



News Bulletin

March – April 2005

2nd AzETA ELT Conference

On 23- 24 April 2004 AzETA held its 2nd ELT Conference at Baku Slavic University. With this Conference AzETA also celebrated 10th Anniversary of its establishment.

The major funding for the Conference was from 2004 ECA Alumni Small Grants Program, a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State, funded by the FREEDOM Support Act and administered by IREX. The Conference was also co-funded by the British Council and the US Embassy Public Affairs Office.

150 participants, including 39 co-presenters attended the Conference. 56 of them were from different regions of Azerbaijan. All the participants were AzETA members.

The aim of the Conference was to give an opportunity to English teachers in Azerbaijan to come together and discuss issues of interest, to unite with AzETA and to empower the organisation, as well as to be empowered as professionals. The Conference helped in the growth and development of AzETA, as well as English language instruction and learning in Azerbaijan.

Presenters of the Conference were AzETA members, as well as the representatives of different ELT programmes functioning in Azerbaijan, including teacher trainers of the British Council, Open Society Institute, Peace Corps volunteers, English Language Fellows of the US Embassy.

The plenary speaker of the Conference was famous ELT professional Ruxandra Popovici from Romania.

The Conference considered organisational issues and elected President, 1st Vice President, Vice President and 7 Executive Board members for the next period. *More details in Special Issue of the News Bulletin dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of AzETA.*

Below is the feelings from Conference participants from Ganja:

1. The conference was just perfect that I even could have never imagined that. For me it was like a nice dream I even didn't want to wake up.
2. When I came back into the classroom after the conference, I felt born again.

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AzETA would be very grateful for any comments on and/or contribution to our News Bulletin. We need your support.

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NEWS FROM THE SIGs

Young Learners:

Dilara Bunyatova, AZETA First Vice President

AzETA Young Learners SIG organised Novruz celebration for the children on Sunday, 13 March at Baku Slavic University. The participants of the event were the children from Qizildash and Umid Yeri orphanages, as well as, the members of AzETA Enjoy English Club (EEC) who are the students of different schools of Baku.

The aim of that holiday was to bring orphans and EEC children together and build friendship bridge between them.

20 orphans from Gizildash Lyceum, 20 students from 'Umid Yeri', 10 EEC members and students from schools #139 and 46 participated in the event.

Honourary singer of Azerbaijan Gulyaz Mammadova, representatives of the Public Affairs Office of the US Embassy, IREX, Peace Corps, Open Society Institute were among the guests of the event. Gulyaz Mammadova sang some songs for the children.

The students demonstrated different performances on spring, Novruz holiday, traditions and customs, sang English and Azerbaijani songs, recited poems, danced.

Some contests had also been arranged for the children. The children had to compete on eating banana and vermicelle first. Two children from Gizildash Lyceum became the winners of both contests. They were awarded with special prizes.

The most memorable part of the event was the songs played by Orient X-press band. They sang songs in English they had composed and children danced very happily.

At the end of the event all the children were given presents.

This event also demonstrated the success of joint efforts. For such a successful event AzETA extends its acknowledgement to the following people:

Mrs Quinta Woodward to add a special flavour to the event through arranging Orient Xpress band's participation in the event. Although, Mrs Woodward was in the UK when the event was held she was interested in supporting the event from the very day an announcement was sent. And also with her great support Community Shield Azerbaijan has decided to fund AzETA English Project in Qizildash. The organisation has been paying for the transportation of the AzETA members-volunteers to Qizildash from April on. Before that the British Council was funding the Project for transportation.

Mr Rob Cole and his band Orient Xpress. It was a great opportunity for the children to sing with the accompany of such a band. Although there had not been rehearsals, they could understand one another so well that sometimes the children wanted to sing more songs, but due to programme limit, it was impossible to realise their every wish. Mr Cole kindly promised that he would accept AzETA invitations for future events with these children. Although it was the first chance for Qizildash children to dance under such a live music, they were so active and no inhibition that was expected.

Mrs Leslie Harnish and World Vision for the fantastic books that reached to the hands of every single child who attended the event. Some of the children recognised their famous cartoon characters when they saw the books.

HE Dr Laurie Bristow, British Ambassador for his personal cash donation (250,000 AZM) which was used for transportation of the Qizildash children.

Mr Neil McGurty of the Public Affairs Office of the US Embassy for the 2 boxes of clothes that were included in the present packages for the Qizildash and Umid Yeri orphanages, as well as for cash donation (100 USD) which was spent for decorating the tables with Novruz cookies and sweets, candles and "samani"s.

Ms Kitty Johnson, Teacher Trainer of the Open Society - Assistance Foundation for coloured pencils (50 sets), colouring books (30 copies - the children loved them very much) and notebooks (20) and for the very delicious shekerburas.

Mr George Bishop, Teacher Trainer of the Open Society - Assistance Foundation for his donation (shoes) which rejoiced Qizildash boys.

ACCELS for very delicious fruits (bananas, tangerines and apples), as well as, for volunteer work of their alumni who helped in organising the event.

Amalia Shirinova of IREX and Flora Poladova of Peace Corps for their cash donation with which apples and some more Novruz cookies were bought to send to other children in Qizildash who could not join the event.

Jim Solan, Senior English Language Fellow of the US Embassy for his unbending great moral, organisational and financial support to all AzETA activities and for being with the children to enjoy the event.

Baku Slavic University for always opening their doors to all AzETA events, hosting these events without any venue charge, the authority of Baku Slavic University who are always very kind, supportive and helpful even if the venue request comes at the last moment.

Ms Gulyaz Mammadova, famous Azerbaijan singer who kindly joined the event with the initiative of an AzETA member and sang a few songs for the children.

Last but not least, to **all AzETA Young Learners Specialist Interest Group members** who are never tired of working with these children (and on volunteer basis!) and thanks to them the children gained hope for tomorrow and belief in people.

Civic Education:

By Tarana Aliyeva, Leader of the the SIG on Civic Education

Civic Education group is one of the active SIGs of AzETA.

The members of SIG on Civic Education participate actively in different programmes and projects. One of these projects is “Deliberating in a Democracy” proposed by Constitutional Rights Foundation in Chicago, CRF in Los Angeles, and Street Law, Inc. It is a teacher based model designed to improve

teaching and learning in democratic principles and the skills of civic deliberation. This project is being conducted with secondary teachers and their students in six sites: Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, and the metropolitan areas surrounding Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington, DC.

The overall goal of the project is to increase the knowledge, ability and dispositions of teachers, students to effectively participate in Deliberation related to Democratic principles as applied in their countries. From Azerbaijan site the project is being co-funded by OSI-AF.

Some members of the SIG (on Civics): Afett Huseynova, one of the coordinators of the project, Farida Huseynova, Huzura Agayeva, Irada Samedova, Rasmiyya Badirova and myself participate in the DID project. Not only English teachers, but also history teachers participate in the Project.

Teachers from “Nur” organization participate in this project, too. This also helps SIG to expand relations with other civic education related organizations like “Nur”. We are going to continue joint projects in future.

One of the main aims of this Project is to facilitate relationship building between the DID classrooms that will be interacting through the Internet.

There are 3 topics for deliberating 1st was “Should violence on TV be regulated by the government?” 2nd was “Should the government (the US/Azerbaijan) regulate greenhouse gas emissions in according to the Kyoto protocol and be part of the agreement”? 3rd deliberation will be on a local topic. And there will be also student to student teleconference.

According to the project participants visited each others country to observe and participate in Deliberation and also joint debrief.

That’s why we 6 teachers from Azerbaijan were selected by OSI-AF to visit America. There were 3 SIG-members on Civic Education among the participants from Azerbaijan.

The programme duration was 10 days. We arrived in Washington, DC on 4 March and returned on 14 March.

We observed the 2nd deliberation in Fairfax schools, and also shared experiences, learned American study, education system, culture and traditions. We had an opportunity to give cultural presentations in the schools and in Street Law, Inc. office-where we visited.

We visited some historical and cultural places and here taken to the police station to the meeting, also were invited to some teachers houses as guests. It was a very interesting programme and we enjoyed every minute of it.

As mentioned above, pursuant to the Project terms 6 American teachers and 1 coordinator from Street Law, Inc had an exchange visit to Baku on 2-9 April and observed Azerbaijani teachers' 2nd deliberation and had a joint debriefing.

They also visited historical places and got to know about our culture and traditions, enjoyed our traditional meals.

On 5 April the American teachers observed 2nd Deliberation in schools: in my school #20, and in school #290, by the teacher Farida Huseynova.

In school #20 they met the Administrator of Yasamal District Education Department and also with Kerry. L. Kosby, Country Director of Project Harmony. The students of the school performed national songs and poems both in Azerbaijani and English. Then they gave the guests their own handicrafts which interested the teachers very much. They were delighted with the program.

After the school visit the American teachers visited AzETA Baku office in Baku Slavic University where they met other members of AzETA.

One of the active members of Civic Education SIG, Dilara Bunyatova has free classes on Civic Education in English on Sundays. She is also Leader of Young Learners SIG. And there is "Enjoy English club" functioning within YL SIG where students learn English through song, poems and games.

The members of the Club are very active and talented. They take active part in different AzETA events. And on that day they greeted the American teachers with national anthem, songs and poems both in Azerbaijani and English, gave interesting information about our historical places, traditions, holidays, played our national instruments: tar, nagara. The children also asked questions about the US, their students or about their knowledge and

ideas, impressions on Azerbaijan. They danced in the national costumes and invited the guests to dance too. American teachers expressed their gratitude for such warm reception and said that they enjoyed being in AzETA, and of course in Baku Raqsana Mammedova gave information about AzETA and its future plans.

I am sure that meeting was one more step in furthering relations, links among Azerbaijanian and American teachers and their students. We are grateful to OSI-AF to create this opportunity for us.

By Irada Samadova, School # 164

From March 24th till April 4th we hosted guests from Nebraska. – Jim Cotter and Ervin Friesen. They came for a reciprocal visit after 7 teachers from Baku, Mingachevir, Sheki, Sumgayit visited Lincoln, Nebraska as winners of PIE program (ACCELS).

The aim of their visit was to get acquainted with Azerbaijani culture, visit schools, talk to students, discuss problems at school and in education. During their stay they visited schools #164, #200, and lyceum #43, in Baku, and some schools in Sumagyt and Sheki. We tried to make their visit very enhanced and interesting. They attended some meetings with teachers, had some discussions and answered their questions. They were very impressed by the meeting at the Institute of Problems where they had a very hard talk with teachers on curriculum, community service, and extra-curricular activities.

They also participated in Student Government Elections at school # 200 and were amazed at how real-life the elections were.

They visited the sights of Baku, which they were especially impressed with – rich culture, perseverance of history, patriotism etc. It fascinated them how a modern Muslim-secular country managed to combine old traditions with modern habits of the world. Old Sheki was a wonderland place for them! They got there by bus, which also was a kind of new experience for them as foreigners in a country whose language they don't know. They visited all the historical places in Sheki and listened to the history of each place with a great excitement. They tried lots of varieties of our traditional food and were fascinated by the richness and individuality of our national cooking. There were a great number

of things that they found out about during their stay in Azerbaijan.

We all enjoyed their visit and were happy to host such nice people.

AzETA Student Government Association Project Elections

By Sarah Paulsworth, Peace Corps Volunteer in Sheki

I work with Turkan at school #8 and also help her run the Student Government project (*This is an AzETA Project funded by the US Embassy. You may read more about it in AzETA News Bulletin, issue 12. Ed.*). I want to share with the members the progress of the Project. Perhaps the most exciting thing is that AzETA and our school are co-operatively opening an English Resource Center in our school on April 9th. Our SGA wrote to the Peace Corps 1% fund and acquired a \$60 grant, which will cover the cost of windows we needed for the room. Now student government has begun to focus on how they will help with the AzETA opening ceremony. They want to clean the school and the school yard so that our school will look nice for all the guests coming. Also at the ceremony they will arrange and serve refreshment. With a great excitement and happiness the members of the Sheki SGA are looking forward to the opening ceremony. (*Below you will read about the official opening ceremony of the Sheki Branch. Ed.*)

Note to the readers: Elections for officers in Sheki SGA took place on Wednesday March 31. SGA in school #220 in Baku held the elections on the same day.

School # 164 held its SGA election on April 8 and school # 177 on April 12. Theresa Markiw, Public Affairs Officer of the US Embassy observed the elections at school # 177.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

Ganja:

By Eddie McGee, Senior ELF

On 25 April 12 English teachers from the AzETA-Ganja branch, after two full days at the AzETA national conference, put in a third day visiting some ELT related organizations namely, the British Council, ACCELS, IREX, Project

Harmony, Library Development Programme. I was very proud of their dedication.

I also wish to thank all those organisations for their willingness to educate the AzETA members about their programs. These teachers now have a good idea of what possibilities exist in International Education in Azerbaijan.

Sheki:

On 9 April AzETA held a successful official opening ceremony of its Sheki Branch. Its success has several reasons. First and more important - it demonstrated joint efforts of almost all ELT providers in Azerbaijan. Also, it was a joint effort of locals and foreigners.

The following people and organisations had a great role in the success of the opening ceremony:

Sheki International School # 8 provided

AzETA Sheki Branch with a free location to AzETA in the premises of the school. The school also offered a librarian to manage the Branch library. The school will pay the librarian monthly salary.

AzETA Sheki members kindly made donations to the Branch to repair the room. They also arranged the reception after the opening ceremony. Members of Student Government Association decorated the school prior to the opening ceremony and served refreshments at the reception.

Afer Mammadova, English Instructor of Sheki Education Department helped in organising the teachers' participation in the opening ceremony. Many of them came from remote villages of Sheki to join the event and show solidarity.

Tukran Kerimova, teacher of that school and Sarah Paulsworth, Peace Corps Volunteer helped the branch in many ways since its establishment. They a) liaised and arranged the official opening ceremony; (b) always encourage the members of the branch for active involvement in the life of the branch. (c) implement AzETA Student Government Association Project in Sheki; (d) involved the students of the Project in the official opening ceremony of the Branch; The students had decorated the school, helped in preparing the

Sheki branch office for opening, announcing the programme, as well as the speakers of the ceremony in both languages, arranged the reception after the opening. Sarah got funding from **Peace Corps** to repair the windows of the office and about 500 books from **World Vision** to add to the library of the branch.

John Metcalf, Teacher Trainer of the British Council, joined AzETA in celebration to represent the British Council

The British Council donated AzETA computers 2 of which were taken Sheki branch.

Jim Solan, Senior English Language Fellow of the US Embassy, to allocate money from his enhancement budget to purchase missing parts of the PC, cd/audio tape player, stationary to be taken to the Sheki branch.

Janet Adams, English Language Fellow of the US Embassy came from a long way - Lenkaran to share AzETA's success.

Eddie McGee, Senior English Language Fellow of the US Embassy who works in Ganja generously equipped the branch office with necessary stuff. After the opening ceremony he stayed in Sheki to give a workshop at the newly established branch.

Kitty Johnson and George Bishop, Teacher Trainers of the OSI-AF also joined AzETA in celebrating this special event.

Nadir Quliyev, ACCELS TEA & PIE Projects Co-ordinator, also joined the celebration to represent ACCELS. He encouraged the members that well-existing co-operation between AzETA and ACCELS would continue.

All Peace Corps Volunteers working in Sheki support AzETA and have a good co-operation with their local colleagues.

Robert Savage, PC Volunteer from Yevlax established AzETA's co-operation with that region and brought two local teachers to the opening ceremony from Yevlax.

AzETA Standing Committee members, who arranged transportation to Sheki with their own expenses and joined the event. AzETA Baku Branch members also donated an audio-tape recorder, some audio-tapes, stationary items to the Branch.

YOUR COLUMN

1. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat)
6. Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.
7. Be more or less specific.
8. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
9. Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
10. No sentence fragments.
11. Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.
12. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
13. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
14. One should never generalize.
15. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
16. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
17. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
18. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
19. The passive voice is to be ignored
20. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary
21. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
22. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
23. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.

24. Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth-shaking ideas.
25. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
26. If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.
27. Puns are for children, not groan readers.
28. Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
29. Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
30. Who needs rhetorical questions?
31. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
32. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.

YOU WILL READ IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

1. **2nd South Caucasus ELT Conference**
2. **5 AzETA members returned from the US**
3. **Celebration of 1 June – International Defence Day of Children**
4. **AzETA regional co-operation continues – visit to Yevlax**
5. **AzETA Executive Board meeting – Action Plan for 2005-2006**
6. **AzETA summer plans**
7. **And more.....**

NOW IT IS TIME TO LAUGH

LET'S LAUGH TOGETHER



How many publishers does it take to change a light bulb?

Three: One to change it and two to hold down the author.

How many editors does it take to change a light bulb?

Two: One to change the bulb and one to issue a rejection the old slip to bulb.

How many proofreaders does it take to change a light bulb?

Proofreaders aren't supposed to change light bulbs: they should just query them.

How many mystery writers does it take to screw in a light bulb?

Two: One to screw it in almost all the way in and the other to give it a surprising twist at the end.

How many literary critics does it take to change a light bulb?

Literary critics don't know how to change a light bulb, but rest assured they'll find something wrong with the way you do it.