

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM
FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (BULGARIA)**

TRIP REPORT: May 1 - June 3, 1992

**Glenda Bunce, Project Director
University of South Carolina**

The second intensive training visit for this project was conducted during the month of May. By the end of the January/ February session, we had decided that three sets of three-day workshops were too much, and so on this visit decided to continue them but on a more limited scale (three trainers rather than six; two topics rather than three). On this trip, we also assigned Resident Advisors to each of the three cities for three weeks on a trial basis.

This report describes both sets of activities as well as efforts to integrate this project with other activities in Bulgaria and develop complimentary activities. The report also includes some follow-up related activities since the report is being submitted more than a month after the visit ended.

The next visit will take place in September. August is almost a universal vacation month and many people are also absent during July, so this is the earliest we can continue. The interns who spent two months in South Carolina from mid-March to mid-May had just returned to their home cities as the May visit was ending. During the fall trip, they will be in their offices and are helping promote and plan the fall visit.

Workshops

The workshop sessions were conducted following the format used during the first visit, that is the first topic was presented for three days in a city; a week later, the second topic was presented with the trainers moving from Sofia to Plovdiv to Varna during a two week period. The topics presented were "Policy Analysis, Implementation and Evaluation" and "Principles of Local Government Accounting." Presenters were Dan Durning (Georgia), Rick Campbell (Georgia), and Nancy Pursley (USC). The Bulgarians who attended indicate that the sessions are useful and informative. A city by city description follows.

As with earlier visits, the trainers had handouts on their topics which were extremely popular. Several people have suggested that we compile all the handouts so far into a single publication for distribution and we are planning to do that. At this point we have also translated several chapters of a paperback on public administration published by the Congressional Quarterly. We plan to seek permission to finish the translation and publish the book in Bulgaria.

- *Sofia*. Sofia had the poorest attendance (usually around 15). There were few elected officials

this time. Appointed officials included staff from the central municipal office and appointed mayors and municipal secretaries from the sub-municipalities. Our liaison in the city's International Office who has been primarily responsible for encouraging attendance at the workshops was in South Carolina on an internship and it was left to someone else in the office to take on this responsibility. When I met with Nikola Daskalov, Secretary of the Municipality, at the end of the sessions to review how they had gone, he stated that the city had not gone about selection of participants in the proper way: that the sessions had been announced and those who were interested were allowed to attend. There was no systematic selection or required attendance. He said that only after the first six months in office were new city officials beginning to feel that they had control of their responsibilities and could give attention to matters such as training.

- *Plovdiv*. There were no particular problems in Plovdiv. All three trainers reported that there was a great deal of interest in their sessions and regular attendance. In Plovdiv, those attending were primarily from the sub-municipalities. There were a number who also continued from the earlier visit. As in Sofia, I think that the city has not done as much as it should to announce the sessions and assure attendance. For the future we will work more with them on this.

There was almost no attendance by elected officials. I think this is a reflection of a number of factors. The perception that these sessions are not as useful for them. The Municipal Council and the Mayor's Office do not work well together and I suspect this was part of the problem. Also there were several conflicts. Before scheduling the workshops, I suggested that they might be held late afternoon or weekend to increase attendance; no one thought this would make any difference, so we didn't do it. During the next visit, we will try this to see for ourselves whether it will affect attendance.

- *Varna*. Varna has a better sense of direction and a greater understanding of what we expect to accomplish than the other two cities. More participants continued from January and there are more staff from the main municipal offices. Also a number of senior staff (the Secretary of the Municipality and Deputy Mayors) attend regularly.

After these workshops ended and following discussions with officials in each city (described below), we have decided not to continue the workshops in this format.

Resident advisors

- *Sofia*. Jim Finane worked in Sofia the first three weeks in May. This was the most difficult city with which to work. The key people were either out of town or not available. Rather than incorporate him into the city staff and use him as an in-house resource, the City insisted on making appointments for him. He had to go through International Office and the key person in that office was in South Carolina. Further, in Finane's opinion that Office does not carry much weight within the City powers and was not effective in arranging meetings for him. In a meeting with Mr. Daskalov (which Jerry Hyman and Anne Cherniak attended), he stated that the city had been reluctant to impose on Mr. Finane or take advantage of his offers. Frankly, I think this is just an excuse for their failure to develop a program that would take advantage of Finane's skills and presence in the city. Neither of the other cities offered this excuse or seemed

reluctant to avail themselves of the Resident Advisor and they are certainly less used to foreign experts than Sofia.

Finally, after a week of repeatedly phoning the International Office and having limited access, at one of the workshops Finane asked anyone that was interested in his services to see him after the meeting and he would come to their office. Working directly with the sub-municipalities, he was able to set up useful meetings. In this way he visited five sub-municipalities and talked directly to key staff about their problems. He also had a series of meeting with the Deputy Mayor of Finance and his staff and with staff in computer services.

Still, because of the central office's lack of cooperation, unless the city takes some responsibility and requests and develops a workplan, in my opinion it is not useful to place another Resident Advisor in Sofia.

- *Plovdiv*. Richard Ellis worked in Plovdiv the first three weeks in May. He was given an office down the hall from the Mayor with a secretary and access to anyone with whom he wished to meet. The city did not have a program developed and left it up to Mr. Ellis to organize his work. The first week the Mayor was in Israel; when he returned, he met frequently with Ellis. Mr. Ellis worked with him to develop selection criteria and establish the interview process for selection of two vacant Deputy Mayor positions and a new position, Chief Administrative Officer. He also worked with a number of staff including the Director of Protocol on public information and three of the four Deputy Mayors (Legal Affairs, Health and Human Services, and Building and Construction). He met with the division of computer specialists, head of the police department, and others and assisted staff who were developing new personnel procedures. He attempted to organize a session for the Chairman of the Municipal Council and Chairman of the Council's Committees with the Mayor and his staff. There was a misunderstanding about the time for the meeting and it was not held; however he did meet separately with the Mayor and his staff and the Chairman of the Municipal Council and key Councillors to report on his work. He also worked closely with staff in four of the twelve municipalities and one of the towns in the region.

- *Varna*. As usual Varna was the best organized of the three cities and used its Resident Advisor, Jim Budds, most effectively. Stanka Raicheva, Secretary of the Municipality, arranged Budds' program. She had him meet with the various Deputy Mayors separately soon after his arrival and then they met as a group to set priorities for use of his time and lay out a work plan for him. Budds was particularly effective working with the Deputy Mayor for Finance and advising on sanitation problems and marketing of the city for tourism and industry.

He also spent a day in Dobrich (a nearby city) and a weekend in Biala (a town in the municipality of Varna) advising the mayors there. Although Dobrich requested more of Jim's time, they did not have a clear idea of how to use his services and a day was enough. If we can agree in advance on a workplan for him, he will return for at least a week during the fall visit.

Follow up meetings in each city:

- *Sofia*. From our difficulties in Sofia (both irregular attendance and poor use of the Resident Advisor), I had determined that it would be best not to continue the program in Sofia.

However, in my meeting with Mr. Daskalov he not only acknowledged the problems with attendance at workshops described above, but he stated that he perceived the value of the training we were providing and requested that we offer a management course during the next visit. He stated that certain pre-identified staff would be required to attend and that the course should last two to three weeks. He offered to send a list of the topics to be covered, a general outline and statement of how we would proceed right away.

Given the city's record and continued appearance of disorganization, I stressed that he should provide this information as soon as possible; he agreed. On my return to the US, I followed up with a letter thanking him, re-stating our discussion and asking for the information no later than July 15 to incorporate the course in Sofia into plans for the September visit. There was no response, and I wrote again at the end of July and explained that we could not include Sofia in the next visit and would wait to hear from them before continuing in Sofia. Shortly thereafter, on July 29, I received a letter in response from the liaison in the International Office saying that they wanted the September course and were sending information with Bulgarian students returning to the US (who will not arrive until mid-August). I sent a reply explaining that it was simply too late, but that we will consider a November course for Sofia if they wish.

- *Plovdiv*. In Plovdiv, I had a follow-up meeting with Mayor Thomassian. Following the experience with the Resident Advisor, Plovdiv determined that they need a management course and asked that it be offered during the next visit. The Mayor said he would make the course mandatory, that he would attend (I am skeptical that he will be a regular participant) with his deputy mayors, other senior staff, and those he selects. He asked that the course be offered three hours a day in the late afternoon from Monday through Thursday.

The intern from Plovdiv now works closely with the Mayor and she and I are in contact about the course. The course will be designed as the Mayor asked and will focus on organization and personnel skills as the City has requested.

In addition, we will suggest that one or two special sessions can be provided for members of the Municipal Council in the evening or weekend. These will focus on the role of the Council in local government, working with the Mayor's office and building an effective Council that is able to work together on the City's problems. There are two civic groups in Plovdiv whose leaders I know, the Open Society Club and the chapter of the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections. In May I mentioned to the Director of the Open Society Club that the Resident Advisor was available to make a presentation at one of their regular meetings. She was interested but it was never scheduled. I will offer David Ammons as a speaker on how citizens can become more involved and can participate in local government to both groups.

- *Varna*. Varna had no particular problems or requests following the workshops and experience with a Resident Advisor. They stated that they would like to have Jim Budds services again and will plan for a fall visit.

Project Director's related activities:

This section of the report describes activities I undertook in addition to responsibility of organizing and coordinating the work of the trainers and Resident Advisors.

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Visitors. During this visit, there were a number of outside visitors for whom I organized and attended special meetings:

- Doug Dobson, Executive Director of the Institute of Public Affairs, USC came (at Institute expense) to visit the project. He attended the session in Sofia, met briefly with the Mayor of Plovdiv, and met faculty and administrators at the American University (AUBG).

- Jerry Hyman from AID participated in two half day's of meetings and a day-trip to Varna.

- Peter Korn, President of the Columbia Sister Cities Association, his brother who is a Catholic priest, and Dr. Robert Phillips, who is on the Political Science faculty at AUBG, were with me in Plovdiv for two days to make plans for the Columbia - Plovdiv Sister City arrangement. I had initiated the process before their arrival, so that while we were there we met with members of the local Initiating Committee, the Mayor, and the media (radio, television, press), and were hosted for a dinner which the Mayor and the former South Carolina intern attended with our group. Plans are underway for a fall delegation from South Carolina led by the Mayor and including a member of City Council to visit Plovdiv and sign the Sister City agreement.

- A part of this visit was on another grant and involved visits by Robert Maffin of the National League of Cities and Anita Floyd, program coordinator, during the last week. We worked on the municipal association idea (which is subject of another report).

Visits to other cities.

During this trip, I spent a day in each of two cities whose mayors have visited Columbia, Dobrich and Stara Zagora. Both are interested in this project and are eager to participate in this program. Following the visit to Dobrich, I arranged for Jim Budds to include a day consultation with city officials there.

Coordinating project activities with other groups in Bulgaria.

- Visit to the American University. I spent a day at the American University (this was my third visit). Dr. Lavery was in the US, but Dr. Dobson and I had lunch with Roberta Lavery and other staff. Mrs. Lavery taught the "Introduction to Administration" course in the spring; Dr. Dobson and I discussed that program with her and expressed our interest in the administration major being developed. I also suggested the possibility that if they recruit a new faculty member to teach administration, we might use him/ her on my project (for instance, during one semester or certain days each week) and pay a portion of the salary. She was interested, and I had hoped to discuss this with Ed Lavery, but did not hear from him before leaving.

- Meeting with PC trainees. Jim Finane and I met with the small business development Peace Corps trainees during one of their training sessions. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information about the USC projects and to suggest ways that we can work together. I suggested

that because of their on-going presence in the country, they could be a source of information for us about developments, whether information is being used, etc. I also suggested that the Centers they are starting might be a depository of materials on public administration and local government. Jim Finane described some of our impressions of local government and some of the problems we have observed.

There was a great deal of interest, but until the trainees have spent some time at their sites, it is too early to commit to working together. When I return in September, I will be in touch with this group again to explore specific ways that we can work together.

- Know How Fund. Robert McCloy of the Know How Fund was also in Sofia part of the time that I was there. We met twice to discuss our projects and up-date each other on plans for the future. He described his idea that assistance to local government should be coordinated at the national level (and that he is the person to do it), that the different assistance providers could divide up the different forms of assistance to local government with the UK and the US providing general management assistance, and his plan to spend extended periods in Sofia working at the national level to do this. I have not heard from him since returning to the US. However, since the study tour group arrived, one of the participants has informed me that Mr. McCloy has been advised that his services are not needed, so I am not sure of the status of this idea.

- During my visits, I regularly visit the Open Society offices, in Sofia as well as Plovdiv and Varna and I did that this time. I also visit offices of the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections in Sofia and meet with volunteers in Varna and Plovdiv. I have had projects in the past with both groups and we continue to assist each other.

- Institute for Sustainable Communities. Paul Markowitz, Director of the Institute's project in Bulgaria, called to discuss his project's work on the environment and to suggest that we cooperate. For instance, he mentioned that he will be expanding from Troyan to do countrywide training of environmental coordinators from local governments. There may be topics in his project that overlap with some of those covered by this project on which we could collaborate. We agreed to keep each other informed of our work and to seek ways to cooperate.

Meetings with central government officials.

Having pointed out in earlier reports, that one of the problems local governments have is a central government that restricts local action, during this visit I set up two meetings with people from the central government to establish contacts and discuss the program.

- Committee on Territorial Administration and Local Self-Government of the National Assembly. On Thursday, May 21, Jim Finane and I met with this Committee of the National Assembly (Jerry Hyman also attended) during one of its regularly scheduled weekly meetings. The previous evening, the Chairman of this Commission had been appointed Minister of Trade, so the Vice-chairman, Mr. Hadji (MRF), presided. Thirteen members were present, as well as the senior staff member, Mr. Mijailov, Senior Counsellor of the Committee.

I described USC's local government projects and the activities in each and stated the reason we requested the meeting -- to inform the Commission about our projects; to convey our impressions from the work we have done so far, particularly comments from municipalities about continued centralization (finance, labor, police); and to solicit their recommendations for working in local government.

Jim Finane gave an overview of local government in the US particularly the topics of finance and budgeting. We then entertained questions for the most of the session. The head of the BSP members on the Committee asked questions about how the project is organized, with whom we are working in Bulgaria, how participants are selected. Other members asked more substantive questions focusing on finance and budgeting, relations with central government. (The ViceChairman of the Committee is a participant in the USIA-funded study tour.)

- The Department of Territorial Administrative Structure and Local Authority Ministry of Regional Development, Housing Policy and Construction. On June 2, Robert Maffin, Anita Floyd and I met with Belin Mollov. I met Mr. Mollov for the first time during the brief visit in April. Mr. Mollov has been extremely busy during May and this was the first chance we had to meet. Apparently he is overwhelmed with visitors and outside experts wanting to get involved in local government. We informed him about progress with development of the municipal association as well as this project. (Mr. Mollov is a participant in the USIA-funded study tour.)

Local training organization. I am keenly aware of the need to involve Bulgarians who can undertake training of local government themselves in this project. Although I have been approached by a number of organizations, I have not found a group in which I have confidence and which I think understands the concepts that we are trying to develop. Most of them are still focusing on "administrative law;" this is especially thus of the courses that the Center plans to offer and those of the New Bulgarian University has included in its public administration major. I have brought a program handbook from the USC Masters of Public Administration program as a standard which they can follow and to give some idea of the broad background that MPA students have when they complete the degree.

They also have not sorted out among themselves who will do what and thus they all claim to do everything related to public administration and/or levels of government training. It is my impression that many of these groups see this as an area which they can move into and are eager to attach themselves to a foreign group that will lend them credibility and legitimacy without a willingness to do the hard work or attend the training.

The following is a list of the organizations that have suggested we work together. I am doing what I can to help them but have not committed to any as our sole agent in Bulgaria.

- National Center for Administration. I met Dr. Emilia Kandeveva-Spiridonova and one of her staff. This is a new organization funded through the Council of Ministers. It is not clear what its role will be, but Dr. Kandeveva is very ambitious and willing to take on anything from academic training to short courses in public administration. Her background is with the Faculty of Law at Sofia University and the Institute of State and Law and she appears overly eager to take on a foreign partner. She told me right away that we should be working exclusively

through her organization. She is not well regarded and there is doubt about how long she will remain in this position.

- New Bulgarian University. I met with Maria Kozadorova who is a lawyer with the Council of Ministers and part-time faculty in the New Bulgarian University; she teaches the administrative law course in the public administration degree. Her class is small and it is her impression that the students are not enrolled because they are interested but because it is required. I loaned her two public administration textbooks that I had with me. Also Jim Finane was guest lecturer in one of her classes. A review of the curriculum of their public administration major indicates it is heavily weighted with administrative law courses.

- The Department of Territorial Administrative Structure and Local Authority Ministry of Regional Development, Housing Policy and Construction also has training centers in Plovdiv and Bourgas that have offered training (in the old way of organizing) in the past. Neither their courses nor their staff have been updated and it is not clear how they will be used in the future.

- Foundation for Support of Local Democracy. Finally, I met with Dr. Vassil Tsankow who works at the Institute of State and Law and also has an administrative law background. He was one of five Bulgarians who attended the March meeting held in Krakow, Poland for local government officials. He came back ready to organize a Bulgarian "Foundation for the Support of Local Democracy;" he says this is an organization indigenous to Bulgaria but it sound amazingly like its Polish namesake and appeared to have the same mission. He says it will be an umbrella for all these other activities, but it has no funding and no authority to act as an umbrella organization. He is also frantically searching for a foreign partner.

- Universities. I did not meet with the Faculty of Law of Sofia University which claims to teach public administration, again under the guise of public administration. I have met some of these faculty in the past, and I have been advised that reforms are limited and they are not eager to change this curriculum. I also did not meet with faculty at the Economics University in Sofia during this visit. I have met them previously (and hosted the Rector and Vice-Rector in South Carolina during a visit to the US). Although they also claim to offer study in public administration, discussions have revealed that this is economics with a focus on regional planning as opposed to central planning.

Complementary activities undertaken in the US:

The following list describes project related activities that have taken place since returning to the US.

- Mayors' visit. In March a group of mayors from eight of the nine largest cities in Bulgaria visited the US on a USIA-sponsored International Visitors program. After introductory sessions in Washington, they visited Columbia. While they were in Columbia, we discussed the local government training program and provided them background material (in Bulgarian) about the project. Since then I have visited six of the eight cities and stayed in touch with them. They are a ready pool of program participants.

- Interns. As mentioned earlier in this report, from March 21 - May 20, six junior level employees of the three cities participated in an internship program in South Carolina as part of the USIA grant. They worked in local and state government offices and had other meetings and special activities with government leaders. (List of participants is attached.)

As part of their program, they attended two Institute workshops for government managers; they also had two special sessions (one at the beginning and one at the end of their program) on training and how to use the information they had collected and learned in their offices.

They were pleased with the program. I saw five of the six in Bulgaria at the end of the May visit. They are eager to assist with this project and are a direct link with each of the participating cities.

- Study tour for senior local government officials. Also under the USIA grant, I will manage a study tour for eight senior level local government officials from around the country from August 8 - 24 (participant list attached). This group includes two representatives each from two of the new regional municipal associations, two representatives from the central government, a representative recommended by the Peace Corps Director in Bulgaria, and a representative from Plovdiv.

Most of them are already involved in our program; I expect that the others will be eager to be involved and will continue to maintain contact when they return.

- Sister Cities. Since I have been going to Bulgaria, I have encouraged the idea of sister cities arrangements and have talked to both Embassy staff, Sister Cities staff in Alexandria, as and Bulgarian local government officials. After a useless pursuit of Sofia, Columbia, SC, has initiated discussions with Plovdiv, and those discussions have been successful (as described above).

In July I attended the annual meeting of Sister Cities International in Tulsa to promote interest in Sister City relationships with Bulgarian cities. I offered to staff a table at an open meeting of representatives from cities interested in a new affiliation; Robert Maffin, who traveled to Bulgaria at the end of May as a consultant on USC's USIA project, also attended (as well as the President of the Columbia Sister Cities Association). Since then Megan Donnelly and I have been in contact to follow-up on the interest we developed. One discouraging note: I observed that there is less interest in Bulgaria than Russia and there wasn't a whole lot of interest in Russia. As a result, I am working with the state coordinators in North and South Carolina to look for cities for Bulgaria matches nearby.

Plans and recommendations:

As I have mentioned previously, I have not been satisfied with our Bulgarian partner. While I was in Bulgaria, I discussed the possibility of working with us with two possible subcontractors. The Open Society Fund with whom I have worked on other projects indicated that they are not interested in adding new operating programs. However, the Bulgarian Association for Free Elections is ready to assist the project and use its network of volunteers to support our program, so we will proceed with them. I was not able to meet with the

Director of the Center for the Study of Democracy when before I returned to the US, so I sent him a letter and we agreed mutually to terminate the subcontract.

As noted above, we now have persons in each of the cities who participated in a South Carolina internship and with whom I can work directly to assure participation. We also have an extensive network of direct contacts with mayors in the cities of Bulgaria. We have established our credibility and commitment to local government development; this will be a major asset in continuing the program.

In September, we plan to send two advisors. We will provide the Resident Advisor to Varna again and offer the management course that Plovdiv requested. Jim Budds who was in Varna in May will return for five weeks. He will spend the first three weeks in Varna and the remaining two in Dobrich and/or Stara Zagora. David Ammons will spend four weeks in Plovdiv. The first weeks he will meet with city officials and discuss their problems so that he can tailor the management course he will teach the other three weeks to their needs and problems. Also during this visit, the Project Director will continue our efforts to integrate our program with others, particularly the Peace Corps Volunteers and will look for ways to work with cities which have expressed an interest in participating in this program.

Depending on how the September visit goes and how funds from the grant hold out, in the future, we will continue to offer these two options, a Resident Advisor who acts as an in-house advisor for an extended period and a two to three week management course (with special offerings).