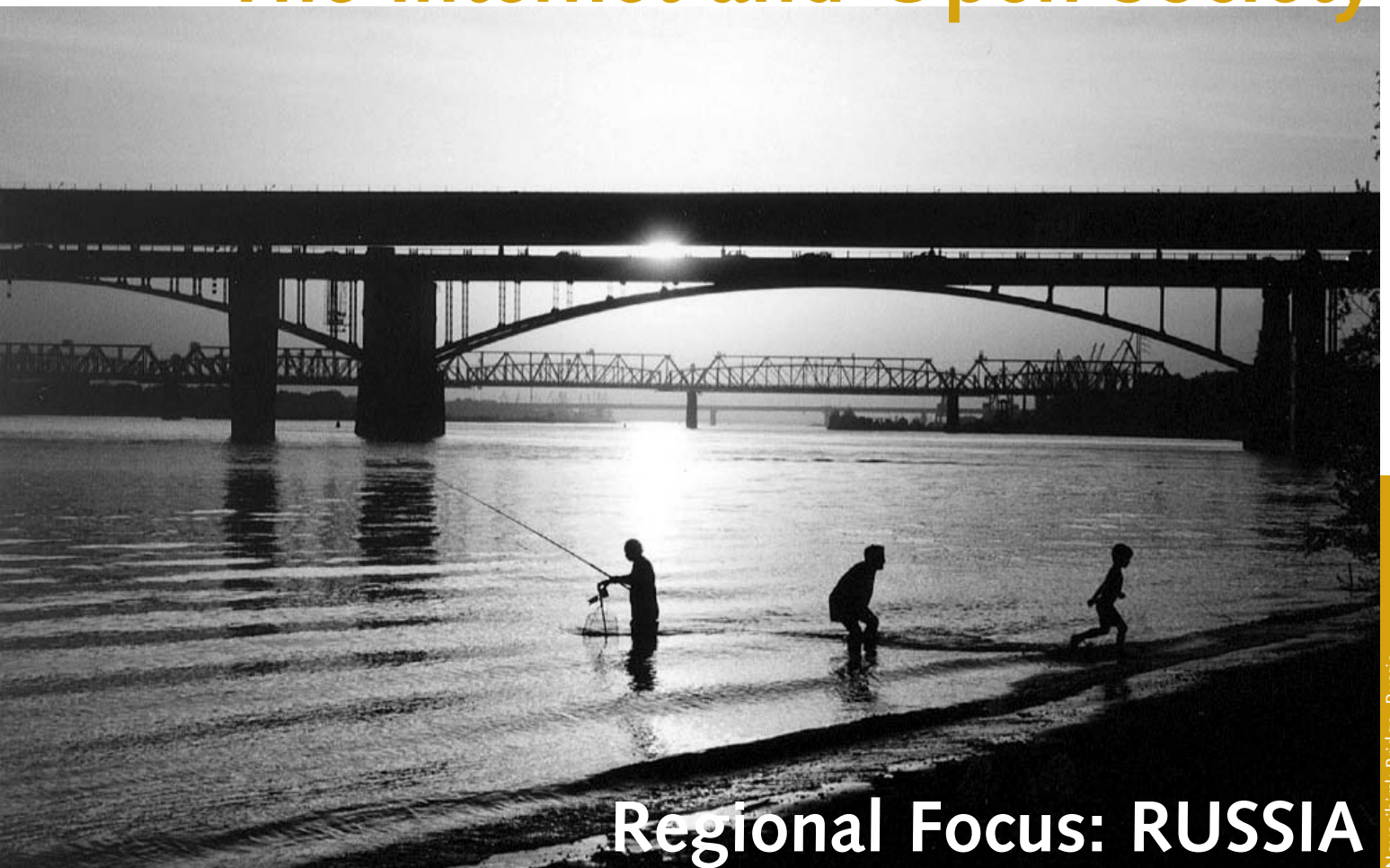


ScholarForum

Number 8 • Fall 2003

The Journal of the Open Society Institute's Network Scholarship Programs

The Internet and Open Society



Regional Focus: RUSSIA

Novosibirsk Bridge, Russia
photo: Eugenia JEITZ

Personal accounts of studying abroad
NSP alumni—where are they now?

Essays and creative works by NSP grantees and alumni

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Open Society and the Internet

According to Global Reach (<http://www.greach.com/globstats/>), approximately 937 million people will be connected to the Internet in 2004. With its amazing popularity, the Internet has brought about significant change in the way we communicate, share information, and understand the world. It has also had a tremendous impact on the spread of ideas and the building of open societies.

This is why we chose to focus on the Internet and Open Society for the eighth issue of the Network Scholarship Program's Scholar Forum. From the large number of (electronic) submissions for this topic, it is clear that the Internet has a great impact on how we share information and communicate in our current reality. To emphasize this point, we have listed as many email addresses and Internet sites as possible throughout the publication. Please feel free to visit these websites and send a message to the authors, who have agreed to share their addresses.

As the World Wide Web is becoming a greater center for information exchange, OSI is actively participating by using the Internet as a center for information sharing and discussion. In November 2003, OSI launched its new website at www.soros.org. This and previous issues of Scholar Forum can be found on this site.

The regional focus for this issue is Russia. Composed of almost 17,000,000 square kilometers (slightly more than 1.8 times the size of the United States), Russia is an expanse of many different regions, cultures, and perspectives. The submissions from NSP fellows from Russia give you a brief overview of the great variance in this large country.

As with every issue, the personal accounts section is a place for fellows to share their experiences while living and traveling abroad and to describe their daily activities. Following this section, you will find a section listing NSP alumni updates. We have included information about alumni reunions and alumni groups. Peruse these listings from your former colleagues, and feel welcome to write these people if you would like to learn more about what they're doing.

On the back inside cover you will find information about our topic for the next NSP Scholar Forum, *The Struggle for Democracy: Activism and Leadership in Network Scholarship Program Countries*. We welcome submissions by our readers, and hope that you will be encouraged to share information about related current events in your countries. Please send your articles or comments to scholarforum@sorosny.org.

The Open Society Institute's Network Scholarship Programs fund the participation of students, scholars, and professionals from Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia, and Burma in rigorous, competitive academic programs outside of their home countries. The goals of these programs are: to revitalize and reform the teaching of the social sciences and humanities at higher education institutions; to provide professional training in fields unavailable or underrepresented at

institutions in the countries served; and to assist outstanding students from a range of backgrounds to pursue their studies in alternative academic and cultural environments.

The Open Society Institute (OSI) is a private operating and grantmaking foundation that develops and implements a range of programs in civil society, education, media, public health and human and women's rights, as well as social, legal, and economic reform. OSI is at the center of an informal network of founda-

tions and organizations active in more than 50 countries worldwide that supports a range of programs. Established in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros, OSI is based in New York City and operates network-wide programs, grantmaking activities in the United States, and other international initiatives. OSI provides support and assistance to Soros foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Guatemala, Haiti, Mongolia, South, Southern and West Africa.

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The Internet and Open Society

The role of the Internet in an open society has been an evolving dialogue over the past decade. Electronic mail has been in existence for over fifty years, and its impact on democracies is still unclear to most. Will communication via the World Wide Web make the world smaller and bring people

together? What is the effect of connecting a student from a village in China to a teacher in London? Will governments feel threatened by the freedoms within reach of their people via thick cables, thereby creating laws prohibiting the dissemination of information? Is the Net providing people of all ages and ethnicities an opportunity to develop intellectually so that they may compete in the global arena, or is it creating a high speed disparity called the "digital divide"? (Even the editors of this journal have struggled with the idea of publishing an online journal to be viewed by readers. However, issues of access to all regions of the world would limit the scope of our audience.)

The following authors express some of these concerns as they investigate the benefits and shortcomings of the Digital Age. They view the Internet as a tool for open societies, with trepidation for its potential harm. The dialogue about the benefits of the Internet versus equality may continue for another 50 years or so before its total impact on democratic nations is clear. In the meantime, the hope is that leaders and citizens will act responsibly by utilizing the Internet as a means to improve civil societies.



The World Wide Web and Elections: A Cure and a Poison?

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The hyper-dynamic development of telecommunications in the last two decades has raised many issues regarding what socio-cultural changes the world is facing after being exposed to one of the greatest inventions since the wheel: the Internet. Although final justification of the Internet's impacts on societal processes are a matter of future studies, some of the very general tendencies can be considered now.

Of particular interest is the Internet's potential in election campaigns and its advantages and disadvantages with respect to a candidate's re-election or first time run.

A website, as a part of an election campaign, is effective when a candidate already has an established political capital, part of which is the public's awareness of a candidate's political values and the public's attitudes toward the politician. These perceptions are based on the public's negative/positive awareness of these values. The existence of a constituent's positive or negative impressions about the politician may itself be enough to provoke an intention of accessing the candidate's website. Thus, a constituent will either support and vote for his candi-

date, or will do the opposite.

The latter alternative should not necessarily concern a candidate. Even negative public feedback regarding political doctrine featured on a candidate's website can be beneficial for the candidate. Why? First, if the website is functioning properly and is easy to navigate, the resources allocated to the web project will have been invested effectively. Second, a candidate who has stimulated voters to visit his website indicates that he is popular enough to make a constituent interested in learning more about him. Third, constituents are communicating—they are in the "open" position with a candidate, indicating that although they may not share the opin-



ions and beliefs of the candidate, they are still dialoguing about their disagreements. The latter is definitely more constructive than maintaining silent disagreement. Because of their communicative openness, outspoken critics have a potential for their views to be changed when involved in an interactive dialogue with a candidate.

Yet, a website will be of most interest to a constituent, when he or she has mature knowledge about a candidate and his political doctrine. In most cases these kinds of candidates are politicians who run for re-election.

In the U.S., an election campaign is a costly event. Senator Hillary

voting preferences are not only an ultimate result of what a candidate verbalizes, but also how.

Consequently, one of the reasons for a constituent's contra voting decision may be a result of an unsatisfied need in a nonverbal context of a website's verbal information. It may seem a paradox, but the voting decision is based not just on what a constituent knows about the candidate from his or her website, but predominantly on non-verbal information, which physically cannot be provided by the website. Sharing the same political values has nothing to do with trusting a candidate personally. A constituent has no feelings of personal connection before downloading and studying a candidate, nor does he after. What may be good for re-election campaigns in terms of effectiveness of election websites may bring no positive results for the first time candidates who prioritize virtual communication as a voter confidence-building strategy. ■

Examples of re-election websites:

U.S. President George W. Bush:

<http://www.georgewbush.com/>

U.S. Senator Hillary R. Clinton (New York - D):

<http://www.friendsofhillary.com>

Reference:

Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Shuster, Inc.

Digital Divide: The Question of Access

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The involuntary exclusion from the Internet is called the digital divide.

—Rafael Capurro

We have entered this century surrounded by endless debates about how the Internet explosion will change our lives. The tone of these discussions ranged—still does—from the apocalyptic matrix-type scenario to the perfect world prophecy. Nothing new up to this point, every important change brings about its own waves of utopia and dystopia, hope and fear. Radio and TV caused hope and anxiety in their time. Rationally, one should be more open to positions that have informative rather than evaluative content.

Globally speaking, the Internet became a major phenomenon in the mid-nineties; its rapid development being sometimes correlated with the remaking of the geopolitical map at the beginning of the decade. Both phenomena, it was argued, were among the signs of a coming quasi-hegelian “end of history”, a new world order based on the fundamental principles of liberty and democracy.

The Internet grew to the present point where it may be thought of as a parallel global social structure. It is not the only

Clinton's 2000 campaign spending was nearly \$29 million, and her opponent, Republican Rick Lazio, spent \$39.6 million. In many cases first-time candidates cannot afford to campaign widely on television and make a decision to prioritize a “virtual communication” with the constituents investing a significant amount of their funds in the website. What are their chances to succeed?

Although pointing out that “the high speed, low cost, and broad scope of mobilization that is possible on the Internet can be an advantage for political organizers, by reducing transaction costs,” Robert Putnam raises a valuable argument that the men-

“Virtual communication can hardly substitute face-to-face interaction.”

tioned advantages of the Internet have significant non-material costs that potentially may cause a decline of a political career of a “freshman” candidate (Putnam 2000, p. 173).

Virtual communication can hardly substitute face-to-face interaction. A constituent needs information to form voting preferences. To satisfy this need, a constituent requires something more than verbal communication can suggest. Virtual communication minimizes a nonverbal communication layer, disputing a fact that

global social structure, but it is the most important in the sense that it is the most inclusive. The fact is Internet has become not only a parallel social structure, with its own virtual communities, email services or e-museums, but also, and this should be more often emphasized, a parallel market.

Why is this important? One simple way to put it is that the relation between Internet society and Internet market is not at all similar to the classical relation between local, regional, national, continental, and supranational communities and their corresponding markets. To be sure, there is a fair amount of other points that could be made trying to relate the Internet and society. Nonetheless, this one seems to be, in my view, the most important. What kind of market the Internet will become is a question that could tell us something about the kind of society the Internet will promote world-wide.

Traditional media, such as TV, are powerful marketing tools and even if the Internet is already used as such a tool, this trend is not (yet) fundamental. The global network does not come attached to an existing market, rather it intersects and sometimes overlaps with (segments of) existing markets. Despite this overlap, the Internet remains different. Traditional markets, even when they have virtual components, are concerned

We were born in mass-media societies, that is, in top-down pyramidal information structures dominated by what Flusser called “discursive media”. (Information) markets were, consequently, “discursive” markets. Few had the (legitimate, trust-worthy) resources, and they set the price, ergo the access. Markets were—hopefully—regulated to leave some space for minor players, outsiders, and consumers. Things have changed. Even if the Internet begins to have some pyramidal components (remember the AOL–Time Warner merger), it is essentially a “dialogical” (Flusser) bottom-up network. Discursive structures control and distribute (sell) information; dialogical structures create, exchange, and share information.

I said access is systemic rather than individual. To have a computer and a modem is not enough. We also need measures that will promote linguistic, cultural, national, and religious equity. To have access is not only to be able to receive information, but also to be represented, to have the possibility of becoming a source, an active producer rather

tain some degree of access. In political terms, they do not have a vote.

Even the marketing slogans of the Internet companies promote the dialogical identity of the Internet. Ethically, this is what we should try to preserve. In other words, we should try to promote fair and

“To have access is not only to be able to receive information, but also to be represented”

free Internet access within the framework of the harm and “minmax” principles: minimize harm, maximize freedom. Freedom of access is the Internet equivalent of freedom of speech and press, but also of antimonopoly laws. ■

Information Society in Post-communist Countries? An Economic Approach

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The information technology (IT) revolution, which spurred the development of an information society is poised like all previous industrial revolutions, to change the way of doing business on a global scale and thus contribute to faster productivity and economic growth.

The IT revolution, embodied in information and communication technologies (ICT), made a substantial impact on the standard of living in a number of countries in the 1990s, particularly the U.S. and in the EU. This led to the emergence of the notion of a “new economy,” which projected extraordinary rates of growth in human wealth in the foreseeable future. The stock market

“Freedom of access is the Internet equivalent of freedom of speech.”

with setting prices. The Internet is less about prices and more about access, because Internet access is not, as one would think, directly and simply connected with cost.

Access is commonly understood in terms of an agent’s capacity to use specific resources, in other words affordability and availability would be the key features of access. It would be a mistake, however, to simplify things this way and to miss the fact that access is a systemic dimension.

than a passive distributor or consumer. We are very far from this goal, even if the Internet is still, due more to its structural features and less to our wisdom, democratic. We are very far not only, for example, because those that cannot read, write, or speak English have minimum access to Internet resources, but also because—and this is as sad as it is not surprising—most people in the world do not have access to a computer. They do not even have a compensatory “black market” to main-

crash and collapse of the dotcom bubble, however, dashed all of these illusions. Nonetheless, despite the current slowdown coupled with some pessimism, the IT revolution is still active. More

communist economies. Internet and telecommunication technologies nevertheless represent a significant potential for transition countries to attain long-term, sustained, and fast socio-economic

development and ultimately to catch up with developed countries. However, benefiting from this potential is not automatic: a sufficient institutional and economic infrastructure must exist before post-communist countries can tap into the benefits of the information society.

An information society and a knowledge-based economy will

not develop without high quality regulations and contract enforcement, good infrastructure, open borders to trade, developed financial markets, high quality of human capital and information society skills, flexible labor markets, suitable conditions for entrepreneurship, macroeconomic stability, and—last but not least—a growing command of the English language. Democracy, freedom of opinion, and strong civic involvement are also indispensable ingredients of development in the modern world. Appropriate policies thus need to be espoused in order to build institutions and enact rules that will spur the development of the information society. It will not happen on its own!

After almost fourteen years of transformation, post-communist countries are quite distinct in their development paths. The different speeds of adoption of the IT revolution, resulting from the different quality of policies and institutions of the various countries, are likely to contribute to diverging rates of economic growth and thus add to the growing income polarization among post-communist economies. The most advanced countries (front-runners like Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia), thanks to IT, are likely to speed ahead much faster, while economic growth in the lagging countries (Central Asia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Moldova) may further languish. The laggards risk finding themselves in the “technological trap” where, due to the insufficient quality of institutional and economic infrastructure and inadequate policies, investments in new technologies may yield lower returns than investments in older technologies. Hence, older technologies can prevail over new ones—thus undermining prospects for development of the information society.

Traditional recipes for development still hold for post-communist countries: investment in physical and human capital is likely to long be the most important ingredient of fast economic growth. Yet, long-term increases in standards of living will also depend on the speed of replacement of the old with the new. The IT revolution is likely to accelerate the replacement process. This is particularly true for transition economies. The technological leapfrogging will not, however, materialize without appropriate economic and institutional foundations. The rapid build-up of these foundations is the recipe for ultimately catching up with the developed world. ■

“A sufficient institutional and economic infrastructure must exist before post-communist countries can tap into the benefits of the information society.”

time is needed for the benefits of ICT to fully feed through to the global economy.

Unfortunately, the IT revolution has not yet had a major economic impact on less developed countries, including post-

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the net that connects millions. the net that has brought to life a different kind of reality. a social space driven by audio-visual culture. an asylum. a momentary illusion that we are not living through our first and last world. that realities are multiple and can be created. to escape from mortality into inter into net into matrix <sic!>

you can pass on knowledge (you can pass on an image or a sound), but you cannot pass on experience. experience carries a certain additional dimension of our existence of which a word itself (an image or a sound) is deprived - to paraphrase ryszard kapu_ci_ski.

hence, interacting through the internet carries a different, new (postmodern ;-) quality. to surf -- means to stroke a surface. all that lives its life under that magical layer is never to be discovered. wow! it is safe to interact that way. you don't have to know how to swim to float. it's a kind of magic. mp3!

alas, not everyone belongs to the lucky community, which btw sets out no limits for membership.. the division line is drawn by a magic word 'access'. a simple equation goes: money + will = access. the bulk of us is able to want. unfortunately, many of us are not in a position to have. so the net, despite its aspirations, remains inter alias exclusive in its character. so there still are people on earth who have never reached the profoundness of surfing. let's tie them all with our exquisite net.

immortal net @ internet.com.



Alexander SHARF takes a break from working on his website

Links to Education

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International education certainly has become energized by the vast possibilities presented by the cyber world. While studying abroad, one is inspired by these prospects. In many cases, such optimism ends once a person returns to his/her home country and starts to worry that it might not actually be possible to make a significant difference. To combat such pessimism, I decided to create a website that would be dedicated to inter-

national education and would make students (undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate) the centerpiece of the project.

The site was created in collaboration with the International Research and Exchange Board and its sub-program, IATP (Internet Access and Training Program). The address is: <http://sharf.iatp.by/>. There are links to a large number of educational resources, including scholarship sponsors, major assessment tests, international student organizations relevant for our countries, and information on conferences. To make the site a bit more interactive, I have included a section with your (alumni) on-program photos. Visit the site and witness international education first hand! ■

How to "Meet" a Guy Online

Vera PETKANTCHIN, Bulgaria
Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2003
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The Internet connected us and otherwise we would have never known each other. To me the fact that the Web is already capable of changing the course of people's personal lives makes it an astonishing technical revolution. Its positive impact is yet to be revealed to us.

O.K., the name of the boy is Vlady. I didn't meet him in one of the countless date-match sites. I was reviewing the new topics in the tennis forum that I visit regularly and there was an advertisement by a guy who wanted to find a partner for playing tennis. He had given his ICQ number and the address of his personal web page. I left a message on his ICQ that I would be glad to play with him. After a few days we caught each other online and he said: "Are you still sure you want to play with me?" I answered: "Of course, why not." He wrote that probably I hadn't visited his

site. He told me he couldn't walk after he was hit by a bus when riding his bicycle, and now he was in a wheelchair. He asked if I still wanted to play with him. It was a little bit like a cold shower in the first moment, but then I thought it would be interesting. After all, maybe not too many people wanted to do this, so if I could be of little help to somebody, that

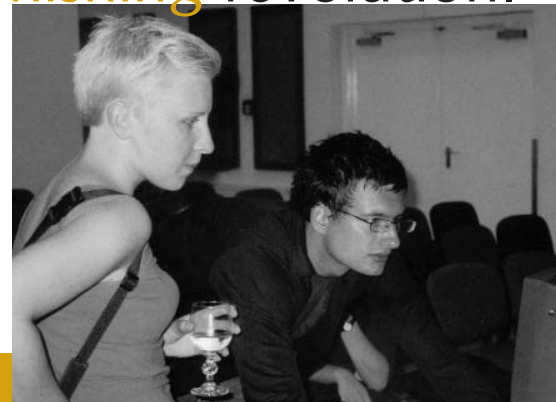
with stories about himself and his accident and a big photo gallery. Vlady told me that he had to find a proper occupation through which he could make his living because he didn't wish to burden his family. He chose to stud Computer Technologies at the Technical University of Sofia and his web-site—an interesting place to visit at www.vladi-g.bulhosting.com—

"The fact that the Web is **already capable** of changing the course of **lives** makes it an **astounding** revolution."

would make me happy.

Some months passed before we could meet in person and play tennis, but during that time I got to know him through the Internet and a few telephone conversations. I thoroughly reviewed his web-site—it is a well-crafted page containing both a Bulgarian and English section—

UEP Alumni online at
Alumni conference (see p. 22)



is a part of his efforts to thrive despite his disability.

Vlady never displayed any self-pity for what had happened to him, never blamed anybody (God, or fate, or whatever). He was always in good humor and teeming with positive attitude towards everything. One day we went to play. I saw an excitement in him that you rarely see in professional players in perfect physical condition. It was as if he had learned to value the things that others take for granted because they weren't robbed by bad luck. There was no desperation, but a strong will and ambition.

inevitably flew off to the dark side of the moon. The cinema we had visited is the only one in Sofia designed so that wheelchair-bound people can come and see movies like every other person does. If Vlady didn't have a car, there was no way he could reach this cinema on his own because of the total lack of care for disabled people in the system of public transport. Practically no buses, no public toilets, no lowered sidewalks—access is denied to them everywhere.

I searched for, but didn't find, in Vlady a stubborn refusal to accept this reality. There was no revolt, just a pur-



Vlady's website

"It was as if he had learned to value what others take for granted."

Maybe it was the spirit of the sportsman in him, I don't know. I was happy.

That same day he invited me to go to the cinema in the evening. We had a wonderful time, but as he was driving me back home, my thoughts finally and

suit to find a way to fit into things as they are now. He is trying to build a bridge and is hoping that the people on the other side of the barrier are ready to stretch their hands through the hole he has cracked in the wall.

Vlady is now training every day with a professional coach and next week is going to a tournament in Romania, and then to one in Austria. Even if he doesn't win all his matches, he has already won important points in his personal battle. ■

Dependency on the Internet

Alexandru BALAS, Romania

Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2002
University of Vermont

I traveled this past week to Poland for a seminar. It was a difficult trip, 40 hours by train, but not because of the length of my stay in an uncomfortable position in the train, or the fact that I had to change 3 trains to get from Bucharest to Sopot. The main reason was that for all this period, I was not able to check my email and read the news online. The first thing that I did after my arrival in Sopot, the place of this event, a nice summer resort at the Baltic Sea, was to look for an Internet Café to check my email. Unfortunately, for 2 days I was unable to open my Yahoo account for some reason. I felt lost. No email access for 4 days is more, much more, than I can take.

Maybe I was so frustrated because I was expecting some

email. However, if I am not to search for all kinds of explanations and accept the truth, I have to admit that for the last 3-4 years since I started to use the Internet, I have become more and more dependent on it. While I could not access my email account, I started wondering what would happen if this would last forever. What if I lost my access to all the information that

"What if I lost my access to all the information that I use every day?"

I use everyday, the emails of many of my friends, and access to other vital information that I keep online? Now imagine if, from tomorrow, we could not use the Internet anymore. It would disappear; it would not work anymore forever... I find this scenario to be a very, very scary one. ■

Electronic Identity

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Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2000
Westminster College

When I think of the Internet, the first thing that comes to my mind is email. Electronic mail is probably the most widely used resource on the Internet. Who wouldn't like to have an address forever? Not long ago the Soviet people used to sing "my address is neither a house nor a street, my address is the Soviet Union." I would paraphrase these words "my address is neither Lithuania nor Europe, my address is yahoo dot com." ■

“My address is neither
Lithuania nor Europe, my
address is yahoo dot com.”

Internet and Open Society Related Websites

The Berkman Center

<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/home/mission>
Focuses on issues concerning the Internet and the law.

Center for Democracy and Technology

<http://www.cdt.org/international/>
The International Issues section hosts a range links to current international policies related to topics, such as freedom of expression, cybercrime, adoption of laws, and access to all. Also includes facts and figures per country. Includes the following publication on-line: *Bridging the Digital Divide: Internet Access in Central and Eastern Europe*
<http://www.cdt.org/international/ceeaccess/index.shtml> .

Derechos Human Rights

<http://www.derechos.org/>
Derechos Human Rights (noted as being the first internet based Human Rights Organization) is international organization working for the respect and promotion of human rights all over the world.

The Digital Divide Network

<http://www.digitaldividenetwork.org/content/sections/index.cfm>

Includes articles, publications, and links to topics related to technology and access, literacy, economics, peace, and the UN.

Gen Tech

<http://www.shecan.com/>
Gender equity and the internet. Includes links to publications and other sites.

Global Internet Policy Initiative

<http://www.internetpolicy.net/>
The Global Internet Policy Initiative supports adoption in developing countries of the legal and policy framework for an open and democratic Internet. The project works with local stakeholders in consultative, coalition-based efforts to promote the principles of a decentralized, accessible, user-controlled, and market-driven Internet.

IDEA

<http://www.idea.int/index.htm>
IDEA, an intergovernmental organization with member states across all continents, seeks to support sustainable democracy in both new and long-established democracies. IDEA draws on comparative experience, analyses democracy trends and assistance, and develops policy options, tools and guidelines.

Institute for Politics Democracy and the Internet

<http://democracyonline.org/>
Publishes on-line works about politics, elections, and journalism and the internet, with mostly an American perspective.

International Education and Resource Network

<http://www.iearn.org/>
An on-line resource for teachers and students which links classrooms and provides curriculum.

Internet Democracy Project

<http://www.internetdemocracyproject.org>
The Internet Democracy Project seeks to enhance the participation of Internet users

worldwide in non-governmental bodies that are setting Internet policy and to advocate that these bodies adhere to principles of open participation, public accountability and human rights.

Internet Society

<http://www.isoc.org>
The Internet Society (ISOC) is a professional membership society with more than 150 organization and 16,000 individual members in over 180 countries. It provides leadership in addressing issues that confront the future of the Internet, and is the organization home for the groups responsible for Internet infrastructure standards, including the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and the Internet Architecture Board (IAB).

The Open Society Institute

<http://www.soros.org/internet/>
Articles focusing on the digital age and its impact in various regions in the world.

Public Broadcasting System

<http://www.pbs.org/digitaldivide/themes.html>
An American perspective on the digital divide between citizens and the workplace, schools, gender, and race.

Techknowlogia

The International Journal of Technologies for the Advancement of Knowledge and Learning

<http://www.techknowlogia.org/>
Includes peer reviewed articles relating to education, distance learning, and access, among other topics.

World Movement for Democracy

<http://www.wmd.org>
The World Movement for Democracy is a global network of democrats, including activists, practitioners, academics, policy makers, and funders, who have come together to cooperate in the promotion of democracy. ■

Regional Focus: RUSSIA

Stretching across two continents and eleven time zones, the Russian Federation covers more land area than any other nation on Earth—an area larger than the United States and all of Europe combined. From Kaliningrad in the west to Vladivostok in the east, it shares land borders with 14 other countries and encompasses an array of climate zones almost as wide as the planet itself—from frozen arctic tundra, to sunny steppe, to dense mountain forests. Russia's history as a state is just as vast, stretching back over a millennium and including periods of imperial expansion, foreign invasion, artistic ferment, and social upheaval. Its celebrated artistic lineage has given the world such

legendary names as Chekhov and Dostoevsky, Akhmatova and Tchaikovsky, but Russia has also kept some treasures—its folk tales, bard singers, and a richly ironic brand of humor—mostly for itself.

In this section, a pair of authors—one native, one foreign—share fond memories of ordinary moments in this extraordinary country, while others describe Russia's immense human and natural resources that have yet to be fully utilized. These accounts all pay tribute to a land—enormous in size, character, and potential—that remains something of a mystery even as it dazzles.



Buying Bread for Babushka

Adam MEAGHER

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As part of my Peace Corps training, I was a student-teacher in an ordinary *shkola* in Zelenograd, a satellite town near Moscow where all the new volunteers were studying Russian, living with local families, and learning to cope with life in the land of Pushkin, Lenin, and Alla Pugachova. The English teacher who had invited me into her classroom, Marina, conducted her lessons in short skirts and knee-high leather boots with lethal heels, and this startled me. But she was extremely welcoming and patient with me, her mostly-clueless charge, and her students were excited to have a real, live American as their teacher—though like middle school students the world over,

they soon got over that. And so it was that twice a week I would don a suit, take a bus deep into the heart of the Eleventh Microregion, and attempt to teach a bunch of restless 13 year-olds (and, in truth, Marina) the difference between the present perfect and past simple verb tenses.

One day, during a break between lessons, I decided to venture out to the local *produkti* to buy cookies and such for tea with the school's foreign language teachers. Finding it closed for *remont* (Russian words were already seeping into my regular English vocabulary, à la *A Clockwork Orange*), I went looking for another shop. I followed a muddy path through the woods to the shop, which sat on a patch of cracked asphalt surrounded by birch and pine. An old woman in a woolly sweater, stooped with age and wearing several interwoven head scarves, was standing by the steps leading up to the entrance. As I hurried past, she shouted, "*Molodoi chelevyok! Idti syuda pozhalusta!*" I turned around; she beckoned me back down the stairs and start-



Adam MEAGHER with students in Volgograd

ed talking. My Russian was pretty infantile at that point, especially under pressure, but I quickly got the drift: She was giving me her shopping list. In retrospect, I assume that she was having trouble getting up the steps, but I don't think she actually told me so; the closest I got to an explanation was something about how the overcast weather was making her legs hurt. "I'll wait here," she announced, handing me a plastic bag with "Scotch Whiskey" emblazoned on both sides over tartan. "Go on, now. It's cold out here."

I played along like a good citizen, but when I got inside the shop I froze in panic. I knew for sure that she wanted milk, half a kilo of potatoes, sour cream, and bread. Naturally, bread. But what kind? This seemed really important, since she had gone into great detail describing the bread, and most of this had gone right over my head. I considered going outside to ask her, but thought the better of it—I didn't want to let her know that I hadn't understood. I

wasn't even sure if she realized that I wasn't Russian! Dazed by this last thought, I ordered her food from the bored *dyevushka* behind the counter and prepared to face my taskmaster.

"What took you so long?" she asked as I emerged from the shop. "I think this is everything," I mumbled, handing her the bags. She examined the goods, and upon seeing the bread—in an attempt to

"This woman survived the Great Patriotic War and lives on fifty dollars a month, and I just got her the wrong kind of bread."

cover all my bases, I'd chosen a regular loaf of black bread as well as a French-style baton—she burst into thick, speedy Russian that I couldn't follow. I'd obviously screwed up, and I felt terrible. This woman survived the Great Patriotic War and lives on fifty dollars a month, I thought, and I just got her the wrong kind of bread. (Several days later, in Russian class, I learned that *krugliy* means "round.") I tried to apologize, but

and since school was out, I couldn't very well expect him to speak English—a stretch for him even in class, under Marina's demanding eye. So I stood there feeling awkward in my silence as the crush of people around us grew to impossible densities. Soon Artyom and I were shoved up against each other as the last passenger pushed her way in and the bus

lurched forward. Grinning, Artyom twisted around to catch my eye. When he had it, he declared in a slow singsong, "*Eta Rossiya.*" We laughed and laughed. His voice was warm and disarming, and hearing it, I understood. It was the first time that I grasped the meaning of Russian speech and heard its intrinsic music at the same time, as one beautiful thing. ■

babushka didn't really seem upset. "*No khorosho, usyo!*" she said briskly and tottered off, leaving me standing there. It started to drizzle. It was then that I realized that I'd forgotten to buy the things I'd come for.

That afternoon, as I climbed onto the bus with dozens of laughing schoolchildren, I ran into Artyom, a boy from one of Marina's classes. He was a good kid, and we'd chatted about soccer after I told him I liked his Bayern Munich pencil case. I was extra nervous about my Russian around kids,

Russia in International Education Markets

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Russian international education policy has contrasted with the prominent international education agendas of the American, British, Canadian and Australian governments in the last decades. Russia is lagging in the international education competition, and it cannot blame such things as Russian economic reforms. Russia should identify the education sector as a competitive asset and advantage, in the form of a well-established education system with its own traditions.

The U.S. could be, potentially, Russia's best partner. Yet the United States' new visa policies are a real bottleneck for traveling students, which has been highly commented on in Russian media. (While I am composing these lines, the TV is again reporting the tightening of U.S. visa regulations in contradiction to the recently signed and cheerfully declared agreement between Bush and Putin on easing visa regulations.) Though U.S. campuses still attract international undergraduate and graduate students, the competition in the international education marketplace is growing and the trend is not in favor of America. Ultimately, with frus-



The Motherland (*Rodina*) statue, centerpiece of the Battle of Stalingrad memorial complex at Mamaev Kurgan in Volgograd photo: Adam MEAGHER

trating visa refusals, most commercial sectors of education—the one combining leisure and sightseeing such as ESL programs—may exclude America from their portfolio entirely.

field, natural sciences, could be a strong area for Russia in the international education market. American schools could be enriched by incorporating Russian methods of teaching subjects such as physics and mathematics. Likewise, Russians would benefit through educational exchanges with other countries

to suggest the contribution by Muskie/FSA alumni to this community. To gather further thoughts on this subject, I am initiating a forum on my site www.nurgaliev.com: “What can American university alumni recommend to Russia regarding education reform and study abroad programs?”

As far as priorities in Russian governmental international education policy, I would recommend that Russia:

- Expand traditional markets in Africa, Asia and Latin America on market based principles, offering high quality/price ratio education;
- Build new brands of study abroad and academic exchange programs in Russia, especially in the fields in which Russian schools have traditionally been strong;
- Establish a public board of experts—including the graduates of foreign universities—to analyze modern tendencies in the education system and to work out independent recommendations for the Ministry of Education and the government;
- Offer a tax cut for Russian funds investing in international education; and
- Use public funds, philanthropic resources, and private funds to sponsor international education.

At a time like this—when my television just reported that the Bush administration approved a \$30 million payment to the informant who led to Saddam Hussein's two sons—a fragment from Senator J. William Fulbright is more than relevant. “Educational exchange can

turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations. Man's capacity for decent

behavior seems to vary directly with his perception of others as individual humans with human motives and feelings, whereas his capacity for barbarism seems related to his perception of an adversary in abstract terms, as the embodiment, that is, of some evil design or ideology.”■

“Russia should identify the education sector as a competitive asset and advantage.”

With this trend in international education, Russia may have an opportunity to strengthen its programs. One

learning from them market economy and principles of western democracy.

In order to strengthen Russian programs, graduates of U.S. Government-sponsored programs—like myself—are an underestimated asset for governmental consulting and for promoting study abroad programs in schools. I would like

The Russian “Province”: Siberia Today

Eugenia JEITZ, Russia

Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2000
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I was born and live in Siberia—in the city of Novosibirsk, known for its heavy frosts and temperatures that sometimes get to negative 40-50 °C in winter. Siberia has always been and will be my home no matter where I live and

“Siberia has always been
and will be my home.”

work, and its problems, those of the largest region in Russia, are really important to me.

When you come to Moscow and mention that you are originally from Siberia, you confront the mentality of the Russian capital inhabitant: “Well, Siberia, it’s wild, it’s dirty, it’s poor, it’s far away, I don’t even know where it is.” To be frank—it is quite far away, a four-hour flight from Moscow to Novosibirsk, it’s not that financially stable, and we have bad roads and low incomes. However, we also have great scientific potential and an immense amount of natural resources: oil, gas, large areas of forests. Many economic analysts are convinced that Siberia has more potential than the European part of Russia to be the leading region to help the country develop. So why is it that this region, which could lead Russian development, has financial problems and cannot manage to help the country? Let me mention just two important points.

Redistribution of financing: Each region has its own budget, defined by the federal government. Since the majority of capital is located in the Moscow region (different sources note between 80-95%), the low level of development

in the regions is not surprising. These numbers prove that in other regions, including Siberia, financing is insufficient. In addition to potential, which Siberia has, development demands a good material base to engage this potential and make it work.

Even with the low level of financing outside of Moscow, Siberian industrial production is 10-11% of industrial production in the whole of Russia, and it is constantly growing (between 10 - 11% per year). The economic growth of Siberia is better than the average growth in Russia (106.3% in Russia as a whole and 108.4 % in Siberia). [Sources: Ministry of Economic Development and Trade in the Russian Federation, Novosibirsk Regional Committee of State Statistics] The

goal that Russia has now—to double GDP in the next year—can become a reality if Siberia becomes economically independent and takes on a leadership role in state-wide development. Economic independence will help Siberia implement the findings of Siberian scientists in Russian (and specifically Siberian) industry. Currently Siberian institutes are forced to sell new technologies to Japan, China, Germany, and USA in order to

special treatments, looking at the same time for new oil-fields and coal-fields.” Siberia will be much better off if it implements new scientific technologies and can thus offer the international oil market better quality (and higher-priced) natural products. Siberia also needs to concentrate on selling its natural resources domestically. By securing the domestic oil market, the producers of oil and gas will not be forced to depend on the constraints of the international market.

In spite of poor financing and a lack of economic independence, Siberia is developing. Living in Novosibirsk, the major city of western Siberia, I notice these changes constantly. After being away for a year in 2000-2001, I didn’t recognize my city, as so many changes had occurred. The middle class is growing, the restaurant and construction industries are developing, we have international art festivals, and Siberian companies are making more international connections.

I am only hoping that these changes will continue and expand, and that the relationships Siberian companies have developed with their international counterparts will be mutually beneficial in both the short- and long-term. I conclude with the saying of world-renowned scientist Mikhail

“Why is it that this region, which could lead Russian development, has financial problems and cannot manage to help the country?”

exist. It is not efficient to develop only the natural resources sector, or to sell these natural resources in their raw form, as Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former chair of the energy company Yukos, supports: “We will sell what we have now, technology develops fast and in 10 years we’ll be able to sell the rest with

Lomonosov: “Russian might will increase by Siberia.” We all know and hope that Siberia will not be ignored, but given what it takes to make positive changes—not only for European Russia, but also for the provinces that feed the Russian economy and don’t get enough of the credit for their work.■

Easter in Russia

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Feeling in the dark for the key on the shelf and quietly slipping out the door. It's almost midnight. Click-click of the front

“Crowds and crowds of people are blowing out candles, drinking in the streets, jumping into their cars and driving off.”

gate, and the huge apartment block is behind me. The piercing wind thrills me. The city is chilly inside and out: it's minus 4 °C on April 26. Turn the corner, and there's the old church. It has survived all the changes and transitions and now solemnly stands out among the herd of modern buildings. Tonight there's

a covey of silent, fussy shadows glued to it—it's Easter. A stream flows in and out of the church, all whispers and shuffling of boots and coats. Feeble candle lights dance in circles around the porch. Mine is dancing too, in the wind, in my hand, in my eyes. Ten more minutes, and bells will ring and the religious procession will start. Just ten minutes to stand there close to people with lit-up eyes, feeling the warmth of their breath, hardly coping with the rush of thoughts through my head. All my nears and

dears, the ones I pray for, even the dreams that excite my mind and soul -everything is there right now, in that small, bright, pointed flame, so scalding and so fragile. Ding-dong, start the bells. Ding-

dong, in the air, in the eyes, in my heart, in the whole world for me and for these people. We let the clergy pass and follow them around the church, stumbling in the dark, but quiet and desperately trying to protect the candle flames. Ding-dong, and a shoulder touches mine. Ding-dong, it's been a long history of marching in order, in the dark, next to strangers with lit-up faces and clenched lips. We are back in front of the porch. Happy Easter, seven times! Happy Easter, a hundred times, before shadows start walking out—out of the church gate and into the supermarket. Crowds and crowds of people are blowing out candles, drinking in the streets, jumping into their cars and driving off to a party, shopping, or eating next to the church porch. I walk back home. I'm relieved and weary, smiling and bitter; still, I love this country. ■

A View from the Other Side

Inna SEVASTIANOVA, Russia
Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2000
Bard College

The most common image of Russia is based on traits of its European territory and on its ever-strengthening ties with Europe and America. Russia's borders, however, stretch eastward to a place that once actually considered building a bridge to Japan. Our Russian Far East, although a part of Russia, is east even of Siberia. Due to our location in the Asia-Pacific region, we have a very different world view. Our region is home to two-thirds of the world's population and two out of three main global power centers (North America and Eastern Asia).

These two factors make cooperation inevitable between the Russian Far East and Northeast Asia, since such cooperation is key for our eventual inclusion in the world political



The Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Moscow
photo: Adam MEAGHER

Russia Related Websites

American Chamber of Commerce in Russia

www.amcham.ru

Offers up-to-date news on the business and investment climate in Russia from an American perspective.

Carnegie Moscow Center

www.carnegie.ru

Home page for the policy research group addressing Russia and the former Soviet republics. Part of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Friends & Partners

www.friends-partners.org

A pleasant site with a personable feel, started by two information scientists (one American and one Russian) and dedicated to promoting Russian-American cultural, educational, and business contacts.

Johnson's List

www.cdi.org/russia/johnson

A daily email newsletter with information

and analysis about contemporary Russia from a wide range of sources, as well as a host of useful links.

Moscow-Helsinki Group

www.mhg.ru

Official site of the groundbreaking human rights group.

The Moscow Times

www.moscowtimes.ru

The premier English-language newspaper in Russia, with a focus on Russian politics, trade, and foreign affairs.

rbcmp3.com

www.rbcmp3.com/store/dept.asp?dept%5Fid=4000

"Russian Rock" section of an online music store. Features a wide array of both classic bands and groups relatively new to the scene. You can listen to songs in MP3 format, free of charge.

Russian Painting

www.rollins.edu/Foreign_Lang/Russian/ruspaint.html

An online history of Russian visual art, created by students enrolled in the "History of Russian Painting" course at

Rollins College and their professor, Dr. Alexander Boguslawski.

Russian State Library

www.rsl.ru/eng/defengl.asp

English version of the official site of the former Lenin Library in Moscow.

Russian Foods.com

www.russianfoods.com

Mmmmm...

The St. Petersburg Times

www.sptimesrussia.com

Sister publication of the Moscow Times.

The State Hermitage Museum

<http://www.hermitagemuseum.org>

Official site (spruced up by IBM) of the State Hermitage Museum at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Includes a searchable digital library of the museum's collections.

Vladivostok News

vn.vladnews.ru

Online edition of the Russian Far East's only English-language newspaper.

WWW.RU

www.ru/eng

English language version of the popular Russian website directory.

and economic "web". However, significant political, economic and cultural differences, as well as the geographical remoteness of the countries, hinder integration into international organizations that usually lead the way to global inclusion. As paradoxical as it might seem, a practical plan for Eastern Asia integration resulted from the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98. That experience demonstrated the effectiveness of countries uniting to combat the crisis. However, this same event also showed the strong rivalry for leadership between Japan and China.

Such rivalries often surface in Northeast Asia, since the interests of four very influential countries (the USA, Russia, China, and Japan) converge here. Russia's Far East has a unique relationship with each of these countries. Relations with the U.S. are dominated by security concerns, not by the more typical economic ones. Politics is also the main aspect of

Russian-Chinese relations, although Chinese and Japanese interests also center on natural resources, namely oil and gas. Relations between the Russian Far East and the Koreans are a special case as well. Plans are underway to build a railway through both Koreas that is to be connected with the Trans-Siberian railroad and will (if everything is settled with North Korea in the near future) provide a much faster and cheaper means of transporting goods to Europe.

This proposed railroad clearly suggests what we are, which is a part of Russia situated in Asia; really, Russia's

"This proposed railroad clearly suggests what we are: a part of Russia situated in Asia."

other side. It could symbolize the path to good relations among the countries of the area, and somewhere here—spiritually in people's minds, and materially in trains—Asia and Europe do become closer. ■

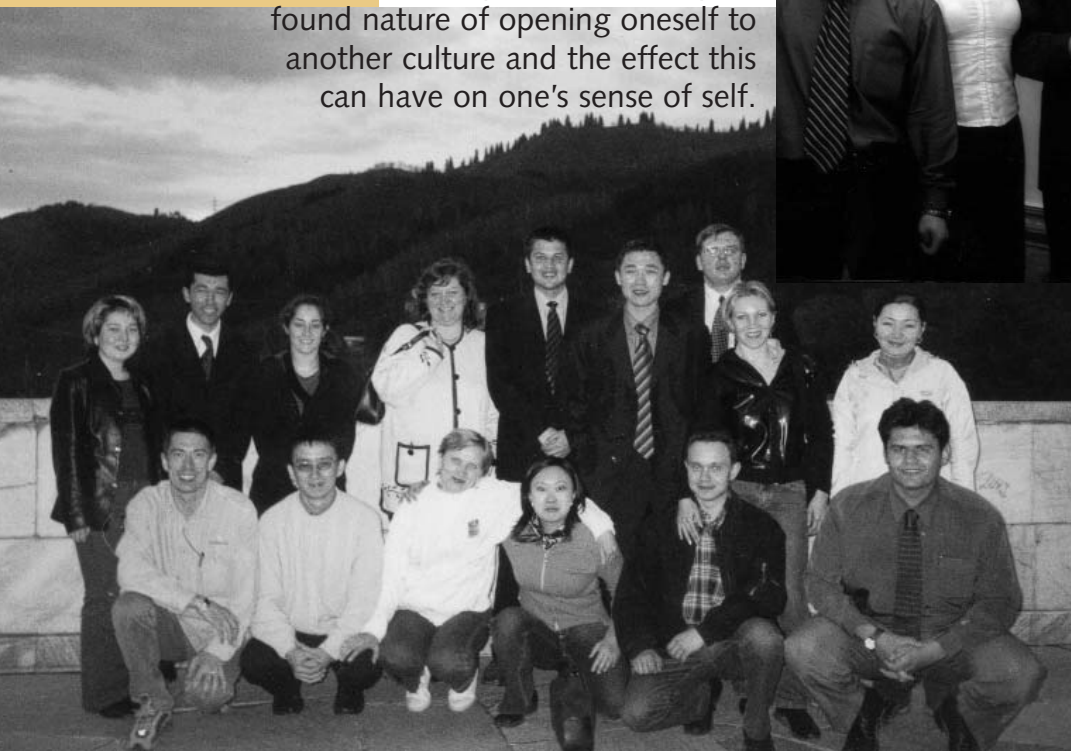
Personal Accounts

Grantees' stories of living and studying abroad

Participants in the Network Scholarship Programs come from an enormous diversity of countries and cultures, but they all share the experience of living and studying in a foreign culture. The submissions in this section express the often profound nature of opening oneself to another culture and the effect this can have on one's sense of self.



Above:
Muskie/FSA and UEP
Fellows meet with George
Soros in Dushanbe,
Tajikistan
Photo: Nigora SAFAROVA



Left:
Muskie/FSA Pre-departure
orientation in Almaty,
Kazakhstan

Sweat Lodge Ceremony

Igor LESKO, Slovakia
Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2001
Bard College
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I was sitting on the pavement of a big college parking lot, waiting impatiently for the arrival of my Native American friend. She was supposed to come pick me up at five o'clock, but she was late again. It wouldn't really have mattered to me to wait longer if it hadn't

been so freaking cold. I had felt very anxious throughout the whole day in the light of the evening event.

There she was. A small blue Chevrolet truck appeared at the entrance to the lot. It was an '88 model, still in very good shape. She got it almost for nothing from her hippie brother who lived in Woodstock.

She stopped right next to me. I gave her a big smile.

"Sorry Igor, you know that time doesn't mean the same to me as it does for you, and the rest of your society."

"It is fine, Gayle," I mumbled while I was getting into the car. "I got used to the false justifications of your actions. I wonder if you use your culture like that all the time, or if it is only with me." Gayle burst out laughing. She liked to tease me a lot, but I wasn't an innocent angel either.

"So are you ready to sweat and suffer?"

“Well, Gayle, as long you are going to suffer with me, it will be a pleasure.”

We took off from the parking lot immediately, heading towards the town of Woodstock.

After a quick stop at Gayle’s brother’s house, we took off to the actual place of the ceremony. As we approached the house on the top of the hill I could already see the flames of the

b u r n i n g
fire.

“Hi Gayle,
nice to see
you again,”
somebody
shouted.

“So are you ready to sweat and suffer?”

“Hi Russell. This is my friend Igor that I was telling you about. He is going to join us tonight.”

“Hello Igor, it is nice having you here.” Russell said. “Get ready everybody. The ceremony starts in five minutes.”

My teeth were shaking, as I was taking off my clothes and my bare feet touched the ground covered with a soft snow. Getting inside the lodge wasn’t easy at all. I had to stoop to my knees. My head was almost touching the ground, but I finally made my way inside. Russell the leader of the ceremony signaled to the guy outside to bring the heated stones from the fire into the lodge.

“Mitakuye Oyasin.” Russell suddenly broke the silence.

“Mitakuye Oyasin.” Replied the rest.

I didn’t know what these words meant.

“Igor!” Russell started to speak. “Mitakuye Oyasin is a Lakota phrase. It means—we are all connected. With this phrase, we connect with all the living beings on earth, and we form a powerful alliance. The ceremony has four parts. We sing and pray and towards the end we smoke a pipe. We express our joy of being reborn again.”

Once the stones were inside, Russell indicated to close the door to the lodge. There was complete darkness. I started to move around my seat. My imagination was my biggest enemy at that time. The singing began. My mind was just about to explode. Every attempt to take a deep breath was awarded with a bigger portion of the hot steam that I had to swallow. I wanted to get out

“Let me out,” I screamed. “I can’t breathe.”

The door was opened, and the singing stopped. I was trying

Igor LESKO, UEP 2001,
with Bishop Desmond
Tutu and two lecturers in
South Africa



to catch the stream of fresh air that started to flow into the lodge.

“Don’t worry brother”, Russell started to speak. “If you have problems breathing, shout to open the door. Remember that we support each other. We formed an alliance with the whole earth. Sing with us. Doesn’t matter

that you don’t know the words. Sing with your heart.”

The ceremony went on again. The door was closed. This time, I was singing with them, and when I couldn’t breathe I sang even louder. I thought that I was the loudest person in the lodge. Then the pipe was lit.

Russell explained to me that the tobacco represents the prayers that we have done in the lodge. The smoke from the burning tobacco brings our prayers to the Great Spirit. We smoked the pipe, sang and then Russell said a few words of appreciation at the end.

We slowly got out of the lodge, and emerged beneath a sky filled with stars, with the reassuring presence of the moon as well.

“So.” Gayle asked me. “Did you like the ceremony?”

“Yes, even though it was difficult.”

“Would you like to go again?”

“Definitely. But this time, I would like to bring a friend of mine as well.”

“Do you want your friend to undergo a journey of spiritual purification?”

“Not at all, Gayle. I want him to suffer as much as I did tonight.” ■

Journey across the USA

Antonia SULKHOVA, Russia
Edmund S. Muskie/FREEDOM
Support Act Fellowship Program, 2001
Northern Arizona University

The U.S. resembles a bright mosaic of a kaleidoscope. Before I came to the Grand Canyon State, I expected to see red rocks,

the desert torched by the sun, and, of course, cacti. Mysterious names of Native American tribes: Anasazi, Sinaqua, Navajo and Havasupai stirred my imagination. Imagine my surprise when I arrived at my final destination of Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, and I stumbled on pine trees instead of cacti; volcanoes instead of flat deserts and was showered by

the abundant rains of an August monsoon season! Or, turn the kaleidoscope and look at California, for example, where I am doing my practical training now—the oceanic views with palm trees blend with mountains, grassy meadows of Yosemite National Park, and vineyards of Napa Valley. In expanding, hard-working LA where even Starbucks has a drive-through,

you can hardly see any pedestrians; whereas, walkers bustle in hippyish San Francisco and sun-tanned Santa Barbara.

My travels across the States (I've been lucky to visit New York, Boston, Washington DC, Chicago, Miami, Dallas and Houston, Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Indianapolis, Columbus, and Las Vegas) allow me to experience the changing landscapes, and also appreciate a variety of unique opinions. My school, a melting pot of students from all over the world, taught me tolerance of different views. I still experience this wonderful feeling of enjoying real academia, when fresh minds are boiling with ideas and we can talk all night long about so many things in the world: the Kyoto protocol

types of democracy; and the challenges of Russia's economic development. Who knows, one day my new interests might help me switch my career from working for big corporations to doing environmental projects with the UN or another international organization.

My studies in the U.S. have definitely changed me. I've become more independent and analytical. Professors in the U.S. do not run after students, cursing, reminding, or begging them to complete a project. I knew that it was solely my responsibility to finish all assignments on time. In other spheres, I surprised myself very soon with how easily I learned to manage my finances, do electronic banking, and even drive (welcome to LA, you



Antonia SULKHOVA
at graduation

“I still experience this wonderful feeling of **real academia**, when fresh minds are **boiling** with ideas and we can talk **all night long**.”

and LA photochemical smog; sustainable development; oil prices and oil wars; women in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Russia; religions and fundamentalism;

barely survive without driving here). During my practical training with British Petroleum, I was surrounded by so many goal-oriented coworkers that I knew that

I had to achieve good results on my project. I had to challenge myself with multitasking. I clenched my teeth and went ahead. I learnt that you must be strong, independent, and inquisitive, and that if you want something really badly and try hard enough, you will be able to achieve it. ■

A Different Taste of America

Alexander GOLUB, Kazakhstan
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This past year made a powerful impression on me. The program was not only a great opportunity to study, but it also allowed me to have a lot of non-academic experiences that I would not have had elsewhere. Apart from my wonderful life at Bard College, friends, and traveling, I consider my winter vacation to be the greatest experience I had while in the US. I stayed in a Russian hostel on Brighton Beach, in New York City's Russian immigrant area, and became

familiar with what many immigrants face once they come to the US. I met and hung out with people from all over the former Soviet Union, each with their own history of emigrating and different views of their American realities. I met a lot of former artists, engineers, a musician, and a businessman, many of whom now had to work either in construction or as waiters at restaurants and cafes. It was a sad picture—seeing how these people's abilities and intelligence were being wasted. In any case, that was the price they paid for the freedom the U.S. provided them. I appreciated this experience because I saw it with my own eyes and in a small way felt a part of the historic process of immigration. ■



Soon Everything Changed

Liena LINSKAYA, Russia

Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2002

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Upon returning from the U.S., I experienced severe reverse culture shock. On my second day home, I went to my university to find out what I should do there. I walked into the building where my department is located, where I used to go almost every day of my student life. Now, with two weeks left before finals week, I felt like a stranger. The university lived its own life as usual for that part of the semester, but I was apart from it. I met students from my group and found out that they had changed—they were all different now, and they said that I was different, too. I noticed that they had become more serious, more concerned with their studies and their futures. Most of them were really engrossed in finding an internship, which is mandatory at our university for all students. This was all completely natural, but I still felt like these weren't the same people I'd studied with before.

There had also been staff changes in our department. There were a few new professors whom I didn't know, plus the head of the department was off doing research, and another professor had taken her place in the meantime. I think it's meaningless to write about all the small changes that occurred while I was in America, but altogether it left me with the strong impression that this wasn't the place I had left a year before. I suddenly realized that life here had not stopped when I left for the U.S. Many things were going on, many things were changing all the time. Life was not the same anymore. I wanted to go back, but it was impossi-



Liena Linskaya with Japanese exchange students

ble. I felt like I would never become a part of this life again.

Soon everything changed. One day I got a call from the head of my department, asking me to participate in the International Student Conference being held by my university. The conference was the first step in a program of cooperation between my university and Tokai University in Japan. During these days, I felt enthusiastic for the first time since I'd returned. There was a lot to do to prepare for the conference. Together with a group of students, I had to make a schedule for the conference and think about how to occupy the participants' free time, where the best places to take our guests would be, etc. In this situation, my experience of being an international student turned out to be very useful. Once the preparation for the conference started, my feeling of being "out of the life-stream" started gradually disappearing, though it took almost a month for me to feel at home again.

This experience helped me to discover something new about myself. I

"My fellow students said I had changed."

kept thinking about how my fellow students had said that I had changed. I thought about how I would have handled all of this a year ago, and I realized that it was true—I had changed. I had become more open, and I had learned to accept other people's perspectives, to look at the situation from other people's points of view. The conference lasted for only a week, but we all became good friends, we learned a lot about each other's cultures, and we became interested in cooperation between our universities. I realize now that the experience I *had* in the U.S. is not over—it has become a part of me, and from now on it will influence everything I do. ■

Sharifa DJURABAEVA, Muskie/FSA 2002 fellow, with Diana PARKS and Kim LEBLANCK in Lassen Park, California. Sharifa did her internship with the TEA Program at American Councils for International Education.



Finding Their Own Way

Jan VANCO, Slovakia

Undergraduate Exchange Program, 1997

Roosevelt University

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After my stay in the USA, I finished my degree at my home university in 2000 and became a teacher of English and German language. My U.S. experience helped me during my American Studies seminars where we discussed American society and the daily lives of Americans.

“It is easy to state ‘I do not like America because it is present everywhere.’”

In these seminars, the students and I talked about various topics such as minorities, social structures, religion, environment, political life, and anti-Americanism. Over the course of several weeks it was interesting to discuss and see the reactions of students and young people, some of whom had been to the U.S. and the West many times. We were too young to experience all the injustices of living under the communist regime, which is why many of

the younger generation had no problem disagreeing with the policies of the United States. An anti-American feeling was present in our society even before Bush and his agenda, before Clinton; it had never faded out. The servants of the former communist regime have kept it alive since the Cold War, and unfortunately, it has been planted in the minds of the present generation.

There is a tendency by the young to over generalize without getting the information from both sides. It is comfortable. It is easier to state “I do not like America because it is present everywhere.” They would use for example the presence of Marlboro cigarettes; but what should also be said is “we want to smoke

Marlboro; we want to watch American movies because now we have the choice between them, French, Czech, and even Slovak films.” I know it is all also part of the overall anti-American mood in the world,

taking into account Iraq or Afghanistan. Nevertheless, a university student must listen to and analyze more sources before forming his/her opinion. That is why it is important to read books about these issues written from various perspectives. I like that they want to and are visiting America and other foreign countries. They will see for themselves. I do not want to persuade. They have to find their own way to discover America. ■

A Day at the Playground

Madalina IACOB, Romania

Undergraduate Exchange program, 2003

Rutgers University

Her sleeves rolled up, hands wrapped in gloves, Polya Lesova, a 20-year-old Bulgarian student, scraped a bench from a playground in Budapest. Her team has already repainted four other benches and is heading towards the fences.

Polya was just one of forty students from Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Mongolia who participated at OSI's Undergraduate Exchange Program community service day. The UEP Fellows repainted a playground in Kispest, one of Budapest's districts, helping the community to save almost \$2000 USD. “I loved the community service day. I can't wait to arrive in the USA and sign up for an activity. It was the first time I volunteered and I felt really satisfied,” said Corina Ardelean, a 20-year-old Romanian student.

“After only five hours of volunteering, I believe that we made a difference!”



"The UEP fellows repainted a playground, helping the community to save almost \$2000 USD."



Croatian, Macedonian, Slovak, Bulgarian, Mongolian, Romanian, and Moldovan students worked side-by-side for five hours and not only changed the appearance of the playground but also

mobilized several Hungarian teenagers to volunteer, too. "I never thought that by volunteering we could change that much the look of the playground and have so much fun!" said Istvan, 17, a Hungarian

teenager, while repainting the fences.

"Community service is a common thing in the USA but not in my country. After we finished I was very satisfied to see some of the residents stopping near the fences and congratulating us for our work. After only five hours of volunteering, I believe that we made a difference!" said Ion Miscin, a Moldovan student.

The community service day, co-organized by OSI and DIA—the Foundation for Democratic Youth, a Hungarian non-profit organization, is part of the OSI Undergraduate Exchange Program. This year the UEP will incorporate community service work and programming as part of the overall program. More information about the community service project can be found on the NSP website: www.soros.org/initiatives/scholarship/ or on the DIA website: www.i-dia.org/en_default.htm. ■

Friends Away From Home

Olya CHINENKOVA, Ukraine
Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2001
University of Montana
Knowles@yandex.ru

When I came to Montana, I had to choose a roommate. I could live with an international student, or, someone who speaks my native language. To me, there was only one option. I'm strongly convinced that to be in the USA and not live with an American is a mistake. One will never really know the culture of any country if one does not have everyday-life communication with local people. I made friends with many international students (Andrei from Romania, Lidia from Russia). I'm happy I met

share with you. When I found out that one of my friends died (in Ukraine), I felt really bad. I told Megan about it; I saw tears coming from her eyes. The next day when I entered our room, I saw that there was a candle on the windowsill; it was lit in honor of my friend. Once, I had to return from NYC at about



Olya CHINENKOVA, UEP 2001, left, with roommate Megan

midnight, but our flight was delayed and I was 2 hours late. I was so surprised to see that Megan was not sleeping; she was sitting on the floor with the alarm clock in her hands. She showed it to me, smiled, and said "You're late!" When you live far away from your family and friends, it is very important to know that somebody is waiting and worried

about you. Even though we have thousands of miles between us now, we still are close friends. We are happy with each other's successes and we suffer each other's failures. ■

"To be in the USA and not live with an American is a mistake."

them, but I'm sure my year in Missoula would not have been full if I had not met Megan, my roommate. There are so many moments connected with this wonderful person that I could

NSP Alumni: Where are they Now?

This section is devoted to sharing the news and activities of Network Scholarship Programs' alumni. In addition to individual postings, we have included information about alumni groups and reunions. If you or your organization would like to be included in the next alumni list, please email us at scholarforum@sorosny.org with your name, gender, scholarship program and year you began the program, host institution, and what you've been up to since you finished your program. Please put "alumni" in the subject line of your message.



Far left and above: UEP, VU, and PIE alumni gather at the Alumni Conference.
Left: George Soros addresses the conference.

The Undergraduate Exchange Program Alumni Conference

Nadezhda STOYANOVA, Bulgaria
Undergraduate Exchange Program, 2001
University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire
nadyka_bg@abv.bg
and

Anne CAMPBELL
Program Manager,
Network Scholarship Programs
Open Society Institute—New York
acampbell@sorosny.org

For three days in June 2003, alumni of the Undergraduate Exchange Program (UEP), the Virtual University Program (VU), and the Bard College Program in

International Education (PIE) Program met in Budapest for an Alumni Conference. It provided a great opportunity for the participants in these two programs to meet and communicate about a variety of issues—including international education, human rights, and professional networking. Former fellows came from 23 different countries, spanning years from 1993 to 2002.

The conference allowed alumni to mix with others from their countries and regions, students from their fellowship

year, and alumni who studied in the same university through the exchange program. The 140 participants were involved in a series of workshops, activities, and speakers. George Soros, Chairman of the Open Society Institute, and Leon Botstein, President of Bard College, addressed the gathering.

The workshop also gave the students an opportunity to reflect on their exchange fellowship and on their activities since their time in the U.S. Students discussed their hopes for their home

countries and their plans to work towards a more open society.

Nadezhda Stoyanova, a UEP fellow in 2001-2002 from Bulgaria, said, "[The Alumni Conference] could be the ground for a future alumni network. Regardless of the short time to spend with the peers, the Alumni Conference was an incredibly positive effort to boost some optimism and courage among the students with OSI...background. My experience from this conference along with the participation at the International Folk Fair at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire led to the idea of organizing an International Students Festival at my University of National and World Economy-Sofia."

One of the most rewarding elements of the conference was to see old friends reunite and new friendships form. Interest in forming UEP alumni networks was expressed and several groups were formed as a result of this conference. Several groups founded online groups to keep in touch and make connections. If you are interested in coordinating an alumni group or have one in existence, please contact Anne Campbell, UEP Program Manager, at acampbell@sorosny.org. ■

The Kellner Scholars' Society

Gyorgy "George" TOTH
President, Kellner Scholars' Society
chippewa@galamb.net

The network of NSP Alumni continues to grow and develop, finding other program alumni and building partnerships. The Kellner Scholars' Society, an alumni group of Kellner Scholars in Budapest, has been a good friend to the alumni of the Undergraduate Exchange Program, hosting a sight-seeing boat trip for 70 participants at the UEP/VU/PIE Alumni Conference this summer.

According to Gyorgy "George" Toth, the Kellner Scholars' Society President, the Society is firmly committed to fostering strong Hungarian-American relations, building a robust

Edmund S. Muskie/ FREEDOM Support Act Graduate Fellowship Program

1995

Ildus Saetgalievich NURGALIEV (Russia, Boston University, Education Administration, ildus58@mail.ru, www.nurgaliev.com) Ildus has been teaching at the Timoryazevskaya Academy, a major agrarian university, and had founded a department of Advanced Research. He is also consulting on modern education trends.

Alexei SIDOROV (Russia, Northwestern University, Law, Alexei.Sidorov@SidorovKhokhlovUskov.com) Alexei has started his own law firm, Sidorov Khokhlov Uskov (www.SidorovKhokhlovUskov.com).

1998

Yelena Yevgenyevna KHROMOVA (Belarus, Emory University, Public Health) Since July 2002 Yelena has been working for the Epidemic Intelligence Service at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At the office in Atlanta, Yelena works on cases of West Nile Virus and Monkeypox, and has researched the U.S. Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).

Ivan SALEYEU (Belarus, The John Marshall Law School, Law, evan@mail.ru) Currently Ivan is working as an Associate Protection Officer with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Minsk.

2000

Zhanna BEISEMBAEVA (Kazakhstan, Yale University, Environmental Management and Policy, zhanna.beisembaeva@aya.yale.edu) Zhanna has founded an NGO called

the Environmental Organization for Kazakhstan (EKO) in Almaty, which is located at the Almaty Ecology Consulting Service Center (www.ecocentre.kz). Zhanna is currently the president of EKO, an organization which promotes a safe and clean environment for the people of Kazakhstan. She also works part-time at CaspiEcology, LLC as an Environmental Specialist.

Lilia TURCAN (Moldova, George Washington University, Public Health, lturcan@unicef.org) Lilia is a project officer with the UN Children's Fund (www.unicef.org). She is working on their National Immunization and Nutrition Program, coordinating a nation-wide immunization campaign. Also, Lilia contributes to the development of a Public Health Curriculum through the Public Health Club of Moldova.

Askar YEDILBAYEV (Kazakhstan, Boston University, Public Health, askar@pih.org) Askar is currently working for a humanitarian organization Partners in Health/HMS as a Program Coordinator in Tomsk, Russia (www.pih.org). He is responsible for some clinical activities and training of medical personnel in urban and rural areas, operational research, and other public health work regarding the treatment of Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis. In addition, Askar is consulting on a Tuberculosis project in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Faculty Development Program

1998

Yuriy BILENKO (Ukraine, Yale University, International Economics, yuriy_11@yahoo.com) In December 2002 Yuriy and his colleagues organized a new Department of International Economic Analysis at Ivan Franko National University in Lviv. Yuriy is head of this department and continues his research in international micro- and macro-economics, foreign investment, transition economy, and economic growth.

Alexei LALO (Belarus, New York University and Columbia University, Philosophy and Culture Studies, lalo@chu.by) In the next academic year, Alexei will teach courses in ethnic and religious relations in Belarus at the Belarusian State University and in cultural studies at the European Humanities University. He has recently published a monograph, two book-length translations, a collection of essays, and a number of essays in scholarly periodicals in Belarus and the US.

Mongolian Professional Fellowship Program

1999

Bolorchimeg BOR (Mongolia, Columbia University, Education Administration, bolorchimeg74@yahoo.com) After completing her Master's degree, Bolorchimeg took a position at the Mongolian Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MOECS). Since July 2001 she has been working as an officer in charge of international cooperation, policy development, and coordination of education. Most recently Bolorchimeg has been working on a Second Education Development Project, implemented by MOECS (www.esdp.mn).

Tsolmon TSATSRALT (Mongolia, Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs) Tsolmon is currently working at the UN Development Program-Mongolia

as an economist in areas of private sector development, economic growth, and poverty alleviation (www.un-mongolia.mn/~undp/).

Ichinnorov MANJAA (Mongolia, American University, Washington College of Law, lclsr@magicnet.mn) Currently serving as the Director, Ichinnorov heads the Center for Legal Reform (www.owc.org/mn/lclsr) in Mongolia. She has founded the community newspaper Legal Reform, has organized the First National Human Rights Forum in Mongolia, and is a National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia board member.

OSI/Chevening Scholarships Program

2000

Anna TRIMAYLOVA (Uzbekistan, International Human Rights Law, University of Essex, anitrimaylova@yahoo.co.uk) Since February 2002 Anna has been working in the Legal Department of the Regional Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross for Central Asia (www.icrc.org).

2001

Avdullah HOTI (Kosovo, MA in Economics for Business Analysis, Staffordshire University, hoti_a@hotmail.com) Avdullah is working as a researcher at Riinvest Institute for Development Research in Prishtina (www.riinvestinstitute.org) and is teaching two economics courses at the University of Prishtina (www.uni-pr.edu/fakultetiekonomik/index.html). He is also pursuing a PhD at Staffordshire University through a part-time distance learning course.

Ihor OLEKHOV (Ukraine, Masters of Law, Edinburgh University, ihor_olekhov@hotmail.com) Ihor is an Associate in the Kyiv Office of Baker & McKenzie, specializing in banking and finance, taxation, and corporate law matters.

2002

Janka DEBRECENIOVA (Slovakia, Magister Juris in European and Comparative Law, University of Oxford, debreceniova@hotmail.com) Janka is working for an NGO called Citizen and Democracy which aims to strengthen civil society (www.obcanademokracia.sk). She is also engaged in a program called Street Law which provides communities with legal knowledge (www.pravnaaklinika.sk).

Aleksandar DRAGANIC (Bosnia and Herzegovina, MA in Economics for Business Analysis, Staffordshire University, adraganic@blic.net) Aleksandar has finished his study at Staffordshire University and working on his thesis on corruption and business development. He is currently working within the Enterprise Development Agency, a NGO in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, consulting on labor market issues and local economic development.

Daiga KAMERADE (Latvia, MPhil in Social and Developmental Psychology, University of Cambridge,

d.kamerade.02@cantab.net) Currently Diaga is in Latvia working on a research project called "Work-life Quality in Latvia in the Context of EU Accession Countries."

Daniel PREMERL (Croatia, Art History, University of Oxford, dpremerl@hart.hr) Daniel is studying 17th Century wooden altarpieces in Dalmatia at the Institute of Art History, Zagreb, Croatia (www.hart.hr). He is enrolled in a MA course in Art History at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb.

Alexander SHARF (Belarus, University of Sussex, alshme@yahoo.com) Alexander, also a 1999 UEP Alumni, has recently completed his Masters Degree in European Studies. His website (<http://sharf.iatp.by>) provides information about upcoming scholarships, conferences, and programs.

Radoslav YORDANOV (Bulgaria, MA in International Politics: Political Development, University of Manchester, rayordanov@yahoo.com) Studying the process of political development and democratization, Radoslav is focusing on the Middle East and Sub Saharan Africa for his dissertation. His dissertation from Sofia University, Bulgaria explored the mediating role of the USA in the Israeli-Palestinian peace dialogue from Oslo to Camp David II (1993-2000).

Social Work Fellowship Program

2000

Sofiya AN (Kazakhstan, Columbia University, sofiya_an2001@yahoo.com) Sofiya is a regional Program Coordinator at the Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan for the Drug Demand Reduction Program for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (funded by USAID). The program is aimed at the reduction of drug use and drug-related problems in the two targeted Central Asian countries.

Fariz ISMAILZADE (Azerbaijan, Washington University in St. Louis, fariz_1998@yahoo.com) Fariz is a Senior Political Advisor at the International Republican Institute in Baku. He is also a lecturer at Western University where he teaches a course on social policy. He has conducted several research projects, including "Social Needs in Azerbaijan" for the Open Society Institute-Azerbaijan and "Conflict Situations in the Caucasus" for the Swedish Government.

Gulnara ISMANKULOVA (Kazakhstan, Washington University in St. Louis, g_ismankulova@hotmail.com) Gulnara works as Liaison Officer at the World Health Organization in Kazakhstan.

Leyla ISMAYILOVA (Azerbaijan, Columbia University, leyla100@hotmail.com) Leyla is the founder and Director of the Center for Psychological Counseling in Baku, which provides counseling services for adults, children, and families. She is also a Civic Education Project Fellow at Western University, Baku, where she teaches part-time courses in psychology and social work. She works as a consultant with the Social Work Education Project at the BEIC (Baku Education Information Center) in a joint project with Baku State University (BSU) to develop a social work program at BSU.

Oyut-Erdene NAMDALDAGYA (Mongolia, Columbia University, oyuterdene@yahoo.com) Oyut is a lecturer in the Social Work Department at the State Pedagogical University in Mongolia. She is responsible for the Master's in Social Work program and faculty development activities and teaches in the Social Work Department. She is also the Project Coordinator for the Curriculum Development Project for Social Work Core Courses along with another Social Work Fellowship Program alumni, Erdenechimeg Tserendorj. Moreover, she served as the Project

Administrator for the Higher Education Support Program funded 2003 Social Work Summer School Project, held in Ulaanbaatar.

Natela PHARTSKHALADZE (Georgia, Washington University in St. Louis, natia@nilc.org.ge) Natela is the Director of the Nursing Learning Resource Center, which partners with the American International Health Alliance (AIHA), World Bank, Washington University School of Social Work, Emory University, and several Hospitals in Tbilisi. The Center conducts trainings for nurses and social workers.

Ia SHEKRILADZE (Georgia, Columbia University, iashekriladze@hotmail.com) Ia is a Civic Education Project Fellow with the Faculty of Psychology at Tbilisi State University (TSU), where she teaches. She is also a Project Coordinator for the University Partnership Project at TSU, which is aimed at establishing social work education, and works as a Technical Assistant at EveryChild, where she conducts trainings for social workers.

2001

Gulnar AKMAGAMBETOVA (Kazakhstan Columbia University, guka82@hotmail.com) Gulnar is a National Adviser with SOS Children's Villages Kazakhstan.

Darikhand BAYAR (Mongolia, Washington University in St. Louis, daryhand@yahoo.com) Darikhand is a Program Officer with the Child Protection Program at UNICEF. Her responsibilities include projects on juvenile justice, street and unsupervised children, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect.

Buajar BEKOVA (Kyrgyzstan, Washington University in St. Louis, bbuajar@hotmail.com) Bujar is a Technical Trainer Assistant with the Peace Corps—Sustainable Economic and Organizational Development (SEOD). Her responsibilities include conducting training on SEOD topics, and working with local NGOs and state officials on issues related to SEOD.

Mehriban MAMMADOVA (Azerbaijan, Washington University in St. Louis, mehribanm@yahoo.com) Mehriban is a Program Officer with the National Democratic Institute in Azerbaijan.

Undergraduate Exchange Program

1995

Nada GROSELJ (Slovenia, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, sesteria@hotmail.com) In 2000 Nada graduated from the University of Ljubljana with a joint degree in English and Latin, winning the national Preseren Prize for artistic achievement. She has worked as a researcher at the University's English Department and has published several articles and reviews. Currently Nada is working on her doctoral dissertation.

1996

Adam FLESCH (Hungary, Bard College, aflesch@mol.hu) Adam graduated from the Budapest University of Economics in 2001 with a MSc in Finance. He is currently a Senior Financial Analyst at the Risk Management Department of the Hungarian Oil and Gas Co (MOL) and working on a PhD program in Finance.

1997

Jan VANCO (Slovakia, Roosevelt University, vanco@alpha.flynet.sk) In 2000 Jan finished his degree and became a teacher of English and German. He is also working as a full-time regional secretary for Christian Democrats and has been elected to the City Parliament in Nitra, Slovakia.

VU 1995 ALUMNI

An online group has been formed to keep in touch with alumni of Virtual University 1995. If you are a VU 1995 Alumnus and would like to join this group, please contact **Zdenka IVKOVIC** at zdenkaivkovic@hotmail.com.



UEP Alumni at Alumni conference in Budapest

Marcin PIATKOWSKI (Poland, Roosevelt University, mpiatek@tiger.edu.pl) Marcin has been promoted to the position of Research Director at TIGER economic think-tank based in Warsaw, Poland (www.tiger.edu.pl). He was also nominated to be an Advisor to Poland's Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance and a member of his Political Cabinet. In June Marcin left this position for a short PhD research study at Harvard University. He has now returned to Poland to finish his PhD in economics.

Burul USMANALIEVA (Kyrgyzstan, Randolph-Macon Woman's College) Burul is a lecturer/teacher of international relations and political science at the American University-Central Asia (AUCA) and before this she taught at Osh Technological University in Kyrgyzstan. She has studied international relations at the graduate level at the Central European University and graduated Magna Cum Laude from the AUCA.

1998

Vilma GEDGAUDAITE (Lithuania, University of Arkansas, vilmag@takas.lt) Currently working as audit consultant in Ernst & Young, Vilma graduated with a MA in Public Administration in 2002.

Veronika HLADISOVA-CAPSKA (Czech Republic, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, vcapska@yahoo.com) Veronika got married in October 2002. She is presently enrolled in a Czech-German studies PhD program at Charles University.

1999

Bibi BAITLEUOVA (Kazakhstan, University of Washington, bishka50@hotmail.com) Last year Bibi spent the year working for a large Canadian oil company in Kazakhstan. Recently she has accepted a OSI/FCO Chevening Scholarship and will be working on her MA in Political Philosophy at the University of York.

Ramil MAMMADOV (Azerbaijan, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, roman160@yahoo.com) Ramil has obtained BA degree from the Department of International Relations and International Law, Baku State University with a distinguished diploma. Now, he is a second year MA student at the same department and university and works as an economist at the International Relations Department, National Bank of Azerbaijan (www.nba.az).

Rita NADAS (Hungary, Trinity College, ritanadas@hotmail.com) Rita was an intern at the UEP Alumni Conference in Budapest this summer. She has recently graduated in American Studies from ELTE University (Budapest) and is a senior in psychology.

2000

Aida AMANOVA (Kazakhstan, University of Washington, sarik55@yahoo.com) Aida graduated from Kazakh State University in International Exchange and Finance and took a position with the Economic Research Institute. Currently Aida works for Kazkommertsbank (<http://en.kkb.kz/>) as a manager at the Division of Development Institutions.

Hanna ASIPOVICH (Belarus, Ithaca College, grazhyna@yahoo.com) Hanna has one more year before graduation. She is working part-time as a translator at a waterpark in Minsk.

Vaidas JANAVICIUS, (Lithuania, University of Arkansas, vaiduks@msn.com)

Vaidas is working in the Department of International Relations at Vilnius City Municipal Government (www.Vilnius.LT). He is currently enrolled in a MA program in French Linguistics at Vilnius University (www.vu.lt) and is the chairman of the Team Europe Lithuania. Last summer Vaidas served as an intern at the UEP Alumni Conference in Budapest.

Elena JANEVSKA (Macedonia, Slippery Rock University) In July 2003 Elena started work as a field interpreter for the CAFAO, a EU mission for modernization and improvement of the Macedonian customs office.

Piotr LABENZ (Poland, Duke University, www.labenz.prv.pl) In June 2003 Piotr graduated with MA in philosophy from Warsaw University. He has recently started a MSc program in logic at Amsterdam University.

Zuzana MAZANOVA (Slovakia, Kalamazoo College, zuna@kamil.sk) Zuzana graduated with a MA in International Relations and Diplomacy in June. She is working in Slovakia at the Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunication at the Information Society Department.

Gunel MIRZAYEVA (Azerbaijan, University of Maine, gmirzayeva@hotmail.com) This summer Gunel obtained my Bachelor in International Economic Relations at

Azerbaijan State Economic University with a Diploma of Excellence. She has been admitted for master study in International Economic Relations at the same university. She also works as a Procurement Coordinator and Member of the Quality Team at a local procurement/supply company.

2001

Maija KURTE (Latvia, Duquesne University, Maija_kurte@va.lv) Maija has graduated from the Political Science Department at Vidzeme University/College in Latvia. She is currently working as a project assistance at the UN Development Program-Latvia on environment-related issues (www.videsprojekti.lv).

George TUDORIE (Romania, New York University, george_tudorie@yahoo.com) George graduated from the College of Communication and Public Relations in Bucharest and now is working on their website (www.comunicare.ro) and as a teaching assistant. He is currently pursuing a MA in Philosophy at Bucharest University.

Igor LESKO (Slovakia, Bard College, ogor_2000@yahoo.com) Igor is currently doing a Masters in Development Studies at the University of Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. He is researching violence in primary schools in township areas and is working on a project with the Flemish Interuniversity Council in Belgium.

Kadyr TOKTOGULOV (Kyrgyzstan, Ithaca College, kadyrt@transfer.kg) Kadyr graduated from the American University-Central Asia with a Bachelor's degree in Journalism last June. He is now working for the Associated Press as the Kyrgyzstan correspondent.

2002

Milena OGANESYAN (Georgia, University of Georgia, myleneog@yahoo.com) Milena is working as an interpreter with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), while she continues her studies at the Tbilisi Institute of Asia and Africa. She is also interning at the International Society of Fair and Free Elections, a local NGO.

Salome SEPASHVILI (Georgia, Slippery Rock University, sesalome@hotmail.com) During the summer of 2003, Salome interned with OSI-Debate (www.idebate.org) through the UEP Summer Civil Society Program. ■

What's New with the Network Scholarship Programs

After many years with NSP, the following staff have recently left us. We wish them the very best in their new endeavors:

Carol Tegen
Alicia Erickson
Sonia Skindrud
Zinta Gulens-Grava

NSP welcomes the following new staff members:

Anne Campbell
Adam Meagher
Kristina Savickiene
Phillip Watkins

New program:

Palestinian Rule of Law Program

Program final year:

Mongolian Professional Fellowship Program

CORRECTION:

The poem submitted by Lela Samniashvili in the Personal Accounts section of Scholar Forum Issue 7 was not translated by Harsha Ram. The submission was translated by the author.

HESP Regional Seminar for Excellence in Teaching

The **Higher Education Support Program** (HESP) promotes the advancement of higher education within the humanities and social sciences, throughout the region of post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Mongolia.

The **Regional Seminar for Excellence in Teaching** (ReSET), established as a successor to the HESP Summer Schools Program, builds on its experience and furthers its effects to promote and nurture university-level teaching excellence in the social sciences and humanities in the region. ReSET promotes the concept of continuous development and self-renewal of university academics and empowering the most committed individuals to become catalysts of the process of critical inquiry into the scholarship and academic curricula in their home institutional environments. HESP invites proposals of multi-year projects from academic institutions, associations or individuals with demonstrated potential for and commitment to promoting teaching excellence and lending on-going support to individual faculty

and departments in the region. The projects considered for funding will target the young faculty currently teaching in the social sciences and humanities in the institutions of higher education throughout the targeted region.

The deadline for applications is **December 15, 2003**.

For more details about the program and eligibility requirements, and to download applications, please visit the website at:

http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hesp/focus_areas/regional_seminar

or contact:

HESP Regional Seminar for Excellence in Teaching
Open Society Institute

Október 6. u. 12., Budapest 1051, Hungary

Tel: (36-1) 235-6152

Fax: (36-1) 411-4401

Email: oshtokvych@osi.hu or mjo@osi.hu

Muskie/FSA Alumni Opportunities

Support for Community Outreach and University Teaching (SCOUT)

The Support for Community Outreach and University Teaching (SCOUT) program provides follow-on support to alumni of the Edmund S. Muskie/FREEDOM Support Act (FSA) Graduate Fellowship Program in all fields of study from the Baltic States and the NIS. It is designed to help alumni share the benefits of their graduate study experience in the United States with their colleagues, academic and professional institutions, and the communities of their home countries.

Type of Award	Application Deadline
Full-time teaching	1 March 2004 (for assignments in 2004-2005)
Part-time teaching	1 March 2004 (for assignments in fall 2004) 1 November 2004 (for assignments in spring 2005)
Special Project grants	applications are accepted on a rolling basis

Detailed information, application forms, and contact information for field offices are available from the Civic Education Project web site (www.cep.org.hu), or by contacting:

Civic Education Project
1140 Chapel Street, St 2A
New Haven, CT 06520-5445, USA
Tel: 1-203-781-0263
Fax: 1-203-781-0265

Civic Education Project
Nádor u. 9
Budapest 1051 Hungary
Tel: 36-1-327-3219
Fax: 36-1-327-3221
scout@osi.hu

CIVIC EDUCATION PROJECT

Be a part of the reform and development of higher education in your country.

The Civic Education Project (CEP) is a not-for-profit organization promoting reform of higher education in the countries of Central-Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. CEP provides support for promising scholars from Eastern Europe who have graduate training from a Western university and who teach or will be teaching in politics, law, economics, education, sociology, history, political science, international relations, and public administration and policy studies.

Information and applications:

Civic Education Project
H-1051 Budapest
Nador u. 9.
Hungary
Fax: (36-1) 327-3221
email: cep@osi.hu
<http://www.cep.org.hu>

Contribute to the next Scholar Forum!

Cover Topic: The Struggle for Democracy

Regional Focus: The Caucasus

The next issue of Scholar Forum will be published in Spring 2004, and submissions are requested from all OSI NSP scholars and alumni. Essays, personal accounts, photographs, poems, stories, cartoons, and drawings are all welcome.

Cover Topic

The Struggle for Democracy: Activism and Leadership in Network Scholarship Program Countries

The Open Society Institute supports the building of civil societies by supporting various programs relating to education, art and culture, women's issues, and harm reduction, to name a few. Yet, the struggle for democracy takes on many other forms. While political opposition parties may come to mind, community organizing, NGO development, volunteering, and other activities can all be components to building a civil society.

We invite you to submit research papers, personal accounts, photographs, stories, cartoons, and drawings that address activi-

ties which are shaping democracy in your countries. (If requested, submissions can be published anonymously.) The following are some points to consider:

- Describe the democratic progression in your country.
- How do you define opposition movements?
- What organizations have made a difference in your communities? Why?
- What is the role of youth and student leadership?
- What is happening in your local community to promote democracy?
- Is what you're doing considered politically controversial, even if it is socially constructive?

(Max. 750 words.)

Regional Focus

The Caucasus

Grantees and alumni from the Caucasus region, as well as those who are familiar with the area, are encouraged to submit stories, poems, photographs, drawings, cartoons, or recipes that repre-

sent the area. (Max. 400 words)

Personal Accounts

Essays and creative works

Please submit short personal accounts of your experiences living and studying in a different country. Poems, photographs, drawings and cartoons are also welcome. (Max. 300 words)

Alumni

Send us information about your current activities to be printed in the Alumni Section. Also, please send information about upcoming alumni reunions or updates from old gatherings.

Send submissions by email to scholarforum@sorosny.org. Include your full name, fellowship program and year, university, home country, and gender with each submission. Please refer all questions to scholarforum@sorosny.org.

Submissions are due in New York by March 15, 2004.

OSI NSP ALUMNI GRANT PROGRAM

The Network Scholarship Programs is pleased to offer the **Alumni Grant Program**. This program offers grants to NSP alumni to further expand the knowledge gained during their fellowship and to make a positive contribution in their home country. All grant proposals must be related to OSI's mission of supporting programs in the areas of educational, social, and legal reform, and of encouraging alternative approaches to complex and often controversial issues. Preference will be given to collaborative projects between alumni, across countries and with host universities and projects that promote the development

of a specific discipline in the region.

Types of grants may include organizing training programs, conferences or seminars in the applicant's field, forming an alumni association, founding a professional association, creating initiatives that support the NGO and/or non-profit sectors, creating initiatives that further social justice causes, support for creating classroom materials, and other projects related to OSI's mission.

The competition for this grant is offered twice a year.

Detailed information including eligibility requirements, deadlines, and application forms are available from the OSI Budapest website:

<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/scholarship>

or by sending inquiries to the following:

The Open Society Institute
Network Scholarship Programs
Alumni Grant Program
H-1397 Budapest
P.O.Box 519
HUNGARY
Email: jiskakova@osi.hu

Scholarships and Fellowships with NSP

The Network Scholarship Programs offers the following scholarships and fellowships. Programs are offered only in certain countries; please visit the NSP website for details and for application information.

www.soros.org/initiatives/scholarship

American University in Bulgaria:

Each year, NSP funds scholarships for four years of undergraduate liberal arts study at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG), located in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

CNOUS-OSI Program:

Up to 10 awards for students in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan to pursue advanced study in certain fields at institutions in France.

DAAD-OSI Program:

A joint scholarship program in Germany for Central Asian and Belarusian graduate students and junior faculty pursuing advanced study in the social sciences and humanities.

Edmund S. Muskie/ FREEDOM Support Act (FSA) Graduate Fellowship Program:

Approximately 375 Muskie/FSA fellowships are awarded annually, with fellows from the former Soviet Union placed in one to two-year Master's-level professional degree (and non-

degree) programs at selected U.S. universities in a variety of fields.

Faculty Development Program:

Up to 14 awards for faculty in Central Asia and the Caucasus to spend one semester at a U.S. university and one semester teaching at their home universities, each year for up to three years.

Global Supplementary Grant Program:

This program offers supplementary grants to students from selected countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union to pursue Doctoral studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences at accredited universities in Western Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America.

OSI/Chevening Scholarships:

UK Scholarship programs include one-year Master's-level awards, generally in the social sciences and humanities, for students and scholars to study at various institutions in the

United Kingdom. Students are from selected countries in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the Newly Independent States, and South Asia.

Soros Supplementary Grant Program:

The program awards partial grants for undergraduate and post-graduate studies at recognized institutes of higher education outside students' home countries or permanent residence but within East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States.

Social Work Fellowship Program:

This Program is designed to provide graduate training in social work to implement reform, create policy, and foster the development of social work in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Supplementary Grant Program—Burma:

Partial scholarships are awarded to Burmese students worldwide who are currently unable to pursue their studies in Burma.

Undergraduate Exchange Program:

The Undergraduate Exchange is a one-year, non-degree program for students enrolled in a university in Eastern and Central Europe and Mongolia.

ScholarForum

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