

2ND STRATEGIC EAST STATE AND IT EURASIAN FORUM
SEPTEMBER 16, 2020



ICT Education in Georgia

Presented by R. Michael Cowgill



DISCUSSION OUTLINE



- **Georgia and ICT Sector**
- **Challenges ICT Sector Faces in Georgia and Abroad**
- **ICT Education in Georgia**
- **University vs Short Course vs Self-education**
- **Dilemma of Choosing a Profession**
- **Employment in ICT sector**

R. Michael Cowgill

- President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia;
- President and Co-Founder of Georgian American University (GAU) in Tbilisi, Georgia;
- President & Founder of Energy & Industrial Management Consulting;
- Supervisory Board Chairman of the Anaklia Development Consortium.

- Previous Energy Advisor to GoG for BTC/SCP Implementation
- Over 44 years of experience in managing all phases of projects in over 40 countries in the energy, infrastructure and education industries
- BS in Mechanical Engineering from Univ. of Kansas
- MBA from UC Berkeley
- PhD candidate at GAU

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



About Georgia

- One of the fastest-growing economies in the region: On average 4.6% GDP increase in the last 9 years (source: www.geostat.ge)
- Ease of doing business: 7th in the world rankings (source: www.doingbusiness.org)
- Economic freedom index (16th in the world rankings, (source: www.heritage.org)
- Information Technology has increased in GDP from GEL864 MM to GEL 1,283 MM in 2014-2019 (source: www.geostat.ge)
- ICT is a strategic development priority on government level, which can be clearly seen in the financial stimulus of startups working in this direction (source: www.economy.ge)

ICT sector in Georgia



ICT Market is Outgrowing Supply

- Lack of ICT specialists (in Georgia and abroad)
- Lack of qualifications of existing specialists (in Georgia) - relatively low level of competitiveness of the Georgian ICT sector on the global market

ICT EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

SCHOOLS

- School children are granted with the Netbooks
- ICT lessons at school only in 5-th and 6-th grades
- Limited ICT knowledge of teachers
- Use of computers for homework is not typically mandatory

UNIVERSITIES

- Only 5 out of 62 accredited higher education institutions in Georgia, have BA and MA programs in computer science

SHORT COURSES

- More variety of demand-oriented courses compared to universities
- More flexible to adapt online studies, even in non-pandemic times

SELF-EDUCATION

- Lower costs/mostly free
- Lack of online courses and materials in Georgian, so English fluency is necessary

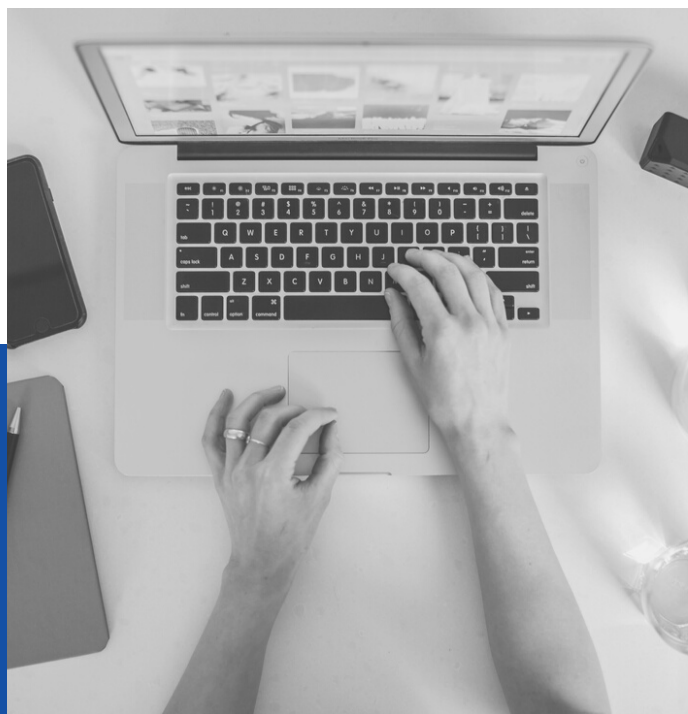
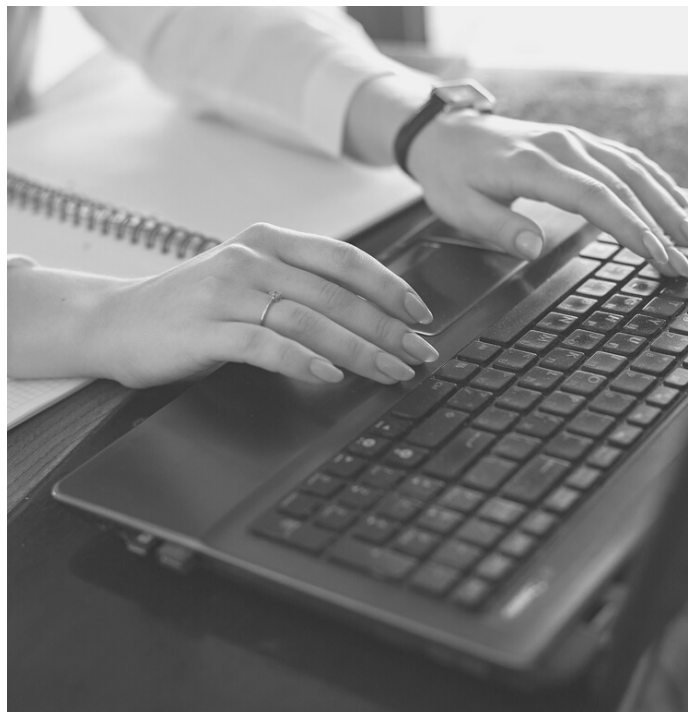
University

VS

Short Course

VS

Self-education



UNIVERSITY

- Degree
- 4 and 2 year study period for BA and MA programs
- Laboratories equipped with all needed software and hardware technologies (with a necessity of continual upgrade)
- Access to other resources (libraries, lecturers individual instructions)
- Networking opportunities
- Includes other skills, such as Project Management, Communications skills, etc.

SHORT COURSE

- Certificate
- Opportunity to study targeted ICT fields
- Shorter duration
- In some cases there is a need for personal technical equipment
- Trainers
- Networking opportunities

SELF EDUCATION

- Online certificates
- Opportunity to develop individual curriculum
- Flexible schedule
- Need for technical infrastructure and other resources
- Need for more self-motivation
- Need for English language (field specific) skills

Dilemma of Choosing a Profession

- Schools seldom provide children with the information about career / study choices
- There is a lack of engagement from the universities and industry side to familiarize school children with ICT-related professions



Employement in ICT Sector

- Work for Georgian Companies
- Work for International Companies in Georgia
- Work remotely for International Companies

- Youth going abroad for studying
- Professionals going abroad for Working
Typically after gaining work experience - unless already studying abroad.

Brain Drain

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION**

