



NEWSLETTER

Issue No.3, November 2005

Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan

Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan 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, and developing training and learning projects for teachers and students.

Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program activities include:

- * Teacher training on using computers and the Internet in classroom teaching;
- * U.S. school partnerships on civic education projects, teacher and student exchanges;
- * Public access and programs for community members and disadvantaged groups;
- * Development of sustainable practices for schools and communities.

C O N T E N T

Page 1 International Education Week

Page 2 Sharing Experiences through Online Chat

Page 3 FLEX Students Share Experiences during IEW
Best Essays and Posters Devoted to IEW

Page 4 More About Human Rights through the Internet
ILC Opens Doors to Junior World Chess Championship

Page 5 Foreign Fashion



Official opening of IEW in Dushanbe

International Education Week

Five years ago in 2000, the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education announced the launching of International Education Week, which gives the opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. Since that time, every year people from almost all over the world celebrate this week in the month of November. This year International Education Week was celebrated on November 14th – 18th.

The official opening of IEW in Tajikistan took place in Dushanbe on November 14th 2005 at the Committee on Youth Issues by the initiative of the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan, RI-SOL, American Councils, and IREX representatives. Ambassador Richard Hoagland of the U.S. greeted attending students from many schools including those from Dushanbe ILC of School No.10. Students came to the event to participate in the opening ceremony of IEW and had a chance to ask questions to the organizers of this event. During the whole week these organizations conducted different educational activities for Tajikistan students: meetings with FLEX alumni, online chats, educational trainings and many other activities emphasizing the importance and opportunities of international education.



FLEX alumni Rukhshona Khaydarova meets with students of Kanibadam ILC

Sharing Experiences through Online Chat



Lori Fredricks shares her experience with teachers and students

During International Education Week (IEW) students, teachers and Managers of our ILCs, through a 2-hour online chat, got acquainted with Lori Fredricks – the U.S. Embassy English Language Fellow. Lori is from the USA, Atlanta, Georgia and is currently working at the Institute of Foreign Languages in Dushanbe. She teaches English to 3rd, 4th, and 5th year Institute students. Besides her expertise in English, Lori also knows Persian and some Arabic. She is also fond of painting and thus she works as an illustrator part-time in addition to teaching.

Students asked many questions to Lori and wanted to know her opinion on many issues like her impression of Tajikistan and its people. Lori considers Tajik people very friendly and family-oriented. And as for Tajik culture, she likes national holidays especially Navruz and celebrates it with pleasure.

Students learned interesting things about Atlanta, and that there are many immigrants in Georgia. The reason is that immigrants or students who are Georgia residents and who earn high grades can attend college for free.

Teachers were interested in the education system and wanted to hear Lori's opinion about the differences in the education systems of the U.S. and other countries. Teachers asked questions about the grading system of U.S. schools and suggested to have chats with more teachers to share experiences in assessment of students' knowledge. And it was very kind of Lori to leave them her email so that Tajik teachers could ask her about assessment or other questions anytime.

Talking about teaching methods Lori mentioned: "I try to use interactive teaching methods to get students to practice using English as they learn to improve their communication and encourage them to think in English instead of translating. Of course, beginners have to translate and use bilingual dictionaries, but as they improve, they should try to use more English and rely less on Russian and Tajik when writing or speaking in English, for instance".

Students and teachers suggested many ideas such as to have English learning and resource centers in the Tajikistan universities and schools. Lori with one of our ILC Managers planned to have a seminar for English teachers in Chorbogh. This is a great beginning of cooperation, so let's wish them good luck!

At the conclusion we would like to thank Lori Fredricks for the opportunity she gave to our students and teachers to learn a variety of new and useful things during International Education Week.



GCEP students chat with Lori Fredricks

FLEX Students Share Experiences during IEW

What a great opportunity to study in the U.S.A.! Hello, my name is Firuza Djabbarova. I am a FSA FLEX (Freedom Support Act Future Leaders Exchange) scholarship recipient. I traveled to the U.S. during the 2003-2004 academic year. During my study there I had a great chance to learn much about American culture, traditions, and lifestyle.

Now I'm back in my home country, sharing my experience and impressions about the U.S. with interested students and teachers. During IEW, it was my pleasure to visit the ILCs in Dushanbe, School No. 10 and School for the Deaf, No. 8, and share my experience with our Tajik students and hopefully change some stereotypes they may have about the U.S.

Kamina Shamsieva a fellow FLEX alumni, willingly joined me in making a PowerPoint presentation and giving a talk about the U.S. as well. The themes we discussed were: education, culture, historical places, history, the concept of "the melting pot" and diversity, our experience about being in the U.S., living in a totally different place; and we also talked about the FLEX program, how it works and how to participate. After the presentation students asked many questions as they were eager to learn about this opportunity to live and study in the U.S. Both students from School No. 10 and No. 8 were actively participating in the discussion and hopefully gained useful information for their own future ambitions.



Firuza Djabbarova gives presentation about the U.S.A.

Best Essays and Posters Devoted to IEW



Maya Vakhobova congratulates participants of contests

Within the framework of International Education Week, two contests were announced for students of our ILCs. One contest was writing an essay in Tajik, Russian or English, answering the question "What would the world be like without international education?"

Several informative and interesting essays were submitted by students from Gissar, Chkalovsk, Kanibadam, Sarband, Isfara, Kurgan-Tyube and Chorbogh ILCs. Each student expressed the importance of international education in his own way. "International education promotes friendship and cooperation between countries" – believes Farzona Saidova from Sarband.

Ravshanoi and Firuza from Chkalovsk think: "Each of us make up a part of a bigger society and if we come together and join all the efforts, our society would be much more educated. And we as representatives of the younger generation want to see our country Tajikistan become an economically and culturally developed country."



IEW poster by Sherzamon Latipov



IEW poster by Manija Kurmaeva

All the essays were reviewed by Maya Vakhobova, Public Affairs Assistant of the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan, who kindly provided memorable gifts for all our participants on behalf of the U.S. Embassy. The top essay writers will receive books and CDs about the U.S. in English and Russian.

The second contest revealed students' drawing and creative skills as they depicted the value of IEW through visual posters. Students demonstrated all their enthusiasm and ideas about education in posters and the best ones can be viewed here.



Work of Takhmina Turdieva

The Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program 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

More About Human Rights through the Internet



Teachers from Isfara learn to use Internet

The Internet is a useful resource to find information on virtually any subject. This valuable tool was used during a training held for 18 teachers of History and Human Rights and members of the NGO Center of Defense and Cooperation. Training participants received 3 hours of training that was conducted by Ibragim Rustamov, Manager of Isfara ILC.

Teachers were trained in basic Internet skills: how to use Internet Explorer and search engines. Through their ability to search for and locate relevant information, they read materials on Human Rights through the UN website www.un.org and Tajik Human Rights website www.tjhr.info – a project of UN. Some other materials in Tajik and Russian languages (including <http://tjhr.info/ssilki.html>) were provided by NGO director Amonullo Musoev and distributed to all participants at the end of

this training. The teachers and NGO members are able to utilize this new information in classroom teaching and projects with the communities to spread knowledge about and advocate Human Rights.

The participants found this training very useful and expressed hope to have more trainings to advance their skills of using the Internet to access valuable information on topics related to Human Rights.

ILC Opens Doors to Junior World Chess Championship

Muhammad Khuseinkhojaev, an 18 year old student from Isfara, has been fond of playing chess since his childhood. Muhammad's first teachers are his parents who used to participate in national chess tournaments. Like any other chess players, Muhammad's goal and dream was to take part in the World Chess Championships. And due to the Internet Learning Center in Isfara, Muhammad's dream came true.

In early October, Muhammad and his father came to the ILC to search for some information about the Junior World Chess Championship that was to be conducted in Istanbul, Turkey. With the help of the ILC Manager, they contacted the committee of this Championship to request an application for participation. After submitting the application via email to Turkey, Muhammad received an invitation to go to Istanbul.

Muhammad's father tried to find support for his son's trip to Turkey. At last they succeeded to send Muhammad to the first World Chess Event in his life. While Muhammad was in Turkey, his father and mother would visit the ILC every day to read the latest news about the Championship and results of Muhammad's play. It was through the ILC that they learned of the great news: that their son got the highest score (2274) at the Championship and became a winner.

Muhammad returned home as a Young Tajik Chess Champion with Champion Rating that opened more doors for him to compete in chess events across the world.

All people of Isfara are very happy and proud of Muhammad's success in the World Championship and wish him all the best in representing Tajikistan in future World Chess Championships.



Muhammad's (on the left side) first World Championship

The Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program 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

Foreign Fashion

In November GCEP students of Tajikistan and the U.S. learned about the values and cultures of their partner country through the Foreign Fashion activity. This project allowed students to prepare interesting presentations about the clothes they wear at school, and explore their partner country through the clothing worn by their foreign peers. In other words, students found out what teenagers on the other side of the world wear.



This is what students in Wisconsin wear

There is one common uniform for students of all Tajikistan schools which is standard throughout the country. Tajikistan schoolboys usually wear black trousers, white shirts with a tie and jackets. Girls wear white blouses and dark skirts but in the winter time girls can and do prefer to wear pants.

Tajik national clothes are usually worn at wedding parties or other national holidays. Oftentimes girls prefer to wear national dresses in everyday life as well, especially in the summer time since national dresses are very comfortable as they are prepared from thin fabric. As for boys, they do not always like to wear their national clothes that consist of a long caftan

(long robe made of dark color fabrics) and skull-cap. Instead of these clothes they prefer to wear jeans and sports clothes.

U.S. partners prepared interesting presentations giving detailed explanations and photos of clothes and particular patterns that are popular in fashion today at their school and at home or in the streets.

Henry Foss High School gave a short and clear presentation and described the common and popular styles of clothes at their school.

Students from Sam Huston High School uploaded information about fashion on their website <http://leehighschool.blogspot.com>

A unique and very informative presentation was prepared by a new U.S. partner school – Oshkosh West High School in Appleton which joined GCEP in November. Students displayed different patterns of clothes, colors, styles, and jewelry that is popular among boys and girls at their school. They also explained the stereotypes that are often attached to the people who wear certain kinds of clothing.

We want to welcome Oshkosh West High School to our program and our wish for a strong partnership!



Tajik national female dress



School uniform of Tajikistan boys

Relief International - Schools Online
6 Pavlova Street, Dushanbe,
Tajikistan 734003
Tel: (992372) 24-23-17
Fax: (992372) 24-39-08
email: taj_office@schoolsonline.org
<http://www.connect-tajikistan.org>

The Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program 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