



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GEORGIA

SUCCESS STORY

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Volunteer teachers make a difference in the lives of their students



Photo: JSI/Richard Wang

A group of teachers from Public School 17 in Kutaisi, Georgia pose with trainers from USAID's Healthy Women in Georgia project. After participating in a four-day training on how to discuss sensitive health and social issues with youth, the teachers motivated more than 80% of the school's students to participate in the Healthy Lifestyles program.

The USAID-supported program teaches youth about the dangers of drugs and sexually transmitted diseases and empowers them to make informed and healthy choices affecting their lives.

Telling Our Story
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

For four teachers at Public School 17 in Kutaisi, Georgia, teaching high school students is more than a job. It is a commitment to helping their young students make safe and healthy choices on their path to adulthood.

For three hours every day, Nato Kuprava, Irina Burjaliani, Tea Kutateladze and Eka Murusidze stay after school on a volunteer basis to teach their students about reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, drug and alcohol abuse and other social issues such as early marriage.

Prior to this USAID-supported after school program teenagers at Public School 17 had little or no access to accurate reproductive health and substance abuse information. Drug use, early marriage and involvement with petty crime are common problems among Georgian youth. The program aims to educate students about protecting themselves against the dangers of substance abuse and unprotected sex. The program also empowers students to make informed and healthy choices affecting their lives. More than 100 secondary schools in Georgia are actively participating in the program.

To become certified instructors in the USAID-supported program, public school teachers participate in a four-day training course, led by local physicians. The participants learn about the curriculum, which was created specifically for Georgia. In addition to the curriculum, they learn how to discuss sensitive health and social issues with youth, and how to manage the program and promote it to parents and students.

Thanks to the focus on domestic training the program ensures Georgian youth have continued access to accurate healthy lifestyle information. A tenth grade boy could not quit smoking on his own so he attended an after school smoking cessation class. After several counseling sessions, the boy put away cigarettes for good. As an added benefit, he went on to become certified as a peer leader and counseled other students on positive lifestyle choices.

Nato, Tea, Irina and Eka motivated an impressive 80% of Public School 17's 450 students to take part in the program. Twenty students completed a two-day training to become certified peer leaders, making them an additional source of accurate information for their classmates.