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TURKMENISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Educator Promotes Innovative Methods

After USAID study tour, a teacher promotes new learning methods to expand opportunities for rural children



Photo: Alma Mater / Nataliya Efendiyeva

Baymyrat Korhanov (center) and his colleagues at a training on interactive teaching methods

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Baymyrat Korhanov is an experienced German and English language teacher at a small school in Yangala Village about 25 miles from the capital city Ashgabat. While teaching approaches in the region are usually limited to lecture-style, recently, Korhanov has begun introducing interactive methods not only in his own classes, but to other Turkmen educators as well.

In 2007, Korhanov won an opportunity to participate in a USAID study tour to the United States. Together with nine other Turkmen school administrators and teachers, Korhanov spent three weeks in Seattle attending an intensive training program on school management. The program focused on the best practices in the U.S. education system, cutting-edge school management strategies, student-centered teaching methodologies, and effective parent-teacher activities, and included visits to educational facilities.

“I am glad that I had a chance to see different U.S. schools and learn how they are managed. I was impressed by the efforts made to involve parents in their children’s school life,” said Korhanov.

The study tour inspired Korhanov to share his experience with his colleagues. Since his return home from the U.S., he has conducted multiple training sessions for the administration and teachers at his own school, as well as specialists from other schools in his district. He now trains education professionals together with the Turkmen teachers’ association Alma Mater.

One of the driving forces for Korhanov is his desire to impact learning processes in rural areas, where access to innovation and information is especially limited. To do this, he began a collaboration with the Soltan Dag Education Center to organize English, German and Russian language courses in several schools of Gektepe Region. At the center, young people that are eager to learn foreign languages can attend the courses for a small fee.

In the future, Korhanov plans to develop and publish a manual for Turkmen teachers on how interactive teaching techniques can be used for extracurricular activities. He would also like to conduct additional training programs and organize free language courses for orphans from rural areas.