
Advocacy case studies

HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CENTRAL ASIA

COUNTRY:	Central Asia
THEMES:	Children and education; human rights, land and property; stigma and discrimination
ADVOCACY APPROACHES:	Building relationships; educating community members; government officials: lobbying; government officials: meeting with; legal mechanisms

In parts of Central Asia, young people who have been raised in children's homes can often find it difficult to find somewhere to live when they reach adulthood. This is because the state only provides financial support to minors, expecting them to fend for themselves when they reach the age of 16 or 17. The result is that many young people are being left homeless and at risk. They often end up living on the streets, suffering ill treatment and being vulnerable to trafficking.

One of Tearfund's partners was so concerned about this situation that, with others, they decided to work to change society's attitudes towards orphans and others living in children's homes. They wanted people to understand that children find themselves in this situation through no fault of their own.

The partner also worked alongside sympathetic officials to lobby the government to introduce changes to legislation relating to housing for young people. Although a law existed that made provision for them when they left a children's home, it was not being implemented. The partner attended many meetings with government officials, and eventually their perseverance paid off, with much-needed changes being introduced to the law. This meant young people were not only able to exercise their right to secure housing after leaving children's homes more effectively, but also to access vital services that require a registered address, such as health care and education, and apply for jobs. The government also agreed to provide state-owned land in the capital city to build accommodation to house some of the young people most at risk.

The government was so impressed with this work that it gave an award to the leader of the partner organisation, recognising his activism and defence of human rights.