



News Bulletin

May – June 2004

First AzETA ELT Conference

On 1-2 May 2004, Azerbaijan English Teachers' Association (AzETA) held its ever first ELT Conference in Baku Slavic University, Baku, Azerbaijan. The event was supported and sponsored by the British Council – Baku, the US Embassy Public Affairs Office and Open Society Institute – Assistant Foundation (Soros Foundation).

The aim was to give an opportunity to English teachers in Azerbaijan to come together and discuss issues of interest, to feel a belonging to the ELT community, to unite with AzETA and to empower the organisation, as well as to be empowered as professionals.

It was ever first conference of the English teachers of Azerbaijan. By nature it was a national conference, but it was open to international participation as such there were English teachers from Turkey and Georgia among the Conference participants/presenters. This enabled all the participants to seek ways and possibilities of furthering the well-established regional/international co-operation. The Conference was vital as a common purpose and understanding was established by the ELT professionals involved in the Conference to combat problems in the field of ELT that are faced in the country.

Minister of Education of Azerbaijan, British and US Ambassadors to Azerbaijan attended the opening ceremony of the Conference, welcomed the participants at the opening ceremony and wished every success to the work of the Conference, as well as to AzETA in its future activities highlighting the importance of the Association as an educational NGO with strong potential as a valuable counterpart not only for the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan in its educational reforms but also for other organisations involved in professional development in education.

On both days the Conference started every day with a plenary session, then continued its work in the concurrent sessions (5 concurrent sessions at a time). In the course of concurrent sessions two special sessions were organised to discuss AzETA matters, its sustainability, action plan for the next one year and opportunities for establishing AzETA branches in more regions of Azerbaijan. These sessions were attended by the leaders of the Teachers' Associations represented in the Conference to exchange opinions and experiences.

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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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Concerning presenters, AzETA gave priority to local teachers encouraging teachers from the regions of Azerbaijan more as the main aim of the Conference was to empower local English teachers professionally, to help in the growth and development of AzETA, as well as English language instruction and learning in Azerbaijan. Around forty presentations on a wide range of topics were given both by Azerbaijan ELT teachers and educators and by overseas specialists. The plenary speakers were Michael Berman, a famous ELT specialist and author of more than 40 ELT books from the UK and Patricia Sullivan, Regional English Language Officer for the US Embassy in Kyev. After the Conference Michael Berman visited AzETA branches and AzETA target regions to give workshops to the teachers who could not join the Conference. *More details below.*

The Conference was the best sign of the rapidly increasing interest in ELT in the country. The Conference presented AzETA newly selected Standing Committee members. SIGs (Special Interest Groups) on Teacher Training, Young Learners, ESP, Adult Learning, Internet Projects, Materials Development, Civic Education were established. AzETA Action Plan for 2004 – 2007 was also presented at the Conference.

After the Conference the members of AzETA increased, more regions requested to open AzETA branches. One branch was opened in Sheki. *More details below.*

AzETA SIG on Young Learners established in the Conference implemented their first Project and visited an orphanage on the International Day of Defence of Children on 1 June. *More details below.*

AzETA extends its acknowledgement to the British Council – Baku, US Embassy – Baku and Open Society Institute – Assistant Foundation (Soros Foundation) for all kinds of support to AzETA in its activities in general, and for financial and organisational support to the Conference, in particular.

AzETA also acknowledges the representatives of ETAG (English Teachers' Association of Georgia) and teachers from Turkey who joined the Conference and made it special with their contribution in giving presentations and joining discussions and sharing experiences with AzETA members.

Michael Berman provides workshops for AzETA in the regions

Michael Berman, a famous ELT specialist and author of more than 40 ELT books joined First AzETA ELT Conference as a plenary speaker with the financial support of the British Council and US Embassy. Before joining the Conference he had agreed to visit AzETA branches and AzETA target regions to give workshops to the teachers who could not join the Conference. His visit to the regions was realised with the money contributed to the Conference by the participants as registration fee.

From 5 May to 8 May Michael Berman visited Shamaxi, Qebele, Seki and Gence together with Nezaket Beylarova and Efsane Huseynova, AzETA members. He provided workshops on the following topics: “Multiple Intelligences & Learning Styles”, “The Storyteller: Shaman and Healer”. Handouts are available from AzETA Baku Branch office.

On 9 May Michael Berman met the AzETA members in Baku and shared his impression on his visits to the regions. He also gave a workshop on : “Multiple Intelligences & Learning Styles”.

RENTA Meeting Istanbul, 7-9 May

RENTA – Regional English Teachers Association was established in 2003 at the meeting of Hornby Alumni and Teachers' Associations' representatives held in Tbilisi, Georgia on 20-23 March 2003. RENTA is composed of 8 Teachers' Associations of South Caucasus, Central Asia and the Russian Federation, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The aim is to share experience and expertise, implement joint projects.

RENTA held its second seminar in Istanbul, Turkey on 9-11 May 2004 with the financial support of the British Council managed Hornby Educational Trust. AzETA was represented by Ragsana Mammadova as a Hornby Trust alumnus and AzETA Executive Director, Hijran Huseynova as AzETA representative – Baku Branch Director.

At the seminar the TAs represented in RENTA briefed on the activities carried out after the Tbilisi meeting, discussed the needs and requirements, future plans of individual TAs and sought the ways for furthering the co-operation.

AzETA informed the participants on the following implemented projects:

- ❖ Hornby Educational Trust Project 1 (Teacher Training)
- ❖ Mini-conference on preparation for the First Caucasus ELT Conference (29-30 March 2003)
- ❖ First Caucasus ELT Conference (Tbilisi)
- ❖ Hornby Educational Trust project 2 (29 July – 3 August 2003)
- ❖ Mini-conference 1 (13 September 2003)
- ❖ Mini-conference 2 (29 November 2003)
- ❖ First AzETA ELT Conference (1-2 May 2004)
- ❖ Michael Berman's workshops in the region (5-8 May 2004).

AzETA also informed the participants in more details about First Caucasus ELT Conference held in Tbilisi, Georgia on 25-27 April 2003 and First AzETA ELT Conference.

AzETA informed the participants on AzETA Future Action Plan presented at AzETA Conference.

On the last day of the seminar the participants discussed the possibility of developing two joint project proposals and implementing them. One of the project proposals was Regional Teacher Training where it is intended to train 5 teachers from each TA as trainer trainers so that the TAs involve them in their future training or conferences or summer schools instead of wasting time for looking for trainers.

The second intended project is website design for the TAs with the following purposes:

1. To build the capacity of TAs to design and update the TA websites
2. To foster the exchange of information, experiences and documentation among the TAs of South Caucasus, Central Asia and the Russian Federation through TA websites.

ELT Networks meeting Paris, France 26-28 May

The British Council held an ELT Networks meeting in Paris, France on 26- 28 May with the purpose of discussing the British Council managed ELTeCS and Hornby ELT networks in the light of the British Council's 2010 agenda (a new strategic vision for The British Council and the way the Council work) and increased regional working. These networks have been very centrally managed (largely by ELT group) and they have both been growing considerably. ELTeCS, in particular, is reaching a stage where central management is no longer appropriate or desirable, and as such the British Council is interested in exploring new models that would help the Council offices achieve their ELT objectives and bring the potential of these mature and successful networks to the attention of decision makers and managers in the British Council.

The meeting was a thinktank of stakeholders and interested parties to help to draw together a strategy to achieve the above.

The participants were British Council managers from around Europe and stakeholders, a few non-British Council key ELTeCS members. Ragsana Mammadova, AzETA Executive Director had been invited as a Hornby Alumnus, ELTeCS member and TA representative.

The meeting was facilitated by Malcolm Griffiths a freelance ELT specialist, active ELTeCS member himself, and formally a British Council member of staff.

Vision statements were drafted in mixed groups containing at least one of the following: key network member/activists; British Council country-operation ELT staff; British Council headquarters ELT staff (both enterprises and Grant-funded services.) They were arrived at through an extensive process of exploring and questioning various stakeholder positions in the light of Strategy 2010.

AzETA visits the regions

❖ AzETA in Nakhchivan

On 29 May Nezaket Beylarova, AzETA Financial Manager and Martin Quirke, British Council Teacher Trainer visited Nakhchivan to meet English teachers, give information on AzETA and thus, promote AzETA.

Sadaqat khanum, Director of Secondary school #11 in Nakhchivan invited English teachers from different schools of the city to her school. More than 20 English teachers participated in the meeting.

First Nezaket talked about AzETA, its aims, mission, structure, activities and the projects implemented so far, the role of English teachers in AzETA, their achievements through AzETA and their contribution to AzETA.

Among the participants there were ACCELS and Project Harmony award winners. They showed great interest in joining AzETA and getting empowered through joining the efforts.

Martin informed the participants about First AzETA ELT Conference held in May, AzETA's co-operation with the British Council, the importance of TAs in the education system of any country. He distributed information leaflet on AzETA where they could find more information on the organisation, as well as the contact details.

It was mutually agreed that the visits to Nakhchivan by AzETA would be frequented as the teachers had very limited opportunities to be introduced to communicative methods of teaching English, as well as they have very limited access to not only outer world, but also to other parts of Azerbaijan as there is only one way of transportation to and from Nakhchivan, i.e. by air which many people cannot afford.

In one of the meetings of the Standing Committee the members decided to include Nakhchivan in the list of priorities for the events held in or through AzETA, as well as to seek ways of funding to organise more trips to Nakhchivan to support the teachers by any ways that AzETA could.

AzETA extends its gratitude to Martin Quirke for joining this challenging visit on volunteer basis and promoting AzETA despite all difficulties sometimes he had to go through due to large bureaucracy.

❖ Standing Committee members in Sheki

On 19 June AzETA Standing Committee members Solmaz Kazimova, Solmaz Hasanova, Ragsana Mammadova and British Council Teacher Trainer Joseph Smith visited Sheki to discuss branch management guidelines with the ELT Community.

School # 8 in Sheki agreed to provide AzETA with a free location for its Branch office. Ragsana Mammadova, AzETA Executive Director had a meeting with Mr S. Alasgarli on terms and references of the Contract.

Joseph Smith demonstrated some activities on communicative methods of teaching English where all the participants were very active.

Then Ragsana talked about AzETA, its mission & goals, the role of the branches and of each individual member for achieving the goals. She also discussed the Branch Management Guidelines with the participants and answered their questions.

It was agreed that the activists would hold a meeting and select Manager of Sheki Branch. AzETA is grateful to Sara Paulsworth, Peace Corps Volunteer in Sheki for her great support to ELT community in Sheki and for facilitating the meeting for electing Mrs Afer Mammadova as the Branch Manager.

AzETA intends to organise official opening of the Branch in mid-September where AzETA partners, important stakeholders, as well as mass media representatives are intended to be invited.

AzETA Young Learners SIG's visit to orphanages in Baku

AzETA YL SIG was established at AzETA Conference. As soon as it was established the members of the group came up with different interesting projects.

One of such a project is English Programme in the orphanages. Before developing the project some members of the group visited Orphanage # 3 in Baku to identify the needs of the children. Before developing the project the group visited the orphanage on 28 May on the eve of International Day of Defence of the Children which is internationally celebrated on 1 June. With the donation of the group members some sweets, cakes, clothes were bought and taken to

the orphanage.

While distributing all this the teachers managed to talk to the children to learn their needs. The children were very happy to hear that they would be given an opportunity to improve their English.

The YL SIG has decided to develop a programme during summer time and start it in 2 orphanages of Baku in September. They intend to involve interested native speakers to give an opportunity to the children practice their English with native speakers.

"Strength in Numbers: Increasing the Impact of English Language Teacher Associations"

With the financial support of the British Council and US Embassy in Baku Nezaket Beylarova, AzETA Standing Committee member attended a seminar titled "Strength in Numbers: Increasing the Impact of English Language Teacher Associations" held in Bournemouth, UK on 20-25 June. She was selected to attend this seminar for her dedication to AzETA, hard work, as well as recent participation in NGO management training organised and sponsored by the Open Society Institute – Assistant Foundation where she had been very active to promote AzETA among other NGOs of Azerbaijan, after which she shared the skills and knowledge gained at the training with her peers in AzETA.

The seminar brought together TA activists, leaders, managers from about 30 countries of the world, namely, Chile, Japan, India, Qatar, Sudan, Senegal, Spain, Iraq, Columbia, China, Brazil, Estonia, Greece, etc. to share and spread best practices in order to improve the effectiveness of their traditional menu of services (conferences, SIG and newsletters), as well as helping them develop new resources such as websites and discussion lists.

The seminar took the form of input sessions from the course director and a number of contributors and course facilitators, specially chosen for their experience and expertise in specific aspects of TAs. In addition to plenary sessions there were extensive group works in which participants had the opportunity to share experiences and network with colleagues. Special attention was paid to the diverse contexts of participants and the variability of the resources available for them. Together with her peers from Japan, India, Columbia and Cuba Nezaket was included in the group to develop a joint project for which they selected a title

"To organise Regional ELT Conference". The result was very impressive and the team members agreed to seek funds to realise this project after returning back to their relative countries.

AzETA acknowledges the British Council and US Embassy in Baku, in particular Brian Maguire and Jim Solan to enable a Standing Committee member to benefit from such a wonderful seminar to help AzETA empowered, as well as for the opportunity for establishing relations with the TAs from different countries of the world represented in the seminar.

AzETA teacher trainers attend training in Crimea, Ukraine on 13-20 June

With financial support of the British Council and US Embassy in Baku 5 AzETA members:

1. Solmaz Quliyeva - school # 10, Baku
2. Jale Mammadova - school # 134, Baku
3. Sevil Aliverdiyeva - Qobuqiragi village secondary school, Khachmaz
4. Shamsiyya Mustafayeva - school #3, Mingechevir
5. Khatira Aliyeva - school #10, Sheki

attended training on teaching young learners in Crimea, Ukraine on 13-18 June.

After introduction the participants were divided into 2 groups: (i) Teachers of Young Learners (YL) and (ii) Teachers of Old Learners (OL). The topics covered in YL group with 25 participants from the ex-SU republics were: Basic Principles of Teaching, Vocabulary Fields and Vocabulary Acquisition Games, Making Learning Child-Centred, etc.

There were 29 participants from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Belarus and Ukraine in OL group. The topics introduced were: Needs Assessment via Graphic Organiser, Learning Styles, Error Correction & Interactive Games.

It was very important for AzETA members to attend this training as there are two related SIGs in AzETA where the members need more skills on these fields. So, the AzETA participants of this training now are real asset for AzETA SIGs on YL and OL. AzETA extends its acknowledgement to the British Council and US Embassy for their unbending support to AzETA enabling its members to get empowered through different events held worldwide.

AzETA bids farewell to Martin Quirke, British Council Teacher Trainer

On 12 June with sadness AzETA said good-bye to one of its great friends Martin Quirke, British Council Teacher Trainer.

Martin joined AzETA last year. Since joining AzETA he regularly attended the meetings to provide his expert recommendations thanks to which our services improved.

Martin also involved other Teacher Trainers from the British Council with the support of whom

AzETA organised visits to different regions of Azerbaijan to promote the organisation, seek possibilities for establishing new AzETA branches. Together with his colleagues Martin also gave workshops on communicative methods of teaching English.

Martin's support was very important for AzETA as it is a best sign for co-operation between the British Council and AzETA. When the teachers who have little idea on AzETA see that AzETA co-operates with the British Council they accept AzETA as a reliable organisation. Not only the teachers, but also the Education Departments of the regions take AzETA as a serious organisation thanks to its close collaboration with the British Council.

Although Martin has left he encouraged his colleagues to continue well established practice of visiting the regions of Azerbaijan together with AzETA. Now Joseph Smith, who join most of the visits is joining AzETA in its visits to the regions instead of Martin.

AzETA is grateful to Martin for this invaluable support. Although he is far away from Azerbaijan now he is still interested in AzETA and its progress.

He left Azerbaijan winning the hearts of the people who knew him. We do believe that we will host him again in future. We wish a good luck to Martin and do believe that wherever he is he will be loved thanks to his kind heart and desire of helping the people in need. We say Good bye to him, which means God be with you.

YOUR COLUMN

Dear Colleagues,

Below are some useful website links that you might find helpful for your teaching.

A great new site for teachers and students alike can be found at www.selfaccess.com , it's great for encouraging autonomous learning and especially useful for students studying for Cambridge exams. There are also links to other sites, which are more students centred.

Another useful site for teachers who are looking for supplementary materials for their lessons can be found at www.handoutsonline.com

A couple of interactive activities are to be found in the games section at www.english-at-home.com and www.dfilm.com/index_moviemaker.html where students can make their own animated film and script.

If you would like to keep up to date with current affairs or would like a topical subject for class, you can search hundreds of newspapers for printable articles at www.thepaperboy.com.au

Those of you who teach young learners may be interested in a site with activities and lesson plans, which can be found at <http://efl4kids.tripod.com> .

Last, but not least - <http://www.theeducatorsnetwork.com/> - where you can find samples of the lesson plans that could guide you to preparing for your lessons more effectively.

Do you like poems? What about the below one? Feel proud that you belong to an organisation for which people compose poems and recite the poem ☺

AzETA ENGLISH CLASS

By Donald Ornick

Far to the east near a great lake,
Fair Azerbaijan lies.
To see what English they teach there
We sent our "language spies".

There are rules for "language war"
These rules can not be staid.
"English only" in the class
This rule must be obeyed.
When the teacher leaves the class,
From duties she is truant,
English language is not used
Azerbaijani IS QUITE FLUENT.

Without the teacher in front of them
and none to show the way.
The class all jumps the track
All quickly go astray.
The "rule of class" they follow--yes?
If so, they do it poorly,
The class is very fluent, true,
BUT ONLY IN AZERI.

There are rules for English class.
The rules can not be staid.
"English Only" in the class
The rule must be obeyed.

The spies listened carefully
Could not detect a word
Azerbaijani was the only tongue
That in English class was heard.
The teacher then returned to class,
with disappointment seen,
The chastened class then began to speak
the Language of the Queen.

The teacher returned to her class.
Class duty it now bears
The class it follows all rules now
They speak with British airs.

Now AzETA can be proud.
with English spoken clear and loud
The students skills no more do languish.
AzETA HAS WON THE WAR OF LANGUAGE!

AzETA extends gratitude to all its members for their efforts of promoting AzETA wherever they go, in particular to those who visit the regions of Azerbaijan with their own costs to promote AzETA, to share knowledge and experience with their colleagues in the regions. Despite the numerous challenges they face in their daily lives and work, they are always ready to make the extra effort to promote the learning of English in Azerbaijan.

AzETA is proud of YOU.

You will read in our next issue

- AzETA members Huzura Agayeva, Dostuxanim Zulfuqarova and Kamaledin Nagiyev are visiting the US as award winners of ACCELS PIE Programme
- AzETA Standing Committee Member Nezaket Beylarova shares with her peers her impressions and skills from the seminar "**Strength in Numbers: Increasing the Impact of English Language Teacher Associations**" held in Bournemouth, UK on 20-25 June
- Generous donation of textbooks in English on different subjects by World Vision with kind support of Mrs Leslie Harnish
- How AzETA prepares for the new school year
- News from the SIGs
- News from the Branches