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EDUCATION MANAGEMENT PROJECT

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CONTENTS

List of Acronyms iv
Executive Summary 1
Key Challenges and Achievements of the Project's Second Year 1
Section I: Introduction 6
Project Overview 6
Section II: Accomplishments by Project Component 8
Output 1: Education Workforce Skills Developed 8
Output 2: Regulatory and Policy Environment Strengthened 16

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BoT	board of trustees
BSU	Batumi State University
CTC	Center for Training and Consultancy
EMIS	education management information system
EMP	Georgia Education Management Project
ERC	Education Resource Center
ESIDA	Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency
GEDA	General Education Decentralization and Accreditation
GOG	Government of Georgia
ISU	Ilia State University
IT	information technology
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
M.Ed.	Masters in Education
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MOU	memorandum of understanding
SIS	Student Information System
SRC	school report card
TOT	training of trainers
TPDC	Teacher Professional Development Center
UCLA	University of California at Los Angeles
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID's Georgia Education Management Project (EMP) is a three-year program designed to build management capacity in the education sector by establishing an education management program for administrators supported by necessary financial and administrative policy reforms. It has two objectives: (1) improving the long-term institutional capacity of Georgia to better manage the education system and lead its transformation; and (2) ensuring the effectiveness of education policies on management, finance, and accreditation[1] through support to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), MoES educational agencies, and Education Resource Centers (ERCs). More specifically, under its first objective, the project aims to:

- Establish a master's of education administration at Ilia State University (ISU),
- Create in-service training for education administrators (e.g., school principals),
- Develop continuing education for ERC staff to strengthen their ability to manage human and financial resources to improve education at the regional level, and
- Support master's students to write theses tied to problems faced by active education leaders and administrators.

Under its second objective, the project's goals are to

- Help the MoES develop a school financing scheme that provides for equitable (though not necessarily equal funding) for all Georgian children,
- Support Georgia's decentralization process by empowering ERCs to more effectively support schools and ensuring school principals understand and have the skills to meet the Ministry's expectations for their performance, and
- Develop an Education Management Information System (EMIS) capable of collecting and analyzing data to enable the MoES to make data-driven decisions.

Key Challenges and Achievements of the Project's Second Year

During its second year of implementation, EMP addressed several challenges to ensure continued progress toward project goals. Below, we describe these challenges and how the project overcame them to continue implementation. A brief overview of project accomplishments are presented here and further detailed in Section II: Accomplishments by Project Component.

Limited demand from non-funded students. One of the biggest challenges ISU and EMP staff faced in developing the M.Ed. has been ensuring interested students have access to funding. Currently, the education sector offers virtually no jobs with salaries that justify the significant expense of the M.Ed. program. For example, 80 students began classes as part of ISU's second M.Ed. cohort in the fall of 2010. At the end of the semester, ISU was informed that only 35 students from Cohort II received state funding for two years. As a result, many registered students were not able to continue due to lack of funding. Noting these challenges, EMP has worked with ISU to create a partial solution. Together, ISU and EMP have launched a scholarship for the M.Ed. program, developing application documents, administrative forms, and evaluation rubrics to select recipients. They also created systems they can use to administer

[1] EMP has received a stop-work order on all accreditation work.

scholarship funds donated by other parties. To date, EMP has offered project-funded scholarships to 16 students, both full and partial funding. This effort has demonstrated that there are students who are willing to pay for the M.Ed. program when offered partial scholarships. In Year 3, EMP will provide additional full and partial funding to ISU students.

In addition, ISU has restructured the M.Ed. program to allow students from other disciplines to take education courses. Opening up the enrollment will allow other paying students to take these high-quality courses, both ensuring the economic viability of the courses and spreading the knowledge of education management more broadly. In the future this arrangement may mean that the M.Ed. program only graduates 30 students each year, but that the courses touch many more future teachers, administrators, and other university students.

Managing the impact of the M.Ed. program's fall start date on student enrollment. Per USAID's original request, EMP staff — in collaboration with the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and ISU — implemented an accelerated development schedule to start the M.Ed. program in the fall of 2009. This approach was successful in getting the program up and running in a very short time. However, the fall start date differs from that used by the majority of masters programs in Georgia, which generally begin in the spring. Given this circumstance, it has been challenging for EMP and ISU to convince all qualified students to apply to the program because some are not willing to invest more than half a semester in coursework before they know if they will receive state funding. Based on the scores they earn on national exams (administered during the summer), Georgian students are eligible for state-funded vouchers. Those students who will receive vouchers are not notified until November or December, well into the first semester of the M.Ed. program. This unique start time discourages some highly qualified students from beginning. In the coming year, ISU will align the M.Ed. program start date with the rest of the master's programs in the country (setting a spring start date) to help ease this situation.

Despite the challenges detailed above, the M.Ed. program has, overall, been an extraordinary success. EMP, UCLA, and ISU have developed a strong academic degree program that provides an excellent foundation for building the long-term institutional capacity in Georgia to better manage the education sector. A total of 89 students enrolled in the 1st and 2nd cohorts, and we anticipate that approximately 70 students will graduate with the skills needed to improve administration and education quality as future education-sector leaders.

Grounding student theses in real-world challenges. In Year 2, EMP and ISU completed work on the master's thesis guidelines. After significant discussions with the university, it was recognized that the typical graduate thesis was not a high-quality product, and most were considered of little value outside of fulfilling the degree requirement for the student. That is, these theses did not fulfill USAID's and ISU's goal of creating useful policy studies and research papers relevant to Georgia's education challenges. In addition, it was also clear that the traditional theses did not prepare the student for work in the education sphere. Therefore, ISU created an innovative approach to thesis development that will help students both develop practical, real-world skills and write papers useful to Georgian education institutions.

M.Ed. students' theses will be based on the action research they conduct in the second year of the program. Students will be allowed to work alone or in groups of no more than three students to conduct the research. This innovative approach not only ensures students will make the independent academic contributions required of master's holders (as observed by faculty advisors), but also helps students develop the collaborative skills that will be required of them in real-world positions as education administrators and leaders.

As a result of this practical approach, ISU's M.Ed. students will not develop 70 education policy studies and research papers. Given the collaborative option, it is likely that more than 70 students will contribute to theses; however, they will produce approximately 30 studies and papers. We believe this group arrangement is an exciting innovation in higher education in Georgia (and more broadly in the world) and will afford students a meaningful experience and produce theses that are more useful to the sector. ISU expects that this focus on action research will help distinguish the university both nationally and regionally as a leader in the field of education research.

Operating diplomatically with our counterparts. Since his appointment in December 2009, Minister Dimitri Shashkin has expressed concern regarding the perceived close ties between EMP's work with ISU and with the MoES. EMP has continuously worked with both the Ministry and ISU to develop a responsive approach to this challenge. This has become the status quo for the project and we have successfully operated within this context. For example, EMP, with USAID's guidance, changed our approach to principal training this year by severing the original connection to ISU, and looking for other partners (including TPDC) to collaborate more closely on developing training. We have also worked to expand the reach of our work with ISU by beginning collaboration with Batumi State University (BSU) and by including both BSU and Kutaisi State University in professional development opportunities provided to ISU.

Changing gears on principal training. In September 2010, the MoES announced that the Education Professional Syndicate would offer free trainings to principals and help them master the skills necessary to meet the new professional standards and improve their schools. Building on this development, EMP began to collaborate with the syndicate to roll out the EMP-designed school financial management trainings to additional principals. However, after a couple of months, the Ministry determined that the delivery of the financial training required highly qualified trainers and asked that EMP broaden its search for trainers beyond the syndicate. As a result, EMP collaborated with the MoES to select 11 highly qualified trainers to roll out the school financial management training to another 647 school principals during the winter and spring (this was in addition to the 378 trained in summer 2010 for a total of 1,025). While in the end the training program did not include the syndicate as planned, EMP worked extensively to meet the MoES' changing needs and ensure that the program design achieved its expected results while also honoring their requests.

Providing assistance to the MoES to roll out the funding formula. One of EMP's biggest accomplishments in Year 2 was the development and finalization of the new school funding formula with the Ministry. When it came time for the Ministry to roll out the formula, it initially wanted to move forward without project assistance.

However, after schools and ERCs expressed significant confusion about the new initiative, the Ministry asked EMP to provide assistance in developing tools it could use to communicate about the new formula. In addition, EMP provided comprehensive training to the Education Resource Center (ERC) heads and financial managers responsible for providing oversight and support to schools for effective financial management. EMP collaborated with the MoES in developing trainings materials, creating participant lists, selecting trainers, and developing the training schedule and trained 144 staff from all 74 ERCs in Georgia.

Managing the impact of software changes and poor IT infrastructure. As EMP embarked on the development of an education management information system (EMIS) in Year 2, the scope of the software projects expanded as the MoES more clearly identified its goals for the overall system. As a result, the software was not completed by their original completion dates, but EMP was able to provide the Ministry with support so that it will ultimately have a student information system (SIS) that is better suited to its data needs.

Additionally, as the year progressed, it became evident that the majority of schools do not have the proper hardware, infrastructure (including Internet access), and/or human resources to manage and input data into the EMIS. While this was not a surprise to project staff, members of the Ministry had differing opinions about the extent of these problems. Implementing solutions to these challenges ultimately falls outside the scope of EMP's work, and the Ministry will need to identify next steps to realize full system implementation. However, by the end of the project, EMP staff will ensure the MoES has an excellent SIS its staff can use to collect, track, and analyze large amounts of student data and create comprehensive reports to inform educational policy decision-making. EMP staff are working with the MoES to develop a roll-out plan that will allow it to gradually and effectively bring users online.

Balancing USAID's interests and MoES priorities. Work under Input 2.5 (System established for increased dialogue between MoES and non-school actors regarding reforms and quality of education) has not moved forward given its low priority with the Ministry. EMP staff proposed creating a grant fund for local organizations to increase community involvement in specific schools, simultaneously introducing a more transparent system in the Ministry for use of discretionary funds. However, our USAID COTR, Mediko Kakachia, has asked us to focus on other key project activities, and we do not plan any work under this input in Year 3.

Increasing equity in Georgian education funding. Year 2 saw the completion and rollout of the revised general education funding formula for Georgia. The revisions to the formula recognized that the previous funding system had fallen short of its goal of educational equity in funding. Rooted in the national curriculum, the new formula ensures that all schools — no matter their size, language status, or geographic isolation — have the necessary resources to implement the curriculum as required by law. Specifically, the new funding formula

- ties the per-student voucher amount to the number of students in a given school as a proxy for population density;
- provides smaller schools with base funding to ease disparities related to economies of scale;

- includes an additional coefficient for 9-12 grade students to account for the increased cost of educating a secondary school student;
- utilizes an additional coefficient for language minority schools;
- provides need-based funding for schools with less than 160 total students, and
- funds special schools based on their individual needs.

Increasing capacity for financial oversight at ERCs. This year, EMP developed policy guidelines, created a school financial oversight toolkit, and trained 144 ERC staff (ERC heads and financial managers) and 15 Ministry staff to support schools in implementing the new funding formula. As a result of this work, ERCs have taken a more proactive role in ensuring that schools are submitting financial information and not extending themselves beyond their means. The new funding formula ensured schools had the funds they needed, but ERC's support of schools ensured that the transition away from deficit funding for schools occurred smoothly. In addition, the Ministry also took proactive measures help increase the success of funding formula implementation by negotiating a national deal with the largest Georgian utility company to allow schools to make average monthly payments for utilities (thus eliminating deficits in the winter) and providing schools with funds at the beginning of each quarter to ensure that they have the funds needed to pay their bills and fulfill their mandates.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

This report is divided into two sections: an introduction and a description of project accomplishments by input. Project staff would like to express their gratitude for the continued support of USAID's technical office, Ilia State University staff, and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science. All of these partnerships have been critical to continued successful implementation.

Project Overview

In 2005, Georgia passed a new Law on General Education that promoted sweeping reforms in the way schools were run and decentralized many functions from the center out to schools. Under this law, schools are established as independent legal, public entities responsible for many administrative functions formerly housed at the MoES or local education departments. In this model of decentralization, in which schools manage themselves autonomously, each school is governed by a board of trustees (BoT) — composed of teachers, parents, high-school students, and a representative from the local government — that is responsible for authorizing financial expenditures and local implementation of the national curriculum. The 2005 law also abolished local government education departments, replacing them with local Education Resource Centers (ERCs) that serve an average of 25 schools and are ostensibly responsible for collecting data, organizing training and workshops for school staff, and overseeing the election process for school boards.

Through its implementation of this law, Georgia has made great strides in putting education into the hands of local educators and parents, while keeping quality control over educational institutions in the hands of the Ministry. However, the rapid pace of reform has led to both successes and challenges in managing a decentralized system at the national, district, and local levels and, at times, to the de facto recentralization of certain management authority. The EMP project is designed to build management capacity in the education sector to continue those successes and address those challenges. The project has two objectives.

First, to realize the goals of this ambitious decentralization plan, Georgian education administrators outside of the central Ministry — i.e., school principals, leaders of the ERCs, etc. — needed to take on new responsibilities that required they learn more robust and autonomous management skills. By helping Georgians establish a master's of education administration program as well as in-service training for active administrators, EMP is improving the long-term institutional capacity of Georgians to better manage the education system and lead its transformation.

Second, for schools across Georgia to flourish under the country's school-autonomy decentralization scheme, they need at least four elements: (1) a funding formula that provides equitable education to all Georgian students given each community's particular circumstances (i.e., dense or sparse population; rural, urban, or mountain location, etc.), (2) ERCs that are empowered to support schools effectively yet not overburdened with other responsibilities, and principals that understand and have the skills to meet Ministry expectations of their performance, (3) a way to effectively collect and communicate information about school performance (student, financial, scholastic, etc.) so that the MoES can make data-driven decisions about how to

promote education quality throughout the system, and (4) effective ways for communities to engage with their schools and boards of trustees to ensure they can both help promote as well as shape high-quality education for their children. To achieve these goals, EMP works to ensure the effectiveness of education policies on management, finance, and community participation through support to the MoES, MoES educational agencies, and ERCs. The project's logical framework is included below.

Exhibit 1. Georgia Education Management Program Logical Framework	
IMPACT: Improved quality of social services	
OUTCOME: Management capacity exists within the government to ensure provision of quality services	
Output 1: Education workforce skills developed	**Input 1.1:** Master's of education administration program established at ICU
	Input 1.2: Short courses in education administration developed for education professionals
	Input 1.3: Short courses developed for ERCs that increase their capacity in resource management and administration
	Input 1.4: Research program established in Education Administration Master's Degree program that focuses on MoES priorities
Output 2: Regulatory and policy environment strengthened	**Input 2.1:** School financial capacity strengthened
	Input 2.2: Decentralized management systems empowered through greater responsibilities of ERCs and/or other regional-level education units of the GoG in education planning and management
	Input 2.3: EMIS further developed to provide data for decision makers
	Input 2.4: Accreditation standards developed
	Input 2.5: System established for increased dialogue between MoES and non-school actors regarding reforms and quality of education

SECTION II: ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY PROJECT COMPONENT

During its second year, in collaboration with USAID and local counterparts, EMP made significant progress on all inputs (described below) included in its second-year work plan.

Output 1: Education Workforce Skills Developed

To help Georgian education administrators fulfill their responsibilities in Georgia's decentralized system, USAID's EMP project has supported the creation of several education and training programs targeted to meet the varying needs of education administrators. EMP has helped Ilia State University establish a master's in education administration degree program (whose thesis research is tied to needs of practicing education managers), worked with the Ministry and the Teacher Professional Development Center (TPDC) to develop relevant and practical training for school principals, and worked with the MoES to design appropriate training for ERC staff.

Input 1.1: Master's of education administration established at ISU

In June 2011, the first cohort of students enrolled in ISU's M.Ed. program are scheduled to graduate (19 or 22 students will graduate this year, with the other three fulfilling missing requirements and graduating in spring 2012). The chart below describes their plans after graduation.

The First Student Cohort After Two Full Years in the Program	#	%
Students planning to continue on to the Ph.D.	4	18.2
Students who would like to become a school principal	10	45.5
Students who have applied for principal examinations	6	27.3
Students who are employed	20	90.9
Among employed students: those who are satisfied with their jobs	15	75.0
Among employed students: those who plan to change their job after graduation	13	65.0
Students currently employed in education administration management–related positions	5	25.0

Develop courses and syllabi. In Year 2, ISU, EMP, and UCLA staff collaborated to design the eight courses needed to complete ISU's M.Ed. curriculum. These courses are listed below.

Year 2 Courses in M.Ed. Program	
• Practicum 3	• Social Issues in Education
• Action Research	• Politics of Education
• Operations Management 2	• Comparative International Education Policy (elective)
• Law and Financial Aspects of Education Management	• Monitoring and Evaluation in Education (elective)

To supplement this curriculum, we also helped complete master's thesis guidelines, an action research protocol, translated texts important to the field of education management and leadership, and formalized procedures for administering the M.Ed. program.

ISU's approach to the master's thesis — the culminating academic activity for the M.Ed. students — offers students a real-world experience in the collaborative project development that will be required of them as education administrators and leaders while also allowing ISU professors to evaluate individual student performance. EMP staff supported ISU in developing guidelines that allow students to work alone, in pairs, or in groups of up to three to conduct action research. This arrangement is an exciting innovation in higher education in Georgia (and more broadly in the world), and ISU expects that this focus on collaborative action research will help distinguish it both nationally and regionally as a leader in the field of education.

Given the foundational role of action research in both students' second-year coursework as well as their master's thesis, EMP supported ISU in developing an action research protocol to define ISU's expectations and standards. The protocol outlines the development of student action research projects, aligns action research with students' thesis development, advises professors how to organize research groups at schools and other educational institutions, and suggests ways to connect students' academic interests to the needs of host institutions. ISU is the first Georgian university to make action research a key element of a master's program, and they hope this focus on action research will close the gap between the practice and study of education while also enabling teachers and administrators to make research-based improvements within their institutions.

In Year 2, EMP continued work on translating texts foundational to the field of education management and leadership for use in the M.Ed. program. EMP has finished basic translations for nine books (see text box at right) and multiple readers (more than 820 pages of articles). However, given that some of specific education management concepts in these books have never been translated into Georgian before, EMP convened several workshops for translators during Year 2 and collaborated with ISU to create an online forum to discuss terminology to ensure consistency across translations. Draft translations of these books were distributed to M.Ed. professors for use in their courses during fall

Translated Texts

- Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison. Research Methods in Education, 6th edition. New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2007.
- Kate Turabian and Wayne Booth. A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, 7th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Wayne Hoy and Cecil Miskel, C. Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001.
- Robert G.Owens, Thomas C. Valesky. Organizational Behavior in Education: Adaptive Leadership and School Reform, 10th edition. Prentice Hall, 2010.
- Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal. Reframing Organizations, 4th edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
- Peter G. Northouse. Leadership Theory and Practice, 4th edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2007.
- Carlos Torres, Education, Democracy and Multiculturalism: Dilemmas of Citizenship in a Global World. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998.
- Thomas J Sergiovanni. The Principalship. A Reflective Practice Perspective, 6th edition. Allyn & Bacon, 2008.
- Gorton, Richard and Judy Alston. School Leadership and Administration: Important Concepts, Case Studies, and Simulations. McGraw-Hill,2008.

2010 and spring 2011, after which EMP will gather feedback on revisions, if any, needed to the translations (which will be finalized in Year 3). This activity is fundamentally important to developing the field of education management and leadership in Georgia, as it creates a foundation of Georgian-language academic literature.

In addition, EMP developed a program administration guidebook to document procedures for the overall management of the program. The guidebook includes procedures for developing new courses and guidelines for monitoring and evaluation, revising courses (using methods such as the semi-annual faculty review process), monthly faculty meetings, course monitoring, and evaluation indicators for student performance. All of these documents have been accepted by ISU and are a part of their current management of the program, but in Year 3 EMP will help ISU revise the evaluation guidelines with a focus on continually increasing the quality of courses and aligning the program with revised national and international accreditation standards.

Develop Georgian language writing style manual. EMP's evaluation of the M.Ed. program following its first year revealed that students were not always adequately prepared in the area of academic writing. To address this problem, EMP worked with ISU instructors to focus on writing quality in classroom assignments and also agreed to work with ISU to develop a Georgian language writing style manual. This Georgian manual draws from the *Chicago Manual of Style* and will be the first of its kind in the Georgian language. To develop the manual, EMP supported a group of experts from ISU, USAID, and EMP in an Academic Style Working Group. The group consulted a translated version of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* (which is based on the *Chicago Manual*), faculty from different ISU departments, and the publisher of ISU's academic journal as well as other outside journals as they developed content for the Georgian manual. The Georgian version will have seven chapters that focus on the writing styles appropriate to seven different types of documents that are essential to the university: books, articles, theses/dissertations, academic reviews, project reports, presentations, and academic correspondence. Each chapter will include three main parts providing specific guidance regarding the document's appropriate format, general structure, and method of citing references. First drafts of all chapters have been developed, and the working group submitted them to ISU's administration and departments for discussion and revision at the end of May. The manual will be finalized and printed in Year 3.

Continue professional development of ISU faculty During Year 2, EMP and UCLA continued to build capacity at ISU to deliver and administer a world-class graduate program in education administration and leadership. However, a key part of EMP's Year 2 approach was to use faculty meetings to allow ISU personnel to drive M.Ed. decision-making. Over the course of the year, project staff stepped back and ISU faculty assumed responsibility for daily program decisions and functions, using project staff for advice, but not for leadership. In this context, EMP and UCLA provided ISU instructors with support related to creating effective syllabi, selecting reading materials, creating class assignments, and developing sound student evaluation rubrics. In addition, UCLA staff held professional development workshops on the following issues: (1) addressing attendance/tardiness, (2) aligning the syllabus with instruction, (3) using appropriate pedagogical strategies, (4) creating a learning

environment, (5) writing an effective dissertation, and (6) conducting action research at schools.

In addition, EMP and UCLA conducted the American Education Administration Training and Practices Observation Tour for nine university professors from Ilia State, Tbilisi State, Batumi State, and Kutaisi State universities, two students from the USAID-funded ISU M.Ed. program, and two school principals who actively participate in the M.Ed. practicum program. The study tour enabled participants to investigate how UCLA manages their master's in education administration program and to meet and network with school principals in the United States to learn the skills that help them succeed in their day-to-day work. As ISU positions itself to become a research institution, this tour also helped ISU faculty learn more about managing research at an internationally recognized research-oriented university.

Increase accessibility to the M.Ed. program. During the first year of the master's program, several students dropped out because they did not receive state funding for the program and could not continue without financial support, and it became clear that many future students would find themselves in this predicament. (For example, in Year 2, 80 students were accepted into the program, but only 35 received state funding.) To address this problem, EMP allocated $35,814 to fund scholarships at ISU during Years 2 and 3 of the project. EMP worked with ISU to develop administrative procedures for overseeing the scholarship program (including evaluation rubrics to be used to select recipients and application documents). ISU selected seven people to serve on the committee that awards scholarships (the dean of the graduate office, the program coordinator, one instructor from the M.Ed. program, two representatives from USAID, and a representative from EMP). In December, the scholarship committee awarded seven full scholarships, five scholarships funded at 70 percent, and seven scholarships funded at 50 percent.

As another way to increase access to the M.Ed. program, EMP supported ISU in designing M.Ed. courses in alternate formats (one online and another in English). As the university works to broaden to reach of its program, it sees online and English-language formats as key tools. In addition, because much of the faculty do not have doctorates, ISU is looking at online formats as a way to keep their talented faculty engaged in the university as they pursue professional development opportunities (including doctoral degrees at foreign universities). The online program proved to be quite successful and ISU plans to continue developing course that are fully online as well as those that use a blended face-to-face and online approach. Unfortunately, the course taught solely in English was not a success. Even though students selected for the M.Ed. program are not required to have strong English-language proficiency, many have a respectable command of spoken English. Despite this, the complexity and amount of reading and writing required of a course taught in English proved too much for the students, and all transferred to other options after the first two weeks of the course. While this experiment was not successful for the M.Ed. program, another ISU program currently under development (the USAID-funded English-based master's in public policy) plans to use this course material.

Increase understanding of education management issues among education stakeholders. Throughout Year 2, EMP continued to sponsor public lectures by UCLA professors on topics of education administration and leadership. In addition, at

the beginning of the year, EMP organized an e-conference between three universities: Ilia State, Kutaisi State, and Batumi State. During the conference, representatives from the education departments of these universities asked questions about ISU's M.Ed. program design and research methods, and UCLA and ISU professors presented about action research methods in education programs. EMP also facilitated a visit to these regional universities by UCLA and EMP staff, where they provided information about the new master's degree program to the more than 200 people who attended two public lectures and two workshops.

Input 1.2: Short courses in education administration developed for education professionals

In Year 2, working with the TPDC, MoES, and USAID, EMP developed and implemented two rounds of practical training for school principals focused on building school principals' financial management and budgeting skills. In total, EMP trained 1,025 principals in Year 2.

Financial Management Training Topics

- Budget planning
- Budget approval
- Finance staff management and delegation of authority and responsibilities
- Financial procedures
- Budget execution
- Procurement planning and new electronic procurement regulations and procedures, process, and reporting
- Budget monitoring

Design and develop courses. EMP and CTC developed a training course (initially 24 hours over three days and then revised to 24 hours over four days) for school principals on school financial management. The training materials are based on a selection of background materials, including the textbook on school budget formation from USAID's General Education Decentralization and Accreditation (GEDA) project, the budget form prepared by USAID's EMP project, and other material developed by CTC. They include PowerPoint presentations, exercise sheets, and review questions to ensure that participants have a strong understanding of the topics listed in the textbox above. In addition, CTC developed a training manual that outlines the course purpose, objectives, and core modules; details the sessions and financial management techniques taught; and includes other support materials. This manual, as well as the PowerPoint presentations, an Excel budgeting and expenditure reporting tool (that is designed for the new MoES database, which EMP is supporting), and other background materials, were provided to participants electronically. Over the course of Year 2, training materials were updated as needed, in response to requests from the Ministry, legal changes, and participant feedback.

Training Participant Feedback	
I will definitely be able to apply the skills I learned in the course	94%
I will probably be able to apply the skills I learned in the course	6%
I would recommend the course to others	98%
I would probably recommend the course to others	2%
I was highly satisfied with the training	76%
I was mostly satisfied with the training	24%

Deliver courses (Round 1). In Quarter 1, EMP conducted a total of 17 three-day trainings for 378 participants. Each training was delivered by a team of two trainers (hired by CTC), who awarded each participant certificates of attendance following the event. Seven trainings were delivered in Tbilisi, and the other 10 were held in Bakuriani, Telavi, Ureki, and Chakvi. The trainings were conducted in a fairly traditional three-day format that

used local hotels as training sites and allowed principals to focus on the training materials without distractions. While this format was very effective, it was also recognized by the EMP team that doing training in this fashion would be unsustainable for the Ministry and would mean training could only be delivered over extended school breaks. Therefore, EMP changed the training format for Round 2 (see below) to ensure that model was more replicable throughout the school year, cost efficient, and still attractive to principals.

School financial management trainers participating in the training of trainers held in February 2011.

Train trainers for ongoing course delivery. To ensure the trainings were established as a joint EMP/MoES activity, EMP collaborated with the MoES to select 11 highly qualified trainers to roll out the school financial management training to additional school principals beginning in Quarters 3 and 4. During this period, EMP hosted a training-of-trainers session (conducted by CTC) to ensure participants understood the content of the School Financial Management Course, which had recently been updated. In addition, all trainers also attended the ERC financial training to ensure that they understood the ERCs' new responsibilities and how these were related to principal financial management.

Deliver short courses (Round 2). EMP collaborated with subcontractor CTC and modified the school financial management training course (created in Round 1) to include the latest information regarding the revised funding formula and electronic procurement guidelines. The school financial management training course remained at 24 hours duration, but was modified to fit a four-day schedule (delivered over two weekends) with six hours of training each day, and time between each weekend for principals to exercise their new skills in their schools. The trainings were conducted in sites relatively close to principals' communities, which allowed them to commute to the trainings each day. This format made the in-service trainings more accessible for busy principals who find it difficult to attend longer trainings delivered in larger cities. It also allowed training costs to be reduced significantly as the project did not pay for lodging and meals for participants. The overwhelming majority of participants stated that all the skills presented in the training were useful, referring most frequently to skills associated with budget planning, financial analysis, procurement, and monitoring techniques.

School principal training Gori ERC, Feb. 2011

For this second round, the Ministry asked that EMP invite primarily elected school principals to training sessions, because it had not yet determined how to proceed with professional development for appointed principals. As a result, approximately 80 percent of principals trained in this round (February-May 2011) were elected. Between February and May, EMP

supported the training of 647 additional principals in financial management topics (a total of 1,025 principals were trained in Year 2).

Training participants reported that they found case studies, role playing, interactive presentations, group discussions, and testing the most effective parts of the training. The majority of principals also recommended conducting these trainings for school accountants. Finally, as a result of the trainings, most participants concluded that monitoring school finances is an essential part of their work that should not be viewed as an extra activity.

Input 1.3: Short courses developed for ERCs that increase their capacity in resource management and administration

To support the ERCs' role in implementing the new funding formula and the financial management guidelines for ERCs issued by the MoES, EMP supported training for ERC heads and ERC financial managers. Over the course of Year 2, EMP trained 144 ERC staff and another 15 Ministry staff.

Develop short courses. To develop training materials, EMP collaborated with the MoES and CTC. Training materials covered the topics listed below:

- Overview of the new funding formula and its intended consequences
- ERC school financial oversight and ERCs' role in successful implementation of the revised funding formula
- New financial information software and the importance of data collection and analysis
- School finance management (budgeting and finance analysis)
- New electronic procurement regulations and procedures

Deliver short courses. As with the Round 1 principal training described above, each ERC training lasted 24 hours, split over three days. The trainings were designed to ensure that ERC staff had the capacity to fully support schools as they began to take more responsibility for their finances. EMP also included at the MoES' request staff from the Ministry's Regional Coordination, Budgetary, and Procurement divisions to ensure sustainability of the new policy. The trainings took place in CTC's office (in Tbilisi) for east Georgian participants and Zurab Jvania School of Administration (Kutaisi) for west Georgian participants. The table to the right presents the training dates for ERC trainings, the location of the training (east or west Georgia), the regions from which participants came, and the total number of participants.

Date	Location	Region	Total
Feb. 4-6	East Georgia	Tbilisi, Rustavi, Khobi	25
Feb. 11-13	East Georgia	Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli	25
	East Georgia	Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Kakheti	26
Feb. 18-20	West Georgia	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria - Adchara	27
	West Georgia	Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti-Imereti	29
Feb. 25-27	East Georgia	Shida Kartli, Afkhazeti	27
		Total	**159**

Monitor and evaluate short courses. To ensure high training quality, EMP staff monitored each training session and provided detailed feedback to trainers and CTC.

At the same time, training participants were asked to fill out an anonymous course evaluation form at the end of each session. In total, 141 evaluation sheets were collected. The survey reveals that a majority of participants were quite satisfied with the training: 83 were completely satisfied, 50 were largely satisfied, and eight were partially satisfied. In addition, 132 participants think that they will definitely apply the skills and knowledge they gained from the training, and only nine indicate uncertainty about whether they will use the new skills and knowledge. The table below describes participants' evaluation of individual training modules.

#	Module Name	Average Score (4 point scale)
1	Renewed rule on determining standard voucher amount and school funding	3.76
2	Role of Educational Recourse Centre in school financial oversight	3.80
3	Planning of school budget	3.85
4	Critical issues on school budgeting and budget analysis	3.78
5	Monitoring and evaluation of school financial reports	3.79
6	Purchasing according to the renewed rules of state procurement	3.28
	Overall Average	3.71

In Quarter 4, EMP staff conducted to evaluate ERC finance training using a phone survey with closed as well as open-ended questions. The survey aimed to monitor how ERCs have handled the newly assigned school financial oversight function: collecting school budget forms and monthly revenue/expenditure forms, reviewing them regularly, and supporting schools as necessary. The survey also aimed to examine how trainings influenced participants' attitudes towards the new funding formula. Of 148 possible, 50 ERC heads and finance specialists were contacted across Georgia.

Of surveyed participants, 100 percent reported they are highly satisfied with the training topics, logistics, and trainers and expressed a desire to attend other trainings provided by EMP. In addition, 100 percent think that the training gave them a better understanding of the new funding formula and would recommend this training to their colleagues. All surveyed participants were asked to recommend improvements to the training sessions, and many expressed a desire to involve MoES staff in all training sessions and to make the training longer. Others recommended delivering similar trainings to school financial managers. All respondents were asked to evaluate ERC training topics according to their usefulness on a 5-point scale (1 - useless to 5 - most useful). The results are as follows:

Which topics are the most useful for your daily work (5 most / 1 least useful)	5	4	3
Overview of the new funding formula and its intended consequences	94%	6%	
ERC financial oversight of schools and ERCs' role in successful implementation of the formula	88%	12%	
New financial information software and the importance of data collection and analysis	84%	14%	2%
School finance management (budgeting and finance analysis)	86%	14%	
Procurement planning, process and reporting	28%	54%	18%

Input 1.4: Research topics established with input from the Ministry for consideration by M.Ed. students

Establish research program. The M.Ed. program includes a strong research component and supports a new approach to education research through the action research used in its Practicum and Research Methodology courses. EMP and UCLA are working with ISU to connect this action research to current practical needs expressed by actors in the education system (i.e., principals, MoES staff, etc.). To this end, in Year 2, EMP supported ISU professors and students to elaborate the action research program in which faculty, students, and school representatives (research host institutions) collaboratively identify education needs and research solutions. During the course of the year, students — supported by faculty advisors — selected eight research topics and negotiated the details of these research programs with host school principals and teachers. Students visited the schools to meet the faculty there who will be members of research committee and will help students conduct their action research.

To ensure active participation from schools, EMP staff attended the initial meeting of the action research committee established in each host school. After this first meeting, student projects were further aligned with host school interests. The resulting research projects covered topics such as developing curriculum, revising student evaluation criteria, improving teaching methodology though effective use of modern library resources, improving subject departments, and ensuring effective lesson planning. The results of these action research projects will be presented at a conference to be held on June 22.

Output 2: Regulatory and Policy Environment Strengthened

Apart from trained and capable managers of its education system (i.e., school principals and ERC staff), Georgia needs the policy and other infrastructure in place to ensure that (1) the Ministry can properly monitor (and adjust if needed) education quality for all Georgian children and (2) Georgian parents have the means to monitor and shape education outcomes for their children. To achieve these goals, EMP is supporting the Ministry to (1) develop a funding formula that provides equitable education to all Georgian students given each community's particular circumstances, (2) identify ways to empower ERCs to support schools effectively and communicate to principals the standards that guide their expected performance, and (3) develop a way to effectively collect and communicate information about school performance (student, financial, scholastic, etc.) so that the MoES can make data-driven decisions about how to promote education quality throughout the system.

Input 2.1: School financial capacity strengthened

In Year 2, EMP achieved a significant contract goal: the funding formula for general education was revised to ensure a more equitable distribution of funds. In addition, EMP helped the Ministry develop policy guidelines for ERCs and tools to more accurately collect and better analyze financial data that will help the Ministry continue to monitor and revise the formula as information becomes available and the Georgian environment changes.

Improve the data collection process, develop funding formula and simulation, and facilitate new formula implementation. To work through the various issues involved in revising the funding formula, EMP supported the MoES in creating a School Finance Working Group. The working group includes staff from the MoES' Budget Division, the National Curriculum and Assessment Center, ERCs, and various schools principals. Among other things, the working group reviewed major findings from EMP's legal analysis and finance data research and discussed a new school finance structure. Working with the working group, EMP staff also supported the development of (1) budget forms that would feed data from schools into the new financial database, (2) policy guidelines to support the implementation of these tools and (3) the new formula itself.

- *Budget/expenditure forms*. EMP helped develop the new forms in Year 1, and in Year 2 piloted them in two Tbilisi schools. These schools were selected based on their financial situation (one was a deficit and one was a non-deficit school) and their current enrollment. Based on the feedback from the pilot, EMP and MoES staff finalized the forms, and they were used as the foundation of the financial database (part of the five-database portfolio) EMP was developing for the Ministry. In addition, EMP drafted detailed, step-by-step guidelines to using the new forms, which are intended to allow the school principal/accountant (and ERCs) to easily fill out the forms. This manual was reviewed by the School Finance Working Group and revised according to their suggestions.

- *New simulator and funding formula*. At the beginning of Year 2, EMP staff presented the draft formula structure to the MoES with an analysis of policy issues that would impact formula creation and sustainability. After revisions to the formula by the working group, EMP reached an agreement with the Ministry on the specifics of a formula that would be flexible in the context of Georgia's constantly changing environment and would introduce support mechanisms to ensure the formula's anticipated success. This formula was supported by Minister Dimitri Shashkin, who agreed to begin using it in 2011. However, the Minister expressed two major concerns about preliminary versions. First, he wanted to be sure that the new formula would not increase the overall school budget as resources were quite scarce within the GoG at the time. Second, he wanted to understand the budgetary impact of the formula on different segments of Georgian schools as certain kinds of change could create significant political hurdles that might erode the GoG's ability to make the necessary formula revisions. EMP agreed to run a simulation in which the new formula drew on October 2010 enrollment figures in order to help Minister Shashkin make a final decision on the funding formula.

  To conduct the simulation, EMP staff mentored MoES Budgeting Division staff in building it, using the 2010 enrollment data. As issues arose during the process, EMP staff worked with the Budgeting Division staff to identify solutions. The goal of this process was to educate and equip MoES staff with the skills and experience to continue working on the formula independently. EMP believed that this is the only way to ensure formula sustainability and develop local ownership. Following this skill-building, MoES staff successfully presented the simulator to

the Minister, his staff, and other MoES agency heads and were able to address questions and concerns raised during the meeting without EMP presence.

After internal discussion within the MoES, the formula and simulator were presented to Prime Minister Nika Gilauri and the Cabinet of Ministers at the government session. The majority of the Cabinet of Ministers provided positive feedback on the formula structure and overall goals and, in late 2010, passed it into law. The revised funding formula became effective on January 1, 2011.

Lasha Saghinadze, the head of the MoES' budget division, discusses the new funding formula structure with the EMP team.

Build capacity of the MoES and ERCs to maintain the new financing system. During Quarter 3, EMP's subcontractor, Delta Systems, finalized the school finance database and handed it over to the MoES. Delta Systems also provided training to MoES staff in using the finance software. In addition, EMP staff developed a school finance toolkit for the ERC staff that would use the school finance database. The toolkit contained school finance legislation, a detailed finance calendar (indicating MoES, Ministry of Finance, and school deadlines for specific financial activities), a school financing process chart, a revenue and expenditure forms, and guidelines on how to fill out the forms (already included in the ERC Finance Policy Guidelines). It is anticipated that a final revision of the toolkit will include individual case studies from ERCs' and principals' experiences (what worked, what didn't work, and why) to provide further assistance to ERCs in the implementation of this policy.

Support implementation of the new funding formula. During Quarter 3, in advance of the official adoption of the new funding formula by the GoG, EMP initiated a discussion with the MoES regarding the implementation of a communication strategy to support the new funding formula. The MoES was interested in the policy communication strategy, but was more concerned that a full public discussion could derail the process and therefore make it impossible to implement in January. They determined a timely implementation was the highest priority and that they would prefer to roll out the formula and then address any public concerns.

After the MoES officially announced the new financing model to ERC heads and finance specialists, EMP worked closely with the Ministry to develop key documents to assist ERCs in understanding the new formula. EMP prepared a detailed description of the relevant decree, providing concrete examples of how a school budget is calculated using the new finance regulation. EMP also distributed the budget and expenditure form manual described above.

In addition, in Quarter 4, EMP and MoES staff organized four monitoring trips to the regions to observe ERC and school performance under the new formula. In particular, their goal was to (1) observe whether ERCs were using skills acquired at the finance trainings as well as fulfilling their newly assigned duties (collecting annual budget forms, monthly revenue, and expenditure forms; analyzing the data; and supporting

schools by organizing meetings or delivering trainings as needed) and (2) identify the problems/successes that schools/ERCs are facing under the new financing system. The MoES and EMP team developed a monitoring checklist to make sure they covered all questions related to implementing the new formula and that they could compare schools based on the data they collected. The monitoring team selected regions and schools based on the diversity of their student populations.

The monitoring team observed that the ERCs visited were using many of the skills acquired at the finance trainings, and schools' needs are being regularly addressed. All sites visited were using the new revenue and expenditure form, and ERCs reported that they were working closely with schools to help them through the transition. The monitoring team asked principals and ERCs to provide feedback for the next formula revision, and ERC heads reported that multi-campus schools need extra funding as most of them are still requesting deficit funds (this issue has already been identified by the Ministry). ERC heads also reported that small schools are happy with the change, but larger schools in the regions complain about not having enough resources for school development (in previous years they had considerably more resources than were needed for basic school activities and had become accustomed being able to spend significant sums of money on extra activities, expanded curricular offerings, and basic infrastructure needs).

Continuously evaluate and refine the system. In Quarter 4, EMP and Deputy Minister Giorgi Chakhnashvili agreed that Dr. Dori Nielson would visit Georgia in Year 3 to evaluate the impact of the funding formula and discuss anticipated structural and legislative changes. In advance of this visit, EMP analyzed the data collected from ERCs regarding Georgia's 103 multi-language schools and presented it to the MoES. During meetings with MoES representatives, EMP suggested the need for an additional factor in the funding formula for non-Georgian and tri-language schools (there is currently a factor for multi-language school developed by EMP, but as more accurate data has been collected, it has become clear that this factor was not precise enough to account for these schools' specific issues). The MoES clarified that they are not willing to put more money into the multi-language schools as this could be interpreted as promotion of multi-language school organization, which the MoES does not favor (they prefer to have single-language schools where possible).

In addition, EMP staff did a more thorough analysis of the multi-campus school data. Currently, there are 319 multi-campus schools in Georgia. The vast majority of these schools are located in rural areas, and many have small student populations (52 percent of schools have less than 160 students). The majority of these schools (77 percent) only have two campuses. Finally, an analysis of the distance between the main campus and its closest satellite demonstrates that some satellite campuses are close enough to be treated as if they are effectively a part of the main building, while other campuses are so remote that they would require significant additional funds to operate. As a result of this analysis, EMP developed three funding schemes for multi-campus schools (essentially additional factors for these schools) and presented them to the MoES for consideration. On the following page we provide a brief overview of issues identified during the new formula rollout that have already been dealt with in some instances or that will be addressed in the coming year.

Issues with the New Funding Formula Identified During Rollout

Internally displaced persons (IDP) schools. Schools located near IDP settlements are overstaffed as the government has instructed them to employ IDPs. The MoES understands the need for IDP employment (and that this is the part of national policy), but at the same time they do not have the funds to support overstaffed schools. EMP suggested (1) finding alternative funding sources for IDP schools and (2) funding positions that are not directly tied to the schools' basic curricular needs outside the formula. As the total number of schools with this issue is small, it is not prudent to adapt the formula for their individual needs. The MoES anticipated solving the IDP schools issue by requesting additional government funds but so far they have not been successful. Therefore, the MoES used their old method of organizing finance committees to determine what is the actual need of particular school and who will be awarded the additional funding (above the formula). The first committee session was organized in February. EMP will work in Year 3 with the Ministry to slowly phase out these committees.

Very large buildings and very small classrooms. Very large schools buildings (built by the World Bank and often referred to as "Philharmonic schools") are difficult to maintain as their heating costs are very high and not in proportion to their other curricular costs. Again, EMP has suggested that alternative funding be found (outside of the formula) to operate these schools. On the other extreme, the problem with some small schools is that their classrooms are too small to fit 30 or more students. Schools have been advised to create larger class sizes (more than 25 students) to more efficiently utilize their funding, but some schools — despite their desire to comply — do not have the facilities to do so for all of their classes. The total number of schools with this problem has not yet been identified, but it is anticipated that the number is not large. EMP suggested investigating the issue further but the MoES prefers to provide funding on a case-by-case basis. At this point, they believe this strategy is most likely to deliver cost savings.

Unregistered students with no ID. At the beginning of January, the new student database system identified more than 16,000 students who did not have birth certificates and, therefore, are not registered in the civil registry. These students are reported by schools, and it is believed that they attend classes, but there is no systematic way to ensure that they do so. Up until now, the MoES paid for unregistered reported students through vouchers. However, in January, Deputy Minister Chakhnashvili announced that the government will not provide voucher funding for unregistered students and that it is the parents' and schools' responsibility to complete the registration. Currently, based on MoES data, the number of unregistered students is less than 9,000. However, the registration process has not proceeded as quickly as the MoES was anticipating. The MoES Statistics and Analytical Department reports that data from newly registered students arrives each day but the process is quite slow. In addition, they do not have an identified completion date for the submission of registrations because the MoES did not give parents/schools any deadline. While EMP respects the Ministry's strong effort to get all children registered, we did express strong concerns with this policy as it could lead to children being forced out of schools. Therefore, the Ministry clarified that schools would not receive funding, but were still responsible under the law to educate all their children. While this is not a perfect solution, it at least puts the official emphasis on schooling first. EMP will continue to work with the ministry on this issue in Year 3.

Multi-language/multi-campus schools. Under the new funding model, multi-language schools that have dual or tri-language programs (e.g., Armenian and Georgian programs) come up short of funds. In addition, schools that are forced to operate separate campuses are unable to increase class sizes in some cases (because the relevant students are geographically separated). They are also facing funding shortfalls based on national curriculum requirements. The MoES considers this issue a top priority and asked EMP to analyze multi-language/multi-campus school data to identify a solution that maintains the integrity of the revised formula.

The main focus of EMP's work on the funding formula has been to help ensure that children are not left behind in this competitive voucher–funded education environment. The revised funding formula contains six new components, each created to rationalize funding vis-à-vis the national curriculum and ensure that disadvantaged communities are provided with resources necessary to meet curricular requirements in an equitable way. These components are described in the text box on the next page.

Six Components Added to the Revised Funding Formula

1) **Policy change**: the per-student voucher amount is tied to number of students in a given school
2) **Funding structure**: a school receives vouchers in addition to a base funding
3) **Grade coefficient**: an additional coefficient for 9-12 grade students is introduced
4) **Non-Georgian school's coefficient**: an additional coefficient for a school with a majority non-Georgian student is introduced
5) **Small school (1-160 students) funding**: funding for such schools is calculated based on their needs
6) **Special/boarding school funding**: funding for such schools is calculated based on their individual needs

Input 2.2: Decentralized management systems empowered through greater responsibilities of ERCs and/or other regional-level education units of the GoG in education planning and management

In Year 2, EMP achieved a significant milestone when the MoES adopted school principal standards and assigned three new functions to ERCs to better support decentralization policy: (1) Oversee school financial compliance with official norms and regulations; (2) Facilitate the implementation of school report cards; and (3) Support BoT activities. EMP focused heavily on the development of policy guidelines and training courses for the new financial oversight policy.

ERC heads provide input regarding the results of ERC study and anticipated policy changes in decentralized education management.

Develop new policy and/or legislation to empower ERCs and improve their effectiveness. In Quarter 1, EMP consultant Dr. Alec Gershberg and EMP staff prepared the first draft of the ERC research paper entitled "Decision-making and accountability in Georgia's education system: The roles of Educational Resource Centers." Because of the sensitive nature and impact this research may have on decentralized management policy, EMP invited MoES and USAID representatives to a workshop to review the findings, incorporate feedback, and reach consensus on next steps. EMP incorporated feedback from ERCs and other attendees into a subsequent version of the ERC report and presented this final draft version at a broad stakeholder meeting conducted at the MoES, which also included other international donors and national education centers. This final round of feedback has been incorporated into a final version of the report and an accompanying policy paper, which offered three policy alternatives for the MoES to improve education accountability and strengthen the school autonomy model of decentralization.

Policy Alternatives for the MoES to Improve School Accountability and Education Quality

Policy Alternative Number 1 - Roles and responsibilities of the system players (MoES, ERCs, BOTs, local governments) remains the same (status quo).

Policy Alternative Number 2 - To improve school accountability and ultimately education quality, the MoES delegates targeted decision-making power to ERCs, decentralizes new targeted functions to ERCs and BOTs, and clarifies ERC roles and responsibilities.

Policy Alternative Number 3 - To improve school accountability and ultimately education quality, the MoES decentralizes new targeted functions to ERCs (e.g., supporting the principal evaluation process using new principal standards; overseeing school financial management; supporting BOTs) and clarifies ERC roles and responsibilities. Delegating targeted decision-making power to ERCs would only be considered in the future once ERCs' performance with respect to its new functions and clearer roles was reviewed.

As described in Alternative 3, EMP proposed that the MoES assign three additional functions to ERCs: (1) overseeing school financial compliance, (2) facilitating the implementation of school report cards, and (3) supporting BoT activities. The Ministry agreed ERCs should take on these three functions. In support of the first new function (and to facilitate the roll-out of the new funding formula), EMP developed policy guidelines for ERCs' oversight of schools' financial effectiveness and efficacy (as described above under Input 2.1).

- *School report cards (SRCs)*. The MoES has prepared preliminary indicators for school evaluation and sent out self-assessment surveys to schools. Since the MoES' branding initiative and the SRCs have the same goals — to provide parents with more information regarding schools to enable them to make more informed choices, increase healthy competition among schools, and incentivize schools to generate better educational outcomes — they should be implemented in parallel. As the MoES has yet to decide what information should be shared or how it will be distributed using branding or SRCs, EMP suggested that the Ministry use school report cards as a communication tool for sharing performance and other data with parents. In this scenario, the branding team would be in charge of collecting data (through ERCs and their access to the EMIS), and the EMIS would generate standard report cards that would be available online (on the MoES' website) and at the ERCs. The ERCs would play a key role in disseminating this information to the public, which would build parents' knowledge of and relationship with ERCs. As SRCs were published, ERCs would become parents' source of consolidated and unbiased information about schools to help them make the right choice for their children. The Ministry agreed there should be a close collaboration with the branding team on this issue. Geta Mumladze (the head of the administration) asked the PR department (who is in charge of branding) to collaborate with EMP and strongly supports the SRC initiative.

  As of this writing, EMP's work on branding is moving forward quickly. The Ministry has shared with us the questionnaire that was filled out by schools for their branding program. EMP will work on the content (data) and visual outline of the report card and will share a first draft with the MoES' branding group this summer. The report card should be ready for publication in the first quarter of 2012 (since parents choose their children's school between March and May).

- *Boards of trustees (BoTs).* In Quarter 4, EMP staff began more detailed research into BoT policy reform. The staff reviewed the detailed reports from the ERC focus groups conducted in spring 2010 to further understand how BoTs are functioning from the perspectives of principals, teachers, ERCs, and BoT members. Generally, the focus-group report revealed that the function of an individual BoT is highly dependent on the school principal's views regarding how they should function (i.e., the principal typically guides BoT activities). In addition, the report pointed to a general lack of skills, and even illiteracy, among BoT members, which makes it difficult to get the BoTs to do more than the most basic tasks. Finally, it is evident that BoTs are generally apathetic toward their responsibilities, given that they are often seen as not adding value to schools. The focus groups described BoTs as not having initiative, motivation, accountability, expectations, or personal interest in their duties. While these are general comments, it is clear that it is difficult to get BoTs to meaningfully support schools.

Develop principal standards. In Quarter 2, to support the TPDC in developing principal performance standards that moved beyond basic process and procedures to address outcomes, EMP collaborated with the World Bank to organize a study tour to Vanderbilt University (United States) to provide TPDC staff with an opportunity to observe the successful implementation and practical use of principal standards in functioning schools. The result of the trip (after participants returned to Georgia) was an extensive two days of discussions within the Standards Working Group, which produced a finalized and highly improved set of standards. In November 2010, the government of Georgia approved the public school principal standards. The photos below bookend the standards development process. It began in the Quarter 1 (Year 2), as the principal standards working group received training and guidance from consultants Rick Hess (American Enterprise Institute) and Pearl Sims (Vanderbilt University) and ended in Quarter 2 with extensive meetings within the Ministry to finalize the standards.

Member of the principal standards working group participate in training provided by EMP consultant Rick Hess (June 22, 2010).

(Clockwise from lower right) Syndicate President Tato Shavshishvili, TPDC Deputy Director Teona Kupatadze, TPDC Director Gia Mamulashvili, and Standards Coordinator Nino Elbakidze preparing the final principal standards revision.

Input 2.3: EMIS further developed to provide data for decision makers

Three EMIS MOUs

1. MoU between the MoES and EMP signed by the Deputy Minister in support of creation of five databases that later will be used by the SIS;
2. MoU between the MoES and USAID, signed by the Minister in support of introduction and institutionalization of the SIS; and
3. MoU between the Deputy Ministry and the EMP in relation to the procurement, installation, and maintenance of the basic equipment for the Data Center.

During Year 2, EMP made significant progress on the development and implementation of the EMIS system for the Ministry. Specifically, the project saw the Ministry exceed its original commitment to support the SIS: the MoES has signed three MOUs regarding EMP's work (see text box at right), collaborated with USAID's FORECAST project to develop a database at ESIDA, and has contributed approximately $1 million to creating a comprehensive data center. Both parties met the commitments stipulated in the MoUs: the software for the five databases is fully functional, the SIS software is almost completed, and the Data Center is operational.

Develop and pilot the Student Information System (SIS). In Quarter 1, Delta Systems — in close collaboration with EMP and the MoES Working Group — finalized the SIS technical description. Following that, Delta Systems began developing the prototype (actual writing of code for the base SIS module). The finalization of the SIS technical description and the beginning of development of the prototype revealed a need to establish new and/or revise existing MoES policies and procedures related to student registration and enrollment, schools, ERCs, and curriculum-related policies. Currently, MoES is revising the list of proposed and required changes. Below is a snapshot of the most important changes implemented by the MoES:

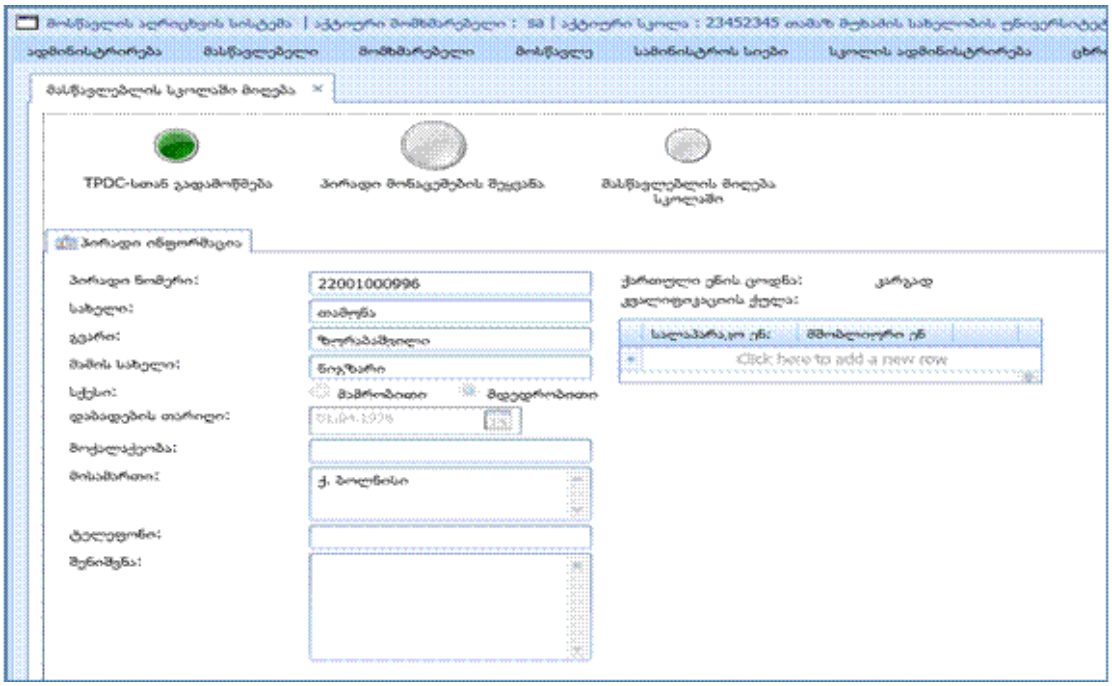
- New coding system for schools developed in which each code would identify the region of the school and its associated ERC.
- Reporting periods defined for enrollment, attendance, and academic performance that also consider schools working in offline mode through ERCs.
- New functions and responsibilities for ERCs defined in the SIS, including responsibilities for uploading offline school data.
- General categories standardized for elective classes offered by schools to ensure they are properly recorded within the SIS.
- Grade promotion periods defined.
- Working instructions and revisions in job descriptions completed for schools, ERCs and MoES staff, as well as SIS access and authority levels.

By Quarter 3, Delta had completed development of the software, which includes:

- Teacher module, including teacher registration and synchronization with TPDC;
- Student module, including student demographic information, synchronization with CRA, cross-checking of student data with the central database, association of student data with the school and class, student enrollment and withdrawal information including procedure chain verified and approved by the MoES, student attendance, student assessment and achievement management, and student retention;
- System administration module for the MoES central management; and

- School administrator module, including school schedule, year closing and exam assessment.

The screenshot below illustrates the look of the software:



In Quarter 3, EMP organized meetings with teachers and principals to discuss the daily, weekly, monthly, semestral, and annual reports the SIS will generate to be sure they meet school needs. The SIS reporting function will enable schools to produce reports on daily attendance, daily grading, teaching hours, student flows (retention and dropouts), average class size, and number of students per grade and per class. The SIS will generate reports that will consider World Bank and UNESCO educational indicators. In Quarter 4, Delta Systems created templates for school reports, as described below.

Daily Attendance	Student attendance in school (percentage)
	Class attendance (percentage)
	Student attendance per course (percentage)
Daily Grading	Average grade per school
	Average grade per class
	Average grade per course
	Average grade given by teacher
Teaching Hours (compliance with national education plan)	Per course
Student Flow	Retention of students by school (percentage)
	Number of dropouts by dropout reason (exclusion, transfer out, etc.)
Average Class Size	Per school
Number of Students	Per school

In Quarter 3, the Ministry also selected the 20 schools in which the SIS would be piloted and sent them a detailed instruction with SIS description, the purpose of the pilot, and tasks to complete before the trainings, including updated student and

teacher lists, and classroom numbering. The trainings also included visits to each school to ensure that they have the software installed and understand the tasks and the task schedule. In addition, Delta Systems conducted trainings for 42 MoES, ERC, and school staff to prepare for the pilot. Prior to the trainings, Delta Systems completed the SIS Users' Manual, which was distributed to the participating schools on CDs and in hard copies.

The pilot began in Quarter 4. In April, the MoES called a meeting with participating schools to gather feedback. Overall, the system testers expressed satisfaction with the system and commented that it was clear that the new system would make their workloads easier to manage. As for the software itself, EMP has identified three areas for continued work: pending development needs, software modifications, and application bugs. These areas were addressed during Quarter 4. The pilot also identified two other areas that need immediate attention, because they can help address the problems described above: new administrative regulations and staffing issues.

- *Administrative regulations*. One interesting finding of the pilot was that mostly IT staff and principals are testing the SIS system with very few teachers participating. The Ministry's position is that they could not get teachers to participate because teachers felt testing the SIS was outside their job description so they should be compensated for it. However, teachers are still required to carry out tasks like generating attendance and grading information. The only change is the manner in which these tasks are conducted. It is important that the Ministry find a way to involve teaching staff in the SIS pilot and ensure that their data needs are met by the system. By having all members of a school's staff participate, the Ministry can ensure the system addresses all the needs of the MoES and will be accepted by schools more easily. This issue will likely require the Ministry to develop administrative regulations detailing the expectations of all levels of staff in the use of the system.

- *Support staff*. The Ministry needs more support staff than it currently has in place to support the SIS system. As only two people (one from the MoES and one from Delta Systems) are available to support the pilot schools, there were complaints about the quality and timeliness of support. The Ministry intends to put together a help desk of six or seven people, who should be hired as soon as possible so that they can also participate in the testing phase of the software. However, the help desk will only meet a portion of the need as the people manning the desk will not travel into the field to provide assistance. The Ministry also needs to increase its field staff, who will likely be those 300 IT managers selected by the MoES for the schools.

Develop the database portfolio. During Quarter 1, Delta completed development of all portfolio modules, including creating a data-import procedure for ERCs, schools, and student cards, as well as school principals and board-of-trustee (BoT) databases. Each draft module was first shared with the Ministry and then finalized. The software has been installed on the MoES' server, and the import of data has begun for all modules. In addition, an agreement was reached with the Civil Registry Agency (CRA) to allow all student data to be verified against CRA records. During Quarter 2,

Delta presented the software to the MoES, and the MoES recommended minor changes related to formatting, linguistic choices, and reporting templates.

Delta Systems prepared a set of users' manuals for three target groups: MoES database administrators, ERC staff, and ESIDA staff. In addition, in Quarter 2, Delta trained four staff members of the MoES' IT Department, about 10 staff from the MoES' Regional Coordination Division, and several staff members.

ERCs and schools have been instructed on how, when, and in what format to collect, consolidate, and submit to the IT Department data related to school financial status, general school data, and student data. Other modules of the database portfolio — such as the databases covering ERCs, school principals, and boards of trustees — will be solely managed by the Ministry. Additionally, the introduction of the new student database will result in much more accurate and valid student information. The Ministry's Legal Department plans to work on legislative changes to the provision on collection of statistical information to bring it up-to-date with the new database.

Promote growth of the MoES' EMIS. While EMP does not have the resources to support the development of every EMIS module the Ministry desires, we have committed to assist the Ministry to ensure that modules are integrated and as cross-functional as possible.

- *Data warehouse for EMIS*. In Quarter 2, EMP procured equipment for the MoES' Data Center. The following month, the MoES decided to invest considerable resources into the creation of a stand-alone fully functional data center that will link all existing information systems of the Ministry proper and its agencies (e.g., the TPDC), and those under development (i.e., the Database Portfolio, SIS, Vocational Education Management System, Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Management System). The MoES allocated one floor of a four-story building to the data center and will likely give it the status of public legal entity under the auspices of the MoES system. While the MoES' main building will still have a small IT administration team for maintenance purposes, all statistical and analytical functions (as well as software development functions) will be housed in the new entity, and its staffing is likely to be increased to 25 people. In Quarter 3, the EMP-purchased hardware was installed in the MoES' Data Center.

- *Collaboration with FORECAST*. In Quarter 3, EMP in collaboration with FORECAST held a one-day Education Management Information System Retreat for the Ministry and its agencies to discuss the current status of the numerous EMIS projects implemented with USAID support and by the MoES directly. The retreat was attended by USAID, Chemonics, World Learning, Delta Systems, and UGT (the latter two are EMIS software developers), Deputy Minister Giorgi Chakhnashvili, and representatives from the MoES, ESIDA, and NAEQ. The immediate outcome of the retreat was a meeting hosted by EMP to discuss and agree on the unique educational facility (school, vocational education, higher education, etc.) code that will be used by all agencies within the Ministry. The agreement was reached and NAEQ will facilitate an inter-ministerial order to enforce the decision.

Revisit human resource support required for the SIS. Since the introduction of a new IT system requires human resources with specific skills, EMP has taken a blended approach in addressing the MoES' need for additional capacity. This approach has included providing third-party, on-the-job training and special training.

For example, in Quarter 1, EMP organized a U.S.-based Managing Data Observation Tour in Washington, D.C., Tucson (AZ), and Redmond (WA) for 14 representatives of the MoES (staff from MoES departments and ERCs as well as school principals) to learn how EMIS systems are used to support data-based decision making. The study tour, facilitated by Jesse Rodriguez and Chemonics' home office staff, was hosted by different educational facilities, such as districts of education; elementary, middle, and high schools; and education associations in Washington, Tucson, and Bellevue (WA) to demonstrate the importance of data collection and management, the process of data-driven decision making, and the impact of technology on education management. Because the group was diverse, the tour agenda addressed a wide variety of needs and interests. Participants learned about the general education system in the United States (from federal to state to county levels); investigated school management models implemented by education executives and boards of education; explored EMIS structure, systems, and technologies; and conducted physical visits of pre-school, elementary, and high schools to look at technology and EMIS application. The feedback from the group was very positive, and this activity's impact will be felt during the testing and launch of both the database software and SIS.

Study tour participants gain a better understanding of key elements in new school construction that facilitate technological and program implementation.

Input 2.4: Accreditation standards developed

EMP has received a stop-work order from USAID on this input, and we are working with USAID to modify our contract to remove work on accreditation standards.

Input 2.5: System established for increased dialogue between MoES and non-school actors regarding reforms and quality of education

During Year 2, EMP developed a concept paper to help the MoES establish a mechanism to engage and support local NGOs together with donor organizations. However, no other activities were implemented under this input due to low priority and limited anticipated impact on education reform, especially in light of the Ministry's already active engagement with non-education actors through Monthly Hall Meetings and thematic meetings.