

Sustainable Development Goals Youth Ambassadors in the Kyrgyz Republic

Brief project
report

2021





SUMMARY

In 2021, the United Nations (UN) System in the Kyrgyz Republic, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy (MCISYP) of the Kyrgyz Republic, conducted the second round of the pilot project "Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Youth Ambassadors", first launched in 2019 to raise awareness of sustainable development and the SDGs among the population of the country through youth activism.

The five best graduates of the first part of the project "SDG Academy" became SDG Youth Ambassadors from June to December 2021. The Ambassadors acted on a voluntary basis and received support from the UN System, MCISYP and partners, mentors, as well as a group of volunteers.

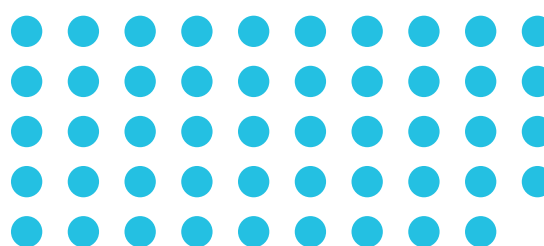
Over the seven months of their activity, the Ambassadors, together with more than 49 partners (universities, youth organisations, business representatives), held 14 events in Bishkek, Osh and Naryn; among them - a youth program on leadership skills, online forums, an essay competition, a festival, lectures, a social challenge, trainings, film screenings, a scientific conference, a debate tournament. Through these events, 1,175 young people in Kyrgyzstan learned more about the SDGs. The Ambassadors also designed two long-term projects that they plan to develop further - a board game about the SDGs and a project to reduce the use of plastic in Bishkek.

The project ended in December 2021 with the awarding of the most active Ambassadors. As a result of the second round of the project, recommendations were again developed for the next recruitment of Ambassadors in Kyrgyzstan.

7 months



49 partners



14 events



1,175

**young people learned
more about the SDGs
through interactive
events**



CONTENTS

01

Summary

02

Contents

03

From the organisers

04

**1. Project
implementation**

05

*Coordination and
communication*

06

*Planning and
monitoring activities*

06

Capacity building

07

Project completion

08

**2. SDG Youth
Ambassadors
2021**

13

**3. Events and
projects of the
Ambassadors**

33

**4. Feedback and
recommendations**



From the organisers

The purpose of this short report is to describe our experience with the project, including the difficulties we encountered, in order to share it with those who might want to create a similar project. In this report, we also share achievements and examples of initiatives implemented by the Ambassadors, whose achievements we are very proud of, as they continued their work despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and all the difficulties associated with it.

The report consists of four sections. In the first section we describe the main aspects of the organisation of the project, in the second we present the profiles of the Ambassadors. In the third section, we highlight the main results of the activities and initiatives created by the Ambassadors. In the fourth section, you can find analysis of feedback and recommendations for implementing a similar project in the future. The report was compiled by Ekaterina Perfilyeva, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and Tynchtykbek Bakytov, UNFPA.

The team of organisers and mentors of the project in 2021:



Azamat Baialinov, UNFPA

Aiza Imankulova, MCISYP

Aisulu Sulaimanova, UNESCO

Amina Kurbanova, ILO

Arina Myassoyed, UNESCO

Baktybek Kainazarov, UNFPA

Karina Abdylidaeva, FAO

Kuvanychbek Koshoev, UNDP

Nurshaim Tilenbaeva, WHO

Nurshat Ababakirov, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator

Ekaterina Perfilyeva, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator

Tynchtykbek Bakytov, UNFPA

Eldiyar Dzheenaliev, activist

Eldiyar Dzhusupov, UNFPA

Elzat Nasyrova, UNFPA

Iulia Votslava, OHCHR

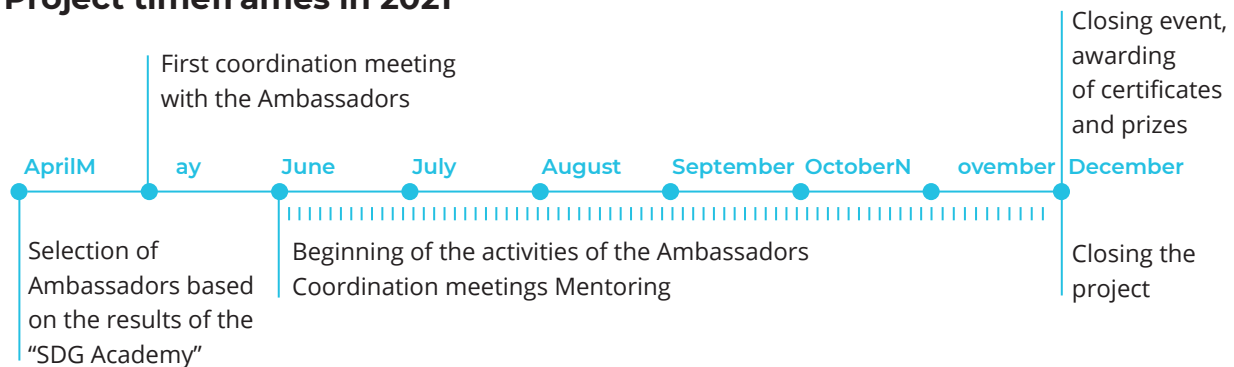


1. Project implementation

SDG Youth Ambassadors in the Kyrgyz Republic is a joint project of the UN System in the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. The project was launched in 2019 to increase the capacity of young activities to promote sustainable development ideas, as well as to raise awareness about the SDGs, especially among the youth of Kyrgyzstan. Report on the first round of the project in 2019-2020 can be found here.

After the pilot round, it was decided to divide the project into two parts - educational and practical. A detailed report on the first part of the second round of the project - "SDG Academy" - can be found here. This report focuses on the practical part, namely how the work with the second group of Ambassadors was carried out during their mandate in 2021.

Project timeframes in 2021



According to the results of the "SDG Academy" five of the best were selected from 20 participants via a points-based system. Whereas in the first group of Ambassadors in 2019-2020 there were 34 people, in 2021 the organisers decided to reduce the total number of Ambassadors to five due to limited resources and the desire to focus more on increasing the potential of each of them, as well as improving the quality of their events. This allowed us to reformat the project, setting clearer and more realistic goals.

Unlike in the first round, no SDGs were assigned to the new Ambassadors: participants were expected to promote all SDGs, with a focus on the ones they were most interested in. At the same time, the general idea of the project

remained the same - the Ambassadors were expected to independently and on a volunteer basis develop and implement initiatives (for example, projects and events) to promote the ideas of sustainable development and the SDGs, while the organisers provide support in the coordination, conceptualization of events, mentorship, as well as some financial support. It was also decided that the mandate of the Ambassadors would last six months after the end of the "SDG Academy" (from May to October 2021), but subsequently the organisers extended the mandate until December 2021. It is important to note that the Ambassadors carried out their activities on a voluntary basis and were not official representatives of the UN or MCISYP.

Responsibilities of SDG Youth Ambassadors

1. Actively promote the ideas of sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the period up to 2030 at the peer, community and national levels in Kyrgyzstan;
2. Mobilise young people and volunteers for action to achieve the SDGs, including by:
 - a. preparing and disseminating information to raise awareness of the SDGs among various stakeholder groups;
 - b. holding presentations, trainings and other events on the SDGs at various venues;
 - c. disseminating information about the latest developments (such as publications, reports, conferences and other updates) occurring at the national and global levels and related to the SDGs through various communication channels;
3. Participate in SDG-related national, regional and international events held by various stakeholders;
4. Participate in regular coordination meetings and project events;
5. Document and summarise experiences, best practice, case studies and success stories as Ambassador;
6. Make efforts to mobilise resources for the implementation of their initiatives as an Ambassador;
7. Uphold and promote the values and principles of the UN.

The originally planned project budget was about USD 32,000. These expenses were planned for the salary of the coordinator, the organisation of coordination meetings, training and other project events, the minimum support for the events of the Ambassadors, certificates, prizes, travel expenses, visual products, stationery and a subscription to Zoom. However, due to limited resources, it was not possible to cover all these costs (in the end, about USD 23,500 was spent).

Coordination and communication

The project had a designated coordinator, UNFPA was the main coordinating agency. The duties of the coordinator included: regular communication with the Ambassadors, organisation of coordination meetings with the Ambassadors, assistance in the implementation of their initiatives, assistance in increasing the capacity of the Ambassadors, support of UN staff in interaction with the Ambassadors and monitoring their activity.

The project was carried out as a joint project of several UN agencies in Kyrgyzstan, namely the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, UNESCO, FAO, ILO, UNDP, WHO and OHCHR as part of the UN inter-agency Youth Thematic Group. Representatives of the MCISYP also cooperated with the team, who supported the organisation of events, including in cooperation with other government agencies.

The organisers held monthly online coordination meetings with the Ambassadors (due to COVID-19 pandemic and different living locations of the Ambassadors). Difficulties and challenges, achievements, lessons learned and plans for future events were discussed at the meetings. At the first coordination meeting, the organisers presented the "Portrait of an SDG Ambassador", as well as made a presentation on the support that the UN System and the MCISYP can provide. During the project, the Ambassadors could seek

- 6 support from various UN agencies through the main coordinator. Communication with the Ambassadors was also conducted via Telegram chat. Through individual meetings with the Ambassadors, as well as through continuous online communication, the organisers managed to increase their potential in a more individual way.

Planning and monitoring activities

Based on the results of a joint discussion with the organisers at the beginning of the project, the Ambassadors jointly developed a single action plan, which included details of the planned joint and individual events for several months: formats and a brief description, geography, target audience, approximate number of participants, expected results, duration and dates, potential partners, necessary resources and budget, as well as communication support.

The development of this plan served as a kind of training for the Ambassadors to write project proposals in the future, as well as to deepen their

skills in organising quality events. Through joint planning, it was also important for the organisers to involve the Ambassadors in self-organisation as a single team. During the process of drafting the plan, the organisers gave detailed feedback to the Ambassadors on several occasions on planned initiatives, and the final version served as the basis for requesting funding to support some of the activities.

For monitoring and reporting, at the end of each month, the Ambassadors completed a simple online spreadsheet with brief reports on their activities.

Capacity building

Although capacity building was the main goal of the first phase of the project and the Ambassadors noted that within the framework of the “SDG Academy” they received a solid knowledge base about the SDGs, it was important to continue training the Ambassadors throughout their active work. To do this, a mentoring mechanism was established: seven UN staff and one ex-SDG Youth Ambassador became mentors, thus, each Ambassador had 2-3 mentors. In order to more clearly work out the expectations from mentoring, the mentor-mentee pairs were created on the basis of questionnaires filled out by both the

Ambassadors and the mentors themselves. The organisers did not set themselves the task of formalising mentoring, so each pair chose the most convenient format of interaction for themselves.

During the project, with the financial support of UNESCO, several Ambassadors also completed online communication courses on the “Setters Education” online platform. The organisers tried to develop the potential of the Ambassadors, including by inviting them to participate in the events of the UN System.



Project completion

On December 8, the organisers held the final event, awarding the Ambassadors. All Messengers received certificates of participation and letters of thanks, and the most active Ambassadors also received prizes.

At the end of the project, the Ambassadors noted that during the implementation of their own initiatives, they learned to work better with peers, correctly convey their thoughts to the audience, and also motivate others to take active steps towards the SDGs. The Ambassadors are pleased that they were able to practice their leadership skills, including by working with youth organisations and through attracting partners in Bishkek and in the regions of Kyrgyzstan. The organisers, in turn, were able to motivate the Ambassadors to act despite the limited resources and the general context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as help them learn more about the work of the UN System.

2. SDG Youth Ambassadors 2021



**Miraida
Almazbekova**

19, Batken

miraida20022708@gmail.com

AIESEC
Enactus
Biota
“Elim Barsynby?”
etc.

Activism

Capacity

Rights

Ecology

Equality

Cleanliness

Student of the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University.

For three years, she has been actively involved in public events on climate change issues, and also works to eliminate inequality in education, support those in need, promote human rights, improve the cleanliness and potential of Batken city.

Miraida participates in more than seven volunteer groups, including AIESEC, Enactus, Biota and the “Elim Barsynby?”. Together with these organisations, she implemented many social projects that helped change the lives of some people.

As a future environmental engineer as an SDG Youth Ambassador Miraida focused on the SDGs related to environmental issues



Danil Tsoi

20, Bishkek

danil.tsoi.ylsp@gmail.com

Young Leaders for Social
Progress
Law in Action
L-CORP
event campaign
#SDGGamesKG
etc.

Rights

Education

Biodiversity

Ecology

Innovation

Initiative

Volunteerism

Interactive

Fourth year student of the Faculty of Law of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University.

Involved in volunteer activities for over two years. Got acquainted with the concept of SDGs in 2019. He started his career as a volunteer in the UNDP, now he manages the Public Platform “Young Leaders for Social Progress (YLSP)”, where, with a team of proactive youth, he develops and implements creative initiatives and projects to promote the SDGs in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia.

Danil has implemented many youth initiatives and events, being the ideological inspirer and coordinator of the “Law in Action”, “L-CORP” projects, the #SDGGamesKG event campaign and other social events. He is also the UN Youth Delegate from the Kyrgyz Republic for 2021-2022.

He actively promotes the SDGs with a focus on goals that are directly or indirectly related to the problems of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, topical issues in the development of legal institutions and the protection of human rights, as well as quality education for young people and the introduction of new approaches and innovative methods for solving such problems.

As an SDG Ambassador, he worked on the creation of a volunteer corps, the organisation of a regional forum on the SDGs, the development of an interactive laboratory on the SDGs, a youth leadership program and a scientific conference for young scientists on human rights.



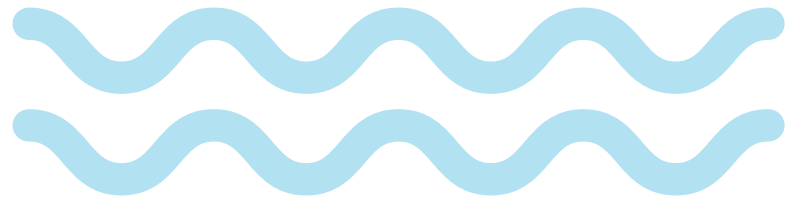
Aliia Mamyrganova

23, Bishkek

aliyamamyrganova@gmail.com



“think globally,
act locally”



Activist. Operates on the principle of “think globally, act locally”.

Learned about the SDGs concept in 2016. During her studies organised six social projects, including teaching youth leadership skills and English. Aliia believes that if as many people as possible are aware of global problems, then they can be solved faster.

She is most interested in SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 10 (Reducing inequality).

As the SDG Ambassador, she promoted the SDGs in Kyrgyzstan, focusing on working with youth, activists and volunteers.

Language

Awareness

Equality

Education

Economics

Work

Gender

Skills

Leadership



Eliza Uraimova

19, Osh

uraimovaeliza02@gmail.com

Академия ЦУР

Activism

Volunteerism

Self-Development

Cohesion

Justice

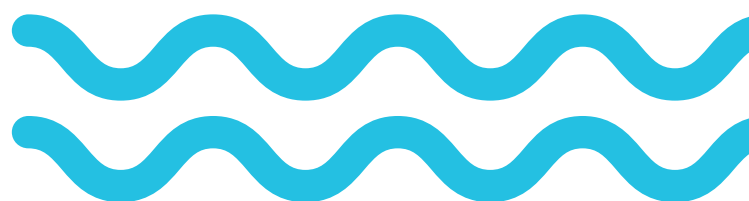
Education

Institutions

Development

Peace

Stability



Eliza believes that social cohesion and stability in society play a key role on the path to development, but they can only be achieved through quality education.

Through volunteering and activism, she is engaged in the dissemination of ideas of tolerance and non-discrimination towards women, girls and ethnic minorities. Her main goal in life is to contribute to the development of society. She learned about the SDGs from a friend who inspired her to become a participant of the “SDG Academy”.

Of all the SDGs, SDG 4 (Quality education) and SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) are the most interesting for her because she considers them key to the prosperity of our society.

As the SDG Ambassador, she actively spread the ideas of sustainable development among her compatriots, inspiring young people for self-development, and directed others to develop in the area of the SDGs.



Aigul Davranova

22, Bishkek

davranovaaigul@gmail.com

“School of Leadership”
“School of Law”

Literacy

Professionalism

Development

Sense of justice

Equality

Health

Gender

Wellbeing

Awareness

Profession

Leadership



In everyday life, Aigul deals with issues of gender equality, quality education and the legal awareness of young people.

She implements the projects “School of Leadership”, on leadership skills and “School of Law” on legal literacy for young people, contributing to the development of Kyrgyzstan. Aigul helps HIV-positive women develop, acquire new skills, and provides them with legal assistance. She conducted a rapid assessment study on the services and needs of children living with HIV. She first learned about the SDGs when UNDP began recruiting volunteers.

She is most interested in SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing), SDG 5 (Gender equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities).

As an SDG Ambassador, she raised public awareness on issues that could change people’s attitudes towards some issues, such as girls’ career choices after high school.

3. Events and projects of the Ambassadors

<p>From June to December 2021</p>	<p>5  Ambassadors</p>
-----------------------------------	--

<p>14  events</p>	<p>Bishkek Osh Naryn</p> 
---	--

Among those: program for youth on leadership skills, online forums, essay competition, festival, lectures, social challenge, development of a board game, trainings, film screenings, scientific conference, debate tournament

<p>2 Participated as guests at big events</p>	<p>Reached 1,175 people</p>
---	------------------------------------

<p>Attracted 9  permanent volunteers</p>	<p>Designed projects 2</p>
--	-----------------------------------

49  partners

including universities, youth and volunteer organisations, businesses

With focus on SDGs



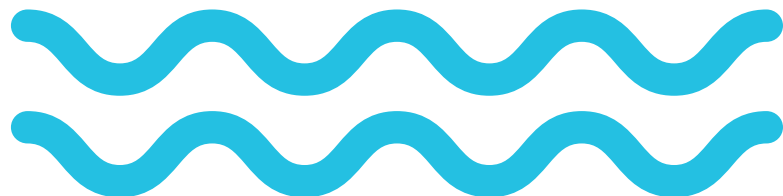
SDG Youth Leadership Program

May-July 2021

SDG Ambassador Danil Tsoi, together with the members of the platform “Young Leaders for Social Progress (YLSP)” he leads, as well as several alumni of the “SDG Academy”, organised the SDG Youth Leadership Program to develop the leadership skills of young people in Kyrgyzstan and involve them in solving sustainable development challenges.

During the program, teams of 35 participants put forward 7 project proposals in the field of responsible consumption and production, quality education, healthcare, proper nutrition and environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

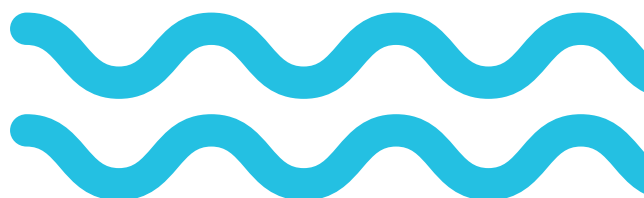
The organisation of the program was supported by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, ILO, the National Red Crescent Society in Kyrgyzstan, the “Alliance for Reproductive Health”, NGO “NABU”, NGO “TAZAR”, public association “BIOM” and eco-market “Ecoland”.



Republican Youth Online-Forum on Ecology

SDG Ambassador Miraida Almazbekova, together with the Biota student club and in partnership with the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, organised the Republican Youth Online-Forum on Ecology, successfully using YouTube and Google Meet tools. The 250 forum participants learned more about ecology and environmental protection, as well as issues of agriculture and food security, water resources, energy, responsible consumption and production, climate change and the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems.

7-16 June 2021



Lecture at the first Local conference of youth for climate change in Kyrgyzstan

11 June 2021

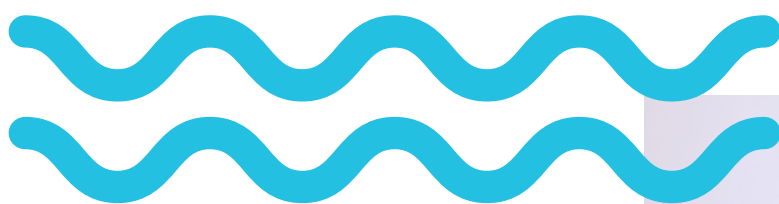
SDG Ambassadors Miraida Almazbekova and Eliza Uraimova delivered a lecture on the SDGs and ecology to 50 participants of the first Local conference for youth on climate change in Kyrgyzstan in Osh.



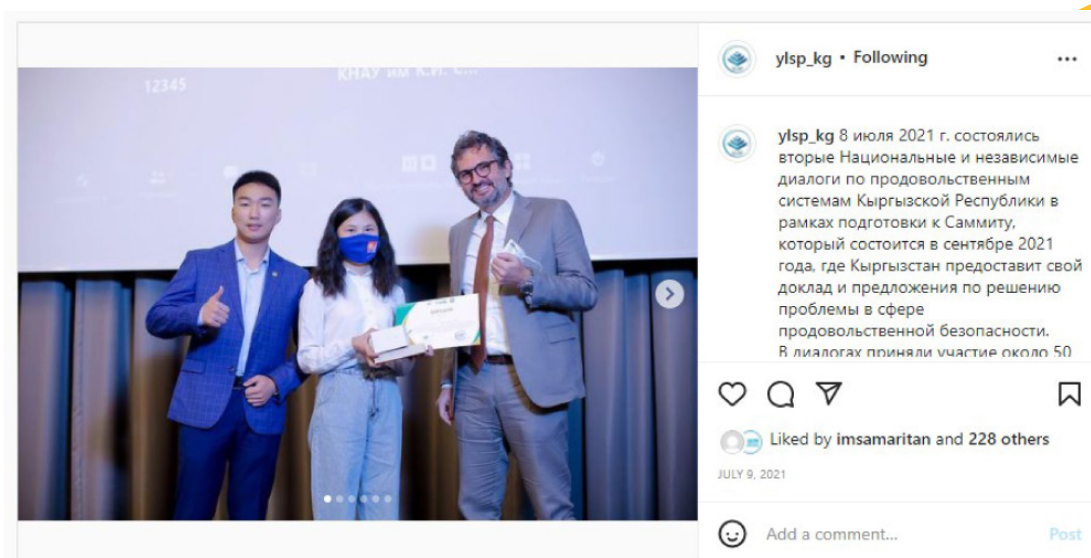
Republican Youth Essay Competition on Food Systems

June-July 2021

SDG Ambassador Danil Tsoi, together with the “SDG Academy” alumna Aizirek Erkebaeva, with the support of the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, FAO and WFP, held an online youth essay contest on food systems as part of Kyrgyzstan’s preparations for the World Food Systems Summit in 2021. 50 people took part in the competition



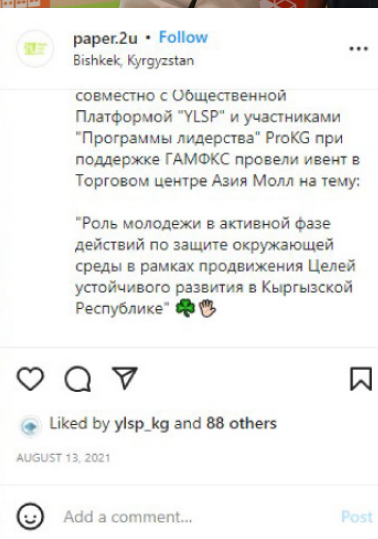
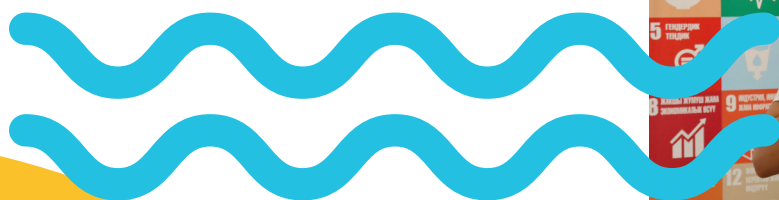
**UNITED NATIONS
FOOD SYSTEMS
SUMMIT 2021**



International Youth Day

12 August 2021

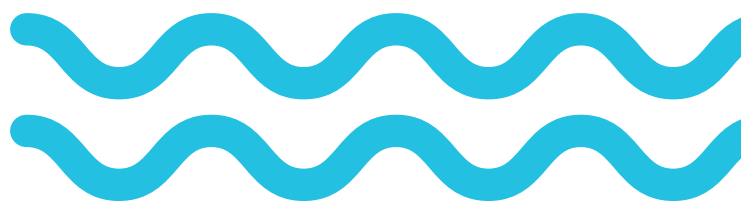
In honour of the International Youth Day, SDG Ambassadors Danil Tsoi and Miraida Almazbekova, with the support of the "YLSP" public platform, participants of the "ProKG Leadership Program", as well as the State Agency for Youth Affairs, Physical Culture and Sports, held an event on the topic "The role of youth in the active phase of action on environmental protection as part of the promotion of the SDGs in the Kyrgyz Republic" at the Asia Mall in Bishkek. 30 people strengthened their knowledge about the role of youth in protecting the environment. At the event, Danil and a team of volunteers also presented a new youth initiative, "Be My Ecobuddy", aimed at reducing plastic waste at food outlets in Bishkek.



Session on the SDGs for volunteers of the “Interact Club”

20-21 September 2021

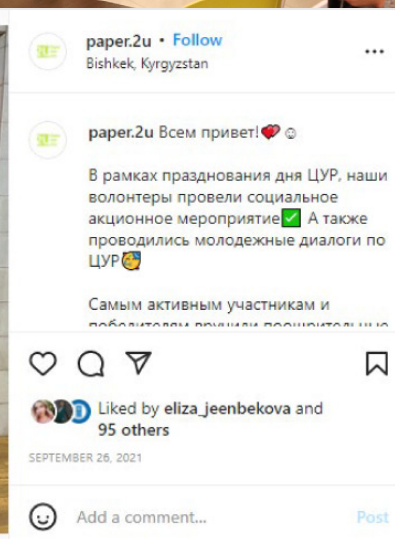
SDG Ambassador Danil Tsoi trained 40 volunteers of the international charity “Interact Club” on the issues of the SDGs and the integration of an eco-friendly lifestyle into the club’s work system.



Social challenge on the SDGs Day

25 September 2021

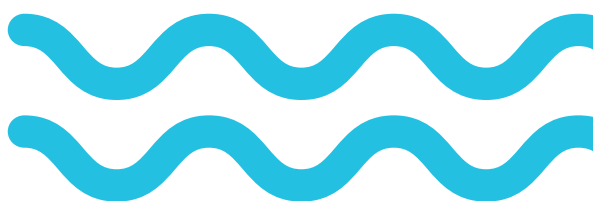
On the day of the sixth anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, SDG Ambassador Danil Tsoi, together with the participants of the “ProKG Leadership Program”, the YLSP Public Platform and the volunteers of the “Be My Ecobuddy” project, held a social action at the Biscuit coffee shop in Bishkek. Through a challenge and a social experiment, young people drew the attention of more than 60 coffee shop visitors to the problem of plastic consumption and encouraged them to reduce the use of plastic cups and straws. The event was supported by several partners, including the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, “Verba Eco”, “Biome.kg”, “Eco Valley” and “EcoStyle”.



SDG Fest

25 September 2021

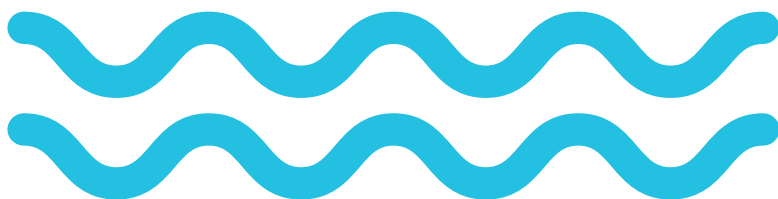
SDG Ambassadors Miraida Almazbekova and Eliza Uraimova conducted a training, exhibition and educational program on the SDGs and climate change for more than 40 visitors of Asia Mall in Bishkek.



Model of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

29 September - 1 October 2021

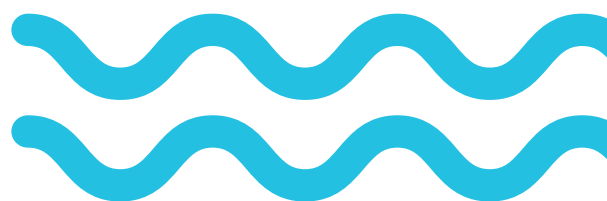
SDG Ambassador Eliza Uraimova, together with volunteer Milana Myktyralieva, on the basis of the Faculty of International Relations of Osh State University with the support of UNFPA, organised the Model of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), where world leaders annually discuss the achievement of the SDGs. Over the course of three days, 35 forum participants not only learned more about the SDGs and methods for solving sustainable development problems, but also strengthened their critical thinking, teamwork and public presentation skills.



UN Day in Kyrgyzstan

In honour of the celebration of UN Day in Kyrgyzstan, SDG Ambassadors Danil Tsoi, Eliza Uraimova, Miraida Almazbekova and Aigul Davranova organised two events with the support of the UN Resident's Coordinator's Office. In Osh, on the basis of the OloloOsh creative space, 30 people took part in a quiz on the SDGs and screening and discussion of films on social and environmental topics. In Naryn, at Naryn State University, 80 people took part in a film screening about bride kidnapping and gender equality.

24 October 2021



“Open mic” of youth associations in Kyrgyzstan

10 November 2021

SDG Ambassador Danil Tsoi, together with volunteers, organised an “Open mic” for 50 leaders of 23 youth associations of the country on the basis of the Innovation Center in Bishkek with the support of the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office and UNFPA. The UN was held to raise awareness of youth associations about the SDGs, analyse and highlight their current involvement in the achievements of the SDGs.

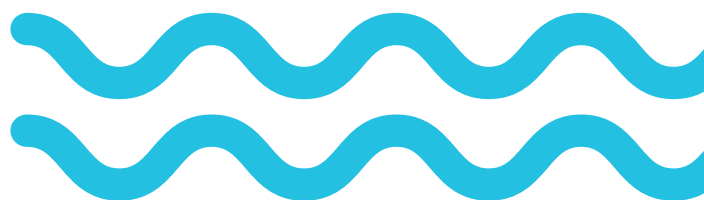


Подробнее: <https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/ru/158599-10-noyabrya-2021-byi-proveden-otkrytyy-mikrofon-molodezhnykh-obedineniy-kyrgyzstana-v>

SDG Quiz

3 December 2021

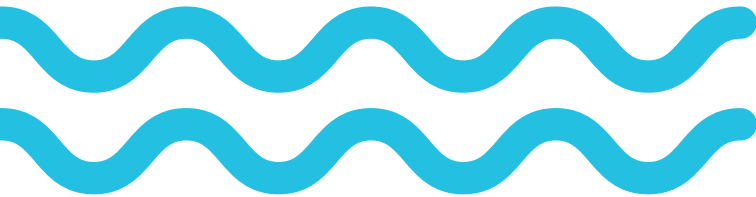
SDG Ambassador Miraida Almazbekova, in partnership with the "Oilonshow" Intellectual Club, organised a quiz on the SDGs at the Faculty of Economics of the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University. At the event, Miraida gave a lecture on the SDGs to over 200 participants.



SDG Debate Tournament “Assorti CUP”

SDG Ambassador Miraida Almazbekova organised a debate tournament at the Faculty of Communications of the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University. 100 students and debaters took part in the tournament.

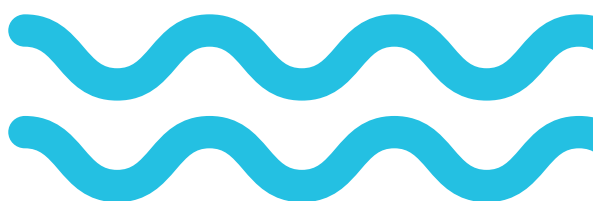
4 December 2021



International Volunteer Day

5 December 2021

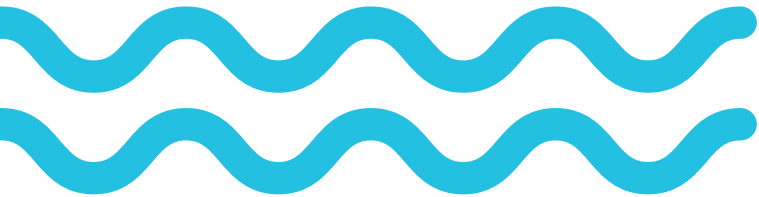
SDG Ambassadors Danil Tsoi and Miraida Almazbekova co-organized the celebration of the International Volunteer Day in Bishkek and took part in a flash mob about volunteers, as well as a fair of youth and volunteer organisations.



Meeting with Manizha

SDG Ambassadors Danil Tsoi, Eliza Uraimova, Aigul Davranova, Miraida Almazbekova, Aliia Mamyrganova and alumna of the “SDG Academy” met Russian singer Manizha as part of her tour of Central Asia. Together with young refugees, the Ambassadors told the artist about their activities, hobbies and discussed the contribution of young people to solving global problems, including gender-based violence.

7 December 2021



International Scientific Student Conference “Human rights through the prism of the SDGs”

13 December 2021

SDG Ambassador Danil Tsoi, together with the “SDG Academy” graduate Aizirek Erkebaeva and volunteers, held an International Scientific Student Conference “Human rights through the prism of the Sustainable Development Goals” to involve young researchers in promoting the concept and protection of human rights and sustainable development. At the conference, 25 students and undergraduates of legal and non-legal specialisations presented and defended scientific reports.



Board game on the SDGs “SDG GAMELAB”

September-December 2021

For several months, SDG Ambassador Danil Tsoi, together with volunteers from the “YLSP” Public Platform, has been developing an interactive board game about the SDGs, designed for an audience of 14 to 20 years old. Danil has already conducted two test games with target groups, which helped to update the concept of the whole game. The team continues to create content and components for the gaming lab. The final test game will take place in April 2022.



“Be My Ecobuddy” Project

SDG Ambassadors Danil Tsoi and Miraida Almazbekova, together with “YLSP” Public Platform and the “ProKG Leadership Program” launched the “Be My Ecobuddy” project with the ambitious goal of reducing the use of disposable cutlery (plastic straws and glasses) in all large and small food and public service outlets in Bishkek. As part of the project, the Ambassadors plan to actively work with businesses, the public, youth and volunteer organisations, as well as eco coffee shops. The “Be My Buddy” events were supported by UNDP and UN Resident Coordinator’s Office and have already reached more than 100 people in the Biscuit and Michele coffee houses.

July-December 2021

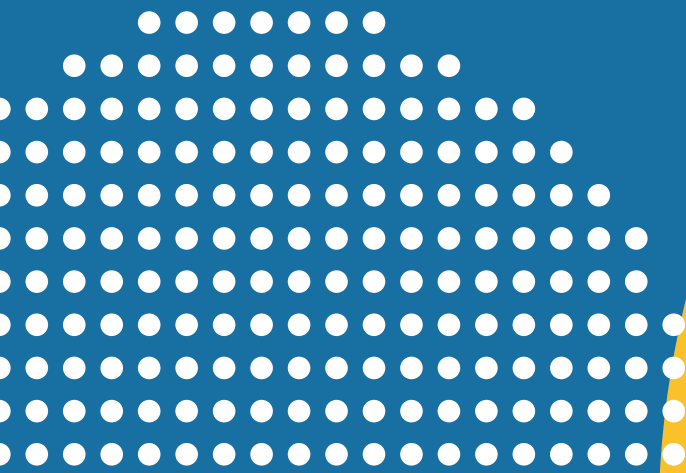


SDG Ambassadors Volunteer Corps

For several months, the Ambassadors were assisted by volunteers who were recruited by the Ambassadors (Danil Tsoi and Eliza Uraimova) themselves, and trained on the topics of sustainable development and the SDGs.

The Ambassadors and organisers thank the volunteers for their contribution to the project:

Begimai Akbarova
Aidana Abdybalieva
Rakhat Alymbekova
Polina Pavlova
Malika Umarova
Tinatin Abdullaeva
Cholponai Zhenishova
Aliia Nuralieva
Milana Myktyralieva



4. Feedback and recommendations

Since the “SDG Youth Ambassadors” is still a pilot project, it was very important to collect feedback, primarily from the Ambassadors themselves, in order to develop recommendations for the next round of the project. This section describes and analyzes the main comments from the

Ambassadors and organisers collected during individual and group meetings of organisers. When drawing up recommendations, we also took into account the feedback received as part of the first round of the project in 2019-2020.

Project coordination

Experience has shown that having a coordinator assigned to the project is very important, as it allows the organisers to pay more attention to the Ambassadors and better cope with the daily tasks of the project, thereby increasing its quality.

Recommendation: The project should always have a fixed coordinator who can devote at least 50% of their working time to the project.

Due to the internal working arrangements and the overall bureaucratization of the UN System, some Ambassadors’ requests for support were considered for a long time, up to several weeks.

Recommendation: Draw up an indicative list of Ambassadors’ requests for support in advance, based on an indicative action plan. The Coordinator to actively involve colleagues from the UN System in decision-making on requests for support from Ambassadors.

There was a gap of several weeks between the end of the “SDG Academy” and the first coordination meeting of the Ambassadors due to internal delays within the UN System. The Ambassadors noted that if they were the organisers, they would not take such a break, but would immediately continue to involve the participants as Ambassadors.

Recommendation: Clearly plan the transition from the “SDG Academy” to the “active” part of the project so as not to reduce the motivation among the participants.

The Ambassadors came to the conclusion that the project needs more meetings for discussions and reflection with the organisers, awareness of their own activities and better goal setting. They also need coordinators to always be in touch and promptly respond to their questions.

Recommendation: Hold regular (at least once a month) coordination meetings with the Ambassadors (common and individual), team building events, as well as informal meetings; maintain daily communication in the general chat of Ambassadors and organisers. Consider conducting in-depth interviews with the Ambassadors at the beginning and end of the project.

The Ambassadors also noted that they lacked a place where they could get together to discuss plans, as the Bishkek Youth Centre was not always able to provide its resources. However, it should be noted that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, both the organisers and the Ambassadors had to learn to work completely remotely. Unfortunately, the organisers were not able to support the purchase of a professional Zoom account for the Ambassadors for remote work and online events, although access to Zoom would be useful for Ambassadors in any case, as they did not reside in the same city.

Recommendation: Consider providing Ambassadors with a work space in the UN / MCISYP premises or in a coworking space. Purchase a subscription for the online communication tools to the Ambassadors such as Zoom.

The organisers also noticed that it is more difficult to hold events during the summer months due to lower youth involvement.

Recommendation: Plan the next round of the project in such a way that the main activity of the Ambassadors falls on the academic year (from September to May).

Capacity building for Ambassadors

The Ambassadors noted taking online courses with the support of the UN as an excellent opportunity for development.

Recommendation: Create individual capacity development plans for the Ambassadors within the framework of the project, support the education of Ambassadors, including through online courses and specially organised sessions and trainings for them (for example, on leadership, working with communities, working with vulnerable groups).

The Ambassadors also noted that they lacked knowledge on how to communicate the SDGs to different audiences.

Recommendation: Consider a separate module on communicating the SDGs to key audiences within the “SDG Academy”’s curriculum. Consider creating template tools to promote the SDGs (for example, a quiz on the Kahoot! platform) for different audiences.

At the end of the project, the Ambassadors once again expressed their gratitude for receiving a large amount of knowledge on the SDGs within the framework of the “SDG Academy”, which allowed them to feel much more confident than the first group of the Ambassadors in carrying out activities on the SDGs.

Recommendation: The holding of the “SDG Academy” should remain an important part of the project. It is necessary to further improve the “SDG Academy” program.

The Ambassadors lacked opportunities to be involved in various activities and projects of the UN System and the MCISYP, as well as other organisations. While the Ambassadors have been invited to participate in some activities, they would like to participate in those in a specific role (for example, as a speaker). There were also few opportunities to participate in international events related to the SDG agenda. This may be partly due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, which has greatly reduced the number of events in general, as well as opportunities to travel abroad. In 2021, there were also no opportunities to participate in the national government's activities on the SDGs, since the main activities took place in 2020 with the delivery of the first Voluntary National Review on the SDGs.

Recommendation: Organisers should more actively involve the Ambassadors in UN and MCISYP events, while designating a specific role for them or involving Ambassadors as co-organizers of such events, as well as look for opportunities to involve Ambassadors in international events and actively promote them in various venues.

Selection and engagement of Ambassadors

Some Ambassadors found it difficult to get involved in the project and carry out their action plans due to work and/or study.

Recommendation: Think over mechanisms to motivate Ambassadors, as well as a mechanism for managing expectations from the project at the stage of selecting participants to create a clear idea among participants about the necessary time and degree of involvement for successful participation in the project.

Many Ambassadors noted that the system for selecting project participants should be organised differently, as the evaluation of participants by a point system based on the results of their activity and homework within the framework of the SDG Academy was not enough to select truly motivated participants. Some also noted that graduate students from the university should not be involved as participants as they may lack the motivation and energy to participate due to being busy studying and adapting to life after university.

Recommendation: Consider a new system for selecting Ambassadors based on the results of the "SDG Academy", focusing on criteria and methods (including interviews) that contribute to the selection of participants with the greatest motivation and the greatest potential.

The Ambassadors noted that the five of them felt like a small team that did not have enough human resources to carry out their plans, so they also attracted 8 volunteers to organise events (2 volunteers in Osh and 6 in Bishkek).

Recommendation: Consider the number of Ambassadors for the next round of the project (based on the experience of two rounds - less than 34, but more than 5 participants), including based on the responsibilities of support from the organisers. Support and, possibly, institutionalise the practice of organising a volunteer corps under the Ambassadors project.

Financial support for the Ambassadors

One of the most important issues of the project remained the question of the possibility of financial support for Ambassadors, i.e. provision of the organisers, firstly, to cover the basic expenses of the Ambassadors (for food, transport, accommodation, insurance), and secondly, to cover some of the costs of their events (for example, catering costs, visual materials, AV equipment, etc.). Unfortunately, the UN agencies were not able to agree on providing the Ambassadors with regular coverage of basic expenses, but managed to support the events through the provision of merchandise with UN logos as prizes. One of the reasons is that the UN does not have clear direct procedures for covering such expenses. The Ambassadors noted that they (including their volunteers) did not have enough financial resources to implement some of the initiatives.

Recommendation: Before launching a new round of the project, the necessary budget should be calculated and raised, which should include monthly stipends for Ambassadors to cover basic expenses, as well as mini-grants to support their activities. Ideally, the budget should be collected by different UN agencies as a common pool and administered by one agency to facilitate procedures.

Communications, partnerships and project status

The Ambassadors complained that very few people knew about the project and the Ambassadors, especially outside the capital. The organizers did not work out the communication part of the project - during the activities of the Ambassadors there was practically no information coverage from the UN System and the MCISYP.

Recommendation: Raise the profile of the project (both within and outside the UN System) through the development and implementation of a communication strategy aimed at increasing the visibility of the Ambassadors. Develop a minimum package of information tools (logo, project brief, etc.) about the SDG Ambassadors, as well as ensure that high-quality visual SDG promotion tools (banners, etc) are available for use by the Ambassadors.

Both Ambassadors and organisers should have put more effort into involving governmental and non-governmental organisations (e.g. youth organisations), as well as representatives of the private sector and other stakeholders as partners, as they present interesting opportunities for involvement as well as sponsorship.

Recommendation: Consider a strategy to attract a variety of partners (especially in the regions) as project partners.

In addition to the above, the following recommendations remain relevant from the first round of the project:

make the team of Ambassadors more diverse, including through possible quotas for participants representing vulnerable groups, as well as quotas based on geographic location;

engage more UN agencies in participating in the project;

consider involving ex-Ambassadors in the project, including as mentors;

expand participation of the MCISYP in the project, especially at the level of regional and district offices;

think over a replacement mechanism in case the Ambassadors drop out of the project.

In conclusion, we would like to note that while the “SDG Youth Ambassadors” project is directly aimed at raising awareness of the SDGs among the population of Kyrgyzstan, this activity should become an obligatory part of all projects of the UN System and the MCISYP, as well as other organisations. In 2022, with one-third of the way to the intended achievement of the SDGs and with the COVID-19 pandemic setting back progress on many of the SDGs, there is a need to significantly accelerate efforts to advance the agenda across the board.

