

**MONITORING RESULTS  
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF ACTION PLAN  
OF THE STATE STRATEGY  
FOR CIVIC EQUALITY  
AND INTEGRATION**

2017-2018

TOLERANCE CENTER UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE  
PUBLIC DEFENDER, COUNCIL OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

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საპარტეზეტოს ხანალხო დამცველი  
PUBLIC DEFENDER (OMBUDSMAN) OF GEORGIA

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## Summary

Monitoring on 2017 and 2018 Action Plan of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration was carried out by member organizations of the Council of National Minorities functioning under the auspices of Public Defender and invited experts in October and November 2019. The aim of the monitoring was to analyze the existing situation and the implementation of strategic goals set out in the strategy and action plan on supporting equal and full participation of minorities in political, civil, social, media, educational and cultural life. Monitoring team members held individual and group meetings with community organizations of minorities, media and non-governmental organizations, representatives of central and local governments and specialists of respective fields in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Marneuli. The experts' team also studied official information, regular reports, thematic and analytical researches of international and local NGOs, information of central and regional media requested from state agencies<sup>1</sup>. The report reflects the findings obtained by triangulation of the listed sources and corresponding recommendations.

The aim of the monitoring was to study/ evaluate the existing situation in terms of implementation of state strategy for civic equality and action plan (2017-2018) and not the study /evaluation of civic integration and the state of national minorities in the country in general. Therefore, the document does not reflect many essential issues concerning the protection of national minority rights and civic integration.

## Major Findings

### **Strategic Goal 1 - Equal and Full Participation in Civic and Political Life:**

1.1. Providing support to small ethnic groups. The focus is placed on the documentation of Roma community, teaching languages to small ethnic groups, Pankisi gorge development plans.

1.2. Gender Mainstreaming. The report addresses "Women's Rooms" established in ethnic minority regions, the training course run by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the campaign against gender-based violence which was provided to inspectors and investigators employed in minority regions, and other.

1.3. Providing Access to State and Law-enforcement Bodies and Mechanisms.

The report addresses the activities on encouraging minorities' participation in the process of policy decision-making carried out by Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti advisory councils for minorities at the Administrations of State Attorney –Governors, the internship provided to the participants of "1+4" educational program, information meetings with representatives of minorities about state services, and other.

1.4. Encouraging participation of Ethnic Minorities in Policy Decision-making Process.

The report addresses the events on raising awareness and informational- training project organized by Central Electoral Commission.

1.5 Improving the Access to Media and Information. The issue stands out thematically in the process of monitoring. The monitoring team of the Council of National Minorities in the sphere of media considers a wider context of this interim goal. Out of factors impeding access to information, the monitoring team lays emphasis on language barrier, due to which minorities increasingly rely on the information provided by broadcasts of the neighboring countries. The monitoring team mentions the issue of strengthening regional media, whose only sources of financing are international organizations, since the advertising market is unable to cover their operational expenses. Internetization of minority regions is a problem. It has been noted that Public Broadcaster has been dropped out of strategy implementation at this stage. However, there are several other projects implemented in the field of diversity coverage. Without active involvement of Television it is impossible to plan and implement particular programs and activities. Programs and initiatives in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages have been analyzed as well. The report provides comments and remarks on the accuracy of translation and quality of supplied information by Public Broadcaster.

1.6. Ensuring Awareness raising of the society about the Rights of Minorities. Respective events and meetings were held in 2017 and 2018 in Tbilisi and other regions of Georgia. According to the state report, public servants, students, farmers and entrepreneurs who were familiarized with the European Framework Convention for the "Protection of National Minorities" and European Charter for "Regional or Minority Languages" took part in the events and meetings.

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1 For sources, see Annex 1

## **Strategic goal 2 - Equal and Full-fledged Participation in Civic and Political Life.**

2.1. Supporting social and regional mobility of minorities. As a result of monitoring of the events aiming at the achievement of this goal, it has been established that minority communities are willing to take part in infrastructural or other regional projects that are being implemented in the country, however, on many occasions, they did not have adequate qualification. There is a lack of information about the projects on subsidized agricultural loans and "Enterprise Georgia".

## **Strategic goal 3 is to provide access to high quality education to minorities and improve their knowledge of the state language.**

In terms of providing access to high quality education and improving knowledge of the state language in 2017-2018, the main challenge still remains the lack of systemic vision, as well as ambiguity of medium- and long-term objectives, which hinder the implementation of consistent policy. The major challenges that have been brought to light are as follows:

3.1. Interim goal – provision of increased access to preschool education for ethnic minorities. Obvious lack of early childhood and preschool educational institutions in the regions with compact settlements of ethnic minorities. Besides, there is no clear vision on preschool education of ethnic minorities. Teachers' education and training need to be based on a clear educational plan and supported by adequate resources oriented at the achievement of the goal.

3.2. Interim goal - provision of increased access to education, both in state and native languages. In this regard, in school graduation exams non-Georgian language school pupils show considerably poorer results compared to their Georgian language school peers, which once again points to the problems caused by incompatibility of textbooks with curriculum and low quality of translation, insufficient qualification of teachers and limited opportunities for professional retraining, little inflow of new teachers and unclear visions of language teaching policy in schools.

3.3. The challenge for interim goal – increase the access to higher education. The most serious challenge in this regard still remains improvement of students' language command to ensure they achieve high academic results at the Bachelor's level. This is possible to achieve by offering students individual, multi-leveled language learning programs.

3.4. The challenge for interim goal – to ensure provision of vocational and adult education, it is important to increase students' involvement in more intensive awareness raising campaigns on the one hand, and on the other, offer diverse programs oriented at supporting learning the state language that will be geographically accessible for students representing ethnic minorities. In adult educational programs, identification of clear indicators for achieving better results in teaching the state language programs and monitoring of indicators and evaluation mechanisms more focused on program development and measuring the impact on cost-effectiveness and achievement of long-term effect, rather than on quantitative indicators of retraining adult population, still remains a challenge.

## **Strategic goal 4 aims at preserving culture of ethnic minorities and encouraging tolerant environment.**

4.1. Reflect the role and importance of minorities in the elaboration of cultural policy and its implementation. When considering this interim goal, the emphasis is placed on the national cultural policy document "Cultural Policy Strategy 2025". The report mentions Orders and resolutions issued by state ministries, agencies, LEPLs that are aimed at promoting and protecting culture of minorities.

**4.2. Protection and promotion of cultural heritage of minorities.** With regard to protection and promotion of cultural heritage, the action plan fails to meet the challenges of minorities' material or intangible cultural heritage. Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, Catholic, Muslim, Judaic and Dukhobor monuments are under threat. Legal status of historic or religious buildings of minorities remains unidentified. No sustainable state programs on studying and promoting of intangible cultural heritage of minorities exist. Cultural diversity of Georgia is not represented in museums.

**4.3. Encouraging Cultural Diversity.** In regions populated with national minorities there was no information about grant mechanism of the Ministry of Culture. The quality and relevance of the implemented projects regarding the existing challenges are not known. The form and content of celebrating traditional festivities of minorities is a problem.

## Recommendations

### General Recommendations:

State Strategy of Civic Equality and Integration and Action Plans needs to be methodologically improved. It implies the introduction of quantitative or/and qualitative assessment methods in the strategy and annual action plans.

As has been mentioned in annual plan reports, it is necessary to work out relevant qualitative and quantitative indicator for each activity and achieved result. It will be possible to assess the efficiency of implementation of a strategy and a plan, the result and its impact through analyzing information about the quantitative characteristics of conducted activity, general background, existing context and qualitative data.

### Recommendations on the first strategic goal:

1.1. Upgrade teachers' qualifications for the implementation of language teaching programs for vulnerable groups of ethnic minorities, provision of services to Roma Community on legal documentation on preferential terms.

1.2. Increase support of "Women's Rooms" activities and empowerment of the persons in charge of gender equality.

1.3. Increase participation of representatives of ethnic minorities, especially of those taking part in "1+4" program in decision making at a local level and provide them with information about current state programs and opportunities.

1.4. Support active cooperation between political parties and representatives of minorities.

1.5. Set an annual budget in advance for the events required by the strategy. It is important to strengthen the feedback mechanism regarding the efficiency of information products. Internetization of regions in minority settlements is very important. It is desirable that public broadcaster continues broadcasting and cover the issues concerning ethnic minorities more broadly, air more programs in the native languages of ethnic minorities and make them accessible, allocate more resources for promoting information products and accessibility to them. Cooperate with ethnic and religious minorities more actively and on regular basis to get feedback. It is desirable that Public Broadcaster raises awareness of ethnic minorities and their involvement in the project "Diverse Georgia".

### Recommendation on the second strategic goal:

2.1. Provide information to municipalities and regions in ethnic minority settlements about on-going social-economic state services and programs.

### Recommendations on the third strategic goal:

3.1 It is recommended to consider language needs of ethnic minorities at the very first stage of educational policy development along with provision of sufficient number of early childhood and preschool educational institutions and their accessibility. Consequently, it is necessary that early childhood and preschool bilingual education standard, the standard of bilingual teachers, their retraining and advanced training of qualified teachers are reflected in the process of development of necessary resources. Besides it is necessary to encourage the introduction of training programs for bilingual nursery teachers and preschool teachers at Universities.

3.2. It is necessary to establish a clear vision of bilingual education, that will include carrying out complex activities, which in the first place implies selection of qualified administrative school personnel, retraining and encouragement of potential personnel out of existing teachers, flow of new teachers to replace the aged personnel stage by stage, ensure provision of high quality textbooks, planning extra-curricular activities aimed at the integration of non-Georgian schools into the common space.

3.3. It is necessary to identify standardized language levels in Georgian language, in accordance to their target indicators, make programs of various intensity, length, difficulty levels, which, upon completion of Georgian

language studies, will equip students with proper knowledge of language when they proceed with higher education in Bachelor's program.

3.4. It is necessary that for each program, which is thought to be part of adult education, exists well determined clear indicators, which on one hand includes the benchmarks of measuring the program efficiency and on the other, the accountability of corresponding results for persons involved in these programs.

#### Recommendations on the fourth strategic goal:

4.1. **Active involvement of minorities in cultural policy making process.** Ministry of Culture can recommend the LEPLs funded by the Ministry to organize regular concert tours and other events in regions with ethnic minorities.

4.2. Respective Ministries and LEPLs should keep track of minorities' cultural heritage, especially of monuments in need of repairs, make an inventory, carry out reinforcement and restoration works. Respective agencies should support the development of touristic business in regions with minorities, develop tour itineraries and production of crafts and souvenirs.

4.3. It is desirable to disseminate information about competitions to support cultural events. The priorities of the competition should include sustainable and long-term programs to promote traditions, crafts and local cuisine. Traditional festivals in minority communities that have survived to our days should be preserved, maintaining their historical form and content.

## Introduction

Protecting ethnic minority rights and ensuring civic integration remain one of the top challenges in the country and for the society. State agencies have been carrying out State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and Action Plan throughout the years (since 2009) adopted by the Georgian Government in order to implement equality and integration policy. The strategy and action plan include many areas: equal and full-fledged engagement in civil and political life; support of small and vulnerable ethnic minorities; gender mainstreaming; increased access of ethnic minority representatives to mechanisms of state administration and law-enforcement bodies; encouraging ethnic minority representatives to participate in policy decision-making process; improvement of accessibility of ethnic minorities to media and information; raising awareness of ethnic minorities about their rights; creating equal social and economic conditions and opportunities; support social and regional mobility; provision of vocational and adult education; ensuring access to high quality education and improve the knowledge of the state language; increase access to preschool education; improve access to general education in state and native languages; increase access to higher education; ensure tolerant environment for ethnic minorities; reflect the role and importance of ethnic minorities in the process of elaborating cultural policy; preserve the culture of ethnic minorities, protect and promote the cultural heritage; encourage cultural diversity and other areas.

Council of National Minorities under Public Defender carries out the monitoring on the implementation of action plan of the state strategy for civic equality and integration on a regular basis. The aim of the monitoring is to provide objective assessment of the policy implemented by the state in this sphere, reveal achievements and drawbacks and work out recommendations for state agencies on the implementation of full /efficient civic integration and advocate the compliance with the suggested recommendations.

To create a monitoring group, Council of National Minorities selects monitors among their employees with relevant qualifications and the Center of Tolerance together with UN Association program PITA invite qualified experts, which they agree upon with the National Minority Council.

This document includes the monitoring results on the implementation of 2017-2018 Action Plan of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration.

Monitoring of the 2017-2018 Action Plan of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration was conducted by the following monitoring teams in different areas:

**a. Accessibility of ethnic minorities to media and information** – Council monitors: Zaur Khalilov – the executive director of Civic Integration Fund; Mikheil Aidinov, the head of Russian-speaking Journalists' Union;

Invited expert - Giorgi Gogvadze, director of the Security and Development Center of Georgia;

**b. Preserving and promoting the culture of ethnic minorities** – Council monitors: Marina Solomonishvili, international Fund of Jewish Women “Lea”; Boris Siniuk, Ukrainian Diaspora in Georgia, “The Dnieper”. The invited expert Konstantine Peradze, an independent expert.

**c. Providing equal social –economic conditions and opportunities for the engagement of ethnic minorities in civic and political life** – Nona Khangoshvili, Women’s Federation “Caucasian Women’s Congress”; Margalita Khidirbegshvili, International Georgia for Peace and Environmental Protection; Invited expert – Shoren Kobaidze, Center for the Studies of Ethnicity and Multiculturalism.

**d. Providing access to education for ethnic minorities** – Lili Saparova, Women’s Rights Community Initiative; Naira Bepiev, International Society “Caucasian Mosaics”; Natia Gorgadze, invited expert, Center for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations.

The monitoring group is coordinated by National Minority Council coordinator Koba Chopliani and an executive Secretary, Isabela Osipova.

Monitoring results have been submitted for approval to the Council of Ethnic Minorities under Public Defender’s Office. Opinions of the Council members have been reported in the final document.

## Strategic goal 1. Equal and Full Participation in Civil and Political Life

This strategic goal aims at embracing wide range of activities and specific initiatives, which should result in improvement of legal state of minorities and enable their full-fledged engagement in the country’s civil and political life.

The above goal includes 6 interim goals, 16 objectives and 36 activities. There are the following interim goals:

Supporting small and vulnerable ethnic minorities;

Gender mainstreaming;

Increasing access to state administrative and law-enforcement bodies and mechanisms for ethnic minorities;

Encouraging ethnic minorities to take part in policy decision making process;

Improving the access of ethnic minorities to mass media and information sources<sup>2</sup>;

Raising awareness of ethnic minorities about their rights.

Monitoring report on the implementation of 2017-2018 Action Plan of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration partly covers and reflects major projects and new developments carried out in the first half of 2019. It should also be noted that the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities published the reports on the third cycle in September 2019, accompanied with explanations provided by the state. The reporting period includes the detailed assessment of specific activities conducted by the state regarding the protection of minority rights. It also points to issues that have not been addressed. It should be mentioned that the Committee gives a positive feedback on the improvement of legal system, however, remarks that collection of data on minorities, protection of religious minorities and teaching minority languages need to be improved<sup>3</sup>. The report mentions the politicization of minority issues in Georgian society, which is also pointed out in many local researches or observations<sup>4</sup>.

2 Interim goal 1.5 and 1.6 has not been covered in the given section. The above interim goals will be assessed in a separate chapter

3 See the report on the 3rd cycle (FCNM), <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-georgia-en/1680969b56>

4 Social grounds for Right-wing nationalist populism in Georgia, Salome Minesashvili <http://gip.ge/ge/%e1%83%a3%e1%83%9a%e1%83%a2%e1%83%a0%e1%83%90%e1%83%9b%e1%83%94%e1%83%9b%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%af%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%9c%e1%83%94-%e1%83%9e%e1%83%9d%e1%83%9e%e1%83%a3%e1%83%9a%e1%83%98%e1%83%96/>

Yet another finding of the Advisory Committee is that along with encouraging the demonstrated diversity, minority issues are considered in the light of security and there is and expressed distrust towards some minority groups. It is also mentioned that the issues of religious and language minorities become politicized even in the case of non-existence of such grounds.<sup>5</sup> This report does not reflect the state of religious minorities, since the state strategy for civic equality and integration, as well as state reports on their implementation, do not cover the issues of religious minorities and the vision about responsive measures.

International Committee of the Council of Europe considers it a major drawback that the ***state limits itself to supporting cultural program and library policy in the encouragement of tolerant environment, while this policy does not imply the dialogue between educational sector and religions.***<sup>6</sup>

The advocates of minority rights<sup>7</sup> and the recognized experts speak about the changes in diversity, political climate, rule of law –pluralistic-democratic institutions. Weakening of the frame of liberal-democratic values and increase of populism have put minority issues on the agenda of problematic issues in a number of European countries. Besides, the experts speak about new political challenges of Framework Convention on Minority Rights and revision of other realias, to enable more efficient protection of national, linguistic, religious and other minorities.

Public Defender of Georgia has emphasized the necessity of making effective steps on a large-scale. In 2018 report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the protection of human rights and freedoms in Georgia reflects the existence of in-depth problems in the sphere of national minority protection and integration.<sup>8</sup> The Public Defender points out that nonacceptance on the ethnic and racial grounds still persists as an acute problem. The most alarming fact mentioned in the report is the case of Vitali Saparov's murder on the grounds of xenophobia in September 2018<sup>9</sup>.

### 1.1. Supporting Small and Vulnerable Ethnic Minorities

The major novelty in the state strategy for civic equality and integration and action plan is taking into account such issues, as elaboration of policy for small and vulnerable ethnic minorities and its implementation. Within the frames of 2017-2018 action plan the priority objective still remains taking relevant measures for issuance of certificates to persons with no birth certificates or IDs or incomplete documents. According to 2017-2018 report, as a result of activities performed by the State Service Development Agency under the Ministry of Justice, five representatives of Roma community managed to arrange their identification data and obtain IDs. However, it should be noted that Roma representatives do not get engaged in these processes independently and they get support via different projects. For instance, the process of searching and identifying of the above mentioned documents was carried out by the project "Reduction of the Number of Stateless Persons and Prevention of Statelessness in Georgia".<sup>10</sup> Not having official documents for Roma people living in Georgia still remains one of the unsettled problems and international or local organizations have been working on its solution for many years. The process is procrastinated, since it directly depends on NGO supported projects, whose budget and implementation terms are limited in time. Granting citizenship takes 7-8 months on average after establishing the status, which is impossible to do within the scope of project lasting for 6 months. As a result of monitoring it was considered that exemption of Roma minorities from paying the fees for issuing legal documents would be an efficient step. Having such an opportunity, more stateless Roma representatives will apply to the Agency and will be able to act independently.<sup>11</sup>

5 <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-georgia-en/1680969b56>

6 See the report on the 3rd cycle (FCNM), [3rd cycle](https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-georgia-en/1680969b56), <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-op-georgia-en/1680969b56> (p.17);

7 See the report „20 Years of Dealing with Diversity is the Framework Convention at a Crossroad <https://www.ecmi.de/publications/detail/20-years-of-dealing-with-diversity-is-the-framework-convention-at-a-crossroads-380/>

8 See 2018 Report of the Public Defender of Georgia, p. 288

9 25-year-old Vitali Saparov was murdered on September 30, 2018 in Tbilisi, in Duma Street on the grounds of hatred.

10 The project was implemented by NGO "Center for Innovations and Reforms" with financial support of UN-HCR and in cooperation with LEPL "State Service Development Agency" under the Ministry of Justice. After 2019 this service became unavailable for Roma community as there was no financial support.

11 The project was implemented by NGO "Center for Innovations and Reforms" with financial support of UN-HCR and in cooperation with LEPL "State Service Development Agency" under the Ministry of Justice. After 2019 this service became unavailable for Roma community as there was no financial support.

In 2017-2018, with the aim of supporting small and vulnerable ethnic minorities, the Administration of State Attorney – governor's office and the Tbilisi Sakrebulo organized free medical check-up campaigns for the representatives of minorities.<sup>12</sup> As a result of monitoring, it was established that minorities had information about similar campaigns, although it was unclear whether anyone enjoyed getting this service or not.<sup>13</sup>

Teaching native languages in certain public schools (Ossetian, Chechen, Avar, Assyrian, Udi) to small ethnic minorities continued in 2017-2018. The steps made by the state in teaching native languages to small ethnic minorities are assessed positively by the representatives of the community, although they mentioned some drawbacks in teaching process. There were certain problems due to the shortage of teachers and textbooks. Besides, no teaching program had been provided with the aim of enhancing teachers' qualification. During the monitoring, representatives of small communities pointed to non-existence of encouragement mechanisms and lack of interests among teachers. For instance, Kurdish language is not taught in any of the schools because of unavailability of teachers.<sup>14</sup>

2018 report also notes about the opening of a Sunday School for learning Latvian language organized on the initiative of Latvian organization in Georgia "Ave Sol" in "Tbilisi House of Friendship". During the meetings, the representative and a founder of the organization discussed the problems such as lack of working space and offices for ethnic minority representatives' organizations registered in Tbilisi.<sup>15</sup>

In 2018 reporting period, regarding policy elaboration and its implementation for numerically small and vulnerable ethnic minorities, we can mention the list of activities implemented within the scope of Pankisi gorge development program. In 2017-2018, State Minister's Office for Reconciliation and Civic Equality in Georgia prepared Pankisi gorge development plan, which had been drawn up as a separate strategic document in cooperation with partner agencies and NGOs. Part of local activists overtly criticize the process of Pankisi gorge development plan elaboration and meaningfulness of the activities reflected in it.<sup>16</sup>

The plan includes implementation of a number of activities by state agencies, as well as with the support of international organizations and funding.

During the monitoring of the implementation of the above interim goal, it became apparent that the activities devised in the action plan overlap in a number of cases and in some instances, are not sufficient. For instance, taking measures regarding the issuance of birth certificates or IDs to persons still remains a priority. NGOs also have to carry out relevant activities in this regard. The mediators appointed by them (mediators for settling Roma community issues) identify persons having incomplete identification documents or the ones without any documents and render them further assistance in obtaining these documents.

Public Service Development Agency (LEPL) at the Ministry of Justice fulfills its obligation to provide the relevant services. However, the Agency does not provide additional services in support of Roma community.

It is recommended to consider elaboration, implementation and monitoring of Pankisi gorge development plan, as well as the reports prepared by agencies and organizations in charge, beyond this plan and strategy. Devising Pankisi gorge development plan can be assessed as a joint step taken by the state and non-governmental sector in response to specific and important challenges. However, similar initiative cannot be regarded as the formation of consistent policy supporting the provision of equal conditions for numerically small and vulnerable groups.

It is recommended to facilitate the access to the accountability of activities/ projects within the implemented grant programs for NGOs, since during the implementation of the monitoring, ethnic minority council or/and other civic organizations have no access to individual projects implemented by various NGOs and their assessment mechanisms. The above recommendation will be beneficial for the improvement of the assessment quality of implementation of the strategy and action plan.

12 Reports on the Implementation of 2017-2018 State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and Action Plan. In 2017 a campaign was held in Kvemo Kartli region. During 2018 small national minority representatives in Tbilisi enjoyed the benefits of free medical examinations.

13 Telephone interview with an Assyrian community activist, October 19, 2019.

14 Interview with the Kurdish –Yazidi community leader, Ms. Lili Saparova, October 19, 2019

15 Meeting with Ethnic Minority Council, September 24, 2019. It was pointed out at the meeting that the House of Friendship founded under the auspices of Tbilisi Sakrebulo cannot accommodate all organizations and it is a problem to carry out all events.

16 <https://www.radioway.ge/news/people/item/922-ras-moizavs-pankisis-xeobis-ganvitarebis-gegma>

## 1.2. Gender Mainstreaming

A number of initiatives supporting gender equality were undertaken in the reporting period. In the reports on the implementation of 2017-2018 action plans, the most widely reviewed initiative carried out jointly by state agencies and NGOs since 2015 is the establishment of “Women’s Rooms” at a municipal level. “Women’s Room” is a public space in the community equipped with all necessary resources to supply information and services to women. It is aimed at encouraging women’s participation in the decision making process at municipal and community levels. “Women’s Rooms” should also support women’s integration into state structures. It is noteworthy that in the reporting period, “Women’s Rooms” were functioning in almost all municipalities (in the regions with compact settlement of ethnic minorities) where an impressive number of meetings<sup>17</sup>, trainings and other events were held. During the monitoring and meetings with the representatives of “Women’s Rooms”<sup>18</sup> they presented different views about which purpose the similar services should pursue at a municipal level. For instance, representatives of local government of Ninotsminda municipality met with Ethnic Minority Council in the “Women’s Room” and held active discussion on gender equality issues. They clearly expressed their position about these issues and emphasized the major achievement of their municipality - out of 64 municipalities, only Ninotsminda municipality mayor is a woman<sup>19</sup>.

During the meetings in Akhalkalaki municipality it was found that instead of supporting “Women’s Rooms” in 2019 they created the Commission at Sakrebulo (city council) for gender issues. According to the information received from Dmanisi municipality, no women representatives of ethnic minorities attended the trainings held in “Women’s Room”. The reason for the above was said to be the language barrier.<sup>20</sup>

Despite geographic proximity, a different and more positive dynamics could be observed in Marneuli municipality. According to the information provided by the Mayor’s office, 4 projects presented by women within the program “Enterprise Georgia” were funded with the support and involvement of Marneuli “Women’s Room”<sup>21</sup> in 2018. It is important to focus attention on the qualification of “Women’s Room” staff, so that people seeking help with various needs were able to get the necessary information. As well as that “Women’s Room” can play an important role if data collection is not limited to keeping records of trainings and thematic meetings only, but also provide description and analysis of key issues of advocacy campaigns. It is desirable to make brief annual analysis of women’s referral at a municipal level, which not only benefits the program assessment mechanism, but improves the provided services as well.

Human Rights protection Department was created at the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2018 and important reforms were implemented in the field of violence against women. Among them methodology for risk assessment of domestic violence was introduced; investigators and patrol police employees were trained and legal changes implying stricter measures of combatting domestic violence were made. In the regions densely populated with ethnic minorities, 13 investigators and 325 patrol inspectors did a specialized training course, etc.<sup>22</sup>.

In the beginning of 2019, with the aim of providing legal and referral services, psychological, social-economic support and rehabilitation to the victims/ would-be victims of domestic violence, a Crisis Center was opened in Marneuli, Kvemo Kartli.<sup>23</sup>

It is noteworthy that the field specialists or the representatives of self-governing bodies in regions did not have the information about the mentioned reforms.

With the aim of elimination of gender-based discrimination in 2017-2018, a number of measures were taken with regard to raising awareness of women, improving their engagement and empowerment. It is important to

17 For instance, in 2017, 168 meetings were held in Kvemo Kartli region, 158 meetings were held in 2018. Statistics on meetings in Samtskhe-Javakheti in 2017 cannot be found. 2018 report mentions 46 activities conducted in Samtskhe-Javakheti region.

18 During the meetings, the representatives of “Women’s Rooms” introduced themselves as being either 1) heads of gender equality department; and/or 2) coordinators of “Women’s Rooms”.

19 Ninotsminda municipality mayor, Anivard Mosoian, started came into office on November 12, 2017.

20 The letter№ 07/4394 from the Mayor of Dmanisi municipality dated October 30, 2019

21 Letter № N 03/12137 from the Mayor of Marneuli municipality of October 31, 2019

22 Report on the implementation of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and 2018 Action Plan, pp. 19-20

23 <https://georgia.unwomen.org/ka/news/stories/2019/08/anti-domestic-violence-measures-strengthened-in-kvemo-kartli>

continue active work in this direction and encourage women's participation in civil and political life. However, efficient work of the Human Rights Protection Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs will be of decisive importance for the elimination of gender-based discrimination, among them in regions settled by ethnic minorities.

In this regard, it is necessary to supply information to regions about state service and significant legal changes. In the first place, it is important that the representatives of "Women's Rooms" and gender councils are informed about the introduction of similar legal initiatives and their implementation.

### **1.3. Providing Access to State Administrative and Law-enforcement Bodies and Mechanisms for Representatives of Ethnic Minorities**

Monitoring revealed that ethnic minorities had no difficulties in the communication with administrative units due to the language barrier, which they consider the major obstacle in the process of integration. According to 2018 report, neither regional administrations nor municipalities received any complaints on the barriers due to the poor knowledge of the state language<sup>24</sup>.

On the initiative of State Minister's Office for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, in 2017 advisory councils in Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti Administration of State Attorney–Governors' office were set up and started functioning. The aim of the Councils is to improve ethnic minorities' involvement in the administrations' work. In the opinion of Samtskhe-Javakheti state representatives' administrations, creating such councils will not bring any additional benefits in the process of settling ethnic minorities' problems.<sup>25</sup> As it turns out from reports and meetings, no information on the impact of Advisory Council activities on the problems of ethnic minorities is available. Consequently, it is hard to measure the contribution of Councils to improving the involvement of ethnic minorities in the Administration of State Attorney–Governors.

Considerable novelty in terms of increased engagement and professional development of ethnic minorities in public administration and public service is the state program, which determines the internship procedures for ethnic minority representatives in public service agencies. According to this program, students that represent ethnic minorities who have done a special educational program in Georgian language training ("1+4") were given the opportunity to do internship in public service structures to gain the relevant experience and develop professional skills. Within the scope of the program, 207 participants underwent the internship program in 2017 and 2018, in different state agencies. The fact that many young people are already employed, proves the program successful. For instance, five participants of the program have been employed in Akhalkalaki municipality after internship.<sup>26</sup>

The monitoring has also shown that two participants were afforded to do their internship in the the Governor's administration in Samtskhe-Javakheti but due to big competition, they failed to get employment in the administration. It will be important and necessary that the information about doing internship and employment in state structures is reflected in the reports of the following years.

With the aim to improve the access to public services for ethnic minorities, the Administration of State Attorney and other state agencies in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions held information meetings with the population to familiarize them with new laws, the rights of ethnic minorities and the relevant legislation on regular basis. Information about public services and on-going state programs was disseminated in the regions settled by ethnic minorities. Besides, the reports provide the information about the meetings held in public centers in ethnic minority settlements.

Information meetings and discussions on the topic of European Integration process were held in 2017-2018. On the initiative of the State Minister's office for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, more than 300 meetings on awareness raising were held only in 2018 in the regions of compact settlements of ethnic minorities. In the course

24 Report on the implementation of State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and 2018 Action Plan p. 24.

25 The meeting held at the state representative's –the governor's administrative office, October 23, 2019.

26 Information about the employment of program participants became known during the meeting with the representative of the State Minister's Office for Reconciliation and Civic Equality in Samtskhe-Javakheti, on October 22, 2019. It is noteworthy that despite some attempts, the representatives were unable to talk to program participants or/and the employed persons.

of monitoring, some trends were revealed at the meetings with NGOs and activists, proving that local population is not aware of significant news, for instance, in agrarian and agricultural fields. Some representatives of local population often contact journalists with the request to help them solve some specific problems. The issue of agricultural land registration is rather acute in Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki and local farmers are often unaware of on-going state projects and opportunities.

In terms of improvement of state language knowledge of public servants, involvement of ethnic minorities in public administration and public service, their professional development, we should mark the significant contribution of Zurab Zhvania State School of Public Administration (LEPL). Since 2014 the school has been running the study programs in: state language learning, Public Management and Administration.<sup>27</sup>

The training programs are held in 10 regional learning centers (Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Gardabani, Tsalka, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Lambalo, Lagodekhi, Akhmeta) and in mobile groups in villages.<sup>28</sup>

#### 1.4. Encouraging Participation of Ethnic Minorities in Policy Decision-making Process

The work carried out in recent years by the Central Election Commission and the efforts they made in raising awareness, preparing election administration employees, translating the documentation necessary for the election process into the minority languages, informing citizens about the election process and many other issues in the regions settled by ethnic minorities deserves special mention.<sup>29</sup> Before 2017 elections of local self-government bodies, 47 259 members in 12 electoral districts (throughout Georgia) compactly inhabited by ethnic minority constituents were trained, among them were 2 782 ethnic minority representatives. For Presidential elections, which took place on October 28, 2018, the training courses were provided to 43 352 members, among them to 1 639 representatives of ethnic minorities. In 2017, 8 small grants were awarded to civic organizations and minority communities with the aim of enhancing information campaigns on the importance of elections and promoting electoral culture among ethnic minorities. 10 small grants were awarded in 2018. 29 informational video clips were made, among them in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages to be aired on regional TV stations. Election documentation was translated for ethnic minorities and many other significant information campaigns were held.<sup>30</sup>

In 2019, on the decision of grant competition commission of the Study Center, with the aim of informing constituents in compact settlements of ethnic minorities (Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti and Samtskhe –Javakheti) funded 8 NGO projects, with the total budget of GEL 236 790. The projects were implemented in the period between September 25 and November 25, 2019<sup>31</sup>. Information-training projects for representatives of ethnic minorities implemented in 2017-2019 by the Central Election Commission of Georgia and Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Center(LEPL), are also significant and impressive. 14 information-training projects had been implemented in total, in which more than 3 000 participants deepened their professional knowledge in the field of electoral law, developed their practical skills and/or raised civic awareness about the importance of electoral processes. The priority of the programs are also to support the increased engagement of constituents, which is an important contribution to the process of promoting political participation of ethnic minorities.

With the aim of encouragement of ethnic minorities to participate in election party lists and activities of political parties, according to 2017 report on the implementation of action plan, special attention was devoted to working with political parties. The State Minister's Office for Reconciliation and Civic Equality actively cooperated with the NGO – "Netherlands Institution for Multiparty Democracy" (NIMD). With the support of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, within the frames of cooperation with NIMD were held seminars and meetings with political parties. Whereas according to 2018 report, no similar activities took place that year.

As well as that, action plan reports do not provide information about the activities oriented at the improvement of legal basis for political participation. Ethnic minorities are insufficiently represented in regional party lists of some municipalities populated by national minorities. The analysis shows that ethnic minorities, basically, are less represented in central government bodies, among them in the positions of policy makers. There is no legal

27 <http://www.zspa.ge/geo/page/31>

28 <http://zspa.ge/geo/page/119>

29 Report on the implementation of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and 2018 Action Plan, pp. 29-34

30 Letter №N 01-07/1287 of the Central Election Commission, October 30, 2019

31 Ibid.

incentive for political parties that would encourage the increase of ethnic minority representation. The above drawbacks became apparent after analyzing the results of 2017 local self-government elections.<sup>32</sup>

## 1.5. Improving Access to Media and Information for Representatives of Ethnic Minorities

As every other state, Georgia also is facing many challenges on the way of fulfillment domestic and external obligations. One of the preconditions for the country's success and its sustainable development is having constant access to unbiased information, the use of pluralistic media by population that is equipped with critical thinking ability and media literacy. While the country aspires to the integration into western institutions, making perfect use of information space becomes twice as important.

Based on various studies, the survey results of ethnic and religious minorities, usually give a different picture in terms of access to media. Apart from accessibility to media pluralism and critical media, the major challenge that persists is the possibility to have continuous access to information.

Using media by ethnic minorities and their participation in creating any of the media products has a considerable impact on their integration and the level of their engagement into on-going social-political processes in the country. It is commonly recognized that media plays a considerable role in the formation of public opinion (Cowen et al., 2013). Media can support ethnic minorities' active engagement and at the same time, contribute to destroying the existing negative stereotypes about these groups.<sup>33</sup>

One of the key components for improving access of ethnic minorities to media is the improvement of regional media standards. Currently, the regions lack independent and strong media which would actively cover interesting topics for the local population. The obligations regarding the content set out in Article 16 of the Law on Broadcasting clearly defines that "programs should reflect ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age and gender diversities of the society". Despite this, the access to television, printed and electronic media is still limited in regions settled by ethnic minorities.

In the third report of European Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities published in 2017, the role of public broadcaster regarding the supply of information to ethnic minorities was assessed positively. The news program "Moambe" on Public Broadcaster broadcasted in Armenian, Azeri and Abkhazian languages. So did other TV companies: Bolnisi TV channel "Bolneli", Ninotsminda TV channel "Parvana", Akhalkalaki TV channel "ATV12" and Zugdidi TV station "Odishi".<sup>34</sup>

Within the scope of the research, in-depth interviews were conducted on Public Broadcaster with the representatives of the State Minister's office for Reconciliation and Civic Equality. Besides, meetings with Tbilisi-based media organizations, as well as Marneuli and Akhalkalaki and civil sector representatives were held.

It is important to mention that the representatives of the above mentioned agency unified the component of media accessibility for ethnic minorities with the first objective of the strategy (equal and full participation in civil and political life). In the previous edition of the strategy, media accessibility was singled out as a separate issue. The unification was based on the consideration that access to media is one of the instruments for the full involvement in political life and it does not need to be singled out. 2017 action plan included many activities and programs. The action plan and report say that from September 2017, a web portal - [www.1tv.ge](http://www.1tv.ge) started functioning under the umbrella of Public Broadcaster in seven languages (Georgian, Abkhazian, Ossetian,

Armenian Azeri, English and Russian). Besides, in 2017 this particular component was concentrated on informing ethnic minority convicts and defendants in penitentiary establishments in their corresponding languages. The report also reads that in penitentiary establishments there are 20 TV channels, among them: Russian (channel 12), English, (channel 2), Turkish (channel 2), Azeri (channel 2), Armenian (channel 1) and Arabic (channel 1). (Report on 2017 Action Plan).

32 „Competing for the votes of minorities in Georgia: 2017 local elections”, political essay, Center for the Studies of Ethnicity and Multiculturalism”(CSEM), Tbilisi, 2018

33 Cowen, Carlyn, Dautil Florian, Mansour Hossam, Moreno Edgar, Siu Emily and Thomassian Vache. 2013. National Minorities and Civic Integration in Georgia. United Nations Association of Georgia

34 Third report of Georgia of European Framework Convention on the protection of national minorities, Article 25, Para. 2 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/third-state-report-georgia-in-georgian-/168075fc5d>

With regards to the implementation and assessment of the strategy, the year 2018 allows us to make thorough observations. It should be noted that the interim objective “1.5” of the action plan is relatively restricted compared to other years. From the list of activities we can learn that only online and print media representatives of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli working in ethnic minority languages were provided the news concerning European Council and NATO. The report on the action plan does not mention anything about the implemented activities in this regard. Only two paragraphs are written about the circulation of newspapers “Varstan” and “Gurjistan”.

The scarcity of activities in the action plan has its own explanation and justification. Namely, Public Broadcaster does not take part in inter-agency commission within the frames of the strategy and is not involved in the elaboration of the action plan. This fact is worth paying attention, since there is no efficient coordination anymore, and the interim Article 1.5 occupies only a formal place in the strategy and action plan. Without active involvement of Public Broadcaster in the process of strategy implementation, planning particular programs and activities becomes actually impossible.

Based on the meeting with the representatives of Public Broadcaster and the obtained information it is possible to make several significant conclusions and observations, namely:

Representatives of Public Broadcaster also confirm that they have stopped participating in the work of inter-agency commission since 2018. Their main argument is that their obligation is reflected in the diverse programs of Channel 1 on ethnic, religious, linguistic, age and gender issues anyway. All the above is defined by the Law of Georgia on Public Broadcaster (Article 16). Besides, their additional argument is that Public Broadcaster follows its own program strategy. It is natural that this argument is far from being reasonable when it comes to dropping out of the state-funded media from the state strategy and it is necessary to make effective steps in order to change this situation.

In the beginning of 2018, the Public Broadcaster created a group called “Diverse Georgia”, whose main objective was to create a media product about ethnic and religious minorities in their languages. Besides, one of their objectives consisted in training the journalists belonging to ethnic or religious minorities. The representative of Channel 1 called it a challenge in the interview. It concerns not only the journalists but technical staff as well. From May 2018 online television of Public Broadcaster started broadcasting in Armenian and Azeri languages.

The existence of critical, local media is critically important for active civil engagement and accessibility to information. During the visits in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, the following major challenges of the local media came to light:

The main sources of financing for local media are donor organizations, while the advertising market is not sufficient and big enough to cover their operational expenses. According to the representatives of local media, international support is often short-term which does not afford the organization an opportunity to develop in the long-term perspective.

According to respondents, process of internetization remains a problem. There is no access to the Internet in all villages and parts; consequently, the citizens are unable to get online information.

The surveyed local media representatives also have questions about Public Broadcasters. Namely, they consider that the quality and translation of the supplied information is rather low. According to the interview, the information on internet platforms is scarce and there are technical drawbacks, plus poor translation. Another important issue is that many local citizens or media representatives are not familiar with Public Broadcaster’s programs, among them “Diverse Georgia”. According to them, the representatives of Channel 1 rarely check, measure and get feedback about programs at a local level.

## **1.6. Ensuring Raising Public Awareness about the Rights of Ethnic Minorities**

The events aiming at raising public awareness about the implementation of European Framework Convention on the “Protection of National Minorities” and on “Regional or Minority Languages” by European Charter were planned to be held in 2017-2018 in Tbilisi and regions. The events were designed for regions compactly settled by minorities, public servants, penitentiary and probation system employees, University and college students.

As monitoring has shown, in 2017, the representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Agriculture held information meetings and discussions about European integration process, free visa regime, free trade agreement with European Union in Samtskhe Javakheti, Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli, in

which the representatives of local self-government, NGOs, media, farmers and entrepreneurs took part. At these meetings the focus was placed on the Framework Convention on Protection of National Minorities. The report also mentions awareness raising campaigns organized by the project “Young European Ambassadors” in minority regions, also thematic school initiated by special mobile groups in Kakheti and Samtskhe-Javakheti villages. As for 2018 implementation plan, we learn that State Minister’s Office organized meetings on ethnic minority rights and the implementation of Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Tbilisi, Ninotsminda, Akhalkalaki, Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Tsalka, Gardabani, Pankisi gorge, Lagodekhi, Sagarejo and Telavi.

## Conclusion

The first strategic goal of the implementation report of 2017-2018 Action Plan of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration had been implemented throughout Georgia. Especially great number of activities in 2017-2018 were carried out in the capital, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. Several activities were organized with the participation of the House of Friendship established at Batumi Cultural Center. According to obtained information, it is possible to make the following conclusions based on individual and group interviews:

It is important to deepen the knowledge of public servants in the field of policy administration in regions or municipalities compactly settled with ethnic minorities. Monitoring has revealed some impediments with regard to receipt and supply of data on the implementation of objectives and goals. It is also important to share practical knowledge and skills with the group of employees whose engagement in the process of annual reporting and data processing has been envisaged.

It is recommended to draw a line between the needs during trainings and information meetings/conferences. The list of almost all meetings and trainings has been provided. Training is a short-term study program, whose aim differs from that of information meeting. It is desirable that the list of trainings reflected the principle of selection of the participants and the training feedback. As well as that, the best practices of training assessment and obtained knowledge should be shared and accessible. It is important to hold trainings based on needs following the analysis, which will be accessible to experts and other interested persons. Consequently, it is recommended that implementation report reflected the summary of the problem. For instance, the number of trainings devoted to gender equality and domestic violence held in the reporting period is rather impressive, although this is only a quantitative indicator and is not related to qualitative indicators, such as statistical data showing the decline in domestic violence; the results of individual initiatives and /or advocacy campaigns conducted by retrained female activists.

Concerning the access to media in the process of strategy implementation, it is important that the respective agencies in charge are guided by concrete qualitative indicators, assess the impact and outcome of on-going projects and activities. Efficient coordination between respective agencies in the course of strategy implementation, as well as active participation in the process of Public Broadcasting and close cooperation with it, is of great importance.

## Recommendations

Interim goal 1.1. Supporting numerically small and vulnerable ethnic minorities - it is recommended to proceed with supporting the policy for numerically small and vulnerable ethnic minorities and offer free state services to overcome existing challenges. **Analysis for the need of recommendation:** It is important to carry out activities for the provision of numerically small and vulnerable ethnic minority language learning programs aiming at training and attracting teachers. It is necessary to exempt the Roma community representatives from any fees for issuing legal documents.

Interim goal 1.2. Gender Mainstreaming – It is recommended that the government representatives proceed working with women more intensely and with this aim enhance the status of a civil servant with adequate qualification is in charge of gender equality in municipalities. **Analysis for the need of recommendation:** in the course of monitoring it was revealed that “Women’s Rooms” and the Councils do not function in a consistent way and on certain occasions they directly rely on financial and program support of international funds and organizations. Women’s equality and their socio - economic empowerment still remains a major challenge.

Interim goal 1.3. Increasing access to state administrative and judicial bodies and mechanisms for ethnic minorities – it is recommended to increase engagement of ethnic minorities in decision making process at the local level and raise awareness about on-going state programs and opportunities. **Analysis for the need of recommendation:**

In the course of monitoring, it was revealed that despite launching the internship program, the problem of employment of ethnic minorities in public structures and their engagement in decision-making process at a local and regional level, still persists. It is important to engage “1+4” program participants in civil life and support their employment. It is desirable to develop special approaches to ethnic minorities while providing employment in order to balance competition.

Interim goal 1.4. – Encouraging the participation of ethnic minorities in political decision-making process - It is recommended to facilitate cooperation with political parties so that party programs adequately reflect minority problems and challenges. **Analysis for the need of recommendation:** given the increased level of populism in politics, national, ethnic and religious minority issues are often considered in the negative context. Both public agencies and civic sector should act proactively to bring forth the most sensitive issues and ensure the engagement of citizens with opposing opinions in public discussions.

Interim goal 1.5. Increasing the access to media for ethnic and religious minorities - It is important that the State Minister’s Office clearly defines the qualitative assessment methods for the activities planned and implemented according to the action plan. As well as that, to the extent practicable, the budget needed for the implementation of objective 1.5 should be set in advance in the process of the development of annual activities within the scope of the strategy. It is important that minority regions are fully provided with the Internet service. Additionally, the inter-agency commission should seek other mechanisms for effective cooperation with Public Broadcaster so that the activities of budget organizations involved in the sphere of supporting civic integration are conducted more efficiently.

#### **Recommendations to Public Broadcaster:**

- Public Broadcaster should continue and broaden coverage of thematic issues concerning the urgent problems of ethnic minorities (among them in the spheres defined by the civic equality and integration strategy action plan);
- Improve and strengthen broadcast in national minority languages and support the promotion of other media products of the Public broadcaster and their accessibility in the regions compactly settled with national minorities;
- Cooperate with ethnic and religious minorities more closely and regularly to get feedback;
- It is desirable that the Public Broadcaster raises awareness of ethnic minorities and increases their engagement in the project “Diverse Georgia”

**Analysis for the need of recommendation:** using media by ethnic minorities and their participation in the creation of any given product has a considerable impact on their integration and the level of engagement in on-going social and political processes in the country. The survey results of ethnic and religious minorities, usually, differ from a common picture, in terms of accessibility. Apart from media pluralism and access to critical media, the main challenge still remains the lack of continuous supply of information.

## **Strategic goal 2: Providing Equal Social and Economic Conditions and Opportunities**

Providing equal social and economic conditions and opportunities is defined as one of the strategic goals in the implementation of the state policy. Ethnic and religious diversity, differences in economic potential according to regions and geographic factors contribute to the increasing trend of social inequality.

The environment and the opportunities of income generation are unequal in such social groups as: women, minorities, IDPs, and so on.

This component of the strategy is based on the Association Agreement between Georgia and Council of Europe signed in 2014, in which one of the important chapters – “Employment, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities” envisages carrying out the policy in the spheres of access to inclusive labor market, social security, social protection, social engagement and antidiscrimination for vulnerable groups of citizens, among them, ethnic minority communities.<sup>35</sup>

Despite carrying out significant initiatives, according to social analysis of the World Bank carried out in 2017<sup>36</sup>, ethnic minorities in Georgia fall under the category of socially excluded groups. According to this research, social exclusion is equaled to regular insecurity that creates barriers, hinders development and access, for instance, to education, employment and income.

Supporting the improvement of social and economic state and ensuring vocational and adult education has been devised as a mechanism for achieving the above strategic goal. Social Service Agency supplied information on the existing demands on the labor market to ethnic minorities via its regional branches. However, this information is of general character and does not specify how many representatives received the information and how many ethnic minority citizens were registered in the information database of labor market. Besides, all municipalities from Kvemo Kartli gave general positive response that ethnic minority representatives were also being employed in the implementation of local infrastructural projects. However, the above information was provided at the request and was not based on any certain statistical data. We should note the expectations of the population in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities regarding new jobs and employment of local population after opening the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars Railway.<sup>37</sup>

Monitoring has revealed that Samtskhe-Javakheti Administration of the State Attorney-Governor are informed about these expectations and, what is more, they actively conduct negotiations with the business sector representatives regarding prioritization of this issue. 2017-2018 reports provide information about the number and total cost of projects implemented in the regions compactly settled with minorities within the scope of the Regional Development Fund of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Municipal Development Fund.

Within the scope of infrastructural projects, motor roads were rehabilitated; irrigation and draining canals were built; external lighting was installed and on-site roads were built, and so on.<sup>38</sup>

It should be noted that all municipalities from Kvemo Kartli provided the document with general information as an attachment that give account of the number of projects and the allocated budget for each municipality.<sup>39</sup>

Thanks to Russian propaganda, local farmers are better informed about agricultural crops introduced in Krasnodar region but they have no information about new technologies that are available in Samtskhe –Javakheti region within the scope of the state programs.

*Expert in agriculture from Samtskhe-Javakheti*

At the meeting in Samtskhe –Javakheti Administration, we learned that during 2018, more than 500 projects were implemented that were worth 160 million GEL in total. However, the Deputy Attorney mentioned the drawbacks such as failing tenders and suspended projects. There is no information about the above drawbacks in state reports. When implementing infrastructural projects, it is important to focus on the opportunities of local workers' short-term employment. Companies that win the state tenders, as a rule, do not employ unqualified workers as was stated by the representatives of Akhalkalaki municipality Sakrebulo. On their words, similar initiatives are not even given any consideration, since the representative of local self-governing bodies consider that it is hard to mobilize unqualified work force locally under the given circumstances for adequate payment terms. In reporting period, apart from infrastructural projects, many other activities took place, such as providing information to citizens about various state programs and opportunities.

For instance, in 2018, according to the report, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable development held 21 information meetings within the project frame "Enterprise Georgia" in all three regions and 873 representatives of ethnic minorities got the necessary information. While during focus group discussions, it was revealed that majority of the surveyed citizens did not have detailed information about the above program. Another important issue for the population is dissemination of statistical information throughout the region, which complicates analysis and identification of data on the implemented projects or initiatives at a municipal level.

Monitoring also revealed the problem of selection of nontarget groups for further dissemination of the

36 World Bank Report on Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Georgia, 2017 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/28317/AUS16604-WP-v2-P156404-PUBLIC-full-report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

37 Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway or Kars-Akhalkalaki-Tbilisi-Baku Railway – the rail link is of regional importance which directly connects Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey.

38 Report on the implementation of 2018 action plan of the state strategy for civic equality and integration, p.37.

39 The letter N 01/1859 of Kvemo Kartli Administration of State Attorney-Governor of November 1, 2019.

information. It is symptomatic that in its recommendations on creating equal social and economic conditions, the report on the implementation of 2018 action plan of the state strategy for civic equality and integration recommends the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture to continue awareness raising campaigns in the regions compactly populated with ethnic minorities. The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of

Agriculture are implementing preferential agro credit program initiated in 2013. It is carried out by the agricultural project management agency.<sup>40</sup> On the one hand it is important to disseminate information about similar program but it is necessary to emphasize its success. On the information provided in the monitoring report, the loans issued in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities amounted to GEL18 000 and GEL 50 000 respectively. It is clear that with such sums, the above program will not favor the farmer's economic growth. The above example speaks for the fact that it is necessary to make assessment of each program, project or any other initiative by analyzing qualitative and objective indicators and not only by the number of information meetings held.

## Conclusion

It was planned to achieve the strategic goal through the implementation of one interim goal- "Supporting social and regional mobility" which included three basic objectives:

2.1.1. Supporting improvement of economic conditions of ethnic minorities; 2.1.2. Supporting social conditions of ethnic minorities; 2.1.3. Ensuring vocational and adult education

Within the scope of objectives 2.1.1. and 2.1.2. the activities were carried out throughout the country. A great number of local infrastructure rehabilitation projects were carried out in 2017 and 2018. Intensive promotional campaigns were conducted on social and economic programs and services in the municipalities with compact minority settlements. However, what specific activities are to be devised or implemented by Social Service Agency to ensure provision of vocational and adult education, still remains vague.

Despite intensive activities in this field, the activities set out in the state strategy document for civic equality and integration and action plans, given their content and scope, do not fully ensure the achievement of the strategic goal. The projects that are coordinated and implemented by international organizations and other donors doubtlessly make the most significant contribution in general, to the accomplishment of strategic plans and projects. However, randomly listed projects and individual initiatives do not look solid in the state reports. Moreover, the monitoring revealed that municipality and regional employees have no information about projects implemented with the support of various organizations. State agency representatives should be informed about the implementation of this or that project and take the recommendations into account as well. Although, it is recommended to place emphasis on the implementation of the planned strategic state program objectives by agencies. It is desirable that the report on the implementation of the state strategy reflected the activities and/or projects initiated and coordinated by state institutions.

## Recommendation

Interim goal 2.1. Supporting social conditions of ethnic minorities – It is recommended to provide local population in ethnic minority regions and municipalities with targeted information about on-going socio-economic state services and programs. It is necessary to present statistics and analysis on the use of socio-economic services and programs at the municipal level. **Analysis for the need of recommendation:** Monitoring has revealed the lack of information about the use of on-going socio-economic services and programs in the country.

### **Strategic goal 3 is to provide access to high quality education to minorities and improve their knowledge of the state language**

The Constitution of Georgia explains that Citizens of Georgia “shall be equal in social, economic, cultural and political life irrespective of their national, ethnic, religious or linguistic belonging” (38.1) and “Everyone shall have the right to receive education and the right to free choice of a form of education (35.1)

Educational issues are regulated by the following laws:

- Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education;
- Law of Georgia on General Education;
- Law of Georgia on Higher Education;
- Law of Georgia on Vocational Education;
- Law of Georgia on State Language; (07.2015).

Georgia is a member of several international conventions for the rights to education of national minorities, among them of European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, in which Articles 6, 12, 13 and 14 pay special attention to the rights to education of minorities. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Convention on the Rights of a Child also deal with educational issues.

After change of government, the policy of the “Georgian Dream” on civic integration and equality of ethnic minorities has not changed. Civic integration is still declared one of the highest priorities for the country. On August 17, 2015, on the government Order N1740, state strategy for civic equality and integration and 2015-2020 action plan were approved. According to the approved plan, one of the strategic goals is “provision of accessible high quality education at all levels and improvement of the state language knowledge”.

The presented part of the report is the analysis of the implementation of 2017-2018 action plan on tolerance and civic integration strategy regarding the issues of education and state language made by National Minority Council under the Public Defender’s Office. Consequently, monitoring results are considered in the context of early/preschool, general, higher and adult education, which is the subject of the third strategic goal.

The aim of the monitoring is to review the implemented activities and their outcome with regard to education on the one hand, and on the other, to analyze their efficiency and compatibility.

#### **3.1 Providing the increased access to preschool education for ethnic minorities**

Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education (N5366-II), passed on June 8, 2016, regulates universal accessibility of preschool education, provides the legal basis for development and quality; defines the authorities, duties, functions and responsibilities of state bodies, municipalities and other legal entities.

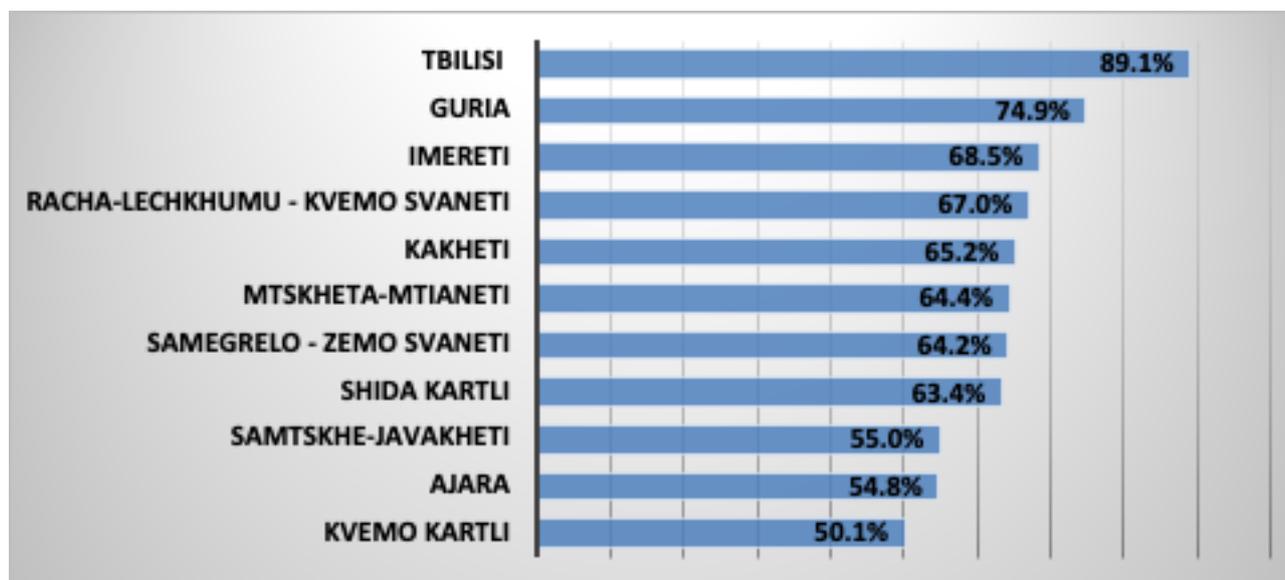
On October 30, 2017, pursuant to the Order N488 of the government of Georgia, state standards on early and preschool education were adopted, which “define the scope of knowledge, skills, values and approaches a child should get in preschool education; as well as that it defines the environmental and educational quality standard for early and preschool educational institutions”. Article 6 “Quality Standard” – “g” states: “Cultural diversity and inclusion – the focus area which provides specifications regarding respect of cultural diversity in preschool educational institutions and equal inclusion of each child, irrespective of different needs, abilities on grounds of culture, ethnicity, religion or other”.

Clause 19, sub-clause “c” on “Inclusive education” reads the following “c) caregiver- pedagogues and caregivers shall promote Georgian language learning in the regions populated by national minorities”. Sub-clause 1d of the same Article explains that “d) caregiver- pedagogues and caregivers learn and use some words in the minority language with the aim of full inclusion of non-Georgian speaking children in the program.” Thus, the standards define that the language for preschool education for all ethnic and age groups is Georgian, irrespective of their native language. Consequently, the existing standard is not adapted to the use of bilingual principle, which would be favorable for ethnic minorities’ integration into Georgian society from early age.

Research into preschool education quality in Georgia conducted by UN Children’s Fund and the National Assessment and Exam Center in 2017 has revealed a number of problems with regard to early and preschool education in the country<sup>41</sup>. According to major findings, relatively low inclusion (69.5%) in Georgia as compared

41 UN Children’s Fund, Research into Quality of Education in Georgia, 2018 <https://www.unicef.org/georgia/media/1041/file/%E1%83%A1%E1%83%99%E1%83%9D%E1%83%9A%E1%83%90%E1%83%9B%E1%83%93>

to the developed European countries, remains a general problem with regard to equal accessibility. As long as decentralized model of preschool education management and funding is still retained, pursuant to the law, preschool education is still under the competence of local self-government. Given the decentralization principles, the differences between municipalities are reflected in the sphere of education as well, both in terms of quality and access to services. Besides, preschool education is less accessible to most vulnerable children living in poor conditions: only 40% of socially disadvantaged children, 33% of children from ethnic minority families and 47% of children in villages go to kindergartens. Due to physical, social or institutional barriers, children with special needs are unable to get preschool education together with their peers (UNICEF, 2018). The fact that ethnic minority children are deprived of the opportunity to get preschool education is proved by the statistics on the access to preschool education in regions, according to which, in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti that are settled by ethnic minorities, together with Adjara, the indicator of accessibility is the lowest among other regions of Georgia.



**Table 1: indicators of 2 - 5 year-old children's inclusion by regions**

The research also places the focus on low qualification of personnel engaged in preschool education, as well as low level of awareness in regions, which is caused on the one hand by language barrier, and on the other, the lack of regular monitoring and assessment mechanisms in some municipalities populated with ethnic minorities. Consequently, even the children who do have access to early and preschool educational institutions, already at that stage get low quality education, which is even more worsened at the next stage.

The Table displays information provided by local self-government and reflects the conditions and the number of children and caregiver- pedagogues in kindergartens and preschool educational centers in municipalities as of 2017-2018. Besides, the Table provides information on the target language taught in kindergartens and preschool institutions. The fact that there is a lack of caregiver- pedagogues for the existing number of children in several municipalities, affects the opportunity of ethnic minority children's development taking into consideration monolingual and bilingual environment on the one hand, and on the other, widens the language gap in multilingual kindergartens, which is caused by monolingual character of education.

Municipality	Year	Kindergarten	12 Kindergartens and 3 alternative preschool education day center			The language taught
Bolnisi	2017	12	3	1321	105	Georgian
Bolnisi	2018	12	3	1313	105	Georgian
Gardabani	2017	25	0	2829	70+389	Georgian
Gardabani	2018	25	0	2850	104+406	Georgian

[%E1%83%94%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98%20%E1%83%92%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%90%E1%83%97%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%20%E1%83%AE%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%E1%83%AE%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%20%E1%83%99%E1%83%95%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%95%E1%83%90.pdf](#)

Dmanisi	2017-2018	9	0	340	16	Georgian Georgian language lessons provided for ethnic minorities on the basis of #1 kindergarten
Tetritskharo	2017	15	0	703	34	Georgian
	2018	16	0	711	35	Georgian
Marneuli	2017	13	6 – 1 Georgian, 5 Azeri .	1962 + 335	56 Caregiver	out of 56 groups: 40-Georgian . 10 Azeri 4-Russ,, 2-Armenian
Marneuli	2018	14	14	2259_+335		Out of 59 groups: 40-Georg. ,13 Azer., 4 Russ., 2-Armenian
Tsalka	2017-2018	1	0	170	10	Georgian
Sagarejo	2017-2018	0	3 Alternative.	125	3	Georgian
Samtskhe-Javakheti	2017	34 <sup>42</sup>				

**Table 2: Distribution of kindergartens in target regions by types, children and caregiver-pedagogues and target languages**

In 2018, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports translated the state standards on early and preschool education and professional standards on caregiver-pedagogues in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages, although according to the same standards, in order to provide high quality education, “No training in teaching the state language has been provided in the regions settled by ethnic minorities”<sup>43</sup>.

For those kindergartens or the groups existing in them that function in the languages of minorities, the lack of resources oriented at teaching and development is identified as one of the major challenges. The research by UN Children’s Fund and Center for Quality Education, the scarcity of such resources is even more emphasized. The desk research carried out on the basis of obtained information shows that the only program which envisages provision of bilingual education and professional training of local teachers and caregivers, plus supplying special resources to target regions - 7 kindergartens in Marneuli, Gardabani, Akhaltsikhe, Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki municipalities, is carried out by an NGO –Center for Civic Integration and Inter-ethnic Relations with the financial support of the OSCE High Commissioner’s Office for Ethnic Minorities. The information provided by kindergartens to municipalities shows that the main teaching resource which non-Georgian speaker groups use is the book published in 2013 by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia within the scope of UN children’s grant program called “Nene, Dudu and Tsiko”. Another publication mentioned is the methodological work “Basko” developed by “Kivitas” in 2014 which is designed within the “preschool readiness program –“Basko”.

## Conclusion

Following the revision of legal documentation on early and preschool education, statistics of institutions and data analysis enable us to make the following conclusions:

Despite many positive changes going on in the country with regard to preschool education, in support of development, quality of education or infrastructural improvement, the existing legislation still does not reflect the language learning needs for ethnic minorities.

Irrespective of the fact that compared to 2016 monitoring results, the number of preschool educational institutions has considerably increased in Georgia in general, as well as target regions, more attention is paid to the allocation of funds for teacher training and resources, provision of methodological materials to kindergartens by the ministry, international and local organizations that are oriented at the development, quality of preschool education and care in the municipalities settled by ethnic minorities still remains a problem according to both, quantitative and qualitative criteria.

In those educational institutions represented by ethnically non-Georgian adolescents in the regions and municipalities with compact minority settlements, they fail to teach the state language due to the lack of human resources equipped with relevant knowledge and teaching materials and methods oriented at the developing of

42 Data for Samtkhe-Javakheti kindergartens by the municipalities and language of functioning isn’t provided

43 Official response of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports

the second language. It is also problematic to create the environment oriented at retaining and development of the native language.

The list of trainings provided by municipalities includes fragmented information about inclusive education, diverse management methods, strategic issues and topics. Such trainings are mainly conducted by international or local non-governmental organizations in target kindergartens.

Consequently, there is a lack of qualified professionals needed for the introduction of language policy at preschool education level oriented at integration.

According to the information, special resources and materials oriented at bilingual teaching, reflecting multicultural aspects and diversity are either hardly available or do not exist at all.

### 3.2. Increasing access to quality general education, both in state and native languages of minorities

In 2018, out of 2085 public schools of Georgia, 208 public schools, i.e. 10% of all schools are non-Georgian language schools. The Table below presents the number of schools by target languages taught:

Schools	
1. Azerbaijani language schools	80
2. Russian language schools	11
3. Armenian language schools	117
Total	208

**Table 2. Number of non-Georgian language schools by target languages taught**

Apart from 208 non-Georgian public schools there are non-Georgian sectors functioning at public schools in Georgia in Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. There are 83 sectors in all. The Table below presents redistribution of sectors by target languages taught;

Azerbaijani, Russian	2
Azerbaijani, Armenian	2
Russian, Armenian	1
Georgian, Azerbaijani	33
Georgian, Azerbaijani, Russian	1
Georgian, Russian	33
Georgian, Russian, Armenian	1
Georgian, Armenian	10
Total	83

**Table 3. Number of non-Georgian language sectors by target languages taught:**

According to the type of settlement.

The Table below shows the location of schools by languages and sectors in different types of settlements:

Language of instruction	Settlement	Village	City	Total
Azerbaijani		73	7	80
Azerbaijani, Russian		2		2
Azerbaijani, Armenian		2		2
Russian		5	6	11

Russian, Armenian		1		1
Armenian		108	9	117
Georgian, Azerbaijani		31	2	33
Georgian, Azerbaijani, Russian			1	1
Georgian, Russian	1	4	28	33
Georgian, Russian, Armenian			1	1
Georgian, Armenian		6	4	10
Total	1	232	58	291

**Table 4. Non-Georgian language schools by settlement types**

The Table clearly shows that the majority of non-Georgian language schools and sectors are located in villages (79.7%) and only 19.9% is located in urban settlements. The picture is even more dissimilar regarding the locations of Armenian and Azerbaijani schools. More than 90% of Azerbaijani language schools and 83.9% of Armenian language schools located in villages and highland areas. The type of location in this case plays the greatest role and is to be taken into account while policy planning and implementation.

The number of pupils in non-Georgian language schools and sectors equals to 51 737, out of whom 49,2% are the pupils of Azerbaijani language schools and sectors, 25,0% of pupils belong to Russian language schools and sectors and 25,8% - to Armenian language schools and sectors. The total number of pupils in public schools in Georgia is 523 281. **School pupils** –the number of pupils out of total number of non-Georgian pupils, as well as the number of schools is 10%.

The Table below shows the number of pupils and percentage by target languages taught:

Target language	Number of pupils	Percentage
Georgian language	471 490	90,1 %
Armenian language	13351	2,55 %
Azerbaijani language	25494	4,87%
Russian language	12946	2,47 %
Total	523 281	100 %

**Table 5. Number of pupils in public schools by target languages taught**

This information is important to analyze the on-going process and what part of pupils out of total number gets quality education that is covered by the country's target policy.

2018-2024 national curriculum was approved in 2016 (primary level) on the Order №40/m of the Minister of Education and Science. The new national curriculum for the basic level has also been approved, which will be introduced from 2019-2020. The new curriculum which envisaged classification coding of textbooks and printing was delayed and consequently, it only became possible to provide the primary schools (I-VI grades) with the relevant textbooks with classification code.

Article 8 has been added to national curriculum. Language learning 1 in non-Georgian schools/sectors –clause 3. If pupils from national minority families study in Georgian language/sector schools, the school is authorized to offer them the same amount of teaching hours in Native Language or different from those provided in non-Georgian school/ sector allocated for the subject "National Minority Language". The group can be made up of pupils from one or several classes and their number should be minimum 10. In case of introduction of the above subject, the information should be reflected in school curriculum.

The fourth curriculum was introduced and has been implemented in Georgia since 2018, which implies new approaches and visions in schools within the frame of the "Program for Supporting General Education Reform". In the concept document, which is uploaded on the official webpage of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport we can read the following: "The main instruments of introduction were textbooks with classification code, guidances and centralized trainings. Within the scope of the program, the main focus is shifted to the support of on-going processes in schools".

Actually, in the period when Georgian language schools are shifting from the third generation national curriculum of 2014-2016 to a new type of curriculum, non-Georgian schools practically failed to cover 2014-2016 curriculum due to the lack of relevant resources, namely, the textbooks, which, according to the concept of the ministry regarding the introduction of a curriculum, is thought to be one of the major tools. In the process of introduction of the new Curriculum, from 2017, Georgian schools still continue functioning without new textbooks, as the only teaching resource that they can access are the textbooks printed with classification code assigned in 2011.

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Order N 28/n of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated February 16, 2017 "On Approving the classification code of Textbooks/Series of General Education Institutions," The textbook/series that gets the best review and has been awarded classification code in each subject may be translated into Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages for non-Georgian school /sector pupils/teachers".

In order to provide textbooks for I-VI grades to non-Georgian school/sector pupils/ teachers, with classification code, on the Order N 28/n of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of February 16, 2017 "On Approval of the classification codes of Textbooks/Series of General Education Institutions", clause "a" of Article 14, clause 1 of Article 15, subclause "h" of clause 2 of Article 20, as well as on the Order N443 of May 15, 2018 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia "On the Rules and Terms of Drawing up License Agreement", clause 1 of Article 5, (LEPL) Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency was assigned to take necessary measures regarding the translation of textbooks/series.

New national curriculum in I-VI grades in non-Georgian schools should be introduced from 2019-2020 academic year. Translation of the textbooks which got the highest points in classification codes competition started in 2018 into Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages. However, after checking their authenticity, a number of drawbacks were revealed. For this reason, the Ministry took a decision to recheck the authenticity of the translation. As of 2019, the identified drawbacks were not fully eliminated; consequently, schools continue using old textbooks.

As for basic and secondary level textbooks, the textbooks that had been awarded classification code in 2011 were distributed in schools in 2017, however, on the information provided by schools, we can see problems of technical and logistical character, which impeded the delivery of necessary number of books from resource centers to schools. Reprinted textbooks awarded classification code in 2011 are not still available to this day.

### Non-Georgian school teachers

Azerbaijani language school teachers make up 43% of total number of non-Georgian school teachers, Armenian language teachers - 37,8% and 19,2% are Russian language school teachers.

Target language	Female	Male	Total
Azerbaijani	2332	1057	3389
Armenian	2509	470	2979
Russian	1374	143	1517
Total	6215	1670	7885

**Table 6: Number of teachers by target language and gender**

In Georgia, the majority of non-Georgian language schools are located in the regions compactly populated with ethnic minorities, such as Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti. In all three regions the total number of teachers in non-Georgian language schools is 6818. Distribution of teachers by regions looks as follows:

Region	Number
Kvemo Kartli	3830
Samtskhe-Javakheti	2571
Kakheti	417
Total	6818

**Table 7: Distribution of non-Georgian language school teachers by regions**

The Table below presents the detailed information on age structure in non-Georgian language schools by target languages

Target language	Number	Pension age	Proportion of pensioners %
Georgia	67344	13525	20%
Azerbaijani language	3389	1179	34.8%
Armenian language	2979	604	20.3%
Russian language	1517	438	28.9%

**Table 8. Age structure in non-Georgian language schools by target languages**

The Table clearly shows that the proportion of the aged teachers in Azerbaijani and Russian language schools is high. Total number of teachers in Azerbaijani language schools their proportion is 34,8%, and in Russian language schools – 28,9%. It means that this indicator is much higher than the existing data throughout Georgia (total number of teachers of retirement age make up 20%, which is high. If we analyze the number of teachers above 50 years, we will see that 55% of non-Georgian school teachers are above 50 (in Azerbaijani language schools this indicator is 63%). If expressed in figures, this indicator equals to 4331 teachers and it is necessary to find replacement for them in coming years.

Teachers' qualification and their engagement in the scheme of professional and career development fall under four categories of teachers, out of which, the lowest category is a practicing teacher, which is a diminishing category and absolute majority of non-Georgian school teachers belong to it. If these teachers are unable to enhance the category, their replacement will become an issue on the agenda. On the hand, the fact that the examination for proving competences in general professional skills is still challengeable for ethnic minority teachers. In fact even those teachers who passed the examination in subject competences still aren't able to enhance their professional status due to insufficient knowledge of the target language.

	Not identified	Mentor	Practicing	Senior	Lead	
Georgian	2.9%	0.1%	52.9%	43.3%	0.8%	48296
Azerbaijani	4.9%	0.0%	90.2%	4.6%	0.2%	2152
Armenian	4.8%	0.0%	89.4%	5.8%	0.0%	2700
Russian	8.7%	0.0%	74.1%	16.9%	0.3%	355
Sectors	3.6%	0.0%	66.6%	29.3%	0.5%	3925

**Table 9: Distribution of teachers by categories in target languages**

Within the same context it is interesting to look at the distribution of teachers by categories. The Table below provides the distribution of teachers in non-Georgian language schools according to their status in details. It becomes clear from the Table that the number of teachers without a status and the number of practicing teachers fluctuates between 78 and 98% in different regions.

Region	Mentor	Lead	Senior	Practicing	Without status
Aspindza	0%	0%	26%	70%	4%
Akhalkalaki	0%	0%	1.70%	95%	3.30%
Akhaltzikhe	0%	0%	12.80%	84.50%	2.70%
Bolnisi	0%	0.10%	3.50%	93.50%	2.90%
Gardabani	0.15%	0.15%	9.40%	85.30%	5%
Dmanisi	0%	0%	3.00%	90.70%	6.30%
Tetritskharo	0%	0%	1.50%	95.50%	3%
Marneuli	0%	0.11%	4.00%	92%	3.89%
Ninotsminda	0%	0%	4.60%	91.80%	3.60%

Tsalka	0%	0%	3.50%	88.30%	8.20%
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**Table 10: Distribution of teachers in non-Georgian language schools according to their status**

In conclusion, it can be said that in non-Georgian language schools, given the teachers' age, as well as their qualification and the knowledge of the state language, their replacement by new generation of teachers is put on the agenda. However, it needs serious consideration to see how much it is worth to address this problem, given the existing demand on labor market, as well as the possibility of supplying with qualified professional teachers.

### Distribution of teachers in non-Georgian language schools and sectors

As we have already mentioned, teachers' distribution analysis clearly shows the differences in the educational level and its relevance existing in Georgian and non-Georgian language schools and sectors. The Table below shows the differences according to higher education level of teachers in schools with Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian language sectors. Despite the generally existing challenges in the country regarding teachers' education and relevance, given the school education objectives, differences at the highest level of teachers' education are clearly seen according to teaching target languages in schools. The Table shows that the highest level of education of more than 8% of employed teachers in Armenian language schools is full general education, and 14% of teachers have professional education. Besides, the highest level of education of teachers is not indicated in about 1% of cases. In total, more than a fifth of teachers in Armenian language schools do not have higher education.

Compared to Georgian language schools, distribution of teachers with professional and full general education is quite high. The differences in the highest level of education of teachers that are revealed according to target languages in different schools, once again point to the challenges and the urgent need to attract new teachers.

It is interesting and important to consider and analyze the programs implemented by the state in terms of provision the non-Georgian language schools with teachers in this context.

Teacher's education background	Not specified	Bachelor or equal academic degree	Master or equal academic degree	Doctor or equal academic degree	Vocational education	Secondary Education
Language of instruction						
Azerbaijani	2.4%	23.3%	58.8%	0.1%	11.7%	3.6%
Armenian	0.9%	31.4%	44.8%	0.0%	14.4%	8.4%
Georgian	0.6%	14.7%	76.8%	0.5%	6.1%	1.3%
Russian	3.7%	20.0%	64.8%	0.3%	7.6%	3.7%
Sectors	0.7%	16.7%	71.7%	0.5%	8.3%	2.1%

**Table 11: Teachers' distribution in Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian language/ sector schools by the highest level of education**

In 2018, within the Program of Introduction and Development of Standards of National Center for Teachers' Professional Development (LEPL), an educational program was developed for Native Language and Literature teachers of non-Georgian language schools. The program consists of two modules – a training module "Methodology on teaching Native Language and Literature in non-Georgian language (Azerbaijani, Russian, Armenian) schools/sectors which awards 1,5 credits and provides 20 contact hours. Consequently, the training module "Methodology on teaching Native Language and Literature in non-Georgian language (Azerbaijani, Russian, Armenian) schools/sectors with relevant training materials and presentations has been translated into Azerbaijani and Armenian languages and the teacher trainers of respective languages have been selected. However, the training of about 2000 teachers according to these modules had never taken place by 2019. As of 2019, the second module is in the process of development.

Professional training of non-Georgian language school principals and teachers was implemented by Millennium

Challenge Fund project Compact, with financial support of Millennium Challenge Corporation in 2017-2018.

Within the scope of “Leadership Academy” 1 and 2, three modules of Leadership Academy 1 (in total 40 contact hours) and five modules of Leadership Academy 2 (in total 64 contact hours) and accompanying training materials were translated into Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian languages. Consequently, non-Georgian language school principals and school facilitators received the trainings. The trainings covered 80% of the total number of schools. At the second stage, the number of invited trainees from Azerbaijani and Russian language schools was 81. It is noteworthy that despite the great efforts and resources invested in translation of the Leadership Academy Modules and conducting training sessions, the proportion of trainee school principals is much lower than that of Georgian language schools, given that 93% of Georgian language school principals took part in “Leadership Academy” trainings.

The program Compact also embraced basic and secondary level STEM subjects of non-Georgian language schools in the fields of Geography and English Language. In this case too, out of invited 2091 teachers, only 1547 underwent the training, which equals to 74% of the total number. As for Georgian language teachers, this indicator is 82%.

While great efforts have been made for the improvement of teaching STEM subjects, considerable resources have been developed and teachers have been reached out countrywide, it is less than a quarter of non-Georgian language school teachers who receive professional training, which, without doubt, seriously deteriorates the quality of teaching in non-Georgian schools.

### Teaching Georgian as a second language

From 2016, the Center has been implementing professional development program for non-Georgian language school teachers which unites the programs implemented in previous years by the Ministry of Education and Science – “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” (2009-2015) and “Georgian Language for Future Success” (2011-2015), whose aim was to provide state language teaching to ethnic minorities living in Georgia and support civic integration.

The aim of the program is to support non-Georgian language school / sector teachers’ professional development and improvement of teaching / learning quality. According to the data on the distribution of school facilitators by region, 4 participants were sent to Kakheti, 27 to Samtskhe-Javakheti and 47 to Kvemo Kartli. The Table below presents the distribution of school facilitators in percentage, which clearly shows that the largest proportion of participants is in Kvemo Kartli schools, which might be due to challenges identified by schools, more friendly and open school environment for facilitators and the need for new teachers.

Municipality	Number of schools covered	Number of participants	Consultant-teachers	Facilitators	Bilingual teachers
Akhalkalaki	24	32	17	9	6
Akhaltzikhe	12	14	1	9	4
Akhmeta	1	2	0	2	0
Bolnisi	19	35	15	11	9
Gardabani	15	30	10	14	6
Dedoplistskharo	1	1	0	1	0
Dmanisi	4	5	3	2	0
Lagodekhi	2	3	0	2	1
Sagaredjo	4	8	4	1	3
Tsalka	8	11	6	2	3
Ninotsminda	23	35	13	5	17
Marneuli	62	107	52	27	28
Total	175	283	121	85	77

**Table 12: Distribution of the assigned teachers by regions**

Despite the fact that there is a tangible shortage of qualified personnel in non-Georgian language school, which is a serious problem and that majority of facilitators are teachers by profession, they are not yet considered the part of professional development scheme, they do not have any status and consequently, to get the position of a teacher in a school, they mostly depend on the school policy. As they have mentioned in focus groups, they can stay in the role of a facilitator for several years, they cannot enjoy the benefits that teachers have. On the information of facilitators, they do not know whether their work agreement will be extended for the next academic year, they cannot take a vacation or maternity leave and their engagement in teaching and learning activities entirely depends on the school policy, the goodwill of school principal, which in a number of cases depends on competitors' vision and consequently, complicates facilitator's full participation in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, they develop the feeling of instability. Despite the fact that the majority of facilitators who do not have the relevant University education to obtain the status of a senior teachers, continue studying within the so called 60 credit programs and are willing to be employed in a school, given the severe shortage of teachers, they are not still included in the scheme. Consequently, in order to keep them in the system and ensure their professional development, it is necessary to promptly award them the status in order to create firm guarantees for keeping them in schools.

As for consultant teachers, apart from the teaching process, their responsibility is to ensure provision of state language learning courses for non-Georgian speaking teachers. On the information provided by the National Center for Teachers' Professional Development, in 2017, 514 non-Georgian teachers did the course, however, during the year their number decreased to 460. The fact that non-Georgian teachers quit the courses of learning and improving the state language in their schools, especially that language learning does not require any additional efforts regarding travelling to work or any other financial expenses, it indicates that teachers do not see any need for learning the state language, despite the state policy, in terms of further prospects of their employment. We can assume that the teachers analyze the existing challenge in the country regarding the need of new teachers and consequently, they do not see the need for professional development for functioning in the competitive environment. If we also take into consideration that most teachers were registered for A+ level course, we can speak about their poor command of the state language necessary for their involvement in bilingual teaching, as well as participation in the professional development processes implemented by state.

### **Teaching Georgian as a second language**

On 2017-2018 data, in non-Georgian schools there are 1221 teachers who teach Georgian as a second language. Among them are 121 consultant teachers assigned by the Program, supporting non-Georgian Language Schools. The studies carried out in previous years prove that the locally spoken Georgian language, as language competence of a teacher teaching Georgian as a second language and teachers' professional level is not sufficient for quality teaching. According to 2017-2018 data provided by the Educational Management Information System, out of teachers who teach Georgian as a second language, 885 are practicing teachers, 37 do not have status, 296 are senior teachers and 4 are lead teachers. Taking into consideration that the teachers assigned by the program have senior or lead teacher's status, it turns out that over 72% of teachers have the status of a practicing teacher.

On the information provided by the National Center for Teachers' Professional Development, a special long-term course on teaching methodology of Georgian as a second language in non-Georgian language schools was planned and conducted. The first module of the course – Reading Comprehension was done by 303 teachers from target schools, and 216 teachers did the second module – Listening Comprehension and Speaking. Taking into account that staff rotation is a serious challenge in general, especially in the case of Georgian Language teachers and also considering the 2014 research conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science, according to which, 340 teachers out of local ones teaching Georgian as a second language did not know the state language properly while teaching this subject in the school, it becomes evident that the training courses organized by the National Center for Teachers' Professional Development in teaching methodology for 519 teachers is not sufficient and cannot solve the problem of quality teaching of state language in non-Georgian language schools.

In 2018, the training on the prevention of bullying and encouraging tolerance, as well as gender equality issues was held for subject teachers and classroom teachers of non-Georgian language schools, which was attended by 6142 pedagogues.

The same year was prepared the supplementary resource for teachers on gender mainstreaming and were held target meetings to promote introduction of the above mentioned resource, which was provided to 140 teachers.

At the same time, in cooperation with the Human Rights Education Center training of trainers on gender equality was held, in which 15 teacher-trainers took part.

### Teaching numerically small national minorities in schools

According to the information provided by the National Center for Teachers' Professional Development, within the scope of its program "Providing Support to Non-Georgian Language Schools", with the aim to improve the knowledge and skills for working in multicultural and diverse environment of non-Georgian language schools and teaching minority languages in Georgian language schools, professional standards of teachers (Assyrian, Ossetian, Udi, Kurmanji, Chechen, Avar) were devised and approved; also professional standard for teaching Native Language and Literature of ethnic minorities were devised (I-VI grades and VII –XII grades) .

Pupils, their engagement and academic performance in non-Georgian language schools as of 2018. Total number of pupils in monolingual schools is 33052, and in schools with other language sectors – 51483. The Table below provides more detailed information about the distribution of pupils by target languages and sectors:

Target language	Number
Azerbaijani	15493
Azerbaijani, Russian	326
Azerbaijani, Armenian	146
Russian	4672
Russian, Armenian	11
Armenian	12887
Georgian, Azerbaijani	14002
Georgian, Azerbaijani , Russian	1337
Georgian, Russian	31874
Georgian, Russian, Armenian	697
Georgian, Armenian	3090

**Table13: Number of pupils by target languages**

The statistics seems interesting, as in recent years there has been an apparent trend of pupils' mobility from non-Georgian language schools to Georgian language schools. According to the information of the Educational Management Information System, in 2017-2019, 791 pupils in total moved from schools and sectors, where target language was other than Georgian. Below see the data on target language and grades:

Target language / grade	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	Total
Azerbaijani	69	51	57	45	43	26	16	20	13	4	1	345
Russian	60	50	40	44	37	24	27	37	60	27	11	417
Armenian	7	2	2	1	6	2	3	1	3	2		29
Total	136	103	99	90	86	52	46	58	76	33	12	791

**Table 14: Indicator of pupils' mobility by schools and grades**

The data clearly show that the mobility indicator is especially high from Russian language schools and this process is taking place in all municipalities, all over Georgia. Besides the dynamics of mobility is higher in primary grades and then it increases in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Although the results of school graduation exams in Russian schools have been better in many years than those in Georgian schools, the main reason for quitting Russian schools may be the existing political situation, however, at the same time, the increased indicator in VIII-XI grades can be due to the changes initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science, in the "provision on the rule of conducting national exams and grant distribution" adopted on November 17, 2017, according to which, the exams in selected subjects at national entrance exams cannot be taken in Russian language, which puts Russian school graduates at a disadvantage.

The indicator of transfer in Georgian schools is high in lower grades and decreases in upper grades in Azerbaijani

language schools, which without doubt is conditioned by high motivation of receiving education in Georgian language, which on the one hand ensures better quality of education and hence, better future prospects, and on the other, it best serves the integration in Georgian society. School mobility indicator is not high in the case of Armenian language schools, which, presumably is due to dissimilar views of Armenian ethnic groups as well as the lack of access to Georgian language schools.

In this context, it is noteworthy to consider Article 8 on Language education added to the national curriculum by the Ministry of Education and Science. Language education 1. in non-Georgian language schools/sectors – clause 3. “ If the pupils from national minority families study in Georgian language school/sector, the school shall be authorized to offer them the same or different teaching hours to study Native Language, than is provided in non-Georgian language school/sector timetable for the subject “National Minority Language”. To study this subject, it is necessary to make up a group of minimum 10 pupils from one or several classes. The introduction of the above subject must be reflected in the school curriculum”. The initiative could be considered positive, as it supports more intensive learning of the native language by ethnic minority pupils, but only under the circumstances, if the children of ethnic minorities had a choice- whether to receive education in ethnic minority language schools, where they would have an alternative opportunity to get bilingual and high quality education, which means maintaining native language and ensuring perfect knowledge of the state language. Otherwise, transfer of Azerbaijani language speaking pupils to Georgian schools, when they have poor or no knowledge of the state language and in frequent cases cannot get any help from their families or community in learning the language, this alternative will not prove right for getting quality education.

Teachers of Georgian language schools speak about the above, where the number of pupils transferred is high. They speak about pupils’ poor academic performance, which is caused by insufficient knowledge of the language, also about impeding other pupils’ progress, as the attention is concentrated on classmates, and the lack of teachers’ professionalism, knowledge and experience to teach pupils with different language background. In this regard, starting from 2017 till present, the only project on the introduction and improvement of bilingual education has been implemented by an NGO – The Center for Civic Integration and Inter-ethnic Relations with the support of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Within the scope of this project, the primary level pupils in 20 non-Georgian schools are taught by specially developed materials along with carrying out professional teacher trainings.

Ensuring the provision of high quality education in ethnic minority schools is a problem and it is clearly revealed in school leaving final exam results, which is the only instrument for measuring pupils’ academic performance at the national level.

School graduation exams in 2017 were taken by the following number of pupils: in Georgian language schools – 47 063; in Armenian language schools -1512; in Azerbaijani language schools -2057 and in Russian schools -1137. Positive assessments (to get a school graduation certificate) were received by: 34 260 Georgian language school pupils, 866 - Armenian language school pupils, 838- Azerbaijani language school pupils and 889 Russian language school pupils. According to results, in total, 72.79% of pupils in Georgian language schools, 40.73% in Azerbaijanian language schools and 57.27% in Armenian language schools managed to pass the set barrier in all subjects. It is noteworthy that the most pupils, 78.18 %, who successfully passed the examinations were from Russian schools.

In 2018, out of 2043 Azerbaijani language pupils, 1026 received positive assessment in all subjects of school graduation exams, which amounts to 50.24% of the total number. 491 out of 905 Armenian language school pupils (60.63%) got positive assessment in all subjects, and 817 out of 1037 (78.78%) from Russian language schools.

Despite the fact that the school leaving exam results improved considerably from 2017 to 2018 in Azerbaijani and Armenian schools but actually they are far from the results of their peers in Georgian schools, which points to the fact that their subject knowledge is far poorer in these schools.

Statistical data on particular subjects also point to this considerable difference between Georgian language school pupils and ethnic minority school pupils.

Physics	2017			2018		
	Total	Failed	% of fails	Total	Fail	% of fails
Russian language schools	812	114	14.0%	847	88	10.4%
Azerbaijani language schools	1224	427	34.9%	1242	312	25.1%

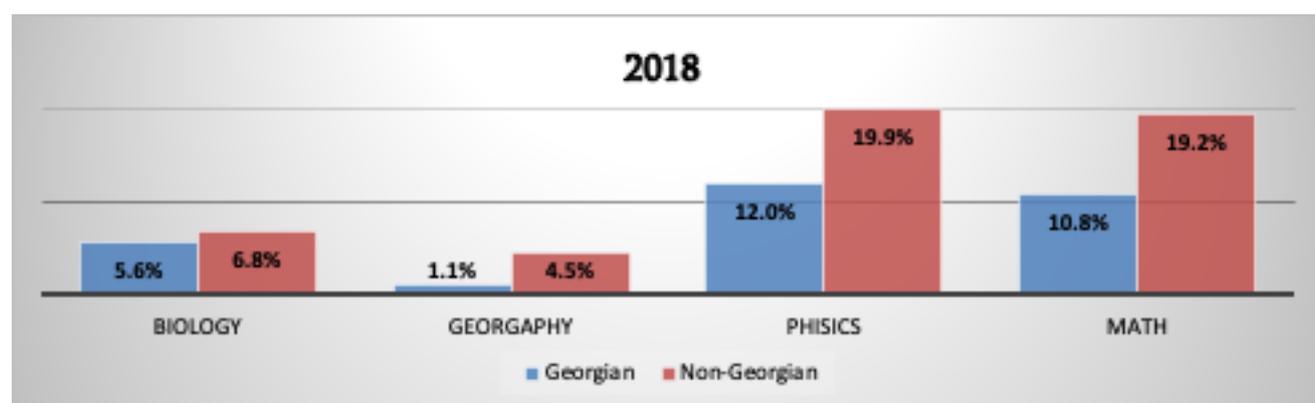
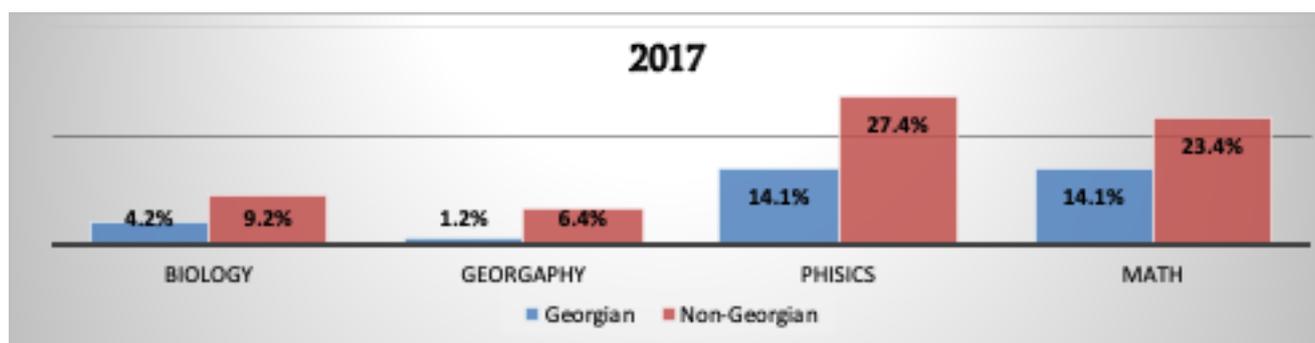
Armenian language schools	925	269	29.1%	943	202	21.4%
Georgian Language schools	35690	5048	14.1%	35449	4240	12.0%

Biology	2017			2018		
	Total	Failed	% of fails	Total	Failed	% of fails
Russian	812	26	3.2%	848	19	2.2%
Azerbaijani	1226	163	13.3%	1245	110	8.8%
Armenian	925	269	29.1%	985	84	8.5%
Georgian	35707	1483	4.2%	35469	1977	5.6%

Mathematics	2017			2018		
	Total	Failed	% of fails	Total	Failed	% of fails
Russian	1033	106	10.3%	927	75	8.1%
Azerbaijani	1226	163	13.3%	1515	330	21.8%
Armenian	1334	332	24.9%	1233	302	24.5%
Georgian	38264	5396	14.1%	38811	4207	10.8%

**Tables 15-17: Results of pupils' performance in school graduation exams by target language schools and years**

In all, the difference between the results of Georgian language and non-Georgian language school graduation exams in all STEM subjects is quite obvious, despite positive results of Russian Language schools.



**Charts 3-4. Pupils' school graduation exam results in STEM subjects in Georgian and non-Georgian language schools**

According to statistics, the common indicator of passing school graduation exams in physics and mathematics is dramatically lower in non-Georgian language schools than in Georgian language schools and this statistics has not improved since previous years.

## Conclusion

Analysis of school education clearly shows that the challenges in non-Georgian language schools in terms of accessibility to quality education, still remain serious and it is necessary to look back at the educational system of non-Georgian schools to make careful analysis of existing statistics and data and share best world practices with the aim of adapting previous experience taking into consideration their context. It is noteworthy that none of the documents requested for the preparation of monitoring report on the action plan, as well as 2017, 2018 and 2019 reports of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport for a six month period, contains concrete information about the integration or strengthening of bilingual education in schools or the outcomes of conducted activities, which might be a signal for starting changes in the vision of non-Georgian school educational system or the sign of having insufficiently clear political vision of the development of non-Georgian schools and might prompt the steps to be taken on the way of guaranteeing high quality of education in these schools.

### 3.3. Providing Access to High Quality Education

#### Preferential policies

The state started implementation of preferential policy with regard to ethnic minorities at the higher level of education in 2005, during the first Unified National Exams, which proved successful at the very beginning stage. The first effective step taken to support access of ethnic minorities to higher education was the change made to the provision of unified national exams, which enabled ethnic minority representative applicants to take general aptitude skills test in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. Besides, within the frames of civic integration of the Ministry of Education, the preparation/ foundation program for unified national exams, which in previous years had been supported by OSCE High Commissioner for Ethnic Minorities in Samtskhe-Javakheti, has expanded since 2008.

Due to the educational reform, which envisaged adding the 12<sup>th</sup> grade in general educational schools, in 2008-2009, Georgian language schools did not have the graduates. This fact was reflected in positive results in entrance exams for Azerbaijanian and even more more positive, for Armenian graduates. Consequently, compared to previous years, about twice as more (out of 113, 46 Armenian and 29 out of 250 Azerbaijanian) graduates became students. 2009 was the first year of the reform for non-Georgian schools and consequently, there were no entrants from non-Georgian schools.

From 2009, on government's decision and based on the experience of previous years, an amendment was made to the law on higher education ((№2078 - 11.01.09, №38), on which basis was determined the quota of students, who, in the first year of University education would do Georgian Language Program (Article 47).

Within the frames of quota allocation, it was defined that "the higher educational institution shall admit students on the basis of general aptitude test results in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Abkhazian and Ossetian languages. The number of students has been determined by National Center for Educational Quality for higher educational institutions. The students' admission will be based on the results of passing general aptitude tests in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Abkhazian and Ossetian languages. The following quotas were allocated: 5-5% for Azerbaijanian and Armenian language students, and 1% for Ossetian and Abkhazian language students (Article 52.51 a-d). The quota system validity term was determined from 2010 through 2019 (90.2.2)

According to the data as of November 2019, Ilya and Samtskhe –Javakheti State Universities obtained a new accreditation, while other University programs were awaiting accreditation procedure. Such administration of accreditation programs impeded the educational process. For instance, on the information of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, accreditation term for Georgian Language program expired and a new accreditation is in the process; consequently, the status of the Georgian Language Program is unclear, which causes the deviation from regulations and impediment of the educational process. Therefore, the indispensable condition for improving of the quality of a program and conducting consistent teaching process is to bring procedures aimed at ensuring quality in line with the program implementation.

Despite the fact that according to changes, all educational institutions that were legal entities under public law were assigned to admit students on the basis of general aptitude test results, non-Georgian students are mainly enrolled exactly in those universities, which provide accredited programs in Georgian Language preparation. At this stage, 11 state universities have accredited programs. These are: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Ilya, Samtskhe-Javakheti State University, Technical University of Georgia, Medical State University of Georgia, Gori University, Batumi Shota Rustaveli University, Akaki Tsereteli State University, Iakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University and Police Academy.

Positive effect of preferential policy, which implies the increased engagement of ethnic minority representatives in higher education of Georgia, was especially remarkable in 2013, when the number of enrolled students reached 890. During the following years, despite a certain drop in numbers, the increasing trend is still maintained.

Georgian Language Preparatory Program		Armenian	Azerbaijani	Total
2010	enrolled	124	175	299
	subsidized			0
2011	enrolled	179	250	429
	subsidized	99	98	197
2012	enrolled	198	386	584
	subsidized	98	93	191
2013	enrolled	186	704	890
	subsidized	91	97	188
2014	enrolled	217	456	673
	subsidized	89	96	185
2015	enrolled	219	522	741
	subsidized	92	94	186
2016	enrolled	300	660	960
	subsidized	95	99	194
2017	enrolled	373	673	1046
	subsidized	95	83	178
2018	enrolled	424	806	1230
	subsidized	93	96	189
2019	enrolled	436	893	1329
	subsidized	93	96	189

**Table 19: Dynamics of enrollment and subsidies in Georgian Language Preparatory Program from the beginning till the current year**

The number of students enrolled since 2016, reached 960, and from 2017 it exceeded 1000. In 2018, as well as in 2019, the number of enrolled students was between 1200+ and 1300+ and is the highest indicator since the day of implementation of the preferential policy.

One Ossetian language speaking applicant and one Abkhazian language speaking applicant were enrolled and subsidized for the 1-year program of Georgian Language in 2017 and 2019 respectively, which is undoubtedly the positive result of preferential policy with regard to equality and integration strategy.

Georgian Language Preparatory Program		Ossetian	Abkhazian
2017	enrolled	1	
	subsidized	1	
2018	enrolled	1	
	subsidized	1	
2019	enrolled	5	1
	subsidized	4	1

**Table 20: 2017-2019 Statistics on the enrollment of Abkhazian and Ossetian language speaking applicants on the Georgian Language One-year Program**

Given the school graduation exam statistics, which points to less competitiveness of non-Georgian language school graduates, it is interesting to look at how many entrants succeeded in passing general aptitude test in their native language.

Status of entrants		Armenian	Azerbaijani	Total
2016	Took exams	424	1112	1536
	Enrolled	300	660	960
	Subsidized	95	99	194
	Proportion of the Enrolled	70.8%	59.4%	62.5%
2017	Took exams	494	1185	1679
	Enrolled	373	673	1046
	Subsidized	95	83	178
	Proportion of the enrolled	75.5%	56.8%	62.3%
2018	Took exams	602	1580	2182
	Enrolled	424	806	1230
	Subsidized	93	96	189
	Proportion of the enrolled	70.4%	51.0%	56.4%

**Table 21: Status of entrants in 2016-2018 by languages**

The information provided in the Table shows that from 2016 till 2018, the number of entrants taking the exam, increased. Parallel to that, the number of the enrolled students changed as well, although the proportion of entrants who succeeded in exams is decreasing. Besides, the dynamics of changes differs between Armenian and Azerbaijani language speaking entrants, which should be paid due attention in the future, especially that Armenian language students' motivation for studying in Georgian universities, despite being more successful, is lower than that of Azerbaijani language entrants.

To see the results of University education it is also important to consider and analyze the results of ethnic minority students after the enrollment on the Training Program in the Georgian Language. According to the information from Universities provided in the report, ethnic minorities studying the course of the Georgian Language show the highest results.

According to the indicators of successful completion of the Training Program in the Georgian Language and proceeding with a bachelor's degree are rather different by universities and point to differences in the vision of the Language Training Program and its functions, also differences in students' competencies, different mechanisms for knowledge assessment and different boundaries for language learning to pursue to bachelor's degree. According to the data of Tbilisi Javakhsivili State University, the difference between the indicators of enrollment on the Program and further studies in 2016-2018 academic years, is only 4 students. In the same years 5-8 students failed to overcome the language competence barriers.

Acad. year	Enrollment	Continued studies	Failed the final exam
2015-2016	400	261	5
2016-2017	300	296	6
2017-2018	300	296	8

**Table 22: Indicators of enrollment on the Georgian Language Training Program and its completion in TSU in 2016-2018 academic years.**

As for Technical University of Georgia, all students succeeded in completion the the Program in 2017-2018, and in 2018-2019 slightly less than 7% of students were not able to continue with 2019-2020 bachelor's program, about 23% failed to succeed in the completion of the program but since students still have one semester ahead to improve their language competencies, it is highly likely that this number will change.

	Enrolled	Completed	Percentage of completion%
2017-2018 Ac. year	159	159	100%
2018-2019 Ac. year	190	159	83.7%
2019-2020 Ac. year	226	175	77.4%

**Table 23: Indicators of enrollment and completion of the Georgian Language Training Program in Technical University of Georgia in 2017-2019 academic years**

We can see a different picture in Ilya State University according to completion results of the Georgian Language Training Program;

Year	2017 – 2019 number of students who failed to pass the threshold level in Georgian Language Program	Numer of students who completed the program	Proportion of students who did not overcome the language barrier
2017	129	50	38.8%
2018	112	40	35.7%
2019	144	93	64.6%
Total:	385	183	47.5%

**Table 23: Indicators of enrollment and completion of the Georgian Language Training Program in Ilya University in 2017-2019**

As we can see from the Table, 38% of students failed to pass the threshold level of language upon the completion of the Georgian Language Training Program at Ilya University in 2017, in 2018, the indicator is over 35%, and in 2019 – 64%. In total, if we look at a three-year dynamics, we can see that about half of the students failed to pass the threshold level of language competence after completion of the program.

Given that by the beginning of the Georgian Language Training Program both Universities admitted the students with the same level of language competence, the poorer results in Ilya University is due to a different scale for language competence required for proceeding with studies at bachelor's degree and in case of insufficiency student gets a marginal point.

Different data on the completion of the Georgian Language Training Program speak for differentiated views of universities and actually affect the approaches, resources and results of teaching Georgian Language, which should be assessed positively, as it will contribute to wider alternatives, develop different approaches in terms of strengthening program efficiency and creating principles of competitiveness.

### **Participation in University life and integration**

Preferential policy implemented for ethnic minority university applicants also implies providing support in the period of enrollment and further studies, both in terms of academic performance and integration in university life. Universities work in this direction with different intensiveness and approaches. The period covering 2017-2018 turned out interesting regarding university initiatives directed at respect of diversity and culture.

While universities are independent legal subjects and autonomously determine the institution's academic and public positioning, visions and values, it is important to study and emphasize the positive practices concerning ethnic minority students. In this regard, the component, supporting the implementation of preferential policy through the USAID funded project PITA, plays a crucial role. Within the frames of the project, youth centers, Ilya University and I. Javakhishvili State Universities create certain centers for ethnic minority students so that they become an integral part of the university.

The activities of youth centers at Tbilisi State University and Ilya University bring ethnic minorities and Georgian students together around the concept of diversity and integration and encourage them to work jointly on different issues such as tolerance, respect of diversity, principles of being active citizens and conduct many other activities like tutorials, thematic schools and clubs.

In 2017, an academic university course together with supplementary learning materials necessary for bachelor program students was developed on "Tolerance and Diversity" by the project "Preparing Georgian Youth for Diversity and Tolerance" implemented by the Center for Civic Integration and Inter-ethnic Relations, which was funded by OSCE High Commissioner's Office for National Minorities. The project was developed in cooperation with 1+4 Program and several other stakeholders from private universities.

A university network was founded within the same project which includes 11 state and 3 private universities

implementing Georgian Language Training Program.

The aim of the network is to encourage diversity in academic and university spaces by carrying out relevant activities, that will be based on coordination and exchange. Within the project scope, in

2018 and 2019, a diversity school was held in Montenegro and Italy whose aim was to deepen links between Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Abkhazian and Ossetian young people, as well as strengthening cooperation through promoting respect for tolerance and diversity. Club "Tolerance" was founded at the Tbilisi State University which plans and coordinates activities based on students' initiatives on encouraging diversity.

Special attention is paid to the familiarization of Georgian students with culture and traditions of ethnic minorities. Also ethnic minority participants of 1+4 program of teaching Georgian as a second language and integration (Azerbaijani and Armenian language speakers) get familiar with and study Georgian cultural diversity, which will encourage Georgian and non-Georgian students' joint participation in each others' cultural and religious events, studying and researching lexical and semantic loanwords and other spheres.

Within the Georgian Language Training program, along with academic program, students carry out extra-curricular work. Academic part of the program includes: "Tolerance in Diverse Society", "Ethnic communities in Georgia", "Georgian Films", "Course in Literature" (apart from Georgian writers, the course includes Saianova and Akhundov), "Language and Intercultural Dialogue", "Media course 1", and "Media course 2". Compulsory subjects in the curriculum are: "Integration 1" and "Integration 2" where students apply the accumulated knowledge to real situation. Extra-curricular activities include trainings, film shows- discussions, lectures and seminars on the topics such as: "Getting Familiar with Azerbaijani Culture", "The first Democratically Elected Muslim Woman Phari-Khanum Sopieva", getting familiar with Assyrian culture - visit of Assyrians to Ilya University and a visit of Ilya University students to village Kanda. "Life and Work of Ibrahim Isphangal", "Famous Armenian Public Figures Living in Georgia", etc.

#### **Graduation from the University, students' employment and support in employment.**

As for the indicators of bachelor's program completion, they also vary from university to university. For instance, according to Ilya University data, the total number of enrolled students from the beginning of bachelor's program is 626, and the number of graduates from the beginning of the program till present is 142. As for the Technical University of Georgia, 1194 have been studying since 2011 until present and 1073 out of them completed the bachelor's course. In Samtskhe-Javakheti the total number of students in 2017-2019 who graduated from the university was 80, and three students continued studies on Master's program.

University education is connected with employment prospects. In the survey "Opportunities and perspectives for ethnic minority students' professional development, career advancement and employment" conducted in 2017, 40% of the surveyed students considered that there should not be any privileges on the labor market for ethnic minorities who have graduated from Georgian university.

However, it is doubtless that support is crucially important in order to assert oneself on the labor market, to develop professional skills and get fully integrated in Georgian society. Supporting employment is important not only for professional development of university graduates, but it also promotes the aspiration to get higher education in ethnic minority communities.

The concept of internship program was developed by the State Minister's Office for Reconciliation and Civic Integration in 2017, which was intended for Georgian Language Training Program beneficiaries (1+4 Program) and the same year the pilot internship program was launched. The initiative was supported by Georgian UN Association Georgia and USAID funded program "Tolerance, Civic Awareness and Integration Program".

There were two pilot programs of internship implemented in 2017 and 2018, which covered students and graduates from bachelor's and master's programs in 65 universities and were carried out in 15 state agencies. The beneficiaries of the internship speak about the important experience, which they gained during 3 to 9 months in different areas. Consequently, internship program is the best example of how to support the implementation of preferential policy and strengthen its impact by means of adding programs and services, which can be achieved by effective coordination.

As for the indicator of university graduation results of ethnic minority students, it varies from university to university.

Sts enrolled					Total	Graduated	program completion indicator%
Academic year	Azerbaijani language		Armenian language				
	Female	Male	Female	Male			
2010-2011	2	13	2	5	22	19	86.36%
2011-2012	5	14	1	6	26	26	100.00%
2012-2013	2	14	0	6	24	24	100.00%
2013-2014	24	122	2	7	155	151	97.42%
2014-2015	12	66	2	15	95	85	89.47%
2015-2016	20	93	2	12	127	113	88.98%
2016-2017	27	126	8	9	170	162	95.29%
2017-2018	21	128	1	9	159	159	100.00%
2018-2019	44	132	2	12	190	159	83.68%
2019-2020	44	160	2	20	226	175	77.43%
Total	201	868	22	101	1194	1073	

**Table 24: Enrollment and graduation indicators of Technical University of Georgia by years**

### Conclusion

The increase of positive impact of Georgian Language Training Program within the frames of preferential policy is quite apparent in terms of both, increasing number of beneficiaries and the increased impact of the Program. However, despite the above, the differences in its vision and perception, as well as its impact on beneficiaries' further education remain a challenge, which is connected with the quality of the Program and its integration in university educational space. The absence of a unified system of language competencies, which would be a good measurement tool for all universities for the assessment of each student's language knowledge level upon the completion, as well as in the beginning and in the course of Program, creates the risks of unequal approaches, perception of students' potential of their further education and consequently puts students in unequal position with regard to proceeding with the next stage of education. Despite the fact that the foundation for the cooperation of universities has been laid, there is still the need for establishing a uniform vision on preferential policy and taking steps for strengthening coordinated actions towards its implementation.

### 3.4. Providing Vocational and Adult Education

#### Vocational Education

On the Order N 533 of the government of Georgia "Unified Strategy of the Development of Education and Science in 2017-2021" which, in its turn, is based on the obligation of the Association Agreement regarding lifelong education and implies the introduction of transparent instruments oriented at qualifications, transparency and recognition resulting from lifelong learning. According to European

Qualifications Framework recommendations, ethnic minorities, together with other vulnerable groups are considered a separate group with special needs, which must be taken into consideration in the process of the development of vocational education system. In this regard, an important step forward is the decision taken in 2016, according to which, representatives of ethnic minorities get an opportunity to undergo vocational testing in their own language.

Consequently, compared to previous years, positive trends regarding the increased participation in non-Georgian language vocational programs are apparent. In the Autumn 2016, 15 applicants passed the vocational test in non-Georgian language and were enrolled in the vocational programs, and in the Spring of 2017, the number of applicants wishing to take a vocational test in Armenian, Russian or Azerbaijani languages equaled to 32. In the Autumn of 2017 the number of applicants reached 76.

In total, in 2017-2018, as a result of successful passing of a vocational test in the vocational Educational Institutions, 119 representatives of ethnic minorities continued studies in 2017, the same year. 38 vocational students were involved in Georgian Language modules and in 2018 their number was 44.

Language of testing	2017 Spring	2017 Autumn	2018 Spring	2018 Autumn	2019 Spring
Azerbaijani		9	7	10	5
Russian	8	18	14	18	18
Armenian	1	3		4	4
Georgian	3807	7093	2547	5097	2778

**Table 18: Number of applicants taken part in vocational testing by languages**

In 2017 the Affiliation of College "AISI" (LEPL), which is in Lagodekhi municipality village Shroma, was rehabilitated and the affiliation admitted students to 2017 Autumn term. Preparatory works for the establishment of a vocational educational institution are being conducted in Marneuli municipality as well. 123 applicants were registered for 2018 Spring and Autumn terms in vocational Training Institutions, where the tests are administered in Russian, Armenian or Azerbaijani languages.

In conclusion, it can be said that considering language needs both, while admission and in the process of education, for the participation of non-Georgian language applicants in vocational training is doubtlessly a positive political step in the educational system, which results in the increase of admissions of non-Georgian language students. Therefore, working in this direction, developing relevant resources and training professionals for teaching Georgian on the basis of vocational institutions are logical and necessary steps, that need to be taken in following years.

### Adult Education

The function and importance of the Georgian language in Georgia are defined by the law of Georgia on Official Language (22.07. 2015). Article 6 – "Guarantees for using official and non-official languages", clause 4 states that "Public servants are obliged to speak the official language". Chapter VIII. "Use of the Official Language in Other Fields"; Article 29 "Rights of consumers to receive information in the official language" states:

1. Consumers may request and receive information in the official language in the manner established by the legislation of Georgia.

2. Services shall not be refused to be provided to a person if he/she does not speak the official language.

Consequently, according to the law of Georgia, the knowledge of the official language not only ensures citizens' integration into the society but its knowledge is obligatory for socio-economic and political engagement.

Given the above, supporting teaching the official language to ethnic minorities is the priority for the state.

Zurab Zhvania Public Administration School (LEPL) was founded in 2005. It is the largest public institution for teaching the state language and is oriented at the development of public servants' skills in different areas and teaching Georgian Language to ethnic minority communities. Parellel to industry-specific courses, Zurab Zhvania Public Administration School conducts official language teaching courses in 10 regional training centers (Dmanisi, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Tsalka, Bolnisi, Marteuli, Gardabani, Lagodekhi, Akhmeta and Sagarejo municipality,village Lambalo) and mobile groups for any interested persons, wishing to learn Georgian language or deepen the knowledge.

The renewed educational programs have been introduced in the school since 2014. Zurab Zhvania Public Administration School (LEPL) teaches the following courses: "Public Management and Administration" and "The State Language Teaching Program".

During 2017 the State Language Teaching Program was delivered in 10 regional Training Centers and mobile groups, which covers 78 towns and villages that are located far from the regional training centers and provide three levels of language competence- A1, A2 and A3:

- A1 Level (Language Key)
- A2 Level (Basics)
- A2+ Level (For Teachers)

- B1 Level (Threshold)
- B1+ Level (Civil Education)
- B1+ Level (Jurisprudence)
- B1+ Level (Infrastructure)
- B1+ Level (Management)
- B1+ Level (Finances and Procurements)

According to the information of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, in 2017, the State Official Language Program had 3247 ethnic minority beneficiaries.

The same year, Public Management and Administration Program was implemented in the following fields:

- Public management and administration;
- State procurement;
- Human Resource management and office administration in public sector;
- Public Financial Management;
- Public Relations and Communication;
- Technical supervision of infrastructural projects;

Public management and administration Program had 89 ethnic minority beneficiaries in 2017.

The same program in 2018 had 307 beneficiaries.

According to the information about the first half of 2019, Public Administration School conducted the following activities:

- Prepared the textbook "Communicative Georgian Language" within the scope of State Language Teaching Program
- In 10 regional training centers, located in three regions of Georgia: Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti, 986 representatives of national minorities enrolled in 2018(72 groups) and in 2019 -371 representatives (28 groups) enrolled in 2019 completed the State Language Training Program.
- 117 groups were made up, out of them 89 – were mobile groups in 4 towns, 37 villages and 4 groups in a military base. In total, 1535 ethnic minority representatives were enrolled;
- Upon the completion of the State Language training program, final exams (testing- interviews) were held in 10 regional training centers. The examiners were Zurab Zhvania Public Administration School representatives;
- Monitoring of the educational process was conducted in all 10 regional training centers and mobile groups;
- At present, 1190 representatives of ethnic minorities are doing the State Language Training Program in 10 regional centers;
- State Language Training Program was implemented in field training detachments of the military forces for the representatives of national minorities serving in compulsory military service; 252 national minority recruits in Algeti, Vaziani, Osiauri and Khtsisi military bases took A1 level language course;
- With the aim of familiarizing with the changes in the State Language Training Program, a two-day teacher training and teachers' assessment workshop was held in Kutaisi in which 60 teachers and 10 administrators took part;

- Zhvania school organized the conference in Tbilisi – “The State Official Language for Integration and the Development of Human Capital”
- Under the scope of the conference, a four-way memorandum on cooperation was signed between Zurab Zhvania Public Administration School, State Minister’s Office, State Language Department and National Library of the Parliament of Georgia. The aim of the memorandum is to implement educational and information projects to promote state language among ethnic minorities;
- A panel picture was put up on the wall of Akhalkalaki Culture house to mark the celebration of the Day of Native Language on the initiative of Zhvania School and with the support of the city council of Akhalkalaki.
- The School took part in the event dedicated to the Independence Day. The textbooks, audio discs “Learn Georgian with audio lessons”, were displayed in Veriko Anjaparidze square in Kutaisi. The winners of calligraphy competition held master classes.
- 349 persons used the Public Management and Administration Program, among them were 30 representatives of ethnic minorities.
- Training courses entitled “Operating and Maintenance of Georgian Public Schools” were held. 283 people were trained, among them, 19 were the representatives of national minorities;
- 66 public servants were trained by basic IT program, among them 11 were the representatives of national minorities;

The Table below shows the statistical data on the participation of ethnic minorities in State Language Training Program in 2017-2019 conducted at regional and municipal levels.

State Language Training Program in 2017-2019						
Number of participants						
Nº	Region	Regional Center/location	2017	2018	2019	total
1	Samtskhe -Javakheti	Akhalkalaki	788	877	400	2065
2		Ninotsminda	404	406	318	1128
3		Akhaltzikhe	164	210	116	490
4	Kvemo Kartli	Bolnisi	165	126	77	368
5		Gardabani	238	267	41	546
6		Dmanisi	205	192	118	515
7		Marneuli	534	544	361	1439
8		Tsalka	60	54	69	183
9	Kakheti	Sagarejo	171	109	45	325
10		Lagodekhi	326	152	185	663
11		Akhmeta	52	25	75	152
Kutaisi			40	59	10	109
Khtsisi(Military base)				138	35	173
Osiauri (Military base)				90	109	199
Algeti (Military base)				71	106	177
Vaziani (Military base)					38	38
Kojori (Military base)					125	125
Orkhevi (Military base)					33	33
Tbilisi			100	80	26	206
Tbilisi (WV- project)					110	110
Total			3247	3400	2397	9044

**Table 25: Number of participants of State Language Training Program in 2017-2019**

The statistics shows the number of beneficiaries having done the the state language program. However, despite our request to provide the information about the language competence levels of participants, the mechanisms of measuring results, the cases of abstention of one and the same person from getting registered for the same course, monitoring results on the use of the obtained knowledge and other, the information provided by agencies does not go beyond quantitative and geographic data. It also includes general information about division of the course by levels. Ethnic minority representatives have been taking the state language training course throughout years which has been funded from the budget but despite it, no actual results can be observed. The positive accompanying interim and final results that the beneficiaries have achieved, have not been described. No clear definition of language competence levels exists, that would measure the improvement of language knowledge and better reflect the efforts made by the state and cost efficiency. There are no follow-up monitoring and assessment systems and indicators that would measure the difference after attending the course. For instance, improvement in conducting paperwork in official language in the regions compactly settled by ethnic minorities; statistics on employment of citizens after having learned Georgian language; career advancement; better provision and use of services; active participation in public and political life; increase in the number of teachers taking exams in State Language Training and getting better results. Consequently, the statistics on State language training courses run from year to year and the number of participants casts doubts on the efficiency and relevance of approaches, as well as reasonability of spending the state budget.

## Recommendations

The activities carried out in 2017-2019 for the implementation of state strategic goals and civic equality and 2015-2020 action plan with the aim of improving education and state language knowledge have been analyzed. The monitoring report describes the achieved results and existing challenges in details.

- It is important that the annual report of the action plan is not based only on quantitative data and statistics, but rather provides in-depth analysis of implemented activities and achieved results, where each activity and outcome will be expressed in relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators. Apart from provision of information about the quantitative data on the implemented work, this will allow to make relevant conclusions on the efficiency of implementation of action plan through analyzing the existing context and qualitative data.
- It is important that the plan and respective activities directed at improvement of education and state language knowledge, are more oriented at active social engagement of ethnic Georgians, since the dominant group is a key part in achieving common results and in the integration process.

### 3.1 Increasing Access to Pre-school Education for Representatives of Ethnic Minorities

- It is important to conduct coordinated activities in the regions compactly settled with ethnic minority groups, as it would make the work more efficient and goal oriented with regard to provision of access to early and preschool education and planning language policy;
- It is important to provide access to early educational centers in accordance to the existing demands and the statistical data on the number of preschool children. Preschool education plays a key role in the further development of a child.
- It is desirable to provide additional indicators in the quality standard part of early and preschool care and educational state standards for the implementation of bilingual/multilingual educational program in preschool educational institutions.
- It is important to carry out a detailed study of kindergartens and preschool establishments in compact settlements of ethnic minorities. This will allow the Ministry to get a clear picture of the number of children, care-giver- pedagogues, the number of native languages and their knowledge, expectations of the community and social profiles of parents, opportunities, needs, and so on, which will enable to determine the relevant forms and approaches for bilingual/multilingual education.
- It is important to develop a care-giver – pedagogue’s professional standard in the future, which will consider the requirements that are necessary for bilingual/multilingual education and define the skills and competencies which the personnel of this type of kindergartens and preschool educators should satisfy.
- It is important to create methodological resources for care-giver/ pedagogues and educational resources for children.

- It is important to implement the policy, supporting the native language learning in preschool establishments where there are ethnic minority adolescents, which implies equipping these institutions with adequate resources and training the personnel involved in early and preschool education, so that they can conduct their work effectively in minority languages.
- It is desirable to develop and introduce the programs enriched with intercultural elements, oriented at encouragement of diversity in early and preschool care and educational institutions located in target regions. Such programs will equip the adolescents with good knowledge of regional specificities and prepare them for effective interaction.

### **3.2 Increasing access to quality general education both, in state and minority languages**

- It is important to develop a single vision of ethnic minority education policy which will be oriented at long-term interventions and outcomes.
- It is important to carry out awareness raising and educational activities with parents and local communities on the need of education, as well as the principles of bilingual education.
- It is necessary to provide professional training to teachers and school administration personnel.
- It is important to implement a consistent and thoroughly planned policy oriented at upgrading professional skills of teachers in non-Georgian schools and sectors.
- It is important to take effective measures to seek and reveal new school personnel in order to replace unqualified ones, gradually. In this process, bilingual education should be paid great attention. New ways and opportunities should be sought. Besides, it is desirable to find external providers and their involvement to ensure quality and sustainability.
- In this context, it is important to carry out relevant activities to enable assistant teachers use adequate resources and attract new personnel.
- It is important to equip non-Georgian schools and sectors with teaching and methodological materials.
- It is important to regularly monitor the consistency of activities that school administration and teachers carry out for improving the knowledge of the state language.
- It is important to determine the necessary level of state language competence for non-Georgian language school teachers and administration and identify the assessment and certifying instruments.
- It is necessary to hold exams identifying the official language competence level of teachers and administrative staff and set reasonable time period for taking them.
- It is necessary to regularly supply information to non-Georgian language school teachers and administration about the on-going reforms in the educational system in the language they understand.
- It is necessary to open up opportunities for intensive and regular state language studies for non-Georgian language school teachers in schools, with relevant mechanisms for assessing interim and final results.
- It is desirable to increase non-Georgian language school teachers' motivation by providing teachers with sufficient competence level of state language with some encouragement tools and instruments.
- It is important to avail the teachers of bilingual programs in career and professional advancement opportunities, according to their professional standards.
- It is necessary to use incentive mechanisms for teachers engaged in bilingual and integrated teaching, for instance a salary increment, awarding credits for various activities, which will increase teachers' motivation to obtain the status of a bilingual teacher.
- It is important to develop the relevant textbooks for teaching languages of numerically small ethnic minorities and the distribution of these textbooks in order to preserve these languages.
- It is important to improve the quality of translation of textbooks and methodological materials. For this purpose, it is recommended to invite qualified experts from Armenia and Azerbaijan and work in close

cooperation with them to avoid language inaccuracies and ensure relevant content for textbooks.

- It is necessary to determine the concept of development of bilingual textbooks, to increase the efficiency of teaching resources and support learning the state language in non-Georgian language schools as well as gaining proper knowledge of subjects.
- It is important to pay more attention to the issues of teaching and learning of a Georgian, as a second language, as well as to its adequate reflection in bilingual educational programs.
- It is desirable to assess the possibility of conducting one-to-one bilingual teaching in schools and give them recommendations on making and running the courses.

### **Educational programs for secondary education teachers**

- It is recommended to improve university education level that have accreditation training program in the Georgian Language and develop mechanisms for attracting students.
- It is important to improve teachers' educational programs on bilingual/multilingual education in universities and introduce them in order to promote bilingual education in non-Georgian language schools and sectors.
- It is desirable to introduce preparatory programs in universities for training teachers in teaching minority languages, which in its turn will be based on Armenian and Azerbaijani language teachers' professional standards, developed by the National Center for Teachers' Professional Development.
- It is desirable to encourage non-Georgian language speaking and 1+4 Program students opt for teaching and educational programs for the prospects of getting benefits, getting a job, being assigned to regions so that they get the opportunity to be admitted to free master's program based on their work experience.
- It is important to take multilingual and native language teachers' programs into consideration and setting them as priorities; also allocating quotas for the enrolled students.

### **3.3. Increasing access to higher education**

- It is desirable to introduce the criteria oriented at the regular improvement and development of Georgian Language Preparatory Program in higher educational institutions.
- It is desirable to disseminate information more actively about the benefits and prospects of preferential policy in schools and local communities, especially in the regions compactly settled with Armenian population.
- It is desirable to establish preferential terms for the graduates from numerically small ethnic groups to ensure their engagement in higher education.
- It is desirable to continue and develop delivery of internship programs, which will help students and graduates acquire professional qualification and get jobs. It is desirable to search for private and regional companies and encourage them carry out similar initiatives.
- It is desirable to encourage higher educational institutions to introduce academic, educational, cognitive and cultural programs oriented at ethnic minorities' integration.
- It is desirable to strengthen regional universities to ensure that students, enrolled as a result of preferential policy, will be admitted to preparatory and bachelor's programs, which will support local students' interaction with population and accelerate social integration processes.

### **3.4 Provision of vocational and adult education**

- It is important to supply local population with regular information on the prospects and available

programs on vocational education in their native language.

- It is important to carry out preferential policy for ethnic minority pupils to arouse their interest towards vocational education and attract them.
- It is desirable that vocational colleges make more efforts to consider the needs of ethnic minorities, such as providing the opportunity of studying Georgian language, having the necessary methodology and resources in place.
- It is important to work out indicators oriented at the outcome of the implemented programs in adult education.
- It is important to ensure equal access to adult education.
- It is necessary to support the implementation of tailored programs for target groups in ethnic minority settlements to improve the knowledge of the state language, to provide clear mechanisms of quality control and financing, which will enable them to make more efficient and effective use of resources intended for learning the state language.
- It is desirable to introduce in-house approaches to learning the state language.
- It is important to organize vocational training and career advancement training courses for adult population, to enable them use perspectives and employment opportunities in the region.

#### **Strategic goal 4: Preserving the Culture of Ethnic Minorities and Encouraging Tolerant Environment**

Pursuant to the Constitution of Georgia, "Citizens of Georgia, regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation or language, shall have the right to maintain and develop their culture, without any discrimination"<sup>44</sup>.

This principle is reflected in the state strategy for civic equality and integration, one of the goals of which is preserving the culture of ethnic minorities and encouraging the tolerant environment<sup>45</sup>. Here it specifies that preserving of culture under the strategy implies maintaining the language, traditions, creative works and heritage and their development. To achieve this strategic goal, three interim goals have been set:

1. Reflect the role and importance of ethnic minorities in the development and implementation of cultural policy, which is expressed in betterment of activities oriented at preserving culture and ensuring coordination with regional and local units;
2. Promotion and protection of cultural heritage of ethnic minorities. The activities devised for the achievement of this interim goal imply protection and promotion of cultural heritage, material and intangible cultural values of ethnic minorities;
3. Encouraging cultural diversity, which is expressed in the implementation of the activities that support the development of intercultural dialogue.

The state strategy also makes a specific reference to the fact that protection of material and intangible values of minorities should consider registration of cultural monuments, cataloguing, reinforcement and restoration works. Supporting theatres and museums, organizing intercultural, educational, integration and tolerance-oriented events in the libraries.

The subject of 2017-2018 monitoring is the strategic goal 4 of the implementation report and action plans of the 2017-2018 state strategy for civic equality and integration, which likewise describes all three interim goals supporting the preservation of culture of ethnic minorities and encouragement of tolerant environment.

It must be noted from the start that the strategy and action plan do not envisage the indicators that are measurable, or worked out in advance. The strategy lists the planned events, although it does not indicate the target number or result that have been planned to achieve in a certain period. This problem has been emphasized in the 2019 document of the Commission of the European Framework Convention on Protection of Ethnic Minorities. It notes that the action plan is oriented at implemented activities and lacks the implementation

44 Constitution of Georgia, Chapter 2, Article 11, clause 2.

45 State strategy for civic equality and integration pp.16-17.

indicators, which would allow to assess mid-term and long-term impact of performed activities.<sup>46</sup>

It is noteworthy that in the implementation reports of 2017-2018 strategic goal 4, the information was not fully provided; in a number of cases it is unknown how relevant the implemented activities were to the interim goal.

For these reasons the monitoring of the 4<sup>th</sup> strategic goal and three interim goals is only possible to conduct on quantitative indicators. The monitoring is interested in the following:

- To what extent the role and importance of minorities were reflected in the development and implementation of cultural policy (4.1);
- How much the material and intangible cultural heritage was protected (4.2);
- How much the minority was encouraged to play the role in intercultural dialogue and the country's cultural diversity (4.3).

#### **4.1. Elaborating Cultural Policy and Reflecting the Role and Importance of Ethnic Minorities in its Implementation**

Several activities have been carried out to achieve the 2017-2018 interim goal 4.1. The reports of both years list various activities, such as theatrical performances and tours, art exhibitions, concerts and festivals, conferences and literary soirees. Other events supporting educational circles (dancing, singing, crafts, etc.), museums, theatres, libraries served the same purpose. The events were held in Tbilisi, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe Javakheti and Russian Federation.

The Georgian State policy on Culture "Strategy of Culture 2025" is the document that has been in use since July 1, 2016. Along with other issues, it reflects the vision of the state on the access of minorities to culture and protection of their culture.

The secondary objective 2.2. –access to culture and cultural diversity implies participation of minorities in the country's cultural life, and access to cultural infrastructure and resources. According to this secondary objective, the following activities are envisaged to be carried out for minorities:

- Organizing cultural and creative projects, initiatives, events and campaigns and supporting the access to respective spaces.
- Working out mechanisms for preferential terms to offer the students from minority communities for the access to education in the field of culture, and some other benefits (for instance, tickets at low price, free admissions, open house, etc.).
- Engaging children and adolescents in various cultural projects to support their integration with local peers;
- Supporting cultural initiatives and Georgian language learning;
- Developing special programs on culture by Public Broadcaster in state and minority languages to increase the access to information for ethnic minorities.

Cultural strategy goal 2.4. envisages provision of cultural diversity, protection of material and intangible cultural heritage of minorities and restoration (for instance, rehabilitation of monuments, preserve traditional knowledge and performing arts, etc.). The list of specific objectives concerning the cultural heritage includes revealing material, intangible and natural heritage of the national minorities, cataloguing, identifying categories, classification, creating record-keeping documentation, keeping a register and mapping in accordance with international standards. Specific tasks of media and broadcaster include the development of special programs by Public Broadcaster both, in state and minority languages, the increased access to the information on cultural events for ethnic minorities. Unfortunately, at the moment of assessment no report on the implementation of "Culture 2025" is available. Consequently, there is no information about the activities supporting the goals provided in the strategy.

It must be noted that many ministries, agencies, LEPLs have issued Orders with the aim of protection and promotion of the culture of minorities. Among them were the programs prepared by the group of Public Broadcaster called "Diverse Georgia", dozens of events held by the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia. Regional and local governing bodies also play an active role in elaborating cultural policy. It is possible to check information about cultural events regarding the culture of ethnic minorities held in Bolnisi, Tsalka, Rustavi, Tetritskhara, Gardabani, Bolnisi, Akhmeta, Gurjaani, Dedoplistskhara, Telavi, Lagodekhi, Signaghi and Khvareli

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46 Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Third opinion on Georgia, adopted on 7 March 2019. clause53, p. 16.

municipalities. The provided documents speak for the fact that local governments take part and support holding festivities, local celebrations in villages, celebrations of writers', singers' or ashugs' anniversaries. However, in their opinion, they do not participate in the development of policy documents, among them, in the process of strategy and action plan development.

## 4.2. Protection and Promotion of Cultural Heritage of Ethnic Minorities

The major aim of this interim goal is registration, cataloguing/ stock-taking, reinforcement and restoration. Protection implies intangible cultural monuments as part of cultural heritage of minorities. The objectives of the interim goal 4.2 of 2017 action plan include assigning the status of a monument to German cultural heritage monuments, preparing the publication on German architecture and maintaining Azerbaijani carpet weaving tradition. For the same strategic goal, in 2018 it was planned to publish the book about German heritage, hold an exhibition in Janashia museum, and exhibitions of intangible cultural monuments. With the aim of promotion, Dmanisi municipality organized a familiarization tour for tourists. According to the report on implementation, in 2017 and 2018 many events were held with the purpose of promotion and protection of German cultural heritage monuments. In 2017, Janashia museum hosted the exhibition of carpets, which served the preservation of Azerbaijani carpet weaving tradition. In 2018, a familiarization tour was organized in Dmanisi. In addition, in 2017, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox (3727, 7358, 7397) and Evangelic-Lutheran (7338) monuments were added to the list of immovable monuments protected by National Agency of Cultural Heritage Protection of Georgia<sup>47</sup>. And in 2018 to the same list were added monuments from Pankisi gorge (7535-7558), Catholic monuments (7604-7611) and the school building of Dukhobors (7613)..

### Material Cultural Heritage of Minorities

After regaining of independence in Georgia, Armenian Catholic, Evangelic-Lutheran, Muslim and Jewish communities demanded to return religious buildings to their historical owner. According to 2017 Public Defender's report, these buildings in Georgia, among them Georgian cultural heritage monuments "are being ignored by the government and are demolishing"<sup>48</sup>. The situation, not to consider some exceptions, did not change in the following year either. Following the Public Defender's report, "the situation regarding the monuments of minorities is still grave and no steps were taken for their rehabilitation in 2018 either".<sup>49</sup>

Armenian Apostolic Church stated that they use 57 churches, however, they do not have property rights to any of them. Back in 2015, Armenian Eparchius applied to the State Agency for Religious Issues with the request to deliver 20 churches into their possession with the right to property, although the response of the Agency is still unknown.<sup>50</sup>

Georgian monuments do not have any problems of restoration or conservation; for some reason, only Armenian churches seem to have such problems.

*Media representative from Samtskhe-Javakheti*

Besides, Armenian Apostolic Church claims back five churches in Tbilisi and one in Akhaltsikhe which are in the possession of the state and Georgian Orthodox Church also claims the right to possession of these churches. In 2017 report, the Public Defender states that some Georgian cultural heritage monuments in the area of Armenian community are demolished and urgently require reinforcement and rehabilitation works.<sup>51</sup> Despite donors' great desire and willingness, it is impossible to obtain the right to conservation or restoration of Armenian monuments. Given the situation, on the statement of Armenian community organizations, due to commercial constructions and initiatives of private persons, the property at issue in Tbilisi and regions is being damaged. Among the damaged Armenian churches that are in need of conservation and restoration are "Surb Gevork" church in Mughni (N 6, Akhospireli Str.), "Shamkhoretsots Karmir Avetaran" (N6 Peristsvaleba Str.), "Erevantsots Surb

47 National Agency of Cultural Heritage Protection of Georgia <https://www.heritagesites.ge/uploads/files/5d5e423eb440d.pdf>

48 Public Defender's Report on the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2017, p. 159.

49 Public Defender's Report on the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2018, p. 293

50 Georgia 2018 International Religious Freedom Report. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/GEORGIA-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf> p. 8

51 Public Defender's Report 2017, p. 278

Minas" (N13, Gelati Str.), "Surb Nshan" (N6 Vertskhli Str.), "Tandoian Surb Astvatsitsin" (N40 Davit Aghmashenebeli Ave.), the churches in villages Korkhi, Turtskhi, Khanchali, Gomani, Olaverdi and others. The representatives of Armenian Community organizations in Tbilisi consider the issue of Nersessian Armenian Seminary in Tbilisi, which is in private ownership and Armenian Catholic church in Batumi that is delivered to Georgian Orthodox Church into possession, disputable. No records can be found proving the connection of these churches with Armenian community. Despite the fact that many buildings in Tbilisi are associated with prominent Armenian financiers, politicians, musicians, artists or writers, it is often problematic to put up memorial plaques in their honour.

We also learn from Public Defender's report about the problems of Muslim community regarding protection of Material cultural heritage in Kvemo Kartli, Adigen and Adjara. The Special Commission at the State Agency for Religious Issues failed to identify the origin and ownership of the Mosque in Adigeni municipality village Mokhe, which would be a necessary precondition for carrying out restoration works on this building. As for the Mosques located in Samtskhe-Javakheti, most of them do not have the roofs and are being demolished due to severe climatic conditions in this area.<sup>52</sup>

Description, exploration and protection of mosques from Arabic and Ottoman period, mausoleums, baths and cemeteries in Bolnisi, Dmanisi and Marneuli municipalities are also problematic.<sup>53</sup>

Synagogue in Batumi is under threat too, which had been seriously damaged due to construction works carried out by a private investor. There is a problem with another synagogue in Akhaltsikhe, which is wrongly marked with red lines. On the information of the Russian community organization representative, traditional houses of Dukhobors in Ninotsminda and adjacent villages are also under the threat. Several monuments and memorial plaques of Russian prominent figures have been damaged in Tbilisi. No due attention is paid to Ukrainian cultural heritage monuments in Borjomi municipality. In the opinion of minority community organizations, the red lines of cemeteries and houses of worship are unprotected and they are getting damaged or destroyed.

Community organizations of minorities express their satisfaction about the rehabilitation of A. Griboedov Russian Theatre, Adamyan Armenian Theatre and Baazov Jewish Museum of History conducted by the Ministry of Culture and Sport.<sup>54</sup>

However, on the statement of the representative of Jewish community organization, museum artefacts, which had been distributed to different museums during repair works, have not been returned to Tbilisi Jewish Museum of History so far. Besides, the Parliamentary report of the Public Defender notes that the museum of Azerbaijani culture and Smirnovs' museum, along with marking important data of the neighboring countries, should pay more attention to the promotion of authentic cultural heritage of local minorities.<sup>55</sup> It is also noteworthy that in central museums of Georgia, among them, in Tbilisi, ethnic diversity of the country is not duly emphasized.

Constitutional Court decision of 2018 gives positive assessment to the protection of material cultural heritage of minorities.

The record in the law of Georgia about the Protection of Cultural Heritage", which unjustifiably relieved religious confessions from the responsibility of maintenance of buildings in their possession or use, was nullified.<sup>56</sup> Introduction and execution of the above legal guarantee in practice is important, as it will enable the restoration and conservation of many cultural heritage monuments of minorities.

### Intangible Culture of Minorities

Among cultural tours of Georgia there are German and Jewish itineraries. A Pathfinder on "Cultural tour for German Minorities in Georgia" in Georgian-English and German languages was published in 2017, with the support of the Council of Europe<sup>57</sup>. The status of intangible cultural heritage was assigned to "26-century-old Unique Tradition of Georgian-Jewish Relationships" in 2018.<sup>58</sup>

52 Liberali, „Invisible Mosques of Samtskhe-Javakheti" <http://liberali.ge/articles/view/24435/samtskhejavakhetis-uchinari-mechetebi>

53 Caucasian Heritage Research Institute works intensively on the issues of Islamic monuments in Kvemo Kartli (Interview with the director of the organization, Mr. Elnur Aliev)

54 Ministry of Culture and Sport of Georgia, cultural infrastructure <http://mcs.gov.ge/Cultural-infrastructure.aspx>

55 Public Defender's Report, 2018 p. 293.

56 Public Defender's Report, 2018 p. 236.

57 German Cultural Tour in Georgia, 2017, <https://rm.coe.int/168070ce59>

58 Order 2/11 of the National Agency for the Protection of Georgian Cultural Heritage, dated 23.03.2018

There is a special place on the webpage of Georgian cultural tours devoted to “European Tour of Jewish Heritage in Georgia”<sup>59</sup>. However, tourist maps do not fully show or do not show at all the monuments of minorities’ cultural heritage monuments, no tourist information materials on the culture of minorities exist. Besides, many natural or historical monuments in minority regions remain unfamiliar to Georgian society and the legends and festivities connected with them, disappear.<sup>60</sup>

Representatives of regional media and NGOs focus attention on the traditions of minority communities, which need protection and promotion. According to 2018 Report of the Public Defender, unique traditions of Ashug school and Borchalo carpet weaving need to be protected.<sup>61</sup> In this respect, a single event that was held within the frames of the strategy with the support of the Ministry of Culture is not enough to preserve and maintain this age-long tradition.

According to the information provided by Kvemo Kartli Governor’s administration, it is necessary to allocate special grants in 2019 for carpet weavers, although, at this stage the result is unknown. In accordance to Kvemo Kartli local NGOs, it is only possible to promote Ashugs’ traditional school by arousing interest of young people. Loss of local traditions raises concerns in Samtskhe-Javakheti region as well. Here, the craftsmanship of building Javakheti traditional Oda(house), baking Armenian flat bread, church chants of Doukhobors, embroidery and other similar traditions are on the verge of extinction. Unfortunately, local ethnic minority young people in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti do not show much interest in traditional musical instruments or crafts.

No art circles function in most parts of the regions compactly settled with minorities. The Houses of Culture need repairs. In central libraries of municipalities, the book funds are rarely replenished with Georgian books. According to the Council member organizations, no attention is paid to the book funds in regional libraries, especially to the books in minority languages. Rare, and in some cases, unique publications are being ruined. In Samtskhe-Javakheti, out of 80 libraries, only 18 have survived, although almost nobody uses them. Minorities in Kvemo Kartli do not use libraries much, either. For instance, in 2017 and 2018, Chavchavadze Library in Rustavi had 8-9 thousand visitors each year, among them, only about 150 were minorities.<sup>62</sup>

The events held within the strategy framework by the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia, are of greatest importance. However, it is necessary to hold such events more frequently in the libraries in minority regions. The representatives of local governments and NGOs in minority regions consider that it is necessary to add interesting functions to the existing libraries to motivate the youth.

### 4.3. Encouraging Cultural Diversity

Interim goal activities include celebration of anniversaries of ethnic minority representatives, equipment of libraries, exhibitions, publishing literary digests, hold events to mark festive occasions of ethnic minorities, discussions about writers, poets and musicians belonging to ethnic minorities, organizing festivals, conferences, memory days. As well as that, holding intercultural events in penitentiary establishments. Arranging exhibitions, publications, essay competitions, organizing familiarization visits of ethnic minorities to state agencies, round tables. The events in support of this interim goal have been held all over the country.

With the aim of encouragement of cultural diversity, the competition to promote ethnic minority cultural activities was held at the Ministry of Culture in 2017 and 2018. As a result 16 and 11 cultural projects got funded in 2017 and 2018, respectively. According to the representative of the Ministry of Culture, about 20 organizations take part in the competition every year. Along with different agencies, the representatives of minorities take part in the selection of projects. Unfortunately, local government representatives, media and NGOs did not have any information about the competition.<sup>63</sup>

Neither do the local media or NGO representatives have the information about the grant program of the Ministry

<https://www.heritagesites.ge/uploads/files/5b7432febfc2e.pdf>

59 European Tour of Jewish Heritage in Georgia <http://culturalroutes.gov.ge/Routes/saqartvelos-kulturu-li-marshrutebi.aspx>

60 For instance, much is written about local traditions in [jnews.ge](http://jnews.ge) and other site

61 Public Defender’s Report, 2018, p. 236

62 A letter N 16062-02 29/10/2019 of (Non-commercial Legal Entity) Rustavi Library Union, Ilya Chavchavadze Library

63 Governors’ administration and Mayor’s office representatives in Ninotsminda, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, and Marneuli had no information about competitions.

of Culture. As a representative of the Ministry of Culture stated, the quality of the implemented projects is also questionable.<sup>64</sup>

Several activities were carried out in Pankisi gorge in 2017 and 2018 whose aim was to promote the culture of the Kist and Chechen people. In Pankisi gorge there is a House of Culture and one regional museum and the community is served by 14 workers in the sphere of culture.<sup>65</sup> Despite the above, participation of the local community in cultural events is a problem here.<sup>66</sup>

To promote cultural diversity, it is important to support celebrations of minority festivals, encourage holding events on providing information about traditions, etc. Despite regular celebration of Novruz or other local festivities, some representative of ethnic minorities in Kvemo Kartli consider that these festivities have lost authenticity. As a local respondent states in the survey, in the celebration of Elati Bairam, which is known as Dmanisoba today, "various cultures of Georgia used to be presented ... and now there is only ethnic Georgian culture".<sup>67</sup>

According to another thematic research, the Novruz festival is also celebrated in a different manner. "Participants of the celebration imitate the events held in Baku and forget those traditions which the locals have been creating for centuries".<sup>68</sup>

We are not integrated in Georgian cultural life, we know modern Armenian and Russian singers, but unfortunately we do not know any Georgian singers, they visit us very rarely .

*NGO Representative from Samtskhe-Javakheti*

On the statement of local government representatives, Armenian language speaking citizens in Samtskhe-Javakheti can hold their own cultural festivals and events without any hindrance.

Armenian children often participate in various cultural events outside the region as well. In Samtskhe-Javakheti there are 3 Georgian-Armenian dance ensembles, made up with only Armenian dancers. They often have tours in Georgia, Armenia and other countries. For instance, Jigrashen dance ensemble had concerts in Romania. It is unfortunate though that Armenian population in Samtskhe-Javakheti is not well informed about cultural life of Georgia and take little part in it.

It is noteworthy that erecting Christian symbolic in minority settlements in Kvemo Kartli is a problem. Such villages are Jushi, Sadakhlo, Sarali, Damia, Shulaveri, Dashapta, Kapanachkhi and others. The recommendation letter of an NGO also focuses attention on this issue<sup>69</sup>.

## Conclusion

All three interim goals were implemented all over the country but especially a big number of activities took place in 2017 and 2018 in the capital, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti.

Some events were held in Batumi and Poti. Based on the obtained information from individual and group interviews, it is possible to make the following conclusions.

Interim goal 4.1. Within the frames of this goal, both central and local governments issued Orders and Resolutions, aiming at the support of minority cultures. Respective Ministries, LEPLs, local municipalities and self-governing bodies were actively engaged in the development of cultural policy.

64 Interview with the representative of the Ministry of Culture (October 15, 2019)

65 Letter of Akheta Municipality Mayor's Office (November 14, 2019)

66 "Khadoroba" was celebrated in Pankisi without the participation of ethnic Kists, Saturday, July 20, 2019 <https://radioway.ge/news/people/item/928-pankisshi-%E2%80%99Exadoroba%E2%80%9C-etniku-ri-qistebis-gareshe-izeimes>

67 EMC Dmanisoba –rewritten festival and cultural domination mechanism - <https://emc.org.ge/ka/products/dmanisoba-gadatserili-dghesastsauli-da-kulturuli-dominatsiis-mekanizmi>

68 EMC – Novruz- Don't forget the Spring! <https://emc.org.ge/ka/products/novruzi-ar-dagavitsqdes-gazaf-khuli>

69 Recommendations on Marneuli Municipality Priority document and budget EMC (24 October, 2019) <https://emc.org.ge/ka/products/emc-s-rekomendatsiebis-da-khedvebis-dokumenti>

Interim goal 4.2 Despite the implemented activities, protection of material cultural heritage of minorities is a particular problem. Cultural monuments of minorities are in alarming state both, in Tbilisi and in regions. Protection and exploration of intangible cultural heritage is problematic as well. Traditions of craftsmanship, singing and cuisine still exist in the regions, however, young people are not very much interested in learning or developing them.

Interim goal 4.3 Ministry of Culture holds annual competitions on cultural events. However, the problem is the dissemination of information about the competition in the community and the quality of the implemented projects. It is important to celebrate public holidays and engage minorities in multicultural activities. However, as part of minorities considers, these events lack authentic form and content of the tradition.

## Recommendations

The 4<sup>th</sup> strategic goal of the strategy and Action plan needs methodological improvement, after which it will be possible to assess the implementation of short and long-term goals, the achieved outcome and the impact. The objectives of the 4<sup>th</sup> strategic goal of the Strategy and Action plan and the activities coincide with those planned by 2.2, 2.4 of "Cultural Strategy 2025". Coordinated planning and accountability of the activities envisaged by this Strategy and Cultural Strategy is important.

Interim goal 4.1. It would be desirable if minority representatives took part in the process of policy development, both at the level of the Ministry of Culture and local municipalities and Sakrebulo. Ministry of Culture is authorized to task the LEPLs that are funded by it (for instance a popular national ballet Sukhishvilebi, ensembles "Erisioni", "Rustavi", "Basiani" and others) to hold regular concerts or other events in regions with ethnic minorities.

Interim goal 4.2. Due to problematic state of material heritage monuments of ethnic minorities, it is necessary that respective Ministries and LEPLs ensure their timely registration, stock-taking, reinforcement and restoration. Relevant agencies should cooperate with minorities' community organizations and other representatives of the community in this process. Attention should be paid to the study and protection of such intangible cultural heritage of minorities as oral histories, legends, songs, poetry, crafts, preparation of traditional foods and drinks, etc. Relevant state agencies should support the development of tourism in the regions settled by ethnic minorities, making tour itineraries and development of traditional products ( food, souvenir gifts ). Traditions, history and culture of minorities should be displayed in central museums. The government should take measures for the development of libraries and their functioning in the regions settled with ethnic minorities.

Interim goal 4.3. It is desirable to disseminate information about competitions organized in support of cultural events of minorities in municipalities, Sakrebulo, NGOs and regional media. The priority in competitions should be given to the study and promotion of local traditions, crafts, culinary, etc. through sustainable and long-term programs. When planning the events encouraging cultural diversity, it is important to focus attention on promotion and improvement of culture and traditions of minorities. Traditional festivities that have survived to our days in ethnic minority communities must be preserved in their historical form and content. It is desirable to constructively consider the issue of location of Christian symbolics in ethnic minority settlements.

## Annex 1

### Literature

#### Participation of minorities in civil and political life

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