

Road to Results

ACHIEVING SUCCESS STEP BY STEP

First “Keeping Children Healthy” Campaign in Two Pilot Districts in Turkmenistan

September 2002

This summer ZdravPlus ran its first health education campaign in Turkmenistan. The campaign, entitled “Keeping Children Healthy,” took place in ZdravPlus’ two pilot districts, Farab and Serdar. The campaign was a first of its kind for both ZdravPlus and for the country, since using commercial marketing strategies to promote health goals is a new idea for Turkmenistan. The campaign combined traditional marketing strategies — video spots



Posters Made by Nurses in Farab

on diarrhea and breastfeeding broadcast repeatedly on national television, radio plays broadcast on national radio, informational materials on diarrhea and breastfeeding produced in Turkmen and Russian — with a Nurses Contest, which was run in cooperation with the local health authorities. About 125 participants were involved in the contest, including the nurses themselves, physicians, feldshers, and other House of Health staff who supported their activities. The goal of the contest was to increase the knowledge of target populations about the danger signs of diarrhea, home care for a child with diarrhea, and the importance of breastfeeding. Visiting health nurses talked to mothers, distributed ZdravPlus materials, and prepared two different posters. Their performance was judged on the basis of the quality of their posters, how many materials they distributed, and random tests of the knowledge of mothers in their catchment areas.

The campaign concluded with an awards ceremony held in early October in each pilot district. The most successful nurses were rewarded with a small cash prize for their personal use and educational equipment for their houses of health. The governors of Farab and Serdar Districts contributed additional prizes for the nurses. Exceptional posters and outstanding educational efforts were also rewarded.

The awards ceremonies were emotional events, as the contest was very popular among nurses, Houses of Health, and the mothers in the target population. At the Farab ceremony, the governor of Farab District made a speech thanking ZdravPlus and the nurses for their efforts, and the leader of a mothers support group from Farab, Ducanam Kortova, read a poem that she had written in honor of the “Keeping Children Healthy” campaign. One stanza from the poem reads: “I wish your face to be happy always. Live for a long time. It is an honor to work with you, your activity is an imperishable gift to our nation.” The Serdar ceremony was attended by both USAID Turkmenistan representative Bradford Camp and the deputy governor of Serdar District, and included celebratory dancing by the audience and a performance by a popular local musician.



Ducanam Kortova reading her poem



The USAID-funded ZdravPlus Program provides technical assistance and training to improve the health of Central Asian populations by improving health delivery systems

By the end of the campaign, thirty Houses of Health and a number of children's hospitals in Ashgabat had been provided with ZdravPlus



Dancing at the Serdar Closing Ceremony

printed materials. In the Farab and Serdar pilot sites, nurses had taught 7,400 women about hygiene, diarrheal diseases and breastfeeding, and over 13,000 brochures, 9,000 flyers, and 3,000 posters had been produced. The population's knowledge on diarrhea home care had significantly improved. According to the 2000 DHS survey, 62 percent of the population nationally felt that a child with diarrhea should receive much less food than normal. After the campaign, 52 percent of the population in Farab District felt that a child with diarrhea should receive more food than normal and 31 percent felt that the child should be fed normally. Only 11 percent felt that a child with diarrhea should receive less food than usual. In Serdar District, after the campaign, 76 percent of the population felt that a child with diarrhea should be fed normally or more than usual.

Both WHO and the Ministry of Health praised the campaign. Several different officials from the Ministry of Health, including Dr. Chari Nazarov, Director of the National Maternal and Child Health Scientific Institute, expressed their positive opinions of the "Keeping Children Healthy" campaign. Rejep Geldiyev, Chairman of the National Health Center, wrote a letter to ZdravPlus in gratitude for the campaign. On a more local level, the director of the hospital in Farab and the directors of the Lebap and Balkan Velayat Departments of Health personally praised the campaign and promised their support for the winter "Keeping Children Healthy" campaign on acute respiratory infections. At the recent review meeting for Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) in Turkmenistan, it was recommended that the Keeping Children Healthy campaign be used as a national model for the community involvement component of IMCI.

Because this was the first campaign of its kind in Turkmenistan, both ZdravPlus and the Ministry of Health had to develop methods of collaborating and implementing activities. ZdravPlus developed relationships with counterparts that will continue with the winter "Keeping Children Healthy" campaign and future ZdravPlus activities. Because of its widespread popularity, the campaign raised the profile of ZdravPlus in Turkmenistan and built support for all ZdravPlus activities in the country. It also gave ZdravPlus the opportunity to develop contacts with health NGOs in Ashgabat and the pilot districts that can be used for future health education partnerships.

For more information

Office in Kazakhstan

39 Begalina Street
Almaty, Kazakhstan 480100
Tel: (3272)915-775, 919-433
Fax: (3272)919-409
E-mail: office@zplus.kz

Office in Kyrgyzstan

1 Togolok Moldo Street
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan 720405
Tel: (996-312)663-816, 663-708
Fax: (996-312)661-024
E-mail: abt_bish@infotel.kg

Office in Uzbekistan

16 Bozbozor Street
Tashkent, Uzbekistan 700007
Tel: (998-71) 169-2212, 169-1491
Fax: (998-71) 169-1492
E-mail: abt@zdravplus.uz

Office in Tajikistan

155 Rudaki Street, #7-8
Dushanbe, Tajikistan 734017
Tel: (992-372) 245-369
Fax: (992-372) 245-369
E-mail: zdrav@tjinter.com

Office in Turkmenistan

43 Gyorogly Street, #4
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 744020
Tel: (993-12)344-242
Fax: (993-12)344-547
E-mail: natalyazp@online.tm