

# GLOBAL CONNECTIONS & EXCHANGE

Enabling Students and Teachers in the United States and Countries with Sizeable Muslim Populations to Build Cultural Understanding in an Educational Context

Azerbaijan \* Bahrain \* Egypt \* Indonesia \* Iraq \* Israel \* Lebanon \* Morocco



Oman \* Pakistan \* Syria \* United Arab Emirates \* United States \* Uzbekistan



International Education and Resource Network

# GLOBAL CONNECTIONS & EXCHANGE (GCE) PROGRAM



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iEARN administers the GCE Program in the countries of Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and the United States.

The GCE Program provides the opportunity to connect through virtual discussion forums and online projects that encourage meaningful dialogue and collaboration. In addition, iEARN offers teachers from all disciplines online professional development courses.

In July of 2008, GCE participants will attend the iEARN Annual Conference and Youth Summit in Bukhara, Uzbekistan.

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# iEARN-Azerbaijan

iEARN Azerbaijan  
iEARN Azərbaycan

## National GCE Workshop Held & GCE Funds Launch 5 GYSD Projects

The second national GCE workshop took place from March 25-26, 2008, training an additional 20 teachers and NGO members who are eager to connect their classrooms to the US and the world through project based learning.

GCE teachers and students have developed and will be implementing 5 Global Youth Service Day projects supported by GCE mini-grants. In the first project, called "Arts & Handcrafts as a Means of Communication," students from a group called the "Enjoy English Club" are creating crafts and works of art that will be exhibited to local and international organizations.

The second project, Rising Sun, will allow the students to celebrate Earth day by performing a play entitled "Lofty Tree" that will raise community awareness about local environmental issues. In the third, Help for the Homeless,

students will visit their orphaned peers to celebrate the holiday "Novruz" with gifts, sweets, singing, and dancing.

In Step by Step, the fourth project, students will volunteer to help disabled children at the hospital. They have already started training with the doctors will soon provide support and get the youths involved in GCE projects such as "Your Dreams" and "Your Vision of the Future" to connect them with their peers in the US and around the world. The fifth project will help create an English Language Resource Center for a primary school to provide a place to develop students' language abilities to increase the number of students able to take an active part in the GCE program.



Teachers at the second National GCE Workshop.

## GCE Schools Participate in Leap Year Project

GCE students at School #164 in Baku and School #1 in Ismaili participated in the Leap Year Project with 25 other schools from 8 different countries, including 19 schools from 11 states in the U.S. The students observed the temperature, height of the sun, wind speed, precipitation, and weather conditions and then shared their data with the other schools in the project.



Teachers at the second National GCE Workshop.



GCE students in Ismaili working on the Leap Year Project.



[iearn-lebanon.wetpaint.com](http://iearn-lebanon.wetpaint.com)

# iEARN-Lebanon

## GCE Alumnus Uses Mini-Grant to Save Water

GCE Alumnus Ramsey Zayek, support by a GCE mini-grant, has launched the Save the Water project, which will focus on teaching students and their families the importance of water conservation and the ways they can reduce the amount of water they use. He went to Adma International School on March 28, 2008 to give a workshop on wasting water to the teachers of the science department. He taught them to use the educational kit provided by Nestle Waters and showed them just how much a drip of

water from a leaky faucet actually wastes.

Mr. Zayek did a workshop with students from the Guide du Liban organization on April 5, 2008, and used 6 activities from the Wet Project ([projectwet.org](http://projectwet.org)) that get them actively involved in learning the value of water and how to save it. On the same day he did another workshop with the Scouts du Liban in Ghazir. For these slightly older youths he did a presentation of the the problem and some statistics and then had a discussion about the things they can do to make a difference.



Mr. Zayek working youth from the Guide du Liban organization to teach the importance of water conservation.

To find out more about this project please visit: <http://iearn-lebanon.wetpaint.com/page/Save+Water>

# iEARN-Iraq

## A GCE Milestone in Iraq

iEARN-Iraq hosted its first ever National GCE Workshop for 20 teachers from around the country at its offices in Erbil from March 11-13, 2008. The participants were introduced to the GCE program, project based learning techniques, and iEARN's online forums through which their classrooms will be able to collaborate with their peers from the U.S. and around the world. The educators attending the workshop came from many subject areas, but all were proficient in English and information technology.

The educators met and had a pleasant discussion with Mr. Jonathan Cebra, Public Diplomacy Officer for the Regional Reconstruction Team in Erbil. Mr. Cebra also presented certificates of completion for the workshop to each of the participants.

At the end of the workshop, teachers filled out an evaluation for the Ministry of Education (MOE) that was highly positive, resulting in congratulations from the Minister and a joint effort with the MOE to deliver this workshop to teach-



Teachers at the first ever National GCE Workshop in Iraq.

ers at all levels in the educational system. This is a long-term effort that will be funded by the MOE and will help promote the GCE program in schools across the country.







www.iearnpk.org

# iEARN-Pakistan

## GCE Supports Training of Effective Online Project Facilitators

Seventeen experienced GCE teachers from 10 different schools gathered at the iEARN Centre in Karachi for a project facilitator training program. Project-based learning in iEARN's collaborative online forums is at the heart of the GCE program in Pakistan, and the success of a project can be ensured by an effective facilitator who manages the project forum and encourages discussion and connections. As a result of the training, 6 of the educators joined current projects as co-facilitators, including: Write On, Civics-Youth Volunteering and Community

Service, Folktales, Water Habitat, and Laws of Life. iEARN-Pakistan developed a project facilitator's guide that will be helpful to educators currently facilitating projects as well as educators facilitating for the first time. This is the first time that the roles and responsibilities of a project facilitator have been written down in a manual, and this document will be shared with project facilitators globally to comment and amend so that there will be a



Teachers exploring the online collaborative forums they will be facilitating at a GCE workshop.

common reference to help ensure that projects are run effectively, encouraging even more communication and collaboration between GCE partners.

## GCE Alumnae Wins Nationwide Pageant

Umme Kulsoom was a GCE student in the early days of the program at the beginning of this decade. Her experience making connections with her peers in the U.S. and around the globe broadened her horizons and gave her the courage to apply to spend a year abroad as high school student in the United States the first year of the YES program in 2003-2004.

Ms. Kulsoom was among only 8 girls recruited the first year in a group of 29. Girls were particularly reluctant to apply the first year, but she was brave enough. Some of her male relatives were strongly opposed to her going to the U.S. for a year, but with the support of people from her com-

munity, they eventually agreed to allow her to participate. She came from a poor community in Karachi, an old neighborhood of Kharadar (she still lives there), and lived with her with her bedridden mother and a sister who held a small job in a school and took care of the family, her father having died long ago.

She was placed by ASSE in Virginia, and her successful year as a YES student paved the way for the exchange program to reach more students in Pakistan. Today Ms. Kulsoom is a 3rd-year student of telecom engineering at one of the lead Universities in Karachi. She was recently crowned as

the Shine Princess in a nationwide contest, a pageant similar to Miss America. Her Shine Story was full of how her YES experience gave her confidence, perspective, and the strength to believe in herself and aspire to be the best. She won 200 grams of solid 24-karat gold and a laptop for her inspirational achievements.



Ms. Kulsoom (middle), a GCE Alumnae, is crowned as the Shine Princess.

# iEARN-Egypt



## GCE National Beginners Training Workshop Held

A GCE National Beginners Training Workshop was held over three days for 30 teachers from 7 schools in the Dakahlia Governorate this March. The training was held at Mansoura Secondary School for Girls, and conducted by Mr. Ahmed Abd El Sattar and Mr. Fadel Edward Fadel, English language teachers at the school, along with trainers from iEARN-Egypt.

The 7 participating schools were Mansoura Secondary School for Girls, Mansoura Language School, Shouhdaa Badway Secondary

School, Aga Secondary School for Girls, Talkha Secondary School, New Mansoura Secondary School for Girls, and Sherbin Secondary School for Girls.



GCE teachers learning about project-based learning at the National Beginners Training Workshop.

The workshop participants will be working with their classes on the Get to Know Others project, Model United Nations project, and will be participating in community service projects for Global Youth Service Day in April 2008.

# iEARN-Oman

## GCE Teachers Promoting the Program Through Cultural Exchanges

Three GCE schools held an English Week in March in which the work of students in the GCE program was exhibited. Presentations about GCE and the benefits it offers teachers and students were also made as part of the activities during the week. All of the school's staff as well as some representatives from the regional administration attended the English Week activities.

English GCE Teacher Fatma Al Abdali is currently participating in a learning circle for the My Hero project with teachers from the U.S., as well as Canada, Indonesia, and Australia. Ms. Abdali has been

sharing information about the project and encouraging other teachers to get involved as well as working with her own class. In the My Hero project students research heroes from all different walks of life and then create a website of their own that celebrates the hero of their choice.

GCE Teachers Asma Al Buraiki and Muna Al Rashidi of the Atika School in Saham have been promoting the use of cultural exchange boxes with other nearby schools. They have already identified partners for the local schools in the U.S., Taiwan, and Bahrain. Students at the Atika School have also been working on the Moving Voices project and been sharing their work with their peers



GCE students at the Atika School in Saham participating in the Moving Voices project.

in the U.S. and around the world in iEARN's online collaborative forums.





www.mearn.org.ma

## iEARN-Morocco

### GCE Project Works to End School Dropout

Students of English Teacher Mr. Mbarek Akaddar at Hassan II High School in Beni Mellal have been participating in the Students Unlimited project, which focuses on community service by youths, by developing and implementing The School Outcasts Project. Students have been researching the issue of school dropout over the past few months and this March began a series of activities to address the problem in their community.

As part of this GCE project, students led a campaign in their school to raise awareness of the problems associated with school dropout by passing out leaflets they developed, preparing an issue of the school's bulletin board magazine on the subject, and celebrating International Women's

Day by offering flowers to all the female teachers and students at the school.

Students also conducted more research by conducting interviews with school administrators and gathering data about absentees in order to be able to classify them by age, gender, and grade level to better understand the problem. The students also made an effort to visit the homes of students who have dropped out to make their parents aware of the problems that can come from missing out on an education.

The students have been sharing their work at each stage of the project in iEARN's online collaborative forums, from plans for the project, to posting essays and materials they created, to sharing photos from their various activi-



GCE students passing out leaflets about School Dropout as part of the Students Unlimited project.

ties. GCE Teacher Lynn Rosen of Public School 135 in Brooklyn, NY has been interacting with Mr. Akaddar and his students, sharing information about school dropout in the U.S. and offering her ideas about potential solutions to the problem.

The GCE students also created a website for their project to share their work with a wider audience at: <http://studentsunlimited.pbwiki.com/>



## iEARN-Israel

### Introductory Course on the GCE Program Offered to 20 Teachers

Twenty teachers from 20 schools took a 4-week course introducing the GCE program during the month of March. Over the 4 weekly meetings the teachers learned about the GCE program and the professional development opportunities it provides. The course focused mostly on how the GCE program could be a great resource for students learning English as iEARN's collabora-

tive online forums and project based learning provide students with the opportunity to use English meaningfully. The teachers also discovered how participating in the GCE program promotes group work and cooperation, develops self-esteem, trains students to accept constructive criticism and respect the opinions of other, promotes awareness of global issues, and develops effective cross cultural communication skills.



Picture of GCE students working on the Art Miles project on a new website designed by schools in Jerusalem to present GCE projects: <http://www.silwan.net/Default.aspx?tabid=215>



# iEARN-Indonesia

## GCE Funds Youth-Led Community Service in Large-Scale Environmental Project

During the GCE National Workshop in November 2007, students from the Al Izhah Senior High School in Jakarta developed a proposal for an environmental project in Mt Halimun National Park, West Java and received a \$200 GCE mini grant to carry it out. The culmination of 4 months of work involving 7 educators and 56 students occurred over 3 days this past month when over 50 participants traveled to the National Park to carry out the project.

The students sought to bring about an ecological restoration by planting economically and botanically significant native species including the hardwood Puspa Tree, the Aren Palm, the Pasang Tree, and the Rasamala tree. The students also sought to ensure that the National Park is protected by empowering the residents of Ciptarasa Village, which borders the Park, through education about

how problems such as erosion, landslides, flooding, soil infertility, deforestation, and the loss of biodiversity affect their communities and the world.

The team from Al Izhah Senior High School stayed with host families to try to integrate into the community as much as possible. The first two days were spent getting to know the community and raising awareness through education about local environmental problems and the purpose of their project. The third day was spent planting about 400 trees with the villagers. The students and teachers of Al Izhah collaborated with the local



GCE students worked with the community around Mt. Halimun National Park to raise awareness about environmental issues and plant trees.

government, National Park staff, local NGOs, and the local community around the Park in order to carry out this ambitious and groundbreaking activity. By working together they have shown the power of youth led community service supported by GCE mini grants, and are looking forward to when they will be able to complete another service project.



GCE students spending the evening with their host family.



GCE students researching the environment around the National Park.



# iEARN-Uzbekistan

www.earn.uz

## GCE Teachers Promote Peace Through Collaboration

English teacher Nargiza Khasanova and a group of parents from the GCE School #40 in Fergana conducted an extracurricular activity aimed to prevent terrorism on March 18, 2008. Thirty students from the school and 12 students from other schools in Fergana participated in the event. The parents of students were involved in creation of a PowerPoint presentation that was given, and teachers and students discussed the potential of education to change the world, prevent terrorism, and to raise a generation of critical thinkers who are committed to finding innovative solutions to the world's problems. As a group they developed ways to prevent terror in their country and around the world by promoting peace and understanding through intercultural collaboration and exchange.

Khosiyat Suvonova, a teacher of Uzbek language and literature

at Karshi School #34 who recently joined the GCE program, joined the Teddy Bear project at the beginning of March. She went to the project forum and posted a message looking for a partner, and soon she and her 28 students were matched with Nan Evans, a teacher at the Osbornville School in Brick, New Jersey and sent their new partners a greeting to begin the exchange.

Ms. Suvonova said of her experience, "I didn't expect that I am going to be involved into this project so soon. We are very lucky to get a partner school from USA—a country with a different culture. My students and I are very excited to take part in this project, this is going to be my first iEARN project... by my mind it is a very fun way to get to know about a new country, to find friends, to have a special ambassador to cross the borders



Students at a GCE activity in Fergana discussing ways to prevent terrorism.

of the countries for education and cultural exchange."

This will be the third Teddy Bear to arrive at Karshi School from the U.S. over the years; the stories of two previous Teddy Bears from Indiana and New Jersey are available online at: <http://karshi34.connect.uz/collaborteddyeng.htm> & <http://karshi34.connect.uz/collaborsmileyeng.html>

## 15th Annual iEARN International Conference & 12th Youth Summit July 12-18, 2008, in Bukhara, Uzbekistan [www.earn2008.uz](http://www.earn2008.uz)

Each iEARN Annual Conference is a unique opportunity for over 1000 participants from over 70 countries to meet and discuss important issues such as collaboration and making the difference in our schools, our cities, our countries and the world. The annual conference showcases educational technology activities, school partnerships, new Internet-based professional development tools, innovative curricula, and the collaborative efforts of youth and educators participating in the network. The six-day event also features visits to local schools, a community service project, and interactive presentations by ministries of education, businesses, and educational organizations eager to form partnerships with iEARN schools.



# iEARN-Bahrain



## iEARN Bahrain Beginners Workshop, March 2008

A GCE Beginners Workshop was held on March 12, 2008 for 16 teachers from 8 different schools from all of the governorates in Bahrain. The main aim of the workshop was to give participants an overview of the GCE program, training in basic internet skills, and instruction on how to integrate iEARN collaborative projects into their school curriculum.

The participants had the chance to browse the iEARN collaborative online forums and familiarize themselves with the resources available through the GCE program. Participants were also given handouts and resource CDs created for the workshop. At the end of the workshop Ms. Ahlam Al Amer, the Head of the First Educational District for Technical Affairs at the Ministry of Education, and Amani Amer, the GCE Country Co-

ordinator, distributed certificates of participation and merit to the workshop participants.

## Mobility International USA (MIUSA) Delegation Visits GCE School

A group of disabled American youths arrived on March 11, 2008 to take part in a three-week exchange program. The 2008 US/Bahrain: Youth Citizenship for Disability Inclusion Exchange Program is administered by MIUSA and sponsored by the US Department of State, and brings together a diverse delegation of young leaders, aged 15 to 17, with and without disabilities, from the US and Bahrain. During their stay in Bahrain, the delegation participated in a



GCE students and teachers presenting their work on the GCE program to the MIUSA delegation.

series of interactive workshops, site visits, and volunteer community service projects.

iEARN-Bahrain organized a visit by the MIUSA delegation to the Ahmed Al Omran Secondary School on March 24, 2008. The delegation watched a presentation about the GCE program and iEARN in Bahrain, which highlighted the achievements of Bahraini teachers and students, and asked questions about how to get American youth with disabilities involved in the program. The delegation then toured an exhibition organized by four GCE schools that displayed pictures of students working on GCE projects and the final products created by students as part of these projects. GCE students and teachers were pleased to show the MIUSA delegation their work and answer questions, and hope to be able to connect online to disabled youths in the US through MI in the near future. The visit was covered by three local newspapers.



The MIUSA delegation attending a presentation of the GCE program at a secondary school in Bahrain.





# iEARN-Syria

## English Language Fellow Leads Workshop For GCE Teachers

W. Todd Stephenson, a Senior English Language Fellow, led a 3-hour workshop on effective strategies for teaching reading and writing at the Rawafed Center in Zabadani on March 18, 2008. The workshop was attended by more than 10 teachers from the Rawafed Center and local schools in and around Zabadani. The teachers found the suggestions for keeping the attention of students and methods for learning new vocabulary particularly

interesting. On March 30, 2008 there was a follow up session for 6 teachers from the Rawafed Center focusing on classroom management and project-based learning techniques.

The English Language Fellow Program is funded by the U.S. Department of State and sends experienced educators all over the world for a ten-month period to improve English teaching capacity and to further mutual understanding between



GCE Educators attending a workshop at the Rawafed Center in Zabadani conducted by a Senior English Language Fellow.

the peoples of the host country and the U.S.

# iEARN-USA

## Educator Uses GCE Program to "Go Global"

St. James Episcopal Day School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana has moved beyond the classroom's walls thanks to the GCE program. At the National Educators Computer Conference (NECC), the school's librarian Rebecca Richardson found the perfect way to "go global" without leaving the school. Ms. Richardson started working in the program with the 3rd grade students by partnering with a school in Pakistan in the Books Mark Our World project, sending hand-made bookmarks to Pakistan in the Fall of 2007. On March 20, 2008 Saleem Ibrahim of iEARN-Pakistan stopped by the 3rd grade class and delivered bookmarks made by the students in Pakistan. The students were

happily surprised and excited to meet somebody from Pakistan in person and enjoyed the bookmarks that their Pakistani friends made for them.

The St. James students continued to participate in other projects after their first successful experience, and used the connections they formed as the basis to learn about the atlas. Students used the library's atlas to locate the countries they were collaborating with, and even used GoogleEarth to locate the town in one

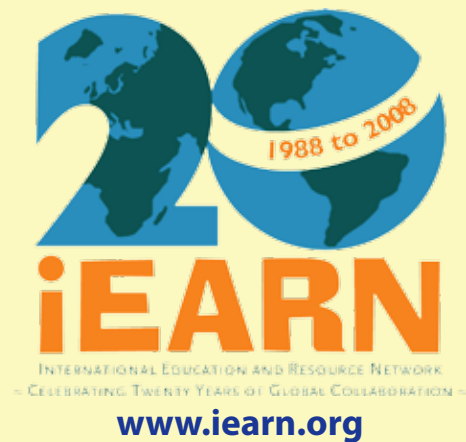
instance. The students especially enjoyed seeing pictures of the students in Pakistan and other countries in the galleries for the projects and loved the idea of being able to form friendships with people around the globe as they learn a little more about the world around them.



Saleem Ibrahim of Pakistan delivering bookmarks to Ms. Richardson's classroom in Baton Rouge, LA.



GCE students in Uzbekistan with a teddy bear from Indiana in their classroom's American Culture Corner as part of the Teddy Bear Exchange project.



Global Connections & Exchange Program is funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State