



SUCCESS STORY

Tajik librarian creates a ‘Reading Corner’ to promote reading skills of primary grade students



Third-grade student Noziya Shoniyozova is very grateful to her school librarian Oinamo Bobojonova who helps her to select books provided by the USAID “Read with Me” project and set her reading goals.



Third-grade student Noziya Shoniyozova and first-grade student Madina Shanbieva won reading competitions in Khorugh, GBAO. Their love of reading was supported by their school’s Read with Me-supported ‘Reading corner’.

Most primary grade school libraries in Tajikistan lack age-relevant books, have limited physical space, and are managed by untrained librarians who do not have the skills necessary to support children’s reading. To address this challenge, the USAID Read with Me project provided over 400,000 books and trained over 1,700 school librarians to both increase the availability of grade-relevant reading materials and improve library operations to foster a reading environment for children. The USAID project also encouraged teachers, librarians, and parents to work together improve student reading skills, which is a foundation for lifelong learning and productivity.

Oinamo Bobojonova, one of the Read with Me-trained librarians with 27 years of experience at School #2 in Khorugh, noted “I was happy to take part in this training to learn modernized approaches to improve primary student reading skills. I now know how to make reading attractive for children and establish a child-friendly reading environment. I changed my perspective on how the school library should operate and I am excited to reorganize service delivery in our library.”

In December 2018, Oinamo launched a reading corner in the school’s library, calling it “Read with Me.” The reading corner includes a special section with small desks and chairs for more comfortable reading, as well as easy access to three bookcases dedicated specifically to children’s books. Oinamo organizes reading activities where children read aloud to each other and organize performances based on what they’ve read. After creating the reading corner, Oinamo noticed that students began to visit the library more frequently to read the books provided by the USAID Read with Me project.

Third-grade student Noziya Shoniyozova and first-grade student Madina Shanbieva are excited by the changes in their school’s library. Both are avid readers and have won first and second place in reading contests in Khorugh in 2019. Noziya and Madina credit the opening of the “Read with Me” corner as the main contributor to their

desire to improve their reading and success in winning the literacy contests.

“Our school librarian, Ms. Oinamo, supports me in selecting and reading books. I use the books from the reading corner in our school to create my own stories. I am very thankful to our librarian who created this reading space that motivates me and my classmates to read more books and participate in the reading contests. My dream is to win the Republican reading competition and make my parents and teachers proud of me,” states Noziya.

Oinamo encourages other librarians in her city to experiment with the new approaches to reading instruction in their schools, and to show children that reading can be an exciting activity.

The USAID Read with Me project plans to extend training to reach librarians from over 2,800 schools and to donate over 800,000 books to 75 percent of schools in Tajikistan before the closure of the project in 2021.