

activities from sport, to youth, to business consulting.
The Union has over 1000 members including some individual members from other welayets.

Registering Small and Medium Businesses

6. (SBU) Members told the DCM they first started the "practical" side of their work shortly after independence by assisting small and medium-sized businesses register with local authorities. According to the UOU President, during the '90's the Union assisted 187 enterprises in registering ranging from farmers unions to joint enterprises to a shoe factory. The UOU told the DCM all

ASHGABAT 00001028 002 OF 002

this consulting was done pro bono. The Union made money over the years, however, by running for-fee computer, accounting and other "non-traditional" courses such as UFOlogy and massage.

7. (SBU) UOU President Muradov told the DCM the Union had been successful in this effort because it had the respect of local authorities. According to Muradov, "everyone is interested in UFOs" and local authorities were eager to assist and also learn more about UFOs. The Union also regularly ran UFO-related seminars and talks, which were well attended.

8. (SBU) In addition to commercial work, the UOU obtained experience in humanitarian goods distribution when it became a partner of the State Department funded CHAP humanitarian assistance program administered by Counterpart International. UOU facilitated humanitarian assistance to refugees from the civil war in Tajikistan and also with Afghan refugees. Muradov said the Union was eager to continue with such work, should the need arise.

Assisting NGOs

9. (SBU) Because of their established track record and their success in re-registering after the austere 2003 NGO law was passed, USAID, through Counterpart International, is considering a \$15,000 grant to assist the UOU with internal capacity building. The grant passed the local grants committee and has been forward to the regional committee for consideration. The UOU already has successfully registered an NGO and is working on the registration documents of four others.

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