



COUNTRY PROFILE

APRIL 2009



As part of its Rule of Law Development Program, USAID/Armenia implements legal education reform through four legal clinics in Yerevan, Gyumri, Gavar and Kapan universities.

The clinics not only provide free legal aid to socially vulnerable groups, but also offer a unique opportunity for law students to hone their practical legal skills while working on real cases under the supervision of licensed attorneys.

ARMENIA SNAPSHOT

Date of independence:
September 21, 1991
Capital: Yerevan
Population: 3 million
GDP per person: \$2,844 (2007)

For more information,
see www.usaid.gov
Keyword: Armenia

OVERVIEW

Since 1992, USAID has worked to support Armenia's transition into a stable partner, at peace with its neighbors, that respects principles of democracy and where all members of society share the benefits of sustained economic growth. Armenia's location at the crossroads of Europe and



Yerevan

Asia, as well as the strong ties between the American and Armenian people, make the country's stability and prosperity an important U.S. interest.

Armenia's development progress since independence has been uneven. The country's closed borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan due to unresolved regional conflict, weak governing institutions and pervasive corruption have hindered its transition to a market economy. The shock of the Georgia/Russia War in August 2008 was a wake up call to Armenia's economic fragility and

isolation. Turkish President Gul's historic 2008 visit to Armenia, however, provided some room for hope that positive regional political realignment can occur. Adherence to democratic principles worsened in 2008 with the Government's retaliation against political opponents and restriction of fundamental freedoms such as assembly. In response, USAID will increase assistance to strengthen civil society, increase access to objective information and promote political pluralism. USAID will advocate for more effective and transparent economic governance and support for the competitiveness of key industries. USAID will also deepen efforts to advance health and social welfare reform to make them more effective and sustainable, and will foster energy and trade linkages through cross-border initiatives.

PROGRAMS

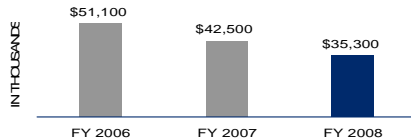
INCREASING ARMENIA'S COMPETITIVENESS

Despite Armenia's steady economic growth during the past few years, the benefits of the development are not reaching many citizens who continue to live in poverty. USAID addresses this problem by strengthening the foundations for economic growth through improved business and policy environment, promotes adoption of commercial laws, enhances the competitiveness of key industries, assists in tax system modernization, and promotes the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises through capacity building and increased access to financing and new markets.

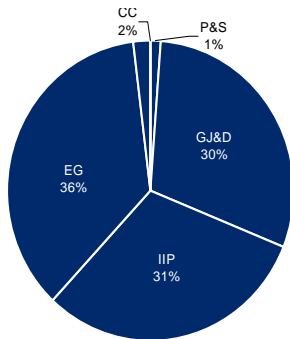


COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

USAID ASSISTANCE TO ARMENIA



FY 2008 Budget Allocation by Objective



Peace & Security: \$500,000
 Governing Justly & Democratically: \$10,650,000
 Investing in People: \$10,900,000
 Economic Growth: \$12,600,000
 Cross-Cutting: \$650,000

Based on FY 2008 Freedom Support Act and Child Survival and Health funds.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Robin Phillips
 Mission Director
 USAID/Armenia
 1 American Avenue
 Yerevan, Armenia 0082
 Tel: +011-37410-46-47-00

Donald Harrison
 Desk Officer for Azerbaijan,
 Georgia and Armenia
 Tel: 202-712-0295
 Email: dharrison@usaid.gov

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Armenia's road to democracy has been hampered by a dominant executive branch, citizens who are still learning their roles and responsibilities in a democratic system, and corruption. In response, USAID works to strengthen democracy and transparency in all levels of the government, promote the rule of law, increase public awareness about human and civil rights, train non-governmental organizations and youth in advocacy, help core and alternative media become more professional and less reliant upon political sponsorship, and increase civic participation in local governance and anti-corruption initiatives.

ENSURING ACCESS TO SAFE ENERGY SOURCES

Although Armenia's power supply has become reliable in recent years, its energy sector remains vulnerable. Armenia remains dependent on imported gas and nuclear fuel to meet about 70% of its energy needs. Its own nuclear power plant, which provides 42% of the nation's electric power, is considered unsafe and planned for retirement in 2016. USAID is launching a new energy activity to promote energy security through two key elements: i) securing diversified sources, including nuclear and renewable, and ii) securing investment to ensure efficient and economically sustainable usage in national and regional contexts.

INCREASING ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

While the Government of Armenia has stepped up efforts to improve primary healthcare (PHC) system throughout the country, state financial support for health is still inadequate and institutional capacity gaps remain at all levels of Armenia's healthcare system. In response, USAID helps strengthen the government's institutional capacity for PHC reforms, reinvigorates provision of and access to quality reproductive, maternal and child healthcare services across the country, improves the clinical and managerial skills of PHC providers, strengthens PHC referral and quality assurance systems, and implements public education programs.

PROTECTING THE SOCIALLY VULNERABLE

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia has had difficulty providing social benefits to its most vulnerable citizens. USAID works with the government to implement social protection (particularly pension) system reforms and ensure that adequate benefits are fiscally sustainable, supports labor market interventions aimed at providing support to the vulnerable population and jobless individuals (including the low-skilled, women and the disabled), giving greater attention to countering the effects of the current global economic crisis.