

Republic of Tajikistan

**FY 2003 QUARTERLY REPORT (4th Quarter)
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**Submitted to the
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES)

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I. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

Political Party Development

During the Fourth Quarter of 2003, IFES continued meeting regularly with representatives of political parties and movement to discuss election-related issues in light of the June 22 Constitutional Referendum and planning for forthcoming parliamentary elections in 2005. IFES Project Manager Christopher Shields and Project Deputy Bahriddin Sharipov met with Rahmatullo Valiev, the Deputy Chairman of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan. The DPT opted to boycott the referendum, though individual members were free to follow their own right to vote. The DPT conducted its next Congress in July, which IFES attended as official invitees. IFES provided the DPT with copies of the Constitutional Law "On Political Parties of Tajikistan" which was shared with other party members.

IFES met with officials representing the Socialist Party of Tajikistan. The SPT was also critical of using referenda as a tool to support legal changes, though the party did not expressly boycott the referendum. They indicated that a more concentrated effort of voter education should have been carried out in order to make the voting population fully aware and understanding of the changes proposed to the constitution, appreciating both the pros and cons of the measure. IFES contributed to voter education by distributing flyers providing basic information about the referendum to voters, a project supported by the British Embassy in Dushanbe. The timing of the referendum, however, made the mobilization of a fuller, nationwide voter information campaign extremely challenging.

IFES met with Rahmatullo Zoirov, who had recently submitted his resignation as Senior Presidential Advisor, citing differences between his party's (the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan) position on the referendum and the government's position. Having served over 1 ½ years as Presidential Advisor, Dr. Zoirov now intends to devote his full energies to leading the SDPT and preparing for elections in February 2005. Dr. Zoirov has been a regular participant at IFES-sponsored roundtable discussions as well as a supporter of IFES projects designed to enhance the development of multi-party democracy in the country.

IFES representatives held a discussion with Qurbonjon Mirzoeva and Barno Ashrapova of the Communist Party of Tajikistan. The Communist Party of Tajikistan conducted its Plenum on July 5. IFES learned about the post-referendum plans of the CPT, which included expanded printing and distribution of the party's newsletter, the development of I.D.s for members, and discussions concerning the party's platform and outreach strategy. In previous trainings, IFES had worked with all parties to reshape their outreach and communications efforts, and several parties, including the CPT, have taken advantage of the training to improve their appeal to existing and potential constituents. IFES also conducted training on increasing the participation of women in parties' activities, and specifically on creating women's interest subcommittees within each party. The CPT worked with its members in Soghd and Khatlon Oblast, and discussed the matter with party leaders, which eventually led to the establishment of a Committee in Khatlon. A CPT Women's Committee had been created earlier for constituents in Soghd Oblast.

Christopher Shields and Bahriddin Sharipov met with Rano Akhunova, head of the NGO “*Women Voters*”. She said that in the pre-referendum campaign her NGO conducted a series of discussions with women to inform and motivate them to take an interest in understanding the ramifications of the referendum. Her conclusions were that international and domestic organizations working for the development of democracy should put greater effort in promoting civic education, especially civic activism and information about political rights. Shields described the IFES civic education/textbook project as one approach it has taken through secondary schools to teach high school students about civics and democracy, using an approach of interactive classroom methodology. While the project got under way in fourteen pilot schools in the winter of 2003, that number is expected to reach as many as 100 for the upcoming school year. IFES also described their past work with women candidates and voters, such as the *School of Political Leadership for Women* sponsored by IFES before the previous parliamentary elections in 2000. Akhunova was impressed at IFES’ civic education portfolio and expressed her interest for future collaboration.

Bahriddin Sharipov and Political Party Development Assistant Ramsia Mamadnazarova finalized plans for implementation of upcoming IFES activities in support of political party development, which include traveling to 10 districts near Dushanbe to create a directory of party officials, offices, and contact numbers. The mission began with travel to Kofarnihon, Faizobod, Hissor and Shahrinav, where information was gathered to include in the directory.

IFES met with Maisara Kalonova, head of International Friendship Association and member of the Movement of National Unity and Revival of Tajikistan. She expressed her appreciation for being invited to participate in IFES’ Women’s Study tour to Munich and Prague and said she was interested in cooperating with IFES in sphere of elections. IFES briefed her of recent project developments and discussed future plans for training women to be active participants in politics and in forthcoming national and local elections.

IFES Project Manager Christopher Shields departed in July, and Interim Project Manager Bradley Austin arrived to lead the project through the rest of the quarter. Austin was introduced to IFES’ local political party contacts and expressed his enthusiasm at continuing programming to support the development of a vibrant multi-party democracy in Tajikistan. All party representatives expressed their desire for continued, fruitful cooperation with IFES. They acknowledged IFES’ long-standing commitment to political party development in Tajikistan as indispensable, and believe the presence of IFES has served to promote and encourage political pluralism and the development of democracy.

IFES held a meeting with Davlatali Davlatov and Muso Asozoda of the People’s Democratic Party of Tajikistan. IFES shared information on its forthcoming programmatic activities, including regional sessions for women’s advocates and for party branches, which will take place in the fall. Both PDPT members liked the idea of reaching out to regional party branches, and encouraged IFES to expand its programmatic reach to include all districts in the country.

IFES attended the Fourth Congress of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, which was held in Dushanbe. Representatives of diplomatic missions, international organizations, government officials, political parties and mass media attended the Congress. A total of 301 out of 330 IRPT delegates comprised the party congress. Muhiddin Kabiri, who also runs the political discussion group "Dialogue" round tables and who is a key partner of IFES', presided over the Congress. Among the topics on the party's agenda were issues of gender equality, a theme IFES has been promoting with all parties for well over two years.

Women's subcommittees of local branches of the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan conducted a series of seminars and conferences titled "Girls in Leadership", which involved a group of 28 female university students. High-ranking government officials and members of the party as well as other local organizations served as trainers. PDPT women's subcommittees intend to publish brochures promoting women's increased role in politics, which was a recommendation made by IFES, which would serve as a unique manual for party members, students, NGOs and other circles of readers.

The series of meetings IFES held this quarter with representatives of local political parties was designed to gauge their interests and needs for the forthcoming period to help IFES define priority areas in its new cooperative agreement proposal. The meetings contributed towards IFES ongoing goal of expanding the communications and outreach capacity of the parties by helping assess their capabilities and highlighting necessary areas of improvement. The meetings also reinforced IFES commitment to working with political parties at the national and local level and strengthened IFES' working relationships with the party representatives.

Civic Education

Democracy Summer Camps

IFES conducted its final four Democracy Summer Camps of 2003 in July and August. Two Camps were held at the Zuhul Campsite near Khojand for students from Soghd Oblast. The format for the Zuhul camps was consistent, with students receiving instruction through daily seminars on key issue areas such as human rights, civil society, elections, governance, leadership, conflict resolution, and gender equality. Learning was enhanced through role playing, games and "auctions," culminating in an election for student president of the camp. Students were able to sharpen their communications skills and develop new friendships in the process by interacting with peers from different regions.

Students at the Zuhul camps were treated to visits by local celebrities, including the famous Tajik poet Farzona, the famous Tajik Actress Sairam Isoeva, and representatives of the People's Democratic Party, Islamic Renaissance Party, Social Democratic Party and Democratic Party of Soghd Oblast. Students met with regional leaders of the parties and asked questions with regard to their activities. Also in attendance were members of the local Hukumat, NGO leaders, and the Deputy Dean of Khojand University.

IFES conducted its Soghd Oblast Democracy Summer Camps together with its main local NGO partner *Chashmai Hayot*, led by Director Rafoat Boboeva.

The final Summer Camps in Karatag opened with welcoming remarks from Project Manager Christopher Shields, Mr. Saifulloev of the Ministry of Education of Republic of Tajikistan, and other local guests. Seventy students attended each of the three Camps in Karatag, representing an extremely diverse makeup of regions. As their counterparts in Soghd Oblast, students learned about democracy and civil society through interactive exercises, focusing on improving communications skills and how to be proactive problem-solvers. Each day of the camps had a different theme, which challenged students to develop mastery of new topics on a daily basis.

A student presidential election was conducted at each camp. Candidates collected signatures from the student “constituents”, with only those collecting 25 signatures being eligible for candidacy to become Summer Camp President. Typically the elections came down to two students, who then conducted full election campaigns among student voters. Other students played the role of election officials, with others working as election monitors and candidate advisors. Candidate debates were held, and the voting was undertaken by secret ballot. The exercise helped students appreciate the need for creative outreach and strong communications, and gave them an opportunity to further develop public speaking skills, which is an essential ingredient of leadership.

Over 280 students participated in the four Democracy Summer Camps held in the months of July and August.

With the conclusion of the sixth and final Democracy Summer Camp in Karatag, IFES/Tajikistan completed its workplan obligations for the 2003 fiscal year. These Camps brought civic education and practical training to more than 400 students in Tajikistan, opening their eyes to their rights and responsibilities. The camps received a good amount of media attention and cooperation by local NGOs, other development organizations and officials. Most of all, the program laid the groundwork for the continuation of effective in-school civic education through related IFES programs.

The final Democracy Summer Camp report was formatted and finalized by IFES staff in Dushanbe. The report lists the experiences and achievements of the six 2003 camps, and includes pictures and overviews of testing results and major lessons learned, along with recommendations for the holding of similar camps in the future. Also included were the impressions of DSC volunteers and other local partners, whose recommendations were included in the final report.

Civic Education Textbook

Mr. Mamadnazar Rajabov, head of the Tajik Critical Thinking Association and Mrs. Lyubov Dudko a trainer from the Association, visited the IFES office and provided the agenda for forthcoming teacher trainings. Upon receipt of its new Cooperative Agreement, IFES will conduct intensive teacher training in order to prepare secondary

school instructors the knowledge they need to lead the civic education course and textbook project, which will enter its second year of use. The number of participating schools is expected to increase dramatically from 14 to as many as 100, thanks to the support provided by the Ministry of Education. Training teachers in Interactive Classroom Methodology is critical in assuring that students make the most of their time in the classroom. The textbooks, which are being printed in Tajik, and which have already been printed in Russian, contain a number of classroom-based interactive exercises as well as providing information on Tajik politics, history, civil society and international norms of democracy. The Ministry of Education has already approved and authorized the textbook to be used in schools, and preparations for further printing have commenced. Training, which will take at least one day to complete for each group of teachers, is expected to begin in November.

A human rights newspaper in Dushanbe published a lesson from chapter 3 of the IFES textbook Citizenship and Participation in Government, Your Role in Civil Society in the 21st Century. The lesson featured a discussion of human rights, which has grown in importance as a theme in Tajikistan and has become more openly acknowledged. An interview with IFES Project Assistant Salohiddin Shamsiddinov was conducted and later published for the teachers' newspaper *Omuzgor*.

IFES Textbook Coordinator Sayora Grezova met with Mr. Shuhrat Rajabov, Representative of the Department for International Development at the British Embassy. The current status of the IFES textbook was discussed, and Grezova provided Rajabov the second volume of the textbook in English. Also discussed was possible future printing support for the textbook. The British Embassy has been a generous supporter of IFES programming in Tajikistan, and IFES hopes that the relationship will continue to bear fruit in the future.

IFES met with representatives of the Ministry of Education, who formally presented IFES with an approved list of schools that will be using the student civics textbook during the new school year. The schools are geographically diverse, and include schools in all regions of the country. IFES is also in discussion with the Ministry to expand the program to the CARE International Secondary Schools in order to increase the reach of the project.

A large facet of IFES work during the next program year will revolve around the civic education textbook. This document, delivered to the Ministry during previous months, continues to be reviewed and should get approval shortly after the beginning of the new school year. To bring the text to the schools IFES worked the Ministry to get their approval for new schools. IFES also heard from additional schools expressing their interest to participate in the program.

Interim Project Manager Bradley Austin began talks with Nancy Keel, Junior Achievement International Regional Director, about conducting joint training sessions for schools the two programs have in common. IFES shared information on its school-based

activities and textbook in order to find common ground on which the two organizations can partner during the upcoming school year.

The Ministry of education delivered a letter to IFES approving new schools in the current academic year. IFES received a letter from the Ministry of Education concerning IFES' request to increase the number of participating pilot schools for the 2003-2004 academic year from 14 to up to 120. The Ministry of Education informed that in accordance with the signed agreement between the Ministry of Education and IFES, 30 secondary schools were listed for pilot courses. However, the Ministry indicated that it would embrace the inclusion of four times as many schools as long as it had the same degree of monitoring and input into the project. In order to formally address the relationship with the Ministry and the governing of the project, IFES is preparing a revised version of its Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry. Proposed language in the new agreement will state explicitly that the Ministry shall approve a set number of Russian and Tajik language schools in various regions of Tajikistan.

To provide ongoing support to its growing list of pilot schools, IFES issued the second volume of its semi-regular Teachers Newsletter, which features information on the IFES civics course, other IFES school-based activities, and highlights achievements of the past school year. It is expected that this newsletter will become a regular feature of the IFES civic education program in Tajikistan under the new Cooperative Agreement with USAID.

IFES representatives met with Basia Urban and her colleagues from Schools Online. The IFES Tajikistan staff cooperated with Schools Online to create a distribution and collection network for their program application, and IFES also worked with them to make the application relevant for the target schools. The programs' cooperation will help the students to work with the IFES programs while generating interest in it for additional schools and the schools overseas partners, as part of the Schools Online program. IFES, as a subgrantee under the "School Connectivity Project" to Schools Online and Relief International, is responsible for providing training in the conduct of SACs to new students and teachers. The goal of the project is to adapt the SACs for online use in selected schools. The two groups discussed the means of selecting participating schools, and IFES provided Schools Online with a list of contact persons of NGOs and City Education Departments of Khatlon, Sughd oblasts and Areas of Republican Subordination of Tajikistan to better facilitate their program.

Student Action Committees

IFES visited the constituent meeting of one of its SACs in the Commercial Gymnasium in Dushanbe. Students at the meeting asked IFES for advice on how to arrange and plan activities. They developed their SAC Charter and students determined the SAC objectives. IFES staff visited Dushanbe schools and other district schools around Dushanbe, including the education department offices, to assist in the establishment of additional SACs, in accordance with IFES' new, three-year plan under USAID. All schools interested in establishing SACs received manuals containing objectives and goals of the Students Action Committees project. Some SACs in Dushanbe met of their own

accord to exchange information on their respective work and experiences. Students and teachers shared ideas and activities that they conducted within their schools and communities. There was a SAC Experience Exchange Meeting held at Dushanbe School #53. The mentor of Dushanbe School SAC #53, Mrs. Lutfiya Bobieva, with support of the school director, Mr. Abdurazokov organized the meeting, which included twenty participants from four area schools. Students decided to conduct SAC Experience Exchange Meetings every month, rotating locations so that each school could host a session. The initiative shown by the schools was reflective of IFES' wish for the SACs to become replicating and self-sustaining, a goal that was well on its way to being met among the participating Dushanbe-area schools.

IFES scheduled a trip to Khorog in Gorno-Badakhshan for October in order to conduct training for the SAC and Student Local Government Day projects. Partner NGOs were contacted for local support. Qironshoh Sharifzoda, Director of NGO "Social Partnership" was interviewed and he was selected as an additional trainer for training SAC and SLGD sessions, along with IFES staff persons Salohiddin Shamsiddionov and Bakhtiyor Gadoev.

University Conversation Clubs

IFES worked with a part-time consultant to help organize and initiate new series of its University Conversation Clubs project. The first in a new series of University Conversation Clubs was held on September 27 at the *Firdousi* Central Library. There were 59 students from various universities such as Tajik National- State University, Tajik Technical University, Tajik Teacher-training University, Humanitarian International University of Dushanbe, Institute of Business and Service of Dushanbe, Tajik Agrarian University, Tajik- Turkish School, Slovenian University, etc. The main themes of this conversation club were New Exchange Program Opportunities and Study or Work Abroad. Guest speakers were: Robert Reno- Deputy Regional Director of IREX and Sitara Shokamolova, Representative from International Association of Exchanges for Students with Technical Experiences.

Elections Issues

The work of a governmental commission reviewing the Constitutional Law "On Elections to the Majlisi Oli" continued at the OSCE. IFES is a member of the International Working Group providing assistance to the government and other non-governmental partners to draft possible amendments to the election code. The commission ultimately completed their review and provided recommendations for improving the document. There remained major differences between political parties and others concerning the law, however, and it was further realized that changes of the law on elections to the Majlisi Oli will also require changes to the law on Elections to Local Majlises.

IFES met with the Chairman of the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda Mr. Mirzoali Boltuyev. Christopher Shields introduced Bradley Austin as Interim Project Manager. Boltuyev informed IFES that political parties have commenced their pre-

election campaigns for the 2005 parliamentary elections. Boltuyev was aware of the IFES political discussion group series, and told IFES that UNTOP has also been conducting such events. Boltuyev lauded IFES and its fellow international partners for engaging the political parties at a local level and helping to build a multi-party democracy by engaging at the grassroots level

Impact Summary

Reaching more than 400 students through the Democracy Summer Camps project was a notable achievement for IFES in Tajikistan during this quarter. Students not only learned more about their rights as citizens and how to use them during the Democracy Summer Camps, but they also learned about how to do more in the future through sessions about IFES SAC and SLGD programs. The experience gained at the Camps will have an immediate benefit on students during the upcoming school year and should resonate well beyond that through students volunteering their time in communities and being proactively engaged in community service.

II. MATERIALS PRODUCED

- Final report, Democracy Summer Camps 2003 (available November 2003).
- Textbook Citizenship and Participation in Government, Your Role in Civil Society in the 21st Century, part I, Tajik Language (available in electronic form only until November 2003).

III. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

IFES' busy summer of 2003 was dominated by the Democracy Summer Camp project, which, while successful, placed great demands on staff capacity and logistical arrangements. IFES was fortunate to have received supplemental funding from USAID to increase the number of camps to six this year, and the results demonstrated that careful planning and organization is the cornerstone of any such large undertaking. IFES had largely completed the political party development of its portfolio during the summer after the Constitutional Referendum, and thus more effort was made to focus on the civic education activities including the Summer Camps and preparations for the textbook and course expansion. However, IFES did participate in a number of post-Referendum discussion groups with international and local partners to weigh in on the election law reform debate.

IFES experienced a personnel change during the quarter, with Christopher Shields departing his post in July. Bradley Austin, IFES/Kazakhstan Chief of Party, took over the Tajikistan project as Acting Project Manager. During this period IFES identified a permanent replacement in the person of Dr. Oskar Lehner, a specialist in civic education and political parties/elections. USAID formally approved his nomination in September, and Dr. Lehner was set to fly to Dushanbe to begin his work in late October. IFES also received funding under its new Cooperative Agreement, negotiations for which were conducting during this quarter, to maintain a second expatriate expert on site to work on political party development. IFES anticipates filling this position soon after the new workplan period commences.