



INTERNATIONAL  
REPUBLICAN  
INSTITUTE

# Central Asian Program

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**TO:** Lori Murray

**MEMO RE:** Quarterly Report of Project Activities

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As pursuant to your request for the status of our project, this report will contain two, major sections--first, a synopsis of work conducted during the second quarter of 1994 (April 15-July 15); second, a conclusory report of IRI's activities throughout its grant period.

*It was decided during this quarter that IRI would close its Central Asia office, therefore, the field representatives spent a good portion of their time and efforts in "close-out" activities. These included the mundane aspects of trying to sublet IRI's office and residence, and the disposing of office equipment, to the more rewarding areas of assisting our local counterpart organizations learn more about other related development projects, helping them expand and coordinate their outreach activities, and to discover other resources that might be available to them.*

## PROGRAM GOALS & PURPOSES

The IRI works in the general field of democratic development and political training programs. IRI programming seeks to develop and consolidate institutions which (1) support pluralistic societies, (2) strengthen democratic institutions, and (3) foster the inclusion and constructive involvement of various segments of society in increasingly open and competitive political processes. As the IRI is committed to the belief that grassroots political development is the most long term and fundamental aspect of democratization, the bulk of the Institute's programming attempts to involve those groups, organizations, movements and activists which help move political power closer to the people, rather than remaining in the hands of a "political elite."

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To these ends, IRI seeks: (1) to provide Kazakstani and Kyrgyzstani political activists with a conceptual framework around which effective, responsible, and representative political parties may be built; (2) to work with the parties' leaderships in approaching the fundamental building blocks of political party development, membership recruitment, structural consolidation, and name recognition; (3) to enhance the practical expertise of local activists in improving the management and organization of local party structures, in enumerating organizational and political goals and formulating plans of action to meet them, and strengthening links between political parties and the electorate through voter contact and social outreach projects.

Given the rapidly changing realm of politics in both republics, the IRI has sought to be increasingly dynamic and flexible in its training programs by matching programs to perceived needs, and by attempting to be responsive to local requests and needs for information and training. To this end IRI has engaged in helping to develop and train various levels of non-governmental organizations. Specifically, IRI has been heavily involved with the development of indigenous women's NGO's.

## **THIRD QUARTER 1994 ACTIVITIES**

### **POLITICAL PARTY TRAINING SEMINARS**

#### **LARGE-GROUP FORMAT**

**Almaty, Kazakstan--(1st Week, July)** A major conference entitled, "Women in Public Life: Responsibilities & Opportunities" was held for participants from each of the five Central Asian states. The conference topics covered a number of specific areas and were designed to answer numerous requests from local organizations. All participants were free to select from a broad variety of seminar topics in each of the four, general training regimes: women in communications, business, politics, and a changing society.

The conference series was designed to work with the leadership of various organizations through intensive small-group seminars, inter-active workshops, and through a number of other techniques which required a high degree of participant involvement. IRI brought in consultant specialists from the United States to conduct the practically oriented seminars. Given the unfamiliarity of the Central Asian NGO's with many of the basic techniques for group organization, IRI focussed much of its attention on helping groups increase their organizational capacity.

Trainers attempted to localize their presentations for the various interests of the participants, particularly across the four general groupings of seminars.

Specific Seminar/Workshop topics included:

- **Political participation:** *the topics to be discussed in this workshop include why it's important for women to become politically involved, how to become involved and how to gain credibility and influence.*
- **Party leadership and management:** *This workshop will examine the types of leadership positions crucial to effective party operations and the roles and responsibilities of each member in the leadership. Management tools, such as delegation, communication, coordination, committee formations, utilizing resources and staff and conducting productive meetings will be addressed.*
- **Candidate preparation:** *This workshop focuses on preparing the candidate for her campaign. Devising a campaign plan, enhancing community involvement through participation in civic organizations, organization of campaign team, cooperation and coordination with local party, effective communication, etc..will be addressed. Participants who will be running as candidates in the mock election are encouraged to participate in this workshop.*
- **Party/government relations:** *the relationship that exists between political parties and governing bodies in democratic societies will be addressed in this workshop. Opening communication links, fostering involvement of political parties into government decision making, services which parties can provide to government officials will all be considered. Lobbying - the promotion of one's cause to other decision makers or organizations, will also be addressed.*
- **Campaign management:** *the fundamentals of campaign organization and management will be discussed in this workshop. Among the topics to be covered are candidate recruitment and preparation, campaign planning and organization, and campaign and election day activities. The interrelationship between national and local party organization during campaigns will also be addressed.*
- **Issue and coalition development:** *this workshop investigates the process by which political parties and campaign organizations identify and prioritize issues. The feasibility of developing single issue, or broader political or electoral, coalitions will be addressed, not only through discussion, but also practical exercises. Coalition development in the political arena, business sector, and community environment will be outlined. The workshop will teach the tolerance and communication between coalition groups. Organization and management, goal setting, outreach and representation and message delivery of coalition groups are additional areas for discussion.*

■ **Media - television, radio and print:** *this workshop explores the differences between electronic and print media. Approaching journalists who represent the various types of media, understanding their needs and constraints, and developing a message and presentations best-suited to each distinct medium will be addressed.*

■ **Media relations:** *this workshop considers the fundamentals of fostering better relations with journalists of the various media. The targeting of supportive, or at least receptive journalists, the development of media contact lists and establishing and maintaining direct communication with journalists will be reviewed. Basic tools such as writing a press release, organizing a press conference, organizing a media event, interviewing skills, crisis management, etc. will be reviewed.*

■ **Communicating your message:** *Developing a communications strategy, positioning and messages, targeting your audience, advertising/paid media, organization/corporate visual identity, newsletters and direct communications, brochures, etc. Will be the focus of the workshop.*

■ **Press release/press conference practicum:** *Participants in this workshop will have the opportunity to apply their communication skills. Workshop participants will be asked to write a press release announcing the IRI conference, "women in public life: responsibilities and opportunities". IRI participants will be taught how to organize an effective press conference. Video coaching will also be conducted during this time.*

■ **Enhancing community viability:** *this workshop focuses on taking the first steps to building enthusiasm and involvement in community projects. Issues to be discussed include: positive attitude, team spirit, seizing opportunities, concrete and constructive activities, etc... Pensioner activism and assistance: incorporating pensioners into community projects, using their talents, special needs of pensioners, erasing negative "communist" stereotypes.*

■ **How to start a volunteer organization:** *the steps required in starting a volunteer organization will be discussed in this workshop.*

■ **Volunteerism:** *The contribution of volunteer to community initiatives will be highlighted in this workshop. Identifying potentials volunteers; establishing a volunteer pool; and mobilizing, training, tasking, motivating, monitoring and rewarding of volunteer workers will be discussed.*

■ **Youth clubs and activism:** *inspiring the active involvement of youths in clubs and organized events, as well as initiating social structures, which provide for the constructive engagement of young people in non-violent, educational, and fun activities, is the theme of this workshop. Using structured events to encourage team building, cultural and ethnic awareness, problem solving, and social responsibility will be discussed.*

- **Lobbying your issues:** *this workshop provides participants with some guidelines on communicating and promoting one's cause to other organizations and opinion leaders. Whether approaching government officials, factory managers, school administrators, or apartment building owners, the process of providing information vital to decision making, communicating issue positions, recommending policy initiatives, outlining a desired course of action, defending your position, and educating opinion leaders, and utilizing public opinion to affect decision making will be reviewed in this workshop.*
- **Devising a business plan:** *This workshop will introduce the major components of Devising a business plan including feasibility studies, identifying business ideas, business operation, business costs, selling a product or service and calculating profits. The basics to setting the schedule, holding meetings, recording information, cash flow analysis and business start-up techniques are important areas of discussion. Participants will be asked to prepare an outline for a business plan.*
- **Business and politics:** *the relationship between economics and politics will be the focus of the workshop. The mutual support of businessmen, political parties, and elected officials will be addressed.*
- **Implementing your plan, marketing and sales:** *training will focus on effective marketing goals; product, price, distribution and promotion. Participants will learn techniques on consumer evaluation, price assessments, business promotion, will be taught expansion, marketing problems, and future marketing plans.*
- **Management and the work force:** *this workshop investigates the fundamentals of effectively working with and managing people. Emphasis will be placed on establishing professionalism within the office; improving communication, particularly through the development of listening skills and the encouragement of staff input; promoting team spirit; establishing authority by earning respect; creating a division of labor and clearly delineating expectations, tasks, and deadlines, investing in people, the most valuable resource of your organization; monitoring, evaluating, and improving performance; and dealing with poor performance; personality conflicts, and counterproductive competition within the office.*

### SMALL-GROUP FORMAT/FIELD TRAINING MISSIONS/COOPERATIVE PROJECTS

Almaty, Kazakstan--(2nd Week, April) The IRI Central Asia office, in conjunction with the NDI office, hosted a post-election seminar and workshop for the leaders of the various Kazakhstani political parties. The purpose of the workshop was to give the parties a venue to discuss the results of the election, to constructively "blow off steam" regarding those same results, and to look at various options regarding the future. Given

the severity of the government's involvement in manipulating the elections, party leaders were upset about the results, unsure of their own plans for the future, and quite discouraged. It was felt by IRI and NDI that a joint seminar would highlight the importance of working together, of opening dialogue, and of setting a future agenda.

Parties discussed the unfair aspects of the elections and were directed to view them with an eye on how to improve the system for future elections. Those comments and recommendations were collected and collated for a report to be submitted to the government and the Central Election Commission. An attitudinal survey was also conducted by IRI to study the outlook and perspective party leaders felt regarding their role in politics and their potential.

**Almaty, Kazakhstan--(3rd Week, April)** IRI's Central Asia office worked with the CSCE Office of Democratic Initiatives and Human Rights (ODIHR) on a conference entitled "The Human Dimension in Central Asia." IRI helped facilitate the conference for ODIHR and to provide briefings for the various international participants regarding legal and political development in the region.

**Issik-Kyl, Kyrgyzstan--(4th Week, April)** IRI conducted a regional mission to the north-central raion of Kyrgyzstan to meet with party leaders and to distribute materials translated subsequent to our last development conference for regional Kyrgyz party leaders. While the trip was originally planned as to make arrangements for the up-coming women's conference, the opportunity to follow up training from our last conference seemed appropriate. Leaders were quite pleased at the interest IRI took in their region and discussed the various problems that they were facing. IRI pointed out the need of communicating these concerns to party headquarters organizations and how these concerns could be more effectively presented.

**Almaty, Kazakhstan--(1st Week, May)** Working with the organizers for the AAS International Conference on Ethnic Rights and Conflict, the IRI office helped organizers brief participants and organize discussion and focus groups. IRI also conducted work with local organizations to "bring forward" the messages and discussions held during the conference.

**Almaty, Kazakhstan--(2nd Week, May)** The IRI program director presented (paper entitled: Individual versus Group Rights in a Democratic Society) and participated in Kazakhstan's first International Human Rights

Conference. Organized by the UCSJ, the conference covered a wide variety of political and human rights issues for each of the Central Asian countries.

*Please note that the IRI field representatives were on home leave during the 3rd and 4th weeks of May. IRI's in-country representatives worked for one week in Washington (meeting with IRI staff, USAID representatives, and with other interested organizations) and then took one week of vacation time. Upon their return to Almaty, the in-country representatives were informed about the intended closing of their office and proceeded to plan for the remaining women's conference and to initiate closing procedures.*

**Almaty, Kazakhstan: June 1994 (2nd-3rd Week)--**IRI held a series of meetings between UNDP and other interested international organizations interested in working with indigenous women's groups, held meetings with the international and local group leaders, and provided contacts names for the international groups to conduct on-site meetings. IRI had discovered that most international organizations were only working with officially sanctioned women's groups and were missing the bulk of the NGO sector. Believing that this was an important link to be made, IRI introduced many of these organizations to indigenous groups as a first step in making connections and building to its own international women's conference for the region.

**Almaty, Kazakhstan: July 1994 (2nd-4th Week)--**IRI conducted individual closing meetings and interviews with each of the local party organizations to discuss their needs and to express IRI's continued interest in programming for the region. This series of meetings culminated in a special closing meeting for all organizations. This session was used as a means of officially closing the International Republican Institute office in Kazakhstan. The session also was an opportunity to pass on the contact names and telephone numbers of other IRI offices in the FSU, and as an opportunity for other democratic initiative and related projects (such as Mercy Corp, ALC, Peace Corp, IFES..) to provide their contacts and coordinates to the parties. Eric Rudenshiold presented brief concluding remarks, drawing attention to the positive developments that parties had made in the time that IRI had been resident in the region, and to thank all of the groups for their participation in IRI's programs.

### SPECIAL MEETINGS & BRIEFINGS

*Out of country*

USAID; Washington, DC--May  
USIA; Washington, DC--May  
US Dept. of State; Washington, DC--May

*In country*

US Embassy Bishkek, Pol/Econ--April, May, June, July  
US Embassy Almaty, Ambassador--April, May, June, July  
USAID Almaty Director--April, June  
US Democracy Initiatives Group--April, June, July  
US Embassy Bishkek, Pol/Econ--April, May, June  
USIS Almaty--April, May, June, July  
UNDP--June  
World Bank--May, June  
WREI--June  
Watson Institute--June  
US Department of State Visit S. Shaddock--July  
USAID Jerry Hyman--July

SPECIAL REPORTS/ARTICLES

"Kazakhstan Post-Election Political Survey & Findings"  
"Official Report of IRI Observer Mission to Kazakhstani Elections"  
"Recommendations and Findings of Kazakhstani Political Parties"

**PROGRAM IMPACT/ASSESSMENT**

This reporting period was another very busy one for the IRI Central Asia office, between the large women's conference and all of its closing-out activities. However, there were once again some exceptional opportunities to gauge the progress of the work that we have been involved in. We were quite pleased to watch the progress groups have continued to make after the Kazakhstani elections. The opposition party and parliamentary coalition has continued to take shape and develop its own agenda. Parties and their leaders are apparently becoming much more attuned to national policies and the importance of platforms, as well as to the impact the degradation of the economy is having on potential constituencies. This has been a focus of IRI's recent training--addressing the needs of society through the political process.

Another key area of activity during this quarter for IRI was in the women's NGO sector. IRI has been working with many indigenous NGO's providing

support, materials and training, but with the advent of its first major conference on the development of women's groups, IRI took several giant steps forward. Given the impending closure of its Central Asia office, IRI undertook to try and help indigenous groups connect with other interested international organizations. IRI already encouraged and fostered the networking of local groups among themselves.

Perhaps the most difficult task of assessing project impact comes from the difference in both short- and long-term problems that political actors face and between short- and long-term consequences of our programming. The challenges to parties, their leaders and members are legion. However, short-term factors, such as a declining economy, impinge upon broad political activity, recruitment, or extensive volunteerism. The longer term challenges of economic decline or Communist entrenchment have more insidious effects--malaise of belief in self-capacity, confused agendas, a creeping sense of hopelessness, etc. Programs like IRI have both short- and long-term impact, but they are difficult to quantify beyond anecdotal reference at this point. It is much easier to measure the increase in party abilities to tackle short-term obstacles than it is to gauge long-term impact.

## SHORT-TERM INDICATORS

The following are five "success stories" that indicate the type of difference we are seeing as a result of IRI's work in the region:

1. **POLITICAL ORGANIZATION:** In Kazakstan, during the political seminars of IRI's recent women's conference, two IRI-trainers attempted to conduct several skill development drills only to find that their audience knew the subject. Both trainers were surprised to find that most audience members had previously attended several IRI development conferences and had learned their lessons well. The trainers remarked that the individuals in the group were very facile in their abilities to draw up campaign plans and to create management resource plans. The trainers happily moved to more complex issues, saying that the students could easily be used as trainers themselves.

2. **LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT:** Three groups working together presented the IRI Central Asia office with a draft proposal of a law to register NGO's. The groups wrote the law and intended to submit it to Parliament for the following session after attending several IRI seminars (and with IRI materials) that stressed the importance of defining legislative agendas. Based upon the practical

work in IRI seminars, the groups felt that they were prepared to tackle the legislature and that this was the best approach to become involved in proposing legal issues and to insure that their ideas would be taken seriously by the republic's legislature.

**3. CIVIC INITIATIVE:** Several groups that IRI has been working with felt that Kazakhstan would be a natural host for an international conference on human rights. The groups applied for funding (using IRI training on how to apply for international funding), organized a partnership, divided the work amongst themselves, and ran a highly successful conference dealing with a range of controversial political issues.

**4. LOBBYING & CIVIC INITIATIVE:** Kazakhstan's Green Party used its training to organize smaller sub-groups into lobbying and applying pressure on local and raion organizations in charge of environmental quality. The citizen groups were concerned over pollution and water quality and wanted to improve the conditions in the living environment. The groups focussed on children's health and used this as the method of gaining government attention and involvement. To this point, groups had been intimidated by government officials, disbanded, and unable to gain any form of official recognition. With the strategies that IRI advised the Greens to implement, the citizen's initiative movements seems likely to succeed.

**5. PARLIAMENTARY TRAINING:** During post-election seminars that IRI ran for trainees who were successfully elected to the parliament in Kazakhstan, IRI encouraged individual legislators to address their concerns in the election process using their new-found political power. The legislators took testimonials from various parties and individual candidates and used these in preparing their own case for insisting on a governmental review of the elections and the election process.

## **LESSONS LEARNED/PROGRAM STRENGTHS**

Gauging the long-term impact of projects like ours on such intangible commodities as democratization and political reform continues to be a formidable task. The former-Communists and elites of the old system still hold a tremendous amount of power and dominate the political scene. The new political parties are still growing and developing; their leaders still are learning by doing. It seems quite obvious that a tremendous amount of work remains to be done, particularly in the post-elections period in both countries.

One of the problems that we continually faced was a lack of resources. Our offices were swamped with requests for information from parties, interested individuals, and from people in government. Sustainable projects--libraries, information centers, on-line research capability, night courses in aspects of democratic governance--would all seem to cry out to be addressed. These at least partially address both short and longer term concerns.

A more serious and immediate problem regarding resources, however, was with respect to our primary mission. Our conferences were continually over-subscribed, we turn people away regularly, only to find them slipping in later. Our registration lists were generally set for between 60-80 people per conference (in order to keep the small-groups sessions small), but random head counts generally top 100 participants. The interest to train party members and leaders is keen, the groups are willing and participants interactive, but our ability to handle the vast numbers is constrained by resources. Given the experiences of other training organizations and the reported lack of interest in their programs, IRI's sustained high level of program activity would seem to be a validation of the its "fly-in" approach. The continued variety of speakers, the high level of specialized expertise, and the freshness of its conference messages (responding to local requests and needs), all combine to produce high levels of interest and program activity.

Another key factor seems to be IRI's refusal to spend vast amounts of time or resources pandering to local desires for theoretical discussion. After seven decades of theoretical constructs, it is no wonder that new political leaders crave this type of training, their actual needs though are more in the area of "how to..." IRI translations and training focusses on the techniques and methods to solve problems that parties face in their every day work and activity. This approach seems to have produced the greatest results in both short- and long-term measures. Parties have shaped their organizations, their platforms, their resources according to IRI training suggestions. The immediate results have been increased capacities, but the longer term consequence can be seen in the results of patently unfair Kazakhstani elections that still resulted in 20% democratic representation. Parties all credit their ability to campaign and think creatively with the practical training that they received.

Still a myriad of other problems abound would-be programmers in this region. IRI was also deluged with requests to take our program "into the field" and conduct oblast' conferences. However, fuel problems and the great amount of time needed to place and remove our volunteer trainers made this almost an impossibility. We often brought the regional representatives into the capitol, but local transportation problems left this a dubious solution.

Another problem we faced was the general need for ancillary programs--student programs, journalism programs, etc.--which are related and have a direct bearing on what we do. For instance, many parties have their own publication or

semi-regular broadcast, but are desperate for journalistic training. We have run programs on an *ad hoc* basis, but we could do much more. A general media development program is crucial to back up the efforts we have already made with parties insofar as media outreach. At this point the fourth estate is on the verge of bankruptcy in Central Asia.

Regional work remains an area in need of development, not just in Kazakstan, for example, but say between Kazakstan and Russia (the Urals). This region was economically developed as a single entity, despite the Soviet borders, and parties on both sides have expressed a desire to build contacts and to search for common solutions to their problems. The impediments to this lie in cross-program reporting, clearances and other bits of red tape. Nevertheless, work between offices in various regions to conduct this type of effort would break new and important ground.