

PROJECTS AWARDED IN 2009

1) Center for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations (CCIIR)

Support of Non-Georgian Language Schools in the Process of Multilingual Education Reform

To support non-Georgian schools in providing high-quality education and improving access of ethnic minority youth to education institutions in Georgia, the project team developed principles of intercultural education that were incorporated into Georgia's education plans and evaluation systems. The grantee organized a workshop with major stakeholders to ensure that intercultural aspects are included in school books. As a result, the national educational curricula, evaluation system, and textbooks were tailored to the needs of minority language communities. The project team also developed bilingual, intercultural teaching methods manual for secondary school teachers, as well as trained 80 teachers from 40 pilot public schools of Georgia on intercultural and bilingual teaching methodology.

2) Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS)

Enhancement of public policy decision-making in ethnic minority region of Samtskhe-Javakheti

Georgia is a multi-ethnic society faced with the challenge of fully integrating its minorities into the country's political, economic and cultural life. Lack of dialogue between the centre and the ethnic minority populated regions adds to perceptions of discrimination and alienation. Overall, the local civil society organizations in ethnic minority regions lack capacity that hinders their policy and advocacy work, not corresponding to the needs of their target groups and local authorities. To contribute to the creation of favorable conditions for effective participation of minority groups in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country, GFSIS implemented an integrated project composed of capacity building activities, policy development, and public debate and TOT components for representatives of ethnic minority communities in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The project team organized skills oriented and awareness raising training to enhance the skills and promote the participation of ethnic minority community representatives in public policy decision-making for 24 representatives of civil society and the media and local government leaders of the ethnic minority population of Samtskhe-Javakhet. The project will support the establishment of informal networks of regional civil society groups among each other and with Tbilisi-based civil society organizations.

3) Association "Mkurnali"

Legal representation of vulnerable youth

The socially unprotected youth suffered particularly gravely during the 1990s, when Georgia became embroiled in political, economic, and social turmoil. The difficulties experienced by the country have led to the formation of the new for Georgian reality phenomenon – street children. This youngster joined various criminal groups and became involved in such deplorable activities as prostitution, drug abuse, and theft. When they came into contact with the criminal justice system, they were discriminated against and consistently experienced gross violations of their procedural rights. The grantee provided free legal aid to eight street children, who came into contact with the criminal justice system and needed assistance with representation. To support its beneficiaries, the project team also analyzed the current Georgian legislation on juvenile justice and contributed to the preparation of the Report on Monitoring on Implementation of Criminal Justice Reform, which was developed under the auspices of the Criminal Justice Reform Inter-Agency Coordinating Council. The Report describes gaps in the current legislation relevant to juvenile justice and provides recommendations to better protect the interests of the street children. Other sustainable project interventions include vocational training for 25 street children to expand the limited employment choices currently available to them and to make them more self reliant.

4) ALPE Foundation

Promoting Higher Education and Civic Knowledge for Civil Integration of Non-Georgian School Graduate

Knowledge of Georgian language, an official language of the country, remains one of the most important barriers in achieving proper social, economic, and political integration of ethnic minorities. Mastery of the official language is a precondition to access higher education institutions, as Georgian is tested during the National Entrance Examination. In order to support integration of ethnic minorities, the Ministry of Education and Science elaborated several versions of legislative changes and amendments, which if enacted would simplify the admissions process of the largest ethnic minority youth (Azeri and Armenian) to higher education institutions. Alpe Foundation, with its project aiming at improving access to higher education of ethnic minority secondary school students, organized a public roundtable to discuss the most acceptable amendment package. The project team also conducted a study of barriers to higher education for ethnic minority youth residing in the country

5) Media Development Foundation

Promoting Professional Covering of Topics on Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Georgian Media

In several high profile instances, the Georgian press has published opinion columns using abusive words and expressions that were highly offensive to the country's ethnic, religious, and cultural minorities. Print media's representation of ethnic, religious, and cultural minorities as a threat often fuel religious and ethnic tensions and confrontations in Georgian society. The Media Development Foundation aimed to confront these issues through its 3-months-long media monitoring process, 3 focus group meetings, a round table discussion, and a journalist training session. The Media Development Foundation met its goals to identify potentially offensive media stereotyping, stigmatizing content, insults, ethnic and religious jokes, and individual expressions of intolerance towards ethnic, religious and cultural minorities in media and to help prevent potentially offensive content from being published in the future.