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**Youth Theater for Peace Kyrgyzstan
(YTP)**

USAID Agreement No. 116-A-00-10-00003-00

Final Program Report

March 1, 2012 – February 28, 2014

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YOUTH THEATER FOR PEACE – KYRGYZSTAN (YTP)

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FINAL PROGRAM REPORT

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Implemented from March 1, 2010 to February 28, 2014, the Youth Theater for Peace (YTP) program in Kyrgyzstan successfully met the following objectives:

- Facilitate lasting attitudinal and behavioral change among young people and mentors from adversarial groups.
- Engage the wider community in drama for conflict transformation activities; and
- Promote long-term sustainability through investments in community institutions.
- Individuals and organizations develop capacity for supporting, institutionalizing, and implementing Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT work) and peace-promotion.
- Youth and youth-serving adults develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors of community peace promoters.
- Peace promoters and communities support a culture of peace in their communities, oblasts and nation.

Conflict Issues and Community Problems Analyzed in YTP Performances

- Racketeering
- Bride kidnapping
- Early marriage
- Ethnic tensions
- Informal money lending
- Labor migration
- Alcoholism
- Drug use
- Truancy
- Child labor
- Suicide
- Domestic violence
- Livestock raids

The Youth Theater for Peace (YTP) program in Kyrgyzstan **directly trained 334 youth and adults in community-based conflict prevention** through Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT). With ongoing support from the YTP program, these leaders launched **33 school-based drama clubs** in Batken, Chui, Naryn and Talas, **engaging more than 50,000 audience members** in community discussions on the causes and appropriate responses to conflict.

The impact of YTP is evidenced in changes at the **individual and community level** and by **significant inter-regional cooperation** around conflict prevention and tolerance promotion.

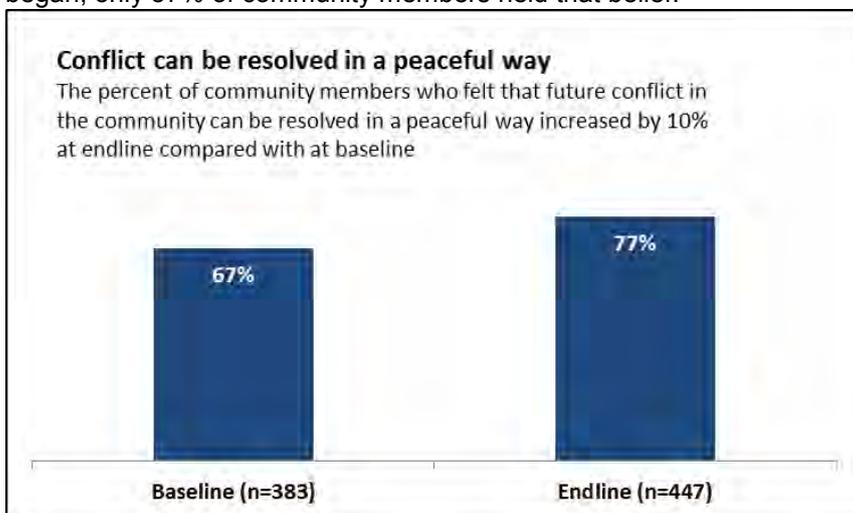
YTP achieved measurable outcomes in facilitating **individual attitudinal and behavioral change** around conflict in youth and adult program participants. In an externally led evaluation, 100% of program participants reported confidence in their ability to help to resolve interpersonal disagreements or conflicts in a peaceful way, compared to approximately 55% of comparison group participants. Nearly 98% of program participants reported confidence in their ability to positively affect conflict situations in their community,

compared to about 31% of comparison group respondents. Approximately 90% of program participants reported confidence in speaking in front of large audiences, compared to about 17% of comparison group respondents.

At the community level, community members reported significant change in their belief that community conflicts would be resolved peacefully. Survey evidence also showed that members of YTP target communities changed their attitudes towards the role of youth in conflict. A survey conducted in six target communities found that following YTP programming, 74% of community members believed that youth have the ability to lead peaceful conflict resolution. In an earlier survey conducted before the program began, only 57% of community members held that belief.

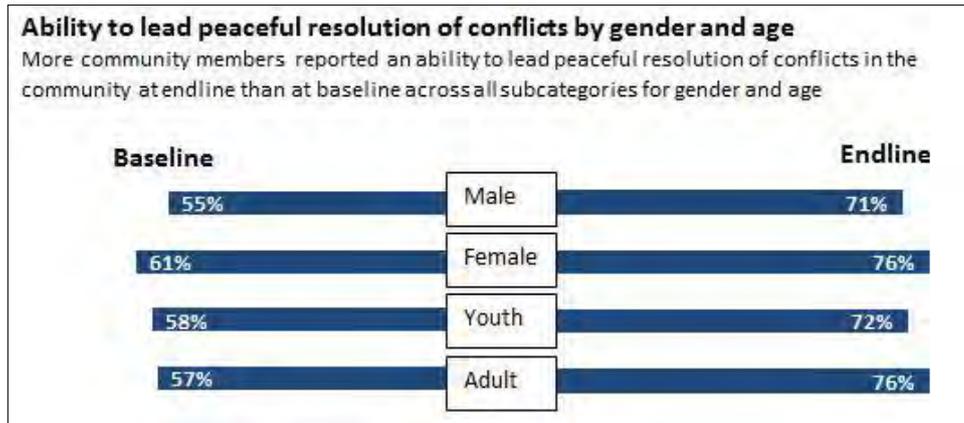
YTP **created opportunities for significant inter-regional cooperation** between youth and adults. The YTP Leaders Forum, initiated in 2012, launched the Union of Trainers and Consultants of Forum Theater NGO, an officially recognized organization with members from four regions of Kyrgyzstan. Drama Clubs from Batken, Chui, Naryn and Talas carried out 11 inter-regional theater tours, making new contacts with NGOs and schools in Osh, Jalalabad, and Issyk-kul.

IREX's YTP local implementing partners, the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI) and Jash Danaker, are well-positioned to continue implementing conflict prevention activities incorporating aspects of the Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT) methodology. In 2012, FTI received funding from UNICEF to bring DCT programming to youth in Osh and



Jalalabad and several adult YTP trainers from Batken and Chui brought their knowledge and skills to Osh and Jalalabad through this program.

The YTP program has transformed individuals, institutions and communities. The participants are respected within their communities – in many cases achieving a greater level of authority due to their YTP activities – and have secured



institutional support for their Drama Clubs. Participants and communities see and feel the impact of the DCT methodology and are eager to continue using it. Many of the Drama Clubs report ongoing activity post-program, and the outlook for long-term sustainability of DCT at the local level is good. YTP created a cadre of engaged, motivated youth and adult participants who have proven to have an impressive multiplier effect in their communities.

B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) is pleased to present to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) the final program report for the Youth Theater for Peace Program in Kyrgyzstan (YTP), Cooperative Agreement No. 116-A-00-10-00003-00. YTP was originally designed to **promote sustainable conflict prevention at the community level through Drama for Conflict Transformation**. In pursuit of this goal, IREX achieved the following three objectives during the first 24 months of implementation (March 1, 2010 – February 29, 2012):

- Objective 1: To facilitate lasting attitudinal and behavioral change among young people and mentors from adversarial groups;
- Objective 2: To engage the wider community in drama for conflict transformation activities; and
- Objective 3: To promote long-term sustainability through investments in community institutions.

In March 2012, USAID extended IREX's cooperative agreement to provide an additional 24 months of funding for YTP, through February 28, 2014. The extension period of YTP (March 1, 2012-February 28, 2014) is designed to **promote sustainable conflict prevention and a culture of peace at the community, regional, and national levels**.

In pursuit of this goal, IREX will achieve the following three extension period objectives:

- Objective 1: Individuals and organizations develop capacity for supporting, institutionalizing, and implementing Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT work) and peace-promotion.
- Objective 2: Youth and youth-serving adults develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors of community peace promoters.
- Objective 3: Peace promoters and communities support a culture of peace in their communities, oblasts and nation.

The YTP extension period focuses on youth in remote Naryn and Talas oblasts and will provide them with opportunities to gain practical knowledge, practice critical thinking, and solve problems through active participation in theater performances on issues immediately relevant to their daily lives. The program continues to work with the youths in Chui and Batken oblasts to ensure sustainability of their DCT activities beyond the life of the project.

PROGRAM APPROACH

"Theater is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theater can help us build our future, instead of just waiting for it." – Augusto Boal, Games for Actors and Non-Actors

The Youth Theater for Peace Program is based on **Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT)**. DCT is a flexible set of tools that encourage improvisation, self-reflection, dialogue, and play to allow members of antagonistic communities develop new views and behaviors around conflict. In situations of entrenched conflict, where debate and historical analysis rarely serve to change minds, DCT unlocks the creative power of individuals and communities to adopt new perspectives and develop novel solutions. IREX's DCT approach draws on the work of Dr. Augusto Boal, a Brazilian director, activist, and educator, who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his invention of "dialogic theater" as

a means for oppressed groups to overcome the sources of their oppression. To Boal's techniques, IREX's approach adds elements of Playback Theater, as elaborated by Jonathon Fox, and the Hope is Vital methodology developed by Michael Rohd. DCT has been applied in conflict situations around the world, from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Rwanda, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. DCT methodologies are flexible: they set up a framework for exploration, but the content depends entirely on the life experience of participants—so DCT can address many types of conflict, from ethnic and religious to resource-based.

DCT differs from traditional approaches to conflict prevention, such as roundtable meetings and sports camps, while capturing their benefits. Like roundtable meetings of adversarial groups, DCT creates a context for participants to address their conflict issues directly. Like sports camps, DCT appeals to young people, introduces an element of fun, and establishes rules of fair play. But DCT transcends these typical models, by unlocking participants' creative powers, opening avenues for discussion that are unreachable through debate, and encouraging behavior change as sports camps cannot. DCT accomplishes conflict transformation by:

► **Creating a safe space for dialogue and the emergence of trust.** DCT first establishes a safe space by minimizing power differentials between individuals and between groups. Since the theater games are unfamiliar, everyone takes part on an equal footing. Initial games are primarily non-verbal, so members of a dominant language group, or particularly articulate individuals, have no advantage over their peers. Participants trade the roles of "director" and "actor" and experiment with scenarios in which no one is truly in charge. Second, DCT establishes clear ground rules for participation, developed and acknowledged by all participants. Finally, DCT creates a world of possibility—a fictional space where youth can cast off their usual social roles to experiment "with the potential to learn rather than fail."

► **Providing empowering tools for self-expression and action.** In the context of DCT, marginalized youth have the opportunity to constructively express their beliefs, frustrations, values, fears, and dreams—to a group of peers who have pledged to listen actively. As participants act out scenarios based on their life experience, they can improvise a new outcome. They effectively rewrite their story, emerging as the protagonist in their own life—a profoundly empowering opportunity for youth who feel like victims of their circumstances.

► **Developing empathy and an appreciation for other points of view.** As participants express their own experience, they are also listening actively to others. As games progress, participants begin playing the role of their adversary in improvised scenarios—"stepping into their shoes," embodying their experience, and imagining their feelings. DCT helps break the deadlock of singular narratives in opposition, and teases out the multiple narratives that together make up the story of a community. Rather than resolve debates over "who is right" or boil down opposing views to a lowest common denominator of "things we have in common," DCT encourages participants to embrace the multiple perspectives that together make up a community's story—building trust, mutual respect, and reconciliation in the process.

► **Promoting analysis of conflict cycles and triggers.** DCT encourages participants to recognize how a situation escalates toward violence, at the level of a disagreement between neighbors, a community rift, or a civil war. DCT invites participants to act out conflict scenarios and then dismantle them, noting each decision point—moments when a person's action could escalate or defuse the tension. Through this process, participants develop an awareness of the cycle of conflict and begin to recognize their own contributions.

► **Encouraging lasting behavioral change.** As DCT promotes internal changes—a greater empathy for the "other," a sense of one's role in a conflict, the potential positive impact of one's decisions—it provides an arena for participants to experiment with peace-promoting behaviors. Participants act out newly-discovered positive resolutions—and in acting them out, they strengthen their skills for seeking positive outcomes in real-life confrontations. In this way, DCT functions as the "scrimmage before the big game" of life in the community.

PROGRAM DESIGN

IREX has designed the Youth Theater for Peace- Kyrgyzstan (YTP) model in response to USAID's request for people-to-people approaches that create opportunities for contact and exchange between adversarial groups. YTP is based on the theories of change associated with **Family 3: Healthy Relationships**¹ and consists of two phases:

► Intensive camps will bring young people from antagonistic groups to the neutral territory of a training facility to engage in Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT) activities. Facilitated theater exercises will help **youth build bridges (theory 6)**², engage with the "other" and explore nonviolent resolutions to conflict.

¹ As outlined in USAID/DCHA/CMM's APS Solicitation #M/OAA/DCHA/DOFDA-09-857, Attachment II, "Table of Illustrative Theories of Change for Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation," page 30.

² Ibid.

► Youth trained at the intensive camps will present interactive DCT plays to their communities, promoting **community-based reconciliation (theory 5)**³, creating opportunities for community members to examine conflict situations and rehearse resolution strategies.

The extension period of the Youth Theater for Peace program aims **to promote sustainable conflict prevention and a culture of peace at the community, regional, and national levels**. In pursuit of this goal, IREX will achieve the following three extension period objectives:

Objective 1: Individuals and organizations develop capacity for supporting, institutionalizing, and implementing Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT work) and peace-promotion.

Objective 2: Youth and youth-serving adults develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors of community peace promoters.

Objective 3: Peace promoters and communities support a culture of peace in their communities, oblasts and nation.

YTP is designed to support US Government Peace and Security indicators within Program Area Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation, Element 6.1: Conflict Mitigation, specifically:

- Number of people trained in conflict mitigation/ resolution skills with USG assistance.
- Number of people from “at-risk groups reached through USG conflict mitigation activities.
- Number of USG-assisted facilitated events geared toward strengthening understanding and mitigating conflict between groups.
- Number of people attending USG-assisted facilitated events that are geared toward strengthening understanding and mitigating conflict between groups.

C. START-UP AND OBJECTIVE 1: ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS (2010-2012)

The first objective of Youth Theater for Peace (YTP) was **to facilitate lasting attitudinal and behavioral change among young people and mentors from adversarial groups**. Activities under this objective, including a **participatory program assessment, training of trainers and theater camps** created the foundation for activities under objectives 2 and 3.

Participatory Program Assessment

The YTP team finalized the selection of target communities and built support for the program through a Participatory Program Assessment in selected districts and communities in Batken and Chui region. In March and April 2010, IREX, FTI staff, and DCT consultant Dr. Ananda Breed met with religious and civic leaders, educators, artists, representatives of NGOs, and young people to present the program to these local stakeholders and ask for their endorsement. Through conversations with community members, the YTP team also explored how conflict materializes at the local level—lines of social fracture, recent incidences of violence, disputed territories and resources, and perceived triggers—generating baseline data for the M&E strategy. Based on these assessment discussions with community members and meetings with local conflict mitigation NGOs, the YTP team refined its list of targeted communities, and in consultation with USAID, selected the following:

District	Region	Targeted Communities
Batken	Batken	Sogment, Koktash, Ortoboz, Samarkandek, Paski Aryk, Batken City
Leilek	Batken	Isfana, Samat, Andarak, Internasional, Borborduk
Moscow	Chui	Aleksandrovka, Petrovka, Aksuu
Issyk-Ata	Chui	Ivanovka, Budenovka, Dmitrievka
Chui	Chui	Tokmok, Iskra
Bishkek City	Chui	Archa Beshik settlement

These communities were selected based on their large youth populations, population density, unemployment levels, and tensions over distribution of resources, borders, or multiethnic friction.

In addition to collecting local conflict histories and building support, the team also sought out cultural forms from artists. Dr. Breed used this information to incorporate elements of Kyrgyz culture (such as the legend of Issykul) into a Kyrgyzstan-specific DCT curriculum.

Formation of Program Advisory Committee

³ Ibid.

As the final step in the participatory program assessment, the YTP team worked with community stakeholders to establish an Advisory Committee for the program. Made up of religious, civic, and local leaders from diverse ethnic backgrounds, the Committee provided input on implementation throughout the program, ensuring that YTP met community needs and worked in harmony with community values and local initiatives.

Training of Trainers in Drama for Conflict Transformation Methodologies

From July 15-22 and August 1-8, 2010, the YTP team held two Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops in Issykul for key adults from YTP target communities in Batken and Chui. Participants experienced the methodology together as “players”, examined the conflict cycle in their communities, learned to use the methodology as facilitators, and prepared to engage youth through DCT. By the end of the TOT, all trainees participated in developing and performing in short plays based on local conflict issues.

The DCT methodology is designed to foster a process of individual change. During the TOTs, the DCT consultants and IREX staff observed significant changes in participants’ attitudes and behavior. For example, Halima Madalinova, an ethnic Dungan teacher at a Dungan-majority school in Tokmok who later became a YTP Master Trainer and Director of the Union NGO, reported a marked change in her sense of personal agency regarding conflict situations. “Being a part of YTP has changed me a lot; my relationship to the world and to people has changed because of it,” Ms. Madalinova commented. “In one of my classes, I taught youth the Obstacle Tree [a conflict analysis exercise in IREX’s DCT curriculum]. I facilitated them to see problems from the root causes. It was good, because they were able to analyze. Prior, I lived without analyzing these problems, but now I analyze all the time.”

According to observations by the DCT consultants, 96% of TOT participants demonstrated increased confidence in speaking in front of a group. Additionally, 96% of TOT participants reported increased confidence in their own ability to positively affect conflict situations (personal agency).

Youth Theater Camp 1

During the Camp 1 events conducted August 9-19 and 20-29, 2010, groups of 50 young people gathered in neutral camp facilities at Issykul for an intensive experience of self-discovery and bridge-building. Adults from the communities represented applied the skills learned at the TOT as assistant facilitators, under the guidance of DCT consultants Ananda Breed, James Forrester, and IREX and FTI staff. While the length of each Camp 1 was condensed to 9 days accommodate the later start to summer activities, the camp experience was overwhelmingly productive, positive and empowering for the youth participants. Participants, particularly those from more rural communities, were excited to engage in a positive extracurricular activity and work to address conflict peacefully at the local level.

Youth Voice Highlight:

“Where I come from, regional conflicts are common. Usually, there are about two hundred or so youth that have violent fights regularly. In the past, I thought it was normal to be a part of such fights. After using Image and Forum Theater to represent these issues, I can see what role I play in the conflicts. I can do something to change these conflicts, because my point of view to the conflicts has changed.” – Male youth participant in Camp 1

Using the DCT curriculum tailored to the needs and experience of youth in Kyrgyzstan, the facilitators led youth participants through a theater process to build trust, create a positive group dynamic, establish a spirit of fun and exploration, provide positive tools for self-expression, and build new awareness around conflict. Facilitators began with introductory theater games to acclimate youth to the process— using their bodies as instruments for self-expression, noticing, sharing, and listening. Once an atmosphere of trust had been established, youth engaged more challenging topics, sharing sensitive personal stories about conflict.

Based on their experiences, participants improvised scenes and worked in small groups to craft them into short Forum Theater plays. At the end of the camp, youth performed the pieces for their peers, who served as “spectators.” Community issues prioritized by the participants included school racketeering, conflicts based on regional origin (North-South), a lack of counseling and emotional support for youth, and conflicts between schools in different villages.

Gulanda, a youth participant from Chui, shared her experience of discrimination after her family moved from Osh to Tokmok. While Gulanda excelled in school, some of her new classmates quickly seized upon regional differences, mocking her dialect and calling her “no-good and corrupt like the former President” on the basis of her southern origin. After a physical fight with a classmate, she begged her parents to let her change schools. Gulanda’s story was selected by other youth participants to dramatize in a Forum Theater play. Reacting to the regional conflict illustrated in Gulanda’s Forum Theater play, the audience called for celebration of regional differences to build a culture of tolerance and understanding.

In post-camp surveys, participants noted changes in their own attitudes towards conflict situations and empathy for the “other.” 93% of youth camp participants reported an increase in their ability to positively affect conflict situations. 88%

“When I first came to the YTP camp, I thought I could only solve the conflicts of kids younger than me. Now I know that I can find solutions to grown-ups’ problems, too.”
Camp 2 Youth participant from Batken

of youth camp participants reported they can now communicate better with people from other nationalities and backgrounds (empathy).

Youth Theater Camp 2

From October 31-November 7, 2010, 41 youth and 22 adult Drama Club representatives gathered in Issykul to deepen their understanding of the DCT model and prepare to apply it more widely in their communities. Adult participants were chosen based on observations and recommendations from

the DCT consultants, IREX and FTI staff, and youth participants were selected based on recommendations from both the YTP team and the adult Drama Club leaders.

As tension between the North and South was one of the conflict issues identified by IREX during the Participatory Program Assessment, a combined Camp 2 was held for both Batken and Chui participants. Having both regions together in the same room allowed for dialogue about regional divisions and common problems, and resulted in the development of close bonds between youth and adult participants from diverse backgrounds. Camp 2 participants shared their initial successes and challenges faced implementing the methodology in their communities, and developed skills to further engage wide audiences through Community Theater Tours. The Camp 2 training focused on developing the following skills:

► **Facilitating Audience Participation.** Given the sensitivities around conflict within and across communities, facilitators worked closely with participants on the nuances of audience interaction. Youth learned the role of the Joker-Facilitator to draw in audience members, inviting them to try their hand at resolving a scene without conflict. In addition, youth and adults learned basic facilitation skills for defusing tension—should it arise during or after a performance—while still respecting people’s authentic viewpoints.

► **Framing the Performance.** Participants also learned how to introduce and close a performance. Participants learned how to prepare audiences before performances through advertising and promotional materials, and by establishing ground rules during the introduction. Through role play, youth learned how to deal with an audience that doesn’t ask questions right away, individuals who dominate, and those who ask inappropriate or inflammatory questions. Building on the initial DCT training delivered by consultants Ananda Breed and James Forrester at Camp 1, DCT consultant Christine Cox worked extensively to help participants examine the structure of their Forum Theater plays critically, and to build moments of possible intervention and potential “ally” characters into the plays so that interventions can generate productive dialogue.

► **Tour Planning.** After further tailoring their plays and learning techniques for managing audience participation, youth began planning for their tour performances, taking part in a Community Mapping Exercise to identify appropriate nearby communities (not areas with active conflict), venues (schools, town halls), timing for performances, and key allies in the community. Participants received a Tour Planning Template during the camps and completed it as much as possible during Camp 2. IREX staff explained the entire Tour Grant process to youth and adults, including monitoring and reporting requirements.

D. OBJECTIVE 2: ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS (2010-2012)

In order to achieve **Objective 2: Engage the wider community in drama for conflict transformation activities**, IREX provided support for the formation of **22 school-based drama clubs** and carried out a **drama club micro-grant competition** and a **theater tour grant competition**.

Launching Drama Clubs and Drama Club Micro-Grants

In Year 1, YTP supported participants to establish and charter Drama Clubs at their schools. The original goal of this activity was to bridge the gap between Camp 1, held in August 2010, and Camp 2, held in late October 2010, to ensure participants did not lose momentum. The addition of this component to the program activities was a significant, unexpected success. Creating Drama Clubs energized directly trained participants, engaged a large number of new youth who had not been directly trained, and garnered wide recognition for DCT in Batken and Chui communities. In Year 2, YTP provided support and technical and organizational guidance to the Drama Clubs, awarding micro-grants of \$200, issued by FTI, to cover club start-up expenses. The Drama Clubs achieved impressive results with this limited funding, engaging over 450 youth who did not attend the summer camps to participate in Drama Club sessions, conducting 86 Forum Theater performances, and reaching a combined audience of over 5,000 people in Chui and Batken between September-December 2010.

Drama Club Impact:

“The students no longer segregate themselves.

The program brought young people together and united them, and this is wonderful.”

-*Teachers in Petrovka, Chui region*

The Drama Clubs were embraced as a positive development by teachers, school administrators, youth, parents and local government officials. “Projects like YTP are particularly relevant in our region, because there is high potential for conflict, limited opportunities for youth development, and a huge risk of youth involvement in socially destructive events,” commented H.B. Salyamov, Mayor of Isfana. “YTP makes a huge contribution to conflict prevention, promoting ethnic harmony, friendship and youth development in Batken region.”

To further motivate participants and recognize their achievements through the program, from February-May 2011, the YTP team conducted a wall newspaper competition for participating Drama Clubs. YTP’s wall newspaper contest challenged

the Drama Clubs to creatively document not only the DCT activities they have conducted, but also the impact of these activities on their communities.

To encourage institutionalization of the Drama Clubs, FTI and the YTP Advisory Board successfully lobbied the Ministry of Education to pay the Drama Club adult leaders in Batken and Chui for their extracurricular hours. The Ministry’s decision, announced in September 2011, was a key step towards sustainability in those regions. During the extension period, FTI and IREX found that some teachers preferred to assist Drama Clubs without payment in order to maintain a fuller course load in the classroom. Throughout the program, YTP continued to work with teachers to advocate for compensation on a case by case basis. All schools granted a meeting space within their schools, and many Drama Clubs are able to use school-owned computers, sound equipment, costumes and performance space for their activities.

As the program progressed, Drama Clubs were increasingly able to attract in kind support from their school and communities with many clubs receiving assistance with travel costs, food and beverage donations, or supplies for costumes and performance props.

Theater Tours and Impact on Participants and Communities

IREX and FTI provided support and monitoring oversight to the Theater Tour groups as they implemented performances under the tour grants carried out from January – May 2011. With USAID concurrence, 22 Tour Grants totaling \$13,200 were awarded, representing all the targeted districts and communities. To quantify audience attendance and participation at the tours in each community, IREX developed monitoring tools to be used by staff, partners and grantees at each performance and conducted training on their use.

Audience Response:

“I saw that Tajiks came to our school and they were speaking Kyrgyz language. They did their best. I think Kyrgyz people also have to speak other languages and try their best.”

- *Youth audience member, Kyrgyz school, Batken region*

By the end of Year 2, 216 YTP Forum Theater performances had reached at least 15,421 audience members in 93 communities throughout Kyrgyzstan, far exceeding the targets of 10,000 audience members, 144 performances and 72 communities set in the PMEPP. Community leaders showed strong in-person support, with 81 leaders attending Forum Theater performances during the first round of Theater Tours.

The YTP Advisory Committee also provided support and assistance to YTP theater tour groups, helping secure permissions from local authorities and inviting elders and community leaders to attend. In Chui region, Advisory Committee member Gulshan Kushbekovna, a specialist with the Ministry of Education, helped organize tours in the local schools. Throughout the implementation and monitoring of the Tour Grants, IREX and FTI provided extensive technical assistance on financial and program reporting to the grantees, the majority of whom had not received any grants prior to the YTP program.

E. OBJECTIVE 3: ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS (2010-2012)

The third objective of Youth Theater for Peace (YTP) was **to promote long-term sustainability through investments in community institutions**. Activities under this objective included a **Sustainability Workshop** and **Sustainability Grants program** that helped existing clubs to support the creation of 15 new Drama Clubs in neighboring schools and communities and a **Cross-Border Exchange** with Drama Clubs in Tajikistan.

Sustainability Workshop and Grants

From March 22-27, 2011, 48 youth participants and 22 adult Drama Club representatives gathered in Issykul to share successes and challenges they experienced applying DCT in their communities, refresh their DCT facilitation skills, and discuss options for the sustainability of their Drama Clubs and the DCT methodology. Adult participants were invited based on their roles as Drama Club leaders, while youth participants completed an application and were

selected based on recommendations from both the YTP team and the adult Drama Club leaders. 40 of the highly recommended youth applicants had actually not attended previous YTP camps, but were new beneficiaries trained in DCT directly by YTP adult and youth participants. These participant-trained beneficiaries have become very active members of their Drama Clubs and came to the workshop with a clear understanding of DCT exercises and the process of creating a Forum Theater piece, a testament to the training skills of YTP's initial beneficiaries.

DCT consultants Ananda Breed and James Forrester led the DCT refresher sessions, with a focus on the Joker role and on facilitation skills for youth. Forum Theater performances were held in the evenings, providing Breed and Forrester with the opportunity to give personalized technical feedback on each group's application of DCT. The DCT consultants also facilitated evening master classes for the adult trainers, introducing additional games and exercises.

On the final day of the Sustainability Workshop, teams of youth participants led their own 75-minute DCT workshops, preparing for their role as peer trainers in the upcoming Sustainability Grant projects. "I feel that I can go back to my community and lead drama workshops," reflected Shahzod Avezov, a 14-year-old from Leylek district, Batken region. "I have the confidence."

During the workshop, IREX and FTI staff introduced the Sustainability Grants to participants, a form of seed funding for establishing long-term sustainability, and presented a range of options for sustainability models. Facilitated brainstorming and community mapping exercises helped participants identify models that meet their needs and interests. This approach allows for local players to be the primary drivers for sustainability and achieves authentic buy-in.

With concurrence from USAID and close monitoring oversight from IREX, FTI awarded 20 sustainability grants totaling \$22,700 in June 2011 to support additional DCT training and performances in the target communities. During this reporting period, the YTP team provided technical assistance to participants as they implemented the remaining activities under the sustainability grants and administered successful close out of the sustainability grant awards.

The majority of grantees focused on creating new theater groups in their own or neighboring communities to reach additional youth and meet local demand for DCT involvement and positive youth development activities. Grantees provided mentoring and coaching to establish 15 new Drama Clubs, five in Chui region and ten in Batken region.

Essay and Video Contests

The YTP team conducted two contests to encourage participant engagement in the final months of the initial program period: an essay contest on the theme of "The Impact of YTP on My Life and My Community" and a video contest for best DCT performances. The essay contest in particular drew great interest from participants, with 59 essays submitted by youth participants, while 15 videos were submitted to the video competition. The YTP team and Advisory Board representatives reviewed the essays and videos and selected winners.

Cross-Border Exchange

IREX continued its efforts to facilitate cross-border exchange, as agreed with the USAID Missions in Bishkek and Dushanbe, with the YTP program in Tajikistan. In October, YTP participants in Chui region and FTI hosted a delegation of Tajik YTP participants to exchange experiences and best practices, supported by a grant from the UK Embassy in Dushanbe. The Tajik delegation to Chui included a diverse group of male and female youth and adult YTP participants from Sughd region, of both Tajik and Uzbek ethnicities. During the visit, the Tajik delegation visited Petrovka Drama Club in Chui region, where they shared a Forum Theater play and observed a local Forum Theater Jokers' contest. The delegation's next stop was to Tokmok, where they watched three Drama Clubs perform and shared experiences carrying out DCT. The Tajik participants in particular noted the strong support for YTP from educational officials in Chui region, while the Kyrgyz participants were interested to learn how Tajik theater groups were drawing more diverse audiences (outside of schools and including more adults and local officials) and handling sensitive conflict topics.

YTP participants in Andarak, near the border with Tajikistan, also hosted a visiting YTP group from that country. During the visit, both the Kyrgyz and Tajik Drama Clubs performed. Participants on both sides of the exchange expressed interest in sustaining the connection, as Kyrgyz and Tajiks near the border often come into conflict.

Essay Contest Winner: "In my childhood I dreamed of becoming a doctor and helping people, but I thought that my dream would come true when I grow up, become independent and run my own life. I would have continued thinking this way, until I became involved in YTP. I learned that every person, in spite of his or her age, can help mankind solve various problems and conflicts."
- *Aiperi Isakova, Isfana Drama Club (Batken region)*

After receiving an extension from USAID to continue the YTP program for an additional 24-months with geographic expansion into the Naryn and Talas regions of Kyrgyzstan, IREX initiated a **Participatory Program Assessment** to prepare for activities in the new regions.

Building on YTP's initial successes in Years 1 and 2, YTP emphasized capacity development for key individual and institutional DCT champions with extension period Objective 1: **Individuals and organizations develop capacity for supporting, institutionalizing, and implementing Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT work) and peace-promotion**. Activities under this objective included a **Master Trainers Workshop**, **Master Trainer Mentoring** program, and formation and support to **the YTP Leaders Forum** and **YTP Youth Advisory Committee**.

Participatory Program Assessment in Naryn and Talas

After the grant extension was finalized, IREX conducted immediate assessment and scoping activity to ensure that YTP extension activities align with mission priorities and respond to community needs. After meeting with Mission staff, Senior Program Officer Susan Armitage and Project Director Ulugbek Nurumbetov traveled to Naryn to meet with local officials, NGOs, and volunteers to identify regional challenges and establish relationships with stakeholders. Although weather conditions prevented a visit to Talas in March, YTP Program Director Nurumbetov and FTI Program Manager Anara Eginalieva visited Talas in April to meet with Oblast-level leaders in Talas city and with regional deputies outside of Talas city. Mr. Nurumbetov also returned to Naryn in May to complete the participatory assessment and selection of participants and the YTP Advisory Committee.

Key Conflict Issues Naryn: Poverty, racketeering, high rates of alcoholism, drug use, truancy, child labor, domestic violence and livestock raids

Key Conflict Issues Talas: Poverty, racketeering, high rates of alcoholism, labor migration, extremist religious groups, and weak connections between schools and local government

In both Naryn and Talas, local officials expressed strong support for the program, noting the need for productive youth activities to promote dialogue. In Talas, community members identified poverty, racketeering, high rates of alcoholism, labor migration, extremist religious groups, and weak connections between schools and local government as factors contributing to instability and conflict. Assessment in Naryn uncovered similar issues with poverty, racketeering, alcoholism, drug use, truancy, child labor, domestic violence and livestock raids being among the community's concerns. Although Naryn and Talas are less ethnically diverse than other regions, the empathy and tolerance encouraged by YTP will be especially important to youth with limited exposure to diversity.

Selection of Naryn NGO Partner

As a result of IREX's assessment of youth organizations in Naryn oblast, IREX invited potential NGO partners to complete an application to partner on the YTP programming in Naryn. Four organizations with experience in youth, civil society and/or peace building projects were identified and completed an application describing their experience relevant to the YTP program and an implementation budget. All four organizations submitted applications prior to the deadline: Jash Danaker, Coalition for Democracy, Youth of Naryn, and NujJolBer.

With concurrence from USAID, IREX selected Jash Danaker and awarded the organization a fixed obligation subgrant to support YTP program implementation in Naryn. Of the organizations considered, Jash Danaker's organizational mission and goals align most closely to the goals of YTP. Other reasons for selecting Jash Danaker included superior staffing, key contacts with local administration and officials that are crucial to the successful implementation of YTP in Naryn, and a successful history of implementing youth projects.

Master Trainer Selection and Workshop

In the extension period of the YTP program, Master Trainers from Batken and Chui played a key role facilitating trainings and supporting new Drama Clubs in Naryn and Talas. The ability and confidence of Master Trainers grew throughout the Years 3 and 4, culminating in a successful Sustainability Workshop and End of Program workshop facilitated by Master Trainers and program staff without support from external consultants.

To begin preparations for the Master Trainer role, ten adult trainers from Batken and Chui participated in a Master Trainer Workshop from July 13-19, 2012. IREX and FTI selected Master Trainers based on criteria including mastery of DCT methodology, facilitation skills, time management, successful implementation of Drama Club activities, and interest to commit additional time to the program.

The Master Trainer Workshop consisted of advanced training exercises and in-depth practice for facilitation at the Training of Trainers (TOT) event. IREX and DCT consultant Dr. Ananda Breed designed the Master Trainer Workshop to prepare Master Trainers for the TOT and for mentoring the Naryn and Talas drama clubs throughout the program. In addition, the Master Trainers Workshop allowed Master Trainers to share best practices, deepen connections, and reflect on the nuances between their various roles as teachers, mentors, and coaches. At the

conclusion of the 10-day workshop, Dr. Breed found all 10 Master Trainers to be at least adequately skilled and assessed 6 of the 10 as highly or extremely skilled.

Reflecting on her role following facilitation of the 2013 Sustainability Workshop, Master Trainer Irina Voronina summed up the experience, “Forum Theater changed my life but then becoming a Master Trainer changed me more. I am confident now with other people and I know that I can lead them to know about Forum Theater and use it to tell about their experiences.”

In addition to the leadership provided by Master Trainers to YTP programs in Years 3 and 4, Master Trainers also received invitations bring DCT best practice to others outside of the program. FTI utilized several Master Trainers to hold DCT trainers in Osh and Jalalabad. Another Master Trainer presented on DCT approaches at a conference for educators in Moscow. Following the close of the program, the Bactria Cultural Centre in Dushanbe, Tajikistan hired two Master Trainers to design and facilitate a 10-day training on DCT for youth in Tajikistan.

Master Trainer Mentoring

Beginning at the end of Year 3 and continuing throughout Year 4, Master Trainers from Batken and Chui supported new drama clubs in Naryn and Talas with bi-monthly mentoring phone calls and a mentoring visit to each new drama club in fall 2012 and in spring 2013. In total, **ten mentors made twenty-three visits to thirteen schools** in Naryn and Talas.

Initial mentoring support focused on sustaining excitement created by the summer Training of Trainers and Camp events. Mentors helped new drama clubs to prepare for communicating with parents about YTP and to practice speaking with local officials about their drama clubs. Connections with Master Trainer mentors also helped new drama clubs to hone their ability to facilitate forum theater exercises. Galiya Abekova, a drama club leader from Naryn, commented on her experience working with Master Trainer mentor Irina Voronina, “Irina leads exercises very clearly. She is a real master trainer. She can attract people to forum theater and working with her contributed a lot to my activeness in the project.”

During the spring mentoring visits, mentors assisted clubs in Naryn and Talas to prepare Sustainability Grants applications and shared lessons learned from their own experience implementing Sustainability Grant projects. Mentors also worked with club leaders to identify training needs for the following school year in order to attract new youth members to their active drama clubs. As drama club leaders in Naryn and Talas become more experienced, the mentoring relationship evolved and IREX and FTI emphasized the importance of viewing the mentor/mentee relationship as a partnership between leaders who both have experience and insight to share.

YTP Leaders Forum and Youth Advisory Committee

Through the YTP Leaders Forum and Youth Advisory Committee, IREX supported adult and youth leaders to ensure development of a sustainable network of DCT champions in Kyrgyzstan. Primary outcomes of the Forum and Youth Advisory Committee were **the launch of an active Facebook community** for YTP participants and supporters and **the formation of an officially recognized NGO**, the Union of Trainers and Consultants of Forum Theater. Throughout Years 3, 4 and 5 IREX assisted these groups to hold a total of 10 meetings, often held in conjunction with other program events to minimize travel obligations for participants.

During Year Four, the YTP Leaders Forum and Youth Advisory Committee successfully carried out their first-year action plan, focusing on efforts to 1) increase online presence and connections 2) improve communications outreach and 3) establish an officially registered NGO with capacity to carry out trainings and events.

Members of both the YTP Leaders Forum and Youth Advisory Committee continued their activity in the summer with a performance at the Caravan of Peace event in Bishkek. In July, Master Trainer members of the Union NGO served as trainers at an event for UNICEF-funded drama clubs in Osh and Jalal-Abad and used this opportunity to share information about the Union NGO.

In a meeting at the YTP End of Program Workshop in November 2013, leaders of both groups emphasized a need to prepare to seek outside funding to continue DCT activity exchange between communities following the close of the YTP program. IREX and FTI responded to this need by facilitating a Leaders Forum Planning Retreat and Training in February 2014, focused on preparing the Union NGO to submit a small grant application to the Soros Foundation. Following the close of YTP, the Union learned that their application for funding was not accepted.

The Union leadership, particularly Director Halima Madalinova, continue to seek new opportunities to fund activities and have plans to submit a Democracy Commission grant application in Fall 2014. Following the close of the YTP program, two trainers from the Union traveled to Dushanbe, Tajikistan by invitation of the Bactria Cultural Center to facilitate a 10-day training on forum theater for Tajik youth. In May 2014, the Union leadership developed three potential logos to represent their group and solicited feedback on the logos from the larger YTP community on their

Facebook page. Despite this continued interest and commitment, language barriers and a lack of experience writing grant applications make grant competitions challenging for the Union leaders, who continue to hold full-time teaching positions in their home communities.

G. EXTENSION PERIOD OBJECTIVE 2: ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS (2012-2014)

Under extension period Objective #2: **Youth and youth-serving adults develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors of community peace promoters**, IREX focused introducing DCT to youth and adults from Naryn and Talas and preparing these participants to lead Drama Clubs and hold performances in their schools and communities. Activities under this objective included a **Training of Trainers** and **DCT Summer Camp**.

Naryn and Talas Trainer Selection and TOT

Concurrent with the community selection process, IREX, FTI, and Jash Danaker selected 26 educators to serve as adult leaders for Drama Clubs in Naryn and Talas. From July 19-27, 2012, IREX held a TOT at Bellcanto in Issykul to introduce DCT methodology to the Naryn and Talas adult trainers and to prepare them to lead the DCT Summer Camp.

Trainer Feedback on TOT: “At TOT practice and theory were interwoven together which was very good. We were given the right and appropriate questions.”

-Male trainer from Ak-muz, Naryn

In developing the agenda and training materials for the TOT, IREX, FTI and DCT Consultant Ananda Breed sought to build on the solid base of curriculum developed in 2010 for the original implementation period. Responding to feedback from DCT leaders in Batken and Chui, IREX and Dr. Breed changed the formatting of the Trainer’s Manual to allow for more flexibility in adapting the camp and TOT agenda to fit learner needs and allow adult leaders to more easily locate the trainer instructions for various types of exercises when they are planning Drama Club meetings in their home communities. IREX printed training materials in both Russian and Kyrgyz language and simultaneous Russian and Kyrgyz translation was available to participants throughout the TOT.

A key aspect of the TOT was the leadership and effective facilitation conducted by the Master Trainers. From the beginning of the TOT, Master Trainers engaged with the adult trainers from the Naryn and Talas communities that IREX matched them with for ongoing mentoring. Master Trainers also received daily feedback on their facilitation from Dr. Breed. By sharing their personal experiences and challenges with the new trainers, the Master Trainers prepared the new trainers to work with youth in Kyrgyzstan and further developed their own skills in coaching and mentoring adults.

Following the TOT, Dr. Breed completed an assessment of each trainer’s learning. She assessed 24 of the 26 trainers as adequately, highly proficient or extremely proficient. Dr. Breed identified two trainers who needed to make some improvements in understanding and carrying out DCT activities and she worked with the Master Trainers to provide extra coaching to those two trainers during the Summer Camp.

Youth Voice Highlight: “YTP promotes that people shouldn’t be indifferent to problems of the community. I understand the conflicts around me and how I should resolve them, thanks to Forum Theater.”

-Female youth participant from Baetovo, Naryn

Selection of Youth Participants and DCT Summer Camp

The DCT Summer Camp introduced conflict prevention and resolution through DCT to the youth participants who later led forum theater performances and brought their excitement and energy for DCT to their home communities. During the DCT Summer Camp held at Aurora in Issykkul from August 11-24, 2012, IREX trained 50 youth from 13 target schools in Naryn and Talas.

Adult trainers from Naryn and Talas assisted Master Trainers, Dr. Breed, IREX, FTI and Jash Danaker staff in facilitating the DCT Summer Camp. As with the TOT, the Summer Camp curriculum was drawn largely from materials created by Dr. Breed and IREX for Camp 1 and Camp 2 in 2010.

Using this curriculum, facilitators led a process designed to build trust, create a positive group dynamic, establish a spirit of fun and exploration, provide tools for self-expression, and build deeper understanding and awareness of conflict. Facilitators began with introductory theater games to acclimate youth to the process of using their bodies as instruments for self-expression, sharing, and listening. After an atmosphere of trust was established, youth began to share sensitive personal stories about conflict. A local professional counselor was present at the camp to assist youth who experienced emotional distress or who wanted to talk privately with a neutral adult.

Youth Voice Highlight: “[The camp] gave me a lot of suggestions and directions how to be active, tolerant, confident and find common language with others. I want to thank all of you for these lessons and opinions, as well as to thank American people one more time!!!”
-Male youth participant, Boo-terek, Talas

Drawing from their personal stories of conflict, participants improvised scenes and worked in small groups to create forum theater performances. In the second half of the Summer Camp, youth performed the pieces for their peers, who served as audience

members.

One of the most powerful forum theater performances was inspired by the conflict story shared by a young male participant. During the story circle, this youth shared his personal background as a racketeer and how he recognized in the camp that he had the ability to reject racketeering and to influence others to do so as well. Following his group's forum theatre performance about racketeering, this youth stated that he had finally achieved one of his greatest goals by engaging others in discussion and action to stop racketeering. He also told others that the day of his group's performance was the best day of his life because he could now see how to create change in his life and the lives of others.

H. EXTENSION PERIOD OBJECTIVE 3: ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS (2012-2014)

Extension period Objective #3: **Objective 3: Peace promoters and communities support a culture of peace in their communities, oblasts and nation** focused on supporting YTP participants to carry out forum theater performances and lead dialogue around conflict issues in their communities and throughout Kyrgyzstan. Activities under Objective 3 included **Drama Clubs Grants** for Naryn and Talas, **Theater Tour Grants** for Naryn and Talas, **Sustainability Grants** for Batken and Chui, Sustainability Grants for Naryn and Talas, **Inter-Regional Travel Grants**, a **Sustainability Workshop** and an **End of Program Workshop** on Planning and Partnering.

Drama Club Grants to Naryn and Talas Clubs

Drama Club Grants of \$400 to new drama clubs provided an incentive to quickly begin drama club activity and to hold regular club meetings and performances. After receiving concurrence from USAID and ongoing oversight from IREX, FTI awarded 13 fixed-obligation grants to new drama clubs in Naryn and Talas to support drama clubs activities taking place from November 2012- January 2013.

With support from the Drama Club Grants, Talas and Naryn drama clubs were highly successful in exposing new audiences to the DCT methodology in their home communities. Through Drama Club grants, over 210 youth who did not attend the summer camp have been involved in DCT as "players," participating in at least one drama club session. The 13 drama clubs conducted 35 forum theater performances in their home and neighboring communities, reaching a combined audience of over 5,000 people.

During the Drama Club Grant implementation period, drama clubs quickly earned support from their schools and communities by demonstrating a commitment to regular meetings and performances. Communities welcomed forum theater performances and drama clubs received positive feedback from school and local officials. "The atmosphere all over school is changing. Parents have come to us and asked 'Please! Take my child as a member of the drama club!'" commented Akmatova Kanyshai Kubatbekovna, a school principal in Talas.

With support from Drama Club Grants, several Drama Clubs in Naryn had success partnering with projects led by local and international NGOs. "Umut" and "Danek" Drama Clubs collaborated with UNDP and Jash Danaker to have a role in two activities designed to build peace and prevent conflict affecting women and youth. The campaign Women as Builders of Peace in Baetov village, Ak-Tala district invited Umut" Drama Club to perform on the topic of bride-napping, a serious problem facing girls in that community. In Ak-muz village in the At-Bashy district the "Danek" club played a role in a series of trainings to improve the capacity of the youth to prevent conflict, performing on the topics of alcoholism and school racketeering. The local newspaper "Tenir Too" highlighted the successful collaboration of the "Umut" and "Danek" Drama Clubs with UNDP.

Theater Tour Grants to Drama Clubs in Naryn and Talas

Following the successful implementation of Drama Club Grant activities, clubs in Naryn and Talas applied for Theater Tour Grants to expand the reach of their forum theater performances to neighboring communities. IREX worked with

Extension Period Small Grants

Drama Club Grants (November 2012 – January 2013)

Supported 35 performances for 5,000 audience members in Naryn and Talas oblasts

Theater Tour Grants (April 2013 – June 2013)

Supported travel to 57 performances throughout Naryn and Talas oblasts for 5,445 audience members and leading to highlights in local media, including oblast-level news in Talas

Sustainability Grants to Batken and Chui (April 2013 – September 2013)

Supported 72 performances for more than 5,000 audience members and 21 trainings for more than 423 individuals

Sustainability Grants to Naryn and Talas (August 2013 – December 2013)

Supported 54 performances for 6,450 audience members and 35 trainings for more than 700 individuals

Inter-Regional Travel Grants (November – December 2013)

Promoted inter-regional connections and brought DCT to 1,670 new audience members in Osh, Jalalabad and Issyk-kul oblasts

FTI to award 13 Theater Tour Grants for up to \$600 to hold theater tour performances from April to June 2013. With financial support from the Theater Tour Grants, Drama Clubs in Talas and Naryn held 57 theater tour performances reaching 5,445 audience members.

Theater tour performances examined themes of family violence, unemployment, neglected children, theft, school racketeering, migration, early marriages, bank loans and debts, school mockery and school bullying.

The Kyzyladyr Drama Club in Talas focused on bringing attention to the problem of expensive graduation and 18th birthday parties. In Talas, many parents take loans from banks and other people to fund elaborate parties for their children. While youth enjoy the graduation parties, they or their parents must eventually pay the loan and in some cases leave Kyrgyzstan for Russia or Kazakhstan in order to earn money for the repayment. The Kyzyladyr Drama Club depicted this problem in several tour performances throughout the Karabuura region of Talas and challenged audience members to consider less elaborate, low-cost celebrations at the end of the school year.

Talas and Naryn clubs received significant media coverage of their theater tours. On May 2, the oblast-level television station in Talas included a performance of the Aksay Drama Club in their news block. The website barakelde.kg posted an article on May 27 about 3 new drama clubs in Naryn. In Kochkor, Naryn the newspaper Kyrgyz Tuusu examined themes from the Kochkor Drama Club's performance about young beggars in an article about the origins of youth beggars, racketeers and thieves.

Sustainability Grants to Drama Clubs in Batken and Chui

Sustainability Grants of \$500 to \$2,000 enabled drama clubs to strengthen their ability to carry out drama activities and to transfer their knowledge of DCT methodology to other local institutions. IREX worked with FTI to award 19 Sustainability Grants to Drama Clubs in Batken and Chui oblasts for activities implemented from April 1 to September 30, 2013. During the Sustainability Grant period, Drama Clubs in Chui and Batken conducted **72 performances reaching more than 5,000 audience members**. Batken and Chui Drama Clubs also held 21 trainings about forum theater methodology for 423 youth and adult training participants.

An excellent example of cooperation between a Drama Club and the local community took place in Tokmok City, Chui oblast where the Tokmok City Prosecutor, Tokmok City Internal Affairs Department, Tokmok City Youth Department and Tokmok City Education Department came together to publicize and participate in a performance about school racketeering. The Tokmok and Iskra Drama Clubs then continued cooperation on youth crime prevention with the Tokmok City Prosecutor's Office, Internal Affairs Department and Education Department, presenting a second performance about school racketeering among girls. In other communities, the "Kelechek" drama club was invited to contribute photos, videos and a brief training to an exhibition organized by the Education Department of Bishkek City. The adult leaders of "Shans" drama club in Petrovka, Chui leader took part in a district-level "Best Teacher" contest where she demonstrated forum theater methodology to earn second place in the competition.

Sustainability Grants also created opportunities to continue training to prepare and inspire a younger generation of youth to lead forum theater activities at their schools after the initial group of youth participants graduate. Through **21 trainings** in Batken and Chui, Drama Clubs used Sustainability Grants to train younger youth in forum theater methodology and to introduce forum theater to teachers and students from schools that are starting new Drama Clubs. Trainings both introduced the forum theater methodology and covered basic planning techniques for gaining local support and publicizing forum theater.

Sustainability Grants to Drama Clubs in Naryn and Talas

Drama Clubs in Talas and Naryn performed and shared DCT with support from Sustainability Grants, carried out from August through December 2013. During the reporting period, Drama Clubs in Talas and Naryn conducted 54 performances reaching a total of 6,455 audience members and held 35 trainings on DCT methodology for more than 700 youth and adult training participants. Additionally, youth and adult YTP participants trained and mentored five new drama clubs formed in Naryn and Talas.

With support from the Sustainability Grant awards, each Drama Club in Naryn and Talas showed at least three performances in the reporting period. Topics of these performances included bride kidnapping, school racketeering, poverty, domestic violence, alcoholism, early marriage, migration, cross border issues, and suicide. Many Drama Clubs prepared performances for community events marking Elder's Day, World Aids Day, and New Year.

In order to plan and facilitate trainings, youth leaders drew from their experience designing and leading sessions during the March 2013 Sustainability Workshop. Sustainability Grants supported training for more than 700 new individuals, both students of original YTP target schools and students and adults in five schools that opened new drama clubs during the reporting period. With mentoring and training assistance from existing clubs, each of the five new clubs concluded a signed drama club charter and identified an adult leader and group of youth participants to lead the new extracurricular activity in their school.

Sustainability Grant activities attracted attention of local NGOs and led to new cooperation opportunities for drama clubs in Talas. Aykel NGO in Talas provided financial support of 7,000 som for Kelechek drama club in Amanbaevo to travel to the border with Kazakhstan in Manas District. Kelechek's performance, "Where are you, mom?" examined labor migration issues and related family conflicts.

Inter-Regional Travel Grants to Drama Clubs in Batken, Chui, Naryn and Talas

Following receipt of concurrence notification from USAID on November 14, IREX supported FTI to award 11 in-kind Inter-Regional Theater Tour awards. With support from the awards, Drama Clubs carried out **10 Inter-Regional Theater Tours reaching 1,670 new audience members in Osh, Jalalabad and Issyk-kul oblasts** and bringing awareness of DCT methodology for peaceful conflict resolution to new regions and building relationships with schools, NGOs and government officials.

Youth Voice: "Before, if I was involved in the conflict I could not admit my guilt, and tried to justify my actions. Now, I try to understand the position of the second person, try to calmly talk about the problem, and work together to find solutions. Forum theater changed me!"

- Male youth participant from Amanbaeva, Talas

YTP Inter-Regional Theater Tours November and December 2013		
Drama Club	Performances	Departure Date
<i>Osh Oblast</i>		
"Etyud" Tokmok, Chui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lenin school (Russian language school) Kara-Suu region 	November 25, 2013
"Compromise", Atbashy, Naryn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rozahunova school #6 • Nazarov school #8, Aravan region 	November 25, 2013
"Lastochka", Kyzyl-Adyr, Talas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T.Altybaeva school, Kara-Suu region 	December 3, 2013
"Dostuk", Iskra, Batken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bary School, Osh city 	December 12, 2013
<i>Jalalabad Oblast</i>		
"Shayloo", Sokuluk, Chui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nogoev school, Maasy, Nooken region 	November 29, 2013
"Shans", Petrovka, Chui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaydar school, Blagoveshenka, Suzak region • Osh Airport, waiting room 	November 29, 2013 November 30, 2013
"Birimdik", Samarkandek, Batken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changyr-Tash school, Kara-Daria, Suzak region 	December 2, 2013
"Kelechek", Amanbaevo, Talas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #26 school, Shamaldy-Say 	December 3, 2013
<i>Issyk-Kul Oblast</i>		
"Chagylgan", Kochkor, Naryn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #3 school, Karakol city 	November 26, 2013
"Umut", Bokonbaev, Naryn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #11 school, Karakol city 	November 26, 2013

Inter-regional tour performances took place primarily in schools, often with school administrators, education officials and other local government leaders in attendance. Performance topics included child labor, child abuse, early pregnancy and early sexual activity, early marriages, school racketeering and murder, importance of education, regionalism, migration, unemployment, family violence and suicide.

In addition to spreading the DCT methodology and highlighting youth efforts to support peaceful conflict resolution, the Inter-Regional Theater Tours also increased youth and adult participants' understanding of the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan. A male youth drama club member commented, "I used to think that all southerners are very poor and devastation is everywhere. I also thought that they are dishonest, cunning people. After the tour, I realized that this is not so. People who met us were very friendly and hospitable. Now I tell friends and acquaintances that southerners are the same as we are."

An additional Inter-Regional Theater Tour was planned to take place in January 2014 for a drama club based in the Leylek district of Batken. Following a violent incident on the border and the extended closure of the border crossing in Leylek, IREX cancelled this final tour in order to ensure safety of all participants.

Sustainability Workshop

From March 20 to March 24, IREX held a sustainability workshop at Gosresidencia in Issyk-kul. During the 4-day interactive workshop, 43 youth and 26 adult leaders from Naryn and Talas learned strategies to promote drama activities in their communities, practiced workshop facilitation and developed plans to train other youth and teachers in DCT methodology with support of Sustainability Grants. Highlights of the event included planning and facilitation led by Master Trainers, youth-led workshop sessions, sustainability planning with drama clubs, and integration of youth from different oblasts.

Youth Feedback: “Being able to make friends with youth from other regions was a highlight for me.”

-Youth participant in Sustainability Workshop

The design of the Sustainability Workshop allowed for significant leadership from youth participants. Master Trainers split youth into 9 groups and assigned each group a time during the final day to lead a DCT training session for other youth and adults. This method helps prepares youth for training facilitation during the Sustainability Grant period. Commenting on the youth-led sessions, one club leader noted, “I liked how youth led the sessions as facilitators. I enjoyed seeing my student Jyrgal actively led a session at the workshop.”

A major accomplishment of the Sustainability Workshop was increased integration between participants from Naryn and Talas oblasts. When planning the workshop, Master Trainers identified cooperation between participants from different oblasts as an important outcome of the event. For this reason, Master Trainers chose to create activity groups comprised of youth and adults from both oblasts. “Being able to make friends with youth from other regions was a highlight for me,” explained one male youth participant at the Sustainability Workshop.

End of Program Workshop on Planning and Partnering

On November 5-6, 2013 in Bishkek, IREX, FTI and Jash Danaker facilitated an End of Program Workshop on Planning and Partnering, attended by a youth and an adult representative of thirty-two drama clubs in Batken, Chui, Naryn and Talas. The event served as a summative learning opportunity for participants and showcased YTP’s success with a public performance and poster display on drama club activities in local communities.

During the End of Program Workshop, participants reflected on the YTP experience and on the effect that YTP and forum theater is having on their lives and their communities. “YTP is one of the best programs because it helped me to solve problems in a peaceful way,” commented a female youth from Talas. A male youth from Naryn emphasized his commitment to sharing what he learns with others, “The YTP program helped me a lot in improving my leadership qualities and in establishing goals. I will share the experience I got from this workshop with other students and will work together to keep our Drama Club sustainable.”

IREX designed workshop curriculum to prepare each drama club to continue offering performances and training in their home community. Training sessions followed three tracks of emphasis:

- 1) partnering in local communities,
- 2) creating action plans, and
- 3) providing emotional support to youth.

In the partnering track, participants shared experiences fundraising for their clubs and discussed benefits, strategies and challenges related to partnering with school administration, local government, local businesses and donor organizations. Participants also discussed the prospects for using ticket sales as an income stream to support ongoing drama club activity. In the planning track, drama clubs practiced creating SMART goals and then wrote action plans geared towards meeting their goals for the academic year. Sessions in the emotional support track focused on identifying emotions in conflict situations and strategies for supporting youth as they experience difficult emotions.

On November 6, youth participants led a public performance at Dostuk Hotel in Bishkek, creating dialogue around issues of internal migration as well as alcohol abuse and teen pregnancy. Following the performance, USAID Mission Director Michael Greene thanked the youth for their efforts to promote peaceful conflict resolution in Kyrgyzstan. Murataly Uchkempirov, Chief of the Department for Cooperation with Youth Unions, NGOs, and Committees in Kyrgyzstan’s Ministry of Labor, Migration and Youth also spoke to the audience, expressing support for youth efforts to lead community dialogue. Following the performance, youth shared posters with guests and spoke about the ongoing drama club activities in their communities. AKI Press covered the event and published an article (<http://kg.akipress.org/news:586149>) about the youth-led forum theater performance.

I. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Throughout program implementation, IREX carried out monitoring and evaluation activities according to the approved PMP. Following approval for the extension period, IREX created and received USAID approval for a redesigned PMP to measure results in the program extension period. *Results are reported according to these PMPs in Attachments 1 and 2 of this report.*

External Evaluation

In September 2011, IREX contracted an independent evaluation consultant based in Tajikistan, Vadim Nigmatov, to conduct the final program evaluation. Mr. Nigmatov implemented a user-focused, externally-led final evaluation of the program in October 2011. To build local capacity to the greatest extent possible, the evaluation included a training component. FTI and IREX staff were trained in M&E methodology and helped to conduct data collection in the field under close observation and with coaching by the consultant designing and leading the evaluation.

The evaluation used a quasi-experimental design comparing YTP participants against a demographically similar group of non-participants (the comparison group). The evaluation results suggest that the YTP approach, including the DCT methodology employed by the program, is an effective tool in promoting lasting attitudinal and behavioral changes in youth and adults in relation to conflict issues at the community level, relations within the community, and particularly in relation to people of other ethnicities, religions and nationalities. The DCT methodology was also determined to be very effective in raising self-confidence and developing leadership skills, not only among youth, but also among adults.

Community Baseline and Enumerator Training

Based on positive feedback from partner staff trained by Mr. Nigmatov, IREX worked with him to facilitate collection of a community baseline and to train Jash Danaker staff and new FTI staff in Talas in oral survey enumeration. In September 2012, Mr. Nigmatov trained FTI and Jash Danaker staff who are serving as enumerators for the community baseline assessment, an aspect of project monitoring and evaluation added to the plan for the extension period. Mr. Nigmatov assisted IREX in designing this assessment, which is an oral survey intended to create a baseline measurement of community attitudes around conflict resolution and of community member ability to speak about conflict in an open and balanced way. Mr. Nigmatov conducted a one-day training for staff in Bishkek before traveling together with FTI and Jash Danaker staff to Talas where they began conducting surveys under his supervision.

Through training with Mr. Nigmatov and collection of the community baseline, FTI and Jash Danaker improved their capacity to develop and collect oral survey information. In November and December 2013, FTI and Jash Danaker successfully collected the community endline survey with assistance and coaching from IREX.

J. BUDGET ANALYSIS

A comparison of budget projections with actuals follows below:

	TOTAL AUTHORIZED FUNDS	TOTAL CUMULATIVE EXPENSES	TOTAL UNLIQUIDATED OBLIGATION
DIRECT COSTS			
Personnel	157,680	166,148	-8,468
Fringe	13,170	16,346	-3,176
Travel	275,322	244,534	30,788
Supplies	20,221	14,913	5,308
Contractual	430,235	430,525	-290
Other	56,920	62,543	-5,623
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	953,548	935,009	18,539
INDIRECT COSTS			
Indirect Cost	146,399	144,214	2,185
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS	146,399	144,214	2,185
Total Expenses	1,099,947	1,079,223	20,724

Throughout the program, IREX adjusted spending to provide maximum investments in partner and grantee capacity development and meet program objectives in a timely manner. These adjustments included:

Personnel and Fringe: IREX dedicated additional staff time to strengthening the newly formed Union NGO and preparing Master Trainers to carry out the Sustainability Workshop without an external consultant as co-facilitator. Program Officer Amy Bernath spent additional time on the program in spring 2013 ahead of the Sustainability Workshop, fulfilling a materials preparation and coaching role previously held by external consultants.

Travel: IREX experienced significant savings over budgeted travel expenses. Although lodging and board costs steadily increased over the course of the program, IREX often combined monitoring visits to different regions and reduced transport expenses for participants by using ground transportation for transit to program events.

Other: At the close of the program, IREX allocated resources to development of a Drama for Conflict Transformation Toolkit, adapted from program training materials and tailored for external audiences.

K. CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following summarizes challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations compiled in previous YTP quarterly and annual reports.

Challenges:

Fighting in Osh and Jalalabad in June 2010 led to heightened tensions throughout Kyrgyzstan. While Batken and Chui were not directly affected by the June fighting in Osh and Jalalabad, IREX and FTI staff observed that trust between ethnic Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Dungans, Russians and other minority groups had markedly decreased, even in areas removed from the violence. In coordination with USAID, IREX made the decision to postpone program events until the political situation stabilized following the Constitutional Referendum on June 30.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

Recognize that competing time commitments for both youth and adults are a significant challenge for extracurricular programming. In rural areas, youth are expected to help with planting and harvesting and in more urban areas, some youth are expected to work after school in local markets. Youth also have commitments to participate in other extracurricular activities, such as the annual Olympiad. Adult leaders must balance time spent supporting drama clubs with other income-generating activities and with household responsibilities. IREX responded to this reality by holding major events during school holidays and during weekends whenever possible. Youth are most likely to stay engaged in the program when they are offered new opportunities, for example an essay contest or an opportunity to travel to perform in a new community.

Engage multiple adult leaders in each school in anticipation of teacher turnover. Teacher turnover in schools is a challenge to sustainability. Although youth have the training and ability to plan drama clubs events with minimal adult assistance, schools will not allow drama clubs to continue official work without an adult leader. When adult leaders trained by the program leave their teaching positions, IREX and FTI work with school administrators to identify a new adult leader for the drama club. Currently, FTI is working with schools in Batken to find new leaders for two established clubs. IREX found that identifying and training two adult leaders from each targeted school in Naryn and Talas significantly mitigated this challenge.

Prioritize integration of youth and adult participants from different regions at project events. Many youth identified meeting friends from other regions for the first time as a major positive aspect of their YTP experience. Although there are some aspects of drama club planning that should take place together with youth and adults from the same drama club, the majority of activities can be used as an opportunity to integrate participants from different schools and regions. At the upcoming End of Program event, all sessions will include group activities with a mix of participants from Batken, Chui, Naryn and Talas oblasts.

In YTP target communities, YTP was often one of the only productive extracurricular opportunities available to youth. Youth participants were thirsty for outlets in which to develop their leadership, communication, critical thinking, teamwork, and other key skills for conflict mitigation, civic engagement, and democracy. In rural areas, participants quickly rose to the challenge of leadership and were able to inspire thousands of additional youth. Tight networks formed between youth participants. Teachers, administrators, and participants themselves noted the program's positive effects on at-risk youth who had behavior problems or were planning to marry early, drop out of school, and migrate. Based on the demonstrated positive outcomes of the YTP program, IREX encourages USAID and its implementing partners to continue investing in the youth of Kyrgyzstan.