

Higher Education Support Program

2014 Strategy

The improvement of higher education system is one of the key challenges for Georgia's democratic development. Higher education instills norms and attitudes crucial to democracy in its students, who then become a driving force for Georgia's democratic reforms and the country's overall modernization process. More open, democratic, and inclusive higher education system will encourage in young citizens of Georgia a greater appreciation for diversity and critical thinking skills. The new leadership of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoES) has attempted to address challenges of higher education and proposed important reforms in 2013. Over the year 2014 the OSGF will assist the MoES in addressing key challenges of higher education in Georgia and increase public participation in and public awareness of higher education reform related processes.

In 2014 OSGF plans to focus its support on the following:

- Improvement of HE quality
- Increasing access of disadvantaged groups to HE
- Strengthening of democratic governance of HEIs
- Ensuring civil society participation in HE policy dialogue.

Over the months OSGF will assist its partners to develop policy papers to propose innovative solutions to key educational problems, lead public debates, speak with decision makers, carry on advocacy campaigns, and cover higher-education related issues in media. OSGF's particular focus will be on the advancement of policies for young people from disadvantaged rural areas, IDPs, ethnic minorities, and students with disabilities (making HEI accessible for disabled, development of inclusive learning environment, targeted scholarships, etc).

OSGF will partner with TTs that have experience in complex analysis of issues in higher education, academic and applied research development, to develop policy papers and advocate for changes aimed at higher education quality improvement. OSGF will facilitate the improvement of university governance structure and developing system of governance that meets the needs of faculty, students and wider society.

OSGF will work closely with civil society to promote policy development through open, inclusive and consultative process. The program will support the establishment of a standing committee of key CSOs, education experts, and key Ministry of Education staff for continued dialogue and involvement of stakeholders in higher education system improvement.

In addition to the experienced CSOs, the OSGF will give support to established student groups oriented towards positive change of the education system.

In 2014 the OSGF will fund the following activities:

- Development of policy papers
- Advocacy campaigns for changes
- Public debates in Tbilisi and the regions
- Establishment of a Standing Committee
- Small grants for student initiatives.