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**GEORGIA**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Energizing Parliament With Youth

### Eleven interns gain invaluable experience in Georgia's Parliament



Photo: National Democratic Institute

Parliamentary interns pose with officials, including U.S. Ambassador John Tefft, center back, and the National Democratic Institute's Jim Hart, back left, and Mike Kelleher, back right, at their graduation ceremony in Tbilisi in July 2006.

***"This program opened my eyes to new ways about how and why strengthening institutions, especially the Parliament, is important to my country's development," said Mikheil Shavtvaladze, an intern in Georgia's Parliament.***

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For ten months, 11 young Georgians and the Parliament of Georgia became inseparable. These young people were interns in Georgia's Parliament. Their internships were supported by USAID in partnership with the National Democratic Institute.

Launched in 2004, the internship program emphasizes the need to engage youth in the work of the Georgian Parliament.

For most interns, this was their first encounter with Parliament. Yet they very quickly became integral members of the committees and parties with which they work.

David Jijelava, an intern in the ruling National Movement faction, came to the Parliament with a background in international relations. He quickly found himself engaged in the daily activities of the party. Like other interns, he assisted the staff with analytical work, research, and translation. The

internship increased his interest in politics and, next year, he will further his education at Central European University in Budapest.

Intern Levan Kasradze, assigned to the Legal Department, was very successful in representing the Parliament at a number of court cases. Upon completing the internship, he was offered a job working for the Parliament of Georgia.

"In the Legal Issues Committee we have had interns for the second year and it has been a wonderful experience. The qualifications, motivation and open-minds of these young individuals is inspiring. [Intern] Giorgi Beridze was assigned to work on the new draft for the amendments to the Election Code on an equal basis with the leading specialist of the committee. He did a magnificent job and he deserves credit for the legislation that was developed," said Member of Parliament Levan Bezhashvili, Chair of the Legal Issues Committee.

According to the interns, this experience has helped them improve their analytical skills, teamwork, and future career opportunities. Clearly, these 11 young interns are headed towards a bright future.