

FLEX Alumni Grant Projects 2004

Armenia:

Lia Arthur Avetisyan '96

Yerevan, Armenia/Clinton, NJ

One World: Equal Opportunities

This project is aimed at promoting the participation in the FLEX program for children with disabilities. In the regions of Lori and Shirak there are many earthquake victims, and this project will give the children in those regions intensive English language training, and let them participate in social activities and team-building exercises.

Gayane Mnatsakan Harutyunyan '99

Yerevan, Armenia/Bradford, NY

Let's Speak English

Gayane's program will cooperate with a regional television studio, Hrazdan TV, to broadcast an interactive television series based on English language learning. Children who speak English will be able to participate in games and quizzes in English on the television show. Viewers will have the opportunity to call in and answer questions, or to tell funny stories in English.

Tigran Gagik Karapetyan '96

Edinburg, Texas/Yerevan, Armenia

Celebrating Ten Years of Success

The Youth For Achievements Association (YFA) is the alumni association in Armenia, and will celebrate its tenth anniversary this year. Since YFA has more than 200 members, and they are alumni from ages 16-26, difficulties can arise in communication. This project will put together a two-day conference for all YFA members to meet, share ideas, and discuss the future of YFA.

Irina Karen Liloyan '98

Yerevan, Armenia/Red Wing, MN

Bridges of Integration: Psychological Treatment Project for Children from Secondary Boarding Schools

Children who live in boarding schools and orphanages oftentimes suffer from psychological disorders brought on by their station in life. Since many boarding schools lack funds to pay for psychologists to counsel the children, these psychological disorders go untreated. Irina's project will focus on treating these children, and on improving integration among the children and their peers. The goals of the project are to build self-esteem of the children and develop their communication skills.

Varya Ashot Meruzhanyan '00

Yerevan, Armenia/Coatesville, PA

Youth in Service: Youth Empowerment and Civic Participation Promotion

FLEX alumni have had the unique opportunity to see educational systems in two countries. For this reason, alumni are able to see the positive and negative aspects of both systems. The Youth in Service project will provide advocacy-training courses for members of ten student councils of ten schools in Yerevan. After the training courses, participants will be able to submit project proposals that will improve and strengthen school communities and environments.

Azerbaijan:

Mohsun Mirmehdi Aghayev '02

Baku, Azerbaijan/Hoquiam, WA

Computer Classes for Refugees

As computers and the Internet are becoming more and more important throughout the world, the skills necessary to use them are becoming imperative in the workplace. In Azerbaijan, as well as many other countries, refugees lack the opportunity to learn computer skills. These classes will focus on teaching computer skills to refugees in three rural regions in Azerbaijan. The goal of this project is to give refugees an opportunity for educational and professional success. By learning how to use computers and the Internet, they will be able to keep up with the growing trend in technology.

Laura Ramazan Muslimova '01

Baku, Azerbaijan/Elk River, MN

Academic Trainings: Language, American Culture, Rights and Career Choices

This project is the continuation of the 2003 FLEX Alumni Grants Project, "Teaching English and American Culture in the Orphanages of Azerbaijan." Academic Trainings: Language, American Culture, Rights, and Career Choices will be held for five months in two orphanages in Baku and Mardakan. Alumni will teach English grammar and aspects of American culture to the children living in the orphanages. They will also have the opportunity to listen to presentations on how to choose a career and on various educational opportunities in Azerbaijan and abroad. Trainers will also teach the children about the basics of Azerbaijan's Constitution, compare different political regimes, promote democracy, as well as providing consultations for children who believe their rights have been violated.

Tohida Kazimova '02

Lenkaran, Azerbaijan/Owatonna, MN

Young Women's Summer Center

In Lenkaran, males have many places where they can go to socialize and participate in various activities, but females do not have many opportunities. This project aims at providing a place for women to socialize and learn skills they can use in their lives. Women will have the opportunity to take English classes, computer classes, cooking lessons, hairdressing courses, sewing classes, and as well as listening to presentations on topics ranging from preparing a family budget to HIV/AIDS. Food prepared in the cooking classes will be delivered to elderly and low-income families in the area. Clothing made by the young women will be donated to orphanages. The program leaders will also hold roundtable discussions as well as conversation clubs for interested girls in the area, where they will be able to share their opinions on a variety of topics. A place will be provided for young women to get together to socialize, read magazines, and meet new people.

Belarus:

Svetlana Aduardovna Filimonova '03

Minsk, Belarus/Old Town, ME

English Skills and American Culture Training for Orphans

This project seeks to educate children living in orphanages about English language and about American culture. Project leaders would teach the English alphabet, and with every letter introduce part of American culture. For example, "W" would stand for Washington, D.C., and "V" would stand for volunteering. Children will have the opportunity to win prizes for good grades on homework and participation in class. They will also be able to celebrate American holidays like Halloween and Thanksgiving. The goal of this project is to give the orphans skills that they can use when they begin job searching.

Georgia:

Matuta Temuri Bjalava '98

Tbilisi, Georgia/Kilyen, TX

SOS! Smoking!

Matuta and other members of the project team conducted a survey in Zugdidi, which is located near the border of Abkhazia, about attitudes toward smoking. They found out that 85% of the children surveyed smoke, and 80% of those began smoking at age 12. SOS! Smoking! Intends to carry out educational workshops in 15 schools in Zugdidi to explain the hazards of smoking and ways to quit. Health professionals will take part in radio shows talking about the dangers of smoking. Students will get posters, booklets, pens, and sporting equipment with anti-smoking slogans attached, and will be able to take part in a contest to design the best anti-smoking logo.

Polina Lukina '99

Tskaltubo, Georgia/Peerless, MT

Introduction to Computers and Internet for Internally Displaced Adolescents

The Imereti Alumni Club (IAC) is an alumni club that unites alumni from various programs in rural cities in Georgia. The goal of the club is to implement programs in smaller regions, so that they can benefit from projects usually carried out in bigger cities. The Internet Access and Training Program (IATP) Centers in several cities are providing training space for classes. This project's goal is to educate internally displaced adolescents in Abkhazia, because they represent one of the most vulnerable groups of society. Trainers will teach the children computer skills and how to use the Internet. They will also teach them skills, which they can use to self-educate following the training sessions. The goal for the project is to contribute to the adolescents' future professional and educational skills.

Sophie Levan Panjikadze '01

Tbilisi, Georgia/Hampton, IA

Participation in the International Summer School (ISS), University of Oslo, Norway

Sophie was invited to attend the University of Oslo's International Summer School (ISS). The ISS is an academic center for learning in an international context and a forum for fostering intercultural understanding, which offers courses in the humanities, social sciences, energy planning and sustainable development, and international development studies, to the highly qualified

students from more than ninety nations every summer. She planned to take course in contemporary problems in government and politics / international relations and foreign policy / and a professional development seminar, June 26 to August 6, 2004.

Sandro Gela Rtveladze '01

Tbilisi, Georgia/Kahului, Maui, HI

Study at International University of Bremen-Germany

Sandro received funds toward his study at International University of Bremen-Germany. While he received financial aid, he will use his ECA grant to cover expense associated with his studies. IUB is a highly selective university (founded by Rice University and German sponsors) requiring from foreigners high scores on tests of SAT and TOEFL. Student body composed from representatives of more than 40 countries and professors from different countries build an excellent surrounding for intensive study and cultural exchange. Sandro will study Economics.

Maka Shioshvili '03

Tbilisi, Georgia/Kissimmee, FL

Save the Children

Maka and a couple friends visited an orphanage in Kakheti, and were shocked by the conditions. There was only one bathroom and shower for 68 children, a lack of medicine, poorly heated classrooms, and a lack of educational material. Most of the books in their library are in Russian, which the children cannot read, and they only have one chemistry book for 13 children in seventh grade. Maka is organizing a charity concert to raise money for the orphanage, in order to provide them with necessary items. The concert will invite popular Georgian singers, who will interact with the children. Artwork created by the children will be on display for the community to see.

Mariam Valeri Vardosanidze '02

Tbilisi, Georgia/Clinton, MS

Participation Fee for the American Institute on Political and Economic Systems (AIPES)

Mariam was chosen to attend AIPES 2004 in Prague, the Czech Republic, which was held from July 11-August 3. Young leaders from nations still recovering from the fall of Communism are invited to attend AIPES, where they learn about political, economic, and cultural issues of the world. The Fund for American Studies is the parent organization of AIPES, and aims at introducing the foundations of democracy and free market economics to young people from many countries. Mariam is currently studying International Law and Relations at Tbilisi State University and hopes to share the knowledge she will gain at AIPES with fellow members of the Georgian Law Student Association.

Kyrgyzstan:**Mairambek Eshimbekovich Bataev '01**

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan/Indianapolis, IN

Asel Murzatova '02

Jalal-abad, Kyrgyzstan/Apple Valley, CA

Active Young Citizens

In Kyrgyzstan, young people do not have much of an opportunity to learn about their right to vote or about the importance of participation in the electoral process. Since many students are unaware of their rights, they fall victim to violations. For example, in the last presidential election, university professors pressured students to vote for the incumbent or they would fail the class. The Initiative group "Active Young Citizen", consisting of seven students of American University in Central Asia (AUCA), conducted a six-day camp in Osh city of the Kyrgyz Republic in July.

Moldova:**Igor Mihail Garabajiv '03**

Balti, Moldova/Rushville, IL

Youth Integration between Moldova and Transnistria

Since the early 1990's, there has been a conflict in Moldova over the Transnistria region. The people of Transnistria want their independence. This conflict has created many problems between people on both sides. The project leaders of Youth Integration between Moldova and Transnistria are seeking to open the lines of communication between these groups by holding lectures for teenagers and instructors to come together and discuss issues affecting both sides of this conflict. They are also planning on writing articles for newspapers in several cities and taking part in interviews in the area.

Russia:**Yelena Mikhaylovna Fomenko '03**

Volzhsky, Russia/Spokane, WA

Building a Better Future

Yelena and other project developers plan to hold English language lessons for children with disabilities from Volzhsky. The children will play interactive games that will teach them vocabulary and grammar in English. English courses will be taught using computers, because some of them have difficulties writing. FLEX alumni will also promote the FLEX exchange program, in order to encourage the students to apply.

Yelizaveta Sergeyevna Gladkovskaya '95

Yekaterinburg, Russia/Gulf Breeze, FL

European Integration and Journalism

Yelizaveta was chosen to attend the XIX Annual Meeting of the Forum for European Journalism Students (FEJS) in Tilburg, the Netherlands, from April 3-8. More than 120 journalism students from countries throughout Europe and Eurasia will attend the conference, where they will share ideas about the role of journalism in Europe, and the place that Europe will take in the future of journalism. Yelizaveta is planning to share the knowledge she gains at this conference with her colleagues when she will return home.

Vyacheslav Yurievich Kotov '99

Moscow, Russia/Seattle, WA

Improving Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities in Russia

Ninety percent of people with disabilities in Russia are unemployed. Myths and misconceptions prevent many employers from hiring people with disabilities, and university students with disabilities have few resources for job searching. This project will be carried out as part of the Access to Employment Project, financed by the Ford Foundation, and implemented by the non-governmental organization, Perspektiva (perspective) and the Independent Living Network. Vyacheslav will attend a conference in the U.S. on employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and upon returning to Russia, he will share his knowledge with others. From this, they will create a network for students with disabilities to search for jobs.

Andrey Valeryevich Lazarev '03

Kurovskoye, Russia/Topeka, KS

Seminars on American Social and Political Processes for Youth in Rural Schools

In smaller towns in Russia, schools do not have access to as much information as schools in big cities in Russia. For this reason, many students can have a limited outlook on the U.S. and its culture. Andrey and alumni of the Teachers' Excellence Awards (TEA) program are planning on implementing classes in Kurovskoye for students to learn about the U.S. and English language. At the end of the sessions, they will hold a competition for the students to create the best poster on what they learned in the sessions.

Anna Aleksandrovna Milyutina '01

Kirov, Russia/Gig Harbor, WA

Talent and Leadership Camp for Orphans

Student teachers from Vyatka State University of the Humanities will lead a three-day camp for about 80 orphans studying in boarding schools in the area. The children will have an opportunity to attend workshops focusing on art, music, literature, politics, and psychology. Special guest speakers, professional musicians, artists, and others, will lead the courses and offer professional advice. The leaders of the project will tell the children about American culture, such as how Americans celebrate holidays, volunteerism, and politics.

Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Novak '03

Khabarovsk, Russia/Ringgold, GA

Solving Regional Challenges through the Creation of Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs)

The Model United Nations of the Russian Far East is organizing a summer camp for students to encourage them to take part in NPO's. Students participating in the summer camp will take part in a role-play, where they will be citizens of the country M, using the currency N, and will use the state languages Russian and English. Participants will be divided into several groups and each group will have to create their own NPO. They will have to write grants and look for support from other outlets in order to run their NPO and carry out projects.

Ksenia Dmitrievna Pozdeeva '00

Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia/Redmond, WA

Center of English and American Culture at the Nizhniy Novgorod Boarding School for Blind and Visually Impaired Children

The Nizhniy Novgorod Boarding School for Blind and Visually Impaired Children has 160 children who range in age from seven to twenty. The school cannot afford to buy specialized computers

that can teach English interactively with special technology designed for blind and visually impaired people. As English is becoming more important in various fields of international contact, Ksenia and other members of the group decided to give the children at the school English lessons.

Yevgenia Yurevna Prishchepova '98

Smolensk, Russia/Bridgeport, NY

Smolensk Youth Nexis (SYNergy) 2004

SYNergy consists of two, four-week day camps for gifted students in Smolensk. Students are selected to participate in SYNergy by academic achievement in English. The camp consists of classes for English grammar, English conversation, computer skills, and physical education. The goal of the camp is to teach children skills necessary for the empowerment of youth, the transformation of community by technical innovation, intergenerational mentoring, peer to peer education, community service, and cultural exploration. SYNergy 2004 will also include a wilderness experience, where students and instructors will spend several nights camping.

Yana Nikolayevna Zabanova '99

Ulan-Ude, Russia/Lakewood, CO

Participation Fee for the American Institute on Political and Economic Systems (AIPES) 2004

This year's AIPES conference will take place in Prague, Czech Republic, from July 7-29. AIPES is put on every year by the Fund for American Studies, a non-profit organization, as well as Georgetown University and Charles University. The conference focuses on political, economic, and cultural concepts necessary for civil society. Participants come from former Communist countries. Yana was selected to participate this summer and earned a scholarship from the Fund for American Studies. Her future plans are to earn a Masters degree in international relations, and this conference will provide an enriching experience.

Tajikistan:

Shukhrat Rakhimov '01

Dushanbe, Tajikistan/Chicago, IL

FLEX Capacity Building Training

Inspired by the FLEX Tenth Anniversary Leadership Summit held in October 2003 in Kyiv, Ukraine, Shukhrat and other members of his project team developed a program for workshops to help other FLEX alumni initiate projects of their own. These workshops will focus on non-governmental organizations, civil society building, project design, and fundraising. FLEX alumni of Tajikistan will have the chance to apply for the workshop by drafting grant proposals and cover letters. The goal of the workshops is to give FLEX alumni the discipline and skills necessary to implement the projects they are inspired to create while in the U.S.

Turkmenistan:

Sabina Rejepbayevna Huseyinova '03

Turkmenabat, Turkmenistan/Postville, IA

Summer English Retreat for Development, Adventure, and Recreation (SERDAR) Camp 2004

In 2003, FLEX alumni in Turkmenistan implemented the first SERDAR ("leader" in Turkmen) camp, which is an 8-day English immersion camp. Following the success of the camp, alumni wanted to make the camp an annual event. Due to the reduction of schools with an English program, fewer children have the opportunity to learn English. SERDAR not only teaches English, but also focuses on increasing confidence in the students, promoting leadership skills, environmental awareness, healthy lifestyles, volunteerism, and teambuilding, as well as increasing community involvement and development.

Ukraine:

Volodymyr Volodymyrovich Bilay '03

Sevastopol, Ukraine/Lanark, IL

Civil Society Development Workshop

The Civil Society Development Workshop is being implemented by Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) program alumni and Peace Corps volunteers in Sevastopol. The workshop is intended to help ECA alumni take active roles in their communities to help build democracy in Ukraine. The eight-day workshop will teach courses on human rights, elections, leadership, project development and management, and publicity. Participants will develop their own community action projects, which they will then implement following the workshop.

Olha Oleksandrivna Dehtyarova '01

Lviv, Ukraine/Tampa, FL

Summer School for Leadership, HIV/AIDS Awareness, American Studies Classes, and Action Development Projects

FLEX alumni conducted leadership seminars in many schools in rural cities in Ukraine, where they found a lack in participation in community action. Olha and other volunteers decided to start a summer school to teach skills to high school students, so they could actively participate in their communities. The school's goals are to train young leaders in order to pass their new knowledge on to other students, introduce American culture in order to break stereotypes, and promote sexual health awareness. The students will be guided in creating their own community projects, and following the school, will have the opportunity to attend trainings in the Internet Access and Training Program Centers.

Lilia Pavlivna Furman '02

Ternopil, Ukraine/Batavia, OH

Beyond the Borders of the Orphanage

Members of the Ternopil alumni club, United Alumni are implementing a 10-day summer camp for 29 children from the Koropets orphanage. These children will have the opportunity to take English classes, participate in recreational activities, go on sightseeing tours, and take part in social and cultural events. The goals for the camp are to enhance individual growth and development in the children. The directors of the camp will take the children on hiking trips, and lead team-building activities and music workshops. At the close of the camp, the children will put on a talent show to showcase their progress.

Oxana Volodymyrivna Nesterenko '00

Kyiv, Ukraine/Santee, CA

Participation in the Northern European Youth Forum on the United Nations (UN) Development Goals

The With Vision International Youth Leadership Forum organizes the Northern European Youth Forum, focusing on providing youth organizations with a forum to share ideas on how to reach the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) by 2015. The MDG's were decided upon at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit. This year's Northern European Youth Forum will take place in Stavanger, Norway from July 22-30. Oxana has been selected to be a moderator of the committee on Environmental Sustainability.

Darya Kostyantynivna Pichueva '02

Odesa, Ukraine/Saginaw, MI

Saturday School of English Language and American Culture for College Students

When FLEX alumni studied in the U.S., the one thing that they learned was, "[The U.S.] is not better or worse... just different." Focusing on this idea, Darya and other students are going to hold weekend classes for college students, in order to teach them about American culture. The classes will be four hours long, and consist of literature classes and a movie. There will be different topics presented every class, and participants will have the chance to voice opinions on various subjects.

Tetyana Eduardivna Poladko '00

Kyiv, Ukraine/Sharpsville, IN

Regional Session of the European Youth Parliament-Ukraine (EYPUA) 2004

EYPUA's mission is Ukraine's integration into the European community by educating youth about their opportunities, development of civil society, and the formation of a positive image of Ukraine abroad. The EYPUA plans to implement an assembly in Kyiv, Ukraine, for 45 young Ukrainians from all over the country. The assembly will follow the format of international sessions of the European Youth Parliament. Project coordinators are aiming for greater Ukrainian participation, in order to further the development of civil society.

Nataliya Mykhailivna Salo '01

Lviv, Ukraine/Raleigh, NC

Promoting the Rights of Ukrainian Migrants

Following the fall of Communism, many Ukrainians left Ukraine to seek employment in other countries. Many times, these migrants become the victims of international crime, ranging from robbery, human trafficking, sexual assault, and problems with visas and work permits. This project aims at educating Ukrainians about the dangers of illegal migration, human trafficking, and international employment laws. The project will offer legal advice, provide contact information for governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in and out of Ukraine specializing in migration, and develop television and radio programs to educate the general public. Organizers will also conduct conferences for government officials, NGO activists, students, and migration scholars.

Vitaliy Igorevitch Shmeriga '94

Odesa, Ukraine/Whitefish, MT

FLEX's Next Step

Vitaliy, an instructor of Constitutional Law at the Odesa Law Institute, believes that one of the most important parts of the FLEX exchange was visiting Washington, D.C., and meeting political leaders and seeing the U.S. government firsthand. His project is to give seven of his students a similar opportunity to visit Kyiv to see Ukraine's capital. On this trip, his students will have the opportunity to meet the U.S. Ambassador, the Human Rights Commissioner, to see the Ministry of Justice, the Cabinet of Ministers, and the American Councils office in Kyiv.

Uzbekistan:

Raihon Ashimbaevna Izimbetova '98

Nukus, Uzbekistan/Sebastopol, CA

Rural Girls Rights Camp

In Uzbekistan, young women in rural regions do not have many opportunities. Many fall victim to violence, kidnapping, and trafficking, because they are not aware of their rights. For this reason, Raihon and other program organizers have created the Rural Girls Rights Camp. The girls will take part in activities to build their self-esteem and self-image, such as drama, art, and sports. The girls will be encouraged to join clubs, and to share their new knowledge with other women.

Zulfiya Muratbaevna Matsalaeva '01

Nukus, Uzbekistan/Carson City, NV

Career Fair

In Uzbekistan, many institutions of higher education do not include career counseling, so most students do not learn of employment opportunities. While in the U.S., Zulfiya had the opportunity to take part in a job-shadowing program, where she was able to see different career options open to her. She and the other project developers decided to create a career fair that will give students from Nukus the chance to learn about an array of jobs available in Uzbekistan. They will invite professionals to schools to talk about their educational backgrounds, how they found their jobs, what their jobs entail, and the future prospects for their fields. Following this, the presenters will take part in a panel to talk about today's job market.

Atabek Kamiljanovich Rimbaev '01

Nukus, Uzbekistan/Houston, TX

Act of Supporting Orphans Society

The Hamza orphanage in Hojely, Uzbekistan, located in the Karakalpak Republic, houses 240 children, who attend classes with other children who live in families. The orphans face problems in these schools, because the children who are not orphans tend not to include the orphans in social activities. For this reason, Rimbaev and other project coordinators have designed a program aimed at increasing the orphans' self-esteem, so they can participate more easily with other children. The coordinators will provide classes ranging from drawing, hip hop dancing, American songs, drama, HIV/AIDS, and life skills.

As of November 2004