

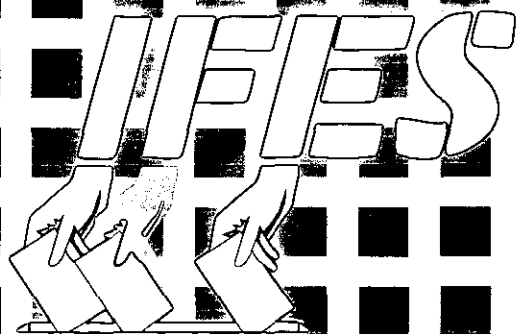
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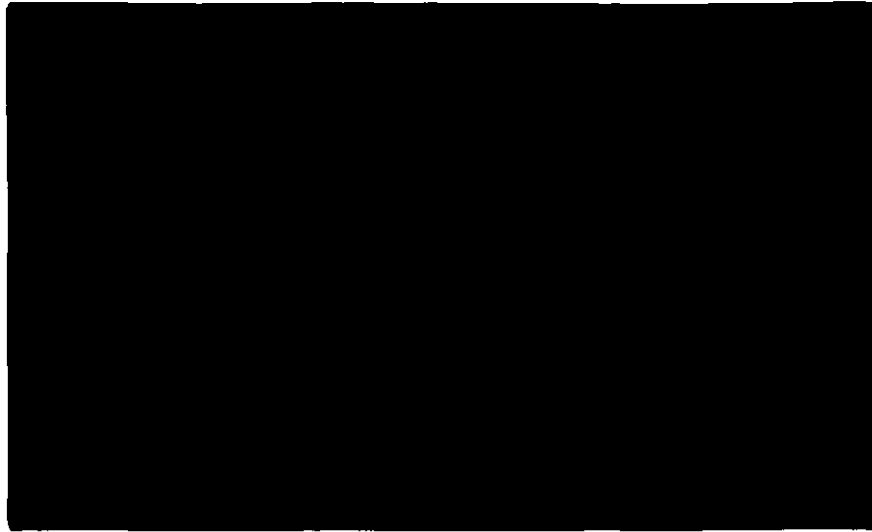


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MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK



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.

REPUBLIC OF KYRGYZSTAN

FINAL PROJECT REPORT
USAID COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
EE-A-00-97-00034-00

October 1, 1997-September 30, 2002

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MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS

REPUBLIC OF KYRGYZSTAN

Final Project Report

October 1, 1997 – December 31, 2001

USAID Cooperative Agreement EE-A-00-97-00034-00

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	page 1
II. OFFICE AND PERSONNEL	page 2
III. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES	page 3
Technical Election Assistance	page 3
Civil Society	page 14
Civic Education	page 14
IV. MATERIALS PRODUCED	page 17
V. IMPACT AND EVALUATION	page 17
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHALLENGES	page 19
VII. CONCLUSION	page 20

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS

REPUBLIC OF KYRGYZSTAN

Final Project Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

Under Cooperative Agreement EE-A-00-97-00034-00, the International Foundation for Election Systems conducted a number of projects designed to support its ongoing mission in Kyrgyzstan of supporting democratic development through support for electoral sector reform, emergence of civil society, and civic education. The Agreement spanned the formal opening of an IFES country office in Bishkek in the Fall of 1997, and witnesses support activities for elections at all levels in the country over a three-year span. The Agreement also encompassed a number of activities designed to assist local, non-governmental organizations' development, building upon the successful "Strategies for Citizen Involvement" program completed by IFES under the prior agreement. At the end of the Agreement, the tone was set for future work as IFES began to delve into an ambitious initiative to support civic education for high school and college-age students through the development of a textbook and accompanying materials, and student hands-on activities such as Democracy Summer Camps.

IFES fortified traditional electoral partnerships during this period as well as establish an array of new partnerships in the civil society and civic education sectors. The Central Election Commission and IFES developed a close working relationship after the appointment of Chairman Sulayman Imanbayev, who was installed as CEC Chair in 1996. The IFES-CEC relationship, initiated with IFES'S arrival in 1993 for its first Pre-Election Technical Assessment (PETA) had been wavering in 1995-1996 as a result of the strict direction taken by Chairman Mambendzhus Abylov, who succeeded Markil Ibraev as Chair not long before the December 1995 presidential elections. In 1997 Kyrgyzstan embarked on a State Program for the Reformation of the Electoral System of the Kyrgyz Republic, which envisioned a top-to-bottom remaking of the system of conducting elections in the country, including establishment of a codified election law, computerized system for reporting results, new initiatives to educate voters, and establishment of clearer guidelines on the CEC relationship with lower level commissions. A working group of lawyers was set up to oversee the revision of the election code governing federal elections and referenda. It was with this group that IFES initially conducted much of its election law development work.

NGO partners forged during the Strategies for Citizen Involvement series were maintained, and new local partners were formed for conducting training of election observers, student activities, voter education projects, public opinion surveys, media monitoring, and textbook development.

The NGO resource organization InterBilim began as the primary local partner, and by the end of the Agreement the number of local partners had increased greatly and included the Coalition of NGOs. Partnerships were forged with universities, schools and individual teachers and professors in support of the civic education program, and with the Ministry of Education and other governmental education institutions.

IFES worked in partnership with a number of international NGOs as well in the conduction of its projects, with both USAID-funded and non-USAID entities. Major partners from the USAID family included the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the American Bar Associations' CEELI project, the Academy for Educational Development/Global Training, Internews, the Urban Institute and the Counterpart Consortium. Non-USAID partnerships tended to focus around the elections work, and included the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations Development Program, the Soros Foundation/OSI, Helvetas, International IDEA, and others.

The following report is designed to provide a comprehensive, theme-oriented overview of IFES' work under this Cooperative Agreement in Kyrgyzstan, from 1997-2001. Work under this agreement was conducted post-September 2000 under the no-cost extension to the Cooperative Agreement as granted by USAID. Funds were ostensibly burned out in early 2001 after post-presidential election projects wrapped up.

II. OFFICE AND PERSONNEL

After having staffed the Kyrgyzstan project out of its Central Asian Regional Office in Almaty for nearly four years, IFES formally established an on-site presence in Kyrgyzstan by opening an office in Bishkek in late 1997. Regional Project Manager Thomas Leckinger hired a local country representative, Galina Sergunina, to be IFES' continual on-site representative. Lawyer and Election Law Consultant John Christman worked as de-facto, on-site expatriate project representative through much of 1998, working with Sergunina on the election law reform initiative together with representatives of the Election Law Working Group and the Central Election Commission. Leckinger continued to provide oversight on the project through continual visits and communications from Almaty. Another legal consultant, Jack Martin, also provided support and input into the election law reform project, with voter education consultant Judith Davis providing training in support of the candidate debate initiative.

In spring 1999 IFES hired Tom Parkins to be its first designated Country Representative for Kyrgyzstan. Parkins undertook the initial pollworker handbook development project, based on election law modifications proposed by Consultant John Christman. The Kyrgyz CEC accepted most of those changes verbatim in early 1998, though some additional procedural work remained.

In July 1999 Parkins was replaced by former Australian Election Official (Northern Territory) Kerry Heisner, and IFES moved into its present second floor office at 9 Manas Street. Heisner presided over assistance activities connected with the local elections of October 1999, and developed a revised pollworker handbook in accordance with amendments made to the election

code. This handbook was augmented by training activities conducted in connection with the Central Election Commission in preparation for the February 2000 national elections to the Jogorku Kenesh. Voter Education Consultant Sebastian Drans joined Heisner in late 1999 to work on a voter education project. Drans worked with local partners to create a series of televised and radio broadcast Public Service Announcements on the new voting procedures, as well as a series of posters for polling stations. Drans also oversaw a media monitoring project conducted with Internews. Heisner worked with representatives of NDI and the OSCE to train domestic observers, including a group of student volunteers who had sought out IFES. Consultant Lamar Cravens was hired following completion of a stint with ABA. Cravens worked to develop a Grievance Adjudication Manual for judges and election officials, and conducted training for those officials in the use of the manual.

Following the February elections Heisner and Drans departed, and Washington-based Program Officer Anthony Bowyer took over interim office managerial duties until the arrival of Chedomir Flego as new Project Manager. Flego, also a former member of the Australian Election Commission (Melbourne) worked in preparation for the October 2000 presidential elections by updating the pollworker manual and conducting a new round of trainings. As well Flego worked with the CEC and local NGOs on voter education, creating a new series of posters for polling stations. Flego also oversaw IFES' expansion into student-based civic education projects, working to train student election observers for the presidential elections, helping provide guidance for university elections, and organizing and initiating IFES' first Democracy Summer Camp at Issyk-Kul in July 2000. Following the elections Flego put together a series of election law and procedural recommendations, and worked with Consultant Eilis Ward to commence the Civic Education Textbook for high school students. Developmental work on this textbook and course project continued into early 2001, and funds from this Cooperative Agreement were used up until the pilot testing of the book in March 2001.

At the end of the Cooperative Agreement funding IFES maintained a staff of one expatriate Project Manager and four permanent local staff.

III. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

A. Technical Election Assistance

At the beginning of the Cooperative Agreement IFES undertook a *technical election assistance project* with the Central Election Commission and the Election Law Working Group. The project represented essentially a continuation of work begun in Spring 1997 in support of the State Program for the Reformation of the Kyrgyzstani Electoral System. IFES Election Law Consultant John Christman worked with counterparts at the Election Law Working Group, consisting of a team of three lawyers working for the CEC, on changes to the national code of elections. Changes to the code as well as codification of all elections laws were stated goals of the State Program.

The formal opening of an IFES country office, which was a result of a visit by IFES President Richard Soudriette to Kyrgyzstani President Askar Akayev, helped IFES increase its presence

and visibility in the country. CEC Chairman Imanbayev had stated on numerous occasions that IFES ought to have established a presence with permanent staff, in order to stay informed and be more effective international partners.

The election reform work continued throughout 1998, with various drafts being considered based on analyses and recommendations as supplied by Christman, and later by Consultant Jack Martin.

IFES/Bishkek, in cooperation with Internews, Counterpart Consortium, AED, and the Central Election Commission of Kyrgyzstan, conducted a five-day training seminar from September 19-23, 1998 to provide *training to elections officials, candidates, and NGOs* regarding implementation of a televised candidate debate. The exercise culminated in the production of an actual debate, which aired live on national television on September 23, between three candidates vying for a vacant seat in the Assembly of People's Representatives. The by-election in Bishkek's 69th electoral district took place on 27 September, and was won by Mr. Attai Borybaev, a rector at the State University of Bishkek. Judith Davis, from the League of Women Voters in Fort Collins, Colorado, participated as an IFES trainer for the project, and her assistance in the training seminar greatly enhanced the candidates' preparation for the debate.

The Central Election Commission had initially been hesitant to approve such a project, though eventually it granted cautious approval. Following the successful production of this debate, IFES commissioned an Enhanced Rapid Appraisal Survey of registered voters in Bishkek's 69th electoral district. Approximately 2,500 individuals were interviewed, with approximately 9% of that number having both seen the televised forum and voting on election day.

Initial results indicated that those who watched the televised debate found it to be quite informative. Approximately 65% of those who viewed the debate reported that they found it either "very" or "somewhat" useful, with 37.9% of those respondents answering that they "completely" or "somewhat" agreed with the statement that the debate provided information on issues that were previously unclear.

When asked which qualities of the candidates impressed them the most while watching the debate, 40.1% of respondents answered that the candidate "seemed trustworthy," with 27.4% responding either that he was a "good speaker" or was "intelligent." Only 20.6% answered that the candidates' political platform impressed them the most. An additional conclusion that emerged regarding access to information and media usage was that while 76.2% were either "somewhat" or "very" interested in matters of politics and government, only 66.1% were either "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with the amount of information they receive on political developments.

Television was clearly shown to be the preferred medium for receiving information on political and election issues. 72.6% of respondents indicated, however, that Russian Federation television in Russian-language was their main source of information, with Kyrgyz state and independent television, both in the Russian-language, serving as the most popular local sources of information (41.2% and 33.9%, respectively, indicating that they regularly used these information sources). Kyrgyz State newspapers in Russian, Kyrgyz State television in Kyrgyz, and friends, family, and neighbors were listed as the next most popular sources of information on political and electoral

matters. Despite the widespread acceptance of television as a source of information, combined with a highly literate population eager to know more about political and electoral matters, it was IFES' conclusion that not a large portion of the population in the 69th electoral district viewed the televised debate and voted. This could perhaps be attributed to the relatively low advertisement of the debate, even though the debate was aired on State television in prime time.

Nevertheless, the survey showed that those who did watch the debate were also very likely to vote, and felt more comfortable and familiar with the candidate for whom they ultimately cast their ballot.

In **November 1998**, a 5th *draft of the Election Code* was submitted by the CEC to the Presidential Office for review, which was then to be submitted to the Jogorku Kenesh for consideration. As with each successive draft, this draft contained some important changes, mainly as concerned the segregation of referendum-related issues, as well as the statement that all elections were to be direct. Overall the procedure of elections for both chambers (Legislative Assembly and Assembly of People's Representatives) appeared very nearly the same.

IFES Project Manager Tom Leckinger, together with colleagues from NDI/Bishkek, forged a cooperative relationship to conduct a series of open forums and town meetings concerning the proposed constitutional amendments and the draft election law. The forum series was conducted in late Fall 1998, and involved IFES, NDI, and the Bishkek-based NGO *POLIS*.

IFES followed the local election and debate initiative by undertaking a new election reform project, focusing on improving the level of professionalism of pollworkers and local election officials. In **spring of 1999**, IFES hired Tom Parkins as its first fully-fledged Country Representative. Parkins set out immediately to develop a *pollworker manual* that corresponded to the new election code, which was expected to be adopted in May of that year. Parkins set out a timeline for development of the manual corresponding to the forthcoming election law. A training module was developed, which would later be used in training election administrator core trainers representing all six oblasts and Bishkek in advance of the October 1999 local elections. While the pollworker manual and training module were to be developed with the March 2000 parliamentary elections in mind, the October 1999 local elections offered a unique opportunity to pilot test the manual and refine the training component.

In **April 1999**, after two years of discussion, the Jogorku Kenesh formally approved a *new election law*. In contrast to the previous legislation, this law provided for the rights of domestic and international observers to participate more fully in the election process. The law also provided for multi-candidate and multi-political party participation in the work of election commissions at all levels, which was to enhance the overall transparency of the voting process. Debate during the final week centered on several controversial issues. One such was the provision supported by the president to establish a mixed single-mandate and proportional representation election system for parliamentary elections. The mixed system passed in parliament provides for a 60-seat Legislative Assembly, 45 elected from single mandate districts and 15 elected from party lists apportioned according to votes received. A threshold of 5 percent was established to attain a single seat in the multi-mandate constituency. President Askar Akayev, who spearheaded the drive for the new election law, signed the measure into law early in May. Central Election Commission Chairman Sulayman Imanbayev praised the contribution

IFES made on revisiting the electoral legislature revision process, and in particular, on the ongoing legal analysis work of IFES Election Law Consultant John Christman. In its continuing support for the state program, IFES continued to work with the CEC on election administration initiatives.

The challenge before Kyrgyzstan was in ensuring the implementation and integrity of the election code through responsive and legitimate use of the legal framework. IFES Country Representative Tom Parkins suggested that the primary strategy to address this issue would be a solid training program for election officials at all levels, an extensive voter education program, and a strong domestic and international observer component in future elections.

In **spring of 1999**, Nina Mukhina, CEC Director of Information and Analysis, requested IFES assistance in preparing for local elections. The elections, which were to be the first to be held under the new law, were scheduled for late October 1999. Plans called for a two-day seminar on election administration in mid-June bringing together the oblast commission Chairs and Secretaries. The seminar program was proposed to cover two basic areas: responsibilities of superior commissions under the new law, and a polling station procedures training-of-trainers session. It was decided that participants would act as core trainers and, in turn, train election managers in their respective oblasts, who would then train polling station commissions. Country Representative Tom Parkins worked on the polling station manual, which was eventually translated into Kyrgyz and Russian. In the process of preparing the manual, several areas were identified where the law required clarification or further explanation to be addressed to the CEC for consideration.

In **May of 1999**, Jogorku Kenesh adopted a *new law on political parties*, which mandated that a party must be registered for at least one year in order to compete for seats under the new partial party list system of elections. 15 of 60 seats in the new Legislative Assembly (lower house) were to be distributed to those parties successfully surmounting the 5% threshold. IFES and its USAID-funded partners and other international organizations agreed to review the code and examine implications for multi-party elections in light of the adoption of a codified election law.

In **late spring 1999**, IFES solidified its work with the Kyrgyz Central Election Commission in designing a *training program for oblast and local-level election administrators*. The CEC reviewed the first draft of an IFES-produced polling station procedural manual and provided positive comment. This document, a version of which would later serve as a pollworker training manual, sought to provide clarity on administrative regulations and augment the law in areas of technical administration otherwise less clear in the election law. Once accepted by the CEC, a pilot training phase was to take place in which core trainers would be instructed in the manual's use, followed by selected training of lower-level officials in time for local elections scheduled to be held in October. IFES and the CEC planned to train up to fifteen thousand precinct election commission members prior to the local elections.

Changes in the election law meant voters would be confronted with different voting procedures when they go to the polls in future Kyrgyz elections. The practice of striking out candidates on the ballot or "negative voting" was replaced with affirmative voting, consisting of marking the box by the candidate's or party's name. An additional change called for a portion of the

parliament to be elected by a proportionate party list system in addition to single mandate seats. IFES made plans to work with the CEC and local and international partners to support the conducting of a ***comprehensive voter education program*** to highlight these and other changes, via a series of voter informational public service announcements.

A second component of IFES' voter education programming involved partnering with local NGOs such as *Human Dimensions* and others to promote grassroots voter information and motivation initiatives, including projects targeted at increasing women's activeness in elections and politics. *Human Dimensions* pledged to participate with the domestic NGO community in an aggressive voter education project to both inform and motivate voters. IFES supported this initiative and sought to collaborate with *Human Dimensions* to help the project gain momentum.

In **June 1999**, the Central Election Commission formally adopted ***IFES' recommended polling station procedures***, which tightened administrative procedures in several critical areas. The most important one involved ballot security procedures relating to mobile voting. This area was especially sensitive due to charges in past elections of irregularities in the mobile "at home" voting process. As a result of the accepted recommendations, election officials were now required to carefully document all requests for mobile voting and mobile voting teams are issued only the number of ballots requested and documented on the supplemental voting list. The CEC also adopted IFES recommendations to tighten audit trails in vote tally protocols and to print color-coded ballots in multi-race elections.

In **June 1999**, IFES sponsored a ***two-day core training course in election administration*** for 14 oblast and 4 Central Election Commission representatives who would serve as "core trainers" for election administrators at lower levels. The program sessions focused primarily on polling station procedures and how to effectively administer the voting process based on the new election code. The program emphasized the importance of transparency, neutrality, and diplomacy in all aspects of election administration. The training sessions included breakout discussion groups, demonstrations of duties such as vote counting, and role playing exercises. The group was fully engaged, asking numerous questions and contributing valid observations and comments; feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive.

Following the successful completion of the training of core trainers and the production of the Training Manual, IFES continued its work in **July 1999** with the Central Election Commission (CEC) in preparation for the elections to local self-government bodies to be held on October 17, 1999. IFES arranged the printing of 27,000 copies of the ***Training Manual*** in both Kyrgyz and Russian.

The training manuals were used during the three-phase poll worker training program. Phase I of this training was completed prior to **September 1999**. Phase II, which involved face to face ***training of approximately 2800 regional trainers*** by the core trainers who were trained in Phase I, was completed in September. Staff from both IFES and the CEC monitored the Phase II training. Phase III training involved face to face training of approximately 18,000 poll workers by the regional trainers using the training manual, and was completed by the October 17 election date.

The CEC and IFES produced two booklets for use during the elections for Self-Governing Bodies: Guidelines for Candidates and Guidelines for Candidate Representatives, Trusted Persons and Observers and outline the rights and responsibilities of each group. The Central Election Commission distributed the booklets, and IFES retained a small supply for ongoing use through its Bishkek resource center.

In **October 1999**, IFES, working together with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), sponsored a conference in Bishkek on *election dispute adjudication*. Preparations for the conference commenced during September with IFES and OSCE identifying and securing international judges to act as presenters/session leaders. An agenda was agreed on which was based on the appeal provisions (both to courts and superior election commissions) of the new Kyrgyz Election Code. Invitations were sent to 50 Kyrgyz Judges and also to relevant NGOs and members of the mass media. The Central Election Commission attended both as a presenter and a participant. Following the conference IFES, ABA and the Central Election Commission immediately commenced working together on an election dispute adjudication training program to be implemented through the Judicial Training Center.

On **October 17, 1999** *local government elections* were held throughout Kyrgyzstan. IFES monitored these elections using four 2-person teams. Although election violations were observed, it was noted by all teams and by USAID/US embassy observers that the IFES-produced election training manual was present in most polling places and had been used in polling staff training. The violations that were observed included family voting and lack of awareness of the rights of observers. These and other violations were considered during preparations for polling staff training prior to the parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2000. The Central Election Commission earned high marks for the overall manner in which it approached the recent elections- the first held under the new election code.

Mr. Tabaldy Orozaliev, Chief of Staff from the Central Election Commission, departed Bishkek on **October 25, 1999** and traveled to Canberra, Australia to complete an *election study tour* with the Australian Election Commission (AEC) in the lead up to the national referendum on the question of Australia becoming republic. Orozaliev was nominated to take part in the exchange, which was arranged and funded by the Academy for Educational Development and USAID, with guidance from IFES.

In **late autumn 1999**, IFES participated in the *Election Grant Committee*, a consortium of international organizations that was tasked with distributing \$125,000 to NGOs to conduct relevant projects in the lead up to the February 20, 2000 parliamentary elections. Through the Election Grant Committee process, the NGO TV Crossroads was successful in obtaining a grant to produce television Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on voter education prior to the local government elections. IFES monitored these productions and assisted TV Crossroads in having them broadcast on a popular television channel. IFES later incorporated the experience of TV Crossroads into IFES parliamentary election public service announcements early in 2000.

In **November 1999**, after elections to the Jogorku Kenesh were confirmed for Sunday, February 20, 2000, IFES resumed its work with the Central Election Commission (CEC) in the *training of Oblast, Territorial and Polling Station Commission members*. IFES revised and reprinted the

Training Manual for Polling Station Commissions (originally produced by IFES for the October 1999 Local elections), and this manual was used in all training events and as a reference guide on election day. In November 1999 IFES produced a new booklet entitled *Election Violations: Penalties and Responsibilities* as a follow-up to the Election Law Adjudication Conference sponsored by OSCE and IFES in which IFES/Bishkek Project Manager Kerry Heisner participated. The CEC approved the draft of the document produced by IFES, which was used at all training sessions to supplement the Training Manual.

During the month of **November 1999**, IFES identified and dispatched Voter Education Specialist Sebastien Drans to Bishkek to direct the IFES *voter outreach campaign* leading up to the February 2000 elections to the Jogorku Kenesh. The project was based on the informational needs identified during the October local elections, and also addressed region-specific issues identified as areas of concern for the voting populations in those locations. The Kyrgyzstani *NGO Coalition* was a partner in the program, using the Coalition's six regional offices to increase access to regional areas.

General Feliks Kulov, Chairman of the Kyrgyz Ar-Namys (Dignity) Party, visited the IFES/Washington office in **December 1999** to discuss the current political and electoral situation in Kyrgyzstan, as well as current IFES activities in the republic. Kulov described the activities of the Ar-Namys Party and its main goals of building a democratic and prosperous state and solving the numerous problems created by the breakdown of the former system and the challenges posed by a new socio-economic order. IFES President Richard Soudriette presented Kulov with Kyrgyz and Russian language versions of the IFES-produced candidate handbook and pollworker guidelines being used in training sessions across Kyrgyzstan in advance of February parliamentary elections. He praised IFES for its work in the sphere of electoral administration training in the Kyrgyz Republic and encouraged work to continue in this sphere and in voter education. General Kulov's visit to IFES was part of a trip to the United States to discuss the current state of multi-partyism and electoral preparations in Kyrgyzstan.

The *Election Dispute Adjudication Manual* was completed during **December 1999**. Final editing and translation into Russian were completed during the first week of **January 2000** followed by a review by the Central Election Commission. The Manual consisted of summaries of the law relevant to the resolution of election disputes, commentaries on lacunae and inconsistencies in that law, hypothetical problems and questions for discussion, and appendices of the actual law and explanatory notes, forms and decrees issued by the Central Elections Commission. The various sections of the summary, commentaries and hypotheticals were all hypertext linked, meaning that the electronic version could be navigated like an Internet website. Printed, the summaries, commentaries, hypotheticals and appendices exceeded 350 pages. *Training of judges* in the manual was then undertaken between **February 14-16, 2000** through a joint effort of IFES, ABA, the Judicial Training Center and the CEC. IFES Legal Consultant Lamar Cravens headed up the project. Versions were made available in Russian and in English.

In **January 2000**, a *poster and a leaflet encouraging polling day participation* and discouraging multiple voting ("Why, and How to Vote") were printed, in cooperation with the local NGO Coalition. The leaflets, containing questions and answers on the elections, targeted local community members and community leaders in rural areas. In all, 200,000 copies of the leaflets

were printed in three languages (Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek). Meanwhile, the posters gave specific information to particular groups such as soldiers, students and hospital in-patients and a total of 1,000 copies were printed in two languages (Russian and Kyrgyz). The distribution of the posters and the leaflets was completed by regional offices of the NGO Coalition.

Two IFES *Public Service Announcements* were submitted to the Kyrgyz national and regional TV stations for airing in **January 2000**. The local NGO *TV Crossroads* completed the production of the two TV spots (on participation and multiple voting; in three languages) on Monday 24 January. A series of radio spots on the election was also produced. The spots consisted of questions and answers with an official of the Central Election Commission. In cooperation with the Kyrgyz State National University (KSNU), IFES highlighted student election education at a public debate at KSNU for candidates for the legislative assembly in that constituency. Approximately 500 students and local voters attended the lively debate, which was also covered by three television channels and the national newspaper *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*.

On **February 20, 2000 elections were held in Kyrgyzstan for the Legislative Assembly** (including a party list ballot) **and the Assembly of People's Representatives**. Elections were also held for *oblast* and *rayon* level councils. IFES activities over the previous several months focused on these elections, and activities intensified during the month of February. Poll worker training for members of Precinct Election Commissions was completed during the week prior to polling day, during which time polling day procedures were also emphasized. In coordination with the NGO *Polis*, the distribution of the IFES Training Manual, the Violations Handbook and the polling station layout and procedure poster (both in Russian and Kyrgyz) was completed by Election Day.

On polling day, two teams of IFES observers visited 31 Bishkek area polling stations, and prepared reports that were included in IFES'S final election day assessment.

In **March 2000**, IFES welcomed the arrival of *incoming Project Manager Chedomir Flego*. Mr. Flego joined IFES as a specialist in the area of election administration after a distinguished career with the Australian Election Commission (AEC). One of his first projects involved gathering records of election dispute court decisions made by judges who participated in the electoral adjudication training. The decisions were to provide case studies for inclusion in an update of the adjudication manual, as well as precedent to guide rulings in similar cases. IFES staff in Bishkek drafted, printed and distributed the initial version of the manual in February and expected to continue training and updating activities during the next several months.

In **May 2000**, following the visit of US Secretary of State Madeline Albright to Kyrgyzstan, President Askar Akayev appointed a *Working Group* (WG) of 21 members, mostly parliamentarians working under the direction of the Central Election Commission (CEC). The WG was created to review the Election Code and make changes addressing the problems which marred the 2000 Kyrgyz parliamentary elections. The CEC had been overseeing a roundtable discussion of election problems with the Territorial Election Commissions (TEC) and IFES participated in assisting these discussions with suggestions and proposals for changes, which would introduce international standards in the election procedures. Participants in the CEC/TEC meetings worked effectively through the election code discussions and pledged to report their recommendations to the WG. IFES continued to support the election reform process through

revision of election administrative manuals and conducting seminars on professional development. Suggestions were to be accepted by June 2, with the WG's subcommittee preparing a report by June 23. The WG promised to then prepare a report of recommendations by mid-July that would be considered for adoption. IFES held regular meetings with the CEC and WG representatives to discuss changes to the code that would improve election administration.

In **June 2000**, IFES Project Manager Ched Flego assisted the Central Election Commission with the *training of selected Oblast and City of Bishkek election administrators* as the first training project in the lead up to the presidential elections. These officials would later go on to become the trainers of the Rayon elections commissions, who in turn trained the Precinct officials. In conjunction with the UNDP and OSCE, IFES proposed to continue support and assistance of the CEC in this training program. It was hoped a wider training program would result in more effective control of the Precinct election committee's work on polling day.

In **late summer 2000**, IFES conducted an assistance program with the Central Election Commission to *train Precinct Election Commission staff*. The core trainers were trained in August, and arrangements were made to commence the PEC training program in mid-September and conclude it by early October. IFES prepared a manual for core trainers and a procedural guidebook for members of the PEC. The guidebooks were translated and made available in Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek languages. Additionally, IFES prepared a voter education leaflet and a poster together with a local NGO partner. These were also translated and distributed to households and to polling stations. Public service announcements (modeled on those developed by IFES for the February 2000 Jogorku Kenesh elections) addressing voter information needs were prepared in September, with preliminary discussions commencing in August.

Through a no-cost extension to the Cooperative Agreement, IFES spent remaining funds to support training for student election observers to monitor the **October 2000** presidential elections. Using many of the students who had participated in the Democracy Summer Camp in July 2000, IFES conducted *observer training* and send student observers around the country after facilitating their accreditation, with the Central Election Commission, as official domestic election observers. IFES fielded an observer team consisting of members of its country offices in Central Asia. Staff were sent to most major Oblast centers to monitor the elections, with generally favorable results on how the elections were conducted on a polling station level. IFES observers noted that the voter education posters were posted at nearly all polling stations visited, with the pollworker training handbooks found in all of the stations. When questioned, both chairpersons and regular polling station staff indicated that they had participated in a training program led by the CEC (supported by IFES). This gave IFES the confidence that trainings had been carried out and reasonable assurance that the pollworkers had received the information necessary to improve the level of their performance on election day.

IFES also used available funds to undertake a *media-monitoring project* together with NDI and Internews. Results of that effort showed a clear bias in favor of incumbent President Askar Akayev, who clearly dominated the airwaves and newspapers with pictures and quotations. This advantage in information may have played a role in Akayev's victory over five other candidates in the October presidential election, though the incumbent President was heavily favored to win

a third term (though the Constitution was changed allowing him to run for what was deemed a “second” term).

Throughout the entire course of the eight-month presidential campaign, and based on lessons learned from previous local and parliamentary elections within the previous twelve months, IFES initiated and conducted various programs that raised awareness about democratic norms of elections among the Kyrgyz electorate and election officials, stimulated more informed civic participation, and provided a framework for the monitoring of the elections.

In **October 2000**, a series of *voter information spots* aired on state television designed to underscore the importance of voting by the one person-one vote principle. The spots were approved by the Central Election Commission (CEC) and shown at various times prior to Election Day. IFES worked with local production teams to develop and film the spots. These spots resembled the voter information public service announcements created by IFES for the February 2000 Jogorku Kenesh elections, and encouraged people to be aware of the election and their rights and responsibilities as voters. The spots were translated into three languages to account for the population diversity in the country.

Together with the Central Election Commission, IFES concluded series of *training events for members of Precinct Election Commissions* (PECs) including chairpersons and secretaries. Trainees were provided with IFES updated training manuals on election administration in Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Russian languages, which outlined new procedures for conducting polling in accordance with the law on elections and referenda. Training events took place nationwide and involved IFES and CEC trainers providing hands-on technical training to PEC representatives, who then trained all pollworkers through a “training of trainers” approach. The pollworker training project originally began with the training of election administrators for the October 1999 local Kenesh elections and was revised and repeated in advance of the February 2000 elections to the Jogorku Kenesh. In each instance, the poll worker manual was revised in accordance with improvements and clarifications to the law made by the CEC under IFES recommendation. In nearly all polling stations where IFES personnel observed during the three elections, the poll worker training manual was present and in plain view of voters and observers. Individual poll workers confirmed that they had attended training events and appeared more knowledgeable about their responsibilities and the importance of non-partisanship. While problems clearly occurred at many levels of election administration during the Kyrgyz presidential election, IFES found that professionalization of election administration had increased with every election since October 1999 and improved to a larger degree since the last presidential election in 1995.

In **October**, IFES staff members from four Central Asia offices formed an *observer contingent* which was deployed by IFES/Kyrgyzstan to various regions of the country. IFES staff was present in all regions except for Naryn and Batken Oblasts. While IFES did not issue or release an official observation report, it did compile its findings into a briefing document that was later shared with USAID, the U.S. Embassy and the Central Election Commission, with whom it has worked for several years. Observations of the IFES team cited violations in the handling of votes, access granted to observers, and in the official reporting of results. As a result, the elections showed that while Kyrgyzstan has achieved progress in various areas of democratic elections, such as greater transparency and political literacy, there still remain roadblocks on its

path to democracy. IFES noted that the CEC made significant efforts at improving election procedures, but the conduct of the elections remained problematic, since the control of the PEC activities at polling stations was not in the hands of the CEC but the administration officials. Despite some setbacks that IFES observers encountered during the elections, the event proved to be a very useful experience as it provided insights about the improvements to which IFES already contributed and about the problems that still need to be addressed.

Also in **October**, IFES worked with Kyrgyz State National University to recruit and *train a number of student volunteer observers*, who received accreditation and observed the presidential election. As a result of its earlier successful implementation of the Summer Democracy Camp at Issyk-Kul, IFES was able to choose approximately 100 exceptional students to form the observer groups who monitored polling stations across the country, including in Bishkek, Osh, Jalal-Abad and Talas. All students were trained by IFES staff in techniques of professional observation, including and observers' rights and responsibilities. Students were also aware of the duties of pollworkers and the main elements of the election law regarding the voting process. The students' objective was to gain experience in "real life" election observations by monitoring the conduct of the election, register any irregularities, and prepare a final report. IFES was gratified to learn from other international observers that while many candidate and other domestic observers largely remained passive or otherwise unsure of their rights, the majority of IFES student observers were well-informed, active, and exhibited professional conduct. Students reported that they witnessed a number of irregularities in the conduct of voting. Among the most widely observed were organized vote solicitation, the presence of unauthorized persons in polling stations, proxy voting, protocol inaccuracies, obstruction of observers' access to the vote count, and interference of administration officials into the voting process. As part of its emphasis on involving youth in this election, IFES sponsored the printing and distribution of a manual for young and first-time voters outlining their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the country. The manuals were distributed to universities and polling sites, and many were seen together with other public information posted at polling stations.

Incumbent Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev was elected to a new, five-year term in an election held on **October 29, 2000**. With all precincts reporting, Akayev garnered 1,460,201 votes, equaling 74.5% of all votes cast. Akayev's surmounting of the 50% support barrier meant that a second round of voting was not necessary. Official turnout was recorded at 72.3% nationwide, thus ensuring that the vote would be considered valid according to the election law. Results, announced by the CEC, reported as official the following totals:

Candidates	Votes Cast (%)
Askar Akayev (incumbent)	74.5%
Omurbek Tekebaev (Ata Meken Party)	13.9%
Almaz Atambaev (Social-Democratic Party)	6%
Melis Eshimkanov (People's Party)	1.1%
Tursunbai Bakir Uulu (Erk Party):	0.96%

Tursunbek Akunov (Human Rights Activist)	0.44%
Against all candidates	0.68%

In **November 2000**, IFES worked with the student observers and held a “lessons learned” seminar. Similar follow-up efforts with both students, NGOs and the CEC were undertaken in an attempt to gauge the effectiveness of IFES assistance efforts. By the close of 2000 IFES funding for Kyrgyzstan under the Cooperative Agreement had finished, and thus concluded a very busy 3+-year assistance effort of technical election assistance under this agreement.

B. Civil Society

In **July 1999** IFES, as a member of the *Election Grants Committee*, had the responsibility of recommending the disbursement of \$170,000 to NGOs for election assistance projects. Grants were awarded through a proposal process and IFES participated with the group drafting documentation including the grant application documents. These grants proved of great assistance to the successful NGOs in the completion of their election activity.

In **August 1999**, as a member of the *Election Grants Committee*, IFES, along with other USAID Grantees, reviewed applications from NGOs for funding for Election related projects. For round one of the review period, 63 applications for funding were received. The number of applications later exceeded 100. Over the course of its participation on the Committee, IFES evaluated hundreds of grants from prospective NGOs who proposed various projects in support of the election process for three elections: local, parliamentary, and presidential.

C. Civic Education

In **September 1998**, in cooperation with the Central Election Commission and the Bishkek-based NGO *POLIS*, IFES/Bishkek conducted a *civic education conference*, which focused on upgrading the professionalism and individual skills of participants in the political process. Linda Calandra, a former city councilwoman from Fresno, California, discussed the role and importance of media relationships, and IFES/Central Asia Regional Project Manager Tom Leckinger spoke on issues concerning the professionalization of election officials. Presentations were also made by representatives from OSCE/ODIHR and International IDEA.

In **January 2000**, prior to the holding of parliamentary elections, an IFES sponsored *Students’ Forum* titled “Students and Democratic Elections” was conducted. The main objective of the Forum was to get young students involved in the democratic process. There were seventy participants (the most interested and active students of all faculties of the Kyrgyz State National University-KSNU) who were divided proportionally into groups representing key categories of election participants: candidates, political parties, election officials, observers and mass media. Four hundred students of the University participated in the process as voters.

On student election day, 4 polling stations were set up---one on each floor of dormitory N5. Each polling station had approximately 100 voters. Candidate debates were conducted for the two days prior to the elections, one day for political parties and another day for the other candidates. The voters were well informed about candidates' platforms and made choices with confidence. Tracy Atwood and Will Melara of USAID were present during the vote count and expressed their satisfaction with the high level of proficiency and interest shown by the participants.

The event was widely covered by the national mass media. Three TV companies, including the national station, showed the opening ceremony on the news the same day. One station (KOORT) filmed Galina Sergunina when she trained election officials. There was also a large article in the national newspaper "Slovo Kyrgyzstana". During closing ceremonies on 31 January, all participants received certificates signed by IFES and the KSNU.

In **March 2000**, preparations for a *student summer camp* in Kyrgyzstan commenced based upon the summer camp project completed by IFES in Uzbekistan the previous summer. Mr. Edyl Moldoev, the head of Kyrgyz State National University (KSNU) was selected to work with IFES on the student summer camp project. In addition to providing instruction and practical knowledge of election laws and processes, students were to have an opportunity to compare ongoing work in civic education. Summer camp students were to introduce what they learned at their universities and discuss the introduction of civic education programs (based on what they learned at the summer camp) into secondary schools and communities back at the local level.

Working in a contractual partnership with IFES in **April 2000**, the INFOREX Survey Research Group prepared to conduct a series of twelve *civic education focus groups* involving students and teachers of 11th grade civics classes. The focus groups, which represent a prelude to conducting a possible textbook and civics course pilot project, were completed by the end of May. IFES previously collaborated with INFOREX and its director, Dr. Vladislav Pototskii, in 1995, 1996, and 1998 on public opinion surveys. The Focus Groups showed that students were extremely free thinkers and very interested in the concept of democracy, though lacked a broad knowledge of democratic practices and human rights. Respondents acknowledged that, though several different civics courses existed, a new, uniform course of civic disciplines was lacking, and cited this as an area in need of improvement. Students appeared well-informed about the education system, but less so about the role of civil society. Students and teachers expressed a desire to know more of the mechanisms of democracy and the need for hands-on learning techniques. **The project was funded through the CEPPS mechanism.

Preparations for a *Student Summer Camp* in Kyrgyzstan intensified in **May 2000**, modeled after a similar Summer Camp project that was conducted by IFES in Uzbekistan in 1999. 150-200 university-level first- or second-year students, representing mainly pedagogical faculties, were sought as participants. In addition to providing hands-on experience in conducting elections and election processes, the Camp was to provide a forum for students to discuss their ongoing work and studies in civic education.

In **July 2000**, the *Student Summer Camp* agenda was formalized and participants were selected via a competitive examining process. While most participants came from the ranks of first-year college-level students, there were also a small group of 11th graders in attendance (the last grade

in the Kyrgyz high school system). The Summer Camp hosted close to 200 students, selected to represent urban and rural areas in Kyrgyzstan, and provided hands-on instructional experience in conducting elections and understanding electoral laws and practices. The Camp encouraged students to take an active interest in community involvement through exposure to the concepts of civil society and volunteerism. As many of the students from the university level represented educational faculties, the Camp challenged them to evaluate and access materials being used to teach civics and citizenship classes in high schools and colleges. Summer Camp participants later presented their experience and “lessons learned” to classmates at their respective universities and discussed ways to introduce civic education (based on what they learned at the summer camp) into middle schools and communities back in their local regions. As a follow-up project, select students instructed high school students in pilot schools in how to conduct mock election campaigns, which later took place parallel to the Kyrgyz Presidential elections.

In **July 2000**, following the successful implementation of the IFES democracy textbook in secondary schools in Kazakhstan, IFES Kyrgyzstan took preliminary steps to create a *textbook on civics and democracy* for use in Kyrgyz secondary schools. IFES received conditional approval from the Minister of Education to proceed with an adaptation of the text developed by IFES in Kazakhstan. An IFES education committee was tentatively convened to undertake the task of seeking appropriate Kyrgyzstani authors to contribute to the textbook. The committee was to prepare the teacher’s manual and ensure that appropriate democracy and civics interactive education activities were included. They also assisted IFES in the editing and implementation phase of the project.

In **August 2000**, following the successful student Summer Camp held at Issyk-Kul in July, IFES held regular meetings with representatives of the student body elected at the Camp to discuss *student-led activities*. These students prepared several projects with IFES’ help during their summer vacation and in the period leading up to the presidential elections. They formed committees to work on a new model for elections of the student council at Kyrgyz State National University; they planned an ‘agitation train’ to bring the election message to students across the country; and they created a group working with an NGO producing public service announcements for IFES as well as other activities. One particularly important project was the formation of an IFES student observer group at the presidential election in October. A list of students who were trained by IFES at the Summer Camp and who were interested to serve as an IFES Observer on election day was prepared. IFES made preparations to train the students and provide them with accreditation on election day, a project for which IFES received approval directly from the CEC. Students were subsequently trained and deployed throughout Kyrgyzstan as observers on election day in October. The students met after the presidential election to discuss and present their findings.

In **September 2000**, IFES/Kyrgyzstan and the Educational Advisory Committee continued the review and adaptation process of the IFES textbook for use in Kyrgyz secondary schools. During this month, the committee focused on the development of a teacher’s manual and related civic education activities to accompany the textbook. The IFES advisory committee agreed to meet regularly to discuss adaptations to the core civics and democracy text. The project was in principle accepted by the Ministry of Education, an agreement that IFES sought to formalize through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Conclusion

The student civics and democracy textbook/course gained its beginnings during this Cooperative Agreement. Other student activities also took place, such as the Summer Camp and University Elections, both which would become important projects in the new IFES Cooperative Agreement which commenced in October of 2000.

IV. MATERIALS PRODUCED

(materials can be found in IFES/Bishkek or IFES/Washington DC offices)

- 27,000 copies of Pollworker Training Manual, September 1999
- Booklet “Guidelines for Candidates,” September 1999, (Kyrgyz, Russian)
- Booklet “Guidelines for Candidate Representatives, Trusted Persons and Observers,” September 1999
- Guidelines for Polling Station Commissions (1st edition), 1999, (Kyrgyz, Russian)
- Guidelines for Polling Station Commissions (2nd edition), 2000, (Kyrgyz, Russian)
- Booklet “Election Violations: Penalties and Responsibilities,” October 1999, (Russian)
- Handbook “Description on Order of Authority and Participation of Candidates, Candidate Observers, Election Authorities, Media Representatives, Trusted Faces and Representatives of Political Parties on Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic,” 1999, (Kyrgyz, Russian)
- 500 copies of Election Dispute Adjudication Manual, February 2000
- 200,000 copies of leaflet “Why and How to Vote,” February 2000, (Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek)
- 1,000 copies of poster “Why and How to Vote,” February 2000, (Russian, Kyrgyz)
- 1,000 copies of poster “Why and How to Vote,” October 2000, (Russian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek)
- 2 television public service announcements, February 2000, (Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek)
- 2 radio public services announcements, February 2000, (Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek)
- Procedural Guidebook for PECs and Pollworkers, September 2000, February 2000, (Russian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek)
- Election Day Code of Conduct Manual, September 2000, February 2000, (Russian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek)
- Booklet “Choosing the president - choosing the future: guidelines for young voter,” 2000, (Russian, Kyrgyz)

V. IMPACT & EVALUATION

IFES’ program in Kyrgyzstan was focused initially on supporting preparations for the parliamentary and presidential elections, with technical and other forms of assistance constituted to reinforce government efforts under the State Program. Following an extensive election law reform effort by IFES conducted under the previous agreement and carrying over into the early part of this one, which concluded with the passing of a codified election law incorporating many of the recommendations proposed by IFES to the Election Law Working Group, IFES set about working with the CEC (with input from domestic non-governmental organizations) to produce pollworker handbooks (accompanied by onsite training), voter educational material, and other

support documentation for local elections. The local elections provided the first laboratory in which to test the new law and the materials in action, and IFES deployed small observer missions to monitor and evaluate the conduct of the elections and the performance of local polling officials as well as poll watchers. IFES-produced materials were visibly present in 99% of polling stations visited during local elections, and later, both parliamentary and presidential elections. When questioned by IFES monitoring teams, pollworkers reported that they had undergone the training and understood how to use the manuals, which helped to clarify all aspects of election administrative procedure under the new law. IFES and other international organizations noted substantial improvement in the conduct of elections in most regions of Kyrgyzstan, particularly when compared to the previous parliamentary elections held in early 1995. Of note was the sheer numbers of domestic observers who were accredited to monitor the 2000 parliamentary elections. These monitors, who had been trained by IFES and other international organizations, served to dramatically increase transparency and accountability at the polling stations. Though pressure from above forced the CEC to place certain restrictions on the number of observers taking part in the October 2000 presidential election, observers nonetheless played a visible and valuable role in monitoring this election as well.

When judging the bigger picture it is easy to point out the deficiencies in the conduct of Kyrgyzstani elections under the new law adopted in 1999. But a holistic view masks the significant achievement in component parts of the election system, such as the improved conduct of election officials at all levels, the level of sophistication of domestic monitoring watchdog groups, the advancements in the election law and election procedures, increased sophistication of voter education and outreach, enhanced professionalization of judges overseeing election dispute resolution, and increased meaningful involvement of young persons in the election process. During its election assistance program under this Cooperative Agreement IFES made significant contributions in all of these areas, producing both written and audio/visual training materials in multiple languages and conducting corresponding hands on training. For the elections project alone, 16 different instructional manuals for pollworkers and observers were created, along with numerous television, radio, and print media voter education spots. The materials were developed in a way that will allow them to be adapted for use in future elections.

IFES made its foray into student education programs during this agreement, beginning with Summer Democracy Camps, university student elections, and creating the first draft of a secondary school student civics textbook and course. IFES conducted focus groups during this period (under different funding) to determine the needs of secondary school students across the country, and based on this information it was decided to create an interactive civic education course which focused on understanding and valuing democratic principles, which included the critical topics of tolerance, conflict resolution and equal rights for women. IFES received early support from officials at the Ministry of Education and the Kyrgyz Institute of Education for the project, which will be proposed as the core of IFES' ongoing efforts under a future Cooperative Agreement. Satisfaction with the situation in Kyrgyzstan has been deteriorating steadily, according to previous IFES surveys and those of other organizations, ever since the mid-1990s. This was due to a variety of reasons, including most obviously economic stagnation. But while interethnic relations remained essentially unchanged in the country, a north-south split was growing and producing cleavages between the northern and southern power elites. In addition, ideologically radical groups made their first known appearances, recruiting disadvantaged youth

in the Ferghana Valley region of the country and destabilizing the local power structure. Groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan made incursions into Kyrgyz territory which resulted in unheard of violence in the south of the country. Negative influences such as these, whose popularity increased as a result of a lack of government counteraction and meaningful engagement to solve regional economic issues, had the potential to draw significant numbers of young persons to the cause and draw them away from the democracy-building effort. IFES, among other international organizations, sought to provide opportunities to re-engage youth and teach them to use their energies to affect positive change, working through democratic norms such as representative government and civil society. The need to challenge youth, who represent an ever-increasing majority of the population of the country, drove IFES to create programs for their benefit and dedicate its new, post-election programmatic focus to helping develop the next generation of Kyrgyzstani voters and leaders.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS & CHALLENGES

With the State Program complete and the election cycle finished, IFES saw as its new priority the creation of programs designed to educate young persons in the ways of democracy. The textbook project and course for secondary school students follows a logical step of progression for IFES, which has worked with election officials, NGOs, lawyers, judges, and universities. With a similar textbook project in Kazakhstan serving as a base model for development of a Kyrgyzstan-specific book, IFES set about developing a draft document for piloting in a limited number of schools in and around Bishkek shortly following expenditure of all available funds under this agreement. This project should be supported by USAID and other donors, based upon demonstrated success, to reach as many schools as possible in the coming years. Of particular importance will be to reach schools in the south, namely, in Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad Oblasts. These regions represent the epicenter of potential unrest given an alarming birthrate, rising unemployment and the presence of Islamic radical elements. It will be important to focus on this region as well due to the ever-expanding political gap between the northern and southern regions, with the north viewed as the privileged power base and the south as an underappreciated, underserved periphery. Within the southern region itself it will be important not to ignore or neglect the substantial Uzbek minority living there, thus necessitating the production of materials in both Kyrgyz and Uzbek languages. Russian language materials will also need to be produced for the heavy Russian population of Bishkek.

Civic education programs should be constructed in a way, as IFES is prepared to do, to make them as sequential as possible to higher and lower grades. IFES' pilot program for 10th and 11th grade students should be linked with a first-year university program as well as 9th grade in order to provide a progression in learning, which could be further expanded in both directions. IFES has additional proposals to work at both of these levels that will be a part of its proposal for undertaking further work in this sector.

The extracurricular student programs (Student Action Committees, Democracy Summer Camps and Student Local Government Days) that will round out the next proposal should be expanded on a parallel track to that of the democracy textbook project and course, once effectiveness is demonstrated (as has already been done with the Camps). There is a window of opportunity to

work with a very favorably-inclined Ministry of Education on a number of education fronts in Kyrgyzstan, and every effort should be made to formalize a working agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding.

IFES should remain vigilant on the elections front, seeking out possible opportunities to affect positive change in between national election cycles. Local or by-elections may be scheduled which would provide IFES with an opportunity to provide concentrated training or promote such activities as candidate debates and public fora. Such activities must be carefully chosen and considered in order to maximize effectiveness and promote growth. All such initiatives will first be discussed with USAID and the Embassy before any final decisions are made. As occurred after the previous round of national elections in the mid-1990s, the post-election period provided fertile ground for discussion and developmental technical assistance in the elections sector, and meaningful opportunities that arise in the coming years should not be ignored or bypassed.

The overall situation in Kyrgyzstan is still the most conducive in Central Asia for conducting democracy work. While the NGO sector is no doubt the most vibrant and developed in the region, there are opportunities to continue to improve NGO development, particularly as political “watchdogs.” Much success was achieved with the NGO *Coalition* during this agreement, to which IFES contributed, and that success should be exploited and built upon to involve more citizens and young persons in order to create a sustainable base of checks and balances on the political workings of the country.

Opportunities will no doubt arise in other sectors, and IFES as well as other implementers and donors should be prepared to address these sectors with targeted, focused programming. It is anticipated that tolerance education, gender equality and conflict resolution will present the biggest opportunities, both at the adult and youth levels.

VII. CONCLUSION

IFES dedicated much of its efforts during this Cooperative Agreement to support the electoral reform process in Kyrgyzstan. With the State Program implemented in late 1996, IFES sought to recommend changes and improvements to the electoral code and procedures for polling station officials. Those efforts were combined with a program of voter education reaching out to the entire population. While the debate over the election law was at times intractable, progress was achieved and the code was adopted prior to local elections in 1999 and revised before the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2000. IFES’ poll worker training program, using a pollworker manual developed by IFES in partnership with the CEC, was conducted and refined for subsequent elections. On all three election days in 1999-2000 (local, parliamentary, presidential) evidence of the IFES pollworker training project could be found: training manuals adorned the vast majority of polling stations, IFES voter education posters could be seen in most stations, and most importantly polling officials appeared to have improved their conducting of each subsequent election. While violations were well documented in certain electoral districts, professional conduct by officials at the majority of polling stations appeared to be of sufficient quality. However, some basic deficiencies in the culture of elections remained to be addressed, and it was an investment in young persons that IFES deemed the next important step in the continuation of its work.

During this Agreement IFES began to target young persons, specifically college and high school students, for civic education programs that were designed to generate interest in politics and representative government. The Issyk-Kul Summer Camp featured a mock student election that drew considerable interest. Other projects included support for university student council elections and high school-based civics courses. This period also witnessed the birth of the IFES civics and democracy textbook project, with a CEPPS-funded series of Focus Groups providing critical information on student and teacher opinions and preferences of existing courses and course materials.

A number of partnerships were either developed or strengthened during this Cooperative Agreement period, both with local NGOs and government. IFES' main governmental partner remained the Central Election Commission, with whom it had the closest working relationship of any election commission in Central Asia. There were difficulties in the relationship, as would be expected, particularly as concerned the relative lack of independence of the CEC from the presidential apparatus. President Akayev also consolidated his power base during this period through changes to the country's constitution permitting him to run for another term in office. IFES consulted closely with the U.S. Embassy and USAID during this period to discuss appropriate forms of electoral sector assistance, and following the parliamentary elections of February 2000 electoral sector assistance efforts were pursued with only a degree of guarded optimism.

IFES feels that its assistance efforts in Kyrgyzstan are on the right track as a result of focusing activities on civic education for young persons. Students in Kyrgyzstan have displayed a great yearning for more information on democratic practice and have proven among the most involved of any students IFES has worked with throughout the region. While a clear deficit of knowledge among high school and even university students exists with respect to civics, a desire to participate actively in community betterment provided the stimulus to seek expansion of the projects to regions outside of Bishkek and Issyk-Kul in the years ahead.

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS

REPUBLIC OF KYRGYZSTAN

Final Project Report

October 1, 1997 – September 30, 2002

USAID Cooperative Agreement EE-A-00-97-00034-00

ATTACHMENT: DISPOSITION OF EQUIPMENT AND DURABLE GOODS

Attached is a list of equipment and durable goods that were procured by IFES under the USAID Cooperative Agreement EE-A-00-97-00034-00 for the Kyrgyzstan project. The procured equipment and durable goods have been transferred from this activity to the next Cooperative Agreement between USAID and IFES for work in Kyrgyzstan. The procurements listed are in current use in Kyrgyzstan under USAID Cooperative Agreement 119-A-00-00-00039-00.

Kyrgyzstan updated 6/21/99

Control #	Category	Description	Model/Serial #	Date of Acquisit.	Cost	Location	Condition	Comments
	Computer Desktop	Pentium II-333A		Apr-99		Bishkek	New	Tom Parkins
	Computer Keyboard	AT		Apr-99		Bishkek	New	Tom Parkins
	Computer Monitor	Samsung 410B	HMDJA04233H	Apr-99		Bishkek	New	Tom Parkins
	Computer Printer	HPLaser jet1100	FRDB577140	Apr-99		Bishkek	New	Tom Parkins
	Computer Desktop	Pentium II-333A		Jun-99		Bishkek	New	Galina Sergunina
	Computer Keyboard	AT		Jun-99		Bishkek	New	Galina Sergunina
	Computer Monitor	Samsung 410B	HA14HVBK316564X	Jun-99		Bishkek	New	Galina Sergunina
	Computer Printer	HP Laser Jet 5L	C3941ACNVM470248			Bishkek	Fair	Galina Sergunina
	Computer Desktop	Boston PC P-166	N214V7700533	Apr-98		Bishkek	Good	Tamara Toktonalieva
	Computer Keyboard	Boston PC		Apr-98		Bishkek	Good	Tamara Toktonalieva
	Computer Monitor	Amdek	2L4V7700533	Apr-98		Bishkek	Good	Tamara Toktonalieva
	Computer Printer	HP Deskjet 670C	ES79J210RG	Apr-98		Bishkek	Good	Tamara Toktonalieva
	UPS Power Protector	APC 500		Apr-99		Bishkek	New	Tamara Toktonalieva
	UPS Power Protector	APC 501				Bishkek	New	Galina Sergunina
	Telephone	Panasonic 28 KXT 2315	8GAKC504884	May-99	49	Bishkek	New	Tom Parkins
	Telephone	Panasonic KXT 7030	8KAVGO 81338	May-99	105	Bishkek	New	Tamara Toktonalieva
	Telephone, socket				25.48	Bishkek	New	Galina Sergunina
	Telephone station	Panasonic KXT 206		May-99	300	Bishkek	New	
	Facsimile Machine	Panasonic	KX-F130 7CBFG257030	Jun-97		Bishkek	Good	
	Pager					Bishkek	New	A. Listvin
	Pager	Motorola Scriptor			150	Bishkek	Good	Galina Sergunina
	Copier mashine	Xerox 520	2986668961	5/19/99	490	Bishkek	New	
	Television			Sep-98		Bishkek	Good	
	Television Receiver			Dec-98		Bishkek	Good	
	Television VCR					Bishkek	Good	
	Water-heater			4/19/99	138.50	Bishkek	New	Tom Parkins
	Oven & electrical stove			4/19/99	94.39	Bishkek	New	Tom Parkins

IFES

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