

The Exchange

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
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REACHING OUT TO YOUTH

The Successor Generation



Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs Patricia S. Harrison and Steven Lebens, Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, arrive at the Save Our Souls Elementary School in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, to present an American Discovery Center

The United States places a premium on international dialogue and education in order to increase mutual respect and understanding. The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) exchange programs have served as vital and dynamic diplomatic tools for more than half a century, promoting mutual understanding between Americans and the people of other nations. Participants in these exchanges have extraordinary opportunities to engage in dialogue and interaction that break down barriers and build on common societal values. ECA plays a key role in the global fight against terrorism, reaching beyond the elites to the successor generation — including those youths who are most vulnerable to the siren song of radical extremism. Young exchange participants gain a sense of personal empowerment. They begin to hope and prepare for opportunity. We help create a network of men and women who build bridges of international cooperation and goodwill between nations, societies, and cultures. Such bridge builders do not commit acts of terror.

This edition of *The Exchange* takes a look at how exchange programs can influence and transform the lives of young people. Our “Partnerships for Learning” (P4L) exchanges bring together Americans and citizens from other countries, working together to ensure a positive future for the successor generation. These programs help young people discover positive outlets for their intelligence and energy to become productive members of the global community with a stake in the future. P4L comprises a wide variety of programs, including Youth Exchange and Study (YES). YES awards scholarships to secondary school students from countries with significant Muslim populations, enabling them to spend an academic year in American schools. The CultureConnect program engages audiences aged 12-25 through exchanges with an array of talented American professional artists from many disciplines. Our recent four-week Arab Youth Initiative sponsored a visit by 18 Egyptian, Lebanese, and Moroccan high school students to the United States to gain a more accurate understanding of American society, culture and values.

We dedicate this edition of *The Exchange* to ECA's crucial partners – those positive “youth influencers” in the United States and worldwide who make our mission possible.

— *Patricia S. Harrison, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs*

P4L YOUTH FROM ARAB NATIONS VISIT UNITED STATES

Eighteen Egyptian, Lebanese, and Moroccan high school students visited the United States for four weeks in July to gain a more accurate understanding of American society and culture. Part of ECA's Partnerships for Learning initiative, the program was organized by Meridian International Center and followed a model similar to ECA's International Visitor Leadership Program. In their travels to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Baltimore, Maryland, Chicago, Illinois, Geneseo, Illinois, and New York City, the students explored American history, culture, and ethnic diversity through interactions with Americans and engagement in service projects. During their visit to Lincoln, Nebraska, the students worked for the Mayor's Committee for International Friendship. Their program in Washington, D.C., included an intensive Web-based ESL training, meetings with members of Congress, a performance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and a workshop with Arabic studies students at the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth. The visit gave the Arab students a deeper understanding of the American experience, including the challenges facing our diverse nation.

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY ENHANCES RUSSIAN PROGRAM



Russian students participate in a digital videoconference with Assistant Secretary Patricia S. Harrison

In June, students from predominantly Muslim populated Ufa, Russia, participated in a three-week summer program that focused on English language study, American Studies, and leadership skills. Seventy secondary school students from a bilingual Bashkir-Russian high school participated in the program run by alumni of ECA's Fulbright, Future Leaders Exchange, and Camp Counseling exchange programs.

The program included Internet instruction on the use of on-line materials to develop English language communication skills, problem solving strategies, and knowledge of American culture. At the program's conclusion, the students conversed in English and shared experiences "face-to-face" with Assistant Secretary Patricia S. Harrison via digital videoconferencing. While providing the students with inspiration and confidence, Assistant Secretary Harrison emphasized the importance of leadership skills and the value of exchanges.

The program also hosted a conference for 60 English language teachers that focused on ways to use English-American books, directories, maps, songs, newspapers and jokes to develop the communication and creativity skills of students studying English as a Foreign Language.

EMPOWERING ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES



Jordanian athletes and their coach participate in the ECA-sponsored disability sports recreation project at BlazeCamp in Atlanta, Georgia

Fourteen young athletes with disabilities from Turkey, Jordan, and Morocco came with their coaches to the United States in June to participate in BlazeCamp, an international youth sports program, at the Roosevelt Warm Springs Rehabilitation Institute in Atlanta, Georgia. The group participated in a ten-day training session that included workshops designed to teach the coaches how to better work with athletes with disabilities. The project was a collaborative effort between ECA and Georgia State University and focused on supporting individuals with special needs in competitive training.

YES STUDENTS CELEBRATE A YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES



YES students at a Q&A Forum with State Department officials

The inaugural year of the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program concluded in June as approximately 160 students returned home after having spent the academic year living with host families and studying at high schools in twenty states throughout the country.

Under the umbrella of Partnerships for Learning, the YES program gives scholarships to secondary school students from countries with majority Muslim populations for a yearlong academic exchange in the United States. The 2004 exchange included students from Nigeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, West Bank/Gaza, Egypt, Kuwait, Malaysia, Syria, Yemen, Turkey, Pakistan, and Indonesia.

During their exchange year, the students engaged in activities to learn about American society and values, acquired leadership skills, and helped educate Americans about their own countries and cultures. They enjoyed high school life to the fullest — making friends, attending school dances, and participating in extracurricular activities.

The students wrapped up their exchange tour in Washington, D.C., for a range of activities before returning home. They focused on leadership development, civic education, and the role of the media. The students had the opportunity to engage in question and answer sessions with Department of State officials on topics including the YES program, U.S. foreign policy, leadership, women's empowerment, and the U.S. media. During the discussion, a hearing-impaired Malaysian student was cheered with a thunderous standing ovation as he expressed his gratitude for the numerous opportunities available to the disabled in the United States and announced his plans to advocate for disabled rights upon his return home.

All of the students attended events at the U.S. Capitol, including meetings with their host communities' representatives. Senators Richard Lugar (R-IN) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) welcomed one group of YES students at a reception held at the Dirksen Senate building. The two senators and Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Patricia S. Harrison addressed the students and commended them for their courage in participating in the exchange. Two students from Syria and Pakistan also addressed the group, expressing their appreciation for "the best year [they've] ever had" and encouraging their fellow participants to keep in mind the job they face upon returning home.

Reflecting on their time in the United States, the students expressed appreciation for the knowledge they gained and were able to help others achieve. The students plan to share their experiences, educating their fellow citizens about the United States and applying their leadership skills.

As the effects of the 2004 YES exchange multiply, ECA welcomed another group of students in August. The number of participating young people will increase to over 400 students, including students from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Iraq, Morocco, the Philippines, and the Arab community in Israel.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN IMPORTANCE OF DEBATE IN DEMOCRACY



A group of exchange students in the International High School Exchange Program prepare their argument for a debate focused on mandatory national service.

Forty students, teachers, and debate coaches from Argentina, Haiti, South Africa, Zimbabwe, China, Moldova, Russia, and Uzbekistan visited the United States for three weeks in June to study debate and civic education. Administered by the National Forensic League in partnership with the International Debate Education Association, the International High School Exchange Program included training sessions in Washington, D.C., and participation in the National Speech Tournament in Salt Lake City, Utah

While enhancing the students' debate and leadership skills, the program also promoted free discourse in civil society, democratic values, and cross-cultural understanding. "I'll take that experience to my country and I will share it [with] everyone and I hope that the steps toward democracy don't stop, but [continue]," commented one Haitian student. In addition to preparing future leaders, the program also provided training for coaches to develop better programs in their schools.

UNITED STATES AND LIBYA RENEW EXCHANGES

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is renewing bi-lateral educational exchanges with Libya, in view of recent developments between the United States and that country. Nine

Libyan representatives from several universities, the Ministry of Education, and other sectors arrived in the United States on June 28 for a three-week program to reacquaint them with the U.S. higher education community.

During visits to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Houston, Phoenix, and New York, the Libyans met with university officials, international exchange organizations, professional education associations, and U.S. government leaders and policy makers. They were also brought up-to-date on policy changes in the U.S. higher educational system that may have an impact on international scholars. This visit by Libyan educators is in exchange with a U.S. delegation of educational representatives to Libya in April of this year.

INTERNET ACCESS HELPS STUDENTS IMPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Seven Uzbek High School students credit ECA's School Connectivity project with helping them qualify to participate in the 2004-2005 FLEX program, noting that the Educational Internet Centers' activities and Internet access improved their English language skills and helped shape their view on world issues. Students were grateful for the opportunity to discuss the program online with FLEX Uzbekistan program director Nathan Truitt and FLEX alumni through a special www.connect.uz website.

With computer technology's ever-increasing information flow worldwide, being digitally interconnected has become critical to economic, educational, and social development. ECA's Youth Programs Division has initiated several international programs to foster overseas secondary school Internet connectivity and curriculum development that incorporate on-line linkages to U.S. partner schools. These programs will enhance the capacity for international educators to integrate the Internet into their academic programs as a means to foster democracy and cultural understanding.

CULTURECONNECT: AMERICANS REACHING OUT TO YOUTH WORLDWIDE



Yo-Yo Ma: The world-renowned cellist who captivated 160 young Korean students in Seoul with his master class at the Korean National University of Arts

ECA's CultureConnect program engages and informs young people around the world through exchanges across all aspects of culture. Successful Americans from a range of disciplines—art, architecture, music, literature, business, sports, science, and technology—dedicate their time and talents to inspire youth in other nations and to challenge stereotypes by offering a closer look at shining aspects of American culture.

Ambassadors include: Debbie Allen, Denyce Graves, Michael Kaiser, Dean Kamen, Daniel Libeskind, Yo-Yo Ma, Wynton Marsalis, Frank McCourt, Tracy McGrady, Joel Meyerowitz, Doris Roberts, Ron Silver, and Mary Wilson.

CultureConnect's inaugural year took Ambassadors to Algeria,

Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Costa Rica, France, Iraq, Italy, Korea, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mexico, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, Tunisia, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

ECA's pilot CultureConnect Envoys program draws on the energy and talents of committed Americans to extend the reach and impact of the program.

NEW CULTURECONNECT AMBASSADORS



Daniel Libeskind: The visionary architect recently inspired youth in Tunis with his message of tolerance, inclusion and creativity. Mr. Libeskind designed the new World Trade Center's 1776-foot-tall "Freedom Tower" destined to replace the destroyed twin towers in the New York City skyline.



Debbie Allen: Dancer, choreographer, actress, singer, director, producer and author of two children's books, Ms. Allen began receiving critical acclaim in 1980 for her Tony award-winning role as Anita in "West Side Story" on Broadway. She also produced, hosted, and choreographed NBC's hit reality TV series — "Fame."



Dean Kamen: Named the "2002 Person of the Year" by the United Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation for his entrepreneurial medical inventions: the People-Mover, the first portable insulin pump, and the iBOT. Mr. Kamen also founded FIRST — For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology — a program to support young scientists and inventors.

COURTLAND FREEMAN AND OMARI FAULKNER



Cultural Envoy Omari Faulkner interacts with youth, ages 12-17, at one of two basketball clinics in Gaziantep, Turkey, on August 2, 2004

Two graduating seniors from Georgetown University, Courtland Freeman and Omari Faulkner, upon completing four years of inter-collegiate, division one NCAA basketball, inspired youth in Bosnia, Romania, Albania and Turkey, they held basketball clinics and visited schools to illustrate some of the positive aspects of American culture — teamwork, free expression, hard work and leadership. The envoys will continue their efforts in fall 2004 in countries in the Western Hemisphere and South Asia, Middle East, East Asia, and Africa.

In Turkey, the last stop on their four-country tour, these first ECA Cultural Envoys reached over 700 youth in two cities, Gaziantep and Kayseri, and their message reached thousands of others through national and local media coverage. Leaders of each community received the Envoys warmly and expressed their interest in increasing interaction with Americans through exchange programs for youth.

CONGRESS-BUNDESTAG YOUTH EXCHANGE CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY



Senator Richard Lugar (R- IN) addresses CBYX participants and supporters at a Congressional Breakfast in Washington, D.C.

In mid-June, U.S. and German politicians and students celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) program, administered by ECA under a Congressional earmark since 1984. The U.S. celebration of the anniversary began in Washington, D.C., with a reception on June 23 at the German Embassy where German and American dignitaries, supporters, legislators, and participating students reflected on the program's great success.



German Bundestag Representative Dagmar Freitag discusses the CBYX program with student participants on June 23 at the German Embassy

Speakers at the event included the German Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission, ECA's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Miller Crouch, and German Bundestag Representative Dagmar Freitag, who commended the program and reiterated the importance of producing a "generation of open-minded people to help us get along together in a globalized world, whose problems and challenges are bringing us closer together than ever before."

At a breakfast the next day, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Beth Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Educational and Cultural Affairs Travis Horel, and

Bundestag Representative Dagmar Freitag honored Senators Richard Lugar (R-IN), Joseph Biden (D-DE), and Representatives Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Ralph Regula (R-OH) for their support of the CBYX program.

At another event, current CBYX participants presented cultural projects on diversity and shared their exchange experiences. Overall, the 20th Anniversary celebration marked two decades of bilateral cooperation and mutual understanding between the United States and Germany, honoring the continuous support of both legislatures and the 16,000 eager students, who have ensured that the program thrives.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK 2004

International Education Week 2004, November 15-19, will be an exciting opportunity to celebrate worldwide the benefits of international education and exchange. This joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education will promote programs that increase mutual understanding, prepare Americans for the global environment, and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the United States.

ECA exchange programs geared toward the successor generation are among the 30,000 annual exchanges managed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

For more information on *The Exchange* contact Managing Editor Robin Croft at (202) 203-5108, or for more information on ECA exchanges contact Catherine Stearns at (202) 203-5107, or visit our website at <http://exchanges.state.gov>

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