



SCHOOLS ONLINE

Global Connections and Exchange

Tajikistan

November 2006

Each month, we publish a newsletter like this one to update schools in our network, our donors and other interested readers about the activities and progress taking place within our program in Tajikistan.

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Please contact:
tajiked@ri.org



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GCEP students in Tajikistan discuss what it means to be a global citizen as part of November's collaborative lesson. The students worked together to select and interview a member of their community whom they felt exemplifies a global citizen.

The Global Connections and Exchange for Tajikistan project 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, as well as developing training and learning projects for teachers and students.

www.connect-tajikistan.org

International Education Week

Universities, schools and ILCs in Tajikistan welcomed a new tradition with the celebration of the annual International Education Week (IEW). The U.S. Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson opened IEW at the Pedagogical University in Dushanbe on the 13th of November with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan. Thereafter, different international organizations providing educational programs in Tajikistan, including Relief International – Schools Online, presented information about activities and programs offered and answered students' and teachers' questions about the benefits and opportunities of international education. Students from RI-SOL's ILC at school No. 10 in Dushanbe and from the Islamic University participated in large numbers at this event.

The event was an excellent opportunity for students to talk to alumni of different exchange programs and to discover the importance of acquiring an international education and participating in study abroad programs. Project Groups, English Clubs, Youth Leadership Clubs, Youth Journalists Clubs, Web Designers & Programmers Clubs, and Art & Photography Clubs from 27 Internet Learning Centers were involved in activities for IEW. Students from the different groups and clubs organized and participated in projects dedicated to the theme of the event. An online forum was held for students who have participated in study abroad programs to answer questions posted by GCEP students at ILCs.

Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX) participants Olya Zavyalova and Mirzomubin Khakimov, who currently study in the U.S., along with students from the Youth Leadership Program on Free Expression, who were traveling throughout the U.S. during the month of November, provided a personal view of what education is like in the U.S. and the importance of an international education in an online forum. The forum can be viewed at <http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/forum/>



A GCEP student participates in an online discussion about international education.

Youth Leadership Club students created PowerPoint presentations for community members and students from neighboring schools to raise awareness about IEW and the importance of international education.

IEW Award Winners

RI-SOL held contests to award GCEP students for the best PowerPoint presentation, article or newsletter, and posting in an online forum or chat about IEW. Students from each ILC voted for the best work on the forum. Based on these virtual votes, the winners are:

Best question during an online chat:
Students from Dushanbe ILC of school No. 10 for the best question during an online chat with Michelle Barrington. The question was "What school gives the best education, the private or government school?"

Best article and PowerPoint presentation:
Students from the Sarband ILC

Online Chats with Michelle Barrington

As an introduction to International Education Week, GCEP students discussed English language instruction in an online chat with The U.S. Embassy English Language Fellow Michelle Barrington. Ms. Barrington is currently working at the Department of Foreign Languages of Khujand State University. She has worked in Tianjin, China teaching English and has also taught in the U.S. This chat provided an excellent opportunity for students to ask questions on the best practices for learning English and for English teachers to talk about new methods for teaching English and how to overcome difficulties faced during teaching. In addition, the chat allowed students and teachers to practice their English language skills with one another. “Learning any language is not easy and it takes time. You must be patient and persistent. Don’t give up, listen and speak as much as you can in English” –Michelle advised students.

Both students and teachers wanted to know many things about schools in the US, including how the education system operates and what



Ms. Barrington discusses topics such as World AIDS Day and International education during an online chat with GCEP students from Tajikistan.



A GCEP student talks with Michelle Barrington online about English language instruction.

U.S. schoolchildren do after classes. “Students play sports like football, running (track), and basketball. There may be clubs as well as chess, science or math clubs. Many students may be lazy too and watch TV or play on the computer” says Michelle. Talking about the role of school in the life of students Michelle stated that “schools play a big role in education, and it can either inspire or ruin students. A bad teacher can make students hate school a good teacher helps students to enjoy learning”.

Besides educational questions, students were interested to hear Michelle’s impressions about Tajikistan as this is Michelle’s first trip and stay in our country. “I like Tajik culture and traditions. The weddings are very nice and the women’s dresses are lovely.”

The conversation was such a success that students and teachers have created an online club to discuss necessary and interesting topics such as Thanksgiving Day or World AIDS Day with Ms. Barrington. We are very thankful to Ms. Barrington for her kindness and support in devoting her time to talk with GCEP students.

Who is a Global Citizen?



GCEP students in Tajikistan develop interview questions to ask a global citizen from their community (above).



Students in the U.S. create posters depicting global citizens (above) and share them with students in Tajikistan (below).



During the month of November, GCEP students participated in the “Who is a Global Citizen” project. Through this activity students gained a deeper understanding of the issues, values and rights that global citizens care about and learned about activities global citizens can do to act on these issues and contribute to their communities.

Students selected a person to interview as an example of a global citizen in their community. Through Internet research and a personal interview students created presentations for the partner country introducing their global citizen and his/her work.

Some students felt that the President of Tajikistan exemplifies global citizenship; others considered their school teachers, doctors and members of their community to be global citizens.

GCEP participants found creative ways to discuss global citizenship. At Oroville High School in the U.S., students prepared interesting posters about their selected global citizen.

Students from Kayrakkum Internet Learning Center (ILC) defined a global citizen as “a person who is not indifferent to problems of the world, and is always ready to do something to create a better life in the world”. Students of another ILC in Khujand stated that “a Global Citizen is a humanist who knows the value of life, the world and peace”.

This activity helped our students develop their awareness of people practicing global citizenship in their communities and established an understanding of how they can become more active global citizens themselves.

Talking About: Presidential Elections and the Constitution of Tajikistan

The month of November provided a pertinent opportunity for students to study the political process in Tajikistan. GCEP programs offer students a wide variety of lesson plans and trainings. Politics, both domestic and international, is one topic often addressed in lessons and club meetings. Students have shown an apt interest in learning how the government in Tajikistan operates and in comparing the political system in Tajikistan with that of other countries. During the month of November, students from the Youth Leadership Clubs (YLC) continued their study of politics and the government of Tajikistan with a lesson on the constitution and the presidential election process.

The lesson was planned for the same time when the rest of the country celebrates the adoption of the constitution of Tajikistan and an individual's right to participate in an electoral process. The constitution of Tajikistan was adopted on November 6, 1994. On this same day, elections were held for the president of Tajikistan. The president is elected by popular vote and serves a seven year term.

In coordination with the presidential elections, YLC members discussed the election process and developed a deeper understanding of the importance of voting. Students also learned about the constitution of Tajikistan and were especially interested in comparing their constitution with the constitution of the United States, discovering the similarities and differences between the two. YLC members found the lesson to be interesting and informative - thanks to the lesson they have developed a better understanding of the political process and their rights as a citizen of Tajikistan.



GCEP students in Tajikistan research topics such as international political processes and citizen rights on the Internet at ILCs.

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For more information about our programs please visit www.ri.org

1575 Westwood Blvd., Ste. 201
Los Angeles, CA, 90024
Tel: 310 - 478 - 1200 Fax: 310 - 478 - 1212



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