



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GEORGIA

SUCCESS STORY

Community Connections

CC Alumni Create a Regional Radio Network



Georgian Regional Radio Network Staff
in GRRN Tbilisi Office

Success

Community Connections alumni Ramaz Samkharadze and Irakli Machitadze are joining efforts to pilot the first network of regional radio stations in Georgia. The President of *Hereti Radio* and Executive Director of *Old Town Radio* created a network of four independent regional radio stations, providing listeners with comprehensive regional coverage on economy, politics and social affairs.

Overview

Samkharadze and Machitadze participated in the Community Connections exchange in Seattle, Washington in October 2008, which focused on Regional Media Management. While in the US, alumni visited several radio stations and the Washington State Association of Broadcasters. The Seattle experience underscored to them the benefits of Georgian radio station networks, which could boost their audiences and provide unique regional perspectives to issues that are of local and national importance.

Georgian Regional Radio Network (GRRN) was officially established in July of 2009. The network unites four regional radio stations, including *Old Town* from Kutaisi, *Hereti* from Lagodekhi, *Atinati* from Zugdidi and *Harmony* from Poti. GRRN works in four large regions of Georgia with over two million residents, reaching out to an audience that none of the individual stations could solely cover. One of the most popular GRRN's projects, *The Bridge*, is aired on all member stations. *The Bridge* is a political talk show, which is funded by the Open Society Georgia Foundation. Interestingly, *Bridge*'s anchor is Zviad Koridze, another Community Connections alumnus from the 2009 Media Advocacy group. GRRN's other project, *The Whole Week*, focuses on weekly coverage of a wide range of subjects, including corruption and government accountability, youth rights and employment. Both programs are run out of GRRN Tbilisi Office, which opened in September of 2009. The network programs are developed by journalists who represent all member stations.

"Although I had collaborated with the members of GRRN before the Community Connections program, this exchange showed all of us how broadcasters can benefit from joining resources and audiences. Community Connections brought us together, exposed us to American media practices, and in the end, helped us expand and grow professionally," says Ramaz Samkharadze.

Theme: Management of Regional Media Outlets

From: Adjara, Kakheti, Imereti Regions

Program Dates:

October 29 – November 19, 2008

Host Organization: Foundation for Russian American Economic Cooperation, Seattle, Washington