



Table of Contents

04	Message from the Country Director	13	Peace Corps Virtual Service Pilot program
06	Global overview of the Peace Corps	14	Peace Corps Eco-tourism program in Kyrgyzstan
07	Peace Corps in the Kyrgyz Republic	15	Peace Corps Small Grants Program
08	Requirements for entering into Peace Corps service	20	Success stories
09	Preparations for service in the Kyrgyz Republic and ongoing trainings	30	Gratitude to host families and communities
10	Teaching English as a Foreign Language		





Message from the **Country Director**

○ Peace Corps and its partners set high standards for themselves and reach for lofty, sometimes elusive goals. In 2024 we made progress toward our shared goal of increasing the number of Volunteers and the communities they serve to pre-2020 levels. In just two years, from June 2022 to June 2024, the number of Volunteers and Volunteer Trainees in Kyrgyzstan climbed from zero to over 60. Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic would like to thank the Volunteers, students, teachers, school directors, Host Families, Government of Kyrgyzstan, and eco-tourism partners for making that growth possible.

Cooperation between Peace Corps and Kyrgyz communities has grown as well. In January 2024, seven Peace Corps Eco-tourism Response Volunteers arrived in Kyrgyzstan. These Response Volunteers have worked with Kyrgyzstan Community Based Tourism (KCBT), Destinations Kyrgyzstan, other tourism organizations, and local and regional government officials to support community-based sustainable tourism in Kyrgyzstan.

In August 2024, we celebrated the swearing in of our 30th group of Volunteers (K-30), which brought the total number of Volunteers

in Osh, Jalal-Abad, Chui, Issyk-Kul, Naryn, and Talas to over 60. K-30 and K-29 Volunteers are English Education Volunteers. In addition to co-teaching English with local teacher counterparts to school children around the country, our Education Volunteers led after-school English clubs and other activities to help students and other community members practice and improve their English. Education and Response Volunteers also worked with their communities and counterparts to plan and implement projects with the support of Peace Corps funding. Projects completed in 2024 include new English textbooks, classroom modernization, teacher training in information technology, a plastic bottle recycling program, and a bike touring program.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication and sacrifices of Volunteers, school directors, Host Families, sustainable tourism partners, as well as the support of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the year ahead, Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic's priorities are to continue supporting our community partners around the country, including in the areas of education and sustainable tourism; to meet the Government of Kyrgyzstan's request to bring more Volunteers to Kyrgyzstan; to explore new areas of cooperation that support the Government's national priorities, with current and potential partners; and to help make Peace Corps service in Kyrgyzstan an even safer and

more rewarding experience for Volunteers. We are excited to welcome our next group of Eco-tourism Response Volunteers in March and our K-31 cohort of Education Volunteers in June.



We hope this report on what Peace Corps and our local partners achieved in 2024 will inspire you to follow us on social media, visit Kyrgyzstan, join our team, and help us and our partners reach higher and further. We look forward to more progress towards our goal of strengthening mutual understanding, cooperation, and friendship between the people of the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic.

*Hoyt Brian Yee
Country Director
Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic*

Global overview of the Peace Corps

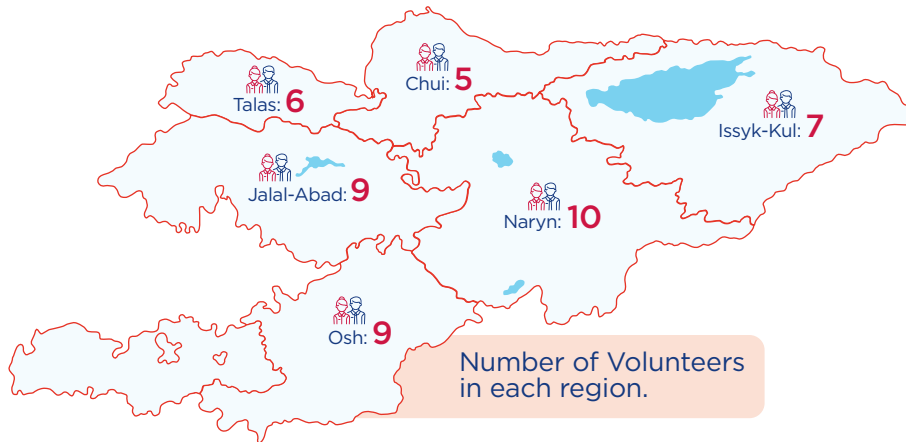
The Peace Corps is an independent, non-political, and non-religious U.S. Government agency that provides Volunteers to countries requesting assistance around the world. The agency traces its roots and mission to 1960, when Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. In 1961, when Kennedy was the U.S. President, he officially established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship, and that mission has not changed. Peace Corps remains committed to its three goals, namely:

1. Helping people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained individuals.
2. Helping to promote a better understanding of American people on the part of the peoples served.
3. Helping to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of American people.

Peace Corps Volunteers around the world are committed to grassroots development by working and living side by side with local people of countries in which they serve. They work as teachers, business advisors, youth development specialists, health educators, and agriculture and environmental workers. They are committed to learning from their host families and partners and integrating themselves into the culture of the countries where they serve. All Volunteers serve at the invitation of the host country government and work in partnership with a host agency. Funding for Peace Corps programs around the world is allocated by the United States Congress and comes from the taxes paid by individual American citizens.



Peace Corps in the Kyrgyz Republic



The Peace Corps was established in the Kyrgyz Republic in 1992 through an agreement signed between the governments of United States and Kyrgyz Republic. Since that time, more than 1,300 Peace Corps Volunteers and Virtual Service Pilot Participants (VSPPs) have helped over 130,000 Kyrgyzstani people learn English, develop leadership skills, and engage in community projects. These Volunteers, working closely with their local Counterparts, have also carried out successful teacher training, computer literacy, and youth development activities.

Most current Peace Corps Volunteers in the Kyrgyz Republic co-teach English as a foreign

language together with local teachers. In addition to building the capacity of teachers and students in the classroom, Volunteers work with their communities on projects that serve a locally identified need. With the funding support from Peace Corps grant programs, Small Projects Assistance and the Peace Corps Partnership, Volunteers and their communities have generated more than \$84,000/7.2 ml som in grants in the last year on projects that have increased access to technology and learning resources for their schools, created spaces for community-wide use, and addressed local challenges related to the environment.

Requirements for entering into **Peace Corps Service**

To serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Kyrgyz Republic, aspiring Peace Corps Volunteers pass through a rigorous screening process. Applicants who are invited to serve have demonstrated that they have fulfilled the following requirements:



- U.S. Citizenship
- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited university
- Health Screening: documented physical and mental ability to serve; fully vaccinated for COVID
- Background Check: Clearance covering civil, financial, and professional conduct
- Successful interviews with Peace Corps headquarters' staff
- Successful completion of an intensive pre-service training program in Kyrgyz Republic

Preparations for service in the Kyrgyz Republic and **ongoing trainings**



Most Peace Corps Volunteers participate in three months of pre-service training to prepare for their two-year service. In June 2024 22 new Peace Corps Trainees arrived and began in-country preparations to become Volunteers in English education. The training began even before the Trainees arrived, with online sessions on Kyrgyz language and culture. The goal of Pre-Service Training is to prepare Trainees to work, live, maintain their health, and stay safe in the Kyrgyz Republic. During these three months they live with local host families, study the Kyrgyz language, practice teaching methodologies with local Counterparts, and receive training in cross-cultural tools and awareness. Only Trainees who successfully complete the training program are sworn-in as Volunteers.

Throughout two years of joint work, Peace Corps Volunteers and local teacher Counterparts exchange knowledge and skills in such areas as methodology, classroom management, assessment, and lesson planning. With the aim of supporting the schools in creating a friendly environment for students, Peace Corps provides “Student-Friendly Schools” training focusing on social emotional learning for school directors, teachers, and Volunteers, who in turn conduct similar trainings with their community members. Local teachers, community members, and Volunteers also gain project design and management skills and can apply for Peace Corps small grants aimed at the development of their communities.



Teaching English as a Foreign Language

In partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, Peace Corps' Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) project aims to increase the professional, academic, and personal opportunities of teachers, students, and community members through improved English language skills teaching and learning methods.

After receiving training on communicative approaches to language teaching, Volunteers and local Counterparts plan and teach English

classes together. In this way, Peace Corps Volunteers and Counterparts build their skills as English teachers. Co-planning and co-teaching happen in English, so Counterparts can practice and improve their knowledge of the English language. Counterparts help their Volunteers to establish extracurricular activities such as English clubs, computer training, and other youth development activities. TEFL Volunteers and Counterparts also work together to assist their schools by establishing or expanding English teaching resources, producing student-centered lesson plans, and incorporating new approaches in classroom management. The Volunteers and Counterparts also assist communities to achieve their development goals through small projects that emphasize capacity building and sustainability.

Currently there are 44 TEFL Volunteers serving in the Chui, Naryn, Issyk-Kul, Talas, Osh, and Jalal-Abad regions. Since its inception in 1993, more than 818 TEFL Volunteers have served as teachers in 200 secondary schools and 15 universities.



How can schools apply?

All TEFL Volunteers currently work in rural public schools in the country, focusing on communities in need. Peace Corps decides where to place Volunteers in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science.

To apply to host a Volunteer, schools may contact their district (Rayono) superintendent or Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic at kg-info@peacecorps.gov.

Peace Corps' preliminary criteria for selecting partner schools:

- Schools that are interested in hosting a Volunteer can send an application to their district (Rayono) superintendent and to Peace Corps (kg-info@peacecorps.gov).
- The application and information about hosting a Peace Corps Volunteer are available at <https://www.peacecorps.gov/kyrgyz-republic/about/>.
- Peace Corps selects partner schools in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, taking into account several requirements, including:

- The school has at least three motivated and qualified English teachers who can work as a Counterpart, one primary Counterpart and at least two back-ups in case the primary Counterpart is unavailable;

- The English teachers are available to co-teach with a Volunteer for a minimum of 18 hours per week;

- The school and the community in which it is located are highly motivated to host a Volunteer;

- Availability of Host Families for Volunteers within walking distance of the school;

- The school and community meet Peace Corps health, safety, and security requirements.

As part of the selection process, Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic's Safety and Security Manager, Medical Officers, Programming, and other staff will visit and hold meetings with local authorities, school officials, and members of the local community.



Teaching English as a Foreign Language Program 2024 Highlights

Goal 1:



Increase the capacity of teachers to use general and/or English teaching skills

Goal 2:



Increase achievement of students in English

91



Local teacher Counterparts co-planning lessons co-teaching with Volunteers

6678



Students from secondary schools attended English classes co-taught by Volunteers, as native English speakers working with their Kyrgyzstani Counterparts

Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic will share the results of Volunteers' and Counterparts' efforts from the 2024-2025 school year in our 2025 Annual Report.

In 2024, Peace Corps supported Volunteers in establishing the Resource and Data Committee. The purpose of this Volunteer-led committee is to support Teaching English as a Foreign Language project goals at Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic by gathering data on student progress, improving the quality and accessibility of classroom resources, and developing grant support resources for Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts. In 2024, Resource and Data Committee developed several tools to measure Volunteer impact. One of these tools was a baseline exam. This 4-part exam (listening, reading, writing, speaking) aims to understand students' English language

development over one year. Volunteers administer the test first in September and then again in April or May. Volunteers send their exam results to the Resource and Data Committee for comparison and analysis. This analysis provides crucial data that help Volunteers understand where students have struggled, thrived, and improved the most. Volunteers from 5 regions provided data from over 1,300 students. This academic year even more Volunteers administered the baseline exam, and the data generated by the committee will help strengthen the TEFL program by providing insights into challenges teachers and students are facing in the classroom.

Peace Corps **Virtual Service Pilot Program**

The Peace Corps Virtual Service Pilot Program is an opportunity for Americans to support Peace Corps projects and partners from a distance. In Kyrgyzstan, Virtual Service Pilot Participants (VSPPs) have been co-teaching with Kyrgyzstani English teachers since February 2021. The first VSPPs were Volunteers who had been evacuated from Kyrgyzstan due to the pandemic. These VSPPs engaged via Zoom from the United States with the students and teachers with whom they had been working prior to leaving the country.

Since that time, 19 different Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and other qualified U.S. citizens have participated as VSPPs in classrooms throughout the Kyrgyz Republic, including in Batken, Osh, Jalal-Abad, Naryn, Issyk-Kul, and Chui. Currently five VSPP-Counterpart pairs are engaging Kyrgyzstani students in English language activities at least once per week.

Peace Corps Eco-tourism Program in Kyrgyzstan

In January 2024, 7 Peace Corps Response Volunteers arrived in Kyrgyzstan to begin one-year assignments as eco-tourism marketing specialists in Naryn, Issyk-Kul, Jalal-Abad, Osh, and Chui regions. This pilot cohort of Peace Corps Response Volunteers worked with Kyrgyz Community Based Tourism Association (KCBTA) partner organizations and businesses across the country on developing new tour products, created digital content, and worked on eco-tourism strategy



development. They developed nature-based tours, assisted in creating effective marketing strategies to attract domestic and international tourists, established guidelines and best practices to minimize the impact of tourism on local ecosystems, and helped local partners improve their English language skills.

Peace Corps

Small Grants Program

The Peace Corps Small Grants Program makes funding available for Volunteers and their communities to access support for small-scale development projects. Volunteers and their Counterparts work with the community to identify needs and design projects that support sustainable development. The community is the driving force of each project. Volunteer communities (schools, local government, other organizations) contribute at least 25% of the total estimated grant cost to ensure the ownership and initiation, as well as to enhance the sustainability of the project. In 2024, Volunteers and their communities wrote 26 grant projects totaling over \$84,000, benefiting more than 48,000 people across 5 regions.



Total # of grant projects in 2024 -

26



Completed - **8**



Currently being implemented - **18**

Sectors -

Education,
Economic Development,
Environment



Total funding received -

\$84,675.74/
7,265,178.49 KGS

Peace Corps Response Volunteer Adam in Jalal-Abad region

Environment Program

The Peace Corps Partnership Program provides immediate support when combined with a minimum 25% contribution from the community it aims to serve. With this arrangement we were able to utilize \$3,000 to obtain a fleet of bicycles sufficient for the terrain and with quality made Shimano components (drivetrain and hydraulic brakes), tools for both general maintenance and wheel building, and a framework for bike tourism packages that utilize local area homestays, restaurants, yurt camps, and guides. The proposed packages have a much higher profit margin than traditional tour packages, require far less fossil fuels, extend the range of tourism travel into smaller communities, and provide a less invasive/resource draining experience for both the hosts and the tourists.



Peace Corps Volunteer Jacob in Naryn region **Education Program**



With the support of Peace Corps, local leaders, and donors from the U.S., we successfully raised over \$3,200/270,000 KGS through the Peace Corps Partnership Program to establish an English Resource Center at our school.

Over the past several months, we worked diligently — allocating resources, coordinating transport, collaborating with school staff, securing community support, and designing a functional layout. The process involved

countless conversations in three languages, the installation of technical equipment, and collective problem-solving. In October, we officially opened the center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, symbolizing the culmination of these efforts. This resource center has been used as a hub for English clubs, trainings, and currently is being used as a space for students to prepare for their Halloween competition that includes a school-wide poster contest!





Peace Corps Volunteer Michaela in Osh region

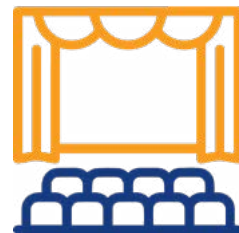
Education Program



Community events and cultural performances are highly valued here so after conducting a successful outreach meeting with my school community, they decided to invest in refurbishing our old theater hall. The chairs that were in the theater hall were old, splintering, and falling apart, so we purchased some comfortable chairs for all students to use with dignity. Our theater hall did not have a speaker or microphone set, so if a teacher wanted to use a speaker for a class performance, they would

need to rent one, which cost over 2,000 som. This steep cost hindered many teachers from putting on performances with their classes, so providing the theater hall with a free-to-use speaker and microphone further encourages creative performances at my school. It is only a few months into the school year, and I have already seen how the new additions have enhanced the students' viewing experience and excitement in performing.

My director and counterparts actively participated in the completion of the grant; their expertise, drive, and support were invaluable to the project. They found vendors for big-ticket purchases and helped reduce the price of items so our money could go further. Their involvement is a testament to their drive to make our community better.



Peace Corps Volunteer Alex in Naryn region **Education Program**

Throughout my first year plus as a Peace Corps Volunteer, my village has been incredibly welcoming, open, and supportive of me. These sentiments and attitudes continued into our first community project. The village community collectively chose to create a space at the school that could be used for a variety of meetings, from teacher trainings to parents' meetings to workshops. The decision itself to create such a room was nothing incredibly special. However, our project has stood out due to the execution and overall quality of the room. The room looks unique and is the only one of its kind in our rayon. The desk style and orientation foster a collaborative and friendly atmosphere. The project has truly been a big success for my school and community. This success was not without the help of many community partners. The village government supported us and offered advice along the way. The school caretakers and teachers worked on the cleaning and renovation for free. Students helped decorate and finish the room. Lastly, the unsung hero of the project must be my school director. She worked tirelessly to ensure the project was running smoothly and ironed out any issues quickly



and effectively. I look forward to working with my community to plan, write, manage, and implement more projects throughout the rest of my time as a Volunteer.



Love Without Words

I'm a storyteller at heart; I've always loved the way words weave into stories. Diving headfirst into an environment where words are often limited has been one of my life's greatest challenges. Without fail, whenever I meet new people, they tell me, "You look Kyrgyz." I've often been an outsider in my life, and there are no words when people say "You look like us; you're one of us." People here give love easily and are open without reservation. Students shout the minimal phrases they know, "I love you!", "Hello!" "Goodbye Grace!" at me everywhere in the village. I have integrated well and feel a part of the community. To my family, I vacuum and set up the tushuks (traditional mattresses) every night and bring candy from the city every week. To my



students, I pour my heart (and money) into lessons and clubs. Words are said, but I have learned that real love always shines through actions. From my host mom who sewed my oversized Kyrgyz outfits, my teachers who invite me to community events, from my host siblings who waved me goodbye, from my students who make finger hearts at me in the hallways, and from the stream of flowers I get at Teachers Day. From my counterpart, who I can call a genuine friend and who I eat lagman dish and go to bazaars (local markets) with in Jalal-Abad city. With her? Love, definitely with words.

*Grace,
Peace Corps Volunteer in Jalal-Abad region
Education program*



Using nature walks to teach English— and pique students' interest in conservation

I am a second year Peace Corps Volunteer in a rural village in central Kyrgyzstan. I teach English to 4th through 7th graders in a school of 400 students. My village is absolutely beautiful! Every day I marvel at the beauty of the landscape! The mountains are close by and there are streams and fields everywhere I look! Spring and summer were especially breath-taking with a myriad of wildflowers.

I decided to incorporate nature walks and nature journaling into my English Clubs. Each week, I take two groups of students on walks in or around the school grounds. We look at trees or birds, flowers or insects. We look at the snow on the mountains and consider if there is more or less compared to last week. We look for seasonal changes, identify trees and edible berries. We identify birds based on their songs. We make drawings in our nature journals to record our observations. Sometimes we just sit and listen to the sounds around us.

We discuss what we find, ask questions, and wonder why we see and hear what we do. My hope is that my students will not only love



and appreciate their village, but also develop a scientific, inquisitive mind. I hope that their nature journals will open their eyes to the uniqueness of their homeland and this will lead to future work in conservation--a crucial need in this country. By combining English acquisition with nature walks and journaling, my students gain important language skills and an increased awareness of the natural world that surrounds them.

*Ruth,
K-29 Peace Corps Volunteer in Naryn region
Education program*

Building Relationships in My New Home

I applied to Peace Corps a year ago, mostly on a whim, but now I cannot imagine any other place I would rather be. The last two months at my site in Talas Oblast have been some of the most interesting and rewarding months I've ever had. I love that every day is an adventure and I never know what will happen – from going guesting to helping my host mom cook dinner to getting invited to judge a concert at my school. I am forming relationships with people in my community, who help my new village feel like home. The students at my school are wonderful and remind me every day why I am here. I love walking into school and being greeted by a chorus of “Hi!”, even from students who I do not teach. I have bonded with my 7th grade class over Miley Cyrus’ “Party in the USA,” and they love perform-



ing a dance I made as an energizer activity. One of my favorite memories so far was also performing a Kyrgyz dance with my 9th grade students at our Teachers’ Day Concert! My students always make me feel like a valuable member of the community. I have also loved forming a relationship with my counterparts, who are not only eager to learn English but to get to know me and build a friendship. My counterparts’ English has improved already and I am excited to see the progress they will continue to make over the next two years. I am thankful to my community for making my new village a great home during my service!

*Katherine,
K-29 Peace Corps Volunteer in Talas region
Education program*



Integration is key in Peace Corps Service

This year my community and I have accomplished so much. After months of work we managed to complete our grant project. We created a student center that includes a computer lab, a library, a conference hall, a cafe, and a very nice outdoor space. We finished on time and under budget. The whole school loves it and it is quickly becoming the place to hang out at, work, or hold clubs in. Both my counterparts and students are improving their English skills. As we learn and practice together every day we become more comfortable helping each other. Students are becoming more involved in clubs, and lessons. In and out of the class my students always

engage with me. It's the most rewarding part of the job. Working with local partners and developing my regional trainings have helped spread new ideas and concepts to people outside of my community. Making and developing social media posts have drawn in people from around the country to ask for help and advice for their English questions, which I am happy to assist with. Hopefully, this year will see more progress and improvement.

Ian,

*K-29 Peace Corps Volunteer in Naryn region
Education program*



Out of Nowhere

Sometimes you just never know how or why your service will be received by the people who mean the most to you. I live with a wonderful family who own a guest house. They have five children, and I wanted to make an outdoor game for them. After much thought, I settled on the fairly new American game of Corn Hole, (though I had never played the game,) and so I found some wood, paint, cloth and, yes, even corn. I set out with hammer, saw and paint brush, and before you know it, I was sharing this new cultural phenomenon with my new friends, halfway around the globe.

Well, the children liked the game, for at least a week! And everyone gets a kick out of it when they have friends over, but I was taken completely by surprise by what the game means for the guest house. We host groups of

a dozen or more travelers every week, mostly from Europe, (which is why I had first considered getting a Bocce set, or even a Boules set – but, of course, our visitors can easily play those games at home, and they travel all the way over here to try new things, right? Well, Corn Hole is definitely new for them!)

Every group seems to enjoy playing, for hours into the night, sometimes! (It is a very social game...) and I am always happy to drag the boards out for any group. My room is near where they play, and I am always, (almost unreasonably,) proud when I hear the “thump, thump,” of bags hitting the boards, knowing that my little effort has meant so much, not only to strangers from around the globe, but mainly, to my wonderful host family, the people who mean the most to me.

My much larger project is a recycling program for two dozen guest houses and public schools in the city. A Kyrgyz man built containers, and a local entrepreneur will process and transport recyclables to the capital. It isn't as much fun as corn hole, but just as rewarding!

Mark,
Peace Corps Response Volunteer in Naryn region
Environment program



Integration into Kyrgyzstan's Beautiful Culture

Integrating into a new culture does not have to be seen as intimidating, but rather as an important opportunity to bond with new people and gain a deeper appreciation for humanity. Being willing to step out of your comfort zone and try new things is essential in this journey. With this attitude, I have been fortunate to enjoy Kyrgyzstan's rich culture: I've given a speech at a wedding, eaten delicious food, and most importantly, made new friends.

I have also gained a deep admiration for Kyrgyz people and their culture. Kyrgyz people are hospitable, honorable, and eager to learn about new cultures, while also placing great importance on sharing their own. Indeed, something I greatly admire about Kyrgyz people is their commitment to maintain their proud culture through generations. Having grown up in a Cuban family with the same commitment to cultural continuity, I find this profoundly relatable. As Kyrgyz author Chingiz Aitmatov explains in *The Day Lasts More than A Hundred Years*, preserving our culture, our roots, is necessary to preserve our direction and sense of self. In this light, seeing my 8th grade students recite the Epic



of Manas for several minutes was an admirable experience, as were other similar moments.

In Kyrgyzstan, I have found an environment where myself, my host family, and my colleagues and students are eager to learn from each other. I have also found hardworking people committed to the continued success of Kyrgyzstan's youth, and I am honored to assist them in this task.

*Diego,
K-30 Peace Corps Volunteer in Osh region
Education program*

Tour Operator Partnerships Key to Kyrgyzstan's Tourism Growth Strategy



Here in Q4 of 2024 our Kyrgyzstan Community Based Tourism Association (KCBTA) Travel team is handling what we believe to be a record number of enquiries from international tour operators asking to feature Kyrgyzstan in their tour programs for 2025. And this is on the heels of a successful United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Future Growth Initiative grant-funded Central Asia Adventure Familiarization Tour our team hosted in early September. All 5 of the small group adventure tour operators we hosted from India, Canada, Portugal, Spain, and the

US, who previously had not sold Kyrgyzstan in their travel programs, intend to for 2025.

Kyrgyzstan's potential to grow tourism is undisputed. Over the last decade, there has been a steady rise in the number of foreign tourists coming to Kyrgyzstan. The Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic reports that 1.6 million tourists crossed the border of Kyrgyzstan in the first quarter of 2024 and that more than 8.5 million tourists visited Kyrgyzstan in 2023.

Most of Kyrgyzstan's inbound tourists are from neighboring countries, so there is untapped potential to attract visitors from major European markets and the US, markets that are typically attracted by cultural and adventure experiences. The United Nations Development Programme estimates that currently only 15-20% of the country's tourism potential is being reached.

*Kim,
Peace Corps Response Volunteer in Chui
region
Environment program*

My wonderful American sister

I can say that 2023 was the most interesting and wonderful year of my life, and the reason for all of this is my Emily. Emily is not just a volunteer who came far away, she is a member of our family. When she arrived, we welcomed her with great joy and good intentions, and since we have similar personalities, we quickly got along. Since I don't have a sibling sister Emily's place in my life has become significant. We spent a lot of time together. We spoke about our traditions, our villages, and our people. And she also taught me a lot about the traditions and language of the American people. We cooked American and Kyrgyz dishes together. We also had very good communication with her family. I think this also strengthens the bridge between our two countries.



When our relatives and neighbors had weddings and other events, we would always go together with Emily, observe and play there. For Emily, all of this and the traditions at the wedding were very interesting. An unforgettable incident: At our relative's wedding, Emily was loved, respected and made to speak in public. She didn't know what to say and looked at me, and I was very embarrassed and looked at her. Our relatives have also accepted Emily as a member of our family and say, "This is Aigul's (my mother's) eldest daughter."

I have been very interested in English since I was little, and it was my dream to go to the US. With Emily's help, I got one step closer to that dream. She gave me many books, always prepared for tests, and guided me to apply to a university.

In fact, I consider Emily as my own sister. I didn't go anywhere alone for a year, if I had any thoughts or plans, I would tell her, and we do anything together. I think I am a good sister to Emily and this relations will last a long time!

*Adelya,
a host sister of Volunteer Emily*

Local teacher and American Volunteer work together

Since September 2024, Peace Corps Volunteer Victoria has been working at our school in Issyk-Kul region as an English teacher. The first days, Victoria began attending classes, got to know the school, students and staff and quickly got along with them. Currently, we are planning lessons together with her. Victoria takes great care of the children, and the students also look up to her very well and participate in the lessons with interest. In a short time, students have learned new English

words, and she is also quickly mastering the Kyrgyz language.

We hope that with Victoria's help we will achieve success, and once again I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Peace Corps. We really like Victoria.

Aizada,

English teacher at school in Issyk-Kul region



Learning English is so much fun

Lessons with Volunteer Guyline are going great, as she is young and open and quickly finds a common language with students. I think it is fascinating for the whole class to study English with her, I have never seen such enthusiasm for English in my classmates. My English is improving, especially pronunciation, before Guyline arrived I did not speak much.

With the arrival of the Volunteer, lessons became more lively and engaging as she is teaching us vocabulary by playing games and immersing ourselves in the language.

*Nazik,
student at school in Chui region*



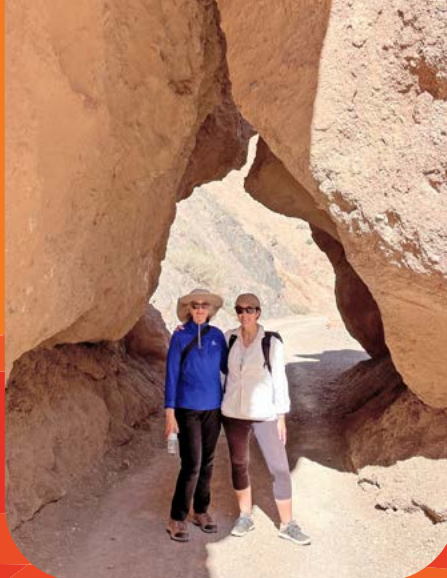
Gratitude to Host Families and Communities

Peace Corps Volunteers live with local host families throughout their two years of service. This is one of the key ways that Peace Corps accomplishes its core goals of promoting intercultural exchange and mutual understanding. The host family members are essential to the safe integration of the Volunteer into the community. Through this close relationship, Volunteers gain valuable cultural and language skills, and host families receive a new member of the family eager to share traditions and knowledge from home.

In addition to the exchange of cultures, host families and Volunteers develop meaningful relationships that often last far beyond a Volunteer's service in the Kyrgyz Republic.

We are thankful to host families and communities throughout the country who open their homes and hearts and take such good care of their American sons and daughters.







Website



Instagram



Facebook

Peace Corps Kyrgyz Republic



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