

QUARTERLY
PROGRESS REPORT

GEORGIA COMMUNITIES
EMPOWERED FOR LOCAL
DECISION-MAKING

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2008

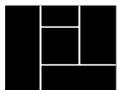
Prepared for



Prepared by

The Urban Institute

Georgia Communities Empowered for Local Decision-Making
United States Agency for International Development
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GEORGIA COMMUNITIES EMPOWERED FOR LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

Cooperative Agreement No.:	114-A-00-04-00131-00
Date of Issuance:	September 23, 2004
Amount Obligated:	\$8,965,351
Total Potential Award Amount:	\$9,999,741
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Project Description

The overall objective of this project is:

— More Effective, Responsive, and Accountable Local Governance in Georgia (USAID Strategic Objective 2.31).

Intermediate Results that should advance the objective include the following:

— Improved Capacity of Local Communities to Engage Local Government to strengthen communities' capacity to rebuild essential services, restore incomes and empower all citizens of Georgia to have an effective voice in government.

CELD is designed to achieve community level impact by using a bottom-up approach to systematically assist Georgian communities to nurture democratic reform efforts.

Expected key results are:

1. Legislative reform matching local government revenues more closely to local government responsibilities is in place.
2. The interests of local governments are advocated and local government best practice is disseminated through demand-driven, democratically organized associations with grass-roots support.

3. Local government/citizen partnerships implement more effective and participatory methods for managing resources and delivering services.
4. Realistic local economic development plans and actions in targeted communities are developed and implemented.
5. Sustainable capacity of Georgian organizations to deliver technical assistance and training to local governments is established.
6. Public awareness of and citizen participation in the affairs of local self-government is increased.

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- Thirty-five students graduated from the Batumi Summer School local government class.
- The Executive Board of the Municipal Finance Officers' Association met to discuss the budget and fee schedule for the Association. The Board agreed on the format and language of the agreement between members and the Association.
- In September 2008, Tbilisi City Hall provided the office space for the Georgian Municipal Service Providers' Association in one of the buildings of City Hall. In October 2008, the office will start operating. Operation expenses will be covered by the membership fees paid by the member municipalities.

II. PROGRESS OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Decentralization and National Capacity-Building Activities

Legislation Training

Legislation training sessions were conducted for 180 participants from 63 NGOs and initiative groups from 15 Municipalities. The following local government legislation was discussed: Organic Law, Budget Law, State Supervision Law, Privatization Law and Property Law.

Batumi Summer School

On August 29, 2008, 35 students graduated from the Batumi Summer School local government class. The class was jointly created and run by CELD and Batumi University. The three-month summer class on local self-governance covered topics on the authorities, competences, structure, rights and responsibilities of local governance units.

Strengthening Communities: Managing Local Resources

Community-Based Economic Development (CBED)



Three workshops focusing on Community-Based Economic Development Planning were conducted for local NGOs from all regions of Georgia. Participants were trained in the methodology, process and tools for developing economic development plans with the direct participation of local community. More than 100 people from 52 local NGOs were trained.

CELD assisted the Lagodekhi and Kvareli municipalities to implement economic development plans created under the CELD program by co-funding the construction and installation of billboards to improve tourism. Fifty-three billboards were prepared for each municipality. Lagodekhi and Kvareli municipalities covered the cost of transportation and installation of billboards.

The Local Economic Development Plans of Kobuleti, Shuakhevi, Khulo, Dedoplistskaro, Lagodekhi, Sagarejo, Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha and Martvili were adopted by the local councils during the reporting period.

Other

Proposal writing workshops were conducted with CELD regional coordinators' assistance in 14 municipalities. Overall, 160 people from 61 NGOs participated.

Financial Management

A three-day workshop took place in Bakuriani for the representatives of NGOs in July, 2008. In total, 15 NGOs were represented by more than 30 people at the workshop. The workshop focused on the dissemination of information about the reforms and new practices being implemented in municipalities and was designed to involve NGOs in planning and executing stages of program budgets.

The Executive Board of the Municipal Finance Officers' Association met to discuss the budget and fee schedule for the Association. The Board agreed on the format and language of the agreement between members and the Association.

Nine one-day meetings took place in each region of the country with representatives of municipalities. Local governments were represented by the Gamgebelis or Deputy Gamgebelis and Heads of Finance Departments. The purpose of the meetings was to present the draft agreements to be signed by the Municipal Finance Officers' Association (MFOA) and municipalities.

The draft municipal program budgets for FY 2009 are going through the preparation process in all 57 partner municipalities.

Service Improvement (Performance Management)

Performance Management workshops for 36 NGOs active in the Kakheti and Mtskheta–Mtianeti regions were conducted on July 6, 7, and 8, 2008. The purpose of the workshops was to make participation of civic institutions in local decision-making more effective and productive. The workshops described the basic steps of developing a Service Improvement Action Plan: situation analysis, performance measures and indicators, data collection and analysis techniques, implementation of the action plan, monitoring and reporting on outcomes.

Municipal Service Providers' Association

On July 29, 2008, the Executive Board members of the Municipal Service Providers' Association (MSPA) met to discuss: (1) Changes in the Association charter regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Board and the President of the Association; (2) the idea of a Consulting Center for the Association members; and (3) the membership fee for the member municipalities. The Board decided to send letters to municipal council chairs informing them about the Consulting Center, the services that the Center will offer to its members, and the membership fee for municipalities and request their commitment to pay the fees.

On September 24, 2008, a working meeting of the MSPA Executive Board was held in Tbilisi. The Board members discussed the following issues: (1) membership fee payment procedures; (2) priority services that Association can provide in 2008; and (3) planning of the national conference to be held in November 2008.

In September 2008, Tbilisi City Hall provided office space for the Municipal Service Providers' Association in one of the buildings of City Hall. CELD assisted the Association with office furniture and equipment. In October 2008, the office will start operating. Operation expenses will be covered by the membership fees paid by the member municipalities.

Other

In July 2008, CELD provided and installed 24 new computers and software for municipalities to be used primarily for communal services billing as part of CELD Service Improvement Program. One of the advantages of improving services is that people are more willing to pay for the service.

III. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTS

- CBED Final Report and Power Point Presentation on activities implemented by the CBED program during the CELD project;
- Council Resolutions on adoption of CBED plans of Kobuleti, Shuakhevi, Khulo, Dedoplistskaro, Lagodekhi, Sagarejo, Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha and Martvili municipalities;
- Reports on the Legislation Training Sessions for local NGOs;
- Report on Batumi Summer School;
- Final Reports on Property Transfer and Legislation activities during CELD project;
- GIPA Final Report;
- Service Improvement Program Final Report on CELD activities
- Community-Based Economic Development guidebook, 500 copies reprinted and distributed;
- Program Budget Guidebook, 500 copies reprinted and distributed;
- Sample of Program Budget, 500 copies reprinted and distributed; and
- Municipal Service Improvement Guidebook, 500 copies reprinted and distributed.

IV. PROBLEMS OR DELAYS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE



Activities in August and September were curtailed because of the conflict with Russia, which affected directly, or indirectly, most of the country.

V. WORK PLANNED FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

The CELD project was extended through November 30, 2008. During the next reporting period, support will be provided for conflict-affected Georgian municipalities. A rapid assessment of the needs of the conflict affected municipalities with local developed plans and budgets for addressing these needs that the donor community, the Government of Georgia and municipalities can use as the recovery progresses. Technical and in-kind assistance will also be provided to the municipalities, local and national NGOs, and the national associations of service providers and finance officers.