

## U.S. government uses Youth Theater to promote social change

The U.S. Embassy, harnessing the power of the Youth Theater, spread awareness of critical issues among Tajikistan's most vulnerable populations. Two recent projects, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Youth Theater for Peace (YTP) and the U.S. Embassy's Drug Demand Reduction Program, use Youth Theater to help young Tajiks engage their peers on conflict resolution and the dangers of drugs.

According to the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, the Youth Theater for Peace project uses an arts-based approach to promote sustainable conflict prevention at the community level. Performances encourage changes in attitudes and behaviors among young people. To date, more than 125 Forum Theater performances by YTP have reached over 22,000 audience members in Khatlon and Sughd. Participants have also

organized nearly 60 workshops on theater and conflict prevention that trained over 800 new youth participants and more than 85 adults.

The U.S. Embassy's Drug Demand Reduction Program, through the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau (INL), funded a project implemented by the NGO Children's Legal Center (CLC) to spread an anti-drug message through theatrical performances for youth and vulnerable groups. The project targets boys and girls aged 10-18 with the goal of preventing them from becoming involved in drug abuse or the drug trade. In coordination with the local NGO Ghamkhori, CLC's project delivers educational campaigns about the dangers of drug use through the use of their "mobile youth groups." to perform plays for students.

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