



PHOTO & CAPTION

Celebrating Healthy Lifestyles



Photo: Save the Children/Koba Sopromadze

Youth in Georgia often lack access to basic information about critical health topics like HIV/AIDS, transmission of infectious disease, and the effects of alcohol and drugs. As a result, they are not equipped with the knowledge they need to make smart, informed, and healthy personal choices.

Recognizing that knowledge is power, USAID has been holding “Healthy Lifestyles” courses in three communities in western Georgia to educate young people about the importance of their lifestyle

High school students in Kutaisi, western Georgia celebrate the completion of “Healthy Lifestyles” courses and start of healthy adult lives at Kutaisi City Public School Number 1.

decisions on their health and teach them how to make healthy choices. Trained counselors facilitate five after-school sessions, where teens engage in fun group activities and discussions about the dangers of smoking and substance abuse, puberty, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. The program fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills among teenagers, encouraging them to make smart personal choices. In 2005 alone, over 3,250 adolescents participated in the courses. Some 200 sessions were held in 35 schools in the Imereti region.

To celebrate the completion of the course, USAID organized a health competition, which included a health quiz and volleyball match in a high school in western Georgia. The success of the course was illustrated by the students’ enthusiasm and accurate knowledge in wide-range of topics from preventing sexually transmitted diseases and the harmful consequences of smoking, to drug abuse, HIV/AIDS transmission, and the effect of alcohol on pregnant women. To cap off the event, students competed in a volleyball game. With all the school directors present, the students were each given certificates and the class was awarded volleyballs and a music box to encourage continued healthy lifestyle practices.