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GEORGIA

CASE STUDY

Citizens Rally Around a Cleaner Kaspi

Youth, government cooperate to pro-actively improve city's services



Photo: Urban Institute

The local government and youth in Kaspi, Georgia, took action together to improve their municipality's environment, including volunteering to pick up trash.

"Interest in the volunteer cleaning activities was so great that students insisted on continuing," said Manana Kabanashvili, a teacher and clean-up organizer.

Telling Our Story
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Challenge

With a population of 50,000, Kaspi, like most other Georgian municipalities, is burdened by neglected infrastructure. The city, in the Shida Kartli region, is now struggling to provide basic municipal services such as parks, street lighting, and garbage collection to its citizens. One important obstacle to improving services was the low collection rate of municipal fees. As a consequence of the poor quality service due to the low collection rates, residents were illegally dumping waste on the outside of town along the Lekhura River banks.

Initiative

USAID helped the local government address this problem through improved management. With its assistance, Kaspi used performance management techniques to develop and implement a service improvement action plan. Youth were employed to conduct citizen surveys and collect objective performance data. Kaspi set up a working group including community members to identify performance indicators, set targets for improvement, and monitor progress. Concrete actions to meet these goals included establishing a municipal garbage collection organization; purchasing eight new trucks; and coordinating volunteer clean-up days conducted by youth with participation from the municipality and teachers.

Results

By focusing attention on outcomes that matter to citizens and using performance information to guide its budget allocation and management decisions, Kaspi has accomplished much. It has largely eliminated illegal dumping and cleaned the river banks. The city also created an accurate customer database, boosted the number of fee-paying residents from 500 to 7,000, and increased the percentage of residents satisfied with the solid waste collection service from 15 percent to 88 percent. At the same time, the local government has created a sustainable partnership for the future with youth by engaging them to improve the city's trash collection through systematic data collection and reporting, and volunteer activities such as the clean-up days.