

Success Story – Georgia

Project title: National Education System Realignment and Strengthening Programme

Client: Georgian Ministry of Education

Start date: December 2002

Duration: 4 years

ETS Europe provides consulting services and technical assistance to Georgia's National Examinations and Assessment Centre (NAEC).

Background

Political changes have prompted national governments to take responsibility for educational quality by

- setting standards and monitoring educational achievement
- delegating the responsibility for teaching and learning to their schools
- focusing more on educational outcomes.

Georgia is no exception. One of the primary goals of the Georgian Education System Realignment and Strengthening Programme is to move away from controlling textbooks and overseeing timetables, and towards a quality control that is more outcomes-oriented.

Establishing the NAEC has been a crucial factor in this shift. NAEC develops and administers end-of-year exams for grades nine and 11, and national assessments for grade four. In addition, the Georgian Ministry of Education has asked the Centre to design a new programme for academic admission tests. These tests would replace the existing entrance exams, which are currently administered by individual universities.

Role of ETS Europe

Together with the American Councils of International Education, ETS Europe provides technical assistance to NAEC. Over a period of four years, experts from both organisations are visiting Georgia to deliver consulting and training services to the Centre and the Georgian Ministry of Education.

During these missions, subject experts collaborate on test development and standard setting, and on developing secure administration and objective marking. Dissemination of psychometric expertise ensures high-quality standards for all products and procedures implemented by NAEC.

ETS Europe is also responsible for organising a programme of study visits by NAEC staff to centres of expertise elsewhere in the world.

Results to date

In 2003, a pilot was done on secure administration of school leaving exams. In a number of test centres, math and Georgian language and literature exams were administered under the supervision of trained proctors.

In 2004, NAEC administered National Assessment of Educational Achievement tests (math and Georgian language and literature) to large samples of students in grade four. The results showed that the outcomes of education did not meet general expectations, causing much debate in the Georgian parliament.

In June 2005, the Unified Admissions Exams were implemented nationwide. Under the general responsibility of the Ministry of Education, NAEC is charged with developing the tests (general reasoning and subject for Georgian language and literature, math, and modern foreign languages). These tests are an integral part of a procedure to allocate students to places in accredited institutions for higher education, and to decide on distribution of grants.