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GEORGIA PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT (G-PRIED)

FINAL REPORT

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Acronyms

BSPE	Business Skills in Primary Education
COR	Contracting Officer’s Representative
EMIS	Education Management Information System
G-PriEd	Georgia Primary Education Project
GL	Georgian Language
GSL	Georgian as a Second Language
IT	Information Technology
JA	Junior Achievement
JAG	Junior Achievement Georgia
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAEC	National Examinations Center
NCEQE	National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement
NCGEDD	National Curriculum and General Education Development Department
PMP	Performance Management Plan
QA	Quality Assurance
TLC	Teacher Learning Circles
TPDC	Teacher Professional Development Center
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

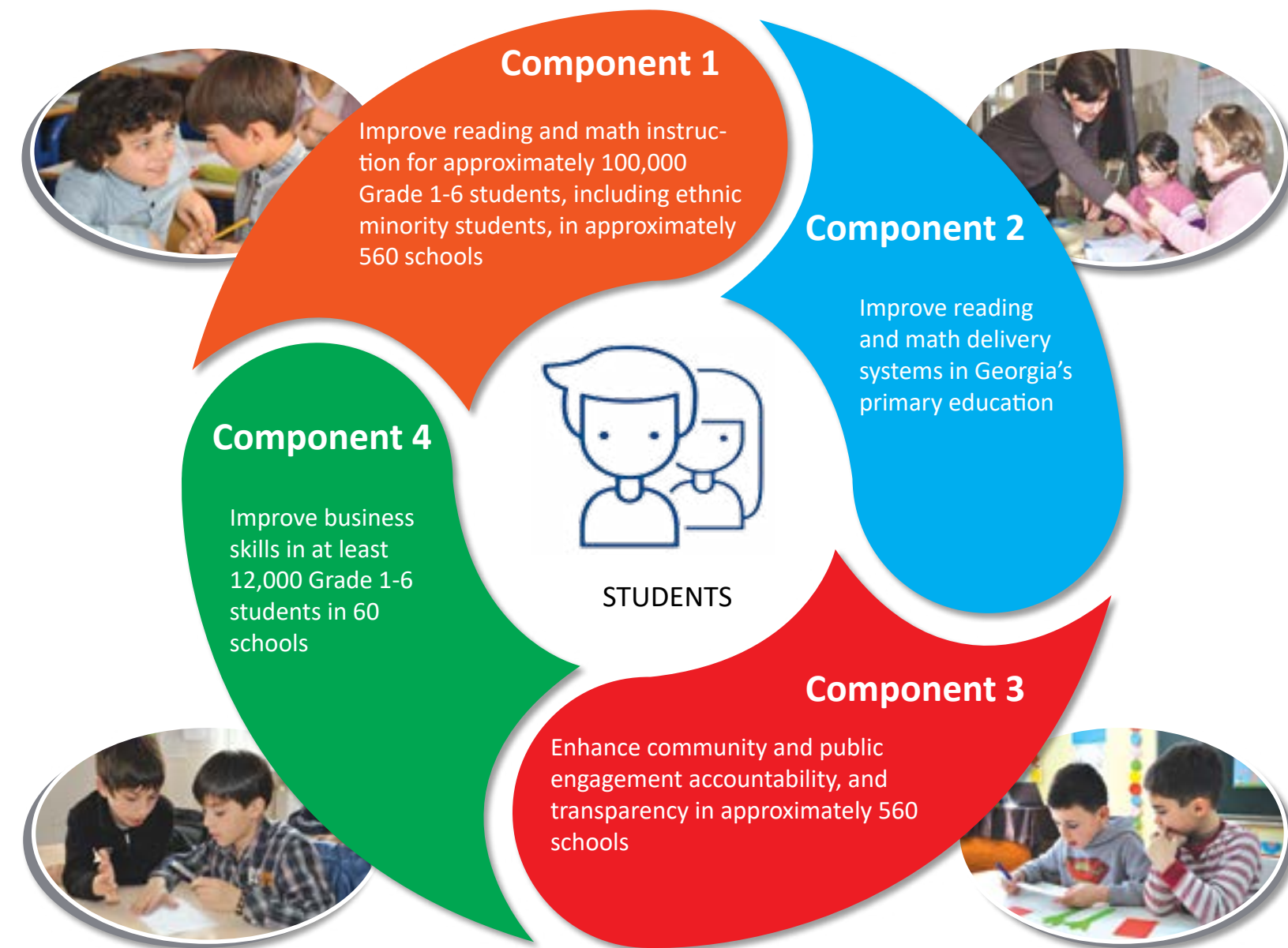


Improving primary grade learning outcomes has implications more far-reaching than simply raising achievement scores on national and international assessments. Reading and math are fundamental tools for thinking and learning, and literacy has an integrated and cumulative effect on comprehension in all other subject areas. Furthermore, establishing a strong foundation in reading and math in primary school sets students up for success in secondary and tertiary education, especially for children from ethnic and linguistic minorities in Georgia. The USAID Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd) aimed not only to improve the math and reading skills of Georgian children, but also to instill critical thinking and enable children to become entrepreneurs, leaders, and productive contributors to society.

Chapter 1. Overview of Project

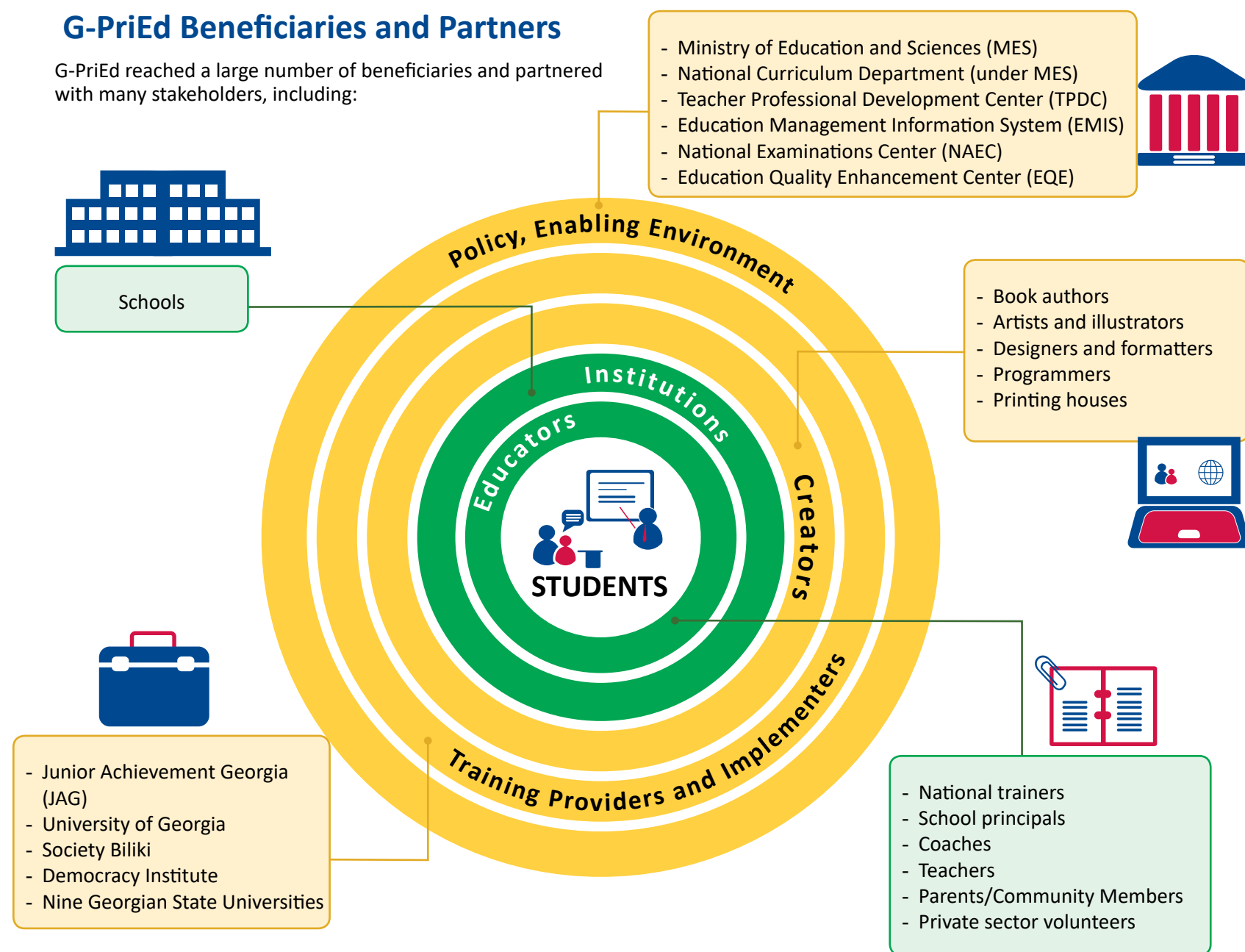
By providing Georgian teachers with additional tools to build reading and math skills, G-PriEd supported USAID's Education Strategy goal of "advancing sustained and inclusive economic and social development in partner countries through improved learning outcomes" and aligned all interventions with the national goals of the Georgia Ministry of Education and Science (MES). The Government of Georgia recognizes that the quality of its educational system drives its social and economic development. To that end, the government has been implementing ambitious reforms to transform its education system into a dynamic learner-centered model that produces students who are motivated to succeed.

Implemented by Chemonics International Inc., with local subcontractor Junior Achievement Georgia (JAG), the \$12,565,635, six-and-a-half year Georgia Primary Education Project provided comprehensive assistance to the Georgian primary education system to improve reading and math competencies of Georgian and ethnic minority students in grades 1-6 and to introduce financial literacy through exposure to business skills. This was achieved by implementing four inter-connected component areas with a cross-cutting focus on supporting instructional improvements, testing and improving standards, using technology, and developing subject experts in reading and math in schools.



G-PriEd Beneficiaries and Partners

G-PriEd reached a large number of beneficiaries and partnered with many stakeholders, including:



Beneficiaries

Students

The heart of G-PriEd's work and the project's overarching mission was to improve reading and math skills and critical thinking in Georgian and ethnic minority primary school students and transform these students into successful, productive contributors to society.

Teachers and Other Educators

G-PriEd worked with and trained these individuals to implement the project's school-based professional development model and through whom the project accomplished its results.

Institutions

G-PriEd supported instructional improvements, improved standards, increased the use of technology, and developed reading and math subject experts in its target schools.

Partners

Creators

G-PriEd engaged creators in the development of textbooks, children's readers, resource books, animated movies, and other instructional and supplemental learning materials. The project also worked with private sector volunteers to implement business skills instruction in the classroom.

Training Providers and Implementers

G-PriEd partnered with Junior Achievement Georgia (JAG) to deliver business skills curricula and teacher trainings to schools across the country. G-PriEd built the capacity of JAG to continue the work of delivering business skills curricula and teacher training after the project's end. Similarly, G-PriEd worked to capacity-build the University of Georgia, Society Biliki, and Democracy Institute to be able to carry on G-PriEd's work of teacher trainings after the project's close. Finally, G-PriEd collaborated with nine higher education institutions to design five-credit courses on innovative methods of reading and math instruction to incorporate into the bachelor's program of pedagogy.

Policy and Enabling Environment

G-PriEd worked closely with the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and its agencies to support instructional improvements, improve standards, increase the use of instructional materials and formative assessments, build the capacity of Georgian teachers to deliver new math and reading instructional approaches, increase parental and community engagement in schools, and introduce financial literacy skills in primary grades.

Locations of G-PriEd Target Schools



G-PriEd Results

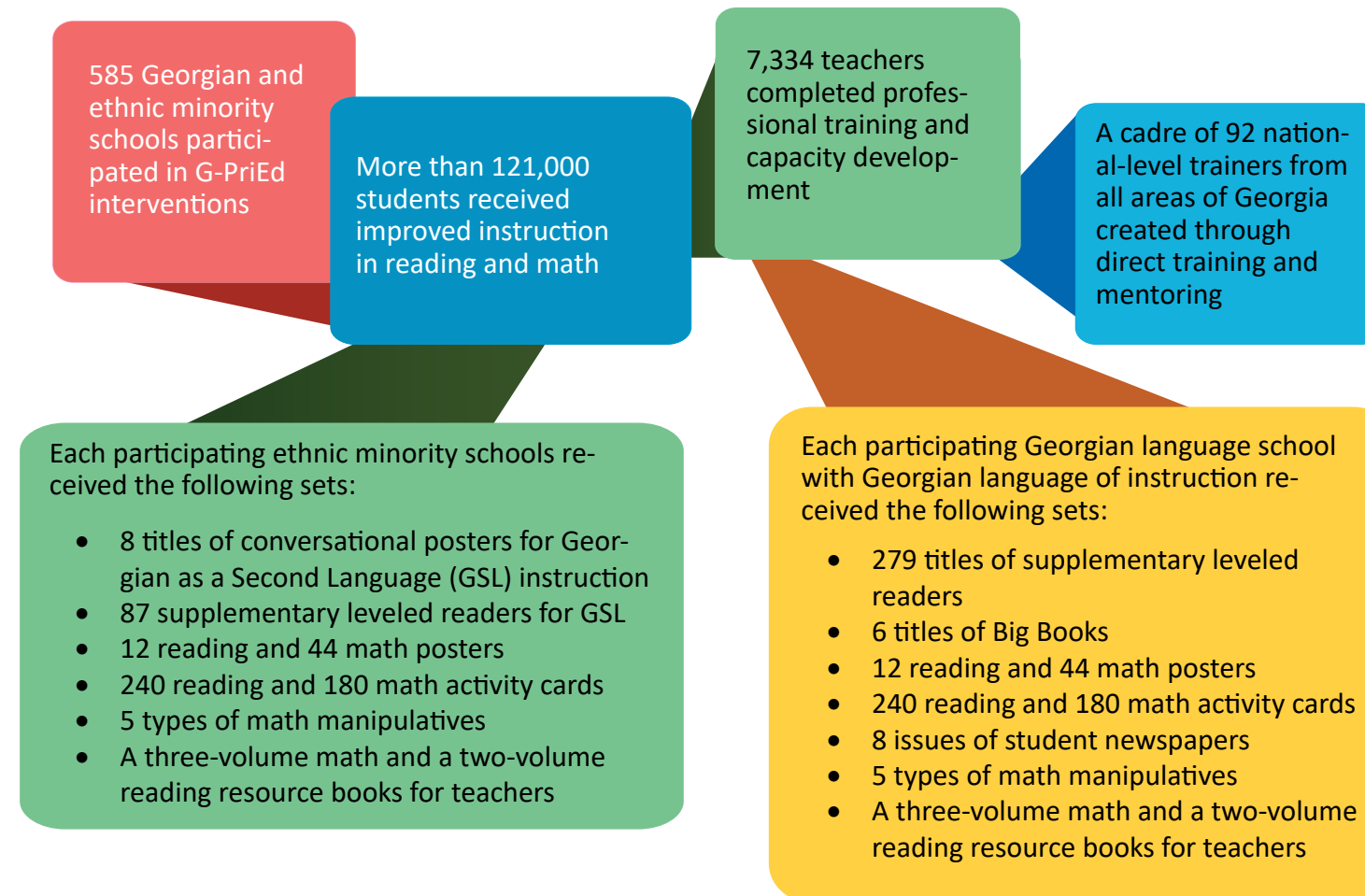
Goal /Impact:	Reading and math competencies of Georgian and ethnic minority students in grades 1-6 improved	
Outcome 1: Reading and math instruction for approximately 100,000 students of grades 1-6, including ethnic minority students, in approximately 560 schools is improved	Output 1.1: Improve teacher effectiveness in teaching reading and math, as well as in the use of formative-as- sessment-based teaching approach	A. In FY2014, 66% of teachers participating in the G-PriEd program regularly used project-developed methodologies and instructional materials in the teaching process; in FY2015, 81%; in FY2016, 92%; in FY2017, 98% of teachers used project methodologies.
		B. In FY2013 and 2014, 92 national trainers were provided with the training to train primary grade teachers; in FY2015, 93 trainers; in FY2016, 76 trainers; in FY2017, 70 trainers were trained.
		C. In FY2013, 1,068 primary grade teachers were trained; in FY2014, 648 teachers; in FY2015, 2,167 teachers; in FY2016, 7,330 teachers; in FY2017, 5,396 teachers were trained.
	Output 1.2: Increase the availability and use of age and language-appropriate reading and math materials and supplies	A. In FY2014, 103 hard copies of supplementary reading materials were developed for grades 1-6; in FY2015, 148 hard and electronic copies; in FY2016, 135 hard and elec- tronic copies were developed. B. In FY2013, 5 sets of interactive instructional materials were distributed to each target school; in FY2014, 5 sets; in FY2015, 18 sets; in FY2016, 13 sets; in FY2017, 1 set; in FY2018, 4 sets were distributed.
Outcome 2: Reading and math delivery systems in Georgia's primary education improved	Output 2.1: Promote professional standards and support professional development for teachers and administrators	A. In FY2014, 2 recommendations of strategies for recruiting, re-training, and retaining qualified teachers were proposed to MES; in FY2015, 3 strategies; in FY2016, 1 strategy was proposed. B. In FY2014, 2 changes to the school principal standards were proposed to the MES.
	Output 2.2: Strengthen the system for testing reading and math outcomes through classroom formative assessments	A. In FY2014, 4 formative assessment tools were developed and submitted to MES; in FY2015, 7 tools; in FY2016, 2 tools were developed and submitted.
		B. In FY2014 and 2015, 12 evidence-based norms and benchmarks were proposed for key reading and math competencies; in FY2016, 57 were proposed.
Outcome 3: Communi- ty and public engage- ment, accountability, and transparency enhanced	Output 3.1: Promote expanded student participation in reading/math activities and parent engagement in children's reading/math outcomes through school-based committees	A. In FY2014, 27% of G-PriEd target schools hosted parent/ community engagement activities; in FY2015, 65% of schools; in FY2016, 60% of schools hosted parent engage- ment activities.
	Output 3.2: Strengthen community and education stakeholder access to and utilization of education data for local decision-making	B. In FY2015, 32% of students participated in additional reading/math activities; in FY2016, 60% of students participated.
Outcome 4: Business skills in at least 12,000 students in grades 1-6 in 60 schools improved	Output 4.1: Promote school-based acquisition of busi- ness skills among learners in primary classrooms	A. In FY2016, students' understanding of basic business concepts increased 45%; in FY2017, there was a 36% increase in understanding.
	Output 4.2: Strengthen private sector and community engagement in business skills curriculum.	B. In FY2016, 140 private sector volunteers engaged in delivery of business skills pro- gram; in FY2017, 204 volunteers; in FY2018, 61 private sector volunteers engaged



As a result of G-PriEd's work, Georgian students are better prepared to succeed in a dynamic 21st century workforce. Launched in 2011, G-PriEd began by working with a pool of 121 pilot schools, 1,100 teachers, and 18,000 students. Beginning in 2015, G-PriEd expanded to 585 Georgian public schools, with 7,334 teachers and more than 121,000 students. G-PriEd has engaged 92 national trainers – experts in reading and math – and trained over 1,000 school-based teacher learning circle coaches. Under its business skills component, G-PriEd provided curricula to over 25,000 students in 62 schools through 845 head teachers and more than 200 private sector volunteers.



Component 1 Results



Component 2 Results



Continuous professional development trainings, including:

- 6 courses in innovative reading and math instruction
- 3 trainings courses in subject-based competencies for teachers
- 2 training modules for principals in instructional leadership
- 2 training modules in TLC facilitation and coaching



Educational web-portal, www.kargiskola.ge, created and transferred to the MES and public organizations



Teacher learning circles operating in 585 schools, led and facilitated by 1,190 trained coaches



3 local organizations supported in training schools and teachers in innovative learning strategies



9 state universities enhanced their curricula and resources with G-PriEd's innovative learning strategies and resources



Online diagnostic assessment software "E-assess" developed, used by, and transferred to the MES



95% of teachers on average engaged in G-PriEd interventions received professional development credits



Component 3 Results



Printed and distributed more than 121,000 parental engagement cards to all parents of target school students in Georgian, Russian, Azeri, and Armenian languages

65% of G-PriEd's target schools hosted parental engagement activities

Math and reading remediation groups conducted, with support from parents, and indicated 80 to 110 percent improvement in students' learning outcomes

Cross-curricula science and design club model developed and piloted in nine schools

Component 4 Results

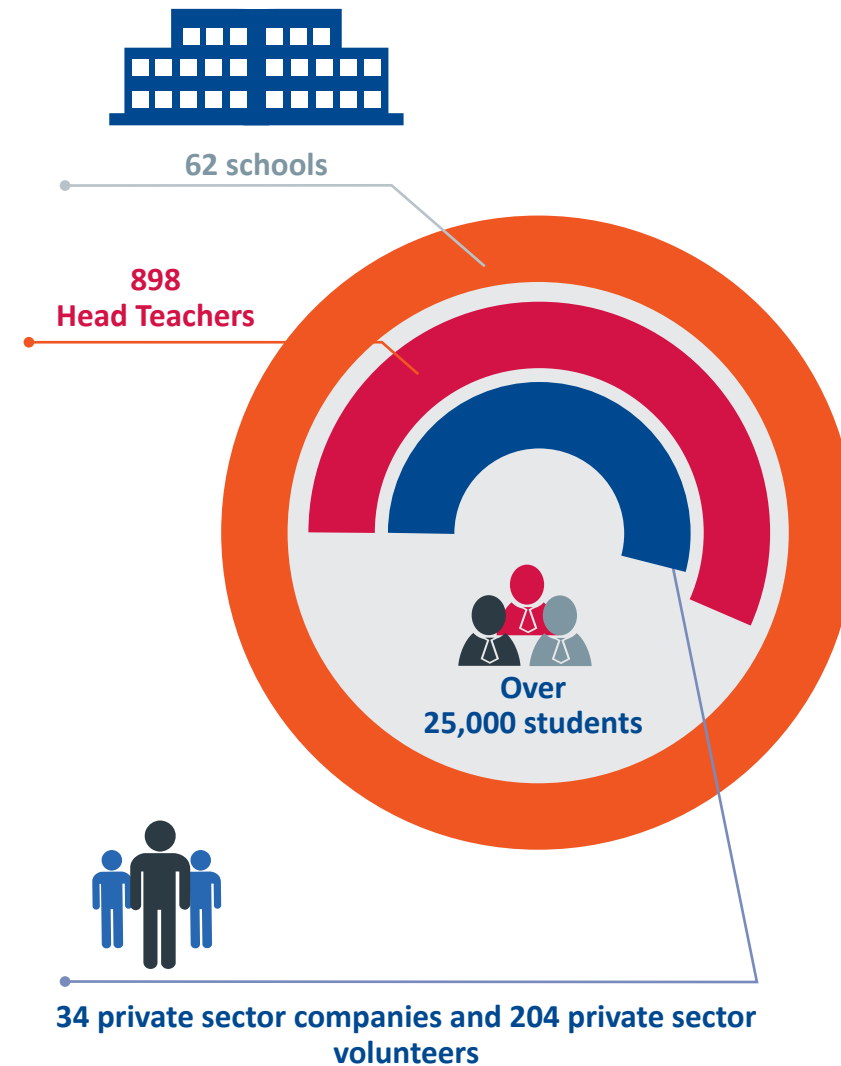
Facilitated the establishment of Junior Achievement Georgia (JAG) as a reputable quality services provider in Georgia in the field of financial literacy in primary and secondary education.

Over 25,000 students from 62 schools participated in extra-curricular instruction of business skills with active engagement of 34 private sector companies and 204 private sector volunteers. A total of 845 trained head teachers delivered the instruction.

Several companies remained committed and engaged their volunteers for three consecutive years. Several companies plan to continue their relationship with JAG after the close-out of G-PriEd, by possibly funding some of the schools and assisting JAG in promotion of the program and newly established JAG centers.

Supported opening of three independent JAG centers to support high demand. Since the opening of the new centers, JAG has been able to sign 78 contracts and generate 88,982 GEL of revenue.

Private sector engagement in the program resulted in substantial financial leverage. Beyond the educational value added, G-PriEd's private sector engagement made the most of U.S. government resources by leveraging an estimated \$2,429,107, including the estimated value of the curricula provided by Junior Achievement.



“Firsts” in Georgia by G-PriEd

Educational web portal, the first repository of modern instructional resources in the Georgian language, with thousands of methodological and instructional resources widely available to teachers, students, and parents for many years to come

A full repository of early grade reading and math assessments in the Georgian language

A full-fledged, online, ready-to-use classroom diagnostic assessment system in reading and math called E-Assess

A comprehensive, well-tested, and utilized model of classroom observations significantly contributing to instructional improvements

A comprehensive, illustrative, and enriched business skills curriculum for primary grades

Fully designed, tested, and widely adopted remediation education modules in reading and math at the grade 3 level

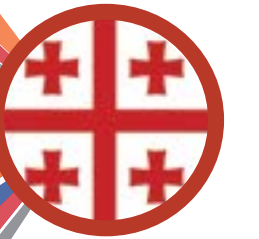
Creation of a structured science and design club model that was flexible, user-friendly, and provided detailed instructions for teachers, requiring no training or assistance to initiate in the classroom

An innovative remediation model for the Georgian context, adapted using international remediation best practices

Engagement of the Georgian private sector in the delivery of business skills lessons in grades 5-6 – the first time company representatives entered primary-level classrooms to teach business basics

Adaptation of JA's science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) computer game into 3D and Georgian language, the first of its kind created in Georgia

A mixed methodology of training, both in-person and electronic, coupled with classroom observation and continuous feedback, which was a change from the traditional training format





Chapter 2: Reading and Math Instruction

Improve Reading and Math Instruction for Approximately 100,000 Students of Grades 1-6, Including Ethnic Minority Students, in Approximately 560 Schools



Component 1: Improved Reading and Math Instruction

G-PriEd's goal in Component 1 was to improve reading and math instruction in approximately 560 schools for approximately 100,000 students in grades 1-6, including ethnic minorities, through the promotion of innovative teaching approaches in reading and math, the design and provision of diversified teacher and student instructional materials, and the introduction of a school-based teacher professional development model.

Teacher quality and effectiveness are key to successful literacy and numeracy instruction. G-PriEd's teacher trainings were complemented by innovative instructional materials and support from national trainers and principals. Following training sessions, G-PriEd promoted continuous school-based support of teachers to implement the new instructional strategies through teacher learning circles (TLC). The classroom observations and descriptive feedback sessions that G-PriEd introduced to supplement teacher trainings and TLCs significantly contributed to effecting real change in instruction, and developed principals and school-based coaches into instructional leaders within the schools, facilitating sustainability. A variety of instructional resources designed by G-PriEd, including teacher resource books, children's readers, and math materials, further served to support innovative classroom instruction and teacher professional development. Finally, the project's web portal – a fully accessible web service and the first repository of modern instructional resources in the Georgian language – enabled the creation of e-trainings and made these trainings and resources widely available to teachers, students, and parents for many years to come.



Training teachers

Increasing teacher knowledge of innovative practices leads to informed instructional decisions. G-PriEd's teacher trainings were based on international instructional best practices and included courses provided throughout the school year, complemented by instructional materials and regular support from national trainers and principals, who observed teachers in their classrooms and provided descriptive feedback. Teacher trainings were offered in face-to-face and electronic formats, and over the course of the project, G-PriEd designed a total of 24 different types of training courses. More than 7,330 primary teachers participated in the project's training program since its launch in schools in 2013, and 92 national trainers received continuous training and capacity building from G-PriEd and provided direct support and mentoring to teachers, coaches, and principals.

At the pilot stage of the project (2012-2015), G-PriEd worked with a pool of 121 pilot schools, 1,293 math and Georgian Language (GL) and GSL teachers, and 18,000 students. During the 2015-2016 academic year, G-PriEd expanded its outreach to a total of 585 schools, 7,334 math, GL, and GSL teachers, and 121,000 students. During the 2016-2017 academic year, G-PriEd continued to work with 479 schools, 5,396 math, GL, and GSL teachers, and

"I can proudly say that the project has had a very successful start. Teachers are waiting for us to visit their schools and I am looking forward to meeting with them again."

Aza Jojua,
trainer from Samegrelo region

98,000 students. During this period, G-PriEd also developed and offered 24 training modules in basic subject knowledge to 4,948 GL, GSL, and math teachers to help them pass the state subject exams, in collaboration with MES and Teacher Professional Develop-

ment Center (TPDC) education specialists. During its peak period in 2015-2016, when G-PriEd had the largest number of schools, it was providing direct assistance and support to 28 percent of Georgia's public schools.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. While the introduction of student-centered innovative methods of instruction was the primary focus of G-PriEd's teacher trainings, consistently poor results on subject state exams and poor subject matter knowledge as indicated by G-PriEd's observations confirmed that teachers require training in their basic subject areas first and foremost and that innovations in methodology should be coupled with such training. Furthermore, the MES and the Georgian education system must focus greater attention on the often-neglected sector of ethnic minority schools to improve teacher performance on exams and subject matter knowledge.

Introduction of Teacher Learning Circles

G-PriEd introduced a school-based professional development model called teacher learning circles (TLC) where collaboration, dialogue, reflection, and leadership were embodied. G-PriEd provided continuous capacity building to TLC facilitators, who later took on coaching functions and provided classroom observation to the members of the TLC under the mentorship of experienced G-PriEd national trainers. In these subject-focused groups, teachers met to discuss student achievement, brainstorm ways to enhance instructional effectiveness, and collaboratively address teaching challenges in order to increase student competencies in reading and math. In particular, teachers found the data-driven meetings the most meaningful, where G-PriEd-created diag-

nostic assessments on teacher performance were analyzed and discussed in results-oriented conversations. Overall, G-PriEd worked with 207 TLC facilitators during its pilot phase in 121 schools, 1,190 TLC facilitators during the expansion phase in 585 schools, and 967 coaches during the phase-out stage of the project in 485 schools.

Lessons Learned. Facilitators and coaches were selected by school principals from among their teachers. Being a coach required a robust level of subject knowledge, a high level of motivation, leadership skills, and a substantial investment of time. After G-PriEd's first round of coach trainings in 2013, some of the assigned teacher-facilitators dropped out, resulting in the need for make-up trainings, which prolonged the training process. G-PriEd could have more clearly articulated the high level of commitment required from teacher-facilitators from the beginning. Additionally, although facilitators received training on conducting a TLC meeting, teachers were not always prepared to participate as productive team members. More training could have been given to teachers to increase their understanding of their role in the TLC. Finally, when facilitators were promoted to coaches, G-PriEd provided at least one session of on-the-job mentoring by a national trainer for each coach. However, more direct support would have added value to the level of confidence and professionalism among coaches.

Recommendations. Though teacher-facilitators and coaches were supported by their school principals, they were not able

to receive compensation for the work they performed in addition to their instructional duties. G-PriEd was able to provide extra credits for coaches as a means of recognition for their work, but a policy-level change is recommended to acknowledge these individuals' work.

Classroom Observations

One of the most successful interventions G-PriEd introduced was classroom observations and descriptive feedback sessions. It was a tremendous success that teachers agreed to be observed, as this is uncommon in Georgia. After being introduced to new teaching strategies and resources during trainings, teachers were able to implement them in the classroom while an experienced national trainer observed. As principals became more familiar



with G-PriEd’s methodology, they were encouraged to accompany the national trainers on classroom visits, and over the years of the project, many principals and school-based coaches took over observing teachers and delivering feedback, thus growing into their role as instructional leaders within the schools and ensuring the sustainability of the initiative.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. G-PriEd noted that observers would periodically slip into learned patterns of negative criticism and non-constructive feedback. Thus, more training is needed for those conducting classroom observations – national trainers, principals, and coaches – on effective observation techniques and constructive feedback. Additionally, with resources that became available when G-PriEd introduced electronic trainings, G-PriEd created an online reporting system where trainers, principals, and coaches reported directly. This system was very much tailored to G-PriEd’s needs; however, if the MES introduces classroom observations into the school-based teacher professional development model, a more universal online system should be created and should have a zone where teachers can view and track their performance. Principals should have access to this data to have a snapshot of the overall performance of teachers in their schools.

Development of Instructional Resources and Creation of e-Portal

In addition to trainings, throughout the project and in collaboration with a team of Georgian education specialists and the National Curriculum Department of the MES, G-PriEd designed and produced a variety of instructional resources to support innovative classroom instruction, including instructional videos, electronic training courses, teacher resource books, and tutorials. In addi-



tion, G-PriEd provided schools with several types of math materials, including math manipulatives (rainbow fraction tiles, decimal blocks, geometry student kits, and math activity cards) as well as designed reading materials (age- and language-appropriate supplementary leveled readers for each grade, big books, reading activity cards, student newspapers for each grade level in paper, audio, and multi-media formats, instructional posters, online “story writing” applications, an animated song for beginning readers, online reading projects). These resources facilitated a supportive learning environment and application of differentiated learning techniques and were eventually uploaded on an ongoing basis to the project-developed web portal, created in 2015.

The web portal – www.kargiskola.ge – is the first repository of modern and quality instructional resources in the Georgian language. The portal made the project’s instructional materials and resources available to the public and enabled the development

of electronic trainings. As a fully accessible web service, the portal could be used in a variety of ways – by teachers for individual or TLC-based professional development and instructional improvement, by students for access to fun resources, and by parents to increase engagement in their children’s academic lives. To respond to teacher-expressed needs of direct interaction with a trainer, which the e-training format eliminated to some extent, G-PriEd created a forum for trainees and delivered a series of webinars to facilitate communication, feedback, and questions and answers with the technical team. Due to the cost-savings of offering e-trainings and resources online instead of printing and distributing to schools, G-PriEd tripled its number of beneficiary schools, teachers, and students. The web portal enabled the work of G-PriEd – its materials, training modules, and resources – to be available and utilized beyond the project’s close, thus facilitating sustainability.

During 2016-2017, G-PriEd worked closely with the MES Textbook License Department to provide recommendations to textbook content and structure, thus influencing textbook procure-

ment criteria. In 2017-2018, G-PriEd was invited to deliver a series of workshops on the structure of a modern textbook for primary grades and innovative methods of instruction of math and reading as the cross-cutting skill in all subjects to textbook authors and textbook assessment experts. At the MES’s request, G-PriEd filmed all workshops and provided the MES with edited movies, which the MES plans to upload onto their website for future reference.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. Textbooks continue to be the major instructional guide and resource for teachers and the MES, despite G-PriEd’s efforts to increase the importance of a teacher guidebook. There are still gaps in capacity for developing modern and innovative student-centered textbooks, and more resources should be prioritized for qualified textbook assessment experts and an improved process for examining textbooks. G-PriEd recommends creating a sample model textbook, which could be used as a supplement to the officially vetted textbooks and an alternative resource for teachers during instruction.





Chapter 3. Reading and Math Delivery Systems

Improve Reading and Math Delivery Systems
in Georgia's Primary Education

Component 2: Improved Reading and Math Delivery Systems

G-PriEd aimed to promote professional standards for teachers and administrators and ensure the sustainability of G-PriEd's achievements through engagement of higher education institutions, the introduction of various classroom formative diagnostic assessments, and building the capacity of school principals. To accomplish this, G-PriEd closely collaborated with the MES and its agencies from day one of the project. This proved to be an effective strategy, as it enabled the project to gain trust, establish relationships with senior representatives, remain abreast of recent educational developments and thus align project activities in a timely manner, and provide policy-level recommendations, be heard, and obtain the support needed. This close collaboration and mutual trust yielded several important achievements, specifically, the Minister's decree enabling teachers to collect

professional credit for participation in G-PriEd activities, integration of the G-PriEd web portal into the MES Data Center, and the creation of a state sub-program, funded by the MES, to ensure support, maintenance, and continued upgrading of the portal.

G-PriEd equipped teachers with the tools they need to implement effective lessons, including an online innovative classroom diagnostic assessment tool, designed specifically for Georgian primary students. Most significantly, G-PriEd created and conducted impact assessments that not only allowed the project to see the results of its school-level interventions, but also allowed the development of an online software – E-Assess – that teachers could customize to analyze and monitor student progress and inform their instruction. Recognizing the critical role princi-

pals play in ensuring successful education processes, G-PriEd trained them to be instructional leaders in the schools. Finally, recognizing that teachers need to learn innovative instruction methods in university in order to be properly prepared for student-centered work in the classroom, G-PriEd worked closely with nine state Georgian higher education institutions (HEIs) to design courses on innovative methods of reading and math instruction.

Assessment in the Classroom

G-PriEd equipped teachers with the tools they need to implement effective lessons, specifically, diagnostic tests to assess student needs and progress in reading and math; innovative instructional techniques; and quality instructional materials to supplement teaching. Most significantly, G-PriEd created and conducted impact assessments that not only allowed the project to see the results of its school-level interventions, but also allowed the development of an online diagnostic assessment software – E-Assess.

In 2013, the project administered a baseline assessment in 121 pilot and 120 control Georgian and ethnic minority primary schools, with approximately 19,070 students. The project created a software application to analyze the data. In 2015, USAID independent contractor NORC administered an end-line assessment to measure student progress after G-PriEd's interventions. The results showed that G-PriEd interventions had positive effects on student learning for grades 1-4; no significant effects for grades 5-6 in math; no significant effects for grade 3 and 6 in reading; and no significant effects for any grade level in reading in



ethnic minority schools. Based on the results, for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years, G-PriEd adjusted its school-level interventions to provide significantly stronger support to ethnic minority schools and grades 5 and 6. Another success of the baseline assessment was the creation of multiple test forms in four languages with test items appropriately leveled for each grade and each competency. In order to capitalize on such a tremendous asset, G-PriEd developed the E-Assess software on its web portal, utilizing the items that were not used in the baseline assessment to generate tests for teachers to analyze and monitor student progress.

The concept of formative assessments *for* learning, rather than *of* learning, was an innovation introduced in Georgia by G-PriEd. The project trained teachers to assess learning while it was tak-

ing place in order to inform their instruction and monitor student progress. The classroom diagnostic assessments (which utilize test forms, scores, and data) were one form of formative assessment that were particularly effective, but the project developed multiple diagnostic assessments for quickly and effectively gauging student progress. Using these instruments, teachers were able to assess student learning throughout the year, rather than only during end-of-the-year testing, when it was too late to modify their instruction or remedy students' conceptual misunderstandings. E-Assess was recognized by teachers and the staff of MES National Curriculum Department as one of the most useful and customizable online multi-functional resources to determine student needs and refocus instruction.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. Teachers were reticent



to use non-quantitative formative assessments, and it was difficult to convey the utility of checking a student's understanding without recording a grade or maintaining a written record of student achievements. Overall, teachers require more practice and greater understanding before formative assessments will be able to be fully incorporated and integrated into classroom instruction. Additionally, the E-Assess software as a unique resource for the Georgian education system is useful for all grades and all subjects. Creating ethnic minority language versions of E-Assess would be an invaluable tool to better support instruction in this marginalized category of schools. Additionally, E-Assess should be expanded to other subjects and all grades, as it greatly supports student-centered instruction.

Engagement of Principals as School Leaders

The foundation for a successful, school-based professional development model is the principal's support. Within the Georgian education system, principals serve predominantly as logistics managers. G-PriEd advocated for them to be instructional leaders who established a vision of success for students and faculty. To ensure effective and sustainable teacher professional development, G-PriEd actively engaged principals in instructional processes through classroom observations, constructive feedback, and teacher performance evaluations – new concepts in Georgia. Such purposeful engagement positively influenced the over-

all school climate and helped teachers increase their self-confidence and motivation to improve their instruction.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. While G-PriEd attempted to work with TPDC to revise principal standards and corresponding certification programs to make principals instructional leaders and enhance the sustainability of instructional changes, little progress was made. G-PriEd recommends principal training standards be revised and that principals take instructional leadership courses as part of their professional orientation, where certification becomes an important indicator in principals' evaluations.

Collaboration with Higher Education Institutions

Beginning in 2016, G-PriEd worked closely with nine Georgian higher education institutions (HEIs) to design five-credit courses on innovative methods of reading and math instruction as part of the bachelor's program of pedagogy. In the 2016-2017 academic year, Telavi University integrated five-credit reading and math courses into its bachelor's program, and all nine HEIs plan to include G-PriEd designed courses in their 2018-2019 academic year pedagogy programs. Thus, the results of G-PriEd's work will be seen beginning in 2018 when the new pedagogy programs commence. According to the Head of the Bachelor's Program at Telavi University, the courses have been very well-received by the students and are important to help a student transform into a teacher, equipped with modern instructional techniques.

Teacher Professional Development Scheme

Throughout the life of the project, G-PriEd worked on revising the MES's Teacher Professional Development Scheme, which specifies the categories of teachers and types of state-accredited professional development activities per teacher category. During the pilot phase, teachers participating in G-PriEd's interventions could not receive professional credit under the Scheme. G-PriEd collaborated with the MES and TPDC to accredit G-PriEd's school-based professional development model for participating teachers. As a result, revisions were made to the Scheme and the Minister issued a Special Order for international programs in 2015 (valid until 2017), which stated that teachers could receive credits through G-PriEd's program and other international or local training providers. As a result, G-PriEd's teachers received state-acknowledged professional credit during both years of the project's expansion period. Specifically, 89-percent of participating teachers received one to eight credits¹ at the end of the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. Once the Minister's Special Order expired, the system still lacked an accreditation process for trainings that would enable teachers to gain credit for participation in the long-term. Thus, teacher motivation to participate in G-PriEd interventions, which require significant effort both in learning and in practicing in the classroom, is partly dependent on acknowledgement of these efforts by the MES and long-term accreditation of these trainings.

¹ A teacher could participate in the program through one or more of the following categories: math teacher, GL teacher, GSL teacher, math TLC facilitator, reading TLC facilitator, business skills teacher. In case of multiple roles, one individual could have received any combination of one to eight credits.



Chapter 4. Community and Public Engagement

**Enhance Community and Public Engagement,
Accountability, and Transparency
in Approximately 560 Schools**

Component 3: Enhanced Community and Public Engagement, Accountability, and Transparency

G-PriEd worked in several arenas to augment student academic success. Recognizing the importance of parental and community engagement in education, G-PriEd supported schools' efforts to offer activities that promoted parental and community support to schools as a means to improve transparency and accountability in the education process and improve student performance. G-PriEd's remediation model was tremendously successful in doubling and tripling struggling students' scores in reading and math. The project also created a science and design club model aimed at developing research, exploration, problem-solving, and innovation skills in students. Finally, the project worked closely with MES to support their work on school report cards and introduce innovations to the reporting system.

Parental Engagement

The MES viewed increased parental and community engagement as a means to improve transparency and accountability in the education process, and as such, G-PriEd's work in this area is one of the project's greatest successes. To involve parents in their children's education, G-PriEd designed practical instruments and tools, such as parental engagement cards, distributed to all parents of target school students, which offered simple tips for parents to strengthen their children's math and reading skills through daily activities. These were tremendously successful. Additionally, G-PriEd provided ideas for competitions that schools could conduct to engage parents, including art events, profession hours, and reading clubs, which proved to be very popular. G-PriEd designed teacher training

"My child's teacher talks about the importance of being involved in our children's education but nobody told me what 'to be involved' meant. I thought that it was enough to review my child's homework. But when I read the activities in G-PriEd's card set, I understood better how I can help my child anytime, anywhere without special equipment or funds."

Tea Lomidze, parent of a grade 1 student at Tbilisi School #133

of an electronic training session, supplemented with various tools. G-PriEd's reading club model was so popular with the schools, that when the MES announced a grant competition among schools to implement extra-curricular activities in 2017, many Georgian schools, including those from outside of G-PriEd's pool, proposed G-PriEd's reading club model (having heard about it via word of mouth or the portal).

From the responses to G-PriEd's survey on progress with parental engagement activities, principals reported that the level of parental engagement increased as a result of consistent effort on the part of the schools, using G-PriEd's resources and conducting G-PriEd activities. Additionally, G-PriEd's parental engagement activities were so successful that several G-PriEd beneficiary schools reported having to open additional Grade 1 classes due to significantly increased demand from parents to enroll their children in G-PriEd schools.

materials on parental engagement, an instructional movie, and a parental engagement theme in the menu of thematic meetings of teacher learning circles. G-PriEd successfully advocated for adding time in the school day for additional reading activities, and by the Minister's order, head teachers received one extra hour per week. G-PriEd supplemented this policy change by creating a reading club model in the form

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. Working with the MES to increase parental engagement in education was at times a difficult process. Obtaining endorsement of parent engagement cards took time, as MES staff initially wanted each activity to be specifically linked to the national curriculum, which would have inhibited the unstructured manner in which these cards were designed to be utilized. In the end, the cards were approved and were very successful.

As parental engagement is a declared priority of the MES, it should be expanded to all schools and institutionalized into the school system and educational process. To achieve this, the MES should distribute G-PriEd's resources as widely as possible and encourage their utilization in the future.

Remediation Model

G-PriEd adapted the remediation experiences of schools in the U.S. and Finland to local practices and selected specific core competencies to work on, such as word decoding, reading fluency, and word problem-solving in math. Remediation teachers received several days of training, a package of instruments for remediation interventions, and continuous support from G-PriEd experts in the form of workshops and classroom observations with feedback. Following screening, diagnostic testing, and individual interviews, selected students received remediation classes in reading and math in an extra-curricular format by G-PriEd-trained remediation teachers for six weeks. Before and after the remediation interventions, students were tested to observe progress. Based on the classroom observation findings and teachers' feedback, G-PriEd finalized the model and presented it to the MES, education specialists, and schools.

Students in both the reading and math groups demonstrated outstanding progress. In math, the students in the remediation



group improved their performance by 110 percent, while the control group's progress was 22 percent by comparison. In reading, 80 percent of students significantly improved their performance. Additionally, all teachers reported a tremendous behavioral and attitudinal change in the students, who gained confidence. Finally, parents of target students were thoroughly engaged in the process, and this contributed to its success.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. Remediation was implemented as a pilot program to see what worked and what did not. In the process, G-PriEd learned that teachers need to be well-prepared to deliver remediation lessons; parental engagement is essential for student success in remediation; reme-

diation instruction should be focused and targeted; and school administration support is essential. Overall, the remediation pilot confirmed that remediation is needed in Georgia's school system and that it significantly affects student performance and self-confidence.

To increase the effectiveness of remediation programs, it is important to start the remediation process early – in Grade 2. Schools also should implement regular diagnostic assessments of reading and math competencies starting in Grade 1. G-PriEd focused on several specific competency areas, but remediation should be expanded to cover a wider array of competencies, and design of a more complex math remediation model would greatly empower teachers and students to address these areas.

Science and Design Club Model

In summer 2017, G-PriEd created the science and design club (SDC) model aimed at fostering students' interest in natural sciences and developing research, exploration, problem-solving, and innovation skills. This model focused on Grade 5 and 6 students and taught complex scientific concepts in a game format and enabled students to create their own products and analyze their applicability and functionality. Due to the nature of the content, all units included math elements, and reading elements were significantly expanded since the initial pilot. While the club model is widely known and offered in Georgian schools, the SDC design was unique in that it was user-friendly, with detailed instructions for teachers, thus requiring no training or assistance to start a club. It was also flexible, and teachers could choose to deliver a variety of unit combinations. Finally, the club did not require financial resources from the school. Six units were developed, with each unit consisting of a

unit plan and Microsoft PowerPoint presentation for teachers and worksheets for students. G-PriEd piloted the model in nine urban and regional schools, trained 11 teachers, and reached out to 157 students. The demand was so high in some schools that additional classes were added. Based on feedback from teachers and G-PriEd classroom observations, G-PriEd finalized the model and presented it at the G-PriEd Final Conference in February 2018.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. Popularizing STEM subjects from early grades by making abstract concepts concrete and practical prepares students to easily transfer from the primary to the secondary school level. There is a deficit of resources like the SDC in the Georgian education system. As such, development of new resources to expand student participation in reading and math activities should be considered for future development work.

Access to and Utilization of Education Data

G-PriEd worked closely with the Education Management Information System (EMIS) Agency and National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) to support their work on school report cards (eCatalogue). G-PriEd advocated for inclusion of additional quality information on schools (the number of books in libraries, innovative programs, etc.), and for recognition of such schools by assigning scores in the principal's performance monitoring system. However, this was not successful because EMIS and NCEQE were not interested in changing their systems. Therefore, to recognize the performance of G-PriEd's target schools, G-PriEd produced its own school report cards, which provided a snapshot of a school's achievements with G-PriEd, including training attendance, results of classroom observations, and number of TLC

meetings held. In 2014 and 2015, G-PriEd organized pilot school conferences where the best performing schools were recognized with certificates and office equipment. The schools reported that the report cards were very informative and useful for tracking performance, and schools used them to assign professional development credits to teachers.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations. G-PriEd shared these report cards with the MES, EMIS, and NCEQE; however, revisions to the current system were not a priority. As such, G-PriEd learned that stakeholder buy-in is critical for successful implementation, and stakeholders should be engaged in formulating the components of a request for proposals (RFP).





Chapter 5. Business Skills

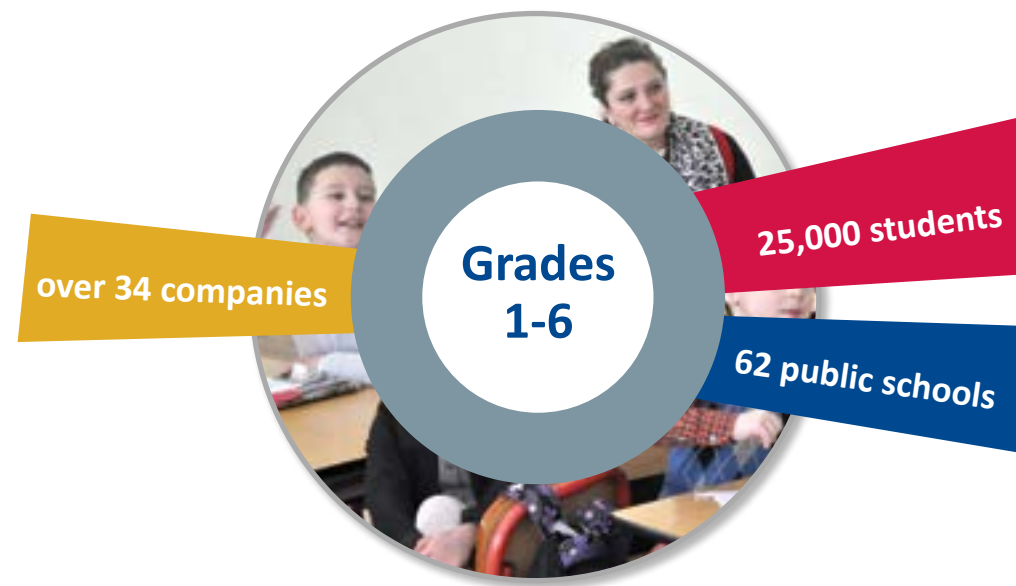
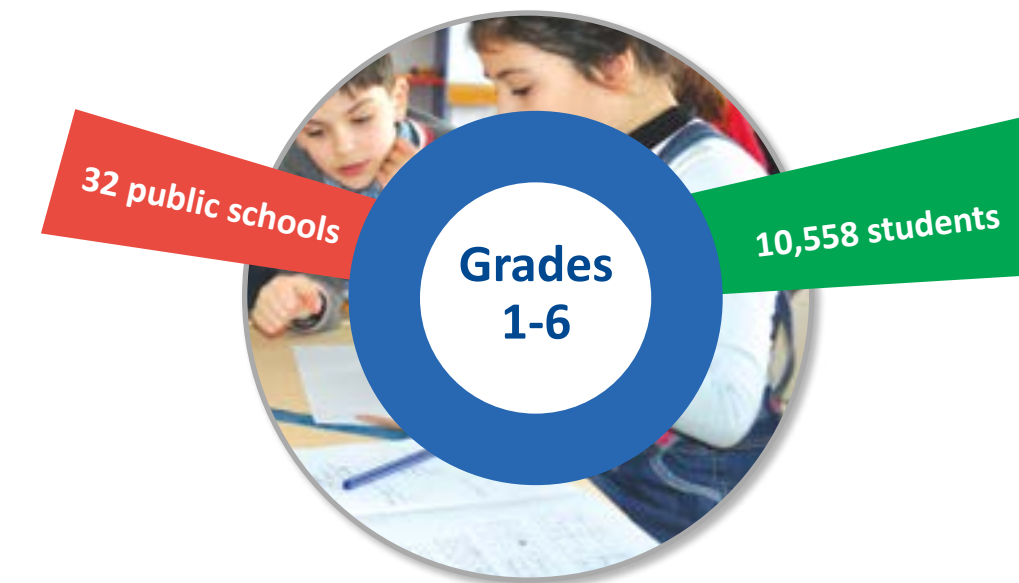
**Improve Business Skills in at Least
12,000 Students
in Grades 1-6 in 60 Schools**

Component 4: Improved Business Skills in Students

Added to the G-PriEd scope of work in 2015, the Business Skills in Primary Education (BSPE) program, implemented in partnership with local partner Junior Achievement Georgia (JAG), worked to enable young Georgian students in grades 1-6 to discover and develop basic skills in financial literacy, entrepreneurship and workforce readiness. Designed to inspire a culture of change surrounding the skills necessary to participate in the Georgian economy, the BSPE program provided primary school students with foundational business skills to prepare them for higher order thinking, creativity, and problem-solving — essential skills in the business world.



During the pilot phase, G-PriEd translated and adapted for the Georgian context the Junior Achievement (JA) curriculum for grades 1-6 and introduced it in 32 public schools across Georgia to 10,558 students. In grades 1-4, the curriculum was delivered by teachers, and in grades 5-6, G-PriEd capitalized on the experiences of local private sector volunteers, who delivered the lessons directly to students.



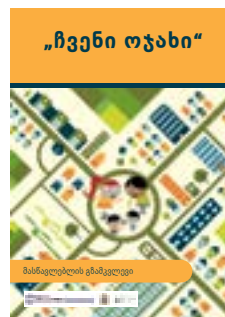
Based on the success of the pilot, during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years, the program entered 62 public schools and delivered curriculum to over 25,000 students with the help of local private sector volunteers from over 34 companies, improving their knowledge of basic business concepts by approximately 45 percent. The curriculum and quality of the materials received high praise and very positive feedback from the MES, the schools, the private sector, as well as students' parents.

Adaptation, Distribution, and Delivery of Junior Achievement Business Skills Curriculum

Training. During a nine-month period, a team of G-PriEd in-house specialists, translators, editors, designers, and curriculum experts worked on adapting seven programs from the Junior Achievement curriculum into Georgian, as follows:



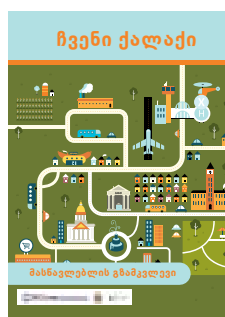
Grade 1 . Ourselves



Grade 2 . Our Family



Grade 3 .
Our Community



Grade 4 . Our City



Grade 5 .
Our Region



Grade 6 .
Our Nation



Grade 6 . More than
Money

Following the approval and vetting of the curriculum by USAID and the MES, G-PriEd published, printed, and distributed thousands of materials directly to schools and to private sector volunteers. Prior to initiating delivery of the program in schools, 38 master trainers provided an intensive two-day training to approximately 1,200 head teachers in grades 1-6. In the first year of the program, 445 teachers were trained; in the second, 898 teachers; and in the third, 203 teachers.

During the expansion phase, G-PriEd trained teachers on general aspects of BSPE lesson delivery and added a module on the key terms of entrepreneurship and financial literacy. The entire teacher training component for the academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 was passed on to JAG, in order to build their capacity.

Delivery and Monitoring. Teachers and private sector volunteers delivered five lessons to each class, either during five consecutive

weeks or spread out over the course of several months. G-PriEd and JAG monitored lesson delivery, entering data into a database, and reported confirmation to TPDC, which issued relevant credits to teachers for participation. A total of 455 lesson deliveries were observed. These revealed challenge areas for teachers, and G-PriEd and JAG analyzed the results and adjusted modules to help teachers improve the quality and effectiveness of their lesson delivery.

Private Sector Engagement. Engagement of the Georgian private sector in the delivery of the business skills lessons in grades 5-6 was the first time that company representatives entered the primary level classrooms to teach basics of entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and workforce readiness, as well as share their career experiences with the students. G-PriEd engaged more than 200 volunteers from 34 companies in the program to deliver one

“Knowing that people in my village struggle without jobs, I have set a goal to contribute to the community by providing employment opportunities...While growing our business in Muskhi, we found out about the Business Skills Program and immediately decided to participate. This program is important, fun, and a great opportunity for the village kids. It is so exciting and rewarding to work with those children. We clearly see their potential and enormous drive to learn.”

Irakli Kurdadze, owner of Freco

management and one live-action movie on delivery of the business skills lesson for private sector volunteers not necessarily familiar with a primary school classroom.

Activities

Animated movie on business skills. During Years 2 and 3, G-PriEd developed an animated movie “Kids from Our Street”, where the main characters come up with innovative ideas on how to solve various problems in their community with the mentorship of a local business owner. JAG will continue negotiations with interested TV channels to potentially air the movie during children’s programming hours.

lesson per week during a five-week period. Additionally, following the JA model, G-PriEd adapted five animated video tutorials on primary grade classroom management and one live-action movie on delivery of the business skills lesson for private sector volunteers not necessarily familiar with a primary school classroom. Additionally, following the JA model, G-PriEd adapted five animated video tutorials on primary grade classroom

STEM game. G-PriEd adapted the JA science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) computer game into a 3D version in the Georgian language. The first of its kind created in Georgia, it focused on developing logical thinking and problem-solving skills and familiarized students with various STEM professions, guiding future career decisions.

Student competitions. In order to stimulate creative thinking in students and strengthen their knowledge of entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and workforce readiness, G-PriEd designed a two-year, grade 5-6 competition called “What is Your Business Idea?”. The goal of the competition was to stimulate creative thinking among students and strengthen their knowledge of the entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and workforce readiness skills that they acquired through participating in the business skills program. The judges, comprised of G-PriEd staff, private sector representatives, TPDC, and JA Georgia, evaluated the business ideas and selected winners, who presented their ideas to an audience comprised of the G-PriEd team, USAID, students, school teachers, principals, animated movie creators, and private sector volunteers. The student teams were awarded certificates and an excursion to Techno-Park, where they toured laboratories and got acquainted with technological innovations.

Pre- and Post-testing of Students. During Years 1 and 2, G-PriEd administered pre- and post-tests to 2,218, grade 4-6 students to measure learning progress and understanding of basic business concepts. The results demonstrate significant increase in students’ understanding of the basic business concepts.

Sustainability of the BPSE Program. G-PriEd initiated a targeted promotional campaign in Tbilisi and the regions to promote the business skills initiative and solicit private sector engagement, placing specially-designed ads on buses, on billboards, in

newspaper inserts, and on various TV and radio shows. Through G-PriEd's assistance, JAG developed a marketing plan and a set of promotional materials, including: 1) an outreach strategy to public and private schools; 2) a plan on broader engagement of private sector; 3) a strategy on soliciting funding from local and international chambers, associations, donor organizations, and NGOs; and 4) various financial models available to public and private schools for introducing the program. A promotional materials pack was disseminated by JAG during the meetings with schools and private sector companies.

JAG Centers. Based on several hundred meetings held by G-PriEd with public and private schools and various training providers, the demand for the programs is very high and an alternative platform for delivery of the lessons, in addition to the school-based model, is needed. To respond to this demand, G-PriEd, in consultation with USAID, supported the opening of three independent JAG centers in Tbilisi, Zugdidi, and Lagodekhi, in November 2017-January 2018. The centers allow parents to enroll their children in entrepreneurship and financial literacy clubs delivered by JAG-trained professionals in an out-of-school environment. Since the opening of the new centers, JAG signed 78 contracts and generated 88,982 GEL of revenue.



Chapter 6.

Sustainability and Future Initiatives

Future cadre of teachers. Given that teacher performance on annually-required state subject exams is continuously poor, G-PriEd believes that a sustainable model of long-term courses for improvement of qualifications should be designed and offered to practitioner teachers. This will not only help them pass the exams but will enable them to keep up-to-date with modern techniques in education. Such courses should be diverse in content and accessible by rural, mountainous, and ethnic minority teachers, as well as administrators.

Stakeholder buy-in. Close and consistent collaboration with the MES and its agencies and overall stakeholder buy-in and full engagement throughout the life of the project is key to achieving sustainability and long-lasting effects. Though gaining trust, establishing working relationships, and aligning project activities with recent educational developments is difficult and takes time, such efforts are key to attaining sustainability.

Ethnic minority schools. Given the results of the impact assessment in 2015, G-PriEd provided more support to grade 5-6 and ethnic minority school teachers during the expansion phase. Reasons for the lack of impact on these cohorts included budget constraints, resulting in no trainings from 2013-2014, difficulty identifying qualified ethnic minority national trainers and translators, inadequate mastery of the Georgian language required to comprehend training content, and constant rotation of grade 5 and 6 teachers (who rotate among grades 5-12) per the Georgian education system. G-PriEd learned that teachers of grades 1-4 and grades 5-6 require different strategies for planning and implementing trainings. While both categories belong to one primary educa-

tion level, training content and the approach to training delivery should be different. Ethnic minority schools continue to remain a disadvantaged group for various socioeconomic reasons that may be outside of the scope of any developmental project, such as the availability of qualified teachers and their poor Georgian language skills. More time and resources need to be specifically invested into ethnic minority schools, including greater training support, mentorship, and diversified instructional resources.

Sustainability beyond G-PriEd. In 2017, through the project's Sustainability Plan, G-PriEd collaborated with the Deputy Minister of Education, the MES's National Curriculum Department, and TPDC to design strategies to ensure the sustainability of the project's work, including the teacher professional development model and instructional resources housed on the web portal, and introduce services to institutionalize the use of G-PriEd's products. In December 2017, the Minister of Education approved a sub-program that provides funding to the National Curriculum Department for at least one year to maintain and administer the web portal and promote the use of its instructional methods and resources. The MES's decision to continue to support an international donor project's efforts is unprecedented since the collapse of the Soviet Union. G-PriEd also worked with TPDC to ensure that availability of portal-based resources goes hand-in-hand with accessibility to teacher professional development trainings. In line with the MES's teacher professional development decentralization strategy, there are two possible routes that teacher professional development in Georgia can take, and G-PriEd has prepared these: 1) TPDC will continue to provide teacher train-

ings. G-PriEd has provided TPDC with electronic copies of all teacher training materials, publicly available through the portal; 2) G-PriEd's training content becomes accredited by TPDC. G-PriEd selected and trained three local organizations – the University of Georgia, NGO Biliki, and NGO Democracy Institute – to apply for accreditation and deliver quality teacher trainings.

Technology-based solutions. The introduction and development of modern, technology-based solutions to teacher professional development should be continued and increased, as this platform is cost effective and enables free access to resources. Additionally, in G-PriEd's experience, a mixed model of training delivery – combining in-person and e-training – is the most effective, better enabling observation, feedback, and activities than a purely electronic model. G-PriEd implemented such a model with a small group of schools from the Ajara and Pankisi Valley regions and found it to be successful.

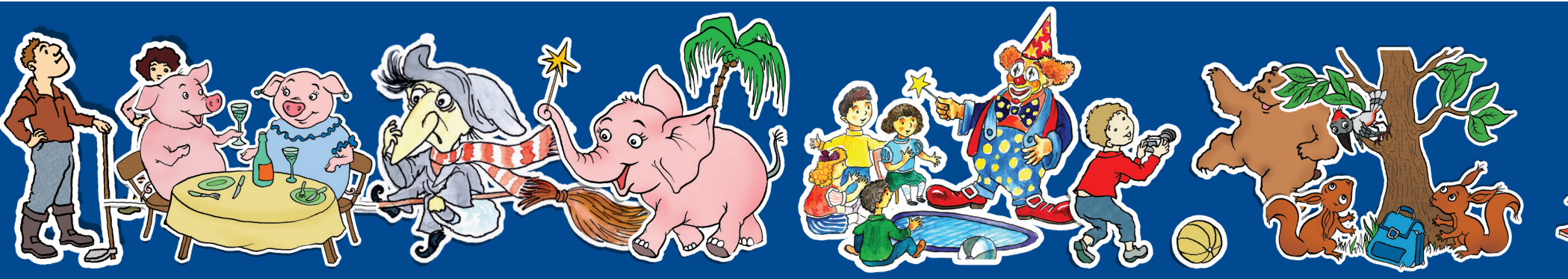
Expanding education work in Georgia. G-PriEd's focus was on the primary grade levels in two subjects. However, limited² access to quality educational and instructional resources for all grade levels and all subjects is the greatest complaint of teachers. The project's approach of utilizing resources to supplement instructional methods and tutorials to support resources should be implemented in future USAID education projects and expanded to other subjects and secondary grade levels. Additions and supplements to the web portal should be considered, as this is a sustainable, cost effective platform which enables creative learning and instructional formats that are attractive to students and do not require complex logistical arrangements for delivery. Additionally, G-PriEd's E-assess software should be expanded to be

available in other subjects and all grades, as it greatly supports student-centered instruction.

Future of BSPE program. G-PriEd has taken calculated steps towards ensuring the sustainability of the BSPE program, which have proven to be successful. JAG has sold over 155 programs outside of G-PriEd and generated close to 90,000 GEL from sales. JAG and G-PriEd approached the sustainability issue from multiple angles and tried to develop various models of sponsorship for the BSPE program, including sponsorship by the private sector or integration of the program by the MES into the national curriculum, with allocated state funding. However, a center-based model, with the establishment of JAG independent centers, has proven to be most successful. In this model, lessons are delivered by trained professionals and not restricted to 45 minutes, the space set-up allows for playing computer games or animated movies, and the environment is very appealing and modern. Ideally, more JAG centers should be added in more regions of Georgia, to ensure wider coverage and accessibility. After G-PriEd closes, JAG has been advised to concentrate its efforts on more aggressive outreach and advertising. Reaching out to as many parents as possible to inform them of the benefits of a business skills education for their children will be the key to success of the centers. Along with the promotional campaign, JAG should carefully monitor the quality of the lessons delivery process through frequent communication with school principals, teachers, and parents, as well as work on continuously enriching the process with new and innovative products, such as computer games and animated movies. JAG should put a lot of emphasis on staff development, due to their team being relatively young and inexperienced. Finally, JAG should work very closely with private sector companies and various chambers and associations to engage more volunteers and potentially receive funding for implementing the program in more schools.

² Most quality educational resources are in the English language. Most Georgian teachers do not have a working knowledge of English or other international languages nor the skills to translate and adapt open source resources into quality Georgian products. Additionally, the MES does not finance the creation of such resources.





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