



## SUCCESS STORY

# Teaching Tolerance through the Arts

**Youth parliamentarians spread the message of peace and tolerance in rural communities where tensions are high.**



Photo Credit: USAID

*Uzbek and Kyrgyz schoolchildren and teachers learn conflict transformation techniques to be used in developing their peace puppetry scenarios.*

***“I believe we should seek ways to prevent aggressiveness, and teach our youth to be tolerant of other ethnicities. I think activities like this training and puppet performances are very timely.”***

***-Burul Sadykova, school teacher and training participant from Alay rayon, where many people were killed during the June conflict***

“Through this training, I understood that while conflict is always destructive, it can be resolved in a constructive and positive way,” said Akjigit uulu Bekbolsun, a 15-year-old Kyrgyz boy from Mangyt village in Aravan Rayon, Osh Oblast. “I will take this knowledge and attitude back to my village.”

Working with grassroots communities through the “Conflict Mitigation through the Arts” project, Central Asian Alliance for Water (CAAW) has reached out to 17 school-based youth parliaments throughout the Fergana Valley, teaching youth civic responsibility and empowering them to become agents of change.

In November, CAAW brought puppetry groups to these Youth Parliaments to build their capacity in addressing topics of peace and tolerance. Two groups of 38 ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth parliamentarians and teachers learned about conflict transformation, while honing their skills in puppetry and scriptwriting. An international conflict transformation organization, Search for Common Ground, was invited to provide the necessary expertise, and share the concept of conflict and conflict management approaches.

“Through this training, I learned the important role mediators play in conflict resolution. When I come back to my school, I will initiate the creation of a Ministry of Conflict Resolution,” said Husniddin Ganiev, a 16-year-old ethnic Uzbek boy from Habib Abdullaev School in Aravan Rayon.

Conflict mitigation puppet performances will be staged in Uzbek or Kyrgyz in all seven rayons of the Osh Oblast in December, culminating with a performance in Osh City on December 23.

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