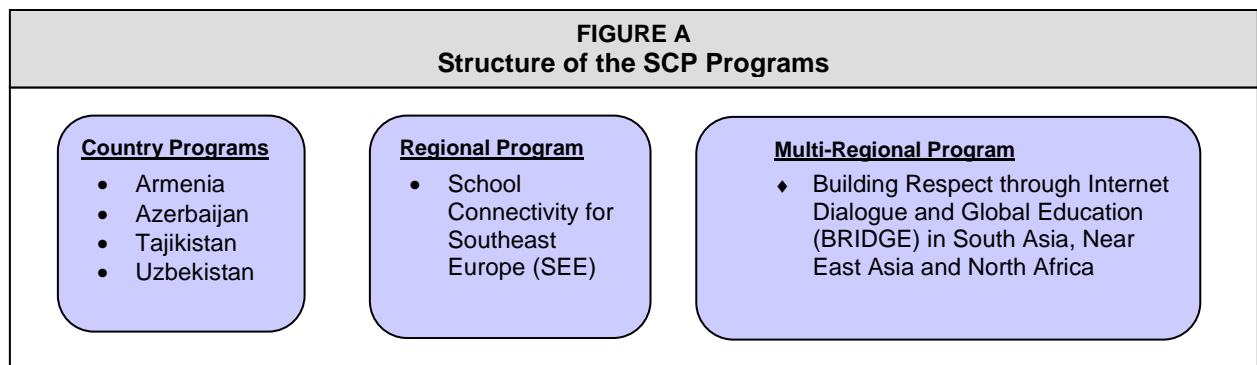# Evaluation of the School Connectivity Program (SCP) and the Building Respect through Internet Dialogue and Global Education Program (BRIDGE)

Executive Summary

June 2007

In November 2004, the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Policy and Evaluation (ECA/P) awarded Aguirre International (now the Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc.) a contract for an evaluation of six School Connectivity Programs operating in 22 countries.[1] The structure of the six School Connectivity Programs is illustrated in Figure A.

FIGURE A
Structure of the SCP Programs

Country Programs
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Tajikistan
- Uzbekistan

Regional Program
- School Connectivity for Southeast Europe (SEE)

Multi-Regional Program
- Building Respect through Internet Dialogue and Global Education (BRIDGE) in South Asia, Near East Asia and North Africa

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All of the School Connectivity Programs are managed by the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division (ECA/PE/C/PY), in the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). It is important to keep in mind that the School Connectivity Programs are not one cohesive Program; rather, they have been funded at vastly different levels, in various parts of the world, through *multiple pieces of legislation*, with different goals and objectives.[2] After the start of this evaluation, the Youth Programs Division consolidated its management of all School Connectivity Programs under the rubric of the Global Connections and Exchange Program (GCEP).[3] *Differences in funding levels and Program goals, however, did not change.*

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[1] The twenty-two countries are: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Egypt, Kosovo, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Montenegro, Morocco, Pakistan, Romania, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, and Uzbekistan.

[2] These School Connectivity Programs operate under the mandate of the Fulbright-Hays Act (the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961). Its purpose is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries, support educational and cultural exchange, and foster linkages between people and institutions in the United States and overseas. In addition, the School Connectivity Programs in Eurasia were originally funded under the FREEDOM Support Act (FSA), which supports economic and democratic reform and development in the independent states of the former Soviet Union. The School Connectivity Program in Southeast Europe (SEE) was funded through the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act, and designated as a Stability Pact project, with the aim of helping to stimulate the development and use of Information Technology (IT), to create an enabling IT environment, and to foster the use of IT in education in SEE.

[3] There are currently 18 countries in the GCEP; Project Harmony is the grantee in Armenia and Azerbaijan. RI-SOL is the grantee in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Palestinian Authorities (West Bank) and Tajikistan. IREX is the grantee

A. Program Description

The purpose of SCP is to integrate access to the Internet with cutting edge approaches to teaching, instruction, and learning. These Programs provide selected schools and new Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) with computer equipment and Internet connectivity, create fora and arenas for project-based and collaborative learning, and establish online partnerships among schools within individual countries and regions, with the United States, and internationally. They offer intensive technical and educational training in several fields. In this way, they serve as mechanisms for educational reform, foster cross-cultural learning and mutual understanding, enhance educational capacity and professional development, and support civic education, conflict resolution, and English-language instruction. In addition, SCP and BRIDGE Programs connect schools in the United States with schools in participating countries through limited physical exchanges that facilitate the exchange of ideas and act as a catalyst for future online, collaborative activities.

B. Evaluation Purpose and Goals

Specifically, the evaluation examines the following four goals common to all School Connectivity Programs.

1. To determine whether the Program has increased understanding between citizens and communities in the U.S. and citizens and communities overseas, as well as among countries, regionally and internationally.

2. To ascertain whether teachers, students, trainers, and Program staff have developed relevant skills and knowledge, and whether a multiplier effect has facilitated both dissemination of knowledge and skill acquisition among others *not* participating in the Program themselves.

3. To assess the extent to which the Program has catalyzed and assisted educational reforms, including the adoption of new teaching pedagogies, new project-based learning (PBL), collaborative learning, the use of technology in the classroom, and the development of new curricula that integrate new technologies.

4. To determine whether the Programs have laid the groundwork for sustainability, in terms of resources, activities, and linkages.

The evaluation also examines those SCP goals emphasized in particular regional Programs:

1. To determine the effectiveness of SCP in supporting civic education, community building, and community service in the Programs in Eurasia;

2. To ascertain the effectiveness of SCP as a mechanism for reconciliation and regional stability in Southeast Europe (SEE); and

3. To determine the effectiveness of the BRIDGE Program in supporting English language teaching and skills-building in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.

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in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. iEARN-BRIDGE is the grantee in Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Syria, and United Arab Emirates (UAE). Information on GCEP can be found at http://exchanges.state.gov/education/students/worldwide/connections.htm.

C. Evaluation Methodology

Given the large number of countries in SCP (22 countries in total), ECA/P and Aguirre designed a methodology that combined the strategic choice of qualitative country case studies with quantitative surveys of Program participants, non-participants, and community members (as feasible), in a select set of countries.

Several criteria served as basis for the country case study selection:

- Regional and School Connectivity Program representation (i.e., one country from each regional Program);
- Program history, duration/age, and size;
- Grantee (i.e., four country Programs implemented by four different grantees); and
- Country conditions that enable the Evaluation Team to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of School Connectivity Programs in different economic, political, institutional, and geographic environments, with different levels of Internet penetration and access.

ECA/P and Aguirre decided to conduct case study work in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tajikistan, and Lebanon.

Armenia is the oldest SCP Program and has the greatest number of ILCs and participating schools (270) in all of the country's *marzs* (sub-regional administrative units).

Tajikistan is the newest of the SCP country Programs in this evaluation study. This Program has benefited from some of the lessons learned in the other country Programs, and thus offers an interesting context for the evaluation of SCP activities as they have evolved.

Bosnia and Herzegovina had a small number of participating schools (10), which facilitated site visit coverage of the participating schools. This country provided a good context in which to assess SCP in SEE activities and the effectiveness of the Program's conflict resolution strategies, with respect to Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent history, attempts at reconciliation, and remaining ethnic tensions and divisions.

Lebanon represents the BRIDGE Program countries. While Lebanon has a history of foreign language instruction in the schools (French and English), the use of Internet-based curricula and online collaborative learning projects is not widespread. This provides a solid baseline against which to evaluate the impacts of Program activities.

In addition, **eight other countries** are represented in the **online surveys** of students, teachers and Master Trainers, bringing the total number of Program countries assessed to 12: SCP in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia-Montenegro, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; and BRIDGE Programs in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Pakistan.[4]

In addition, other primary data sources for this evaluation included:

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[4] Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Bosnian, Croatian, English, Macedonian, Serbian, Russian, Tajik, Urdu and Uzbek.

- Background, web-based research on individual country Programs;
- Open-ended interviews with U.S.-based and in-country grantee organization staff;
- Open-ended interviews with school principals and ILC staff;
- Transcripts from focus group and notes from informal discussions with Program participants (students, teachers, Master Trainers, and community members);
- An online survey of community members in Tajikistan; and
- Face-to-face interviews with students from non-Program schools in Armenia, to obtain quantitative data for a comparable group of students who did not participate in the Program.

D. Evaluation Findings

The SCP and BRIDGE Programs are achieving mandated goals, within a varied set of economic, political, and geographic environments, and educational systems.[5] The Program's multifold components and activities—relying on virtual exchanges, new information and communication technologies, new pedagogies, innovative curricula, and access to the Internet – have been the catalyst for enhanced mutual understanding, have imparted critical "in-demand" skills and knowledge, and have set in motion educational reforms, establishing a "new culture" in the classroom. The Programs have succeeded in improving the English language skills of participants, and developing or reinforcing English language instruction capacity in Program countries. It has also had a significant impact on girls' education, as well as promoted inter-ethnic dialogue.

1. Building Mutual Understanding

Many of the teachers and students emphasized how interactions with counterparts and peers from different countries, through the Program's virtual exchanges, online activities and fora, offered new opportunities for in-depth learning about diverse cultures and daily life in other countries and regions. Even with differences in the participant's prior level of knowledge, involvement in the Program significantly changed and enhanced their understanding of society, culture, and daily life in the United States. Students now understand that they live, learn, and function in a public space that is less confined, its dimensions less limited by national borders, and more global.

a. Program Impact: Broader World View

- A majority of the SCP and BRIDGE students indicated that participation in the Program has changed their views and increased their knowledge of other cultures.
- Eighty percent or more of the Program teachers said that joint projects with partner schools has helped them to gain a better understanding of their partner's culture.

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[5] Please note: Due to some differences in the School Connectivity Program activities, separate surveys were administered to participants in the BRIDGE School Connectivity Programs and those in the rest of the School Connectivity Programs in Southeast Europe and Eurasia. As a result, when findings diverge, analysis of BRIDGE and other SCP findings are noted accordingly. When they do not, SCP is used in reference to all Programs.

- Students in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, and Tajikistan all reported that their view of the world has broadened as a result of the Program and their understanding of others has increased.

b. Program Impact: Changes in Views on the U.S. and the American People

- Most SCP and BRIDGE students have favorable views of the American people.
- Roughly half of the Program teachers reported that their views of U.S. values, culture, and daily life have changed moderately or substantially as a result of the Program.
- Over 90 percent of Master Trainers reported favorable views of the American people.
- About 60 percent of Master Trainers said that their degree of understanding of U.S. values, culture, and daily life has changed.

2. Assisting in Educational Reform

Change is occurring *across the Program countries*, as teachers report actively applying the new knowledge, new methodologies, and new approaches to teaching they have learned from the Program. In many ways they are the drivers of the reform process, implementing SCP projects and participating in activities and fora. Many have incorporated the use of the SCP online fora into their regular classroom activities. Some school principals indicated that the SCP has given them the opportunity to implement changes in the classroom more quickly than would have been the case otherwise. As a result, changes in classroom culture are also evident, as teachers behave more as facilitators of the learning process, and students have more of a voice in their education.

a. Program Impact on Innovation in the Classroom

- A majority of the teachers said they have introduced new ideas and new ways of doing things at work.
- Roughly 80 percent of the Master Trainers reported that they have introduced new ideas and new ways of doing things.
- Teachers in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, and Tajikistan have begun to use the Internet to expand their teaching materials and to use new methodologies in classroom work.

b. Change in Classroom Culture

- The collaborative nature of the Program's online activities has exposed students and teachers to new, more cooperative ways of doing things.
- Teachers have introduced collaborative learning, PBL principles, and integration of IT into classroom activities.
- As a result of the new teaching methodologies introduced by the Program, the locus of action has changed from the teacher to the student.
- Teachers regard themselves more as facilitators and noticed that students are becoming more independent, self-directed, and confident learners.
- Teachers reported that the new teaching methodologies introduced by the Program have made instruction more interesting. Consequently, students pay attention in class and are willing to devote more time to schoolwork in general.

c. Administrative Change

- More than 74 percent of the teachers reported that they received support from the school administration which enabled them to integrate IT into the classroom.

3. Building Skills and Knowledge of Program Participants

Students in the SCP and BRIDGE Programs said they are developing technical skills marketable in a digital world. Students and teachers reported noticeable improvements in computer skills. These improvements have had the side effect of boosting self-confidence. As a result, students and teachers have shown a willingness to try new things and to share their knowledge and computer skills with others. The Program's emphasis on using the Internet for educational purposes has clearly influenced attitudes and behaviors on the part of students and teachers alike. Both groups of participants reported using the Internet to look for information for a class or online project.

a. Program Impact on New In-demand Skills: Students

- Students across the Programs have learned a number of new computer applications; Internet research, e-mail, word processing/spreadsheets, and online discussions are the most commonly cited.
- As a result of the Program, a majority of the students indicated that they access the Internet more frequently now than prior to joining the Program.
- Over 73 percent of the students rated their computer skills as "good" to "excellent."
- Students also reported learning critical life skills, such as team building and teamwork, as a result of their participation in the Program.

b. Program Impact on New In-demand Skills: Teachers

- Teachers' new and improved computer skills are particularly important, as these skills are strongly associated with a broader participation across all the online activities. Teachers with higher levels of confidence in their computer skills engage in more Program activities.
- A majority of Master Trainers also reported that their computer skills have improved.

c. Secondary Impact of Internet Access

- Teachers noticed that providing access to the Internet has had the added benefit of increasing students' motivation to learn English. Over 90 percent of the teachers say that access to the Internet has had a 'large impact' or 'some impact' on their students' motivation to learn English.

4. Civic Education, Community Service, and Community Outreach

SCP has integrated civic education curriculum with community service activities and has sought to include local communities in Program activities.

a. Civic Education

The SCP Programs in Eurasia (Armenia and Tajikistan) have designed and implemented wide-ranging civics education curricula and developed online resources for civic education.

- The Program in Tajikistan developed a Civics Education Textbook and Teachers' Guide in Tajik, Russian, and English. The Program's website in Armenia hosts an online library that contains over 20 civics-based resources to enhance the civics curriculum.
- The online project fora reinforced the Program's focus on civic education. For example, the Armenia Student Parliament Project, with student representatives elected in local schools, exposed students to the political process in Armenia and gave them direct access to individuals they might not normally meet (e.g., Armenian politicians).
- Participation in the online activities has changed student attitudes towards corruption; they have become less accepting and tolerant.
- Participation in the online activities has changed student attitudes towards civic participation (e.g., democracy).
- Sentiments of a 'new way of thinking' were articulated by the students, and a sense of civic engagement is evident in the students of both Programs in Eurasia.
- Across all of the Programs and regions, students indicated that they discuss local and community related issues in the SCP online fora.
- A large number of Master Trainers (87.2%) say that SCP has contributed to greater community participation in local government and that they have hosted or facilitated community meetings and events to discuss local issues.
- The ILCs in Tajikistan have enhanced civic engagement in local communities. Eighty-three percent of the community members surveyed believe that the ILCs have contributed to greater participation in local government.

b. Community Service Activities and Outreach

All of the SCP Programs use community service as a means of teaching students about social responsibility, collective action, and activism. Service to the community is an integral part of each Program and they are often structured so that activities benefit the local community, though often these efforts span regions and countries. Activities have included environmental clean-up and protection, assisting disadvantaged populations, teaching new skills, and volunteering in community organizations.

- Teachers and students alike indicated that they participate in community service activities, in large numbers.
- Sixty-four percent of the BRIDGE teachers surveyed organized or participated in community service projects with the Program students and 76 percent increased their volunteer and community service activities.
- Fifty-five percent of the SCP teachers surveyed organized community service projects with the Program students and 66 percent participated in volunteer or community service activities.
- Eighty-eight percent of the BRIDGE students reported that their community service activities increased with their participation in the Program and 92 percent intend to continue with these activities in the future, perhaps in a leadership role.

- Forty-four percent of the SCP students increased their volunteer or community service activities, and a larger percentage – 67.3 percent – intend to either participate in or lead community service activities in the future.
- A majority of the Master Trainers surveyed (86%) report that their volunteer activities have increased, that they have provided training to children or community members with special needs (72.4%), and that they have organized new activities or projects in the community (64.1%).

5. Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation

Through SCP's curricula and online activities, SEE students were exposed to peers from different ethnic and/or religious backgrounds, both within their own countries, as well as within the region. One of the unique features of this Program was its focus on building interpersonal communication skills among teachers, as a means of facilitating inter-ethnic dialogue. The online forum for community building, in particular, gave students in the region the opportunity to engage in collaborative projects and collective action across ethnic groups and boundaries.

a. Inter-ethnic Interaction

- In the online fora, the students learned about the daily life outside their home towns, and in other countries.
- As a result of the online activities, students in Bosnia and Herzegovina stressed the commonalities among themselves, as well as with students of different ethnic backgrounds from neighboring countries (e.g., Albania, Kosovo).

b. Cross-cultural Learning

Although conflict resolution, per se, was not the *primary* goal of all SCPs, it is clear that the global emphasis on cross-cultural learning has promoted inter-ethnic interaction and understanding beyond the SEE region.

- In Lebanon, for example, BRIDGE activities reflect the theme: "United Beyond Our Diversity."
- SCP projects in Armenia enabled interaction with students in Azerbaijan, Russia, Chechnya, and Turkey.
- The organization implementing the Program in Tajikistan also took advantage of other Global Connections and Exchange Program it implements in Afghanistan, the Palestinian territories, and Bangladesh, to foster contacts among young people in these places and in Tajikistan. The organization has been able to use these parallel projects to great effect, designing projects through which students in more than one country can collaborate.
- Likewise, it introduced cross-border fora with SCP in Uzbekistan (USCP); these fora enabled the Tajik participants to know and understand their neighbors.

6. English Language Instruction and English Language Skills

Enhancing and refining English language instruction, and by extension, developing participants' English language skills, are key goals of the BRIDGE Program. The acquisition of English

language skills has enabled teachers to act as catalysts for the application of these skills throughout the school curriculum. Roughly 70 percent of the BRIDGE online projects are conducted in English, which means that most of the BRIDGE students are at some point communicating online in English. (As noted below, SCP participation in other regions and countries has also resulted in improved English language skills for participants.)

a. Program Impact on English Skills

- Students and teachers reported that their English language skills have improved.
- Program participants (students and teachers) acknowledged that improvement in their English language skills has enabled them to better express themselves in the online fora.
- Eighty-three percent of BRIDGE students reported that their English language abilities have improved since they began participating in the Program.
- Moreover, 80 percent of BRIDGE students believed that the English language skills they have developed in the Program have improved their performance in other coursework.
- Although English language learning is not an explicit focus of SCP elsewhere, almost two-thirds (64%) of those SCP students surveyed reported that their English language skills have improved, as a result of participating in the Program.

b. Program Impact on English Language Instruction

- Almost all of the BRIDGE teachers surveyed (92%) said that they have adopted English language resources from the Internet.
- Close to 70 percent of the teachers surveyed said they have integrated English language materials into classes in other subjects besides English.
- Approximately 67 percent of BRIDGE teachers have updated English language curricula.
- Fifty-six percent of BRIDGE teachers have developed and piloted new English language curriculum.

7. Impact on Young Women and Girls: from the Tajikistan Case Study

In Tajikistan, the SCP has been especially beneficial for girls and young women. In most schools, girls are a majority in the Program's project groups and are well-represented among school ILC users. Frequently, more girls than boys visit ILCs during free hours.

- The Program has given a 'voice' to girls and substantially strengthened their self-confidence. Teachers reported that young women who participated in the Program were more self-confident than those who did not.

- Multiple observers reported that the Program has motivated young women to remain in school. Teachers and school directors emphasized that it is not uncommon, especially in small towns and rural areas, for girls to leave school after ninth grade. The interest and excitement engendered by the project reportedly have kept young women in school until its completion, at the end of eleventh grade.

- Young women are learning about technology and mastering significant computer skills, skills that will be increasingly in demand in the labor market. While the status of young women may have declined in general, since the end of the Soviet Union, the Program

provides many young women with a background that will aid them in their future careers and increase their ability to contribute financially to their families and to Tajikistan's development.

8. Multiplier Effects of the Program

While the Program produces multiplier effects in several areas, crucial multiplier effects are generated by the significant extent of knowledge sharing among participants, and between participants and colleagues, peers, family members, and community members. One element of this is the sheer *volume* of sharing (i.e., how many people benefit) and the other is *content* (i.e., what new learning, knowledge, and skills are shared).

When teachers share new knowledge, pedagogies, and skills with colleagues in their own schools and externally, when students share new learning and skills with peers and family members, and when participants transmit new knowledge to members of the community, the multiplier effects are considerable.

a. Sharing Skills with Others

- Students and teachers alike are enthusiastically sharing what they have learned with colleagues and friends.
- This diffusion of knowledge and skills acquired through participation in the Program occurs both formally and informally – at school, in the community, and at home.
- BRIDGE teachers reported sharing their skills with approximately 31 people per month. SCP teachers estimated that they share their skills with roughly 20 people per month.
- BRIDGE students indicated that they share what they have learned with about 18 people per month. SCP students reported sharing their skills with approximately 29 people per month.

b. Content of the Sharing

- Almost 50 percent of the BRIDGE teachers have shared new English language curricula and materials with teachers in *other* schools.
- Slightly more than half of SCP teachers (52.7%) reported sharing new or revised curricula with other schools in the Program and/or schools outside of the Program.
- Likewise, approximately 62 percent of Master Trainers surveyed indicated that they also share new or revised curricula with schools that participate in the Program, as well as those that do not.
- Large numbers of BRIDGE teachers have shared new skills with other teachers: about 57 percent share computer skills, and about 40 percent share collaborative learning skills, ways of identifying educational resources online, and English Language training.
- About one-quarter of SCP teachers indicated that they share two critical skills with other teachers: computer skills and ways of identifying educational resources online.
- Sixty-seven percent of BRIDGE students and 47 percent of SCP students share their computer skills with other students.

- Fifty-seven percent of BRIDGE students share English Language training with family, friends, and community members; 37 percent of the SCP students share computer skills with them, as well.
- In Tajikistan, community members have gained valuable skills by using the ILC and interacting with the ILC staff. Eighty-five percent of the community members surveyed indicated that their computer skills have increased since they began frequenting the ILCs, and 62 percent report that the center has had a large impact on improving their English language skills.

9. Program Sustainability

The Evaluation Team ascertained numerous strategies for sustainability generated by grantees and participants in Program countries. These strategies are deliberate, well-conceived actions and initiatives designed to underpin and secure Program sustainability, once U.S. funding ceases. These include: establishing and maintaining school networks; maintaining professional collaborations and contacts with people met during the Program; collaboration with and support from other donors in Program countries; information dissemination; and fundraising and planning to meet resource needs.

a. Building Networks of Schools and Teachers

- ASCP has done considerable work in establishing and maintaining a network of 324 Program schools and computer centers.
- TSCP has built a substantial network of schools and computer centers. In December 2004, an independent NGO named 'Internet,' was set up to serve as an umbrella organization for all the centers, thus creating an ILC network.
- The BRIDGE Program in Lebanon has established a network of teachers that spans schools across the country, both in the private and public sectors. Over the past 3 years, the Program network has grown from 30 teachers to 80 teachers.

b. Sustainable Relationships

- Eighty percent of BRIDGE teachers and 62 percent of SCP teachers have continued professional collaborations that grew out of the Program.
- Fifty-four percent of the Master Trainers surveyed report that they have continued professional collaborations with those met during the Program.
- Substantial proportions of students, teachers, and Master Trainers in all of the Programs have remained in contact with people they have met during the Program: 76 percent of BRIDGE teachers; 71 percent of SCP teachers; 78.6 percent of Master Trainers; 82.4 percent of BRIDGE students; and 56 percent of SCP students.

c. Leveraging Resources: Collaboration with other Organizations

The synergy established through collaboration with other donors in these countries has been, and will continue to be, critical to the long-term sustainability of these activities and the transition to

local stewardship. The Programs have leveraged resources – and continue to do so – in various ways. For example:

- ASCP has collaborated with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to establish and support four Regional Technology Centers (TeCes).
- TSCP approached CARE (an international NGO), at the outset, and decided to locate SCP schools in communities where CARE was already working, in order to leverage the groundwork CARE had done in promoting community involvement.
- UNICEF, UNDP, Merlin[6] and Population Services International have all expressed interest in conducting trainings in Tajikistan's ILCs.
- TSCP also received some additional funding from the Hewlett Packard Foundation, the Global Catalyst Foundation, and the British Embassy in Tajikistan.
- The UNDP funded a BRIDGE classroom project in Lebanon, after a BRIDGE teacher established contact with a UNDP representative.

d. Community Fundraising and Action Plans

The sustainability of the SCP and BRIDGE Programs will depend – to a significant degree – on Program awareness among local communities and in Program countries. Awareness can generate or reinforce local community willingness and ability to raise funds for future activities.

- Approximately 74 percent of Master Trainers surveyed indicated that local funds have been raised to support Program activities.
- Fifty-seven percent of the Master Trainers anticipate that Program activities will continue after the current funding ends.
- Over half (52%) of the SCP teachers indicated that funds have been raised in the school or community to support Program activities. One-quarter of the BRIDGE teachers reported such fundraising activities.
- Roughly 60 percent of the SCP teachers and one-third of the surveyed BRIDGE teachers affirmed that parent and communities groups had already formed to develop plans and/or raise funds for future Program activities.
- ASCP has organized approximately 20 one-day regional seminars for school Principals and ILC staff. Participants received instruction on the development of short-term action and promotional plans for the ILCs.
- Approximately 50 percent of SCP students and teachers reported making presentations to their communities as do 81 percent of BRIDGE teachers, 91 percent of BRIDGE students, and 79 percent of Master Trainers.

E. Conclusion

In addition to the findings above, the evaluation demonstrated that Program activities were often *interconnected and mutually reinforcing*, such that they achieved outcomes *across* multiple Program goals. Activities also achieved outcomes and had positive impacts that were either

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[6] Merlin is a U.K. based NGO that specializes in health care and medical relief for vulnerable people. They currently work in fifteen countries.

unintended, in terms of the original Program design (not the primary goals of a particular country or regional Program) or were *unanticipated prior to implementation.*

1. Select Outcomes Achieved Across Multiple Goals

- Activities designed to promote cross-cultural learning and mutual understanding *globally* reinforced those designed *specifically* to facilitate reconciliation and inter-ethnic collaboration in SEE.

- Program activities with different thematic emphases and goals dovetailed, and acted as catalysts for changes in students' self-perception, attitudes, and behaviors. For example, civic education activities that exposed students to the idea of activism and political participation worked in unison with new pedagogies that introduced students to critical thought and independent learning, and with virtual fora that allowed for independent expression of views. Students have been empowered by new knowledge of the democratic process, the value of social responsibility and political participation, and new skills. They have participated in and initiated new activities in their communities, regions and countries, and intend to take on leadership roles in the future.

- Augmenting English language capacity - whether by design, as in the BRIDGE Program, or less so, as in the other SCP Programs - supported the goals of building mutual understanding and cross-cultural learning. Indeed, English language skills determine *the extent* to which student and teachers are able to take full advantage of the opportunities to communicate and share insights and learning with individuals in other countries and regions, who speak other languages.

- Similarly, improvement in teachers' computer skills has enabled them to participate in an ever increasing number of Program activities and has facilitated and reinforced achievement in other goals areas, such as mutual understanding, civic education, and educational reform.

2. Select Unintended and Unanticipated Outcomes

- Activities, designed to promote mutual understanding, cross-cultural exchange and learning, and the idea of a "global citizenry," have offered unique opportunities for dialogue and rapprochement across national borders and ethnic divisions, in regions where reconciliation was not an explicit Program goal.

- Participation in the SCP in SEE and Eurasia, where English language skills development was not a primary goal of the Program, generated significant improvement in students' and teachers' English language skills. Additionally, having access to the Internet, across all regions, had a considerable impact on students' motivation to learn English.

- The Program has had an unanticipated impact on gender parity in education in Tajikistan. The Program has made "in-roads," crossed the digital and technological divides, and provided those lacking access to information and resources new opportunities for

learning and education. The girls' participation in Program activities and fora, experience working collaboratively, and new skills have given them a "voice." Girls currently in the Program and its alumnae are relying on these experiences and tools as they initiate girls' literacy projects in their individual communities, regions, and the country. Experiences gained from the Program will enable female participants to take their place in the Tajik economy and polity.

As educational reforms take hold in classrooms – with new pedagogies, new methodologies, integrating IT into teaching, and collaborative learning, students are increasingly engaged in independent work, learn critical skills, and are no longer strangers to the benefits and opportunities afforded by globalization. As a result, these students recognize that they can be more autonomous actors, with more say in determining their educational and professional goals and the role they play in society, now and in the future.

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