



HELVETAS

KYRGYZSTAN

BRIEFING
NOTE 2
March 2026



Tune In!

A training programme that strengthens intergenerational relationships

This briefing note forms part of a series that shares achievements and lessons learned of the Youth United for the Future (YOU) project which operated from 2017 to 2025. The project was implemented by Helvetas Kyrgyzstan, Youth of Osh and Progress Aravan. Its aim was to improve the integration of young people into the social and economic life of southern Kyrgyzstan.



An interactive training curriculum that equips young people and adults with the attitude, skills and knowledge to transform their relationships.

About Tune In



Tune In is a practical training programme that helps to strengthen the relationship between young people and adults. It was designed in the context of southern Kyrgyzstan where a gap between generations was a key factor contributing to feelings of frustration and marginalization amongst young people.

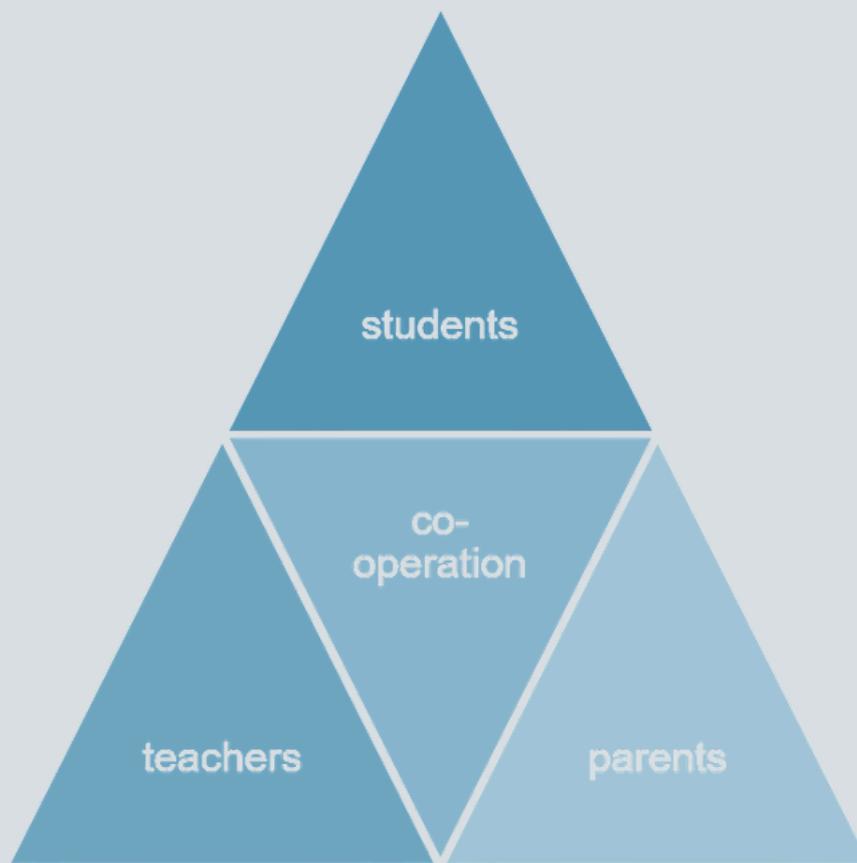
Young people often felt that they had little control over the direction of their lives, and that adults did not listen to them or take their concerns seriously. Starting in south Kyrgyzstan, the methodology has since proven effective beyond the region, being successfully adapted and institutionalised across the country. This demonstrates its scalability and relevance in diverse contexts nationwide.

The training programme for young people and adults uses experiential learning methods to improve participants' self-awareness, self-worth and self-confidence. It trains them to better communicate and cooperate with others, and to be more accepting and valuing of differences.

The methodology is all about “tuning in”.

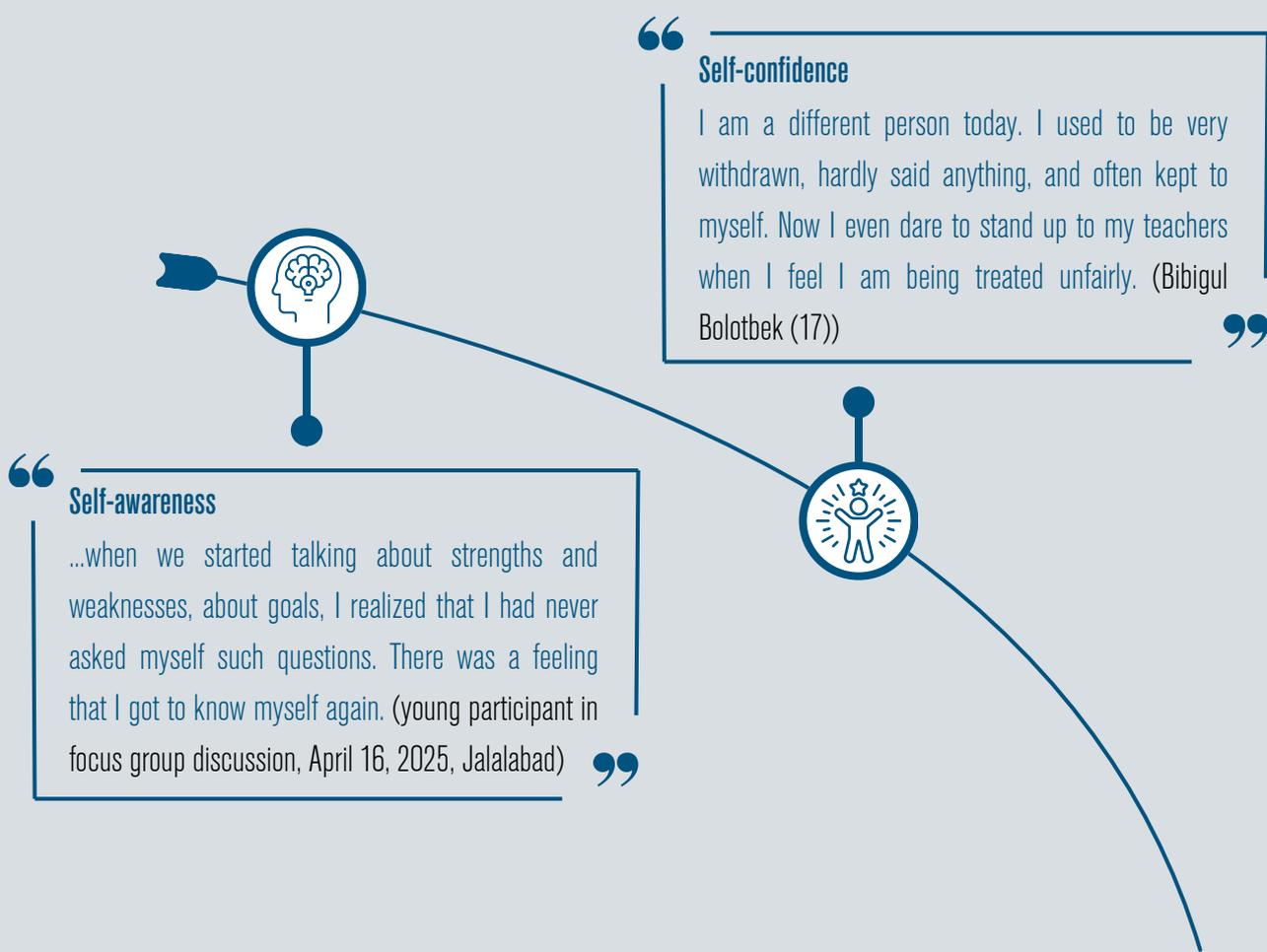
The power of Tune-In

The YOU project used the Tune-In training programme to work with school-going young people aged 14-17, their teachers and their parents. Teachers were trained in the methodology and then, in turn, trained their students and their students' parents. In focus group discussions, as well as surveys and interviews conducted as part of an external evaluation, representatives of all three groups reported significant changes as a result of participating in the programme.



Impact on young people

Young participants reported an increase in self-awareness, self-confidence, improved relationships with their parents and teachers, and new ambitions for themselves and their futures.



“

Engagement

Earlier, my child was very withdrawn, ..., thanks to the project, he began to express his opinion more, he became sociable, he began to participate in public life, he began to sing at the university, he began to visit nursing homes because he himself chose the specialty of a social worker.

(Parent participant in focus group discussion, September 17, 2024)

”



“

Ambition

I used to think about easy money, about business, just to make money. But after practicing within the project, I realized that it was not so easy, and I began to think differently. I realized that I need to study and work, and not hope for quick money... Now, I want to become a dentist.

(young participant in focus group discussion, April 16, 2025, Jalalabad)

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“

Relationship to school

Classes have become friendlier, students support each other. Children are now busy with projects, not gossip and quarrels. There are no previous conflicts.

((teacher) (external evaluation))

”

“

Relationship with parents

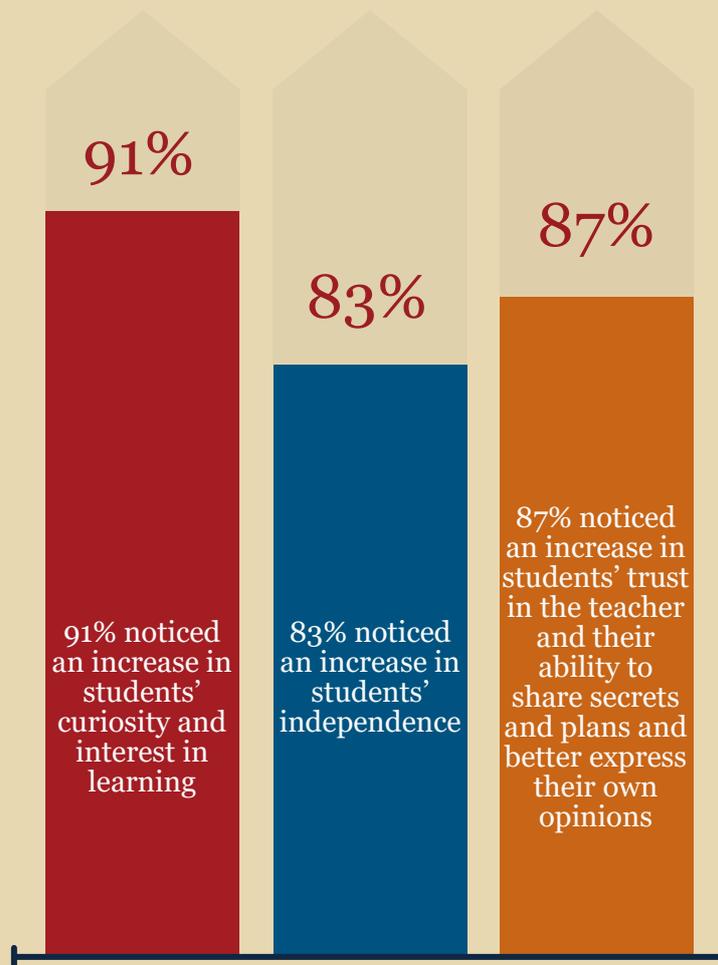
Parents began to understand us, we learned to speak correctly and correctly explain what we feel and want.

(Young participant in focus group discussion, September 17, 2024)

”

Tune In's impact on young participants

Teachers noted significant positive changes in adolescent behaviour after the implementation of the programs. 47 teachers involved in the implementation of the programme were surveyed as part of a final external evaluation of the project:



Impact on adults

Teachers

Changed view of their role:

Teachers noted that the project “woke them up” them. It helped them to look at their role differently and led them to adopt a more supportive and interactive style of communication. Many began to conduct lessons in a freer, less traditional format.

Parents

Increased attention:

Parents realized they often did not really listen to their children, thinking that they knew best. They gained new insights into the value of listening to their children. One parent reported: “I began to pay attention and time to my child, I began to actively listen to my child,

Improved engagement with students:

83% of teachers surveyed as part of a final project evaluation noted positive changes in their style of interaction with students. One teacher commented: “**I didn't even know that it was possible to communicate with teenagers like that. We've never had such open conversations in class.**”

Increase in teacher motivation:

The programme gave teachers a sense of mission and value in their work. Many teachers, having become coaches, felt like important agents of change, which increased their motivation and strengthened the culture of conscious education. “**After these sessions, it was like I got a second wind. I fell in love with my job again.**” said one teacher.

Improved interaction between teachers:

The programme contributed to interactions between teachers and the creation of a positive atmosphere. Teachers began to informally exchange their experiences and share knowledge with colleagues. The authority of teachers who had participated in the programme also increased among teachers and colleagues.

the exercise when our children did not listen to us had a great effect on me, and I realized that we also do this in life.”

Increased understanding of their children:

In the words of one parent: “**It turns out that I did not understand the inner world of my daughter before. Now I understand her inner world. We are used to shutting them up in everyday life.**”

Changed view of their role:

The traditional approach to parenting is quite authoritarian. The assumption is that the parent is always right, and it is the parent's role to give advice and tell the children what to do. Participants in the trainings reported realizing they should listen more to learn from their children and support them in their choices. The following quote from one mother captures this realization: “**It turns out that I did not know what kind of mother I was, I did not really perceive myself as a mother, what role I play in decision-making, I realized my role in listening and in their direction and upbringing.**”

Improved relationship between parents:

Parents reported that the attitude and skills developed also had a positive effect on their relationship with their partners. As one focus group participant said “**Even my relationship with my husband has changed. I began to talk to him softly. I used to swear and say that I do everything, everything is on me, and I was angry with everyone. I work in a kindergarten. I get tired of the noise, so at home I was digging into the phone and did not communicate with the children, now it is different for us.**”

The design of the training programme

Approach

The training programme is inspired by Pestalozzi pedagogy (“head, heart and hands”) and the four pillars of holistic education as defined by UNESCO:



Learning to BE:
emphasizes
personal growth,
self-awareness
and ethical
reasoning.



Learning to DO:
participants
develop practical
skills and the
application of
knowledge



Learning to KNOW:
participants gain
new knowledge
and enhance their
critical thinking



Learning to LIVE TOGETHER: participants enhance their
empathy and relationship skills

UN pillars of education and Pestalozzi pedagogy



BE



DO



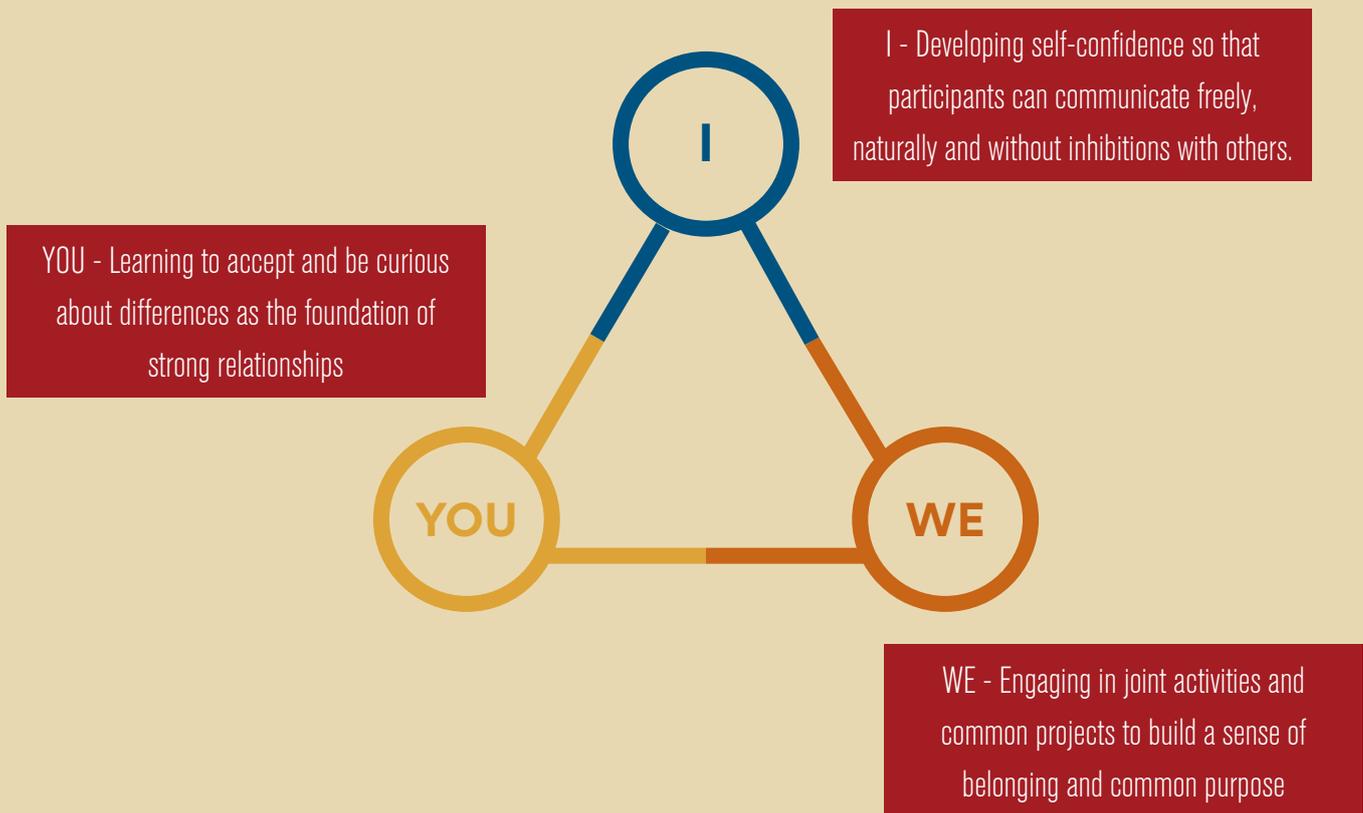
KNOW



**LIVE
TOGET
HER**

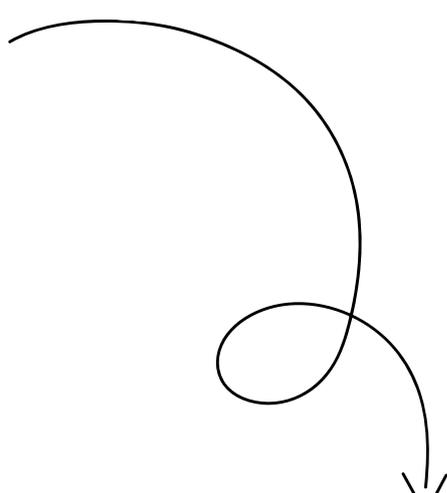
The training methodology is highly experiential and interactive. Participants learn and grow through a series of exercises that allow multiple opportunities for experiencing and doing.

The core of the training is the I-YOU-WE philosophy of intercultural education.



Content

The original training programme, as set out in the Tune In Trainer's manual is divided into three modules: one for young people, one for adults, and “generation exchange” that brings the two groups together. See the table for detail of the topics covered.



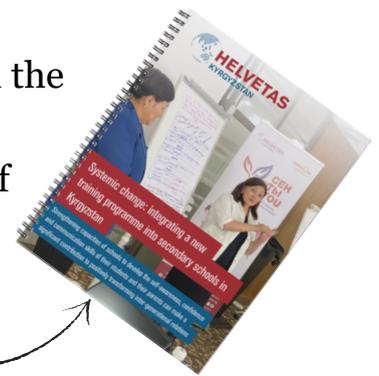
YOUTH TRAINING (4 days)	ADULTS TRAINING (2 days)	GENERATION EXCHANGE (3 days)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity/Self-Confidence • Diversity/Inclusion • Visions and Aim setting • Non-Violent Communication • Context Analysis • Cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push/Pull Factors of Violent Extremism, Factors of Resilience • Participation • Trust • Context Analysis • Mentoring • Empathy & Active Listening • Solution-Focused Coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal Perceptions on Youth and Adults • Crossing Boundaries between generations • Dealing with Prejudice and Privileges • Power and Non-Discrimination • Creating Trust and Cooperation • Successful Communication between Generations • Changing Inter-generational Relations in our Society

Delivery

At the outset of the YOU project, a pool of trainers from Youth of Osh and Progress Aravan were trained to directly deliver the training to young people aged 15-29 and to adults. To reach more people, the project then began working with schools, focusing on young people aged 14-17, their teachers and their parents.

The original curriculum was adapted for use by teachers in the classroom. A manual on “Self-knowledge and personal development of adolescents” containing 32-hours’ worth of lessons is available in Russian and Kyrgyz.

More information on the integration of the methodology into the school system is available in Briefing Note 3.



Lessons learned

Eight years of developing, testing and delivering the training programme was a continual learning experience. Three of the most important lessons learned about applying the methodology are summarized below.



Cultural adaptation

The methodological approach of the training programme was new to users and participants in Kyrgyzstan. The Soviet-influenced education system continues to privilege frontal teaching and a strong hierarchical distance between teachers and students. It was therefore important that the new experiential approach introduced by the training programme was sufficiently adapted to the cultural context to be accepted. This required a close collaboration between international and local experts.

The original training programme was developed by a Swiss expert from Helvetas, in close co-operation with colleagues from Helvetas Kyrgyzstan, Youth of Osh and Progress Aravan. The programme was piloted in two communities in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2018. Based on these experiences the Tune In manual was finalized. In 2020, Youth of Osh worked with teacher trainers and multiple secondary school teachers to adapt the methodology for the education system.

Anyone planning to use the methodology in a different cultural context is advised to go through a similar process of testing and adaptation.

Impact assessment

Testimonies from users and participants provide strong evidence for the positive effects of the training programme. To further understand these effects, and how they may vary depending on the profile of participants, it would be helpful to conduct testing to track changes in individuals' attitudes and relationships over time.

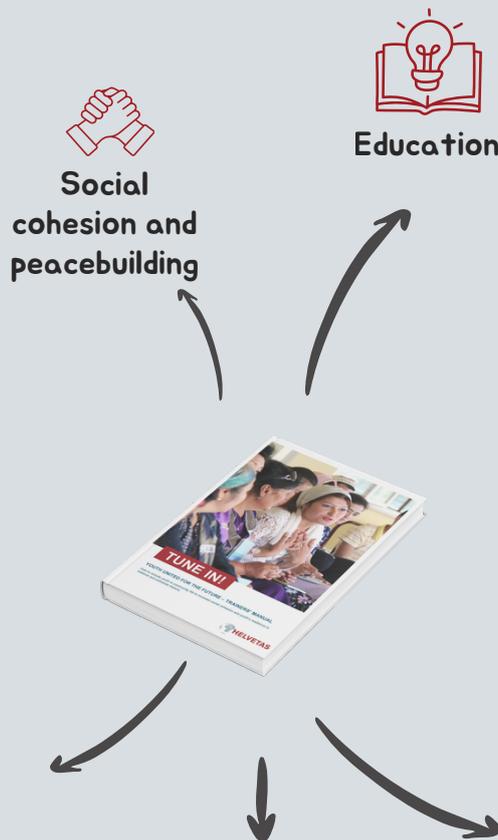
The project partners are currently exploring options with academic partners to secure funding for a randomized control trial.

Multiple applications

Originally developed as part of a project to prevent extremism and violence, feedback from users and participants suggest the methodology can be widely applied in many sectors.

People working in the following sectors are encouraged to explore how the methodology could complement their existing efforts.

The positive effect the programme has on both personal confidence and interpersonal relations means it can be integrated into a range of programmes aimed at strengthening social cohesion and preventing conflict.



The training programme has a positive effect on academic outcomes, student-teacher relations, class discipline, and student and teacher motivation. It could therefore be a useful component in any programme seeking to improve educational outcomes. (Briefing Note 3 offers further details on how the methodology has been adapted for the education system.)



The programme demonstrated its effectiveness in empowering young people to take more control of their own lives. It can therefore be a powerful component in any programme aimed at increasing young people's active engagement, whether in the job market or in civic life.



Testimonies by participants suggest that the programme had the strongest impact on girls and women, contributing positively to more equal gender relations. In a society, where social norms often constrain women's options, it equipped them with the confidence and tools to reflect on the role they desired for themselves, whether in the family or professionally, and to pursue it.



Self-esteem and positive relationships are important factors for good mental health. The training programme could therefore be a useful component of preventive mental health and suicide prevention programmes.

Examples of use in peacebuilding

Youth of Osh worked with UNICEF to integrate the methodology into the “Umtul” project that provided training for teachers working with children and adolescent repatriates from conflict zones in Syria and Iraq. Key lessons from the Tune In methodology are part of UNICEF's official guidance in the "Integrating Children with Significant Gaps in Education" guide, recommended for use with repatriated children and their families. The methodology supported the reintegration of 396 children repatriated from conflict zones in Iraq and Syria to Kyrgyzstan, providing them with life skills, confidence-building and career orientation.

Progress Aravan used the methodology when providing training to security services and prison officials working on reintegration of offenders into society.

Youth of Osh has also used the training programme with international partners: within the IREX-led project SHE's GREAT! (Supporting Her Empowerment: Girls' Resilience, Enterprise, and Technology) in Jordan (in partnership with JOHUD – Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development) and in Georgia (in partnership with the Georgian Center for Strategy and Development – GCSD).



Personal story

Zhoogazyn Bolusheva

Teacher at “Bilim” Lyceum, Project Trainer, Parent

Before the project, Zhoogazyn, like many mothers, experienced stress in her role. Her first attempt to lead self-awareness lessons in 2020 was challenging and yielded little results due to low student engagement. Becoming a project trainer allowed her to deeply engage with the methodology, turning the experience into personal transformation. She realized that true pedagogical success begins with oneself. Zhoogazyn gradually applied what she learned at home, discussing principles of respectful communication with her husband.

The turning point came two years after her first unsuccessful attempt: the same teenagers approached her, requesting self-awareness lessons again. Their maturity and intrinsic motivation, combined with Zhoogazyn’s confident delivery rooted in personal experience, made this second round highly effective.

The most significant change happened at home: “I no longer feel stressed about being a mother,” she says. “My husband and I feel like a resource for our children, we are their support.” Their family now operates on principles of partnership, valuing each member. Children openly share plans and take initiative. Zhoogazyn emphasizes: “The main change is in me. I am no longer a mother on autopilot; I participate in my children’s lives and they see it. I have learned to accept their emotions without judgment and see challenges as growth opportunities.” She believes the project’s success lies in transforming not only skills but also life philosophy.