



Tajikistan School Connectivity Project

NEWS

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The Tajikistan School Connectivity Project for Central Asia has established 24 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**



Steve Bsharah opens the world of technology to Tajik kids in Gissar, Tajikistan

C O N T E N T

L E T T E R

Page 1 US Teachers Explore Tajikistan on Three Week Teacher Exchange Visit

Page 2 Connectivity Students Meet American Diplomats Online

Page 3 Students Learn About Migration Issues in Tajikistan and US

US Teachers Explore Tajikistan on Three Week Teacher Exchange Visit

From February 20 to March 10, U.S. School Connectivity teachers Norma Barber (Ukiah, Oregon), Steve Bsharah (Delano, CA), Doug Hatten (Duluth, MN), Emily Leary (Denver, CO), Andy Magness and Jen Peterson (San Diego, CA) spent three extraordinary weeks in Tajikistan in what has been called "the experience of a lifetime."

The U.S. Teacher Exchange gave these 6 Connectivity teachers the unique opportunity to gain a first-hand understanding of the School Connectivity program and the role it plays in a country of students and educators eager to interact with others in the global community.

With the days filled with vibrant visits to ILCs, active discussions with fellow educators, chats with local students about Tajik and American culture, presentations about the U.S., generous hosts, delicious Tajik food, spirited traditional music, lively dancing, and sincere toasts to the newly formed but everlasting friendships, the teachers and welcoming students, teachers, officials and community members shared in the building of personal friendships and international understanding.



US Teachers with Tajik Musicians in Gissar

The U.S. teachers taught Tajik students about their local communities and how they were very similar to Tajik communities in many ways, introduced and played lacrosse and the traditional American game of baseball with ILC students, and demonstrated that music shared between cultures can be appreciated by everyone regardless of nationality. They answered personal and political questions, open about life in the U.S. with both its problems and its freedoms. The communities and homes the teachers visited welcomed them openly and warmly, interested in learning about the U.S. and excited to show the beauty of Tajikistan and its people.

At every ILC the teachers were met with warm welcomes, performances, traditional food, and gifts, which all reflected the tremendous appreciation for the School Connectivity program and the ability to connect with their students. And with all the knowledge, understanding, insight, appreciation and friendships the teachers have gained through their time in Tajikistan, they are sure to bring Tajikistan back with them to share with their students and with the U.S.

To read about the teachers' experiences and thoughts, visit: <http://tojikiston.com/connect/forum/index.php>

Connectivity Students Meet American Diplomats Online

During February 9th – 15th RI-SOL held a forum to introduce Connectivity students in Tajikistan with the life and work of American Diplomats. This forum was an opportunity for two American Diplomats - David Fay and Jon Larson who will be working in the region to directly learn from students from different regions of Tajikistan.

Students from the Internet Learning Centers in Sarband, Kayrakkum, Isfara and Nurek had a lot to say and many opinions and impressions from Tajikistan that they shared on this forum. The students were ready and happy to talk about culture, traditions, life, and economy in Tajikistan.

Connectivity students were also interested in what the diplomats knew about Tajikistan, and how the world views Tajikistan. On the Forum David Fay wrote: 'Thank you for your interesting questions. I will be working in all five countries in Central Asia, and hope to spend a considerable amount of my time in Tajikistan. I suppose that, like Jon, the hospitable people and rich history is what sparked my interest in the region. We unfortunately know very little about the region in the US... but we should know much more. I believe that the world needs to know about the traditions of your region - that they will help us better understand an important part of the world.' The Connectivity students are ready to help them in any way they can.

Please, read more here: <http://tojikiston.com/connect/forum/viewforum.php?f=15>



The US Teachers learning traditional Tajik Dance in Kayrokkum, Sugd, Tajikistan



Nurek Connectivity students are one of the most active teams.



David Fay with his students in Istanbul, Turkey.

Students Learn About Migration Issues in Tajikistan and US

The February collaborative project gave Connectivity students a chance to learn about a very real and important issue in both Central Asia and the US - migration. The 'Migration - The World of Gastarbeiter' (a German word meaning "guest worker", a foreign laborer working temporarily in an industrialized country.) lesson opened new information and ideas to Connectivity students and teachers.

Students spent hours interviewing their families, relatives and community members to find out how migration has affected their family and some of the reasons why members of their families moved or did not move. These kind of questions helped students better understand their origins and how migration effects their economy and culture.

Using migration and immigration statistics which were taken from the Report on Labor Migration from Tajikistan from the International Organization for Migration, and with the help of Internet research using National Geographic maps, students created maps where they could analyze migration areas and population statistics to determine how geography, economics, politics, and other characteristics of a region affect the lifestyles of the people who live there, and whether they stay leave.

Students showed how migration is a very real factor in their own lives when teachers asked them; "Where would you like to live in the future and why?" Of course Tajiks said that they would like to live here - in Tajikistan, because it's their motherland, but almost all of them said, if they won't be able to find a job here, they would like to go to Russia and work there.

For Tajikistan students this lesson was doubly useful. Because all rural communities have families from which members migrated to Russia, Kazakhstan or other countries to find a job and help their families to stay alive. Fathers, sons, and husbands are working far from their native land because they have to feed their families. Many students didn't know where their relatives are working, but during this activity they could find these places on the map and highlight them. Now they know where their relatives are, and what they as the next generation can do to prevent labor migration from Tajikistan.

Though this lesson Connectivity students came to understand the economic situations in Tajikistan and the US better. It is also important that parents and community members also participated in this activity - this shows the global meaning and importance of educational activities.

Please, visit our forum here: http://tojikiston.com/connect/forum_viewforum.php?f=25 to read the Connectivity students' views.

Please, visit also our website here: http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/en/sc_migration.html to see the Connectivity Students' maps and presentations.



Students explore migration maps in Nurek's ILC



Connectivity girls from Fayzabad create their own migration map

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