

## **Eurasia Partnership Foundation**

### **Scope of Work**

### **Impact Evaluation of the Open School Network Project**

**March 2008**

For the past 15 years, Eurasia Foundation (EF) has worked to revive civic and economic vitality in the independent countries of the former Soviet Union. In the South Caucasus region, EF grants and programs have targeted each nation's individual needs, but also supported cross-boundary cooperation and capacity building efforts serving multiple countries.

To root these achievements in sustainable *local* institutions, EF launched the **Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) in 2007**, three locally registered, networked institutions promoting civil society and economic development in their host countries through small grants, operating programs and development of public-private partnerships. **EPF -Georgia, EPF - Armenia and EPF - Azerbaijan** will pursue a shared mission and an integrated program – addressing transformational challenges in good governance, increased transparency, and citizen participation – and will share both governance and management structures to promote coordinated work across borders. More information on the Eurasia Partnership Foundation can be found at [www.epfound.ge](http://www.epfound.ge)

The Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) seeks an evaluation consultant(s) to conduct an impact evaluation of its Open Schools Program. The goal of the impact evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the Open Schools Program's impact on the governance and management of the program's targeted secondary schools. The evaluation is scheduled to be conducted in **May-June 2008** with the final report submitted no later than **July 9, 2008**. The budget for the evaluation includes a range of \$8,000 to \$10,000 for evaluation services, including expenses for transportation to and within Georgia, accommodation, and per diem. The deadline for applications is **April 24, 2008**.

### **Background Information**

In cooperation with Open Society – Georgia Foundation (OSGF), EPF implemented the Open Schools Program (OSP) from July 2003 to October 2006. The program received financial support from OSGF and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The goal of the program was to increase the transparency and improve the management of a select group of Georgian secondary schools by increasing public involvement in decision-making. OSP involved a number of components, including a co-sponsored grant competition for local school boards, parent-teacher associations and other school-based NGOs; technical assistance provided by consultants hired by OSGF and EPF; and a linkage project implemented by a Tbilisi-based NGO that sought to increase horizontal networking among the school-based NGOs.

EPF and OSGF conducted the grant competition among school-based NGOs in July 2003. The two foundations awarded seven grants to school-based NGOs in three Georgian cities, Tbilisi (4 projects), Kutaisi (1 project) and Telavi (2 projects). The duration of each project was about 18 months. The activities of these projects included facilitating the democratic election of the school boards of trustees, creating computer centers in the schools and establishing a participatory

management. In addition, the projects also created a local radio network and websites and used these information channels for public information campaigns.

In September 2003, EPF conducted a limited grant competition and awarded a grant to the NGO School-Family-Society (SFS). SFS was expected to implement a linkage project that would have increased the horizontal networking among the seven target schools and the school-based NGOs as a model of Open Schools' community. In addition, SFS was expected to undertake the following activities as part of the linkage project:

- Facilitate fair and democratic elections of the target schools' Boards of Trustees;
- Encourage participatory management of the target schools by providing a series of training seminars about modern education management to school administrators, board members, teachers and pupils;
- Provide the schools and the trainees with appropriate informational and educational materials and follow-up consultations;
- Conduct a two-stage survey (baseline and follow-up) of the seven Open Schools projects to monitor their progress and assess their efficacy; and
- Publish magazines, create a website, and give initial support to the networking between the schools to popularize education reform and participatory methods of school management.

The anticipated outputs of the linkage project included trained school activists and school administrators, democratically elected and operable boards of trustees in the schools, the documented results of the surveys, and the publications mentioned above.

The anticipated outcomes of the linkage project were increased transparency in the management in the seven schools through the active participation from the elected school boards. In addition, improved educational management was anticipated by introducing modern school management and governance standards and creating a viable and expandable network of Open Schools.

Following an amendment to the linkage project in August 2005, SFS organized a networking workshop for school representatives from Tbilisi and other regions of Georgia in order to develop further partnerships between the Open Schools, stakeholders, representatives of other schools, governments, donors and NGOs; popularize Open School practices by sharing ideas and experience; and, where possible, extend the Open School network to the schools with old system of management.

OSP was implemented before the adoption of the amended law "On Education," which made the creation of Boards of Trustees in all secondary schools compulsory. Meanwhile, according to the reports by the Georgian media and some civil society organizations, including school-based CSOs, the operation of the Boards of Trustees in many schools, especially in regions, has fallen short of the expected standards designed to make them full-fledged actors of participatory management of schools and a new vibrant civic organization. Therefore, assessing the efficiency and impact of this EPF project is a high priority to craft further EPF approaches in this area the way that would result in a maximum of the expected impact.

### **Evaluation Goal, Objectives and Research Questions**

The overall goal of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the Open Schools Program's impact on the governance and management of the seven participating secondary schools.

EPF is eager to better understand if the projects undertaken by SFS and the school-based NGOs resulted in more inclusive, democratic governance and improved school management or not.

Below are the evaluation's objectives. The questions below each objective are of interest to EPF. The evaluator is expected to complete this list with additional questions to better meet the goal and objectives of the evaluation.

**Objective 1:** Assess the relevance of the approaches utilized by SFS and the school-based NGOs.

- Are the school-based NGOs continuing to work in the targeted schools after their OSP projects came to an end?
- Are the school-based NGOs still involved in the school and/or education-related projects and, if they are, what do they contribute?
- Did SFS' methodology for electing school boards help ensure that the boards were capable of providing participatory and transparent school management?

**Objective 2:** Evaluate the impact of OSP's activities on the seven target schools involved in the project by comparing the quality of their governance and management with three schools that employ participatory management but whose boards of trustees didn't receive the training delivered by OSP.

- How many project trainees are currently involved in the boards of trustees of the target schools?
- Whether the OSP made the school boards effective civic organizations with a continuing influence on their schools' governance?
- What is the number and types of decisions taken by the OSP-trained boards of trustees in the seven schools and how did they contribute to the schools' development (e.g., improving quality of education, increasing budget transparency, improving management oversight and increasing fundraising)?
- Is there evidence that the seven Open Schools involved in the SFS project have progressed further than the comparison group in key performance areas (e.g. budget revenue trends, funds raised, reduction of illegal deals, fewer conflicts between pupils, their parents and school administration, improved teaching)?
- What is the level of satisfaction of the school board members who received training through the school-based NGOs and SFS projects?
- Were there any unexpected positive and/or negative effects of the program on the intended beneficiaries and communities?
- To what extent can identified changes in school management and horizontal networking/collaboration between the school-based NGOs be attributed to the intervention of the linkage project?

**Objective 3:** Assess the effectiveness and sustainability of the Open School Network.

- Have the Open School principles (e.g., participatory decision making, budgeting) become ordinary and established practices in the schools which participated in the networking workshop?

- To what extent are the seven schools involved in the program networking and coordinating their activities?
- What are the visible and tangible result(s) of the networking, if any?
- Do the network members have sufficient financial and organizational capacity to maintain the benefits from the project after the EPF support will be withdrawn?
- How many new schools have joined the Open School network and how many of them had established participatory management?
- Was the public information campaign for popularizing the Open School Network sufficient and effective?
- To what extent is the Open School Network supported by other local institutions and well integrated with local social and cultural conditions?

**Objective 4:** Identify possible opportunities for replication of the Open Schools projects and develop recommendations for EPF strategy in this program area.

- To what extent can the Open School management principles be employed in the three comparison schools not involved in the program?
- Is the Open School “know how” applied by SFS during the project (e.g. handbooks, guidelines, consultations, training resources) easily available for potential users?
- If EPF were to continue utilizing the Open Schools approach as a way to contribute to secondary education reform, what are some prospective directions for its further development?

### **Evaluation Methodology**

The evaluator will determine the evaluation design and methodologies per their capacity in order to meet the evaluation’s goal and objectives.

This evaluation will also analyze the projects’ results to date as reported by the grant recipient organizations, direct beneficiaries, and other individuals or organizations that are direct stakeholders in the projects. The evaluator is expected to survey or conduct interviews with representatives of a comparison group to be comprised of three schools not involved in the project. The evaluator may select these schools at their discretion. It is expected that the evaluator will survey or conduct interviews with representatives of these target groups.

### **Sources of Information**

The EPF documents available for review include correspondence, programmatic reports, project publications, site-visits reports, and others. These materials will provide additional information for the evaluator for both the quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Other sources of information include Law on General Education, addenda and amendments to the law made from 2004 to 2008 as well as surveys and reports such as public opinion survey about public services of general education conducted by GORBI; pilot survey monitoring of reforms in Tbilisi schools conducted by GORBI; public attitudes to the reforms in educational sphere conducted by BCG. These data are available on website of the Ministry of Science and Education <http://www.mes.gov.ge/> and the website of the Parliament [www.parliament.ge](http://www.parliament.ge)

Other relevant sources of background information include:

- The September 15, 2005 Decree #448 of the Minister of Education & Science about establishment of public schools as entities of public law and approval of schools' charter
- The regulation approved by the January 17, 2006 Ministerial Decree #30 about election of members of school boards, registration of the board and about suspension of authorities of the board members
- The November 13, 2006 Ministerial Decree #929 about "Approval of the rule of the competition for selection of public schools' headmasters."
- The January 17, 2006 Ministerial Decree #31 about "Approval of charters of the territorial bodies-educational resource-centers of the Ministry of Education & Science
- The April 17, 2006 Ministerial Decree #357 about "Approval of the charter of national center for evaluation and educational plan"
- Formal documents of the target schools (protocols of school board meetings, decisions, budgets) and the same documents of the schools from the comparison group, related to reform in secondary schools.
- School websites, if any

### **Intended Use of the Evaluation**

The impact evaluation of the Open School Program is, in a small but significant way, an evaluation of a new and important civic institution in Georgia, namely elected school boards. Given that this type of participatory institution never existed in Georgian secondary schools before, the present evaluation, including the lessons learned from the OSP achievements and possible setbacks will be of interest to the various groups of domestic and international stakeholders, which are involved in the reform of educational system and building of civil society in Georgia.

The key stakeholders include the following organizations:

- EF/EPF program staff, management and board will use the evaluation for learning lessons, strategy development, and possible program design.
- OSGF program staff and management will use the evaluation for the same purposes.
- The seven participating secondary schools and their boards of trustees to learn lessons from the successes and challenges of the program.
- The seven school-based NGOs to learn lessons from the successes and challenges of the program.

In addition to these key stakeholders, EPF expects that the following organizations will also utilize the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations:

- USAID/Caucasus Mission
- European Commission Delegation to Georgia and Armenia
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- Ministry of Education and Science
- Parliamentary Committee for Education and Science
- Other secondary schools participants of the networking workshop
- Teachers' Union and professional associations
- NGOs directly or indirectly engaged in the projects and/or activities related to school reform

### **Timeframe and Reporting Requirements**

The expected duration of the evaluation is 8 weeks.

The evaluation expert is expected to produce the following deliverables:

1. Work plan for evaluation activities
2. Data collection instruments
3. First draft, **due June 6, 2008**
4. Final draft, **due June 30, 2008**
5. PowerPoint presentation for presenting findings publicly
6. 2-page article for public release in Georgian or English that describes the evaluation findings
7. EPF accepts all deliverables **July 9, 2008**

The draft report will include the following sections:

1. Description of evaluation goals and objectives
2. Description of research methodology including data collection strategy, possible limitations and data analysis process
3. Presentation of the main findings and conclusions of the assessment
4. Lessons learned
5. Design recommendations for EF's Open School Network program

The final report will include the following sections:

1. Executive summary in Georgian, English and Russian (max. 2 pages in English)
2. Description of evaluation goals and objectives
3. Description of the research methodology
4. Presentation of the main findings and conclusions of the assessment
5. Lessons learned
6. Design recommendations for EF's Open School Network program
7. Annexes, including all data collection instruments, list of interviewees, etc.

The draft and final report will be submitted in Georgian and English in MS Word format and shouldn't exceed 30 pages. The document will be the sole property of the Eurasia Partnership Foundation, which will retain the right to use it for internal and external purposes. In addition, the report may form the basis for a small publication in English and Georgian on participatory school management that can be distributed to the broader community interested in the subject.

## **Budget**

The budget of the evaluation ranges from **USD 8,000-10,000** for evaluation services, including expenses for transportation to and within the region, accommodation and per diem. Price competitiveness will be a significant consideration in project selection, and all projects exceeding this maximum will be declined.

## **Request for Bids**

The Eurasia Foundation seeks bids from individuals or organizations to conduct this evaluation. Applicants should submit a proposal in **English** that includes:

- Detailed description of the evaluator's qualifications
- Description and justification of proposed evaluation methodology including sampling strategy, description of tools and techniques that will be used to collect and analyze information
- Draft work plan
- Budget

All expenses must comply with the Eurasia Foundation's cost and travel procedures.

### **Selection Criteria**

The Eurasia Foundation will select the winning candidate from among the companies or individuals submitting a complete bid by the proposal deadline. The selection criteria will include the following:

- Degree to which proposal adheres to evaluation questions listed above
- Quality of the proposed methodology
- Qualifications of the bidding organization and the personnel involved in the project, including past experience in secondary education reform and program evaluation
- Cost-effectiveness of the cost proposal
- Feasibility of proposed methodology and work plan
- Ability to adhere to the time constraints of the proposed activities.

### **Review Process**

Proposals may be submitted in hard copy to the attention of Ms. Eliso Anchabadze, 3 Kavsadze Street, Tbilisi 0179, Georgia. Alternatively, proposals may be submitted by email to Ms. Anchabadze's attention at [earchabadze@epfound.ge](mailto:earchabadze@epfound.ge)

Interested persons who have questions about this tender should email their inquiries to Zaal Anjaparidze, Coordinator of Civil Society Programs, [zanjaparidze@epfound.ge](mailto:zanjaparidze@epfound.ge). The deadline for applications is **18:00, April 24, 2008**.

EPF senior management, program and evaluation staff will review the proposals. The decision on the selection of the winning evaluation team will be announced **no later than May 1, 2008**.