**GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA**

**STATE INTER-AGENCY COMMISSION**

**OFFICE OF THE STATE MINISTER OF GEORGIA FOR RECONCILIATION AND CIVIC EQUALITY**



**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY FOR CIVIC EQUALITY AND INTEGRATION AND 2015 ACTION PLAN**

**FEBRUARY 2016**

**Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality**

**Address:** 3/5 G. Leonidze Street, Tbilisi 0134

**Telephone:** +995 32 2923299; +995 32 2922632

**Website:** www.smr.gov.ge

**E-mail:** tinagog@hotmail.com

**Introduction………………………………………………………………………………………....4**

**I. Equal and Full Participation in Civic and Political Life……………………………..…5**

**Supporting Small and Vulnerable Ethnic Minority Groups………………………….…...6**

**Gender Mainstreaming……………………………………………………………………….….…7**

**Improving Access to State Administrations, Law Enforcement Agencies and Mechanisms for Representatives of Ethnic Minorities………………………….……….…7**

**Providing Equal Electoral Conditions for Ethnic Minority Voters…………….….…..8**

**Providing Access to Media and Information……………………………………………….…10**

**Ensuring Public Awareness of Human Rights Issues………………………………………...12**

**II. Creating Equal Social and Economic Conditions and Opportunities…………….….13**

**Social Mobility………………………………………………………………………………….…..13**

**Infrastructural Rehabilitation………………………………………………………………...14**

**III. Ensuring Access to Quality Education and Improving State Language Skills…...14**

**Increasing Access to Quality Basic Education………………………………………….……15**

**Increasing Access to Higher Education………………………………………………….…….16**

**Ensuring the Provision of Vocational and Professional Education……………….……17**

**Improving and Increasing Knowledge of the State Language…………………….………19**

**IV. Maintaining Ethnic Minority Cultures and Promoting Tolerant Environments...23**

**V. Activities Implemented by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality………………………………………………………………28**

## Introduction

Over the past years, one of the most important tools for the implementation of Georgia's state policy concerning ethnic minorities was the "National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and the Action Plan 2009-2014" which was approved by the Georgian Government on 8 May, 2009 with Order N.348. The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration[[1]](#footnote-1) was tasked with policy development, coordination and reporting on matters related to ethnic minority issues. In order to ensure the coordinated implementation of the above-mentioned processes, on July 3, 2009, the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration created an Inter-Agency Commission with Order N.14.

The Commission included employees of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality as well as representatives from relevant state institutions, ministries and organizations, members of the Tbilisi City Assembly and representatives of regional administrations from areas with ethnic minority populations. The following agencies are actively involved in the Commission:

* The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality
* The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection
* The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs
* The Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
* The Ministry of Justice
* The Ministry of Education and Science
* The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs
* The Ministry of Internal Affairs
* The President's Administration
* The National Security Council
* The Public Defender's Office
* The Central Election Commission
* Tbilisi City Assembly
* Kvemo Kartli Regional Administration
* Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Administration
* Kakheti Regional Administration
* Georgian Public Broadcaster
* The National Center for Teacher Professional Development
* The National Assessment and Examinations Center
* The National Parliamentary Library

In January 2015, the Inter-Agency Commission was expanded to include the following agencies:

* The Ministry of Corrections
* The Ministry of Agriculture
* The Zurab Zhvania Georgian School of Public Administration
* The David Aghmashenebeli National Defense Academy
* Batumi City Council

When the above-mentioned Action Plan expired in 2014, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality prepared a new document. Before creating a new strategy, the State Minister's Office, along with a group of independent experts, prepared the "Assessment Document on the Implementation of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan for 2009-2014", which in turn laid the foundation for creating new and more effective state policies. Accordingly, the new strategic document is based on the results of activities carried out in the past years; the document also reflects recommendations and suggestions by various actors.

The creation of a new Strategy for civic integration was an open and transparent process, which encouraged active participation and collaboration among interested parties working on this issue. The Strategy and Action Plan was discussed with members of the National Minority Council of the Public Defender's Office, local representatives of civil society, international organizations, the Georgian Parliament's Committee on Human Rights and Civil Integration, political parties, experts, and representatives of ethnic minorities from various regions. The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities has provided international expertise of the document.

On August 17, 2015, the Georgian Government approved "The State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and Action Plan for 2015-2020" with Decree N.1740.

The strategy is based on the approach - "more diversity, more integration" - and aims to implement policies that promote equality, ensure the full participation of ethnic minorities in all spheres of public life, preserve the culture and identity of minorities, and encourage tolerance.

Throughout the process of creating the new strategy and implementing planned activities, the State Minister's Office was actively supported by the United Nations Association (UNAG) with its "Advancing National Integration in Georgia" program, which in turn is financially backed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

This report reflects the measures taken by the Georgian Government within the framework of the 2015 Action Plan.

## I. Equal and Full Participation in Civic and Political Life

To accomplish the mid-term goals and objectives set out by the Strategy, specific programs/projects and activities were carried out by the following institutions: the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Corrections, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the Georgian Public Broadcaster, Georgia's Central Election Commission, as well as various regional administrations of areas with ethnic minority populations.

## 

## Supporting Small and Vulnerable Ethnic Minority Groups

***Registration of Roma***

The Georgian Ministry of Justice's Public Service Development Agency, along with the non-governmental organization ‘Innovations and Reforms Center’ - have taken on the task of registering Roma people.

**2011-2015 Statistical Data on the Registration of Romani People**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Case Category** | **Total** | **Case Completed** | **Case In Progress** |
| Determining Citizenship | 13 | 13 | 0 |
| Status of Stateless Persons | 15 | 14 | 1 |
| Recorded Birth | 36 | 36 | 0 |
| **Total** | **64** | **63** | **1** |

In order to implement the practice of providing free legal consultation at public centers, the Justice Ministry's Public Service Development Agency signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Legal Aid Service. Within the framework of the Memorandum, 5 public centers now offer free legal advice, including the Sartichala Community Center, where representatives of ethnic minorities can utilize the free legal consultation services.

Georgia's Ministry of Education and Science has developed and implemented a policy aimed at helping small and vulnerable ethnic minorities:

* A teaching plan for national minorities and language standards for minority tongues was developed and approved for grades I to VI. These languages ​​include: Chechen, Assyrian, Kurdish, Avar, Udi, Ossetian.
* Information meetings were held with school administrations and faculties.
* On receiving an official request from schools, an individual legal act approved a list of schools at which ethnic minority languages are offered as selective courses.
* A 2014 research report on ‘Access to Professional Education for Vulnerable Groups’ was prepared, which revealed a number of barriers ethnic minorities face when trying to access vocational education. Based on the study, mechanisms to promote the engagement of vulnerable groups in professional education have been put in motion, taking into account ethnic minority needs.

## Gender Mainstreaming

The Tbilisi City Assembly and its Coordinating Council for Ethnic Minorities held joint meetings with women representatives of ethnic minorities and conducted discussions on the needs of ethnic minority women living in the capital and their involvement in the planning and implementation of relevant activities.

The General Education Management and Development Department of the Ministry of Education and Science carried out the "Parent Education and Involvement Sub-Program" as a preventive measure for early marriages. Within the framework of the sub-program, visits are held regularly in regions, where cases of early marriages are most frequently observed. Ten public meetings took place in Lagodekhi, Bolnisi and Marneuli municipalities. The participants of the meetings included parents, teachers and other interested representatives of ethnic minorities, as well as a psychologist, local law enforcement and social workers. These activities are carried out in cooperation with the Georgian representative of the United Nations Population Fund.

## Improving Access to State Administrations, Law Enforcement Agencies and Mechanisms for Representatives of Ethnic Minorities

***The Activities of Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs:***

During the reporting period, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of Georgia was actively pursuing a policy of equality in relation to ethnic minorities. The following measures were taken in this regard:

* A one-year educational program in the Georgian language was developed;
* Anti-discrimination trainings were held at the MIA Academy for police officers as well as representatives from the Prosecutor's Office and Public Defender's Office.

The MIA Academy conducts various programs which include the following training courses: Human Rights ("Georgian Law Concerning the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination"), Police in a Multiethnic Society, Policy oriented on community. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sciences, the MIA Academy organized introductory campus tours with the aim of raising awareness among school students. During the reporting period, ethnic minority representatives underwent various trainings at the MIA Academy.

***The Activities of Georgia's Ministry of Corrections:***

One of the priorities of the Ministry of Corrections is the reform of the penitentiary system and its transformation into a modern, flexible institution that provides protection to persons deprived of liberty in accordance with international standards of human rights.

* **The creation and distribution of media in ethnic minority languages concerning public services and ongoing state programs.** Guides to medical services offered in prisons and penal institutions were published for the accused/convicts in Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian, English, Russian, Turkish and Persian languages;
* **Provision of translation services for accused/convicted ethnic minority representatives.** In 2015, convicts took advantage of utilizing written translations in accordance with an agreement between the Ministry of Corrections and the Translation Bureau. In addition, as per request, convicts were provided with verbal translations in accordance with the guidelines set out by the abovementioned bureau.

***The Activities of the Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti Regional Administrations:***

Throughout the reporting period, representatives of Marneuli, Dmanisi, Tetritskaro, Gardabani and Tsalka regional administrations held periodic informative meetings in the respective municipalities at which anti-discrimination regulations, ethnic minority rights and legislation were discussed. In the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti, responses to ethnic minority appeals during the reporting period were given in compliance with procedures established by the law. Accordingly, citizens were provided with appropriate assistance/consultation. In addition, frequent meetings were held between State Representative-Governors and local populations, including densely populated ethnic minority municipalities Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki. Ethnic minority representatives did not face any obstacles by not knowing the state language, since they were provided with all relevant information verbally in their native tongues or languages they understood. Regional administrations and municipalities operate a "One Window Principle", under which members of ethnic minorities are able to meet with relevant agency representatives upon request. In total, 1671 citizens appealed to regional administrative offices with various needs and concerns, 148 of whom were representatives of ethnic minorities. The most common plea made by citizens, regardless of ethnicity, was social assistance.

## Providing Equal Electoral Conditions for Ethnic Minority Voters

During the reporting period, the Central Election Commission (CEC) has continued to work actively to create equal electoral conditions for ethnic minority voters. To this end, a number of measures have been implemented. In some constituencies, Georgia's election administration held interim local self-government and Parliamentary elections.

***Translation of Materials Related to Election Procedures into Ethnic Minority Languages:***

* During the Georgian Parliamentary by-elections of October 31, 2015, ballots were translated into Azerbaijani, published in a bilingual (Georgian- Azerbaijani) format and distributed among the 12 election precincts within the Sagarejo election district with dense populations of Azerbaijani electors[[2]](#footnote-2). In addition, the unified list of voters and the voter's manual were also translated into Azerbaijani.
* For the Azerbaijani members of Precinct Election Commissions (PEC), the following documents were translated and published in a bilingual, Georgian-Azerbaijani, format: PEC member guidelines, PEC Chairman handbook, functioning guidelines regarding voter-flow regulation, PEC Secretary handbook for polling day, Voter Registration Commission handbook, guidelines for commission members in charge of ballot box and special envelope supervision, guidelines for commission members accompanying mobile ballot boxes, and instructions on the treatment of disabled voters at polling stations. Additionally, the PEC member training film - "Polling Day Procedures" - was made available with relevant subtitles. In order to provide voters with better access to information, voters from the Sagarejo districts with dense Azerbaijani populations could view the unified list of voters in Azerbaijani on the CEC's official website (www.cesko.ge). On the CEC's website under the banner "Ethnic Minorities", documents concerning elections were available in Azerbaijani language. The CEC's informational video about voting day procedures was also translated into Azerbaijani and broadcast via the Georgian Public Broadcaster and Kakheti's regional television networks.

***Small Grants to Civil Society Organizations and Minority Communities - Funding Informative Campaigns about the Importance of Elections and Strengthening its Culture***

In early 2015, the CEC's Legal Entity of Public Law – The Center of Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Trainings (Training Center) funded the projects of seven non-governmental organizations in order to facilitate the participation of ethnic minorities in the electoral process. The funded projects include the following:

**1.** Public Movement "Multinational Georgia" (PMMG) with its project "Meaningful Support - Facilitating Extensive Quantitative and Qualitative Involvement of Ethnic Armenian Voters in the Electoral Processes of Upcoming Election Cycles in the Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Aspindza, Akhaltsikhe, Tsalka and Borjomi Election Districts".

**2.** "Media Development Foundation" with its project "Tour of Democracy: From Elections to Institutions", a program which mobilized young people, trained them and involved them in holding mock elections.

**3.** "Women of Multinational Georgia" with an initiative aimed at enacting protection mechanisms for women and promoting the civic involvement of ethnic/religious minority women living in the Kvemo Kartli region.

**4.** "Public Initiatives Group" with a project aimed at informing, engaging and motivating ethnic Romani, Avars and Udi populations.

**5.** "Integration Fund" with a program directed towards increasing awareness about civic and electoral culture and promoting the civic and political engagement of the ethnic Azerbaijani population living in the Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions.

**6-7.** "Union of Azerbaijani Women" and "Civil Education and Development Multiethnic Resource Center" with programs that politically socialized ethnic minority representatives, increased awareness about the country's electoral culture and integrated minority voters into the electoral process.

The geographical scope of the projects included Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Adjara (Batumi and Kobuleti) and Imereti (Kutaisi). The implementation period took 6 months, from June 15 to December 15, 2015. The total project budget amounted to 355155 GEL.

For the October 31, 2015 by-elections, the CEC grant competition (Phase II) prioritized informing ethnic minority voters and facilitating their participation in the parliamentary by-elections of October 2015. In addition, the CEC's Legal Entity of Public Law – The Center of Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Trainings funded 6 non-governmental organizations working on this issue. The NGOs included:

* "Media Center Kakheti"
* Association of Journalists - Community Development Union "Metsenati"
* "Center for Youth Development - XXI"
* "Association of Free Development and Rights Protection - TGUDA"
* "Public Advocacy"
* "Women for Tomorrow"

The organizations carried out programs aimed at increasing voter participation through informing and raising awareness among the electorate. The geographical scope of the projects included the following villages in the Sagarejo region: Iormughanlo, Duzagrama, Tulari, Keshalo Lambalo, Kakabeti, Udabno, Kandaura and Badiauri. The total budget for the project amounted to 105291 GEL.

***Procedure Trainings for Ethnic Minority Members of Election Administrations***

For the October 31, 2015 by-election, the Training Center operating under the CEC provided trainings for members of Precinct Election Commissions in order to increase their qualifications. The training was conducted in four stages, during which ethnic Azeri PEC members were given access to training materials and election documents in their own language.

## Providing Access to Media and Information

***Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB)***

During the reporting period, the Georgian Public Broadcaster carried out certain activities as outlined by the 2015 Action Plan. Throughout the TV season, the information program "Moambe" ("Messenger") continued to air on Channel 2 in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages with the selection of news topics based on the Georgian "Moambe" material and with programs lasting an average of 10 -12 minutes in each minority language. During the last TV season, the Georgian Public Broadcaster offered audiences programs not only through its main network channel, but also through regional television channels. Based on an open tender the Public Broadcaster bought airtime on Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli TV stations for the 2014-2015 TV season (so-called 'primetime,' from 20:00 to 23:00). The Bolnisi TV channel "Bolneli" transmits the Azeri-language "Moambe", the Ninotsminda TV station "Parvana" and the Akhalkalaki "ATV 12" broadcast "Moambe" in Armenian, while Zugdidi's channel "Odishi" airs Abkhazian-language "Moambe". Partner TV stations offer live broadcasts of these programs. Local TV stations have the opportunity to air re-runs in the morning and evening hours and are also free to advertise before and after the program.

Until October, the weekly TV program "Chveni Ezo" ("Our Yard") aired on the Public Broadcaster Network every Saturday at 17:00. Throughout 2015, the program followed a TV magazine format, the theme of which was ethnic minorities - culture, tradition and issues.

Every day at 23:00, Channel 2 airs the Russian-language analytical news program "Настоящее время" ("Real Time"). The aforementioned program is a joint project of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America, which is carried out in cooperation with public and private broadcasters in Georgia Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova and Ukraine.

***Radio Broadcasting***

During the reporting period, "Pirveli Radio" ("Radio One") continued its broadcast of programs for ethnic minorities. Throughout the year, an audio version of the news program "Moambe" aired on the radio in a number of minority languages. In addition to the news programs in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian languages, a weekly news program was transmitted in the Kurdish language.

**The Public Broadcaster's Allotted Airtime for Ethnic Minorities**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Format** | **Title** | **Duration**  **(Minutes)** | **Quantity**  **(Months)** | **Total**  **(Hours)** |
| Television News | National Moambe | 60 | 12 | 300 |
| Radio News | National Moambe | 60 | 12 | 300 |
| Radio News | Kurdish Weekly Program | 20 | 12 | 16 |
| Analytical News | Real Time (Freedom - GPB) | 26 | 12 | 324 |
| Informative | Our Yard | 20 | 12 | 14 |
| **Total Yearly Hours** | | | | **954** |

In light of a transition to digital broadcasting, the Digital Broadcasting Agency prepared information leaflets in minority languages, including 10,000 in Azerbaijani, 1,0000 in Russian and 10,000 in Armenian, which were distributed through regional administrative offices and local self-governing bodies.

***Print Media***

Financial support of non-Georgian-language print media continued throughout 2015. With the help of the Ministry of Finance, the Armenian newspaper "Vrastan" and the Azerbaijani newspaper "Gurjistan" were published. The newspapers were distributed in Tbilisi, as well as in ethnic minority regions.

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Corrections and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs carried out activities within their competencies that were aimed at increasing access to media and information among ethnic minority groups.

* Through the cooperation of the Ministry of Corrections and the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, from March 11, 2015, all prison libraries are stocked bimonthly with Azerbaijani newspapers "Region Press" and "Gurjistan", as well as the Armenian newspaper "Vrastan". The aforementioned print media is available to all prisoners.
* Prison inmates have access to Turkish and Russian television channels.
* With the support of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, a project for journalists belonging to ethnic minorities was implemented at AGFM radio station (Azerbaijani-language Georgian Radio). The training course - "Radio Journalism in Mass Communication" - provided theoretical and practical skills for Azerbaijani youth interested in the profession of radio journalism. As a result of the program, 5 Azerbaijani youth found employment at AGFM radio station.

***Regional Print Media***

Since 2015, the Georgian-Azerbaijani-language newspaper "Bolnisi" has been printed in the Kvemo Kartli region. The newspaper also operates the internet portal - www.bolnisi.ge. The newspaper "Trialeti Express" is published in Tsalka, monthly newspaper "Didgorelebi" – in Tetritskaro Municipality, through which it supplies the non-Georgian population with relevant and necessary information. A Georgian-language regional newspaper "Southern Gate" is published weekly in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti.

## Ensuring Public Awareness of Human Rights Issues

In order to raise awareness concerning the fight against human trafficking, the Ministry of Justice held informational meetings in various regions with national and ethnic minority populations, during which the threats of illegal migration and its safeguards were discussed. Representatives of both national and ethnic minorities attended the meetings, which took place through close cooperation with the Council on Human Trafficking and the International Organization for Migration.

**Statistical Data on Informational Meetings held for National and Ethnic Minority Representatives in 2015**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Region** | **Number of Meetings** | **Number of Attendees** |
| April 2015 | Akhaltsikhe  Akhalkalaki  Ninotsminda | 3 | 161 |
| June 2015 | Tianeti  Marneuli | 2 | 150 |
| **Total** | | **5** | **311** |

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Corrections carried out the following measures:

* **Informing accused/convicted ethnic minority representatives of their rights.** 500 copies of brochures detailing their rights were printed and distributed in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Turkish, English and Russian languages. In addition, with the help of social services, information regarding individual rights and administrative procedures are provided to them in a timely manner.
* **Providing civil servants with trainings and materials regarding ethnic minority representative rights and anti-discrimination law.** Civil servants participate in various educational programs at the Ministry's training center, including "Creating Healthy Environments and Preventing Diseases in Penitentiary Institutions," "Working with Vulnerable Groups - Suicide Prevention," "Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms," and "Training for Penitentiary Employees Who Work with Women." In 2015, a total of 23 trainings were conducted, within which 419 participants were trained to deal with ethnic minority convicts as well as those belonging to different types of minorities, such as women prisoners, underage prisoners, foreigners and religious minority representatives.

## II. Creating Equal Social and Economic Conditions and Opportunities

## Social Mobility

During the reporting period, Georgia's Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs planned and carried out an informational campaign aimed at providing ethnic minority representatives with information about state programs in health and social security.

* By the end of 2015, the preliminary work needed to set up the Labor Market Information System (LMIS) was complete and information concerning existing labor market requirements was being provided to ethnic minorities through the regional branches of the Social Security Agency. In cases where there is a language barrier, local staff provides relevant information in respective minority languages. At the same time, if necessary, competent staff members provide assistance to ethnic minority representatives when registering for the Labor Market Management Informational Portal (Worknet).
* Within the framework of the Hepatitis C Nationwide Elimination Program, an informational campaign was undertaken aimed at communicating, informing and improving access to program services among non-Georgian-language ethnic minority populations. Informational booklets were developed and published in the state language as well as in Armenian (5000 copies), Azerbaijani (5000 copies), and Russian (5000 copies). The booklets were displayed in the Ministry's reception area and in regional branches of the Social Security Agency, including those with dense ethnic minority populations, namely Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli.

The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs ensures that citizens are equipped with relevant information regarding matters under its competence. Communication with ethnic minorities is mainly carried out in Russian, and in densely populated ethnic minority regions in respective languages with the help of informal translators.

In November, 2015, with the joint efforts of the Tbilisi City Assembly and the NGO "Women's Council," 160 ethnic minority women underwent medical examinations.

## Infrastructural Rehabilitation

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, in coordination with the Regional Development Fund, executed infrastructural projects in areas with dense ethnic minority populations.

62 projects were financed in the Kvemo Kartli region (Bolnisi, Gardabani, Dmanisi, Tetritskaro, Marneuli and Tsalka Municipalities and the city of Rustavi) with a total value of 20 761 300 GEL. The Village Support Program carried out 451 projects with a total cost of 6 719 669 GEL.

35 projects were financed in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region (Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Borjomi, Adigeni and Aspindza municipalities) with a total value of 13 818 000 GEL. The Village Support Program carried out 387 projects with a total cost of 3 512 424 GEL.

24 projects were financed in the Kakheti region (Akhmeta and Lagodekhi municipalities) with a total value of 4344000 GEL. The Village Support Program carried out 192 projects with a total cost of 1850598 GEL.

Projects were also implemented within the framework of the Municipal Development Fund in various regions.

In order to improve socio-economic conditions for ethnic minorities, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs conducted the training program "Become a Young Entrepreneur" for up to 60 Georgian and ethnic minority representatives in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions. The training aimed at raising young people's interest, involvement, awareness and motivation within the agricultural sector, with a particular focus on farming activities. With ministry support, a tailoring house was also opened for Chechen girls which will support the employment of Kist women and promote Kist culture.

## III. Ensuring Access to Quality Education and Improving State Language Skills

The Ministry of Education and Science and its subordinated entities of public law continued to undertake various programs and projects during the reporting period. The Ministry, alongside local and international experts, began to create a policy document regarding ethnic minority education. The document refers to pre-school, school, vocational and higher education access, as well as the provision of faculty and staff. The Ministry of Education, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund office in Georgia, held a three-day conference in order to review and improve the policy document. The conference was also designed to review and analyze the Ministry’s past analytical work and research results in this area, as well as to report on the progress made in terms of ethnic minority inclusion within the framework of the Action Plan.

## Increasing Access to Quality Basic Education

***Secondary School Teacher Development and Career Support Program in Regions with Dense Ethnic Minority Populations***

Since September 2015, the "Teacher Induction, Professional Development and Career Advancement" scheme has been in force, which all secondary school teachers are required to adhere to, including teachers in regions with dense ethnic minority populations.

In 2015, the National Center for Teacher Professional Development developed and approved the "Secondary School Teacher Development and Career Support Program in Regions with Dense Ethnic Minority Populations," the main goal of which is to introduce the "Teacher Induction, Professional Development and Career Advancement" scheme to non-Georgian-language secondary school teachers, to provide related documents in respective ethnic languages and to raise the professional qualifications of teachers. The program is also intended to provide local subject-based trainings in various regions.

Beneficiaries of the program are 7500 active non-Georgian-language secondary school teachers, including: 3301 Azerbaijani-language, 2933 Armenian-language and 1208 Russian-language teachers.

Within the scope of the program:

* The "Teacher Induction, Professional Development and Career Advancement" scheme was translated and printed (a collection of documents) in Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian.
* Part I of the guidebook to the "Teacher Induction, Professional Development and Career Advancement" scheme was translated and printed in Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian languages.
* A Teacher's self-assessment questionnaire was translated into Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian.
* A self-evaluation table for Georgian language skills was translated.

***Creating, Adopting and Translating Subject-Training Modules and Reading Materials***

* In accordance with the National Curriculum, the National Center for Teacher Professional Development created and adopted subject-training modules and related reading materials for non-Georgian-language school teachers, which are being translated into Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian.

The following electronic resources are available on the website of the National Center for Teacher Professional Development www.tpdc.ge :

* "Teacher Induction, Professional Development and Career Advancement" scheme (Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian versions)
* Part I of the guidebook to the "Teacher Induction, Professional Development and Career Advancement" (Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian versions)
* A teacher's self-assessment questionnaire (Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian versions)

The results of the bilingual program in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti pilot schools, which has been in place since 2009, are being monitored.

***National Educational Olympics***

Georgia's National Educational Olympics of the 2014-2015 academic year was held in every educational institution, including non-Georgian-language schools. The National Olympics in the aforementioned schools were held in Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages, In addition, students from non-Georgian language schools participated in the Georgian Language Olympics.

|  |
| --- |
| Georgian Language (non-Georgian language schools) – 1073 |
| Subjects (Azerbaijani language) – 1035 |
| Subjects (Armenian language) – 1639 |
| Subjects (Russian language) - 731 |

The third round of the Olympics revealed winners which included ethnic minority representatives. Among the winners, there were no Armenian or Azerbaijani-speaking students in the Georgian Language Olympics, however there were 10 Russian-speaking winners.

***Final School Exams***

Based on the results of the 2014-2015 academic year final school exams, secondary education certificates were awarded to:

792 Armenian-language students

659 Azeri-language students

946 Russian-language students

## Increasing Access to Higher Education

Any citizen can enroll in the Georgian Language Training Program at institutions of higher education, if they pass the General Abilities Test in either Azerbaijani or Armenian languages. After completing the one-year preparatory language course and earning 60 credits, students continue studying at the same higher education institution in the undergraduate program of their choice. If a student receives a 2250 GEL grant for the Georgian Language Training Program and continues studying at the Bachelor's level, the financial aid is guaranteed until graduation.

Based on the results of the 2015 National General Aptitude Test in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages, the following applicants earned the right to continue their studies at higher education institutions:

522 applicants based on the Azeri-language General Aptitude Test

219 applicants based on the Armenian-language General Aptitude Test

Based on the results of the 2015 National General Aptitude Test in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages, the following students were awarded with State Education Grants:

94 students based on the Azeri-language General Skills Test

92 students based on the Armenian-language General Skills Test

**2015 Unified National Exams - 40076 Registered Applicants**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exam | Registered | Completed | Passed Score Limit | Enrolled | Georgian Language Course | Full Grant Awarded | Prep. Course |
| General Skills Test (Azerbaijani) | 427 | 355 | 244 | 224 | 219 | 92 | 92 |
| General Skills Test (Armenian) | 1181 | 888 | 556 | 541 | 522 | 95 | 94 |

***Enrolled in Academic Programs***

19 students based on the Azerbaijani-language General Aptitude Test (1 received a grant)

5 students based on the Armenian-language General Aptitude Test (0 received a grant)

1 student based on the Abkhaz Language and Literature Test

The Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University offers the undergraduate program "Armenology" which awards a Bachelor's Degree in Philology.

***The Activities of the David Aghmashenebeli National Defense Academy of Georgia***

In 2015, 1 non-Georgian-language (Azerbaijani) student was admitted to the David Aghmashenebeli National Defense Academy of Georgia in accordance with the so-called "1+4" program scheme. 15 non-Georgian-language students are currently enrolled in the Academy's Bachelor's Degree Program.

## Ensuring the Provision of Vocational and Professional Education

The mission of the Zurab Zhvania Georgian School of Public Administration is to overcome the shortage of qualified staff in the public service sector by increasing the qualifications of civil servant employees in regions and mountainous areas with dense ethnic minority populations, as well as to integrate regional ethnic minority representatives into the unified sphere of public administration. The school's key target groups include the employees of regional self-governing agencies, administrations and municipalities, local government-managed enterprises and non-commercial entities, and the Ministry of Education's resource center and public school staff.

***Public Administration and Governance Program***

* The Zurab Zhvania Georgian School of Public Administration developed and implemented a new course - "Public Relations and Communication.”
* The School also developed another new course, "Technical Support and Management of Infrastructural Projects," the implementation of which is planned for the 2016 academic year.
* In order to effectively conduct each course ("Public Organization Management," "Financial Management and Internal Audit of Public Officials," "Procurement," "Human Resource Management and Public Sector Operations," and "Public Relations and Communication"), all the course modules include a visiting guest rubric - invited guests being successful and experienced experts in their respective fields.
* Reading materials were prepared and published for each course.
* The Academic Council approved a new, updated system of assessment which increased the number of credits needed to obtain a certificate.
* In cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), procedures for the effective implementation and administration of the Public Administration and Management Program were worked out.
* A study was conducted that looked into the need to establish a Basic Training Program in Computer Technology, gathered data about the existence of such programs in various regions and evaluated the rate of interest and computer literacy among public servants.
* The Basic Training Program in Computer Technology was developed and implemented in 4 regional training centers (Akhalkalaki, Marneuli, Gardabani and Dmanisi).
* 4 instructors for the Basic Training Program in Computer Technology were selected, through a competition, to undergo a 2-day training course on implementation of the program.
* In partnership with the Governor’s office of the Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Administration and the Samtskhe-Javakheti State University, the school carried out a pilot program titled, "Automated System Operations (Edocument) Training Course", under which 78 municipality employees were retrained. Also, within the framework of the training, up to 500 administrative officials were made aware of the abovementioned topic during meetings held in regional administrative agencies.
* 360 public servants were trained through the Public Administration and Management Program.
* 48 public servants participated in the Basic Training Program in Computer Technology.
* A 3-day workshop involving program instructors and trainers was conducted for the purpose of further developing and improving the Public Administration and Management Program.

## Improving and Increasing Knowledge of the State Language

The lack of knowledge of the Georgian language remains a serious challenge. Programs initiated to cope with the issue in past years were continued during this reporting period. An assessment tool that evaluates the level of knowledge of Georgian was also created. The unified European policy for modern language learning, teaching and assessment procedures is based on a special 6-stage language acquisition system, which was developed by the Council of Europe over a several year period. The abovementioned system is adaptable to Georgian. Within the system, growth in language acquisition is expressed by the following steps: A, B, C, each of which in turn is divided into two main sub-levels - A1-A2, B1-B2, C1-C2. (For more detail visit - http://geofl.ge/#!/page\_doneebi).

***The Georgian Language for Future Success Program***

The program "Georgian Language for Future Success" aims to raise the professional qualifications of non-Georgian-language school teachers and improve the quality of Georgian language and social science education in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti.

During the reporting period, the following measures were carried out in the framework of the program:

* In January, 2015, the National Center for Teacher Professional Development merged its programs "Teach Georgian as a Second Language" and "Georgian Language for Future Success" into a single program and reviewed the programs' guiding documents and budgets. The unified program kept the title- "Georgian Language for Future Success".
* In January, 88 consultant-teachers from the "Georgian Language for Future Success" program attended a presentation of the "Teacher Induction, Professional Development and Career Advancement" scheme.
* In March, 21 program participants received certificates of completion.
* In April, a list of past program participants was compiled and sent to the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in order to verify data concerning graduate statuses and state grant awards.
* According to information received from the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, 176 former program participants were financed to continue graduate level studies in the 2014-2015 academic year.
* With the support of the Ministry of Education and Science, information about vacant positions for teaching Georgian as a second language was made available at local resource centers in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti
* Consultant-teachers participating in the program underwent the first module of a long-term methodical course "Teacher Competencies and Curriculum Requirements" (12 contact hours).
* An integrated summer camp took place from July 15 to August 5 which involved 150 non-Georgian-language students and 30 of the program's consultant-teachers.
* A competition for consultant-teachers was announced for the program, through which 86 candidates were selected, including 67 former participants.
* A competition for assistant-teachers in the subjects of Georgian, history and geography, as well as for ethnic minority representative assistant-teachers, was announced through the program. Of the selected 152 candidates, 115 signed labor contracts with the center. Among them 65 were former program participants.
* The 19 new consultant-teachers selected through the competition underwent trainings in the following modules:
  + Professional skills (18 contact hours).
  + "Teacher Competencies and Curriculum Requirements" (12 contact hours).
* The 50 new assistant-teachers selected through the competition underwent trainings in the following modules:
  + Professional Skills (20 contact hours).
  + "Teacher Competencies and Curriculum Requirements" (12 contact hours).
  + Inclusive Education (5 contact hours).
* Based on available information concerning vacancy positions for teaching Georgian as a second language in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti, selected consultant-teachers were assigned to target schools at the beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year.
* In October, 2015, the 115 selected program participants were assigned to non-Georgian-language schools in the Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions.
* In November, 2015, 103 program participants received certificates of completion.
* In the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti, the following activities were carried out for local, non-Georgian-language schoolteachers:
  + An A1 and A2 level language competence course was developed (a prerequisite to the "Teacher Induction, Professional Development and Career Advancement" scheme for local, non-Georgian-language school teachers).
  + A pre-test for determining language competence levels was created.
  + After consulting relevant experts, the pre-test was administered by the program's consultant-teachers.
  + Under the program, the pre-test results of local non-Georgian-language school teachers were collected and processed.
  + Training materials for an A1 and A2 level language course were published.
* In October, a list of past program participants was compiled and sent to the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in order to verify data concerning graduate status and state grant awards. According to information received from the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, 174 former program participants were financed to continue graduate level studies in the fall semester of the 2015-2016 academic year.
* 95 consultant-teachers participating in the program underwent the second module of a long-term methodical course - "Listening Skills Development" (12 contact hours).
* In October of the reporting period, a competition for assistant-teachers and ethnic minority representative assistant-teachers was announced in the subjects of Georgian, history and geography, through the program.
* In November, 2015, a competition for consultant-teachers was announced through the program.

In order to aid intercultural dialogue and promote the teaching/learning of the Georgian language, in 2014-2015, two sub-programs - the "International Summer School in Georgia" (2014) and the "Multicultural Summer School for Ethnic Minorities" (2015) was implemented under the Ministry of Education and Science's "Summer School" program. The "Multicultural Summer School for Teachers" and the "Multicultural Summer School for Students" also took place within the framework of the abovementioned sub-programs.

***The Zurab Zhvania Georgian School of Public Administration "State Language Teaching Program"***

* The language-teaching program was revised for the School's eight regional training centers. Language instruction was undertaken on 3 levels - A1, A2 and B1, distributed over 120 hours.
* Training materials were prepared and published for each level of the language program.
* For the purpose of expanding the geographic scope of the "State Language Teaching Program" and increasing the number of participants, the School conducted a survey -"Researching Existing Problems of State Language Skills and Civic Education in Georgia's Regions" - under which a number of meetings were held with local government representatives and the local population of the Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions. The importance of increased levels of state language acquisition and the need for additional training centers was highlighted.
* The implementation of the "State Language Teaching Program" was initiated, also involving the general ethnic minority population. Mobile groups were created to conduct the program for the participants living in the areas remote from the regional centers. There are 37 such groups within the framework of the program.
* In agreement with the National Center for Teacher Professional Development, an advanced A1 level course was created for non-Georgian-language teachers which involves additional materials and resources (120 hours).
* In 2015, a unified database of program participants was created.
* An assessment tool that evaluates the level of knowledge of Georgian among teachers was created for the purpose of furthering the quality of education. The tool is also utilized to assess participants of the "State Language Teaching Program."
* Throughout the year, the learning processes at Regional Training Centers were systematically monitored through open and planned lesson observations.
* In order to address the needs highlighted by monitoring results and teacher evaluations, two (II and IV quarters) 3-day trainings were held for the purpose of discussing the monitoring results, identifying gaps and developing teaching resources.
* A competition for "State Language Teaching Program" instructors was announced, through which 22 teachers were selected.
* In cooperation with the SDC, team procedures for the effective implementation and administration of the "State Language Teaching Program" were worked out.
* 1694 employees of the public sector were re-trained under the "State Language Teaching Program."
* The School Charter was amended to allow any interested person (legally present in Georgia) to participate in the "State Language Teaching Program."

During the reporting period, the Zurab Zhvania Georgian School of Public Administration's Regional Training Centers were actively engaged in the program's implementation. More specifically, 52 ethnic minority representatives (public servants and teachers) participated in the state language re-training program at the Bolnisi Regional Training Center and 93 participants took part in the program at the Tsalka Regional Training Center. 84 participants underwent the 3-month training course at the Dmanisi Regional Training Center. By the end of 2015, there were a total of 38 participants taking part in Georgian language and computer skills courses.

In 2015, on the initiative of the Minister of Justice, courses in the Georgian language were held for ethnic minority representatives at community centers in Phoka, Kabala, Kvareltskali and Sartichala. The project was funded with the help of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), while the courses were administered by instructors from the Ministry of Justice's Training Center. The purpose of the language course was to not only increase the level of knowledge of the state language, but to promote awareness of Georgian literature, history and culture. In total, 90 program participants were awarded certificates of completion.

***Providing State Language Training Courses for Non-Georgian-Language Convicts***

***(The Activities of the Ministry of Corrections)***

Upon entering the prison system, social division ensures that non-Georgian-language convicts are involved with the Georgian language program. In 2015, 52 convicts participated in the Georgian language course.

***The Activities of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs***

A special training module "Electronic/Distance Learning of Georgian for Ethnic Armenian Youth" was developed, which is available free of charge on www.teach.ge. The Ministry created a Georgian language e-learning module for Azerbaijani youth in 2014.

***The Activities of Regional Administrations***

***Kvemo Kartli Region***

* In order to increase the level of knowledge of the state language and advance professional development among teachers, the Gardabani Municipality conducted training sessions and informational meetings for non-Georgian-language teachers throughout the year.
* During the year, Georgian and English language courses were held at the Dmanisi Educational Center. 79 ethnic minority representatives enrolled in the Georgian language course (49 participants received certificates) and 79 ethnic minority representatives enrolled in the English language course (68 participants received certificates).
* During the reporting period, the No.1 Kindergarten of Dmanisi continued to administer the program "Promoting Georgian Language Skills Among Preschool-Aged Ethnic Minority Children" for 18 preschool-aged participants.
* The Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University project "Learn Georgian" established implied to establish 15-20 person language study groups in the Dmanisi Municipality villages of Lower Orozmani, Karabulakhi, Amamlo and Ifnari. 61 ethnic minority representatives completed the 3-month course in Orozmani, 45 in Ifnari, 77 in Amamlo and 75 in Karabulakhi.
* In addition, throughout the year, regional municipalities held various cultural and educational events at local schools, including literary evenings, contests, Olympiads, and competitions, all aimed at improving the integration process of ethnic minority youth and promoting their development into active, open-minded and tolerant citizens.

***Kakheti Region***

* Within the Akhmenta Municipality, infrastructural and inventory changes were made at kindergartens in Pankisi Gorge.
* Playgrounds and sports fields were renovated in Birkiani and Omalo schools. In addition, the project "School Initiative Encouragement Sub-Program" was implemented which promotes educational, sporting and artistic spheres of interest. The Jokolo Village Library was equipped with computers and mobile internet. An Agricultural Library was opened in the village of Lower Khalatsani and was gifted books, computers and mobile internet.
* Informational meetings for the program "Pupils of Kakheti - Envoys of Cultural Heritage" took place at the Sagarejo Municipality. Also, at the request of ethnic minority representatives wishing to better their Georgian language skills, the village of Iormughanlo was gifted more than 200 books in Georgian.
* Within the Lagodekhi Municipality, a youth community center was rehabilitated and opened in the village of Kabal with the help of the "Georgia Development Association". Throughout the year, the Kabal Community Center, alongside the Lagodekhi Municipality and Sports Development Center, carried out various cultural, educational, sporting and artistic events at the request of local youth.

## IV. Maintaining Ethnic Minority Cultures and Promoting Tolerant Environments

During the reporting period, with the direct support and participation of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, past programs/projects and activities were continued to ensure the protection, development and promotion of ethnic minority cultures.

To further assist the expression and integration of ethnic minority cultures in the general public sphere, the activities of the following public entities are vigorously supported: the David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia, the Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan Culture, the Petros Adamian Tbilisi State Armenian Drama Theater, the Haydar Aliyev Azerbaijanian State Theater and the Alexander Griboedov Russian Professional Drama Theater.

***Promoting Theaters***

The Alexander Griboedov Russian Professional Drama Theater celebrated its 170th anniversary with a series of events organized throughout the year, including 121 theater performances and 3 premieres. In total, 39853 spectators attended the performances. The theater also presented 12 performances abroad on tour.

Regarding the Haydar Aliyev Azerbaijani State and the Petros Adamian Tbilisi State Armenian Drama theaters, the Azerbaijani theater gave 8 local performances and went on 2 tours, while the Armenian theater performed 9 local and 1 visiting plays. The Azerbaijani theater hosted a total of 2210 audience members and the Armenian - 1144.

***Promoting Museums***

***The David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia***

In 2015, the Museum held 2 book presentations, 1 evening of remembrance, 2 film screenings, 1 creative evening, 1 public gathering and 1 lecture. 3 events took place on May 18 dedicated to the International Museum Day. On June 28, children affected by the June floods were given school supplies and other gifts. The Museum hosted Israel's former ambassador to Georgia and a faculty from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. On September 4, an event was held in connection with the 100th anniversary of the synagogue in the city of Oni, which was covered by the newspapers "26 Centuries" and the American-published "Shield of David". On September 7, the Museum hosted the event "Bridges", which was devoted to Jewish culture. Fundraising work is underway to supply the Museum and its foundation with needed inventory and funds.

***The Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan***

The Museum hosted 6 meetings, 1 workshop and organized 8 events, including the “Ganja and Kutaisi Writers' Conference,” a remembrance evening for Baku's independence fighters of 1990, a jubilee event for E. Mahmudov's 75th anniversary and a photo exhibition titled "Justice for Khojalo." Book presentations were held for "Zelimkhan's Apex of Speech" and two new publications. The Museum also hosted 5 exhibitions, including one organized by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection for Cultural Diversity Day on May 21. Informational meetings concerning foreign admissions processes were held between Azerbaijani and Georgian youth organizations and representatives from the Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction. The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia hosted an exhibition dedicated to Azerbaijani cultural heritage. On July 9, an exhibition was held in celebration of Mirza Fatali Akhundov's 203th anniversary, which was organized with the support of the abovementioned namesake museum and the Georgian State Museum of Theater, Music, Cinema and Choreography. On July 27, a delegation from Azerbaijan's Milli Majlis visited the Museum. On September 22-24 classical music concerts were held in honor of Uzeyir Hajibeyov's 130th anniversary in Marneuli, Gardabani and Bolnisi. Rashid Behbudov's 100-year anniversary concert was performed with the participation of the Khyrdalan school student orchestra. On November 13, the director of the Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan, Leyla Aliyeva, was honored with the "Defender of Tolerance" award in celebration of the Day of Tolerance.

***Protecting Cultural Heritage***

* An updated rehabilitation project was prepared for the temple of Norasheni (Tbilisi).
* Restorative work was done on the Jame mosque in the village of Kvirike (Kobuleti Municipality).
* Inventory was taken of German heritage sites on Georgian land. Cultural monuments in need of urgent conservation measures were also identified and documented.
* Ottoman monuments on Georgia's territory were monitored.

***General Overview***

In order to maintain the cultural identity of ethnic minorities, ethnic minority representatives involved in various creative fields enjoyed continued support, promotion and facilitation of their work through exhibitions, performances, publications and concerts.

* The project of the Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan, "Maintaining Azerbaijan's Carpet Traditions," continued for the fifth consecutive year. The project serves to promote and disseminate the ancient Azerbaijani technology of hand-woven carpets among youth. Throughout the year, young people are encouraged to learn the tradition of ancient textile technology in Tbilisi, as well as in the regions, and at the end of the year an exhibition is held showcasing the newly-created carpets. The project has 5 employees and has so far trained 19 people in the art of carpet-weaving.
* The Georgian State Museum of Theater, Music, Cinema and Choreography released the album "German Artists in Georgia" which references the works of German artists who have worked in Georgia. The album contains the works of Paul and Ellen Franken, Karlos Rihard Zomer, Friedrich Frisch and other German artists' works that are either kept in Georgian museums or in private collections.
* An exhibition, titled "Sergei Parajanov - XXI Century Dream," was dedicated to the life and work of the great Georgia-based artist. The exhibition displayed unique pieces from his body of work.
* Ossetian writer Kosta Khetagurov's complete collection of poems was published in a bilingual Georgian-Ossetian format.
* With the help of "Women's Support," an evening of Ossetian classical music was organized where the works of Ossetian classical composers were performed. The evening was dedicated to the promotion of Ossetian music and the strengthening of Georgian-Ossetian friendship. Works were performed by Tbilisi State Conservatoire graduate composers Z. Khabalova, P. Alborov and M. Pliev, as well as compositions based on Ossetian motifs by A. Kereselidze, V. Dolidze, V. Azarashvili. The participants of the concert included the Tbilisi Chamber Orchestra "Georgian Sinfonietta," the Choir of Abkhazia and IDP musician-performers from Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. Up to 80 people took part in the project.
* A presentation of the project "Diverse Georgia" was held in areas with dense ethnic minority populations (Ninotsminda and Bolnisi). Within the framework of the project, student-youth met with modern Georgian writers, were presented with the bilingual intellectual mega-game "United Georgia" and attended screenings of the latest products of the Georgian film industry, namely Levan Tutberidze's "Moira" and various Georgian short films.
* For the sixth time, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, the Bolnisi Cultural Center hosted the multiethnic festival "Under One Sky" with the participation of students from regions with dense ethnic minority populations. The festival was dedicated to maintaining the folk traditions of ethnic minorities, promoting young people's interest in classical and folk music, and developing inter-cultural dialogue. 180 students took part in the project.

***The Activities of the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia***

During the reporting period, the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia actively cooperated with the Civil Integration unit of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, the Public Defender's Office's Center for Tolerance and Georgia's ethnic minority communities.

Through close cooperation with partner organizations, in 2015 the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia held 10 events, including art and photo exhibitions, concerts and book presentations. The library frequently displayed unique works by and related to ethnic minority representatives in their possession. The library's database of dictionaries was expanded to include Ukrainian-Georgian, Abkhaz-Georgian, Russian-Georgian, Armenian-Georgian and Ossetian-Georgian dictionaries.

The aim of the abovementioned measures was to popularize and integrate the cultural heritage, art and traditions of ethnic minorities living in Georgia. The following projects and events were implemented during the reporting period:

* A jubilee celebration was held for Sergei Parajanov.
* The Armenian school in the village of Pamaji (Akhaltsikhe Municipality) was gifted 500 books.
* The library's exhibition hall hosted an event for the project "Forward to Tolerance," organized by "Georgia's Armenian Diaspora" and "Georgian House of Yezidis."
* An event commemorating the 71th anniversary of the deportation of Chechen and Ingush peoples took place.
* Through the support of the Circassian Cultural Center, a Circassian Language and Culture Day was celebrated at the library. The Circassian Cultural Center and the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia also signed a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation.
* An exhibition of objects of cultural heritage for the project "Maintaining Azerbaijan's Carpet Traditions" was held in the library's exhibition hall. The Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan and the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia also signed a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation.
* Gasanov Rasim's exhibition "Freedom" was opened.

***The Activities of the Tbilisi City Assembly***

During the reporting period, the Tbilisi City Assembly established the Ethnic Minority Coordination Council, the aim of which is to enhance relations and promote cooperation with ethnic minority representatives.

In 2015, the Tbilisi City Assembly's “Council for Names and Symbols” named several of the city's streets in honor of notable ethnic minority representatives.

***The Activities of Batumi City Council***

The "Friendship House," founded by Batumi City Council and operating under name the "Batumi Cultural Center," hosts 9 ethnic diaspora groups (Armenian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Russian, Ukrainian, Hebrew, Greek, German and Kurdish). Each diaspora is funded by a budget of 5000 GEL, which is distributed to organize various activities. A variety of cultural and educational events took place at the "Friendship House" during the reporting period, including the administration of state language courses.

***The Activities of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs***

The Ministry carried out a number of programs and projects during the reporting period, including the following:

* Sustained audio recording of theater performances in Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. DVDs were prepared and presentations held in various regions within the framework of the project.
* The Lagodekhi Municipality hosted a 2-month training course entitled "Active Youth and Free Space," the purpose of which was to help ethnic minority youths acquire knowledge and experience through non-formal education.
* The training course "Civic Activism - Diverse Georgia" was carried out for ethnic minority representatives of the Kakheti region.
* The cultural-creative and cognitive training/workshop "Get to Know One Another Better," the aim of which was to promote integration, was completed during the reporting period. Participants of the project included Georgian and ethnic minority youth from Tbilisi and the Samtskhe-Javakheti region.
* Archaeological excavations were undertaken at the Georgian National Museum's Nastakis preservation fund base. 50 Ethnic minority representatives from Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, Ossetian and Kist ethnic groups from the Kakheti region took part in the archeological expedition.
* Poetically gifted youth of various ethnic minority groups took part in the literary competition "Georgia - My Homeland". The best submissions were published as a collection of poems.

In 2015, penitentiary institutions actively held various cultural, educational and sporting events, the participants of which included convicted representatives of ethnic minority groups.

***The Activities of Regional Administration in the regions compactly populated by ethnic minorities***

The cultural events and projects carried out by regional administrations in areas with dense ethnic minority populations include the following:

* Public and religious holiday celebrations, concerts, literary competitions, exhibitions, music and theater festivals were held.
* Summer camps were organized.
* The construction of a library commenced in Marneuli.
* Municipality cultural centers and village clubs held a variety of events.

Administrative districts in regional areas with dense ethnic minority populations operate art collectives, various clubs, as well as music and art schools.

## V. Activities Implemented by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality

During the reporting period, the Inter-Agency Commission, led by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, held extended sessions, outreach conferences and thematic working group meetings in order to develop proposals and recommendations on issues related to the topics of education, state language, media and information. Discussing various issues under a thematic working group format allows for more engagement among non-governmental organizations, experts and other interested parties working in different fields. The Office of the State Minister, alongside the Inter-Agency Commission, prepared and submitted the 2014 Action Plan Assessment Document.

A new Action Plan for promoting civic integration was prepared during the reporting period with the participation of a group of independent experts. Prior to approving the new Action Plan, the Office of the State Minister submitted the document for review to the National Minority Council, non-governmental sector experts, representatives of international organizations, political parties, and representatives of ethnic minorities, both in Tbilisi and in various regions (Marneuli, Dmanisi, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Batumi).

Representatives from the Office of the State Minister of Georgia met with and presented reports to mission experts that oversee the implementation assessments of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) between the EU and Georgia. The supervision of and reporting on Georgia's international obligations also took place with the guidance of the UN Human Rights Committee, the Council of Europe and the European Union.

***Campaign to Raise Awareness Concerning Georgia's European Integration Process***

In 2015, informational materials were prepared and distributed in minority languages ​​(Abkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian and Azerbaijani). Informative meetings, seminars and discussions were held in Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Tbilisi with various target groups: undergraduate and high school students, representatives of non-governmental organizations, regional media, local government representatives, and farmers.

Special attention was paid to the inclusion and involvement of ethnic minority youth in the various cultural events, including the following:

* With the support of the Office of the State Minister, representatives from the National Assessment and Examinations Center and the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of Georgia met with ethnic minority students from Marneuli, discussed the most recent innovations in education, and presented them with information concerning the ‘1+4’ program.
* An event was held in celebration of State Language Day, during which ethnic minority children read the works of Georgian writers.
* The ‘Young Leaders Club’ project was established during the reporting period. Within the framework of the project, the Office of the State Minister and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs organized lectures/debates aimed at raising civic awareness among ethnic minorities.
* Meetings surrounding the issue of women's rights were held in Kartli.
* 50 Azerbaijani school students from Marneuli district villages attended a performance by the Puppet Opera Theater.
* In collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, the Office of the State Minister organized two concerts for the multi-ethnic festival ‘Under One Sky’. Festival participates included ethnic minority representatives from art schools, cultural centers and musical groups from all regions and cities of the country.
* In celebration of the International Day of Tolerance, the Office of the State Minister organized lecture/seminars with local students of the Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions and held a youth photo competition, ‘My Multinational Homeland,’ prizes were awarded to the winners of this competition.
* A reception was held in celebration of International Women's Day, among the participants were women of ethnic minority representatives from Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions, as well as from Tbilisi.

The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality worked closely with the National Minority Council of the Public Defender's Office, the public sector, international organizations, the diplomatic corps and local and international experts.

During the implementation process of the Action Plan, the Office of the State Minister maintained constant communication with local communities, regional administrations and non-governmental organizations and received regular feedback and proposals from citizens.

Representatives of the Office of the State Minister supervised and coordinated activities taken in the regions compactly populated by ethnic minorities. (Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli).

Throughout the year, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality regularly congratulated ethnic minority representatives residing in Georgia, both citizens and members of the diplomatic corps, with their respective national and religious holidays.

1. On December 24, 2013, with decree N.362, the Georgian Government renamed the State Office of the Minister of Georgia for Reintegration as the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality. The change came into effect on January 1, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Villiges with ethnic Azerbaijani populations: Duzagrama, Tulari, Iormughanlo, Kazlari, Lambalo, Paldo, Qeshalo, Tsitsmatiani. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)