



# United States Mission in Turkmenistan

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## English Language Specialist Improves Ties with Leading Turkmen Educational Centers

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Dr. Bill Johnston, associate professor of Linguistics at Indiana University, conducted a number of curricular and professional development workshops throughout Turkmenistan as part of the English Language Specialist (ELSPEC) Program in Ashgabat May 19-June 3, 2004. Mr. Johnston met with English language



*Bill Johnston conducting a workshop for students and teachers at Turkmen State University.*

instructors and students throughout the country. He conducted seminars, workshops, and roundtable discussions on various topics, including "Alternative Approaches to Grammar Teaching" and "Effective Ways of Using Authentic Materials in Language Teaching." He also introduced writing and communicative learning techniques that promote fluency and accuracy in writing and speaking. Throughout the program, Johnston commented on the interplay between American life and culture and the evolution of American English.

During his program, Mr. Johnston led a series of workshops for English Language Department students and faculty members at Turkmenistan's main universities – the International Turkmen-Turkish University, Turkmen State University, and Azadi World Languages Institute. He met with the Rectors and English Department Heads in those

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## FLEX Alumni Excel at Organizing Charity Children's Arts and Crafts Auction

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, FLEX alumni from all regions of Turkmenistan, in close cooperation with Dinara Matkarimova, Alumni Coordinator of U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section, organized the Annual Children's Art Gala, a charity event dedicated to Global Youth Service Day that attracted over 120 participants from the local and international communities. Throughout the month of April, alumni conducted art and crafts classes for marginalized groups of children in five institutions for disadvantaged children in four of the five welayats of Turkmenistan – the School for Visually Impaired Children in Ashgabat, the School for Hearing Impaired Children in Turkmenabat, two Orphanages in Turkmenbashi and Dashoguz, and a Police Shelter for Runaway and Lost Kids in Ashgabat. Art works from papier-mâché trays and drawings to woodcarvings and embroidery, were displayed and auctioned at the Children's Art Gala. The alumni received a grant of \$500 from American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) to begin the project, and raised nearly 3,000 U.S. dollars. That money will be used to equip game rooms in the five institutions that participated in the project.

This project was a direct result of the *FSA FLEX: Ten Years of Service and Leadership International Summit* that was organized in Kiev in October 2003. Turkmen FLEX alumni celebrated the tenth anniversary of the FLEX program by advocating the ideas of charity and sharing.



*A visitor observes crafts and paintings at the silent auctioning section before deciding on which one to bid.*

## Ambassador Jacobson Welcomes FLEX Finalists to this Year's Program

On May 22, Ambassador Jacobson congratulated 50 Turkmen high school students selected for this year's Future Leaders Exchange program and their parents, highlighting the importance of this U.S. Government-sponsored exchange for advancing mutual understanding between the United States and Turkmenistan. The Minister of Education's attendance at the event was a high honor for both finalists and organizers of the program, including staff members of American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) and the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section. Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson and ACCELS representatives took the opportunity to emphasize the merit-based non-discriminative selection process of the independent selection committee in the United States. The meeting also featured a short performance by program finalists, demonstrating their talents and readiness to represent Turkmen culture in the U.S. The young envoys of Turkmenistan will depart for America late this summer and will study in American high schools for one year.



*Ambassador Jacobson (third from left) and ACCELS Director Dan Klaus (second from right) with FLEX finalists.*

## Alumni Beat

### Turkmen IV Alumna Brings Community Together Thru Art

On May 25, Valentina Hairova, International Visitors program alumna, concluded her art therapy courses at the



*Young authors of art works and their parents at the art exhibition.*

Ashgabat School for Mentally Challenged Children by organizing a small celebration for participants after the "Last Bell" graduation party. The best art works made by these children throughout the year were exhibited along with paintings of young art students from the Art School at the Children's Art Exhibition. The basic art courses were designed to encourage disabled students to investigate, understand, and use the elements of art in expressing their individuality. The Embassy's Public Affairs Section co-sponsored the event with the OSCE Center in Ashgabat. Over 80 children and their parents attended the exhibition. All young artists were recognized and given small awards.

The yearlong art therapy courses helped not only to involve disabled children in extracurricular activities but also to unveil the hidden talents in many of them. The three most talented children will start attending art classes at a private art studio in September. This project not only filled a gap in education, but also opened the eyes of participants and spectators to the range of abilities of the 'disabled' and gave them a sense of confidence, opening new opportunities for their personal development.

### Discussion on Alumni Grants Program Highlights Tips for Successful Proposals

On May 6, IREX sponsored a roundtable discussion on the Alumni Small Grants program. The roundtable provided an opportunity for previous grantees to advise alumni in preparing applications. Adelya Mishenko, a 2003 alumna of the Contemporary Issues exchange program and a February 2004 grantee, shared her tips for a successful project proposal. She also gave a mini presentation on her

project, which is to organize trainings in embroidery and patchwork quilting for 96 unemployed young women and girls in Turkmenistan. During the roundtable, alumni were acquainted with a list of common problems that they should try to avoid in drafting their project proposals and with recommendations to follow when creating a project proposal budget.

## U.S. Presidential Elections 2004

### Guest Speaker Highlights Significance of Political Parties in American Society

On May 21, ABA/CEELI Country Director John Hickey spoke to over 20 American Center visitors explaining politics, coexistence and the struggle of multiple parties in American society. Interpreting the term “politics” as applied to political parties, the speaker traced historical and societal origins of contemporary Democratic and Republican party dominance in U.S. politics, and how this relationship unfolds in presidential elections in the United States. He also gave examples of other democracies where multiple political parties participate in government. Mr. Hickey described third party participation in past U.S. presidential elections, and stressed that although unsuccessful in presidential elections, they have gained some historic achievements in local and state elections. After the event, participants noted that the presentation gave them perspective on the U.S. political system and helped them to better understand the roles and significance of political parties in a society.



*John Hickey conducting a presentation on political parties in American society.*

## Education

### English Language Specialist Improves Ties with Leading Turkmen Educational Centers

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universities, observed classes and discussed the core components of English language curriculum with university administrators. Mr. Johnston also consulted instructors on incorporating modern methods of teaching English as a second language into lesson plans, suggesting alternative approaches to teaching grammar through games and inductive learning.

On May 20, Bill Johnston and Embassy staff members traveled to Turkmenabat, the second largest city of Turkmenistan. In one day, Mr. Johnston met with the head of the regional department of Education, observed a secondary school English class and conducted a workshop for teachers. The American specialist also had a productive discussion with alumni of U.S. Government-funded exchange programs in Turkmenabat about English language programs in their region and professional development opportunities. Local teachers and university students in teaching programs described the value of English language resource centers and professional development camps that members of their community have been able to establish with U.S. Embassy Local Initiative grant funding.

Bill Johnston led additional workshops and seminars in Ashgabat for more than sixty young professionals, students and teachers of English language, who gathered from

throughout Turkmenistan to meet him. He visited the American Center and the Bashkent Language Center, a Turkish-run school for private English language study with five locations in Turkmenistan. Mr. Johnston encouraged improving speaking fluency through communicative teaching and recommended professional development and self-study techniques.

The visit received positive media coverage from Turkmenistan’s most widely circulated dailies – “Neutralniy Turkmenistan” and “Turkmenistan”. The articles stressed the importance of ELSPEC programs for teachers and students of English in Turkmenistan to develop new methods of teaching and to improve professional skills. Mr. Johnston was quoted in the article as saying, “These kinds of programs are very important for developing mutual understanding between our two nations. I am here to tell Turkmen about the United States, but I will also go back and tell Americans how friendly and hospitable Turkmen people are. I am surprised at the great interest and dedication that Turkmen students and teachers showed during my presentations.”

Dr. Bill Johnston is the second English Language Specialist to visit Turkmenistan this year. His program built upon the work of Dr. Leslie Barratt during her ELSPEC program in March 2004.

## The USAID/EDP Grant Program Provides Support to Business Associations of Turkmenistan

The USAID/Enterprise Development Project (EDP), as implemented by the Pragma Corporation, continues to assist in supporting the development and sustainability of licensed professional and accounting associations. Its main goals are advocacy (protection and promotion) of association members' interests, development of new products and services rendered to association members, accounting reform and regional trade promotion. These activities should lead to positive economic outcomes for small and medium enterprises and a more efficient market economy in Turkmenistan.

Since September 2003, EDP has pledged financial support to four initiatives totaling approximately \$ 9,000. The specific projects funded were designed to increase

association income and productivity, as well as membership for cooperatives and a professional accountants' association. The Union of Accountants of Turkmenistan was awarded two grants – one to organize a conference and another to support regional development of the association. The cooperatives "Hurmant Gokche" and "Geokdepe Gala" received financial assistance from EDP to purchase a tractor, which increased productivity, and to provide training seminars on cultivation of tomatoes.

To obtain further information, please contact USAID/EDP Association Development Program Officer, at the following telephones: (993-12) 39-31-00, 39-31-55 or e-mail: [elalita@pragma.kg](mailto:elalita@pragma.kg).



### **ABA/CEELI ANNOUNCES ITS NEW COMMERCIAL LAW SEMINAR SERIES at the Ak Altyn Hotel Ashgabat, Turkmenistan**

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|------------------|--|
| <b>24 May</b>    | <b><i>Start-up and Registration Issues for Commercial Enterprises</i></b>  |
| <b>31 May</b>    | <b><i>Regulation of Imports and Exports</i></b>                            |
| <b>14 June</b>   | <b><i>Taxation Issues for Commercial Enterprises</i></b>                   |
| <b>28 June</b>   | <b><i>Business Ethics</i></b>  |
| <b>5 July</b>    | <b><i>Labor Law Issues for Commercial Enterprises</i></b>                  |
| <b>26 July</b>   | <b><i>Legal Issues for Health Care Providers</i></b>                       |
| <b>9 August</b>  | <b><i>Legal Issues in Agricultural Enterprises</i></b>                     |
| <b>23 August</b> | <b><i>Opportunities for Education and Training in Business and Law</i></b> |

**SEMINARS ARE DESIGNED FOR LAWYERS WHO DEAL WITH COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES, BUSINESS PEOPLE WHO HANDLE LEGAL MATTERS AND OTHERS INTERESTED IN THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT OF BUSINESS.**

**ALL SEMINARS ARE FREE OF CHARGE BUT REQUIRE ADVANCE REGISTRATION NO LATER THAN TWO DAYS PRIOR TO SEMINAR.**

**REGISTRATION AT 9 A.M. MOST WILL CONCLUDE ABOUT 4 P.M. SEMINARS INCLUDE A BUFFET LUNCH. TOPICS AND SCHEDULE ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

**SPACE LIMITED. TO REGISTER, TELEPHONE 39-42-32 OR E-MAIL [VJORAIEVA@ONLINE.TM](mailto:VJORAIEVA@ONLINE.TM).**