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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

KAZAKHSTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Alumna Organizes Camp For Children

Alumna Applies U.S.- Gained Skills to Benefit Community



Photo: U.S. Peace Corps/Melissa Paros

English camp participants and the camp organizer, USAID study tour alumna, Anara Zhakupova (second from right).

“The USAID Community Connections Program not only gave me a chance to visit the United States, but also, helped me join two different cultures - people from East Kazakhstani village Pervomaiskiy and people from Tucson, Arizona,” said Anara Zhakupova.

Telling Our Story
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When she embarked on a USAID Community Connections study tour to the United States, Anara Zhakupova couldn't imagine the impact the program would have on her life. The skills and contacts gained allowed her to create a new English-language program for at-risk youth in her village of Pervomaiskiy in the Northeast Kazakhstan Region.

Zhakupova says she returned home from the U.S., “charged with the energy that I did not have before, to develop outstanding cultural and education projects in my village.”

While in the U.S., Zhakupova participated in study-tour sessions on topics important to community leaders as well as practical visits to U.S. organizations. She also had invaluable interactions with her Tucson, Arizona, host family.

When she returned to Kazakhstan, Zhakupova immediately went to work and developed a two-year language and cultural exchange weekend/summer school for 25 rural Kazakhstani children who would not otherwise have the means to access such training.

Study-tour training sessions on topics such as “Financial Development: Fundraising and Friend-raising” and discussions with organizations, such as a Tucson group that runs a camp for at-risk children, helped Zhakupova develop a successful proposal for funding for her organization's summer camp.

With the help of her U.S. host family, Zhakupova recruited two retired teachers from Arizona who volunteered to come to Pervomaiskiy and teach at the two-week intensive English-language summer camp. The program was a resounding success, and Zhakupova is working to secure funding that will allow for broader participation in the future.

Meanwhile, students in the program have already felt the impact of Zhakupova's work. Alena Suikanen, a 15-year-old student said about the program: “Some people think that you never catch happiness, and others try to find it in money, but for me, to be happy is to enjoy spending time with others and learn something new from them. The English summer camp was a very happy time for me.”