

## Together women can change the world around them

The flood that happened in July 2014 in Rasht destroyed Latofat's house and all her belongings. That time local administration gave promise to inhabitants of affected communities to allocate land plots in safe areas where they can start constructing new houses. Latofat, her husband and their three children, two boys and a daughter hoped about new house and new life as well.

With tears in eyes, Latofat Navruzova recalls her story: "In spite of multiplied requests to the local administration, our family couldn't get clear answer to our claim on land for almost two years. Every time when we applied to the local administration - we would face new bureaucratic barriers, like request for additional papers or procedures with no result. Therefore, our family had to live in a small administrative office with no conditions, especially for children. Very often my children, especially Noziya, my three-year old daughter would get sick".

That time local women of Furudgoh village (Nusratullo Makhsum Jamoat) in Rasht Valley, have set-up the Self-Help-Group (SHG) with support of NGO "Najibullo", in the frame of the "Empowering Communities with Better Livelihood and Social Protection" project. Latofat who had also to think on how to support her family economically, without hesitation became a member of artisans' group named 'Bahor' [*Spring*] that produces handcraft products.

Latofat, talented embroider and hard-worker very quickly gained respect and sympathy of her group peers. Still women knew that Latofat had no place to live. After thorough discussions and planning, the women members of the SHG decided to assist Latofat to tackle this issue. The group consulted with the community leaders and also addressed in



Latofat is surrounded by her peer group from the Self-Help-Group. Photo: UN Women/Aijamal Duishebaeva

written and in person to local administration of N. Makhsum Jamoat about Latofat's problem. Women Watch Group [*WWG is a group of women activists assisting SHGs in the course of the Project*] informed NGO 'Najibullo', UN Women's Responsible Party. "Najibulo" team, in its turn, approached the district authorities to facilitate solution of the matter. All efforts mobilized at various levels finally brought results – Latofat's family was granted with a plot of land for house construction. The family, neighbors and friends by *hashar* method [*unpaid voluntary community work*] helped Latofat and her family to construct a modest temporary building.

Now the family – Latofat, her husband and their children feel privileged to live in their own house. Though, the constructed building is a modest temporary house, Latofat is so happy for such a bright opportunity.

"This success story inspires every woman in our village – says Natalia Sharipova, head of Self-Help-Group, - now women are confident that they can reach high goals if they stand for each other!"

When UN Women visited Latofat in June, Latofat appeared to be an empowered woman, an active member of her self-help group and a skilful embroider that now teaches other women of her community.



*Happy and empowered Latofat and her daughter. Photo: UN Women/Aijamal Duishebaeva*

Tajikistan is prone to natural disasters, in particular to flooding, mudslides, rock falls, avalanches and earthquakes. On annual average, 150 small- and medium-scale disasters occur country-wide, affecting at least 10,000 people per year. Extraordinary heavy floods occurred in spring 2014 and spring/summer 2015. In April and May 2015, floods and landslides occurring in several districts of the country directly concerned more than 300,000 individuals.

UN Women, in the frame of Joint UN Human Security Trust Fund Programme “Empowering Communities with Better Livelihood and Social Protection”, supports about 506 women who are members of 60 Self-Help-Groups in N. Makhsum and Hoit Jamoats in Rasht district. The Project helps women to support economically their families and empowers them to claim and protect their rights.



*Latofat Navruzova, member of the SHG with her family near their new house.*