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Principles and general objectives of education

The Law on Education reflects the following basic principles of the State educational policy: a unified education system throughout the country; decentralized administration of educational institutions and transfer of management to local governments in the provinces; humanistic, scientific and democratic character of education and upbringing; recognition and appreciation of human and national cultural values; independence of educational institutions from political and religious organizations.

The Ministry of Education and Science aims at establishing modern and innovative educational and scientific environment in close cooperation with civil society. The Ministry advocates freedom of choice, fair competition, equal opportunities, civil integrity, and respect for cultural identity. The Ministry promotes acquisition and development of knowledge and skills necessary for social success and self-realization. An Educated society serves as a foundation of every successful and powerful nation. The main priority of the State policy is to provide quality education and invest in future generations.

In accordance with the National Goals of General Education adopted by the government in October 2004, as well as international obligations and commitments assumed by the country, the general education system aims at developing citizens as free individuals, equipped with essential intellectual and physical skills and capacities, nurturing civil consciousness based on democratic and liberal values. The general education system shall: promote national interests and traditions; enable students to preserve and protect the natural environment, as well as make efficient use of technology; develop the students' personal, family and social life and promote the formation of independent decision-making skills; enable students to continuing to develop their abilities and interests throughout their life; promote general communication skills; foster among students mutual respect and understanding, tolerance and respect for law.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Since independence, one of the most important tasks has been the reform of the education system and the development of a new legal framework for education. To this end, the Board of Ministers adopted in 1995 the State Programme of Education Reform.

In June 1997, the Parliament of Georgia approved the Law on Education. This Law defined the main principles of the State educational policy, enabled the establishment of private educational institutions and provided for education financing from public and private sources. According to this Law, primary education was compulsory (grades 1 to 6), basic secondary education (three years' duration) was provided free of charge, and general secondary education was provided free of charge

to a quota of students determined by a State Order on the basis of available financial resources. The Law stated that, by the year 2003, the State should provide general secondary education free of charge to all students. A number of normative acts were issued by the Ministry of Education in accordance with the 1997 Law, including: regulation concerning regional departments of education; State standards for educational institutions of all types; regulation concerning secondary schools; regulation regarding primary and secondary vocational education institutions; regulation and criteria for licensing preschool institutions; regulation concerning the Accreditation Board of higher education institutions.

The Parliament of Georgia adopted the new **Law on General Education** on 8 April 2005. According to the new Law, the citizens of Georgia with a native language other than Georgian enjoy the right of receiving a full-course general education in their native language in compliance with the national curriculum. The Law also establishes a twelve-year cycle of school education to be fully implemented during 2006/07, and that compulsory education covers primary and basic secondary education (grades 1 to 9). Other provisions include: rights and freedoms of students, their parents and teachers; financing mechanisms of general education; management principles for educational institutions and accreditation and property disposal mechanisms; and introduction of the Boards of Trustees, elections of the principal, and students' self-governance.

The new **Law on Higher Education** was adopted in December 2004 and first amended in 2006 within the framework of the implementation of the Bologna process.

The **Law on Vocational Education** was passed in March 2007. This Law provided for the consolidation of the existing 17 vocational schools and the 64 elementary vocational education and training centers. Over the period 2007-2008 these were re-organized into 38 vocational education and training (VET) centers, each with the status of largely autonomous legal entities in public law.

By **Resolution No. 203** of 4 November 2009 the government approved the statutes of the National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Council, a consultative board based on the principles of the social partnership in VET, and in charge of the coordination of activities among governmental institutions, employers, trade unions and the non-governmental sector.

Georgia was officially recognized as a full member of the Bologna process on 19 May 2005. (Government of Georgia, 2005).

Administration and management of the education system

The education system in Georgia is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (today the **Ministry of Education and Science, MES**). The functions of the MES are defined by the Law on Education and the Regulation concerning the Ministry of Education approved by the President of Georgia. All publicly financed education is subordinate to or under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The Minister, who is a member of the government, is assisted by deputy ministers appointed according to the main directions of activities.



The main functions of the MES are to: implement the unified state policy in the education sector; define study plans and State educational standards and supervise their application; approve criteria, rules and conditions for licensing educational institutions; approve criteria and rules for the attestation of students and pedagogical staff; approve academic degrees and regulate their granting; and recognize certificates and diploma obtained abroad. In addition, the MES organizes the creation of the necessary material and technical base, provides scientific-methodological and information services, and approves and publishes textbooks and other teaching aids.

The Minister of Education is assisted by four Deputy Ministers. The Ministry of Education and Science consists of the following main Departments: Administration, General Inspection, Legal Affairs, Public Relations, Information Technology and Statistics, Funding, Higher Education and Science Development, and General and Vocational Education Development. Three national centers function under the Department of General and Vocational Education Development, namely the National Curriculum and Assessment Center, the National Examinations Center, and the Teacher Professional Development Center. The **National Curriculum and Assessment Center** (NCAC), established in 2006, is responsible for the development of the national curriculum, the development of students' assessment system, establishment of national education standards, and piloting and approval of textbooks. The **National Examinations Center** (NEC), established in 2006, is an agency accountable for admissions to higher education institutions and is responsible for the development and administration of the United National Entrance Examinations (e.g. entrance examinations for general education school graduates). The Teacher Professional Development Center (TPDC), also established in 2006, is responsible for the development of teacher professional standards and code of ethics, professional requirements for teacher certification, accreditation and approval of teacher professional development programmes.

The **National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement** has been established as an independent body in September 2010 under the Law on Educational Quality Enhancement, replacing the National Center for Educational Accreditation. As a result of amendments made to the Law on Higher Education and the Law on General Education in September 2010, mandatory licensing and institutional accreditation of higher, vocational and general education institutions were substituted by the authorization procedure. The content of accreditation was also modified. Authorization is the instrument for external evaluation of compatibility of an institution with standards, certifying internal (self) evaluation. Authorization is mandatory for all types of educational institutions in order to carry out educational activities and issue certificates and diplomas approved by the State. Accreditation is a type of external evaluation mechanism which determines the compatibility of an educational programme with established standards. State funding goes only to accredited programmes. Accreditation is mandatory for doctoral programmes and regulated professions as well as Georgian language and liberal arts. The accreditation shall aim at the establishment of regular self-evaluation of educational institutions for the improvement of educational quality and promotion of the development of quality assurance mechanisms through the establishment of the compatibility of an educational programme of an educational institution with the following accreditation standards: the goals of an educational programme, learning outcomes and the compatibility of the programme with them; methodology and organization of the



teaching and learning process and adequacy of the assessment; provision of teaching resources; potential to further enhance the educational quality.

The National Vocational Education and Training Council has been established in 2009 with the purpose of supporting the development of vocational education and training (VET) and ensuring coordinated activities of governmental institutions, employers, trade unions and the non-governmental sector. The Council: develops proposals and resolutions related to the VET Reform Strategy approved by the order of the Prime Minister and VET Development Action Plan; develops proposals on the formation of various committees and working groups in sphere of VET; can obtain any relevant information from the governmental institutions in accordance with existing legislation; and forms the working groups and invites independent experts to study issues and frame recommendations within its field of competence.

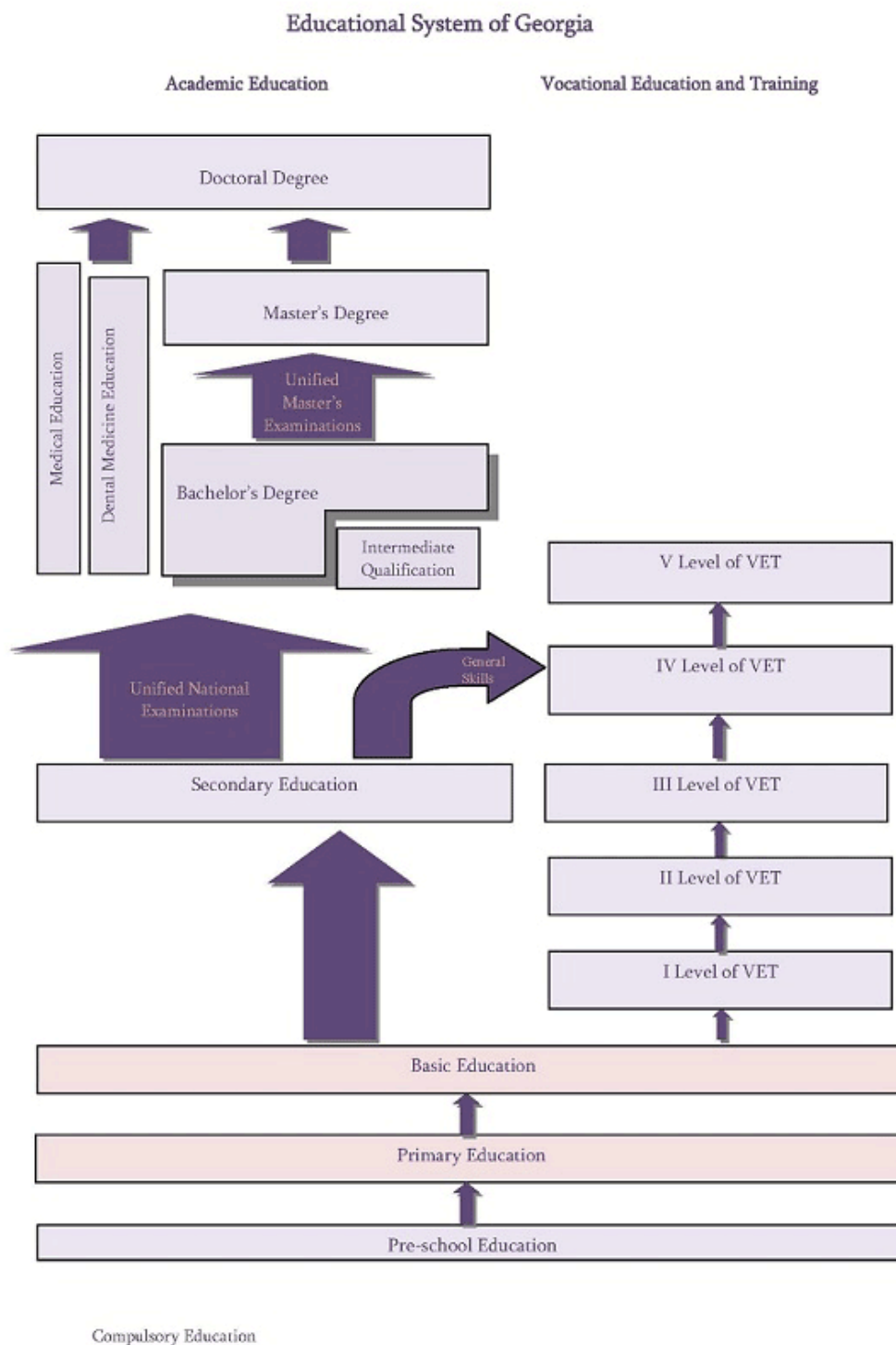
Georgia is comprised of ten regions and 70 *raion* (districts). In the past, regional education departments and education departments at the district level were responsible for the administration and management of kindergartens and schools. Within the framework of the educational reforms, primary, basic and general schools have been converted from local-government budget organizations to autonomous Legal Entities of Public Law (LEPLs). They are funded directly from the Ministry of Education and Science, receiving an amount per pupil (a voucher) which varies only according to the location of the school and covers current but not capital expenditures. Small schools can receive an extra amount per pupil from the central budget, and extra educational and teaching services and special educational curricula can be financed locally. Each school has a **Board of Trustees**, composed of elected teachers and parents, a student representative and in some cases a local-government nominee, which elects the school director, approves the budget, and oversees and advises school management. The lump-sum amount received from the MES (paid into the school's own bank account) can be spent in any way that school management, approved by the Board, decides, subject only to a minimum salary rate for teachers, depending on their qualifications, experience and the size of their class. Local education departments have been replaced by seventy-two **Education Resource Centers**, which function as territorial bodies that provide assistance to schools and facilitate (but do not control) educational activities at schools by collecting data, conducting research, organizing training, workshops, seminars, etc.

Higher education institutions have a high degree of autonomy. They elect their rector and scientific board, take independent decisions concerning their structural units, staff, content of courses and other organizational matters.

There are two autonomous republics in Georgia (Adjara and Abkhazia), which have their own Ministries of Education. These Ministries are the main governing bodies of the education system within the territories under their jurisdiction. They participate in the development and implementation of the unified state educational policy. They also define educational programmes and control their implementation within the territories under their jurisdiction.

Structure and organization of the education system

Georgia: structure of the education system



Source: Website of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, 2011.

Pre-school education

Preschool education is not compulsory and caters to children aged 1-5. Nursery schools admit children in the age group 1-3 years and kindergartens cater to children aged 3-5.

Primary education

Before the adoption of the Law on Education, primary education lasted four years (grades 1 to 4). Since 1998, compulsory primary education lasts six years for the age group 6-11. Children may attend primary school until they reach the age of 14.

Secondary education

Before the adoption of the Law on Education, secondary education was divided into basic secondary (five years of study) and general secondary (two years' duration). Since 1998, secondary education consists of two stages, each one lasting three years: compulsory basic secondary education (grades 7 to 9), and (complete) general secondary education (grades 10 to 12) provided free of charge. Secondary vocational education institutions require for admission the completion of basic secondary education; students may also receive secondary vocational education jointly with general secondary education. Specialized secondary vocational institutions offer programmes lasting two to four years leading to the certificate and diploma of specialist. According to the Law on Vocational Education of 2007, formal vocational education and training (VET) is divided into two levels, namely initial vocational education (apprenticeship) and higher VET. Initial vocational education is offered at vocational training centers, while higher education institutions offer professional higher education programmes.

Higher education

The degree structure of higher education has changed with the introduction of bachelor's and master's degree programmes, in accordance with the implementation of the Bologna process. Bachelor's degree programmes normally take three to four years (equivalent to 240 credits) to complete (five years in the case of veterinary and dentistry; six years in the case of medicine). Successful students are awarded a bachelor's degree together with a specialization. Master's degree courses require at least two years of study (120 credits) after the bachelor's degree. The duration of doctoral degree programmes is at least three years (180 credits). Other higher education institutions offer specialist diploma programmes normally of five years' duration. At the postgraduate level, the old system of degrees consisted of Candidate of Science (*aspirantura*, three years' duration) and Doctor of Science degree programmes.

In 2009 the school year consisted of thirty-six working (five-day) weeks, divided into three terms. At the higher education level, the duration of the academic year is determined by the Scientific Council, taking into account that it should consist of thirty-four to thirty-five working weeks divided into terms.



The educational process

Pre-primary education

In Georgia pre-primary education is provided in nursery schools (age group 1-3) and kindergartens (age group 3-5/6). Many kindergartens have been closed due to the difficult economic situation. The main objective of pre-primary education is to prepare children for school and to promote their intellectual, physical and social development. Children normally attend kindergarten five days per week. Some kindergartens operate 10½ or 12 hours per day. There are also kindergartens operating twenty-four hours.

Preschool education is completely decentralized in the country with local governments fully responsible for establishing, funding and operating preschool institutions. The preschool education sector is largely underdeveloped and the number of preschool institutions as well as enrolment rate has been decreasing.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science, in 2006 there were 1,197 preschool educational institutions in the country with 77,922 children enrolled. The number of children in urban preschool educational institutions is on average three times higher than enrolment in rural areas. Also, only 17% of 3-4-year-olds from the poorest families attended preschool in 2005, compared with 69% of those from the richest families. Enrolment in preschool educational institutions is higher among older children and lower among younger children. Teacher's qualification, teaching methodology and materials used at preschool institutions are outdated and inefficient. Among 7,000 staff employed in this sector, only 1,857 had the appropriate qualifications. (MES, October 2007).

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2005 showed that less than half of children (43.2%) aged 36-59 months were attending preschool in Georgia in 2005. Urban-rural and regional differentials are significant, as the figure is as high as 64% in urban areas, compared to 24.4% in rural areas. Among children aged 36-59 months, preschool attendance is more prevalent in Tbilisi (72.6%). Almost no gender differential exists, but differentials by mother's education and socioeconomic status are significant. The proportion of children age 36-59 months reaches to 60.6% if the mother has higher education. More than two-thirds of children living in rich households attend preschool, while the figure drops to 17.4% in poor households. Overall, 60.4% of children aged 6 or 7 and attending the first grade of primary school were attending preschool the previous year. The proportion is exactly the same for boys and girls, while nearly three quarters of children in urban areas (72.3%) had attended preschool the previous year compared to 49.6% among children living in rural areas. Regional differentials are also very significant. (SDS & UNICEF, 2008).

Primary education

Primary education is compulsory and lasts six years. The main objectives of primary education are: to promote the harmonic development of children and encourage the development of their talents, abilities and living skills; to help children to develop

their personality and inclinations; to foster motivation for learning, as well as respect for human values and labour.

The weekly lesson timetable for primary education in 2010 is shown in the table below:

Georgia. Primary education: weekly lesson timetable (schools teaching in Georgian)

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Georgian language and literature	7	7	5	5	5	–
Georgian language	–	–	–	–	–	3
Georgian literature	–	–	–	–	–	3
First foreign language	–	–	–	–	–	3
Second foreign language	–	–	–	–	3	3
Mathematics	4/5	5	5	5	4	4
History of the world	–	–	–	–	–	2
Our country Georgia	–	–	–	–	3	–
Natural science	4	4	4	4/3	3	–
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	1
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	1
Arts and crafts	2	2	2	2	2	1
Music	2	2	2	2	2	1
Physical education and sports	3	3	3	3	3	2
Introduction to work	–	–	–	–	2	1
ICT/Informatics	1/0	–	–	–	–	–
Civil protection	–	–	–	0/1	–	–
Total weekly periods	23	23	24	24	27	25

Source: Ministry of Education and Science. *National study plans for general basic education 2010-2011*. Each teaching period lasts 35 minutes in grade 1 and 45 minutes in grades 2 to 6.

Promotion to the next grade is based on the assessment of pupils. At the end of grades 4, 5 and 6 end-of-the-year examinations can be administered, depending on the decision of the school pedagogical board and subject to the approval of the local Education Department. An average of 2% of children drop out of primary school, mainly due to the family's poor living standards, or because of psychological or health reasons.

The Parliament of Georgia adopted a document "Main directions of social policy with respect to protecting rights of children with limited abilities" on 13 February 2004. The Government elaborated specific strategies for its implementation. Additionally, the authorities have drafted a concept of special education for mentally retarded children to provide them with appropriate education, preserving high standards for educational services and securing access to education for children with limited abilities and their families. The Ministry of Education and Science is developing and introducing new methodologies and approaches that conform with the requirements of a democratic society. These methodologies and approaches include: an inventory of children with limited capacities in Tbilisi schools; ten pilot schools that have been provided with incentive assistance (computers, copy-machines, sports



equipment) are currently and successfully providing inclusive education services; the salaries of corrective and assistant teachers were increased; training is being conducted for corrective teachers to enhance their practical skills of working with handicapped children; a multidisciplinary council has been established and will organize further training for parents, teachers and children to facilitate their integration into the teaching process. It is crucial to adapt school premises and raise public awareness for inclusive education. (Government of Georgia, 2005). According to official statistics there are approximately 1,500 children with special needs in different educational and specialized institutions. However, the real number of children in this category in the country is higher. According to the National Department, 10,041 children with special needs were registered in 2002. (MES, October 2007).

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2005 showed that of children who are of primary school entry age (age 6 and 7), 82.3% were attending the first (and second) grade of primary school in 2005. The percentage of children at age 7 attending the first grade is quite high (92.6%) compared to children at age 6 (72.7%) implying that there are possibly children failing to start school on time. More girls (85.2%) were attending first grade compared to boys (79.5%). Differentials were also present by region and urban-rural areas. In Imereti, for instance, the value of the indicator was 72.1%, while it was around 90% for many other regions. Children's participation to primary school was timelier in urban areas (86.1%) than in rural areas (78.6%). A positive correlation with mother's education was observed; for children age 6-7 whose mothers have at least higher education, 90% were attending the first grade. In rich households, the proportion was around 93%, while it was 75% among children living in the poorest households. It is also interesting to note that if the ethnic group of the household head is Azerbaijani the proportion declined to 64.4%. The majority of children of primary school age were attending school (94.6%). However, there were still some children (5.4%) who were out of school. On average, there were no significant differences between boys and girls in regard to primary school attendance. The lowest total net attendance ratios were observed among children in Kakheti (89.9%) and among children living in households where the ethnic group of the household head is Azerbaijani (86.9%). (SDS & UNICEF, 2008).

Of all children starting grade 1, almost all of them (99%) will eventually reach grade 5. Notice that this number includes children that repeat grades and that eventually move up to reach grade 5. There are no differentials by background characteristics which implies that, regardless of their background characteristics, once the children are enrolled in primary school they will definitely reach to grade 5. At the moment of the survey, only 70.2% of the children of primary completion age (11 years) were attending the last grade of primary education. This value should be distinguished from the gross primary completion ratio, which includes children of any age attending the last grade of primary. Almost all of the children (99.5%) who successfully completed the last grade of primary school were found to be attending the first grade of secondary school at the time of the survey. There was no variation by background characteristics. No difference was found in the attendance of girls and boys to primary school. (*Ibid.*).

According to MES, in 2009/10 there were 2,462 general education schools, of which 2,179 in the public sector. The total enrolment in general secondary education



was 624,526 students (of whom 47,723 in the private sector). Out of this total, 289,137 pupils (of whom 25,264 in private schools) were enrolled in grades 1 to 6. The total number of general education teachers was 79,891 (of whom 68,587 were female teachers); about 52,010 teachers were teaching in grades 1-6, of whom 46,405 were female teachers.

Secondary education

Basic secondary education lasts three years (grades 7 to 9). The main objectives at this stage are: to further develop motivation for learning; to encourage the further development of pupils' talents and abilities; to encourage logical independent thinking; to teach pupils to respect others and nature; to strengthen their appreciation of aesthetic values and their sense of citizenship. The well-rounded physical development of pupils at this stage is also very important. General secondary education was a two-year programme (grades 10 and 11), but following the adoption of the 1997 Law on Education now it consists of three years of study (grades 10 to 12). The main objective of general secondary education is to prepare students for higher education or the labour market. After completing general secondary education students should be morally and physically prepared for independent living.

The General Education Qualifications Framework defines learning outcomes of the basic cycle of general education and of general secondary education through six criteria: knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge; making judgments; communication skills; learning skills; and values. The learning outcomes of the basic cycle of general education are as follows: (a) knowledge and understanding – basic knowledge of key disciplines, understanding of the steps necessary for carrying out routine simple tasks; (b) applying knowledge practice – ability to apply cognitive and practical skills for carrying out routine simple tasks; (c) making judgments – ability to understand routine simple problems with the help of practical and cognitive skills and establish links between them; (d) communication skills – ability to communicate both orally and in writing on routine simple matters, search for necessary information using information technologies, also the ability to understand and communicate some ideas in a foreign language; (e) learning skills – ability to understand the importance of lifelong learning and make choice on further studies; (f) values – ability to respect national and common values; ability to understand personal rights and obligations to family and society. A general secondary education graduate should meet the following criteria: (a) knowledge and understanding – knowledge of general facts, principles, processes and concepts, characteristic for key disciplines; understanding steps necessary for carrying out complicated tasks; (b) applying Knowledge – ability to apply a wide range of cognitive and practical skills, evaluate different approaches for carrying out tasks, select adequate methods, tools and materials; (c) making judgments – ability to use, evaluate and analyze known sources of information for the solution of problems, arising in different environment; (d) communication skills – ability to communicate both orally and in writing in different environment on general matters, to use efficiently information and communication technologies, use a foreign language in practice; (e) learning skills – ability to assume responsibility over own learning within the context of predetermined tasks; (f) values – ability to act in accordance with common values in different environment.

The tables below show the weekly lesson timetables for basic and general secondary education in 2010:

Georgia. Basic secondary education (lower secondary): weekly lesson timetable (schools teaching in Georgian)

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade		
	7	8	9
Georgian language and literature	5	5	5
First foreign language	3	3	3
Second foreign language	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4
History and history of Georgia	3	3	4
Geography	2	2/1	2
Civic education	–	–	2
Biology	3	2	2
Physics	–	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	2
Arts and crafts	2	3/0	0/3
Music	2	0/3	3/0
Physical education and sports	2	2	2
Civil protection	–	0/1	–
Total weekly periods	30	30	35

Source: Ministry of Education and Science. *National study plans for general basic education 2010-2011*. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

Georgia. General secondary education (upper secondary): weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade		
	10	11	12
Georgian language and literature	5	5	5
First foreign language	2-3	2-3	2
Second foreign language	2-3	2-3	2
Mathematics	5	5	4
History and history of Georgia	2	3	3
Geography	2	3	1
Biology	2	–	2
Physics	2	3	2
Chemistry	2	3	2
Physical education and sports	2	2	2
Civic education	4/0	–	–
Arts and crafts	0/2	–	–
Music	0/2	–	–
Civil protection	–	–	1/0
One subject to be chosen among: Economics; State and citizenship; Law; Geography of global problems	–	2	–
One subject to be chosen among: Music; Arts and crafts; History of Arts; Technical drawing; Drama	–	2	–
One subject to be chosen among those included within the 2 groups above, or among: Biology; Physics; Chemistry	–	–	2
Total weekly periods (max.)	31	33	28–27

Source: Ministry of Education and Science. *National study plans for general basic education 2010-2011*. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2005 showed that the overall secondary school net attendance ratio was 88.3% in 2005 and compared to the primary school attendance level, where around 5.4% per cent of children were not attending school at all, 11.7% of children of secondary school age were not attending secondary school. It is expected that some of these children are attending primary school. Less than 7% of children of secondary school age were attending primary school when they should be attending secondary school. Therefore, the remaining 5% were not attending school at all. The proportion of children who are secondary school age but attending primary school was higher in Kvemo Kartli (11.6%), in rural areas (8.5%), among children in poorer households (10.9%) and among households where the ethnic group of the household head is Azerbaijani (14.2%). As expected, this proportion is highest among children age 12, reflecting the fact that education had previously been started one year later than at present. (SDS & UNICEF, 2008).

In 2006/07 there were 2,284 public and 257 private general education schools in the country. There were 456 non-Georgian schools or Georgian schools with non-



Georgian sectors, of which 159 were Russian, 140 Armenian, 123 Azerbaijani, as well as several Ossetian and Abkhazian. In the same academic year, the number of students enrolled in public schools amounted to 599,980; an additional 36,601 students were in private schools. The number of private schools is increasing. Compared to 2003, the number of students enrolled in private schools has doubled. (MES, October 2007). According to MES, in 2009/10 there were 2,462 general education schools, of which 2,179 in the public sector. The total enrolment was 624,526 students, of whom 47,723 in the private sector. Out of this total, 166,586 students (of whom 10,409 in private schools) were enrolled in grades 7 to 9 and 168,803 students (of whom 12,050 in private schools) were in grades 10 to 11/12. The total number of general education teachers was 79,891 (of whom 68,587 were female teachers).

In the 2009/10 academic year, 11,995 students were accepted into the 42 institutions that provide vocational education and training (VET). Of these, 38 were VET centers exclusively and four of them were higher education institutes that also provide some VET courses. The duration of the overwhelming majority of the courses is between six and 18 months. The main focus is on six sectors: construction, restaurant/hotel/tourism, textiles, agriculture, IT and transport (including mechanics and drivers). (GTZ, 2010).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

In 2006 Georgia participated for the first time in an international assessment exercise, namely the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which is administered to grade 4 pupils. It also participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2007, which is administered to 15-year-olds. A National Assessment of fourth graders carried out in 2003 by the National Examinations Center was based on the PIRLS 2002 framework and methodology. The 2003 examinations provided evidence of large disparities in outcomes. In the Georgian language examinations, for instance, the results were much better in cities and valley regions than in villages and mountain regions; girls did better than boys in every part of the Georgian language examinations. Furthermore, almost half of grade 4 pupils were found to be unable to master the topics that were included in the mathematics syllabus, and a maximum of 42% of pupils were found to be ready to continue to grade 5 in the Georgian language and writing skills were 'very poorly developed'.

Teaching staff

Teachers are trained at colleges and higher education institutions.

The Tbilisi State University, the Batumi State University, the Kutaisi State University and the Institute of Western Languages and Cultures offer courses where trainees qualify as teachers and graduate in their main specialty (mathematics, history, philology, etc.). Teacher education is also offered at the Tbilisi Pedagogical University, the Pedagogical Institutes of Telavi and Tskhinvali and the Tbilisi Pedagogical College.



Preschool and primary (elementary) education teachers are trained at colleges. Higher education institutions offer teacher training for all levels of education. A total of forty specializations are offered by higher and secondary vocational education institutions. A bachelor's degree in education normally lasts four years. Student teachers have also to practice in schools for a period varying from three to six months, according to the main field of their specialization. In order to graduate, students must pass two or four state examinations and submit a thesis at the end of the last term of study. The academic programme includes subjects such as history, political science, psychology, philosophy, physical education, etc., and the required subjects for the teacher profession.

The Law on Education (1997) specified that the minimum amount of a teacher's salary should not be less than the average salary of civil servants. Teachers who have worked during twenty-five years receive a pension according to the length of service, equivalent to 50% of their salary, which is paid to them whether they are still working or not. In private schools, teacher's salaries are determined by the founder(s) of the school and, generally speaking, they are higher than the salaries of teachers in state schools. Primary school teachers are mainly women, but the number of male teachers increases at higher levels. At higher education institutions, there are more male than female teachers. The average age of teachers is 40-45 years.

The main goal of the National Center for Teacher Professional Development is to promote enhancement of quality teaching and learning in schools by ensuring professional knowledge in teachers, establishing high performance standards and raising professional status of teachers. Since 2008 the Center had been implementing the activities along the two main priority directions: professional development of in-service teachers; and attracting qualified teachers, supporting their training and retention on teacher positions.

According to the Law on General Education, after receiving a relevant academic qualification (normally a bachelor's degree), a teacher shall go through an induction period and pass a teacher certification exam to ensure that his/her knowledge and skills are compatible with the teachers' professional standard. Teacher's professional success very much relies on the experience gained in the first years of work at school. In addition, during the first years of teaching, a teacher faces a widest range of challenges. That is why it is important that the new, young teachers get the help of experienced, highly qualified teachers, mentors. A mentor is a qualified and experienced teacher, who expresses readiness to assist a beginner teacher in developing pedagogical skills, demonstrating abilities and obtaining positive experience.

In 2008/09 and 2009/10 academic years, through Teacher Professional Development Center initiative, a two-year pilot project of teacher probation is being implemented. The goals of the project are: to regulate the process of entering teacher's profession, as well as establish and develop legislative and institutional base for the probation system; to support beginner teacher's professional development and employment; to popularize teaching profession; to fully exploit authority, knowledge and skills of experienced teachers.



Currently a state programme of induction for 2010/11 is being developed, which will consider the experience gained from the pilot projects. The goal of the state programme is to effectively establish the induction system and develop relevant normative and institutional foundation, so that the involvement in the probation program becomes accessible country-wide. About 500-600 inductees will be selected within the state programme. They will complete a one-year probation period in different schools of Georgia with the supervision of 120 mentors.

Teacher registration management information system is another important initiative. It allows all Education Resource Centers (ERC), public schools and registered teachers to enter, search or update data in the system via Internet. Entering certain part of information will be the responsibility of the schools, while the information about a teacher's certification will be provided by the National Examination Center. Data on teacher's professional development will be contributed by the accredited programmes. Each educator will have an opportunity to check personal data and make updates and additions as needed using the school computer lab or the ERC. Therefore, the system will offer teachers simple and convenient form of registration for the certification exams.

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- National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement: <http://www.nea.ge/> [In Georgian and English. Last checked: August 2011.]



National Center for Teacher Professional Development: <http://www.tpdg.ge/> [In Georgian and English. Last checked: August 2011.]

National Curriculum and Assessment Center: <http://www.ncac.ge/> [In Georgian; some information in English. Last checked: August 2011.]

National Examinations Center: <http://www.naec.ge/> [In Georgian and English. Last checked: August 2011.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>