

Project Name: Increasing Effectiveness of Educational Reforms through Introducing Self-Governance Tools to Secondary Education
Project code: PA/13/04-13047
Donor: Open Society Georgia Foundation
Implementing Body: Liberty Institute Foundation / EPPM

Project Final report

(2005-2008)

Liberty Institute Foundation and International Institute for Education Policy, Planning & Management (EPPM) implemented a project “Increasing Effectiveness of Educational Reforms through Introducing Self-Governance Tools to Secondary Education” to support key reforms and positive changes in the education sector and to establish good governance at public schools.

The proposed project aimed to strengthen institutional and management capacity at the school level through providing boards of trustees and school principals with relevant tools for informed decision-making, improved leadership, increased transparency and accountability in the budgeting processes. Acknowledging that capacity building at various levels is the key to the success and sustainability of any reform effort, the project was committed to respond to the most urgent needs of schools in the country.

The tasks for achieving mentioned goals were:

- Building management capacity in schools, strengthening mechanisms of accountability
- Facilitating to the active involvement of public and interested parties in the decision making processes
- Conducting public outreach campaigns to raise citizens' awareness and understanding about reform challenges, thus building public confidence into the reform process.

Implementation Strategy

The project implementation strategy envisaged identification, adaptation and integration of the international experience in the field, transforming accumulated knowledge into training modules and sharing knowledge with stakeholders through series of cascade training.

During implementation the project team closely cooperated with the Ministry of Education and science, resource centers, school management, teachers and parents.

In order to ensure better coordination of project strategy and activities with the reform process underway in the education system, the project team also closely collaborated with different

departments of MoES. A coordination committee was established at the initial phase of the project which included project management and management of MoES.

The project envisaged the following activities:

- Preparing content, design and materials for training;
- Recruiting top trainers;
- Training of Top Trainers;
- Recruiting of Trainers;
- Training of Trainers;
- Training of BoTs;
- Training of school principals;
- Editing and publishing a manual for school management.

Project implementation period and coverage

Initially the project implementation period was 2005-2006. The project completion date was extended later to 2008 as the dates have been verified in accordance to the revised reform implementation plan of MoES. For example, elections of the members of BoTs have been postponed several times, and the date of elections of principals was postponed respectively. According to the initial plan elections of BoTs were scheduled for 2005, but postponed for spring 2006 and held in April-May 2006.

Number of target regions for the training was increased significantly. Tbilisi and nine other regions were included in the initial plan –Imereti (Kutaisi), Shida Kartli (Gori), Samtskhe-Javakheti (Akhaltsikhe), Kakheti (Telavi), Samegrelo (Poti; Zugdidi); , Kvemo Kartli (Rustavi), Adjara (Batumi). Due to significant interest towards the project, additional financial and human resources have been mobilized to increase the number of target regions to 24.

Stages of implementation

The project activities were implemented in two main stages:

1. Preparation stage included the following steps:

- Development of training content and materials with the help of a foreign consultants recruitment of top trainers
- Recruiting top trainers;
- Training of Top Trainers;
- Training of Trainers;
- Developing manuals for schools;
- Identifying target secondary schools.

2. Training of main stakeholders:

- Training of BoTs;
- Training of school principals.

Development of training content and materials

This step envisaged preparing support materials and training design for two separate groups – BoTs and school principals as well as gathering and generalizing relevant international experience.

In January – March the project management team carried out a desk study to analyse the structure of school management as well as the strategies for training/retraining of school managers in several former Soviet Union republics, Eastern and Western Europe and North America. Another important outcome of the study was a list of potential partners with extensive experience in management of innovative, flexible and effective systems of school management. Based on results of the study, the consultative group decided to select American and British models, relevant experts have been identified and invited.

The project team attracted additional funds to include international experts in the project. In particular, in May, 2005 with financial support of British Council, two international consultants, Bob Jay and Martin Garewood, from Great Britain were involved in the process. World Learning, with financial support of USAID (15 000 USD) contracted three expert/trainers (from the United States, Oklahoma School Board Association) - *Dr. Keith Ballard*, Executive Director of the OSSBA, *Dr. June Ehinger*, Deputy Executive Director of the OSSBA, *Terri Silver* – Program Director at OSSBA.

British experts participated in the work on the school management manual, while American experts were mostly involved in preparation of training materials and curricula. The first two months were devoted to the preparation and development of the materials for international consultants. Specifically, project staff compiled package of surveys, researches and reports made on the educational, and especially, secondary educational system of Georgia. These materials were sent to international consultants in order to enable them to have a good understanding and knowledge of Georgian educational system, including ongoing reforming process. In addition to this, project staff participated in online discussions with international consultants and provided them with the additional information and with answers on their specific questions.

The work was carried out according to the initial plan and schedule without significant delays. Minor revisions in the schedule were caused by rotation of Georgian experts, as some of them had changed their occupation during the project period.

Main outcomes of the mentioned stage of the project are as follows:

- Groups of Georgian and international experts;
- Agreed outline of the manual and training materials;
- Drafts of the manual and training handouts;
- Additional donors and partners – British Council; World Learning
- Additional funds – 22 000 USD

Selection of Trainers and Top Trainers

The project team decided to select top trainers and trainers in parallel regime. Project team has selected 50 trainers and 5 top trainers. The main duties and responsibilities of top trainers included: Attendance of series of training conducted by international consultants; Participation in the elaboration of training materials for school boards of trustees and school principles; Conducting training for trainers of the project; Consulting trainers in a process of training of school boards and school principles in the respective regions; Working on the manual.

An open competition was announced to select candidates for the position of top trainer. The selection process was carried out in several cycles during May- June 2005. Selection criteria were: a) previous experience in conducting training programs, in developing instructional materials; b) solid knowledge of field of education and awareness of the ongoing reforms in the country; c) perfect English language, writing, communication and leadership skills.

Liberty Institute and EPPM also recruited trainers both in Tbilisi and in the regions of Georgia through an open competition. The commission consisted of representatives of the organizations implementing the project. More than 300 resumes were received from applicants interested to take a position of trainer. Liberty Institute and EPPM selected 100 short-listed candidates from the cities of Tbilisi, Telavi, Batumi, Gori, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Telavi, Akhaltsikhe and Zugdidi. Selected candidates were interviewed. Selection was based on the following criteria: previous experience in conducting trainings, good knowledge of educational system and educational reform, and strong leadership and communication skills. Liberty Institute and EPPM have prepared a ranking list of interviewed trainers' candidates. The list of the trainers was finalized based on the number of participating schools in different cities and villages of Georgia.

The following persons have been selected as top trainers:

Tamar Tsirekidze, Sergo Durglishvili, Paata Chorgolashvili, Gogi Kvantaliani and Gia nozadze.

The list of trainers is attached to the report.

During the same period the project team selected 1000 target schools of the project. Based on preliminary agreement with MoES the selection process was based on results of the preliminary survey. Survey instrument (a questionnaire) was distributed in schools. According to the agreement 500 schools (out of 1000) should have been trained by the financial support of MoES. As the ministry did not finance the mentioned component, the total number of target schools changed. Instead of the remaining 500 schools, two representatives of BoTs of 771 schools and 871 school principals were trained.

Despite the extensive volume of work there were only slight changes in the initial schedule. The main problem was lack of qualified candidates (in spite of a significant number of participants in the competition).

Main outcomes of the stage are:

- 5 top trainers;
- 58 trainers
- 1000 target schools.

Training of Top Trainers

The training had two important goals: Consulting top trainers by international experts and piloting training materials. In September 2005 the selected international experts visited Georgia and conducted two week training for top trainers (September 15-29). Goals of the visit also included: preliminary meetings with selected candidates, representatives of MoES, teachers, school management, BoTs and parents to learn more about the reform and adjust training materials to the needs of potential stakeholders.

With the support of World Learning and USAID the training was organized in the hotel “Marriot” for 5 top trainers. By the decision of the project management 35 trainers also attended the initial ToT.

The training covered the following topics:

- Working with Adult Learners
- Roles and Responsibilities of the BoTs and Principals
- Teamwork and Conflicts while Performing Duties
- Ethics of Trustees and Principals
- Leadership Skill Building
- Communication, Partnership, Community Mobilization
- Conducting Effective Meetings
- Strategic Planning
- Policy (project) Writing
- Budgeting and Financial Policy
- Quality School Environment
- Human Resource Management
- Discipline Issues
- Rights of pupils, parents, teachers, administrators, trustees
- Facility Needs Planning
- Developing Action Plans
- Report Writing Skills.

At this stage of the project some changes were made in the initial schedule, which on their turn had an impact on subsequent activities. It was initially planed to conduct the training in March – April 2005, but it was held in October. The change in the schedule was caused by the delay in adoption of the law on general education in the parliament and subsequent elaboration/legalization of relevant normative acts, which should form the basic framework for the training.

Main outputs of the stage are:

- Piloted and revised training materials and handouts;
- 5 trained top trainers.

Training of trainers

There was a considerable pause in the project after the stage of preparation of top trainers and main training materials. This delay was caused by several reasons – Formation of Boards of trustees in schools turned out to be rather lengthy and complicated process, elections of principals have been postponed. Boards of Trustees were finally elected in July 2006 and relevant activities of the project were shifted to August 2006 respectively.

Despite the mentioned objective gap in the project implementation schedule, the project team managed to implement additional activities and attract additional funds.

In particular, it was decided to conduct pilot training sessions for a small group of schools to refine training strategy and materials. 3500 USD has been raised from the World Learning as the mentioned activity was not included in the initial project proposal. This additional stage of the project included the following sub-aims: adaptation and verification of training materials; four day pilot training for a small group of selected trainees, including school principals, teachers and parents; developing recommendations for changes in the project activities (if necessary).

On April 22, 2006 at the office of CTC (Center for Training and Consultancy) the ARC research group conducted a focus group to identify main topics of interest of the potential target groups of the training. On March 4-7 the pilot training was held for 16 participants. Based on results of the training the project team developed recommendations for future trainers.

In August 2006 32 and 28 trainers were trained in two cycles (August 3-13, August 22-September 1). The training was also attended by representatives of resource centers. Overall, 63 trainers were trained that exceeds the initial number of participants. Increase in number of participants was caused by expansion of the target group.

Main outputs of this stage of the project are:

Revised training materials;

Package of recommendations for future trainers;

Additional 3500 USD

64 trained trainers

Training of BoTs

The training for representatives of BoTs was held during the period from August 19 till October 2. Duration of the each cycle was 7 days. The training was held in Tbilisi and 25 regions of Georgia. Initial number of target schools was 710, although many village schools expressed an interest to participate and included in the list (self-financing mechanisms and project resources were used). 771 schools participated in total (2 representatives from each target schools). 58 representatives of resource centers also participated in the training. The training themes were discussed with great interest and many participants mentioned that the training contained interesting and new information.

Main outcomes:

More than 1500 representatives of BoTs from 771 schools trained;

58 heads of resources centers trained

Training of school principals

As it was already mentioned, the competition for principals was announced in the end of 2006. Selection process, including elections of principals by BoTs, was held in 2007. The training of elected principals started on February 17 2008 and was finished in May 29. 41 training sessions were held instead of 30 in 24 regions and 871 school principals were trained.

Main outcomes:

871 trained principals

Developing manual for schools

As it was mentioned the project team in cooperation with international experts developed a draft version of the manual for schools. The manual was piloted/revised during the training sessions and through cooperation with the MoES. It was published in 3500 copies. The project envisaged publishing only CD versions of the manual and distributing them in schools, but the project team took into consideration the fact, that some of schools still don't have computers and decided to publish hard copies of the manual. The manual will be distributed in all schools and will be accessible to all interested persons. Additionally to this in the framework of the project was published manual in participatory budgeting in schools in 2000 copies and training materials in 2500 copies.

The presentation of the manual was held on June 9, 2008 and was attended by 300 school principals, local and international organizations, representatives of the MoES and media.

Project results

The project can be considered successful due to the following reasons:

- For the first time in Georgia a comprehensive re-training of school management was organized in school management issues.
- Manual for schools was created through close cooperation with international and local experts;
- Training design and materials were elaborated based on international and local experience;
- The project was implemented by the initiative of NGO sector;
- Unique cooperation models were formed between non-governmental and governmental agencies, donors and professional unions.

63 trainers were prepared, 1542 representatives of BoTs as well as 58 representatives of resource centers and 871 school principals were trained. During the project implementation period following manuals were published: School management manual- 3500 copies; Manual in participatory

budgeting for schools- 2000 copies; training materials in 2500 copies. Apart from funds provided by the project the project team managed to raise additional 30 000 USD.

The project revealed many shortcomings and challenges associated with the process of preparing school managers. Based on the experience gained through the project EPPM and Liberty Institute will elaborate future strategy of working on the issue. It is necessary to expand existed training modules and make them more accessible to schools, it is also important to systematically revise training materials and tailor them to the needs of each particular school. EPPM and Liberty Institute are ready to work in this direction either individually or in cooperation with each other.

Financial resources: See attached financial documents.

Attachments: