

Youth and Peacebuilding Project

Youth centres:

UNICEF is working with two implementing NGOs, *Development Cooperation in Central Asia (DCCA)* and *Young Citizens' Development (YCD)*, and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and local government at district and sub-district levels. A framework for establishing the Youth Centers (YC) was developed in February, establishing the implementing NGOs as umbrella organizations with smaller youth NGOs/initiative groups/youth councils as the facilitators of the centres. The framework also defines the local government's role in the project as the providers of appropriate locations for the centres to ensure local ownership and sustainability.



Computer skills training at Bazarkorgon Youth Centre, Jalal-Abad.

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Based on the framework, 17 youth centres have been established in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces. The function of the centers are twofold as the different activities and training have been able to bring different ethnic communities together in some of the hot spots of the June 2010 events, as well as provide the young people with skills to better their life situation. Currently around 2,000 young people participate in activities on a regularly basis and around 1,200 young people have been trained on basic computer and English language skills. A variety of knowledge and skills events has been conducted in the centres, as well as advocacy and discussion platforms on urgent issues such as unemployment, inclusion, volunteerism, peace building, conflict prevention and civic participation.



Chess tournament in Nookat Youth Centre, Jalal-Abad.

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The 32 youth centre facilitators (Osh and Jalalabad provinces) have been identified and selected among the young people that have a positive image of young community leaders. These facilitators have been trained together with 32 computer and English trainers on management of the centres and on administrative issues. The youth centre facilitators and teachers have proved to be highly committed and well-capable of contributing to reconciliation and cohesion building particularly in the

communities which still experience a high level of division and distrust. UNICEF and partners have been investing considerably into capacity development of these people through providing trainings on diversity management and conflict prevention, mediation and negotiation. The youth centre facilitators are key in ensuring sustainability of the youth centres and as a first step they have been trained on basics of fund-raising, resource mobilization and project development as well as on some concepts of community development.

Capacity building of the Ministry of Youth Affairs:

UNICEF has been working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth both at the local and national level, ensuring coordination between the provinces and capacity building of local staff. In September a Diversity Management and Conflict Prevention training was conducted for partners in the Ministry of Youth and the civil society institutions involved in youth development (overall 30 people). The Ministry was represented by seven



Roundtable discussions at Asancheck Youth Centre with Mr. Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director

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representatives from the central office in Bishkek and seven representatives from the leading territorial departments in the country provinces – all responsible for policy development and implementation. The participants also included seven young activists from the local youth councils and civil society organization, newly established throughout the country and closely linked to the Ministry of Youth. Their participation was firstly to bring up the perspectives and needs of youth to the policy makers at different levels and secondly to play a role of “watchdog” to hold the government accountable. What distinct this training from other conflict prevention knowledge exercises was that it provided awareness about a variety of diversity aspects and tools to cope and manage both in daily life and at the policy making level.



Young reporters interviewing a Youth Centre facilitator during the opening of Nookat Youth Centre, Jalal-Abad.

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In August, two round table discussions were conducted with participants from all 16 youth centres. The aim of the discussions was to make recommendations/comments to the newly drafted youth policy at a youth forum in Bishkek hosted by the MoY with support from the UN Youth Theme Group. Recommendations from all provinces were presented to key stakeholders at a following roundtable.

Young people and the media:

As part of the media component of the project, 33 young people (19 female and 14 male) that were trained on basic journalism skills continue to produce news material to local press. In the reporting period over 90 news articles were published or aired in Osh and Jalal-Abad. Three short news stories were aired on EL TV (Public TV), produced by young people after visits to villages in Osh where the youth centres have been established. EL TV has currently introduced a new TV slot called ‘Interesting news’ especially for news reports made by young people.

Assessing the needs of the youth:

A KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice) study took place in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces in April and the overall purpose of the research was to assess the opinions, views and concerns of youth in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces. Some of the key findings showed a decline in interaction between different ethnic groups in the last two year and that youth have little confidence in their ability to acquire capital, credentials and connections which they would need to succeed in the careers they want. The study makes recommendations for specific activities and it can therefore be used as a helpful guide for the Government and organizations working in the areas of youth and peacebuilding.

Youth Peace Camps:

As part of a project designed to reduce tension before the elections in October, Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI) conducted the first of two youth peace camps with the support of UNICEF. The first camp took place in Osh, with 45 youth participants (32 Kyrgyz and 13 Uzbek) from Osh and Jalalabad provinces. The participants were from 14-28 years old with almost equal gender representation. The participants were predominantly selected among youth activists in the communities around the youth centres.



Youth Centre facilitators during the opening of Kurshab Youth Centre, Osh.

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The camp was designed and conducted as a comprehensive capacity development exercise by FTI. The participants were brought through a three-day Peace and Conflict Analysis (PCA) consultation workshops. They were equipped with basic concepts and skills of conflict analysis which was immediately applied to the context of their locations. The youth identified and prioritized key tensions that may lead to open conflict and made in-depth analysis into the root causes of the issues. They were guided to examine key capacities and obstacles for peace in their communities when developing response measures. The agenda of the workshop was substantially focusing on the issues related to electoral process. This three-day exercise was followed with another three of workshop on fund-raising skills. With the conflict prevention lens and the findings from the PCA findings in mind the participants learnt and practiced fund-raising skills. As a result participants submitted over 10 project proposals to FTI. These projects include initiatives on addressing potential electoral conflicts and existing tensions among youth of different ethnicity.