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**Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan
March 5-22, 1994
Trip Report**

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**IRI Youth Leadership and Democracy Program
Trip Report
March Mission: March 5th-22nd**

I. Goals and Purpose:

IRI's Youth Leadership and Democracy program trains young people and their caretakers to take initiative, to develop organizational skills, to teach strategies for addressing community concerns, and to underscore the necessity of citizen involvement in a democratic society. IRI's goal is to stimulate individuals to work with others on grassroots projects to effect change on a local level.

IRI has chosen to work with educators whose understanding of youth leadership development overlaps with basic democratic values such as the primacy of the individual, problem-solving through teamwork, informed decision-making, pluralism, and responsibility. As educators strive to implement IRI programs, they mobilize important players in their immediate environment. Through their efforts, the principles of democracy are articulated in terms of concrete results and benefits to parents, administrators, and officials. They widen their circle of influence and gain support for citizen involvement in public life.

II. IRI Background

The authoritarian regimes in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan seek to control citizen participation in public life. They have successfully evaded international pressure to introduce democratic reforms. They continue to circumscribe individual rights guaranteed by their constitutions. Laws are written imprecisely, so that the interpretation is left open to serve the state. Citizens have no recourse to the law to protect themselves and their liberty.

Even though Soviet era institutions such as the economic ministries, the military and internal security forces are controlled and staffed by former Communists, the Central Asian states struggle to establish a national identity, economic stability and political policy. Central Asian governments are overwhelmed. Government attention has been focused on the suppression of political opposition parties, but not on community initiatives. For IRI, this situation presents a window of opportunity.

Since December 1992 IRI has been cultivating support for democratic civic education at the local level. IRI's programs offer individuals a chance to express themselves, to act, to form coalitions with like-minded partners and groups without interference from the government. IRI teaches democracy through practical experience: a first-hand taste of freedom and respect for the individual.

IRI workshops inspire action. Participants engage in a process of discovering the common values and common goals of their fellow citizens at the grassroots level. IRI provides tools for solving

problems and strategies for overcoming obstacles. These magical ingredients have been proven effective in mobilizing educators, teachers and others in Central Asia.

IRI allows partners to adapt workshop materials and democratic principles to local conditions for maximum success and impact. As a result, IRI has inspired the formation of a student council, a democracy-oriented school curriculum, and a variety of grassroots initiatives. In addition, there is a steady demand for information on the structures and principles of democracy.

III. Uzbekistan

A. Background

IRI's operations in Uzbekistan are based on the successful interaction with three groups. Workshops were initially introduced at the English language specialty school, School #17, in Tashkent. In October, the circle of participants expanded to a group of adults who wanted to initiate grassroots projects for youth. In March, IRI began running programs at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy for students in International Relations, Economics and Law.

1. School #17

IRI has been training students at School #17 in Tashkent over the past year. The leadership workshops have created a critical mass of students ready to take action and undertake self-generated projects. School #17 has reaped the most from its consistent willingness to host IRI workshops. Parents, teachers, and trainers comment on the remarkable transformation of the student body to which the workshops have contributed. The students will test their training in organizational skills and specific conflict management tools in May when they host a community Youth Fair as a part of IRI's Youth Conference.

2. "Rainbow"

This nascent non-governmental organization has emerged as a direct result of IRI initiatives and currently works in schools and in neighborhoods to motivate others to effect change at the grassroots level. IRI's future programming goal is to increase the group's outreach and to solidify its organizational base.

3. University of World Economy and Diplomacy

Finally, IRI's success at the University of World Economy includes reaching an entirely new audience preparing for governmental and diplomatic posts. The students profited from IRI's model UN simulation and the challenge to learn more about democracy and world affairs. IRI will ensure that the students replicate the program at the University and at area high schools.

B. Model UN

From March 9th-13th, IRI organized an "International Student Congress" (Model UN) at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent. Professors Scott Ratzan and Gregory Payne of Emerson College in Boston conducted workshops in communication and negotiation skills and facilitated the proceedings of the Congress. 26 students from the departments of International Law and International Relations engaged in the simulation exercise. In combination with the skills from the practical workshops and the basics of parliamentary

procedure, the young Central Asians learned about the application of democratic practices in a multilateral setting.

Students took on roles as delegates in the simulation, whereas trainers provided guidance on writing bills, coalition-building, parliamentary procedures and other instruments to facilitate the democratic process of the Congress. In this setting, students applied their skills as negotiators in attempts to listen, persuade and push for agreements. They learned the importance of advance research skills, public speaking, cooperation, critical thinking, problem-solving, negotiation and compromise.

In follow-up evaluations students particularly expressed appreciation for the practical training in negotiation skills and public speaking. They stressed the importance of these skills and their knowledge of the proceedings of multilateral organizations as essential elements in their career development.

The trainers and IRI prepared and distributed an instruction manual to assist students in their roles as delegates. This manual will afford students the opportunity to train classmates in future simulations, which they will organize themselves later in the year.

As a result of this program, students articulated their acute need for current and accurate information on the foreign policies and interests of other nations, other cultures and values, and international legal and financial systems. The success of the program can be measured in terms of future cooperation of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy. IRI will be able to deliver a large selection of appropriate and otherwise unavailable literature in the name of the effectiveness of the simulation exercise.

C. Group Process Training

From March 9th-14th Russian trainer Ivan Timofeev of the Moscow-based "Center of Experiential Education and Democracy" conducted three workshops in Tashkent to enhance IRI's work with client groups and to introduce IRI activities to a new audience.

On March 9th and 10th, 50 students at the English language specialty School #17 participated in the workshop "Developing Working Relations and Win-Win Problem-Solving through Effective Communication". Previous work with student leaders at School #17 has created a core group of activists who organize school and community activities. IRI's assistance focuses on the development of effective organizational structures, which will serve as a model for other student governments in Tashkent.

Mr. Timofeev's workshop featured organizational strategies such as joint goal-setting, shared responsibility, and effective delegation of tasks. Practical exercises and group discussion complemented the workshop's in-depth theoretical presentation of the principles of effective communication in groups initiating collaborative action.

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As a result of IRI training, the students learn skills to help them to organize effectively. At this workshop, students concentrated on the importance of communication skills as they learned to clarify expected outcomes, to define mutual goals and to share responsibility for every project undertaken. One student evaluation reads, "I liked the way this new information was given in the context. Now I know how I can present my points and seek support from my colleagues at the forthcoming teachers' meeting."

Students demonstrated that IRI programming has had a cumulative effect over the past year and a half. Students apply the information and skills as student leaders in the school and at home. In addition older students are currently providing mini-trainings for younger students. Thus, the information and skills are not lost as one experienced group graduates from school. In the next year, IRI anticipates a transfer of skills and experience from School #17 students and teachers to other schools with the assistance of in-country program officer, Charles Watson.

In an effort to create strategic alliances, Mr. Timofeev spoke to 15 teachers in Tashkent on March 11th. Helena Galant, a teacher and student activities director at School #17 organized the event to stimulate interest in IRI's workshops and programs for youth development. The presentation included a series of workshop exercises on communication skills. IRI identified teachers open to innovation as potential partners in its outreach program for the upcoming year.

On March 12th-13th Ivan Timofeev conducted a workshop for 6 of IRI's "Rainbow" group, an informal action group comprising community leaders trained by IRI. The group meets regularly to share experiences, resources and support for projects.

The "Communication" workshop for the "Rainbow" covered material similar to that relayed to students at School #17. The workshop activities and content were adjusted to suit the sophistication of the participants. In this workshop IRI provided the "Rainbow" group with techniques for creating strategic alliances between individuals and groups. As the group continues to evolve into a non-governmental organization, these community activists will rely on communication and group process skills to accomplish their goals. In the upcoming year, IRI's Community Leaders Training program will track the success of the training process and provide continued support for this nascent organization.

D. Introductory Democracy workshop in Samarkand

March 14th-17th Russian trainers Igor Ovchinnikov, Natalie Mirimanova of the "Center of Experiential Education and Democracy" conducted a workshop in Samarkand tailored to meet the needs of the IRI Youth Leadership and Democracy program. The "Democratic Leadership and Intercultural Tolerance" workshop brought together twenty-five individuals of eleven ethnic groups. The participants were selected by their willingness to effect social and political change in their community. The hosts from the Youth Union of Uzbekistan of Samarkand impressed IRI with their desire to learn more about organizational strategies and assistance in effecting change in their city.

This carefully sequenced workshop combines informational mini-presentations on democracy, cultural stereotypes and the origins of conflict with experiential exercises. The workshop links cognitive learning to self-actualization through an experiential process. Experiential techniques solidify learning, deepen understanding and build group cohesion.

The Samarkand workshop consisted of two parts. The democratic leadership section introduced the basics of group processes, democracy broadly defined, options for shared leadership, problem-solving and decision-making techniques. The section on intercultural tolerance covered awareness-building, discovering diversity as a resource, conflict-resolution, and "ethnic empowerment".

The program induces participants to move beyond old paradigms by means of games, simulations and role-plays, which stress the value of creativity, as well as reliance on common sense. The trainer's role is to encourage participants to trust their intuition and to draw out the lessons from the simulation or experiential game.

The exercise "Warp-speed", for example, works on many levels and can be used to illustrate a variety of points: positive thinking has an impact on tackling problems; group diversity is a resource; problem-solving is a step by step process. Throughout a workshop trainers can refer to such experiences to illustrate a point related to topics of discussion such as the elements and benefits of democratic leadership. A participant's evaluation draws on this game as an illustration: "The material of the workshop was chosen and combined in such a way that we were able to get close to each other and to get to know each other very well. Having played a game, is it really possible that in 4 seconds a ball can be shared by 20 people, and having make the conclusion that it is possible, I discover that it might be true for my life. I started looking at my daily problems in a more optimistic way."

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants had not only learned about experiential teaching techniques that would help them in their work with youth, but they came away with a deeper understanding of how a democratic society stimulates progress and democratic structures by managing conflict instead of imposing solutions from above. Many participants expressed a desire to become qualified trainers in order to promote these ideas among youth in Samarkand.

IRI identified a rich source for community trainers in Samarkand. After an IRI workshop in January in Tashkent, the delegation from Samarkand convinced IRI that the workshop would have a tremendous impact in their city. In March, they organized the workshop, demonstrating their leadership skills and commitment to IRI's democracy programs. The IRI workshop was well-received and paved the way for the IRI's future Community Leaders program. As the crossroads between Tajikistan and Tashkent, Samarkand will provide an ideal site for training.

E. IRI In-Country Representative and Youth Festival Preparation

In order to offer continuity in its programs and assistance, IRI will deploy an in-country officer in April. In preparation, IRI's Charles Watson visited Tashkent from March 14th to 18th. There

he investigated options for office space and living quarters. As a result of the US-Uzbekistan bilateral agreement IRI and the US Embassy began the registration procedure for IRI as an organization funded by the US Agency of International Development.

In preparation for IRI's Youth Festival in May, planning and organizational meetings were held with staff, expeditors, conference facilitators and School #17.

In addition, IRI staff began search for candidates for IRI Women's Conference, Bishkek in June.

IV. Turkmenistan

A. Background

In Turkmenistan, IRI's main contact has been the International Economic School. In 1992, the US Embassy in Ashgabat recommended the director of the school as a partner. Ms. Begjanova, one of the few innovative and enterprising individuals in the country, continues to provide stalwart support IRI's program.

Undaunted by the obstacles and obstruction of public life in Turkmenistan, Ms. Begjanova forges ahead in acting on her conviction that democracy and free enterprise is necessary for stability and prosperity in her country. In a mere four years, Ms. Begjanova has been able to lay the foundations of a progressive school with three branches throughout Turkmenistan.

The school's administrative staff, the director, and the teachers have invested their time and energy in providing IRI support for its training program. IRI has reached over 100 students in workshops that clarify democratic values such as consensus, pluralism, equality, and participation. IRI has established a Youth Center at the school, where IRI trainers continue to conduct workshops, reaching students and teachers from other schools and the university, parents, and the general public.

B. Democracy workshops in Firyuza (near Ashgabat)

From March 18th-23rd trainers Igor Ovchinnikov and Natalie Mirimanova of the "Center of Experiential Education and Democracy" in Moscow and Charles Watson III, IRI In-country Program Officer conducted parallel workshops to train trainers and to induct new democracy advocates. The advanced group of twelve experienced trainers attended the workshops on "Democracy to Affect Social Change" and "Advanced Youth Leadership". The eleven novices attended "Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance" and "Youth Leadership" workshops.

The Training of Trainers and introductory IRI workshops resulted in broadening the network of IRI supporters in Turkmenistan. It also increased the training ability of IRI Youth Center staff and others who have previously attended 2-4 IRI training workshops.

C. IRI's Youth Center in Ashgabat

Program Officer Gabriela Schwarz inspected the newly established IRI Youth Center at the International Economics School and conducted business with Director Anjela Begjanova. In addition, Ms. Schwarz initiated the search for candidates for IRI Women's Conference in Central Asia in June.

The IRI Youth Center has become alive with activity in Ashgabat. With a paid staff, greater attention is being paid to outreach and training in the region. The staff has demonstrated drive and willingness to conduct training, arrange for problem-solving meetings with interested community activists, and introduce democratic education in school curricula. These discussions and training with community leaders has created a network of supporters for IRI programs. In the future, IRI will emphasize organizational development in Turkmenistan to help community leaders move from informal interest groups to groups with defined and sustainable structure.

In Turkmenistan, the sluggish backwater of Ashgabat has been transformed into an oasis. With the support of the International Economics School and its energetic director, the IRI Youth Center acts as a catalyst for community activism and educational reform. At first, IRI's impact was limited to the parameters of the school and showed no promise of expanding to other populations.

V. Summary

IRI's March training mission demonstrated the effectiveness of programs over a prolonged time period and IRI's ability to step beyond school-based programs.

Evidence supports the beneficial effect of IRI workshops on the student population and teachers at School #17 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. In Turkmenistan, the workshops and presence of a Youth Center has begun to have an impact on citizens and young people.

As a politically and commercially progressive city, IRI has found Samarkand to be an ideal site for training community leaders. The non-obstructionist political environment will greatly enhance the effectiveness of the program. And finally, IRI has begun a fruitful partnership at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent, where members of the elite are trained for influential positions in government.



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**Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan
January 15 - February 2, 1994
Trip Report**

I. Introduction

The January Mission

Political Background
Turkmenistan
Referendum
Uzbekistan

Overview

II. IRI Workshops, January 16 - February 2

Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance for Adults, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

*Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance for students at the International
Economics School, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan*

Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance for Adults, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Organizational Strategies workshop at School #17, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Community Building workshop for Adults, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Community Building workshop for Adults, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

III. Conclusion



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**UZBEKISTAN AND TURKMENISTAN
TRIP REPORT
JANUARY 15-FEBRUARY 2ND, 1994**

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"A leader is not the person who guides everyone, but rather asks for people's opinions; that means listening to others".

16 year old Ashgabat
workshop participant

Between January 15th-February 2nd, 1994 IRI conducted a series of workshops in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan addressing topics of democratic leadership, interethnic tolerance, and community building. IRI's Youth Leadership and Democracy program targeted educators and young people, audiences willing to invest in change for a democratic future. As a result of IRI workshops, local people have been inspired to take initiative and to work together to promote responsible citizenship.

Since December 1992, IRI has tapped into the energy and creativity of the people of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and, most recently, Tajikistan. The IRI workshops unleash dormant strengths and creativity in people. Through continuous IRI support these same people take initiative, build community and envision a society that offers greater opportunity for all to create democracy. The IRI process transforms participants from objects of oppression to agents of change.

THE JANUARY MISSION

The success of the January training mission marks the continued progress of IRI's democracy-building program in Central Asia, particularly in the stifling political climate of Turkmenistan and in the increasingly authoritarian environment of Uzbekistan. In Ashgabat (Turkmenistan), local people are involved in a campaign to promote IRI-inspired programs. In Tashkent (Uzbekistan), grassroots activists continue to involve the community in local initiatives; students learn to organize themselves to promote their interests. IRI has inspired local projects and has received invitations to hold workshops in Bukhara, Samarkand (Uzbekistan) and Khojand (Tajikistan).

The January training mission underscored the appropriateness of IRI's venture. Until then, IRI claimed success in Uzbekistan, but less so in Turkmenistan. IRI attributed the effectiveness of its programs in Uzbekistan to the more favorable political climate. Participants in Tashkent readily responded to IRI's training by taking initiative and by starting grassroots projects. In Ashgabat, IRI's training remained limited to workshops for youths at the International Business School but had not resulted in community-wide involvement.

After January's adult training session in Turkmenistan, however, the phenomenon has taken hold in Turkmenistan as well. The "Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance" workshop for educators in Ashgabat brought immediate results. At the conclusion of IRI's seminar, the workshop participants requested a training of trainers workshop and a certification program. Since January, local organizers in Ashgabat have been active in preparation for IRI's training of trainers workshop in March. They secured a site for the training and have been leading sample

exercises at local schools and at the university in search of potential trainers who would grasp democratic principles readily and would be quick to learn IRI methods.

IRI programs bring people together to talk about political and social issues in forums where citizens discover that they share common interests and concerns. Through IRI's efforts such groups are eager to reach out to others, to get involved in community projects, and to shape young people into leaders in a democratic society.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Turkmenistan

Since its independence in 1991 and the election of President Niyazov in 1992, Turkmenistan has experienced increasing concentration of political and economic control in the hands of the government. Steadily, the president has been able to consolidate power of monarchical proportions.

In Turkmenistan, individual citizens have no recourse to the law to protect their rights and virtually no opportunities to act on their own initiative. Private initiative is generally discouraged except in the case of influence buying influence, exploiting family ties, or using outright bribery of government officials.

The energy and time needed to overcome the bureaucracy in Turkmenistan is incomparable to similar hindrances in the west or even in nascent democracies in Eastern Europe and Russia. As in the past, the situation can be described as "kafkaesque". Authorities in the Ministries fail to take responsibility or provide explanations for their decisions regarding the approval or disapproval of projects initiated by innovators or other progressive elements in society.

Referendum

Examples of general oppression of human rights and fair governance abound. On the January 15th, the first day of IRI's most recent Democratic Leadership workshop, Turkmenistan held a referendum to decide whether President Niyazov's term in office should be extended without popular elections. The official tallies showed that 99.9% of the population voted and that 98.5% of them voted in favor of the president. In discussions with locals, IRI in fact met very few people who had voted; almost all who were asked could name several friends and relatives who had also stayed away from the polls. The conversations revealed an attitude of powerlessness in the face of the government decisions and frustration with the lack of popular input into the political process.

Uzbekistan

As in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan's political system has remained authoritarian and undemocratic since its independence from the Soviet Union. The political system is an outgrowth of pre-existing structures, combined with traditional leadership styles peculiar to the region. (Political authority derives from family ties and obligations in the clan system and from government positions of influence.) The system negates basic freedoms and rights for citizens and blocks the path to democratization. In such a system the citizen's role is to accept the dictates of the central government, although individual interests may be met by having personal connections or by bribing officials. As a result, the country is ruled arbitrarily by an oligarchical elite with no concern for an accountable approach to governance.

Overview

In its work with educators, IRI workshops have helped sustain the dreams of people who wish to change their lives and create opportunity for themselves and others. Participants in such workshops realize that there is an alternative to authoritarian rule, an alternative in which their rights and freedoms take precedence. The program in Central Asia successfully transforms people from objects of repression to activists with a sense of responsibility and purpose. As one participant writes, "You made me think about certain things in a new way and openly accept what had been previously unacceptable, or which hadn't reached my consciousness."

In countries where censorship of the press prevails, IRI workshops offer alternative means of sharing opinions and airing differences of opinion. A 16 year old participant from a workshop in Ashgabat commented, "The main thing of course was communication. We didn't know each other well. It is very important in our new country that the opinion of other people should be taken into account as in a democratic society." In general, the IRI workshops provide an opportunity to discover universal values which can then be used as the building blocks for a common notion of democracy.

Participants in IRI's program learned that solutions to problems lie within themselves. In most post-Soviet societies citizen involvement is not part of the political culture. In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the possibilities are often limited by the imagination. IRI workshops allow them to play out situations that can affect future patterns of behavior and encourage civic action.

Central Asia's political culture is not immutable. IRI strives to change it by working with young people and educators. One student wrote, "I learned a lot of new information on democracy and democratic leadership. Much of what I heard sounds useful to me and this information might play an important role in the future." Indeed, young people can easily adapt to new ideas and apply them to solve problems that baffle their less creative, less visionary adult counterparts.

Many individuals understand the need to plant the seeds of change in the young generation. IRI workshops are attended by people who see progress in terms of preparing young people to practice democratic leadership and to deal with conflict through dialogue and formalized structures. Educators in Central Asia hunger for new methods of teaching in their schools that will develop character and leadership qualities. One participant evaluation stated, "Main conclusion: not to be desperate in a desperate situation. Start making peace in the souls of children, starting small. Any kind of creation is not just creativity, step by step, liberation of people from the oppression of their complexes, stereotypes, etc." IRI Youth Leadership and Democracy programs in Central Asia help youth and adults make small steps toward change.

The second step in the IRI program leads participants to action. IRI community building workshops enable people to tap into something that is innately human: the desire to effect change and control one's destiny. People everywhere want to improve their living conditions, to do something for themselves and society, to experience success in realizing their dreams.

Community building is essential to the foundations of a democratic society, especially in societies that impose norms from above. Communism tapped into the wellsprings of the human desire to serve the community, but failed to recognize that the generative force comes from below and

within, rather than from authority and dictate.

The community building elements of IRI's program teaches people to be creative in overcoming obstacles. The program is packaged in simple, convenient steps. From this, dozens of individual and group initiatives have sprung to life in Central Asia.

IRI Youth Leadership and Democracy programs are making headway in Central Asia. IRI has been able to establish forums for the discussion of democracy. Educators have begun using classroom activities which were learned at IRI workshops. The program has touched hundreds of lives and continues to have a multiplier effect as participants aspire to become trainers themselves and demand more opportunities to work with IRI.

IRI WORKSHOPS: JANUARY 16-FEBRUARY 2ND

Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance Workshop for Adults: Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

From January 15th-18th, IRI conducted a training workshop for 20 adults from 4 regions in Turkmenistan. The topic of the workshop "Democratic Leadership" and "Interethnic Dialogue" attracted educators, youth workers, school administrators, and entrepreneurs.

Russian trainers, Igor Ovchinnikov and Natasha Mirimanova of the Russian-American Humanitarian Initiative, led the IRI-sponsored workshop. The program met the needs of the participants, who expressed a desire to learn how to resolve conflicts, how to help youngsters be more open and involved, how to apply the workshop information to society in practice, and how to become trainers.

This carefully sequenced program combines informational mini-presentations on democracy, cultural stereotypes and the origins of conflict with experiential exercises. The experiential techniques built group cohesion and induced participants to move beyond old paradigms by means of games, simulations and role-plays.

The Ashgabat workshop consisted of two parts. The democratic leadership section introduced the basics of group processes, democracy broadly defined, options for shared leadership, problem-solving and decision-making techniques. The section on intercultural tolerance covered awareness-building, discovering diversity as a resource, conflict resolution, and "ethnic empowerment".

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants learned that democratic structures manage conflict, while at the same time society thrives on freedom of expression and diversity. Many participants requested a certification program that would enable them to teach these concepts to youth in Turkmenistan.

Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance Workshop for Students at the International Economics School: Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

On January 19th and 20th, 20 student representatives were chosen by their classmates to participate in the IRI training at the International Economics School. The students demonstrated

greater openness than the adults and were eager to discuss principles of democracy.

In one training activity, students were asked to identify themselves as members of certain groups. Groups included rock musicians, democrats and no-democrats. Only three did not consider themselves democrats. The students played out their stereotypical image of the other group in a role-play exercise. Confusion emerged about the term "democracy", as is typical of the former Soviet Union. As they performed, non-democrats play by democratic supporters personified Russia's Khasbulatov and the parliament. Students with democratic tendencies acted out Zhirinovskiy and the Liberal Democratic Party as the personification of non-democrats.

Students showed insight and understanding of democratic concepts. Students had an opportunity to experience consensus decision-making, creative conflict resolution, and breaking stereotypes.

Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Dialogue Workshop Tashkent, Uzbekistan

From January 25th to 27th, IRI conducted a workshop on "Democratic Leadership" and "Interethnic Dialogue" in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce IRI democratization programs to outlying regions for the expansion of program reach. Participants included 10 from Khojand (Tajikistan), 7 from Bukhara and 5 from Samarkand (Uzbekistan). As a result of the workshop, IRI has been invited to hold similar workshops in all three cities.

The workshop was conducted by Igor Ovchinnikov and Natalie Mirimanova of the Russian/American Humanitarian Initiative in Moscow. The workshop included exercises in group process, democratic leadership, interethnic dialogue and conflict resolution.

The participants were highly educated, but unaccustomed to freely expressing their opinions in a public forum. The trainers strained to create an atmosphere in which such dialogue could take place. In part, the recalcitrance of the workshop participants could be attributed to the restrictive environment of the provinces, as well as to the cultural taboo of broaching unpleasant subjects in a public setting. Two days of adept workshop facilitation finally yielded the results that IRI and the trainers had set out to achieve. The measure of success was the quality of the discussion and openness by participants in the final day of the workshop and the ensuing invitation to conduct similar workshops in each of the cities represented.

One of the most difficult topics to broach in this particular workshop was the ethnic question. To Uzbek participants in particular, this topic caused discomfort. In the evaluation of the workshop, one participant stated that he found discussion of ethnic differences distasteful, because it supported nationalism. In the workshop, however, participants discussed the danger of keeping silent on the subject of ethnic differences. A majority agreed that conflict management depended on open dialogue.

"Organizational Strategies" Workshop at School #17, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Since February 1993, IRI has been conducting workshops at School #17 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. In November 1993, IRI conducted a mock election with the students of School #17. The student

body elected a president and endorsed her party platform. The "Organizational Strategies" workshop on January 24th prepared the students to take the next step, which is to form a legitimate student council.

Trainers Igor Ovchinnikov and Natasha Mirimanova focussed on organization strategies for group work and offered practical tools to achieve group goals. The students gained resolve and confidence.

The second stage in IRI's democracy work was presaged by a simulation of a democratic election process. In November 1993, IRI conducted a mock election with the students of School #17. The student body elected a president complete with a party platform. Issues included broadening student rights, organizing entertainment, maintaining order on the school premises, changing requirements in the school curriculum, and promoting student business initiatives.

At the time, no model for a student government was in place. There was no structure from which students could launch their initiatives and expect to be taken seriously by teachers and the school administration. Although students organized a briefing for teachers about their experiences at the IRI mock election, the student government lacked legitimacy. The president and her newly formed "cabinet of ministers" resigned themselves to titular roles.

Organizational Workshop

On January 24, IRI conducted a follow-up workshop for the most active students at the school, including the president and her staff. The workshop was conducted by Igor Ovchinnikov and Natasha Mirimanova of the Moscow-based "Russian-American Humanitarian Initiative" or "Golubka". The training focussed on organizational strategies for group work and offered practical tools to achieve group goals. The workshop turned the students' despair into resolve and confidence.

The first part of the workshop addressed the problems that students had encountered in their efforts to carry out their proposed program. To initiate a discussion, the students first brainstormed a list of what the students had already achieved and another list of what remained unfulfilled. The students divided into two groups. The president's group worked separately from the "electorate" to develop a list that answered the following questions: "what would you like to see happen?"; "What support can you offer (the president)?"; "What support do you need (from the electorate)?". In the presentations of these two perspectives, it became immediately apparent that the two groups disagreed on the goals of the student government.

The trainers moved ahead with activities that illustrated leadership roles and functions of group participants. The students learned about task functions and maintenance functions and discovered that there were many opportunities for shared leadership in group work. Students compared group functions such as leadership, advisory and coordination roles.

As the workshop turned to practical matters, students learned to prepare an appropriate agenda, formulate goals, solve specific problems and apply strategic models for winning support from potential allies and adversaries.

The students demonstrated extraordinary abilities to focus on the task and reacted with

enthusiasm to the practical tools presented to them. The trainers took concrete examples from the students and had them work through the problems step by step. Student evaluations reflect satisfaction with this practical approach to problem-solving. Students show a greater willingness to take responsibility and to achieve their program goals.

In conclusion, IRI training for students have proved to be successful in that they instilled leadership qualities through experiential techniques and turned to their practical application as understanding matured. IRI will continue to support the students to develop a model student government.

COMMUNITY BUILDING WORKSHOP TASHKENT

From January 27-29th, 1994 IRI conducted an advanced workshop in "Community Building" in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Jeff Bercuvitz of "Community Innovations" worked with eleven activists who had previously attended IRI leadership training. Inspired by an introductory community building workshop with Mr. Bercuvitz in October, the participants came to report and seek renewed impetus for their grassroots initiatives. The advanced workshop enhanced implementation and outreach strategies for community activism at the grassroots level.

Mr. Bercuvitz' program offers a combination of tactics to overcome obstacles, that face individuals who wish to effect change. The advanced workshop outlined "Jeff Bercuvitz's Recipe for Successful Community Building" in six simple steps, coupled with exercises to reinforce the strategies and tactics.

Participants wrote goal statements for their particular community project that would clearly articulate what they hoped to achieve, how they were going to achieve it, and criteria by which to measure success. In this exercise, participants were instructed to ensure that the statements be clearly defined, encompass a six month period, explain the "what" and the "why", concentrate on one project, and build on personal pleasures.

Group activities included brainstorming exercises on identifying target audiences, turning "negatives" to the advantage of a project, contacting formal and informal groups for support and outreach, and creating a timeline as a commitment to achieving project goals.

Individuals in the group reaffirmed their commitment to their projects and each other. Their individual goals became more clearly defined, as did the action steps which they might take to achieve them. In addition, the group as a whole has committed to meeting regularly. At these meetings, they intend to support each other, to refresh their knowledge of the community building principles that they have learned, and to initiate newcomers to the program.

As a result of this community building work, IRI has successfully created a grassroots organization in Tashkent that will perpetuate the concepts of self-help activism in Tashkent. The group has recently met to decide on a name and a logo. The nascent organization for grassroots initiatives is called "Rainbow". Recent successes include 60 people gathering at a school for an initiative to paint a mural; a group of young people applying their artistic talents to entertain invalids at a hospital; and a community talent show.

Taken individually, these projects seem insignificant. However, in the context of a society that lacks grassroots initiatives. The participants of this program are eager to start mini-projects. Each success means greater experience and self-confidence. It means that participants will be able to take greater risks and by example encourage more people to get involved. Interest in "Rainbow" is growing every day. IRI's message is being promoted by word of mouth, by enthusiastic participants, and by the demonstration of success.

BUKHARA

From January 30th-February 1st, IRI conducted an introductory training in community building in Bukhara. 25 participants were from Bukhara. Five "graduates" from the training in "Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance" in Tashkent attended as well. In the watchful and controlled political environment of this provincial city, the prospect of grassroots activism is yet a distant dream. From the start, the workshop met with difficulties. The workshop was monitored by local authorities and participants were visibly uncomfortable.

From the start, the workshop met with difficulties. The workshop was visited by local authorities, which contributed to the inability of participants to focus on the goals of the workshop and to express themselves freely. The goal was to help participants to determine for themselves a concrete activity, which will be useful for the community and create future opportunities for community projects. When participants were asked about their goals, the input ranged from "to learn about presidential elections" to "how to channel the sexual energy of teenagers". In addition, participants displayed an inability to follow instructions, to stick to the schedule, and to make relevant contributions to the discussion.

Regardless of these obstacles, the workshop resulted in several community building projects. After the second day of the workshop, participants were ready for realistic goal-setting and a discussion for overcoming obstacles. Projects for a flower festival, a night cafe for young people, and a playground were discussed. At the conclusion of the workshop, several project initiators had pooled their interests together. The participants plan to conduct a flower festival that will celebrate national folklore heroes and support the reconstruction of a playground. These projects showed promise and participants had concrete suggestions for their implementation.

The workshop was most successful in working with the 5 participants from Samarkand, who had just completed the IRI "Democratic Leadership and Interethnic Tolerance" workshop in Tashkent. The participants demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of IRI's goals and the program's relationship to solving political problems.

In reviewing the experience in Bukhara, it is obvious that in a region of strict authoritarian control, IRI programs must begin with basic leadership development for high school children. In previous instances, such workshops have enabled IRI to single out potential supporters among teachers and educators, who are capable of articulating IRI's message to sympathizers and adversaries in such a way as to pave the way to IRI's more challenging program of community initiative.

CONCLUSION

IRI's January training mission broke ground in new territory. IRI worked with adults in

Turkmenistan, creating demand for a training of trainers program. For the first time, IRI held a workshop for adults from a provincial setting and for participants from Tajikistan. IRI's work in Tashkent with community activists and School #17 continues to flourish.

In the future, IRI will focus on training trainers, establishing a school-based program for community activism, strengthen community initiatives, replicate successful grassroots projects, and provide support for the next step in organizational development for IRI's client groups.