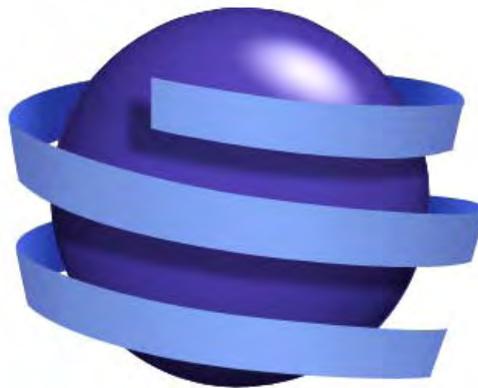


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## **INTERNEWS NETWORK**

**FINAL PROJECT REPORT**  
***“Developing Civil Society in Armenia through  
Independent Broadcast Media”***  
**USAID Grant Number 111-A-00-00-00156-00**

**June 2005**

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## Summary

From September 2000 through January 2005, with funding from USAID, Internews Network carried out a comprehensive program of support to the Armenian broadcast media sector as it struggled to establish itself in the face of an evolving political climate, a serious lack of professional human resources, and an extremely challenging economic environment.

During this time, Internews Network and its partner Armenian NGO, Internews Armenia, provided comprehensive technical assistance to the broadcast community, building skills and creating connections that significantly improved the quality and quantity of information that reached the Armenian public through the most popular medium of television and on the airwaves of the country's fledgling radio stations.

With help from Internews, local broadcasters improved their self-sustainability, shared news, and information programming, and fought for changes to misguided media legislation. Through the unique pan-Caucasus program *Crossroads*, Armenian audiences saw stories of everyday life in Azerbaijan, presented by Azerbaijani journalists. The local media assistance organization Internews Armenia became a critical source of advice, connections and information for journalists, managers, designers, and other media professionals. Even after the end of major USAID funding for its activities, Internews Armenia continues to support cross-border programming, public service production, and capacity development for journalists.

## Industry Overview

The last four years have represented an intense, contradictory, and complicated period for the mass media in Armenia. This was especially true for the electronic media, as their number has skyrocketed. In a country with a population of just under 3 million people, the fact that there are 42 television and 14 radio stations is almost surreal.

During the period of 1995-1998, TV companies appeared, in the main, in small towns around the country, while starting in 1998, the television boom re-concentrated in the capital. In 1996, there were only two private broadcasters in Yerevan: A1, a news channel that would ultimately become A1+, and Mayr Hayrenik, the original "movie channel" that offered a door-to-door subscription service and broadcast pirated VHS copies of movies made in India. This was all in contrast to more than 10 broadcasters located in the Marzes.

By the end of 2004, the situation had changed drastically: 22 TV companies were broadcasting from Yerevan, five of them with a national footprint. Of the 17 local stations, 11 are currently producing news, information and social/political programs, and three are oriented towards cultural/educational programming.

With the overwhelming majority of ad dollars remaining in Yerevan, the radio and television industry matures and condenses, becoming more viable and more professional. At the same time, it is likely that regional stations will continue to close down until only those that maintain at least a small creative staff and have access to a significant share of the local advertising market will manage to survive. Furthermore, the competition will become more heated during the next four-six years as stations consolidate facilities, staff, and programming inventory to finally realize the economies of scale.

The four years of this project were highlighted by a series of dramatic events. The most notable of them was the pre-election closing of A1+ TV. This action was not just a move against a TV company providing alternative services to the viewers of Yerevan through a presentation of more informative, timely, and critical news. It was a statement of intimidation delivered on the eve of presidential elections, and it led to a complete stagnation of television broadcast news during the election period and, on too many occasions, a practical impossibility for the viewing audience to obtain any information via television.

At this writing, A1+ is still without the right to broadcast in Armenia. Despite having participated in numerous competitions since 2001, it has been turned down by the National Commission on Television and Radio each time. Today, A1+ is looking forward to its trial date at the European Court of Human Rights. As a direct result of the government's action against A1+, virtually all Armenian television broadcasters are more cautious about challenging the status quo.

In terms of more general characteristics of the broadcast industry in Armenia in mid-2005, it is clear that competition for audience has begun to have an effect, with stations recognizing that they need to establish a unique brand. The competition to attract and then retain an audience is what will drive the industry if it is to prosper and grow. The access to this audience is what will encourage and enable stations to design, implement, and constantly refine their image in the minds of viewers and listeners. A mitigating factor to the effect of market forces will be the continued political nature of the ad market, where political loyalty to both the government of the Republic of Armenia and the office of its president can affect stations revenue more than its actual success with the audience.

Inherent in the rapid build-up of stations is the dearth of qualified personnel and the quality of work offered by those already in the business. There are just not enough professionals to ensure even the most basic on-the-job training for working journalists. The situation is complicated by the poor economy outside the capital, which leads to rapid turnover, especially of the most talented staff.

As the broadcast industry expanded and the economy grew somewhat, a number of so-called oligarchs became involved in the media business. Several stations in Yerevan were bought and sold among various economic groups. While these media owners certainly had their own goals and objectives, they all kept their loyalty to the President of Armenia. Some of the money invested by these wealthy owners did help increase the stations' capacity, however the new owners usually had little interest in promoting independent editorial policies.

As in so many countries in the region, the politically driven money available to media, whether from political advertisements, or investment from owners with a political agenda, far outweighs the apolitical commercial advertising money. The idea of running a media outlet as a profitable business is only now taking hold. At the same time, the drive to make a profit in a weak economy also limits the incentives for managers to fulfill the public service function of broadcasters.

To counter this somewhat bleak portrait of the Armenian electronic media, here are some of the achievements of this project:

- The beginning of true programming competition between broadcasters that may inevitably lead to better production quality and more advertising revenue.

- The stabilization of a growing radio industry.
- The emergence of a larger pool of professionals who have an increased possibility of applying their skills.
- An increased understanding and early elements of mastering the techniques of marketing-driven sales campaigns on behalf of many broadcasters.
- A heightened desire to develop and produce local programming.
- A movement towards self-regulation through mechanisms discussed and adopted by broadcasters.
- A renewed interest by regional TV companies towards unification (unwired syndicates) as a survival tool.
- Consistent technological development and implementation by larger stations.
- A marked increase in the volume of the advertising market in 2004 (taking into account its relatively small size as compared to similar countries).
- The emergence of professional forums, festivals, and competitions as stimulating mechanisms of industry development and advancement.

With the end of this grant, many of the support activities previously available to Armenian broadcasters have been cut back. However, Internews Armenia continues to seek other funding to support quality public service journalism, including vital regional programming, and skills enhancement for the industry.

## **Training**

Over the four years of this project, Internews training activities grew with the industry. Internews started out by sponsoring 15 training events in 2000 and finished by running more than 50 in 2004. One of the two cornerstones of the entire program (along with production), the training component expanded in scope as well size. Detailed descriptions of the training events have been provided in earlier reports. This report summarizes only the main trends.

### **2000-2001**

Internews organized and staged 15 training events involving 190 industry professionals. There were three different types of training events: 10 trainings or seminars at the Internews offices, one on-site residency with foreign consultants, and four internships in other CIS countries. The shortest seminar was three days in length, and the longest lasted two weeks. The percentage of repeat trainees was 34 percent, as participants progressed from basic to more advanced skills, and events had an average of 16 participants.

### **2001-2002**

As the broadcast industry grew, there was a substantial increase in Internews' activity and a decrease in repeat participants. All together, Internews hosted 31 training events for 279 media professionals from 40 media organizations. Five international consultants and five Internews staff members offered 10 on-site training opportunities at TV and radio stations. Seven members of the media community were sent to the CIS countries for internships and work/study programs. And, by slightly decreasing the average number of participants (down to 12), Internews' trainers found that the learning process was more effective.

Perhaps the most noteworthy training events of 2001 were the long-form journalism courses (four and six weeks each) that for the first time brought together camera operators/video editors and journalists, placing them in a team-training environment. The Internews

Certificate of Completion became recognized by station management throughout the country as a symbol of quality.

### **2002-2003**

During this period, Internews shifted its training focus from quantitative to qualitative changes: 34 training events reached 230 trainees representing 36 media organizations, and 11 media professionals were sent to the CIS, as well as European countries and the U.S., for internships and work/study. The continued focus on short-term training was based on the recognition that most managers were reluctant to release their staff for prolonged periods of time. Working within a finite universe of media professionals, Internews was able to tailor training to meet the specific needs of its broadcast partners.

During this period, Internews add more on-site residencies based on the specific requirements of partner stations, more individual work with journalists and camera operators/editors, and, again, limited course size. In terms of new activities, Internews introduced three new training events:

- Special Report Workshop – designed to strengthen the individual work of journalists/videographers during hands-on training. Two-person crews produced eight two-minute pieces under the supervision of an Internews staff specialist, with all pieces broadcast by h2 TV.
- Computer Graphics Workshop –a unique opportunity for non-linear editors and television graphics designers to spend 7-10 days in the Internews computer lab. The results of this training were immediately reflected in the on-air look of participant stations.
- The Sales & Marketing School – aimed to increase advertising revenues to independent TV and radio stations. A group of participants attended four one-week seminars presented by international media marketing and sales professionals from both the NIS and the U.S.

### **2003-2004**

In 2003, Internews saw a new peak in its training efforts. The numbers speak for themselves: 53 training events served 376 media professionals and university students; 15 training courses/seminars; 14 on-site residencies; 12 workshops; and 12 internships and work/study trips to the CIS countries. With an expanded number of people in the industry, there were only 8 percent repeat participants.

Internews also improved its communication with training participants, relying on their feedback and answers to questionnaires to shape future offerings. This input opened a dialogue and allowed Internews to be considerably more proactive in its course design during the final two years of the program. It also imbued a sense of ownership in many participants, encouraging them to take even more from the experts offered by Internews. Finally, Internews' staff spoke directly with the station directors and managers to see what they wanted and how they intended to implement the ideas their employees had developed at the trainings. This input was also used to craft Internews' follow-up training efforts.

Also in 2003, Internews designed a new activity to benefit university students. In addition to the regularly offered course for graduating journalism and production students, the Special Report Workshop project allowed the best students to come and work with Internews'

professionals and use Internews' equipment to design, write, and produce their dream projects. Working with Internews' specialists, these future industry leaders of tomorrow independently produced eight feature pieces, all of which aired locally.

Another program designed by Internews allowed two Yerevan-based universities to send some of their students to Internews for practical work. And, lastly, Internews brought international trainers to various universities to lecture journalism and production students. Not being able to invite all interested students to Internews, the company was happy to bring Internews to as many of them as possible.

## 2004-2005

During the final year of the project, Internews staged 40 training events for 180 participants, 13 on-site residencies, nine seminars and trainings, nine Special Report Workshops, as well as four additional trainings and five extra on-site visits during the no-cost extension (NCE) period ending in Jan 2005.

The increased number of on-site residencies, using both international and local consultants, reflects an important point in the evolving training policy of Internews: to train journalists in their natural environment, giving them an opportunity to immediately apply learned knowledge and newly acquired skills.

During the final four months of the project, Internews offered two seminars and an on-site consultancy. Details on these events, which were not covered in previous reports, are given below.

### ➤ Advanced Film Production

Dates: Jan 10-22 2005

Location: Internews Armenia, Yerevan

Consultant: Andrei Kaminski (Russia)

Participants

NAME	STATION	POSITION	CITY
Arzuman Harutyunyan	Studio	Film Director	Yerevan
Aram Shahbazyan	Shoghakat	Film Director	Yerevan
Nerses Matinyan	Interkap	Script Writer	Vanadzor
Arthur Sargsyan	Studio IF	Film Director	Yerevan
Sirakan Abroyan	2P studio	Film Director	Yerevan
Arman Avetisyan	Mir	Film Director	Yerevan
Lusine Gevorgyan	Monarch	Film Director	Yerevan
Suzy Simonyan	H-1	Script Writer	Yerevan
Artak Margaryan	H-1	Operator	Yerevan
Artyom Gevorgyan	freelance	Producer	Yerevan
Zara Manukyan	freelance	Editor	Yerevan

### ➤ Applying Media Research to Programming and Sales

Dates: Jan 18-20, 2005

Location: Internews Armenia, Yerevan

Consultant: Dennis Israel, InterMedia (USA)

NAME	STATION	POSITION	CITY
Tigran Paskevichyan	Shoghakat	Deputy Director	Yerevan
David Hakobyan	Yerkir Media	Sales Director	Yerevan
Andranik Ghandilyan	Tsayg	Sales Director	Gyumri
Gor Martirosyan	Kentron	Sales Director	Yerevan
Levon Mayrapetyan	H-2	Manager	Yerevan
Manya Manaseryan	H-2	Program Director	Yerevan
David Avetisyan	H-1	Sales Manager	Yerevan
Karine Tukhikyan	Paradise	Sales Manager	Yerevan
Manana Sargsyan	Paradise	Sales Manager	Yerevan
Hrach Kostanyan	Armenakob	Director	Yerevan
Artyom Ispiryan	Shant	Sales Manager	Yerevan
Laert Soghoyan	Shant	Sales Manager	Yerevan

➤ News Production (On-Site Training)

Station: Ankyun+3  
Dates: Jan 24-27, 2005  
Consultant: Armen Sargsyan, Internews Armenia  
Participants: 8 station staff members

Throughout the four years of this grant, Internews was continually searching for innovative and alternative ways to support the growth, education, and development of the media industry in Armenia. Internews created and implemented a training cycle consistent of three phases: pre-training, training, and post-training. Each challenge encountered along the way was approached through the following process:

1. Problem identification
2. Target group identification
3. Training needs assessment
4. Learning objectives development
5. Development of course offering to meet objectives
6. Implementation
7. Evaluation
8. Analysis and program review

To make trainings more attractive and less exhausting for participants, Internews developed and implemented the following procedures:

- Shifting many of the trainings from trainer-oriented to participant-oriented
- Encouraging consultants to involve participants and make seminars more interactive
- Suggesting that trainers reserve time for individual work
- Soliciting unbiased and frank feedback about trainers, Internews' input and the course from all participants

Lastly, Internews launched an outreach program that allowed its staff members to visit stations, see if training events were meeting the actual needs, and solicit ideas and

suggestions for future offerings. As a result of this interactive approach, Internews was able to design trainings that met the needs of participants.

## Production & Programming

### *TV Production*

Internews' TV productions have gone through multiple levels of development and growth during the past four years and have been constantly refined and retooled to sustain the audience and keep a fresh approach. There have been changes in the look of its programs, as well as the content and editorial side. Designed to improve the local current affairs content available to local stations, these productions also worked as on-the-job training for producers, writers, journalists, correspondents, camera operators and editors. Internews projects competed in international contests and won recognition and awards.

PMPM The investigative program *Khndir* ("Problem" or "Question") in particular has maintained a high level of production and a sharp focus on important issues. Internews produced a total of 15 investigations in this series that was unique and innovative in the Armenian broadcast environment. Given its quality, the program could easily have aired in the Western world, certainly by networks and other major broadcasters.

One of Internews' earliest productions was *Storaket (The Rest of the Story)*, first broadcast on July 29, 2001. At that time, it was the only weekly news exchange program in Armenia, and it became both a theoretical and practical school for local journalists. During the life of this series, 32 television stations and studios, as well as more than 20 freelancers working to augment Internews' staff, contributed to this production. Many of these pioneers are now the leaders of the television community in this country and, in some cases, have production companies of their own.

One notable graduate of *Storaket* is Armen Sargysan, who joined Internews' staff to work on the show having previously worked at a regional station in Vanadzor. He went on to create and host *Ditak*, a show that became the cornerstone of the program production component of this project.

*Ditak*, an analytical weekly news talk show, first appeared on Oct 14, 2001. It was produced in a specially designed studio, and it very much differed from the magazine-style programs that Internews had pioneered in Armenia. Each edition of *Ditak* focused on a single issue, examining it through feature pieces and a live-to-tape in-studio guest interview. This different style of analytical programming required Internews to develop a new approach to design, direction, production, and equipment used on the show.

In all, Internews' crew produced 153 editions of *Ditak*, with more than 500 stories covering more than 100 issues. Some 20 freelance journalists, staff from 20 TV stations, as well as journalism students have taken part in the program. And over the past year and a half, *Ditak* had its own Internet page offering additional information and serving as a conduit to the producer/host and the rest of the show staff.

Another Internews production, *Aispisi Baner* ("Just So Stories"), a series of special reports, was first broadcast in Mar 2002. The project had engaged personnel from 10 television stations, in addition to freelance journalists and cameramen, as well as students of the Yerevan State University, Yerevan State Pedagogical University, Armenian-Russian University and the State University of Theatre and Cinema. This show offered Armenian students a unique opportunity to design and produce their dream project and then use the best

in the business to make it into a television program. In total, Internews had produced 26 special reports, 21 of which were broadcast by h2 TV, with the rest going out to various partner stations.

### *Radio Production*

Internews' main radio show, *Aniv* ("The Wheel"), was launched in 1998. At first, it was 15 minutes in length with three or four features on various topics, with some segments produced in the regions by partner stations in Vanadzor and Gyumri. At the time, radio journalism outside of the traditional news broadcast was still relatively rare in Armenia, and *Aniv* was well received within the industry and by the audience.

In addition to this weekly offering, the Internews staff created and produced a pilot for a live talk show under the *Aniv* banner. That first talk show went on air in Mar 2001 on the Ardzagank radio station in Yerevan. Starting as a half-hour show, it became an hour long in mid-2003 as it changed its format to match the needs of the Ardzagank station.

In mid-2004, *Aniv* once again produced a spin-off. This time, the result was a series of programs entitled *Aniv Investigation*, focusing on in-depth investigative reports that aired as special event broadcasts. These programs featured the work of Internews' staff and more than 20 freelance radio production specialists, and were broadcast in Yerevan as well as through an unwired syndicate of small radio stations around the country.

### *News & Video Distribution*

In addition to these production initiatives, Internews made many scripts and storylines available on its website, contributing to the wider dissemination of quality journalistic material across the country.

Internews had further brought numerous films and video productions to Armenia, translating them for broadcast in this country through the placement of lower third titles. These included:

- *Anatomy of Feelings* – a series of 25 documentary films
- *Mysteries of Old Civilization* – a series of 13 documentary films
- *Romances of Britain* – a series of 13 documentary films

Perhaps one of the more forward thinking elements of this project was the creation of a stock footage – a video library. Creating a database program internally, Internews documented and classified more than 4,000 hours of various clips and other video materials and archived them in the DVCAM format. The repository contains, among other titles:

- Editions of *Storaket*, *Crossroads*, *Ditak*, *Aispisi Baner* ("Just So Stories"), *Khndir*, and *Ynddem poghkapi* ("Against the Tide"), an analytical program series
- 12 editions of the *Yerevan-Baku Spacebridge* series
- Films produced by the Hay Film and Hayk Film studios
- Programs, films and video scripts as produced by regional stations and independent producers sponsored by Internews competitions.

### *Graphics & Design Support*

In addition to producing TV and radio shows, a large part of Internews' contribution to the Armenian media industry in the past four years has had to do with graphics and design. A common weakness of Armenian stations is the absence of a clear understanding of what makes their individual image. Added to this is the lack of money and ability at the stations to conduct proper marketing research, investigate their audience, and, based on those findings, work on their position in the marketplace. Many regional stations do not have a computer graphics and design department, almost none of them have a promotions department, and most cannot afford to order the graphics from an outside source.

Recognizing these problems, Internews produced full graphics packages for independent stations, including ID packages, promos and specific TV program design packages. As a testimony to the work of Internews' staff artists and designers, an ID package produced for Last TV in Goris won the first prize at the 2001 Eurasian TV Forum in Moscow.

Since it was impossible for one graphics department to supply all regional stations with their own graphics packages, in 2004 Internews produced one universal full graphics package and distributed it to 18 regional stations. This package contained 20 graphics pieces with strong ID elements, featuring eight different bumps and other components capable of being customized with nominal graphics equipment. The design incorporated the faces of ordinary people of all ages looking out from their "local" windows onto the world. This symbolized a local television station and its service to the local community by covering local events, something that a national station available to viewers in that region could not accomplish. This approach allowed regional stations to have a professional presentation of a designed graphic identity of their channels with a strong identification of a local message.

A good example of vertical integration of an ID package produced by Internews is the one done for Shoghakat TV. The style and concept for the design and image of the station was used by the channel in the production of graphics pieces and came to represent one of the most creatively applied station brands in Armenia.

Internews had also produced dozens of graphics for spot use in news and analytical programs, TV debates and other programs broadcast by station partners, and used its expertise to hold annual conferences entitled "Television: The Art of Management."

### *Cross-border Production*

The flagship program of Internews' production department is the trans-Caucasus produced and broadcast magazine show *Crossroads*. This weekly program is still in production (with other funding covering the costs for the current season) – *Crossroads*, produced in conjunction with Internews Georgia and Internews Azerbaijan, crosses the borders on a weekly basis and brings a single television program to a regional audience of more than 10 million households.

In 2004, this successful program gave birth to a spin-off, *Kids' Crossroads* (aired in Armenia under the title *Menk enk* ("We Are")), funded by USAID until 2007. This program is written, produced and hosted by teenagers from the three countries and broadcast by major TV stations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Working with the Internews staff in each location, the young participants of the project get the benefit of learning from each other as well as from some of the best professionals in the industry, and experiencing what might well become their avocation.

## Internet Technology

Internews' continued Internet support of the majority of broadcasters in Armenia has proven to be one of the most effective ways of contributing to the growth of the media industry. At one time, Internews supported more than 30 media outlets, designing and hosting their sites on its own server to enable news rooms to do proper research, exchange information, maximize operations, and have access to email. In many cases, Internews paid for the stations' phone connections as well. All of this has helped to create, to more than limited extent, an unwired network of stations in Armenia.

As Internews "graduated" stations and discontinued paying for their connection fees, it encouraged them to stay connected as a way of proceeding towards potential sustainability. And, in what became an element of local support to their community and its economy, many stations have made their connection to the Internet through their local area Internet service providers, while stations such as Nor Hachin and Gavar have even become local ISPs for their region. Now it is possible to say that virtually every media outlet in Armenia has Internet access, and Internews is happy to have played an integral part in setting the stage for this major step towards self-sufficiency and maturity.

Internews' work in developing and updating its own websites is also something to consider when reviewing this project's impact on the growth of the telecommunications sector. Internews dramatically increased its presence on the web over the past four years, and if better bandwidth had been available in Armenia, it would have been streaming not only radio productions, but also video. It is a shame that there was not a cost effective and efficient way of sending these productions to the most welcoming audience a USAID project could have – the Armenian Diaspora.

Here is a sampling of Internews' work online:

- Internews Armenia, <http://www.internews.am>

This is the Internet home for this program's activity, a central matrix for the many links that make up the offerings and services of this project. It includes information on Internews' projects, training events, media assessments, news production and programming, and also offers a complete database of media outlets in Armenia. Internews also posts, in many cases in three languages, media laws and information about infringements in the rights of journalists and private individuals seeking information.

- *Crossroads*, <http://home.perekrestok.am>

This cyber version of Internews' weekly magazine show appears on the day the program airs in Armenia. The website now also has a link to *Kids' Crossroads*, a television show that is produced and hosted by teenagers from the three countries in the South Caucasus.

- Media.AM, <http://home.media.am>

Media.AM is an Internet portal designed by members of the mass media community for the use within the industry. This site features daily newscasts produced by independent TV stations, analytical articles, research, interviews with politicians and other newsmakers, training materials, legislative updates, useful links, announcements, notices, graphic arts,

photos – literally everything that may come in handy for media professionals. This is also the location of Internews Armenia’s Internet directory.

- *Ditak*, <http://ditak.media.am>

This is another cyber version of one of Internews’ programs. It serves the public in the same way that the *Crossroads* site does and gives the producers a chance to make a good use of the items that ended up on the edit room floor. The website is a perfect venue for an analytical show like this weekly broadcast.

- GIPI (Global Internet Policy Initiative), <http://www.gipi.am>

A joint project of the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT) and Internews Network, GIPI supports the adoption of both the legal and policy framework for an open and democratic Internet in developing countries. The project works with local stakeholders in consultative coalition-based effort to promote the principles of a decentralized, accessible, user-controlled and market-driven Internet.

- Internet in Armenia, <http://Internet.media.am>

This is a repository of news and analytical materials about telecommunications and Internet policy related to Armenia. An interactive resource for individuals interested in the development of the Internet in the republic, this site is always among the leaders in visits based on Internews’ continuing monitoring of the project.

- Eurasia Foundation’s Synergy Program, <http://synergy.media.am>

This page promotes Internews’ work thanks to the sponsorship and underwriting of the Eurasia Foundation through its South Caucasus Cooperation Program. A site for the Integration of Information Communication Technology Legislation in the South Caucasus with the European Union and Council of Europe Standards project is also located here.

- Billboard, <http://billboard.media.am>

This site lists job openings in the media industry, equipment for sale, and other opportunities relevant to media professionals. Generally, it is the best place to discover the talent available from the small, but growing, pool of freelancers working in Armenia. Internews Armenia, for one, used approximately 12 freelancers on a regular basis, offering these broadcast professionals an opportunity to make a living.

- Parliamentary Elections, <http://elections2003.media.am>

Launched in 2003, the parliamentary elections and referendum on the constitution link was set up to educate the voters and offer the general public another venue for information gathering. Of course, due to the lack of Internet penetration in Armenia, currently estimated at only 6-8 percent, this service was used primarily by Internews’ partners. Still, Internews’ staff, led by its Legal Department, spent many hours translating, designing and uploading these documents into the Internet. Much of this work, as well as many other initiatives undertaken by Internews under this Cooperative Agreement, was done not simply because it was listed in the work plan or scope of work document, but, mainly, because it had to be done based on the needs of the industry.

- Presidential Elections, <http://election2003.media.am>

The 2003 presidential elections link allowed regional broadcasters to access the latest information on events in Yerevan. The site also contained Internews' own information based on its numerous elections-related productions.

It is worth noting that beginning in 2001, Internews helped several independent partner stations to launch their own websites. These stations include: Fortuna (Stepanavan), Interkap (Vanadzor), ALT (Armavir), Tsayg (Gyumri), Shant (Gyumri/Yerevan) and A1+ (Yerevan). In 2003, websites were set up for the Yerevan-based independent radio companies Radio Ardzagank, Impuls-Mayak, and Hit-FM.

To sustain this activity and provide market enhancement for its partners, Internews offered consulting services to the webmasters of TV companies who wanted to continue maintaining and developing their sites on their own. In that vein, the A1+ web site became the station's only way of survival and grew into a destination web address for many Internet users in Armenia.

In line with this activity, Internews helped stations to organize and create their internal computer networks and to maintain their own domain names and mail servers. Internews further created a number of lists available through its site, including the one that links all TV and radio stations in the country ([stations@media.am](mailto:stations@media.am)) and serves as a framework for the establishment of a virtual news exchange.

Additionally, Internews donated computers with modems to selected stations to help them in their Internet access. Internews conducted research and offered a series of consultancies and trainings on a video and audio (VandA) exchange via an Internet supported network of stations.

Finally, during the last months of the summer 2004, Internews IT specialists and its broadcast engineering department conducted a series of technical tests on real-time audio streaming. This groundwork proved that despite the minimal bandwidth in Armenia, it is possible to stream Armenian radio stations worldwide. While technically too challenging and anything but cost effective at this time, Internews is working on a plan to design, construct, and implement an audio streaming project including the start-up and operational budget for a three-year program.

### **Equipment grants**

Over the years, Internews helped numerous TV and radio stations to upgrade and modernize their equipment, contributing extensively to their sustainability efforts and attempts to provide better quality programming to their audience. Through special competitions among the broadcast media, Internews not only gave away professional equipment, but also helped partner stations to install and administer it, provided specific trainings and sought to stimulate an active and efficient use of the equipment. To achieve that, Internews created a technical maintenance center, where TV and radio stations could repair their broken equipment. The services provided by the center were free in 2000-2002, while in subsequent years stations were asked to pay 25 percent of the costs. In parallel to the repair services, station managers and technicians also received qualified consultations from Internews' technical staff.

Most of Internews' equipment grants and no-cost leases sought to support the technical quality of news production at regional stations. The year-by-year activity included:

- In 2001, awarding more than \$16,000 worth of grants and leases to six TV and three radio stations
- In 2002, awarding nearly \$42,000 worth of grants and leases to 11 TV stations, with 29 stations and production studios using Internews' resource center to support local production.
- In 2003, awarding about \$2,000 worth of grants and leases to three TV stations and three journalists; 39 stations and studios used the resource center, and 17 had their equipment repaired by Internews.
- In 2004, awarding close to \$107,000 worth of grants and leases to eight TV and seven radio stations; 43 TV stations and studios used the resource center, and 18 had their equipment repaired by Internews.

### **Production grants**

Internews' annual grant competitions succeeded in supporting public service programming by partner stations as well as independent producers, helping to create a professional core of young, talented journalists responsible to their audience and eager to address the most pressing issues faced by their communities. With Internews' support, they were able to produce and/or write the kind of stories that are much in demand in Armenia, even if not supported by the slow-developing advertisement market. Many of these issue-based programs and films were aired by several TV stations across the country and have been kept in the archives for further broadcasting.

"Women of Armenia," Internews' very first competition, was staged in 2001. A total of \$25,000 was provided to six production studios and TV companies, with each project dealing with gender issues. Some of the films that were produced under the auspices of this competition have been nominated and received international awards.

In 2002, Internews announced a competition, "The World around Us," for documentary film production on environmental issues. As a result, \$25,000 was awarded to six production studios and TV companies to producing seven films.

The next year, 2003, Internews ventured a step further to send Armenian journalists to report on location in other countries. This special reports project, "The Planet," served to introduce the viewers back in Armenia to the social, political, and cultural life abroad. Visited countries included Sweden, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Estonia, and Turkey.

#### *IN 2003 and 2004*

2003-2004

#### **Lend Your Hand**

This competition aimed at increasing the attention focused on some marginal group problems and while encouraging Producers to cover these topics in a humane, professional and creative manner. \$ 24 268 was awarded for the 5 documentary films.

## Out of the Margin

*Synopsis:* Quite a few people go with the flow. In fact, many do not oppose the concept. While recognizing it [flow] at times the flow does not see them...especially the homeless of Armenia.

## From Fear to Life

*Synopsis:* Two disabled children who cannot afford to buy medicine continue to live their life without losing hope...

## House of Children

*Synopsis:* Children with congenital defects; many of them isolated from society here in Armenia. Abandoned by parents, they move from orphanage to orphanage...

## The Continuation of War

*Synopsis:* The aftermath of the war left behind several minefields in the disputed territories which continue to take the lives of many people. Often these are children.

## Women Warriors of the Conflict

*Synopsis:* Women, who fought in the war now, years later, require help and care.

Support Social Campaigns (PSA) competition had the goal of increasing the interest of broadcasters and producers in the neglected production sector of “social” campaigns and promotions and hoped to interest viewers through an enhanced production value of these PSAs. \$ 9000 was awarded to 3 production groups and TV companies.

## Education

*Synopsis:* Education is necessary for all segments of society: Secondary education for either poor or disabled people is often less than adequate.

## Let's Get to Know Ourselves

*Synopsis:* Clips about art and the young people who create it.

## Volunteers

*Synopsis:* A piece on philanthropy and charity put forward in the name of building a civil society. A portrait of volunteers as an important form of social activity.

## **Professional festivals and conferences**

In 2001-2003, Internews conducted annual competitions and awarded professional prizes for investigative reporting. In 2003, it decided to build on this experience by starting an annual news competition, “Three Days of TV,” which traditionally concludes the national journalism conference, “The Art of Management,” also held on the annual basis. The conference attracts

a large number of Armenia's media managers, journalists and industry professionals, who come together as a group to meet colleagues from around the world, including the U.S., Russia, Georgia, and many West European countries, familiarize themselves with the latest industry developments, network with world-renown media experts invited by Internews as speakers and panelists, and learn valuable lessons to apply in Armenia.

The last day of the conference has traditionally been reserved for journalists, as experienced media trainers from different countries provide master classes and moderate discussions, followed by the awards ceremony.

## The Legal Department

Internews' legal team provided legal services to the industry in two basic ways: advocacy for media legislation and *pro bono* legal assistance. Internews' attorneys, three for most of the project period, were available to members of the media community virtually around the clock, including during weekends.

In terms of the legal environment in the country, it should be noted that during the last four years, Armenian media legislation experienced significant changes. In 2000, the Armenian National Assembly adopted a controversial Television and Radio Law that was inconsistent with internationally accepted standards. Despite strong criticism from industry representatives and concerned civil society organizations, and proactive communication between these organizations and the appropriate National Assembly Committee (Science, Education and Youth Affairs), the lawmakers failed to take into account the numerous recommendations of broadcast professionals and civil society groups. The law introduced a licensing regime for the production of television and radio programming as well as broadcast activities, but failed to clearly define licensing mechanism and procedures for the activities of the National Television and Radio Commission itself.

Right after the promulgation of the Law, Internews, with the support of media industry representatives and other civil society organizations (including the Yerevan Press Club and the Armenian Union of Journalists), initiated a series of meetings with the National Television and Radio Commission and the members of the standing committee of the National Assembly. Internews played an important role in the fusing of civil society and related industry efforts aimed at amending the Law.

In 2001, the National Assembly adopted changes and amendments to the Television and Radio Law. Unfortunately, not all changes and amendments proposed and drafted by Internews and other organizations were accepted by the lawmakers. At the same time, the most harmful and contradictory provisions, such as the limitations on the licensing of television and radio production, were removed. Also, Internews' advocacy campaign resulted in the approval of several important amendments on the operating stations' priority in frequency allocation, new procedures for administrative sanctions, and the operation of the National Television and Radio Commission.

In 2002, the Armenian government circulated a draft Mass Media Law that, if adopted, would have resulted in a significant restriction of freedom of speech, introducing administrative control over the activities of Armenian media. The draft law was widely criticized by media professionals and civil society organizations. Internews had developed detailed analysis of

the draft law outlining its deficiencies. Under public pressure, the Armenian government invited media-related NGOs to discuss the draft law and find a compromise solution for the problems raised by media representatives and civil society groups. Internews' lawyers participated in these discussions and proposed several important changes aimed at liberalizing the legislation. In line with the well-argued and justified comments by the Internews legal team, several provisions restricting freedom of the media were eliminated from the draft law. Further advocacy in the National Assembly resulted in the adoption of one of the most liberal media laws in the NIS.

Parallel with the discussion of the new media law, a group of the National Assembly members initiated discussion on a draft law on changes and amendments to the Television and Radio law. The amendments were aimed at strengthening control over television and radio stations and significantly reducing the democratic practices within the National Commission on Television and Radio. Internews' lawyers prepared detailed analysis of the draft law, highlighting the negative effect that the proposed amendments would have on the industry. With the support of the OSCE mission in Armenia, Internews and other media NGOs initiated discussions on the proposed amendments with members of the appropriate National Assembly committee. As a result, several positive changes made it into the proposed draft law. Meantime, the discussion of the amendments was used to raise the issue of the political neutrality and independence of the National Commission on Television and Radio, which remains the central issue regarding the regulation of television and radio in Armenia.

Internews' activities related to the media legislation advocacy have not been limited to the above-mentioned initiatives, but also included production of analytical materials on the proposed amendments to the media and information legislation, including those on the freedom of information, advertising, and elections. Most of the aforementioned media legislation activities have been implemented in close cooperation with the industry and other media-related NGOs, as well as with the OSCE through its media legislation working group.

Parallel with its advocacy activities, Internews has been providing regular legal support to television and radio stations in the form of *pro bono* legal services that have included individual consultations and on-site visits. During the various elections periods in the past three years, Internews worked with TV and radio stations, training journalists on the elections law and other relevant legislation. Many stations, including Radio Van, Noyal Tapan, A1+, Ashtarak TV, Abovyan TV, Echmiadzin and others, have received legal assistance from Internews' lawyers during conflicts with the local authorities. Apart from legal advice in such cases, Internews had made numerous public statements in support of these and other TV and radio stations.

To build media professionals' awareness about the media legislation, Internews has published a series of popular brochures containing media-related laws and regulations, as well as relevant articles of Civil, Criminal, and Administrative Codes. Internews has also created and regularly updated online legal database of the basic media-related laws and regulations, commentary on the draft Media Law, as well as other documents and information related to the media legislation.

## **Public Relations, Outreach and Publications**

This is an area of development and community participation that was not part of Internews' original proposal. Yet, it was born out of necessity and became, slowly and with a very

controlled growth, a strong suit of this project. Internews' work in this area became well known to the local community of USAID implementing partners, international organizations and, of course, members of the media industry. From trainings offered to government spokespersons to media trainings in the private sector, Internews' expertise in this tangentially related communications component has become one of the more attractive offerings of this project. It has included:

- Conducting a series of PR training sessions for the Vanadzor branch of the Helsinki Association;
- Conducting PR sessions as an adjunct to the four-week and six-week TV journalism courses offered through Internews' Training Department;
- Publishing 30 articles, with photos, promoting the activities of Internews Armenia on the Internews Network's main website at [www.internews.org](http://www.internews.org);
- Publishing 20 editions of the Internews Armenia newsletter at [www.internews.am](http://www.internews.am);
- Producing more than a dozen press releases announcing various Internews and media related events.

As a result of these and many other activities, Internews has earned a reputation as a leader in setting up, designing, and managing press events and other initiatives that have expanded effective communication standards and added to the sustainability to this program.

### **Publication of professional handbooks & journalism manuals**

In 2000-2004, Internews received the rights to, translated, published more than 20 books and manuals related to the broadcast industry, distributing each publication free of charge to the entire broadcast community. These titles, which came to serve as authoritative reference guides for hundreds of Armenian media professionals, included:

- The ten golden rules of journalism. By Eric Fokhtelius – 500 copies
- Life talk-show production. Technical guide. By Irakli Glonty – 200 copies
- How to set up a Radio station. By G. Horovic
- Handbook for Broadcasters – 500 copies
- Newsroom Organizing and Management - 500 copies
- Creative TV Management - 500 copies
- Small Format TV Production - 200 copies
- Legal Handbook for Broadcasters, part 2 -500 Copies T
- Television and radio journalism and professional ethic - 500 copies
- Branding and Promotion. By Lee Hant - 500 copies
- Elements of Journalism, by Bill Kovach – 500 copies
- The Debate Book. By Ronald A. Faucheux - 500 copies
- Secrets of the radio. From A to Z. Tip of professionals - 500 copies.
- Escape from the Promised Land – A critical essay on Armenian media in the future. - 500 copies. By Paul Riger ( Vahram martirosyan) - 500 copies
- Legal Manual 2004 - 500 copies

Throughout the lifespan of the project, Internews remained the only organization in Armenia publishing professional literature for broadcasters.

## Media Research

Besides translating and distributing textbooks and other professional literature to journalists, Internews itself conducted and published numerous media studies. All of these documents were distributed free of charge among the media companies and were well received by the journalists. Internews' publications included:

1. City Media Survey in Armenia: Yerevan, Gyumri, and Vanadzor, an Audience Analysis & Market Profile
2. TV and Radio Preferences in Yerevan, a data analysis based on the public opinion monitoring and telephone surveys.
3. Television Audience of Armenia, research commissioned by Internews and conducted by Intermedia in Yerevan, Gyumri, and Vanadzor in December 2004.
4. New Information and Communication Technologies in the Armenian Media, the first attempt to analyze the role of new information and communication technologies in the development of the Armenian mass media.
5. Main Problems and Prospects for the Development of the Armenian Media, research classifying industry problems, defining its prospects, and suggesting the necessary changes for its further development.
6. Audience Preferences and Evaluation of Television Programming, research analyzing how the audience ranks TV channels and their programs and whether the media succeeds in meeting audience expectations.
7. Difficulties and Peculiarities of the Mass Media Development & Problems of the Regional TV Companies, a survey that aimed to reveal the most pressing issues in the media industry and prospects for its further development of mass media. It also addressed the problems of the regional media.
8. The Advertisement Market in Armenia, research conducted in 2002, 2003, and 2004 and aimed at estimation of the approximate volume of the advertisement market in Armenia as a whole, and in the regions in particular, as well as identifying development tendencies in advertisement in TV, radio, and print.
9. The Market of the Electronic Media, analysis of the development stages, statistics, legal regulation, and development of the electronic mass media market in Armenia in the post-Soviet period.
10. Research on the Radio Market of Gyumri and Vanadzor, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the audience attitude to the radio channels.
11. Ratings Research of the TV audience in Armenia, conducted in 2000, 2001, and 2002
12. Mass Media and Their Role in Public Life in Armenia, research to reveal the level of responsibility and public accountability in the mass media in Armenia.