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**KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Youth Initiatives for Renewal

In Bishkek, a number of civil society and government partners unified under a “Renewal” campaign engaging nearly 3,000 at-risk *novostroiki* youth.



Photo credit: USAID

Youth plant trees in Bishkek’s low-income communities wearing “Future is I” branded t-shirts as part of a youth-driven “Renewal” campaign.

“By empowering the at-risk *novostroiki* youth through Youth Initiative Groups and engaging them in constructive activities, we want to foster their integration into a larger Bishkek community, thereby changing a general perception that this youth is incapable of bringing about positive changes.”

—Aigul Jeenbaeva,  
Member of Youth NGO “Erep”

**April 2011** – “To change life for the better, start with yourself. Then you can say, “I am the future!” This Public Service Announcement was aired on national and local radio and TV stations in April, 2011 informing the general public of an ongoing youth-led “Renewal” campaign.

Throughout the month of April, a flurry of activities, totaling close to \$400,000, sprang up around Bishkek, engaging 2,721 at-risk *novostroiki* youth. Through these activities, unemployed youth participated in clean-up and tree-planting activities in their communities while adding to their family incomes. A consortium of youth NGOs (Erep, Youth Policy Fund, and the Youth Integration Alliance) organized 150 young people into Youth Initiative Groups and equipped them with leadership, advocacy, and community mobilization skills to help their communities move forward.

In addition to providing marginalized youth with temporary employment, these activities also provided 720 youth from 48 *novostroiki* with opportunities not previously available to them. Organized into 16 teams, they played soccer on a new sports field in Bishkek recently rehabilitated by USAID. The winning teams played in the April 15 finale at the Dordoi Soccer Field, one of Bishkek’s largest private soccer fields.

These activities, generated through a recent USAID/OTI-facilitated forum with 13 past grantees, provided an urgent response to youth-driven initiatives channeling youth energies away from potential destabilization around the anniversary of last year’s violent events. Conducted in partnership with a range of government and civil society partners, they empower at-risk *novostroiki* youth to become agents of positive change in their communities.

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