



## THE PLAYROOM OF HOPE

### Making a difference for little TB patients

In Tajikistan, Project HOPE opens a dedicated space where hospitalized children engage in playtime and guided activities to overcome long months of treatment and separation from families.



With the support of generous individual donations, Project HOPE opened the playroom in Tajikistan's National Center of Lung Diseases, Tuberculosis and Thoracic Surgery in Machiton near the country's capital. The ludic space makes the lives of the little TB patients a little bit brighter and contributes to their accelerated healing and improved wellbeing. The playroom is a warm and cheerful space equipped with toys, games, and accessories for children of all ages.



We are pleased to present you Nigora Karimova\*. It is hard to believe that this adorable 8-year-old with beautiful eyes and a cute ponytail is a TB patient. Little Nigora has been hospitalized at Tajikistan's National Center of Lung Diseases, Tuberculosis and Thoracic Surgery in Machiton near the country's capital since the summer 2017 and after many long months of treatment, finally, the doctors are hopeful that this youngster can be discharged with a clean bill of health in the next couple of months.

In Tajikistan, every year as many as 600 children become ill with TB, this infectious but curable disease. To receive treatment, the majority of these children have to be hospitalized and, as a result, separated from their families for months at a time. For these little patients, a hospital stay is a very long, lonely, and scary experience.

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\* Name has been changed to protect identity.

For Nigora, separation from her parents and her 2-year old brother has been particularly difficult. Her family lives in Tajikistan's remote and mountainous region of Rasht Valley. The only road connecting the area where her family lives with the capital city and the TB Center can become treacherous or even impassible in winter months, cutting the region off from the rest of the region. Even in good weather, taxis and private cars -- the only available mode of transport -- can take up to six hours and a large chunk of the family's monthly income for travel to the hospital. As a result, Nigora's mother and father can visit their little girl at the hospital only very rarely. Many of the remaining 16 children at the hospital face a similar situation.

With the support of the new playing and activity space, Nigora and other little patients at the TB Center now can forget for a little while about their illness, loneliness, and separation from family.

Project HOPE has worked in Tajikistan since 1996, providing humanitarian and technical assistance for over 20 years during a difficult period for the country through the delivery of crucial medications and medical supplies valued at over USD 300 million. In 2001, Project HOPE became the first partner organization supporting the efforts of the Republic of Tajikistan Ministry of Health in the implementation of interventions to halt the spread of TB. For nearly two decades, Project HOPE, in partnership with Tajikistan's National TB Control Program; USAID; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; civil society organizations; local government authorities; and communities has been implementing targeted and effective TB control interventions to improve access to quality TB detection treatment, and care for all. These efforts have brought cure and support to 17,000 patients representing over 80% of all TB cases registered during this time period in Tajikistan.

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