



Tajikistan School Connectivity Project

NEWS

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LETTER

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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**



Connectivity students recording their voices for the history. Sch.#2, Gissar

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Five Connectivity Teachers Selected for Professional Development Program in US

In September 2004, RI-SOL will hold a three-week professional development program in America for five Tajikistani teachers on technology in education. The trip will include seminars led by experts from UCLA on how to use computers and the Internet in the classroom, as well as site visits to several Connectivity US partner schools to observe American teachers and students using technology.

More than 50 teachers applied from all 20 Connectivity schools around Tajikistan. After careful review of each application, eleven finalists were invited for an interview in Dushanbe or Khujand. The interviews were conducted by Americans from other international organizations to provide an objective evaluation. As a result of the interviews, five teachers were chosen to participate in the US program.

Thank you to all the teachers who applied, and congratulations to the winners: Nigina Mirzoeva (Sch.Nº4, Chkalovsk), Dilorom Abdullaeva (Sch.Nº16, Gulyakandoz), Zebonisso Murodova (Sch.Nº1, Sarband), Takhmina Sirojova (Sch.Nº40, Chorbog) and Miyasar Ashankulova (Sch.Nº101, Tursunzade).



On-Site Educator Nigina Siyakova and one of the selected teachers, Miyasar Ashonkulova at the ILC in School #101, Tursunzade

State Department Representative Ilo Mai Harding Visits Connectivity Program in Tajikistan

During the week of June 15 - 20, we were fortunate to have a very special guest to three of our Internet Learning Centers. Ilo Mai Harding, ECA Senior Program Manager for the US State Department visited schools in Kulyab, Shahrinov, and Gissar. These were not formal visits, but rather a chance to see how the schools and communities use the ILCs. We hope that she left with an even greater appreciation for the profound change that the Connectivity Project is bringing to rural schools and communities in Tajikistan.

To be visited by such an ambassador from the State Department, and such a true advocate for these programs, gave the staff, volunteers, and students of the ILCs the chance to see how what they do is important. The Connectivity Project is just one part of a much larger initiative to better connect the world and to better understand each other.

On June 19th she visited the ILC in Shahrinov School #18. While this center is only an hour outside of Dushanbe, it is a very rural agricultural area. Ilo Mai met with students and teachers asking a lot of questions such as; "Who uses the center?" "How many kids go to university after graduation?" "Are parents active in school affairs?" "How does the community use the Internet?" and more. For Ilo it was a good chance to meet and speak with the people that directly benefit from State Department programs.

On the same day she also visited School #2 in Gissar to meet with the students who were learning about digital sound recording from Matthew Wood (see "Connectivity Students Record Tajik Traditional Music with Computers" below). This day was a good example of how the ILCs do projects that are not just about computers, but also use computers to learn, to preserve culture, and to involve the community.

We were sorry to see Mai go but we hope she will be back. It was our pleasure to show her that the goals of the State Department for the Connectivity project — working in communities, improving education, focusing on girls, creating friendships between cultures and building a better understanding of US culture — is succeeding in Tajikistan.



Ilo Mai meeting with Connectivity teachers and students at the ILC at School #18, Shahrinov



Ilo Mai and Connectivity students and staff having lunch at School #2, Gissar

ORA Disability Program and Connectivity Project Collaboration Expands to Gissar

On June 3, 2004, NGO "Munice" in Gissar held a meeting between orphans, kids with disabilities, representatives from ORA International, and student volunteers from the ILC at School #2 in Gissar: Anvar Samadov, Afzal Sharipov, Akbar Abdulloev and On-Site Monitor Parviz Abdulloev. During this meeting they discussed how the students from the ILC could help kids with disabilities. The students from School #2 hope to assist the kids with disabilities use computers and Internet to help them learn new life skills. The group plans to meet regularly over the summer to plan a collaboration starting in the fall.

Connectivity Students and Teachers Work Towards Global Citizenship

The Global Citizenship & Youth Philanthropy (GCYP) project enables young people to learn and experience what it means to be a global citizen. 237 students and 47 teachers from 15 schools all over Tajikistan completed GCYP activities, learning about geography, history, languages, culture, and, most importantly, cross-cultural understanding.

Each school completed at least one of three activities from the GCYP textbook, which is now available in English and Russian for Tajikistani students and teachers. The "Soccer Around the World" activity allowed students to learn about soccer, teamwork, and geography by studying the last World Cup results. The students worked in teams to create maps on the computer using the Internet, Word, and Photoshop showing the locations and flags of the World Cup countries.

The second activity, "What's in a Name?", allowed students to study history and culture by researching the history of their own names. They worked on the Internet, talked to relatives and friends, and took pictures that were all compiled in PowerPoint presentations about the history of their names.

The third activity, "Culture Wheel", was about different cultures - it's an important issue for international understanding between schools and classes. The students created a culture wheel diagram using computers that showed the commonality and differences in their cultures.

In the fall GCYP activities will continue at Connectivity schools in Tajikistan and with their partner schools in the US. You can see the results of these activities and find out more information about GCYP at: http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/en/sc_gcyp.html

ILC in Kurgan-Tyube Helps Doctor Order Equipment via the Internet

Surgeon Ibragim Khudoyberdiev from Kolhozabad, Khatlon region, was the first doctor to open a children's surgery center in the Kolhozabad district. A doctor for 40 years, he worked at the center for 15 years using ultrasound equipment. Now that he is retired and living on his pension, he wants to continue his work by opening a private clinic. He has been looking for an ultrasound machine for several months, but was only able to find a few very expensive ones for sale locally. His assistant, doctor Khosiyat Akramova, was visiting ILC in Kurgan-Tyube in school #12 to search for some medical information on Internet. During that search she found a doctor in Moscow who could sell them the ultrasound equipment for a quarter of the price. Dr. Khudoyberdiev contacted the doctor in Moscow and traveled there to buy the equipment. The team at the ILC in Kurgan-Tyube is very proud that their center helped the community to find the equipment essential for the health of their children.



Connectivity students working on their soccer map, School #4, Chkalovsk



Connectivity student creating a PowerPoint presentation about her name, School#101, Tursunzade



Connectivity students working on GCYP themes, School #2, Gissar



Doctor Khudoyberdiev using his new ultrasound device for medical treatment

Connectivity Students Record Tajik Traditional Music with Computers

On June 19, 2004, 15 Connectivity students from School #2 in Gissar, School #18 in Shahrinav, and School #101 in Tursunzade came to the Internet Learning Center in Gissar to learn about traditional music and sound recording on the computer.

The workshop was led by a special guest from the US, Matthew Wood, who is a Sound Designer at LucasFilm. A Sound Designer is the person who uses a computer to design, record, and edit all the sounds that happen in a film. Matthew has worked on films such as *Star Wars Episodes I and II* and *Mission: Impossible*. Matthew learned all of his computer skills by himself while working on projects.

The nine students from Gissar researched traditional music in their community. They selected four musicians and interviewed them, emailing their results to the students in Shahrinav and Tursunzade. Six students from these two schools researched the instruments the musicians played on the Internet, such as the *dutor*, *doira*, and *rubab*, and prepared presentations to introduce them on the day of the event.

On June 19, all the students and the On-Site Educators from each school came to the ILC in Gissar. They introduced the musicians and gave presentations on their instruments. Then Matthew gave a seminar on how to make a recording on the computer and how to use special effects to edit the recording. The students took turns recording each of the traditional instruments, and then they divided into groups to record their own songs, poetry, and music. After the event, each of the schools took a microphone back to their ILC to record the unique sounds of their own communities.

You can learn more about this project and listen to the results here:

http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/en_sc_music.html



Matthew showing Connectivity students how to record a sound on the computer, School #2, Gissar

Online Chat with Matthew Wood, Digital Sound Designer

All Connectivity students had a chance to ask Matthew questions about his work in an online chat on June 17. Over 42 students, staff, and community members logged in from ILCs all over the country, asking him questions such as: "What is sound?", "How many sounds are there in the world?", "What is your favorite film?", "Did you play any roles in your films?", "What do you think about people in Tajikistan?", "How many countries you've visited?", etc. Matthew was very impressed with the students' questions and tried his best to answer everyone. You can read the chat transcript here:

<http://www.schoolsonline.org/dushanbe/matt.htm>.



Connectivity student and On-Site Educator chatting with Matthew Wood at School #1, Isfara



Music recording process at School #2, Gissar

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