



EXTENDING THE REACH OF DEMOCRACY

**FY 2004 QUARTERLY REPORT (2ND QUARTER)**

**Cooperative Agreement No. 119-A-00-00-00039-00**

**REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN**

**Submitted to the  
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
By the International Foundation for Election Systems  
(IFES)**

**January 1 – March 31, 2004**

## **I. GENERAL**

During the second quarter of FY2004, IFES worked toward fulfilling its programmatic objectives by continuing its civic education initiatives with secondary school and university students and engaging political party representatives on a the national and local level. A number of activities were carried out in support of extracurricular student engagement in civil society and governance, along with school-based study of civics and democracy. Contacts with political party members were also solidified and a training schedule finalized to take advantage of issues facing political parties as they look ahead to the parliamentary elections of February 2005.

### ***IFES Hosts Political Party Representatives***

In January, IFES Washington hosted representatives of two Tajikistani political parties, sponsored by Meridian International under the auspices of the State Department's International Visitor's Program. Amniyat Abdunazarov, Deputy Chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT), and Khikmatullo Sayfullozoda, Press Secretary for the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), visited IFES to learn more about IFES' Political Party Program in Tajikistan and to share their views and concerns regarding preparations for the February 2005 elections to the Majlisi Oli. Following an open discussion on the U.S. elections process, the IFES hosts gauged their guests' views on the increasingly challenging political environment in Tajikistan. Both party representatives conceded that the environment in which political parties operate is evolving, and they thanked IFES for its ten-year commitment to helping with democratic transition in Tajikistan, including a current project of promoting the professional development of political party branches in rural regions of Tajikistan as well as a focus on helping to encourage the greater involvement of women in politics.

### ***IFES Political Party Expert Arrives in Tajikistan***

IFES Political Party Development Consultant Stephanie Wheeler arrived in Dushanbe in January to begin her daily work in support of IFES approved assistance activities in political party development. Wheeler, a veteran of international as well as U.S.-based political campaigning and party development, was sent to focus on local party branch development, increasing the participation of women, and helping parties and individuals develop professional outreach and communications skills. As part of her orientation to Tajikistan, Wheeler worked with IFES Chief of Party Oskar Lehner to meet key officials from each of Tajikistan's six officially registered political parties as well as a number of actors outside of mainstream politics. Wheeler spent the remainder of the quarter traveling to work with branch representatives and undertake theme-based training initiatives.

## II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### Civic Education

#### *Memorandum of Understanding*

IFES-Tajikistan and USAID officials met together with the Ministry of Education to negotiate a revised, more comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding and to formally present the Tajik language version of IFES' civic education textbook Citizenship, Participation & Governance: Your Role in Civil Society in the 21st Century. The MoU seeks to enshrine the Ministry's commitment to support IFES' educational projects over the long term, allowing for their expansion into new regions and schools. Through this expansion and usage on an official basis, IFES anticipates the eventual institutionalization of civics as a required course in the national curriculum, with the IFES textbook possibly as the main teaching tool. The role of teachers will continue to be paramount, and teacher training in the methodology of Interactive Classroom Management will take on an even greater future role as the project fans out into new regions. A formal signing ceremony is expected to take place in the spring.

#### *Civic Education Course/Textbook Project Update*

IFES made improvements and updates to its civic education textbook in both the Tajik and Russian languages. Visiting IFES Civic Education Specialist Simon Jenkins met with IFES staff to discuss textbook development, student capacity, and other issues related to the civics course and textbook project and to recommend revisions.

The Russian language version of Part II of the textbook was completed during this period. Those classes who had been using Part I of the textbook introduced Part II to their students in February.

IFES specialists translated Part II of the textbook and teacher's guide into Tajik after IFES solicited student and teacher comments through a focus group. IFES visited 20 schools to follow up on the training and distribution of Part I of the textbook and to determine the level of comprehension of the textbook by students. At one school, IFES tested Chapter 13 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume on students to assess its level of difficulty. Thirty students from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade participated in the testing and found the textbook generally easy to use understand. After identifying the words and terms some students found difficult to fully comprehend, IFES included these words in the glossary for the new edition.

At the beginning of the school year, IFES determined that in order to meet the needs of Uzbek-speaking students, who make up roughly 25% of the population of the country, the textbook would need to be translated into Uzbek language. Thanks to a generous contribution provided by the Embassy of the United Kingdom, IFES embarked on a translation of the textbook into Uzbek. For this purpose, IFES hired Mr. Turghon Dadabaev, the editor of the local publication, *Minbari Khalg* (People's Tribune), to translate and edit the textbook into Uzbek. The UK Embassy in Dushanbe provided

funding for the translation of volume one of the book into Uzbek and the printing of a pilot edition of 500 books. The OSCE signaled an interest in funding volume two.

IFES conducted one teacher training session in January for 31 teachers from Sughd Oblast. A total of 11 teachers from Uzbek-speaking schools attended the training. Thus far, IFES has conducted trainings for over 126 teachers throughout the country in the use of its new interactive civic education textbook for 9<sup>th</sup> graders, which employs an interactive classroom management methodology. Training of additional teachers will continue in the following months as soon as the Ministry of Education has approved additional schools to the 120 currently using the textbook across the country.

A total of 9,000 copies of the civic education textbook, Citizenship, Participation & Governance: Your Role in Civil Society in the 21st Century (volume one), in the Tajik language were printed; 4,974 of these copies were distributed to 109 teachers in over 100 approved pilot schools located in the Rasht Valley and Khatlon Oblast. IFES plans to distribute 3,909 more copies of the civic education book after the Ministry of Education approves the additional schools chosen by IFES to be included among those participating in the civics course/textbook project. IFES civic education textbooks in the Tajik Language were distributed to Sarband, Qumsangir, Kolkhozabad, Vakhsh and Bokhtar Hukumats and Education Departments. Furthermore, IFES reprinted 500 copies of the Textbook Part I in the Russian language to be delivered to Russian pilot schools that are short of textbooks. IFES, through the Aga Khan Foundation, distributed textbooks to the Gorno-Badakhshan Hukumats and Education Department.

IFES met with the Director of the NGO *Avrora* and the ABA/CEELI Staff Attorney to discuss the possibility of introducing the IFES textbook into their Center, which is funded by the Tajik government under the “Poverty Reduction Strategy” project. The Center was established in the early 1990s for underprivileged youth after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Director expressed her desire to set up a Youth Club, in which kids will have the opportunity to discuss relevant issues using the IFES textbook. A request of 100 textbooks was formally made to IFES.

## **School-Based Activities**

### *Student Local Government Day*

In March, IFES conducted a Student Local Government Day activity in Vahdat District of Dushanbe, together with the City Education Department and Vahdat Hukumat. Thirteen students, eight government officials and five teachers participated in making this event successful. The offices of local government, which accepted the students, included the Public Prosecutor’s office, Vahdat Court, Department of Economics of Vahdat, Socio-Cultural Department of Hukumat, Hukumat Administration, City Education Department and Control Department of the Hukumat.

During Student Local Government Day events, students shadow a public official in order to observe and experience the workings of government at the local level. Students exposed to public officials and their day-to-day activities gain a greater interest and

appreciation in government and share the information and experiences they have gained with their classmates. IFES-Tajikistan representatives made a great impression on the participating public officials in Vahdat District, who made time for the students and explained the importance of serving in local government. The Public Prosecutor of Vahdat introduced all the employees of his office to students by holding a brief meeting with the Prosecutor's staff, acquainting them with the activities of his office. He then briefed students on the law and the rights of citizens. Left with a great impression of the SLGD event, the Prosecutor expressed his willingness and desire to accept students into his office for future SLGDs. Students followed up the event by preparing essays on their experience and sharing them with their teacher-mentors.

#### *Youth Forum and Democracy Summer Camps*

IFES-Tajikistan introduced its civic education program and all school-related activities at the Youth Forum on March 12-13 in Dushanbe. Mercy Corps International organized the Forum, with the participation of over 100 young adults between the ages of 15 and 25 from Youth Committees in Gharm and Khatlon. Mercy Corps expressed interest in cooperating with the IFES pilot schools in the Gharm area and Khatlon Oblast and presented 100 IFES civic education textbooks to their community representatives. Such cooperation increases the effectiveness of IFES's civic education programs and allows for the possibility of continued growth and expansion.

During the Forum, representatives from Youth Committees under the local Hukumats approached IFES staff to inquire about implementing IFES school programs in their districts. IFES advised them on the procedure and offered assistance. Implementing school programs does not present a major challenge since these representatives have a close relationship with their local Hukumats and are part of the local government.

IFES also distributed Democracy Summer Camp Application Forms to all interested participants. In the spring, IFES staff will travel to the area and conduct interviews and examinations to select the top students to participate in the 2004 Democracy Summer Camps. Preparation for the Camps, which will be held in Karatag and Kairakkum, began in March. Over 200 youth from select regions will gather for ten days to participate in intense study and hands-on experience with activities promoting democratic governance.

#### *Student Conversation Clubs*

Forty students participated in an IFES-sponsored Student Conversation Club on the themes "Presentation of the Resource Center on Human Rights" and "International Agreements Ratified by the Republic of Tajikistan." Guest Speakers Alisher Turakhanov, Coordinator of the Resource Center of Human Rights, and Khusrav Sattorov provided an overview of the Center's activities and instructed students on how to access materials and the resources at the Center. The Center grants students access to the Internet in addition to all their materials, including hard copies of all domestic and international legislation relevant to human rights. Additional Clubs were held throughout the quarter on a semi-regular basis, and in all, seven universities have participated in the project to date.

IFES Political Party Development Consultant Stephanie Wheeler discussed the possibility of evolving the project into Student Political Discussion Clubs. She concluded that the next generation of University level clubs should be a true working club with elected officers, a treasury and a voting body for fundraising, social and club activities.

#### *Student Action Committees*

IFES continued to successfully expand the Student Action Committees (SAC) at schools throughout Tajikistan, including into Gorno-Badakhshan. As an important component of the IFES civic education project, Student Action Committees encourage youth to actively participate in the community and their school and address problems through creative problem solving. The students establish SACs through the support of school administrators and/or teachers, who act as mentors. A total of 57 SACs are active, out of which 9 are in Dushanbe, 30 in Sughd Oblast, 9 in Khatlon Oblast, 6 in GBAO and 3 in the Districts of Republican Subordination.

IFES published and distributed two separate newsletters; one addressed to Student Action Committees and the other to the Teachers' Forum, and delivered them to 152 schools participating in IFES projects. These newsletters provide information on all student-based activities as well as familiarize the readers with IFES' partnership with the Relief International Schools on-line and the IREX Internet Centers.

IFES continued to reach out to more schools in Dushanbe in order to familiarize them with the SAC concept. Upon the request of a former SAC president and current volunteer at Dushanbe School #1, IFES met with that school's Director to discuss the establishment of a SAC at the school. IFES later took select students from Dushanbe School #1 to an SAC training seminar in Vahdat. Bringing students together for one training seminar rather than organizing various local training seminars allows students from different areas and backgrounds to share their opinions and experiences in implementing SACs in their respective communities. Students participating in the SAC in Vahdat district assisted the Dushanbe School students.

During training, IFES learned that another school in Vahdat District established a SAC on their own initiative, without assistance. The establishment of this SAC reduced the outclass curricula activities for their teachers by 80%. IFES will conduct regular visits to the school to assess what types of assistance it can provide and what links of cooperation can be tightened with this school. This encouraging initiative demonstrates the appeal of the project and its sustainability.

#### *National Student Action Committee Fair*

IFES, with the support of the Academy for Educational Development, held a two-day National Student Action Committee Fair in Dushanbe. Students from various parts of Tajikistan participated in this event in order to share their experiences and work together to find a way to improve the functioning of SACs nationwide. Sixty-two students, fifty SAC mentors, and various representatives of international organizations participated in the Fair. Fifty-four SACs presented their work and shared their practical experiences in

problem-solving and community activism. The general public was informed via electronic and print media about the SACs' activities, encouraging more and more schools and students to establish them in their communities. The international organizations in attendance presented their activities in Tajikistan, their role, and how they could contribute to the improvement of SAC activities within the schools and the community.

At the Fair, SAC Presidents representing different schools formed several working groups. One such working group addressed all necessary changes and improvements to be made to the SACs while another discussed what types of activities can be done that will improve the environment and neighborhood around the schools.

In addition, SACs were encouraged to increase communication amongst themselves and to use the facilities provided by IFES partner organizations Relief International, IREX, and Junior Achievement. Since the beginning of the civic education program, IFES has initiated cooperation and partnerships with a number of organizations in order to increase the sustainability and effectiveness of the programs. Now in each region, SACs have access to the Internet through IFES partner's resource/Internet centers and also receive training on how to effectively use the Internet. In addition, the Internet allows IFES Tajikistan to maintain much of their contact with SACs. IFES receives information on each SAC's activities and disseminates this information to other SACs; SACs distribute their electronic versions of their Newsletters and have access to the textbook on the web.

Since February, SAC schools operating in Dushanbe have met every Thursday at the Relief International-School Online Internet Center, where a web-master assists them in establishing their own website. Through the Internet, SACs throughout the country can communicate with each other, reinforcing their skills and sharing their experiences.

## **Political Party Development**

### *Political Party Development Seminars*

IFES-Tajikistan conducted a 6-day Political Party and Gender Based Training of Trainers (ToT) session in Dushanbe from February 24 through February 29 with a total of 12 local NGO representatives, 12 political party representatives, and several representatives from international organizations. Participants came from Sughd, Khatlon, and Dushanbe regions to take part in the training. During these seminars, IFES worked to raise women's political awareness and activism by providing basic but essential information on political and legal issues. The training prepares participants to function as leaders of further educational activities for rural women in basic matters of governance and representative democracy. IFES followed up on the training by providing materials to trainers in the regions, including an ethical teaching standards sheet that briefly lists the professional expectations of trainers. Regional trainings continued to take place during the quarter, led by trainers from the February event. Up to 20 total events are expected to take place by the end of the fiscal year.

IFES published booklets containing all legal provisions relevant to the subject matter (law on political parties, family law, etc) of the two training sessions. These booklets were distributed to all participants who attended the sessions. Internews agreed to film and broadcast several of the future trainings on their TV network.

The Swiss Office for Cooperation in Tajikistan and the British Embassy provided financial support for the Gender-Based political party trainings. Funds were provided for the conduct of PPD skill-building and communication training seminars as well as for the gender-based training seminars for female political activists. Because the funding augments IFES' regular USAID funding, IFES plans to conduct additional trainings and cover key districts in the north and south of the country.

#### *Political Party Study Tour*

A Study Tour involving representatives of Tajik political parties was organized to observe elections in Slovenia in late May. Political parties submitted participant names for consideration, and IFES Consultant Stephanie Wheeler worked with Slovenian officials to secure speakers and develop the itinerary. Earlier, AED and IFES met with representatives of each of the 6 political parties to discuss the priorities that each of the parties want to see come out of the Study Tour. It was decided that in September 2004 a follow up meeting would be held in four regions of Tajikistan, to be implemented by IFES along with 6 of the 12 tour participants. The meetings will focus on the participants sharing the skills they learned with a large number of regional party activists.

#### **Elections Issues**

IFES analyzed two different proposals for amending the electoral law in Tajikistan, which were submitted to the Parliament. The Communist Party and Islamic Revival Party jointly developed and submitted amendments on the Constitutional Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Elections to Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan" to the Parliament. In addition, the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan, in conjunction with independent deputies, submitted their own amendments to the law to Parliament. Both proposals mainly consider amendments to the status and makeup of the electoral commissions; the status and authority of domestic/international observers; candidates' proxies; status and role of the local Hukumats; electoral fees and fundraising. IFES remains hopeful that the existing electoral law will be amended in order to provide more transparency and anticipates a parliamentary vote on the amendments to the electoral law by mid-April 2004.

IFES completed plans to host a Round Table Discussion together with the National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan in early April on the topic of Precinct Election Commissions, a subject addressed in the current debate over election law reform. Participating will be members of the Majlisi Oli, leaders of the political parties not represented in the Majlisi Oli, members of the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda and members of the executive branch. These discussion events engage political actors in high-profile discussions on critical topics that can spawn new

partnerships and foster cooperation and understanding. IFES anticipates cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation for the Round Table.

### **Parliamentary Outreach**

IFES worked with the Press Secretary of the Majlisi Oli, Muhammadato Sulstonov, to develop scenarios for a series of televised educational programs featuring deputies from the parliament. The programs are designed to educate citizens about the political legislative process by focusing on the work of parliamentarians in the regions. Negotiations were completed between IFES, Sulstonov, and a Tajik State Television journalist on production issues and methodology of the programs. The episodes will cover the following topics: Division of Power, A Working Day of Parliament, Women in Parliament, Legislature of the Republic of Tajikistan on Youth Problems, Political Parties in the 2005 elections, the Democratization Process in Parliament, Parliament from the View of People, and additional themes. Stephanie Wheeler worked with Press Secretary Sulstonov to prepare the scenario of the 1<sup>st</sup> episode on the “Division of Power.” The project, part of IFES’ approved workplan, will include opportunities for interactive citizen participation through question-and-answer sessions. Production is likely to commence in April.

### **III. MATERIALS PRODUCED**

- Report on Monitoring Mission to Schools in Sughd Oblast
- Summary Booklets of Legal Issues Affecting the Status of Political Parties
- Part II of Russian language Civic Education Textbook Citizenship, Participation & Governance: Your Role in Civil Society in the 21st Century.

### **IV. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS**

During the closing weeks of the second quarter, the Ministry of Education stalled efforts to conclude an enhanced Memorandum of Understanding by delaying providing feedback to IFES on subsequent drafts. As a consequence, IFES Dushanbe had to put the further expansion of its textbook project on hold as no additional schools have yet been approved in addition to the 120 already using the book. In order to expedite the process, IFES requested USAID assistance in facilitating a meeting at which all issues related to the Memorandum could be discussed, including any Ministerial objections. By the end of the quarter it became clear that internal changes within the Ministry itself led to some delays in the Memorandum’s review, though a new person designated to work with IFES appeared amenable to addressing the matter with renewed vigor.

IFES Chief of Party Oskar Lehner left IFES-Tajikistan to take up a post as EU Chief of Elections in Indonesia. The departure, while unexpected, offered IFES an opportunity to find a long-term replacement and generate continuity in the management and administration of the program. Stephanie Wheeler assumed the Acting Chief of Party position while a permanent replacement was identified. That person turned out to be Katherine Muller, a specialist in civic education, rule of law, political party development,

and elections. Ms. Muller, who previously worked for the majority of her career in Latin America, brings over 20 years of experience to the position. Muller completed a week of training in the IFES home office in Washington and was expected to arrive in Dushanbe in early April.

IFES prepared an elections assistance concept paper and submitted it to USAID and the U.S. Embassy/Dushanbe. Although it was recognized that the U.S. electoral strategy in Tajikistan was dependent, in part, on the outcome of discussions taking place over a new election law, IFES felt that a concrete plan with options needed to be developed in order to be prepared to undertake assistance in a variety of sectors, including technical training of pollworkers, voter registration, voter education, party and candidate training, and training for domestic election observers. IFES was concerned that the delay in adopting a strategy may lead to an opportunity cost vis-à-vis other international organizations, and left IFES uncertain how to respond to requests made by the CCER and international actors and prospective donors.