





# Monitoring results of implementation of the National Concept and Action Plan on Tolerance and Civil Integration

Council of National Minorities under  
the auspices of the Public Defender of Georgia

**2010-2011**

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the author/s and do not necessarily represent those of UNDP, USAID, UNAG and ECMI.



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## 2010

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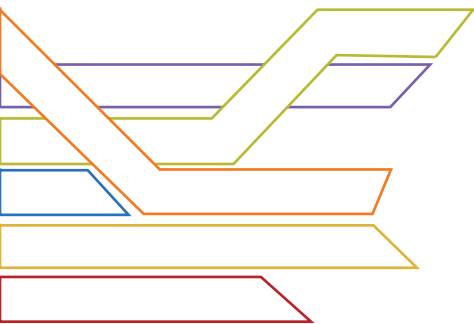
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## Introduction

This publication presents findings of 2010-2011 monitoring of implementation of the National Concept and Action Plan on Tolerance and Civil Integration. The monitoring was conducted by the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender of Georgia with the aim to assess state programs in support of civil integration and to elaborate recommendations for addressing existing challenges. The Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender designated 12 members to a monitoring group, which was divided into four sub-groups with following composition:

**Education and State Language:** Leila Mamedova – Georgia’s Azeri Youth Union; Elene Kurtanidze – Ukrainian Teachers’ Union of Georgia; Shalva Tabatadze – invited education expert.

**Culture and Preservation of Identity:** Marine Solomonishvili – Jewish Women’s International Foundation “Lea”; Alla Bezhentseva – Russian Women’s Association of Georgia “Yaroslavna”; invited experts on culture – Sopho Zviadadze (2010 monitoring) and Ekaterine Chitanava (2011 monitoring).

**Media and Access to Information:** Zaur Khalilov – Civil Integration Foundation; Mikheil Aidinov – Russian-speaking Journalists’ Association; Ketevan Mskhiladze – invited media expert.

**Rule of Law, Political Integration and Civil Participation; Social and Regional Integration:** Agit Mirzoev – Analytical Center of Inter-ethnic Cooperation and Consultation; Marjam Mikoyan – Coordinator of Regional Integration Working Group of the Council of National Minorities; Giorgi Sordia – invited expert.

During the monitoring process, meetings and in-depth interviews were organized with representatives of central and local government, non-governmental organizations, community leaders and other target groups in various cities and regions of Georgia, among them: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Gardabani, Tsalka, Marneuli, Rustavi, Telavi, Sagarejo, Akhmeta, Kvareli, Lagodekhi. In total, monitoring group conducted more than 120 meetings.

It should be noted that majority of representatives from state bodies and non-governmental organizations showed big interest and responsibility towards issues raised by the Council members in the course of monitoring. The Council of National Minorities established exceptionally effective partnership with the National Council of Tolerance and Civil Integration under the President of Georgia and its Chairperson – Mrs. Tamar Kintsurashvili.

Draft monitoring report was discussed during the joint session of the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender of Georgia and Civic Integration and Tolerance Council under the President of Georgia which was held in Batumi. While, final monitoring results were agreed upon at the Council meeting in Tbilisi.

Monitoring findings illustrate shortcomings in the implementation process of the National Concept and Action Plan on Tolerance and Civil Integration, as well as, outline achieved progress. After three years since the activation of the National Concept, a lot of positive steps have been taken in the field of general and higher education; important infrastructural projects have been implemented in the regions populated by national minorities. It is important to note that overall conditions for promoting civil integration has significantly improved in Georgia over the recent years. Nevertheless, there are remaining issues that require timely solution.

The Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender carried out the monitoring of implementation of the National Concept and Action Plan on Tolerance and Civil Integration with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Advancing National Integration (ANI) Project of the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG), and European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI). The Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender expresses its gratitude towards state agencies and donor organizations for their support and fruitful cooperation.

The Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender operates since 2005 and it unites more than 100 organizations representing each ethnic minority residing in Georgia. With regards to civil integration and protection of national minorities, the Council of National Minorities represents the major consultative body for the Public Defender and state agencies. The Council's work is coordinated by the Tolerance Center under the Public Defender of Georgia.



2010







# Rule of Law; Political Integration and Civil Participation; Social and Regional Integration

The Monitoring Report presents the findings of the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender of Georgia. The Report is based on Monitoring Group's field research, focus group discussions, analysis of related legislation and consultations with experts. The Monitoring Group aimed at assessing implementation of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan 2010, including identification of existing problems and challenges, achievements and the needs to be addressed. The monitoring was conducted throughout November-December 2011. However, the work of expert groups continued in January-February 2012 with an end to identify and assess more issues regarding civil integration of national minorities in Georgia.

From priorly defined four directions of the Action Plan, the presented Monitoring Report reflects the issues pertaining professional development and employment, political and civic participation, and regional integration of national minorities in Georgia.

The monitoring was conducted in all regions densely populated by national minorities – Kakheti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Imereti. The members of the Monitoring Group organized meetings with the representatives of local self-governments, high authorities of internal forces (local representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecutor), leaders of political parties at the local level, heads of Central Election Commission of Georgia, representatives of local non-Governmental organizations and people from the local community.

## **Professional Development and Promotion of Employment of National Minorities**

When describing the measures taken towards professional development and promotion of employment of national minorities based on the Action Plan the major focus of the State Report 2010 is on the operation of Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration and different professional development courses administered by relevant governmental agencies.

With regards to Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration the State Report 2010 maintained that the school offers educational and professional development short term and long term courses. Namely, the short term courses listed include: 1) Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs); 2) Financial Management; 3) Project Management and Monitoring; 4) Human Resource Management; 5) Basics in Law and Clerical Work; 6) Basics in Management. Long-term Courses are Georgian Language Course (three months a year, step by step) and English Language Course (three months a year, step by step).

The findings of the monitoring revealed that the section of the State Report is not based on actual situation in Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, but just reflects the list of objectives and goals of the School which were only partially implemented in 2010. Specifically, the results of the monitoring demonstrate that in 2010 only 11 attendees were enrolled at public administration direction of the school and since second half of 2010 the public administration components and relevant short term courses were totally cancelled.

As for the vocational training and other components of employment, 2010 report presents brief information about the ongoing training courses for representatives of national minorities. Namely, the state report mentions Katshreti Vocational Training Center, Akhaltsikhe Vocational Training Center and Professional Development courses at Ministry of Internal Affairs and Prosecutor's office.

The monitoring revealed that all the abovementioned programs operate according to the plan. At local level, authorities of both MIA and Prosecutor's Office regional structure authorities are interested in professional development of the representatives of minorities. In 2010 they regularly sent their staff for the enhancement of qualifications. The same tendency was observed in vocational training centers. E.g. in case of Akhaltsikhe Vocational Training Center in 2010 out of 626 students being trained in one of the 19 professions 76 were a representative of national minorities.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations of the Monitoring Group regarding the state policy towards professional development and employment of national minorities:**

Professional development of the national minority representatives employed at public sector is one of the major issues with regards to development of civic integration process and promotion to political and social participation. The need is adequately reflected in the National Concept of Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan and a number of activities planned to ensure professional development of the minorities and promotion of their employment. The establishment of Zura Zhvania School of Public Administration was regarded as a major and promising step forward on the part of the government. The following should also be noted: despite the fact that the school is one of the best equipped and ensured educational institutions (with an annual budget of around 500000 GEL), the school activities defined by the State Report in 2010 was only partially implemented, since, as monitoring revealed, professional development courses were terminated in the second half of 2010. Besides, there are professional development opportunities within the state initiated programs for national minority representatives, e.g. through vocational training centers, as well as national minorities employed at Ministry of Internal Affairs and Prosecutor's Office.

Based on meetings and consultations, the Monitoring Group presents the following recommendations:

- Strengthen public administration component in Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration;
- Develop new public administration curriculum for Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration in line with the needs of the region;
- Increase autonomy of management at Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, establish Board of Trustees and ensure representation and participation of national minorities;
- Ensure better coordination with local self-governments during the selection of attendees for Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration in order to consider local needs to a greater extent;
- Grant autonomy (reasonable way) to Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration. At this point, school managers cannot make any independent decisions and even minor issues are agreed with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. This situation has hampering effect on the overall functioning of the School.

### Political Integration and Civil Participation

In the State Report in 2011, provision of equal electoral rights and opportunities to be involved in decision making process are presented as the major highlights of the section on Political Integration and Civil Participation.

The Report in 2011 partially repeats and reiterates the achievements from the previous years, however, new accomplishment and issues are also presented.

With the view of improving political integration and civil participation the National Concept of Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan envisages activities aiming at promotion of framework convention for equal electoral rights, improved participation in decision making and protection of national minorities. Within the framework of the overarching goal, the state implementation report mainly is based on the information and data provided by CEC, different ministries and NGOs

Concerning the aforementioned priorities and based on the state report the major achievements can be summarized as follows:

- General guidelines and different types of informational materials on the election procedures, general election processes and legislation were developed and translated into minority languages;
- According to the State Report 2010, the Central Election Commission of Georgia (CEC) planned to establish resource centers in the regions.
- Different non-governmental organizations implemented the projects aiming at provision of information about elections to the ethnically non-Georgian population;
- Several meetings with local community were held with the initiative of both – NGOs and state agencies; memorandum of understanding between the Council of National Minorities under Public Defender's Office and the different state agencies were signed;

- The work of the Monitoring Group revealed that the booklets about the procedures of election are available in minority languages. Local representatives of Central Election Commission are provided with the appropriate materials both in state and minority languages. The staff members of the Central Election Commission underwent professional trainings about election procedures;

Political integration and civil participation is of great importance in integration of national minorities. Consequently, the Monitoring Group went beyond merely observing the scope of the National Concept of Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan and studied general situation with regards to political and civic integration in areas densely populated by minorities.

Despite the fact that there are no legislative and other barriers to minority participation, it can be concluded based on the existing information that the level of minority participation in social and political life of the country is extremely low. The same way, the chances of making impact on decision making is really very little. National minorities are weakly involved in the executive branches of government, political parties and civil society.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations of the Monitoring Group regarding the improvement of political integration and civic participation:**

In 2010 majority of the priority objectives regarding political integration and civic participation that have been stipulated by the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan have been accomplished by respective state agencies. The only issue, which is stated as fulfilled but is not verified by the Monitoring Group, is the functioning of the resource centers under the Central Election Commission (CEC) in the regions densely populated by national minorities.

As to the overall assessment of political integration and civic participation of national minorities, despite the acknowledged positive tendencies and improved political environment, involvement of national minorities is not fully ensured. This is first and foremost linked to insufficient development of the civil society and low political culture in the regions densely populated by national minorities.

#### **Recommendations of the Monitoring Group are as follows:**

- Civil sector is recommended to foster and initiate additional programmes and efforts in order to promote development of civil society and community mobilization in the regions densely populated by national minorities;
- Foster initiation of the state programmes, which will promote employment of national minorities at public sector;
- Put integration of minorities and issue of raising their awareness high on the agenda within CEC's Grant Programme;
- Establish a legal consultancy center in a language comprehensive to national minorities (or recruit extra staff speaking minority languages).

The State Report on the Completion the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan of the Government of Georgia provides detailed and comprehensive account of the activities towards social and regional integration. The information mainly is based on the data and sources provided by the Ministry of Regional Development. The Report mainly lists and describes the infrastructure development projects being undertaken in the regions or in separate municipalities populated by minorities. Namely, it describes the rehabilitation of roads and schools, village assistance programme and water pipeline renovation. However, the report does not cover a number of issues envisaged by the action plan, namely: rehabilitation of energy infrastructure that had to be realized in 2006-2010, small and medium business investments to be realized form 2006-2011.

During monitoring no dissatisfaction or negative evaluation was not observed from either population or NGO when discussing infrastructure and other rehabilitation projects. However, specific problems were highlighted, revealed during meetings in Samtskhe-Javakheti region, namely, representatives of Akhalkalaki Municipality representatives. While implementing infrastructure projects in Akhalkalaki municipality representatives underline the fact that central structures (mostly, Ministry for Regional Development) rarely involve local authorities in planning which is assumed on the part of the local representatives as disregard for the regional interests and distrust towards regional authorities on the part of the central government.

From the point of view of regional integration, ethnic minorities living in small numbers or beyond compact settlement should be also referred to. During the monitoring, the issue has been repeatedly raised on the part of the representatives of these ethnic minorities, as well as the local municipalities. When speaking about small groups of ethnic minorities, we primarily refer Assyrians, Udis, Avarians, Kurds, Roma, Abkhazians, Ossetians that are devoid of any protection mechanisms. Preservation of their cultural identity is becoming more and more acute considering the degree of their assimilation. Out of the regions with non-compact minority settlements, the focus of the strongest interest are Kakheti, Shida Kartli and Adjara that were traditionally distinguished by a large number of ethnic minorities. Despite the fact that ethnic minorities constitute a significant proportion of the population in the region, unlike Samtskhe - Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, here minorities are distributed in different municipalities or villages of the region, and do not clearly project in the overall ethnographic picture. Therefore, the issue of the regions and their ethnic minorities are not adequately reflected in the National Concept and, consequently, the state programs do not provide for the settlement of these specific issues.

### **Conclusions and recommendations of the Monitoring Group concerning the social and regional integration of national minorities:**

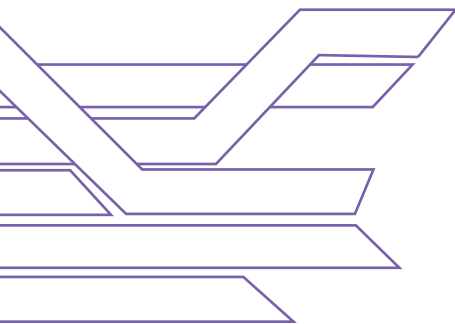
In terms of social and regional integration in 2010 relevant government agencies implemented several infrastructure and rehabilitation projects in the regions densely populated with national minorities. The state report describes in details each of the projects, however, it does not reflect several issues envisaged by the Action Plan. During monitoring in parallel to the priorities and activities several issues were revealed the reflec-

tion of them in the action plans of the next years considering the minority interests are recommended.

With the above in mind the Monitoring Report presents the following recommendations:

- In the framework of regional and social integration policy, the state has to consider the problems of such regions as Kakheti, Shida Kartli and Adjara, where national minorities feel ignored and disregarded from the Government as well as from the side of NGOs and international organizations;
- While implementing the state policy more focus made the needs of small ethnic groups, such as Udis, Avars, Lezghins, Ossetians, Abkhazians, Kurds, Roma people and Assyrians;
- The state agencies working on civil integration of national minorities are recommended to actively cooperate with local governments (where the staff is comprised of national minorities) during the implementation of regional activities and programs, so that local municipalities and state agencies do not feel disregarded and distrusted by the central government;
- The scarcity of qualified local resources is a permanent problem during the implementation of infrastructure projects. The respective agencies should provide preparation of human resources, when needed (for instance, in such important fields of the regions as railway system, agriculture, rehabilitation of roads, etc.);
- Interregional economic interaction should be enhanced; Agri tours should be organized among farmers from the regions densely populated by the national minorities and the rest of the country;
- Irrigation system has to be rehabilitated in the regions densely populated by national minorities (this problem is particularly severe in the village Kanda of Mtskheta District, where ethnic Assyrians are residing);





# State Language and Education

Georgia is a signatory country of several international conventions on the right of education of national minorities, including:

- Articles 12th and 14th of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities that make a special emphasis on education as a fundamental right
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In Georgia, three major laws provide legal framework in education:

- Law of Georgia on General Education
- Law of Georgia on Higher Education
- Law of Georgia on Professional Education

## Monitoring

This chapter of the Monitoring Report presents the findings of the Tolerance Center under the auspices of Public Defender's Office of Georgia. The monitoring assessed the activities implemented in 2010 in line with the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan of the Government of Georgia. The chapter presents the snapshot of the activities implemented at preschool, general, vocational, higher and adult education levels. Each specific issue is discussed in line with the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and the activities stipulated in its Action Plan.

## Preschool Education

Preschool education is regulated by the Georgian legislation. Preschool institutions are under the auspices of local self-governments, therefore their functioning falls within the framework of local self-governments' competence.

According to the 2010 Report of the State Minister for Reintegration of Georgia, several tasks and activities were implemented with an end to meet the Priority Task №2.1 on the Provision of Access to Preschool Education to National Minorities:

On March 31, 2009, the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia approved the “Georgian Language Programme” by the Ministerial Decree №188. Within the framework of this Programme, the Ministry of Education is implementing the sub-program – “Enhancement of the Georgian Language Teaching and Learning at Preschool Level in Regions Densely Populated by Minority Communities” since 2009. The ultimate goal of the sub-program is to improve Georgian language acquisition among minority children by providing quality language programs at preschool level.

Within the Programme of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia<sup>1</sup> – “Meeting Educational Needs of Minority Preschool Children” – expert group (comprising experts on Georgian as a Second Language, a preschool education expert and an illustrator) worked out a framework for teachers’ methodological manual and the first part of preschool textbook for minority children. The second part of the textbook is planned to be finished and piloted in 2011 by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (NCAC)<sup>2</sup>.

Schools were selected in six municipalities of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti (Dmanisi, Bolnisi, Marneuli, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda). In these selected schools, rooms were equipped with relevant facilities and educational materials for establishment of preschool educational centers. National Curriculum and Assessment Center was supported by UNICEF<sup>3</sup> in accomplishment of the Project.

It is noteworthy that the activities carried out in 2010 repeats the information which was reported in 2009. In 2009, six kindergartens were equipped with necessary facilities. “Georgian as a Second Language Programme” as well as the “Programme for the Provision of Information for Preschool Children’s Parents” were launched in 2009. Instruction process was supposed to start from 2010. In the report as well as in the information provided by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia there is no progress in this regard.

At preschool education level, there are two outstanding problems: a) access to early childhood education; b) provision of quality preschool education for minority children.

Herewith, it should be pointed out that the access to early childhood education is a challenging issue throughout the whole country. According to the data for the years 2005-2006 by the National Statistics Office of Georgia, only 55% of children of early childhood age have access to preschool education in the whole country. The figure is substantially high in urban settlements compared with rural areas (urban – 67%, rural – 43%)<sup>4</sup>.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, access to preschool education remains to be more severe problem in the regions densely settled with national minorities. The situation is even worse in Kvemo Kartli region. In Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions, preschool education institutions are in an extremely poor condition and,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://mes.gov.ge/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncac.ge/> ; <http://ganatleba.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/georgia/> ; <http://www.ungeorgia.ge/geo/UNICEF.php>

<sup>4</sup> See the official website of the UNICEF at: <http://www.unicef.org/georgia/childhood.html>

these circumstances hinder parents from bringing their children to kindergartens. However, there is proven evidence that early childhood education is crucial for cognitive and social development of a child.

As mentioned, the second problem regarding early childhood education is an issue of preschool education quality. Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia took some solid steps for improving the quality of teaching and learning at preschool education level. Specifically, National Curriculum and Assessment Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia with the support of UNICEF, developed standards for Early Learning and Development of Children. The instruction process at preschool level should be conducted in line with the above-mentioned standards. For ensuring the implementation of these standards during the instruction process, National Curriculum and Assessment Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, in partnership with UNICEF, published several textbooks on early childhood care:

- a) “Environmental Standards for Preschool Education Institutions (principles and practices);
- b) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- c) Teachers’ Methodological Manual at Preschool Education Level;
- d) Guidebook for the Management of Preschool Education Institution;
- e) Programme for Early Childhood Development;
- f) Instrument for the Assessment Early Childhood Age Children.

National Curriculum and Assessment Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has launched trainings for the gradual introduction of preschool education standards.

There is a low awareness of existing early learning and development standards among teachers and administration staff in the regions densely populated by national minorities. It should be noted, that unlike the national curriculum at general education level, the national curriculum at preschool level is not available in minority languages.<sup>5</sup>

It should also be mentioned that recently elaborated important methodological textbooks and manuals are not available in minority languages for teachers and administrative staff working in minority regions of Georgia. Further, teachers and administrative staff working in minority regions did not have any training courses on introduction of new standards and methods of teaching at preschool education institutions. Therefore, the quality of teaching at preschool education institutions in minority regions remains to be an extensive problem.

## General Education

General education legislation as well as education policy have been substantially developed since the launch of educational reforms in 2004. The major goals of the education

<sup>5</sup> Source: the official letter of the Legal Department of the MoES to the Deputy Public Defender of Georgia № 08-2-13/1907 (14.-2.2012).

reform were to develop legislative framework in general education, eradicate corruption, improve curriculum and introduce European standards to the schools, provide harmonization of educational system, rehabilitate school infrastructure and develop necessary environment for the introduction of inclusive education in Georgia.

### Anti-discrimination

Under the Constitution of Georgia (Article 35.1), everyone shall have the right to receive education and the right to free choice of a form of education<sup>6</sup>. Law of Georgia on General Education (Article 9) also confirms the right and equal access to education for all (Article 3.2.a)<sup>7</sup>.

Law of Georgia on General Education (Article 4) stipulates that the language of instruction in general educational institutions of Georgia is Georgian, and in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia – Abkhazian. The same Article of the Law maintains, “Citizens of Georgia, whose native language is not Georgian, have the right to receive complete general education in their native language, according to the national curriculum in compliance with the law.” “At general educational institutions, teaching of the state language is obligatory, while in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, teaching of both state languages Georgian and Abkhazian is compulsory. It is possible to instruct in foreign languages at general educational institutions if envisaged in international agreements. However, even at these particular cases, general educational institution is obliged to teach the state language, while in Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia it is obligatory to teach both state languages – Georgian and Abkhazian.”

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

All accredited general educational institutions, both public and private are financed by the state according to per capita voucher system throughout 12 years of general education (Article 22). Article 23 of the Law of Georgia on General Education envisages provision of vouchers even for extended time for those schoolchildren who are not able to achieve necessary level and requirements for sufficient academic performance after studying 12 years at schools.

According to Article 4.4 of the Law of Georgia on General Education, instruction in foreign language at general educational institutions is allowed only if envisaged in international agreements. However, even in such cases, teaching of state language is compulsory. As stated in Articles 5.4 and 58.5 of the Law, in such cases not only Georgian language, but History, Geography and other Social Sciences should also be taught in Georgian after 2010-2011 academic year.

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<sup>6</sup> Constitution of Georgia, August 24, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Law of Georgia on General Education, 1330/IS, April 8, 2006.

Article 7 of the Law of Georgia on General Education maintains that schoolchildren can have an access to education in their native language, nearby to the place of their residence. For this purpose, the state ensures a bigger amount of voucher or/and additional funding that should be approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia within a respective targeted programme. In order to put into effect the afore-mentioned regulation of the Law, it is necessary that non-Georgian schools or sectors have at least three schoolchildren in the class at elementary level, six at basic level and 21 at secondary level (Article 7).

The Law of Georgia on General Education further protects schoolchildren from any type of violence and guarantees the right for expression in native language. Specifically, Point 2 of the Article 13 of the Law stipulates, “using of the study process in a public school for the purposes of religious indoctrination, proselytism and forced assimilation shall not be allowed.” This regulation does not restrict public schools to celebrate state holidays or historical dates, or to carry out the activities that promote national and universal values. Point 6 of the Law maintains, “the school shall observe and encourage establishing of tolerance and reciprocal respect between pupils, parents or teachers, irrespective of their social, ethnic, religious, lingual and world outlook belonging.” According to the point 7 of the Law of Georgia on General Education, “the school on the base of equality shall provide individual and collective right of members of minorities to use their native language, preserve and express their cultural values.”

Point 1 of the Article 18 of the Law of Georgia on General Education guarantees freedom of faith, religion and conscience among pupils, parents and teachers. According to the Point 2 of the same Article, “a pupil, parent or teacher can’t be obliged to fulfill duties, which contradict to their faith, religion and conscience.”

### National Curriculum and Textbooks

According to the Law of Georgia on General Education, schools are responsible to provide children with education that is built on universal human values, democratic principles and the idea of equality (Article 33.1.a). The same vision is further expanded in the “National Goals of Secondary Education” approved on October 18, 2004 and the curriculum of different subject areas. Specifically, “National Goals of Secondary Education” states, “the Georgian secondary education system aims at equipping young people with essential skills for communication, organization and team work enabling them (including those for whom Georgian is not a native language) to be law-obedient and tolerant citizens. Nowadays, in a dynamic ethnically and culturally diverse world, ability and skills of mutual respect, mutual understanding, and cognition acquires increasing importance for social life. School should equip youth with values and skills promoting respect for human rights, as well as personality, which will help them in future to retain their own, as well as others’ identities. An adolescent should be able to put acquired theoretical knowledge on fundamental human rights into practice and live with these principles”<sup>8</sup>. The major goal of the social science curriculum is the formation of a tolerant citizen who holds fundamental human dignities and rights.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 18 October 2004 Decree of the Government of Georgia on the approval of “National Aims of Education”, pp 2-3. See: <http://ganatleba.org/index.php?m=112>

<sup>9</sup> Curriculum of the social sciences. See: [http://ncac.ge/uploads/esg2009\\_2010/sciences.pdf](http://ncac.ge/uploads/esg2009_2010/sciences.pdf)

Publishers of school textbooks are required to give due regard to antidiscrimination issue when developing and publishing school textbooks. According to the Decree №019/N of the Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (March 15, 2010) that establishes rules for the approval of textbooks, the submitted textbooks will not be assessed and given approval, if a) the content, design or any other part of the textbook contains any kind of discriminatory elements (language, ethnicity, social belonging, etc.). The Decree is also followed by the specific criteria for the assessment of textbooks stating that one of the criteria for the assessment is that the submitted textbook promotes development of multifaceted and analytical thinking and fosters dispelling stereotypes among schoolchildren”<sup>10</sup>.

According to the instruction of the Decree №072 of the Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (March 30, 2009), that establishes the rules for the approval of school textbooks and criteria for their assessment, one of the criteria for the assessment of textbook is that, “d) the content of the textbook envisages diversity of school children in terms of race, language, sex, religion, political vision, national, ethnical and social belonging, origin, social status and place of residence”<sup>11</sup>. This regulation, as one of the assessment criteria, is not included in the Decree for the Approval of Textbooks issued in 2010.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is continuously taking significant steps for improving access to general education. In this respect, one of the major directions of the Ministry is to provide translation of the national curriculum and school textbooks into minority languages.

### 1. Translations of Textbooks into Minority Languages

National Curriculum and Assessment Center continues to provide translation of accredited textbooks into Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages for non-Georgian schools. At this point, textbooks for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th and 12th grades have been translated in minority languages.

Within the framework of the “Sub-Programme for Improvement of Access to Textbooks for Students of Non-Georgian Sector,” in academic year 2009-2010 Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia distributed free-of-charge bilingual textbooks of History and Geography to students of the 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades. Textbooks for Georgian as a Second Language were also distributed free of charge to students of 1-4 classes of all non-Georgian schools. The budget of this Sub-Programme equals to GEL 639,210, number of students covered is – 35,874, while number of books equals to 75,895 units.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia provides non-Georgian schools with translated textbooks and is intending to make further efforts toward this direction. However, the MoES intends to develop bilingual textbooks instead of translation into minority lan-

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<sup>10</sup> Decree of the Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (March 15, 2010) on the Approval of Textbooks. See: <http://ncac.ge/index.php?m=791>

<sup>11</sup> Decree of the Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (March 30, 2009) on the Approval of Textbooks. See: <http://ganatleba.org/index.php?m=124>

guages. This will enable minority students to have an access to education in their native language and, at the same time, improve Georgian language acquisition as the state language of the country. This vision and step is in line with Multilingual Education Reform of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

In academic year 2009-2010, 6025 9th graders of non-Georgian schools were provided with the textbooks of the History of Georgia, Geography, and Civic Education.

National Curriculum and Assessment Center publishes a newspaper “Dialogue” in order to facilitate the process of the introduction of national curriculum at general educational institutions. The newspaper “Dialogue” was translated into Azerbaijani and Armenian and is available for non-Georgian schools.

Several problems and challenges were identified regarding national curriculum and textbooks during the focus group discussions and meetings with expert groups:

- a) Teachers did not undergo trainings on introducing new curriculum in the classrooms. It is noteworthy that the introduction of new national curriculum is planned to be launched in non-Georgian schools from the academic year of 2012-2013. Consequently, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is intending to conduct trainings for teachers in non-Georgian schools so that they can effectively introduce new curriculum in the classrooms;
- b) National Curriculum and Assessment Center continues translation of textbooks into minority languages. However, this process is hindered by several factors, that include high costs for translated books and free textbooks provided from Armenia and Azerbaijan. Considering the above-mentioned circumstances, teachers in non-Georgian schools prefer to instruct with old curriculum and textbooks, which is reflected on the quality of education in non-Georgian schools. Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is taking tangible steps to lessen these problems and implements targeted programmes, that allow distribution of textbooks free of charge to minority students;
- c) There is a controversial assessment regarding textbooks’ translation quality into minority languages. Some teachers point to the inadequate translation of textbooks, however they outline that there is a considerable progress in this regard compared to previous years;
- d) Translated textbooks are not supplied in time and sometimes it does not make sense to purchase them for schoolchildren. Apart from that, textbooks that are supposed to be distributed free of charge within the “Social Assistance Programme” are often delivered to children very late and this has additional hindering effect in terms of introduction of new curriculum and textbooks in non-Georgian schools.

## 2. Improvement, Piloting and Implementation of Multilingual Education (MLE) Policy

On December 15, 2010, amendment was made to the Law of Georgia on General Education. The amendment is already a part of the Law. New point was added to the 2nd Article of the Law stating that multilingual education is “a type of education that aims at development and deepening of linguistic competences in different languages among schoolchil-

dren. It implies provision of such instruction at general education level that boosts acquisition of the languages as well as promotes efficiency of their use (Law of Georgia on General Education, 2005). According to the same amendment, development and support to the introduction of multilingual education have become one of the duties of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center. Therefore, the list of subjects and subject areas were modified in the national curriculum. For instance, subjects referred as “Georgian Language and Literature” and “Abkhazian Language and Literature” were changed and named as “the State Language.” This amendment once again reaffirmed the policy vision declared in 2005 that the State Language and Social Sciences should be taught only in the state language at non-Georgian schools of the country.

In 2010, by the Decree of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, the “Multilingual Education Support Programme” was approved<sup>12</sup>. Within the framework of this Programme, the Statute of Multilingual Education, Registration Mechanisms and Unified Application Form were elaborated and approved. According to the Statute and based on the Decree of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, the Council of Multilingual Education was set up, engaging Center for National Curriculum and Assessment in its work. The Council provided review and approval of multilingual educational programmes submitted by general educational institutions.

With an end to support multilingual schools, three regional seminars (180 participants) in multilingual education were conducted in 2010 in Tbilisi, Marneuli and Akhalkalaki; Audio-video version of methodological film “Learning in Several Languages” on multilingual education was developed, released and translated into Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, English and Ukrainian languages.

Within the framework of the “Multilingual Education Support Programme” and with the support of OSCE Higher Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), methodological resources (multilingual education teacher’s guide and multilingual education training modules) in multilingual education were developed for teachers and trainers. Publication of the materials is planned for the subsequent year.

During the reporting period, 40 multilingual schools have been registered and the Council has been established that ensures approval of multilingual education programmes submitted by schools.

An important step in the framework of the “Multilingual Education Support Programme” was allocation of targeted financial subsidies to 40 pilot schools (subsidies will be used for increase of bilingual education teachers’ salaries). In addition, with the aim of effective implementation of the Programme, 40 pilot schools were provided with visual aids in different subject areas.

With the support of USAID’s National Integration and Tolerance in Georgia (NITG) project, implemented by United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG), 40 pilot schools

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<sup>12</sup> <http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?t=srch&search=multilingual&id=547&lang=geo;>  
<http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?t=srch&search=multilingual&id=1213&lang=geo>



participating in the Programme for Multilingual Education were provided with audio-vidéo materials – TV sets, DVD players and collections of Georgian films and cartoons.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia developed the draft statute of bilingual education programmes for general education institutions. The schools are given an opportunity to select respective MLE programme according to the needs and reality of each specific general educational institution. Existing version of the Law of Georgia on General Education provides schools with direct and clear instructions on bilingual education programmes. According to the point 4 of the Article 5 of the Law of Georgia on General Education, in those schools where the language of instruction is not Georgian, History and Geography of Georgia, as well as other subjects under Social Sciences should be taught in Georgian and in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia in Georgian or Abkhazian languages. In line with the Point 5 of the Article 58th of the same Law, “Point 4 of the Article 5 of the Law should be put into effect gradually but no later than the beginning of 2010-2011 academic year.” It is impossible to teach and learn Social Sciences in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions from the academic year 2010-2011. The issue that non-Georgian schools cannot meet the requirements of the afore-mentioned regulation on teaching Social Sciences only in Georgian has been underlined and put forward during monitoring group’s meetings with teachers, school administration and parents in minority regions. They consider this regulation inapt even in the context of bilingual education. They believe that learning of History, Geography and other Social Sciences require the highest linguistic competences. Therefore, they believe that moving toward the achievement of such high linguistic competence can be a target but not the tool for achieving a language competence.

Representatives of national minorities realize that the acquisition of Georgian as a state language of the country is essential for their integration into the society. They have higher motivation for language acquisition compared to the previous years. This was especially explicit in Kvemo Kartli region.

According to the focus group discussion, parents try to solve the problem of Georgian language incompetence through bringing their children to Georgian schools. However, after bringing a child to a Georgian school, a child faces many challenges that still need to be addressed, such as:

1. Parents do not know Georgian and cannot support their children in a study process, especially in the elementary classes when they need help from their parents;
2. Since minority children do not know Georgian, they have a low academic performance compared to ethnically Georgian peers; this, in its turn, diminishes their self-confidence;
3. Due to the fact that minority children have poor academic success, teachers are forced to downgrade the requirements during the teaching and learning process, which in its turn has a negative impact on academic performance of the whole class;
4. Frequently, teachers do not know minority languages and therefore they have problems of communication with minority students;
5. Often, teachers and Georgian children know community language since the communication language in some communities is minority language. This impedes acquisition of Georgian, as a state language.

Meetings of the Monitoring Group revealed some issues in multilingual education that need to be addressed:

- a) The attitude of the population toward bilingual education has shifted in a positive way; however, fear and caution still persist, especially from the side of teachers. In this view, it is crucial to have clear-cut and straightforward policy, especially with regards to human resources. The effective implementation of multilingual education is greatly determined by the qualified teachers. There is no teachers' professional standard that will guide professional development of bilingual teachers. Herewith, it is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is intending to develop and approve standards for bilingual teachers;
- b) In pilot MLE schools, there was no pre-assessment for the evaluation of the effectiveness of bilingual education, both in terms of language development and development of academic, social and cognitive skills; there is no assessment mechanism for bilinguals;
- c) Despite positive attitude towards multilingual education, involvement of communities and parents in these programmes is not sufficient. However, parents and community engagement is an important prerequisite for effective implementation of multilingual education in Georgia.

### 3. Provision of Access to Education in Languages of National Minorities

According to the Law of Georgia on General Education and the data from 2009, 234 non-Georgian schools (404 non-Georgian schools and sectors in total) were functioning:

Language of Instruction	Schools with mixed language sectors		Schools where language of instruction is only one one of the minority languages	
	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Schools	Number of Students
Azerbaijani	124	27442	94	18462
Armenian	140	15592	124	14944
Russian	135	24512	14	3748
Ossetian	3	165	1	60
Other	2	242	1	37

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoES)<sup>13</sup>

Notably, the above-mentioned figures were substantially changed in 2011. According to the data from 2011, there are 216 non-Georgian schools and 305 non-Georgian sectors.

<sup>13</sup> Tabatadze, Sh. Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), "Cultural Dialogue and Civic Consciousness," p. 85 .

Language of Instruction	Schools with mixed language sectors		Schools where language of instruction is only one one of the minority languages	
	Number of Schools		Number of Schools	
Azerbaijani	123		88	
Armenian	133		116	
Russian	61		12	

Note: there are some schools where language of instruction are three languages. Therefore, the figure in the table exceeds 305.

The difference from 2009 to 2011 is explicit. It should be underlined that the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia implements schools' optimization process and the cut of the number of non-Georgian schools relates to this factor. During the optimization process, Georgian schools shut down as well. Problems regarding the Russian schools are even more overt. Out of 135 Russian schools and sectors in 2009, only 61 Russian schools and sectors are functioning in 2011. Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti residents explicitly talked about the problem of closing Russian schools and sectors. They emphasized that the closure of Russian schools hindered access to general education for minority children. For those children who were instructed in Russian language, it is a great challenge and struggle to pursue their studies in a different language. There is another problem related to the same issue. It is possible to move a child to other Russian school, however in this case parents face transportation problems because of a remote distance from the place of residence.<sup>14</sup>

Access to education in native language of minorities are administered either by establishment of private schools or/and through teaching in minority languages in public schools of Georgia. General educational institution can be established either as a legal entity of public law, or as a commercial or non-commercial entity of private law (Law of Georgia on Legal Entity of Public Law, Article 31.1).

This opportunity is realized in practice. There are 16 private schools in Georgia where minority language is the only or one of the languages of instruction<sup>15</sup>. It should be pointed out that the majority of such schools are located in big cities (Tbilisi – 11 schools, Batumi

<sup>14</sup> Report of the monitoring group in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Letter of the MoES to the UNAG about statistical information on private non-Georgian schools, May 20, 2010.

– 2, Rustavi – 2). In the regions densely populated by minorities there is only one non-Georgian private school which is located in Algeti village of Marneuli municipality.

Teaching native languages to national minorities remains one of the major problems, as maintained by teachers and parents in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions. In 2006-2007, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in partnership with OSCE/HCNM developed the draft of the curriculum of Azerbaijani and Armenian as native languages. Experts from Armenia and Azerbaijan took part in working out the curriculum. According to the above-mentioned curriculum, trainings for native language teachers were undertaken.<sup>16</sup> From 2008, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia did not continue its work towards this direction. The curriculum was not approved and, subsequently, all efforts for introducing this curriculum and developing corresponding textbooks have been terminated. Therefore, quality of teaching Armenian and Azerbaijani as native languages for minority children is still problematic.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia did not resume work towards this direction in 2010. Consequently, minority languages are not part of the national curriculum since there is no teaching and learning programme of these subject areas. Azerbaijani and Armenian languages as subjects are not presented in the Law of Georgia on General Education. The only document where these subject areas are mentioned is “Hour Net” of the national curriculum.<sup>17</sup>

Akin to the above-mentioned problems regarding the curriculum there are no textbooks of Armenian and Azerbaijani languages that are in line with the needs and context of the education system in Georgia. Therefore, teaching of native languages is conducted according to the curriculum and textbooks from Armenia and Azerbaijan. Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is not aware of the details of the afore-mentioned curriculum, including content, structure and the programme, since there is no Georgian translation of the afore-mentioned curriculum .

This problem is particularly acute in 12<sup>th</sup> grades of Armenian and Azerbaijani schools. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, teachers instruct in 12<sup>th</sup> grades with textbooks published in Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, it is noteworthy that in Azerbaijan, general education covers only 11 years; therefore, textbooks of native language for 12<sup>th</sup> graders are not available at all<sup>18</sup>. In Armenia, transfer to 12 years of general education was introduced in 2009<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, in 2010, textbooks for native language acquisition for 12<sup>th</sup> graders were not available for Armenian schools as well.

In addition to non-existence of the curriculum for teaching native languages to national minorities, there is no professional standard for minority language teachers. This fact hampers introduction of multilingual education and threatens the quality of teaching of native

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Source: the official letter of the Legal Department of the MoES to the Deputy Public Defender of Georgia № 08-2-13/1907 (14.02.2012)

<sup>18</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002112/211298e.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002112/211297e.pdf>

languages in non-Georgian schools. Since the language transfer is not implemented effectively, poor quality of native language teaching has an impact in terms of acquiring other disciplines, including learning of Georgian as a second language. Considering all the above-mentioned challenges, it is decisive to establish specific mechanisms in order to improve teaching of native languages as independent subject areas at non-Georgian schools. This will substantially promote quality of education in non-Georgian schools of the country.

In 2010, in the framework of the Sub-Programme for the Protection of Minority Languages of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, funding was provided for the Ossetian Sunday school (based on public school №11). In the Ossetian Sunday school, students had a possibility to learn the Ossetian language, culture, history, folklore, Caucasian dances and song.

#### 4. Improving Teaching of Georgian as a Second Language

Improvement of teaching and learning of Georgian as a second language at general education level is one of the priorities of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan: “Priority task №2.4. Promotion of State Language Acquisition.”

During the reporting period, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia took several tangible steps toward this direction. Specifically, the following activities and programmes were implemented:

##### a) Introducing programme “Georgian as a Second Language at non-Georgian Schools”

Elaboration of Georgian as a Second Language Subject Area<sup>20</sup> was completed in the framework of New National Curriculum. The afore-mentioned document was given for review to non-Georgian language teachers in the regions densely populated by national minorities (on June 30 – in Akhaltsikhe to teachers of all six Samtskhe-Javakheti municipalities, on July 1 – in Rustavi, Kvemo Kartli region).

In 2010-2011 academic year, a renewed programme for teaching Georgian language was introduced in the 4th grade of non-Georgian schools in line with the updated subject area programme of the National Curriculum.

Textbook of Georgian as Second Language was elaborated and published for 4th graders of non-Georgian schools and sectors.

With an end to improve quality of state language teaching in schools, 340 teachers of Georgian as second language were tested in language competence. Testing was conducted throughout the entire country in seven municipalities (Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Marneuli, Gardabani, Tsalka and Tbilisi).

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.tpdg.ge/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=103](http://www.tpdg.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=103)

It is notable that 340 teachers were selected according to their last names. Teachers with non-Georgian last names had to take tests. This fact was assessed as discriminatory by Georgian language teachers. Further, the selection of the participants for testing resulted in several problems:

- a. Some of ethnically Georgian teachers had to take tests because after marriage to ethnically non-Georgian, they transferred to the last names of their husbands;
- b. National minority teachers with ethnically Georgian husbands who changed their last names after the marriage did not take part in testing process;
- c. Some teachers from Svaneti participated in testing because of the error during the identification of the last names of minority teachers.

Despite the afore-mentioned drawbacks, testing was of utmost importance. It revealed extremely low competence of Georgian language teachers at non-Georgian schools and proved that the lessons conducted by them cannot be effective for schoolchildren studying in non-Georgian schools.

Based on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), National Curriculum and Assessment Center<sup>21</sup> together with Teacher's Professional Development Center<sup>22</sup> started Programme for Voucherization of Teachers of Georgian as Second Language. Corresponding training programmes for practical courses of language teaching were prepared for non-Georgian teachers. In addition, organizations for teacher professional development trainings were selected, which underwent respective trainings from local and foreign consultants. Implementation of similar professional development programmes is crucial for improving teaching of Georgian as a Second Language.

#### b) Programme "Qualified Georgian Language Specialists in Schools of the Regions Settled by National Minorities"

Teacher's Professional Development Center is implementing the State Programme – "Qualified Georgian Language Specialists in Schools of the Regions Settled by National Minorities."<sup>23</sup> The Programme implies sending qualified teachers of Georgian language and literature to those non-Georgian schools of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti villages, where the issue of Georgian language acquisition is especially acute: approximately 30% of Georgian language and literature teachers do not speak basic Georgian themselves.

In 2009-2010 up to 800 persons participated in the open competition conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Out of these, only 64 teachers passed the test and interview successfully. In addition to hourly imbursement, newly selected teacher-trainers get from the State Programme 1,000 GEL as a monthly salary (three times more than the average teacher's salary). They take obligatory trainings in the following subjects: "Methods of Teaching Georgian as the Second Language," "Ethnic and Religious Tolerance" and "Intensive Course in Azerbaijani or Armenian Languages." Only

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.ncac.ge/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.tpd.c.ge/>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.tpd.c.ge/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=103](http://www.tpd.c.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=103)

after taking these courses, teachers are eligible to instruct at schools located in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti villages settled by national minorities. Newly selected teachers and trainers are required to know the local language at least at the elementary level. Alongside with teaching Georgian Language and Literature at schools, teachers are assigned to conduct training for teachers, organize various events in order to increase motivation for learning Georgian in the community and enhance inclusion in the State Programme. According to the quarterly report of the teachers, in 2010, up to 6,000 students were engaged in the Programme and trainings were conducted for 500 local teachers.

In order to effectively conduct teaching process, Teacher's Professional Development Center provided target schools with necessary facilities, audio and video devices, visual aids and stationary.

In 2010, the "Summer School" project was implemented in all schools participating in the Programme. Teachers assembled groups of schoolchildren in advance and in July continued learning Georgian in a free mode (by way of games, excursions, events). For 2011-2014, it is planned to increase the scale of the summer schools and engage more students and teachers. The afore-mentioned Programme is implemented in the following municipalities: Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Tsalka, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Gardabani, Marneuli and Sagarejo. The budget of the Programme in 2010 equaled to GEL 773,000.

In 2010-2014, it is envisaged to increase the number of qualified teachers of Georgian language and literature in regions densely settled with national minorities and to engage more villages in this State Programme.

The activities implemented by Teacher's Professional Development Center is of utmost significance for the improvement of quality of teaching and learning Georgian as a Second Language. Herewith, it should be noted that the meetings with teachers and experts conducted by Monitoring Group revealed several problems. Namely, similar programmes have been implemented since 1998. The major objective of such programmes is to improve the state language acquisition through allocating Georgian language teachers at non-Georgian schools. Therefore, these programmes have short-term results. Several problems are in place in terms of achieving long-term and sustainable results. There are no sustainable policies or programmes that can ensure training or re-training of teachers (working in minority regions) who can teach Georgian as a Second Language continuously and for a longer period.

### Teachers Professional Development and Certification

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia established legal entity of public law "Teacher's Professional Development Center" in order to ensure teachers' professional development. The Center implemented several programmes and activities within the reform:

Teacher's Professional Development Center and National Curriculum and Assessment Center developed Teacher's Professional Standard, also elementary/secondary subject standards for eight subjects/subject areas. In addition, the standard for elementary school

teachers was developed. Teacher's Professional Development standard has been translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. 900 copies of the translated standard have been distributed among non-Georgian schools and Educational Resource Centers<sup>24</sup>.

Teacher's Professional Standard issued on November 21, 2008 states: "Teacher is aware of the principles and approaches of inclusive, multicultural and multilingual educations and puts them into practice during the planning and implementation of his/her work."<sup>25</sup> Inter-cultural aspects are more overtly reflected in subject area standards, namely in professional standards for Social Sciences and professional standards for teachers of Foreign Languages<sup>26</sup>.

There is no teacher's standard of Armenian and Azerbaijani languages as native languages in Teacher's Professional Development Standard and the Certification Statute. It should be noted that Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia approved Teachers Certification Statute by the Decree № 1101, December 4, 2009. The Statute defines the regulations on conducting certification exams, rules for obtaining teacher's certificate, guidelines for issuing teacher's certificate, requirements for the renewal of the right for teaching and cancellation of the certificate before expiration date. According to the Statute, teacher's certification exam is based on the approved National Curriculum and Teacher's Professional Development Standard. The Certification exam is comprised of subject part and a test in professional skills. Certification exam is passed once a teacher goes through both - subject and professional parts successfully<sup>27</sup>.

The subject part of the Certification exam is held in the following subject areas of the national curriculum: a) Georgian Language and Literature (in A/R of Abkhazia – Georgian and Abkhazian); b) Mathematics; c) Social Sciences: c.a) History; c.b) Geography; c.c) Civic education; d) Natural Sciences: d.a) Physics; d.b) Chemistry; d.c) Biology; e) Foreign Languages: e.a) English; e.b) German; e.c) French; e.d) Russian; f) Sports, Esthetics and Labor subject areas: f.a) Arts; f.b) Music; f.c) Sports.

Certification exams are held in Georgian and in A/R of Abkhazia – in Abkhazian language too. Certification exams are also conducted in Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages for those teachers who want to teach at respective non-Georgian schools.

Until the end of 2014, those teachers are eligible to take certification exams who have at least one year of teaching experience or who underwent induction period successfully. Also, those teachers who are not acting teachers on the moment of registration, but do have one year of teaching experience at educational institution are eligible to take certification exams. In case of passing certification exams by the afore-mentioned time, the

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<sup>24</sup> Annual Report (2009) . Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan, Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration Issues

<sup>25</sup> Teacher's Professional Standard. See: [http://tpdc.ge/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=Article&id=88&Itemid=93&lang=ka](http://tpdc.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=Article&id=88&Itemid=93&lang=ka)

<sup>26</sup> Teacher's Professional Standard. See: [http://tpdc.ge/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=Article&id=89&Itemid=94&lang=ka](http://tpdc.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=Article&id=89&Itemid=94&lang=ka)

<sup>27</sup> Statute of Teacher's Certification. See: <http://tpdc.ge/images/uploads/File/sertificirebis%20debuleba.pdf>



qualification requirements related to education envisaged by Georgian legislation will be regarded as fulfilled for the entities implied in this Point.

The Statute provides detailed information about the procedures for conducting Teacher's Certification Exams. The registration deadline for the first Certification Exams is March 31, 2010. The exams will take place in summer, 2010.

During the certification process, Teacher's Professional Development Center took some steps to support teachers. Since 2008, Teacher's Professional Development Center is publishing bimonthly journal "Teacher" that is a quite good source for teachers. Four journals were published in 2008. In addition, the Center ensured publication of teacher supplementary guidelines (three parts) for certification exams. Further, manual for teachers "Intercultural Education" was published by the Center considering the requirements of bilingual and multicultural competences in Teacher's Professional Standard.

Teacher's Professional Development Center and the NGO "Center for Civil Integration and Intercultural Relations" with the financial support of OSCE/HCNM translated the journal "Teacher" and other teacher supplementary materials into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages and distributed its 1290 copies at non-Georgian schools. Within the same project, three-language (Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani) education web-portal for non-Georgian schools [www.ganatleba.ge](http://www.ganatleba.ge) was set. The portal gives opportunity to minority teachers to get information on ongoing changes in education system and have an access to educational and teaching materials and resources in their native languages – methodological books, teacher's manuals, curriculum, teacher's standard and legislation. The journal, supplementary materials and web-portal were not translated into Russian; therefore, they are not available for the schools and sectors where the language of instruction is Russian.

Several problems were identified based on the analysis of accredited programmes by Teacher's Professional Development Center, statistical information about teachers who registered for the certification exams in 2010<sup>28</sup> and teachers who underwent teacher professional development trainings. Also, problems were revealed through the meetings conducted by the monitoring group:

- a) Despite the fact, that Teacher's Professional Development Standard encompasses the requirement to have intercultural competence among teachers, out of 40 accredited programme for teacher's professional development, only one programme contains the issues pertaining to intercultural awareness. Only one programme considers upgrading teachers competences in intercultural issues and developing teaching strategies for conducting culturally appropriate lessons. Out of 15 accredited programmes of Georgian language and Literature, none integrates and envisages teaching of native language and literature with transformative approaches. Issues regarding cultural dialogue and multi-perspectivity are integrated in only 10% of foreign languages subject area programmes, which are over 50 in total<sup>29</sup>;

<sup>28</sup> Statistical information is presented in the official letter of the TPDC sent to UNAG on May 20, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Tabatadze, Sh. Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), "Cultural Dialogue and Civic Consciousness," Article – "Intercultural Education in Georgia."

- b) Availability of teacher's professional development programmes for non-Georgian schoolteachers are limited. The providers of teacher's professional development trainings do not implement programmes in minority languages (because of scarcity of adequate human resources and non-efficiency), while majority of teachers of non-Georgian schools does not know enough Georgia in order to undertake professional development courses in state language. As a result, non-Georgian schoolteachers do not undertake professional development courses and therefore majority of them does not register for teacher's certification exams. For instance, in Akhalkalaki, out of 54 registered teachers for certification exam, only one teacher is ethnically non-Georgian – a teacher of foreign language, while the rest of the teachers are instructing either in Georgian schools or are teachers of Georgian language in non-Georgian schools. In Marneuli, out of 64 registered teachers for certification exam, only 10 are ethnically non-Georgian. The rest of the teachers in Marneuli are instructing either in Georgian schools or are teachers of Georgian language in non-Georgian schools of Marneuli municipality.

Monitoring group witnessed similar situation in all other municipalities and districts densely settled with national minorities:

- c) Professional standard of Georgian as a second language is not approved; therefore, service providers that obtained accreditation in this direction, do not conduct trainings and there are no vouchers provided as well for Georgian as a second language teachers<sup>30</sup>. However, it is remarkable that Teacher's Professional Development Center and national Curriculum and Assessment Center in partnership with the service providers are intending to develop professional development and training programmes for Georgian language teachers at non-Georgian schools. In 2011, within the above-mentioned initiative, 310 teachers from Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions will undertake trainings in Georgian language. The initiative is financially supported by the Government of Japan;
- d) Teachers of Armenian and Azerbaijani languages, as teachers of native languages are not provided with professional development trainings. Further, there is no professional standards for these teachers based on which their professional development and trainings will be provided.

Regarding non-Georgian schools, it should be underlined that there is a problem of scarcity of adequate human resources. During the monitoring visit in the field, representatives of educational resource centers and school administration underscored that there is a dearth of qualified teachers in non-Georgian schools. This information is supported by the data from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia according to which in 2008, the age of 46,7% of teachers at non-Georgian schools was above 45 years. At the same time, number of pre-service teacher trainings or preparations of new teachers at university level who will substitute the afore-mentioned cohort at non-Georgian schools are not sufficient. These are mainly caused by lack of interest and low prestige of teacher

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<sup>30</sup> Annual Report (2009) . Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan, Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration Issues.

profession. Number of future teachers/teacher graduates is very low (only 134 students enrolled at Master's level in education department for the years 2007-2008, while the number 2008-2009 was 354 and in 2009-2010 – 642 at state higher education institutions)<sup>31</sup>.

Herewith, it is worth mentioning that the percentage of minority students enrolled in the department of education is very low since the introduction of Unified National Admission Exams. This means that in higher education institutions of Georgia, the preparation of new generation of teachers for non-Georgian schools is almost impracticable.

### School Leaving Exams

On March 5, 2010, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia approved the Decree – “the Statute for the Certification of Education through External Exams.” According to the Statute on external exams, it is possible to take external tests in Georgian, Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. Schoolchildren who pass external tests in Russian, Armenian or Azerbaijani languages will take exams of Georgian language and Foreign Languages in line with the respective curriculum (Article 4.5).

Since 2011, with an end to improve the quality of teaching at schools, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia adopted obligatory school leaving exams. School leaving exams will be based on existing National Curriculum. School leaving exams will be held in the following subjects:

- Georgian Language and Literature
- History
- Geography
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Mathematics
- Foreign Languages.

At the same time, school leaving exams will qualify students for a general school certificate and prove their minimal competency. Besides, the students intending to enroll at higher educational institution will have to pass exams in Georgian and Foreign Languages and General Aptitude as well as a fourth, department-specific exam based on a different normative test while passing qualifying tests for the rest of subjects<sup>32</sup>.

Introduction of school leaving exams can be one of the effective ways for introducing National Curriculum and respective textbooks to non-Georgian schools. Due to this initiative, schools and teachers will use the National Curriculum and textbooks so that school graduates are able to pass school leaving exams. However, past challenges regarding adopt-

<sup>31</sup> Students distribution according to the programmes. See: [http://www.geostat.ge/?action=page&p\\_id=205&lang=geo](http://www.geostat.ge/?action=page&p_id=205&lang=geo)

<sup>32</sup> Priorities of Education system, 2010-2015, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, 2010.

ing the National Curriculum and textbooks at non-Georgian schools can have hindering effect for conducting school leaving exams at non-Georgian schools. Namely:

- Because of three major factors, introduction of new curriculum and usage of new textbooks was quite a slow process: 1) reforms in non-Georgian schools started one year later; 2) poor quality of translation and late provision of textbooks; 3) high price of textbooks published in Georgia and free textbooks from Azerbaijan and Armenia. Considering the afore-mentioned factors, exam system that is totally based on new national curriculum can be very challenging for the regions densely settled with national minorities and can cause extremely poor results at the exams<sup>33</sup>;
- Another challenging issue can be a test in Georgian as a Second Language for school leavers. School leaving exams should be based on the new national curriculum, while there is an uncertainty of Georgian as a Second Language in the curriculum itself. There is a curriculum developed for 1-12 grades of Georgian as a Second Language, which envisages that a schoolchild will reach to certain level of competence in Georgian if he/she studies with new national curriculum from the outset, i.e. from the 1st grade. However, graduates from 2011 and onwards did not study Georgian from the 1st grade in line with the new national curriculum. They learned Georgian with textbook “Tavtavi,” which is not based on official curriculum. Herewith, it should be noted that even “Tavtavi” was taught in a different way considering specificities of a certain class, school, districts and region.

## Higher Education

### Anti-discrimination

According to the Article 4<sup>th</sup> of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, “the language of instruction at a higher education institution shall be Georgian and in Abkhazia – also Abkhazian language Instruction in other languages, except for individual study courses shall be allowed whenever so provided by an international agreement or agreed with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.”

For a branch of a foreign higher education institution to conduct the relevant educational activities on the territory of Georgia, it is necessary to obtain licensing or/and accreditation commensurate with the procedure envisaged by the international agreements and legislation of Georgia (Article 14.4).

According to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, a higher education institution shall ensure equal treatment for all, regardless of ethnic or social origin, gender, political or religious beliefs (Article 16.1. d.) and prohibit all forms of discrimination on religious and ethnic grounds (Article 3.2.h). Article 3.4 of the same Law states that “no structural units of political and religious organizations can be established within a higher education institution.”

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<sup>33</sup> Tabatadze. Sh., Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD). “New Initiatives of Education Policy in the Context of Civil Integration,” (2010).

The Law of Georgia on Higher Education further stipulates, that the information about student's faith and religious beliefs, which became known to the academic personnel during the study process shall be confidential (Article 43.4). The same Law maintains that a student shall be entitled to make use of higher education institution's material and technical, library, information and other resources (Article 43.1.c).

### Access to Higher Education

Access to higher education is one of the priorities of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan: "Priority Task №2.3. Improvement of Access to Higher Education for Representatives of National Minorities."

Article 43.1 of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education envisages allocation of scholarship, financial or material aid and other benefits from the state, higher education institution or other sources. Furthermore, in certain cases, the state provides social assistance programme for socially vulnerable students (Articles 6.1.c and 52.8).

Considering the problem of access to higher education for the students belonging to national minorities, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia initiated a special "mitigating" policy for minority entrants. Specifically, in November 19, 2009, an amendment in the Law of Georgia on Higher Education was made that established quota system for national minority entrants and defined the amount of those entrants who will undergo preparatory intensive Georgian language course. It was defined that higher education institutions who accept students based on only the results of General Aptitude Test either in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages are obliged to provide 5% of available places for each Azerbaijani and Armenian cohort of entrants within the framework of available places defined by the National Education Accreditation Center. Similar approach will apply to Abkhaz and Ossetian students – 1% per each group (Article 52.51).

In addition, considering the number of those students who have been accepted to higher education institution based on only general aptitude tests in Azerbaijani or Armenian, it is possible to make some reshuffles in percentages of the above-mentioned number (while the total remains the same), if there are informed and motivated decision of higher educational institution and a consent of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

The afore-mentioned quota system will be valid from the academic year 2012-2013 for Abkhazian and Ossetian entrants (Article 90.23). This new system of enrollment of national minority students through quota system is temporary and will be valid until the end of academic year 2018-2019 (Article 90.25).

After the successful completion of preparatory intensive Georgian language course, a student is eligible to pursue study at Bachelor's level, certified doctor /dentist/veterinary or certified specialist delivered in Georgian. A student collects 60 credits upon successful completion of one-year preparatory language course in Georgian (Article 473.2) and for the first study year at higher education institution, a student is obliged to take one-

year Georgian Language intensive course. Upon the end of one-year preparatory language course, higher education institution will grant to a student a respective certificate of completion.

The special „mitigating“ policy toward national minorities of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia at higher education level has been positively reflected in the number of entrants registered for the Unified Admission Exams for the year 2010. Compared with 2008, the number of registered Azerbaijani entrants increased from 250 to 335 (34%), while the number of Armenian entrants scaled up from 113 to 253 (123,8%). It was important that ethnically Azerbaijani entrants from Kakheti region became much more active in this regard. For instance, if none of the entrants registered for the Unified Admission Exams from Sagarejo district throughout 2005-2009, 12 entrants were registered in 2010. Despite the positive effect and substantial increase in the number of registered minority entrants for the Unified Admission Exams, a tangible amount of intellectual resources does not have an access to higher education. The number of registered entrants cover only 22.5% of the available places through quota system (there are 1301 places for Armenian entrants out of which only 253 are registered (19,44%) and 335 registered out of 1301 available places for Azerbaijani entrants that equals to 25,75%).

In 2010, the following number of minority students were admitted at accredited higher education institutions (HEIs) as a result of passing General Aptitude Test of Unified Admission Exams either in Azerbaijani or Armenian languages:

- 178 entrants accepted at HEIs based on the results in general aptitude test in Azerbaijani language;
- 123 entrants accepted at HEIs based on the results in general aptitude test in Armenian language.

In 2010, the following number of minority students obtained state grant for studying at accredited higher education institutions (HEIs) as a result of passing General Aptitude Test in Azerbaijani and Armenian at Unified Admission Exams:

- 101 entrants obtained state grant based on the results in general aptitude test in Azerbaijani language;
- 112 entrants obtained state grant based on the results in general aptitude test in Armenian language.

Civil integration policy toward national minorities is positively assessed. Level of awareness on special policy at higher education level for national minority entrants is also very high. Recommendations of Public Defender's Office (2009) are already taken into account by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration Issues and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. They intensely cooperate and conduct meetings with the population of the country. Representatives of the National Examinations Center have also been organizing meetings with entrants in order to inform them about the changes and novelties in terms of higher education access. Future entrants were provided with information and guidelines how to apply to the quota system developed for national minorities<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Annual Report of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration Issues, 2010

Notably, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia took important steps toward civil integration of minorities compared with the previous reporting period. Recommendation of Public Defender's Office in 2009 maintained that it was necessary to define the levels of Georgian language competence and assess admitted students in line with the defined levels. In 2010, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia developed levels of Georgian language.<sup>35</sup> This will help higher education institutions to carry out one-year Georgian Language Intensive Course more effectively and assess the level of students' competence in Georgian language.

### Adult Education

Adult education is also one of the priorities of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan. This direction is reflected in the next priority task of the Plan: "Programmes Promoting State Language Acquisition among Adults (Adult Education Centers)"<sup>36</sup>.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia took several important steps for the promotion of adult education among national minorities. In 2007, Center for Civil Integration and Intercultural Relations and High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) granted "Language Houses" in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. In 2008, the adult education centers served 682 attendees<sup>37</sup>. In 2009, adult education centers – Language Houses in Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki continued functioning and served teachers, public servants, social workers, business representatives and representatives of other social groups. In 2009, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia provided funding for the Language Houses – 30,000 GEL for each Center. The costs allocated from the state were spent on the salaries, maintenance, visual aids, books, stationery and other running costs of the Language Houses. Currently, six groups are functioning in each center. In addition to Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda Language Houses, in 2009, within the "Georgian Language Programme," Georgian Language Centers have been established in Kvemo Kartli region (one center based at Bolnisi Educational Resource Center and another one at Dmanisi Public School №3). In the framework of "Georgian Language Programme" and with the support of the USAID, the Centers were provided with necessary equipment, books, visual aids, and audio-video facilities. In addition, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia ensured recruitment of two Georgian language teachers for the afore-mentioned Centers. The teachers will ensure formation of group of attendees and delivering Georgian language lessons.

According to the Annual Report for 2010 on Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan, there are no more activities toward the direction of adult education. For the reporting period, "Language Houses" have been functioning in Ninotsminda, Akhalkalaki, Bolnisi and Dmanisi. However, from the 2011, the Ministry intends to expand the network of adult education centers and establish language houses in other districts densely settled with national minorities of Georgia.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=2076&lang=geo>

<sup>36</sup> <http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=547&lang=geo>

<sup>37</sup> Mekhuzla, S., & Roche, A. ECMI Working Paper №46, "National Minorities and Educational Reform in Georgia," 2009

After Language Houses were granted to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, their functions and scope of work have been substantially decreased. Since the establishment of Language Houses, i.e. from 2004, they had quite a big scope and directions: a) organizing courses in state language for adults; b) organizing cultural activities and promoting intercultural communications and dialogue; c) providing professional development for teachers of Georgian language and minority languages; d) publishing informational-methodological journal „Mermisi“ for teachers; e) providing population with information and promoting usage of media during the state language acquisition process; f) support to bilingual education.

From 2007, the scope of Language Houses was limited to only teaching of state language to adults.

In 2006, the legal entity of public law – Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration was established with the initiative and support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration envisaged provision of six-month intensive course for minority representatives (three months – State language study programme and three months public management course). According to the data obtained in 2009, 133 Azerbaijani and 124 Armenian students attended the school. Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration is a good example and practice toward civil integration of national minorities. Its establishment is positively assessed by national minorities themselves. Despite this, several problems were identified toward this direction:

- a) Three-months course is not sufficient for language acquisition;
- b) After three-months course of Georgian language, it is still very challenging to study public management in Georgian, therefore the impact of the course diminishes;
- c) Employment of school graduates is not ensured.

Considering the above-mentioned problems, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia ensured modification of the programme, training of the staff, school rehabilitation and in June 12, 2010, rehabilitated Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration was reopened. Throughout ongoing year, the school has been fully rehabilitated and accepted the first cohort of students: 15 Azerbaijani and 15 Armenian public servants employed in different districts (Gardabani, Bolnisi, Marneuli, Rustavi, Tetrtskaro, Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, and Ninotsminda) at local self-government bodies. In summer of 2010, the afore-mentioned cohort of students will undertake classes in Georgian Language, English Language, ICTs and Human Resource Management.<sup>38</sup>

## Recommendations

Monitoring of the Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan revealed that there is a necessity of change, reassessment and improvement in some directions. Specifically, non-Georgian schools face not only problem of state lan-

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<sup>38</sup> Information of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. See: <http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=951&lang=geo>



guage teaching but overall quality of education. Therefore, it is decisive to focus more on the activities that will foster improvement of overall quality at non-Georgian schools.

Presented recommendations are based on the findings and analysis of collected data during the monitoring process and consequently cover recommendations in education policy.

### Preschool Education

- The initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia toward the establishment of preschool centers are very important for fostering access to early childhood education. It is important to continue making efforts toward this direction so that the Programme covers all non-Georgian schools, especially in remote villages where access to early childhood education is extremely low;
- It is significant to translate into minority languages Early Childhood Development Standards developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and UNICEF and make it available for preschool institutions located in the regions densely settled with national minorities;
- It is important to provide preschool institutions located in the regions densely settled with national minorities with trainings in Early Childhood Development Standards developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and UNICEF;
- It is advisable to translate into minority languages those supplementary materials in early childhood care that were developed by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center and make them available for preschool institutions located in the regions densely settled with national minorities.

### National Curriculum and Textbooks

- It is crucial to restore consideration of diversity issues as one of the criteria for the assessment and approval of textbooks. Submitted textbooks for approval should be strictly assessed according to this criterion, i.e. if a certain textbook envisages the issues of diversity;
- It is advisable that National Curriculum and Assessment center conducts direct meetings with publishing houses and groups of authors so that promote more reflection of diversity and multicultural issues and encourage publishing of textbooks with ethno-relative perspective;
- It is crucial to integrate native languages of national minorities as a part of the National curriculum and Georgian legislation, approval and adoption of the curriculum of national minorities' native languages and launching of textbooks development;
- It is necessary to extend the deadline of instructing social sciences (including History and Geography) in Georgian at least until 2016 and apply regulation only at secondary level of general education. This means that teaching social sciences in Georgian at secondary education level will become the target of non-Georgian schools at elementary and basic levels and the schools will plan and adopt school strategies accordingly so that to meet the final target;
- It is advisable to create cross-cutting curriculum of intercultural relations that will promote reflection of diversity of Georgia in the new national curriculum and textbooks

and also foster development of intercultural dialogue among schoolchildren of Georgian and non-Georgian schools;

- It is crucial to improve quality of translation of textbooks into minority languages and timely provision of non-Georgian schools with translated textbooks;
- It is vital to provide trainings for teachers of non-Georgian schools so that they can introduce new national curriculum at non-Georgian schools;
- It is decisive to provide necessary mechanism so that non-Georgian schools are provided free of charge with textbooks that are developed in line with new national curriculum;
- It is vital that a subject added to the national curriculum in 2010 – “World Culture” reflects cultures of national minorities living in Georgia and also their role in the world as well as in Georgian cultures;
- It is significant to increase hours of teaching of Georgian as a Second Language and modify lessons in line with the bilingual education programme of a certain school. In addition, it is decisive to teach Georgian as a Second Language so that schools have more choice and flexibility in terms of distribution and reshuffle of academic hours.

### Teacher’s Certification, Professional Development and Pre-service Training of Future Teachers

#### a) Teacher’s Professional Development

- It is important to increase funding of the programmes for professional development of teachers of non-Georgian schools;
- It is vital to include Armenian and Azerbaijani languages as native languages into the statute of Teacher’s Certification so that teachers of Armenian and Azerbaijani languages have also an opportunity to obtain right for teaching and getting respective social grants. At the same time, higher education institutions should prepare future teachers of Armenian and Azerbaijani as native languages for minority schoolchildren;
- It is crucial to develop professional standards for bilingual education teachers, their certification and professional development;
- It is necessary to provide incentive mechanisms for bilingual education teachers (for example, additional monetary incentives for bilingual teachers), so that teachers are motivated for professional development and obtaining the status of bilingual teachers;
- State language teaching to teachers of non-Georgian schools so that after 2014 teachers can renew their status through the involvement of teacher’s professional development programmes provided in Georgian and by taking teacher’s certification exams. This recommendation is important for the implementation of bilingual programmes, especially at 7-12 grades.

#### b) Pre-service Training (preparation of future teachers)

- To promote refinement of educational programme of Georgian as a Second Language at higher education institutions;
- To introduce programmes at higher education institutions for the preparation of bilingual teachers. This should be based on bilingual teacher’s professional standards developed by Teacher’s Professional Development Center;

- To prepare teachers of minority languages at higher education institutions. This should be based on teacher's professional standards for Armenian and Azerbaijani languages as native languages developed by Teacher's Professional Development Center;
- To introduce some additional "preferential" mechanisms at unified admission exams, providing funding of tuition fees at Bachelor's and Master's programmes for the graduates of non-Georgian schools who pursue they study at Education Department or programme;
- To regulate specialties for those entrants who are admitted to higher education institutions through quota system and make more focus on students studying pedagogy. This will foster attraction and preparation of necessary human resources for non-Georgian schools;
- To introduce contractual mechanisms for those students who will be admitted to the Department of Education through quota system or/and provide payment by the state to cover their tuition fee (at both Bachelor's and Master's levels). Because of contractual mechanisms and provided support, a graduate will be responsible to teach in Samskhe-Javakheti or Kvemo Kartli region during a certain period of time;
- To include intercultural education course as obligatory in each Teacher's Professional Development programmes functioning in Georgia;
- To reflect intercultural relations and issues in teachers professional development manuals at higher education institutions and each subject areas of the curriculum;
- To organize study visit for students in diverse and culturally different environment.

### School Leaving Exams

- It is decisive that school leaving exams implies optimal and feasible threshold of competence for minority schoolchildren considering the problems of introducing new national curriculum and textbooks at non-Georgian schools. Otherwise, minority schoolchildren can face a greater challenge of obtaining a certificate of general education completion.

### Bilingual Education

- In case of submersion (when non-Georgian schoolchildren are placed in Georgian schools), schools and teachers have to ensure development of individual curriculum for such pupils. Therefore, it is important to train teachers on development of individual curriculum for schoolchildren, when needed.
- It is advisable that these programmes will include intensive supplementary courses in Georgian language so that children involved in bilingual education can acquire Georgian in shortest time. This will decrease the chances for poor academic performance among minority children caused by language barriers;
- It is crucial to inform parents about language competence of a child as well as on the possible negative impact of submersion in terms of cognitive and social development;
- It is significant to make more emphasis on the so-called "strong" programmes of bilingual education despite the challenges regarding its administration and implementation;
- It is vital to provide schools with methodological, human and financial resources for the introduction and implementation of "strong" bilingual programmes. Consequently,

it is necessary to increase funding substantially for schools, which implement bilingual programmes;

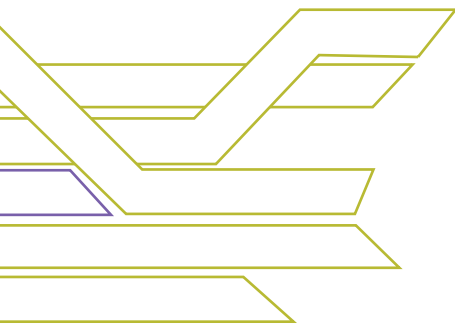
- It is important to raise awareness of parents and community about the benefits and effectiveness of bilingual education;
- It is crucial to ensure development of necessary mechanisms for the promotion of parents and community engagement in bilingual education;
- It is necessary that National Curriculum and Assessment Center develops samples of bilingual programmes for schools so that to make easier for schools to develop their own models of bilingual programme;
- It is crucial to ensure pre-assessment of language competence and academic performance of school children in pilot bilingual schools;
- It is significant to determine and define assessment mechanisms of the effectiveness of bilingual education programmes.

### Unified Admission Exams

- It is important to raise awareness of the population about existing quota system, especially in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions so that school graduates from these regions will use quota system to a maximum extent and utilize available places for national minority entrants at higher education institutions;
- It is advisable to develop some contractual mechanism for those students who are admitted to higher education institutions through quota system. This will promote maintenance and employability of the students in the regions densely settled with national minorities.

### Adult Education

- It is important to expand the network of “Language Houses” so that to cover other minority settled areas, such as Marneuli, Tsalka, Gardabani and Akhaltsikhe;
- It is significant to solve the problem of necessary space for Akhalkalaki “Language House;”
- It is vital to expand the scope of listeners and attendees of “Language Houses” and engage more people in the study process;
- It is advisable to expand functions of Language Houses so that they have the same functions assigned at the beginning of their establishment;
- It is crucial to organize professional development courses for adults so that the residents of the regions densely settled with national minorities can be employed in ongoing projects that are being implemented in the regions.



# Culture and Identity Preservation

## Introduction

Preservation and protection of national minority cultures is important for their full participation into the common cultural life, achieving mutual trust and sense of civic unity.

Constitution of Georgia guarantees each citizen a right to cultural development, participation into the cultural life, expression and enrichment of cultural identity (Article 34.1). Each citizen of Georgia is equal before the law despite their belief (Article 9, 19). As stipulated by the Constitution, Georgian citizens are equal in social, economic, cultural and political life despite their national, ethnic, religious and linguistic identity. In accordance with the commonly agreed principles and norms of international law, they have a right to develop their culture and use mother tongue in their everyday life and public freely, without any discrimination and intervention (Article 38,1). Besides, Georgian Constitution ensures freedom of intellectual work and prohibits intervention into creative process<sup>1</sup>.

The following laws within the sphere of culture envisage preservation of culture and identity of the minorities:

**The Law of Georgia “on Culture”<sup>2</sup>** stipulates the equality of all citizens of Georgia in cultural life despite their national, ethnic, religious and linguistic belonging. In accordance with Article 10 of the law, every citizen has a right to cultural identity<sup>3</sup>.

**The Law of Georgia on General Education** ensures neutrality in teaching processes in educational institutions and promotes the establishment of non-discrimination, tolerance, mutual respect (Article 13)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution of Georgia, Article 23.1,2; see also, Law on Culture, Article 6.

<sup>2</sup> The following transitional provisions regulate the cultural sphere: Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage; Law on Education; Law on Arts Education; Law on Museums; Law on Theatre; Law on Library Activity.

<sup>3</sup> Creative work is free and intervention into the creative process and censorship of creative activities is prohibited (...), apart from the cases that breach human rights and legal interests of other people, incinerates national, ethnic, religious and racial conflicts. Law on Culture, Article 6.

<sup>4</sup> School is responsible for protection and promotion of tolerance and mutual respect between students, parents and teachers despite their social, ethnic, religious, linguistic and political vision (Article 13.6); Based on the principle of equality, school defends the individual and collective rights of minorities to freely use their mother tongue, retain and express their cultural identity. (Article 13.7).

**International conventions:** European Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities<sup>5</sup>.

For the preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities, the adoption by the state of the “National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan 2009-2014” in 2009 is of great importance<sup>6</sup>. A State Inter-Agency Commission was formed under Decree #14 of July 3, 2009. The commission is formed from the responsible staff from the office of the State Minister for Reintegration as well as representatives from the respective governmental institutions, ministries, agencies and organizations, as well as Tbilisi Council and regional administration of three national minority regions<sup>7</sup>.

The Action Plan 2010 identified an importance of a sixth direction (“Culture and retention of identity”) and the objectives under the direction were increased to be 6:

1. Promotion of civic consciousness.
2. Preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities;
3. Protection of cultural heritage of minorities;
4. Supporting tolerance, encouragement of intercultural dialogue and contacts;
5. Ensuring participation of national minorities into the cultural life of Georgia;
6. Cognition and promotion of cultures, history, language and religion of minorities as cultural values of the country.

In the sphere of culture functions are distributed among central and local governmental bodies.

The goal of the monitoring and evaluation of Action Plan 2010 is to define: a) how adequately the activities have been planned to achieve each of the objectives; b) How adequately are they implemented; c) whether the results contributed to the specific goal determined by the action plan; d) how sustainable the activities are; e) to prepare recommendations for a better planning and implementation of the action plan.

### Objective 1. Promotion of Civic Consciousness

Mutual respect, sense of unity and cultural dialogue is a prerequisite for the existence of a consolidated society. For countries distinguished by their cultural diversity, such as Georgia, raising civic consciousness of each member of the society is of great importance. It could be assumed that all the directions of the Action Plan serve this goal<sup>8</sup>. On 25 April, 2010 a conference on “The State of Human Rights in Georgia” by a Youth Center of the National Minorities Council within the Ombudsman’s Office<sup>9</sup> was held. The conferences

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<sup>5</sup> Georgia ratified the International Pakt on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 3 May, 1994. Ratification of the Charter on Protection of Minority and Regional Languages is still underway.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.smr.gov.ge/docs/doc173.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.smr.gov.ge/docs/doc42.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> This objective was inserted into the Action Plan in 2010.

<sup>9</sup> See the Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration.

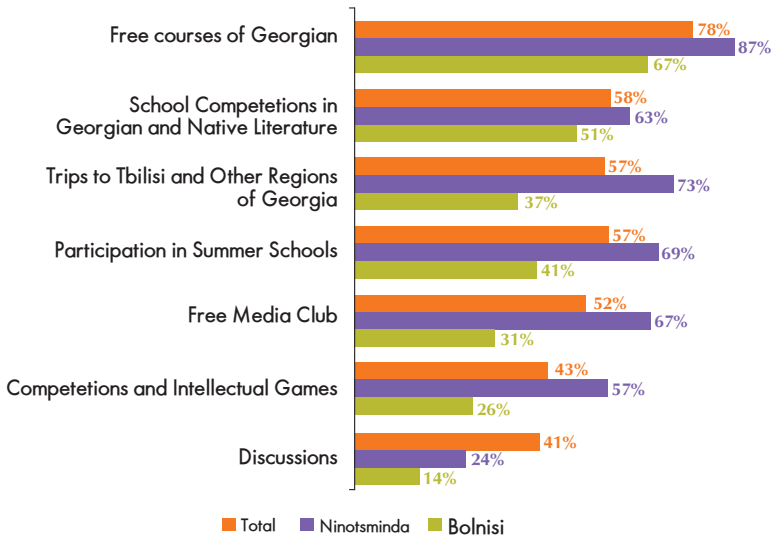
dealt with freedom of speech and expression, protection of rights of ethnic and religious minorities and people with disabilities and the situation within the penitentiary system.

A competition on “Ethnic entities and religions in Georgia” was held organized by a Tolerance Center under the Ombudsman’s Office<sup>10</sup>. Six groups from Tbilisi and regions took part in the competition. The competition aimed at promotion of the publications: “Ethnic Entities in Georgia” and “Religions in Georgia”, increasing knowledge of high school students on religious and ethnic diversity of Georgia<sup>11</sup>.

A workshop planned to take place in Telavi in 2010 on “National Minorities of Kakheti Region and their civic rights” was not held due to the lack of funds<sup>12</sup>. The same applied to a workshop on “Civic Integration and Challenges Related to Georgian-Ossetian Relationship in Kakheti Region” planned to be held in Kakheti Municipalities.

Formation of civic consciousness of the population is a long and comprehensive process. All sectors in the community should be involved in the process, especially, education and culture sectors.

**How important is it for you to participate into the following extracurricular activities?**



Sociological Survey: Level of Intercultural Relationship in Bolnisi and Ninotsminda Districts, Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> The activities implemented in 2010 by the Tolerance Center and Ethnic Minority Council are not reflected into the Action Plan and does not constitute its part. However, the activities aim to civic integration in Georgia: A workshop for national minority youth “Integration and Tolerance”, publication of a journal “Solidarity”, celebration of an International Day for Tolerance etc.  
<sup>11</sup> See the Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2010.  
<sup>12</sup> The cancelation of financing was resulted from expenditures from landslides and climatic conditions in Kakheti Region.

## Objective 2. Preservation of the Cultural Identity of National Minorities

As stipulated by the Constitution of Georgia and the Law on Culture each person has a right to preservation of the cultural identity and to a free choice of artistic and esthetic orientation despite their ethnic and religious belonging (Article 10).

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection supports the minority cultures through “Culture Support Program of National Minorities of Georgia” the annual budget of which in 2010 was 100 000 GEL. Within the program annual 30 000 GEL is allocated to finance newspapers “Vrastan” and “Gurjistan”. 17 issues of each were published in 2010<sup>13</sup>.

Within the framework of supporting national minority cultures the following open projects were implemented in 2010:

- Exhibition of 22 Armenian painters was held in May, 2010 by the Gallery “Muza” and an album ART-bridge was issued followed by a conference on the same topic;
- Ali Avarski, a Dagestani film Director with Georgian citizenship completed work on a third part of the trilogy “An Open-air Museum” dedicated to Georgian-Dagestani friendship in 2010.
- Armenian Culture Days were held in Tbilisi in May, 2010. Guests were invited to Petros Adamiani State Drama Theatre where Svetlana Eitsian, a citizen of Georgia, was awarded the Medal of Honor;
- An exhibition by Eugenia Odinetsi and Elene Mloskevich, members of the Polish Women’s Association “friendship” was organized in November, 2010.
- A Costa Khetagurovi Cultural Evening was held in the village of Arishperon<sup>14</sup>.

## Theatres

The Ministry of Culture financed three theatres within its 2010 priority direction- Support to LEPL Art Organizations:

- Al. Groboedov Theatre by 370 000 GEL (2010 Report) \*. Within the budget the theatre held 2 Premieres, 43 local and 3 visiting performances as well as 3 tours. Total of 3570 people attended;
- The Ministry allocated 130 000 GEL to Heydar Aliyev Azeri Theatre. The theatre staged three premieres, 26 performances (6 – local, 20 – Charity). Total of 1 350 people attended;
- Petros Adaimani Armenian Theatre staged 3 premieres, 24 visiting performances and 10 tours in Armenia.

Following the events of August 2008 the representatives of Russian culture have been notably inactive in any of the regions. This is observed on both sides: community as well as municipality . Russian culture is given increasingly less attention. In 2008 People’s Russian Theatre closed down in Rustavi.

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<sup>13</sup> Data from the Arts and Education Department of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection.

<sup>14</sup> See the Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2010.



## Museums

One of the priority areas of the Ministry of Culture is the arts development programs aimed at promotion of LEPL art organizations, improvement of their infrastructure, development of modern art, revitalization of the art life in the country. Museums, that have the status of legal entity of public law (LEPL) are part of the Ministry of Culture and get subsidies. Since 2008 regional, history and other types of museums that have a status of a legal entity of private law financially belong to the local municipalities.

Under the Presidential Resolution № 654 of July 25, 2004 “On restoration of LEPL David Baazov Historical and Ethnographic Museum of the Jews of Georgia as a treasury of multi-century history of the Jews in Georgia and research center of unique Jewish-Georgian relations was financed<sup>15</sup>. The museum is unique in its character and the exhibits it houses. The museum is located in a former synagogue, which in itself is an important architectural and cultural monument. Since 1999, the building, especially the dome, has been in a poor condition, water leaks to every part of the building. Because of the lack of appropriate conditions, the museum, in fact, is not operational. The Presidential Decree № 493 of August 17, 2006 defined a new legal status and name of the museum – LEPL David Baazov Museum of History Jews living in Georgia”. The Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport was put responsible for supervision on behalf of the state. The museum owns many exhibits and rarities – epigraphic, manuscript, archaeological, ethnographic, historic, art, archives etc. They were temporarily placed in various museums, institutes and warehouses (Sh. Amiranashvili National Art Museum, National Center of Manuscripts). Under the Resolution № 654 of 2004 of the President, returning the materials belonging to the museum is stipulated upon the completion of the reconstruction of the building.

- 79 000 GEL was allocated in 2010 by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection to support operation of LEPL David Baazov Georgia’s Jews Historical - Ethnographic Museum. The museum published materials from the Scientific Conference “Caucasian Archeology, Ethnology, Folklore Studies”. The museum’s exhibits were shown at the Karvasla Exhibition Hall. The annual budget of the museum, as a legal entity of public law, consists of, mostly, funds for salaries and it cannot cover the rehabilitation costs urgently needed by the museum.
- 29 400 GEL was allocated in 2010 (Report 2010) by the Ministry to support operation of the LEPL Mirza Fatali-Akhundov Azeri Culture Museum. 2 documentary film shows were held at the Museum (documentary films on 20th January tragedy and “Khojala” tragedy of 90-ies of the 20th Century). (Footnote: cult. report). On April 25 an event celebrating Nariman Narimanov anniversary and on 26-28 May a cultural event dedicated to the Independence Day of Georgia and Azerbaijan was held at the museum<sup>16</sup>.

2010 Action Plan also provided for the support program for **Telavi History and Ethnography Museum**<sup>17</sup>. Apart from the fact that the museum possesses rich historical documents

<sup>15</sup> The museum was established in 1933 (During the Soviet times, in 1951, the museum was abolished and the significant materials housed there was redistributed to other museums. The museum was revived in 1954, and in 1992 the exhibits were returned to the museum.

<sup>16</sup> See the Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> With the same purpose, other historical and regional museums could also be part of the plan.

and works of art, it has been actively working to attract visitors in recent years. For the purposes a special program was created by the museum entitled “VDP” (viewer-driven program). Within the framework of the program the museum actively cooperates with schools, among them Karajala Azeri school<sup>18</sup>. The students from the school often visit the museum. They held an open lesson in the museum as well as theatrical performances. The museum plans continue collaboration with the Karajala School<sup>19</sup>. The museum is financed through subsidies from the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection. At this stage, the priority for the museum is to update the collection, since “it is difficult to find money to buy new exhibits”, as it was stated during the monitoring process<sup>20</sup>. In addition, one of the challenges to the museum is the non-existence of heating system in the exhibition halls during winter.

In general, historic, ethnographic and regional studies museums keep rich stores on minority cultures and traditions. The monitoring and follow-up evaluation revealed that the museums in the regions do not only have educational functions, but also serve as places for cultural convergence. In the conditions of scarce funding their successful work is often the result of the intensive efforts and creative skills of the museum staff.

The Action Plan did not have reference to Akhaltsikhe Museum, which is an excellent example and resource for illustration of the cultural dialogue. At present **Samtskhe-Javakheti Historical Museum of Akhaltsikhe** is part of the National Museum<sup>21</sup>. The museum holds an annual conference for young historians every year. It was symbolically held in the old district of Akhaltsikhe, on the territory of the Synagogue where Georgian and Armenian students participate. In 2008 the conference marked the anniversary of Mikheil Tamarashvili.

**Gardabani Regional Museum** is funded as part of Gardabani Municipality Cultural and Museum Center through subsidies from the local municipality Budget.<sup>22</sup> There are 3 branches of the museum: Martkopi, Norio and Sarthichala. Museum celebrates the International Museum Day on May 12 every year and organizes an open day. Gardabani museum houses examples of Georgian culture, as well as artifacts of Azeri everyday life, traditional instruments etc.

It should be noted that despite inadequate financial resources, museum staff continues to collect artifacts of Georgian and Azeri culture. The museum has permanent visitors. Georgian and Azeri school students often visit the museum. The museum offers a good op-

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<sup>18</sup> There is only one village in Telavi District, Karajala with dense Azeri population.

<sup>19</sup> The museum intends to arrange an educational tour and show the exhibits (copies) at the village schools, to popularize the museum and make the collection accessible to more people. In case of an increased financing the museum is willing to visit other districts in Kakheti, among them the villages having Ossetian population, with the same project.

<sup>20</sup> In 2010 budget amounted to 263 000 GEL.

<sup>21</sup> Akhaltsikhe museum was established in 1923 as a District (Mazra) Museum and Ivane Gavramadze donated all his materials to it. In 1937 it was turned into a regional museum. Until 2005 it was a branch of Simon Janashia State Museum of Georgia, Since 2005 it is Ivane Javakhishvili Samtskhe-Javakheti Historical Museum.

<sup>22</sup> In 2010 its budget amounted to 55 000 GEL.

portunity to Georgian and Azeri students to discover traditional craft, everyday tools and weapon belonging to different cultures in a single exhibition hall.

The museum organizes a scientific workshop every year and publishes a collection of works<sup>23</sup>.

Currently the major problem for the museum is space. It has already been a few years since the museum moved from its old building and is housed in two rooms of the Cultural Center, which is not adequate space for the museum to operate properly. Part of the exhibits are shown in the entrance hall of the museum, many more are stored in the boxes.

In Bolnisi there is an ethnographic museum. In the village of Khachin there is a house-museum of the children's writer, Ghazaros Aghoian. The Ghazaros Aghoian Museum, as well as Dmanisi Regional Museum is financed from the municipality budget.

One of the interesting parts of Georgia's cultural diversity and history is Dukhabors' communities in several villages in Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli<sup>24</sup>. In a number of Javakheti villages this religious unity has created a unique cultural environment, which is unique and has survived nowhere in other countries, since the number of believers has been decreasing through years and in many countries it liquidated itself. Since 90-ies Dukhabors started to migrate back to their historic homeland, Russia, where Dukhabors' confession weakened and assimilated<sup>25</sup>. Today they live in 2 small villages in Ninotsminda, Javakheti: Gorelovka and Orlovka. A Prayer House distinguished with its wooden ornaments in the central street of Village Gorelovka, so called an Orphanage was granted a status of a museum and declared as a reserve of Dukhobor Culture by a Decree of the President. Unfortunately, the museum does not function as of now.

## Cultural Centers

Under the aegis of local municipalities both public and religious holidays are regularly celebrated. Representatives of ethnic and religious minorities living in the region participate in the events. In some of the districts, minority folk ensembles exist within culture houses (e.g. in Dmanisi – Dukhabors Ensemble “Aisi”, in Marneuli – “Sarvani”). Cultural events, art schools, libraries, youth and sports issues are the responsibility of Culture, Monument Protection, Education, Sports and Youth Affairs Departments of municipalities.

<sup>23</sup> Some of the essays submitted to the conference studied the settlement of some of the Azeri villages, e.g. Kandara etc.; M bulaghoshvili submitted an essay “An ethnic picture of Kvemo Kartli in 12th-15th centuries”.

<sup>24</sup> Dukhabors are Slavs exiled from Russia in 40ies of XIX century because of their religious belief. It is considered to be a Christian Sect. For more information check also Bezhentseva Ala: The Country of Dukhaboria, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> (Footnote: Bezhentseva, Ala: “Dukhaboria, a Russian Region lost in Georgian Mountains, 2010, p.19).

## Folk and Religious Holidays

In 2010, several important projects were implemented. By the initiative of the President **Novruz-Bairam** was declared a national holiday.

Novruz-Bairam was celebrated in all regions of Kvemo Kartli with large scale events. Municipalities provided for public transportation for the participants. The ensembles and individual groups participated in Novruz-Bairam Events organized by other municipalities. The participants included both Azeri and Georgian performers. Georgian and Azeri televisions covered the events.

During last few years folk holidays (Erekleoba, Akhaltsikheloba, Gardabnoba, Rustavi-City holiday, etc.) are celebrated by large scale events in Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe - Javakheti, as well as in other Georgian cities. Representatives of national minorities participate in it together with Georgian folk ensembles. As Head of the Department of Culture, Youth and Sport Affairs of Dmanisi stated the district is always represented by a diversity of cultures. For example, during Rustavi-City holiday, a concert was given by Dukhabor's ensemble Aisi together with a Georgian ensemble, and the exhibition included Georgian, Azeri and Greek cuisines.

Minority participation in cultural events is different by districts. If ensembles of Dmanisi and Marneuli Culture Centers take part in celebrations, in other districts participation is less active (for example, "Erekleoba" was not actively participated by minority representatives who attended the evenings only as guests).

An excellent example of the minority cultural identity is the type of Eastern music common in Azeri communities called "**mughami**" and its performers called "**ashughs**".

According to the representatives of the local population and Department of Culture, there are 23 Ashughs in Kvemo Kartli out of which 7 live in Gardabani. They always take part in holiday celebrations (Gardabnoba, Novruz-Bairam). Unfortunately, the number of "ashughs" gradually decreases. Nowadays, Ashughs are only representatives of the older generation.

During the monitoring process in Gardabani and meetings with different groups, it became clear that the relationships between Georgians and Azeris in recent years are growing ever closer. "If earlier only old people had links, now this is true about the young people as well."

In 2010, in **Gardabani** the Assyrian public holiday "khabnisani" was also celebrated. In **Bolnisi** apart from Novruz-Bairam, anniversary of Ghazaros Aghoiani, a children's writer was also celebrated in 2010.

In **Akhlatiskhe**, on Rabati territory, a folk holiday "Akhaltsikheloba" was celebrated. As the Head of the Department for Culture, Monument Protection, Sport and Youth Affairs in Akhlatiskhe stated, the Armenians and other ethnic minorities living in the district participate in all events.

**Ninotsminda** municipality, as well as other municipalities regularly celebrate public holidays, including Armenian folk and religious holidays. Traditionally, “Terianoba” – an Armenian Poetry Evening is held in Ninotsminda where guests are invited from Tbilisi and Yerevan alike.

The head of Ninotsminda Culture Division stated that every year they are invited to the holiday of St. Nino, which is held under the Patriarchate of Georgia in Ninotsminda in last few years.

In Akhalkalaki, traditionally, a folk holiday “Jivanoba” is celebrated.

The Head of Akhalkalaki Culture Department indicated that cultural events have significantly increased compared to last year, but they are still few. As the local population, the level of cultural life in the region is very low and “there is no enthusiasm to continue the work in the sphere of culture” in the representatives of the sector.

The International Folklore Festival was not celebrated in 2010. The idea was also mentioned by the representatives of an other municipality. There is a possibility to better coordinate and plan the festival and celebrate it with a large scale event.

Some of the villages of Khakheti municipalities there are compact settlements of ethnic minorities<sup>26</sup>. According to the information provided by the **Akhmeta** District Administration, Kist Ensembles are invited in every single event held in the district. “In general, the Kist are an active community and take part in musical and literary evenings.”

Avars living in Kvareli are more closed a community. The reason is the civil and ethnic discord of 90-ies, which is slowly vanishing and “during the last few years this alienation is being overcome.”

There are positive trends as well, population migration from villages decreases and the youth who have left the villages either for work or study return to the village in the end. Decrease of migration was mentioned in Tsalka district as well: “migration of a large part of the population to Armenia decreased and there are many young people serving in the Georgian Army.”

The Avars do not participate in the events held in **Kvareli** District (e.g., in 2010 the festival “Autumn Colors” was held). Traditional conservative views increased during the post-Soviet period and the community has become more closed. As the locals say: “The Georgians and Avars had a very close relationship, intermarriages, common celebration of parties and holidays etc”. There is a hope that soon the old, more open relationships will be revived. According to the Head of Kvareli Culture, Monument Protection, Youth and Sports Affairs Department, despite the fact that the community is not active and we do not have a possibility to promote Avar culture, “over time it will change, because we can observe them getting closer. Sport is very popular in the community.” The good news is that the municipality took the interest of minorities into account, and in 2010 the sports sections

<sup>26</sup> Telavi District village Karajala (Azeri), Akhmeta District village Jokholo, Duisi (Kists), Kvareli district village Chantliskhure, Zinobiani, Tivi, Saruso (Avars), Village TsitskaanaTseri (Osetians), Lagodekhi District village Kabala (Azeri)

were opened in the villages of Tivi and Saruso<sup>27</sup>. More attention should be paid to their full integration and participation in the cultural life to ensure increased trust between the two ethnic groups.

Mainly sports events are held also in Tsalka district. A connection road to Tsalka has been a problem for a long time as well, which was automatically reflected in the culture and everyday life of the region. Several times some of the invited artists refused to go to Tsalka. There is a special need in the region for a better link to the capital city and other parts of the country.

In 2010, the “Tsalkoba” a local holiday was celebrated. Besides regular holidays, the “Avasoba” was also celebrated and local cultural center ensembles gave a planned concert.

During the last few years local folk holiday “Shotaoba” was revived in Aspindza which was attended by the guests from different parts of Georgia and Armenia besides the local writers and artists. Aspindza municipality is not included on the Action Plan at all. “Shotaoba” is a good example of integration of the people and promotion of cultural life in the region through arts and literature. More attention to such holidays in the district would be desirable<sup>28</sup>.

### The Cultural Centers, Music and Art schools

One of the priorities of the Action Plan is the support of cultural centers. Different folk ensembles and art clubs operate within cultural centers of the municipalities. They are mostly self-financed. Several municipalities (e.g., Akhaltsikhe) cover part of the fees for all the students and full fees for youth under 5 categories.

In most of the districts cultural centers have been repaired. Heating in winter remains a challenge of most of the cultural centers, since the allocated funds cannot cover costs in winter. Consequently, the events at this period of the year are hampered.

The monitoring revealed that Georgian and non-Georgian troupes rarely visit the regions. And the local troupes give concerts only around the district villages. Some municipalities are trying to initiate a variety of cultural activities. Dmanisi Cultural Center has already a new generation of Dukhabors’ ensemble “Aisi”<sup>29</sup>. They collaborate extensively with local cultural center. Marneuli Cultural Center holds quite a good number of cultural activities.

Municipalities have difficulties in maintaining youth clubs, cultural centers in the regions. Unfortunately, the centers scheduled to be opened in 2010, were not established (e.g. in the Village Avranlo, Bareti, Nardvani). The reason was the termination of funding, low interest on the part of youth.

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<sup>27</sup> Wrestling is especially popular. Some representatives from the village are Champions of Georgia.

<sup>28</sup> The best possible option can be “Shotaoba” (Shota’s Day) taking place in the vicinities of Vardzia as a significant place from cultural and touristic point of view.

<sup>29</sup> In 2011 the ensemble participate in the opening of the Art Festival Art Geni in Tbilisi. Dmanisi Culture Service plans to establish an Azeri ensemble in 2012.

Some districts request for additional projects. For example, in Tsalka there is no regional TV, a Music School<sup>30</sup>. There are very few cultural-education programs in the district. The positive impact of opening of Tsalka-Akhalkalaki road should be noted.

In general, the activation of the cultural life in the regions requires intense efforts. The Culture Services budgets do not always afford the costs of inviting troupes from the capital. It is desirable that certain events (especially inter regional ones) are further subsidized and coordinated by the Reintegration Ministry.

## Libraries

The Action Plan includes funding for libraries to facilitate their smooth functioning. In recent years, the decisions about libraries, namely village libraries have changed several times. Since 2006 the process of liquidation of village libraries has started throughout Georgia, which had a negative feedback from the local communities. The question of village libraries still remains hot. Since 2007, libraries are subjected to local municipalities (previously it was financed from the budget of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection). In some regions (e.g., Imereti region) due to the lack of finance to village libraries are closed down in great numbers. Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti district libraries are facing the same problem. However, in recent years, some positive trends were observed in the same region of restoring some of the closed libraries.

In the spring of 2007 there was only a central library operating in Akhaltsikhe and its 41 branches closed down. In the spring of 2008, under the decree of the Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sports two libraries in each municipality were restored. At present there are 5 libraries operating in Akhaltsikhe (Rabati, Central, Village Atskuri, Village Uravela and City Vale libraries).

The question of the fate of the books from liquidated libraries stays unresolved<sup>31</sup>. Book funds of the liquidated libraries were transferred to the school libraries. It has both positive and negative sides. It is good that books will still have readers, will be kept in the school building. But school schedules are problematic for casual readers. During summer vacations and other holidays books became inaccessible for the reader.

There are 17 libraries in total in Akhalkalaki district<sup>32</sup>, each with one employee. According to the director of the Akhalkalaki Library Association there is a demand for libraries in the district villages, but they are not able to plan for new branches due to scarce funds. The demand is high in the following villages: Turtskhi, Olaverdi, Samsari, Alatumani, Bughasheni, Lomaturtskhi, and Merenia.

Funding for libraries in Ninotsminda District in 2010 was 55 000 GEL.

<sup>30</sup> The support to Tsalka music school should not be indicated in the Action Plan.

<sup>31</sup> Both in Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki former employees of the libraries take care of the books, which are stored in the locked libraries or in private homes.

<sup>32</sup> Libraries were renovated in 2010/2011. Some library still needs repairs (v. majadia).

There are 19 libraries in **Gardabani**. They have 20-25 visitors a day. As the head of the library association stated “Pupils from Azeri schools often visit Gardabani Central Library. Gardabani School # 1 held a public reading of “the Knight in Panther’s skin” in the library. In 2010, the center was allocated 2000 GEL. Currently the urgent need for the library is heating of the reading hall in winter. It requires also replenishment of the books and bookstands.

In Marneuli District there are 6 Libraries: 1 – Armenian, 4 – Azeri and 1 – mixed Central Library. All libraries require repairs and replenishment of the book fund.

Dmanisi District has 4 libraries: 1 – Azeri (village Amavlo) and 3 – Georgian: Dmanisi Central Library, Gomareti, Vardisuban library).

In 2010, the new libraries (v. khachkovi and v. Arsarvani) that were planned to be established in Tsalka District failed to be opened. “There was no demand for them,” as we were explained at the Department of Culture of the Tsalka Municipality. Opening of a library is planned for 2012 in the village Trialeti. And two libraries in v. Gantiadi and v. Kizilkirashi were opened in 2008. The same year Tsalka Central Library was renovated.

These libraries are in need of replenishment of Georgian book funds. Armenian books are from time to time handed over by the Armenian Embassy in Georgia.

The book funds almost in all the libraries were replenished 2 years ago. Heating problem is acute in all the libraries visited by the monitoring group. This hinders their operation in winter.

The question of the village libraries stays painful and unresolved in the entire district. Finding funding for their existence is difficult in all municipalities. Although the support of libraries is part of the Action Plan, the development of libraries is not a priority in any of the municipalities and since 2009 no single additional program has been implemented to change the situation in this regard. Initiation of this priority direction from the central government seems important as well as participation in it of the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture, different institutions working in regional development.

## Music Schools

The National Concept envisaged facilitation of the functioning of music schools<sup>33</sup>. Following the 2008 reform music schools became structurally subjected to the municipalities. There are several issues with respect to music education that applies to music schools in all the regions of Georgia, among them – areas populated by minorities, where access to music education has dropped.

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<sup>33</sup> Conference on “Vainach Culture” and musical evenings of national minorities envisaged by the Action Plan have not been held.



After the reform, music educational institutions/colleges (so called ten-year schools) that were a level higher to music schools and a prerequisite for higher music education. Currently such institutions exist only in Tbilisi<sup>34</sup>. All the students living in the region and willing to continue their studies in conservatoire face the problem of enrolling at an institution located in Tbilisi and moving places together with their families. This is connected to multiple problems: material, family-related etc. Closure of music institutions in the districts puts students living in the region on an unequal basis. Their chance to get a higher musical education decreases. There is a tendency among people living in the regions populated by minorities to get music education in neighboring countries: Armenia, Russia etc., where they have more relatives and have more contacts.

There are 4 music schools in Akhaltsikhe district at present<sup>35</sup>. Graduates of music institutions had been allowed to continue their career as teachers of music. Until 2008 a branch of Tbilisi Music Institution #1 existed in Akhaltsikhe. The graduates of the institution could continue their studies in the conservatoire or work as music teachers in music schools. As the director of Akhaltsikhe Music School stated: "Almost all the music teachers of this branch are graduates of this branch (Borjomi, Abastumani, Aspindza etc)."

Nowadays, this Branch was closed down and turned into a six-year music school. So far the school has qualified teachers, but in a few years there will be a need for new staff.

Music schools participate in the festival "A Road to Parnassus." On the initiative of the director and teachers of Akhaltsikhe music school Georgian composers are invited and classical music concerts held. Unfortunately, such events depend only on the enthusiasm of a few people. In other regions musical life is really low. There are no trade unions; performers of classical music do not visit some districts. However, the locals have expressed their desire in this regards during monitoring in 2009 and 2010.

The positive initiatives should also be observed, such as – financial benefits for music school students by Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities.

Low teacher salaries remain a problem. Music school teachers do not enjoy social benefits offered to public school teachers.

Music schools and in general culture falls within the municipality responsibilities and it has very slight connection with the Ministry of Culture. This is regarded by all the locals and staff of Culture Services as a problem. Often their initiatives and projects are neglected on the ground that "it is a responsibility of local municipalities".

<sup>34</sup> Before 2006 there were 3 music institutions in Tbilisi: named after D. Arakishvili, G. Paliashvili, M. Balanchivadze. In 2006, they merged into one musical institution and in 2009 they turned into music seminary.

<sup>35</sup> Ninotsminda - 1 music school, Bolnisi District - 2: in Bolnisi and Kazreti; In Tsalka Music School no longer exists..

### Objective 3. Protection of Cultural Heritage of National Minorities

Movable and immovable monuments of cultural heritage of national minorities are also a part of cultural heritage of Georgia<sup>36</sup> Protection and preservation of cultural heritage includes complex legal, scientific, rehabilitation, informational and educational measures aiming at preservation of the diversity of the cultural heritage and its sustainable development<sup>37</sup>.

In 2010, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Ministry of Culture and the Public Defender's Office aiming to promote full integration of national minorities living in Georgia, protection and promotion of minority rights and freedoms. Based on the bilateral memorandum, the Ministry of Culture assumes responsibility to implement programs and projects related to national minorities; In addition, it will collaborate actively with the National Minority Council within the Public Defender's Office with the view to envisage their recommendations in their activities. The responsibility of the Ministry of Culture is protection and preservation of the national minorities' languages, cultures, traditions and identities. It is also in charge of protection and promotion of cultural heritage of minorities.

### Inventory and Rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage Monuments

The monitoring proved that in most of the municipalities new religious and cultural buildings are revealed and registered every year. After special research, the Ministry grants the relevant buildings a status of a monument. The monument registry does not distinguish Georgian and non-Georgian, Christian and non-Christian monuments, since all are considered to be the heritage of Georgian culture. However, such a typology would be desirable from at least technical point of view, to make the search system simpler.

Inventory of monuments is still underway and has not finished yet. There are 50 registered Armenian Churches in Georgia (Tbilisi, Batumi, Telavi, Bolnisi, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities)<sup>38</sup>.

In 2010 a three-year project "Inventory of Ottoman monuments" was completed. Within the framework of the project materials preserved in Tbilisi museums and archives, part of the historical monuments existing in Samtskhe and Adjara, several dozen objects of Ottoman architecture were studied<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> The priorities of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage of Georgia in 2010: rehabilitation and monitoring of the monuments of cultural heritage; the rehabilitation, joint planning and implementation of the monuments of cultural heritage existing abroad, promotion of cultural heritage; creation of the registry of the monuments of cultural heritage; creation of an integrated infrastructure; World Registering and Rehabilitation of some of the heritage of the Georgian monuments.

<sup>37</sup> See Law on Cultural Heritage, Article 3.

<sup>38</sup> The Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2010

<sup>39</sup> See the Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2010, Data from National Agency of Monument Preservation.

The Monitoring Group met with representatives of minorities, visited monuments in Tbilisi as well as in the regions. The most important thing at this stage is the condition of those valuable cultural monuments which needs urgent rehabilitation. To ensure their preservation, as a first step, strengthening works should be undertaken. Among from the Armenian churches in Tbilisi, Mughni Church, Surb Norshni, Norasheni and Surb Minasi churches need rehabilitation.

The Ombudsman drew attention to the condition of the churches in his reports<sup>40</sup>. 2010 Action Plan envisaged restoration of Mughni Surb Gevork. Due to lack of funds restoration of the church did not take place and is at present in a worse condition than before.

As for the synagogues, so far not all the synagogues in Georgia are registered. Sources often refer to 5 synagogues existing in Georgia. This confusion in the number can be attributed to the fact that list of the cultural heritages does not single out synagogues. There are unofficial sources of information about the number of synagogues in Georgia. They are much more than indicated in the 2010 report, the fact confirmed by the Agency of National Heritage<sup>41</sup>. We recommend the relevant agencies to take inventory of all the synagogues in Georgia, and, after relevant study and evaluation, grant a status of a monument. Currently, Tbilisi Synagogue “a Great Prayer,” Kutaisi Synagogue, and a supporting building on B. Gaponovi Street have the status of a cultural monument<sup>42</sup>.

Rabati Neighborhood in Akhaltsikhe represents a unique historical and cultural environment of communication between cultures and religions. Mosques, Armenian, Catholic, Orthodox churches and synagogues stand side by side in this oldest districts of the city<sup>43</sup>. Several of them had already had a status of the monument of the cultural heritage. The list increased in 2011<sup>44</sup>.

Therefore, the category of national importance was granted to a cultural heritage monument – Network of Streets in the historical part of Akhaltsikhe (Rabati Neighborhood) by the Presidential Decree N666 of October 28, 2011, in accordance with the first paragraph of Article 18 of the Law on Cultural Heritage.

<sup>40</sup> See <http://www.ombudsman.ge/files/downloads/ge/ktifezlljkytwmwbpggc.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> 2 Synagogues in Tbilisi, 3 Synagogues in Kutaisi, 2 Synagogues Akhaltsikhe, Batumi, Oni synagogues, as well as – the, health, Kulashi, lailashi, Kareli, Satshkhere, Poti, v. Bandza, Vani synagogues.

<sup>42</sup> Oni Synagogue was built in 1895. In 1991 it was restored. Oni synagogue was built by Warsaw project, by so called Mauritania architectural style and is an important architectural monument. In all the three Kutaisi synagogues belong to the community. Tourists often visit from abroad, most of which are Jews formerly living there who donate to the synagogues. Most of the costs are covered from the donations from the mecenats. In 2010, the government allocated 28 thousand GEL that was spent on repairs and the cleaning of graves.

<sup>43</sup> Rabati Neighborhood included Akhaltsikhe fortress, fortress prison, fortress mosque, minaret, baths, the Georgian Catholic school, St. John Catholic Church, Trinity Church, at different times Called Savardo and Patrebian Church / Armenian Catholic Church, st. Stephen Church, the Catholic Church. Holy Cross Church, St. Marine Orthodox church, ruins of Ascension and the John Chrysostom Church, 2 ancient synagogues).

<sup>44</sup> Holy Cross Church and Ivane Gvaramadze tomb, in 2011 it became a monument of Cultural Heritage: Patrebian Church, Grigollus Avorichis Armenian Church, Surb stepanozis Armenian Church, St. Marina church).

Rabati has a distinctive artistic and national value and is closely linked to the most important historical events in the development of the nation.

In 2011, the restoration and conservation of Akhaltsikhe Rabati Complex began. The project is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture. Akhaltsikhe Culture and Monument Protection Department reported that the restoration of the Catholic Church was completed in 2011.

According to the information provided by the Akhaltsike governor there is a special line in the budget for “Rabati rehabilitation”<sup>45</sup>. The rehabilitation project is being prepared by a Cultural Heritage Fund. The full version of the project is still under development.

Many important issues connected to the protection and maintenance of the monuments were revealed during the monitoring. The Culture and Monument Protection Department of the municipality is in charge of identifying and registering monuments in the region. As representatives of the regional services (Ninotsminda, Akhalkalaki) noted, they do not have a qualified expert in this field. So, they are interested in taking special trainings, qualification enhancement courses, etc. More frequent visits from the Ministry of Culture to the district Culture Services is also recommendable with the view of sharing information as well as professional skills and experience. All district Culture Services have noted the lack of cooperation with the Ministry of Culture.

#### **Objective 4. Supporting Tolerance, Encouragement of Intercultural Dialogue and Relations**

The prerequisite for harmonious coexistence of people with different identities is recognition and respect for their cultural and religious traditions<sup>46</sup>. The promotion of the spirit of tolerance and recognition of cultural diversity is one of the objectives of the Action Plan and there is a variety of initiatives planned for 2009-2014 to achieve the objective. In order to fulfill the objective of the Action Plan, the implementation of sustainable programs is important.

There is a need to implement educational projects at secondary and tertiary educational institutions to breed the culture of tolerance. All the objectives of the Culture Part of the Action Plan suffer from the lack of long-term educational projects.

It can be said that the only education initiative of the Action Plan – an introduction of a textbook in tolerance – was cancelled in 2010. The teaching of the school subject was started in 2009 in Kakheti region. The teachers underwent a special training. According to the resource center in Khaketi District the textbook was popular among students. Telavi school students prepared an album dedicated to the topic – tolerance, Akhmeta N2 Public School held an open lesson.

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<sup>45</sup> In 2011 it amounted to eight million, one hundred thousand GEL. 340 000 GEL from which was allocated based on the Government Resolution: 30 000 is spent on cleaning the walls of the prison, 40 000 – on Rehabilitation works for the preparation of preliminary documents.

<sup>46</sup> White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, „Living together as equals dignity“, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2008, p. 13

The subject stopped to be offered in 2010. It became an elective and since the teaching time is very limited, the subject is never given any time. Consequently the subject is no longer offered.

Since 2010 a new elective subject – “Global Culture” was proposed within the National Curriculum<sup>47</sup>. It is designed for X, XI, XII grades. The learning objectives of the subject are: to develop student’s positive attitude towards cultural diversity; build skills for successful communication and tolerance in multicultural environments.

550 general schools in Georgia including private schools have already chosen the subject for 2011-2012 academic years. By the initiative of the Teacher Professional Development Center of the Ministry of Education and Science, all Global Culture teachers of the schools have undergone training in teaching methodology for the subject as well as contents<sup>48</sup>. Students show particular interest and enthusiasm and often contact the authors of the book with diverse questions.

During the meetings with representatives of ethnic minorities and youth activists everyone supported the idea that close and intensive contacts between representatives of different cultures are important for integration.

More attention should be paid and more focus made on planning for measures aiming at providing information to Georgians about the diversity of the country.

Apart from the educational activities, significance is assigned to cultural initiatives and educational programs on television aimed at informing the population about the cultural diversity of the country.

In 2010 a project by the office of the State Minister for Reintegration – “intercultural dialogue” aimed at identifying young poets and writers living in Georgia and arranging literary evenings. The following initiatives were fulfilled within the framework:

- Music Festival “Under One Sky” in Tsalka;
- A Memorial Evening of Mate Albutashvili, the first Kist educator, religious figure, writer, theologian from village Jokolo, Pankisi Gorge.
- A Literary Evening in Telavi of Azeri poets and writers living in the region;
- A multilingual collection of young Russian, Armenian, Azeri writers’ and poets’ works was prepared. Presentation of the collection was held late in 2010.

The following activities could not be executed: A conference on “Interreligious Dialogue”, a second edition of the Chechen translation of “Knight in the Panther’s Skin”, a workshop in Telavi “For the overcome of the negative attitudes among ethnic minority groups living in Kakheti region and promotion of tolerance”.

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.ncac.ge/uploads/msoflio\\_kultura\\_2010\\_2011/msoflio\\_kultura\\_sapilote\\_masala\\_mascav-leblistvis\\_20102011.pdf](http://www.ncac.ge/uploads/msoflio_kultura_2010_2011/msoflio_kultura_sapilote_masala_mascav-leblistvis_20102011.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Teachers from Tbilisi, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Imereti, Guria, Adjara, Racha0Lechkumi, Svaneti, Mtsketa-TianeTi, Abkhazia, Samske-Javakheti schools. undertake the trainings in 25 training centers all over Georgia.

In 2010 Tbilisi Mayor's Office have undertaken measures directed to the promotion of the minority cultures:

- By the initiative of the Writers' Association of Georgia and support from the Mayor's Office 125 years' anniversary of the famous Armenian poet Vahan Teriani was held. The Writers' Union of Armenia from Yerevan attended the event;
- Women's Council, with the support of the Mayor's Office, held Ethnic Minority Culture Week "Multinational Georgia". Within the Culture Week meetings with well-known representatives of the national minorities, exhibitions, poetry and music evenings were held. The closing event was held at the Youth National Palace on Thursday (300 people).
- World Congress of Georgian Jews dedicated to the promotion of long standing Georgian – Jewish relations and cultural traditions<sup>49</sup>.

### **Objective 5. Ensuring Participation of National Minorities into the Cultural Life of Georgia**

The country has a long history of tolerance and co-existence; however, the integration policy has a comparatively short history. Different political and social processes have had a negative impact on the integration of the minorities. Following the Civil War, ethnic conflicts of 90-ies some communities became more closed (e.g., Udis, Avars in Kvareli District). But in recent years, changes have been observed. These changes were referred to in Kvareli, Tsalka, Dmanisi District focus groups. Despite the positive changes, minorities are still not fully involved in a common cultural life.

The Objective 5 is weakly outlined within the planned activities.

The most stable and participatory from the point of view of the minority involvement are public holidays. Involvement in cultural activities is particularly high in Marneuli, Dmanisi, also, more or less, Tsalka, Akhalkalaki. We can welcome the initiative of Culture Services of each municipality to hold different holidays. Participants of such events involve not only Georgian troupes and artists, but also other ethnic groups. Often minorities have the status of guests in such public celebrations.

As the monitoring revealed, the minorities themselves give preference to events outside their villages, such as regional festivals and competitions. Besides, despite the fact that the events are regular, they are often very focused in contents and cannot really solve the problem of lack of information on minority cultures. We should also note the challenge of, in general, establishing yourself in this very competitive world, which is generally accompanied by an increase in competition in the field of culture. It is twice as difficult for someone from minority communities.

We should admit the positive tendency also. Despite the lack of interest from the communities, some municipalities continue to cooperate with them, and frequently do it successfully (Dmanisi, Kvareli District).

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<sup>49</sup> Information from Education and Culture Division of Tbilisi Mayor's Office

The 2010 Action Plan for Tbilisi Mayor's Office envisaged support to participation of minorities in educational and cultural processes.

- In 2010 Tbilisi Mayor's Office and School # 98 have implemented a joint project "Tbilisi – the City of Tolerance", which envisaged twinning Yerevan, Tbilisi and Baku schools. To this end, Baku and Yerevan delegations of students and teachers visited Tbilisi in April 2010. They were offered tours of historical sites, were introduced to Georgian culture and participated in various educational and cultural events<sup>50</sup>.
- A joint project by Tbilisi Mayor's Office and Writers' Union "library on the wheels" was a wide-scale educational and cultural project, which has involved a large diversity and number of population. The main participants were the artists (writers, composers, painters, singers), who, according to a prepared scenario, met students, school pupils, old age pensioners, people with disabilities. Thematic meetings and evenings were held, the participants were representatives of national minorities (Azeris, Armenians, Assyrians).
- In 2010, within Holiday Tbilisoba, a week of ethnic minority culture "Multinational Georgia" was held, a well known Dagestani woman artist Manaba Magomedova was elected as an honorary citizen<sup>51</sup>.

#### Objective 6. Cognition and Promotion of Cultures, History, Language and Religion of Minorities as Cultural Values of the Country.

Cognition of minority cultures, history, languages and religions will facilitate the integration and equal basis relationships between different ethnic groups. The Implementation of Objective 6 of the Action Plan will require a more extensive and sustainable initiatives.

A significant innovation and step forward in 2010 was declaring Kurban-Bairam as a public holiday. This fact is assessed positively by all the minority representatives. Although this festival had been celebrated in Kvemo Kartli and Adjara in the past as well, after its official recognition more people got to know about it. Radio and television covered holiday celebration.

In 2006 a UNESCO Chair of intercultural dialogue was established at Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University<sup>52</sup>. As the Chair staff stated during the interview, the goal of their scientific and educational project is to present cultural diversity as a value and to promote the recognition of the phenomenon through education and communication. The experts working in the field pay special attention to the issue of education of the population, especially youth education, and the importance of learning about different cultures. This promotes a sense of exclusivity and helps to overcome stereotypes.

<sup>50</sup> At the end of the events a meeting with the chair of the City Council was held. The participants were granted the title of Peace Envoy in Caucasus by the Georgian side. Information by Tbilisi Mayor's Office, Education and Culture Department.

<sup>51</sup> Information by Tbilisi Mayor's Office, Education and Culture Department

<sup>52</sup> It is a member of UNESCO/UNITWIN chairs network. Besides a MoU is signed with National Curriculum and Assessment Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, and Memorandum of Cooperation with Scientific Methodological Center of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan).

On November 5, 1992 Council of Europe member states in Strasbourg adopted the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages<sup>53</sup>. By becoming a member to the Council of Europe, Georgia assumed commitments and a number of the Council of Europe agreements were ratified, among them – Language Charter<sup>54</sup>. As compared to the Framework Convention on National Minorities, the Charter aims at protecting minority languages, not minority groups. The charter aims at protecting language as a European cultural value and at preserving cultural diversity. The opinions differ with regards to the Language Charter within the political and social circles. It is seen both as a positive impact for the preservation of minority languages as well as a threat of separatism. The difference in attitudes indicates to the need for more work from the part of the decision-makers, as well as representatives of civil society to gain deeper understanding of the issue.

In accordance to Charter<sup>55</sup> 32 “The Charter grants rights to the governments of specific countries to define the criteria, based on the democratic principles, in accordance with which a regional or minority language used over the territories will be officially granted the status.

On 14 September, 2010 ECMI initiated a conference “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages”. It aimed at providing information and discussion of the issues related to the ratification of the Charter and its implementation by the government officials, scientists and experts.

## Recommendations

The increase in the number of objectives in the sixth Direction of the 2010 Action Plan - “Culture and Preservation of Identity” should be assessed positively. In 2010 the number of the activities planned and implemented under this direction was the smallest. Given its importance, the number of the projects aiming at formation of the civic awareness should be increased. The projects, the effectiveness of which has been proved by experience and research, should be planned. The question of rising civic awareness and spirit of tolerance applies to all members of the community. Thus, the task requires more intensive measures over long periods. In general, in order to implement all the objectives, the following should be undertaken – to identify and plan for the next year: a) the most successful projects, and b) the activities minority representatives are interested in c) long-term projects, d) the projects that failed to be implemented during two consecutive years should be identified (libraries and youth centers). Additional projects and resources should be identified if there is a demand on them and e) it is a prerequisite that all the staff of the governmental agencies and units under them in charge of the implementation of the Action Plan, should be introduced to the National Strategy and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration.

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<sup>53</sup> Major goal of the Charter is to ensure the protection of regional and minority languages as part of regional, european and national cultural heritage and promote the opportunities to use them in personal as well as public life together with the state language.)

<sup>54</sup> Georgia Ratified Framework Convention on National Minorities in 2005.

<sup>55</sup> European Charte on Regional and Minority Languages.



The database should be updated and clarified each year (in order to avoid confusion. E.g. there is no music school in Tsalka, consequently it cannot be supported); identify best practices, successful projects and ensure they are promoted. The activities that have not been carried out due to lack of interest from the communities or other reasons, should be replaced with new activities, demanded by the targeted groups (e.g. In Tsalka more events should be planned involving invited artists, in Akhaltsikhe, demand for village libraries should be followed up).

With the objectives in mind, all the municipalities in the regions should be involved (e.g. Tetrtskaro in Kvemo Kartli, Aspindza in Samtskhe-Javakheti. In Aspindza an annual public holiday Shotaoba is held every year, which is a good example of integration of different cultures by a common goal and, in general, cultural dialogue).

The overall conclusion of the monitoring is that beauty contests and sports tournaments are most common in the cultural centers; arts exhibitions and literary evenings that are envisaged by the Action Plan are less frequently held. Arts groups rarely tour districts. Additional financial resources should be allocated and more sustainable projects implemented in such regions. Budget cuts in the middle of the project cycle should be avoided, since such activities damage sustainability of the project and development of the district in the long run.

The quantity of educational projects in the Action Plan (in particular, those aiming at raising civic consciousness and spirit of tolerance) should be increased.

The monitoring revealed the need for a more in-depth study, that will examine the minorities' expectations, their attitudes towards integration policy; what they see as a barrier towards engaging in the common cultural life of the country and what they see as the most important factors for the preservation of cultural identity. Such data are useful for a more effective action plan and will help a better match between the integration policies and expectations among minorities.

There were a total of 84 activities planned under the culture direction in Plan 2010. Most of the activities envisaged were completed within the timeframe, but monitoring revealed a number of issues that need to be taken into account in the planning of a new year. Recommendations

### Task 1. Promotion of civic consciousness

- The number of educational projects as well as beneficiaries should be increased. More new extracurricular activities should be planned: workshops, roundtable discussions, educational competitions, summer schools, competitions;
- The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs should participate into the implementation of the National Concept and Action Plan. Interregional projects should be implemented. Since, sports, common cultural, exchange programs have greater impact on integration of the people, the number of such programs should be increased.
- TV and Radio programs should be created aiming at increasing civic consciousness for public TV as well as regional channels.

## Task 2. Support preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities

### Museums

- For proper operation and preservation of LEPL David Baazovi Historical and Ethnographic Museum of the Jews of Georgia, the dome of the museum should be repaired at first, so that the deterioration of the conditions would not happen. Next, state as well as additional donor funding should be secured for total rehabilitation of the museum. The building design and financial plan of the reconstruction works of the museum are already in place;
- A responsible agency for the museum reconstruction works should be determined. Due to legislative and structural amendments it is not clear who is the body in charge of the museum (Ministry of Culture, Mayer's Office of Tbilisi or both of them) The issue hinders final resolution of the fate of the museum;
- The Action Plan should include ethnographic and historic museums in every region so that their rich resources are used and exhibitions arranged; Museum projects dealing with study and preservation of the minority culture should be supported (Kutaisi Ethnographic and Historic Museum possesses rich collection of artifacts of history of the life of Jewish community in the city as well as life and work of Georgian Catholics in Kutaisi and Akhaltsikhe);
- More attention should be given to Iv. Javakhishvili Historic Museum of Akhaltsikhe, as an educational and cultural center. Its establishment and rich collection is a good example of interreligious dialogue;
- Gardabani Regional Museum should be allocated a relevant space or be still placed within the old building. Nowadays the museum does not have adequate space to show all the exhibits (exemplifying Georgian, Azeri and other cultures);
- In the future not only collection of artifacts of ethno-culture should be targeted, but also the craftsman that practice the trade, so that the unique trade is protected and preserved;
- Preservation of the unique cultural microcosm, created in Javakheti by the Doghobors, should be sought. The Ministry of Culture and local municipality should agree to establish Dughabor Ethnographic Museum and allocate the relevant financing in Ninotsminda annual budget.

### Public celebrations and holidays

- The difference in minority interests and level of integration in different regions should be considered while planning; More popular projects among the minorities should be supported; Each Culture Service should define a priority direction for protection and presentation of minority cultures;
- Promotion of Mughami and Ashug cultures in the local community as well as in wider public is needed. Of special interest is encouragement of the culture among Azeri youth to ensure intergenerational transition;
- The cultural events planned for the next year should include classic music concerts in the regions, deficit of which was revealed during the 2009 monitoring by the Ombudsman's office and that is still problematic;

- Additional funds for cultural events should be allocated to regions that have not had in this regard (Akhalkalaki, Tsalka, Ninostminda). Severe climate hinders implementation of different projects in winter;
- A folk festival planned to be take place in Javakheti for 2010 was not held. Other municipalities have also expressed the desire to hold such festivals. Participation in organizational issues of the festivals of this kind by different governmental agencies: State Center for Folklore; Ministry of Culture, Regional Administration, Regional Development Service and Ministry of Reintegration;
- Some events, especially those that are interregional, should be additionally financed and coordinated from the Ministry of Reintegration.

### Libraries

- Before the closure of the libraries, they were inventoried in some of the districts and the information about the number of readers etc. can be easily received. Considering the information, as well as specific character of some of the districts and villages, libraries should be reopened in a number of villages: e.g. Village Tshatsharaki Library, where about 3000 Georgian, Russian and Armenian books were stored;
- On the initiative of the Municipality Culture Services village libraries can assume a function of youth centers and arts clubs;
- Funding located for libraries by the municipalities are very little and covers costs of the central and a few village libraries. A state Library Support Program from the central governments should be initiated for the existence of the libraries with the participation of the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture, and other bodies working in the regional development;
- Municipalities should solve the problem of heating of the libraries (reading halls, book stores) in winter; The lack of heating prohibits the libraries from working properly in winter;
- Annual replenishment of the book funds of the libraries is recommendable.

### Music Schools

- Discussion at governmental and nongovernmental levels over the reestablishment of music institutions at regional level should be initiated. Experience from the previous years should be considered and a reasonable decision taken together with the music experts. At present the closure of music institutions present a barrier for pupils to higher music education and in the future this problem will hamper the development of the sector;
- By the support of the Ministry of Culture and local self-governance bodies the number of culture activities should be increased and more artists invited to the districts. Classic music concerts should be arranged, that will help in capacity building of the local personnel apart from having a pure esthetic value;
- The Ministry of Culture should closely cooperate with Municipality Culture Services and timely present new programs to them;
- In order for projects to be initiated at local level, representatives of local self governance bodies, civil society need to take relevant training. The interest was expressed in all the districts.

### Objective 3. Protection of national minority cultural heritage

- The list of the monuments requiring urgent repairs should be identified. Surb Nishni and Mughni Surb Gevork churches should be included in the list; their reconstruction works and later their rehabilitation should start immediately, despite who will they belong to as religious buildings after the sentiment of the dispute;
- The database should include the address of the building as well as other additional information: whether the building is religious, operational, which culture it belongs to besides Georgian etc.;
- Inventory of movable and immovable monuments of Jewish culture: inventory and database of religious buildings as well as rich collection stored in museums and archives should be undertaken, as this was the case with other monuments (e.g. Project of Inventory of Ottoman Monuments);
- All Kutaisi and Oni synagogues should be studied and evaluated and granted the status of a cultural heritage monument. These monuments are of special importance from architectural, cultural and historic point of view. They should be reconstructed;
- Seraphime Saroveli Church in village Japaridze (Sechenovka) built in XIX century by Count Sechenov from Russian cultural heritage monument in Georgia should be paid special attention. It is not included in the registry of cultural heritage monuments so far. It should be studied and relevant reconstruction works launched;
- Promotion of Rabati (Akhalsikhe) as a monument of cultural heritage and one of the most interesting tourist attractions in Samtskhe Javakheti should be undertaken;
- The National Agency for Monument Protection should coordinate the process of inventory in the districts (some district Culture Service successfully implements the process, but in general the process has faults and is implemented with delay). In Akhalkalaki District the only existing registry was done in 80ies last century. The staff of the Culture Services should undergo relevant training. They express their readiness and interest in it.

### Objective 4. Supporting spirit of tolerance, intercultural dialogue and relations

- Because of the reduction of the contact hours in schools in 2010 the subject “Tolerance” is no longer taught. The teaching hours as well as significance of the new subject “Global History” should be predefined to ensure that it is not also terminated. Besides teaching, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives of this kind should be undertaken to get information about the level of success of the introduction of the subject and interest and the topics to be focused on during teaching;
- Intercultural teaching methodologies need to be introduced;
- Students participate in exchange programs and summer schools with great motivation. More resources should be allocated to these projects (especially on the part of the Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs). Educational programs will greatly facilitate integration of youth and the increase of knowledge base;
- Promotion of the spirit of tolerance requires work in different directions. Media has great importance and impact in this regards. Educational and cognitive programs should be prepared that will promote authors, pieces of artistic work and historic figures that carry spirit of tolerance;

- Rabati as a distinguished example of an intercultural dialogue should be popularized: educational and cultural programs need to be dedicated to it. It's cultural significant should be revealed: e.g. The contribution of Catholic Georgians, as founders of unique center for enlightening, history of Jewish community in Akhaltsikhe etc.

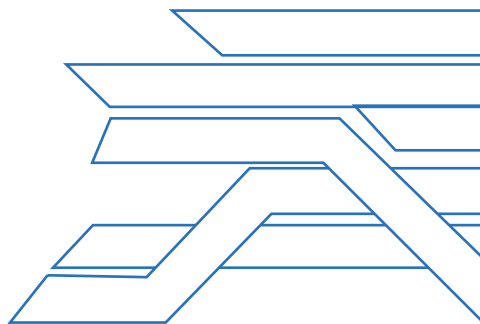
#### Objective 5. Ensuring participation of minorities in the cultural life of Georgia

- Minority representatives should be priorly informed and prepared for participation in the activities;
- Translations should be more employed with the purpose of tightening cultural ties and studying cultures. Literary and scientific projects should be financed.
- Governmental bodies should continue collaboration with local communities. Relevant initiatives should be timely identified. The representatives of minorities noted they preferred the projects are not short term and "the cultural communications last year long and not one concrete day".

#### Objective 6. Cognition and promotion of culture, history, language and religion of minorities as cultural values of the country.

- Work should continue to ratify Regional and Minority Language Charter; also, the respective informational meetings should continue with the field experts, decision makers and other representatives of public;
- Ethnographic and historic, regional museums and archives should be attached proper attention. They store numerous interesting and valuable information on the relationships between Georgian and non-Georgian cultures. Museum staff can be recommended to prepare annual exhibitions, that reflects the intercultural dialogue and culture as a phenomenon of dynamic relationships;
- The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture can be recommended to mainstream the projects that will introduce public at large in Georgia the work of the people that contributed to the development of the Georgian culture, despite their ethnic and religious identity;
- Regular Radio and TV programs should reflect traditions and habits etc. of different cultures living in Georgia;
- The governmental bodies responsible for implementing integration policy should collaborate with nongovernmental organizations and research institutes (e.g. UNESCO Center for Intercultural dialogue); Experiences and knowledge should be exchanged to plan and implement new projects.

# Media and Access to Information



## 1. Legislation

The Constitution of Georgia guarantees freedom of speech, opinion, conscience, religion and belief and prohibits from discrimination of people on the grounds of, also compulsion of people, to express their opinion over speech, opinion, religion and belief. (Article 19).

As stipulated by the Law of Georgia “On Freedom of Speech and Expression”, each person has a right to freedom of expression, including freedom from compulsion to express their opinion over belief, religion, conscience and political vision, ethnic, cultural and social belonging, origin, family, property and position, also all other conditions that can become the basis for restriction of these rights and freedom (Article 3.2. k)

Criminal Code of Georgia provides for penalties for illegal restriction of freedom of speech and a right to obtain and disseminate information (Article 153); illegal restriction of worship or observance of other religious regulations or traditions through violence or threat to violence, or accompanying abuse of religious feelings of a believer or a priest (Article 155); and prosecution on the grounds of speech, opinion, conscience, religion, belief, as well as in connection with their political, public, professional, religious or scientific work (Article 156).

The Law of Georgia on Broadcasting holds Public Broadcaster responsible for reflecting in programs ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age and gender diversity of the community and place information with a relevant proportion of programs prepared by minority groups, in their language (Article 16). As stipulated by article 33.1 of the same law, Public Broadcaster should create one or more annual regular program in at least 4 languages, including Abkhazian, and Ossetian languages.

In accordance with the Law on Broadcasting, a license holder of a local broadcast should ensure the reflection of the opinion of the minorities living in the area of his service (Article 46).

The Law on Broadcasting prohibits broadcasting programs containing material to stir up hatred, discrimination, or offensive to any person or group on the basis of ethnic back-

ground, religion, opinion, age, gender, sexual preference or disability, or any other feature or status. Special emphasis of these features or statuses is only permissible within the context of a program if it aims merely to illustrate such hatred or discrimination, as they already exist in society (Article 56).

Code of Conduct for Broadcasters adopted by the National Communications Commission of Georgia congruent with Article 50 of the Law of Georgia “On broadcasting” is based on broadcasting principles with “accommodating interests of various social groups regardless of their political affiliation, cultural, ethnic, religious and regional backgrounds, language, age or gender (Article 3) being one of them. Chapter 9 of the Code of Conduct “Diversity, Equality and Tolerance” obliges broadcasters to refrain from publishing any material likely to incite hatred or intolerance on the grounds of race, language, gender, religious convictions, political opinions, ethnic origin, geographic location, or social background (Article 31). The code requires from a broadcaster to report accurate, reliable, balanced, proportional information on all cultural, religious, ethnic and social groups living in Georgia, with due regard to the principles of fairness and impartiality, respect the fundamental rights of freedom of opinion, conscience, belief and religion and avoid offending any ethnic, religious, cultural, or social groups. (Article 32).

Congruent with Article 33 of the Code of Conduct Broadcasters should avoid drawing unjustified parallels between ethnic or religious origin and negative events, including associating activities of specific individuals with the entire group also avoid inaccurate and misleading statements regarding minorities and their social problems, should not promote stereotypes or identify an individual’s ethnic origin or religious faith unless necessary. Broadcasters should avoid causing offence to any religious, ethnic or other groups by using, among others, certain terminology and images.

According to the same Article 33 of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters, if any unjustified referral to ethnic origin, religious faith, sexual orientation, family status, social standing or any other factor as to a cause of the problem, or the use of offensive terminology by a source in live broadcast or news program should not go unchallenged and presenters should ask authors of offensive statements to substantiate their views.

## 2. Georgian Public Broadcaster

Georgian Public Broadcaster has a significant function of ensuring the availability of information for national minorities living in the country and thus promoting their integration. Among the general obligations with regards to the content, there is a requirement over ensuring the provision of timely and comprehensive information to the audience concerning important events taking place in Georgia, its regions and worldwide and reflection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age and gender diversity of the community. Congruent to a 2009 December amendment to the law, Public Broadcaster was given a concrete obligation to “create one or more annual regular program in at least 4 languages, including Abkhazian, and Ossetian languages.”

Prior to 2010, Channel 1 of the Public Broadcaster transmitted news programs in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Azeri and Russian and one program per week was broadcast in each

minority languages covering all the major events of the week. The result was that the population received outdated information. Besides, the program was broadcast during the day airtime, usually, having the least audience.

A sociological survey ordered by the Public Broadcaster revealed the ineffectiveness of the arrangement. The results of the survey indicate that the airtime was inconvenient for the target audience and the frequency of information unsatisfactory.

Considering the results from the mentioned survey the Broadcaster was reorganized. A change applied to the format, airtime, and frequency of the news programs in the minority languages. In March, 2010 news programs were made and transmitted in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian and Azeri languages daily (with the exception of the weekend). So called "Erovnuli/National Moambe" (National Narrator) was broadcast during night air on Channel 2 and was repeated in the morning air on Channel 1. News program with the duration of 40 minutes was a compilation of Georgian "Moambe". Ten minutes of information was given in each language and at least 12-14 features were prepared with duration for each feature of less than 1 minute.

In 2010 Public Broadcaster stopped creating Russian language news programs, since from 15th January the same year a new Russian language channel "1st Caucasian" started to be aired through satellite. The goal of the channel is to cover the current events in the region and people living on the territory. Channel prepares news programs as well as analytical programs and social and political talk shows. However, the "1st Caucasian" stopped broadcasting soon by the decision of the French Company Eutelsat.

Daily broadcast of "National Moambe" is undoubtedly a positive step forward concerning improving access to information for ethnic minorities. This also helps to meet the requirement of 2009 December amendment to the law. However, "National Moambe" needs further development in terms of format, contents and duration of the feature. From the 10 minute news editions, 12-14 short videos of which creates a kaleidoscope effect and the presenters read texts either too quickly or too monotonously, the viewers will find it difficult to perceive the information. Besides, the airtime is not always stable. The time indicated in the TV programs – 23:00 on Channel 2 and 7:30 on Channel 1 – is not always observed which resulted in the decrease of the number of the "National Moambe" audience.

In his 2010 report over the news programs in minority languages, the Public Defender noted that in these programs "... less time is devoted to minority communities – including developments in minority-populated regions. It should be noted that minorities are especially interested in this kind of information."<sup>1</sup>

Public Broadcaster has expressed its readiness to include regional reports prepared by regional media in the relevant "National Moambe." For the purposes, Public Broadcaster plans to provide media training for regional TV journalists and has been seeking relevant donor funding.

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<sup>1</sup> A Public Defender's Report on Protection of Human Rights and Freedom in Georgia, 2010



Another positive step towards ensuring access to information for ethnic minorities in 2010 was broadcasting of “National Moambe” in minority languages on regional TV channels. Public Broadcaster cannot completely cover Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions. Accordingly, the news programs prepared in minority languages do not reach part of the target audience. To eliminate this drawback, from March 2010, the Public Broadcaster started transmitting news in minority languages through regional TV channels covering the areas densely populated by the Abkhazians, Ossetians, Azeris and Armenians. Specifically, in Samtskhe-Javakheti news program in Armenian language was transmitted through Akhalkalaki TV station “ATV 12”, in Kvemo Kartli in Azerbaijani language through “Marneuli TV”, in Abkhaz language through Zugdidi “Odishi” and in Ossetian language, through “Trialeti TV”. The regional channels are granted the right to repeat the information the next day. “Moambe” was also broadcast in Armenian language through Ninotsminda TV Channel “Parvana”. The retranslation was financed by the local council. In Ossetian language “Moambe” was broadcast in the evening air by Chiatura “Imervizia,” too.

Despite the aforementioned, in accordance with the Ombudsman’s report: “on many occasions, Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti residents as well as most representatives of local non-governmental and governmental organizations are not aware of the daily news programs transmitted by the Public Broadcaster in minority languages on regional and national TV channels”<sup>2</sup>.

In a 2010 report by the Public Broadcaster broadening the broadcast in the languages of national minorities “at the expense of increasing the number of the local TV stations”<sup>3</sup> was defined as one of the priority. However, no action has been taken so far to improve the coverage through local TV stations apart from the partner TV channels listed above. Public Broadcaster’s authorities state that there are financial and technical problems hampering the implementation of the objective. The technical means by which the partner regional television are provided with news programs in minority languages (so called, “flyweight”) is very expensive. In the presence of relevant technical support (so called, FTP server) it would be possible to provide news programs to more regional televisions at a lower price. To obtain financing for the technical support for the expansion of distribution area, public broadcaster has been prepared a project to be submitted to donors in 2011.

In a 2009 report by the Public Broadcaster, a recommendation is given concerning program priorities for 2009-2010 air time: **“the interests of the population from the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities be considered and major part of the program products are translated into the appropriate languages and placed in the airtime of the local broadcasting stations”**<sup>4</sup>. This recommendation adopted more of a concrete form, and in 2010 report one of the priorities defined for the same year was: “Dubbing of the educational and cultural products produced by the Public Broadcaster (no less than 2 products in each season) into languages used in Georgia and transmitting them through regional network”<sup>5</sup>. This activity was not fulfilled due to the lack of funds. To obtain financing for translation and dubbing their products in minority languages the public broadcaster in 2011 prepared a project proposal to be submitted to donors.

<sup>2</sup> A Public Defender’s Report on Protection of Human Rights and Freedom in Georgia, 2010

<sup>3</sup> A report by Public Broadcaster, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> A report by Public Broadcaster, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> A report by Public Broadcaster, 2010.

There were three TV bridges arranged by Georgian and Azerbaijani public broadcasters in 2010. The TV Bridges were organized by minority languages broadcasting unit. The discussions focused on cooperation of the two countries in NGO sector, tourism development, and economic ties.

### 3. Public Broadcaster Radio

The reorganization stated at Public Broadcaster affected radio channels as well. Before the reorganization, the public broadcaster “Radio 1” transmitted daily 5-minute news programs in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages and 10-minute news program in Russian language. In addition, a weekly 25-minute Kurdish informational and music program “Ronkai” was also broadcast.

In May 2010, “Radio 1” began renewed programming. This channel broadcast audio versions of “Moambe” in minority languages at 05:25 every day (except weekends). “Radio 1” also continued airing weekly informational and educational program in Kurdish.

Considering the fact that public radio frequencies are not distributed in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti as well as air time of the news in ethnic minority languages, we can assume that the effect of the radio programs for ethnic minorities in terms of awareness is very limited. This assumption is reinforced by the results of the survey undertaken within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network” in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in December, 2010<sup>6</sup>. According to the survey, the proportion of the radio audience in the region is low – on average 13% of the population. “Radio 1” was not named among the channels most often listened by the population of the region.

### 4. Coverage of the National Minorities and their Participation in the Programs by Public Broadcaster

One of program priorities determined by the Board of Trustees reads: “preparing programs and reporting on life-styles and ethno-cultural traditions of various religious and ethnic groups in Georgia.”<sup>7</sup>

Since 2006 a program “Our Georgia” is broadcast on the radio, and since 2007 – a TV talk show “Our Yard”. These programs aim at promoting the civil integration process and enhancing the values of an open society, as well as the establishment of tolerance and cultural pluralism in the media.

In 2010, the program “Our Georgia” was broadcast on “Radio 1” only once a week until March 1 with the airtime of one hour. The program covered history, traditions, life, and

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<sup>6</sup> ARC „Survey of Multiethnic Community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti“, implemented within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network”, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> A Public Broadcaster’s Report, 2010.

activities of the ethnic and religious groups living in Georgia as well as their problems, and other related topics. However, since March production of this program was terminated due to financial problems, and only resumed from 2011.

TV talk show “Our Yard” is broadcast every Sunday at 16:30 with an airtime of 1 hour. The program was originally called “Italian Yard,” since 2010 it was broadcast with a new name “Our Yard” and a revised format. The talk show is in Georgian language and special guests include representatives of ethnic minorities. “Our yard” targets wider community apart from ethnic minorities.

The program covers discussions over acute problems for ethnic minorities, solutions to them and interethnic relations. “Our yard” promotes traditions and culture of the minorities living in Georgia, as well as good practices of co-existence of diverse ethnic groups, achievements of people from different ethnic origin and their contribution to Georgian statehood and culture. In 2010, Ethnic Minority Council Program of the Public Defender’s Office awarded “Our yard” as “The Most Tolerant Program of 2010.”

“Our yard” is the only program in Georgian airspace, specially devoted to the issue of national minorities and has been on air already for 5 seasons in public broadcaster. However, according to CiDA survey results in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions its viewers represent more of Georgian population than non-Georgians. One of the major reasons might be the language barrier. To increase the contribution of “Our yard” to the national minorities’ integration process, it can be recommended to translate the program into minority languages and televised through partner regional TV Channels.

Only Public Broadcaster devotes its attention and time to minority life, problems, religion and culture, which is not enough to ensure effective participation of minorities. For private television companies this issue does not have an attached commercial interest and in, in fact, ignored.

## 5. Printed Media

Newspapers in ethnic minority languages that used to be published in huge circulations and with fat financing in the Soviet Period are reported to be facing serious problems. The biggest challenge is financing. The publications in minority languages are issued in small circulations, are mostly unstable and, in fact, do not sell. Their subscribers are governmental agencies, mostly at the local level, public school teachers and a small number of local population. Some of the newspapers exist on grants or government subsidies and are distributed free of charge. The majority of the publications in minority languages do not have a website.

In 2010, newspaper “Gurjistan” in Azeri Language was published with the circulation of 2000 every week. The Newspaper comprised of four pages and was mainly distributed in Kvemo Kartli region. In 2010, the newspaper received funding of 45,000 GEL, out of which 15,000 GEL was allocated by the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and

Sports of Georgia within the “Literary Development Program” and the remaining 30,000 GEL – was allocated from the President’s Fund. The paper mainly covers the activities of the government.

In 2010, the NATO Information Center allocated funding for a two-page supplement for the newspaper – a newsletter “NATO in Georgia.” “Gurjistan” was published with this supplement for three months. In 2010 the newspaper received funding from “Open Society - Georgia is” to create “the publishing base” for the project. The foundation gave “Gurjistan”, a grant of \$ 10,000 to buy a risograph.

Armenian-language newspaper “Vrastan” is published once a week. In 2010, the newspaper received funding of 45,000 GEL: 15,000 GEL was allocated from the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports Affairs of Georgia within the “Literary Development Program”; 30,000 GEL – from the President’s fund. “Vrastan” is a 8 pager with a circulation of up to 4,000. “Vrastan” is mainly distributed in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, with comparatively small amount. The newspaper is published in Tbilisi and distributed by a correspondent to the regions. “Vrastan” has 120 subscribers in Georgia, and 108 in Armenia. The newspaper does not have a web site. The paper mainly covers the activities of the government. According to the chief editor of the newspaper, the demand for the newspaper is high and, in case of additional financing, circulation will be increased.

In 2010 the following Russian-language newspapers were published: “Multinational Georgia”, “Svobodnaya Gruzia” and “Russkoe Veche” existing on self-finances. Since March 2011, due to financial problems, “Svobodnaya Gruzia,” and from June - “Ruskoe Veche” were suspended.

A bilingual Georgian-Armenian newspaper “South Gate” is published in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The newspaper was established in 2004 by the financial support of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) and the Government of Finland. “South Gate” comes out once a week and covers current events and issues in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Caucasian Region. The editorial board of Georgian edition of “South Gate” is in Akhaltsikhe, the Armenian edition is located in Akhalkalaki.

Initially, the “South Gate” was a 12 page with 4,000 circulation. Since 2010, the number of pages decreased to 8 and circulation to 1,500 copies out of which 1000 is Georgian and 500 – Armenian version. Reports are prepared by both editorial boards, which are then translated into the appropriate language. Translation from Armenian into Georgian is a problem since Armenian texts are translated into Russian at the first stage, then into English, which inflicts considerable costs to the newspaper.

“South Gate” (“Samkhretis Karibche”) is mostly circulated through subscription. Distribution of newspapers is done by the editorial board itself – the newspapers are delivered either at home (in the case of the rural population), or left at governmental organizations, where the subscribers withdraw the newspapers themselves. Because of the shortcomings of distribution there is no mechanism for subscription for the mountainous villages. Since in winter, in fact, it is impossible to deliver the newspaper in the villages. “South Gate” is

also distributed at local government agencies, banks, resource centers of the Ministry of Education. Very few are delivered for sale through regular networks – a maximum of 10 copies and, very often, even these do not sell.

In 2008-2010 the newspaper was financed by a Dutch organization Press Now. In 2011, immediately after the end of the financing, the newspaper faced serious financial problems. The income from advertising is little (from 100 to 400 GEL per month) and unstable.

“South Gate” does not have a website; however, has a Georgian blog, where all the content is published. Armenian Blog does not exist yet. Electronic version of each issue of the paper is sent to the National Library of Armenia. The electronic version of the newspaper has 2 subscribers in Yerevan.

The newspaper has made an important contribution to the integration of the local population. Through the newspaper, national minorities living in the region learned that Georgian and non-Georgian population of the region are equally concerned by the everyday, communal or other problems and they do not face these problems because of their ethnicity.

There are a few newspapers published in Azeri in Marneuli. Most of them are financed through NGO “Azeri Cultural Center in Georgia”, which is itself financed from the Government of Azerbaijan. The goal of the NGO is facilitation of the integration of Azeri population into Georgian community.

Azerbaijani newspaper “Region Press” is being published in Marneuli since 2008. This paper was published once a month at first. The frequency gradually increased and since 2010 it is issued three times per month. The organizers explained that the increase in the frequency of the periodical is connected with the newspaper being informative and the increased demand. “Region Press” is a 8-page, 2000 circulation newspaper, distributed free of charge in Kvemo Kartli region. The publication is distributed casually in Kakheti as well. The newspaper covers current events taking place in Georgia, globally, in Kvemo Kartli and in the Caucasus. Apart from covering political and social issues the newspaper covers Georgian-Azerbaijani relationships, youth participation and integration. The paper does not have its own web site, and is attached to the website of the “Azerbaijani Cultural Center”, which is still underdeveloped and the information is uploaded only in Azeri language.

“Azerbaijani Cultural Center” finances also an Azeri magazine “Maidan”. This is a literary-cultural 72-page magazine, which is published every 2 months. It covers the stories of Azerbaijanis in Georgia, Georgia-Azerbaijan relations, and the relations and integration issues between two ethnicities. The circulation of the magazine is 500 copies and is distributed free of charge in Kvemo Kartli; it is also sent to Batumi, Azerbaijan, Turkey, local authorities, the Ministry of Reintegration of Georgia.

Another Azerbaijani newspaper “Zia” is being published since 2001 sponsored by the Azerbaijani Diaspora Committee. The newspaper is 8 pages and is published with the circulation of 2,000 monthly. Apart from reflecting current events, the paper highlights

the life of Azerbaijanis in Georgia, Georgian-Azerbaijani relations, Azeri culture, traditions and holidays. The newspaper is distributed free of charge in Kvemo Kartli region and sometimes articles are printed in Georgian, too.

A Georgian newspaper “Bolnisi” is issued in Bolnisi financed by the local municipality. In 2010 the newspaper was published weekly with the circulation of 1000. Since 2011 the newspaper is being issued three times a month because of the reduced funding. In 2005-2008 the newspaper was published with a 2 page Azeri Language supplement consisting of the articles translated in Azeri and materials aiming at teaching and promoting the Georgian Language. However, the publishers say that the bilingual edition was not successful. The ethnic Azeris were not interested to subscribe to the newspaper and the District Council also stopped financing the supplement.

In 2010 a bilingual Georgian-Armenian newspaper “Tsalka News” was published in Tsalka and distributed in the District. The newspaper was published once a month with 500 circulations.

## 6. Access to Information

As revealed by the recent sociological surveys the major source of information for the greater part of the population (88%) is television<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, TV bears a decisive role in providing information to national minorities. Despite certain steps taken forward to improve provision of information in 2010, namely, launching of “Moambe” in minority languages by Public Broadcaster through regional TV Channels, the level of access to information for ethnic minorities is still low. Both the frequency and quality of the information provision as well as the contents of the information is unsatisfactory. Moreover, national and local TV coverage is limited. As a result, there are villages and settlements in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities where TV signals from neither national nor local TV stations is received. The same applies to radio transmission as well.

In terms of provision of the information and promotion of civic integration, it was undoubtedly a positive measure to translate electoral information video clips into minority languages by the National Elections Committee before the local self-government elections in 2010. In 2010 these videos were broadcast through “National Moambe” of the Public Broadcaster as well as regional TVs.

As confirmed by the survey undertaken in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in December, 2010 within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project<sup>9</sup> the major obstacle to the access to information is the language barrier. A large part of the population in these regions receives information in a language other than Georgian. Two thirds of non-Georgian population in Samtskhe-Javakheti receives information in the Russian and Armenian

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<sup>8</sup> Caucasian Research Resources Center (CRRC) media surveys, 2009 and 2011.

<sup>9</sup> ARC „Survey of multiethnic community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti” undertaken within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network ” in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in December, 2011.

languages. More than a quarter of Kvemo Kartli population receives information in the Russian language and more than half in the Azeri language. Accordingly, ethnic minorities living in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions prefer Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani and Turkish channels.

In accordance to the research by the „Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development“ conducted in 2010, for two thirds of Samtskhe-Javakheti population local TVs are the major source of information<sup>10</sup>. As per the results of the CiDA survey, in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions local channels are viewed by less than a third of the population<sup>11</sup>. From the above-mentioned, strengthening of local TV channels and employing the resource more actively for provision of information to national minorities can be recommended.

Regional TV stations are not yet developed enough to fully meet the demand of the population on information. There are many problems hindering the development of local television stations, financial resources being at front. The advertising market is relatively under developed in the regions, and consequently, revenues from TV advertising are little. Other problems include outdated technology, low qualification of journalists, as well as need for a building for most of them. All these prevent creation of more products in languages comprehensive to ethnic minorities.

At the same time, there is a deficit of commercial approaches to regional televisions. Many still hope for getting grants from donors. No attempts of cooperation among regional TV stations and efforts to create joint products in the light of scarce resources. One of the serious problems is that new media elements are not used. Most of the TV companies do not even have a website of their own.

Three local TV channels broadcast in Samtskhe-Javakheti: Georgian “Channel Nine” in Akhaltsikhe and Armenian „ATV 12“in Akhalkalaki and “Parvana” in Ninotsminda.

Georgian TV company “Channel Nine” covers Akhaltsikhe and Adigeni Districts. Around 5 hours are dedicated to the programs prepared by the channel; the rest of the airtime is filled by Russian “Region TV.” The TV Company prepares daily news program on current events taking place in the region.

Since April, 2010 through financial support from the USAID the channel broadcasts program “Dialogue” covering mostly social problems and civil integration issues (e.g. mixed families). In total 15 programs were prepared. Among the invited guest there were ethnic minorities too.

<sup>10</sup> ARC survey on “Major Sources of information and civic identity of Samtskhe-Javakheti Population, November, 2010; Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD)

<sup>11</sup> ARC „Survey of multiethnic community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti” undertaken within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network ” in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in December, 2011.

Channel 9's broadcast of pre- self government-election debate is worth noting aiming at the increased participation of the local population in the elections as well as facilitation them to make informed decisions. This was a joint product by "Internews", USAID and the TV Company. The Tele-debates were broadcast also online at Internews internet address. Through the website the viewers could put questions to the participants of the debates live. During pre-election period Channel 9 also broadcast video clips in Armenian prepared by the central Elections Committee.

Television does not have a website, has only a blog, funded by the Eurasia Partnership Foundation.

TV station "Parvana" is the only television in Ninotsminda. It broadcasts in Armenian and covers Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki districts.

At present, "Parvana" is the best established TV channel in Samtskhe-Javakheti region with its technical-material resources, program diversity and number of employees. In addition to grants, it has income from advertising.

The daily news programs of the television covers events taking place in Samtskhe-Javakheti, the problems the population faces, socio-economic and cultural issues. In 2010 "Parvana" accommodated for Armenian "Moambe" by Public Broadcaster in the evening airtime. The associated retranslation costs were covered by the local council. Every day television allocates airtime to programs of the Armenian TV channel "Armenia."

A program series aiming at civil integration were prepared through the financial support of "Open Society – Georgia". The program highlighted life, social problems, issues related to cultural identity and the development prospects of the population in Samtskhe-Javakheti.

TV Company "Parvana" has a website, which is still underdeveloped ([www.parvana.ge](http://www.parvana.ge)). The website contains only general information about the company. Neither current nor archived programs are placed on the website.

Akhalkalaki Armenian TV Channel „ATV 12“ covers Akhalkalaki District only partially. To achieve full coverage, the TV Company needs retranslator. In 2010 TV channel broadcast Armenian "Moambe" by the Public Broadcaster every evening and was repeated next morning. TV company prepares its original news program covering news of the district and issues from local municipality. Twice a month program "Conversation with the Lawyer" is broadcast through the TV where the expert explains the laws that are of interest for Akhalkalaki population. Free airtime was filled with Russian Channel "Region TV".

Among the TV stations in Samtskhe-Javakheti „ATV-12“ is the most impoverished from the point of view of finances, technical equipment and employees. The TV channel exists on revenues. The major source of income is running messages and obituaries. Little income is collected through selling airtime to the local council. According to the Director of the television, the population is interested in agricultural issues. However, due to the lack of funds the television cannot afford to develop a new program.



Marneuli TV located in Marneuli, Kvemo Kartli covers Marneuli District completely as well as part of Tetrtskharo, Bolnisi and Dmanisi Districts. The TV Station is Georgian, but produces a few bilingual programs as well. The channel broadcasts Azeri “National Moambe” by the Public Broadcaster during the evening air and repeats it in the morning. TV channel prepares its own news program in two languages, Georgian and Azeri. In 2010 through financial support from the Embassy of The USA in Georgia a series of programs on current problems in the villages of the region especially those where ethnic Azeris reside.

„Marneuli TV“ has a website ([www.marneulitv.ge](http://www.marneulitv.ge)), where new programs and program archives are posted.

Georgian TV channel “Bolneli” produces a weekly informational-analytic program in Georgian and Azeri. The project is financed through the Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF).

In December, 2010 according to the CiDA research, the population in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti are better informed about the current processes in general throughout the country, than about the events happening specifically in respective regions<sup>12</sup>. TV Journal “Polygon” by the “Association of Regional Broadcasters of Georgia” is an interesting project to counterweigh this gap. This project is being implemented through financial support from Dutch Organization Press Now and Open Society Georgia Foundation and is on air since 2009. The reports for the program are prepared by regional correspondents and the issues such as human rights, ethnic minorities, education and culture that are relevant for their region are covered. The TV journal is broadcast once a week on regional TV channels and provides the population with information on ongoing issues in the country.

Together with other regional broadcasters, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli TV channels are also engaged in the project. However, majority of television viewers, due to the lack of knowledge of the language cannot understand Georgian “polygon”. The Association of Regional Broadcasters has considered this problem, and since July 2010 the program is subtitled in Armenian and Azeri. Accordingly, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli televisions renewed its broadcast.

Kakheti regional televisions have not produced programs in minority languages. Kakheti does not face the problem of the knowledge of the language of the scale and acuteness as some areas of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. Among the Georgian regional television stations “Gurjaani” has the most diverse and informative program. Besides the daily news programs, the station in 2010 broadcast a weekly analytical talk show “Power of the Powerless,” discussing the regional problems. In addition, a weekly analytical program “Self-Governance Expert” was devoted to discuss the problems in self-governance. Since 2011, “Gurjaani” produces a program “Farmer’s Time”. It has its own web site ([www.gurjaanitv.ge](http://www.gurjaanitv.ge)), where the program archive is accessible.

<sup>12</sup> ARC „Survey of multiethnic community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti” undertaken within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network ” in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in December, 2011.

In accordance with the CiDA survey in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, on average 13% of the population listens to the radio<sup>13</sup>. The proportion of the Radio listeners is even lower in ethnic terms. “Ar Daidardo”, “Imedi”, “Fortuna”, “Green Wave” are among the radios named by the listeners.

Radio “Green Wave” covers almost all the country. In 2010, the Radio “Green Wave” broadcast a program “Media Criticism” which devoted a number of programs to the coverage of ethnic minorities and the language of hatred in the media. In addition, since 2010 the radio produces a program “Europe in Georgia,” 6 editions of which were devoted to national minorities. Radio also broadcasts live Boell Foundation debates which often cover national minorities, civic integration, and media. Every evening, for one hour, at 9 PM “Green Wave” broadcasts Russian-language informational-analytic program “Echo of the Caucasus” by Radio Liberty. Broadcast of the program started in October 2009. The project aimed at covering also South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The program reports on current National and global news. “Echo of the Caucasus” is also daily broadcast by Zugdidi Radio “Atinati” and Gori Radio “Trialeti”.

According to the survey by CiDA newspapers represent sources of information for very few of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli population<sup>14</sup>. Georgian population is more likely to read printed media, than non-Georgian. Out of 38 named, 18 are local or foreign (Armenian and Azeri) newspapers. “Kviris Palitra” and “Asaval-Dasavali” are most popular among Georgians when “South Gate” and “Vrastan” among non-Georgians.

In 2010 the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration renewed its website which now is in English and Russian, too, apart from being in Georgian. Under the rubric “civic integration” the documents related to the issues of tolerance and civic integration are accessible in Armenian and Azerbaijani as well.

CiDA survey results reveal that the number of internet users in Samtskhe-Javakheti is twice as high (23.9%) as in Kvemo Kartli (11.3%). It seems that it is a long way before internet can compete with television as a major source of information in Georgia.

## 7. Media and Tolerance

Telemedia in Georgia has a little focus on minority issues. Private TV companies do not pay attention to the topic since it does not have a commercial value attached. Minority issues are only covered by the private TV companies in news programs and this is mostly connected to either crime or conflict, or religious or other festivals if a high ranking official takes part.

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<sup>13</sup> ARC „Survey of multiethnic community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti” undertaken within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network” in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe - Javakheti in December, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> ARC „Survey of multiethnic community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti” undertaken within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network” in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in December, 2011.

The only exception with this regards is the public broadcaster which several programs on ethnic minorities. In addition, broadcaster is regulated by the internal code of conduct in order to ensure coverage of ethnic and religious minority issues with professional standards. According to the internal Code of Ethics the goal of the Public Broadcaster is to fully and fairly cover all people and cultures of Georgia, respect the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, and promote their development. The code requires from the broadcaster to reflect minority points of view over minority as well as other issues, and respond to negative opinions expressed with regards to minorities.

In recent years, cases of violation of the media standards during the coverage of ethnic and religious minority issues has been significantly reduced on TV, but not in printed media. This is confirmed by NGO “Media Development Foundation” in 2010 that monitored the coverage of issues of ethnic and religious minorities through the television and print media within three months. According to the results, ethnic and religious discrimination, use of offensive and xenophobic terminology, discriminatory approach in coverage of crime, stereotyping separate groups and circulation of discriminatory statements is quite frequent in some printed edition.

The afore-mentioned proves that, despite numerous trainings and workshops, the issue of tolerance in media is still acute.

## Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the research and aims to promote civic integration process through increasing media coverage of minority issues and improvement of access to information for minorities:

### Georgian Public Broadcaster

- Ensure improvement of the news programs in minority languages with the view of the content, format and duration;
- Ensure a wider coverage for the news programs in minority languages by increasing the number of regional partner TVs;
- Ensure translation/dubbing of its products in minority languages and their broadcast through regional partner TVs.
- Ensure increased participation of national minorities and increased coverage of the problems, lifestyle, cultural or religious issues related to minorities in its programs, among them news and socio-political programs;
- Ensure the coverage of the current events and problems in the regions densely populated by minorities.

### Commercial Media

- Ensure increased participation of national minorities and increased coverage of the problems, lifestyle, cultural or religious issues related to minorities in its programs, among them news and socio-political programs;

- Ensure the coverage of the current events and problems in the regions densely populated by minorities.
- Comply with professional standards when covering the issues regarding national and religious minorities.

### Regional Media

- Develop cooperation mechanism for local regional television stations envisaging joint production and exchange of media products;
- Ensure the use and development of Internet media;
- Expand coverage;
- Ensure the production, increase and improvement of media productions in the languages comprehensible by local population.

### Non-governmental Organizations

- Provide regular media monitoring of the coverage of national minorities by media and publish the results.
- Inform society at large over the breach of conduct in media, especially use of hate speech and hold public debates.

### International Organizations

- Promote the development of regional media in terms of technical support as well as diversification of the content;
- Support cooperation and joint projects between regional local TV stations;
- Promote translation and dubbing in minority languages of educational programs prepared by public broadcaster;
- Continue capacity building of the journalists with regard to tolerance, national integration and coverage of national minorities' issues.

2011







# Rule of Law; Political Integration and Civil Participation; Social and Regional Integration

The Monitoring Report presents the findings of the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender of Georgia. The Report is based on Monitoring Group's field research, focus group discussions, analysis of related legislation and consultations with experts. The Monitoring Group aimed at assessing implementation of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan, including identification of existing problems and challenges, achievements and the needs to be addressed. The monitoring was conducted throughout November-December 2011. However, the work of expert group has been continued in January-February 2012 with an end to identify and assess more issues regarding civil integration of national minorities in Georgia.

From four directions of the Action Plan, the presented Monitoring Report reflects the issues pertaining professional development and employment, political and civic participation, and regional integration of national minorities in Georgia.

The monitoring was conducted in all regions densely populated with national minorities – Kakheti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Imereti. The members of the Monitoring Group organized meetings with the representatives of local self-governments, high authorities of internal forces (local representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecutor), leaders of political parties at the local level, heads of Central Election Commission of Georgia, representatives of local non-Governmental organizations and people from the local community.

## **Professional Development and Promotion of Employment of National Minorities**

Similar to the Report of 2010, Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration has been presented in the Report for the year 2011 as one of the major highlights with regard to professional development and employment of national minorities.

The courses at Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration presented in the Report (2011) are identical to the activities given in the Report on the implementation of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan of the Government of Georgia for 2010. According to the Report, in 2011 the attendees of Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration had an opportunity to take the following courses:

Short-term Courses:

1. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs);
2. Financial Management;
3. Project Management and Monitoring;
4. Human Resource Management;
5. Basics in Law and Clerical Work;
6. Basics in Management.

Long-term Courses:

1. Georgian Language Course (three months a year, step by step);
2. English Language Course (three months a year, step by step).

The findings of the monitoring revealed that the section of the Report in 2011, which presents information on Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, is not based on actual situation, but just reflects the list of objectives and goals of the School which are quite deviated from the activities carried out in 2011. Specifically, the results of the monitoring demonstrate that from 2011, public administration component of the school as one of the major objectives is totally taken out from the School's curriculum. At this stage, the activity of the school is mainly linked to the provision of three-months courses for teachers and administrative staff of the non-Georgian schools located in the regions densely populated with national minorities. During the monitoring period, 75 attendees from Kvemo Kartli region, including public school principals and the staff members of Educational Resource Centers have been taking Georgian Language classes at the School.

The Report on the implementation of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan of the Government of Georgia (2011) states that 21 Armenian and Azerbaijani language speaking employees of the local self-governments of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo-Kartli regions took intensive three-months courses of Georgian language and clerical work from July of 2010 to February 2011. This has been confirmed by the monitoring process.

**Conclusions and recommendations of the Monitoring Group regarding the state policy towards professional development and employment of national minorities:**

Conclusions and recommendations of the Monitoring Group regarding the state policy towards professional development and employment of national minorities remains the same in 2011, similar to what has been stipulated in the recommendations in 2010. The main part of the recommendations deal with the professional development of national minorities and the respective state institution – in this case, Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen public administration component in Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration;
- Develop new public administration curriculum in line with the needs of the region;
- Increase autonomy of management at Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration,



establish Board of Trustees and ensure representation and participation of national minorities;

- Ensure better coordination with local self-governments during the selection of attendees for Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration in order to consider local needs to a greater extent;
- Grant autonomy (in an optimal scope) to Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration. At this point, school managers cannot make any independent decisions and even minor issues are agreed with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. This situation has hampering effect on the overall functioning of the School.
- Provide opportunities for internship at state institutions for national minority students, enrolled in 4+1 programme.

### Political Integration and Civil Participation

In the State Report in 2011, provision of equal electoral rights and opportunities to be involved in decision-making process are presented as the major highlights of the section on Political Integration and Civil Participation.

The Report in 2011 partially repeats and reiterates the achievements from the previous years, however, new accomplishment and issues are also presented.

These achievements and attainments are:

- General guidelines and different types of informational materials on the election procedures and legislation were developed and translated into minority languages;
- According to the State Report in 2010, the Central Election Commission of Georgia (CEC) planned to establish resource centers in the regions. As the Report in 2011 maintains, CEC set up seven resource centers, 4 out of them – in the regions densely populated by national minorities – Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Bolnisi and Marneuli where various kinds of seminars and meetings were held with the representatives of NGOs and international organizations as well as the trainings on election issues were conducted. According to the Report of 2011, the election library and useful internet-resources are also available in the resource centers;
- Different non-governmental organizations implemented the projects aiming at provision of information about elections to ethnically non-Georgian population;
- Several meetings with local community were held with the initiative of both – NGOs and state agencies; memorandum of understanding between the Council of National Minorities under Public Defender's Office and the different state agencies were signed;

The work of the Monitoring Group revealed that the booklets about the procedures of election are available in minority languages in 2011, similar to the previous year. Local representatives of Central Election Commission are provided with the appropriate materials both in state and minority languages. The staff members of the Central Election Commission underwent professional trainings about election procedures;

The Monitoring Group confirms that the resource centers mentioned in the State Report in 2011 were established in four municipalities in the regions densely populated by national

minorities. However, the Group does not verify the fact that election library and internet-resources were available at the Centers. The Group does not either confirm that the information meetings were held permanently. It is true that Resource Centers were set up, but they were provided with necessary space in the Office of the CEC in all four municipalities. These spaces were repaired and equipped, but during the timeline of the monitoring (i.e. by 2011), they were not equipped with books and computer facilities. This means that the voters by the reporting period could not have the opportunity to use the aforementioned materials and facilities.

As to political integration and civil participation, involvement of national minorities in social and political life of the country is extremely low. Similarly, the opportunity to make any kind of influence on decision-making is just minor. National minorities are less engaged at executive level, in political parties and the life of the civil society.

Despite the above-mentioned situation, the monitoring also revealed some positive cases from the side of local self-governments and agencies. Specifically, the heads of local municipalities and state agencies in the regions densely populated by national minorities express their willingness and readiness to foster involvement of national minority representatives in public administration and other spheres. However, at this stage only a limited number of national minorities is successful in political and public life. The main reason for this is the fact that national minorities are not competitive because of inadequate qualifications and poor knowledge of the state language. This factor once again confirms and underlines the importance of Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration.

One more positive tendency is that the regional government tries to envisage the needs and requirements of the community during policy planning and implementation process. This tendency has also been proved during the allocation of the local budget and the informational meetings of the representatives of the municipalities with local communities; such practices are used by the local municipalities. In spite of these facts, such positive attempts cannot change the overall picture in terms of the influence of national minorities on the decision-making process. This is because the community mobilization and development at the local level are not in a favorable condition. Therefore, national minorities are deprived the opportunity to adequately present their needs and problems. Meetings from the side of local municipalities can be considered as positive attempts. However, since these meetings are not held permanently, they are not enough to fully reflect the needs of national minorities and foster their engagement at the local level.

One more problem that is particularly acute in terms of political integration and civil participation of national minorities – an extremely low political involvement of the national minorities and the fact that the majority of political parties ignore the regions densely populated by the national minorities. The Monitoring Group held meetings with all political parties registered in these regions. After the consultations and meetings, the Group got the following picture: political parties, except the leading party, carry out political activities only prior to the election period. In addition, they engage national minorities in political activities to a very minor extent, while the issue of civil integration of national minorities is reflected in the political platform and goals of few political parties.

## Conclusions and recommendations of the Monitoring Group regarding the political integration and civil participation of national minorities:

2011

Majority of the priority tasks regarding political integration and civil participation that have been stipulated in the State Report on the Completion the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan of the Government of Georgia (2011) have been accomplished by respective state agencies. The only issue, which is stated as fulfilled but is not verified by the Monitoring Group, is the functioning of resource centers under the Central Election Commission (CEC) in the regions densely populated by national minorities. The Monitoring Group confirms that the resource centers were established; however they do not function fully at this point. Despite this, it is noteworthy that the Central Election Commission (CEC) took some tangible and important steps in order to provide national minorities with respective information about the elections and encourage their participation in the election process. Such approaches as well as establishment of special working group on May 14, 2012 are explicitly positive steps toward political integration of minorities. The Working Group aimed at fostering engagement and awareness raising among national minorities about election process. The Working Group encompassed representatives from more than 20 NGOs, including representatives of national minorities.

As to overall assessment of political integration and civil participation of national minorities, despite the acknowledged positive tendencies and improved political environment, involvement of national minorities is not fully ensured (as the findings of the monitoring reveal). This is primarily linked to insufficient development of the civil society and low political culture in the regions densely populated by national minorities.

In the recommendations for 2011, the Monitoring Group maintained most of the suggestions from 2010. At the same time, the Group added some important recommendations regarding the involvement of political parties, inclusion of civil integration issues in the platform of the political parties' agendas and the Central Election Commission's work toward engagement of national minorities.

Recommendations of the Monitoring Group for political integration and civil participation of national minorities:

- Georgian political parties are recommended to enhance their activities in the regions densely populated by the national minorities; further, give due regard and include the issues of tolerance and civil integration in the political agendas and election statutes;
- Encourage involvement of national minorities in the political party-lists, thus promoting overall political activism of national minorities in Georgia;
- Civil sector is recommended to foster and initiate additional programmes and efforts in order to promote development of civil society and community mobilization in the regions densely populated by national minorities;
- Foster initiation of the state programmes, which will promote employment of national minorities at public sector;

- In addition to existing CEC resource centers, establish other centers in each municipality settled by national minorities and equip them with adequate material-technical facilities; identify election districts and precincts settled by national minorities and translate election ballots into minority languages;
- Put integration of minorities and issue of raising their awareness high on the agenda within CEC's Grant Programme;
- Establish legal support center for national minorities (or for existing centers, recruit staff who can communicate in minority languages).

### Social and Regional Integration

The State Report on the Completion the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan of the Government of Georgia (2011) provides detailed and comprehensive account of the activities towards social and regional integration, even with reference to the additional issues beyond the National Concept. If the Report in 2010 mainly dealt with programmes for rehabilitation of roads and schools, village assistant programme and water pipeline renovation efforts, the Report in 2011 thoroughly puts forward such initiatives as regional and municipal development programmes, infrastructure development projects with respective statistics, tourist and agrarian infrastructure development, social welfare and health.

The Report of 2011 also presents information about the new agency; specifically, in 2011 Regional Development Councils were set up in the regions, which represent an advisory body of the State Governor. In addition to the government representatives, it also incorporates local businesspersons acting in the region and representatives of non-governmental organizations.

During the monitoring of the account stated in the Report for 2011 regarding regional and infrastructure projects, the Monitoring Group did not find any responsibility of the Government that was not accomplished. However, the Group identified several problems that impede full regional integration. One of the major issues is the problem with regard to economic interaction, particularly among farmers. Minority representatives are not aware of ongoing economic policy of the country, especially in agriculture sector. At the same time, there is an extreme dearth of qualified resources in the regions densely populated by national minorities. The scarcity of qualified human resources is particularly explicit during the implementation of infrastructure projects. Majority of recruited staff in these projects are from other regions or from foreign countries.

One more problem that has been identified by the Monitoring Group is the lack of effective mechanism for the identification of regional needs and problems, and for proper coordination at local level. In order to lessen this problem, in 2011 Regional Development

Councils were established under the auspices of the Governor's Offices. However, these Councils do not fully function hitherto.

In 2011, the Monitoring Group believes that it is necessary to make more emphasis on the problems of those vulnerable and small groups of national minorities who reside in the following regions (but not densely): Kakheti, Shida Kartli and Adjara. Unlike from Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions, national minorities residing in the above-mentioned regions face the challenge of assimilation, losing their identity and social insecurity. Therefore, it is crucial to consider their problems in the context of regional and social integration.

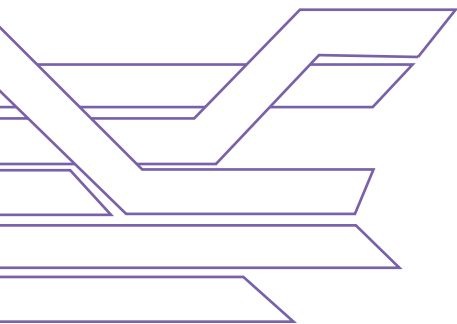
### Conclusions and recommendations of the Monitoring Group concerning the social and regional integration of national minorities:

Similar to the Report of 2010, the Report in 2011 does not reflect several issues envisaged by the Action Plan. Specifically, the Report does not refer to energy infrastructure rehabilitation project that was supposed to be implemented in 2006-2010. Further, it does not report on the project for investment in small and medium-sized enterprises that was expected to be implemented in 2006-2010. It is advisable to report on these issues along with other initiatives implemented by the state towards the social and regional integration.

The Monitoring Group maintained some suggestions from 2010 and at the same time, added other key recommendations:

- In the framework of regional and social integration policy, the state has to consider the problems of such regions as Kakheti, Shida Kartli and Adjara, where national minorities feel ignored and disregarded from the Government as well as from the side of NGOs and international organizations;
- The state agencies working on civil integration of national minorities, are recommended to consider in the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration Action Plan the problems of small ethnic groups, such as Udis, Avars, Lezghins, Ossetians, Abkhazians, Kurds, Roma people and Assyrians;
- The state agencies working on civil integration of national minorities are recommended to actively cooperate with local governments (where the staff is comprised of national minorities) during the implementation of regional activities and programs, so that local municipalities and state agencies do not feel disregarded and distrusted by the central government;
- The scarcity of qualified local resources is a permanent problem during the implementation of infrastructure projects. The respective agencies should provide preparation of human resources, when needed (for instance, in such important fields of the regions as railway system, agriculture, rehabilitation of roads, etc.);

- Access to agricultural projects should be boosted and retraining of human resources has to be provided;
- Interregional economic interaction should be enhanced; Agri tours should be organized among farmers from the regions densely populated by the national minorities and the rest of the country;
- Irrigation system has to be rehabilitated in the regions densely populated by national minorities (this problem is particularly severe in the village Kanda of Mtskheta District, where ethnic Assyrians are residing);
- Better coordination between the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure and local municipalities should be ensured. Representatives of local municipalities and NGO sector should take part in designing regional development strategy. Regional Development Councils under the auspices of the Governor's Offices should start actual functioning and their role. Finally, it is important that the effectiveness of these Councils is increased.



# State Language and Education

Georgia is a signatory country of several international conventions on the right of education of national minorities, including:

- Articles 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities that make a special emphasis on education as a fundamental right
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In Georgia, three major laws provide legal framework in education:

- Law of Georgia on General Education
- Law of Georgia on Higher Education
- Law of Georgia on Professional Education.

This chapter of the Monitoring Report presents the findings of the Tolerance Center under the auspices of Public Defender's Office of Georgia. The monitoring assessed the implementation of the activities stipulated in the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan of the Government of Georgia for 2011. The chapter presents the snapshot of the activities implemented at preschool, general, vocational, higher and adult education levels. Each specific issue is discussed in line with the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and the activities stipulated in its Action Plan.

## Preschool Education

Preschool education is regulated by Georgian legislation. According to Georgian legislation, preschool institutions are under the auspices of local self-governments and therefore their functioning falls under the framework of their competence.

According to the Report for 2011 of the State Minister for Reintegration of Georgia, there are no activities presented toward the Priority Task №2.1 on the **Provision of Access to Preschool Education to National Minorities**. It is noteworthy that on March 31, 2009, Minister of Education and Science of Georgia approved the "Georgian Language Programme." In 2009, the Programme envisaged implementation of the subprogram -

“Enhancement of the Georgian Language Teaching and Learning at Preschool Level in Regions Populated by Minority Communities.” The ultimate goal of the Subprogram was to improve Georgian language acquisition among minority children by providing quality language programs at preschool level.

Within the Programme of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia<sup>1</sup> – “Meeting Educational Needs of Minority Preschool Children,” expert group (comprising of experts on Georgian as a Second Language, a preschool education expert and an illustrator) worked out a framework and the first part of preschool textbook for minority children.

In six municipalities of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti (Dmanisi, Bolnisi, Marneuli, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda) schools were selected. In these selected schools, rooms were equipped with corresponding inventory and educational materials for establishment of preschool educational centers. National Curriculum and Assessment Center has been assisted by UNICEF<sup>2</sup> in accomplishment of the Project.

It is noteworthy that the activities carried out in 2010 repeats the information that has been reported in 2009. In 2009, six kindergartens were equipped with necessary facilities. “Georgian as a Second Language Programme” as well as the “Programme for the Provision of Information for Preschool Children’s Parents” was launched in 2009. Instruction process was supposed to be started from 2010. In the report of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia for 2010-2011 as well as in the information provided by the Ministry, there is no progress in this regard.

The Monitoring Group embarked on a mission to assess situation regarding access to preschool education. According to focus group discussions held in the regions, functioning of the preschool education centers under public schools were hampered, because preschool education institutions were not profitable for schools. Georgian as second language programme as well as materials and teacher’s professional development are provided at preschool education institutions.

At preschool education level, there are two major explicit problems: a) Access to early childhood education; b) Provision of quality preschool education for minority children.

Herewith, it should be pointed out that the access to early childhood education is a challenging issue throughout the whole country. According to the data for the years 2005-2006 by the National Statistics Office of Georgia, only 55% of children of early childhood age have an access to preschool education in the whole country. The figure is substantially high in urban settlements compared with rural areas (urban – 67%, rural – 43%)<sup>3</sup>.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, access to preschool education remains a severe problem in the regions densely settled with national minorities. The situation is worse in Kvemo Kartli region.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://mes.gov.ge/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncac.ge/>; <http://ganatleba.org/>

<sup>3</sup> See the website of the UNICEF at: <http://www.unicef.org/georgia/childhood.html>



Monitoring in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions revealed that there is a severe problem of access to early childhood education. For instance, in Ninotsminda one preschool education institution is functioning, where one group comprising of 20 children is undertaking Georgian language preparatory classes. At the initial stage, this kindergarten was established with the financial support of UNV. After the completion of the Project, the kindergarten continued functioning with the support of parents. From 2008, after the meeting with Sandra Roelofs, the kindergarten was financed from the Presidential Fund and currently it is funded by the local self-government. At this point, one group (comprised of 20 children) is functioning in the kindergarten, where the Project of the MoES is implemented. Within the Project, training of teachers and introduction of new methods of teaching of Georgian language are ensured. Within the Project, the kindergarten was equipped with modern technical facilities and visual aids. The staff of this kindergarten underwent training and was provided with training materials. As teachers of this kindergarten state, Georgian language textbook for preschool education teachers was published and distributed in Ninotsminda. However, piloting, revision and publishing of the final version of the textbook planned in 2011 was delayed and will be implemented in 2012.

In total, 120 children are enrolled at preschool education institution in Ninotsminda that is 20 times less than needed in this municipality. At this point, administration of kindergarten does not accept any applications since the capacity of the kindergarten does not give an opportunity to accept more children. Parents are bringing children to the kindergarten from the villages for which they rent cars. As outlined by the local people, considering the high needs for preschool education, it is reasonable to establish one kindergarten even in each village. For parents, it is important that children have an opportunity to learn Georgian at preschool education institution.

In Akhalkalaki, there are two preparatory groups. Preschool Education Project has been implemented since 2009. Specifically, there is one group at kindergarten and one preparatory group based at Russian school. Similar to Ninotsminda kindergarten, the preschool education institution is fully equipped with modern facilities and teachers are trained. As parents noticed, early childhood education is very important for children. Unfortunately, two groups comprising of maximum 40 children are not sufficient to meet the needs of the municipality. They also complained that children are accepted through acquaintance (nepotism).

The problem of access to preschool education is also severe in Marneuli. The willingness from the side of parents to bring children to kindergartens is substantially high compared to available places in Georgian groups. About 200 parents are waiting for bringing their children to preschool education institutions. Kindergartens are not repaired and are equipped with old, Soviet time furniture and visual aids. Children do not have toys and the sanitary condition is also very poor.

„Parents are told that one has to register two years in advance. 200 people are in a pending mode. We don't understand why they do not add additional groups in kindergarten!”

„I was forced to take my child out of kindergarten. When there are 40 children in the group, teachers cannot teach, but they just take care of a child...”

Focus group discussions revealed that preschool education centers were not established at schools. At least, parents and NGO representatives do not have such information. There is one kindergarten at Marneuli (№3) with one experimental group funded by the UNICEF. The group is provided with textbooks, toys, audio-visual aids, and teachers are trained as well. From the next year, UNICEF will provide funding for all groups of the kindergarten. The results and academic performance of children in experimental group in terms of Georgian language acquisition is quite good. Textbooks, toys, audio-visual aids provided by UNICEF are also available for other groups in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda preschool education centers.

It is noteworthy that in Marneuli, the number of people who would like to enroll their children in Georgian preschool education centers have substantially increased compared with the previous years. Parents believe that to take ethnically minority child directly to Georgian school is not effective and it is much better to bring child to Georgian classes at preschool level. However, number of existing kindergartens is not sufficient to meet the increased demand for preschool education. Along with environment, parents say that at preschool centers teachers' qualification are very low. They believe that preschool education centers do not ensure proper development of a child and his/her preparation for school. This is true not only regarding Georgian kindergartens, but Azeri and Russian preschool centers as well. Regarding to state language acquisition, parents say that children cannot acquire Georgian since majority in the group belongs to ethnically Azeri minorities. Therefore, teachers are forced to communicate in the language of majority, i.e. in Azeri language.

As mentioned, the second problem concerning early childhood education is an issue of preschool education quality. Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia took some explicit steps in order to improve quality of teaching and learning at preschool education level. Specifically, National Curriculum and Assessment Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia with the support of UNICEF, developed standards for Early Learning and Development of Children. The instruction process at preschool level has to be conducted in line with the afore-mentioned standards. With an end to ensure meeting with the established standards during the instruction process, National Curriculum and Assessment Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in partnership with UNICEF published several textbooks in early childhood care:

- a) Environmental Standards for Preschool Education Institutions (principles and practices);
- b) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- c) Teachers' Methodological Manual at Preschool Education Level;
- d) Guidebook for the Management of Preschool Education Institution;
- e) Programme for Early Childhood Development;
- f) Instrument for the Assessment Early Childhood Age Children.

National Curriculum and Assessment Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has launched the trainings for the gradual introduction of preschool education standards.

There is a little awareness of existing early learning and development standards among teachers and administration staff in the regions of Georgia settled with national minorities. Herewith, it should be noted, that unlike from national curriculum at general education level, the national curriculum at preschool level is not available in minority languages.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the afore-mentioned textbooks and manuals are not available in minority languages for teachers and administrative staff working in minority regions of Georgia. Further, teachers and administrative staff working in minority regions did not undergo any training regarding introduction of new standards and methods of teaching at preschool education institutions. Therefore, the quality of teaching and learning at preschool education institutions in minority regions remains to be an extensive problem. The only activity for professional development and quality insurance is a teaching Georgian as a second language.<sup>4</sup>

## General Education

General education legislation as well as education policy have been substantially developed since the launch of educational reforms in 2004. The major goals of the education reform were to develop legislative framework in general education, eradicate corruption, improve curriculum and introduce European standards to the schools, provide harmonization of educational system, rehabilitate school infrastructure and develop necessary environment for the introduction of inclusive education in Georgia.

### Antidiscrimination

Under the Constitution of Georgia (Article 35.1) everyone shall have the right to receive education and the right to free choice of a form of education<sup>5</sup>. Law of Georgia on General Education (Article 9) also confirms the right and equal access to education for all (Article 3.2.a)<sup>6</sup>.

Law of Georgia on General Education (Article 4) stipulates that the language of instruction in general educational institutions of Georgia is Georgian, and in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia – Abkhazian. The same Article of the Law maintains, “Citizens of Georgia, whose native language is not Georgian, have the right to receive complete general education in their native language, according to the national curriculum by the observance of rules fixed by law.” At general educational institutions, teaching of the state language is obligatory, while in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, teaching of both state languages Georgian and Abkhazian is compulsory. It is possible to instruct in foreign languages at general educational institutions if envisaged in international agreements. However, even at these particular cases, general educational institution is obliged

<sup>4</sup> Source: the official letter of the Legal Department of the MoES to the Deputy Public Defender of Georgia № 08-2-13/1907 (14.02.2012).

<sup>5</sup> Constitution of Georgia, August 24, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Law of Georgia on General Education, 1330/IS, April 8, 2006 .

to teach the state language, while in A/R of Abkhazia it is obligatory to teach both state languages – Georgian and Abkhazian.

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

All accredited general educational institutions, both public and private are financed by the state according to per capita funding/voucher system throughout 12 years of general education (Article 22). Article 23 of the Law of Georgia on General Education envisages provision of vouchers even for extended time for those schoolchildren who are not able to achieve necessary level and requirements for sufficient academic performance after studying 12 years at schools.

According to Article 4.4 of the Law of Georgia on General Education, instruction in foreign language at general educational institutions is allowed only if envisaged in international agreements. However, even in such cases, teaching of state language is compulsory. In compliance with the Article 5.4 of the Law, in such cases not only Georgian language, but History, Geography and other Social Sciences should also be taught in Georgian.

Article 7 of the Law of Georgia on General Education maintains that schoolchildren can have an access to education in their native language, nearby of the place of their residence. For this purpose, the state ensures a bigger amount of voucher or/and additional funding that should be approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia within a respective targeted programme. In order to put into effect the afore-mentioned regulation of the Law, it is necessary that non-Georgian schools or sectors have at least three schoolchildren in the class at elementary level, six at basic level and 21 at secondary level (Article 7).

The Law of Georgia on General Education further protects schoolchildren from any type of violence and guarantees the right for expression in native language. Specifically, Point 2 of the Article 13 of the Law stipulates, “using of the study process in a public school for the purposes of religious indoctrination, proselytism and forced assimilation shall not be allowed.” This regulation does not restrict public schools to celebrate state holidays or historical dates, or to carry out the activities that promote national and universal values. Point 6 of the Law maintains, “the school shall observe and encourage establishing of tolerance and reciprocal respect between pupils, parents or teachers, irrespective of their social, ethnic, religious, lingual and world outlook belonging.” According to the point 7 of the Law of Georgia on General Education, “the school on the base of equality shall provide individual and collective right of members of minorities to use their native language, preserve and express their cultural values.”

Point one of the Article 18 of the Law of Georgia on General Education guarantees freedom of faith, religion and conscience among pupils, parents and teachers. According to

the Point Two of the same Article, “a pupil, parent or teacher can’t be obliged to fulfill duties, which contradict to their faith, religion and conscience.”

## National Curriculum and Textbooks

According to the Law of Georgia on General Education, schools are responsible to provide children with education that is built on universal human values, democratic principles and the idea of equality (Article 33.1.a). The same vision is further expanded in the “National Goals of Secondary Education” approved on October 18, 2004 and the curriculum of different subject areas. Specifically, “National Goals of Secondary Education” states, “the Georgian secondary education system aims at equipping young people with essential skills for communication, organization and team work enabling them (including those for whom Georgian is not native language) to be law-obedient and tolerant citizens. Nowadays, in dynamic, ethnic and culturally diverse world ability and skills of mutual respect, mutual understanding, and cognition acquires increasing importance for social life. School should equip an adolescent with values and skills promoting respect of human rights as well as personality, which will in future be used for retaining their own as well as others identity. An adolescent should be able to put acquired theoretical knowledge on fundamental human rights into practice and live with these principles”<sup>7</sup>. The major goal of the social science curriculum is the formation of a tolerant citizen who holds fundamental human dignities and rights.<sup>8</sup>

During the monitoring process, several problems were identified in regard with the curriculum and textbooks: a) Quality of textbooks’ translation still remains to be a problem; b) In the textbooks, there are cases when some stereotypes are given. Also, many issues are not given with the consideration of intercultural issues or delivered in distorted way; c) 70% of materials from the textbooks was translated into minority languages, while 30% were kept in the state language. The part of the textbooks that is presented in Georgian is difficult for minority schoolchildren to acquire, since neither teachers nor schoolchildren and parents know enough Georgian to understand material given in the state language. Due to this factor, it is a daily practice for teachers just to skip the part given in Georgian.

Below are presented more detailed information and findings about existing problems at general education level.

### 1) Textbooks need to be revisited with the consideration of intercultural issues

In many cases, textbooks at general education level do not reflect existing religious and ethnic diversity of the country and are not free from stereotypes. Requirements for developing textbooks with due regard to antidiscrimination were put directly in the requirements for assessing the textbooks submitted by publishers. Specifically, according to the Decree №019/N of the Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (March 15,

<sup>7</sup> Decree of the Government of Georgia on the Approval of National Goals of Secondary Education, October 18, 2004, p. 2-3. See: <http://ganatleba.org/index.php?m=112>

<sup>8</sup> Curriculum of the social sciences. See: [http://ncac.ge/uploads/esg2009\\_2010/sazogadoebrivi.pdf](http://ncac.ge/uploads/esg2009_2010/sazogadoebrivi.pdf)

2010) that establishes rules for the approval of textbooks, the submitted textbooks will not be assessed and given approval, if a) the content, design or any other part of the textbook contains any kind of discriminatory elements (language, ethnicity, social belonging, etc.). The Decree is also followed by the specific criteria for the assessment of textbooks stating that one of the criteria for the assessment is that the submitted textbook promotes development of multifaceted and analytical thinking and fosters dispelling stereotypes among schoolchildren.”<sup>9</sup>

According to the Decree №072 of the Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (March 30, 2009) that established the rules for the approval of school textbooks and criteria for their assessment stipulated that one of the criteria for the assessment of textbook is that: d) “the content of the textbook envisages diversity of school children in terms of race, language, sex, religion, political vision, national, ethnical and social belonging, origin, social status and place of residence”<sup>10</sup>. This regulation, as one of the assessment criteria is not included in the Decree for the Approval of Textbooks issued in 2010.

It is worth mentioning that Ministerial Decree №30/N of February 25, 2011 on “the rules for the approval of school textbooks and determining the prices,” the requirement for intercultural consideration is not mentioned at all. New decree on the alignment of textbooks with the national curriculum and general education goals mention this requirement indirectly.

Consequently, reflection of intercultural and interreligious issues in textbooks remains to be an acute problem. Focus group discussions revealed some specific examples regarding the problem:

“In the maps, Nagorono-Karabakh and seven other occupied regions are depicted as the territories of Armenia;

There are lots of errors in depicting historical facts. E.g. Albanian historian is mentioned as Armenian historian;

Textbooks say that Mohamed was a fortune-teller instead of prophet which is a real insult.”

## 2. Problem of textbooks translation into minority languages

2011 Annual Report on Implementation of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration does not say anything about the activities toward this direction.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia provided non-Georgian schools with translated textbooks and it is intending to make further efforts toward this direction. However,

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<sup>9</sup> Decree #019/N of the Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (March 15, 2010) on the Approval of Textbooks. See: <http://ncac.ge/index.php?m=791>

<sup>10</sup> Decree #072 of the Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (March 30, 2009) on the Approval of Textbooks. See: <http://ncac.ge/index.php?m=124>

the MoES intends to develop bilingual textbooks instead of translating them into minority languages. This will enable minority students to have an access to education in their native language and at the same time, improve Georgian language acquisition as the state language of the country. This step is in line with Multilingual Education Reform of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

Quality of textbooks' translation has been again identified by the participants of focus group discussions as one of the major problems. In their opinion, textbooks are not edited, corrected and therefore there are lots of errors.

„Example: Rome is built on the River Tiber. Authors decided that the letter “B” is not correct and have written that Rome is built on the River Tigris that is in Mesopotamia.”

Teachers in all districts of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions talk about the errors in translated textbooks. Errors and inaccuracy in the textbooks cause dissatisfaction among teachers and schoolchildren.

„We do not like quality of translation, there are too many errors. For example, in math textbook instead of word “calculation” we can see the word “transaction” which is certainly obvious mistake for a teacher. It seems that translated textbooks did not go through mathematician; otherwise, it is impossible to witness such explicit errors and inaccuracy. However, this is not a great problem in Math per se since figures and signs are the same in every language.”

Teachers suggested several options to solve the problems regarding textbooks translations:

1. For those subjects, in which there are translated versions of the same textbooks from the previous years, teachers use those versions as supplementary materials during the teaching process. However, there are cases when some chapters of new textbooks are not included in the translated version of textbooks from previous years. Therefore, teachers are forced to ask their colleagues for assistance to understand what is written in the parts given in Georgian;
2. Schoolchildren and teachers translate Georgian parts of textbooks with the help of Georgian language teachers, if there is an opportunity to do that;
3. Teachers just skip the part given in Georgian and did not explain to children (do not give to children any assignment as well from these parts of textbooks).

In opinion of representatives of some NGOs participating in focus group discussion in Akhalkalaki:

„Those parts in textbooks which are given in Georgian should also be translated into minority languages. At the same time, it is advisable to keep Georgian version. A schoolchild should be able to retell these sections in Georgian.”

However, it is unclear who will assess accuracy of the text delivered in Georgian by a schoolchild, if teachers are not able to comprehend Georgian language.

### 3. The problem of usage bilingual textbooks

According to the participants of focus group discussions, it is good that the state provides translation of textbooks. However, at this point teachers are not ready to fully use bilingual textbooks in the classroom.

„Even teachers of Georgian language do not know enough Georgian not to say anything about teachers of other subject areas whose competence in Georgian language is extremely poor. In this circumstance, certainly it is difficult for teachers to use a textbook where 30% of the material is given in Georgian.”

Teachers and other participants of focus group had greater complains toward the textbooks of History and Geography. There have been many controversies about these textbooks. In bilingual textbooks, in which most of the materials are given in minority languages, some parts (especially citations from direct sources) are given in Georgian. Teachers believe that pupils and teachers are not ready to teach and learn with bilingual textbooks. Majority of history and geography teachers does not know Georgian. Schools either do not have a qualified Georgian language teacher who can help geography and history teachers in comprehending given material during the teaching process. Therefore, teaching process with these textbooks is hampered. Those schools where there are qualified Georgian language teachers or a teacher assigned in the framework of “Qualified Georgian Teachers Programme” face fewer problems in this regard, since in this case a teacher of Georgian language can provide translations into Georgian for subject area teachers or pupils.

„The most challengeable is the fact that the sources which should be found by a school-child independently are given in Georgian. Therefore, a child is not able to prepare lesson if she/he does not know Georgian or a teacher does not provide translation of sources or additional materials...”

#### Multilingual Education Support Programme

Since January 6, 2011 in the framework of the “Multilingual Education Support Program”<sup>11</sup> the monitoring has been carried out in pilot MLE schools. Within the framework of the Programme and with the support of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the new methodological Manual “Teacher’s Guideline in Multilingual Education” was developed, which has already been translated into Georgian language and its publication is intended at the beginning of 2012. In 2011, 12 Armenian, 12 Azerbaijani, nine Russian and one Ukrainian (overall 34) pilot MLE non-Georgian schools, where 30% of the subjects are taught in Georgian language, were granted targeted subsidies which equaled to GEL 1000. The subsidies were allocated as a salary supplement for teachers engaged in multilingual education programme.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=547&lang=geo>



Existing version of the Law of Georgia on General Education provides schools with direct and clear instructions on bilingual education programmes. According to the Point 4 of the Article 5 of the Law of Georgia on General Education, in those schools where the language of instruction is not Georgian, History and Geography of Georgia as well as other subjects under Social Sciences should be taught in Georgian and in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia in Georgian or Abkhazian languages. In line with the Point 5 of the Article 58th of the same Law, "Point 4 of the Article 5 of the Law should be put into effect gradually but no later than the beginning of 2010-2011 academic year." It is impossible to teach and learn Social Sciences in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions from the academic year 2010-2011. The issue that non-Georgian schools cannot meet the requirements of the afore-mentioned regulation on teaching Social Sciences only in Georgian has been underlined and put forward during monitoring group members' meetings with teachers, school administration and parents in minority regions. They consider this regulation inapt even in the context of bilingual education. They believe that learning of History, Geography and other Social Sciences requires the highest linguistic competences. Therefore, they believe that moving toward the achievement of such high linguistic competence can be a target but not the tool for achieving language competence.

In 2011, teachers were much more motivated to use bilingual textbooks in order to develop their own skills for passing Teacher's certification exams until 2014. They believed that if they do not have direct connection with the new national curriculum, they could not pass Teacher's Certification Exams. However, in 2012 rumors spread that certification process for teachers in non-Georgian schools were delayed and there was even a possibility to revoke certification process. However, teachers who intend to take certification exams and prepare in professional skills have also participated in focus group discussions.

As mentioned, translation of only 70% of the materials of the textbooks into minority languages is very problematic for non-Georgian schools in Kvemo Kartli region. Schoolchildren cannot acquire information presented in textbooks in Georgian language. Provision of Bilingual textbooks (70% of the materials in a textbook is translated in one of the minority languages, while 30% is given in Georgian) is considered to be one of the major directions toward implementation of multilingual education in Georgia. However, practical application of this initiative points to negative effects. Materials given in the textbook in Georgian are not used for the improvement of Georgian language competence among pupils, but on the contrary – these textbooks hinder the process of teaching and learning of a certain subject area since teachers do not know sufficient Georgian to ensure effective teaching process. As focus group discussion revealed, some of the teachers try to lessen the problem in the following way: "teacher translates Georgian parts into Russian in advance and then delivers the material to the class. However, once a schoolchild is back home, he/she is not able to prepare and learn a lesson since does not have any notes from the class on what the teacher has delivered. Even if a child memorizes what a teacher said during the class, this is not still in line with bilingual teaching. The competence in Georgian language among minority students is not sufficient to prepare lessons in Georgian independently."

The situation is getting even worse because a great number of parents do not know Georgian; therefore, they are not able to help and support their children during the study process. The level of education overall is very low.

„During each class, my child got 1-2 lower score since he could not retell and present Georgian parts of the lesson. When we asked a teacher why she gave lower scores though she did not explain at the class the part given in Georgian, she replied that parents have to provide translation of the materials at home. However, to this end, it is crucial that Georgian language is taught and learnt in an adequate level. “

„If a child does not understand History in native language, how she/he can get the material in Georgian? Even the competence in native language among minority children is quite low to acquire given material. As a result, once a child graduates from the school s/he does not know neither Georgian nor Social Sciences and therefore cannot have an access to higher education. In addition, a school graduate is not able to use the “mitigating” policy for minority entrants – 4+1 system. “

„Maybe, theoretically it is good to have bilingual textbooks. But, teachers do not know how to conduct bilingual lesson since they do not know bilingual teaching methods.”

It should be pointed out that in Kvemo Kartli there is a different situation regarding general education compared with the previous year. In the previous years, many parents took their children to Georgian schools and engaged them in submersion programme of bilingual education. Nowadays, they underline that bringing a child to Georgian school is not a way out from the problem they face. It is necessary to teach Georgian as second language at Azeri schools with high quality so that they children will not have a problem in terms of access to higher education and for employment perspectives in Georgia. During the last few years, parents from Samtskhe-Javakheti region did not demonstrate a great interest to bring their children to Georgian schools. In this region, parents believe that their children should get education in Armenian schools, learn Georgian language and acquire state language along with native language.

### Provision of Access to Education in Languages of National Minorities

According to the Law of Georgia on General Education and the data from 2009, 234 non-Georgian schools (404 non-Georgian schools and sectors in total) were functioning:

Language of Instruction	Schools with mixed language sectors		Schools where language of instruction is only one one of the minority languages	
	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Schools	Number of Students
Azerbaijani	124	27442	94	18462
Armenian	140	15592	124	14944
Russian	135	24512	14	3748
Ossetian	3	165	1	60
Other	2	242	1	37

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoES)<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Tabatadze, Sh. Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD, 2010), “Cultural Dialogue and Civic Consciousness,” Article: “Intercultural Education in Georgia.” p. 85 .

Notably, the above-mentioned figures were substantially changed in 2011. Namely, according to the data from 2011, there are 216 non-Georgian schools and 305 non-Georgian sectors functioning in the country.

Language of Instruction	Schools with mixed language sectors		Schools where language of instruction is only one of the minority languages	
	Number of Schools		Number of Schools	
Azerbaijani	123		88	
Armenian	133		116	
Russian	61		12	

Note: there are some schools where language of instruction are three languages. Therefore, the figure in the table exceeds 305.

The difference from 2009 to 2011 is explicit. It should be underlined that the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia implements schools optimization process and the cut in number of non-Georgian schools is related to this factor. During optimization process, Georgian schools were also shut down. The problem regarding to Russian schools are even more overt. From 135 Russian schools and sectors in 2009, only 61 Russian schools and sectors are functioning in 2011. Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti residents explicitly talked about the problem of closing Russian schools and sectors. They underscored that the closure of Russian schools had hindering affect in terms of access to education for minority children. For those children who have been instructed in Russian, it is a great challenge and struggle to pursue study in different language. There is another problem related to the same issue. It is possible to move a child to other Russian school, however in this case parent can face a problem of transportation and getting to a certain school because of the remote distance from the place of residence.<sup>13</sup>

Access to education in native language of minorities are administered either by establishment of private schools or/and through teaching in minority languages at public schools of Georgia. General educational institution can be established either as a legal entity of public law or commercial or non-commercial entity of private law (Law of Georgia on Legal Entity of Public Law, Article 31.1). There are 16 private schools in Georgia where minority language is the only or one of the languages of instruction at schools<sup>14</sup>. It should be pointed out that the majority of such schools are located in big cities (Tbilisi – 11 schools,

<sup>13</sup> Report of the monitoring group in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Letter of the MoES to the UNAG about the statistical information on private non-Georgian schools, May 20, 2010.

Batumi – 2, Rustavi- 2). The only private school where the language of instruction other than Georgian is located in Algeti village of Marneuli municipality.

In 2011 in the framework of the Minority Languages Protection Sub-Programme of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, funding for the Ossetian Sunday school (based on public school №11) was provided. In the Ossetian Sunday school, 20 students have the possibility to learn the Ossetian language, culture, history, folklore, Caucasian dances and song.

Georgian language lessons were held once a week in order to teach Georgian language to the parents of public school children in 19 minority villages of Bolnisi Municipality.

Georgian language teachers of the elementary, basic and secondary level and principals of non-Georgian language schools of Marneuli Municipality were trained in the integrated teaching of language and subject by the initiative and funding of the “Center for Civil Integration and Ethnic Relations.” 50 Georgian language-learning circles were organized in 35 schools of the region by Azerbaijani Cultural Center of Marneuli. 52 principals of non-Georgian Armenian and Azerbaijani schools took intensive learning courses of Georgian language twice for 90 days.

Georgian Language Rooms function effectively in non-Georgian schools of Tetrtskaro municipality. The meetings are held with the school staff as well as with the village community. The courses for learning Georgian language function for non-Georgian speaking teachers and schoolchildren with the purpose of teaching and learning Georgian more effectively.

The learning courses/circles of computer and office programs were set in the municipalities of Akhmeta and Sagarejo municipalities, where ethnic minorities are densely settled.

Instruction in native languages for national minorities remains one of the major problems, as maintained by teachers and parents in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions. In 2006-2007, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in partnership with OSCE/HCNM developed draft of the curriculum of Azeri and Armenian as native languages. Experts from Armenia and Azerbaijan took part in working out the curriculum. According to the above-mentioned curriculum, trainings for native language teachers were undertaken.<sup>15</sup> From 2008, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia did not continue working toward this direction. The curriculum was not approved, an effort toward its introduction was hampered and development of textbooks in line with the afore-mentioned curriculum was terminated. Proceeding from the above-mentioned challenges, quality of instruction in Armenian and Azeri languages as native languages for minority children is still problematic.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia did not maintain to work toward this direction since 2011. Consequently, minority languages are not part of the national curriculum

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid

since there is no teaching and learning programme of these subject areas. Azeri and Armenian languages as subject areas are not presented in the Law of Georgia on General Education. The only document where these subject areas are mentioned is “Hour Net” of the national curriculum.

Akin to the afore-mentioned problems regarding the curriculum, there are no textbooks of Armenian and Azeri languages that are in line with the needs and context of the education system in Georgia. Therefore, teaching of native languages is conducted according to the curriculum and textbooks of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is not aware of the details of the afore-mentioned curriculum, including content, structure and the programme, since there is no Georgian translation of the afore-mentioned curriculum<sup>16</sup>.

This problem is particularly acute in 12<sup>th</sup> grades for Armenian and Azeri schools. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, teachers instruct at 12<sup>th</sup> grades with textbooks published in Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, it is noteworthy that in Azerbaijan general education covers only 11 years, therefore textbooks of native language for 12<sup>th</sup> graders are not available at all<sup>17</sup>. In Armenia, transfer to 12 years of general education was introduced in 2009<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, in 2010, textbooks for native language acquisition for 12<sup>th</sup> graders were not available for Armenian schools as well.

In addition to non-existence of the curriculum for teaching native languages to national minorities, there is no professional standard for minority language teachers. This fact hampers introduction of multilingual education and threatens the quality of teaching of native languages at non-Georgian schools. Since the language transfer is not implemented effectively, poor quality of native language teaching has an impact in terms of acquiring other disciplines, including learning of Georgian as a second language. Considering all the above-mentioned challenges, it is decisive to establish specific mechanisms in order to improve teaching of native languages as independent subject areas at non-Georgian schools. This will substantially promote quality of education at non-Georgian schools of the country.

The problem of teaching of native languages for minorities has been identified as one of the major problems by the participants of focus group discussions. School leaving exams did not envisage taking an exam in native language at Azerbaijani schools, which somehow diminishes the importance of Azeri language acquisition among school graduates. As a result, schoolchildren of the upper classes do not learn Azerbaijani language. The same attitude and ideas were presented at focus group discussions in summer 2009 regarding acquisition of minority languages: participants underscored that schools cannot ensure quality education in terms of teaching of minority languages to schoolchildren. Teachers’ qualifications do not meet the necessary requirements to ensure delivering quality lessons to students.

<sup>16</sup> Source: the official letter of the Legal Department of the MoES to the Deputy Public Defender of Georgia № 08-2-13/1907 (14.02.2012)

<sup>17</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002112/211298e.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002112/211297e.pdf>

## Improving Teaching of Georgian as a Second Language

Teaching and learning Georgian as a second language at general education level is one of the priorities of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan: “Priority task №2.4. Promotion of State Language Acquisition.”

During the reporting period, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia took several tangible steps toward this direction. Specifically, the following activities and programmes were implemented:

- a) In 2011, “The Manuals for Georgian as a Second Language of Elementary I-IV Levels” were developed that were founded on the communicative teaching principles of modern pedagogy. The Manual set includes the student book and the workbook; In addition, the teacher’s guidebook and thematic audio-material for class work was prepared. Each level of the Manual was printed in circulation of 20,000 copies and was distributed to non-Georgian schools in conformity with their requirements. Based on the developed materials, special 4-level computer games were created that are intended for non-Georgian speaking schoolchildren and are in line with the topics of a new Georgian language textbook. The games were loaded in the computer notebooks intended for the first grade schoolchildren and simultaneously were placed on the special web page [www.buki.ge](http://www.buki.ge).
- b) With an end to improve quality of state language teaching in schools, 340 teachers of Georgian as second language were tested. Testing was conducted on the entire territory of Georgia in seven municipalities (Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Marneuli, Gardabani, Tsalka and Tbilisi). Based on the memorandum of understanding (MoU), National Curriculum and Assessment Center<sup>19</sup> together with Teacher’s Professional Development Center<sup>20</sup> started Programme for Voucherization of Teachers of Georgian as Second Language. Corresponding training programmes for practical courses of language teaching were prepared for non-Georgian teachers. In addition, organizations for teacher professional development trainings were selected, which underwent respective trainings from local and foreign consultants. 340 teachers underwent professional development training in Georgian language (90 teaching hours in total).
- c) The program “Learn Georgian as the Second Language” aims at the professional development of Georgian language and literature teachers and promotion of Georgian language learning in the regions densely settled by the national minorities. The program implies assigning qualified teachers of Georgian Language and Literature to non-Georgian spoken language schools, namely to the villages of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo-Kartli and Kakheti populated by ethnic minorities. Nowadays, in the framework of the program, 65 teachers are employed, who were trained in: “Methods of teaching Georgian as a second language” (60 hours) “Ethnic and religious tolerance” (5 hours) and the intensive course for learning Azerbaijani or Armenian languages (84 hours) and they were assigned to the villages of Kvemo-Kartli and Kakheti populated by the ethnic minorities. A newly arrived teacher to minority regions is required to

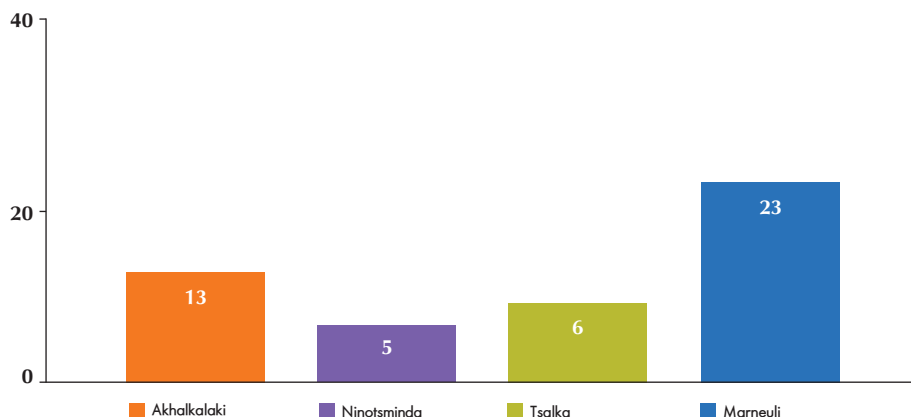
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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ncac.ge/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.tpd.c.ge/>

know the local language on an elementary level to communicate with the community, engage the parents and other teachers in the events. In 2011, additional 11 trainer-teachers were selected. Alongside with learning Georgian language and literature in schools, the teachers organize different actions, establish the “Georgian Language Clubs”. In order to arrange clubs and manage the learning process effectively, Teacher’s Professional Development Center<sup>21</sup> handed over the necessary inventory, audio-video equipment, training-visual materials, stationary items and in addition 69 sets of visual aids (15 aids in each set) to 59 schools involved in the program.

### Learn Georgian as a second language



In July, 2011, 16 teachers and 84 pupils participating in the program proceeded learning of Georgian language in a free mode (by playing and organizing excursions and events) within the framework of the “Summer School” organized in Kechkhobi. The trainer-teachers taught ethnic Armenian and Azerbaijani children Georgian language with a variety of interactive methods (exercises, games and other).

16 teachers were sent to Anaklia Summer Camp from May till October 2011, where non-Georgian pupils were taught Georgian language by the specially designed training program.

About 30 trainer-teachers who were assigned to non-Georgian schools found partner Georgian schools throughout the country within the Exchange Programme in 2011 and carried out joint events with them.

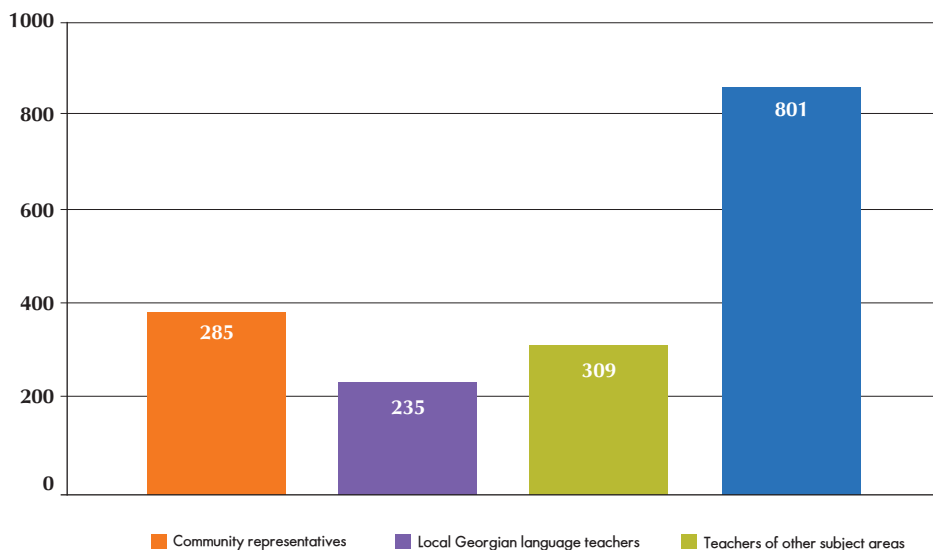
Within the framework of the Programme, 69 trainer-teachers held trainings/lessons in 2011 involving:

- 4,034 pupils
- 558 local Georgian language teachers

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.tpdc.ge/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=103](http://www.tpdc.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=103)

In Georgian Language Clubs, the following groups are studying Georgian language:

- Community representatives;
- Local Georgian language teachers;
- Teachers of other subjects;
- Parents;
- Graduate schoolchildren;
- Persons wishing to pursue study in Georgia.



- d) On June 1, 2011, by the initiative of the President, the new Programme – “**Georgian Language for Future Success**”<sup>22</sup> started, implemented by the Teacher’s Professional Development Center. The target group of the programme consists of schoolchildren, teachers, school administration of non-Georgian schools and the local community (minority representatives) living in Kvemo-Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti regions (See: attachment #6). Within the framework of the programme, two information clips were prepared broadcast by the central TV channels.

In order to improve the level of Georgian language acquisition at non-Georgian schools, the Teacher’s Professional Development Center on the basis of the competition selected and sent 303 specialists with Bachelor’s degree, who assist the teachers of local non-Georgian schools to conduct Georgian language lessons and/or to deliver classes bilingually. 50 % of non-Georgian schools in the regions was covered. The State will finance the education fee of the Master’s Course for the Bachelors who were sent to these regions to teach Georgian<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.tpdcenter.ge/ge/programs/qartuli-ena-momavali-warmatebistvis>

<sup>23</sup> Annual Report (2011). Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan, Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration Issues.



## Teachers Professional Development and Certification

2011

Several problems were identified in the direction of Teacher's Professional Development and Certification: a) Subject areas teachers are not able to participate in teacher's professional development courses. Programmes for teacher's professional development are mostly designed and developed for Georgian language teachers; b) Teachers of non-Georgian schools are reluctant to take teacher's professional development courses and are quite skeptical about this process; c) Provision of non-Georgian schools with new teachers (graduates of higher education institution) who can substitute old generation of teaching staff is not sufficiently ensured.

Majority of focus group participants pointed out that teachers of Georgian language underwent professional development trainings, including Georgian language courses. In addition, they mentioned about professional trainings in bilingual teaching for bilingual teachers at elementary and basic education levels conducted by Center for Civil Integration and Intercultural Relations with the support of High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and European Commission (EC) in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Focus group participants pointed to the fact that professional development trainings in minority languages of teachers at non-Georgian schools are less available.

Regarding non-Georgian schools, it should be underlined that there is a new problem of scarcity of adequate human resources. During the monitoring visit in the field, representatives of Educational Resource Centers and school administration underscored that there is a dearth of qualified teachers in non-Georgian schools. This information is supported by the data from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia: in 2008, age of 46, 7% of teachers at non-Georgian schools was above 45 years. At the same time, number of pre-service teacher trainings or preparations of new teachers at university level who will substitute the afore-mentioned cohort at non-Georgian schools are not sufficient. These are mainly caused by lack of interest and low prestige of teacher profession. The percentage of minority students enrolled in the department of education is very low since the introduction of Unified National Admission Exams. This means that in higher education institutions of Georgia, the preparation of new generation of teachers for non-Georgian schools is almost impracticable

### School Leaving Exams

Since 2011, with an end to improve the quality of teaching at schools, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia adopted obligatory school leaving exams. School leaving exams are based on existing national curriculum. School leaving exams will be held in the following subjects:

- Georgian Language and Literature
- History
- Geography

- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Mathematics
- Foreign Languages.

At the same time, school leaving exams will qualify students for a general school certificate and prove their minimal competency. Besides, the students intending to enroll at higher educational institution will have to pass exams in Georgian and Foreign Languages and General Aptitude as well as a fourth, department-specific exam based on a different normative tests while passing qualifying tests for the rest of subjects<sup>24</sup>.

Two types of problems were identified regarding school leaving exams: a) A substantial number of school graduates could not pass threshold. Out of 4110 graduates, only 2500 were able to meet the requirements of school leaving exams<sup>25</sup>. This means that 1610 graduates were not able to pass necessary threshold (39,17% who took exams); b) Results of school leaving exams according to subject areas are quite low. Graduates of non-Georgian schools have better results in Georgian language than in other subject areas (See: table below)<sup>26</sup>.

Subject Area	Average Score
Georgian	7.29516
Math	6.217
Biology	6.0885
Chemistry	6.518
History	6.426
Geography	6.8008
Physics	6.0313
Foreign Languages	6.5615

It is noteworthy, that in order to avoid the risk that 1610 school graduates are left without school completion certificate, in July 12, 2011, Minister of Education and Science of Georgia issued the Decree №453 according to which “a person, who did not register for school leaving exams or could not pass a necessary threshold for obtaining certificate of completion of general education institution, and a person is willing to pursue study at higher education institution abroad, will be given a certificate of completion of general education institution with a special bar code. However, this person will not be eligible to pursue study or mobility at any of the accredited higher education institution functioning in Georgia<sup>27</sup>”.

<sup>24</sup> Priorities of Education System, 2010-2015. Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (2010).

<sup>25</sup> Statistical raw data provided by National Examinations Center.

<sup>26</sup> Table is developed based on the raw data provided by National Examinations Center.

<sup>27</sup> Decree of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia №453, July 12, 2011.

The main rationale of this decision was poor results at school leaving exams of non-Georgian schools' graduates. Minister of Education and Science of Georgia also talks about this initiative: "School leavers who intend to continue study at higher education institution abroad are given a certificate of completion of general education institution with a special bar code. However, it is impossible to use this certificate in Georgia or pursue study later at higher education institution in Georgia. We support graduates to have an access to higher education. This is particularly important for our ethnically Armenian and Azeri citizens. School leaving exams are not used in many countries and several countries do not recognize certificate issued by general education institution"<sup>28</sup>.

There is a controversy toward this decision. Some participants of focus group discussions endorsed this decision by the Minister of Education since school graduates will be able to continue study abroad. However, some others believe that the main focus should be made on the improvement of education quality at general school level followed by appropriate assessment mechanism, including school leaving exams. Regarding to school completion certificate with a special bar code, participants of the focus groups maintained that from the side of the government this means, "the state gets rid of such school graduates and somehow force them to leave the country and pursue study at higher education level abroad."

**„ If one does not get enough scores, the state gives a certificate of completion with a special bar code which allows to pursue study abroad, e.g. in Russia, Azerbaijan... and the reaction to this was that the state gets rid of us in this way and forces us to leave the country!!!!“**

### National School Olympiads

In academic year 2010-2011, the National School Olympiads were conducted in all general education institutions existing in Georgia, including non-Georgian schools in which Olympiads were organized in Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages. National minority schoolchildren took part in the Georgian Language Olympiad too.<sup>29</sup>

The School Olympiad of 2011-2012 once again reaffirmed that there is a huge problem of education quality in non-Georgian schools, especially in the regions densely settled with national minorities. None of the participants from non-Georgian schools located in the regions densely settled with national minorities (Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti) could pass successfully the third round of the Olympiad in subject areas,<sup>30</sup> despite the fact that the Olympiads for them were organized in Russian, Armenian and Azeri languages.

<sup>28</sup> <http://ick.ge/ka/rubrics/education/7797-12-.html>

<sup>29</sup> Annual Report (2011) . Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan, Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration Issues.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2756-qarthuli-enisa-da-literaturis-qarthuli-enisa-araqarthulenovani-da-biologiis-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi-da-apelacia.html?lang=ka-GE>;  
<http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2757-informatikis-erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi-da-apelacia.html?lang=ka-GE>;  
<http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2759-inglisuri-da-rusuli-enebis-erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi.html?lang=ka-GE>;  
<http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2751-matematikis-da-franguli-enis-erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi-da-apelacia.html?lang=ka-GE>;  
<http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2750-fizikisa-da-germanuli-enis-8-9-klasi-erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi-da-apelacia.html?lang=ka-GE>;  
<http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2744-istoriisa-da-geografiis-erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi-da-apelacia.html?lang=ka-GE>;  
<http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2742-2011-2012-sastsavlo-tslis-qimiis-erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi-da-apelacia.html?lang=ka-GE>.

In the School Olympiads, none of non-Georgian schools, located in the regions densely settled with national minorities (Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti), could become the winners of the competition. Even in the competition in Georgian for ethnically non-Georgians, winners turned out to be from Kutaisi, Tbilisi, Rustavi and Poti schools (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades) and from Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Poti and Zugdidi (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades)<sup>31</sup>.

In the third round of competition in Georgian language for schoolchildren who are not ethnically Georgian, only one pupil from Ninotsminda went through the competition successfully, even he was ethnically Georgian. Pupils from non-Georgian schools from Tbilisi, Rustavi, Kutaisi, Poti and Zugdidi passed the third round of Olympiad successfully<sup>32</sup>.

Pupils from non-Georgian schools from Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti could not pass the third round in Russian language subject area too. Again, pupils from non-Georgian schools of other regions and municipalities were the dominant group who went through the third round in Russian language subject area successfully<sup>33</sup>.

Results of the School Olympiad of 2011-2012 once again confirm that alongside with poor quality of state language teaching and learning, there is a massive problem of education quality in general at Armenian and Azeri non-Georgian schools in the regions densely settled by national minorities, particularly in comparison with other public schools of the country.

## Higher Education

### Anti-discrimination

According to the Article 4th of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, “the language of instruction at a higher education institution shall be Georgian and in Abkhazia – also Abkhazian language Instruction in other languages, except for individual study courses shall be allowed whenever so provided by an international agreement or agreed with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.”

For a branch of a foreign higher education institution to conduct the relevant educational activities on the territory of Georgia, it is necessary to obtain licensing or/and accreditation commensurate with the procedure envisaged by the international agreements and legislation of Georgia (Article 14.4).

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2749-erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-gamarjvebulebi.html?lang=ka-GEhtml?lang=ka-GE>;

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2756-qarthuli-enisa-da-literaturis-qarthuli-enisa-araqarthulenovani-da-biologiis-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi-da-apelacia.html?lang=ka-GE>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.naec.ge/erovnuli-sastsavlo-olimpiada/shedegebi/2756-qarthuli-enisa-da-literaturis-qarthuli-enisa-araqarthulenovani-da-biologiis-olimpiadis-mesame-turis-shedegebi-da-apelacia.html?lang=ka-GE>

According to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, a higher education institution shall ensure equal treatment for all students and academic staff (Article 16.1. d.) and prohibits all forms of discrimination on religious and ethnic grounds (Article 3.2.h). Article 3.4 of the same Law prohibits establishment of any structural units of political and religious organizations within a higher education institution.

The Law of Georgia on Higher Education further stipulates, that the information about student's faith and religious beliefs, which became known to the academic personnel during the study process shall be confidential (Article 43.4). The same Law maintains that a student shall be entitled to make use of higher education institution's material and technical, library, information and other resources (Article 43.1.c).

### Access to Higher Education

Access to higher education is one of the priorities of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan: "Priority Task №2.3. Improvement of Access to Higher Education for Representatives of National Minorities."

Article 43.1 of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education envisages allocation of scholarship, financial or material aid and other benefits from the state, higher education institution or other sources. Furthermore, in certain cases, the state provides social assistance programme for socially vulnerable students (Articles 6.1.c and 52.8).

Considering the problem of access to higher education for the students belonging to national minorities, from 2010 Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia launched a special "mitigating" policy for minority entrants. This policy had a positive impact in terms of increasing number of minority students having an access to higher education.

In 2011, the following number of minority students has been admitted in accredited higher education institutions (HEIs) as a result of passing general aptitude test (in Armenian or Azeri languages) of Unified Admission Exams:

- 250 entrants accepted at HEIs based on the results in general aptitude test in Azeri language;
- 179 entrants accepted at HEIs based on the results in general aptitude test in Armenian language.

In 2011, the following number of minority students obtained state grant for studying at accredited higher education institutions (HEIs) as a result of passing general aptitude test in Azeri and Armenian at Unified Admission Exams:

- 98 entrants obtained state grant based on the results in general aptitude test in Azeri language;
- 99 entrants obtained state grant based on the results in general aptitude test in Armenian language.

In 2011, two entrants passed Abkhazian language at Unified Admission Exams for the first time instead of passing an exam in Georgian language:

- Based on the results in general aptitude test, one entrant was admitted at preparatory course of Georgian language;
- Based on the results of creative or other obligatory exams, one entrant obtained the right to be admitted at academic higher educational programme.

In 2011, Graduate Record Test (Unified Exams for Master Level) for entrants at Master's level was held in Georgian and Russian. 123 entrants passed exams in Russian to pursue study at Master's level. In addition, preparatory compendium for Graduate Record Test for Master's was published in Russian.

The preparatory compendium of the Unified Admission Exams was published in Russian too in 2011 on:

- a) Elective subjects – in Russian language;
- b) General Aptitude Test – in Russian, Azeri and Armenian languages<sup>34</sup>.

The representatives of the **National Examinations Center** held meetings in Akhalkalaki, Bolnisi, Marneuli and Gardabani with the 12<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents of Azerbaijani and Armenian schools of two regions. Meetings were initiated by the Office of the State Ministry for Reintegration<sup>35</sup>. The future entrants have been familiarized with the amendments to the Law on Higher Education and were explained the required procedures for filing an application.

2-3 months prior to the start of the entrance exams, two-month, free preparatory courses in Georgian language are opened for non-Georgian speaking entrants in Telavi State University. At the same University, within the partnership programme with foreign HEIs and scientific centers, the exchange programmes are organized with HEIs of Greece, the Ukraine, Portugal, Italy and other countries in order to promote the mobility of non-Georgian students.<sup>36</sup>

Both in Samtskhe-Javakheti and in Kvemo Kartli, the population is informed about 4+1 system. This state initiative is assessed as one of the most positive and timely steps by the population of both regions densely settled by national minorities. The perception toward studying at higher education institution in Georgia was somehow vigilant in 2010-2011 compared with current attitudes. In opinion of the participants, this positive dynamism is determined by several factors, including:

1. Trust of the population toward studying at higher education institution in Georgia has substantially increased and the population has a hope that after the completion of higher education one can have employment perspective;
2. The number of school graduates who can continue study in Georgian has increased;

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<sup>34</sup> Annual Report (2011) . Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan, Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration Issues

<sup>35</sup> [http:// www.naec.ge/](http://www.naec.ge/)

<sup>36</sup> Annual Report (2011) . Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan, Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration Issues.

3. Amendment in the Law that gives an opportunity to pass general aptitude test in minority languages, boosted motivation of ethnically non-Georgian youth to pursue study at higher education level;
4. Awareness about the law amendment has substantially increased among national minorities;
5. There are examples of successful entrants who already study at higher education institutions in Georgia.

The fact that awareness on the policy on access to higher education has increased from 2010 until now has reflected in the number of registered entrants as well as on the number of enrolled students at higher education institutions.

Year	Number of places through quota system	Number of registered entrants	Number of enrolled students	% of utilized places through quota system	% of enrolled students in comparison with registered entrants
2010	2602	588	301	11,56%	51,19%
2011	2100	725	431	20,52 %	59,44 %
2012	2242	1187			

The above statistics explicitly demonstrate that awareness on the policy on access to higher education has increased from 2010 until 2012. However, the number of failed entrants at Unified Admission Exams is still very high, while the percentage of utilized places through quota system is low. The results of general aptitude tests passed in native languages once again reaffirm that the quality of education at non-Georgian schools are extremely poor. Overall education quality at non-Georgian schools are not less severe than the problem of state language teaching and acquisition.

## Adult Education

Adult education is also one of the priorities of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan. This direction is reflected in the next priority task of the Plan: "Programme Promoting State Language Acquisition among Adults (Adult Education Centers)".<sup>37</sup>

In 2011, the Ministry of Education and Science has ensured the funding of the Language Houses equaling to GEL 22,500 (for each Center) in Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki in the framework of the "Georgian Language Programme." In addition, in 2011, by the Ministry the allocation of funds was ensured for the Georgian Language Houses in Dmanisi and Bolnisi founded in 2009 (22.500 GEL for each Center as well). Nowadays, teaching of 4-4 groups is underway in 2 Language Houses and in 2 Georgian Language Centers; they have approximately 300 students throughout a year. Within the framework of the pro-

<sup>37</sup> <http://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=547&lang=geo>

gramme “Georgian Language for Future Success” additional three Georgian Language Houses were opened in Kvemo-Kartli region – Gardabani and Marneuli, as well as in the village of Iormughanglo of Kakheti region. Since October 1, 2011, functioning of Georgian Language Houses and Centers has been administered by the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration. Seven Georgian Language Houses are planned to be opened additionally in 2012.

It was important that the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia established new language houses in the regions densely settled by national minorities, however, their functions and scope of work have been substantially decreased. Since the establishment of Language Houses, i.e. from 2004, they had quite a big scope and directions: a) organizing courses in state language for adults; b) organizing cultural activities and promoting intercultural communications and dialogue; c) providing professional development for teachers of Georgian language and minority languages; d) publishing informational-methodological journal „Mermisi“ for teachers; e) providing population with information and promoting usage of media during the state language acquisition process; f) support to bilingual education.

From 2007, the scope of Language Houses was diminished and limited to only teaching of state language to adults.

## Recommendations

Monitoring of the Completion of National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan revealed that there is a necessity of change, reassessment and improvement in some directions. Specifically, non-Georgian schools face not only problem of state language teaching and learning but overall quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, it is decisive to focus more on the activities that will foster improvement of overall quality at non-Georgian schools.

Furthermore, it is important to make more focus on minority native language acquisition in the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan. Native language and literacy in native language is extremely important for successful academic performance of a child as well as for the acquisition of a second language. Effective teaching and learning of native language is the main precondition for academic and cognitive development of a child and in success toward acquisition of state language as well.

Presented recommendations are based on the findings and analysis of collected data during the monitoring process and consequently cover recommendations in education policy.

## Preschool Education

- The initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia toward the establishment of preschool centers are very important for fostering access to early childhood education. It is advisable to continue making efforts toward this direction so that



the Programme covers all non-Georgian schools, especially in remote villages where preschool education institutions are not functioning;

- It is significant to translate into minority languages Early Childhood Development Standards developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and UNICEF and make it available for preschool institutions located in the regions densely settled with national minorities;
- It is important to provide preschool institutions located in the regions densely settled with national minorities with trainings in Early Childhood Development Standards developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and UNICEF;
- It is advisable to translate into minority languages those supplementary materials in early childhood care that have been developed by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center and make them available for preschool institutions located in the regions densely settled with national minorities.
- It is crucial to make emphasis not only state language acquisition, but overall education quality at preschool education institution in line with Early Childhood Development Standards.

### National Curriculum and Textbooks

- It is crucial to restore consideration of diversity issues as one of the criteria for the assessment and approval of textbooks. Submitted textbooks for approval should be strictly assessed according to this criterion, i.e. if a certain textbook envisages the issues of diversity;
- It is advisable that National Curriculum and Assessment center conducts additional meetings with publishing houses and groups of authors so that promoting more reflection of diversity and multicultural issues and encourage publishing of textbooks with ethno-relative perspective;
- It is crucial to integrate native languages of national minorities as a part of the National curriculum and Georgian legislation, approval and adoption of the curriculum of national minorities' native languages and launching of textbooks development;
- It is necessary to extend the deadline of instructing social sciences (including History and Geography) in Georgian at least until 2016 and apply regulation only at secondary level of general education. This means that teaching social sciences in Georgian at secondary education level will become the target of non-Georgian schools at elementary and basic levels and the schools will plan and adopt school strategies accordingly so that to meet the final target;
- It is advisable to create cross-cutting curriculum of intercultural relations that will promote reflection of diversity of Georgia in the new national curriculum and textbooks and also foster development of intercultural dialogue among schoolchildren of Georgian and non-Georgian schools;
- It is crucial to improve quality of textbooks and curriculum translations into minority languages;
- It is vital to provide teachers of non-Georgian schools with trainings by September, 2012 on the introduction of new curriculum at non-Georgian schools;
- It is significant to increase hours of teaching of Georgian as a Second Language and modify lessons in line with the bilingual education programme of a certain school. In

addition, it is decisive to teach Georgian as a Second Language so that schools have more choice and flexibility in terms of distribution and reshuffle of academic hours.

- It is necessary to revisit the issue of publishing bilingual textbooks. In this direction, a special mechanism should be developed as a result of which the textbooks will promote state language acquisition as well as effective learning of the contents of a certain subject area;
- National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement under the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia during the authorization process of schools should include extra-curriculum activities as one of the criteria for assessment for school curriculum. The extra-curriculum activities must be targeted to the promotion of diversity and respect to each other as well as to the building of tolerance;
- Requirement for the awareness of diversity management and intercultural education should be included in Standards for School Principals;
- Diversity management strategies and intercultural awareness of a future school principal should be evaluated through the certification exams for the principals (both during testing and face-to-face interview).

### Teacher's Certification, Professional Development and Pre-service Training of Future Teachers

#### a) Teacher's Professional Development

- It is important to develop teacher's professional development programmes for teachers of non-Georgian schools and provision of professional and subject area trainings in minority languages;
- It is vital to include Armenian and Azeri languages as native languages into the statute of Teacher's Certification so that teachers of Armenian and Azeri languages have also an opportunity to obtain right for teaching and respective social grants. At the same time, higher education institutions should prepare future teachers of Armenian and Azeri as native languages for minority schoolchildren;
- It is crucial to develop professional development standards for bilingual teachers, their certification and professional training;
- It is necessary to provide incentive mechanisms for bilingual education teachers (for example, additional monetary incentives for bilingual teachers), so that teachers are motivated for professional development and obtaining the status of bilingual teachers;
- State language teaching to teachers of non-Georgian schools so that after 2014 teachers can renew their status through the involvement of teacher's professional development programmes provided in Georgian and by taking teacher's certification exams. This recommendation is important for the implementation of bilingual programmes, especially at 7-12 grades.

### b) Pre-service Training

- To promote refinement of educational programme of Georgian as a Second Language at higher education institutions;
- To introduce programmes at higher education institutions for the preparation of bilingual teachers. This should be based on bilingual teacher's professional standards developed by Teacher's Professional Development Center;
- To prepare teachers of minority languages at higher education institutions. This should be based on teacher's professional standards for Armenian and Azeri languages as native languages developed by Teacher's Professional Development Center;
- To introduce some additional "preferential" mechanisms at unified admission exams, funding of Bachelor's and Master's programmes for the graduates of non-Georgian schools and for the entrants who pursue they study at Education Department;
- To regulate specialties for those entrants who are admitted to higher education institutions through quota system and make more focus on students studying pedagogy. This will foster development and preparation of necessary human resources for non-Georgian schools;
- To introduce contractual mechanisms for those students who will be admitted to the Department of Education through quota system or/and provide payment by the state to cover their tuition fee (at both Bachelor's and Master's levels). Because of contractual mechanisms and provided support, a graduate can be responsible to teach in Samtskhe-Javakheti or Kvemo Kartli region during a certain period of time;
- To provide funding for tuition fee at Master's level only for those 303 Bachelor students who have been assigned to teach in the regions densely settled by national minorities within the framework of the project "Georgian Language for the Future Success" and who are intending to pursue study at education department at Master's level. This will attract more students at the departments of education and also ensure that only motivated students apply to the afore-mentioned specialties;
- It is advisable to carry out additional trainings in second language and bilingual education for those bachelor's students who are assigned to teach in the regions densely settled by national minorities (currently, only one day is allocated to such trainings, while five days are utilized for the preparatory trainings in general teaching methods and intercultural education);
- To include intercultural education course as obligatory in each Teacher's Professional Development programmes functioning in Georgia;
- To reflect intercultural relations and issues in teachers professional development manuals at higher education institutions and each subject areas of the curriculum;
- To organize study practice for students in diverse and culturally different environment.

### School Leaving Exams

- It is decisive that school leaving exams implies optimal and feasible threshold of competence for minority schoolchildren considering the problems of introducing new na-

tional curriculum and textbooks at non-Georgian schools. Otherwise, minority schoolchildren can face a greater challenge of obtaining a certificate of general education completion.

### Bilingual Education

- In case of submersion (when non-Georgian schoolchildren are placed in Georgian schools) schools and teachers have to ensure development of individual curriculum for such pupils. Therefore, it is important to train teachers on development of individual curriculum for schoolchildren.
- It is advisable that these programmes will include intensive supplementary courses in Georgian language so that children involved in bilingual education can acquire Georgian in shortest time. This will decrease the chances for poor academic performance among minority children caused by language barriers;
- It is crucial to inform parents about language competence of a child as well as on the possible negative impact of submersion in terms of cognitive and social development;
- It is vital to provide schools with methodological, human and financial resources for the introduction and implementation of “strong” bilingual programmes. Consequently, it is necessary to increase funding substantially for schools, which implement bilingual programmes;
- It is important to continue campaign for raising awareness of parents and community about the benefits and effectiveness of bilingual education;
- It is crucial to ensure development of necessary mechanisms for the promotion of parents and community engagement throughout the reform process of bilingual education, including providing parents with state language courses within the framework of “Language Houses.”

### Unified Admission Exams

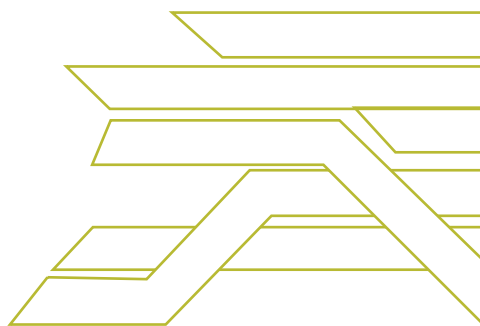
- It is important to raise awareness of the population even more about existing quota system;
- It is advisable to develop some contractual mechanism for those students who are admitted to higher education institutions through quota system. This will promote maintenance and employability of the students in the regions densely settled with national minorities;
- It is desirable that higher education institutions implement educational, entertaining, cultural and academic programmes that will foster civil and social integration of students admitted through quota system;
- National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement under the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia during the accreditation process of one-year Georgian language preparatory programme, should make more emphasis and give due regard if the programme promotes academic, social and civil integration of enrolled students.

## Adult Education

2011

- It is vital to expand the scope of listeners and attendees of “Language Houses” and engage more people in the study process;
- It is advisable to expand functions of Language Houses so that they have the same functions that they had been assigned at the beginning of their establishment;
- It is crucial to organize professional development courses for adults so that the residents of the regions densely settled with national minorities can be employed in ongoing projects that are being implemented in the regions.

# Culture and Identity Preservations



## Introduction

National Minority Council under the auspices of the Public Defender's Office undertakes monitoring of the implementation of the National Concept of Tolerance and Civil Integration and Action Plan<sup>1</sup>.

The goal of the monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan is to define:

- how adequately the activities have been planned for each of the objective;
- whether the activities have been implemented;
- whether goals and objectives, that specific activities aimed at, were fulfilled;
- how sustainable the activities are;
- to prepare recommendations for a better planning and implementation of the action plan.

Similar to the Action Plan 2010, the 6th Direction of the Action Plan 2011 identifies six objectives:

1. Promotion of civic consciousness.
2. Preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities;
3. Protection of cultural heritage of minorities;
4. Supporting tolerance, encouragement of intercultural dialogue and contacts;
5. Ensuring participation of national minorities into the cultural life of Georgia;
6. Cognition and promotion of cultures, history, language and religion of minorities as cultural values of the country.

However, tasks and activities under the Action Plan 2011 were developed by using new methodology – programs/activities designed by the governmental bodies (in partnerships with their partner organizations) fall under several priorities of the National Concept. E.g. activities were planned that envisage **formation of civic consciousness, preservation of national and ethnic minorities, protection and promotion of their cultural heritage.**

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<sup>1</sup> An interagency state commission was formed by a Decree# 14 of 3 July consisting of staff of the Office of the State Minister for Reintegration, as well as representatives of the relevant governmental institutions, ministries, agencies and organizations, and Tbilisi Council, three regional Administration of the areas densely populated by minorities. <http://www.smr.gov.ge/docs/doc42.pdf>

6.1. – 6.6. (In total 4 activities)

6.2. – 6.6. (In total 11 activities)

Therefore, to reveal a complete picture, we will combine the analysis of implementation of the Objectives 1, 2 and 6 in the monitoring of the Action Plan 2011.

#### Objectives:

- Promotion of civic consciousness.
- Preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities;
- Cognition and promotion of cultures, history, language and religion of minorities as cultural values of the country.

As stipulated by the Constitution of Georgia and Law “On Culture”, each person has a right to preserve cultural identity and to a free choice of artistic and esthetic orientation despite their ethnic and religious belonging (Article 10).

In 2011 the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia held 10 events aiming at promotion of civic consciousness, preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities and cognition and promotion of cultures, history, language and religion of minorities as cultural values of the country<sup>2</sup>.

6.2-6.6 activities under the Action Plan envisage participation of minority representatives into the state festivities (Tbilisoba, New Year Fest, etc.).

In 2011 Tbilisoba was celebrated by ethnic minorities with a folk concert. Georgian crafts exhibition was also held.

Besides, throughout 2011 educational-cultural project “Library on the Wheels- Tbilisi Evenings” was continuing. Writers, musicians, singers, artists, composers and actors held educational evenings in different neighborhood of Tbilisi for Assyrian, Armenian and Azeri pupils, students, people with limited abilities.<sup>3</sup>

One of the important components of the Action Plan is “Program to Support the National Minority Cultures of Georgia”<sup>4</sup>, being implemented by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia (Activities 6.1-6.6).

<sup>2</sup> See the Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2011

<sup>3</sup> See the Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2011

<sup>4</sup> At present the following minority institutions - LEPLs are under the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia:

- Tbilisi Heidar Aliev State Azerbaijani Theatre;
- Tbilisi Petros Adamiani State Armenian Drama Theatre;
- Tbilisi Al. Griboedov State Russian Drama Theatre;
- Tbilisi Mirza Patali Akhundov State Azerbaijani Culture Museum;
- Tbilisi David Baazov Jewish Hystoric Museum of Georgia.

Each of the abovementioned organizations execute the activities according to their mandate, reflected in their statutes, and the annual agreements between the ministry and the organizations. The basis for the agreements are annual action plans, implementation schedule, budgets of the subsidies and income expenditures, personnel structure annually submitted by the organizations.

In 2011 100 000 GEL was allocated for “the Program to Support National Minority Cultures of Georgia”, as this was the case in 2010.

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection financed or co-financed the following projects in Tbilisi and Regions:

- Festival “In the Open Air” (Marneuli) was held. Multi-ethnic cohort of art-school students participated;
- Children’s Ensemble “Sarvani” existing at the Marneuli Azerbaijani Culture Center received a special present – Georgian dancing costumes and accessories;
- Mirza Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Culture Museum organized an exhibition of Azerbaijani carpets;
- Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijani Culture was equipped with computer technologies;
- The Caucasus Jazz Festival “ was held. The participants included: Tbilisi Big-Band, Dini Virsaladze Trio, Armenian Band “Kross Roze”, an Azeri Artist Ulvia Rakhimova and “Jazz Factory”. The festival was held at Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre.
- Petros Adamiani Anniversary Theatre held a performance “Pepo” to celebrate Day of Independence of Armenia in Alexander Griboyedov Theatre.
- Nahapet Khuchak’s “One Hundred and One Hereni” (Translation by Givi shakhnazari) was published in Georgian and Armenian languages Also, “Woman’s Fate” and “Price of Honor” by Igor Obolenski was published in Russian, French and English Languages.

At the end of 2011 LEPL Circassian (Adyghe) Culture Center was established.

Action Plan 2011 envisaged purchase of computers for the libraries in regions compactly settled by Azeris and Armenians. The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection took decision to reschedule it for 2012.

**It is recommended that the most successful projects, and the activities in which minority representatives are interested should be identified and planned for the next year. The projects that failed to be implemented during two consecutive years should be analyzed (e.g. libraries and youth centers). Additional projects and resources should be secured if there is a demand for them.**

## **Museums**

In 2011 with the view of promoting ethnic minority cultural heritage collections of the museums:

- An event was held in LEPL Mirza Fatali Akhundov museum: exhibition and sale of Azerbaijani handmade carpets. The Ministry also financed a yearlong project, within which those interested have a chance to learn carpet weaving. Consequently, the initiative has a component of sustainability for the retention of the cultural identity. A literary evening dedicated to Akhundov was held in the Museum; 17 events on various topics were also held;
- LEPL David Baazovi Historical and Ethnographic Museum of the Jews of Georgia published Eldar Mamistashvili book “Georgian Jews” in Russian.



Despite the fact that the museum publishes scientific works, in some cases they are not accessible to public at large – regarded as one of the major functions of the library. The museum has not been properly functioning for more than twenty years. Its rich and unique collection, temporarily housed in other museums, has not been returned to the museum since no reconstruction works has been undertaken.

Operation of the museum will facilitate popularization and transmission to the next generations of the history and harmonious co-existence of the Georgian Jews and the Georgians since with the emigration of Jews from Georgia this is being forgotten.

In Autumn, 2011 a historic and ethnographic museum was opened in the Village Duis, in Pankisi Gorge. The museum exhibits – items typical of Georgian and Kist everyday life – were collected by the director, Khaso Khangoshvili. The office of the State Minister for Reintegration donated a computer, Xerox Machine and stationary to the museum.

In 2011, an excursion to the museum by student historians, ethnographers and archaeologists was planned, but was not implemented because of the lack of the appropriate funds for the event.

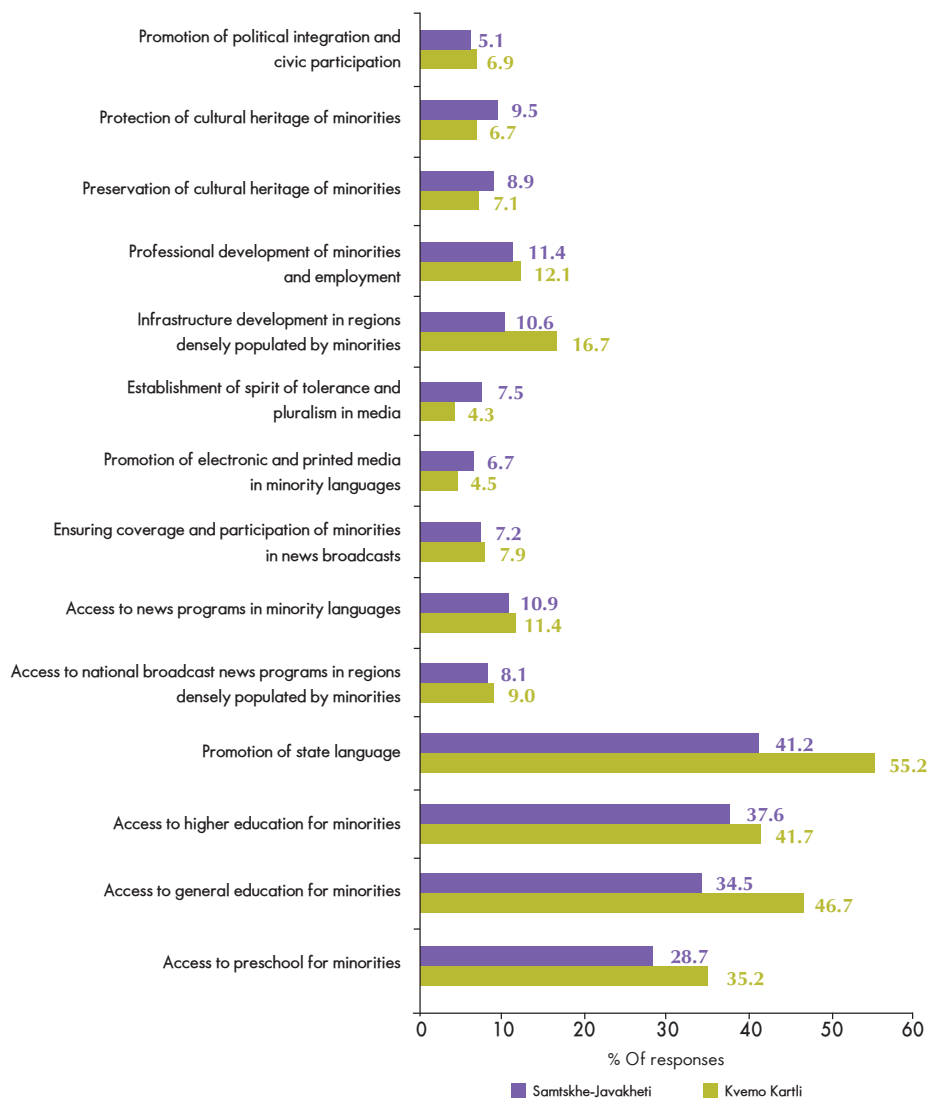
### **Cultural Events, Folk Holidays in Different Regions**

During the last few years public holidays have been celebrated by large scale events in Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and also in other cities of Georgia. Cultural events are also held with the participation of ethnic minorities.

It should be noted that mostly the events are local, not going beyond one geographic area. Consequently Georgian and non Georgian population get less acquainted with each other's cultures.

Within the framework of “Multiethnic Confidence Building Network” project a quantitative research was undertaken by Civil Development Agency (CiDA) in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in 2011. The survey shows that protection and preservation of ethnic minority cultures is less of a priority as compared to other directions.

## Significance of directions of the National Concept of Tolerance and Civil Integration



## Kvemo Kartli

### Marneuli

#### Festival “Under a Common Sky”<sup>5</sup>

On 11 June, 2011 within the framework of “cultural dialogues” a multiethnic musical festival was held in Marneuli called “Under a Common Sky”<sup>6</sup> with the participation of music school pupils and individual artists from: Rustavi, Gardabani, Marneuli, Bolnisi, Tsalka, Koda and Dmanisi. Vice Premier and State Minister for Reintegration, Eka Tkeshelashvili awarded the best performers with diplomas and souvenirs.

The following activities envisaged by the Action Plan 2011 were implemented in Kvemo Kartli:

- A grand piano and equipment was purchased for Marneuli and Tsalka Municipality music schools, the concert halls were renovated. Girl’s Choir was established;<sup>7</sup>
- National Holiday “Novruz Bairam” was celebrated in Marneuli, participated with high level representatives from the Government of Georgia; They addressed local Azeri population and congratulated on the holiday;
- On 16 November an International Day of Tolerance was celebrated, A multiethnic concert was held (Rustavi, Gardabani, Bolnisi and Marneuli troupes and young performers of the music schools participated).<sup>8</sup>

Despite the fact that the number and frequency of the cultural events arranged in Marneuli is bigger compared to other cities of Kvemo Kartli, at a meeting with the monitoring group Marneuli Cultural Center Director Leri Mumladze stated that more mixed events where Georgians, Azeris and Armenians will participate together would be recommendable.

### Bolnisi

In 2011 **Azerbaijani Culture Days** was celebrated in Talaveri, Nakhiduri and Kvemo Bolnisi. Youth from Bolnisi participated in Novruz Bairam Festivity held in Marneuli.

**Ashughi players competition** – The source of financing could not be found to implement the activity.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Annual Festival – Under Common Sky” aims at: 1. Promotion of music of classic composers of Georgian and other ethnic origin and classic orchestra instruments; 2. Presentation of spiritual culture of non-ethnic Georgian population, support to its development and integration to Georgian culture; 3. Finding young talents 4. Introduction of sister cultures to Georgian and non ethnic georgian youth living within a single state, teaching respect to each other’s cultures to overcome barriers and increase tolerance awareness and a better civil society integration.

<sup>6</sup> The festival was organized by joint efforts of the office of State Minister for Reintegration, Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, Kvemo Kartli Administration, and NGO CiDA.

<sup>7</sup> The event was financed from CiDA, ECMI, Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, also Kvemo Kartli Marneuli and Tsalka Municipalities.

<sup>8</sup> See the Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> The event took place in 2012 and Ashugs from Marneuli and Gardabani, as well as a well known Ashug Zelimxan Iaguri from Azerbaijani participated.

An anniversary of Ghazaros Aghoiani, Children's writer was celebrated – representatives of Armenian Diaspora were visiting. Altogether 80 participants were involved. Armenian and Georgian songs were performed. Pupils read Ghazaros Aghoiani poems in Georgian and Armenian.

### Dmanisi

Russian language Ensemble “Dmanisi Aisi” participated in National Festival “Artgeni 2011”. Apart from this, the ensemble did not participate in other regional and inter-district events.

Unlike other Kvemo Kartli cities, Tsalka experiences lack of cultural and educational programs. District is isolated from the cultural life going beyond its borders.

Action Plan 2011 envisages one or two events aimed at contributing to cultural life in Tsalka. None of the folk and classic music concerts were held. Sports competitions are most frequently arranged.

### Samtskhe-Javakheti

In 2011 regional ethnographic festivals “Javakheti Voices” and “Youth Festival” were celebrated in Samtskhe-Javakheti.

Akhalkalaki Municipality hosted the traditional folk holidays: in village Kartsakhi – public holiday “Jivanoba”; also – an international Festival of Folklore. Ashugh musicians actively participate in such festivals, which is an exceptional example of minority cultural identity.

Akhalkalaki Ensemble Javakhi, participated in national cultural events as well.

Ninotsminda municipality hosted public holidays – in village Gandza, “Terianoba- Armenian poetry evening”; village Eshtia – “Viktor Hovsefian Poetry evening” .

It should be noted that the Armenian Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki creative collectives with the support from municipalities regularly participated in different festivals held around the country. The level of cultural engagement, in this respect, is quite high.

Doukhobor holiday “Snow Descent” envisaged by the Action Plan has not been held.

In 2011, the exhibition was held at the Conference Hall of the National Parliamentary Library – “Doukhobors in Georgia”, dedicated to the 170 anniversary of their exile to Georgia. Invited guests were presented a book “Doukhobors’ Region” written by Ala Bezhtseva, the chairman of the Women’s Union of Ethnic Russians living in Georgia – “Iaroslavna”. A documentary by Alexander Kviria “Gorelovka - Community on Extinction” was also shown together 20-ish historic archive photos reflecting Doukhobors’ life.

The day should have been celebrated in Ninotsminda, as well, which did not happen.

It should be noted that the small community of Doukhobors living in the village Gorelovka is completely isolated from the cultural life in Ninotsminda. There is not even the desire for intercultural interaction from the community.

Ninotsminda Youth Festival “New Talent” was held in 2011. This is a traditional festival, which is held every year and aims to identify talented performers. Dance Ensemble “Paravani” actively participates in the events around the country.

## Kakheti

In some of the municipalities of Kakheti region there are compact settlements of ethnic minorities.<sup>10</sup> Most numerous among them are Kists.

According to the head of Culture, Education, Sports, Social and Youth Affairs Service of Akhmeta Administration, Ms. Pikria Khokhobashvili, Kists actively participate in all major events held in the region. Kist Ensemble “Pankisi” consisting of nine members, actively participate in almost every cultural event in the Akhmeta Municipality.

Akhmeta Day was celebrated in 2011 in Pankisi, young people and school children from the villages of the Pankisi Gorge gathered to participate in this event.

Kists took part in traditional celebrations – Zezvaoba, which is traditionally held in the village Alvani, bidzinaoba it – Akhmeta. Groups “in Pankisi” left for France in 2011, the Caucasian peoples to participate in the festival.

In 2011 Akhmeta celebrated Pankisi Day. Youth and school students from different villages in Pankisi Gorge came to Akmeta to participate in the event.

Kists took part in traditional celebrations – Zezvaoba, which is traditionally held in the village Alvani, Bidzinaoba – is held in Akhmeta. Ensemble “Pankisi” had a tour to France to participate in Caucasian People Festival in 2011.

Avars and Udis living in Kvareli are more closed a community. In accordance to Nana Sepashvili, a specialist at Municipality Culture Service there are no special events envisaged in their culture program aiming at ethnic minority participation.

## Telavi

In 2011, a festival organized by the Cultural Centre of Telavi Municipality “**Under Kakhetian Sky**” was held, where representatives of various ethnic minorities – Kurds, Azeris, Armenians, Ossetians and Kists participated.

<sup>10</sup> Telavi District village Karajala (Azeri), Akhmeta District village Jokholo, Duisi (Kists), Kvareli district village Chantliskhure, Zinobiani, Tivi, Saruso (Avars), Vilage TsitskaanaTseri (Ossetians), Lagodekhi District village Kabala (Azeri, Ossetians), Sagarejo District village Magharo (Ulianovka, Russians-malakans), Dedoplistskaro District (Russians, Azeri, Gypsy)

An exhibition and sale of folk craft was held. Traditional dishes prepared by ethnic minorities were presented. A concert was held at the Cultural Center.

In village Tshoet (former Leninovka) in Dedoplistskaro village there is a compact settlement of Roma population<sup>11</sup>, among them – school-age children. Despite the fact that, with the help of the Ministry of Education, they participate in joint activities together with Georgian children, more focus in the Action Plan on Roma community and planning of concrete actions with the view of their integration can be recommended.

### Supporting Clubs and Art Schools

Cultural centers and clubs help to preserve the cultural identity of ethnic minorities and improve their cultural relations in the regions of Georgia, since students get music and arts education here and then given the possibilities to participate within large scale events. Considering the aforementioned, more focus should be allocated to the component in the Action Plan.

In Action Plan 2011 with the view of the preservation of the cultural identity of ethnic minorities there is a program line: supporting clubs and arts schools in Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe and Ninotsminda. The implementation of the above mentioned activities is under the responsibility of local municipalities.

In Akhalkalaki there are 51 such institutions, 21 – at central level and 51 functioning in the village. According to the municipality, in 2011 almost all of the institutions in the city were reconstructed. As compared to the institutions in the city, the majority of those in the village need repairs.

#### Arts schools

Akhalkalaki Arts School was established in 1990. School Director, Carl Karapetian was awarded the title of Honorary Teacher of Georgia.

The school has 10 employees and up to 40 pupils. The school is allocated annually 30 000 GEL from local budget.

The challenge of heating of the building in winter is still unsolved. Firewood is used for heating.

According to the director, during 2011 children's several picture exhibitions were held at the school. However, these are local events in Akhalkalaki with no connection to other art schools in the capital and other regions. Young people in general go to Yerevan to study fine arts, nowadays.

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<sup>11</sup> Giorgi Sordia: Is there a solution? First steps taken to solve Roma Problems in Georgia.  
<http://tolerantoba.ge/index.php?id=1314971636>

The Action Plan 2011 envisaged a visit of the children to Tbilisi and exhibition and sale of their paintings. However, due to a lack of funding, these activities have not been carried out.

The Action Plan should have a focus on integration for art school's pupils. The school has often expressed interest to participate in the activities, but it failed to be implemented.

### Problems Related to Music Schools

Problems related to the music education were underlined in Monitoring Report 2010 as well.

After the reform, music colleges (so called ten-year schools) that were a level higher to music schools and a prerequisite for higher music education were abolished. In Akhaltsikhe (as well as in Samtskhe-Javakheti in general, there is no music college). The students face the problem of enrolling an institution located in Tbilisi and of moving places together with their families. This is connected to multiple problems. In a few years' time there will be a need for new staff, also.

There is a tendency among people living in regions populated by minorities to get music education in neighboring countries (Armenia, Russia)

### 6.6 Cognition and promotion of culture, history, language and religion of minorities as cultural values of the country.

Improving knowledge on culture, history, language and religion of the minorities will encourage the integration and equal relationships between different ethnic groups.

To meet this objective the Action Plan 2011 envisaged support for holding an evening dedicated to the 67th anniversary of mass resettlement of Caucasian peoples, Chechen and Ingush deportation.

The anniversary was celebrated by a large scale event. Participants included both local (Government of Georgia, Parliament, NGOs, Ministers, scientists, students etc.) as well as north Caucasian representatives

Due to lack of financing the following events did not take place: A roundtable "Women in national traditions" related to the Independence Days of Georgia and historic homeland of the Azeri living in Georgia.

The Action Plan envisaged also development of a textbook – "Teach yourself Chechnyan – A Textbook for Foreigners" (in 4 languages: Chechnyan-Georgian-Russian-English) in electronic colour version and its online distribution. No donor organization was interested to finance the project.

### Objective 3: Protection of Cultural Heritage of Ethnic Minorities

#### Inventory and Rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage Monuments

The National Minorities Council within the Public Defender's Office has been working on the issues concerning the conditions of the national minority cultural heritage for a long time. With the view of their preservation and improvement of their maintenance the council developed and presented recommendations to the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia.

We should note with satisfaction that, upon the recommendation of the National Minorities Council of the Public Defender's Office, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia in 2011 registered Muslim monuments existing in Kvemo Kartli (a Mosque, Jame, Bath and mausoleum )<sup>12</sup>.

In 2011 5 172 889 GEL from the state budget was spent on registration and inventory as well as examination and rehabilitation, 1.684395 of which was spent on minority cultural heritage monuments.<sup>13</sup>

The prerequisite for granting a status of cultural heritage is its historic and cultural value connected to its age, uniqueness and authenticity.

Based on the inventory of Akhaltsikje Rabati Neighbourhood undertaken by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia in 2011, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia granted the status of monument to 19 objects.<sup>14</sup>

In 2011 reconstruction and restoration of Rabati Complex in Akhaltsikhe was launched.<sup>15</sup> The initial phase of the works to be undertaken by the project envisage the rehabilitation of

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<sup>12</sup> Bolnisi – 5, Dmanisi – 1, Gadabani – 1, Marneuli – 12). At a later stage it will be decided which of them will be granted a status of a cultural monument.

<sup>13</sup> The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

<sup>14</sup> Based on the decree #3/181 of 1 October, 2007 by the Minister of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports Affairs of Georgia with the view of "legal defense of most important historic and cultural values of Georgia", Article 15.3, Article 59.2/3 of the Law of Georgia "On Cultural Heritage" and the Decision of the Urban Monument Subcommission, also Articles 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 61 and 95.6 of the "Administrative Code of Georgia" was granted a status of the Cultural Heritage Immovable Monument to the objects given in annex 1 and Annex 2. E.G Annex 1 lists 1768 objects. The table includes the addresses without any comments. The table does not distinguished between the type of the object (public or religious). Indicating the typology can be recommended.

<sup>15</sup> Based on the Decree N3/133 of 30 March, 2006 by the Minister of Culture, Monument protection and Sports Affairs, Sargis Jakeli Fortress, Fortress Chapel, Mosque, Medreses, Gate and Wall within Rabati Complex were granted a status of immovable monument of Georgian culture. And based on Presidential Order #665 of 7 November, 2006 Akhaltsikhe Complex with the aforementioned buildings were assigned National Significance Category. Also Based on the Decree N3/271 of 28 October, 2011 by the Minister of Culture, Monument protection and Sports Affairs akhaltsike Rabati Neighbourhood street network (Atoneli, Gogebashvili, Guramishvili, Khmaladze, Kazbegi, Tikhisdziri and Kharistshirashvili streets with all the numbers) were granted immovable cultural monument (urban development monument) status, and based on Presidential Order #666 of 28 October, 2011 street network of the historic part of Akhaltsikhe were assigned National Significance Category.



the complex. So far, no reconstruction is planned for a Jewish synagogue (rehabilitation of one of the synagogues is already launched on Jewish community funding. The belonging of the second synagogue is still unclear. We recommend that the synagogue is transferred to the local community and a museum is placed in it).

At the end of 2011, Monitoring group visited the mosques existing in Kvemo Kartli:

**Sadakhlo Mosque** – a place of worship dating from 1881 (renovated by Glass blocks, having a suspended ceiling);

**Araplo** – also renovated with contemporary construction materials;

**Kutliari** (1872-1880) – needs renovation;

**Baidari** (1822) – renovated in 2010;

**Algeti** (1592-1594) – restored in 1902, turned into a culture house in 30-ies. The building was renovated in 70-80-ies. In 1987-88 converted back to the Mosque. In 2010 it was restored again. Part of the old foundation is still left.

It should be noted that local population undertakes reconstruction works without special permission and observance of relevant rules.

A mechanism should be created ensuring preservation of the original look of the cultural heritage monuments. Also relevant agencies should ensure that the monuments are not rehabilitated and reconstructed without supervision.

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia and NGO Tolerance in 2011 cooperated over selecting 10 monuments considering their artistic and cultural value. At present works are under way to grant them a status of a monument.

At present the following objects are registered:

- Up to 50 Armenian St Orthodox Church eparchies in Georgia: in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kakheti, Bolnisi, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities;
- 37 Muslim objects – Mosques and Jamis: in Tbilisi, Adigeni Batumi, Khelvachauri, Chokhatauri, KobuleTi, Keda, Khulo municipalities;
- Doukhobor Houses in village Gorelovka in Ninotsminda.<sup>16</sup>
- 5 synagogues: in Tbilisi, Sukhumi, Tsageri, Oni; besides, Oni synagogue was restored.

Speaking about synagogues, it should be mentioned that not all the synagogues in Georgia are inventories. It can be hypothesized that the number is comparatively bigger than indicated in official sources. We recommend that all the synagogues in Georgia are registered and inventoried and if the monument complies with the relevant criteria, granted the status.

Despite the efforts by the ministry on inventory and rehabilitation of the monuments, there are issues that need urgent consideration:

<sup>16</sup> The Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2011

Problematic is reconstruction and rehabilitation of the so called non-functioning Armenian churches and places of memorial value: these are

- Belfry existing at 5 Atoneli str., Tbilisi;
- A church on Aghmashenebili Str. former cinema in Tbilisi;
- Churches in Kaspi, Gori, Telavi, Gurjaani districts.

Unsolved is the issue of a second synagogue on Rabati area, where sports complex was housed (in 2012 Jewish community financed the rehabilitation of the second one). The issue on the synagogue is not mentioned in Action Plan 2011 either.

The issue of granting a cultural heritage status to Doukhobor 's Orphan House in village Gorelovka, in Ninotsminda District is still unresolved.

It should be mentioned that in 2011 the Minister for reintegration officially requested Samtske-Javakheti Administration to change the cultural heritage status for Doukhobor's Orphan House, to grant than a status of a museum and allocate two personnel to protect it. This would have afforded remuneration for the maintenance of the object by the people who are doing it on pure enthusiasm at present.

However, because of the lack of funds in the local budget, the initiative was not followed up.

Doukhobors' houses and so called orphan house do not have a status of a monument at present. According to the official correspondence of 5 July, 2012 addressed to the Ombudsman's Office from the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, the inventory of the objects is planned and, based on the data, the status of monument will be granted to the valuable objects.

Emergency strengthening works were undertaken of Holy Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Churches: Norashen, Moghnis<sup>17</sup> and Surb-nshans<sup>18</sup> in Tbilisi funded by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection.

On January 6, 2012 Surb-nshan got on fire and on January 10 one of the four dome supporting pillars collapsed.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Muhgn Surb Gevorlg"- a church in Akhospireli str., Sololaki, Tbilisi. The church houses St Gevorg holy pats. It was built by donations from Mendenov, Bastamov and Bashinjaghelov families. Mugn Surb Gevork in old town was a kind of center of Armenian culture. Some of the manuscript are still present today, the oldest of which belongs to 1447. The belfry was built in 1789. In 1795 the church was robbed during Agha Mahmad Khans occupation of Tbilisi. However, through efforts by the head of the church Ter (Father) Grigor part of the property could be saved. During the soviet period until 1980 the church served as folk art museum. Later on all the exhibits were transferred to another building. The church was left in rundown condition. In 2009 the dome collapsed and disintegrated almost entirely. In the yard of the church Armenian community members and priests are buried.

<sup>18</sup> The Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2011

<sup>19</sup> A church at the juncture of Akopiani and Vetskli Streets, in Sololaki, Tbilisi, In 1763 it was among the most important 6 churches in Tbilisi. In the soviet period the church was used first as a storehouse for noodles, then archive for Armenian book stores of the National Library. In 2002 the church caught fire. After which the floor of the Surb Nihn was covered in liter 1 meter deep. Lately homeless people and street dogs find shelter there. [http://www.tolerantoba.ge/index.php?news\\_id=131](http://www.tolerantoba.ge/index.php?news_id=131).

A second phase of the restoration of Surb-nshan will be completed before September 28, 2012 the Ministry reports.

2011

## Museums

LEPL Mirza Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Culture Museum and LEPL David Baazovi Historical and Ethnographic Museum of the Jews of Georgia are structurally within the Ministry of Culture and Monument protection and both are financed through subsidies by the Ministry.

The organizations below were financed in 2011–2012 by the following budgets:

- LEPL David Baazovi Historical and Ethnographic Museum of the Jews of Tbilisi: 70 000 GEL; 75 000 GEL;
- LEPL Mirza Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Culture Museum of Tbilisi: 25 000 GEL; 30 000 GEL.<sup>20</sup>

LEPL Mirza Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Culture Museum<sup>21</sup> had on average 2000 visitors in 2011, out of which 300 were foreign tourists.

LEPL David Baazovi Historical and Ethnographic Museum of the Jews of Georgia has not been open for viewers for more than 20 years because of the conditions of the building. The museum is placed in an old synagogue that is itself a monument of cultural heritage. The building requires repairs for many years and every year the conditions get worse, since the roofing of the dome is damaged and water leaks at every corner of the building damaging the supporting construction. The question of the rehabilitation of the building is still unresolved due to the lack of funds. The building needs urgent rehabilitation: at the initial phase, at least the dome should be properly roofed, so that the monument of cultural value is not lost.

Despite the fact that the director of the museum has requested from the official structures of the government for and was promised assistance, nothing has been done so far.

Again the question of who (Ministry of Culture and monument Protection, Tbilisi Mayer's Office, or the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia. They keep

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<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection.

<sup>21</sup> Based on the Presidential Decree #326 of 13 May, 2009 the space on the second floor of the building at 16 Gorgasali Str. where LEPL Mirza Fatali Akhundov Azerbaijani Culture Museum was housed was directly sold to Azerbaijani Oil Company. It was put responsible for ensuring operation of the museum existing on the premises of the delivered property and the reconstruction of the property. Since the building is granted a status of immovable monument of cultural heritage, with the view of protecting the building as a monument, and the territory and the objects of cultural heritage placed there from the damage and destruction as well as for preservation of the setting and its cultural and scientific value an agreement # 07/01, 12 10. 2009 "On Maintenance of the Monuments" was formed between the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, Tbilisi Mayer's Office and Georgian Representatives of the Azerbaijani state Oil Company. Before the end of the reconstruction works the museum was operating in 40 Aghmashenebeli ave., currently the museum is open to viewer in its rehabilitated building.

cross referring and the responsible body could not be established) is responsible to take decision with regards to the issue is still unresolved.

The budget expenditures of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia does not have a line for the rehabilitation of infrastructure of the state organizations within the structure of the ministry. From time to time the ministry lobbies the organizations in higher authorities, but should be noted that the buildings of different state organizations have been mostly renovated through nongovernmental funds.

Iv Javakhishvili Samtskhe-Javakheti Historical Museum belongs to LEPL National Museum. The museum is located in the historic part of Akhaltsikhe-Rabati area, where currently reconstruction works are underway. The museum is not temporarily, until 2012, open for viewers.

The Action Plan 2011, in addition to the exercises above, envisaged a number of activities aimed at protection of the cultural heritage of national minorities.

**It should be noted that, considering their content and format, it would be more logical to include those activities under different Objective of the Action Plan.**

Most of the measures did not take place due to the lack of financing.

- Preparation of Manaba Magomedova, a famous Daghestani Artist, evening in Kvareli District that has compact settlements of ethnic Avars.

The activity needed small financing (about 1200 GEL), but none of the donor organizations wanted to fund the event.

- Support to translation, publication and popularization of Vainakh Children's Fairytales in Georgian and Chechen languages.

The book is ready, but the funds for publication and presentation could not be secured.

- Vainakh Folklore Evening in Tbilisi (Kists from Pankisi, as well as the Chechen and Ingush from North Caucasus performers and creative groups and poets should have participated).

All the preparatory work for the evening was undertaken; negotiations were launched with North Caucasian (Chechnya and Ingushetia) organizations. Folk Ensembles expressed their readiness to visit Georgia, but the event did not take place due to lack of financing.

- A competition of Kvemo Kartli Ashugh performers

The funding could not be secured to hold the event.

#### Objective 4: Supporting Spirit of Tolerance, Encouragement of Intercultural Dialogue and Contacts

2011

Promoting the spirit of tolerance and intercultural communication is one of the components of the Action Plan that, in comparison to 2010, is being broadened. The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs has contributed to this as well.

However, as the survey undertaken by the Civil Development Agency (CiDA) within the project – **A multi-ethnic confidence-building network** – in 2011 in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti shows, ethnic minorities living in these regions are not adequately familiar with each other's traditions.

12.8% of the population in both regions responded positively: in Kvemo Kartli – 14.2% and in the Samtskhe-Javakheti – 11.4% to the Question – **whether you visit the cultural / sporting facilities of different settlements of the region and whether you participate in cultural / sports activities?**

7.6% of the population in both regions responded positively: 7.0% in Kvemo Kartli and 8.2% in Samtskhe-Javakheti<sup>22</sup> to the second question – **whether people from other settlements of your region visit the cultural / sports facilities and take part in a cultural/sports activities in your district?**

According to the survey, more respondents in Kvemo Kartli say that the various ethnic groups attend each other's celebrations than in Samtskhe-Javakheti.

It should be noted that the response "do not know" to these questions is quite high: in Samtskhe-Javakheti – 45%, in Kvemo Kartli – 28.6% indicating that ethnic minorities are under informed.

The survey also reveals that different ethnic groups are not very familiar with each other's national traditions.

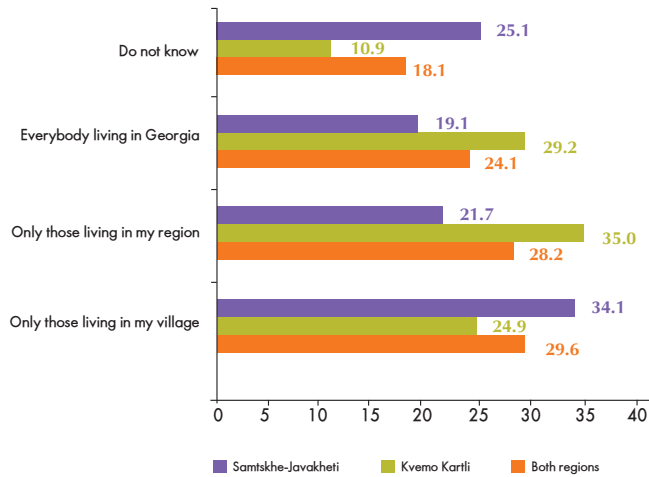
According to 35% of respondents in Kvemo Kartli and 21.7% in Samtskhe-Javakheti, national traditions are only known in their region.

A third of Georgian respondents believe that all citizens of Georgia are aware of the traditions of other ethnic groups. Only 15.2% of non-ethnic Georgian respondents responded similar.

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<sup>22</sup> See Multiethnic public survey in Kvemo kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti a report from the quantitative survey. [www.cida.ge](http://www.cida.ge)

## Do other ethnic groups know about your national traditions?



The comparatively high level of awareness in Kvemo Kartli could be attributed to the bigger number of activities envisaged by the Action Plan for the region. In this regards multiethnic festival “Under th Common Sky” can be a good example. The festival was international in 2012 and involved not only representatives from Georgian but also from neighboring countries in a single cultural space.<sup>23</sup>

Development of youth centers and projects implemented in this field will contribute substantially to establishing and improving tolerant relationships.

Action Plan 2011 maintains that:

- Sports games should have been arranged for IDP children from the settlements in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions, as well as Azerbaijani and Armenian children, youth from Pankisi Gorge and eco-migrants. Bringing kids from Samtskhe-Javakheti region could not be arranged.

Through joint efforts from a representative of the Office of the State Minister for Reintegration in Kvemo Kartli region and a non-governmental organization “UNION” as well as support from Marneuli Municipality, IDP children from Shaumiani were brought to attend a sports event in Marneuli. Friendly games in football, volleyball and chess were arranged. Participants were awarded promotion certificates (50 beneficiaries).

<sup>22</sup> On May, 2012 students of Rustavi, Gardabani, Marneuli, Bolnisi, Tetrtskharo, Dmanisi, Tsalka, Kakheti and Samtske-Javakheti music schools piano, vocal, choir, classic orchestra and folk instrument (piano, violin, flute etc.) classes as well as music school students from Armenia and the republic of Azerbaijan participated in the festival. All the participants were awarded books (“Pirosmani” in Georgian and English languages) (Source: Kvemo Kartli Governor’s Office. Founder and Organizer of the Festival, chair of the Kvemo Kartli Regional Office of Composers’ association of Georgia, composer Manana alphasidze).

- Supporting the publication of Chechen translation of “the Knight in the Panther’s Skin” – despite multilevel negotiations with donor organizations, funding could not found for the publication of the Chechen Translation of “the Knight in the Panther’s Skin”.
- Supporting an exhibition and sale of drawings by Akhalkalaki Art School students, handicraft objects the children from Kvemo Kartli and works by young Kist artists could not be arranged due to lack of funding. Children could not be transported from Samtskhe-Javakheti to Tbilisi.

The event was organized by the representative of the Office of the Minister of State for Reintegration in the region with the support from Rustavi Mayer’s Office. The exhibition was arranged at the Hall of Rustavi Municipality. Rustavi Public School # 18 and Marneuli Azeri School presented their handicraft and drawings.

Organized by the State Minister’s Office, and facilitated by the Kvemo Kartli regional administration, an exhibition of the children’s drawings was arranged in E. Akhvlediani Children’s Gallery. Works of fine arts, sculpture, embroidery, knitting, carpet weaving by ethnic Azeri children aged 9-17 from Marneuli were presented.<sup>24</sup>

### Summer Schools

The educational activities like summer camps facilitate creation of social ties between young people from different ethnic groups.

In 2011 Anaklia International Youth Camp “Patriot 2011” opened on May 25 and hosted up to 3,400 young people throughout the year. There were 305 participants from Samtskhe-Javakheti, and 395 participants from Kvemo Kartli regions.<sup>25</sup>

### The project “Youth Development and Engagement”

Under the financial support from the Japanese government 8 regional youth centers were opened in 2011 – in Lentekhi, Rustavi, Gori, Ambrolauri, Zugdidi, Akhaltsikhe,<sup>26</sup> Gurjaani, Vartsikhe.

### Objective 6.5: Ensuring participation of national minorities into the cultural life of Georgia

National minorities regularly participate in traditional public celebrations in the region. However, as the monitoring revealed the minorities give preference to activities where Georgians also participate.

It should be noted that majority of the activities planned in this regards are local and does not result in promotion of minority culture. The reason for this is often the lack of interest from the part of the community itself. Therefore, there is a need to create incentives for the youth in the region.

<sup>24</sup> The works were created by the students of Arts Clubs/Circles of Marneuli NGO “UNION” with financial support from “CiDA”.

<sup>25</sup> The Implementation Report of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2011

<sup>26</sup> Akhaltsikhe Youth Center: in 2011 a project named “Tolerance” was implemented with the participation of Armenian and Meskh youth. Youth from different districts of Akhaltsikhe were offered trainings and workshops focusing on intercultural dialogue. The participants held debates, discussions, film shows. Culture evenings of Georgia, Armenia and Turkey were also arranged. The project continued for one month.

Apart from holding music festivals, other directions such as arranging literary evenings, meetings with writers and poets, and arts exhibitions should also be employed to contribute to cultural ties.

It should be noted that the scope of the cultural events in some of the districts is only limited to concerts and sports competitions.

Modern, classic and folk music concerts as envisaged by the Action Plan 2011 under the abovementioned objective to be held in the regions (Tsalka, Akhalkalaki) with compact minority settlements were not implemented due to the lack of funds. The same is true about the folk festival in Mestia.

### Theatres

With the view to promote participation of national minorities into the common cultural life, the ministry of Culture and Monument Protection gives subsidies to ethnic minority theatres within the framework of the **Georgia's Ethnic Minority Culture Support Program**.

The following organizations were financed with the indicated amount:

- In Tbilisi LEPL Heydar Aliyev State Azeri Theatre: 130 000 GEL; 135 000 GEL;
- In Tbilisi LEPL Petros Adaimani State Armenian Drama Theatre: 130 000 GEL; 402 300 GEL;
- In Tbilisi LEPL Al. Groboedov State Russian Drama Theatre: 380 000 GEL; 1 085 900 GEL.

As shown by the data, funding for the organizations has increased compared to the previous year. However, the budget is not enough to undertake reconstruction works.

- **Petros Adaimani State Armenian Drama Theatre** is not functional. Staging performances in the building is currently impossible and the rehearsals take place in the theatre hall. According to the director, the theatre is losing its viewers because of the condition of the building.
- **Heydar Aliyev State Azeri Theatre** also is in need of repairs. The big hall of the theatre is not functional.

Despite the situation, as Gocha Kapanadze, Director informed the monitoring group, **Azerbaijani State Theater** holds at least three premieres annually and up to twenty performances. 1940 people visited the theater in 2011.

**Petros Adamiani State Armenian Theatre** regularly visits regions with compact Armenian settlements. The theater held three tours in Armenia, up to twenty in the regions. They had a tour in Paris, too. The theater had in total 5 313 spectators. The only barrier for holding the performances is the poor condition of the building.

Al. Griboyedov Russian State Drama Theatre had 16 580 spectators in 2011.

### Recommendations:

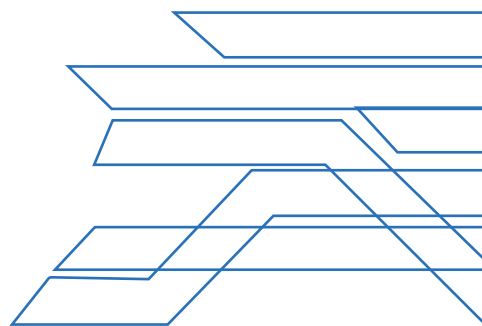
Out of the 64 activities envisaged by the Action Plan 2011 only 35 were implemented. Almost half of the events could not be carried out due to lack of financing.

- Cultural events in the regions with compact minority settlements should be more diversified. The number of the events should be increased in the regions that experience lack in this regard (e.g. Tsalka).



- Reestablishment of a music institution (ten year school) in Akhaltsikhe is recommendable. The national minorities will get a complete music education. This will facilitate development of professionals and give stimulus to them to work in the field in the future.
- Promotion of Mughami and Ashug cultures in the local community as well as in wider public is needed. Of special interest is encouragement of the culture among Azeri youth to ensure intergenerational transition;
- The cultural events planned for the next year should include classic music concerts in the regions, deficit of which was revealed during the 2009 monitoring by the Ombudsman's office and that is still problematic;
- For the operation of Davit Baazovi Georgia's Jews historic museum funding should be secured for the rehabilitation of the building. Also, a responsible agency for working over the problem should be identified; Firstly, the dome should be urgently repaired, so that the deterioration of the conditions would not happen.
- A mechanism should be created ensuring preservation of the original look of the cultural heritage monuments. Also relevant agencies should ensure that the monuments are not rehabilitated and reconstructed without supervision.
- It should be mentioned that not all the synagogues in Georgia are inventoried. It can be hypothesized that the number is comparatively bigger than indicated in official sources. All the synagogues in Georgia should be registered and inventoried and if the monument complies with the relevant criteria, granted the status.
- Decision should be taken to rehabilitate two synagogues and the Jewish graveyard on Rabati Area in Akhaltsikhe.
- Issue of the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the so called non-functioning Armenian churches and places of memorial value should be solved. These are:
  - Belfry existing at 5 Atoneli str., Tbilisi;
  - A church on Aghmashenebili Str. former cinema in Tbilisi;
  - Churches in Kaspi, Gori, Telavi, Gurjaani districts.
- Seraphime Saroveli Church in village Japaridze (Sechenovka) built in XIX century by Count Sechenov from Russian cultural heritage monument in Georgia should be paid special attention. It is not included in the registry of cultural heritage monuments so far. It should be studied and reconstruction works – launched;
- The issue of granting a cultural heritage status to Doukhobor's Orphan House in village Gorelovka, in Ninotsminda District is still unresolved. The process should be speeded up and the object granted a status of a museum and allocated two personnel to protect it. This would afford remuneration for the maintenance of the object by the people who are doing it on pure enthusiasm at present.
- More attention should be paid to the communities that are on the verge of disappearance (e.g. Doukhobor Community in Ninotsminda); Very few events are arranged to promote Jewish culture also).
- It should be noted that the scope of the cultural events in some of the districts is only limited to concerts and sports competitions. Apart from music festivals, cultural ties should also be developed in other directions such as arranging literary evenings and arts exhibitions, meetings with writers and poets, etc.
- The contacts between art schools in regions and the capital should become more intense. E.g. Akhalkalaki art school has expressed interest to hold an exhibition in Tbilisi, in 2011. The event could not be realized.
- Translation work should be more employed with the purpose of tightening cultural ties and studying cultures. Literary and scientific projects should be financed.
- The issue of rehabilitation of Petros Adaimani State Armenian Drama Theatre and Heydar Aliyev State Azeri Theatre should be solved urgently.

# Media and Access to Information



## 1. Legislation

The Constitution of Georgia guarantees freedom of speech, opinion, conscience, religion and belief and prohibits from discrimination of people on the grounds of, also compulsion of people, to express their opinion over speech, opinion, religion and belief. (Article 19).

As stipulated by the Law of Georgia “On Freedom of Speech and Expression”, each person has a right to freedom of expression, including freedom from compulsion to express their opinion over belief, religion, conscience and political vision, ethnic, cultural and social belonging, origin, family, property and position, also all other conditions that can become the basis for restriction of these rights and freedom (Article 3.2. k)

Criminal Code of Georgia provides for penalties for illegal restriction of freedom of speech and a right to obtain and disseminate information (Article 153); illegal restriction of worship or observance of other religious regulations or traditions through violence or threat to violence, or accompanying abuse of religious feelings of a believer or a priest (Article 155); and prosecution on the grounds of speech, opinion, conscience, religion, belief, as well as in connection with their political, public, professional, religious or scientific work (Article 156).

The Law of Georgia on Broadcasting holds Public Broadcaster responsible for reflecting in programs ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age and gender diversity of the community and place information with a relevant proportion of programs prepared by minority groups about national minorities, in their native language (Article 16). As stipulated by article 33.11 of the same law, Public Broadcaster should create one or more annual regular program in at least 4 languages, including Abkhazian, and Ossetian languages.

In accordance with the Law on Broadcasting, a license holder of a local broadcast should ensure the reflection of the opinion of the minorities living in the area of his service (Article 46).

The Law on Broadcasting states that any broadcasting license holders shall avoid broadcasting programs containing material to incite ethnic or religious hatred and which are of a discriminatory nature to any group; also, the Law prohibits broadcasting programs

containing material to stir up hatred, discrimination, or offensive to any person or group because of ethnic background, religion, opinion, age, gender, sexual preference or disability, or any other feature or status. Special emphasis of these features or statuses is only permissible within the context of a program if it aims merely to illustrate such hatred or discrimination, as they already exist in society (Article 56).

Code of Conduct for Broadcasters adopted by the National Communications Commission of Georgia congruent with Article 50 of the Law of Georgia “On broadcasting” is based on broadcasting principles with “accommodating interests of various social groups regardless of their political affiliation, cultural, ethnic, religious and regional backgrounds, language, age or gender (Article 3) being one of them. Chapter 9 of the Code of Conduct “Diversity, Equality and Tolerance” obliges broadcasters to refrain from publishing any material likely to incite hatred or intolerance on the grounds of race, language, gender, religious convictions, political opinions, ethnic origin, geographic location, or social background (Article 31). The code requires from a broadcaster to report accurate, reliable, balanced, proportional information on all cultural, religious, ethnic and social groups living in Georgia, with due regard to the principles of fairness and impartiality, respect the fundamental rights of freedom of opinion, conscience, belief and religion and avoid offending any ethnic, religious, cultural, or social groups (Article 32).

Congruent with Article 33 of the Code of Conduct Broadcasters should avoid drawing unjustified parallels between ethnic or religious origin and negative events, including associating activities of specific individuals with the entire group also avoid inaccurate and misleading statements regarding minorities and their social problems, should not promote stereotypes or identify an individual’s ethnic origin or religious faith unless necessary. Broadcasters should avoid causing offence to any religious, ethnic or other groups by using, among others, certain terminology/language and images.

According to the same Article 33 of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters, if any unjustified referral to ethnic origin, religious faith, sexual orientation, family status, social standing or any other factor as to a cause of the problem, or the use of offensive terminology by a source in live broadcast or news program should not go unchallenged and presenters should ask authors of offensive statements to substantiate their views.

## 2. Rehabilitation of the Coverage of Public Broadcasting System

Nowadays, 1<sup>st</sup> Channel of Public Broadcaster covers 88% of the country area, while coverage by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Channel equals to 65%. In 2012, as a result of moving the 2nd channel to Kutaisi, the signal of the Channel will cover broader area due to stronger transmission facility.

In 2011, Public Broadcaster did not rehabilitate existing system because it is planned to move to digital broadcasting from 2015 and therefore it is not feasible to spend money on the rehabilitation of transmitting system. Georgian Public Broadcaster has already started working to move on digital broadcasting. GPB already has the plan and funds for purchasing necessary transmitting facility for moving to digital broadcasting. Further necessary works will be carried out in 2013-2014.

### 3. Systematic Production of TV Programmes and Broadcasting

In 2011, Public Broadcaster produced daily (except weekends) and broadcast news in the languages of national minorities in Georgia. The so-called “National Moambes” were transmitted in Abkhazian, Ossetia, Armenian and Azeri languages during prime time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> channel of Public Broadcaster and were retransmitted early in the morning at both 2<sup>nd</sup> channel and 1st channel of GPB.

In order to ensure access to information for national minorities, regional televisions located in the regions densely settled by Abkhazians, Ossetians, Azeri and Armenians provided daily transmission of the news. Specifically, news program was transmitted in Abkhaz language through Zugdidi “Odishi,” in Ossetian language, through “Trialeti TV.” In Samtskhe-Javakheti news program in Armenian language was transmitted through Akhalkalaki TV station “ATV 12”, in Kvemo Kartli in Azerbaijani language through “Marneuli TV.” The regional channels retranslated “National Moambes” every evening during the best time for broadcast (the so-called “prime time” – from 20:00 to 23:00) and also repeat them in the next day during the morning time. “Moambe” was also broadcast in Armenian language through Ninotsminda TV Channel “Parvana”. The retranslation was financed by the local self-government. In Ossetian language “Moambe” was broadcast in the evening air by Chiatura “Imervizia.”

The so-called “Erovnuli/National Moambe” (National Narrator) with the duration of 40 minutes was a compilation of Georgian “Moambe.” Ten minutes of information was given in each language and at least 12-14 features were prepared with duration for each feature of less than 1 minute.

Because of the lack of rankings of TV programs, it is impossible to measure the size of the audience of “National Moambe.” According to the survey conducted by Applied Research Company (ARC) in December, 2010 58,8% of the ethnic minority population in Kvemo Kartli watch “Moambe,” while in Samtskhe-Javakheti less than half of the population watches the same program (48,4%)<sup>1</sup>.

As stated by the focus group participants (local NGOs, media, local self-government representatives, teachers) undertaken in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti by Civil Development Agency (CiDA), “there is no tangible progress in terms of media and access to information in the regions densely populated by national minorities. The main sources of the information are still the TV channels of other countries”<sup>2</sup>.

However, the issue of quality of translation was not so negatively assessed in the aforementioned focus group discussion (FGDs) as it was back in 2009 during the FGDs.

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<sup>1</sup> ARC „Survey of Multiethnic Community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti“, implemented within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network”, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Report (2010- August 2011) on the Implementation of the Action Plan of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration, CiDA; 2011.

Focus group discussion held in May, 2012 in Kvemo Kartli also pointed out that the quality of translation has been improved (“language became more academic/official”). However, in general participants underlined that overall quality of translation is still not accurate. They underscored that there are lots of errors; they do not like the voice and accent of the anchor (“sounds like Georgian who does not know Azeri language”)<sup>3</sup>.

As to the topics of TV Programs, participants of focus group discussion in Kvemo Kartli underlined that there is the lack of TV programs which examine and reflect the problems of the regions densely populated by national minorities.

People watch “Moambe” in Azeri language mostly through “Marneuli TV” since the TV program in this channel is broadcast more convenient time, i.e. 9 PM. Those who receive TV signals from the satellite where there is no Marneuli TV channel, do not watch “National Moambe”<sup>4</sup>.

According to media representatives and teachers, national minorities are more interested in watching entertaining TV programs than news programs<sup>5</sup>. They watch those entertaining TV programs which are transmitted in their native languages.

According to the opinions of the participants of FGDs, it can be concluded that the lack of interest toward the news TV programs are mainly caused by their poor quality. Current format of the “National Moambe” is more apposite for Radio Programs than for TV programs. Such format for TV viewers is boring and uninteresting. This assumption is supported by the ideas presented at FGDs that “many families, who do not understand Georgian, still watch Georgian “Moambe” to get information at least visually since they believe that this can be helpful in terms of Georgian language acquisition.” The concerns from the participants of FGDs in Samtskhe-Javakheti also support the same idea. As they say, “Parvana” does not provide translation of TV news “Kurier” into Armenian language and its retranslation. The project that provided translation of the afore-mentioned TV news was completed in 2008. Participants of FGDs underscored that the Project was really relevant in spite of the poor quality of translation. Despite the fact that the population complained a lot about poor quality of translation, majority of them still watched the Program and had an access to information about ongoing events of the country<sup>6</sup>.

Another factor for the lack of interest toward “National Moambe” is that, the issues and problems from the regions densely populated by national minorities are broadcast very rarely. It is true that the editors and producers for national minority sections produced some exclusive features about national minorities throughout 2011, but is advisable to increase even more the number of such features since national minorities are interested in such news. In 2011, editors of “National Moambe” produced 32 exclusive features broadcast on minorities, including 5 – by Abkhazian section, 6 – Ossetian, 5 – Azeri and

<sup>3</sup> Report of the FGDs organized by ARC in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the FGDs organized by ARC in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Report (2010- August 2011) on the Implementation of the Action Plan of the National Concept on Tolerance and Civil Integration, CiDA; 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Report of the FGDs organized by ARC in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2012.

16 – Armenian. It is necessary that the editors of minority sections become more active and produce more features about national minorities in Georgia.

Daily broadcast of “National Moambe” is undoubtedly a positive step forward concerning improving access to information for ethnic minorities. However, “National Moambe” needs further development in terms of format, contents and duration. Also, it is crucial to ensure training for the “Moambe” staff in order to lessen the existing drawbacks outlined by the participants of FGDs.

Permanent producing and broadcast of “National Moambe” is ensured by Georgian Public Broadcaster and partner regional televisions in 2012. It is advisable that “National Moambe” has its own web link at the official website of Georgian Public Broadcaster so that the viewers have an opportunity for response and interaction.

#### 4. Permanent Producing and Broadcast of the Radio Programs

In 2011, audio versions of “Moambe” in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian and Azeri languages were broadcast every day early in the morning through “Radio 1” of GPB.

“Radio 1” also provided airing of weekly informational and educational program in Kurdish language. The Action Plan for 2011 envisaged development and broadcast of the radio program in Kurdish language on a daily base. However, this responsibility has not been met. Despite this, on October 17, 2011, “Radio 1” organized a meeting with Kurdish Diaspora, involving up to 40 participants. The participants of the meeting expressed their satisfaction about weekly news produced in Kurdish language and underlined good quality of translation (2 linguists work in Kurdish Division of the Radio). As a result of the meeting, a special initiative group was set up which will work on the recommendations for further development and improvement of the aforementioned radio program in Kurdish.

Similar to television, because of non-existence of the ranking system, it is impossible to measure the size of the audience for “National Moambe” on the Radio. However, considering the fact that public radio frequencies are not distributed in some of the districts of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti and the percentage of the radio listeners in these regions is low (13%)<sup>7</sup>, we can assume that the effect of the radio programs for ethnic minorities in terms of provision of information is very limited.

#### 5. “First Caucasian”

68,4% of the population in Samtskhe-Javakheti watch Russian TV channels, while the figure for Kvemo Kartli is 28,4%<sup>8</sup>. This explicit difference between two regions is because more

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<sup>7</sup> ARC „Survey of Multiethnic Community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti“, implemented within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network”, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

people know Russian in Samtskhe-Javakheti region compared with Kvemo Kartli. However, Georgian Public Broadcaster's Russian-language TV channel, "First Caucasian" ("Pik") is not popular in these regions. Participants of the FGDs had some awareness about this channel. However, as pointed out during the discussion, majority of the local population probably never heard about this TV channel<sup>9</sup>.

The population in Samtkhe-Javakheti positively assess the launching of new channel – "First Caucasian." They think that TV programs are acceptable and the language also quite comprehensible. Though, there is a major issue that majority of the population never heard about this TV channel and therefore they do not watch it. People in Kvemo Kartli also watch "Pik." The most convenient for the population is to watch TV programs in Russian. Also, as they underscore, the quality of the news program at this channel is much better and more diverse.<sup>10</sup>

"First Caucasian" launched broadcast on the satellite in 2011. One of the major goals of the channel is provide news about the developments and people living in the Caucasus region. Informational and analytical programs, political talk shows and educational programs are broadcast on "First Caucasian." In terms of access to information among national minorities, launching of this Russian TV channel was clearly a positive step. From March 2012, the channel retranslates "Moambe" of the 1<sup>st</sup> channel of GPB in Abkhazian, Ossetian and Armenian languages. In addition, from March, 2012, the channeled embarked on a mission to produce news program focusing of the recent developments in the regions densely populated by national minorities.

It is less likely that unpopularity of the "First Caucasian" in 2011 was caused by the fact that the channel was not on the satellite, since majority of the population owns satellite antennas. Probably, the major cause of this is the fact that "First Caucasian" is a relatively new channel. In addition, it should be considered that the population has some pre-conceived behaviors in terms of watching TV: as a rule, it is very difficult to attract the audience for a new TV channel. In 2011, the population of the regions densely populated by national minorities watched more frequently another channel in Russian language "Region TV." The target audience of this channel is the population from South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The popularity of the "Region TV" can be also explained by the fact that the local TV channels in Samtskhe-Javakheti filled up their "free" television time with TV programs of "Region TV." In 2012, "First Caucasian" and "Region TV" have been merged and "First Caucasian" started to launch broadcast with the frequencies of the "Region TV." This means that the resource and potential of the channel "First Caucasian" are not fully utilized for the promotion of civil integration of national minorities.

## 6. Coverage about the National Minorities and their Participation in the Programs of Public Broadcaster

### "Our Yard"

In 2011, GPB has permanently broadcast the TV program "Our Yard." TV talk show "Our Yard" is broadcast every Sunday at 16:30. The talk show was retranslated every Tuesday during the day time. The duration of the "Our Yard" is almost one hour.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Report of the FGDs organized by ARC in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2012.

The talk show is broadcast in Georgian language and special guests include representatives of ethnic minorities. "Our yard" targets broad audience apart from ethnic minorities. The program covers discussions over acute problems for ethnic minorities, solutions to them and interethnic relations. In 2011, the TV program focused on such issues as civil integration of national minorities, conditions of the Diasporas in Georgia, teaching and learning of Georgian as a state language, infrastructure development, media, etc.

Apart from national minorities, the audience of the TV program is a wider community of the country. "Our yard" promotes traditions and culture of the minorities living in Georgia, as well as good practices of co-existence of diverse ethnic groups, achievements of people from different ethnic origin and their contribution to Georgian statehood and culture.

"Our yard" is the only program in Georgian airspace, specially devoted to the issue of national minorities. It has been on air since 2007 on Georgian Public Broadcaster (the program was originally called "Italian Yard," since 2010 it was broadcast with a new name "Our Yard"). This TV program manages to maintain its audience. In 2011, the retranslation of the TV program on Tuesday increased the audience of "Our Yard."

However, it should be noted that according to CiDA survey results in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions, viewers of "Our Yard" represent more of Georgian population than non-Georgians<sup>11</sup>. One of the major reasons might be the language barrier. To increase the contribution of "Our yard" to the national minorities' integration process, it can be recommended to translate the program into minority languages and broadcast permanently through partner regional TV Channels. The population of those remote villages where the 1st channel of GPB is not available, people will be still able to watch "Our Yard" if broadcast this TV program by the regional TV channels.

The TV program "Our Yard" has its own page on the official website of GPB, which gives an opportunity to the population of Georgia to respond and provide feedback to the Program. Further, archives of "Our Yard" are also available. Producing and broadcast of this TV program will further continue in 2012.

## **7. Promotion of Tolerance and Cultural Pluralism in Media**

### **„Our Georgia“**

Since March 2011m 1<sup>st</sup> Radio Channel of GPB produces weekly radio program "Our Georgia." The program is broadcast every Thursday during daytime (14:10 pm) and is on the air during 50 minutes.

The program is designated for national minorities as well as for the wider audience. It envisages promotion of civil integration and the idea of open society as well as fostering tolerance and cultural pluralism in media.

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<sup>11</sup> ARC „Survey of Multiethnic Community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti“, implemented within Civil Development Agency's (CiDA) Project "A multi-ethnic confidence-building network", 2011.



Majority of the invited guests at the program are representatives of national minorities. “Our Georgia” is an interactive program and the listeners have an opportunity to call during the program and ask questions live, express their opinions regarding the topic of discussion. 3-4 persons call on average during a program.

In 2011, the radio program broadcast and put forward such issues as history, traditions, daily lives and habits of national minority and religious groups; civil integration of national minorities, issues and challenges regarding integration and tolerance, etc. For example, in 2011, issues discussed on the radio were: cultural heritage of national minorities, Georgian media on ethnic and religious minorities, Georgian language and national minorities, civil integration, etc.

Archives of the radio program are available on the official website of Georgian Public broadcaster. Producing and broadcast of the radio program will further continue in 2012.

## 8. Other Activities and Initiatives of Georgian Public Broadcast

On October 14, 2011, the Azerbaijani and Georgian public broadcaster arranged 3 TV bridges. A new TV space Bridge was dedicated to the 20th anniversary of independence of Azerbaijan Republic.

In 2011, Public Broadcaster launched the musical program “10+10,” in which Georgian and Armenian popular singers took part. The program was bilingual.

In 2011, GPB conducted a seminar for the journalists working on minority issues – “Language and Ethics for Tolerance based on International Experience.”

According to the Georgian Law on Broadcasting (Article 31), eight Public Boards were set up to present the public interests and needs in the air of the Public Broadcaster, including National Minority Board. The major function of these Public Boards was to formulate recommendations for the Public Broadcaster with the immediate involvement of the public and in their best interest. As a result of the amendment to the Law made in July 2011, one Public Board was set up under GPB merging all eight aforementioned Boards. Representatives of national minorities are also presented in the Board. This can be assessed as the positive step toward civil integration of national minorities since representatives of national minorities are not involved only in the issues concerning national minorities per se, but they are also engaged in the discussion and development of recommendations regarding different issues which falls under the competence of the Public Board under GPB. The Public Board under GPB is comprised of 47 members<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> <http://gpb.ge/uploads/documents/bb37414a-dc6d-454f-bf88-a6de1de15fb1doc.pdf>

## 9. Printed Media

Today, the printed media publications in minority languages are issued in small circulations, are mostly unstable and, in fact, do not sell. Their subscribers are governmental agencies, mostly at the local level, public school teachers and a small number of local population. Some of the newspapers exist on grants or government subsidies and are distributed free of charge. The majority of the publications in minority languages do not have a website.

In 2011, the newspaper “Gurjistan” in Azeri language was published once a week. Since 2011, the number of pages of the newspaper increased up to eight pages. The newspaper did not have an official website.

The newspaper “Gurjistan” is mainly distributed in Kvemo Kartli region. It is published with the circulation of 2000 every week. In 2011, the newspaper received funding of 45,000 GEL, out of which 15,000 GEL was allocated by the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports of Georgia within the “Literary Development Program” and the remaining 30,000 GEL – was allocated from the President’s Fund. The paper mainly covers the activities of the government. In October-November 2011, the newspaper was not published because of the management could not pay maintenance costs after moving to the new building.

The editors of the newspaper themselves are responsible for its distribution. The newspapers published in Tbilisi are taken and distributed in the regions by the staff members.

Armenian-language newspaper “Vrastan” is published once a week. In 2011, the newspaper received funding of 45,000 GEL: 15,000 GEL was allocated from the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports Affairs of Georgia within the “Literary Development Program”; 30,000 GEL – from the President’s fund. “Vrastan” is a 8 pager with a circulation of up to 4,000. “Vrastan” is mainly distributed in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, with comparatively small amount. The newspaper is published in Tbilisi and distributed by a correspondent to the regions. “Vrastan” has 120 subscribers in Georgia, and 108 in Armenia. The paper mainly covers the activities of the government. According to the chief editor of the newspaper, the demand for the newspaper is high and, in case of additional financing, circulation will be increased.

According to the participants of the focus groups in Samtskhe-Javakheti, the newspaper “Vrastan” is not very diverse, but still it is a good source for getting some information. Participants from Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki also noted that no other newspaper is distributed in these two municipalities, except “Vrastan”<sup>13</sup>.

Printed media as a rule is not popular among the population. Despite this, the participants of focus group discussions held in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli consider the existence of the local printed media necessary. It is important to note that newspapers published in Armenian and Azeri languages are targeted at the local communities. As men-

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<sup>13</sup> Report of the FGDs organized by ARC in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2012.

tioned by the participants of the focus groups, those interested can subscribe to “Vrastan” and “Gurjistan.” However, as mentioned already, these newspapers are not very popular and the main subscribers are still the state agencies<sup>14</sup>.

Participants of the focus groups in both regions underlined that people prefer getting newspapers free of charge or receiving necessary information through television to paying money for them. “Majority of the regional newspapers are distributed free of charge among the population and that is why people still read newspapers.”<sup>15</sup>

A bilingual Georgian-Armenian newspaper “South Gate” is published in Samtskhe-Javakheti in 2011. “South Gate” comes out once a week and covers current events and issues in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Caucasian Region. The editorial board of Georgian edition of “South Gate” is in Akhaltsikhe, the Armenian edition is located in Akhalkalaki.

Initially, the “South Gate” was a 12 page with 4,000 circulation. In 2011, the number of pages decreased to 8 and circulation to 1,500 copies (1000 – Georgian and 500 – Armenian version. Initially Armenian texts are translated into Russian, and then into Georgian, which inflicts considerable costs to the newspaper. With the financial support from Mercy Corps, the newspaper had a supplement “Agrarian” dealing with agriculture issues.

“South Gate” is mostly circulated through subscription. Distribution of newspapers is done by the editorial board itself – the newspapers are delivered either at home (in the case of the rural population), or left at governmental organizations, where the subscribers withdraw the newspapers themselves. “South Gate” is also distributed at local government agencies, banks, educational resource centers of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

In 2008-2010 the newspaper was financed by a Dutch organization “Press Now.” In 2011, immediately after the end of the financing, the newspaper faced serious financial problems. In 2011, the newspaper could not get any grant and continued functioning on savings. In December, the resources were exhausted, and only two issues were published, later publishing of the newspaper was totally ceased. From March 19, 2012, publishing of only the Georgian version of the “South Gate” was renewed.<sup>16</sup>

“South Gate” had only a Georgian blog, where all the content was published. Electronic versions of each issue of the paper were sent to the National Library of Armenia. The electronic version of the newspaper has 2 subscribers in Yerevan.

There are a few newspapers published in Azeri in Marneuli. Most of them are financed through NGO “Azeri Cultural Center in Georgia”, which is itself financed from the Government of Azerbaijan. The goal of the NGO is facilitation of the integration of Azeri population into Georgian community.

<sup>14</sup> ARC „Survey of Multiethnic Community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti”, implemented within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network”, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.media.ge/stories/kartulenovani\\_samkhretis](http://www.media.ge/stories/kartulenovani_samkhretis)

In 2011, Azerbaijani newspaper “Region Press” was published in Marneuli (three times a month). “Region Press” is a 8-page, 2000 circulation newspaper, distributed free of charge in Kvemo Kartli region. The publication is distributed casually in Kakheti as well. The newspaper covers current events taking place in Georgia, globally, in Kvemo Kartli and in the Caucasus. Apart from covering political and social issues, the newspaper covers Georgian-Azeri relationships, issues related to youth participation and integration. The paper does not have its own web site.

Another Azeri newspaper “Zia” was published. It was sponsored by the Azerbaijani Diaspora Committee. The newspaper comprises of 8 pages and apart from reflecting current events, the paper highlights the life of Azerbaijanis in Georgia, Georgian-Azerbaijani relations, Azeri culture, traditions and holidays. The newspaper is distributed free of charge in Kvemo Kartli region. Sometimes articles are printed in Georgian, too.

In 2011 a bilingual Georgian-Armenian newspaper “Tsalka News” was published in Tsalka and distributed in the District. The newspaper was published once a month with 500 circulations.

Since August 2011, weekly Kakheti regional newspaper “Speqtri” was published once a month with a 4 page two languages (Georgian and Azeri) supplement. The supplement was published with the financial support of IREX within the Project “Effectiveness of the State Programs and Information Provision in the Villages Densely Populated by Ethnically Azerbaijanians” and targeted remote villages settled by national minorities.

The supplement covered news about the current developments of the country, activities of the Government, needs and problems and lives of the local communities, issues regarding religious belonging and identity. In general, the newspaper “Speqtri” is published with 3, 500 circulation. The circulation for the newspaper with monthly supplement was up to 5000. The newspaper supplement was distributed free of charge in Iormughanghlo communities (8 villages), the population of which equals to 24,000. As mentioned by the Editor-in Chief of the newspaper, the interest toward the newspaper supplement is really high and it is the only source of information since neither TV nor radio signal reaches these villages and the local population does not speak any language other than their native.

## 10. Access to Information

Despite certain tangible steps were taken toward improving provision of information in the past few years, the level of access to information for ethnic minorities is still low. “National minorities living in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti have an opportunity to access information in their native languages about the current developments in the country. The problem is not within the lack of access to information in their native languages, but the quality and frequency of the information.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> ARC „Survey of Multiethnic Community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti“, implemented within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network”, 2011.

Moreover, national and local TV coverage is limited. As a result, there are villages and settlements in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities where TV signals from neither national nor local TV stations is received. The same applies to radio transmission as well.

The population perceives television as the main source of information. Therefore, major concerns and complaints are toward TV channels. During the focus group discussion of the attitudes towards media, participants underlined the necessity for the development of local televisions: “local TV channels broadcast news about the events at the local level, therefore people watch them with interest. In spite of the fact that majority of the population does not know the state language of the country, it is important not to forget about those who have already learned Georgian or who are currently studying the language. For those people, it is very important to have an access to quality and interesting TV programs. Solution of the problems is easier through local than national TV channels.”<sup>18</sup>

Regional TV stations are not yet developed enough to fully meet the demand of the population on information. There are many problems hindering the development of local television stations, financial resources being at front. The advertising market is relatively underdeveloped in the regions, and consequently, revenues from TV advertising are little. Other problems include outdated technology, low qualification of journalists, as well as need for a building for most of them. All these prevent creation of more products in languages comprehensive to ethnic minorities.

At the same time, there is a deficit of commercial approaches to regional televisions. Many still hope for getting grants from donors or assistance from the government. There are no attempts of cooperation among regional TV stations and efforts to create joint products in the light of scarce resources. One of the serious problems is that new media elements are not used. Most of the TV companies do not even have a website of their own.

Three local TV channels broadcast in Samtskhe-Javakheti: Georgian “Channel Nine” in Akhaltsikhe and Armenian „ATV 12” in Akhalkalaki and “Parvana” in Ninotsminda.

Akhalsikhe Georgian TV company “Channel Nine” covers Akhalsikhe and Adigeni Districts. Around 5 hours are dedicated to the programs prepared by the channel in 2011; the rest of the airtime is filled by Russian “Region TV.” The TV Company prepares daily news program on current events taking place in the region.

Since September 2011, “Channel Nine” launched a new cycle of TV programs “Epocha.” The cycle of the TV programs reflected important events and stories about famous people. TV programs were prepared about Mikheil Tamarashvili, Akhalsikhe Theater, Muslim Meskhs, Jews, Rabat Fortress. According to the managers of the TV channel, these TV programs were greatly endorsed by the viewers. Furthermore, the TV program for farmers was released with the financial support of Mercy Corps.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

In 2011, a journalist and a camera man from the “Nine Channel” were among the winners of the competition “Tolerance and Diversity” for the best TV video regarding Muslim Meskhs.

The TV channel does not have a website, but has a blog financed by Eurasia Foundation.

TV station “Parvana” is the only Armenian language television in Ninotsminda covering Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki districts. From 2012, “Parvana” intends to expand its scope and cover the villages of Tsalka municipality settled by ethnic Armenians and also adjacent villages to the border of Georgia and Armenia, where as pointed out by the executive director of “Parvana,” there is a great interest toward the TV channel.

At present, “Parvana” is the best established TV channel in Samtskhe-Javakheti region with its technical-material resources, program diversity and number of employees. In addition to grants, it has income from advertising.

The daily news programs of the television in 2011 covered events taking place in Samtskhe - Javakheti, the problems the population faces, socio-economic and cultural issues. In 2011 “Parvana” accommodated for Armenian “Moambe” by Public Broadcaster in the evening airtime, the associated retransmission costs of which were covered by the local council. Every day television allocated airtime to programs of the Armenian TV channel “Armenia.”

TV Company “Parvana” has a website, which is still underdeveloped ([www.parvana.ge](http://www.parvana.ge)). The website contains only general information about the company. Neither current nor archived programs are placed on the website.

Akhalkalaki Armenian TV Channel „ATV 12“ covers Akhalkalaki District only partially. To achieve full coverage, the TV Company needs retranslator. In 2011 TV channel broadcast Armenian “Moambe” by the Public Broadcaster every evening and repeated it in next morning airtime. TV company prepared its original news program covering news of the district and issues from local municipality. Twice a month program “Conversation with the Lawyer “ was broadcast through the TV where the expert explains the laws that are of interest for Akhalkalaki population. Free airtime was filled with Russian Channel “Region TV”.

Among the TV stations in Samtskhe-Javakheti „ATV-12“ is the most impoverished from the point of view of finances, technical equipment and employees. The TV channel exists on revenues. The major source of income is running messages and obituaries. Little income is collected through selling airtime to the local council. According to the Director of the television, the population is interested in agricultural issues. However, due to the lack of funds the television cannot afford to develop a new program.

Marneuli TV located in Marneuli, Kvemo Kartli covers Marneuli District completely as well as part of Tetrtskharo, Bolnisi and Dmanisi Districts. The TV Station is Georgian, but produces a few bilingual programs as well. In 2011 the channel broadcast Azeri “National

Moambe” by the Public Broadcaster every evening and repeated it in the morning. TV channel prepared its own news program in two languages, Georgian and Azeri.

In 2011, “Marneuli TV” launched bilingual TV programs with the support of IREX: since September 2011, a 6 month project “Legal Consultation” has been released in two languages. This TV program examined several issues of public interest (registration of civil acts, agreements for the loans, labor code, administrative law, family violence, procedural agreements, rights of the prisoners, types of penalties and punishment, registration of property and business, etc.). From December 2011, “Marneuli TV” started a release of the new program “Woman’s Voice.” Another bilingual TV program by “Marneuli TV” released from December is “Be a Citizen!” that covers issues of civic education. Bilingual TV programs have two anchors: one Georgian and another Azerbaijani, who provides simultaneous translation of Georgian texts. Such format is a bit tiresome for a viewer. In this regard, it is advisable to adopt more flexible formats for these TV programs.

Bilingual TV programs by “Marneuli TV” are certainly tangible and positive efforts toward provision of information for national minorities residing in Kvemo Kartli region and for their integration into the wider society.

In 2011, “Marneuli TV” rebroadcast the cycle of Georgian language TV programs that had been developed with the financial support of Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF). This TV program (36 lessons of Georgian language) was broadcast once a week and was very popular among the local population. As pointed out by the executive director of “Marneuli TV,” the aforementioned cycle of TV program was also very popular among teachers of the Georgian language of Marneuli schools, who in reality do not know Georgian and therefore these video lessons were very helpful for them. It is reasonable that other regional television companies share the experience of “Marneuli TV” since one of the major impediments for the integration of national minorities is the language barrier.

„Marneuli TV” has a website ([www.marneulitv.ge](http://www.marneulitv.ge)), where new programs and program archives are posted.

In 2011, TV channel “Bolneli” produces a weekly informational-analytic program in Georgian and Azeri. The project is financed through the Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF).

In 2011, TV Journal “Polygon” by the “Association of Regional Broadcasters of Georgia” was broadcast by regional TV channels. This project was implemented through the financial support from Dutch Organization Press Now (at present called Free Press Unlimited) and Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF) and is on air since 2009. The reports for the program are prepared by regional correspondents and the issues such as human rights, ethnic minorities, education and culture that are relevant for their region are covered. In 2011, the TV journal is broadcast once a week on regional TV channels.

Considering the language barriers in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, since July 2010, the Association of Regional Broadcasters started to release subtitled versions in

Armenian and Azeri of the TV journal for local televisions. From June 2011, the video stories of the TV journal “Polygon” are also prepared from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Archives of the TV journal are also available at the website of the Association of Regional Broadcasters.

Radio “Green Wave” that covers almost all the country broadcast Russian-language informational-analytic program “Echo of the Caucasus” by Radio Liberty in 2011 at 9:00 pm every evening. The TV program reported on current national and global news. “Echo of the Caucasus” was also daily broadcast by Zugdidi Radio “Atinati” and Gori Radio “Trialeti”.

According to the survey by CiDA, newspapers represent sources of information for a very limited number of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli population<sup>19</sup>. Georgian population is more likely to read printed media, than non-Georgian population does. Out of 38 named, 18 are local or foreign (Armenian and Azeri) newspapers. “Kviris Palitra” and “Asaval-Dasavali” are most popular among Georgians when “South Gate” and “Vrastan” among non-Georgians.

It is true that the number of internet users in Georgia is drastically increasing; however, the overall figure is still very low. According to International Telecommunications Union (ITU), 2011 December data, only 26, 9% of the population is an internet user. A research conducted by the CRRC in Spring 2011 revealed that people use internet mostly for social media (70%), while only 45% of the interviewed used internet for an access to information.

CiDA survey results reveal that the number of internet users in Samtskhe-Javakheti is twice as high (23.9%) as in Kvemo Kartli (11.3%)<sup>20</sup>. During the meetings in Kvemo Kartli, many people complained about the ineffectiveness of internet providers. People willing to have the internet have to wait for a long time after application before the internet providers ensure an access to the net for them.

## 11. Media and Tolerance

Telemedia in Georgia has a little focus on minority issues. Private TV companies do not pay attention to the topic since it does not have a commercial value attached. Minority issues are only covered by the private TV companies in news programs and this is mostly connected to either crime or conflict, or religious or other festivals.

Media researches shows that during the last few years, cases of violation of media standards while covering ethnic and religious minorities have drastically decreased in television, but not in printed media.

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<sup>19</sup> ARC „Survey of Multiethnic Community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti“, implemented within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network”, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> ARC „Survey of Multiethnic Community in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti“, implemented within Civil Development Agency’s (CiDA) Project “A multi-ethnic confidence-building network”, 2011.



The question of religious and national tolerance became an issue of a special interest in summer 2011, when the Parliament of Georgia made amendments in the Civil Code. The amendment allowed religious minority groups in Georgia to be registered as legal entities of public law. A monitoring by Media Development Fund over the coverage of the law by Georgian media t revealed major problems and violations: in most of the cases, the materials did not show the opinions of religious minority groups; Georgian Orthodox Church was the only source for information among journalists; and the topic was evaluated from individual perspectives; the amendment was assessed as the impediment and infringement of the best interest of the country; journalists associated Georgian citizens of different religious beliefs and ethnic origin with the neighboring countries and not Georgia; media presented minorities as secondary unequal members of the society and fostered hatred.

A research conducted by “Internews Georgia” envisaged monitoring on the coverage of the issues related to ethnic and religious minorities among other topics revealed the following tendencies: the major cause of interest of the Georgian media toward issues of ethnic and religious minorities depends of if the topic or issue is scandalous; regional media is less interested in the issue; printed media frequently violates media standards and contains language of hatred; there is an explicit gap in terms of analytical articles in printed media.

The aforementioned proves that, despite numerous trainings and workshops, the need for the provision of trainings for journalists in tolerance building is still valid.

## Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the research and aims to promote civic integration process through increasing media coverage of minority issues and improvement of access to information for minorities:

### Public Broadcaster should

- improve the news programs in minority languages in terms of contents, format and duration;
- conduct trainings for the journalist of “National Moambe” and partner regional TV channels;
- provide internship of minority representative journalists and students from the Department of Journalism at the “National Moambe” and Georgian “Moambe”
- Promote a wider coverage for the news programs in minority languages by increasing the number of regional partner TVs;
- Ensure translation/dubbing of its products in minority languages and their broadcast through regional partner TVs.
- Promote wider coverage of minority issues (needs, problems, lives, cultural and religious issues) as well as involvement and participation of minorities in TV programs, among them informational and political programs ;
- Guarantee wider coverage of important news and the problems of the regions densely populated by national minorities;

- Ensure development of the page for “National Moambe” at the official website of Georgian public Broadcaster so that people have more opportunities for interaction and feedback.

#### Commercial Media should:

- increase participation of national minorities and coverage of the problems, lifestyle, cultural or religious issues related to minorities in its programs, among them news and socio-political programs;
- Guarantee the coverage of the current events and problems in the regions densely populated by minorities.
- Comply with professional standards when covering the issues regarding national and religious minorities.

#### Regional Media should

- Develop a cooperation mechanism envisaging joint production and exchange of media products;
- Ensure the production, increase and improvement of media products in the languages comprehensible by local population.
- Guarantee the use and development of Internet media;
- Expand coverage.

#### Non-governmental Organizations should

- Provide regular media monitoring of the coverage of national minority issues by media and publish the results.
- Inform society at large over the breach of conduct in media, especially use of language of hatred, and hold public debates.

#### International Organizations should

- Promote the development of regional media in terms of technical support as well as diversification of the content;
- Support cooperation and joint projects between regional local TV stations;
- Support translation and dubbing in minority languages of educational programs prepared by public broadcaster;
- Continue capacity building of the journalists with regard to tolerance, national integration and coverage of national minority issues.

#### Internet Service Providers

- Ensure increase of access to the internet in the regions densely populated by national minorities.

ANNEX







# National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration

## I. INTRODUCTION

The National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration were developed based on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ratified by Parliament of Georgia in 2005) and the Presidential decree №639 “On the development of the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration” issued on August 8, 2005. Its main goal is to support the building of democratic and consolidated civil society that is based on common values, which considers diversity as a source of its strength and provides every citizen with the opportunity to maintain and develop his/her identity.

The National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration are based on the Constitution of Georgia and the country’s international commitments. In order to ensure broad social consensus all interested parties were given opportunity to participate in the drafting process of the National Concept and the Action Plan. Draft document was developed by the Civil Integration and Tolerance Council functioning under the President of Georgia, which consists of the members of Parliament, Public Defender, representatives of national minorities, non-Governmental organizations, Ministries, and other governmental bodies. Drafting process was accompanied by the ongoing consultation process with the National Minorities Council under the Public Defender. Civil Integration and Tolerance Council was also regularly facilitating meetings with the population of regions densely populated with national minorities and local non-Governmental organizations.

The National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration elaborates national strategy and objectives in six main directions: rule of law; education and state language; media and access to information; political integration and civil participation; social and regional integration; culture and preservation of identity. The Action Plan sets out specific activities and programs according to strategic directions of the Concept that must be implemented in the next five years. The Action Plan defines specific governmental bodies, which are responsible for the implementation of relevant components of the Action Plan.

Implementation of the Action Plan is coordinated by the Office of the State Minister for Reintegration Issues. Governmental bodies responsible for implementation of the Action

Plan, according to the policy developed by the Office of the State Minister for Reintegration Issues, present the reports developed in frames of their competence by the 5th day of every month. On 10th December of every year the Office of the State Minister for Reintegration Issues presents its report on the implementation of the Action Plan by the relevant governmental bodies to the Government of Georgia and Civil Integration and Tolerance Council.

Implementation of the Action Plan is monitored by the Civil Integration and Tolerance Council, which, if necessary, will develop recommendations on the implementation of the Action Plan and will consider suggestions on changes and additions to the Action Plan.

Implementation of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration is not limited to regions traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of national minorities.

The main financial source for the implementation of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration and the Action Plan is the state budget.

## **II. GOALS OF THE NATIONAL CONCEPT FOR TOLERANCE AND CIVIL INTEGRATION**

The National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration has following goals:

- a) Create an environment of tolerance and respect among every person living in Georgia.
- b) Provide every citizen of Georgia equal opportunities to avail of civil, political, economic and social rights.
- c) Create necessary conditions for effective participation of persons, who belong to national minorities, in every sphere of political, social, economic and cultural life of Georgia.
- d) Provide equal access of national minorities to every level of education and address special educational needs in the field of general education.
- e) Create necessary conditions for preservation and development of minorities' cultures and for protection of essential elements of their identity, including religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

## **III. PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL CONCEPT FOR TOLERANCE AND CIVIL INTEGRATION**

The National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration is based on following principles:

- a) Equality of every citizen of Georgia, nondiscrimination and strengthening of the tradition of tolerance.
- b) Maintenance of balance between civil integration and protection of minorities' identities, voluntary participation in the civil integration process and unacceptability of forced assimilation.

- c) Right of minorities to freely choose whether or not to be treated as such.
- d) Right of persons belonging to national minorities to realize those rights and freedoms, both individually and collectively, which derive from the Constitution of Georgia and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
- e) Effective participation of minorities in the decision-making process on issues directly or indirectly related to the protection and development of their identity.
- f) Participation of the Civil Society Organizations in the process of monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration.

#### **IV. MAIN DIRECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL CONCEPT FOR TOLERANCE AND CIVIL INTEGRATION**

##### **1. Rule of Law**

The Rule of Law is one of the strategic directions of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration, which implies the implementation of following objectives:

- a) Further harmonize Georgian legislation with international commitments.
- b) Improve access of national minorities to the judicial system.
- c) Ensure effective protection of national minorities against discrimination.
- d) Raise awareness of public officials on the rights of minorities and anti-discrimination legislation.

##### **2. Education and State Language**

One of the most serious challenges for civil integration process in Georgia is the lack of knowledge of the state language among national minorities, which significantly impedes their participation in the political, economic and social life of the country. Initially, it is necessary to increase motivation of national minorities to study the state language and implement programs promoting integration of students with special educational needs. The following objectives are set:

- a) Ensure access of national minority representatives to the pre-school education.
- b) Facilitate receiving secondary education by national minority representatives.
- c) Improve accessibility of higher education for national minority representatives.
- d) Support teaching of the state language.
- e) Encourage public debate and civil integration in the field of education.

##### **3. Media and Access to Information**

An important step in respect of access to information by national minorities has been taken by the Georgian Public Broadcaster, which since 2005 broadcasts news programs in national minority languages. According to the recent legislative amendments no less than 25% of the Public Broadcaster's programming budget must be spent on broadcasting programs, inter alia, in minority languages. Considering the low level of

knowledge of the state language and predominantly Georgian language of broadcasting of Georgian media it is important to carry out specific activities to ensure that national minorities are duly informed. The following objectives are set:

- a) Ensure access to national broadcaster in regions populated by the national minorities.
- b) Ensure accessibility of the broadcasting programs in minority languages.
- c) Ensure media coverage and participation of national minorities in the broadcasting programs.
- d) Support electronic and print media in minority languages.
- e) Support of tolerance and cultural pluralism in the media.

#### **4. Political Integration and Civil Participation**

In order to raise the level of political integration and civil participation of national minorities, public service skills development trainings are being carried out in recent years; in municipalities traditionally or predominantly populated with national minorities, they are encouraged to participate in the public service recruitment process, and election materials and ballot papers are published in their native languages. Active involvement of national minorities in the political and social life of the country will largely depend on an increased level of knowledge of the state language, and on the Government to encourage them, initially, to start working in the public service. The following objectives are set:

- a) Ensure equality of suffrage for national minorities.
- b) Improve minority participation in the decision-making process.
- c) Popularize the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

#### **5. Social and Regional Integration**


In recent years there have been made important steps to ensure full participation of national minorities in the economic and social life of the country. In regions populated with national minorities infrastructure rehabilitation and other large-scale economic projects have been carried out. The following objectives are set:

- a) Further develop infrastructure in regions populated with national minorities.
- b) Provide professional retraining of national minorities and facilitate their employment.
- c) Encourage social and regional mobility of minorities.

#### **6. Culture and Preservation of Identity**

In order to encourage participation of national minorities in cultural life of the country and support their cultural heritage the state plans to make specific steps in different directions, which imply implementation of the following objectives:



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- a) Promote the formation of civil consciousness.
  - b) Support preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities.
  - c) Protect cultural heritage of national minorities.
  - d) Encourage tolerance spirit and support intercultural dialogue and contacts.
  - e) Ensure participation of national minorities in the cultural life of Georgia.
  - f) Extend the knowledge of the society on culture, history, language, and religion of national minorities and present them as cultural values of the country.

# ANNEX №2 ACTION PLAN

## EDUCATION AND STATE LANGUAGE

OBJECTIVE #1	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
Ensure access of national minority representatives to the pre-school education	1) Development and piloting of pre-school teaching programs oriented to educational needs of national minorities	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009-2014	
	2) Development of a special program in the regions with significant national minority population to increase the level of preparedness to go to school. Raising awareness of parents on pre-school education and specific programs.	Parliamentary Alliance on Childcare at the early age; Ministry of Education and Science; Local self-governments; National Curriculum and Assessment Center	2009-2014	

OBJECTIVE #2	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
Encourage receiving secondary education by national minority representatives	2.1 Translating National Curriculum and facilitating implementation trainings	Ministry of Education and Science; National Curriculum and Assessment Center	2009	
	2.2 Translating textbooks into national minority languages according to the teaching languages of the schools	Ministry of Education and Science; National Curriculum and Assessment Center	2009-2014	
	2.3 Targeted assistance to national minority schools in implementation of reform activities – development and implementation of relevant programs	Ministry of Education and Science	2009-2014	

2.4	Optimizing multilingual teaching policy, piloting and implementation	Ministry of Education and Science; National Curriculum and Assessment Center; Teacher Professional Development Center		
2.5	Publishing of the magazine “Mast-savlebeli” [A Teacher] in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages	Ministry of Education and Science; Teacher Professional Development Center	2009-2014	
2.6	Translating “Teacher’s handbook” (in three parts) and other auxiliary resources into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages	Ministry of Education and Science; Teacher Professional Development Center	2009-2014	
2.7	Targeted professional trainings for teachers and representatives of school administrations	Ministry of Economic Development of Georgia	2009-2014	

OBJECTIVE #3	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
<b>Improve accessibility of higher education for national minority representatives</b>	3.1 Elaboration of the preparatory-integration course concept in the higher education institution, its piloting and implementation	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; National Examination Center, Higher education institutions	2009-2014	Legislative changes and first flow in 2009
	3.2 Elaboration and implementation of “Social Grants Program” and other targeted programs	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009-2014	
	3.3 Sending national minority representatives abroad to study on Bachelor’s and Master’s programs	Development and Reforms Foundation	2009-2014	

OBJECTIVE #4	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
Support teaching of the state language	4.1 Implementation of Georgian as a second language teaching program in non-Georgian language schools	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; OSCE	2009-2014	
	4.2 Elaboration and development of Georgian language textbooks and teaching resources	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009-2014	
	4.3 Training for Georgian language teachers from Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli non-Georgian language schools (special professional vouchers for teachers to study “Georgian as communication language” and “Georgian as a second language”)	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, Teacher Professional Development Center	2009-2014	Already on voucher funding
	4.4 Elaboration and implementation of extracurricular educational and civil integration oriented programs and projects	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009-2014	
	4.5 Programs for assisting teenagers and adults in learning state language	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009-2014	In partnership with non-Governmental organizations
	4.6 Planning and implementation of events to recruit Georgian language teachers in the regions	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009	
	4.7 Software, internet programs, web portals and educational games for studying Georgian language	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009	

## MEDIA AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

OBJECTIVE #1	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
<p><b>Ensure access to national broadcaster in the regions populated by the national minorities</b></p>	Rehabilitation of GPB's coverage system	Georgian Public Broadcaster	2009-2014	

OBJECTIVE #2	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
<p><b>Ensure accessibility of the broadcasting programs in minority languages</b></p>	<p><b>1) TV news programs</b></p> <p>2.1.1 Moambe in Abkhazian (frequency: once a week)</p> <p>2.1.2 Moambe in Ossetian (frequency: once a week)</p> <p>2.1.3 Moambe in Armenian (frequency: once a week)</p> <p>2.1.4 Moambe in Azerbaijani (frequency: once a week)</p> <p>2.1.5 Moambe in Russian (frequency: once a week)</p>	Georgian Public Broadcaster	2009-2014	
	<p><b>2) Radio news programs</b></p> <p>2.2.1 News program in Abkhazian (frequency: daily)</p> <p>2.2.2 News program in Ossetian (frequency: daily)</p> <p>2.2.3 News program in Armenian (frequency: daily)</p> <p>2.2.4 News program in Azerbaijani (frequency: daily)</p> <p>2.2.5 News program in Russian (frequency: daily)</p> <p>2.2.6 News program in Kurdish (frequency: daily)</p>	Public Radio FM 102.4	2009-2014	

<b>OBJECTIVE #3</b>	<b>NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>REMARK</b>
<b>Ensure media coverage and participation of national minorities in the broadcasting programs</b>	Talk show “Italiuri Ezo” [the Italian Yard]	GPB, UNA, within the frames of USAID-supported National Integration and Tolerance in Georgia program	2009-2014	

<b>OBJECTIVE #4</b>	<b>NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>REMARK</b>
<b>Support electronic and print media in minority languages</b>	<b>1) Periodicals published within the frames of a Support to Literature Program:</b> 4.1.1 Armenian newspaper “Vrastan” 4.1.2 Azerbaijani newspaper “Gurjistan” 4.1.3 Russian newspaper “Svobodnaya Gruzya”	Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia	2009-2014	

<b>OBJECTIVE #5</b>	<b>NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>REMARK</b>
<b>Support establishment of tolerance and cultural pluralism in the media</b>	1) Series of documentaries – Multiethnic Georgia	GPB, UNA, within the frames of USAID-supported National Integration and Tolerance in Georgia program	2009-2014	
	2) Private Show Chveni Sakartvelo [Our Georgia]	Public radio FM 102.4	2009-2014	



OBJECTIVE #3	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
<p><b>Popularize the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities</b></p>	<p>Print and distribute Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities</p>	<p>Office of the State Minister for Reintegration Issues; Civil Integration and Tolerance Council functioning under President</p>	<p>2009-2014</p>	



## SOCIAL AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

OBJECTIVE #1	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
<b>Further develop infrastructure in regions populated with national minorities</b>	<b>1) Samtskhe-Javakheti road rehabilitation project</b> 1.1.1 Rehabilitation of road and transportation network in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions	Millennium Challenge Georgia Foundation	2006-2010	
	<b>2) Energy infrastructure rehabilitation project</b> 1.2.1 Rehabilitation of the damaged sections of North-South main pipeline	Millennium Challenge Georgia Foundation	2006-2010	
	<b>3) Regional infrastructure development project</b> 1.3.1 Improvement of municipal services	Millennium Challenge Georgia Foundation	2006-2010	

OBJECTIVE #2	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
<b>Provide professional retraining of national minorities and encourage their employment</b>	<b>1) Presidential program for rehabilitation of vocational education centers</b> 2.1.1 Rehabilitation of several vocational education centers in the regions densely populated by national minorities	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009-2014	
	<b>2) Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration and retraining of public servants</b> 2.2.1 Support involvement of representatives of national minorities in public sector	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009-2012	

<b>Provide professional retraining of national minorities and encourage their employment</b>	<b>3) Implement vocational education policy and programs that will be oriented to the needs and peculiarities of the regions densely populated by national minorities</b>	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	2009-2014	
	<b>4) Making small production a profitable agribusiness. Agribusiness development project:</b> 2.4.1 Primary production 2.4.2 Establishing service centers for farmers 2.4.3 Small scale processing 2.4.4 Creation of a production chain	Millennium Challenge Georgia Foundation	2006-2011	
	<b>5) Georgia's regional development fund's projects: Investing in small and medium-size plants</b>	Millennium Challenge Georgia Foundation	2006-2011	

## CULTURE AND PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY

OBJECTIVE #1	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
<b>Support preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities</b>	<b>1) Assistance program to the cultures of Georgia's national minorities</b>	Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia	2009-2014	
	1.1.1 Supporting LEPL (legal entity of public law) Davit Baazov Georgia's Jews historic and ethnographic museum			
	1.1.2 Supporting the activities of Georgia's cultural relations center – the Caucasian House			
	1.1.3 Supporting the activities of LEPL Mirza Patali- Akhundov's Azerbaijani cultural museum			
	1.1.4 Supporting the activities of the Russian cultural center of Georgia			
	1.1.5 Supporting LEPL Tbilisi Petros Adamiani State Drama Theatre			
	1.1.6 Supporting LEPL Tbilisi Azerbaijani State Drama Theatre			
	<b>2) Provide assistance to regional libraries, clubs and art schools</b>			
	1.2.1 Supporting Baghlojiani musical school in Kvareli	Kvareli council	2009-2014	
	1.2.2 Supporting a musical and art school, 14 clubs (ten of them is Armenian) and 4 libraries (two of them is Armenian) in Akhalkalaki	Akhalkalaki council	2009-2014	

<b>Support preservation of the cultural identity of national minorities</b>	1.2.3 Supporting a musical school, 21 libraries (18 of them is Armenian) and 20 clubs (18 of them is Armenian) in Ninotsminda	Ninotsminda council	2009-2014	
	1.2.4 Supporting a musical school, 18 libraries (11 of them is Azerbaijani, 4 of them is Armenian) and 4 rural clubs in Marneuli	Marneuli council	2009-2014	
	1.2.5 Supporting a musical school, a library (for the Armenian population) and a cultural house in Tsalka	Tsalka council	2009-2014	
	1.2.6 Supporting Eredvi musical school and 18 libraries (five of them Ossetian) in Gori	Gori council	2009-2014	
	1.2.7 Supporting 19 libraries (one of them is Azerbaijani) and one club in Gardabani	Gardabani council	2009-2014	
	1.2.8 Supporting 9 libraries in Bolnisi (two of them is Azerbaijani)	Bolnisi council	2009-2014	
	1.2.9 Supporting 4 libraries in Dmanisi (one of them is Azerbaijani)	Dmanisi council	2009-2014	

OBJECTIVE #2	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
Protect cultural heritage of national minorities	1) Protection of material and nonmaterial cultural heritage of national minorities:			
	2.1.1 Registration and inventory of cultural monuments of national minorities	Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia	2009-2014	
	2.1.2 Monuments' restoration	Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia	2009-2014	
	2.1.3 Program for supporting pantheons in Tbilisi and care of cultural monuments: Protection and care of pantheons in Tbilisi, including those of Armenian writers and public figures	Tbilisi City Hall	2009-2014	

OBJECTIVE #3	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
Encourage tolerance spirit and support intercultural dialogue and contacts	Introducing Tolerance as a subject in the secondary school curriculum	Ministry of Education and Science; Federation "Save the Children"	2009-2014	

OBJECTIVE #4	NAME OF THE PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION/PARTNER	TIMEFRAME	REMARK
Extend the knowledge of the society on culture, history, language, and religion of national minorities and present them as cultural values of the country	1) Talk show "Italiuri Ezo" [the Italian Yard]	GPB, UNA, within the frames of USAID-supported National Integration and Tolerance in Georgia program	2009-2014	
	2) Series of documentaries – Multiethnic Georgia	GPB, UNA, within the frames of USAID-supported National Integration and Tolerance in Georgia program		
	3) Private Show Chveni Sakartvelo [Our Georgia]	Public radio FM 102.4		





