

GCE Students Interview Hero

As part of the My Hero project, 5 GCE students in grade 6 conducted an interview with author of short stories Mahmoud Shukair and posted information about the experience to a website created to share their work. The My Hero project is interdisciplinary and challenges students to make a positive difference in the world by recognizing the heroes around them as well as the heroic attributes within themselves.

The students were all girls, Nawal, Tamara, Ikhlas, Isra, and Suheir, and chose Mr. Shukair because they enjoy his writing. He is from the same village that they live in, Al Sawahreh, and they hope to be successful in their lives as he has in his. The GCE students researched the author, asking family members about him and searching the internet as well as his books, and then arranged an

interview with the help of their headmistress.

On the day of the interview, Mr. Shukair welcomed the students into his home and answered all of their questions. In addition to getting to meet and interview their hero, these students gained self-confidence and valuable experience in research from this project.

For more information about work of these 5 GCE students and for a link to the video of their interview, please visit <http://www.sawahrehgirls.net/Default.aspx?tabid=157>.

GCE Classroom Integrates Community Service Into Curriculum

Ten GCE students in grade 9 and their science teacher at the Al Uhkuwah School have started working on a community service project fixing up a piece of land in front of their school as part of the



GCE students meeting with their hero as part of the My Hero project.

Students Unlimited project, which empowers students to take action on important issues through community service projects and instills values such as citizenship, leadership, creativity, generosity, and collaboration. These GCE students are clearing and cleaning the land as well as planting olive trees and some seasonal flowers. While the main purpose of the project is to help the environment, their teacher has also integrated this project into their study about the growth of plants as they plant and maintain the land by the school.



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iEARN-Lebanon

GCE Students and Teachers Participate in Seventh Annual YouthCaN Med Conference

GCE educators and students have been working on the YouthCaN Med project since January of 2008, and all their work culminated in YouthCaN Med's Seventh Annual Conference hosted by iEARN-Lebanon at the American Community School in Beirut on April 7, 2008. The theme of this year's conference was "H2O: Help-

ing Ocean Habitats." Students and educators from 17 schools across Lebanon presented their projects, which focus on a wide range of issues including: the 2007 forest fires in Lebanon, cell phones, road safety, poaching, planting trees, water conservation, global warming, as well as many others.

YouthCaN Med is an offshoot of YouthCaN, an international project that enhances understanding



GCE students presenting at the YouthCaN Med Conference.

of environmental, social, and civic (continued on page 8...)

iEARN-Morocco

GCE Students Showcase Work at National Forum

iEARN-Morocco (MEARN) brought together 70 GCE students and 70 GCE teachers from 11 GCE schools throughout Morocco to present the community service projects they implemented in their regions as part of the Students Unlimited project at MEARN's third National Forum from March 31–April 4, 2008 in Ifrane. The Students Unlimited project empowers students to take action on important issues through community service projects and instills values such as citizenship, leadership, creativity, generosity, and collaboration.

In Morocco, the project was funded by the RELO, USAID, and MEARN to empower youth and engage students in geographically diverse areas of the country in collaborative projects. The participating students and teachers have been collaborating online with students and educators from all over world who are also work-

ing on community service projects.

Beginning in September of 2007, students and teachers were trained to use iEARN's online Collaboration Center to talk about project development issues such as design, implementation, management, and assessment. Throughout the past academic year, students have been working on their projects and sharing their work as well as benefiting from input received from all over the world in the online collaborative forums. In addition, iEARN-Morocco dedicated funds to a small grants competition that assisted students in carrying out their community service projects.

The community service projects that students presented at the National Forum focused on the following issues: special needs kids, child labor, reformatory and



GCE students planting trees in the yard of a primary school at MEARN's third National Forum.

rehabilitation centers, school outcasts, model schools, visiting homes for old people, drug abuse among youth, illiteracy among women, school dropout in rural areas, smoking, and sustainable development.

The final phase of the project will include a presentation at iEARN's International Youth Summit in Uzbekistan and a student-produced English-language publication about the rewards of developing and implementing service projects in their communities.

(...continued from page 7) education issues and empowers youth to take action. YouthCaN students facilitate an online network of students and share the environmental issues facing their communities along with what they are doing about them in iEARN's online forums. A youth planning committee coordinates this annual event that brings the youth of the world together to share their work on environmental projects.

Since April of 2002, iEARN-Lebanon has held six annual YouthCaN

Med conferences for approximately 400 Lebanese youth presenting an average of 26 interactive workshops. Youth delegations from Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, and the U.S. have participated in the past.

This year the conference began with videoconferences with the YouthCaNers in Slovenia and the USA. The Director General of the Ministry of Education attended the conference and voiced his support for the program as well as his wish that all public schools will be able to participate in this or other collaborative programs

in the future. The conference was supported and sponsored by Lebanon's Ministry of Education, the Hariri Foundation, the Kamel Youssef Jaber Cultural Center in Nabatieh, the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon, USAID, iEARN-USA, and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

The YouthCaN Med conference was covered by *The Daily Star* and the article can be found at: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=90865

Educator Discovers New World of Learning Through GCE Program

GCE English teacher Mbarek Akaddar completed iEARN's online Moving Voices course this month with a GCE scholarship and found the experience to be of tremendous benefit to both him and his students. Moving Voices is an interdisciplinary project that integrates digital video-making into the curriculum and teaches related technical skills.

In the online Moving Voices course educators learn the skills for making digital movies in a secure, supportive, collaborative, and highly interactive online environment with educators from around the world. In his final paper for the class, Mr. Akaddar wrote about the transformation he saw in his classroom as he tried out a project-based learning approach.

When he first told his students they would be making a movie over the coming weeks, it was so far removed from what they normally did in school that they didn't believe him. Mr. Akaddar didn't have access to the necessary equipment for the project at

the school and the students thought it would just be another boring programme to be involved in. It was difficult to get these jaded students interested in the project.

He showed them some examples of films that had been made by students as part of the Moving Voices project and then was able to get some of the students to meet after school in an internet café, which was a difficult situation for some of the female students. Some of the students had little or no experience with computers, but once they could see what they had the opportunity to become involved in, the students became enthusiastic about making the effort to see the project succeed.

Mr. Akaddar found that the students truly became engaged in discussing and researching ideas for what their film should focus on. He even found himself becoming engaged in a new way as "my students and me played new roles as partners in learning rather than knowledge giver and knowledge taker." Even greater surprises lay in store as the class continued with the project.



GCE students in "The Story of a Source," a film made as part of the Moving Voices project.

As the project went on, the class almost came to run itself, with Mr. Akaddar feeling more like a participant than the leader. Not only has participating in the Moving Voices project motivated his students so that they are learning far more, but "this project has positively changed the relationship between my students and me." Even though the course is now over, he plans to continue working on the project with his class and looks forward to being able to do the project with other classes in the future. The video he and his students produced was called "The Story of a Source" and focuses on the importance of protecting sources of freshwater.

Though Mr. Akaddar faced, and continues to face, great difficulties in terms of access to computers for his students, he went the extra mile to find a way to make the project work and get his students involved. Now he is trying to share his discovery with his peers. Mr. Akaddar successfully lobbied to have the theme of the upcoming regional conference of the Moroccan Association of Teachers of English be on collaborative and project-based learning.



Interviewing the community about the history of the source.

According to Mr. Akaddar, "the most striking change concerned the class discipline." This class had been one of his worst, with unmotivated, poorly behaved, and often absentee students. Yet "with this class, absenteeism and bad behaviour diminished remarkably when the class got engaged in the project!"

GYSD Celebrated Throughout Uzbekistan

Thirty GCE students from the Parvoz School gave up their Sunday to celebrate Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) on April 20, 2008. Students renovated the site for the summer camp "Yoshlarobod" in the village of Vodil in preparation for the coming summer's activities. The students cleaned the grounds of the camp, planted flowers, and cleaned and fixed up the buildings on the grounds. The students also researched what people had done locally for GYSD in previous years as well as what people all over the world were planning to do in 2008 and made a presentation of their findings to inspire others to get involved this year.

The GCE Parvoz School in Fergana City conducted a GYSD week, in association with the local NGO Ecologically Clean Fergana Association, beginning on April 22, 2008. The week began with a pre-

sentation on ecological disasters in the region and the current state of the local environment by representatives from the NGO. As a result of the presentation, students volunteered to clean the City Park and local community area. There was also an essay contest on the topic "What can I do for the nature of Fergana Valley?" and an exhibition of crafts made by students from materials found in nature. All the participants in GYSD week cleaned the school and planted flowers on the grounds to conclude the GYSD week with community service on April 26, 2008.

GYSD was also celebrated with several GCE projects in Karshi, including: an exhibition of cacti (a rare plant in Uzbekistan) at School



GCE students celebrating GYSD with a cactus exhibition.

#34 organized by the students in grade 6 to inspire people to protect the environment; a 10k bicycle race organized by GCE students at the Academic Lyceum Nuristan to promote awareness of alternative transportation methods; and cleaning up the trash and planting of about 50 pine trees on the grounds of the Academic Lyceum Nuristan to replace the many that died during the exceptionally cold winter.

**15th Annual iEARN International Conference
& 12th Youth Summit
July 12-18, 2008, in Bukhara, Uzbekistan
www.iearn2008.uz**

Each iEARN Annual Conference is a unique opportunity for over 1000 participants from over 70 countries to meet and discuss important issues such as collaboration and making a difference in our schools, our cities, our countries and the world. The annual conference showcases educational technology activities, school partnerships, new Internet-based professional development tools, innovative curricula, and the collaborative efforts of youth and educators participating in the network. The six-day event also features visits to local schools, a community service project, and interactive presentations by ministries of education, businesses, and educational organizations eager to form partnerships with iEARN schools.



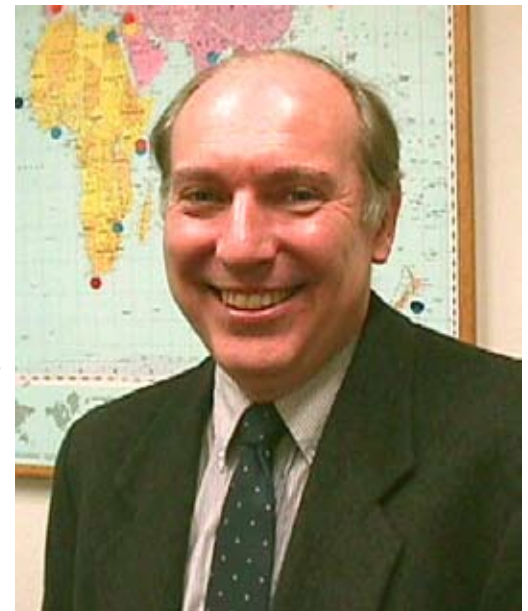
iEARN-USA



Edutopia Honors iEARN-USA's Executive Director as one of the Daring Dozen in Education

The George Lucas Education Foundation's (GLEF) magazine *Edutopia* named Dr. Ed Gragert one of its 2008 "Daring Dozen: Twelve who are reshaping the future of education" this April. Mr. Gragert is the Executive Director of iEARN-USA, which, as part of the global International Education and Resource Network (iEARN), implements the GCE program in a number of countries. On why Dr. Gragert was selected as one of the Daring Dozen, the GLEF noted, "Even as the most optimistic activists in education begin to feel alone and unheard in the wilderness, we find evidence that the ranks of reformers are growing and their pleas for technology

integration, project learning, integrated curriculum, collaborative learning, new methods of assessment are having more impact. Gragert believes one of iEARN's most important missions is promoting collaboration, both as a learning tool and an end in itself. To that end, iEARN's programs focus on combining technological tools with the social, emotional, and intellectual skills that enable strong, productive teamwork. The emphasis, Gragert says, is on honoring different perspectives, incorporating different points of view, and utilizing the array of abilities an international team of students can bring to problem solving and the completion of joint projects." Dr. Gragert is truly a leader in the field of using educational technology to connect



Ed Gragert, iEARN-USA's Executive Director, was named one of *Edutopia's* Daring Dozen.

young people and build cultural awareness and understanding, a central theme of the GCE program. The article in *Edutopia* can be found at: <http://www.edutopia.org/edwin-gragert>

American TEA Teacher Travels to Azerbaijan and Meets GCE Colleague

Nicole Boujaber-Diederichs, an American teacher from Cypress Creek High School in Orlando, Florida, visited Baku on April 4, 2008 to meet with Farida Huseynova, her GCE collaborator from School #290. Ms. Boujaber-Diederichs was in Azerbaijan as part of the Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) program.

As part of a presentation at the American Center, Ms. Boujaber-Diederichs presented her GCE project activities to 11 Azerbaijani teachers and 3 students. After sharing her experiences, challenges, and successes, she showed

some of her students' work that she had brought along.

The teachers were grateful for the opportunity to meet Ms. Boujaber-Diederichs in person after working with her and her students virtually through the GCE program. The teachers are

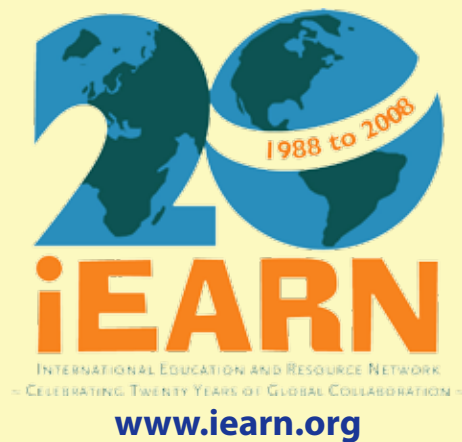
hopeful they will get to meet face-to-face again at the Annual iEARN Conference in Uzbekistan in July 2008.



Nicole Boujaber-Diederichs at the American Center with GCE teachers and students.



A GCE classroom in Uzbekistan preparing their teddy bear to be sent to a classroom in New Jersey as part of the Teddy Bear Exchange project.



Global Connections & Exchange Program is funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State