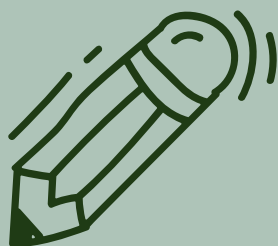


VOCATIONAL EDUCATION REFORM 2020 REPORT



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT OF GEORGIA
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**TBILISI
DECEMBER 2020**

1. INTRODUCTION



This report reviews the progress made in 2020 under the Unified Strategy of Education and Science (2017–2021)¹ and the Vocational Education Reform Strategy (2013–2020).

The reform of vocational education is based on the priorities declared by the Parliament and the Government of the country in relation to the development of human resources in the country and ensures the fulfillment of the obligations assumed by Georgia in accordance with the Association Agreement with the European Union.

For the successful implementation of the reform, it is especially important to implement consistent, best practice measures, which are presented in the goals and objectives of policy documents and related regulations. Such documents create the basis for the vocational education reform: 1. Unified Strategy of Education and Science; 2. Vocational Education Reform Strategy² and 3. Law of Georgia on Vocational Education³. It's worth mentioning that the Vocational Education Reform Strategy, approved by the Government in 2013, covers 2013-2020 years, and the current reporting period is the last year of the sectoral strategy and, therefore, the issues of systematic implementation of initiatives, assessments, and institutional sustainability are of particular interest. However, evaluating the implementation of the reform strategy is a separate process that has already begun with the support of the European Training Foundation. This document will review the progress of activities planned and implemented in 2020, which, in turn, will provide interesting information to the team conducting external review of the reform. As in previous years, the indicators of the Unified Strategy of Education and Science 2017-2021 will be used to illustrate progress. At the same time, the new Law on Vocational Education, adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in 2018, raises the need for significant interventions, about which the report also contains comprehensive information. Also noteworthy are the Association Agreement and the Financing Agreement between the EU Delegation to Georgia and the

Government of Georgia, as well as the country's commitments on human capital development and employment within the framework of the Financing Agreement. The above-mentioned policy documents, regulations and agreements form the basis of the Action Plan for the Vocational Education Development for 2020, the implementation of which is the prerogative of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia.



The introduction should address the situation caused by the global pandemic (COVID-19) in 2020 and its impact on the education sector. As a result of the deterioration of the situation in the spring, lifestyle changes, restrictions on social activity, a slowdown in international relations and economic activities began in almost all countries of the world, and public health services became a priority over other services. Consequently, the education sector, as one of the areas with high mobility, both domestically and abroad, is facing the biggest challenges in all countries.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the largest disruption of education in history, having already had a near universal impact on learners and teachers around the world, from pre-primary to secondary schools, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, universities, adult learning, and skills development establishments. By April 2020, 94 per cent of learners worldwide were affected by the pandemic, representing 1.58 billion children and youth, from pre-primary to higher education, in 200 countries."⁴ - says the UN report.

To keep social distance, all levels of education have switched to distance learning. It is obvious that no country was ready for such a large-scale challenge in the education system. Accordingly, it has become the task of all governments to mobilize all the resources required for distance learning to ensure the participation of students in the educational process. The resources include both equipment, as well as the readiness of teachers to deliver online lessons / lectures, program modifications and adaptations for e-learning platforms.

¹ http://mes.gov.ge/uploads/MESStrategy_2017-2021.pdf

² <http://mes.gov.ge/uploads/300.pdf>

³ https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf

⁴ https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf

It should be noted that, in contrast to academic education, additional barriers were identified for the transformation and continuity of vocational education. Among them, of course, the most important is the practical component of training, which cannot be provided in distance learning form. The OECD's report "The Impact of COVID-19 on Education" offers interesting insights from participating countries. According to the OECD average, 65% of vocational students are enrolled in so-called "school-based" programs only, while the remaining 35% are enrolled in combined school- and work-based programs,⁵. The shutdown of the enterprises has clearly suspended apprenticeship programs.

Georgia's economic growth, despite significant fluctuations, from 2005 to 2019 amounted to 5.3%. The poverty rate decreased from 30% to 14% in 2019, although the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to a worsening of positive indicators in 2020, being reflected in a decreased employment and income rate and increased poverty rate by 2.8%.⁶

The slowdown in economic processes and the passive role of business has a negative impact on the development of the labour force in Georgia, and this general picture has a great impact on the development and planning of the vocational

education system. The instability of the demand component in the labour market and changed daylife radically changed the specifics of the supply of vocational education. As with other levels of education, there has been an increased need for distance learning and the need for transformation of existing procedures, partnerships, methodologies and approaches.

The abovementioned overview presents that the implementation of the Vocational Education Reform Strategy (2013-2020) and the Action Plan (2020) of the Unified Strategy of Education and Science (2017-2021) is the result of special efforts of all stakeholders / agencies, and the reporting period mainly includes the so-called "smart solutions", crisis management, more orientation to planning and methodological support in the light of new realities, which after the pandemic ends / slows down, will provide a good basis for putting more effort into the implementation and evaluation components. Consequently, the unfavorable situation in all interconnected sectors affects the pace of development of vocational education gained for many years ago. It should be noted that the indicators for 2020 are largely the result of the negative consequences of the pandemic and the crisis situation.

⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/education/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-education-insights-education-at-a-glance-2020.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/georgia/overview>

Strategic tasks:

1. Compliance of vocational education with the labour market requirements and the internationalization of the system
2. Ensuring access to vocational education based on lifelong learning principle
3. Promoting and enhancing the attractiveness of vocational education



2. COMPLIANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WITH THE LABOUR MARKET REQUIREMENTS AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE SYSTEM

Georgia's Vocational Education Reform Strategy, taking into account its goals and objectives, pays special attention to setting benchmarks for the development of a system that, in a rapidly changing world, ensure the formation of human capital in response to the needs of the labour market. The importance of vocational education is highlighted in a number of policy documents, and the process of its modernization is a governmental priority. Over the past decade, vocational education has become the best mechanism for reducing unemployment, creating better jobs and opportunities for self-development for people.

The process of transition from education to the labour market is still a challenge for all countries, regardless of the structure of the education system. It is obvious that the degree of complexity varies from country to country, and forms of partnership between employers and education sector plays an important role in this difference.

Georgia's Vocational Education Reform Strategy aims to involve employers at all stages of vocational education. Accordingly, in recent years, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia has introduced and / or institutionally strengthened various forms of partnership with them.

In 2020, the Ministry began developing, evaluating and discussing development of a new **institutional model** of vocational education management with stakeholders. Based on a feasibility study of the vocational education institutional structure, for vocational education, carried out in previous years with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), during the reporting period, the Ministry continued to work on a new model. The work included the corresponding financial implications, effectiveness and risk assessment of the new approach. As it is known, the current structure implies centralized management of the system, which comes mainly within the competence of the state structure. The concept of a new governance model was based on the strategic goal of the reform - to stimulate private sector participation through public-private partnerships both at the policy development stage and at the stages of its implementation and evaluation. The challenge of decentralizing governance is also noteworthy, which includes not only vertical, but also horizontal diversification of governance, share of responsibilities, access to sector / technical knowledge, and equitable use of results, which cannot be said of current situation. The study showed that a number of issues related to vocational education often go beyond the competence of state body and its agencies and require technical knowledge in dozens of sectors. Consequently, a state bodies have to find solutions and often facing a lack of interest and motivation from sectoral organizations; This situation also slows down the pace of implementation of the main and immediate tasks of the body and are directly related to ineffective management. In response to the challenges identified, based on the recommendations of the parties involved and international best practices, a new model has been developed that implies *the development of a new institution by the private and public sectors*. According to the new concept, the main principle that guides the process of management and development of vocational education is joint participation - accelerating the development of the country's human resources through joint efforts and share of responsibilities between the public and private sectors.

As a result of the work carried out in 2019-2020, the structure of the organization, management principles and functions were determined, which should be transferred to the new agency, namely: support and coordination of vocational standard development process, support work-based learning, improvement of the quality of teaching entrepreneurship, development of textbooks and assessment tools, strengthening the institutional development of vocational education providers, stimulating international partnerships, improvement of career planning services, as well as coordination, monitoring and evaluating of training and retraining programs, etc. In 2020, a financial analysis of the model was also carried out and an estimated budget was determined; Negotiations began with the relevant government bodies and unions of employers, which clearly stated their interest in partnership. The new model was also presented to international partners, experts, and educational institutions. According to the agreement reached, in 2021 the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia will jointly establish a **"Skills Agency"**. The presentation of this model took place in September at a joint online conference of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia and the World Economic Forum (WEF). The Forum assigned to the initiative the status of "closing the skills gap accelerator" and named

Georgia among 12 countries that have responded to contemporary economic challenges with short-sighted policies and in cooperation with the private sector is establishing the so-called skills gap accelerator.

An initiative launched by the private sector in 2019 which aims systematization and active participation of private companies in vocational education, is developing in a very interesting way. With the joint support of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, the Georgian Farmers Association and the United Nations Development Programme, the development of a “**Sectoral Skills Organization (SSO) - Agro Duo**” in the field of agriculture was continued in 2020. Its task is to develop vocational qualifications, raise awareness, improve quality, introduce work-based learning, and develop educational services in the field of agriculture. The Infrastructure Construction Companies Association (ICCA) has shared the mentioned experience and is already working on an initiative to establish such an organization.

It should be noted that associations with a similar format and function will play a special role in the accumulation of sectoral knowledge, which is currently fragmented and not institutionalized. Accordingly, it is expected that under the new governance model, the agency will be able to obtain sectoral expertise using the resources of “sectoral skills organizations”. A similar model exists in the vocational education systems of Switzerland and Germany and is a successful practice.

- Taking into account unstable situation and expectations of private sector, clearly driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, work-based learning faced particular challenges in 2020. The restrictions imposed in the country have led to the closure of business operators in almost all major sectors, especially in tourism, which is one of the priority areas for the implementation of dual programs. However, five state colleges in the regions of Tbilisi, Samegrelo, Shida Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti obtained the right to implement qualification programs in agriculture, transport and culinary arts for additional 222 students. Two out of the 13 dual programs are integrated programs (programs with integrated secondary education learning outcomes). A diploma issued at the end of the program will be equal to the general education diploma.

During the 2020 one-time, centralized admission 384 new students were enrolled in public and private TVET Institutions at work-based (dual) programs in the fields of agriculture, construction, tourism, food production, veterinary, and transportation. 14 of them were enrolled in two colleges with an “integrated-dual” program. All this suggests that, despite the pandemic, the private sector makes long-term calculations and does not stop investing in vocational education.

The year 2020 was fruitfully used for the development of various regulations, as defined by the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education, adopted in 2018. This includes the terms and conditions for the implementation of work-based programs that have been developed and discussed with stakeholders with the support of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The developed regulation clearly defines the role and responsibilities of agencies (colleges, companies) involved in work-based learning, as well as the rights of students, quality assurance issues, etc. Based on the facilitation by the same group and wider consultations, the draft normative document on the Terms and Conditions for Obtaining the Status of a Training Enterprise has been developed, which is ready to be initiated.

It is important to note that the fact that there is no regulation for work-based learning caused some ambiguity between private companies, and this negatively influenced on their motivation. At present, clearly defined, agreed and shared rules will support private sector and will stimulate this form of program implementation. The submission of an resolution to the Government for approval is scheduled for the first half of 2021.

- The educational system of Georgia allows for the recognition of **learning outcomes achieved within the framework of non-formal education** at the level of vocational education. The purpose of recognizing non-formal education is to validate learning outcomes of a person achieved outside of formal education to promote lifelong learning, personal development, continuing education and / or skill development and / or employment / career development / self-employment.

In accordance with the regulation approved in 2019, an institution implementing a vocational education program and a legal entity authorized to implement a vocational training program have the right to recognize non-formal education if the organization meets defined requirements. During the reporting period, two educational institutions obtained the right to recognize non-formal education, namely a –“Ltd Community College Nataly Academy; (in the field of beauty services) and “Ltd Tegeta Academy” (in the field of car repair) within the framework of the right to implement a vocational education program / vocational training/retraining program and for a corresponding period. Nine consultants have been certified, who, if necessary, provide consultations to interested parties.

In order to provide services for the recognition of non-formal education in digital form, a new component has been added to the Education Management Information System, which will support the e-management of the following processes: submissions of an application for eligibility; confirmation of eligibility; registration of applicants for education recognition; consultation; recognition of non-formal education and issuance of a corresponding document. The system also has a built-in register of consultants.



➤ **Development of key competencies:** In recent years, the development of entrepreneurial competencies at all levels of education has acquired particular importance. When studying future skills, the demand for entrepreneurial skills was identified as a priority, which determines the need for its integration into educational programs. The concept of developing an entrepreneurial thinking is to empower students to make creative, opportunity-driven and innovative decisions

throughout their lives. At the same time, they must be given the opportunity to develop the ability and desire to create something valuable for society, regardless of profession. This is a key principle of entrepreneurial thinking. Accordingly, teaching entrepreneurial skills at the vocational education level, in parallel with the development of other key competencies, plays a special role. Since 2015, the module for the development of entrepreneurial competencies has been integrated into all vocational education programs and is currently a mandatory component of the program. It is noteworthy that in recent years, a number of new theories have been developed throughout the world, aimed at improving entrepreneurial education. Noteworthy is the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), which offers interesting approaches for development of appropriate policies and practices. In 2018, Georgia began to change approaches to learning in accordance with this structure and developed an Action Plan for the Implementation of Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning (LLEL) at All Levels of the Education (2019-2020). Based on the action plan activities were carried out in order to improve the quality of entrepreneurship education in VET Institutions. In order to introduce new services, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia actively cooperates with various organizations. In 2019, with the funding from the US Department of State, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia in partnership with the N(N)LE “Environment and Development”, and the University of California, Davis, D-Lab, launched a Vocational Strengthening Project. The project aimed to promote entrepreneurial education through the development of a new training module. Based on the experience of the University of California (UC Davis) and the European Competency Framework (EntreComp), the Module and supporting materials were revised within the project, which in turn are based on the project-based teaching method. In 2020, a revised module was submitted to the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. At this stage, in accordance with the established procedures, it is being discussed for further approval.

With the support of the United Nations Development Programme, a concept was developed for introducing an entrepreneurial culture in vocational education institutions. In 2020, within the framework of the concept, a company was selected to support 2 VET institutions (LEPL College “Iberia” and LEPL College “Modusi”) in the development and implementation of action plans to introduce the concept.

- Participation of citizens in public life is one of the key issues in democratic governance. In recent years, there has been a decline in the level of civic engagement and involvement, which is especially painful for the developing democracy of Georgia. Civic participation is relatively low in non-urban communities, leading to ineffective governance systems and a lack of citizen-centered services.

The formation of an informed, effective and responsible citizen is the basis for the development of human resources, while the task of the education system is to educate such generations. **Civic education**, begins at the level of general education in Georgia, continues at the level of vocational education and is included in the list of compulsory competencies. Since 2015, **the civic education module** has been an integral part of modular vocational education programs. However, in 2020, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), an assessment of the existing educational module began. Some challenges were identified and, according to the decision of the Ministry, the organization coordinated the process of developing the new module through extensive consultations.

It is noteworthy that as a result of the work done, the development of a new module was completed with the participation of all interested parties in it. The module is designed in such a way that teaching of citizenship and democratic values in a democratic society is fully consistent with the goals of education in general, as well as the goals of the educational institution, taking into account the specifics of vocational training. The module takes a holistic approach to the teaching process for civic education and focuses on the acquisition of factual and conceptual knowledge on the one hand, and on the development of basic skills of citizenship in a democratic society, on the other hand. The knowledge section focuses not only on actual knowledge of democratic values, but also on their understanding, analysis and perception. The module is currently under final review in accordance with established procedures and is expected to be approved in the coming months and be further integrated into professional programs, which of course includes capacity building of human resources.

- In order to stimulate a new vision for financing vocational education, improve the quality of teaching, meet the demands of the labour market, create an entrepreneurial ecosystem and a competitive environment, a new law on vocational education allowed vocational colleges to engage in **economic activities**, based on the analysis of existing practices. With the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in 2020, the Ministry began work on a regulatory framework, according to which the Advisory Group prepared a draft concept paper of economic activities for colleges. The concept paper examines the legal framework pertaining to the economic activities of colleges and proposes the methodological framework necessary for carrying out the activities, as well as reflects information provided by the colleges about the products and services created in the learning process.

Based on the concept and the proposed methodology, a draft resolution of the Government of Georgia on the Determination of the Cost of Products / Rendered Reimbursable Services Created in the Educational Process by an Educational Institution Established by the State or with Its Participation, the Rules and Conditions for Disposal of Income Received from the Activities will be submitted to the Government of Georgia in 2021.

- **The internationalization of the vocational education system** includes several aspects: the implementation of internationally recognized standards, taking into consideration best practices in policy development and in elaboration of regulations, approaches and methodologies. The internationalization is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, and since the reform process involves the introduction of a number of innovative approaches, the Ministry actively uses international tools available throughout Europe, including international partnership platforms, technical assistance projects, exchange programs / schemes for students and teachers, etc. The goal of internationalization is to bring the vocational education system of Georgia closer to the European educational space and increase the competitiveness of the local labour force in both the local and international labour market.

To achieve this goal, a number of fundamental changes have taken place in the systemic in recent years. The newly developed National Qualifications Framework was based on the requirements and principles of the European Qualifications Framework, which will facilitate the compatibility and recognition of qualifications issued in Georgia within the European Education Area. In addition, the new Law of Georgia on Vocational Education has created a legal basis for **the implementation of joint programs and exchange programs**, between not only national institutions, but also educational institutions abroad. In the reporting period, drafting of the relevant legal acts on the rules and conditions for the development and implementation of exchange and joint programs was completed, and the documents were submitted for approval.

The compatibility of **the credit system in vocational education** is a prerequisite for strengthening international cooperation. The Ministry, with the support of various agencies and partners, completed in 2020 the work on a normative act regulating the development and counting process of the credit system in vocational education. The document has already been approved, and according to it, vocational education system is transferred to a credit system based on the European mechanism - ECVET. With this tool, Georgia will be able to strengthen its work with foreign partners and support student mobility.

In 2020, several interesting practical initiatives in terms of internationalization were launched. With the support of the Ministry, the United Nations Development Programme and the Georgian Farmers Association, the project “Internationalization of Vocational Education and the International Practice Initiative between Georgia and Germany / Great Britain in the Agricultural Sector” was launched in cooperation with public and private educational institutions. The project aims retraining of VET institutions representatives and education specialists / experts within a distance learning program at Cambridge International College and offering a 5-month paid internships for agricultural vocational and higher education students in Southern Germany.

During the reporting period, Georgia joined new initiatives of **the European Training Foundation (ETF)**, namely:

- 15 institutions with vocational education programs participated in a pilot test of the Self-Assessment Tool (SELFIE) in dual programs. SELFIE is an electronic self-assessment questionnaire developed by the European



Commission that assesses the extent to which educational institutions (schools and colleges) use digital technologies in teaching and learning. At the level of vocational education, the SELFIE tool is tested along with Georgia in Germany, France, Poland, Hungary, Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey.

- Six vocational education institutions have joined the Network for Excellence (ENE) of the European Training Foundation (ETF) (<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/projects-activities/projects/network-excellence>). The aim of the initiative is to create an international network, the members of which will actively communicate and share their experience and knowledge. All this will contribute to the formation of new partnerships, the exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as the development and realization of new ideas. In 2020, the organization conducted a study that examined the autonomy of centers of excellence (selected colleges) and their level of involvement in public-private partnerships. An international conference “ETF Network for Excellence (ENE) launch conference - “Centres of Vocational Excellence as engines for VET development”, held at the end of the year. At the conference were discussed research findings and prospects for future collaboration.
- It is known, that the vocational education reform is carried out with significant support from **international donor organizations**.

The European Union has been actively supporting the vocational education system in Georgia over the past decade. The scope of its program was further expanded during the reform and covered both the education/skills development system and the employment sector. With the launch of the budget and technical assistance projects and the grant component, Georgia will receive additional resources amounting to 48 million euros over 5 years to modernize its systems. In 2020, the commitments undertaken by the country in 2019 were assessed, and after the conclusion on full compliance with the budget of Georgia, it received a certain amount of annual aid. During the reporting period, 7 new organizations were identified as the beneficiaries of the grant assistance that will assist in development of new effective mechanisms in the field of education and employment in order to increase the employment opportunities of the population. With the support of an EU technical assistance project, an assessment and analysis of the geographical coverage of vocational education has been initiated, which will form the basis for making decisions on new development locations in the future. The project also contributes to the development of a new sectoral strategy of vocational education.

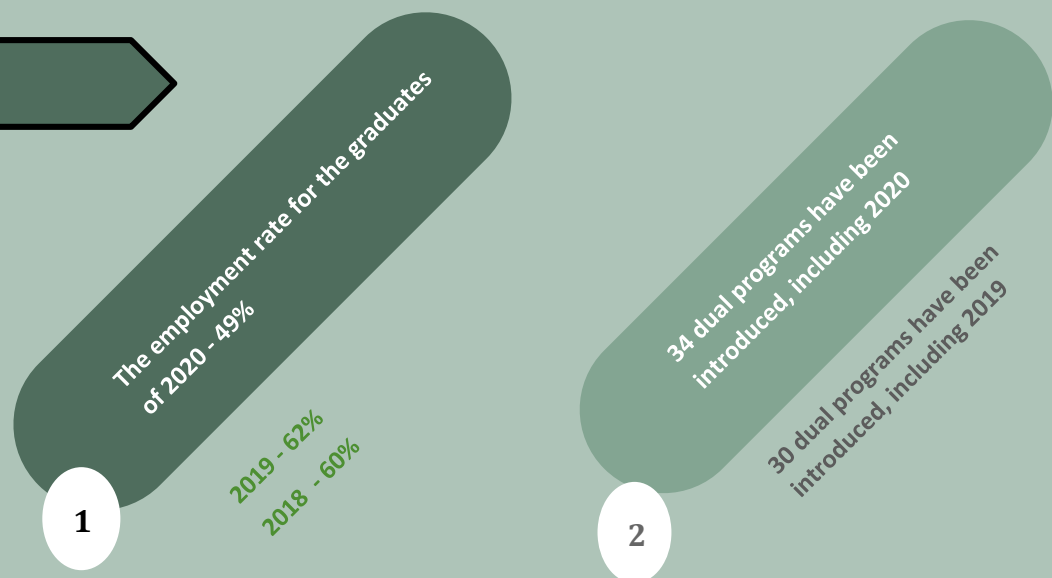
Support from the **German government** was further strengthened, and in 2020 a new two-year phase of the program of the **German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)** again included support of the public and the private sector in introducing dual vocational education programs in selected sectors, improvement of the basic infrastructure in colleges, strengthening of sectoral associations, assisting in the revision of qualifications, promotion of vocational education and capacity building for VET Institutions staff and teachers. All of the above is based on already implemented initiatives and the process of their implementation, such as: the development of regulatory documents, the strengthening of public-private partnerships - dual training, the promotion of sectoral associations, as well as the promotion of vocational education, etc.

- The first stage of the tender for the development of the Excellence Center in Tbilisi was announced in 2020 with the aim of fulfilling the terms of the loan agreement signed between **Georgia and the German Bank for Reconstruction (KFW)**. The winners of the first stage were determined in accordance with the qualification requirements. The completion of the final, second phase of the tender is scheduled for 2021. The center, which will focus on the training of transport / logistics and construction professionals, will also serve as a hub where modern technology will be widely available, and skilled professionals will continually strive to strengthen the human resources of all similar educational institutions in Georgia. Since the beginning of 2020, the Ministry has resumed negotiations with the Bank on assistance in development of a Winemaking Institute on the basis of Telavi University and an International School of Tourism in Dusheti. Currently, a feasibility study is being carried out on both projects with the participation of the German side.
- **With financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** strongly supports vocational education reform. Key issues such as the integration of a general education component, improving entrepreneurial education, regulation of economic activities of colleges, institutional strengthening of institutions, quality assurance, development of the adult education system are supported by the United Nations Development Programme. It is noteworthy that within the framework of a grant agreement with the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, the mechanisms initiated to eliminate the deadlock in the education system were successfully introduced. Thanks to the announced small grant projects, which were implemented in two rounds in 2020, colleges will be able to obtain the resources necessary for the implementation of new initiatives in the field of agriculture .
- Since 2018, vocational education reform in Georgia receives financial and technical support from **the British Embassy, Good Governance Fund (GGF)**. Within the framework of the partnership, the following projects have been implemented: development of a model of public-private partnership, definition of a new financing model, and development of a VET teacher professional development model. The main work in 2020 was focused on the latter issue, and a new model and standard for teacher professional development was established with the involvement of stakeholders within the World Bank project, in line with international best practice. Work on the remuneration scheme continues. For the implementation of a new approach to financing vocational education, in early 2020, appropriate recommendations were submitted

to the Ministry. The fund will continue to support vocational education reform in 2021 to develop a new model for funding.

- During the reporting period, negotiations between **the Asian Development Bank** and the Government of Georgia on the signing of a loan agreement in the amount of US \$ 70 million were successfully completed, in which the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, in particular the vocational education system, is the main party. As a result of several years of work and in cooperation with the technical support project team of the Asian Development Bank, a design of budget and sectoral assistance programs was developed, and a corresponding agreement was signed in December 2020. The large-scale assistance aims to diversify vocational education providers and strengthen the capacity of public schools to implement vocational programs in the regions, as well as to develop two educational centers in western and eastern Georgia, to facilitate the internationalization and inclusiveness of vocational education.

I Task indicators



3. ENSURING ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BASED ON LIFELONG LEARNING PRINCIPLE



➤ In accordance with the order of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia dated 11 February 2020, new standards for authorization of a vocational educational institution were approved. It should be noted that the new standards must contribute to the establishment of new standards of teaching in vocational education, which in the modern educational environment not only provides access to the program or resources, but also in a broader context evaluates the relevance, quality and accessibility of the services offered to students within the formal education institution. The new standards evaluate all components of the educational process from the point of view of a unified mechanism and pay special attention to ensuring the full involvement of stakeholders in the educational process. They assess the existence of internal quality assurance systems that place more responsibility on institutions and pave the way for increased autonomy. The new approach puts an institution in front of the need to have a vision of its continuous development and allows the institution to think about the transition to a new stage of development. All this is achieved through a diversified assessment system, which is also characterized by a partial support function. This approach became the basis for the development of new authorization standards. The process of its preparation was carried out with the involvement of all interested parties. During the reporting period, VET institutions had access to various types of technical assistance initiatives, including activities implemented within the framework of the Grant Agreement of the LEPL the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement and the UNDP: developing profiles of authorization experts, developing a selection methodology and tools, developing an expert evaluation scheme and methodology for the work performed; elaborating an expert certification concept, developing a certification training program, revising the forms used in the process of external quality assurance and supporting the whole process. Significant steps have been taken to support educational institutions, the educational institutions that have to be re-authorized at the earliest date (2 private and 14 public ones) were selected for the simulation visits; In order to better understand and introduce new standards and approaches, an e-guide and a 9-day training package were prepared, which was completed by 193 representatives of 88 accredited VET institutions. 113 authorization experts trained in four days in new approaches to assessing institutions with new authorization standards. A guide on quality assurance of program implementation has been prepared, which is a supporting material in the process. Trainings were held for representatives of institutions to verify the assessment system and implement development assessments. In accordance with the current regulations, 85 institutions submitted self-assessment reports to the Center within the period of 1 July to 31 July including, the analysis of which revealed systemic challenges and further support measures were planned. Part of the process was carried out using the QMS system, which is an integrated component of the information management system and provides complete automation of the process. A training was also held for Authorization Council members of 2020, which was aimed at introducing new standards and strengthening the Council's capacity. As a result, in 2020 applications for program authorization made by 27 institutions were evaluated based entirely on the new standards.

In terms of strengthening the capacity of VET institutions and their compliance with new standards, it is worth mentioning the support of the United Nations Development Programme through the small grants program. As part of the grant competition, 27 small grants were awarded to support vocational education providers in regulations development, management quality improvement, development of communication strategies with the public, as well as implementation of cybersecurity standards, etc.

- In 2020, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports began the process of introducing regulations and new mechanisms, which are a necessary component to ensure the principle of lifelong learning in accordance with the new law. A new approach developed for overcoming **the educational deadlock** in the system, as well as its practical implementation requires the consolidation of all stakeholders and consistent planning of processes. The objective was achieved with the help of a grant agreement between the United

Nations Development Programme and the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. In order **to integrate the learning outcomes of general education into vocational education programs**, a number of measures were planned and implemented, as a result of which in 2020 the learning outcomes of secondary education were integrated into 17 secondary vocational education programs. 19 educational institutions (17 public and 2 private ones) were granted authorization for integrated programs and up to 500 students with basic education were enrolled, who began their studies in October 2020.

A number of activities were planned and carried out for high quality, properly organized and effective educational services - The specifics of integrated programs were considered in the existing quality assurance system and appropriate quality assurance mechanisms were developed. A draft rule for confirming the achievement by a VET student of the integrated program has been prepared.

The greatest attention was paid to the selection of teachers and their retraining, since it was a new initiative that required the development of teachers' skills and competencies. The selection of teachers started at the beginning of the year and took place in two stages. The training cycle, which was also carried out in two phases, included two days of introductory training and 6 days of subject training in various modules. In total, over 300 teachers were selected and trained.

Trainings were also available for representatives of college administration aiming at familiarizing them with the specifics of the issues related to the administration of complex programs. A total of 72 representatives of VET institutions were trained.

In order to ensure the maximum involvement of persons with disabilities and special educational needs in vocational education, as well as for the practical implementation of the principles of inclusion in vocational education, the Rule on the Identification of Persons with Special Educational needs and Implementation of Inclusive Vocational Education was developed in 2020. It will be submitted for approval in the beginning of 2021.

It should be noted that a new vocational education management information system was developed and launched in accordance with the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education, adopted in 2018. The system provides information about VET modules, educational standards, educational institutions implementing VET programs, programs, VET students, personnel, mobility and funding, as well as manages processes through it. The questionnaires to carry out the necessary research are also integrated in the system.

- **Adult education system:** It is known that by acquiring education and improving skills throughout life, a person gains more self-confidence and has a positive effect on the quality of life. The natural ability of humans to discover, learn and develop requires the creation of opportunities that will encourage and return a person to a constant cycle of development. Consequently, in order to create a skilled workforce, developed countries pay particular attention to developing systems and services that easily meet the mentioned interests and aspirations of the people. **The principle of lifelong learning** is implemented not only within the framework of the formal education system. In this case, access to non-formal education is equally important. To meet the demands of the labour market and personal interests, these two systems create educational services, the main task of which is to be of high quality and accessible to all.



Since 2019, the introduction of new educational services into the formal education system of Georgia was initiated. Based on the changed system and rules, the idea of admitting formal education only in educational institutions was transformed, and the private sector with an educational component and non-standard qualifications were added to existing providers and qualifications. The opportunity to teach the adult population certain competencies / skills to in a relatively short period of time **through vocational training**

and retraining programs is attractive for employers who want to hire qualified personnel for specific tasks, as well as for people who have jobs but want to improve professional skills and career growth. The aforementioned change in the formal education system has several objectives: (1) meeting the needs of the labour market in a relatively short period of time; (2) involving employers in the implementation of programs and in this way improving the quality and relevance; (3) activating the adult population in the labour market.

Vocational training and retraining programs process management and automation is provided by the e-system developed in 2019 by the LEPL Education Management Information System.

In 2020, under the coordination of the Ministry, the process of developing the adult education system continued, which includes the introduction of various programs, financing, promotion of services and the development of new flexible procedures. Despite delays due to the pandemic, in accordance with the procedure established by the state, during the reporting period, 39 legal entities (including 16 state, 23 private ones) were entitled to implement 107 vocational training / retraining programs, of which 83 were successful through confirmation and 24 through obtaining the right.

In accordance with the government funding policy, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports continued full or partial funding of trainees enrolled in short-term training and retraining programs. The number of trainees in 2020 was 1,224 trained in 18 state, 1 private educational institution and 4 non-educational institutions. Personnel trained in 2020 mastered skills in architecture and construction, business and management, engineering, winemaking, information and communication technology, fisheries, forestry, personal services, agriculture, transport services, manufacturing and processing, as well as the arts. During the reporting period, 632 persons were trained. The funded programs were implemented in the regions of Tbilisi, Shida and Kvemo Kartli, Ajara, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Imereti. The special programs that were organized at the request of private companies and with their active participation should be mentioned as well: N(N)LE Business Association of Georgia Distributors' with the vocational training program "Distribution in retail facilities"; LLC Academy of Sairme Tourism and Gastronomy with the vocational training program "Hotel Room Management" developed on the basis of the experience of the Swiss Hotel Management School - SHL, where 30 persons were eligible to study in 2020. Upon completion of the program, an internationally recognized certificate will be issued, which significantly reflects the priority of the Government of Georgia in the internationalization of education. In addition, as a result of the cooperation between the state and the private sector, 120 professionals were trained in the most demanded profession of the labour market by a private company LLC Ajara Textile under the program "Operator-tailor", where the level of employment of graduates was 100%.

In 2020, within the framework of a memorandum signed between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, the Administration of the Government of Georgia and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the South Caucasus, three training programs were selected and implemented for persons with special educational needs and disabilities. Distance learning for these programs was carried out in three vocational schools.

With financial support from the United Nations Development Programme, up to 20 agricultural training / retraining programs were developed during the reporting period. Also, preparatory work has begun between the Georgian and German sides to implement a practical component of vocational training / retraining programs in agriculture in Germany.

Following the introduction of the adult education system in 2020, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Protection of Georgia became part of the vocational training / retraining system within the formal education system.

In addition, as a result of active interaction with the private sector, amendments were developed and initiated to the resolution of the Government of Georgia on the Approval of the Rules and Conditions for obtaining the Right to Implement a vocational Training and Retraining Program and its Recognition. The changes will further facilitate the involvement of the private sector in the training/retraining process and scale up implementation.

Improvement of the mechanism of state financing of adult training programs is also on the agenda. That is why, with the support of the German partner organization DVV, a new financing approach is being developed that must make the existing scheme more flexible.

In order to introduce a quality assurance system for adult training courses, as well as to increase the capacity of providers, the LEPL National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement successfully implemented a two-year grant program with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the results of which were summed up by the end of 2020. Within the framework of the program, measures were taken to strengthen the potential of the training/retraining Authorization Council, the personnel of the Centre and the specialists, a manual for the for specialists in vocational training / retraining was developed, as well as 4 trainings for more than 100 providers were conducted. In addition, 6 information seminars were held for providers of vocational training / retraining (136 participants), and more than 100 individual consultations were held for training providers interested in the system. In order to develop and test mechanisms for ensuring the quality of vocational training / retraining programs, a methodology, a scheme and a monitoring tool were developed, as a result of which monitoring visits were carried out to 30 organizations.

The Ministry continues the process of introducing new initiatives for the development of the adult education system, which, of course, means an assessment and analysis of already implemented approaches. The most important of these is the Graduate Employment Survey, for which a questionnaire is integrated into the Education Management Information System. Its completion is mandatory for all funded providers. The report shall be available early next year.

- **A new model for VET teacher professional development:** a key condition for improving the quality of vocational education, along with the change in vocational education programs, is the availability of qualified teachers. As it is known, in 2019, the Ministry successfully completed negotiations with the Good Governance Fund (GGF) and the World Bank, and since 2020, the project “Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education and Training” was actively implemented. It focused on the topics such as a new model of professional development, teacher standard, new remuneration scheme, etc. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports within the framework of the World Bank project, drafts of the following documents were developed during the reporting period:

- Policy document: Challenges and possible solutions
- The concept of a vocational education teacher standard and the draft regulatory legal act
- Code of ethics and draft legal act
- Concept for training of vocational education teachers
- Criteria and guidelines for recruiting vocational teachers
- The concept of continuous professional development of vocational education teachers
- Rules and criteria for evaluating vocational education teachers
- Two versions of the development model for vocational education teachers
- Criteria for assessing vocational education students.

In addition, an analysis of international practice and available resources was completed, as a result of which a draft concept of VET teacher remuneration was developed.

The documents development process was public and inclusive. Within the framework of the project, surveys, polls, internal and public consultations were carried out, in which up to 1000 stakeholders took part.

The above documents form the basis for the key aspects of the professional development and career development model of vocational education teachers. Accordingly, on the basis of conceptual documents, a draft concept of the rules and conditions for the commencement, professional development and career

advancement of VET teachers was developed. In order to reach agreement on a final version, Internal and public consultations with stakeholders are planned. Also, by February 2021, it is planned to develop guidelines for the recruitment of teachers, piloting and for developed documentation. In parallel with the above works, with the involvement of the World Bank contractor PriceWaterHouseCooper, work is underway to develop the following materials:

- Training package for directors and staff of administrators of educational institutions implementing vocational education programs;
- Assessment tools for vocational education teachers for 11 modular programs;
- Student assessment tools;
- Up to 50 training programs for trainers.

In parallel with the development of a new professional development model, capacity building of teachers continues, which is coordinated by the National Center for Teacher Professional Development. To improve the quality of teaching entrepreneurship, the competencies of teachers were strengthened, and the number of teachers trained using the new module equals to 374 teachers; 150 teachers completed various modules of the pedagogical course in 2020 (50 of them completed the full course). The course is attended by a total of 590 teachers; 290 professional teachers and representatives of the administration were trained in Microsoft Teams.

The Center also implements capacity building activities for college administration through which training modules on strategic planning and research have been developed. The entrepreneurship training was conducted for the directors of vocational education institutions. The webinars were recorded on the following topics: strategies for communicating with parents; Involvement of parents in vocational education; Vocational education during a pandemic; New standards for the authorization of vocational education institutions; Short-term training / retraining programs for business; Integration of general education into vocational education; Assessment of vocational education teachers in Germany, etc.

- In 2020, as part of the implementation of vocational education programs, 22 public and 5 private educational institutions obtained the right to implement 56 new programs in the main place or in its branch, which additionally created 6,541 places for study. It is worth mentioning that the authorization was carried out in accordance with the new standards.

In 2020, 3 qualifications were revised and updated:

- Framework Document for the Vocational Education Program - Photography. The development of this qualification was carried out within the framework of external initiation. The initiator was the College of Media and Television Arts of the LEPL Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, with the participation of the Georgian Photographers Association;
- Framework Document for the Vocational Education Program - Library Work. The change was initiated by National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement;
- Framework Document for the Vocational Education Program - Music Art. The document combines two framework documents - Piano Accompanist and Music Tutor, as they relate to the same field of study.

Through the joint work of the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement, the UNDP Grant Project and the Ministry, the following legal acts based on the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education have been developed:

- The Rule for Elaboration, Development and Approval of the Standard and Module / Modules of Vocational Education - which has been initiated for approval;
- The Rule of Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Formal Education (approved);
- Document certifying vocational education and its annexes (approved);

- Draft rules for the development and implementation of the state language teaching program / state language teaching module and a draft of the admission rule to the program have been prepared.

In cooperation with the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, in March 2020, the Education Management Information System prepared technical specifications for development of an electronic register of qualifications and submitted it to the Center for consideration and planning of further activities.

- **Infrastructure projects:** Improving geographic access to vocational education is one of the priorities of the reform. Due to their specificity, the availability of providers and the availability of various programs in large municipalities with a high population and employment potential are of particular importance for the promotion of regional development. It was with these criteria in mind that in 2020 infrastructure projects in new locations, as well as full or partial rehabilitation of existing buildings and construction of workshops were successfully continued. As a result of intensive work, the construction of a multifunctional college for 200 students in Shida Kartli region, **Kaspi municipality** was completed and the institution was equipped. Then preparatory work for obtaining an Authorization began.

In the village of **Goraberezhouli**, Guria region, the construction of a branch of N(N)PL College “Horizonti” has been completed, which will be able to accept 100 students for programs in agriculture and engineering. The new branch of Rustavi LEPL College “Modusi” in Marneuli will have a capacity to accept 150 students from 2021 on vocational programs developed in accordance with the needs of the municipality. The rehabilitation of existing educational buildings in Telavi, Kobuleti and Kutaisi was completed.

Construction work is underway in the municipalities of **Khashuri, Borjomi, Tskhaltubo, Lanchkhuti**. In these municipalities, for the first time since 2021, the population shall be able to receive vocational education without leaving their place of residence. In **Zugdidi**, VET students of the Shota Meskhia State Teaching University will be provided with a new building. Also,



Khashuri College

for the construction of new educational buildings, the design works were completed for LEPL - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Media and TV Art College(Tbilisi), LEPL Tbilisi College of Arts (Tbilisi), N(N)LE College "Ikarosi" (Tbilisi) and LEPL College “Black Sea” (Batumi).

The availability of workshops that meet modern standards is a prerequisite for creating a practical and / or simulated learning environment in vocational education. In 2020, the LEPL Educational And Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency, along with the construction of new colleges, built 26 new workshops in 8 vocational Institutions (Kachreti, Ambrolauri, Poti, etc.).

- **Student enrollment 2020:** Fundamental changes have been made to the enrollment of students for vocational programs. The changes are based on an analysis of previous years and stimulation of the possibility of filling the available student places to the maximum. Consequently, the procedural and evaluative part has become more decentralized and encouraging for youth participation. In particular, the previous process of enrollment (twice a year) was changed and replaced by an enrollment once in a year, the registration procedures were extended from May to August instead of 2-3 weeks. With this possibility,

applicants were allowed to change the list of programs they chose before the registration deadline is expired. It is worth mentioning that the authorization process for new programs was active until August, and programs were constantly added to the registration database.

According to the changes made, the ranking lists were replaced by rating lists and two ways of admission to vocational education programs were defined:

a) Vocational testing, which is carried on a centralized basis, and during testing, an applicant takes a test in vocational skills and in the corresponding subject / subject group of the field.

And

b) Competition / selection determined by an educational institution, which is administered by the educational institution itself.

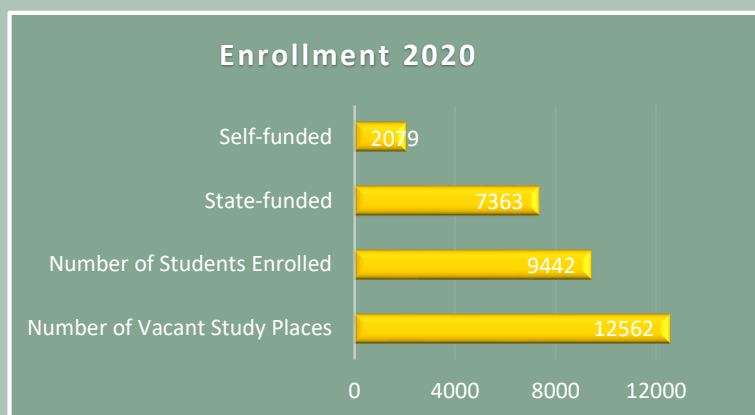
The approach to enrollment in dual programs has not changed and is still carried out by VET institution on the basis of a competition held with the participation of employers.

According to the new approach, if the number of places declared for an educational program exceeds the number of applicants who have chosen this vocational education program, the applicants are enrolled based on the selection carried out by VET institution in accordance with the rules they defined.

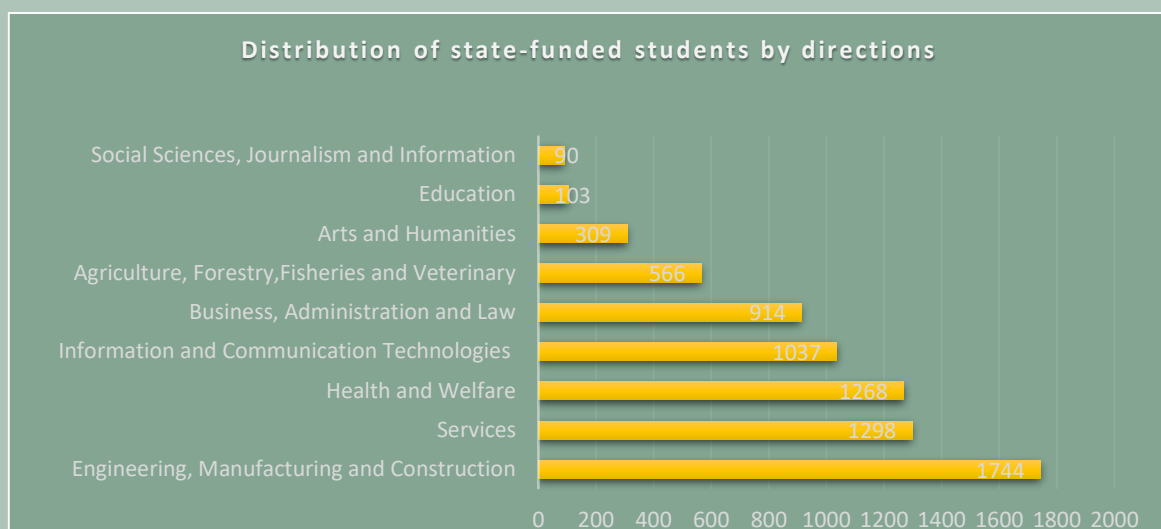
- In centralized testing, the previously existing approach for all categories was divided according to age and social status, and coefficients were determined (1.3 for up to 19-year-old persons; 1.1 for 20-29-year-old persons; 1 for 30-year-old and older persons; 1.2 for persons receiving living allowance). This was multiplied by the number of point/points received on the test: the change in approach was based on research and social packages developed with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Swiss Government to promote vocational education for vulnerable groups. The study examines the socio-economic status of vocational education and training students and analyzes the relationship between vocational education and training in employment and the labour market. As a result of the changes and the launch of the training-retraining system, the system has become more diversified, offering services suitable for beneficiaries of all ages.

After the completion of the first stage of the competition, if there are any vacant places in the institution, applicants who have not been enrolled in their chosen program have the opportunity to apply to the institution, which is obliged to enroll the applicant in the vocational education program taking into account the number of vacancies left.

Certain benefits were imposed on individuals who did not show up for testing due to the coronavirus pandemic. In particular, persons who registered for vocational testing and failed to appear for testing on time for the following reasons were exempted from testing: 1) were in the territories provided for in Article 2 (a) and (b) of the Law of Georgia on the Occupied Territories; 2) were in a quarantine/ self-isolation; 4) were outside the country; 5) were in a medical facility/isolation due to the confirmation of a new coronavirus (COVID-19).



As a result, in 2020, taking into account the pandemic and the state of emergency, **9442 students were enrolled in VET programs in private and public institutions, including 7363 state-funded students, out of which 161 students are persons with special educational needs.**



- Due to changes in student admission rules, since institutions had to conduct internal selection at vocational training programs where the number of applicants did not exceed the number of vacant study places, the Ministry provided appropriate consultations and support to the process at the request of VET Institutions.
- In terms of expanding access to vocational education and ensuring inclusiveness, an initiative of the Government of Georgia **to exempt vocational students from compulsory military service** is unprecedented. An amendment, supported by the Parliament of Georgia, to the Law of Georgia on “Military Duty and Military Service provides for a one-time postponement of compulsory military service for VET students. Eliminating this discrimination shall allow young people who enrolled in 2020 to complete their favorite program, become specialists in a particular field, obtain the appropriate qualifications and immediately after that undergo compulsory military service. This shall significantly reduce the drop-out of students from the vocational education system.
- **Promoting Distance Learning:** In 2020, the reality caused by the COVID-19 pandemic required the provision of distance education services to students at all levels of education, including vocational education. Taking into account the specifics of vocational education, it is obvious that difficulties have arisen in the field of practical training, which accounts for more than 50% of vocational education program. Therefore, in addition to online learning, it is necessary to provide appropriate technical support for both teachers and students, and it is equally important to adapt vocational education programs to the distance learning method. In response to the challenge, the Ministry planned and implemented a series of activities aimed at supporting VET Institutions both in technical aspects, planning and content. The LEPL Education Management Information System has created accounts for VET teachers and students of all educational institutions implementing authorized professional programs to deliver distance learning with Microsoft 365 Teams and began providing information and technical support for this process. It was planned to create sectoral networks with the general purpose of discussing sectoral issues, problems, visions, development prospects in the process of providing vocational education. However, considering the most actual problem of 2020, the work of sectoral networks began with defining possibilities of distance learning. College administrators, program managers, and VET teachers were divided in Sectoral networks in Microsoft Teams. At the first stage, work began on adapting the general modules of vocational education programs for distance learning. With the facilitation of the Vocational Education Development Department, a unified e-database of teachers of general modules and program managers was prepared, and through this platform, based on active communication and consultation, the modules were revised and adapted to the specifics of distance learning. The process was carried out in consultation with the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

The work also continues on revising sectoral modules. With the participation of relevant agencies, a distance learning application for sectoral modules was created; Based on intensive work, VET teachers,

program managers and subprogramme staff prepared distance learning curriculum for vocational programs, which is submitted to the sectoral councils for review and approval. The document will be approved as an annex to the framework document.

However, it is worth mentioning that VET institutions, in accordance with governmental regulations, have introduced various forms of education, including so-called blended form, most successfully used, given the epidemiological situation and current restrictions in a particular region.

In accordance with the requirements imposed by the Government, the secure environment was arranged in VET Institutions. It includes keeping distance between students, wearing masks, controlling the temperature or availability of other necessary equipment during classroom training. It is also important, that the institutions managed to assign students to groups based on the permitted number of students, which caused extension of program length, as well as the need for a diverse financial resources. However, in order to actively involve the students in the educational process, all of the above mentioned different approaches, in agreement with the Ministry, were successfully implemented.

II Task Indicators

1

The rate of transition at the next level
of education (HEI) - 4.4%

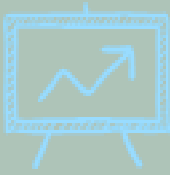
2019 - 8%
2018 - 7%

2

In 2020, 1136 persons were
involved in adult training
programs

In 2019 the indicator made up 443
persons

4. PROMOTING AND ENHANCING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



Improving the image of vocational education in 2020 remains on the priority list. Given the circumstances caused by the pandemic, this task was further complicated by the fact that one of the most important target groups - schoolchildren who received information about professions through practical testing at school - switched to distance learning from home. Obviously, in 2020 it became impossible to scale up the program oriented on Development of Vocational Skills for School Children, but in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, a list of more than 20 target general education institutions has been developed to mobilize relevant resources for inception of vocational programs by 2021.

The Work Skills Development Program (WSD) is one of the most effective tool of the career guidance service that has had a significant impact on the promotion of vocational education among young people, as well as fostering collaboration between general education institutions and VET institutions. It is noteworthy that the program, which has covered 15,000 students since 2018, equipped schools and raise awareness about this sector for both students and their parents. Despite the effectiveness of the program, the issue of introducing career guidance services in the education system as a whole remains fragmented. Educational systems in developed countries begin career guidance at the preschool level and make this service available throughout life. In order to promote the correct and adequate development of human capital in Georgia, it is very important to introduce career guidance services in accordance with modern standards at all levels of education. Accordingly, the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education obliges the Ministry to develop and approve a strategy for vocational guidance, counseling and career planning in formal education; With the assistance of the EU Technical Assistance Project in 2020, the work needed to develop a strategy and action plan has begun, in which the Vocational Education Development Department is actively involved along with other departments. At this stage, the final version of the strategy is being developed in consultation with stakeholders.



In order to maintain an active dialogue with the private sector, the Vocational Education Development Department held online meetings in 2020 with selected business associations and sectoral associations under the title “Post-Covid-19 Vocational Education for Business” and “Vocational Education for Human Capital Development”.

The purpose of the intensive meetings was to promote dialogue and active discussion between the public and private sectors in order to identify the problems caused by the pandemic and, in the context of vocational education, suggest their possible solutions.

Within the framework of the organized meetings, individual models of public-private partnerships in the context of vocational education were presented, the results of already established cooperation were assessed and further steps were outlined in communication with new, potential partners. About 500 representatives of the following organizations took part in the dialogue: European Business Association; Georgia Employers’ Association; Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; HR specialists; IT sector - individual companies, associations; Infrastructure Construction Companies Association; Georgian Farmers’ Association; Tourism sector - individual companies, associations; Wine Association; Logistics Association, etc.



In addition to elaboration of VET teacher professional development model, a World Bank project is developing an information web portal on vocational education. A specially formed technical group in cooperation with the Education Management Information System, as well as with the participation of the Department, is working on the development of a new version of the website www.vet.ge. This component, in addition to promoting vocational education, aims to support data-based decision making. During the reporting period, the design of the web portal was completed, vocational education indicators required for the analysis of the field were developed, the new EMIS database was also analyzed and the updating of the database in accordance with the established indicators is underway; Development of web portal content has started in the framework of digital marketing and vocational education.

The development of a web portal and easy access to data for end users has become realistic since 2020, when the Education Management Information System completed the main work on development of a new base for the management of vocational education. After finalizing the web-page, interesting data / sections / categories on vocational education shall be available for potential students, educational institutions or employers directly from the website. At the same time, in the reporting period, the Rule for Development and Administration of an Information Management System for Vocational Education was prepared, which is ready for introduction.



In November 2020, the European Training Foundation (ETF) hosted the European Skills Week 2020 with the participation of partner countries. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, events were held online, and participants in conferences, seminars or workshops were involved through an online platform. The main topic of the event, obviously, was the pandemic, challenges and consequences. Discussions also focused on the exchange of best practices on topics such as innovative learning, digitalization in education, non-formal education, so-called Centers of Excellence for Skills Development, etc. Georgia participated in several panels. Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Ms Tamar Kitiashvili acted as keynote speaker at the panel on internationalization.

A large-scale online event held in Georgia in early December in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and its international partner organizations was a continuation and summing up of the European Skills Week. The four-day Skills Week in Georgia focused on such topics as the pandemic and its impact on vocational education, challenges, solutions, teacher opportunities, the private sector and the skills demand in a pandemic, international support, etc. The online event was attended by over 100 interested persons daily; Facebook Live was also available. At the end of the week, a meeting with international partners took place. During the meeting which modern challenges were identified and possible ways to solve them with the donor support were discussed by the parties.

5. OTHER ISSUES

In accordance with the growth in the number of new educational institutions, new opportunities and scales within the system in 2020, the actual execution of the state budget in the field of vocational education amounted to 64.3 million GEL.

Since 2014, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, in order to assess the effectiveness of the reform, has been conducting a Tracer Study of VET program graduates on a regular basis, which represents a retrospective look at the events happening around a target group. The study includes a systematic analysis of significant and long-term changes (positive or negative; planned or unplanned) that have occurred in the lives of graduates in terms of employment. The study provides information on how graduates are doing in different areas (education, employment, self-employment, unemployment). The data collected includes factual information about graduates as well as their

perceptions and grades. The target audience of the study is graduates of all state vocational education institutions. The study is conducted once a year and covers graduates who have completed their studies about a year earlier at the time of the survey. The survey is based on a structured questionnaire conducted by a computer-based phone survey. In 2020, the Questionnaire was integrated into the Education Management Information System.

As part of a survey conducted in 2020, graduates who completed their studies in 2019 and received vocational qualifications were interviewed. According to the LEPL Education Management Information System, 4,496 people received vocational qualifications in 2019. A stratified random sampling method was determined on the basis of statistically reliable data by region, gender, age and field of education, in accordance with which up to 1,200 graduates were involved in the study. Details of the study are available in the study report.

