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# **DARE Comparative Framework Georgia**

Ilia State University, Sokhumi State University, Telavi State University, Shota Meskhia State Teaching University  
of Zugdidi

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The aim of this report is to put DARE's objectives and mission in a broader context, that is, describe the needs of DARE's target groups, the support to be given to answer those of people with disabilities, women and minorities at each Israeli HEI within the consortium. Each Institution provided information regarding the target group addressed within its own action plan.

## **Target Group #1 – People with learning, mental and physical disabilities**

### Challenges and barriers

1. Language barrier and insufficient use of language services.
3. Integration difficulties: students with special needs find it difficult to socialize with the other students.
4. Learning strategies and academic skills. The lack of knowledge of modern educational strategies and technologies;
5. Limited access of modern technologies.
6. Financial barriers: Tuition fees.



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## National and University regulations

Georgian Constitution; The law of Georgian higher education and the law of Georgian general education; Law on integration; and the law on the disabled people, Educational standards for students with special needs.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. (2005). Law on General Education of Georgia. [online at [http://mes.gov.ge/publicInfo/?page\\_id=171](http://mes.gov.ge/publicInfo/?page_id=171)]

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. (2004). Law on Higher Education of Georgia. [online at [http://mes.gov.ge/publicInfo/?page\\_id=171](http://mes.gov.ge/publicInfo/?page_id=171)]

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. (2007). Law on Vocational Education of Georgia. [online at [http://mes.gov.ge/publicInfo/?page\\_id=171](http://mes.gov.ge/publicInfo/?page_id=171)]

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. (2013). Vocational education and training development strategy for 2013-2020 [online at [http://mes.gov.ge/uploads/12.%20VET%20Strategy%202013-20\\_EN.pdf](http://mes.gov.ge/uploads/12.%20VET%20Strategy%202013-20_EN.pdf)]

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. (2011). “National Curriculum” Order 36/N of the Minister of Education and Science.

Parliament of Georgia. (2013). Decree of the Parliament of Georgia on “Ratification of the EU Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; decree #1888RS. [online at <http://www.parliament.ge/ge/law/670/10626>]

Salamanca Statement of 1994 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) of 2006 have introduced a new vision toward the education of persons with special needs under the umbrella term of Inclusive Education. In Georgia, inclusive education was declared as one of the priorities of the educational reform in 2006 and since then remains a compulsory component of the state policy (Tchintcharauli, Javakhishvili, 2013). Inclusive education has been binding on respective academic institutions at the general education level



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since 2006 and at the level of vocational education since 2013 (Law of General Education of Georgia; Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy for 2013-2020). At this moment we do not have any adjustments or changes in the Law of Higher Education taking into account the needs of persons with special educational needs.

Based on Law of General Education we have defined Inclusive Education as involvement of children with special needs in general education process together with their peers. National Curriculum, which regulates the content of general education, defines who is a student with special educational needs and what type of support should be used to facilitate and support his/her education at the general education level (order #36/n, 11.03.2011: the Minister of Education and Sciences). In Georgian case, any student who in comparison to his/her peers has difficulties in learning and needs modification or/and adaptation of National Curriculum or/and creation and teaching based on Individual Educational Plan is considered as being a student with special educational needs (SEN). In this category fall students with physical disabilities, sensory difficulties (hearing and vision), intellectual disabilities, behavior and emotional disturbances, speech and language disorders, students who need long hospitalization or who cannot learn due to social factors such as poverty and cannot learn based on National Curriculum.

Based on this definition student with learning disability who has a typical intelligence quotient and has problems in learning basic math and reading will be identified in case of moderate problems (mostly in case of behavioral and emotional problems) and it is unclear in case of identification what type of support will he/she receive. Even specialized assessment tools are not enough developed to precisely assess and define what type of support will be most appropriate in case of this student. At present, we have Georgian version of Wide Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT-4-M), which can be used to assess students till 5th grade and Georgian version of Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scale also to assess children from 6 years old till 10 years old. In most of cases based on the parent's referral neuropsychological assessment is conducted to define the presence of learning disabilities. After this a student to be qualified as having special educational needs should be assessed by Inclusive Education Multidisciplinary Team of the Ministry of Education and Sciences and based on their decision he/she will receive some type of support such as special teacher service, accommodation of National Curriculum etc. The practice shows that in most of cases the school does not have enough resources to support student with learning disabilities.



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Based on Law of Higher Education, to start university level education you need to pass national exams. In 2015 from 40000 enrolees near 400 requested special conditions for national exams and based on report among them mostly are students with sensory disabilities (hearing and vision) and motor difficulties. There is no statistics how many students requested special conditions based on their learning disabilities.

And finally, at the university level, there are not any regulations and guidelines regarding identification and support of students with learning disabilities. Usually, if the student has some type of learning related problems he/she can approach individual professor and ask for some adjustment, but in most of cases even students are not aware about their learning related difficulties.

To sum up abovementioned, the first task should be raising awareness regarding learning disabilities even at the general education level not only at the higher education level, second task - supporting development of the screening and assessment tools for different age groups and third task – promoting development of guidelines at the university level for identification and support of students with learning disabilities.

#### Resources:

Pachkoria, Tatia (ed). (2008). “Salamanca Statement”. Learning Together. Inclusive Education. Tbilisi: Ministry of Education and Sciences of Georgia (in Georgian).

Salamanca Statement: Network for Action on Special Needs education. Adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality Salamanca, Spain, 7-10 June 1994 [online at <http://www.inclusion.com/artssalamanca.html>]

Tchintcharauli, T., Javakhishvili, N. (2013) Inclusive Education Indicators in Georgia. Survey report:  
<http://inclusion.ge/res/docs/201507161349597521.pdf>

United Nation. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Annex 1, [online at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahcfinalrepe.htm>]



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Institution	Existing Support services inside the University
<b>Ilia State University</b>	None
<b>Sokhumi State University</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students' registration Service.</li> <li>2. Language support from the Language department.</li> <li>3. Students' practice and career management service.</li> <li>4. Culture and sports centre.</li> </ol>
<b>Telavi State University</b>	None
<b>Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi</b>	<p>Tutorials on the faculty and department level responsible for learning disabilities students studying. Students with learning disabilities can receive assistance from tutors who are on the faculty and department level.</p> <p>Career services center - providing guidance for choosing a major and a career path for students from target group.</p> <p>Offering supporting technologies for target groups.</p> <p>New dormitory.</p> <p>First floor with all equipment for disable people.</p> <p>Project of new building with all special need environment on all three-storeyed building.</p>



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## Target Group #2 – Women

### Challenges and barriers

- **Freedom of choice and the factor of family**
  - In some regions families still decide for the girls :
    - Study or not to study
    - Where to study
    - What to study
  - Another problem - because of the children and family, female student have to leave university before finishing their degree

Institution	Existing Support services inside the University
<b>Iliia State University</b>	Free Exam preparatory courses for those, who can ignore family factor, are ready to study even their parents, don't give permission and have no their own money to get prepared (women from shelters are also participating) Special room where women can leave their children, but it is stopped now Public Lectures on gender issues Part time employment possibilities at University STEM direction open door days General Scholarship system within the university for successful freshmen Online Courses Code of Conduct



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## **Target Group #3 – Minorities (Abkhazians, Jews, Armenians, Azeris, refugees IDPs, Kist and Azerbaijan)**

### Challenges and barriers

- Crossing Borders
- Lack of knowledge

### Having no Preschool Education

Preschool education is the most problematic part of the educational system of Georgia and especially in the regions settled with national minorities. However there is proven evidence that the early childhood education is crucial for cognitive and social development of a child. Poor conditions hinder parents from bringing their children in kindergartens; Kindergarten teachers and administration aren't awaited of existing learning and development standards; Textbooks and manuals aren't translated.

- Lack of resources connected to quality textbooks

Textbooks are translated into minority languages, but:

Approximately 30% of texts given in published textbooks for public schools in the minority regions are only in Georgian, and many students and evens some teachers say that they are unable to understand;

- Teachers do not know how to work with these new textbooks.

School textbooks lack information on the history, geography, religion and culture minorities - according to the Law on General Education, schools can add subjects to the compulsory Curriculum, but can only use textbooks approved by the ministry.

And even more translated textbook (for example) the view of history can exacerbate conflict.

- Lack of Qualified Teachers.



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There are too few qualified language teachers, though the government has provided financial incentives for working in minority schools under the “Future Starts Today” program. In 2004-2006 (within the program).

40 language teachers 287 were sent to Kvemo-Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti (27 and thirteen respectively) to teach Georgian language, literature and history and train local teachers. In 2006 – 2007 they were replaced by teachers from the ethnic minorities; Unfortunately these programs are often perceived negatively in the field and are too small and brief to effect systematic change.

Frequently teachers do not know the minority languages and therefore they have problems of communication with minority students.

Teachers didn't undergo training on introducing new curriculum in the classrooms.

- Parents do not know Georgian and cannot support their children in a study process.
- Quota system and project 1+4 causes some problems:

A one year course and having minimal competence in general aptitude test is not sufficient for attending university classes.

Since minority children do not know Georgian, they have a low academic performance compared to the ethnically Georgian schoolmates and this diminishes their self-confidence.

As far as there doesn't exist any mechanism on the state level to reveal the competence in Georgian language while entering the university 1 year program, some of freshmen don't know Georgian at all.

Some even don't know their own language.

Even though afterwards university checks the level of the language competence, it's impossible for us to open different Georgian language competence groups.





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- Lecturers have to downgrade the requirements during the teaching and learning process, which in turn has a negative impact on an academic performance of the whole class.

#### Different academic standards

Lack of information.

All the necessary information is provided either in Georgian or in English. Because of this reason:

- School graduates aren't using to a maximum extent and utilizing available places for national minority entrants at higher education institutions;
- Students have difficulties to be engaged in the study process or university life.

Lack of finances to move to the capital.

Even though the state covers tuition fees, moving to the capital for education requires living expenses, that many cannot afford.

Attitude of majority towards minority.

#### National and University regulations

In 2009, the Ministry of Education introduced a quota system in order to help ethnic minority students continue their post-secondary education in Georgian universities. Armenian and Azeri students each are allocated 5 percent of all academic placements. These students can get into university passing just a General Skills exam in their mother tongue, but they then have to spend an extra year learning Georgian language before they can start their selected study programs. The program, referred to as "1+4", will continue until 2018-2019 school year.

As a member of the international community Georgia has ratified several international agreements:



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- Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Article #12; Article #14).
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- Convention on the Right of the Child.
  
- **Georgian Constitution**
  - “Everyone is free by birth and is equal before law regardless of race, color, language, sex, religion, political and other opinions, national, ethnic and social belonging, origin, property and title, place of residence” **(Article #14)**.
  - “Citizens of Georgia shall be equal in social, economic, cultural and political life irrespective of their national, ethnic, religious or linguistic belonging. In accordance with universally recognized principles and rules of international law, they shall have the right to develop freely, without any discrimination and interference, their culture, to use their mother tongue in private and in public” **(Article #38)**.
  
- **The Law of Georgia on General Education**
  - The language of instruction in general education institutions shall be Georgian, while in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia – Georgian or Abkhazian **(Article 4.1)**.
  - The citizens of Georgia, whose native language is not Georgian, shall have the right to acquire a complete General education in their native language in accordance with the National Curriculum, as provided for by the legislation **(Article 4.3)**.
  - Schools shall protect individual and collective rights of minorities to freely use their native language, preserve and manifest their cultural affiliation on the basis of equality **(Article 13.7)**.
  
- **Programs launched by Government**
  - **Program “Georgian Language for Future Success”**  
Minorities Receiving Education on Their Native Languages Under the law of Georgia on General Education that a school should protect the individual and collective rights of minority group members to freely use native language, maintain it and express their cultural identity, based on the principle of equality (par. 7, Article 13).



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According to the National Curriculum learning native language (Azeri, Armenian) in minority schools/sectors is compulsory and covers 5 hours a week.

At the same time, process of teaching State language to minority group members is ensured. According to the National Curriculum (chapter VII, Article 38) “Georgian as the second language” is provided to minority schools/sectors in all I-XII grades and covers 5 hours a week as well.

- **Translating Textbooks**

Currently, the Ministry offers approved translated textbooks in Armenian, Russian and Azeri languages for non-Georgian citizens of the school/sectors 1-6 grades.

The textbooks for 7-12 grades have been also translated on the Armenian, Russian and Azeri languages, but are in compliance with the previous National Curricula, which is still valid in these grades. These textbooks have been approved and are in compliance with the existing National Curricula.

In 2013-2014, all grades pupils were given textbooks for free of charge.

In 2013, non-Georgian textbooks (Armenian, Russian, Azeri) were delivered to 257 schools in 27 districts/municipalities; total number of the textbooks together with textbooks in Georgian language amounted to 650709, total cost : 2455027.63.

- **Program “Georgian as a second language”**

State program “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” sends qualified teachers of the Georgian language and literature to those non-Georgian schools in Samtskhe-Javakheti, KvemoKartli and Kakheti.

Teachers selected within this program receive a monthly remuneration in the amount of 1000 GEL.

Teachers who win the competition are employed in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, KvemoKartli and Kakheti populated by ethnic minorities.

- **Higher Education Reform – “Program 4+1” and quota system**

In 2009, the Ministry of Education introduced a quota system in order to help ethnic minority students continue their post-secondary education in Georgian universities.

Armenian and Azeri students each are allocated 5 percent of all academic placements.



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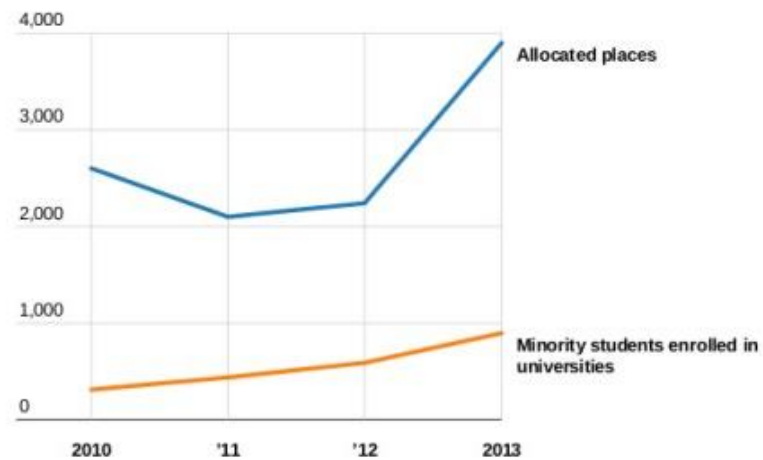


These students can get into university passing just a General Skills exam in their mother tongue, but they then have to spend an extra year learning Georgian language before they can start their selected study programs. The program, referred to as “1+4”, will continue until 2018-2019 school year.

Statistics

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Armenian	124	179	198	183
Azeri	175	250	386	708

Minority students in universities in Georgia





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Institution	Existing Support services inside the University
<b>Ilia State University</b>	<p>Since 2013, to increase the participation and integration of ethnic minority students in the life of university, on the basis of memorandum, Tbilisi Youth Center has been established. Center runs the project named “Enhancement of National Integration in Georgia”. Now the activities and events are organized under the program PITA with the support of UNAG and USAID. The partners of the program are Fund ALPE and Ilia State University. The members of Tbilisi Youth Center are representatives of different nationalities. The center is supporting tolerance and integration of students of ethnic minorities in Georgian environment. Center became something like open forum, which helps students to get civil education and connected skills on the basis of inter ethnical relations.</p> <p>Program “Tutorium” – tutors – Georgian students help quota students to study Georgian and other subjects</p> <p>Students having the recommendation from the coordinator, can get a job at the different departments and offices of University</p> <p>We are organizing open door days in the schools for the recruitment of ethnic minority students and quota students are delivering the presentations</p> <p>We are offering al the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students for free entrance exam preparatory course (in general aptitude test and in Georgian – but the courses are delivered in Georgian)</p>
<b>Sokhumi State University</b>	<p>“Program 4+1” Ethnic minorities enrolled in Bachelor’s programs can overcome the language barrier through the one-year Georgian language educational program.</p> <p>Language support from the Language department.</p> <p>Students’ practice and career management service.</p>



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	Culture and sports centre. Students' registration Service.
<b>Telavi State University</b>	1+4 academic program. Georgian as a second language peer tutoring for academic skills, no registration fee for low income students , flexible schedule of payment for students with financial problems, foreign language courses (English language free of charge), Caucasian Scientific Research center that Works with the Kist population helping them to integrate into their HEI.
<b>Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi</b>	We offer a dormitory for those students who are not able to stay in the city and force to cross the border several times in the week. Support services within ERASMUS MUNDUS mobility projects (Those students are defined as TG3 students with special three academic year study abroad). Offering academic support (special individual template for them)

Some information about the Georgian Higher Education Institutions:

Iliia State University is the leading public research HEI in Georgia. Established in 2006, ISU united several Georgian institutions and since then it has been promoting the principles of liberal education. ISU endeavors to provide high-quality education and works toward the development of sustainable future and liberal society. One of the significant reforms in terms of research management is the design of liberal arts education principles, freedom of choice, freedom of learning, and freedom of research. Research is encouraged at ISU as the



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core higher education activity and the strategy to recruit and retain the best academics and researchers is in place. It has attracted well-known high quality academic staff not only at home, but also from abroad. The mission of the university is to be a leading research university that nurtures and educates its community by inculcating critical, analytical, ethical, and creative skills. Its goals are to provide high-quality education and facilitate rigorous research through innovative initiatives and policies. ISU believes that this approach will contribute to the creation of a global knowledge-based society capable of developing sustainable solutions for the challenges of the 21st century. ISU teams of professionals in every area are dedicated to reinforce the institutional mission and to serve the individuals and communities in need. Above all, inclusive education and the children with special needs are one of the top priorities of ISU's researchers and teaching professionals, who in their daily activities employ the principles of excellence.

Iliia State University promotes inclusive education not only through TEMPUS Projects, but initiates various activities in this regards. One of the most significant undertakings that Iliia State University initiated and successfully implemented was opening Child and Adolescent Development Clinic in 2014. The clinic incorporates a full spectrum of services for children and youth with special needs, including already available services at various service centers of ISU and is one of its kind in Georgia. Additionally, the clinic is a cornerstone of research, development and modernizing services for inclusive education while applying contemporary applied research based methodology in practice. Moreover, the clinic is functioning as a core practical base for relevant undergraduate and master programs in inclusive education as well as coaching and preparing qualified practitioners.

The clinic accepts all children and families with special needs within the age group 0-18 on specific programs if they meet the requirements of the clinic. Clinic offers services up to 300 beneficiaries and provides about 200 students and specialists with study components on a yearly basis.

Sokhumi State University (afterwards SSU) is a regional university, which trains specialists mainly for the regions, especially for the population living near the conflict zone (Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha and Gori municipalities) and in the conflict zone, where the major part of the disadvantaged groups of our country lives. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the access to education for the people living in the territories of conflict zones –autonomous regions of Abkhazia (Gali, Sokhumi municipalities) and South Ossetia (Akhalgori, Tskhinvali municipalities), which is the main direction of our activities



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Iakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University is the only one higher education institution in Kakheti region (the biggest region of Georgia). Due to this fact it is very important for region as well as for the whole country that TeSaU become accessible for big variety of applicants. Region is rich with compact settlements of ethnic minority groups (Azerbaijani, Kist, Osetian, Udins). TeSaU has well established relations with most of the ethnic and religious minority groups. At the moment there are mostly two groups of minorities living in Kakheti represented among the student population of TeSaU. These are Kisti (Chechenian and Ingushian residing in Georgia) and Azerbaijanians. The involvement of groups such as Osetian, Avarians, Udins (Albanians of Caucasus) is still very weak. There are five Faculties in the university. Various programs are offered on three educational levels: BA, MA and PhD. University offers vocational education. TeSaU is following the modern standards and priorities which are offered by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and accordingly creates new programs and courses. Among other educational programs TeSaU offers two year 60 credit educational program in Georgian Language: "Georgian Language for Foreigners" which aims to give the appropriate knowledge to ethnic minority groups living in Georgia, especially in Kakheti region. Having into consideration the latest reforms made in the Georgian higher educational system as a result of becoming the member of Bologna process in 2005, Telavi state university has established international relations with many higher educational institutions. Therefore, the university has become a member of several international projects.

Shota Mekshia State Teaching University of Zugdidi is very young University in the region, providing BA (Georgian Language and Literature, English Language and Literature, History, Business Administration, Public Governance, Pharmacy, Elementary Educational), MA (History of Georgia, Business Administration, Georgian Literature) and several Vocational Educational Programs. University is the main support center for HE in the region for the (IDPs minorities) coming every day for lectures to get EU standard HE in Georgia. University is the main place to get access for HE and use mobility to other Georgian universities and EU partner countries at the same time. At the same time there are some students (as in first cycle of HE also on the vocational educational programmes) obliged to attend the lectures every day but the problem is the living facilities in the region. University offers them for free the dormitory from the next academic year and the special schedule for the students with problems crossing boarder every day. Special supports for the students from Abkhazia during national exam time are conducted on state level. All students graduate from the schools of Abkhazia have grant for study and no matter they get high score or not during exam.