



U.S. EMBASSY DUSHANBE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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U.S. AMBASSADOR TO TAJIKISTAN PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT RAHMON



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November 26, 2009 Thanksgiving Day

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Embassy News

U.S. AMBASSADOR TO TAJIKISTAN PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT RAHMON



Dushanbe, Tajikistan, October 2, 2009. Ambassador of the United States of America to Tajikistan, Kenneth E. Gross, Jr., presented his credentials to the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, on October 2 at the Presidential Palace in Dushanbe.

At the ceremony, Ambassador Kenneth Gross voiced the commitment of the United States to work closely with the Government of Tajikistan to reach common goals of fostering peace and stability in the region, enhancing economic ties and promoting democratic reform and development. "I and the Embassy staff will work hard to deepen the level of understanding between our two countries, and I look forward to the many opportunities we will have to make our relationship stronger." Prior to his nomination, Mr.

Gross served as a Career Development Officer for senior-level officers in the Human Resources Bureau and as director of the Middle East Partnership Initiative Office in the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau.

Mr. Gross's most recent overseas postings have been in Iraq. He was Principal Officer at the Regional Embassy Office in Basrah, where his office represented the United States in the four southern provinces, and he returned to Iraq for a short period of time at the Embassy's request to be the director of the newly formed Office of Provincial Affairs, the office overseeing the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Mr. Gross previously served in Tajikistan as the Deputy Chief of Mission from 2002-2004. His other overseas postings include Haiti, Malaysia, Nepal, and Germany.

In the Department of State, Mr. Gross worked in the Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs as an aviation negotiator, in the Bureau of European Affairs as desk officer for Austria, and in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research as a current intelligence analyst.

Mr. Gross joined the Foreign Service in 1987. He received a B.A. from Auburn University, a J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law, and a M.S. in National Security Strategy from the National War College. He speaks Tajik, German, and French.

U.S. AMBASSADOR TO TAJIKISTAN PRESENTS NEW PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICER



U.S. Ambassador Gross welcomes Rachel Cooke, Public Affairs Officer

Local media, the embassy's NGO partners, government officials, academics, and cultural contacts were able to meet the new Ambassador and officers. This is important for maintaining regular contact with the public and to continue the embassy's usual outreach activities.

Over 160 guest representing local government structures, media, law enforcement, academic and cultural institutions, political parties and civil society attended the reception to welcome the new U.S. Ambassador Gross and new Embassy officers including the new Public Affairs Officer, Rachel Cooke, and Cultural Affairs Officer, McKenzie Milanowski.



U.S. Ambassador Gross welcomes McKenzie Milanowski, Cultural Affairs Officer

ONE MORE AMERICAN CORNER OPENS IN TAJIKISTAN



Shamsiddin Orumbekov, Deputy Mayor of Khorog, Bibinigor Sadonshoeva, and U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer, McKenzie Milanowski, cut the ribbon to open the American Corner in Khorog

Khorog, GBAO, September 23, 2009. The Deputy Governor of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, Shamsiddin Orumbekov, Deputy Mayor of Khorog, Bibinigor Sadonshoeva, and U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer, McKenzie Milanowski, cut the ribbon to open the American Corner resource center in Khorog at the Khorog Educational Center. Milanowski welcomed guests at the American Corner and said that it will “provide access to the Internet, study materials, and information

about grants, scholarships, and exchange programs in the United States.” Milanowski went on to say, “I am confident that this American Corner will be a place where the people of Badakhshan will feel comfortable and welcome. It will serve as a center for the lively exchange of ideas and culture.” American Corners are resource centers sponsored by the U.S. Embassy, which are located in local libraries or educational institutions. Besides the Corner in Khorog, American Corners are located in Dushanbe, Khujand, Kulyab and Qurghon-Teppa. The five American Corners in Tajikistan are among 360 worldwide. The American Corner in Khorog, located at #1 Azizbek Street will be open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. A fulltime coordinator will be on site to assist visitors and coordinate special English language activities with local educational institutions. The coordinator will also provide advice about scholarship programs offered by American universities, as well as U.S. Government educational exchange programs.

YOUNG JOURNALISTS TRAINED ON PRACTICAL REPORTING SKILLS

The “Independent School of Journalism: Tajikistan XXI Century” completed its three-month practical journalism training for young journalism students and practicing reporters. The training is sponsored by the 2009 Democracy Commission Small Grants Program. On August 31, the Director of the School, Safo Safaroy, held a public event involving mass media and trainers to award certificates to students who successfully completed the course.



The project was aimed at strengthening practical journalism skills among students of journalism faculties. The project is important in terms of filling the gaps in journalism education by presenting an opportunity for internships in local newspapers, TV, and radio. The students wrote stories and prepared TV and radio programs, and many of them went on the air and were published.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM FIERMAN'S VISIT TO AGA KHAN HUMANITIES PROJECT

On October 2, Professor William Fierman from Indiana University gave a speech about language policy at the Aga Khan Humanities Project. The speech started with an overview of his work on language policy in different Central Asian countries. The students listened with great interest to the professor's speech. The students asked lots of questions, and the professor answered them all.



This activity is definitely supporting the goal of the Public Diplomacy. The visit of Professor William Fierman gave new insight to the Tajik students. Their knowledge on other Central Asian countries, both in the Soviet period and after that, was broadened.

IRO BILL MIDDLETON GAVE PRESENTATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY AND AMERICAN CORNERS IN TAJIKISTAN



Information Resource Officer (IRO) for South and Central Asia (SCA) Bill Middleton visited Tajikistan from October 5–2, 2009. During his visit to Tajikistan, Bill traveled to Kulob, Qurghon-Teppa, and Khujand and visited American Corners in each region. Bill was accompanied by the IRC/AC Coordinator. The visit of IRO Bill to Tajikistan was very productive. While visiting to the ACs, Bill made presentations on American pop culture and the status of current newspapers in the U.S. During the presentations, the AC visitors, who were mostly high school and university students, were engaged in a long discussion not only on the topics relevant to the presentations, but also on other general issues as well. Most of the questions were about education and study in the U.S. Participants also received the following IIP free distribution publications: Education in the USA, Discover Yourself in America, Forum, Being Muslim in America, Obama in His Own Words, and Free at Last.

Alumni Events

PRESENTATION OF THE ALUMNI SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM



International Organization Urban Institute. Shafolat Kabilova made a presentation on Alumni Grants. OW alumni were interested in alumni grants and asked many questions. All alumni were encouraged to submit their proposals next year. Maya Vakhobova made a presentation about all USG exchange programs.

On August 12, McKenzie Milanowski, Cultural Affairs Officer; Maya Vakhobova, Cultural Affairs Assistant; and Shafolat Kabilova, Grants Assistant, were invited to the post-study tour conference for Open World program alumni, which was arranged by the

OW alumni learned how to write grants and received information about educational programs. This presentation gave an opportunity to the alumni to use their knowledge and skills to implement projects that could lead to the prosperity of their communities.

YOUTH ENRICHMENT CAMPS: A LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR FLEX ALUMNI

On August 16, there was a meeting on Youth Enrichment Camps: A Leadership Opportunity for FLEX Alumni. Middy Tilghman and Andrew McEwan gave a presentation on their summer camp experience in Tajikistan. The summer camp served youth ages 8–14 in Rasht and Sughd.

The presentation showed alumni how to organize summer camps in different parts of the country. It is very important to note that these summer camps will give the opportunity and will open the doors to the youth from unreachable regions to learn more about America.



GLOBAL UGRAD PROGRAM CLINIC

September 14, 2009, Khujand. IREX has organized a Global UGRAD Program Clinic for undergraduate university students who have previously applied to Global UGRAD Program in the past two years and did not succeed in the process. The Clinic was an engaging opportunity for UGRAD alumni as well as interested candidates to learn more about Global UGRAD Program rules and regulations, program timeline, and



upcoming deadlines. Bakhtiyor Isoev and other UGRAD alumni conducted the clinic and shared personal experiences. In particular, Bakhtiyor spoke about the procedure step-by-step, including writing quality essays, examples and results of plagiarism and best practices of citation, MLA and Chicago styles, acquiring strong recommendations, proofreading applications, technical eligibility requirements, meeting application deadlines, and preparing for the TOEFL exam.

In order to gain a clearer vision of the program, the participants asked a variety of questions.



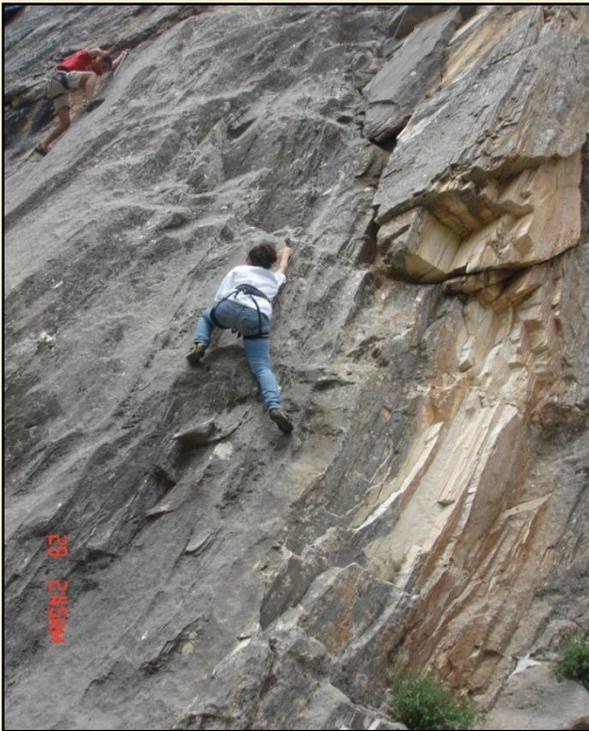
The questions included:

- 1) What are the frequently made mistakes by past participants?
- 2) Is a 200-word essay enough for the second round?
- 3) Tell us more about plagiarism!
- 4) If I have already participated in a USG-sponsored program, can I still apply to UGRAD?
- 5) How many finalists come from Khujand? From Dushanbe? Or from Tajikistan?
- 6) What is the main goal of the program?

- 7) Can I stay in the U.S. if I am awarded a scholarship?
- 8) When will the applications be available?
- 9) Should we bring completed applications to your office or to Dushanbe?
- 10) Will I receive a diploma in the U.S. even if they are on a four-year system and my program in Tajikistan is five years?

The questions were addressed by UGRAD alumni, and participants have been fully informed of different aspects of applying to UGRAD program.

FLEX ALUMNI MONTHLY MEETING/ROCK CLIMBING



On August 2, Farangis Nozimzoda '07, Nishofarin Nazari '09, Saidakram Ishanov '09, Vadim Abanin '09, and Siyavish Saidov '08 participated in the alumni monthly meeting/rock climbing. Alumni, along with professional rock climbers from Switzerland, went to a special rock-climbing camp in Varzob. Since most of the alumni had never tried rock climbing before, the meeting began with an explanation of the basic rules. Alumni had two options to climb; one was easy and the other harder. Those who had tried rock climbing before chose the harder option. The alumni had great time, and decided to organize such events more often.

ENGLISH DISCUSSION CLUB

Throughout August, Nushofarin Nazari '09 and Farangis Nozimzoda '07 held an English Discussion Club every Thursday at American Councils. Every interested individual was welcome to participate in the discussion club. The main goal of this project is to enhance the knowledge of practical English language usage through watching different movies in English, followed by a discussion. The majority of the participants of the club are students in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades. During the month, alumni screened different movies that participants chose themselves.

RE-ENTRY SEMINAR FOR 2008 FLEX ALUMNI

On August 8, Farangis Nozimzoda, FLEX Alumni Coordinator for Tajikistan, carried out the Re-Entry Seminar in Khujand for 2008–2009 FLEX Alumni from the Sughd region. The introduction was made by Farangis Nozimzoda '07 and Shakhnoza Muminzoda '08, the city representative for Khujand. Alumni from many different program years warmly welcomed the new alumni back, congratulated them on the successful completion of the year in U.S., and explained the purpose of the re-entry seminars, as well as the importance of the Alumni Association. Alumni had the opportunity to share stories about their year in the U.S., and they also talked about adjustment issues, reverse culture shock, and the alumni program.

Some alumni expressed their feelings of misunderstanding back in Tajikistan and others mentioned a wish to keep in touch with FLEX alumni from other countries around Eurasia.

A group collage called “Our America” was conducted after the introduction. Alumni were divided into three groups and made collages using photos and postcards. Through this activity, the new alumni had a chance to share their experiences with older alumni and to talk about living in the U.S. Older alumni shared their own stories in order to help the new alumni overcome their culture shock and



to readjust back to life in Tajikistan. After finishing their group collage, each group gave a small presentation about their collage. Afterwards, alumni started doing exercises that helped them to evaluate their experience in America and to analyze how they coped with cultural differences and other difficulties. After lunch, a guest from the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section, Cultural Affairs Officer McKenzie Milanowski, joined the re-entry seminar. She welcomed the alumni and spoke to them about the opportunities that the U.S. Embassy has for alumni, including grant programs.

Farangis Nozimzoda gave a short introduction to the alumni community network and explained to the newly returned students the importance of alumni activities. Farangis asked alumni to register on <https://alumni.state.gov> site and conducted a

small presentation about the upcoming online Welcome Home Seminar for FLEX alumni '09, the FLEX photo contest, Global Youth Service Day, as well as the other plans for the year.

In addition, the new alumni performed short skits about situations they have faced since coming back home, such as problems with siblings or parents, friends, money, and independence. At the end of the seminar, the re-entry orientation evaluation forms were filled out by the alumni, and Bradley Herald Journals were distributed to them. The alumni expressed a desire to regularly participate in all alumni events, do volunteer work, and always keep in touch with their Alumni Coordinator.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING ON BUSINESS ETIQUETTE



September 4, 2009, Khujand. IREX organized professional development training on business etiquette for the alumni community of Sughd. The training was conducted with the support of Muskie alumna Manzura Makhkamova and UGRAD alumnus Bakhtiyor Isoev. Alumni had a chance to learn different formal behaviors that are important to follow in the business environment. Alumni also shared their experiences in working with international organizations and business firms.

TRAINING OF TRAINERS FOR ALUMNI

September 19–20, 2009, Varzob. Training of Trainers for Tajikistan alumni was organized at the Varzob Resort. Alumni of Muskie, UGRAD, and TEA attended two days of TOT, which was organized with the support of Rachel Surkin. Central Asian program managers Chinara Omurkulova, Timothy Gibson, and Natalya Semenova also greatly contributed to the TOT. The training was organized for those alumni who wished to develop their skills in working with an audience.

Many alumni have started to conduct their own training sessions, and have gained some experience in training, seminar, and workshop conduction and facilitation. This was a good opportunity for alumni to further expand their knowledge and skills. The topics that were covered by the training included:



1. Principles of adult learning (adult learning theory)
2. Training design (with a focus on incorporating principles of adult learning and employing appropriate interactive methodologies)
3. Facilitation skills

The TOT was conducted by visiting professionals from IREX's Washington, DC and Central Asian IREX offices. Alumni from outside of Dushanbe, more specifically from Khujand and Khorog, were also invited to attend the training. This was a good opportunity for alumni from all over Tajikistan to meet each other.

By the end of the two-day TOT, participants were able to:

- Describe at least four principles of adult learners and apply these principles to training design.

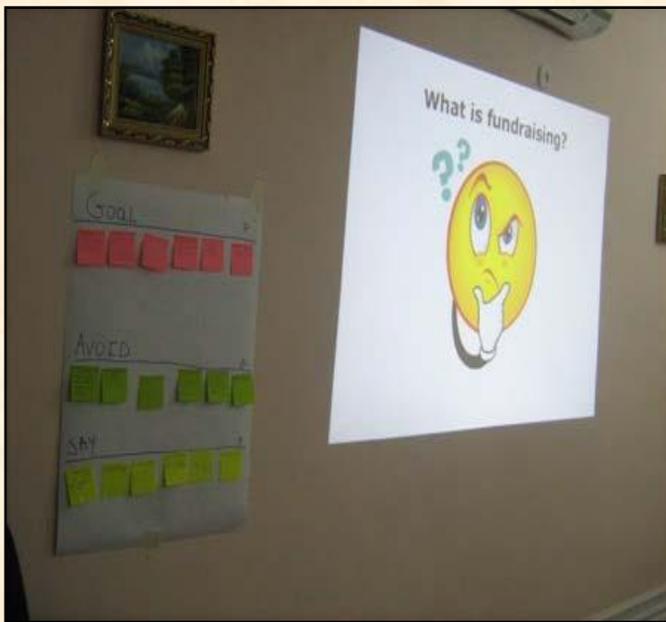


- Write learning objectives for a topic-specific training.
- Design a 1–2-day training event using appropriate interactive methods.
- Employ key facilitation skills and techniques, both for solo trainers and team-trainers, in implementing a training event.

The TOT was a success and newly trained alumni have started to conduct different trainings in their own towns.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: FUNDRAISING TRAINING



September 26, 2009, Khujand. IREX Tajikistan, with the cooperation of Legacy Consulting LLC, organized fundraising training for United States Government program alumni based in Khujand that include Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD) Program, FLEX, TEA, Muskie, and Global Connections alumni. The training was an opportunity for USG program alumni to share, learn, and deepen their knowledge on fundraising basics, fundamentals, methods,

and techniques, plus the need for transparency and accountability. Bakhtiyor Isoev, UGRAD 2006–2007 alumnus and Managing Director of Legacy Consulting LLC, conducted the training and shared his personal experience with fundraising events and projects organized in the past. In particular, Bakhtiyor spoke about fundraising procedures, including creating a team, motivating the team, assigning each team member with a special role in the project, identifying the target audience, choosing a fundraising method, creating a timeline, budget and action plans, reporting, follow – ups, and “thank you” situations, whether donors give funds or not.



It was apparent that many of the attendees thought about fundraising in different ways. Some have already done some fundraising events, collecting in-kind gifts and other contributions to donate to local orphanages, while others are just getting started. For this reason, Edmund Muskie and UGRAD Alumni Grant Program and Project Smile Grant Program were introduced to participants. Bakhtiyor mentioned that these two grant programs give opportunities to

eligible USG alumni to submit quality project ideas to IREX and to get financial support for their particular ideas and urged them to apply. The deadline for this program is October 30, 2009. It was mentioned that there will be more opportunities for newer alumni to consult with experienced alumni on the grant programs and their particular project ideas. As a part of the training, all participants were split into two groups to come up with a fundraising project for their community and to make a short presentation of their idea. The group exercise was a motivational opportunity for them to learn how to identify a need/cause, identify and approach one's prospects, set financial goals for a fundraising event, prepare a budget, build a team, assign responsibilities, set a timeline, and generate

fundraising ideas. Prior to the exercise, participants participated in some an energizing and team-building activities that helped get them united and motivated to work hard for future success. At the conclusion of the training session, it was clear that participants were pleased with the training and expressed their gratitude for IREX Tajikistan's continued financial



support and Legacy Consulting's technical support. It was apparent that participants wanted to have more training sessions in order to learn more about the program. One of the participants mentioned that she would approach IREX to seek financial support to organize training in her community for her students.

Alumni Success Stories

PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM FOR DEVELOPMENT

Alumni Create Community Connections Association



Faridun Shodiev, USAID alumnus and Director of Community Connections Alumni Association

Challenge

Volunteerism in Tajikistan is a nascent field. During Soviet times, citizens expected the state to meet all of their needs, and it was largely able to do so. Following independence, this became increasingly difficult due to limited funds. A civil war also caused massive damage to state infrastructure and put increasing pressure on the government to meet people's needs. There is a growing understanding that individual members of society also bear responsibility for their communities and that the gap between needs and

government resources can be filled by volunteers.

Initiative

With this in mind, USAID Community Connections alumni created an organization that is quickly becoming a solid base for future alumni volunteer work. Alumni were inspired to promote volunteerism after participating in program study tours to the U.S. As part of professional development oriented study tours, participants have the chance to participate in U.S. volunteer activities, which they found fascinating and rewarding. Participants saw how Americans contribute to their communities and help shape the society that they live in. Upon their return to Tajikistan, USAID alumni founded the Association, a non-governmental organization through which they plan to benefit their own communities.

Results

The Alumni Association has already started volunteer work in the Northern city of Istaravshan, where it works with girls from poor families, engaging them in English language studies and other topics, as well as volunteer activities. Through volunteer work, the Association tries to contribute to development of their communities by providing skills and knowledge to those members who lack opportunities. "It is already the third month of the training program, and we see how excited the girls are about the educational opportunities and English classes" says Nigora Negmatuloeva, a volunteer trainer for the girls in Istaravshan and a USAID alumna. The Association plans to expand its work by inviting alumni from other U.S. Government professional exchange programs to join its ranks.

SHARING MY IDEAS ABOUT TEACHING EXPERIENCE....

Article by Nasiba Mirpochoeva Fulbright Alumna 2007

As a Fulbright FLTA at the Indiana University, Bloomington during 2006–2007 academic years I had great and unforgettable impressions about my stay and study in the U.S., and after the completion of the program I returned to Tajikistan and resumed my teaching at Khujand State University with more enthusiasm, energy, and fresh ideas. My teaching has changed greatly since that time as the period I spent in the U.S. altered my philosophy and vision of teaching. I found myself being more innovative, hard-working, and creative in my pursuit of teaching and I also opened new horizons for my personal and professional growth. Since that time, my participation and presentations in a number of international and regional conferences and workshops like TESOL (2007), CESC (2007), CATEC (2008), AKHP (2008), and KhSC (2009) enabled me to view new perspectives in teaching English, share my ideas of teaching with others, and gain more experience in teaching.

This summer, I have another chance to visit the U.S., as I have been invited to teach Tajiki at the most beautiful spot on Earth: Bloomington, Indiana. I was so happy to visit the town, university, faculty, and my friends after a two-year absence, since I have such good



memories about them. This time, I taught my native language to American students who were passionate about Central Asia and particularly Tajikistan. They were eager to learn the language, culture, and lifestyle of Tajiks. And, to be honest, my students' diligence in learning the language was so amazing that they managed to acquire basic skills of communication in Tajiki within two months of the intensive language program (SWSEEL).

In fact, the students took on numerous lab and homework assignments daily and displayed incredible efforts and stamina to succeed in the program. Moreover, their curiosity about Tajik culture, traditions, family members' relationships, and many other questions made language table sessions so interesting and informative.

It should be noted that the program offered rich cultural events besides

language learning to allow students full immersion into the target language atmosphere. Students really enjoyed cooking demonstration where they were involved in cooking pilaf. Also, they watched with interest a couple of movies from Tajik filmmakers that revealed the real life of people in Tajikistan nowadays. Next, during the Silk Road Bayram, they took part in a fashion show wearing Tajiki national clothes and performed the best skit in Tajiki! Both my students and I greatly enjoyed the language program due to the good organization of the program, qualified teaching staff, rich cultural program, and also because we could exchange culture and language experiences as well as diverse ideas on

different things that made us friends forever. As for me, I discovered one very important thing : “Teaching is not only imparting knowledge but also making a difference.” My teaching experience in this program was enhanced, starting from teaching approaches up to philosophical issues that broadened my outlook and made my life different. I think my students also gained lots of positive and memorable impressions from this program. To sum up, I just want to say that fondness for my job constantly changes and betters my life and gives me an opportunity to make a difference.

LEARNING GRAMMAR THROUGH COMMUNICATION

Article by Mehriniso Abdulloeva, Fulbright Scholar Program Alumna 2009



I am happy that my project proposal is supported by the Department of State, because it has much significance. Working over my manual, I could group the genuine nature of the CLT and its advantages in teaching English. Secondly, it gave me the opportunity to get acquainted with how the CLT is being applied by the EFT throughout the world. The main aim of my project was to design the textbook *Learning Grammar through Communication* for the English-learning students of

Tajikistan and local teachers of English as a Foreign language, which consists of communicative exercises and interactive games on English grammar, taking into consideration Tajik culture, local features, customs, and traditions of my country. Fortunately, all the measures on this point were successfully completed:

1. Writing the manual
2. Typing, design, and publishing
3. Interviews with scholars, taking reviews from the scholars about my manual.
4. Distribution among the 20 teachers and 480 students .



One of the most important achievements I could get this year is that the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan supported my individual grant to publish 500 copies of my manual in Tajikistan, which were distributed among the teachers and the students of Khujand State University on September 1, 2009.

I received about ten positive recommendations on my manual from professors and scholars from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. I also got feedback and reviews from my American colleagues who read my papers and reviewed my manual. I got acquainted with them during my visit to the U.S. as a Fulbright Scholar. I've received evaluations of my work from the teachers of English grammar at Khujand State University. Thanks to the manual, I had professional talks with many outstanding grammarians of Central Asia. I was a participant of the CATEC twice and now I have many colleagues whom I met during the conferences held in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. They also evaluated my work.

As a result of the grant, the following tasks were done:

1. To provide the teachers and students of Tajikistan with the manual, which contains modern methodology of teaching foreign languages. While writing the textbook, I took into consideration Tajik culture, local features, customs, and traditions because all of the textbooks we have at school were published in Russia. It's more effective to use our national names and to speak about our national holidays, customs, and traditions.

2. To help the teachers form a methodological point of view; to demonstrate the genuine nature of CLT.

3. To help English teachers to get a vivid imagination and a deep knowledge about the Communicative Language teaching. While in the USA, I arranged numerous meetings with English teachers and shared my experience with them. Coming back to my home university, I made a presentation for my colleagues demonstrating teaching materials I brought from the U.S. and shared my experience as a Fulbrighter. I am sure that Tajik educators benefited from my talks because after the presentation they gave me good feedback and letters of thanks.

I believe that the manual will be in use year after year among the first, second, and even third-year students. It means that at the end of each educational year the students will give the manuals to the lower grade students to use them and improve their grammar skills.

I hope if there will be any financial support in nearest future I will:

1. Publish 1000 more copies of the manual *Learning Grammar through Communication* for the pupils of secondary schools and local teachers of English.
2. Conduct a conference “Learning English through Communication” for local secondary school English teachers of Khujand town, Spitamen, B. Gafurov, J. Rasulov, Istaravshan, Asht, Mastchoh, Konibodom, Isfara, and Gonchi districts, with the aim of presenting the manual and sharing my experience of being a Fulbright Scholar at Georgia State University. I hope it will improve the teaching process in Tajikistan.

From talking with my colleagues, I have noticed that Tajik educators are attempting to develop new methods of teaching English as a foreign language. I participated in the grammar classes of the young teachers who are using the manual, and the students say that the tasks are interesting and stimulate them to speak English. My experience of staying in the U.S. and publishing the manual has given me the opportunity to start researching different ways of using the CLT in Tajikistan. I already created a team of young English teachers who are engaged in researching the CLT under my supervision with the close cooperation of my American colleagues whom I met during my stay at Georgia State University.

Alumni News From Abroad

WATER ENGINEERS FROM TAJIKISTAN VISIT BOULDER

Group studying local dams, ditches and treatment plants

By **Laura Snider** Camera Staff Writer

Posted: 10/05/2009 06:12:35 PM
MDT

Monday morning, as cold raindrops began to fall in Nederland, reservoir manager Jim Creek stood on top of the Barker Dam and made a joke to a group of water managers at his own expense.

"I jokingly say this dam is like me," he said. "It's big, it's strong and it's ugly."

No one laughed -- at first.

It took a few minutes, after all, for Alexander Etlin to translate the joke into Russian, so that the visiting water engineers from Tajikistan could understand. And then the chuckles began.

This week, a delegation of Tajiks is visiting Boulder to learn how the city manages its water resources, promotes conservation, harnesses hydroelectric power and collaborates with its neighbors.

Only one, Gulru Sharofovna, speaks English, which means she and Etlin were busy asking and answering questions for the others, sometimes having to translate complex technical terms about treatment chemicals, water pumps and hydroelectric turbines into Russian or Tajik.

Despite the fact Tajikistan and Colorado sit on opposite sides of the world, the two places face some similar challenges in water management. Both rely on snowmelt from their high peaks for drinking water and irrigation, both have semi-arid climates and both argue with their neighbors over water rights.

Water that melts from Colorado's mountains flows through Nebraska, Kansas, New



Ismail Gafurov, left, who works with water supply issues in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and Todjiddin Pirov, who holds a similar job in the country's Khatlon region, look down from the top of Barker Dam in Nederland on Monday. The two are part of a five-person delegation of Tajiks, visiting the Boulder area for a week to learn about local water management (Marty Caivano)



Kamar Azizmurodov, left, director of the Unitary Utility Enterprise in the Sogdi region of Tajikistan, asks questions of Jake Gesner, center, hydroelectric manager for the Boulder Creek Watershed, while visiting Lakewood Reservoir north of Nederland on Monday. At right is translator Alexander Etlin. (Marty Caivano)

Mexico and Wyoming. And that doesn't include the snow that feeds the Colorado River, ultimately flowing past Utah, Arizona, California and Mexico, which have battled for decades over how that water is allocated. More than 90 percent of Tajikistan is covered by the Alay and Pamir mountain ranges, where snowfields and glaciers melt to feed Central Asia's two great rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, which eventually supply water to the otherwise parched countries of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. When all four countries were ruled by the Soviets, control over the water was centralized, but since the fall of the U.S.S.R., the countries have disagreed over who should get how much water and at what cost. "Here you are (fighting) within one country," said Sharofovna, who lives in

Dushanbe, Tajikistan's capitol and Boulder's sister city. "We are different countries."

Despite Tajikistan's wealth of water, the infrastructure for delivering clean water to the people is crumbling and insufficient. Nearly half of all Tajiks do not have access to clean drinking water, Gul Sharifov, chief water engineer for the country's Rural Water Supply Department, said through a translator. And 70 percent of the systems that are now delivering water are in need of "reconstruction, rehabilitation or expansion," Sharifov said.

The delegation is sponsored by the Open World Program -- which facilitates exchanges between the United States and many of the former Russian republics -- and hosted by the Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities organization.

On Monday, the group visited Barker and Lakewood reservoirs, the Nederland wastewater treatment plant and the Betasso water treatment plant. Over the next few days, the delegations will explore Boulder Reservoir, learn about transmountain diversions of water from the Western Slope and explore issues of Climate Change at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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JOURNALISTS FROM TAJIKISTAN VISIT UCONN

By: Amy McDavitt

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Five journalists from the central Asian country of Tajikistan had an eventful eight days in Connecticut and beyond last week, when they visited UConn to examine government accountability and experience living with American families.

The group, accompanied by a facilitator, was sponsored by the Open World Program, "a unique, nonpartisan initiative of the U.S. Congress designed to build mutual understanding between the United States and Eurasia,"

according to a statement released by the Center for Continuing Studies.

The journalists were guided through their week by staff from UConn's Global Training and Development Institute (GTDI), which is located within the Center for Continuing Studies. Throughout the week, they traveled to Hartford and Boston and toured the facilities of several media outlets, including The Hartford Courant, The Willimantic Chronicle, Fox 61 News and WNPR radio. After touring The Hartford Courant on Wednesday, delegate Safwat Burhonov commented on the fundamental similarities between the media in the United States and Tajikistan.

"I have not found great differences between the media in Tajikistan and the United States," said Burhonov, speaking through a translator.

He explained that in both countries, journalists strive to do their work well and recognize that being in the field requires a great deal of responsibility and accountability. "If a person lies, it is half a problem. If a journalist lies, it is a full problem because people will believe him," said Burhonov, relating a quote from a Tajik writer. Besides touring the newspapers and broadcast stations, the journalists traveled to Boston for a tour of the city and a presentation on how media and police interact at the Police Department. They also attended the Thomas J. Dodd Prize in International Justice and Human Rights, and later that day met with Mansfield Town Manager Matthew Hart.

Burhonov spoke of how impressed he was with Hart, who "did not complain about the [economic] crisis."

Throughout their high-intensity visit, the journalists returned at the end of each day to the home of their American host families. The delegates spoke positively about all of their "American families."

Olga Vladimirovna Tutubalina was surprised by the "unusual" combination of unlimited hospitality and respect for privacy that her host family showed.

She also found her family, as well as the Americans with whom the delegates interacted, to be very perceptive.

"They feel just from facial expressions what people want and don't want," said Tutubalina.

"The Americans are psychologists," added Zukhra Gurezovna Tursunova with a laugh.

Burhonov stayed with Edie Roxburgh, who is the owner of Safe Haven Farm, where she raises and boards alpacas.. Burhonov had never seen an alpaca before. However, "the most striking is my American mother, who combines several personalities within herself," he said, including farmer, artist and hostess.

"She's a very positive woman for me," Burhonov added.

Since its inception in 1999, the Open World Program has allowed more than 14,000 delegates to be hosted in all 50 states and experience American democracy and society, work with American counterparts in their field and stay in American homes. Currently, the program facilitates exchanges with participants from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

Alumni Updates

Alumni of the Library Management group (2008) are actively introducing knowledge they gained in the U.S. into their daily work. Kurbon Avgonov and Musina Aslieva are starting to perform puppet drama theater in the Children's Library in Dushanbe in order to attract children to the library. They learned this approach in Nebraska, and now are interested in making theatrical performance a regular activity of the library.

Toshef Sharif, CC alumnus of the Library Management program, organized a new department for disabled people in the library. He has already collected necessary literature and information. The department already has visitors. In the future, he plans to open a books-on-tape section like the ones he saw in the U.S.

In September, Farangis Yuldasheva, UGRAD alumna, started her work at the Child Rights Center as a temporary part-time translator for an international social work consultant for the Girl's Support Service project. She is enjoying the work because it is interesting to gain experience and make a contribution to the project, which helps girls who have been abused and exploited to reintegrate. In addition, she organized a book-drive among friends and the university she is studying in to collect some books for these girls, as the financial support for the project is very limited.

We welcome our alumni to contribute articles and information for the newsletter. If you would like to share your experience or success stories with the alumni community please contact Shafolat Kabilova at KobilovaS@state.gov

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American Corners Tajikistan



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There are three American Corners currently functioning in Tajikistan in Dushanbe, Khujand, and Kulob and two more to be opened soon in Khorog and Qurghon-Teppa.

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