



News Bulletin

May – June 2005

2nd South Caucasus ELT Conference

With the financial support of the US Embassies and British Council offices in the South Caucasus countries and US Embassy in Kiyev the English Teachers' Associations of the three South Caucasus countries held the 2nd South Caucasus ELT Conference on 13-15 May 2005 in Tbilisi, Georgia.

AzETA was represented by 40 participants, including 17 co-presenters. There were also 10 representatives of ELT providers from Azerbaijan, including Paul Hilder, Brian Maguire and Simon Best of the British Council, Neil McGurty and Afet Ibrahimova of the US Embassy, Jim Solan and Eddie McGee, Senior ELFs, Janet Adams, ELF, George Bishop and Kitty Johnson, SPELTs.

The Conference started with the welcoming speeches of the representatives of the donor organisations and heads of the TAs of the South Caucasus republics. It was followed by a plenary session by Carolyn Graham: The Creative Classroom: Jazz Chants, Music, Poetry, and Storytelling for Language Development. It was a very useful session and all the participants were very active.

After the plenary session the Conference continued its work in two 50 minutes' concurrent sessions.

After Day 1, a reception was held at the US Ambassador's Residence in the honour of the Conference participants.

Day 2 started with three-country Round Table where heads of AELTA, AzETA and ETAG gave presentations on the work of their respective TAs since the First South Caucasus ELT Conference. There were also three 50 minutes and one 25 minutes concurrent sessions on Day 2.

Day 3 started with the plenary session by George Pickering titled "Teacher Development: Mission Impossible or Voyage of Discovery?" It was a very interesting session, especially, for the ones who are interested and involved in teacher development.

The Conference once more proved that sharing of experience, expertise helps the participants a lot in both professional and personal development. It also creates an opportunity for the Teachers' Associations to implement joint projects and also learn from each other.

Inside this issue

- 2nd South Caucasus ELT Conference
- AzETA Executive Board meeting
- AzETA summer plans
- News from the SIGs
 - Celebration of 1 June – International Defence Day of Children
 - AzETA extends international relations – AzETA Teacher Training SIG members returned from the US
 - Friendship Force Club
- News from the Branches
- AzETA bids farewell to dear friends
- Your column
- You will read in our next issue
- Let's laugh together

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

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Below is how Simon Best, British Council Teacher Trainer shares his impressions on the 2nd South Caucasus ELT Conference in his letter to AzETA members:

I'm just writing to thank all AzETA members for their great efforts in making the conference such a success. It was a great privilege for me to take part and it was wonderful to see so many high quality presentations and such an atmosphere of co-operation and sharing.

Congratulations once again.

And below message is from Shane Austin, ACCELS Country Director:

I've heard nothing but outstanding things about the Conference. The only thing I'm disappointed about is that I wasn't able to attend. I hope it will be an experience that will be repeated next year. It's really wonderful that so many of the TEA alumni have become members of the AzETA. ACCELS will be looking for more ways we can collaborate with AzETA and this type of conference.

Congratulations again.

AzETA once more extends acknowledgement to the organisers and donors of the Conference and hopes that such conferences will be held in future too as their contribution to individual TAs is undeniable.

AzETA Executive Board meeting

On 29 June AzETA Executive Board held its first meeting after the Conference. The main aim of the meeting was to discuss and adopt AzETA Action Plan and budget requirements for July 2005 – July 2005. With this meeting Executive Board was also preparing for the meeting with the British Council to be held on 5 July.

The Action Plan included some events organised in the past year, as well as new plans to challenge the members and to keep AzETA an interesting place.

The Action Plan will be taken to all AzETA branches until September to keep AzETA members throughout the country posted on the plans and activities. The branches will also be asked to develop their individual action plans on the basis of the AzETA general Action Plan.

NEWS FROM THE SIGs

Compiled by Tabriz Aliyeva, SIGs Co-ordinator

Young Learners:

Charity Concert dedicated to the International Defence Day of Children:

By Dilara Bunyatova

AzETA implements an English Language Project in Qizildash for the orphans. Young Learners SIG members always try to involve these orphans in different events to create an environment for them where they could get acquainted and socialise with children of their ages from different schools of Baku.

One of such events was a charity concert dedicated to the International Defence Day of Children held on 1 June at Baku Slavic University.

Although it was AzETA's first experience to organise a charity concert, it went very well. The concert consisted of two parts. In part one the singers and dancers of Mugam Theatre performed. At the end of part 1 famous Azerbaijan singer, Honorary Singer of Azerbaijan Flora Kerimova joined the concert. The children were so happy to see her. She sang two songs and the children took lots of photos with her.

In part two Orient Xpress played for about 1 hour. Orient Xpress had almost all the children dance. Orient Xpress encouraged even the shy ones to join others and dance, everybody was reluctant to leave at the end.

The children from different schools were very active in the charity concert. They bought lots of tickets to contribute to the concert. \$350 was generated from the concert. \$50 of this was spent for the transportation of the Qizildash children and \$100 was spent for hiring some equipment for the charity concert. The rest of the money will be spent for the summer camp to be organised for the children in August 2005. *More about the summer camp in the next issue of the News Bulletin.*

We are really grateful to every single person who contributed to the concert in the way they could.

We are very grateful to **Mrs Quinta Woodward** for her unbending support to Qizildash children and AzETA, and for being with the children again in the charity concert, in particular, in spite of her very busy schedule.

We deeply acknowledge **Orient Xpress** for their fantastic contribution to the concert. But for them the children would have been just passive participants of the event. They managed to enliven the children and had all of them dance.

We are grateful to **Mugam Theatre**, especially to Arif Qaziyev, Director of the Theatre for the very nice two-hour concert programme.

We are especially grateful to our famous singer **Flora xanim Kerimova** who promised to join the concert from the very first day we invited her and in spite of her poor health condition on the day of the concert, she did not break her promise and joined the concert enabling the children to take as many photos with her as they wanted.

We acknowledge **Baku Slavic University**, our very kind landlord for always approving all our requests, helping us in everything and for providing us with venue for our events (and for free!!!).

We are very grateful to **Farida Agammedova** of the British Council thanks to whom we managed to arrange Qizildash children's transportation. It was an ever first live concert that these children were participating.

We acknowledge **George Bishop** of OSI who as always joined the concert and supported the children and AzETA.

AzETA has very good relations with Independent Teachers' Union of Azerbaijan. We are grateful to **Malahat Murshudly**, President of ITU to join and contribute to the event.

As always, AzETA continues good co-operation with IREX and we are grateful to **Amalia Shirinova** for being with us and contributing to the event.

Last but not least, AzETA acknowledges **Mezahir Kishiyev**, Director of Qizildash Lyceum # 8 who always makes a favourable condition for us to successfully continue our English Language Project in Qizildash.

Teacher Training:

AzETA extends international relations – AzETA Teacher Training SIG members returned from the US

By Gamar Rustamova

Five AzETA members: Gamar Rustamova, Solmaz Kazimova, Lyudmila Jafarova, Narmina Aliyeva and Solmaz Guliyeva were finalists of the 2005 Azerbaijan Teacher Education Project and participated in a 12 week Curriculum Development Seminar. They spent one week: from February 23 to March 1, 2005 in Washington D.C and 11 weeks at University of Wisconsin - Madison from March 1 to May 14, 2005.

This program was administrated by ACTRA/ACCELS and University of Wisconsin-Madison with grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of States.

We had Pre-departure Training in Baku in February 2005. The training concerned an overview of primary education theory, methods and practices taught by a local expert in early childhood education for Azerbaijan.

We arrived in the USA on 23 February. We visited historical places and had sightseeing in Washington D.C. We participated at Round Table Discussions of International Curriculum Development Projects, visited US Department of Education, US Institute of Peace, National Council for Social Studies, some elementary schools, also Islamic weekend school and got acquainted with Washington D.C. education system and teachers' experiences.

From March 1 to May 14 we attended courses on Curriculum Development Seminars at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. These seminars were more of a discussion nature concentrated on state standards and critical reflection related to standards, child-centered curricular assumptions, and the notion of integrated curriculum. We were asked to think comparatively about approaches as a method of self-reflection in Azerbaijan context and about

the social studies curriculum as an integrated activity designed with readily available and free materials. Using local materials that are part of everyday life, previous activities and previous readings, we developed units of curriculum and compiled teachers' guide of social studies for the elementary grades.

During the visit once in a week we visited local elementary schools, worked with partner teachers, observed lessons and shared experiences giving lessons and participating at the school activities.

During 2005-2007 period AzTEP group will organise training courses on curriculum development and social studies in the elementary school for Azerbaijan elementary teachers with the participation of the US professors and elementary school teachers. The International cultural and academic program, and the people, including Madison teachers and faculty speakers, the staff, and the friends made during this project made it enjoyable and profitable for everyone.

We are grateful to ACCELS for giving us an opportunity for personal and professional development.

OSI Summer Camp

On 18-22 June 2005 Open Society Institute – Assistance Foundation organised a summer camp for English teachers in Zugulba Recreational Centre. There were about 30 English teachers from Baku and different regions of Azerbaijan.

At the opening ceremony Kitty Johnson and Afet Huseynova of OSI, Ragsana Mammadova, AZETA President welcomed the participants and wished success to the work of the summer camp.

The majority of the participants were AzETA members. Ragsana Mammadova presented draft AzETA Action Plan for 2005 – 2006 to encourage non-AzETA participants to join AzETA.

Presenters of the summer camp were Amalya Musayeva (Baku Slavic University), Ulviya Akhmedova (Baku State University), Shahla Garaeva, Gozel Aliyeva, Sevinj Seyidova.

All the workshops were very interesting and all the participants enjoyed them very much. We had a very good learning and sharing environment where we had an opportunity to learn lots of new

things from the presenters, as well as from the participants, and to share our experiences.

At the end of the summer camp certificates were given to the participants. AzETA active members Nushaba Bakhshieva and Kamaladdin Nagiev from Neftchala were given certificates as Teacher Trainers.

We cordially congratulate our colleagues and extend our acknowledgement to Open Society Institute – Assistance Foundation for this very helpful summer camp.

Friendship Force Club:

By Solmaz Kazimova

Friendship Force Club is a new AzETA Special Interest Group established on 21 May, 2005.

Now, more than ever, our country needs the healing power of friendship. The world remains divided and barriers of misunderstanding can lead to fear, hatred, and conflict. By joining strangers together, the FRIENDSHIP FORCE reinforces their common humanity and celebrates differences of colour, culture, language, food and customs. Friendship knows no distance and Internet reflects this understanding. The friendship force will provide support for professional development of English language teachers of the country.

In our increasingly interdependent world it is important for Azerbaijanis and Americans to gain a better understanding of each other's countries, peoples and cultures. The best way to achieve this goal is through educational programs that reach young people as they are growing and forming their ideas and understanding of the world. For the first step the Friendship Force proposes teacher exchange programme: "Bridging the Language and Cultural Divide: Azerbaijan-American Teacher Exchange Programme:"

Purpose: The goal of this proposed exchange programme provides an alternative approach: a program to enhance the conversational skills of the Azerbaijani teachers.

Participant Selection and Matching: Each applicant will be screened to ensure proper

motivation for inclusion in the program, as well as for his/her ability to carry through on a strong follow-up program to ensure maximum impact on the youth.

Itinerary Design: a) The program itinerary for the Americans will be two weeks in Azerbaijan, with ten days in the home of their professional counterpart, the remaining four days will consist of a cultural tour to some regions of Azerbaijan. During the homestay, the American teachers will gain a firsthand experience of contemporary Azerbaijan, while also spending time in their host environment, including giving classroom presentations on American culture and society. While experiencing their homestay in Azerbaijan, the Americans will also be engaging in intensive English language conversation with their Azerbaijani hosts. b) The program itinerary for the Azerbaijani teachers will be two weeks in the US. The first four days will be spent in a specially designed orientation program followed by ten days with their host counterpart living in an American house, visiting an American school, and participating in a wide-range of American cultural and social activities with his/her host family. There will be a strong emphasis on practical spoken English, with each Azerbaijani teacher housed separately, limiting the temptation to speak Azerbaijani.

Follow-up Programming. Since the purpose of the program is to have an impact on Azerbaijan and American youth, the follow-up programming is vital to the success of the program. Each applicant will be required to prepare a preliminary action plan as part of the application process, focusing on how they plan to use the exchange experience to enhance the cultural and/or language capabilities of their students. During each phase of the exchange, this action plan will be revised. The final plan will be a joint plan, consisting of strategies jointly developed by each pair of Azerbaijani and American teachers. The final plans will be required to include ongoing collaboration between the teachers, to ensure the maximum benefit from the exchange experience. This can include websites between schools, even student exchanges between the schools. The plans will also be expected to include professional support that each teacher can provide to his/her counterpart.

Through paying membership fee English teachers can join Friendship Force Club to have the opportunity to: a) a visit to America, share experiences with colleagues; b) attend seminars,

conferences in Azerbaijan, as well as, overseas; c) co-operate with American teachers on different projects.

We should know we are in the Friendship Force because we believe that together we can really make a difference by creating a new way of viewing the world.

May the Sun never set on Friendship!

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

Ganja:

By Khalida Aliyeva, Branch Manager

During his business trip to Ganja Andy Williams, British Council Director visited Ganja Branch on 30 May. He had a very productive meeting with the members of the Branch. The members informed him about their work, told about future plans, also shared some of the problems of the Branch including the needs of the members and the Branch.

The possibilities of extending the co-operation between AzETA Ganja Branch and the British Council was also discussed.

Leyla Hasanova of the British Council informed the members on the British Council programmes for the teachers.

British Council Director was very impressed with the Ganja branch and enjoyed meeting the members there.

Below is the message from Andy Williams after his visit to Ganja Branch:

It was very interesting to meet you and your AzETA colleagues on Monday.

Leila and I enjoyed meeting you all and I was very impressed with everyone's commitment, drive and energy (not to mention everyone's excellent English!). I hope I get the opportunity to visit you all again soon and look forward to the British Council working with you to support your initiatives.

AzETA bids farewell to dear friends

In its history AzETA had never had this many friends. A friend in need is a friend, indeed. And these are real AzETA friends. No matter where they are they always care about AzETA. Thanks to these friends AzETA could stand on its feet after 2 years' hard time. And some of these friends have left Azerbaijan. Although they have left, it is a physical leave, their souls are here with us, and also they are always with us as the ELT seeds they have planted here started yielding successfully.

The below names are well-known among English teachers in Azerbaijan who worked in Azerbaijan in 2003-2005:

1. Jim Solan, Senior English Language Fellow;
2. Kitty Johnson, Senior Professional of ELT who worked in Open Society Institute;
3. George Bishop, Senior Professional of ELT who worked in Open Society Institute;
4. Joseph Smith, Teacher Trainer of the British Council;
5. John Metcalf, Teacher Trainer of the British Council.

To speak about these people and their contribution would require an entire issue of News Bulletin to devote to them. And AzETA will do so. AzETA will issue a special issue of News Bulletin called Friends of AzETA where you will be able to read more about these people and how they helped AzETA and English teachers of Azerbaijan develop personally and professionally.

In this issue we just want to thank these people for their unbending support to AzETA thanks to whom AzETA has developed this much and managed to be famous throughout the country opening new branches increasing the number of its members day by day. Also we learned from them effective regional co-operation thanks to which we have been implementing joint projects with the TAs in the region successfully.

We want to say good bye to our dear friends which means God be with you. People win wars, but you won people's hearts here in Azerbaijan which can be won by no money. You won the hearts with your sincere, loyal friendship. You have always been rejoiced with AzETA's achievements, which we succeeded thanks to your contribution in everything. You are always with us!

YOUR COLUMN

Passion for life!

By Galina Ceban. Secondary school, English Teacher, in Balti. Moldava.

Teachers of English as a foreign language need to create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom and raise students' interests. I suggest the use of drawings. The following activity makes all the pupils very active, even those who are usually shy and feel uncomfortable if they make mistakes because it gets them involved in thinking about the beautiful things in life.

First get the class in the right mood when you begin the lesson by telling them you are very glad to see them wealthy, strong and happy. Life may be difficult at times, but in class you are not going to talk about problems. Start a conversation about beautiful things in life such as love, happiness and family. Tell them what life means for you. For ex. You could say that life is like a one-way street or a train that never comes back. You could also use a quotation such as "Life" is a party. We join it after it is started a leave it before it is finished. After a brief class discussion have the pupils read the following poem "Life" by Mother Teresa. I ask my secondary students to learn the poem by heart,

Life

Life is a challenge, meet it,
Life is a duty, complete it,
Life is a game, play it,
Life is a costly, care for it.
Life is wealth, keep it,

Life is a mystery, know it,
Life is love, enjoy it,
Life is a promise, fulfil it,
Life is sorrow, overcome it

Life is a song, sing it,
Life is a struggle, accept it.
Life is a tragedy confront it,
Life is a opportunity ,benefit from

Life is a beauty, admire it
Life is bliss, taste it
Life is a dream, realise it
Life is a challenge, meet it
Life is luck, make it

Life is too precious, do not destroy it
Life is life, fight for it.

We want our pupils to be able to communicate with each other and people outside the classroom in socially acceptable ways using this poem and create a drawing about it can help them share their passion for life.

YOU WILL READ IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

1. News from SIGs: Enjoy English Summer Camp
2. AzETA – British Council partnership continues: Executive Board meets the British Council staff
3. AzETA becomes an associate member of IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) thanks to the financial support of the British Council
4. AzETA branch Monitoring Groups' visit to their respective branches
5. How AzETA members spent their summer time – AzETA members attend different programmes inside and outside the country
6. And more.....

Dear Members,

Please be advised that AzETA office will be closed from 11 to 31 of July due to the repair work.

We are grateful to all of you for your kind contribution to AzETA for refurbishing its Baku Office. We hope you will enjoy newly refurbished AzETA office in the new school year.

NOW IT IS TIME TO LAUGH

LET'S LAUGH TOGETHER



The Pacific Palisades High School (California) Staff voted unanimously to record on their school telephone answering machine. This is hilarious, no wonder some people were offended! This came about because they implemented a policy requiring students and parents to be responsible for their children's absences and missing homework. The school and teachers are being sued by parents who want their children's failing grades changed to passing grades even though those children were absent 15-30 times during the semester and did not complete enough school work to pass their classes. This is the actual answering machine message for the school:

"Hello! You have reached the automated answering service of your school. In order to assist you in connecting with the right staff member, please listen to all your options before making a selection:

- "To lie about why your child is absent - Press 1.
- "To make excuses for why your child did not do his work- Press 2.
- "To complain about what we do - Press 3.
- "To swear at staff members - Press 4.
- "To ask why you didn't get information that was already enclosed in your newsletter and several flyers mailed to you - Press 5.
- "If you want us to raise your child - Press 6.
- "If you want to reach out and touch, slap or hit someone - Press 7.
- "To request another teacher for the third time this year- Press 8.
- "To complain about bus transportation - Press 9.
- "To complain about school lunches - Press 0.
- "If you realize this is the real world and your child must be accountable and responsible for his/her own behaviour, class work, homework, and that it's not the teachers' fault for your child's lack of effort: Hang up"

If you can read this, thank a teacher.