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KAZAKHSTAN

SUCCESS STORY

People With Disabilities Receive Better Access

Advocacy campaign results in city government making special provision for the disabled



Participants attend a USAID-supported workshop on advocacy planning.

With training and funding from USAID, a local advocacy organization achieves the enforcement of a law on the access to government buildings for people with disabilities.

Telling Our Story
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As a result of an advocacy campaign supported by USAID, the authorities in the Kazakh city of Karagandy have equipped the city's main government building with a ramp for people in wheelchairs.

The advocacy campaign in Karagandy was undertaken by Tirlik, a Karagandy-based Disabled Persons Organization. The campaign lobbied the authorities of Karagandy to expand access to government buildings for people with disabilities. Even though the law stipulates that such premises should be readily accessible for people with disabilities, in practice this requirement is often ignored.

Tirlik developed this campaign inspired by a USAID-sponsored advocacy training course that sought to expand the ability of Kazakh disabled persons organizations to advocate for their constituents. At the course, Tirlik and other organizations learned to engage stakeholders more effectively, to select the most appropriate mechanisms for their advocacy messages, and to organize public hearings on the issues it represents.

"The training course provided practical examples from the local context," said training participant, Kairat Imanaliev. "Such an approach helped us enormously to understand how to identify the most fitting advocacy mechanisms."

With funding from USAID, Tirlik mobilized several disabled persons organizations and launched a campaign about compliance with laws on access for people with disabilities. Tirlik organized two public hearings that were attended by city officials, specialists, and disabled people's organizations which called on the city government to uphold the disability provisions of the building law.

As a result of the advocacy campaign, the Karagandy city authorities allocated 1,500,000 Tenge (\$12,500) to construct a wheelchair ramp into the city's main government building. The authorities also pledged to build additional ramps, indicating that these would be the starting point of a major effort to apply the disability provisions of the building law. City authorities have also set up a commission to carry out the disability provisions of Kazakhstan's law on new and reconstructed buildings and invited Tirlik's Executive Director to become a commission member.

Photo: Counterpart