

EXTENDING THE REACH OF DEMOCRACY

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

IFES PRECINCT ELECTION COMMISSION TRAINING PROJECT FOR
THE 2003 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

*In Cooperation with the Central Election Commission of
the Republic of Azerbaijan*

September – October 2003

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FINAL REPORT
IFES PEC TRAINING PROJECT
IN COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION OF AZERBAIJAN
September – October 2003

1 OVERVIEW

As part of its on-going electoral assistance program in Azerbaijan and in anticipation of presidential elections slated for 15 October 2003, IFES Azerbaijan conducted a training project in cooperation with the Central Election Commission (CEC) for local trainers and precinct election commission (PEC) members between 8 September and 8 October 2003. With the support of USAID, realized through a sub-grant totaling \$178,000 from World Learning, The project achieved the following results:

- The core training team conducted two, three-day TOT courses for a trainers' group comprised of 24 Azerbaijanis.
- The trainers' group subsequently conducted 359 training sessions for 10,351 PEC members representing 66 constituencies.
- Training teams had on-going consultations with 66 ConEC chairpersons and 32 ExCom representatives.
- The core training team monitored 27 training sessions; briefed local authorities in the areas visited via a series of meetings with 26 ConEC representatives and 19 ExCom representatives; and observed elections in select constituencies where PEC training was conducted in Baku and Lenkoran-Astara.

Evaluation forms completed by participants in the TOT course and PEC training sessions as well as feedback provided by ConEC representatives was highly complimentary of the training project. Requests for on-going training were also routine.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The core training team would like to acknowledge the contributions of various entities and persons without whom it would have been impossible to successfully realize this project:

The U.S. Embassy, USAID, and World Learning

The interest of the Embassy and USAID and their investment in the provision of professional training for PEC members made this effort a success. The contribution of World Learning in administering the sub-grant that made this project possible is also duly noted.

Charles Lasham and Anna Wiktorowska

Our utmost appreciation goes to IFES Project Director Charles Lasham and Deputy Director Anna Wiktorowska who laid the conceptual and organizational groundwork for this effort, liaising with actors in the U.S. and Azerbaijan governments to achieve a project that reflected various priorities and expectations. The core training team is also cognizant of the impact of their previous training initiatives, the results of which were evident in the high quality of the IFES/CEC trainers' group. This groundwork allowed the core training team to hit the ground running. Finally, their leadership, advice, and good humor throughout the project were greatly appreciated.

Dan Blessington

For presenting the various questions, issues, and problems that emerged from the PEC training sessions to the CEC leadership, securing answers or clarifications, and when necessary advocating solutions.

Chairman Panahov

For his support of the joint PEC training project and for making 14 highly qualified members of his staff available to participate in the project during the CEC's busiest period.

Rovzat Gasimov

Rovzat Gasimov played a pivotal role in advocating and coordinating the joint PEC training project within the CEC, well as managing the assorted issues and problems that naturally stem from an undertaking of this type, and ensuring the quantitative and qualitative success of the project. He maintained a nearly inhuman training schedule in addition to considerable day-to-day duties at the CEC. The core training team is also indebted to him for his expert presentation on the counting and completion of the official protocol of results – according to the latest CEC decisions and instructions – at the TOT.

The IFES/CEC Trainers' Group

It is simply not possible to overstate the intensity and quality of effort made by the trainers' group to ensure the success of this project. As a group, their preparedness, professionalism, and commitment as well as their flexibility and sense of humor in the face of adversity was greatly appreciated by the core training team, PEC members, and local officials. The willingness of the IFES trainers to assist their colleagues in the provision of 'CEC' designated training beyond the scope of this project and absent additional remuneration is a testament to their personal integrity and commitment to the cause of democracy.

The Training Coordinators

By the end of their first week on the job, the training coordinators found themselves in the eye of the storm that was endless translations, copies, training supplies and materials, contingency planning, logistics, drivers, deployments, monitoring missions, and reports. While most of these tasks sound relatively straightforward on paper, anyone who has worked in Baku appreciates how many office supply stores one must visit to cobble together all the necessary materials and supplies necessary to do a decent TOT or how hard it is to mobilize a reliable corps of drivers. The rapidly changing context in which the TOT and PEC training was conducted added to the sense of chaos that threatened to encroach on project planning. Vusal Mallikov and Ramil Afandizade dealt calmly and positively with all the tasks, changes of plans, and problems that were thrown their way. Their overtime records attest to their level of commitment.

The IFES Azerbaijan Staff

In particular Sarvat Maharramov, who helped to foster team building within the trainers' group, brilliantly stepped in to reinforce the Baku 1 training team during the absence of a fellow trainer, and who labored through an extremely arduous PEC closing in Lenkoran-Astara in pursuit of the all important certified copy of the official protocol; Parviz Musayev who provided expert oral translation at the TOT course and suffered through the infamous late night session at which half a dozen multi-degreed persons tried to figure out the official protocol of results, in particular why the numbers failed to reconcile; Jeyhun Karamov who positively contributed to whatever needed to be done, whether conducting training on presentation skills, creating mock ballots and ballot envelopes; or switching training teams and deployments on a moment's notice; Shehla Mahmudova who provided such creative input to the substance of the mock ballots and who adeptly stepped in to fill a void on the monitoring team responsible for the greater Guba, Ganja,

¹ See Interim Report # 1 issued on 18 September 2003. The quote specifically applied to the CEC, although it could equally be applied to some subordinate level commissions.

While the political parties in power have long been accused of manipulating the electoral process, many PEC members newly appointed by the opposition similarly viewed their role as political agents representing the interests of their party rather than impartial election administrators. A lack of trust by each side was clearly evident and contributed to the politicization of election commissions including the PECs. As noted in the first interim report issued by the ODHR Election Observation Mission in Azerbaijan, this type of dynamic "greatly diminished the collegiality that should prevail in such bodies."

In addition, transitional provisions of the EC provided for greater access to election commission membership by a full range of political parties in Azerbaijan. And, the decision by the opposition political parties to compete in the presidential elections, and therefore appoint members to election commissions, meant that a significant number of people without previous election administration experience were appointed to election commissions at all levels. Some Constituency Election Commission (CEC) Chairmen estimated that a majority of members on precinct election commissions (PECs) within their constituencies had no previous election administration experience.

Familiarity with the provisions of the new EC was limited even among long serving election officials at the constituency and precinct levels and often nonexistent among some newly appointed members. It was not uncommon for IFES to receive requests from election officials for copies of the Code. In addition to the considerable number of reforms stemming from the UEC, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan (CEC) also introduced new materials and practices intended to improve election transparency and security measures. For example, the CEC purchased new secrecy booths and received transparent stationery and mobile ballot boxes, and uniquely numbered, tamper evident, plastic security seals from the international community. Ballot envelopes were instituted and ballot papers and protocol forms redesigned.

On 27 May 2003, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, signed into law the new universal Election Code (EC). Previously, laws on the Central Election Commission, presidential elections, parliamentary elections, municipal elections, and the Voters' List existed as stand alone documents rather than being codified. At that time, there were many gaps and inconsistencies both within and between laws governing the campaigns and elections process. Many legal reforms and procedural innovations were instituted as a result of the new EC, which international organizations such as IFES and the OSCE agreed provided an adequate legal framework for democratic elections even if some deficiencies remained.

3 PROJECT CONTEXT

In addition to the many people who contributed to the implementation and ultimate success of the TOT and PEC training project, a number of people at IFES Washington provided crucial backstopping, including Irina Zaslavskaya, Jeffrey Carlson, and Michael Svekk. Their support is also greatly appreciated.

The IFES Washington Staff

and Lenkoran areas; Inara Muzayeva who assisted in designing the visual aids used and numerous translations; Zaur Jalilov who will be entering the results of 10,000 PEC evaluation forms into a database for the foreseeable future; Aig Jahangirov who assisted in the never-ending quest for drivers, replacement drivers, and back-up drivers; and Ulker Agamirzoyeva who kept the money flowing.

These variables, taken together, resulted in an even greater need for training of PEC members than had existed previously in Azerbaijan.

4 PROJECT PLANNING AND PREPARATIONS

4.1 Planning

The planning and development of the PEC Training Project was an extension of previous IFES initiatives to provide technical assistance to the Central Election Commission (CEC) and to assist in the development of a CEC training team, as outlined in IFES' cooperative agreement with USAID. Throughout 2002 and early 2003, IFES conducted training of trainers (TOT) sessions for select CEC staff to prepare them to deliver training to PEC members in preparation for parliamentary by-elections. This initiative contributed to the first meaningful training conducted by the CEC staff – utilizing interactive techniques - for PEC members.

Due to the positive response to these initial efforts and the success of training activities, the CEC indicated its commitment to continue the development of its training team in cooperation with IFES. Coinciding with this on-going dialogue with the CEC, IFES was approached by USAID and the U.S. Embassy regarding the possibility of IFES undertaking training of PEC members on a wider scale in preparation for the presidential election in October 2003.

In response, a concept paper and preliminary training schedule was drafted. The underlying assumption was that it would not be possible to undertake training of all 4,500 PECs, consisting of 27,000 PEC members², in the 40 day time period prior to Election Day as provided for in the UEC. Logistics and cost considerations were cited as the main reasons for this conclusion.

The concept paper presented an alternative plan, whereby training would be held in selected constituencies located throughout Azerbaijan. This plan would involve an international core training team that would design and implement a TOT course to prepare 12 two-person training teams, comprised of Azerbaijanis representing IFES and the CEC, to conduct PEC training sessions in 35 constituencies. It would be critical to the success of the project that the 12 training teams have previous training experience and substantial knowledge of electoral issues.

The proposal was submitted to and approved by USAID, and project funds were sub-granted through World Learning.

4.2 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the PEC training project was "to assist the Central Election Commission in designing and implementing a PEC training program in selected constituencies in order to improve the overall preparedness of PEC members for the upcoming elections, thereby contributing to the improvement of the elections process in Azerbaijan."

This broadly stated goal would be achieved through the implementation of the below-outlined objectives, the success of which was dependent not only upon the efforts of the core training team and the 12 joint IFES-CEC training teams, but also external actors such as Constituency Election Commissions (ConECs) and Executive Committees (ExComs) responsible for the areas in which training would be held.

The main objectives of the PEC training project, as outlined in the concept paper, were to:

1. Recruit three international members of the core training team, who should be experienced in the field of election administration, Azerbaijan election law and/or training of election officials and trainers.

² The number of actual PECs increased to over 5,200 with more than 30,000 commissioners.

2. Design a three-day TOT course that addresses changes in the legal framework for elections, polling procedures, and duties and responsibilities of PEC members.
3. Deliver two consecutive three-day TOT courses to six two-person training teams between 8 and 13 September. Training teams would be provided with a sample training package that would include:
 - Presentation skills
 - Pre-election activity
 - Opening of precincts
 - Polling procedures
 - Closing of precincts
 - Count procedures
 - Doubtful ballots
 - Completion of protocols
4. Conduct training in 35 constituencies covering 1,614 PECs that comprised 9,684 PEC members at a total of 348 training sessions comprised of 24 – 30 participants each between 15 September and 8 October.³
5. Monitor PEC training sessions throughout the country and provide advice where needed.
6. Observe elections in selected constituencies and precincts to assess the effectiveness of the PEC training program.

Some of these objectives were modified, enhanced or supplemented by the core training team during the planning and implementation of the project. Other objectives were added in order to ensure the full cooperation of ConECs and ExComs in the areas in which the trainings would be held. The ConECs were needed in order to guarantee PEC members were informed of and attended training sessions, while the ExComs were responsible for logistical and organizational matters relating to elections, including securing training venues and, when necessary, arranging transportation for PEC members to training session venues.

Therefore, training teams were advised to visit the Head of the ExCom and ConEC Chairperson to ensure a constructive and cooperative relationship throughout the implementation of the training project within their respective areas of responsibility. Monitoring teams also held meetings with over 40 ExComs and ConECs to reinforce the cooperative nature of the effort, to express appreciation to the officials for their assistance, review the content of the training sessions, and further present IFES Azerbaijan and its programs.

A de-briefing session with the full trainers' group was held upon completion of the project to capture the trainers' impressions regarding the implementation of the project in their constituencies and ideas for improving future training programs. This additional evaluative step was not foreseen in the concept paper.

4.3 Preparations

Due to the unique joint nature of this project, key to project planning and preparations was an on-going dialogue by IFES Azerbaijan staff with the relevant CEC representatives. This was particularly important to ensure a sustained commitment on the part of the CEC to dedicate CEC staffers, who also had other job responsibilities at the CEC, to the training project. While a training unit was established within the CEC in 2000, it operated on an ad hoc basis and its staff was drawn from other CEC offices and departments, e.g. those responsible for legal issues and international relations.

³ These numbers are based on a training schedule included in the original concept paper. Ultimately the training schedule went through numerous revisions that affected the total number of ConECs, PECs, and PEC members affected. For example, the number of ConECs originally targeted for training was 35. This number increased to 42 by the time the training teams deployed. By the completion of the training, the number had risen to 66. For explanations of these changes, please refer to the 'Issues and Developments' sections of this report under 'TOT' and 'PEC Training.'

Early in course of these discussions, IFES Project Manager Charles Lasham and the Head of the CEC's International Relations Department, Rovzat Gasimov, agreed that 13 CEC staff would participate as trainers in the project. IFES would provide 11 trainers of its own to comprise the trainers' group of 24 Azerbaijanis. The trainers were identified through on-going discussions between IFES and CEC representatives, and were assigned to teams based on the best possible combinations.

4.3.1 Trainers' Group Orientation

IFES conducted an orientation meeting for the trainers' group at the Radisson Hotel on 8 July 2003. The 24 members of the future trainers' group were provided with the timetable and schedule for the PEC training sessions. Charles Lasham and Anna Wiktorowska briefed participants on the details of the project and the documents provided. They also indicated that three international consultants would conduct TOT sessions for the trainers' group and monitor, mentor, and support implementation of PEC training in the regions.

4.3.2 Core Training and Coordination Team

The core project team included three election administration trainers (international consultants) and three training coordinators (national staff). As noted in the "Acknowledgements" section, additional support was provided at various stages by IFES Azerbaijan's full time staff. Catherine Barnes, lead trainer, and Beverly Hagerdon Thakur, arrived in Baku in late August, to begin in-country preparations for the TOT course. Pam Flowers, a locally recruited consultant, began working on project administration and logistics beginning in mid-August based in the IFES Azerbaijan office in Baku. For more information on the core trainers, please refer to Appendix A.

Three training coordinators--Vusal Malikov, Ramil Afandizade, and Mirza Abdullayev--were recruited on short-term contracts to assist with project activities, including translating and collating TOT materials, providing written and verbal translation during training sessions and monitoring activities, assisting with logistical planning in advance of the PEC training sessions, and coordination between Baku and the training teams once they were deployed. In addition Zaur Jalilov was recruited mid-project to assist in database and reporting responsibilities based in Baku.

4.3.3 Logistical Arrangements

In preparation for planned project activities, several logistical issues were addressed in initial stages of the project. These included accommodation arrangements for incoming project consultants, identification and reservation of the TOT venue, identification and contracting of drivers for monitoring and training teams, and amending the draft training schedule throughout the planning process due to changes by the CEC in ConEC composition. Changes to the numbers of PECs within ConECs involved in training continued throughout the course of the project. Based on information available at the time, each of the training teams was assigned a geographic area of responsibility to conduct training. A deployment schedule was created for each team, outlining the constituencies to be covered, the number of PEC members within each constituency, and a training schedule for each training team.

5 TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT)

5.1 Audience

The trainers' group of 24 Azerbaijanis was ultimately comprised of 14 CEC and 10 IFES representatives. Most, although – due to some last minute changes in personnel by the CEC – not all, had previous experience as trainers. Many of the CEC staffers had participated in IFES training of trainers (TOT) programs and had trained election workers during the referendum and

by-elections in the past couple of years.⁴ For their part, the IFES contingent had already received extensive TOT from IFES and had conducted countless discussion groups and training sessions on such issues as municipal governance, electoral reform, human rights, civic participation, voter education, and other democracy related topics. As such, the knowledge base and experience level of the participants was quite high.

As a group, CEC representatives were relatively more conversant in the intricacies of the Election Code and the CEC regulations issued by the start of the TOT on 8 September 2003. The IFES contingent, however, tended to have an edge in such areas as team building and presentation and facilitation skills. This dynamic created a situation in which IFES and CEC trainers were in a position to learn from each other as well as from the core training team of expatriates.

Members of the trainers' group were paired in teams of two with 10 of the teams having one CEC and one IFES representative each and two teams comprised entirely of CEC staffers. There were 22 men and two women in the trainers' group. For the purposes of maximizing interaction at the TOT, the trainers' group was divided into two parts, with the first sub-group of 12 receiving training from 8 to 10 September 2003 and the second sub-group receiving training between 11 and 13 September 2003.

A complete listing of trainers can be found under Appendix B.

5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 Substance and Format

The substance of the TOT was largely based on the *Election Day Guide* developed by the CEC with the assistance of IFES. The *Election Day Guide* presented pertinent provisions of the Election Code and CEC decisions and instructions issued at the time of printing as well as various procedural innovations in a user-friendly format. Segments of the TOT were tied directly to chapters in the Guide:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Opening of the Polling Station
- Voting Hour Activities
- Vote Counting and Reporting of Results

As noted elsewhere in this report, some important issues were still in a state of flux at the time the TOT was being carried out. The protocol design, for example, had yet to be finalized and the CEC was still discussing instructions on the vote counting and protocol completion processes. This necessitated routine updates and in some cases, CEC representatives were invited to brief the trainer's group on late breaking developments.

A copy of the TOT training format can be found under Appendix C. Copies of the core training team's presentation points can be found in appendices F and G.

5.2.2 Pre/Post Test

At the outset of the TOT, participants took a pre-test comprised of a series of matching, true and false, and multiple-choice questions. The core trainers used this pre-test to gauge the familiarity of the group with various changes both to the legal framework for elections and to long-standing administrative practices. Each participant was also able to use the pre-test as a tool to assess his or her own gaps in knowledge. Once the pre-tests had been graded, the core trainers reviewed the group results, highlighting particular issues that were either unknown or unclear to

⁴ A training unit was created within the CEC in 2000, although it functions on an ad hoc basis with staffers being pulled from other departments, primarily the international relations and legal departments, to conduct training.

the audience. They returned the pre-tests to each trainee with instructions to consult the *Election Day Guide* in search of the correct answers.

Near the end of the TOT, the trainers' group took a post-test on the same issues. The core trainers used the results of the post-test to assess the learning curve that had occurred as a result of the TOT and to identify whether or not there were any issues that continued to present the group with problems. The results of the pre and post tests can be found under the Results section of this report (see TOT: Analysis of Pre- and Post- Test Results). A copy of the Pre/Post Test is attached in Appendix M.

5.2.3 Audience Expectations

Also at the outset of the TOT, the core trainers' engaged participants in a brain-storming session to identify their expectations of the TOT itself. These expectations were recorded on a flip chart tablet and the pages hung around the training room. At various points in their presentations, the core trainers would reference pertinent expectations. These were also revisited at the end of the TOT and participants were asked whether or not they were satisfied that their expectations had been fully met. Any outstanding expectations were then addressed.

5.2.4 Interactive Approach

Team Building Exercises

The core training team provided each participant with a team assignment at the beginning of the TOT. Teams were seated together and given several joint assignments (detailed in this and subsequent sections) to carry out throughout the course of the TOT. A variety of team-building exercises were used to foster the cohesiveness of individual teams and the training group at large:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Introductions | Rather than proceed with traditional introductions, participants were given five minutes to get to know their training partners. Once this discovery process was completed, each participant then introduced his or her partner to the group. |
| What You Carry With You | The core trainers asked participants to select two personal items from their pockets, purses, and/or briefcases. Participants were then asked to: (1) Tell the group what one item suggested about them as a person, e.g. who smokes, or chews gum, or has children, etc. and (2) Relate the second item to the electoral process, e.g. a pen used to mark one's choice on the ballot, a key to open the polling station, the transparency symbolized by sunglasses, etc. |
| False Statements | The audience was provided with a set of mathematical equations and the following written instruction: 'There are three false statements here. Identify them by underlining each one. Raise your hand when you are done.' In fact, only two of the equations were incorrect. As a result, the third false statement was actually the first sentence of the instruction. Once the audience had been 'clued in' to the trick question, the core trainers facilitated a discussion on ambiguous statements and the ramifications that these can have for a training audience. The tendency of audiences to accept information provided by trainers without thinking it through was also discussed. |
| Steps | The core trainers provided each team with a slip of paper that contained one – or several - activities that had to be completed |

after the closing of the polls, but prior to the opening of the ballot boxes. These steps were not numbered. Teams were instructed to interact with each other to determine the correct order of the steps and to form a line representing this chronology.

Portraits

Participants were asked to stand up and to place a blank piece of paper on the table in front of them. While music played, they were then asked to walk around the table, stopping at the place of another participant only when the music stopped. Each time the music stopped, they were then instructed to draw a facial feature of the person whose place they occupied, e.g. eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, hair, ears, etc. This process was repeated until the drawing of the face was completed. Everyone then shared their caricatures and posed for a group photo.

You're OK

The core trainers asked participants to take apart their name tents and pass them to the person sitting on their left. Everyone was instructed to write something positive about the person whose name appeared on the piece of paper, e.g. an admirable trait or his or her greatest improvement during the course of the TOT. This process was completed until each participant possessed his or her own name tent filled with positive comments.

Practical Demonstration and Practice Sessions

The CEC introduced a number of new materials for the presidential elections, among them transparent stationary and mobile ballot boxes and uniquely numbered, tamper evident, plastic security seals. Both ballot boxes required assembly prior to being sealed. To best explain the security features of these materials, how trainers should assemble and seal the boxes, and how they could most effectively instruct PEC members to do the same, a series of practical demonstration and practice sessions was conducted:

Stationary Ballot Box

Core trainers displayed the new stationary ballot box and the security seals to be used in this election and demonstrated and explained how to properly assemble and seal the box. They also offered a number of training tips. Each team was provided with a demonstration model and a set of seals with which to practice.

Mobile Ballot Box

Participants were provided with all the pieces to the new mobile ballot box and with a set of security seals. The first team to correctly assemble the box would be awarded a prize. As anticipated, most teams forgot to attach the flap and it took them several tries to correctly assemble the box. Once one team had completed the processes correctly, participants were instructed to disassemble their boxes and to then re-assemble them as the core trainers demonstrated how this was to be done. A number of training tips were also offered.

Simulations

A series of simulations were also used to test participants on their practical understanding of the knowledge being imparted during the course of the TOT and to provide a more creative and interactive approach to learning. Specifically, simulations were organized around a number of Election Day activities:

Preparing to Open the Polls	Participants were assigned various roles as PEC workers, observers, media representatives, police officers, candidate representatives, and other local authorities. PEC workers were tasked with opening their polling station on time, despite a series of obstacles. As various participants completed their role, the expatriate trainers debriefed them on how the PEC had handled its responsibilities.
The Voting Process	Participants were again divided into PEC workers and other participants in the process. Those assigned roles as voters presented the PEC with various routine and exceptional cases likely to occur on Election Day, e.g. mobile voting, voting with a De-Registration Card, ballot spoilage, assisted voting, etc. As each voter fulfilled his or her role, he was debriefed by the expatriate trainers on how the PEC had handled its responsibilities.
Counting of Votes and Completion of the Protocol	A package of envelopes and ballots was prepared in various combinations, i.e. determinate and not determinate form and valid and invalid votes. Participants were asked to conduct a counting simulation based on this package and to complete the protocol accordingly. ⁵

Following each simulation, trainees were re-assembled to discuss how the simulation had proceeded and to consider whether or not the problems that had been encountered were handled in accordance with the law. More detailed explanations of each simulation can be found in appendices F and G (presentation plans).

Critiqued Presentations

Each team was also given a topic on which to prepare a 10 minute presentation on a specific election issue. The presentation would then be critiqued by the trainers' group and the expatriate trainers. In preparation for this exercise, participants were advised on ways to give constructive feedback to their colleagues⁶, specifically to:

- Start by accentuating the positive;
- Offer specific comments and refer to behaviors that can be changed;
- Offer alternatives and leave those being critiqued with a choice;
- Be descriptive rather than evaluative; and,
- Own the feedback.

Presentation topics assigned to the teams included:

- Voter eligibility, identification, and voting with a De-Registration Card;
- Roles and responsibilities of observers;
- Exceptions to the routine voting process;
- The process of mobile voting;
- Steps to be undertaken prior to opening the mobile ballot box; and,
- Determining whether or not a vote is valid.

Comments on the substance of the presentations, from the standpoint of legal or technical accuracy, were also address as necessary.

⁵ This particular simulation was facilitated by CEC staffers.

⁶ IFES staff person Jeyhun Karamov gave a very good presentation on this issue.

Answers . . . and Questions

At the end of each day's session, participants were presented with a list of "answers." For example:

- A: 18
- A: Form No. 9
- A: 6
- A: 3
- A: 100 meters
- A: Cut in half
- A: 7:00
- A: 24
- A: Line 5
- A: Third Copy

Participants were asked to provide the "answers" as a means of testing their retention of information that had been discussed that day. In the case of the actual examples noted above, the correct answers were:

- Q: The age at which a citizen of Azerbaijan is eligible to vote.
- Q: One of the identification documents accepted on Election Day.
- Q: The number of members on a Precinct Election Commission.
- Q: The number of seals on the mobile ballot box (or the number of days in advance of elections, that a voter must request a De-Registration Card or the number of extra ballots PEC workers can take when administering mobile voting).
- Q: The distance from the polling station that police officers must stay unless invited by the PEC Chairman to restore order in the polling station.
- Q: How to cancel unused De-Registration Cards (or spoiled ballots).
- Q: The time that PEC members are expected to show up at the polling station to prepare for opening.
- Q: The deadline for requesting to vote by mobile ballot box, i.e. 24 hours in advance of Election Day (or the maximum number of participants to be included in one PEC training session).
- Q: The line in the protocol where the number of voters who were issued envelopes and ballots is recorded.
- Q: The copy of the official protocol that is publicly posted at the polling station.

5.2.5 Handouts and Visual Aids

Participants in the TOT were provided with a number of handouts including:

- The Universal Electoral Code (upon request)
- The *Election Day Guide*
- Presentation Points: Roles and Responsibilities
- Presentation Points: Opening of the Polling Station
- Presentation Points: Voting Process
- Presentation Points: Vote Counting and Reporting of Results
- Presentation Skills: A Quick Overview
- Sample Protocol Forms

A variety of visual aids were used including those depicting the polling place layout, the voting process, and acceptable forms of identification. Flip charts were also prepared to reinforce the verbal presentations and to record input from participants. A conscious decision was made to avoid the use of 'high tech' visual aids, for example Power Point presentations or even slides and an overhead projector, as these would not be available to the trainers' group when conducting training for PEC members.

Copies of select handouts and visual aids can be found under appendices H, I, and J.

5.2.6 Evaluation

At the conclusion of the TOT, participants were asked to fill out an evaluation. The quality and efficacy of the TOT was evaluated through ratings on a number of variables including organization and administration, issue-specific presentations, team-building exercises, simulations and demonstrations, visual aids, handouts, etc. and via responses to a series of open ended questions. Details on the responses captured in the evaluation forms can be found in the 'Results' section of this report (see 'TOT: Overview of Participant Evaluations') and Appendix P.

5.3 **Issues and Developments**

5.3.1 Short Timetable for Implementation

Two members of the core training team and the training coordinators began their preparations just one week in advance of the TOT. These preparations included getting acquainted with the substance of the training, i.e. the UEC and the *Election Day Guide*; developing the training agenda, presentation plans, hand-outs, visual aids, team-building exercises, simulations, evaluations, pre- and post-tests, and homework assignments; procuring or producing materials for the election simulations; procuring other training materials and supplies; and administrative and logistical planning in anticipation of team deployments. This short lead time, combined with the rapidly changing electoral context (more on this immediately below) necessitated an extremely intensive work schedule in the week prior to – and the week of – the TOT, i.e. at least 6 people typically working 18 hours a day, 7 days per week during the first two weeks of the project, in order to meet the pre-established outputs of the project.⁷

5.3.2 Fluid Regulatory Environment

At the time of the TOT, not all Election Day procedures had been clarified through CEC decisions or instructions. In particular, the CEC was still working on instructions pertaining to the counting process and the completion of the official protocol of results. The design of the protocol form, itself, was also still in flux. Some important questions on how the UEC would be realized in practice remained unanswered.⁸ As such, the core training team entered the TOT with incomplete information. Updates provided by the CEC were not entirely consistent. This situation necessitated daily – often several times throughout the day – adjustments to the substance of the TOT course and the 'standard' response to questions raised by the audience. As a result of the rapidly developing situation, there were some – not entirely insignificant – differences between the information and instructions provided at the first and second sessions of the TOT. The core trainers and training coordinators strove to stay on top of this fluid situation and to notify all trainers of any developments pertinent to the substance of their training presentations.

⁷ As a point of comparison, the total number of billable hours for two of the expatriate trainers, whose contracts spanned from 25 August – 1 November, was 416 hours each. The total number of hours worked (although not billed) in the first two weeks of the project was over 225 hours per expatriate trainer.

⁸ The urgent need for such answers became increasingly apparent once the constituency and precinct election commission began their work.

And, with respect to training on the counting process and completion of the official protocol, this presentation was made by CEC Department Head Rovzat Gasimov to ensure the most timely and accurate provision of information.⁹ For the same reason, the counting simulations were also facilitated by CEC staffers.

5.3.3 Changes in the Composition of Trainers' Group and Team Assignments

IFES and the CEC had originally agreed that all members of the trainers' group would have previous training experience. Some of the CEC staffers designated to the trainers' group had other responsibilities or opted out of the project, necessitating the recruitment of additional CEC staff members who had little or no training experience. These changes were made as late as the morning that the TOT course opened. They also led to a considerable gap in the experience of various members of the trainers' group. As such, some adjustments had to be made to the TOT program, in particular more emphasis on presentation skills than otherwise would have been necessary with a group of experienced trainers.

In addition, two CEC representatives were unable to attend the bulk of the TOT course due to pressing obligations at the CEC. This impacted the ability of their assigned partners to prepare, practice, and bond within their actual training teams. Ultimately, one of these CEC members pulled out of the project at the 11th hour, requiring further adjustments to the teaming arrangements. One of the CEC trainers who was slated to work in Nakhchivan was reassigned to work in Baku. In turn, another CEC staff person, one who had not participated in the TOT, was assigned to Nakhchivan. One IFES back-up trainer was also put on notice that he might be required to replace another CEC trainer assigned to Baku.

5.3.4 Organizational and Logistical Issues

In addition to changes in the composition of various training teams, the planned deployment schedule was further affected by CEC adjustments to the ConECs where 'joint,' i.e. IFES and CEC, training sessions would be conducted.¹⁰ These adjustments initially amounted to a net loss in the total number of precincts and PEC members that would be involved in the training project. In order to restore these numbers to a level consistent with quantitative targets established in the concept paper approved by USAID, additional constituencies were added, bringing the number up from 35 to 42. As a result of various changes, the deployment schedule was still somewhat in flux at the time team deployments were issued and discussed at the TOT.

6 MONITORING TEAM ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF PEC TRAINING

6.1 Methodology

Immediately upon completion of the second TOT session in Baku, all trainers were set to be deployed to their first scheduled constituency to begin conducting PEC training seminars. Sunday, 14 September was designated as the date for handing over training materials to the teams on their way to the regions. Monitoring teams, comprised of one core trainer and one local coordinator each, followed on Monday, September 15.

Monitoring was carried out during the three-week period from 15 September - 8 October. Deployments were organized according to regional breakdowns, namely northwestern, southern, and central/northeastern Azerbaijan. The monitoring teams rotated regions every week so that each monitoring team could observe each training team at least once. In addition, IFES expatriate personnel in Baku carried out monitoring in the capital and in Nakhchivan.

⁹ In addition, the protocol form was quite complicated and not entirely logical, despite the instructions provided on the form. Several issues caused particular confusion, including the missing 'Box 0,' Line 11, the difference between De-Registration Cards 'issued' and 'used' and how to count envelopes with either no ballot papers inside or multiple ballot papers inside.

¹⁰ In addition to the 'joint' training, the CEC trainers were also tasked with carrying out 'CEC' training in constituencies not covered by the scope of this project. For more information, please refer to Appendix Z.

Typically, monitoring teams:

- Met with local executive authorities in the areas where training was being conducted;
- Briefed ConEC representatives in the areas where training was being conducted;
- Observed PEC training sessions; and,
- Mentored training teams and offered substantive and organizational support as required.

The core trainers created a monitoring form to use while observing trainings in the regions, while additional notes were kept for more detailed observations. The monitoring team used these notes to debrief the trainers at the conclusion of their training session and give them detailed feedback on how to improve their training delivery in the following days. In addition, lists of questions had been prepared for the monitoring teams by the IFES Project Director in order to give some focus and direction to the meetings with the ConECs and ExComs (see below for more detail). The substance of the completed monitoring forms and discussions with local officials was provided during verbal debriefs and in weekly reports. See appendices W, X, and Y for copies of each monitoring team's weekly reports and Appendix Q for a sample copy of the monitoring form.

In general, Mondays and Fridays were used as travel days, with Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays reserved for monitoring activities. Verbal debriefings were normally held in the IFES Baku office on Fridays or Saturdays. Weekly reports, including qualitative and quantitative information, were compiled over the weekend and submitted to the IFES Project Director. This information was then forwarded to the donor organization to keep them apprised of the progress of the training teams. If time permitted, the roving monitoring teams also observed training sessions being conducted in the greater Baku area.

6.2 Meetings with Executive Authorities

Immediately upon arrival, monitoring teams attempted to meet with the Head of the Executive Committee responsible for the constituency where they were monitoring PEC training. In cases where the Head of the ExCom was not available, monitoring teams would typically meet with the Deputy Head, the Head of Local Area Administration, or the Head of Public Information. On occasion, the ConEC Chairperson would also attend these meetings.

During each meeting, the monitoring team would begin with a brief overview of IFES' activities in Azerbaijan. Due to some confusion among local authorities about various international organizations active in the sphere of elections in Azerbaijan, the monitoring teams endeavored to distinguish IFES from election observation missions such as OSCE/ODIHR and groups working with political parties, such as the two party institutes. The monitoring teams stressed IFES' history of constructive engagement of the Government of Azerbaijan (GoA), particularly with respect to municipal and electoral reform and its cooperation with the CEC.

The monitoring teams also presented a copy of the *Election Day Guide*, the '15 Priority Issues' document outlining the main points to be covered by the PEC training, and a sample of the voter education leaflet prepared by IFES. This presentation was generally met with expressions of gratitude for IFES' assistance in preparing the country for a free and fair electoral process and praise for the *Election Day Guide*, voter education pamphlet, and PEC training program in particular. ExCom's also noted their appreciation at being notified of IFES' presence in the area and briefed about its activities.

In addition to these types of formalities, the monitoring teams posed specific questions to the ExComs in order to glean some information regarding the extent of their involvement in election activities in their area of responsibility. These queries were phrased in various ways:

- What role did you play in preparing for the elections?
- Does the ConEC Chairperson meet with you or your staff on election related issues?

- Do you or your staff attend ConEC meetings?
- Has the ConEC asked for assistance on any election related issues?
- Were you notified in advance that IFES was undertaking training in your area?

Invariably, the answers to these questions were well-rehearsed phrases acknowledging involvement only in matters of an organizational or logistical nature, and at the same time in strict accordance with the law. At times, these answers were offered even before the monitors had an opportunity to ask any questions. In one ExCom office building in Genja, the monitoring team noted a door sign that indicated the "President of the Election Section" worked within, although no one was present at the time of this visit.

When the monitoring teams followed up with more specific questions regarding the compilation of voters lists and appointment of members to the Precinct Election Commissions (PECs), the ExCom took responsibility for carrying out those activities as well. In addition, the ExComs also admitted that they were in charge of providing venues for political party rallies and implementing voter information campaigns in their constituency.

When given an opportunity to ask the monitoring team questions, ExCom representatives generally did not have any interest. On the occasions when questions were raised, they mainly dealt with 'problems' the ExCom was experiencing with 'unfair' complaints and 'unreasonable' demands from opposition parties.

6.3 Briefings for Constituency Election Commissions (ConECs)

The monitoring teams also spent considerable time with representatives of the ConECs in the areas where they were monitoring PEC training. Typically, a briefing was provided for the Chairperson and/or secretaries, although in some areas, members were also present.¹¹ These briefings included an overview of the PEC training program and a thorough review of the *Election Day Guide* and the '15 Priority Issues' document. Generally, ConEC chairpersons were familiar with the training materials. Bulk copies of the *Election Day Guide* and the voter education leaflet were also made available for further distribution. ConEC members were given an opportunity to comment on the adequacy of the training program and offer suggestions on how this might be improved in the future. The capacity of ConECs to carry out interactive training similar to that being carried out by the IFES/CEC training teams was also explored.

Due to the ConECs' direct responsibility for election administration, the monitoring team asked more detailed questions about the technical preparations for Election Day during these meetings. Questions posed to the ConECs included:

- What training have you had in order to prepare for the upcoming elections?
- Are you confident that PEC members will be able to properly complete the protocol?
- What is the political make-up of the ConEC?
- What role does the ExCom play in the election process?
- Do all members of the ConEC have a copy of the UEC?
- Will the ConEC review the counting and protocol instructions with their PEC chairpersons closer to Election Day?
- Have you received any new instructions from the CEC?

The level of understanding of the election process varied from constituency to constituency, with some ConEC chairpersons proving to be professional and competent, while others were clearly overwhelmed by efforts to engage them in a more technical discussion of their election preparations or their understanding of specific provisions of the UEC.

¹¹ It is also interesting to note that in a few instances, a representative of the municipal council participated in meetings either with the ExCom or the ConEC.

More lengthy conversations with ConEC Chairpersons revealed some problems that would potentially impact Election Day activities, for example.

- PEC members had not resigned from positions that were in conflict with their electoral duties;
- Copies of the UEC and *Election Day Guide* were not being shared with the full PEC membership;
- Some opposition members of PECs were not being invited to attend PEC training sessions or were opting not to attend;
- ExCom representatives were much more involved in election related matters than was appropriate;
- Some ConECs were instructing their PEC members to stamp ballot papers prior to the opening of the polls, contrary to instructions contained in the *Election Day Guide*;
- Questions about the quality of the Voters' List and confusion regarding the number of actual voters in the precinct;
- Opportunities for observers to monitor the ConEC staff person assigned to input data from the PECs to the ConEC's summary protocol on election night;
- Rumors about the number of official protocols, i.e. suggestions that a spare might be kept at the ConEC in case mistakes were made on the official protocol at the PEC level;
- Questions about how to handle persons who appeared at the polling station on Election Day whose names were not on the Voters' List, especially since the Voters' Lists were not posted in accordance with the deadline established in the UEC; and,
- Concerns about proper issuance and use of de-registration cards.

These points were raised with the Project Director in IFES Baku, who was able to investigate relevant concerns directly with the CEC Chairman.

6.4 Monitoring of PEC Training Sessions

The primary purpose of the monitoring missions was to ensure quality control and offer continued mentoring and organizational support to the training teams as necessary. Monitoring teams used standardized forms to evaluate the performance of the training teams.¹² Information captured in these forms included:

- Quality of training venue provided by the ConEC;
- Quality of verbal presentation skills;
- Ability to use visual aids effectively;
- Appropriateness of non-verbal communication skills;
- Ability to directly engage the audience;
- Ability to handle difficult dynamics within the audience;
- Ability to handle questions from the audience;
- Ability to work effectively as a training team;
- Overall flow of the presentation;
- Ability to effectively manage simulations and/or practical exercises;
- Substantive knowledge on the content of the training; and,
- General audience reaction to the training session.

¹² Although notes were maintained on the performance of individual trainers, the quality of the training session was rated on the basis of the team's performance.



Trainers Vusal Mirazyev and Anar Grayev demonstrate the proper way to assemble and seal the stationary ballot box.

These focused questions in the monitoring forms provided a consistency in observation among the monitoring teams, and provided the training teams with constructive feedback that helped them improve their training skills and knowledge. After the training sessions, each monitoring team met with the pertinent training team to review the highpoints of the presentation, identify areas for improvement, and discuss how questions and difficult audience dynamics were addressed by the team. For more information on the findings of the monitoring teams, please refer to the 'Results section (under 'PEC Training: Findings of Monitoring Teams') of this report and Appendix R.

7 PEC TRAINING

7.1 Areas of Activity

At the time of the training team deployments, 42 constituencies had been identified as beneficiaries of this training project. Training teams were based in nine towns throughout Azerbaijan. Two teams were based in Baku and another was based in Nakhchivan, see Appendix E for list of team assignments per region. Ultimately, the area of activity in which the PEC training project was conducted increased to 66 constituencies, approximately half of all constituencies in Azerbaijan. For a full list of constituencies involved in the final PEC training program, see the 'Overview of Findings of Trainers' Reports' under Appendix V. Details on the percentage of PECs that were covered by training in those consistencies, can also be found in the 'Results' section of this report (under 'PEC Training: Outputs).

This expansion of the original plan resulted from several factors: (1) The inability of some ConECs to mobilize 100% of the targeted participants as was envisioned in the concept paper led training teams to expand their training activities to other constituencies where ConECs had relatively better organization and mobilization skills; (2) In some cases, news of the training sessions spread to neighboring constituencies that were not included in the original training plan. When those ConEC Chairman appeared in person to request that training teams conduct sessions in their constituencies, the training teams usually complied with this request. Some training teams were literally 'fetched' to conduct training in nearby areas; and (3) IFES trainers volunteered to assist their CEC partners in additional sessions, originally designated as 'CEC' sessions in other constituencies. As such, the distinction between 'IFES/CEC' trainings and

'CEC' trainings was lost. The numbers from these sessions were factored into the totals for this project.¹³

In addition, some training teams that completed their assignment in the regions by the end of the third week were re-assigned to Baku to assist the two teams assigned there with completing their training plan by the deadline.

7.2 Audience

The target audience for the training project was the membership of the precinct election commissions, i.e. not just the Chairmen and secretaries, but the full membership representing both the ruling and opposition parties. At each training session, four to five PECs, each containing six members, were to be assembled. Trainers and ConEC Chairman were strongly advised to limit the size of the audience to 24-36 PEC members in a deliberate attempt to maintain control over the interactivity and quality of the training sessions in the field.

Due to political sensitivities, and in an attempt not to encourage partisan wrangling, a record was not kept of the party affiliation of participants in PEC training sessions. Lower than anticipated attendance during the first week of training and feedback from some participants suggested that opposition members were not always being invited to the sessions. As a result of intervention by the CEC, this problem was rectified by the start of the second week of training.

Women were well represented in training sessions in larger urban areas, such as Baku and Ganja. However, a general rule applied to gender balance among PEC membership: the more rural the area, the fewer women were included. More detailed figures on gender balance can be found in the Appendix V. Preliminary figures showed that 1,870 female participants were trained out of a total of 10,351 participants, or 18%.

7.3 Methodology

The CEC was responsible for instructing the relevant ConECs to schedule PEC training sessions in accordance with the joint IFES-CEC training schedule. All logistical matters were to be put into place prior to the arrival of the IFES/CEC training teams. In most cases, organizational and logistical issues were finalized upon the arrival of the training teams in their assigned constituencies.

7.3.1 Training Format

The training teams trained in accordance with a recommended two-hour agenda (see Appendix D.), which included the following segments, with minor variations from team to team:

- Introduction and Overview
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Preparing to Open the Polls (including assembly of the stationary ballot box)
- The Voting Process (both routine and exceptions, including assembly of the mobile ballot box)
- Preparing to Close the Polls
- The Counting Process (including the steps to be taken prior to opening the ballot boxes, determining the validity of votes, counting, and completion of the protocol of results)
- Q&A
- Evaluation

¹³ For more information on the CEC's simultaneous training efforts and their impact on the joint IFES/CEC training project, please refer to Appendix Z.

The trainers focused on making the training sessions interactive, provoking audience participation with questions and inviting them to participate in practical exercises and modified simulations.¹⁴ Standardized visual aids were also used. For samples, please refer to appendices K, L, and N. This approach to training was quite innovative relative to instruction provided to election workers in the past. Typically, if training was conducted at all, a speaker read provisions of the law or lectured participants on highly legal, technical, or theoretical matters without any practical applications or opportunities for meaningful interaction. Participants were also given a number of hand-outs including the *Election Day Guide*, sample copies of the protocol of results, and the voter education leaflets.

7.3.2 Participant Survey

At the end of each training session, participants in the Training Participant Survey. The trainers were responsible for submitting all evaluation forms to the IFES Baku office for analysis.

The PEC members were asked to respond to the following points:

- Quality of training venue;
- Quality of PEC training materials;
- Rate the schedule and timing of the PEC training;
- How would you rate the content of the PEC training;
- Evaluate the professionalism of the PEC trainers;
- The least and most positive aspects of this training;
- Has this training prepared you to properly conduct elections in your precinct; and,
- Recommendations for improving future PEC trainings.

In general, PEC members were very positive in their comments and ratings on these evaluation forms. In fact, training teams were so well received in some constituencies they received startling ovations and were asked for autographs at the conclusion of their training sessions.¹⁵ For more information, refer to the 'Results' section of this report and appendices S and T.

7.3.3 Trainers' Reports

Training teams submitted standardized reporting forms at the end of each week. The reporting form was one way by which trainers could communicate with the head office and request assistance on-going problems. This form also provided the core trainers with another method of monitoring training teams activities, as the monitoring teams could not be present at every training session simultaneously. It was especially important to ascertain the number of PEC members per training session. These reports were also the main source from which quantitative data was gathered to measure the progress of the training teams and, indeed, whether IFES was reaching its targets as stated in the concept paper. See Appendix U for a sample of the reporting form.

¹⁴ Due to time constraints, the number and complexity of simulations was greatly reduced relative to the (C)T. Some teams were able to do counting simulations, while others were not. Typically, the team's ability to conduct simulations depended, in part, upon the size and manageability of the audience.

¹⁵ See weekly report submitted by Catherine Barnes for monitoring week 15-20 September in Appendix W.

Trainer Sardar Huseynov explains to PEC members how the routine voting process will work on Election Day.



In their weekly reports, training teams were asked to give information regarding the following issues:

- Number of PECs trained that week;
- Number of PEC members at each session that week (including gender breakdown);
- Dates of meetings the ExCom;
- Dates of meetings the ConEC;
- Presence of observers;
- Problems encountered during the training sessions;
- Solutions applied to resolve those problems;
- Overall opinion of PEC training process in area of responsibility;
- Planned innovations to improve training in the coming week (as necessary);
- Total PECs trained to date;
- Total PEC members trained to date; and,
- Total training sessions implemented to date.

For detailed information on training feedback as presented in these reports, please refer to the 'Results' section of this report (under 'PEC Training: Reports of Training Teams') and Appendix V.

7.4 Issues and Developments

Among the major issues and developments during PEC training were:

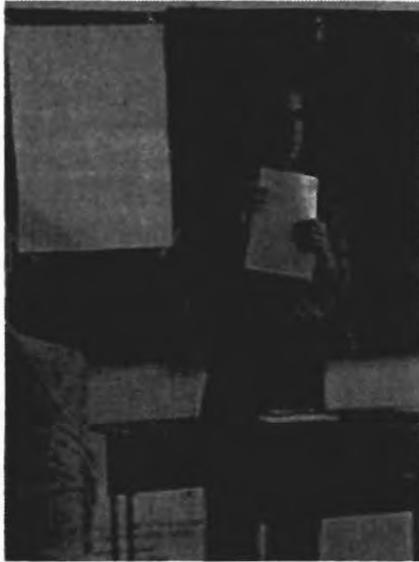
7.4.1 Short Timetable for Implementation

The first half of the trainers' group, which attended the TOT session held 8-10 September, was fortunate to have a few extra days to prepare their presentations and make the necessary logistical arrangements for their first training sessions. The second half of the trainers' group, which attended the TOT session held 11-13 September, essentially had no time for preparation as deployments took place on 14 September and the first PEC training sessions were slated for 15 September. The monitoring teams were concerned that trainers from the second group would not be able to prepare themselves properly before the start of the PEC training in the field. Despite the lack of lead time, the monitoring teams were impressed with the majority of the training teams during week one and the level of effort they made to prepare their joint presentations, not only covering the essentials presented in the TOT, but in some cases exceeding expectations.

The short timetable did not, however allow for periodic de-briefings of the full trainers' group. This would have been advantageous, particularly after the first week of training, for the purposes of coordination, sharing the latest information on CEC instructions, dealing the various organizational and logistical issues, or applying lessons learned and best practices to the larger groups' efforts. It also did not allow for the teams to set a reasonable pace for the delivery of training. The monitoring teams commented on a noticeable fatigue among the training teams observed during the third week. Two weeks of overcrowded schedules, which included 2 - 3 joint training sessions and 1-2 additional CEC training sessions, had left the trainers with hoarse voices and perceptibly lower energy.

7.4.2 Training Team Performance

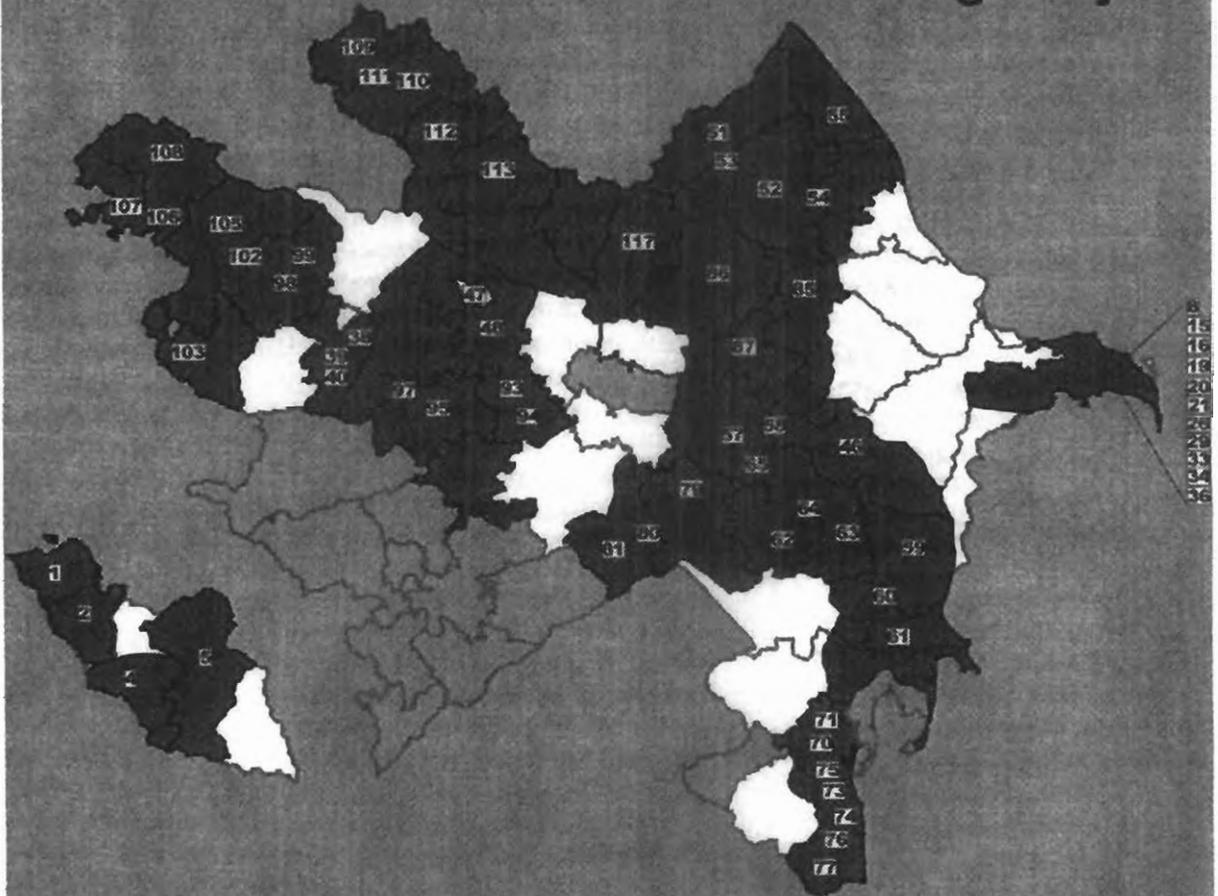
In only one case was a training team deemed to be a weak pairing. In response, two teams were reassigned so that each of the weak trainers could be paired with stronger partners. Thus, the stronger training partners were able to take the lead in the ensuing training sessions, while supporting the weaker partners until their skills had matured more fully.



Trainer Shahin Asadli explains the criteria a ballot paper must meet to be considered in determine form and a valid vote.

- Training teams held on-going consultations with the ConEC chairpersons from each constituency where they conducted training (66 ConECs), and with 32 ExCom representatives.
- The monitoring teams observed 27 training sessions conducted by training teams, briefed local authorities in the areas visited via 26 meetings with ConEC representatives and 19 meetings with ExCom representatives, and observed elections in constituencies where PEC members were trained both in Baku and in Lenkoran-Astara.
- As an add-on, IFES Project Manager Charles Lasham and Lead Trainer Catherine Barnes conducted training on presentation skills for several groups of young people recruited by ConECs not slated for IFES/CEC or CEC training sessions to assist in the provision of training to PECs. This training was carried out on 5, 6, and 7 September 2003.

ConEC Involved in the PEC Training Project



1 Sharur-Sadarak	53 Guba-Gusar	81 Beylagan
2 Sharur	54 Devechi-Guba	85 Shamahl
4 Naxcivan	55 Khachmaz town	86 Ismayilli
5 Shabuz-Babek	57 Kurdamir	87 Agsu
8 Binegedi	58 Hajagabul-Kurdamir	93 Barda
16 Yasamal 1st	59 Salyan	94 Barda (village)
16 Yasamal 2nd	60 Salyan-Nefchala	95 Terfer
19 Naramanov 1st	61 Nefchala	97 Goranboy-Agdam-Ter Ter
20 Naramanov 2nd	62 Saatli	98 Shamkir
21 Nizami 1st	63 Sabirabad	99 Shamkir (village)
26 Nizami-Sabunchi	64 Sabirabad-Saatli	102 Samux-Shamkir
29 Sabail	65 Sabirabad-Kurdamir	103 Gedabey
33 Khatai 1st	70 Masalli town	105 Tovuz
34 Khatai 2nd	71 Masalli (village)	106 Tovuz-Gazakh-Agstafa
36 Khatai 4th	73 Lenkoran town	107 Gazakh
38 Ganja (Nizami II)	74 Lenkoran (village)	108 Agstafa
39 Ganja (Kapaz) 1st	75 Lenkoran-Masalli	109 Balakan
40 Ganja (Kapaz) 2nd	76 Lenkoran-Astara	110 Zagatala
46 Ali-Bayramli	77 Astara	111 Zagatala-Balaken
47 Mingechevir	79 Imishli	112 Gakh
48 Yevlakh	80 Imishli-Beylagan	113 Sheki
51 Qusar		117 Gabala-Ismayilli-Oguz
52 Guba		

9.2.2 Findings of Monitoring Teams

The following are findings identified by the IFES monitoring teams as they conducted meetings with local authorities, representatives from the ConEC and ExCom, and observation of PEC training sessions in various regions of project implementation. For more detailed reports on monitoring teams' activities, please refer to appendices W, X, and Y.

Training Logistics and Coordination

- There was a problem with PEC member participation at scheduled training sessions in several ConECs, particularly in the first week of training activities. In many cases there was less than full participation by all six members of each PEC. Reasons provided for this included non-invitation of members by ConEC or PEC chairperson, transportation challenges, scheduling conflicts, non/poor cooperation of ConEC chairperson, lack of interest among some PEC members, non-participation of opposition members and other factors.
- Lack of flexible transportation options for training teams as they did not have dedicated vehicles and drivers for the duration of training activities in the regions.
- Inconsistent communication between Baku and training teams, particularly in regard to new CEC decisions and instructions. The CEC passed a number of instructions impacting the substance of the training presentations. Information communicated by the CEC to the CEC representative on the training teams and the timing of such communication was less clear as some of the trainers were not aware of the changes.
- For the purposes of administrative issues, frequency of communication, and interaction, it was more difficult to deal with training teams that did not have an IFES representative, i.e. CEC staff only.

Training Approach, Substance, and Delivery

- The average training session lasted approximately 2.5 hours, with variation depending on audience size, attentiveness of audience, and training team capabilities. In most cases, this did not allow the trainers time to use the practical vote count and protocol completion simulation exercises.
- Many of the PEC members had limited or no prior experience in election administration, and had limited knowledge of the new election code. For example, in ConECs #59 and #60, the chairpersons indicated that as many as 50% of the PEC member were newly selected. In other ConECs, estimates of newly selected PEC members ran as high as 80%.
- Training sessions were often highly politicized due to PEC members' attitude and approach to information being presented. PEC members from opposition political parties were often disruptive during training sessions, and did not appear to take the impartial responsibilities of being a PEC members seriously.¹⁷ In some cases, members were not aware of the changes in the election code (arguing about issues that were only addressed on the old law) or alternately refused to accept some provisions of the election code due to their perception that it was not adopted in a 'legitimate' manner.

¹⁷ The impartiality of PEC members appointed by the ruling parties could also be called into question, although this was not evident in their behavior at the training sessions.

- In general, use of visual aids, hand outs, and interactive approach of training teams was received positively. Of the prepared visual aids, however, trainers used illustrative slides more than text based slides, often due to the latter's limited effectiveness in large training venues. In addition, participants did not take notes during sessions, and only left with provided materials (*Election Day Guide*, voter education leaflet, and in many cases sample protocols) for future reference.
- Many PEC members appeared to have difficulty reading the Azerbaijani alphabet as presented on visual aids and in the *Election Day Guide*. This often became apparent during the completion of trainee evaluation forms.
- The distinction between originally planned 'joint' training sessions and additional 'CEC' training sessions became increasingly blurred in practical terms as project implementation progressed. This was due both to the willingness of IFES trainers to assist their teammates in conducting the additional sessions and the necessity of a flexible approach to ensure maximum coverage of PEC training during the limited implementation period. However, the additional sessions conducted were often for larger audiences, often impacting the quality and interactive standards expected in the 'joint' trainings sessions.
- Many of the new aspects of the election code created confusion and led to considerable discussion among training participants. Some of the common problematic topics included:
 - The new transparent stationary ballot box, particularly the size of the slot;
 - Concept and procedure for the use of 'De-registration Cards';
 - What constitutes a valid ballot (for example, difficult to understand concept that a properly marked ballot paper in determinate form found without a stamped envelope was not a valid vote); and,
 - New vote counting procedures due to the addition of envelopes (for example, that three valid ballots found inside one stamped envelope in determinate form to be counted as one invalid vote, but three invalid ballot papers).
- Participants made repeated requests that the CEC develop standardized forms for dealing with a whole range of issues to be handled by the PECs, such as applications for mobile voting, recording the number of seals on the ballot box, documenting spoiled ballot papers, and other common procedures requiring a written record.
- Participants often appeared overconfident in their ability to handle the vote counting process and correct completion of the protocol. In one example, an eager training participant who was '100%' confident that he could complete the protocol properly, found the process more difficult when completing the simulation exercise even with the assistance of additional PEC members.
- In general, PEC training participants and ConEC representatives responded positively to the trainers and the training sessions conducted, often being quite outspoken in their praise of the training teams. Often heard comments included appreciation for the energetic and interactive approach taken by the training teams, their technical knowledge of the new election code, and their complete and thorough presentation of issues in an accessible manner (see Appendix BB, for example). In at least one example, a ConEC chairperson from a neighboring ConEC observed a training session and insisted that the training team cover his ConEC (#59) as well. Some PEC members also demonstrated their interest in the information presented by participating in more than one of the sessions.
- Several ConEC chairman indicated they were conducting or planning to conduct follow-on training, particularly focused on the completion of the protocol. This training was to

take place closer to Election Day. Some ConEC representatives (#58, #60, #75) also indicated that they would like to have TOT for ConEC members in order to conduct their own training – at a higher level – for PEC members in the future.

9.2.3 Reports of Training Teams

Training teams tended to focus on the quantitative portions of their reporting forms, offering limited responses to open ended questions about problems, solutions, and innovative approaches planned for the upcoming week's training. Nonetheless, some trends could be gleaned from these reports:

- Problems reported by training teams included low attendance, disruptive behavior from opposition members, lack of motivation and information among PEC members, stress from conducting three trainings per day without sacrificing quality, the lack of protocol copies available for training purposes from the ConECs, transportation of PEC members from remote villages to attend training sessions, and other organizational issues.
- Solutions invariably involved additional meetings with the ConEC Chairperson and the ExCom representative, during which more pro-active trainers were able to address their grievances and receive the support they needed to continue implementation of their training project in that constituency.
- Where problems were systemic throughout the country and having a negative impact on the training project, such as the low attendance which occurred during the first week, the IFES Project Director was able to address trainers' concerns in some detail with the CEC leadership with the aim of improving the situation before training activities recommenced the following week.

For more detailed comments, please refer to Appendix V.

9.3 Election Day Performance

Based on observations of IFES teams observing elections in Mingachevir, Baku, and Lankoran-Astara as well as the broader OSCE-ODIHR Mission, PEC performance on Election Day was mixed. There were polling stations where PECs functioned quite professionally and efficiently, while at others there were problems of varying significance. According to the ODIHR Mission's preliminary statement, issued on 16 October 2003, "Observers reported that voting was . . . often well administered" and "election commissions performed well in 71% of polling stations" visited.

Major problems tended to arise on election night, once the count had commenced. Again, according to the ODIHR Mission's preliminary statement, counting was negatively assessed in 50% of the polling stations visited. The presence of large numbers of 'unauthorized persons' during the counting process was cited as a serious concern as was the resultant 'atmosphere of coercion.'¹⁸

Interim reports issued by the ODIHR Mission in advance of Election Day also referenced the training project and the 'good reviews from participants.'¹⁹

¹⁸ See page 8 of the preliminary statement.

¹⁹ See Interim Reports Nos. 1, 2, and 3, especially page 3 of the latter.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPTIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

The core training team has developed the following set of recommendations based on issues raised during the training of trainers (TOT) course, discussions with ConEC representatives, monitoring of select PEC training sessions, and Election Day observations as well as input collected from the trainers' group through evaluation and reporting forms, periodic consultations, and the end-project de-briefing.

Some recommendations can be achieved in the short term, as Azerbaijan heads into parliamentary and municipal elections in the coming two years. At the same time, there are a number of recommendations that take a longer term view and would necessitate systemic reforms and significant adjustments to the institutional culture of election commissions, other bodies with supporting election preparations, and election participants, themselves.

10.1 Project Planning, Preparations, and Implementation

- To the greatest extent possible, provide more lead-time to the core training team and the trainers' group to adequately prepare for their respective tasks and assure the quality of program.
- Develop realistic aims and objectives for the program that allow for greater flexibility during the course of program implementation. For example, training of 10,000 people during the 3.5-week timetable with 12 teams did prove possible although only with the addition of extra training sessions and constituencies. The expectation that 100% of PEC members would attend every planned session in all targeted constituencies proved – for a variety of reasons – to be highly unrealistic.
- Increase budgetary allocations for transportation for the trainers' group to provide each team with dedicated transportation (that meets minimal safety requirements) for the duration of field deployments and per-diem for drivers to provide for more reliable and timely movement of people, training supplies, and other materials to be distributed, e.g. *Election Day Guides* and voter education products. For remote locations, flights should be budgeted.
- Involve the core trainers' group in the recruitment of drivers. Drivers personally known to the training teams might prove to be more dependable than those who have no previous work history with IFES.
- Further involve experienced trainers and staff, those representing both IFES and the CEC, in the conceptualization and delivery of the TOT course. The lead training coordinator, (local) should be a member of the IFES staff, ex. Sarvat Maharammov, rather than a temporary hire.
- Take the road system into account when planning training team deployments, i.e. despite the seeming proximity of certain cities, is it actually possible to readily get from one location to another?
- Work to build the size of the trainer's group to accommodate the taut workload, allow for broader coverage, and provide for greater flexibility. As part of this process, assess the performance of trainers participating in this process, continue to build their skills as needed, and drop those who are not up to the task.²⁰

²⁰ IFES needs to confer with Rovzat Gasimov to assess the performance of the locally recruited young people who were tasked with assisting the ConECs with training in areas not covered by joint or CEC training sessions. Perhaps some leaders emerged that might be recruited and prepared for future training initiatives.

- Improve formal communication and coordination mechanisms both between IFES and the CEC and with the training teams to ensure the timely and consistent provision of information on 'late-breaking' CEC decisions and instructions.
- Station one member of the core training team and a training coordinator in Baku at all times to handle logistical planning, provision of updated information to training teams, and to handle other issues and problems that arise during the course of the program.
- To facilitate effective management of all training teams by IFES, ensure that every team has at least one IFES trainer.
- To facilitate greater quality control, work with the CEC to develop a uniform training program that is consistently implemented by a core training team in accordance with pre-determined parameters, i.e. avoid the co-existence of 'joint' training carried out by IFES and CEC trainers, 'CEC' training carried out with and without IFES trainers, ConEC training, etc. Further work with the CEC to develop a realistic training schedule, i.e. one that starts considerably earlier than was the case this time around.

10.2 Training Approach, Substance, and Delivery

The following recommendations are based on the possibility that the training program, as carried out for this election, might be closely replicated in the future. As such, they represent refinements to this approach. Options for significantly different approaches to training are outlined in the next section.

- Make adjustments to the TOT agenda to take into account the presence of novice and highly experienced trainers. Day one, for example, might be dedicated to presentation skills for the novice trainers only. Days two and three (to be repeated on days four and five) might then be allocated to deal with substantive issues and to undertake team building, i.e. two days for the first 12 trainers, and another two days for the second 12 trainers. The final day might address logistical, administrative, reporting, evaluation, and financial issues for all 24 trainers.
- Incorporate a section on ethical standards and principles of democratic election administration, based on Chapter Three, Article 17 of the UEC and – if one exists – a Code of Conduct for Election Officials, into the presentation format for the PEC training sessions.
- Prepare the *Election Day Guide* and other handouts for the PEC training sessions, e.g. evaluation forms, in both the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets.
- Allocate sufficient budgetary resources to provide sample protocol forms (to scale) for all participants in PEC training sessions.
- Also budget for the provision of pens and notebooks to all participants in PEC training sessions to facilitate note taking.
- Consider reducing the number of 'text' visual aids and increasing the number of 'illustrative' visual aids. In addition to those used for this program, these might include a number of envelope and ballot variations, e.g. in determinate form and a valid vote and equations to check the accuracy of various protocol entries.
- If time permits, schedule a full trainers' group de-briefing after the first week of PEC training sessions, if not periodically, to make adjustments, provide updates, and address problems as necessary.

- Provide for a more thorough de-briefing of the trainer's group *after the elections* to formulate training recommendations within the context of PEC performance on Election Day. This de-briefing should include all available IFES personnel who served as credentialed 'observers' or 'translators' on Election Day.
- In cooperation with the CEC, conduct a post-election de-briefing with ConEC Chairman on a variety of election administration issues, including PEC performance and training needs. Work with the CEC to ensure that lessons learned and best practices are applied and that on-going problems are addressed in a strategic manner.

10.3 Training Options and Models for Institutionalizing Training Programs

- As a supplement to direct training programs, consider producing a poll worker training video, such as those done by IFES in Macedonia (2002) and Georgia (2000) to be aired regularly on state television in the week(s) prior to Election Day. The CEC would need to be responsible for securing free airtime and notifying the ConECs of the broadcasting schedule. Political parties and NGOs should also be provided with the broadcasting schedule. While a training video should not be used to replace more interactive forms of training at this point in time, its use would facilitate the consistent provision of information to PECs nationwide and could also serve as an effective educational tool both for domestic election observers and for voters.
- Cultivate a better understanding among CEC members and staff that training can and should be conducted between elections. This training might address standardized procedures, regardless of electoral event, as established in the new UEC, and a range of non-legal issues such as logistical planning, service orientation, dealing with the media, how to conduct a meeting, conflict management, presentation and facilitation skills, voter education strategies, training approaches, etc. Training should be directed at CEC members and staff, ConEC members and staff, and PEC members.
- As a device for initiating training activities earlier, consider a major re-work of the *Election Day Guide* in anticipation of municipal elections. The template for the current guide has existed since 1999. A new version with legal references to the UEC, more graphics, a new design, and adjustments to content (as necessary)²¹ should be developed sooner rather than later. As part of the deliberations with the CEC on the new *Election Day Guide*, IFES could advocate for a more lengthy training schedule and identify issues on which training could be conducted prior to the start of the official election period.
- Establish a permanent training unit, i.e. full time, within the CEC to conduct on-going training and professional development. This unit might also have responsibility for voter education consistent with other models in the region. To demonstrate that there is sufficient need and rationale for a full time training unit, arrange an exchange with a CEC in the region that is effectively utilizing this model, e.g. Russia.
- Work with the CEC and an appropriate university faculty, e.g. political science or public administration, to develop a short course on election administration and adaptable to student and professional audiences.
- Consider conducting supplemental training on election administration through political party structures with the intent of improving the quality of election commission members appointed by political parties and to further ingrain a commitment to impartial and professional election administration among *both* the ruling and opposition parties. This type of training could be based on international standards as well as the UEC and need

²¹ The new *Election Day Guide* should include a chapter on principles of election administration based on Chapter Three, Article 17 of the UEC. If the CEC can be convinced to develop a Code of Conduct for Election Officials, this should also be included.

not be conducted at the time of elections. In fact, it might be better to conduct this type of training outside of the campaign period.²²

- Investigate the possibility of building the training capacity of select ConECs on a pilot or model basis. This would need to be done in cooperation with the CEC and take into account the performance of the select ConECs in the presidential elections and their potential to carry out training.
- Explore and cultivate local interest in the development of a professional association of election administrators to carry out on-going training and professional development, facilitate networking between experts and practitioners in the region, lobby for necessary electoral reforms, and build a sustained local capacity. The trainers' group, comprised both of IFES and CEC trainers should be involved at the outset of this process. An exchange should also be arranged with a pertinent model within the region to provide a more practical understanding of how this would work and to demonstrate to CEC members, in particular, that a professional association would serve as a resource to the election commission structure rather than an alternative to it. For more details, see Appendix AA.

10.4 Facilitating the Work of PECs

- Adopt a Code of Conduct for PEC members based on Chapter Three, Article 17 of the Universal Electoral Code (UEC). Appointees to PECs might be required to sign a copy of the Code of Conduct prior to assuming their duties as PEC members. Or, all political parties appointing members to PECs might be asked to sign the Code as part of a high profile public commitment to the conduct of democratic elections in accordance with the UEC and international standards.
- Provide training to CEC members and staff lawyers on regulatory drafting, to achieve more clear, consistent, and logical instructions that can be efficiently implemented by PECs. Such training might draw upon existing IFES resources, such as the manual on regulatory drafting prepared as part of the IFES Russia program (1996).
- Related to the previous recommendations, undertake direct critiques of instructions prepared by the CEC of the Republic of Azerbaijan and craft model (or at least 'sample') instructions on the same issues as a point of comparison. Since the UEC standardizes election procedures across various categories of elections, develop quality boilerplates for instructions that would require only minor modification for specific electoral events.
- Institute standardized poll kits for PECs that contain all materials necessary for the proper administration of elections, vote count, and packaging and delivery of election materials to the ConECs.²³
- Prepare standardized forms for all applications, decisions, and records required of the PECs – both by law and by CEC regulations. Ideally, these forms would be included in a poll book provided to each PEC as part of the standardized poll kit.
- Provide guidelines and/or training on more efficient counting methods, such as using a tally or uniform stacking (stacks of 10 for example) system.

²² It should be understood that this recommendation addresses preparation of potential political party appointees to election commissions and would NOT infringe upon or duplicate traditional campaign, party-building, and governance programs carried out by the party institutes.

²³ At present, the Election Day Guide contains a list of materials and supplies to be provided to the PECs. In past elections, as well as the one held on 15 October 2003, some items on this list have not been made available to the PECs (an issue raised at several training sessions).

- Institute an attendance requirement for PEC (and other election commission) members. Members failing to attend a certain number of meetings or to show up for work during the preparatory phase of elections should be removed and new appointments made.²⁴
- Simplify the protocol form in a manner that captures all necessary information, eliminates extraneous data, and facilitates efficient and accurate completion by PECs in accordance with the law, e.g. timely completion by PEC members in the room where the voting and counting has taken place as well as *immediate* posting of the third copy and provision of certified copies to observers.
- Improve the qualifications of appointees to PECs through the introduction of minimum professional criteria for PEC membership, on going training programs, testing, and certification.

10.5 Issues for Consideration by the International Community

- Observer missions, such as the OSCE-ODIHR mission, should coordinate closely with IFES on the substance of technical briefings provided to observers as well as the content of the reporting forms used by observers to provide for greater clarity and accuracy, ensure consistent use of election terminology as well as the consistency of information provided during various types of training, whether directed at election workers or observers.
- Given the continued, unlawful involvement of unauthorized persons, in particular representatives of ExComs and the ruling party, during the counting process, determination and aggregation of results, and completion of the official protocol of results, the international community should insist that the GoA minimize the influence of executive bodies and the ruling party on the electoral process. Until these entities are removed from the equation, particularly their ability to pressure election administrators, election commissions will never be truly independent bodies. International pressure directed solely at the CEC fails to take this reality into account and, will not fully produce the desired results.
- Related to the unlawful involvement of the ExComs on the electoral process, not to mention various aspects of Azerbaijan's political, economic, and social development at locals levels, substantial investment should be made in programs aimed at decentralization of power and building an effective, institutional counter-balance to the authority of the ExComs.

²⁴ Any such requirement would need to be combined with absolute implementation and enforcement of legal provisions requiring that all PEC members be given adequate advance notice of the time and location of PEC meetings.

1 APPENDICES

- A. TOT Trainer Bios
- B. List of IFES/CEC Trainers
- C. TOT Agenda (final version)
- D. Presentation Format for PEC Training
- E. Training and Deployment Schedule
- F. Presentation Plans: Catherine Barnes
- G. Presentation Plans: Beverly Hagerdon Thakur
- H. 15 Priority Issues
- I. Handout on Presidential Elections
- J. Handout on Presentation Skills
- K. Sample Ballot Paper and Envelope
- L. Sample Protocol
- M. Pre/Post Test
- N. Visual Aids for PEC Training
- O. Sample TOT Evaluation Form
- P. Overview of TOT Evaluation Findings
- Q. Sample IFES Monitoring Form
- R. Overview of Findings of IFES Monitoring
- S. Sample PEC Evaluation Form
- T. Sample Trainers' Reporting Form
- U. Overview of Findings of Trainers' Reports
- V. Weekly Reports: Catherine Barnes
- W. Weekly Reports: Beverly Hagerdon Thakur X.
- X. Weekly Reports: Pam Flowers
- Y. Explanation: 'Joint' versus 'CEC' Training
- Z. Concept Paper for Election Association Development
- AA. Letter of Appreciation from ConEC No. 75

Note: Completed evaluation, reporting, and monitoring forms will be kept on file at IFES Azerbaijan.

CATHERINE BARNES

Since 1990, Ms. Barnes has worked on democracy and governance projects in 24 countries, primarily in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Ms. Barnes' applies her expertise in organizational and mass communications and public information, outreach, and advocacy to political development, electoral reform, local governance, and NGO sector support projects. Her experience spans all facets of project realization from design and implementation to management (both at headquarters and in the field) and evaluation. Following employment at IRI and IFES, Ms. Barnes established her own consultancy in 1997. She has worked with an array of partners in government, politics, advertising, mass media, academia, and civil society. She is the author of several articles on approaches to foreign aid and on political developments in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Ms. Barnes has worked on a variety of projects in Azerbaijan since 1992, including voter education and municipal and election training.

BEVERLY HAGERDON THAKUR

Ms. Hagerdon Thakur has been integral in championing the statewide non-governmental organization "Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (AEOBiH) in promoting free, fair and transparent elections. She conceptualized a strategy to ensure the long-term sustainability of AEOBiH, negotiated a role for AEOBiH with the Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and cultivated relationships with international organizations to explore and develop potential areas of cooperation. Previously, Ms. Hagerdon Thakur worked in the Elections Department of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, from March 1997 through December 1999. She was also a project assistant and coordinator at Price Waterhouse LLC., from 1994 to 1996, and the Director of International Trade at AVS Services Inc., from 1991 to 1994. Ms. Hagerdon Thakur earned a master's degree from George Washington University and a Bachelor's degree in Government from Dartmouth College.

PAM FLOWERS

Pam Flowers is an independent consultant, working in the area of civil society development and NGO capacity building. Ms. Flowers has lived and worked in Azerbaijan since 1999. Her clients have included IFES, Mercy Corps, Catholic Relief Services, ADRA, and a number of local NGOs. She has provided consulting services in institutional development, coordination of advocacy activities, and coalition development both in Baku and in the regions. She has also assisted NGOs with civic education and economic development activities. Ms. Flowers has a master's degree in International Studies from the University of Reading in the UK.

ROVZAT GASIMOV

Mr. Gasimov is the Head of the International Relations Department of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan (CEC). Since March 2003, he has also served as a member of the Council of Europe's Sub-Committee for Legal and Operational Standards for 'e-enabled' voting. Mr. Gasimov currently chairs this sub-committee. In addition to conducting training for the CEC and IFES in Azerbaijan, he has also served as a polling station supervisor in Kosovo and an election observer in Ukraine, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Serbia. Mr. Gasimov holds a master's degree in languages from Azerbaijan University of Languages.

PEC TRAINING PROJECT

Catherine Barnes	Election Administration Trainer (lead)
Pamela Flowers	Election Administration Trainer
Beverly Hagerdon Thakur	Election Administration Trainer
Mirza Abdullayev	Baku Based Coordinator
Ramil Afandizade	Pollworker Training Coordinator
Vusal Malikov	Pollworker Training Coordinator
Anna Wiktorowska	Deputy Program Director
Parviz Musayev	Project Coordinator
Sarvat Maharramov	Project Coordinator (Alternate Trainer for Team 1)
Shahla Mahmudova	Project Coordinator
	Team 1-Baku
Rovzat Gasimov	Trainer (CEC)
Dilara Efendiyeva	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 2-Baku
Vusal Kerimov	Trainer (CEC)
Natavan Seyidova	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 3-Ganja
Shahin Asadli	Trainer (CEC)
Sardar Huseynov	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 4-Tovuz
Anar Garayev	Trainer (CEC)
Vusal Mirzayev	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 5-Ismayilli
Ilham Yusifov	Trainer (CEC)
Firdovsi Javadov	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 6-Sheki
Rasim Gurbanov	Trainer (CEC)
Vugar Huseynov	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 7-Masalli
Samir Tagiyev	Trainer (CEC)
Jeyhun Karamov	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 8-Sabirabad
Sergey Sidorenko	Trainer (CEC)
Mirali Huseynov	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 9-Mingachevir
Rashid Yusifbeyli	Trainer (CEC)
Babek Mamedov	Trainer (IFES)
	Team 10-Nakhchivan
Ramin Nureliyev	Trainer (CEC)
Elshad Ismayilov	Trainer (CEC)
	Team 11-Imishli
Elnur Atayev	Trainer (CEC)
Elchin Nesirov	Trainer (CEC)
	Team 12-Guba
Bakhtiyar Hajiyev	Trainer (CEC)
Eldaniz Asadov	Trainer (IFES)

**TRAINING FORMAT
TRAINING OF TRAINERS
FOR THE TRAINING OF PRECINCT ELECTION COMMISSION (PEC) MEMBERS
8 – 10 September 2003 and 11 – 13 September 2003**

DAY 1: Group 1: Monday 8 Sept. (Group 2: Thursday 11 Sept.)

- 09:30 Registration and Coffee
- 10:00 Opening and Introductions
 IFES Project Director
 Trainers and Training Teams
- 11:00 Project Overview
 Background
 Training Approach and Presentation Format
 Project Parameters and Aims
 Training Group Expectations
 TOT Program
- 12:00 Pre-Test
- 12:15 Overview of Election Law and Procedures
- 13:00 Lunch Break
- 14:00 Team-Building Exercise
- 14:15 Review Pre-Test Results (Group Results)
- 14:30 Voter Eligibility and Identification
 Who is Eligible to Vote?
 What Forms of ID are Accepted?
 How to Vote with a De-Registration Card?
- 14:45 Roles and Responsibilities
 PEC Members
 Observers and the Media
 Security Personnel
- 15:00 Opening of the Polls
- 15:45 Break
- 16:15 Demonstration and Practice Session
 New Ballot Box
 Uniquely Numbered, Tamper-Evident Plastic Security Seals

- 16:30 **Simulation**
 Preparing for Opening of the Polls
- 17:30 **Review of Day 1 and Assignments for Day 2**
- 18:00 **Closing**
- DAY 2: Group 1: Tuesday 9 Sept. 2003 (Group 2: Friday 12 Sept.)**
- 9:00 **Coffee**
- 9:30 **Giving Constructive Feedback**
- 9:45 **Team Presentation I and Critique**
- 10:15 **Team Presentation II and Critique**
- 10:45 **Practical Exercise**
 How to Assemble and Seal the Mobile Ballot Box
- 11:00 **Voting Hour Activities**
 Voting Process
 Monitoring Turn-Out
 Exceptions to the Routine Process
 Process of Using the Mobile Ballot Box
- 12:00 **Simulation**
 Election Day Procedures
- 13:00 **Lunch Break**
- 14:00 **Team-Building Exercise**
- 14:15 **Preparation for Closing and Counting the Votes**
 How to Treat Voters Who Are in the Polling Station at Closing
 Before Opening the Ballot Boxes
- 15:00 **Break**
- 15:30 **Team Presentation III and Critique**
- 16:00 **Team Presentation IV and Critique**
- 16:30 **Review of Monitoring and Evaluation Process and Forms**
 IFES Monitoring of PEC Training
 Trainee Survey (both TOT and PEC Training)
 Other Evaluative Tools
- 17:00 **Review of Day 2**

DAY 3: Group 1: Wednesday 10 Sept. 2003 (Group 2: Saturday 13 Sept.)

- 9:00 Coffee
- 9:30 Vote Counting and Completing the Protocol
- 11:00 Simulation
Vote Counting and Completion of the Protocol
- 12:00 Team Presentation V and Critique
- 12:30 Team Presentation VI and Critique
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Discussion of Presentation Format
- 14:30 Review of Day 3
Post-Test
TOT Participant Survey
- 15:30 Break
- 16:00 Team Building Exercise
- 16:30 Discussion of Next Steps
Team Deployments
PEC Training Schedule
A Word on Talking to the Press
Finance and Administration Issues
- 18:00 Closing Remarks

**PRESENTATION FORMAT
PEC TRAINING**

- 1. Introduction and Overview**
- 2. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 3. Preparing to Open the Polls (demonstration of the stationary ballot box)**
- 4. Voting Hour Activities**
 - The Routing Voting Process**
 - Exceptions to the Routine Voting Process (demonstration of mobile ballot box)**
- 5. Preparing to Close the Polls**
- 6. Vote Counting and Completion of the Protocol (including simulation)**
- 7. Q & A**
- 8. Participant Evaluation of PEC Training Session**

PEC TRAINING PROGRAM

Debriefing of Training Teams

Thursday, October 9, 2003

4:00–6:30 pm

**State Automated Systems Office
Encyclopedia Building
Old Town**

Agenda

- 4:00 pm** **Introductions and Team Reports**
- *Sarvat Maharromov*
- 5:00 pm** **Evaluation of the PEC Training Program Content**
- *Catherine Barnes*
- 5:15 pm** **Recommendations for Facilitating the Work of the PECs**
- *Beverly Hagerdon Thakur*
- 5:30 pm** **Future PEC Training Programs**
- Electoral Commission Training Unit**
 - *Catherine Barnes*
- Professional Association**

- *Beverly Hagerdon Thakur*

6:00 pm **Closing and Awarding of Certificates**
- *Charles Lasham*

6:30 pm **Departure for Dinner**

Presentation Plan CB1

Heading: Voter Eligibility and Identification

Time Allotment: 15 minutes, Day 1

Handouts: None

Visual Aids: Flip Chart 1.1 Acceptable Forms of ID
Poster Board Acceptable Forms of ID

Main Presentation Points:

Suffrage

Ask the audience who is eligible to vote:

- **Citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan**
- **18 years old by Election Day**
- **Stateless persons who meet these criteria and who have resided in Azerbaijan for not less than 5 years**

Persons recognized by a court decision as incapacitated cannot vote.

Acceptable Forms of ID

Ask the audience to name the forms of ID accepted on Election Day and write these on the flip chart. If they miss any, fill these in.

- Republic of Azerbaijan ID Card
- Former USSR Passport
- Form No. 9

Also military ID and IDP document.

Ask the audience why the Azerbaijani Passport is not an acceptable form of ID.

Voter's Card

Explain what is a Voter's Card. The UEC requires that Voters' be given a Voter's Card. This card will effectively replace the notifications that used to be sent to voters. These cards have yet to be produced and issued to voters, however, and will not be used for this election.

De-Registration Card

Explain what is a De-Registration (“Voting”) Card. A De-Registration Card is issued to voters who will not be in their own precincts on Election Day. This card will allow them to vote an alternate polling station. The De-Registration Card is issued by a ConEC or PEC. Remind audience that voter voting with a de-registration card must also provide one of the three acceptable forms of identification noted above. (3 days before)

Questions and Answers

Main Trainer Points:

- Bring to trainers’ attention that they will have a visual aid on acceptable forms of ID (show).
- Emphasize that voters without an acceptable form of ID will not be allowed to vote on Election Day.
- Make sure that they understand the De-Registration (“Voting”) Card.

Presentation Plan CB 2

HEADING: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Time Allotment: 15 minutes, Day 1

Handouts: "Roles and Responsibilities"

Visual Aids: Flip Chart 2.1	Commission Structure and PEC Roles
Flip Chart 2.2	Restrictions on Consultative Voting Members
Flip Chart 2.3	Observers (who is eligible)
Flip Chart 2.4	Observer Rights
Flip Chart 2.5	Restrictions on Observers

Main Presentation Points:

Election Commission structure in Azerbaijan is comprised of the Central Election Commission, Constituency Election Commissions, and Precinct Election Commissions. Today's presentation will focus primarily on the PEC's as they will be the audience which you will be training in the coming weeks, and the ConECs, to which PECs report.

The Constituency Election Commission is comprised of 9 members including the Chairperson and two secretaries (as well as members with consultative voting rights). ConECs coordinate activities of the PECs and provide them with organizational and logistical support. They ensure that voting rights are respected within their constituency. They are also responsible for canceling illegal decisions of PECs.

The Precinct Election Commission consists of 6 members. On Election Day, PEC members are responsible for organizing the vote, counting votes, determining voting results, and delivering the official copy of the Protocol as well as ballots and election materials to their ConEC. PEC members elect a Chairperson and two secretaries. Representatives of each registered candidate can be assigned to PECs as members with *consultative* voting rights.

PEC Chairperson: Distributes responsibilities among members, announces and proceeds with opening and closing of the polls, ensures adherence to CEC instructions and the law, calls in law enforcement to restore order, and organizes the counting of votes and preparation of the official protocol on voting results and delivers it with other election materials to the ConEC.

Precinct Election Commission Secretaries: One of these would generally assume the responsibilities of the Chairperson in his or her absence.

PEC Member: One PEC member will be placed at the entry of the polling station to greet voters and check to see if they have their voter's cards and proper identification documents. He or she will ask if they have any questions and direct them to the information board or to proceed.

PEC Member: One PEC member will review identification documents and confirm the voter's eligibility. He or she will record the serial and batch numbers of the voters' ID, issue a ballot paper and envelope, instruct the voters how to correctly mark their ballot papers, and direct him or her to the next available voting compartment.

PEC Member: One PEC member will be stationed near the ballot box and ensure that it is not tampered with and that all voters deposit the envelope containing their ballot paper into the box and then directs them to leave the polling station. He or she also assists voters who have spoiled their ballot papers.

PEC Members with consultative voting rights: Ask the audience to explain the PEC member with consultative voting right. Then ask the audience to list the tasks that they members are NOT allowed to perform. List these on the flip chart, then note any that the group might have missed (or noted that are not addressed in the UEC).

- Issue ballot papers.
- Cancel ballot papers or de-registration cards.
- Complete the official protocol of results.
- Or, sign any decision of the PEC.

Observers: Ask the audience, who has the right to observe elections and list on the flip chart, then not any that they might have missed:

- Candidates and their authorized representatives or agents of political parties (with appointment document and ID).
- Citizens in their own right or as representatives of NGOs (with accreditation by the CEC or appropriate ConEC and ID).
- International observers (with accreditation).

Observer Rights (on Election Day):

- Observe preparations to open the polls
- Observe the process of voting from the opening to the closing of the polls (including mobile voting)
- Observe the counting process and the finalization of the official Protocol
- Attend all meetings of the PEC
- Obtain one free copy of the official Protocol (and additional copies for a fee)
- Give comments and suggestions to be examined by the Chairperson and, if necessary, the full PEC
- Have their written comments included in the official Protocol
- Observe a re-count at the PEC, if applicable
- Observe the transfer of election documents to the ConEC and CEC

Restrictions on Observers:

- Cannot issue ballot papers and envelopes
- Cannot help a voter who needs assistance, even if requested
- Cannot obstruct the work of the PEC
- Cannot attempt to influence a voter's choice or the secrecy of his or her ballot
- Cannot ask a voter for whom he or she has voted
- Cannot agitate for or against a candidate
- Cannot participate in counting of ballot papers

What about the mass media? Can they be in the polling station from the time the PEC commences its work to the finalization of the official Protocol? (yes with proper accreditation)

Under what circumstances can police officers enter the polling station? (if invited by the PEC Chairperson upon a decision of the PEC so as to restore order).

Questions and Answers

Main Trainer Points

- **Need to reinforce that election commission members with consultative voting rights are not allowed to perform certain functions.**
- **The rights of election observers will also be particularly important to emphasize.**
- **Also review the role of the police, particularly the conditions under which they can enter the polling station and at what distance they must remain from the polling station under normal circumstances (100 meters).**

Presentation Plan CB 3

HEADING: EXCEPTIONS TO THE ROUTINE VOTING PROCESS

Time Allotment: 15 minutes

Handouts: "Voting Process" [exceptions only]

Visual Aids: Flip Chart 3.1 Exceptions

Main Presentation Points:

Begin discussion by asking trainees about exceptions to the routing voting process, then review main possibilities . . .

Voter Spoils Ballot Paper:

- Retrieve the spoiled ballot paper.
- Cancel by cutting in half. Place in an envelope reserved for all spoiled ballots.
- Give voter a new ballot paper.
- Make notation in the Voters' List next to voter's surname.
- Instruct voter to proceed with voting.
- Prepare a separate document recording the incident.

Voter Needing Assistance:

Ask audience who cannot assist a voter who needs help receiving and/or marking a ballot:

- PEC member (voting or consultative)
- Observers

Person assisting the voter needs to write his surname and initials and sign the Voters' List next to the voter's signature.

Point out that if necessary, the person assisting the voter can enter the voting compartment with them.

Voter's Name Not On Voters' List

Ask audience what happens. (The voter cannot vote.)

Exception: The voter has a De-Registration Card and an acceptable form of ID.

Voting with a De-Registration Card

- The voter needs to have the proper ID.
- The voter must write his home address on the back of the card and sign it.
- PEC member retains the card and attaches it to the Voter's List.
- Issues ballot in accordance with normal procedures . . .

Voter Forgot ID

Ask audience what happens. (voter is not allowed to vote).

Questions and Answers

Main Trainer Points

- Because the De-Registration Cards are new, need to emphasize that when someone votes with a De-Registration Card, they must sign and address the back of the card and the PEC must COLLECT it and attach it to the back of the Voters' List.
- If a person does not have acceptable ID or if they are not on the Voters' List, they CANNOT vote, even if they are personally known to the PEC members.
- Observers and PEC members cannot assist a voter if asked.

Presentation Plan CB 4

HEADING: MOBILE VOTING

Time Allotment: 15 minutes

Handouts: "Voting Process" [mobile voting only]

Visual Aids: Flip Chart 4.1: Mobile Voting
Mobile Ballot Box

Main Presentation Points:

Voters who cannot come to the polling station on Election Day due to illness or other valid reasons have the right to vote using the mobile ballot box.

An application must be made verbally or in writing by October 2003.

Before the mobile voting team departs the polling station:

- A list of persons requesting to vote by the mobile ballot box will be prepared.
- Mobile voting will be administered by two PEC members, representing different political parties or interests.

- The mobile voting team will take the number of ballot papers and envelopes that equals the number of requests for mobile voting plus three extra ballots/envelopes. A record must be made of the number of ballots and envelopes taken by the mobile voting team.
- The mobile ballot box will be sealed in the presence of observers (immediately before departure). Announce uniquely numbered, tamper evident, plastic security seals and make a record of these (these will be black).
- When the mobile ballot box is taken out of the polling station, observers must be informed and provided with an opportunity to accompany the mobile ballot box.

The process of mobile voting:

- The mobile voting team will go to the first address.
- Locate the voter who requested to vote by mobile ballot box and verify his/her identity against the application and any of the accepted IDs.
- Record this identity information on the application.
- If a voter made a verbal request to vote by mobile ballot box, a written application must be made at this time.
- Ensure that the upper right hand of the ballot paper has the PEC stamp.
- Cut off the upper right hand corner of the ballot paper and retain in an envelop retained for this purpose.

- **Issue a ballot paper and envelop to the voter. Provide instructions.**
- **Ask voter to acknowledge that s/he has received the ballot by signing the written request.**
- **Make sure he/she can vote in secret.**
- **Instruct voter to place the envelop in the mobile ballot box.**
- **Proceed to the next location.**
- **Throughout the mobile voting process, election materials must be held in a secure manner.**

Upon return to the polling station:

- **Record the number of unused ballots.**
- **Record the number of spoiled.**
- **Make a special notation in the Voters' List against the names of voters who voted using the mobile ballot box.**
- **The details of the mobile voting process must be kept in a separate document.**

Questions and Answers

Training Points:

Persons wishing to vote by the mobile ballot box, must make a request not later than 13 October at 24:00. (ultimately a written request must be obtained).

Two PEC members representing different parties must accompany the mobile ballot box. Observers must be allowed to accompany the mobile voting team and observe the mobile voting process.

The mobile ballot box cannot be opened until the vote count commences.

How to assemble the mobile ballot box and seal it will need to be part of a demonstration and simulation during your presentations. The box and seals are new and not so easy to assemble.

Presentation Plan CB 5

HEADING: SIMULATION OF THE VOTING PROCESS

Time Allotment: 40 minutes on Day 2

Handouts: Assignments/Instructions

Visual Aids: None

Assign Roles: Remember that the role of the person who applied in advance to vote by mobile ballot box needs to be specifically assigned – Ramil. Also, the person assigned to vote with a De-Registration Card needs to have a sample card attached to his or her assignment instructions.

Instruct participants to write their role, e.g. “PEC Chairman” or “Voter” on the empty nametag provided. (Credentials provided when necessary).

Instruct all voters who have fully completed their assigned role to come to Catherine Barnes to collect an “observer credential” so that they can then watch the rest of the simulation.

1. PEC Chairperson
2. PEC Secretary 1
3. PEC Secretary 2

4. **PEC Member responsible for greeting voters, checking IDs, and providing information**
5. **PEC Member responsible for checking voter eligibility and ballot issuance**
6. **PEC Member responsible for ballot box security**
7. **Voter: You will be casting a ballot according to a routine voting process. Please present your Voters' Card and proper identification document to the PEC members. After you are done voting, hang around the polling station and chat with various people who are there.**
8. **Voter: When marking your ballot paper, make a mistake. Tell the PEC member responsible for ballot box security that you have spoiled your ballot and need a new one.**
9. **Voter: Attempt to mark your ballot in the open rather than going into a secrecy booth. As you stand in the middle of the polling station preparing to fill out your ballot, ask various people who are there for whom you should vote.**
10. **Voter: Inform the PEC member that you have very poor eyesight and cannot mark your ballot by yourself. Ask for assistance (you did not bring anyone with you to the polling station to help you). Say that you would like the domestic observer to help you vote because you trust that he or she will mark you choice honestly.**
11. **Voter (Ramil): You have pneumonia and cannot come to the polling station. Luckily, you have already applied to vote by mobile ballot box. Please situate yourself somewhere outside of the simulated polling station and wait for the PEC members to bring the mobile ballot box.**

- 12. Voter:** You will be casting your ballot according to a routine voting process. However, you will also be asking if the PEC members can take the mobile ballot box to your father who is too ill to come and vote (this is a same day request, no application was made before Election Day).
- 13. Voter:** You have come to the polling station without the necessary ID. See if the PEC members will let you vote anyway. If he or she directs you to go home and return with your proper ID, then leave the polling station and return with the necessary ID and cast a ballot according to the routine voting process. After you have finished, leave the polling station and wait a couple of minutes. Then try to enter the polling station again, with the same ID and see if you can vote a second time.
- 14. Voter:** You are voting with a De-Registration Card (since you are away from your home precinct this Election Day). Be sure to present the De-Registration Card (attached) and an acceptable form of ID to the PEC members.
- 15. Voter:** You appear with the ID's of several people and attempt to vote on their behalf.
- 16. Policeman:** Attempt to enter the polling station – just to check out how things are going – absent a request by the PEC Chairman.
- 17. Executive Authority:** Come to the polling station just to see how things are going. If you don't agree with how the PEC members are handling something, tell them to do it differently.
- 18. Domestic Observer (with proper accreditation)**

19. International Observer (with proper accreditation)

NOTE: Charles Lasham arrives and claims that he has been living in Azerbaijan for 5 years and has a right to vote in elections.

De-Brief:

How do you think the simulation went overall?

While roles were in violation of the UEC? How?

How would the group assess the "PEC members" handling of these transgressions?

Were any issues or problems left unresolved? Did the PEC members forget to do anything?

Did this exercise help you better visualize both routine and exceptional voting procedures?

Do you feel confident that you could train PEC members on how the voting process is supposed to work and how they should handle unexpected developments? Are there issues that you need to further clarify?

PRESENTATION PLAN BHT 1

PROJECT OVERVIEW: Parameters and Aims

> PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ **Talking Points – see below**
- ❖ **Prepared Flipchart with definitions of aims and objectives. See below in talking points.**
- ❖ **Prepared Flipchart with example of aim of this training project and objectives that would contribute to achieving said aim. See below in talking points.**
- ❖ **Blank Flipchart for writing additional examples of objectives from the audience (time permitting).**
- ❖ **Plant first objective with an IFES trainer in the audience as an ice breaker.**
- ❖ **Treats for active participation.**

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 5 minutes presentation + 5 minutes translation = 10 minutes total.

> DELIVERY

Talking Points:

Briefly re-introduce self.

The next 30 minutes we will continue to give you an overview of the project.

It will be broken down into three 10-minute segments.

The first segment will be a presentation of the parameters and aims of this project from IFES' point of view.

The second segment will solicit feedback from you regarding your expectations of this training seminar.

The final 10-minute segment will address those expectations and give you an overview of what the next 3 days will be like. This should help us all feel comfortable in that we will have the same understanding of what is to happen during this training seminar as well as throughout the course of the PEC training in the field.

If there is ever a time when you are not clear about something, please write down your question and ask it at the end of each session, as we have built in time to clarify any issues and discuss your concerns.

First, a look at the big picture: What are the parameters and aims of this PEC training project?

Project Parameters:

IFES is committed to its donor organization, USAID, to deliver this train the trainer program to 24 trainers who will in turn train PEC members in teams of two trainers from 15 September through 8 October.

The PEC trainings must take place in 35 constituencies covering 1614 PECs that include 9684 PEC members at a total of 348 training sessions.

For purposes of quality control, no more than 24 PEC members should be trained during one session. The only exceptions are in 4 constituencies where 30 people are allowed per training group.

It is a matter of protocol that you all visit the ExComm prior to the start of your training activities in that area, as well as the respective ConEc.

Three IFES international trainers and their local training coordinators are responsible for monitoring your trainings and providing advice where needed.

We are also obliged to hold meeting with over 40 ExComms, and are sending a letter of introduction for our international trainer teams to prepare them for our own meeting.

Another parameter would include a pre-determined budget, which cannot be overspent.

You will be receiving a handout on Day 3 during the presentation on logistical issues to see which constituencies are involved and to review the figures in more detail.



Project Aims and Objectives:

Aims and Objectives often get confused with one another, there is however a simple way of remembering the difference.

Definition of aims: a general or broad statement of intent.

State Aim of PEC Training Project as an example: To assist the CEC in designing and implementing a PEC training program in selected constituencies in order to improve the overall preparedness of PEC members for the upcoming elections, thereby contributing to the improvement of the elections process in Azerbaijan.

Definition of objectives: The stages or steps by which the aim is to be achieved.

Give two objectives to match aims. For example, one objective to meet this aim is the holding of this train the trainer seminar.

Another objective might be to monitor the training sessions in the field in order to ensure that the training is being properly implemented.

Solicit examples from audience to ensure they grasped concept: What are some of the objectives you will be carrying out in order to achieve the above-stated aim?

Write on flipchart, time permitting.

Hang on wall for view throughout course of training seminar.

PRESENTATION PLAN BHT 2

PROJECT OVERVIEW: Training Group Expectations

> PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ Flipchart – blank
- ❖ Plant first expectation (or several) in audience with IFES trainer to break the ice.
- ❖ Treats for active participation.

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: Brief instruction and exercise = 10 minutes total.

> DELIVERY

Talking Points:

Now we will move on to the second segment of my presentation where we will talk about your expectations of this training seminar.

Question: What are your expectations of the next three days during the course of this seminar? What do you hope to gain from this experience?

Write on blank flipchart.

Watch time.

PRESENTATION PLAN BHT 3

PROJECT OVERVIEW: ToT Program Overview

> PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ **Talking Points – see below.**
- ❖ **Handout - Agenda**
- ❖ **Flipchart – expectations generated in previous exercise**

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 5 minutes presentation + 5 minutes translation = 10 minutes total.

> DELIVERY

Talking points:

In this final 10-minute segment we will address these expectations and give you an overview of what the next 3 days will be like.

State the aim of this training seminar: To prepare you in the best way possible to conduct PEC training sessions in the regions.

Examples of objectives are found throughout the agenda. For example, conduct simulation of filling in the protocol would be an objective contributing to the overall aim of preparing you for your tasks ahead.

It needs to be emphasized here that all information provided in this training seminar is based on the Election Day Guide, which is in accordance with the Universal Electoral Code.

Review all the expectations once by having the translator read the list out loud.

Give brief overview of agenda, pointing out where their expectations will be addressed.

Check off expectations once it has been shown they will be covered.

Any unchecked expectations at the end of this exercise should be addressed individually to explain that they are not relevant to the aim of this ToT training seminar. Draw a line through these irrelevant expectations as they are addressed.

Give alternate ways these expectations should be met, if appropriate.

For example, if people expect to meet with each other to plan their training, tell them it is not part of the parameters of the seminar as set by the agenda, however they should be encouraged to be proactive and meet with their training partners on their own time to discuss preparation and coordination issues. Give this example whether or not it was listed as an expectation in order to emphasize this point!

Hang flipchart of expectations on wall for view throughout course of training seminar.

* See Appendix for expectations from both groups.

PRESENTATION PLAN 4

OPENING OF THE POLLS

> PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ **Talking points: See below questions, handouts and background notes.**
- ❖ **Background notes from Election Day Guide**
- ❖ **Handouts on Opening of the Polling Station – 2 pages (Hold until Simulation!)**
- ❖ **Polling Station Layout Diagram**
- ❖ **Prepared Flipchart with same information as is on handouts – 2 pages**
- ❖ **Blank Flipchart**

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 15 minutes presentation + 15 minutes translation + 15 minutes discussion = 45 minutes total.

> DELIVERY

Talking Points:

Ask group to list what tasks must be undertaken to prepare for opening the polling station?

Check off the ones that they name on handout notes. When they are finished, flip over the flipchart and point out the ones they got and emphasize the ones they didn't remember. Make additional comments as necessary.

Ask group to list who is authorized to be in the polling station on Election Day?

Check off the ones that they name on handout notes. When they are finished, flip over the flipchart and point out the ones they got and emphasize the ones they didn't remember. Make additional comments as necessary. See handouts and background notes.

OPENING OF THE POLLING STATION

What tasks must be undertaken to prepare for opening the polling station?

- Prepare Materials and Supplies.
- Display Voting Instruction Posters.
- Remove Campaign Materials.
- Verify Accreditation of Observers.
- Count and Record Ballot Papers and Envelopes.
- Prepare the Ballot Boxes.
- Destroy Un-Used De-Registration (“voting”) Cards.
- Assign Responsibilities.
- Open the Polling Station.

OPENING OF THE POLLING STATION

(continued)

Who is authorized to be in the polling station on Election Day?

- PEC Members
- ConEC and CEC Representatives
- Accredited Observers
- Candidates and Their Representatives or Party Agents
- Media Representatives
- Uniformed Policemen (at the request of the PEC only to restore order)
- Relevant Specialists (at the request of the PEC only to fix technical problems)
- Voters

Background Notes

No later than 7:00 on the Election Day, the PEC should assemble to prepare the polling station for the day's voting. All PEC members must be then ready to work. Tasks in preparation for opening the polling station are outlined below.

1. Prepare Election Materials and Supplies

PEC members shall be responsible for arranging the polling station. Voting compartments and relevant information boards must be set up, posters advising voters on voting procedures placed on the walls and in the voting compartments, and the PEC stamp and the materials and supplies needed for voting must be prepared. **Make sure everything is arranged properly in the polling station as shown in the diagram in this guide.**

A checklist of voting materials and supplies is given below. This checklist is designed to assist you as you take an inventory of the election materials and supplies at your polling station. If you are missing anything, or if you run out of any materials during Election Day, contact your ConEC.

CHECKLIST OF ELECTION MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

Election Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan
CEC Instructions
Stationery
Notice Boards
Candidate Information (if available)
~~Samples of Completed Ballot Papers~~
Official Voter Education Posters
Voters Lists
Applications for Mobile Ballot Box
Ballot Papers
PEC Stamp
Ink Pad
Scissors
Rulers
Voting Compartments
Pens and String
Polling station Ballot Boxes
Mobile Ballot Box
Security Seals for Ballot Boxes
Calculators
Oil Lamps and Candles
Self-carbonated Official Protocols
Blank protocols for Drafts
Blank protocols for Observer Copies

2. Voting Instructions Posters

The PEC Chairman must ensure that the posters containing voting instructions and information are displayed properly on the walls of the polling station and he must check regularly during voting hours to ensure that they have not been removed.

- The poster on the voting procedure must be prominently displayed in a location that allows the PEC member in charge of information to explain to the voters the essential steps of voting.

3. Removal of Campaign Materials

The PEC members must remove all campaign materials from the polling station prior to the commencement of voting, but neutral information about the candidates must be displayed for the information of the voters.

4. Verify Accreditation

The PEC must verify the accreditation of all observers and check the appropriate ID documents of candidates, candidate agents, and media representatives who attempt to enter the polling station.

5. Count and Record Ballot Papers and Envelopes Received from ConEC

Prior to opening the polling station to voters, and in the presence of observers, PEC members must confirm their earlier count of the number of envelopes and ballot papers received from the ConEC. (A preliminary count will have been done upon receipt of the envelopes and ballot papers prior to Election Day, and the PEC will have made a decision on the number received.) Once the envelopes and ballot papers are recounted before the opening of the polling station, the PEC Chairperson announces the number received from the ConEC. The PEC will then prepare a decision on the number of envelopes and ballot papers received. The information will be put aside, and later entered on the appropriate lines of the draft protocol on voting results. **Please Note: The ballot papers and envelopes are to be stamped throughout the voting day, to keep up with the flow of voters entering the polling station. Both ballot papers and envelopes should be stamped in the upper right hand corner.**

6. Prepare the Ballot Boxes

Ballot boxes must be positioned so that observers and PEC members can see them at all times. At approximately 7:50, the PEC Chairperson shows the empty immovable ballot box (boxes) to observers, commission members and voters closes and seals it (them). The empty mobile ballot box must also be shown, closed and sealed, in the presence of observers, just before it is to leave the polling station during voting hours. For the first time, the ballot boxes will be secured by uniquely numbered, tamper-evident plastic security seals.

7. Destroy Unused De-registration Cards

If the precinct has any unused de-registration cards for voting (also known as "voting" cards), the PEC must gather them before commencement of the voting, and destroy them by cutting them in half. The PEC must draw up an act to this effect.

8. Assign Responsibilities

Immediately before opening the polling station, the Chairperson confirms the assignments of PEC members, and the PEC members take their working places. Responsibilities can be changed by mutual agreement of the PEC members.

9. Open the polling station

At 8:00 a.m., the Chairperson of the PEC announces that voting may commence and requests that the PEC members start the voting process.

CHECKLIST OF PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO BE IN THE POLLING STATION

- **PEC Members**
- **ConEC and CEC Representatives**
- **Accredited observers and authorized representatives of candidates and political parties**
- **Media Representatives**
- **Uniformed Policemen (*at the request of the PEC only to maintain public order*)**
- **Relevant specialists (*at the request of the PEC and only to solve technical problems and then they must leave*)**
- **Voters**
- **Persons Helping Voters Requiring Assistance**

SIMULATION EXERCISE 1

PREPARING FOR OPENING OF THE POLLS

> PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ **Talking Points for Instructions – see below.**
- ❖ **Handouts on Opening of the Polling Station – 2 pages (Held from Presentation)**
- ❖ **Polling Station Layout Diagram**
- ❖ **Simulation Role Play Instructions on Cards**
- ❖ **Hat or Box**
- ❖ **One Polling Station Kit.**
- ❖ **Campaign poster for pro-government party.**
- ❖ **Campaign poster for opposition party.**
- ❖ **Accreditation badges (10). Write "proper accreditation" on the badge.**
- ❖ **5 deregistration cards**
- ❖ **Role play badges (40). Leave blank and ask participants to write their role on their badge and put it on.**

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 5 minutes instructions + 40 minutes simulation + 15 minutes discussion = 60 minutes total.

> DELIVERY

Talking Points:

We will now be conducting our first of three simulation exercises that will be held during this training seminar.

You will all be given roles to play during the exercise the goal is to successfully prepare your polling station, which is to be in the next room, for opening of the polls.

I will now hand out your individual role assignments. Please read them but do not share with anyone else. Once you understand your role, you may immediately begin to act it out in accordance with the instructions given.

Fill out your nametag and display it prominently so everyone can read it. Put on an accreditation badge if appropriate.

You have 40 minutes to complete this simulation exercise.

Once we have declared the exercise to be successfully completed, please return to your seats for a debriefing.

*** Instructions were modified for Group II as follows:**

Read proper role first in the EDG.

Only implement instructions in simulation role a few times, not repeatedly.

Starting times for participants were staggered.

Look for violations of the UEC in each of the simulated roles.

Roles for Simulation Exercise: Preparing for Opening of Polls

Have participants pull one card out of a hat or box.

- **PEC Chairperson:** Your role is to set up the polling station with the materials provided within the allotted timeframe. Try to engage other PEC members to assist you and avoid other interruptions as much as possible. You started 20 minutes later than you planned and are very pressed for time now.
- **PEC Member 1:** You are lazy and not very interested in assisting with the tasks at hand. Avoid work as much as possible. Chat with voters outside the polling station. If you see that Chairperson is not going to be able to open the polling station on time with 15 minutes left until the end of the simulation, take on some tasks to help.
- **PEC Member 2:** You are 10 minutes late in arriving and then proceed to ask endless questions to the Chairperson about the opening process and what is happening every step of the way. You forget to carry out tasks given by the Chairperson. If you see that Chairperson is not going to be able to open the polling station on time with 15 minutes left until the end of the simulation, be more diligent in carrying out your tasks.

- **PEC Member 3:** You are highly pro-active and are very helpful in assisting the chairperson with the tasks at hand. Without instruction, you begin stamping as many of the ballot papers and envelopes as possible in your efforts to be efficient and helpful.
- **PEC Member 4:** When not engaged in set-up tasks given by the Chairperson, you spend your free time engaged in conversation with the ConEc, the policeman and the pro-government political party representative. Try to convince PEC Chairperson that he or she does not need to cut the unused deregistration cards in half, as they can be used again in the future.
- **PEC Member 5:** When not engaged in set-up tasks given by the Chairperson, you spend your free time engaged in conversation with the NGO observer, media representative, and the voters. At the appropriate moment, insist that the mobile ballot box does not need to be shown, closed and sealed until immediately prior to its use and not before the opening of the polling station. Complain when you receive your assignment from the Chairperson and request another position.
- **ConEC Representative:** You check with the PEC Chairperson to ensure all the materials have arrived and react to his or her response accordingly. Afterwards, you hang around the polling station chatting with PEC Member 4, pro-government political party representative and policeman. You discover about half way through the simulation that the annoying media representative does not have proper accreditation. You try to dissuade the PEC Chairperson from accepting any complaints that are made about campaign posters, as you would like to have a clean election in your constituency.
- **Accredited observer from local NGO:** You are a law student at Baku State University. Scrutinize closely every move the PEC makes. Raise objections if you see anything not in accordance with the UEC. Use legalistic terminology to the utmost extent.
- **International observer:** Introduce yourself to everyone in the polling station and tell them your name, where you are from, how many elections you have observed and in which countries (you speak barely understandable Russian). Ask for a group photo with the PEC during the step where counting and recording ballot papers and envelopes is being carried out. Take opposition party campaign poster from where it was torn down and save as a souvenir.
- **Authorized representative of pro-government political party:** You speak with the ConEc, the policeman and PEC member 4. You attempt to re-hang any pro-government campaign posters that have been taken down without anyone noticing. You make pro-government party remarks to the voters. You try to discredit anything the opposition political party representative says or does.
- **Authorized representative of opposition political party.** You scrutinize every move the PEC makes and check to see what the pro-government political party member is doing whenever possible. You discover that someone has tried to re-hang a pro-government party campaign poster that the PEC had just taken down a few minutes earlier. You attempt to immediately file a complaint with the PEC Chairperson. You make pro-opposition party statements to the voters. At the appropriate time, you insist that the numbers of the security seals are noted down in an official act if the Chairperson has not already done so.

- **Media Representative:** You pester the Chairperson with questions about whether or not the elections will be free and fair. Interview both voters. Ask them who they plan to vote for. You do not have the appropriate accreditation badge.
- **Uniformed Policeman:** Your role is to enter and leave the polling station as you please and intimidate the local NGO representative, opposition political party, media representative and voters when no one is looking. You join discussions with the ConEC member, PEC Member 4, and pro-government political party representative. You ask to see the voter's id documents.
- **Building Supervisor:** Your role is to ask the Chairperson if there is anything he needs. If there are no tasks, then spend the rest of your time speaking to PEC Member 1, taking up space in general and being in the way.
- **Voter 1:** Enter the polling station during the set-up and ask where you can vote. Obey answer given by PEC Chairperson or member. Engage in conversations that are initiated by others. Initiate conversation only with voter 2 during which you will loudly critique progress of set-up of polling station. You insist that you be allowed into the polling station in time to witness the sealing of the ballot box prior to the opening of the polling station.
- **Voter 2:** Wait by the door and observe all the set-up preparations. Speak only with the other voter. Look suspicious of all other actors if they approach you and don't engage in any additional conversations.

Monitor Exercise: IFES staff not engaged in a role play.

Debrief:

Ask group how they think the simulation went overall.

Ask for individual feedback on how it felt to play their role.

Which roles were in violation of the UEC? How?

Were there any problems experienced in setting up the polling station? If so, what was done to resolve them?

Were problems related to following the guidelines to physically set up the polling station, or did they arise when dealing with other people or unforeseen interruptions?

Did this exercise help you to visualize better opening of the polls process?

Do you feel confident to go out and train PEC members on this topic?

Gather role cards and put back in the hat or box.

ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

A: destroy them!

Q: what must you do with unused deregistration cards?

A: 8:00 am

Q: when is the official opening time for polling stations?

A: 7:00 am

Q: what is the minimum recommended time to begin preparing the opening of the polling station on election day?

A: 39 (this changed during implementation)

Q: what is the number of constituencies where the joint CEC-IFES PEC training program will be implemented?

A: 24

Q: what is the maximum number of PEC members allowed to attend a single training session?

A: by request of PEC only

Q: when are uniformed policemen and relevant specialists allowed to enter the polling station?

A: 18

Q: at what age does a citizen become eligible to vote?

A: form 9

Q: what is a type of acceptable identification document for voting?

A: 6

Q: how many pecs are allowed to attend one joint IFES-CEC training session?

A: 2 hours

Q: what is the approximate time a joint IFES-CEC training session should last?

PRESENTATION PLAN 5
VOTING HOUR ACTIVITIES
ROUTINE VOTING PROCESS

➤ PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ Talking points: See below handouts and background notes.
- ❖ Background notes from Election Day Guide
- ❖ Handouts on Routine Voting Process – 2 pages
- ❖ Prepared Flipchart with same information as is on handouts – 2 pages
- ❖ Blank Flipchart
- ❖ Visual aid on voting process.

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 10 minutes presentation + 10 minutes translation = 20 minutes total.

➤ DELIVERY

Talking Points: See handouts and background notes.

Refer to visual aid on voting process.

Let's review this in preparation for your next simulation exercise.

REMINDER: DO NOT ATTEMPT TO INTERPRET ANY VAGUE AREAS OF THE ELECTION CODE AT ANY TIME.

VOTING PROCESS

The Routine Voting Process

- Greet voters and answer their questions.
- Check each voter's ID. [acceptable forms of ID]
- Locate the voter's name on the Voters' List.
- Record the series and number of the voter's ID in the Voters' List.
- Issue each voter one ballot paper and envelope.
- Have the voter sign the Voters' List . . .



VOTING PROCESS

(continued)

The Routine Voting Process . . .

- Instruct the voter how to correctly mark his or her choice.
- Direct the voter to the first available voting compartment.
- Ensure the voter deposits his or her envelope into the ballot box.
- Then, direct the voter to leave the polling station.

BACKGROUND NOTES

3.1 VOTING PROCESS

Each step in the voting process performed by PEC members is outlined below. There will be exceptions to the routine voting process due to the special requirements. These exceptional cases are described in Section 3.3. In order to vote, a voter must present an acceptable form of identification and be on the voters' list of the precinct where he or she is voting, or present a de-registration card (voting card).

The PEC Member responsible for Information:

- Greets each voter at the entrance to the polling station;
- Checks to see if the voter has a voter's card and an appropriate identification document;
- Asks each voter if they have any questions about the voting process; and
- Directs each voter to the PEC member responsible for voter eligibility and issuance of ballots.

ACCEPTABLE IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS:

Republic of Azerbaijan ID card

Former USSR passport

Form No. 9

A voter must present one of these documents in order to vote.

Exceptions

- *Officers in the military can present an officer's ID card.*
- *Soldiers can present a military service ID card, and*
- *Refugees and IDPs without a Republic of Azerbaijan ID card may present identification issued by the State Committee on Refugees and IDPS of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

Voters who do not bring their voter's cards with them on Election Day may still vote, providing they are on the precinct's voters' list (or have a de-registration card) and have one of the three approved forms of identification

The PEC member responsible for Eligibility Check and Ballot Issuance:

- Asks for the voter's name, voter's card and ID document;
- Locates the voter's name on the voters list;
- Records the series and number of the voter's ID document next to the voter's name on the voters list;
- Issues the envelope and ballot to the voter. While doing so, cuts off and retains the upper left hand corner of the ballot paper;
- Asks the voter to sign the voters list against his or her name under the column entitled "Signature of Voters on Receipt of Ballot Papers";
- Instructs the voter to clearly mark one blank box on the ballot;
- Instructs the voter to proceed immediately to a vacant voting compartment, mark his or her ballot, fold it and place it in an envelope stamped with the seal of the PEC and drop it into the ballot box.

REMEMBER!

The upper left hand corner should be cut off and retained immediately before it is issued to a voter.

*Each voter shall sign the voters list, receive only **ONE** ballot paper and mark it. Voters must mark the ballot paper in secret in the voting compartment. Be aware of the flow of voters within the polling station. **Do not issue a ballot paper to a voter unless an empty voting compartment is available.***

Instructions for assisted voting appear under Section 3.3.

WARNING: Voting on behalf of another person is a crime punishable by the imposition of monetary penalties or imprisonment. Do NOT allow it!

After the voter has completed marking his or her ballot paper in secret, the PEC member responsible for the security of the ballot boxes then:

- Ensures that the voter deposits his or her envelope correctly in the ballot box; and
- Instructs the voter to leave the polling station.

PRESENTATION PLAN 6

VOTING HOUR ACTIVITIES

MONITORING VOTER TURNOUT

➤ PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ Talking Points – see below and background notes.
- ❖ Background notes.
- ❖ Prepared Flipchart with chart "Information on Voter Turnout" from 3.2 in Election Day Guide.
- ❖ Blank Flipchart for audience to show best practice in monitoring turnout procedure.
- ❖ Treats for active participation.

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 5 minutes interactive presentation + 5 minutes translation = 10 minutes total.

➤ DELIVERY

Talking Points:

Insert Election Day Guide blurb here from 3.2

Ask audience to share best practice with the most efficient way to keep track of this information throughout the day without having to recount every signature each time.

Ask them to draw chart on flipchart or demonstrate method on flipchart if necessary.

BACKGROUND NOTES

3.2 MONITORING VOTER TURN-OUT

Your ConEC will request reports on voter turnout throughout Election Day. Therefore you will need to determine the number of voters who have received ballot papers at prescribed intervals.

A checklist is provided below. Once you have determined the voter turnout, check the box provided and enter the number of voters who have already received ballot papers on the line provided.

INFORMATION ON VOTER TURNOUT

- 09:00 _____
- 12:00 _____
- 15:00 _____
- 18:00 _____
- 21:00 _____

PRESENTATION PLAN 7

Preparation for Closing the Polling Station and Counting the Votes

How to treat voters who are in the polling station at closing

➤ PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ Talking points: See below question, handouts and background notes.
- ❖ Background notes from Election Day Guide 3.5
- ❖ Handout on Voting Process: Preparing to Close the Polls – 1 page
- ❖ Prepared Flipchart with same information as is on handout – 1 page
- ❖ Blank Flipchart
- ❖ Treats for participation in answering question.

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 5 minutes interactive presentation + 5 minutes translation = 10 minutes total.

➤ DELIVERY

Talking Points:

Follow handout and insert Election Day Guide blurb here 3 5

Ask group who is permitted to remain in the polling station after closing?

Answer: PEC members, accredited observers, authorized agents of candidates for president and political parties, and accredited media representatives.

VOTING PROCESS

(continued)

Preparing to Close the Polls

- Announce the close of voting.
- Process voters who are in the polling station at closing time.
- Clear the polling station of persons not permitted to remain after closing.

Who is permitted to remain in the polling station after closing?

BACKGROUND NOTES

3.5 HOW TO TREAT VOTERS WHO ARE IN THE POLLING STATION AT CLOSE OF VOTING

At 19:00, the Chairperson of the PEC announces loudly the close of voting and says, "Only those voters who are already in the voting compartment or who have been issued ballot papers will be permitted to complete the voting process." These voters must be directed to leave the polling station immediately after they have finished voting.

At this point, everyone remaining in the polling station must be asked to leave immediately, with the following exceptions: the voters described above, PEC members, accredited observers, authorized representatives of candidates and political parties, and media representatives. PEC members then prepare to count the vote.

PRESENTATION PLAN 8

Preparation for Closing the Polling Station and Counting the Votes

Before Opening the Ballot Boxes

➤ PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ Talking Points – see below, handouts, background notes.
- ❖ Handouts on Before Opening Any Ballot Boxes - 2 pages
- ❖ Background Notes from Election Day Guide 4.1 and 4.2 up through step 7.
- ❖ Prepared Flipchart with same information as is on handouts – 2 pages
- ❖ Blank Flipchart

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 15 minutes presentation + 15 minutes translation + 5 minutes discussion = 35 minutes total.

➤ DELIVERY

Talking Points:

This review will be in preparation for your last simulation exercise which will be conducted tomorrow.

Insert Election Day Guide blurb here 4.1 and 4.2

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

Before Opening Any Ballot Boxes

The PEC Chairman makes necessary announcements and gives instructions.
The

PEC will then proceed to . . .

1. Count and record total number of voters on the Voter's List.
2. Record the number of voters who received a De-Registration ("voting") Card from the PEC.
3. Record the number of envelopes received from the ConEC.
4. Record the number of ballot papers received from the Con EC . . .

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

5. Record the number of envelopes received from the ConEC.
6. Record the number of ballot papers received from the Con EC.
7. Record the number of voters receiving stamped envelopes and ballot papers.
8. Cancel, count, and record the number of unused ballots.
9. Count and record the number of spoiled ballot papers.

Remember to enter the requested data on the draft Protocol!

BACKGROUND NOTES

4.1 PREPARATION FOR THE COUNTING OF VOTES

When the last voter has completed voting, the PEC chairperson must ensure that all persons, except those persons who are eligible to remain for the count of votes, have left the polling station. The room should be secured at this point.

IMPORTANT

ALL counting must be done in the same room as the voting. Mobile and immovable ballot boxes, the voters' list and all other voting materials must remain in this room until the count is finished.

ONLY the following persons can be present for the count of votes:

- PEC members
- Authorized agents of candidates for President and political parties
- Properly authorized domestic and international observers
- Media representatives

The PEC Chairperson prepares a list of all persons to attend the count.

The room should be cleared in order to create an environment conducive to an efficient count with all materials and equipment not needed for the count placed aside. Ensure that all forms required for the count are in place. A materials checklist is provided below:

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST FOR THE PREPARATION FOR THE COUNT

- Voters List
- Information about Unused Ballot Papers
- Envelopes containing Spoiled Ballot Papers
- Draft and Original Protocol
- Extra Blank Protocols for observers who request them
- Applicable CEC Instructions
- Oil Lamp/Candles
- Calculator
- Envelopes and Paper Sheets for Packing of Ballot Papers and Envelopes
- Pens, Pencils and Paper

The **PEC Chairperson** should then explain the method of conducting the counting of votes and completing the Protocol on the voting results, to ensure that all the PEC members are familiar with the process.

The **PEC Chairperson** should explain the general procedure that will be used:

- Every line item to be completed on the Protocol will be announced loudly to the entire room.
- Then the information will be recorded in words and figures on the draft Protocol prior to final completion of the official Protocol.
- Observers may request to make or obtain a copy of the Protocol that is verified and stamped by the PEC.

The PEC Chairperson should provide an overview of what is involved in the counting and reporting of votes.

First - before opening the ballot boxes – the PEC must do a ballot reconciliation exercise. This involves the checking, counting and recording of certain data relevant to the number of votes cast. Only after this preliminary phase is complete will the ballot boxes be opened. The ballot reconciliation exercise includes the counting and recording of the following information:

- Number of voters on the voters list;
- Number of voters who obtained a de-Registration card for voting (voting card);
- Number of envelopes and ballot papers received from the ConEC;
- Number of unused ballot papers;
- Number of spoiled ballots;
- Number of ballots issued to voters within the polling station;
- Number of ballots issued to voters outside the polling station (mobile voting); and
- Number of voters who voted using a de-registration (voting) card.

Second – The Chairperson then explains the steps involved in the actual counting of votes once the ballot boxes are open. The PEC does the following counts and records the results in the draft protocol:

- Number of ballot papers in the mobile and immovable ballot boxes not inside of envelopes;
- Number of unstamped envelopes in the mobile and immovable ballot boxes;
- Number of ballot papers in stamped envelopes in the mobile and immovable ballot boxes;

- Number of ballot papers in unstamped envelopes in the ballot boxes;
- Number of valid votes;
- Number of invalid votes; and
- Number of votes cast for each candidate.

REMEMBER!

The counting procedures must continue without any break until the entire counting procedure is concluded.

- *Begin by filling in the preliminary DRAFT Protocol on voting results. You may correct errors on this draft Protocol.*
- *Do NOT open any ballot boxes until you have completed steps 1 – 7, set forth below.*
- *The OFFICIAL Protocol must be filled out in ink and cannot contain ANY corrections.*

BACKGROUND NOTES

4.2 INSTRUCTIONS FOR COUNTING VOTES AND COMPLETING THE PROTOCOL ON VOTING RESULTS

BEFORE OPENING ANY BALLOT BOXES, PERFORM THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

Step 1 – Count and Record the Total Number of Voters on the Voters Lists

- First confirm the number of voters on the PEC's permanent voters' list. Record this in words and figures on line 1.a) of the draft protocol.
- Next check the number of voters who have voted with a de-registration (voting) card. (Note: these cards should be attached to the voters' list.) Count them. Enter the number in words and figures on line 1.b) of the draft protocol.
- Add the amounts in lines 1.a) and 1.b). This equals the total number of voters on the voters' list (as expanded by those voting with de-registration cards.) Record this in words and figures on line 1 of the draft protocol.

Step 2 - Record the number of voters who obtained a de-registration card for voting (Voting Card)

- The number of voters **from your precinct** who received de-registration cards (voting cards) must be determined prior to Election Day, and confirmed by the PEC by an act (written decision). The total number of voting cards issued by the PEC and those issued by the ConEC should be included in the act (written decision). **Do not be confused – this has nothing to do with voters from other precincts who voted with de-registration cards at your precinct. You have already dealt with this in Step 1.**
- Referring to the PEC act, record the number in words and figures on line 2 of the draft protocol.

Step 3 – Record the Number of Envelopes Received from the ConEC

- The number of envelopes has been previously recorded on the act acknowledging receipt by your PEC from the ConEC, as described in this Guide.
- Announce the number of envelopes.
- Record the number in words and figures on line 3 of the draft protocol.

Step 4 – Record the Number of Ballot Papers Received from the ConEC

- > The number of ballot papers should be equal to the number of envelopes received, and should have previously been recorded in the act acknowledging receipt of ballot papers from the ConEC.
- > Announce the number of ballot papers.
- > Record the number in words and figures on line 4 of the draft protocol.

Step 5 – Record the Number of Voters Receiving Stamped Envelopes and Ballot Papers

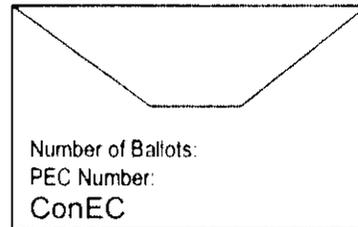
- > First announce the number of voters who voted by using the mobile ballot box. This information can be retrieved from the voters' list and a separate document prepared at the conclusion of mobile voting. (As noted earlier in this Guide, there should be notations on the voters' list indicating which voters voted by mobile ballot box. Moreover, as also noted earlier in this Guide, the details of the mobile voting must be kept in a separate document that includes the number who actually voted in this way.)
- > Record the number in words and figures on line 5.a) of the draft protocol.
- > Next determine the number of voters who voted in the polling station. This should total the number of signatures on the voters' list plus the number of de-registration cards attached to the voters' list.
- > Record the number in words and figures on line 5.b) of the draft protocol.
- > Finally, add the numbers in lines 5.a) and 5.b) and enter the number on line 5 of the draft protocol. Announce it.

Step 6 – Cancel, Count and Record the Number of Unused Ballots

- > First, cancel each unused ballot by cutting off the bottom right hand corner.
- > Then, count all unused ballot papers.
- > Announce this figure.
- > Place the cancelled, unused ballots in an envelope and mark it "Unused".

→ Record the number of cancelled, unused ballots; the PEC number and the ConEC number on the outside of the envelope.

→ Record the number of cancelled/unused ballots in words and figures on line 6 of the draft protocol.

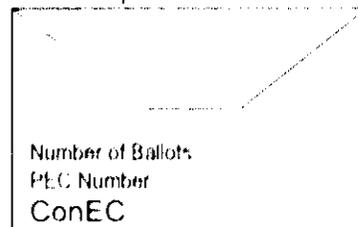


Step 7 – Count and Record the Number of Spoiled Ballot Papers:

REMEMBER!

Spoiled ballot papers are to be placed throughout the day in an envelope reserved for that purpose. Don't forget to include any spoiled ballot papers from the mobile voting.

- First, open the envelope(s) containing the individual spoiled ballot papers.
- Ensure that all the spoiled ballot papers were cancelled by cutting them in half (if this was not already done.)
- Count the number of cancelled and spoiled ballot papers.
- Announce this figure.
- Place the cancelled and spoiled ballots in an envelope marked "Spoiled"
- Record the number of the cancelled and spoiled ballots; the PEC number and the ConEC number on the outside of the envelope
- Record the number of cancelled and spoiled ballots in words and figures on line 7 of the draft protocol.



Please Note

Should you have any difficulties in completing the forgoing steps, they should be fully described in the final protocol, and/or attachments thereto.

After completing Steps 1 through 7 above, and completing Lines 1 through 7 of the draft protocol, CHECK THE BALLOT BOXES.

In the presence of all observers, each tamper evident ballot box seal must be checked to ensure that ballot boxes have not been tampered with. Announce the unique number on the seals, and record them in an act. They must be the same numbers that were recorded earlier when the immovable and mobile ballot boxes were prepared.

PRESENTATION PLAN 9

Review of Day 2 A&Q – 10 Reflection Homework Assignment

➤ PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ Talking Points
- ❖ Prepared Flipchart with 10 answers (TBD)
- ❖ 10 questions below.
- ❖ Blank Flipchart.
- ❖ Treats for right questions.

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 5–10 minutes in total.

➤ DELIVERY

Talking Points:

Explain to audience that they need to think of the question that matches the answers shown on the flipchart. Go one by one and emphasize any points of review that may be necessary.

Is there any material we have covered you are still not comfortable with? Is there anything we have learned over the past two days that has been surprising to you? If so, what?

*** Homework Assignment (Group I only):**

Draft your ideal presentation outline for the PEC training you will be conducting in the field. Will be used as input for final agenda. Timeframe is 2 hours and must include all main points in EDG and practical exercises with ballot boxes and protocol.

ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

A: bottom right hand corner

Q: what do you cut off to cancel a ballot paper?

A: 13 October

Q: when is the deadline for signing up mobile ballot box voters?

A: step 5

Q: which step on the protocol talks about stamped ballots and envelopes?

A: cut in half

Q: what do you do with a spoiled ballot paper / unused deregistration card

A: 3

Q: how many seals will PECs receive for the mobile ballot box?

A: Attach to voters list

Q: what should the PEC do with voted deregistration cards?

A: 41 and 42

Q: what number articles in the UEC deal with observers?

A: 9:00

Q: when is the last voter turnout report due to the ConEC?

A: a crime

Q: what is the action called where someone votes on the behalf of another?

A: a secret

Q: give one word that could describe everyone's vote?

PRESENTATION PLAN 10

Review of Day 3 A&Q – 10 Review Post-Test Results Review Expectations Reflection You're OK Exercise

➤ PREPARATION

Resources:

- ❖ Talking Points
- ❖ Prepared Flipchart with 5 answers (TBD)
- ❖ 5 questions below.
- ❖ Blank Flipchart.
- ❖ Treats for correct questions.
- ❖ You're OK printout as guideline for conducting exercise. * **See Day 3 packet of notes from bht.**
- ❖ Blank paper or large (A4) index cards – one for each participant
- ❖ Flipchart with Expectations from Day 1
- ❖ Treats for everyone for their attention.

Practice: Sunday afternoon at venue

Timing: 5 minutes from A & Q. 10 minutes for You're OK.

➤ DELIVERY

Talking Points:

Explain to audience that they need to think of the question that matches the answers shown on the flipchart. Go one by one and emphasize any points of review that may be necessary.

Review expectations from flipchart completed on day one in order to ensure all expectations were met.

Reflection: Check and see how participants are feeling after doing the counting and protocol training today. Are they still confident? Prepared to train?

Explain goal of You're OK as a closing exercise. Pass out paper/cards. Monitor process until people have own cards back.



ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

A: in the polling station

Q: where must all election day business take place?

A: line 9 on the protocol

Q: where does one record the number of valid votes?

A: ballot in determinate form

Q: what is a ballot officially prepared by the CEC, stamped by the PEC in the upper right hand corner, with the upper left hand corner cut off?

A: envelope in determinate form

Q: what is an envelope officially prepared by the CEC with official stamp of the PEC?

A: "matches with original"

Q: what should be written on each copy of the checked protocol requested by observers?

A: invalid protocol

Q: what is a protocol that has either been filled out in pencil/incorrectly/left blank/has been corrected/is not signed by 2/3 of the members of the PEC.

A: 812 984 306

Q: what is the fax number of the IFES office.

15 Priority Issues

PEC representatives who participate in the CEC/IFES training program need, by the end of the training seminar, to have a practical understanding of the following issues:

1. That PEC members with consultative voting rights are not allowed to issue ballot papers and envelopes, count ballots and envelopes, cancel any ballot paper or de-registration card, complete the official Protocol of results, or sign any decision of the PEC
2. How to properly assemble and seal a stationary ballot box (including the fact that they need to announce the numbers of the seals and record them in an act).
3. How to properly assemble and seal the mobile ballot box (including the fact that they need to announce the numbers of the seals and record them in an act).
4. That "used" deregistration cards must be collected from the respective voters and attached to the Voters' List.
5. Appropriately credentialed observers have the right to observe preparations leading up to the opening the polling station, the entire voting process from 8:00 – 19:00 (including mobile voting), the count and finalization of the official protocol (including a recount if necessary), and the delivery of the official protocol and election materials to the ConEC. They also have the right to receive a copy of the official protocol.
6. Voting on behalf of another person is a crime punishable by the imposition of monetary penalties or imprisonment and must not be allowed.
7. PEC members, credentialed observers, and authorized representatives are not allowed to help voters needing assistance.
8. The deadline for applying to vote by mobile ballot box is midnight 13 October 2003. Election Day requests to vote by mobile ballot box will not be accepted.
9. What are the 7 steps that MUST be completed after the closing of the polls but BEFORE opening the ballot boxes.
10. That once the stamped envelopes in determinate form in the mobile ballot box are determined and recorded, they will be set aside and later mixed with those in the stationary ballot box before votes are counted in order to protect the secrecy of the ballot of persons who voted using the mobile ballot box.
11. What constitutes an envelope and a ballot in determinate form (and NOT in determinate form).
12. What constitutes an valid ballot (and an invalid ballot).
13. How to correctly complete the protocol (and that the official Protocol must be completed in ink and without inaccuracies).
14. That if multiple ballot are found inside ONE stamped envelope, they are counted as ONE invalid vote. Also, an empty stamped envelope is considered ONE invalid vote.
15. That upon closing of the polls, ALL election materials, including the Voters' List and the ballot boxes, MUST remain the main room of the polling station. NO election materials can be removed to another location during the counting process. All election materials must remain within full view of all PEC members, credentialed observers, and candidate representatives.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Election Commission Structure

- Central Election Commission (CEC)
- Constituency Election Commission (ConEC)
- Precinct Election Commission (PEC)

Precinct Election Commission Members

- PEC Chairperson
- PEC Secretaries
- PEC Member responsible for information
- PEC Member responsible for eligibility check and ballot issuance
- PEC Member responsible for security of the ballot boxes

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(continued)

Persons Entitled to Observe Elections

Candidates and Their Authorized Representatives or Party Agents
Accredited Observers (International and Domestic)

Media Representatives

Media representatives also have the right to be present in the polling station.

Security Personnel

Uniformed police officers can enter the polling station for the purposes of restoring order only at the invitation of the PEC Chairperson following a decision of the PEC.

OPENING OF THE POLLING STATION

What tasks must be undertaken to prepare for opening the polling station?

- Prepare Materials and Supplies.
- Display Voting Instruction Posters.
- Remove Campaign Materials.
- Verify Accreditation of Observers.
- Count and Record Ballot Papers and Envelopes.
- Prepare the Ballot Boxes.
- Destroy Un-Used De-Registration (“voting”) Cards.
- Assign Responsibilities.
- Open the Polling Station.

OPENING OF THE POLLING STATION

(continued)

Who is authorized to be in the polling station on Election Day?

- PEC Members
- ConEC and CEC Representatives
- Accredited Observers
- Candidates and Their Representatives or Party Agents
- Media Representatives
- Uniformed Policemen (at the request of the PEC only to restore order)
- Relevant Specialists (at the request of the PEC only to fix technical problems)
- Voters

VOTING PROCESS

The Routine Voting Process

- Greet voters and answer their questions.
- Check each voter's ID. [acceptable forms of ID]
- Locate the voter's name on the Voters' List.
- Record the series and number of the voter's ID in the Voters' List.
- Issue each voter one ballot paper and envelope.
- Have the voter sign the Voters' List . . .

VOTING PROCESS

(continued)

The Routine Voting Process . . .

- Instruct the voter how to correctly mark his or her choice.
- Direct the voter to the first available voting compartment.
- Ensure the voter deposits his or her envelope into the ballot box.
- Then, direct the voter to leave the polling station.
- Monitor voter turnout.

VOTING PROCESS

(continued)

Exceptions to the Routine Voting Process

- What if a voter spoils his or her ballot paper?
- What if a voter needs assistance to receive or to mark his or her ballot paper?
- What if a voter's name is not on the Voters' List
- What if a voter wants to vote with a De-Registration ("voting") card?
- What if the voter does not have his or her required ID?

VOTING PROCESS

(continued)

Voting By the Mobile Ballot Box

- Who is eligible to vote using the mobile ballot box?
- What needs to be done to prepare for mobile voting on Election Day?
- How is mobile voting administered on Election Day?
- What needs to be done once the mobile voting team returns to the polling station?

VOTING PROCESS

(continued)

Preparing to Close the Polls

- Announce the close of voting.
- Process voters who are in the polling station at closing time.
- Clear the polling station of persons not permitted to remain after closing.

Who is permitted to remain in the polling station after closing?

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

Before Opening Any Ballot Boxes

The PEC Chairman makes necessary announcements and gives instructions. The PEC will then proceed to . . .

1. Count and record total number of voters on the Voter's List.
2. Record the number of voters who received a De-Registration ("voting") Card from the PEC.
3. Record the number of envelopes received from the ConEC.
4. Record the number of ballot papers received from the Con EC . . .

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

5. Record the number of envelopes received from the ConEC.
6. Record the number of ballot papers received from the Con EC.
7. Record the number of voters receiving stamped envelopes and ballot papers.
8. Cancel, count, and record the number of unused ballots.
9. Count and record the number of spoiled ballot papers.

Remember to enter the requested data on the draft Protocol!

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

Opening the Ballot Boxes

Be sure to check the seals to ensure they have not been tampered with!

The Mobile Ballot Box

10. Open the mobile ballot box and separate its contents.
11. Count and record the number of stamped envelopes in determinate form.
10. Count and record any ballot papers not in envelopes.

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

Check List for Determining That a Ballot Paper is in the Determine Form

- ✓ The ballot paper was officially prepared by the CEC.
- ✓ The official stamp of the PEC appears in the upper right-hand corner.
- ✓ The upper left-hand corner has been cut off.

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

The Stationary Ballot Box

11. Open the stationary ballot box and separate its content.
12. Count and record any ballot papers not in envelopes.
13. Calculate lines 8 and 12 of the draft protocol.
14. Count and record the number of unstamped envelopes in the stationary and mobile ballot boxes.
15. Count and record the number of ballots papers found in unstamped envelopes from the ballot boxes.

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

16. Determine the validity of votes.
17. Count and record the number of valid votes.
18. Count and record the number of invalid votes.
19. Determine the number of ballots in determinate form in stamped envelopes.
20. Separate, count, and record division of valid votes cast for candidates.

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

Check List for Determining That a Ballot Paper is Valid

- ✓ The ballot paper is found inside the envelope.
- ✓ There is only one ballot paper in the envelope.
- ✓ The ballot paper has been marked and only once.
- ✓ The intention of the voter is clearly indicated.
- ✓ The ballot paper is not cancelled.
- ✓ The upper left hand corner has been cut off.

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

Complete the Official Protocol and Reporting Results

- Verify the accuracy of the draft Protocol.
- Enter the data by pen to the official Protocol.
- Attach dissenting opinions.
- Sign all three copies of the official Protocol.
- Publicly post the third copy of the official Protocol at the polling station.
- Make certified copies of the official Protocol if requested by observers.

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

Prepare and Package Materials for the ConEC

- Gather required documents.
- Ensure proper signatures.
- Attach originals or complaints and related decisions to the first copy of the official Protocol.
- Place in large envelope.
- Seal and label large envelope.
- Deliver to the ConEC.

Remember to make certified copies of complaints and related decisions to retain for the PEC!

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

Prepare Documents to be kept by the PEC

- Ballot paper corners and spoiled ballots papers
- List of authorized representatives and accredited observers
- Certified copies of complaints and related decisions
- Second copy of the official Protocol

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

(continued)

Close the Polling Station

The PEC Chairman can close the polling station once:

- The official Protocol has been completed.
- Observers have been provided, upon request, with a certified copy of the official Protocol.
- All voting materials have been packaged and delivered to the ConEC.
- All authorized persons have left the premises.

**PRESENTATION SKILLS
A QUICK OVERVIEW**

PREPARED BY CATHERINE BARNES

Remember! Good preparation makes for a good presentation

PREPARATION

Assess the audience.

To whom is the presentation directed. What is their knowledge and experience relative to the presentation topic? How homogenous or diverse is the audience. What are their needs and expectations? What is the size of the audience? How much time do they have? Use the answers to these questions to tailor your presentation to the audience.

Survey the presentation venue.

Make sure that it is of sufficient size to accommodate the audience. If you need more than one room, for example one for the presentation and one for a simulation, make sure that all rooms are reserved. Is there sufficient lighting, heat, or cooling in the room? Does the room meet your technical needs, for example are there sufficient outlets and are they well placed? Has the room been set up properly? What limitations does the room have that may affect your planned presentation, for example is there theater-style seating that will prevent you from re-arranging the furniture in the room?

Learn the material.

Be sure that you are familiar with the subject matter that you will be presenting as well as the terminology that you will need to use throughout the presentation. You will be able to make your presentation more confidently and comfortably if you DO YOUR HOMEWORK!

Outline your presentation.

Every presentation should have three distinct phases, an introduction, the body of the presentation, and a summary. The introduction should state the purpose and format of the presentation and create interest among the participants. The body of the presentation will convey the main facts or message to be communicated. Ensure that this part of the presentation is clear by proceeding in logical steps and letting the audience know when you are transitioning from one issue or theme to another. In the summary, restate your main points and ensure that your ending hits home.

Prepare notes to guide your presentation.

Do not attempt to memorize your talk or read a prepared essay. Rather, make a listing of the facts to be included in your presentation. Organize them in a logical order. Condense this information into headings or key points on index cards that you can refer to throughout your presentation. You can also list these headings or key points on a flip chart or other form of visual aid to help "prompt" your presentation.

Identify and prepare necessary visual aids and handouts.

Visual aids are important to a presentation because they help to convey information and to make the presentation more interesting for the participants. Visual aids should be selected or prepared carefully, however, to ensure that they can make a positive contribution to achieve the learning objectives. Visual aids should be simple, clear, and relevant.

Practice, practice, practice.

Schedule a solid bloc of time to rehearse your presentation. Be sure that you practice with your visual aids and other tools, materials, or props that are a part of your presentation so that you are comfortable with them. Work on the non-verbal aspects of your presentation including pace, tone, pitch, articulation, posture, gestures, volume, variety, etc. Time yourself to make sure that you are not running over the allotted time. Practice in front of other people so that they can give you useful feedback.

PRESENTATION

Public Speaking

- Speak louder than normal but don't shout. Adapt your tone of voice to the size of the room
- Pronounce words distinctly. Do not "fade out" at the end of sentences.
- Keep your language simple. Avoid slang or terms that are unknown to the audience
- Don't speak too fast.
- Vary the pace and pitch of your voice to help maintain the audience's interest.
- Use pauses. This gives the audience time to digest what you have said and gives you time to pick up the substance of the next point.
- Don't read. Reading to an audience is boring and difficult to follow.
- Tell the audience what you are going to tell them. Then, tell them. End by telling them what you have told them.

Non-Verbal Communication

- Face the audience.
- Smile from time to time.
- Project a confident and comfortable style with the audience. Try to be natural.
- Maintain eye contact with members of the audience.
- Stand up straight and square your shoulders. Try not to be too "stiff."
- Gestures should be appropriate to what you are saying. They should be timed to emphasize key points. Use a variety of gestures instead of using the same gesture over and over.
- Facial expressions can be used in the same way as gestures to emphasize key points. Your face should reflect what you are saying (not what you thinking). Facial expressions also help bring your presentation to life.
- Don't use tables, podiums, easels, or other items as a "crutch" upon which to lean.
- Your feet should be placed firmly on the ground so that you are well balanced (remember not to "lock" your knees!). You do not need to stay rooted in one spot, but when you are standing in one place don't rock back and forth or front to back. If you do move, don't pace.
- Vary your position to reflect what is going on. If posing a question to the audience, come out from the "barrier" created by a table or podium and move toward them.
- Don't fidget.

Using Flip Charts

- Print in large, capital letters. Use plain, block letters. Use the wide end of the marker tip when making letters. Write letters straight up and down rather than slanted.
- Use different colored markers but beware of colors that can't be easily seen or read

- If you need to draw a diagram or other graphic, lightly draw it out beforehand in pencil. You're audience won't be able to see the fine lines but you will be able to use them to guide your drawing. A similar trick can be used if you are worried about writing in a straight line. Use a ruler to lightly "line" your paper in pencil.
- Don't crowd the page with too much information. Think about how to convey ideas with a limited number of words. Verbs and nouns are a high priority, adjectives and adverbs are not. As a rule, you should have no more than 8 words per line and no more than 8 lines per page. Also, plan ahead so you don't run off the page.
- Title every page.
- Use tabs with labels if you need to access particular pages quickly.
- As with other visual aids, each flip chart page should not be shown until it is needed. When you have moved on to a new point, remember to "flip the page" that what your visual aid corresponds with what you are saying! Once you reach your last flip chart page and you no longer need the visual, remove it. (This same rule applied to other visual aids).
- Do NOT talk to the flipchart (or any other visual aid). If you are talking, you should be facing the audience. If you need to write, stop talking. Only resume talking when you are able to face the audience.
- Make sure the flipchart is secured to the easel.
- If possible, you may want to use two flip charts, one containing information that you have prepared in advance, for example your presentation outline or main points of the presentation and another one to use throughout the presentation to jot down input from the audience and spontaneously respond to ideas that are generated through group discussion.

Dealing with Difficult Audience Dynamics

One person dominates the discussion: Rather than focus on the person over-participating, encourage those who are under-participating to become more involved. Trying to change the dominant person merely gives that person all the more attention.

Part of the audience is not paying attention: Aim for a break as soon as possible as participants are becoming overloaded with information and worn out. After a break they will be better able to focus.

The entire group is not participating: Adjust the presentation format and pace by breaking down into smaller working groups, conducting a brain-storming session or practical learning exercise, or playing a game.

Two people have gotten into a disagreement: Reach out to other participants and solicit their ideas or opinions thereby shifting attention away from the two people who are disagreeing. Or, suggest that the group "step back" from the current discussion and focus on other or bigger issues.

A small number of people are not participating: Ask for input, for example "I'd like to hear from some people who haven't spoken in a while." You might also use some sort of practical learning exercise that would require each person in the group to share an idea or comment. Or, break down into smaller working groups that allow for more interaction.

Whispering and side jokes: Applying your own warmth and humor, appeal for decorum. If the problem persists, it might be time for a break.

Failure to start and end on time: Start when you say you're going to start. Waiting only encourages lateness. If you must go longer than anticipated, allow for a short break. If you routinely go over time, you need to improve your agenda planning.

Handling Questions from the Audience

- Solicit questions from the audience as you finish each theme or "module" within your presentation.
- Treat each question with respect.
- Make sure that you listen carefully to the essence of what is being asked, pause and think about this before answering.
- Make sure that the audience can hear the question. Repeat it if necessary.
- Give straightforward answers.
- If the question concerns a point already covered, then put it back to the group. This will help you check whether the point was missed more generally.
- If you don't want to answer yet, say "That's an important point which I will be covering later on in the presentation. Can I come to it in a few moments?"
- If you need a moment to work on an answer, try passing the question back to the audience and getting their ideas. You can then regain control by summarizing their answers.
- If you do not know the answer, admit that you don't know by saying something like "That's an interesting question that I haven't been asked before. I don't have a full answer for you right now, can I look into it and get back to you?" In this case, however, you must subsequently get the answer and convey it to the audience.
- After you have answered any question, check with the person who asked the question to make sure that they are satisfied with the response.
- Irrelevant questions should be dealt with constructively. Give encouragement but do not waste time. Watch for deliberate attempts to mislead or digress.



PRE-TEST/POST-TEST

Part I

Instructions: Match the definition to the appropriate term from the list below by indicating the letter of the term in front of the matching definition.

___ A ballot paper that has its upper left-hand corner cut off, and has the official PEC stamp on the lower right hand corner.

___ A person authorized by the CEC or a ConEC to scrutinize the voting process.

___ A ballot paper not in determinate form, found with other ballot papers in a single envelope, and/or unmarked or improperly marked.

___ One of the three forms of acceptable identification that a voter must present to the PEC in order to vote.

___ A person authorized by a presidential candidate or political party who may follow the work of the Precinct Election Commission (PEC).

___ A document issued prior to Election Day by either a ConEC or PEC to voters who will not be able to vote in their own precincts.

___ A ballot paper in determinate form, found by itself inside an envelope in a ballot box, and clearly marked to indicate the voter's preference.

___ Effectively replaces the notifications that used to be sent to voters.

___ The official document of voting results filled out in triplicate by the PEC.

___ A ballot paper that has its upper left-hand corner cut off, and has the official PEC stamp on the upper right hand corner.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| a. Valid ballot | f. Voter's card |
| b. Voting card | g. Invalid ballot |
| c. Form No. 9 | h. Protocol |
| d. Ballot paper in determinate form | j. Observer |
| e. Authorized representative or agent | k. Ballot paper not in determinate form |

Part II

Instructions: Place a check mark in front of the word True or False according to which you believe the preceding sentence to be. If you don't know an answer, simply leave the answer blank.

1. PEC members with consultative voting rights may be asked by the Chairperson to assist with the counting process so that this can be completed more expediently.
 True False
2. Voting on behalf of another person is a crime punishable by monetary penalties or imprisonment.
 True False
3. Unused de-registration cards should be kept on hand by the PEC in case a need for them arises on Election Day.
 True False
4. Polling stations with more than 1,000 voters will receive two mobile ballot boxes in order to conduct mobile polling on Election Day.
 True False
5. International observers who have an accreditation badge issued by the CEC do not need to present an additional identification document.
 True False
6. Uniformed police officers may be present in the polling station at their own discretion for the purposes of restoring public order.
 True False
7. The ballot box must be sealed and the numbers of the seals recorded in an act before the polling station is opened to the voters at 8:00 am.
 True False
8. Voters are allowed only one spoiled ballot each.
 True False
9. Voters needing assistance to mark their ballots can ask for help from an observer if there are no other voters present to assist them.
 True False

10. If a voter did falls ill on Election Day and is unable to vote in person, a family member may come to the polling station on their behalf and make a written application to vote using the mobile ballot box.
 True False
11. Only those voters who are already in the voting compartment or who have been issued ballot papers will be permitted to complete the voting process at 19:00.
 True False
12. The PEC Chairperson may immediately open the ballot box and begin the counting process as soon as the last voter has vacated the polling station.
 True False
13. The PEC may take small breaks in the middle of the counting procedure, as long as the official protocol is delivered to the ConEC within 24 hours from the close of the polling station.
 True False
14. De-registration cards must be attached to the Voters' List.
 True False
15. If the procedures are followed correctly, all documents will be packaged in envelopes by the end of the counting process.
 True False
16. Stamped envelopes in the determinate form from mobile ballot boxes may be opened and the votes counted separately from the votes cast in the immovable ballot box.
 True False
17. Three ballot papers found inside a single envelope should be considered as three invalid votes.
 True False
18. If the PEC decision is to consider the ballot invalid, the reasons for the decision are recorded on the reverse of the ballot paper.
 True False
19. The official Protocol can be completed in pencil so that inaccuracies can be more easily corrected.
 True False

Part III

Instructions: Circle all answers that apply under each question.

1. Which of the following persons are allowed to be in the polling station during the counting process?
 - a. Accredited observers
 - b. ExCom representatives
 - c. Media representatives
 - d. Interested voters
 - e. Candidates' authorized representatives

2. Which of the following forms of ID are among those that are accepted to establish a voter's identity on Election Day?
 - a. Azerbaijan Passport
 - b. USSR Passport
 - c. Azerbaijan ID Card
 - d. Form No. 9
 - e. Driver's License
 - f. Voter's Card

3. How many uniquely numbered, tamper evident, plastic seals are required to seal the stationary ballot box?
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three
 - d. Four

4. How many uniquely numbered, tamper evident, plastic seals are required to seal the mobile ballot box?
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three
 - d. Four

5. What is done with the third copy of the official protocol?
 - a. It is retained by the PEC as part of its records.
 - b. It is sent to the CEC
 - c. Is delivered to the ConEC
 - d. It is publicly posted at the polling station.
 - e. It is given to an observer who requests it.

6. Within what timeframe must the PEC deliver its official protocol of results and all required documents to the ConEC?
 - a. By mid-night on 15 October
 - b. Within 48 hours of the closing of the polls.
 - c. Within 24 hours of the closing of the polls.

PEC TRAINING

This training session will review election procedures as presented in the *Election Day Guide for Presidential Elections* prepared by the CEC in cooperation with IFES. Support for this project has been provided by USAID.

VOTING RIGHTS AND VOTER ELIGIBILITY

- Voting rights
- Eligibility to vote in presidential elections
- Voter's cards
- De-registration ("voting") cards
- Acceptable forms of voter identification

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Election Commission Structure
- Precinct Election Commission Members
- Persons Entitled to Observe Elections
- Media Representatives
- Security Personnel

OPENING OF THE POLLING STATION

- Materials and supplies
- Polling station layout
- Tasks prior to opening
- Assigned responsibilities upon opening
- Persons authorized to be in the polling station

VOTING HOURS ACTIVITY

- The routine voting process
- Exceptions to the routine voting process
- Voting by the mobile ballot box
- Preparing to close the polls

VOTE COUNTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

- Before opening any ballot boxes . . .
- Opening the ballot boxes
- Completing the official Protocol and reporting results
- Preparing and packaging materials for the ConEC
- Preparing documents to be kept by the PEC
- Closing the polling station

Check List for Determining That a Ballot Paper is in the Determinate Form

- ✓ The ballot paper was officially prepared by the CEC.
- ✓ The official stamp of the PEC appears in the upper right-hand corner.
- ✓ The upper left-hand corner has been cut off.

Check List for Determining That a Ballot Paper is Valid

- ✓ The ballot paper is found inside the envelope.
- ✓ There is only one ballot paper in the envelope.
- ✓ The ballot paper has been marked and only once.
- ✓ The intention of the voter is clearly indicated.
- ✓ The ballot paper is not cancelled.
- ✓ The upper left hand corner has been cut off.

PEC Training Program Training of the Trainers Seminar

**Radisson Hotel, Baku
8-14 September, 2003**

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

A. General Assessment

Circle one number for each topic:

1 Poor 2 Fair 3 Good 4 Very good 5 Outstanding

1. The overall seminar	5	4	3	2	1
2. The trainers' presentations	5	4	3	2	1
3. The simulations and exercises	5	4	3	2	1
4. The team presentations as a means to practice presentation skills and receive constructive feedback	5	4	3	2	1
5. The interaction among colleagues, especially within team	5	4	3	2	1
6. The opportunity to enhance professional effectiveness	5	4	3	2	1
7. The quality of the training materials and visual aids	5	4	3	2	1
8. The quality of the consecutive (verbal) translation services	5	4	3	2	1
9. The quality of the translation of the written materials	5	4	3	2	1
10. The opportunity to actively participate in the training activities	5	4	3	2	1
11. The conference facilities: hotel staff	5	4	3	2	1
12. The conference location	5	4	3	2	1
13. The conference schedule/timing	5	4	3	2	1
14. The organization of the seminar	5	4	3	2	1

Comments: _____

B. Program Content

Rate usefulness of each session:

Circle one number for each topic:

1 Poor 2 Fair 3 Good 4 Very good 5 Outstanding

1. Opening and Introductions	5	4	3	2	1
2. Project Overview	5	4	3	2	1
3. Overview of Election Law and Procedures	5	4	3	2	1
4. Voter Eligibility and Identification	5	4	3	2	1
5. Roles and Responsibilities	5	4	3	2	1
6. Opening of the Polls	5	4	3	2	1
7. Demonstration and Practice Session – New Ballot Box	5	4	3	2	1
8. Preparing for Opening of the Polls Simulation	5	4	3	2	1
9. Giving Constructive Feedback	5	4	3	2	1

10. Practical Demonstration and Practice Session – Mobile Ballot Box	5	4	3	2	1
11. Voting Hours Activities	5	4	3	2	1
12. Election Day Procedures Simulation	5	4	3	2	1
13. Preparation for Closing and Counting the Votes	5	4	3	2	1
14. Review of Monitoring and Evaluation Process and Forms	5	4	3	2	1
15. Vote Counting and Completing the Protocol	5	4	3	2	1
16. Practical Exercise – Sequencing the Pre-Count and Counting Process	5	4	3	2	1
17. Pre-Count, Vote Counting, and Completion of Protocol Simulation	5	4	3	2	1
18. Pre-Test/Post-Test as self-evaluation tool	5	4	3	2	1
19. Ice-Breakers and Games	5	4	3	2	1

Comments: _____

C. Additional Feedback

What were the three highlights of the training seminar?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Were you disappointed in any area of the training seminar? If yes, which area and why?

How do you think this training seminar will affect your work?

The objectives for the conference were relevant to my work as a PEC trainer and my expectations were met.

5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 Neutral 2 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____

What obstacles do you think you may face when you implement the PEC training in the regions?

Comments: _____

B.

Do you think you are sufficiently prepared to overcome these obstacles in order to conduct a successful PEC training program?

Comment _____

Please submit to appropriate person before departing training room at end of program. Thank you!

Appendix: Overview of TOT Evaluation

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

A. General Assessment

Circle one rating for each topic:

5 Outstanding 4 Very Good 3 Good 2 Fair 1 Poor

RATINGS	5	4	3	2	1
1. The overall seminar	16 (76%)	5 (24%)			
2. The trainers' presentations	16 (73%)	6 (27%)			
3. The simulations and exercises	7 (35%)	11 (55%)	2 (10%)		
4. The team presentations as a means to practice presentation skills and receive constructive feedback	4 (18%)	16 (73%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	
5. The interaction among colleagues, especially within team	15 (68%)	6 (28%)			1 (4%)
6. The opportunity to enhance professional effectiveness	11 (46%)	10 (42%)	3 (12%)		
7. The quality of the training materials and visual aids	14 (64%)	6 (27%)	2 (9%)		
8. The quality of the consecutive (verbal) translation services	18 (82%)	4 (18%)			
9. The quality of the translation of the written materials	11 (55%)	7 (35%)	2 (10%)		
10. The opportunity to actively participate in the training activities	18 (82%)	4 (18%)			
11. The conference facilities/hotel staff	16 (73%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)		
12. The conference location	15 (68%)	6 (27%)	1 (5%)		
13. The conference schedule/timing	11 (50%)	9 (41%)	2 (9%)		
14. The organization of the seminar	20 (91%)	2 (9%)			

Comments:

The trainers are very experienced; the content of the training was comprehensively covered.

B. Program Content

Rate usefulness of each session:

Circle one number for each topic:

5 Outstanding 4 Very Good 3 Good 2 Fair 1 Poor

RATINGS	5	4	3	2	1
1. Opening and Introductions	16 (73%)	5 (23%)	1 (4%)		
2. Project Overview	14 (64%)	7 (32%)	1 (4%)		
3. Overview of Election Law and Procedures	11 (50%)	9 (41%)	2 (9%)		
4. Voter Eligibility and Identification	18 (82%)	3 (14%)	1 (4%)		
5. Roles and Responsibilities	13 (59%)	8 (36%)	1 (5%)		
6. Opening of the Polls	18 (82%)	4 (18%)			
7. Demonstration and Practice Session – New Ballot Box	19 (86%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)		
8. Preparing for Opening of the Polls Simulation	11 (50%)	8 (36%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	
9. Giving Constructive Feedback	10 (45%)	11 (50%)	1 (5%)		
10. Practical Demonstration and Practice Session – Mobile Ballot Box	16 (73%)	6 (27%)			
11. Voting Hours Activities	13 (62%)	7 (33%)	1 (5%)		
12. Election Day Procedures Simulation	9 (41%)	12 (55%)	1 (4%)		
13. Preparation for Closing and Counting the Votes	15 (68%)	6 (27%)	1 (5%)		
14. Review of Monitoring and Evaluation Process and Forms	10 (45%)	12 (55%)			
15. Vote Counting and Completing the Protocol	18 (86%)	2 (10%)	1 (4%)		
16. Practical Exercise – Sequencing the Pre-Count and Counting Process	12 (55%)	8 (36%)	2 (9%)		
17. Pre-Count, Vote Counting, and Completion of Protocol Simulation	17 (77%)	5 (23%)			
18. Pre-Test/Post-Test as self-evaluation tool	17 (77%)	5 (23%)			
19. Ice-Breakers and Games	12 (55%)	6 (27%)	4 (18%)		

Comments:

It is important to meet with other training group and to benefit from their experience; everything was well organized, we do our best for Democratic and Free elections.

C. Additional Feedback

What were the three highlights of the training seminar?

- a. Organization skills; very comprehensive; improvement of presentation skill; discussion opportunities; activity of participants; frankness; ideal training room; training methods; experience; informative (Group 1);

Excellent Organizational Skills; constructive feed-back; nice training venue; frankness; interactive ness; explanation in common language; work with audience; frankness of Catherine and Beverly (Group 2).

- b. Seminars; full coverage of the program; the interest of an international organization in elections; experience of trainers; not boring; quantity of handouts; presentation skills; presentations by beautiful women; determination of priorities; skills; clear explanation of training skills (Group 1);

Good explanation to audience; ice-breakers; dynamics; pre and post tests; well organized training, exercises and simulations; trainers are feeling free; discussions; respect to the thoughts and explanations of trainers (Group 2).

- c. Activity of trainees; frankness of trainers; personal development; trainers are good persons; practical work; minimal independence; novelties in presentations; knowledge; high level of preparing (Group 1);

Very interesting and joyful; simulations and exercises; organizational issues; chocolate; explanation in common language; comprehensive knowledge of training materials; presentations (Group 2)

Were you disappointed in any area of the training seminar? If yes, which area and why?

No one from either training group indicated disappointment concerning the training content of trainings or trainers.

How do you think this training seminar will affect your work?

All TOT seminar participants appreciated given the necessary information and the methods to effectively conduct training. Several participants stressed that the comprehensive explanation of issues related to the activity on Election Day made the things clear to them and they would like to use this experience during the trainings they are to conduct for PEC members.

The objectives for the conference were relevant to my work as a PEC trainer and my expectations were met.

5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 Neutral 4 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree

Comments: 15 participants strongly agreed with this statement. 7 agreed with it.

What obstacles do you think you may face when you implement the PEC training in the regions?

Concerning this question, responses were similar. Most of the trainers have comprehensive information about the situation in the regions. The anticipated obstacles mentioned are as follows:

1. **Difficulties concerning organization:** This includes the organization of proper training rooms, as in most of the regions it is difficult to find a properly equipped and suitable training room. The other problem stressed by some participants is the local bureaucracy and living conditions in regions as a result of unemployment, lack of electricity, and gas.
2. **Difficulties concerning local PEC members:** Training participants emphasized the potential problem of dealing with the indifference of PEC members and how this might impact the trainings conducted by trainers of IFES and CEC. In addition, the difference between ages of trainers and trainees, was mentioned by at least one of the trainers concerned with the traditional attitudes towards elders and the conservative nature of many rural people.

3. **Timing and Schedule:** Most of the trainees have underlined the lack of time given for the conduct of the training in the regions. This raised concerns due to the lack of information of local people about novelties in Election Code and some new practices to be implemented in coming Presidential Elections, for example, the use of transparent ballot boxes and their assembling, completion of protocol and explaining of flow of voting procedure.
4. **Other difficulties:** This included weather and other unspecified obstacles, which might cause difficulty the transportation of IFES/CEC trainers and/or the PEC training participants, especially in remote villages the roads where roads become muddy and impassable in some seasons. This transportation issue raises a concern about the number of PEC member participants.

Do you think you are sufficiently prepared to overcome these obstacles in order to conduct a successful PEC training program?

Comment : All of the participants consider the TOT seminar to be enough for their future trainings for PEC members and will do their best and benefit from previous experiences to conduct it at high level.

***Please submit to appropriate person before departing training room at end of program.
Thank you!***

**IFES MONITORING FORM
PEC TRAINING**

Date: _____ Time: _____
 Constituency: _____ Precinct: _____
 Training Team: _____ Monitoring Team: _____
 Number of Trainees: _____

Rating Scale: *Please circle the appropriate rating.*

5 = Outstanding 4 = Very Good 3 = Good 2 = Fair 1 = Poor

Quality of training venue	5	4	3	2	1
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TRAINING TEAM PERFORMANCE

Quality of verbal presentation skills.	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to use visual aids effectively.	5	4	3	2	1
Appropriateness of non-verbal communication skills	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to directly engage the audience.	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to handle a difficult dynamics within the audience.	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to handle questions from the audience.	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to work effectively as a training team.	5	4	3	2	1
Overall flow of the presentation.	5	4	3	2	1
Ability to effectively manage simulations and/or practical exercises.	5	4	3	2	1
Substantive knowledge on 'Roles and Responsibilities'	5	4	3	2	1
Substantive knowledge on 'Opening the Polling Station'	5	4	3	2	1
Substantive knowledge on 'Voting Hours Activity'	5	4	3	2	1
Substantive knowledge on 'Vote Counting and Reporting Results'	5	4	3	2	1
General audience reaction to the training session.	5	4	3	2	1
OVERALL RATING BY MONITOR	5	4	3	2	1

COMMENTS:

**Overview of Monitoring Team Findings
Summary of Monitoring Team Activity**

Monitoring Team	ConECs Visited	ConEC Meetings	ExCom Meetings	Trainings Observed
Catherine Barnes & Shahla Mahmudova	Khachmas town (#55) Shamakhi (#85) Zagatala-Balaken (#111) Salyan (#59) Salyan-Nefchala (#60) Sabirabad (#63) Sabirabad-Saatli (#64) Lenkoran-Masalli (#75) Nizami 1st (#21) Khatai 2nd (#34) Ganja-Kapaz 2nd (#40)	11	6	10
Beverly Hagerdon Thakur & Vusal Malikov	Tovuz (#105) Ganja-Kapaz (#39) Barda (#93) Gakh (#112) Agsu (#87) Guba (#52) Nisami (#21) Khatai (#34) Hajigabad (#58) Astara (#77)	8	6	10
Pam Flowers & Ramil Afandizade	Ali-bayramli (#46) Saatli (#62) Lenkaran (#73) Agstafa (#108) Shamkir (#98) Mingechevir (#47) Devechi-Guba (#54)	7	7	7
Monitoring Team Totals:		26	19	27

IFES PEC TRAINING PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Date: _____ Time: _____
 Constituency: _____ Precinct: _____
 Trainers Names: _____

Rating Scale: Please circle the appropriate rating.

5 = Outstanding 4 = Very Good 3 = Good 2 = Fair 1 = Poor

Quality of training venue	5	4	3	2	1
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TRAINING TEAM PERFORMANCE

Quality of PEC training materials (manual, training materials, visual aids, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
Rate the schedule and timing of the PEC training	5	4	3	2	1
How would you rate the content of the PEC training (Was it interesting? Did it meet your expectations?)	5	4	3	2	1
Evaluate the professionalism of the PEC trainers (Did they communicate the information accurately and facilitate the workshop in a clear, understandable and friendly manner?)	5	4	3	2	1
What was the most positive aspect of this training? (Write comment in box to the right)					
What was the least positive aspect of this training? (Write comment in box to the right)					
Rate the level at which this training has prepared you to properly conduct elections in your precinct?	5	4	3	2	1
OVERALL RATING BY PARTICIPANT	5	4	3	2	1

Please give us your recommendations for how to improve future PEC trainings:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation form. We wish you a successful election day!

WEEKLY REPORT
15 – 20 September 2003
Submitted by Catherine Barnes

Overview

Catherine Barnes and Shahla Mamudova traveled to Guba, Khachmaz Town, Zagatala-Balaken, and Shamahi between 15 and 18 September to meet with Constituency Election Commission (ConEC) chairpersons and Executive Authority (ExCom) representatives in anticipation of PEC training sessions in their areas of responsibility. These meetings went extremely well. Both the monitoring and training teams received considerable support from the ConECs and ExComs, which had been previously informed of the impending IFES/CEC activities. The ExComs were particularly pleased to be briefed on the project. All ExCom representatives were quick to point out that their only involvement in the electoral process was to provide organizational, technical, and logistical support to the ConECs. They offered this information without being questioned, although their presentation of this fact seemed rather scripted. Interestingly they all had copies of the draft protocol. One ExCom representative in Shamahi had an incorrectly completed draft protocol on his desk (again confusion over line number one). The ConECs were also helpful and provided various levels of support, from arranging venues and mobilizing participants to providing transportation. Some ConEC chairpersons sat in on most or all of the trainings while others were somewhat less engaged.

The monitoring team also observed training sessions and held consultations with training teams. The training teams in these areas performed well or extremely well. The monitoring team offered some advice on issues of organization, substance, presentation, or handling of questions, but there were no major problems. USAID observed a training session conducted by Jeyhun Karamov and Bakhtiyar Hajiyev in Khachmaz town and seemed quite satisfied. The response from the audiences as well as the ConEC representatives was overwhelmingly positive. In all cases, IFES trainers offered to assist the CEC trainers in the provision of CEC training beyond the constituencies covered by the joint training program. As a result, some training teams were conducting as many as four sessions in a day. The length of each training session tended to hover around 2.5 hours depending upon the extent of audience participation. While completion of the protocol was discussed in every session, the ballot counting simulation was only being used when there was enough time and when the size of the audience and the configuration of the room permitted.

Two issues of concern emerged during the course of the first week's training in these areas. First, the number of participants has been lower than the set target of 24 participants per session. In general the numbers tended to range from 12 – 20. This issue was discussed with the ConEC chairpersons and via the CEC trainers, with the CEC itself. Calls were made by the CEC in an attempt to boost attendance. At least in these areas, it appeared that the ConEC chairpersons were contacting the PEC chairpersons who were subsequently responsible for getting their representatives to the training sessions. As such, under participation seemed first and foremost to be the responsibility of the PEC chairpersons rather than a lack of will or effort by the ConEC chairpersons. Secondly, there was some suggestion (and even allegations) that under participation stemmed from the fact that opposition members were not being invited to attend the training sessions. Since there were at least some opposition members present at each session, it appeared that whether or not they were invited depended upon the particular PEC chairperson doing the inviting. At any rate, there were sufficient numbers of opposition present at the training to lead to considerable partisan commentary and debate. Luckily, this was effectively managed, i.e. cut off, by the trainers.

In other cases, scheduling conflicts were a problem, and participants invited to one session appeared at later sessions. Since they did not attend the session originally assigned to them, IFES lost some control over when they showed up. Specifically, they may have attended a subsequent training session that was a "CEC" session rather than a "joint" session, thereby affecting our numbers. However, since the "CEC" sessions are, for all intents and purposes, becoming "joint" sessions, these numbers should, if possible, be factored into the total number of persons trained. In this case, there would be no difficulty meeting the pre-established targets. In fact, they would be greatly exceeded.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Khachmaz Town [and meetings in Guba]

Upon arrival in Guba on 15 September, the monitoring team met with ConEC Chairperson Qadir Abdullayev for a 'meet and greet,' to discuss the PEC training program (ConEC #52). Mr. Abdullayev was provided with an overview of the substance of the training sessions. He had been contacted by the CEC, was aware that training was planned for his constituency in the coming week, and offered all necessary support. He agreed that a central training venue would be secured and that participants from surrounding villages would be brought in to this central venue.

Guba ConEC Contacts

Qadir Abdullayev, Chairperson. 5-19-90. 320-39-06

The team then met with several representatives of the Executive Authority, including its head Mehman Ibrahimov. Mr. Ibrahimov was grateful for being briefed on the training program and also offered all necessary support. He was quick to point out that the ExCom has only an organizational, technical, and logistical role to play in elections.

Guba ExCom Contacts

Eynulla, Chief of the Territorial Management Department. 169-5-30-85. 388-67-57
Mehman Ibrahimov, Head of Executive Authority. 218-22-27 (mobile)

The monitoring team then traveled to Khachmaz Town (Constituency # 55) to observe a training session. The session was conducted by Jeyhun Karamov and Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, one of the star training teams. Whether in terms of substance, presentation, or handling of the audience, their performance was outstanding. Jeyhun and Bakhtiyar had good chemistry and work well as a team. They covered all priority points identified by IFES to be included in every presentation. During the course of the presentation, it became clear that PEC members were totally unaware of "De-Registration Cards." There was also a lot of discussion about what constituted a valid vote. The concept that a properly marked ballot paper in determinate form found without a stamped envelope was not a valid vote was a difficult one for the audience to accept. The total number of participants was 16, of which seven were women. Given the size of the group, the time available, and the room set up, the team was able to divide the audience into two working groups and to conduct supervised counting simulations. This approach worked well. The audience was very active. The length of the session was 2.5 hours. Participants were outspoken in their praise, with one chairman repeating that the training was 'excellent.' The team also received high marks from the ConEC chairperson. The monitoring team gave them an overall rating of 5, the highest possible score.

While in Kachmaz, the team also met with the Deputy Head of the ExCom Akit Mardanov as well as Abdulfaz Husseinov, the ExCom Head. They advised the team that the ExCom was providing organizational, technical, and logistical support to the ExCom. They also updated the team on the delivery of election materials, e.g. the new secrecy booths have arrived. They inquired about the level of support the training and monitoring teams were receiving from the ConEC. This ExCom supports constituencies # 55 and # 56.

Khachmaz ExCom Contacts

Abulfaz Husseinov, Head of ExCom in Khachmaz. (172) 3-53-00, 3-13-58,
220-65-73 (mobile).
Akit Mardanov, Deputy Head of ExCom in Khachmaz

The monitoring team also met with the ConEC chairperson, Bahram Omazov. He was very helpful to the training and monitoring teams, although not particularly engaged in the training itself (relative to Shamahi for example).

The monitoring team returned to Khachmaz on 18 September ahead of an anticipated visit by USAID representatives Kelley Strickland and Yusif Valiyev. They attended a training session attended by 28 people of which three were women. The training went well and after approximately an hour, they left, seemingly satisfied with the results. The monitoring team noted that Jeyhun and Bakhtiyar, were a bit nervous given the presence of USAID representatives. While they still did a great job, this did affect their performance somewhat and they left out some information that they did cover in previous sessions. The monitoring team advised them of these omissions, particularly the color of the seals for the mobile ballot box and the need to check that the ballot box has not been tampered with (and announce the numbers of the seals and make an act) prior to opening it. For this particular session, the monitoring team gave a rating of 4 out of 5.

Near the end of this session, more participants began to arrive (apparently in response to mobile phone calls made by other participants in the room). In the midst of the evaluation, one participant stood up and commented on what a great job the team did, but complained that opposition PEC members were not invited. Other participants said that they were opposition members. It appeared that some PEC chairmen informed the opposition of the opportunity for training while others did not. This turned into a bit of an argument between PEC members representing YAP and those representing the opposition. The team handled this well and was able to calm the audience, although the bigger issue is still hanging out there.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Shamahi

The team was in Shamakhi (Constituency # 85) on 15 September to observe a training session. The session was conducted by Firdovsi Javadov and Ilham Yusifov. The training was conducted in a village. There were 31 participants all of them men. The training venue was small and without electricity. There were chickens roaming around on the floor of the room and refugees closed off in a side room (since there was only one entrance to the building, they were closed off for the duration of the training session). The trainees had a relatively low level of knowledge and there was some partisan bickering. As an audience, they were a bit unruly with several participants shouting out comments or questions all at the same time. Nonetheless, the training team adapted to the venue, was quick to quell any political debate, and otherwise effectively 'manage' the audience.

There was a lot of discussion pertaining to the protocol, especially the issue of the "missing box" under Line 1. There were also lots of questions about the difference between "issued" and "voted" De-Registration Cards.

The monitoring team did offer some comments to the training team concerning the organization and substance of their presentation. In particular, they needed to spend more time on what constitutes a ballot in determine form and a valid vote. There was also some 'back and forth' with respect to the flow of the presentation. The training team was aware of this problem and agreed with the monitoring team's advice to concentrate on the organization of their presentation. They also needed to more clearly explain how to assemble and seal the stationary ballot box (as they provided few verbal cues during the process of the

demonstration). Despite these shortcomings in the presentation, the monitoring team found that Firdovsi and Ilham worked well together and that they showed marked improvement from the TOT. The monitoring team gave Firdovsi and Ilham an overall rating of 3 out of 5.

The ConEC Chairman in this constituency was particularly engaged. He worked with the training team to develop a detailed schedule (including the names of participants) for the entire week. He attended all training sessions and provided transportation for the training team. He also used the opportunity of the training sessions (at the end) to make important announcements to his PECs. The Chairman was quick to praise the training, along with the participants, who requested that such sessions become a matter of routine election preparation.

ConEC Contacts

Vahid Khanaliyer, Chairman, (174) 5-53-99

While there, the monitoring team met with Nasimi Abdullayev, the 1st deputy of the Shamakhi ExCom (Constituency # 85). He was aware of the joint training and offered all necessary assistance both to the training and the monitoring teams. He also assured the monitoring team that the only role performed by the ExCom relative to elections was the provision of organization, technical, and logistical support. Interestingly, as with all the ExCom representatives, he did have a copy of the draft protocol on his desk. It was completed incorrectly (confusion over Line 1).

Monitoring of PEC Training in Zagatala-Balakan

The monitoring team traveled to Zagatala-Balakan (Constituency #111) on the 17th of September to observe training carried out by Vugar Huseynov and Rasim Gurbanov. Vugar and Rasim have a very high energy presentation and worked well as a team. Although Rasim emerged as the clear leader, he did not entirely dominate the presentation (an initial concern). The presentation was very well organized. The pace was quite fast and there was a lot of 'tag teaming.' At some points, one trainer would emphasize a statement made by the other. CB had questions about whether this was distracting and whether the pace was too fast. SM indicated that, actually, it was quite easy to follow and that the pace contributed to the energy level maintained throughout the presentation.

The monitoring team did offer some advice to the training team. First, they needed to emphasize that if the tabs on the stationary ballot box are not properly locked, the lid will not be secured. They also needed to remind the audience that the seals for the stationary ballot box will be yellow. They also forgot to instruct the participants to check that the ballot box had not been tampered with prior to opening and to announce the numbers on the seals and make an act. Since they asked people not to fill out the sample protocols (so that they could be recycled) and since they were not using the ballot counting simulation, it was suggested that they use the flip chart to create a visual aid to facilitate the discussion of how to complete each line of the protocol. Despite these areas needing improvement, the training team received an overall rating of 4 out of 5 from the monitoring team.

The audience was very pleased with the training. Some members asked for autographs at the end, having Rasim and Vugar sign their Election Day Guides. One participant noted that he had never experienced such a training in the past. The ConEC Chairman was quite complimentary. While the monitoring team was there, a ConEC Chairman came from a neighboring district to make sure that the team would come to his constituency to conduct training. Vugar agreed to help Rasim with the CEC trainings, and between these and the joint trainings, they were conducting four sessions per day. The sessions lasted for approximately 2.5 hours. At the session observed by the monitoring team, there were 18 participants, four of which were

women. There were also two OSCE-ODIHR long term observers who observed. They were impressed. They are based in Sheki and may attend other training sessions.

OSCE-ODIHR Contact Information in Sheki

Sarah Johnson

393 6915 (mobile)

While in Zagatala, the monitoring team met with the Deputy ExCom, Ramazan Mammadov. As per usual, he assured the team that the only role for the Executive Authority in elections was to provide organizational, technical, and logistical support. Unlike other ExComs, Mr. Mammadov did request a substantive overview of the training sessions. The monitoring team then reviewed the '15 Priority Issues' document with him as well as the main chapters of the Election Day Guide. As with the other ExComs, he had a copy of the sample protocol on his desk.

ExCom Contacts

Ramazan Mammadov, 1st Deputy of the Zagatala Executive Authority

(174) 5-55-66, 321-33-85 (mobile)

The monitoring team also met with the ConEC Chairman (ConEC # 111), Elkhan Veliyev. He was very helpful and offered all necessary assistance.

ConEC Contacts

Elkhan Veliyev

(174) 5-53-99, 397-94-29 (mobile)

Other Comments and General Issues

In general, the audiences seemed to be highly politicized. The teams did a very good job of keeping this under control.

In most cases, sessions were under-attended. The possibility that not all PEC chairmen are inviting their opposition members looms large. May need to have IFES trainers monitor opposition attendance. Also suggest that the word be put out through the election commission hierarchy that both the PEC chairmen and both their secretaries be informed of the training opportunity to better ensure that the opposition is aware of this.

The distinction between joint IFES/CEC trainings and CEC trainings barely exists as IFES trainers have opted to assist their CEC partners. If these numbers are added to the attendance statistics, there will be no problems meeting the pre-established targets.

Most PEC members appeared unaware of the use of De-Registration Cards. This begs the question of whether or not any will be issued by the PECs if they are unaware of their very existence.

In some areas, the fact that properly marked ballots in determine form but not in stamped envelopes did not constitute a vote was difficult to grasp.

Many participants were asking that the CEC develop standardized forms for dealing with such issues as mobile voting, recording the numbers of the seals on the ballot boxes, documenting spoiled ballots or determinations on whether or not a vote is invalid, etc.

Upcoming Activities

In the coming week, this monitoring team will hold meetings and observe training in Salyan-Nefchala Sabirabad, and Lenkoran-Masalli.

WEEKLY REPORT
22 – 26 September 2003
Submitted by Catherine Barnes

Overview

Catherine Barnes and Shala Mamhudova traveled to Salyan-Nefchala, Sabinabad, and Masalli-Lenkoran between 22 and 25 September to meet with Constituency Election Commission (ConEC) chairpersons and Executive Authority (ExCom) representatives in anticipation of PEC training sessions in their areas of responsibility. These meetings went extremely well. Both the monitoring and training teams received considerable support from the ConECs and ExComs, which had been previously informed of the impending IFES/CEC activities. As in other regions, the ExComs were appreciative for being briefed and did not obstruct the trainings in any way. Again, the ExComs were quick to point out that their role in elections was only to provide organizational, logistical, and technical support. Their responses to these questions, however, seemed less scripted than those given by their counterparts in Guba, Khazmaz, Zagatala-Balaken, and Shamahi. And, unlike their colleagues in these areas, they did not [yet] have copies of the protocol. The ConECs were very helpful, having mobilized participants – both ruling party and opposition – at the appropriate levels, i.e. 24 – 36 persons, arranged for training venues, and, in some cases, provided transportation for the training team. The Chairman of ConEC No. 75 in Masalli-Lenkoran deserves special mention both for his professionalism and for his efforts.

The monitoring team observed training sessions and held consultations with training teams. For the most part, the training teams in these areas performed well, or extremely well. Overall ratings ranged from '3' to '4' with '5' being the highest possible score. Some advice was offered on presentation skills, substantive issues, and answering questions or dealing with difficult audiences. Sessions conducted by CEC trainers Elnur Atayev and Ekhin Nesirov went quite well, as did those by IFES trainer Mirali Huseynov and CEC trainer Sergey Disorenko. The monitoring team was particularly impressed by Sergey's discussion of the vote count and completion of the protocol. This has been the most clear presentation of this complex issue bar the one done by Rovzat Gasimov. And, it may be the best 'low tech' presentation of this subject. The monitoring team also observed several sessions conducted by the recently paired team of Jeyhun Karamov of IFES, and Samir Tagiyev of the CEC. This change was made to strengthen the team, as Samir Tagiyev has proven to be a less than adequate trainer. The first session observed was average. The audience was highly politicized and difficult to manage. Samir's portions of the presentation were missing some important details. And, Jeyhun's efforts to step in and assist on substance sometimes disrupted the flow of the presentation. While Jeyhun was speaking, Samir usually phased out and did not provide sufficient support. As a result, the monitoring team provided a lengthy consultation after this session. A subsequent session observed the next day was greatly improved, with the training team incorporating many of the comments made by the monitors, although Jeyhun took over some sections previously carried out by Samir. Ultimately, Jeyhun was responsible for approximately 75% of the presentation.

Most training sessions hovered around 2 hours or 2.5 hours. The size of the audiences ranged from 26 to 29 people. There were very few women participants. The opposition was clearly present. In Masalli-Lenkoran, the PEC Chairman inquired at the very beginning of the session whether or not there were opposition members present. When the response came back yes, he still advised any PEC chairmen who had not invited opposition members to be sure to do so. As such, it appears that they word has come down from the CEC that the opposition must be present. Unfortunately, the opposition tried to use the training session as a forum for making partisan statements and allegations. This situation was most evident in Masalli-Lenkoran. Some opposition members were clearly not familiar with the new UEC, instead quoting articles of the old law. On occasion, they argued with trainers on issues of fact. Too often, they did not appear to take the training as seriously as they should have nor did they seem to appreciate their role as

impartial PEC members. In one case, opposition members did not want to sit through the training session and instead requested to take away copies of the Election Day Guide, sample ballot papers and protocols, ballot box seals, and other items. This request was firmly denied by the trainers. There were also lots of complaints about the stationary ballot box, both with respect to the size of the slot and the absence of the flap over the slot (as seen on the demonstration model).

As noted in last week's report, the distinction between 'joint' IFES/CEC training sessions and CEC only sessions has effectively been lost as IFES trainers are assisting their CEC colleagues in the latter.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Salyan-Nefchala

Contact Information:

Yusif Alakbarov, Head of ExCom (responsible for Constituency Nos. 59 and 60)

201-01-63 (cell), (163) 5-23-55

Etibar Husseinov, 1st Deputy Head of the ExCom (responsible for Constituency Nos. 59 and 60)

330-41-37 (cell), (163) 5-24-48

Alakbar Husseynov, Chairman of ConEC No. 59

Mammadagha Badalov, Secretary of ConEC no. 59

(163) 5-23-81, 364-87-79

Abdufat Badalov, Chairman of ConEC No. 60

614-36-80 (cell)

Valeh Sadigov, Deputy Chairman of ConEC No. 60

(055) 784-70-35 (cell), (163) 5-24-02

Gulara Askarova, Director of Refugees Committee in Salyan and PEC Chairwoman

358 78 31 (cell)

While in Salyan-Nefchala on 22 September, the monitoring team met with both the 1st Deputy Head, Etibar Husseinov, and the Head, Yusif Alakbarov, of the Executive Authority. They were aware of the PEC training and offered assistance to the ConEC in arranging for a training venue as well as lodging for the training and monitoring teams. The monitoring team provided a briefing on the '15 Priority Points' being addressed during the training sessions. The team was told that the ExCom was providing organizational, logistical, and technical support to the two ConECs within its area of responsibility. The ExCom reportedly has no specific budget allocation for this purpose.

The monitoring team also met with four representatives of ConEC nos. 59 and 60. ConEC no. 60 was scheduled for 'joint' IFES/CEC training this week, while ConEC no. 59 was targeted for joint IFES/CEC training by another team next week. The Chairman of ConEC 59 was anxious and quite insistent that his PECs be trained as soon as possible. As a result, representatives of PECs from both constituencies participated in training sessions conducted this week. This change will affect next week's deployment of Training Team No. 8 (more on this below). The monitoring team met with various representatives of both ConECs during a group meeting. They noted that the joint training for PECs was considerably better than that conducted by the CEC for ConECs in Baku. In particular, they praised the interactive nature of the sessions, the patient and respectful approach of the trainers and their ability to keep politics out of group discussions, the complete and thorough presentation of issues, and the emphasis placed on completion of the protocol. The ConEC representatives indicated that, in future, they would like to have some TOT for their people so that they could conduct this type of training. They also noted that as many of 50% of the

PEC members were new and had no previous election experience. Opposition members did attend the training sessions.

The monitoring team observed a training session at 15:00 in the afternoon. There were 29 participants, of which three were women. One woman, Gulara Askarova, who is a refugee, is heading up a PEC and appears to be quite active in the community. She might be a useful resource in the future should IFES work in Salyan and her contact information is therefore included above. Elchin Nesirov and Elnur Atayev are an experienced training team and the session went very well. The monitoring team gave an overall rating of '4' out of '5' and offered just a few comments. The room was set up was a bit odd, with a very long and narrow horseshoe configuration of tables. Depending up where the trainers were positioned at any one time, they occasionally had their backs to 4 or more people. They were advised to always be 'in front' of the entire audience. Elchin and Elnur also skimmed over the 'Rights and Responsibilities' of observers and were encouraged to spend more time on this important issue. When holding visual aids, Elnur also tended to be in constant motion, so that it was hard to read them. Catherine suggested that he stand still for a few seconds when handling the visual aids so that the audience could adequately read and absorb the information contained therein. Elchin, in particular, did a very good job of handling difficult audience dynamics, as there were some unruly participants and partisan diatribe. The audience had a very positive response to the training, and some participants from the morning session decided to sit through the presentation again!

Monitoring of PEC Training in Sabirabad

Contact Information

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Shahin Shirinov, Chairman of ConEC No. 63
Elbrus Aghayev, Secretary of ConEC No. 63
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Shukur Imanov, Chairman of ConEC No. 64
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Sabir Jalilov, Secretary of ConEC No. 64

On 23 September, the monitoring team met with the Head of the ExCom Abdulfaz Aghayev. He was aware of the PEC training and had assisted in the provision of lodging for the training team. The monitoring team briefed him on the substance of the training sessions. He indicated that the ExCom was providing organizational, logistical, and technical support to three ConECs within its area of responsibility. Within the ExCom, two persons were assigned as liaisons on election issues. Additional support was reportedly being provided as needed by ExCom representatives in the villages.

The monitoring team then met with five representatives of ConEC nos 63 and 64, who were very forthcoming with information and election preparations within their constituencies. The Chairman of ConEC no. 63 indicated that in addition to the PEC training being conducted by IFES and the CEC, the ConEC planned to conduct follow-on training on the protocol the week before the election. They were extremely appreciative of the assistance being provided by IFES and the CEC.

That afternoon, the monitoring team sat in on a training session held by IFES trainer Mirali Huseynov and CEC trainer Sergey Sidorenko. There were 28 participants, of which one was a woman. The opposition

was clearly present and there were numerous partisan statements. They were effectively managed by the training team. Mirali and Sergey make a good team and gave a very good presentation. Sergey gave an extremely clear and straight forward presentation on vote counting and completion of the protocol, by far the best observed by the team to date with the exception of the higher tech presentation made by Rovzat Gasimov. In the future, should Rovzat be unavailable to explain the counting and protocol completion processes at TOT sessions, the monitoring team would recommend that Sergey be tapped to do this. The monitoring team gave the training team an overall rating of '4' out of '5' and had only minor comments. In particular, the team needs to remember to mention that the mobile ballot box seals will be yellow. They also need to spend more time covering the 'Roles and Responsibilities of Observers'. In addition, they must remember to advise PEC members that prior to opening the ballot boxes, they must ensure that the boxes have not been tampered with, announce the numbers on the seals, and prepare an act.

As noted early in this report, Mirali and Sergey were scheduled to go to Satyan next week to train PECs in ConEC no. 59. At the insistence of the Chairman of ConEC No. 59, this is already being done by Training Team No. 11. As a result, Mirali and Sergey will train another constituency, Hajigabul-Kurdimir No. 58, within the same region. Next week's monitoring team will need to touch base with the training team to reconfirm the training location.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Masalli-Lenkoran

Contact Information:

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In Masalli-Lenkoran, the monitoring team did not meet with the responsible Executive Authority as this had been done the previous week by IFES trainer Pam Flowers.

On 24 September, the monitoring team met with Gaghayi Mammadov, Chairman of ConEC No. 75. The team was quite impressed with his knowledge of the new Universal Electoral Code (UEC) and the protocol of results. The training team made similar comments and noted the efficiency with which he arranged the training schedule and mobilized participants. Comparatively speaking, he really stood out with respect to competency and professionalism. The training team would recommend that IFES continue to engage Mr. Mammadov after the conclusion of the current training program. The Chairman mentioned that he had met with Kelly Strickland of USAID approximately two weeks earlier and specifically mentioned the need for an *Election Day Guide* for Presidential Elections and for training focused on the many innovations in the electoral process. He was very appreciative that USAID had 'followed through' on this request and on the assistance being provided by IFES and the CEC. He was very engaged in the training sessions, often sitting in on all or at least part of each session. He also provided useful clarifications on issues that would not be known by the training team, for example how military voting would be handled within the constituency.

At the start of each training session, Mr. Mammadov inquired as to whether or not there were opposition members present. There were. Even so, he advised the PEC Chairman in the room that if they had not been able to reach opposition members or had for whatever reason not invited them, that they should be informed of subsequent training sessions and instructed to attend. He also mentioned to the monitoring team that due to some scheduling conflicts, some PEC members who could not attend the session to which they were originally assigned, would be attending subsequent sessions. He also indicated that some participants had opted to attend more than one session.

The training team reported that the opposition members in this area were particularly unruly and seemed to be more interested in making politicized statements and hurling allegations than participating in training. This was also the monitoring team's impression based on the training sessions observed. Opposition members were clearly unaware of the provisions of the new UEC. They were focused on past improprieties rather than innovations intended to improve ballot security, the transparency of the election process, and the accountability of election officials. They were also fixated on issues related to the campaign period rather than Election Day, which was the focus of the training. While the training team and even the ConEC Chairman attempted to steer the discussion to the topic at hand, they were not always entirely successful. One opposition member complained bitterly that the ConEC Chairman was trying to suppress his freedom of speech. In another case, an opposition member did not want to attend the training session, but instead asked to be given copies of the *Election Day Guide*, sample ballots and protocols, and even ballot box seals! This request was refused by the training team.

The monitoring team sat in on a training session on 24 September, at which there were 28 participants, none of them women. The audience was very unruly and prone to partisan statements that tended to disrupt the flow of the presentation. Samir, the CEC trainer, did not adequately cover all issues assigned to him, i.e. either left out important details or was not clear, and seemed to be struggling over some parts of the presentation. There were problems with the explanation of the De-Registration Card, mobile voting, checking the ballot box seals prior to opening the boxes, and – in response to a question – how to handle a court order to add someone to the Voters' List on Election Day. Jeyhun tried to step in to assist which was necessary from a substantive point of view, but this also affected the flow and organization of the presentation. The visual aids not handled particularly well and some key aids were missing, (left at a previous training venue but subsequently recovered). When not speaking, Samir was not adequately focusing on the session and failed to adequately support Jeyhun. Following the presentation, the monitoring team held a rather lengthy consultation with the training team to address some of these issues. The monitoring team gave the trainers a rating of '3' out of '5.'

The next day, the training team sat in on another session. There were 28 participants, two of which were women. This session went *considerably* better than the one the day before. The training team had addressed the recommendations made previously by the monitoring team. Issues of substance and presentation were handled well and Samir was more focused and attentive and did a better job of presenting. At the same time, the improved performance of the team could be partially attributed to the fact that the IFES trainer, Jeyhun, assumed greater responsibility, handling at least 75% of the presentation. The monitoring team gave the trainers a rating of '4' out of '5.'

Other Comments and General Issues

As noted throughout this report, opposition members were present at all training sessions observed in the region, although their presence was often disruptive. The seriousness with which they are approaching training, much less their commitment to impartial election administration, seems questionable. In future training sessions should address ethical standards and the code of conduct for election officials representing *both* the ruling party and the opposition.

Given that at least some of the PEC members cannot read the Latin script, the *Election Day Guide*, should be prepared and printed (in smaller quantities) in Cyrillic.

There are lots of complaints about the stationary ballot box, i.e. that the slot is too big and that there is no flap over the slot (as shown in the demonstration model). This may be made an issue on Election Day.

IFES trainers continue to assist CEC trainers in sessions originally designated as 'CEC' trainings. Since these have essentially become 'joint' sessions, statistics from these sessions are being built into the reporting process.

Again, PEC members seemed largely unaware of the use of De-Registration Cards. And, the issue of what constitutes an invalid vote and that multiple ballots or no ballots in an envelope were considered as one invalid vote were hard for participants to grasp.

Participants appear overly confident in their ability to handle the voting counting process and correctly complete the protocol.

Upcoming Activities

In the coming week, this monitoring team will hold meetings and monitor training in Baku, Gedabey, and Terter.

WEEKLY REPORT
29 September – 3 October 2003
Submitted by Catherine Barnes

Overview

Catherine Barnes and Shala Mamhudova observed PEC training in Baku and traveled to Ganja between 29 October and 3 October 2003.

The trainings observed in Baku involved somewhat more sophisticated audiences than those observed in the regions and tended to involve considerably more women participants (50%). On 30 September, the monitoring team observed Natavan Seyidova and Vusal Kerimov conduct training at Baku Asia University (Nasimi 1st, No. 21). On the same day, the monitoring team also attended a training session carried out by Rovzat Gasimov and Sarvat Maharramov in Khatai (No. 34). Sarvat was filling in for Dilara Efendiyeva, who had to leave Baku due to a death in the immediate family.

The training team then traveled to Ganja. While in Ganja, the team met with Constituency Election Commission (ConEC) representatives (No. 40) to discuss the training program. This meeting involved the Chairman and three opposition members as well as an observer representing the Election Monitoring Center (EMC), which has a sub-grant for election observation activities from IFES.

Training either went well or was quite outstanding. The combinations of Sarvat and Rovzat and Serder and Shahin were very, very good.

The training team in Gedebey encountered the first instance, as far as this monitoring team is aware, of a ConEC refusing to assist in preparations for PEC training – despite a phone call from the CEC – absent intervention from the Executive Authority.

The CEC issued a number of decisions during the past week(s) that affected the substance of the training presentation, specifically how PECs should handle voters inadvertently left off the Voters' List and some aspects of the counting process, for example stamping ballot papers determined to be valid on the back side. There were also some verbal clarifications provided on issues stemming from the previous week's training, i.e. whether or not there is a limit on the number of observers allowed to be present in the polling site on Election Day (according to Panahov, no, the only limit specified by the law applies to meetings conducted prior to Election Day).

A new line of argument appeared to emerge on the part of some opposition members attending training. This line of argument revolved around their belief that the UEC was not adopted in a 'legitimate' manner and therefore some legally mandated procedures are not acceptable and should be handled in a different, i.e. 'better,' way. In some cases, opposition members refused to accept some components of the training with which they did not agree.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Nasimi 1st

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On 30 September, the monitoring team observed Natavan Seyidova and Vusal Kerimov conduct training at Baku Asia University. The training team had an excellent room within which to conduct training, i.e. oval conference table accommodating approximately 20 people, a white board, and a podium. This was probably the best training venue observed by any monitoring team and it greatly facilitated the conduct of an interactive training session. There were 24 participants, of whom 12 were women. In general, the audience was fairly sophisticated and there were no problems with unruly participants. Both trainers had made very good eye-contact with the audience and were able to involve them throughout the course of the presentation. In response to comments by the previous day's monitoring team, Vusal carried a more equitable proportion of this training session, although he appeared to be completely exhausted (due to the additional CEC trainers that he is also obligated to conduct). He also did a very good job explaining the counting process and completion of the official protocol. This monitoring team did offer quite a few comments, in particular: Vusal was speaking much too quickly throughout the presentation. Nata did not always use the proper technical terminology. Some portions of the presentation were out of order. Some issues were either skipped entirely, e.g. the roles and responsibilities of PEC members with consultative voting rights, or skimmed over. In some cases, explanations were not as thorough as they needed to be, for example a ballot determined to be valid needs to be put back into its corresponding envelope. In general, it appeared that the quality of the training was suffering somewhat as a result of the exhaustion level of the stronger of the two trainers, i.e. Vusal.

Following the training session, the monitoring team held a protocol meeting with the ConEC Chairwoman, as the previous day's monitoring team had already conducted a meeting with her. She was quite complimentary of the training team and the training program. Given the number of recent CEC decisions and instructions that had impacted the substance of the training presentations, Catherine Barnes asked her how the PECs were being informed of the latest decisions and instructions of the CEC, she indicated that these are published in the official press. As the Chairperson of a ConEC, she is notified by the CEC that a decision or instruction will be appearing and she, in turn, notifies all her PECs. She felt that this was a timely and efficient way to keep everyone abreast of the latest developments.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Khatai

On 30 September, the monitoring team observed the recently paired training team of Rovzat Gasimov and Sarvat Maharramov in Khatai (no. 34). Sarvat, an IFES staff person and back-up trainer, stepped in when IFES trainer Dilara Efendiyeva had to leave Baku due to a death in her family. Despite being recently paired, Rovzat and Sarvat worked very well together. They conducted a well orchestrated training session, both in terms of substance and presentation. Clearly, as individuals, each is an extremely experienced trainer. During the session, both had a very pleasant demeanor, delivering training with a smile, while always maintaining control over what was, on occasion, an unruly, audience. Despite being new to the team, Sarvat was also to insert himself into the presentation, handling upwards of 50% of the presentation. The monitoring team had very few comments for the training team and gave them an overall rating of 5.

There were 30 participants, of whom 14 were women. The monitoring team was also interested to observe that several people were actually taking notes during the presentation. While this seems obvious, the monitoring team has been surprised at how few people do take notes at such sessions.

After the training session, Catherine Barnes did speak to Rovzat Gasimov about the need to communicate with every training team the substance of recently adopted CEC instructions that impact some aspects of the training, for example the preparation of an Act by each PEC concerning voters who were excluded [incorrectly] from the voters' list and further clarifications on the counting process, i.e. the decision to stamp the reverse side of all ballot papers determined to be valid. He indicated that the CEC was indeed communicating with the CEC representatives on each training team on a routine basis.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Ganja

Contact Information

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Aziz Aliyev, Secretary, representing the Communist Party
Nizami Hasanov, member representing the Liberal Party
Emin Eminov, member representing the Popular Front
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Sevinge Mammadova, domestic observer representing EMC

The monitoring team held a meeting with the Chairman of Ganja ConEC (No. 40) and several ConEC members to discuss the training session slated for 2 October 2003. The Chairman appeared friendly enough and was very complimentary of the training program, although the team sensed a bit of tension in the room. For the most part, the opposition members did not participate in the meeting. At one point, the Chairman invited them to say something. Only the Popular Front representative spoke up, saying how satisfied everyone was with the training. The Chairman did indicate that the ConEC would be doing follow-on training on the protocol in the week before the election. Otherwise, he and the others were not particularly forthcoming with details. He did confirm that all necessary arrangements had been made for the upcoming training session.

The monitoring team did not hold a meeting with the Executive Authority responsible for this and other ConECs in the area, as this had already been done by a previous monitoring team.

The monitoring team also contacted the training team, en route from Gedebey to obtain an estimate of their time of arrival in Ganja. The training team reported having major problems in Gedebey. According to the information that they provided, the ConEC Chairman (No. 103) had not made any arrangements for PEC training, i.e. securing a venue, inviting and mobilizing participants, and providing logistical support as required. As such, the training team spent their first day in Gedebey trying to deal with the absence of adequate preparations. The ConEC Chairman, who had never previously administered elections, refused to accept that he was responsible for inviting PEC members and making necessary arrangements for the training sessions. He insisted that the training team do this. Failure to adequately resolve the issue led to a phone call being placed by the CEC trainer, Shahin Asadli, to the CEC. Despite this, the ConEC Chairman still refused to provide the necessary assistance. Ultimately, the CEC placed a call to the Executive Authority responsible for ConEC No. 103. The ConEC Chairman was subsequently called in for a one-on-one meeting with the Executive Authority (to which the IFES/CEC training team was not invited). Not surprisingly, after this meeting, the ConEC Chairman was considerably more cooperative. He and the Executive Authority, however, had decided to solve the problem by having all PECs trained at one massive session. The training team explained that this was not acceptable and that smaller sessions would have to be arranged for 24 – 36 participants in accordance with the original training plan. Since all the PEC Chairmen were coming in for a pre-arranged meeting with the ConEC, it was agreed that they would receive training at that time, while all other PEC members would be trained at subsequent sessions through 8 October 2003.

On 2 October, the monitoring team observed training by Sardar Huseynov and Shahin Asadli in Ganja. As it turned out, the organization of that session was not altogether adequate either. There were 13 participants in total, of which three were ConEC members (and one got the sense that they were pulled in at the last moment because of the low turn-out). There were eight women. Both Serder and Shahin did a very good job and interacted seamlessly. Serder exhibits excellent instincts as a trainer and is very comfortable in front

of an audience. During the presentation on line 11 of the protocol, the infamous line item for listing the number of ballots and envelopes not in determinate form, Serder came up with a brilliant example to help one PEC member who simply could not grasp the difference between an invalid vote and an envelope not in determinate form. Serder simplified this issue – more or less - as follows:

Imagine that you bought a box of chocolates. Upon opening each piece, you discover that only some of them are chocolates and the rest are other types of candy. Right now, we are not concerned with whether each piece is a chocolate [valid] or not [invalid], we are only concerned about the wrappers and whether or not they are the official wrappers from the candy factory [if yes, determine form, if no, not in determinate form], i.e. it's all about the wrappers.

Shahin did the best stationary ballot box demonstration and explanation observed thus far. Shahin spoke a bit too quickly during his parts of the presentation and was advised to slow down a bit. The monitoring team also provided some comments on the organization of the 'Roles and Responsibilities' and the 'Opening of the Polls' segments of the presentation, where there seems to be some overlap. In general, the training team did a great job and the monitoring team rated them highly on almost all points, receiving an overall rating of '5' by the monitoring team.

Despite the performance of the training team and the small size of the audience, one of the ConEC participants, representing the opposition, began to cause some problems during the discussion of the protocol, taking advantage of the confusion over line 11. The ConEC representative questioned the training team repeatedly on the same points and challenged their responses. The trainers answered in various ways, trying to respond to the questions in a manner satisfactory to the ConEC representative. When he continued to refuse their explanations, another ConEC representative, a mathematician, intervened and drew a diagram on the chalk board to provide further clarification (which luckily was quite accurate). This attempt also failed to satisfy his colleague who became more and more argumentative. At a certain point, it became clear to the monitoring team that this was not an issue of failure to comprehend, but rather one of wanting to disrupt the proceedings. Unfortunately, despite repeated and varying efforts by the trainers and one of the other ConEC representatives, this led to a half hour digression.

Other Comments and General Issues

Opposition members were present at all training sessions observed in Baku and in Ganja. In the case of Ganja, this presence proved to be disruptive. The monitoring team heard reports from some training teams as well as at least one other monitoring team that opposition members had begun to reject certain facts being presented in the training sessions because – as far as they were concerned – the Universal Electoral Code (UEC) had not been adopted in a 'legitimate' manner. As such, some opposition members argued about how they felt things should be done rather than what was required under current legislation. This position is quite inconsistent, given that the opposition has forwarded candidates and appointed election commission members under the provisions of the current law. The implications of this type of mindset for Election Day are worrisome, raising some questions about opposition PEC member's willingness to uphold the election law (something for which they have criticized the ruling party during past elections).

This monitoring team also heard rumors of instructions being offered by political parties to their appointees on PECs not to sign any documents, whether Voter's Lists, acts, or protocols. There were also continued reports of opposition members failing to report to the PECs to which they had been assigned for work or to participate in meetings. If these allegations are in fact true (the monitoring team was not in a position to determine this), it might suggest that while the opposition is not 'officially' boycotting this election, there are still some elements of a boycott in their approach to the election.

The CEC passed a number of instructions impacting the substance of the training presentations. While this information appears to have been communicated by the CEC to the CEC representative on each training team, the timing of such communications was less clear as some trainers were not aware of changes to the process. There also appeared to be some cases of trainers being given inconsistent advice from different CEC members or staffers in Baku. Sometimes this was based on the ultimate form they thought draft decisions or instructions would take, other times it appeared to stem from a difference of interpretation. This occurred in Nakhchivan, where the training team was under the impression that 10 observer limit applied to Election Day, despite the fact that the CEC Chairman confirmed that it only applied to the period prior to Election Day. In addition to the issue of the number of observers allowed to be present in the polling stations on Election Day, the procedure at the PEC level for dealing with voters who had inadvertently been left off the Voters' List and some aspects of the counting process were affected by late-breaking decisions. In cases where monitoring teams were able to catch inconsistencies or speculation, this was discussed with the training teams and they were firmly reminded not to communicate any information based on draft decisions or instructions or on opinions of individual members or staffers of the CEC.

On the issue of military voting and the need to issue De-Registration Cards as many military personnel were being released from active duty proximate to elections, a question was raised about how a ConEC should respond to a commanding officer who presents a list of subordinates who need to be issued a De-Registration Card. The trainers and even ConEC representatives were not immediately sure how to address this question as it is an exception to the routine voting process. The monitoring team was able to identify the answer by finding the appropriate article of the UEC (101.3), which states that only a person who has been given 'power of attorney' can request a De-Registration Card on behalf of another person.

There also seems to be some frustration on differing 'instructions' on whether or not to pre-stamp ballot papers. Trainers are discouraging this process during the joint trainings. It is not clear where the instructions to pre-stamp are coming from, e.g. CEC training sessions for ConECs or at 'CEC' training sessions.

There continued to be lots of complaints about the stationary ballot box, i.e. that the slot is too big and that there is no flap over the slot (as shown in the demonstration model). This may be made an issue on Election Day.

In some cases, IFES trainers continued to assist CEC trainers in sessions originally designated as 'CEC' trainings, thereby blurring any distinction between 'joint' training sessions and those designated as 'CEC' training sessions. In others, however, CEC trainers proceeded with 'CEC' training sessions on their own in response to either a verbal instruction or suggestion coming from the CEC that IFES trainers should not be involved in 'CEC' trainings.

Upcoming Activities

In the coming week, all of the monitoring teams will be preparing for the de-briefing of the core training team (24 trainers and one back-up trainer) slated for 9 October 2003 from 16:00 - 18:30 and focusing its efforts on processing the various monitoring, reporting, and evaluation forms and preparing the final project report.

brief story showed the training in progress, with a voiceover by the journalist echoing the information given by the monitoring team during the interview.

Monitoring team mentioned the training program was a joint IFES-CEC effort and explained the role of the monitoring teams and the number of trainers involved in the program. When asked about more local information about the program, the monitoring responded they had witnessed two excellent trainings in Qakh and Agsu earlier in the week and expected today's session to be equally good. The expected outcome of the program was defined as having PEC members in the 41 constituencies where the joint program was being conducted know the UEC and be able to do their jobs better than if they had not received the training.

Questions regarding deployment of observers in the area were deferred to ODIHR.

Questions about past IFES involvement in elections were referred to IFES Baku. In addition, the journalist was allowed to copy information about IFES from the letter dated 11 September 2003 addressed to "the appropriate authorities", which gave some detailed information about IFES Azerbaijan's current and past activities.

Upcoming Activities and Recommended Follow-Up

In the coming week, Beverly Hagerdon Thakur and Vusal Malikov will hold meetings and observe trainings in Baku, Hajigabul/Kurdamir, Imishli/Beylagan and Masalli/Lenkeran town. It will be the last full week of monitoring activities to be conducted in the regions.

Monitoring teams and trainers will ask ConEcs if any new instructions have been received from the CEC. IFES Baku staff is requested to do the same and to notify monitoring teams of any new developments while in the field.

Monitoring team will inform trainers of a mistake in the voter education pamphlets (step 4) before they disseminate them to the PEC members for distribution to voters in their precincts.

Attachments

Copies of PEC Training Monitoring Forms for Teams 6, 5, and 12.

Report on Trips to Region – Week Three 28 September–4 October 2003 Submitted by Beverly Hagerdon Thakur

Overview

After spending the first part of the week monitoring the training sessions of teams 1 and 2 and holding meetings with the respective ConEc chairpersons in constituencies 21 and 34 in Baku, monitoring team Beverly Hagerdon Thakur and Vusal Malikov traveled south with the intention of monitoring joint IFES-CEC PEC

Trainings to be held by teams 7, 8 and 11. Meetings were also planned with representatives from the ConEC and ExComm in Hajigabul, Astara and Imishli. However, last minute changes in the schedules of teams 7 and 11 and current developments in the election campaign prevented the team from fully implementing activities planned for the latter part of the week in Astara and Imishli.

The monitoring team advised trainers that many questions had been raised during the training sessions over the past two weeks to which there were no clear answers to date. A list has been compiled at the IFES Baku office for review with the CEC directly. Issues include the following points:

- Relation between party affiliation and how roles and responsibilities are assigned to PEC members. (Trainers can note that PEC chairperson will assign roles on election day and that all PEC members must act impartially!)
- Number of observers to be allowed in a single polling station on election day. (CEC will probably confirm article 40.13 also applies in this case and limits the number of observers to 10 at one time).
- Number of seals to be issued. (The CEC is being provided with 4 purple seals per stationary ballot box and 4 yellow seals for each mobile ballot box, but this is not to say the CEC has decided to issue the security seals to PECs in this configuration).
- Procedures for handling court orders. (IFES suspects the procedures will mimic those applying to de-registration cards, especially in regard to line 1b on the protocol).
- Pre-stamping ballots. (The instructions in the EDG should be carefully followed in this instance).
- Voter's cards vs. notifications.
- Ballots in boxes without envelopes need to be cancelled.
- Deadline for protocols. (IFES is interpreting this 24 hour deadline as beginning from the time the polling station is closed).
- Possibility for fraudulent use of de-registration cards as voting cards in cases where people have been deregistered due to reasons of ineligibility, and not simply absentness from their home precinct on election day.
- Handling of pre-stamped ballot papers that are not used during the mobile voting process. (IFES believes these should simply be put back in the pile of ballots and can be issued to regular voters).
- Procedure on how to handle a mistake when filling out the final protocol.
- Procedure when a polling station has two stationary ballot boxes.
- Question regarding whether the courts be working on October 15 in case a voter does not find his or her name on the voters list and needs to request a court order to allow them to vote.

Some issues are partly dealt with in the UEC and/or EDG. In these cases, the trainers are expected to provide partial answers based on the known information. **Otherwise, trainers are being instructed to defer any questions relating to these unclear issues to the ConEcs, who should be receiving clarifications from the CEC prior to election day that they can forward to the PECs within their area of responsibility.** The final instruction for voting day procedures was received by IFES on Monday, September 29, 2003 and was translated during the week. It is hoped that these instructions, perhaps along with later directives, will clarify many of the above outstanding issues.

The monitoring team noted the training teams are beginning to show signs of fatigue, and the quality of the trainings is being somewhat affected. One CEC trainer, looking exhausted on a Monday, informed the monitoring team that he had conducted four

(4) CEC trainings the previous day (Sunday). Other trainers are losing their voices, mainly due to having to shout to be heard above the large crowds attending the CEC trainings.

PEC training teams observed this week were given ratings ranging from 3 (good) to 5 (outstanding). Audience reactions have been very positive in all IFES-CEC training sessions monitored this week. Since a CEC training with 70-80 participants was monitored in Astara, it has been interesting to note the differences between the quality with the joint IFES-CEC trainings where training groups are kept to a reasonable 24-30 attendees per session.

Gender balance continued to follow previous patterns of turnout: the more highly populated the area, the more female participants were included. Overall attendance was strong, and in some cases is at risk for being too high as the trainings wind down and there is a temptation to load the final sessions with as many participants as possible. This seems due to several factors, including making up absentee participants from previous sessions as well as word of mouth recommendations from ConEc to ConEc regarding the quality of the IFES-CEC PEC trainings.

Monitoring team continued to disseminate voter education leaflets via the PECs attending the training sessions. Trainers were asked to instruct the PEC members to correct information contained under step 4 in the leaflet before disseminating to voters.

All ConEc and ExComm representatives interviewed were already well familiar with the IFES-CEC trainings taking place in their areas of responsibility, having met with the training team and, in some cases of the ConEcs, personally attending the training sessions. The monitoring team handed out copies of the Election Day Guide and list of 15 priority issues to be trained in order to inform the ConEc and ExComm about the training program and the particular importance of covering these topics during the PEC training program. Questions posed to the monitoring team this week from the ConEcs and ExComms focused on election day issues.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Baku (Nasami): September 29, 12:15 pm

Constituency 21. PEC members attended from the following precincts: 13, 15, 20, 25 and 29. Attendance: 20 (10 women). Venue: Large oval conference table in room at Baku University for Asian studies.

Team 2 Vusal Kerimov, and Natavan Seyidova (IFES) were well received by the ConEc and audience during their afternoon training session. However, the monitoring team noticed that misinformation was given several times during the course of the training. Therefore, a lengthy debriefing session was held immediately afterward.

This team was weaker than expected, mainly due to how the workload had been split between the trainers. In this regard, a monitoring team should have closely observed team 2 during the first week of the training program in order to correct this situation sooner. Natavan was conducting all of the training, except for the practical exercises, mobile ballot box voting and protocol. The training would have been more effective if the other topics had been split up more equitably between the trainers, especially since Vusal showed superior understanding of the training material throughout the course of the ToT session. Unfortunately, the team will only be able to benefit from the monitoring teams' suggestions during the final week and a half of the training program.

In the training team's defense, the monitoring team would like to mention this training team had not been paired together originally during the ToT seminar, but became a team at the completion of the ToT when it became apparent that one of the expected CEC trainers would not be participating in the program at all. It is this monitoring team's opinion that training team 2 would have been better prepared had they been teamed up during the ToT, as they would have had more opportunities to plan the sharing of responsibilities and review their preparation for the training sessions jointly.

The monitoring team gave the following detailed suggestions during the post-training debriefing session, in follow-up to the notes made on the monitoring form:

- Review the 15 priority issues before the next training session, as points 1, 6, 13 and 15 were missed or only partially covered.
- Use a flipchart or other visual aid when reviewing the protocol in order to clarify the mathematical equations, numbers being filled in for certain lines, etc.
- Make the training session more dynamic by standing during the presentation (lead trainer - Natavan) and paying more attention in order to fill in the gaps of information the lead trainer may inadvertently leave uncovered (off trainer – Vusal).
- Engage audience more with questions when introducing an important topic to be covered.
- Be careful when answering questions posed by audience that you do not simply make up an answer in order to provide a response. For example, Natavan gave information explaining why the ballot boxes are transparent. In her explanation, she stated that the transparent ballot boxes make the envelopes necessary because otherwise you can see the ballots. She also stated that voters will be able to appeal to the courts for a court order on election day if they do not find their names on the voter register, while in fact it is unclear whether courts will be working on election day or if election day appeals will be allowed at all. Vusal was not correcting these mistakes either.
- Divide the responsibilities more equally among the team, i.e. Vusal should take on more topics before the vote counting and reporting results session, so that there is more back and forth between the trainers making the seminar more dynamic.
- Trainers were advised there should be one spare seal for the mobile ballot box, whereas they had trained there would not be any spares available for this box.

The monitoring team was concerned that some misinformation was given during the opening, voting hours and closing of polling station segments. Some of this is due to unclear instructions in the UEC, EDG and subsequent CEC directives on the topics of pre-stamping ballots and 2 stationary box procedures. However, other topics that should have been clear were not covered properly, including the closing of the polling station and some areas of exceptions to the routine voting process, such as the deregistration card process. In fact, the ConEc chairwoman needed to intervene in the presentation on deregistration cards due to Natavan leaving so many holes and creating confusion and questions from the audience.

The team was asked to review these areas and stick more closely to the EDG without making up additional information to fill in the blanks.

It should also be mentioned that Vusal (CEC trainer) was training information from a draft CEC directive (communicated from Rovzat?), which was subsequently passed, regarding stamping the backs of valid ballots and stapling them to their corresponding envelopes during the counting process. Monitoring team cautioned Vusal to be careful in training instructions that had not been finalized and disseminated to the ConEcs in case there would be a change made to them before finalizing.

Again, PEC members are not happy with the width of the slot on the stationary ballot boxes. There was also a complaint about not having gum on the envelopes, which has been heard in previous training sessions throughout the country.

The next day's training schedule was forwarded to Catherine Barnes in order for her monitoring team to be able to view Team 2 on Tuesday, September 30. It will be interesting to compare monitoring notes to see if the training team was able to make improvements in the recommended areas before making their presentations on Tuesday.

Meeting with Baku (Nasami) ConEc

Monitoring team met with the ConEc 21 chairwoman at the close of the training session. Since the monitoring team conducted their debriefing with the trainers in the ConEc office, the chairwoman also added comments representing her viewpoints on some of the technical issues that were being discussed. The chairwoman was also in attendance throughout the training session, as was another ConEc member. The chairwoman seemed eager to show her knowledge of the election process and readiness to conduct the elections in her constituency in accordance with the UEC, EDG and training being given. She praised the training team for their excellent conduct of the training sessions thus far. It was mentioned the audience from the earlier session that day had been much more difficult, but the trainers had handled it in such a way as to satisfy the demands of the opposition party members. It seems the rest of the audience was also supportive of the trainers, making it difficult for unruly members to disturb the course of the training too much. This ConEc receives credit for providing the best training venue observed to date.

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Agajafar Charkazov, ConEc Secretary

Monitoring of PEC Training in Baku (Khatai): September 30, 10:00 am

Constituency 34 (Baku – Khatai). Precinct information not captured due to chaotic transition between training groups. Attendance was a bit high at 37 (17 women). ConEc Chairperson was present throughout the training, and was therefore not interested in a separate meeting with the monitoring team. The monitoring team introduced themselves and thanked him for his cooperation in setting up the training. Other ConEc members were also present during parts of the session. Venue was rated with a 2 (fair) due to poor seating arrangement (auditorium style) and thick layer of dust on the rickety chairs. The timing of the training sessions could be better coordinated, as the second group arrived for training at 11:30 am (only one and a half hours after the start of the first session), and waited nearly 90 minutes before the

first training group was finished. The training team took 2 hours and 45 minutes to complete the session.

Team 1, Rovzat Gasimov (CEC) and Sarvat Maharramov (IFES), worked together for the first time as a training team due to the absence of team 1 member Dilara Efendiyeva (death in the immediate family). They were given an overall rating of 5 (outstanding), as their performance was highly professional in front of a very attentive but active audience. The division of labor seemed sensible to the monitoring team, however Sarvat felt he could contribute more as Rovzat still shouldered most of the burden during his segments. The monitoring team feels confident the two trainers will work this out between them over the coming days as they begin to feel more comfortable working together.

One example of their effectiveness as a new training team occurred when Rovzat skipped some important information during the Opening of the Polling Station segment dealing with the counting of the received ballots and envelopes. Servet noticed this omission and covered it at the beginning of his Routine Voting Process segment, without the audience members being aware of the mistake. This was also one of the few training teams that covered all of the fifteen priority issues.

There remains a noticeable difference in training styles between the CEC and IFES trainers regarding the pre-stamping of the ballot papers. The CEC trainer cites the UEC stating it is up to the PEC and that stamping is actually considered as being integral to the process of officially "receiving" the ballot papers from the ConEc. In the meantime, the IFES trainer refers to the EDG and recommends that the PECs only pre-stamp enough to keep up with the flow of voters on election day. **Observers should be made aware of this issue and to expect a great deal of variation in practice among constituencies and precincts on election day due to these discrepancies between the UEC and the CEC-approved EDG.**

Newly disseminated CEC instructions are also beginning to play a role in the training sessions, as some of the information contained in these decisions affects the way certain topics are being trained. For instance, when discussing the non-existence of supplementary voters list for these elections, normally the de-registration card and court order topics are explained. However today, for the first time, the CEC trainer also mentioned the CEC made a decision (9.29.2003) that voters who do not find their names on the voters lists can appeal to the PEC 24 (TBD) hours in advance of polling day. A decision can be made in the voter's favor and attached to the voters list in order to allow that person the right to vote on election day. Such late-coming information will need to be communicated directly from the ConEc to their PECs, as the official training period is over in 8 days with two full weeks and thousands of PEC members already behind us. **This information came as a surprise not only to the monitoring team, but to the IFES training partner as well. It would be better if the CEC trainers could keep their IFES partners better informed in the future.**

The CEC trainer also mentioned the PECs could cross off the names of deceased persons from the voters lists, but not of the names of people who are working abroad. However, he did not go into any detail about what the correct procedure is for determining a voter has been officially acknowledged as deceased. For example, does this mean that a voter can come into the polling station on election day and insist the PEC member cross off the name of another voter whom they claim as being deceased? Hopefully, the partial information given during the training session will not lead the PEC members to believe they can proceed in any manner not in full accordance with the law.

Questions coming from the participants in this group included the following issues (answers given by trainers are shown in parentheses immediately following the question):

- Is having spare seals providing an opportunity for fraud? (No. the uniquely numbered tamper evident seals protect against this). If the ballot box is not assembled properly and needs to be re-done, is this a valid reason for the spare seals to be used? (Yes).
- Notifications: Who can distribute them? (It doesn't matter). Do voters need to bring them with them to the polling station on election day? (No. only identification).

It was noted by the monitoring team that the CEC trainer gave more strict recommendations in regard to treatment of observers who are interfering with the voting or counting process (i.e. calling the police immediately), while the IFES trainers have been a bit more observer-friendly. This has been the case observed in several other trainings as well.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Hajigabad: October 1 at 10:40 am.

Constituency 58. Attendance: 28 (No women – village). Venue: small village school room to be used as the polling station. Precincts: 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

The training team (#8 Sabirabad) of Sergey Sidorenko (CEC) and Mirali Huseynov (IFES), having finished their scheduled joint trainings in Saatli, Sabirabad and Salyan, added Hajigabal constituency to their list for the final week of training. The ConEc, ExComm and training participants were extremely appreciative they were given the opportunity to receive this information from the IFES-CEC joint training team.

Although the quality of the venue was only rated as fair, due to its small size and being packed with nearly 30 PEC members, it did not negatively impact the quality of the training itself, which was rated with an overall mark of 5 for outstanding. Team 8 has gelled into a superb training team, in spite of both trainers being a bit more introverted than the majority of the other trainers.

Team 8 gave a smooth presentation, handling topics in a logical order and giving detailed but digestible information on all the subjects. The team gave a good explanation of PECs with consultative voting rights and roles of the observers and media representatives. Mirali made good use of the visual aids on the routine voting process and referred to the voter education pamphlet as well. Sergey posed good questions to the audience, such as what to do when a name is not found on the voters list? This set up the increasingly complex discussion of de-registration cards, court orders and appeals to PECs to be put on the "additional" (not supplementary!) voters list. Although the training team could not offer information on a final deadline for the appeals to the PECs to add a name to the voter list, they emphasized that additions on election day were definitely not in the plans, as the decision will be attached to the voters list prior to election day.

Some points the monitoring team reminded the trainers about during the post-training debriefing session were as follows:

- Check visual aids from back of the room to ensure all participants can view them.
- Include information about the closing of the mobile voting process when the designated PEC members return to the polling station.
- The person assisting a voter must sign the voters lists next to the voters signature.
- Include the new information about voters on line at the announcement of the close of polls being allowed to vote.
- Emphasize more clearly the difference between the written application and oral application for mobile voting.
- Do not give the impression that pre-stamping of envelopes is an option. It is not allowed!
- Repeat information for lines 12, 13 and 14 at the end of the protocol session, even if it was mentioned before the line 11 explanation in this case.

The training team was particularly good with explaining the differences between the various types of ballots, votes, etc. The closing was also more complete than other trainers viewed.

One issue that still remains unclear is what to do with ballot papers not in determinate form and envelopes not in determinate form that are found inside the ballot boxes. Are they torn up? Cancelled? Put into a separate envelope marked as “envelopes found not in determinate form” or “ballots found not in determinate form”? Should an act be written about such cases? What is the clarification from the CEC regarding this issue??? How will this be communicated to PECs before election day? Are observers aware of the lack of clarity on this procedure?

Meeting with Hajigabad ConEc:

Monitoring team met with the Hajigabad ConEc chairperson briefly at 9:30 am as the planned training session was to take place in a remote village and we needed to leave immediately in order not to arrive late. We thanked him for his assistance and proceeded to the training venue.

Later in the afternoon while waiting for the Head of the ExComm to be available for a meeting, the monitoring team had another opportunity to speak with the ConEc Chairperson. Other issues discussed included plans for mobile voting, the ConEc's role in summarizing results from PECs within their area of responsibility, notifications, and contingency plans for mistakes made to official protocols at the PEC level.

Some interesting points that should be communicated to the rest of IFES staff and possibly ODIHR observers if they are unaware include:

- **There is one local employee per ConEc who has been trained by the Election Information Center to input the data from the PECs into the ConEc summary protocol on election night. How do observers plan to monitor this process?**
- **The CEC is providing every ConEc with two official protocols per PEC. The second or spare protocol will be kept at the ConEc in case it is needed due to mistakes on the original official protocol at the PEC level. Where is the written instruction on this from the CEC?**
- **It doesn't seem that ConEcs are particularly concerned with preparations to conduct mobile voting in their area of responsibility.**

None of the ConEcs spoken to have mentioned their plans for carrying out this important task. Are they required to forward copies of their mobile voting list to the CEC prior to election day? Is there a way for IFES or ODIHR to follow up on this point to ensure that people needing the mobile ballot box are being given the opportunity to vote?

Appropriate follow-up action to these issues should be discussed during the Monday, October 6 debriefing meeting.

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Meeting with Hajigabad ExComm:

Later in the afternoon, the monitoring team was finally able to meet with the head of the ExComm for the Hajigabad area. The ConEc Chairperson was attending the meeting as well, and several times interrupted the ExComm in order to clarify various points.

The ExComm was interested in speaking about the problem of attracting young people to participate in the voting process. The ExComm was active earlier in the year to register 18 year olds and provided them with 1,200 Azerbaijan ID cards in order for them to have the required documentation on polling day.

The ExComm also mentioned they were expecting new military servicemen to arrive on October 11, and so therefore would not be forming the two military PECs until then. **He also mentioned that registered candidates were not allowed to enter military polling stations on election day. (Is this correct?)**

Besides being involved with organizational and logistical matters, the ExComm mentioned they had also been responsible for the formation of the PECs themselves. Neither the ConEc nor the ExComm were certain whether October 15 would be a regular working day, but of course they would both be on duty personally throughout the election day and evening events.

*Fizudin Babayev: Head of ExComm
Telephone: 5-40-00 (receptionist)
Sahib (see Vusal?), Deputy Chairperson
Telephone: 365 37 66*

Unofficial Monitoring of PEC Training (CEC) in Astara: October 2

On Wednesday, October 1, the monitoring team was informed the PEC training in Astara to be held the following day would be a CEC training and not a joint IFES-CEC training. After consultation with Catherine Barnes, the monitoring team decided to observe the training in order to make some comparisons with the IFES-CEC joint training program. Therefore, an IFES Monitoring Form was not filled out for training team 7 (Masalli), Samir Tagiyev (CEC) and Jeyhun (IFES). However, the following notes were made during the course of the training session.

An enormous group of approximately 70-80 PEC members (7 women) were in attendance at this CEC training session held in a large venue upstairs at the Astara library. The ConEc Chairperson was in attendance, and it seemed another ConEc member was in the audience as he stood several times to try to help the training team answer questions and maintain some control over the large group.

Specific observations about ways in which such a large audience negatively impacted the delivery of the training information are as follow:

- The trainers conducted the stationary ballot box and mobile ballot box exercises together at the point in the training where the mobile ballot box practical exercise is held. This was due to the size of the group and the trainers trying to adjust their strategy to keep control over the group. (It seemed the CEC trainer started the stationary box exercise as a way to cut off further questions during a period where the audience was being particularly active!) It was not the monitoring team's opinion that their strategy worked, and in fact it is more confusing to train the two exercises together since the stationary box should be shown during the opening of the polling station session and not during the voting hours process (exceptions) session. In addition, people couldn't really see the sealing of the boxes very well from the back of the room.
- Another long interruption was made during the segment on spoiled ballot papers.
- Questions were raised by the audience during training sessions that were not appropriate, such as what to do with cancelled corners of unused ballot papers before the counting and protocol session had begun.
- People in the front of the room have their questions acknowledged while people seating in the middle and at the back of the room simply can't be seen by the trainers, nor can they hear the information being trained over the din of the discussion going on in the audience.
- Participants were walking in and out of the training session due to lack of control over such a large audience. This was especially dismaying during the critical protocol session.
- Visual aids were ineffective due to the size of the audience, and were skipped entirely in some sessions, i.e. protocol exercise. By the time Samir reached lines 8-14 on the protocol training, he gave up on providing numbers to fill in and just explained the theory behind each of the lines.
- The more confusing the topic, such as the definition of an invalid vote, the more discussion is engendered among the participants. This leads to an atmosphere in which the most important information being trained can not be heard by the audience.
- In such large audiences, there is a greater chance of having a large discrepancy in knowledge and former experience among the PEC members. It was obvious that some PEC members were new, as they were asking questions about unused ballot papers and thinking they would be in the ballot box and not still on the table where they were issued throughout the day. These types of trainees cannot get the kind of attention they need from the trainers in such a large group. In addition, there is a risk that other audience members will answer their questions, but with the wrong or outdated information. **This can be expected to lead to some inconsistencies between IFES-CEC trained PECs and CEC-trained PECs on election day. IFES should be certain to keep a distinction between PECs who**

received the IFES-CEC joint trainings and those who only received the lower quality CEC trainings.

- The trainers were forced to skip the closing information, as audience members left after they had finished training on the protocol.

It was amazing that the training team was able to hold the audience's attention for some periods of longer lengths of time during which they were able to communicate a great deal of information. However, it is highly recommended after this observation that training groups in the future are kept to 24 (4 PECs) at one time, with 30 being the absolute maximum allowed.

The training team plans are to continue with CEC trainings in Astara, Lerik, etc. through October 8.

Some items of concern that came to the attention of the monitoring team during this chaotic event include the following:

- **One of the audience members announced that PECs have been instructed to arrange for a group of "assistants" to stay at the polling station all day in order to "help" the voters who need assistance with filling out their ballot on election day. While the trainers responded this was not appropriate practice, observers should be instructed to be aware of this behavior occurring on election day. BHT observed similar practice in the Armenian elections earlier this year where government party loyalists "helped" voters complete their ballot whether they sought assistance or not. In most cases, these voters were elderly women. This is obviously the danger of the UEC not limiting the number of times one person can assist another voter.**
- **Again, there were questions raised about the conflicting instructions regarding pre-stamping ballot papers. PEC members were angry that the training information conflicted with the instructions given by the CEC via the ConEc. It should be noted here that an area of improvement for future PEC training programs is to coordinate the dissemination of information on such procedures more closely with the CEC. For instance, could an IFES staff member attend CEC trainings in the future where instructions are being disseminated to ConEcs for further communication to PEC members?**
- **The audience was very confused regarding the ways in which people can vote whose names are not found on the voters list, including the process involving de-registration cards, court orders and PEC official decisions that lead to "additions to the voters list". It was trained that by official PEC decision, a name can be added to the voters list if their name is not found on the list 24 hours in advance of election day. This "addition to the voters list" will be in the form of a table that is similar in design to the voters list itself and attached to the voters list for election day. This information was trained by the IFES trainer. The ConEc also tried to clarify this issue by stating the voter would have to prove 6 months residency. Observers should be aware this could create confusion in filling out lines 1a and 1b of the protocol.**

- Again, there was attention drawn to the fact that the slots on the ballot box are too wide. A member from the audience approached the monitoring team to ask whether or not the boxes used for training were the actual CEC ballot boxes to be used for election day. The monitoring team answered them in the affirmative. It should be suggested to the CEC that they order new lids for the ballot boxes before the next election with narrower slots and a cover that can be opened and closed for each vote. In addition, more durable "tabs" should be guaranteed, as some of the training ballot boxes have sustained damage to the tabs during the training sessions and would no longer be appropriate for use as a secure ballot box.

It should also be mentioned that the IFES trainer requested the monitoring team to intervene at one point in the training when they had lost control over the audience and the ConEc was not able to regain their attention either. Reluctantly, the monitoring team addressed the audience.

After a brief introduction and clarification that this observation on behalf of IFES was informal due to the session being a CEC training, the monitoring team confirmed the answer the ConEc had given regarding what to do with unused ballots that are brought back to the polling station at the conclusion of the mobile ballot process. BHT referred the PEC members to their EDGs for more details on the information they were receiving during the training session. She also stated that they had been chosen due to their sense of responsibility, and that they should be prepared to use their own common sense on election day in cases where there is no guidance provided in the UEC or EDG. They were also recommended to contact their ConEcs in cases where they were still unsure how to proceed. The monitoring team relinquished the floor to the trainers after quickly responding to a question on how Americans can vote if they live in Azerbaijan.

This was the only case of the monitoring team being asked to address the audience, except in one training where the training team asked the monitors to say a few words at the conclusion of the training seminar while the participants were filling out their evaluations (Gakh). This can be added to the list of negative results when training a group that is too large, as this training team would certainly not have panicked in the face of such a question from a reasonably sized audience.

Informal Meeting with Astara ConEc:

The monitoring team introduced themselves to the Astara ConEc Chairperson at the close of the training session and apologized for speaking to the audience without having had the opportunity to meet with him prior to the start of the training session. The Chairperson did not seem to mind the breach in protocol and invited the monitoring team and training team for lunch, which was held in a jovial atmosphere.

Name and contact information was not captured, as an official meeting was not held.

Cancellation of Monitoring PEC Training and Meetings in Imishli: October 3

Monitoring of this training session and holding of meetings with the ExComm and ConEc on Friday, October 3, were cancelled due to the following:

1. The trainers in Imishli were only conducting one CEC training session that day and no IFES-CEC joint trainings, even though two joint sessions had been originally scheduled. Since the monitoring team had just witnessed

a CEC training session in Astara that day for comparison, there was no need to visit another CEC training in Imishli. These trainers will conduct joint IFES-CEC trainings in Beylagan next week in case it is deemed necessary to monitor those sessions.

2. Monitoring teams received instructions from IFES Baku on Thursday evening to report back to Baku as soon as possible, due to the withdrawal of Heydar Aliev's candidacy.

Upcoming Activities and Recommended Follow-Up:

In the coming week, Beverly Hagerdon Thakur and Vusal Malikov will prepare for the trainers debriefing seminar, which is to take place on Thursday, October 9. See draft agenda attached.

Technical points marked for follow-up in the above-highlighted text will also be discussed and acted upon as appropriate.

Attachments

- Copies of PEC Training Monitoring Forms for Teams 1, 2, and 8. No monitoring forms were completed from this monitoring team for training teams 7 (Masalli) or 11 (Imishli), although team 7 was observed during a CEC training. Team 11 was not observed at all by this monitoring team, however they will be conducting joint IFES-CEC training sessions in Beylagan next week in case it is necessary to try to cover their final week of training.
- Draft agenda for Trainers Debriefing Seminar, October 9.

**Report on Trips to Region – Week One
14-20 September 2003
Submitted by Beverly Hagerdon Thakur**

Overview

Monitoring team Beverly Hagerdon Thakur and Ramil Afandizade traveled to Tovuz, Ganja and Barda to monitor joint IFES-CEC PEC Trainings. Meetings were also held in all three constituencies with representatives from the corresponding Constituency Election Commissions (ConEC) and Executive Committees (ExComm).

All PEC trainers were rated with the highest mark, 5 out of 5 for outstanding overall performance. Trainers were informed by the monitoring team about two mistakes in the EDG (change CEC to PEC stamp in regard to the stamp that is on a ballot in determinate form; change line 9 to line 11 on protocol instructions - see top of page 25 English version). Trainings were running just a bit over the two-hour mark. All trainers were informed they were doing an excellent job and no specific remarks were made in most cases on how to improve their performances. **It is recommended that the next monitoring team to visit these districts review some of the points from the training sessions below to ensure they are aware of these issues.**

In general, all representatives from the ConEc and ExComms were already familiar with the IFES-CEC trainings taking place in their areas of responsibility. They were not particularly interested in receiving more detailed information about the training program, nor did they have many questions for the monitoring team, with the exception of the Ganja ExComm representative who was interested in learning more about the voter registration system in the United States. **ExComms, while claiming to only be offering organizational and logistical support to the ConEcs, have been in charge of conducting voter registration this year and two out of three admitted to having appointed ExComm representatives to each of the PECs in their area of responsibility.**

No ConEcs had a copy of a ConEc telephone list, or draft counting/protocol instructions from the CEC, to give to the monitoring team when requested. One ConEc chairperson suggested the telephone list could be found on the CEC website. In general, ConEcs network with other ConEcs in their zonal area.

IFES trainers were assisting CEC trainers in additional CEC trainings in many cases. It was not ascertained to what exact extent this was being done.

ConEcs are also conducting seminars for their PECs, although this exchange of information was defined as more theoretical and general. It is the practical aspects of the IFES-CEC trainings, with the opportunity to go into more detailed information, which seems to be most valued by the ConEc representatives.

The ConEc representatives were in communication with the trainers on a regular basis, were actively assisting them in their organizational arrangements for the venue and participants, and were highly complimentary about their training skills and technical knowledge.

Gender balance among attendees is directly linked to the population of the constituency where the training is being conducted. In larger cities, such as Ganja, the gender balance was 50/50, and in some cases the scale was tipped toward the

women being the majority of attendees. In a smaller town, such as Barda, there were a smaller minority of women in attendance (4 out of 21), while in villages (Tovuz constituency), there was one token female who was visibly uncomfortable taking an active role in the training process. For example, she did not take a prominent place at the table for the counting exercise even though it was offered to her, taking a back seat instead. She also refused the trainers' attempts to answer a question or participate in a practical exercise.

There was a great deal of interest from the PEC members about the mobile voting process. When asked, ConEcs did not seem to feel there would be many people who would need to sign up to vote with the mobile ballot box. **This might be an area to spend more time on in future meetings between monitoring teams and ConEcs to make them feel more comfortable with the process so that they do not simply put it aside because it is new or seems to be too complicated to deal with.**

An issue that was difficult for some of the trainees to grasp had to do with the fact that three valid ballots found inside a stamped envelope in determinate form were counted as one invalid vote, but three invalid ballot papers.

Low attendance and possible lack of communication to the opposition PEC members is another major concern.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Tovuz: September 16, 10:30 am

Constituency 105. PEC members attended from the following precincts: 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36. Attendance: 14 (1 woman).

The venue was located in an upstairs room at the ExComm building in the village, decorated with the ubiquitous Heydar Alijev photos, publications and calendars.

The turnout was weak, showing poor organization on the part of the ConEc. However, the trainers reported that the training the previous day had included the maximum 24 trainees, including 4 women.

Vusal was the first trainer observed at the Alacol village training session. It was feared that his dominant presence would overpower his partner Anar, but Anar was able to hold his own and handled the protocol session well. The team was very effective at asking questions of the audience on topics where they knew they would elicit the wrong answers in order to reply with the correct answers and explain why. This kept the audience highly engaged throughout the process. The team was also effective at making all the information presented directly relevant to the activities of a PEC on election day.

The counting of ballots and filling out the protocol simulation was conducted in two groups, and ended when one of the groups had completed the exercise successfully. The counting exercise was a bit frantic, with all of the participants opening envelopes at once. It is hoped this process will be conducted in a more orderly manner on election day!

Many participants seemed to believe they could pre-stamp all the ballots and cut off the left hand corners in order to "prepare" them for election day. The trainers told them this was not the correct procedure, but they seemed unconvinced. Some attendees had received briefings from ConEcs prior to this training. However, when asking ConEcs about this issue at meetings during the week, the monitoring team

was told that this was not an instruction coming from them and that PEC members were being lazy. No suggestions were given about how to prevent such laziness from occurring when the ballots are delivered to the PECs prior to election day. **This is an obvious concern as the entire control factors of having to cut off the upper left hand corner and stamp the upper right hand corners of the ballots will be eliminated if it is done prior to election day instead of upon handover to the voter on election day.** It may be worthwhile speaking with the CEC chairman about this issue directly to ensure that instructions are given from their side that preparing the ballots ahead of time is not acceptable.

Participants had trouble with filling out the survey due to their lack of familiarity with the Latin alphabet. **This is a concern for election day as some PEC members may have trouble filling out or checking the accuracy of the protocol.**

One participant asked for three copies of the EDG for absent trainees. **Quantity of EDGs may become an issue during the last week of training.** Steps should be taken now to ensure there are no shortages, such as asking the trainers to report if they give out more EDGs than there are trainees (attending or otherwise) at the joint IFES-CEC trainings, and more than the three EDGs that are allocated for the additional CEC trainings.

Meeting with Tovuz ConEC

Prior to the meeting, the monitoring team was waiting in the office of the PEC secretaries. **Mansurov Elsad Asger Oglu, the opposition PEC secretary, complained that certain people on the PECs have not resigned from their positions that are in conflict with their duties as PEC member (i.e. school director) and therefore should not be on the PEC.** He is from the People's Proletariat Party. The monitors recommended that he send a written complaint to the CEC, and he agreed to do so.

He also requested as many UECs as possible as soon as possible. BHT explained that unless the recipients were lawyers, they might be better off with copies of the election day guide. The secretary agreed and we promised to deliver 100 copies of the EDG, as well as some additional copies (50) of the UEC, with the monitoring team visiting the region next week (see below follow-up). **This creates a concern that IFES materials are not reaching the opposition, but are being retained by the ruling party members of the ConEcs.**

The ConEc chairperson was asked about the low turnout of the previous training session. The chairperson had already been advised of this by the trainers and explained that one entire PEC (6 members) did not attend due to the distance to the training venue and would be covered at a later training session. **This did not explain the other absences, and it is feared that those absent were opposition or "impartial" PEC members.**

The ConEc spent most of the meeting explaining that special rooms were being set aside for party campaign materials, including schools, shops and ExComm office buildings. All PECs have been established and political party campaigns begun. Computers have been provided at the ConEc level to facilitate reporting to the CEC on election day. Phones have been installed in all PEC locations so that information can be passed up to the ConEcs on election day.

This ConEc is running separate seminars on how to fill out the protocols closer to election day. BHT commended him for this good practice and said she would use it as an example in meetings with other ConEcs.

Not many mobile voters are expected, although voters are being informed about this process over radio broadcast, through personal contacts (relatives, PEC members), or by mail. This seemed to be somewhat vague and general information rather than a plan that was actually being implemented. **It is a potential concern that mobile voting will be shortchanged by the ConEcs and PECs.**

ConEc chairperson had also attended a CEC training session held in Ganja on the protocol. It seems that the CEC has definitely gotten the word out that the protocol must be the number one priority in terms of training topics.

*Contact Information:
Vilayet Hasanov (Nasanov?), ConEc Chairperson
Telephone: 5-00-23; 5-35-18*

Meeting with Tovuz ExComm

The ConEc chairperson made a few phone calls to try to find the Excomm Representative who was supposed to be meeting with us. He then left the room, stating that he needed to make a call from a different phone, and then showed up with the ExComm representative a few minutes later. The ConEc chairperson remained in his office where the meeting was conducted.

After a long explanation about the roots of democracy at the local government level in Azerbaijan, and praises about the UEC as a good basis for the conduct of democratic elections in Azerbaijan, the ExComm representative stated that their role in the elections was one purely of logistics, organization, transportation, renovation of polling stations, ensuring of telephone and electricity, equipment supply and neutral voter information (i.e. the date of the elections – such posters were seen in the secretaries' office). He has met with the IFES-CEC trainers and is familiar with the program. He also mentioned that **80% of all PEC members are new**, and that they represent the government, opposition and "impartial" factions. He was very knowledgeable about the payment for the PEC members (although when he realized he was appearing too knowledgeable he tried to defer the answer to the ConEc chairperson). They are paid 180,000 M for two months of work prior to the elections (it was unclear if this was per month or in total), and that this is in accordance with the new UEC. He also complained that young people show no initiative in joining the work of the PEC.

The monitors left the meetings with concerns about the close relationship of the ConEc and ExComm on election related matters, the fact that the opposition may not be getting equal access to the UEC and EDGs, and that ballots may be pre-prepared prior to election day.

*Contact Information:
Bahruzar Rustamov, Head of Public Policy Department
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Monitoring of PEC Training in Ganja: September 17, 9:00 am

Constituency 39 (Ganja Kapaz). PEC members attended from the following precincts: 20, 21, 22. Attendance: 16 (8 men, 8 women).

The venue was a large conference room outside the ConEc chairperson's office.

Shahin and Sardar gave a seamless performance of tag team training during this session. They made special mention of the role of observers and hit the crime point strongly (voting on behalf of others). The IFES trainer started the protocol session (points 1-7) while the CEC trainer finished the rest (8 – 15).

The ConEc chairperson intervened at the start of the protocol session to emphasize the deregistration card issues. He also gave a strong closing speech to stress the importance of their roles as PEC members.

International observers popped in for 5-10 minutes to observe the training. Subsequent monitoring teams may want to look them up to share notes on the current situation in the region.

The IFES trainer was planning to assist the CEC training in their additional training sessions in the afternoon.

One concern about the briefings some PECs are receiving from the ConEcs is that in one case, the PEC members came into their IFES-CEC training saying that they had already received their training and just needed to review the protocol. A policy needs to be set regarding these cases: do the IFES-CEC trainers force the participants to sit through material they are adamantly opposed to listening to, or do they acquiesce and give a partial training? In this case, according to Shahin, they only did a protocol training.

The trainers are informed that they will receive a visit from the US Ambassador to observe a PEC training in Ganja on **October 2**. They will rearrange their training schedule accordingly.

Meeting with Ganja ConEc

Seventy percent of PEC members in this constituency are women, with approximately fifty percent of all PEC members possessing prior elections experience. Chairperson complained that salaries are too low to attract young people to PEC positions.

The Ganja ConEc Chairperson is providing weekly seminars to PEC Chairpersons to ensure all information is clear, especially protocols. He is doing this on his own initiative, and not due to a CEC instruction.

ConEc has given instructions to PECs that they may pre-stamp 100 ballots, but not envelopes, but only if they have over 1000 voters in their polling station. He assured the monitoring team that pre-cutting the top left hand corners of the ballots is not an instruction coming from the ConEc.

Chairperson has met twice with Musavat and the National Independence Party, but there has not been any initiative from NGOs for information about the elections, observation process, etc. Only two citizens have applied to observe, with one receiving accreditation and the other currently in the appeals process. Chairperson expressed his suspicions that opposition observers are not serious, since they have

changed their party affiliation since the previous election period, and he asserted that they are only active in the elections process to make trouble!

ExComms are only supporting elections in technical matters such as photocopying and computers. They are not interfering in the process! Upon closer questioning, it was revealed that ExComms were indeed involved with updating the 2002 voters lists, since the PECs were not established during that period. Students also played an active role on their own initiative, although the local organizations controlled by the ExComms were in charge. They are still awaiting the final copy of their voters lists from the CEC in Baku (Election Information Center).

The Chairperson mentioned that court appeals would be accepted in case a voter does not find his or her name on the list. He also stated these names would be added to the voters list as a supplementary list!?? He also stated that notations can be made to the final voters lists in case someone passes away or moves. **This is a concern as any confusion regarding the number of voters in the precinct could affect how the protocol is completed.**

PECs, now that they are established, should be in charge of updating the voters list by the next deadline, which is March 12, 2004. (Article 46.12).

It also seemed that the ExComm are involved in funding PECs work directly.

*Contact Information:
Ibrahim Jafarov, ConEc Chairperson
Telephone: See Ramil*

Meeting with Ganja Kapaz ExComm

The monitoring team called on the ExComm representative that had been recommended by the ConEc chairperson. The visit was unannounced. She was a bit more open with information than other Excomm members interviewed this week.

One ExComm representative has been appointed per each of the 54 PECs in their area of responsibility. These representatives have been instructed to respond to the PEC's demands regarding transportation, technical difficulties, etc. It is in accordance with the law that the ExComm take on these responsibilities.

It should be noted that a door on the ExComm floor below had a sign on it saying it was the elections department.

*Contact Information:
Elmira Hasanova, Chief Referant of Area Administration Issues
Telephone: See Ramil*

Monitoring of PEC Training in Barda

Constituency 93. PEC members attending the first morning training session were from precincts 31, 32, 33 and 34 (15 total, including one woman). Monitoring took place at the second training session, which included PEC members from precincts 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and one person from PEC 33. There were 21 trainees total, including four women and about half a dozen young people. The venue was the second floor of the ConEc office building.

Rasid and Babek made good use of the flipchart on an easel, made a good reference to the polling station layout in the EDGs (as the visual aid is a bit difficult to see), and

used handouts on a desk as a talking points prompt. They also made sure the trainees were taking notes when necessary. They hit the 15 priority points better than the other teams observed this week. The team also broke up the protocol session into two distinct segments with the IFES trainer doing 1-7 and the CEC trainer 8-15.

Improvements could be made in clarification of the voters cards and the fact that they will not appear during this years elections. Also, the off trainer was not engaged, but instead was preparing for their next presentation. The trainers conducted a very short but creative voting process simulation, using deregistration card voting and wrong id voting examples. The audience gained experience from this simple exercise, for instance declaring that an older and diplomatic person needed to be posted at the door for checking identification and sending people home for the proper id if necessary.

Meeting with Barda ConEc

This constituency has both military voters and IDPs resident in the area. Both have their own PECs, and in the case of IDPs belong to a separate constituency (occupied area ConEc). The military PEC will be trained 5 days prior to the election day. 95 percent of all PEC members are new in this constituency, another reason the ConEc is grateful for such a high level training program from IFES.

ConEc noted that they have established all PECs and have themselves attended trainings at the CEC in Baku regarding novelties in the elections process. ConEc chairperson praised the IFES-CEC training program, particularly in regard to the visual aids, practical exercises with ballot boxes, provision of EDGs, use of ballot papers, counting exercises, and use of protocol samples. While ConEcs are instructed to conduct trainings at the zonal level, the information given out is much less than provided in the EDG and is only on the theoretical level.

It is the ConEc chairperson's opinion that his two secretaries (one from opposition, one impartial) have the potential to become trainers for future elections. ConEc plans to use own trainers for Municipal Elections in 2004 to conduct local level seminars. They would hope to be able to rely on IFES for similar materials as were provided this year, as well as training skills for the ConEc level trainers. The ConEc also hopes that IFES will continue working to improve the electoral code.

*Contact Information:
Mehdi Mehdizade, ConEc Chairperson
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Meeting with Barda ExComm

Meeting was conducted in ConEc chairperson's office, although unlike in Tovuz he left the room during the meeting with the ExComm representative.

Opening statement: Azerbaijan is trying to overcome the legacy of the centralized Soviet system in order to achieve democracy. When asked, the ExComm representative predicted 90-95% voter turnout in his area of operations.

He also insisted that the ExComm does not campaign on behalf of certain candidates, and that it wasn't the responsibility of the ExComm to ensure equal representation of all candidates' posters in town. He stated that Barda is a

stronghold of the pro-government party, and that he couldn't force people (shopkeepers, etc.) to hang opposition posters if they didn't want to. Opposition parties have complained about their lack of opportunities to hang posters.

The Excomm has only produced neutral voter information posters about the election date (public policy department) and provided technical support to the election commissions (area administration units). They do not control the PEC or ConEc, but rather that is the role of the CEC. The area administration units do select the PEC locations. Also, the local ExComm representatives at the village level liaise directly with the PECs.

*Contact Information:
Khasai Mehdiyev, Director of Public Policy
Telephone: 348 7179; (110) 539-93*

Upcoming Activities and Recommended Follow-Up

In the coming week, Beverly Hagerdon Thakur and Vusal Malikov will hold meetings and observe trainings in Gakh, Agsu and Quba.

Training teams will be asked to conduct a brief introduction exercise through which they will ascertain the name, PEC number and party affiliation of each attendee before commencing with the training seminar.

Monitors should remind training teams to be sure to incorporate the 15 priority issues in their training sessions. Consider giving 15 priority issues as a handout with the EDG.

Ensure trainers (especially from ToT group one) realize the mobile ballot seals will now be yellow and not black as they were told during their training in Baku.

One unanswered question was regarding the **PEC members with consultative rights** and whether they were allowed to give their comments to attach to the official protocol, i.e. complaints. Trainers clarified the issue in accordance to the first item on the list of 15 priority issues, but could not give a full answer due to the fact that this remains undefined in the law. BHT recommended to the CEC trainer that this issue be brought to the attention of the CEC upon his return to Baku this weekend. (Follow-up with Team 9).

Monitoring team will better ascertain exactly how many CEC training sessions are being conducted jointly by both the IFES and CEC trainers. Trainers will be reminded to keep track of the CEC trainings on a separate weekly reporting form so that numbers from both IFES-CEC and CEC trainings can be kept.

Monitors will also ask ConEcs if they have received the voters lists from the CEC yet and posted them.

It would be helpful to have Azeri language versions of the EDG and the 15 priority issues page to handout to ExComm representatives during meetings.

The monitoring team traveling to Tovuz region this week is requested to deliver 100 copies of the Election Day Guide and 50 copies of the Universal Electoral Code to the Secretary (Opposition Party) of the ConEc in Tovuz as per his request prior to the

official meeting with the ConEc chairperson in Tovuz on 16 September (see above notes).

Attachments

Originals of IFES PEC Training Monitoring Forms for Teams 4, 3 and 9.

Logistical Recommendations for future Monitoring Teams in Ganja

Accommodation: Hotel Luxe, on the right side of the highway coming in to Ganja town from Baku
See Ramil for Telephone Number

Restaurant: Kur-Xazar
Tel: 99422 55-95-21, 55-95-26
Ganja Sah. V. Xulufllu Kuc. 73

Report on Trips to Region – Week Two 21-27 September 2003 Submitted by Beverly Hagerdon Thakur

Overview

Monitoring team Beverly Hagerdon Thakur and Vusal Malikov traveled north to Gakh, Agsu and Guba to monitor joint IFES-CEC PEC Trainings held by teams 5, 6, and 12. Meetings were also held with representatives from the Constituency Election Commissions (ConEC) and Executive Committees (ExComm) in Gakh and Agsu. Authorities in Guba were met previously by another monitoring team.

PEC training teams were rated with either "4" or "5", indicating very good to outstanding performances. Trainers have honed their timing in order to try to fit into the 2-hour recommended limit, but team 6 (Sheki) has admitted they have not been able to consistently conduct trainings in under 2.5 hours. Monitoring teams conducted detailed debriefing sessions with all training teams in order to give them more detailed feedback about their performances, giving them hints on how to improve future trainings and reminding them to be sure to cover all 15 of the priority issues at some point during their PEC training seminars.

The monitoring team asked the trainers to capture information about the participants' party affiliations to ensure the opposition PEC members were being invited and were attending. Trainers were told they could do this either through the introduction process, the survey evaluation process, or by maintaining an attendance record.

Information should be submitted with the trainers' weekly reports. Trainers were also asked to report on the additional CEC trainings that were being carried out, and to indicate if both the IFES and CEC trainer were participating in these sessions. This information should also be captured in the submitted weekly reports.

ConEcs were asked if they have received the final voters lists from the CEC yet and they indicated they have. ConEcs were also aware they needed to work harder to ensure 100% attendance by all PEC members at the joint IFES-CEC training seminars, especially in respect to opposition party members.

All ConEc and ExComm representatives were already well familiar with the IFES-CEC trainings taking place in their areas of responsibility, having met with the training team and, in some cases of the ConEcs, personally attending the training sessions. The monitoring team handed out copies of the Election Day Guide and list of 15 priority issues to be trained in order to inform the ConEc and ExComm about the training program and the particular importance of covering these topics during the PEC training program. Questions posed to the monitoring team this week from the ConEcs and ExCommms focused on problems with the behavior of opposition parties in these regions.

Gender balance was fairly good, with between 6 and 9 women participants attending out of 15-32 attendees. Overall attendance was low at the training session monitored in Quba (15), although the arriving participants for the afternoon session seemed to be making up for some of the morning session absenteeism.

Meeting with Gakh ConEC

The monitoring team met with Abdulkarim Alijev, chairman of the ConEC (112) at 9:30 am. He announced, without prompting, that both pro-government and opposition party members were being invited to attend the PEC trainings and that it was an obligation for them to attend.

Mr. Alijev reported that he had received the voter lists and new notification cards (not voter cards) to send to the voters to inform them where they should vote on election day. Information on the cards includes the number of the ConEc, the address of the voter, the PEC number, and an invitation to vote between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm on 15 October.

The chairman mentioned that the final voter lists would not be amended, but that voters who do not find their names on the register could get a court order and vote with this on election day. It did not seem to clear to him how the procedure would be handled, i.e. attaching the court order to the voters list vs. "adding" the name to the voters list (i.e. creating a supplementary or temporary list). When the monitoring team pressed him to provide a clarification of his thoughts on the subject, the chairman became rattled. The monitoring team also raised the issue of the de-registration card being used for two purposes, both as a de-registration card and a voting card. The chairman was unable to think critically and simply read some passages from the UEC that did not really address the issues. He also mentioned that the reason for the de-registration would be stated in an attached letter (ineligibility or absent from precinct), but the fact remains that the de-registration card itself does not seem to indicate this information and could be easily detached from the letters and misused.

The CEC should pass some clarifications/instructions prior to election day on procedural issues relating to the handling of court orders brought in on election day, i.e. treating them in the same manner as de-registration cards.

The CEC may also want to consider clarifying the difference between de-registration cards to be used as voting cards on election day versus de-registration cards that are used solely for the purpose of declaring a voter ineligible to vote. It is not clear in the UEC or EDG that a de-registration card could not be misused as a voting card in cases where the voter is being declared ineligible and not simply as being absent from that precinct on election day. For example, according to the current reading of the UEC, a voter being de-registered due to an issue with eligibility could take their de-registration card, cut off the top left hand corner, and use it to vote at any other precinct in the country for this election. (Reference Articles 101 and 47.11 in the UEC).

Unfortunately, the chairman felt overwhelmed by this line of questioning and spent the rest of the meeting frantically trying to contact the ExComm in order to pass us on as soon as possible.

*Abdulkarim Aliyev,, ConEc Chairperson
Telephone :5-22-06. City code: 144.*

Meeting with Gakh ExComm

The ConEc chairperson arranged the meeting with Mr. A.C. Goyusov, head of the ExComm in Gakh and the meeting was held at 1:00 pm, just prior to the start of the 2:00 pm training session.

The monitoring team gave a brief introduction to IFES and the training program. Mr. Goyusov was very sharp and had a strong personal presence. He commented that voter education was very important and welcomed the IFES voter education pamphlets. It was also mentioned that the ExComm only plays a technical and logistical role in the election process.

When asked if he had any questions for the monitoring team, Mr. Goyusov complained that the opposition parties were conducting information campaigns in his area of responsibility without informing the ExComm and asked for IFES' advice on how to handle this situation. The monitoring team responded that the ExComm needed to see what the legal requirements were in that regard. If there was a legal requirement being violated, they should report it to the head of that particular political party as well as to the CEC and to ask the CEC about further action to be taken. The monitoring also noted that the more the ExComm cooperated with opposition parties regarding venues and provisions of other forms of assistance, the more other parties would begin to work with them and not avoid informing them about their activities. Mr. Goyusov thanked the monitoring team for their opinion on the matter, agreeing that the CEC would be a more appropriate organization from which to seek advice.

*A.C. Goyusov, Head of the ExComm
Telephone: (144) 5-22-23*

Monitoring of PEC Training in Gakh: September 23, 2:30 pm

Constituency 112. PEC members attended from the following precincts: 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. Attendance: 22 (9 women). Venue: chess school.

The monitoring team focused on noting ways in which the training session could be made shorter, as the training team (6 – Sheki) was concerned they had been unable of conducting the program in less than two hours.

The ConEc chairperson announced that anyone absent would need to make up the training at a later date, and made it clear the PEC chairpersons were to be in charge of that. The ConEc Secretary was present throughout the training, sitting at the front of the room.

The audience was quite difficult during the course of the training. The IFES trainer, Vugar Huseynov, was more patient with the audience, while the CEC trainer, Rasim Gurbanov, acted defensively and was less accommodating with such interventions from the audience. Oftentimes, the CEC trainer would handle the questions or comments from the audience, even if the IFES trainer was conducting the training during that section. This disrupted the flow of their presentation, as Rasim was jumping in to try to control the audience and both trainers were sidetracked from their normal course of training by answering questions as they came up. However, the trainers somehow managed to maintain control of the training and to impart all the necessary information by the end of the session. This was accomplished with a great deal of effort on behalf of the trainers, who looked exhausted during the post-training debriefing.

Examples of interventions from the audience are numerous. A complaint was heard from the participants that the slot in the ballot box was too wide. Another participant thought that the number of deregistration cards received from the ConEc needed to be announced before canceling of the cards took place during the opening process. This is not stated in the EDG. Complaints were also made about the number of acts involved in the election day process. The CEC trainer responded that the CEC had already designed forms for all necessary acts. Another concern was raised regarding the correct decision-making procedure for when to invite in a policeman in order to reinstate public order in the polling station. Another point raised was in regard to application forms for the mobile box and when to define the number of forms received. The difference between valid and invalid votes was also a contentious point of discussion.

Many of these interventions came from two members sitting at the back of the room, who were identified as coming from the Ingiloy national minority group. It is suspected they were appointed by opposition parties and instructed to create difficulties for the trainers. The ConEc Secretary tried to blame their actions on the fact they were ethnic minorities and didn't understand the Azeri language, however it was apparent to the monitoring team by the detailed questions that the participants did indeed understand the process, perhaps better than the rest of the group.

The monitoring group advised the training team they could save time by not asking so many questions to the audience, but rather simply delivering the material and answering questions when they arose. The introduction could also be shortened a bit. Hypothetical questions could also be cut off without spending too much time on the response. The CEC trainer was warned not to give answers based on draft CEC instructions in case they were changed before being finalized and disseminated to the ConEcs and PECs.

The monitoring group accepted a revised schedule from the training team and forwarded a copy to IFES Baku for logistical purposes.

Meeting with Aqsu ConEc

The monitoring team met with the ConEc chairperson at 10:30 am on September 24. He reported the trainers had briefed the entire ConEc upon their arrival the previous

evening, which he described as inspirational. They have received the voters lists from the CEC and were happy to have the voter education leaflets disseminated in the constituency.

The ConEc also mentioned he had met with OSCE representatives. When expressing his concern over the expectations of the international community in regard to the conduct of free and fair elections, the monitoring team assured him that while perfection may not be reached, certainly an improvement over the past elections should be achievable.

*Ramiz Ahmadov, ConEc Chairperson
Telephone: 365-91-62; 198-545-92*

Meeting with Agsu ExComm

The monitoring team began this meeting at 10:45 am, directly after the meeting with the ConEc chairperson. The head of the ExComm in Agsu mentioned he has already met with the trainers and provided them with all the assistance they need.

He complained about appeals received from candidates in regard to requesting access to venues for registered candidates and showed a paper proving he was responding diligently.

In addition, the ExComm head mentioned they are helping with all aspects of the "planning" for election day, including provision of offices for the ConEc, PECs, facilities, lighting, logistical issues, telephones, etc. However, the ExComm is not involved in selecting ConEc or PEC members. The ExComm has all posters from all candidates posted in their area of responsibility. All information was volunteered by the ExComm without having specific questions from the monitoring team.

It was interesting to note that the ExComm had a separate "state" telephone line in their office.

*Aphlatun Rufiyev, Head of ExComm
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Monitoring of PEC Training in Agsu: September 24, 11:15 am

Constituency 87 (Agsu). PEC members attended from the following precincts: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Attendance: 32 (6 women). 4 attendees left early. The ConEc Chairperson opened the training session and scolded people for being late. The monitoring team noted a comment that PECs have been put in charge of controlling the campaign materials in their precincts.

Team 5, Ilham Yusifov (CEC) and Firdovski Javadov (IFES) received an outstanding mark for overall performance as a team. The audience was active, but focused. The team was able to impart practical hints to the participants while showing excellent knowledge of the material.

There was a great deal of interest from the participants in controlling the access of media representatives to polling stations. The trainers explained that de-registration card only becomes a voting card if the upper left corner is cut off. Concern from the participants included whether the ballot box would be big enough for all the envelopes and whether voters would cast ballots without envelopes and take the

envelopes home. The trainers gave excellent responses, which satisfied the audience and kept the training session on track.

One comment from the audience that was overheard praised how well the trainers were explaining the protocol.

One recurring concern is that of pre-stamping the ballot papers. Again, a PEC member in this training session admitted they had received instructions to pre-stamp all ballot papers upon receipt from the ConEc. Firdovsi acknowledged there was nothing in the law to prevent this, but they were training that it is best to simply keep up with the flow of voters on election day. It was recommended that no more than 100 ballot papers be pre-stamped at one time.

The monitoring team offered a few comments to the trainers during the debriefing session. First, while it may be good practice to offer observers a place to sit in the polling station, it should be stressed that they are indeed free to walk about the polling station at will as long as they are not interfering with the process. The monitoring team also reminded the trainers that, according to the EDG, ballot papers found inside ballot boxes without envelopes should be cancelled. The trainers disagreed with this point until the training coordinator showed them the instruction in the EDG.

It should be noted that due to the IFES trainers needing to attend a finance meeting at IFES Baku on Monday next week (September 29), Ilham will be conducting the training sessions scheduled on that day by himself as they could not reschedule for a later date without throwing off their entire itinerary.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Guba: September 25, 10:30 am

Constituency 52 (Guba). Attendance was poor (15 including 6 women). Many attendees came in late, therefore pushing the starting time back by half an hour. The venue was the worst one visited by the monitoring team thus far and considered much too small for the training. It is noted that their regularly assigned training room was being used for another purpose and that the training team was able to resume their trainings in the larger room for the afternoon session. It also seems the attendance was lower in the morning session due to the room size, and that attendance was made up during the afternoon session. Therefore, a complaint was not made with the ConEc chairperson. The ConEc Secretary sat in on the entire training session.

Team 12 was one of the two new teams this week, with Bakhtiyar Hajiyev (CEC) now being paired up with Eldaniz Asadov (IFES). Both trainers were present and attentive at all times. They posed good questions to the audience and displayed winning personalities in their interaction with the group. They acted as a team in fielding questions from the audience, and were very effective overall, especially as a new team. The overall flow of the presentation was excellent as it followed the EDG and election day in a logical manner. Unfortunately, they had to skip the final closing segment, as some of the participants were running out the door to catch their bus.

During the roles and responsibilities session, it was determined that no PEC Secretaries were present at the training. It is a concern that this may mean opposition and impartial members were underrepresented.

The audience was active but attentive, and included some excellent female participants. Participants seemed particularly fed up with the complicated protocol

and numerous acts that need to be completed on election day. A question was posed whether a voter can vote with a deregistration card in his own precinct if he/she changes his/her mind on election day and are at home after all. The answer given by the training team was a definite no.

In addition, one elderly participant requested that polling stations be built by the CEC in his village as they have no adequate space in which to conduct elections.

During the protocol segment, the training coordinator noticed that the women at the back of the room were having trouble following the presentation. He brought this to the attention of the training team, which reacted by sending the "off" trainer (Eldaniz) to the back of the room to help the slower participants keep up with the rest of the group. The training coordinator noted the clarity of Bakhtiyar's presentation on the completion of the protocol process.

Debriefing the training team was a challenge, as the morning training venue was not available and the room for the subsequent training venue was already filling up with the next group of PEC members. When the monitoring team moved the debriefing session to the hallway, they were joined by the building supervisor and one of the PEC members from the next group, who both seemed interested in hearing what was being discussed! After the monitoring team offered some parting words of encouragement that the team was halfway through their training program and to keep up the good work, the building supervisor added her two cents by enjoining the training team not to quit in the middle of the project!

In general, the monitoring team gave positive feedback to the training team in order to build their confidence, while drawing their attention to the list of 15 priorities to ensure they are included in each and every training session (points 6, 13 and 15 had been skipped in the monitored session). They also warned the trainers that the equations given on the protocol should only be used to check the numbers, and not to calculate the figures to be entered onto the protocol. Also, more realistic figures should be used for the protocol, with at least one example of all types of ballot papers to be used so that participants gain practice filling in all of the lines of the protocol.

The monitoring team noted that inviting members from the audience to come up to seal the stationery ballot box was a very effective means of involving participants in a practical manner, as opposed to just showing the trainers sealing the box themselves. This team also gave an excellent training on why the ballots from the mobile ballot box should not be mixed with the stationary ballot box upon close of the mobile ballot voting process. It is expected that this training team will further improve their presentations as they become more familiar with each other's style.

Interview with Qutb local television station

Dayanat Mammadov, from the local television station "Qutb", requested an interview from the monitoring team to address the purpose of the training and its expected outcome. The monitoring team granted the interview request, which was held in the hallway outside the training room just prior to the start of the training program. Footage from the training itself was also recorded.

Monitoring team informed Charles Lasham of the content of the interview immediately upon its completion.

A copy of the videotape was obtained for 15,000 manats and provided to the IFES office in Baku. It was not possible to receive a receipt or check for this cost. The

WEEKLY REPORT—PEC PROJECT
15-20 September 2003
Submitted by Pam Flowers

Overview

Between 16-18 September Pam Flowers and Vusal Malikov traveled to Ali-Bayramli, Saatli, and Lenkaran to meet with Constituency Election Commission (ConEC) Chairpersons and Executive Authority (ExCom) representatives, and conduct monitoring visits to the training teams conducting trainings in each of the constituencies mentioned.

In each of the areas visited, meetings were arranged and conducted with the ConEC Chairmen and representatives of the ExCom. The tone of these meetings was positive and gratitude was expressed for IFES' efforts in training the PEC members. The ExCom meetings proceeded smoothly, with all ExCom representatives eager to point out their role in the elections is restricted to assistance with logistics and equal representation and access to facilities by all presidential candidates.

The monitoring team also observed one training session of each of the three training teams operating in the area. Generally, the training teams were performing well and on schedule to cover the projected number of training sessions as scheduled for the first week. The training teams were receiving support and assistance from the ConECs to arrange training venues and issuing invitations to PEC participants. Attendance in the training sessions observed ranged from 16-23 participants. However, a slight irregularity occurred in the scheduling in the Masalli constituency, as the ConEC initially only invited PEC Chairmen to the training sessions. Although additional sessions were conducted, not all the PEC members within the constituency received training as scheduled during the week.

In addition to monitoring related activities the team arranged on-going transportation and other logistical issues to ensure monitoring teams, training teams, and materials were in the appropriate locations. This involved working from the Baku office on the 15th and 20th, as well as regular phone contact with training teams throughout the monitoring trip.

Monitoring of PEC Training & Meetings in Ali-Bayramli

On arrival in Ali-Bayramli the morning of 16 September, the monitoring team met with the ConEC Chairman Akif Sagiyev (Ali-Bayramli #46). Mr Sagiyev indicated his appreciation for past and current IFES election training, particularly the current joint IFES-CEC project. He was impressed that the training session on the previous day had lasted three hours, and that the trainers were committed to conveying the material, even if that required more time than originally anticipated. The Chairman was also proud to display the ConECs recently refurbished office and new office equipment and felt that this placed them in a position for improved functioning in the up-coming and future elections. The monitoring team reviewed the overview of the project objectives.

In addition, prior to attending the training session, the monitoring team had the opportunity to obtain some feedback from the training team Elnur Atayev and Elchin Nesirov as they joined the conversation with the ConEC Chairman. The trainers also indicated a positive response from the training participants. They also mentioned the challenge of long training sessions due to the interest of participants and the

complexity of the material to be covered. They indicated that ideally one hour of the training should be designated for discussion of the protocol. Due to these considerations, they suggested that more practical and familiar components of the training material, such as time for discussion of the 'Roles & Responsibilities' be shortened to allow for more time for new and more technical aspects of the training material. The monitoring team agreed in general, but stressed that all the material in the agenda needs to be covered during each session. The trainers praised the chairman for his awareness, good organizational skills and willingness to actively participate in the training process.

The monitoring team then met with the Head of the ExCom, Satagat Gahramanova. After introductions and a brief project overview, Ms Gahramanova began speaking about the change in psychology of Azerbaijani people and how that impacted voter turnout that was previously about 90%, however currently at about 65%. She described the types of support the ExCom is providing to the ConEC, including providing equal conditions for the functioning of the 30 PECs within the city, on-time completion of the voter's list to submit to the ConEC, providing technical equipment for candidate meetings, equal conditions for all candidates (poster space, organization of meetings in same venue, etc). In closing, Ms Gahramanova indicated that during her eight years as ExCom Chairperson that she has never witnessed any violations of the election code and that there have been no irregularities within the territory.

From the ExCom meeting the monitoring team proceeded to the training session already in progress. The training room was full to capacity with 23 PEC members, including six female participants. Soon after the monitoring team's arrival, the training participants became side tracked on a discussion regarding the appropriateness of the stationary ballot box, concentrating on the width of the slot and the lack of flap (as several of the PEC members had seen on a previous sample ballot box at the CEC). This distraction, as well as the remainder of the session, was handled well by Elnur and Elchin who were able to keep the participants on topic despite attempts by opposition members to sidetrack the discussion. Elnur and Elchin had a clear division of responsibilities and presented the material in a clear, confident, organized and efficient manner. The monitoring team also attended the first part of the afternoon training session to observe the sections missed in the morning session.

Contact Information (Ali-Bayramli):

Akif Sagiye	(ConEC Chairman)	(8 197) 40 83 53 (8 197) 48 35 0 (8 197) 44 59 9
Satagat Gahramanova	(Head of ExCom)	(8 197) 40 07 3

Monitoring of PEC Training & Meetings in Saatli

On the 17th of September the monitoring team traveled to Saatli and met with the ConEC Chairman, Arif Aliyev (Saatli #62). The monitoring team provided a brief overview of the project and received feedback from the Chairman regarding how he perceived the project thus far. Mr. Aliyev indicated that he had 20 years of election experience and that he was satisfied with the trainers' professionalism and contributions to building the capacity of PEC members. He also stated that the ConEC had planned to provide training for PEC members, but that the IFES/CEC

project was initiated prior to the ConEC conducting this training. Before leaving for the training site, Mr Aliyev showed the monitoring team a schedule of the PECs to be trained in each of the joint IFES/CEC trainings and also the PECs to be covered by the CEC trainings.

The monitoring team observed a training session conducted by Sergey Sidrenko and Mirali Huseynov in PEC #19, located in a school building outside Saatli. Sixteen male participants attended this session. The training team conducted the training effectively and efficiently, with both members covering the materials confidently. A significant amount of time was spent on explaining what constituted a valid vote. However, when a small group of participants attempted to execute the vote counting simulation, there was considerable confusion and an attempt was made to combine a empty stamped envelope and a ballot paper in determinate form (found outside an envelope).

Prior to leaving Saatli, the monitoring team was able to conduct a brief meeting with the Deputy ExCom representative Shahbazov Qachay. This included a brief overview of IFES activities and the PEC training project. (The Head of the ExCom, Gulhuseyn Akhmudov, was not in the office due to a recent death of a relative.)

Contact Information (Saatli):

Arif Aliyev	(ConEC Chairman)	332 83 91 (8 168) 53 3 99
Shahbazov Qachay	(Deputy ExCom)	(8 168) 53 2 06

Monitoring of PEC Training & Meetings in Lenkaran

On 18 September, the monitoring team met the training team of Samir Tagiyev & Ekdaniz Asadov in Lenkaran. On arrival the monitoring team met with the ConEC Chairman Lenkaran #73) for introductions and project overview. The ConEC was busy with visits from OSCE observers and other visitors, however he took a few minutes to inform the monitoring team about his experiences and impressions of the PEC training project. In addition, the ConEC Chairman indicated that he attended a three-day seminar (8-10 September) supported by the OSCE and the Council of Europe, where he participated in a simulation exercise with 5 ConEC chairmen (acting as PEC members) to complete the simulation and protocol. He also indicated that the ConEC—ExCom relationship in Lenkaran was good, and that the ExCom provided the technical assistance and support required by law, including providing an equal venue for all candidate and local voter meetings and posting of campaign materials.

The monitoring team then proceeded to observe the morning training session conducted by Samir and Ekdaniz, conducted in the same building as the ConEC office. There were 22 participants in this session that lasted for approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. Unfortunately, the monitoring team was not able to observe the presentation of the protocol and the demonstration of the ballot boxes, due to leaving the training session to meet with the Head of the ExCom. However, during the observation some concern was raised regarding the presentation format of the training and the ability of the trainers to deal with the sometimes difficult dynamics of the audience. In the parts of the training that the monitoring team attended, the information presented by the trainers was correct but a bit unorganized at times.

During a post-training discussion with the trainers indicated that this had been the shortest session that they had conducted to date, and that they had previously had some complains from participants regarding the length of the training (usually 2-2.5 hours). In addition, when discussing the organization of the training, the training team indicated that they were trying to respond to questions from the participants rather than strictly following the outlined agenda. The monitoring team informed the team of their observation that some additional consideration might be given to the organization of their presentation to make it more clear and effective. For example, the demonstration of the ballot boxes to be demonstrated during the opening of the polls discussion and that the discussion regarding the exceptions to the voting process be linked more closely in the presentation.

A brief meeting was conducted with the Head of the ExCom, Zeynal Naghdaliyev, including introductions and a brief outline of project approach, geographic coverage, timeframe, highlighting the trainings taking place within Lenkaran. From his side the ExCom expressed his desire to support the important work being done by the ConEC and PEC members. Mr Naghdaliyev indicated that the main tasks of the ExCom in the election process include compiling the voter list, providing equal facilities to all candidates for meetings, in this case the drama theatre, and his own decree to allow for equal access to space for all presidential candidate posters. He also mentioned ensuring support from local executive authorities to each of the PECs in order for them to properly carry out their duties. There have already been 3-4 meetings for presidential candidates, all conducted with equal conditions. Lastly, Mr Naghdaliyev expressed support for the IFES-CEC project, as it is important for PEC members to understand election procedures.

NOTE: Earlier in the week the training team conducted three training sessions in Masalli (#70), however due to scheduling issues in that constituency moved on to Lenkaran mid-week to begin trainings. Apparently, there was a misunderstanding on the part of the ConEC chairman in Masalli resulting in only the PEC chairmen being invited to the PEC training sessions. This was discovered during the first session conducted, and was partially rectified through two additional trainings conducted for the remainder of the PEC members. However, only about half of the PEC members within the constituency (Masalli #70) were covered by the trainings conducted during the week.

Contact Information (Lenkaran):

Kerim Heydarov	(ConEC Chairman)	(8 171) 5 38 71
		(8 171) 5 38 95
Zeynal Naghdaliyev	(Head of ExCom)	(8 171) 5 27 27
		(8 171) 5 32 86

WEEKLY REPORT—PEC PROJECT
21-27 September 2003
Submitted by Pam Flowers

OVERVIEW

Pam Flowers and Ramil Afandizade traveled to Agstafa, Shamkir, and Mingechevir between 23 and 25 September to meet with Constituency Election Commission (ConEC) chairmen and Executive Authority (ExCom) representatives, and conduct monitoring visits to the training teams conducting activities in each of the areas mentioned. As in other regions the meetings with the local authorities went well, and the monitoring team and training teams received support for their activities. In all regions, the ExCom representatives continue to clearly articulate the strictly defined legal role for ExCom authorities to provide logistical and technical support to ConECs and PECs.

The monitoring team observed one training session of each of the three training teams operating in each area. All of the teams were performing well and indicate becoming increasingly comfortable with the information presented in the trainings, as they had now conducted several sessions in a short period of time. However, it was also indicated that their perception about how effective the trainings were in various areas depended on the level of cooperation and attitude of the ConEC and PEC representatives, impacting attendance and receptiveness to learn the information presented. In most of the sessions the monitoring team observed, PEC member attendance was good with an average of 24 participants per training.

At the beginning and end of the week (September 21-22 & 26) the team, along with Mirza Abdullayev, worked from the Baku office on September to arrange transportation and other logistical issues to ensure the monitoring teams and materials arrive at appropriate locations. In addition, responsibilities included compilation of project reporting information, including a summary of project statistics to date.

Meetings with Local Authorities in Agstafa

On September 23 the monitoring team traveled to Agstafa to observe an afternoon training session conducted by Anar Garayev and Vusal Mirzayev. Prior to attending the session, the monitoring team met with Teymurlan Eyyubov, ConEC chairman (Agstafa #108). This was a brief meeting with the monitoring team providing information about IFES and the PEC project training activities. The chairman expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the training team based on his participation in the sessions during the previous two days. He indicated that the trainers were providing specific information regarding new aspects of the election code, and appreciated that the PEC members within the constituency were acquiring this detailed information through the project.

The ConEC chairman arranged a meeting for the monitoring team with an ExCom representative, Shaig Abdullayev, Head of the Department on Area Administration Issues. Mr Abdullayev had previously met with the training team, however, prior to their visit he was not aware of project activities planned in Agstafa. He also expressed appreciation for the IFES training project and the Election Day Guides as important sources of information for PEC members to be aware of the changes in the election code. This is seen to be of particular importance as many of the PEC

members are recently elected. As for the ExCom's role in the election preparations, he indicated that as the Deputy of Area Administration he is responsible for arranging meeting and training venues and providing technical support for the PECs, and preparation of voters lists (for the 39 PECs in Agstafa, including 43,000 voters).

Contact Information (Agstafa):

Teymurlan Eyyubov (ConEc Chairman #108) (050) 3752237
(0-244) 6-17-36

Shaig Gurbanov (Head of Dep. On Territory Admin. Issues) (050) 3476147

Monitoring of PEC Training in Agstafa

Immediately, after the meeting with the ConEC chairman, the monitoring team proceeded to the training already in progress in the adjoining room for 28 PEC members. The training area was a large auditorium type room with several rows of chairs. This set-up made it difficult for the trainers to effectively use visual aids and to move about the room to interact with the participants. However, the trainers made an attempt to keep the audience engaged and participatory by directly asking questions and moving around the room to respond to audience members when possible. Anar Garayev made a particular effort to keep the audience engaged during the discussion of the protocol. For the most part, there was a good level of participation and apparent interest from the majority of training participants, however several members began to get restless after two hours and a few left prior to the completion of the protocol discussion.

Unfortunately, the monitoring team joined the training during the discussion of 'Voting Hour Activities' due to late arrival in Agstafa and briefly meeting with the ConEC chairman. However, from the sections of training that were observed it was evident that the training team had clearly established responsibilities and information to convey and proceeded through the material confidently and effectively. Several of the participants were quite active and asked many questions regarding the information that was presented. There was some confusion among participants regarding the process for using the de-registration card, and some insistence that names should be recorded on a supplemental list. Also there was discussion about several aspects voting with the mobile ballot box, including the time it should be sealed (most participants thought it should be sealed at the same time as the stationary box), and who was allowed to accompany the mobile box (multiple participants indicated that only 1 PEC member and 2 observers were allowed). In addition, several of the participants indicated that the time to close the polling station is 6:45pm. These issues were clarified and reinforced by the training team.

After the training, the monitoring team had a brief meeting with the training team, although it was difficult to have a few minutes away from the ConEC chairman. One of the trainers expressed how after working in several constituencies he really began to notice the difference in the level of support and cooperation of the ConECs, as well as the PEC members. However both trainers indicated that there had been a good level of support from the Agstafa ConEC chairman, and they were planning to meet with the Gakh ConEC chairman later in the evening to plan the schedule for next week to complete all the trainings for the constituency within one week.

As it was evening before the monitoring team was able to leave Agstafa, they were not able to deliver the materials to the Tovuz secretary (a requested follow-up by the monitoring team covering the Tovuz ConEC during the previous week). However, the materials (Election Day Guides and copies of the Election Code) were left with Vusal to deliver when traveling through Tovuz on Friday.

Meetings with Local Authorities in Shamkir

On the evening of the 23rd the monitoring team traveled to Shamkir and were met by the training team of Sardar Huseynov and Shahin Asadli, along with the ConEC chairman Nuraddin Aliyev and a representative of ExCom Abdulla Sadigov (Head of the Department on Territory Administration Issues). The monitoring team was immediately invited into the newly renovated ConEC office for a meeting. The feedback from the ConEC chairman regarding the training activities was extremely positive, and he continued to mention his high level of satisfaction with their professionalism and energy during training sessions. As this was a joint meeting, at various points in the discussion the ExCom representative also interjected positive comments regarding the training and expressing appreciation for the training activities. At one point, when the ConEC chairman left his office, Mr. Sadigov commented that maybe the monitoring team found it surprising that he was there and interacting so closely with the ConEC. He indicated that this was due to the importance of pre-election preparations, for which the ExCom is responsible for logistical and technical support.

Contact Information (Shamkir):

Nurraddin Aliyev	(ConEc Chairman #98)	(050) 3197263 (0 2-41) 2-44-26
Sadigov Abdulla	(Head of Dep. On Territory Admin. Issues)	(050) 3383050 (0 2-41) 2-45-46

Monitoring of PEC Training in Shamkir

On the 24th the monitoring team observed the morning training of Sardar Huseynov and Shahin Asadli, attended by 15 PEC members, including 5 women. Later the ConEC chairman explained the low attendance at the session was due to several PEC members who are schoolteachers, and unable to attend the morning session and would be rescheduled. He also reassured the monitoring team that most of the absent PEC members were representatives of the ruling party and that there was good representation among opposition PEC members in the training. In addition, the chairman made a comment regarding a slight problem during a previous training session when an opposition member raised the issues of campaign posters being torn down, and insisted on a response from the trainers on this issue. However, as the training team did not address this issue, the PEC member left in protest—although he returned later.

The training was conducted in a large auditorium style room. The trainers worked well as a team and interacted with the participants as much as possible given the constraints of the room configuration. The training team had clear division of responsibilities of material to be covered by each of them, and for the most part remained engaged during their time as the 'off' trainer. Aside from a good presentation of technical material, the team also provided a clear introduction of the

project and outline of topics to be covered in the training. In addition, they specifically allowed for questions after completing each section. The components of the training that generated the most discussion related to the process for voting with the mobile ballot box and the completion of the protocol. Although the session was running over time (in the end lasting almost three hours), the team was careful to go through the prepared materials to describe the correct completion of the protocol. This was done with sample numbers to illustrate the process and demonstrate the 'checks' in the document. Throughout this long session the participants actively responded and asked questions and were engaged in the training, however in many cases they asked questions about material that had just been covered by the trainers.

During the training two OSCE observers observed a few minutes of the training session. The monitoring team also had a brief conversation with the observers after the training, with the primary topic of interest for the OSCE representatives was possibilities for translators and accommodation options within their region of coverage.

Monitoring of PEC Training in Mingechevir

On the afternoon of the 24th the monitoring team traveled to Mingechevir and met with the trainers Babek Mamedov and Rashid Yusifbeyli. During discussions, Rahid spoke of differences in the level of cooperation and attitude he has been observing when working with various ConEC and PEC representatives from different regions. For example, he indicated that in the Mingechevir constituency the representative of the ConEC and the PEC members had thus far been active in supporting the training activities and interested in learning the information presented. As a point of comparison, he mentioned the activities conducted in the Barda constituency (where the team had worked in the previous week) were much less enthusiastically received at both the ConEC and PEC level.

On the morning of the 25th the monitoring team observed the training conducted by Babek and Rashid held at the office of the Mingechevir NGO Resource and Training Center office. This is a good facility with 'U'-shape set up, however the room was filled to capacity and at times the noise from the street outside was a distraction and made it difficult for the trainers to be heard. The session was attended by 30 participants including 4 women. The training team provided an efficient and comprehensive coverage of the training materials in slightly over two hours. A considerable amount of time was spend on the introduction and the discussion of 'Roles and Responsibilities'. As in previous training sessions the participants had many questions regarding the process to use the mobile ballot box, including: the necessity of the flap, as it could be opened/closed at any point outside the precinct (on the street, etc.); if the mobile box needed to be assembled if no applications were received; and what countries were using a similar transparent ballot box. At one point, an opposition representative was quite disruptive issuing complaints regarding the destruction of opposition candidate campaign posters near the precinct, however the trainers quickly directed the discussion to the training topics. The discussion of the protocol was well organized, and conveyed quickly in a quite theoretical manner. However, the discussion of each category of ballots (illustrated with visual aids) as appropriate for each section of the protocol was effective to provide clarification regarding the process.

Meetings with Local Authorities in Mingechevir

After the training, the monitoring team met with representatives from ConEC #47 Secretary Yashar Shirinov (Communist Party) and Secretary Ahmed Allazov (Impartial), as the ConEC chairman was in Baku at the request of the CEC. During the meeting the secretaries indicated that their constituency consists of 33 PECs, and showed a schedule for planned training attendance. They also expressed their satisfaction with the work of the IFES/CEC training team, and thanks to IFES for providing Election Day Guides and other handouts. The trainings and materials are perceived to be particularly important as the information in the Election Code is difficult and technical and their appreciated the ability of the trainers to explain the complex information in understandable language. By order of the ConEC chairman, the ConEC members were also instructed to attend the training. The ConEC had conducted meetings for some PEC members previously, including simulations to provide practice in correctly completing the protocol. In closing, the secretaries also indicated that they feel that this election has generated more interest and activity from the international community, as well as the local community. For example, many voters are actively reporting that their names are not included on the voter's list—and the secretaries feel that this increased activity and interest is due to information provided by international organizations and the ConECs.

The meetings in Mingechevir were concluded with a meeting with the Deputy Head of ExCom Ramiz Goyushov and Head of Public Policy Department Ilham Ismayilov. Mr Goyushov indicated that he was familiar with the work of IFES and had met with several IFES representatives, including the regional coordinator based in the area. He also reinforced that he welcomed IFES' approach of working with government authorities in general, and as it applies to this training project. Mr Goyushov also explained the ExCom's position of acting within the law to provide technical and logistical support to ConECs and PECs, and that interaction between ConEC and ExCom representatives take place during common meetings in the form of informal discussion—the ExCom does not interfere in the ConEC's activities. Both were provided with copies of the Election Day Guide. (Mr Ismayilov came into the meeting a few minutes late and did not hear the description of the project approach and was concerned if the CEC was aware the training activities being conducted. The monitoring team reinforced the joint aspect of both the training project and the approval of information presented in the Election Day Guide.)

Contact Information (Mingechevir):

Shirinov Yashar	(ConEc Secretary #47)	(0 147) 5-47-45
Allazov Ahmed	(ConEc Secretary #47)	(0 147) 5-36-08
Ramiz Goyushov	(Deputy head of ExCom)	
Ilham Ismayilov	(Head of Public Policy Dep.)	

WEEKLY REPORT—PEC PROJECT
28 September-3 October 2003
Submitted by Pam Flowers

OVERVIEW

During this week, the monitoring team visited one training team and spent the remainder of the week in Baku working on logistical tasks and project reporting. On October 1 Pam Flowers and Ramil Afandizade traveled to Devechi to observe the training team of Eldaniz Asadov and Bakhtiyar Hajiyev and to conduct meetings with the ConEC chairman and ExCom representative in the region.

On 29 September the IFES trainers were in the Baku office for financial reporting, to pick up training materials and for a meeting regarding technical and logistical issues. (One team of CEC trainers also picked up training materials on Sunday.) Activities during the week also included the set-up of a database to compile data from monitoring forms, training team weekly reports, and training participant evaluation forms, and compilation of information and project statistics for the weekly report.

Meeting with Local Authorities in Devechi-Guba

On arrival, the monitoring team met with Agshirin Bagirov, the ConEC chairman for Devechi-Guba constituency #54. Mr Bagirov expressed gratitude for the work of the trainers, and indicated that after the detailed information provided no further training is necessary for PEC members. He pointed out that the ConEC included 67 PECs, with 40 precincts in mountainous regions, covering 33,200 voters from Devechi and some segments of Guba. (One PEC remains to be established for a prison in Devechi). Although there are significant challenges to logistics in the mountainous areas he assured the monitoring team that all PEC members would attend the training sessions, and that all materials have been delivered to the PECs to allow for their proper functioning. The ExCom authorities had assisted the PECs by providing buildings and technical support such as telephone lines and electricity. However, the chairman requested assistance in obtaining mobile telephones to be used by 17 PECs in the constituency that depend on electricity for their phone lines to function. He indicated that in previous elections these were provided by the Ministry of Communication and AZ Telecom, however for this election it is only planned to give this assistance in constituencies covering IDP and refugees populations.

After the training, the monitoring team briefly met with Israfil Mikayilov the Deputy Head of ExCom on Social-Economic Issues. This was one of the most difficult ExCom representative meetings for the monitoring team, as Mr Mikayilov was not very forthcoming even with basic information. When asked, he indicated that he had been aware that the CEC was planning training for the ConECs, but was not previously aware of the IFES training project. He also responded that the ExCom had done a great job providing all the technical support necessary for the ConECs and PECs for their proper functioning, including the provision of electricity and telephone lines.

Meeting with IFES Trainers (29 September)

During the meeting with the IFES trainers facilitated by Anna Wiktorowska, each trainer had the opportunity to provide feedback regarding their activities. In general, they indicated that participants were responsive and the ConEC chairman and the ExCom representatives were welcoming and supportive of the project activities. However on a few occasions there were difficulties with local authorities that hindered the trainers' ability to conduct effective trainings. In most cases when there were problems they related to the issue of attendance of PEC member at training sessions. Reasons for low attendance included: not all six PEC members attending sessions as scheduled; difficulties in transporting PEC members from remote areas; some PEC members (often opposition representatives) not being invited by ConEC chairman or ExComs; schedule of ConEC too busy to invite PEC members; and scheduling conflicts with individual PEC members. In other instances, the ConECs were inviting 5-6 PECs per session making the sessions larger than the planned 30 person maximum. In the constituencies with remote and difficult to access areas sometimes the number of participants per session had been increased as buses had been arranged to transport the PEC members to the training venue. The issues related to attendance and session size will be reflected in the overall project numbers, and concern was raised by one of the trainers about not achieving the number of planned sessions for his training team. It was indicated by Anna that the more important project target number to achieve was total number of participants trained. However, she also mentioned that in cases when attendance and the number of sessions were decreased due to transportation difficulties that the trainers should consider traveling to the PEC members rather than only relying on them to attend training in a central location.

The trainers were informed about the planned debrief scheduled for 9 October for all project trainers, and were asked to communicate the information to their CEC counterparts. In addition, Charles Lasham and Dan Blessington joined the meeting to provide information about new developments from the CEC and to respond to technical questions.

PARALLEL TRAINING STRUCTURES: CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Due to budgetary, logistical, and timing issues, IFES was not able, through its joint PEC Training Project with the Central Election Commission (CEC), to provide training to all PECs in every constituency in Azerbaijan. According to the original concept paper, IFES had planned to cover approximately one-third of the constituencies through the joint project. Relatively late in the process, the CEC leadership became concerned about the lack of training arrangements for the majority of PECs. In response, they made provisions for training to be carried out in the remaining constituencies either by the CEC staff members who were also serving on the training teams for the joint project or by ConEC personnel.

Numerous challenges were posed during the implementation of the joint IFES-CEC training project by the simultaneous conduct of other CEC training programs. With these challenges, however, came opportunities for IFES to add value to training sessions conducted outside the purview of its own joint project with the CEC. These challenges and opportunities as well as an explanation of how training data was used to calculate the quantitative results of the joint IFES-CEC training project are detailed below.

First, for the purposes of this explanation, the three parallel training structures can be defined as follows:

1. Joint IFES-CEC Training Project
 - a. Originally planned training sessions
 - b. Additional (unplanned) training sessions
2. CEC Training Program
 - a. With IFES trainer assisting
 - b. Without IFES trainer assisting
3. CEC-ConEC Training Program

The first category refers to the joint IFES-CEC training activities described throughout this report. The second and third categories refer to the two parallel training structures implemented by the CEC to ensure every PEC in Azerbaijan received some form of training prior to Election Day.

Joint IFES-CEC Training Project

The first category relating to the joint IFES-CEC training project can be further broken down into two sub-categories: originally planned training sessions and unplanned training sessions that were added throughout the course of the training project. At the time of the training team's deployments, 42 constituencies had been targeted for at least some coverage by the joint IFES-CEC training project. By the end of the project, this number had increased to 66.

Some of the reasons for this increase were: (1) Originally targeted ConECs were not able to mobilize a sufficient number of participants so training teams moved to ConECs with better organization and mobilization skills, (2) Logistical realities necessitated changes, (3) Neighboring constituencies not targeted by the joint project requested (insisted upon) training, and Training teams finished their original training assignments earlier than planned or prior to the 8 October deadline and were reassigned elsewhere. One additional reason, i.e. IFES trainers opted to assist their CEC counterparts in the provision of training outside the parameters of the current project, is discussed in the next section.

The value added in the case of the additional trainings is obvious in that more constituencies than originally planned were able to benefit from the joint IFES-CEC training project.

The only challenges faced by the trainers in conducting these additional sessions were of a logistical nature as well as fatigue resulting from additional work and travel.¹

Since these trainings were not negatively impacted by oversized audiences as tended to occur in the CEC trainings, they could be considered, for the most part, to be of the same quality as the sessions conducted under the originally planned joint IFES-CEC training project.²

Therefore, unplanned joint IFES-CEC training sessions were fully included into the final program analysis along with those originally envisioned in the concept paper.

CEC Training Program

The second category of training structures distinguishes between those training sessions where IFES trainers were present as volunteers to assist and those sessions where they were not.

IFES recognized the pressures being put upon the CEC contingent within the joint project's trainers' group. In addition to the two or three joint IFES-CEC trainings planned daily, CEC trainers were required to conduct an additional one to two training sessions a day on behalf of the CEC. In some cases, trainings were also conducted on the weekends.³ In response, IFES trainers volunteered to assist their CEC colleagues in the provision of these additionally assigned CEC trainings.⁴ In cases where the IFES trainer assisted his or her CEC partner in these additional sessions, the distinction between 'joint' and 'CEC' trainings was blurred.

The value added to these additional 'CEC' trainings by the participation of both IFES and CEC representatives who had completed the TOT course, the use of presentation format designed for the joint project, as well as the use of visual aids, training materials and supplies, and handouts developed for the joint project was considerable.

At the same time, there were some differences between the joint sessions and those designed at 'CEC' sessions that affected the overall quality of the training. In particular, audiences attending the 'CEC' sessions were considerably larger, which negatively impacted the interactive nature of the training and the ability of the training teams to control unruly audiences.⁵

¹ Challenges facing coordination between IFES and the CEC in relation to the joint program can be found in the 'PEC Training' section of the final project report under 'Issues and Developments.'

² The distinction is made, nonetheless, due to the need to be clear and accurate in reporting how target, quantitative goals were met.

³ One CEC trainer, looking exhausted on a Monday, informed the monitoring team that he had conducted four (4) CEC trainings the previous day (Sunday).

⁴ While IFES trainers assisted with many of these sessions, they did not assist with all.

⁵ More detailed observations from a CEC training session can be found in Beverly Hagerdon Thakur's weekly report, 23 September-4 October, in Appendix X. These observations list specific reasons why training large audiences was not an effective way to conduct PEC training programs.

Another challenge the training teams faced was fatigue from implementing three to four or even five training sessions per day. Trainers found it difficult to maintain the highest standard of performance for every training session. Trainers also began losing their voices, due both to the sheer volume of training sessions as well as the need to shout to be heard over the oversized CEC training audiences.

The enormous pressure placed on the CEC trainers to cover their additional sessions had other ramifications for the IFES/CEC joint training sessions. The time between training sessions had to be kept to a minimum due to the need to cover not two or three but four sessions per day or more. Originally, the joint IFES-CEC training project called for a two or three session day, with adequate breaks for lunch, rest, or travel between constituencies or training venues.

The CEC training approach also set the precedent of accepting larger audiences to "speed up" the training schedule and to meet the quantitative targets. It was a challenge to the joint IFES-CEC training teams to resist the temptation to increase the size of their audiences in order to complete their own training schedules early. This was especially true with respect to the two training teams that were entirely comprised of CEC personnel.

In the end, the additional CEC training sessions benefited from the involvement of persons involved in the TOT, the application of modern training methodologies, and the use of other training resources while allowing the joint project – in those instances where the IFES trainer participated – to reach a broader scope of PECs and constituencies. For the purposes of reporting, if the IFES trainer participated in the provision of the 'CEC' training sessions, these numbers were factored into the quantitative results for the joint project. If the IFES trainer did not participate, the numbers were not used.

CEC-ConEC Training Program

In order to provide training to the remaining PECs⁶, the CEC asked all relevant ConECs to provide one trainer from their constituency to attend a TOT session at the CEC headquarters in Baku. These ConEC-level trainers, the vast majority of whom had no previous training experience, were instructed in large groups on 6, 7, and 8 September 2003 by CEC staff members, in particular the Head of the International Relations Department Rovzat Gasimov.⁷ IFES Project Director Charles Lasham and Lead Trainer Catherine Barnes also did one-hour sessions on presentation skills. These trainees were then, reportedly sent back to their constituencies to assist their ConECs with PEC training.

While there is very little information gathered regarding the delivery of these training sessions, it is suspected that that most followed previous CEC-ConEC training models. Namely, someone lecturing directly from the training materials to a large auditorium of PEC members absent any interactive or practical exercises.

In terms of value-added, IFES had limited contact with the CEC-ConEC training structure beyond the provision of the above mentioned training on presentation skills and the *Election Day Guide*, which IFES assisted the CEC in producing, and which may have served as the basis for these training sessions.

⁶ The majority of PECs in Azerbaijan received training through this CEC-ConEC structure

⁷ Rovzat Gasimov was one of the CEC trainers participating in the joint IFES/CEC training program. He participated in numerous IFES TOT courses and has previously implemented training for poll workers

No challenges to the joint IFES-CEC training program were raised by the conduct of the CEC-ConEC training structure. However, implementing different training programs has likely left an incongruous imprint across the various constituencies in Azerbaijan. It is hoped that these three structures can be merged into one comprehensive PEC training program that can be applied in a more consistent manner in the future.⁹

Training sessions conducted by ConEC trainers were not included in any final analysis for the joint IFES-CEC training program.

⁹ It is suggested in Appendix AA on developing a professional association of election officials that the CEC-ConEC-PEC chain of communication be made integral to any future strategy regarding the design and implementation of PEC training programs.

DRAFT CONCEPT PAPER ON DEVELOPING A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELECTION OFFICIALS

As witnessed during the implementation of the 2003 PEC Training Project, there was a shortage of impartial and professional election officials in Azerbaijan. Currently, election officials see the commissions on which they serve as extensions of the government authorities, or the political parties that appointed them (both ruling and opposition), rather than as independent and neutral bodies. Many officials are technically inept, lacking the knowledge and experience necessary to conduct a complex election process. This is partly due to many officials having been recently appointed to their positions without receiving any substantive professional development or training to prepare them for executing their important responsibilities.

One way to respond to these issues is through the development of a professional, non-governmental association of election officials that would:

- Provide ongoing training and professional development;
- Facilitate networking between experts and practitioners in the region;
- Lobby for necessary electoral reforms and serve as a watchdog in cases of misconduct by election officials;
- Promote a code of conduct and sense of professionalism among election officials at all levels; and
- Build a sustainable local capacity to carry out these tasks in the future.

The first step would be to gather the IFES and CEC trainers, training coordinators, and local IFES staff persons who were involved in the 2003 PEC Training Project. Indeed, the idea of setting up an association was broached during the post-training de-briefing session and was met with positive comments, with most of the trainers indicating their interest in developing such an organization. The idea of establishing a full time training department with dedicated staff inside the CEC was also broached, although some CEC trainers have difficulty envisioning that such a department inside the CEC might undertake training and professional development on a year-round basis. If so, then a professional association might be the best option for moving forward with improving the professionalism and capacity of election authorities in Azerbaijan.

Once a working group had been formed to develop an association of election officials, a study tour should be set up in order for some of the members to gain exposure to models of other election associations within the region. It would also be productive to invite members of similar associations to Azerbaijan to speak with the working group and other election officials regarding the positive aspects of such an organization.¹

The next steps would depend upon the local NGO legislation, however it is normal to hold a founding assembly, elect a steering board, and establish a strategic plan in the early phases of such an organization. It would be ideal if an IFES staff person closely followed and supported the process through these initial stages. Since IFES has already worked on developing a municipal association, much of that experience could be applied to this initiative. Indeed, IFES Azerbaijan may want to explore ways in which these two associations might build upon each other's successes.

¹ Members from associations such as the AEOBİH, ACEEEO (of which Azerbaijan is a member), AEA and other NGOs that IFES has worked with in Moldova, Russia and other countries could be considered for the purpose of sharing experiences with and providing support to the working group. Indeed the IFES Project Director himself is a member of the AEA from the United Kingdom and could be considered as a valuable local resource in developing such an organization in Azerbaijan.

Under IFES guidance and with cooperation from the CEC, the new association could be instrumental in designing and implementing the PEC training program for future elections.²

An association-led training program could be designed based on a classic cascade training model and lessons learned from the 2003 PEC training project. The most critical consideration in designing this program should be the CEC's potential intent to develop a training capacity at the ConEC level for future election training programs. This assumption is based upon the fact that the CEC conducted a TOT program at the CEC headquarters in Baku this year for ConEC level trainers from the constituencies where the joint IFES-CEC trainings were not being held. It can be expected the CEC will work to build on this model in the future. Therefore, PEC training efforts put forth by IFES and a new association should dovetail into this CEC-ConEC-PEC chain of communication, rather than trying to conduct a parallel training system that can never be fully integrated into the CEC's work plan.

At the top of the cascade model, two international training experts and two IFES local staff trainers would be identified. Their first task would be to select ten of the best trainers (and members of the association) from the 2003 PEC training project to design and deliver the TOT program. It would also be prudent to select two alternate trainers who could substitute for selected trainers in the case where they would be unable to perform their duties.

The TOT program would be delivered to approximately 120 ConEC trainers (one trainer per constituency), as put forward by the CEC. Each of the five core training team pairs would conduct two TOT sessions for the ConEC trainers with 12 constituencies represented per seminar. Therefore, each core training team would work with 24 constituencies, or 24 trainers, each.

An alternate TOT agenda is presented in the recommendations section of this report. For the association-led training scenario, it would be particularly important to stress code of conduct issues, spend time on presentation skills and provide ample opportunity for the ConEC trainers to prepare and practice their training sessions in front of the core trainers and other IFES training experts before being deployed to the field.

These core training teams would split for the purpose of monitoring the ConEC trainers once they began conducting PEC trainings in their respective constituencies. Each core trainer would cover 12 out of the 24 constituencies that had been represented in their TOT seminars. The constituencies would be located in the same region, facilitating travel from one location to the next within the same day if necessary. The international training experts and IFES local staff trainers would provide continuing guidance and mentoring to all the core trainers during this monitoring process.

In their assigned constituencies, the core trainers would work with the new ConEC trainers to actively assist them in conducting their initial training sessions. As the ConEC trainers became more experienced, the core trainers' role would shift to that of a monitor. This level of supervision could be adjusted based upon the readiness

² The Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina needed three years to develop an organizational and training capacity mature enough to design and implement the statewide polling station committee training program for the 2002 General Elections on behalf of the Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the AEOBiH partnered with the OSCE to conduct poll worker training for the 2000 General Elections, slightly more than one year from their founding assembly.

of each individual ConEC trainer to effectively conduct interactive training sessions accurately and independently.

Positive selling points in favor of this training scenario include:

- Consistency in PEC training throughout the entire country.
- Building local training capacity that is sustainable in the long term.
- Strengthening the CEC-ConEC-PEC chain of communication on all election matters (and downplaying the role of the local authorities and political parties)
- Cost-effective based on training costs spent per constituency.
- Multiple uses for trainers at the ConEC level for other democracy and governance programs, including the IFES municipal governance and municipal association programs, and
- Flexible enough to be adjusted to the training needs as defined by the CEC

A draft budget should include the following items, and take into consideration recommendations made earlier in this report regarding budget issues:

- Two international training experts (IFES/Association)
- Two IFES local training experts (IFES/Association)
- Ten local core trainers (IFES/Association and CEC)
- TOT programs in Baku (CEC to cover training venues, transportation)
- Copies of the Universal Electoral Code, Election Day Guides, protocols and ballots (CEC)
- Flipcharts and stationery items (IFES/Association)
- Transport and hotels for two international/local training expert teams and five core training/mentoring teams (IFES/Association)
- One day debriefing seminar – one full day (IFES/Association and CEC)
- Election Day costs for expert and core teams to observe in areas where they monitored PEC trainings (IFES/Association)
- Post-election conference to analyze results of the training program and implementation of elections by the electoral administration (IFES/Association and CEC).

Due to the statewide scope envisioned by this association-led training plan, the CEC would need to increase their budget contributions in order keep the costs shouldered by IFES and the association at a reasonable level.³ Line items for which the CEC should bear at least part of the cost is indicated above.

IFES should take the lead in developing a professional association of election officials in order to address the current shortcomings endemic throughout all levels of election administration in Azerbaijan. Positive peer pressure engendered by membership in such an association would be an effective way to achieve a higher standard of ethical and professional behavior among election officials in this country. Such an effort would also have a lasting impact on the development of democracy in Azerbaijan through the creation of an indigenous organization that could carry out electoral assistance independently from international organizations in the future.

³ It should also be noted that preliminary feedback from fundraising meetings conducted by an IFES development office representative in Azerbaijan this September pointed toward civil society building as a major priority for donors in the coming year.

**Republic of Azerbaijan
Central Election Commission
Lankaran-Masalli Constituency Election Commission # 75**

Charles Lasham
Project Director,
IFES Azerbaijan

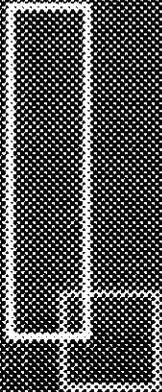
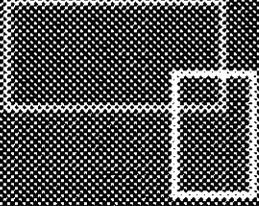
Dear Mr. Lasham,

I would like to tell you that the training team sent to ConEC #75 (Samir Taghiyev, CEC and Jeyhun Karamov, IFES) has performed their work very professionally. The quality of the seminars proved their high professional standards.

The explanation of each chapter of the Election Day Guide will help the PEC members to implement their duties set by the laws, organize election process in polling stations, calculate votes and determine election results successfully.

Considering all above-mentioned facts, I would like to express my deep gratitude to you on behalf of Lankaran-Masalli Constituency Election Commission and PEC members.

Chairman of the ConEC: Q.M. Mammadov



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