



## IFES Quarterly Report: April 1 – June 30, 2005

### **Supporting Elections in Afghanistan** **USAID Associate Cooperative Agreement No. DFD-A-00-03-00033-00 under** **Leader Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**

**Project Period March 1, 2003 to November 30, 2005**  
**Total Budget: \$7,009,928 Expenses Recorded to Date: \$5,030,549**

#### **IMPACT STATEMENT**

During this quarter, IFES improved popular awareness of Afghan democratic institutions and processes by conducting 10,000 civic education majalis, reaching 222,500 men and women voters. Additionally, IFES initiated training of student volunteers as civic educators in Kabul schools. With both activities, IFES aimed to imbue democratic knowledge and ideals, which participants will share with fellow citizens, thereby widening the impact of its programming exponentially. One practical component of the training involved IFES civic educators testing six ballot designs for the JEMB, allowing direct citizen input. These tests were instrumental in the final ballot decision.

IFES continued its election administration capacity building in the run-up to the September 18 elections by training 128 of 136 newly appointed Provincial Electoral Commission members and secretaries in addition to continued training of IEC members. With the dual objectives of facilitating the elections on a tight schedule, and transferring election management skills to Afghani elections officials, IFES seconded three specialists to the JEMB: a coordinator for the Chief Electoral Officer, a budget analyst, and a post-election planner. An NDI pre-election assessment mission noted increased capacity of the elections bodies as the biggest step toward Afghanistan's democratic development.<sup>1</sup>

#### **BACKGROUND**

The objective of IFES' Supporting Elections in Afghanistan (SEA) project is:

*To support fair and participatory 2004 and 2005 national elections by providing targeted assistance in strategic planning and organizational support to the TISA (Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan) and the national electoral body.*

IFES proposed to meet this goal through: (a) Increasing citizen knowledge about, and participation in, the political process – particularly for women and ethnic minorities – through effective voter education by the electoral management body; and (b) Supporting the development of a credible electoral administration.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement of the NDI Pre-Election Delegation to Afghanistan. July 1, 2005. Page 7.

## ACTIVITIES

In this quarter, IFES continued its USAID-funded presence in Afghanistan. Program activities focused on:

- Civic/voter education
- Testing of six ballot designs for the JEMB
- Building the capacity of the IEC
- Building the knowledge base of election stakeholders
- Strengthening the electoral planning and implementation process

### *Civic Education Program Activities:*

67 IFES trainers and 12 coordinators conducted 6,146 majalis. IFES staff held face-to-face discussions in 804 villages in the six provinces of our area of responsibility in addition to sessions in 12 ministries and 222 schools. They educated 222,550 voters on the role of parliament, its composition and powers, and how it fits into the overall government structure under the new constitution.

During this period IFES majalis and programmatic material received airtime on Radio Wardak, Afghanistan Radio, and Radio Paghman.

In April, twelve IFES trainers acted as a focus group for Altai Consulting in its design of an electorate survey. The trainers performed a similar function for JEMBS in its preparation of voter education material. This cooperation continued on May 7<sup>th</sup> with a joint training session between IFES trainers and JEMB international supervisors and in June when IFES trainers in Kapisa and Wardak trained their JEMB counterparts at the request of the JEMB trainers.

In May, IFES initiated a special training for ten voting-age high school students to conduct majalis in their respective schools. By June the students were holding their own sessions with no assistance from adult IFES trainers. By June 30<sup>th</sup> seven of these students conducted 30 majalis for 1,137 students in five Kabul high schools. One female student conducted a majali of 32 attentive students, a teacher, and principal, and fielded more than twenty questions - all of which she answered superbly and without assistance.

IFES received a request from Governor Habiba Surobi to open an office and conduct civic education in Bamyan Province. The governor became familiar with our activity during her tenure as Minister of Women's Affairs and is an enthusiastic supporter of our approach to educating the public. Currently, we do not have the funds to expand beyond our mandate to work in the central region.

### *Citizen Input*

During civic education sessions throughout the central region this quarter, IFES trainers heard many comments about security for voters – particularly women voters – on

Election Day. This concern is heightened by the increasing presence of “night letters” threatening girls not to attend school as well as pressure on prospective candidates not to run. Recent killings of civic education trainers operating under other authority validate IFES’ approach of sending trainers out in groups.

In addition to security concerns, voters express a desire for information about candidates. IFES trainers indicate a citizen need to understand: why a parliament is needed, women’s rights and women’s role in parliament, the role of women as outlined in the Quran, freedom of movement for women and the right to work, the role of the ECC, what is meant by “civil society” and “democracy”, and how to mark a ballot. IFES continues to adapt its training to address the interests and concerns of an active citizenry.

### ***Election Related Activities:***

#### *IEC Capacity Building Activities*

IFES continued its capacity-building efforts with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) during the reporting period. Upon request of the IEC, IFES shifted its primary focus from capacity building activities for the IEC Commissioners to the election authority’s field structure. Given the increased importance of field operations in an election year, this request was both natural and anticipated by IFES. IFES did continue to offer training sessions to the IEC Commissioners via its consultant, Paul Anderson. Computer training also continued throughout the period. The JEMB requested additional technical expertise from IFES to assist in a number of mission critical tasks including:

#### *Designing a Media Results Center*

Having headed the Media Results Center for the 2004 presidential election, IFES consultant Paul Anderson was again requested to develop, in close cooperation with UNOPS and the JEMBS, the plan for this year’s Media Results Center. From July to late October, IFES will send Mr. Anderson to Kabul to manage the MRC for the JEMB.

#### *Post-Election Strategy Group*

The objective of the PESG is to develop a comprehensive post-election strategy for the electoral institution and the processes for which the institution will be responsible. The PESG will make recommendations on the political and legal framework, post election administration, retaining and capacity building of staff, involvement of donors and partners, and operational concept and budgets. IFES has provided Professor Rafael Lopez-Pintor as the Senior Election Expert to the PESG. He is also engaged in evaluating the JEMBS’ work to date in preparing for the forthcoming elections.

#### *Strengthening the JEMBS Chief of Staff’s Office*

The Chief of Staff’s office plays a pivotal role ensuring that election administration activities are cohesive and effective. To further strengthen the Chief of Staff’s office ability to manage 8,400 individuals employed by the election authority, IFES recruited Ms. Anne-Sofie Holm to assist the Chief of Staff in his daily duties. Key components of Ms. Holm’s work include: analyzing UNAMA-JEMBS communication systems; working

with the Media Commission on its new structure and resource needs; creating a database of Daily Instructions from departments, working on Standard Operating Procedures for a Staff Manual, designing a staff database to guide budget development, and; drafting a post-election strategy report.

#### *Election Budget Review*

In February 2005, the JEMB presented the donor community with a preliminary election budget. Subsequently, significant changes in the structure of the election administration and its programs have taken place. The total budget increased by \$10 million due to higher costs of ballots and ballot boxes, but was partly offset by reduced costs for national and international staff.

IFES contracted Mr. Peter Clayton to review and provide budget planning and management assistance to the JEMB. In consultation with the heads of all departments, Mr. Clayton led JEMB staff in calculating accurate costs by linking the staffing table to actual contract start and end dates. With assistance throughout June, the JEMB presented a revised elections budget to donors on July 11.

#### *International Election Commissioner*

Upon request by UNAMA's SRSG, Jean Arnault, IFES' Senior Election Administration Specialist, Staffan Darnolf, was appointed International Election Commissioner to the JEMB. Dr. Darnolf will be seconded from IFES to perform his duties with the JEMB.

#### *IEC Capacity Building*

IFES consultant Paul Anderson continued his media and media relations training with the IEC Commissioners in collaboration with the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR).

#### *Testing of Ballot Paper Designs*

Responding to a JEMB request for assistance with ballot design testing, IFES trained 60 of its existing Civic Education field staff to test and monitor ballot testing in all provinces of the central region. 1,500 Afghans took part in testing six different ballot paper designs. The JEMB later decided this year's design based on information collected in the exercise.

#### *Development of Election Complaints Commission*

IFES' Senior Election Administration Specialist, Staffan Darnolf, took a lead role in developing the Election Complaints Commission concept paper for the JEMBS.

#### *Provincial Electoral Commissions (PECs)*

With the objective of enabling the PECs to fulfill their responsibilities in administering the parliamentary and provincial elections, IFES conducted five-day training programs of PEC members and secretaries over a four week period in June of 2005. Working closely with the JEMBS and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), IFES designed and implemented the training based on IFES' Basic Election Administration Training (BEAT). 15 primary topics included the JEMB structure, PEC roles and structure, constitutional issues, laws and regulations, ethics in election administration, elections

planning, the role of the ECC, election monitoring and observation, and women in elections. 128 of 136 PEC members and secretaries from all 34 provinces attended the trainings.

Impressed with its scope and practical application, participants rated the training very highly – 92.26% of participants rated the 15 program modules a 4 or 5 on a five point scale of helpfulness.

Still, participants wanted more training and support from the JEMBS and ECC, while people involved with the JEMBS and ECC express hope that the PECs will become a fixture in future election administration in Afghanistan. For this to happen, the PECs must have the capacity to assume a substantial role in election administration. For this reason, future programming should be founded on competency-based training objectives.

A PEC Training working group has been formed and is planning future PEC training activities to enhance capacity building efforts initiated by IFES and carried on since early 2004.

#### **ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT QUARTER**

Over the next quarter, IFES will continue its civic education and technical assistance activities. In particular, IFES will focus its efforts on civic/voter education, building the capacity of the media results center, developing a post-election strategy, assisting with the budget management process, assisting in establishing the election complaint commission, and continued PEC training.