



INSTITUTE  
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Multiethnic Resource Centre on Civic  
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**Impact analysis of Erasmus Mundus and Tempus Projects on  
the case of Armenia and Georgia: obstacles and  
recommendations**  
(2009-2013)

**The project is implemented with the  
financial support of the Ministry of Foreign  
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**Yerevan 2015**

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Researchers:

**Anapiosyan Arevik**, Institute of Public Policy

**Hovhannisyan Hovhannes**, Institute of Public Policy

**Mejlumyan Avetiq**, Institute of Public Policy

**Alexandra Kalatozishvili**, Multiethnic Resource Centre on Civic Education Development

**Sopiko Shubitidze**, Multiethnic Resource Centre on Civic Education Development

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## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Project objectives .....	3
General overview of the Tempus and Erasmus projects .....	3
Methodology .....	4
Implementing Organizations .....	8
Main Conclusions.....	9
Problems and specificity of expected results as a contributing factor for success.....	9
Projects Awareness, Transparency and Reporting .....	9
Selection of Projects' Coordinators .....	10
Selection of Projects' Participants .....	10
Needs Assessment and Targeting.....	11
Projects Outcomes: Clash of Reality and Expectations.....	12
Cooperation Issues with the Ministry of Education and Science.....	13
Information Circulation and Knowledge Multiplication .....	13
Specifics of Project Related Issues: Perception and Interpretation.....	15
Mutual Influence .....	15
Achievements and Prospects: Ongoing Impact .....	16
Issues Related to the Implementation of Erasmus Mundus key action 2.....	16
Culture of Dependence.....	17
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	18

## Introduction

Eastern Partnership countries are major beneficiaries of Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency's programmes, especially Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes that have now become part of Erasmus Plus projects. Within the timeframe of 2009-2013 the Eastern Partnership countries have gained the biggest portion of the Tempus projects: almost 29% of the projects have been held by the Eastern Partnership countries (General Statistics on Tempus Programmes, 2014). In the period of 2010-2013, 25 out of 201 Erasmus Mundus Action 2 programmes<sup>1</sup> included Eastern Partnership countries<sup>2</sup>, and currently a number of universities of Eastern Partnership countries are included in 18 ongoing projects<sup>3</sup>. This has assumedly developed a decent alumni and an army of beneficiaries who would have ideally promoted and advocated for the European educational culture, upheld the European objective for endorsing the intercultural understanding through cooperation with Third Countries as well as for the development of Third Countries in the field of higher education.

The three major beneficiary Eastern Partnership countries of the EU education related projects are Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia. If Ukraine has participated in twice as many projects as Armenia or Georgia did, the later two countries have participated in almost same amount of projects, with Georgia having a little more projects than Armenia<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, the ***overall impact of the abovementioned EU funded projects has not been analyzed, especially with regard to their influence on the enhancement of the overall quality of the education.*** Hence, civil society organizations engaged in the education policy analysis in Armenia and Georgia express their concerns regarding the effectiveness of those projects against the stated objectives of the EU abovementioned programmes.

Despite the similarities and differences of project implementation mechanisms in the two countries, one perception is shared by the field professionals: *the pool of beneficiaries is limited to project participants*. This implies the *impact and benefits of the projects are not disseminated among wider university staff and faculty*, and it impedes the overall *enhancement of education quality*.

The present study refers to the impact and long-term results of the European Commission funded Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects (currently Erasmus plus key action 2) at the higher educational institutions of Armenia and Georgia. It is based upon the data received through the

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1 Action 2 programmes imply partnerships between European and Third Country higher education institutions including scholarships and fellowships for mobility at all academic levels.

2 The source for calculation has been call selection results posted on the Erasmus Mundus programme webpage ([http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/results\\_compendia/results\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/results_en.php) retrieved March 20, 2015).

3 The projects are listed on the National Erasmus+ Office in Armenia (<http://erasmusplus.am/eu-programmes-2007-2013/erasmus-mundus/> retrieved March 20, 2015).

4 The statement is based on the statistics provided National Erasmus+ Office in Armenia [http://erasmusplus.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/General-Statistics\\_Tempus-Programme.pdf](http://erasmusplus.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/General-Statistics_Tempus-Programme.pdf)

use of the qualitative methods of the study. The target groups of the study are the beneficiaries of three Armenian and three Georgian educational institutions: Yerevan State University, National Polytechnic University of Armenia, Gavar State University, Tbilisi Iv. Javakhishvili State University, Ilia State University and the Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. The study is useful and instrumental for raising the quality of the projects, it identifies the existing problems and offers recommendations for their resolution.

The aim of the study is to assess the Tempus and Erasmus projects implemented by the EU and to determine whether the participants of the projects have the resources and motivation to disseminate widely the results – the knowledge and the experience, once they are back home, as well as The study is oriented on dissemination of the professional knowledge proper, as well as on the promotion and support for the European values and principles in terms of culture.

### **Project objectives**

The goal of the project is to establish the extent of the impact of Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects on the ongoing processes in the education system and to facilitate the increase of the effectiveness of EU funded educational projects' impact in Armenia and Georgia. To meet this aim the following two major objectives were advanced:

1. Develop methodological strategies for conveying the EU projects' results into practical tools for education quality enhancement by understanding the effectiveness of the projects to establish and/or reshape the educational quality culture in the universities of Armenia and Georgia.
2. Enhance a joint network of Georgian and Armenian university faculties and staff from EU project participants and not only, for channeling the best practices to meet the local needs.

### **General overview of the Tempus and Erasmus projects**

23 Armenian and 28 Georgian higher education institutions have been involved in the Tempus and Erasmus projects for the period of 2009-2013, which means that more than half of the higher educational institutions in the two countries benefit from the opportunity. In the period of 2009-2013, 39 and 45 projects were funded within Tempus, where, respectively, Armenia and Georgia were involved, though many more project proposals were submitted.

In terms of cooperation, the biggest number of projects were implemented in partnership with the UK, Germany, Italy, France and Spain. It is noteworthy, that the large majority of the implemented projects concern the reform of the higher education system, which is of particular importance for two countries. This particularly contributes to not only to the revision of the curriculum, but also

development of joint Master's programmes and introduction of entirely new professions in the university area.

## **Methodology**

### *Research design*

The purpose of the research is to identify the obstacles for the enhancement of the impact of Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects and explain the underlying reasons for poor and best practices.

For the purposes of the research a sample of Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects have been studied, as well as their implementation in a sample of universities. The project organizations performed sampling separately in each country (Armenia and Georgia). The sample was constructed in the following way:

1. To identify the universities to be included in the sample, the list of Tempus projects that started within the timeframe of 2009-2013 has been extracted with the indication of participant universities (see Table 1). Based on simple mathematical calculations, those universities that participated in the most number of projects were selected in the university sample. Hence, 3 universities were selected in Armenia and 3 universities in Georgia (see Table 2).
2. To identify the Tempus projects to be studied, 3-tire sampling was applied: 1<sup>st</sup>-tire selection was based on the matching principle, which implies that projects were selected in which all the 3 sample universities were included. Secondly, the projects, which involved 2 sample universities, were selected in the project sample. And finally, those projects to which our respondents would refer as failure or success stories were also studied for the purposes of this research.

The research has been conducted in six universities of Georgia and Armenia that participated in the selected EU funded Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects. Within the current research project the alumni and participants of the abovementioned EU projects have been targeted for study purposes. Besides, university staff and faculty who have not taken part in either of the projects were also studied. Project organizations closely cooperated with local Erasmus+ offices.

In total, over 50 beneficiaries (representatives of academic and administrative staff, in some instances a single person assumed both, academic and administrative positions), local coordinators, representatives of the National Erasmus Offices in Armenia and Georgia took part in the study together with the non-participants of the addressed projects, which makes it an important instrument to study the extent of the impact and the multiplier effect of the projects.

					2nd Call		3rd Call			4th call		5th Call								6th Call																						
		2009			2010		2010 - 2			2011		2012								2013																						
		CRH-BME	QATMI	ECESIS	MAPB	Dev eLearn	HESDesPI	MPPHSS	PICQA	DIUSAS	GIDEC	Cap4Com	UNIMIG	iCo-op	MAHATMA	ARARAT	ASPIRE	<u>HEN-GEAR</u>	<u>ATHENA</u>	SuToMa	INARM	<u>La MANCHE</u>	PEOPLE	VERTAS	GOVERN	ARMENQA	LeAGile	MathGeAr	ALIGN	BME-ENA	PACT	DESIRE	<u>PICASA</u>	RETHINK	SSRULLI	ESPAQ	DECERPH	TNE_QA	MedGen	ARMAZEG		
	Armenia																																									
1	American University of Armenia Foundation													V									V		V														V			
2	Armenian National Agrarian University				V						V						V			V		V				V	V	V														
3	Armenian State Pedagogical University														V*	V	V										V		V								V				V	
4	Armenian State University of Economics														V	V*		V					V	V	V											V						
5	Eurasia International University																V																									
6	French University in Armenia Foundation																																						V*			
7	<u>Gavar State University</u>															<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>			<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>				<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>						
8	Goris State University										V				V	V	V																									
9	Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute								V	V							V		V		V						V															
10	Kapan Branch of State Engineering University of Armenia												V																													
11	National Academy of Sciences																							V																		
12	Orbeli Institute of Physiology	V																																								
13	Public Administration Academy																V							V	V																	
14	Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University											V				V				V	V		V				V	V			V								V	V		
15	<u>National Polytechnic University of Armenia</u>								<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>			<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>				<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>					<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>
16	Vanadzor branch of State Engineering University of Armenia								V	V						V					V																					
17	Vanadzor State University												V											V	V		V										V					
18	Yerevan Northern University																							V	V																	
19	Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts		V	V			V			V							V							V	V*				V				V				V					
20	Yerevan State Linguistic University Brusov																			V				V	V	V			V*							V						
21	Yerevan State Medical University					V		V	V	V														V*	V				V									V		V*		
22	<u>Yerevan State University</u>		<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>					<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>		<u>V</u>					<u>V</u>		<u>V*</u>				<u>V</u>					
23	Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction						V				V							V						V	V	V						V					V					

Table 1: List of Tempus projects and participant universities (Armenia).

					2nd Call			3rd Call			4th call		5th Call							6th Call																							
		2009			2010			2010 - 2			2011		2012							2013																							
		CRH-BME	QATMI	ECESIS	MAPB	Dev eLearn	HESDeSPI	MPPHSS	PICQA	DIUSAS	GIDEC	Cap4Com	UNIMIG	iCo-op	MAHATMA	ARARAT	ASPIRE	<del>HEN-GEAR</del>	<del>ATHENA</del>	SuToMa	INARM	<del>La MANCHE</del>	PEOPLE	VERITAS	GOVERN	ARMENQA	LeAGLe	MathGear	ALIGN	BME-ENA	PACT	DESIRE	<del>PICASA</del>	RETHINK	SSRULLI	ESPAQ	DECERPH	TNE-QA	MedGen	ARMAZEG			
		Georgia																																									
1	Agricultural University of Georgia																			V																							
2	Akaki Tsereteli State University				V										V													V		V									V				
3	Akhaltshikhe State Teaching University																V																										
4	Apollon Kutateladze Tbilisi State Academy of Arts																																			V							
5	Batumi State Maritime Academy																																			V			V				
6	Caucasus International University																																			V							
7	Caucasus University																					V																	V				
8	David Tvildiani Medical University																																										
9	Georgian Institute of Public Affairs											V					V																										
10	Georgian State Agricultural University				V																																						
11	Georgian Technical University	V																										V		V						V						V	
12	Gori Teaching University																					V											V										
13	Jakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University																																					V					
14	Ilia State University								V				V	V			V*			V			V					V				V		V									
15	International Black Sea University														V							V																					
16	Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University*					V			V			V										V									V		V	V	V*		V				V		
17	Kutaisi State University				V	V																	V																				
18	Kutaisi University of Law and Economics								V																																		
19	Jakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University																			V								V															
20	Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy																																					V					
21	Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi																																		V								
22	Shota Rustaveli State University					V		V				V	V	V	V		V											V						V		V							
23	Sokhumi State University					V																																					
24	St. Andrew the First-Called Georgian University																																									V	
25	Tbilisi State Medical University																														V												
26	Tbilisi State University				V			V																																			
27	Technical University of Georgia											V																															
28	University of Georgia							V																				V	V			V											

Table 2: List of Tempus projects and participant universities (Georgia).



### *Research methods*

For the purposes of the study qualitative research methods were applied, including analysis, expert interviews, focus groups, and others for triangulation purposes. Thus, the macro level activities have been performed:

1. A comprehensive policy research has been conducted on the effective implementation of EU funded Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects in Armenia and Georgia through 2013. Qualitative research methods applied for the purposes of this project are focus groups and in-depth interviews (with semi-structured questionnaires) conducted with the participants of the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects in Armenia and Georgia. A number of projects' documents have been analyzed, including memos, articles and analytics. The research included not only the participants of the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects but also other beneficiaries left out of the mentioned projects.
2. Site visits have been organized to 3 Georgian and 3 Armenian universities to learn about the practical implementation of the EU funded Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects. Participants of the abovementioned projects met with current project staff in Tbilisi: visits were organized to universities and other organizations having participated in Tempus and Erasmus Mundus projects.
3. A wrap-up day-and-a-half workshop in Dilijan (Armenia) was organized to present the project research findings and facilitate the development of the network of Erasmus Mundus alumni and, most importantly, wider academic and administrative staff of the Universities. A package of practical recommendations has been developed during the completion of this event: the recommendations referred to groups and countries, planning and implementation of the EU funded educational projects.

<b>Armenia</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
Yerevan State University	Tbilisi Iv. Javakhishvili State University
National Polytechnic University of Armenia	Ilia State University
Gavar State University	Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University

Table 3: List of Universities included in the sample.

## **Implementing Organizations**

The project has been implemented by the Institute of Public Policy (IPP) in collaboration with Multiethnic Resource Center on Civic Education Development (MRC).

IPP ([www.ipp.am](http://www.ipp.am)) is an Armenian start-up think tank with a very sound profile of researchers practicing in the field of education, education quality, corruption, foreign policy studies and religious studies. Since its establishment in March 2014 IPP has already completed four projects, and it currently has 3 ongoing projects: one project refers to the quality professional development of the universities, the other targets the security concerns facing the South Caucasus, and the third addresses the integrity concerns within the field of education. The greatest asset of the organization is that all of its employees are stand-alone professionals and experts in their fields of expertise. Prior to formally setting up the organization and joining IPP, all of its experts developed a sound profile of independent and impartial policy researchers with rigorous and critical policy analyses. Still, they worked jointly on the advocacy phase, which enabled to push forward some of the policy recommendations developed by the policy researchers.

The vision of MRC is to assist the formation of civil society in Georgia based on true democratic values, as well as development of integration processes in Georgia. MRC is an educational non-governmental organization which is engaged in: a) civic education; b) electoral education; c) conflicts management and prevention; d) intercultural education; e) upgrading professional qualification and skills, etc. MRC has a pool of trainers having multiyear experience in teaching theory of public administration and its systems, basics of administration and electoral law, intercultural communication skills, etc. MRC is a member of the Ethnic Minority Council created under aegis of the Public Defender's Office. In 2012-2014, the head of MRC acted as coordinator of the Working Group 4 "Contacts between People" of the Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

## **Main Conclusions**

In the majority of Tempus projects the higher education institutions of Armenia and Georgia are involved simultaneously (26 projects). This is among reason why the study of the supporting factors or obstacles for impacts of Tempus projects becomes actual and practical in both countries. Overall, Tempus project promoted the creation and enhancement of international networks, thus, ensuring the international relations and connections with foreign universities. Mobility, as its by-product has become crucial both for importing quality culture and for raising the visibility of a university.

The second greatest achievement for the Tempus projects has so far been the university management reform. All of our respondents would agree that Tempus projects have greatly supported their universities to advance management reforms.

Finally, the projects have been least effective in promoting changes at teaching and learning level. Even the Erasmus mundus Key action 2 (referring to the opportunities of the faculty to undertake a research in a European university), has not been very successful in changing the teaching and learning practices.

The effectiveness of the majority of Tempus projects is related to a number of factors, which are interrelated, and the most salient ones are presented below.

### ***Problems and specificity of expected results as a contributing factor for success***

Study respondents noted that it is of great importance for the successful implementation of the project for the tasks set be realistic and specific. As a rule, the success of the projects depends on the realistic and measurable expected results and objectives. Such expected results are, for instance, the introduction of postgraduate programs, laboratories, ensuring the accreditation of individual professions, etc. Other projects are targeted at long-term and often intangible results, such as development of education quality culture.

### ***Projects Awareness, Transparency and Reporting***

As the study results show in Armenia and Georgia the different departments and professors of higher educational institution do not get enough information on the Tempus projects, their implementation and outcomes. The transparency of the projects is not assured on the level of Departments and Chairs. Although there is some awareness on the proposed projects, but the professors usually do not have information on the involvement of their chair, department or

University in the Tempus projects. Awareness of professors and involvement of new people may become a good impulse for new changes.

The information related to projects implementation in most cases is not available through achievable and user-friendly resources. For example, if a professor or other staff member would like to get information on the project the University is involved, he/she should know the project title beforehand to find the project's web-site. It turns to be a closed circle as without the prior information on the projects it becomes impossible to have much information on them in later stages.

After the completion of the projects, the outputs of the project often remain on the website of the project. Many useful outputs do not find wide circulation in the University environment. For example, various manuals, guidelines, regulations and other useful materials are being developed which may be found only on the web-site of the project while the dissemination of such materials through the Universities' web-sites and other means would enhance the impact of the projects.

### ***Selection of Projects' Coordinators***

The selection of the projects' coordinators is another issue, and in Georgia, the selection of adequate candidates becomes more difficult at the upper levels of education due to the shortage of the qualified staff. Meanwhile, in Armenia we have a reality that in a number of universities the Tempus projects are managed and supervised by the same officials.

On the one hand, the quality implementation of such great amount of work by a single person is under doubt. The projects' managers are mainly involved with administrative work and are not able to pay much attention to the daily and operative supervision of the Tempus projects.

On the other hand, there is a suspicious or alarming fact that the limits of the University's human resources did not allow to find other professionals to be able to coordinate any of the projects. The selection of a project coordinator often takes place on the basis of *ex officio*, which reduces the efficiency of project management.

Transparent and competitive procedure for selection of project coordinators shall allow a greater number of interested persons to get involved in the projects, to ensure more efficient and professional project management. In addition, this procedure shall ensure the trust of beneficiaries towards the transparency of the projects.

### ***Selection of Projects' Participants***

The selection of the participants of the projects, especially the management and other responsible persons is not sufficiently transparent in the case of Armenian universities. Many staff members of various departments of Universities expressed dissatisfaction related to the selection mechanisms

of the Tempus projects participants. In many cases the selection is made by a non-transparent and undemocratic way. The project coordinator of the University selects the project participants at his/her own discretion to take part in the study tours – participation in workshops and seminars held in various European Universities. It should be noted that the interviewees for this study often used the “administrative or academic tourism” concept to describe some of the Tempus and Erasmus projects. This concept indicates the widespread perception of participants that these projects are good opportunities to travel, entertainment and new acquaintances.

Although there are a few criteria that were mentioned by the respondents as somewhat ‘preconditions’ for being involved in the projects. One of those preconditions would be the knowledge of English language.

One of the contradicting findings related to the circle of persons being included in projects. So, our findings revealed that the same people are involved in various projects which reduces the “multiplication” impact of the projects hindering the overall effectiveness of the projects. According to the study interviewees, there is an impression that in some universities the potential Tempus participants are closed community. If a professor is not a member to the “closed circle”, it is hard for him/her to have access to the available opportunities. Meanwhile, we were informed about some cases where participants have stepped into a project in the middle of its implementation without being properly informed about the project, and thus, undermining the overall performance of the project implementation and its impact.

The selection procedure for the Tempus projects implies nominations of candidates from various departments. The relevant supreme body of the university responsible for the international affairs reviews the applications. The selection process at the university is in no way based on the competition. In some way, this is caused by the lower number of the administrative and academic staff participating in the Tempus project compared to that of the students, and therefore, the candidates’ capacities, subject area, etc., are widely known. The practice at the Batumi State University showed that the university tries to send group as diverse as possible to the partner university, deficiency in the foreign language has not been established as a barrier in the short-term visits, as the sending university provides the simultaneous interpretation. However, such practice is not shared by all universities within all projects. No problems have been revealed in terms of information accessibility in any educational institution and there are no limitations on participation.

### ***Needs Assessment and Targeting***

Some of the Tempus projects are not actual or feasible in Armenian or Georgian Universities while being relevant and timely in European Universities. For example, the Hen-Gear project did not initially consider the restrictions of national laws according to which personal data may not be uploaded in open access web-sites available for potential employers and not only for them.

Hen-Gear project is an example to show that before the commencement of a project needs assessment should be implemented for choosing the most effective means to meet those needs. The representatives of the universities having participated in the project indicated that the project impact is strongly questionable as the uploaded CVs are very few while the Universities got large amount of money to upload the files needed. In addition, CVs containing personal data are legally vulnerable. Finally, the project's impact is highly questionable from the standpoint of employer-employee relationship, as there are more effective means for the selection of the best candidate. Employers usually prefer to receive multiple bids (CVs) through vacancy announcement to ensure a wide range of choice. This is the simplest method for the Employer to recruit staff rather than the study of any database.

Meanwhile, the project was reported to be successful in other universities: it enabled them to establish a career centre, which has actually been identified as a university need. Thus, targeting should not be only in terms of a topic, but also in terms of the selection of the consortium universities: if a university already had a career centre, then it won't probably be fascinated by the prospective of establishing one.

During the field research, one of the representatives of a university expressed his/her content regarding this project, but when asked about the success of the project, the answer was that only 2-3 of graduates found jobs in the private sector with the help of the database. Thus, although the project has been successful in terms of creating the database, its actual impact on the career development of graduates is unclear, and extremely dependent on the further ownership of a university towards the sustainability of the achieved results.

### ***Projects Outcomes: Clash of Reality and Expectations***

A number of respondents mentioned that if a person is an experienced professional and is aware of Tempus requirements than he/she may perfectly meet the requirements of a project implementation "on paper". By saying "meet" the requirements the respondents would imply the development of documents, regulations, codes, guidelines, reports and reporting corresponding to the expected outcomes and indicators of a project.

In each university there are staff members who are well aware of the philosophy and the expectations of Tempus projects, at least on paper. However, the concern is whether the reported results can actually be implemented fully and effectively.

One of the precarious results of Tempus projects seems to be the establishment of a community that is experienced in development and implementation of international projects within the academic circles who are more concerned in the reporting of the projects on paper rather than its practical implementation. So, one of the findings is that universities have growing staff very skillful in the outward design of the projects, especially in eye-catching reporting. And still, the level of

diligence for ensuring the long-lasting impact of the project seems to be problematic, especially when quality culture is concerned.

The respondents would indicate that even the most outstanding results of the projects wouldn't have further advancement, either due to lack of resources, but most consistently, due to lack of political will of the relevant decision makers within and outside of universities.

### ***Cooperation Issues with the Ministry of Education and Science***

The success and the long-term impact of a number of projects directly hinges on the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Science. In a number of projects the ministry is involved as a participant and it is inferred that it would ideally put forward the achievements of the project. However, as our findings revealed, this is not always the case, and some of our respondents would openly state their dissatisfaction with the Ministry's performance. There is a silent agreement among the academia that in recent years the ministry seems to lack appropriate resources to fulfill its responsibilities undertaken within the projects' framework. A number of reasons brought by the Ministry to justify their refusals to fulfill previously undertaken responsibilities, would be articulated to changes of politics and outflow of public officials. For example, within the framework of Tempus projects a number of documents related to the reforms are being developed, which should become a part of the regulatory framework with the support of the Ministry. However, our findings showed that at the most crucial moment of implementing these changes or decisions, the Ministry would bring various excuses to put off the anticipated changes.

The substantiveness of project expenditures becomes an issue here too. It turns out that a lot of financial and human resources are invested in an outcome, the adoption or application of which is not considered appropriately at various stages of implementation.

According to the respondents most decisions made by the Ministry are not based on the research of need and are not formed based on discussions with universities. Hence, the origin of those decisions continues to remain nontransparent and unjustified.

Besides, it is worth noting that cultural and value specific impact of Tempus is not tangible on MoES, due to large number of turnover there. Meanwhile, there seems to be accumulation of a critical mass in most universities, which might lead to positive changes in the education quality culture.

### ***Information Circulation and Knowledge Multiplication***

One of the key factors for the success and the positive impact of the Tempus projects is the proper dissemination and circulation of the project achievements, knowledge and information gained throughout the workshops and seminars. Thus, we are concerned here with the multiplier effect of

the accumulated knowledge and experience throughout the tempus projects. In the majority of the universities, both in Armenia and Georgia, there are only formal reporting mechanisms for all types of business trips, be it a Tempus project or other. However, a paper reporting, which in most of the cases is a formal document for auditing purposes only, is not sufficient for ensuring the multiplier effect or for developing a quality culture. International workshops and seminars are important not only for administrative staff in terms of gaining knowledge and experience, but also for faculty members in terms of developing and teaching new courses. In two universities included in our sample we observed a well-established practice for knowledge sharing: upon returning from a business trip – workshop, seminar, training, etc., the participants would have a presentation on the seminar/workshop attended with emphasis of its importance for their university. Thus, participants of projects are expected to demonstrate what type of cultural differences they experienced and what changes they plan to implement within their universities. There would be cases, when participants would do workshop series upon the return, and it would empower both the project participants and non-participants and would enhance the ownership of the change throughout the university staff and faculty. As a result, these universities would introduce new teaching courses into their curricula

One of the greatest achievements of one Tempus project has been the International accreditation of two academic programmes in one of our sample universities. As a result of accreditation, besides the change of the content, the ration of specialization subjects to other subjects shifted to 60% over 40% in favor of specialization courses, and currently the university has developed a strategy to review all the curricula for approximating all the academic programmes to the requirements of the accredited ones. Thus, this has been a major achievement of a Tempus project in one university, but the result is only due to the commitment of the relevant project participants and their willingness to create additional knowledge based on international consultancy and advance the project deliverables. This is definitely a good practice of how can a project create remarkable results in one university, and be considered a failure in another. Partially, this can also be due to lack of proper needs assessment and targeting prior to joining a consortium, and thus result in accumulation of experience with no specific ground for application.

Another good practice example we observed in one of the sample universities, where the greatest achievement recorded as a result of the “La MANCHE” has been the development of a “Concept of Academic Honesty”, which was a pioneer of its kind in the higher education system of Armenia. The University would emphasize the importance the collaborative and transparent environment leading towards the creating of the document, and the sense of ownership significantly impacted on the proper implementation of the document clauses.

However, most of the universities would mention that the main issue or obstacle for multiplication or participation in programs is the insufficient level of knowledge of English Language, because of which only a limited number of persons are able to participate in projects.

The good practice of universities reminds that they should be able to create fundamental and sustainable mechanisms to support multiplication of gained knowledge and skills. Investment of



one member should bring to a chain of changes within staff members and university environment. Its best guarantee is to make sure information is circulated openly, establishing the common sense that the knowledge acquired individually is not a property of one individual, whereas the achievement of the whole academic population. More specifically, not only circulation of information within a university is a major issue, but also exchange of best practices amongst other universities.

### ***Specifics of Project Related Issues: Perception and Interpretation***

Some of our respondents would argue that instead of aiming at changing the existing practices, most Tempus programs play a sort of an “accelerating” role. These programs force the administrative bodies to hasten the process of reforms, to make transformations, many of which those institutions would have to come up with throughout time.

There was opinion that the Tempus projects are not aimed at specific reforms, but perform a function of introducing various specialists to each other, establishing contacts and network. Not only an exchange of experience takes place with universities of the European countries, but also various specialists get to know each other, receive an opportunity to undertake joint projects on later stages.

Hence, in that sense, Tempus projects are aimed at establishing a new academic value system: - development of open, horizontal communication and quality culture through the change of individual thinking. One of the elements of that culture is also formation of “new language.” People who are involved in social networks eventually begin to apply similar, mutually understandable and comprehensive concepts, start to share the same or similar values.

### ***Mutual Influence***

The influence of Tempus programs is not unilateral, mutual. Various European universities not only play a role of change agent for Armenian and Georgian universities, but also undergo changes by the latter's influence. For example, well-established European universities “test” their various mechanisms in universities of Armenia and Georgia, observe pros and cons of those mechanisms, and make necessary changes in their home universities. We were reported of a number of cases when members of European universities would gain positive experience during the meetings with their colleagues, receive new and interesting ideas.

According to our respondents, the issue of mutual influence has not still received sufficient attention. Based on previous and old belief it is still considered that universities of eastern partnership countries are the ones that mostly benefit. Thus, it is desirable to change this stereotypical view and look into the issue of mutual influence in detail.

### ***Achievements and Prospects: Ongoing Impact***

One of the expected important impacts of Tempus program is education quality improvement. Tempus has had an enormous impact on the overall development of the documents for accreditation of higher education institutions, starting from documentation problems, university commitments to technical changes and equipment. However, on the background of these formal changes the actual change leading directly to the enhancement of education quality at the teaching and learning level is often invisible or it takes place very slowly.

With the example of programme accreditation, we can confirm that specific Tempus project was rather successful with particular university in terms of enhancing the quality of education at the teaching and learning level (all the syllabi have also been reviewed with particular emphasis on learning outcomes). Still, to illustrate that not all the projects have practical implication, we can bring an example from another Tempus project, which aims to increase the support for university autonomy. It is well-known that exactly half of university governing boards have no direct connection with the university: those are people from the Government, the Ministry of Education and Science, etc. And so, the existing governing model creates limitations to actual autonomy. Therefore, it is difficult to anticipate that as a result of a particular Tempus project this type of management system can be subjected to radical changes without adequate political will and determination.

With the support of Tempus projects, currently Erasmus plus Key Action 2, universities should be engaged in projects, which will develop critical thinking amongst their faculty, staff and students, promote new knowledge creation, provide faculty time and space to have meetings and discuss various academic questions after classes, and finally, create cooperation platforms between faculties.

### ***Issues Related to the Implementation of Erasmus Mundus key action 2***

Within the framework of key action two faculty members can conduct a study in a European university. As our findings revealed, there are no formal mechanisms for translating research results into the syllabus or teaching activities. Moreover, it appeared that there is no such requirement from the project side. Some of our respondents, representatives of a university faculty, also mentioned that finding a replacement is an issue in terms of faculty exchange programs. Generally this issue is solved through informal connections, i.e. personal negotiations and agreements either with the faculty chair or the university administration. However, this is also an issue for university administration to solve, as exchange programs bring up additional financial load related to sustaining salaries of their faculty member (at least for a month) and paying the replacing member.

Although, unlike the Tempus projects, Erasmus projects have alumni networks that are active regarding the graduate students but not very active with engaging faculty members.

### ***Culture of Dependence***

Tempus and Erasmus programs, along with their significant positive impact, can also be negative in terms of creating artificial dependency on external funding. Our findings showed that apparently there have been and are some objectives that could be entirely doable with just internal resources. In other words, universities could implement these projects on their own initiative, with their own resources. This implies that even for the initiatives directly linked to the university development and in the interest of those universities are implemented upon external assistance, and mostly financial assistance, thus creating undue dependence on EU funded projects. So, Universities expect financial contribution to perform activities that were supposed to be done as part of their everyday activities, normal practice.

Often some documents are developed during a project the implementation of which requires additional funding, and thus, policies developed with some external consultancy and on EU money often remain on the papers with no real possibility to be implemented.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

To sum up, it may be said that the EU-funded educational projects contribute to approximate the Georgian and Armenian education system to the European standards. Yet, identification of shortcomings and addressing them is an important component that needs more focus from the project organizers. Considering the problems and needs of the target universities identified through our study, we offer the following recommendations:

### ***For university management and field policy makers:***

1. The actual needs of the higher education system should be taken into account during the development process of Tempus projects, as well as local peculiarities and legal framework (limitations).
2. Provide an opportunity to the project-initiating group to present the initial idea on a virtual platform and invite other teams/people who will satisfy certain requirements to work together. It is important to make the project development process easier and more transparent. Currently, difficulties exist in the very first stage, i.e. finding consortium members. Every university tries to solve this issue individually based on previous experience of cooperation and personal contacts. Afterwards, the already formed working groups usually work separately without having any idea about other participants' ideas. Hence, being aware of other teams' ideas will help working groups to avoid duplication, and the opposite, to unite efforts into broader consortia.
3. While developing projects, it is important to have truly measurable deliverables, which will target the university needs and, thus, make the project more practical for a university.
4. To develop mechanisms which will marginalize subjective factors impacting the implementation of projects. It means that the system mechanisms should be strengthened, due to which the project impact will depend more on policy changes and less on responsible officials. During the decision-making process, it is desirable to increase the amount of collegial decision-making and public debate.
5. Administrative and academic mobility needs to be balanced. Some universities need more projects in administrative mobility, while others in academic mobility, and there are a number of universities that no attached priority to either of the mobility types: take whatever comes.
6. To strengthen the influence of external stakeholders (for example, employers, and alumni) in the process of Tempus project's management.

***For National Erasmus Plus Offices and Brussels:***

7. To amend the project proposal submission a less problematic and two-tier procedure. At the first step the applicants could submit a concept note, and then, only selected candidates will develop and submit the full proposal.
8. To increase the involvement of public institutions, think tanks, and other non-governmental organizations in the process of deciding about the country priorities, progress monitoring and impact evaluation of Tempus projects.
9. Develop a network or a platform to ensure the sustainability that will help its participants feel the responsibility towards the project and contribute to greater dissemination and continuity of the impact.
10. To enable internal (Armenian and Georgian) evaluating experts' involvement in evaluating the outcomes/impacts of Tempus and Erasmus projects in addition to foreign (European) expert evaluation.
11. Review some of the technical requirements within the project, such as procurement of equipment, and others.

***For university top administration:***

12. Coordination of Tempus project within a university is desired to decentralize; the project management can be assigned to management of the university, while content-wise, it should rely on persons skillful and experienced in the field.
13. Competitive regulatory policy should be applied for selecting project coordinators. It is desirable to apply a principal where the same person cannot manage more than a certain number of projects. To the possible extent avoid the "ex officio project management" approach, instead choosing coordinators based on their professional experience, knowledge and abilities.
14. Select the list of program participants through a competition while informing about it to the faculty and all interested parties in advance. In one of the sample universities we observed a formal selection mechanism for the project participants, and if properly administered, it can be a good practice for participant selection.
15. Organize Tempus project management seminars for equipping the staff with relevant skills and competences and also to ensure that there will be no shortage of human resources for project administration, as lack of human resources have often been emphasized for justifying centralized coordination of projects.

***For university administration and project coordinators:***

16. Regularly inform the university staff about the changes taking place as a result of Tempus projects, the outcomes or possible impacts of those changes.

17. To encourage the professors and faculty participating in exchange programs within the framework of Erasmus projects, by eliminating artificial obstacles on the way of participating in the exchange programs and ensuring transparency and accessibility of information.
18. It is highly important to develop mechanisms providing ongoing dissemination, circulation and accessibility of project results. Those mechanisms should allow using the project outputs for initiating a change in their relevant university units; communicate the ownership of achievements to broader academic population.
19. Thoroughly select the project trainers and the training topics: often representatives of partner countries are perceived as freshmen students with no or limited understanding of the field, while the university population has considerably developed in Armenia and Georgia, and more advanced level trainings could be better for meeting the needs of the participants<sup>5</sup>.

***Recommendations regarding preferred content of upcoming programs of Tempus and Erasmus:***

20. It is desirable that Tempus projects start concentrating more on teaching and learning activities rather than change of the administration and management.

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<sup>5</sup> This recommendation should also refer to the NEOs and Project coordinators.