



SUCCESS STORY

REBUILDING OSH FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

“Youth of Osh” is mobilizing ethnic communities in cash-for-work activities that are helping restore Osh and rebuild trust throughout the city.



Photo Credit: USAID

Fatima Alimahunova, an ethnic Uzbek, cleans up a playground area in the Cheremushki neighborhood of Osh.

“While we were working on cleaning the area, we were united by a single goal – to see smiles on our children’s faces and to hear their happy laughter.

We were not thinking about nationalities.”

*- Fatima Alimahunova,
Uzbek resident of Cheremushki*

“During the June crisis, I saw burning houses and wounded people. My little daughter is still afraid of loud noises. But I do not want to leave Kyrgyzstan. I want to build my future here, in Osh,” said Fatima Alimahunova, a 32-year-old Uzbek single mother living in Cheremushki, a multiethnic neighborhood in Osh, with her three-year-old daughter. “When I get my cash for work, I will buy a heater so my apartment will be warmer for my daughter,” she added.

Cheremushki is an ethnically mixed area of ethnic Kyrgyz (50%), Uzbeks (30%), and Tatars and Russians (20%). More notably, it was one of the places where residents protected each other in June and one of the areas most affected by violence; 192 houses were burned, and many people were killed or wounded.

In October, a local NGO, “Youth of Osh,” engaged 20 ethnic Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Tatar, and Russian residents of Cheremushki to rehabilitate their neighborhood and make it a safe and pleasant space for their children. Men and women of different ages worked together for 12 days to clean a playground area in the center of four apartment buildings. The next phase of rehabilitation will include installation of new play and sports equipment, benches, picnic tables, and trash bins. More than 100 children of different ages and ethnicities will enjoy the rehabilitated playground.

“At the end of clean-up activities, we want to cook *plov* (a very popular national dish) in the yard and enjoy it all together,” said Fatima. She believes that the people of Osh benefit from opportunities that engage them in reconciliation and rehabilitation efforts. “Working together, we have been able to strengthen our relations, overcome feelings of fear and helplessness, and build our confidence in tomorrow.”