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U.S. Ambassador's First Visit to Dashoguz Welayat

U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan Tracey Ann Jacobson made her first official visit to Dashoguz welayat October 3-5, 2003. During her trip, Ambassador Jacobson highlighted the U.S. Government's support for educational exchange programs, entrepreneurial initiatives and civil society activities in Turkmenistan, as



In Gorogly village, Ambassador Jacobson and her spouse Mr. Johansson were invited to a Turkmen "gara oi" (a traditional hut) and had the opportunity to observe some Turkmen traditions.

well as visited the historical sites of Kunya-Urgench.

At a presentation of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs at the "Bahar" community center, the Ambassador emphasized the pride that she takes in promoting educational opportunities for Turkmen citizens to an audience of more than 350. She described academic exchange programs as "the most important work that we do at the American Embassy" and expressed her assurance that they will serve to foster greater mutual understanding between our countries.

On October 4, the Ambassador met with representatives of civic initiative groups and non-governmental organizations, learning about their successes and challenges. "Building the foundation of society's development is a main characteristic of your work," noted the Ambassador. "The U.S. Embassy will continue to support civic initiatives and NGO development in Turkmenistan as long as I serve as Ambassador here." **Continue**

Turkmen FLEX Alumni Join Future Leaders' Summit in Kiev

A delegation of Turkmen alumni participated in the international summit dedicated to the Tenth Anniversary of the Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX), held in Kiev, Ukraine from October 31 - November 2, 2003. Nine participants from Turkmenistan joined a delegation of 250 FLEX alumni from twelve NIS countries, who embody the FLEX spirit and show great potential for leadership. The Summit, entitled "Ten Years of Service and Leadership", gathered alumni who have stayed active in their efforts to effect positive change in their communities after returning from their academic year in the United States.



A delegation from Turkmenistan with Senator Bradley and his spouse.

During the three-day Summit, alumni participated in training activities geared toward supporting their leadership and professional development, which will help them serve their communities more effectively. They also exchanged experiences and ideas with alumni from neighboring countries.

"It was a great opportunity, first of its kind, to meet FLEX co-alumni from other NIS countries and learn about volunteer projects they carry out in their countries," said Diana Shaimova, a FLEX alumna who lived and went to school in Humbolt, Tennessee during the 1999-2000 academic year. **Continue**

U.S. Ambassador Meets Turkmen Farmers in Gokdepe

On October 2, the Ambassador visited two farms in Gokdepe etrap and met their owners, Mr. Ata Durdymukhammedov and Mr. Akhmed Charyev, both of whom had participated in the Cochran Fellowship Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Ambassador first visited a cotton farm owned by a community-based farmers' cooperative, of which Mr. Durdymukhammedov is a member, and learned about their successes and challenges. The Ambassador stated that the U.S. Government is interested in supporting Turkmen entrepreneurs in various fields, including agriculture. Mr. Durdymukhammedov shared how he helped his cooperative receive a micro credit from USAID's Farmer-to-Farmer Program. Mr. Durdymukhammedov also arranges training for village children in farm management under the Future Farmers of Turkmenistan (FFT) project, sponsored by Winrock International.

After visiting with Mr. Durdymukhammedov, the Ambassador visited Mr. Akhmed Charyev's private poultry farm "Altyn Hilal", which has produced broiler poultry meat according to U.S. standards since 1993. Mr. Charyev gave the Ambassador a tour of the farm and highlighted the significant role the Cochran program played for his business' growth. In 2002, he implemented modern poultry management

practices at his farm, having learned them through the Cochran program in the United States. Mr. Charyev replaced 100-watt electric bulbs in his chicken units with 40-watt bulbs, thereby decreasing his electricity and feed expenses. He also shortened the amount of time needed to produce his product by two days.

About one hundred other agricultural specialists in areas of agricultural research and management, agricultural production, processing and marketing, have taken part in the Cochran program, administered through the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat.



Ambassador Jacobson at Mr. Durdymukhammedov's cotton farm in Gokdepe.

U.S. Ambassador's First Visit to Dashoguz Welayat

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During the Ambassador's meeting with Dashoguz agricultural entrepreneurs, she learned about the successes that they have achieved with the assistance of the USAID-funded "Farmer-to-Farmer" program, administered in Turkmenistan by Winrock International. Dashoguz entrepreneurs and farmers had an open discussion with the Ambassador about their businesses and prospects for further development.

The Ambassador participated in the opening ceremony of an English Resource Center in the Gorogly (formerly Tagta) etrap center on October 5. The center, initiated by Peace Corps Volunteers five years ago, recently received assistance from the Embassies of the United States and Great Britain, which jointly funded furniture and equipment to modernize this special library. "There are very ancient, historical and cultural sites in Dashoguz welayat, but what we see here now is a special site, because this resource center is a symbol of cooperation between our three countries - Turkmenistan, Great Britain and the United States,"



Representative of a successful cheese production enterprise treated Ambassador Jacobson with their product.

the U.S. Ambassador said opening the center. A representative from the Gorogly Educational Department expressed his appreciation to the U.S., British and Peace Corps missions in Turkmenistan for "providing opportunities for local students to learn about the culture, science and history of the British and American people, which will expand the children's outlook."

The visit to Dashoguz welayat was Ambassador Jacobson's third trip outside the capital city. She looks forward to continuing to meet the people of Turkmenistan by continuing her travels around the country.

Turkmen Citizens Explore Educational and Research Opportunities in U.S.

Over one thousand visitors attended the Seventh Annual Educational Fair at the National Library in Ashgabat on October 12, to explore educational and research opportunities in the United States. Representatives of twelve international and local organizations made presentations and distributed their materials at the fair, jointly organized by the American Councils for International Education (ACCELS), International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) and the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section (PAS). The Ambassador opened the fair and invited the visitors to make use of the valuable and diverse resources offered at the Educational Fair.



Alumnae Phiruz Babayeva and Anna Jorayeva distribute educational materials to visitors.

"Education is the future of our countries; and it is the future of our cooperation," the Ambassador said.

By tradition, the fair featured annual exchange programs for students and professionals in various fields and of various levels. Representatives of ACCELS, IREX and PAS, which administer the programs, provided consultations for prospective applicants and other people interested in their services. Alumni of exchange programs, who have already studied in the U.S., assisted with advising and handing out materials, and eagerly shared their own experience in the U.S. with interested visitors.

Other organizations and projects such as the British Embassy, Peace Corps, Counterpart Consortium, Ashgabat International School, UNDP Info-Tuk, Pragma, EdNet, POET, and START provided information about activities they undertake and welcomed visitors to benefit from their services and resources. PAS organized sales of English language study materials specially ordered from the U.S. to be sold at a reduced price for Turkmen citizens.

Discussions and presentations at the fair covered a variety of educational topics. People attended sessions on exchange programs, U.S. university experience, writing a statement of purpose, taking the TOEFL test, information technologies, small business management and marketing, English and Business teaching techniques, and other topics.

High School Students Test the Waters in Gokdere

On October 18, Ashgabat high school students participated in World Water Monitoring Day (WWMD) in Gokdere. The event was the final activity of a four-month environmental awareness campaign called the Ecological Marathon that was conducted by the EcoCenter, one of Turkmenistan's largest and most active NGOs. High school students from Ashgabat's Turkmen-Russian school and seventh school tested water samples from a mountain stream in Gokdere. The results of this monitoring activity will be recorded in a database kept by the WWMD international organizers, the International Water Association and America's Clean Water Foundation.

U.S. Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson participated in the event and encouraged the students to continue with their environmental activities, "Young people like yourselves must learn now the good

habits of environmental conservation and continue them throughout your lives, teaching them to your own children."



Ashgabat high school students Chubak Akmatbekov and Bogdan Golenkov test water samples from a mountain stream in Gokdere

U.S. Teaching Excellence Awards (TEA) Winners Welcomed in Ashgabat

Two English language teachers from the U.S. were in Turkmenistan October 16-28, as part of the Teaching Excellence Awards (TEA) exchange program. Elizabeth Blaufuss, from Washington, D.C., and Catherine Kelly, Nashville, Tennessee, received this opportunity having won the program for secondary school English teachers, supported by the U.S. Government and administered in Turkmenistan by the American Councils for International Education (ACCELS). During their two-week stay in Turkmenistan, the American teachers lived in three different cities, Ashgabat, Mary and Turkmenbashi and collaborated with their local counterparts and students through seminars and discussions.

In Ashgabat, Ms. Blaufuss and Ms. Kelly met with members of the Professional Organization of English Teachers (POET) and teachers at the State Economic School. They learned about various aspects of Turkmen English teachers' work. On the other hand, local English teachers were interested to find out about teaching methods used in an American classroom. Workshops the American educators conducted included such topics as "Teaching poems" and "Teaching Geography". The U.S. TEA finalists demonstrated many new techniques, activities, and games they use to make learning for students more interesting.

Elizabeth Blaufuss' and Catherine Kelly's professional experience as English teachers in the U.S. was of great interest for Turkmen students as

well. As the guests visited secondary schools of Turkmenistan, they encountered more and more students asking about school life and teenagers' interests in America. Ms. Blaufuss and Ms. Kelly brought pictures of American teenagers and letters written by teenage boys and girls in America especially for their Turkmen peers.

In all three cities they stayed, Elizabeth Blaufuss and Catherine Kelly met ordinary Turkmen people and visited historical and cultural monuments of Turkmenistan. Both teachers were leaving Turkmenistan full of impressions. "I have never been treated so well before; Turkmen hospitality is just wonderful," Catherine Kelly said departing to her home country.



Catherine Kelly conducts a seminar at POET

Turkmen FLEX Alumni Join Future Leaders' Summit in Kiev

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Summit delegates included alumni of the very first FLEX program one decade passed, as well as those of the most recent FLEX group, who returned to their home countries this summer. Since its inception, more than thirteen thousand teenagers from twelve former Soviet republics have visited the United States through FLEX. Currently, they are successfully working or continuing their education in many industries such as business, law, government and public policy.

Key figures who have been instrumental in creating and leading the FLEX program also participated in the Summit. Special guests included former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley, who co-sponsored legislation that helped found the FLEX program in 1992; FLEX Program Manager at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. State Department, Diana Aronson, who has managed the program since its inception; President of the American Councils for International Education (ACCELS), Dan Davidson; and U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, John Herbst.

Speaking about the goals of the FLEX program, Ms. Diana Aronson noted, "In order to free ourselves from the conflicts of the past, we must invest in the

future". Senator Bill Bradley said the idea for the program came from his wife, who told him about the massive exchange programs that Germany and France inaugurated for young people after World War II. "My thought was, 'Why not establish a similar program between young people within the Soviet Union and the U.S.?' " Bradley said.

Striving to become future leaders of their countries, FLEX alumni carry out a large number of community service projects, ranging from environmental clean-up to social and political initiatives. During the Summit, delegates from Turkmenistan shared their successful endeavors to raise funds to build playgrounds for disabled children in Ashgabat and to repair a heating system at an orphanage in Abadan. Graduates in Russia organize annual debate competitions for high school students. Alumni in Kyrgyzstan are currently trying to raise academic integrity in their region by discouraging students from paying bribes to university professors. Future leaders of Uzbekistan raised \$ 6,000 at a recent charity art auction, to drill hundreds of wells for residents of northwestern regions of Uzbekistan that have been struck by droughts.

On the last day of the Summit, each delegation presented a special community service project for their country, which will mark Global Youth Days on April 16-18, 2003. Turkmen alumni will organize another fundraising event, a charity art exhibition and auction, to support orphanages and schools for disabled not only in Ashgabat and Abadan, but in all welayats of Turkmenistan. In the months before the charity event, alumni and students from art schools will be attending orphanages and schools for disabled, teaching children

to draw pictures. Those pictures will then be displayed at the charity exhibition and sold at the auction.

Aside from the concrete accomplishments of FLEX alumni, former Senator Bradley said the long-term goal of the program was an investment in the human spirit. "The program will be a success even if no graduate assumes leadership of their country," he said. "But, of course, I expect them all to do that."

U.S. State Department Official Visits Ashgabat

Director of the U.S. State Department Office of Caucasus and Central Asian Affairs John Fox visited Ashgabat on October 16, 2003. As part of the visit, Mr. Fox met with Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov to discuss issues of bilateral interest, such as

economic cooperation and educational programs, as well as human rights issues.

Mr. Fox also met with the National Alumni Association's Board of Directors to discuss alumni initiatives in Turkmenistan. Ten representatives of U.S. Government-funded exchange programs shared their U.S. program experiences and discussed major successes and accomplishments resulting from their fellowships and the ways that their fellowships have affected their professional activities and careers. Mr. Fox had the opportunity to learn first-hand about the benefits and effectiveness of US academic and professional exchange programs for Turkmenistan. He encouraged alumni to continue their successful initiatives within their communities.



Mr. Fox is having lunch with the Alumni Board of Directors

Mr. John Fox was on a regional tour with stops in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. This was his first visit to Turkmenistan.

Information Resource Officer Visits Turkmen National Library in Ashgabat and the American Corner in Turkmenabat

On October 19-24, the Embassy's new Information Resource Officer (IRO) Pamela Dragovich, based in Vienna, Austria, paid her first official visit to Turkmenistan. During her trip, Ms. Dragovich visited the Turkmen National Library in Ashgabat and presented Jeren Garamyradova, Head of the Library's International Book Exchange Department, with a book entitled "Eyes of the Nation: A Visual History of the United States", produced by the Library of Congress. She also visited the American Corner in Turkmenabat - one of the three American Corners located in regional centers, where she learned about the American Corner activities and had the opportunity to talk with volunteers and visitors. She spoke about her work at the Library of Congress and answered questions about education and culture in the United States.



IRO Ms. Dragovich presented the National Library with a book produced by the Library of Congress.

American Jazz Musicians Perform in Ashgabat

The Adam Klipple Quartet (AK4) visited Ashgabat as part of their Central Asian Jazz Ambassadors tour. They kicked off their tour in Ashgabat on October 20 with a successful outdoor performance, drawing a crowd of more than 400 people to the Ashgabat Amphitheater in the center of the capital. Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson opened the concert and introduced the jazzmen - Adam Klipple, David Ambrosio, Frank C6lon, and Aaron Johnston. The famous musicians pioneered performing Latin jazz in Turkmenistan. "The weather is cool today, but the jazz is hot!" remarked one local musician during the concert.

Enthusiastic local musicians played alongside the AK4 during their second concert at the Sheraton Four-Points Ak Altyn Hotel, creating a festival of Turkmen and American sounds for the diplomatic community and other invited guests. They rounded out their visit on October 22 with a rousing jam session at a local club. The Jazz Ambassadors' program in Ashgabat also included master classes with members of the

National Cultural Center of Turkmenistan and students of the National Conservatory. Exchanging folk melodies provided an opportunity for both the American and Turkmen musicians to discover the rich musical traditions of both nations.



AK4 band and local musicians at the Turkmen-American festival.

Alumni Share Halloween with Orphans



Alumni of various U.S. exchange programs celebrated Halloween, marked on October 31, with orphan children. Six FLEX and four FSAU alumni, the U.S. Embassy's Alumni Coordinator and Cultural Affairs Officer organized a Halloween party for 55 orphans from Abadan Orphanage. Prior to the event, alumni conducted clothes and toy drives, collecting eight boxes of clothes, shoes, and toys for the children. During the celebration, alumni described what Halloween is like in America, including its history, traditional Halloween activities,

and Halloween celebrations in other countries. After the presentation, children enjoyed playing games and competing in contests. The games and competitions allowed the children to not only enjoy themselves but also to acquire teambuilding skills. For alumni, who also had a lot of fun, it was a good opportunity to practice their organizational skills, to discover their pedagogical talents, and to share their American experiences.



IATP Mobile Trainer Zuhrah Abdullayev "starring" as a scarehead was a hit of the Halloween party organized by Tatyana Navruzova.

On October 30, Tatyana Navruzova, 2002 alumna of the Contemporary Issues exchange program, used ideas found on the Internet to throw a Halloween party for orphans in Ashgabat. In the city orphanage's fifty years of existence, it was the first Halloween party ever organized, and it was also the first for Tatyana. Tatyana has been volunteering at the orphanage, where she has been known to share her knowledge of American holidays with the orphanage's children. To prepare for the Halloween party, she went to the Alumni Resource Center to search the Internet for ideas regarding the best games, scariest stories, most haunted houses, easiest costumes, slickest tips on pumpkin carving, and most appropriate history of Halloween. The event was a huge success, bringing lots of tricks and treats to needy children. Tatyana described the event in more detail on www.iatp.edu.tm/halloween, through which she hopes to inspire others to bring joy to less fortunate children.

USAID/EdNet Introduces the Higher Education Credit System in Turkmenistan

On October 18, 2003, USAID partner Carana Corporation which implements the Business and Economics Education Network (EdNet) held a seminar in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on the Credit Hour System. The topic focused on the Anglo-American university degree system with its credit hour structure as this is the model being used by the European Union and others to transform their higher education systems. This allows for courses, programs and degrees to be easily transferable between countries. The seminar provided introductory information on the credit hour system to 24 participant professors and other relevant educators. In addition, EdNet identified resources available to Turkmenistan to assist with a change in the higher education system should the country decide to take action.

EdNet is currently working with the ministries of education in two Central Asian countries as they commit to changing their higher education systems to participate in the emerging global higher education marketplace. EdNet provides consulting assistance to help the countries determine whether they want to transform their higher education structure either fully or partially and, if so, how they can most effectively manage that change.

Women Discuss Gender Issues in Business

Thirty women employed in various fields attended a two-day seminar entitled "Women in Business and Economics: Gender Issues" held in Dashoguz City on October 18-19. The seminar, organized by the Women's Resources Center (WRC) based in Ashgabat and financed by the Educational Network (EdNet) Project, aimed at teaching women to do business in Turkmenistan and on the international level, addressing gender issues. WRC trainers Ejegyz Rakhmanova and Gulistan Yazkulieva led interactive sessions on women's role and gender issues in business and economics, small business development, Turkmenistan's macroeconomic situation and other topics. A special brochure on the seminar subject was published and distributed to the participants as part of the project. "Unfortunately, due to our educational background, we - women - are poorly informed about doing business and are often afraid to take chances by starting our own business," said a participant of the seminar expressing her opinion about the need for such seminars.

USAID Program Helps Doctors Make Life Better for Mothers and Children

In October, USAID partner Zdrav Plus provided Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) training for family doctors in rural areas. Local physicians were trained at an IMCI training of trainers event and were provided follow up training. The program's impact is particularly noticeable in rural areas. For example, in the Dashoguz

USAID Funded Legal Resource Center at Turkmen State University in High Demand

The USAID funded Legal Recourse Center (LRC) at Turkmen State University (TSU) has been averaging about 1,200 visitors a month. Opened in January 2003, the LRC has served about 10,000 people. Visitors include law students, law professors, students and professors from other TSU faculties, Polytechnic and Transport Institute students and faculty, Turkish-Turkmen University members and various other higher educational schools of Turkmenistan. Twice a week, the Center is visited by twenty to thirty students from the Military Institute, judges, government officials from Ministry of Justice and parliament members. The LRC provides books on international law, local legislation, sociology, philosophy, history, and cultural sciences. Visitors may also use the Internet and computer facilities, copying machine and other technology.

Workshops on different legal aspects, round tables and discussions are regularly held under the ABA/CEELI advocacy grant that supports the LRC. The LRC was originally seeded by a grant from the Eurasia Foundation with additional assistance provided by the OSCE.

Roundtable on Youth Volunteerism

From October 24 to 28, the Aladja Children's Equestrian Club held a youth forum at the Ministry of Internal Affairs Holiday Center with the assistance of a Democracy Commission grant. The forty-five participants were students from all parts of Turkmenistan who have demonstrated an interest in the Civil Society movement. Two trainers from the Counterpart Consortium's Civil Society Support Center provided instruction on the role of Civil Society and its development, how to encourage and utilize volunteers as well as methods of teambuilding and conflict prevention. The participants also learned strategies for preparing newsletters and press materials, and participated in a round table with a panel of NGO leaders. Embassy Grants Coordinator Kevin Dean also took part. Mr. Dean encouraged the forum participants to continue volunteering with NGOs and community groups, explaining that youth participation is a necessary element of any democracy and will be important for the economic development of Turkmenistan.

region, five local trainers trained in IMCI provided follow up training for eighty family doctors covering about eighty percent of all rural doctors. Local trainers are supervised by Ashgabat trainers, trained by WHO experts in 2001. The training has been provided support by IMCI partner UNICEF through the supply of quality medications.

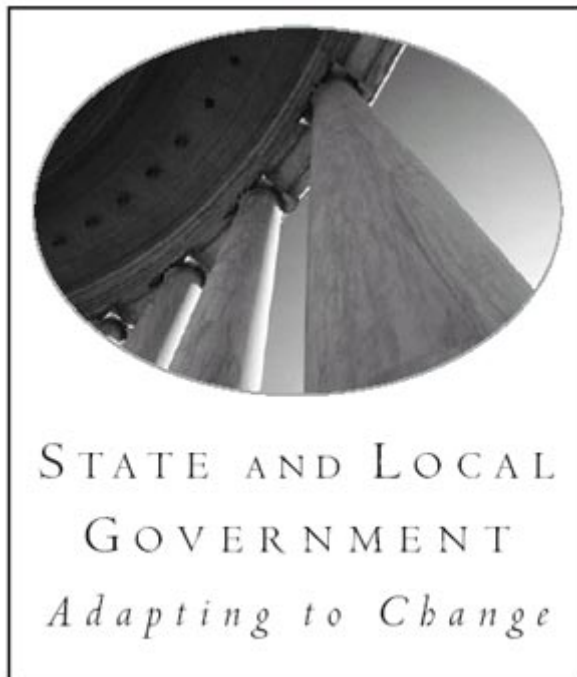
State and Local Government: Adapting to Change

*New E-journal about state and local government
in the USA*

This new e-journal examines the vital role played by U.S. state and local governments. It presents several case studies of how both governments and the people they represent are responding to the challenges they now face. The first two articles focus on the relationship between state efforts at political, social, and technical modernization and the constituencies that are affected by these changes. Ellis Katz, professor emeritus at Temple University, provides an in-depth look at the methods that states have used to modernize, adapt to changes and forge policy on behalf of their local constituencies. Sharon Crouch Steidel, who is director of information technology for the Virginia State House of Delegates, offers a concrete example of this modernization in her article about e-government and its positive effect on the states and their citizens.

In addition to the social and technological changes that state and local governments must address, they have a crucial new role in protecting citizens in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, as explained by Donald L. Plusquellic, the mayor of Akron, Ohio. Mayor Plusquellic describes the way cities, with help from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, are developing teams of first responders and educating citizens to cope with possible attacks.

Finally, recognizing the importance of partnership in addressing the problems of the twenty-first century, staff writers Deborah M.S. Brown and Eric Green have interviewed two civic leaders who are building partnerships domestically and internationally. Brown speaks with Dennis Taylor, a director of the



International City/County Management Association, about examples of partnerships between American and international cities that address problems of mutual interest. Green explores the partnership between federal, state and local enforcement agencies in combating cyber crime in his interview with Utah State Attorney General Mark L. Shurtleff.

For more insight into how state and local governments and their constituencies are responding to the challenges of the twenty-first century, the journal provides bibliographic references for further reading and a list of useful electronic links.

The journal is available in English and Russian and can be requested in electronic form from the IRC Assistant at the U.S. Embassy by calling 35-00-45 or sending an e-mail to: irc-ashgabat@iatp.edu.tm.

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