



## Uzbek Kids Welcome the Information Age



Photo Credit: Qobil Yunusov/IREX

First graders learn valuable Internet and word processing skills in Uzbekistan's first afterschool computer club.

I am very grateful to you for the care you devote to our children...[The] generous deeds of USAID will contribute to the individual development of our children and achievement of their cherished goals.

-Mukhayyo Ergasheva,  
parent

In 2002, only 2% of the 10,000 schools in Uzbekistan were equipped with computers. Now, through USAID, more than 1,000 computers have been distributed to pilot schools across the country, including eight schools in the Province of Adijan which incorporate basic computer literacy in the primary school curriculum.

However, many schoolchildren in Adijan wanted more time to use the computers. They needed computer access afterschool to complete homework assignments, practice typing, and develop Internet skills. To address this need, a student volunteer group organized the first afterschool computer club. They created a club charter, elected student officials, and certified it with the Regional Department of Education. This initiative was soon adopted by other schools. Today, afterschool computer clubs are functioning in all eight schools of the province participating in this project.

An average of 110 students and community members can now use computers everyday during afterschool hours. Younger children, who never used a computer before, take their first computer classes taught by student volunteers. One of the student volunteers, Sanjar Hakimov, was a finalist of the Regional Computer Science Olympiad in Andijan and will go to Tashkent to compete nationally. The clubs also provide students with opportunities to participate in community events, including computer-integrated seminars on International AIDS Day and International Day for Protection of the Disabled, and a Computer Show held to showcase websites and presentations designed by members of computer clubs.