Entrepreneur from Tashkent Shows Flexibility and Farsightedness

Umida Tadjieva is a businesswoman through and through. After completing her degree as a paediatrician she attained a Master's degree in health management and in 2014 founded a company that now makes it possible for patients in Uzbekistan to have access to high-quality medical treatment in Germany. The company is also active on the international health market and trains staff from medical and other fields. Yet, as an entrepreneur she doesn't only export patients and staff, she also ensures that medical expertise flows back into Uzbekistan. The Manager Training Programme helped support her in doing this.

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Umida Tadjieva founded Medica GmbH in August 2014, and has continuously developed the company since then. Seven years later the company employs a dozen experts, who are dedicated to the goal of making it possible for Uzbek citizens to get medical treatment that is unavailable in their country. As a native of Tashkent, she also helps to generate possibilities in her own country: Consulting Uzbek health institutions and providing qualified training abroad for Uzbek doctors have become further core activities.

Germany is often used as a standard in Uzbekistan. "We have been cooperating with German companies from the start", explains Tadjieva. "I know the German healthcare system well. I know how the German hospitals that we send our patients, doctors and medical students to operate. In Tashkent we regularly present German hospitals and clinics at the international healthcare exhibition TIHE." The company also organises trips for Uzbek entrepreneurs from the healthcare sector to the international medicine trade fair MEDICA in Düsseldorf.

I have to go there!

Once the entrepreneur starts talking about the Manager Training Programme (MP), her eyes light up: "In the spring of

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2017 the Uzbek Chamber of Industry and Commerce published a competition for participation in the MP. When I read that I knew: I have to go there! The programme was an opportunity for me. And a fantastic chance to share knowledge with internationally renowned experts in the fields of public health and health management." At the RWTH Aachen training site Tadjieva met MP participants in the economy and health sectors from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kirgizstan, Mongolia, India and Mexico. "We learned a lot", remembers Tadjieva: "How to manage a company in accordance with European norms, or transact or lower expenses intelligently. We networked with German partners and with colleagues from our region of the world."

A company in demand internationally

The manager returned to Tashkent with a number of concrete ideas and new expertise, rebranded her company and changed the employment procedures for new staff. In the summer of 2019 Medica won a bid for a matchmaking together with a German business partner, which was part of an export support programme headed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy and the Federal Office of Economics and Export Control. Yet before the project could be realised, the plans were shut down by the covid pandemic. „We were to have completed the project in September 2020 with in-person negotiations, and tours of Uzbek hospitals, medical production site, etc.", so Tadjieva. Instead, 80 bilateral talks with twelve German and over 60 Uzbek firms were held online. "They included both companies with more than 20 years of experience and who are among the biggest importers of medical products and technology, large hospitals and also young businesses who reacted with great flexibility to a changing health care market, especially during the pandemic", remembers Tadjieva. "The meetings were both productive and fruitful. I hope that the companies will further expand their relationships with the German partners."

Umida Tadjieva (2nd from left) regularly attends the Tashkent health care trade fair TIHE, here in 2018 with a German delegation and representatives of the health care economy in Uzbekistan.

Covid also demands more flexibility from the company

Because the company relied on international flights, the covid pandemic affected Medica as well. "Like the rest of the country, we were not prepared when the pandemic suddenly brought everything to a halt in early March 2020." But Tadjieva knew what needed to be done: "Even during the complete lockdown we flew out emergency cases and patients with complex courses of disease for treatment. At the same time, we re-focused on the acute lack of doctors in Uzbekistan and acted as doctors from April to mid-October 2020. In addition, we contributed to various bids for the delivery of medical equipment. We closed the company office, but we maintained the cooperation with international doctors and experts for collaboration, especially as concerned the pandemic."

Umida Tadjieva has now completely resumed normal business operations and looks back at the previous seven years with pride: A small company with five employees has now become Medica GmbH – with a strong team of twelve and five times the revenues. "We are continuing to develop and enter new markets, in our country as well. We are also

about to realise two large projects. The company website treatment.uz is currently being revamped.” Then it is also to be in German in addition to Uzbek, Russian and English: „Most of our strategic partners are in Germany”, explains Tadjieva. Resting on her laurels is not an option for this Uzbek businesswoman: “I am constantly optimising something in the company. That’s what the market demands as well. Our great hope is medical consumer goods.” Then Medica would have a new pillar of medical products, with medical services being the other.

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