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CAUCASUS

USAID Civic Education Activity

Program Description

ACRONYMS

CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPP	Elections and Political Processes Program
GoG	Government of Georgia
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
LSG	Local Self Governments
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MT	Momavlis Taoba (Future Generation) Activity
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
TPDC	National Center for Teacher Professional Development

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the USAID Civic Education Activity (hereafter referred to as the “Activity”) is to use civic education to prepare the next generation of Georgians to be civically engaged, know and exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities, harness technology, and build partnerships, including with the private sector, to demand and facilitate increased government accountability.

As Georgia’s education system is transformed through GoG’s education reform policies and enhanced funding commitments, in parallel to post-COVID-19 challenges and limitations, the training and recruitment of a new cadre of teachers presents a significant opportunity to introduce new, innovative approaches to supporting civic education in line with USAID Georgia’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy objectives. The Activity will be differentiated from previous USAID civics education work by focusing on the identified need to develop a more democratic culture in schools, introduce innovative approaches to extracurricular and experiential/project-based learning, establish new forms of partnership including with the private sector, and equip teachers and students to maximally benefit from digital resources.

II. BACKGROUND

Citizen participation is critical to the development of transparent and democratic governance. It helps citizens understand and evaluate the decisions the government is taking on their behalf and ensure that their own needs and views are taken into account in the decision-making process. USAID/Georgia’s 2020-2025 Country Development Cooperation Strategy lays out the following Development Hypothesis Statement: IF civic activism of Georgian citizens increases; IF the

country's government institutions at the national and municipal level are more accountable and accessible; and IF the country's rule of law systems and institutions are more equally accessible, effective and overseen, THEN the governance system will be more citizen-responsive and able to shore up fragile democratic gains. The need for civic education in this equation is clear.

Despite a few successful examples,¹ citizen participation remains low across the country and municipalities. USAID/Georgia aims to foster citizen participation in democratic processes at their foundation, through comprehensive civic education embedded in the basic education system and by addressing established gender stereotypes and barriers that thwart women's meaningful participation. Civic education ensures that young citizens not only know why they should engage with their government and representatives but also how to engage effectively. Until citizens are prepared to demand more from the organizations and institutions that represent them, there will be little change in the system. Increased citizen participation requires raising civic awareness, building capability and confidence of various strata of Georgian society to be engaged in democratic life, and encouraging social activism beyond the formal civil society sector.

Historical Context

Since 2004, Georgians have demonstrated a sense of civic pride, though it manifests more as national awareness than civic activism. While family and neighborly bonds have always been strong, there is still limited civic organizing above the most basic community level. A 2020 assessment on democracy, human rights, and governance in Georgia commissioned by USAID recognizes that the legacy of the Soviet era and its monopoly on all forms of political and social organization continues to shape Georgia's transition to democracy, which plays out in Georgian society in frequently cited public 'nihilism,' and a lack of trust in civic organizations. These, among other factors, contribute to individuals' sense that they have neither the ability nor the responsibility to compel their government institutions and leaders to consider their needs as part of democratic governance.

Georgians have not been shy to take to the streets in demonstrations to express dissatisfaction with their government, but protests are the only means of civic participation for many. The Internet, especially social networking sites like Facebook, is by far the most popular tool used for civic organizing. More can be done to improve the effectiveness of participation mechanisms and Georgia's government publicly states its support for strengthening citizen participation. Still, citizens lack knowledge of formal democratic structures and processes and are unaware of opportunities to advance their interests at the local, regional, or national levels outside of political channels, including through formal and informal interest groups, participating in local budget processes, petitioning government actors, bringing complaints before the court system, and implementing small grant-funded projects in their communities. More alternative, proactive and constructive means of civic engagement are necessary, especially in the context of Georgia's fragile democracy, which remains a largely winner-take-all system. Additionally, the current modes of citizen participation are influenced by established gender norms about acceptable and appropriate roles and actions for women and men. These norms often dictate gender-biased leadership roles that limit women and girls' participation at all levels.

In September 2018, the GoG announced the New School Model - a large-scale reform of the education system which aims to move the country closer to the European system of education.² In its new initiative, the government made an unprecedented commitment to spend 25 percent of the state budget, equal to 6 percent of Georgia's GDP, on the "rapid development of the education system."³ While targets may be revised in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic slowdown, the GoG has made an unprecedented commitment to reform the education sector towards a modern, evidence-based and student-centered learning experience. With piloting currently ongoing, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) plans to have the New School

¹ See Annex, note 1

² See Annex, note 2

³ Speaker of Parliament Irakli Kobakhidze, [7 March 2019](#): Will include "wide-scale investment in infrastructure, management of universities, syllabuses and pedagogy."

Model adopted by all schools by 2030.

History of USAID Involvement in Civic Education

The MES began reforms that promoted civic education in 2007 by introducing a new mandatory Civic Education curriculum. Initially, the new curriculum was introduced in approximately 2,500 schools across Georgia, but implementation was weak. Textbooks and resources were scarce and not high quality. Teachers also received minimal training on the new curriculum and modern teaching methodologies in general. The 2007 curriculum focused primarily on history and the mechanics of how the government functions, dealt little with civic engagement, and lacked a focus on practical applications for students.

In 2010, USAID initiated a civic education activity to support the Georgian government's efforts to implement civic education in public schools - USAID's Applied Civic Education and Teacher Training Program (2010-2014). Its primary objectives were to provide students (grades 9-12) with knowledge about democratic institutions, principles and practices; instill an ethic of democracy in teachers, students and administrators; and create a foundation for constructive and effective citizen participation in Georgia's political processes. Internal evaluations show that USAID's Applied Civic Education and Teacher Training Program increased the quality of civics education in 30% of Georgian schools.

USAID's Momavlis Taoba (MT) Activity (2014 - 2021) worked in another 30% of schools (480 schools) in all regions of Georgia. The purpose of MT was to promote greater civic engagement of young people and to enhance civil society's role in promoting transparent and accountable governance at the national and local levels by expanding and institutionalizing secondary school civics education curricula and practical applications. With the support of MT, the Civic Education Teachers' Forum was established, emerging as a capable organization with excellent potential to spearhead the future of civic education's continual improvement and growth in Georgia. 1,875 teachers were trained in project-based learning methodologies, increasing quality, professionalism, and adaptability. Over \$127,400 in small grant funds were awarded for student projects. Civics classes are now integrated as part of the core curriculum in public schools, and the MT methodology is supported by the MES. Supplemental books for teachers and students developed by MT are popular not only in MT partner schools but across Georgia.

USAID has gathered, adapted, and shared best practices in civic education from the United States and Europe with Georgian leaders. Programming has also focused on showcasing positive examples, demonstrating how adopting new teaching methodologies and curricular elements can have a strong positive impact on learning outcomes and civic engagement outside the classroom.

Thus, the new Activity will begin in fertile ground. Over the last decade, USAID's interventions have raised the quality of civic education in the classroom for school students across the country, led by an enlarged cadre of 1,843 (~63%) civic teachers trained by USAID, and access to high quality supplementary materials. 170,587 students (~35%) have been engaged in small community projects, building experience and confidence in civic engagement, learning to research a problem, collaborate in a group, write a proposal, work with business and government representatives, and implement and report on projects. The MES has been a key partner throughout USAID's engagement in the civic education sector and continues to express its commitment to working with USAID to improve civic education in Georgia.

The Need - Youth Engagement

Young people in grades 7-12 are one of Georgia's most vulnerable generations. They are moving towards leaving school and graduating into a society with limited employment opportunities and high outmigration and rural-urban migration. It is critical to intercept school-age youth to instill in them confidence in their ability to positively influence their society, demand democratic accountability and have a stable, successful adult life. In Georgia, nearly 30% of youth aged 20-25 are NEETs (not in employment, education, or training), which makes them particularly

vulnerable to misinformation, poverty, apathy, and outmigration.⁴ Youth are also particularly vulnerable to stereotypes about gender roles in leadership and the professional sphere, and the potential of women and men. Such stereotypes are reinforced by established practices (e.g., the number of female schoolteachers is 6.5 times higher than the number of male school teachers), educational materials (e.g., gender bias in textbooks), and prevailing expectations around girls' societal roles.⁵

An unengaged electorate and lack of inclusion of youth in electoral and political processes are core challenges to Georgia's democratic development. Other key issues include the disengagement of youth, including from CSOs. There is an acute need to harness the tremendous potential of young people to impact the democratic trajectory of the country.

Research conducted by USAID programming reveals that the great majority of youth are not politically active - just 6 percent have expressed political opinions online, 6 percent have attended political meetings, 2 percent participated in demonstrations or protests, and a mere 2 percent say they regularly discuss politics with family. The risk of malign influence is also front and center, as youth are a primary target of disinformation campaigns.

In the most recent Youth Development Index, produced by The Commonwealth (2016), Georgian youth showed significant progress since 2010 "in the area of civic participation (volunteering, helping strangers)," although its score is still "well below the global average and lags behind neighbors."⁶ Political participation, however, has significantly decreased, with Georgian young people dropping from 51st in 2010 to 107th in 2016.

A Friedrich Ebert Stiftung study published in 2017 explained that, although Georgian youth perceive democracy "to exist to a certain extent, political and civic engagement – two main pillars of democracy, are quite weak in Georgia." The study also warns that "Georgian young people are not very interested in politics" and notes that youth civic engagement is also insignificant.⁷ The study identified low social trust outside immediate family and friends and low political efficacy as potential causes of the low political and civic engagement of Georgia's youth.

The 2020 Youth Manifesto, compiled by the Georgian Institute of Politics and Polis180, represents the ideas of young people.⁸ It identifies nine challenges to young people's political participation in Georgia, including limited access to information, poor education quality at all levels (school, university, non-formal education), and a lack of initiatives and platforms for engaging youth in political processes. One youth participant is quoted in the Manifesto as saying "Youth are not taken seriously in Georgia, which discourages us from being actively engaged in the political processes" [sic].

Georgia's Youth Policy Concept (2020-2030)⁹ has five strategic priorities, three of which will be directly addressed by the Activity:

1. Active participation in public life and democratic processes
2. Promoting youth development and realization of their potential
3. Improving the management of the National Youth Policy at the central and municipal levels

Youth, teachers and schools are target groups for this Activity. USAID/Georgia recognizes that there are many active young people who can be tapped as local leaders, peer educators, and key

⁴ Resolution of the Parliament of Georgia. *On Approval of the "Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020 – 2030."* parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/142491/National_Youth_Concept_ENG

⁵ [Geostat](https://geostat.ge/), Women and Men in Georgia, 2020

⁶ The Commonwealth, 2016, *Youth Development Index 2016*, thecommonwealth.org/youthdevelopmentindex

⁷ 2016 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung study, "Generation in Transition" pg 176, page 10

⁸ <https://polis180.org/geoyouth2020-manifesto-engaging-youth-in-politics-in-georgia/>

⁹ Resolution of the Parliament of Georgia. *On Approval of the "Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020 – 2030."* parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/142491/National_Youth_Concept_ENG.

change agents in their target communities. The key to engaging less active youth will likely be promoting the ‘fun’ aspect of school- and community-based interventions, and working with a smaller group of intrinsically motivated, action-oriented individuals to be peer leaders.¹⁰ Young people want to see the practical applications of their participation in community activities, such as how it will help them in their future careers or allow them interesting opportunities, such as participating in international study visits.

Evaluations of previous USAID programming in Georgia aimed at increasing democratic engagement have highlighted the importance of enhancing the development of a national narrative of community and responsibility through civic education. Helping the public become more discerning media consumers is also critical, which can be supported by integrating media literacy into civic education in schools and universities.

The Need - Private Sector Engagement

Alongside civil society and government, the private sector is a key stakeholder to civic development. Vibrant and resilient societies are built on the active interaction and cooperation of the public and private sectors. Without private sector engagement in civic education, Georgian youth may not be aware of the integral and vital role businesses can play in society, and public schools may miss opportunities to expand experiential and project-based civic education instruction.

The private sector’s potential role and capabilities in civic education spans a range of areas. The private sector has a role to play in advancing and sustaining civic education in particular on established elements of the national curricula, such as entrepreneurship and financial literacy. The private sector, including ICT companies, can support the advancement of innovative digital platforms and solutions to advance youth-led civic engagement. Advancing financial literacy at the secondary level aligns with the core business interests of banks and financial institutions. Co-investing with businesses in career development and youth entrepreneurship can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes. Despite these opportunities, private sector engagement in education in Georgia is nascent. According to the Global Compact Network Georgia’s report on *Private Sector Contributions to Georgia’s 2020 Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals*, only 6.1 percent of 1,000+ surveyed businesses contribute to Goal 4 aimed at promoting inclusive and equal education.

In alignment with the Country Development Cooperation Strategy, USAID is co-creating, cost-sharing, and co-investing with Georgian partners, both public and private, to create more sustainable solutions to development challenges. The intent for engaging the private sector in this Activity is to lay the foundation for their more active participation in civic development and civic education over time. Effectively engaging a wide range of relevant private sector stakeholders to this Activity will require creating incentives for their participation. These incentives should be based on a solid understanding of their constraints to engagement, interests and motivations (i.e., commitment to corporate social responsibility, personal interests, alignment with core business interests). The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have placed tremendous constraints on businesses, which is likely to continue in the coming years and presents challenges to engaging the private sector. It is important for the Activity to ground expectations for private sector engagement (PSE) by conducting a mapping and analysis of the private sector landscape. This assessment should serve as the basis for a PSE strategy that is grounded in the reality and context in which the private sector is operating. As PSE is a new concept in the civic education space, the Activity should take an iterative approach in which creative interventions are piloted, learned from, and adapted with a particular focus on digital solutions.

¹⁰ Schmid, Christine. 2012. “The Value ‘Social Responsibility’ as a Motivating Factor for Adolescents’ Readiness to Participate in Different Types of Political Actions, and Its Socialization in Parent and Peer Contexts.” *Journal of Adolescence, Political and Civic Engagement Development in Adolescence*, 35 (3): 533–47.

The Need - Civic Education

The Education Quality indicator for Georgia in USAID's Self Reliance Roadmap is 0.62 (out of a maximum score of 1). The indicator gauges both the quality of Georgia's overall education system and the quantity of schooling received to evaluate system performance. There are stark differences between the performance of the rich and poor, as well as the rural versus urban. Both signify gaps that need to be addressed to ensure equity in education for all Georgian citizens, which translates to the ability of youth to become active citizens. A lack of critical thinking-focused pedagogy is notable throughout public education.

Currently, there are no legal requirements for professional development for civic education teachers. The Activity may consider working to initiate the establishment of professional development requirements and systems in cooperation with the Civic Education Teachers' Forum and the MES, improving the sustainability of U.S. Government investments. Applicants should note that the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement has expressed interest in cooperating with USAID to rewrite the teacher regulation requirements for upper grade teachers of civic education.

It is vital to ensure that civic education incorporates opportunities for young people in Georgia to apply what they have learned, such as through community service projects, debates or mock voting. Empirically, emphasis on the development of non-cognitive skills (e.g., planning, organization, grit, confidence, perseverance) are predictors for political participation.¹¹ Service learning provides young people with the opportunity to not only strengthen their non-cognitive faculties, but also exposes them to the civil society arena and ultimately develops a better understanding of how to participate in democratic reforms and decision-making processes. Engagement and interface with policy makers has proven to increase youth participation in civic and political processes.¹² It is critical to ensure civic education remains a frequent, sustained, and adapted source of information and learning for citizens, online and offline, plugging into avenues like civil society and civic movements, to help advocate for reform.

The Need - Potential Dangers of the Online World

Over the last decade, the Kremlin has pursued its geopolitical aspirations by applying a range of hybrid warfare techniques around the world, particularly in post-Soviet countries. Recently, it has intensified the use of propaganda and disinformation to influence public opinion against the West in post-Soviet countries and undermine transatlantic unity.

Georgia is a target of Government of Russia information operations due to its pro-Western orientation. As noted in the November 2019 public opinion survey by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), there is strong majority support (particularly among youth) for the country's European Union (EU) and Euro-Atlantic aspirations, with support for the EU at 82% and NATO support at 74%.¹³ Kremlin propaganda thus seeks to arouse anti-European and anti-Western ideas through a variety of approaches, including: discrediting Western institutions and turning public opinion against them; instilling confusion, fear, and polarization among the population; spreading conspiracy theories and half-truths against Europe and the U.S.¹⁴

Social media networks are an essential feature of Kremlin disinformation campaigns.¹⁵ Online propaganda from Russia targeting Georgia is spread on social networks in the Georgian language, primarily through Facebook, which is the most popular social network in Georgia with nearly

¹¹ https://sites.duke.edu/hillygus/files/2020/02/2018.HolbeinHillygusetal.BJPS_.nsf_.pdf

¹² https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACP331.pdf

¹³ Public Attitudes in Georgia; Results of November 2019 Survey. Carried out by NDI by CRRG/Georgia

¹⁴ Kremlin's Information War: Why Georgia should Develop State Policy Against Russian Propaganda <https://idfi.ge/en/informational-war-of-kremlin-against-georgia-the-necessity-of-having-state-policy-against-propaganda>

¹⁵ Inside the Russian Troll Factory: Zombies and a Breakneck Pace, New York Times, February 18, 2018 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/18/world/europe/russia-troll-factory.html>

25% of the population connected. Many Georgians do not have the digital and media literacy skills to identify disinformation online, particularly on social media. A lack of contemporary teaching models that integrate digital literacy and unsystematic teacher training in digital literacy leaves students vulnerable to disinformation and malign influence.

Data from V-Dem measuring “average people’s use of social media to organize offline action” and “engaged society” over the past decade, shows that social engagement among Georgians has plateaued.¹⁶ At the same time, young Georgians are becoming increasingly proficient in the wider digital world. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated Georgia’s use of the internet and digital technologies, including as education has gone digital. According to a survey conducted by the Education Management Information System in March 2020, of the 528,426 pupils enrolled in the general education system, 88% had fixed internet access and 53% had mobile internet access in their homes. This new reality demonstrates there are significant needs related to digital education and training for teachers. In particular, it is critical to promote digital citizenship - the responsible use of technology to engage with society - and the norms that underpin that participation aimed at creating a digital space or ‘public sphere’ that is civically oriented and respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Additionally, Georgian public-school teachers across the board have low technology capacity, which has become clearly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic as classes shifted to a virtual format. There is still progress to be made before all teachers will be able to integrate digital technology into the classroom and teach digital and media literacy at a high level.

Without adequate civic awareness, media literacy, and engagement, malign disinformation operations and general digital information manipulation threaten Georgia’s pro-Western orientation, the resilience of Georgia’s democratic institutions, and nationwide social cohesion.

The Civic Education Structure

The MES increasingly supports school-based civic education. After years of support by USAID-funded programming, civics is now taught at all grade levels. In primary school it is integrated as a course titled Me and Society, in middle school as Citizenship, and in high school as Civic Education.

USAID-funded civic education programs have played a key role in elevating the subject’s importance. This result was achieved by working closely with GoG counterparts, including the MES, the Civic Education Teachers’ Forum (the Forum), and the National Center for Teacher Professional Development. The Forum creates opportunities for professional development and recognition of civics teachers. With support from USAID, the Forum organizes activities including master classes and trainings by civics experts, civics teacher peer-trainings in all regions of Georgia, regional conferences, roundtables to discuss the further development of the subject, and awarding the top civics teachers of the year.

The current MES national curriculum for civics education is divided into three pillars: Social Skills, Civic Participation, and Entrepreneurship. The components of the curriculum include government, human rights, principles of democracy, personal and social development, civic participation, sustainable development, emergency preparedness and response, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. The integrated Citizenship/Civic Education course is designed to be taught as a mandatory subject in grades 7-10 and as an elective course in grades 11-12.

University certification programs for civics education teachers are limited. When mandatory civic education was introduced in schools in 2007, teachers of other subjects were generally assigned additional hours to teach civics classes. Now, the first university graduates trained as civics teachers are beginning to graduate, but there are still few civics teachers with secondary education in the subject. The number of certified civics teachers will increase significantly over the next few years as the subject-group teacher model is introduced. These new teachers will be

¹⁶ <https://www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/CountryGraph/>

challenged to teach interactive, experiential courses and lead extracurricular activities.

Teachers are largely motivated to provide a better learning experience for their students. The main barrier to engagement is a lack of knowledge and resources. Most school directors also support civic values, democratic principles, and innovative teaching practices. Schools want to integrate more practical civic activities and project-based learning, but often teachers and administrators do not know where to start with implementation and lack technical knowledge. The MES offers project funding that teachers and administrators can apply for, but it is underutilized. Many schools are unaware of funding opportunities, which discourages them from pursuing projects or activities that require even small amounts of financial support.

In the mid-term, the MES strategy for teacher training is to use 24 coaches, based at Education Resource Centers around the country, who work with a rotating selection of New School Model schools. More coaches will be added in the coming year, targeting minority language regions. Coaches received training within the framework of MT. This is a valuable element of USAID's legacy that the Activity will build on by working with those coaches to ensure next-level skills and knowledge, coordination in curriculum and teaching methodology, and as a tool to communicate with civic education teachers nationwide. The coaches train teachers based on guidelines that focus on complex tasks - projects grounded in real-life experience. Their guidelines follow recently updated civic education standards.

Students are not currently engaged in school decision making in a systematic way. Some schools do solicit regular feedback from students, but there are few student-led initiatives. The approach highly depends on the culture and norms established by the school director. Although there are no policy or substantive guidelines for schools outlining how to engage students in decision making processes, it is considered a good practice, promoted through in-service training sessions for teachers. Some good examples observed at the school level include students being involved in school operation and maintenance processes, providing ideas for school renovation projects, and initiating activities to make their schools greener and safer spaces.

Across Georgia, technology is used in the classroom in many ways and greatly varies due to the interest, knowledge, and capacity of teachers and available resources. Use of technology is highly promoted and encouraged by the MES. One of the four main objectives of the New School Model is the integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning processes. Besides coaching and supporting teachers to integrate technology into daily teaching practice, MES equips all New School Model schools with all necessary technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also supported the rapid integration of technology into the teaching process. All schools across the country were obliged to teach online, using both synchronous and asynchronous methods and various platforms. The Ministry has made an effort to support teachers to adapt, and even, when necessary, develop individualized approaches to ensure that no student was left without schooling because of the pandemic.

III. OBJECTIVES AND THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change for the Activity is:

“IF school administrators, students, and other stakeholders are motivated and incentivized to strengthen civics and democratic practices in schools; IF they have access to sustained resources from alternative sources in the private sector and wider community; and IF they are able to use digital technical resources; THEN civic education systems will be able to continuously improve and develop, supporting increased abilities of Georgian youth to be more responsible citizens who can demand and facilitate more government accountability through civic action.”

The **goal** of the USAID Civic Education Activity is to contribute to a Georgian society of civically active, responsible, engaged youth and young adults who can demand and contribute to

an accountable and accessible government and a democratic society. The Activity will contribute to USAID/Georgia's Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-2025, Development Objective 2: Fragile Democratic Gains Consolidated Through Enhanced Citizen Responsive Governance.

Foundational Principles

Through a decade of USAID programming on civic education in Georgia, several conclusions are clear. To have positive and lasting effects, classroom instruction must be interactive and incorporate democratic principles. Teachers must not only teach, but themselves model behavior accepting of opinions that differ from their own, to inspire students to accept such differences as well. Students must be required to think critically about what it means to be an active citizen in a democracy. It is important to apply a Positive Youth Development approach, supporting student initiatives and providing them tools to act, not only inviting them to participate in organized activities.

The best results come from project-based, experiential learning and extracurricular activities. The strongest effects in MT were seen for students participating in extracurricular civics clubs and implementing voluntary projects in addition to being enrolled in civics classes with access to enhanced teacher training and supplementary civics curricula.

MT has produced many notable tools that may be incorporated into the Activity, including an outline for a course on project development and management, supplemental textbooks, and supplemental teaching materials.

By definition, PSE is a strategic approach to achieving greater development impacts and thereby not generally a standalone objective. However, due to its importance to USAID's long term vision and strategy for supporting civic education, it is being elevated to the objective level in this solicitation. It emphasizes the focus that USAID is placing on PSE and the expected role of the private sector in the future of civic education and civil society in Georgia. Activities implemented under Objective 2 are expected to additionally make impacts towards results under other objectives.

Objective 1: Improve Student-Led Civic and Democratic Engagement in Schools
<i>Key target populations: civic education teachers, school directors, school management, Educational Resource Centers, and students grades 7-12</i>
Expected Result 1.1: Students' leadership and decision-making capacity and opportunities increased
Expected Result 1.2: Student-led extracurricular activities expanded and improved
Expected Result 1.3: Avenues for improved student engagement through more democratic management practices are institutionalized by motivated and incentivized school administrators, resource centers, and teachers
Illustrative Activities Supporting student-led after school civics clubs to allow for more flexible, youth-driven activities and to offer an alternative to potentially negative after school behavior

- Establishing feedback loops for parents and students to weigh in on decisions about academic directions, curriculum, extracurricular activities, private sector cooperation, etc.
- Creating co-curricular opportunities for students to practice representative democracy (e.g., voting for student leadership, practice developing and managing a small budget, moot courts, simulated legislative hearings, debate tournaments to promote greater interest in and understanding of government and civil society)
- Integrating service learning opportunities or programs through partnerships with civil society, local government, and/or the private sector
- Establishing or strengthening existing student councils or other student self-governance systems
- Developing a National Student Parliament or similar
- Opening a dialogue with the MES, universities, and other stakeholders on adjusting high school graduation/university admissions processes to encourage greater consideration of extracurricular activities and volunteer experiences

Additional Guidance

Objective 1 aims to increase students' participation in decision-making at the school level and in related community activities. USAID/Georgia's Momavlis Taoba Activity developed a toolkit for schools to establish and operate student-led after school civics clubs that enable experiential learning. The MT-developed toolkit for establishing and managing after-school clubs is available for the Implementing Partner to review and apply if desired. Interventions under Objective 1 should also consider ways to keep recent graduates engaged in civic activities, including with their alma maters (university students, TVET students, and those working) and linking to university-level programs. The Activity should educate relevant school staff on how to select projects to fund with student input, and how to apply for this funding. The Applicant should also consider working with the GoG to secure specific commitments to increase extracurricular funding opportunities for public schools.

Interventions should also be designed so as to identify and address the varying needs of female and male students and the different types of gender-biased barriers they face.

Objective 2: Strengthen engagement of the private sector in civic education at the school level

Key target populations: school leadership, Ministry of Education, private donors (philanthropy), private sector (companies, business associations), bi-/multilateral donor organizations

Expected Result 2.1: Long-term, sustainable mechanisms are developed to strategically engage and sustain private sector involvement and investment in public (civic) education

Expected Result 2.2: Relevant companies, business associations, and other private sector entities are engaged to invest in elements of civic education and civic activities that align with their core business interests

Expected Result 2.3: Schools are equipped to effectively engage and collaborate with the private sector in pursuing their shared interests in civic education

Illustrative Activities

- Identifying and mapping relevant private sector stakeholders and industry actors to strengthen the civic education system as it aligns with their business interests (e.g., digital technology, banking/lending for financial literacy, telecommunications, media, etc.) and/or as it relates to their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives.
- Co-creating with the private sector a PSE strategy for the Activity that grounds expectations for PSE, segments and maps the private sector's constraints, interests and incentives for collaboration, and outlines priorities, incentives and a process for engagement to achieve expected results.
- Supporting the continued capacity building of the Civic Education Teachers' Forum, including their ability to represent the needs of the civic education community and effectively engage with the private sector
- Partnering with ITC companies to promote the role technology can play in civic engagement, e-governance, and government accountability, e.g., hackathons for mobile applications for civic priorities, matching grants from the private sector for students' extracurricular civic initiatives (e.g., under the Momavlis Taoba Activity, Crystal funded various grants requested by student groups in Tbilisi and Kutaisi, and Dio funded grants in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, and Samtskhe-Javakheti)
- Creating a *private sector advisory council* in which private sector leaders are engaged to expand their role in civic education (e.g., chambers of commerce serving on a grant review board for proposals from youth)
- Establishing a business mentorship, internship or career pathway programs (ie. business leader TED talks) for students (esp. women, minorities)
- Organizing informational networking activities for students such as career days, business talks, and externships as an entry point for engaging the business community
- Engaging banks in developing and delivering financial literacy programs
- Co-hosting competitions with the private sector that promote civic leadership and skill building among youth and demonstrate the value of public-private collaboration
- Identify ways to recognize outstanding efforts (financial and non-financial) of the private sector in civic education to continue their involvement and investment beyond the life of the program.

Additional Guidance

The intention of Objective 2 is to strategically engage and incentivize the private sector to be an inextricable stakeholder in civic development, alongside government, CSOs, and donor organizations.

The Activity should deploy specific strategies to engage relevant private sector partners on the basis of their core business interests, in addition to considerations of Corporate Social Responsibility.

The Activity should include creative ideas for bringing youth and the private sector together in the local system for civic education.

Objective 3: Students improve their ability and proficiency to responsibly use and harness technology to advance their civic agendas and participate in public discourse

Key target populations: Ministry of Education, civics education teachers, ICT teachers, students

grades 7-12

Expected Result 3.1: Students are able to harness technology to a) responsibly participate in public discourse, electronic feedback loops and e-governance; b) increase resilience to potential manipulation, disinformation, and malign influences; c) engage with a wide range of populations to identify major issues in their communities, build a base of support, bring issues of shared concern to the attention of policymakers, and obtain diversified funding for civic actions

Expected Result 3.2: New modules in the civic education curriculum are developed (i.e., entrepreneurship, financial literacy, digital citizenship, media literacy, gender), and supported electronically via interactive platforms/games, videos, online lectures/workshops

Expected Result 3.3: Students are able to safely utilize online resources to develop new digital tools to use in the civic space

Illustrative Activities

- Supporting continued professional development for civic education teachers by developing virtual teacher training modules accessible on demand, specifically on digital-related topics - consider using the Learning Management System and creating incentives for private sector partners to engage
- Developing teaching guides and classroom materials/learning resources on how to implement project-based activities (on topics such as digital citizenship, media literacy, parliamentarism, multi-party democracy, environmental protection, social learning) and how to teach project management through project-based learning
- Strengthening existing and developing new, high-quality Georgian-as-a-second-language teaching and learning digital resources in cooperation with and for minority-language schools
- Establishing pen pals/buddies with civics classes in U.S./European schools
- Developing digital credentials (badges) programs for implementation in American Spaces, local libraries, and/or other relevant institutions
- Engaging the private sector in competitions for best civics-related mobile app or website idea and partnering to operationalize the concept
- Improving students' online research skills through school projects
- Supporting schools to partner with media companies and online businesses who can sponsor events, conduct disinformation training, broadcast/publish spotlights on student activities, etc.
- Training civics teachers integrate the use of existing digital engagement platforms into their classrooms (e.g., EVOKE, Cisco's GPS, Global Citizen)
- Coordinating with schools' and Resource Centers' IT staff to understand the needs and skill levels of teachers and to design training programs to be implemented by IT staff
- Teaching students to protect themselves online in directions including cyber security, understanding disinformation or bias bubbles and its effect on political polarization, and cyber bullying

Additional Guidance

The Ministry of Education and Science has requested that the new Civic Education Activity help train the Education Resource Centers' coaches and develop additional guidelines with more focus on specific themes, such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, the environment, and democracy. The

Recipient will be expected to meet with the MES during implementation to coordinate cooperation, including on the Education Management Information System - a legal entity of public law under the MES.

The Recipient should also consider working with the GoG during implementation to secure specific commitments for the institutionalization of improved teacher training models.

The Activity *should not* include traditional teacher training efforts such as in-person training courses led by an outside trainer.

IV. STRATEGIC AND POLICY LINKS

Providing a bulwark against democratic backsliding by strengthening Georgia's civic engagement is a priority for USAID in Georgia. The Activity will link to the following strategic and policy documents:

USAID/Georgia's Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-2025¹⁷

- Development Objective 2: Enhanced Citizen-Responsive Governance Consolidates Fragile Democratic Gains, Intermediate Result 2.1 - Civic Participation Catalyzed
- Development Objective 1: Resilience to Malign Influence Strengthened, Intermediate Result 1.4 - Impact of Targeted Disinformation Mitigated

USAID/Europe and Eurasia Bureau's Countering Malign Kremlin Influence Development Framework

- Objective 1: Counter efforts to undermine democratic institutions and the rule of law, Sub-Objective 1.2: Strengthen civil society's resilience against efforts to restrict, harass, and stigmatize independent non-governmental activity
- Objective 2: Resist the manipulation of information, Sub-Objective 2.2: Increase media literacy and public demand for high-quality, independent reporting

USAID and the U.S. Department of State's Europe & Eurasia Joint Regional Strategy Mission for FY 2018-2022

- Objective 3.1: Strengthen ability of democratic allies and partners to resist malign influence, counter disinformation, and increase cooperation against active measures
- Objective 4.1: Strengthen respect for individual liberty, the rule of law, separation of powers, democratic institutions, independent media, and civil society

USAID's Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance¹⁸

- DO 1: Promote participatory, representative, and inclusive political processes and government institutions; 1.2: Promote politically engaged and informed citizenries, active civil society organizations, organized labor, independent and open media, and representative political parties
- DO 2: Foster greater accountability of institutions and leaders to citizens and to the law; 2.2: Support the ability of civil society and independent and open media to provide oversight and an informed critique of government

USAID's Digital Strategy¹⁹

¹⁷ <https://www.usaid.gov/georgia/cdcs>

¹⁸ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/USAID-DRG_fina-6-24-31.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.usaid.gov/usaaid-digital-strategy>

- *Objective 1:* Improve measurable development and humanitarian-assistance outcomes through the responsible use of digital technology in USAID’s programming

The strategy charts an Agency-wide vision for development and humanitarian assistance in the world’s rapidly evolving digital landscape. The Digital Strategy seeks to advance the growth of self-reliant countries through efficient, effective, and responsible digital initiatives that enhance national security and economic prosperity, consistent with American values of respect for individual rights, open and competitive markets, freedom of expression, and the promotion of democratic norms and practices. The Digital Strategy also paves a path for USAID to partner with the private sector on long-term sustainability and investment in an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet, along with underlying policies that protect consumers and promote the free flow of information, products and services.

USAID Youth in Development Policy

- Objective 1: Strengthen youth programming, participation and partner-ship in support of Agency development objectives.
- Objective 2: Mainstream and integrate youth issues and engage young people across Agency initiatives and operations.

USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, 2020

- Women continue to face significant legal, social, cultural, and economic barriers to their civic and political participation at all levels - as voters, civic and political leaders, candidates, and elected officials.
- By identifying the key constraints to participation in a given country, we can apply evidence-based and context-appropriate approaches to facilitate women’s civic and political engagement.
- The 2017 *National Security Strategy* makes clear: “Societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful.”

US Government Strategy on Basic Education 2019-2023²⁰

“When youth are educated, healthy, employed, and civically engaged, they have the power to drive economic growth, democracy, and prosperity.” (p 8)

USAID’s Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Policy²¹

USAID staff and partners should actively assess the role of the private sector and use of market-based approaches in approaching development issues for more sustainable development outcomes. Implementing partners play a vital role in advancing the PSE Policy by actively engaging relevant private sector partners, embracing market-based approaches, and integrating the unique capabilities of the private sector in addressing development challenges across sectors. The Activity seeks to affect a change in the systemic structures and assumptions by which civic activities are supported and students engage with their wider communities cultivating a greater role for the private sector as a stakeholder.

The Government of Georgia’s National Youth Strategy 2020-2025²²

The National Youth Strategy was developed in alignment with the Georgian National Youth Policy Concept 2020-2030 and governs the National Youth Agency. The strategic goals that notably align with the Activity are:

²⁰ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USG-Education-Strategy_FY2019-2023_Final_Web.pdf

²¹ [USAID Private-Sector Engagement Policy](#)

²² “National Youth Strategy 2025.” Youth Agency of Georgia. 2020.

- Goal 1: Enhance youth engagement and promote equal participation in public life and democratic processes
- Goal 2: Promote youth development and realization of young people's potential through youth work, non-formal, and informal learning
- Goal 5: Promote entrepreneurship among youth

V. IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH

Lessons learned in prior USAID civic education activities in Georgia and other countries in the region show that effective programming will require several cross-cutting elements:

a) Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA)

USAID is committed to multifaceted [Collaborating, Learning and Adapting](#) (CLA) approaches for programming based on the understanding that development efforts yield more effective results if they are coordinated and collaborative, test promising, new approaches in a continuous yet also rapid, targeted search for generating improvements and efficiencies, and build on what works and eliminate what does not, based on routinely generated evidence.

The Activity must include a rigorous monitoring, evaluation and learning component and collect, analyze, and apply data for reporting and decision-making during implementation. The Activity should collaborate closely with key in-country stakeholders, including government, civil society, and other donors to share data from program results, implementation research, evaluations, assessments, and lessons learned from implementation.

Innovative ideas and approaches should be tested and piloted, subjected to evaluation and scaled up and shared if successful. The Activity should improve and support the institutionalization of the routine use of data analysis and reviews of global experience to adjust, adapt, and implement priority interventions. In line with USAID guidance, the Activity will adopt an aggressive, data-driven approach to meeting the stated civic education goals while ensuring efficiency in the use of foreign assistance.

b) Programmatic Links

Civic education is a critical foundation for all USAID Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance programming. The Activity should be designed to create linkages with other activities supported by USAID, other donors, the GoG, and private sector actors. The Activity should network actors and efforts to increase coordination, collaboration, and cooperation within and between the private and education sectors and between schools that are direct targets of the Activity and those that are not, in order to broaden a community of learning and fully utilize demonstration and competition as motivating factors for targeted stakeholders to adopt best practices. Applicants are strongly encouraged to dedicate a specific staff member as responsible for cross-program coordination and partnership building. The Activity will be managed within the Education Technical Unit in the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Office of USAID/Georgia and should strategically link to other education activities within the unit.

Activities with which this Activity should expect to coordinate include:

The overall goal of USAID's **Civil Society Activity** is to increase citizen engagement, awareness and participation in civic actions and democratic processes. Using a flexible and adaptive approach, the activity will address systemic weaknesses within the civil society sector in Georgia, such as lack of legitimacy, weak constituency engagement and poor financial diversification. It will improve the ability and interest of Georgian citizens to mobilize their communities and engage with democratic actors. It will strengthen the capacity and collaboration of a diverse range of civic actors, including formal and informal civil society organizations, civic movements and

civic-minded individuals. There are several potential areas for cooperation with the Activity, including supporting the growth of philanthropic culture in Georgia.

The purpose of USAID's forthcoming **Strengthening Local Self-Governance Activity** is to support Georgia's ongoing decentralization reform and enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and citizen-responsiveness of target local governments in Georgia. Directions of cooperation include efforts to improve local governments' responsiveness to citizens' needs and enhancing citizens' ability to express their demands and interact with their representatives

The **USAID Basic Education Program** aims to institutionalize student-centered instruction and strengthen critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This goal will be achieved by accomplishing three objectives:

Objective 1: Current teachers and administrators implement student-centered curricula;

Objective 2: Future teachers acquire student-centered teaching skills and future administrators acquire relevant instructional leadership skills, and

Objective 3: Educational policies are developed with the use of data and evidence.

Specific points of coordination should include the Basic Education Program's target schools, teacher training institutions, Regional Educational Resource Centers, MES, the Policy Working Group, and other educational stakeholders.

USAID's Elections and Political Processes Program applies a citizen-centered approach to supporting more transparent elections and more responsive politics. The program works to build up the demand side of responsive politics, with a recognition that youth engagement is necessary for democratic progress. The Activity should engage with election programs in the direction of young leaders' development and elevation of political culture.

The **PROLoG Activity** aims to strengthen the justice system to ensure due process, judicial independence, and the protection of human rights. The activity is designed to address key challenges in the rule of law sector and capitalize on opportunities for accelerated rule of law and justice sector reforms where there is political will and/or interest from the government or civil society. PROLoG strengthens the legal environment for the application of due process rights and improves their implementation. Links to the Activity include opportunities to engage judges to work with students, and raise the awareness of the need for and existing work towards improving citizen-centered justice. USAID anticipates launching a follow-on Rule of Law Activity in late 2021.

The goal of the **Georgia Information Integrity Program** is to enhance Georgian efforts to advance the integrity of the information space and build societal resilience in the face of disinformation and propaganda campaigns. This goal will be achieved by meeting two following objectives: 1) Build a sustainable community of stakeholders to coordinate counter-disinformation efforts and maximize impact; 2) Measurably more impactful efforts by local actors to diagnose, track and respond to disinformation; and create and disseminate fact-based messages that reach and influence audiences. Specific areas of cooperation should include digital and media literacy.

The **Industry-Led Skills Development Program** aims to develop industry-relevant human capacity that will contribute to high-value employment opportunities and increased economic competitiveness in Georgia. The Program will achieve this by systematically engaging employers to equip Georgians with skills demanded by sectors with high growth potential and create direct linkages between training programs and employment opportunities. As youth beneficiaries graduate from participation in the Activity, they will have access to Industry-Led Skills Development-supported programming and the Applicant should consider ways to help bridge opportunities in each activity for beneficiaries.

The Applicant should be aware that USAID plans to launch a **New Integration Activity** in late 2021, which will also focus on the unifying civic values of the country and target significant youth engagement, as well as a **New Resilient Communities Activity**, which aims to strengthen resilience to external malign influence in the communities alongside the Administrative Boundary Line with Abkhazia and South Ossetia through greater inclusion in the country's broader development agenda.

The U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi's Public Affairs Section also supports activities related to civic education, in particular, the Civic and Tech through English Language program. Peace Corps' small grants program may also be considered as an opportunity for collaboration.

c) Cooperation

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many donor-funded, governmental, and private sector projects to adapt their work. The Activity must be able to carefully monitor changes in the civic education landscape and adjust programming accordingly.

There is currently low commitment from the **private sector** to engage with civic education in a systematic way or on a large scale. The private sector engagement culture in Georgia is nascent, and nearly nonexistent in relation to civic education specifically. The proposed activity has a core focus on engagement with the private sector and aims to shift the dominant narrative towards deeper private sector funding and other forms of support and engagement, including, but not limited to, corporate social responsibility, philanthropy, and environmental, social and corporate governance.

There are currently no **other donors** working directly on school-based civic education. World Bank efforts to improve connectivity in Georgian schools will provide a strong, complimentary foundation for the proposed activity.²³

The **Government of Georgia** is a strong partner for USAID's civic education support. MES will be the principal stakeholder of the Activity. The proposed program integrates well with the New School reform model. The National Center for Teachers' Professional Development (TPDC) and the Civic Education Teachers' Forum, both LEPLs, are also strong, committed partners.

Public-Private Cooperation should not be disregarded. The Activity should facilitate private sector partners to engage with CSOs, municipalities, Educational Resource Centers, and relevant government agencies to develop public-private partnerships.

The Activity is expected to partner with **youth-led organizations**. Youth-led organizations in Georgia have high-quality content and unique expertise to contribute to the goals of the Activity, including, for example, in the development of revised civic education teaching supplements, service learning projects, or in efforts to demonstrate higher education and professional benefits to civic education. The Applicant should consider the key principles of [USAID's New Partnerships Initiative](#) when exploring avenues to support the capacity of youth-led organizations to become more equitable partners.

d) Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:

Gender equality, female empowerment, and social inclusion are essential for achieving USAID's development goals in Georgia. The USAID [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#) advances equality between females and males, and empowers women and girls to participate fully in and benefit from development, through the integration of gender in the entire project cycle, from project design and implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

²³ Cite WB programs

Per USAID Policy, implementing partners are required to develop a gender and social inclusion strategy to accompany and complement the first annual work plan to ensure the integration of gender and social inclusion considerations into the work plan, the MEL Plan, and for reporting on how the project benefited men and women. [USAID guidelines](#) also instruct implementing partners on how to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities and Disabled Persons Organizations in the design and implementation of the activity.

On average, female students outnumber and outperform their male counterparts at all levels of education in Georgia.²⁴²⁵ However, there is a sizable segregation and achievement gap in some subject areas, with women being particularly underrepresented in STEM subjects. Additionally, the educational attainments of female students often do not lead to better employment or business opportunities later on in life. Activity interventions should address the needs of female students (e.g. enhancing women's soft skills that bolster their leadership, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and confidence to pursue successful careers).

Inequalities among Georgians often begin with citizens' first sustained experience with government services - such as education. Lessons learned from previous programming indicate the need to prioritize inclusiveness and integration of minority communities, persons with disabilities, and otherwise marginalized populations to ensure their voices are represented in democratic dialogue. All teaching supplements, student learning materials, and other beneficiary-targeted materials should be inclusive of Georgia's minority languages (i.e., Azerbaijani, Armenian) to the fullest extent possible. The universal design approach should be promoted by seeking ways of increasing access to digital learning resources for students with disabilities through Optical Character Recognition (OCR). Ethnic minority group members and those for whom Georgian is not a first language face particularly acute barriers in school and in society. The Activity should consider USAID/Georgia and MES priorities on supporting *Georgian as a second language* and bilingual education, including support to the MES' development of bilingual pilot curriculum, and work closely with USAID staff and concurrent USAID Activities to develop appropriate interventions.

VI. INDICATORS

The following indicators to measure the performance of the Activity are illustrative only. The Applicant is encouraged to develop additional indicators, especially at the higher level of results, and plan for relevant data collection. Illustrative indicators as well as any additional indicators need to be disaggregated as appropriate from the start of the Activity and key terms (e.g., civic activism, institutionalization) should be defined.

Illustrative indicators:

- Percent increase in civic activism among target students as reported by themselves, parents, school administrators, teachers and other staff.
- Number of schools that have institutionalized civic education and civic engagement activities/programs
- Number of new teacher and student training modules developed
- Percent change in target students' leadership and decision-making capacity
- Percent change in target students' research and project management skills
- Percent change in target students' that report participation in decision-making at the school level

²⁴ <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CDCS-Georgia-MAY-2025.pdf>

²⁵ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/the-country-gender-equality-profile>

- Percent change in target students that identify a significant increase in civic-related extracurricular activities they participated in
- Percent of small projects implemented by students with participation/support from the private sector
- Increased use (%) by teachers of existing digital engagement platforms into the civics classroom
- Increased involvement of students in civic activities using digital technology
- Increased involvement of the private sector in school/civic education (as reported by private sector, students and schools)
- Number of youth who participate in civil society activities following social or leadership skills training or initiatives from USG assisted programs (F indicator)
- Number of youth trained in soft skills/life skills through USG assisted programs (F indicator)
- Number of women-led businesses participating in the implementation of Objective 2.

VII. SUSTAINABILITY

USAID aspires to enable and support local or regional actors to take charge of their own development. USAID has chosen to support civic education as a means to advance Georgia toward the goal of more meaningful civic participation and stronger democratic development. The Activity will seek to strengthen the role that youth, schools, and the private sector play in enhancing the quality of Georgia's civic education, increasing democratic institutions in schools, and promoting sustainability by broadening access to alternative sources of support for civic education activities. USAID seeks to build the *capacity* of school and civic education teachers to empower students to become more active, responsible, and engaged citizens with support from the private sector and the full utilization of digital technologies as well as the *commitment* on the part of schools and wider society for sustained investment in civic education for youth.

The Activity turns on a sustainable vision - affecting the culture of schools, institutionalizing democratic school management practices at the school level, skill building among students for project design, management, budgeting, and fundraising, and identifying and building resources for sustainable funding, among other efforts. The GoG is actively involved in civic education. Key institutional partners whose engagement will be critical to promoting sustainability include the Ministry of Education and Science, the Civic Education Teachers' Forum, regional Education Resource Centers, the Youth Agency, and school directors and teachers. USAID intends to conclude a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the MES prior to the commencement of the Activity. The MoU will be designed to advance the sustainability goals for the Activity, acknowledge roles among host-country partners, and obtain policy commitments, such as those related to expanding and funding civic education platforms beyond USAID's assistance. The MoU will also help mitigate potential volatility caused by any changes in leadership within the GoG in the longer term. The Applicant should propose what elements of the proposed Activity will be sustainable, and specifically how.

The Civic Education Teachers' Forum in particular should be incorporated as a key counterpart in the Activity, critical to its sustainability. USAID has significantly contributed to establishing a good foundation for the Forum, which is a LEPL under the MES that promotes the development of civic education in Georgia. USAID has supported the institutional development of the Civic Teachers Forum, an increase in the number of Forum members, strengthening collaboration with the MES, and improved fundraising strategies.

VIII. ACTIVITY PARAMETERS

a) Geographic Scope

Selected target schools will be confirmed during implementation based on a technically sound methodology utilizing objective criteria and data. Recognizing that, due to economies of scale, it is sometimes more expensive to work with smaller, more isolated schools, target schools may receive different levels and types of support. The Activity should work with a mix of high and low performing schools. Schools that have demonstrated significant progress under previous USAID programming might be engaged in the Activity as a peer and/or mentor where appropriate. The unique needs of rural and underserved schools must also be incorporated. USAID will work with the successful Applicant to finalize selections.

Considering resource constraints and the necessity of maintaining high standards of quality and monitoring, the Activity should prioritize rural schools and disadvantaged students. Priority populations include girls, persons with disabilities, households under the poverty line, ethnic and religious minorities, and high mountain and otherwise isolated communities.

- Catalyst/Champion/Mentor schools should be identified to serve as regional examples.
- Demand from schools should be considered as a factor in target school selection.
- Some schools will be more expensive per student than other schools - for example, high mountain regions. Applicants may propose innovative approaches to engage with smaller, remote schools in a different model than other schools.
- Connection with other donor programs should be considered, maximizing results with joint efforts
- Applicants should consider that 40% of schools in Georgia have *not* yet been directly involved in USAID civic education programming
- Some digital aspects of the Activity will be able to cover all or most schools
- Applicants should consider that the New School Model is currently being piloted in 598 public schools (March 2021) and present an argument about how to work with the model, if at all

c) School Focus

The Activity prioritizes public schools, however, the Activity may also engage private schools in programming, including through PSE. Possibilities for cooperation might include small contributions from private schools (student transportation for joint projects, in-kind donations, volunteer hours), a buddy or mentorship program, extracurricular service projects and experiential learning activities in collaboration with public schools, and teacher peer training.

The Activity should not spend any financial resources directly on clubs or projects in private schools. Details on engagement will be further discussed with USAID to ensure use of resources in line with Agency regulations and that USAID funds are not being used to support for-profit activities.

Additional Resources:

- **Best practices in civics classrooms**
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15512169.2017.1399798>
https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf
- **Public-private partnerships**
<https://www.dai.com/our-work/projects/ukraine-transforming-financial-sector-fst>
<https://socialimpact.com/portfolio-items/ukraine-confidence-building-initiative-ucbi/>
- **Interactive multimedia in civic education learning**
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2047173416689794#abstract>
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1190152.pdf>
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1202152.pdf>
https://www.meducationalliance.org/?page_id=243
https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/CIVIC_POTENTIAL_VIDEO_GAMES.PDF
- **Other Resources**
<https://gof.org.ua/en/>
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1155573.pdf>
<https://mje.mcgill.ca/article/view/9102>
<http://www.icicp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Measuring-the-Impact-of-Youth-Voluntary-Service-Programs.pdf>

ANNEX:

- 1) On its democratic journey, Georgia has experimented with several successful approaches to citizen participation. As of 2019, nine municipalities are implementing participatory budgeting: Batumi, Ozurgeti, Zugdidi, Mestia, Tskaltubo, Kutaisi, Akhaltsikhe, Gori and Sighnaghi.²⁶ The Council of Civil Advisors of the Batumi Municipal Council, composed of 19 members, has a broad mandate and works on increasing citizen engagement in the local policy process, informing the public about the work of the municipality, and reviewing initiatives, legal acts and policy proposals. The Council has its own webpage that has participatory elements and provides extensive information about its work (marte.ge/sabcho). Batumi and Rustavi Municipalities had the highest scores (87% and 72%, respectively) in the 2019 National Assessment of Georgian Municipalities (LSG Index) ranking in terms of development of participatory mechanism tools envisaged under the Local Self-Government Code of Georgia. Promotion of citizen engagement and access to information has been upheld under the Tbilisi OGP Action Plan 2018-2020, including the responsibility of the Tbilisi City Hall to elaborate an integrated web application for citizens (ms.gov.ge).
- 2) The New School Model reform includes salary raises for teachers, a greater focus on preschool education, and strengthening vocational and higher education.

²⁶ https://idfi.ge/public/upload/Handbook/Handbook%20GEORGIA_eng.pdf.pdf

- 3) Applied civic education positively changes attitudes and beliefs. A USAID impact evaluation of the MT activity showed that students in MT schools were more likely to express their opinions, learn about problems in society, discuss current events, have positive views about participating in school politics, and believe that positive changes are possible when students mobilize in groups to resolve critical issues.
- 4) As of February 2021, there are 2,300 civics teachers - most are primarily history, geography, and Georgian language teachers; there are very few who teach only civics. TPDC will hold certification exams in the summer of 2021 and will hold a short, one-time training session for civics teachers before then. Training in the spring and summer will also include prospective civics teachers. New 9th grade civics textbooks are in the process of being authorized for September 2021.