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KAZAKHSTAN

SUCCESS STORY

USAID boosts sales of craft items in Central Asia

USAID helps preserve the craftsmanship of local artisans



Central Asian Crafts Fair in Astana opened by the U.S. Ambassador Mr. Kenneth J. Fairfax

"I am very grateful to USAID for the grant awarded, as the activities implemented under the grant provide for building a community and network among craftspeople and women-leaders across Central Asia. The Craft Fairs have provided for the preservation of traditional cultures and crafts"

Raisa Raimbekova, Director of the Raisa Fashion House LLP, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan.

As part of a USAID program to preserve artisan traditions, a local fashion company, Raisa House, organized two Central Asian craft fairs in Astana and Pavlodar, Kazakhstan, which were attended by more than 500 people. Central Asian artisans presented their unique craft items along with ethnographic collections from the best fashion designers. Craft fair exhibitors signed more than 30 trade contracts, and sales totaled about \$100,000.

Raisa Raimbekova, Director of the Raisa Fashion House LLP and a graduate of the State Department's summer 2012 Voluntary Visitors Program, received a grant from USAID to raise the quality of women's craftsmanship and increase craft item sales in Central Asia. She organized these two events as part of that program.

Mahfuza Salimova, an artisan from Bukhara, Uzbekistan sold products valued at more than \$6,700, and jewelers from Astana also sold more than \$6,500 in handmade goods. Altyn Khvan, a young artist from Pavlodar, sold more than \$10,000 in silk handmade scarves. Woodcarvers from Kokshetau, Kazakhstan sold \$3,300 in products and took orders for an additional \$2,000 in handcrafted wooden souvenirs. Suhrob Yusupov, a ceramist from Uzbekistan, sold over \$1,100 worth of pottery.

The Pavlodar craft fair hosted a master class on ethnic fashion design to improve artisans' knowledge and skills. In addition, Raisa organized a round table on the role of women's entrepreneurship in Central Asia. Female leaders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan agreed to share information on the development of international trade; arrange international, national and regional events to solve social problems that women face; and develop and implement projects in the legal, economic and gender sectors.