



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 17

Monthly Newsletter

January 2003

Peace Corps Volunteers Gather in Ashgabat for a Week of Seminars and a Resource Fair

Inside This Issue:

- 2 [Major Daily Notes NGOs Supported by the U.S. Government](#)
- 2 [USAID Expert Visits Ashgabat to Review Economic Programs](#)
- 2 [Pragma's Short Business Courses for the Hearing Impaired](#)
- 3 [Grant Proposal Writing Workshop for Alumni](#)
- 3 [CHAP and Umyt Assist the Needy](#)
- 4 [National Library for Blind and Deaf Produces American Books on Tape](#)

More than 50 Peace Corps Volunteers from across the country gathered in Ashgabat from January 6 - 11, 2003, to attend a resource fair and an early service training aimed at increasing the efficiency of the volunteers' service in their communities. Volunteers gathered to share their experiences and needs, which they encountered during the two months of service at their sites since their swearing in on November 6, 2002. During the weeklong training, Peace Corps Volunteers attended seminars on teaching HIV/AIDS awareness and reproductive health, as well as technical training in education and health. Experienced volunteers, who have been working in Turkmenistan for a longer period, conducted a seminar on "How to Do a Camp".

More than 20 American and international organizations and the Embassies of the U.S. and Great Britain gave presentations and displayed their information at a Resource Fair, specially organized for Peace Corps volunteers on January 9, 2003. Volunteers met with representatives of various organizations operating in Turkmenistan and explored opportunities for using their resources to support their local projects. The Peace Corps Office in Ashgabat developed a special



A Health Volunteer from Kelejar village in Gokdepe etrap, Megan Sussek is looking through materials displayed by the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat

Resource Booklet featuring services various organizations offer in Turkmenistan.

Volunteers left Ashgabat on Sunday, January 12, for their regional sites, newly furnished with useful information and eager to share it with their local counterparts. Over 300 Education, Health and Business volunteers have worked in all five welayats of Turkmenistan since 1993, when the Peace Corps first began its programs in the country. This year, the Peace Corps will mark its 10th anniversary of operations in Turkmenistan.



Along with the Resource Fair, Peace Corps Volunteers attended presentations by more than 20 American and international organizations and the Embassies of the U.S. and Great Britain



USAID Country Director Brad Camp explains about his agency's work in Turkmenistan

Major Daily Notes Turkmen NGOs Supported by the U.S. Government

The major daily newspaper "Neytralniy Turkmenistan" provided substantial coverage of Turkmen NGOs' activities supported by USAID and the U.S. Embassy's Democracy Funds in the beginning of 2003.

A report on the public health activities of NGOs supported by USAID/Counterpart Consortium in Dashoguz welayat appeared in "Neytralniy Turkmenistan's" regional news column on January 20, 2003. These health NGOs operate under a program entitled "Health of a Mother and a Child," which was implemented by Counterpart Consortium Turkmenistan. The NGO activities focus on preventing diseases of mothers and children, teaching first-aid skills and skills for nursing newborn babies, education regarding public sanitary regulations, etc. NGO activists hold meetings with people in rural areas, provide consultations, and disseminate handout materials. In the near future, health NGOs plan to conduct contests in various regions of Dashoguz province to evaluate the level of the population's familiarity with the information and skills they teach.

In the January 23 issue of "Neytralniy Turkmenistan", an extensive article on the Dashoguz Beekeepers Club featured the October 2002 visit of an American beekeeping scholar, University of Maryland professor Mike Embrey who consulted Dashoguz beekeepers under Winrock International's "Farmer to Farmer" program. Prof. Embrey shared his experience of working on his personal bee-farm, and also brought some queen bees to Dashoguz. He also talked about new kinds of medication to prevent and cure bee diseases; modern technologies of honey production, storage and marketing; and answered numerous questions asked by members and guests of the Beekeepers Club. "There is no doubt that the Dashoguz beekeepers' meeting with an experienced professional from the U.S. was useful for them," said the article.

On January 27, 2003, "Neytralniy Turkmenistan" published an article about activities of the ecological clubs of Turkmenbashi City. Among others, the article featured the NGO "RIF", which is a U.S. Embassy Democracy Funds grantee. According to the article, "By the initiative of 'RIF' ecological club, all secondary schools' biology classrooms received complete sets of posters featuring the flora and fauna of the Caspian Sea region," including fish species found only in this region.

Another article published in "Neytralniy Turkmenistan" on February 5, 2003, notes that "Sarygamysh" NGO supported the construction of electrical power lines leading to two villages in Kunyargench etrap of Dashoguz welayat. The project provided over 500 rural residents with electricity. USAID/Counterpart Turkmenistan provided the majority of the funding. The etrap hakimlik, a local cotton-processing factory, "Gok gushak" joint stock association, and workers of the electrical power service provided one-third of the funding.

USAID Regional Expert Visits Ashgabat to Review Economics Programs

Lewis Tatem, USAID Regional Sr. Economics Expert, was in Ashgabat January 22-24, 2003, to review USAID programming in the economics sphere and involvement of Turkmenistan's institutes of higher education into the Education Network (EdNet), managed by USAID partner Carana Corp. While here, Mr. Tatem met with professors of Turkmen higher educational institutions, which have joined EdNet. Professors were positive about the program and gave concrete examples of how the materials they are being exposed to are being shared with their students. Professors commented to Mr. Tatem that EdNet is the major vehicle offering professors professional development opportunities, such as new teaching materials, techniques and networking with other professionals. Mr. Tatem and professors discussed prospects for opening an EdNet Resource Center in Ashgabat.

On January 22, 2003, Mr. Tatem led a roundtable discussion on "Educational Opportunities in Central Asia" for Turkmen professors in Business and Economics, students, and young men and women seeking educational opportunities. Speaking to over 30 participants of the roundtable, Mr. Tatem discussed opportunities for studying for bachelors, masters and doctorate degrees in prestigious Central Asian educational institutions, including Kazakhstan Institute for Management and Economics (KIMEP), American University in Central Asia (AUCA), University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Uzbekistan (UWED) and other educational institutions providing scholarships for Central Asian residents. At the request of young participants, Mr. Tatem talked about the most prestigious professions in the current world job market, which according to Mr. Tatem are in economics and information technologies.

Short Business Courses Create Employment for the Hearing Impaired

USAID/Pragma Business Training in Turkmenistan provided both the knowledge and inspiration for two hearing impaired participants to step out of their traditional employment and start their own enterprise providing massages to shoppers at a local bazaar in Mary City.



Bairamgul Gurbandurdieva conducting a business course with translation into sign language for hearing impaired participants of the course

continued...

In November 2001, Bairamgul Gurbandyrdieva, the leader of the "In One Line" organization for the hearing impaired in Mary City, approached Pragma with the idea to offer Short Business Courses to hearing impaired members, translated into sign language. The first course, "Developing a Marketing Plan", had immediate results. Participants took their home-based activities such as sewing and shoe repair and began looking for opportunities to promote their products and services at the local bazaar.

Since that time "In One Line" members have completed all five Short Business Courses offered in Turkmenistan including "Preparing a Business Plan", "Human Resource Management", "Analysis of Financial Statements", and "Legal Environment for Small and Medium Enterprises". According to Ms. Gurbandyrdieva, the courses have provided group members the skills and confidence to create unique businesses and generate real income. Most recently two group members set up chairs and signs and began offering massages to shoppers at the local bazaar. With excitement Ms. Gurbandyrdieva says "People like it and nobody else is doing anything like it".

Alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored Exchange Programs Learn to Write Grant Proposals

American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) and the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan jointly conducted a Grant Proposal Writing Workshop for alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs on January 18, 2003, in Ashgabat. Over 30 alumni of the Fulbright Scholar, Contemporary Issues, Regional Scholar, Muskie Graduate, FSA Undergraduate, Future Leaders, and Teaching Excellence Awards exchange programs came from all five welayats and attended the workshop, which featured techniques for writing grant proposals and various grant programs administered in Turkmenistan. Representatives from the U.S. Embassy, ACCELS, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), World Bank, and



FLEX alumnae Irada Abbasova and Oksana Hodjayeva discuss their grant proposal for an imaginary project with ACCELS Country Director Brendan Dallas

Caspian Environment Program introduced participants to their grant programs and criteria for application and shared stories about some successful grant projects. The U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Specialist, Anjela Begjanova, conducted a session on Generating Grant Ideas where she illustrated some creative ways to amend grant proposals in order to meet necessary criteria. Alumni also participated in situational games, where they divided into groups to draft proposals for imaginary projects. At the end of the day, some participants were full of encouragement and eager to implement their long-nourished ideas into practice through one of the grant programs they learned about that day, while others decided to begin thinking about possible grant ideas.

CHAP and Umyt Assist the Needy

During the last few months, Counterpart's Community and Humanitarian Assistance Program (CHAP) has been intensely cooperating with "Umyt", a Social Adaptation Center in Turkmenbashi City, to distribute two humanitarian aid shipments of clothing and footwear from the U.S. valued at \$465,000 among the marginalized populations of Turkmenbashi City. U.S.-funded CHAP, a part of the Counterpart Consortium, continues to assist people of Turkmenistan by supplying humanitarian aid, which is distributed throughout Turkmenistan via various state and non-governmental organizations.

"Umyt", CHAP's distribution partner, has dispersed new clothing and footwear to the elderly, orphans, the disabled, and large families, as well as to organizations which support them. "The people have been waiting for this clothing and footwear - the winter is very cold this year," says Hojamurad Byashimov, Director of "Umyt" Center, which has been cooperating with CHAP for two years. Another shipment of household items is expected to arrive in March 2003. It will be the 5th humanitarian aid shipment dispersed by "Umyt" Center in Turkmenbashi City.

CHAP will also deliver clothing and footwear to organizations affiliated with the Ministry of Social Security and the Turkmen Blind and Deaf Society by the end of March 2003. Distribution partners of CHAP also include the Center of Industrial Unions and Organizations of Disabled of Turkmenistan, some organizations affiliated with the Gurbansoltan Eje Union of Turkmenistan, the National Red Crescent Society, the Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry and others. This list of partners is expected to expand throughout the following year.

CHAP has supported local organizations engaged in the social protection, rehabilitation and social integration of disadvantaged groups in Turkmenistan since August 1998. Since that time, CHAP has delivered \$14 million worth of humanitarian aid to the people of Turkmenistan via various state and non-governmental organizations.

National Library for Blind and Deaf Produces American Books on Tape

In January 2003, "Dayanch" Club of the Turkmen National Library for the Blind and Deaf finished its project of producing several books about America on audiotape. Members of the Club recorded narrated texts of books like "American Life and Institutions", "Muslim Life in America" and "Outline of American Geography" in Russian and "Outline of American History" in Turkmen on audiotapes. They also put the Russian version of the first issue of the U.S. Embassy's Cultural Magazine "Echo of America" on tape.

The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat supported the project initiated by Ludmila Nikolaeva, the leader of the Club, by providing special long-play audio recorders and helping select good books about America. "Your assistance

proved to be crucial in successful implementation of our project," said Ms. Nikolaeva presenting copies of books-on-tape to the American Embassy. "Now each visually impaired member of our library will have access to interesting books about America."

The U.S. Embassy has supported the blind and deaf community in other ways as well. In October 2001 and June 2002, the U.S.-funded Counterpart Community and Humanitarian Assistance Program (CHAP) supplied humanitarian aid to the Turkmen Blind and Deaf Society. In September 2001, the U.S. Embassy funded a modest resource center for the blind and deaf at the Society's headquarters.

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