



# IFES

EXTENDING THE REACH OF DEMOCRACY

# The Europe and Eurasia Report

January 2003

## IFES BROKERS NEWFOUND COOPERATION BETWEEN TAJIK POLITICAL PARTIES

*By Anthony Bowyer, Senior Program Officer*

The year 2003 opened with IFES continuing to expand its Political Party Development project in the Republic of Tajikistan to best meet the ongoing needs of parties and party branches at all levels in the country. With the much-anticipated and long sought-after registration of the Social Democratic Party by the Ministry of Justice, the climate for political parties operating in Tajikistan improved dramatically. Open and inclusive discussions have taken place at the national and local levels on a variety of topics of interest to parties and their constituents. These topics include election law reform, building communications strategies to reach ordinary citizens, creating coalitions, and how to integrate women and youth more into the party activities.

While the parties have traditionally maintained headquarters in Dushanbe, where their organizational capacities have been the strongest, it is the numerous regional branches that provide the real strength and cohesiveness of the parties and, along with it, the greatest hope for success of the party's political life. During previous trips to work with party branches in places as diverse as Dusti, Garm and Penjakent, IFES learned that parties generally lacked information on how to access potential constituents and connect with them in a way that generated support for the party's platform.

While it is true that political life in Tajikistan is heavily dominated by the ruling People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan, there are a number of other parties that have strong support and who have played a key role in the political reconstruction and reconciliation of the country following the 1992-1997 civil war; namely, the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), Democratic Party (DP), Socialist Party (SP) and the Communist Party (CP). Though only "officially" on the political scene for two months, the Social-Democratic Party has also attracted support among the intellectual elite in Dushanbe. Other, regionally-based movements also have a substantial following, but not to a sufficient degree to make them nationally relevant, and therein lies the problem.

The IFES training series was undertaken to help parties and movements expand their following, moving them beyond reliance on a single geographical region for the bulk of their support and toward creation of a national following. For parties to be able to compete effectively in the next national parliamentary elections in 2005, they will have to have built a strong nationwide support base. A key precursor to developing support is to identify the needs of potential constituents and then develop targeted messages to reach them.

Another potential asset to all registered political parties would be a learned appreciation for the benefits of working together to strengthen multi-party democracy in the country. Though the parties may have quite different platforms and might be divided by ideological and regional differences, they would stand to gain a great deal of trust, legitimacy, and confidence from the citizens of Tajikistan were they to work toward the greater goal of a stable political system that encourages and respects diversity. For too long in Tajikistan, 'diversity' has meant 'division', with the political elite acting to safeguard their positions and the opposition working unconstructively.

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*Representatives of political party local branches come together in Dushanbe to discuss areas of common interest and ideas for cooperation.*

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### EUROPE

#### **ALBANIA**

##### *Voter Registration Project in its Second Stage*

As part of the ongoing voter registry project, final report on the Kavaja pilot project was prepared by the CEC Director of Voter Registration and will be presented in a meeting with the political parties in mid-February. A review of the voter list for the City of Durres and the preparation of polling unit maps is underway, with a completion date set for March. Work has also begun with local authorities in the City of Tirana. This activity is funded through OSCE/Dutch and Italian governments.

In order to address public awareness problems that impact the review and update of the voter registry, IFES, the CEC, and the Ministry of Local Government are preparing an advertising/public education campaign to encourage people to bring their registration up to date. The registries are often not accurate because many citizens do not register marriages, births, and deaths. In addition, migration within the country, followed by re-registration, has created incomplete or inaccurate civil registry information. This campaign will be first phase of a three-phase civic education program leading up to the local elections this fall.

##### *Consensus on the Voting Rights of People with Disabilities*

The Bi-partisan Commission to Review the Electoral Code continues to meet. In January the National Assembly extended the mandate of the Commission to the end of March. There does appear to be a consensus on change to improve the ability of disabled people to vote. IFES has been active in promoting this change through ADRF, a local NGO promoting the rights of the disabled.

Other substantive changes to the code have not emerged and the commission has yet to consider the composition of local election commissions and issues regarding Election Day procedures and the counting of ballots.

##### *Association of Election Officials*

An English version of the quarterly newsletter to local election officials was published and distributed to the Albania donor and NGO community. In addition, IFES published a 40-page booklet on the election process in Bosnia as observed and interpreted by an Albanian election official. The official had participated in an IFES-World Learning-Association of Election Officials in BiH (AEOBIH) training session and election observation program in October 2002, as well as the annual meeting of the AEOBIH in December 2002, both held in BiH.

In late January, IFES Program Director Dickson Bailey met with the leader of the Democratic Party, Sali Berisha, to discuss the formation of the Association of Election Officials in Albania. While Berisha did not provide his full support to



*Municipality leaders meet in Durrës, Albania for the second phase of the Voter Registry Project.*

the formation of the association at this time, he agreed to revisit the matter when the review of the electoral code by the bi-partisan commission is completed.

#### *Impact Summary*

Nationwide local elections will be held in October 2003. For the next ten months, preparation for the elections will be the primary focus of IFES/Albania. During the past year, the CEC of Albania has done a great deal to position itself to manage the elections more effectively. This development has meant that IFES continues to play a more supportive and consultative role than in the past. This shift is a welcome development. However, there are many areas in which IFES continues to need to take a very active role. These include voter registration, civic education, and training, primarily due to the lack of state financial resources to carry out these activities. As the next few months unfold, the exact role IFES will play in these areas will be further clarified.

## **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BiH)**

### *Transition in Partnership of IFES and AEOBiH*

During the month of January, activities focused on completing the transition of the Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina (AEOBiH) to an independent local organization. In addition to the finalization of the organizational structure, several procedures were drafted for consideration of the Steering Board at their meeting during the first weekend of February, including the action plan for the coming year, procedures for handling resources, procedures for donor relations, and the rulebook for finances. As part of the AEOBiH's participation in ADF's Democracy Network, an advisor from ADF reviewed these procedures and concluded that they were well prepared and in line with local laws.

The new procedures for the AEOBiH were also included in

the pre-award survey of the organization that USAID did in late January. This survey is a condition for AEOBiH to apply for direct grants with USAID; thus, it is a first step for AEOBiH to apply for funding through USAID.

In January, AEOBiH completed a proposal for an advocacy project from ADF. If awarded, AEOBiH would begin an advocacy effort to further define the financing of elections in BiH. AEOBiH also began on other proposals to be completed during February.

In addition to preparations for AEOBiH's independence, IFES taking steps for its own future programming. An assessment of current needs in the BiH electoral system was carried out in January; in response to this assessment, a work plan is currently being developed in cooperation with USAID.

### *Winter Camp*

The first and second AEOBiH Winter Camps were held in January. These camps followed the first two summer camps which were held in July 2002. The purpose of the Summer/Winter Camp project is to educate final grade secondary school students about the election system and the electoral process in BiH to encourage them to participate in the democratic process. In addition, the camps provide young people from both entities with an opportunity to get to know one another better through working and socializing together; this is also very important to help gradually to break down the barriers in BiH.

Forty-three students from the Mulabdic General Program Grammar School in Maglaj, Zavidovici Technical Secondary, Electrical Engineering and Communications School, Teslic Mixed Secondary, and Zenica Nursing/Medical Secondary took part in the Winter Camps. There was such a high level of interest in the Winter Camps that not all students who wanted to participate could be accepted. The selection of participants was also highly successful, as evidenced by the fact that all participants took the work very seriously and took part in all exercises. For example, there was a constructive debate when students had the exercise of appointing an election commission. The quiz held at the end of the camp was competitive but productive.

### *Conflict Resolution Training*

Election officials come into daily contact with participants in the election process, including voters, political parties, government bodies, and the media. The sensitive questions that election officials must deal with on a daily basis require a neutral and unbiased approach, particularly considering the politically charged environment in which they work. Thus, AEOBiH has carried out Conflict Resolution Training during the past year. The purpose of the training has been to instruct the participants in how to become neutral, based on experi-

ences of participants themselves.

The most recent Conflict Resolution training took place in Lukavac from 22-26 January. Eighteen participants took part in the training. The participants were chosen from seventy-one applications based on territorial representation (from the entire BiH), adequate representation of all ethnic groups, and the possibility to attend the entire training.

During the training they explored differences between debates, hidden conflicts, and deeply rooted conflicts. They presented the basic elements of mediation, negotiation, and development of group processes, as well as a summary of requirements and responsibilities of the neutral third party. The participants had the possibility to learn mediation skills and to hold discussions about processes occurring inside smaller groups. Open dialogue offered the participants a possibility to practice developing processes inside a group. Through this mutual interaction, participants learned how to connect with people who are different in order to achieve a common goal. These exercises strengthened the principles of neutral and unbiased approach to their work.

Participants were quite impressed by the training. They commented that they will begin using the skills acquired from the training immediately and are interested in participating in future trainings on these topics.

#### *Election Observation in Austria*

The city of Graz invited three members of the AEOBiH to observe their elections in January. This cooperative program between AEOBiH and Graz was a successful exchange of experiences between Austrian and BiH election officials. As with past election observation trips, participants had a program specifically designed for them which included meetings with election officials, NGOs, and political party representatives. Thus, the AEOBiH delegation received a full overview



*A diverse group of 43 students participated in the AEOBiH Winter Camp.*

of the electoral system and election administration of the country and exchanged experiences with their international colleagues.

#### *Impact Summary*

IFES and AEOBiH activities in January show the extent to which the AEOBiH has become an independent organization. Both the Conflict Resolution training and the Winter Camps were programs implemented through sub-grants awarded to the AEOBiH by IFES. Thus, the programs were designed and implemented by the association without direct oversight by IFES. Additionally, the election observation in Graz was possible due to contacts that AEOBiH has made during past international activities. AEOBiH also finalized many of its administrative procedures during January to ensure a smooth transition process to independence from IFES in February while the association continued its fundraising efforts. The successful work of IFES with the AEOBiH since 1999 can be seen in the progress made within the AEOBiH and their ability to carry out these programs independently.

## **MACEDONIA**

### *Political Overview*

Orthodox Christmas was celebrated on 7 January. As many people decided to extend their winter holidays, government and business did not get back to normal until the week of 13 January. January was a fairly calm month. The government continued to pursue its anti-corruption efforts, and there were further reports of the eventual handover of the NATO Mission to the European Union. The Lions, an ethnic Macedonian paramilitary group that served directly under the former Minister of Internal Affairs, staged demonstrations over abandonment by the government. They were eventually disbanded with promises of retraining for some and integration of others into the regular police and army. While there was some talk of a "Spring Offensive" by a handful of Albanian extremists, most dismissed it. Under the surface, use of the Albanian language at "official" and other gatherings has been the source of tension, and worse. Ethnic Macedonians have taken a severely restrictive view as to when Albanian may be used under the post-Ohrid constitutional amendments; Albanians take a more permissive approach. The government has announced its intention to introduce language legislation this year.

While IFES continued work on several different fronts in January, it largely directed its energies toward a post-election seminar to explore the need for administrative and legal reform of elections.

### *Election Seminar*

IFES and the State Election Commission (SEC) co-sponsored a seminar focusing on last September's elections on 28 January. Entitled "*Parliamentary Elections 2002: Building on Success*," the seminar reviewed key elements of Macedonia's

most recent elections with a view towards strengthening the legal and administrative framework for future elections. More than 70 individuals participated in the one-day event, including government officials, representatives of NGOs, international organizations and the diplomatic corps.

The President of the Republic of Macedonia, Boris Trajkovski, opened the seminar, calling the September 2002 parliamentary elections a difficult test in which the citizens of Macedonia showed their commitment to democracy. He noted that the period following the elections marks a new time for economic and political reform as Macedonia tries to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic community. He also addressed the issue of political party finance in the context of the broader fight against corruption. He said that illegal financing of political parties is a form of corruption with the potential to undermine democracy, democratic procedures, and state institutions. He recommended that specific projects be developed to clean up the system, adding that Macedonia could become a leader on this issue in the region.

Lawrence Butler, U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia, noted that no single event in Macedonia in 2002 captured the sense of progress and hope more than the parliamentary elections. He added that it was difficult to overstate their success and the step forward that this represents for the country. He challenged Macedonia to live up to the same high standards in the next elections.

The IFES Macedonia Project Director, Dan Blessington, and the President of the State Election Commission, Mirjana Lazarova-Trajkovska, co-chaired the seminar. There were three panels consisting of local officials and international experts focusing on election legislation and administration. International panelists included Ambassador Craig Jenness, Head of the OSCE Mission in Skopje, Mr. Ilirian Celibashi, Chairman, Central Election Commission of Albania, and Dr.



*Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski and State Election Commission President Mirjana Lazarova-Trajkovska open the election seminar in Skopje.*

Daniel Finn, representing OSCE/ODIHR.

#### *Impact Summary*

The seminar put elections once again at center stage, acknowledging success while at the same time highlighting the need for further action. There was consensus among all participants regarding the necessity to make election administration permanent and continuous rather than episodic and improvised. There was also agreement on the need to undertake electoral reform in 2003 in order to have new laws in place well before the next Presidential and local elections in 2004.

## CAUCASUS/CENTRAL ASIA

### **ARMENIA**

#### *IFES Reaches Over 38,000 People in Armenia through Discussion Groups and Initiative Groups*

During the course of January, 3,800 people from 85 communities participated in 206 meetings of Dialogue Groups (DGs) or Initiative Groups (IGs) facilitated by IFES/Armenia's 22 civic education instructors. In total, by the end of the month, 38,213 people from over 340 communities have participated in 2,162 meetings of DGs and IGs since IFES/Armenia's Citizen's Awareness and Participation in Armenia (CAPA) project started. These numbers do not include the people or organizations involved in CAPA's regular large-scale volunteer actions or the volunteers involved with Voter Lists Advisory Committees (VLACs) for the October 2002 local elections and the February 2003 presidential election. Including the candidate debate for Alaverdi's community council elections this month, IFES instructors have conducted a total of 26 candidate debates.

In January 154 voter education DGs were conducted on Voter Rights, Procedures on Polling Day, the Institution of the



*Panelists review the 2002 Parliamentary Elections at the election seminar in Skopje.*

President in the Republic of Armenia, and Making an Informed Choice. IFES instructors have also taken their voter education discussions to the airwaves. The field offices are regularly doing voter education discussions on local TV and radio and in the local papers.

The 51 meetings of Initiative Groups (IGs) were mainly connected to the work of VLACs which, through the additional support of USAID, increased from eight to 24 in mid-January. The total number of voters in these 24 communities, where VLACs operate, is greater than 460,000. Six hundred people are involved with the VLACs either as VLAC members or volunteers. Nevertheless, IFES instructor continued their support for other civic initiatives and met with IGs addressing the municipal budget, telephone connections, housing issues for refugees and others.

*Women's Republican Council Seeks Answers on Gender Issues from Future President of Armenia*

The Women's Republican Council (WRC) took the initiative, within the framework of the CAPA project and as part of its "Women and Elections" clubs' activities, to ask the presidential candidates about issues of gender balance in Armenia. The letters were drafted during a roundtable of 40 women's NGOs and were sent to the campaign headquarters of the candidates.

The letters queried the candidates about:

- Whether the constitutional right of gender balance in Armenia has been a key factor in human and social relations;
- Whether the democratic procedures upgrade the status of women;
- The UN Special Committee's recommendations to the Government of Armenia in response to the government's second report on the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The WRC expects candidates to present their policies on these issues in order to help voters to understand the stance of candidates on gender issues and thus make a more informed choice on polling day. During the last few days of the campaign, some candidates started addressing women's issues, which, the WRC reports, is one impact of its letters.

*Voters with Disabilities to Observe on Election Day*

In mid-January a coalition of three Lori marz NGOs, began their work to assess the participation of citizens with disabilities in the February 19 presidential election after the visit of Jerry Mindes, IFES' Senior Advisory for Disabilities. As part of this effort, with technical assistance from IFES/Armenia and support from the Finnish and Swedish government, the coalition will conduct a public education campaign to educate all voters about the rights of citizens with disabilities. On

Election Day, citizens with disabilities will monitor the election as fully-trained and credited local observers. In addition, non-disabled citizens will visit election sites to determine whether they are accessible for citizens with mobility impairments. The effort will focus primarily on Lori for the presidential election and may expand to include other marzes for the parliamentary elections.

The groundbreaking work will be organized by the Lusastgh Charity Union NGO of Vanadzor, the New Spitak NGO in Spitak and the Liarzhok Kyang NGO in Stepananve. These three Lori marz-based organizations will also be joined by activists from the Paros Disabled Center, which will expand the observation to cover some precincts in Yerevan. The coalition of organizations is coordinated by Lusastgh and its director, Nune Pepanyan.

*Voter Lists Advisory Committees Active in 24 Communities throughout Armenia*

With additional support from USAID in mid-January and through the support and efforts of community residents and municipalities, IFES/Armenia expanded the use of the VLAC mechanism to 24 communities in eight marzes: Yerevan, Gegharkunik, Shirak, Aragatsotn, Lori, Armavir, Kotaik, and Syunik. The total number of voters in these communities is greater than 460,000. Six hundred people are involved with the VLACs either as VLAC members or volunteers. VLACs work on securing accurate voter lists for each election precinct in their communities. VLACs achieve this goal by:

- Informing voters about the possibility to review and update their information on the voters lists;
- Providing ways for voters to check their information on the voters lists and to correct this information if needed;
- Delivering voter information to the Passport Department and Civil Registry and bringing their responses to the municipality; and
- Assisting with the information flow and communication between the Municipality, the Passport Department, and Civil Register.

The 24 VLACs will complete their assistance with voter list updates for the presidential election by 14 February. A final report on the results of the VLACs' efforts will be produced by IFES/Armenia in mid-March. At the start of April, 24 communities will again mobilize and launch VLACs for voter list updates for the 25 May parliamentary elections.

*IFES Activities for the Presidential Election*

IFES/Armenia's head office assisted in the circulation of election materials to key target audiences, including civic education materials along with a collection of CEC decisions and lists of Territorial Election Committees and Precinct Election Committees. The head office provided materials to election commissions, local observers, and international observers

from OSCE/ODIHR. Other recipients of IFES materials included USAID's partners, including ProMedia for its newspaper insert, ABA/CEELI for its judges training, and World Learning for its elections grant competition, as well as other international NGOs, such as OSCE and UNDP for its election commission trainers, local NGOs, and local organizations collaborating with USAID's partners.

IFES will also field forty observers on Election Day. They will include staff from IFES/Armenia and IFES/Washington, as well as the USAID Mission/Armenia. Thirty-two of our observers will observe compliance or non-compliance of election procedures at PECs in VLAC communities and their surrounding areas. Two observers will take part in the disabled voter observation in Lori Marz, and four observers will monitor the PEC at the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Washington. Approximately 220 PECs, including fifteen PEC openings and fifteen PEC closings, in IFES' eight marzes will be covered.

#### *Increasing the Voters' Awareness about the Elections Process*

To prepare for the approaching presidential election and to inform the electorate, IFES produced and distributed 33,543 copies of eleven different civic education materials, including the Electoral Code, CEC Decisions, the Voter and Voting Procedure Q&A Guide, the President's Institution Booklet, and a sample ballot poster. Approximately 23,000 of these were posters and leaflets on how to check the voters list. In addition to these printed materials, IFES/Armenia also produced television and radio broadcasts of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to reach citizens throughout Armenia and inform voters of how to check and update the voter list, of how to mark the ballot properly, and of the voting procedures on Election Day.

IFES/Armenia is also in the process of producing a documentary about the work of VLACs. The documentary will be in two parts; one 15-minute documentary about VLACs activities up to the presidential elections and a second 25-minute piece about VLAC activities through the parliamentary elections.

#### *IFES/Armenia Begins its Community Activists Exchange Program*

Beginning in January, IFES launched an exchange program which will allow IG members and community activists to travel to different towns/marzes to share information and expertise. Throughout the month IFES supported three exchanges. The first exchange was held with members of Giumri "Mush 2" Community Center and members of the Kharbed IG in Yerevan. Ara Sukiasian, director of "Mush 2" shared his experience and addressed some effective ways the group has solved various community problems. The exchange was of particular interest to the members of the Kharbed IG, because they are dealing with similar problems. Meanwhile, another exchange took place at the Artik VLAC,

where VLAC members from Aparan, Talin, and Abovian shared experiences on new, effective methods for organizing volunteer work and general VLAC initiatives. For the third exchange, IFES' instructors organized a visit of four teachers from Aramuns village to a variety of successful schools in Yerevan; some of these schools had received grants from international organizations, while other had developed their schools without such support. IFES hopes to continue with similar exchanges each month.

#### *Training for Community Activists*

From 29 to 31 January IFES/Armenia held its first training for community activists. Twenty-two IG members and leaders of different initiatives from eight regions participated in the training. Participants included a community leader, a NGO president, a painter, a refugee, a few teachers, and students. The goal of the training was to help IG members work more effectively by covering three main topics: (1) what it means to be a community activist, (2) effective IG team work, and (3) action plan development.

During the course of the training, five ongoing IGs were selected and five working groups conducted a step-by-step analysis of these IGs to help develop their action plans. The last day began with the presentation of the five plans. This was an educational and useful process as participants were able to draw out ideas for new IGs. For example, there are about 450 unregistered babies and newlyweds in Garni and its surrounding areas (Kotayk). This problem persists in many regions, and one of the trainees proposed the creation of a coalition that will address the problem across Armenia.

This training gave the participants skills, positive ideas, and enthusiasm to continue their work with IGs and to begin new IGs that would help residents to become more sensitive to their community needs, active in community development processes, and responsible for the ultimate results. IFES/Armenia plans to do such seminars for IG members on a quarterly basis.

#### *Good Governance: Bridging the Gap between Local Authorities and Residents in Sevan*

Increased understanding, dialogue, and collaboration between local authorities and community residents represent a primary focus of the CAPA project. IFES/Armenia addresses this objective through various initiatives and services; one example is the drafting and circulating of reports on community council sessions. As of the end of January, four meetings of the Sevan community council had taken place. IFES/Sevan instructors Armenuhi Nikoghosyan and Karen Manucharyan have participated in two of these four meetings. At the end of the first meeting on 19 November in Sevan, Nikoghosyan and Manucharyan introduced the mission of IFES/Armenia and presented work plans related to community council member activities, particularly related to the elucidation of their rights and obligations. The instructors also distributed the Q&A

*(Continued on page 10)*

**UPCOMING EVENTS IN EUROPE AND EURASIA**

March 27-28	Event: Location: Contact:	<b>IFES Nationwide Civics Tournament</b> Almaty, Kazakhstan IFES Program Manager, Ed Morgan ed@ifes.almaty.kz
June 19-20	Event: Location: Contact:	<b>Joint IFES/Council of Europe Seminar for Councilors on Budget and Financial Issues</b> Baku, Azerbaijan IFES Program Manager, Charles Lasham charles@ifesaze.org
June 30	Event: Location: Contact:	<b>Founding Meeting for the Association of Municipalities of Azerbaijan</b> Baku, Azerbaijan IFES Program Manager, Charles Lasham charles@ifesaze.org

power in local government. As the dialogue ensued, the parties surprised themselves by realizing that much more was to be gained by taking a position of cooperation rather than one of confrontation. One of the great realizations achieved was that each party shared a common interest and vision about wanting to participate in a democratic system of government and elections. It was recognized that, while ideologies may differ, each party is an equal stakeholder in society and part of a fabric of political interests that does not necessarily have to be inherently combative or conflictive.

IFES capitalized on the great amount of interest at the local level by pledging to conduct similar

events in regions “underserved” by political interests. While the People’s Democratic Party is easily the most visible in society, even they have not been able to engage the average citizen’s interest or convince them to take an active part in party politics. Part of this is due to the fact that, in the past, party politics was reserved for elite strata of society which to this day still carries a negative connotation for many people. In addition, as a fallout of the five-year civil war, average citizens are somewhat weary of competing political parties and movements, based on their respective involvement on competing sides during that conflict. Thus the parties, and particularly those who are traditionally associated or affiliated primarily with one region, have their work cut out to attract new members and expand their support base nationwide.

*(Continued on page 9)*

*“Political Parties in Tajikistan,” from page 1*

In seminars conducted in Qurghonteppa, Khojand, and Dushanbe in January 2003 by IFES Political Party Development Consultant Foster Tucker and PPD Assistant Bahrriddin Sharipov, as part of IFES’s ongoing, multi-year project of party development, participants were tasked with determining the priorities for each of their regions. The purpose of this exercise was to test if rival grassroots political party activists could create and present a list of priorities for their rayon or region, devoid of any divisive or party-specific rhetoric, and agreed to by all.

In most instances, this level of interaction was entirely new for the participants and required them to put aside their ideological differences and focus, instead, on the needs of their rayon and its citizens as a whole. To facilitate their work, this exercise occurred near the end of the seminar, after numerous discussions and exercises designed to build trust and encourage cooperation had taken place. IFES, in the role of facilitator, began the discussion by suggesting some possible common areas of interest that the parties might have in improving community life, and channeled the discussions into the positive and the cooperative and away from the conflictual and divisive. Basic quality of life issues were raised as priorities, ranging from the need to improve social services to issues of unemployment and agriculture/industry sector development. While each party may have had differing views on how to address the problems, each agreed that each problem in fact represented an area of common concern and priority.

After initial discussions, the party representatives began to plan out critical steps to be taken to address each problem and postulated on what they would do if they were in a position of



*Party officials in Qurghonteppa discuss the local situation during a breakout session.*



To address basic and fundamental barriers to the development of a stable and functional multi-party political system in Tajikistan, IFES sought to conduct additional trainings and discussions focusing on the needs of citizens and what parties could do to more effectively represent their positions and actively engage the populace. At IFES trainings in Qurghonteppa, Khojand, and Dushanbe, representatives of parties were tasked with working together to come up with a list of “What Every Citizen Should Know About Tajikistan”. This exercise encouraged the parties and their representatives to work together and think about the key elements of Tajikistan’s political system and democratic evolution that citizens need to be aware of, as a precursor to and stimulant of their greater political interests and participation. In each region it was agreed that it is essential for citizens to know the laws, national symbols, the history of the country, the Constitution, and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Once they can be engaged with this information, then they will be more able to contribute to the democracy-building process through political activism as informed participants.

A final exercise led by IFES at regional seminars involved the development of a manual on grassroots political organizing, utilizing the ideas and energy of the party representatives themselves. Party representatives were divided into small groups and tasked with developing the outline for the manual, which would ultimately be finalized and drafted by IFES. Each party would be allowed to review the final draft and submit comments prior to publication. The outline of the manual as suggested by consensus of the parties included four major themes: establishing of grassroots offices, promoting the reputation and impact of a party, studying economic and social issues of the area, and strengthening the party’s effectiveness in a campaign. The following topics were deemed essential for inclusion in the manual for parties wishing to improve effectiveness of local branches, which reflected the output of the cooperative dialogue and discussions which took place:



*A local political party representative in Khojand offers her ideas on community priorities.*

- The importance of participation in the political process and events of the local area
- The need to maintain regular communication with the party hierarchy
- Developing recommendations for improving local party activity
- Preparing of long-term and short-term action plans
- Assigning duties within the local party organization
- Step-by-step advice on conducting outreach sessions
- Recruiting and adding new members
- What party members need to do in political campaigns

Each training session concluded with a pledge by party representatives to continue meeting regularly and discussing areas of common interest. Many attendees commented that they had not had the chance to previously meet their colleagues from other parties, in part due to a less-than-open political environment. But in the three years since the last parliamentary and local elections, and with two years remaining until the next elections, the parties realize that now is the time to begin seriously addressing issues of their party’s future and its place in the Tajikistani political landscape. Most importantly, parties realized that cooperation with former adversaries was a win-win situation for all, as all are stakeholders in the future of the country and all have a vested interest in continuing to help the peace process by promoting a political system that is open to all parties believing in peaceful reconciliation and that includes the participation of all citizens.

IFES is pleased to be able to contribute to the ongoing development of multi-party democracy and civic involvement in Tajikistan, and will continue to broker discussions and dialogue through regional training events to support a peaceful and lasting transition.



*Cooperation and action plans are presented at the IFES political party training in Qurghonteppa.*

(Continued from page 7)

Guide on the Armenian law on local self-governing bodies.

In January, the IFES/Sevan office distributed 60 copies of the resolutions of the community council meeting of 19 November. The resolutions reports were met with favorable feedback from local residents. One resident remarked, "such awareness provides an opportunity to have personal participation in the actions undertaken by the authorities and being unaware of them is a great omission."

#### *Impact Summary*

Since the beginning of the CAPA project, 38,213 people from more than 340 communities participated in meetings of DGs and IGs. The DGs of January were all connected to voter education for the February presidential election. Most IG meetings also addressed issues directly related to the presidential election, such as the start-up and work of the 24 VLACs, but also addressed other community-defined problems.

Through the additional support of USAID, the number of VLACs increased from 8 to 24. The total number of voters in these 24 communities, where VLACs operate, is greater than 460,000. Six hundred people are involved with the VLACs either as VLAC members or volunteers. The CEC showed its strong support for VLACs and their assistance with voter list updates.

The formation of an NGO coalition for a disability observation and a public education campaign took place. While the coalition remains separate from the CAPA project, it continues to be supported by the IFES/Armenia head office and field office staff.

In addition, two new services are made available to community activists: a monthly exchange program and a quarterly training program.

## **AZERBAIJAN**

### *Draft Unified Election Code Debate at an Impasse*

With presidential elections scheduled to take place no later than October of this year, the development of the Unified Election Code (UEC) is taking on added urgency. IFES continues to support the development of a code that is consistent with international standards. IFES also promotes the widest possible consultation process on the draft prior to its impending introduction in parliament this spring. Members of the international community believe that any new legislation should be adopted by April, six months before scheduled elections.

There are numerous areas that still need to be addressed. The most significant of these include the need to revise the composition of election commissions, to allow domestic NGOs to

observe elections irrespective of whether they receive international funding, and to introduce measures provisions to guarantee ballot security, such as transparent ballot boxes and the inking of voters' fingers at the precinct.

IFES continues to engage the Government of Azerbaijan, which is responsible for the initial draft, as well as other local groups and the international community in order to help facilitate an active and informed debate. Such a debate has thus far been lacking. Failure by major opposition parties to participate in January's OSCE/ODIHR roundtable, which was subsequently postponed, has caused all sides to reevaluate their positions. Previously, the opposition parties had sought to form a "conciliation commission," the results of which would be binding on the government and the parliament. This was unacceptable to the government. As the elections draw closure, IFES will work closely with the OSCE to break the impasse and play an active role in facilitating a meaningful debate.

### *IFES Reaches Out to the NGO Community on the Draft UEC*

The development of a new election code affects all citizens and groups. Azerbaijan's NGO community has a direct interest in the development of the UEC as it provides the framework within which they participate in the electoral process. By organizing a joint roundtable with the NGO Forum on the draft code, IFES reached out to these organizations and raised their level of knowledge and interest in the new legislation being drafted. At the forum, IFES discussed the draft UEC with 43 different NGOs from Azerbaijan. IFES described its involvement in the drafting process and advised that there were still a number of issues that were of concern. Two key issues affecting the overall conduct and monitoring of the electoral process were noted - composition of election commissions and the right of domestic NGOs to observe elections irrespective of their funding source.

The roundtable increased the capacity of these NGOs to engage in an informed debate and resulted in a commitment by the participants to take the following concrete steps issued in a resolution following the roundtable:

- To continue the process of development of the UEC by participation of all stakeholders and to be carried out not only within a limited political frame, but within a wider circle.
- To ensure participation of NGOs in all election processes within the legislative framework.
- To provide equal rights to NGOs with other public associations in election observation process and to lift recent relevant restrictions set in the legislation to be lifted, and
- To establish an NGO Task Force for further coordination of activities and discussions on detailed amendment suggestions to the draft UEC.

### *IFES Engages Citizens on the draft UEC*

Leading the way in educating the general public on the nature

and significance of the draft UEC, IFES trainers and regional coordinators, trained by IFES election specialists, embarked on an intensive month-long series of discussion groups devoted exclusively to the draft UEC. Discussion groups were conducted in all the nine partner municipalities reaching 972 people, of which 53% were women and 57% were youth. IFES bolstered this effort by distributing 3,500 leaflets about the draft UEC, with another 1,500 to be distributed in February.

With each discussion group, the need for more information on the draft code became noticeably apparent. Of the participants, comprised mostly of individuals interested in active participation, only about 5% were even aware of the existence of the draft code. Based on these findings, IFES fully expects the number to be lower among the entire population.

Through the discussion groups, IFES increased the knowledge among citizens about the draft UEC, explained differences between it and the legal texts currently in force, and enabled a more active and informed public participation in the coming elections. The discussion groups attracted students, teachers, NGO representatives, and ordinary active citizens.

The discussions also attracted the regional political elite, such as municipal councilors and employees and representatives of different state institutions. In response to the many hundreds of questions on how to voice their comments and/or proposals on the draft UEC, IFES trainers provided guidance on the many ways citizens can influence legislation.

The participants came to a number of common conclusions. In almost all discussions, participants raised the existence of political will as one of the most important issues for the free and fair elections. Citizens believe that if the government creates equal conditions for all candidates and plays an impartial role during the election, then it will be possible to conduct free and fair elections. In all discussions, participants particularly noted that the impartiality of election commissions is vital for the elections.

One participant expressed his gratitude to IFES by suggesting these discussions encouraged responsible and informed political participation "because we now feel that we have been given in a timely manner the tools to contribute to such a vital document. We never had this chance before." Not only were participants given the tools to play an active role in the debate, but they also have information and written materials need to engage others in their communities on this issue. As a result, the impact of these events will spread far beyond the 972 citizens participating in the discussions.

While January was the set for holding an intensive series of discussions groups exclusively on the draft code, IFES will now include the draft code among its core topics for these activities. Clearly, there will be a need to hold similar discus-

sion groups once the draft UEC has been adopted, especially in the months preceding the presidential elections scheduled for October 2003.

*Democracy Schools Inform Baku Students on the Draft UEC*  
IFES included the draft UEC in its Democracy Schools for high school students from Yasamal and Ahmedly municipalities of Baku City. During the eleven sessions conducted, IFES was able to introduce 286 students, of whom 53% were women, to civic topics such as human rights, basic principles of democracy, and free and fair elections. The latter topic served as the introduction of the draft UEC. Raising issues like falsifications and outside pressure on the heads of the precinct committees, the students demonstrated an ability to grasp the details of the electoral process.

In one school, most of the discussion was devoted to the importance of voting. One student explained the importance of voting in the following way: "One vote is very important. We must know that during the elections the winner is defined based on the 50%+1 system. It shows how important is it for us to go and vote." Also some of the students said that parliamentarians "elected by the people" forget all their pre-election platform and campaign promises and are not accountable to members of the electorate.

Feedback on the Democracy School continues to be highly encouraging. In the evaluation forms filled at the end of the seminars, students have noted how important the seminars were in "increasing our role in decision-making process."

*IFES Works with Parliament, Municipalities, and NGOs to Affect Change*

The IFES/*Milli Majlis* Permanent Commission on Regional Affairs Working Group met on 23 January to discuss the current version of the draft law on Inter-relationships and Cooperation between State Executive Authorities and Municipalities, as well as the amendments thereto. IFES was pleased to see that the majority of its proposals were accepted by the group. IFES has since submitted additional proposals on the draft law, as well as concrete suggestions from the legal trainings it conducted for its nine partner municipalities.

These sets of proposals are important because they refer to main principles of the delegation of certain state powers and provide specific solutions, procedures, and mechanisms for cooperation and coordination of the activities and programs at the local municipal level. The proposals also address important issues concerning the allocation of financial resources. These reforms will give municipalities greater and clearer powers to act effectively and to better serve their constituents.

While working directly with the Parliament, IFES continues to engage and solicit feedback on new legislation from a Municipality Working Group. This Working Groups consists of

IFES' five partner NGOs and nine partner municipalities and will conduct legal roundtables to discuss and obtain comments and proposals on legislation being developed by the IFES/*Milli Majlis* Working Group.

By working with groups active on the local level to identify needed changes in the laws governing municipalities and on the national level to effect this change, IFES seeks to promote a framework that allows municipalities to effectively address the issues of local concern affecting their constituencies.

*IFES Seeks to Institutionalize Achievements in Municipalities*  
Professional associations provide their memberships with a variety of opportunities to help them better do their jobs and represent their interests. IFES has extensive experience with the development of associations of officials from all levels and strongly supports the creation of the Association of Municipalities. Although, at present, some of the municipalities undertook an initiative to create coordination boards at the regional level and in some regions, these are only regional initiatives. IFES intends to support the creation and sustained development of a national association of municipalities and to promote decentralized cooperation between and within local government.

IFES released a request for proposals in January to identify a local partner for this endeavor. Among the several applications received, IFES expects to award a grant to the domestic group with demonstrated capacity and an approach that is both realistic and sustainable. Over the next two months, IFES will engage each of the nine core municipalities and develop training materials and training program for councilors on creation of an association. Once established, new members will be added over time. As the Association of Municipalities of Azerbaijan grows, so will its resources, expertise, and capacity to represent its members. Over time, the Association will help to institutionalize best practices and lessons learned among municipalities.

#### *Impact Statement*

Of notable success, IFES achieved the following:

- IFES substantially raised the level of debate on the draft UEC among representatives of 43 NGOs in Baku and across the country, reaching 1,258 active citizens and distributing 3,500 leaflets. Together with informational materials, these NGOs and citizens will pass this information on, significantly multiplying its impact.
- IFES successfully promoted legal reforms to define the division of power between the executive and municipal structures and the allocation of financial resources by working directly with the *Milli Majlis*, municipalities, and active NGOs.

## **GEORGIA**

### *Civic Education in Schools Program*

Beginning in June of 2002, IFES' civic education efforts in Georgia were redirected to support civic initiatives in Georgian schools. The program commenced with a baseline assessment of current civic education programs operating in the schools. Direct support for civic education in schools began in January with twenty pilot schools in four regions of the country. The program is scheduled to run through April of 2005.

### "Active Schools Bring Change" Conference

With the twenty partner schools selected, IFES' Civic Education in Schools program focused on preparations for the "Active Schools Bring Change" conference, to be held from 6 - 9 February. The conference will bring together one teacher, one student, and one parent from each of the twenty IFES partner schools. The three-day workshop will provide a forum for partner schools to introduce their planned activities and finalize their action and implementation plans. The conference agenda will also include formal training components on the education reform process in Georgia, proposed education legislative changes, and community based schools and volunteerism. IFES staff compiled participants' materials, conducted training of trainers, and provided a briefing for all conference facilitators.

### *Elections Program*

With parliamentary elections scheduled for November of this year, IFES has been working with local and international partners to build pressure for reform. The poor organization of the June 2002 local elections and the fracturing of the ruling party have focused much attention on November's contest. IFES' current efforts are aimed at improving the quality of the voter lists and ensuring that election administrators have adequate training and resources to fulfill their mandates. IFES is also working with the Central Election Commission (CEC) to improve the election planning process.

### Voter Registration

Preparations for the field work for the voter registration pilot were completed in January. This saw the focus of the project move from the CEC to the respective District Election Commissions. Following approval by the CEC, all materials and forms for the enumeration phase of the voter registration pilot were printed, including 200,000 registration forms, 50,000 public information leaflets, and 500 enumerators' instruction materials. Other forms prepared to support the process enable detailed accounting of households visited. District staff prepared and finalized detailed maps of the areas to be enumerated. This was a problematic issue, as Georgia lacks accurate maps at the level of detail required for such an exercise. In some cases, District staff had to prepare sketches from their own surveys of the district.

District staff also completed recruitment of the enumerators

and enumeration managers in January. Candidates were chosen from a list of people who had been employed as enumerators in the 2002 Census. A total of 344 enumerators and 28 enumeration managers have been contracted for the three pilot districts:

- Saburtalo: 116 enumerators and 11 managers
- Rustavi: 128 enumerators and 11 managers
- Samtredia: 100 enumerators and 6 managers

The number of enumerators contracted for each district was determined by the requirement to complete the enumeration in ten days.

The Voter Registration Team decided to commence the field work in Saburtalo a week earlier than in the other pilot Districts of Rustavi and Samtredia to enable the training materials, instruction booklets, forms, and the agreed procedures to be tested before full implementation across the three districts. Training for all enumerators and managers in Saburtalo has now been completed and field work was scheduled to start on 1 February. An IFES representative will be located in each pilot district throughout the enumeration process to address questions that arise, assist with public enquiries, and support the work of the district staff.

#### Coordination of Election Technical Assistance in Georgia

In order to better coordinate donor efforts and to help focus and coordinate higher-level support for strengthening electoral processes in Georgia, the Election Support Group (ESG) established at the ambassador level has continued to meet with Georgian Government to discuss planning, preparations, and Georgia's funding capacity for the forthcoming Parliamentary Elections.

The Election Technical Working Group (ETWG), consisting of international technical assistance providers, continued to meet throughout the month. This group was formed in late October 2002 with the objective of ensuring coordination across all organizations working on elections in Georgia. The ETWG also has an advisory role for the Ambassadors' Election Support Group and the recently formed Democratic Coalition of Georgian NGOs. IFES, USAID, and OSCE prepared a draft document of election activities in need of support prior to and during the 2003 Parliamentary Elections. The ETWG finalized this consolidated document of election activities and funding shortfalls prior to presentation to the Ambassadors Election Support Group on 29 January.

The Ambassadors Election Support Group sought an update from the ETWG on election preparation activities prior to their meeting with the State Minister on Friday, 31 January. The group reviewed a "Points of Concern" document prepared in December to confirm that the issues identified at that time were still the most urgently in need of political support and attention. The group reaffirmed that the issues previ-

ously identified remained relevant, especially those issues related to improved election administration. These included: proper training for election officials, support for a centralized voter registry, adhering to legal timeframes in relation to election activities, a commitment to transparency and accountability in the conduct of elections, and a commitment to prosecute those accused of election fraud and violence.

#### Georgian Coalition for Democracy

The Georgian Coalition for Democracy was formed late in December to address election deficiencies leading up to the 2003 parliamentary elections. Member NGOs are ISFED, the Liberty Institute, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, the Partnership for Social Initiatives, the Democracy Coalition Project, the Former Prisoners for Human Rights, and the Social Research Center. The coalition has subsequently worked to establish regular dialogue with Georgian Government and the international community on matters related to the conduct of the forthcoming elections. As a result of their meetings with the State Minister, a proposal has emerged to form an elections technical advisory group with representation from Georgian Government, Parliament, Georgian NGOs, and international election experts.

IFES, together with other invited international organizations (UNDP, OSCE, NDI and IRI) have been participating in the initial meetings. The list of priority issues identified by the group are: implementation of a centralized, computerized voter registration process, issue of free voter identity cards, development of an election implementation plan, training of election official, election funding, and voter information.

Although the international organizations have participated in these preliminary meetings with NGOs, there remain concerns regarding this group being seen as an alternate election administration body. The group has no legal authority to play such a role and there is concern that their good intentions may serve to undermine legally constituted election administration institutions by alleviating pressure for reform and confusing their mandate.

#### UEC Training

IFES staff met with representatives of USAID and the American Bar Association (ABA-CEELI) to discuss a cooperative project for training of judges on the election code in preparation for the parliamentary elections. USAID requested that a concept paper be drafted by ABA, the Judicial Training Center (JTC), and IFES. The project concept will include the training of at least one judge from each court and training for observers in how to lodge complaints properly through the court system. The group discussed a number of strategies on how best to achieve these outcomes, including support for a legal advisory center to be established for the elections. The JTC has agreed to develop the initial concept for the consideration of IFES and ABA prior to submission to USAID and other election partners.

*Impact Statement*

The IFES Civic Education in Schools Program prepared for the “Active Schools Bring Change” Conference to be held in February. This conference will bring together representatives of the twenty partner schools, providing a formal launch for the beginning of activities in the partner schools. The program aims to stimulate active citizenship on the part of secondary school students in the target regions and to democratize the administration of schools. The expected outcome is a more active and effective learning environment that produces more responsible and involved citizens.

IFES’ elections program was focused on providing technical support to the CEC and district commissions in the conduct of the voter registration pilot. The pilot will provide a model for addressing one of the key identified weaknesses in Georgia’s election administration system: the inability to produce accurate, verifiable voter lists. The pilot will test a proposed model for a centralized, computerized voter registration system. IFES’ technical assistance efforts ensure that election administrators, other election stakeholders, and the public have access to expertise on best practices in the field, ultimately yielding more effective application of the law and better management of the electoral process.

**KAZAKHSTAN***Conferece of the Association of Initiative Schools*

IFES/Kazakhstan project staff delivered presentations at a civic education conference sponsored by the Association of Initiative Schools on 7-8 January. The event, held in Almaty, was attended by fifty teachers and principals from eastern Kazakhstan. The theme of the conference was “Democratic schools as a social institution of civil society.” Discussion centered on the development of a democratic school model, management of democratic schools, the role and place of students’ councils or committees, and the impact of parent groups on development of education policy in schools. At the end of the first day, IFES Program Manager Ed Morgan and IFES Project Coordinator Marat Bigaliev introduced attendees to IFES programs and made comments on topics such as the role of student activism, Student Action Committees, and other forms of student-led organizations as ways to democratize a school system and encourage active student interest and participation. Attendees showed keen interest in IFES programs and requested a significant number of IFES civic education materials. The presentation received a warm reception from participants and earned praise of USAID/Central Asia representative Igor Tupitsyn.

Issues raised by the speakers included many problems that IFES has also identified over the past three years during the conducting of its own school-based initiatives, such as:

- Lack of modern and new textbooks
- Lack of state support

- Fear of democracy by adults
- Communication problems between teachers and students
- Passiveness of students and parents
- Lack of information and practice on students’ committees and councils
- Lack of legislation and inability to use existing laws and regulations
- Inability to use knowledge in practice

IFES discussed how it has addressed many of these problems through its ongoing civic education project, supported by the Ministry of Education. Together with the teachers and others represented at the conference, IFES proposed a number of possible recommendations, including:

- Working with the government to support the development of more modern education programs
- Use of broader mass-media in dissemination of education programs
- Increasing the publishing of materials in the Kazakh language
- Increasing “democratic” links with communities
- Developing a democratic culture through appropriate programs
- Better training school administration and teachers
- Modifying the position and role of school administration from its traditional role
- Expanding programs on student self-management and activities
- Studying international education programs and exchange of experience, applying the best models to the situation in Kazakhstan

During the conference, Marat Bigaliev met with a number of teachers and school principals from the IFES pilot schools in Taldykorgan, Temirtau, Karaganda, Lisakovsk, Semey, Petropavlovsk, Shymkent, and Almaty. During these meetings he made contacts with new schools and organizations willing and eager to cooperate with IFES in various civic education programs, including the civic education course and textbook, the Student Action Committees, and the Student Local Government Day project.

*Central Election Commission Relations*

The Central Election Commission (CEC) of Kazakhstan contacted IFES for information related to existing laws in other countries on polling and pre-election public surveys. This proved to be a topic of interest during the month of January, as the CEC begins preparations for the upcoming local and national elections to take place over the next three years. IFES also responded to a request for election information regarding the upcoming elections in Armenia, for which the CEC has received an invitation to serve as observers. IFES/Almaty contacted the IFES office in Yerevan and obtained

materials in Russian language, which were then shared with the CEC in Astana. The CEC expressed its gratitude to IFES for providing the materials, assistance, and guidance in an extremely quick turnaround.

In addition, the CEC sent a request letter to IFES/Kazakhstan on behalf of a new permanent Commission on Further Democratization and Civil Society Development established by President Nazarbaev. Mr. Mukhamedzhanov, Deputy Prime Minister, is the Head of the Commission. One of its main focuses will be amendments, changes, and recommendations for the improvement of the Constitutional Law on Elections.

The commission is comprised of government officials, parliamentarians, and representatives of major political parties and related organizations and movements. There is no international representation. The committee is currently working on its organizational structure, membership, and procedural and legislative issues. One item of interest is amending the Election Law on conducting public opinion surveys in relation to elections and referenda. The CEC is requesting any materials in order to study practices of such surveys and, in particular, the rights, responsibilities, and functions of citizens and organizations that conduct public opinion surveys.

With its extensive field experience in designing and conducting surveys of public opinion on democracy issues, including the first baseline survey of democracy indicators sponsored by IFES in 1995 and a tracking poll in 1996, IFES is familiar with the sampling techniques required to conduct nationally-representative polls. This is why the CEC approached IFES for information and advice on the use of public opinion polling on elections and referenda. IFES pledged to provide responsible assistance and targeted advice if the CEC displays a willingness to conduct surveys according to international standards and share the results with all stakeholders in the election process.



*Marat Bigaliev presents IFES materials during a training session.*

#### *Teacher Training, SLGD and SAC projects*

Tatiana Ragozina, the local IFES civic education coordinator in Uralsk, completed her fifteenth teacher training of the current school year. Ragozina was one of the teacher-trainers trained during a seminar conducted by Marat Bigaliev on using the IFES textbook. Fifteen teachers were introduced to updated course materials, civic education projects, and interactive teaching methodology. Tatiana also sent an information booklet from the school-lyceum # 35 in Uralsk, which contained information on how the IFES program has been implemented in that lyceum.

The Student Action Committee program also continued to expand. To date, IFES/Kazakhstan has monitored 27 SACs, with more committees still anticipated to take place during the current school year. At the beginning of the month, IFES SAC coordinator Oleg Bakhmutov addressed a session of 25 teachers and school principals representing regional institutes from throughout Kazakhstan.

The teachers and principals gathered in Almaty to discuss extra-curricular school activities. Bakhmutov presented the SAC concept and distributed copies of the IFES SAC manual. With the support of the school administration, local eleventh grade student Aleksey Zhuravlev, who participated in the 2001 Aktau summer camp, established a Student Action Committee in his school. Another SAC was established in the Kazakh school #15 in Temirtau.

IFES was informed that the local Akimat in Uralsk, in partnership with the Department of Education and schools, conducted a Student Local Government Day project as the first pilot program. Due to success of the project, in which school students shadowed local administration officials for a 'day on the job,' the Akimat expressed its strong interest in conducting SLGDs on an annual basis.

Marat Bigaliev sent letters on the SLGD project to Akimats in the cities of Temirtau, Lisakovsk and Karaganda to gauge their interest in sponsoring SLGDs for the current school year.

#### *Civic Education Course Survey*

By the end of January, the IFES civics course had successfully reached 35,948 students in 577 schools. To gauge the value and acceptance of this course among current students, graduates, and teachers, and to provide this information to the Ministry of Education and Science and USAID, IFES began preparations for a written survey that will take place in February among 200 teachers and 1,000 students. The survey is part of the approved IFES monitoring and evaluation plan for its civic education course and textbook project. In January IFES finalized the survey's scope, approach, and content of the questionnaires and conducted a pre-test. IFES expects to make results of the survey available in March.

*Impact Summary*

In January IFES/Kazakhstan successfully engaged actors in both the elections and civic education spheres, advancing its program according to its approved work plan in the latter and taking advantage of newfound opportunities in the former. Ongoing engagement with the Central Election Commission on a number of informational initiatives underscored IFES' ongoing importance as an electoral watchdog and resource. IFES will continue to make its services and advice available in accordance with USAID goals and policies.

IFES proceeded with the expansion of its civics initiative in all spheres, nearing its target goals for number and range of students and events in the present school year. A number of SACs and SLGDs had already taken place independent of IFES, though as a result of IFES training, and teacher trainings were conducted by experienced teachers without direct IFES supervision. This points out to the growing sustainability of the project and level of support among schools in Kazakhstan.

**KYRGYZSTAN***Secondary Civics Education*

Through the end of January 2003, the IFES civics course and textbook project had reached nearly 8,700 students nationwide. The course and textbook project has been the centerpiece of IFES civic education efforts in Kyrgyzstan for the last three years. The distribution of part two of the Russian and Kyrgyz textbooks was completed, with 22 textbooks issued to 44 Russian and 41 Kyrgyz schools together with the teacher's guidebook. In January IFES proceeded with coordinating the translation of the textbook into the Uzbek language, with a sufficient number of translators engaged to ensure timely conclusion.

*Teacher Training*

Three teacher training events took place in January: two in Bishkek for pilot schools located in the north, and one training for those in the south. Fifty-eight teachers attended the three teacher trainings, which highlighted classroom management techniques, evaluation mechanisms in civic education, curriculum design, and a review of the teacher's guide. At the end of the trainings each teacher was issued a copy of a CD-Rom and supplementary reading materials, which contained nearly 1,600 pages worth of secondary and tertiary level civics education articles.

*Civics Education Newsletter*

The eighth edition of the IFES Civics Education teachers' newsletter was published in January. This monthly publication, which serves as a resource to teachers participating in the pilot school project nationwide, is made available in Russian, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek languages.

*Teacher Support*

Pilot schoolteachers who participated in an IFES- and AED-sponsored Study Tour of Kiev in April 2002 initiated a follow-up activity that aims to develop a concept paper on Civic Education in the Kyrgyz Republic. The content of the concept paper will apply lessons learned in Ukraine and develop groundwork for a national curriculum strategy on Civic Education. The initiative has received the support of the Academy for Education Development (AED/USAID).

A training provider has been identified by AED to provide critical thinking training for IFES' southern pilot schools- teachers. The critical thinking laboratory was based at the American University in Central Asia. The training course is scheduled to commence in late February or early March. For the training program IFES/Kyrgyzstan will undertake a teacher selection process in combination with AED and other partners.

*Student Local Government Day*

IFES/Kyrgyzstan program staff reviewed materials, developed a timeline, and completed a list of participants for forthcoming student local government day activities, which will be held in February. The list includes heads of the local state administrations and high officials such as mayors of different regional and provincial towns and heads of the provincial assemblies. IFES commenced contacting participants, informing them about the venue and date of the training. Materials will be distributed early in February.

Three brochures were printed for teachers, students, and public officials, and an invitation letter to public officials to take part in the SLGD project was drafted.

Manuals for the public officials, teachers, and the students were also printed, and IFES will now select teachers and students from its participating pilot schools to take part in the SLGD project.

*Constitutional Reform in Kyrgyzstan*

Leading up to the referendum held on 2 February 2003, IFES supported a public committee to develop a pros and cons leaflet. Committee members and staff worked long hours reviewing public comments, translating materials, and preparing for printing, although printing could not be undertaken without the express permission of the Chairman of the CEC, who gave his permission at the last minute. IFES printed 100,000 leaflets (50,000 Kyrgyz, 35,000 Russian and 15,000 Uzbek) and delivered close to 95,000 leaflets around the country. IFES staff were pleased with the leaflets and received praise from varying quarters including CEC staff Halima Bakirova and Nina Petrova and USAID Democracy Officer Igor Tupitsyn.

*Kyrgyzstan Referendum Results*

The Kyrgyz referendum day closed, ushering in a new consti-



tution enhancing executive power and confirming presidential incumbent Askar Akayev to serve to the end of his current term in 2005. The Kyrgyz Central Electoral Commission (CEC) announced that close to 86% of the electorate had cast ballots. A 50%+1 turnout is required under Kyrgyz law to make the vote official, and 50%+1 of those on the voters roll must vote in favor for the plebiscite to succeed.

The government pushed the point that the referendum was an opportunity for the voters to register a vote of confidence in president Akayev. The public was shown how to vote YES, by crossing out the NO by all government media and institutions. Polling was marred by serious and widespread voting irregularities, as witnessed in past elections, including multiple voting, family voting, proxy voting (some rural polling stations had turnouts of 99.9% and 99% of the vote for the president, which mirrored Soviet practices) and the local authorities were seen in all polling places with large numbers of both uniformed and plain clothes militia. In several cases in the university polling places, particularly at the Osh State University, observers noted such serious voting irregularities that the oblast elections committee was obliged to acknowledge and consider voiding these results.

IFES deployed observer teams to key locations in the north and south of the country to monitor the poll, and liaised with other international and domestic monitors at the conclusion of the referendum to share impressions and convey concerns to the CEC. It was the conclusion of IFES and other international monitors that the irregularities seen in the voting and recording process sufficiently marred the process to consider it not in compliance with international elections standards. IFES hoped to engage stakeholders to discuss the referendum experience and assess what may lie ahead by planning a forum to take place either in February or March. IFES has been proactive in promoting dialogue between local stakeholders and advising both the CEC and local NGOs on how best to pursue consensus. Despite the relatively negative experience of the referendum, IFES will continue to serve in an advisory capacity in order to pursue affecting positive change in the system of elections and electoral accountability in Kyrgyzstan.

#### *Impact Summary*

IFES continued to pilot the civics education course in Years 10-11 of 167 schools in all areas of Kyrgyzstan. IFES Russian pilot teachers, utilizing part two of the textbook, continued to express support and satisfaction with the course and materials. Teachers and students reported finding part two even more challenging than part one, which indicated a successful transition to subjects of greater complexity and sophistication. It also continued to confirm a high level of participation and commitment to the program. IFES looks forward to completing the Kyrgyz- and Uzbek-language editions in their entirety and gaining equally high levels of acceptance from students and teacher using those versions. Part two of

the textbook is more comprehensive and is gaining a solid reputation with teachers confirming the significant contribution to the development of democratic student initiatives. With the teacher assistance through the teacher newsletter, supplementary readings and teacher conferences, IFES is achieving its objectives in promoting development and professionalism of the secondary school teacher corps.

IFES support of the public committee associated with the referendum discussions achieved its main objective in the production and distribution of the first ever 'pro and cons' referendum leaflet issued in Kyrgyzstan. The committee's media and public work was groundbreaking, although unheralded in any previous activities in constitutional reform in Kyrgyzstan. IFES is pleased to have recruited a strong group of moderate politicians and professors to support the referendum work. The group became strong partners with IFES and learned significantly from the project as well as becoming long-term supporters and associates of IFES.

IFES work in support of electoral activities in the past, such as training PEC members and printing election guidebooks, clearly needs to be moderated in the future with more emphatic emphasis needed to be put not only into procedural reform but with the support of USAID, reform of the activities of the government apparatus through the establishment of a code of ethics and matching practices.

## **TAJIKISTAN**

### *Election Assistance Issues*

In January IFES/Tajikistan met with the chairman of the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CCER) Mirzoali Baltuyev and the CCER Staff Director Muhibullo Dodojonov. Initial discussions focused on the successes of the Symposium on International Election Standards, jointly conducted by IFES and the CCER in Dushanbe on 30-31 October 2002. The CCER expressed great interest in conducting follow-up regional meetings on International Election Standards, thus building on the issues raised in October. It was agreed that follow-up Symposiums on the Election Law Standards should be conducted in the near future. It was also agreed that the CCER and IFES will prepare a list of participants which tentatively may include deputies from the relevant Majlisi Namoyandagon Committees, Hukumat officials, district election administrators, representatives of the Ministry of Justice, and leaders of political parties and movements. The meeting concluded with the discussion on other possible future areas of cooperation, including voter registration, voter education and election administration assistance.

### *Political Party Development – Regional Outreach*

Follow-up meetings were held with political parties in Yovon, Faizobod, Hisor, Kofarnihon, Sughd, and other districts who participated in IFES political party development (PPD)

seminars. The party representatives were informed of IFES plans to conduct a survey in ten districts of Tajikistan to elicit parties' comments. The survey would take place in the spring of 2003 and would be in cooperation with grassroots party organizations. All parties indicated their eagerness to cooperate and offered their assistance. IFES was asked to organize a seminar to explain the methodologies of conducting surveys, prior to commencing the interview process. IFES was gratified to see initiative and activism of many parties. Several parties announced plans to organize similar PPD seminars in their districts and encouraged IFES to conduct civic education trainings for their members.

During the month, IFES staff also developed a series of recommendations based on conclusions reached during November/December PPD seminars in Dushanbe, Khojand, and Kurghon Teppa. Possible programmatic opportunities include broader cooperation with local partners, especially in the development of non-partisan grassroots organization materials, a poster *What Every Citizen Should Know*, and a citizen survey on knowledge of democracy.

#### *Textbook – Distribution Progress*

The Russian language version of the textbook has been printed and distributed to fourteen schools (29 total classes) in two regions - Dushanbe and Area of Republican Subordination (ARS), reaching 642 students. In January IFES conducted on-site visits to the schools to gauge initial reaction to the textbook.

Additionally, classroom simulations were conducted on-site in several Tajik language schools to determine initial reaction to the methodologies and terminologies used in the textbook. When printed, the Tajik language version will be distributed to 25 schools (97 total classes) in 4 regions - Dushanbe, Khatlon ARS, and Sughd, reaching 2,603 students, for an overall pilot program involvement of 39 schools and 3,245 students.

#### *School Based Activities*

As of January, IFES/Tajikistan conducted a total eight out of eleven new Student Local Government Day (SLGD) events. This is in addition to four already functioning SLGD programs, one of which, in Khojand, is already self-sustainable and has plans to expand to more local schools. As of 31 January, a total of 111 students, already exceeding the 2003 benchmark goal, have spent a working day with a total of 75 local government officials. The Chkalovsk, Gafurov, Garm, Istaravshan, Isfara, Kairakkum, Konibodom, and Penjakent SLGD events had all taken place, with Kulyab, Hisor and Shartouz still to be held. The Penjakent SLGD was covered by the independent media agency *Varorud* and an article on the event was published on their website. *The First Press Club of Tajikistan* also provided media support for several of the events, with the resulting tapings being broadcast on state

and private TV stations. The participants' lists were added to the IFES School Based Database Chart. Certificates of Participation were awarded to all SLGD participants: teachers, students, and government officials.

#### *Impact Summary*

IFES has been encouraged to see the growing level of support for its civic education and political party development programs among the population of Tajikistan. Initiatives of political parties, support of government officials, and enthusiasm of local educators all underscore that IFES' programs are not only needed in the country, but that they are having a genuine impact. By mobilizing parties to organize themselves in an efficient manner, providing technical assistance to election officials and party members, encouraging media involvement, and training local educators to conduct civic education projects, IFES/Tajikistan empowers Tajik citizens to impact the development of their country in a positive and productive fashion. In the upcoming months, IFES plans to involve contacts it has made in January in its programming and to provide them with all necessary assistance. †



# IFES

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*IFES provides technical assistance in the promotion of democracy worldwide and serves as a clearinghouse for information about democratic development and elections. Since its inception in 1987, the Foundation has worked in more than 100 countries. IFES activities are made possible, in part, by the U.S. Agency for International Development.*

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