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**USAID ARMENIA, SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS
STRENGTHENING PROJECT**

**ԱՄՆ ԱԶԳ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ, ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆ ԴԱՇՏՊԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ
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SUCCESS STORY

SESA Takes Lead with Active Labor Market Measures



Photos: SPSS

For employers, job fairs are one-day recruiting events that attract hundreds of job seekers with broad qualifications

On October 14, 2008, through the support of the USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project (SPSS), as well as other public and private partners, the State Employment Service Agency (SESA) of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues (MLSI) held its 4th Job Fair – this time in Gyumri. The Job Fair attracted 41 employers and over 1000 job seekers. 150 current vacancies were advertised, and employers collected CVs for anticipated openings, as well.

Armenia’s largest job fair was held in Yerevan last year with SPSS showing SESA the steps to organize it. The Yerevan fair in October 2007 attracted 5,000 job seekers and 100 employers in a venue, where labor market demand and supply could meet. The 2007 job fair gave SESA a unique opportunity to promote its infrastructures and services as it develops an active employment strategy. SPSS provided considerable employer and job seeker training so each could make the most of the opportunity.

Since October 2007, SESA has conducted 3 job fairs in May-June 2008 in Yerevan, Goris and Abovyan with active participation by its various partners, resulting in filling 223 job vacancies out of 600 within 3 months. Evaluations proved that the employers started perceiving the job fairs as an efficient human resource management tool, while providing valuable exposure of their businesses, and the job seekers could not overestimate the role of job fairs as the best facility to find jobs quickly.

Based on the success of the SESA-implemented Job fairs in 2008, six more are budgeted under State funding for 2009. Ms. Sona Harutyunyan, the Head of State Employment Service Agency, stated that Gyumri was selected in 2008 because it has the highest unemployment rate in the country, 12.9 percent. One of SESA’s purposes is to give the opportunity to every single citizen the freedom of selecting the job they want, as stipulated under the Armenian Constitution.

Job fairs allow job seekers to understand their choices. One of the main directions of USAID SPSS Project support is to build the capacity of SESA to roll out active labor measures in Armenia, which include job fairs, job clubs, group job search, employer services, labor market surveys and internal performance measures. The core management principles for active measures are customer services efficiently provided, with continuous improvement and accountability. SPSS and SESA fruitful cooperation resulted in increasing responsive approaches by SESA to the job seekers’ and employers’ needs.



Part of the problem for youth is that they don’t know the types of jobs available in their communities; job fairs are a quick tool to learn about local vacancies

Currently due to SPSS support, model office renovation with meeting space and equipment resulted in three Employment Centers throughout Armenia implementing group job search, employer seminar and job club sessions. As a result, more unemployed are finding jobs, and SPSS staff can work more efficiently to help job seekers and employers. SPSS measured over a 20 percent increase in the number of job seekers using the improved employment center services during year since October 2007.

All these endeavors lay sustainable groundwork and create the institutional conditions for the development of a labor market responsive to shifting labor demand.

USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project supports USAID Strategic Objective – investing in people, Program Element 3, Social Services and Protection of Especially Vulnerable Populations. As such, this intervention brings together the employers and job seekers promoting a fast networking process and job matching.