

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: the Muskie Internship

Experience with Home Health Provider Provides Fellow with Skills for the Future

Adiba Karimi (2006) studied education policy and health education at Kennesaw State University. For her internship, she worked at a company called "At Home Personal Care," which provides quality personal care, serving Atlanta and the surrounding counties for over ten years. For Ms. Karimi, her internship helped her "learn new career related skills, new possibilities and perform a positive service for the community. The internship provided me with excellent opportunities to both learn new skills as well as expand upon the knowledge that I had acquired through many of my classes. My main job within this company was to manage people, to work in the Human Resource Department. Although the internship was unpaid, I was given a lot of responsibility right away, as I found out later that my manager wanted me to learn as many skills and obtain as much information as possible. I gained quite a good understanding of what an effective manager should be. At the end of every day, my manager sat down with me and we talked about my strengths and weaknesses. I also learned that by accepting criticism we can improve our potential and do a better job the next time. It gave me great confidence to ask more questions and find the right answers. My goals were mainly to learn how to manage and deal with people in different situations and applying this towards my future career plans. These goals were definitely achieved because my manager treated me as an associate within their company, not just as an intern. I left my company with great experiences and memories. Today I am back in my country and currently working for Project HOPE. My internship experience helped me greatly and I am using the skills that I have learned in the U.S. in my professional life. My internship played a very important role in my personal development as well."

iEARN Experience Inspires New Curriculum in Mississippi ESL Classrooms

Daniela Munca (2006) is working on her master's degree in TESL at the University of Mississippi. Last summer she was an intern with iEARN International Education and Resource Network, the world's largest nonprofit global network that enables teachers and young people to use the Internet and other new technologies to collaborate on projects that both enhance learning and make a difference in the world.

As Ms. Munca explains, "My experience with iEARN has been both exciting and useful; when I returned to the University of Mississippi I developed a new course to teach Intermediate ESL Lab classes in the ESL Program, where I have been teaching as a graduate assistant for two semesters. I was asked to develop a unique syllabus to teach ESL in the computer lab using the latest technology and internet applications. An important part of my syllabus was designing appropriate learning environments where ESL students would use online dictionaries, blogs, wikis, web searches and other Internet-based cognitive tools to improve their English. We have created an ESL blog that we are using on a daily basis in class to explore different resources on the web. We post pictures, essays, and power point presentations to share online and to study English collaboratively and interactively. Many of my new teaching methods were inspired by the NECC Conference 2007 that I attended as a member of the iEARN-USA team in July, 2007. I helped develop the main iEARN workshops and presentations while sharing my experience of working on online collaborative projects."



As the semester draws to a close, Ms. Munca is "Very excited about the fact that teaching with technology has proved to be both challenging and exciting for my students and me. I feel really proud of the fact that half of my students that had never read a blog or had never checked on a wiki before joining my class were able to create their own blogs and share their ideas with the rest of the world! My class proved to be both interesting and useful for my students and I will continue teaching ESL Lab classes during the next semester."

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Internship and Academic Interests Lead to Career Back in Ukraine

While **Svitlana Batsyukova** (2005) was studying public administration at the University of Washington, she participated in many conferences that addressed the issue of human trafficking. For her internship, she also worked for an organization that was concerned with human trafficking issues. Just before she returned to Ukraine, Ms. Batsyukova secured a position as a Counter Trafficking Program Specialist with the International Organization for Migration in Kyiv, Ukraine. She coordinates anti-trafficking initiatives in several Ukrainian regions and works extensively with government and NGOs.

Conferences and Internship Lead to Use of Performance Measurement Model in Current Job

Karine Taslakyian (2004) earned a Master's of Public Administration at the University of Washington. She recently joined Heifer International in July 2007 as a Program Coordinator. She works on project proposal development and monitoring and evaluation of ongoing community development projects. During her fellowship, Ms. Taslakyian participated in the "Driving Change and Getting Results" Performance Measurement Conference from September 13-14, 2005 held in Bellevue, Washington. She also took volunteered for the 17th Global Warming International Conference and Expo from April 20-21, 2006 in Miami, Florida. In addition, Ms. Taslakyian conducted her summer internship in 2005 at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Seattle, Washington, where she worked doing research and developing effective performance measurement models. During this internship, she began using the same performance measurement logic model technique that she now practices while developing project proposals for Heifer International.

Searching for an Internship with Employment Back Home in Mind

When **Irina Dubik** (2005) arrived at orientation in 2005, she got the impression that finding the most desired internships that suit an individual's needs was very difficult. Therefore, according to Ms. Dubik, "I realized that I needed to develop a strategy in order to get internship that would

allow me to change my career path. Instead of looking just at the U.S. market I started searching for opportunities in the Russian Far East since that region was more attractive for me than others. I decided that there were good career opportunities in my native city of Vladivostok and also in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk where many multinational companies involved in oil and gas projects are located. Therefore, those companies were key drivers for me in searching for an internship when I arrived in the U.S."

For Ms. Dubik, the internship was "not a bridge between an academic program and employment with the same company but strong leverage for good career opportunities with that company in Russia. My strategy worked successfully with Exxon Mobil Corporation subsidiary located in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Instead of communication with the U.S. office I had all negotiations with Exxon Mobil's affiliate's management on Sakhalin. As a result I was interviewed for employment in the U.S. in July and got the internship I desired and reserved a position in Russia.

The internship helped me to realize that Exxon Mobil is the right company for me. During those two and a half months I had a chance to see the company culture, values and career opportunities lying in front of me. The internship itself was very intense and interesting. I had to complete a difficult project and then present the results to management. After the completion of the internship I had no doubts about accepting a job offer and moving from Vladivostok to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Now, after a year has passed, I still don't have any doubts. Moreover, my husband joined the company three months ago and we are eager to use the dual-career planning opportunities which are available within this huge corporation."

Fellow Gains Invaluable Organizational Experience Through Internship and Optional Practical Training

Marina Harutyunyan's (2004) internship at Mercy Corps Conflict Management Group and her optional practical training at the National Democratic Institute added invaluable experience to her future career opportunities. She first became involved with the Conflict Management Group (CMG) in 2002, when she was selected as a participant of a negotiation and leadership training. Later, as a fellow, she was able to secure an internship with CMG. As Ms. Harutyunyan emphasizes, working with CMG "was an opportunity to get an insight of the work of the organization and it turned out to be a rewarding experience, since upon return to Armenia I planned to work in foreign assistance agencies, inter-national organizations, nongovernmental organizations, or other development institutions. This work requires strong

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interpersonal, communication and negotiations skills. CMG provides both a theoretical and practical approach to the negotiation process which is a valuable set of skills which will have a wide application in Armenia. During my internship I provided support for the training of eleven young Georgian professionals from the municipal sector to learn negotiation, persuasion, communication and leadership skills. Arthur Martirosyan, Momentum Program Director and Brian Mandel, Professor at the Kennedy School of Public Policy at Harvard University led the training. The aim of the training was to equip the participants with the skills to address challenges Georgia faces today, including a weak municipal sector, economic development, corruption and security. As an intern, I had a chance to facilitate administrative details, as well as research preparations before the training. I benefited greatly from the opportunity to work closely with CMG staff and once again met Roger Fischer, CMG Founder. Professor Fischer has been an inspiration to me as an outstanding expert in negotiation skills and techniques to teach negotiation and leadership to young professionals from post-Soviet countries. In a transitional region, professionals with skills as such are valuable and crucial assets."

In the fall of 2005, Ms. Harutyunyan was able to secure optional practical training with the National Democratic Institute's Women's Political Participation Team as a Project Assistant. During this additional practical experience, Ms. Harutyunyan "Witnessed that women's participation is an essential element in the design and implementation of all NDI programs. NDI helps women acquire the tools to engage in the political process. The programs that I had chance to research and study help to create an environment in which women can advocate on matters of policy, run for political office, be elected, govern effectively, and participate meaningfully in every facet of civic and political life. This internship was a crucial career opportunity for me. I had chance to compare the best and worst practices of the organization and to take this knowledge back to Armenia. NDI's internship helped me to identify major democratic challenges and difficulties in promoting greater women's participation in newly-emerged nation-states. The internship was a great introduction to the out-standing job NDI does to promote democracy worldwide and more importantly women's participation in establishing one."

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CURRENT MUSKIE NEWS

Fellow Meets Senator While at Internship

During his internship at GLC Enterprises in Minneapolis, **Karen Sarkavagyan** (2006) had a chance to brief Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota) on the Muskie Program and IREX at a fundraising event attended by local activists and members of the Armenian community in Minnesota. Senator Klobuchar was aware of the program but was interested to learn about Karen's specific experience as a Muskie fellow in the U.S.



Fellow Presents Azerbaijani Costumes and Cultures in Vermont

On November 26, 2007, **Natig Hajiyev** (2006) made a presentation about Azerbaijan at the School for International Training in Vermont. The presentation was entitled "Azerbaijan-Land of Fire," and included information about history, culture, traditions, arts, and sports. Mr. Hajiyev also dressed in the traditional Azerbaijani men's garment, the Chepken, which originated in the 19th century. The audience included representatives from the administration of the School for International Training and students.

Mr. Hajiyev also wore the Azerbaijani traditional costume at the annual Multicultural Fashion and Talent Show on November 16. Costumes, music and dances of more than 30 countries were presented at the multicultural fashion and talent show.



Director of Youth Center Helps Coordinate International Youth Conferences

Lilit Simonyan (2005) now works as the director of development and international programs at the Stepanavan Youth Center in Armenia.

As part of her job, she has initiated and organized three international youth projects. The first, entitled "Youth Protects Nature," was conducted in Stepanavan and Yerevan from July 29 to August 3, 2007. The project was implemented in collaboration with the Latvian organization "Kenguru Skola." The project unified youth organizations from E.U. members-states and eastern Europe and the Caucasus that work with environmental issues in local communities. The project provided a platform to develop ideas for new joint projects, enhance the quality of projects, and assist in future cooperation on environmental issues between groups from various parts of Europe. Young people and youth leaders from fifteen European countries participated in the event.

Ms. Simonyan also helped coordinate an event in Stepanavan on August 17-27, 2007, entitled "Diversity is a Name of a Woman: Youth Creative Proposals about Women's Condition in the World." The program brought together participants from Georgia, Spain, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, and Armenia in order to familiarize the participants of the program with the problems of gender issues that exist in their countries. The program also encouraged participants to reflect upon women's condition in today's world and the tangible progress related that has been achieved so far in the target countries.

Senior Citizens Watch the Dolphins of the North

Ludmila Petrova (1995) organized a trip for twenty-one senior citizens "SMILE" to watch the dolphin show in St. Petersburg. Petrova cooperated with the St. Petersburg Society for People with Disabilities to organize the event and learn about the participants' interests. She recruited a team of three volunteers to assist with the project and participants, all of whom were World War II Leningrad Blockade survivors. Lunch at McDonald's followed the dolphin show. "Thanks to this event, the elderly who have small pensions and tend to feel neglected and removed from society attended a show which they would never attend otherwise due to its cost and distant location," said Petrova. The project was implemented with the support of Project Smile.

Telemedical Technologies in Healthcare and U.S.-Russia Cooperation

Nikolay Matveev (2005) organized the international conference "Information and Telemedical Technologies in Healthcare" and began cooperation between telemedical centers in Russia and the U.S. Matveev invited two American doctors to present at the conference and share best practices in the field. Leading pediatricians and telemedicine specialists attended the event as well as Ministry of Public Health and Social Development and Ministry of Communication representatives, who are planning to utilize the outcomes of the conference for two government projects in the field in the coming year. "The project was a starting point for cooperation among Russian and American professionals. Most conference participants expressed interest in attending a similar event next year," said Matveev. The conference was partially funded under the Alumni Small Grants Program.

ALL Aims for Country-Wide and Regional Alumni Coordination

Muskie alumni from Kazakhtan have founded an unofficial organization called "ALL," which stands for the Alumni Leaders League. The mission of the organization is to use best practices expertise for building bridges of cooperation among different sectors of civil society. The name of the organization, "ALL," also implies that the organization is not restricted just to alumni of Muskie program, but that it is open to all graduates of foreign universities interested in taking initiative in their country. As a trial project, alumni from ALL wrote a manual for international students studying in American universities. The manual can be downloaded from the pilot website, www.allregion.kz, which will soon be upgraded to a fully-functioning website with regular updates, profiles of members, news, and events. "ALL-ers" also seek cooperation with alumni of other countries because there are multiple opportunities to undertake projects of international scope that include social, educational, public health, public policy, and business aspects. Please contact Geniyat Issin at geniyat@gmail.com for more information.

Russian Muskie Alumni Association Hold Second Annual Conference

On October 27-28, the Muskie Alumni Association (Muskie Club) held their second annual conference at the Avantel Country Club in Istra, Moscow region. The conference brought together more than 35 Muskie and U.S. government sponsored program alumni for personal and professional development sessions focusing on the theme of financial management. The two-day conference also provided a forum for professional networking and Association development activities. The Muskie Alumni Association (Muskie Club) is now an officially registered entity in Russia. The official registration will strengthen the Association and allow for more transparency and efficiency in their work. The Muskie Alumni Association is an independent, membership-based association created on the initiative of Muskie alumni.



ALUMNI SHORTS

Working with a local high school director, **Igor Masychev** (2005) recently conducted an activity entitled "Share with children spare clothes and toys." Many families brought used and new clothes and toys. Four big boxes were collected and sent to local orphans' house where there are children from different places in the region and to the monastery where there is a group of girls aged from 3 to 12.

From July 22-27, 2007, **Edward Safaryan** (2001) participated in the 4th Summer Academy at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. The topic of the conference was "Bridging the Divide in Global Climate Policy: Strategies for Enhanced and Integration."

Vyacheslav Bezruk (2002) recently accepted a position of Sales Executive for Maersk Line and Maersk Logistics brands with Maersk Ukraine, a subsidiary of A.P. Moller-Maersk Group, after spending two years with Safmarine, another shipping brand in the group portfolio.

Sahak Sargsyan (2002) recently received a new assignment to work in the Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles, CA in the position of Vice-Consul.

Karlygash Dairabayeva (2006) and her friends recently performed the Kazakh dance performance "Kamazhai" as part of a multicultural showcase at the World Bank.

Salima Kasimova (2005) recently began working with the World Health Organization in Tajikistan as a National Professional Officer for Family and Community Health. She will support the promotion and implementation of activities related to programs in the Family and Community Health section focusing on gender, reproductive health, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health.

Shortly upon his arrival home, **Amat Adarov** (2005) returned to work as chief specialist at the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments of the Republic of Altai. His new position enables him to formulate, implement and analyze all aspects of the Republic's investment.

Elena Chernigina (2005) returned to Voronezh where she is completing her dissertation. Last month Chernignina started co-teaching a Global Classroom Course at Voronezh State University, which is a communications course based on online video conferencing between Russian and American students.

Shortly after returning to his community in Yekaterinburg, **Viktor Shishlyaev** (2005) launched his own Internet Technology company, Energo-Konsalt. His company represents a full spectrum of quality services utilizing integrated information management systems.



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Submission guidelines:

If you are interested in making a submission to the Messenger, please send all text and pictures to <muskiemessenger@irex.org> by March 31, 2008.

ECA and IREX reserve the right to edit submission content. Not every submission will be printed.



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ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

US Government sponsored exchange alumni are eligible to take part in various Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) supported conference and training activities. In addition to events that support large audiences, individual alumni may apply for small grants that fund the organization of community service activities, conferences, publications, Internet-related activities, research trips, training programs, the creation of associations and other activities.

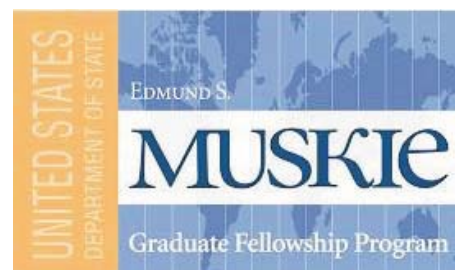
ECA Alumni Programming for Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program Alumni

State Alumni Website: The State Alumni website is an online community by and for alumni of US Government sponsored exchange and training programs. As of May 2004, the website has over 8,500 registered users. The content of the site is updated every day and alumni are encouraged to submit information to the website for posting. Features of the website include: calendar of upcoming alumni events, job listings and career development information, searchable database of alumni and US host families who have registered at the site, grant opportunity listings, live online discussions, discussion forum, alumni news, alumni resume database, articles written by alumni, feedback form/online survey, live online guest speakers, photo gallery, and the Alumni ListServ. <<https://alumni.state.gov/>>

The ECA Alumni Small Grants Program (ASGP): Alumni may apply for a grant of up to \$3,000 to conduct a community development or professional development project. Fundable project ideas include coordinating a community service project, launching a pilot program at an NGO or organizing a training program for professional colleagues and/or other alumni. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. <<http://www.irex.org/programs/asgp/index.asp>>

Project Smile: Project Smile is a community development program aimed at helping youth, the elderly and the disabled in Eurasia. Each grantee will receive up to \$250 to perform public service in their home city. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. <<http://www.irex.org/programs/smile/index.asp>>

Alumni Events: IREX and the US Embassy organize monthly alumni events in all 12 countries of Eurasia. These events include workshops, conferences, trainings, roundtable discussions, happy hours, movie nights, seminars and lectures. Larger scale events include job fairs that allow alumni to have their resumes reviewed, learn about the current job market in their home country, and meet with potential employers. IREX local offices and the Embassies encourage alumni to actively participate in the development and implementation of such events.



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