



Tajikistan School Connectivity Project

NEWS

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LETTERR

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**

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"Traveling the World".
Teachers during English TOT
Workshop, Dushanbe, School #10

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Connectivity Students Working for a Clean Environment in Sarband and Kurgan-Tyube

The ecological NGO Chashma in Sarband is working with the ILCs at School #1 in Sarband and School #12 in Kurgan-Tyube to involve students in environmental issues in their city. Chashma held a training seminar for 25 students from five local schools at the ILC in Kurgan-Tyube, forming volunteer student Green Patrols at each school to help keep their city clean. The student volunteers who belong to the Green Patrol give performances, read poems, and sing songs to raise awareness about the importance of nature and protecting it, and organize general cleaning days for their schools and communities. The students from the School #1 Green Patrol created a newsletter in Word about the results of the seminar and distributed it to all the Connectivity ILCs. The students wrote, "Certainly one person cannot solve all the cleanliness problems of the environment. But everyone should understand that their health depends upon the environment around them."



Young Green Patrol members during the seminar, Kurgan-Tyube, School #12.

Khorog ILC Organizes Trainings for Teachers and Students

From July 23-24, the ILC at School # 2 in Khorog organized a workshop on New Methods of Teaching. 12 teachers from School #2 and #12 participated in this workshop, lead by School #2 ILC On-Site Educator Bahor Jumaeva, during their summer holidays.

During the workshop the teachers analyzed the old teaching methods of the Soviet Union and compared new methods of teaching. The teachers found new ways to make their teaching more effective for their students. Thanks to their hard work over the summer, beginning in the new educational year the teachers will know how to use new methods with computers and the Internet in their lessons. Teachers used during the seminar searching system at www.google.ru where they found interesting education websites

From July 16-17, the ILC at School #2 ILC in Khorog and the Youth City Center of Khorog organized a training with 10 students and community members about reducing drug use, AIDS and trafficking. Because Khorog is on the border with Afghanistan, the participants agreed that fighting drugs is a very important problem not only for their community, but also for Tajikistan and all of Central Asia. With the help of the Internet, participants searched information and gained a better understanding about this problem. They visited the website www.afew.org/russian/aids and learned more information about AIDS.

Two New US Schools Join the Connectivity Project

Nacel International School is located in St. Paul, Minnesota. The school shares a campus with Hamline University, the first university in Minnesota, founded in 1854. Nacel International School has a diverse group of students from all over the world. We will have two teachers participating this year, Amanda Bishop, who teaches Social Studies, and Andrea Bitunjac, who teaches World Music and World Culture. Both teachers are interested in making their school more globally aware. They're off to a good start with all of the international students they have and their upcoming participation in the Tajikistan Connectivity Project!

We are also very excited to welcome Joshua High School back to the program. Joshua HS is located in Joshua, Texas in the Northeastern area of the state. While Joshua joined the Connectivity Project last year they were unable to participate. Our new teachers there are Cheryl Adkins who teaches World Geography and Sally Rye who teaches U.S. History. Both teachers are excited to be a part of the program and are looking forward to welcoming Tajikistan into their classrooms!



Khorog teachers using computers and Internet, Khorog, School #2



Student in Khorog making notes using Word software, Khorog, School #2

Connectivity Centers Start Up English Clubs

The ILC at School #1 established an English Club with the help of On-Site Educator Ibragim Rustamov. The goal of the club is to provide an opportunity for students from poor families who can't afford lessons to learn English. The Isfara English Club was established in 1998 and its members used to listen to foreign radio broadcasts such as the Voice of America and different English radio programs. After the opening of the ILC at School #1, the English Club members began to meet there to access the Internet to learn more and improve their skills.

The English Club members learn American English, American culture and traditions, and also contribute articles to local and national newspapers.

They organize exhibitions and parties where they can speak English. All of the English Club members are students from Isfara schools and are very active ILC users.

This club is also listed and recognized as a member of the worldwide handbook "World Radio TV Handbook" that is published annually in Oxford, UK. You can find out more about the Isfara English Club at: www.criclubtjk.narod.ru

On-Site Educator Nigina Siyakova helped established another English Club in the ILC at School #101 in Tursunzade. The goals of the Tursunzade English Club are to develop oral speech, perfect grammar, and raise the computer and Internet skills of community members.

The club began their activities by creating modules and lesson plans, distributing materials, and researching educational games and English sound files on the Internet. Now the club is holding lessons with the use of computers and the Internet. They found many interesting things (games, tests, exercises, materials) on the Internet, and are using them to make the lessons more interesting and effective.

The English Club in Tursunzade has 15 members of different ages. In addition to students from School #101, students take part from three nearby schools along with workers from the Tajik Aluminum Factory, teachers, and two householders. Despite the diverse group, one general goal unifies them—the desire to study English.



Two Connectivity Students participating in the forum, Isfara, School #1

Students from Azerbaijan Participate in Cross-Border Forum with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

The most successful forum to date between Connectivity Project schools was conducted on July 9, 2004. In addition to schools in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, there were also eleven schools participating from six cities in Azerbaijan. The language of the forum was Russian and the topic was "What Is Special About My Country".

The students from Azerbaijan impressed everyone as the most active participants in the forum with their informative, poetic descriptions of their country and its traditions, folklore, and culture. For example: "There are 11 climatic zones in the world and 9 of them can be seen in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has many nature reserves such as Kizilagach, Zakatali, Lenkoran, and others. Lenkoran is a very ancient site. According to scientists 70 types of plants from the dinosaur age still grow in Lenkoran," – Nigyar, School#14, Sumgayit . "Azerbaijan is very famous with its beautiful and colorful carpets. This craft has appeared in Azerbaijan long ago. Women usually weaved carpets using gold and silver threads and precious stones and passed this craft from one generation to another. The first national museum of carpets in the world was established in Baku in 1967," – Shikarli, School #2, Baku.

Tajikistan students from Chkalovsk School #4 thanked the students from Azerbaijan for the information about their motherland: "We did not know that Azerbaijan is such an interesting country!"

On-Site Educator Nigina Siyakova showing students how to use Internet resources, Tursunzade, School #101



English Club meeting led by On-Site Educator Ibragim Rustamov, Isfara, The Culture Palace



The Tajikistan School Connectivity Project 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

Summer English Camps for Connectivity Lead Teachers and Students

RI-SOL organized a Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop for 17 Connectivity Lead Teachers of English with funding from the American Embassy in Tajikistan. The three-day seminar was held from July 28-30 in Dushanbe at the ILC at School #10. The Lead Teachers were selected by application and represented ten school ILCs from all regions of Tajikistan, including Gorno-Badakhshan.

The seminar was lead by Senior On-Site Educator Abdulhamid Sharipov from Kulyab, and On-Site Educator Ibragim Rustamov from School #1 in Isfara. They worked closely with Caitlin Drewes, Program Officer at RI-SOL headquarters in the US who is an experienced teacher of English as a second language, to create their own three-day training module. The overall objective of the seminar was to improve English teaching by training teachers in new methods, especially those using computers and the Internet.

During these three days, the teachers learned several new interactive methods to improve students' speaking, reading, understanding, and writing in English, such as various games, skits, dictation, and Internet-based activities. The teachers were very eager to learn how to make their English lessons more productive with the help of computer software and Internet websites, and how to create lesson plans with the help of new technology. Teachers learned several new activities for using the Internet and computers for teaching English, and then created their own resource list of English-teaching sites and lesson plans available on the Internet.

The teachers completed the training by applying what they learned in the workshop to create their own specific lesson plans and activities. They will teach these at the two-day English Camps they will lead with over 160 students from ten Connectivity schools in August. The materials and techniques the teachers gained over the course of the training will be a strong asset to Connectivity students and schools as the new school year and US collaborative projects begin in September.

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Jennifer Washeleski, Public Affairs Officer for the US Embassy, Tajikistan presenting certificates to the English Language Camp participants



Lead Teachers planning their English Camp activities



Teachers working in teams to create new methods of teaching