

Date Printed: 10/28/2008

JTS Box Number: IFES_1

Tab Number: 22

Document Title: Azerbaijan, FINAL REPORT, September
20, 2001 - September 19, 2003

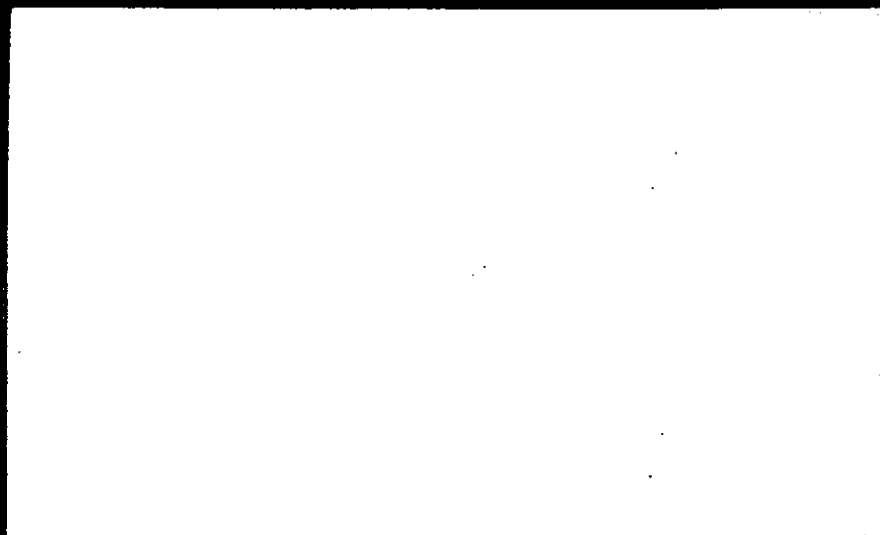
Document Date: 2003

Document Country: Azerbaijan

IFES ID: R01519



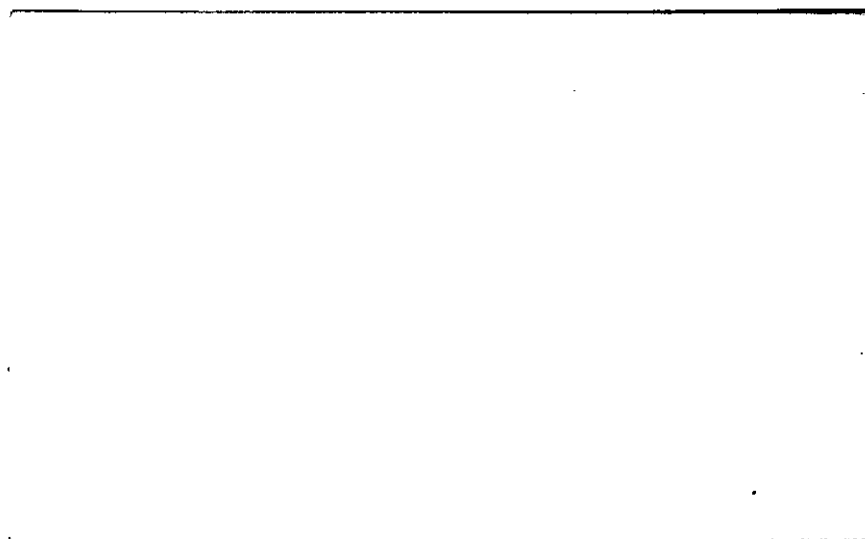
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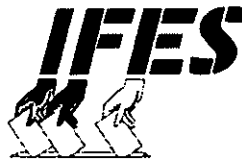


MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK



IFES MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of IFES is to provide technical assistance in the promotion of democracy worldwide and to serve as a clearinghouse for information about democratic development and elections. IFES is dedicated to the success of democracy throughout the world, believing that it is the preferred form of government. At the same time, IFES firmly believes that each nation requesting assistance must take into consideration its unique social, cultural, and environmental influences. The Foundation recognizes that democracy is a dynamic process with no single blueprint. IFES is nonpartisan, multinational, and interdisciplinary in its approach.



EXTENDING THE REACH OF DEMOCRACY

Azerbaijan FINAL REPORT

September 20, 2001 – September 19, 2003

**USAID COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
No. 112-A-00-01-00022-00**

Submitted to the

**UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

by the

**INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS**

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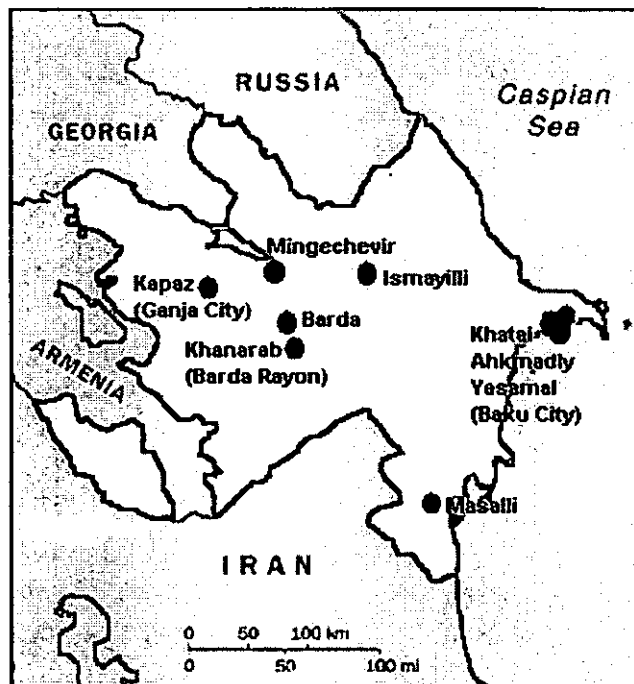
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1. Introduction

IFES finished its programming under Cooperative Agreement No. 112-A-00-01-00022-00 by building on its past programmatic experience and network of election commissions, legislative, municipal, and NGO contacts in Azerbaijan. IFES program activities supported USAID SO 2.1 - Civil Society Better Organized and Represented - by linking directly to the following IRs:

- IR 2.1.1 Issue-Based, Formal and Informal Associations/Advocacy Groups Organized and Active*
- IR 2.1.1.1 Improved Capacity for Public Outreach, Awareness and Advocacy*
- IR 2.1.1.2 Improved Organizational Management*
- IR 2.1.2 Legal and Policy Advocacy Environment Supports Civil Society and Media Development*
- IR 2.1.2.3 Increased Public Awareness of Legal and Policy Advocacy Framework*

IFES activities resulted in enhancing IFES' voice and securing improvements in the electoral process, developing citizens who are better equipped to play an active role in their communities and meet the requirements of democratic citizenship, formalizing advocacy groups, increasing public participation by municipal councils through institutionalized communication strategies, improving the capacity for these councils to provide services and share information, getting IFES' message about democracy out to the public, and raising the level of information and awareness about democracy in Azerbaijan.



IFES AZERBAIJAN TARGET MUNICIPALITIES

2. Programmatic Environment and Background

Despite President Heidar Aliyev's professed intention to promote democracy in Azerbaijan, the country's progress toward establishing a more open and accountable system of government was inadequate. Political power remained concentrated in a constitutionally strong presidency that exercised near total control over the legislative and judicial branches of government. Although legal frameworks are being put into place they are often not implemented. Moreover, independent media, opposition political parties, legitimate non-governmental organizations, professional associations and special interest groups enjoyed limited freedom to organize and act. Although steps were made in the development of a legal framework for civil society, this development remained insufficient and there is little understanding or acceptance, both within and outside of government, of the role of civil society in a democracy.

With regard to the development of independent structures of local self-governance, the election of municipal councils in 1999 resulted in few functioning local governments. Conventional wisdom suggests that the current situation reflected only a de-concentration of power (as vested in the executive authorities). Indeed, IFES experience through its work in this field from before the 1999 elections to the present indicates that while many of the variables needed to achieve a meaningful de-centralization of power are still not in place, incremental reform is occurring. IFES also witnessed the capacity for municipalities to build constructive and credible relationships with their constituents at the community level.

3. Program Overview

IFES programmatic activities furthered SO 2.1 Civil Society Better Organized and Represented. IFES built a constituency for democratic change in Azerbaijan by promoting the further evolution of a sustainable system of elections by doing the following:

1. Encouraging increased professionalism among election officials;
2. Providing targeted training to elected local officials;
3. Encouraging broader citizen participation in public life; and
4. Providing citizens with essential information on democracy and democratic governance.

IFES improved democratic practices through transferring needed skills to election officials and municipal members, increasing important networking and information-sharing opportunities, and influencing the legislative basis for elections and local governance. IFES likewise empowered citizens of all ages to take responsibility for solving local problems in a collaborative manner, to hold public officials accountable and to demand those officials conduct themselves according to the law.

3.1. Technical Election Support

In preparation for the October 15, 2003 presidential elections, the international community organized a number of events to share plans and discuss likely coordination and cooperation. IFES actively participated in these events, which included representatives from US Embassy, USAID, and groups such as Eurasia Foundation, NDI, IRI, Internews, OSCE, and OSI.

3.1.1. Technical Elections Assistance and Professional Development

Throughout the agreement, IFES engaged the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Azerbaijan to pursue regulatory, institutional, and procedural reform in order to engender greater professionalism, efficiency, and transparency of the election administration process to increase public confidence in the legitimacy of election results. This engagement was made possible through two Memoranda of Understanding with the CEC, regular meetings with CEC Chairman and other members and staff, and attendance of regular CEC meetings. Seeking to encourage best practices through engagement with their colleagues in successful democracies, IFES supported the attendance of the CEC Chairman at ACEEEO Conferences and CEC membership in the ACEEEO in 2001. *The ACEEEO General Assembly admitted Azerbaijan CEC as a new institutional member in 2002.* IFES also received funding from Norwegian Embassy and Westminster Foundation for Democracy to support

multi-partisan CEC delegation at the Association for Electoral Administrators conference in the UK. Finally, through funding from IFES' E&E Cooperative Agreement with USAID, IFES sent two judges from the Azerbaijan Supreme Court and Constitutional Court to attend the IFES Election Dispute Resolution Seminar in Sofia.

As part of its technical election assistance, IFES actively pursued positive change by working both with the CEC and the international community. Prior to the constitutional referendum held on August 24, 2002, IFES pursued changes to the ballot that offered a multiple opportunity, rather than one single opportunity, to vote either for or against each proposal. IFES, together with the OSCE and with the support of the US Embassy and USAID, organized a series of five televised roundtables in August, during which deputies from the *Milli Majlis* and representatives of the major political parties, the Presidential Apparatus, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, and NGOs publicly debated the issues on the ballot. IFES also played the lead role in keeping the international community informed about the issues connected with the plebiscite. This information was used by the wider international community not just in Baku, but also in Washington as a source of useful information for briefings and decision-making.

For both the August 24, 2002 referendum and March 5, 2003 by-elections, IFES actively supported monitoring of the process. Through training of domestic monitors in coordination with NDI and IRI and local NGOs, IFES sought to ensure that there was no duplication of effort. IFES updated and provided printed sufficient copies of its Election Day Guide for Domestic Observers. IFES also briefed international observers in coordination with the international community, in particular OSCE/ODIHR and the US Embassy. IFES coordinated with the US Embassy and Democracy and Governance partners to achieve maximum impact by strategically employing most observers in a single constituency. Finally, IFES fielded its own technical observer teams and developed technical reports which were shared directly with the CEC.

During the March 5, 2003 by-elections IFES fielded numerous election-related calls from observers throughout the day concerning issues such as questions on the quorum required for results to be valid, whether the media was able to witness the counting of the votes, clarification on which identification documents were acceptable in order to obtain a vote and procedures to be followed by the Precinct Election Commission at the counting of the votes and completion of protocols. Immediately after the 5 by-election, IFES collected the individual observer reports and drafted IFES' Technical Report. As a result of its engagement with the Central Election Commission, the CEC cancelled results in a total of 30 precincts in the three constituencies - 6 in Garadag, 10 in Ismayilli and 14 in Khanlar-Dashkesan.

In advance of the October 15, 2003 presidential election, IFES attended every official CEC meeting and consulted regularly with CEC leadership. During these consultations, IFES provided technical advice on such issues as implementing regulations, new procedures mandated by the newly adopted Election Code (EC), and the design of ballots and protocols. As a result of these meetings, IFES began to revise its Election Day Guide so that it conforms to the new Election Code and relevant regulations. With USAID funds, IFES procured in US more than 5000 individually numbered, carbonized multi-colored protocols, as required by the new law. With funding from USAID and the German Embassy, IFES procured 7500

transparent ballot boxes for all the constituencies in Azerbaijan. IFES also procured more than 5000 transparent mobile ballot boxes with support from the Royal Netherlands and British Embassies. Each ballot box order included individually numbered tamper-evident seals. The transparent ballot boxes and other provisions in law, such as the use of numbered protocols (which IFES printed) and ballots, and envelopes for the ballots all provide additional level of security that did not exist in previous elections.

Committed to enfranchising all eligible voters, IFES met with the Azerbaijan Association of Blind People to discuss the issues related to the right of visually impaired persons to elect and be elected. IFES demonstrated different special ballot papers and tools that could ensure the secrecy of voting for the visually impaired that allows them to vote without assistance. IFES also pointed out relevant articles in EC that increase the responsibilities of the CEC and lower level commissions to secure greater voting rights for the disabled. As a result of IFES activities the CEC decided to use stencil for voting of blind voters.

3.1.2. Election Administration Curriculum Development and Training

IFES systematically engaged the CEC through regular meetings and topical roundtables designed to increase their knowledge and skills sets, while holding them accountable to existing legislation. In November 2001 IFES held two roundtables with the CEC. During the first event, IFES and the CEC discussed the new draft EC in detail. IFES then conducted a second roundtable on problems facing election administrators and other election actors in Azerbaijan and abroad. IFES challenged the participants to identify possible solutions to these problems that are appropriate for Azerbaijan.

Throughout the agreement, IFES continuously updated Election Day Guide so that it applied to the relevant by-election, referendum, or national election and conformed to the changes in the Election Code. IFES used this Guide as the basis for its pollworker training efforts. IFES pollworker training in advance of each by-election and national election, resulted in increasing the capacity of lower level election officials to fulfill their tasks while training a cadre of CEC trainers using interactive methodologies for the first time. These training efforts were supported by funds from the British Embassy.

The March 5 by-elections typified IFES' approach. As the CEC prepared to conduct by-elections in three constituencies, IFES sought to strengthen the capacity of pollworkers to conduct the elections in accordance with the law. In February IFES conducted a two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) for the CEC Training Group composed of seven current and four new CEC members. They were trained on presentation skills, election administration issues and election-day procedures. In addition to the ToT, IFES monitored the training provided by the CEC trainers in two of the three constituencies, and observed that the training was being well conducted. Not only did the trainers successfully convey the necessary information to the pollworkers, but the success of the training led, in part, to an official request for IFES' involvement in the training of Precinct Election Commission (PEC) members in advance of the October 15, 2003 presidential elections.

3.1.3. Voter Education

During the drafting of the Election Code, IFES utilized its effective civic education program to raise awareness and encourage discussion of electoral issues addressed in the UEC. By raising the level of information and discussion, and at the same time hearing their concerns, IFES helped create a more active electorate in the nine strategic municipalities across Azerbaijan in which it worked. IFES launched this initiative by conducting a "training of trainers" session on the draft EC for its own team of nine Civic Education Trainers and Regional Coordinators.

IFES led the way in educating the general public on the nature and significance of the draft EC, 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 EC. Discussion groups were conducted in all the nine partner municipalities. IFES bolstered this effort by distributing 5000 leaflets about the draft EC. 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. Through the discussion groups, IFES increased the knowledge among citizens about the draft, 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 from participants on how to voice their comments and/or proposals on the draft EC, IFES trainers provided guidance on the many ways citizens can influence legislation.

With a new Code and new procedures, voter education emerged as a critical component of supporting the election administration process. With support from the British Embassy in June 2003, IFES developed a set of voter education materials, including training aids for use by USAID-funded IFES trainers as well as trainers from NGOs and political parties. Immediately after publication of the new law, IFES conducted a three-day training session for IFES Azerbaijan civic education trainers. The trainers received instruction on presentation skills, and refreshed the methods and techniques that they used during their previous activities. Based on the trainers' comments, IFES amended the content of its voter education training and get-out-the-vote activities and materials, using these materials to launch its voter education drive in advance of the October 15 presidential elections. From July until the end agreement, IFES launched a voter education initiative which directly engaged citizens and reached voters through discussions conducted by trainers using IFES' user-friendly Training Package.

In the midst of holding these discussion groups, on September 13 IFES conducted a Voter Education Volunteers Day for 78 young participants from the IFES partner municipalities. IFES emphasized the importance of the mission that the volunteers will implement and made presentations on IFES' Voter Education Package, how to become an observer, and the rights and responsibilities of observers. Participants received 36,000 Voting Steps leaflets (which described voting day procedures) for distribution, 50 copies of the Election Day Guide, and 40 copies of the Election Code.

Developing voter education posters for polling sites in advance of by-elections set IFES up to develop public service announcements (PSA) in advance of the October 15, 2003 presidential election. IFES supported its voter education efforts with three PSAs produced with equipment from Internews in advance of the October 15 elections. IFES selected three major television companies on which to air the PSAs. AzTV, Lider and ANS TV aired the IFES PSAs from October 2 to October 13 with AzTV allocating free air time.

IFES also strengthened its outreach efforts through the media and participating in various pre-election events. IFES regularly discussed the electoral process with media representatives and held special events. For example, on August 26, 2003 IFES conducted a Voter Education Presentation for media representatives at the International Press Center (IPC). Thirty-nine media representatives attended the presentation where they received information available in the IFES voter education package and were shown an example of a transparent ballot box and the sealing process, with special emphasis on security and transparency issues.

In the effort to reach a wide range of Azeri NGOs, IFES organized voter education roundtables for local groups designed to provide them with voter education materials and training. By conducting training for groups such as Women's Rights Protection Organization and Democratic Elections Center, IFES extended the impact of its training aids and materials. IFES reached 16 participants from each organization during the training and provided them with copies of the IFES training package along with several copies of the new Election Code. IFES also conducted a voter education briefing on the Election Code for the US Embassy Democracy Commission grantees. All 19 participants from 10 domestic groups were provided with printed and electronic (on floppy disks and CD-ROMs) versions of all materials presented. These events generated a lot of interest and many questions were raised by the participants. Following a roundtable titled: "New Electoral Legislation and our rights – Elections and Women" organized by the Center of Legal and Economic Education (CLEE), in which IFES presented its training materials on the new Election Code, the IFES Training Package was provided to CLEE. As part of its cooperation with IDEAM, on August 25 IFES conducted a voter education presentation for representatives of the Blind Association of Azerbaijan. These and other NGOs obtained the election information and materials that they needed to reach their own constituencies. Finally, as part of its commitment to youth voter education, IFES participated in the International Conference on Youth Participation in Elections organized by the Association of Young Azerbaijani Friends of Europe (AYAFE) on April 28-30 in Baku.

3.1.4. Voter Registry and Voter Registration Assessment

IFES undertook an assessment to analyze the current voter registration system in Azerbaijan and provide alternative solutions for problems identified during past elections. Numerous interviews were held with members of the CEC, heads of numerous Executive Commissions (ExComs), as well as representatives of political parties. In addition, roundtable discussions were held with chairmen and members of the Constituency Election Commission (ConEC) and Precinct Electoral Commissions (PEC).

The study confirmed that the current system of registration in Azerbaijan is neither accurate, nor effective. The list of voters is created anew for each election and the trust of the public in the validity of the voters' list is virtually non-existent.

Therefore, recommendations presented in this document are based on the premise that the current process of creating a voter registration program must be fully revised. For the public's trust in the electoral system in Azerbaijan to be regained the electoral reform process needs to start at the ground level with the creation of a valid voters' list.

The IFES voter registration assessment recommended several alternatives to the current registration process - all of which are currently being used in other countries. Although all of the proposals are monumental in their scope tasks, all of them are achievable. A timeline required for each suggested alternative is reasonably attainable, if well designed and executed.

3.2 Legislative Advising on Legal Framework For Elections and Municipal Governance

IFES provided a tested combination of direct engagement and consultation on often difficult legislative issues to help build clear, coherent, and appropriate legal framework governing elections and local governing bodies. While substantial progress was made creating a sufficient legal framework for democratic elections and local governance, there was a failure of the government to implement these laws properly and clearly lack of political will.

3.2.1 Assistance to Election Law Reform

IFES focused its efforts on the adoption of the unified Election Code. IFES recognizes that weaknesses leave the electoral process open to manipulation. IFES promoted the unified EC as a way to effectively codify existing election-related legislation into one document, thereby eliminating inconsistencies and reducing the complexity of multiple pieces of legislation. Based on a document that essentially culled together The Law on the Elections to the *Milli Majlis* of the Republic of Azerbaijan, The Law on Elections of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, The Law on Municipal Elections, The Law on Referendum, and The Law on the Central Election Commission, IFES used its engagement with the Presidential Apparatus (PA) to press for legislative reforms. On May 27, 2003 Azerbaijan's National Assembly, the Milli Majlis, adopted the unified Election Code. The following week, on June 3, the "Azerbaijan" state newspaper published the Law of the Azerbaijan Republic "On Approval and Entry into Force of the Election Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan" signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on May 27, 2003.

The Election Code is the result of more than 17 months of intense labor by the Government of Azerbaijan, in particular the Presidential Apparatus, consultations with IFES and other members of the international community, and negotiations with the main opposition parties. Since January 2002, IFES Azerbaijan has played a key role by providing Government of Azerbaijan counterparts with technical assistance and training on electoral law and by enabling broad-based consultations on the EC. The adopted EC, a condition set by the Council of Europe for admission in that organization, includes 85% of IFES' recommendations. While the Code is viewed by many as an improvement over the previous legislation and by others as seriously flawed, IFES believes that the new Code contains provisions that could have allowed for an improved election process had the Code been applied in a proper manner.

IFES made comments to the PA in March and July of 2002 and January of 2003 that were designed to produce a single, consistent draft document that took into account recommendations made by political parties, domestic NGOs, and the international community. Among these recommendations, both the international community and local groups have consistently pointed out concerns regarding the make up of the Central Election Commission and lower-level commissions and the right of all local groups to observe the electoral process. IFES presented its comments on the draft EC to the PA on the condition that these comments would be used to develop clear and consistent draft legislation for an open and public discussion.

IFES strongly believes in the importance of representation by all interested political parties and groups in the electoral reform process. To this end, IFES continuously urged the government to release documents pertaining to the drafting of new electoral legislation. From the moment the draft EC was released, IFES played the lead role as a clearinghouse for up-to-date election-related information by incorporating in a timely manner the many changes made by the PA and distributing the resulting drafts in hard-copy and via the internet to political parties, domestic and international NGOs, the diplomatic community, as well as to the public at large. The draft EC appeared in both languages on the IFES Azerbaijan website (www.ifesaze.org), thereby allowing all interested parties to access the most up-to-date information available. IFES also addressed political parties, local NGOs, and select members of the international community in briefings to discuss the status of the unified EC. IFES made public the comments that were submitted to the drafters. The events were well attended and the legal background and comments were widely distributed, even reaching two political parties that had boycotted the briefings.

Engagement with the PA by IFES and others in the international community led to an agreement to hold public roundtables to discuss the draft EC and propose changes. These roundtables were to be the first real opportunity for the government and opposition parties to openly discuss the long-awaited draft. Despite last minute efforts by IFES and the international community, the main opposition parties and most NGOs operating in the field of elections boycotted the event.

IFES also collaborated with OSCE Ambassador Peter Burkhard, who sought to jointly organize an informational seminar on the EC for political parties, NGOs, the media and other interested individuals or organizations. For the event "Scientific Practical Conference on Election Law," IFES prepared copies of the EC, IFES information leaflets and other materials for distribution to conference participants, and worked with ODIHR to prepare final recommendations. IFES took active part in the event which also included participation by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe. While the opposition parties boycotted the conference, Vagif Hajibeyli, lawyer and chairman of opposition "Ahrar" party, and one of the drafters of the Opposition Coordination Center's Proposals to the Unified Electoral Code did participate. Media coverage was widespread with full television and print media reporting. Overall, by bringing to the attention of the general public the need for new legislation and the contents of the EC, the conference successfully achieved one of its main objectives.

Azerbaijan's NGO community had a direct interest in the development of the EC as it provided the framework within which they participated 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 roundtable IFES discussed the draft EC 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 formalized in a resolution adopted during the roundtable:

1. To continue the process of development of the EC by participation of all stakeholders and to be carried out not only within a limited political frame, but within a wider circle.
2. To ensure participation of NGOs in all election processes within the legislative framework.
3. 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
4. To establish an NGO Task Force for further coordination of activities and discussions on detailed amendment suggestions to the draft EC.

During the final days of consideration of the draft EC, parliamentarians were presented with new suggestions for the composition of election commissions developed as a result of the April 14-15 meetings held in Strasbourg, between the representatives of the Presidential Apparatus, IFES, ODIHR and the Venice Commission. IFES Azerbaijan was a key participant in the discussions. The meetings, hosted by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission, also resulted in further agreed changes to the draft Code. Undoubtedly, the composition of the election commissions was the most problematic aspect of the Code. The Parliamentary Commissions in the *Milli Majlis* reviewed the suggestions and came up with a new formula for the election commissions that was distributed to the parliamentarians at the May 23 session. The formula was debated on May 23 and 27. Though some deputies criticized the proposal on the composition of the CEC, the last words in the speeches of almost all deputies were supportive of the suggested formula. They also emphasized that it is a very big compromise on the part of the government to the opposition and it is a transitional formula (it will be in effect until the 2005 *Milli Majlis* elections). The US Ambassador to Azerbaijan at the time, Ross Wilson played a significant part in this process behind the negotiation scenes and discussions. The new formula, as set forth in the Law of the Azerbaijan Republic "On Approval and Entry into Force of the Election Code of the Azerbaijan Republic", expires following the 2005 Parliamentary Elections reverting to an 18-member body with six commissioners from the ruling party, six from the opposition, and six independent members.

IFES also supported demands by opposition deputies that the Code include a provision to certify the prevalence of the EC over the NGO Law. This would serve to guarantee unlimited access for NGOs to observe elections irrespective of their funding sources. Since the adopted EC contains no such language on its prevalence and the NGO law has not been amended, NGOs receiving foreign funding were noted to have the opportunity to field observers. While NGOs faced legal obstacles in observing elections, the Code does allow for partisan observers as well as for individual citizen observers. According to the law, citizens may register to be observers at either the constituency or national level.

Following the adoption of the new Election Code, IFES met with the Presidential Apparatus to discuss the further steps in connection with its implementation. A substantial amount of work was required to establish procedural regulations and carry out its provisions. IFES' first priority was to ensure that all relevant actors in Azerbaijan had a copy of the adopted Code. IFES translated the Election Code into English and distributed it to the international community. IFES also printed 5000 copies of the Code in Azeri, 500 in English, and placed it in both languages on the IFES Azerbaijan website (www.ifesaze.org). IFES then briefed USAID and the US Embassy on the final Code and the implications for the October 15, 2003 presidential election. IFES also conducted extensive voter education and attended events on the implementation of the new Code by the Coordination Center of Opposition and a domestic NGO "SOS 03 Election League".

In the midst of the development of the Election Code, the President of Azerbaijan issued an unexpected proposal that there be a Constitutional Referendum on August 24, 2002. As a clearing-house for election and referendum related information in Azerbaijan, IFES prepared informational materials on the rules and regulations governing referenda in Azerbaijan, the potential make-up of the ballot, and the impact of the proposed changes.

3.2.2 Support of Local Governance Legislation Development

IFES and the *Milli Majlis* published and distributed a comprehensive compendium of municipal laws and regulations. The compendium was subsequently placed on the IFES website. The compilation of 14 existing laws, which was distributed to all 2,667 municipalities, other government bodies, and several NGOs, served as the basis for IFES' in-depth assessment of the legal framework for municipalities and the particular needs of the five municipalities. The assessment is serving as a guide for IFES work on the municipal law and in-depth work with the municipalities, while serving as the groundwork for creating a strategy for the local governance program.

The draft *Law on Inter-relations, Coordination and Certain State Powers Delegation between State Local Authorities and Municipalities* has been placed on the annual 2003 calendar of the *Milli Majlis*. The *Milli Majlis* Permanent Commission on Regional Issues, which is responsible for local governance legislation, requested advice from IFES on drafting the above law as well as the draft *Law on Administrative Control over the Activities of Municipalities*. Out of this request came the decision to form a Working Group of IFES experts and Permanent Commission legal experts to address issues pertaining to the development of local governance legislation. Meeting twice a month, the Working Group allowed IFES both to submit comments on existing draft that are consistent with international practice and standards and to incorporate proposals generated by municipalities and IFES legal trainings.

The division of powers between local executive authorities and municipalities affords little real mandate and resources for the nascent municipal councils. IFES effectively utilized its civic education and local governance resources to assertively pursue training activities with municipalities on this topic. Six training workshops were conducted in Baku, Barda, Ismayilli, Ganja, Masalli, and Mingachevir for both councilors and employees in the nine municipalities with which IFES works. These sessions helped municipal representatives to clearly identify and debate issues

pertaining to the division of power. The events resulted in concrete proposals for the draft law that addressed the division of powers between municipalities and local executive authorities. The comments and suggestions obtained from the councilors during the training were especially valuable since they came from the practitioners dealing with these problems on daily basis. A comprehensive report on municipalities' proposals was submitted to the *Milli Majlis* Permanent Commission on Regional Issues.

IFES conducted a series of six legal roundtables on new legislation relating to municipalities. The roundtables were conducted in Baku, Barda, Ismayilli, Ganja, Masalli, and Mingachevir for both councilors and employees. IFES presented and discussed its comments on draft laws to be addressed by municipal councilors and NGO representatives. These roundtables allowed IFES to collect comments and concrete suggestions for municipal reform from practitioners and specialists for submission to the IFES/*Milli Majlis* Working Group. In this way, IFES maintained a formal structure through which municipalities were able to effectively voice their concerns on the national level.

IFES also held six informational roundtables following the adoption of the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan *On Administrative Control over the Activities of Municipalities*. Participating municipalities and NGOs discussed the new legislation, as well as pending legislation. As with previous meetings, IFES collected all proposals and comments made the participants during these meetings.

Discussions by the IFES/*Milli Majlis* Working Group on the draft law on *Inter-relations and Cooperation between State Executive Authorities and Municipalities* resulted in a majority of IFES' proposals being accepted. The final draft law submitted to the *Milli Majlis* Permanent Commission on Regional Issues reflected the proposals by IFES and the municipalities and NGOs with which it worked. While the initial version was aimed at settling certain ambiguities among municipalities and state local bodies, the IFES proposals, in fact, have significantly broadened the goal and purposes of the draft law. The current revised version is aimed at specifying and regulating inter-relations between municipalities and state bodies as well as extending municipalities' authority.

The draft law *On Inter-relations between Local Executive Authorities and Municipalities* developed jointly by IFES and *Milli Majlis* experts and submitted to the *Milli Majlis* Permanent Commission on Regional Affairs was sent by the commission to the *Milli Majlis* for discussion with no changes. IFES views this step as a major achievement. The draft is expected to be on the agenda of the *Milli Majlis*' fall 2003 session.

While working directly with the Parliament, IFES continued to engage and solicit feedback on new legislation addressing the administrative control over the activities of municipalities from a Municipality Working Group. This Working Groups consisted of IFES' five partner NGOs and nine partner municipalities and conducted 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 affect this change, IFES sought to promote a framework that

allows municipalities to effectively address the issues of local concern affecting their constituencies.

In order to support its work directly with the Milli Majlis and municipalities, IFES also conducted legal seminars devoted to "Municipal and State Local Authority Divisions of Power" and the "Ombudsman and Municipalities" for international NGOs engaged and/or interested in local self-governance in one session and domestic NGOs in another.

3.3 Training and Professional Development of Select Municipalities

IFES supported the professional development and networking of select municipal councils through a variety of mechanisms, including relationship-building and on-going consultations, and training. IFES built constructive relationships with municipal councils that are interested in establishing meaningful, collaborative relationships based on mutual respect and a common desire to promote effective local democracy. Recognizing that the needs of each municipality is different, IFES consulted with the chairmen and councilors of each municipality to carefully explain its technical assistance and training program and identify ways to adapt this approach to best suit local needs and aspirations.

In the first year of the program IFES targeted five partner municipalities - Barda, Khatai, Ismayilli, Masalli, and Mingechevir. Utilizing lessons learned from the first phase of the project, IFES added another four municipalities - Ahkmadly, Yasamal, Khanarab, and Kapaz. IFES integrated these municipalities into its current programming in such a way as to incorporate current relationships and benefit from past achievements and lessons learned. While IFES also addressed other municipalities, the experience of targeting these nine resulted in the development of a Baseline Capacity Assessment at the beginning of the project, the identification of issues addressed in Democracy Today and other fora, and the preparation of a written Guide and training manual for each of Azerbaijan's 2667 municipalities.

3.3.1 Relationship Building/On-Going Consultations

IFES supported the professional development of select municipal councils through relationship building and on-going consultations. IFES initiated constructive dialogue with municipal councils that are interested in establishing meaningful, collaborative relationships based on mutual respect and a common desire to promote effective local democracy. IFES conducted regular consultations with members of municipal councils to assess the organizational and administrative structures of each municipal council, as well as the specific needs and interests to be addressed by IFES through its capacity-building training. During the first year of the agreement, these consultations with members of municipal councils in Barda, Khatai, Ismayilli, Masalli, and Mingechevir, together with a legal review and historical analysis resulted in a Baseline Assessment of Municipalities.

3.3.1.1 Direct Consultations and Training

In April 2002, IFES conducted a two-day workshop for municipal members from the initial five municipalities participating in the program. The workshop used interactive methodology to encourage participants to exchange ideas with one another and

discuss common problems and potential solutions. The event served as an excellent training and networking opportunity for the participants.

From May 2002, IFES launched the training of municipal councils following its initial assessment. IFES identified weak levels of communication and public input in the decision-making process. Recognizing that more effective public participation would help municipalities to better identify, prioritize, and target issues of local concern, while enhancing the legitimacy of their decisions, the initial training sessions focused on encouraging municipal councilors identify ways to better interact with citizens and to think about strategies for increasing such cooperation.

IFES public participation efforts effectively utilized its local governance capacity building and civic education programming to enhance trust, transparency, and accountability in partner municipalities. IFES continued to conduct parallel activities to prepare municipal councils and citizen groups to meet and address common concerns in a positive environment. Discussions and training resulted in the development of Communication and Cooperation Plans that incorporate citizens into the decision-making process - essential element for the appropriate identification, prioritization, and delivery of services.

Public participation training sessions in Khanarab and Yasamal highlighted the successes of this project. In both these municipalities more than ten of the most active councilors and officials participated in the training activity. Councilors generated new ideas and ways to increase the public participation in their municipality that were used to develop a "Cooperation and Communication Strategy". IFES has facilitated the creation of similar Strategies in the other municipalities with which it works. The participatory training sessions also resulted in the establishment of Task Forces to work on the final document and select councilors to participate in the later roundtables, and the identification of six stakeholders from the community. In June 2003, the councilors facilitated the presentation and discussion of the draft Cooperation and Communication Strategy to citizens in the community. This consensus-oriented approach allowed to build trust and facilitate exchange of information that lead to more effective identification and prioritization of local issues.

Working with a total of nine municipalities, IFES tailored its training to the needs and priorities of each. Through discussions with municipalities, grant proposal writing emerged as a priority as municipalities are very interested in fundraising and are eager to attract additional money for implementation of their activities. A total of 54 councilors - seven from Barda, ten from Ismayilli, nine from Mingachevir, 11 councilors and officials from Masalli and 17 councilors and officials from Khatai municipalities participated. The presentations included detailed information about general principles of proposal writing and specific information on different aspects of proposal development: statement of need, project description, information on organization, budget, assessment etc. Working in groups, the municipalities had opportunity to write a mock proposal using the presentation materials. All five municipalities found the training very useful and interesting.

With an emphasis on building local capacity, IFES, under a sub-agreement with the Reliable Future Youth Organization (RFYO) conducted three local governance working public roundtables in September 2003 for representatives of NGOs and nine IFES partner municipalities. The topics of roundtables included: networking of the

municipalities (international practice and current situation in Azerbaijan), cooperation between NGOs/CBOs and municipalities, and involvement of youth and women in the municipality's activities. These roundtables were supplemented by a brochure prepared by RFYO on international networking practice, underlining joint activities of municipalities and exchange of experience.

3.3.1.2 *Cooperation with Other Groups*

As an experienced provider of democracy and governance technical assistance in Azerbaijan, IFES recognizes the inherent benefit of coordination among USAID programs. Since establishing an on-site presence in Azerbaijan in 1998, IFES has consistently worked with international partners such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), Internews, the American Bar Association (ABA/CEELI), IREX, ISAR, the Eurasia Foundation, Mercy Corps and UMCOR to enhance the collective impact of USAID-funded programming in the democracy and governance arena.

Utilizing its established relationships with other international and, in particular, local NGOs active in this area, IFES acted as a hub for sharing information and lessons learned, coordinating activities, and providing useful training and informational materials to these groups. Among others IFES worked with OSCE and OSI and also made available its expertise to other organizations in areas such as training events and conferences. At the request of OSCE Baku representation office, IFES held a briefing for OSCE staff members and IMC staff in Imishly on the local government system in Azerbaijan and on the IFES Azerbaijan Local Governance Program.

IFES also cooperated with IREX to provide its partners with additional professional development opportunities for municipal members and other local governance experts by nominating them for study trips.

Through its Local Governance Program, IFES acted as one of the main sources of information on municipalities for the international community. IFES is frequently called upon by other international organizations to inform them on the key role it plays in support of municipalities in order that their program design complements valued existing initiatives or even participate in the projects. With Azerbaijan's 2,667 municipalities in an early stage of their development, IFES fully recognizes the need to work in collaboration with local and international organizations with similar goals. IFES held a two-day seminar on "Municipal Service Delivery and Planning" for the nine municipal councils with which IFES works. The event was held in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

Building on its relationship with the Council of Europe, IFES participated in a training workshop titled "Cooperation between civil society and local authorities", organized by the Council of Europe in Masalli on in April 2003. IFES Local Governance Advisor Anna Wiktorowska delivered two presentations "Participation of NGOs in the Management of Public Services" and "Forms of Cooperation between NGOs and Local Democracy in Poland" and participated in a panel discussion titled "NGOs as a Link between the Citizen and Local Authorities." IFES also made available its materials on municipalities in Azerbaijan and the division of power between local executive authorities and municipalities.

IFES organized a third event with the Council of Europe in June 2003. The seminar on Municipal Budget and Financial Issues featured 27 councilors from eight municipalities. The seminar speakers presented the main principles and standards of local government finance and provided best practices from around the world. Experts from Belgium, Russia, USA and England presented the principles and methods of financial management at the local level including: strategic financial planning, administration and collection of local taxes, participatory budgeting and monitoring of budget implementation. The three experts from the Council of Europe: Artemy Karpenko, Jean-Francois Huart and Alexander Kovalevskiy were fully paid by the Council of Europe. The English expert Andy Page was recruited locally as well as the American expert Bob Leonard without any cost. An Expert of the *Milli Majlis* Permanent Commission on Regional Affairs and the Chairman of Mingachevir municipality also made presentations. The participants also had an opportunity to work on the strategic financial plans, operational budgets and strategies for tax collection together with the international experts and shared the results of group works with all participants.

IFES also worked with local groups by reviewing a document with ten priorities for a reform in local governance prepared by the political party members' Policy Working Group on Local Governance. The group is a part of a larger program initiated by NDI that worked with the four major opposition parties: Musavat, ADP, APFP and AMIP, focusing on ten policy areas including local governance. Each policy group had 10-12 participants and through several months of discussions and proposals, came up with 10-15 priorities for their policy area. IFES reviewed the priorities and offered recommendations and suggestions. As a follow up IFES conducted meeting with the representatives of political parties during which each representative of the political parties had presentation of their concept of restructuring the municipal institutions. IFES commented on each of the topic and gave recommendations.

Finally, responding to a request from the US Embassy, IFES recommended six successful municipal leaders to tour the US on municipality program. IFES identified the six municipal councilors and chairpersons based on their qualifications, experience, and engagement in international assistance programs.

3.3.1.3 Sustainability

Addressing the deficiencies in information about municipalities among municipalities themselves, government bodies, international and local organizations, IFES produced a set of written explanatory materials. The following materials, sent to each of Azerbaijan's 2,667 municipalities, were based on existing legislation and included legal texts relating to municipalities, *Division of Power between Local Self-Governance and State Local Executive Authority*, and *Municipalities in Azerbaijan*.

IFES' Local Democracy work culminated in the production of the "Manual for Councilors in Azerbaijan" and "A Guide for Trainers: Local Self-Government in Azerbaijan." The Manual was sent to each municipality and interested NGOs. The Guide for Trainers was designed to assist international and domestic NGO trainers to support local governance capacity strengthening. In addition to providing a framework for municipal governance in Azerbaijan, the manual addresses citizen participation, strategic planning, municipal budgeting and service delivery, grant proposal writing, and association development.

3.3.2 Association Building and Exchanges

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. At present, some of the municipalities undertook an initiative to create coordination boards at the regional level and in some rayons these are only regional initiatives. Through a subgrant from IFES, Reliable Future Youth Organization laid the groundwork for the creation of an independent Association of Municipalities in Azerbaijan. Together with IFES, RFYO conducted information meetings and trainings in 29 municipalities from 13 rayons.

Based on international experience and best practices together with feedback from target municipalities, RFYO published "Municipal Associations: Guidebook for municipalities and experts" to provide councilors with information on municipal associations international practice; structure, activities and objectives of associations. IFES and RFYO invited over 150 municipalities to attend the founding conference scheduled to take place on June 30. However, due to a series of events beyond the control of the organizers, the event could not be held. IFES held onto the Guidebooks and plans to re-examine the possibility of establishing the association at a later date. IFES amended the RFYO subgrant to allow RFYO to conduct related alternated activities including the publication of a pamphlet on effective networking and conducting municipal events on new legislation.

3.4 Civic Education

IFES' civic education activities centered on its discussion group methodology. IFES built on this methodology to conduct related activities such as Democracy Camps, Volunteer Days, and Democracy Schools. IFES firmly believes in coordinating civic education activities and maximizing available resources in order to reap maximum impact. IFES complemented its civic education work by providing NGOs with information on civic education and local governance as well as cooperating with other USAID grantees. In this respect, IFES actively participated in seminars and training events by other international and local groups.

3.4.1 Citizen Discussion Groups

After selecting Massali, Mingechevir, Ismayilli, Barda, and Baku as its target rayons (in which IFES selected municipalities to conduct local governance activities), IFES launched its civic education activities by conducting an intensive three week training and planning session for a cadre of four civic education trainers. Following a month of preparation and intensive Training of Trainers (ToT), IFES civic education trainers conducted their first discussion groups in April 2002. Each discussion group, lasting between one and two hours, addresses a variety of topics such as public participation in municipalities, resolving problems of local concern, rights and responsibilities of active citizens, human rights, elections, role of NGOs in civil society and voluntary movement. IFES approach is to always consider the evolution of each individual group and to encourage requests for more advanced or more specific topics for discussion. The scope of the project has steadily expanded from the original five municipalities to nine. Before actually organizing discussion groups or providing training activities, IFES conducted initial visits in the four new municipalities:

Ahkmadly, Yasamal, Khanarab, and Kapaz and introduced its program and objectives to Municipal and Executive Commission officials and NGOs representatives. IFES supported these activities with training materials such as *Citizen's Activity as the Basis for Democratic Society* - a brochure on rights and responsibilities of citizens for distribution among the discussion groups participants. As a result of IFES civic education activities, discussion groups participants have created formalized institutions such as Initiative Groups and block associations. The IFES trainers follow up with these groups regularly in order to provide them informative materials and consultations. In this way, IFES sought to create exemplary groups for others to follow. In addition to these discussions, the trainers conducted substantive meetings with different Initiative Groups and NGOs in order to better identify issues and target participants.

Through Democracy Schools, IFES provided an introduction to democratic values and practices to youth of Azerbaijan for the first time. Building on the successes of IFES Ltd., IFES used two trainers to work in selected schools in the nine regions where IFES was implementing its civic education and local governance programs to conduct extra curricular activities with the students. IFES concluded its first six-month phase of these Schools in April 2003. IFES brought its highly interactive approach to introducing democracy to 1262 participants, about half of which were women, between the ages of 14 and 17 in 40 schools in all six regions where IFES partner municipalities are located. During each session, participants are initiated into the principles of democracy, human rights, separation of powers and elections. While in most cases teachers do not attend, when they actually did, their input was often very constructive. The teachers were also exposed to new interactive and participatory teaching methods, used by the IFES trainers as they witnessed how well students responded. Most teachers were astounded by the success achieved by the trainers in holding attention of the teenagers. One middle-aged teacher warned the IFES trainers in advance that the group was ill-disciplined and mischievous. At the closing of the session she exclaimed: "That's the first time ... that such a class went so well!"

IFES included the draft EC in its Democracy Schools for high school students from Yasamal and Ahmedly municipalities of Baku City. Raising issues like falsifications and outside pressure on the heads of the precinct election commissions, 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 when the winner is defined based on the 50%+1 system. Also some of the students raised an issue of parliamentarians' accountability to the electorate. Feedback on the Democracy School continues to be highly encouraging. In the evaluation forms students have noted how important the seminars were in "increasing our role in decision-making process".

Using IFES' highly successive Volunteer Days model to mobilize citizens, IFES organized the whole range of Volunteer Action Day events. Mingachevir Volunteer Action Day events extended over the entire week beginning at the end of November 2002, the day after the end of Ramadan. On that day, more than one hundred volunteers, NGOs members, IFES staff, and municipal officials joined forces to celebrate the Volunteer Action Day. Volunteer Action Day was organized by IFES with volunteers from nine NGOs and support from the Mingachevir municipality and the Local Executive Authority. Altogether, more than 250 volunteers participated in

Mingachevir Volunteer Action Day and the preceding week making it a huge success and an example for other municipalities to follow.

In the week leading up to International Women's Day in March 2003, IFES conducted its first civic education discussion group session on a relatively new topic for its trainers - women's rights. Touching on the role of women in public life, equality and the legal basis of the protection of women's rights, the participants from Barda Municipality enthusiastically embraced the subject matter and participated in the lively debate. As a direct result of this discussion group a new NGO was created, and later four IFES civic trainers and regional coordinators attended the opening ceremony of a new women's organization "Banu" IFES helped to create. In a city of 40,000 residents plus 30,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), this new organization is one of three women groups working with socially vulnerable groups, such as women and children. Banu, made up of 15 women, provided food assistance to families of IDPs and war veterans. In the future, Banu plans to provide computer and English language training to the IDP children and help them get a head start in school and challenging environment of a current Azeri job market. The success of organizations like Banu illustrated one of the fundamental goals of IFES' civic education activities - to encourage citizens' initiative and self-reliance.

IFES witnessed an increase in public participation by elected officials, NGO representatives, and citizens in the municipalities with which it is working. Put forward by three NGOs - Anti-Drug Organization of Youth, 'Babadach' Football Club and Ismayilli Democratic Youth Center, the Municipality and youth volunteers of Ismayilli marked International Youth Service Day in April 2003 with a ceremony held at the Municipality building that brought together more than 40 attendees. Attendees noted that this was a first-of-its-kind meeting of youths in Ismayilli and decided to hold similar meetings and initiatives every year. Volunteer activities planned for that day such as cleaning up the public parks, refreshing the gardens in the kindergartens and paying a visit to disabled children were carried out on the following days due to heavy rains.

IFES built on this methodology to organize three highly successful Democracy Camps - two for youth and one for young teachers - together with the local NGO National Debate Center. Thirty-five students took part in the first camp, 32 young teachers in the in the second, and 32 youth in the third. During the camps, participants addressed different themes such as democracy, elections under the new Election Code, local governance, human rights and active citizenship. These presentations were augmented by training in debate methodologies. At the end of each Camp, participants were divided into small teams to conduct debates using information and techniques that they received during this event. Not only do these events leave a lasting impression on the participants, but they also provide IFES with a network of energized young community leaders.

Students worked in groups to re-enforce the information that they learned and to identify ways to carry it over to their daily lives outside the Camp. During one camp, IFES conducted a game of jeopardy, with questions about elections, local governance, human rights and other topics in which four teams competed. Students also worked in case study groups (municipalities and citizens) as a preparation for the public meeting. Students presented their work and debated proposals from municipality and citizens' initiative groups. Toward the end of the Camp, students worked in three groups on possible actions that they could take in the areas of

elections, human rights and local governance in order to increase the role of youth in these fields. As a result, the participants adopted the Democracy Camp Youth Charter, which includes statement on main problems of youth in relations to local governance, election and human rights. Recommendations on possible youth actions were developed by the students and distributed to other students and youth groups by the participants. At the end of Democracy Camp students discussed the possible ways of cooperation among the camp participants and networking strategy. It was agreed that they would continue the exchange of information and experience after the camp by a Yahoo list and also with the help of the IFES Regional Coordinators. Participants also will organize discussions for other students and youth groups on the topics covered during the camp. All participants promised to encourage their colleagues to take an active part in the presidential election.

3.4.2 Micro-Grants

Effective public participation is more than active citizenry or NGO community. It is productive interaction between these individuals and groups working with their local elected representatives. IFES encouraged this cooperation through its micro grants program, providing support to such groups to carry out discreet projects. While the projects themselves positively affected their respective communities, it is the cooperation itself fostered by these activities that will have a more significant impact.

IFES launched its micro-grant program in the July 2002 by developing materials and proposal requirements, and soliciting proposals for activities to achieve the following goals: encourage cooperation between citizens and their municipality, promote good administrative practices, and achieve sustainable results. By the end of September 2002, IFES had selected a short list of candidates from which it chose six finalists. IFES worked with all six of its approved micro-grantees to help them with administrative matters such as registering with local tax services in order to obtain an ID code for using the funds, as well as new with banking formalities. By year's end, the six micro-grantees successfully completed all required by the Azeri legislation formalities.

Under Phase II of its Micro-Grants activity, IFES approved 12 micro-projects for awarding grants averaging \$1600 each. Implemented in eight of the nine IFES partner municipalities, these micro-grants add value to programming in these municipalities in which IFES is undertaking municipal governance assistance and civic education activities. In the case of the six infrastructure-based micro-projects, IFES ensured that their implementation was in compliance with the USAID environmental regulations through assessment and monitoring work. All IFES' micro-grants projects were successfully completed in September 2003. Not only were many improvements made in the nine target municipalities across Azerbaijan, but citizens and municipalities identified new and constructive ways to work together.

3.5 Public Information/Information Resources

Throughout the agreement, IFES was getting its message out by cultivating relationships with mass media in Baku and the other regions where IFES was working. IFES has built strong relationships with both nation-wide and regional media outlets. This relationship has helped IFES to inform the citizens of Azerbaijan about its civic education, local governance, and electoral reform programs, and to

deliver its message about the importance of active citizenship and transparent and accountable governance.

3.5.1 Democracy Resource Center

The IFES Azerbaijan Democracy Resource Center, established in 1998 as a resource for project activities and IFES partners, was reorganized and publicly opened for use by civic groups, policy makers, lawmakers, academics, and others interested in electoral reform, civil society, and local governance issues. In February 2002, IFES launched the Center as a resource for visitors with a reception for local NGOs. IFES also increased its outreach efforts throughout the country through its website. The resource is designed to provide user-friendly access to information on developments in elections, municipalities, and civic education, and useful IFES publications. The website, which is available at www.ifesaze.org provides information in both Azeri and English. The website was effectively being integrated into IFES' programs at all levels, serving as a very effective tool for IFES' overall mission.

3.5.2 Regional Democracy Information Centers

IFES regional network of five Democracy Information Centers and its Baku-based Democracy Resource Center provided local partners with relevant background materials and up-to-date information in the areas of governance, civil society, and elections. IFES President opened the first IFES Azerbaijan Democracy Information Center in Khatai municipality in 2002. This opening was followed by four other RICs in Kapaz, Barda, Ismayilli and Mingachevir. Unlike the four other RICs located within partner Municipality buildings, the Center in Mingachevir occupies an office within the headquarters of a local NGO, the War Veterans Association.

3.5.3 Newsletter on Municipal Government and Local Democracy

IFES strived to inform, popularize, and engage its local and international partners throughout the country in all matters regarding electoral reform, civic education and local democracy. It also encouraged its partners to take part in these efforts. IFES accomplished this through seminars, workshops, discussion groups for small audiences. But to reach a larger population extending over a wider geographical area, IFES relied on its quarterly newsletter *Democracy Today*, launched in June 2002. With a circulation of 4000, each of the five issues reached all of Azerbaijan's 2667 municipalities, most of the active local and international NGOs, as well as international donors and Embassies and multilateral organizations. Articles, sometimes critical, were meant to reflect the current electoral and democratic problems confronting Azeri society today and to present applicable lessons learned and best practices to solve them. IFES is pleased that many of the articles are actually written by outside contributors who find in *Democracy Today* a respected channel by which they could broaden their message of support for democratic development in the country.

3.5.4 Database of Municipal Councils

In April 2003, IFES launched its Municipalities Database containing information on approximately 1750 municipalities in Azerbaijan on the its website (www.ifesaze.org). In addition to providing municipalities with an easy way to access pertinent information about other municipalities, the database is especially

useful for local and international NGOs working with municipalities, as well as for other international organizations, domestic and foreign investors. It provides helpful information about the municipalities such as the names of Municipal Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Councilors and Secretary; the list of municipal commissions; a description of the municipal programs being implemented; social, environmental, infrastructure, the training needs of the municipality in order to increase its capacity, and finally contact information and population size. IFES continued to collect questionnaires and expects to include data on all 2667 municipalities in Azerbaijan.

3.5.5 Public Opinion Surveys and Focus Groups

IFES conducted two nation-wide surveys and two sets of focus groups in 2002 and 2003. In 2002, IFES completed a nation-wide public opinion survey that captured public attitudes towards citizen awareness and participation in Azeri public life (including local governance) and identified issues and policies with broad-based support and opportunities for building issue-based coalitions and/or regional, professional, or sectoral associations. The questionnaire for the survey was developed by IFES in consultation with USAID. The fieldwork and data processing was conducted by SORGU, a fieldwork organization based in Baku. The total sample was 1,523 respondents, consisting of a base national sample of 1,000 respondents and 523 over-sample interviews in selected regions in Azerbaijan. The data file was weighted so that the data is nationally representative and proportional to population for each region of the country. (The margin of sampling error for a sample of this size is plus/minus 2.5%.) Fieldwork for the survey was carried out throughout the country between April 28 and May 13, 2002. Interviews were conducted in Azeri and Russian. IFES presented the survey to USAID and the US Embassy, after which IFES revised the survey report. The revised survey report was submitted for approval to USAID.

In October 2002, IFES finalized the focus groups outline that followed a nation-wide survey in 2002. IFES incorporated the findings of the focus groups into the survey for release in January 2003 in order to empower citizens and NGOs with useful information concerning public attitudes, while at the same time enlightening public officials. Focus groups results were also used by IFES for programmatic and evaluative purposes. A total of nine focus groups were conducted consisting of citizens (seven groups), NGOs (one group), and municipal council members (one group). By selecting ordinary citizen participants that had never had any contact with their municipal councils, IFES was able to highlight public concerns regarding approaching these institutions, as well as other local issues. This information will help IFES and others target programs to address these problems and promote greater and more active public participation in local communities.

Following tentative USAID approval to release a revised version of its survey findings document, IFES prepared a version that included the final approved text. In order to create a more timely and useful document, IFES added the results of its focus groups in order to enhance and support its findings, as well as to add more contextual data to the survey findings. IFES focus group text took into account earlier concerns raised by the US Embassy and USAID. Due to certain sensitivities, however, it was decided not to release the final document to the public. The information continued to be available for representatives of USAID, US Embassy, and US Department of State as a useful resource for program development and policy making. Questions for IFES' 2003 survey, which were presented to USAID, included core questions from

the 2002 survey designed to track changes in attitude and knowledge over the last year.

In June 2003, the local survey firm "Sorgu" completed all survey fieldwork of the IFES 2003 Public Opinion Survey. Sorgu conducted 1500 face-to-face interviews in 63 settlements in 15 of the country's 65 rayons, including the enclave of Nakhchivan. Interviews were carried out in Azerbaijani and Russian (only in Baku city) languages. After conducting the interviews Sorgu validated their work by sending a quality control group to the regions and making the callbacks to the respondents. Sorgu has since processed all data from the questionnaires and submitted its technical report to IFES Washington. Due to strict quality control measures, IFES is confident that its survey results will be valid and reliable. IFES followed up the survey interviews with targeted focus groups and released the final report in September 2003.

3.5.6 Internal Mid-Term Assessment

IFES contracted a consultant to conduct an internal survey of IFES' programs under this agreement. The mid-term evaluation provided useful information to IFES. A copy of the report was submitted to USAID. The evaluator (1) reviewed more than 55 program related documents, including proposals, workplans, memos, reports, assessments, meeting agendas, and other program documents and deliverables; (2) met with more than 65 representatives of IFES staff, US Government, diplomatic and international donor community, government and parliament of Azerbaijan, municipalities, international and domestic NGOs, initiative groups, and a social research firm; and (3) attended seven IFES training and program events. Recognizing the challenges facing electoral reform on the national level, the evaluation report noted that "IFES is making inroads on technical fronts, 'chipping away' at standard operating procedures, and laying the groundwork for professional election administration at some point in the future." Regarding efforts to reform the legal framework governing political and electoral processes and municipal governance, the report went on to say that "IFES is deemed to be a necessary and qualified interlocutor by government policy makers, lawmakers in the Milli Majlis, election and municipal government practitioners, and NGO advocates." Finally, the report concluded that, "[w]hile highly localized in focus, the three-pronged approach to local democracy, i.e. municipal training, civic education and citizen engagement, and micro-grants in support of community initiatives may be the most dynamic component of the current program, one that is producing results. It may also have the greatest potential to bring democracy to the grassroots and stimulate public participation."

4. Challenges Encountered

IFES encountered the following major challenges while conducting its programming in Azerbaijan during the agreement:

1. IFES faced challenges initiating its local governance programming and identifying the most appropriate person for its Local Governance Advisor position in Azerbaijan. IFES sought to find the right mix of programmatic experience in transitional societies, practitioner experience, and language skills. After having IFES' first choice withdraw for personal reasons shortly after USAID concurrence, IFES revisited its other candidates. After reviewing the selection process, IFES hired Anna Wiktorowska due to her extensive

programmatic experience working with municipal councils in countries in transition, regional background, and language skills. IFES complimented her skills by hiring former Cambridge City Councilor Katherine Triantafillou to utilize her experience as a practitioner and lawyer to provide short-term legal and capacity-building expertise. During this hiring process, IFES Project Director Charles Lasham and IFES Deputy Director Sara Feinstein initiated the relationship building, assessment, and identification processes. This laid the groundwork for Triantafillou to launch an extensive needs assessment and to begin working with the five select municipalities in earnest and conduct an extensive legal analysis. Upon Wiktorowska's arrival in April, Triantafillou worked closely with her to operationalize workplan commitments and address the needs of each of the five targeted municipalities.

2. IFES training of CEC trainers and their subsequent training of Precinct Election Commission members, as well as its training of domestic and international election observers were very successful. The training and materials increased skill-sets and awareness amongst all participants in the process. However, while the PEC members have the capacity to more effectively administer elections and the observers are more aware, this critical technical component of the electoral process can be overshadowed by corrupt government practices that have led to fraudulent elections in the past. Perhaps, the most important challenge was to increase the electoral administration and election observation capacity nationwide while continuing to mount pressure on the Government of Azerbaijan to create the political will for free and fair elections. IFES firmly believes that the best way to do this is through a process of engagement.
3. IFES was granted an opportunity to make comments on the initial draft of the EC and pressure the Government of Azerbaijan to hold public fora on future drafts, under the condition that IFES not to distribute the draft. IFES also was informed that other organizations might formally request the draft from the Presidential Apparatus. The Council of Europe and OSCE/ODIHR both received revised drafts. IFES concluded that it was not for a USAID grantee to determine when an official document should be released. IFES carefully weighed the benefits of not accepting the document and decided it would be best to engage the Government of Azerbaijan on the issue of electoral reform, even in this less than ideal situation. IFES believes that it did everything possible to comment on problems and inconsistencies with the draft law and encourage an open and public debate. While keeping USAID informed, IFES maintained an on-going dialogue concerning its approach with US Embassy, OSCE/ODIHR, NDI, and IRI.
4. IFES faced challenges seeking to promote meaningful dialogue on the draft Election Code within the politically charged environment in Azerbaijan. The Government of Azerbaijan and the opposition remained polarized. IFES first had to overcome the hurdle of informing all relevant actors in the debate. In addition to holding informational seminars, maintaining up-to-date versions of the draft Code, and translating the OSCE/ODIHR commentary, IFES ensured that groups who chose not to attend IFES events had access to these materials in hard copy and through its web-site. This allowed them to have the information they needed to discuss the document. IFES then faced the boycott of the OSCE/ODIHR roundtable. While this was a disappointment,

IFES was pleased to see that dialogue on the draft Code continued within the opposition. IFES strongly believes that meaningful reform requires participation by all actors in the political process. While seeking to ensure that the views of the opposition were represented in the debate, IFES sought to ensure greater inclusion by members of the NGO community. IFES also undertook voter education efforts designed to increase understanding of the proposed changes among the citizens of Azerbaijan. Although 80% of IFES' recommendations were accepted, IFES continued to actively seek to promote the inclusion of changes in two significant areas – composition of the CEC and eliminations of prohibitions against NGO observers receiving foreign sources of funding – prior to the second and third readings of the draft Code.

5. With the release of the draft Election Code and the increasing importance of the April 12, 2002 by-elections as an indicator of needs to be addressed for the nationwide 2003 elections, IFES dedicated its electoral reform towards training CEC trainers, PEC members, and observers, and commenting on the draft Code. While IFES continued to provide on-going technical assistance to the CEC through on-site consultations and international professional development opportunities, IFES felt that the timing was not appropriate to conduct a formal election administration-training curriculum. IFES revised its approach to developing good election administrative practices and chose to focus on informal and constant engagement through consultations and reducing the formal training.
6. IFES witnessed interference from local executive structures in the areas where it observed municipal by-elections. This interference made it difficult for election officials to conduct their job in an unbiased manner. IFES believed that this should have been addressed prior to the presidential elections through wide-spread measures designed to provide impartial training and increase accountability. IFES noted that adequate support from the diplomatic community was required in order to effectively dissuade this type of executive level interference.
7. In June 2002, the President of Azerbaijan issued an unexpected proposal that there be a Constitutional Referendum to be held on August 24. As a clearing-house for election and referendum related information in Azerbaijan, IFES prepared informational materials on the rules and regulations governing referenda in Azerbaijan, the potential make-up of the ballot, and the impact of the proposed changes. Both international and domestic groups raised issues with the timing of the referenda and question the intent of some of the proposed amendments. While the two-month time frame for holding the referendum was consistent with the law of Azerbaijan, there were concerns that the voting public would not have adequate time to receive information relating to the questions being asked and the postponement of the voting. Aware that many in the international community sought to promote prime broadcast time for all interested political parties and NGOs in order to ensure adequate transparency in the process, and after consulting with USAID and the US Embassy, IFES supported the roundtables conducted by the OSCE. Finally, there were concerns about provisions that preclude the ability of NGOs that receive a portion of their funding from foreign sources from observing the voting process. By significantly reducing the pool of qualified observers, these provisions severely limited transparency and accountability.

IFES engaged the CEC to secure changes in the ballot and the registration of observers. In this way, by working closely with the international community and with the consent of the US Government, IFES approached these issues carefully in order to promote discussion while not lending credibility to a potentially illegitimate referendum.

8. Despite significant logistical challenges producing and delivering election commodities for the October 15, 2003 presidential election on a very short timeline, all necessary commodities arrived in Baku on time. USAID was very responsive to IFES' needs throughout this process. Operating on a short timeline left little room for logistical issues on the part of the producer or shipper. IFES faced difficulties transporting transparent ballot boxes from the producer to Baku. In the case of the static ballot boxes, they were bumped from the vessel that would have brought them to Baku in time. Due to this unfortunate circumstance, IFES, operating within current budget constraints and US Government regulations, used remaining funds from its expiring cooperative agreement to cover the substantial additional costs of flying the ballot boxes to Baku, thereby guaranteeing their arrival in time for the elections. The flight, on a US carrier, also complied with USAID regulations. With funding from the Royal Netherlands Embassy and British Embassy, IFES also produced transparent mobile ballot boxes.
9. IFES continued to press for measurable steps to move away from a de-concentration of political power (as represented by the executive authorities) and toward a meaningful decentralization of power (in the municipal councils). Indicators of such movement include more clear and detailed legislation on municipal governance (including an exclusive role for municipal councils); the provision of financial means, including revenue-raising capacity, and infrastructure; and an investiture of real political authority. This is a slow process, but IFES was achieving results through its work with legal drafters, local executive structures, and municipal councils.
10. IFES did not reach the original target of 60 participants due to a change in strategy. The only draft law prepared jointly by IFES and by the Milli Majlis Permanent Commission on Regional Issues was the draft law "Inter-relations, cooperation between municipalities and state local authorities and delegation of certain state powers to municipalities". In order to maximize the level of constructive dialog and discussion on drafting the legislation, IFES decided that it was necessary to keep the group fairly small, which is why only nine partner municipalities and six NGOs representatives were invited for the roundtable attended the roundtable. Apart from the roundtable, the IFES/Milli Majlis working group held three meetings.
11. The final survey report for 2003 shows that IFES and USAID programs exceeded the targets in each of the PMPs except for one area - % of people who understand the role of municipal councils. While the actual number was only 3% lower than the target of 31%, it nevertheless shows an increase over previous years. On inhibiting factor could have been the fact that IFES received poor cooperation in Massali.
12. IFES and RFYO invited over 150 municipalities to attend the founding conference scheduled to take place on June 30, 2003. However, due to a

series of events beyond the control of the organizers, only three municipalities arrived. IFES and RFYO were informed that within three days of the event the invited municipalities received phone calls from the Executive Committees (ExComs), Ministry of Justice officials, or both and that many ExCom's organized alternative "mandatory" events for municipal officials. Upon arriving at the conference site, the organizers found it closed with the electricity turned off with a man watching from across the street. IFES was then informed that an alternative meeting place, which was hastily arranged, could not be used.

13. Despite IFES non-partisan nature and proven record of working cooperatively with governmental bodies as well as the wide-spectrum of other political groups over the years, Azerbaijani government officials actively blocked two IFES initiatives in one week in June 2003. Following its efforts to dissuade municipalities from attending the founding conference of the Association of Municipalities in Azerbaijan, and preventing the venue and an alternate venue from hosting participants, local executive authorities in Ganja prevented IFES from holding local governance roundtable in Kapaz. As a result, IFES and the international community were monitoring this situation closely to ensure that it would not impact the conduct of presidential election activities.
14. Based on information collected in 2002, IFES prepared a survey report using the standard template employed in other countries. The survey was based on a questionnaire developed in cooperation with USAID. Following the presentation of the IFES survey to USAID and US Embassy, it was forwarded to the US Ambassador for final approval. The Ambassador requested that references to the president be edited out and that the final text will be distributed as a US Embassy report. IFES believed that both the international community and local groups were fully aware that IFES was conducting a survey, as IFES was approached by NDI and IRI requesting copies. IFES complied with all US government requests. IFES strongly believed that the information in the survey would not only help IFES and the US Government to better target and conduct its programs, but it would help local groups and others in the international community as well. IFES was unable to publicly release its 2002 survey and accompanying focus group reports. However, IFES has ensured that the report was made available to representatives of the US Government, including USAID. IFES used the findings in the report to better target its assistance.

5. Programmatic Results and Success Stories

IFES achieved measurable results in each of the four programming areas – electoral reform, civic education, local democracy, and information resources. Below are highlights of these achievements and the results of IFES' performance monitoring plan.

5.1 Electoral Reform

1. Through on-going consultations with key actors and targeted briefings, IFES remained the lead organization in the promotion of a consultative process and information dissemination on electoral issues thanks to its genuine role of non-partisan watchdog of the election process.

2. IFES commentaries on the draft Election Code and IFES' encouragement to hold open and public roundtables was well received by the Presidential Apparatus, marking a significant achievement in cooperation between IFES and the Government of Azerbaijan. Significantly revised versions of the draft that incorporate recommendations of the international community and local groups voiced through IFES, were given to the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe for review.
3. IFES successfully worked with others in the international community by taking the lead role to incorporate many changes into the draft Election Code so that it better conformed to OSCE standards, taking into account deficiencies from previous elections. By addressing many of the technical issues, more energy was devoted to those of particular concern. IFES' efforts resulted in more than 80% of its recommendations being accepted. In addition, IFES' collaboration with the OSCE and Council of Europe led to changes in the Election Code prior to its adoption.
4. IFES presentations of the draft Election Code to the international community, political parties, and local NGOs, raised awareness of the legal issues being considered by the Government of Azerbaijan, thereby facilitating public debate on the Code. IFES' work with NGOs led to the formation of a Working Group on the UEC in order to develop and present common, concrete proposals on the draft law.
5. IFES substantially raised the level of debate on the draft Election Code among representatives of 43 NGOs in Baku and across the country reaching 1258 active citizens and distributing 3,500 leaflets. Together with informational materials, these NGOs and citizens passed this information on, significantly multiplying its impact.
6. IFES successfully promoted information dissemination on the Code among all political parties, NGOs and the international community and printed 5000 Azeri copies, 500 English copies, and made it available on its website.
7. The CEC granted IFES access to all CEC meetings in order to allow IFES to provide better-informed and more effective technical assistance.
8. CEC and IFES implemented a major recommendation in IFES' technical election assessment of the 2000-2001 parliamentary elections to "provide regular and consistent practical training to PEC members in order to improve the consistency and quality of the administration of elections." Training nearly 400 election commissioners in advance of the November 2001 by-elections, IFES became the first international organization to train electoral commissions in Azerbaijan.
9. IFES staff members trained a seven-members team of the CEC secretariat to prepare them to be trainers for Constituency and Precinct Elections Commissions' members. As a result, the CEC has conducted high-quality trainings for each member in all 101 PECs in advance of the April 12, 2002 by-elections. Over 600 commission members were trained. The success of this training methodology represented a great step forward for this and future

election cycles in Azerbaijan, and highlighted IFES' impact on this process. In addition, every member of each of the PECs in the three constituencies holding by-elections received a copy of IFES *Election Day Guide*.

10. IFES programming in Azerbaijan achieved an important electoral reform impact when members of the CEC agreed to revise Precinct Election Commission and Constituent Election Commission protocols for the April 12, 2002 by-elections in accordance with IFES recommendations.
11. IFES produced 500 voter education posters, which were posted three to a precinct, thereby raising the level of information about the process in advance of the April 12, 2002 by-elections.
12. IFES assisted the NGO "For the Sake of Civil Society" in training about 230 observers for ten registered candidates in advance of the April 12, 2002 by-elections. IFES issued a *Handbook for Domestic Observers* to each observer describing correct voting and counting procedures, and the rights and duties of observers of elections in Azerbaijan for registered candidates and their representatives, as well as other domestic observers.
13. IFES training of CEC Training Group not only led to better informed pollworkers in advance of the March 5, 2003 by-elections, but, more significantly, opened the door for IFES to conduct a much more extensive training effort in advance of the October 15, 2003 presidential election.
14. IFES coordination with the international community of the March 5, 2003 by-elections enabled it to effectively monitor, both technically and logistically, the by-elections and enabled it, based on lessons learned, to develop more effective observation strategies for the October 15, 2003 presidential election.
15. Upon receiving IFES summary of international observer reports concerning the April 12, 2002 by-elections, the elections in two precincts in the Tovus constituency were cancelled by the CEC and complaints were referred to the prosecutor's office. Additionally, IFES' observer training initiatives resulted in a comprehensive and well-informed effort on the part of international and domestic monitors. The criticisms expressed by observers further resulted in the annulment of results in 7 regions. Further, as a result of its engagement with the CEC following the March 5, 2003 by-elections, the CEC investigated activities pertaining to the conduct of municipal by-elections in precincts 113 and 114 in Khatai and cancelled the results in those precincts following the presentation of IFES Technical Report.
16. IFES cooperated with the OSCE, the US Embassy, and USAID to organize roundtables involving all major players in Azerbaijani political life in advance of the August 24, 2002 referendum. IFES also cooperated with other organizations such as the Council of Europe in the area of municipal council reform and with the OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe on election law reform. In this way, IFES maximized the impact of the US taxpayer dollars, while achieving more effective results. By engaging the CEC prior to the referendum, IFES successfully secured changes in the ballot and the registration of observers

17. With support of the German Embassy, USAID, Royal Netherlands Embassy, and British Embassy, IFES procured 7,500 ballot transparent ballot boxes, 5200 transparent mobile ballot boxes, and individually numbered seals for the October 15, 2003 presidential election in compliance with the new Election Code.
18. Since initiating voter education discussion groups, IFES trainers conducted 348 discussions for 4,422 participants, and trained and provided a Voter Education Training Package to more than 15 domestic groups.
19. IFES supported efforts by local organizations to increase voter participation in the October 15, 2003 presidential election, such as the projects submitted by grantees under the U.S. Embassy Democracy Commission Program and through the development of a voter education program.
20. IFES secured additional outside funding from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, British Embassy, Norwegian Embassy, and Statoil for support of the Election Code development, training and professional development, and voter education, thereby multiplying the impact of US taxpayer funds.

5.2 Civic Education

1. IFES' discussion groups and democracy schools have demonstrated that it is possible to erase apathy through increased citizen participation. IFES reached a total of 11,536 new participants through its discussion groups which resulted in the creation of NGOs, initiative groups, and block associations. IFES discussion groups also raised the level of public access and participation in local level political processes through active citizen engagement with local officials. Through its democracy schools, IFES raised the demand for more information about democracy, reaching and introducing democratic ideals to more than 1000 young future voters.
2. IFES' flexible methodology successfully identified issues, addressed those issues, and provided participants in the discussion groups with the tools they need to carry on what they learned in their personal and professional lives. For example, teachers of children between the ages of 10 and 15 were concerned that the rights of these children were not being addressed. IFES focused a discussion group on this issue that showed how democracy and governance issues and international conventions related to their concerns. The teachers are now passing on what they learned to their colleagues.
3. By bringing out 250 volunteers in Mingachevir, IFES has helped municipalities acknowledge, promote and celebrate the fact that local voluntary involvement is a valuable and indispensable contribution to the improvement of social conditions and empowerment of citizens.
4. The IFES/National Debate Center Democracy Camps raised the level of awareness and increased advocacy skills of nearly 100 bright and articulate students and young NGO leaders, all potential agents of change, in the areas of democracy, citizenry, local governance and elections. Democracy Camp participants in one Camp adopted the Democracy Camp Youth Charter, which included a statement on main problems of youth in relations to local

governance, election and human rights. Recommendations on possible youth actions were developed by the students and were distributed to other students and youth groups by the participants.

5. As a result of IFES micro-grant program, 18 Community Initiative Groups of citizens and municipal members were formed in order to develop community-based activities.

5.3 Local Democracy

1. IFES reached an agreement with the *Milli Majlis* to support the printing and distribution of a comprehensive compendium of municipal laws and regulations to all municipalities across the country, thereby increasing municipal members' exposure to the legislative basis of local governance and assist their understanding of local government process.
2. IFES' municipal-related activities provided increased networking opportunities among nine municipalities, thereby increasing the sharing of information and promoting models of good local governance.
3. Providing innovative training in the areas of local governance and civic education, IFES has empowered municipalities and citizens alike to influence local level policy decision and law making in an informed and constructive manner. IFES-trained municipal councils and citizens agreed on a municipal public participation communication strategy, thereby promoting trust, transparency, and accountability.
4. Through an IFES seminar on the delivery and planning of municipal services, the ties among these nascent municipalities were strengthened, information exchanged, and the conviction for greater public participation in municipal affairs increased.
5. IFES raised the capacity of eight of its target municipalities to effectively raise revenues and manage finances.
6. IFES effectively brought municipalities into the legal drafting process through its regional legal roundtables and the establishment of the informal working group on local governance legislation with the *Milli Majlis*. IFES legal seminars on the division of municipal powers and the Ombudsman and municipalities, raised the level of information among the international and domestic communities of NGOs active in this field.
7. IFES' legal roundtables and participation in the IFES/*Milli Majlis* Working Group led to significant changes in the draft law on Inter-Relations between Municipalities and Local Executive Authorities. The new draft is aimed at specifying and regulating inter-relations between municipalities and state bodies and extending the authority of municipalities.
8. IFES legal drafting support has led to the adoption of the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Administrative Control over the Activities of Municipalities" and the introduction into Parliament of the draft law "On Inter-relations between Local Executive Authorities and Municipalities".

9. IFES' reputation for successfully promoting legal reforms to define the division of power between the executive and municipal structures and improving local governance capabilities continued to attract international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, to work with IFES to achieve results.

5.4 Information Resources

1. IFES network of Resource and Information Centers and the IFES Azerbaijan website significantly increased the level of information available in Azerbaijan on elections, local governance, and civil society. During the agreement 4,486 people visited the centers. Highlighting support for the Regional Information Center, the Chairman of the Barda Municipality called on all 110 municipalities in Barda to utilize the new Center in his municipality.
2. IFES effectively reached out to the citizens of Azerbaijan through the local media. Following its meetings with the press, several articles supporting IFES activities were published in national and regional media.
1. IFES raised the level of information and awareness about democracy in Azerbaijan by the publication and distribution of five issues of *Democracy Today* with a circulation of 4000 each.
2. IFES continued to be the main clearinghouse for information on election and democracy related issues, particularly the Election Code, Election Day Guide, civic and voter education materials, and local government materials.
3. The IFES Azerbaijan website significantly increased the level of information available in Azerbaijan on elections, local governance, and civil society. In particular, many political actors who chose not to attend informational events accessed the updated draft and approved versions of Election Code from the website.
4. Nearly 2000 municipalities responded to IFES' requests for information for its database. This information has been made public on the internet dramatically raising the level of information available to municipalities, domestic and international NGOs, and other interested groups.

5.5 Performance Monitoring Plan

SO/ IR	Objective/ Intervention	Indicator/ Disaggregation	FY02 Actuals	FY03 Actuals	FY03 Targets
SO 2.1	Public Opinion Surveys and Focus Groups	% of target population aware of at least one issue-based organization or advocacy group	13%	22%	15%
		% of target population who feel that they are well informed about the electoral process	28%	43%	33%
		% of target population who have understand the role of municipal councils	26%	28%	31%
IR 2.1.1	Promote a networking and information association of municipal councilors	Establishment of an independent network of at least nine (9) municipal councils with which IFES works	No	No	Yes
IR 2.1.1	Promotion of outreach activities through micro-grants	# of organizations conducting advocacy or outreach activities with micro-grants	0	18	18
IR 2.1.1.1	Improved capacity for public outreach and advocacy	# of people trained in outreach, awareness or advocacy skills	1768	13458	5399
IR 2.1.1.2	Provide technical elections assistance and professional development for CEC and PECs	IFES recommendations addressed by the CEC (scale of 1-10)	5	7	6
		# of people participating in international election activities, including electoral associations, election observations, and international election-related fora	11	0	3
		# of people participating in IFES/CEC election official training	995	1979	1212
2.1.1.2	Provide Municipal councilors with information, training and professional development opportunities	# of people trained in outreach, awareness or advocacy skills	147	609	317
IR 2.1.2	Promote clarity, consistency, comprehensiveness and conformity on laws governing electoral and political processes	Passage of new or significantly revised election legislation;	No	Yes	Yes
		IFES identified deficiencies addressed in new/amended election legislation (scale 1-10);	7	8	8
		Election law provisions consistent with international norms (scale of 1-10)	5	7	7
		# of people attending election law seminars	111	175	60
		# of people attending working public roundtables on drafting local self-governance legislation	54	30	60
		# of people attending local self-governance public information roundtables	71	214	120
IR	Promote the	# of voter education workshops	0	24	3

2.1.2.3	evolution of a better informed and active voters	# of people attending voter education workshops (# of people receiving voter education)	0	661	30
IR	Increase Citizen awareness and understanding of political and electoral processes	# of citizen discussion groups	127	935	315
2.1.2.3		# of people in citizen discussion groups (# of participants in repeat discussion groups)	988 (2297)	10548 (11255)	3000 (5670)
		% of women in citizen discussion groups	35%	48%	40%
		% of youth in citizen discussion groups	20%	39%	40%
		# of people in Democracy Camps (by gender)	33 (42% women)	99 (49% women)	70 (40%)
		# of people in Democracy School sessions (by gender)	N/A	1262 (50% women)	800 (40%)
		# of visitors to the Democracy Resource Center and Regional Democracy Information Centers (by gender)	95 (28% women)	4391 (28% women)	300 (30%)
		# of copies of Democracy Today newsletter distributed	3000	16379	16000

6. Attachments

IFES produced, translated and/or disseminated the following selected reports, laws and other documents during the agreement:

6.1 Electoral Reform

1. Memorandum of Understanding between IFES and the CEC of Azerbaijan
2. Technical Report – November 16, 2001 By-Election
3. Technical Report – April 12, 2002 By-Election
4. Technical Report – November 2, 2002 By-Election
5. Report to CEC on Training of CEC Trainers and PEC Members
6. IFES Comments to the Draft Election Code – March 2002
7. IFES Comments to the Draft Election Code – July 2002
8. IFES Comments to the Draft Election Code – January 2003
9. IFES Proposals on the Composition of Election Commissions
10. IFES Approaches to Improve the Election Code
11. Election Code
12. Voter Registration Assessment

13. Election Day Guide
14. IFES Voting Steps Poster
15. IFES Election Code Leaflet
16. IFES Election Code Brochure
17. IFES Voter Education Training Package
18. Three Public Service Announcements (October 13, 2003 Presidential Election)
19. IFES Domestic Observers Day Materials – Poster and Leaflet

6.2 Civic Education

1. Civic Education Training of Trainers Program
2. Civic Education Discussion Group Package for Trainers
3. Municipalities in Azerbaijan Brochure

6.3 Local Democracy

1. Seminar Materials - Ombudsman and Municipalities
2. Seminar Materials - Budget and Finance
3. Manual for Councilors in Azerbaijan
4. A Guide for Trainers: Local Self-Government in Azerbaijan
5. Municipalities in Azerbaijan Brochure
6. Association of Municipalities in Azerbaijan
7. Draft *Law on Inter-relations, Coordination and Certain State Powers Delegation between State Local Authorities and Municipalities*

6.4 Information Resources

1. Democracy Today Newsletter – Issue #1
2. Democracy Today Newsletter – Issue #2
3. Democracy Today Newsletter – Issue #3
4. Democracy Today Newsletter – Issue #4
5. Democracy Today Newsletter – Issue #5

6. IFES 2003 Calendar
7. IFES Tee-shirt
8. Press Releases

IFES

As one of the world's premier democracy and governance assistance organizations, IFES provides needs-based, targeted, technical assistance designed and implemented through effective partnerships with donors and beneficiaries. Founded in 1987 as a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, IFES has provided integrated, collaborative solutions in the areas of democratic institution building and participatory governance in more than 120 countries worldwide. IFES' Washington headquarters houses eighty-five employees specializing regionally in Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, as well as functionally in rule of law, civil society, good governance, election administration, applied research, gender issues, public information technology solutions, and more. IFES' staff offers vast country-specific experience and facility in more than 30 languages. IFES employs an additional 120 people in twenty-five field locations.



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