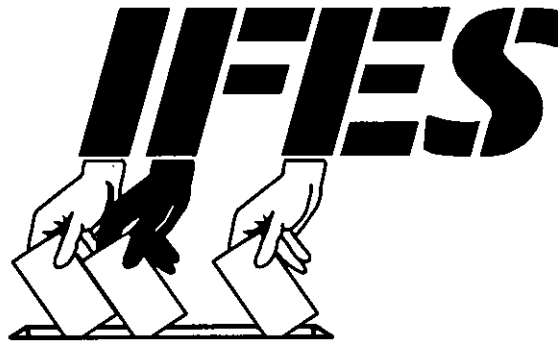


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Making Democracy Work

**F. CLIFTON WHITE RESOURCE CENTER
INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS**

**Citizen's activity is
basis for democratic
society**

April 2002

Information about the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and Civic Education Program

Founded in 1987, IFES (International Foundation for Election Systems) is a private, non-profit, nonpartisan organization providing need-based assistance for election administration and sustainable democracy building. IFES has experience working in over 120 countries.

Since establishing a permanent presence in Azerbaijan in 1998, IFES has provided technical assistance to the Central Election Commission (CEC), the Milli Majlis, municipalities and domestic civic organizations. IFES/Azerbaijan is developing its Resource Center to provide access to books, periodicals and articles on democracy-related topics in different languages.

Basic purpose of Civic Education Program is to improve knowledge of public about democracy and to assist improving their activeness in the democratic processes. IFES trainers will have discussions groups and have meetings with Mingechevir, Massalli, Kapaz, Barda, Ismayilli, Yasamal, Khatai and Ahmedly municipalities during the two years within this program. During the discussions and meetings the citizens will be informed about democracy, local self-government, human rights, importance of citizens' activeness in democratic society and other issues.

Who is an active citizen?

Active citizen is who:

- is aware of own rights and freedom and who can use them rightly;
- cooperates closely with local self-government bodies;
- is not indifferent to the current problems and tries to resolve them;
- is uncompromising to the violations and struggles against the ensure of legality;
- is engaged with public and political activity.

What are the requirements for being active citizen

Being active citizens you:

- form good government which is able to resolve problems;
- control activities of state bodies and never let officials abuse their occupation;
- create comfortable conditions for life by resolving the problems of the territories you are residing in;
- never let anybody violate your rights;
- ensure justice and equality of all in the society;
- are informed about happenings in public and political life which helps you to organize your life properly.

Ensuring justice and equality in society begins on the smallest level:

- Taking initiative to improve life in your community.
- Speaking out against prejudice and hatred.
- Teaching your children about their rights and responsibilities.
- Setting an active example for the next generation.

Your Constitutional rights

Everybody has the right of freedom of speech. No one can be forced to state his/her thoughts and persuasion or to change his/her thoughts or persuasion (Article 47, Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.)

Citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan have the right to participate in the political lives of society and state without any obstructions (Article 54, Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.)

Citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan have the right to participate in the governance of the state. They can implement this right directly themselves or through their representatives (Article 55, Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.)

Citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan have the right to elect or to be elected, to participate in referendums (Article 56, Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.)

- Citizen of Azerbaijan Republic who is 18 year old has voting right.
- Citizen of Azerbaijan Republic who is 21 years old has right to be elected to the municipal membership.
- Citizen of Azerbaijan Republic who is 25 years old has right to be elected to parliament.
- Citizen of Azerbaijan Republic who is 35 years old has right to be elected to the presidency.

What is priority of democratic governance?

Democratic governance is a form of governance, which is based on values such as rule of law, pluralism of ideas and human rights.

- Democratic governance gives the citizens opportunities to express their thoughts about the government, to criticize it and to have various attitudes.
- Democratic governance gives the citizens the opportunity to elect their government corresponding their wills.
- Citizens' position is basic for resolving any kind of problems.
- Broad right and freedoms are considered for citizens.
- The government guarantees observation of basic human rights and freedom.

The formulation of the government, which serves you depends on yourselves:

- Get acquainted with you candidates and vote for the best one.
- Follow political processes and make proper assessment.
- Don't be indifferent to the illegal action of authorized persons and achive his/her accountability in from of law.

Why participation in local self-government?

Participation in local self-government is important for governing the territory you are residing in by yourselves and for resolution of your problems. By participating in local self-government you will:

- ensure the normal functioning of roads, transport, communication means, water supply, sewage system, trade, public catering, consumer and other services of the territory you are residing in;
- open new work places for unemployed and provide citizens with jobs of their specialty;
- assist alone, sick people, elders, orphans and talented children;
- achieve cleaning and planting trees, protection of environment of municipal territory.

How to participate in local self-government?

- By participating in elections to municipalities;
- By being enterprising during local public opinion surveys and participating in them;
- By initiating municipal acts;
- By appealing to municipal governors and addressing problems of the territory to them;
- By participating in citizens' meetings.

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