

# BRIDGING THE GAPS

Health and rights for key populations

## MOFA OF NETHERLANDS HELPS DRUG USERS IN SOCIAL READAPTATION.

«New harvest – new hopes!»



Hokim was one of the successful cotton farmers in Khatlon region of Tajikistan. He managed his own farm with a total area of 12 hectares of land. All members of the Hokim family worked on this farm. In 2004, Hokim handed over the management of the farm to his cousin, partly supervising the work and financing the farm. Leaving the management of his business Hokim, like many young people in those years, actively used marijuana. Without supervision, the farm fell into decay and got into numerous debts.

Constant conflicts with creditors and relatives, inability to cope with the current situation and financial difficulties pushed Hokim to use heroin. As a result, he has lost his health, reputation, had problems with the family and ongoing issues.

After more than ten years, in October 2015, from one of his friends, a drug user as himself, Hokim has learned that there were organizations that helped drug users.

Having got acquainted with the social workers of "AIDS Foundation East West - Tajikistan", Hokim received the necessary information and support. With the assistance of the organization, Hokim passed a free medical examination and was included in the program of opioid substitution treatment.

Having received a legal support and mentoring assistance from the AFEW-Tajikistan staff, Hokim began to believe in his strength again. Participating in the opioid substitute therapy program (OST), Hokim resumed his work on the farm. First, he restored his business ties, then after planning and budgeting, he began to plant the crop.

This winter, Khokim again sowed all of his land with the cotton and hopes for a good harvest.

Due to the support of social workers, positive changes started to take place in the life of Hokim, one of the several thousand Tajik drug users.

*«In my life, I have already gone through thick and thin. I experienced treason and loneliness. I realized the falsity of respect, when I was rich and humiliating attitude in times when I was poor. These are the lessons learned from my life with drugs. I am grateful to my family for understanding and support. Thanks to the social programs, drug users like me can feel like real members of the community,»* says Hokim.

In just three months of work, 40 Khatlon drug users received social and legal assistance from AFEW-Tajikistan employees who are implementing the project "Bridging the Gaps: Health and Rights for Key Populations 2.0".

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