



Tajikistan School Connectivity Project

NEWS

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LETTERR

CONTENT

The Tajikistan School Connectivity Project for Central Asia is establishing 20 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.

Tajikistan School Connectivity Project activities include:

- **teacher training on using computers and the Internet in classroom teaching**
- **US school partnerships on civic education projects and teacher exchange**
- **public access and programs for community members and disadvantaged groups**
- **development of sustainable practices for schools and communities**



Graeme Loten, the Ambassador of Great Britain to Tajikistan cutting the ribbon during the Opening Ceremony at School #1, Ayni, Ayni Region. More information about the new ILC in Ayni will be in the next newsletter.

Page 1	Interview with Alla Suleymanova, ILC Lead Teacher from Chkalovsk
Page 2	Global School Connectivity Conference Held in Washington DC
Page 2	Tajikistani Students Active in Central Asian Forums
Page 3	Three New US Schools Join the Connectivity Project
Page 3	Phase II Schools Complete My Community Websites
Page 4	English Summer Camps Prepare Connectivity Students for Online Projects

Interview with Alla Suleymanova, ILC Lead Teacher from Chkalovsk

Alla Suleymanova is a teacher of Russian Language and Literature of School #4, Chkalovsk. Before her professional trip to Moscow Alla gave us her thoughts and impressions about her work in the ILC.

- *What did you receive from the participation in RI-SOL ILC activities?*
- In 2003 I joined this project. I became interested at once, because I saw the opportunity, that this project could give me in my personal and professional life. I attended trainings, learned and studied every day something new in pedagogical, psychological and technical directions. New interactive methods of teaching and Internet and computer skills which I received from attending ILC's activities helped me to make my own lessons more interesting and useful for the students. Their attendance to my lessons has increased by 3 times!
- *What is the most important thing for you in RI-SOL?*
- This project is an introduction to a world of creativity
- within the framework of this project I've participated in many community and philanthropic activities and I hope to continue my active participation in them.



Alla during her training in the ILC of School #4, Chkalovsk

Global School Connectivity Conference Held in Washington DC

On August 12-13 a conference was held involving the 5 participating countries of the Connectivity Program: Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and the former Yugoslavia. The forum was held at the US State Department and organized by Anna Mussman, Program Officer for the Youth Programs Division. The RI-SOL Head Office in Los Angeles, CA was represented by Caitlin Drewes, Program Manager and Tajikistan was represented by the RI-SOL Country Director Garth Willis. At the conference were also visitors from other offices in the State Department, and from the US Department of Education.

The conference was a great chance for all the countries to learn how Connectivity is implemented in different ways. What we discovered was that there are more similarities than differences. All of the countries found that there was not enough resources to help those that want to participate, but each country also had a list of examples of success how the connectivity program brought inspiration to the school.

The conference was also an opportunity for the US State Department to outline their future goals for the Connectivity program. The Connectivity program is not seen as a computer program, but instead as an arm of US Public Diplomacy. Much the same as sending a youth to the United States for a year exchange will show them American life and democratic ideals, an internet based civic education program can also help bring progress in any society.

The importance of exchanges between US schools and Connectivity schools was also stressed. American youth also benefit from learning more about other cultures. The more the world's youth speak directly to each other, even if they live on opposite sides of the globe, the better chance we all have for a safer and more peaceful world.

The primary concern for the State Department is that we work on finding a way for the programs to continue in the long term. US government support will not last forever, but it would be tragic to see the educational programs and internet friendships that have been formed to disappear. It is not only about funding, it is about keeping relationships between schools and teachers, and finding ways for the schools to support the Connectivity programs.

All the participants left the conference with a renewed sense of the importance for the Connectivity Program. As separate countries we know that the work we do is important for that country, but when we view Connectivity as part of a larger movement that will bring youth from all parts of the world together, we know that we are truly helping to make the world a better place.



Participants of Connectivity Conference in Washington, DC

Tajikistani Students Active in Central Asian Forums

On August 21st, Tajikistan Connectivity Schools participated in a forum called "Collaboration between Central Asian schools", organized by IEARN Uzbekistan. This is a place where students and teachers from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan schools can meet and talk about their schools life, ideas and suggestions.

Tajikistan Connectivity Schools were very active. Teachers, students, On-Site Monitors and On-Site Educators of ILC's from all around Tajikistan posted there messages on the forum. They welcomed all Central Asian Schools, told them about their life before and after Connectivity Project came to their schools and lives. Students invited their friends from other countries to visit their My Community websites, which they created by themselves and are proud of.

The forum was very successful for Tajikistani ILC's, and our side already invited other Central Asian countries to participate in the forum, discussing the very important subject "Development of Educational Materials in Schools Using Internet Resources"

For more information about this forum, please, visit: <http://www.iearn.uz/iearn/forum/index.php?showtopic=238&st=0>



Connectivity Students discussing Internet issues during the forum. Isfara, School #1

Three New US Schools Join the Connectivity Project

Our U.S. team has been working hard to recruit a diverse group of U.S. schools for the 2004-2005 Connectivity Program. The entire RI-SOL team would like to welcome the three newest schools on our roster:

Kettle Moraine High School — Wales, Wisconsin

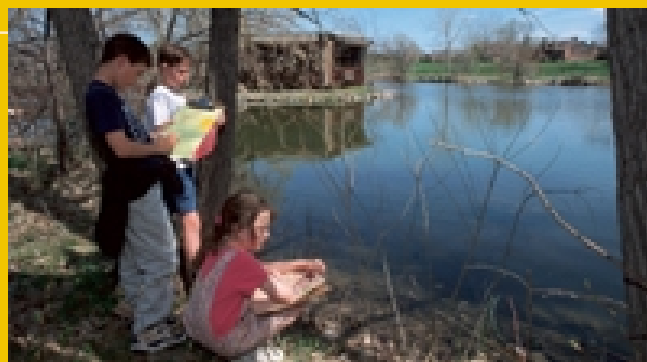
Kettle Moraine H.S is a public school of 1,484 students in the town of Wales. Wales is located in southwest Wisconsin close to the shores of Lake Michigan. The participating teacher, Denise Roseland, teaches in the business department. Her classes include International Business and Marketing, Computer Applications and Entrepreneurship. We have no doubt that her students will have a great deal to add to the connectivity project. We are excited to have our first school in Wisconsin, and our first Business Department join our team!

TRECA Digital Academy — Marion, Ohio

Welcome aboard, TRECA Digital Academy! TRECA Digital Academy (TDA) is a unique high school which is entirely online. TDA offers a new and different opportunity to students who have decided that online education is a good alternative to the brick and mortar environment. Students can access their classes 24 hours a day, all week long. We have a lot to learn about online education from the students and teachers at TDA! We are looking forward to working with Robin Roskoph, a dedicated social studies teacher for the school.

Colorado Academy — Denver, Colorado

We are excited to have Colorado Academy in Denver signed-up to participate in Connectivity this year! Colorado Academy is a private school located in the state's capital where students have a rigorous academic curriculum enriched by programs outside the classroom. Our participating teacher, Emily Leary, teaches World History and is looking forward to helping her students explore the world through their connection with Tajikistani high schools. Also of interesting note is that, Denver, Colorado is the sister city to the capital of Tajikistan, Dushanbe. Students at Colorado Academy and School #10 in Dushanbe will have the chance to learn a great deal about students in their sister city. What a wonderful opportunity!



Colorado Academy, Denver Colorado.
<http://www.coloradoacademy.org/aboutca/overview/images/image02.jpg>



Colorado Academy, Denver Colorado.
<http://www.coloradoacademy.org/aboutca/overview/images/image01.jpg>

Phase II Schools Complete My Community Websites

Welcome! Now you can visit our Phase II Schools My Community Websites!

Students, teachers and ILC's staff did a great job, creating all these websites for their schools. You can find different interesting information about school, city, community, culture and so on. Students were using their own ideas and design while creating the websites, they made good digital photos of their culture and community - and as a result, now almost all our Connectivity Schools have their own web page. We hope, you'll enjoy it! Here are some of the links: <http://www.schoolsonline.org/norak/mycommunity/web/index.htm>
<http://www.schoolsonline.org/istaravshan/index.htm>.

"It is very pleasant for me to take part in this forum and I hope, that my participation will benefit both my pedagogical and educational work among students of our city. I think that I'm one of those lucky and happy teachers of a modern school, who learned the computer and the Internet. From the date of my acquaintance with all these riches of computer science, my work became much more interesting, though I have almost thirty years of operational experience at schools. For some months of my activity in Internet Learning Center opened in our school by Relief International - Schools Online I have learned new and interesting things. Naturally all my successes are due to our opportunity for dialogue through the Internet and computer. And these forums are a great opportunity for us - the teachers of Central Asia can talk to each other and to show everyone how knowledge of computer and Internet can change your life", Mamlakat, teacher of Russian Language, School #3, Nurek, Tajikistan

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English Summer Camps Prepare Connectivity Students for Online Projects

In July RI-SOL held Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop for 17 Connectivity Lead Teachers of English with funding from the American Embassy in Tajikistan.

After completing these seminars, the teachers lead the English Camp for students in their own ILC's during August. Teachers spent with students 2 days, during which they learned computers more, played different games, learned to understand each other, be tolerant, learned how to use the Internet: as a tool for communications, exchange and education improvement.

Over 160 students from ten Connectivity schools participated in the camp. Students were very active and happy, because of interesting and useful time spent all together. On the second day students have visit different places near the their town, for example, students from Chorbog - visited famous mausoleum of Mirsaid Ali Khamadani, students from Tursunzade came to Dushanbe and visited different museums and cultural places.

Students are ready now to start new collaborative activities with their friends in the US.

"First of all we are very pleased taking part in this summer English camp. During the seminar we felt like we were making a bunch of changes in our lives. It was really interesting. Those days we played different kinds of games, we have opened the marvellous world of Internet. We all want to deliver our special gratitude to you and want to see these sort of seminars more often. It was very kind of you assist us to spend our summer holidays with benefit - we received great knowledge about computers and internet!"

Girls from School #32, Istaravshan.



Kanibadam students working under "Travelling the World" activity, English Camp, School #3



Playing 'Topic Cards' game during the English Camp. Gissar, School #2



Introduce yourself game. English Camp, School #101, Tursunzade



Participating in English Camp online forum. English Camp, School #1, Isfara

Relief International - Schools Online
18 Pavlov Street, Dushanbe,
Tajikistan 734003
Tel: (992372) 21-06-55,
Fax: (992372) 24-08-33
taj_office@schoolsonline.org,
<http://www.connect-tajikistan.org>