




World Bank Supports Early Childhood Nutrition in Tajikistan

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The Minister of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan Abdusalom Kurbonov and the World Bank Country Manager for Tajikistan Marsha Olive today signed a grant agreement to scale up a project that supports improving health and nutrition among children under the age of three and mothers in Khatlon Oblast. The US\$2.8 million grant funded by the Japan Social Development Fund will build on the activities implemented in the last three years through the "Grant for a Pilot of Nutrition Investments in Severely Food Insecure Districts of Khatlon Province." This new grant will expand support for nutrition and health improvements for children and mothers of Khatlon Oblast to an additional 5,000 households. We are pleased to cooperate with the Government of Japan to make this broader coverage possible, said Marsha Olive, World Bank Country Manager for Tajikistan. "Recognizing the multiple factors influencing childhood nutrition and development outcomes, this grant takes an innovative approach by combining small-scale household gardening with a set of community-based actions in health and nutrition to address household food insecurity and ease the problem of child malnutrition. Ensuring adequate nutrition in the first two years of life provides a critical foundation not only for healthy physical and mental development, but also for future education and social outcomes. The previous Japan Social Development Fund Grant for a Pilot of Nutrition Investments in Severely Food Insecure Districts of Khatlon Province in the amount of US\$2.8 million aimed to address malnutrition among infants and young children of ten districts of Khatlon Oblast through the following activities: strengthening the capacity of primary health care workers to manage childhood nutrition problems and common illnesses, educating mothers on child nutrition, promoting breastfeeding, and providing micronutrient supplements to pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under five. The project was implemented in Pyanj, Qumsangir, Rumi, Jilikul, Vaksh, Yavan, Hamadoni, Farkhor, Temurmalk, and Baljuvon districts. As a result, 50,000 children under five and 85,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women received micronutrient supplements, and 40,000 breastfeeding women received vitamin A. Over 300 female community volunteers were trained to serve as resources on health and nutrition within their communities. The new grant expands these activities to the rest of the Khatlon Oblast, covering an additional 5,000 households in the remaining 14 districts, which include: Jomi, Bokhtar, Vose, Dangara, Qubodiyon, Kulyab, Muminabad, Nosiri Khisrav, Nurek, Sarband, Khovaling, Khuroson, Shaartuz, and Shurobod. Furthermore, the new grant will deepen investments to improve household consumption of nutritious foods through community-based gardening. The grant will support household gardening through the combined use of locally available gardening approaches, delivery of high quality seeds and fertilizers, and by training households to cultivate, preserve, and store food safely. Activities to improve the capacity of district health administrators and district health centers on nutrition monitoring will also be implemented under the new grant. The active portfolio of the World Bank in Tajikistan currently consists of 13 projects with a net commitment of US\$ 222 million. The largest share of the portfolio is in agriculture and rural development (40 percent), followed by water and sanitation (15 percent), human development (14 percent), energy (13 percent), the public sector (12 percent), and the private sector (6 percent). The World Bank
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