

Global Connections and Exchange Program

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SCHOOLS ONLINE



Students Help Chart the Future of GCEP

During the last few months of our project, a few students who are graduating from our participating schools have demonstrated the impact of GCEP by asking to become volunteers with GCEP and RI-SOL. To brainstorm ideas, we arranged a meeting with several of the youths and discussed with them their ideas for the program in the future.



Public school students from Khawlah School in Ramallah discuss the future of GCEP with RI-SOL staff

On June 6, 2006, four students from Khawlah Secondary Girls School - Wala' Saleh, Aseel Shamasneh, Nagham Fares and Eman Al-Khateb - attended a meeting at RI-SOL's country HQ in Ramallah.

The meeting began with a presentation about RI-SOL in general, hosted by RI-SOL on-site monitor Jihan Mitwalli. Jihan described RI-SOL's mission in assisting countries such as Palestine with development assistance and emergency relief, and that ICT in education is just one sector of RI-SOL's programming in more than 11 countries.

Following the presentation, students and the RI-SOL staff members, including the project coordinator and the Palestine program director, discussed GCEP events over the past 18 months and shared suggestions regarding the project. Incorporating our views of grassroots program development, we discussed the students' opinions and ideas for summer activities that can be developed with student participation.

Among the suggestions:

- Publish a "Youth Newsletter" as a supplement to the GCEP Monthly Newsletter, in which students write about their achievements, personal and community issues, and creative work. The newsletter would be distributed to youth in Palestine, the United States and around the world. Students will be working on the newsletter every week with RI-SOL staff in the Ramallah office..
- Rely more on student participation in expanding the project and implementing

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GCEP Palestine

(Students, cont. from page 1)

it in public schools. Their continued involvement will be invaluable as most of these students are leaving Khawlah School and moving to new schools.

- Develop a greater variety of online collaborative projects.
- Create a space on the GCEP website for a students' photos gallery
- Attract more students by spreading the word and getting them excited about the program.
- Strategize on ways to reach out to students in Gaza and Israel.

A Debut for the Hebron Center of Excellence

As a result of RI-SOL's success in working with students and communities in the "First Center of Excellence" in Jenin, RI-SOL is opening a second community-based learning center in Hebron, in cooperation with the local NGO Ebdaa' ("creativity" in Arabic). RI-SOL is also working with other local youth NGOs to open a second community center in Hebron. To debut the center to the Hebron community, RI-SOL held a fundraiser luncheon on June 8, 2006. Staff members from Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron attended the luncheon and met with community members, as well as local Hebron businesses and NGOs.



RI-SOL and Ebdaa' staff meet after a fundraising luncheon to discuss plans for the new center

Also attending the luncheon were representatives from UNRWA and TIPH (Temporary International Presence in Hebron), which is an international NGO that assists in mediating problems between Israeli settlers and Palestinians in Hebron.

After the lunch, Ebdaa' and RI_SOL staff discussed their impressions, experiences and vision for the center, including plans to work with local schools, community members and community organizations. In total, the fundraiser earned about 2500 NIS (\$600), which will cover the costs of providing furniture for the entire center.

Ebdaa' and RI-SOL staff discussed their impressions, experience, and vision for the center



Students at Khawla Wind Up the School Year

On May 30, 2006, students from Khawlah Secondary Girls School presented their final research projects for their Technology Culture class. The projects built on the skills that students learned during the year through GCEP, showing how the program affected their understanding of their societies and their curriculum. The students also demonstrated how the Internet served as an invaluable tool in creating their final projects.



Students presenting their research projects at Khawlah School in Ramallah

The students developed PowerPoint presentations based on material they had learned about employment fields and opportunities in Palestine. All three sections of 10th grade students at the school took part in the lesson. The material was divided into five topics, with a group covering each topic. After the final exams, students presented their projects to students from all grades at the school to demonstrate their achievements, as well as skills gained from the project.

Planning This Year's Summer Camp!

Building on last year's success, RI-SOL's GCEP summer camp will be back this year with new activities. This time, we've decided to let students design the plan themselves to best fit their needs and ambitions over the summer.

RI-SOL staff and student leaders discussed the themes of the summer camp and the schedule and agreed on the main points.

The summer camp will be divided into two segments. The main part will include training on various computer programs, volunteerism and a field trip. The second half of the camp is an "English Club," which will have several activities to improve language skills in writing and conversation, and is designed to enable the students to have fun while learning. Duration of the camp will be 12 days, and 15-20 students will participate in each city from different schools. The students who helped develop the plan will also assist us during camp as group leaders.



Students and RI-SOL staff planning this year's camp at RI-SOL's office in Ramallah

Staff Profile

For this month's staff profile, we would like to introduce Jihan Mitwalli. Jihan is one of our On-Site Monitors in Ramallah, and she has been working with RI-SOL since February 2005.

Since high school, Jihan has been setting standards for academic excellence. In her Tawjihi exam, Jihan was ranked among the top ten students in the Ramallah district. After high school, she entered Birzeit University where she received her B.A. in civil engineering in 2001.

Since Jihan joined the RI-SOL team, she has consistently been one of our most active and hardest-working On-Site Monitors. She has come up with new and creative projects for the students at Khawlah Bent Alazwar and in Ramallah as a whole. When asked what she likes best about her job, she says she likes the humanitarian nature of her work, working in teams with teachers and students, and, of course, working with the local communities. She would like to see RI-SOL's programming expand to cover more districts and other humanitarian sectors of work.

Recently, Jihan worked with our coordinator for the Salfeet and Kalkeelia districts, Nasfat Qofash, to develop an idea for a grassroots composting project in the Salfeet District. With Jihan's engineering background and Nasfat's contextual knowledge of the districts, the project helped foster teamwork and cooperation among staff members at different levels.



Jihan at her desk in our Ramallah office

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