

Partnership Title: Media Relations for Science Reporting and Environmental Advocacy: Facilitating Higher Education Leadership and Administration at Gorno-Altai State University

In 2003, the institutional partnership between Gorno-Altai State University (GASU) in the Russian Federation of States, Kansas State University, and The Civil Society Group LLP, received funding from USAID/ALO to improve higher education leadership and facilitate administrative transformation at GASU, the only higher education institution in the Altai Republic. GASU was forced by difficult economic conditions to discontinue its programs in journalism. Despite the present lack of formal journalism training programs, several independent newspapers and television stations have been started in recent years which offer news in both Russian and the indigenous Altaian languages. With the serious environmental and economic problems currently facing the Republic there is an urgent need to improve the ability of journalists to communicate technical information to the public. We are addressing this need by working jointly to 1) design an online journalism and media relations curriculum focusing on science reporting and environmental advocacy for working journalists and university students, 2) create a model for professional internships for university students from underserved groups, and 3) improve GASU's capacity for media relations, including the dissemination of results from university environmental monitoring programs. The project will result in the improvement and extension of university course offerings through the use of information technology applications, development of a continuing education program to address local needs, and establishment of an internship program. Local media outlets and community representatives will participate in the design of the program at GASU to insure that the resulting curriculum and intern program will meet professional and community educational needs in the Republic.