

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

2020-2021 REPORT



2022

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF GEORGIA

Introduction



The report reviews the progress made in 2020-2021 under the Unified Strategy of Education and Science (2017-2021).¹

Vocational education reform is based on the priorities declared by the parliament and the Government of the country in relation to the development of human capital in the country and ensures the fulfillment of the obligations undertaken 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 should be noted that the "Vocational Education Reform Strategy" approved by the government in 2013 covers the years 2013-2020. The evaluation of the implementation of the reform strategy was carried out with the support of the European Training Foundation. The recommendations of the evaluation were taken into account in the process of preparing a new strategy for vocational education, which was developed with the technical assistance of the European Union and covers 2022-2027 years.

The document addresses the progress of activities planned and implemented in 2020-2021. 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. The above-mentioned policy documents, regulations and

agreements are the basis of the Vocational Education Development Action Plan for 2020-2021, the implementation of which is the prerogative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.



The introduction should address the situation caused by the pandemic (COVID-19) in the world since 2020 and its impact on the education sector. As a result of the aggravated situation in the spring, lifestyle changes began in almost all countries of the world, restrictions on social activities, slowdown in international relations and economic activities, and public health services became a priority over other services. Consequently, the education sector, as one of the areas with high mobility, both within the country and abroad, has faced the greatest challenge in all countries.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the largest disruption in the education sector in history, with an incredible impact on every student or teacher in the world, from primary education to vocational and higher education. The pandemic affected 94% of learners worldwide were affected by the pandemic, representing 1.58 billion children and youth, from pre-primary to higher education, in 200 countries⁴." - 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.

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,

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

² <http://mes.gov.ge/uploads/300.pdf>

³ <http://mes.gov.ge/uploads/files/kanoni-profesiuli-ganatilebis-sheaxe-2018.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

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 programs⁵. The shutdown of the enterprises has clearly suspended apprenticeship programs.

The slowdown in economic processes and the passive role of business had 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. However, since 2021, educational and economic processes have been gradually restored amid the easing of pandemic restrictions. The business sector in the country has also become more active, thus making it possible to restore work-based learning processes.

The abovementioned overview presents that the implementation of the Vocational Education Reform Strategy (2013-2020) and its Action Plan for 2020-2021 is the result of the special efforts of all parties / agencies involved. The reporting period largely includes 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>

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

Strategic Task 1: Compliance of vocational education with the labor market requirements and 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 individuals.

The process of transition from education to the labor market and its associated difficulties remain a challenge for all countries, regardless of the arrangement of the education system. Naturally, the degree of complexity varies from country to country, and forms of partnership in the employment and education sectors play a major 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 and Science of Georgia has introduced and / or institutionally strengthened various forms of partnership with them.

Based on the feasibility study conducted and the proposed recommendations, in 2020 the Ministry began to develop, evaluate and discuss a new model for the institutional arrangement of vocational education management with stakeholders. Since the strategic goal of the reform is to stimulate the participation of the private sector through public-private partnership, both in the policy development, implementation and evaluation stages, the concept of the new management model was based on this principle. Also noteworthy is the task of decentralizing management, which involves horizontal diversification and redistribution of responsibilities. In response to the identified challenges, also based on the recommendations of the participating parties and international best practices, a new management model has been developed and by the private and public sectors a new institution was established. According to the new concept, the main principle that guides the process of management and development of vocational education is participation - accelerating the development of the human capital of the country through the joint efforts and sharing of responsibilities of the public and private sectors. In 2021, the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia jointly established a non-profit (non-commercial) legal entity - Skills Agency, on the basis of consultations with the employers' associations operating in Georgia. The purpose of the jointly established Agency is through public-private partnerships: to promote the development of modern skills tailored to the needs of the country's

economy; to promote inclusive vocational education and development tailored to the needs of the individual; to promote the internationalization of human capital development policy.

The Agency will perform the following main functions: to support the development / update of occupational standards and its approval; Support the development / update of vocational education standards; Support the development of educational resources and textbooks in the field of vocational education; Support stakeholders in work-based learning (private sector, educational institutions, sectoral associations / organizations); Coordination of obtaining the status of a training enterprise; Support the introduction of innovative approaches of teaching; Support the development of vocational student assessment tools; facilitation / coordination of the participation of representatives of the relevant field in the process of awarding qualification. Provide consultations / trainings / capacity-building activities related to VET to stakeholders interested in vocational education; Support organizations involved in the provision of vocational education, both in human resource empowerment, as well as in material resource management and institutional development; Support for teacher professional development; Support provision of inclusive and accessible vocational education and student services; Support career planning services within vocational education and etc.

The highest governing body of the Agency is the Supervisory Board, which is composed on the principle of public-private partnership, with representatives of business associations and state organizations in the country. The Board determines the policy of the Agency and performs the most important functions (appoints and dismisses the Director of the Agency, approves the long-term action plan of the Agency, approves the structure of the Agency, the budget, etc.) for the effective operation of the organization. At the same time, it is important that the Agency itself carries out its functions through sectoral skills organizations / professional associations and creates an incentive to unite sectoral associations and support their cooperation under a common goal.

In 2020, the World Economic Forum (WEF) named Georgia one of the ten innovative countries in the world with a new vocational education management model and was awarded the status of Skills Accelerator as one of the most flexible government initiatives to tackle the unemployment gap (closing the skills gap accelerator).

Taking into account unstable situation and expectations of private sector, clearly driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, work-based learning faced particular challenges, especially in 2020. The restrictions imposed in the country have led to the suspension of business operators in almost all major sectors, especially in the field of tourism, which is one of the priority areas for the implementation of dual programs. However, 5 state colleges obtained the right to implement qualification programs in agriculture, transport and culinary arts for additional 222 students. While regulations caused by the pandemic were reduced in 2021, it became possible to re-activate work-based learning. In 2021, 13 public institutions obtained the right to implement dual programs, as a result, 395 new places for learners were allocated. In 2020, public and private colleges admitted 384 new students in agriculture, construction, tourism, food production, veterinary, and transportation to qualifications programs based on a work-based learning approach. And in 2021, admission to dual programs was announced at 521 places. All of this suggests that despite the pandemic, the private sector is making long-term calculations and not stopping investing in vocational education. It is noteworthy that as of 2021, more than 100 private companies are involved in the implementation of dual programs.

2020-2021 years have been used fruitfully for the development of various regulations, the obligation of which was created by the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education adopted in 2018. Among them are 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 of the same group and extensive consultations, the development of a regulatory document on the "Rules and Conditions for Obtaining the Status of a Learning Enterprise" was completed. In 2021, these regulations were submitted for approval. 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. Following the entry into force of the regulations, with the support of the Skills Agency the process of its implementation will be active from 2022.

It should be noted that an interesting model in the format of public-private partnership has been developed between LEPL College "Spectri" and **Ltd. "Euromaster"**. The partnership launched a construction project aimed at promoting college

development, developing dual vocational education, and enhancing the qualifications of college students through a practical component that will facilitate student employment. Within the framework of the project, the college allocated space for the project and the company began equipping it with relevant resources. It is noteworthy that the company will provide the students involved in the program with paid internships and further employment.

The Georgian education system allows **the recognition of learning outcomes achieved within 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. According to the regulation, the institution implementing vocational education program is authorized to recognize non-formal education as well as any legal entity authorized to implement the vocational training / retraining program, if the organization meets the requirements for the right to recognize non-formal education.

As of 2021, the right to recognize non-formal education has been acquired by **4 educational institutions in 8 areas** in accordance with the legislation of Georgia –“Community College Natally Academy Ltd, Tegeta Academy Ltd., Business and Technology Academy Ltd. and Georgian Business Academy Ltd. within the framework of the right to implement a vocational education program / vocational training/retraining program and for a corresponding period. To support the non-formal education recognition process 51 consultants have been certified to provide consultations to interested parties as needed.

In order to provide non-formal education recognition services in digital form, a new component has been added to the Education Management Information System, which supports the electronic management of recognition processes: submission of applications for eligibility; Confirmation of entitlement; Registration of applicants for education recognition; Consulting; Recognition of non-formal education and issuance of relevant document. A register of consultants was also included in the system. The abovementioned four institutions have been granted the right to recognize non-formal education through electronic system (E-vet, QMS). For those seeking recognition of non-formal education in 2021, call for applications was announced by two educational institutions (Tegeta Academy Ltd., Natality academy Public College Ltd.). During the reporting period, non-formal education received in the field of logistics was recognized by one person.

Development of key competencies: In recent years, the development of entrepreneurial competencies at all levels of education has acquired special importance. In the research of future skills, the demand for entrepreneurial skills is named as a priority, which determines the need for its integration into educational programs. The concept behind **the development of entrepreneurial thinking** is to enable students to make creative, opportunity-oriented, innovative decisions throughout their lives. At the same time, they should be given the opportunity to develop the ability and desire to create something of value for society, regardless of profession. This is a key principle of entrepreneurial thinking. Accordingly, the teaching of entrepreneurial skills at the level of vocational education, along 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 currently is a mandatory component of the program. It is noteworthy that in recent years, a number of new theories have been developed around the world to improve entrepreneurship education. Noteworthy is the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), which offers interesting approaches to developing relevant 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 actively cooperated with various organizations. In 2019, with the funding from the US Department of State, the Ministry in partnership with the N(N)LE “Environment and Development”, and the University of California, Davis, D-Lab, launched a 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, which in turn are based on the project-based teaching method. The Skills Agency is already working to support the introduction of the new module.

Under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) project activities were carried out in 2021, in order to introduce an entrepreneurial culture in VET institutions. In particular, Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC) implemented a project in colleges "Iberia" and "Modusi" in order to support transformation of their organizational culture and support structural changes related to internal institutional strengthening. Within the project, a manual was developed: "Internal Institutional Entrepreneurship in Vocational Education Institutions" and methodological principles of entrepreneurship benchmarking in VET institutions. The project also developed internal institutional development plans and guidelines for pilot institutions, self-directed training course "Internal Organizational Entrepreneurship in Vocational Education Institution" <https://ctconline.ge/enrol/index.php?id=86>. Further introduction of the Entrepreneurial College concept will be supported by UNDP / SDC. The processes are coordinated by the Skills Agency.

It should be noted that with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the Israel's Center for International Cooperation "MASHAV", a project was implemented at the College "Information Technology Academy" aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and technology education and strengthening creative thinking among VET students. Within the framework of the project, simulation games and hackathons were developed by VET students in the context of entrepreneurial education, as well as a one-month long training in the field of entrepreneurial and digital competencies. Nine teams consisting of students from various VET institutions participated in the hackathon.

Citizen participation in public life is one of the key issues of democratic governance. In recent years, there has been a decline in the level of civic activism and involvement, which is particularly painful for a developing Georgia-like democracy. Participation in civic life is relatively low in non-urban settlements, leading to inefficient 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 and Science and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the evaluation of the existing educational module began. Some challenges were identified and by the decision of the Ministry, the organization coordinated the process of developing a new module based on extensive consultations. As a result of the work carried out, a new module was developed and approved. The module takes a holistic approach to the process of teaching civic education and focuses on acquiring factual and conceptual knowledge on the one hand, and on developing the essential citizenship skills of a democratic society on the other. Within the framework of the project, a guidelines for teachers and students were developed and a training of civic education teachers was implemented (107 civic education teachers were trained). From 2022, the new civic education module will gradually become part of every VET program.

It is noteworthy that in 2021 a new methodology for the development of occupational qualifications was developed with the support of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ). Based on the new methodology, approaches related to the teaching of key competencies will be revised, with significant emphasis on the development of a green competency ecosystem, the development of digital competencies and the strengthening of foreign language teaching.

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 VET 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 developed 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 was developed and approved. These will enable educational institutions to engage in economic activity, the income of which will contribute to the financial sustainability of the educational institution, development of educational process, acquisition of additional funds to finance educational process and improvement of the quality of products / services. From 2022, the Skills Agency began to support introduction of the regulation.

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 and Science 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 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 at the system level 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 in 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 local institutions, but also educational institutions abroad.

The compatibility of the credit system in vocational education is a prerequisite for strengthening international cooperation. In 2020, the Ministry, with the support of various agencies and partners, developed 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 provide support for student mobility.

Relevant legal acts on the rules and conditions for the development and implementation of exchange and joint programs were developed and initiated for approval with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The approval of the Acts will facilitate the implementation of exchange and joint programs, especially given that from 2021 Georgia was given the opportunity to participate in **Erasmus+** at the level of vocational education. Erasmus+ National Office of Georgia conducted an information seminar for VET schools and other stakeholders. The seminar discussed all the opportunities that the Erasmus+ program offers to Georgian VET schools: institutional cooperation projects, staff and student mobility, information about leading vocational training centers, etc. Terms, requirements and deadlines for participating in projects were also discussed at the seminar. Thus, Georgia has the opportunity to enter the European vocational education area from 2022. From 2022, the new strategy of vocational education will intensify the support of VET institutions to stimulate their participation in the program.

Several interesting, practical initiatives have been launched in the direction of internationalization. With the support of the Ministry, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Georgian Farmers' Association, in cooperation with public and private educational institutions a new project was launched - "Internationalization of Vocational Education and International Practice Initiative between Georgia and Germany / Britain in the Agrarian Direction". Under the project, in 2020, students of vocational and higher education institutions underwent a five-month paid internship in Germany. Successful graduates were awarded German certificates. In 2021, the training of teachers and students in the field of agriculture was supported in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is noteworthy that within the framework of the initiative, in 2021, a wide range of online consultation meetings were held with VET students and teachers.

It is also important to note the success achieved in the tourism sector in terms of internationalization. In 2021, the Georgian Association of Mountain Guides (co-founder of the Adventure Tourism School with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Mountain Resorts Development Company Ltd.), became a member of the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA). The mountain guide's program of the Adventure Tourism School has gained international recognition. The 30 graduates of the Adventure Tourism School received the status of an international mountain guides.

In the field of internationalization, the new initiatives of the European Training Foundation (ETF) are also noteworthy, 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 European Education Foundation (ETF) Network for Excellence (ENE) network (<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/projects-activities/projects/network-excellence>). The aim of the initiative is to establish an international network whose members will have active communication and share their experiences and knowledge. All this will contribute to the formation of new partnerships, the sharing of knowledge and experience, the creation and implementation of new ideas. In 2020, a study was conducted by the organization that examined the autonomy of Excellence Centers (selected colleges) and their involvement in public-private partnerships. At the end of 2020, the international conference "ETF Network for Excellence (ENE) launch conference -" Centers of Vocational Excellence as engines for VET development ", discussed the results of the study and prospects for future cooperation. Institutions involved in the initiative participate in the following areas: social inclusion and equality, green school, development of entrepreneurial ecosystem. As part of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development Initiative, a study visit to Finland was conducted in 2021 with the participation of the vocational education development department and VET institutions. In addition to sharing experiences and getting acquainted with the Finnish model, the event validated the Public-Private Partnership and Autonomy Assessment Document developed by the ETF. Also in 2021, the first opening meeting was held within the framework of ENE Initiative GRETA – “Greening Responses to Excellence through Thematic Actions”. The online meeting shared the experience of the countries involved in the initiative on the topic of "going green". In 2021, the first meeting was held between the representatives of the countries involved in the Social Inclusion in the Network of Excellence Partnership (ENE), which also includes Georgia.

As it is known, vocational education reform is carried out with the significant support of international donor organizations: The European Union has been actively supporting Georgia's vocational education system for the last decade. The scope of its program has been further enhanced during the reform process, and the current program covers both the education / skills development system and the employment sector. With the launch of budget and technical assistance projects and the grant component, Georgia will receive additional resources to upgrade its systems, totaling € 48 million over 5 years. In 2020, the commitments undertaken by the country in 2019 were assessed, and after the conclusion on full compliance Georgia received annual aid. And in 2021, the commitments made by the country in 2020 were assessed and the budget of Georgia received the defined assistance of the year.

Also within the project, in 2020, the selection of 9 grant projects was completed, the implementation of which will help create new effective mechanisms in the field of education and employment, to increase the employment capacity of the population. In 2021, Vocational Education Development Department was actively involved in coordinating activities planned through grant projects and was also involved in project monitoring.

With the support of the EU Technical Assistance Project, the geographical coverage of vocational education was also assessed and an analysis document was developed, which became the basis for decisions on development of new locations. The project also facilitates the process of developing a new sectoral strategy for vocational education, covering 2022-2027. With the support of the project, a working group on the strategy was coordinated during the year and draft strategy and action plan were developed, public discussions were held. Approval of the strategy and relevant action plan is scheduled for 2022. It should be noted that the strategy development process considered the recommendations prepared by ETF in 2021 as a result of its assessment of the Vocational Education Reform Strategy 2013-2020.

The 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. With the support of the program, a new master's program "Vocational Education and Human Resources Development" was

launched at Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. It is noteworthy that the program is the first in Georgia and the South Caucasus to train vocational education specialists. The program is based on the newest approaches to vocational education and involves collaboration with universities in Germany and other leading countries. Relevant educational literature has been translated into Georgian for the program.

With the support of the German Bank for Reconstruction and Development (KfW) and with the involvement of the Ministry of Education and Science, the project "Skills 4 Georgia" was launched. The project is led by the Ministry of Education and Science and implemented by the Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency (ESIDA). The project envisages the establishment and development of a qualitatively different educational center (so-called Center of Excellence), the new educational center will have the function of a hub and will assist in the development of existing VET institutions. The project plans to equip partner schools and strengthen their capacity by increasing access to teacher training, exchange programs and international certification courses. Within the framework of the project, the concept of Excellence Center was prepared and an international consulting company was selected. The company will provide technical assistance to the project. As part of its activities, it is planned to work on institutional development issues, as well as to develop a modern design of the building for the procurement of construction services and equipment, which will be implemented in 2022.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has completed negotiations with the Bank on assistance in establishing an Institute of Winemaking on the basis of Telavi University and an International School of Tourism in Dusheti. Within the framework of the German-Georgian bilateral negotiations, it has been agreed to allocate grant funding in the amount of 24 million Euros for the implementation of these projects. Preparatory work is planned for 2022.

With financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a strong supporter of vocational education reform. Key issues such as the integration of the general education component, the improvement of entrepreneurial education, the regulation of the economic activities of colleges, the institutional strengthening of institutions, quality assurance, the development of the adult education system was supported by the UNDP. It should be noted that within the framework of the grant agreement signed with the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement relevant mechanisms for elimination of so-called educational deadlocks were successfully introduced. The project was completed in 2021. Under the project, grants were awarded to about 30 public and private colleges, which supported popularization of VET institutions, its institutional development, curricula development, legal acts development, introduction of new authorization standards, and more. Within the project 6 VET institutions were provided with modern equipment in the field of agriculture. The institutions received VET students in agriculture and forestry programs for the first time in 2021. Also, 10 target secondary schools were selected under the EU-funded project "Creating Better Life-Long Learning Opportunities through Local Partnerships". It is planned to strengthen secondary school capacities for provision of VET programs.

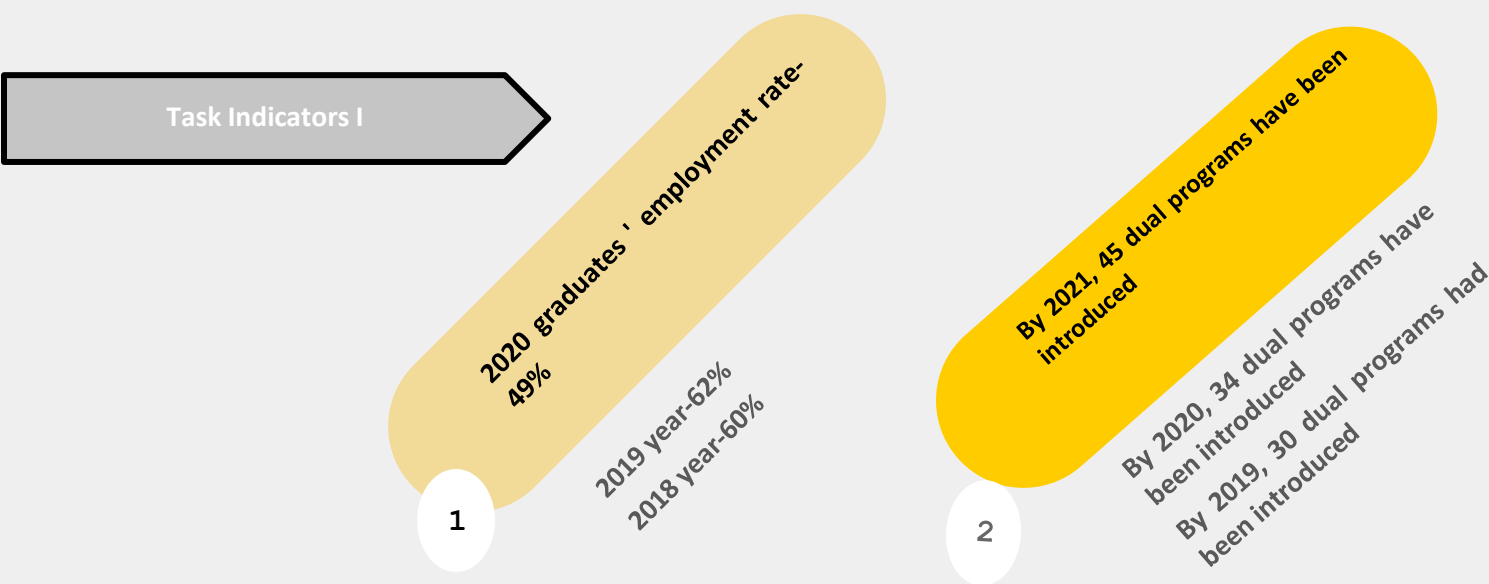
In 2021, with the support of the UNDP, two new projects were launched in collaboration with the HR Professionals Association, the International Digital Institute (IDI) and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. The first project, implemented by the Association of HR Professionals, aimed at developing documents that would help vocational education institutions strengthen their organizational and HR systems. This, in turn, will help create an educational environment that meets the requirements of the authorization standards. Institutional capacity building activities were also carried out under the project. As for the second project, it was mainly focused on the formation of the VET Institution of the Future ("VET of Tomorrow" (IDI), in which digital innovations will be introduced. The project will support VET institutions in formation of vision of HR and organizational development and to better tailor internal workflows to authorization requirements. In addition, introduce modern technologies and digital tools in the learning process, which will make educational programs more diverse and interesting.

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 implemented projects focused on: development of a public-private partnership model, definition of a new funding model, development of a teacher professional development model. The project created a new model and standard for teacher professional development and developed recommendations on the remuneration scheme. Relevant recommendations were also submitted to the Ministry in order to introduce a new approach to financing vocational education. The project was completed in 2021 and the Ministry continued work on a new model of teacher professional development. It is noteworthy that in 2021 work on the funding

approach continued with the support of GIZ. A relevant organization has been selected to submit a new funding model and mechanisms to the Ministry in the first half of 2022, taking into account the above recommendations.

During the reporting period, negotiations between the Asian Development Bank (ADB) 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 and Science, 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. In 2021, the program carried out preparatory work, completed the selection of general education institutions and identified the programs that will be implemented in the 20 selected general education institutions. The concept of educational hubs was also developed and reflects the vision of transforming colleges into skills hubs.

In 2021, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a new five-year program “Employers for Vocational Education” to promote human capital and sustainable economic development in Georgia. The program's budget is \$ 24 million and it aims to stimulate cooperation between employers and VET institutions, as well as to develop educational programs in cooperation with the private sector and to promote employment. Under the program, a grant competition "Stimulating Private Sector Involvement in Skills Development" was announced, with a grant component budget of \$ 13 million.



Strategic Task 2: ensuring access to vocational education based on lifelong learning principle

In accordance with the order of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of February 11, 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 were selected for the simulation visits. In 2020-2021 guidelines, definitions of standards, guidelines for evidence, justification of program feasibility and quality assurance manual were developed. The work was based on the conducted research and analysis, which reflected the implementation of new standards, the needs of institutions at the systemic and individual level, also on the Satisfaction Survey of the VET institutions, which reflected the results in terms of provided support services. Workshops, information seminars and trainings for the quality assurance units of the institutions were held, which were attended by up to 300 representatives of 90 authorized educational institutions.

113 authorization experts underwent four-day training in new approaches to evaluating institutions under new authorization standards. Prepared a guide on the quality assurance of the implementation of programs, which is a supporting material directly during the process. Trainings for the representatives of the institutions in the verification of the evaluation system and the implementation of the development evaluations were conducted. Under the current regulations, in 2020, 85 institutions submitted self-assessment reports to the NCEQE, the analysis of which identified systemic challenges and planned further support measures. 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. It should be noted that in 2021, development of QMS - self-assessment automation software - has already been completed and the users of the institutions have been trained, which ensures the full automation of the self-assessment process of the institutions.

In 2021, the NCEQE, with the support of the UNDP, started certifying the VET quality assurance specialists. The certificate was obtained by 47 specialists for a period of 5 years. The new corps of experts in the authorization of vocational education institutions and vocational training / retraining programs includes a quota of certified specialists with a quota of experts in quality assurance of vocational education. In 2021, NCEQE strengthened its corps of experts with an additional 29 experts in the field. Currently, the corps of experts for the authorization of VET institutions and vocational training / retraining programs consists of 45 experts in VET quality assurance and 140 experts in the field.

Also, in 2020-2021, members of the authorization council were trained twice, with the aim of introducing new standards of authorization and strengthening the capacity of the Board. As a result, in 2020 applications for program authorization made by 27 institutions were evaluated based entirely on the new standards. According to the new standards, in 2020, 23 (20 state, 3 private) VET institutions obtained the right to implement 135 new programs. And in 2021, 25 (19 state, 6 private) VET institutions obtained the right to implement 107 new programs. Also, in 2021, 6 educational institutions (4 public and 2 private) underwent institutional authorization in accordance with the new standards.

It is noteworthy that a review of the credibility and transparency of the implementation of the authorization standards and training / retraining programs standards was carried out and relevant recommendations were developed. An analytical document on compliance with the the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) indicators and quality assurance system evaluation methodology in accordance with EQAVET indicators were also developed. Based on these documents, an evaluation of the quality assurance system of vocational education will be carried out in 2022.

The Ministry of Education and Science has continued the process of implementing the regulations and new mechanisms that are an essential component of ensuring the principle of lifelong learning under the new law. A new approach developed for overcoming so called 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 UNDP and the NCEQE. 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) were granted authorization for integrated programs and up to 500 students with basic education were enrolled. And, in 2021, the scale of integrated programs has grown even more. As of 2021, general education learning outcomes were integrated in more than 30 secondary vocational education programs. A total of 28 educational institutions (22 public and 6 private) were authorized for implementation of integrated programs. By 2021, the number of places announced for integrated programs has increased to 800.

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. In July 2021 the rule was adopted, which regulates validation of general secondary education learning outcomes under the vocational education program achieved by a vocational student.

Naturally, 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 trainings were also available to college administration representatives and were aimed at familiarizing them with the specifics of integrated program administration issues.

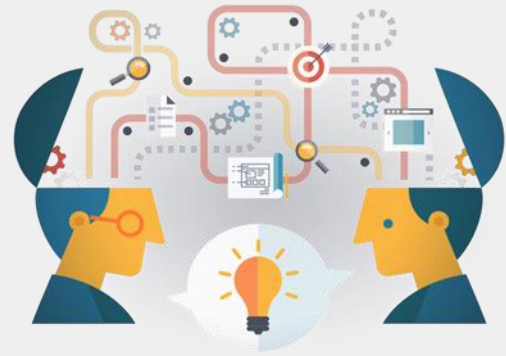
In order to ensure the maximum involvement of persons with disabilities and special educational needs in vocational education, as well as for the implementation of the principles of inclusion in vocational education, the Rule on the Identification of Persons with Special Educational needs and Implementation of Inclusive Vocational Education was developed and approved in 2022.

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, VET 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.

Also, in order to introduce the rules and conditions of enrollment in the vocational education program approved in 2021 and to administer the processes, relevant work was carried out on the vocational education management information system (E-vet.emis.ge) and the registration system (vet.emis.ge) as the initial enrollment of applicants, as well as to fill the remaining vacancies:

- A functions for filling questionnaire and for call for admission were integrated into the Evet.
- Required arrangements for online registration (Vet.emis.ge) of applicants were provided.
- During the 2021 Admission, for the agricultural programs, the method of selection was defined as "Practical Work Case Analysis". The Education management information system provided the sampling method using the online testing system testing.emis.ge.
- Motivational interviewing was also defined as one of the selection methods. For which a new functionality has been developed in the registration system (vet.emis.ge). According to the criteria and coefficients set for the sampling method, the system performed the automatic calculation of the final result.
- Relevant functionality needed to display the evaluation / testing schedule and results was developed on Vet.emis.ge. In order to ensure the enrollment procedures, relevant work was carried out to form the ranking lists and the final results, in accordance with the criteria and coefficients established for the selection method defined for the vocational education program.

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 abovementioned 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. E-management and automation of the processes is provided by the electronic system of vocational training and retraining programs, which was developed in 2019 by the LEPL Education Management Information System (EMIS).

In 2020-2021, under the coordination of the Ministry, the process of developing the adult education system was continued, which includes the introduction of a variety of programs, funding, promotion of services, development of new flexible procedures. Despite the delays due to the pandemic, from the introduction of the system to date, the right to implement a vocational training / retraining program has been obtained / confirmed by 77 legal entities for 349 vocational training and retraining programs. Of these, there are 60 educational institutions (public educational 35, private 25) and 17 non-educational (public non-educational 1, private non-educational 16) in total, about 7000 students are enrolled in vocational training and retraining programs. Since the introduction of the system, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has funded 237 programs of 40 legal entities (33 public educational, 1 public non-educational; 2 private educational, 4 private non-educational), to which more than 3500 individuals were enrolled. Persons trained in those years 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. Funded programs were implemented in Tbilisi, Shida and Kvemo Kartli, Adjara, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi and Imereti regions. 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, which was completed in 2021 by 20 students. Upon completion of the program, an internationally recognized certificate was issued, which significantly reflects the Georgian Government's priority on the internationalization of education. In addition, as a result of the cooperation between the state and the private sector, 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, and Science 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 education institutions.

With the financial support of the UNDP, more than 20 agricultural training / retraining programs were developed during the reporting period. In 2021, with the support of GIZ, a vocational training program "Diagnosis of Vehicles" was developed, as well as in cooperation with GIZ, the Georgian Association of Infrastructure Builders and the company "Nova" 2 new vocational training programs - "Safe operation of warehouse trucks" and "Bridge crane operation." In addition, in active partnership with GIZ, a VET training program "Installation of aluminum and metal-plastic doors, windows, sun protection systems" has been developed, which is planned to be implemented together with "Dio" Ltd. at their enterprise.

It should be noted that in order to fulfill the obligations under the Association agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part and in order to support energy efficiency, as well as training qualified persons in the production and use of renewable energy important activities were carried out. In particular, a memorandum was signed between the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable development, JSC "Georgian Energy Development Fund" (GEDF), the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement. In the framework of the memorandum, with the support of GIZ, following vocational training programs were developed: "Solar Photoelectric Installation of systems", "Installation of solar thermal systems", "Installation of small-scale biomass boilers and furnaces" and "Installation of surface geothermal and thermal pump systems". During the reporting period, the Georgian Technical University applied for the right to implement these programs.

After the introduction of the adult education system, in 2020 the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia became part of the vocational training / retraining system within the formal education system. Accordingly, in 2020-2021, vocational training / retraining of job seekers was carried out within the framework of formal programs.

Currently, the agenda is to improve the mechanism of state funding for training programs. That is why, in 2020, with the support of the German partner organization DVV International, work on elaboration of a new funding approach begun, which should make the existing scheme more flexible. As already mentioned above, with the support of GIZ, work has begun on a new approach of vocational education funding, which will also consider the flexible mechanisms of state funding for training/retraining programs.

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.

In 2021, the trainings organized by the NCEQE, to which about 70 institutions implementing training / retraining programs were invited, were attended by about 100 representatives of institutions implementing vocational training / vocational training programs. The trainings covered the following topics: teaching and assessment methods, form of work-based learning, informing the population about educational services, selection procedures, labor market analysis / research, displaying data in electronic system, certificate and its annexes.

DVV International plays an important role in the development and promotion of the formal adult education system in Georgia. With the support of DVV International 2 trainings were held in 2021 in order to increase the qualification

and capacity of adult education coordinators. The trainings covered issues such as: effective communication and negotiation, research techniques, labor market analysis and its importance, information campaigns and etc.

Also, within the framework of the USAID-funded project "ZRDA activity in Georgia", which aims to promote sustainable economic development in different regions, training equipment and educational resources were provided to the following educational institutions: Kaspi College, College "Modusi", College "Aisi", College "Gantiadi", College "Opizari" and Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University. Within the framework of the project, vocational training and retraining programs for tourist guides were developed.

At the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and with the financial support of DVV International, in December 2021, a survey of graduates of VET training and retraining programs was conducted for the first time in Georgia. It is a retrospective view of developments around the target group, as well as an impact assessment tool that includes a systematic analysis of the significant and long-term changes (positive or negative; planned or unplanned) that have taken place in the employment life of graduates. The research provides information on how the activities of the graduates in different areas (education, employment, self-employment, unemployment). The data obtained includes factual information about the graduates, as well as their perceptions and assessments.

The study included cohorts from different years, in particular, the target group was all graduates enrolled from May 2019 to June 2021 and who underwent training/retraining programs. A total of 1,050 graduates took part in the survey. It should be noted that the research questionnaire was integrated into the Education Management Information System.

According to the results, the employment rate of graduates of VET training/retraining programs is 76.4%. The highest employment rates were found in graduates of education, engineering, manufacturing, and construction, information, and communication technology. The self-employment rate among graduates is 16.9%. The employment rate is significantly higher among men - 81.4%, compared to women - 70.4%. According to age, the highest employment rate was found among 35-44 year old graduates, and lowest among 24 year old and younger graduates, it should be noted that the majority (90%) of respondents are satisfied with the short-term course they completed and even recommended it to their relatives / friends. In particular, to the question "Would you choose the same course if you have to apply now?", 90% of the respondents answered that they would not change their profession, and to the question "Would you recommend your relatives / friends to pass the program you took?" - 93.6% answered that would definitely recommend.

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. In 2020-2021 years the Good Governance Fund (GGF) and the World Bank project "Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education and Training" carried out activities addressing topics like the new model of professional development, the teacher standard, the new remuneration scheme, etc. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, the World Bank project developed following draft documents 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 of the concept of remuneration of a vocational education teacher has been prepared.

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 were

developed. Also in 2021, guidelines for relevant documents, for teacher recruitment and for piloting were developed. The introduction of a new model of teacher professional development is planned for 2022 in coordination with the Skills Agency.

In parallel with the development of a new professional development model, capacity building activities for teachers were held in 2020. 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 VET teachers and representatives of the administration were trained in Microsoft Teams. College administration capacity building activities were also supported, as well as training modules on strategic planning and research. Training was held for directors of vocational education institutions in entrepreneurship. Webinars were recorded on the following topics: communication strategies 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 businesses; integrating general education into vocational education; Evaluation of vocational education teachers in Germany, etc.

Also, in accordance with the renewed civic education module initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), a cycle of civic education teacher trainings was conducted (107 civic education teachers were trained).

In 2021-2021, work was actively underway to update VET qualifications. Through the joint work of the NCEQE and UNDP Grant Project and the Ministry “The Rule for Elaboration, Development and Approval of the Standard and Module / Modules of Vocational Education” was developed. Also, and with the support of GIZ, work has been completed on a new methodology for qualification development, which will be reflected in the abovementioned rule and will be approved in 2022. Prior to the introduction of the new methodology, the qualifications were updated within the existing methodology. In 2020, 3 qualifications were updated, while in 2021, 21 vocational education standards were revised and updated and 1 independent module was approved.

Through the joint work of the NCEQE and UNDP Grant Project and the Ministry the following legal acts based on the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education have been developed:

- 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 2020, the Education Management Information System developed technical specifications for development of an electronic register of qualifications and submitted it to the NCEQE for consideration and planning of further activities. Work will continue from 2022 in partnership with the Skills Agency.

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 and equipment of a multifunctional college for 200 students in Shida Kartli region, Kaspi municipality was completed. The college was authorized in 2021 and joined the 2021 admission.

In Guria region, in the village of Goraberezhoul, the construction of the branch of N(N)PL College “Horizonti” was completed. The college is designed for up to 180 students. The newly constructed branch of Rustavi college "Modusi" in Marneuli was also involved in the 2021 students admission. Rehabilitation of existing educational buildings in Telavi, Kobuleti and Kutaisi has been completed. The historical VET institution established by Niko Nikoladze in the village of Didi Jikhaishi, Samtredia Municipality, has also been fully rehabilitated and is being equipped. In 2021, the development of a new building of Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi was completed, which is

designated for VET. In 2021, students / listeners were admitted for the first time to newly developed locations in Keda, Poti and Shuakhevi.

Construction works are underway for the construction of new buildings in Khashuri, Borjomi, Tskaltubo, Lanchkhuti municipalities, which will be completed in 2022. Also, in 2022, the complete rehabilitation educational building of Samtskhe-Javakheti State University in Akhalkalaki will be completed. Also, for the development 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). It is planned to announce a tender in 2022 and start the construction process. Development of new locations will start in 2022 in Bolnisi and Kvareli municipalities.



In addition to the international level VET institutions supported by donor organizations, which have already been mentioned above, work also began in 2021 to establish a gastronomic academy in Gurjaani. The College, in partnership with the public and private sectors, is being developed in partnership with Caucasus University and Basque Culinary Center - one of the most successful institutions in the world.

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 (ESIDA), along with the construction of new colleges, built 26 new workshops in 8 vocational Institutions (Kachreti, Ambrolauri, Poti, etc.). In 2021, the construction of 6 workshops was completed in 6 VET institutions ("Phasisi", "New Wave", "Aisi", "Lakada" (Potskhoetseri), "Erkvani", "Kaspi").

In 2021, a unified rule of enrollment in educational institutions was introduced in the vocational education system, according to which, in 2021, for the first time it became possible to enroll VET students with unified enrollment procedures not only in public but in all private institutions. Thus, all authorized, including private institutions accept students only through a single admission, through a common platform. The application process uses a variety of mechanisms, which, depending on the specifics of the program, provide a much more flexible approach to student selection and evaluation - Vocational education institutions, together with partner organizations, including employers, organize the student selection process. Those wishing to enroll in higher vocational education programs have to pass the test organized by the National Assessment and Examinations Center (NAEC).

Following the completion of the selection procedures, the rule envisages formation of ranking lists of applicants, considering the relevant criteria for each program. In order to form a ranking list, if the applicant is a recipient of subsistence allowance in the unified database of socially vulnerable families, his / her ranking score is determined by multiplying received score on the 1.1 coefficient. The goal of setting a coefficient for socially vulnerable people in vocational education is to create equal opportunities and not to give preference to a specific group, the amount of the coefficient was determined based on the analysis of EMIS data.

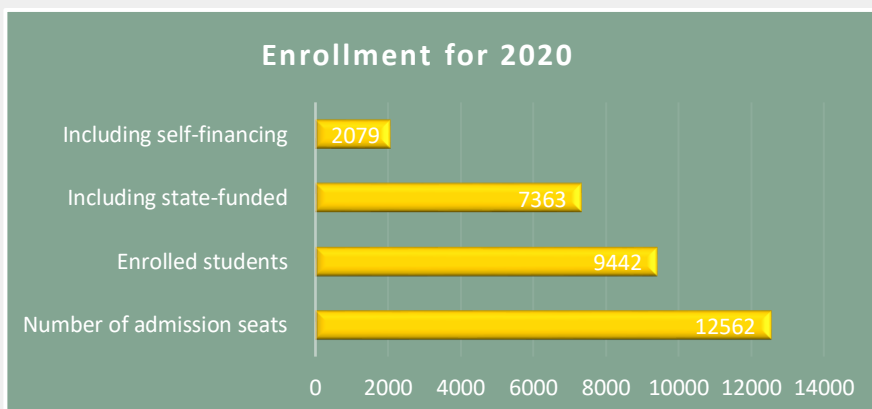
One of the important innovations is the quotation of places for admission according to the level of education achieved and the determination of the percentage of places for admission to the respective program in order to enroll applicants in accordance with the following principle: 70% of places on basic vocational education programs are allocated to persons whose highest achieved level of education is basic level of general education (taking into account their ranking points), and 30% of places on the program are allocated to persons whose highest level of education achieved is more

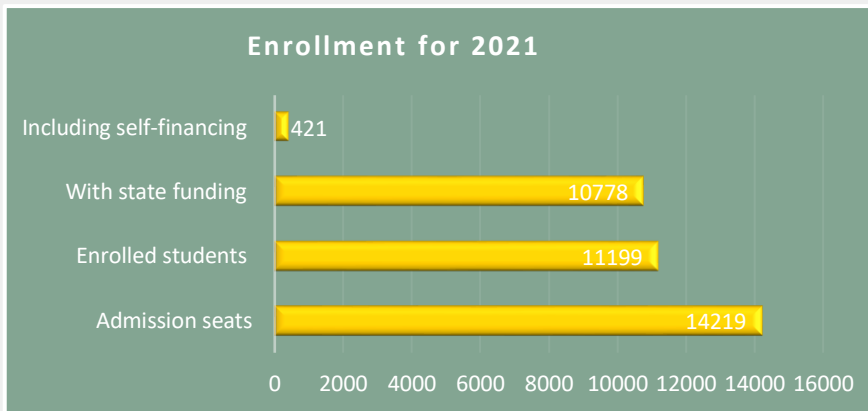
than basic level of general education. As for the other programs, 70% of places on secondary vocational education programs and on higher vocational education programs are allocated to persons, whose highest achieved level of education is secondary level of general education. And ranking list on the remaining 30% of places is defined by ranking point of persons whose highest level of education is vocational and/or higher education. If the places won't be filled, the remaining places will be used for enrollment of the applicants in the second ranking list. The purpose of setting quotas is to provide maximum access to a particular program for individuals whose level of education meets the prerequisites for admission to that program. In the student selection process, if he / she is competing with individuals with a secondary level of general or higher education (who have the opportunity to study in other level programs based on previous education), there is a high probability that a person with a basic education will stay out of the program (as evidenced by previous experience). Thus, according to the proposed approach, the main number of seats allocated to the program, 70% will be filled by representatives of the target group, and 30% - by other persons. The target group is determined by the level of education achieved, which makes it possible to select students for programs at the appropriate level in accordance with the principle of justice, as well as stimulate the involvement of young people in vocational education.

The above rule also envisages exceptions for enrollment in a higher vocational education program without passing the test and defines the categories who may enjoy this right.

In order to ensure that all persons receive an education based on their individual educational needs and abilities, the rule differently regulates enrollment procedures for applicants with special educational needs. It is noteworthy that almost all programs for which admission is announced in the respective year were also be available to applicants with special educational needs above the maximum number of places for VET students, within 15% of the places declared, A person who has been certified by a multidisciplinary team as a person with special educational needs and has passed the professional orientation in accordance with the established procedure, has the right to make the appropriate choice on the registration portal for enrollment.

Also, some benefits were introduced for individuals who could not report for testing due to the coronavirus pandemic. Given the pandemic and the state of emergency, 9,442 students were enrolled in VET programs in private and public institutions in 2020, including 7,363 students with state funding, of whom 161 are persons with special educational needs. And after the enactment of the new enrollment rule, 11049 persons were enrolled within the 2021 admission, including 10778 students enrolled with state funding, of which 187 are persons with special educational needs.





As institutions had to conduct internal selection due to changes in student enrollment rules and many of the regulated approaches were new to them, appropriate consultations and process support were provided by the ministry at the request of the 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 undergo compulsory military service after completion of study. This shall significantly reduce the outflow of students from the vocational education system.

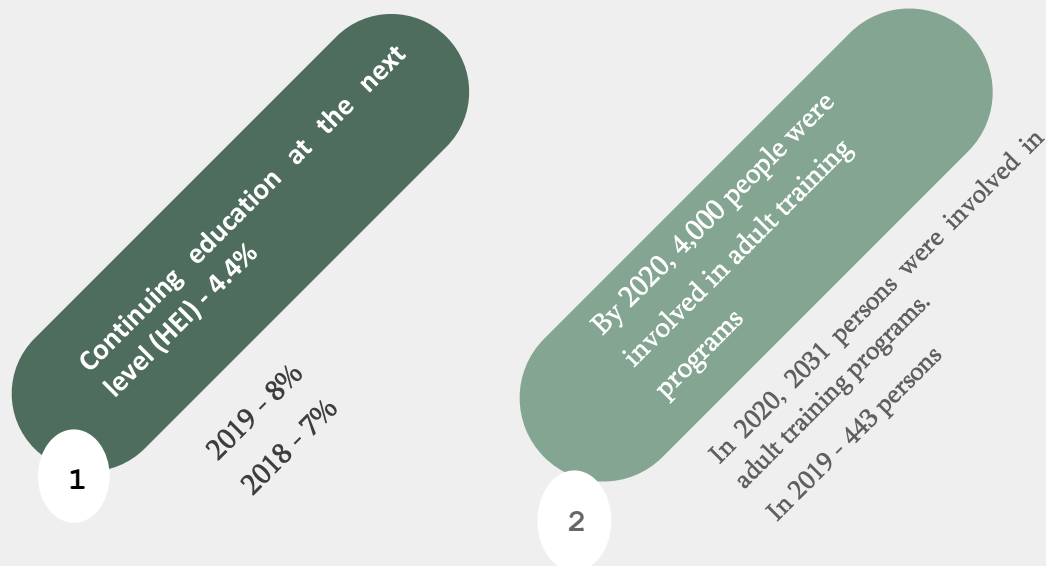
It is also noteworthy that in 2020-2021, the IDP Vocational Education Support Program provided support to IDPs enrolled in state vocational education institutions to cover transportation costs or rent.

Promoting Distance Learning: In 2020, the reality caused by the COVID-19 pandemic required the provision of distance learning 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 VET programs to deliver distance learning with Microsoft 365 Teams and began providing information and technical support for this process. In 2020 work began on establishment of sectoral networks with the general purpose of discussing sectoral issues, challenges, 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.

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. It should be noted that at the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, a number of information campaigns were provided to the staff and students of VET institutions to on prevention of the spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) and vaccination.



Strategic Task 3: PROMOTING AND ENHANCING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROMOTING



scale

Improving the image of vocational education remained one of the priorities during the reporting period as well. Given the circumstances caused by the pandemic, this task was further complicated by the fact that one of the most important target groups - students of general education institutions, who received information about professions through practical testing at their school, switched to distance or blended learning from home. Increasing the of the "Work Skills Development Program" (WSD) program in 2020-2021 has obviously become impossible, but it is noteworthy, that in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a list of more than 20 target general education institutions has been developed to mobilize relevant resources for inception of vocational programs by 2022.

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 VET 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 the 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, within the framework of the EU Technical Assistance Program, a 2022-2026 Strategy for the development of a professional Guidance, Counseling and Career Planning

System in Formal Education has been developed. The strategy will ensure the implementation of an inclusive career guidance policy in the field of formal education, which will be aimed at creating equal opportunities for young people and adults throughout their lives to realize their full potential. At the end of 2021, a draft strategy was submitted for approval.

In order to maintain an active dialogue with the private sector, the vocational education development department held online meetings with selected business associations and sectoral associations during the reporting period, entitled "Vocational Education for Business After Covid-19" 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 partnership 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 took part in the dialogue, including such organizations as: European Business Association; Georgian Employers Association; Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; HR professionals; IT sector - individual companies, associations; Infrastructure Builders Association; Farmers Association; Tourism sector - individual companies, associations; Wine Association; Logistics Association, etc.



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 of 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 and Science, 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 and Science 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 existing challenges were identified and possible ways to solve them with the donor support were discussed by the parties.

In 2021, the award ceremony for the graduates of the colleges “New Wave” and “Blacksea” dual vocational education programs in the field of construction and tourism and their employers was held. A public-private partnership forum was also held at College "Spectri", attended by the college's partner companies.

Also, in 2021, the GCCI organized a working meeting with the business sector involved in vocational education. The role of the private sector in vocational education was discussed at the meeting. Private companies involved in the implementation of vocational education programs presented the results of their activities and successful examples to the participants of the meeting.

With the support of the GIZ, the Association of Infrastructure Builders held an online event: Public-Private Dialogue – “Vocational Education in Construction: Cooperation and Development Perspectives” and an Online Forum on Employment in Construction. A large number of construction companies related to the association were represented at the event.



In addition to creating a model for teacher professional development under the World Bank project, the process of creating a vocational education information web portal has been completed. A specially assigned technical group, in cooperation with the EMIS, as well as with the involvement of the VET department, has completed work 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-driven decision-making. During the reporting period, the Rule for Development and Administration of an Information Management System for Vocational Education was prepared and approved.

In 2021, the journal “Vocational Education” was launched with the support of the Georgian Farmers' Association, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Switzerland. The e-journal has played an important role in raising public awareness and understanding the importance of vocational education. The journal is published quarterly and is available on the updated vocational education portal - www.vet.ge.

In November 2021, with the support of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the fourth National VET Award ceremony was held. The competition was held in five different categories - Vocational Education Student, Vocational Education Teacher, Vocational Education Program, Vocational Training / Retraining Program and Business Partner of the Year. The main goal of the national award is promotion of vocational education and sharing the success stories of VET programs, teachers, students and business partners in the country.

It is noteworthy that despite the pandemic, various types of activities were held targeting potential students and wider groups of the community. As part of the 2021 admission, all state vocational education institutions have organized informational introductory meetings online. Also, in 2021, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the 11th International Education Fair - 2021 was held. It is noteworthy that for popularization of vocational education the Millennium Foundation organized information campaign - "Choose your future profession". As part of the campaign, open days were held in 5 vocational education institutions. Attendance at the event was free and any interested person could get information about the new programs and the updated learning environment from the representatives of the vocational education institutions.

Also, in cooperation with the Georgian Employers' Association, informative and fun online events were held in general education institutions in order to inform students about vocational education opportunities and various professions. 800 students from 40 general education institutions, who were introduced to the specifics of different professions, the educational process of colleges and the working principles of companies, were involved in the activities. In addition, adults were given the opportunity to receive information about professions and to meet specialists working in the profession.

The culinary competition, jointly organized by LEPL - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Media and TV Art College (Tbilisi), N(N)LE College "Ikarosi", served to popularize vocational education and strengthen professional qualifications. Up to 10 VET institutions in Georgia participated in the competition.

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 and in 2021 it amounted to 76.2 million GEL.

Since 2014, the Ministry of Education and Science 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.

The study, conducted in 2020, interviewed graduates who completed their studies in 2019 and received vocational qualification. 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 are available in the research report published in early 2021. According to a 2020 survey, 49% of graduates are employed. Work has also begun on a 2021 graduates survey. With the support of the UNDP, the research tool was updated and work on modification of relevant methodology has begun. The updated tool will be integrated into the Vocational Education Management Information System. In the first quarter of 2022, a company will be selected to conduct the study. The results will be available by the end of 2022.

In 2021, with the support of UNDP, the Employers' Satisfaction Survey was conducted, as well as a methodology was developed and preparatory work was carried out to select the company that will organize the survey in 2022.

Within the framework of the EU grant project - "Innovative Employment Opportunities for Georgia's Regional Development" - The Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSRDG) has developed a local labour market research tool for quantitative and qualitative research, a research administration guide and a training module. These tools will be used by VET institutions to study the local labour market. Within the framework of the project, training of the participants of the selected educational institutions was conducted. Documentation prepared under the project is available to all VET institutions.

Indicator:

1. *Raising public awareness regarding vocational education*

According to the survey of the population's attitude towards vocational education (2015), 72% of respondents indicate that the population's attitude towards vocational education is changing positively. As mentioned above, a new study in this area will be conducted in 2022.

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