



# HEALTH AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE SPECIAL THEMATIC REPORT 2012

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF U.S. ASSISTANCE TO EUROPE AND EURASIA (EUR/ACE)  
MONITORING USG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RESULTS IN GEORGIA  
(GEORGIA MONITORING PROJECT)  
CONTRACT NUMBER: GS10F0309P



**GEORGIA MONITORING PROJECT**



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***Submitted to:***  
**United States Department of State**  
Mary E. Stewart  
Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia  
2201 C Street, NW, Room 4227  
Washington, D.C. 20520  
Email: [Stewartme@state.gov](mailto:Stewartme@state.gov)



***Submitted by:***  
**International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI)**  
8618 Westwood Center Drive Suite 220 • Vienna, VA • 22182  
Telephone: (703) 749-0100 • Facsimile: (703) 749-0110  
Email: [jsk@ibtci.com](mailto:jsk@ibtci.com)

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	Advisory Board
AC	US Embassy Assistance Coordinator
BSN	Bachelor Science Nursing
CAF	Child Assessment Forms
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
CC	Construction Companies
EG	Economic Growth
EUR/ACE	Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia
GJD	Governing, Justly & Democratically
GMP	Georgia Monitoring Project
GOG	Government of Georgia
GVEP	Georgia Vocational Education Project
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
IBTCI	International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc.
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IIP	Investing in People
ISU	Ilia Chavchavadze State University
JCP	Job Counseling and Placement
JNA	Joint Needs Assessment
MOES	Ministry of Education and Science
MOLHSA	Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Assistance
NVEP	Nursing Vocational Education Project
P&S	Peace & Security
SCSS	Strengthening of Childcare Services and Systems
SGH	Small Group Homes
SIP	Social Infrastructure Project
SIWG	School Improvement Working Group
SOW	Scope of Work
SSA	Social Services Agency
STR	Special Thematic Report
USG	United States Government
VEC	Vocational Education College
VEI	Vocational Education Institution

## **DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in the publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of State or the United States Government.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

Two months after the August 2008 conflict with Russia, the United States Government (USG) pledged \$1 billion at the donor Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) conference in Brussels to the Government of Georgia (GOG). The Georgia Monitoring Project (GMP) is a two-year project (June 2010 to May 2012) funded by the United States Department of State, implemented by International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI), and managed by the Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia (EUR/ACE), was established to monitor the results of USG foreign assistance provided to the GOG from the \$1 billion Brussels pledge and to ensure the funds are directed toward the foreign policy and foreign assistance objectives for which they were intended. EUR/ACE defines monitoring as the determination of the progress being made to meet defined objectives.

USG's Investing in People Sector<sup>1</sup> was allocated \$48.2 million for implementation of seven projects being administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Out of this total, \$17.2 million was provided to the healthcare system, \$14.3 million to childcare services, \$9.0 million to public school renovation and \$7.7 million to vocational education. For this Special Thematic Report (STR), the GMP selected four projects allocated \$22.1 million from this portfolio:

- Strengthening of Childcare Services and Systems (SCSS);
- Social Infrastructure Project (SIP);
- Georgia Vocational Education Project (GVEP); and
- Nursing Vocational Education Project (NVEP).<sup>2</sup>

### Purpose and Methodology of the Review

This review presents an independent perspective of the results of USG assistance achieved as of February 2012 by four nationwide USAID-administered projects that focused on the improvement and capacity building of a child welfare system, renovation of facilities (public schools, training and learning laboratories), and generation of employment through vocational education.

The GMP developed a review methodology for each of the four selected projects utilizing qualitative methods. Initially, GMP conducted introductory meetings with the USG funded implementing partners and obtained project documentation for review and analysis. The GMP team also conducted a week of field research (December 12-16, 2011) in three regions of Georgia to better understand the contextual environment at beneficiary institutions, identify specific beneficiaries to interview as part of its partner-implemented field survey conducted in January-February 2012, and pilot test questions for inclusion in this survey. Data collection techniques therefore included an extensive document review, GMP-led key informant interviews and focus groups, GMP site-visits, and a partner-implemented survey (conducted by ACT Research, a well-regarded Georgian research organization). The survey was conducted through face-to-face, telephone and self-administered interviews. To obtain information on the attitudes and experiences of the USG funded project beneficiaries, questionnaires were developed for each group of beneficiaries individually. The survey sites similarly were selected by GMP based on the particular scope and focus of each project. All data collected by telephone, self-administered means, and face-to-face interviews were aggregated and analyzed.

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<sup>1</sup> USG foreign assistance is categorized under five sectors: (1) Investing in People; (2) Humanitarian Aid; (3) Peace and Security; (4) Economic Growth; and (5) Governing, Justly and Democratically.

<sup>2</sup> The project titles will be the same for consistency purposes throughout the report.

## **Summary of Findings**

The August 2008 conflict and the subsequent need for emergency relief and recovery funding in the conflict-affected areas forced cuts in overall state expenditure on the education and health sectors. The USG's cooperation with the GOG on policies and programs that supported Georgian citizens in these sectors played a critical role in continuing reforms to childcare services and systems, the renovation of public schools, the provision of equal learning opportunities to ordinary and disabled children, creating a model for modern vocational education training, and promoting nursing as a profession through on-the-job patient services trainings.

### **A. Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems (SCSS)**

In reforming the childcare services of Georgia, USG assistance played a critical role in supporting the institutional capacity building of governmental institutions involved in this sector. Assistance included closing large state children's homes and replacing them with alternative child placement options; supporting the emergence of new forms of child and family assistance; training social workers, foster caregivers, caregivers of Small Group Homes (SGH) and Day Center staff; reframing the roles of the Social Services Agency (SSA);<sup>3</sup> and informing the public-at-large and gaining their support regarding the changes.

Training sessions covered important issues such as early child development, the role of the social worker in child assessment, advocacy, children's rights and abuse, new Child Assessment Forms and assistance to biological parents. Social workers that took the training spoke positively about it, stating that it had significantly raised their knowledge in the childcare field. Foster caregivers, caregivers of SGHs and Day Center staff also expressed positive opinions about the training material, training courses and trainers.

In summary, an important model and precedent has been developed by linking the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Assistance (MOLHSA) and the SSA with the non-governmental sector to set policies in the sector and work with civil society institutions to implement the policies, under the oversight of the GOG.

### **B. Social Infrastructure Project (SIP)**

In response to GOG priorities to improve the learning environment in public schools, the USG funded the renovation of 50 such schools in Georgia. The SIP-provided renovations satisfied at least minimal physical learning standards for public schools in Georgia, and overall, the renovated schools were found to be well-maintained. Additionally, municipalities provided school principals with adequate funding to keep the improved schools in good condition. However, the number of hygienic facilities in certain cases did not comply with the number of students in the renovated schools.

Participatory planning and community mobilization tools were extensively employed at various stages of SIP implementation. Creation of the School Improvement Working Groups (SIWGs), with participation from students, parents and teachers, contributed to effective cooperation between stakeholders. Needs assessments and prioritization of renovation needs were carried out with the active participation of the SIWGs, which also played critical roles in identifying appropriate interim schooling facilities during the school renovation process. Since the renovations were completed, the SIWGs also have continued to work on school improvements and have developed clear plans on fundraising for continued school improvements. Moreover, SIWGs have initiated broad participation of local community representatives

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<sup>3</sup> Department under the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Assistance of Georgia.

in the school renovation processes, with these representatives working for free as an in-kind contribution by local communities to these projects. As part of the renovation process, the construction companies provided short-term employment for Georgia Vocational Education Project (GVEP) graduates, Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and ethnic minorities, which provided short-term employment and construction skills practice for these populations with relatively low incomes.

In summary, the USG-funded SIP met the Ministry of Education and Science's (MOES's) strategy to partially renovate public schools in key Georgian regions. It also offered construction designs for renovation of public schools that provided equal learning opportunities for both regular and disabled children.

### **C. Georgia Vocational Education Project (GVEP)**

To support the GOG initiative on revitalizing Vocational Education Colleges (VEC) in Georgia, the USG funded the GVEP. The GVEP established seven modern VECs across the country by renovating existing training facilities and purchasing new training equipment. The GVEP developed new curricula for conducting training courses that included both theoretical and practical components. Based on the new curricula, the GVEP designed seven training manuals for the construction trades with the greatest demand for qualified labor. The GMP survey found that all interviewees were satisfied or very satisfied with the training manuals. GVEP also helped to re-train existing faculty at the three VECs visited by the GMP (out of the seven GVEP-supported colleges). In the GMP survey, new faculty stated that the re-training conducted through GVEP was very useful and had resulted in them obtaining new skills and full knowledge of some professions. Additionally, GVEP was able to support the addition of faculty to VECs expanding into new trades, such as construction.

To support long-term public-private partnerships and further job placement of VEC graduates, the GVEP, with participation of construction and tourism firm representatives, established Advisory Boards in each targeted VEC. The results of other GVEP activities were mixed: While the GVEP established a VEC graduates' database, which was maintained by the VECs' Employment Centers, only three percent of VEC graduates found jobs through direct assistance from the Centers, although 68 percent of total VEC students found employment after graduation. In a related effort in targeted VECs, the GVEP introduced a one-month on-the-job training at the end of each course, which assisted graduates in obtaining future employment, and was simultaneously used as a marketing tool for VECs. However, the effectiveness of this process was highly dependent on the personal contacts of VEC principals and faculty.

In summary, through the integration of institutional and individual (student) capacity development training programs, GVEP developed a model for high quality VECs. These models can serve as good examples for the expansion of VECs throughout the country.

### **D. Nursing Vocational Education Project (NVEP)**

To improve patient services in hospitals across Georgia, the USG funded the NVEP, which focused on the rapid upgrading of nursing through in-service vocational training. NVEP has developed and implemented a new curriculum, which includes both practical and theoretical components, as well as a comprehensive training manual. According to the GMP survey, nurses who underwent the training were highly positive about the training course, manuals and trainers. Trained nurses became acquainted with a rapidly growing number of innovations in medical care, developed better approaches toward their patients and accompanying families, and gained an improved understanding of their role in patient recovery. As the GMP findings note, nurses' attitudes toward the nursing profession also changed as a result of training. These changes included a better impression of the nursing profession, greater

satisfaction with their role as nurses, enhanced self-confidence, a deeper appreciation of their importance and responsibilities regarding patients' well-being and recovery, and a stronger orientation toward professional growth. The nurses also became more attentive and the general quality of their work improved, which led to additional responsibilities. Finally, as a result of the knowledge they acquired through the nursing course, they gained newfound trust from chief nurses and physicians with whom they worked.

To ensure continuation of these learning processes, another priority area of the NVEP was the establishment of a degree-granting nursing school intended to produce the future leaders of the nursing profession in Georgia. NVEP began teaching an introductory course on nursing in Ilia Chavchavadze State University (ISU) in the fall of 2010 that was envisioned as the foundation of a degree-granting nursing program in Georgia. In December 2010, however, the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) issued an order under which a nursing education model was to be approved, thus potentially opening the way for other degree-granting institutions (i.e., besides NVEP) to offer nursing degree programs. The future of NVEP's nursing degree program plans, as well as its introductory course, were thus unclear at the time of this review.

In summary, however, the USG-funded NVEP succeeded overall in the training of Georgian nurses.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the evidence and findings discovered during monitoring visits, the GMP team believes that USG assistance provided to the GOG greatly contributed to the reform of the health and education sectors in Georgia. A number of achievements were realized in the Childcare Services sector, including successful cooperation between the government and civil society institutions, as well as the establishment of national standards for childcare that helped streamline understanding of the childcare system among participating staff members. Other improvements in childcare services included the increased hiring of qualified staff through the expansion of Human Resources capabilities, provision of trainings that enhanced the level of knowledge and skills of existing staff, and an overall rise in awareness by Georgian citizens regarding childcare reforms and the childcare system. The Social Infrastructure Project enabled the partial renovation of public schools in key regions of Georgia, which in turn satisfied minimum learning requirements and provided equal learning opportunities to disabled children. These renovations were well-maintained, which was due in large part to the creation of SIWGs, who actively participated on each site. These working groups also identified appropriate interim schooling facilities during school renovation processes, and encouraged broad participation by local community representatives. The school reconstruction processes supported through the Georgia Vocational Education Project had a significant impact on vocational education within Georgia. Construction companies (CCs) provided short-term employment opportunities to GVEP graduates, IDPs and ethnic minorities who conducted the work and were assessed as mostly satisfactory. Further successes resulting from the GVEP included the establishment of high-standard VECs across Georgia, adoption of curricula and training manuals in the construction trade, and a 68 percent employment rate among VEC graduates. The Nursing Vocational Education Project provided highly-skilled faculty to the Georgian public and private health care sector along with trainings that continued building the professional capacity of the country's nurses. These courses enabled nurses to acquire deeper knowledge of nursing issues and become better acquainted with innovations in medical care, while also increasing their knowledge, self-confidence and career commitment. NVEP also worked with physicians to improve nursing procedures and raise the standards for patient care through its continuing education programs.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background and Rationale

The Georgia Monitoring Project is a two-year program (May 2010 - May 2012) funded by the United States Department of State, implemented by International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI), and managed by the Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia. Its primary purpose is to monitor the results of the United States Government foreign assistance under the \$1 billion pledge to the Government of Georgia that followed the August 2008 Georgian-Russian conflict to ensure the funds are directed toward the foreign policy and foreign assistance objectives for which they were intended. Information and reports produced by the GMP are intended for Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, and all USG implementers to enable them to better form judgments on the effectiveness of programs to meet USG assistance objectives. One of the main components of the GMP scope of work (SOW) is the preparation of Special Thematic Reports (STR) to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of USG assistance to Georgia in specific thematic or geographic areas.

The USG has committed to assist the post-conflict reconstruction and financial stabilization of Georgia in cooperation with GOG in the following areas: defense and security, economic and trade issues, energy, strengthening democracy, implementation of poverty-reduction policies and programs, and promotion of the welfare of Georgian citizens through investments and sustained improvements in the health and education systems.<sup>4</sup> As part of the \$1 billion pledge, the USG allocated approximately \$48.2 million for implementation of projects for the improvement of health, vocational education and child care systems in Georgia. The US Embassy Assistance Coordinator (AC) organized a series of consultative meetings with the Director of the Office of Health and Social Development at USAID. As a result, a sample list of the following projects under this sector was selected for review:

- Strengthening of Childcare Services and Systems;
- Social Infrastructure Project;
- Georgia Vocation Education Project; and
- Nursing Vocational Education Project.<sup>5</sup>

### B. Georgia Context

With an area of 69,700 sq. km and a population at 4.5 million (as of January 1, 2011)<sup>6</sup>, Georgia has a strategic location in the south Caucasus region. Tbilisi, the country's capital, is home to about 25 percent of country's population – with an estimated 1.2 million residents. Two administrative-territorial units (Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region) are beyond Georgian authorities' jurisdiction and currently are under the control of Russian troops. Georgia is part of an important energy-transit corridor between Europe and Asia, and its stability has ramifications for European energy security and trans-Caspian energy connections. In addition, ships carrying liquefied gas across Georgia and the Black Sea in the future could be part of a Global Liquefied Natural Gas Market (See Figure 1).

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<sup>4</sup> Georgia in the West: A Policy Road Map to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic Future. Annex A: The United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership.

<sup>5</sup> The project titles will be the same for consistence purposes throughout the report.

<sup>6</sup> [www.geostat.ge](http://www.geostat.ge)

Figure 1: Map of Georgia



Source: GMP

From the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 until 2003, the Georgian economy was in a period of stagnation. A liberal monetary policy and aggressive privatization spurred Georgia’s economic growth. Georgia’s economy went from being non-adaptive to one of the most business-friendly in the former Soviet Union. Georgia was rated by the World Bank as one of the world’s fastest-reforming economies - ranked in 2010 as the world’s 11<sup>th</sup> easiest place to do business - and is showing dramatic improvement in the struggle against corruption. However, GDP growth slowed following the August 2008 conflict with Russia, and turned negative in 2009. The global economic crisis, beginning in 2009, was a further blow to Georgia’s economic health as foreign direct investment, the demand for its exports, and bank lending all declined. Unemployment rose from 13.3% in 2007 to 16.9% in 2009. A Welfare Monitoring Survey in 2009 found that nearly a quarter of households in Georgia were living below the official poverty threshold, and that these poor households included 28% of Georgia’s children. Attempts at reforming key areas of the country’s health and social infrastructure stalled after the 2008 conflict as budgetary resources were diverted to the post-conflict emergency relief and recovery needs of the country’s conflict affected areas.

A key problem affecting children in Georgia was the prevalence of large-scale residential institutions (i.e., Children’s Houses) and related boarding schools that served poor, disabled and special needs children within Georgia. The physical plant at these institutions was often poor, caregivers varied in their competence and commitment to the children, and standards for formal educational programs were not very high. Child abuse and neglect was a problem in a number of instances, as well. While the long-recognized problems of these houses were resulting in children being transferred to the care of their biological families or to foster care placements, the pace of this change<sup>7</sup> was moderate.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs; statistics from 2004-2008.

Another significant area of concern was the quality of the general education of Georgia's children, particularly the quality of their learning facilities. Due to the fact that no capital repairs of public schools had been carried out in Georgia in almost a decade, school buildings were in extremely poor physical conditions and in need of substantial renovation and refurbishment.<sup>8</sup> In 2006, the GOG launched the President's National Program "Jacob Gogebashvili – Renovation of Public Schools" with the purpose of addressing actual needs<sup>9</sup> in the country's 2,731 schools.<sup>10</sup> However, the 2008 armed conflict between Russia and Georgia and diversion of funding to emergency slowed the pace of the public school renovation processes.<sup>11</sup> Vocational education in Georgia also suffered from the slow pace of school building renovation. While 28,395 students were enrolled in public and private vocational institutions<sup>12</sup> in 2005, these buildings had not been significantly renovated in nearly two decades. Moreover, this neglect had resulted in the training laboratories being demolished and only limited equipment being available for practical lessons. In fact, most Vocational Education Institutions (VEIs), the predecessors to the Vocational Education Colleges detailed in this review, were "Diploma Mills"<sup>13</sup> that provided little in the way of professional knowledge and skills to graduates.

A key issue in modernizing the health care system in Georgia was the dearth of qualified nurses operating in its hospitals. Physicians have historically outnumbered nurses in Georgia. In its international comparison of numbers of physicians and nurses, for example, the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe found that there were 363 nurses per 100,000 people in Georgia's population, compared with 454 physicians per 100,000, which represented the third lowest ratio of nurses to physicians in 2007 of the total of 47 countries compared.<sup>14</sup> Correcting this imbalance was necessary to avoid unjustified costs spent for human resource development, undesirable clinical outcomes and the challenges of employing an excessive number of physicians in the health sector.

### C. Methodology

**Technical Approach:** The GMP chose qualitative approaches to assess the attitudes and experiences of select groups of project beneficiaries, and tailored its review methodology for each selected project. Target groups, areas of observation/expected outcomes, and verification methods were established by GMP based on several months of extensive work that encompassed a consultative process with USAID implementing partners; review of all four projects' documents; attendance at meetings between GOG and USAID grantees, site-visits conducted in different regions of Georgia; and formal and informal interviews with relevant individuals to clarify unclear points and to identify additional informational resources. It should be noted that three out of the four projects selected for this GMP review were still being implemented at the time of the review.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.moes.gov.ge](http://www.moes.gov.ge)

<sup>9</sup> The program is administered by the Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency under the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Georgia ([www.esida.ge](http://www.esida.ge)).

<sup>10</sup> [www.geostat.ge](http://www.geostat.ge)

<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, by the beginning of 2010, the GOG's "Jacob Gogebashvili" program had improved the physical learning environment fully or partially improved in 1,265 public schools.

<sup>12</sup> [www.geostat.ge](http://www.geostat.ge)

<sup>13</sup> A diploma mill (also known as a degree mill) is an organization that awards academic degree and diplomas with substandard or no academic study and without recognition by official education. The purchaser can then claim to hold an academic degree, and the organization is motivated by making a profit.

<sup>14</sup> WHO Regional office for Europe 2009 statistics in Georgia: Health System Review.

**Data Collection Techniques:** The GMP team conducted extensive research both prior to and following the engagement of ACT Research, a well-regarded Georgian research organization, to collect data from beneficiaries. The GMP team also conducted a week of field research (December 12-16, 2011) in three regions of Georgia, pilot testing questions for inclusion in the larger ACT field study. Data collection techniques employed by the GMP team included:

- *Document Review* – GMP reviewed the initial proposals of the four Health and Social Infrastructure projects; all of their quarterly reports submitted to USAID; Memoranda of Understanding with partner institutions; reports by partner contractors and sub-contractors; analyses conducted by research organizations for GOG ministries; and reports developed by the World Bank, the World Health Organization and independent researchers.
- *Key Informant Interviews* – GMP interviewed all the project Chiefs of Party, their current senior staff members, as well as former senior staff; international and local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) directors and senior staff partnering with the USAID-supported projects being reviewed; contractors to the partner organizations; senior staff at the MOLHSA, including senior staff at the Ministry’s Social SSA; the Division of Vocational Education Development of the MOES, including directors, deputy directors and staff of VECs; and NGO and international organization senior staff working in the health and social development sector (see Annex A). In addition, the GMP team held focus groups with social workers, nurses, two SIWGs, and VEC faculty at Kutaisi and Kobuleti as part of its field research.
- *Site Visits* – In Tbilisi, GMP made multiple visits to the Learning Center for Experiential Learning and Research – the site of lecture and simulation training for the NVEP. The GMP attended the graduation for Chief Nurses participating in the NVEP leadership training program, a faculty development seminar, and interviews with the NVEP senior management team. GMP also visited Central Clinical Hospital, partner to NVEP in Tbilisi, and traveled to NVEP beneficiary hospitals in, Batumi (Batumi Republic Central Hospital) and Zugdidi (St. Lucas Health Center). Additionally, site visits were conducted to observe trainings for foster care parents and Small Group Home caregivers. GMP also participated in several Friday meetings of the UNICEF Partners and other interested parties working on the Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems project, as well as a workshop organized by the Georgian Association of Social Workers (GASW) on Improvement of Dialogue with Civil Society for Development of Social Work Policy.

**Field Work:** ACT Research developed the field work implementation plan for this review. The preparatory phase for the field work included selection and training of field personnel, as well as testing of the field questionnaires. The training of field personnel was conducted January 28-29, 2012. The field work process began on January 30 and concluded on February 3, while the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) ran from February 6 to February 16. The survey covered five of nine regions of Georgia, and results were observed for each particular project at specific sites. To guarantee the required level of confidentiality for respondents, GMP followed Article 4 Basic Principle of Official Statistics stipulated in the Law of Georgia on Official Statistics.<sup>15</sup> In total, ACT Research conducted 429 interviews (six on-site observations, 76 Face-to-Face (FtF) interviews, 219 CATI interviews and 134 self-administered interviews). Annex B presents detailed information on the number of concluded interviews for each target group and per project.

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<sup>15</sup> [www.geostat.ge](http://www.geostat.ge).

**Quality Control:** Quality assurance of the field work was enforced by: (1) checking 100 percent of completed questionnaires by field coordinators at the end of the working day; (2) monitoring 29 percent of completed questionnaires by phone; and (3) reviewing interviewers' daily reports. Additionally, all completed questionnaires were monitored by a Logical Control and Coding Specialist, taking appropriate corrective actions or conducting call backs. Following revision of the questionnaires, data-entry clerks entered the questionnaire data into a specially designed data entry form. Once all the questionnaires had been entered in to the database, the Database Specialist cleaned the database and provided frequency tables to the analysts.

**Data Analysis:** All data collected through the CATI, self-administered and FtF interviews were aggregated and analyzed to create a comprehensive assessment of results. The findings were analyzed at the level of each target group per project and later were aggregated for each project. The data incorporated into this report is illustrative/descriptive information on the findings and does not present statistically valid conclusions.

**Challenges and Limitations:** GMP encountered the following challenges and limitations in the process of carrying out this review:

- Statistics from diverse GOG sources and those collected by NGOs did not always match, and were often collected utilizing different parameters. Categorizations employed at different points in time varied and were not necessarily following populations identified in the same way.
- Personnel working for the four projects under review and for government agencies with responsibility for the sectors involved have changed over time, with some significant details in project development lost as a result. Further, as a result of the staff changes, existing documentation was not always easily available or retrievable.
- Important background information, vital for understanding the context of the project work underway and the forces supporting and obstructing project development, were frequently in Georgian and required translation. The GMP monitoring work also required translation from English into Georgian, especially the time-sensitive fieldwork questionnaires.
- The questionnaire development process was a multi-layered one in which the GMP developed key questions and designated target groups, worked with its contractor, ACT research, to fine-tune the questions, translated the questionnaires from English into Georgian, and checked to ensure that the Georgian and English questionnaire versions were equivalent.
- Requested information on the multiple project elements was scattered among different sources, with time lags as to when needed data would be available.
- The heavy snow and severe winter conditions during the ACT Research's field work (January 30 - February 3) limited the mobility of their field personnel and their accessibility to some sites located in mountainous and remote areas of Georgia. In certain cases during the field work, GMP therefore substituted new, more accessible locations for the original sites, although it was careful to maintain the existing balance between the regions.

## II. FINDINGS

The U.S. Government, as part of its \$1 billion pledge to post-conflict Georgia, funded several projects in the health and social infrastructure sectors that aimed to improve the state of Georgia's healthcare, childcare services and professional education. USAID supervises this expenditure of approximately \$22.1 million through the four projects being reviewed, which were selected by GMP in consultation with the USG agencies working on them. These projects played a significant effect in improving: 1) the livelihoods of vulnerable children; 2) learning environments in public schools; and 3) vocational education and training in the nursing, construction and tourism trade. The following provides detailed findings based on the GMP review of the four selected projects.

### A. Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems (SCSS)

The overall aim of the Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems (SCSS) project, a cooperative agreement with UNICEF initiated on August 26, 2010, was to expand the quality of childcare services and to institutionalize ways in which the childcare system operates. Three major objectives of the SCSS project, which will run until 2013, have included: 1) Improving Access to Social Benefits for Vulnerable Groups, 2) Family Support and Alternative Care for Vulnerable Children; and 3) Strengthening Management, Policy, Oversight and Accountability. Central to this work has been furthering the professional development of social workers employed by the GOG's Social Service Agency – who are responsible for implementing the major reforms in the delivery of childcare services.

The SCCS project, as part of USG \$1 billion pledge, melded many components: the closing of large children houses and establishment of alternative child placement options; recruitment and training of social workers, caregivers and managers to provide needed services; sustaining the changes and informing and gaining the support of the public-at-large affected by the changes; and reframing the roles of the SSA and supporting the emergence of new forms of child and family assistance. In executing its wide-ranging agenda, UNICEF's primary governmental partner has been the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Assistance (MOLHA). An overarching objective of UNICEF throughout its work on this project was providing support and counsel to MOLHSA and SSA in implementing the many new agreed upon approaches, and then taking ownership and monitoring responsibilities for this expanded program of action in collaboration with NGOs as implementers, with oversight provided by the government.

The key aspect of childcare reform in Georgia included closing large children houses and trying to reintegrate children with biological parents. In those cases where it was not possible to reintegrate the child with biological parents, alternative care methods for children were identified:

- Foster care;
- Small Group Homes (SGH); and
- Day Centers.

The GMP review focused on monitoring the mid-term results of this project. In the process of closing large children houses, the role of social workers had become critical. Social workers, working for SSA, assessed the children in large children houses and thereafter provided recommendations for further steps toward child development.

Based on the three alternative care methods mentioned above and the importance of social workers' roles, the following target groups were identified for survey by GMP:

- Social workers;

- Foster caregivers;
- Caregivers of SGHs; and
- Day Center staff.

SCSS project activities vary from recruitment and training of personnel in childcare system to the capacity building of existing personnel. The GMP focused on two major questions for review: 1) how satisfied were the above mentioned target groups with the training provided; and 2) to what extent in practice did the trained target groups manage to use their newly acquired knowledge. Target groups were interviewed in locations of East and West Georgia, with the exception of interviews of foster caregivers, as child placement trained foster caregivers were only available in Tbilisi and environs.

#### **i. Capacity Building of Childcare Services**

In reforming childcare services of Georgia, USG assistance played a critical role in supporting the capacity building of governmental institutions involved in childcare services. The assistance included the training of social workers, foster caregivers, caregivers of SGHs and Day Center staff.

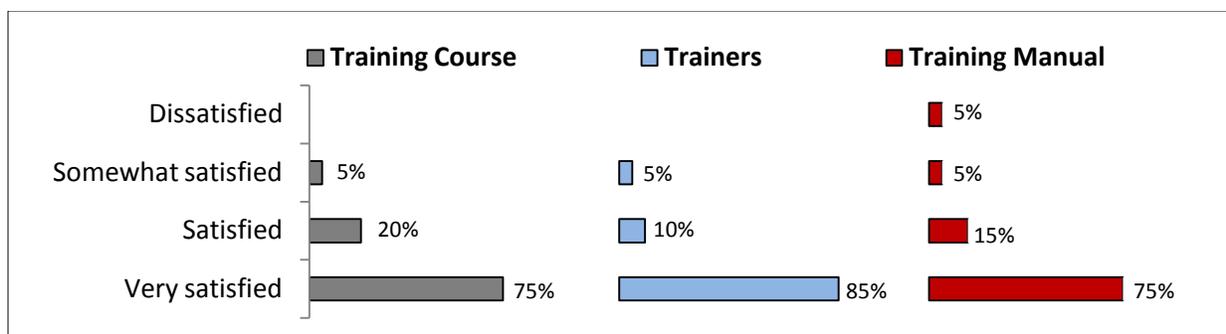
***Training of Social Workers:*** The training of social workers played a key role in the process of closing large children houses and in supporting children after they were closed.

The GMP identified two sets of social workers for review within the SSA structure – senior managers and regular staff. The regular staff members were responsible for visiting the biological parents of the relevant children, conducting child assessments and completing the Child Assessment Forms, and providing recommendations regarding whether or not to close the children houses, as well as how best to provide for the future care of the children. The senior managers were solely responsible for the management of this process, and also served as the primary interlocutors between the regular staff social workers and the national Guardianship and Care Panel, the government organization responsible for making final decisions on a child’s future development plan.

To effectively carry out these critical responsibilities, it was essential that the regular staff thoroughly understand the MOLHSA’s priorities. Therefore, a key activity within the SCSS project included the hiring and training of social workers throughout Georgia. From September of 2010 to February 2012, a total of 50 social workers were recruited and trained under SCSS, which also helped to raise the total number of Georgian social workers from 154 in 2009 to 225 in February, 2012.

Four senior managers and 20 regular staff social workers were interviewed by the GMP monitoring team. Surveyed social workers attended the most recent trainings from October to December 2011. According to those social workers interviewed, the training sessions covered issues such as early child development, the role of the social worker in child assessment, advocacy, children’s rights and abuse, new Child Assessment Forms and assistance to biological parents. Interviewed social workers revealed positive opinions regarding the training. Particularly valuable for the social workers was the opportunity to share their experience. Seventy percent of social workers stated that the training had significantly raised their knowledge in the field of the childcare system. Moreover, 85 percent of survey respondents stated that the training was extremely practical and useful to them (See Chart 1 below).

Chart 1: Opinion of Regular Staff Social Workers on Training



Source: GMP Survey

Social workers clearly articulated the SSA priority of child’s future development – reintegration with biological parents - or if this was not possible, providing alternative care methods such as Foster Care, SGHs, or Day Centers.

The regular staff social workers were also asked to provide their perceptions on the childcare system in general and to identify any existing gaps in the system. The social workers recommended the following:

- Improving services for biological families, such as finding sustainable employment for family members;
- Prevention of child abandonment;
- Less bureaucracy;
- Increasing the number of social workers;
- Improving the adoption process; and
- Increasing work on child abuse.

In addition to the regular staff social workers, four senior management social workers were interviewed. Their training included developing approaches toward children's needs and their biological parents, and understanding issues regarding advocacy and supervision. Additional findings from these interviews included the belief that greater attention should be paid to services for the biological parents, the need for Day Centers to be made available to children from ages 0-6 instead of only 6-18, the necessity of preventive actions to maintain intact biological parents, and greater focus on the problems of single mothers.

**Training of Foster Caregivers:** In total, 185<sup>16</sup> foster caregivers were recruited for training within the framework of the SCSS. Training sessions identified the most successful foster caregivers who would provide child placement, with a total of 84 foster caregivers successfully completing the training. Seven individuals serving as foster caregivers were interviewed – they participated in training sessions for foster caregivers in July and August of 2011.

Six out of the seven respondents were satisfied with the training, training materials and trainers, while one individual was non-committal. Interviewed foster caregivers reported that their knowledge and awareness of children’s needs and care giving methods significantly increased as a result of the training, which they found to be practical and useful. Areas of training that stood out for the foster caregivers were discussions focusing on child psychology and children’s developmental stages, challenges they might encounter and steps they could take to address these issues. When asked what they would have

<sup>16</sup> EveryChild and SSA recruited foster caregivers, trained by EveryChild.

changed in the training, one trainee recommended that information on the child's biological parents should be provided as this would be particularly useful if the biological parents visited the child. Another foster caregiver recommended that the training should focus on specific and concrete needs of an individual child. Nearly all foster caregivers identified problems they encountered with the voucher system, which the SSA was using as the method of payment for their services. Several of the foster caregivers experienced delays in receipt of compensation,<sup>17</sup> with one person stating that "everything around the voucher" required some improvement.

**Training of Caregivers for Small Group Homes (SGH):** 240 people were initially interviewed to recruit candidates to be caregivers for small group homes. Of these, 101 were selected to undergo filter<sup>18</sup> training, out of which 56 were select to take basic training. As a result 36 were appointed as caregivers at SGHs. Six caregivers from three SGHs were interviewed by GMP. These caregivers participated in training sessions conducted by SCSS at the end of 2011/beginning of 2012, and were uniformly very satisfied with the trainers, training materials and training.

Caregivers reported that their knowledge and awareness of children's needs and care giving methods had risen significantly as a result of the training. All of the caregivers interviewed stated that the training was very practical and useful to them. New caregivers indicated the following subjects covered in the trainings as significant for them: providing psychological help to children and working with each child individually; providing constructive criticism to children, teaching children to solve their own problems and become more independent and self-confident; and, managing the budget of the SGH. Particularly valuable to the caregivers was the training focused on an individual psychological approach to working with children.

**Training of Day Center Staff:** Another component of the SCSS project was strengthening the services provided to children with disabilities. The day centers for disabled children are a vital component to provide needed services to children with disabilities. In total there are 24 day centers in Georgia. The SCSS provided training to the staff of 12 Day Centers. Ten staff members from seven different day centers were interviewed by GMP.

Of those interviewed, eight indicated that the training significantly deepened their knowledge about being a caregiver in a day center and about the needs of vulnerable children; the other two indicated that the training only somewhat increased their knowledge about being a caregiver in a day center and the needs of vulnerable children. The respondents noted that the training was extremely practical and useful for them and highlighted the following issues being addressed during their training process: theoretical background on disability issues, preparation, management and documentation of children's individual development plans, preparation of individual education plans, and standards for operation of day centers promulgated by the MOLHSA.

Particularly valuable for the interviewed day center staff was the training on how to hold interviews with the parents of disabled children, the provision of recommendations on working with autistic children and children exhibiting challenging behaviors, and training on approaches toward rehabilitation. They also appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences, the interplay of theory and practical examples, and the communicative style of the trainers. The day center staff who participated in the

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<sup>17</sup> Compensation for costs needed to provide Foster care service.

<sup>18</sup> Trainings were split on two phases: Initial (filter) courses and basic courses. Those who failed at the initial course were not attended basic course.

training sought on-the-job training, further sessions addressing practical issues, and the opportunity to hear from psychologists. Other staff members drew attention to the need for the day centers to have more material resources such as toys for the children. Staff members also called for holding the training sessions at the day centers to enable additional staff members to participate.

**Child Assessment:** Another childcare reform supported with USG funding was the revision of the forms used by staff social workers during the child assessment process.<sup>19</sup> The revised Child Assessment Forms (CAF) were piloted by social workers and then modified based on their feedback. Ten staff and senior social workers who had participated in the pilot test were interviewed by the GMP. Of this group, nine reported the revised CAF being easier to complete, and more flexible and less time-consuming than the previously used forms. All of the senior social workers found them easy to use and more comprehensive compared to the old forms. In their training, the senior social workers also addressed monitoring of CAF completion by the social workers they managed. The shift to completing the forms electronically was welcomed by social workers as this made specific case management easier.

## **B. Social Infrastructure Project (SIP)**

To support the renovation of public schools, USAID worked with the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF). The goal of this work was to enhance learning and living conditions for orphans and vulnerable children, as well as to improve the short-term economic status of ethnic minorities, IDPs and VEC graduates. SIP's two specific objectives were: 1) improving the physical conditions of 48 public schools and eight (8) children's houses;<sup>20</sup> and 2) increasing employment opportunities for ethnic minorities, IDPs and VEC graduates. The SIP concluded on March 31, 2012.<sup>21</sup>

An important part of SIP was coordination of multi-stakeholder engagement. In addition to MOES and MOLSHA representatives, SIP staff worked with regional/district governors, municipal authorities and community leaders. In order to prioritize renovation needs and provide proper school upkeep and maintenance following the renovations, SIP staff mobilized students, parents, school administrative personnel and teachers through the establishment of a SIWG at each renovated school site.

The renovation of selected public schools was prioritized in order to keep balance among regions, and was planned in three phases: Phase I - 18 schools, Phase II - 18 schools, and phase III - 12 schools. The original SIP plan was to make as much progress as possible on the renovations during the summer of 2010 – to take advantage of students' summer vacation – and minimize disruption of classes and teacher and student workload during the winter months.<sup>22</sup> However, the start of the renovation period was delayed. Between September 29 and October 6, 2010, ten contracts with construction companies were signed to perform renovations of the schools selected for Phase I.<sup>23</sup> On average, SIP estimated three months for these renovations - a period which directly overlapped with the academic semester. Considering that approximately 67 percent of schools selected for Phase I were located in mountainous

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<sup>19</sup> These Child Assessment Forms include all cases, depending on the child's status and stage of development.

<sup>20</sup> On October 28, 2011, in line with an acceleration of GOG child welfare reform efforts, the SIP Statement of Work was amended, adding the renovation of two additional public schools to the 48 originally called for and bringing the total number of schools to be renovated to 50 and replacing the renovation of eight children houses, with the renovation of 25 SGHs.

<sup>21</sup> In order to complete the expanded renovation work now required, the original program completion date (October 31, 2011) was extended to March 31, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Cooperative Agreement, Attachment B - Program Description.

<sup>23</sup> The SIP Quarterly Report (July 1, 2010 – Sept. 30, 2010).

regions of Georgia, SIP therefore faced two major challenges: 1) ensuring that construction crews could access these mountainous regions during the winter months; and 2) identifying alternate facilities that could be used to avoid disruption of classes due to renovations.

GMP selected six schools among 50 for on-site observation.<sup>24</sup> The selected schools represented urban and rural areas, Western and Eastern regions of Georgia and all three renovation phases. None of the selected schools were located in mountainous areas, as heavy snow in the regions during the field work (January 30-31) limited the mobility of the monitoring team. With one exception, all SIWGs, which were located in the same communities as the six renovated schools, were created during fall 2010 meetings.

#### i. Learning Environment in Renovated Schools

**Power Supply and Electricity:** Power supply systems were renovated in all observed schools and, as stated by the school principals. Out of the six schools visited, five had available electricity, and four had sufficient and available lighting at the time of the survey. Lighting could not be assessed at one school due to the lack of electricity (harsh weather conditions damaged the magisterial cable line) at the time of the survey. Another school had a limited number of operative electric bulbs in the corridors and restrooms, but was able to sufficiently equip all the classrooms with functional bulbs. None of the observed schools had any bare or exposed wires on the walls or visually damaged sockets.

**Potable Water Supply and Sewage Systems:** The GMP survey aimed to collect information about the potable water supply system, the quality of the water, the cleanliness of the toilet bowls and hand washing basins in the six observed schools. Due to limited access to water, all schools were equipped with water reservoirs, as per the scope of SIP. As observed by GMP, water from the reservoirs was mostly used for toilet facility maintenance, with five of the six schools not having access to running water in taps or drinking fountains during the survey. Several reasons were provided for the absence of tap water, including: harsh weather conditions that prevented access to water and electricity for the whole settlement; frozen water in the pipes between the water reservoirs and the school buildings; and intentional blockage of the water supply due to do necessary refurbishments in the school building. Only one out of the six observed schools had potable water available in taps, with the water quality assessment rated as normal (the water was transparent and did not have any specific odor).

As a result of the renovations, all observed schools had toilet facilities inside the buildings except one, which did not have access to the sewage system. As a result of the renovations, all of the schools' toilet facilities had been equipped with handles specifically designed for students with disabilities. Certain schools also had been equipped with ramps to accommodate disabled students. However, not all of the observed schools stopped the operation of old toilets located outside of their buildings, and these had not been refurbished as per the SIP scope of work. Table 2 below presents the ratios of indoor toilet facilities (if applicable)<sup>25</sup> per student for each observed school. In three out of the six schools, the ratio of indoor toilet facilities per student was significantly lower.

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<sup>24</sup> Renovation of 25 SGHs was not observed by GMP as this component of SIP at the time of review was at initial stage.

<sup>25</sup> In case the outdoor toilets were the only functional facilities that the school had, the ratio was calculated based on the number of outdoor toilets.

Table 2: Number of Toilet Facilities per Student in Observed Renovated Schools<sup>26</sup>

Criteria	Ratio School #1	Ratio School #2	Ratio School #3	Ratio School #4	Ratio School #5	Ratio School #6
Toilet bowl per girl student	1:73	1:26	1:89	1:18	1:166	1:9
Toilet bowl per boy student	1:73	1:30	1:100	1:18	1:212	1:14
Hand washing basin per girl/boy student	1:91	1:45	none	1:18	1:189	1:9

Source: GMP Survey

**Heating System:** All observed schools were equipped with a functional, independent heating system. In five out of the six observed schools, the heating system was changed from firewood stoves to centralized heating as a result of renovation. Only one of the six schools already had a centralized heating system in place prior to the renovation, although that school's radiators were reinstalled during the renovation in order to increase efficiency. All of the principals stated that their heating systems were functional, although at the time of the visit, the heating system in one school was not running properly due to a lack of electricity.

**Enrollment of Students in Renovated Schools:** In order to study the impact that the SIP renovations had on students enrolled in the subject schools, principals were asked to provide data about the number of students enrolled by the end of the 2009-2010 academic year (i.e., number of students before the renovation, and the current number of students). The total number of students in the schools before and after the renovations did not seem to change significantly, which in certain cases was primarily due to those schools being the only ones in their respective areas. However, while the quantity of students did not change extensively, the principals did report seeing strong improvements in the studying environment and the motivation of the students, which they attributed to the renovations. Although the renovation period did coincide with the academic year, none of the schools held classes in the same buildings that were being renovated. Instead, the students were placed in different schools or buildings, thus enabling them to continue their studies in a safe and healthy environment.

**Operation and Maintenance of Renovated Schools:** In order to assess the sustainability of improvements in the renovated schools, the principals were asked to provide the total amount spent on public utilities, including electricity, water, and natural gas consumption. These expenditures were compared between December 2010, when renovations had yet to get underway, and December 2011, when renovations had been completed. In all of the observed schools, the average cost of electricity, natural gas and water expenditures rose by 20 percent. Despite this increase, all school principals indicated that their schools were still capable of paying these utility bills.

**Challenges Encountered after Renovation:** The construction companies gave all schools a three-month guarantee on the renovations. Three out of the six schools identified defects in the construction, including cracked walls, damaged door handles and hinges, and leaks in toilet facilities, and requested repairs from the construction companies.

<sup>26</sup> The ratios were calculated with division of total number of students (girl and boy) in the school by the total number of the indoor toilets, including urinals.

As part of the survey, principals were asked to assess the performance of the CC that renovated their respective school on a five-grade scale. Table 3 below shows the principals' responses.

Table 3: Opinion of School Principals on Construction Companies Performance

Scale	School #1	School #2	School #3	School #4	School #5	School #6
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dissatisfied	2	2	2	2	2	2
Neutral	3	3	3	3	3	3
Satisfied	4	4	4	4	4	4
Very satisfied	5	5	5	5	5	5

Source: GMP Survey

In most cases, the principals felt neutral about CC performance. An exception was the principal of School #5, who was very dissatisfied with the quality of the construction work and requested that the CC rebuild a wall and fix all defects within the three-month guarantee period. The CC accepted the claim of the school principal and rebuilt the wall.

**Community Involvement in Maintaining Improved Schools:** The SIWGs, which consisted primarily of teachers and parents, as well as a small number of students<sup>27</sup>, served as mediators between the CCs performing the renovations and the local communities. These groups were responsible for ensuring the safe-keeping of school equipment and furniture during the renovation, and in some cases for finding appropriate temporary school buildings for teaching when renovations overlapped with the school semester. The SIWGs met with CC representatives at least weekly to discuss issues connected with the school renovation process, and to set priorities regarding their most important projects (i.e. renovating or building the school's electrical, water and sewage systems, and renovating damaged buildings and the school yard). In certain cases, they met more frequently to reach decisions on additional renovation activities, such as choosing paint colors for the walls, electrical socket locations, and the color and design of internal doors and accessories.

After the renovations were completed, SIWGs continued playing an important role by ensuring that renovations were maintained in good condition. The SIWGs organized cleaning sessions of the renovated school buildings and school grounds, and moved furniture and equipment from temporary storage facilities to the refurbished schools. Some (schools #2 and #3) even continued to meet on a weekly basis (see Table 4).

Table 4: Team Composition of SIWG

School	Students in SIWG		Parents in SIWG		Teachers in SIWG		Total Number of SIWG members	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
School	1	8%	5	42%	6	50%	12	100%
School	6	46%	3	23%	4	31%	13	100%
School	10	31%	7	22%	15	47%	32	100%
School	2	13%	9	60%	4	27%	15	100%

<sup>27</sup> SIWGs with a higher share of students (schools #2 and #3) worked on fundraising in order to renovate parts of the school not included in the SIP SOW, and also to purchase new inventory necessary for the school.

School	4	20%	6	30%	10	50%	20	100%
School	2	20%	3	30%	5	50%	10	100%

Source: GMP Survey

The principals from schools #2 and #3 – those in which SIWGs continued meeting regularly after completion of renovations, and those including higher numbers of students – gave their SIWGs top ratings (see Table 5).

Table 5: Opinion of School Principals on SIWGs

Scale	School #1	School #2	School #3	School #4	School #5	School #6
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dissatisfied	2	2	2	2	2	2
Neutral	3	3	3	3	3	3
Satisfied	4	4	4	4	4	4
Very satisfied	5	5	5	5	5	5

Source: GMP Survey

The principals' assessments of SIP communication officers and SIWGs were closely correlated to each other. More specifically, with one exception (School #4), high marks were given to both SIWGs and the communication officers was deemed either satisfactory or very satisfactory (see Table 6).

Table 6: Opinion of School Principals on Communication Officers (SIP Staff)

Scale	School #1	School #2	School #3	School #4	School #5	School #6
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dissatisfied	2	2	2	2	2	2
Neutral	3	3	3	3	3	3
Satisfied	4	4	4	4	4	4
Very satisfied	5	5	5	5	5	5

Source: GMP Survey

Separately, SIP communication officers noted that relations between community members and CC employees involved in the school renovation process were harmonious, and that individual community members were involved in the renovations of all six schools. These individuals, for example, assisted the workers at the school renovation sites with food preparations, accommodations, removal of construction materials, and the piping of water and gas into the building.

## ii. Job Creation, Achievements and Obstacles

**Employment Analysis:** CC representatives were interviewed to analyze the level of short-term employment of GVEP graduates, Internally Displaced Persons and ethnic minorities.<sup>28</sup> Table 7 shows this breakdown as well as the total number workers employed at each site.

<sup>28</sup> The CCs that performed renovation of the schools were obliged to hire a certain number of individuals from each of these groups.

Table 7: Employment Structure on School Renovation

School	Total number of workers at site	GVEP graduates	IDPs	Ethnic minorities
School #1	20	5	3	unknown
School #2	30	7	15	0
School #3	111	7	10	0
School #4	40	5	20	unknown
School #5	20	8	2	10
School #6	20	5	1	2

Source: GMP Survey

As part of their short-term employment under SIP, GVEP graduates were assigned – and rated on their proficiency in the following tasks: masonry, painting, plastering, concrete works, electrical, dry-wall installation and tile works. Four out of six CC representatives stated that they were satisfied with the work conducted by the GVEP graduates, while two were dissatisfied with the work (see Table 8).

Table 8: Opinion of Construction Companies on Qualification of GVEP Graduates

Scale	School #1	School #2	School #3	School #4	School #5	School #6
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dissatisfied	2	2	2	2	2	2
Neutral	3	3	3	3	3	3
Satisfied	4	4	4	4	4	4
Very satisfied	5	5	5	5	5	5

Source: GMP Survey

The CCs were also asked whether they would recommend the GVEP graduates to other CCs and hire them in the future for other projects. The CC representative who assessed the GVEP graduates’ work as neither satisfying nor dissatisfying stated they would neither hire nor recommend them to other companies in the future. On the other hand, five out of the six CCs stated that they would recommend the GVEP graduates to other companies and would hire them for other work in the future. Despite this expected endorsement, none of the GVEP graduates were hired by CCs after the school renovations were completed. Senior company staff attributed this primarily to what they saw as a lack of practical skills, a reluctance to work in other regions, and the fact that they asked for higher remuneration.

All interviewed CCs confirmed employing IDPs at school renovation sites, where their responsibilities included: masonry, painting, plastering and plumbing, concrete work, electrical, tile work and the operation of heavy construction machinery. The CCs were mostly satisfied with the IDPs’ work, with the exception of one CC that was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Three out of the six CCs employed these IDPs for other work after completion of the school renovations, while five stated that they were ready to recommend the IDPs to other companies. One exception was a CC that hired all 20 IDPs after completion of the school renovation, but would only recommend 10 of those workers to other companies.

Only two out of six CCs declared that they had hired ethnic minorities for the school renovations, while one stated that they were not aware of the number of minorities employed at the job site. The

remaining CCs stated that no ethnic minorities were employed at their sites. Those who were hired at the two sites performed masonry, painting and tile work, with the CCs assessing their work as satisfying and stating that they were ready to hire them again in the future. CCs indicated that they would recommend eight of the 10 ethnic minorities employed to other companies.

### **C. Georgia Vocational Education Project (GVEP)**

The main goal of the GVEP was to provide training in response to labor market demand. Individual GVEP objectives were to:

- Increase the supply of trained graduates in tourism and construction trades;
- Increase the sustainability of the vocational colleges through public-private sector partnerships and the application of business models to their further development;
- Facilitate public-private cooperation for the development of vocational standards and related curricula in the tourism and construction trades to ensure that the created competencies meet current market needs.<sup>29</sup>

To achieve the GVEP goals, new trades in construction and tourism were promoted through: renovation of training facilities; procurement of new training equipment; training of trainers through the involvement of international experts; development of new curricula and training manuals on construction and tourism; creation of Advisory Boards (AB); and establishment of Career Counseling and Guidance Officers in each targeted VEC. Another important component of the GVEP was the engagement and coordination of multiple stakeholders. The GVEP facilitated cooperation between MOES and private companies involved in the construction and tourism trades. In order to ensure long-term public-private partnerships, as well as on-the-job training and further job placement of VEC graduates, GVEP staff mobilized construction and tourism trade representatives through the establishment of Advisory Boards at each targeted VEC.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed approach, GVEP selected two multi-profile VECs located in Tbilisi (these were selected on the basis of earlier labor market studies that identified tourism and construction as sectors in which vocational training could play a significant role), and another five in various regions of Georgia.<sup>30</sup> One of the five VECs targeted by the GVEP was located in the post-conflict area of Shida Kartli, which, even prior to the 2008 conflict, was considered one of the poorest regions of Georgia.<sup>31</sup> As Shida Kartli was the region most damaged by conflict, it became the focus of significant attention and the largest recipient of post-conflict IDPs.

GMP selected three of the seven VECs targeted by the GVEP for on-site observation. The selected VECs covered urban and rural areas, and Western and Eastern regions of Georgia. All three were multi-profile colleges. None of the VECs selected for observation were located in mountainous areas, as heavy snow in the regions during the field work (January 30-31) limited the mobility of the monitoring team.

#### **i. Capacity Building of the VECs**

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<sup>29</sup> The GVEP Final Report. December, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Tbilisi Tourism Multi-profile VEC "ICARUS", Tbilisi Multi-profile VEC "SPEKTRI, Multi-profile VEC "ORIENTI" in Khidistavi (post-conflict area/ShidaKartli region), Kutaisi Multi-profile VEC, Kobuleti Multi-profile VEC, Akhalkalaki VEC and Mestia VEC -- Final Report: VEP in Georgia. December, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank (April 2009); Georgia Poverty Assessment.

**Renovation & Furnishing:** One of GVEP's first steps was the establishment of adequate and appropriate training facilities in the selected VECs. Most of the targeted VEC facilities required substantial renovations, and the observed VECs were no exception (two out of the three observed colleges were funded and supervised by the GVEP). The renovations within these observed VECs consisted primarily of the refurbishment of classrooms to enable training of the construction and tourism trades. Additional classrooms were renovated to allow training in welding, plumbing, masonry, and tile setting, as were rooms for an employment center. The GVEP also provided heavy simulation construction equipment for learning purposes in the VECs, such as caterpillar excavating machines, front end loaders and motor graders. Additionally, students studying in the VECs were provided with safety uniforms (boiler suits), which they wore during the VEC classes observed by GMP.

On October 1, 2010, the MOES adopted a new system of authorization and accreditation of VECs. As a result of these reforms, authorization was obtained by 20 public VECs from 2010 to 2011, out of which seven (35 percent) were targeted by the GVEP.<sup>32</sup>

**Identification of Priorities:** At the outset, the GVEP assessed labor market needs in order to identify sectors with considerable labor demands. Once sectors had been identified, it was important to investigate what kind of skill sets would be needed most, and whether the VEC would be a suitable institution for providing such skills. Over the last five years, considerable research conducted by multiple organizations, including USAID, identified construction, tourism and agriculture as the labor sectors with the greatest demand.<sup>33</sup> As a majority of the population in rural areas was involved in household farming activities and were self-employed, the GVEP focused on the other two most labor intensive sectors: construction and tourism.<sup>34</sup>

**Training Manuals:** Within the GVEP, training manuals on various construction trades were developed and provided to VECs to replace the antiquated manuals they were still using from the Soviet era. The libraries of the observed VECs had the following training manuals: Masonry, Heavy Machine Operation, Tile Setting, Steel Fixing – Concrete Pouring, Painting, Welding, and Dry-wall. In one of the observed VECs, a manual on tourism was also provided. As one of the VEC principals declared, faculty members were very satisfied with the supplied training manuals. Half of the interviewed faculty members stated that they were satisfied – and the other half very satisfied – with the training manuals provided by the GVEP. All faculty members interviewed stated that they were using the aforementioned training manuals as part of their lessons.

In addition to the training manuals, faculty members were using notes from their own personal practice during the lessons. The manuals were so popular that in one instance, a VEC librarian told the GMP team that students constantly asked whether they could purchase the manuals elsewhere, and frequently borrowed the manuals from the library. The observed VECs also confirmed the use of GVEP-developed visual materials, including videos on safety measures and employment skills, which were regularly shown to students. In 2011, the MOES adopted all seven GVEP sets of curricula and training

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<sup>32</sup>The Report on Implementation of Vocational Education Reform Strategy, MOES, 2011.

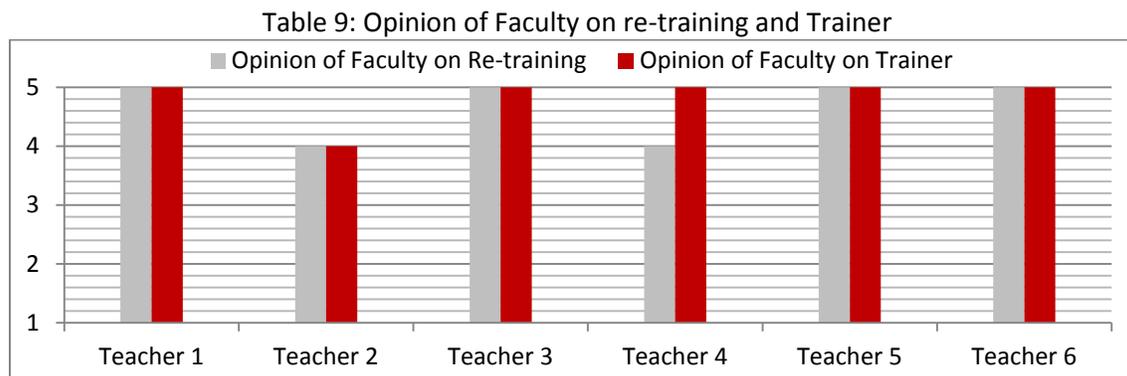
<sup>33</sup> The International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted employer demand for workforce surveys (2007, 2008); USAID commissioned a poll on tourism and construction (2007); and National Professional Agency (under the MOES) carried out a similar exercise (2008).

<sup>34</sup> In 2010 GVEP conducted Labour Market Survey in four regions out of nine of Georgia. The GVEP Final Report, December, 2011.

manuals in construction trades. Moreover, training manuals were reproduced and distributed among 20 VECs throughout the country.<sup>35</sup>

**Retraining of Faculty:** Current VEC faculty required intensive re-training in new trades and teaching skills. Additionally, although principals of most VECs had twenty-five or more years of management experience in their positions, most had begun their careers in the Soviet era. New GVEP-supported curricula and training materials were developed and utilized that provided instruction in the construction and tourism trades, and helped them to update their skills. At one of the observed VECs, for example, GVEP support had enabled the launch of specialized courses focusing on tile application, plumbing, electrical, masonry, painting, dry-wall installation and welding. All of these specialized courses were still available in the VEC at the time of the survey, with the exception of the dry-wall installation course.<sup>36</sup>

Through GVEP, the VECs also were able to add new faculty members; at one of the observed VECs, for example, six new members had joined the faculty. With regard to current VEC faculty, seven out of the ten interviewed faculty members attended the GVEP trainings and found them useful. In particular, the interviewees stated that they had obtained new skills and increased their knowledge of some professions as a result of the training; the painting course, for example, included new and specific safety procedures. All of the retrained faculty members were employed by the VECs at the time of the survey. Surveyed faculty members gave high marks to the retraining program, rating their courses – and the course instructors – as either 4s or 5s<sup>37</sup> (see Table 9).



Source: GMP

Additionally, nearly all principals and faculty members noted that VEC enrollment increased significantly and motivation among current VEC students grew once GVEP activities began to be implemented. They also asserted that the courses, along with the well-designed training manuals and provision of training equipment, were better equipping graduates to compete in the labor market. All of those interviewed faculty members planned to continue working in the VEC, basing their decision on affection for their professions, a friendly work environment, and the student body.

## ii. Public-Private Partnership as a Vehicle for Employment<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> The Report on Implementation of Vocational Education Reform Strategy, MOES, 2011.

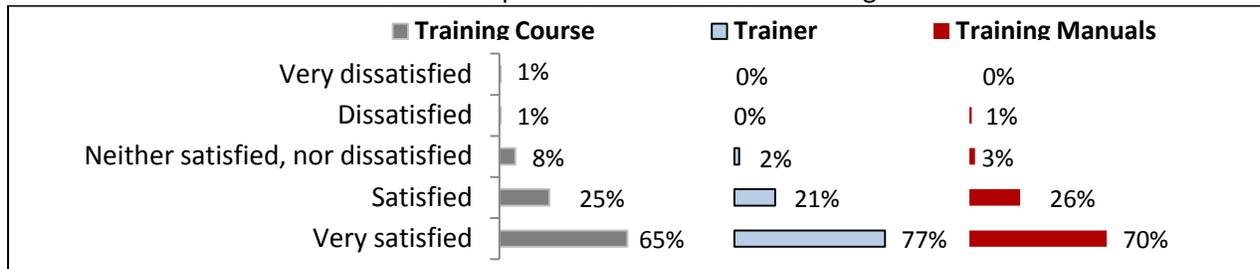
<sup>36</sup> Dry-wall courses were stopped due to low enrolment of applicants.

<sup>37</sup> On a 5-point scale.

<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that the data provided in paragraphs below describes information obtained from a single case and should not be generalized.

**Theoretical & Practical Knowledge:** The new curricula in observed VECs consisted of joint theoretical and practical lessons so as to strengthen the employability of its graduates. For example, in one VEC, three days of each week were reserved exclusively for practical lessons. It should be noted that VEC students also were provided with basic computer skills and English language lessons to improve their communication abilities and facilitate future employment. In most of the cases, the observed VEC graduates displayed positive attitudes toward the training course, trainers and training manuals. This positive perception was a result of the course being conducted by retrained faculty, as well as of students having access to the new, well-designed training manuals (see Chart 7). Graduates also found the theoretical knowledge learned through the trainings useful, stating that they “fully” or at least “somewhat” utilized this knowledge 90 percent of the time in practice (see Chart 8).

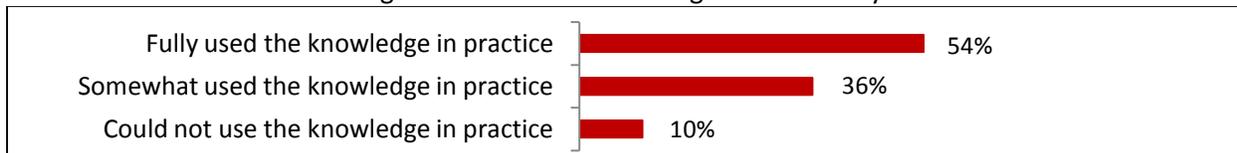
Chart 7: Opinion of Graduates on Training



Source: GMP

As graduates of one VEC stated, the completion of courses allowed graduates to successfully use their knowledge in practice. While 27 percent of surveyed graduates were employed at the time of the interview, it should be noted that out of these, only half (51 percent) were able to work in the trade for which they received training at the VEC (that is 14 percent of 173 surveyed graduates). Sixty eight percent of the graduates declared that they were hired upon finishing their VEC course.

Chart 8: Usage of Theoretical Knowledge in Practice by Graduates



Source: GMP Survey

**Employment & Employers:** Employment Centers were available at all observed VECs. Twenty six percent of the interviewed graduates from one observed VEC went to the employment center for assistance; out of this number, 26 percent declared that an employment manager helped him/her (this comes to three percent of the interviewed 173 graduates).

The GMP Team interviewed representatives of three employer companies that were hiring graduates of one of the observed VECs. The manager of one of the companies stated that the graduates of the VEC were very hardworking and skilled, which led to the company hiring 17 of them (five welders, five plasterers, five painters and two electricians). The manager stated that he was very satisfied with the work conducted by VEC graduates and that, although there were no graduates working in his company at the time of the GMP interview, there was a strong possibility of hiring them again in future.

The director of the second employer company, which focused primarily on construction stated that his company hired five plasterers, and that the company was somewhat satisfied with the work conducted by the VEC graduates. He also stated that the five plasterers were still working for the company, and that there was a strong possibility it would hire VEC in the future. The third company employed VEC graduates as carpenters, but had to provide them with supplemental retraining. The manager of the third company was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the work of the graduates, and believed that he would be open to hiring other VEC graduates but thought that they too would likely require retraining.

**Advisory Boards:** As a result of GVEP, each observed VEC established an Advisory Board (AB) comprised of VEC management, faculty members and private sector representatives. Within the GMP survey framework, four AB members from one of the observed VECs were interviewed to assess the status of the ABs and their level of sustainability since completion of GVEP (July 2011). While they did not alone determine the success or failure of the GVEP, the ABs did provide a useful forum for public-private sector discussions and decision-making. One board member, for example, noted that the most important AB decision was the establishment of construction and service short-term training courses, while another member referenced the board's decisions on the special transport of students and the studying process. One senior entrepreneurial board member had hired five students for one-month industrial internships in his company, but he had not hired any students since then.

**Open Houses:** A key activity noted at one of the observed VECs was the practice of conducting an open house for potential employers (both private and public) at the final examination of VEC graduates. This allowed graduates to demonstrate their professional skills to potential employers.

**On-the-job training:** To supplement the practical skills gained by students while enrolled in the courses, the GVEP introduced a one-month, on-the-job training at the end of each course designed to help graduates gain additional experience and increase their chances of finding future employment. This one-month training also was used as a marketing tool for VECs. Of those graduates interviewed at one VEC, 45 percent had the option to take these special trainings, which occasionally were held directly in the VEC in order to renovate the hall of the main building or IDP dwellings located on VEC-owned territory. However, engagement by relevant companies in the training was highly dependent on the personal contacts of VEC principals and faculty.<sup>39</sup>

**Database of VEC graduates:** The GVEP had designed a database of graduates, available only for college and employers, in order to help employers choose their employees.

#### **D. Nursing Vocational Education Project (NVEP)**

NVEP is a three-year USAID project that commenced on October 1, 2009.<sup>40</sup> . The core efforts of the NVEP revolved around the "two compelling needs" that the original proposal had identified as critical to the advancement of nursing expertise in Georgia: 1) the rapid upgrading of practicing nursing through in-service vocational training; and 2) the establishment of a degree-granting nursing school that will produce the future leaders of the nursing profession in Georgia. The GMP review focused on these two major NVEP focus areas.

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<sup>39</sup> Face-to-face interview with VEC principal.

<sup>40</sup> The initial \$1.2 million USAID grant was for two years; the grant was extended for a third year on October 1, 2011 with an additional \$800,000 in funding.

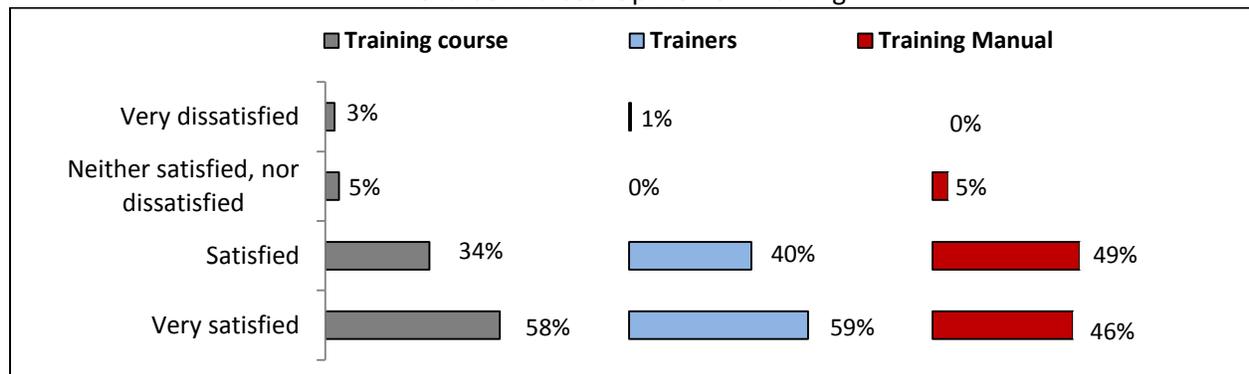
To assess perceptions of the training by nurses who had successfully competed at least one course, as well as those of their immediate supervisors (the hospital chief nurses) and physicians working with them, the GMP commissioned a survey of six chief Nurses, 12 physicians and 134 trained nurses working at six hospitals in Georgia. Four hospitals were selected in Eastern Georgia and two in Western Georgia.<sup>41</sup>

**i. Training of Nurses**

Of the surveyed nurses, 82 percent completed the NVEP course in general nursing. This course had the largest number of trainees. Eighteen percent of the nurses took the NVEP course in general pediatric nursing, a course with much of the same content as the general nursing training, but with a focus on pediatric issues. A majority of the surveyed nurses (84 percent) had completed vocational education and were in the 25-54 age range; 31 percent of nurses had 1 to 5 years of working experience, 37 percent had 6 to 20 years, and 32 percent possessed 21 or more years. In terms of course locations, 44 percent of the surveyed nurses took the course at their own hospital, 19 percent at another hospital located in their own city, and 1 percent at a hospital in another city. Forty percent of the respondents participated in the course at the NVEP Learning Center in Tbilisi.

The response of the surveyed nurses to the training was highly positive, with a majority expressing their satisfaction with the course, trainers and training manual. They were particularly pleased with the teaching process employed during the training - finding it interesting due to the use of videos and clinical practices which used mannequins. Nurses also found the training manual, which served as the “textbook” for the general nursing course, to be a highly valuable tool, with 87 percent stating that they referred to the manual in the course of their daily nursing work. Nurses also declared that through the course, they acquired a deeper knowledge of both theoretical and practical nursing issues, and became acquainted with a growing number of innovations in medical care (see Chart 9).

Chart 9: Nurses’ Opinion on Training



Source: GMP Survey

A number of nurses stated that as a result of the training, they had developed a better approach toward their patients and their families, and had gained an improved understanding of their role in patient recovery, which subsequently increased their sense of professional responsibility. Those few nurses who expressed dissatisfaction with the training generally spoke of the need for more extensive practical training.

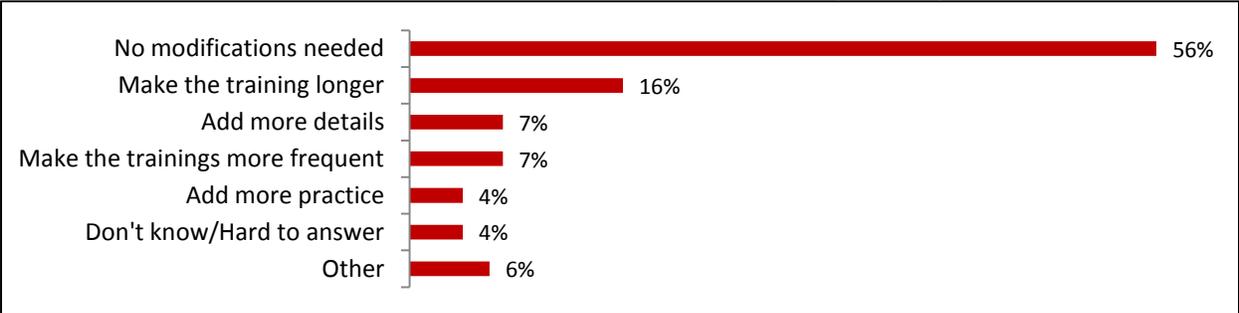
<sup>41</sup> The survey focused on nurses who had taken general pediatrics training courses, which were conducted primarily in hospitals in Eastern Georgia.

With respect to newly acquired or refreshed clinical and professional skills, nurses’ answers on two specific skill-related questions essentially did not differ prior to and following course completion. Following the training on data entry of patients’ medical charts, the surveyed nurses indicated that there was little change in their data entry practices, although they indicated that they might now include additional patient data. Separately, the survey recorded only a small uptick in the percentage of those nurses able to insert IV lines (96 percent to 99 percent). It is possible that the hospitals in which the surveyed nurses worked were more advanced than other Georgian hospitals in providing professional non-NVEP training for their nurses. The fact that these hospitals promoted additional nursing training could serve as another indicator of their progressiveness (although a possible alternative explanation is the nurses’ need to give a positive response to this question, perhaps feeling that a negative answer might show their hospital in a poor light and affect their job security).

However, in their “open ended” comments, a number of nurses indicated that following the NVEP training, they acquired new responsibilities, greater independence and the ability to independently carry out nursing functions such as catheterization, and diagnoses of patients’ medical problems. Additionally, nurses were increasingly able to evaluate the conditions of patients which, prior to the training, were the physician’s prerogative. Several nurses also indicated that they now feel a responsibility to communicate the knowledge acquired through the training to new staff members and interns. Sixty four percent of surveyed nurses indicated that their attitude toward the nursing profession had changed as a result of taking the nursing course. The changes included a better impression of the nursing profession, greater satisfaction with their roles as nurses, enhanced self-confidence, deeper appreciation of nurses’ importance and responsibilities regarding the well-being and recovery of patients, and a stronger orientation toward professional growth.

While a majority of the surveyed nurses felt that the training was very good as it stood, 16 percent of the nurses wished that the training could have been longer, with a small additional number of respondents desiring more detailed and frequent trainings. One reason for this request for greater detail was the nature of the general nursing courses most had taken, which by design, reviewed a wide range of nursing issues. Specialized nursing courses would have provided a deeper immersion into individual nursing specializations. Suggestions by the nurses for enhancing the training included extending the duration of the training so that specific issues could be discussed in greater depth with more time left for clinical training. Some 3 percent of respondents wished to see their attainment of a certificate of successful course completion result in being credited with higher professional credentials and higher salaries for those nurses with more advanced knowledge (see Chart 10).

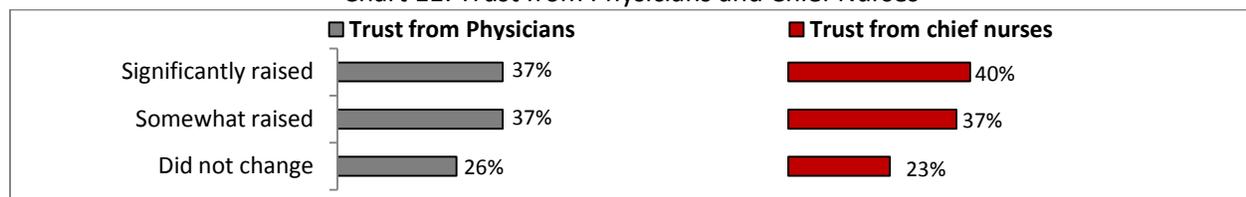
Chart 10: Modifications Desired in the Nursing Training



Source: GMP Survey

As indicated in Chart 11, nurses felt that as a result of the knowledge acquired through the nursing course, they had gained newfound trust from their chief nurses and physicians with whom they worked.

Chart 11: Trust from Physicians and Chief Nurses



Source: GMP Survey

The chief nurses stated that the overall qualification level of nurses had been “somewhat raised” as a result of the training, noting improvements in nurses’ work with machines/tools, patient assessments and knowledge in anatomy-physiology. Moreover, the chief nurses stated that as a result of the training, nurses had become more attentive, and that the general quality of their work had improved. Two of them in particular believed that the nurses’ qualifications had significantly risen, and noted that they were now being assigned additional responsibilities, such as the provision of first aid and emergency assistance (See Table 10).

Table 10: Opinion of Chief Nurses on the Raise of Qualification of Nurses after Training

Scale	Chief Nurse # 1	Chief Nurse # 2	Chief Nurse # 3	Chief Nurse # 4	Chief Nurse # 5	Chief Nurse # 6
Significantly raised	1	1	1	1	1	1
Somewhat raised	2	2	2	2	2	2
Did not change	3	3	3	3	3	3

Source: GMP Survey

In the future, the chief nurses recommended continuing education for nurses, together with provision of training in specific skills, such as sterilization, neurology and oncology.

Of the 12 physicians surveyed, ten believed they regarded the assessment quality of patients as improved after training, together with the knowledge of drug dosages, etc. Physicians also identified a general improvement of the quality of the job implemented by the nurses. Three of the 12 physicians stated that there was no need for further trainings for nurses, and four of them stated that it was desired to have continuing, permanent trainings. Two of the 12 surveyed physicians believed that the qualification level of nurses had not improved as a result of the training (See Table 11).

Table 11: Opinion of Physicians on the Change in Qualification of Nurses after Training

Scale	Physician # 1	Physician # 2	Physician # 3	Physician # 4	Physician # 5	Physician # 6	Physician # 7	Physician # 8	Physician # 9	Physician # 10	Physician # 11	Physician # 12
Significantly raised	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Somewhat raised	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Did not change	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

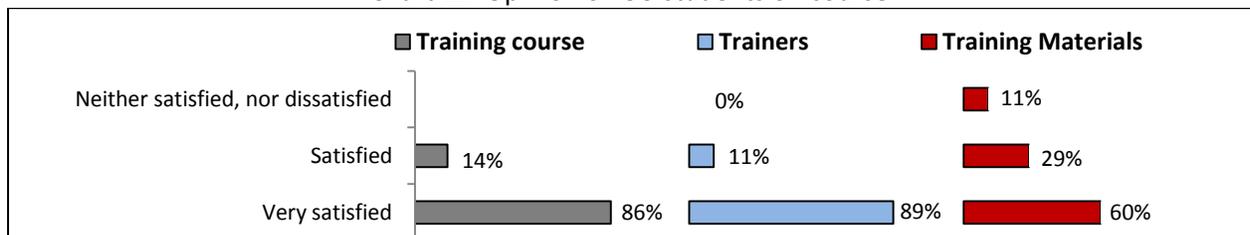
**ii. Bachelor of Science in Nursing Initiative**

In its proposal to USAID for implementing NVEP, the implementing partner considered development of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program an important priority. By the time NVEP was launched in 2009, training opportunities and study tours were increasingly offered to physicians and nurses, but no university-based BSN degree program existed through which undergraduates could complete a rigorous nursing curriculum and earn an academic degree. Despite this, it was understood that government approval to allow establishment of such a program was not likely in the immediate future. It was a surprise in December 2010 when the MOES issued an order under which a two-level nursing education model was approved.

At this point, USG funding had already begun delivery of an introductory course on nursing in a university setting at the well-regarded Georgian University of Ilia Chavchavadze State University. The course, which had been in the planning phase since the inception of the NVEP, was originally seen as a foundation for what was planned as a complete BSN curriculum to be offered at ISU, in collaboration with an American university. The introductory course – entitled Georgian Healthcare in the Twenty-first Century – had been offered three times: fall of 2010, spring of 2011, and fall of 2011. As part of the course, students along with faculty spent a class session observing the work of nurses at NVEP hospitals. All course materials were available to the students on the web-site maintained by the ISU for use by its students.

More than one-third of students (28 students, i.e. about 36 percent) who enrolled in this course at some point over its three semesters were interviewed by telephone about their experience with – and responses to – the course. Seven nine percent of the respondents indicated that they took the course because they were interested in it. The satisfaction level of the students with the course was quite high (see Chart 12).

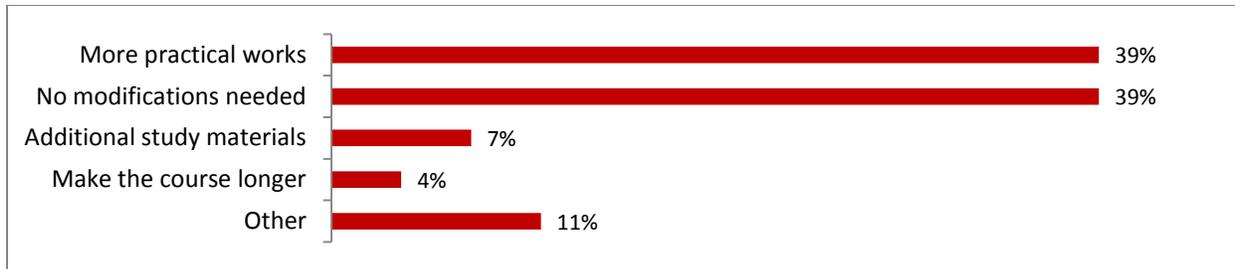
Chart 12: Opinion of ISU students on course



Source: GMP Survey

An important contributing factor to the student’s satisfaction with the course was its mixture of both theoretical and practical components. For 86 percent of the students, it was this practical dimension that made the course very interesting. A highlight for many was a visit to the hospital in Tbilisi where they were taught how to apply emergency first aid. When asked if there was anything they would change in the course, 39 percent of the students said they would not change anything.

Chart 13: Modifications Desired in the Course



Source: GMP Survey

The majority of students enrolled in the course did not appear to see nursing as a career path for them, although nearly one-third expressed some degree of interest in learning more. Thirty two percent of the interviewed students, for example, said they intended to gain in-depth knowledge of nursing together with their main academic area of focus, and hoped to increase their knowledge of the field through further training at ISU or elsewhere, although they hoped that ISU itself would provide additional nursing-related courses. Three of the 28 respondents stated that they might continue studies in nursing and try to obtain a degree in this area (although ISU did not provide such an option). Six students commented that they might even become healthcare specialists, healthcare managers, etc.

The NVEP, as of February 2012, did not have any plans to develop additional nursing-focused courses at the ISU, and was uncertain as to whether it would offer the introductory course in the spring 2012 semester.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evidence and the findings, GMP believes that USG assistance greatly contributed to the reform of the health and education sectors in Georgia. Conclusions are grouped below according to the four principal projects reviewed for this STR.

#### A. Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems

- An important model and precedent – the linking of MOLHSA and SSA with the NGO sector, with the government setting policy and working with civil society institutions to implement these policies under GOG oversight – was developed with the support of the USG;
- National standards for childcare services were established under the SCSS. This was a much needed development due to the difficulties experienced previously drafting and maintaining these standards. This helped to create a common vocabulary and shared understanding among the staff members involved in childcare system, including social workers, day center staff, foster caregivers and SGH caregivers;
- Social workers are becoming an integral part of the childcare system. The USG-sponsored SCSS project assisted SSA in hiring additional human resources and guaranteeing the desired qualification level;
- The staff members involved in the childcare system, newly recruited and trained through the SCSS project, demonstrated their satisfaction with the level of knowledge and skills acquired through the new USG-sponsored training. However, some of them identified the need for more specific, case by case, on-the-job training sessions.

## **B. Social Infrastructure Project**

- The SIP was in line with the MOES's strategy toward partial renovation of public schools in all regions of Georgia. The construction design offered by the SIP for the renovation of public schools satisfied at least minimal learning standards for these Georgian institutions, and provided equal learning opportunity to disabled children; however, the number of hygienic facilities in some cases did not comply with the number of students in the school;
- Renovated schools were well cared for, with budgets provided by municipalities helping school principals to maintain the improvements;
- Participatory planning and community mobilization tools were extensively employed at various stages of SIP implementation. During the creation of the SIWGs, students, parents and teachers participated on each site, which contributed to effective cooperation among stakeholders at the local level;
- The SIWGs played critical roles in identifying appropriate interim school facilities during the renovation process; although these refurbishments coincided with the school year, classes were not disrupted and students continued studying at alternative locations;
- Since the completion of the renovations, SIWGs continue to work on school improvement and have developed clear fundraising plans for continued school improvements;
- Through its active role in the school renovation process, the SIWGs facilitated the broad participation of local community representatives in this process; community members cleaned renovated school buildings and school territory, and moved furniture and equipment from storage facilities to renovated schools at no cost;
- The CCs provided short-term employment to GVEP graduates, IDPs and ethnic minorities – groups with relatively low incomes; and
- The SIP worked to promote the employment of GVEP graduates through the CCs contracted for the renovations of the public schools. CC senior management deemed the work conducted by GVEP graduates as mostly satisfactory. A challenging part of this cooperative effort was matching GVEP graduates' expectations and the qualification requirements of the construction companies. As the CCs stated, the GVEP graduates had some theoretical background, but lacked practical experience.

## **C. Georgia Vocational Education Project**

- The USG-sponsored GVEP is in line with the MOES's strategy to establish high-quality VECs across Georgia. On October 1, 2010 the MOES adopted a new system of authorization and accreditation of VECs. A total of 20 public VECs have earned this authorization, out of which seven (35 percent) were targeted by the GVEP;
- The MOES adopted all seven curricula and training manuals in the construction trades that were developed with GVEP support. These training manuals were distributed among 20 VECs throughout the country;
- Engagement with businesses, particularly through on-the-job trainings, offers an opportunity for students to improve their practical skills, and for GVEP to expand knowledge of and interest in VECs among private sector companies. However, the effectiveness of these partnership efforts, with a few notable exceptions, appears to be highly dependent on the personal contacts of VEC principals and faculty; and
- Despite the high level of competition among semi-qualified technical personnel in the local labor market, a 68 percent employment rate was achieved among VEC graduates in part due to GVEP activities, including the training of trainers through the involvement of international experts and the development of new curricula and training manuals on construction and tourism. A 68 percent

employment rate among VEC graduates is satisfactory, but this rate could be even higher if the managers appointed at the VEC employment centers were coordinated more effectively. Only three percent of the 173 interviewed graduates stated that they took advantage of the employment centers and that the centers' employment managers helped him/her find employment.

#### **D. Nursing Vocational Education Project**

- Highly skilled NVEP faculty are an important resource for the Georgian public and private health care providers as the sector continues to build the professional capacity of the country's nurses; in turn, NVEP's faculty succeeded in providing training to a cadre of nurse educators who are now serving as skilled instructors to practicing nurses and as educators to university undergraduates enrolled in an introductory nursing course.
- Through the training course, nurses acquired a deeper knowledge of nursing issues on both the theoretical and practical levels, and became acquainted with the rapidly growing number of innovations in medical care;
- Nurses who took NVEP trainings demonstrated increased the knowledge, self-confidence and career commitment. They also developed a better approach toward their patients and families, and gained a better understanding of their role in patient recovery, which in turn increased their sense of professional responsibility; and
- NVEP's work with physicians to improve nursing procedures and raise the standards for patient care succeeded in effecting changes in the management and organization of nurses in several hospitals. Following the NVEP training course, nurses acquired new responsibilities, greater independence and the ability to independently carry out more nursing functions, such as catheterization and diagnoses of patients' medical problems. They were also given more leeway to evaluate patients' conditions, which prior to the training was the physician's prerogative.

## **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations seek to ensure the effective continuation and further sustainability of results already achieved in the reform of the education and health sectors in Georgia as part of the USG's \$1 billion pledge.

### **A. Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems**

- The SCSS project had been working through its partners and consultants to develop national standards. It will be an ongoing challenge to ensure that these standards are applied and maintained. Continual monitoring will be essential, and continuing education and support for both caregivers and social workers will be vital. This could be done through the involvement of an independent M&E entity with the requisite experience.
- An important contribution of the SCSS project will be to ensure that the skills and knowledge of social workers hired and trained by the SCSS project are maintained and fostered;
- In cases where SSA offices employ more than five social workers, a supervisory mechanism should be created in order to ensure that each case is adequately managed; and
- Ongoing training sessions will help the newly recruited staff in the childcare system to better prepare for individual case management.

### **B. Social Infrastructure Project**

- The MOES should develop standards with which renovated buildings must comply; these standards should be as close as possible (if not identical) to international standards for new construction; and
- More coordination among the projects funded by USAID is recommended. Ongoing, clear communication at various levels (e.g., between senior management and technical staff) is a precondition of effective coordination and the creation of realistic expectations among SIP and GVEP beneficiaries. In this particular case, the coordination of needs would help to both identify where the demand is within various construction trades, and estimate the level of effort required for construction work.

### **C. Georgia Vocational Education Project**

- Labor market surveys are routinely undertaken by international NGOs as part of their project work. However, relying on labor market needs assessments conducted by different international organizations presents a number of problems. This review therefore recommends the design and implementation of a nationwide labor market poll. International experts should be involved in developing the poll's methodology to gain interest and possible financial support from the international community. The survey should be conducted annually and provide conclusions at the regional level;
- On-the-job trainings, if organized well, could be the first step toward a wider engagement with the labor market. Far more sustained efforts are required to ensure that on-the-job trainings are better managed and to facilitate more systematic outreach;
- There is a lack of coordination among a large number of bilateral and multilateral organizations working toward reform of the Georgian education system. The MOES of Georgia should add efforts for effective coordination. Less challenging should be the coordination among the projects funded by USAID with similar objectives; the GVEP and the JCP Project serve as examples, since their timeframes overlapped. Such coordination would prove especially useful in the context of GVEP's

VEC Employment Centers, which demonstrated minimal success in helping VEC graduates to find jobs (three percent of 173 interviewed students).

#### **D. Nursing Vocational Education Project**

- NVEP leadership, together with like-minded organizations, should advocate with physicians and hospital owners/administrators for increased professional responsibility and autonomy for well-trained nurses, as well as for enhanced opportunities for them to put the knowledge and skills they have gained through advanced professional education into practice;
- Providing continuing opportunities for alumni of the training program to share information, post questions to each other and to the NVEP faculty, and create a learning community will help to create a robust “Community of Practice” for Georgian nurses, and to sustain the enthusiasm and dynamism created by NVEP;
- In collaboration with an evolving Georgia Nursing Association, NVEP’s senior leadership should foster dialogue with Georgia’s medical community (through such organizations as the Georgian Doctors Association and the Georgian Specialist Doctors Association) to familiarize itself with continuing education programs for practicing nurses, and with the university-based training of new nurses through BSN programs;
- NVEP should consider developing a follow-up course with a more advanced scientific and public-health focus to the introduction to nursing course at ISU. Such a course could provide an excellent overview of the role of nursing in the broader public health sector, and its wider societal role; and Information exchanges and coordination between NVEP and other USAID health-related projects, such as the Health System Strengthening Project, Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems Project and Georgia Sustaining Family Planning and Maternal and Child Health Services Project, should be maintained and/or strengthened. MOLSHA, for example, could play a lead role in conducting information exchange and coordination meetings with the participation of professional associations and organizations involved in project implementation

## ANNEXES

### Annex A: Review of Selected Health and Social Infrastructure Projects – Interviewees

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
<b>US EMBASSY</b>		
Jeri Dible	Director	Office of Health and Social Development
Olesia Gardner	Assistance Coordinator	POL/ECON Office
<b>DEPARTMENT OF STATE</b>		
Mary Stewart	Director, Program and Budget Division	Office of the Coordinator of US Assistance to Europe and Eurasia
<b>HEALTH &amp; SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT STAFF</b>		
Keti Stvilia, MD	In-country Director	Nursing Vocational Education Project
Kenneth Walker, MD	Co-Principal Investigator	Nursing Vocational Education Project, Emory University Medical School
Nika Chachkhiani	Chief of Party	Georgia Vocational Education Project, American Institutes for Research
Aaron Greenberg	Chief of Party	Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems Project, UNICEF
Maia Meparidze MD	Director of Learning Center	Nursing Vocational Education Project
Tinatin Baum	Social Welfare Policy Specialist	UNICEF
Maia Jashi, MD	Nursing Program Coordinator	Nursing Vocational Education Project
Archil Udilashvili MD, MPH	Co-Principal Investigator	Nursing Vocational Education Project, Emory University Medical School
Ketevan Melikadze	Social Welfare Officer	Strengthening Childcare Services and Systems Project, UNICEF
Andrew Dunn	Consultant	UNICEF
Dimitri Gugushvili	Consultant	UNICEF
Nubar Goudsouzian	Chief of Party	Social Infrastructure Project (CHF)
Natia Berdzenishvili	Program Manager-East Georgia	Social Infrastructure Project (CHF)
Kim Crawford RN, MS, MPH	Former Nursing Program Coordinator-International	Nursing Vocational Education Project

Temur Drokini	Communication Specialist, Imereti Regional Office	Social Infrastructure Project (CHF)
Medea Toraia	Project Manager - West Georgia	Social Infrastructure Project (CHF)
Giorgi Kvenetadze	Civil Engineer, Imereti Regional Office	Social Infrastructure Project (CHF)
Judy Wold, PhD, RN	Former Co-Principal Investigator	Emory University School of Nursing
<b>INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>		
Nino Moroshkina, MD	Health Specialist	World Bank
<b>MINISTRIES OF GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA</b>		
Lali Ebanoidze	Head of General and Vocational Education Development Department	Ministry of Education and Science (MOES)
Ana Mchedlishvili	Senior Specialist	Vocational Educational Department, MOES
Gvantsa Tabatadze	Specialist	Vocational Educational Department, MOES
Eka Saneblidze	Head of Guardianship/Care and Social Program Department	Social Service Agency, Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs (MOLHSA)
Mamuka Machavariani	Deputy Director	Social Service Agency, MOLHSA
Eteri Tskhakaia	Head of Guardianship/Care Division	Social Service Agency, MOLHSA
Maia Kiladze	Senior Social Worker	Social Service Agency, Kutaisi/MOLHSA
Lika Grigolia	Social Worker	Social Service Agency, Kobuleti/MOLHSA
Nino Tsetskhladze	Senior Social Worker	Social Service Agency, Batumi/MOLHSA
<b>PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES</b>		
Nona Tsotsoria	Director	Public School #6
Tinatin Losaberidze	Director	Kutaisi Vocational Education College (VEC)
Davit Mchedlishvili	Director	Kobuleti VEC
John M. Welton, PhD	Dean of the School of Nursing	Florida Southern College
Maka Pataridze	Senior Learning Specialist	Ilia State University

Kakhaber Chelidze, MD	Associate Professor	Tbilisi State Medical University
<b>CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES</b>		
Mamia Kukhianidze	Director	Construction Company "Imeretmsheni-2000"
Levan Bibileishvili	Director	Construction Company "Ivermsheni 2"
<b>HOSPITALS</b>		
Jemal Dumbadze, MD	Director	Batumi Republic Central Hospital
Vakhtang Kaloiani, MD	Deputy Director	Kipshidze Central University Hospital
Nana Tsintsadze	Deputy Director	Batumi Republic Central Hospital
Marina Mgeladze	Chief Nurse	Batumi Republic Central Hospital
Roland Akhalaia MD	Director	St. Lucas Health Center in Zugdidi
<b>NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>		
Tina Gewis	Protection and Advocacy Advisor	Norwegian Refugee Council
Andro Dadiani	Country Director	EveryChild
Salome Namicheishvili, MSW	Chairperson of GASW	Georgia Association of Social Workers
Natia Deisadze	Senior Program Manager	Save the Children
Nino Nutsubidze	Project Coordinator	Save the Children
Ia Shekriladze, MSW	Project Manager	Save the Children
Brian McCotter	Member, Board of Directors	Partners for International Development
Eteri Pataraiia	Psychologist	EveryChild
Leslie Orr	Program Development and Learning Manager	EveryChild
Jaba Nachkebia, MD	Director	Children of Georgia
Maguli Shavishvili, MSW	Director	First Step Georgia