

## THE CHALLENGE

Kyrgyzstan's 1991 independence from the Soviet Union ushered in periods of hope and, more often, disaffection. When each of the country's first two presidents was unable to follow through with transparent decision-making—with the effect of repressing opposition—citizens reacted by demanding change. April 2010 saw violent protests, and in June of that year, clashes between Kyrgyzstanis and ethnic Uzbeks killed more than 1,000 people and left more than 400,000 others displaced. Anecdotal and eyewitness accounts report that many of those involved in the April uprising and June violence were youth.

Today, despite the fact that more than 30 percent of the country's population is 10 to 25 years old, young people in Kyrgyzstan have limited social services, political voice, and economic opportunities. As a result of this marginalization, a large portion of the population distrusts the government and its promises of democracy. Nihilism of this sort poses particular challenges to economic and political development. As witnessed in the June 2010 violence, young people in Kyrgyzstan also increasingly have become targets of political manipulation and extremist movements.

## THE INITIATIVE

In response to this history of political and economic instability, IYF proposes a holistic approach to youth development in Kyrgyzstan. IYF designed the package of services available through the *Jasa.kg* program to support young people to become leaders; to engage actively on pressing social issues; and to build sustainable livelihoods for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Launched in 2011, *Jasa.kg* aims to catalyze a generation of youth to actively engage in building a stable, prosperous, and democratic Kyrgyzstan. They have the potential to usher in promising advances for the country, and *Jasa.kg* offers pathways and guidance.

The project has four primary objectives:

- Inspire active citizenship among Kyrgyzstani youth
- Prepare youth for the local job market
- Create a culture of positive youth development
- Provide critical life skills to orphans

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

By the end of the program in 2015, *Jasa.kg* will have accomplished the following goals:

- 4,000 youth trained in entrepreneurship and employability
- 4,000 youth trained in civic engagement initiatives

## RESULTS TO DATE

### Civic Engagement

- 1,379 youth trained in the *Passport to Success*® life skills program, with focus on civic engagement. Each cohort of the training program culminated in youth-led community service projects.
- 24 youth volunteer clubs were established at secondary schools in the south of Kyrgyzstan, and 344 youth club members received training in conflict management and prevention and social project development. The youth clubs have carried out over 80 social projects and have been featured on a TV series focused on community service initiatives.

(continued)

### Workforce Development

- 600 youth completed a rigorous entrepreneurship training course focused on the practical development of original business plans.
- 29 youth received vouchers to start up their own businesses, and 21 received mentorship support from business leaders.
- 28 new youth entrepreneurship clubs at secondary schools have given young people the opportunity to learn the basics of business and start their own mini-enterprises.
- 647 youth were trained in employability skills, and 184 were placed in internships.
- 181 youth received employment opportunities through four *Jasa.kg*-organized fairs.

### Positive Youth Development

- 150 youth had the opportunity to participate in the Summer School of Democracy initiative that provided a series of leadership seminars and engagement with civic leaders.
- *Jasa.kg* provided support to the newly formed Youth Policy Network to encourage high-level initiatives by government agencies focused on youth development.

### Life Skills for Orphans

- 1,027 youth from residential institutions were trained in *Passport to Success*<sup>®</sup>, with a focus on social adaption.
- 107 youth from residential institutions participated in a dance training program to develop teambuilding and conflict management skills
- More than 60 youth who have transitioned from residential institutions to independent living received direct support in securing documentation, education, employment, housing, and life skills.

## PARTNERSHIPS

**Donor:** U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

**Implementing Partners:** Center Interbilim (CIB); Youth of Osh; Bishkek Business Club (BBC); Central Asia Free Market Society (CAFMI); InStream; Y-Peer; Association of Social Entrepreneurs (ASE); Childhood Institute; Oasis; Our Voice

## CONTACT

Christie Scott, Regional Director, Eurasia

c.scott@iyfnet.org

+1 410 951 1619

