

**CEPPS/IRI Final Quarterly Report
April-June, 2005**

**Bolivia: Improving Citizen Perceptions of Political Parties
USAID Cooperative Agreement # ACA 511-A-00-04-00016-00**

**Project Dates: November 6, 2003- May 31, 2005
Total Budget: \$550,000 Expenses to Date: \$555,531.06***

*corrections are being made to previous statements

I. SUMMARY

This quarter marks the close of the International Republican Institute's (IRI) program which aimed to legitimize the role of political parties in Bolivia. To strengthen the institution of democracy in Bolivia, this program provided Bolivians with a vehicle through which to aggregate and voice their concerns to both elected officials and party leaders. Civic education is a key factor to bettering public perceptions of the country's political parties. IRI worked to assuage dissatisfaction with political parties and democracy in Bolivia by increasing civic understanding of the role of the citizen, while concurrently providing basic information on democratic processes. The December 2004 municipal elections provided a particularly appropriate context in which to work with civil society on civic education, advocacy and active democratic participation.

Activities completed over the course of the project included the creation of public forums for positive interchange between political parties and civil society, and the launching of a national civic education campaign that included radio programs, media training and high school civics courses. The goal of this project was to engage civil society in activities that would result in improved understanding of democracy and the critical role that political parties must play.

It is important to note that this project was conceived before the deadly riots of October 2003. At that time, the project's central objective was to help legitimize the role of political parties as an institution key to Bolivian democracy. Post-October 2003, IRI and USAID officials agreed that improving perceptions of democracy as a whole would be an appropriate addition to the original proposal.

II. BACKGROUND

In February 2003, IRI opened an office in La Paz to launch a civic education and participation

project. The objectives of this project were to improve relations between civil society and political parties, to deepen civil society's overall understanding of the democratic process, and to ultimately help channel civic interest into more constructive avenues of communication and participation. IRI met these objectives through three distinct types of activities: informational forums, work through and with the media, and high school civic education activities.

Over the course of the project, IRI held 19 informational forums throughout the country on the issues of the referendum and the constituent assembly. Additional forums were held in La Paz on the role of the media in democracy, the role of indigenous groups in Bolivian politics, democracy and the armed forces and Bolivian politicians and political parties. The forums served as a unique opportunity for civic actors to receive clear and unbiased information on these issues, as well as to openly and constructively discuss them. The observations culled during the forums, especially on those regarding the constituent assembly, can serve as a reliable baseline for future work with civic leaders and assembly candidates.

IRI made special use of the media throughout this project to complement other program activities. IRI conducted 27 radio programs on the referendum, Ley de Agrupaciones Ciudadanas and municipal elections in all nine departments. These programs served as reinforcement to the informational forums and as opportunities for citizens to receive pertinent local information on these issues. A ten-part television program series on youth and democracy gave the next generation of Bolivians the ability to contribute to these national discussions as well. To maximize impact, the radio programs were broadcast on the largest radio networks in each department, and the TV series was broadcast on public station PAT in urban and suburban La Paz and in all departmental capitals.

Also integral to this project has been the training provided to journalists and media representatives of TV, radio and print news outlets. In an effort to promote solid, reliable reporting, IRI conducted referendum and elections-coverage training for journalists in La Paz, El Alto, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and Sucre. Special outreach was made to rural radio stations in the Altiplano, as they often serve as the only news source in that region. With the constituent assembly on the horizon, IRI also facilitated a national accord for responsible reporting between the National Association of Bolivian Journalists and the Congressional Special Commission for the Constituent Assembly.

The high school civic education component of the project has been especially successful. IRI developed an interactive manual for use in high school classrooms that explores the civic concepts of responsibility and authority. The manual was designed to complement the interdisciplinary theme of civic education being incorporated into a new high school curriculum under development by the Ministry of Education. This marks the first time any national or international organization has successfully collaborated with the Ministry in the production of civic education materials. IRI has trained 4,500 social studies teachers in the use of this manual; they constitute nearly 90% of the instructors in this subject area. The 98 trainings were held in La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija and Santa Cruz. Given the average classroom size of 40 students, over 180,000 students will benefit from this project. Over 12,000 copies of the manual were distributed for use during the 2005 academic year.

In implementing this project, IRI forged close partnerships with the Ministry of Education, National Electoral Court, Departmental Electoral Courts, Bolivian Association of Political Science and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Over 200 civil society organizations have been involved in IRI activities, including juntas vecinales, labor unions and teacher organizations.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Create forums in which Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) will aggregate and advocate their interests to political parties.
2. Legitimize political parties through a civic/education campaign and the development of related contents to be included in high school curricula.

IV. QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES

This was the final quarter of activity for the IRI Bolivia project, launched in November 2003. During the month of April the remaining programmatic activity reached its conclusion, and the month of May was dedicated to close-out procedures. The month of June saw only administrative activity.

As of last quarter, the following components of the project had been completed: civil society forums, the TV program “*Democracia*”, journalist and media trainings, radio programs and the high school civic education program. The programmatic activities conducted this quarter were part of the seminar series on democratic values.

Seminar Series: Democratic Values and Principles

Information gathered through focus groups and polling indicates that the majority of Bolivian citizens understand democracy through only one of its characteristics: voting and elections. This limited understanding of democracy undermines the population’s ability to develop a profound democratic political culture that goes beyond the election cycle.

In an effort to deepen civic understanding of democracy, IRI partnered with the Bolivian Association of Political Science (ABCP) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) in the development of an instructional seminar on the values and principles upon which a democracy is based. The seminar is designed as a seven-hour course that explores the democratic principles of liberty, equality and pluralism, as well as the democratic values of tolerance, dialogue, civic participation, responsibility, equity, transparency and solidarity. The course is designed for an audience of adult leaders who have already participated in a leadership course sponsored by the IDEA Foundation and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF). Participants include leaders from civil society, unions, political parties, farm groups, neighborhood civic committees and universities, as well as locally elected officials including council members and prefects.

This quarter, five trainings were held in the cities of El Alto, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and

Trinidad. Participants totaled over 215, including university students, public sector employees and civic committee members. They expressed special interest in discussing the issues of autonomy, natural resources and the constituent assembly.

Combined with last quarter's ten trainings in La Paz, Santa Cruz, Oruro, Cochabamba, Sucre, Tarija and Potosi, the seminar series trained 648 people in total. Post-seminar evaluations show that 80% of participants find the information provided high or very high in relevance to their civic activities, and cite refreshing and/or bettering their understanding of the material as the reason for participating in the seminars. Response to the seminar courses has been extremely positive, with participants emphasizing that the knowledge they gained will be critical to their effective civic participation.

V. RESULTS AND INDICATORS

Result 1:

To deepen Bolivian civil society's understanding of the democratic process and improve its relations with political parties, IRI will:

Indicator 1:

Create forums in which Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) will aggregate and advocate their interests to political parties.

All CSO activities were concluded during the first quarter of 2005.

Indicator 2:

Legitimize political parties and democracy writ large through a civic education campaign and the development of related contents to be included in high school curricula.

The IRI project to foment democratic values in civic leaders was implemented in five cities and 215 leaders participated.

VI. EVALUATION

This quarter, the seminars on democratic values and principles provided Bolivian leaders with a more thorough understanding of the values intrinsic to a democracy. This training will help them in their capacity as community leaders to implement the principles of democracy and create a democratic culture that extends beyond the election cycle.

Over the course of the project, IRI has effectively linked programmatic activities with Bolivia's current events such as the referendum, elections and the upcoming constitutional assembly. Linking activities with Bolivia's current events ties democratic theory to tangible, real life processes, therefore contributing to the development of a permanent democratic culture in Bolivia. IRI was successful in creating active and highly participatory forums in which civil society actors interfaced with political party leaders. IRI provided technical training to Bolivia's media in rural and urban

areas, contributing to a more professional and resourceful and focused press corps. The radio and TV campaigns reached Bolivia's general public, taking civic education out of the classroom and into people's homes. Finally, the high school civic education project involved nearly 90% of all Bolivian high school social studies teachers, leaving an identifiable IRI thumbprint on the country's high school curriculum.

VII. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

This was the project's final quarter of activities.