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G-PRIED

Georgia Primary Education Project
საპარტიკულო დაწყებითი განათლების პროექტი

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS **MARCH 1 – MARCH 31**

During this reporting period, G-PriEd continued to closely cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the project COTR. Activities included developing task forces to finalize Georgian classroom diagnostic assessment tools in reading and math, developing a concept paper on teacher professional development, and refining the professional development leader (PDL) training modules.

Accomplishments. After having secured approval for the project-developed sampling strategy from the MES, representatives from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) Agency created an Excel program to select a random sample of schools for G-PriEd's pilot sample (based on the sampling strategy). During this reporting period, EMIS Agency staff provided a list of the selected Georgian and non-Georgian schools. Small changes were made in the number of non-Georgian schools.

Technical Activities

Cross-component activities.

- *Additional national trainers.* G-PriEd has completed the initial screening of the supplemental national trainer applicants. Successful candidates will fill the regional trainer slots in underserved regions in time for the September roll-out. The initial screening results were communicated to the Deputy Director of TPDC, and G-PriEd staff will now work with TPDC to set a date for the joint short-listing session and applicant interviews. Following these two sessions (short-listing and interviews), G-PriEd and TPDC staff (working together in a selection committee) will select those applicants that best meet the required qualifications. The names of these individuals will be shared with G-PriEd's five primary Ministry contacts in order to secure references with regard to the quality of the candidates' work. The hiring of these supplemental trainers is the first use of a joint G-PriEd-MES selection committee and the hiring process agreed upon between the MES and USAID. This hiring process is intended to model the transparency and focus on candidate skills that characterize effective HR processes.
- *Diagnostic Assessment Workshop.* On March 14, G-PriEd hosted a workshop to share information on diagnostic assessments in general and preview the new Georgian diagnostic assessments in math and reading. Following the workshop, through discussion with USAID and the MES' National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement Center (NCEQE), a decision was made to set up two task forces in reading and math, which will be charged with developing the Georgian classroom diagnostic assessments. Each task force will include the representatives of MES agencies, psychologist/child development specialists, psychometricians, gender specialists, elementary school classroom teachers, and school principals. G-PriEd is working closely with the NCEQE and the project COTR to develop the SoWs for the task forces and the field of activity experts under each Task Force.
- *Support for national assessment.* Upon request from the NCEQE and the Minister of Education and Science, G-PriEd is providing technical support to the implementation of national assessments in grades 1 and 4. A consultant will visit Georgia mid-April to advise NCEQE on strategies for test security, test administration, training of test administrators, and procedures for collecting and cleaning data. In addition, the NCEQE has requested more comprehensive support to improve the national assessment process, specifically support for the printing of test materials and for the training of test administrators. Project staff will issue a request for quotations for vendors to print test materials and expects to finalize the procurement in April. With respect to the training of test administrators, G-PriEd will respond to the NCEQE's request after receiving additional information about the specifics of the requested training.

- *Parent engagement in improving math/reading learning outcomes.* Upon request from the MES (and with USAID's concurrence), G-PriEd has agreed to provide technical support to the MES to launch its national program to improve parent engagement in elementary school education. G-PriEd will provide a technical expert to help develop a conceptual framework, create an implementation strategy, create a communications plan, etc. This in-country activity is tentatively scheduled for mid-May.

Output 1: Reading fluency and comprehension outcomes improved in grades 1-6

- *Readability.* Reading Improvement Specialist Paata Papava, together with the COP James Wile, met with a team of language arts subject area specialists from the National Curriculum and General Education Development Department (NCGEDD) and discussed the need to set readability criteria for developing and evaluating school textbooks and other text-based educational resources (including the passages to be used in the diagnostic assessment). It was suggested that G-PriEd, in cooperation with MES, organize a special working group on readability issues. It is possible that readability will become one of the target topics for the Diagnostic Assessment Task Force or that a separate working group will form to address this topic. The objectives of the work on readability are to identify the best international practices in identifying readability measures, develop a set of readability criteria for each grade, and field test the passages that meet the readability criteria. This process will be carried out in close cooperation with the NCGEDD and NCEQE.
- *Diagnostic assessment in reading.* Working with local expert Tamar Chanturia, Mr. Papava developed consolidated recommendations from short-term linguists for developing the Georgian diagnostic assessment in reading. These recommendations cover particular components of the test and include 18 sample passages for grades 1-6. In addition, G-PriEd staff developed a draft concept paper on the Georgian diagnostic assessment in reading. The document outlines the overall purpose of the assessment and includes a matrix of basic components of proficient reading and their linkages with the national curriculum. The preliminary concept paper will be shared with the project COTR in May and will be further elaborated and finalized by the Diagnostic Assessment Task Force for reading, which will be charged with developing the diagnostic assessments in reading.

Output 2: Math competencies improved in grades 1-6

- *Conceptual framework for diagnostic assessment.* USAID reviewed G-PriEd's conceptual framework for diagnostic assessment in mathematics, and G-PriEd has submitted it to MES. The MES' feedback was generally positive and included a few suggestions. The diagnostic assessment framework will be further elaborated by the Diagnostic Assessment Task Force in Math to be set up with MES. In addition, G-PriEd staff discussed with the project COTR the draft document on international practice of diagnostic assessments in math and incorporated her feedback. The document received a positive feedback from the MES at the workshop on March 14.
- *Math training modules.* G-PriEd staff discussed the first math training module with the project COTR. Her suggestions covered revising the outline of the three books, adding additional resources, and the need to have supporting "leveled" math books for students. Based on her substantive feedback regarding the limited presentation of diagnostic teaching techniques and the lack of specific recommended strategies for differentiated learning, G-PriEd staff will revise the books accordingly. These revisions — including a realignment of math concepts from the previously proposed second math module (on teaching math in subject areas) to be incorporated instead into a more comprehensive initial module on teaching math in the elementary math classroom — were in development during March. A revised draft math module is anticipated to be completed during April.

Output 3. Teacher training delivery systems strengthened

- Ketevan Chachkhiani, with support from the COP James Wile, developed a concept paper on school-based professional development in Georgia. The concept paper presents the framework of the new proposed school-based professional development and highlights the main features of the new model and its links to the existing in-service teacher professional development. Upon finalization, the concept paper will be communicated and discussed with the representatives of the MES and its agencies.