



News Bulletin

July – August 2004

AzETA members visited the US as award winners of ACCELS TEA Programme

Here is how Huzura Agayeva describes the programme:

I was the finalist of ACCELS TEA Programme. We were seven English teachers from Azerbaijan – 3 teachers were from Baku. The others were from Neftchala (1 teacher), Ganja (1 teacher), Sumgaiyt (2 teachers). There were 4 AzETA members among the participants from Azerbaijan: Dostukhanum Zulfuqarova from Sumqayit, Raifa Veliyeva from Ganja, Kamaledin Nagiyev from Neftchala and me. The participants of the programme were from 11 republics of the former Soviet Union.

The programme was for 7 weeks. We arrived in the US on 11 June and returned back on 5 August. We visited Washington D.C for 2 weeks (one week when we arrived in the US, another week in August before our departure). We also visited Williamsburg (Virginia) for 2 days. We spent the rest of the time (5 weeks) in Chico, California, Sacramento, San Fransisco.

The aim of this programme was to introduce the participants the new innovative teaching methods, and applying them to ELT, sharing their experiences, learning American study, culture, tradition, education system. All the participants gave 3 presentations: one presentation on vocabulary building, we made the second presentation at a conference held on 24-27 July, and we made the last presentation for our peers.

At the end of the conference we were given certificates. Another certificate was given in Washington D.C. on 2 August.

We had also a chance to give cultural presentations. Although all the participants came from the countries with the similar past and present (as mentioned all the participants were from the former Soviet Union republics) there are cultural differences that were very interesting for us to know.

All in all, it was a very sophisticated programme and we enjoyed every minute of it. It helped us for our both professional and personal development.

We are grateful to ACCELS to create this opportunity for our teachers every year.

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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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**AzETA Standing Committee Member
Nezaket Beylarova shares with her
peers her impressions from the
seminar "Strength in Numbers:
Increasing the Impact of English
Language Teacher Associations" held
in Bournemouth, UK on 20-25 June**

On 20th-25th June 2004 teacher association representatives, from 21 countries and 4 continents, came together in Bournemouth, UK, to attend the British Council Seminar 'Strength in numbers: increasing the impact of English language teacher associations'.

The seminar was designed to enable participants to share and spread best practices in order to improve the effectiveness of their traditional menu of services, as well as helping them to develop new resources such as websites and discussion lists.

Sandra Burford, event manager, and George Pickering, course director, welcomed us to the seminar with her generous smile and his ever-amusing way: Welcome to Bournemouth, English seaside with its four glorious seasons in one day!

Contributors included: Adrian Underhill (Consultant and professional development trainer, past president of IATEFL, founder of IATEFL Teacher Development SIG), Magali de Moraes Menti (Past President of A PIRS and APLIAL and general Co-ordinator of A PIRS), Margit Szesztay (President of IATEFL Hungary, IATEFL Associates Co-ordinator and teacher trainer), Gavin Dudeney (Co-director of the Consultants-E and Co-ordinator IATEFL Computer SIG and in charge of PAL - the Associates Yahoo group), Simon Fenn (IATEFL Wider Membership Scheme), John Walsh (Managing Director of the Bournemouth English Book Centre), and Christopher Palmer (Project Director British Council Seminars).

George got us started by presenting an overview of the topics to be covered. He also showed us a cartoon of an elephant trying to get on a double-decker bus to represent the difficulty of covering all of the topics in four and a half days! Topics included: missions of teacher associations, leadership and management, change management frameworks, project management, products and services, newsletters, new services/websites,

discussion lists, teacher associations and best practice, marketing and membership, finance and resources, networking, regional links, strategic partnerships, and the role of teacher associations in reform and development programmes.

Several messages and ideas emerged from the sessions:

1. No association should fall into the trap of trying to be all things to all members. Mission statements should inform, inspire and make sure they do this in a few words.
2. TA representatives should aim at developing leader and manager roles in themselves and encouraging members to follow suit.
3. Much as we like those who are like ourselves, our teams should include a diversity of people: different people to perform the different roles needed to make the TA successful.
4. As far as change is concerned, a question should come first and always: is this change necessary?
5. Two questions to have in mind regarding conferences: How to have conferences recognised by the Ministry of Education? And how to make them memorable?
6. Jigsaw articles for newsletters. They are collections of short texts (answers, comments, tips) about a specific topic from various people. Easy to put together and interesting to read. A few topics for jigsaw articles: What makes you angry as a teacher? How do you start your lessons? Most memorable conference and why. Most important thing you take with you to the classroom. The best thing about your TA, your country, etc.
7. Services should aim to provide members with a sense of belonging. Personalising messages (Dear Gavin) is one way to do this. Software that does it automatically is available on the market at Reasonable prices.
8. Although interactive, dynamic and resourceful websites are desirable, websites that contain static, updated, information about the association do perform a valuable service.

9. Fielded discussions - discussions around a theme of interest to the community. They are tangible artefacts, products produced by the members for the members that help to create a sense of belonging. (This can be set up through Yahoo Groups.)

10. The concept of Communities of Practice (groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better - www.ewenger.com) has many nuances and implications, but seems to fit in perfectly with TA practices.

11. A project is a dream with a deadline. Important words being Time, Cost and Quality.

12. Benchmarking for growth. Find out who does what and how they do it.

13. Marketing. Opposing views here: some of us felt strongly about using business frameworks and words to talk about our TAs. Others seemed quite uneasy about it. A third group went for conciliation, as the concept of Relationship Marketing has been around in education for a few years now; and several roles are possible and needed, including the role of disseminating information about the association among potential members, which is in essence a marketing function.

13. When seeking for sponsors: Don't get discouraged. This is not personal. Don't be afraid to ask. We need to ask and ask and ask.

14. Committee members need commitment, time, task clarity, skills, team mindedness, and responsibility. TAs need achievement, recognition, reward, team spirit and learning to keep going.

15. TAs can be seen as key stakeholders in any ELT project and channels for raising self-esteem amongst teachers. However, they need entrepreneurship and management skills, a vision and visionaries.

At the end of the week, George presented an overview of the seminar - the elephant had been successfully pushed into the bus and we needed to take it back to our homes and make good use of it.

We then presented a draft of projects we were going to implement back home. Chris closed the event by thanking George, Sandra, all the contributors and participants. We got our

certificates, photos and contact list, and exchanged hugs, tears and promises to keep in touch through PAL.

All in all, a seminar to remember for lifetime.

Note: AzETA acknowledges the British Council (personally Brian Maguire) and the US Embassy (personally Jim Solan) for supporting Nezaket to attend this seminar where she made lots of contacts for AzETA.

How AzETA prepared for the new school year

In comparison with other organisations AzETA did not have a holiday this summer. On the contrary, it was a busy time for AzETA as the ideas and suggestions bounced during Standing Committee meetings, which encouraged the members to develop and approve a good action plan for September – December 2004. As there are several events intended for wider audience to hold each month, different committees have been established to organise these events.

- As every year several AzETA members participate in different programmes outside Azerbaijan or in Baku, it has become a tradition to share the impressions on the programmes at mini-conference 1 and share the gained knowledge in the format of a workshop at mini-conference 2.

So, on 18 September AzETA will hold its traditional Sharing & Caring Mini-Conference 1. It will be held at Baku Slavic University. If you are interested in participating or getting more information, please contact Huzura Agayeva at huzuraagayeva@yahoo.com

- In summer AzETA received requests from the ELT communities of Mingechevir and Sheki to open a branch in each region. As the community was ready to take the responsibility AzETA Standing Committee approved their request and went to see the location for the branches generously given by International School # 8 in Sheki and Azerbaijan Teachers' Institute Mingechevir Branch. Also, branch management issues were widely discussed with both communities and they were provided with AzETA Branch

Management Guidelines developed by the Standing Committee. Afterwards both branches elected their branch managers and developed their action plans on the basis of AzETA action plan for 2004 – 2007 presented at First AzETA ELT Conference on 1-2 May 2004.

So, the official opening of the Mingechevir Branch will be held on Saturday, 25 September and of the Sheki branch on Saturday, 9 October. *More information can be obtained from AzETA Baku office or from Ragsana Mammadova at Ragsana.Mammadova@fco.gov.uk*

- Special Interest Groups also worked hard during summer to develop projects to implement during the coming school year. *More below.*

News from the SIGs

- Young Learners' Group is one of the most active SIG. They have already identified the area of work. They visited some orphanages during summer time and agreed to implement English programme in two orphanages in Baku.

The children from Umid Yeri orphanage spent their summer in Shamaxi, at the Rehabilitation Centre for orphans. Young Learners SIG visited them on a Saturday in August and spent the whole day with them to find out their level of English, needs and wants. At the beginning the children were very shy, but the teachers encouraged them involving them in the activities of their interests. All the children welcomed the idea of English club in their orphanage. So, YL SIG will establish an English club at Umid Yeri orphanage to teach the children poems, songs in English on Halloween, Christmas, Novruz and other national holidays of the UK, US and Azerbaijan. Then the children will be taken to different schools during these holidays to perform in front of the children of their own ages. *For more information contact Solmaz Kazimova at: (+994 55) 777 6098.*

- Teacher Training SIG is also very active and is keen to implement an Outreach Teacher Training in some regions of Azerbaijan. The group has managed to get some grants from the Open Society Institute – Assistant Foundation. The members of the group certified as teacher trainers and/or trainer

trainers by the British Council or OSI-AF will train English teachers in the selected regions. *For more information contact Afet Huseynova at: AHuseynova@OSI-AZ.ORG*

News from the Branches

Ganja:

Neil McGurty, US Embassy Public Diplomacy Officer and Afet Ibrahimova, Education Assistant visited Ganja branch to introduce Eddie McGee, new Senior English Teaching Fellow of the US Embassy who will work in Ganja for the next school year. Eddie discussed the ways of co-operation offering his support and assistance in providing better service to the members. He has a great potential and promised to conduct teacher-training in AzETA -GB.

Neil McGurty was interested in the work of the Branch and asked how the members were going to develop AzETA – GB, future plans of the branch, etc.

Afet Ibrahimova informed the members on education programs of the US Embassy.

For more information on the work of the branch contact Xalida Aliyeva at: AzETA-GB@GITC.AZNET.ORG

Sheki:

Since its establishment, which is just June 2004 the branch has been very active in developing its action plan for 2004 – 2005. They have also managed to repair the room allocated by International School # 1 as the Branch office with the contribution by the Branch members.

As mentioned above, the Branch has already elected its Manager. Afer Mammadova, Supervisor from Sheki Education Department has unanimously been elected Branch Manager. She has been AzETA member since 2002 and has always actively participated in AzETA activities facilitating and liasing AzETA co-operation with ELT community in Sheki. *For more information on the activities in Sheki contact Turkan Kerimova at: turkankerimova@yahoo.com*

Mingechevir:

Mingechevir is also a very young, but very active AzETA Branch. As soon as it was established the members elected the Branch Manager – Durdana Qurbanova, teacher of Azerbaijan Teachers' Institute Mingechevir Branch, a very active and enthusiastic member of AzETA. After electing the Branch Manager they developed Branch Action Plan for 2004 – 2008. The action plan

envisages very interesting activities intending to cover not only Mingechevir, but also the neighbouring regions. *For more information on the branch and its activities contact Durdana Qurbanova at: durdane_azeta@hotmail.com*

AzETA welcomes:

➤ *Prof. Dr Minira Qarayeva*

She worked for many years as the Head of English Phonetics and Phonology Department at the Azerbaijan University of Languages.

In 1994 she was invited to Turkey to teach English at the Cumhuriyet University and worked as the Head of the Department of the English Language and Literature in the said University.

In 1999 Prof. Dr Qarayeva was awarded with “Illuminated Diploma of Honour” as the 20th Century Award for Achievement by the Society of International Biographical Centre of Cambridge, UK. She was also nominated as and “International Woman of the Millenium” by the same society. She was awarded with a number of certificates of honour and a medal for her long, perfect pedagogical and scientific activities in Azerbaijan and Turkey. Her teaching experience includes research in Azerbaijan, Turkey, USA and UK.

Prof. Dr Qarayeva is a leading specialist in the field of phonetics and has been trained in this field at Moscow, Oxford, Cambridge and Georgetown Universities. She has presented a number of papers on ELT in different Universities around the world including Great Britain, USA, Turkey, Greece, Northern Cyprus, Germany and the capital cities of the former Soviet Union.

Prof. Dr Qarayeva is a member of different Language Teaching Associations including ECA (European Communication Association). She is the co-author of two ELT textbooks on phonetics and phonology (1983, 1999) and the author of the book of English Pronunciation (2003).

We cordially welcome Prof. Dr Qarayeva to AzETA. She is an asset for AzETA and we hope as her former students we will benefit from her expert views in our work.

➤ *Eddie McGee, M.Ed.*

Eddie has recently arrived in Azerbaijan. He will be spending the academic year 2004-2005 at Ganja State University doing English teacher training as

an English Language Fellow with the School for International Training, USA.

Prior to his arrival Eddie sent a message to AzETA with a request of providing him with more information on AzETA and its activities. He wants to do outreach beyond the University so he is trying to make contact with people involved with English teaching in Azerbaijan. He has an extensive experience of work in different parts of the world.

We warmly welcome Eddie to Azerbaijan and do hope that the ELT community in Ganja, in particular AzETA Ganja Branch will benefit from his presence.

AzETA acknowledges:

➤ Peace Corps Volunteers: Cara Preuss in Mingechevir, Sarah Paulsworth in Sheki and William Lyon in Ganja

Thanks to Cara and Sarah AzETA managed to open an affiliation in Mingechevir and Sheki the official opening ceremony of which will be on 25 September and 9 October respectively. (*More information on the official opening of the branches in the next issue of the News Bulletin*). In these hot summer days both of them held regular meetings with the ELT communities to help them develop the action plans of the branches, seek possibilities for implementing projects, co-operating with other AzETA branches, as well as with their colleagues overseas.

Since working in Ganja William has closely been co-operating with AzETA. Starting from September he is planning to hold regular workshops in AzETA Ganja Branch.

They are a real asset for AzETA, as well as for the ELT communities in the regions they work. They do not consider their work to consist of teaching English only, they work very closely with the ELT communities, they help them develop both personally and professionally. If they have achieved this much within a short period of their work in Azerbaijan (just one year!) we do believe that the neighbouring regions will benefit from their presence through AzETA branches in the next one year, and thus, AzETA will flourish throughout Azerbaijan.

Thank you very much for this invaluable support to AzETA!

YOUR COLUMN

Improbable research

The English disease

If we all spoke Japanese, Sars might not be half such a problem. Marc Abrahams explains

Tuesday January 20, 2004

[The Guardian](#)

One's aspirations can kill - if Dr Sakae Inouye, of Otsuma Women's University in Tokyo, is correct - and Chinese aspirations are particularly deadly.

Dr Inouye devised a simple theory about a vexing public health problem. Her theory is this: the English language, when spoken by someone who normally speaks the Chinese language, can be lethal.

Dr Inouye recently drove her train of logic through the pages of the medical journal the Lancet. There she writes: "Severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) is transmitted via droplets spread by infected individuals. Droplets are generated when patients cough and, to a lesser extent, when they talk, during the early stages of disease. I believe that the efficiency of transmission of Sars by talking might be affected by the language spoken."

Here are the details of Dr Inouye's reasoning. They are subtle. They are breathtaking. They should perhaps be read silently.

- The disease called Sars seems to have originated in China.
- China has had millions of visitors from the US, and even more visitors from Japan.
- SOME American visitors (about 70 out of 2,300,000) got the disease, but NO Japanese visitors did.
- There must be a reason for that.
- The reason must be: language. In both Chinese and English, many sounds have a strong accompanying exhalation of breath - but Japanese has no such sounds.

- The final step in the chain brings these pieces together. It is frightful. Dr Inouye writes that: "A Chinese attendant in a souvenir shop probably speaks to American tourists in English, and to Japanese tourists in Japanese. If the shop assistant is in the early stages of Sars and has no cough, I believe American tourists would, hence, be exposed to the infectious droplets to a greater extent than would Japanese tourists."

Dr Inouye does not specify a particular dialect of Chinese, so at the moment all are suspect. If one's spoken language is dangerous, can it be altered? Nearly a century ago, future Nobel Prize winner George Bernard Shaw raised this very question. His play Pygmalion concerns a professor who painstakingly alters the speech patterns of a young woman. In the printed preface, Shaw wrote this: "the change wrought by Professor Higgins in the flower girl is neither impossible nor uncommon ... But the thing has to be done scientifically, or the last state of the aspirant may be worse than the first."

(Thanks to M Schreiber for bringing this item to my attention.)

• Marc Abrahams is editor of the bimonthly magazine Annals of Improbable Research (www.improbable.com), and organiser of the Ig Nobel Prize

Some tips for tired teachers:

Do your students enjoy poems? If yes, here is one for you to teach them:

If You're Happy

1. If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands (clap, clap).
If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands (clap, clap).
If your happy and you know it,
then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands (clap, clap).
2. . . . stomp your feet (stomp, stomp) . . .
3. . . . shout hurray (Hur-ray!) . . .
4. . . . do all three (clap, clap, stomp, stomp, hur-ray!)

You will read in our next issue

- Mini-Conference 1
- Official opening of Mingechevir and Sheki Branches
- Halloween party in the orphanages
- Patricia Sullivan, RELO visits Azerbaijan
- Tbilisi Conference Planning Committee meeting
- 2 AzETA members attend RENTA website training in Moscow
- AzETA bids good-bye to Jacky Sherwood, AzETA's great friend – Conversation Group Leader

Note for Readers:

If you have anything interesting that you want to share with your colleagues AzETA News Bulletin is the right place for you to do so. The News Bulletins reach the hands of many ELT professionals inside and outside Azerbaijan!

Note for Donors:

AzETA is desperately in need of your support. Due to lack of finances the opening of Sheki Branch is delayed until an uncertain period. It had initially been agreed to open it on 9 October, but we could not arrange the purchase of the needed equipment for the Branch office. The school authority provided the Branch with a free office location. The ELT community donated the Branch some money to repair the office. They have elected the Branch Manager who will do the job on volunteer basis. After all this has been done there is a fear that the ELT community might get discouraged to see the delay of the opening and as such all the efforts made during these hot summer days could go astray.

AzETA rely on your usual generosity and believe that you will help the teachers continue the well-established work.

NOW IT IS TIME TO LAUGH

LET'S LAUGH TOGETHER



Three EFL students are walking down the road to their remedial listening comprehension workshop.

STUDENT 1: It's windy

STUDENT 2: No it isn't, it's Thursday

STUDENT 3: Me too. Forget the listening, let's go for a drink!

A student, who is studying English as a foreign language, was confused when he saw the words "open here" on a box of laundry soap, so he asks the clerk, "Can't I wait until I get home to open it?"

STUDENT 1: What do you call a deer with no eyes?

STUDENT 2: No idea. (No Eye Deer.)

STUDENT 1: What do you call a dead deer with no eyes?

STUDENT 2: Still no idea.

TEACHER: Why are you late?

WEBSTER: Because of the sign.

TEACHER: What sign?

WEBSTER: The one that says, "School Ahead, Go Slow."

TEACHER: Ellen, give me a sentence starting with "I".

ELLEN: I is...

TEACHER: No, Ellen. Always say, "I am."

ELLEN: All right... "I am the ninth letter of the alphabet."