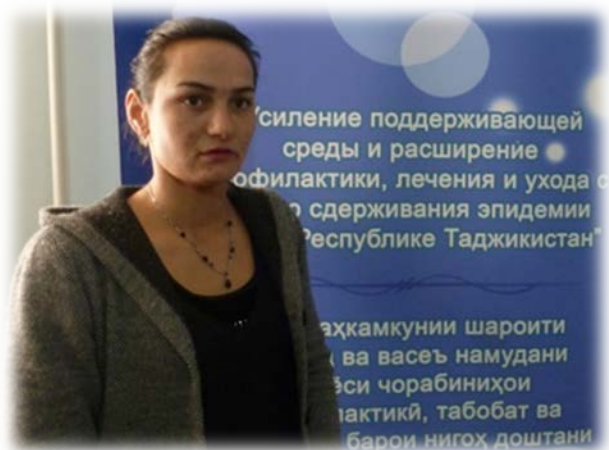


HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM HELPS PEOPLE TO OBTAIN FAITH TO THEMSELVES.



On photo: Gulrukhsor, the client of the project

Gulrukhsor.

In order not to give this story publicity, Gulrukhsor's mother decided furtively to marry her 15-years-old daughter to a widower. However, in the next day after the wedding, the chairperson of the mahalla committee, the chairperson of the district committee of women and family affairs, and the school principal came to the groom's house and took Gulrukhsor back to her parents' home, as she was still underage. She was forced to go to school, and her mother was fined and administrative punishment was imposed on her.

"I started to go to school again, but my behavior has not changed. I remember the first time when I was given to try heroin. Further, in order to buy heroin, I started stealing money from my mother. Each time I began to steal more and more. This lasted until my relatives tied me with a rope and started beating me so that I would stop using drugs. I promised them that I would no longer take heroin and would not use it again. For a week, I could not go out because of bruises on my face. Meanwhile, withdrawal from heroin did not give me a rest. I ran away from home ...," continues her story Gulrukhsor.

Running away from home, Gulrukhsor no longer returned there. She abandoned the school, began to rent an apartment in Bokhtar city. In the city she had a new friend who found heroin for her. In order to pay for the apartment and for drugs, Gulruskhor began to provide sex services.

"Sometimes I was ready to have a sex with men only for one cigarette ..." - says Gulrukhsor.

"One evening, in a state of withdrawal, I walked around the city, looking for clients to earn for a dose of heroin. Accidentally I met my friend with whom we often used to get heroin together. She told me about an organization that helps drug users. She also told me about the OST program and suggested that I go there. Taking advantage of her advice, the next day I went to that organization. I was met very warmly and cordially, they talked with me and listened to me very attentively. It was Shodi Khakimov, a social worker at AFEW-Tajikistan. After talking with him, I realized that methadone is my salvation. They helped me get through free examinations and pass all necessary tests for joining the OST program. Now my life began to improve. I am very glad that there are organizations that care about people like me. Thanks to AFEW-Tajikistan, I participate in OST program, completed cutting and sewing courses and received a diploma in vocational education for adults. I became a member of the Advisory Council of Representatives of Key Populations and participated in the training on the protection of the rights of the KPs. I realized that I still have everything ahead. I dream of learning, working and starting a family, but for this I still have a lot of work to do on myself," Gulrukhsor concludes.

Reference: In 2018, with the support of AFEW-Tajikistan, 1309 PWID in Khatlon received preventive and social-legal services. 9 PWID started participating OST, 8 new HIV cases were detected and 5 cases were re-confirmed. All 13 PWID receive ART and adhered to therapy.