



## PHOTO & CAPTION

### Participation Builds a Bridge



Photo: Lena Kadeishvili, Urban Institute

***Governance training empowered local officials to work cooperatively with their community to repair a bridge.***

Since its independence, Georgia's local governments have lacked a complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities. In addition, many stakeholders, officials, businesses and citizens have an unclear idea of what they can legally expect from their local government. This problem is particularly serious in rural villages, which have fewer resources at their disposal than urban areas.

USAID is addressing this weakness by preparing local officials from Georgia's cities to train those in smaller municipalities about good governance and citizen participation. In western Georgia, deputy

mayors from the cities of Ozurgeti and Khashuri provided training in more than 30 small villages in two districts. At least 15 people attended the training in each village — councilors, village officials, youth and other community members. The results have been excellent. In Melekeduri village, for example, the mayor used knowledge he acquired at the training to get a local bridge repaired. The village council had already sought funding for the project from higher authorities and was turned down. Armed with new participatory methods, the mayor mobilized the community to fix the bridge. Households provided the labor, the district donated material, and within three months, the bridge was repaired. Today, the mayor and the newly established Citizen Advisory Board are working with the community to fence the local cemetery.