

PEACE CORPS  ANNIVERSARY  
1961-2011

# PEACE CORPS IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



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ANNUAL REPORT 2011

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

2011 marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. To mark the occasion we threw a party for some 800 host family members, counterparts, and partner organizations at the Philharmonia in Bishkek at the swearing-in of the 19th group of Volunteers to arrive in country. In addition, the Volunteers organized a photo exhibition that toured Naryn, Talas, Issyk Kul, and Chui, spreading the message about the work that our Volunteers do. You will find those photos on the cover and throughout this report.

The Peace Corps is in the Kyrgyz Republic at the invitation of the Kyrgyz government. Over 900 Volunteers have served here since the office opened in 1993. The Volunteers teach side by side with local teachers to improve English language education, promote healthy communities, help build strong local community organizations and businesses, and assist local government agencies.

Volunteers spend 27 months living side by side with local people in cities, towns and villages. They range in age from 21 to 76 years old. Some are recent university graduates and others are mid-career professionals or pensioners.

Volunteers share their skills and knowledge with their counterparts and host families and help pave the way for those who want to build better lives. They also help build a better understanding between the people of the United States and the people of the Kyrgyz Republic through their presence here and the e-mails and phone calls they make to friends and family back home.

All of us associated with Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic, both staff and Volunteers, are proud to be here and to have an opportunity to share in the success of this beautiful country.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seth G. Fearey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Seth G. Fearey  
Country Director

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### To Be a Volunteer

- Volunteers agree to serve for 27 months, which includes an average of three months of in-country training and 24 months of Volunteer service.
- Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to community service, leadership experience, and a willingness to learn a new language.
- Volunteers receive a living allowance that covers housing, food, and incidentals, enabling them to live in a manner similar to people in their local communities.
- Volunteers must successfully complete a rigorous training program that includes learning technical skills, the local culture, and the language that is most appropriate for their site.

## OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL PEACE CORPS

The Peace Corps is an independent U.S. Government agency that provides Volunteers to countries requesting assistance around the world. The agency traces its roots and mission to 1960, when Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. Thus, in 1961, President John F. Kennedy officially established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship, and that mission has not changed. Since 1961, over 200,000 Volunteers have served in 139 countries. Today the U.S. Peace Corps is working in 76 countries around the world with more than 9,095 Volunteers, the largest numbers of countries served and Volunteers serving in 30 years. Peace Corps Volunteers around the world are committed to grassroots development by working and living hand-in-hand with local people of countries served in order to achieve the agency's three goals. Those goals are as relevant today as they were 50 years ago:

- Helping people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained men and women.
- Helping to promote a better understanding of American people on the part of the peoples served.
- Helping to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of American people.

Volunteers around the world share their time and talents by serving for a two-year commitment to work as teachers, business advisors, youth development specialists, information and technology consultants, health and HIV/AIDS educators and agriculture and environment workers. These Volunteers are women and men, young and old, married and single, and come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. They are committed to learning from their host families and partners and integrating themselves into the culture of the country where they serve as well as participating in community designed development and service projects. All Volunteers serve at the invitation of the host country government and work in partnership with a host agency. Funding for the Peace Corps programs around the world is allocated by the United States Congress and comes from the taxes paid by individual American citizens.

## Peace Corps Approach to Development

The word “development” is used in so many ways that it has come to mean different things to different people. Some speak of housing developments or the development of infrastructure, such as roads and bridges. Others speak of the economic development of countries. The Peace Corps uses the term “development” in human, people-to-people terms: helping people develop the ability to improve their own lives. By working within a human capacity-building framework, Volunteers focus on developing people, not things. The Peace Corps is not a grant-making organization; our contribution is the energy, skills, and enthusiasm of our Volunteers, young and old. Our approach focuses on empowering local people to be their own decision-makers and develop the skills they need to carry out those decisions and improve their lives. The legacy of the Volunteers is the skills they transfer and the memories of living and working with people of other cultures.



## Volunteers in the Kyrgyz Republic

### Officially opened on:

November 5, 1993

### Volunteers:

87

### Gender:

53% female, 48% male

### Marital status:

81% single, 14% married

### Minorities:

23% of Volunteers

### Average age:

25

### Volunteers over 50:

3.5% of Volunteers

## Key Government Partners

Ministry of Education and Science

Ministry of Youth, Labor, and Employment

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Emergency Situations

## THE PEACE CORPS IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

It has been 18 years since the United States Peace Corps opened in the Kyrgyz Republic in 1993 with an official country agreement signed between the governments of the Kyrgyz Republic and the United States of America. In that time, more than 900 Peace Corps Volunteers have helped over 100,000 people learn English, develop management and leadership skills, engage in environmental protection and build healthy lifestyles. The government to government agreement establishes the principal worksites of Volunteers as secondary schools, higher academic institutions, municipal and non-governmental health and environmental agencies and small and medium-size business organizations. The many generations of Volunteers that have served the country have also carried out successful projects in teacher training and HIV/AIDS prevention. These Volunteers helped strengthen community participation by teaching teachers advanced teaching methods and promoting critical thinking, leadership, project planning and implementation, gender education, computers and Internet technology. Volunteers work closely with local counterparts; they do not replace members of the staff.

Peace Corps in the Kyrgyz Republic has three main programs:

- Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)
- Sustainable Organizational and Community Development (SOCD)
- Health Education (HE)

An important theme that underlies many of our programs is a focus on developing youth. Most Volunteers work in secondary schools, participate in summer and winter camps, and teach young people about health, including how to prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS.

All Volunteers receive technical training in their program. They learn a language, Kyrgyz or Russian according to where they will be posted, and study Kyrgyz culture.

Peace Corps Volunteers presently work in 41 villages, 5 rayon centers, and 5 major cities in four oblasts: Talas, Chui, Issyk-Kul and Naryn. The program particularly seeks sites in small or economically disadvantaged areas. By working both in rural and urban communities, the Peace Corps is able to maximize its potential in the country with a limited amount of human and financial resources.



Towns and villages where Peace Corps Volunteers have served

### Investment

Through its operations, Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic directly invests about \$1.4 million per year in the local economy. The majority of these funds are spent on staff compensation and operations. Almost a quarter of the funds goes to Volunteers to pay for housing, food, utilities, and transportation. Other funds go to hotels and transportation services for training events and meetings.

The staff of 34 host country nationals includes trainers, program managers, accountants, doctors, facilities operations, an information systems specialist, guards, drivers, and Volunteer support personnel. Staff members receive continuing training from the Peace Corps, often including travel to other countries. The Peace Corps also provides training in educational techniques for local language and cultural trainers, and in project design and management for counterparts.

In addition, Peace Corps Volunteers help their communities and partner organizations apply for grants for school renovations, libraries, computer technology, summer camps, and more. In 2011 there were 72 such grants, bringing an additional \$93,870 into the local economy.



## CORE PROGRAMS

### English Language Education



Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic experienced difficult economic conditions and a lack of resources to support the transition to a market economy. Because English language skills can provide opportunities to advance careers, and access the information and technology needed to stay up-to-date with developments in all fields, the Ministry of Education and Science has determined that English must play an important role in schools. Therefore, the Ministry has invited the Peace Corps to help build the capacity and skills of local English teachers in rural areas.

TEFL Volunteers work toward four goals:

- **Resource Development.** Help counterparts and students acquire, adapt, or develop, communicative English language teaching resources to support and implement the national curriculum.
- **Instruction.** Help students improve their English language and critical thinking skills through formal and informal interactions with Peace Corps Volunteers.
- **Capacity Building.** Train English language teachers in communicative teaching methods to encourage student-centered participatory learning and critical thinking.
- **Community Development.** Work with community members to identify local needs and develop projects to address them.

These goals were agreed on in an official Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic and the United States Peace Corps that was renewed and signed in November 2011.

The TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) Program develops the English language skills of students and teachers. Peace Corps Volunteers work as team teachers and teacher trainers, bringing resources and methodologies to the local education system and fostering teacher-to-teacher links to promote the exchange of information on the best teaching methods. Since inception in 1993, more than 530 TEFL Volunteers have served as teachers at 189 secondary schools and 15 regional universities.

Many TEFL Volunteers provide assistance to their schools and communities in establishing or expanding English teaching resource centers, contributing to curriculum development, and production of innovative teaching materials. During the school

breaks in summer and winter, TEFL Volunteers help organize and lead language and sports camps for Kyrgyz youth. When school is in session, they lead English clubs, assist with in-service teacher training, sponsor student newspapers and direct drama performances. They also organize essay and debate contests as well as share information on health topics, information technology, gender issues and other subjects through their English lessons and extra-curricular activities with their students.



**TEFL Program Accomplishments**

- Sixty TEFL Volunteers team-taught English to approximately 2,500 students at 60 secondary schools and seven TEFL University Volunteers team-taught 600 students at universities through the creation of an interactive learning environment and use of contemporary methods and materials.
- Two Teacher-Trainer PCVs served as co-trainers in a four-week English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for University Teachers Project with the International Summer Institute (ISI) for more than 50 university professors from the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. PCVs worked on improving participants' English language skills and methodology for ESP and EAP subjects.
- A Teacher-Trainer PCV and his counterpart planned and carried out the 2011 Annual National FORUM Conference with a focus on "Using Technology to Enhance Education" for more than 100 English teachers throughout the country on March 23, 2011.
- Many Volunteers actively participated in teacher training by planning and conducting methodological seminars promoting the use of the communicative approach to foreign language instruction in Naryn, Talas, Issyk-Kul and Chui regions.
- Four Volunteers supported their sites in an effort to improve English language education by establishing teacher development resource centers equipped with modern resources and technology.
- Schools and universities enriched their libraries by getting books from external sources such as the Darien Book Aid Plan, Oxford University Press and the Rotary Club. An English Club Resource Guide for beginner-advanced clubs of all ages, a student exam-prep (Olympiad) workbook, Barskoon English Curriculum Book, the "115 Free English Books" resource CD, and a teacher-training manual in English, Kyrgyz, and Russian were developed by PCVs and are being utilized in teaching.
- Volunteers' students and counterparts were successfully enrolled in international education exchange programs at internationally recognized schools and universities abroad. For example, twenty-seven secondary school students have successfully passed the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> rounds of the FLEX Test, and two university students received UGRAD scholarships to study in US universities. Four secondary school and two university English teachers received TEA (six-week) and JFDP (six-month) scholarships to visit US schools and universities as exchange scholars.

**Community Development Projects**

- Volunteers organized life-skills-building camps throughout the country for over 500 children to promote youth leadership, volunteerism, HIV/AIDS education and prevention, gender issues, problem-solving and decision-making skills. They co-facilitated ACCESS, Youth Development camps, a TAG (Tech Age Girls) conference, the FLEX Pre-Departure Orientation, a Youth Theater for Peace Sustainability Workshop, and the "Paint on Your Face" Festival.
- More than 200 secondary school students were exposed to community awareness issues during summer schools. Environmental campaigns were implemented at many schools in 2011.

## Sustainable Organizational & Community Development (SOCD)



Since independence, more than 8,000 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have sprung up in the Kyrgyz Republic to address social problems and community needs. Because they represent a significant force and may themselves lack sufficient resources, the Ministry of Youth, Labor, and Employment has asked the Peace Corps to place Volunteers in selected institutions as business advisors and organization developers.

Today SOCD Volunteers work with NGOs, municipal government organizations and businesses. They promote social and economic development at the grassroots level.

SOCD program goals are to:

- increase the capacity of individual community members and service providers,
- assist local institutions in achieving organizational sustainability, and
- foster cross-sector cooperation between NGOs, government entities and private enterprises.

The program strengthens cooperation between local community members and organizations, and enables them to more effectively assess, plan and implement community, social and economic development projects that will improve their quality of life.

Volunteers contribute in three areas:

- **Individual Professional Development.** Develop and strengthen the professional skills of counterparts in organizations, communities and municipal agencies to increase their future opportunities.
- **Organizational Development.** Improve the quality of the services community-based organizations provide by strengthening their organizational structures and planning abilities.
- **Community Development.** Work with community-based organizations, local businesses and governmental organizations to conduct community assessments. Develop and implement projects that promote community engagement and achieve locally identified goals.

**SOCD Accomplishments**

- Two Volunteers and their counterparts developed marketing plans for their organizations.
- Volunteers created information, advertising booklets and brochures to introduce activities for potential clients, donors and sponsors of their organizations.
- Four Volunteers developed or updated websites for their organizations and trained local staff how to maintain them. They also trained them on how to create and implement an electronic inventory system.
- Many Volunteers trained their staff and community members on grant writing and project design.
- 3 Volunteers assisted in founding 3 NGOs on women's support, tourism development and handicraft business.
- 6 Volunteers conducted business trainings for local small business organizations on marketing, business planning, management, organizational development, pricing, and basic accounting.
- 2 local handicraft organizations participated in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington DC and presented Kyrgyz handicrafts.
- With the help of Volunteers, a few young professionals applied for and received scholarships for studying abroad and enhancing their professional development.
- Many Volunteers organized life skills workshops, professional trainings, critical thinking clubs, and Business English clubs for more than 600 young people in the Kyrgyz Republic.

## Health Education (HE)



The Ministry of Health (MOH) seeks to create a sustainable public healthcare system while simultaneously strengthening and integrating priority programs such as tuberculosis prevention, reproductive health, child health and wellness, prevention of cardio-vascular diseases and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. After launching its national health reform program, the MOH invited the Peace Corps to participate in health education efforts at the village level to build the training capacity of local leaders.

The Peace Corps program has three main goals:

- **Health Promotion.** Provide adults, youth, and children with greater access to quality preventive health information that promotes positive health practices.
- **Building Capacity.** Help service providers increase their capacity to promote healthy practices that respond to the changing health and social needs of Kyrgyzstan.
- **Healthy Lifestyles.** Encourage communities to actively engage in activities that promote healthy lifestyles and practices.



The first group of Health Volunteers began work in 2007. They work with a wide variety of organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic. Some Volunteers work at the regional or grassroots level in health promotion units in towns or villages across the country. Others work in health institutions, local health-promotion schools, NGOs or other health-focused community-based organizations.

Volunteers work with their counterparts to increase the awareness and understanding of healthy lifestyles and practices among the people of the Kyrgyz Republic. They do this by building the professional capacity of trained health professionals and educators, by improving access to health information and community awareness programs, and by establishing preventive health practices. In addition, the project supports government and non-government initiatives which promote healthy lifestyles and educates communities on issues of health that affect them.

All Volunteers have the opportunity to participate in a Peace Corps initiative to teach life skills to teachers, students and youth. They organize camps for children and they work at schools, youth service center and community groups to provide training and to build awareness of health issues such as dental hygiene, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis.



**HE Accomplishments**

- Two Health Volunteers developed informational tools on health promotion and on trauma assessment. They are working with local health professionals to develop new trauma prevention strategies.
- Two Volunteers built a database of disabled children in the Talas oblast. The database is being used for planning social benefits programs. Recently, the database was used to help plan a “Warm and Dry” campaign to distribute warm clothes and blankets to disabled children in Talas oblast.
- One Volunteer is developing a health services referral map for her entire village population. She is worried that the villagers are going to pharmacies and getting drugs without any medical examination. This practice can lead to inappropriate treatment and medical complications. She is raising awareness that drugs are to be taken only after medical examination by staff in Primary Health Care facilities.
- Health Volunteers taught health classes on a broad variety of health topics including hygiene, hand washing, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, infectious diseases, smoking, alcohol and depression. More than 800 children, youth and adults participated in the classes.
- Two Volunteers and a local partner hosted a two-day Save Your Teeth seminar for ten motivated secondary school students. During the seminar they discussed peer education concepts and what it means to be a volunteer and mentor for others. They learned dental health and proper tooth-brushing techniques and shared it with others. As a result of this peer teaching, 275 other students learned dental care skills.

## CROSS CUTTING PROGRAMS

### HIV/AIDS Prevention



In 2007, Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic began implementing the PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) HIV/AIDS prevention program to prevent new HIV infections and support care and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS. Since then, funding has increased, from \$20,000 to \$125,000. These funds support Volunteers' and their counterparts' joint efforts to raise awareness and combat major misconceptions about HIV/AIDS.

Using PEPFAR resources, the Peace Corps/Kyrgyz Republic program aims to contribute to the Kyrgyz National Strategic Program on HIV/AIDS by empowering communities to implement HIV education programs focused especially on youth and educators in small towns and villages throughout Kyrgyz Republic.

PEPFAR activities include:

- Conducting trainings for Volunteers and their local partners (students, parents, teachers, health and social workers) on HIV and drug use prevention, behavior change, gender aspects of HIV, combating stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV and affected by HIV.
- Organizing community-wide events, such as HIV awareness concerts, World AIDS Day programs, planting trees in memory of those who died of AIDS, organizing HIV-themed marathons, and creating murals on buildings.
- Organizing local HIV training centers run by host country national service providers who have gone through HIV training. Besides literature on HIV, these centers offer regular training to students and teachers on topics related to HIV and healthy lifestyles.
- Creating a team of youth peer educators and peer educator clubs to discuss HIV and healthy lifestyles.
- Organizing drama performances for youth.
- Setting up information tents and organizing mobile consultation points.
- Holding life skills based HIV-related summer camps.



**HIV/AIDS Accomplishments**

- Forty-two Peace Corps Volunteers were involved in HIV/AIDS activities in 2011. They reached 2,300 youth and adults with HIV-education and prevention activities, trained 120 peer-educators and 130 service providers (social workers and school teachers).
- VAST (Volunteer Activities Support and Training) grant program supported 24 community projects totaling \$38,000:
  - 8 youth camps focused on HIV, life skills, leadership and empowerment of youth;
  - 6 peer education trainings;
  - 3 trainings/seminars for service providers (social workers, village health committee members, school teachers);
  - 3 parent-teen seminars of HIV and reproductive health;
  - 4 HIV and life-skills educational seminars for youth.

Two examples of activities are:

- Talas PCVs organized a youth camp where they focused specifically on using radio technology and graphic design to promote training of HIV/AIDS awareness, drug prevention, and daily nutrition. Students had 3 projects to complete in groups by the end of the camp: 1. Design and perform in a play telling the story of someone with AIDS, changing behavior to healthy lifestyle, and/or nutrition; 2. Design a poster advocating HIV/AIDS prevention, tolerance and diversity, and/or nutrition; and 3. Design and create a radio commercial on these topics.
- PCVs organized 3 workshops to help mothers and fathers learn how to improve communications with their teenage children. Volunteers and their local partners conducted simultaneous separate seminars to equip young women and their mothers and young men and their fathers with the knowledge to make healthy, responsible decisions about issues of sexual health, preventing HIV/AIDS, reducing HIV stigma, choosing a life-partner, the practice of bride kidnapping, maintaining healthy relationships, and future planning. Teaching life skills (goal setting, decision-making), discussing self esteem, gender roles, and how they impact young people was an essential component of these training programs.

## Community Development



The **Small Project Assistance (SPA)** program provides support for small-scale community grants and targeted skills training for men, women, boys, and girls in grassroots organizations and communities around the world. The program is a partnership between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Peace Corps, originally established in 1983.

The SPA program increases the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots level, sustainable, development. The program works toward this objective through grants and field assistance. Grants provide small sums of capital for community-initiated, sustainable, projects through a competitive process designed to select the most feasible and sustainable projects. To enhance the sustainability of these small projects, skills training can be provided to host country and community counterparts through targeted training workshops. In 2011, with the aid of almost \$36,300 in SPA funds, Volunteers and their counterparts helped community organizations implement 25 projects that improve facilities, repair unsanitary conditions, improve health, address environmental issues, promote the safety of the children, and enhance the training capabilities of hospitals, kindergartens and secondary schools. Community members helped build two outhouses, one for a school and one for an elder house, and three playgrounds. In addition, a hospital conference room and a school for children with disabilities were renovated. More than 50 English language resource centers have been developed through SPA funds over the last 5 years. Examples of outstanding projects accomplished in 2011 are:



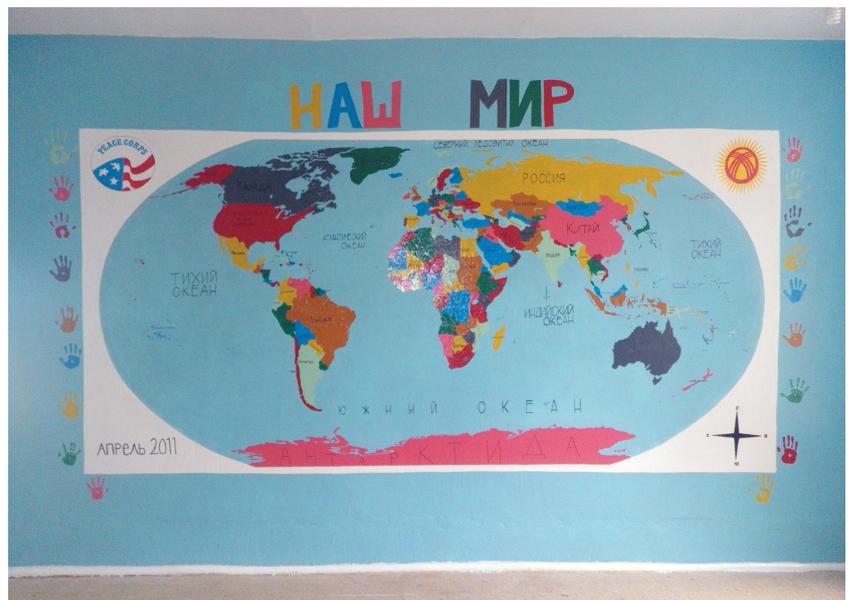
- Young women's future leadership training series
- English resource books, textbook purchases in schools and universities
- World Map Project in Karakol
- Lingua Training Center establishment, audio-visual equipment purchase and series of trainings at Talas State University
- Tourism Network Capacity Building in Karakol with business tour operators
- Providing swimming trainings and swimming TOTs for future lifeguards in Karakol
- Series of trainings to reduce stigma for the disabled people
- Series of trainings to agriculture students in Temir and Balykchy
- Building greenhouses, planting trees, vegetables
- Domestic violence, bride-kidnapping training series in Karakol

- TOT for mothers and pregnant women on improving their maternity nutrition
- Helping a Republican orphanage in Talas to open a self-sustained business opportunity (business incubator)
- Computer and English literacy training series in four oblasts



The **Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP)** connects interested groups or individuals to the pressing needs in developing communities where Peace Corps Volunteers serve. PCPP does not directly fund projects, but serves as a link to groups, foundations, service organizations, and individuals wanting to contribute to the valuable work Volunteers do within their host communities. Grants average \$2,500 and range in size from a few hundred dollars to ten thousand dollars.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, over 170 PCPP projects have been implemented in the last five years. In 2011, donations totaled \$53,730 in support of 24 projects. The majority of the projects were directed towards creating English language resource centers, youth centers and American culture centers. Volunteers also used the funds to conduct environmental clean up events, lead boys and girls summer leadership camps, organize trainings for teachers and tourism service provider, set up a women's sewing cooperative, and build a greenhouse.



## Gender in Development



The Women in Development (WID) committee of Volunteers was first formed in June of 2005 in Peace Corps/Kyrgyz Republic. In recent years it has come to be known as the WID/GAD committee to reflect the recognition that men's and women's issues are inter-related, adding Gender in Development (GAD).

Peace Corps Volunteers have taken an active stance in working with host country nationals to explore how gender issues affect development in the Kyrgyz Republic and disseminating useful information to fellow Volunteers.

One of the most useful ways to pass along information is through project booklets. For example, the Bride Kidnapping Toolkit was distributed to every member of one Volunteer group along with an orientation session. These booklets contain information and history on non-consensual bride kidnapping, a still common, though outlawed practice, in rural Kyrgyzstan. It also contains lesson plans, multimedia tools and tips on how to approach discussions on this sensitive subject. This toolkit was developed by local Kyrgyz people and Volunteers. It has been shared through the WID/GAD network of Peace Corps.



Volunteers have sponsored many girls' leadership camps geared towards empowering and educating Kyrgyz girls. In the same vein Volunteers have successfully conducted boys' leadership camps to examine boys' leadership issues and how boys and girls can relate in respectful ways. Other camps involving WID/GAD themes have included healthy choices camps dealing with nutrition, health, hygiene, drugs, alcohol, and how to make informed choices regarding these issues. Camps revolving around HIV/AIDS education and outreach also accomplish WID/GAD goals.



Many Volunteers find success in starting clubs centering on gender issues in their communities. Girls' clubs, boys' clubs, men's clubs, and women's clubs can provide host country nationals with a comfortable environment to discuss sensitive topics like non-consensual bride kidnapping and traditional gender roles. These are also good places to speak about health and nutrition, as well as drugs, alcohol, and even safe sex and sexually transmitted diseases. A perennial event that Volunteers host is "Take Our Children to Work Day". This is a day where Volunteers arrange for local students to meet with men and women in many professions including doctors, lawyers, fashion designers, translators, business men and women and many more. Students shadow a person in a career that interests them for a day, who in turn can facilitate greater interest and passion to pursue a career path. It can also expose girls and boys to men and women working in careers outside traditional gender roles.

**WID/GAD Accomplishments in 2011:**

- A Domestic Violence Toolkit was developed for working with militia, local crisis centers, and communities. It is available in Kyrgyz, Russian, and English.
- Gender Conferences were held in all 4 oblasts where we have Volunteers.
- 2 PCVs helped to found a Women's NGO Aryzhan Karakol.
- 5 PCVs and a member of the local staff assisted with the U.S. Department of State-sponsored Central Asian Women's Economic Symposium of Central Asia in Bishkek.
- 6 PCVs helped 6 local organizations design and implement projects funded by the U.S. Embassy on small-business development, tourism improvement, property rights, bride kidnapping training, and more.
- GLOW and TOBE summer camps held in 2 oblasts were hugely popular with young people.



## VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR STORIES

### Sharing Cultures through Dance

*David Malana, K-18 Secondary School TEFL Volunteer, Talas Oblast*



For the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps, I really wanted my dance group AmericAral to have the chance to perform. Not only would it be a great chance for the kids to go somewhere and do something that they may never have gotten the chance to do again, but it would also be a great way for me to represent Talas and get some attention to my village of Aral. I think that people look at Talas as this forgettable place, and I wanted to show everyone that there is so much talent and beauty in this area of the country. My community has really supported my dance projects; parents gave their own hard earned money to help get their children to the event. As a result of our performance, people now know about the wonderful talent and humor that exists in my village. To think that we were in the Philharmonia in Bishkek with hundreds of people watching was the honor of a lifetime. People still talk to me about the performance and the dancers. It is a memory that is as valuable to me as any I have had here in Kyrgyzstan.

### Training Social Workers on HIV/AIDS Prevention in Talas

*Andrew Hull, K-18 SOCD Volunteer, Talas Oblast*

I worked with the Maana Women's Shelter to raise awareness about HIV and risky behaviors, and to build the capacity of local health service providers to train others. With the help of an outside expert we trained shelter staff on a structured, culturally sensitive process that helped them overcome their reluctance to discuss *ouyat* (shameful) topics like reproductive health, HIV and sexually transmitted infections with members of the community. The staff members then provided trainings to 63 girls and women who visited the shelter, and to the sons of mothers who have visited the shelter within the last six months. In addition, the shelter staff trained 120 community social workers from Talas oblast to become community peer educators. The responses we received from trainees - especially from the community social workers - were extremely positive. They said they feel much more comfortable and better prepared to talk about HIV/AIDS with members of the community.

## **Moms' Clubs**

*Mark Iozzi, K-18, Issyk-Kul Oblast*

Our Moms' Club project is a coordinated effort by Peace Corps Volunteers to promote education and awareness about nutrition to young mothers across Kyrgyzstan. The project is being implemented by 20 Volunteers, each working with local counterparts in their villages to organize and conduct club meetings for young mothers. At these meetings, they teach nutrition information in fun and interactive ways according to a curriculum they learned at a Training of Trainers (TOT) we conducted in December. Start-up costs were funded by a Small Projects Assistance grant written with Stephanie Smith, a Volunteer in Talas. At the TOT, we elected a project coordinating committee that is responsible for implementing the project through sharing resources, organizing participants, training new Volunteers, maintaining project materials, and ensuring the continuation of the committee from one group of Volunteers to the next. Kompanion Financial Group, a microfinance bank, will be working with two of the Moms' Clubs on implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

## **Alpha Team English Learners**

*Laetitia Dupuy, K-18, TEFL Volunteer, Issyk Kul Oblast*

In the course of teaching an advanced English club through the summer, I identified five particularly bright, personable, and impressive ninth and tenth form students. These three girls and two boys - Serga, Nurjan, Tanya, Shaibek, and Bekjan - have become the focus of my primary assignment and have developed an advanced level of English within just a year. By working closely with these students and being in regular contact with their families, I have been able to do many non-English related sessions dealing with issues relating to the LGBT community, to religious and ethnic minorities, and to local health problems. We also have been on field trips to the mountains, beach, zoo, and museum to work on translation or critical thinking skills. These students, nick-named the "Alpha Team," have become role models for many students at the school, motivating their peers to take their education seriously and to attend and actively participate in English Clubs. They also help with diverse projects, like a world map project and the development of an English Resource Center. They act as translators and session facilitators when other volunteers give sessions at school, and constantly inspire their peers and me.

The Peace Corps is a non-political and non-religious organization of the U.S. Government that seeks to promote peace and friendship among peoples of different nationalities and cultures. In 2011 the Peace Corps celebrated its 50th year anniversary. For five decades, Peace Corps has provided technical assistance in 139 countries through the implementation of programs in education, business development, environmental protection, agriculture, and health.

This report is not intended to cover all activities implemented by the Peace Corps in the Kyrgyz Republic and merely represents a snapshot of Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic in-country programs and activities.

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