



PHOTO & CAPTION

Children Share the Joy of Reading



Photo: Kazakh Reading Assoc./Sapargul Mirseitova

Each year, children and adults throughout Kazakhstan are invited to celebrate a Reading Day in community libraries. Organized with support from USAID by the Kazakhstan Reading Association, the event demonstrates that reading is fun and encourages readers of all ages to visit libraries. Each year, the association carefully selects topics and recommends books to center the Reading Days around ideas such as citizenship, patriotism, and morale.

These children at a school in Turkestan city are participating in a national “Reading Day.” With support from USAID, Reading Days open library doors to communities across Kazakhstan and teach children and adults alike to share the joy of reading.

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One of these Reading Days, held in the Taraz City Library, invited 10 through 15-year-olds for a discussion titled “What is a good citizen?” To stimulate discussion, they read the “Book of Words” by a famous Kazakh author, Abai Kunanbaev. Parents and local school teachers also joined the event. The children gathered in small groups, read excerpts from the book, and discussed what it means to be a good citizen according to the author. After the discussion, the children read short essays they wrote on the topic and looked for answers to their questions. “It was great, we debated, argued. I wish there were more activities like this,” said one of the young participants.

“Reading Days help us to bring books back into our children’s lives,” says teacher Nina Golopyatova, a Reading Day organizer from the town of Kokshetau. With USAID support, the association has sponsored 40 reading days for 1,500 participants in each of Kazakhstan’s 14 provinces.