



Annual Impact Report

20
21



Overcoming Adversity and Preparing for the Future

The world is currently facing multiples crises, including raging wars, a persistent pandemic, rising authoritarianism, diminishing trust in institutions and leaders, widening inequality, underperforming education systems, and the rampant spread of misinformation.

While daunting, these challenges make IREX's work more important than ever and strengthens our resolve to make the world more just, prosperous, and inclusive. To meet this moment, we are investing in people and institutions to address critical social problems, create community change, and foster bridges between nations.

This year's annual impact report provides an overview of IREX programs, implemented in different geographies, to empower youth, cultivate leaders, strengthen institutions, and extend access to quality education and information.



Supporting the People of Ukraine

The Kremlin's deadly and destructive war on Ukraine is an attack on a sovereign nation and its citizens who have made great sacrifices to pursue their democratic aspirations.

For more than 25 years, we have worked to positively influence the lives of Ukrainians with people-centered programming. IREX programs have made a profound impact by supporting youth, extending access to quality education, enabling critical information flow, and facilitating veteran reintegration.

At the start of the invasion, IREX had more than 100 staff in Ukraine implementing an array of initiatives, including:

- The USAID-funded Ukraine National Identity through Youth program focuses on collaboration with and support of young Ukrainians as they define their own national identity and future;
- The Cohesion through Youth-Led Action program, funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. IREX fosters the integration of internally displaced young people, increases community bonds, and contributes to local and national integration plans;
- The Learn to Discern in Education program works with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science to incorporate critical information consumption skills into existing secondary school curricula and teacher training programs at pre- and in-service teacher training institutes;
- The Ukraine Media Partnership Program has developed the Ukrainian media sector's professionalism and sustainability by cultivating more than 50 partnerships between U.S. and Ukrainian media outlets; and
- The Veteran Reintegration Program, funded by the U.S. Department of State, develops targeted outreach and specialized programs to equip Ukrainian veterans for life after their military service.



In response to the invasion, IREX launched a Rapid Reaction Fund to assist with basic needs and to protect vulnerable populations in Ukraine. Accurate information about the war and its humanitarian toll must continue to be shared with the international community. To that end, IREX is equipping Ukrainian media professionals and their families with protective gear and evacuating them when necessary to ensure their voices are heard. Further, we are working to counter Kremlin-sponsored disinformation by providing cyber and information security resources to civilians and assisting Ukrainians to document the war's devastation.

While the Ukrainian people's response to Russia's unprovoked attack has been valiant, the country faces a long road to recovery. IREX will continue our efforts to meet immediate citizen needs while planning for long-term support to rebuild and strengthen Ukraine's pursuit of democracy in the war's aftermath.

Preparing for the Future by Leveraging Data to Deliver for Citizens

Development Gateway Becomes an IREX Subsidiary

In 2021, IREX partnered with Development Gateway, an organization that leverages data to improve the lives of people and their communities. That partnership grew into Development Gateway joining IREX as a subsidiary.

The partnership reaffirms IREX's belief that timely and robust data is critical to measure the performance of institutions and to the development and implementation of programs to address the challenges people around the world are facing. Together, IREX and Development Gateway will implement larger programs, create tools and services to reach new audiences, and help drive the global digital development policy agenda, all while meeting and exceeding donors' growing expectations for monitoring, evaluation, and learning.



The union of Development Gateway's focus on data and technology and IREX's focus on investing in people will empower leaders from diverse backgrounds to build more effective institutions that are worthy of public trust.

Who We Are

IREX is a rapidly growing global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world in which individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive. We work with partners in more than **100 COUNTRIES** in four areas essential to progress: cultivating leaders, empowering youth, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to quality education and information.

In **2021**, we had an annual portfolio of more than **\$71 MILLION** and a global staff of more than **600**. By the close of **2022**, we are projecting an annual portfolio of **\$107 MILLION** and more than **700** staff **WORLDWIDE**.

Engage and empower
YOUTH

Cultivate **LEADERS**
at all levels of society



Strengthen educational,
civic, and governing
INSTITUTIONS

Extend access to
QUALITY EDUCATION
and **INFORMATION**



Cultivating Leaders

IREX cultivates dynamic leaders at every level of society who bridge divides and drive positive social change.

Across IREX programs,

89%
OF PARTICIPANTS

gained skills, knowledge, connections, and experience that has helped position them as leading and trustworthy public servants in their communities.

97%
OF THE ALUMNI

of IREX's Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Pakistan reported they were empowered to address pressing challenges within their communities.

86%
OF PARTICIPANTS

in the Community Solutions Program incorporated a new strategy, approach, or model learned during the program to a community action project within their home country.



Strengthening Institutions

IREX helps institutions at every level of society become more effective, accountable, and responsive to the diverse populations they benefit.

IREX supported

500
INSTITUTIONS

to achieve their missions more effectively, accountably, better serving the public good.

Under Comunitatea Mea (My Community) in Moldova,

100%
OF THE 87 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

institutions assisted by IREX introduced measures to improve services and planning.



Empowering Youth

IREX strengthened the leadership skills, workforce readiness, and civic participation of the next generation in more than

100
COUNTRIES.

79%
OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

reported a positive change in employment status.

Extending Access to Education and Information

IREX broadens access to quality education and public information to equip citizens to successfully navigate uncertainty, complexity, and change.

IREX trained

8,250
TEACHERS

globally to incorporate problem-based learning, critical thinking, cross-cultural communications, teamwork, and self-management into their classrooms.



Unleashing the Power of Youth to Create Inclusive, Open, Democratic Societies

Ukraine National Identity through Youth (UNITY)

When Russia launched an unprovoked attack on Ukraine, the Ukraine National Identity through Youth (UNITY) program acted quickly to support Ukrainian youth. UNITY is a five-year, USAID-funded program that advances youth leadership and economic opportunities for youth.

Because of UNITY's works across Ukraine and touches millions of people through a network of partners, the program has extensive influence and a strong reputation. Days after the Russian invasion, UNITY created safe spaces for internally displaced children and youth in public libraries and reached youth with targeted campaigns dispelling war disinformation

narratives while promoting social cohesion. In the face of a treacherous war, UNITY continues to work to provide humanitarian assistance throughout Ukraine while remaining true to its mission by fostering access to improved economic and skill-building opportunities, backing efforts for youth to assume leadership roles in civil society structures, and building mechanisms to contribute to community-based problem solving.



Ukraine National Identity through Youth (UNITY)

Snapshot of Impact

73%
OF YOUTH

reported being better equipped to match employer needs and feeling more confident in their abilities to succeed in job searches after UNITY career counseling.

Nearly

3,000
PEOPLE

visited an innovative traveling media literacy exhibit that helped visitors to critically consider the information they consume, gain practical knowledge, and practice skills that build resilience to mis- and disinformation.



Building Trust in Democratic Governance

Comunitatea Mea (My Community)

Comunitatea Mea is a five-year, USAID-funded program that is building trust in local governments in Moldova by supporting their efforts to become more effective, transparent, and accountable to citizens. The program is facilitating Moldova's decentralization process, building local government capacity to meet citizen needs while strengthening confidence in the ability of democratic institutions to improve quality of life.



Comunitatea Mea (My Community)

Snapshot of Impact

1.3

MILLION CITIZENS

in **87 COMMUNITIES** empowered to meaningfully engage in local governance.

800

LOCAL CIVIL SERVANTS

trained in innovative tools for asset management.

23

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

including, street lighting, wastewater systems and sewage extension, road rehabilitation, and school renovation in partner communities.

\$7.2

MILLION

in revenue gained by partner communities because of improved asset management.



Stopping Disinformation

Learn to Discern

IREX's Learn to Discern approach helps people of all ages develop healthy habits for engaging with information, online and offline. The curriculum builds resilience to misinformation and disinformation, promotes inclusive communities by helping citizens to recognize divisive narratives and hate speech, improves young people's ability to navigate online spaces, and enables leaders to shape decisions based on facts and quality information.



Learn to Discern

Snapshot of Impact

More than

600
UKRAINIAN HIGH SCHOOLS

participated in Learn to Discern training.

Students reported that after the training, they were **25% MORE LIKELY** to check multiple news sources and demonstrated **25% BETTER** understanding of the news media and social media industries.

Participants in Jordan showed a

67%
IMPROVEMENT

in understanding news media, media analysis skills, healthy media, and information behaviors.

After Learn to Discern training in Montenegro, participants enhanced their knowledge by

23%
WHEN EVALUATING

the news and information landscape.

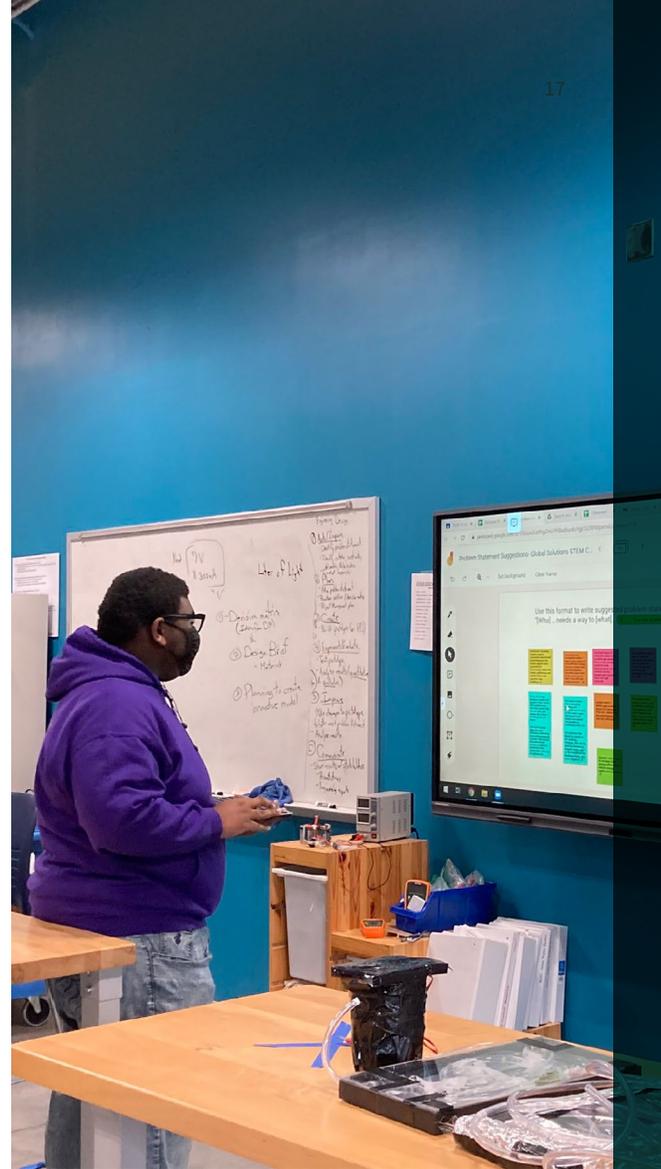


Supporting the Quest for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversifying the STEM Talent Pipeline

Sponsored and supported by Sauce Labs, a leading provider of continuous testing solutions that enable customers to deliver digital confidence, the Global Solutions STEM Challenge paired students and teachers across classrooms in the United States to collaboratively design and test science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) solutions to local and global problems. The program used a compelling STEM curriculum to inspire students, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) as well as women and girls across communities.

The program aimed to inspire participants to pursue education and careers in STEM by designing STEM-based solutions to challenges in their communities.



Recognizing the critical part role models play in breaking stereotypes, students engaged with mentors, guest speakers, and judges who are experts and professionals in the STEM fields.

Global Solutions STEM Challenge

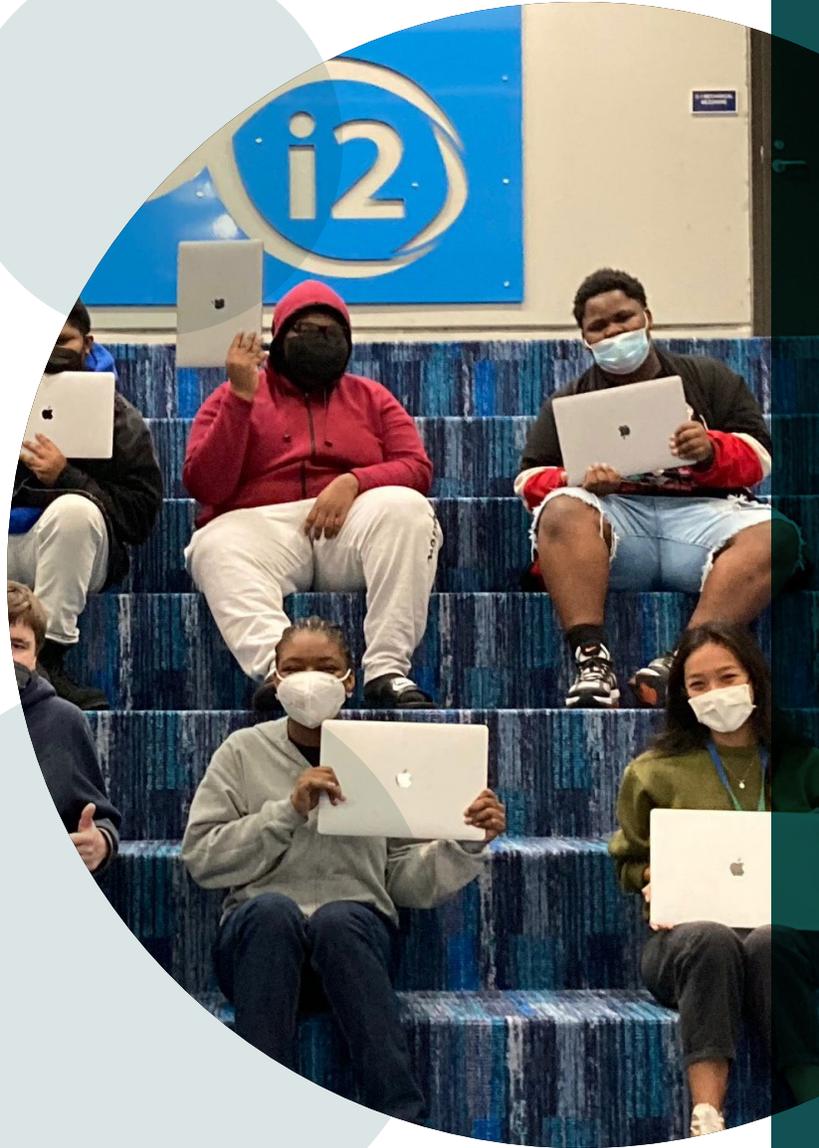
Snapshot of Impact

67%
OF PARTICIPANTS

said that they are now more likely to pursue STEM careers and to seek opportunities to participate in internships and similar science competitions.

43%
OF PARTICIPANTS

said they would continue working voluntarily on the project in the next term.



Advancing Gender Equality in Jordan

The USAID Takamol program supported gender equity and female empowerment in Jordan, particularly within the political, labor, justice, and education sectors. The program delivered in-kind assistance, training, and grants to bolster the Jordanian National Commission for Women, Jordanian government ministries and semigovernmental organizations, local organizations, and universities to expand gender equity at the policy, national, and community levels.

Snapshot of Impact

USAID Takamol teacher training on gender concepts and mainstreaming reduces gender-stereotyping in more than

5,000
CLASSROOMS

each year.

Nearly

6,000
PUBLIC-SECTOR EMPLOYEES

and leaders trained annually on gender equity concepts partnership with the Institute of Public Administration.



Supporting Migrant Workers in Asia and Latin America

With funding support from Walmart Foundation, IREX works closely with local partners in communities of origin in Asia and Latin America to reduce migrant workers' risk of exploitation.

- In Mexico, the new Ambulantes program is providing information about migration and COVID-19 safety to internal migrant agricultural workers and their families working in Oaxaca and Veracruz. Ambulantes has conducted research on the challenges faced by agricultural workers and their families, including an ongoing series of interviews with migrant workers. Ambulantes is also in the process of launching community radio programming and will soon deliver information sessions, printed materials, COVID kits, and a mural campaign to strengthen awareness of migrant workers' rights and the importance of health and safety.
- In Nepal and Myanmar, the Navigator program partners with local civil society organizations and community centers to share tailored, timely migration information and skills training with migrant workers and their families. Navigator partners convene workshops with local government officials and criminal justice actors to strengthen community support for safer migration practices.

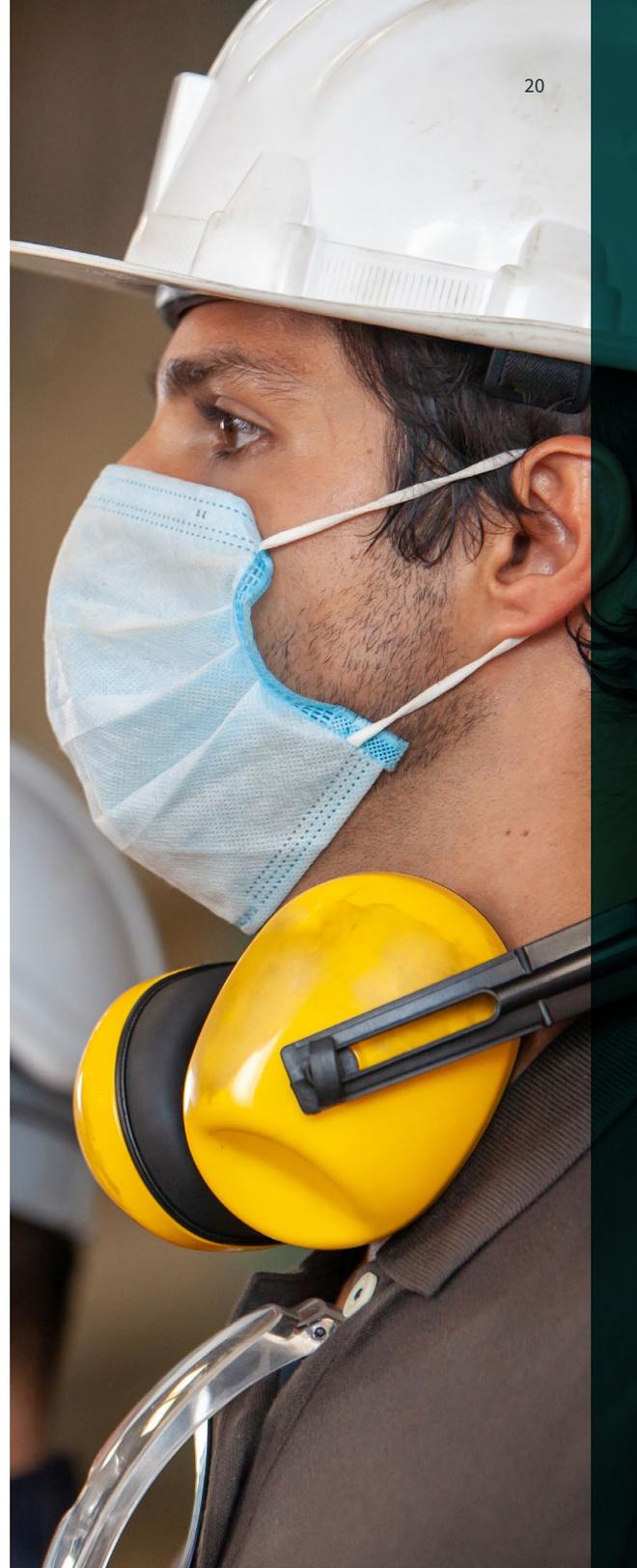
Snapshot of Impact

Since the program's launch, Navigator has:

Reached more than

79,000
PEOPLE

through workshops and information sessions about migration.



Established

48

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CORNERS

at trusted community centers, including public libraries and other community-based organizations.

Supported more than

400

GOVERNMENT

and criminal justice officials to better assist migrants and their families.

Reached over

100,000

PEOPLE

through radio PSAs and social media campaigns and supported **20 EMPLOYMENT** resource corners - despite a military coup in Myanmar and continuing pandemic impacts.



Building Communities of Leaders Who Serve Others

Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative

The Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLA) is the U.S. Department of State's flagship program for emerging entrepreneurs and business leaders from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. The program promotes mutual understanding and network building among the participants by bringing them to the U.S. for entrepreneurial leadership training and fellowships with U.S. companies and social enterprises. The program recently celebrated more than 1,000 fellows.



In addition to entrepreneurial leadership training, fellows build new skills, share best practices, and forge commercial ties. YLA alumni also have access to outbound exchanges, small grants, resources and events, as well as to exclusive opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of State.

Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative

Snapshot of Impact

873
BUSINESSES ACROSS 34 STATES

hosted YLAI professional fellows.

A year after returning from their YLAI fellowships, alumni reported:

98%

applied what they learned in the U.S.

94%

felt prepared to find funding.

84%

attracted new resources to grow their businesses.



Community Solutions Program

Sponsored by the U.S. State Department, the Community Solutions Program provides professional development to the world's best and brightest community leaders through a four-month fellowship with a U.S. nonprofit organization or a local government agency. Participants follow an integrated leadership curriculum and receive individual coaching. When the fellows return home, they apply their new skills through a small-small initiatives that the fellows implement in their communities for six months after the U.S. fellowship.



Community Solutions Program (CSP)

Snapshot of Impact

Alumni reached more than

600,000
PEOPLE

through follow-on community development initiatives implemented in their home communities utilizing the skills and knowledge gained during the fellowship.

CSP partnered with a diverse group of

350 host organizations in

129
U.S. CITIES.

98%
OF FELLOWS

concluded the program made them more effective as community leaders.



Fortifying Independent Media Outlets

Strengthening Media Systems (SMS)

Strengthening Media Systems (SMS) is a USAID-funded program that works holistically toward an independent free press in Serbia. Through capacity development, technical assistance, small grants, and mentoring, SMS enabled independent media organizations in Serbia to develop and implement new business models, tools, and techniques to grow their revenue and expand their audience, thus moving toward long-term sustainability. The program provided citizens with the quality, unbiased information they need to be better informed participants in the democratic process.



SMS also increased media independence and created a more competitive media landscape resulting in Serbian citizens receiving unbiased and timely information from professional and accountable sources.

Strengthening Media Systems (SMS)

Snapshot of Impact

An SMS supported awareness campaign to raise public awareness on the importance of independent media and to encourage independent media outlets to become more responsive to the needs of their audiences reached

6,000,000
PEOPLE

A survey following the campaign indicated its objectives were largely met, noting

38%
OF RESPONDENTS

considered independent media to be an important source of information, while **18%** were ready to support independent media outlets financially (**7% MORE THAN IN 2019**).



Program Expenditures by Region



Program Expenditures

16.3%
OVERHEAD, GENERAL &
ADMINISTRATIVE



83.7%
DIRECT PROJECT



\$71
MILLION PORTFOLIO



100
COUNTRIES



600
GLOBAL STAFF



We sincerely thank

the program participants and partners around the world whom we've had the privilege to work with. We are also grateful to the foundations, corporations, government agencies, and global citizens that make our work possible. For more than 50 years, our focus on investing in people and inspiring change has remained steady through adversity and uncertainty.

We will continue striving to create a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world.

LEARN MORE: WWW.IREX.ORG

Key Funders*

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, FOUNDATIONS, AND PRIVATE SECTOR

The Aspen Institute	LEGO Foundation
Carnegie Corporation of New York	Sauce Labs
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	University of Notre Dame
Ford Foundation	The United States Education Foundation
	Walmart Foundation

U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

U.S. Agency for International Development
U.S. Department of State

- Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations
- Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
- Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
- Bureau of Near East Affairs
- Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
- Office of Global Women's Issues
- U.S. Embassy in Albania
- U.S. Embassy in France
- U.S. Embassy in Georgia
- U.S. Embassy in Iraq
- U.S. Embassy in Jordan
- U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan
- U.S. Embassy in Moldova
- U.S. Embassy in Serbia
- U.S. Embassy in Ukraine
- U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan

PARTNER COUNTRY GOVERNMENTS AND BILATERAL AGENCIES

Association of Ukrainian Cities – Ukraine
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development – Canada
Federal Foreign Office – Germany
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office – United Kingdom
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Netherlands
The Ministry of Education – Singapore

*The funders listed contributed \$50,000 or more to sustain IREX programs and projects.



IREX is a global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world—where individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive. IREX is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

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