TEACHERS TRAIN FOR GET-IT

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A group of 11 ICT teachers has undergone training in World ORT's award-winning Graduate Entrepreneurship Training through IT (GET-IT) programme, the first such seminar since World ORT and Hewlett-Packard (HP) announced a massive increase in their GET-IT partnership.

The teachers from Kiev, Lvov, Murmansk, Rybinsk, St Petersburg, Slavutych and Tula were brought together at the ORT-KesherNet ICT training centre for women in Tula, which has a new computer class thanks to HP's increased investment.

The GET-IT programme focuses on the need to encourage job creation and entrepreneurship among people below the age of 25. Its training courses deal with practical IT solutions for daily business challenges faced in areas such as finance, human resources, marketing, communications and technology management.

The four-day seminar raised the teachers' skills in the use of ICT for business; another seminar is due to be held next month. The training, which was provided in this instance by

Ana Barfield and Munir Ahmad of the Micro-Enterprise Acceleration Institute, is required by HP for all teachers at its GET-IT centres in 25 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"It was all so interesting," said Elena Zastavnyuk, Senior Teacher at the Slavutych Training Centre of Chernigov State Institute of Economics and Management. "Many things were new to me and it was challenging. But everything we learned was practical and I look forward to applying my new knowledge."

One day of the seminar was held at another HP-ORT GET-IT centre – at the Tula Vocational Boarding School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children.

"Seminar participants became acquainted with the use of ICT for the vocational training of disabled children and they viewed some of the films made by students with a digital camera given to the school by World ORT," said Dr Sergey Gorinskiy, Deputy Director of the World ORT Representative Office in Moscow.

World ORT and HP announced last month that they are more than doubling the size of their GET-IT partnership with the opening of 10 new training centres in Russia and Ukraine. Once the new centres in Moscow, Tula, Kineshma, Rybinsk, Saransk, Murmansk, Slavutich, Kiev and Lviv are operational, World ORT will be involved in half of the GET-IT centres situated in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

News of the partnership expansion came just six months after ORT won a prize at the HP GET-IT Annual Conference in Brussels for the project it has implemented at its six initial centres in Moscow, Ekaterinburg, Tambov, Volgograd and Tula – Breaking the Digital Divide: Business and IT Skills for Underserved Population Groups.

This programme has been particularly useful in helping women and deaf and hard-of-hearing students and is the model for four of the new centres which cater for these population groups.

ORT-KesherNet is a joint project of World ORT and Project Kesher, a coalition of more than 200 Jewish and non-Jewish women's groups in the Former Soviet Union, to provide computer training and job skills to women – especially those in vulnerable circumstances such as single mothers, the unemployed and refugees. It operates at 15 computer centres in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus and a new centre is due to open in Tbilisi, Georgia this year.

To date, more than 14,000 people have graduated from the ORT-KesherNet programme with close to 80 per cent of them improving their economic situation – and at a cost of less than $100 per student. In addition, most graduates become more engaged in improving their communities through volunteerism or philanthropy.

"In its 130 years of operating, ORT has not only been a teaching organisation, it has also been a learning organisation," Dr Gorinskiy said. "And thanks to the productive partnership we have with Project Kesher we have learned how to work with small communities."

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