



SCHOOLS ONLINE

NEWSLETTER

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Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan

Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan has established 27 Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) in secondary schools across Tajikistan. The program's main goal is to increase global dialogue and educational opportunities by installing modern computer equipment with Internet access in schools, and developing training and learning projects for teachers and students.

Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program activities include:

- * Teacher training on using computers and the Internet in classroom teaching;
- * U.S. school partnerships on civic education projects, teacher and student exchanges;
- * Public access and programs for community members and disadvantaged groups;
- * Development of sustainable practices for schools and communities.

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GCE Students Talk to FLEX and YES Alumni

On June 12, Tajikistan Global Connections students from 27 Internet Learning Centers throughout the country were joined by 30 FLEX and YES alumni from Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan for an online chat among some of the region's most active youth. FLEX and YES alumni from the countries mentioned above, together with Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, were invited to participate in a symposium about "Respecting Diversity and Building Tolerance: Learning from Each Other" where they explored issues of Tolerance and Diversity, listened to different points of view from experts on various topics related to Tolerance and Diversity, expressed their own opinions, and gained practical knowledge on how to organize projects and write grants.

During the hour-long online chat, participants discussed the importance of overcoming stereotypes some have of Islam, being tolerant of all different religions, respect for women and prevention of sexual harassment, and being accepting to groups and individuals who may appear to be different. FLEX and YES alumni also shared the many projects they planned during the symposium which focus on appreciating diversity and promoting tolerance, and shared advice with GCE students on how to plan and fund successful activities of their own. One student encouraged others to being open-minded by remarking, "Tolerance and diversity can make the world better, make the country better. Not only that, it also can make a wonderful life."



Dr. Seniors gives presentation at the Islamic University

Native People of USA

In early June, the ILC of Islamic University was visited by a guest from the U.S. – Dr. Paula Marie Seniors, an assistant professor of African American Studies at the College of New Jersey. In 2003 Dr. Seniors received her Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, San Diego. She also holds a Master of Arts in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, San Diego; Master of Arts in vocal performance from New York University, and Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance from the City College of New York.

The visit of Dr. Seniors to the Islamic University consisted of two activities: meeting with students and giving a presentation about the native people of USA and some history of the alliance of Caucasians and African Americans; and an online chat with Global Connections and Exchange students which gave them a chance to get answers to questions regarding African American studies and Native Americans USA from a professional in the field. Students learned many interesting things about the history of natives Americans. It is known that the USA is inhabited by representatives of different ethnic groups and students learned that the most numerous and growing ethnic group in America at present is Spanish-speaking. Dr. Seniors said that rights of all ethnic groups living in the USA are protected and by law there should be no discrimination towards any ethnic group. Students and teachers learned these and many other useful things during this online discussion.

We are very grateful to Dr. Paula Marie Seniors for such an educational and interesting chat because due to such online meetings students learn about the history, culture and traditions of the USA and other countries of the world.

Project Groups in Summer Time

This month GCEP students of Tajikistan and Bangladesh participated in two partnership activities. One of them was about the FIFA World Cup 2006. This lesson helped students to improve their knowledge of the English language, develop skills in writing paragraphs in English, and identify and solve common grammatical errors in written English by participating in an online forum. Students prepared a paragraph about the first day of the World Cup 2006 match results and pasted it in the forum. Football matches are often thought to be watched primarily by boys but this activity raised girls' interest too and made them real football fans: they would watch football matches, and discuss and argue with boys about the results and play of different football teams.



Tajikistan GCE students create cards to congratulate their fathers

Through this lesson students learned how to write articles about sports in English, and identify and suggest corrections for grammatical mistakes in written English.

Another interesting activity which Bangladesh and Tajikistan students participate in was about "Arts and Crafts for Every Day Life". This lesson was devoted to International Fathers' Day celebrated on the 18th of June. It taught students about the history of this day and the importance and value of a handmade gift. Students joined in celebration of this holiday, created their own gifts for their fathers and shared their experience and instructions on making these crafts which can be viewed here: http://www.connect.tj/en/father's_day.html

The Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program for Central Asia is a project of Relief International - Schools Online's Global Citizenship & Youth Philanthropy Program and has been made possible with major funding from the United States State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Global Catalyst Foundation

GCEP: Plans for the Next Year

This month field staff of RI-SOL participated in the second three-day Planning Meeting on June 22-24, 2006. The first meeting was conducted last summer and served as a planning session to start another two years of Global Connections and Exchange Program (GCEP). One year of GCEP has passed and this time ILC Managers came to share the past year's successes and achievements, areas to change, and discuss ideas. Field staff, now from 27 Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) with two newly opened ILCs in Panjakent and Shartuz, stayed in a camp of Gissar valley.



Mr. Tom Armbruster and GCE field staff discuss program issues

During the first day of the meeting participants met with the U.S. Embassy Charge D'affaires Officer Mr. Tom Armbruster and U.S. Public Affairs Officer Mr. Jon Larsen. At this meeting RI-SOL staff had a chance to share their experiences, talk about successes and needs of their ILCs, and ask questions about priorities of the U.S. Embassy.



Ms. Anna Mussman shares her ideas about GCEP activities

Another important guest of the meeting was Ms. Anna Mussman, Program Officer for the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, who participated in program planning discussions. It was an invaluable opportunity for RI-SOL staff to hear suggestions and ideas from Anna Mussman on planning interesting program activities for the next year, including activities that raise students' and community members' awareness on AIDS, rules and procedures of election process, and democratic values.

While being together at the meeting ILC Managers worked on planning summer activities as well. In July, project group students together with English Club Members, Web Designers, Photographers and Youth Leaders, will start a pilot national project about Tajikistan Literature and History. Students will be working to design a web page about Tajikistan writers, poets, and scientists using different sources of information for the web page: local libraries, interviews with specialists, and teachers of literature and history. The result of this program will be a web site in three languages - Tajik, Russian and English which will serve as an online resource to be used by teachers and students in their classes.

Another project will be developed, inspired by Wikipedia - an online encyclopedia, the content of which will be created by GCE students and teachers - will be started this summer. Interested educators and motivated students will paste their articles and education materials not only in Russian and English but also in Tajik and will be able to add and make changes to it.



ILC Managers talk about program activities for summer

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International Children's Day



Tajikistan children celebrate their day

For 57 years, the 1st of June has been the day when the whole world celebrates children with International Children's Day. The history of this holiday is rooted in an oath "... to struggle for creation of conditions for the happy and harmonious development of children and future generations ..." taken by participants of the First Congress of the International Democratic Federation of Women in Paris after WWII. Since November 1949 the 1st of June is announced as International Children's Day which calls upon everybody to protect children and their rights.

Tajikistan GCE students took an active part in the celebration of this event by conducting different community service activities.

Members of Youth Leadership Clubs (YLCs) held a contest to for the best drawings of students of primary school, spent a day in neighborhood kindergartens looking after kids, singing songs and presenting them sweets and other gifts. All these activities made the children feel happy and cheerful as there is nothing better in the world than to see smiling children and hear their laughing.

Students also participated in different activities and contests devoted to International Children's Day. They talked about the history of Children's Day, the convention of children's rights, how this holiday is celebrated in their city, and many other issues in an online forum. Several contests devoted to this holiday were announced for ILC students: members of English Clubs were invited to show their skills in writing and compose essays about Children's Day in English; young photographers and artists made interesting photos and logos; students of web designers and programmers club together with project groups created colorful web pages devoted to children.



Nurek YLC members spent a day with children in the kindergarten



Photo made by Suhrob Sulaimonov from Kayrakkum ILC

We would like to thank all the students who participated in our contests and congratulate authors of the best works:

Mukhlisa Sohibova from Isfara ILC School No.1 - for the best essay on the lives of Tajikistan children; Photo Club member - Suhrob Sulaimonov from Kayrakkum ILC of School No. 14 - for the best photo; students Nekruz Shekhmamadov, Firdavs Nazirov, Nozanin Mamadoshoeva from Khorog ILC of School No. 2 - for the best web page which can be seen here <http://www.connect.tj/en/Khorugh/>

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