



United States Mission in Turkmenistan

Pushkin Str. 9, Ashgabat
744000 Turkmenistan

Phone: (993-12) 35 00 45 Fax: (993-12) 39 26 14
Website: www.usemb-ashgabat.rpo.at

Issue 19

Monthly Newsletter

March 2003

USAID Partners Contribute to Health and Economic Reforms in Turkmenistan

Inside This Issue:

- 2 AUCA Scholarship Program Presented in Turkmenistan
- 2 TEA-2003 Semi-Finalists Announced in Ashgabat
- 3 Turkmen English Teachers Learn New Methods of Teaching English
- 3 IATP Completes MS Excel Training Course for Alumni
- 4 U.S. Ambassador Conducts A Roundtable on Iraq with Journalists
- 4 NGO Activists Learn American Experience of Helping Youth At Risk
- 5 U.S. and Turkmen Agriculture Specialists Discuss Cattle Breeding
- 6 Alumni Help Kids at Abadan Orphanage To Plant Trees

Project HOPE and Turkmen Health Ministry Mark World TB Day

Project HOPE marked World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, March 24, by conducting a series of activities aimed at fighting TB and increasing the level of primary health care in Turkmenistan in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other organizations. The TB Day campaign, held throughout March across Turkmenistan, included publication of TB posters and brochures, production of a popular science film on TB prevention, a TB poster competition, a conference for primary health care doctors and other events in Ashgabat and Turkmenbashi aimed at preventing TB.

Doctors and representatives from health institutions, students, teachers, and cured patients were among those present at the event held at Turkmen State Medical Institute on March 24 under the slogan "DOTS Cured Me - It Will Cure You Too." The event jointly organized by USAID partners and Turkmenistan's Ministry of Health featured an award ceremony for doctors who won the TB Poster Competition and stories from cured TB patients on how they overcame TB. Organizers of the event addressed important public health issues in their remarks, and Rejep Geldiev, Head



Public health care nurses presenting a sketch on DOTS at one of the TB Day events in Turkmenbashi

of the Health Ministry's Press Department, made a presentation on "The Fight to Stop TB."

On the same day, TB-infected children participated in a drawing competition held at the Central TB Hospital in Ashgabat and received prizes and gifts. Volunteers from the Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan prepared
(continued on page 4)

Pragma Corporation Recognizes Its Best Training Partner and Best Trainers of the Year

On March 25, 2003, the Pragma Corporation in Turkmenistan, implementing the USAID funded Small and Medium Enterprise Development



Representatives from the Ashgabat School of Economics and Business invited to the stage. The school was recognized as the Best Training Partner of the Year

Project in Central Asia, announced its "Best Local Training Partner of the Year and Best Local Trainers of the Year" and rewarded them with complementary training equipment, as well as financial rewards. U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan, Laura E. Kennedy, and USAID Country Director, Bradford Camp, attended the ceremony and congratulated representatives from the Ashgabat School of Economics and Business, recognized as the Best Local Training Partner of the Year. They also congratulated Artyom Asriyan, teacher of law disciplines at that school, and Ayna Nazarova, a trainer of professional accounting courses at "Hemayat" Partnership Enterprise, who were recognized as the Best Local Trainers of the Year. Pragma Corporation also
(continued on page 4)

ACCELS Presents AUCA Scholarship Program in Turkmenistan

On March 28, 2003, the U.S. Embassy and American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) presented the American University in Central Asia (AUCA) Scholarship Program 2003 to prospective students, their parents, journalists and representatives of the international community. This scholarship program, initiated by the U.S. Government and administered by ACCELS, will provide young Turkmen men and women with an opportunity to study for a Bachelor's degree at the prestigious university in Kyrgyzstan. Students who pass the selection process will be subsidized to study in such fields as Business Administration, International Relations, Law, Information Technologies, Economics, Journalism, Psychology and others.

During the presentation, Shannon E. Runyon, Public Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat; Brendan Dallas, ACCELS Country Director, and Konstantine Augemberg, AUCA

Scholarship Program Assistant, introduced the program and described selection criteria to the interested audience. "The U.S. Government is pleased to be able to expand educational opportunities for Turkmenistan's citizens," said Ms. Runyon speaking of the new program. A representative from the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan informed visitors of the excellent reputation AUCA has as an academic institution in the region and briefly spoke about the education system at the University.

AUCA is an American-style liberal arts university that offers high quality academic programs to qualified students from all over the world. It is the first and only institution of higher education in Central Asia that functions according to the American model. The mission of the university is to promote civil society in this part of the world, to train a new generation of leadership for Central Asia and the CIS, and to introduce new pedagogical methods to Kyrgyzstan.

TEA-2003 Semi-Finalists Announced in Ashgabat

On March 1, 2003, the office of American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) held a special ceremony in Ashgabat to announce 33 secondary school English and American Studies teachers from across Turkmenistan as semi-finalists for the Teaching Excellence Awards (TEA) Program. According to the program, these teachers will receive personal prizes worth \$ 200.00 and training aids and office equipment of their choice for their schools worth \$ 2,000.00.

ACCELS Country Director, Brendan Dallas, and Acting Public Affairs Officer, Jennifer Hall-Godfrey, congratulated the semi-finalists and wished them success in the next round of the competition. Mr. Dallas talked about the TEA program's goals in Turkmenistan and underlined the significant role of the program for the professional development of English and American Studies teachers in Turkmenistan.

Semi-finalists were interviewed during the following two days to determine six finalists, who will travel to the U.S. this summer to participate in professional development workshops and seminars on American Studies and English teaching methodology. Upon their return, the TEA finalists will also have an opportunity to host American teachers in Turkmenistan, which will help expand the range of educational contacts between the two countries.

After the award ceremony, English teachers participated in a mini-conference, which featured presentations by two TEA alumni and a Peace Corps Volunteer. TEA-2002

alumnus Atanazar Akatov conducted a Power Point presentation on how prize order forms should be filled out and described the contents and benefits of English teaching books and materials to assist the semi-finalists in making their choices. In her workshop on English teaching methodology, TEA-2002 alumna Haitjan Kerimova shared her knowledge of modern and creative English teaching methods gained during professional development seminars and conferences in the U.S. last summer. Peace Corps Volunteer Katrina Fink presented a workshop on developing interview skills.

The United States - Turkmenistan Teaching Excellence Awards Exchange Program is designed to recognize and reward Turkmenistan's secondary school teachers of English and American Studies. During the three years since the program started, 15 English teachers from Turkmenistan have been to the U.S., five American teachers have visited Turkmenistan and about 80 Turkmen schools have been equipped with books and computers.



Thirty-three TEA-2003 semi-finalists gathered in Ashgabat for an award ceremony and a mini-conference

Turkmen Teachers Gather in the Capital to Learn New Methods of Teaching English

Over a hundred English teachers from across Turkmenistan gathered for a two-day conference in the capital city jointly organized by the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat, ACCELS, and IREX. The goal of the conference, held at the end of March, was to discuss prospects and opportunities for implementing modern English teaching methods in their classrooms.

Speakers from the Ashgabat International School, Turkmen-Turkish University, and Peace Corps, as



Peace Corps Education Volunteer from Turkmenabat Nathan Truitt conducting a presentation at the conference

well as a social foundations educator from the U.S., Ms. Stephanie Tansey, and a local Fulbright alumnus introduced English teachers of Turkme-

nistan to modern developments in the methodology of teaching English as a second language.

These interactive methods of teaching English encourage students to communicate and help to develop their associative thinking skills. The conference featured interesting presentations on "Getting People Started", "Teacher - Student Relationships", "Principles of Adult Teaching and Learning", and "Testing in Teaching English Language", among other topics.

Each participant received handout materials containing various exercises, vocabularies and games for teaching English and developing specific language skills. Teachers will be able to use these materials as a helpful resource for their classes. At the end of the conference, Turkmen teachers had the opportunity to evaluate their own level of English proficiency by taking a sample TOEFL test.

Organizers of the conference noted that Turkmen teachers are greatly interested in learning and applying new teaching methods in their classrooms. "It was a very good idea to organize the English Teachers' Conference - a good opportunity to refresh our minds, learn new things and meet people," said Reda Soyunova, an English teacher at Gokdepe Secondary School #6, after the conference.

IATP Completes First in A Series of PC Trainings for Alumni

Alumni of exchange programs funded by the Educational and Cultural Affairs Office (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State attended a three-week training course on Microsoft Excel, organized by the Internet Access Training Program (IATP) Office in Ashgabat. The training led by IATP Mobile Trainer Zohrab Abdullayev featured creating comprehensive spreadsheets, using various functions, formulas, diagrams, charts and other techniques available in Excel. Basic computer users are often unaware of these more advanced functions.

On March 26, 2003, organizers of the training held a certificate presentation ceremony for six participants who successfully passed a test upon completion of the course. Public Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan, Shannon E. Runyon, and IATP Country Coordinator, Aysenem Tuylieva, presented the certificates and congratulated the participants on their achievement. Alumni expressed their appreciation to the organizers for conducting such a useful training, as well as for numerous other activities at the American Center, which they, as alumni, can participate in.

The certificate presentation ceremony was followed by an informal pizza party, where alumni and staff members of IATP and the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section discussed the role exchange programs play in each alumnus' professional and personal life. Sharing the benefits of having

participated in an exchange program, RSEP 2002 alumna Oguljahan Orazova said, "Before, I could never imagine that my after-work time could be so interesting. Very often, I come to the IATP alumni resource center after my daytime job and participate in various training courses, seminars, browse the Internet, or just chat with other alumni."

The Microsoft Excel course was the first certified training conducted by IATP for alumni of ECA-funded exchange programs. In the future, IATP plans to have regular certified trainings on Microsoft Word, Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Dreamweaver and other applications.



Six certified participants with organizers of the IATP Excel training course

"Brothers and Sisters of the Desert" Form Basis for Future Cooperation

Visiting professors from the Department of Agriculture at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), and Nevada's State Veterinarian held a roundtable discussion on cattle breeding with Turkmen experts in Ashgabat on March 13. High-ranking representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Turkmen Agricultural University, and the State Veterinary Service participated in the event. Representatives from scientific research institutes dealing with cattle breeding and other agricultural issues, and international organizations implementing agricultural



Agriculture and Livestock expert at UNR Dr. Thawley conducting a roundtable with Turkmen specialists

projects in Turkmenistan such as TACIS and Winrock International participated as well.

The discussion centered on similarities of climatic conditions and agricultural specializations of Nevada and Turkmenistan. Specialists from the two countries shared their experiences with cattle vaccination and fighting bovine diseases. Relations between the government and private farmers and the issue of land ownership in Nevada and Turkmenistan were other hot topics of discussion.

Nevada specialists shared stories of their success in producing merino sheep, prized for their high quality wool, which sparked the interest of Turkmen breeding specialists. A representative from the Ministry of Agriculture proposed beginning collaboration in this sphere in order for Turkmen cattle farmers to adopt the Nevadans' merino sheep breeding technologies. The idea was a hit with both sides.

Participants of the roundtable agreed to continue their discussion and seek more ways for cooperation, communicating via e-mail, before the next team of Nevada agricultural specialists visits Turkmenistan later this year. "Very few people in the world live in climatic conditions similar to ours," said Dr. Thawley, Agriculture and Livestock expert at UNR. "That's why, we, the people of Nevada and Turkmenistan, have reason to consider ourselves brothers and sisters of the desert."

Pragma Corporation Recognizes Its Best Training Partner and Best Trainers of the Year (continued from page 1)

recognized Senem Nurnazarova, Director of "Hemayat", which provides economics courses, for her significant role in developing entrepreneurship training programs in Turkmenistan.

Ambassador Kennedy addressed event participants and encouraged them to keep up their important work. "The skills you are delivering - including entrepreneurial thinking, international accounting standards, business ethics and integrity - and the methods by which you teach them are preparing the people of Turkmenistan to face the challenges of a market economy and integration into the world business community," the Ambassador said.

"We are very grateful to Pragma, USAID, and the U.S. Government for their investments in the education of Turkmenistan. These investments are highly valuable for our country," said Ms. Nazarova as she received her prize from Ambassador Kennedy. Mr. Camp underlined that USAID is going to continue to support and increase the level of business trainings for current and future entrepreneurs in Turkmenistan.

Two participants in business courses provided by Pragma's partners shared their success stories at the award ceremony. Irina Adamova told participants that business courses offered by the School of Economics and Business inspired her to start a laundry business primarily aimed at supporting the aged and pensioners. Yayly Bekov, who runs his own taxi business, shared how much he increased his business based on what he learned from the business course provided by the School of Economics and Business, despite being "on in years."

The ceremony was also an opportunity to highlight the results of the program over the past years. Since its launch in September 2000 and its extension in September 2002, it has grown into a regional effort for all Central Asian nations. In Turkmenistan, Pragma carries out accounting and business skills development training and regional trade promotion. Whether the result is a loan for a micro enterprise or better management practices, whether it is in the capital or in a small village, there is a clear benefit to project participants and a growing impact on the Turkmen community.

Alumni Help Kids at Abadan Orphanage To Plant Trees

On March 4, 2003, several alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs and an alumna of a French exchange program, Aina Karlieva, traveled to Abadan to plant trees together with children at the local orphanage/boarding school. Aina Karlieva provided young plants for the orphanage, while U.S. Embassy alumni organized the event.

Sixty children participated in planting over 40 fruit trees in the backyard of their school, while their teachers and alumni instructed them on how to plant trees so that they would grow right. Every plant was assigned to a group of children, who will be responsible for taking care of their tree. Alumni helped the students label their plants to make it easy to identify who is responsible for each tree.

"The children are very excited and looking forward to taking good care of their own plants," said one of the teachers at the orphanage. The kids said they couldn't wait to eat their own apples, peaches, apricots and pistachios once the trees are old enough to bear fruit.

Alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs have been helping children at the Abadan Orphanage for over two years. In July 2002, alumni of the FSA FLEX program conducted a Charity Art Auction in Ashgabat and raised \$3,260, which was used to repair the heating system of the orphanage this winter.



Alumni of exchange programs helping kids at Abadan Orphanage plant trees

If you have any comments on the newsletter,
please contact us at
myalikhulyevwk@state.gov