

Lia Akhaladze

**Dissemination of the EU International project DARE in Georgia - Opening of the meeting,
greeting speech**

Dean of the Faculty of Education at Sokhumi State University

Coordinator of the Project at SSU

Good afternoon everybody,

Today, Sokhumi State University is hosting an important event – the meeting for Dissemination of the European Union International project Dare- Developing programs for Access of disadvantaged groups of people and Regions to higher Education’ within Erasmus+programme of the European Union.

I would like to welcome and extend my thanks to our British guests-representatives of the European access net Mee Foong Lee and Tricia Jenkins, who are the organizers of this meeting together with Sokhumi State University.

I would like to welcome our guests:

- representative of the Department of higher education and science of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia;
- Head of students’ support Division;
- Head of the National curriculum Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia;
- Representatives of British Council in Georgia;
- Representative of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia;
- Department of Human rights protection of the Public Defender’s office Of Georgia;
- Representatives of Erasmus+National Office in Georgia;
- **I would like to welcome** representatives of the United Nations Children’s fund- UNICEF ;
- Representatives of Open Society Georgia Foundation;
- Representatives of the organisation Partnership for Human Rights;
- Civic Development Institute
- Center for Civil Integration and Inter-ethnic Relations,
- Representatives of **World Vision Georgia** ,
- Association „Dea“,
- Education and healthcare experts;

Our Partner Universities from the Consortium- leader of the Project from Georgia -

- Ilya State University
- Telavi Jacob Gogebashvili State University,

- Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University.

Next, I would like to greet our friends from other universities, who are not members of DARE project, but according to the actuality of the issues of the project, they kindly accepted our invitation and today are here for discussion and debate.

Welcome

- Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University;
- Kutaisi Akaki Tsereteli State University;
- Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University;
- Representatives of Gori State University;

Again, I would like to welcome all representatives of Sokhumi State University, administration, my colleagues-Deans and Professors, my beloved students, everyone who joined us today. Thank you with all my heart for your readiness and participation in the discussion on the challenges which are very important for our society and education system.

The aims of our meeting are:

- **To familiarize the society with the conducted work within DARE project and disseminate the information about the achievements gained at this stage .**
- **At the same time we intend to enhance establishing contacts between academic, government and civil sectors to have expert-level discussions about access to higher education and to continue such collaboration in the dialogue format in the future .**
- **To disseminate the information about DARE project and to promote the formation of the public opinion to actualize, advocate the necessity of enhancement access to higher education for disadvantaged people**

We think that these meetings will continue in the future and this day might be considered as a precondition for the scientific conference - **Teaching and Research of Inclusive Education at higher institutions**, which is planned by our University together with the Ministry of Education and Science within the “week of Science and Innovations”, **the date is already known the 26th of September, 2017**. All our guests will be given more detailed information about the conference. We may say, that today is a preparation day for it.

Project DARE - “Developing programs for Access of disadvantaged groups of people and Regions to higher Education” was awarded the international grant from European Commission in Summer, 2015. It began working from December, when the first working. meeting was held. The partners of the Project from Israel are:

- Haifa University –coordinator of the project
- Gordon Academic College of Education
- Achva Academic College and
- Sakhnin Academic

DARE Consortium partners from Europe

- University of Murcia (Spain),
- Masaryk University (Czech Republic)
- kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania), and
- **The Alexandru Ioan Cuza University (Romania),**

From Georgia the members of DARE Project are: Ilya State University, Sokhumi State University, Telavi Jacob Gogebashvili State University, Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University.

Since the beginning of the project up to now 3 consortium meetings have been held in Murcia, Tel-Aviv. and Telavi, though there were other teaching and working meetings as well between the universities Tbilisi, Masaryk and Haifa. The Members of the Project have frequent skype meeting. We have already become very close, as though family members and it is expressed in our activities and relations. Today there are not all members of the consortium here, but most of the materials of this meeting has already been translated into English and Georgian and will be uploaded on the Consortium web-site.

I hope our meeting, discussions about the problems related to access to higher education ,inclusive higher education, national minorities and students with special needs and socially disadvantaged ones will be successful and productive. After such long introduction and welcome speech I would like to give the floor to the rector of our University Professor Joni Apaqidze, to the head of Administration, Professor Nino Topuridze and the Speaker of the Representative Council, Professor Larisa Takalandze.