

ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL CONCEPT FOR TOLERANCE AND CIVIC INTEGRATION AND ACTION PLAN FOR 2009-2014

JUNE, 2014



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



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Assessment document on the Implementation of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan for 2009-2014 was prepared by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality in partnership with a group of invited experts.

This document was discussed with the State Inter-Agency Commission, established for the implementation of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan for 2009-2014.

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INTRODUCTION

Creating a state policy for the civil integration of national minorities and its effective implementation is an important priority for the country. This policy aims to protect the rights of ethnic minorities, help integrate them fully into society, and support the establishment and promotion of a tolerant environment.

Georgia joined the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and committed to meet the obligations assumed by the international community, which includes the protection of minority rights and their active participation in the development of the country.

On the basis of Presidential Order № 639, issued on August 8, 2005, on the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan (NCAP), the government issued Order №348 on May 8, 2009, to approve the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and the Action Plan for 2009–2014. According to this act, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration was given the task to develop a policy for national minority related issues, and coordinate and report to the Government and the President’s Council. In order to effectively coordinate these processes, the Georgian State Minister for Reintegration, based on Order № 14 of July 3, 2009, established the Interagency Commission which was composed of representatives of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration, as well as representatives from relevant state institutions, ministries, departments and organizations, the Tbilisi city council, and three representatives of the regional administration from areas with minority populations.

The main aim of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan is to support the development of a democratic and consolidated civil society, which shares common values, considers diversity as the source of its strength, and provides every citizen with the opportunity to maintain and develop their own identity.

The National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration is based on the Constitution of Georgia, as well as Georgia's international responsibilities. In order to assure a broad public consensus, all interested parties were given the opportunity to participate in the process of developing the Tolerance and National Integration Strategy and Action Plan. The document was prepared by the Civic Integration and Tolerance Council (CITC), which consisted of the members of Parliament, the Public Defender, national minorities, civil society organizations, ministries and other governmental organizations.

The National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration determines the state strategy and objectives in six key areas: rule of law, education and state language, media and access to information, political integration and civic participation, social and regional integration, and culture and preservation of identity. The Action Plan included specific activities and programs in accordance with the strategic direction of the national concept which were to be implemented over a five-year period. The responsibility to implement different components of the Action Plan was shared among specific state agencies.

The Action Plan was coordinated by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration.

On January 1, 2014, as determined by the Government, on the basis of the Order №362, the Office of the State Minister for Reintegration of Georgia adopted a new name – Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and so hereafter will be referred to as the same.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This study is the assessment of the implementation of Georgia’s National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and its Action Plan for 2009–2014. The paper discusses the six priority areas of the concept, the impact of civic integration programs on the overall civil integration processes, the achieved results and consequences, as well as the positive and negative trends that were observed during the implementation of the Action Plan. Showcasing the results achieved in various aspects of the Concept will provide the opportunity to develop new policies in the future. Based on the analysis of current trends, recommendations were prepared for the main actors involved in the process of integration. The recommendations are based on the analysis of the information acquired during the study, as well as on the opinions developed by various local and international organizations over the last few years. The existing legislation is also showcased within each direction.

The assessment of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration was commissioned by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality. The United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG) has actively supported the government in providing organizational and financial assistance for the preparation of the Assessment document. Support was provided within the framework of the “Advancing National Integration in Georgia” project with the financial support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Assessment document was prepared by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, along with an independent group of experts composed of: Mr. Shalva Tabatadze, George Sordia, Mamuka Komakhia, George Mshvenieradze, and George Amariani.

Before the publication of the Assessment document and the development of a new Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, a public hearing will be organized to discuss the current findings and recommendations and solicit additional input from individual state agencies, which will be thence incorporated into the new action plan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Assessment Document on the Tolerance and National Integration Strategy and Action Plan for 2009-2014 was produced using research methods such as desk research and empirical – focus-groups and in-depth expert interviews. The study is based on the annual action plans and their implementation reports developed within the framework of the Concept, as well as on the assessments of various local and international non-governmental organizations, and expert research in the field of ethnic minorities.

The research used various sources including: the Constitution of Georgia, laws passed by the Georgian Parliament, international legal documents signed by Georgia, reports and statistical data, materials from the State Minister's Office on Reintegration, data from the Central Election Commission, the Second State Report of the European Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities, the National Strategy and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, annual reports (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013) of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, the annual reports of the Public Defender, and the results gained by monitoring the NCAP conducted by the Georgia Public Defender's Council of National Minorities.

In-depth interviews were conducted with various official structure and field experts, both in the capital city, as well as in areas densely populated with minority groups. Focus group meetings (a total of 12 focus groups were conducted in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions) were conducted with representatives of non-governmental organizations and active members of the community. The Assessment Document also incorporated the opinions expressed during inter-agency committee meetings.

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

The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality was responsible for supporting the development, coordination, correction, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the “National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and the Action Plan for 2009-2014.” Thus, the Ministry has been actively engaged in the activities which were carried out during the above-mentioned process. The work implied spreading information on the rights of ethnic/national minorities as determined by the law and international obligations, raising awareness in society, and supporting the cultural development of national/ethnic minorities, as well as helping them maintain their identities (in religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage). Civic Integration Unit of the Office of the State Minister, in collaboration with various government agencies, planned and carried out work in all six strategic directions that are identified in the Concept.

To assure the effectiveness of the process, Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality coordinated the work of the State Inter-Agency Commission. The Office of the State Minister facilitated the sessions and meetings of the Commission, and held thematic discussions and consultations. The State Minister’s Office, along with other relevant agencies, was also responsible for developing annual detailed action plans and reporting on their results.

Throughout the Action Plan implementation, it was important to communicate with the public, local governments, community leaders and civil society organizations. As necessary, the State Minister’s Office cooperated with

the central government to ensure effective resolution of various issues, the advocacy for which has often had the positive results.

It was important to cooperate with the Public Defender's Office, as well as with non-governmental organizations and human rights defenders. On December 14, 2009, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by the State Minister's Office and the Public Defender, resulting in active communication with the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender's Office. Within the framework of the Concept, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality worked closely with international organizations, diplomatic communities and experts.

Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality was supported by various international organizations and foundations in the implementation of programs within the framework of the Concept, including the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG).

MAIN DIRECTIONS

RULE OF LAW

RULE OF LAW

REVIEW OF CURRENT LEGISLATION

The Constitution of Georgia

There are many norms in the national legislation regulating the rights of ethnic/national minorities. However, first of all, it should be mentioned that in the Constitution there already exists a guarantee of equality and prohibition of discrimination based on ethnic and national basis. Article 14 of the Constitution states that “Everyone is free by birth and is equal before law regardless of race, colour, language, sex, religion, political and other opinions, national, ethnic and social belonging, origin, property and title, place of residence.” It is important to note that Article 14 of the Constitution establishes not only the fundamental right to equality under the law but also the fundamental constitutional principle of equality before the law.¹

Protection against national and ethnical discrimination is also guaranteed under Article 38 of the Constitution, where the subjects are the citizens of Georgia. According to the article, “Citizens of Georgia shall be equal in social, economic, cultural and political life irrespective of their national, ethnic, religious or linguistic belonging. In accordance with universally recognized principles and rules of international law, they shall have the right to develop freely, without any discrimination and interference, their culture, and to use their mother tongue in private and in public.”

¹ The Constitutional Court ruling of March 31, 2008 N2/1-392 Beridze citizens and others v. Parliament of Georgia, II. P. .2.

It is important to note Article 85 of the Constituion which provides that an individual not having a command of the state language shall be provided with an interpreter during legal proceedings. In areas where the popula-tion does not have a command of the state language, teaching of the sta-te language and resolution of issues related to legal proceedings is to be ensured. The same rights are envisaged by the Criminal Procedure Code, which provides that a participant who does not know or does not speak the language of the criminal justice process shall be provided with an inter-preter as prescribed by this Code.² In addition, the Criminal Procedure Code provides the sentencing verdict to be translated into the native language, or another language that the defendent understands, in cases where he can not speak the language of the criminal justice process.³ Additionally, suspects of crimes will be notified, in a language they understand, of which criminal offense under the Criminal Code they are being charged with du-ring or prior to their arrest.⁴

Thus, the state has a constitutional obligation to treat those who are equal equally, and the unequal in accordance with the peculiarities of unequali-ty, unequally and differently. The right to equality before the law does not imply treating them with the same conditions irrespective of their nature and abilities. It comes only with a legal obligation to create a space that is substantially equal to each specific relationship, creates equal opportuni-ties for those that are equal, and the opposite for those that are not equal.⁵

The range of laws and regulations which can be found in Georgian Legislation serve precisely the state's obligation to protect minorities from discrimina-tion and to ensure their involvement in civic processes. However, whether or not the existing legislation is sufficient to effectively ensure their rights and protection is a separate issue that we will discuss later in this paper.

² Criminal Procedure Code, Article 11

³ Criminal Procedure Code, part 2, Article 277

⁴ Criminal Procedure Code, first part of Article 38

⁵ Constitutional Court Jugement of March 31, 2008 N2/1-392 Beridze citizens and others v. Parliament of Georgia, Il. P. .2.

The Criminal Code

Article 142 of the Criminal Code imposes sanctions for the violation of human equality. This Article includes a list of markers, such as attitudes towards religion, beliefs, national and ethnic heritage, and more. Article 142 of the Code establishes norms and sanctions of a more private nature for racial discrimination, “for committed national or racial enmity or dissidence, or humiliation of national honor and dignity.”⁶

The March 27, 2012 Amendment to Article 53 of the Criminal Code, which refers to the motive of the crime, should also be noted. Article 53.31 established that “crimes committed on the basis of race, color, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, political or other opinions, disability, citizenship, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth or social status, place of residence or discrimination on the basis of other signs of motives of intolerance shall serve as an aggravating circumstance to any relevant offenses under the Criminal Code.” So, through this amendment, the legislation imposed a stricter punishment in cases where the motive of the crime is one of the above listed in the Article Amendment: discrimination on any grounds of intolerance as indicated in the article, is considered an aggravating circumstance.

The Law on Personal Data Protection and the General Administrative Code

On 28 December 2011, Parliament adopted the Law “On Personal Data Protection” which was first launched in May 2012 (except 43 – E-55 – articles). The purpose of the law is to ensure the human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the protection of personal privacy, during personal data processing.⁷ The first part of Article 6 of the law prohibits data processing for special categories. Special categories of data include data which relates to a person’s racial or ethnic group, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade organization membership, health, sexual orientation, or criminal records, as well as biometric data which can identify the above-mentioned

⁶ Criminal Code, Article 1421

⁷ The Law «On Personal Data Protection», Article 1

features. Thus, the law creates a guarantee that a person's racial or ethnic origin, as their personal data, will be protected and the person's right to privacy will not be violated.

Prior to the enactment of the law, protection of personal data was regulated by the General Administrative Code, which entailed that public agencies have the obligation not to allow the type of information gathering, processing, storage or distribution, which was related to a person's ethnic heritage. The law on "Personal Data Protection" projected a similar responsibility to private entities.

The Civil Code

The amendments to the Civil Code, which relates to the procedure for registration of a religious organization, should be seen as a step forward in this direction. The change took place on 5 July, 2011. The Parliament of Georgia added a provision to the Civil Code which grants religious organizations the choice to register as a legal entity under public law, but at the same time still have the choice of registering as a private non-profit legal entity or not registering at all. It should also be noted that even if registered as legal entities under public law, the legal regulation of religious organizations does not happen in accordance to the "legal entity of the law" but according to the regulations for non-profit legal persons of private law.

Granting them this choice should undoubtedly be seen as a positive step, but the lack of change in other legislative acts still creates problems for those religious organizations registered under the status of "Legal Entity of Public Law." For example, the "State Property" clause of Article 3 lists the subjects who are allowed to purchase state property. The current wording of the law excludes religious organizations that are registered as Legal Entities of Public Law from being able to purchase state property. In light of the constitutional arrangement with the Orthodox Church of Georgia, where the church was granted ownership of its churches and monasteries, – other religious organizations not being allowed the same right could potentially become a basis of discrimination.

The Tax Code

The Tax Code does not recognize religious activities as economic activity and, thus, religious organizations are exempt from paying certain taxes. It should also be noted that, unlike other religious organizations, the Georgian Orthodox Church enjoys more privileges, which other religious organizations often consider to be an infringement of their own rights. The Public Defender has repeatedly responded to this problem in his reports.

Attention must be paid to Article 99, paragraph “d” of the Tax Code, according to which “the profits from the Church’s sales of crosses, candles, icons, books, and calendars for religious purposes” are exempt from income tax, a privilege awarded only to products produced by the Georgian Patriarchate, and not applicable to other religious organizations. Apart from the Georgian Orthodox Church, in this case, all other religious organizations are taxed at the normal 15% rate. The same problem is present in part 2, section “b” of Article 168 of the Tax Code. The Georgian Orthodox Church is exempt from paying property tax⁸, whereas other religious organizations get similar exemptions only for property holding in non-economic activities. Consequently, each religious organization, excluding the Patriarchate, is obliged to pay land taxes before November 15th of each year.

Religious organizations, in their form and content, are substantially equal to each other and therefore, privileges of any form granted to any one of them should be considered as discrimination. In accordance with the present case, it is recommended that the tax-related benefits be equally established for all religions. It is important that the state continue its work in this regard to correct the problem.

Broadcasting Law

Article 56 of the law is allocated to program limitations, which states that “It is forbidden to broadcast programs that create a clear and direct threat based on racial, ethnic, religious or other kinds of conflict, a group of discrimina-

⁸ Constitutional Treaty, Paragraph 5, Article 6

tion or violence or incitement”⁹ and “It is prohibited to broadcast programs which are directed to the discrimination of a person or group on the basis of ethnic background, religion, ideology, gender, sexual orientation, or any other feature or status, or placing special emphasis on these features or statuses, except when it is necessary for the content of the program, and aims to illustrate a conflict.”¹⁰ At the same time, we should consider the fact that, under this law, the public broadcaster is obliged to reflect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age and gender diversity of society.¹¹ However, unfortunately, the number of such programs is limited and minority related news and issues are rarely covered. The Public Defender also drew attention to these problems in his reports.¹²

Prisoners

The legislative steps taken to meet the religious needs of individuals in custody, and convicts, can be seen as a step in the right direction. It should be noted that on December 30, 2010, the Order №187 was issued by the Minister of Corrections of Georgia, according to which minority representative clergy, in accordance with the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia, were given the opportunity to meet with prisoners upon their request. Also, according to the Order, prisoners are given the opportunity to freely carry out religious rituals in their cells, as long as it does not violate the rights of other suspects/convicts. The above-mentioned changes are welcomed because they contribute to the prevention of religious discrimination.

In conclusion, it can be said that the legislative framework in relation to the protection of ethnic/national minorities and the facilitation of civil integration in general, is quite broad and includes many legislative and normative acts. The focus on equality and discrimination can also be seen in acts such as the Labor Code (Article 2), the General Administrative Code of Georgia (Article 4), the Law on Patient Rights (Article 6), and more. Each of them is in accordance

⁹ The Law on Broadcasting, Article 56.2.

¹⁰ Article 56.3.

¹¹ «Broadcasting» under Article 16 of the Law h) of this Article.

¹² Ombudsman’s Annual Report 2011, p. 150.

with the Constitution of Georgia and with the responsibilities taken on by the Georgian government under international human rights mechanisms.

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RULE OF LAW

According to the NCAP, four main tasks were established in relation to the rule of law. Specific activities were planned for the implementation of each task. In order to assess these activities, let us evaluate how effectively each task was accomplished and, generally, whether the tasks chosen and the activities conducted for the implementation of these tasks was sufficient to achieve the aims set out in the Concept.

Tasks:

A) The further harmonization of Georgian legislation with international obligations

After the ratification of the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities in 2005, Georgia committed to ensuring effective protection of national minorities and their civil integration. In order to implement this, it was first necessary to create an appropriate legislative framework which could create legal guarantees for national minorities. The legislation discussed above shows that several steps have been taken in this direction in recent years, and actual changes were made to the legislation of Georgia which contributed to the realization of international commitments.

It should be noted, in regards to the first task of ensuring the rule of law, that no major activities were included in the Action Plan. The identification and implementation of certain activities took place only in 2011, while other annual action plans did not take into account the implementation of any significant activities in this regard. And the fact that activities for the purpose of harmonizing have not been reflected in the Action Plan does not directly indicate the lack of need for such activities.

b) Improving access to the justice system for ethnic /national minorities

As the annual reports on the Implementation of the Action Plan suggest, the state has taken some specific steps to achieve the above-mentioned task, namely:

- Meetings were held with representatives of the Ministry of Justice and ethnic minorities, with the aim of providing legal education and civic and social integration for minorities;
- Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality held meetings with the local populations of Tsalka and Tertritskaro;
- The Innovation and Reform Center (IRC), in collaboration with the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI), took significant steps in the registration of Roma people. Unfortunately the problem has not been resolved completely and work still continues in this regard;
- Steps were taken to identify persons residing on Georgian territory, including ethnic minorities, without documentation and to provide them with legal assistance as well as naturalization;
- It should be noted that, for the purpose of raising the level of knowledge of ethnic minorities on their rights and freedoms, various legal documents as well as legal literature (including the Constitution of Georgia) were translated into Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian languages.

However, in spite of the activities implemented, there are still unresolved issues in this regard. We find that, on the one hand, the translation of legal acts into other languages is a positive thing, but the problem lies in the fact that attention is given to only the largest ethnic groups in Georgia, and other ethnic groups are not taken into account, which hinders their civil integration.

There are also problems in terms of the administration of justice. For example, the Public Defender, in his 2011 report, focused his attention on the Akhalkalaki municipal court proceedings, stating that “as it became

clear during the court session, the judge himself did not speak the national language fluently. The interpreter was only formally participating in the discussion of the case (he was only partially interpreting).”¹³ This fact, in turn, gives rise to the issue of the right to fair trial, and interferes with the realization of rights of persons who do not have fluent knowledge of the state language during the proceedings.

It should be noted that the number of planned measures aimed at improving access to the justice system are quite limited. For example, in 2010, there were no activities planned or carried out in this regard. And during the years 2011-2012, the number of planned activities was quite low. In addition, the measures that are included focus only on three main regions: Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, and Kakheti. As a result, little to no attention is given to representatives of ethnic minorities living in other regions of Georgia.

c) Providing effective protection against discriminatory treatment of ethnic minorities

A few activities were carried out within the scope of this task:

- Opening Justice buildings in areas populated with ethnic minorities in which the residents have the opportunity to receive a variety of services in one building;
- Activities carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA) which have contributed to the employment of ethnic minorities in the police force;
- Brochures were distributed to interested civil society organizations and throughout regions to better inform the public on the “Framework Convention for the Protection of the National Minorities;”
- In order for ethnic minorities to become more knowledgeable on their rights and freedoms, a compilation of international and national laws and norms relating to ethnic minorities was translated and distributed;

¹³ Ombudsman’s Annual Report 2011, p. 13.

- In order to prevent discriminatory treatment, activities were carried out in regions inhabited by ethnic minorities within the project of the Public Prosecutor.

The creation of a bill, with the initiative of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia “On the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination,” which “unites a variety of existing anti-discrimination laws and regulations under one law,” should be seen as a positive step. This bill is not aimed at granting new rights to the people, but is aimed at protecting the already-existing rights under the law.”¹⁴ The Bill defines the concept of discrimination, the range of the law, lists the main features on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited, and also explains the measures that should be taken to eliminate this discrimination. According to the Bill, there shall be a subject – the Equality Protection Inspector – set up to supervise the process of carrying out the eradication of discrimination and to guarantee equality. The law states the procedures involved in the selection and appointment of the Inspector, his rights and responsibilities, reasons for termination of authority, etc.

It should be noted that the scope of power of the Equality Protection Inspector is quite broad, such as being able to issue a resolution in case of administrative violations, and to impose a penalty for a violation of rights, on both individuals and legal entities. The initiative is a welcome step towards ensuring non-discrimination and will contribute to the further strengthening of mechanisms for the protection of rights and will likely reduce instances of violations.

Government agencies, as well as local and international non-governmental organizations, alongside the diplomatic representatives of Georgia, were all actively involved in the drafting of the Bill. Meetings were held with the following organizations to discuss the Bill: (1) NGOs working on human rights issues; (2) Representatives of religious and ethnic minori-

¹⁴ <http://www.netgazeti.ge/GE/105/News/21407/> [last viewed: 25.07.2013 0:10 - on]

ties; (3) NGOs working on women's rights and gender equality; (4) NGOs working on issues related to persons with disabilities.

The Bill was also sent for international examination to the United Nations (OHCHR), the OSCE (ODIHR), and the Council of Europe (ECRI). The Bill was also examined by a Swedish expert who was invited on the recommendation of Thomas Hammarberg. The comments, suggestions and recommendations given by the International organizations and experts were reflected in the Bill. The final version of the Bill was presented to NGOs on December 17, 2013, by the Ministry of Justice of Georgia.

However, practice shows that the protection from discriminatory treatment of minorities, especially to guarantee effective protection of their religious beliefs, has not been achieved. The religious conflicts that developed in Nigvziani, Tsintskaro, Samtatskaro and Chela in 2012–2013, despite the fact that the individuals whose rights were violated were not representatives of ethnic minorities, clearly demonstrated the problems the government faces in this regard. The problem also lies in the fact that none of the perpetrators of the threats against Muslims, the obstruction of religious rituals or the harassment have been held accountable. The state's inadequate, inefficient and discriminatory action is caused mainly by the fact that the persecution of Muslims on the basis of religion has acquired a personal nature.¹⁵

D) Raising awareness of the public on the rights of minorities, and anti-discriminatory legislation

A number of activities were carried out in this regard:

- Anti-discriminatory trainings were held throughout 2012 for the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia;
- Meetings were held among members of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender's Office.

¹⁵ <http://gdi.ge/?p=403> [last viewed on 16 December 2013].

- Lectures were conducted on topics related to ethnic minorities during basic training courses for the Ministry of Internal Affairs Academy for Patrol Police;
- A brochure was prepared on the violations of human equality and distributed to every unit of the MIA;
- In 2010, a cycle of trainings was conducted on ethnic minorities and anti-discriminatory legislation for regional and municipal agencies to enhance their qualification of civil servants.

We believe that similar kinds of trainings will benefit civil servants in raising their qualification and knowledge levels, and contribute to the prevention of human rights violations. But it is unfortunate that most of these trainings only focused on Tbilisi, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Marneuli and no attention was paid to other regions, where there is also a need for these types of trainings.

It should also be noted that during the religious conflicts in 2012–2013 there were significant flaws in upholding the law by authorities. There, they were unable to neutralize the situation and in some cases actually got involved directly in the conflict, perceiving themselves as members of the conflict. Non-governmental organizations have noted these issues repeatedly in their reports.¹⁶ This demonstrates that seminars alone are not sufficient to raise the awareness of civil servants, and that other necessary measures should be taken to eliminate the problem.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Despite the activities carried out within the framework of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration, there are still unresolved problems in terms of the protection of ethnic/national minority rights and their civil integration. This includes the problem of creating a culture of tolerance in today's civil society. As noted in the 2011 report of the Public Defender, estrangement

¹⁶ <http://gdi.ge/?p=295> [last viewed 18.12.2013].

of majority and minority groups and the existing negative stereotypes and attitudes is problematic.¹⁷ Which, of course, prevents the achievement of the goals set forth by the Concept and the creation of a democratic consolidated civil society based on common values.

The analysis reveals several important factors:

1. The activities carried out under the rule of law, especially the first two defined priority objectives, are rather limited in number;
2. Priority is given to only the largest ethnic groups when implementing activities, and less attention is given to other ethnic minorities, for example Roma, which hinders their integration into society;
3. Attention has been focused on only three major regions – those of Samtskhe–Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti, which translates into neglect of ethnic minorities living in other regions of Georgia;
4. The activities implemented for civil servants are not sufficient to raise their level of legal awareness;
5. There are gaps in the Georgian legislation which prevent the realization of rights.

¹⁷ Ombudsman's Annual Report 2011, p. 143.

The background is a solid dark blue color with several overlapping, semi-transparent, curved shapes in lighter shades of blue. These shapes create a sense of depth and movement, resembling stylized waves or abstract architectural forms. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and professional.

EDUCATION AND STATE LANGUAGE

EDUCATION AND STATE LANGUAGE

REVIEW OF THE EXISTING LEGISLATION

Georgia is a member of a number of international conventions on the rights of national minorities in education:

- The European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Articles 12 and 14 particularly focus on the right to education;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Education issues in Georgia are governed by the following laws:

- The Law on General Education;
- The Law on Higher Education;
- The Law on Vocational Education.

Article 35.1 of the Constitution of Georgia protects the right of every citizen to receive education and to choose the form of education.¹⁸ The law on “General Education” reaffirms this right to education (Article 9) and the “equal access for all” (Article 3.2. A.).¹⁹

Article 4 of the Law “On General Education” states that “the teaching language in general educational institutions shall be Georgian, while in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia it shall either Georgian or Abkhazian.” In the third paragraph of the same Article it is stated that “citizens for whom

¹⁸ The Constitution, August 24, 1995

¹⁹ Law on General Education, No. 1330/IS, 08 April 2006 ..

Georgian is not a native language have the right to acquire general education in their native language, in accordance with the national curriculum, according to the law.” In general educational institutions it is mandatory to teach in the state language, while in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia – both state languages. In the instances considered in the international treaties and agreements signed by Georgia, it is allowed to conduct teaching in a foreign language at a secondary education institution.

The licensing of general educational institutions is carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science (Article 31.3), while accreditation is issued by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, created by the Ministry of Education and Science (Article 32).

All accredited educational institutions, both public and private, are funded by state-issued vouchers allocated for each student, valid during 12 years of school education (Article 22). Article 23 of the Law on General Education provides an extension to the funding for pupils who are unable to reach the level of achievement in the education plan at the end of those 12 years.

According to Article 4.4 of the Law on General Education foreign language teaching in general education institutions is allowed only when it is provided for in international treaties. However, even in these cases it is mandatory to teach the state language as well. According to Article 5.4, besides teaching Georgian language in general education institutions, it is mandatory to teach Georgian literature, history, geography and other social sciences also in Georgian.

Article 7 of the Law on General Education, allows students to receive an education in their native language as close as possible to their place of residence and will provide increased vouchers and / or additional funding, which must be approved by the Ministry of Education and Science for the target program. For the implementation of these rights, it is essential that the linguistic minority within a school or classroom include at least three pupils at the primary level, six at secondary level and 21 students at secondary level (Article 7).

According to Government Resolution №249 of 27 September 2013 “On the determination of the general education funding per pupil to financial normative and its corresponding standard voucher amount,” Paragraph 6 of the first article of the Amendment states that “increased vouchers for the non-Georgian language public school sector... will be determined by multiplying the coefficient by 1.14, and the non-Georgian language public school sector’s increased vouchers shall be determined by multiplying the coefficient by 1.13...” In accordance, non-Georgian language schools and sectors will receive an increased voucher, which is not the case with Georgian language schools and sectors. The purpose of this is to manage the learning and native languages teaching issues related to regulation and financing.

The General Education law protects all students from all kinds of violence and provides them with the freedom to express themselves freely in their native language. In particular, Article 13, Paragraph 2, states: “Public schools are forbidden from using the learning process for religious indoctrination, proselytism and forced assimilation purposes.” This provision does not forbid public schools from celebrating state holidays and historical dates, or from conducting events which aim at establishing national and universal values. Paragraph 6 of the same article states: “Schools are obligated to protect and encourage pupils, parents and teachers to be tolerant and have mutual respect, regardless of their social, ethnic, religious, linguistic and ideological affiliation.” Paragraph 7 states “On the basis of equality, the school shall protect the individual and collective rights of minorities to use their native language, and preserve and express their culture.”

The first paragraph of Article 18 of the Law on Education guarantees the pupils, parents and teachers freedom of faith, religion, affiliations and consciousness. The second paragraph of the Article states “It is unacceptable to impose obligations on the student, parent and teacher which are fundamentally contrary to their belief, religion or conscience.”

As approved by OrderNo. 452 of the Ministry of Education and Science, on May 22, 2005, the “form of education certification regulations for externates” states that students can overcome education in externate forms in either

Georgian, Russian, Armenian or Azerbaijani languages. Externantes who are taking exams in either Russian, Armenian or Azerbaijani languages will pass the Georgian language and literature tests based on the appropriate curriculum. The translation of the exam text from Georgian into Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages is provided by the National Examination Center.

Curriculum and textbooks

According to the Law on General Education, schools are responsible for providing the education based on universal values of democracy and equality (Article 33.1.A.). This provision is more widely acknowledged in the National Education Objectives document, approved on October 18, 2004, and in different curricula. Particularly, the document on National Education Objectives states that “school education should ensure that the prospective members of society develop general communication, organizational and teamwork skills, including those for whom the state language is not the native language... to be the law-abiding and tolerant citizens as the importance of mutual respect and understanding is signified for a society to thrive in today’s dynamic, ethnically and culturally diverse world. Schools should develop habits of respect for human rights and respect for the individual in teenagers, which they will use to secure their own identity, as well as the identities of others. Teenagers should be able to implement the theoretical knowledge about basic human rights and principles in life.”²⁰ The task of the social sciences curriculum is to establish tolerant citizens with human dignity and rights.²¹

Developing anti-discrimination textbooks was directly formulated by textbook publishers in the years 2009 and 2010. But in the February 25, 2011 Order of Approval of the textbooks, this point was no longer present as one of the criteria for assessing textbooks. The requirement for diversity and intercultural education, as well as non-discriminatory textbooks, was restored for textbook publishers, and those wanting licensed textbooks, in 2012. This can

²⁰ October 18, 2004 of the Government Decree No.84 «On Approval of the National Education Objectives,» p. 2-3, see.: <http://ganatleba.org/index.php?m=112>.

²¹ Social sciences curriculum, more on this.: [Http://ncac.ge/uploads/esg2009_2010/sazogadoebrivi.pdf](http://ncac.ge/uploads/esg2009_2010/sazogadoebrivi.pdf).

be seen in particular in the January 6, 2012 and the February 25, 2011 amendments to the order (the eighth paragraph, fourth point, sub-point b.): “the textbook will not be judged and will be denied approval, if its content, design or any other sign contains discriminatory and / or defamatory elements (language, ethnicity, gender, ethnic or social origin, etc.).

The requirement of intercultural learning is reflected in the November 21, 2008 issue of Professional Standards for Teachers, “The teacher is familiar with inclusive education, as well as multicultural and multilingual approaches and principles, and uses it in his own practice.” Further details on the intercultural aspects are reflected in the teacher’s subject matter standards, particularly in the Georgian as a second language, social sciences and foreign languages teacher standards.

Georgia is a member of various international organizations for whom intercultural education is a major factor, and Georgia, as a member state, contributes to the decisions taken by these organizations. In this regard, the Council of Europe should be particularly distinguished for developing four fundamental documents in recent years. These documents define the intercultural education policies of the member states of the Council of Europe. One such document is the final declaration of the permanent education commission, during the 21st session (Athens, 10–12 November 2003). The declaration was specific to intercultural education. The Wroclaw Declaration (9–10 December 2004) should also be noted, the action plan of which was adopted during the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, 16–17 May 2005), as well as the October 4, 2005, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation №1720 on Religion and Education.

According to the Declaration of Athens, it is important for the Council of Europe to: “a) re-launch conceptual research in the field of intercultural education; b) promote the development of mutual respect for human rights and diversity; c) carry out measures in the field of teaching methods and learning opportunities; d) develop programs focused on communication and mutual understanding, in particular – through language learning; e) assist the Member States in incorporating intercultural elements in their educa-

tion policy; f) develop quality assurance mechanisms for democratic and intercultural principles; g) strengthen intercultural education and diversity management through such training; h) assist the Member States to realize that cultural, ethnic and religious diversity are not just important issues for schools, but for society as a whole.”

The October 4, 2005, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation №1720 on religion and education, provides specific recommendations to the Committee of Ministers in implementing intercultural education and educational systems across Europe.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Anti-discrimination

According to Article 4 of the Law on Higher Education, “the language of instruction in higher education institutions is Georgian, and in Abkhazia – also Abkhazian. Instruction in other languages, in addition to individual training courses, is permitted if it is provided by an international agreement or agreed with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.”

For a branch of a foreign higher education institution to conduct business in Georgia, they need to acquire licensing and/or accreditation in accordance with the international agreements and national legislation of Georgia (Article 14.4).

The Law on Higher Education obliges all higher education institutions to treat all students and staff of higher education institutions equally (Article 16.1. D) and prohibits any discrimination on the grounds of religious or ethnic affiliation (Article 3.2). Article 3.4 prohibits the existence of any religious or political organization in universities.

The Law on Higher Education requires the confidentiality of information about a student’s religious affiliation, by academic staff or administration, for

which it becomes known during the learning process (Article 43.4). Students must have equal access to the material of the higher education institution – technical, library, information services and other means (Article 43.1. G).

Access to higher education

Article 43.1 of the Law on Higher Education provides for the issuance of state scholarships from the university or other sources, as well as financial and material assistance for students of the university. In special circumstances, the government shall implement a number of social programs for students with financial need (Article 6.1., Gda 52.8). This article takes into account funding of 15 Azerbaijani and 15 Armenian students annually within the social program of higher education.

The adopted amendments to the Law on Higher Education on November 19, 2009 determine the number of students who would complete the Georgian language program. The law also determines that a higher education institution can admit students based on the results of the general skills exams alone, carried out in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages. National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (formerly the National Center for Educational Accreditation) determines the number of such students to be admitted by the institutions of higher education at 5% (out of total students to be admitted) each for Armenian and Azerbaijani language speakers, and 1% for Abkhazian and Ossetian language speakers (Article 52.51). In addition, with the consideration of the number of students accepted based on the test scores of the national examination in only general skills in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages, with the motivational decision of higher education institutions and the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science, it is possible to change the allocation of a percentage within the range of its total.

The above-mentioned rule on the enrollment of students in higher education institutions based only on Abkhazian and Ossetian language test results went into effect at the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year (Article 90.23). The established new system of enrollment of national minority representative

students in public universities is temporary and will stay in effect through the 2018-19 academic years (Article 90.25).

In addition, it was established that the percentage of seats available for the enrollment of students based only on the results of the general skills portion in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages on the entry exams does not include the seats allocated for certified specialist academic higher education programs.

The Georgian Language Training Education Program also works in accordance with the above-mentioned law (Article 52.5), which in the national exam includes only general skills in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages, test results based on accredited higher education institutions or the newly-established licensed higher education institutions in the transfer of a citizen's skills – the skills and knowledge (writing, reading, listening, speaking) the grasp of the Georgian language at a level that is necessary to continue their studies for a Bachelor's degree as a certified doctor / dentist / veterinarian or certified specialist educational program. Consequently, the Georgian language training educational program provides the necessary skills and knowledge for the continuation of higher education. After completion of the Georgian Language Training Education Program, the enrolled students, on the basis of the test scores for only the general skills in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages, are required to continue their studies in Georgian for their Bachelor's degree in certified doctor / dentist / veterinarian or certified specialist and get the appropriate number of credits specified in the legislation for the given educational program (Article 2. qQ 35, the program (Article 473.4).

All of the legal entities of public law – the higher education institutions – are required to enroll all those students, who are in the Georgian language preparation program, based on the results of the national examinations in general skills in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages.

According to the Law on Higher Education, the Government is authorized to determine the volume and the amount of state grant funding for those

students who are participating in the Georgian language training education program (Section 6.1. C2).

After the completion of the one-year Georgian language preparation program, students have the choice of continuing their Bachelor's studies as a certified doctor / dentist / veterinarian or certified specialist educational program only in Georgian. The Georgian Language Training is a 60 credit Education Program (Article 47, 3.2), and enrolling is mandatory during the first academic year. After the completion of the program, the higher education institution issues a certificate of completion to the students.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

On March 28, 2007, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Law on Professional Education, which regulates the professional education system. One of the main goals of the law is to provide professional development in terms of job opportunities for people at risk of social alienation (Article 5, paragraph “f,” above). Article 6, paragraph “c” reflects on one of the most important tasks of the Law, which includes developing vocational education relevant to local needs and creating a network of educational centers.

According to the Law on Professional Education, the professional training center is to ensure the equal treatment of students regardless of their ethnic origin and religion (Article 31.1. B).

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Preschool education related issues are also regulated by law.²² Preschools are under the control of local governments and they function within the competence of local authorities.²³

²² Law on Local Self-Government (Article 16, p).

²³ Law on Local Self-Government (Article 16, p).

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN THE DIRECTION OF EDUCATION AND THE STATE LANGUAGE

Preschool Education

For the realization of ensuring the availability of pre-school education for ethnic/national minorities, under the Education and the state language, certain steps were taken during 2009-2013 by the Ministry of Education and Science. Specifically, on March 31, 2009, by Order of the Minister of Education and Sciences, the Georgian language program was approved. “In 2009, the Ministry carried out a sub-program “Supporting the Learning of Georgian in Preschool Education in Minority Regions.” Under the sub-program, three public schools and five preschools were selected from Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti region (Dmanisi №1 Preschool, Bolnisi village, Nakhiduri public schools, Marneuli №3 Preschool, Ninotsminda Public School №4, Ninotsminda preschool “Tsitsernaksa,” Akhalkalaki Public School №2, Akhalkalaki №2 Preschool, Akhaltsikhe Preschool №3) and in each preschool education centers were opened.²⁴ 84,690 GEL was allocated for the program by the Ministry of Education and Science.²⁵

In 2012, the experts of the program completed work on the manual which is based on the learning principles of Georgian as a second language at an early age, and also takes into account the cognitive and social-emotional development of preschool children. The manual is available in electronic form in the ministry’s electronic library website [elibrary.emis.ge/ge/books/details/154].

According to the program of the Ministry of Education and Science, a pilot program for Georgian as a second language was tested in the above mentioned centers. The teachers of the centers were trained. 147 ethnic minority children participated in the pilot program. During the years 2010-2012 – due to the lack of educational resources for the continued operation of these centers, only three of the eight centers remained functional: Marneuli №3 Preschool, Ninotsminda preschool “Tsitsernaksa,” and Akhalkalaki №2 Pre-

²⁴ Office of the State Minister’s report.

²⁵ Office of the State Minister’s report.

school. In 2013, with the active cooperation and support of the Ministry of Education's Division for Preschool Education with municipalities, all centers have resumed trainings and education. Also in 2013 an additional 24 ethnic minority representative preschool teachers were trained by the Ministry of Education and Science and instruction manuals for Georgian as a second language were published and given to preschools in ethnic minority regions. Based on the activities carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science during the years 2010-2013, and the statistical information provided by the regions and local municipalities, the following trends have been observed in the results of the monitoring report of the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender's Office.

Two major problems loom in non-Georgian preschool education institutions: (a) the availability of preschool education, (b) the provision of quality education in preschools. It should be noted that both the above-mentioned problems are common in the preschool education system of Georgia in general, but it is more clearly seen in regions with dense non-Georgian populations. The issue is particularly relevant given the importance of early childhood education in the development of the student's social-cognitive, emotional and linguistic competence.

Access to preschools

Preschool availability is problematic throughout Georgia. In 2005-2006, the Department of Statistics estimated that only 55% of preschool-aged children are actually attending preschool. These figures are much higher in urban areas than in rural areas (in the city 67 %, in the village 43 %).²⁶ More recent data is not available in this regard, but according to research conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Children's Fund, there is increasing availability of preschool institutions and the enrollment is now around 60% countrywide. The situation is significantly worse in the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions. Based on the information provided by regional administrations and local municipalities, the following picture emerges:

²⁶ The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), see.: <http://www.unicef.org/georgia/childhood.html>.

Samtskhe-Javakheti

Name of municipality	Total number of preschools	Total number of non-Georgian language preschools	Number of ethnic minority children	The number of preschool aged ethnic minority children
Adigeni	7	0	2	12
Aspindza	4	0	10	60
Akhaltsikhe	15	1	110	950
Akhalkalaki	11	9	610	1776
Borjomi	10	0	24	157
Ninotsminda	7	7	360	1367
Total	54	17	1116	4322

Kvemo Kartli

Region/City	Number of non-Georgian language preschools	The number of preschool aged ethnic minority children	The number of children attending preschool in areas densely populated with ethnic minorities
Tetrtskaro	0	179	30
Marneuli	4	-	50
Dmanisi	0	890	12
Bolnisi	0	2200	187
Gardabani	16	-	869
Tsalka	0	20	0

კახეთი

Region/City	Number of non-Georgian language preschools	The number of preschool aged ethnic minority children	The number of children attending preschool in areas densely populated with ethnic minorities
Akhmeta	-	-	-
Gurjaani	0	13	13
Dedoplistskaro	0	71	15
Telavi	1	361	58
Lagodekhi	0	90	90
Sagaredjo	0	900	37
Sighnagi	0	14	14
Kvareli	-	-	-

Access to preschools does not exceed 25% for various possible reasons, which is significantly lower than the country-wide average.

The low number of children enrolled in preschool is not due to a lack of desire from parents to have their children in preschool. As the 2009–2011 Council of National Minorities of the Public Defender’s Office Monitoring and Evaluation Report suggests, parents in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti want their children to attend preschool, but these facilities are not available to them (see the reports for the years 2009–2011). This trend and the problem of accessibility were also visible in the results of the 2013 focus-groups conducted in Marneuli and Akhalkalaki with parents and representatives of organizations working in the education system.

The Quality of Education in Preschools

Another important issue is the quality of pre-school education. The Ministry of Education and Science has taken concrete steps to improve the learning process in preschools. In particular, the Ministry of Education and Science, in collaboration with UNICEF, developed standards for the National Curriculum and Assessment Center for Early Learning. The learning process should be carried out in accordance with the standard of preschool institutions. For the implementation of these standards, the National Curriculum and Assessment Center, in collaboration with UNICEF, published the following manuals: (a) The Physical Environment for Preschool Institutions (Principles and Practice); (b) Early Learning and Development Standards; (c) Guide for Preschool Teachers; (d) Management guide for Preschool Institutions; (e) Preschool Education Program; and (f) Evaluation Form for Preschool-aged Children. The National Curriculum and Assessment Center began a gradual training in the new standards.

Teachers and administrators of preschools located in regions densely populated with non-Georgian are less likely to possess the information about Early Learning and Development Standards. It should be noted that, in contrast to the general education curriculum, the preschool education curriculum is not available in the native languages of ethnic minorities.²⁷

²⁷ Letterhead of the Legal Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, Deputy Public Defender № 08-2-13/1907 (14.-2.2012).

It should also be mentioned that significant methodological manuals are not available for non-Georgian language preschool instructors and teachers in their native languages. At the same time, the administration and teachers of these preschool institutions have not been trained in the new teaching methods for the introduction of new standards and programs. Consequently, the quality of education in non-Georgian preschools remains problematic. The only professional development and quality assurance measures are implemented for Georgian as a Second Language teaching programs.

General Education

In accordance with the Law on General Education of 2009, there are 234 non-Georgian language schools, and 170 non-Georgian language sectors functioning in Georgia (404 non-Georgian schools and sectors combined):

Language of instruction	Schools with mixed language		Schools with one language	
	Number of Schools		Number of Schools	
Azerbaijani	124		94	
Armenian	140		124	
Russian	135		14	
Ossetian	3		1	
Other	2		1	
Total	404		234	

*Ministry of Education and Science*²⁸

It should be noted that the data has changed dramatically since the 2011 census. In particular, according to the 2011 data, there are 216 non-Georgian language public schools, and 89 non-Georgian language sectors functioning in Georgia. The number of schools decreased by 18 schools, while the sectors decreased by 81:

²⁸ S.Tabatadze, Peace, Democracy and Development Institute, 2010 edition of “Cultural Dialogue and Civic Consciousness,” the article “Intercultural Education in Georgia,” p. 85

Language of instruction	Schools with mixed language		Schools with one language	
	Number of Schools		Number of Schools	
Azerbaijani	123		88	
Armenian	133		116	
Russian	61		12	
Remark: Some of the schools are trilingual, so the number in the table exceeds 305				
Total	305		216	

According to data from 2013, the declining trend continues. However, is not as sharp as was observed in 2009-2011. The number of schools has decreased by three, while the number of sectors by 12. There are 213 non-Georgian language schools and 77 non-Georgian language sectors in Georgia today:

Non-Georgian public schools by region, 2013

Region	Azerbaijani	Russian	Armenian	Total
Adjara				
Tbilisi	1	2	1	4
Imereti				
Kakheti	4	1		5
Samegrelo-Upper Svaneti				
Samtskhe-Javakheti		4	96	100
Kvemo Kartli	80	4	20	104
Total	85	11	117	213

Non-Georgian sectors by region

Region	Georgian, Azerbaijani	Georgian, Russian	Georgian, Russian Azerbaijani	Georgian, Russian Armenian	Georgian, Armenian	Total
Adjara		6			1	7
Tbilisi	1	9	1	5		16
Imereti		1				1
Kakheti	6	3			1	10
Samegrelo-Upper Svaneti		3				3
Samtskhe-Javakheti		1		2	5	8
Kvemo Kartli	21	8	2		1	32
Total	28	31	3	7	8	77

The difference between the years 2009 and 2013 is obvious. It should be noted that the Ministry of Education implemented the optimization process and a reduction in the number of schools is associated with this process. Georgian schools were also optimized during this period. However, there are obvious problems with regard to the Russian-speaking sectors. There were only 61 schools left in 2011, from the 135 in 2009, and by 2013 a total of only 52 Russian schools or sectors were still functional. That is almost one-third of Russian schools and sectors.

The problems caused by the closure of the Russian-language sectors are displayed in the reports of the Ombudsman's Office, Council of National Minorities Monitoring Group. According to the report, the closing of Russian-language sectors has caused a problem in the accessibility to education for the Russian-language population. It is a problem for Russian language pupils to acquire an education in a different language. It is possible for these pupils to attend other Russian language schools, but then there is the problem of transportation, since these schools are located far from the residence of the pupils.²⁹

During the years 2010-2013, the Ossetian Sunday School in the 11th Tbilisi Public school was funded by the Ministry of Education and Science "Minority Language Protection Program." Twenty students in the Ossetian Sunday School had the opportunity to study the Ossetian language, culture, history, folklore, Caucasian dances, and songs.

Native Language Education in Non-Georgian Language Schools

A serious problem indicated by teachers and parents in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti is the quality of teaching of the native language. The Ministry of Education and Science in 2006-2007, in collaboration with the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, developed a curriculum project for teaching Armenian and Azerbaijani as a native language, with Armenian and Azerbaijani experts participating in the development of the curriculum. In accordance with the designed curriculum, native language

²⁹ Monitoring Group in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti report.

teachers in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions were trained.³⁰ However, the Ministry of Education has not continued work in this direction since 2008. The curriculum projects that were developed have not been approved, and the work in the creation of new textbooks and the implementation of the curriculum has ceased. Accordingly, the teaching quality of Armenian and Azerbaijani as a native language remains problematic.

The Ministry of Education and Science has not continued work in this direction in the years 2010–2013. Consequently, the teaching of native languages of minorities is not part of the national curriculum, since there isn't a curriculum plan. These items have not been included in the list of the Law on General Education. The only document where these curriculums are mentioned is in the national curriculum subject hourly grid. Along with the absence of a national curriculum plan, there is an absence of textbooks catered to the educational curriculum. The native language instruction is carried out according to the Armenia and Azerbaijan national curriculums and textbooks, which are unfamiliar to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, since there doesn't exist a translated version of these textbooks.³¹

It should be noted that the net hours of native language teaching is also problematic. The net hours determine the number of hours per week that are to be dedicated to teaching the native language, which in this case is made up of five academic hours. Non-Georgian language schools learn the native language using the Armenia and Azerbaijan curriculum plan and textbooks and their primary academic curriculum includes seven hours of training a week. Consequently, the difference in the net hours creates serious problems for teachers, and they are not able to fully pass the native language program during the academic year.

The above mentioned problem is especially acute in the 12th grade of Azerbaijani and Armenian schools. According to information provided by the Ministry of Education and Science, instruction in the 12th grade is carried out

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Letter head of the Legal Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, Deputy Public Defender № 08-2-13/1907 (14.-2.2012).

using Armenian- and Azerbaijan-issued textbooks. It should be noted that in Azerbaijan, general education continues for 11 years, so there exists no native language textbook for the 12th year.³² In Armenia, the general education extended to 12 years in 2009.³³ Accordingly, by 2010, the twelfth grade textbooks had not yet been accepted in any Armenian schools.

Following the lack of curriculum for minority languages, there is no standard for the native-language teachers either. This creates a serious issue in terms of the implementation of multilingual education reform and the quality of native language teaching. The low quality of native language teaching also affects the learning of other subjects, including Georgian as a second language, as linguistic transfer is performed inefficiently. Therefore, it is essential to improve the specific mechanisms of teaching the native language of ethnic/national minorities, as a subject, which will contribute to raising the overall quality of education in non-Georgian language schools.

Curricula and Textbooks

According to the Law on General Education, schools are responsible for providing students with an education based on universal values of democracy and equality (Article 33.1.A.). This is more widely discussed in the document on National Education Objectives and Curriculum of Various Subjects, approved on October 18, 2004, more specifically, detailed information in this regard is presented in the education anti-discrimination legislation analysis section of the document.

The general objectives of the national curriculum and national education plan are more or less reflected in the development of intercultural sensitivity in pupils – in particular the general part of the curriculum through a variety of competences that the education system needs to develop multilingual, pluri-lingual competence in a student:

³² <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002112/211298e.pdf>.

³³ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002112/211297e.pdf>.

“Multilingual (competence). Multilingual competence is the inner ability to acquire and use languages. A pupil in any subject acquires knowledge and skills through linguistic activities. Accordingly, all subjects may contribute to the development of the student’s multilingual competence.”

Encouraging the development of civil and social competence is also included, in particular:

“Social and civic competence. Social and civic competence refers to the development of skills and values necessary for integration into civilian life, such as constructive collaboration, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, decision making, tolerance, respect for others’ rights, and recognition of democratic principles.”

It should also be noted that in spite of the existence of important competencies in terms of intercultural competence described in the National Curriculum, “intercultural competence” is not directly represented in the National Curriculum’s transversal competencies, which can be considered a weakness of the National Curriculum Plan.

Article 5 of the general provisions in the National Curriculum determines that schools should promote mutual respect and equality principles.

The requirements for the development of intercultural competence are reflected in various subject area curricula. In spite of the achievement in the spirit of the Law on Education, National Education Objectives, and the National Curriculum, significant issues were revealed in textbooks in the period of 2009–2013. Here is a summary of the work of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in this area and the major issues in this process:

Translation of Textbooks in Minority Languages

The approved translation of textbooks for non-Georgian language schools by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center into Armenian, Azerbaijani

and Russian languages continues; Books have been translated for I, II, III, VII, VIII, IX, XI, XII grades. During the 2011-2012 academic year, the following textbooks were translated for the 4th and 10th grade into Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani: Science (Nature, biology, physics), mathematics, and art subjects. The translations were completed in January 2011.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, within the “textbooks for the non-Georgian language sector pupils, improvement of accessibility sub-program,” the Ministry of Education and Science distributed bilingual history and geography textbooks free of charge for pupils of the 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th and 12th classes. Additionally, the “Georgian as a second language textbooks” were given, free of charge, to all non-Georgian language school pupils in classes I-IV. The budget of this sub-program was 639,210 GEL, the number of pupils involved was 35,874, while the number of textbooks was 75,895 units. During the 2009-2010 academic years, 6,025 non-Georgian language school 9th graders were provided with history of Georgia, geography and civic education textbooks.

The Curriculum and Assessment Center published the newspaper “Dialogue” during 2009-2010 to promote the implementation of the school curriculum. “Dialogue” was translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages and was made available to non-Georgian schools. In addition, since 2011, and following the introduction of a new curriculum and textbooks by the Ministry of Education and Science for primary, secondary and basic level methodological guides for teachers of the subject were developed. The above-mentioned guidelines for primary class teachers were translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages by the Center for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations in 2011 and 2012, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, Memorandum of Understanding, and with the financial support of “Open Society– Georgia Foundation.” Unfortunately, similar methodical manuals were not translated for basic and secondary level subjects and they are not available for non-Georgian language school teachers.

In 2011-2013 non-Georgian language schools were provided with the translated curriculum and textbooks. New curriculum and new textbooks were introduced in 2011. The introduction of a new curriculum and new textbooks for grades 1-6 in non-Georgian language schools began in the 2012-2013 aca-

demic year and schools were provided with translated textbooks. Introducing the new curriculum and textbooks to 7-12 grades was to be implemented for the 2013-2014 school year. However, the Ministry of Education and Science failed to translate and provide these textbooks to schools in the 2013-2014 academic year. Accordingly, non-Georgian language schools are still working with old curriculum and textbooks in 2013, which is a serious problem and is discriminatory towards non-Georgian language school pupils.

There are several visible problems illustrated in the research and reports on the curriculum and textbooks: (a) the problem of quality translation for the textbooks still stands, (b) stereotyped material is often observed in the textbooks, also many intercultural points of view are not taken into consideration and some of the information is distorted, (c) only 70% of the textbooks have been translated, the remaining 30% is in the state language. The portion of the material in the state language is difficult for pupils to understand because neither the pupils, teachers or parents speak the national language well enough to incorporate the material. Hence, in many cases teachers are simply leaving out the material in the state-language.

We will discuss each issue in more detail.

1. Textbooks Need Improvement in Intercultural Terms

Requirements for creating an anti-discriminatory textbook were directly formulated for the publishers of the textbook, in particular, according to the sixth paragraph of the accompanying instruction manual of Article 4, Order No. 019/n issued on March 15 2010 by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center which determines the use of textbooks, the textbook will not be assessed and therefore not given permission for use, if b) the content, design or any other aspect contains discriminatory elements (on the basis of language, nationality, ethnic or social origin, etc.). In the same Order, regarding textbook evaluation criteria it is insisted that: “it promotes and encourages the development of a non-stereotypical, diverse way of thinking and believing in pupils.”³⁴

³⁴ On 15 March 2010, the National Curriculum and Assessment Center, No. 019 / n of the Order for “the Approval of the Government”, see.: <http://ncac.ge/index.php?m=791>.

It should be noted that according to Order №072 issued on March 30, 2009, by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center which determines the use of textbooks, and the accompanying instruction manual on the evaluation criteria for the textbooks, it was noted that: “d) the content of the textbooks should take into consideration the diversity of Georgian students on the basis of race, color, language, sex, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property or social status, as well as place of residence.”³⁵ In the 2011 order on the use of textbooks, this rule is no longer included as one of the evaluation criteria.

In the 2011 approval of textbooks, the requirement for the reflection of Georgia’s diversity and the spread of non-stereotypical views was removed. There was an article in the rule which stated that approval for use would not be issued to textbooks where “the content, design or any other sign contains discriminatory elements (on the basis of language, nationality, ethnic or social origin, etc.) but it was not reflected in the textbook evaluation criteria. This article had been removed completely in the 2011 approval criteria for textbooks. Hence, this rule does not apply to the approval of textbooks for grades 1-6. It should be noted that the article was only added during the 2012 Amendment: on January 6, 2012, by order of the Minister of Education and Science, the rule came into effect for the approval process of 7-12 grade textbooks, but in practical terms the effect was not that large (a detailed analysis of textbook problems in regards to intercultural issues can be seen in the study on “The aspects of intercultural studies in Georgia’s primary education”).

Various studies have shown that primary and secondary school textbooks, in some cases do not reflect the country’s ethnic and religious diversity, and are not free from the stereotypical tendencies. Detailed information in this regard can be viewed in the available reports.

The issues related to the reflection of intercultural aspects in textbooks are especially important- on the one hand in terms of creating an anti-discrim-

³⁵ March 30, 2009, the National Curriculum and Assessment Center, No. 072 Order for «the Approval of the Government», see.: L <http://ganatleba.org/index.php?m=124>.

inatory learning environment for minority students, and on the other hand to engrain intercultural sensitivity and tolerance in students of the majority, an aspect which is essential for the civil integration process where the wish for integration from minorities is just as important as the high level of acceptance from the majority. Therefore, perhaps, it would be better for the new NCAP to also focus on creating majority oriented policies, especially in the field of education and the media.

2. The Problem of Textbook Translation into National Minority Languages

The process of translation into minority languages in Georgia began in 2005 and has continued systematically for both the curriculum and textbooks. In this regard, there is a constant discussion on the poor quality of translation, especially of Armenian and Azerbaijani textbooks. There is an improvement in translation visible every year. It should be noted that since 2011 the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender's Office has been involved in the editing process of translated textbooks for grades 1-6. Unfortunately, since 2012, this process has failed to expand into the other grades as the Ministry of Education and Science and the Public Defender's Office, along with publishing houses, did not carry out the translation of textbooks for grades 7-12. Consequently, in 2013, non-Georgian language schools received textbooks for music, art and natural sciences only in the state language, causing serious problems with teachers. During the focus groups conducted in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda it was noted that teachers are forced to use old versions of the textbooks for these subjects from the library. Also, there is the frequent use of textbooks from neighboring countries, or old textbooks in these subjects, since using the Georgian versions is impossible for them.

3. The Issue of Using Bilingual Textbooks

The translation process of textbooks has changed since 2011. According to the Ministry's decision, only 70% of the material in textbooks is translated, while the remaining 30% is left in the state language. The purpose of this initiative was to promote bilingual education reform, but this initiative was carried out with serious flaws:

1. The 70%–30% translation principle of textbooks is not based on any scientific and methodical evidence and does not correspond to any learning principle on the integrated study of subjects. Accordingly, the mechanical percentile division turned out to be absolutely ineffective and to have only a negative affect;
2. Subject teachers who do not speak the state language are unable to use the textbooks properly, since they don't understand the content of the 30% of the textbooks left in the state language;
3. The parents of students attending non-Georgian language schools are unable to assist their children, since they do not understand the material in the existing textbooks;
4. In many cases, the translation is so illogical in its distribution that it cannot be understood by the pupils, parents, and teachers and thus often both the material in their native language and the state language is left unlearned.

The focus groups conducted in Akhalkalaki and Marneuli identified the following solutions to the existing problems in terms of the bilingual translation of textbooks:

1. Teachers are using the textbooks from the previous year in subjects where such textbooks are available. However, often there are certain chapters in the current textbook that are not included in last year's textbooks so the teachers request assistance from their colleagues to comprehend the sections written in Georgian;
2. Teachers use textbooks imported from neighboring states that exist in their school libraries and became useful after the application of the 70%–30% translation method;
3. They have been translating the Georgian portions of textbooks with the help of Georgian language teachers in schools where resources allow;
4. Teachers just leave out and do not explain (and don't give homework on) the material in Georgian.

The Professional Development and Certification of Teachers

The Teacher's Professional Development Center (TPDC), under the Ministry of Education and Science, implemented the following measures in 2009–2013:

The Teacher's Professional Development Center and the Center for Curriculum and Assessment developed professional standards, as well as basic / secondary subject standards in eight subject areas. Standards were developed for primary school teachers. The standards developed by the TPDC have been translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages, and 900 copies were distributed in the resource centers of non-Georgian language schools.³⁶ It should be noted that standards for Armenian and Azerbaijani native language teachers are not included in the developed Standard and Certification regulation subject groups.

The Teacher's Professional Standards, issued November 21, 2008 states, "The teacher is familiar with inclusive education, as well as multicultural and multilingual approaches and principles, and uses them in the planning and implementation of his practices."³⁷ The intercultural aspects of the subject matter are also described in more detail in the Teachers' Subject Standards, particularly in the social sciences and foreign language teacher standards.³⁸

It should be noted that Order No. 1101, issued on December 4, 2009 by the Ministry of Education and Science, approved the certification regulations for teachers which determine the conducting of the teacher certification exams, the issuance of teaching certificates, renewal of the teaching certificate and conditions for disqualification of the status of a certified teacher before his term. According to the regulations, the certification exam will be conducted in Georgian, and, in Abkhazia, also in Abkhazian language. The certification exam is also conducted in Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages for those candidates who wish to teach in non-Georgian language schools. Despite this provision in the certification regulations, in the period of 2009-2013, the National Center of Examination of the Ministry of Education and Science has not provided the tests in Armenian, Russian and Azerbaijani languages, and thus, non-Georgian language teachers were not able to pass the certification process in their native languages.

³⁶ Office of the State Minister for Reintegration, "National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan" Implementation Report, 2009.

³⁷ Professional Standards, see.: http://tpdc.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88&Itemid=93&lang=ka.

³⁸ Teachers' Subject Standards, see.: http://tpdc.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=89&Itemid=94&lang=ka.

The TPDC has taken certain steps to assist in the certification process for teachers. Since 2008, the journal “Teacher,” has been published, which is a fairly good resource for teachers. In 2008, four issues were published. Along with this, a three-part supplementary manual for teacher certification was also published. TPDC also published a guide to intercultural education, so intercultural and bilingual education is reflected in the Teacher’s Professional Standards. The TPDC, along with a non-governmental organization and in collaboration with and with the financial assistance of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, published 12 additions of “Teacher” and translated the teachers’ manuals into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. 1290 copies were distributed to non-Georgian schools in 2008–2011. Through the same project, a trilingual web portal (Georgian Armenian, Azerbaijani) was created, www.ganatileba.ge, which provided information about changes in the education system, as well as teacher textbooks, curricula standards, as well as legal acts. This information has not been developed in Russian; it is not available to Russian-language schools. In 2011, in collaboration with one of the NGOs and TPDC, with the financial support of the fund “Open Society Georgia,” the School Director Standards, developed by the TPDC, and the “Supplementary Manual for School Directors,” were translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages for directors of non-Georgian language schools. It should be noted that since the translation process ceased in 2011, the translation of supplementary materials for teachers from NGOs stopped and there is no longer any helpful methodological literature available for non-Georgian language schools in their native languages.

As a result of the analysis of various studies, the monitoring research done by the Tolerance Center under the Public Defender’s Office, and the statistical information provided by the TPDC, the following problems were observed in terms of the training and certification of teachers:

- (a) Even though the Teacher’s Professional Standard includes an intercultural component, in the teacher’s professional development program neither private providers, nor the trainings organized by the Teacher’s House included trainings in the direction of intercultural programs. Besides this, little attention is devoted to intercultural strategies, intercultural sensitivity, or related topics on the certificate exams. Accordingly, teachers have

no motivation to develop professionally in these directions (Intercultural Education in Georgia, 2010, Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, CIPDD).

- (b) The vocational development program is not available to teachers, because the trainings organized by both private providers and the Teacher's House is conducted in the state language. There are very few teachers who speak the state language in regions densely populated by ethnic/national minorities. Hence, non-Georgian language teachers living in such regions do not have the opportunity to participate in the teacher's professional development programs, which reflects on the curriculum quality and the academic cognitive development of the pupils.
- (c) The certification exam is not held in minority native languages which deprives them of motivation. They lack professional development and are discriminated against since they are unable to use the benefits associated with the certification. The existing statistics clearly show a low level of desire for the certification within the ethnic/national minorities groups, and the statistical analysis demonstrates the low level of accomplishment in certification for non-Georgian speaking teachers, since most of them were not able to pass the certification.

The Data on the Non-Georgian Language Teachers from Densely Settled Regions Registered for the Certification Exams 2010-2013

City	2013	2012	2011	2010	Total
Aspindza	0	0	4	2	6
Akhalkalaki	5	3	3	3	14
Akhaltzikhe	11	13	3	2	29
Bolnisi	9	16	4	3	32
Borjomi	1	1	3	0	5
Gardabani	17	25	12	3	57
Dmanisi	6	33	5	1	45
Tetritskaro	3	9	2	3	17
Marneuli	27	62	18	13	120
Ninotsminda	4	7	0	1	12
Tsalka	6	9	17	6	38
Total	89	178	71	37	375

The number of those registered for the certification exam is numerically very low in relation to the number of teachers in these schools. It should also be noted that only 5% were able to pass the exam and acquire the status of teacher. Only 13 were able to pass from densely settled regions. The statistical charts showcased below clearly demonstrate the problems existing with the certification of non-Georgian language teachers.

Certified Subject Teachers from Densely Settled Regions

City	2012	2011	2010	Total
Akhaltzikhe	0	1	0	1
Gardabani	1	0	0	1
Dmanisi	1	0	0	1
Marneuli	0	1	0	1
Rustavi	4	3	1	8
Tsalka	1	0	0	1
Akhalkalaki	0	0	0	0
Ninotsminda	0	0	0	0
Total	7	5	1	13

(d) Despite the Georgian as a second language standards and bilingual standards developed in 2010, the National Examination Center has not conducted teacher certifications in either of these directions, which can result in a serious hindrance in the non-Georgian school reform process. This is a problem for Georgian as a Second Language. The teachers for Georgian as a Second Language passed the certification exams in the direction of Georgian as a Second Language, since those exams were not offered by the National Testing Center and the government did not request the proof of competence in teachers in this regard. In 2012 these teachers were cut off from the certification addition, with the motive that they had already passed the certification in Georgian as a native language and were teaching another subject: Georgian as a Second Language. This problem is still unresolved and the teachers teaching Georgian as a Second Language are still discriminated against. Also the inability to take the certification exams for this subject, as well as certification for bilingual teachers, severely reduces their motivation, harms their professional development, fails to attract new teachers to the profession and overall hinders reforms in this regard.

- (e) The standards do not exist for Armenian and Azerbaijani as native languages and, accordingly native language teachers do not have the opportunity of professional development, or certification, which, on the one hand has a negative effect on the teaching process, and, on the other hand is discriminatory towards the teachers of these subjects. They do not have the opportunity to benefit from the teacher certifications or other social benefits.
- (f) The problem of aging teachers in non-Georgian language schools. 70% of the teachers in non-Georgian language schools are over 41, while 20% are over 61. This means that most of them will have to be replaced during the next 20 years.

The Sex/Age Structure of Teachers in Non-Georgian Language Schools

Age (years)	Male	Female	Total
<21	1	8	9
21-30	325	1564	1889
31-40	294	2275	2569
41-50	411	2776	3187
51-60	929	3366	4295
61-70	869	1307	2176
71-80	456	318	774
81-90	45	5	50
Total	3330	11619	14949

Trainings in new human resources have not taken place in recent years. Non-Georgian language applicants were unable to enroll in higher education institutions before 2005–2010; therefore, it was impossible to attract new people to a teacher’s profession. Since 2010, after the affirmative action program went into effect, it has become possible to recruit students to the teaching profession, but the lack of incentives and certification mechanisms hinders this process. Consequently, there is a serious danger of having a shortage of teachers in non-Georgian schools in the near future. This trend is already evident for teachers of certain disciplines, particularly science, foreign languages and mathematics.

School Graduation Exams

In order to increase the role of schools and improve the quality of teaching in schools, the Ministry of Education and Science established the rule for the final compulsory graduation exams in 2011. The graduation exams will be based on the school curriculum. Tests were conducted in the following subjects: Georgian language and literature, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, and foreign languages. In addition, the school final exams will be required in order for pupils to receive a diploma, and will serve as proof of minimum competency. Also, students who want to enroll in higher education institutions will take the appropriate test for the Georgian language, foreign language skills, and for subjects with a different type (lecture style) tests, as well as for the remaining subjects certification-type tests.³⁹

Two types of problems were identified in relation to the graduation exams in 2011: (a) a large number of students did not pass the minimum threshold. Out of 4110, only 2,500 pupils passed.⁴⁰ So, 1610 pupils did not pass the graduation threshold (39, 17% of those that took the exam). (b) The exam scores are very low in relation to the subjects. Students from non-Georgian language schools scored higher in Georgian language, compared to other subjects (see table).⁴¹

Subject	Average score
Georgian	7.29516
Math	6.217
Biology	6.0885
Chemistry	6.518
History	6.426
Geography	6.8008
Physics	6.0313
Foreign Language	6.5615

It should be noted that with the threat of 1610 students remaining without diplomas, the Education and Science Minister issued Order No. 453 on July 12, 2011 which states that “a person who did not register for the graduation exams, or was unable to pass due to an inability to acquire the required

³⁹ Education System Preferences 2010-2015, the Ministry of Education and Science Publishing, 2010.

⁴⁰ Primary statistical data provided by the Georgian National Testing center.

⁴¹ Table compiled by the center have provided the first statistical treatment of the data.

scores in important subjects, and who wishes to continue his education in the higher education system of a foreign country shall be given a special general education certificate. The recipients of this special certificate will not be able to attend higher education institutions in Georgia.”⁴²

The basis of this order was the low passing rate of pupils in non-Georgian language schools in graduation exams, on which the Minister of Education and Sciences remarked: “We will be giving a special series of certificates to those kids who plan on continuing their education abroad, which is only valid abroad. Using the certificate in Georgia to later continue their education here is not allowed. We are helping these children acquire an education. This is especially important for our Armenian and Azerbaijani citizens. Not all countries have graduation exams and certain countries do not recognize the diplomas issued by schools.”⁴³

The results of the 2012 graduation examinations were also fairly poor for non-Georgian language students and a relatively large portion of them failed to pass. To better illustrate the issue, national results were compared to those of the graduates of non-Georgian schools within the areas and regions that are densely populated by ethnic minority communities:

According to the 2012 graduation examination results by subject, the number of students who failed general graduation examinations from non-Georgian language schools in the regions that are densely populated by ethnic minority communities (Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Rustavi, Dmanisi, and Aspindza)

Subject	Number of students taking the exam	Passed	Failed	Failed (%)
Georgian	2262	1936	326	14.41202476
Math	2288	1711	577	25.21853147
Foreign language	2328	2101	227	9.750859107
History	2210	1987	223	10.09049774
Geography	2222	2039	183	8.235823582
Biology	2227	1896	331	14.86304445
Chemistry	2237	1994	243	10.86276263
Physics	2290	1604	686	29.95633188

⁴² Minister of Education and Science, July 12, 2011 Order No. 453.

⁴³ <http://ick.ge/ka/rubrics/education/7797--12-.html>.

The Countrywide Number of Those Pupils who failed the Graduation Exams, by Subject in 2012

Subject	Amount taking exam	Passed	Failed	Failed (%)
Georgian	39444	38691	753	1.909035595
Math	39621	38457	1164	2.937835996
Foreign language	39625	38169	1456	3.67444795
History	38931	38304	627	1.610541728
Geography	38814	38000	814	2.097181429
Biology	38766	37727	1039	2.6801833666
Chemistry	38817	38221	586	1.535409743
Physics	38981	37208	1773	4.548369719

From the statistical analysis, the extreme difference between Georgian and non-Georgian language school students are evident. The percentage of those that failed in non-Georgian language schools by subject varies between 8.23 % and 29.95 %. The same rate countrywide is between 1.53 % and 4.54 %. These results once again emphasize the low quality of teaching in non-Georgian schools, also when compared to Georgian schools.

There exists a threat that certain problems will be present for non-Georgian language school students who are planning on taking the graduation exams in the fall of 2013, or spring of 2014. These students have been studying with the old curriculum and textbooks. The graduation exam programs for non-Georgian language school pupils should be based on the curriculum of non-Georgian language schools.

Multilingual Education

On December 15, 2010, amendments were made to the Law on General Education. These changes have been reflected in the law and a second clause was added, according to which multilingual education is defined as “education, which aims to develop a pupil’s deepening linguistic competence and understanding in a variety of languages. It includes organizing such studies in the general education system which will increase the efficiency and utilization in the above mentioned languages (Law on General Education, 2005). Also,

in accordance with these changes “to develop and promote the introduction of multilingual education,” was added into the functions of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center. Along the lines of these changes, the list of subject and subject groups were changed in the National Curriculum, among them the Georgian language and literature courses- and that Abkhazian language and literature and was to be taught in the official state language. The policies made in 2005 again reaffirmed that in non-Georgian language schools the state language and social sciences will be taught only in the state language.

In 2010, the Minister of Education and Science approved the “Multilingual Education Support Program”.⁴⁴ Within the scope of this program, the multilingual education program regulations, registration mechanisms and unified application forms were developed and approved. According to the regulations, with the order of the Minister of Education and Science, a multilingual education council was created and approved. The National Curriculum and Assessment Center was involved in the development of the council. The council provided the assessment and approval of multilingual education introduced by general education institutions.

In 2010, three regional seminars on multilingual education (with 180 participants) were held to support schools in Tbilisi, Marneuli and Akhalkalaki. The audio-video versions of a movie on multilingual education methodology “Teaching in Several Languages,” was developed and released and translated into Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, English and Ukrainian languages.

Within the scope of the Multilingual Education Support Program, and with the support of the OSCE High Commissioner for Minorities programs, methodological resources for multilingual education were developed for teachers and trainers (Teacher’s Guide to Teaching in Several Languages, and Multilingual Education Training Modules) and are planned to be published in 2014.

⁴⁴ <http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?t=srch&search=მულტილინგვური&id=547&lang=geo>. <http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?t=srch&search=მულტილინგვური&id=1213&lang=geo>.

In 2010, the registration of 40 pilot schools began, and a council was created which reviews and approves the applications submitted by the schools. Within the framework of the multilingual program, an important event was the targeted subsidies issued by the Ministry to those 40 schools which were used to supplement the salaries of the teachers involved in the program. Also, for the effective implementation of the program, those schools were provided with illustrations of various subject groups. In 2011, 12 Armenian, 12 Azerbaijani, nine Russian, and one Ukrainian (34 total) pilot non-Georgian language public schools, where 30% of the subjects are taught in Georgian, were given targeted subsidies to the amount of 1000 GEL, which were used to supplement the salaries of those teachers involved in the program.

With the support of the United Nations Association of Georgia, within the USAID and multilingual education programs, the 40 selected pilot schools were given supportive materials such as TVs, DVD-players and Georgian fiction and animated films.

The provision of bilingual education programs was developed by the Ministry of Education and Science and approved on August 20, 2010. The schools were given the opportunity to select their preferred bilingual education program, even though the current wording of the law already provides a direct indication of the compulsory bilingual education program, Article 5, paragraph 4, states that in those general education institutions where instruction is carried out in non-state languages, Georgian history, geography and other social sciences should be taught in Georgian, and in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia – in either Georgian or Abkhazian. Article 58 paragraph 5 of the same law states that paragraph 4 of Article 5 of this Law would come into force from the academic year 2010-2011. Teaching social science subjects in the state language is not possible in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. The study of history, geography and social sciences needs the highest linguistic competence. To reach this level of linguistic competence may be the target of the task and not the tool to achieve linguistic competence.

In 2012, under the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science, the standard for bilingual teachers was established. The process involved Ministry

multilingual education experts, as well as experts funded by the OSCE High Commissioner's Office on Minority Issues, Marina Gurbo and Ligita Grigule.

In 2012, the methodological resources for teachers in multilingual education ("Teacher's Guide to Teaching in Several Languages") was developed and published within the framework of the Multilingual Support Program, and with the support of the OSCE High Commissioner's Office on Minority Issues.

In 2012, within the framework of the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science, and publishers, one approved textbook for every subject for 1-6 grade was translated into Armenian, Russian and Azerbaijani languages. 30% of the material in the textbooks was in Georgian, while 70% was Armenian, Russian or Azerbaijani languages. It should be noted that the Council of National Minorities under the auspices of the Public Defender's Office was involved in the translation quality assessment. The multilingual textbooks were used as recommended teaching material in the pilot schools.

The following problems have been demonstrated based on a study conducted on bilingual education (Tabatadze, 2011, the International Conference on Materials) policy, legislation and statistics which were also discussed to some extent in the context of a variety of educational directions:

- (1) The inconsistency of the bilingual education reform. The reform started in 2009 was basically completely discontinued in 2011, and almost the entire burden of reform shifted to bilingual textbooks. Accordingly, it is obvious that the Ministry failed to establish bilingual education reform, which could be implemented consistently and realized fully;
- (2) The disorganized legislative field on bilingual education. The teaching of social sciences in only the state language, as stated in the law, is, on the one hand, unrealistic and unachievable in today's context, and, on the other hand, is unreasonable and ineffective with relation to the bilingual education methodology and its approaches. Consequently, the improvement of the legislative field, and creating a unified vision for the reform, remains one of the most important tasks;

- (3) The deficit of personnel for the bilingual education reform, both school administrators as well as teachers. To solve this problem there is no long-term, coherent, sustainable and sufficient policy which would ensure the training of existing teachers and the training of future teachers for higher education institutions.
- (4) In spite of the altered attitude of the population on multilingual education, which was quite negative during the initial stages of the reform, community and parental involvement in school life, including in non-Georgian language schools, is negligible. Parent and community involvement in the implementation of multilingual education is one of the most important prerequisites. The Ministry of Education and Science has not conducted any activities to increase parental and community involvement in the process;
- (5) The scientifically unsound and methodologically flawed bilingual textbooks that were introduced for grades 1-6 in the 2012-2013 academic year. A detailed analysis of these problems can be found in the of the curriculum and textbooks analysis section.

Improving the teaching of Georgian as a Second Language

Improving the teaching of Georgian as a Second Language in the scope of general education, is one of the priorities of the NCAP. For the purpose of improving the teaching of Georgian as a Second Language, the Ministry of Education and Science implemented several programs in 2009-2013:

The “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” Program

The program “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” entails assigning qualified teachers of Georgian language and literature to the non-Georgian language schools in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti with minority populations, where the issue is particularly acute in relation to Georgian language skills and learning. The teaching of Georgian language in such regions is a serious issue. The program aims to promote and develop the teaching of Georgian language and literature and support the professional development of teachers in those areas. In 2009-2012, 1000

individuals participated in the competition, but only 86 teachers successfully passed the interview and testing. Currently, 75 teachers are employed. The newly selected teachers are undergoing trainings in “Georgian As a Second Language teaching methods” (50 hours), “Ethnic and Religious Tolerance” (five hours) and intensive Azerbaijani or Armenian language learning (50 hours). Only after this are the teachers assigned to Samtskhe–Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti minority villages. Teachers hired under this program, in addition to hourly rates, receive monthly salaries of 1000 GEL. The program aims to raise the level of knowledge of Georgian in non-Georgian language populations, and the professional development of Georgian language teachers in areas populated with ethnic minorities, improving learning of Georgian as a second language, and improving the minority integration process. The program “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” is being implemented in Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Gardabani, Marneuli and Sagarejo. In order to set up the groups and effectively lead the learning process, the National Center for Teacher Professional Development handed over necessary equipment like audio–video equipment, visual materials and stationery, and training–aid kits. 1997 pupils, 715 teachers, and 566 community representatives are involved in these Georgian language groups.

Exchange and Befriending programs

In 2011–2012, within the framework of the program “Teach Georgian as a Second Language,” exchange programs were planned and implemented. Armenian and Azerbaijani schools became friends with Georgian schools in different regions. 30 trainee–teachers found partners in different schools in various regions of Georgia (Tbilisi, Gori, Rustavi, Sagaredjo, Chaqvi Zestaphoni, Khashuri and others). Exchange events were also planned which entailed week–long exchange visits for attending classes, concerts, plays, trying various foods, and visiting Georgian Orthodox churches, Armenian Apostolic churches, mosques, and other cultural monuments. The final event of the exchange program took place in Tbilisi, where the participants visited the Teacher’s House to be introduced to the employees of the National Teacher’s Professional Development Center, and to acquire information on the “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” program. The exchange

programs included pupils and teachers from all three (Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani) nationalities, which supported intercultural relations.

The “Georgian Language for Future Success” Program

In 2011-12, the TPDC program “Georgian Language for Future Success” was implemented which aims to facilitate the integration of ethnic minorities living in Georgia. The target group of the program was pupils, teachers, and administrators from non-Georgian language schools, as well as local community members in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti. Several activities were carried out in 2011-2012 within the framework of this program:

(A) In order to improve the quality of teaching the state language, 340 teachers were tested to check their level of knowledge of the Georgian language. Testing was conducted in a total of seven centers throughout Georgia (in Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Gardabani, and Tbilisi). In response to the bad results of these tests, and on the basis of mutually understood memorandum, the National Curriculum and Assessment Center⁴⁵ and the National Teacher’s Professional Development Center⁴⁶ began implementing a voucher program with the teachers of Georgian As a Second Language. Practical training-courses for language instruction were prepared for non-Georgian language teachers, and organizations were selected to conduct the trainings with local and foreign consultants. 340 teachers were trained in the 90 contact hour Georgian language courses.

For the improvement of the knowledge of the Georgian language, the National Teacher’s Professional Development Center, through a competitive selection process, sent 303 specialists with Bachelor’s degrees in 2011 and 237 in 2012 to minority schools throughout Georgia to help the local non-Georgian language teachers conduct lessons in two languages as well as to conduct lessons in the Georgian language. This contributed on the one hand, to the level of knowledge of the Georgian language of pupils and teachers and, on the other hand, to improve the level of knowledge

⁴⁵ <http://www.ncac.ge/>.

⁴⁶ <http://www.tpdg.ge/>.

of the Georgian language in local populations through interaction with the population during the after class activities.

- (B) 2011-2013, the I-IX grade textbooks were developed and published for preschool and primary levels. In the same period thematic audio material was developed for class work. 20,000 copies of each textbook level were published and distributed based on requests from schools.

Special supplementary teaching materials were created in the form of computer games which are designed for non-Georgian language students and are consistent with the “New Georgian as a Second Language textbook” topics.

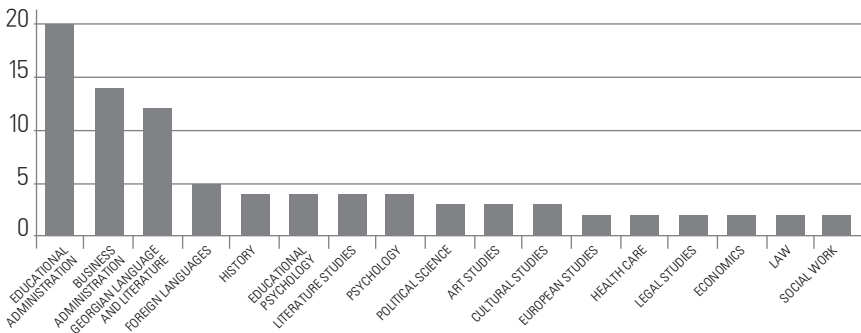
In this regard, the activities undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Science are the most noteworthy, although problems in this regard are also visible:

1. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science, about 340 Georgian language teachers, while teaching Georgian as a second language, they do not speak the national language properly. No long-term serious steps have been taken in terms of the professional development of these teachers. Nor have there been any alternative measures undertaken in the transition period. This remains a serious problem and these teachers continue to teach non-Georgian language school students with their limited qualifications.
2. The so called “Bachelor’s program” is problematic in several ways: \
 - (a) the efficiency and effectiveness of the assignments given to youth with Bachelor’s degree is questionable. This program has quite a large budget and its long-term effect is minimal, since the teachers tend to leave the region, or even the education system, after conclusion of the one year assignment, since about 50% of the program participants continue their education in non-educational related fields. Detailed information about the distribution of the participants in terms of their MA programs is provided in the table below. It is also interesting to note the choice of employment of the participants after the program. Only about 50% of the program participants are currently employed

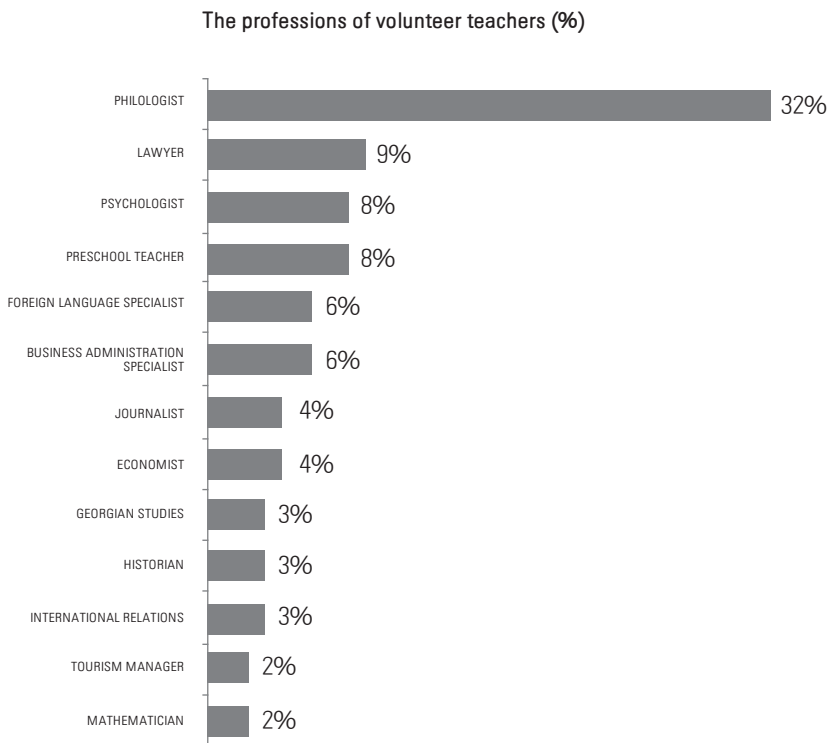
and of them only about 44% are working in the education system. (Ministry of Education and Science, 2013). Respectively, investing in them, keeping in mind that their MA education is also funded, does not seem to have a long term beneficial effect on the education system and the civil integration process.

3. Here is a positive impact in the educational system and civil integration process for a long-term perspective. The Ministry of Education and Science is processing the data on various aspects of this program. On the basis of this analysis, it is desired to modify this program;

Graduate Training of Volunteer Teachers



- (b) The problem of their qualification is quite serious. Those sent have Bachelor’s degrees but in most cases they have to aid and counsel teachers more qualified than they are themselves. In addition, their teaching specialty is often inadequate for teaching. In particular, the specialty of about 38% of the trainers is unmatched to the teachers’ qualifications. Detailed information about the sent trainers is given in the table below:



Ministry of Education and Science, 2013

- c) The local population is annoyed with the high remuneration rate of the sent trainers, which is significantly higher than a regular teacher's salary;
4. With respect to the 1-6 level textbook of "Georgian As a Second Language" the following issues have been identified:
- (a) The textbook is meant for non-Georgian school children, although the students (with rare exceptions) can hardly identify their own cultural context in the textbooks, and the texts directed towards their civic awareness appear only from the fifth unit. It is recommended to have more content in the textbooks directed toward civic awareness. Apart from this, in the 1-6 level of the Georgian As a Second Language textbooks, there is very little information on the existing ethnic / national groups;

- (b) The names used in the text are typical only for Georgian ethnic groups, and do not include the names characteristic for other ethnic groups of Georgia. All the characters (main, secondary, relatives, friends ...) have the names of only Georgian origin, like Gia, Anna, Lia, Rezo, Mzia, David, Zaza, Malkhazi, Sandro, Shota, Tamta, Nutsa... The only exceptions in this regard are the names of well-known fairy-tale characters (Carlson, Peppy, Chipollino. etc.;
- (c) The trainings on introduction of textbooks have not been offered to the Georgian as a Second Language teachers, and therefore these new textbooks can not be effectively used by those teachers;
- (d) The textbook was designed specifically by the Ministry of Education and Science and was been granted approval by the Ministry of Education's National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. The textbook was set up in a non-competitive environment; a non-competitive environment is reflected in the quality of the textbooks. In the current reality, the Ministry of Education and Science creates textbooks, assigns them, approves them, and evaluates their efficiency. The unification of all of these components together in one single system prevents the development of the education quality and its effective evaluation (in this regard, detailed survey results can be viewed in the study conducted within the program funded by the United States Agency for International Development "Public policy, advocacy and civil society development in Georgia").

Higher Education

Access to higher education is one of the most important priorities in the NCAP.

Article 43.1 of the Law on Higher Education provides for the issuance of state scholarships for students, from the universities or from other sources, as well as financial and material assistance. The government is implementing a number of social programs for financially needy students in special circumstances (Article 6.1. Gda 52.8).

Keeping ethnic minority problems in mind, on the National Entry Exams in 2005–2009, the Ministry of Education and Science made the decision to apply

the most radical form in “International Politics” quota system: in particular, in compliance with the adopted amendments in the Law on Higher Education of November 19, 2009, students were identified to undertake a language training educational program and it was determined that the admission of Azerbaijani-, Armenian-, Ossetian- and Abkhazian- speaking students would be realized on the basis of test results on general skills. For the admission of students on the basis of the Azerbaijani and Armenian test results, the announced number was determined by the total number of students in the National Entry Exams and was limited to 5-5% while the number of Ossetian and Abkhazian-speaking students was determined by 1-1% (Article 52.5¹). In addition, while taking into account the number of entrants to be enrolled on the basis of only test results on general skills (Azerbaijani and Armenian), registered in the appropriate year, as well as on the basis of the motivated decision of higher education Institutions and with the consent of the Ministry of Education and Science, it is possible to change the allocation of a percentage within their sum.

Based on Abkhazian and Ossetian test results, the rule of students’ enrollment in higher education institutions will take effect from the beginning of the academic year 2012-2013 (section 90.2³). The new system of enrollment of ethnic/national minority member students in the State University set forth with these amendments is temporary and will be effective in the 2018-19 academic year (inclusive), (Article 90.2⁵).

It was also established that the number of entrants (Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian) to be enrolled on the basis of test results of only general skills, as well as the above-mentioned percentage of seats, are not included in the number of students identified for academic higher education and certified specialist programs.

In compliance with the new initiative, a training educational program is being introduced in the instruction of the Georgian language (Section 52.5¹). The program provides the Georgian language skills and knowledge needed (writing, reading, listening, speaking) for Georgian citizens who were enrolled (on the basis of the test results of National Exams of only general skills for Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian entrants) in the

certified higher education institutions to study Georgian language. It aims at students acquiring the level necessary for a Bachelor's degree, certified medical doctor, dentist, veterinarian or certified specialist to continue studies in the educational program. Consequently, the Georgian language training educational program provides gathering the necessary skills and knowledge for acquiring higher education in the Georgian language. After completing the Georgian Language Training Education Program, only the Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian students enrolled on the basis of test results of general skills are required to continue their studies in a Georgian educational program for the Bachelor's, certified medical doctor, dentist, veterinarian or certified specialist and so get the proper amount of credits defined by the current legislation of the grant for the education program (Article 2. q. 35) (section 47³.4).

All legal entities of public law – ie., in this case higher education institutions – are obliged to admit students who, on the basis of the test results of National Exams of only general skills for Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian entrants, are participating in the Georgian language training educational program.

The amendments determine the State government's authority to establish the scope and amount of the state grant for students who are participating in the Georgian language training educational program (Section 6.1. C2).

After completion of the one-year education program in the Georgian language, a student is given permission to continue their education of Bachelor's degree as a certified medical doctor, dentist, veterinarian or certified specialist only in the Georgian language. The Georgian Language Training Educational Program comprises 60 credits (section 47.³2), and the training is mandatory for the first academic year. The higher education institution will issue a certificate to students on completion of the program..

Before the start of the academic year 2012-2013, the Ministry of Education and Science was to provide accreditation of language training education programs. A higher education institution should be required to undergo

language training educational program accreditation prior to the 2012–2013 academic years. Prior to the first Georgian language training educational program accreditation, a newly licensed or accredited educational language training program is deemed accredited.

Situation after the Introduction of the Quota System in 2010

Since 2010, following the introduction of the quota system in higher education institutions, the number of ethnic minority applicants, as well as the number of enrolled, has increased dramatically. This is obvious from the statistics given below:

Year	Number of Quota Places	Number of Enrolled	% of the Quota used
2010	2602	301	11.56%
2011	2100	431	20.52%
2012	2242	584	26.04%
2013	3900	928	23.79%

However, from the statistics it is also evident that the number of enrolled is significantly lower than that of the quoted seats and it is important to continue work in this direction.

2010–2013 statistics of the registration, examination and test provision for Armenian and Azerbaijani Entrants

Year	Armenian-language Seniors			Azerbaijan-language Seniors		
	Registration	Took the exam	Passed the threshold for general skills	Registration	Took the exam	Passed the threshold for general skills
2010	253	188	137	335	303	194
2011	254	216	172	320	301	222
2012	290	262	207	579	541	407
2013	271	249	191	1189	1083	737
Total	1068	915	707	2423	2228	1560

The table presents a certain picture on the efficiency of “preferential policies” and gives an opportunity to realize that the number of registered and enrolled Azerbaijani-speaking students has dramatically increased for the

years 2010–2013, and that this figure has tripled (the number of those registered in 2010 stood at 335, while in 2013 the number was 1083, in 2010 194, and in 2013 – 737). As for the number of Armenian entrants, the progress has not been analyzed (253 registered in 2010 and in 2013 – 271), indicating the need for additional measures with regard to this target group.

The results of the Entrance Exams for 2010–2013 also emphasizes the rather high number of entrants who failed in general skills– 27.8 % of the total. The high rate of failed entrants also emphasizes the problems in the education system. See the table below which shows the number of failed entrants and its ratio to the number of those who underwent tests.

2010–2013 registration, the overall statistics of passing exams

Year	Registration	Took the Exam	Passed the threshold in general skills	Failed	Failed (%)
2010	588	491	331	160	32.587
2011	574	517	394	123	23.791
2012	869	803	614	189	23.537
2013	1460	1332	928	404	30.33
Total	3491	3143	2267	876	27.871

Test results in general skills of Armenian and Azerbaijani entrants and their comparison with the results of the Georgian and Russian-speaking applicants also gives a good picture for analysis. Although the tests in general skills are conducted in the entrants’ native language, their results are much lower in comparison with the Georgian and Russian-speaking entrants which once again demonstrates the problems with regard to the teaching quality of the general education level. The table below exposed the problems in this regard:

Average Score Based on Year

Exam	2010	2011	2012	2013
General skills, all	37.00	37.58	37.30	37.29
General skills (Georgian)	37.15	37.75	37.52	37.64
General skills (Russian)	38.28	39.00	39.43	40.40
General skills (Azerbaijani)	23.85	26.88	26.68	25.02
General skills (Armenian)	25.20	26.62	26.94	28.39

In compliance with Order 79/N, issued on June 24, 2013, the State is funding 17 of the priority state higher education programs. This initiative has become problematic for the Armenian and Azerbaijani students who were enrolled in 2012 due to the “preferential policies.” The students failed to get priority enrollment programs because none of the mechanisms on legislative acts was clear about what would happen to the principle of enrollment of the state-funded educational programs. In particular, as a result of passing the 2013 Unified National Exams in these specialties, the applicants fill out the seats designated for specific programs (e.g., in the Tbilisi State University, due to the high level of competition, 425 seats of the Faculty of Humanities allotted for the priority programs were filled by Georgian entrants. Accordingly, for the students involved in the one-year program, these specialties remained inaccessible because of the lack of any regulation which would have allowed for their enrollment in the desired faculty even in the case when the state grant existed. Today, universities are given the opportunity to enroll such students in these programs. However, without acquiring grants, the students’ education is not free: they are to pay, while Georgian-speaking applicants do not need to pay. On the one hand, the above-mentioned infringes the rights of students and puts them in a discriminatory situation; on the other hand, it is not in tune with the priorities of the state policy concerning the incentive to attract students and popularize these programs.

After the 2013 entrance exams, secondary enrollment was allowed for those students who managed to overcome the minimum competency level yet failed to enter the faculty or university of their choice. Such applicants were given an opportunity for secondary choice and they became students as a result of secondary enrollment. In a similar situation, non-Georgian entrants who passed the minimal level of the tests in general skills had no right to enter any university or faculty. Today, they are not given an opportunity for secondary enrollment, but hopefully this problem will be resolved and the overall approach will work for all entrants.

In terms of affirmative action policies, there are certain problems emerging with regard to the implementation of the one-year Georgian language program in higher education institutions, namely:

1. In the Tbilisi State University, where 53% of the enrolled students get education, grouping by ethnic markers and communication problems among the students have been detected. Integration of Armenian and Azerbaijani groups in the community would be important from the lingual (as there would have been a Georgian-speaking environment as a whole, as well as communication in Georgian which is currently realized in Armenian and Azerbaijani) point of view; besides which it would be important for the development of intercultural civic awareness and tolerance for both ethnic groups;
2. The one-year program is not sufficient for some students. After one year of training, they are not yet prepared to continue their studies in the Bachelor's program. In addition, for the students who have high linguistic competence, participating in the one-year program does not necessarily raise their competence. As the students stated, they had actually lost a year on this program and at the same time found themselves unprepared for an undergraduate program;
3. There is no support center for students in higher education institutions. Without a support center, students encounter problems in social adaptation at the beginning of the one-year program, while at the undergraduate level the problems are connected to academic integration. Most problematic is the first semester of training. The first semester is problematic in terms of organizational affairs and choosing courses.
4. Graduates of Tbilisi schools are in a different situation. They speak the state language, and a one-year program is not profitable for them because they are learning by the same program as those entrants who do not speak the state language at all. In these groups the learning time is mostly lost and the lecturer does not know what to do as students already possess the material defined by the syllabus and by the competencies. The linguistic competence evaluation system should be developed and the certificate should reflect the student's knowledge of the language in terms of actually being able to study the Bachelor's program. It is important that such an evaluation system is created;
5. There is no linguistic evaluation system, which would ensure there are sufficient language skills, necessary for the training for Bachelor's degree; in the case of establishing a linguistic evaluation of a one-year program, applicants would have a valid assessment and in the case of positive

evaluation, they would have less problems with the linguistic side of the undergraduate level;

6. Non-Georgian students do not have an environment for integration – there is no communication with the Georgian students, their civic consciousness and civic integration is low, they are isolated in a particular building without any interaction, and additional extracurricular activities that would encourage them to integrate are inaccessible for them.

Adult Education

Adult education is an important component of the NCAP. In particular, the Action Plan sets out the following priority areas: support programs for children and adults to learn the state language (adult education centers).⁴⁷

By the year 2011, the Ministry of Education and Science, within the “Georgian Language Program” provided funding to Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki language houses to the amount of 22,500 GEL (per center). Also, in 2011, the Ministry made arrangements for the funding of Dmanisi and Bolnisi Georgian Language Centers founded in 2009 (22,500 GEL per center). Currently, in two language houses and in the Georgian language center 4–4 groups are being taught; and they have approximately 300 students per year. Within the scope of the program “Georgian Language for Future Success,” three Georgian Language Houses were opened in the region of Kvemo Kartli – Tsalka, Gardabani and Marneuli, as well as the in the village of Iormuganlo in the Kakheti region. Since October 1, 2011 the Georgian language houses and centers are administered by the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration.

The Language House concept is designed for those in several categories: school principals and teachers, public officials, entrants, and other interested persons. Language houses offer an intensive Georgian language course.

Differentiation of participants happens, by the acquisition of language, which is determined on the basis of preliminary tests, and by providing the specifics of their activities.

⁴⁷ <http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=547&lang=geo>.

Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration

The Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration is designed to provide selection and implementation of both short-term and long-term educational programs appropriate for the permanent professional growth and development of public officials working at the central and regional levels of governance and self-governance. The School offers entrants the following short- and long-term educational and professional development programs in two stages:

List of short term courses:

- Information Technology Management;
- Financial Management;
- Project Management and Monitoring;
- Human Resource Management;
- Law and proceedings;
- Management basics.

List of long-term courses:

- Georgian Language Course (3 months gradually by stages per year);
- English Language Course (3 months gradually by stages per year).

In January–February, 2012, principals of 75 Armenian schools passed a six week intensive training course in the Georgian language. It is important to note that since October 1, 2011, within the program “Georgian Language for Future Success,” which aims to improve the Georgian language teaching skills for ethnic/national minorities, the Georgian Language Houses in Samtskhe–Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions have been administered by the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration. In general, in Zurab Zhvania School and in the “language houses” in 2011–2013, attendees rated as follows:

Learning center	Number of attendees			Profession		Age		
	Total	Female	Male	Teacher	Others	30 or unders	30-45	45-60
Akhalkalaki	261	201	60	190	71	47	95	119
Bolnisi	161	93	68	133	28	35	58	68
Gardabani	22	16	6	22		2	7	13
Dmanisi	105	47	58	91	14	24	39	42
Lambalo	84	46	38	84		19	29	36
Marneuli	134	36	98	134		31	43	60
Ninotsminda	293	236	57	258	35	63	102	128
Total	1060	675	385	912	148	221	373	466
%		64	36	86	14	21	35	44

With regard to the Zurab Zhvania School and “language houses,” the following problems have been identified: from the structural point of view the Zurab Zhvania Public Administration School and the language houses were merged. In fact, these two structures had very different functions. The function of the Zurab Zhvania Public Administration School was the professional development of public officials in different directions, including the organization of language training courses for officials from the non-Georgian speaking regions. The language houses, founded in 2004, had the following function (a) to organize state language courses for adults, (b) to organize cultural activities and encourage intercultural communication and dialogue, (c) to ensure the professional development of the Georgian language and that of minority language teachers, (d) to issue an informative- methodical magazine for teachers, (e) to provide the population with information and media and use of the media in the language teaching process, (f) to support bilingual education. In 2010-13 the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, as well as language houses, were limited to the organization of language learning courses for only school principals, teachers and public officers. It should be noted that there are no any mechanisms for quality control of the courses and it is impossible to evaluate to what extent the students attending the courses were able to learn the state language.

MAIN CONCLUSION

A number of positive steps have been taken in the direction of education and language policy, but at the same time significant shortcomings were revealed. Consequently, it is important to plan and implement educational reforms so that the realized policy will facilitate the process of integration of ethnic minorities.

The background is a solid dark blue color, overlaid with several large, semi-transparent, curved shapes in various shades of blue. These shapes create a layered, geometric effect, with some appearing as broad, sweeping curves and others as more complex, overlapping forms. The overall composition is abstract and modern.

MEDIA AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

MEDIA AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

REVIEW OF EXISTING LEGISLATION

Constitution and Legislation

The Constitution protects freedom of speech and freedom of religion and forbids the prosecution of human speech, thought, religion or belief, as well as the compulsion to express opinions about them (Article 19).

According to the aspect of the law stating “Freedom of speech and freedom of expression,” freedom of expression is associated with freedom from coercion, expression of opinions on religion, belief, conscience, world vision, ethnic and cultural affiliation (Article 3.2. K.).

“Persecution of speech, freedom of thought, conscience, religion, belief or faith, or political, social, professional, religious or scientific pursuits” are punished by Article 156 of the Criminal Code.

Law on Broadcasting

The Law on Broadcasting prohibits Radio and TV broadcasting of programs which demonstrate clear and direct risks of inciting racial, ethnic, religious or other kinds of conflicts or if they suggest threats of discrimination or violence against any group. The law also prohibits broadcasting of programs which are directed towards discrimination or incitement of any person or group because of ethnic background, religion, ideology, or other features or status, to the

special emphasis of these features or status, except when it is necessary for the program context and aims at illustrating existing hatred. (Article 56)

On the basis of Article 16 of the Law on Broadcasting, the public broadcaster is obliged to reflect ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and proportionately broadcast programs in minority languages about minorities and prepared by minorities.

A positive step on the Legislation level can be the change included in the law in December 2009 according to which the public broadcaster shall annually create one or more than one regular program product in not less than four languages, including the Abkhaz and Ossetian languages (Article 33). The community-based broadcaster is obliged to provide coverage of minority opinions in its service area (Article 46).

Code of Conduct

According to the Code of Conduct adopted by Public Broadcasting in 2006, the objective was “full and fair coverage of all the people living in Georgia and their culture, to respect the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and to encourage their development.”

Before the implementation of the 2009–2014 Action Plan, important steps were taken when, on the basis of Article 50 of the Law on Broadcasting of March 12, 2009, the National Communications Commission adopted a Broadcasters’ Code of Conduct. Chapter 9 of the Code is devoted to issues of diversity and tolerance. Article 31 prohibits broadcasters from transmitting any material likely to incite hatred or intolerance of race, language, religious affiliation or ethnic background. In addition, the Company is responsible for: imparting reliable and unbiased information to all cultural, religious and ethnic groups living in Georgia (Article 32.1); for preventing their abuse (Article 32.2); for avoiding the drawing of unreasonable parallels between negative issues of ethnic or religious origin, among them the association of the activities of specific individuals with entire groups (Article 33.1); refraining from the promoting of stereotypes; and they should not indicate the person’s ethnic origin or religious beliefs if deemed unnecessary (Article 33.2).

According to Article 14 of the Law on Broadcasting, the broadcasters should take on the obligation of responsibility for the creation of a self-regulatory mechanism that allows the consideration of complaints on the basis of violations of the Code of Conduct and ensures timely reactions on the matter.

According to the Law on Electronic Communications, the National Communications Commission will not allow discrimination of end-users of electronic communications services and is to ensure equal access to electronic communication services (Article 20.2. G).

The Code of Conduct of Public Broadcasting and the Code of Conduct of the National Communications Commission allows the creation of a Board of Appeals and the setting up of an internal monitoring unit for broadcasters. However, so far it is not in compliance with the rules of the minorities and so not giving a real chance to the minorities as well as to general society to express their dissatisfaction.

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN REGARDS TO MEDIA AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Public Broadcasting

During 2009-2014, in the field of integration of ethnic minorities, in terms of the media and access to information, major steps were taken by the government, which was reflected in the NCAP.

In this regard, the main burden was put on the Public Broadcasting TV and radio channels where radio programs in minority languages for minority issues were prepared. Steps were taken by the public broadcaster in the area of television broadcasting programs in minority languages ensured a minimum level of accessibility .

Within each year of the Action Plan, the rehabilitation of the Public Broadcasting System was proposed for the purpose of increasing the efficiency and scale of the broadcasting programs in the regions. However, experts estimate that it

was insufficient and, moreover, in some areas of dense settlement of ethnic/national minorities, public broadcasting programs could not be obtained due to the lack of full transmission of the public broadcaster throughout all regions of the country. According to the statements made by focus-groups, public broadcasting programs are mainly picked up by satellite antennas.

During the 2009–2014 Action Plan, producing news programs in the five minority languages was planned annually. The public broadcasting station aired news programs in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages once a week. From 2010, the Russian language program stopped airing, since the new Russian language channel “First News Caucasus” (FNC) came into existence, which played a certain role in the intercultural dialogue. In 2011 a second Russian language channel, “Region TV” came on air. On March 1, 2012, these two channels merged. From January through October, 2012, FNC provided tele-productions for ethnic minorities. Because the language of the TV broadcaster was available to minorities, its closure created a deficit of a Russian language channel.

Programs in minority languages were 26 minutes long. The first part was informative, reflecting the recent Georgia socio-political developments, in the second part, consisting mostly of social-educational programs.

The survey conducted during the implementation of the Action Plan was a positive step, during which it was confirmed that the once a week minority languages broadcast was not especially interesting for viewers, due to the inconvenient airing time of the program (14:30) and non-intensive frequency (once a week). On March 1, 2010, based on research, the public television broadcaster carried out reforms to increase the volume and efficiency. Regional TV news began to spread through the different channels that broadcast in minority languages and that cover the areas that are densely populated by Abkhazian, Ossetian, Azerbaijani and Armenian communities. “Broadcasting on the Languages of National Minorities’ was created, who created a collage in the form of new product information. The bulletin of the collage aired every day on the first and second public TV channel. Information is also provided on a daily basis to regional TV channels. At the same time, the partner stations were authorized to show re-runs of shows in the morning and evening hours. However, it seems

that recent changes have not yielded the desired results because in June 2013 the public broadcaster began broadcasting a new format in minority languages which involved presenting the news in five minority languages during show. 12 minutes are allocated for broadcasting in each language. The audio version of the show is also broadcasted through the Public Radio daily.

Despite a number of changes to the format of the public broadcaster's news programs, the interest in these news programs in minority-populated areas is low. In the views expressed during the focus groups, news programs air during inconvenient times, the running time of the program is short, and there is more coverage of foreign news and less coverage of current events in the country which contributes to the lower rating of the news programs.

It was apparent during the Action Plan implementation period in the regions compactly populated by ethnic/national minority regions that the increased quantity of news programs transmitted in ethnic minority languages, along with other positive changes in minority inclusion since 2010, failed to increase the level of public awareness of current country affairs. The news program coverage mainly focused on local and international news and devoted less time to issues pertaining to ethnic minority communities, including current developments in minority-populated regions. The problem was that, in many cases, the residents of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions, as well as local non-governmental organizations and a significant portion of government agencies were not aware of the fact that regional and national TV channels were airing these daily news programs. Spreading information in the above-mentioned regions was also hindered by the fact that the public broadcaster television signal did not fully cover the areas of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti.

COVERAGE OF ETHNIC MINORITIES AND PARTICIPATION IN BROADCASTING PROGRAMS

The television talk show "Our Yard,"⁴⁸ which aired weekly on the Georgian Public Broadcaster's First Channel, was unprecedented in its content because

⁴⁸ Prior to 2010 the talk show aired under the name 'Italian Yard'.

the program was directly related to topics concerning ethnic minorities living in Georgia. The TV show featured the culture and religion of ethnic minorities, as well as ethnic minority public figures and their contributions to the development of Georgia. In 2010 the Public Defender's office declared "Our Yard" to be the most tolerant talk show on air. Since 2013 the format of the show changed to incorporate regional visits with the participation of local residents and invited guests. The final product aired on Public Broadcaster Channel in the form of a television movie. According to the opinions expressed in focus groups, "Our Yard" was watched by a small segment of the public in densely populated ethnic minority regions.

According to experts, the Georgian media lacked information related to ethnic minority issues and in this respect "Our Yard," which focused primarily on the topic of ethnic minority inclusion, attempted to fill this information vacuum. Another positive development in the celebration of ethnic diversity was the creation of a documentary series "Multinational Georgia" within the National Integration Program, which dealt with the history and culture of nine minority groups in Georgia, the goal of which was the promotion of tolerance and cultural pluralism within the media.

Only the public broadcaster channel filled the information vacuum concerning ethnic minority culture and problems- no other Georgian language commercial television station even attempted to deal with this issue. These types of programs offered no commercial interest to such stations and the issue of minority interests was active on air only when regions with dense ethnic minority populations were protesting, welcoming visits by high-level government officials or had confrontations between different ethnic groups.

Georgian Public Radio

According to the 2009-2014 Action Plan news programs airing in six minority languages were to be created yearly. Public Radio Broadcast aired daily 10-minute new reels in Abkhaz, Ossetian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Kurdish and Russian languages.⁴⁹ Abkhaz, Ossetian, Armenian and Azerbaijani language

⁴⁹ Russian language broadcast is no longer included in the 2010 Action Plan.

“National Bulletin” audio version was transmitted daily on the air of Public Broadcaster’s Radio One.

In order to facilitate the process of national diversification and societal integration, the Public Radio Broadcast aired a weekly 45-minute program, “Our Georgia,” which was taken off air on March 1st, 2010. The program covered the history of ethnic and religious groups living in Georgia, as well as ethnic and religious identity issues. In 2011, with the funding of “Open Society – Georgia” the program was reinstated. Although the program was included in the Action Plan, since September of 2012 the program is no longer on air. Problems related to its production are mainly due to unstable funding.

Georgian-language commercial radio broadcasts were also transmitted in areas with dense minority populations, but due to the fact that they were exclusively in Georgian, the local populace listened to these channels mainly for musical enjoyment. The region of Samtskhe-Javakheti transmitted up to ten radio stations, which conducted broadcasts in Georgian, Armenian and Russian languages. However, a very small segment of the population listened to these programs.

Transmission of public radio programs in minority languages was undoubtedly a positive action, but given the fact that public radio waves did not reach many territories of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, the national radio resources were not utilized for greater information dissemination. Due to this, the Public Radio Broadcaster had virtually no listeners in these regions. Thus, the effect of these programs in terms of informing the population of these regions was very limited.

Print Media

Minority-language newspapers were facing serious challenges. Unlike during the Soviet era, their circulation and format were much smaller. Their scope of reach and the efficiency of their distribution were also limited, which resulted in their lack of popularity. The state-funded newspapers reflected the ruling government’s policy and were distributed mainly on a local level through state agencies.

Within the NCAP “Literature Development Program,” the government funded several minority-language press publications that have been in existence for a number of decades. Among them, weekly Armenian newspaper “Vrastan” was given 55,000 GEL of state funding in 2009, while the weekly Azerbaijani newspaper “Gurjistan” received 40,000 GEL. The above-mentioned newspapers were distributed in the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions. Russian newspaper “Svobodnaia Grusia,” which also came out once a week, was self-funded. According to the opinions expressed in the focus groups, the main complaint of the population towards state-funded newspapers was improper and inefficient distribution. Most of the population had yet to see physical copy of the printed press, while those familiar with the material deemed the publications outdated and obsolete.

In addition to the state-funded publications, minority language newspapers and periodicals of various circulations were produced with the help of private donors, international and non-governmental organizations as well as groups of private citizens. However, due to the narrow scope of distribution, the role these publications performed in terms of informing the public at large was limited. Some noteworthy publications include: “Multinational Georgia,” “South Gate,” “Zia,” “Region Press,” “Ozani,” “Trialeti Express,” “Zlata Praga,” literature almanacs “On Hills of Georgia,” “Ukrainian Journal,” “Russian Chamber,” and so on.

Due to lack of funds, low professionalism and other obstacles, newspapers were unable to regularly and promptly provide information in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti concerning current developments in the country. Therefore, they couldn’t fulfill the function of information supplier to the minority population.

Apart from central national publications, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli areas received newspapers from neighboring states. Press from Armenia and Russia circulated in Samtskhe-Javakheti while Kvemo Kartli received publications from Azerbaijan. Consequently, the population was acquainted with Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian-language print media. However the number in circulation was very small and was usually delivered much later than the actual publication date.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

According to reports by the Public Defender, the problem of information access in densely populated minority regions pertained to inefficiency in timely and comprehensive delivery of information through Georgian news channels. The Georgian television market offered several national and local television channels to ethnic minority groups, though these stations had low ratings amongst the minority population. Despite transmitting airwaves across most minority settlements, lack of knowledge of Georgian language resulted in a small audience and mostly concentrated in urban settings. As for local TV channels, despite the fact that they were transmitted in minority languages, their audience was also small because of limited geographic distribution and low quality production.

Over the years, the Public Broadcaster has collaborated with regional television companies which produced minority-language content. These collaborators include: Zugdidi TV “Odishi” (Abkhaz), Gori TV Company “Trialeti” (Ossetian), Akhalkalaki Station “ATV-12” (Armenian), Marneuli Television Company “Marneuli TV,” and Rustavi TV Company “Channel 4 (Azerbaijani)”. These television companies provided broadcasts of National Bulletin programs. In addition, the regional TV stations translated and aired “Rustavi 2” and “Imedi” news programs with the funding and help of local governments.

Despite the fact that there were means of obtaining news, the population was still suffering a thirst for information. Some experts argue such informational vacuum was a result of the existence of minority enclaves. The population was enclosed in a singular area and was not interested in the current developments in the country. At the same time ethnic minorities had little trust in central media outlets, since from their perspective the regional news was only transmitted in negative and biased contexts. It is also worth noting that Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti residents had the opportunity to utilize satellite TV systems and watch broadcasts in their native or Russian languages (Armenian, Azerbaijani, Turkish and Russian). This choice was mainly determined by a low quality or complete lack of knowledge of the official state language, Georgian.

Growth in Georgian TV ratings could be attributed to the increase in usage of Georgian language among the ethnic minorities. If this is the case, then Georgian TV channels will be more or less able to gain popularity among minority groups. However, national and regional television channels will find it hard to compete against Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani-language TV Companies in the coming decade.

In regions with dense Armenian and Azerbaijani populations, local TV channels whose range was limited to these specific regions also operated in addition to national TV stations. But overall, the level of media development in minority-populated regions was low. The majority of media development projects implemented with the support of international organizations in minority-populated regions failed to develop and function independently due to various financial and operational obstacles.

In terms of regional media development, central regional TV stations were more advanced in comparison with district stations. “ATV 12” and “Parvana TV” operated in Samtskhe-Javakheti, while “Marneuli TV” functioned in Kvemo Kartli. Despite the fact that most of these channels did not have a license to broadcast, the government turned a blind eye.

Local TV Stations found support mainly through projects funded by grants from international organizations (including the OSCE and the European Union). A limited advertising market and a disinterest in business ownership of regional television stations made such channels financial unsustainable. Modest financial resources also resulted in a shortage of human capital and qualified staff.

The local governments partially provided financial support for local media outlets, but the funds allocated in the budget for this cause were not large enough to have a great impact. For example, with the help of local government funding, Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki TV stations translated and aired “Rustavi 2” and “Imedi” TV news programs. While the population assessed the quality of the translations negatively, they still recognized the positive value of these informational resources. Local TV stations were relatively more active in pre-election periods, though this process was typically initiated and

aided by international organizations. However, the fact that local TV stations managed to create their own product when funding was available indicated the existence of viable information resource potential.

The demographic situation in areas with dense national minority populations resulted in a linguistic divide of media organizations. In Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda the media was mainly in Armenian. As for Kvemo Kartli, in this respect, the situation was more complex and Azerbaijani media was practically non-existent. State-owned media outlets provided content in Azerbaijani-Georgian or Russian-Georgian languages (Marneuli, Tsalka). In Kvemo Kartli, media organizations were mainly concentrated in the Marneuli region. This was largely due to the fact that the Marneuli region, unlike other districts, housed the operations of different community organizations that utilized printed press as a means of disseminating information.

According to experts, despite the fact that there were news channels through which the level of informational awareness among ethnic minority groups could potentially be raised, the process of reaching the public was not systematic and most often fragmented.

Despite steps taken by the government to improve information dissemination in minority-populated areas, Georgian media reports are still unavailable and these groups generally turn to neighboring countries' media outlets for sources of information. This tendency results in a lack of knowledge about current country affairs among ethnic minority groups.

The reasons for this can be attributed to a variety of factors: lack of knowledge of the state language, limited geographic coverage airwaves, low-quality programs, and other technological inefficiencies.

MEDIA AND TOLERANCE

The Code of Conduct adopted by the Public Broadcaster Network in 2006 is a testament to the organization's dedication to the issue of ethnic minority

inclusion. The Code emphasizes that the Public Broadcaster's mission is "to provide complete and fair coverage of different cultures and peoples living in Georgia, to respect the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and to encourage their development." This Code of Conduct, however, does not apply to all Georgian media outlets, which often use discriminatory language when referring to minorities which in turn contributes to creating or strengthening already existing negative and stereotypical attitudes towards minority groups. In addition, the Public Broadcaster founded eight community councils, including the Council for Ethnic Minorities (established in 2006) to represent community interests and requests. Councils studied problems of current public interest in accordance with the areas of expertise and provided the Public Broadcaster Network with recommendations. However, none of the community councils had a viable impact on network policy.

Coverage of minority communities often included the use of discriminatory, offensive and xenophobic terms. News outlets usually paid attention to these groups only when cases of conflict and criminal acts occurred or when state officials attended religious and cultural celebrations. Xenophobic and insulting statements toward minority members was especially common in print media, which continued to the spreading of stereotypes of ethnic minorities and emphasized the ethnic origin of suspected or known criminals.

Some positive developments observed during media monitoring led to the identification of the main trends in Georgian media coverage. Media monitoring conducted by the Media Development Foundation revealed that Georgian media coverage of minority issues was limited and to a large extent violated the standards of media reporting. According to the study conducted by the Media Development Foundation, minority news was more often mentioned in newspapers, rather than television, and consequently discriminatory statements and incorrect handling of the issue was most frequently encountered in print media.

A positive development in ethnic minority inclusion occurred in December of 2009, when 139 journalists established and signed a charter on Journalistic Ethics confirming their dedication to maintaining general standards of pro-

fessional conduct. When dealing with diversity, journalists must pay special attention to the 7th and 10th principles of the charter. Principle 7 states that a journalist should be aware of the danger in promoting discrimination through the media and in light of this should avoid discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, political affiliation, nationality, social status or any other grounds. The self-regulatory mechanism initiated by journalists was viewed as a positive step towards reducing the use of hate speech, but during the implementation period of the Action Plan, many members of the press were not part of the charter and thus its range of influence was limited.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The 2009–2014 NCAP included five objectives to improve media and information access.

1. Ensuring National Broadcaster coverage in areas with ethnic minority populations

In relation to the first objective of the Action Plan, it must be noted that in recent years the government has taken concrete steps to make Public Broadcaster programs available to various regions, including those densely populated with minority groups. Despite this fact, the Public Broadcaster programs were not transmitted everywhere. It will be possible to solve this issue in 2015, when television will be transferred onto a digital broadcasting system.

2. Providing access to Broadcast programs in minority languages

It is noteworthy in relation to the second objective of the Action Plan that the state tried to improve the quantity and reach of broadcast programs available in minority languages, yet regardless of these efforts such programs had very low ratings among minority populations making it

necessary to plan projects of different types and scales to achieve this goal.

3. Ensuring coverage and participation of ethnic minorities in broadcasting programs

Despite the fact that “Our Yard” is seen as a positive step towards reaching this goal, some media experts are still criticizing the program and stating that they preferred to see ethnic minorities included in regular, every-day programs alongside ethnic Georgians. The show periodically emphasizes topics that reinforce stereotypes of minorities.

4. Supporting the production of electronic and printed media in minority-languages

While two of the largest ethnic minority print publications received state funding, the small scale of its audience made such forms of financing less efficient. In fact, such actions are less likely to achieve the goal of the Action Plan and it is desirable to establish a different approach to this issue in future.

5. Promoting tolerance and cultural pluralism in media

In this regard, the steps taken by the government were modest. The implemented programs (Documentary series “Multinational Georgia” and the TV program “Our Georgia”) were noteworthy, but the objective required measures of a larger and more permanent scale instead of periodic initiatives.

The background is a solid dark blue color with several overlapping, semi-transparent, curved shapes in lighter shades of blue. These shapes create a sense of depth and movement, resembling stylized waves or abstract architectural forms. The shapes are layered, with some appearing in front of others, creating a complex, layered effect.

POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

REVIEW OF EXISTING LEGISLATION

In terms of Georgia's national legislation, the civic integration and political participation of ethnic minorities is limited to general provisions. The constitutional provisions regarding equality are noteworthy. The Constitution guarantees citizens equality in all spheres of public life irrespective of their national, ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation (Article 38). The same article also entitles citizens to develop their culture, and to use their native language both privately and in public without any form of discrimination. Additionally, the Constitution states that all people are born free and equal before the law regardless of race, language, gender, religion, political affiliation, origin, financial or social status, or place of residence (Article 14).

In terms of political participation, the Constitution and the Organic Law of Georgia on Political Union of Citizens, with their respective provisions, is also significant. According to the Constitution, every citizen has the freedom of association, including the right to establish and join trade unions. Citizens also have the right to form political parties or other political organizations and participate in its activities (Article 26). The Organic Law also prohibits party membership restrictions based on race, language, gender, religion, political affiliation, origin, and place of residence, financial or social status (Article 11). At the same time, the Organic Law deems registration of political parties on regional or territorial basis as inadmissible (Article 6). This provision is intended to prevent separatist movements at the local level, particularly in regions where minorities are densely populated.

Provisions to the relevant norms of international law are clearest with regards to minority participation and involvement, though a number of these standards is mandatory and some parts in the form of recommendations. In particular, we note the recommendations and declarations of the European Council, OSCE and UN conventions.

Among the European Council Conventions, the most important in terms of ethnic minority rights is the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, since it is the only legally binding document that obliges signatory states (including Georgia) to take adequate measures to ensure ethnic minority engagement in economic, social, political and cultural life (Article 4). Participating states must also ensure ethnic minority rights of peaceful assembly, association, free expression of thought, and religious freedom (Article 7)⁵⁰.

Among the documents obtained under the auspices of the UN, it is worth singling out the declaration of rights regarding national or ethnic linguistic minorities, according to which these minorities have the right to participate in cultural, religious, social, economic and civic life. The declaration also emphasizes the necessity of involving minorities in decision-making processes and the importance of forming minority unions (Article 2).

Although this declaration has no legal authority to impose obligations, it imposes important political and moral obligation to the member-states.⁵¹

Another important legal instrument developed under the auspices of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities offers recommendations on the issue of minority inclusion. Although the document is not legally binding, it possesses political significance to OSCE member-states and statutory leverage for states that wish to join the European Union. In terms of political and civic participation of ethnic minorities, the Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities are notable (1999).

⁵⁰ The Convention was opened for signing in 1995 and entered into force in Georgia on 1 April 2006.

⁵¹ The Declaration was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1992.

The Lund Recommendations focus on ethnic minority participation in decision-making processes, as well as issues related to self-governance, more specifically the issue of state decentralization and local-governance in relation to ethnic minorities.⁵²

The OSCE Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies,⁵³ developed in November 2012, is another important document in this respect. The document focuses on the guiding principles associated with strengthening the effective participation of minorities in areas of public, political, social, economic and cultural involvement. The guidelines set out in detail the measures needed to ensure the effective involvement of minorities in the decision-making process. They also mention administrative-territorial organization and decentralization as one of the effective means for increasing minority participation.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIVITIES PERTAINING TO POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Though directed towards strengthening minority participation in political and civic life, the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration fails to include the above-mentioned legal norms, Georgia's international commitments (Framework Convention) as well as the recommendations adopted by international organizations concerning this issue, despite their significance to the cause of societal integration.

Within the National Concept there are three types of activities directed towards strengthening political and civic participation of minorities. They are as follows:

1. Ensuring equal voting rights for ethnic minorities.
2. Improving participation of ethnic minorities in the decision-making process.

⁵² The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life, OSCE HCNM, 1999.

⁵³ The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies, OSCE HCNM, November 2012.

3. Promotion of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

ENSURING EQUAL VOTING RIGHTS FOR ETHNIC/NATIONAL MINORITIES

To achieve this goal, government action, in accordance with the National Concept and the Action Plan, focused on raising awareness, providing equal electoral rights and increasing involvement in the decision-making process among ethnic minority groups.

The Central Election Commission is the main government institution executing these actions in recent years. Currently it has implemented the following activities:

a) Policy Development

In 2011, a Coordination and Management Department was founded within the Central Election Commission (CEC) in order to strengthen minority political participation, to involve these groups in electoral processes and to develop a general policy concerning ethnic minorities. Additionally, in May 2012, the Central Election Commission set up a working group which unites both local and international organizations working in the field of civic integration. This group of 19 organizations also includes ethnic minority organizations that advise the Central Election Commission on policy and activity planning.

The working group developed the 2012 Action Plan, as well as long-term action plan for 2013–2014. The latter plan includes the following activities: providing ethnic minorities with equal voting rights, informing young voters and engaging them in election processes, informing and involving women voters in the election process, supporting the political participation of disabled ethnic minority members, translating election documents into minority languages, informing ethnic minority groups through media outlets.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Report on activities aimed to improve and promote participation of ethnic minority voters in the electoral process. CEC, 2012.

b) Informing and Raising Awareness Among Minority Voters

In order to inform voters before each election, the Central Election Commission translates and publishes relevant election material in minority languages (Georgian-Armenian and Georgian-Azerbaijani).

For the 2013 Presidential Elections the following literature was prepared: election flyers, Precinct Election Commission Member Handbook, Commission Chairman Instruction Manual, Commission Member Instruction Manual, PEC election posters explaining electoral procedures.

Election ballots, voter lists, instructions for casting a ballot and guidelines for assisting voters with disabilities were also translated.

Videos in ethnic minority languages were also prepared and aired on six local television stations in order to raise voter awareness. A tab “Ethnic Minorities,” containing election material in minority languages (Armenian and Azerbaijani) were posted on the CES official website and Facebook page.

c) Improving Competence of the Electoral Administration

The Central Election Commission conducted professional skill development trainings for all members employed by the organization. CEC also employed the service of Armenian and Azerbaijani-speaking hotline operators, who respond to calls concerning election issues from ethnic minority regions on a daily basis.

d) Allocating Grants for Civil Society Organizations

Since 2008, the Central Election Commission has given out small grants to non-governmental organizations that work to raise awareness among ethnic minorities and to increase their political involvement. In 2013, the target groups for the grant program included Armenian, Azerbaijani, Ossetian, Kist populations as well as the Roma community. The geographical scope of the project includes the following settlements: Samtskhe-Javakheti (Aspindza,

Adigeni, Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Ninotsminda and Borjomi municipalities), Kvemo Kartli (Marneuli, Gardabani, Tsalka, Bolnisi and Dmanisi municipalities), Shida Kartli (Gori municipality), Kakheti (Telavi, Sagarejo, Lagodekhi, Gurjaani and Sighnaghi municipalities) and Guria (Ozurgeti municipality).

In 2013, in total 14 project proposals were funded. Both ethnic minority NGOs and organizations working on minority issues were financed.⁵⁵

Research consultations and focus-group discussions revealed that the level of understanding of electoral and voting procedures among ethnic minorities has improved significantly, mostly due to the existence Armenian and Azerbaijani-language ballot instructions and other election materials. However, in terms of informed choice, the level of public consciousness in densely populated minority regions remains low. The Small Grants Program, funded by the CEC to help non-governmental organizations implement projects, aimed at improving ethnic minority consciousness is not enough to solve the above-mentioned problem. A survey confirmed that the projects are only local in nature and involve only a limited circle of beneficiaries. A large segment of the population, as well as many local non-governmental organizations, are not aware of the existence of the grant program.

Recent years have significantly improved the level of competence among the election administration due to the training programs conducted by the CEC. It is also noteworthy that in regions densely populated with ethnic minorities, these trainings have given ethnic minority members an opportunity to join election commissions at all levels of employment, including the chairman position. Despite a frequent manifestation of incompetence on behalf of the administration and election commission members, in light of current trends, it is expected that continuing the training program could potentially minimize the issue of election commission incompetence.

⁵⁵ Information about the measures undertaken by the CEC was obtained through the CEC Coordination and Management department, consultations with employees of regional offices, and official CEC documents.

IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION OF MINORITIES IN DECISION-MAKING

The above mentioned is one of the most important issues in terms of providing political and civil integration and participation for ethnic minorities. However, it is not determined what specific measures will be taken to achieve this goal in the NCAP. The concept of ethnic minority participation in the decision-making process is only of general importance in the NCAP and does not portray a clear national vision to improve engagement. Accordingly, no specific measures are included in the direction of “improvement of ethnic minority participation in decision-making”.

There is also no definition in the NCAP exactly what types of decisions ethnic minorities will be participating in, however, it is likely the NCAP aims at raising the level of political influence for ethnic minorities at central and local levels. Based on the above-mentioned goal, the NCAP focuses on raising the level of professional competence in ethnic minorities, which should result in an increase of effectiveness during their participation in government agencies, even though specific activities are only intended for professional development. The present study examines these trends and also showcases the quality of the participation of ethnic minorities in the decision-making process, as well as the current state of their political engagement.

The Development of Ethnic Minority Administrative Staff

One of the main activities provided by the NCAP, in terms of increasing the political participation of ethnic minorities, is to increase opportunities for minorities in the field of public administration. These efforts include improving the management and public administration skills of ethnic minorities working in government agencies, especially the local government, through specialized training courses.

The main institution that is authorized to strengthen ethnic minorities in the above mentioned field is the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, which has been in existence in Kutaisi since 2006. The School is one of the most well-equipped state educational facilities with an annual budget of

approximately 500 thousand GEL. It should also be noted that the school has a good material – technical base, highly equipped classrooms, a library, dining room, and dormitory.

The school's profile has changed significantly since 2010. Before 2010, the curriculum focused on training employees in the local government from ethnic minority regions. Since 2010, when the school merged with the Regional Language Houses, it has mostly been engaged in teaching Georgian language to public school principals and teachers from ethnic minority regions.

The school administration has prepared the curriculum for the new school semester. However, it has yet to be approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, which impedes the education process. This new program provides the following types of trainings: 1) a 10-month Georgian language program which will be implemented in the regional Georgian language centers, for both local self-government employees, as well as any interested citizen, 2) a 4 week linguistic qualification improvement program for civil servants that will be implemented only for public officials in Kutaisi. The program has three modules: writing and speaking Georgian, introduction to computer skills, introduction to politics, 3) basic 8-week program to enhance professional qualifications for local self-government junior officials, which will be implemented in Kutaisi. The program is divided into five modules: Introduction to Public Service, Introduction to local self government organizational work; Introduction to the local self-government's financial and material capacity; Use of IT systems in government management; Introduction to computer skills.⁵⁶

As the focus groups conducted in Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki, and the individual meetings with government officials revealed, the local self-government and local non-governmental organizations are well acquainted with the above-mentioned school and view it as a realistic solution to the training of local staff. At the same time, there is a general dissatisfaction with the current uncertain status of the school.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Of the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration – Local Government junior officers basic training programs for public officials, Tbilisi, 2013.

⁵⁷ Information was obtained about the current situation with the headmaster of the school, and after consultation with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC/NATIONAL MINORITIES

The professional development colleges in Akhaltsikhe and the village of Kachreti (in the Gurjaani municipality) play a significant role in terms of the professional development of ethnic minorities. Both colleges are oriented to the development of professional skills for adults.

a) SSIP Professional College of Akhaltsikhe “Opizari”

The College opened in 2007 with educational buildings rehabilitated by the Ministry of Education and Science. The College is also supported by a variety of international organizations and foundations, in particular, the United Nations Development Fund, the Norwegian Refugee Council, British Embassy, and IOM. It is equipped with modern computer technology, a library, a conference hall, a hotel, a dining room, and a medical room. Public workshops, laboratories and classrooms exist for the implementation of each educational program. There are bathrooms and hot and cold water available in the school.

16 professional educational programs have run in the college since September 2013, such as: carpenter, plastering, electrician, welder, auto locksmith, auto technician, textile products specialist, fruit – vegetable primary processor, veterinary service specialist (for small animals: dogs, cats and others; rural – agricultural animals, and birds; exotic animals, birds, fish , etc.), specialist in the manufacture of food products, agricultural machinery mechanic, cook, restaurant administrator, confectioner, plantsman (medicinal, aromatic), and accountant. There also exist paid short-term courses at the college.

b) Community College “IC” (Kachreti, Kakheti region, Gurjaani Municipality)

Community College “IC” offers a variety of professional education programs to students and attendees. In particular, there are 21 different educational programs offered at the college, namely: cookery, carpentry , veterinary services specialist, beekeeping, wine-making, fruit-vegetable processing, tour guide, tour operators, hotel administrator, electrician, plastering, masonry, auto technician, engine mechanic, tractor driver, computer networks and

systems technician, nursing assistant, feltmaker, fabric specialist, vintner and vigneron, and assistant pharmacist.

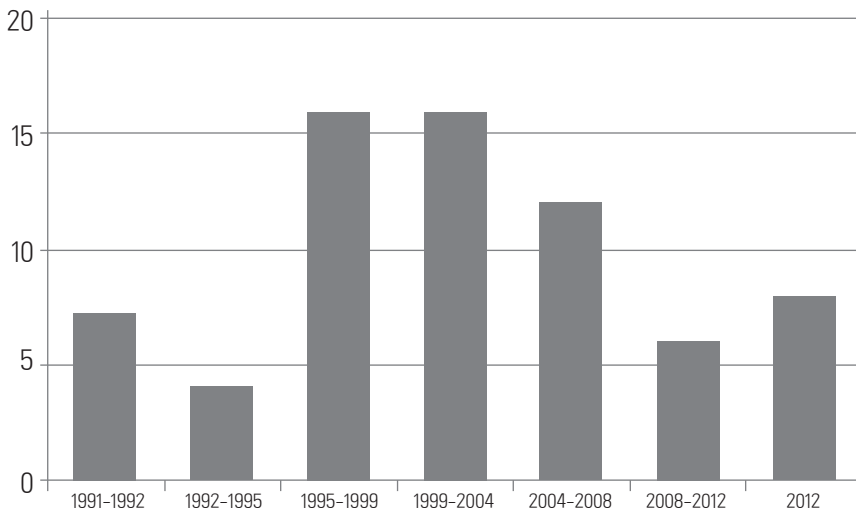
The survey revealed that both the training of minorities in the administrative sphere and the professional development of national minorities is happening spontaneously, and are not meant to have long-term outcomes. In terms of increasing the administrative capacity, it is reflected through the removal of the Management component of the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration and the delay in the approval of new academic programs. At the same time, the school administration, local self-government and public administration are not experts and specialists who could have had a training program for the improvement and for the adaptation to the needs of ethnic minorities.

As for Professional Development colleges, regardless of their work and the variety of study programs provided, the colleges do not actually provide any general policies in the integration of ethnic minorities and the development of their capabilities, because both the above-mentioned colleges, despite the fact that they are located in minority-populated regions, are not oriented towards attracting participants from minority communities and offering training programs for them. For instance, the overwhelming majority of the students in the Akhaltsike professional development college are from the Georgian language municipalities. In 2013, the college enrolled 552 participants, 77 of whom are ethnic minorities. However, only 15 applied from Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda, or minority-populated municipalities. The lack of information about the college was also reaffirmed during the focus groups conducted in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities, where none of the 12 local participants were informed about the existence of the college. A similar situation is viewed in the Kachreti College for professional development, which currently has a very limited number of representatives from ethnic minorities. It should also be noted that most of the Kakheti region's minority communities are not aware of the existence of the college.

Despite the measures taken in this regard, the minority involvement in the political decision-making process is still minimal. To evaluate there is the data

on representation of ethnic minorities in parliamentary and local councils. During 2012, a total of eight representatives of ethnic minorities had seats in Parliament. If we take into account the previous Parliament, we see the following dynamics: in 2008–2012 there were six representatives of ethnic minorities in Parliament, twelve during the convocation of 2004–2008, and even earlier, in 1999–2004, their number amounted to sixteen.⁵⁸

National Minorities in the Georgian Parliament



The small number of ethnic minority representation in parliament is one of the most important indicators of the fact that, on a central level, ethnic minorities basically don't participate in the implementation of national policies. It should be noted that minority groups across the country are not involved in the political process. Their membership and active involvement in the ethnic political parties is at a minimal level of importance. This is reflected in the negligence of ethnic minorities in the re-election political party lists. For example, in the 2008 parliamentary elections, the political parties in their party lists took a total of 55 representatives of ethnic minorities into account. The most electoral subjects, eight ethnic minorities, were included by the United National Movement in their electoral list, but the first among them

⁵⁸ Data from different years of minority parliamentary representation based on official data from the Central Election Commission.

as the 31st, while others after the 50th place on the list. So basically the so called “Passing” seats were not being allocated for ethnic minorities. In this respect, we can see a better situation in the Republican party’s election list, where three out of the five minority representatives had been granted relatively high places on the list – 9,15 and 31.

As a result of the 2012 parliamentary elections, the representation of minorities in the electoral lists of political parties was as follows: UNM considered 12 minorities on the electoral list (seven Azerbaijani and five Armenian), of which the highest number on the party list was № 39. GD coalition included only nine ethnic minorities in their list (four Azerbaijanis, two Armenians, one Kurd, and two Ossetian), of which the highest electoral place granted was 35.

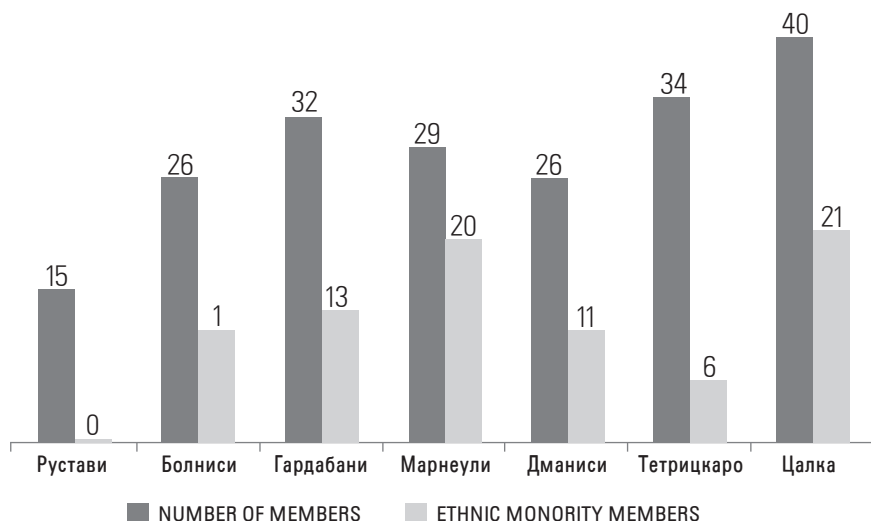
The political representation of ethnic minorities on local council level is minimal country-wide. As a result of the 2006, as well as the 2010 local elections, the number of minorities in the councils is not proportional to the percentage of minorities in the population. Councils in large cities (Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Kobuleti), have no ethnic minority representation at all. Minority representation is only present in municipalities densely populated with ethnic minorities. In comparison to other ethnic groups, the representation of Armenians in Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Akhaltsikhe, Tsalka and Marneuli councils is more or less proportional to the percentage in the population.

The number of Azerbaijanis is higher than those of Armenians country-wide, although their representation level is much lower. According to their number, Azerbaijanis are only adequately represented in Gardabani and Marneuli local municipalities.⁵⁹

The individual interviews and focus group discussions conducted in Samtske-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti, on the engagement of ethnic minorities in the decision-making process painted the following picture: From the above-mentioned three regions, only the official representatives of the Armenian language municipalities of Samtskhe Javakheti and members of the

⁵⁹ Data on Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti councils of national minorities is based on the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI)’s research.

National Minority Board Members in Kvemo Kartli



NGO sector have expressed sharp criticism in terms of engagement in the decision-making process during recent years. In particular, both the local government and non-government sector believe that over the past few years the local government's real impact on the region was minimal. The executive bodies of the municipalities did not have the opportunity to decide even the region's most important issues without the authority of the central government.

Similar assessments have not been made by the local government representatives in Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions. However, the representatives of non-governmental organizations from Kvemo Kartli (ethnic Azerbaijanis) believe that the Azerbaijani community is poorly represented in the management of the municipalities of the region, including the regions most populated with Azerbaijanis. In particular, the ethnic Azerbaijanis have never held the position of governor in the respective municipalities, they have just been represented as one of the deputies. Their numbers are also insufficient in mid-level government. This problem has been named by both the Kvemo Kartli regional administration, as well as the administration officials from separate municipalities of Kvemo Kartli, but their shortage is due to the fact that there is only a very small number of qualified professional personnel from Azerbaijani language communities.

It is also possible to use the election results, the activeness of minorities in the elections, and the voting analysis to assess the civil and political awareness of ethnic minorities. Since the 1990s, a tradition has been established according to which an overwhelming majority of ethnic minorities vote for the ruling party in any election. Accordingly, the political processes and civic activism of minority-populated regions are extremely limited. Statistically, over 90% of the population in minority municipalities vote in favor of the ruling party. In this regard, there seems to be an increase in awareness and progress when observing the trends during the last 2012 parliament elections, where the ruling party did not receive even 80% of the votes from any minority municipality.

The Election Results in Ethnic Minority Municipalities (2012)

MUNICIPALITIES	GEORGIAN DREAM	NATIONAL MOVEMENT	OTHER	VOTER ACTIVITY
Akhalkalaki	21.29%	76.54%	2.17%	54.55%
Ninotsminda	17.13%	79.59%	3.28%	60.07%
Tsalka	28.28%	67.82%	3.90%	35.59%
Marneuli	17.42%	78.91%	3.67%	43.98%
Dmanisi	25.78%	69.83%	4.39%	53.47%
Bolnisi	29.49%	66.99%	3.52%	48.44%
Overall National	54.97%	40.34%	4.69%	60.80%

The status of civil and political awareness and activity is also indicated by the work and activeness of political parties in minority-populated regions. The consultations and meetings conducted during the research process reaffirmed that the full social and political processes are not taking place in the above mentioned regions, which is demonstrated by the passiveness of political parties. Political parties only become active and open offices in minority municipalities during the election campaign period.

THE PROMOTION OF THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

The study revealed that ethnic minority communities are more or less informed on the Framework Convention in both of the compact settled regions (Samtskhe–Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli). It should be noted that both local NGOs and the local population have certain information about the Convention, including in rural areas. The focus group meetings revealed that the main source, from which the population gets information about the Convention, is not so much the state agencies, but local TV stations, newspapers and various NGO projects. As for other regions, for example Kakheti, where minorities are more dispersed, the level of awareness of the Convention is minimal. The four focus groups conducted in the Kakheti region confirmed that the population has adequate information on the Framework Convention only in rare cases. Similar surveys have not been conducted in other regions. However, based on the Kakheti example, it is highly likely that public awareness on the Framework Convention in regions where there are low numbers of ethnic minorities is extremely low.

The NCAP does not include the National Council of Europe's second important document on the popularization of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. However, during the recent period, the Charter gained significance, since the signing and ratification of the Charter has been put on the agenda. The focus groups discussions and individual interviews revealed that the attitude towards the Charter varies for the minorities in compact settlements and the Georgian language populations. It is interpreted differently by different ethnic groups. Particular interest in the Charter can be observed from the Armenian communities in Samtskhe–Javakheti who feel that the adoption and ratification of the Charter will make Armenian the official language of the region, which in turn will be a significant step in the development of the Armenian language and culture in the region. The level of knowledge about the Charter in Georgian regions is very low, but also the information they do have is being interpreted improperly. In particular, the common perception is that the remedies provided for in the Charter may be extended to Laz and Svan languages, which adversely affects the efficient operation of the unified Georgian state structure.

The opinions of the minority as well as Georgian communities with regards to the Charter show that awareness levels on the Charter are quite unsatisfactory. The main problem in this regard lies in the fact that a comprehensive information campaign has not been done for the population and different circles of society (NGOs, political parties, local or central government) to gain adequate information about it.

THE TOPICS LEFT OUT IN THE NATIONAL CONCEPT FOR TOLERANCE AND CIVIC INTEGRATION

Marginalized Ethnic Groups

The NCAP did not include the problems of marginalized ethnic groups and no steps have been taken to identify and resolve their needs. Marginalized ethnic groups can be divided into several categories:

- Roma people (approximately 1,500 people) – located in the following areas: Tbilisi Samgori settlement, the village of Gachiani in the Gardabani municipality, Choeti villages of the Dedoplistskaro municipality, city of Telavi, Kutaisi, and Kobuleti;
- Nomadic Kurdish population (approximately 700 people) – mainly settled in Tbilisi and Kutaisi ;
- Moldovans (about 1200 people) – mainly settled in Lotkini settlement;
- Domi /Lomi⁶⁰ (approximately 500 people) – mostly live in Africa settlement.

From the above-mentioned ethnic groups only the problems of Roma people have been more or less explored. Their needs are documented by the European Center for Minority Issues, as well as by relevant state agencies who are aware of the basic problems of the Roma people. In 2010-12, with the facilitation of the National Security Council, an inter-agency worked on Roma-related problems that brought together their legal issues and made positive steps in terms of documentation and the issuance of identity cards

⁶⁰ Roma community – one of the branches, though they have separate ethnic identity. Roma differ significantly from the linguistic point of view.

for them. However, the working group did not meet in 2012, hence this informal initiative of the government of support and integration of the Roma people stalled.

No programs have been initiated by the government for any of the other marginalized ethnic groups. Moreover, there is still no reliable and accurate information about them. The situation with Domi people is particularly ambiguous. Until recently there was no information about the existence of Domi people in Georgia.

The main needs of marginalized ethnic groups living in Georgia, according to the latest situation, are as following:

With regard to the Roma people: the main problem hindering the integration of Roma people, the lack of identity cards and birth certificates, has largely been solved. According to reports, about 80% of Roma people living in Georgia now have identity cards and birth certificates. The most pressing issue now is the development of secondary education for these communities. Roma children attend school only in rare cases. Employment and social issues are no less severe. The involvement of Roma people in social programs and public affairs activity is also minimal.

With regards to other marginalized ethnic groups: Unlike Roma people, other marginalized ethnic groups, in most cases, are living without any legal status, they do not have identity cards or birth certificates. Their main field of activity is illegal trade or begging.

Small Ethnic Groups

The integration and development of the small number of ethnic groups living in Georgia is not adequately reflected in the NCAP. There are also no appropriate measures set out in the Action Plan. Like all other state initiatives, the NCAP is focused on compact settlements and municipalities of ethnic minorities. Other minority groups can be grouped into the following categories:

- Udis, Assyrians, Abkhazians, Avars: the small number of ethnic groups, many of which have the greater concern of saving their own identities than being integrated into society;
- Ossetians, Kurds, Kists: relatively larger ethnic groups which have distinct ethnic identities, even though they lack the tools for the development of their own ethnic and cultural identity;
- The so-called “European” and “Baltic” ethnic minorities (Germans, Poles, Czechs, Latvians, and so on): generally Russian speaking, partly Georgian speaking ethnic groups, that receive cultural support from their countries of origin;
- Ethno – religious groups: and the Russian Dukhoboriy and Molokani, which have mostly preserved their cultural identities, even though their cultural monuments are in bad conditions.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of the NCAP document revealed that one of the main conceptual shortcomings is that in the part of the civic and political participation of ethnic minorities, the political participation and their role in the decision-making process was not deeply considered. It has not been clearly defined what kind of measures should be taken to achieve this goal. Another problem is that the NCAP is not directly based on international legal documents which constitute the guiding principles for the provision of minority civic and political participation. Therefore, it is important that during the development of the new NCAP, specific proposed measures which are reflected in relevant international conventions and declarations are taken into account such as: The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, OSCE High Commissioner Lund’s recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life, and the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies.

The most visible change resulting from the NCAP has been made in terms of ensuring minorities equal voting rights and raising awareness on elec-

tion-related issues. At the same time, the conscious and informed choices of ethnic minorities during elections remains low, which is associated with low political culture in regions.

Despite the measures taken in strengthening civic and political participation of ethnic minorities, the results are still low. The state programs and activities carried out during the past years were marked by inconsistency, an example of which is the training program for minority professional staff and civil servants. According to the NCAP, the above-mentioned is a key element in terms of increasing the participation of ethnic minorities in decision-making processes. However, the activities carried out in this regard were not adequate. In particular, the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, which was the forerunner in training personnel employed in the public sector in minority regions, realistically lost its main function and assumed the function of a language center. Also, in terms of professional training to ethnic minorities, it should be noted that the existing professional colleges in Gurjaani (Katchreti) and Akhaltsikhe are not focused on minority communities and their programs are not considered to be a part of the general policy of integration.

In light of this problem, to ensure the political participation of ethnic minorities, the National Concept should strengthen the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration and the general direction of training administrative staff in minority communities. It is important to develop an appropriate curriculum for minority communities in public administration, and to determine the correct priorities for public administration in ethnic minority communities. In terms of the professional development of minority communities, it is important that the existing facilities and professional educational programs in the existing colleges adapt to the general policies and programs of the integration of ethnic minorities.

Significant problems have been identified in terms of political participation of minorities in state structures, both at the central as well as regional (especially in the case of Kvemo Kartli) levels of minority representation. At the same time, a high dependence on the central government during the decision-making process is another concern. Therefore, it is important to consider

the specificities of ethnic minorities and relevant regions when structuring local self-governments. In this regard, it is important that the new Action Plan take into consideration the local self-government and decentralization issues, as stated in the international norms and recommendations that are presented in the OSCE Lund recommendations and guidelines.

In terms of increasing political culture it is also important that the NCAP include awareness-raising programs and various trainings for the representatives of political parties.

The level of awareness is low on international agreements on the protection of ethnic minorities in both minority communities and the Georgian population, especially on the European Charter on Minority or Regional Languages. Due to these problems, it is recommended that the NCAP accurately define the measures that will contribute to raising awareness about these international agreements.

The Concept does not reflect the needs and problems of marginalized and small numbered ethnic groups. In this regard, it is important that the NCAP define measures for the issuance of relevant documents to marginalized groups (identity cards and birth certificates), facilitates access to education for children and the inclusiveness of adults in the ongoing social projects.

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SOCIAL AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

SOCIAL AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

REVIEW OF EXISTING LEGISLATION

The legislation in this area does not contain any provisions which grant exclusive rights to ethnic minorities.

According to Article 31 of the Georgian Constitution, the state is obliged to take care of the whole territory in terms of equal socio-economic development.

According to Article 2.3 of the Labor Code, labor relations of any kind are prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, language, or ethnic or national origin. Human discrimination is regarded as both direct and indirect harassment that creates a hostile, degrading or offensive environment, as well as leading to conditions under which the human condition worsens compared to others in the same conditions (Article 2.4). The only exception is the case when different treatment is derived from the essence of the job and serve a legitimate purpose (Article 2.5).

According to Article 6.1 of the Law on Health Care, it is prohibited to discriminate against a patient on the basis of race, skin color, language, belief and religion, or national or ethnic background. Under Article 6.2 of the same law, it is prohibited to discriminate during the medical care of a patient in prisons.

On the basis of Article 7 of the Law on Health Care, Each citizen shall have the right to acquire objective and comprehensive information in a form un-

derstandable for him, as well as to seek a second opinion on his state of health.” This means that ethnic minority patients have the right to obtain information on their health in their own language.

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN THE DIRECTION OF SOCIAL AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Social Security and Mobility

During the realization of the 2009–2014 Action Plan, the state implemented activities in every region of Georgia, to improve the situation of ethnic minority registration, and to improve the issuance of social benefits and allowances allocated to them. Measures to improve the quality of information to ethnic minorities have intensified since 2011.

The health and social programs planned and implemented by the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs covered every citizen in the country equally, regardless of their national, social and religious backgrounds. However, access to medical and social services guaranteed by the government was hindered by informational barriers. These language barriers exist for some of the ethnic minorities living in Georgia is particularly evident in minority-populated regions, and is a problem most notably for middle-aged or elderly persons who were deprived of the opportunity to read or hear about a variety of media sources that reported on the planned state programs, and were unable to receive timely information on a variety of changes to the state program which clearly hindered them from using the services offered by the state. To eliminate this information vacuum, various informative campaigns were planned in their native language, within the projects implemented for the non-Georgian language population.

In 2011, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Affairs, accepted the 2011–2015 Health Care Strategy document, which was based on a few basic principles, most of which focused on supporting equal access and the development of a patient-centered healthcare system. Equal access means providing medical and social services to all citizens equally, regardless of their socio-economic

status, ethnic origin, and consciousness. Accordingly, the state programs implemented by the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs should be enjoyed by all citizens of Georgia equally.

The right of the citizens to make informed decisions about their own health is directly related to medical institutions, insurance companies and state healthcare programs for making information.

In 2011, with the organization of the Office of the State Minister for Disease Control and Public Health, National Screening Center and “The Georgian Health Promotion and Education Foundation, and with EU funding, meetings were held with ethnic minority representatives in Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti. During the meetings cancer screening, tobacco prevention, physical activity, general health and healthy eating programs were presented. Additionally, informative materials were distributed in Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian languages.

In 2011, the “Public Health Insurance Mediation Service” implemented a project on “Informing national and ethnic minorities about health insurance mediation functions and services.” Due to the fact that medical insurance and insurance mediation services are relatively newly established trends, citizens often had no information about these services and their rights, and failed to receive proper medical care. Therefore, the government has decided to inform the public of the principles of insurance mediation service functions and means of communication, so that they could provide timely and purposeful necessary services to them. In this respect, informational brochures were prepared and meetings were held.

The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs provides various social guarantees to the vulnerable population. To obtain complete information on these guarantees and about the use of state social programs, within the “Informing national minorities on the provision of social guarantees” project in 2011, the Social Service Agency has developed three types of brochures on the use of a variety of social guarantees. In 2011, within the framework of the “National / ethnic minorities and citizens information of the health and social sector reforms” meetings were held with target groups in order to inform them.

In order to inform the population on the scopes and availability of services provided by the State Insurance program, the “national minority awareness of their rights in the field of health and state-financed medical services” project planned to develop an informational banner. According to the order, the insurance program for beneficiaries created a banner with full information on the public health insurance services. The content of the banner was translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. The managers of medical centers located in minority-populated regions were required to put up bilingual banners in a place visible to the beneficiaries.

the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, has paid particular attention that citizens be regularly informed about the reforms, which, in turn, had a great importance for the successful implementation of the reforms. The main objective of the “National minority awareness on the reforms in the health and social sector,” project was to provide information about the new phase of health insurance. On September 1, 2012, the medical insurance program for children under the age of six, senior citizens, students, children with disabilities, and persons with severe disabilities came into effect. Outreach campaign was prepared by the representatives of the ministry, during which the informative meetings were held in the regions that are densely populated by ethnic minority communities.

The information campaigns conducted by the government in order to inform ethnic/national minorities on the various health care reforms had a positive impact. This kind of event promotes increasing referrals of ethnic minorities to health facilities and increases their involvement in the identification and resolution of problems. However, the information campaigns were of a relatively modest scale in comparison to the scale of ethnic minorities in the country, and a much larger campaign should be planned by the government.

SUPPORTING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the 2009-2014 Action Plan implementation periods, there were efforts from the government to create a systematic approach to minority problems in the region. In 2011, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastruc-

ture, which was serving as the leading government agency role of regional development, implemented the regional and municipality development strategy and action programs and included ethnic minorities in the process.

A methodic manual for the Regional development strategy was prepared in 2012. The creation of a development strategy for every region in Georgia was done through this manual. The strategy was a policy document which reflected the current situation and the mechanisms through which the development potential of the regions was supported. An important part of the strategy was defining specific projects, the timeframe, the determination of the costs and funding sources. Strategy aimed at identifying some of the region's potential and suggestions for achieving the objectives of the proposal.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

As a result of the developments in the country in the 1990s, in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti, like other regions, the existing infrastructure was completely destroyed, which contributed to the isolation of minority-populated regions. The situation has changed significantly over the period of the implementation of the Action Plan , in 2009–2014, when large-scale social and regional integration projects started. Infrastructure projects were vital in minority-populated areas. The fact that the attitude of ethnic minorities living in compact settlements changed towards the state in recent years is partly due to the large-scale infrastructure development projects, in particular the important railway and highway construction.

Rehabilitation of the Samtskhe–Javakheti Road

Intense road rehabilitation work is going on in ethnic minority populated regions, which are implemented within the “Millenium Challege, Georgia” project. The Samtskhe–Javakheti Road Rehabilitation Project was aimed at the road - transport network recovery. The project cost was U.S. \$ 203.5 million and included the rehabilitation of 223 km of road in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti regions. Rehabilitation work carried out in 2008–2010.

The road rehabilitation in the regions of Samtskhe Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli created a better environment in the two regions' trade –entrepreneurship development; increasing international and domestic trade, business development, and attracting private investment, tourism and other related economic-development activities. As a result of regional roads in Samtskhe–Javakheti reducing the isolation of the region from the rest of the country there will be a promotion of regional economic integration and fulfilling of the education and health care needs of the local population. According to the opinions expressed during focus groups, the rehabilitation of roads brought about a positive impact on the development of small and medium-sized businesses, as well as improved terms of trade with other regions of Georgia, including Tbilisi.

Construction of the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars Railway

The Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway construction, which connects Europe and Asia, and started in 2007, will play a significant role in the improvement of the economical life in the Samtskhe–Javakheti region.

The significance of the project is huge for both Georgia and the region. After the completion and the rehabilitation–reconstruction of the railroad Baku–Tbilisi–Akhalkalaki–Kars will become the shortest road from central Asia to the Mediterranean, central and East Europe markets. After the completion of the project, the passing of loads will have a positive effect on the country's economy, including the rejuvenation of economic life in regions populated with ethnic minorities.

The project includes the rehabilitation–reconstruction of the 153 km stretch between Marneuli and Akhalkalaki as well as the building of a railroad on the 30 km from Akhalkalaki to the border of Turkey. Besides this, 10 stations will be rehabilitated–restored–reconstructed, and a new railway station “Kartsakhi” will be built on the boarder of Turkey.

Rehabilitation of the Infrastructure

During the implementation of the 2009–2014 Action Plan by the Georgian government, especially the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure

and local budget incomes support, more than one project was implemented in ethnic minority regions. It should be mentioned that similar projects were happening all over Georgia and that they were not just directed at ethnic minorities. Despite this, it should definitely be noted that similar projects had an undisputable positive effect in ethnic minority regions in terms of civil integration.

Various infrastructural projects were implemented such as: the State roads rehabilitation program, the Rural Support Program, and the school rehabilitation program: to rehabilitate public schools, repair roads and bridges, water systems, lighting, culture houses, stadiums, sports halls, Country clubs, and more.

Energy Infrastructure Rehabilitation

In 2008 the restoration or constructing of new gas pipes in Samtskhe Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli began, which will improve the gas supplies of the population in the coming years. In parallel to the development of gas infrastructure in these regions, these changes will reduce isolation and promote more active involvement of the local population in the country's economic life.

DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS

Grants were issued during the implementation period of the The "Millennium Challenge Georgia Fund" Agribusiness Development Project 2009-2014 Action Plan, in the form of a co-payment principle for primary production, farm service centers, small enterprises, and continuous production chain development in rural Georgia. ADA activities of the project included two components : the promotion of enterprises and the creation of a continuous production chain. Its aim was to transform small farming into a profitable agribusiness which could contribute to the development of agribusiness and create new jobs.

Within the scope of this project a variety of projects were financed in the regions, including in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. As a result of the implementation of the projects, the rural population was employed, and also received indirect benefits. However, focus group participants claimed that local people were less informed about the possibility of funding in agribusiness.

SUPPORT FOR RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

In 2009, the program was implemented in stages in minority-populated regions of the country, including rural villages. State funds were allocated to primary necessities of that work which was a priority for the rural residents. In some cases, this amount was also raised by the co-financing of local self-budgetary funds and additional funds from international and donor organizations. Rural communities were directly involved in defining priorities. Local officials mobilizing their communities in various villages to address the existing acute problems. In the villages where there were farmer unions, or where there were international organization-initiated Community Unions, mobilization was more effective and it was easier to identify the top priorities. In Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti different types of projects were funded. For example:

- Rural gasification;
- Rehabilitation of preschools;
- Providing agricultural machinery;
- Restoration/creation of irrigation and drinking water canals, water reservoir recovery;
- Creating waterpools for cattle use;
- Cleaning equipment for small irrigation canals;
- Rehabilitation of internal roads.

The rural population was employed to carry out the work. According to the views shared during focus groups, rural infrastructure development projects are undoubtedly a positive development, but it is necessary to increase their size.

LOCAL POPULATION AND REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

In relation to the Samtskhe-Javakheti road rehabilitation, and construction of the railway, local officials noted that despite the promise, a very small number of local people were employed in the construction of the roads and railways. It should be noted that the road construction/rehabilitation projects were performed by tender-winning competitive companies and judged by government officials; they were obliged to employ local people. However, the percentage of employment did not satisfy the government nor the local community.

Locals demanded protection of their interests, the allocation of a certain number of jobs, and appropriate training to ensure that they are employed in the railway construction, as well as after the opening of the railway- as railway workers. It should be noted that this promise was received from the local government officials, but the promise has not been fulfilled. Although part of the Samtskhe-Javakheti population think that these problems are exclusive to their region, in fact, similar claims in relation to construction facilities have been made in other regions, which are mainly populated by ethnic Georgians.

In general, these road rehabilitation projects are appreciated by the local population. In the Javakheti region it used to take 2-3 hours to reach the center of the region, which is currently possible in much less time. It has also halved the travel distance to Tbilisi. Despite the fact that there was a groundless fear of the railway line, now this fear exists in only a small part of the population there. In 2007, after the withdrawal of the Russian military base from Akhalkalaki, some local political groups discussed the geopolitical importance of the project and named the isolation of Armenia as the aim of the project. Some also feared that Turkish and Azerbaijani troops would be sent to guard the railroad and people from other regions would be employed. However, over time, the attitude towards the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway has changed significantly.

The focus groups conducted with the Samtske-Javakheti population expressed the view that the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway construction will create employment opportunities for the local community.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

There are three tasks in regards to social and regional integration in the NCAP 2009-2014.

1. Further development of infrastructure in minority-populated regions

In relation to the first task of the Action Plan, it has to be noted that in recent years the state has implemented large-scale infrastructure projects country-wide. The aim of the project was to increase international and domestic trade, business development, and agribusiness and farming de-

velopment, create good conditions for investment, reduce unemployment, develop tourism and other economic activities related to the development and promotion of regional economic integration. Despite the fact that the goals set for minority districts cannot be fully achieved in the coming years, such projects are undoubtedly a positive trend and were important steps towards the reduction of the isolation of the minority regions in the country, and in terms of speeding up the process of further integration.

2. Supporting the Professional Training and Employment of Ethnic/National Minorities

The ongoing projects that were implemented under the 2009–2014 Action Plan were meant to encourage the employment of local populations. However, projects supporting small and medium business, in terms of efficiency require a better approach. The critical approach of ethnic minorities living in local infrastructure projects was justified, but the employment issue is directly linked to training and qualifications. The gaps in the above-mentioned direction result in a small number of people employed in the local projects. The state's vocational training and capacity building were a positive step in this regard, but the modest scale of the projects and learning gaps are not helping in the employment of ethnic minorities.

3. Supporting the Social and Religious Mobility of ethnic Minorities

During the implementation of the 2009–2014 Action Plan, the government carried out various projects in healthcare and social directions. In terms of delivering the state services to ethnic minorities, the problem consisted of a lack of information about the services. Perhaps the Georgian population had a similar problem, but the lack of information in the case of ethnic minorities was due to the lack of knowledge of the Georgian language. In the recent years of the implementation of the Action Plan, the Government has implemented a number of measures aimed at providing information to ethnic minorities, but, in this regard, in order to achieve efficiency, the ethnic minority areas are in need of more intensive information campaigns. In this case, the minority will be able to receive more information and so have more access to public services.

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CULTURE AND PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY

CULYURE AND PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING LEGISLATION

According to the Constitution⁶¹, every citizen is equal before the law regardless of his belief (Article 9).

The Constitution of Georgia

Article 9

The state shall declare complete freedom of belief and religion, as well as shall recognize the special role of the Apostle Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Georgia in the history of Georgia and its independence from the state.

The Georgian constitution guarantees the cultural development of each citizen, unrestricted participation of citizens in cultural life, so expressing and enriching cultural originality. (Article 34.1)

Article 34

1. The state shall promote the development of culture, the unrestricted participation of citizens in cultural life, the expression and enrichment of cultural originality, recognition of national and common values and deepening of international cultural relations.
2. Each citizen of Georgia shall be obliged to care for the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage. The state shall protect cultural heritage by law.

⁶¹ Constitution of Georgia: http://www.parliament.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=180&Itemid=85&lang=ge.

Article 38

1. Citizens of Georgia shall be equal in social, economic, cultural and political life irrespective of their national, ethnic, religious or linguistic belonging. In accordance with universally recognised principles and rules of international law, they shall have the right to develop freely, without any discrimination and interference, their culture, to use their mother tongue in private and in public.
2. In accordance with universally recognised principles and rules of international law, the exercise of minority rights shall not oppose the sovereignty, state structure, territorial integrity or political independence of Georgia.

In addition, the Constitution provides for the freedom of intellectual creation and forbids interference in the creative activity.

Article 23

1. The freedom of intellectual creation shall be guaranteed. The right to intellectual property shall be inviolable.
2. Interference in a creative process or censorship in the field of the creative activity shall be prohibited.
3. The seizure of creative work and prohibition of its dissemination shall be prohibited unless it infringes upon the legal rights of others.

Apart from the Georgian Constitution, in regards to the sphere of culture, the following laws provide for the preservation of minority culture and identity:

The Law on Culture, according to which Georgian citizens are equal in cultural life regardless of their national, ethnic, religious or linguistic belonging. (Article 6).

Article 6. The Right to Cultural Participation

According to the Constitution of Georgia, cultural activity in Georgia is focused on human rights. Citizens of Georgia are equal in cultural life regardless of their national, ethnic, religious, or linguistic affiliation.

According to Article 10 of the same law, all citizens have the right to cultural identity.

Article 10. The Right to Cultural Identity

Everyone has the right to protect their cultural identity and to choose their artistic – aesthetic orientation.

In addition to the above-mentioned laws that directly regulate the rights of ethnic minorities, organizations working in the sphere of ethnic minority culture and education are guided by the common law of Georgia such as the Law on Cultural Heritage,⁶² the Law on Professional Theaters,⁶³ and the Law on Libraries,⁶⁴ as well as by international conventions, the European Cultural Convention and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN THE DIRECTION OF CULTURAL AND PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY

In this direction of the NCAP, the state has an obligation to support the participation of ethnic minorities in cultural life and to protect their cultural heritage. For this purpose, a series of concrete measures were planned by the government which includes the following:

- a) Promote civic consciousness;
- b) Promote the preservation of the cultural identity of ethnic/national minorities;
- c) Protect the cultural heritage of ethnic/national minorities;
- d) Support tolerance, intercultural dialogue, and connections;
- e) Support the participation of ethnic/national minorities in the cultural life of Georgia;

⁶² Georgian Law on Cultural Heritage https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_idmssearch&view=docView&id=11932..

⁶³ Georgian Law on Professional Theaters https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_idmssearch&view=docView&id=1900035

⁶⁴ Georgian Law on Libraries: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/geo7/alias%2063/id27>

- f) Raise awareness on minority culture, history, language and religion in public, showcasing them as part of the cultural value of the society.

National Minority Culture Support Program

Since 2009, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection has been implementing a Support for National Minority Culture program, a sub-program of the Development of Art program. The main objectives of the program are protecting the cultural identity of ethnic/national minorities, promoting its development and popularization, encouraging the cultural dialogue of ethnic/national minorities, and supporting freedom of initiatives. Within the scope of the same program, during the years 2010–2013, the Armenian newspaper “Vrastan” and Azerbaijani newspaper “Gurjistan” was financed, and in 2013 the Russian language newspaper “Svobodnaia Grusia” and “Vecherni Tbilisi” was added. The newspapers were aimed at raising the level of awareness of Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian language minorities. The program’s annual budget was 100,000 GEL, of which 60,000 GEL was spent on print media funding, while the remaining 40,000 GEL went to financing free projects.

It should be noted that due to its specificity, the ethnic minorities cultural preservation project, additionally funded by a variety of programs such as: the **“Book and Literature Promotion”** program, which focused on the implementation of public policy in the field of literature, books and libraries, development of the literary process, writing, , books and literature promotion, and the promotion of libraries; the **“supporting the development of Georgian professional music”** program, a program aimed at the implementation of the state policy in the field of professional musical art, Georgian music arts promotion, and the promotion and protection of traditions; the **“Georgian professional theater promotion”** program, aimed at the implementation of the state policy in the field of professional theatrical art; protection of performance art traditions of Georgia, development and promotion; and **“Georgian Season”** programs⁶⁵ that were focused on the promotion of Georgian culture abroad.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection www.culture.gov.ge.

The Public Law Legal Entities, Museums and Theaters under the Ministry of Culture

The Mirza Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Cultural Center, David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia, the Museum of Smirnoff, Circassian (Adyghe) Cultural Center, SSIP Tbilisi Public National Theater, Petros Adamian State Armenian Drama Theater, SSIP Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Drama Theater, SSIP Alexander Griboyedov State Russian Drama Theater⁶⁶ are subjected to the Ministry of Culture and Monumental Protection as legal entities under Public Law.

Museums

LEPL Museum of Azerbaijani Culture named after Mirza Fatali Akhundov

The museum is set up and operates on the basis of the Mirza-Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Culture Center, and the Nariman Narimanov and Jalili Mamedqulizades Mirza's House-Museum exhibits and is their legal basis. The museum houses memorial objects of Mirza Fatali Akhundov—plays, newspaper articles, and sketches, as well as Georgia-Azerbaijan's cultural relations through photographs, books, documents, scientific and artistic literature in both Azerbaijani and Georgian.

In December 2008, a Cultural Center was established by the museum which engages in cultural and educational work among the Azerbaijani population in Georgia.

The center offers song and dance clubs, painting courses, carpet weaving, the art of Azerbaijani national musical instruments, languages (English, Georgian, Azerbaijani), computer courses, and more.

According to Presidential Decree No. 326 of May 13, 2009, the second floor of the house on Gorgasali Str. № 17, where LEPL Museum of Azerbaijani Culture named after Mirza Fatali Akhundov used to function, was given to

⁶⁶ LEPL Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection. <http://www.culture.gov.ge/text-8.html>

the the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic Azerbaijan through a direct sale. They were also assigned the maintenance of the museum and reconstruction of the building. Since the building is held by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection under cultural heritage monument status, in order for the protection of cultural heritage objects, protection from damage and destruction of the environment and the historical – cultural, or scientific value for maintenance purposes, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Culture, the Mayor’s Office, and the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan ‘statue – maintenance of’ (№ 07/01, 12.10.2009 sec.). Activities of the museum are determined by the 27 March 2007, № 3/59 statements,⁶⁷ The Law on Museums and the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection.

Documentary films are shown in the museum, alongside meetings, anniversary events and activities in connection with the Independence Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan.⁶⁸

Museum Title	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
LEPL Museum of Azerbaijani Culture named after Mirza Fatali Akhundov Budgetary Finance (GEL)	31.900	29.400	31.900	30.000	30.000
Number of Visitors	-	-	-	-	1210

LEPL David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia

The David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia was established on November 30, 1932, within department of the Cultural Base of organization-worker Jews. The museum closed in 1951 during the antisemitic movement in the USSR but was reestablished under Governmental Decree No.1017 of November 30, 1992 and was named after famous Rabi and public figure, David Baazov. Due to being in an unstable condition for years, the museum itself no longer functions. In order to save the existing historical building and museums of national and international importance, the Georgian-Jewish Relationship Association prepared an order (№ 54) on July 25, 2004 – “Reconstruction and renovation works for the David Baazov Museum

⁶⁷ Legislative Herald of Georgia: https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_Jdmssearch&view=docView&id=69958.

⁶⁸ After the dissolution of the Transcaucasian Federation, the National Council of Azerbaijan announced the independence of Azerbaijan in Tbilisi, in the Viceroy Palace on May 28, 1918.

of History of Jews of Georgia,” the action plan involved reconstruction of the museum, as it would serve as a unique research center of Georgian–Jewish relationships and a treasure bank of the history of Jews living in Georgia for centuries. According to the Presidential Order⁶⁹ №493 of August 17, 2006, the museum was given the new legal status “LEPL David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia.” The museum holds epigraphic materials, manuscripts, archeological, ethnographic, historical and art pieces, archives, etc. These were distributed across various museums, institutions and depositories after the museum closed in 1951. According to Presidential Order №654, all of the museum’s belongings should be brought back to the museum after the reconstruction is finished.

The museum carries out scientific–research on the history of Georgian Jews, ethnology, cultural heritage, and Georgian–Jewish historical relation issues. The museum has also published a catalogue as well as materials of the scientific conference “Archaeology, Ethnology, Folklore.”

The museum, as a LEPL, receives a budget to cover the salary fund but is insufficient for the urgent renovation works that are needed. In 2010 the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender and the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia signed a memorandum agreement. At the signing ceremony the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia declared that although the rehabilitation project of the building is prepared, the budget of the Ministry does not have sufficient funds. The Minister also stated that the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia addressed the Tbilisi City Hall and got a promise that the City Hall would include this building in the list of monuments that need rehabilitation, but the promise was not kept. In 2013 the International Charity Foundation Cartu financed the rehabilitation and strengthening works of the museum building (the synagogue, built in the 19th century, carries the status of immovable cultural heritage monument). The works are scheduled to finish in the second half of 2014. Currently, the copper roof is being installed. There will be an exposition event after the rehabilitation works finish.

⁶⁹ Legislative Herald of Georgia: https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_jdmssearch&view=docView&id=98620

Museum Title	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
LEPL (legal entity of public law) David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia, Budgetary Finance (GEL)	79.200	79.200	70.000	75.000	75.000
Number of Visitors	00	0	0	0	0

LEPL Circassian (Adyghen) Cultural Center

The LEPL Circassian (Adyghen) Cultural Center was established based on the Presidential Decree No 606 dated October 11, 2011 and Order No 3/286⁷⁰ of the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of November 9, 2011. The center aims at enhancing relationships between Georgian and Caucasian nations, developing and promoting their culture; supporting the dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation among the Caucasian nations; initiating and supporting cooperation in cultural and social issues as well as scientific research among Georgia and the Caucasus nations; researching and promoting knowledge of culture, history, society, economy and politics of the Caucasus region.

LEPL Telavi Historical Museum

The Telavi History Museum is closed at the moment, the rehabilitation works of the museum complex, funded and supported by the World Bank, began at the end of 2012. The museum owns a rich collection of historical materials and works of art, and is actively working on attracting visitors for which the museum has developed a special program “VOP “ (Visitor-Oriented Program). Through this program, the museum is actively cooperating with schools, including the Azerbaijani school in Karajali village⁷¹ as students of this school often visit the museum where they hold open classes and theatrical performances. The museum plans to further cooperate with the Karajali school. The museum is funded by the Ministry of Culture. As it is much more difficult to allocate funds for purchasing new exhibits, at this point it is important to renew the existing collection.

⁷⁰ Legislative Herald of Georgia: https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_idmssearch&view=docView&id=1506830

⁷¹ In Telavi region there is only one village – Karadjali, densely populated by the Azerbaijanians.

Ivane Javakhishvili Samtskhe–Javakheti History Museum (Akhaltzikhe) of The National Museum of Georgia

The museum is an excellent example and resource of illustrating the dialogue between cultures and today it is part of the National Museum. Founded in 1923 as an Akhalatsikhe district museum, Ivan Gvaramadze donated all the materials in his possession to it. In 1937, the study of local lore opened a base in the museum. Until 2005, it was a branch of the Simon Janashia State Museum of Georgia, but in 2005 it joined the National Museum of Georgia. The museum possesses an important part of cultural heritage of regions: ancient manuscripts, epigraphic, archaeological, numismatic and ethnographic materials and photo-documents. To date, more than 25 exhibits are preserved in the museum, including manuscripts and an old printed books fund.

Exhibitions of Georgian lapidary patterns and carpets hold an exceptional place in the museum. In 2011, as part of the Rabati rehabilitation program, the museum building was also restored. The museum holds an annual Young–Historians Conference, which was previously held on the premises of a synagogue in the Akhaltsikhe district. The last conference was attended by Georgian and Armenian students. In addition, the National Museum organized a seminar dedicated to the Jewish self-taught artist Shalva Koboshvili. The museum preserves rich data on Georgian–Jewish relationships, history of the Jewish community in Akhaltsikhe, as well as materials illustrating works of Georgian catholic educators of the 19th century.

LEPL Gardabani Local Museum

The museum is financed by the local municipality in the form of a subsidy. In 2010, the museum budget amounted to 55,000 GEL and in 2011 – to 58,000 GEL. The museum has three branches in **Martkopi**, **Norio** and **Sarthichala**. Annually, on May 18th the museum holds an open door day to celebrate International Museum Day. Gardabani museum houses items of Georgian culture and items of Azerbaijani everyday life, traditional music instruments, and more.

⁷⁰ В Телавском районе есть только одно село – Караджала, в котором компактно проживают азербайджанцы.

It should be noted that, despite the lack of financial recourses, the staff continues to collect Georgian and Azerbaijani cultural objects. The museum always has a lot of visitors – often students from Georgian and Azerbaijani schools who have the opportunity to view traditional weapons, cultural and household items of different cultures.

The museum organizes annual scientific sessions and publishes works⁷². Currently, the museum is facing a problem of space. A few years ago it left its old building and moved to the Cultural Center where it occupies two rooms – the available space is insufficient for the proper functioning of the museum. A number of the items are exhibited in the entrance hall and the rest are kept in boxes.

The Bolnisi Local Museum

The Bolnisi Local Museum resides in Bolnisi the house-museum of children’s writer Ghazaros Aghonian – in the village Khachini. Both museums are financed by the Bolnisi municipality.

Historical and Ethnographic Museum of Duisi Village

In the fall of 2011 a Historical and Ethnographic Museum opened in the village of Duisi, Akhmeta region. The exhibits represent typical Kist and Georgian lifestyle with household items that were gathered by one of the staff members – Gebish Khangoshvili. The existence of this museum in the Pankisi valley region is important, as it contributes to the promotion of local culture and attracts tourists.

The Legacy of the Dukhobors

One of the important parts of the Georgian cultural diversity and history is the Dukhobor community living in villages of Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. In

⁷² A number of themes of the conference referred to the way some Azerbaijani villages got populated: Kandara and others; M. Bulogashvili prepared a work “Ethnical picture of Kvemo Kartli in 12th-15th centuries”

a number of villages of Javakheti this religious community has established a unique cultural environment which has not survived and can longer be found in any other country.

The number of believers in the community has gradually decreased over time and in many countries it has disappeared completely. In 1990s a massive migration of Dukhobors began when they returned to their historical homeland – Russia, where the community gradually weakened and assimilated. Today, they reside in two small villages of Gorelovka and Orlovka in Javakheti, Ninotsminda region. The distinct wooden ornamented houses on the central street of Gorelovka village, the so-called “Orphan House” chapel, bath, Kalmikova’s house and Kalmikova’s summer house have been granted the status of immovable cultural heritage monuments by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection based on Order No. 3/221 signed on 31.10.2008.

Unfortunately, the museum complex is closed at the moment and the future of the museum is still undefined. It is important that the museum retains the status of a legal entity and that both the Ministry of Culture, as well as the Ninotsminda municipality, should work on this issue.

The Center for Cultural Relations of Georgia – “Caucasian House”

The Center for Cultural Relations of Georgia – “Caucasian House” is the legal successor of a Translational Board established in the Soviet era that was financed by the Ministry of Culture of the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, due to the complicated social-economic conditions and scarce financial aid, the management decided to establish a non-profit legal entity carrying the same name (The Center for Cultural Relations of Georgia – “Caucasian House”) and the same purpose. The entity aims at partnering with international non-governmental organizations and allocating additional funding.

The organization has been successful and has obtained the support of the Horizonti Foundation. As a result, an agreement was signed between Horizonti Foundation and the Ministry of Culture of Georgia, according to which the fund

would complete the rehabilitation and restoration of the Caucasian House office and would construct additional space and that the Ministry of Culture would take the responsibility of carrying out the mission, goals and objectives of the Center. According to the agreement, one of the articles stated that if Caucasian House should change its organizational profile, the Ministry of Culture would reimburse the funds spent by the Horizonti Foundation.

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia took the obligation of supporting the Caucasian House activities, within the framework of the NCAP. . According to the program, in 2009 the Caucasian House was awarded 20,000 GEL. The Caucasian House held a Sergo Parajanov memorial meeting dedicated to his 85th birthday, organized cultural meetings with students, seminars on religious and political topics, events dedicated to the Russian, Azerbaijani and Slavic scripts, poetry, cultural and folklore events of various ethnic groups, and organized a film showcase. In 2010 Caucasian House ceased being funded from the budget of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, as it was no longer a legal entity of public law operating under the Ministry.

LEPL Smirnoff Museum

On the base of the Center for Cultural Relations of Georgia –Caucasian House, a legal entity of public law, Smirnoff Museum, was founded, according to Order №3/227 signed by the Minister of Georgian Culture and Monument Protection on 18.10.2010.

The Smirnoff museum fund is located in a few rooms of the Center. Since 2010 the museum has been sealed. Despite being a LEPL (Legal Entity of Public Law), the museum does not have a budget, director or employees typical for an LEPL, therefore at present it is not functioning. Currently, negotiations are taking place between the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and the “Caucasian House” on resolving the issue of the Museum.

Theaters

LEPL Petros Adamiani Tbilisi State Armenian Professional Drama Theater⁷³

LEPL Petros Adamiani Tbilisi State Armenian Drama Theater operates under the laws of Georgia, according to the Order of the Georgian President, in accordance with its regulations, and manages its creative and economic activity independently. The theater is funded by the Government for an indefinite time period.

The theater represents a professional state theater with a long tradition of performances; it owns a building designed for permanent use, and has a permanent theater troupe which takes part in staging various theatrical performances and plays: drama, tragic, comedy, marionette, puppet-shows, etc.

The theater has a separate property, an independent balance sheet, settlement, foreign currency and other accounts in Georgian and foreign banks, a seal with its name, a stamp, letterhead, logo and other things required for an LEPL. The theater can hold legal proceedings in its own name, purchase property and obtain personal non-property rights, assume obligations, is authorized to sign agreements and contracts, act as a defendant or claimant in the court.

The main role of the theater and its purpose is to stage high quality performances in order to develop international and national values and to promote theater by means of art, enhance spiritual and aesthetic values in education, develop national theater art, protect the literary language through stage art, strengthen national identity, revive traditions, promote universal ideals, and integrate Georgian theater art into the world cultural space.

The budget allocated to the theater is mainly used for salaries. The theater building is so damaged that holding performances there is dangerous. There-

⁷³ Regulation of LEPL Tbilisi State Armenian Drama Theater named after Petro Adamiani, approved by the Order of Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_idmssearch&view=docView&id=1994597

fore, the troupe gives performances in other buildings and conducts tours. The management has asked the government of Georgia to allocate money for reconstruction a number of times and received a promise that the works would begin in the second half of 2010. Nevertheless, the building is still in the same condition.

The Armenian Drama Theater was built in the 1930s and started operating in 1936. It was reconstructed in 1968-1972. Since then, the building has not been renovated. The Board Chairman of the International Charity Foundation Cartu stated that a promise had been sent by the theater to the foundation and that specialists had been to assess the situation. The decision on awarding money to the theater has not been made and is still open and subject to discussion.

As mentioned above, the theater troupe is focused mainly on touring, with tours having taken place in Armenian cities Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, and also in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. In 2011, the theater had a tour in Paris.

LEPL Petros Adamiani Tbilisi State Armenian Professional Drama Theater of Tbilisi ⁷⁴	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Budget Funding (GEL)	120.000	130.000	130.000	135.000	402.000
Number of Performances	71	40	32	21	34
Premiere	4	4	3	4	7
Tours	22	36	30	19	-
Number of Visitors	7084	5572	5313	2419	5493

The LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Drama Theater⁷⁴

The LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Professional Drama Theater is operating under the laws of Georgia and, based on the Order signed by the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, it manages its creative and economic activity independently. The theater is funded by the Government for an indefinite time period.

⁷⁴ The statistical data is presented by the Deputy Director of the Theater.

⁷⁵ Regulation of LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Drama Theater named after, approved by the order of Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_idmssearch&view=docView&id=1997398

The theater represents a professional state theater with a long tradition of performances, which owns a building designed for permanent use, and has a permanent theater troupe which takes part in staging theatrical performances and shows of various genres.

The theater has a separate property, an independent balance sheet, settlement, foreign currency and other accounts in Georgian and foreign banks, a seal with its name, a stamp, letterhead, logo and other things required for an LEPL. The theater can hold legal proceedings in its own name, purchase property and obtain personal non-property rights, assume obligations, is authorized to sign agreements and contracts, and act as a defendant or claimant in the court.

The main role of the theater and its purpose is to stage high quality performances in order to develop world and national values and to promote theater by means of art, enhance spiritual and aesthetic values in education, develop national theater art, protect the literary language through stage art, strengthen national identity, revive traditions, promote universal ideals and integrate Georgian theater into the world cultural space.

The LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Drama Theater has the same problem – shortage of finances with a budget mainly for the salaries and utility bills. The building is damaged and the main stage does not function. The smaller stage, with a capacity of 50 people is working, but is not equivalent to the number of visitors willing to attend the shows. From time to time, the Rustaveli and Opera theaters offered their stages for free. The theater is also in need of costumes and props.

LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Drama Theater ⁷⁶	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Budget Funding (GEL)	130.000	130.000	130.000	135.000	135.000
Number of Performances	15	18	20	18	11
Premiere	3	4	2	1	2
Tours	5	6	5	5	3
Number of Visitors	1900	2800	3000	3100	4585

⁷⁶ The statistical data is presented by the Director of the Theater.

The LEPL Alexander Griboedov State Russian Drama Theatre⁷⁷

The LEPL Alexander Griboedov State Russian Drama Theatre represents a legal entity of public law operating under the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia.

The theater has a separate property, an independent balance sheet, settlement, foreign currency and other accounts in Georgian and foreign banks, a seal with its name, a stamp, letterhead, logo and other things required for an LEPL. The theater can hold legal proceedings in its own name, purchase property and obtain personal non-property rights, assume obligations, is authorized to sign agreements and contracts, and to act as a defendant or claimant in the court.

The theater represents a professional state theater with a long tradition of performances which owns a building designed for permanent use, and has a permanent theater troupe which takes part in staging theatrical performances and shows of various genres.

The main role of the theater and its purpose is to stage high quality performances in order to develop world and national values and to promote theater art, to conduct artistic education and to promote world and Russian drama to the wider population. Moreover, it aspires to promote universal ideals, strengthen the century-long cultural relationship between Georgian and Russian people. The main goal of the theater is to stage valuable performances based on the best plays of Russian and world drama, also to stage other types of performances and work on creative projects. The theater aims at supporting the development of minority cultures. The mission of the theater is to promote the development of Georgian ethnic minority cultures and to support the realization of creative forces of youth, also educating them in art and the improvement of their artistic skills.

⁷⁷ Regulation of LEPL Tbilisi State Russian Drama Theater named after Alexander Griboedov approved by the Order of Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia https://matsne.gov.ge/index.php?option=com_idmssearch&view=docView&id=1997346.

The representative of the LEPL Alexander Griboedov State Russian Drama Theatre stated that the funds awarded to the theater are used for salaries. As for the staging of performances, the theater uses funds from visitors. The building was financed by aid granted from the International Charity Foundation Cartu, which was also used to pay the utility bills of the theater.

LEPL The Alexander Griboedov Tbilisi State Russian Drama Theater ⁷⁸	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Бюджетное финансирование (лари)	370.000	370.000	399.600	1.097.400	1.100.000
Количество спектаклей	141	109	132	110	145
Премьера	4	4	4	4	4
Гастроли	0	3	1	2	4
Количество зрителей	16255	17266	16488	16785	18811

Libraries

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the library management system crashed. In 1996, the enforced Law on Libraries⁷⁹ and the Law on the National Library⁸⁰ obliged the Ministry of Culture to manage the coordination of libraries and implement a new system of management, in cooperation with the National Library. Together, they had to carry out the united state library policy, prepare international treaties and conventions, and determine the policy of training the employees of libraries in order to control whether or not the standards of the library set by the state were kept to and in order to ensure the centralized collection and analysis of the statistical data of libraries. Unfortunately, the law has remained written on only on paper. Nowadays, there is no uniform state policy about the libraries and all activities in this direction are spontaneous. In regions, the custody over libraries has been granted to the local municipalities with the local libraries being funded out of their budget.

The Action Plan includes financing the libraries and supporting them to function properly. In recent years the fate of libraries has changed a number

⁷⁸ The statistical data is presented by the Deputy Director of the Theater.

⁷⁹ Georgian Law on Libraries: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/geo/7/alias%2063/id27>.

⁸⁰ Georgian Law on the National Library of Georgian Parliament: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/geo/7/alias%2062/id26>.

of times, particularly the condition of rural libraries. In 2006, the liquidation of libraries started all across Georgia. The latter gave rise to dissatisfaction within the local community, but this issue has still not been resolved. Since 2007, libraries have remained under the control of local municipalities (previously they were financed by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection). In some regions (e.g. Imereti), due to lack of funds, the rural libraries started closing down. The libraries of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti regions have the same problem. However, some positive steps have also been taken in these regions in recent years and several previously closed libraries have been reopened and restored.

In 2009, under the national program of the Georgian President, 939,651 GEL was awarded to 120 libraries. Books, computers and other library equipment were purchased. The Ministry of Culture hosted an exhibition of new books, where the department bought new editions to a total of 1000 GEL for the regional libraries.

In spring of 2007 only the main library was open in **Akhaltzikhe** – 41 of its branches were closed. In spring of 2008, according to the Order of Minister of Culture, Sport and Monument Protection, a library was open in two villages of every municipality. At the moment, five libraries are functioning in the Akhaltsikhe region (Rabati and Central Library of the city of Akhaltsikhe, and in villages Atskuri, Uraveli and Vale). In 2011, the Akhaltsikhe Central Library building was renovated. It had 5000 annual visitors and possesses rich book funds in Georgian, Armenian, Turkish, Russian and Greek languages. The renewal of these funds takes place annually. Books were also added to the funds of the Atskuri and Rabati libraries.

The issue regarding the books of the closed libraries is still open.⁸¹ A number of them were awarded to the school libraries, which carries advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one hand, the books will be kept safe in the school buildings, but on the other hand, the school schedule is does not corresponding to that of a classic library. During school vacations, the books are unavailable to readers.

⁸¹ In Akhaltsikhe as well as Akhalkalaki the former employees of libraries still take care of the books, which are kept either in closed libraries or in private houses.

Akhalkalaki region has 17 libraries⁸² each employing only one employee. According to the director of the Akhalkalaki Libraries union, there is demand for the libraries from the villages but, due to insufficient funds, they cannot plan to open new branches. The demand is high in the following villages: Turtskhi, Olavedi, Samsari, Alatumani, Lomaturtskhi, and Merenia. The libraries of villages of the Akhalkalaki municipality – Diliska and Khando, densely populated by Armenian citizens, were renovated and the necessary equipment was installed.

Ninotsminda region libraries were awarded 55,000 GEL in 2010. In 2011, libraries opened in Gandza and Did Gunudra within the Presidential program, these were granted computers and other necessary equipment. Village clubs and libraries were financed within the agricultural support program.

Gardabani region has 19 libraries. They have 20–25 visitors each day. According to the head of the libraries union center, the Central Library of Gardabani is often visited by students from the Azerbaijani Language School. The Gardabani School No.1 organized an event of public reading of *The Knight in Panther's Skin* in the library. In 2010, the center was financed with 2000 GEL. The main problem of the library is heating of the main reading room in winter. The library also requires stands and a renewal of its book funds.

Marneuli region has six libraries: one Armenian, four Azerbaijani and one mixed central library. All of them require renovation and the renewal of the book funds. The library of village Sadakhlo in Marneuli region was renovated and equipped with the necessary equipment.

Dmanisi region has four libraries: one Azerbaijani in Amavlo village and three Georgian: Dmanisi Central Library, and each in Gomareti and Vardisubani villages.

The opening of two libraries was planned in 2010 in the villages of Kachkov and Arsarvan in the **Tsalka** region, but they were not opened. In 2012, the

⁸² In 2010/2011 the libraries and library toilets were renovated. Other libraries also require renovation (village Majadia).

libraries opened in Trialeti village; in 2008 libraries in Gantiadi and Kizilkarsi villages also opened, and in the same year the Tsalka Central Library was renovated.

These libraries also require renewal of book funds and additional Georgian books. Armenian books are granted to them from time to time by the Armenian Embassy in Georgia.

Within the Presidential program, book funds of almost all libraries were renewed two years ago. Heating is an important issue in all libraries, as this problem hinders their functioning in winter. The fate of the village libraries remains an unresolved and painful issue for all regions. Allocating funds for financing of the rural libraries is difficult for all municipalities. Although support of libraries is part of the Action Plan, the development of libraries is not a priority for any of the municipalities and since 2009 and no additional programs have been envisaged to change the existing situation. It is necessary for the central government to initiate this kind of program and that the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture and other institutions which work on regional development, to take part in the program.

Music Schools

The NCAP includes supporting music schools. After the reform which took place in 2008, the music schools fell under the control of the local municipalities. A number of issues were identified which are common to all regional music schools, including the ones that are densely populated with ethnic minorities, where the gaining of musical knowledge is now connected with difficulties. After the reform, music schools, e.g. the 10-Year Music School, which was the second stage after primary music school and a stage before entering the higher music education studies, closed down. A school of this kind is only functioning in Tbilisi.⁸³ All students who wish to study in the

⁸³ Before 2006 there were three music schools in Tbilisi, named after D. Arakishvili, Z. Paliashvili and M. Balanchivadze. In 2006 all three were united into one musical school and in 2009 the school became a Musical seminary.

Conservatory face the issue of whether or not to apply to the Music School in Tbilisi, which includes changing their place of residence, together with their families. This is then affected by money matters and/or other family issues. Closing down the music schools in regions places regional students in unequal conditions. Their chances of acquiring higher music education are getting lower. In regions populated by ethnic minorities, the tendency of students getting higher music education in neighboring countries like Armenia, Russia, etc. is more common as they have relatives and more contacts there.

Today, there are four music schools in the **Akhaltsikhe region**.⁸⁴ Graduates of regional music schools had the opportunity to pursue the career of music teachers before. Prior to 2008, a branch of the Tbilisi Music School functioned in Akhaltsikhe. The graduates of this school had the opportunity to continue their education in the Conservatory or work as teachers in the music schools. According to the Director of Akhaltsikhe Music School “Almost all teachers working in regional musical schools (in Borjomi, Abastumani, Aspindza, etc.) are the graduates of this branch. Nowadays, this branch is closed and is functioning only as a six-year music school.

Music schools participated in the festival “The Way to Parnas.” Akhaltsikhe Music School Director and teachers initiated and organized music evenings where Georgian composers were invited. Unfortunately, these kinds of evenings depend only on the enthusiasm of such people. The music life in other regions is not active. Professional unions do not exist, and performers of classical music do not visit the regions, although locals express desire and interest. Nevertheless, positive initiatives should also be noted. Akhaltsikhe, Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki municipalities established financial aid for the students of music schools.

Low salaries is still a problem for teachers – they are not able to use other social privileges either, which are present for the teachers of public schools. Due to the fact that music schools and the cultural sphere in general are controlled by local municipalities, they have practically no contact with

⁸⁴ In Ninotsminda there is one music school in the Bolnisi region, and two music schools in the Bolnisi city and Daba Kazreti. There are none in Tsalka.

the Ministry of Culture. All local representatives and cultural workers are concerned about this issue. Often, their projects and initiatives are ignored, because “this is a matter for local municipality.”

On 20 December 2013, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia held a meeting with heads of municipalities and self-governing bodies, where a sample curriculum for nine-year Experimental Music Schools was presented. Moreover, a study plan for 2014 was discussed and the electronic and printed copies were given to the heads of the musical schools.

Protection of the Cultural Heritage of Ethnic/National Minorities

Tangible and intangible cultural heritage of ethnic/national minorities is also part of the Georgian cultural heritage.⁸⁵ Protection of cultural heritage includes unity of various procedures like legal processes, scientific-research, rehabilitation, and informative and educational events – all aimed at preserving the complete diversity of the cultural heritage and ensuring its sustainable development.⁸⁶

The status of immovable cultural heritage monument is given to a building for its distinctive historical, cultural or architectural characteristics and is not differentiated according to it belonging to any national, ethnic or religious minority.

In most municipalities, new religious and cultural buildings are identified and registered annually. After the necessary research is conducted, the cultural artifacts are granted the status. In the list of cultural monuments these are not categorized according to being Georgian or non-Georgian, Christian or non-Christian, because all of them are considered as the cultural heritage of Georgia. Nevertheless, this kind of labeling is still preferable from the technical point of view, in order to simplify the search engine.

⁸⁵ The National Agency of Monument Protection works on the following issues: Rehabilitation and monitoring of the cultural heritage monuments; rehabilitation of cultural heritage monuments situated outside of Georgia, planning and implementation of mutual events; promotion of cultural heritage; starting the information bank of the cultural heritage monuments; creation of the integrated infrastructure of the monuments; documentation and rehabilitation of Georgian monuments that are part of the World Heritage.

⁸⁶ See Law on Cultural Heritage, Paragraph 3

Registration and granting the status of cultural heritage monuments to various buildings is still in progress. There are up to 50 Armenian churches registered in Georgia (in Tbilisi, Batumi, Telavi, Bolnisi, Akhalkalaki and Niotsminda municipalities).⁸⁷

In 2011, the status of cultural heritage monument was granted to the Armenian Church in Batumi. It should be noted that according to the recommendation given by the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender, the National Agency of Monument Protection registered Muslim monuments (Mosque, Jame mosque, Bath, Mausoleum⁸⁸), situated in Kve-mo Kartli.

The three year project “Inventory of Ottoman Monuments” finished in 2010. Within the project, materials kept in museums and archives in Tbilisi were studied. A number of Ottoman monuments and dozens of Ottoman architectural buildings⁸⁹ located in historical Samtskhe and Adjara were studied also.

Cooperation in the field of cultural heritage enhanced between Georgian and Turkish authorities in 2013. During the official visit of former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili to Ankara on 14 February 2013, the cooperation in protection of cultural heritage was discussed with the Turkish side. It was underlined that protection of cultural heritage monuments cannot be based on the principle of reciprocity because it is the responsibility of all countries.

As a result of the negotiations between Turkey and the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, Georgian specialists visited Turkey on five separate occasions for the study and assessment of Oshki and Ishkhani monasteries in 2013. The Georgian delegation visited Oshki and Ishkhani monasteries and assessed the rehabilitation process in Ishkhani monastery. The comments and recommendations of the Georgian side were given to the Turkish side. Negotiations are underway about involving Georgian specialists in the pro-

⁸⁷ Report on the NCAP, 2010

⁸⁸ Bolnisi – 5, Dmanisi – 1, Gardabani – 1, Marneuli – 12. It will be revealed later which of them can be granted the status of cultural heritage monument.

⁸⁹ See Report on the National Concept of Tolerance and Civil Integration 2010, Data of the National Agency of Monument Protection.

cess of the upcoming rehabilitation process of Oshki Monastery. Moreover, the visit of Turkish specialists to Georgia, in order to study the rehabilitation works made in the mosque and madrasa built by Ahmed Pasha in the Akhaltsikhe Castle, is also planned.

Apart from this, throughout 2013 a number of high-level visits took place, where, together with other issues, cooperation in the field of cultural heritage was also discussed. An important meeting took place on 27 March 2013, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey – Ahmed Davitoghlu – came on an official visit to Georgia.

Also, on October 27-29, 2013, the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, Guram Odisharia, visited Turkey and attended the “International Congress of the Silk Road.” During the visit, a meeting was held between the Ministers of Culture of both countries during which they discussed issues of cooperation in the field of cultural heritage.

Nevertheless, the agreement was not signed. The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia prepared an agreement project – “Between governments of Georgia and Turkey on restoration of immovable Ottoman cultural heritage monuments situated in Georgia and restoration of immovable Georgian cultural heritage monuments situated in Turkey” which included long-term cooperation with the Turkish side in the field of cultural heritage protection and support of the inventory process. It also included the development of an affective format of future cooperation based on the results of the inventory. Moreover, according to the agreement, the Turkish side would involve Georgia in the process of and/or in the future planned projects connected with Oshki and Ishkhani monasteries; both intellectual and financial involvement would take place. According to the agreement, together with the Turkish experts, the Georgian side would improve and correct mistakes that were made in 2012 during the restoration works of the mosque and madrasa built by Ahmed Pasha in the Castle of Akhaltsikhe.

The project went through the inter-governmental procedures and, according to the Georgian legislation, through an exchange of notes it was sent to the

President's Administration on March 29, 2013. The decision had to be made on starting the negotiations. But the President did not make any decision on the above-mentioned agreement project. Therefore the process did not go any further.

In 2011 status of cultural heritage monument was given to the Orta Jame mosque in Batumi.

The most important thing at this stage is the condition of those cultural heritage monuments that require urgent rehabilitation. In order to save them, at the first stage strengthening works should be carried out. Three churches need restoration in Tbilisi: Mughnu Surb Gevrok Church – an architectural monument built in 1751; Surb-Nishani Church an architectural monument of the early 18th century, and the Surb Minas Church.

The Public Defender repeatedly emphasized the urgent need of rehabilitation of these churches in his reports.⁹⁰ The Action Plan of 2010 included the restoration of the Mughnu Surb Gevrok Church. But because of the scarce finances, the restoration did not happen and the church is in an even more deplorable state.

In 2011 the National Agency for Protection of Monuments measured the Mughnu Surb Gevork, Surb-Nishani and Norasheni Churches and their surrounding areas. The issue of restoration of these churches is still unresolved. Insufficient funds are named as an impeding circumstance, as well as the fact that some find the status of historical heritage of these churches questionable. Currently, the Norasheni Church, situated on Leselidze Str., Tbilisi is being restored with the financial help of an the International Charity Foundation Cartu.

During his visit to Armenia, the former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili addressed the issue of restoration of questionable churches and archeo-

⁹⁰ See. <http://www.ombudsman.ge/files/downloads/ge/ktifezlljkytwmbpggc.pdf>.

⁹¹ 17.01.2013. Interview of the Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili with the Armenian language edition of "Radio Freedom – Free Europe" <http://rus.azatutyun.am/media/video/24846520.html>

logical excavations. In his exclusive interview⁹¹ with the Armenian-language editorial office of the “Radio Freedom – Free Europe” he stated that the above-mentioned churches and excavations would be financed by the International Charity Foundation Cartu. Nevertheless, the Board Chairman of the International Charity Foundation Cartu said that they would not fund the restoration unless the status of the churches was defined.

As for Jewish chapel – synagogues in Georgia, currently not all of them are described. In the NCAP and other official documents we often find five synagogues mentioned. These quantitative errors are also caused because the synagogues are not categorized separately in the list of cultural heritage monuments (the same applies to religious building of other ethnic minorities). There are only unofficial sources about the number of synagogues in Georgia. And there are many more than is noted in the report of 2010 – the National Agency of Monument Protection confirmed the fact that there was an error.⁹² It is recommended to carry out the description and registration of all synagogues situated in Georgia, and after research and assessment they should be granted the status of cultural heritage monument. It is also recommended that the discussion on ownership of these synagogues and Jewish cemeteries begins, which is one of the crucial issues for the Jewish community.

Currently, the Tbilisi synagogue “Didi Lotsava,” one synagogue in Kutaisi, and one auxiliary building on B. Gaponov Street carry the status of cultural heritage monument.

In 2011 the status of cultural heritage monument was granted to the Batumi synagogue and also to the Rabati district in Akhaltsikhe which included two ancient synagogues. Restoration of these monuments is included in the Rabati district rehabilitation project.

Synagogues of Vani, Poti, Senaki, Bandza, Lailashi and Oni were restored through the International Charity Foundation Cartu. The completion of restoration of Kareli and Gori synagogues is planned in 2014.

⁹² All three synagogues of Kutaisi are owned by the Association of Countryman. Often, visitors from abroad come to the synagogues, most of them Georgian Jews who left Kutaisi, and they donate money to the synagogues. The expenses are mainly covered with the help of such patrons. In 2010, 28,000 GEL was given to the synagogues by the City Hall and the money was used for renovation of chapels and cleaning of cemeteries.

Apart from this, the Jewish cemeteries in Akhaltsikhe and Atskuri were also restored; the completion of rehabilitation works of Surami cemetery is scheduled in 2014.

Rabati district in Akhaltsikhe represents a unique example of cultural and religious unity in an historical and cultural environment. In the ancient district of the city you can find a mosque; Armenian, Catholic, and Orthodox Christian churches; and synagogues – side by side.⁹³ Some of them already had the status of cultural heritage monument, but the list grew further in 2011.⁹⁴

Therefore, on 28 October 2011, upon Presidential Decree №666 “On Cultural Heritage,” according to the first paragraph of the 18th Article of Georgian Law, the category of National Importance was given to the street network of the historical area (Rabati district) of city Akhaltsikhe as a monument of cultural heritage.

Rabati carries a distinct artistic and national value and it is connected with a highly important historical event, and to the development of the nation.

The restoration and conservation of the Rabati complex started in 2011. The project was carried out together with the Ministry of Culture. According to the department of Culture and Monument Protection of Akhaltsikhe, the restoration of Catholic Church finished in 2011.

According to the information provided by the Governor of Akhaltsikhe, for the rehabilitation of Rabati there was a special Article in the local budget named “Rabati rehabilitation.”⁹⁵ The Cultural Heritage Protection fund worked on the rehabilitation project.

⁹³ The Rabati district included Akhaltsikhe Castle – wall, Castle mosque, prison mosque, Minaret, bath, school building of Georgian Catholics, Church of Georgian Catholics of John the Baptist., St Stepane church, St Cross Church of Georgian Catholics, Orthodox Church of St Marine, ruins of Amagleba and Ioane Okropiri churches, two ancient synagogues.

⁹⁴ St Cross Church complex and the cemetery of Ivane Gvaramadze were granted the status of cultural heritage monuments in 2011. also: Patrebian Church, Armenian Church of Grigolus Avorichi, Armenian Church of Surb Stepanoz, Church of St Marine.

⁹⁵ 2011 it amounted to 8 million GEL. Out of which 340,000 was awarded based on the governmental order, 300,000 was used for cleaning the castle wall, 40,000 for reconstruction works and preparation of pre-project documentation.

Numerous important issues were identified during the assessment concerning the protection of monuments and their maintenance process. The Department of Culture and Monument Protection of the municipality supervises the process of identifying and registering the monuments in the region. According to the representatives of the regional department (Ninotsminda, Akhalkalaki), they do not have a qualified specialist in this field. Therefore, they are willing to undergo special instruction, training, etc. It is also recommended that the representatives of the Ministry of Culture often visit Cultural Departments within the regions in order to exchange professional skills and experience, together with information. Cultural departments of all regions suffer from a lack of communication with the Ministry of Culture.

According to Order №3/86 signed on March 20, 2012 by the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia – Mosques, Rabati complex, Minaret, Madrasa and Bath of Akhaltsikhe, Aspindza and Adigeni municipalities were awarded status of cultural heritage monument. In 2009 up to 50 Armenian churches, 10 mosques and five synagogues were registered.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The adoption of NCAP and of the five-year action by the Government of Georgia should undoubtedly be assessed positively. Moreover, major problems have been identified throughout the initial stage of working on the NCAP, as well as during the implementation process. Although the document was prepared in close cooperation with governmental, non-governmental and international organizations, the chapter on preserving the identity in the action plan of the concept does not reflect existing cultural buildings of the national ethnic minorities in the regional municipalities, for example such cultural institutions as: the Vahan Terian House-Museum, the V. Ovsepian House Museum, the Vladimir Mayakovski House-Museum, etc. They are not included in the Action Plan, which further worsened their condition in terms of their legal status as well as material and technical situation. Moreover, it should be noted that some organizations are uninformed during those events organized within the tolerance and civil integration action plan, not to mention anything about the ethnic minorities with dispersed settlement in Georgia. Their issue has not been addressed at all, which should be resolved during the process of working on the next NCAP.

The responsibilities taken by the government within the NCAP proved insufficient for preserving the identity of ethnic minorities, not to mention the fact that there have been no awareness campaigns for the education of the general public about the culture, history, language and religion of the ethnic minorities. These have not been promoted as additional cultural values of Georgia.

The budget allocated to the Support Program for Culture of National Minorities prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, amounted to 100,000 GEL annually. Most of the funds were used for print media and the rest was spent on small-scale activities. The above-mentioned funding was inadequate for preserving cultural identity. The funds were insufficient even for printed media and this was additionally funded by the President's Administration, therefore, in the future NCAP access to information and the support of culture of ethnic minorities should be considered separately.

The organizations working in the field of culture are not differentiated by being Georgian or other ethnic minority institutions and they all have the same legal status. According to Georgian legislation, theaters, museums, cultural centers and libraries are divided under the control of either central government (Ministry of Culture) or local self-governments and are regulated by different legislations. Under the Legal Entity of Public Law status, LEPL Petros Adamian Tbilisi State Armenian Professional Drama Theater, LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Drama Theater, and LEPL Alexander Griboedov State Russian Drama Theatre are under the control of the Ministry of Culture and Monument of Protection of Georgia. It should be noted that they were financed according to the budgetary subcode of the Ministry of Culture and Monument of Protection and that the money allocated to them was mainly used for salary funds. LEPL Petros Adamian Tbilisi State Armenian Professional Drama Theater and LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Drama Theater are damaged and require urgent rehabilitation works. The theater troupes of both have been unable to use the halls of their theaters for years and are obliged to rent the halls of other theaters. Therefore the troupes are oriented on tours in Georgian regions as well as abroad. As for the LEPL Alexander Griboedov State Russian Drama Theatre, it was renovated by the International Charity Foundation Cartu and the government has not allocated any resources to the theater. The funds awarded by the government are only enough for the salaries. Utility bills and bonuses for the actors were also paid by the International Charity Foundation Cartu.

Unfortunately, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection is either not helping them to find additional means of funding or cannot help them. The museums are in the same condition, the museum building mentioned in the assessment and other material-technical bases are old and do not satisfy modern museum standards. In 2013, the LEPL Azerbaijani Museum and Cultural Center of Georgia of Mirza Patali Akhundov was reconstructed and equipped, financed by the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR). Unfortunately, in this case, the money awarded by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection was enough only for the salaries. The Museum gets its additional funding from SOCAR.

After the destruction of the library management system due to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1996, according to the Georgian Law on Library Affairs and the Law on the National Library, the coordination and management of the new system was put, together with the National Library, under the charge of the Ministry of Culture. They had to jointly carry the unified State library policy, ensure fulfillment of international treaties and conventions on library affairs, define the library staff training - retraining policy, realize security control of the State standards in the library discipline, and provide centralized collection and analysis of library statistical data. Unfortunately, the law has remained only on paper. At present there is no uniform state policy in the library and all activities in this direction have a spontaneous character. Local self-government bodies are charged with the custody and funding of libraries.. In worldwide developed countries, book depository libraries are now used not only for the function of storing books, but they are a powerful tool for tolerance, intercultural – education, and integration. Unfortunately, the library system of Georgia remains beyond all of this.

Based on all the above-mentioned, it is necessary for the government to take into account the existing five-year experience in the direction of preserving culture and identity. During the development of the future National Concept and Action Plan, all of the technical and political issues that prevent the cultural integration of ethnic minorities in the space of the unified State should be eliminated and cultural organizations and individuals interested in working in the field should be involved in the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

DIRECTION – RULE OF LAW

- Define a greater number of measures in the NCAP to enforce the rule of law;
- Form future plans to focus on the priority goals of the rule of law- to evaluate the obligations rate of the national legislation in order to harmonize with international obligations and to conduct studies on the particular areas in which harmonization is necessary, to be then reflected in the Action Plan;
- Additional attention must be paid to the smaller minority groups to ensure their civil integration through the planning of certain activities;
- Measures taken should be realized nationwide and not just for the few in the region;
- After passing the Georgian law on “Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination,” it should be popularized and introduced to ethnic/national minorities;
- More effective measures should be designed to raise the awareness of public officials;
- Deepen the work with the community to strengthen the culture of tolerance, which includes discussions, meetings, and the involvement of the wider community.

DIRECTION – EDUCATION AND STATE LANGUAGE

- It is important for the NCAP to include not only the educational policy of dense settlements, but also that of the dispersive resettlement policy groups, with the policy to be focused on the needs of these groups.

- It is important that the state language teaching be separately reflected for ethnic minorities in the NCAP, in the direction of education and training.

According to the concrete directions it is recommended that the Ministry of Education and Science develop the following policy:

Preschool Education

- It is important that, for the availability of preschools, the Ministry of Education and Science is to set up preschool education centers at public schools, or independently. Preferably, active work should take place in this direction to embrace rural communities where preschool institutions are non-functioning;
- The Ministry of Education and Science should ensure the enhancement of the quality of teaching in preschool institutions by the way of the professional development of teachers, training of the administration officers, creation of a variety of educational resources, and provision of preschool institutions;
- It is important to introduce in preschool education institutions different models of bilingual teaching and learning processes by providing them with appropriate resources and personnel.

General Education

Curriculum and textbooks

- It is important for manuals to reflect the diversity of Georgia and not to contain stereotypical and discriminatory elements. Accordingly, the Ministry should take steps to set up curricula, textbook approval and textbook evaluation;
- It is important for the Ministry of Education and Science to promote the improvement of a native language teaching policy and measures to ethnic minorities;
- It is important that the Ministry of Education and Science establishes a reformed concept of multilingual education and that it develops a related implementation strategy and action plan;

- Bilingual editions of textbooks should be revised and effective mechanisms developed in this direction which will result in the provision of teaching improvement, and at the same time, the effective perception of subject content.

School environment

- The Ministry of Education and Science should provide working mechanisms of practical realization of anti-discrimination legislation within general education in order to make the school environment free from any form of proselytistic indoctrination and to create real institutions with equal educational opportunities for all students.

Teacher certification, professional development, preparation of future teachers

(a) Training teachers

- It is important that non-Georgian school teachers elaborate a professional development policy, strategy and action plan;
- It is important to develop and realize the mechanisms of certification, encouragement and professional development of the teachers of Armenian and Azerbaijani-as a native language;
- It is important for non-Georgian school teachers to be provided with training in the state language.

(b) Preparation of future teachers

- Development of the policy and strategy for preparing bilingual teachers for teaching a second language or native language in higher education institutions.

School Graduation Exams

- It is important to put in the certificate exams for non-Georgian schools a reasonable and fair minimum limit of competence, taking into account

the implementation issues of the new curriculum and textbooks in order not to create a serious obstacle for students in terms of getting a diploma.

The Entrance Exams

- Preferential policy to actively disseminate information to the general population;
- The Ministry of Education and Science is essential for the development of policies on the creation of knowledge of a Georgian language evaluation system and instrument.
- It is vitally important that the 17 priority areas announced by the Ministry of Education and Science on which state funding is allocated, and under which the learning is "free" for students, that this state funding extends to the students enrolled under the preferential policy as well, for the purpose of attracting and giving equal opportunities during higher education acquisition. It is desirable to extend the state funding to students enrolled under the quota system, proportional to the number of quotas allocated based on the established law (5% of the sponsored seats for Armenians, 5% for Azerbaijanis, 1% for Abkhazians, and 1% for Ossetians). This policy will aid in attracting Ossetian and Abkhazian language students and generally improve the relations with Abkhazians and Ossetians.
- It would be important for the policy to benefit the interests of those ethnic groups which are not considered to be within the scope of the current preferential policies and, therefore, are under discriminatory conditions. It is desirable that quotas are also allocated for pupils in Russian schools and Russian sectors in order to finance their higher education. Moreover, to ensure fairness and to avoid students transferring due to preferential policies, it is recommended to identify an additional control mechanism to confirm the validity of the preferential policy for students who have been attending Russian language schools or Russian sectors within the last five years. The quotas for Russian language students can be less than 1% of the total allocated seats. The above-mentioned change will be useful in several areas:
- It will contribute to the attraction of the Armenian and Azerbaijani entrants who have a Russian-language education into the higher education system and place them equal terms with Armenian and Azerbaijani graduates;

- It will promote the civic integration of different ethnic groups and create equal conditions for entrants from dense settlements;
- (c) It should be noted that the Russian quota system may prove to be a positive step in attracting Abkhaz and Ossetian school graduates in higher education;
- (d) A decision may serve as a minor positive role in the political/diplomatic relations with Russia.

Adult Education

- It is important to expand the circle of attendees of the Language House and to include the wider public;
- It is important to reform the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration and to adjust to the needs associated with the professional education of public personnel;
- It is important to organize professional training courses for the adult population, as well as lifelong education based on the recommendation principles set forth in the EU Association Agreement in order to maximize the inclusion of ethnic minorities based on needs.

DIRECTION – MEDIA AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Public Broadcasting

- To promote the popularization of the Code of Conduct for Public Broadcasting to inform the public what to expect and what the requirements are for highly skilled and professional media outlets. Also to inform the public on the complaint mechanisms in the monitoring system;
- To create a complaint board and internal monitoring unit for broadcasting based on the Code of Conduct for Public Broadcasting and the National Communications Commission;
- Ensure that the TV news programs in minority languages are improved in content, format and airing time;
- Ensure that ethnic/national minorities are more informed on the current social, economic and political life in the country in their native languages;

- Due to the fact that a significant portion of the ethnic/national minorities living in compact regions have inadequate command of the Georgian language, in the short term, to increase their awareness, it is desirable to establish a Russian-language TV channel;
- Ensure coverage of the problems and cultural heritage of ethnic minorities;
- Ensure that television programs increase the participation of minorities in public debate;
- Expand the broadcast coverage area;
- Expand coverage to provide information programs in minority languages by increasing the number of regional TV partners;
- Ensure the translation of television programs in minority languages broadcast through regional television broadcast partners;
- Provide training for the editorial staff of the National News as well as for journalists of the regional TV partners;
- Provide internships for ethnic minority journalists and journalism students in the editorial offices of National News and Georgian News;
- Provide the creation of a periodic reporting of the monitoring and self-assessment system of ethnic minority topics.

Commercial Mass Media

- Protect professional standards in the coverage of ethnic and religious minorities;
- Increase the participation of minorities in public debate on television programs;
- To ensure the inclusion of minorities in TV reports on the issues that concern them;
- Highlight not only the negative, but also the positive events going on within Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in the news;
- Ensure that talk shows, and special programs deliver information on minorities also;
- Ensure the creation of regional mass media (regional TV, radio, newspapers) in regions with dense settlements of ethnic minorities (Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti), in minority languages.

NGOs

- Provide media monitoring and periodic publication of research on the media's coverage of the issue in terms of ethnic minorities;
- Provide regular publication of the media's use of ethnic hate language.

International Organizations

- Promote the development of regional media projects;
- In cooperation with the media and NGOs, to promote continuously updated training for journalists in the area of diverse programming;
- Continue to provide technical support to local media;
- Facilitate the training of ethnic minority journalists.

DIRECTION – POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

- For the purpose of promoting the civic participation of minorities, it is recommended to strengthen professional and administrative staff training programs. In particular, it is important to strengthen the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, and to develop new training programs as well as identify precise priorities for public administration in minority communities. For the professional development of minorities, it is recommended that the existing facilities and professional college programs (the Kachreti and Akhaltsikhe Professional Development Colleges) be adapted to the general policies and programs on the integration of minorities;
- In terms of the political participation of ethnic minorities, it is important to consider the specificities of ethnic minorities and relevant regions during the installation of local governments. It is also important that the new action plan take into consideration decentralization issues, as suggested in the international norms and recommendations that are presented in the OSCE Lund recommendations and guidelines.
- In terms of the increasing political culture it is also important that the NCAP include awareness-raising programs and various trainings for the representatives of political parties.

- The level of awareness is low on international agreements. Due to this, it is recommended that the NCAP accurately define the measures that will contribute to raising awareness about international agreements.
- Keeping in mind Georgia’s ethnically diverse population, it is important that the NCAP defines measures for the issuance of relevant documents to marginalized groups (identity cards and birth certificates), facilitates access to education for children, and ensure the inclusion of adults in ongoing social projects.

DIRECTION – SOCIAL AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Government of Georgia

- Continue the implementation of the current infrastructure projects;
- Establish and implement training and capacity-building programs for local residents;
- Stimulate the development of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti agriculture and the development of cross-border trade;
- In the short-term, implement a state procurement program for agriculture in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe– Javakheti;
- Support local farmers in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti, especially in relation to projects carried out via low-interest loans;
- Carry out joint projects in agreement with the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti;
- Promote economic ties between Georgian regions and Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti;
- Plan and conduct comprehensive and large-scale awareness-raising events on the social and health issues of ethnic minorities.

NGOs

- To participate in the legislative changes taking place in the economic sphere and provide consultations to the local populations of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe–Javakheti on starting small businesses;

- Participate in the informing process of ethnic minorities in densely settled regions on services provided by the government in the social and health spheres;
- Participate in the monitoring of infrastructure projects implemented by the government and the assessment of the real needs of the population;
- Participate in the training and improvement of qualification programs, together with the government, for local populations.

International Organizations

- Provide technical, human, and financial resources to the government and NGOs to implement programs aimed at increasing minority participation in economic life;
- Support the implementation of activities planned by the government in the field of social and health services;
- Support the implementation of training and capacity building programs for local populations.

DIRECTION – CULTURAL AND PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY

- It is advisable to study the expectations and attitudes of ethnic/national minorities towards the integration policies, to ask where they see barriers in participation in the general cultural life and what they feel is the most important aspect for maintaining their cultural identities. The existence of this data would contribute to the effective planning of programs and events.
- We recommend that the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection either create an agency or allocate personnel to work on the cultural and identity preservation of ethnic minorities and which will contribute to the effective implementation of cultural policies on central and regional levels and on informing the public. It is crucial for the Ministry of Culture to work with local municipality cultural agencies and to introduce them to the current policies and programs of the Ministry of Culture;
- It is important to review the State Program for National Minority Culture goals and objectives, as well as its budget. The current situation is not

sufficient to fulfill the tasks defined by the National Concept and for the popularization of the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities;

- There may be other applications for the funding of the print media of ethnic minorities or the program's budget should be increased to meet the needs of other small minority information requirements, besides the Azerbaijani and Armenian populations;
- It is important for the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection to keep a record of the organizations working in the sphere of ethnic/national minority culture, on both central and regional levels;
- The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection should assess the existing "State Program for National Minority Culture" and prepare an analysis of the results based on the data;
- It is important to involve the smaller minority groups in cultural life as well as in the protection and promotion of their ethnic/national heritage;
- The LEPL David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia needs full rehabilitation and renovation in order to maintain its function;
- The Gardabani Local Museum needs to be provided with proper conditions.
- The issues regarding the Center for Cultural Relations "Caucasian House" and "Smirnoff Museum" need to be resolved;
- The LEPL Petros Adamian Tbilisi State Armenian Professional Drama Theater requires full rehabilitation and additional financial support;
- The LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Drama Theater requires either full rehabilitation or new construction;
- It is important for the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection to ensure the development-implementation of a library policy for the whole country, or to set up a legal entity to resolve issues related to libraries in Georgia;
- It is necessary to regularly train personnel in the latest advances in the field of culture;
- It is important to decide on issues of disputed religious buildings;
- It is important to promptly identify and make a list of heritage sites which are in urgent need of restoration work and then start the immediate reinforcement and rehabilitation works;
- It is recommended that a list be made of Jewish cultural heritage, movable, and static monuments; religious buildings; museums; and that a

description be made of the material in archives towards the creation of a database.

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

- Effective coordination of state policy towards ethnic/national minorities;
- Continuing and improving work under the thematic working groups within the Interagency Task;
- Development of a new NCAP, keeping in mind the results of the NCAP 2009-2014;
- Close cooperation and consultation with relevant stakeholders;
- Constant communication with the NGOs and local populations in regions populated by ethnic/national minorities;
- Effective communication and collaboration with local government agencies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the Assessment Report on the Implementation of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration. The paper discusses the six priority directions of the concept: rule of law, education and the state language, media and access to information, political integration and civic participation, social and regional integration, and culture and preservation of identity. It provides an analysis of the programs and projects implemented by the state in each direction. At the same time it evaluates the real impact of the program on the process of integration as well as the positive and negative trends that were observed during the implementation of the Action Plan.

1. RULE OF LAW

In the area of rule of law, the report discusses the various legislative provisions (of the Constitution, the Criminal Code, the Law on Personal Data Protection, the Administrative Code, the Civil Code, the Tax Code and the Broadcasting Law), the provisions of the ethnic/national minorities, and overall Civil Integration and Tolerance in Georgia. At the same time the report presents in detail the activities and events implemented by the government in accordance with each direction. The main emphasis is made on the harmonization of Georgian legislation with the international legal obligations, improving access to the justice system for ethnic minorities, the protection of ethnic/national minorities from discrimination, and raising the awareness of public officials in terms of the protection of minority rights.

The survey revealed that despite the activities carried out within the framework of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration, there still exist problems regarding the protection of the rights of ethnic/national minorities and their civil integration, including the problem of a lack of a tolerant culture in today's civil society. As noted in the 2011 report of the Public Defender, the existence of negative stereotypes and attitudes between the majority and minority groups is problematic. Which, of course, prevents the achievement of the goals set forth by the Concept and hinders the creation of a democratic and consolidated civil society based on common values. The analysis reveals several important factors:

1. The number of activities implemented in the direction of the rule of law, especially the first two defined priority objectives, is rather limited;
2. During the implementation of the Action Plan, priority was given to only the largest ethnic group, and little attention was paid to other, smaller ethnic minorities, such as the Roma, so inhibiting their civic integration;
3. Attention is focused on only three major regions: Samtskhe – Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, and Kakheti – and as such, representatives of ethnic minorities who live in other regions are neglected;
4. The activities implemented for civil servants are not sufficient to raise their awareness on legal issues;
5. There are gaps in the Legislative space, which prevents the realization of rights.

2. EDUCATION AND THE STATE LANGUAGE

In the direction of education and the state language, the report discusses the basic legal provisions in Georgia – in particular the Law on General Education, the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Vocational Education. At the same time, all three of these areas are analyzed and evaluated in regards to the access of ethnic/national minorities to education.

Pre-school education: there are two significant problems in terms of pre-school education in non-Georgian language pre-school institutions: (a) the

availability of pre-school education, and (b) the provision of quality education in those pre-schools. It should be noted that both the above mentioned problems are common in the Georgian pre-school education system in general, but are more clearly seen in those regions densely populated with non-Georgian language citizens. The issue is particularly relevant given the importance of early childhood education in developing a student's social - cognitive, emotional and linguistic competence.

General Education: Several important problems and shortcomings have been identified in the sphere of General Education which have a negative impact on the overall process of integration of ethnic minorities. Some of the problematic issues have become evident in various studies and reports with regard to the curriculum and textbooks: (a) qualitative translation in textbooks is still a problem, (b) textbooks often comprise stereotyped material; from the intercultural point of view a wide range of issues are not taken into account and some of the information is distorted, (c) only 70 % of the texts in textbooks have been translated while 30% have been left in the state language. The material in the state language is inaccessible for students, because neither students nor their parents or teachers speak the national language well enough to assimilate the material. Hence, in such cases the teachers are simply ignoring the material offered in the state language.

Significant problems have also been identified regarding the professional development and certification of teachers. Professional development programs for teachers are often unavailable, since the trainings organized by private providers, as well as by the Teachers' House, are conducted in the state language. The number of teachers that are fluent in the state language is very small in the regions that are densely populated by ethnic minorities. Accordingly, those teachers in the non-Georgian language schools have limited opportunity to participate in teachers' professional development programs; this, in turn, affects the quality of the learning process and the academic and cognitive development of students. At the same time, the certification exam is not conducted in minority languages, which on the one hand makes them lose motivation and hinders their professional development, and on the other results in discrimination against them because they

do not enjoy the benefits of certification. Data clearly indicates that there are a small number of teachers who apply for certification, as well as a very low number of certified teachers in the non-Georgian language schools of those areas and regions that are densely populated by ethnic minorities.

The report also reflects flaws in the bilingual education system. Despite the positive attitude of the population towards multilingual education, there are still a notable number of irregularities which are reflected in the inconsequence of bilingual education reform and disorganization in the relevant legislation field. There is also evidence of the deficiency of bilingual staff for the implementation of the reform, which leads to the supplying of different classes with scientifically unsound and methodologically flawed bilingual textbooks.

In terms of the direction of general education, the clearest picture can be found in the case of the Georgian as a Second Language Teaching Program, but at the same time the following problems still arise: the majority of Georgian teachers (340 teachers) themselves do not properly possess the state language; the efficiency and effectiveness of sending young teachers with Bachelor's degrees to the regions of ethnic minorities is under question as these teachers, for the most part, tend to leave the region after the completion of their one-year assignment. Therefore, the resources invested in them are unfruitful, and the difference between the salaries of these teachers and those of the local teachers is a subject of discontent among the local population.

Higher Education: Since 2010, following the introduction of the quota system in Georgian higher education colleges, the number of representatives of ethnic minority applicants, as well as the number of those enrolled, has increased dramatically. The general aptitude habits test results of Armenian and Azerbaijani students, and their comparison with the results of the Georgian and Russian-speaking applicants, also gives a good picture for analysis. Although the general aptitude test is conducted in the native language of the entrants, their results are much lower in comparison with the Georgian and Russian-speaking entrants. This once again demonstrates problems with the quality of teaching in general education.

In terms of “affirmative action policies”, some issues are emerging with regard to the realization of the one-year Georgian Language Program in higher education institutions, in particular the one-year training program in Georgian language is not sufficient for some students. After one year of training, they are not yet prepared to continue their studies in the Bachelor’s program whereas graduates of Tbilisi schools find themselves in a different situation: they speak the state language, and a one-year program for them is fruitless because they are going through the same program as those students who do not speak the state language at all. Non-Georgian speaking students do not have the environment for integration; there is no communication with Georgian students; their civic consciousness and civic integration is low, and they are isolated in a particular building without any form of interaction.

3. MEDIA AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The report discusses the legislation, in particular the constitutional dispositions on freedom of speech and expression, Broadcasting Law, and the Code of Conduct. At the same time, the measures which have been implemented by the government of Georgia are analyzed. The report focuses on the impact of public TV, and of public radio and print media on the accessibility of information for ethnic minorities and on the coverage rate evaluation of ethnic minority themes.

Despite the steps taken by the government in minority-populated areas, the information of Georgian media reports is still unavailable, and to benefit from the news media they are mainly supplied with information from neighboring countries. This results in a lack of information about current events for ethnic minorities within their resident country. The reason can be considered through a variety of factors: inconvenient knowledge of the state language, lack of media coverage or quality programs, and other technological gaps. It is also noteworthy that there has been discriminatory coverage of minority communities using offensive and xenophobic terms. From the point of view of media coverage, the minorities were mostly focused on in the cases of conflict or crimes, or when religious or ethnic celebrations were going on

and being attended by state leaders. Xenophobic and insulting statements were made mostly by print media, which continued to spread stereotypes with regard to ethnic minorities and, in the case of discussing a violator or a suspected person, placed particular emphasis on their ethnic origin.

The survey also revealed that national broadcasting availability in ethnic minority-populated areas is not finally guaranteed; however, solving this issue will be possible from the year 2015, when television broadcasting will be transformed into a digital system. In terms of accessibility of the broadcast programs in minority languages it should be noted that within the implementation process, the state tried to improve accessibility of the broadcasting programs, however, notwithstanding these efforts, the program ratings at minority-populated areas were low, which necessitates planning and the taking of other measures on larger scales in order to achieve this goal.

4. POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

The report reflects national and international laws and regulations (the Constitution, the Organic Law on Political Union of Citizens, the Council of Europe and UN documents, as well as OSCE themed recommendations) relevant from the point of view of minority political integration and civic participation; the study focuses on civil and political integration issues such as the envisaging of equal voting rights for ethnic minorities, improving the participation of ethnic minorities in decision-making processes and implementing, in real terms, the European Framework-Convention on Protection of National Minorities.

The Study of the Ethnic Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration, as a result, revealed that one of the main conceptual disadvantages was the fact that, regarding the civic and political participation of minorities, the political participation of ethnic minorities was not fully realized in terms of their participation in the processes of political involvement and decision-making. It is not clearly defined what kind of measures should be taken to achieve this goal. The problem is that the Concept is not directly based on international legal documentation which would constitute the guiding principles for the

provision of minority civic and political participation. Therefore, it is important that the new National Concept and Action Plan be based on specific proposed measures as reflected in the relevant international conventions and declarations, in particularly such documents as:

Framework Convention for the Protection of the National Minorities, The National Minority Rights Convention; The United Nations Declaration on the National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities; The Rights of Persons Belonging – OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities; The Lund Recommendations on the Effective. Participation of National Minorities in Public Life and The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies guidelines for the integration of the ethnically diverse communities by the OSCE High Commissioner on the National Minorities of Ljubljana.

From the directions focused on in the National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration, the most visible change has been made in ensuring the equal voting rights of minorities and the election-related issues of ethnic minorities in terms of awareness. At the same time, a conscious and informed choice at the polls in the minorities remains low, which is associated with a low political culture in the regions.

The measures taken to strengthen the civic and political participation of ethnic minorities, based on current results, are still at a low level. State programs and activities carried out over the past years were marked by inconsistency. An example of this is the training program for minority professional staff and civil servants. According to the National Concept, this is one of the key directions in terms of increasing the involvement of minorities in the decision-making process. However, the relevant activities are inadequate, in particular Zurab Zhvania's school of Public Administration – which had the responsibility of preparing public sector workers in ethnic minority regions – actually lost its main function and assumed the function of a Language Center. Also, in terms of the professional training of ethnic minorities, it should be noted that the existing vocational colleges in Gurjaani (Kachreti) and Akhaltsikhe are not focused on minority communities, and their programs are not considered to be focused on the general policy of integration.

Keeping in mind the above mentioned issues, in order to ensure the political participation of ethnic minorities it is important to strengthen the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration and the general direction of administrative training of minority communities in the National Strategy and Action Plan. It is important to develop an appropriate training program for minority communities in public administration, and to determine the correct priorities. In terms of the professional development of minority communities, it is important for the existing facilities and vocational educational programs to adapt to the integration of minorities in their general policies and programs.

Significant problems have been identified in terms of the political participation of minorities in state structures. Both at the central as well as regional (especially in the case of Lower Kartli) levels, minority representation is low. At the same time, the strict reliance on the central government during decision-making is also a problem. Therefore, it is important to consider the specificities of ethnic minority regions during the structuring of local government. In this regard, it is important that the new action plan include local governance and decentralization issues in accordance with international standards and recommendations, which are presented in agreement with the specificities of minorities presented in the OSCE Lund recommendations and Ljubljana guidelines.

In terms of increasing the political culture, it is also important that the National Strategy and Action Plan take into consideration awareness-raising programs and various trainings for representatives of political parties.

In minority communities, as well as amongst the Georgian population, there is a low level of awareness of international agreements on the protection of ethnic minorities, especially on the European Charter on Minority or Regional Languages. Due to these problems, it is recommended that the National Strategy and Action Plan accurately define the measures that will contribute to raising awareness about these international agreements.

The Concept does not reflect the needs and problems associated with small or marginalized ethnic groups. In this regard, it is important that the National

Strategy and Action Plan include measures and activates for marginalized groups: to provide the issuance of relevant documents (identity cards and birth certificates), to facilitate access to education for children, and include adults in ongoing social projects.

5. SOCIAL AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The report discusses in detail the social and regional integration programs and projects carried out by the state, such as social security and mobility, and regional infrastructure and agribusiness development projects. It also analyzes the attitude of the population towards ongoing projects.

As a result of the study, the following trends have been identified:

Three objectives have been set forth in the direction of social and regional integration in the National Concept for Civic Integration, however four different objectives expect to be achieved in different Action Plans throughout various years of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration. In this regard, there is a certain inconsistency and the presence of activities that seem irrelevant to the objectives.

1. Further development of infrastructure in minority-populated regions

In regards to the first task of the Action Plan, it has to be noted that in recent years the state has taken large-scale steps in terms of infrastructure projects. The aim of the project was: to increase international and domestic trade, business development, agribusiness and farming development; to create good conditions for investment; to reduce unemployment; to develop tourism and other economic activities; and to promote regional economic integration. Despite the fact that the goals set for minority districts cannot fully be achieved during the coming years, such projects were undoubtedly a positive trend and were an important step in reducing the isolation of the minority regions in the country and in speeding up the process of further integration.

2. Vocational training and employment promotion of ethnic minorities

The ongoing implementation of the 2009–2014 Action Plan projects was also supposed to promote the employment of local communities. However, the projects aimed at supporting small and medium business, in terms of efficiency, require a better approach. The critical attitude of ethnic minorities towards the infrastructural projects, aimed at employing them, was justified. But the employment issue is directly linked to training and qualification. The problems associated with the above-mentioned direction results in the employment of a small number of locals in the projects. The vocational training and capacity building of the state were positive steps, but the modest scale of similar projects and the problems associated with learning hindered the employment of ethnic minorities.

3. Social and regional mobility of ethnic minorities

During the implementation of the 2009–2014 Action Plan the government implemented various projects in healthcare and social directions. The problem of service delivery to ethnic minorities consisted of a lack of information about the existing services. It is possible that the Georgian population had a similar problem, but the lack of knowledge of the Georgian language also contributed to the issue in the case of ethnic minorities. During recent years of implementation of the Action Plan, the Government has carried out a number of measures aimed at informing ethnic minorities, but in this regard, in order to achieve efficiency, the areas populated by ethnic minorities are in need of more intensive information campaigns. This will create the opportunity for ethnic minorities to receive more information and get more access to public services.

4. Promoting Civic Education

During the 2009–2014 Action Plan implementation the steps taken to achieve this goal were modest and less systematic. Keeping in mind the recent developments in the country, the issue of civic education is relevant to the current challenges, especially when it concerns ethnic minorities. Therefore,

it is important for the state to develop a more systematic approach and to use the vast resources of NGOs and international organizations, in order to contribute to the further integration of ethnic minorities. At the same time, in the process of developing a systematic approach, it might be important to achieve the objective of the planned activities in the Action Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration by including them in other components within the framework.

6. Culture and Preservation of Identity

The basic legislative framework that regulates the protection and preservation of cultural heritages is limited by the Constitution- the Law on Culture and the Law on General Education. The work also describes and analyses in detail the National Minorities Cultural Support Program of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, in particular, it provides a review of the status of ethnic minority museums, libraries, music schools and the measures that have been taken to protect the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in general.

The analysis demonstrated the following: despite the fact that the document was being prepared in close cooperation with the governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations, in the chapter dedicated to the preservation of culture and identity in the concept of the Action Plan, the already-existing cultural institutions of the minority were not reflected, such as local cultural institutions under the municipalities. They went beyond the Action Plan, which further aggravated their legal and material - technical condition. In addition, it is worth noting some lack of awareness on the part of the organizations in the activities provided by the Action Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration, to say nothing of the dispersion of settled ethnic minorities. They generally find themselves out of the game, a fact which is to be improved in the process of further development of the Action Plan.

According to the Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration, government commitments appeared insufficient for preserving minority identity, not to mention deepening public knowledge on ethnic minority culture, history,

language and religion or presenting them as cultural values of the country as a whole.

The main sources of funding of the “Program to Promote the Culture of National Minorities,” developed by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection with an annual budget of one hundred thousand Lari, was spent on print media, while the remaining amount was spent on symbolic activities. The mentioned funding for the preservation of the cultural identity represented a very small amount of money. It is clear that the money was not enough for print media, and as such it was additionally funded by the proceeds of the Presidential Administration. More appropriately, the Promotion of Access to the Information and Culture of Ethnic Minorities in the future Action Plan should be considered separately.

Organizations working in the field of culture are not divided into Georgian and other minority institutions and they have the same legal status. Theaters, museums, cultural centers, libraries, according to Georgian legislation, are under the governance of the National Government (Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection) and local governments, and regulated by various subordinate legislation. Some institutions have no legal status.

Under the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, by the status of Legal Entity Public Law are: the LEPL Petros Adamyan Tbilisi State Armenian Professional Drama Theater; the LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Professional Drama Theater; and the LEPL Alexander Griboyedov State Russian Professional Drama Theatre. It should be noted that they receive funding from the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection from the budget sub-code and the funds allocated for this serve to cover the salary fund. The buildings of LEPL Petros Adamyan Tbilisi State Armenian Professional Drama Theater and the LEPL Heydar Aliyev Tbilisi State Azerbaijani Professional Drama Theater are damaged and in need of urgent repair works. Their theater troupes have been unable, for years, to enjoy their own theater room and they are forced to rent other theater halls; therefore tours are focusing on acting troupes in the regions of Georgia as well as abroad. As for the LEPL Alexander Griboyedov State Russian Professional Drama Theatre,

it was refurbished by the International Charity Foundation Cartu, while the state did not provide any resources. The fund allocated by the State was spent only on the payroll. the International Charity Foundation Cartu covered the bills and employees' salary bonuses. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection cannot or does not act as a mediator and does not help them in finding additional funding. All of the museums under the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection are in a similar condition; all the museum buildings and other material and technical bases are outdated and do not conform to modern museum standards. In 2013 the LEPL Mirza Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Museum and Cultural Center renovation and upgrading was completed. It was implemented by the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR). Unfortunately, even in this case, the funds allocated by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection are spent on the payroll or on symbolic funding. The Museum gets its additional funding from the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the library management system dissolved. The Law of Georgia on Library Affairs and the Law of Georgia on the National Library accepted in 1997 charged the Ministry of Culture, along with the National Library, for the coordination and management of the new system. They had to carry a unified state library policy in order to ensure the fulfillment of the international treaties and conventions of the library, the training policy of library staff, to control state standards of the library, and to ensure a centralized library collection of statistical data and analysis. Unfortunately, the law has remained only on paper. At present there is no uniform state policy on libraries, and all activities in this direction are spontaneous. Local self-government bodies were charged with the custody of libraries. Local libraries are funded through the budget. In developed countries, the book depository libraries are now used not only in function, but as a powerful tool for promoting tolerance, intercultural integration, and education. Unfortunately, the library system of Georgia remains beyond that. Issuing from all of the above-mentioned, it should be noted that in the future Concept and in development of the Action Plan, the Georgian Government should use the gathered experience and cultural organizations should be involved in the development of the new document.



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OF GEORGIA FOR RECONCILIATION AND
CIVIC EQUALITY

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