

IFES/TAJIKISTAN QUARTERLY REPORT

Q1-02 -- October -- December 2001

I. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

CIVIC EDUCATION

Student Action Committees

During the first Quarter of 2002, IFES/Tajikistan achieved progress in its Student Action Committee (SAC) program by finalizing and printing updated teacher training manuals for training sessions held in Khojand and Dushanbe. On October 10, Project Assistant Moukim Mallaev conducted the first of two teacher-training seminars in Khojand, with forty-four teachers and one student from 33 schools in Khojand and Chkalovsk in attendance. Kironshoh Sharifzoda, who served as a trainer at the IFES Summer Democracy Summer Camp at Kairakum in August 2001, conducted the second SAC teacher-training seminar along with Mallaev in Dushanbe on October 16. Thirty-two teachers and one student were present representing 17 schools and the Youth and Children Centre of Dushanbe. Iskandar Aminov, Deputy of the Education Department of Dushanbe (GORONO), participated in this training as well. During both trainings, teachers were asked to submit suggestions to IFES regarding any changes or additions they felt would improve the effectiveness of the SAC manual. Moukim Mallaev also met with students and teachers of schools who had participated in the 2001 SACs to get their impressions and feedback for use in the new round of trainings.

Following SAC trainings in Khojand, arrangements were made to familiarize key officials in Khatlon Oblast/Kulyab, including Deputy Odinaev of the Majlisi Namoyandagon, with IFES' upcoming civic education plans for the region. National and local governmental officials representing this region were asked to offer letters of support for IFES' work in their respective areas, with Deputy Odinaev expressing his readiness to assist IFES with Kulyab-area, school-based activities.

In November, following the October SAC training seminars, Program Assistant Moukim Mallaev, under the direction of Project Manager Christopher Shields, held follow-up meetings with several participants of those seminars. Mallaev met with the students and teachers of Dushanbe schools #53 and #7 and the directors of the schools #42 and #7. IFES was informed that a SAC was already organized in the Dushanbe school #95.

Student Action Committee training was held in Kurghon-Teppa on November 16. The total number of participants was 16: 11 teachers, 3 students, and 2 Education Department representatives attending the event. Kironshoh Sharifzoda, the Director of NGO "Social Partnership", conducted the training along with Moukim Mallaev. The head of the Education Department of Kurghon-Teppa, Mrs. Kasimova, thanked IFES for organizing the seminar. The Education Department expressed its readiness to continue cooperation with IFES in the future on this and other projects.

Student Local Government Day

Christopher Shields and Moukim Mallaev contacted the Ideology department of the Dushanbe Hukumat to discuss the SLGD project. While IFES received commitments to conduct SLGDs in Kulyab, Kurghon-Teppa, Khojand, and Leninskii Rayon (Areas of Republican Subordination), IFES did not receive a final commitment from the Dushanbe Gorono to conduct the SLGD. During a conversation with IFES, the head of the Ideology department indicated that a meeting could be set up following IFES consultation with the Education department (Gorono). Mr. Gairatov, head of the Gorono indicated to the Hukumat that he supported the IFES SLGD project. By the end of the Quarter IFES arranged a meeting with the Hukumat for early January 2002.

In Khojand, Mallaev met with Ms. Muinova, IFES' main contact in the Khojand City Hukumat, and Mr. Aslonov, the Deputy Head of the Education Department. Since the Head of Education Department was recently appointed and is new to the programs, Aslonov introduced the SLGD project and invited the new head for the opening of SLGD training on January 7. Civic Education teachers and representatives of the Khojand Hukumat, Prosecutor's Office, Interior Department, Justice Department, Court and Education Department were invited to attend the training.

Guided by Program Manager Christopher Shields, Program Assistant Moukim Mallaev traveled to Kulyob to introduce the SAC/SLGD projects. Mallaev met with Abdujabbor Shamsov, Kulyob's Chief Prosecutor, Nozimov Talabkhuja, the Head of Kulyob Education Department, and Vosieva Horonbi, Deputy Chairman of Hukumat/Head of Ideology Department to introduce the SLGD program and invite their offices to participate in the project. All three officials were eager to learn about IFES programs and expressed interest in co-operating and hosting students during the Student Local Government Day.

The end of 2001 was intense for IFES/Tajikistan staff as it worked to finalize the results of its activities during the year and prepare for new projects in the upcoming months. Updated teacher training manuals for Student Action Committee (SAC) program were finalized and printed and training sessions were successfully held throughout Tajikistan. These SLGD/SAC projects encouraged greater student involvement in the affairs of their communities, thus strengthening democratic system and well-informed, active and open civic society in Tajikistan.

Civic Education Course/Materials Development

Progress was made in the first Quarter of 2002 with the IFES Civic Education Textbook for 9th grade students. Project Manager Christopher Shields and IFES/Tajikistan Textbook Development Consultant Simon Jenkins. In light of the security situation in Tajikistan, Jenkins traveled to Bishkek to continue his work on the Tajik textbook out of the IFES office in Kyrgyzstan. Jenkins was later able to travel to Dushanbe, but while in Bishkek worked on editing textbook submissions by local Tajik authors, as well as organizing testing of student exercises in Dushanbe. Work on the Tajikistan book focused on systematically enhancing the Russian translation of chapters to enable the Tajik translation to move forward more quickly. Efforts were then initiated to locate a professional Tajik translator to render the best possible translation of the material and to assure quality control in translating the Tajikistan book based on lessons learned.

Upon his return to Dushanbe, Consultant Simon Jenkins assessed progress made on the remaining chapters and continued to work on the first version of the Tajik civic education textbook. He met with a number of local contributors, soliciting their recommendations for the book, and organized a group of 9th and 10th graders to test several student exercises for implementation in Tajikistan. These student “focus groups” spend considerable time testing the IFES exercises, and were guided by volunteer teachers trained by IFES.

During a meeting with Ms. Mohinisso Horisova, one of the local textbook contributors, it was learned that the teachers themselves have begun to undertake work on civic education programming, based on exercises developed by IFES, using their own time and resources. IFES was pleased to see the initiative taken by teachers in Sughd Oblast, who essentially commenced using the IFES draft pilot textbook materials to enhance and augment existing civic education curricula.

The IFES civic education began to attract more attention in Tajikistan by the end of the Quarter, with the OSCE already requesting permission to use certain IFES textbook activities in their field offices in Shahrtuz and Kurgan-Teppa. Similar interest to use IFES textbook was expressed by the “Nargis” Street Law Program.

By the end of the Quarter only one chapter remained to be drafted for the textbook. The chapter on “nation building” was being prepared by a local author and expected by IFES in January. It was decided by the end of the Quarter to divide the textbook into two parts, similar to the format used in Kyrgyzstan. The “nation building” chapter was to be included in part I following its receipt and review by IFES. Though delays in the project continued as a result of the security situation, IFES remained confident that parts of the forthcoming textbook could be piloted in select schools once the new semester begins in January 2002. A formal textbook piloting is set will begin later in 2002, following a final approval of the draft document and support for the course curriculum by the Ministry of Education.

University Civic Education

Work on this project was delayed initially due to security conditions prompted by September 11. Contact was later made with individual professors from two universities in Dushanbe for the purpose of providing informational resources and extracting commitments to undertake a pilot project in 2002 following approval of the student course materials.

POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT

Study Tour

IFES/Tajikistan Project Manager Christopher Shields led a delegation of 12 women political party representatives on a one-week tour of Germany and the Czech Republic. With funding provided by AED and logistical assistance from the George C. Marshall Center, Shields and Project Assistant Bahridin Sharipov organized an intensive agenda for the visiting party officials under the theme “Women in Politics.” The goal of the tour was to assist Tajik women political party activists in strengthening their roles in the parties and in parliament, showing them

how their counterparts in other countries identify and address key issues affecting women, and providing an inside glimpse of the legislative and political structures of long-standing democracies and newly-emerging democracies.

Marshall Center Professor Dr. Roger Kangas, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty contact Dr. Abbas Djavadi provided tremendous support that enabled participants to visit Germany and Czech Republic. Dr. Vasil Hudak and Dagmira Ašerova of the Prague Center of the East-West Institute also provided crucial assistance in making critical contacts and setting up meetings in Prague for the Study Tour.

The Study Tour included Deputy Speaker of Parliament Gulafzo Savriddinova, and members of the Parliament Laili Babaeva and Rano Samieva. In addition to three women-members of parliament, representatives of nine officially registered political parties and movements also participated: Barno Ashrapova of the Communist Party; Nargis Kholova of the Islamic Renaissance Party; Hurinisso Ghafforzoda of the Independent/National Reconciliation Party; Horisova Mohinisso of the Socialist Party; Asliya Shogunbekova of the Democratic Party; Kalonova Maisara of the Movement for National Unity and Reconciliation; Khojaeva Maisara of the Jzhunbish Movement; Mavzuna Karimova of the Congress of National Unity; and Zebunisso Bakhtibekova of the La'li Badakhsha Movement

The group spent the first working day of the Study Tour at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in a series of facilitation exercises, as well as presentations by several Marshall Center faculty members. Following the work at the Marshall Center, the group visited political representatives and elected officials in the German State of Bavaria, including the Deputy Chairman of the Bavarian Parliament (Landtag). Additionally, the group traveled to Prague where they met with their respective Czech political party and parliamentary counterparts, including the Deputy Speaker of the Czech Parliament and the most senior member of the Czech Senate.

The Munich-Prague study tour provided a hands-on opportunity for the Tajik women political party activists to explore ways of strengthening their role in their parties as well as the role of women in society. The party representatives hailed the trip as a one-of-a-kind opportunity to assess women's stature in both local and national government in established and new democracies. While issues affecting women's participation in politics are more pronounced in Tajikistan than in Germany or Czech Republic, particularly among those women from parties other than the People's Democratic Party, the group learned of some of the hardships suffered by women seeking equal rights in Europe and took home lessons learned in successful women's advocacy.

Organizational Development

On November 13 and 14, IFES/Tajikistan held a seminar on website training and development for political parties and movements. Representatives of all political parties or movements, except for La'li Badakhshan, participated in the seminar. Working with IFES, trainers and providers from local media organizations and NGOs including Tantis, GIPI, CADA, Tajik Telecom, Babylon-T and the Ministry of Communication covered theoretical and practical issues, such as creation of web-pages and web sites, Internet legislation in Tajikistan, how to use

search engines, regional and world-wide Internet domains, Tajik font, anti-virus programs, and computer security information. Participants were first familiarized with the whole notion of using the Internet as an effective outreach medium, and gained a better understanding of the demographics of Internet users in Tajikistan. It was learned that college students tend to be the heaviest users, which is a group particularly targeted by parties for recruitment.

Participants were also introduced to Internet and e-mail services as modern means of communication and mass media. The provision of low Internet costs or free access for political parties, movements, and NGOs was reviewed. At the conclusion of the website training, participants finalized a protocol on possible ways of accessing Internet with the support of local and international organizations.

The seminar helped participating political parties and movements to update their knowledge of various ways to communicate with each other and reach out to voters using Internet resources. Furthermore, it raised the necessity of low or no costs for Internet access for political parties, movements and NGOs, and addressed some of the most common communication problems encountered.

Publication of Political Party Development Manual

A revised and final draft version of the Political Party Directory in both Russian and English languages was sent to the IFES/Washington office for review and publication. The document is expected to be printed and presented in late January/early February 2002.

The Political Party Manual, to be prepared with focus on election strategies, was discussed by PM Christopher Shields and a group of local election experts in Dushanbe. A draft document was prepared by departed Political Party Development Consultant Philip Griffin and shared with Shields. The document awaits adaptations based on the specific Tajik electoral experience of 1999 and 2000. Publication has been re-targeted for the spring of 2002.

Youth/Women's Outreach

No activities were undertaken during this Quarter.

Parliamentary Politics and Political Parties Project

No activities were undertaken during this Quarter.

Parties Media Outreach Project

No activities were undertaken during this Quarter.

TECHNICAL ELECTION ASSISTANCE

No activities were undertaken during this Quarter.

II. MATERIALS PRODUCED

- Final, revised version of Political Party directory (English and Russian languages) sent to IFES/Washington office for review and publication.

III. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

Political Party Development

While slowed by the events of 11 September, the Political Party Development programming slowly came back on schedule by the end of the Quarter. Plans for Year Two seminars are underway, although later than originally planned. This was due to security concerns, including the inability of the Project Manager to travel to Tajikistan for some weeks following the terrorist attacks. Once back in Dushanbe, however, it was determined that security would allow for a resumption of work. As the Project Manager was new to the program, there was a significant amount of startup and orientation work (including meeting all local partners) that had to be done in advance of a full resumption of activities. With plans proceeding for continued “organizational development” events well in the works, the IFES work calendar of seminars should be completely on track by the end of February.

Tajik Women Political Leaders Study Tour

Despite the fact that IFES had been involved in three previous Study Tours, a lack of information regarding the logistical arrangements for the Study Tour caused an inordinate amount of time to be spent in its preparations. Some of this was due to the presence of a new Project Manager who had not been present when the event was originally consummated in June 2001. However, information developed as well as “lessons learned” from this most recent trip to Munich and Prague will be accumulated into a catalogue of logistical contacts for future Study Tours.

Civic Education

Projects under this rubric also suffered delays due to the events of September 11. IFES was unable to dispatch Consultant Simon Jenkins to Dushanbe as planned until November. Jenkins did work on the Tajik textbook from his temporary posting in Kyrgyzstan, and in that capacity communicated with IFES staff in Dushanbe, but direct contact with contributors as well as with Ministry of Education officials was not possible for some time. Furthermore it was determined that the textbook needed a greater deal of revision than first thought due to growing evidence of deteriorating comprehension levels in Tajik schools.

Civic Education activities related to SACs, SLGDs, and Democracy Summer Camps proceeded according to schedule.

The civic education textbook project encountered additional delays based on the continually changing registration procedures, which is necessary before an official Protocol of Understanding can be signed to allow official collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Without this official status, the Ministry of Education will not allow IFES Tajikistan to conduct pilot classes with the book. Even then, the Ministry of Education may decide that the Textbook Panel of the Pedagogical Institute may need to review the book before it can even be tested in a pilot program. Fortunately, the continued degree of editing required of local submissions has been mostly resolved, although one major chapter only recently received will require major overhauling. In order to speed both the draft publication and the pilot classes, the book has been divided into two volumes to allow the completed chapters to be brought forward for testing. A series of classroom simulations have been conducted in the IFES office, with students providing

essential feedback on the chapters tested. These simulations have provided useful empirical data that move the project forward.

Computer System

The computer network server for the office, plagued by SirCam virus, corrupted the Server Registry and required the purchase of new equipment. This problem caused considerable disruption in the office's ability to perform effectively. IFES purchased a new server for the office and by the end of the Quarter awaited the arrival of the computer consultant for the new server and network installation. Until that installation is completed, there will continue to be service disruptions in the office.

E-Mail/Internet

While e-mail service is provided by the Central Asian Development Agency free of charge, its system is dependent on a decrepit and increasingly overburdened telephone network. As an example, any measurable amount of rain or snow results in the outage of IFES telephone lines in the office, leaving it unable to communicate by phone, fax or e-mail. The use of a dedicated line was considered until IFES was informed that dedicated lines are no more reliable than the regular dial-up lines currently used. One means of resolving this problem will be change the IFES e-mail system to what is known as an "air-bridge" which is based on the use of a radio modem, operating independently of telephone land lines. Based on a review of the Internet costs over the past year, a 64Kb connection could be obtained at a discounted rate through the offices of the organization of Internet Service Providers, Tantis, with whom IFES Tajikistan has worked closely over the past several years.

Registration with the Ministry of Justice

Many of the issues have been overcome, and it was thought that with the receipt of an officially sealed copy of the Board Resolution detailing the IFES Representative in Tajikistan, that all documentation issues were complete. However, IFES was informed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will require that IFES have all of its documents "authenticated" by the US Embassy. The Embassy has informed IFES that they do not have the authority to "authenticate" documents, and that IFES would need to send all the documents to the State Department, which could take weeks, if not months. At the end of the Quarter IFES began pursuing the matter with the USAID Tajikistan Country Representative Michael Harvey for guidance.