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TURKMENISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Reaching Turkmenistan's Rural Youth

USAID study tour alumna creates new opportunities for rural youth.



Photo: ACCELS

Participants of a seminar on community health at the Beyik Turkmenbashy resource center.

Because of Aynabad Muhamova's resource center, young people in Beyik Turkmenbashy have new opportunities to realize their professional dreams.

Telling Our Story
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Using the knowledge and skills gained during a USAID study tour, Aynabad Muhamova opened a resource center for youth in the remote Beyik Turkmenbashy district in the Lebap province of Turkmenistan. The inspiration for the center came when, along with eight other representatives from Turkmenistan, Muhamova traveled to Raleigh, N.C., for a 3-week USAID training aimed at exposing Turkmen professionals to new ways of reaching at-risk youth and new methods for preventing drug abuse and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

"I learned a lot by observing how my U.S. colleagues work with vulnerable populations," said Muhamova.

After the study tour, Muhamova rallied her colleagues to create a center that would provide training to Beyik Turkmenbashy youth. Due to the district's remoteness and lack of resources, young people in Beyik Turkmenbashy had few opportunities to realize their professional dreams. Muhamova and her colleagues wanted to change that. The center operates a small sewing workshop and a training facility, and serves approximately 35 people a week. At the sewing workshop, local girls learn to sew, so that they can earn money and contribute to household expenses. The training facilities are also used to conduct community health seminars for young people.

Muhamova is closely involved with the center's work. She uses the techniques learned during the USAID program to conduct trainings on community health, healthy lifestyle, and first aid. She is planning to expand the activities of the center so that the girls who attend sewing classes can receive assistance in finding employment. She also wants to recruit a local textile factory to supply materials for the sewing classes so that the girls can earn money producing garments.

"I believe the outcome depends on your professionalism in delivering information to people," said Muhamova. "I have aspirations and look for new opportunities to promote further democratization of my country."