

THE USAID INDUSTRY-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

NEWSLETTE



## EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Which support from USAID, the Coding School for 1500 Women has been able to support 1500 beneficiaries from Georgia's rural areas", noted Business and Technology University Rector Nino Enukidze at a panel discussion on "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" at the 67th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York. "For them and many others, together we are building high-tech computer labs where women and girls are learning front-end and back-end development, digital product testing, UI/ UX design, various coding languages, and other skills."

The need to strengthen human capital in the ICT sector is declared in the Government's Development Strategy of Georgia - Vision 2030. The large-scale supply of skills to the labor market requires a network of strong and flexible training providers and programs that are relevant to labor market demand, international standards, and swiftly adaptable to employers' changing needs. To this end, the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program has co-invested in a significant number of industry-led ICT sector initiatives to date. In addition to the Georgian Government's training target, which will train 5,000 new ICT professionals over the next three years, the Program is committed to supplying up to 2,900 graduates to the labor market. Such a sector-wide intervention will lead to fundamental changes in the country's digital skills supply in the near future.

Through the Program's partnership with BTU, 1500 women across nine regions of Georgia have enrolled in skills training programs aligned with the needs of Georgia's ICT companies. Currently, the first cohort of 333 rural women and girls has completed its studies to enhance their digital competencies and find high-value employment. The partnership has established eight digital ICT training labs in rural areas to encourage female participation in areas along the Administrative Boundary Lines and communities with sizeable ethnic minority populations to address the expanded demand for ICT skills. BTU has since extended project coverage by offering training opportunities for rural women and girls in an additional six municipalities. Within the Coding School project, BTU has updated six training programs through the engagement of around 30 partner private companies to meet their expanding workforce needs, and developed an e-learning platform called CS-Women.com. The online platform aims to bridge the gap between English language proficiency and technology skills by providing rural women and girls with relevant educational resources and networking opportunities.

In December 2023, BTU hosted a Pitch Yourself event in Tbilisi that gathered 35 local and international companies representing technological and business sectors, as well as the beneficiaries of the first Coding School cohort. The employer companies offered more than 100 vacancies based on the beneficiaries' knowledge and experience, while the beneficiaries presented their final projects to the employers. In addition, graduates were assisted with diverse employment support services, including mentorships and career bootcamps, resulting in employment or improved employment.

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# PRIORITIZED INTERVENTIONS

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PARTNERSHIPS LAUNCHED THAT WILL ESTABLISH **243** TRAINING PROGRAMS AND TRAIN **12,283** STUDENTS



NEW TRAINING CENTERS TO BE ESTABLISHED ACROSS GEORGIA \$12.26 MILLION IN CO-INVESTMENT COMMITTED BY USAID



COMMITTED PARTNER CONTRI-BUTION \$16,37 MILLION

## INCENTIVIZING PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



## DEVELOP SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS DEMANDED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

INCREASE ACCESS TO TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL AND PRIORITY POPULATIONS





THE FIRST GEORGIAN-LANGUAGE REFERENCE BOOK ON CULINARY METHODS RELEASED THROUGH PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Culinary Academy of the Agricultural University of Georgia/Free University of Tbilisi released the first Georgian-language reference book on culinary methods. Issued as an integral part of the Program-supported Culinary and Restaurant Management Program, the book covers the basics of culinary methods, including product composition and the methods of processing ingredients.

The book's authors include young scientists in the field of food technology and engineering, as well as chefs, restaurateurs, and other culinary professionals. For more details about the book and program, please see the TV footage linked here:

Formula: https://www.facebook.com/DilaFormulaze/videos/1526356447937766 BMG: https://www.facebook.com/culinary.academy.georgia/videos/365560409490002





# BUILDING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

Georgia faces new challenges and opportunities in the energy Sector in line with its commitments under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, which requires substantial reforms and development of the energy system and will result in an enhanced legal and regulatory framework for doing business. The Programsupported partnerships aim to increase the number of highly qualified employees in the energy sector with relevant knowledge and skills to meet both these new requirements and the needs of the modern labor market.



#### PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN GEORGIA

With support from USAID, the Business Association of Georgia and its partners – Georgian Renewable Energy Development Association, Skills Agency Georgia, TATA Power Skills Development Institute, and 10 hydropower and solar energy plants and 8 colleges – are addressing the existing high demand for skilled workers in Georgia's renewable energy sector. This partnership replicates and implements two professional training programs, Hydropower Plant Operation and Maintenance and Solar Photovoltaic Installation, in eight regions of Georgia.

Eight vocational schools and 10 private companies are establishing eight sustainable partnerships in the following regions:

- Racha-Lechkumi-Kvemo Svaneti: Erkvani College, Georgian International Energy Corporation, and Chordula Hesi
- Guria: Horizonti College and Georgian Energy Development
- Adjara: Black Sea College and Adjaristsqali Georgia
- Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti: Tetnuldi College, Georgian Renewable Power Company, and Austrian Georgian Development
- Mstkheta-Mtianeti: Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili College in Stepantsminda and Dariali Energy
- Kvemo Kartli: Modusi College, Georgian Renewable Power Company, Helios Energy, Step Solar, and OHM Energy

- Kakheti: Prestizhi College, Helios Energy, Step Solar, and OHM Energy
- Imereti: Chiatura Multifunctional Center, Helios Energy, Step Solar, and OHM Energy



The USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program is partnering with the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) and its private sector partners - IG Energy Ltd, AFRY Austrian Branch, and Skills Agency Georgia – to design and institutionalize long-term formal vocational programs in Technical Maintenance of Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency and Inspection.

"I am confident that our collaborative project will play a special role, contributing significantly to the country's energy security and the training of qualified personnel. The shortage of skilled professionals is already being keenly felt in various regions of Georgia, and our joint efforts aim to address this crucial issue. We express our gratitude to USAID for its unwavering support of the energy sector in our country. Through our shared commitment, we aspire to mitigate the impact of the professional scarcity on the industry's development, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future." -Levan Vepkhvadze, Executive Director of BAG



The Program's partnership with ESCO contributes to an increase in high-value employment opportunities in the Green Economy through the development and piloting of a training program on Installation and Service of Automated Hybrid Energy Systems developed in partnership with vocational education providers Georgian Technical University and Spektri College.



#### CREATING A PIPELINE FOR EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR



The Program's partnership with Gorgia, the largest hypermarket chain for construction and home improvement materials in the South Caucasus, is establishing Gorgia Craftsmen Academy to provide validated short-term courses in plumbing, tiling, drywall installation, floor, installation, door and window installation, and roofing in five major cities of Georgia: Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, and Telavi. The courses will be based on the expertise of European partners and tailored to the needs of partner organizations in the construction industry. Accredited by the state, the courses will be available to new and existing craftsmen.



The Program's partnership with another industry leader, Element Construction, is establishing a Training Center in Tbilisi. The 13 formal and three non-formal training programs to be launched will encompass a range of fields, including Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP) Ventilation, MEP Cooling and Heating with Water Systems/Freon Systems, Quality Control in Construction, Reinforced Concrete, Construction Painting, Mechanic Plastering, Obscured Facades, Labor Safety, Polished Flooring, Polymeric Flooring, Concrete Flooring, and Hydro-Insulation.



Through Program support, industry leader BK Construction is enhancing access to vocational education and skills training opportunities in the construction sector for individuals in Georgia's Samtskhe-Javakheti region. In the new Construct2 branch to be reconstructed in Vale with Government of Georgia support, USAID co-investment will help BK Construction to introduce five industry-driven skills training programs currently available only at Construct2's Zestaponi branch.



Through Program support, Construct2 College and the leading construction companies in Georgia are establishing and delivering Heavy Construction Equipment Operator training programs in Zestaponi, Imereti Region. To this end, the College is introducing an intensive training program featuring a heavy construction equipment simulator, which will enable students to gain all necessary skills to operate and maintain the heavy construction equipment with minimal risks to health, safety, and the environment.









## REVIVING REGIONAL CATTLE FARMING IN THE RACHA HIGHLANDS

With support from USAID, Blauenstein Georgia/Blauenstein EDU together with its partners -- Gudavadze-Patarkatsishvili Foundation, Erkvani Vocational College, and the Skills Agency – is establishing two comprehensive long-term training courses in Cattle Farming and Meat Processing, as well as five short-term courses tailored to immediate industry demands. In addition, Blauenstein is contracting Swiss vocational education providers to introduce Swiss-inspired practices in the local meat industry.

## CREATING AN ICT WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE IN GEORGIA

With support from the Program, Skillwill is addressing the shortage of qualified labor in the ICT sector through the development and inclusive implementation of new short-term and long-term training programs that provide national and internationally recognized certification, supported by career care and networking components. Skillwill will develop at least 10 key private sector-led training programs that will be focused on priority areas within the software and digital marketing sector, which offer high-value employment opportunities in the ICT sector.



### DEVELOPING MARKET-DRIVEN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR HIGH-TEMPERATURE INDUSTRIES

The Program's partnership with the Rustavi-based Basalt Fibers and its partners European Business Association and Modus College is developing an innovative training program for high-temperature technology line operators that responds to the needs of a specialized group of heavy industries utilizing high-temperature melting technology as a core process. Presently, there are up to 30 production facilities across Georgia that are using similar technologies and may benefit from graduates of this new program.



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## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE VEHICLE TECHNICAL INSPECTION SECTOR

With support from USAID, Greenway Georgia and its partners – Technical Inspection for Safety Association (TISA), APPLUS+ Automotive (based in Spain), and the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee – are developing a training program for vehicle technical inspectors in line with the reform requirements stipulated under the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union. This partnership is establishing a Training Center under TISA as a sustainable mechanism for scaling up standardized training delivery and working towards national authorization of the training modules.

#### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE, TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS SECTORS

A new Program-supported partnership with Tegeta Holding and Transford/Pace Group is facilitating the expansion of Tegeta Academy, featuring two new branches in Batumi and Poti. The Batumi branch will offer six innovative long-term training programs designed for heavy and light vehicle mechanics, while the establishment of a new Tegeta Academy branch in Poti will include the development of 13 non-formal short-term training and retraining programs tailored to meet the dynamic needs of the construction industry and port operators.

TRANSFORD

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#### INNOVATIVE HYBRID TRAINING CENTERS TO BOOST RAILWAY INDUSTRY IN GEORGIA

With support from USAID and in partnership with Georgian Railway and Marabda-Kartsakhi Railway, Railway Transport College is establishing two innovative hybrid Training Centers – in Samtredia, Imereti region and in Tetritskaro, Kvemo Kartli region – to serve the needs of the railway industry and enhance access to high-quality skills training programs in rural communities. The joint project will entail the establishment of four long-term diploma programs and nine short-term formal certification programs in Tetritskaro and Samtredia. In addition, RTC will develop a distance learning portal and examination testing system to improve the learning processes. "USAID is proud of this partnership, which will contribute to a stronger and more competitive workforce in Georgia's railway sector. We are confident that our partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Railway

Transport College, and Georgian Railway, as well as with other public and private sector partners, will create valuable employment for Georgian workers while helping businesses recruit the high-skilled employees they need to grow. This advances USAID's partnership with Georgia to build a dynamic, European-integrated economy that creates prosperity and opportunity for workers, families, and communities across the country." - USAID Mission Director John A. Pennell

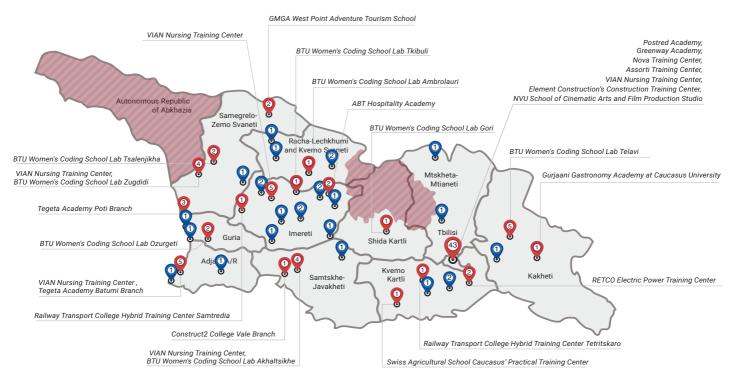
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# **BUILDING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE**

## **PROGRAM COVERAGE MAP**

#### Numbers of Grantees with Program-Supported Training Centers and/or Training Programs

All training centers newly built/renovated under the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program are listed by name (Unlabeled training centers were not built/renovated under the Skills Program, but were supported to develop new and/or upgrade existing programs)



Note: The number shown at each location is the number of grantees there that have Program-supported training centers or trainings. As many grantees have been assisted to create or upgrade multiple training programs, the number of programs is often much higher. Existing Training Centers with New/Upgraded Training Programs Newly Created Training Centers with New/Upgraded Training Programs





## LAUNCHING A NEW INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF GASTRONOMY IN KAKHETI

With support from USAID and the Government of Georgia, Caucasus University and its Spanish partner -- Basque Culinary Center -- are addressing the skills gap in and increased market demand for gastronomy industry professionals in Georgia by launching the Gurjaani Gastronomy Academy. The Government of Georgia is covering the construction of the new facility, while the other partners will support the development of skills development programs meeting international standards. This partnership will develop skills development programs meeting international standards in Culinary Arts, Bakery, Confectionary, and Food and Beverage Management. These programs, which are being created jointly by Caucasus University and its partner in San Sebastian, Spain, will offer graduates internationally recognized certificates.

## FOSTERING GEORGIAN HOSPITALITY EXCELLENCE

The Program's partnership with Academy of Business and Technology (ABT) is establishing a Georgian Hospitality Excellence School, a new educational hub for the tourism sector in West Georgia to improve access to industry-demanded high-quality training opportunities, with a particular focus on Georgia's unique hospitality features. ABT will update and improve replicated skills training programs, reflecting two main dimensions: best international practices replicated from the Marriot International Standards adopted by industry partner Paragraph Resort & Spa Shekvetili (an Autograph Collection hotel) and authentic Georgian cultural elements with a focus of unique local hospitality features.



## **BUILDING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE**

## **D** NEW VISION UNIVERSITY

#### PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL FILM PRODUCTION AND INVESTMENT IN GEORGIA

With support from USAID, New Vision University and its partner – David Lynch Graduate School of Cinematic Arts at Maharishi International University (MIU), based in Fairfield - Iowa is establishing the School of Cinematic Arts and Film Production Studio in Tbilisi and developing industry-standard skills development programs in Camera Operation, Video Editing, Lighting Design, and Film Production Management, with internationally recognized certifications awarded for each program. The graduates will be awarded a David Lynch Graduate School of Cinematic Arts certificate in addition to a professional diploma or training/vocational education certificate.



## CONNECTING GEORGIA'S TALENT WITH THE LARGEST FILM INDUSTRIES IN THE WORLD

U SAID is expanding its partnership with POSTRED to launch a new facility for POSTRED Academy, focusing on creating stateof-the-art spaces tailored to the unique needs of sound design programs. These facilities will include modern classrooms, a sound recording studio, and post-production labs equipped with industry-standard tools and software, as well as two long-term modular courses in Sound Design for Visual Media and Music for Film, along with short-term courses in Sound Engineering, Pro Tools, Sound Editing, Foley, Dialogue Editing, Mixing, Music Theory, Orchestration, and other fields. "New Vision University is delighted to embark on this joint activity with co-funding from the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program. The project includes the purchase of modern equipment so that Georgia's film production workforce is trained in accordance with international standards, which will promote international film production and investment in Georgia." - Giorgi Barkalaya, Rector of New Vision University

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## INCREASING THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN GEORGIA

Through Program support, VIAN launched a new model of engagement in the skills development system to enhance the knowledge of nurses in 17 VIAN hospitals. To streamline the adoption of the upcoming Government of Georgia regulatory framework on nursing, the partnership will establish three new post-diploma educational programs along with six newly renovated and equipped training centers, modern learning materials, and an employment promotion scheme.



### NEW PASTRY SCHOOL TO CATER THE NEEDS OF FOODSERVICE PROVIDERS

With assistance from the Program, Assorti is opening a Pastry School to sustainably work on staff development in parallel with the company's expansion. Assorti is developing a training program with two modules: Confectionary Production and Design of Pastry Products to meet the needs of foodservice providers across Georgia.



Tamar Chikava, beneficiary of the first cohort of the Coding School for 1500 Women

## TELLING OUR STORY

"USAID and BTU provided me with a new avenue to enhance my digital skills and acquire a new profession. I initiated work on a project tailored to the diverse needs of Zugdidi municipality." - Tamar Chikava, beneficiary of the first cohort of the Coding School for 1500 Women.



## OPENING UP DIGITAL HORIZONS FOR WOMEN ACROSS GEORGIA – PARTNERSHIP WITH BTU LEADS TO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN THE DIGITAL SKILLS SUPPLY

Tamar Chikava, recognized as one of the top 18 participants in Business and Technology University and USAID's "Coding School for 1500 Women" collaborative initiative, is actively engaged in the implementation of innovative municipal programs focused on social protection and gender equality. Her diverse skillset includes not only her pivotal role in municipal program coordination but also her work as a freelance graphic and UI/ UX designer. Tamar's journey into technology began with her background in graphic design. As she notes, "After studying graphic design, I developed an interest in UI/UX design, realizing it was at the intersection of creative thinking, analytical activity, and technology." Empowered by the joint BTU and USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program initiative, Tamar embarked on her own project, reshaping her future.

Through the Program's partnership with BTU, 1500 women across nine regions of Georgia are enrolled in skills training programs that align with the needs of Georgia's ICT companies. The first cohort of 333 rural women and girls have now completed their studies to enhance their digital competencies and find high-value employment. The partnership initially established eight digital ICT training labs in rural areas to encourage female participation in regions along Georgia's Administrative Boundary Lines (ABL) and communities with sizeable ethnic minority populations. Given the great demand for industry-led ICT skills trainings in Georgia, BTU has now expanded its coverage by offering training opportunities for rural women and girls in an additional six municipalities. Within the Coding School, BTU has updated six training programs through the engagement of 30 partner private companies to meet their expanding needs for qualified workers, and developed an e-learning platform called CS-Women.com (https://cs-women.com/). The online platform aims to bridge the gap between English language proficiency and technology skills by providing rural women and girls with relevant educational resources and networking opportunities. In December 2023, BTU organized Pitch Yourself, an event which gathered 35 local and international companies representing technological and business sectors, together with beneficiaries of the first Coding School student cohort. The employers informed attendees about over 100 vacancies relevant to the beneficiaries' knowledge and experience, while Coding School trainees like Tamar presented their final projects to the employers.

As Tamar notes, "USAID and BTU provided me with a new avenue to enhance my digital skills and acquire a new profession. I initiated work on a project tailored to the diverse needs of Zugdidi municipality." The application she has developed aims to offer citizens a comprehensive resource for effective time management in Zugdidi, providing information on events, points of interest, local governance, entrepreneurs, civil society, and the medical sector. Tamar emphasizes that the application will be bilingual, supporting both Georgian and English, enabling citizens from foreign countries to access the application she is crafting. Tamar is dedicated to refining the app and creating projects aligned with citizens' needs by integrating cutting-edge technologies.





#### IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF LOGISTICS AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

"A strong Logistics professional thrives in fast-paced environments and uses an analytical approach to streamline the supply chain process," says Valerian Shkubuliani, Regional Manager at Nova Logistics. "The USAID-supported training course gave me and my colleagues a broader understanding of the logistician's role in organizing and managing the supply chain for the company. We were taught to make the process as efficient as possible in working with suppliers to improve the acquisition of materials and with customers to ensure the company meets their needs. What is even more important, we are now equipped with knowledge about how to use data to analyze the current situation and measure improvements when changes are made."

Inventory management and logistics are key areas in which companies involved in production and trade can increase their competitiveness. Increased demand for quality logistics in Georgia has led to a significant shortage of qualified logistics personnel. As the majority of logistics companies note, the existing vocational education providers are not able to deliver educational programs and trainings that meet the market requirements, since they lack not only elements of modern logistics and supply chain management, but also, hands-on learning practices. To address "A strong logistics professional thrives in fast-paced environments and uses an analytical approach to streamline the supply chain process," says Valerian Shkubuliani, Regional Manager at Nova Logistics.

the problem, the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program supported Nova Ltd., one of Georgia's leaders in construction material manufacturing and supply, and its partner, the Georgian Logistics Association (GLA), to establish in-house training centers in Batumi and Tbilisi and build the capacity of staff in inventory management and logistics. Nova has long been a sector leader, with mega-centers operating in Tbilisi, Batumi and four other locations across Georgia. The company offers 40,000 product categories and employs 900 people.

"The main objective of the newly launched in-house training center is to ensure continuous education and skills upgrading of the company's logistics staff. The training center is expected to facilitate the adoption of best international practices in the logistics and supply chain management, as well as help us implement new technologies in inventory control and logistics," says Professor Giorgi Doborjginidze, Chairman of GLA and a Logistics Expert for many international organizations. GLA developed a curriculum for the training center based on the skills and knowledge gaps identified to support the development of a sustainable logistics system.

According to Edisher Khimshiashvili, Nova's General Director, "Thanks to the USAID-supported training center, the company will be able to introduce innovative management tools and practices, such as ABC/XYZ categorization of inventory and digitalization of inventory control, use of energy-efficient technology, and green logistics, among other innovations."



## KUTAISI INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

## CREATING CYBER SECURITY CAREER PATHWAYS

Participating in the USAID-supported project made me realize how much I love to share information with others, help and teach them. It also gave me the opportunity to become a cyber security trainer, work with professionals in this field, get to know them better, and receive valuable advice for my career development," says Daniel Iliaev, a 21-year-old cyber security graduate from Kutaisi International University (KIU). He developed a passion for this field in his final years of school and has been learning and growing ever since.

Daniel's work involves protecting computer networks and systems by monitoring networks for security breaches, investigating, documenting, and reporting them, and researching IT security trends. Daniel recalls one incident where he had to work for almost 48 hours to prevent the attackers from accessing individuals' credit card information: "We had to remove the malicious files and track down the attackers." He is also interested in robotics and technology, since he likes to take on new challenges as they help him discover new things and broaden his learning.

Daniel's skills and qualifications were enhanced by the support of the USAID Industry-led Skills Developent Program. With co-investment support from USAID, KIU and its partners are addressing the skills gap in, and increased market demand for, information and cyber security in Georgia. This efficient model of Daniel Iliaev is just one of 400 cyber security specialists who will have an opportunity to kickstart their career as cyber security specialists in various Georgian companies thanks to the new USAID-supported programs.

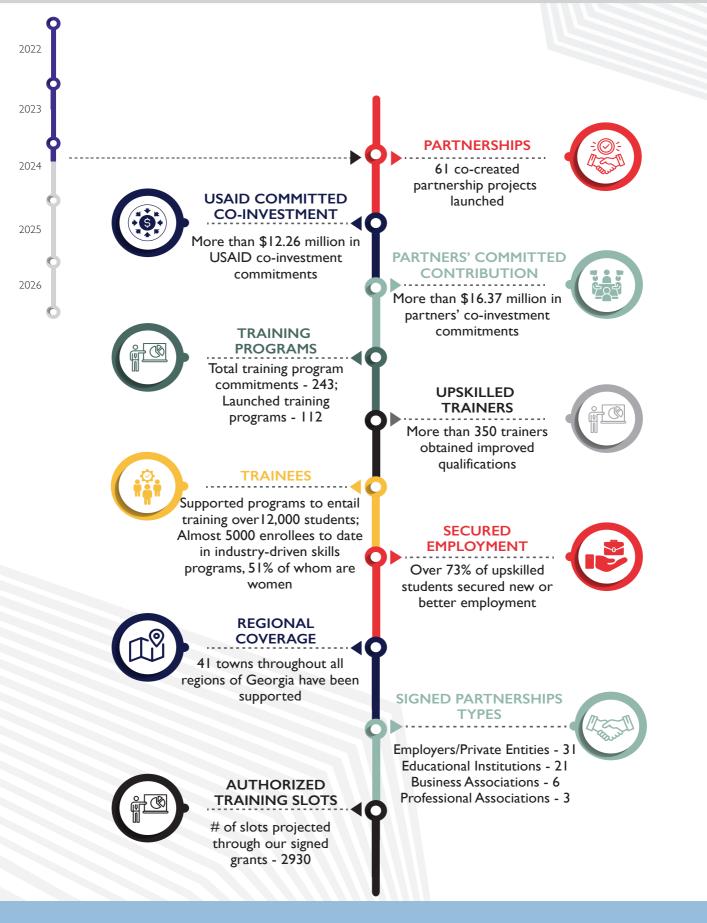
education, which is designed to address the needs of the cyber security labor market, is providing for the enrollment of at least 400 participants in three different-level short-term cyber security courses: Fundamentals of Cyber Security, Certified Ethical Hacker, and Ethical Hacker Practical Course.

KIU's initiative is an example of a well-designed sustainable solution; through partnership with the National Center for Nuclear Research, Tallinn Technical University's Computer Science Department, international security firm JAM Systems, Orient Logic LLC, and others, KIU has established a new cybersecurity center and created an internationally certified pool of cybersecurity trainers who are delivering and will continue the delivery of training programs at KIU after the project ends. In addition to ensuring international certification of trainees, KIU has joined the US-based International Council of Electronic Commerce Consultants (EC-Council), which is the world's largest cyber security technical certification body, operating in 145 countries globally.

This is just one example of the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program's co-investments of industry-led ICT sector initiatives to date. In addition to the Government of Georgia's training target, which is training 5,000 new ICT professionals over the next three years, the Program is committed to supply 2,100 ICT graduates to the labor market through various other new or upgraded ICT training programs. Thus, such a sector-wide intervention is significant and will help lead to fundamental changes in the digital skills supply in the Georgian labor market.

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# **PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS**



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