

Faces of *change*



For a quarter century, Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (AKF USA) has been investing in people, extending a helping hand to communities and individuals so they may live with dignity and hope.

Goats Project Helps Poor Families in Remote Villages in Eastern Tajikistan

Podhsoeva Latofat lives in Rojak village of Shugnan district in Eastern Tajikistan. Latofat is a housewife and mother of four. Her husband does not have a permanent job.

In 2006, the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP) started a village development planning program in Latofat's village. MSDSP is a local organization that was set up by Aga Khan Foundation in 1993 in Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan. Initially, MSDSP operated an emergency assistance program to increase food security after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It coordinated the logistics of the humanitarian assistance program, providing food and other basic items to the population that was on the verge of

starvation. Then by combining humanitarian assistance and agricultural reform with long-term programs in community organization, natural resource management, enterprise development and physical infrastructure improvements, MSDSP has helped many Tajiks improve their livelihoods over the past 15 years.

In 1997 the group expanded outside of Gorno-Badakhshan and took on the wider development goals of increasing incomes, managing communal resources and attaining food security, and contributing to the development of civil society.

When Rojak village began its planning process, Latofat's family was ranked as one of the poorest in the community and chosen to be a recipient of the goat project. In December 2006, Latofat received five female goats from the Rojak Village Organization. According to the contract she was expected to give back two goat kids to the Village Organization over the next year, which are then given to other poor residents in the village.

The goat program is part of Aga Khan Foundation's Education Dairy and Nutrition Program. It is designed to help vulnerable households, often women-headed households, have greater access to livestock products and opportunities.



When a representative from MSDSP visited in April 2007, Latofat was delighted that the maturing goats had already begun to produce milk, which she fed to her family. She traded the extra milk with her neighbor in exchange for fodder for her animals. She is pleased that she does not have to spend money or time to obtain fodder.

Two of Latofat's goats are pregnant. The two kids will be given to the Village Organization once they are about one year old and then given to another family to raise. With two kids, her mature goats will produce more milk. Latofat plans to make yogurt and sell it at the local market. The goats will also produce wool which has high demand in the market. Between the milk, yogurt and wool, Latofat estimates she will earn \$45 this year, which is a significant amount of cash income for her family.



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