

# Brief Summary of the Progress Achieved under the Vocational Education Reform in Georgia

2014-2016 years

## Background Information:

Since 2013 Georgia started VET sector reform. Poor image of vocational education from soviet time, abolished system, required fundamental intervention for achieving the goals on the way to approximation to EU education system. The volume of transformation set ambitious agenda for the government and generated the need of well-structured strategy for guiding the reform.

On December 26, 2013 GoG adopted the strategy of VET sector reform (2013-2020) together with its action plan and initiated the development of the VET field facilitated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and supported by EU representation to Georgia.

## Main Goals of the Reform:

- Increasing relevance of vocational education system to social-economic challenges of the country; fulfilling the current and future requirements of the labor market;
- Enhancing life-long learning opportunities, social inclusion, and personal and professional development of individuals;
- Approximation of Georgian VET system to European education system;

## Reform Objectives:

- Creating legislation base for the reform;
- Enhancement of quality and accessibility;
- Improving infrastructure;
- Developing inclusive vocational education and training;
- Developing of human resources;
- Institutional strengthening and Private Sector involvement;
- Popularization of Vocational Education and Training;
- Financial support;
- Monitoring and evaluation.

## Main Achievements 2014-2016:

### Legislation:

In 2016, Ministry of Education and Science completed the work on development of new Law on Vocational Education. New draft framework law ensures the development of the sector in line with the strategy goals,

eradicates the dead ends existing in the system, ensures life-long learning principle, increases the access to VET for all groups of population etc. The document also envisages the requirements of EU-Georgia Association agreement and approaches of Copenhagen process. Adoption of new law would enable the system to improve the quality, become more flexible and establish the linkages with other levels of education.

Meanwhile from 2013 until now, several amendments have been made into existing version concerning to (1) finances of VET and (2) establishment of modular programs.

#### **Accessibility:**

Financial: Implementation of the reform required increased financial resources from the state budget. Prioritization of VET system reflected in the allocated funds from the GoG:

Period	GEL (mln)
2013 year	13.3
2014 year	23.2
2015 year	33.0
2016 year	33.7

Since 2013, GoG started full funding of VET students in state vocational education institutions. Precondition of entering the programs was defined with 25% threshold at state exams. Different enrolment procedures were introduced for the persons with disabilities. As a result the following number of students were financed during the reporting period:

Period	# of Students
2013 year	8 396
2014 year	9 910
2015 year	10 273
2016 year	11 170

Period	# of students (Persons with disabilities )
2013 year	53
2014 year	136
2015 year	198
2016 year	270

Geographical: One of the main goals of the reform is increasing the geographical accessibility to vocational education. Lack of sufficient coverage of the regions and municipalities in 2012 led to decreased number of students gradually. Thus, grounded the need of intervention and the Ministry, in 2013 started assessment of the chain and opportunities of launching new providers.

As a result 13 new locations were added to the VET providers map and with this result in all regions of Georgia at least one VET provider is currently available. Rationale behind enlarging the coverage was the assessment of the socio-economic and demographic situation as well as employment/self-employment opportunities in particular region/municipality.

New concept of Public-Private Partnership has also been introduced by MoES in 2015 and generated the establishment of new colleges within this format. Progress was achieved in terms of two big projects with (1) Georgian Railway and (2) Mountain Guides Association. Both colleges has been authorized in 2016.

2016 year was very important in terms of linking the general education to VET. Public school in rural area –village Agara launched the TVET programs and enrolled the students in autumn.

Consequently, the following locations have been developed during the last 3 years:

1. Vocational College in Tsinamdzgvriantkari - Mtskheta municipality;
  - 1.1. Branch in Kazbegi municipality;
  - 1.2. Branch in Tianeti municipality;
2. Railway Transport college in Tbilisi –PPP format;
3. Adventure Tourism School in Gudauri;-PPP format;
4. Art College in Tbilisi;
5. College “Aisi” branch in Dedoplistskaro municipality;
6. College “Aisi” branch in Alvani-Akhmeta municipality;
7. College “Aisi” branch in Lagodekhi municipality;
8. College “Phazisi” branch in Khobi municipality;
9. Zugdidi University branch in Senaki municipality;
10. “Iberia” branch in Baghdati municipality;
11. Public School in Agara municipality.

Some of the above mentioned buildings are under rehabilitation and some of them already got the authorization and enrolled the students from fall, 2016.

### **Vocational Education Program Reform:**

Since 2013 year, with the technical assistance from EU, new vision of reforming the VET programs has been formed anticipating the introduction of flexible, competence based modular programs.

Principles of development of modular programs are: orientation on learning outcomes, practice, use of modern methods of teaching and assessment, credit system, accumulation of credits and transfer. Flexibility of programs should enable the use of each module within short term retraining courses for the adults. Modular programs are not only oriented on development of professional skills, but include interpersonal skills such as: communication, foreign language, civic education, literacy, numeracy etc.

Ministry of Education and Science and Education together with National Center for Education Quality Enhancement worked on establishment of modular programs into the system during past three years and respectively 97 revised standards and 83 new modular programs have been validated by sectorial committees and adopted by the center head.

Modular programs require new unified standards of students’ assessment. The goal of unification was introduction of common mechanisms of acquiring the professional qualifications. During the reporting period 101 assessment standards have been prepared, 54 were validated by the sectorial committees. Trainings were respectively held for introduction of a new system.

In 2015 Ministry, adopted the concept on establishment of Work Based Learning approach. From 2016, implementation of the action plan started with the support from the international partners: GIZ and UNDP. Several amendments were made in sub legal acts: students' enrollment, voucher funding, rule of program development. As a result students were enrolled in 3 WBL programs of agricultural field from fall, 2016.

### **Entrepreneurship and Innovative Learning:**

Special attention was paid to strengthening entrepreneurial learning in new VET programs for facilitating the self-employment opportunities. All adopted new modular programs consist of entrepreneurship module as obligatory part of the program. All teachers of this module have been trained. In 2016, with the support from the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Georgia, entrepreneurial module has been revised and improved and the assistance has also been provided in further improvement of the skills of the teachers. Entrepreneurship and innovative learning is also supported by innovative labs (Fab Labs) in 14 colleges that are used for strengthening the new ideas and start-ups. Entrepreneurial clubs arranged in 4 colleges are considered as additional mechanisms for facilitating the entrepreneurial thinking.

### **Quality Assurance:**

During the last years, authorization procedures has tremendously been improved. Quotas are defined now by each authorized program. With the technical assistance from MCA, NCEQE started working on elaboration of new quality assurance system framework that is in line with European framework. Piloting process of each component has been carried out and respective sub legal acts are being prepared.

### **Non-formal Education:**

From 2014, Ministry and NCEQE with the support from ETF, worked out concept of recognition of Non-formal learning. In the next years, with the involvement of MCA, the work continued with elaboration of methodology for RNFL and in autumn 2016, the piloting phase of existing methodology started in 3 VET colleges in IT and Agricultural fields.

### **General Education:**

In 2016, UNDP assisted the Ministry to elaborate the vision of integration of general education into the VET system. Agreed general approach helped to start the actual integration and as a result 5 modules were finalized by the end of the year with integrated learning outcomes from the subjects of National Curricula. It is planned to start piloting in 2017 in 4<sup>th</sup> level VET programs.

### **Work Based Learning:**

In 2015, concept on launching the works based learning (WBL) in VET system has been prepared and adopted. As a result of Prime Ministers' initiative on starting the piloting of WBL programs, MoES started implementation of the action plan that has been adopted by the NVETC. System was prepared for the Autumn enrollment with 3 new WBL programs in agriculture and with the assistance from international organizations (UNDP, GIZ) colleges and employers met the new phase prepared and oriented for the pilot.

Agreements signed by the providers and employers, created the bases for the quality education programs and flexible implementation of the process with stressed practical component. Sublegal acts regulating the funding of the programs as well as the regulation on students enrollment have been modified and reflected the principles of WBL such as the participation of employers in students selection, exams etc.

#### **Professional Orientation and Carrier Guidance:**

Professional orientation service is the bases for identification of the personal interest as well as the orientation on the future of the citizen defining its profession according to labor market trends.

The mentioned service is a cross cutting issue among several line ministries having the various target groups. MoES started implementation of professional orientation service from 2014 for the school pupils and as well as carrier guidance service for VET students, based on the Government adopted concept and action plan. With the assistance from the EU, the following assistance has been provided to the system: methodological support to the institutions, capacity building of the professional orientation managers, development of guidelines and handbooks etc.

As a result more than 1000 schools have been involved in service provisions, all VET state colleges are delivering the service to the beneficiaries with the help of specifically trained managers.

#### **Inclusive Vocational Education:**

- Support to Ethnic Minorities to access VET  
In 2015, Ministry developed the mechanisms assisting the ethnic minorities to have access to VET. Study revealed that one of the barriers on the way is language, thus the mechanisms created in 2016 to simplify the process, included the translation of tests on Russian, Azerbaijanian and Armenian languages. Adaptation of entry procedures to their needs, continued with creation of opportunity to learn Georgian language module for one semester that enables the persons to continue learning the profession from the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester.
- Support to Inmates to access VET  
Within the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Correction, VET colleges started provision of retraining courses in the prisons for the inmates. The courses are designed according to the demand and interest of the beneficiaries. Number of beneficiaries that passed the courses from 2014 until 2016 reached 1000. The inmates are given the state certificate approving the achievement of specific learning outcomes.
- Support to persons with disabilities to access VET  
From 2013 until 2016, nearly 600 persons with disabilities entered into VET system. Specifically prepared vision for improvement of infrastructure of VET providers guided the adaptation of physical space of VET colleges during these years. Principles of universal design has been elaborated in the projects with the help of Norwegian government and as a result 5 buildings are being rehabilitated and fully adapted to the needs of persons with special education needs.

Apart from the infrastructural improvement, additional services are available in the colleges to support inclusive education: sign language teachers, orientation trainers, inclusive education

teachers and assistants are applicable for the beneficiaries with full state funds. Teaching materials have also been adapted and are used in the teaching process within the individual education plan.

### **Improvement of infrastructure:**

Based on the requirements of new modular programs and improved quality of the programs, all infrastructural needs of VET state providers have been analyzed. Minimal standards of material technical base have been adopted together with the modular programs and they were used as a guidelines for the infrastructural projects as well as for authorization standards. Since 2014 year, the Ministry ensured the provision of necessary funds to the colleges in order to satisfy the authorization requirements. All state colleges are possessing the modern technical workshops, computer labs and new furniture is accessible for the students.

From 2014 until 2016 9 partial and 8 full rehabilitation has been carried out in state providers, also the student dorm projects have been finalized and the construction work is ongoing in Senaki and Mestia municipalities.

Support to innovative learning is an essential component of VET reform. In 2015, innovative laboratories have been arranged in 14 state colleges facilitating the entrepreneurial thinking and innovative learning. The labs are starting operation with its full scale gradually.

### **Capacity Building of Human Resources:**

#### *Teachers Professional Development:*

Concept on teachers' professional development and carrier advancement has been elaborated;

Data on the existing teachers was entered into the unified database [evet.emis.ge](http://evet.emis.ge)

Studies for defining the needs of teachers have been finalized.

Training sessions were provided covering the following topics: ICT in education, Inclusive education, modular program establishment, students' assessment, trainings at enterprises were also held for improvement of professional skills of teachers.

UNDP assisted TPDC with preparation of guidebook in pedagogics for VET teachers. Pedagogical course has also been designed.

With the support from EU TA, the regulation document of VET teachers' professional induction, development and carrier advancement has been developed and is in the process of finalization. New law on Vocational Education would be the bases for adoption of new scheme. New regulation would also lead to differential remuneration of teachers according to the professional qualification, work experience etc.

#### *Capacity Building of College Administration:*

EU supported the Ministry, with capacity building of administrative staff of 20 state colleges that have been trained in 8 modules for improving the education management system.

During the reporting period ISO certificate has been awarded to 3 colleges and “EFQM –model of excellence” to 5 colleges including the private providers.

### Institutional Development and Engagement of Private Sector

- In 2015 NVETC format changed from tripartite system into quadripartite (Civil Society organizations were added). ETF supported the Ministry with assessment of efficiency of the council and provided the recommendations that would be anticipated in the next years for increasing the active participation of social partners in reforming the VET.
- In 2015 MoES developed concept on public-private partnership that was adopted by NVETC and was supported by the government. Based on the modalities of abovementioned concept 2 new VET providers have been established: Tbilisi Railway College and Gudauri Adventure Tourism School.
- Public school in village Agara passed the authorization and started student enrollment on the programs of engineering field.
- Millennium Challenge Corporation in Georgia finalized grant competition for VET providers investing 12 mln US dollars for improving the relevance of vocational education to labor market needs. Specific goal of the investment is to develop the VET programs in line with labor market demands. 10 winner organizations started implementation of the projects covering almost all priority industries: transport, maritime, aviation, engineering, construction, agriculture, tourism, IT technologies etc.

### Popularization of VET

Georgia became a member of Worldskills International and starting from 2013 Georgian TVET students are successfully participating in the competition. In 2013 and in 2015 Georgian team contested with the fellows of Tourism, IT, Service and Engineering field programs. This competition helps Georgia to attract the youngsters in VET and stay in line with the international standards.

Worldskills international is prevailed by the national contest, that has been organized by MoES and NCEQE in 2014 and in 2016.

Vocational Education festival represents another instrument for attraction of beneficiaries and is annually conducted by facilitation of MoES and with participation of VET providers. Colleges are able to demonstrate their service and product to wide society. Professional orientation service is also available at this events instructing the applicants about the opportunities of VET programs.

Fairs organized by the Ministry are dedicated to demonstration of the products produced during the learning process. Recognition of successful students help them to motivate and start entrepreneurial activities.

By the end of 2016, for the first time, Georgia arranged the Skills Week as a part of EU skills week event. Conferences, open days, workshops and other events helped to summarize the achievements and progress in VET reform and defined the challenges to be addressed in the next phase.

[www.vet.ge](http://www.vet.ge) represents the unified web portal that integrates information about the programs, providers, projects, enrollment procedures, new initiatives etc.

### Monitoring and Assessment:

- Unified data system

Development of unified database for VET system started from 2013 and integrated the information about: VET state providers, VET standards, programs, students, administrative staff, teachers, material-technical base, partner employers, enrollment, exams, electronic track of attendance, mobility, funding, statistical data etc.

Database is constantly developing and new functions are added in order to get the comprehensive overview on the system and to develop evidence based policy.

- Monitoring of Strategy Implementation:

With the assistance from the EU TA and with the use of EMIS resources, electronic monitoring system has been developed and established. Strategy Implementation Action Plan (SIAP) is an online tool (office 365) that is helping the Ministry to keep the coordination among various stakeholders and to monitor the implementation of annual action plan. SIAP generates the quarterly monitoring reports and helps to assess the outcomes against set indicators. Also it is a good instrument for reporting progress that is shared among the international as well as the local partners.

Coordination System is well established at MoES and includes quarterly meetings with donor society, agencies of the ministry, social partners etc.

Having a huge pool of international partners it is vital to avoid overlapping of the activities and quarterly coordination meetings are dedicated to sharing the achieved progress during the reporting period and also to share the planned actions.

National Vocational Education Council is a highest advisory board at the Ministry that is compiled with social partners. Quarterly meetings aim at discussing the policy options/decisions and specific recommendations/feedback is given to the Ministry for implementation.

Since 2014, MoES started implementation of Tracer Study that is a good instrument for assessing the reform implementation since the study identifies the employment rate of the graduates after completion of the courses. As a result in 2014, 42% of employment rate was identified, the next round revealed 47% of employment and the last study in 2016 identified that 56% of graduates are employed.

Along with the tracer study, Employers' Satisfaction study is also carried out with the assistance from UNDP and annual increase of positive attitudes from the employers is observed.

Reports on both studies are available on MoES web page as well as on [www.vet.ge](http://www.vet.ge)