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HICD PLUS
HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

SNAPSHOT

Strengthening Regional Media for Informed Local Communities

**First-ever ad sales help
Georgian TV stations
keep the public informed**



Photo: GARB

The USAID HICD PLUS project works to improve the capacity of key Georgian organizations in the public, private, and NGO sectors.

Telling Our Story

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“Without these funds we wouldn’t be able to continue producing and airing programs. These programs are very important for our audiences; we broadcast in Chiatura and Sachkhere and also cover some of the occupied territories,” says Ramaz Gamezardashvili, director of Imervizia TV, describing the impact that recent advertising sales have had on his regional TV station.

Despite the important role they play in educating citizens across Georgia, regional TV stations have long been one of the most disadvantaged sectors in the country, often having low technical and professional capacity and insufficient financial resources. The Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB) exists to support the development of regional media, advocate for their rights, and promote free speech. Its 22 members serve every region of the country. Yet GARB itself is plagued by problems of financial sustainability.

USAID is committed to democratic development and media freedom in Georgia. To help ensure regional citizens have access to information, the USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) PLUS project worked with GARB in the summer and fall of 2012 to help improve GARB’s financial sustainability and, in turn, to enable GARB to deliver the highest value to its member organizations and support the sustainable development of regional media.

The most promising way for GARB to obtain revenue is to sell advertising time on behalf of its members. HICD PLUS provided GARB with a regional advertising market assessment, a marketing strategy with financial forecasts, and other practical tools to sell advertising time and distribute the revenue among its members. The project quickly yielded results. In only a few months, GARB made its first-ever ad sales, bringing in more than \$77,000 to the organization and its members. This is nearly three times the cost of HICD PLUS’s intervention, representing a nearly 3:1 initial return on USAID’s investment.

With the revenue from these sales, several regional broadcasters began to produce new programs and improve the quality of existing ones. Maia Ivelashvili, director of Akhaltsikhe TV 9, noted, “With the funds received from advertising we managed to provide news to our Armenian viewers in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda in their native language, specifically during the election period when they needed it the most.”