



USAID
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NEWSLETTER

USAID INDUSTRY-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



BUSINESS LEADERS' COUNCIL AS AN EFFICIENT TOOL TO CO-CREATE AND CO-INVEST IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS

Designed to reduce the mismatch between employers' needs and the skills available on the labor market, the \$24 million USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program works to incentivize businesses in high-growth industries to systematically engage in innovative skills development, to foster economic growth and implement high-quality training/retraining programs aligned with labor market demand.

To ensure its activities are evidence-based and private sector relevant, the Program launched the Business Leaders' Council in partnership with business consulting company PMCG. The initiative introduces a private sector engagement tool expected to become the voice of businesses for designing innovative

skills development solutions, and to provide a mechanism for building trust, sharing information, and eliciting advice from experts. The Business Leaders' Council will provide an opportunity for the private sector to actively participate in the identification of challenges and solutions to address skills constraints. Additionally, it will help the Program respond to the most urgent needs of employers, and provide a platform for peer-to-peer information sharing. Council member business leaders representing healthcare, ICT, construction, hospitality, agriculture, banking, media, services and other sectors, will serve as the Program's ambassadors for facilitating sustainable private sector engagement in skills development.

Business Leaders' Council will work to advance market-based solutions and to engage businesses as stakeholders in Georgia's development. Working in partnership with USAID, the private sector will be able to introduce innovative international best practices for industry-led skills development that benefits women's economic empowerment, minority populations, and rural areas.

Aleksi Aleksishvili
Chairman of the Board
and CEO, PMCG

USAID has really intensified its efforts to engage the private sector to achieve development results in Georgia. In the past year alone, USAID collaborated with the private sector to mobilize more than \$15 million in private contributions toward Georgia's development goals and facilitated nearly \$10 million in new private sector investment. Building on these relationships, USAID's Industry-Led Skills Development Program is creating incentives for Georgian businesses to help create a more skilled modern workforce suited for Georgia's modernizing economy.

Peter Wiebler
USAID Mission Director

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Incentivizing Private Sector Engagement in Skills Development

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PRIORITIZED INTERVENTIONS

Central to achievement of results under the Program is an innovative approach to competitive grants, which will allow the Program to respond to gaps in the supply of skilled workers to meet high-growth industry needs, as well as address the needs of priority populations such as youth, women, rural populations, ethnic minorities, and students with disabilities. At the sector level, the Program will leave behind a network of training providers with scalable and replicable models for private sector engagement in skills development.

INCENTIVIZING PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Program supports employers (individual companies, business associations, or professional associations) to participate in innovative practices of engagement in skills development. The Program also enhances partnership modalities between employers and education providers, and creation of direct linkages between skills training and high-value employment opportunities. These practices can be related to employer's participation in skills training program curricula development, the delivery of skills training programs, the development and implementation of quality assurance and standards for skills training programs and creating direct linkages between skills training programs and employment opportunities.



102 APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED
17 PARTNERSHIPS LAUNCHED



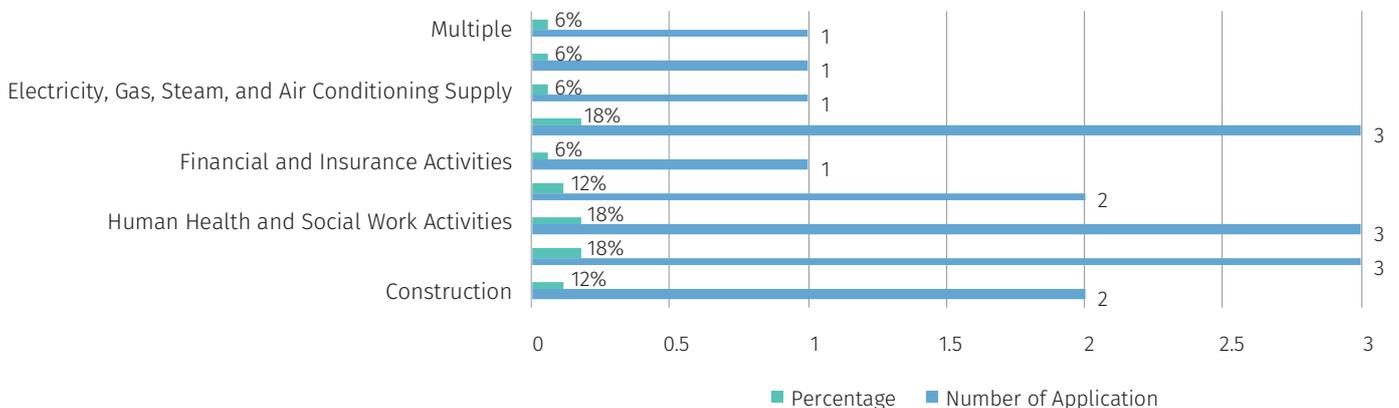
TOTAL GRANT FUND
AWARDED - USD **\$466,035**



PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS
USD **\$302,496**

The Program was proactive in engaging the private sector in different models of skills development activities that resulted in over 100 applications in response to the Request for Applications to Incentivize Private Sector Engagement in Skills Development. Private sector response exceeded all expectations, with nearly 70 applications coming from employers in health, construction, ICT, tourism, services, and other high-growth industries. The Program launched partnership with 17 organizations to create innovative approaches and strengthen linkages between skills training and high-value employment opportunities.

Sectoral Breakdown of Approved Applications





PROGRAM PARTNERS



TRANSFORD LLC

STRENGTHENING GEORGIAN LOGISTICS THROUGH IMPROVED CARGO HANDLING

AS Georgia’s largest port, Poti is a strategically important city. Transford LLC was established by New York-headquartered Pace International and handles an annual average of 3 million tons of cargo. The Program is working with Transford to build a public-private partnership model that will support workforce development in transport and logistics. Key to the sustainability of this grant activity is Transford’s partnership with a vocational education provider, Batumi State Maritime Academy, and sectoral associations such as the Association of Freight Forwarders of Georgia and Women’s International Trade and Maritime Association. Together, they piloted two short-term training courses for 42 driver-operators and dockers in the port cargo handling industry. By connecting vocational education and associations with Transford, the Program is creating the workforce necessary to fulfill Georgia’s potential as a regional logistics hub.



BK Construction LTD

IMPROVING PERCEPTION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

BK Construction LTD is a leading construction company which currently employs around one thousand persons at 11 construction sites across Georgia. Having successfully completed 25 projects with more than five hundred thousand square meters of total space built, BK Construction strives to set the highest construction standards in the Georgian market through construction workforce development at its authorized Construct2 College operating in west Georgia. With Program support, BK Construction in partnership with Construct2 College works to conduct Nationwide Awareness Campaign to Improve Perception of Vocational Education. The marketing strategy aimed to popularize high-value employment opportunities in the construction sector resulted in 20% increase in the number of registered applicants at the College.



Magnium + LTD

BOOSTING GROWTH IN HVAC INDUSTRY ACROSS GEORGIA’S REGIONS

TO cater to HVAC industry needs, the Program partnered with “MAGNIUM +” Ltd which is one of the major suppliers of heating and cooling ventilation systems, elevators, escalators, building management and factory automatization systems. In parallel, Magnium+ operates an International Training Academy, equipped with an Air Conditioning Laboratory and Air Conditioning Technical Library, and runs short-term training and retraining programs authorized by the Ministry of Education and Science. As such, Magnium’s engagement model targets heating, ventilation and air-conditioning industry development through training of professional engineers, and providing access to upskilling opportunities in the regions.



POSTRED LTD

CONNECTING GEORGIA'S TALENT WITH LARGEST FILM INDUSTRIES IN THE WORLD

The Program will support Georgia's creative industries through partnership with POSTRED Ltd which provides post-production for audio-visual & immersive media. The team creates sound and music for movies, commercials, video games, and other television or interactive media. Over the past six years, POSTRED has collaborated with giants of the film industry such as Paramount Pictures, HBO, Netflix, BBC, Hulu, A24, Apple TV+, The Farm Group, Formosa Group, and others. To address the demand on studio's services that have increased by 70% over the last two years, POSTRED partnered with the Program to create the model that will result in the establishment of a Vocational Education & Training Center "POSTRED Academy" to offer "Sound Design" and "Music for Film" training courses to young people across Georgia. After the pilot, they plan to add trainings for foley artists or music producers.



Business Media Georgia

GIVING A BIGGER PROFILE TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CAREER PATHS

Business Media Georgia is a unique media platform with extensive multimedia coverage (TV, radio, print, digital, social media, and more) that focuses on the local and global economic trends. Through partnership with the Program, Business Media Georgia is opening up the dialogue to a wider audience via nationwide awareness campaigns that will be implemented in close partnership with private sector companies. The campaign will focus on best practices and innovative approaches of employer engagement in skills development and examples of quality career advice. To reach broader audiences nationwide, BMG will use its television outlets such as Business Morning and internet resources such their 'Forbes Week' and 'The Check Points' live streams, in addition to their website and social media channels.

Businesses require access to employees whose skills align with industry demand. This is a foundational driver of Georgia's inclusive economic growth, citizen prosperity, and private sector competitiveness.

Giorgi Isakadze
Managing Partner at BMG
and Editor-in-Chief at Forbes Georgia



Every nurse must be educated to deliver patient-centered care as a member of an interprofessional team, emphasizing evidence-based practice, quality healthcare improvement approaches, the use of informatics, and a commitment to safety.

Giorgi Mindiashvili
General Director, Evex Hospitals

INCREASING QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPATIBILITY OF NURSING PERSONNEL ACROSS GEORGIA

Healthcare companies across Georgia seek to address a severe deficit of qualified nursing staff, especially in the regions. Through the Program support, Evex Hospitals and Geo Hospitals will implement initiatives in anticipation of a new government regulatory framework on nursing accreditation that will be enforced by 2025. Evex will work to strengthen the qualification of nurse managers for better employment, whereas Geo Hospitals will introduce new quality assurance mechanisms for nurses to build in-house human capacity.



EVEX HOSPITALS

Operating 18 referral hospitals in six regions of Georgia, JSC Evex Hospitals represents the biggest private network of hospitals in Georgia. Currently, the company employs 3,000 nurses, and 250 of these nurses are in managerial positions while nurses at all levels are leaders in patient care. Unfortunately, the Georgian health care system lacks certified nurse managers who play a key role in overseeing nursing operations and ensuring a high standard of care. The current absence of accredited courses to certify nurse managers further exacerbates this skill gap. To address this challenge, Evex is launching a new model of engagement in the skills development system that will contribute to increased quality of health care services and enhance employment opportunities within the company. In accordance with best practices in nursing management, Evex will develop a curriculum and a certification process for nurse managers to increase patient care outcomes and assist qualified nurses to progress professionally through expanding their skills.



GEO HOSPITALS

Geo Hospitals is an inpatient and outpatient regional clinic network which operates in five regions of Georgia. Geo Hospitals network consists of 14 inpatient care facilities with over 700 beds and ten outpatient facilities that employ over 1,350 doctors and 1,000 nurses. In 2020, Geo Hospitals established a training center that provides doctors with relevant continuing education programs. Unfortunately, the Georgian healthcare system is experiencing a severe deficit of qualified and skilled nursing staff, especially in regions. As an example, Georgia's nurse to doctor ratio is 0.8, whereas according to the World Health Organization (WHO), the recommended nurse to doctor ratio should be 4:1. As there is no formal postgraduate and continuing professional education system for nurses in the country, improving education and skills for nurses is challenging. Geo Hospitals will work to increase the qualifications of nursing personnel while ensuring their compatibility with the European Union education system requirements. Within its training center, Geo Hospitals is planning to develop high-quality continuing education programs for over 1,000 nurses employed in its network.



Business Academy of Georgia and PSP



UTILIZING PRIVATE SECTOR KNOWLEDGE TO DEVELOP NEW SKILLS OF PHARMACEUTICAL PROFESSIONALS

In partnership with the Business Academy of Georgia (SBA), largely involved in developing knowledge and skills tailored to the labor market needs, and PSP Pharmacy, a leading company in the Georgian pharmacy industry, the Program will contribute to workforce development in the pharmaceutical production and sale. PSP's long-term strategy is to expand its engagement in the skills development of pharmaceutical professionals across Georgia. The innovative teaching methods and approaches implemented through this partnership will allow the development of education programs to be upscaled in regions.



Hospitality Management Institute

PROMOTING FUTURE TRENDS IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM THROUGH UPSKILLING

Through Program support, Hospitality Management Institute will work to create a multi-faceted hospitality and tourism Training of Trainers program that will cover two major future industry trends - Hotel Operation and Sustainability Destination Management - to ensure transformation of industry quality standards. HMI plans to implement this 10-month activity through immediate involvement and participation of its international partners Les Roches Hospitality School and HSLU - Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts.



Caucasus University

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NEW EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN GASTRONOMY

Caucasus University is one of the leading educational institutions in Georgia which includes 10 Schools/faculties running 45 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs taught in Georgian and English for up to 7,000 students enrolled at the University. Together with the Basque Culinary Center, located in San Sebastian, Spain, and the Gastronomic Tourism Business Association of Georgia, the Caucasus University will create an innovative skills development certificate training program which will become the first vocational training programs in gastronomy in Georgia, designed in collaboration with international partners.



Agricultural University, Culinary Academy, Free University

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AND MODERNIZATION OF GEORGIAN CUISINE

Through partnership with the Program, the Agricultural University of Georgia and its Culinary Academy will develop a market-oriented vocational program in restaurant management through the establishment of a partnership model between an educational institution and the private sector companies such as McDonald's Georgia, Georgian National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce, Strada chain of restaurants, and 20 other catering companies. To support international recognition and modernization of Georgian cuisine, the Culinary Academy of Georgia offers vocational programs in cooking and pastry, and throughout the teaching process, it applies a learn-by-doing approach and provides students with individual working spaces and all necessary equipment and products. Having over 6,000 students enrolled, the Agricultural University of Georgia and Free University of Tbilisi equip Georgia with robust teaching infrastructure, best education practices and highly qualified academic staff.



REDBERRY LTD

OPENING UP NEW HORIZONS FOR ICT WORKFORCE ACROSS GEORGIA

Founded by a group of friends in 2014 as the business venture to “breathe digital life” into brick-and-mortar businesses in Georgia, Redberry has expanded its operations in Georgia to the international market. Currently, Redberry employs 115 highly skilled staff members and offers numerous services including digital marketing, web & mobile development, product design, social media management, marketing growth, and development of creative campaigns. ICT sector is one of the fastest growing in Georgia, though the market growth rate does not coincide with the increase in the number of qualified Georgian web developers. To respond to the market needs, the Program partnered with Redberry to facilitate the development of a result-oriented internship program to help motivated individuals to become junior full-stack developers.



Banking Association of Georgia

CREATING A SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM TO CATER HUMAN CAPITAL NEEDS OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR

The financial sector is one of the largest economic segments in Georgia and 93% of the sector is represented by commercial banks. 14 banks that represent 95% of Georgia’s financial sector are members of the Banking Association of Georgia. In addition, the Association includes 39 licensed Micro Finance Institutions, 18 insurance companies, and 5 credit unions. As one of the most dynamic and technologically advanced industries, it employs around 29,500 persons in the country though the sector is facing a shortage of trained and skilled employees. Through Program support, the Association piloted an innovative and sustainable model aimed at creating a skills development platform that will respond to financial sector human capital needs.



Start Business Solutions



Travel Guide, GeoLab



HELPING THE DIGITAL ECONOMY FILL LABOR SHORTAGES THROUGH UPSKILLING

The Program partnered with Start Business Solutions, which is actively involved in the commercialization of business ideas through provision of assistance to startups in business planning, market linkages, and assessments. The company’s portfolio includes successful collaboration with over 450 private sector and government entities, both local and international. Start Business Solutions will work with its partners, Leavingstone Lab/ GeoLab and Travel Guide App, to create an innovative model of engagement in skills development. The project aims to create three multi-stage educational programs in Content Creation, Data Analytics and ICT Project Management. that will make individuals job-ready for high-value and in-demand career paths.



ADDRESSING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE POTI SEA PORT EXPANSION

The Poti-based contracting and materials company Prime Concrete LLC is executing the construction of Poti Port Expansion for the Poti Sea Port Corporation. The expansion will involve the construction of a new deep-water multipurpose port, which will be able to handle cargo throughput of 50 million tons and two million twenty-foot equivalent units per year. The project will be managed by a large international team of experts, with more than 400 local contractors engaged in the project implementation over the next three years. To bridge the gap between the supply of qualified workforce and labor market needs in the construction sector, the Program piloted a platform of cooperation linking the construction company to the European Business Association, which acts as a bridge between the pilot project and the business community in the construction sector thus bringing a sectoral perspective to the project. By utilizing this approach, Prime Concrete will be directly involved in creating highly practical courses aimed at increasing the flow of highly skilled and productive workforce, leading to increased efficiency for businesses and high-value employment opportunities for job seekers.



Prime Concrete LLC
and European Business
Association



Business Association
of Georgia

REPLICATING BEST INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES TO RESPOND TO MEMBER COMPANIES' SKILLS NEEDS

The Business Association of Georgia unites more than 80 leading Georgian business groups and holding companies. Through Program support, the Business Association of Georgia will focus on the establishment of an international partnership with a leading Finnish non-profit education and training provider Omnia Education Partnerships Ltd aimed at launching new, high quality educational services to address member companies' skills needs. In particular, the Association will facilitate practicing education modules in Entrepreneurship and Product Development according to the Finnish education system best practices.



TEGETA MOTORS/TEGETA
ACADEMY

IMPROVING QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES ACROSS GEORGIA

Tegeta Motors is one of the largest holdings in Georgia with nine subsidiary companies and more than 2,000 employees. The company strives to establish the highest standards of service and implement a new culture of auto service in the country through its expertise and constant innovation. Through its subsidiary Tegeta Academy, Tegeta Motors helps companies improve their services, promote professional development of employees, contribute to the wider development of the labor force, share new knowledge and international best practices. In partnership with the Program, Tegeta Academy will pilot a model that includes new career prospects for already-employed staff as well as new employment opportunities through a flexible, online upskilling platform.