

## Health Policy and Practice: Bridging Evidence and Decision-Making

Summer Institute

Ilia State University (ILIAUNI), Tbilisi, Georgia • 18–20 July 2026 • English-language

### Meet the 2026 course faculty and guest lecturers

#### George Gotsadze

Course founder | President, Curatio International Foundation | Associate Professor, Ilia State University



Prof. George Gotsadze is the founder and president of the Curatio International Foundation (CIF), a not-for-profit Georgian research institution established in 1994 that works on health policy and systems issues in the South Caucasus, Eastern Europe, Central Asian Countries, and globally.

Prof. Gotsadze brings over 35 years of experience and expertise in health systems, policy, health financing, and evaluation. Throughout this period, he has worked in over a dozen countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. He has extensive experience working with Global Health entities, including the Global Fund, Gavi, UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF, International Financial Institutions, and other organizations.

George Gotsadze is an associate professor in the School of Natural Sciences and Medicine at Ilia State University in Georgia, and co-leads the Public Health and Policy graduate program. Until 2014, he served as Vice-Chair of the Technical Review Panel of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria for six years; starting from 2018, he was a member of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group for five years, and from 2023, he is vice chair of the Independent Evaluation Panel.

Prof. Gotsadze's academic contributions are extensive, with over 80 publications to his name that include peer-reviewed articles and book chapters showcasing his commitment to advancing health policy and systems. Gotsadze's expertise is not limited to academia; he has also served on numerous scientific panels of science funders and the corporate boards of national and international not-for-profit organizations, further demonstrating his wide-ranging influence in the field.

## **Veriko Mirtskhulava**

Course Co-lead | Epidemiologist and Health System Strengthening Expert | Associate Professor of Public Health, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Ilia State University



Veriko Mirtskhulava is a physician-epidemiologist with over 20 years of experience in tuberculosis research, program management, and technical assistance, including more than 15 years of specialized engagement across Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

She holds an MD from David Tvildiani Medical University (Tbilisi), an MPH in Epidemiology and Global Health from Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health (Atlanta), and a PhD in Epidemiology and Public Health, complemented by two NIH/Fogarty International Center fellowships.

Dr. Mirtskhulava has held senior roles at KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation (The Hague), where she served as Senior Epidemiologist, leading multi-country operational research, including the introduction of the BPAL regimen across 10 countries. Earlier, as Global Fund Round 6 TB Grant Manager at the National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases in Georgia, she oversaw the nationwide introduction of M/XDR-TB diagnosis and treatment. As a freelance consultant, she contributed to WHO-, Global Fund-, and USAID-supported national TB program reviews in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and other countries.

Since 2022, Dr. Mirtskhulava has been a faculty member at Ilia State University, where she is Associate Professor of Public Health, Epidemiology, and Biostatistics, teaching master's and PhD students and leading multi-institutional research projects. She is fluent in English and Russian.

## **Nino Mirzikashvili**

Course Co-lead | Health Policy Expert | Associate Professor, Ilia State University



Nino Mirzikashvili is a professional with 20 years of experience managing multi-sector programs and projects as a direct implementer, donor consultant, and public servant. She has worked for multiple international organizations as well as the Government of Georgia.

Nino served as Chief of Staff at the Ministry of Labor, Health, and Social Affairs of Georgia and has extensive experience in healthcare regulation. She was actively involved in projects funded by the Open Society Georgia Foundation, USAID, DFID, Curatio International Foundation, the Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC), and others. Currently, she consults for WHO, UNICEF, and other UN agencies. Ms. Mirzikashvili is an Executive Board Member of the Civil Society Foundation.

She holds an MSc in Public Health from the University of Warwick (UK), a Diploma in Democracy and Public Policy from the London School of Economics, and a PhD from Tbilisi State Medical University. She is an Associate Professor at Ilia State University, School of Natural Sciences and Medicine.

## **Akaki Zoidze**

Health Policy Expert | Associate Professor, Ilia State University



Dr. Akaki Zoidze has nearly 30 years of experience as an international expert in health policy and systems.

In 2001- 2003, he served as the Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia, a high-level policymaking role. Later, from 2016 to 2019, he served as an elected member of the parliament and the Chair of the Healthcare and Social Issues Committee of the Parliament of Georgia. During this period, he oversaw health and social sector reforms in Georgia and the adoption of a package of groundbreaking new-generation tobacco control legislation, for which he received the WHO European Region's World No Tobacco Day award in 2018.

Dr. Zoidze has more than 20 years of experience in international policymaking as a consultant and advisor to UN organizations, including WHO, the World Bank, the EU, USAID, GAVI, the Global Fund, DFID, ADB, and other multilateral and bilateral development partners. In these capacities, he led or actively participated in global and national public health initiatives, as well as health policy development and implementation efforts, in 15 Eastern European and Central Asian countries.

Dr. Akaki Zoidze has more than 15 years of experience in Health Policy and Systems Research and has authored more than 20 publications in peer-reviewed journals. In 2020, he was also elected an Associate Professor in the School of Natural Sciences and Medicine at Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia, and teaches Health Policy and Systems.

## **Zurab Tchiaberashvili**

Health Policy and Governance Expert | Full Professor, Ilia State University



Zurab Tchiaberashvili is a Georgian politician, diplomat, and professor, and a leading member of the opposition party United National Movement. After the Rose Revolution, he served as Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Georgia (2003–2004) and Mayor of Tbilisi (2004–2005). He later represented Georgia at the Council of Europe (2005–2010) and served as Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein, as well as Georgia’s representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva (2010–2012). In 2012, he briefly served as Georgia’s Minister of Health, Labor, and Social Affairs.

Zurab Tchiaberashvili studied philosophy at Tbilisi State University and earned a PhD there in 1999. He also studied at The New School and completed an Executive MBA with the Kellogg School of Management and the WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management. Since 2014, he has been a Full Professor at Ilia State University.

## **Andrew Urushadze**

Health & Social Policy Expert | Invited lecturer at Ilia State University



Andrew Urushadze is a health and social policy expert and former Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (2010–2012), with more than twenty years of experience in health system reform, social protection policy, and public administration. He contributed to the design and implementation of major reforms in Georgia's health and social sectors, including hospital network development through public–private partnerships, expansion of targeted social assistance programs, and introduction of innovative health financing mechanisms.

As an international consultant and policy advisor, he has worked with governments and international organizations, including the World Bank and WHO, on healthcare governance, financing reforms, and social protection system development across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with advisory experience in Georgia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Albania, and Tajikistan. He has also taught university courses on health financing and healthcare reforms.

## **Martina Marten**

Guest Lecturer | CAREC Health Program



Martina Merten, an international health specialist with over 20 years of experience in health systems analysis and health communication. She has extensive experience working with international organizations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the German Corporation for International Cooperation, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Besides being specialized in Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) for various health areas, including the design of curricula, qualitative research, and training, she has broad experience in analyzing health care systems in transitioning countries, risk communication, needs of vulnerable populations such as the elderly, and strengthening of public and global health education for Human Resources for Health.

Her work took her to more than 20 countries, mainly LMICs in Asia, including India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, the Philippines, China, Vietnam, and Nigeria. Merten leads the sub-working group for Human Resources for Health of the ten Central Asian and Caucasus Countries on behalf of GOPA Worldwide Consultants under an ADB Technical Assistance, leads the team of national and international consultants of the ADB Technical Assistance for Addressing Health Threats in Central Asia and Caucasus, and has worked as International Gender and Social Safeguards Expert for two ADB projects in Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Besides her consultancy work, Merten works as a researcher and health instructor in public and global health at various German and International Universities, teaching bachelor's and master's students from across Africa and Asia. Her latest research, on behalf of Charité University, Berlin, and the Swiss Public Health Institute, Basel, focuses on Elderly Care and Long-term Care options for older women in India. Merten got fourfold awarded from the European Journalism Center and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for global health reporting and is a fellow of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, the American Council on Germany, the International Journalists' Programs (IJP), the Heinz-Kuehn Foundation, and was fourfold supported by Rotary International for doing research on polio eradication around the globe. Merten holds a master's in political sciences, constitutional, social, and economic history, and in public international law from Friedrich-Wilhelms University, Bonn.

## **Sukhrob Saliev**

Guest Lecturer | Westminster International University in Tashkent



**Dr. Sukhrob Saliev, MBA, MPH, MSc (SEM), PhD** is a seasoned public health professional and academic with extensive expertise in non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention, healthcare management, and hospital administration across Europe and Central Asia.

Dr. Saliev currently serves as Course Leader for the MSc in Public Health at the School of Business and Economics, Westminster International University in Tashkent, where he shapes the next generation of public health leaders. In parallel, he works as a National Expert in healthcare management, contributing to the development and strengthening of Uzbekistan's health systems.

Throughout his career, Dr. Saliev has collaborated with a wide range of leading international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, GIZ, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, iCMLF, ELN, GFA, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). His consultancy work has spanned NCD prevention strategies and health policy, and he has served as a co-author of the national program on training healthcare managers — a landmark contribution to building institutional capacity in the region.

Dr. Saliev is the project lead of an international, multi-institutional research initiative examining behavioral change in physical activity among schoolchildren, a pioneering multicenter pilot investigation conducted in collaboration with University College London, the University of Westminster, and Westminster International University in Tashkent. His academic output includes more than 20 publications spanning peer-reviewed articles and professional contributions to health policy and systems research.

With a rich portfolio of academic credentials — including an MBA, MPH, MSc in Sport and Exercise Medicine, and a PhD — Dr. Saliev brings a uniquely multidisciplinary perspective to public health challenges, bridging clinical insight, management practice, and evidence-based policy. He is alumnus of UCL (UK), Umea University (Sweden), Bologna University (Italy), Tashkent Medical Academy (Uzbekistan).