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COMPETITIVE ARMENIAN PRIVATE SECTOR

SUCCESS STORY

Academic Partnerships Bring International Best Practice to Armenia's Tourism Industry

CAPS Provides Enhanced Workforce Development Opportunities



Photo by CAPS

In addition to providing world class training to tourism professionals the course also helped build the capacity in an Armenian institution resulting in several AUA lecturers receiving a license to conduct three new courses on a regular basis.

In the framework of the CAPS Project USAID is facilitating growth and increased market share through a cluster approach in which target marketing is employed and positioning the country among its many competitor destinations is the focus. The efforts are divided between firm level assistance, policy reform initiatives, association capacity building and workforce training.

The Armenian tourism workforce has been provided with enhanced opportunities for the development of skills and knowledge. CAPS year-long efforts yielded in an evolving long-term academic partnership between the renowned George Washington University (GWU) based in the USA, with one of the world's oldest and most respected tourism programs in the world and the American University of Armenia (AUA). This provides the Armenian educational institution with an exceptional opportunity to teach and provide best practice curricula and materials under international license.

This success is a result of a CAPS ongoing initiative toward establishing academic partnerships with the intention to upgrade and re-align curricula that is more responsive to the employer market, offer more modern teaching methods and form longer term professional relationships to transfer knowledge from western institutions to those in Armenia.

In the framework of the partnership program in March 2009, the two Universities collaborated to deliver, for the first time in Armenia, the "Tourism Destination Management Program". Designed for tourism destination managers, representatives of tour/travel companies, hotels, sites/attractions, public sector representatives and lecturers who are teaching tourism and hospitality management courses, the training provided key information for destination managers to better equip them to face the challenges in today's tourism environment.

The training generated huge interest among industry representatives, Government and educational institutions. Forty influential members of the tourism industry participated in the six-day interactive course, which was taught by GWU lecturers with considerable experience in hospitality, tourism, leisure, and brand development consultancy.

"Through different projects and now through CAPS, USAID has provided assistance to foster tourism development in Armenia. By providing training from one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the world, CAPS tackles important tourism and workforce development issues that are critical to Armenia's development." Diana Avetyan, Cognizant Technical Officer of the Economic Growth Office at USAID Armenia, said at the official opening of the training.