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AZERBAIJAN

SUCCESS STORY

Student Committee Holds First Elections

Students bring democracy to school in a well-organized election

The Student Action Committee at School 177 in Baku, Azerbaijan organized its first-ever presidential election in March 2005. The entire election process was organized by the students. They obtained transparent ballot boxes from the



precinct's election commission, created a voter list with full voter details, and designed special ballots.

The students even arranged for two of their peers to act as election commission representatives. They were charged with announcing the election results and addressing concerns of students whose names were missing from the voter list. The two candidates for president spent the weeks leading up to the election campaigning and publicizing campaign pledges. Their pledges included proposals to work with student action

The chairwoman of the election commission counts votes as students from visiting schools look on.

committees at other schools and to assist the local orphanage.

Students are teaching the next generation of voters the principles of free and fair elections, paving the way for future democratic progress.

On election day, representatives from a USAID-sponsored election-monitoring program were invited to observe the election. They were joined by representatives from the local education department, the town government, the local precinct's election commission, and the school administration. The visitors remarked that the students had organized a free, fair, and transparent election, setting an example for other schools and even the country. After all the votes were cast and the ballots counted, Gunay Badalova was confirmed as the winner. Representatives from the USAID-sponsored program stamped her credentials and attended her inauguration ceremony.

Through their effort and example, the students are teaching the next generation of voters the principles of free and fair elections, paving the way for future democratic progress.

Telling Our Story
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