

# ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2019

THE BRANCH OF THE GERMAN CARITAS  
ASSOCIATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN



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## Acknowledgements

Another year has passed and it has become a tradition to share our annual newsletter, which displays our highlights and joint efforts accomplished in the past year.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank each of our partners and beneficiaries for the trust, support and confidence in our joint efforts. Without you, it would of course have not been possible to be able to share this newsletter full of achievements.

I would also like to thank our government partners, ministries and local municipalities, the German government (BMZ), the EU Delegation in Tajikistan, local implementing partners and other international organizations, who have made such an incredible contribution to the development of an inclusive society.

2019 was a year of closure as we attempted to accomplish every one of our objectives that were set at the beginning of the organization. Thus, we began a new frontier with new directions and at a new level.

I hope you enjoy reading about our successes and find inspiration for new endeavors.

Happy New Year to you all and may 2020 bring new ideas and opportunities!



*Parvina Tadjibaeva*

*Country Representative*

*The Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan*

## Impressions after nine years

The Caritas office in Tajikistan had the pleasure of welcoming the first Country Representative of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan, Andreas Riesterer for a short visit. After not having visited Dushanbe for nine years, he was surprised by the development of the city and stated, “it’s amazing how Dushanbe has developed into a metropolis in recent years.”

He was particularly impressed with the professional and personal development of the Caritas Office. Riesterer stated:

*“Under the direction of Parvina Tadjibaeva, Caritas’ work has developed professionally, according to international standards. In particular, the establishment of structures based on the professional approach of Community-Based Rehabilitation with the consistent focus on the needs of affected. Their active participation in particular is very impressive. We can still learn from this approach in Germany as well. Of course, Caritas’ successful work in Tajikistan is only possible due to the entire Caritas team working with great professional and personal commitment. Congratulations on this work and continued success.”*

After his assignment in Tajikistan, Andreas Riesterer continues to work in the Caritas Association in Freiburg and is responsible for the areas of «Disability Aid and Community Psychiatry»



# Dushanbe hosts an International Disability Forum



On October 18, 2019, the first International Disability Forum was held in Dushanbe. The forum was organized by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan (Caritas Germany) provided technical assistance for the forum with financial support from the European Union. The forum, which was attended by high-ranking Tajik Government officials, representatives of relevant ministries and institutions and international and civil society organizations, aimed at promoting action, partnership and accountability to deliver lasting change for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Tajikistan. This forum strived for real change and marked the beginning of a national endeavor towards the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of PWDs, signed by Tajikistan in 2018. It also contributed to further strengthening the inclusive policy environment and the implementation of the rights of PWDs in Tajikistan.





The participants of the forum unanimously adopted a declaration that states the following four strategic priorities for the disability sector by 2030 in order to increase innovation regarding PWDs in Tajikistan: 1) Better rehabilitation (assistive technology, innovation and a unified disability information system); 2) Better healthcare (PWD access to health services); 3) Better education (PWD access to varying levels of education); and 4) More social protection, more economic empowerment, more livelihood opportunities (ensuring favorable conditions for the economic empowerment of PWDs).

Among other proposals, Umeda Munavvarova, Caritas Germany's representative proposed a suggestion to introduce professional training for para-specialists in the specialization of social work in primary and secondary professional education institutions. This suggestion was warmly welcomed and included in Dushanbe Declaration on Disability issues. At the forum, Caritas Germany exhibited basic technical assistive devices produced by PWDs and parents of children with disabilities who were trained within the Community-Based Rehabilitation projects of the organization.





## A big step towards ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

On December 3, 2019, within the framework of the European Union Week in Tajikistan 2019, the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan provided technical support to the National Union of People with Disabilities of Tajikistan (NUPDT) to conduct a conference dedicated to the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The conference titled, “Promoting the Participation of Persons with Disabilities and their Leadership: Taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda” was aimed at sharing information on the work done thus far and making further contributions towards ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

While presiding over the conference, Asadullo Zikrikhudoev, Chairman of NUPDT noted that today’s event was made possible due to the initiative and direct involvement from all Disabled People’s Organizations (DPOs) of the country. He also noted that this was the result of the increase in PWDs’ rights advocacy trainings and workshops. These workshops were organized with the financial and technical support from the European Union and Caritas Germany for representatives of DPOs, associations of parents of children with disabilities and other stakeholders in various regions of the country.



Addressing the conference, Shodikhon Jamshed, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan mentioned that as of today, there are 148,383 PWDs in the country, of which 28,320 are children with disabilities. He noted that a series of legal and normative documents concerning the protection of the rights of PWDs had been adopted and they must be adapted in order to create a legal framework for the ratification of CRPD. There is hope that today's conference would give a new impulse to this process.



In her opening remarks, Marilyn Josefsen, EU Ambassador to Tajikistan, focused on key areas of partnership and cooperation between the EU and the Government of Tajikistan. She emphasized that among other results, there were two visible results of bilateral cooperation between the EU and Government of Tajikistan. These two results are the development and implementation of the National Program for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities for 2017-2020 and the signing of CRPD. Josefsen stated, “our efforts empowered persons with disabilities to take part in decision-making and today we witness how DPOs are prepared well to take leadership in ratifying CRPD.”



Representatives from DPOs held presentations on topics such as disability, a legal framework for sustainable development goals and CRPD, accessibility, education, employment and health. They also drafted a road map for the ratification of the CRPD. The efforts made by PWDs had once again proven that they are capable and have the potential to take the lead in decision-making processes, particularly in developing an action plan for the ratification of the CRPD.

This year's conference was unique in that it made informative materials available in audio, Braille and sign language interpretation. There was also a seating plan for high-ranking guests and the conference included a diversity of participants.

## Support for the young movement

A group of six students from the European Union (EU) visited the Ayni district on June 24, 2019 to learn about the achievements of a project jointly funded by the EU and Caritas Germany. The project is titled, “Supporting Civil Society in Applying Community-Based Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities in the Ayni District.” During the course of their visit, the students met with some young project beneficiaries whose lives had changed for the better after receiving rehabilitation services, technical assistive devices and small grants to start their own businesses.



The students also had the opportunity to speak with persons with disabilities (PWDs) and PWDs’ family members, who were engaged in practical exercises on fruit drying. The visitors were interested in hearing from PWDs how the fruit drying training would allow them to increase their household income. The visitors were especially impressed by the practical sessions of early intervention in Mother & Child rooms created by the project, which the students had the opportunity to observe.



## The Donation of Braille textbooks to Tajik National Library

On February 14, 2019, the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan donated 49 Braille textbooks and 10 manuals on the rehabilitation of children with disabilities to the Tajik National Library. This large donation was achieved with financial support from the European Union. At the handover ceremony, which fell on the International Book Giving Day, Miralizoda Abdusalom Mustafu, Director of Tajik National Library, expressed his appreciation. He also considered the donation a valuable gift for the National Library, particularly for the Department of Service Provision for Persons with Disabilities. It was noted that an average number of 60 visits by blind persons is registered per week and the donated textbooks would allow them to increase their knowledge.





## CBR in Tajikistan – a good model for replication



Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) was high on the agenda at the international conference titled, “Future Rehabilitation: Social Approach,” which took place on September 18th, 2019 in St. Petersburg, Russia. Caritas Germany, as a leading organization in applying CBR in Tajikistan, was able to demonstrate the dynamics of CBR development during 2009-2019. This was visually demonstrated with the help of a poster at the conference. Umeda Munavvarova, project coordinator from Caritas Germany in Tajikistan, held a presentation via Skype

on the organization’s ten years of experience in applying best practices of CBR in Tajikistan. The conference participants acknowledged that this experience was very useful, not only for Tajikistan but also as a good model for replication in Russia. This is due to Russia having a large territory, many regions being remote from the centers and also the severe climatic conditions in the country, which are an obstacle for the access of persons with disabilities to obtaining quality rehabilitation services.

## Promoting PWDs active participation in elections

At the request of the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan, Dr. Bhushan Punani, Executive Director of Blind People’s Association of India conducted a workshop on “Accessible Voting.” The workshop, which was held on June 11, 2019 in Dushanbe, introduced a new and very interesting topic to the attendees. Among those in attendance were representatives of Disabled Peoples’ Organizations (DPOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), partner organizations and beneficiaries of Caritas Germany projects in Tajikistan. Mr. Punani mainly focused on major challenges that voters with

disabilities face and necessary measures that need to be undertaken in order to create accessible polling places. Throughout the workshop, he provided specific examples of accomplishments that were made in his country. He also noted that all these successes were made possible by the initiative and hard work of DPOs and CSOs. Asadullo Zikrikhudoev, Chairman of The National Union of People with Disabilities of Tajikistan considered this workshop contemporary and useful. He also expressed his commitment to use new knowledge in the upcoming elections.





# ***Inclusive summer camps for children with disabilities***

At various times throughout the summer, The Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan organized four summer camps in Sughd and Badakhshon regions, Rasht valley and Varzob ravine. These camps were executed with financial support from the European Union, UNICEF and Caritas Germany and with the technical assistance of its local partner public organizations, “ASTI”, “DARO”, “Shifo”,



“Gharm Support Center” and “Ehyo.” A total of 250 project beneficiaries, including children with and without disabilities, children from poor families, parents and family members and community rehabilitation workers from Ayni, Shahrituz, Rasht and Shughnon districts had the opportunity to experience a week of recreation during the summer season.



Many children with disabilities have never traveled outside of their district except to go to the hospital and oftentimes remain at home due to their visual, hearing, speech, mobility and intellectual impairments. The summer camp provided these children with an enjoyable opportunity to socialize with other children. The recreational programs mainly

included morning exercises, drawing, applique, bead weaving, pottery, swimming, poem recitation, singing, dancing, sport competitions and many other cultural, sport and artistic activities. Moreover, psychological consultations on proper upbringing of children with disabilities were provided for parents during quiet hours.



During the farewell parties that took place in the evenings on the final days of camp, the children with and without disabilities demonstrated their hand-made products, recited poems, sang songs and performed dances and shows that were learned and prepared while being in summer camp. They were also awarded with gifts and certificates of recognition for their active participation in activities.

Inclusion of children with disabilities in society, development of children's skills and the promotion of peer support as well as improvement of parental caring skills were the main goals of the summer camps.





## Caritas Germany donates heavy machinery to the Ayni District

On December 18, 2019, a handover ceremony took place, where a mini excavator was donated to the Ayni District. The ceremony was attended by the Country Representative for the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan, Parvina Tadjibaeva, The Head of the Ayni Unit of the Committee on Emergency Situations and Civil Defense under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mirzoshohiyon Mirzoshoh, and representatives of partner organizations. The mini excavator was procured within the framework of the Caritas Germany funded project on “Long-term Action on Emergency Prevention in Four Main Vulnerable Jamoats of the Ayni district,” known as “The Project.» The donated machinery is intended for the clean-up of mudflow derivation canals and other works required during and after emergencies in all villages in the Anzob, Shamtuch, Rarz and Fondaryo jamoats.

The Project, which was officially launched in September 2019 and will run until the end of February 2020, also includes a number of disaster risk reduction activities, such as soil erosion prevention. These activities include building terraces, planting fruit trees and bushes on steep slopes, creating new orchards, building gabion walls on the most vulnerable sections of the Ayni-Kuhistoni Mastchoh road, and installing traffic signs to reduce accidents. Moreover, simulations and drills are conducted for targeted villagers on how to behave and react during mudflow and other natural disasters.

Ayni is a sparsely populated mountainous district located in the north of Tajikistan with villages prone to various natural disasters. There are 67 villages in the district and 40 of these villages are prone to natural disasters including mudflows, avalanches, landslides, snowfalls and rock falls. These natural disasters put people’s lives in danger and disrupt the agricultural and livestock practices in the region. From April – June 2019, heavy rainfall has resulted in several mudflows, landslides, avalanches and rock falls. According to data from the District Unit of the Committee on Emergency Situations and Civil Defense, 1,216 households with 5,640 members live within the affected areas.



## Caritas Germany helps vulnerable families overcome difficult life situations

Social problems, such as poor living conditions, unemployment, family conflict, malnutrition, and lack of childcare skills and knowledge are often observed among poor families. These problems negatively affect the psychological and emotional wellbeing of all family members, particularly children and their mothers. In order to strengthen the community's capacity in the field of social work and improve the quality of social services for families and children in difficult life situations, Caritas Germany in Tajikistan together with the regional public organization, "Ehyo," implemented a one-year social work development project. The project was launched in the Shughnon district, which is reported to have the highest rate of

poverty in the Badakhshon region. Among many other activities, the project provided personalized social support to 35 families with children in difficult life situations using a case-management approach.

Fifty-year-old Nazarsulton is a member of one of the beneficiary families living in the Medenshor village of the Shughnon district. Her difficult life began after she went through a divorce and returned to live in her father's home with her daughter. Her brother did not work and often came home drunk, which created conflicts in the home. Her father's disability pension was the only source of income for the family. Nazarsulton stated that she "was always depressed and felt like a burden on the family." She was thankful

for the project's social workers, who helped her family overcome their difficult situation. As a result of the project interventions, her brother gave up alcohol and began earning money as an unskilled worker. Nazarsulton was admitted to a vocational training course on sewing and completed it successfully. She is pleased that she was awarded with a certificate and can now bring in extra income for her family.



# Companionship creates a more meaningful life



Caritas Germany's long-time partnership with the local Caritas Tajikistan led to the development and implementation of a unique project titled, "Preparation for Adulthood - Supervision for Success". The project was built around the idea of creating mutually-beneficial interactions between two vulnerable groups - socially-isolated elderly and orphaned youth. The elderly were former attendees of the Social Center, which was established with funds from Caritas Germany in 2009. The youth were 9th-11th grade students from boarding school No.1 in Dushanbe and the boarding school in the Shahrinav district. The aim of this interaction was to develop companionship between the elderly and orphaned youth in order to prepare the youth for a future independent life. The project also aimed to create a more meaningful life for the

socially-isolated elderly through participation in this process. This experience has been shown to be quite successful and mutually-beneficial for both groups. Some notable accomplishments of the project are legal counseling and support, vocational training



through government structures and preparedness for higher education. These aspects have had a huge impact on the life of the orphaned youth and their ability to develop independence. Equally important is the impact that the project has had on the socially-isolated elderly participating in the project, who have received enormous emotional

satisfaction.

Seventy-five-year-old Tatyana is one of the project beneficiaries, who after the collapse of the Soviet Union, lived alone due to her only son abandoning her to move to Russia. She was already retired and had a troublesome life for many years, both economically and emotionally. Tatyana overcame her periods of sadness and depression and returned to leading a meaningful life after joining the project. Her cooking skills allowed her to actively interact with the youth. She currently conducts cooking classes for the orphaned youth at the boarding school No.1. Tatyana stated joyfully, "I don't feel alone anymore and get inspired when the students call me Tatyana-khola (Aunt Tatyana) and ask questions about the details of cooking and ask for advice on their future independent life."

# Enabling parents of CWDs to believe in their children's future

The vast majority of parents lack an understanding of what constitutes a disability and how one is able to live with the challenges that come with having one. Upon learning of a child's disability, 99% of parents experience panic, followed by depression. They typically believe that medical treatments are the only available options and are unaware of other approaches to improve the lives of their children with disabilities (CWDs).

Twenty-nine-year-old Shokirova Gulnora, who lives in the B. Ghafurov district, is the mother of a son with cerebral palsy. Twice she had brought her six-year-old son to the Regional Health and Rehabilitation Center for CWDs in the Sughd region (hereinafter referred to as the Center). During each visit, her son underwent a three-week course of treatment, which helps him remain calm. At the Center, children used to receive more medical preventive treatment than rehabilitation services. However, this change has helped mothers be able to rest, share experiences with other parents and feel that they are not alone in facing the challenges that come with being a parent of a CWD.

From July 2018 to June 2019, Caritas Germany and the public organization, "Payvandi shahrvandi," implemented a Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) project. The goal was to improve the quality of CWD care and promote CWDs development through a higher

parent involvement. The project allowed parents to join in the play-group activities. It also prepared and trained them to be able to provide home care for their children after leaving the 16-day stay in the Center. The outcome of the project was that 342 mothers of CWDs, including Gulnora, were trained to work as animators in play-groups and mother and child rooms. For training purposes, a mother and child room was established at the Center and equipped with necessary furniture and developmental toys as part of the project.

"After joining the project, I understood that mothers are the best trainers for their CWDs," says Gulnora. She believes that uninterrupted rehabilitation exercises at home helped improve her son's quality of life. She is pleased that her son is now able to independently sit, stand leaning against wall, ride a tricycle, build pyramids, play with other children and pronounce simple words that he could not do before.



# Preparing for independent life

On June 13, 2019, a ceremonial event was organized at boarding school No.1 in Dushanbe to mark the closing of the project, “Help Yourself (School of Life).” The project was funded by Caritas Germany and implemented in partnership with the public organization, “Zumrad.” The students at the boarding school were able to demonstrate their new knowledge and skills in the fields of tourism, sport, housekeeping, art, theater and music, which were gained as a result of project.







The event included sporting competitions, chalk drawing, as well as masterclasses on hiking, transporting injured persons, confectionery, quilling and a concert program. A total of 140 students from grades 4-9, teachers and mentors at the boarding school and volunteers from the public organization, "Zumrad," attended the event. An innovative aspect of this project was the fact that former graduates of the boarding school became involved as leaders for the sport and music clubs.



The project was designed to provide legal and psychological assistance to the students, and also to ensure social protection through the involvement of state structures, public organizations and media. They also received assistance with identifying potential

occupations. A series of theoretical and practical activities allowed the graduates to prepare themselves for a successful transition to a complex independent life, to be able to take initiative, and to strengthen their social network. One of the main project tasks was providing support to the students to be able to successfully socialize and integrate into society. This was accomplished through the introduction of their rights and abilities and through the development of their skills required to live independently in society. The project provided the students with social knowledge and practical skills, which will increase opportunities for them to receive education, income and employment after leaving the boarding school.





## Children with disabilities surprised to see Santa Claus

In Tajikistan, it is still common today that parents feel shame or guilt for having children with disabilities (CWDs). This causes parents to attempt to hide their children from view and prohibit them from leaving the home. This social exclusion prevents CWDs from participating in daily social activities which would allow them to enjoy their rights and develop their abilities. To change the attitudes and behavior of parents and enhance social inclusion of CWDs, more than 300 residents from all corners of the Shahrituz district, including CWDs and their parents and caregivers were brought together in the district's Palace of Culture to



celebrate New Year's Eve. Most of the CWDs, who were attending this type of public event for the first time, were surprised to see Santa Claus, Snow Maiden and a Christmas tree decorated with toys and lights. The event included various games, poetry recitation, singing and dancing as well as New Year's congratulations by local government and civil society representatives. The performance shown by the artists of the State Puppet Theatre made a deep impression on CWDs. The event ended with a handover of New Year gifts to CWDs who were reluctant to leave the hall and wanted to continue celebrating.

# THE HUGE IMPACT OF A CBR WORKER



Malika Qodirova is 37 years old and lives in the Chorshanbe village in the Shahrituz district. Working as a nurse at the Rural Health Center, she is very familiar with the health conditions of her villagers, particularly persons with disabilities (PWDs). Realizing that drug therapy is not a proper solution to improve the quality of life for PWDs, she volunteered to become a Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) worker within the European Union and Caritas Germany funded project. Malika actively attended all CBR trainings conducted by the national and international trainers and acquired the required knowledge and skills. She has provided rehabilitation service for 22 PWDs over the last two years and the impact of her work is highly appreciated by her community.

A clear example of her hard work is the progress that was made by 19-year-old Bakhtiyor Mahmadvulov who became a beneficiary of Malika's in July 2018. Due to his physical and intellectual impairment, Bakhtiyor was not able to walk at all, and remained lying in bed all day and socially isolated. He could not manage self-care and relied on his mother to take care



of him. Within a period of ten months, Malika visited Bakhtiyor at least twice a week, conducted rehabilitation exercises and created a daily routine for him. The project also provided a wheelchair for Bakhtiyor that allowed him to integrate into mainstream society. Now, Bakhtiyor no longer needs his mother's assistance and he can handle daily activities, including personal hygiene by himself. He learned how to effectively use his wheelchair and thus is able to leave the house independently to meet friends, visit relatives and attend public events conducted in his village. The CBR worker's exercises also helped Bakhtiyor start walking by holding on to a wall or a wheelchair, even sometimes without any support for short distances.



## Making technical assistive devices for charity

Sherali Hayitmatov is a 59-year-old man and the father of four children, who lives in the Oriyon village in the Shahrituz district. His primary reason for joining the European Union and Caritas Germany funded Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) project at an early stage was his eldest son's disability. Acting as a CBR worker, he learned a significant amount of new knowledge and skills revolving around disability, which allowed him, first of foremost, to help his paralyzed son walk better and more confidently. Later, Sherali displayed a great interest in becoming a master of technical assistive

devices (TADs), motivated in part from his prior welding and carpentry skills. Thus, he actively attended all relevant trainings and cross-visits organized by the project and became a skilled master of TADs.

At his own expense, Sherali purchased necessary tools and opened a small workshop in his house, where his disabled son also helps him produce and repair TADs. According to Sherali, baby walkers and corner chairs are the some of the most in-demand TADs. He also receives numerous requests for wheelchair repairs as they often break due to poor road conditions in rural areas.

Sherali uses various locally available materials to make TADs. Every PWD has his or her special need, therefore, Sherali always consults with physical therapists, parents, CBR workers and PWDs themselves. He is very careful in measuring and always tests the TADs before handing it over for use. It is sometimes required that he attach additional belts to corner chairs or add some extra polyurethane foam to make it more comfortable for a disabled child. As a rule, PWDs or parents of children with disabilities will bring the required materials and Sherali makes or repairs TADs for free, doing it as a charity work.



## Raising awareness about disability among the general public

Together with the Shahrtoz Local Government Authority, an educational, cultural and sports event dedicated to the Day of Disabled and Elderly People was organized on June 28, 2019. The event took place in the district center with participation from persons with disabilities (PWDs), children with disabilities and their parents and caregivers from all jamoats in the district.

The aim of this event was to raise awareness and develop positive attitudes and a sense of respect towards persons with disabilities and social work professionals. This was achieved through displaying the achievements of PWDs, and the role of social work professionals in developing personal abilities and improving the quality of

life of PWDs.

The event began with a photo exhibition of PWDs, whose lives drastically improved after receiving rehabilitation services. The exhibition displayed handmade crafts, particularly toys made by PWDs. It also demonstrated educational and scientific materials on social work and social rehabilitation of PWDs. A wheelchair basketball match between the teams of Dushanbe and Bokhtar cities was held with the focus on promoting sports and healthy lifestyle among PWDs. The event was concluded with an inclusive entertainment program during which the local talents recited poems, sang songs and showed performances and dances.





## ***“Shahnoza is completely a different girl now”***

Seventeen-year-old Shahnozai Mazhabsho, a resident of the Revad village of the Ayni district, is one of a set of twins who was born blind in her right eye and deaf in her right ear. Due to the difficulties of raising twins in addition to other young children, her mother left after Shahnoza’s birth and she was cared for by her grandmother. Her grandmother had brought her to an eye and ENT (ear, nose and throat) specialist when Shahnoza was an infant and then a second time when she was five years old. However, unfortunately all efforts to restore her vision and hearing were unsuccessful. The grandmother became disappointed and lost hope after the doctors had informed her that Shahnoza’s problems were birth defects and the treatment could negatively affect her other eye and ear. Shahnoza had learning difficulties, did not obey teachers and disturbed others in class. Therefore, she only received primary education up to the fourth-grade and was expelled from school after repeated complaints about her disruptive behavior. Her grandmother remarked that, “she could not manage her personal hygiene and was always dirty all day.” She also added that she used to consider Shahnoza useless. Today, Shahnoza is a completely different girl. The Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) worker who visited her once a week helped not only Shahnoza to manage her day, but was able to change her family’s and neighbors’ attitude towards her. Every morning, she gets up early, tidies up and helps

her grandmother with household chores, such as cleaning, cooking and fetching drinking water from the spring. Her grandmother stated that she “now consider[s] Shahnoza a very useful and helpful member of the family” and that “she is always well-groomed and manages personal hygiene independently.” She also added that she remains involved with the CBR program so that Shahnoza can continue vocational training in sewing.



# Supporting persons with disabilities in creating a sustainable source of income

Due to a lack of higher education, many persons with disabilities (PWDs) are left with difficulty in acquiring descent work in Tajikistan. Ibrohimbek Murodov is 23 years old and is a PWD, who was born with visual impairment in the Urmetan village of the Ayni district. He was only able to finish primary education and was barred from continuing his studies due to his disability. It was only by his own efforts and strong will that he learned how to work with computers and cell phones. With this skill, he was able to provide cell phone repair and unlocking services to his fellow villagers, which

allowed Ibrohimbek to earn an income. In order to empower PWDs to lead independent lives, the European Union and Caritas Germany Joint Project carried out a series of income generating activities in the Ayni district. This project included 75 PWDs, including Ibrohimbek, as well as family members of PWDs from all jamoats of the district. During the final training on writing a business-plan, it was announced that through the project, ten in-kind grants would be provided for the best business ideas. The project's evaluation team found Ibrohimbek's business-

plan on "Establishing an Information Technology Service Center in the Urmetan village" among the ten best. He was then also provided with a laptop, a 3-in-1 printer and a DVD/CD duplicator to implement his business idea. Ibrohimbek is pleased to be currently earning around 3,000 TJS a month, which allows him to feed his family independently. He states that there is a high demand for his services, which include cell phone repairs, flashing and unlocking cell phones, connecting pay TV channels, scanning, copying and printing, as well as copying DVDs and CDs.





## Celebrating the International Children’s Day

On the eve of World Children’s Day, which takes place annually on June 1st, the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan organized an inclusive cultural and entertainment event in Zarafshon jamoat of the Ayni district. This event was executed with financial support from the European Union and Caritas Germany.

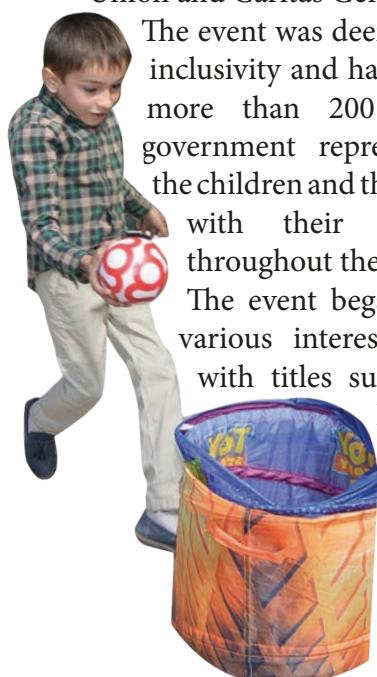
The event was deemed a success with its inclusivity and having brought together more than 200 participants. Local government representatives supported the children and their parents /caregivers with their active participation throughout the event.

The event began with a number of various interesting outdoor games, with titles such as, “Who Does a Lot,” “Who is Faster,” “Find the Toy,” “Mother’s Hands,” “Bag Throwing,” etc.,

in which children with disabilities (CWDs) and their parents/caregivers participated actively and received prizes. These games were intended to foster the mental, emotional and physical development of CWDs as well as improve parents’ and caregivers’ childcare skills.

The kindergarteners of No.1 in the Ayni district performed a cultural program that included poems, songs, dances and shows. The program covered topics such as patriotism, a mothers’ love, peace, unity and friendship. The Puppet Theater from the city of Buston made a deep impression on CWDs through their educational and entertaining shows. For most of the CWDs, it was the first event of this kind of which they had ever attended.

The event was wrapped up with a screening of a series of short video clips about CWDs who had led successful lives. These videos aimed to encourage CWDs to pursue higher education and vocational training.







## Vocational training provided for persons with disabilities

Thirty persons with disabilities (PWDs) from all jamoats of the Ayni district had taken part in free vocational training courses that specialized in sewing and cooking-confectionery. These courses are based at the new vocational training center in the district center, which was established with financial support from the European Union and Caritas Germany. Upon completion of these courses, which each run for three months, the best graduates were awarded with certificates acknowledged by the Adult Training Center in the Ayni district. These certificates allow PWDs to find better job opportunities in the local labor market and lead independent lives. On October 23, 2019, the certificate award ceremony took place in conjunction with a job fair in the center

of the Ayni district. The job fair resulted in two attending PWDs securing permanent jobs.

The new vocational training center consists of three rooms. One of the rooms is used as a training hall for theoretical classes, while the other two rooms are used as a kitchen for practical cooking lessons and a sewing room for hands-on exercises. As part of the project, all necessary equipment, such as tables, chairs, sewing machines, an iron, a refrigerator, an electric stove, a baking oven and various other equipment was provided to the vocational training center. Before equipping the center, an analysis of the labor market was carried out, which determined the most in-demand jobs in the region.



# The dreams of Morning Flower

*Community Mobilization and Community Based Rehabilitation project in Rasht helped a young girl to fulfill her dreams.*



*«I always wanted to go to school and be like other girls. I always wanted to learn reading and writing...»*

Sahargul, whose name is translated as “morning flower” had a dream. She wanted to learn embroidery and become a dressmaker. This year, she gained her power and finally made it.

Sahargul is 17 y.o girl with disability who lives in Kochon village, Navdi jamoat of Rasht district. She lives with her father, step-mother and step-sister. Sahargul never attended school full-time. She visited school only twice. First time at the age of 15 y.o in order to learn an alphabet, but when school year started she had to quit. Second time she went to the neighbor village school, but it took 2 hours to walk. Sahargul always wanted to go to school just like other girls and to be able to read and write. But she had to stay at home.

As she didn't go out a lot, the only thing that made her busy was knitting. She also wanted to learn embroidery and become a dressmaker. But when she asked people refused to help. Sahargul was very disappointed and she

gave up on trying to learn what she wanted.

In March 2019, she was offered to join the Community Mobilization and Community Based Rehabilitation project in Rasht that started one month earlier. This project is funded by United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF) and implemented by Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan in partnership with Public Organization “Gharm Support Center”.

The project aims at providing children with disabilities with Community-Based Rehabilitation home-based services; increasing the level of awareness among community institutions, organizations and individuals on disability, and enhancing active participation of persons with disabilities, with a focus on women, youth and children with disabilities and their families in the community.

Since she joined the project, Sahargul with the help of the community rehabilitation worker learnt to read and write, embroidery and canning skills. She also improved her walking.

Lately Sahargul was invited to attend the event dedicated to the day of Persons with Disabilities and participated in the Inclusive Camp organized within the framework of the project.

*“When I saw basketball players and girls dancing on wheelchairs, I got so inspired.”*

Months after Sahargul joined the project, she had changed. Closed, shy and sad girl is now talking with confidence and has a light in her eyes. She joyfully tells about what she learnt and achieved. She also wrote her own biography in a notebook. She underlined that soon she will learn dressmaking as well.

*“I want to become a dressmaker. And I believe that I will!”*

Source:

<https://www.unicef.org/tajikistan/stories/dreams-morning-flower>





## Impelling local people to raise disability awareness

Between October 10 and October 29, 2019, six theatrical performances took place in targeted jamoats in the Rasht district to raise public awareness around disability issues. These performances attracted a total audience of over 500. The performance scripts were written by Tajik artists, Shodi Soleh and Nurullo Abdulloev, with titles such as, “There will be a wedding party at our home, too” and “Generosity to friends...” However, the roles were played by local people, including persons with disabilities (PWDs). The shows mainly reflected the topics from the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child and on the Rights of PWDs. The main goal of these performances was to involve PWDs in cultural events, discover and enhance

PWDs’ artistic talents, change societal attitudes of PWDs, accept PWDs as full members of society, educate and raise awareness, promote positive perception, and increase respect for the rights and dignity of PWDs.





## Developing social work in Tajikistan

On May 30, 2019, the Tajik National University held a conference on “Social Work Development Tendencies in Tajikistan: Problems and Their Solutions.” The conference was held with the technical and financial support from the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It was attended by representatives from relevant ministries and departments, national universities, international and public organizations as well as representatives from Kyrgyzstan and Russia. The purpose of the conference was to consolidate the efforts of science, practice, and the community in the development of social work as a profession. The conference also aimed to analyze the national and foreign experience of professional associations of social workers in order to increase the prestige of the social worker profession in Tajikistan.

The presentation by Dashkina Antonina

Nikolaevna, the President of the Russian Union of Social Pedagogues and Social Workers on “The role of associations of social workers in enhancing the status and prestige of the social work profession” made a deep impression on the participants. The best practices of this organization provided great examples for associations of social workers and other stakeholders in Tajikistan to follow. The conference concluded its work by making the following recommendations for social work development in Tajikistan: Develop and adopt a law on social work; review the national qualification framework on social work based on social workers’ competencies; review the standards for the training of social work; be inclusive of new specializations, such as social pedagogues, rehabilitation workers and case-managers in the national qualification framework; bring all public organizations engaged in social work under one union and develop a strategy for the union’s activity for the upcoming years.

# Disseminating advanced shoemaking technology



In July 2019, the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan organized a five-day shoemaking training course for six persons with disabilities (PWDs) from its target districts. The training was aimed to enhance the PWDs' knowledge and skills of advanced shoemaking technology. This training also included the teaching of the foot anatomy structure, which must be taken into account when preparing tailored orthopedic shoes.

The training program consisted of both theoretical and practical exercises. The participants were able to

learn how to cut out patterns and sew pieces of the shoes together, both by hand and with the machine. PWDs worked with large parts of the shoes, which included attaching soles with glue or nails. They also performed fine finishing work, such as shaping the soles once they were attached.

On the last day of the training, each participant independently made their own pair of shoes, using high quality and natural materials. After completing the training, they were also awarded a certificate, which would enable them to pursue further employment.



# State educational standards for social work improved



The current state of the professional education system for social work is not meeting the demands of the field of social protection. The problem is that the bachelor's level curricula for social worker training are outdated due to having not been reviewed for the last 10 years. In addition, the curricula for secondary and primary professional level social worker training is nonexistent. Therefore, there is a current need to improve the training for the field of social work at all three educational levels.

In May 2018, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan funded a project titled, "Enhancing the Vocational Training System and Previously Established Structures in Community-Based Rehabilitation in Tajikistan." The project provided technical assistance to establish an Inter-Ministerial Working Group that included representatives from the Ministry of Health and

Social Protection of the Population, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population, Tajik National University, Adult Training Center of Tajikistan and experts in the field of social work. The main goals of this working group were to review, analyze and improve the existing curricula as well as develop new ones for social worker training at all three levels.

The highlighted achievements of the working group over this period include the following:

- A revised and improved state standard on the specialization of the "social work profession" for bachelor's level.
- The development of state standards on the specializations of the "social work profession" for master's level, "social worker" for secondary professional education level through professional colleges, and "social worker assistant in the field of social services for people with disabilities and elderly people" through vocational schools.



# Expanding CBR in Kyrgyz Republic

Early in June 2019, the Branch of the German Caritas Association in Tajikistan launched a six-month Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) project in Kyrgyz Republic. The initiative was funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented in partnership with the public foundation, “The Center for Protection and Development of Vulnerable Groups.” The pilot area is in the Leilek district, which is the most remote area from the center and lays on the border of Tajikistan. The project is aimed to introduce CBR to the neighboring country and to build up the capacity of the local social institutions in order to provide home rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Within a short period, the project was able to establish a District Coordination Committee

to improve interagency coordination on disability issues and to train 30 community rehabilitation workers. Among social workers, the community rehabilitation workers included nurses, teachers, parents of children with disabilities, and community activists. Moreover, nine local craftsmen were trained to produce technical assistive devices and a system to provide community-based rehabilitation and early intervention services to 85 PWDs and their families was established. These were established in the district that includes Isfana, Kulundu and Sumbula jamoats.

Our neighbors were pleased to have the opportunity to take over the project and to promote the concept of home rehabilitation services, which will help improve the lives of PWDs and foster a more inclusive society in their country as well.



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