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USAID Trainee Uses New Skills to Start Business

Former administrator of a USAID program establishes a private Internet café

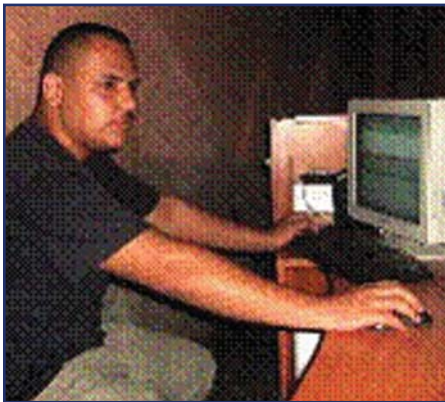


Photo: IREX

Alisher Eshonkhonov started his own business with the skills he learned from a USAID-supported program.

“Thanks to the knowledge I gained at the USAID computer labs in 2005, I acquired important Internet and computer technology skills,” said Alisher Eshonkhonov, former supported Internet access and training program.

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Former administrator of a USAID-funded Internet café, Alisher Eshonkhonov opened his own Internet-centered business in Tajikistan’s capital city Dushanbe.

Eshonkhonov was an avid participant of the computer and Internet trainings offered in Dushanbe by a USAID-supported program that sets up Internet shops and computer classes across Tajikistan and other countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia to enable local populations learn modern skills and access Internet-based information.

Caftar Independent Internet Center, where Eshonkhonov first started his participation in the program, was one of the several centers set up Tajikistan. In 2005, when he was a fourth-year student at Tajik State National University, Eshonkhonov began volunteering for the program as well.

At first, Eshonkhonov was conducting training sessions on computer and Internet basics. He also assisted customers at the USAID computer labs in creating several websites. Due to his demonstrated knowledge and skills, Eshonkhonov soon became an administrator at the Caftar Independent Internet Center.

“Thanks to the knowledge I gained at the USAID-supported center in 2005, I acquired important internet and computer technology skills and then further developed them as a center administrator,” he said.

After two years of work for the USAID project, Eshonkhonov decided to build further on the newly-learned skills and open his own Internet café. He rented a facility in Dushanbe, equipped it with eleven computers, a photocopy machine, printer, and scanner, and offered internet and computer services to the local residents.

Eshonkhonov’s new Internet café provides such paid services as Internet browsing, photo printing, CD copying, photocopying, word processing, and online games. Recently his business procured an antenna to provide Wi-Fi service in the radius of 150 meters to clients living nearby. “At the moment we have seven users, but soon we will begin promoting the café and intend to raise this number,” Eshonkhonov said.