

ABE/BE

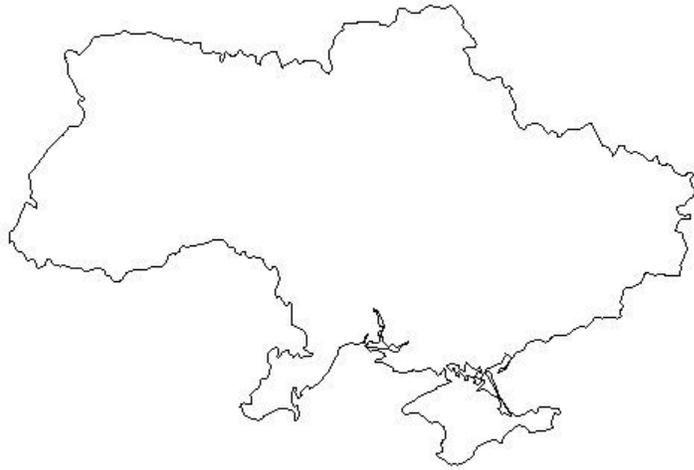


USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI)

Final Report

April 2007 – December 2009



Submitted by:

American Institutes for Research

with

American Councils for International Education

U.S. Agency for International Development

Contract No. EDH-I-00-05-00027-01

The Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI)

From April 2007 through December 2009 MCC|USAID implemented a Threshold Country Plan (TCP) in Ukraine with a single Strategic Objective of Reducing Corruption in the Public Sector. USETI was funded by USAID/Ukraine and implemented through USAID's ABE/BE. The Initiative addressed one of the five components in the Government of Ukraine's TCP, combating corruption in higher education.

The USETI program consisted of the following six components:

1. Collaboration with UCEQA to support improved test development and administration, as well as technical assistance to university departments that teach education measurement and psychometrics;
 2. Improvement of test security through the development of the necessary tools and procedures to prevent corruption at all levels, internally as well as externally;
 3. Development of legal and normative bases necessary for creating and protecting testing materials; and developing sanctions for those violating testing security;
 4. Increasing public awareness through the timely provision of information to students, parents and educators in order to better integrate the testing process into the education system;
 5. Collaboration with UCEQA to develop test preparation materials and to support private industry expansion in this area;
 6. Provide evidence to universities about the benefits of using standardized external testing admissions processes and collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, UCEQA, higher educational institutions and other governmental institutions to develop and promulgate relevant policy; and
- ✓ Special Issues related to the USETI Project.

Results achieved by USETI components within USAID|MCC technical assistance follow.

1. Capacity Building in Testing Processes

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Test Development Workshops. Over the course of the project USETI consultants Steven Bakker, Mark Zelman, David Ziegler, Iwa Mindadze, Mike Fast, Zarko Vukmirovic, and Markus Broer delivered several test development workshops to UCEQA. After USETI discussed how to optimize consultant missions and institutionalize the USETI training framework within UCEQA, USETI consultants developed the USETI Certificate Program for UCEQA (*UCP – USETI Certificate Program*). As the result of the 5-module-training, by February 2009, 82 trainees had received theoretical and practical training in item and test development and were actively involved in the item development process. For four of the sessions they developed items in their respective subjects, circulated them among their subject group members for peer review and also presented them to the international consultants for review. Based on peer review and expert analysis, the trainees incorporated feedback to both improve their items and create new ones. All trainees worked effectively in groups as well as individually and were able to reach consensus on how to develop quality items. Course trainees received certificates that were accredited by the Ministry of Education.

In late 2008, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, in collaboration with UCEQA, conducted a competition to recruit item writers. In September 2009 46 of the competition recruits successfully completed a *2-session-UCP-modeled certificate course called, “Basic training for test developers.”*

In January 2009, the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine Ivan Vakarchuk signed a Ministerial Order to create a Working Group that would develop an *Ability Test Concept Plan*. The Ukrainians see the Ability Test as an enhanced tool that will support the HEI admission system in Ukraine. USETI consultants Mark Zelman and Howard T. Everson were invited to the WG. Other members included representatives of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, HEIs, Local Government, and the Test Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. In total, 13 persons were responsible for Ability Test Concept Plan development. By June 2009 the WG had developed the Concept Plan, which was reviewed and accepted by MoES Board in October 2009. During the next three years UCEQA will conduct a pedagogical experiment to determine the viability of the Ability Test in Ukraine:

- 2009-2010: UCEQA will conduct small scale approbation on the basis of certain secondary schools and HEIs;
- 2010-2011: UCEQA will pilot the Ability Test in the HEIs of Lviv, Donetsk, Kyiv and Kharkiv oblasts; and
- 2011-2012: the Ability Test will be piloted on the national level; it will be voluntary in addition to the usual UCEQA subject tests.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Support construction of tests in all subjects. During their missions to Ukraine, USETI consultants closely worked with those UCEQA subject specialists developing external tests for the 2008, 2009 and 2010 testing years, in particular foreign languages specialists, as these tests were completely new in 2009 external testing.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Workshops in Psychometrics for Data Analysis and Item Bank. During the reporting period USETI consultants delivered workshops and consultancies for UCEQA staff addressing data analysis and psychometrics.

In October 2007, USETI consultants Konstantin Titov and Markus Broer held an introductory workshop in psychometrics and data analysis for UCEQA staff. The workshop consisted of both theoretical and practical training, with attention paid to best practices in assessment from other countries. The consultants made an introductory presentation on the FastTest program and conducted practical exercises in how to load data from one Ukrainian exam into FastTest. Information on the utility, structure, and development of item banks was illustrated through these practical examples.

In October 2007, USETI consultants Iwa Mindadze, Markus Broer, Mike Fast and Mark Zelman held a workshop on item statistics for UCEQA subject specialists. The workshop consisted of the basics of the psychometric issues that underlie test development. The audience appeared to have sufficient background knowledge to absorb the issues. All questions asked by participants demonstrated a basic understanding of the field.

In December 2007, USETI consultant Markus Broer held a 2-day-workshop for UCEQA on the following issues: organizational aspects for test scoring to maintain consistency, item review for constructed response items, determining inter-rater reliability, calculating item bias and Differential Item Functioning (DIF) with special emphasis on detecting DIF in polytomously scored items with the example of PolyStand.

During four visits in February, April, May and July 2009 USETI consultant Zarko Vukmirovic focused on item bank development. The consultant held the number of workshops with the UCEQA Psychometrics Department on requested topics of interest that included:

a) Development of a customized item banking system that supported comprehensive test development activities including item reviews, tracking item statistics, and assembling test forms using content and psychometric criteria. The consultant evaluated the current item banking structure as soundly conceptualized and developing in appropriate direction.

b) Development of a data management and item analysis system that worked in production mode. As UCEQA's volume and scope of work grows, there is an emergent need to implement an effective system that will be flexible, open for customization, and transparent for its users. The system should also be integrated in the overall test development system. The Data Management & Item Analysis (DMITAN) system was demonstrated and an initial training was conducted.

c) Advanced training and interactive discussion about the benefits of Classical Test Theory (CTT) and Item Response Theory (IRT) in test development and recommendations in terms of how it applies to the development of the scaling system used for university admissions.

d) Training in factor analysis, DIF-analysis, processing of tests with different types of items, macros for performing graphs for items, adaptation of program for specific terms and recommendations for parameters, which could be used as psychometrical characteristics in the test item bank. Also, during the visit in May, Mr. Vukmirovic provided UCEQA with training in programs for Mantel-Haenzel and SMD methods. The need for specific software to manage the system is a hindrance to its optimization.

During his mission visit in July 2008, Mr. Vukmirovic continued assisting UCEQA with DMITAN and further customized it to show UCEQA psychometricians how to generate graphic representations of item performance.

On May 29, 2009, Mr. Vukmirovic met with UCEQA Director Ihor Likarchuk. The consultant had been delivering psychometrics training to UCEQA's Psychometrics Department throughout the project and had also worked with UCEQA psychometricians in the development of multiple test forms. At the meeting Dr. Likarchuk explained that there was a critical need for further support to UCEQA from psychometricians because UCEQA's item bank was being developed and multiple test forms were going to be used in the future, especially in the more popular test subjects such as Ukrainian Language and Literature, History, Mathematics, Physics, Biology and Chemistry. As a result of the discussion, the following activities were identified as necessary: a workshop for psychometricians in the methodology used to create multiple test forms, a workshop for psychometricians and subject specialists in using item statistics to equate tests, and further training in item response theory (IRT) for both subject specialists and psychometricians.

The most urgent issue brought up by Dr. Likarchuk was the limited amount of time in which USETI could assist UCEQA in further psychometric training. Dr. Likarchuk explained that with USETI's assistance UCEQA had been able to lay solid foundations for external standardized testing as a university admissions tool. However, he explained that the next several years would be crucial in optimizing the work of UCEQA and building the kind of capacity needed to further improve and expand the system. UCEQA achievements over the course of the USETI project included: diversifying the pool of items and increasing the number of trained test developers, implementing educational measurement courses in universities and providing targeted training to UCEQA specialists.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Development of UCEQA procedures & materials. USETI consultants supported UCEQA with technical assistance in the development of protocols and manuals for test development, administration, scoring and reporting.

Test Administration Manual. In October 2007 USETI consultant Todd Drummond held a workshop on Test Administration for UCEQA and RCEQA representatives. At the workshop, participants learned about the crucial role standardization plays in all aspects of test administration, including following directions (scripting) and instructions, as well as training RCEQA personnel and training trainers to prepare test proctors in how to administer the external tests. Mr. Drummond developed recommendations on how to improve test administration procedures, which were subsequently used by UCEQA trainings in February 2008.

Test Development Manual. In January 2008, USETI consultant Mark Zelman developed a Test Development Manual for UCEQA that covered item writing, test scoring, and analysis procedures. The Manual consisted of the following subtopics: (1) Developing large scale assessments, (2) Test development processes, (3) Item writing, and (4) Measurement models for large scale educational assessment.

In February 2008, Dr. Zelman developed *Writing Problem Solving Questions for Quantitative Assessment*. This manual provided a detailed account of how to go about item writing in mathematics and related subjects. The manual covered the following subtopics: (1) Content and abilities measured, (2) Guidelines regarding the item stem, (3) Guidelines regarding the answer choices, (4) Examples of items and revision suggestions.

UCEQA Professional Development.

33rd IAEA Conference “Interdependence of National Assessment Systems and Education Standards” in Azerbaijan. From September 17 through 22, 2007 UCEQA First Deputy Director Vadym Karandiy, Director of Vinnytsya RCEQA, Hennadiy Kuzmenko, and Serhiy Rakov, the Adviser to the UCEQA Director for Research and Development, and Testing Development Manager Olena Kotsur attended The 33rd IAEA Conference “Interdependence of National Assessment Systems and Education Standards” in Azerbaijan.

Study tour to Poland. On November 25-29, 2007 a group consisting of UCEQA (2 persons) and RCEQA (9 persons) representatives, as well as USETI Testing Development Assistant Nataliya Borodchuk and USETI Monitoring and Evaluation Manager Ihor Andreyko participated in a study tour to the Krakow Regional Examination Commission (Poland). During this tour the participants received detailed information on how the Polish implement admissions testing in the following areas: the structure, coordination and financing of the Polish External Examination System; the role and responsibilities of the Krakow Regional Examination Commission; the training provided to school directors on preparation for external exams implementation; the management of the independent examination including the use of an Examination Internet Service; examination scoring sheet development; scoring sheet analysis; school level test preparation; test administration; security of examination documentation; examination data processing; analyzing and communicating exams results to different stakeholders; score reporting for schools; arranging conferences for disseminating results; participation in scientific conferences on external exams and arranging such types of conferences; training proctors; and score archiving.

The Krakow Regional Examination Commission provided their Ukrainian counterparts with materials (handouts and electronic files) on these topics, which were translated by USETI. These materials were used by UCEQA & RCEQAs for their professional development, in particular for test instructors and administrators trainings.

Study Tour to the United States. The USETI US Study Tour took place on February 2-9, 2008. The participants were divided into two groups: Policy and Technical. Both groups started the tour in Washington DC and spent the first four days together.

The Study Tour participants first met with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and American Councils (AC) staff at the American Councils for International Education office where the following presentations were delivered: *Examining the Uses (and Abuses) of University Admissions Test Scores in the U.S. and Abroad: An Illustrated Discussion of Admissions Testing as Viewed by Professors, University Admissions Offices, Testing Agencies, and Governments* (presented by Dan Davidson, the President of American Councils); *100 Years of Testing in the United States* (Howard Everson); *Overview of U.S. Education System and Testing* (Dana Kelly); *Large-scale Testing Procedures* (June Zack and Stephan Ahadi); and *Contemporary Issues in U.S. Higher Education* (Rita Kirshtein).

Participants visited Thomas Edison High School where they received information on *Higher Education Admissions Processes and the High School*. The participants had an opportunity learn about high school guidance counseling, which does not exist in Ukraine. This was followed by a visit to the National Association of College Admissions Counselors where David Hawkins talked about *Higher Education Admissions Processes and the High School*. On Tuesday afternoon the group met with the representatives of the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S.

Department of Education, who talked on *Education Indicators and Assessments in the United States*. The participants were acquainted with the Center activities and their purpose, as well as U.S. participation in international assessment surveys such as TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS.

On Wednesday, February 6, the Technical group flew to Columbus, Ohio, where they visited an AIR test scanning and test scoring facility. This visit gave the technical group members an opportunity to compare Ukrainian facilities and technical procedures with those of AIR. Later that day the Technical group met with Judy Feil, Ohio State Testing Director, who talked about *The Ohio State Graduation Test: Technical and Policy Issues*. This presentation was of considerable usefulness and interest for the group as they managed to find out more about test preparation, test administration and test results usage.

At the same time, the Policy group was still in Washington DC where they visited the American Association for College Registrars and Admissions Officers where Jerry Sullivan talked about the Standards for Higher Education Admissions Professionals. This was followed by a visit to the University of Maryland to find out more about the university admissions process.

On Thursday, February 7, both groups arrived to New York where Dan Davidson discussed *Predictive Validity*, Howard Everson presented on *Predictive Validity and Testing and the Taxonomy of Higher Education Admissions*. Also the two groups visited the College Board where they learned about the College Board activities and functions.

On Friday, February 8, the participants visited Fordham University where they met with the faculty of the Psychometrics Program which provided the participants with additional information on the preparation of specialists in Educational Assessment and Psychometrics. Later that day the group found out more about the *University Admissions Process* which provided the participants with even more information on how university admissions offices operate in the U.S. in different universities. The Study Tour participants received extensive background materials. All the materials and presentations were translated into Ukrainian.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Independent review (including item analysis and inter-rater reliability study). Algirdas Zabulionis assisted UCEQA in the external testing review, which included item analysis and inter-rater reliability analyses.

Dr. Zabulionis began analyzing data files to gauge inter-rater reliability just after the release of exam results in 2008 and 2009. UCEQA management produced a narrative analysis of the findings, which was disseminated internally. During this technical analysis the scripts that needed to be re-scored were identified. Printed images were re-scored by a small number of scorers in Kyiv, and scores were entered into database and analyzed. In September 2009 Dr. Zabulionis also made recommendations based on his observations of the 2009 testing for the 2010 test administration, in particular he suggested increasing the number of tests forms in each subject; holding multiple sessions simultaneously; focusing on Ukrainian language as the sole language in the 2010 external testing; revising open ended parts of the Ukrainian language and Mathematics test sheets; and changing some elements of the registration process.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – With MOES and UCEQA, establish partnership on undergraduate curriculum in educational assessment. An undergraduate curriculum in educational assessment was initiated when USETI consultants Howard Everson and Zarema Seydametova along with Olena Kotsur (USETI) met with Vasyl Shynkaruk (MoES Deputy Minister) and Yaroslav Bolyubash (Head of MoES Higher Education Department). As the result

of these meetings a *Working Group on the Development of an Undergraduate Curriculum in Educational Assessment* was established by the MOES. USETI provided continual technical assistance to the MOES to develop an undergraduate program in educational assessment which served as the basis for a graduate program as well. USETI consultant Howard Everson developed a curriculum on educational measurement for the *Working Group in Developing an Undergraduate Curriculum on Educational Assessment*. The course was designed as a two semester introduction to the educational and technical issues of implementing standardized testing programs on a national scale.

In June 2008, USETI consultants trained university professors who were going to teach the Fundamentals of Educational Measurement and Quality Assessment course at Ukraine's pedagogical institutes beginning in September, 2008. The USETI consultants responsible for the majority of topics were Howard Everson and Mark Zelman, assisted by Ukrainian specialists Sergey Rakov (UCEQA), Volodymyr Kovtunets (USETI), Oleksandr Lyashenko (Academy of Pedagogical Sciences), Larysa Dvoretzka (UCEQA), Oleksandr Kolgatin and Lyudmyla Bilousova (Kharkiv National Pedagogical University). Subsequently, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine approved the Fundamentals of Educational Measurement and Quality Assessment course. The MOES identified 20 universities to pilot the offering. These institutions began delivering the course in September 2008.

From April to May 2009, USETI specialists conducted an evaluation of the educational measurement course at eight pedagogical HEIs. Three-hundred students were questioned (35-40 students from each university). Most of the students surveyed were in their 3rd, 4th and 5th years of study and had already completed the course. The study showed that about 90% of the students deemed the course as necessary to their education. Many of them emphasized that the educational measurement course taught them how to write test items correctly and how to measure students' abilities/knowledge – a skill they agreed was essential for future teachers. Also, because of the advent of external testing, the course is essential. However, around 40% of the students considered such a complex discipline inadequately covered in the hours allotted. Over 30% of the survey participants would have liked to have more practical, hands-on classwork to get more experience in developing tests and item writing. Almost a half of the survey participants are considering further studies in educational measurement at the graduate and post-graduate levels.

The survey also showed that textbooks and information resources related to educational measurement are sorely lacking. Furthermore, when asked what should be changed about the course delivery, the students stated they would have liked more access to computers and internet during the classes, and for more practical, real-life material to be used to liven up the course, and pique interest and student engagement.

In May 2009, USETI CCN consultant Oleksandr Maksymenko drafted an analysis of the current status of the psychological testing discipline in psychology departments of Ukrainian universities. This analysis helped the MOES develop a strategy to use existing capacity within psychological testing departments to develop specific, relevant capacity to teach psychometrics and educational measurement courses. Mr. Maksymenko assesses specific universities on their readiness for such development. The final document was delivered to MOES and UCEQA.

In May 2009, the MOES held a working group meeting on the development of the standards for an MA in Educational Measurement. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the pros and cons

of introducing in 2009-10 required coursework in Educational Measurement for all students in pedagogical universities. Considering the lack of specialists in educational measurement and psychometrics in Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine decided not to make the Educational Measurement mandatory for teaching colleges, but to introduce it in academic programs that are suitable foundations for the further study of psychometrics at the graduate level (statistics, psychology).

The WG agreed to coordinate its work with a consortium of three HEIs (Nizhyn National University, Dragomanov National Pedagogical University and Kirovohrad Pedagogical University) who had received a 3-year-grant from the EU-funded TEMPUS Project for the implementation of an MA program in Educational Measurement in the fields of Mathematics and Information Science.

In October 2009, the Tempus Project *Educational Measurements Adapted to EU Standards* conducted a Summer School entitled “Educational Measurements: Teaching, Research and Practice” in Foros, Crimea. The event was organized within the framework of the EU Project supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Nizhyn State Mykola Gogol University, National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, Kirovograd State Pedagogical University named after Volodymyr Vinnichenko, Mälardalen University (Sweden), Helsinki University of Technology (Finland), University of Rome “La Sapienza” (Italy), University of Cologne (Germany). The main topics of the Summer School included educational measurement in the context of improving the quality of education; the theoretical foundations of educational measurement; advanced design and administration skills; teaching of academic disciplines related to educational measurement. USETI was a co-organizer of the Summer School and Consultant Mark Zelman participated as a trainer.

Correlation Analysis of the external testing 2008 results to the academic achievements of the first year students. During July-September 2009, the Centre of Educational Policy, a USETI grantee partner, completed a correlation analysis linking the 2008 external testing results with the academic achievements of 2008 first year students. Apart from the six HEIs presented in the first stage of the analysis (conducted in April-June 2009) CEP gathered data from another four HEIs – the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ostroh Academy National University, National Pirogov Memorial Medical University of Vinnytsya, South Branch of the National Agricultural University. These HEIs provided results from the summer examination session only. All major types of HEIs and macro-regions of Ukraine are represented in the analysis.

Results are summarized in the table below:

Higher Educational Institution	Correlation of average 2008 external testing score with					Number of students surveyed
	average grades for winter and summer examination sessions	average grades for winter examination session	average grades for summer examination session	GPA	sum of examination sessions and GPA	
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv	0.505	0.479	0.459	0.466 ¹	0.716 ²	1536
V.N.Karazin Kharkiv National University	0.464	0.428	0.457	0.411 ³	0.526 ⁴	922
National Technical University “Kharkiv Polytechnical Institute”	0.496	0.496	0.461	-	-	857
Donetsk National University of Economics and Trade after M.Tugan-Baranovsky	-	0,548	-	-	-	643
K.Ushynsky South-Ukrainian State Pedagogical University and National Academy of Management	0.479	0,440	0.457	-	-	243
National Academy of Management	0.548	0,572	0.479	0.716	0,740	147
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv	0.612	-	-	-	-	3229
Ostroh Academy National University	-	-	0.632	-	-	412
National Pirogov Memorial Medical University of Vinnytsya	-	-	0.645	-	-	696
South Branch of the National Agricultural University	-	-	0.362	-	-	563

According to the analysis, test scores are a better predictor of student academic performance than the high school GPA (except at the National Academy of Management). But the correlation is stronger if, along with the external testing score, the high school GPA is factored in as well.

The analysis also considered correlations between HEI exam results and external testing results by subject. It found the highest correlation between grades and test results on the Ukrainian Language & Literature test. Correlation between external test scores and HEI performance in Mathematics is higher only for technical specialties. The Pearson correlation of 2008 external testing results and average winter and summer examination sessions is 0.502 (3,657 students surveyed). After consultations with USETI, the International Renaissance Foundation agreed to support such an Analysis of 2009 test takers that currently studying in HEIs.

¹ Only for Mathematics and Computer Science fields.

² Only for Mathematics and Computer Science fields.

³ Only 186 students were surveyed.

⁴ Only 186 students were surveyed.

2. Security Procedures

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Establishing effective security systems for all testing processes. At outset of USETI, consultant Algirdas Zabulionis analyzed security concerns and developed strategies related to the external testing administration. This included looking at installation of security cameras installation in test sites as well as testing centers to show the public the process of marking exam paper and well as printing facilities security. After a number of site visits to the Regional Centers for Educational Quality Assessment in August and September 2007, Dr. Zabulionis produced recommendation that were followed by UCEQA to install security cameras only inside printing facilities, rather than surveillance cameras either inside or outside test sites.

After receiving USAID|Ukraine approval, USETI completed all procurement procedures, finished the vendor selection and signed an agreement with the vendor. The process of installing security equipment at the printing facility in Brovary began in late March, 2008. By August 2008, installations of security alarm, video surveillance and an access control system were complete. The provider had to suspend installation of the security system for a short period during external testing sessions, during which the facility needed to be completely secured and inaccessible to workers.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Workshops in data management, use of multiple test forms, etc. for test security. USETI consultants closely worked with UCEQA on improving data management, use of multiple test forms, etc. to support test security. In October 2007 consultants Zarko Vukmirovic and Konstantin Titov conducted a workshop on the assessment process from the perspective of test security for a large group of UCEQA specialists. At this event they presented a high level organizational overview of security issues, covering procedural norms and adherence to them in an operational environment. This session was for all UCEQA specialists (psychometric, content, IT, and managers). Also, Dr. Vukmirovic held separate, focused workshops on data management and use of multiple forms for test security for both UCEQA psychometric and IT staff. In January 2008, USETI consultant Dr. Vukmirovic conducted a 2-day workshop for test developers on test architecture and test construction principles for development of multiple forms.

In July USETI consultant Algirdas Zabulionis worked in the UCEQA scoring center, where data from regional scoring centers is sent in order to enter scores of each participant into a database. Dr. Zabulionis verified secure transport of scores electronically and their import into data scoring systems. He also reviewed procedures that make it impossible for a single person to have access to the data. One issue that did come up was the fact that in printed format the possibility of falsifying scores received by individuals was possible, particularly in terms of persons submitting photocopied documents. Dr. Zabulionis worked with the IT team to develop a system which would allow HEIs to verify scores, should they choose to do so. In September 2008, January and March 2009, Dr. Zabulionis continued working with UCEQA personnel on data management to improve procedures for registration and test administration based on the outcomes of 2008 testing and lessons learned.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Introduce a system protecting identity of test takers and testing processes including storage of data on results. USETI consultant Algirdas Zabulionis worked with UCEQA staff on test security logistics, administration and data management as well as on how to implement a secure system to protect test-takers' identities and

to secure printing methods. The main focus of these workshops was to discuss the efficiency of and security measures used in data processing. The output of these workshops included: agreement on the detailed technical structure of two data processing modules to be developed by the IT department. These two modules will be an integral part of the data processing software (to be run internally on the UCEQA's secure server) that allows data processing without the need to export data files out of the system. Data processing enabled by these modules includes: express data analysis, data cleaning, support of scoring and scaling. The success of this endeavor obviated several highly risky operations related to data export/import, use of external computers, change of the data format, data files merge, etc. These risky processes were no longer needed and the overall security, efficiency and reliability of the system have been increased substantially.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Customer satisfaction surveys developed and delivered. During the first two years the project, USETI grantees Testing Technologies Center and Democratic Initiatives Foundation concentrated on conducting customer service surveys and performing watchdog functions related to standardized testing. Technical assistance in survey development was performed by USETI consultant Camrin Christensen during her visits to Ukraine. All the surveys, before they were administered in the field, went through Institutional Review Board procedures. These procedures are standard to protect the identity of human subjects. These NGOs' activities included:

- 1) Testing Technologies Center:
 - a focus-group with test-takers (one per year 2008 and 2009);
 - a focus-group with scorers (one per year 2008 and 2009);
 - a focus-group with proctors (one per year 2008 and 2009);
 - a focus-group with test administrators (one per year 2008 and 2009);
 - a focus-group with public observers (one per year 2008 and 2009);
 - a survey of public observers (one during the 2008 external testing session);
 - a survey of test takers conducted (one during the 2008 external testing session);
 - a survey of scorers conducted (one during the 2008 external testing session);
 - a survey of instructors conducted (one during the 2008 external testing session).
- 2) Democratic Initiatives Foundation:
 - 4 focus-groups with test-takers (one per year 2008 and 2009; separate sessions for those who are going to take external exams and those who passed exams last year);
 - 5 focus-groups with parents and teachers – (per year);
 - an expert survey in 2008 and 2009 with educational NGO representatives, journalists, mass media and PR specialists on the external testing issues;
 - an expert survey in 2008 and 2009 with leaders in education, university rectors, school directors and teachers etc.;
 - a national public survey on external testing in March and December 2008.

TTC and DIF shared results of these surveys with UCEQA and MOES management in order to improve the test administration and reporting systems, and were also made public to inform Ukrainians of salient opinion on testing issues.

3. Legislative Development

Education Law and Policy Expert Group (ELPEG). After a number of consultations with Ukrainian state authorities, in September 2007 USETI created ELPEG. ELPEG is composed of experts from MOES, UCEQA, the Secretariat of President of Ukraine, Members of the Verkhovna Rada (parliament), staff from the secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada's Committee on Science and Education of Ukraine, outside legal experts, representatives from selected universities and educational policy specialists. During the reporting period ELPEG conducted numerous meetings, workshops, consultancies and round tables to strengthen and improve the legislative basis for quality and safe external testing in Ukraine.

ELPEG's first deliverable was a comprehensive comparative analysis of domestic legislation (with references to international standards and practices), practices and standards in higher education admissions systems. Considering the constantly changing political environment in Ukraine, the analysis went through revisions during entire period of USETI. Also, in January 2008 ELPEG developed an analysis of legal regulations pertaining to external testing in Ukraine. ELPEG completed and delivered to the MOES and UCEQA an initial draft law on amending and supplementing the laws of Ukraine on education regarding external testing, and pertaining to the legal processes for handling testing violations.

USETI ELPEG deliverables at a glance:

1. *MOES Conditions of Admission 2008, 2009 and 2010.*

For each of these admission campaigns, USETI delivered Draft Conditions for Admission to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Innovations suggested by ELPEG pertaining to admission procedures were accepted and approved by the Ministry.

2. *MOES Regulations on Public Monitoring of the External Testing and Admission Campaign in Ukraine.*

The document, drafted by ELPEG in March 2008, regulated organizational and operational principles of external testing and HEIs admissions.

3. Draft Law of Ukraine "On amending and supplementing the laws and codes of Ukraine (on external testing)"

During the period from January to March 2008 ELPEG developed the Draft Law that was positively evaluated by the Center for Support to Legislation of the President of Ukraine (an office of the Institute for Strategic Research).

On April 23, 2008, an *Expanded Cabinet of Ministers Meeting* was conducted, and included representatives of public institutions involved in education. The Minister of Education and Science Ivan Vakarchuk reported on the results of the first external test (Ukrainian Language and Literature, held April 22). The Prime Minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko opened the session stating that independent testing was a progressive form of assessing knowledge which minimized corruption and should be introduced rationally, gradually and professionally. She noted that the first stage of independent testing, which took place the day before, had been completed peacefully. Ms. Tymoshenko added that

the Government would observe the following stages of independent testing and make decisions accordingly: “depending on further events, on how many children will take the tests, how many children will have passing scores, we will make further decisions.” The major result of the expanded cabinet meeting was the creation of *the Cabinet of Ministers Working Group on a Draft Law on External Testing* chaired by the Deputy Prime-Minister of Ukraine Ivan Vasyunyk. USETI COP Yarema Bachynsky and USETI Government and Legislative Relations Manager Volodymyr Kovtunets were included in the working group.

The first meetings of the working group were held on April 24 and 25 where two subgroups were created – one on testing procedures (Yarema Bachynsky was a member of this subgroup) and the other on drafting laws (Volodymyr Kovtunets was a member of this subgroup). USETI submitted a packet of draft laws to the Deputy Prime Minister to amend the existing legislation. The draft laws were developed by ELPEG to secure external standardized testing in for university admission and became the foundations of later work of the working group.

Between April 29 and May 3, 2008, USETI arranged an *ELPEG field workshop* in Kosiv (Ivano-Frankivska oblast). Participants worked on the Draft Law on external testing that encompassed all aspects of external testing. The workshop participants included: N. Bohasheva, Ministry of Justice of Ukraine; O.Yaresko, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine; Y.Kliuchkovsky, I.Zhyliayev, VRU; O.Protsak, Center for Educational Policy; M.Zubrytska, National Lviv University; Y.Myronenko, Assistant to VRU Deputy V.Kurylo; S.Rakov, UCEQA; P.Khobzey, Lviv oblast State Administration; L.Hrynevych, Kyiv State Administration; Y.Bachynsky, V.Kovtunets, I.Demchuk, I.Andreyko, USETI. Using the draft law “On amendments and supplements to the laws and codes of Ukraine (on external testing),” the group drafted and delivered to the Cabinet of Ministers draft amendments to the Ukrainian laws with the aim of adjusting Ukrainian legislation on external testing procedures and added penalties for test security violations (cheating). On May 6, the draft amendments with all accompanying documentation (comparative table, argumentation, etc.) were presented to the Cabinet of Ministers’ Working Group on the Draft Law on external testing. The working group accepted the draft amendments.

In early 2009, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine transmitted the first of two draft laws to the Verkhovna Rada for its review. In February 2009, a meeting of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Science and Education of Ukraine took place. The main decision of the Committee was to approve the Draft Law on external testing procedures delivered to the Parliament by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The Committee recommended registering the Draft Law for the Verkhovna Rada first reading.

On March 10, 2009, the Draft Law did not make it through the first reading in Parliament (222 yes votes with 226 needed for adoption). One of the three political factions – Lytvyn Faction – that had registered its support reneged its support just prior to the vote, although the Verkhovna Rada’s Committee on Science and Education supported the Draft Law. Mr. Lytvyn later made a series of truly subjective and biased comments on the draft law that indicate he does not support external testing and believes the legislative issue is a trivial one at best.

Later, on March 19, 2009, Science & Education Committee Chair Volodymyr Polokhalo and six other members of parliament (representing the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko and Our Ukraine factions, plus a lone member from the Party of Regions faction) submitted a more comprehensive single “replacement” bill, which featured virtually all the provisions of the failed bill, and also comprehensive liability for violations provisions. This new bill also gave university admissions committees an additional tool to use in making admissions decisions, by providing for the consideration of both the relevant UCEQA standardized testing certificates as well as the secondary school Grade Point Average record to be submitted by university applicants. In this respect it may be an improvement on the previous bill.

On March 30, 2009, a meeting of the Parliament Faction Council of Conciliation was conducted where faction heads agreed to place the law in the Parliament agenda after clearance by the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Science and Education.

On April 1, 2009, the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine William B. Taylor addressed a letter to Verkhovna Rada’s Chairman, Volodymyr Lytvyn, on the development of the testing and admissions reforms, conveying that such are of great interest to the Government of the United States of America. With this letter Mr. Taylor brought to the attention of V. Lytvyn that the U.S. supports these reforms as a partner with the Government of Ukraine and education community, as do millions of Ukrainians who see the benefits of an objective, fair and truly competitive higher education system. The U.S. Ambassador addressed the Ukrainian Parliament’s Chairman to support a draft bill “On Amending Certain Laws of Ukraine” (#4241) which had been submitted by a group of MPs led by Science and Education Committee Chair Volodymyr Polokhalo.

On April 15, 2009, this Draft Law on testing (#4241) passed through first reading in the Parliament (242 yes votes with 226 needed for adoption). Thereafter USETI conducted a number of ELPEG meetings and consultancies on the amendments to be implemented for the second reading in Parliament. These amendments dealt with: specifying the roles and jurisdictions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in the sphere of the external testing; ensuring confidentiality in external testing; specifying the criminal nature of violations by parties involved in external testing and corresponding penalties according to the recommendations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Prosecutors General Office of Ukraine.

As of December 24, 2009, the Draft Law was under Parliamentary review but the second reading had not been cleared yet.

4. Draft UCEQA Regulations.

In September-October 2008, USETI conducted six ELPEG meetings per the UCEQA Director’s request to work out new UCEQA procedures to improve UCEQA operational sustainability. The participants agreed on two options – UCEQA as the Agency of State Power or as a State Non-Profit Enterprise. After the consultations, MOES accepted a draft of UCEQA regulations aiming to strengthen UCEQA’s institutional legal status and to define more precisely its exact areas of operation, mandate and place within the Ukrainian education community. As the result at the end of November 2008 the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine Ivan Vakarchuk signed the UCEQA regulations and sent them to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval.

4. Public Outreach

USETI Component 4 was focused on generating and communicating relevant messages on testing, and building the capacity in Ukraine for informed public discourse on external testing and admissions.

Media Monitoring. USETI grantee PE Baklanova provided USETI with comprehensive monthly media monitoring on topical issues pertaining to the standardized testing enterprise and HEI admissions/admissions reform issues. These reports were regularly analyzed with UCEQA and MOES to improve media relations and communication strategies.

External Testing Informational Centre. In February 2008, USETI had discussions with the World Bank Office in Kyiv on a broader Public Outreach Campaign for testing. As a result, in February USETI supported the establishment of the External Testing Informational Centre (ETIC) with two consultant positions – Roman Kobets as Director and Viktor Zahreba as Public Relations Manager. According to the agreement with the World Bank, USETI supported ETIC for 6 months. In cooperation with USETI, ETIC supported external testing by arranging press conferences, contacts with media representatives, participation in media and NGO trainings, daily media monitoring, etc. throughout the project.

Training for UCEQA and RC PR staff. In December 2007, USETI hosted a two-day training on “Cooperation with Media” for directors of Regional Centers for Educational Quality Assessment. The seminar, delivered by USETI public relations consultant Yevhen Hlibovitsky, educated RCEQA directors in how to plan a strategy to cooperate with local journalists. The seminar included presentations, a Q&A session, case studies and role-playing. The latter allowed participants to experience what a real press-conference might look like and what it means to be a reporter.

Town Hall meetings. In November 2007, USETI conducted advocacy training for town hall meeting facilitators that focused on the specific ways testing could overcome corruption. Throughout the months of December 2007 through February 2008 the facilitators, trained by USETI, held 45 town hall meetings in the regions of Ukraine to give the public personal access to information about the testing process. USETI activities during year one in these areas were especially crucial because of the nationwide roll out of the test in 2008. Town hall meetings, attended by approximately 6,500 people, were important venues to inform people on the benefits of external testing.

Improve, expand and make available informational materials from UCEQA. During 2007-2009 USETI regularly assisted UCEQA to better inform the public on improvements in external testing procedures via PSAs, newsletters and information videos production and dissemination:

Newsletters:

- 1) In October 2008, USETI developed and disseminated 550,000 copies of a UCEQA/USETI informational brochure, containing a concise description of the testing process for 2008. The brochure was provided by UCEQA and the RCEQAs to each 2008 testing applicant upon registration.
- 2) In the first quarter of 2008 USETI developed and distributed a poster (40,000 copies) to test sites and testing registration points that conveyed the major requirements for

- 3) In the first quarter of 2008, USETI developed a newsletter (515,000 copies) informing test takers of possible violations during external testing; it was distributed by UCEQA as a supplement to the invitations to external exams.
- 4) In June 2008, USETI developed and sent to test takers 462,000 copies of the “Graduate’s Handbook” which was a USETI information newsletter. The issue described major features of the admission procedures in 2008 and the relationship of external testing certificates to admissions. It was distributed through external testing registration points along with score certificates. Also, the newsletter contained links to the MOES and UCEQA telephone hotlines and the “Konkurs” website where every school leaver could find basic statistics about each Ukrainian HEI (see Component 6).
- 5) In August 2008, USETI in cooperation with the Journal TIMO (Testing and Monitoring in Education Herald) developed the fifth issue of USETI information newsletter. The issue contained statistics and analytical data pertaining to the 2008 testing. Generalized by oblasts, types of educational institutions and their locations, the data was presented by ranges on a 100-200 points scale (the scale used by the HEI admission process) and on a 12 points scale (the scale used for high school graduation).
- 6) In November 2008, an informational booklet/newsletter for HEIs entrants was developed by USETI with the MOES and UCEQA. The aim of this sixth issue was to inform all school leavers and other likely 2009 testing participants of the official ground rules for the 2009 HEI admission campaign. The newsletter, with a print run of 522,000 copies, was distributed at registration sites along with registration cards/informational booklets on testing. The registration cards were developed by UCEQA in October 2008 and contain the basic information about all stages of the registration process as well as the relevant details about the external tests.
- 7) The next (seventh) newsletter was developed and delivered to test takers in March and April 2009 and contained preparation materials for foreign languages (see component 5).
- 8) In April 2009, USETI developed and published 5,500 posters to inform test takers on how to prevent irregularities at the testing sites. The posters were distributed to nine RCEQA offices to be placed in each testing site.
- 9) In the first half of 2009, USETI published an advertisement in *Silski Visti* newspaper – the most popular paper in rural areas with a circulation of 300,000. Rural areas in particular were targeted due to their lack of other access to reliable information on testing processes. In all, *Silski Visti* published information with the slogan "Be proactive – protect your score!" in eight issues - approximately 2.5 million copies covering the period of the majority of external testing session.
- 10) In August 2009, USETI and TIMO developed a special issue containing an abbreviated version of the UCEQA 2009 External Testing Report, with statistics and analytical data for the 2009 testing session. Generalized by oblasts, types of educational institutions and their locations, the data were presented on a 100-200

point scale (the scale used for the HEI admission process) and on a 12 point scale (the scale used for high school graduation). The issue was distributed through the UCEQA/RCEQA network, and by post to regular TIMO subscribers. The newsletter recipients included secondary and higher educational institutions, local education departments, state institutions and NGOs.

- 11) In December 2009, UCEQA delivered the newsletter on the finding of the 2010 external testing to the regional centers. The newsletter included instructions for 2010 test takers (registration information, the list of subjects offered, the rights and duties of test takers, tips for test takers, plus contact information). Each test taker will receive a copy of the newsletter during registration for external testing, from December 15, 2009 through March 31, 2010. USETI produced 437,000 copies of the newsletter.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and Informational Videos:

- 1) In January 2008, USETI produced an informational video on testing. During February, TV spots were broadcast daily on two national channels (MTV and “Ukrayina”). The main objective of this informational video was to inform all those who wished to participate in external testing of its major requirements, particularly the requirement to register for the test by February 20.
- 2) In February 2008, a USETI appeal to register for the 2008 external test was aired on various radio stations, with a total of 50 spots per day aired. Ukrainian Radio Channels 1, 2 and 3, along with FM station Promin’, covered most of rural Ukraine while FM stations Era-FM and LOVE Radio covered audience in oblast centers.
- 3) In March 2008, USETI developed a video PSA to inform 2008 test takers of the rules and regulations of testing. This PSA was aired during April and May of 2008 on 6 Ukrainian TV channels (MTV, “5th channel”, TRK “Ukrayina”, “Nashe Kino”, RTVi and “24th channel). In total the PSA was aired 1,358 times.
- 4) The USETI PR campaign regarding registration for the external testing 2009 started in early February. An animated Internet banner that read “Do you want to enter a higher education institution? What are you waiting for? Registration for external testing ends on the 3rd of March www.testportal.gov.ua” first appeared on www.finance.ua, one of seven sites that were chosen to target diverse audiences: businessmen, females of mid-parenting age (those with school-leaving children), youth, and residents of two Western regions of Ukraine with low levels of participation in past years. These web sites, namely www.natali.ua, www.ukr.net, www.bigmir.net, www.mukachevo.net, www.zik.com.ua, and www.zakarpattpost.net, started displaying USETI banners from the 16th of February.
- 5) In February 2009, the USETI TV campaign began on the national TV channels “5 Kanal” and “Ukraine” and the supra-regional channel “TRK Kyiv”. These channels broadcast a PSA about registering for external testing more than four hundred times. Furthermore, per an agreement achieved between the World Bank and USETI during the coordination meeting in October 2008, more TV and radio channels were involved in this PR campaign. In particular, USETI leveraged MCC/USAID funds with World Bank funds to further broadcast the PSA on the “ICTV”, “Pershyy

Kanal”, “Ukraine” TV channels and on the “Era FM”, “Nashe Radio”, “Melodia”, “Lux FM”, “Europa Plus”, “Prosto Radio” radio stations.

- 6) In April 2009, USETI produced a Public Service Announcement to inform test takers of the rules and regulations of testing. Starting on May 1st, three nationwide channels ("5 channel", "Ukrajina", "Tonis") broadcasted the PSA "Be proactive – protect your score!" which informed 2009 test takers of irregularities that could occur during external testing and possible ways to avoid abuses. There were 18 broadcasts per day, totaling 378 during the first three weeks of May. These PSAs were aired during the main period of external testing, which began on May 6.

High level Round Tables Four High Level Round Tables were held in order to reach a consensus among high level stake holders, including government and university officials:

- 1) October 2007. USETI hosted a High Level Round Table entitled “External Assessment 2008: Prospects and Challenges”. The primary objective of the round table was to gain political support for the implementation of national external exams in 2008. All those attended learned about the successes that UCEQA achieved in 2007.
- 2) March 2008. USETI, through ELPEG, arranged the High Level Round Table entitled “Providing equal access to higher education and improvement of the educational services quality.” The participants discussed the most important issues concerning the external testing campaign of 2008, in particular legal groundwork for external testing, external testing as the stage in education quality monitoring, and organizational support for external testing.
- 3) October 2008. USETI held the High Level Round Table entitled “External Testing: Consequences of 2008 and Objectives for 2009”. The aim of the round table was to discuss the major challenges found during the admission process of 2009 due to the orders on Conditions of Admission and External Testing approved by the MOES. The following issues were raised at the round table: the need to adjust the legal background of external testing, in particular, liability for violations; increase the quantity of external test to be passed by test takers; HEI autonomy; and the eventual implementation of an abilities test as part of external testing in Ukraine.
- 4) October 2009. USETI conducted a High Level Round Table entitled “Towards Accessible Quality Higher Education. Preliminary Results and Challenges”. The aim of the event was to present the correlation analysis of the 2008 external testing results to the academic achievements of first year students (see component 1), conducted in 2009 by USETI, to review the 2009 admissions campaign and discuss conditions for admission in 2010.

USETI trainings for regional media representatives To enhance the role media played in informing the public about external testing, and to inform representatives of the mass media on how they could observe actual test administrations, USETI regularly held trainings for regional media representatives (November 2007, March, October 2008, and April 2009). The trainings were designed to allow journalists to learn about the specifics of the upcoming external testing sessions. Additionally, journalists were able to talk with UCEQA management, USETI media consultants, public monitors, etc.

Train NGO representatives in public monitoring of the testing process. To make the administration of external testing more transparent, USETI regularly conducted Trainings of Trainers for OPORA's regional representatives on the criteria for public monitoring of testing systems (September 2007, March and October 2008 and February 2009). With knowledge and skills achieved during these sessions, trainers conducted a series of local trainings for other public monitors of the external testing and admission campaigns.

2008 external testing public monitoring *The Coalition of NGOs*, made up of USETI sub-grantees, OPORA and TTC, and the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (which was awarded with a grant from the International Renaissance Foundation), was formed to carry out a nationwide campaign in *public monitoring of the 2008 testing administration*. The coalition held over 93 Trainings of Trainers in all regions of Ukraine and over 2,315 people were trained to become public monitors (CVU - 665, OPORA - 1650). Two OPORA monitors worked in every single test site in 14 regions of Ukraine during the first two external tests (Ukrainian Language and Literature - April 22 and Math - April 29). During the administration of subsequent tests OPORA monitors covered sites where there were issues during the first two tests. About 25-30 test sites were covered by CVU's monitors for each external testing subject during main external testing session.

The launch of the public monitoring campaign was announced via *25 local press-conferences* (one in each region of Ukraine). After each test, the Coalition disseminated press-releases on monitoring results through the media.

2009 external testing public monitoring In April 2009, USETI launched work on the 2009 external testing observation campaign. In particular, on April 15, a meeting with the Civic Network "OPORA," Committee Voters of Ukraine, and the Testing Technologies Centre was conducted by the International Renaissance Foundation in Kyiv. At the meeting NGO representatives presented their proposals for external testing observation in 2009. IRF carefully appraised the necessity of external testing observation. Due to limited funds provided for the external testing observation campaign by USETI, IRF provided additional funds for public monitoring. On April 30, 2009, the external testing observation campaign was presented at the press conference. Once again, a coalition of NGOs, made up of USETI sub-grantees, OPORA and TTC, and the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, co-funded by USETI and IRF, was formed to carry out a nationwide campaign in public monitoring of the administration of the 2009 test.

In April, OPORA conducted 31 trainings, resulting in 940 trained observers. In total, these individuals observed 1,692 testing sessions from May 6 to June 5. CVU and TTC conducted 1,603 observations in the regions of Ukraine under their responsibility.

During the external testing observation campaign the organizers conducted at least one local press conference in each region of Ukraine to inform the public on specifics of the 2009 administration. On May 20, 2009, OPORA and CVU conducted a press conference on the preliminary results of the external testing observation campaign through the UNIAN Informational Agency.

Additionally, a press conference entitled: "Public Observation of 2009 External Testing: Summation and Conclusions" was held on June 9, 2009 by the coalition. Fifty percent of all test sites were covered by these three NGOs. The report concluded that external testing was conducted on a satisfactory level at most of the test sites with minimum procedural irregularities. No major violations were observed.

2009 admission campaign monitoring With USETI and IRF financial assistance, OPORA conducted the monitoring of the 2009 admission process of 26 HEIs (one in each Ukrainian region).

The 2009 admissions campaign monitoring began with 20 regional press conferences. During the months of July and August, OPORA representatives visited HEIs' admission commissions systematically to monitor the admission procedures abidance. One of the key instruments of the admission campaign monitoring was the web-based admission system "Konkurs".

On July 30, 2009, OPORA addressed the MOES with their concerns that 2009 Conditions of Admission did not regulate the process of test takers' applications' adjustment precisely/fully. As a result, on July 31st, the MOES issued Letter # 1/9-510 explaining the process.

In August, OPORA conducted a press conference on the results of the 2009 admission campaign monitoring. At the press conference, Ms. Sovsun, Educational Programs Coordinator, informed the public of the key issues observed by OPORA during 2009 admission campaign. According to OPORA's data, a great influx of privileged entrants to prestigious faculties at the leading HEIs, along with admission committees being unready to manage large number of applicants were among the most common problems and complaints by the entrants and their parents. For example, even testing "Champions"" had no chances to gain admission to the "international relations" specialty at the Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, as there were 35 entrants with privileges and 17 winners of educational contests (who are entitled for enrollment on preferential terms as well) applying for 50 state funded places in the specialty.

During their observations, OPORA noted that a new method to circumvent the testing rules was being used. Forged certificates were being submitted by some applicants feigning illness and some claiming to be winners of educational contests. OPORA exposed cases where applicants were listed as winners of educational contests in the "Konkurs" system, according to data entered by HEIs' admission committees, but who were absent from the official lists of the educational contests winners, approved by the MOES.

Additionally, administrators at some universities continued to ignore the MOES Order on entrance conditions. In particular, Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University changed its own documents acceptance deadline and three Kharkiv HEIs – Kharkiv National Municipal Economy Academy, Kharkiv National Medical University, and Kharkiv Polytechnic University – would not allow access to registered observers.

Business circles informed on the importance of the external testing In October 2008, a national HR Forum was conducted in Odesa. Yevhen Hlibovytsky, USETI PR consultant, participated in the forum and made a one hour presentation on the need for and logic behind external testing and on its influence on Ukrainian business. About 200 HR managers from Ukrainian and multinational companies working in Ukraine participated in the event, most of whom were present for Mr. Hlibovytsky's presentation.

Also 40 participants of the HR Forum were surveyed regarding their attitude towards education reform. Ninety five percent of the respondents knew about admission reform in higher education. But only 50% agreed that the new admission system gives transparency for all participants. Among negative responses, the most common were based on the arguments that there is no objectivity in the process, that there is distrust of external testing and test quality and that tests do not evaluate the test takers' psychological characteristics. *At the same time 90% of*

the respondents agreed that the efficiency of new employees is directly related to their education and that it is very important to change the higher educational system and improve its practical relevance to the needs of the labor market in Ukraine.

5. Test Preparation

Standardized testing cannot fulfill its anti-corruption HEI admissions function if the hundreds of thousands of students who will be tested do not have equitable access to quality test preparation materials and services. The equity of access issue has greater meaning in Ukraine than in countries with established testing systems and traditions, because the very concept of standardized testing is quite new to most Ukrainian students at this time, and it will be years before testing becomes commonplace and a regular activity throughout the typical student's school and HEI years.

Throughout the project, support has been given for equal access to test preparation materials for students throughout the country, including those in remote locations, such as rural areas. In such areas access to quality education is sometimes an issue, let alone access to quality test preparation materials.

Test preparation materials for 2008 testing session. In August 2007, USETI (in particular, USETI Consultant Mark Zelman), worked with UCEQA subject specialists in August 2007 to review preparation materials from the past and assisted in drafting new materials for mathematics, Ukrainian language and literature, World and Ukrainian History, Physics and Biology. In October and November of 2007, UCEQA, with USETI assistance developed a compendium for test preparation, which included information on test taking strategy, test specifications and sample tests for all available subjects. The compendium was printed by UCEQA and delivered to all schools for future test takers. Due to legal restrictions regarding state funding legislation the compendium could not be issued free of charge *to those who graduated school prior to 2008*. Therefore, USETI assisted in printing 50,000 copies of the compendium for distribution through registration centers for persons who graduated from school prior to 2008 but who had registered for the 2008 testing cycle. The compendium of 2008 test preparation was also placed at USETI Website. USETI also posted samples of additional exams provided by UCEQA on the site.

Test preparation materials received during the study tour to Poland (*see component I*), were also widely used for developing test preparation materials for the external testing campaigns.

USETI again supported UCEQA in 2008 test preparation. In particular, USETI consultant Mark Zelman provided assistance and guidance to UCEQA specialists. From July to September 2008, Dr. Zelman assisted UCEQA math specialists in developing a practice test in math. He also worked with the history specialists in developing the framework for the history test. A number of meetings were held in September to discuss the effectiveness and necessity of a practice test in March. Although there were some issues with the practice session in 2008, results of the TTC survey, conducted during 2008 external testing session, showed that such practice sessions did benefit test takers by helping them prepare psychologically to take standardized tests. Therefore a practice session was planned for March 2009. The survey also showed that schools were fairly effective in helping students prepare. It was also decided that a committee on preparation strategy would be organized with the MOES, UCEQA, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and USETI.

Test preparation materials for 2009 testing session. With assistance from USETI in November and December 2008, UCEQA developed its own registration bulletin for 2009 test takers. The registration bulletin included information about the layout of the tests and general information about test content, which allowed test takers to prepare themselves for the external testing 2009.

In addition, UCEQA made provisions for a practice test in all subjects. Thus, in March 2009, UCEQA conducted a two day practice test – on March 14 (Ukrainian Language & Literature, Ukrainian History, Geography and Biology) and March 21 (Math, Chemistry, Physics and Foreign Languages – English, German, Spanish and French). A total of 1661 test sites were open for practice test sessions and 211,127 persons (95% of those who had registered for the practice test) participated in the sessions. Although the practice test was fee based, it was a unique chance for test takers to prepare by taking a “live test,” i.e. one with questions derived from the same item pool as that which fed the “real” tests scheduled for later in 2009. Due to availability of tests on-line and in school from previous years, test takers had more opportunities to prepare in 2009 than in years past.

Due to budget constraints, UCEQA could not print the additional preparation materials for test takers in 2009. Instead, existing materials – a compendium for test preparation 2008 including a basic test framework and sample tests for all subjects conducted in 2008 external testing session – was used. UCEQA also conducted an informational campaign about the availability of the Compendium as well as foreign languages preparation materials in each library of Ukrainian secondary schools.

Given that four modern foreign languages (English, German, French and Spanish) were added to the list of external testing subjects in 2009, USETI, in cooperation with UCEQA, developed a newsletter featuring additional materials on the foreign languages. Thus, in March and April of 2009, all of Ukraine’s 18,000+ schools receive two special issues of *Osvita Ukrayiny (Education of Ukraine) newspaper* with a description of the foreign languages tests, methodological prep recommendations for use in the classroom, and sample items for each of the new languages. The newsletter was issued in two parts (one featuring material in English, the other in French, German and Spanish) and delivered to every educational institution of Ukraine (secondary schools, educational state and local authorities, etc.)

In February 2009, OPORA, with USETI assistance, developed a special issue of “*Tochka Opori*” (OPORA’s Point) newspaper for the Lviv Regional Centre for Educational Quality Assessment. The aim of the newspaper publication, with a print run of 5,000 copies, was to inform the public in several regions of western Ukraine on the external testing terms and conditions as well as the external testing public monitoring campaign in 2009.

Test preparation materials under UCEQA (MOES) licensing. In early 2009, USETI conducted an assessment of the status of test preparation materials licensing within UCEQA and MOES. In Ukraine there is an MOES monopoly on licensing all educational materials and UCEQA can not publish any preparation materials without ministerial approval.

The following external test preparation materials are available on the book market:

- “English. Complex preparation to external testing” by S. Myasoyedova and O.Khodakovska, Kharkiv 2009;

- “English. Test items corpus” by A.Nesvit, O.Yakovenko, V.Kovalenko and Z.Pukha, Kyiv – “Geneza”, 2009;
- “German. Test items corpus” by T.Ocheretina and O.Chub, Kyiv – “Geneza” 2008;
- “Mathematics. Test items corpus” by Y.Zakhariychenko and O.Shkolnyy, Kyiv – “Geneza” 2009;
- “Mathematics. Complex preparation to external testing” by V.Gorokh, Y.Babych, H.Vartanyan, Y.Zakhariychenko, S.Ilyina, Y.Nelin and O.Rohanin, Kharkiv – “Fakt” 2009;
- “Ukrainian Language and Literature. External Testing 2009 exercises” by O.Marchenko, Kharkiv 2009;
- “Ukrainian Language and Literature. External Testing 2009 exercises” by O.Avramenko and L.Kovalenko, Kyiv – “hramota” 2008;
- “Ukrainian Language. Complex Handbook” by V.Parashchych, V.Zhovtobryukh and V.Marsymenko, Kharkiv – “Torsing Plus” 2008;
- “External Testing. Basic package: Ukrainian Language and Literature, Ukrainian History, Mathematics and English” by V.Zhovtobryukh, Y.Lebedyeva, O.Maksymenko, O.Tarasenko and Y.Dovhopolova, Kharkiv – “Torsing Plus” 2009;
- “External testing in Math” by S.Nelin, L.Dvoretzka, N.Prokopenko and others, Kyiv – UCEQA 2006;
- “Mathematics: External Testing. Practice Book on the external testing preparation” by L.Dvoretzka, Y.Zakhariychenko, A.Merzlyak and others, Kyiv – UCEQA 2007.

2010 test preparation materials development. Starting in October 2009, UCEQA began to place 2010 preparation materials for next year’s test takers on the UCEQA web site: www.testportal.com.ua.

In addition, in March 2010, UCEQA will conduct practice tests sessions in all subjects.

6. Admissions Policy

University Regional Round Tables To engage Ukrainian Higher Educational Institutions in the admission procedure policy making process, USETI grantee Center for Educational Policy held regional roundtables for university stakeholders. From November 2007 to February 2008, CEP, along with USETI, conducted nine University Round Tables in cities where the Regional Centers for Educational Quality Assessment are based – Kyiv, Odesa, Lviv, Vinnytsya, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Simferopol, Kharkiv and Ivano-Frankivsk.

Regional representatives of higher education institutions of III-IV accreditation level, heads of local education governing bodies, RCEQAs representatives, and journalists of electronic and print mass media participated at the round tables. At the round tables the participants had the opportunity to share their opinions on the legislative status of external testing in Ukraine as well as to discuss suggestions for admission systems reform and particular features of external testing implementation.

It is noteworthy that HEIs actively responded to the invitation to these round tables. The universities were represented by rectors, vice rectors or responsible secretaries of admission commissions.

Solicitation of priorities from Universities. During the same period CEP surveyed 238 HEIs regarding their attitude toward external testing as an admissions tool. The questionnaire consisted of two blocks – 1) system of admissions in Ukraine and 2) external testing in Ukraine. Thanks to the survey, HEIs showed their positions on the purpose of external testing and their expectations from future students. The survey results, in addition to the university regional round tables, were used when preparing the new admissions conditions for 2009.

To make the analysis of admission reforms in Ukraine more comprehensive, USETI CCN consultant Alexander Belyakov prepared “*Analysis of the Admission Campaign and Preconditions for Admissions Concept Creation in Ukraine*” in April 2008. Mr. Belyakov focused on the following issues: state funded places (ie: government scholarships) in HEIs; how private HEIs function; the work of HEI admission commissions; and centralization of the admission campaign. The consultant analyzed the interests of school leavers, HEIs, and UCEQA, as well as the MOES, regarding the creation of an adequate model of admissions in Ukraine. The Paper was delivered to ELPEG and CEP.

In November and December 2008, CEP conducted four follow-up University Regional Round Tables/workshops (Lviv – Nov. 8, Kharkiv – Nov. 22, Odesa – Nov. 29 and Kyiv – Dec. 20) to discuss the development of the Concept of Admission Policy Paper. In total 181 participants representing mostly higher and secondary education and RCEQA from all regions of Ukraine took part in the events (these 4 events were a modified reprise of the 9 regional university round tables mentioned above).

Later, CEP prepared an analytical report on the round table results, which was sent to all HEIs. After CEP received feedback from these HEIs, adjustments were made to the Concept of Admissions Policy Paper and it was presented to the ELPEG for inclusion in legislation where necessary.

Reforming national policy on admissions to HEIs of Ukraine was discussed by participants of a *symposium* entitled: “Reforming Ukraine’s Admissions System to HEI’s”, held in Kyiv in February 2009. The event was organized by the MOES, Drahomanov National Pedagogical University, USETI, the CEP and the Testing Technologies and Education Quality Monitoring Center.

The organizing partners brought together over one hundred participants representing the Parliament of Ukraine, the Secretariat of the President of Ukraine, the Director of the USAID Mission for Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, UCEQA management, management and administration of Ukrainian HEIs, non-governmental organizations, international experts and the media. The participation of these stake-holders secured a quorum necessary for laying the foundations for reforming national admissions policy.

The participants made it clear that the admissions system in general requires improvement. Of particular concern are the “special privileges” enjoyed by specific social groups identified by the constitution. Individuals who fall into these categories are admitted on state scholarships without competing against the whole pool of applicants. They simply need minimal passing test scores. In this context MP Olesya Orobets said that privileges should be introduced in the form

of scholarships for children from poor families, loans for study, and other forms of financial assistance, and that such privileges should be given after the person had been admitted to an HEI on the basis of fair and equal competition.

Strategic recommendations on admissions reform in Ukraine developed on the basis of university regional round tables were also discussed at the Symposium and well received by the participants.

Analysis of the Rules of Universities Admission In July 2008, USETI CCN consultant Oleksandr Vorobyov, along with OPORA, conducted a correlation analysis of adherence of 73 university admissions procedures to the 2008 MOES Conditions of Admission. The aim of the analysis was to discover violations in these university procedures.

With the same purpose, USETI CCN consultant Maksym Baryshnikov developed a correlation analysis of 100 HEI university admissions to the MOES Conditions of Admission in 2009. After all the analyses were prepared they were sent to the MOES.

Assisting MOES in developing an interactive, web-based admissions management tool
Given the need to make the admissions process more transparent and after the corresponding consultations with the MOES, USETI developed the web-based admissions informational system “Konkurs” (Competition – Eng). The web portal was launched at <http://www.vstup.info> in June 2008, providing all school leavers with the basic statistical data of each higher educational institution: the number of state budget places for each faculty/specialty, the number of submitted applications with minimum, maximum and average external test scorers. This allowed each applicant to understand his or her chances of getting into a specific university and brought some transparency to the individual criteria of each HEI. During a number of regional meetings, conducted in June by MOES, USETI representatives instructed HEIs’ representatives on the portal functions.

The functionality of Konkurs System was recognized by the Ministry in 2008. In November 2008, at the end of an MOES working seminar, Minister Ivan Vakarchuk recognized USETI’s role in establishing the MOES Konkurs Electronic Admissions Database for the 2008 admissions cycle. The MOES honored USETI COP Yarema Bachynsky with the “Petro Mohyla” Medal for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine; Dr. Volodymyr Kovtunets and Tetyana Serhiyenko, who actively participated in the 2008 Konkurs development, were also honored for their tireless efforts in assisting the MOES Higher Education Department with the implementation of the Konkurs information component with Citations of Recognition. Also, the Konkurs System was incorporated into the 2009 MOES Conditions of Admission, requiring HEIs to submit data to Konkurs on a daily basis.

Considering the MOES focus on making “state-civic management of the Ukrainian Educational System” a pillar of Ukrainian higher education, USETI, in full agreement with the Ministry made the decision to shift management of Konkurs to the CEP (USETI grantee partner in education policy development). The shift took place in April 2009.

The Konkurs system was significantly improved in 2009. Each user received the ability to see the data of any applicant who submitted documents to a particular HEI, including their names and test scores. This information was found very helpful, especially for the public admission monitoring done by OPORA. During the 2009 admission campaign, over 1.1 million entrants’ applications and 498 HEIs were registered with the system. From June to August 2009,

1,100,625 visitors (hosts) were tracked at the www.vstup.info web-site; 23,268,035 web-page reviews (hits) were registered.

- ✓ Special Issues related to the USETI Project

External testing 2008 and 2009 at a glance From April to June 2008 and May to June 2009 external testing was conducted. Each year approximately 450,000 test takers had the opportunity to take standardized nationwide exams in diverse subjects (maximum in 2008 – 3 subjects, in 2009 – 5 subjects). The statistics of the 2008 and 2009 external testing session are as follows:

Subject	Registered		Test takers		Test takers with score 100-123		Test takers with maximum score (200)	
	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
Ukrainian Language and Literature	512,473	461,981	461,210 (90.00%)	434,264 (94%)	40,655 (8.81%)	37,292 (8.61%)	222 (0.05%)	206 (0.05%)
Mathematics	266,337	259,213	226,084 (84.89%)	234,625 (91%)	10,363 (4.58%)	22,609 (9.62%)	227 (0.10%)	415 (0.18%)
History of Ukraine	98,924	195,118	83,465 (84.37%)	179,509 (92%)	7,587 (9.09%)	15,649 (8.7%)	62 (0.07%)	115 (0.1%)
World History	7,739	N/A	5,469 (70.67%)	N/A	472 (8.63%)	N/A	6 (0.11%)	N/A
Chemistry	30,361	34,201	24,382 (80.31%)	28,045 (82%)	2,382 (9.77%)	2,713 (9.48%)	19 (0.08%)	31 (0.11%)
Geography	30,887	56,690	24,225 (78.43%)	48,946 (86%)	2,373 (9.80%)	4,441 (8.79%)	18 (0.07%)	24 (0.05%)
Physics	45,669	38,209	32,592 (71.37%)	32,417 (85%)	3,170 (9.73%)	2,037 (6.3%)	39 (0.12%)	31 (0.1%)
Biology	83,780	111,671	70,581 (84.25%)	102,514 (92%)	6,734 (9.54%)	9,612 (9.4%)	77 (0.11%)	56 (0.1%)
Basics of Jurisprudence	69,569	N/A	55,248 (79.41%)	N/A	4,568 (8.27%)	N/A	46 (0.08%)	N/A
Basics of Economics	20,546	N/A	12,111 (58.95%)	N/A	1,130 (9.33%)	N/A	11 (0.09%)	N/A
Foreign Literature	4,835	N/A	2,530 (52.33%)	N/A	248 (9.80%)	N/A	4 (0.16%)	N/A
Foreign languages	N/A	69,053	N/A	59,933 (87%)	N/A	5,800 (9.68%)	N/A	103 (0.17%)

Testing terminology dictionary developed and published. With International Renaissance Foundation funding and assistance by USETI consultant Mark Zelman, the Testing Technologies Centre developed a Testing Terminology Dictionary in early 2008. The dictionary, containing more than 900 terms, was published with support from USETI, and distributed to UCEQA as well as the RCEQAs, HEIs (via university regional round tables) and to/through the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The dictionary was the first attempt to systematize commonly used testing terminology in Ukraine.

The Head of State takes interest to the external testing. From the first year of obligatory standardized external testing in 2008, the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, regularly and publicly takes an interest both to the advantages and challenges of external testing.

In June 2008 and June 2009, the President met with school leavers who had the highest scores in the nation for that year. Mr. Yushchenko underlined that high quality education, without the hindrance of corruption, plays an important role in the country's development. In this context the President stressed the key importance of introducing external testing as a mechanism of combating corruption in higher education, ensuring equal access to education for all university entrants and demonstrating fair assessment of their knowledge.

However, the President of Ukraine stressed the need to improve such the mechanisms as external testing to make Ukrainian education more transparent and of a higher quality. At the meeting with HEIs representatives in September 2008, Mr. Yushchenko raised the following topics:

- Drawbacks of the external testing campaign which have to be improved – technical problems of the external testing as well as lack of legal framework of a number of the external testing procedures;
- Violations of Conditions of Admissions during the admission campaign 2008 made by a number of institutions;
- The necessity of combating corruption in the Ukrainian higher education.

In June 2009, President Yushchenko met with the Minister of Education and Science Ivan Vakarchuk. At the meeting the Minister reported on the achievements of the 2008-2009 academic year, problems with preparation for the 2009-2010 academic year and achievements of students who have graduated. The President paid particular attention to external testing, remarking that reports of national and international experts, representatives of NGOs and observers showed that the 2009 testing session surpassed last year's effort. At the same time, the President stressed the need to analyze the 2009 testing session, in order to address any weaknesses and effect further improvement. The end of the academic year and admission campaign issues were also a highlight. The President emphasized the importance of creating special guidelines for admission of individuals from certain social groups including children from large families, orphans, and handicapped children.

Working Lunch on Admissions System Improvements in Ukraine On November 18, 2009, USETI hosted a working lunch for representatives of Ukrainian and international philanthropic institutions, businesses and NGO. The aim of the event was to interest potential donors in supporting various systems of external testing.

Approximately 70 participants took part in the event, including representatives of USAID, WB, EU Delegation of the European Commission, Canadian Embassy, UNDP, Rinat Akhmetov Foundation, Microsoft Ukraine, MTS, "Ukraine 3000" Foundation, and others.

The working lunch began with opening remarks by USETI COP Yarema Bachynsky who presented the main achievements of USETI Project and thanked the state authorities for the productive cooperation. MoES Deputy Minister Pavlo Polyansky and UCEQA Deputy Director Vadym Karandiy then talked about the reforms in Ukrainian education and the dramatic effect external testing has had on the quality of education and equal access to higher education in Ukraine. They also paid particular attention to effective cooperation with USETI on external testing PR, security and quality issues in their speeches.

USAID Mission Director Janina Jaruzeslki underlined the necessity of continuing educational reform in Ukraine and appealed to unite donors and civic and business leaders to promote reform going forward.

Olena Zaplotynska, IRF Educational Program Manager, described basic IRF assistance in previous years and assured participants that IRF will continue its support. Yevhen Hlibovyt'sky and Oleksandra Baklanova, USETI PR consultants emphasized the need to work with diverse groups of people on systematic explanations of educational reforms and how it will benefit their lives. Volodymyr Kovtunets, USETI Legislative and Government Relations Manager, presented the achievements of the web-based informational admission system "Konkurs" and Inna Sovsun, OPORA Educational Programs Coordinator, showed the need of further support for public monitoring of external testing and admission campaigns.

Given the significant interest generated by this USETI Forum, USETI began a series of meetings with institutions potentially interested in educational reforms in Ukraine. During 5 weeks in November and December of 2009, USETI representatives had meetings with MOES, UCEQA, International Renaissance Foundation, National University "Kyiv-Moyle Academy", Intel Ukraine Microelectronics, MTS Company, Publishing House FAKT, Microsoft Ukraine, Fulbright Program, EU TEMPUS Project Educational Measurements Adapted to EU Standards, Rinat Akhmetov's Foundation "Development of Ukraine," Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), British Council, UNITER Project, the Petro Mohyla Black Sea State University in Mykolayiv and Goethe Institute. The aim of the meetings was to discuss possible development of educational reforms in Ukraine as well as to start the creation of State Authority/NGO/Business consortium to support Ukraine in its efforts to create an effective and transparent system of higher education in Ukraine.