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Organizational culture of educational non-government organizations in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan

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**ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF EDUCATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENT
ORGANIZATIONS IN POST-SOVIET AZERBAIJAN**

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PIM 63**

**A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of
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**October 10, 2006
Dr. Sora Friedman, Advisor**

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ABSTRACT

This research is an ethnography of the organizational culture of four education-oriented local non-government organizations (LNGOs) in Ganje, Azerbaijan. To get a sense of the distinct features of the organizational culture of these LNGOs, qualitative research methods consisting of participant observation, formal interviews, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, focus group discussions, and analysis of organizational literature were undertaken. Bolman and Deal's Four Frames model (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) lends a perspective on the organizational culture of the LNGOs in terms of 1) organizational mission 2) rules, roles and relationships of members 3) service delivery 4) relations with government and international non-government organizations and 5) organizational identity and self-belief. Central to the discussion is the nature of civil society development in post-Soviet Azerbaijan and the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union (FSU), with both analysis from several sector specific reports and commentary from interviews with LNGO leaders, staff, and service recipients. Research findings show that NGOs lack the capacity for advocacy on a large scale and hence have a weak impact on civil society development due to underdeveloped support structures, intersectoral competition, weak relationships with constituents, and lack of a positive public image. Other organizational issues include legal recognition, organizational structure, and donor dependency. The research findings point to ways for improved organizational effectiveness of the Ganje LNGOs' efforts in education reform and civil society development through sustainable funding sources, clear goals and mission, cooperation with other NGOs, and transparent, participatory management systems.

Introduction

In August 2004, I began my work as an English Language Senior Fellow with the U.S. Department of State/Office of English Language Programs in Ganje, Azerbaijan. The director of the Ganje Education Information Center (GEIC) escorted me to Ganje from the capital, Baku. It was the beginning of my association with educational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ganje and throughout Azerbaijan. A few days later a meeting was held at a local university where I was to conduct English teacher training. At the entrance of the English department was a sign that read “Department of the English Grammar.” The dean of the English department sputtered English with archaically formal phrases and couldn’t be bothered to listen to anyone around him, regularly interrupting as he pleased. He and another dean repeatedly demanded that the university needed manuals. When I suggested it was books that were needed, a tedious debate ensued -one from which I was summarily excluded- as to whether books or manuals were the correct word. I gave a short needs assessment questionnaire to the “professors,” some of whom could not give detailed answers in writing. Subsequent teacher training sessions were poorly attended by the faculty, some of whom discouraged their colleagues and students from associating with me.

In general, I found that university life in Ganje ended at 2:00pm, with few extracurricular activities or student associations. I rarely saw faculty outside the university setting. During meetings aimed at the professional development of faculty, teacher training, all too often individuals uttered the phrase “May I go?” and excused themselves. Most every formal educational institution I worked with in Ganje never gave me many classes to teach or any responsibilities. One secondary school teacher attributed the low level of English and academic rigor at universities to some faculty wanting to do things the same way they had in the past. With low salaries and lack of support from a central government authority, some academics have had

to seek other means of earning a living, meaning at times the exacting of bribes from students and/or earning money outside an institutional setting. A faculty member at one university stated that the academic program was nearly the same as in Soviet times, with the older professors discouraging innovation. In his estimation, it would take ten to twenty years to reform the system.

In the spring 2005, an article was published in a local Ganje newspaper claiming that foreign Christian missionaries had come to Ganje, which led some educational authorities to suspect Peace Corps volunteers and myself of missionary activity. I had been visiting English classes at a local college and was abruptly told not to return. Even a year later such rumors persisted. One government inspector knew of my presence at another institute and seriously questioned my presence there despite my appointment to work there by the Minister of Education. Other rumors began in spring 2006 that related American presence in Azerbaijan to the anticipated invasion of Iran by the U.S. military. So it was in the non-formal educational sector that I made most of my efforts in English Language Teaching, International Education, and civil society development.

A significant problem in the Azerbaijani education system is the low salary for teachers, partly responsible for bribery that exists in some educational institutions. It is a two-tiered, highly organized system in which 1) bribes are exacted by teachers for grades, certificates, diplomas and other favors, the money being passed upward through the organizational structure in percentage increments and 2) teaching and administrative positions are purchased (Rasizade, 2004). At the secondary level, some students and parents willingly pay bribes for excused absences so that students can get out of class to study with private tutors (Silova and Kazimzade, 2005). Freedom House (2006) reports that one of the most common types of bribery in Azerbaijan is procuring better grades for schoolchildren.

In some cases, the state education system in Azerbaijan fulfills the purposes of instilling patriotism and adherence to authority of the ruling political party, maintains the traditions of patronage and nepotism, while serving as a platform for exacting bribes. The system, as with other sectors in Azerbaijan, as it exists some fifteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, largely is not addressing economic, political, and social inequalities. All of this brings into question whether education in Azerbaijan could any longer be considered a public good.

In the face of static educational environments in the state sector, the bulk of my work in Azerbaijan has been in the non-formal sector, which has a much more welcoming and productive atmosphere characterized by local organizations operating more or less autonomously from the state. Since August 2004 I have worked with the following organizations:

Local NGOs (LNGO) Ganje, Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan Young Leaders Association (AYLA)

Azerbaijan English Teachers' Association (AzETA)

Bilik

Ganje Education Information Center (GEIC)

It should be noted that the four organizations are for the most part separate entities, though they may work on similar projects such as civil society development, English Language Teaching, and academic and professional exchanges.

AYLA

The Association of Young Leaders of Azerbaijan as an educational institution, resource and coordinating center for NGOs was created in November 1999 in Ganje by a group of young ecologists, students, and lawyers. Its mission is the improvement of the state of civil society, civic initiatives, active participation of citizens in the processes of building civil society, development of a free market economy, democratic principles, and the creation of a good atmosphere for the third sector in western regions of Azerbaijan. In September 2005, I founded the Center for English Language Learning and International Education (CELLIE) at the Leaders'

School (LS), a National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funded youth program that is part of a larger organization, the Azerbaijan Young Leaders' Association (AYLA). AYLA registered as an NGO in 2005 under the name Young Leaders' Education Training and Development Public Union. Much of the data collected in this research was from the Leaders' School staff and participants as my presence there was the longest and most intense of the organizations I worked with in Ganje.

AzETA

AzETA is an NGO established and officially registered in 1996. Since its establishment AzETA has worked closely with the British Council, Open Society Institute (OSI), and the US Embassy in Azerbaijan. AzETA's main focus is to provide support for high quality education in English Language Teaching (ELT) through the professional development of English language teachers in Azerbaijan. AzETA has a strategy of supporting ELT through different projects: teacher training, materials development, study tours, TV matinees, conversation groups, workshops, and conferences. There are currently five branches, including one in Ganje. I conducted teacher training sessions at the Ganje branch as well as at other branches, encouraged organizational development, assisted with materials development, organized conferences, participated in study tours, and presented at regional and national conferences.

Bilik

Bilik means knowledge. The society is located at the Ganje Central library and engages in an array of education and community projects, including professional development for secondary school teachers, infrastructure projects in refugee communities, computer training, and work

with disabled children. I have assisted them with grant applications, donor solicitation, and English teacher training in the secondary schools.

GEIC

The GEIC, an affiliate of the OSI, advises students for study abroad, offers free Internet access and computer training, and an NGO resource center, and has a sizable library of English books and information on North American and European universities. It is also a venue for English classes, TOEFL and GRE preparation, lectures, seminars, and training. At the GEIC, I gave programs about American culture, showed English language films, participated in International Education Week, and advised students, teachers, and professors about opportunities for academic and professional exchange. The GEIC offers training on a wide variety of topics including elections, organizational development, women's issues, human rights, human trafficking, and guest speakers from international organizations such as the Eurasia Foundation, the OSI, and the U.S. Embassy.

Research Question

The following research question is posed in order to reflect on my experience in the educational NGO sector in Azerbaijan.

What are the distinct features of the organizational culture of educational NGOs (AYLA, AzETA, Bilik, and GEIC) in Ganje, Azerbaijan?

Sub-questions related to the research question are:

What has been the involvement of Ganje area NGOs (AYLA, AzETA, Bilik, and GEIC) on both educational and institutional reform and civil society development in Azerbaijan?

What are the key elements that define group members' identity and organizational self-belief at Ganje area NGOs?

What sort of relations do Ganje area NGOs have with government?

What role do foreign links with international organizations play in the development of the organizational culture at Ganje area NGOs?

What parallels in organizational culture exist between Ganje area educational NGOs and those in other parts of Azerbaijan, in the Caucasus, and Newly Independent States (NIS)?

Literature Review

Civil society, broadly defined as self-initiated civic groups mediating market and government sectors, was nearly but not totally absent in the Soviet system. The four LNGOs that are the focus of this research are actively involved in civil society development aimed towards the building of a pluralistic society. Therefore, the literature review has considerable detail about civil society, its relationship to the market and the state, and related concepts such as social capital and community driven development.

Factors affecting social conditions in Azerbaijan include the oil industry's ill effects on the political development of society, ethnic conflict, the Nagorno-Karabakh war, isolationist tendencies, corruption, social apathy, and dependency on centralized authority. Some of these factors come into play in the education sector characterized by low teacher salaries, bribery, under funding, and obsolete curricula. In light of such conditions, it is argued that NGOs can play an advocacy role in education reform. Finally, the influence of International Non-government Organizations (INGO) in Azerbaijan is shown to be supportive of LNGOs, though

INGO efforts at times prove to be counterproductive leading to dysfunctional organizational behavior.

Civil Society

Civil society can be thought of broadly as not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) covering a wide range of organizations from development NGOs and think tanks to trade unions, foundations, faith-based organizations, disabled persons organizations, community-based organizations, media (independent and non-profit), and business associations (World Bank, 2005). Terms for Civil Society Organizations (CSO) vary in different countries, for example *charters* in Great Britain, *non-profit organization* in the USA, *economic sociale* in France, and *non-commercial* or *non-governmental organizations* in Russia. Other terms used for social organizations are *private voluntary organization* (PVO) and *community-based organization* (CBO). According to the Society for Humanitarian Research NGO manual (2001) in Azerbaijan, the legislative term *public association* was initially used in 1992 in the “Law on the Public Association” and approved in 1995 by the Constitution of the Republic. Both *public organization* and *non-governmental organization* were approved in the final discussion of the NGO law in June 2000, prepared with participation of NGO representatives under the lead of the National NGO Forum (NNF). AYLA uses the term *public union* in its formal title.

Social capital, the degree of trust, cooperation, and interdependence among civil society organizations, is a concept often discussed in relation to civil society. Kuchukeeva & O’Loughlin (2003) consider NGOs as playing a key role in civic engagement viewed by the authors as the reproduction of and tangible measure of social capital. In the post-Soviet context, Rose (1999) asks whether social capital networks in the FSU exist or whether they are substitutes for

discredited formal institutions. The author describes anti-modern tendencies in which goods and services are allocated through favoritism and bribery, resulting in uncertain institutional environments. Instead of supporting and monitoring the state, social capital networks at times oppose and even exploit the state.

Civil Society in Azerbaijan

Civil society in Azerbaijan can be traced back to the Cemiyeti Xeyeriye Benevolence Societies of the early 20th century. An NGO manual created in 2001 by the Society for Humanitarian Research and the Enlightened Youth Organization of Azerbaijan traces the history of civil society development since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, destruction of the Topkhana forest, and the hard living conditions of refugees were some of the issues that gave the impetus for the founding of purpose-oriented public organizations. Essential problems of the community, such as social or humanitarian needs, youth and women's issues, and human rights protection, also gained the attention of community organization, which began to be founded by local institutes, universities, administrations and departments. Though most organizations had limited resources, they were active participants in cooperation with political parties, government, and international organizations. Trade unions also set up charitable and cultural centers (Society for Humanitarian Research, 2001).

More closely related to the NGO sector in Azerbaijan, Russell, et al. (2005) represents the findings of a USAID assessment team from 2004 that researched Azerbaijani NGOs whose activities met this definition of civil society: "public interest advocacy organizations outside the control of the state that seek to influence the state on the behalf of public aims." An important point is that NGO activity does not constitute the whole of civil society, which the report sees in terms of citizens' action and advocacy. The report discusses a variety of issues germane to NGO

activity in Azerbaijan namely civic activism, advocacy, capacity, government hostility toward NGOs in the form of legal barriers and tax policy, social apathy, counterproductive donor practices, barriers to registration, and obstacles to donor funding.

Leonard (2003) covers topics such as community driven development and mobilization, local government, LNGOs, and needs and barriers of communities concerning community development. Sustainability seems to be hindered by dependence on short-term external funding. Lack of coordination between INGOs and LNGOs, barriers to registration, the language barrier, lack of transparency, and no common development plan are other challenges mentioned in the report. Leonard recommends that community development organizations have a clear mission, a participatory management style, a planning process for writing proposals, an annual strategic plan, community outreach, and primary responsibility for service delivery.

Two recent studies, the *USAID 2004 Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia* and the *ISAR Public Awareness Survey: NGOs and Their Role in Azerbaijan* contain survey data shedding light on public perceptions of NGO activity in Azerbaijan. Common themes are advocacy, relations with donors, constituents, government, awareness of NGO activity, NGO work in the regions compared to Baku, NGO registration, and perceived NGO impact on society.

Several periodicals exist that cover the NGO sector in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus. *NGO News Digest* has information about third sector activity in Azerbaijan. *Give and Take* is a journal on civil society in Eurasia. Three of the four educational LNGOs in Ganje have websites. All publish reports and organizational literature. There are many websites as well that have information about NGO activity in Azerbaijan, including 1) www.azerweb.com 2) www.3-sektor.org In addition, organizational literature has been collected about the four LNGOs in

Ganje as well as website material. Of special note is the AYLA publication *QHT Bu Gun* (NGO Today) which details NGO activity in western Azerbaijan.

Since gaining independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan's transition, not unlike that in other Newly Independent States (NIS), has encountered factors specific to civil society development, namely the processes of economic, political, and social transformation, integration into world systems, and new methods of governance. In more than fifteen years after independence from the Soviet Union, the reconstruction of the public awareness of civil society is a formidable task after seventy years of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan when the state was the ultimate source for determining the public good. Although the associations such as trade union organizations, disability centers, women's and youth organizations could be formed on the basis of self-initiative, wholly independent organizations were strictly prohibited in the Soviet times.

An active civil society relies on the freedom of association, the ability of citizens to interact with one another for any purposes that are not illegal and do not infringe on the rights of others without fear of government interference and retribution. Freedom of association is a right and entitlement, not something that is granted to citizens by the government (Public Interest Law Initiative, 2003). Article 11 on Freedom of Assembly and Association of The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) guarantees freedom of association, which is further supported by ECtHR case law. Restrictions are permitted when prescribed by law, public policy, and when necessary to achieve the intended purposes of a democratic society (Schmidt, 2003).

Azerbaijan's accession to the Council of Europe in 2001 and its ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights ostensibly underscore the freedom of association and civil society development in Azerbaijan. The Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic guarantees the equal

right of persons to gather freely and form organizations with others as well. However, the absence of the rule of law, an independent judiciary and independent media mean that in practice the right to freedom of association is not always guaranteed or protected in Azerbaijan.

Bagirov (2002) cites Aristotle's view of a fully-fledged citizen as one who is involved both in governance and being governed. In the case of Azerbaijan's transition, Bagirov sees this reflexivity in light of decentralization, a two-way street paved at the initiative of those who govern and by citizens and their associations, the latter taking over where "the helplessness and futility" of the former left off. In addition to reconstruction of the economy and governance institutions, Bagirov points out the importance of the populace realizing that local problems can be solved independently of a central authority by joining one's efforts with others in public association, a position with which Leonard (2003) concurs in the context of community development.

In spring 2006, Counterpart International (CI) began to implement a five-year USAID funded grant called the Civil Society Project, in association with the Urban Institute and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law. A representative of CI summarized the efforts made toward civil society development in Azerbaijan. CI's local partner in Ganje is the Ganje Agribusiness Association (GABA). The Civil Society Project objectives will attempt to:

- Establish relations between NGOs and government and municipalities
- Encourage NGOs in advocacy
- Initiate efforts toward capacity building, organizational development, and financial sustainability
- Lessen donor dependence of NGOs
- Establish collaboration with all stakeholders: executive committees, municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, media, international organizations

- Bring about knowledge transfer CI →GABA→LNGOs

Taking a broader scope, Kuchukeeva & O'Loughlin (2003) outline salient issues in civil society development in the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the FSU.

- Social Capital
- Civic Engagement
- Institutional and Ideological Pluralism
- Atomization and Fragmentation of the Public Sphere
- Antipathy and Distrust of Formal Institutions and Organizations
- Closed Nature of Networks
- Patron-Clientistic Relations
- Struggle among elites, institutions, and interests
- Civil Society in Opposition to the State
- Perpetuation of Existing Power Relations by NGOs
- Transcendence of Ethnic and Regional Cleavages

Modernity and the Soviet System

Civil society then can be seen in light of the concept of modernity, a product of ideas of the European Enlightenment including rationality and the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of the progress and improvement of humanity (McGhee, 1997). According to Bauman (1987) in McGhee (1997) and conceived of by Gellner, the emergence of modernity brought social control exercised through the ruling elite that promoted a view of uniformity changing from a gamekeeper mentality (allowing wildlife to flourish within certain boundaries) to a gardener mentality (carefully planning and managing the growth of life). Aranson in McGhee (1997) argues the Soviet system was a “counter-paradigm of modernity,” which emerged under the

influence of Russia's imperial past and its interaction with the West, a system unable to accept the plurality of domestic and global concerns.

The Soviet system was overly organized, but under bureaucratized leading to what Rose (1999) calls an anti-modern society imbued with organizational failure. Organizations often failed to operate impersonally, predictably, and according to the rule of law. Rules were often subverted by politics, bribes, interinstitutional bartering, and personal contacts resulting in uncertain institutional environments. In response, the populace protected themselves from such an organizational environment through social networks focused on the interests of a narrow circle even to the point of exploiting formal institutions. Commenting on human resources, Bolman & Deal maintain that "When the fit between the individual and the system is poor, one or both suffer: individuals will be exploited or will exploit the organization-- or both will become victims (Bolman & Deal, 1997)." Instead of being deployed in the spirit of cooperation and trust, social capital networks may be used against an anti-modern state. Rose claims that these unmodern networks did not end with the collapse of the Soviet Union and decentralization of the Soviet system.

Patron-Client Relations

Hyden (1997) warns that decentralization is no panacea. The control of the state apparatus at lower levels by local, traditional patrons could not only be a means of strengthening the central government, but also an impediment to the emergence of civil society. Dudwick, et al. (2003) further point to the persistence of paternalistic relationships, extended family networks, and a strong ethos of reciprocity among relatives in the FSU. McGhee (1997) describes such relations as wealthy, influential patrons controlling exchange relations while

protecting clients in a hostile environment. The author continues by saying that patron-client relations endure in their near universal persistence in Azerbaijan as a means of influencing decisions affecting the distribution of resources and exhibit unequal relations that can be inimical to a democratic system of representation.

In the case of Azerbaijan, Rasizade (2004) cites the ubiquity of black marketeering monopolized by those with connections to the ruling clan. In addition, clientalistic networks have privatized the state while the legislature and political opposition have become avenues for realizing private interests, a phenomenon to which civil society organizations are not immune. A decline in the ability of the government to maintain minimal levels of public services in education, health care, pensions, and other sectors is a daily part of life in Azerbaijan. The dependence on patronage from the regime by clients is a major reason for maintenance of the status quo for the sake of self-preservation, hardly an inducement for reform supported by civil society.

Sabanadze (2002) demonstrates the link between the weakness of states structures and patron-client relations in terms of ethnicity in the Caucasus:

In the context of collapsing state structures, national economies and social security, identification with one's ethnic kin became extremely important and further strengthened the role of ethnicity as a prime source of personal identification. Individuals were identified mainly in terms of their ethnic or other collective identities, which practically brought ethnic conflict from the public into the private sphere, blurring the distinction between the two and further encouraging a stigmatization of individuals solely in terms of their ethnic affiliations.

Sabanadze (2002) p. 30.

Where strong kinship ties are the prevalent form of association and democratic values are alien to the existing political culture, the formation of weak ties in the form of social

networks may aid societies in democratic transition. NGOs conceived of as weak social networks may contribute to the development of democratic values, though NGOs by no means constitute the whole of civil society or civic engagement, nor are NGOs always democratic (Gibson 2001 in Kuchukееva & O'Loughlin, 2003).

International NGOs

Two studies critique the value of International Non-government Organizations (INGOs) in civil society development. Mendelson & Glenn, eds. (2002) bring into question the value of INGOs in promoting and sustaining democracy. The development of local institutions and advocacy networks are rarely the subject of inquiry, hence the claim that there is no correlation between NGO presence and civil society development in many post-Soviet countries. Typical NGO development strategies such as infrastructural assistance, human capital development, proactive, imported, and responsive strategies need above all to respond to local needs and conditions. Instead, it is often the case that NGOs become quasi-corporate, elite organizations atomized by competition for grants from international donors. Ostensibly attempting to bring democratic assistance to Eastern Europe and Eurasia, NGOs have often compromised their capacity to serve as a driving force of democratic change in society at large.

Cooley & Ron (2005) *advance* two theoretical propositions, first that INGO proliferation is not necessarily indicative of a robust civil society since this may in fact increase uncertainty, competition, and insecurity for all organizations in that sector. Secondly, the authors dispute that efficiency and effectiveness are increased by the use of competitive tenders and market-based institutions, which may ultimately contribute to dysfunctional organizational behavior viewed as a rational response to systematic and predictable institutional pressures. Thus it is somewhat

understandable that local actors are responding to institutional pressures and conflicting donor practices in taking advantage of INGOs to further their own opportunistic agendas.

It would be easy to think that INGOs have come to the rescue for civil society development. Mendelson and Glenn (2002) deliver case studies exploring INGO involvement in civil society development with women's NGOs in Poland and Hungary, media assistance in the Czech and Slovak Republics, and environmental NGOs in Kazakhstan, concluding that there is no direct correlation between NGO presence and the robustness of a transitional state's civil society. In seeking to provide democratic assistance to Eastern Europe and Eurasia, NGOs have often compromised their efforts in social change by failing to take into account the needs of local communities, cultural norms and historical experiences, and perceptions. The atomization of society can be exacerbated if INGOs impose their own agendas on LNGOs, who compromise their missions in order to compete for western aid, so seemingly close to the influence peddling and the inter-institutional bartering of the Soviet era, distancing themselves from local constituents all the while. Mendelson & Glenn (2002) go so far as to claim that in almost every case they studied, INGO involvement led to the disassociation of LNGOs from the local population.

Drawing on three case studies of INGO involvement in Kyrgyzstan, the Congo, and Bosnia, Cooley & Ron (2005) maintain that dysfunctional organizational behavior is likely to be a rational response to institutional pressures brought on by donors' practices which effectively have in some cases brought marketization to the aid sector. In particular, the reliance on one-year renewable contracts by Western donors and subsequent pressure to annually renew contracts created incentives for contracting INGOs to downplay government subversion of economic reforms, withhold information about ineffective projects, tolerate bureaucratic opportunism, and not report recipient's opportunistic behavior. The authors suggest solutions such as long term

projects, the availability of funding sources beyond established Western government and INGO aid sources, and incentives to cooperate rather than compete.

Organizational Behavior in Azerbaijan

Rasizade (2004) describes the “Soviet hangover” seen in organizational behavior in Azerbaijan resembling Soviet times in its authoritarianism, lack of transparency, nepotism and corruption. He describes a dismantled social welfare system with lingering public expectations that such a system, though effectively non-existent, should be responsible for most of the needs of society. Foreign investment in the oil sector seems to reinforce authoritarianism at the expense of strengthening state institutions and democracy building. Oil and gas resource interests take precedence over the democratic development of society such that it would seem that oil and democracy do not mix in Azerbaijan. A common observation is that at the transnational level, foreign powers (Russia, Iran, Turkey, European nations, and the U.S.) care more about their presence in the Caucasus than the interests of its inhabitants.

Bayulgen (2003) points out that despite a significant amount of foreign direct investment primarily in the oil sector and double digit GDP growth over the last five years, the affinity between authoritarianism and oil in Azerbaijan is no exception to what is often the case in other countries that depend on the export of natural resources. The author discusses the dialectic between Azerbaijan’s integration into global networks of capital and the political development of society. Oil revenue in the billions has not led significantly to the development of other sectors of the economy or to sustained levels of investment in education. Institutionally, Bayulgen observes weak horizontal accountability between state institutions as well as weak vertical accountability of ruling elites to society, a phenomenon Kuchukeeva & O’Loughlin (2003), Rasizade (2004), and McGhee (1997) discuss as well.

Gibson in Kuchukeeva & O'Loughlin (2003) associates democratic culture with horizontal community ties characterized by reciprocity and thin trust built on social capital, defined by Putnam in Kuchukeeva & O'Loughlin (2003) as “the features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.” Members of voluntary associations with horizontally structured relations have the opportunity to contribute on an equal basis. In contrast, vertically structured power hierarchies tend to reinforce patron-client relations and produce asymmetrical exchanges.

McGhee (1997) in a three-year study of organizational culture at the first private university in Azerbaijan examined the institution's organizational self-belief in terms of the construction of top-down, authoritarian, and controlling mechanisms. Central control by the founder and university chancellor and active involvement of family members including the chancellor's wife and brothers were the norm, with a degree of acceptance of alternatives norms such as different structures, mechanisms, attitudes and behavior. The author found the organizational culture of the university to be authoritarian (but not strictly so) and improvisational.

Crisis in Education

Rasizade (2004) characterizes the education system in Azerbaijan as having minimal government expenditure, corruption, as many as one-third of children not attending classes regularly, and obsolete curricula, in contrast to the Soviet education system with 90 percent of the adult population having completed secondary education and a high literacy rate. An Asian Development Bank (2002) report summarizes the problems faced by the Azerbaijani government at the time of independence in undertaking educational reform: loss of markets, hyperinflation, border conflict, the declining role of agriculture, and the slowness of privatization. Following the

collapse of the FSU, expenditures for education dwindled to a very low level; in 1997 the public education expenditure was 34 percent of the level of 1992 (Rahimova, et al., 2005). Silova & Kazimzade (2005) estimate that the level of education expenditure as a percentage of GDP decreased from 7 percent in 1990 to 4.8 percent in 2001. Others observers point also to the inefficient use of resources and rigid procedures causing the rapid deterioration of the quality of public education.

As a part of an eight-country study in the NIS funded by the OSI, Silova & Kazimzade (2005) have documented the private tutoring industry in Azerbaijan. The corruption and low quality of instruction has led to a de facto privatization of education in which students prepare for university entrance exams and other requirements through private tutoring, privately estimated to be \$57 million USD per annum industry that is unregulated and untaxed. In some cases teachers are not devoting their full efforts toward public education. Some teachers have been reported to deliberately withhold teaching the curriculum thereby forcing students into private tutoring. The authors quote one teacher who said, “the worse the education system gets, the better it is for my tutoring business.” Silova and Kazimzade recommend that education policy-makers and NGO representatives can encourage a more active engagement of communities, parent-teacher associations, and school boards in stemming the negative effects of private tutoring by playing a monitoring role in curricular issues and corruption in schools. Local organizations can work to prevent the excessive, unethical use of private tutoring from putting students at a disadvantage.

Research Methodology

A descriptive ethnographic study was undertaken to gain a sense of organizational culture of four educational LNGOs (AYLA, AzETA, Bilik, GEIC) in Ganje, Azerbaijan. The research

was both a means of reflection on my own personal involvement with these organizations for 22 months (September 2004 to June 2006) and an analysis of the organizational culture at each organization to reveal distinctive features. AYLA was selected for an in-depth analysis for two reasons. Of all the LNGOs, I had the closest contact with AYLA. Secondly, AYLA's variety of departments, programs, staff, and service recipients provided a rich environment to study. Data and information were also gathered from AzETA, Bilik, and GEIC. Perhaps the most invaluable source for this research is McGhee (1997), an ethnography of the first private university in Azerbaijan. The work serves as a model for this research, which emulated the qualitative research methods (participant observation, focus groups, formal interviews, and document analysis), research questions, discussion of organizational culture, the key elements that define group members' identity and organizational self-belief, the nature of authority and its legitimation, and the roles that links with international organizations play in organizational culture.

What was surprising was the willingness of participants to be interviewed, for I did not anticipate that the LNGOs and interviewees would be totally transparent in giving information. Most of the interviewees did not want their name to be given, but still spoke honestly about their experiences NGO involvement. Having to speak English was not as much of a barrier as anticipated. Most participants were well versed in NGO terminology, donor-speak, and concepts of civil society. In a few interviews, an interpreter was used. Some translation of organizational literature from Azeri to English was also done.

Framework

The Four Frames model from Bolman & Deal (1997) *Reframing Organizations* was used to examine the organizational culture of the four educational INGOs in Ganje, Azerbaijan. The authors advocate four frames (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic), which allow

people involved with organizations to take a step back and make sense of their organization's complexity and the people in them. The Four Frames model is a tool for gaining a perspective on organizational life through the examination of organizational aspects such as rules, goals, needs, skills, relationships, leadership, power, conflict, politics, culture, meaning, ceremonies, stories, and heroes. One can conceive of an organization not only in terms of structure and mechanics, but also from different points of view with a sense of flexibility, creativity, and interpretation. Each frame views an organization through these categories: metaphor, central concepts, image of leadership, and basic leadership challenge. The following chart gives a summary of the four frames (Bolman and Deal, 1997).

Table 1: Four Types of Organizational Culture-Bolman and Deal

	Structural Frame	Human Resource Frame	Political Frame	Symbolic Frame
Metaphor	Factory or machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theater
Central Concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships	Power, conflict, competition, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of Leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy	Inspiration
Basic Leadership Challenge	Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Align organizational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected through 40 formal interviews of leaders, service providers and recipients associated with the four Ganje educational NGOs. Three focus group sessions were held, with an average of 12 participants in each group. Other data collection methods used were participant observation and document analysis that provided a thick description of organizational life. The information gathered is concerned with 1) how organization members' beliefs and values guide their actions and their understanding of those actions and 2) how these actions affect the beliefs and actions of the community, service recipients, government, and other stakeholders (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The methods are contextual in that they take into account local perceptions, norms, and practices that may not be generalizable to a whole country, but could produce findings with significant implications for organizational development, better relations with stakeholders, and improved donor practices (Dudwick et al., 2003).

The first phase of interviewing was loosely structured using the Four Frames as a guide. Interviewees spoke about their own roles in the organization, how they saw the roles of leadership, what they perceived as their own beliefs and values as participants in the organization, as well as critical incidents, stories, and anecdotes.

In the second phase, a SWOT analysis was done in which organization members reflected on their organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats perceived internally and externally. The SWOT analysis is a framework for analyzing strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats that face one's organization to help focus on strengths, minimize weaknesses, take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available, while meeting and dealing with threats. See Appendix A for the SWOT form used with interviewees and complete SWOT data.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	What advantages do you have? What do you do well? What relevant resources do you have access to? What do other people see as your strengths?
Weaknesses	What could you improve? What do you do badly? What should you avoid? Consider this from an internal and external basis: Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you do not see?
Opportunities	Where are the good opportunities facing you? What are the interesting trends you are aware of? Useful opportunities can come from such things as: changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale, changes in government policy related to your field, changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, etc., changes in local events
Threats	What obstacles do you face? What is your competition doing? Are the required specifications for your services changing? Is changing technology threatening your position? Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems? Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your organization?

The final part of the data collection consists of two sections. First, interviewees were asked to comment on selected statements from the *USAID 2004 Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia* for Azerbaijan as to their accuracy and relevance concerning the NGO sector in Ganje, adding a verificative dimension to the research. Secondly, data were collected concerning each organization's efforts toward civil society development.

Data Analysis

Since the data collected were qualitative, close attention was paid to patterns that emerged over time from what the NGO leaders, members, and service recipients express about

their organizations. Prominent themes were coded under beliefs and values, civil society development, decision-making, donor relations, four frames (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic), NGO Corruption, organizational mission, and SWOT.

Significant elements in this analysis are:

- an organization’s mission
- rules, roles and relationships of members
- service delivery
- relations with government and INGOs
- organizational identity and self-belief.

Presentation of Data

Data collected about AYLA will be presented including commonly held beliefs and values of its members, a public survey about NGO awareness, and comments from LINGO leaders, staff, and service recipients on civil society development in Ganje. Table 3 has information about the interviewees: name of organization, number of interviewees, gender, and average age.

Table 3: Interview Data

Organization	Number of Interviewees	Males/Females	Average Age
AYLA	11	4M 7F	25.7
AzETA	13	2M 11F	26.6
Bilik	4	3M 1F	41.25
GEIC	12	4M 8F	25.9
Total	40	13M 27F	27.6

Interviews with AYLA Staff and Students

Eleven formal interviews and three focus group discussion were conducted to collect data about organizational life at AYLA. The interviewees commented about their participation in AYLA activities, their beliefs and values as participants, and perceptions of AYLA guided by Bolman & Deal's four frames. Interviewees completed a SWOT analysis and responded to statements from the *USAID 2004 Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia*.

Beliefs and Values

Interviewees were in agreement that the Leaders' School is a useful project for youth and necessary for citizens of a transitional democratic society. One interviewee stated that "the LS is good for our people, especially for those who can not afford educational opportunities." At the school students learn knowledge and skills necessary for citizenship and the development of Azerbaijan. Teaching is in the context of western values and integration into Europe. One interviewee stated that Western educational values should be adapted to Azeri values. This person considered good Western educational values were exemplified by free and flexible teacher-student relations, no rigid expectations of behavior for students, and the attitude that a student is a subject not an object. An observation was made that American children are free to express their opinion and behave the way they want. The interviewee qualified these comments

saying that Azeri children should behave well in front of their parents by showing respect and hospitality should be shown towards guests.

One interviewee saw the LS advertised on TV, applied to the program and was accepted. The interviewee stated that the LS gives youth freedom and the opportunity to develop their own opinions. This person expressed fondness for LS staff. One can speak with the president as a friend, something that was nearly impossible with professors and administration at a local university. Nonetheless, the interviewee keeps a respectful distance with LS teachers and leaders out of politeness and formality. Speaking of the past, in Soviet times it was impossible to have one's own opinion or to become rich. Everyone had to be normal, equal, and standard.

Contrasting the experience at a local university with the LS, the interviewee saw a difference between the two environments. Students can say what they want at the LS. At the university students generally can not speak with professors as a friend and are afraid of them. The interviewee attributed the mentality of professors as a product of the Soviet Union that students must fit standard behavior.

At the LS, there is freedom, respect, and a different way of education. There the interviewee became an active person, found positive and negative aspects to her character, developed her own opinions, saying that "I can be a free person for my society." Interestingly, at the end of the interview, the interviewee told of plans to leave Azerbaijan permanently.

Survey of Public NGO Awareness

LS Journalism teachers and students publish a monthly bulletin *QHT Bu Gun* (NGO Today) funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Azerbaijan and the NED. *QHT Bu Gun* reports on NGO activity in western Azerbaijan including stories about new laws, human rights,

NGO laws and registration, women's issues, problems in schools, problems with utilities, information on grant competitions, training, scholarships and job vacancies, as well as important information for newly created NGOs, people and students involved in the LS. LS journalists also go to the areas around Ganje (Shemkir, Samux, and Xanlar) to gather information for the bulletin. Personal visits to the regions were necessary in part because of slow or non-existent Internet connections. In turn, some regional NGO members have begun to visit the LS to spread information about their activities as well. Articles in recent issues reported on activities of the Shams Women's Center, Bridge to the Future, Ganje Child Foundation, SOS child Project, Ocaq Humanitarian Union, Tomris Mother's Society, Azerbaijan Lawyers Association, and Ganje Agribusiness Association. The April, May, and June 2006 issues included reports on Ombudsman Elmira Suleymanova's visit to Ganje and her meeting with law enforcement organizations, the "bird flu" virus H5N1, parliamentary election reruns on May 13, 2006, strategic planning training for NGO representatives, water problems in Ganje, IWPR training for journalists, and inactive NGOs. Copies of *QHT Bu Gun* have been distributed to embassies, LNGOs, and INGOs.

The April 2006 issue of *QHT Bu Gun* reported on the results of a public survey on NGO awareness administered to 150 people in the Ganje area in an article called *I Don't Know What It Is and I Don't Want To Know*.

General comments from the public about NGOs were:

"Are those the people who harm us?"

"Why don't we know how much work they do"

"These organizations don't do anything but waste money"

As to the question “What is an NGO?”

- 23 percent said they didn’t know what an NGO is.
- 16 percent said NGOs work against government.
- 19 percent thought that NGOs wasted money; they are “grant eaters”; some NGOs are only after grants and not interested in society; some even think that except for one or two organizations, all NGOs are grant eaters.
- 42 percent said NGOs active in civil society development.

In the article, the director of the Ganje Regional Children’s Fund said that NGOs fill the empty spaces the government can not fill. Despite the war situation, financial gaps in a developing economy, and difficult economic conditions, NGOs work quite well. NGOs are not working against government but helping government. There are some NGOs that work for the rights and freedom of citizens. He disagrees that NGOs are wasting money; a project has a concrete budget which can not be deviated from. NGOs work to build civil society and democratization.

A representative of the NGO Bridge to the Future had the following comments about the survey. If NGOs collaborated with media, people would know more about NGOs. NGOs also should cooperate with the public and find out their needs. If NGOs would do this, people would know NGOs are not working against government and are organizations that help people. The quantity of NGOs has increased. They are active in every city, but a majority of them are not doing what they are supposed to do. The public doesn’t know what they are doing.

An ANS-TV journalist noted that:

- the 18 percent who believe NGOs are corrupt is 3 times as many as in last year’s survey.

- As for the 23 percent who don't know what an NGOs are about, this is the fault of NGOs not collaborating with media and not representing their activity to the population.

An Azadliq Radio Representative concurred that NGOs should do more public relations. He agreed that a majority of NGOs are corrupt and that many NGOs are not interested in the final outcome of projects. That respondents claim NGOs oppose government probably represents people who are in government. In his opinion, government is not that interested in NGO activity. Lack of freedom of speech is a basic problem for people in general and NGOs. Some people think: "We will not tell the secrets of our house to others." A majority of people not knowing what NGOs are about is not only because of the lack of PR, but also some NGOs not wanting to represent their activities to the public. The public cannot be blamed for not knowing about NGOs, who are at fault for the public not knowing about NGOs. NGOs should have tools for informing the public. More registered NGOs would lead to better PR, for which a better registration process is needed. Other recommendations included the creation of a local fund local donors could invest in for NGO activity and that other terms should be used for organizations besides NGO because of its negative connotation as being anti-government.

Civil Society Development in Ganje, Azerbaijan

The Leaders' School

The LS mission statement addresses the importance of civil society development through the improvement of the state of the third sector, civil society, civic initiatives, the active participation of citizens in the processes of building civil society, development of the free market economy, democratic principles, and the creation of a stable atmosphere for the third sector in the western regions of Azerbaijan. Like many other post-Soviet countries, Azerbaijan is in the

transition from a totalitarian regime to democracy. Reforms in the country have touched upon all social areas: political, social, economic and cultural. The country also faces a number of problems similar to other post-Soviet countries. With the closing of many industries in Ganje, unemployment is threatening the transition from a socialistic system to a market economy. It is important for youth to have training for a useful profession, skills, abilities, and leadership leading to active participation in society. For these purposes, youth studying at the LS take courses in Marketing, Management, Law, Journalism, English and Computers.

The mission statement goes on to say that education plays a significant role in the transition to a democratic society, and in particular in secondary education, because schools form the consciousness of future citizens, the models of behavior, and instill certain values. The goal of democratic education is the creation of conditions for the formation of independent, free citizens, who possess profound knowledge. Vestiges of the old Soviet education system are still present in public education, for example old teaching methods, outdated lessons, and some textbooks inaccurately translated into Azeri. Not only may graduates of the public school system not be prepared well for the future, but also indigent youth with no access to education end up in the street leading to the increase of societal ills such as crime and drug abuse.

One interviewee commented on how being a student at the LS enabled her to be a part of society by encouraging her to be more sociable by simply giving her the opportunity to socialize, a common activity for LS students and staff in my own observation. Before coming to the LS, she was not so interested in talking to people or playing an active role in school. The LS helped her learn new things by searching, which increased her interest in the world around her. Courses in law and journalism helped her better understand current events. She learned marketable job skills such as how to design advertising.

Focus group interviews held at the LS included LS students, staff, and other members of the community. When posed the question “What is an NGO?” members of the focus group replied that NGOs are seen as organizations that build civil society to fill the emptiness in society through taking the initiative to solve society’s problems, provide young people with opportunities for scholarships and exchange programs, help refugees, and engage in community development and advocacy. One interviewee elaborated on the role of youth in civil society development. It is through NGO involvement that youth participation in governance is increased.

AzETA

Interestingly in interviews with AzETA members in Ganje, civil society was rarely if ever discussed. The national president, however, expressed that the following things were encouraged at AzETA. People feel free at AzETA because the organization isn’t related to the government. Freedom of speech is valued. There is no threat of punishment or losing job one’s job. A shared sense of responsibility comes about through the delegation of authority, committees, and special interest groups, one of which is devoted to civic education. At the national level, officers and the executive board are elected. In contrast to AzETA's official stance on leadership and authority in the organization, the Ganje branch exhibits a more traditional management structure. The founder’s sister has been head of the organization for two years and appoints branch leadership. No relationship exists with local government or the Department of Education even though several meetings were held in the past. In the branch head’s observation, local government puts walls between itself and others. It does not want people or organizations to approach them, which was attributed to the influence of the Soviet Union. It is a stance that cannot be gotten rid of (personal communication, May 1, 2006).

Bilik

The Bilik Society chairman defines civil society as the elimination of obstacles to the active participation of citizens in the decision-making process in matters of importance to the country through the establishment of relations between citizens and local government. In view of the fact that people have accepted the transition to a market economy and civil society, a main aim of Bilik is to bring about the broadest possible participation of stakeholders in the formation of civil society. Societal problems should not be the sole responsibility of executive government powers. NGOs, communities, municipalities, local government should play roles as well. Bilik sees civil society not as a geographic space, but a social one (personal communication, April 10, 2006).

Another Bilik member's involvement with civil society initiatives has included work democratic elections, civil law, local governance, municipalities, multiparty system, democratic participation in elections, freedom of speech. In addition, this member has worked in the areas of conflictology, refugee rehabilitation, citizens understanding their rights, education reform, and conferences about gender and unemployment. The importance of civil society organizations is that people have access to power through governance systems. However, in most institutions expression is limited within the framework of governance systems, which sometimes view civil society development as a threat to the status quo. The Bilik member gave a local university rector as an example of this kind of limitation. One could not come into conflict with the

rector's opinion. "You must do his work, not your own work" (personal communication, June 5, 2006).

GEIC

The Ganje Education Information Center (GEIC) looks at civil society development through creating an open society, explained on the GEIC website.

The concept of open society is based on the recognition that people act on imperfect knowledge and nobody is in possession of the ultimate truth. Open Societies are characterized by a reliance on the rule of law, the existence of a democratically elected government, a diverse and vigorous civil society, respect for minority opinions, and [a] free market economy. A closed society expends most of its energies in preserving the existing order, whereas an open society takes law and the respect for others as its starting point and creates progress and prosperity from that base. (GEIC website, 2006).

The GEIC seeks to minimize traditional society and Soviet influences by putting no restrictions on participation, fostering inclusivity, and allowing individuals to choose whether to participate in activities. In contrast, in some other organizations members feel pressured to follow the will of the director. Behavior is restricted. There is a lack of places to express oneself in society and find those of like mind. Some members of other organizations lack an understanding of organization's mission and a spirit of volunteerism.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of the data collected from AYLA was undertaken by use of the Four Frames model and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Data using the Four Frames were also collected about the AzETA and GEIC. This section concludes with data from focus group sessions and interviews describe reactions to the *USAID NGO Sustainability Index 2004-Azerbaijan*.

AYLA

The Four Frames

Structural

AYLA is a family-run organization with two sisters at the apex of the organization. One bears the title of AYLA president, while the other is the director of the LS and the Women's Rehabilitation Center (WRC). A main responsibility of the two leaders is to get grants, a task occupying much of their time. The LS depends almost exclusively on grants from foreign organizations, namely the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Communication with donor organizations in English is mostly handled by the LS Administrator, who is also responsible for the day to day running of the school, enrollment, scheduling, faculty and student affairs, and the overall organization of LS activities.

All of the LS students interviewed expressed having good relations with the administration and were almost entirely satisfied with LS programs. A regret often expressed was that the five-month course of study was too short. One interviewee stated that at the LS there was freedom of speech, good relations between students and teachers, students were held to a high standard, and there was no corruption. Another interviewee felt the faculty and staff deserved more salary and the school needed more public relations. The Administrator stated on many occasions that there are far more many applicants, perhaps three times as many as there are places in the program. Potential applicants and their parents still contact the school regularly seeking to enroll. Regarding the LS mission, one interviewee stated that the mission is a very good one and unlike some other organizations, the LS "works" and is fulfilling its mission.

Most interviewees expressed respect for their organizational leaders. The AYLA president stated in a focus group interview that she listened to the opinions of those in her

organization before making decisions. At times, she delegates decisions to the LS coordinator and other staff members. Other times, she does make authoritative decisions herself. She stated that she varied her leadership styles according to the situation, being laissez-faire, democratic, or autocratic. In her opinion, a good leader can use all styles, choosing the appropriate one according to the situation.

Human Resource

Several interviews revealed that the LS has had success with volunteer policies. One interviewee commented that in some Ganje NGOs volunteers typically work with an organization one or two weeks and then leave. The LS seems to be able to retain volunteers by 1) creating good conditions for people for their work 2) not hurting them, not letting people leave 3) letting employees and volunteers feel like they are useful to the LS 4) finding out what experience volunteers have in community work, background, and interpersonal skills. Work experience is not the only important thing. Long-term staff transfer knowledge and skills to people coming into the organization. Some students have been known to become volunteers, and eventually part of the paid staff. The LS is well respected as an NGO in Ganje for other NGOs recruit LS volunteers and members.

One LS interviewee spoke in general terms about human resource issues in Azerbaijan, stating that there is a lack of basic human resource policies, a problem exacerbated by a lack of career opportunities, nepotism, and corruption. Some employees do not know their basic rights, while management in some cases does not know how to motivate employees. The interviewee referred to incidences in which the head of an organization feels he or she has the right to do anything. The interviewee stressed the importance of improved human resource policies as a means of organizing to increase productivity, especially as production demands become more

complex. In a good organization, employees reach for organizational goals rather than personal ones, and are involved in the solution process.

Political

AYLA members are politically active. The AYLA president was a candidate for parliament in fall 2005 as were other NGO leaders. In terms of advocacy, the legal department promotes Human Rights protection by assisting individuals in appealing to the European Court and other organizations for protection of rights. Members have sought to challenge resistance to NGO activity from officials in Ganje and in the regions. LS journalists have written articles in *QHT Bu Gun* to challenge government to take responsibility for community problems, especially in gender issues, which several interviewees stated were often neglected by government.

When asked about conflict within the LS, most interviewees stated that there was very little of it, with one person noting that “the ones who make conflict are the ones who have no work to do.” Strategies for conflict management include the sharing of limited resources and negotiation to solve conflicts between students. In one incident, a boy in the neighborhood threw a rock that broke a school window. LS leaders talked to other children in the neighborhood to find out who did it, and then talked to the boy's parents. In the end the boy came to fix the window and apologized. The neighborhood children were then asked not to play near the window.

In general, competition, secrecy, and tacit agreements between organizations and members within organizations were detectable on numerous occasions. Donor dependent NGOs compete for grants, students for scholarships, as well as users of equipment and resources such as Internet access. Applicants for all-expense paid training held in other countries may conceal public information about the training from others. In interviews, training participants claimed that some NGOs only invite those whom they want to training sessions.

Symbolic

In terms of meaning, metaphor, and inspiration, LS interviewees said that for an organization to be famous and powerful, it should give the public many meals, like a cafeteria. The LS involves teachers, journalists, lawyers, and other professionals. The LS has a good image and is not a “grant eater.” As one LS staff member put it, “the LS Mission is like pouring water into a deep hole. Pouring a cup of water will not fill it, but we are trying.” The LS is a venue for youth expression in a town where there are no such other venues for youth such as clubs and cinemas. The student paper *Drongo* is a means of freedom of expression. The LS represents active citizens working for the development of Ganje.

SWOT Analysis

In individual interviews and a focus group discussion, LS members were asked to think about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to their organization from their own points of view and the point of view of others outside the organization. Overall, the research participants had a lot to say about their own perceptions of the Leaders’ School, but were less aware of the perceptions of others outside the organization, the implication being that the Ganje LNGOs could use more empirical data on how people in the community perceive their own organizations. The yearly survey of public awareness of NGOs in *QHT Bu Gun* is a start.

What LS Thinks

Strengths

That the LS is a unique, in demand program for the western regions is borne out by the fact that courses are offered that students could not get elsewhere free of charge. In spring 2005, there were 150 applicants for 30 positions. Some students cannot apply for higher education programs because of the “fees” involved. For other services such as psychological and legal

counseling offered by other AYLA departments, most people would not have any other recourse. Program participants know their legal rights and how to protect them, can judge the quality of a product before buying, have gained computer and English skills, and have had the chance to work for other organizations.

Weaknesses

The major weakness is that the LS is dependent on an NED grant. With the falling dollar and grant reductions every year, the outlook for financial sustainability is not good. September 2005 to March 2006 there were no LS programs because of a funding gap. Local funding sources such as tuition were sought in the past to no avail.

Many participants in LS and AYLA programs commented that a major weakness for the LS is that it does not own its own building, which means that the LS has to move periodically if the lease is not renewed. Rent has to be paid from grant funds, which takes away from funding for other projects. LS capacity is further limited by renting because space limitations mean that a lot of different activities happen in a small area.

LS students say that 5 months is too short a period for study. Two to three years would be appropriate. There needs to be more opportunities for practice in Management and Marketing through connections with local businesses. Students have no ready Internet access at LS.

Opportunities

LS leadership is actively seeking other donors, a process which strengthens the staffs' skills in networking, proposal writing, and establishing international partnerships. With expanded capacity, LS could extend its program into the regions where there are lots of potential applicants. One faculty member is now associated with Proctor and Gamble and hopes to involve students in internships. Members have participated in exchange programs in Turkey and Poland.

Many more are eager to participate in exchanges, a promising possibility as Azerbaijan begins to integrate into Europe through the Bologna Process and the Council of Europe.

Threats

An end to the NED grant could mean an end to the program. Other financial threats include 1) strict laws on grants which impose a 17 percent tax on salaries 2) the rising cost of rent, utilities, and consumer prices 3) an uncertain lease agreement. If the LS should end, poor people will not have the chance to be integrated into society.

What Others Outside LS Think

Strengths

Positive perceptions in the community are that the LS provides opportunities for youth to become leaders. The LS tries to improve things among youth. There is a broad base of volunteers and supporters (nearly 100). The large number of applicants shows the LS is well thought of and well known in Ganje and the regions.

Weaknesses

The public seems to know that there is a lack of resources at the LS, mainly in space and old computers. One faculty member commented that a majority of students in the Ganje area are concerned mostly with getting a certificate from studying, an important thing for employment. Because the LS is not recognized by local government, the LS certificate is not as highly regarded as one from a state institution. For the LS to get official recognition would take a lot of bureaucracy. This faculty member also commented there has been little program development over the years at the LS. It has been essentially the same program with the same grant.

Opportunities

One respondent at least seemed to think that youth could make a revolution within the LS. At the minimum, students can realize their dreams here. Other organizations and NGOs benefit from the skills and training that LS students get as they often take positions there.

Threats

The only comment made was that they say “oh, you are OK.” It is hard to understand that this is a direct threat. If anything, it could be taken to mean that others take the LS for granted.

AzETA, GEIC

Four Frames

AzETA

Structural

The head branch of AzETA in Baku does have a developed organizational structure with clear roles, leadership rotation, delegation, and committees. Because of its smaller size, the Ganje branch has a simpler structure with a branch manager, assistant, and editor-in-chief of the newsletter. The Ganje branch leader makes most of the major decisions in consultation with branch members. At the suggestion of the Baku branch, special interest groups for Young Learners of English and Materials Development have been formed.

Human Resource

AzETA is able to pursue its mission for the improvement of English Language Teaching largely through volunteers who consist mainly of Azeri alumni who studied abroad in the U.S., Peace Corps volunteers, and English Language Fellows. Active AzETA members are rewarded with invitations to study tours and conferences in Baku and Georgia. One AzETA member

commented on her experience as acting branch manager. She began to believe in herself and discovered she could do something by participating in management.

AzETA continually confronts the issue of limited participation of some of its members because of heavy teaching and tutoring loads, family responsibilities, marriage, and attrition of members leaving Ganje for Baku or other countries. A Peace Corps volunteer working with another AzETA regional branch observed the absence of a stable core group of people willing to do the work. One AzETA member admitted not being able to give back to AzETA as much as she would like, yet she applies knowledge and skills gained at trainings in her teaching. The national AzETA president counters these challenges by periodic visits to Ganje and other regional branches where she emphasizes branch action plans, member benefits such as access to trainings, materials, and resources, involvement in special interest groups, and writing for branch newsletters. When branch managers can be paid, they will be recruited and trained properly.

Political

The political frame has been the most elusive in this research for the simple matter that interviewees of the four Ganje LNGOs rarely if ever mentioned conflict within organizations. In speaking of relations in organizations, the metaphor of family came up repeatedly with comments such as “we are like a family, [and] we treat each other well.” The AzETA national president once said that she considers herself a child of the organization. An outside observer stated in her opinion that the absence of overt conflict could mean that one person is making the major decisions. In general, conflict is avoided because it would eventually lead to a confrontation with the head of the organization. The AzETA national president does not encourage political discussions in her organization and thinks if NGO leaders want to run for office then they should disassociate themselves from the NGO.

Symbolic

The national AzETA president commented that AzETA is symbolic of cooperation with locals and outsiders. AzETA is a face of Azerbaijan, a place that doesn't give a false idea, has no age discrimination, and an organization where members become friends and their families become friends. Husbands support members by taking them to the regions for meetings, while children of members help with computer skills.

The Ganje branch president related the difficulty of finding a space free of charge where members could meet autonomously. According to the branch president, host institutions will say "You have to dance under my song. You have to play my music," meaning that institutions will likely ask for money for a room and exercise a degree of control. As a result, the branch has rented its own space for some time. The Ganje branch president did leave Ganje for a time to study and work in Baku. But because of the expense of living there and a low salary, she returned to Ganje where it is a better situation for her, particularly because of her involvement in AzETA. "AzETA is everything for me, like my kid. AzETA gave me almost everything: knowledge, new people, and books." Speaking of responsibilities as a branch manager, she said she sometimes feels like a slave to AzETA. She has to be there a lot and has no time for other things.

Another AzETA member in Ganje is a recent university graduate and has recently settled in Baku. When asked what AzETA symbolizes, she replied that this was an interesting and difficult question. Underneath the AzETA title, she thought there could be a motto underneath: "It changed my life." Involvement in AzETA gave her the opportunity to gain knowledge and extend her outlook. "I learned what I dreamed about. I got some real friends there. It gave me a specific chance to show myself."

Yet another member expressed the sentiments of what has been observed in several members who no longer attend AzETA meetings regularly for such reasons as heavy teaching loads, marriage, or out migration. This member doesn't go regularly to AzETA now because she says she has no time. Her experience with AzETA is like getting a present but not giving one back. "AzETA is like my home, but I can't go to my home. I have no time. But going to AzETA did help me."

Four Frames

GEIC

Structural

Interviewees described effective elements of the GEIC's organizational structure. The director isn't always present, yet work continues. In fact, the director spent January-July 2006 in the U.S. on a Fulbright serving on an accreditation team. An acting director was appointed and the activities of the GEIC have continued without interruption. Interviews with service recipients described evidence of role definition in that staff know their responsibilities, have a sense of ownership of their work, and desire to be at work even though the director is not there. As one staff member put it "things are not left to destiny."

Service recipients and staff seemed to be well aware of GEIC rules. One interviewee said the staff is willing to help visitors gain academic and cultural information. Others commented that the GEIC library rules are clear. It is not a place for talking. People can not hang around if they have nothing to do. Library users observe that staff keeps private affairs to a minimum at work. Internet users must register and get a password. Their time is limited to one hour so that others will have access.

One GEIC staff member in an interview stated that these OSI principles are followed at GEIC 1) provide a public service 2) no pressure on service recipients 3) independence of service

recipients 3) mutual understanding between the GEIC and service recipients 4) everyone's ideas and opinions respected 4) programs are responsive to participants interests.

A GEIC staff member commented that for many NGO leaders making a living is the main purpose for their organizations and warned of the danger of an NGO without a transparent financial structure. Some NGOs without funding might make deals with government in order to survive. If NGO leaders were truly motivated, such deals wouldn't be made. Speaking of the role of some donor organizations in corruption, the interviewee felt some donors don't control money well or don't want to control it.

One interviewee had this to say about the GEIC:

One of the goals of the GEIC was to provide a bridge for the students who are willing to participate in exchange programs and represent their countries in the U.S. and in Europe. Without getting involved in GEIC, I would never be able to take part and win the exchange program that I am currently participating. (personal communication, April 26, 2006)

Human Resource

The GEIC has four paid staff and a volunteer staff varying in size. Certain standards are expected of volunteers, namely that they must have experience and a commitment to education. GEIC volunteer rewards include distance education programs, preferred access to the Internet and resources, recommendation letters, references, and birthday gifts. GEIC staff have participated in exchange programs and trainings such as Contemporary Issues, Fulbright, Muskie, OSI sponsored conferences in the Caucasus and Eurasia, and U.S. Based Training. An unfortunate side effect of returnees from such programs is that people often do not return to Ganje to live and work. A GEIC staff member commented that in early 2006 only six U.S.-educated alumni remained in Ganje, the rest having gone to Baku or out of the country.

Political

Not all interviewees were sure that political involvement of NGOs was such a good idea. One interviewee, questioning the legitimacy of some candidates, thought that some NGO leaders ran for parliament because other NGO leaders were doing it. In one case, one NGO member turned up to a campaign rally only to be put on stage to support the NGO leader's campaign without prior consent. One interviewee active in several NGOs thought political involvement was a source public image problems for NGOs. This person seemed to think that in some cases foreign donors use NGOs in order to achieve their political goals, citing the role of NGOs in Georgia's Rose Revolution as an example. Another interviewee stated that an NGO should only be involved in politics if it is an explicit part of their mission.

NGO Registration

NGO registration with the government is a great source of conflict and inconvenience. Squire (2003) reports that in recent years, NGOs have faced more difficult and centralized bureaucratic procedures in registration. Only with registration can NGOs work legally, pay taxes, and receive grants from foreign organizations. These problems, plus a general lack of resources, keep NGOs small and encourage them to compete for grants, rather than work together for mutual advantage. Russell et al. (2005) quote the head of the registration department who commented on the disparity between commercial and LNGO registration rates: "We pay attention to what we consider important." Eurasianet (2006) reports that the civil society sector continued to encounter tax, registration and funding difficulties. Azerbaijan's civil society rating by Freedom House rating fell from 4.75 to 5.00.

Rust et al. (2003) cite a January 2002 overview of Azerbaijan's registration procedures, prepared by the International Center for Nonprofit Law (ICNL) which refers to the Law on State Registration and authorizes the [MOJ] to carry out such registration though it does not address

NGOs specifically. Differing significantly from registration procedures for other legal entities, NGO registration is regulated by MOJ documents unavailable to the public. The ICNL report also states that Azerbaijan is the only country in the FSU which bars the public from accessing regulations on NGO registration procedures.

Symbolic

Interviewees saw the four Ganje LNGOs symbolically in many ways. What stood out was that these organizations provide meaningful educational opportunities that the formal education sector does not provide. For example, the LS journalism program is the only one of its kind in Ganje. The GEIC brought the Internet to Ganje in 1999 and is one of the few providers of free Internet access. AzETA is a place where young English teachers can meet native English speakers and practice teaching. Ganje LNGOs are symbolic of venues for youth expression in a town with no movie theatres or youth clubs, and where good girls are at home by sundown. Good NGOs are like a cafeteria that gives the public many meals, as one interviewee put it.

A GEIC staff member believes NGOs do the work that the government is unable to do like a chain that links the bottom side of society, the people, with the top side, government. Other NGOs that “did not work” and existed effectively only on paper were seen as “grant-eaters.” In the opinion of one interviewee, the organizational structure in some NGOs was like an iceberg: there was only part of it that one could see.

Most everyone in Ganje referred to the GEIC organization as “Soros” after the founder and benefactor of the OSI, George Soros, the eponymous symbolism of which is worth examining. The attitude of the administration and faculty of one university toward George Soros is not a positive one. They thought the term NGO implied being against government because it was non-government. Some university administration and faculty actively discourage students from participating in GEIC activities. The university often refuses to grant permission to send

students and faculty on exchange programs abroad or even to training programs in Azerbaijan not connected with the university. Those students who do manage to study abroad are often denied credit upon return to their home universities. The GEIC has often advocated on the behalf of faculty and students who want to go on exchange programs, but are denied permission.

GEIC staff and participants in interviews spoke about the associations people have with George Soros and the GEIC. One staff member reported that Soros has been portrayed in the negatively in the Russian media as a revolutionary. The staff member cared to speculate about Soros's alleged involvement during the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia. The then ruling president Shevardnadze might have secretly supported the revolution though it would force him from office, for he saw that his own end was inevitable. At the time, Shevardnadze stated the reason for his resignation was to avoid a bloody power struggle. Others speculate that another factor was the unwillingness of the Georgian military to support Shevardnadze. Yet Shevardnadze publicly blamed Soros for financing the revolution. In Azerbaijan, TV broadcasts in the past claimed that Soros is a threat to the government. GEIC tries to counter negative perceptions by explaining to the public that their efforts are aimed at civil society development and education.

A participant in GEIC programs said in an interview that there are negative impressions in the community of GEIC, but mainly from those who have not attended programs there. Most service recipients view the organization positively. Negative impressions have to do with peoples' characters, the interviewee said, who added that he does not know these people directly, but senses their negativity toward GEIC.

USAID Sustainability Index

USAID NGO Sustainability Index 2004-Azerbaijan

Statements from Ehmann, C. et al., (Eds.). (2005) *The USAID 2004 Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia* were selected and presented to a focus group at the LS consisting of LS students, staff, faculty, members of AzETA, and university students. On separate occasions other NGO workers were posed the same questions in individual interviews.

1. NGOs in general are still not very successful advocates, and lack the capacity to effectively engage in advocacy initiatives on a wide scale. Their underdeveloped support structures, intersectoral competition, weak relationships with constituents, and lack of positive public image limit the NGO sector's influence over public policy.

A LS staff member was in absolute agreement with this statement, expressing the belief that the NGO sector in Ganje was not a powerful one. Interestingly many respondents to this question tied these problems to the poor relationship the many LNGOs have with local government in Ganje. AzETA members stated their organization had no relationship with the Ganje city government. Other focus group members suggested the possibilities for cooperation with local government, namely that NGOs could train local government employees. Local government could give infrastructure support and registration to NGOs. One GEIC staff member commented in an interview that NGOs play a great role in society in spheres where government pays the least attention such as gender issues. Another active NGO member stated that most government officials consider NGOs to be political organizations and that is why NGO activity is restricted. NGOs with ties to political groups were definitely viewed as political by government. In rural areas, there are more problems with local government understanding NGO activity. In some cases, poor NGO and government relations were due to jealousy on the part of the latter.

Other comments included that great dependence on international funding with no financial contribution from members or local business to NGOs remained as a barrier to NGO development. Potential local funding for the LS could come from micro credit agencies (Finca, Viator) and tuition from students. One simple but telling observation was that most NGOs don't have an organizational structure, which the interviewee related to poor public relations. Finally, another comment was that small groups tend to form and work on short-term projects, which minimizes stakeholder participation and project impact.

2. Most NGO representatives consider the laws regarding NGO registration as written to be satisfactory, despite inconsistencies and ambiguities. Their primary complaint with the legal framework is that interpretation and application vary according to the government officials and NGOs involved.

One interviewee was quite frank about the problems of NGO registration.

Government officials carefully analyze the mission of the NGOs before registering them. Business organizations don't have a problem with registration but it is very difficult to register an NGO. Government understands that donors don't trust the unregistered NGOs and a registered NGO is very powerful and trustworthy. Because of the same reasons that I mentioned above, government does not want to register the NGOs and give them power.

(personal communication, April 28, 2006)

A second interviewee stated in reference to the Ministry of Justice restricting registration for new NGOs that the process needs to be simplified in order that there be more competition for grants. A third interviewee cited cases in which in the registration required an NGO to change its name and mission, especially if it was involved in human rights or civil society development. Government has taken other petty measures to delay registration, for example, denying the GEIC registration in 2004 because the director did not provide the date of issue of his passport.

3. The NGO sector remains largely donor driven, and constituency building is often limited to short-term projects. Few NGOs have yet to understand the importance and

benefit of building long-term relationships with their constituencies.

One interviewee was blunt about the negative effects of short-term projects stating that the reason why NGOs mostly do short term projects is because they want to get the money and finish the project as soon as possible without worrying about the quality and the sustainability of the project. A member of the LS faculty added, however, that some NGOs do seek long-term donor support. Another interviewee felt that short-term projects are due to low salaries and limited NGO capacity. With enough resources, long-term projects are desired. A GEIC staff member added that NGOs are subservient to donor initiatives. Because government doesn't allow NGOs to participate in governance issues, many NGOs have relations with donors but not local government. NGOs therefore tend to run short-term projects.

4. Most NGOs are built around the leadership and control of a single charismatic leader, and managed in an authoritarian manner with little organizational structure.

One interviewee has observed the rotation and election of NGO leaders is problematic in some NGOs. The leader considers the NGO his property, while other people in the organization have no rights. One NGO leader said authoritarianism is a major obstacle to NGO network development. It was also sad and strange that international organizations tended to finance this kind of NGO. Another person put it simply: "Good leaders of NGOs listen and try to understand people."

A GEIC staff member had a great deal to say on this matter. In most NGOs, coordinators have "a very strong hand on the crew." Budget transparency is not guaranteed. Azeris like a strong leader because *he* forces them to work and complete their daily work. Otherwise there would be weak relations between workers and duties. In Soviet times there were lots of factories where people were forced to be responsible for their work. This was also true in education. Some

NGO members don't have a strong responsibility for their jobs. A strong coordinator is useful for ensuring responsibilities are met.

5. Few NGOs have undertaken significant strategic planning, a problem that NGO leaders often attribute to donor dependency, lack of managerial experience, and the centralized nature of their decision-making processes.

Very few interviewees had observed strategic planning in NGOs. A few didn't know what the term meant. If in fact an NGO had a strategic plan, in the opinion of one interviewee, the public should have access to it. Other barriers to strategic planning were cited by another interviewee. Dependence on grants prevents effectiveness of programs because NGOs often cease activity when a grant ends. Lack of technical support, low salaries, and lack of local support were other reasons given for the lack of strategic planning.

6. NGO volunteerism has increased among Azerbaijani youth, as noted in Ganje.

Most of those interviewed agreed with this statement. At the LS Focus Group, there was immediate and near unanimous agreement. One statement made by one interviewee was that volunteering was a way of realizing oneself, which might not be possible in a job in the state sector. A LS staff member qualified volunteerism by stating that volunteering was the first stage of a future job. Some volunteered not for the sake of volunteering or belief in the mission of an organization. However, a GEIC staff member stated that in 1999-2000, the boom period for NGOs, volunteerism was popular and continues to be an important part of NGO sustainability. It is not as popular now because volunteers want to earn money.

7. Many in the NGO community have been discussing ways to increase local support and diversify their funding. They have identified obstacles such as the lack of tax incentives for charitable giving, poor relations with local businesses, and negative public perceptions.

In the opinion of one interviewee, Azeri people are not accustomed to giving money to NGOs, also adding that it was impossible to get money from local business or government in

Ganje. Others tended to agree that finding local support was difficult. In Baku, however, AzETA was able to obtain corporate sponsorship for an orphanage summer camp in the summer of 2006.

8. NGO activities, programs and area of coverage are generally determined by donor priorities and not the needs of constituencies.

A LS staff member stated that the first question an NGO asks is what does the donor want to hear, while another interviewee concurred that NGOs have been known to change their missions to win grants. Another interviewee said that local people can better see problems of society. The first aim of donors is to develop civil society in Azerbaijan. Donors should consider personal projects within a certain framework that is sensitive to local contexts.

8. Most NGOs have stronger relations with print media than they do with broadcast media, which is more expensive and has little interest in NGO activities.

One LS staff member felt that newspapers were not determined to report on NGOs in depth, linking this with the absence of independent newspapers in Ganje. Others interviewees described a vicious cycle in which NGOs don't have relations with media, there is low funding or government control of media, while government is ill-informed about NGO activity, which reduces media coverage.

9. Relationships between NGOs and the government vary according to the organization and agency involved. The government has yet to consider the NGO community as a resource, either as service providers or sources of information and expertise.

One interviewee recommended that in order to work more effectively, NGOs need relations with local government. "There is a need to establish ties. Deep ties may not be possible. If the AzETA-Ganje branch wanted to establish ties with the Department of Education, it would not be a problem. It's easy to say for NGOs that they can not have relations with government.

They have not tried. Establishing ties shows that an NGO is working for society. A confrontational stance toward government is not productive. They [local government] have big power. Get officials to listen.”

In an interesting twist to this statement, one interviewee claims that government creates its own NGOs. In fact, many interviewees expressed their belief that this was true of the Bilik organization. When I asked one of their leaders about this, he replied that relations with local government were necessary. In his observation, in Azerbaijan if you don't like someone, you say they are close to government. NGOs who don't like each other make such comments. Similar things are said about GEIC.

Conclusions

Statement of Conclusions

The consensus from interviews and NGO sector reports is that the overall impact of NGOs in Azerbaijan is weak. NGOs continue to face obstacles such as government hostility, social apathy, donor dependency, counterproductive donor practices, and organizational issues. There are some promising points for the NGO sector in Ganje. The first is untapped LNKO potential. The LS could easily admit five times as many students and expand programs into the western regions if it only had the resources, which will most likely not come from a single donor organization. English teachers in the regions would like to found more AzETA branches, but at times are hindered by local education ministries, the lack of human resources, and the fact that no one in AzETA earns a salary. A Peace Corps volunteer observed that many teachers like the idea of having a branch, but are deterred when they see the amount of work that is involved on top of teaching loads, private tutoring, and family responsibilities.

According to one member of an INGO based in Ganje, by 2005 there were 1500 registered NGOs and out of these 400 active NGOs with an office and programs in Azerbaijan. Challenges NGOs face include lack of sustainable and stable funding sources, clear goals and mission, mechanisms of support, management, planning, skills, qualifications, cooperation with other NGOs and presentation skills. The INGO worker recommends the following for improved organizational functioning: a clear mission, focus, annual strategic planning, communicating the mission to donors, public relations, transparent and participatory management systems, staff orientation, training, capacity building, local partnerships, knowing the needs of the community, income generation, and private sector relations.

According to the USAID *The 2004 Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia* (2005), NGOs in Azerbaijan lack the capacity for advocacy on a large scale and hence have a weak impact on public policy and public opinion due to underdeveloped support structures, intersectoral competition, weak relationships with constituents, and lack of positive public image. The lack of legal recognition, full-time employees, written rules, and independent funding leave one wondering whether some NGOs are authentic organizations. Public perceptions of NGOs in Ganje established by the NGO survey in *QHT Bu Gun* (2006) also point to the need for NGOs to conduct better public relations, specifically defining their missions for the public.

Some efforts at public relations by LNGOs in Ganje were evident. AzETA, AYLA, and GEIC all have websites in English and Azeri, publish organizational literature, and educate the public about their work. What I often observed, however, was the tendency of a core group of three or four persons controlling the organization. Other interviewees described the same, noting that in some cases only certain people would be involved in significant events, decision-making,

and the inner workings of the organization. Though acting as a public organization, there were occasions when activities were directed toward the sole benefit of the core group. If only one person invites people to events, that person may invite only those he or she wants, said one interviewee.

Strengthening LNGOs means taking a broader view of civil society based on cooperation. Russell et al. (2005) call for an expanded definition of civil society to include other forms of citizen action in the form of mobilized communities, implying cooperation with these groups, LNGOs, and different levels of local government such as municipalities. The mix would include an expanded range of organizations: LNGOs, individuals, small groups, community-based organizations, and municipalities. A narrow sectoral focus on NGO development can create a sense of separation in which NGOs become a self-serving business bifurcated from the populations they ostensibly espouse to serve.

The idea of coalitions comes to mind, yet Russell et al. (2005) cautions that coalitions cannot be forced into existence, but must emerge organically. One head of an INGO stated that the coalitions he had been involved with failed every time. A civic education coalition he was a part of could not reach a shared concept of civic education, nor was there agreement as to what such a coalition should do. "It was just flapping its wings." A GEIC staff member recalled efforts to start an NGO council in Ganje saying that there was a lot of discontent over who got elected, speculating that the winners were designated by local government. The interviewee did not participate in the coalition because no one offered him the opportunity or information about it. The staff member recommends that a coalition should be locally organized. In this regard, the importance of building social capital, the degree of trust, cooperation, and interdependence among stakeholders can be seen, which will come about after legal and political restraints on

civic activism and dependency on authorities and donor organizations to solve local problems are reduced.

Russell et al. (2005) caution that programs attempting to change government could only entrench its interests, legitimacy, and power even more. One NGO head stated in the report: “It is illogical on the part of the donor community, knowing how corrupt the government is, to provide money [and other benefits] to them with no oversight, and wonder why NGOs are so weak.” This statement underscores the responsibility donors have for oversight and proper program assessment as well as building ties between government and NGOs.

Research, interviews, and my own observations show that, in general, in institutional environments in Azerbaijan, relationships take precedence over rule of law, mechanistic bureaucracy, and transparent organizational structure, decision-making, rules, goals, and policies. As alluded to earlier in the research, family and kinship ties play an influential role in a system of patron-client relations, a complex web of asymmetrical but mutually beneficial social networks influencing the exchange of resources (McGhee, 1997). In return for protection from powerful patrons, clients must show loyalty and observe subordination at all levels, especially to key figures. One long term INGO director stated that in Azerbaijan, some NGOs are similar to government in their organizational structure: centralized with one key figure who micromanages and is the driving force of the organization. That some organizations are like a family in Azerbaijan may be not be just a metaphor.

The structural frame, therefore, may be particularly relevant to LNGOs, government, and donor organizations in Ganje. The numerous studies and interviews conducted in this research point to what Perrow in Bolman & Deal (1997) calls particularism, the intrusion of personal and political forces unrelated to organizational goals. Rules, policies, and standard operating procedures bring about predictability and uniformity in terms of conditions of work, task

completion, and personnel issues. Vertical coordination in the form of an authority figure micromanaging employees through a strict hierarchy and subordination might be efficient in predictable situations where conformity is critical. A weakness of this kind of structure is when the organization becomes dependent on its leader. For example, instead of an organization's leader handling every aspect of the grant application procedure, getting a grant could be more of a shared task. This would mean, however that the leader would have to give up some control. Shared tasks would lead hopefully to a shared sense of ownership so that the leader doesn't think of the organization as his or her property or investment, as is sometimes the case according to one interviewee.

Bolman & Deal (1997) propose an alternative organizational structure with boards, committees, informal meetings, and networks that would provide lateral coordination for the completion of complex tasks in fast-changing environments. In this way, initiatives and strategy emerge from many places. The challenges LNGOs face are unique and there is no one set formula for an effective organizational structure. Whether vertical or lateral, or a blend of the two, an effective organization is one that achieves an alignment between its organizational structure and its goals.

Limitations

A major limitation of this research is that the data consists largely of interviews. The LNGOs have to my knowledge never been studied or given interviews in this manner about the organizations. Some of the interviewees might not have fully understood the purpose, procedures, and terms used in formal research. For example, after I had been doing some interviews, one person asked to participate, requesting a certificate that another interviewee had received, which was in fact a release form. Most interviews were conducted in English with the potential that communication was not always clear. In addition, with a few exceptions (notably

with the Bilik organization) the interviews were conducted in English without translation into the Azeri language, meaning that non-English speakers were largely excluded from the research

A further limitation is that a detailed analysis of all four LNGOs is beyond the scope of the research. Future research could consider issues of reliability so that such work could be more easily replicated. Since this research relied heavily on self-reporting interviews, future research with more of an empirical and quantitative focus could lead to greater validity and generalizability.

Practical Applicability of Research

There are numerous donor organizations active in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus seeking to improve social conditions and with good reason. Though a relatively obscure region, somewhat isolated internationally and internally, the Caucasus is of vast geopolitical significance to larger countries on its borders (Turkey, Russia, Iran), Western countries, Central Asia, and China all. Conflict in the Caucasus has and will affect a globalized, interconnected world. Oil riches, economic development, and macro economic stability have not led to better living standards for all, creating social divides and imbalances among a population that to a degree is vulnerable, socially isolated, and voiceless.

Managing effective humanitarian assistance programs in Azerbaijan requires careful consideration of local contexts. The size of Maine, Azerbaijan has 11 climate zones, distinct regions, ethnic groups, and a cultural milieu with quite different norms between regions. Many interviewees commented that a majority of INGO work, funding, and resources are centered in the capital, Baku. Successful programs in Baku may not be so successful in Ganje or in other regions. This capstone has attempted through qualitative research to let local concerns of the LNGO sector in Ganje be known. The validity of the research findings were based on attempts to gain an understanding of NGO organizational behavior in its social, cultural, political, and

economic contexts through the representation of the experiences and perceptions of local actors to bring about a better understanding of local values, expectations, social norms, and networks (Dudwick et al., (Eds.), 2003).

More specific to LNGO activity in Ganje, this research should be viewed largely as a broad descriptive statement. It is a record of what leaders, employees, service recipients, and other stakeholders of four NGOs in a regional city are saying about the nature of their activities. A common finding from the SWOT analysis is that NGO members do have a developed sense of their organizations and their roles in them, but less of a developed sense of how their activities are perceived by those outside the organizations. The *QHT Bu Gun* public survey on NGO awareness certainly reveals that the public does have questions about the legitimacy of NGO activity, which need to be addressed through better public outreach from NGOs educating the public about their mission. Gaining the trust, cooperation, and support of the public is crucial to the building of social capital.

Recommendations for Further Research

The central research question of this capstone is:

What are the distinct features of the organizational culture of educational LNGOs (AYLA, AzETA, Bilik, and GEIC) in Ganje, Azerbaijan?

Civil society development was a dominant theme that emerged from capstone interviews, organizational literature, and research on NGO activity in the NIS, leading this capstone to take a rather broad view by associating civil society development with organizational culture. Because of the descriptive nature of the research, this capstone should be taken as more of an aerial view of LNGO organizational life rather than a cropped photo. Further research could take a more narrow focus on the distinct features of organizational culture. While clear indications of the

LNGOs' organizational missions, service delivery, and relations with government and INGOs were represented, more data could be collected about 1) rules, roles, and relationships of LNGO members and 2) organizational identity and self-belief. Such data could shed more light on the actual internal workings of the LNGOs, hopefully pointing the way to greater effectiveness and a stronger organizational structure.

One sub-question related to this capstone is:

What has been the intended impact of Ganje area NGOs (AYLA, AzETA, Bilik, and GEIC) on both educational and institutional reform and civil society development in Azerbaijan?

Though intended impact was portrayed through the comments of service recipients, demonstration and verification of actual impact of LNGO programs was beyond the scope of this capstone, but remains a crucial question in terms of program effectiveness and development.

Ample information from a local context regarding LNGO activity was gathered in this research, leaving another sub-question only partially answered:

What parallels in organizational culture exist between Ganje area educational NGOs and those in other parts of Azerbaijan, in the Caucasus, and Newly Independent States (NIS)?

Normally qualitative research is not intended to be generalized to a wider population, yet it can serve as a descriptive basis for additional quantitative research contributing to the development of social process theory in related contexts in the NIS.

A major area touched upon but not elaborated in detail in this capstone is the issue of gender. In a traditional Muslim/Turkic society, female participants, staff, and leaders of several of the Ganje LNGOs play a vital role in their organizations. 82.5 percent of the interviewees in the study were women. And it is gender issues that are often ignored by government in the opinion of several participants in the research. That many of the women in these organizations balance traditional family roles with civic activism remains a story to be told.

A final recommendation regarding the Four Frames model is that in this research the frames were used largely for descriptive purposes. As a tool, the Four Frames also serve as a means of reframing. A problem that an organization faces can be viewed through each of the frames for new perspectives and solutions to organizational dilemmas. Use of the Four Frames could be a step toward building a learning organization.

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Appendix

A. SWOT Analysis- Understanding Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

by *James Manktelow* <http://www.mindtools.com/swot.html>

Why use the tool?

SWOT analysis is a framework for analyzing your strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats you face. This will help you to focus on your strengths, minimize weaknesses, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available.

Strengths: What advantages do you have? What do you do well? What relevant resources do you have access to? What do other people see as your strengths?

Weaknesses: What could you improve? What do you do badly? What should you avoid? Consider this from an internal and external basis: Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you do not see?

Opportunities: Where are the good opportunities facing you? What are the interesting trends you are aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as: changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale, changes in government policy related to your field, changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, etc., changes in local events

Threats: What obstacles do you face? What is your competition doing? Are the required specifications for your services changing? Is changing technology threatening your position? Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems? Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your organization?

	What you think	What others think
Strengths		
Weaknesses		
Opportunities		
Threats		

SWOT Data

I. LS Faculty Member November 11, 2005

Strengths-the school is unique in the region for youth programs. It offers important subjects that youth can not easily get elsewhere. There seems to be a great deal of mutual respect between teachers that they are experienced and knowledgeable. The view from the outside is that the school has a degree of notoriety evinced by the fact that the last school session had over 150 student applicants for 30 positions. Interested students and parents continue to contact the school seeking enrollment.

Weaknesses-the school would benefit by owning a building. It moved to a new site in the Summer of 2005, albeit two doors down the street. More interactive methods are needed in instruction, especially in English. Students need more practice speaking and listening, a need partially met by conversation classes organized by Senior Fellow Eddie McGee. The school is in need of more technology to aid instruction such as modern computers, overheads, and a language lab.

Opportunities-though the school is without a donor at the present time, it is actively seeking one, a process which is strengthening the staffs' skills in networking, proposal writing, and casting a wide net in establishing international partnerships. Six students will go to Poland in November 2005 for training in Social Entrepreneurship. With the addition of the Center for English Language Learning and International Education, the school will see the expansion of its English language programs and opportunities for academic and professional exchanges. Finally, school president is a candidate for Parliament in the November elections putting the school focus into the political frame and potentially opening up a role for the school in advocacy for education reform.

Threats-as mentioned previously, the most pressing need for the school is to find another donor organization for the continuation of programs. Otherwise the school is in good standing with the community.

(n.b.: no information was given about what others think)

II. LS Administrator 4.02.06

Strengths

Qualified staff
Good image, not a "grant eater"
Genuine efforts to assist youth
Helping youth with life skills

What others think

Good image
Broad base of volunteers and supporters (100)

Weaknesses

Lack of space and resources
Can only offer programs to 50 Ss
Don't own building
Financial sustainability
Fall 2005-March 2006 no grant
Surviving from grant to grant

What others think

5 month course length too short
old equipment, computers
lack of resources

Opportunities

Dev. LS into a private college
CELIE- Catherine Thompson continuing work of center
Send youth abroad to training and study
Demand from applicants (over 300)
Expand programs into regions
Possible branch in Samux: debates youth activities

What others think

Other org and NGOs benefit from LS Ss
Students involved with Proctor and Gamble

Threats

Continuation of LS depends on financial support from NED (support since 2003); amount of support decreases every year

Strict laws on grants
17% of LS salaries taxed
rents, utilities, prices getting higher
Complex reporting process to MOJ and Ganje Tax office and others
Grant contracts have to be translated into Azeri
Lease uncertain; more money demanded (\$400 to 500)

What others think

No other NGO competes with LS programs
Service delivery is free of charge

Focus Group SWOT 3.29.06**What you think****Strengths**

LS gives the opportunity for students to be independent, to acquire essential knowledge, to hold discussion clubs free of charge.

Experienced staff, trainers, team, good image
LS gives good information to children; opens the way to the future
Development project
Active members; we can help our society
LS has high level for students

Weaknesses

Lack of space in the building. Length of courses is short.
Financial sustainability
I can say about the LS not very bad news
Lack of money
Place for working; provide new technologies
This association is very small. More contact is important

Opportunities

Develop LS
Collaboration with INGO implementing pilot projects
People may have experience abroad in English speaking countries and talk about these programs
LS can send our students to the seminars in foreign countries; other cities should have a school like this

Threats

Relations with government and other officials

What others think

Strengths

Perfect youth organization with perfect youth programs
Opportunity for young people to be leaders
They know that we try to improve some things among youth

Weaknesses

Lack of computers and other equipment, resources

Opportunities

Youth can make revolution within this school. Students are able to realize their ideas here

Threats

They say “oh, you are OK.”

SWOT Data Compiled from Individual Interviews

Strengths

LS unique in the region for youth programs
It offers important subjects that youth can not easily get elsewhere
For an organization to be famous, powerful, give the public many meals, like a cafeteria
LS involves teachers, journalists, lawyers, etc
Experienced staff, trainers, team, good image

LS gives good information to children; opens the way to the future
Development project
Qualified staff
Good image, not a “grant eater”
Genuine efforts to assist youth
Helping youth with life skills
LS better than universities
Good opportunity for poor young leaders
Some can not apply to university because of corruption; big obstacle
LS has only journalism program in Ganje
Law, Journalism-can understand news, current events better
Good for our people, especially for those who can not afford education opportunities
LS school helped me to be sociable; before coming, I was not that interested in talking to people;
my other school was not so interesting
At LS I learned new things which increased my interests
I began to take more interest in events at LS
Compute, marketable job skills, learned to design advertising
Teaching, learning new things by searching
LS introduces people to new things
Opportunity to socialize
Parents have good impressions of LS
Young organization
Many projects, training
Experienced trainers
People visit the LS who have no money to learn computers, to see a lawyer or psychologist
Different from other NGOs
LS “works”
People who have little money can learn things here
People find jobs after graduating: one journalist now working for BBC
At WRC women who don’t know their legal rights get counseling for divorce
All classes are useful and can not be found elsewhere in Ganje
Interactive methods, role plays, meeting different people
Rivalry between different student groups
I know how to protect herself and her rights
When I buy something now, she can judge the quality of product
Computer skills important for journalism
Journalists have the chance to work with professional orgs

Weaknesses

More interactive methods are needed in instruction, especially in English
LS is without a donor (July2005-Jan2006)
Lack of space and resources
Can only offer programs to 50 Ss
Don’t own building
Financial sustainability
Fall 2005-March 2006 no grant

Surviving from grant to grant
Not many guest speakers
5 months limited time for training
More practice opportunities needed in management and marketing
No connection with businesses
Limited library
Technical problems
Increased capacity needed
More students
Miscommunication: someone called to come take test, but later not allowed to take test, told that no one had called
No Internet for Students at LS
Working alone
Donor situation; dependence on donors; fewer donors
LS doesn't own its own building
Limited resources
Too many applicants for too few places
Little practice in marketing and management
5 month period of study not long enough; 2-3 years would be appropriate

Opportunities

It is actively seeking a donor, a process which is strengthening the staffs' skills in networking, proposal writing, and casting a wide net in establishing international partnerships.

Six students will go to Poland in November 2005 for training in Social Entrepreneurship.

With the addition of the Center for English Language Learning and International Education, the school will see the expansion of its English language programs and opportunities for academic and professional exchanges.

Experienced staff, trainers, team, good image
LS gives good information to children; opens the way to the future
Collaboration with INGO implementing pilot projects
LS can send our students to the seminars in foreign countries; other cities should have a school like this
Develop LS into a private college
Send youth abroad to training and study
Demand from applicants (over 300)
Expand programs into regions
Possible branch in Samux: debates, youth activities

Threats

Funding gap
Continuation of LS depends on financial support from NED (support since 2003); amount of support decreases every year
Strict laws on grants
17% of LS salaries taxed

Rents, utilities, prices getting higher
Complex reporting process to Ministry of Justice and Ganje Tax office and other government offices
Grant documentation has to be translated into Azeri
Lease uncertain; more money demanded (\$400 to 500)
Dependency on grants
Failed at getting 50% tuition support
Some in Ganje do not value education
Project with NED may end
Lack of funding
Only school in Ganje that offers free courses; poor people will not have the chance to be integrated into society if school closes

What others think

Strengths

Perfect youth organization with perfect youth programs
Opportunity for young people to be leaders
They know that we try to improve some things among youth
Good image
Broad base of volunteers and supporters (100)
The large number of applicants more than 300 shows that the program is well known and well thought of in Ganje and regions
NGO Today Survey: some respondents knew what an NGO was because of LS
LS is well-liked among youth in Ganje

Weaknesses

Lack of computers and other equipment, resources
5 month course length too short
Old equipment, computers
Lack of resources
LS tried 50% funding through tuition but failed
Getting a certificate is more important than getting knowledge in some students' point of view; at least half of students think this way; certificate very important for employment; LS certificate not as highly regarded as state institutions; for the LS to get official recognition would take a lot of bureaucracy
If no future funding for LS, it will change program direction; little dev. of program; same program same grant
Those who can not get admitted complain
No cafeteria

Opportunities

Youth can make revolution within this school. Students are able to realize their ideas here.
Other organizations and NGOs benefit from LS students
Faculty member involves students with Proctor and Gamble
Students can express complaints and make suggestions

Threats

None

B. The Leaders' School Curriculum

The following information is from the Leaders' School literature describing its program. Editing was done in places for clarity.

Problem Statement

Azerbaijan like many other post-Soviet countries is in the transition from totalitarian regime to democracy. Reforms in the country have touched upon all social areas: political, social, economic and cultural. The goals of current reforms are the building of a legal, democratic state and the establishment of civil society. Azerbaijan also faces a number of problems, as many other post-soviet countries. A lot of industries have been closed down, unemployment is high, and it is very difficult for the people brought up in socialistic system to transition into market economy. At this moment it is important to have a useful profession, skills, abilities, and leadership to be active.

LS History

The Association of Young Leaders of Azerbaijan (AYLA) established the "Leaders' School" in October 2, 2003. The AYLA president and director of the school held a press conference and said that in this social school the youth between the ages of 15 - 21 will learn Basics of Marketing, Management, Journalism, and Law and also receive Computer and English courses. She also mentioned that there is great need of establishing such kind of school in Ganje because the skill of students expressing their thoughts freely is limited in existing educational

establishments. And this prevents them from growing up as citizens (Leaders' School History, 2006).

The following material about LS programs comes from Leaders' School Program Information (2005).

Purpose

AYLA offers the opening of the Leaders' School for senior pupils, youth, and members of NGOs to assist in the democratic development of Azerbaijan. It won't be solely visiting the courses. It will be the school with its complex of courses, newspaper, school council and events. Students and schools graduates will have a chance to meet, discuss the situation in the city and country, and have discussions on the issues of their interest. Students will be able to apply the knowledge received in the Leaders' School in their own schools (school and student self-governance) as well in the future life.

Project Goals

Opening of the Leaders' School with graduates, who will possess basic knowledge and skills, necessary for citizenship, participating in the process of their country's development.

Project Objectives

Conduct complex events for senior pupils and youth of 14-24 years old on the following topics:

1. Legal education
2. Management
3. Basics of marketing
4. Basics of journalism
5. Computer courses
6. English language
7. Publication of school newspaper, design of web-site, news board.

Courses

English Lessons: English courses give students the opportunity to improve mainly their speaking and listening skills. Beside these, they learn English grammar, writing, reading and speaking skills. They learn basic grammar, which will help them to communicate in English. They do a lot of exercises in order to remember grammar rules and the teacher gives grammar exercises as homework. They often concentrate their knowledge on grammar. The teacher explains the grammar from many sources, but mostly from *Essential Grammar in Use* by Raymond Murphy, *The Textbook of English Language* by N.A. Bonk. Besides this, students write many compositions on different topics. They take a home reading book from which students can learn many new words in order to enrich their vocabulary. In order to develop their speech, their teacher gives them dialogues to revise by heart. It helps them in speech. In order to improve their reading skills, some of the announcements in our advertisement board are in English. Beside this, the teacher conducts a conversation club on different themes once a week for all groups. They prefer to organize conversations on the history, education system, and culture of different countries.

Management: Students are very interested in this subject. They learn the main research areas of management. In order for students to decide and work within a group, the teacher organizes different intellectual games at the lessons using interactive methods. We organized a training course for our teachers' staff on Methodology of Education of Democracy in schools – Interactive Methods. So our teachers use the interactive methods in their activity. During this period at this lesson, they discuss business plans. The teacher gives the students several home tasks to write business plans at home with new ideas. In this lesson, they often organize debates for discussing the objectives of management. In order to use their leadership skills in

management, they organize interactive games. Once a week they consider all the knowledge from all themes and ask teachers questions.

Marketing: In this course, the students gain knowledge of formalizing prices, the strategies of defining and researching demand, the quality category of products, sales, active marketing methods, and so on. The teacher leads the lessons using interactive methods when they discuss selling. They discuss the psychology of customers and the behavior and strategies of sellers corresponding to this. In these practical lessons, some of the students play the role of sellers and the others buyers. In addition they also get knowledge world exchange markets, their features, and conditions for participation in them.

Journalism: The Journalism teacher always conducts lessons in a discussion format. The first 10 minutes of the lesson, the teacher lists several events and then plans interview strategies. In this lesson, students have the opportunity to put in practice all the theoretical knowledge and skills. During this period, they learn how to use a video camera, how to appear when videoed, and discuss the results with teachers.

Teachers go on excursions to the city with the students and they make video plots. After the excursion, they watch their activity on TV and discuss their mistakes with the teacher. Their program mostly consists of interviewing processes, for which the teacher has organized several practical lessons. Some students play the role of journalists and the others act as interviewers. The result of this is that the students gain experience in how to organize the interview process and to interview specialists working in different fields. In order to put in practice their knowledge and skills gained from this lesson, the students go on an excursion with teachers to different local TV channels of the west region of Azerbaijan. At the local Kapaz TV, they

observe and introduce how the journalists prepare and conduct the news and other programs. They go to a printing house and learn how the newspapers are published and which kind of printing machines are used. During this period the Journalism teacher organizes training courses for a day for all groups on “Writing rules of informational plots and giving to television”. Working in the groups they discussed and wrote texts concerning different subjects. These training sessions are conducted by our journalism teacher and a journalist from the ANS –TV. The students make plots in different subjects and after the montage, they will be shown on local TV channels.

Legal Education: This subject is of interest to students because many of them are unaware of their rights. So in the transition period, the youth always come across problems and conflicts. In this lesson, they learn their rights and ways for solving their problems. All the students take an active part in this lesson. In addition, the Law teacher invited two students from each group to a training course on “Discussing of Cases in European Human Rights Court” organized by the American Bar Association. The students were actively involved with different participants from different companies. Our organization collaborates with different local and international organizations. We involve the attention and activity of those organizations to our LS. So the leaders of our school are invited to different events. Besides this, teachers give the students tasks to write the references and applications for court at the lessons. The students who have the good results in this task have gained 100 score automatically from exam.

Computer Course: The students learn computer skills. All the students help the editors of newspapers with typing articles in the computers, scanning photos, and printing documents. Besides this, the students designed the web site for the LS. So all of them take an active part in

the activity of the LS using computer services. In order to improve their listening skills in English with the help of their computer knowledge they use CD programs.

Other Leaders' School Activities

1. Quizzes on all subjects
2. Meeting with the school newspaper editors
3. Publishing of the school newspaper "Drongo" # 1 and # 2
4. "Social Defenders" as the Human Rights defenders
5. Activity of the "Council of Independent Students"
6. Lecture on religion, January 11, 2005
7. Training "Leadership", January 30-31, 2005
8. Training "European Convention", February 5-6, 2005
9. Lecture on psychology, February 15, 2005
10. Lecture on History, March 14, 2005

Events at LS (Not financed by NED)

Poetry night of Nizami Ganjevi, 17 January 2005

Training on "International Education" by Eddie McGee, English Language Senior Fellow

- Symbolic Court, 14 February 2005
- Excursion on local TV studio and Print House, February 2005
- Movie Hour at LS "Ghostbusters", 19 February 2005
- American Evening at LS, February 24-25, 2005
- Event concerning with 13th Anniversary of Khocali Tragedy, February 26, 2005
- Training "Know your rights, when police stop us" by the social defenders initiative

- Celebrating International Women Day, March 8, 2005
- Movie Hour at LS “Piano Blues” Directed by Clint Eastwood
- Disputes on Parliament Elections
- Conversation Club
- Our students at the different NGOs and Organization events

AYLA and Municipality Elections on December 17, 2004.

On December 17, 2004 Municipality Elections were held in Azerbaijan. We were very active during these elections. We involved all the staff of the Civil Education Resource Center, Press Center employees, Council of Independent Students in these activities. With its own budget AYLA established the Election Information Center during elections. It began the activity from December 16, 2004. All employees of the Resource Center and Press Center were at the election points where they gathered information and sent them by phone to the information center. We spread information about elections by e-mail to the embassies in Azerbaijan, different local and international organizations in Azerbaijan and abroad. Before the elections, we sent a message to all of these organizations, embassies and informed them about this information center. We asked them to send their e-mail addresses for spreading information. After the elections, we spread information about disruptions and forgery during elections. The correspondents also took photos from election points. All the gathered information and photos also were published in the bulletin *NGO Today* published within the project “Civil Education Resource Center” which was distributed to all local NGOs in Ganje, embassies in Azerbaijan, INGOs in Azerbaijan and NGOs in the western regions.

English Language Learning and International Education

On November 13, 2004 we held a conversation with Eddie McGee, English Language Senior Fellow. The theme of the conversation was “National Traditions and Customs of Azerbaijan and USA”. It was very interesting and useful for the students to speak in English. They asked very interesting questions and were satisfied with the answers. They also were interested in American English . During this event students discussed many themes on language, family, culture, education, holidays, marriage traditions, etc. They compared the traditions of USA and Azerbaijan. Generally, they got important facts and knowledge on USA traditions and style of life.

On November 20, 2004 an International Education Seminar was held at LS. Eddie McGee spoke about the history of International EducationWeek, gave information about famous alumni of exchange programs and spread brochures about it. He gave important and interesting information about TOEFL, Exchange programs, internalization and globalization. There were also the following video presentations: *Northfield Mount Harmon School*, *Intercultural Adjustment and Values Conflict of Foreign Students and Scholars at an American University*, and *Welcome to the English Language Institute at George Mason University*.

In March 2005 along with Fulbright Scholar Dr. Richard Kortum and U.S. Embassy Education Assistant Afet Ibrahimova, Eddie helped plan a two-day seminar on American culture and its education system. He has assisted the school in grant writing, establishing links with international organizations, and donor solicitation. In September 2005, the school agreed to the beginning of the Center for English Language Learning and International Education. Eddie directs the center in its activities including English conversation classes, teacher training, and a

resource library with information about English Language Teaching materials, videos, International Education organizations, academic and professional exchanges, and a website <http://cellie.iatp.az>

On November 19, 2005 an International Education Fair was held where LS students, staff, and the community got information on academic and professional exchanges.

Organizations such as ACCELS, AzETA, the British Council, the GEIC, IREX, and Project Harmony gave information about their programs.

Thus far in this capstone, the sources of information about the LS have come from leadership, faculty, staff, and experienced observers. What follows is student material collected from the LS bulletin board allowing student expression to be known.

LS Bulletin Board

1. Magic Feeling (a student's poem)

Feel everything that is good. At the nighttime cut the flower. In a moment spend your time looking at the blossom. When you feel the smell of the flower in your heart, you will see the flower is well organized. If you are not a flower, don't forget you have good love like a flower. Give love to a sad heart. Don't forget you can give much meaning with one smile.

Don't be angry with the wind. Know that everything has one reason. Learn it. Be like the wind. Give out your breath everywhere to sad peoples' hearts. Make them full with your hot breathing like a spring rain. Enter the spirit like water enters the sand.

Pray using your good words. If you want to be a sun, help the cold hearts and cold looks. Be strong like the sun and try to learn what does the sun want to tell you when it's rising and setting. Feel the shine which makes you hot and cold. If you can not be a sun, be a moon that every where makes the dark light. What is next to you like a sun don't make them too hot and also don't make them too cold.

At harvest the trees are bending over. Be like a tree because if you are not like so, you can not feel who you are. Think and don't be an enemy of death. If your love is distant from death, only death can make you close to your love.

Be so sincere that everyone considers you so. Love your lovers so that when you tell them your love, don't let them be afraid of your loving the sun while entering the shade. And also you love the wind but you close the window. You like the rain but you take the umbrella.

2. Titles of other poems

Magic of Aphrodite

Declaration: help comes from Ali,

Three things: honesty, helping, beauty

If you want to learn one science, try to know everything clearly and exactly

May our love continue to grow

Friendship is an unbroken chain

I am an ordinary person

3. Information about Nagorno-Karabakh and the Occupied Territories

Details about occupied territories

Dates of occupation of Karabakh regions

Size of territories

Population

Number killed, wounded during occupation

National heroes

Things burned and destroyed by Armenians

Number of factories, cities, settlements, and villages, historical monuments, museums

4. Bird Flu

Six drawings of chickens

1. in a healthy body there is a healthy spirit
2. chattering can bring the bird flu (two chickens talking)
3. the flu has entered the body
4. what condition are you in? (chicken with sparse feathers)
5. God bless you (dead chicken with thermometer)
6. defend yourself from the bird flu; life continues

Appendix C. List of Acronyms

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AYLA	Azerbaijan Young Leaders Association
AzETA	Azerbaijan English Teachers Association
Bilik	The Knowledge Society
CBO	Community-based organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EctHR	The European Court of Human Rights
FSU	Former Soviet Union
GEIC	Ganja Education Information Center
INGO	International Non-government Organization
LNGO	Local Non-government Organization
LS	The Leaders' School
NGO	Non-government Organization
NIS	Newly Independent States
OSI	Open Society Institute
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats