



## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Mission to Georgia**

Project: Door-to-door Leaflet/Artists Event Get Out the Vote Campaign in the Georgian Presidential Elections 2003

### **Project Purpose/Objective(s):**

In order to raise the turnout during the upcoming Presidential Elections the International Republican Institute propose to **distribute 400,000 reminders on doors around Georgia that will encourage participation in the 4 January 2004 elections**. Coinciding with this, **an art project/festival on Rustaveli Avenue across from the parliament** is also proposed as a high visibility project aimed at encouraging voter turnout.

### **Background:**

#### **Implementing Partners:**

**The International Republican Institute (IRI)** was established in 1984 as a private, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing democracy worldwide. IRI conducts a wide range of international programs to promote and strengthen democratic ideals and institutions. IRI programs are individually structured to meet the needs of the participants in the host country. These programs range from technical assistance in developing political parties and running election campaigns to civic education and training, legislative process training, constitutional reform, coalition building and communications training. IRI's programs are non-partisan and adhere to the fundamental American principles of individual freedom, equal opportunity and the entrepreneurial spirit that fosters economic development. IRI is not part of the Republican Party.

IRI is planning to engage National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia (NCYOG) to implement part of activities under this project.

**National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia (NCYOG)** was created in 1995. NCYOG is an acting structure, uniting nongovernmental youth organizations of Georgia. Its activities are aimed at the development of the nongovernmental youth movement. NCYOG was founded with the purpose of creating favourable environment and conditions for development, cooperation and coordination of nongovernmental youth organizations, leading to increase of participation and social activity of young people. Working of NCYOG is based on the voluntaries; transparency and openness; cooperation on the basis of principles of democracy. NCYOG has the well organized and experienced network of the regional organizations that unites over 1,000 activists in the different parts of Georgia.

#### **Project Background:**

As the OSCE is aware, for a Presidential Election to be valid in Georgia, it requires a 50% +1 voter turnout. Surpassing a 50% turnout is not a foregone conclusion and may present a problem for the upcoming elections due to the following reasons:

- The elections will be held in winter season during the New Year holidays. Georgians will be focusing on their holidays and traditions at this time and this will impede voter turnout. Simply put, most Georgians will be preparing for holidays or celebrating and will not be as inclined to participate in elections.
- The interest in current events and politics will decrease and the voters may become frustrated again with their own personal problems. It is a nature cycle and fits with a normal political voting pattern: political interest and activism cannot be sustained on the level like it has over the last three weeks in Georgia. In other words, a lot of the euphoria that many Georgians are feeling now will wear off even within 45 days and most of the same of problems will surface in their day-to-day lives. This will obviously have an impact on voting turnout – especially combined with the cold. (Note: for a case study in low voter turnout due to cold, the recent presidential election in Lithuania can be used as an example – even normally tough Lithuanians were dissuaded by the cold on voting day and this is arguably the main reason why Paksas was able to defeat the popular Adamkus). The weather and the holiday season will definitely affect voter turnout in Georgia during these elections.
- In the last elections, Ajara and Kvemo Kartli were reporting about 98% turnout. In the upcoming elections this will obviously not be possible. In the best case scenario, the turnout in these two areas will not be more than 50%. In the worst case: 5-10%. This will severely affect national, overall voting percentages – making the 50% threshold even harder to surpass.
- Turnout during the November 2 Elections was reported around 60%. But due to inflated numbers from foreign voting, Adjara and Kvemo Kartli, the actual turnout was around 45% - meaning that if this were a presidential election the 50% threshold would not have been met.

### **Approach:**

In order to raise the turnout during the upcoming Presidential Elections the International Republican itself and through the National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia propose to use the effective campaign tool of **distributing leaflets that will hang from the handles of doors** that will encourage the population of Georgia to vote in the upcoming elections. IRI and NCYOG have the necessary contacts in the printing industry as well as organizationally to distribute these leaflets on the doors of homes throughout the country in a rapid manner. The leaflet will contain information about the approaching Election Day, a reminder to the citizens to cast their vote on 4<sup>th</sup> January and the other side of the leaflet will contain useful information which forms of identification documents could be used for voting. This campaign tactic will be an effective means of increasing voter turnout - across the demographic board – on January 4. The campaign will cover all of Georgia and will target 400,000 voters both in the capital and regions of Georgia.

An art project that will involve 20 of Georgia's best artists painting Get Out The Vote pictures in the open space across from parliament encouraging people to vote in the upcoming elections is also proposed as an effective and cost effective means to raise voter turnout. Over a period of ten days before the January 4 election, artists will paint pictures (including a huge billboard) encouraging citizens to vote in the elections. Twenty of Georgia's leading artists will paint pictures on the open wall across from parliament on Rustaveli Avenue. The artists undertook a similar project before the

parliamentary elections in the national library and the media coverage and the general interest from the public was very high. Such a project in this location promises an even better interest and visibility. USAID has strongly endorsed the project and has encouraged IRI to attempt to fund this project. The artists also have some limited funding from the Soros Foundation. Given the high visibility of the project combined with a budget request of only \$4,500 from OSCE, the cost-benefit in terms of voter turnout in the elections from this endeavour will be extremely high.

The leaflets will be distributing according to the following schedule:

January 1

Tbilisi - 50,000 leaflets

Rustavi - 25,000 leaflets

Marneuli - 25,000 leaflets

Gori - 30,000 leaflets

Khashuri - 25,000 leaflets

January 2

Tbilisi - 40,000 leaflets

Kutaisi - 45,000 leaflets

Zestafoni - 15,000 leaflets

Samtredia - 20,000 leaflets

Poti - 35,000 leaflets

January 3

Tbilisi - 40,000 leaflets

Kutaisi - 20,000 leaflets

Rustavi - 15,000 leaflets

Marneuli - 15,000 leaflets

**Budget: 25, 840**