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Internews Azerbaijan and World Learning are pleased to announce the successful completion of the 3-month project called The Economic Costs of Corruption, funded by the United States Agency for International Development. Managed by World Learning and implemented with the technical assistance and production advice of Internews Azerbaijan, this project had three major goals:

1. Production of eight 30-second public service announcements explaining how harmful corruption is for the economy and society at large using easy to understand language and everyday life examples or case studies
2. Organizing contests among local journalists in order to select the 3 top broadcast and 3 top print pieces on the Economic Costs of Corruption
3. Organizing a half-day information session for 100 print and broadcast journalists in order to explain the contest rules and procedures, as well as to provide easy to understand information and statistics on the economic costs of corruption and tips for reporting on this topic

“We expect the Azeri public to become more aware of the economic costs of corruption and hope that the participating journalists will benefit from this project by developing their specialty reporting skills”, said William McKinney, Country Coordinator for USAID in Azerbaijan.

Eight PSAs will be aired 4 times each via the network of regional non-state TV stations operating in Tovuz, Ganja, Mingachevir, Zagatala, Sumgait, Lenkoran and Guba and at least three times on one or two private Baku based stations, in September 2003.

“We would like to make it very clear, that the project is not directed against the government or individual government representatives but will rather raise basic awareness on how corruption affects the daily lives of Azerbaijani citizens”, said Ilham Safarov, Internews’ Managing Director in Azerbaijan.

Contest winners will be provided with cash prizes in the following amounts: between \$500 and \$750 - for first place reports, \$200 for second place reports and \$100 for third place reports. The Contest’s selection committee was made up of representatives of USAID, Transparency International and the Entrepreneurs’ Development Foundation.

“We are very pleased with the content and quality of PSAs and the level of organization of the contest. We hope that this very important project will help eradicate the long-standing problem of corruption in this country”, said Telman Youlchiyev, World Learning’s Program Coordinator

The following 4 broadcast journalists were announced winners:

- 1st place - Ilkin Mammadov, 215 KL, Baku
- 2nd place - Fatma Bagirova, Space TV, Baku
- 3rd place – Halida Babayeva, Alternative TV, Ganja
- 3rd place - Ayten Aliyeva, BBC freelance correspondent

In the field of print media, 3 journalists were announced winners:

- 1st place - Rauf Nasirov, Echo Newspaper, Baku
- 2nd place – Samir Neymanoglu, Azadlig Newspaper, Baku
- 3rd place – Farman Nabiyeu, Mingachavir Isiglari, Mingachavir

Representatives of USAID, foreign embassies in Azerbaijan, INGOs and business companies attended the award ceremony and public viewing of the PSAs on September 3, 2003 in Azerbaijan cinema.

