

Activity Report

Irakli Katsitadze ***2003 International Policy Fellow***

March 01, 2003 - April 30, 2004

The implementation of the research project started in March 2003. The first installment in the amount of 12,215 USD was received in the beginning of March, 2003. First half of the month was dedicated to visiting Budapest and attending the first International Policy Training. During the same period the research mentors were identified and agreed with IPF. According to the verbal agreement of Ms. Csilla Caposvari of IPF, Mr. Bakuti Shengelia from World Health Organization and Dr. George Shakarishvili from Oxford University were selected as research mentors. Their CVs and contact information were posted on researcher's personal web page.

In April communication with mentors was established and the issues of project implementation and research methodology were discussed and consulted with both mentors. The mentors' availability and their support during the period were satisfactory and it is expected that after visiting mentors and discussing the project in details their involvement and interest will be even higher. During the second half of the month office equipment and books were procured and relevant literature and materials were collected.

In the beginning of May first visit to project site - Samegrelo region was conducted, where two non-governmental organizations, "Grassroots Support Center" and "Oxfam GB", were identified as possible providers of the support in conducting the household living standard survey. Namely Oxfam GB agreed to provide free transportation for interviewers and another NGO agreed to help with office space, computers and copier.

In the first half of June second IPF training was attended and by the end of the month draft questionnaire for the survey was prepared and discussed with mentors. Also dates of study visit to World Health Organization's headquarters to learn WHO methodology of Fairness of Health Financing have been discussed with Mr. Shengelia. The visit was planned for July, however,

because of summer vacation period and according to Mr. Shengelia's suggestion it was agreed to postpone the visit until the end of September. By this time the survey data will be processed and analysed and utilization of the methodology will be initiated. In the end of June the survey questionnaire was finalized and questionnaires were printed. Prior to the survey, in the end of June, the training session on survey techniques was organized for 6 students of Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) coming from Samegrelo Region of West Georgia. Students were instructed on how to fill out questionnaires, collect data and enter it into database. The training content was designed with the support of mentors and Ms. Tata Chanturidze MD, MPH. department of Public Health, TSMU. Due to budget constraints only four students were asked to assist and participate in the survey as interviewers.

In the end of August survey started in 23 villages of Samegrelo Region and more than 1000 households, residents of 5 villages both IDPs and local population, were interviewed. Survey data has been entered into EpiInfo database and analyzed by mid of September. Georgia health financing system and IDPs related documents and materials have been analyzed and health financing and IDP profiles for the country have been drawn. In August the research paper was discussed with research mentors and drafted according to their suggestions and recommendations.

In the end of September study tour to World Health Organization took place. The researcher met his mentor and discussed issues related to the implementation of the research project, survey results and methodology of fairness in health financing. The researcher has met Ms. Ke Xu, a member of the working group responsible for implementation of the fairness in financing methodology in WHO member countries. Methodology has been explored in depth and specific recommendations have been provided. Research fellow has been assisted in obtaining recent publications, studies and papers on fairness in health financing. have been provided for free to the researcher.

Due to the political situation in Georgia and revolution in November majority of State organizations and agencies stopped functioning until elections and appointment of new officials.

This situation made impossible for researcher to obtain official documents necessary for finalization of research project. Only in March, after key policy makers (minister, deputy ministers and heads of departments) were appointed the researcher was able to continue the research project and finalize calculations.

In the end of March 2004, final IPF policy training was attended. The fellow participated in the all seminars and presented final research paper and research findings to the working group and group mentor.

In April 2004, the researcher took a position of a project manager for the WB funded Primary Health Care Development Project. This situation caused delays in finalization of the research project. The final activity within the scope of the project has been organization of dissemination seminar with the participation of high level officials from the Ministry of Health. Unfortunately, in the end of April recently appointed Minister and other State health authorities unexpectedly resigned. This caused further delays in finalization of the research project, since the audience of the dissemination seminar should have been comprised of high level policy makers. The seminar has been rescheduled for May 20. Before that time a policy paper will be produced and printed.

According to the agreement with IPF the deadline for the submission of final activity report, financial report, research paper and policy paper has been extended until May ??????? and interim financial report accompanied with receipts have been prepared and submitted to IPF. The design of fellow's personal web page has been finalized and all required documents have been posted on katsitadze@policy.hu web page.

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