

# **GEORGIA**

## **CONSOLIDATED EDUCATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (2007-2011)**

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# 1. Strategy for the Education Sector (2007-2011)

## *a. Introduction*

Prospects for education and for the economy are closely inter-related. Georgian economic growth has been fast in the past few years – real GDP growth rate was 9.3 per cent in 2005 and 7.5 per cent in 2006 – but the legacy of the first sixteen years of transition continues to constrain the rate at which the quantity and quality of education can be improved. Of all the transition economies, Georgia is second only to Moldova in the severity of the transformational recession that it suffered in the early 1990s. Real GDP fell to its lowest point in 1994: in spite of the recent revival, recovery over the whole period has lagged behind that of its neighbors and other countries in the region. As a result, Georgia's average standard of living, as measured by GDP per head in US\$ adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP\$), was lower in 2005 than that of any country in the Europe and Central Asia region except Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova (IMF World Economic Outlook database).

As the economy contracted, the resources available to government fell even more. Total government expenditure was equivalent to less than 20 per cent of GDP in 2004, compared with 33 per cent in 1991, implying a real fall of 62 per cent over this period (UNICEF TransMONEE database). Since 2004 government revenue and expenditure have increased (see Table 2 below), but Georgia is still one of five countries in the CIS classified as highly indebted: total external debt was around \$2,000 million in 2005, and public and publicly guaranteed debt service obligations were \$159 million (IMF 2006a: Tables 27 and 28), about 36 per cent of government revenue, squeezing the public resources available for other purposes, including education.

Poverty also spread during the 1990s. The recent review of poverty in the region by the World Bank (2005) found that 52 per cent of Georgians earned less than \$PPP2.15 per day in 2003, a proportion exceeded by only Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Since then the National Statistics Department has found that the poverty rate continued to increase in 2004 and 2005. A marked improvement occurred in early 2006, particularly in rural areas, but the poverty problem is still severe (Government of Georgia 2006).

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that a significant proportion of Georgians seek work abroad. On one estimate, between 250,000 and 300,000 were working abroad in the early 2000s, of whom around 200,000 in Russia. Remittances were estimated at \$275 million in 2003, equivalent to around 7 per cent of GDP, 8 per cent of foreign direct investment and 12 per cent of exports of goods and services (Ivakhnyuk 2006).

Another important context for education strategy is the downward trend in the number of young people of school age. Between 1991 and 2006, the number of 3-6 year olds is estimated to have fallen by 46 per cent, that of 7-15 year olds by 38 per cent and that of 16-18 year olds by 24 per cent and of 19-24 year olds by 19 per cent. Between 2006 and 2011, as Table 1 shows, even though the number of 3-6 year olds shows signs of stabilizing, further falls in the number of 7-15 year olds (by 20 per cent), 16-18 year olds (by 20 per cent) and 19-24 year olds (by 14 per cent) are expected.

**Table 1: Projections of school-age population, by age group, 2005-2010 ('000)**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>3-6</b>	194	188	189	191	194	198
<b>7-15</b>	483	459	434	414	399	387
<b>16-18</b>	196	191	189	186	173	157
<b>19-24</b>	404	407	405	392	396	387

Source: Calculated from UNICEF, TransMONEE database (based on National Statistics Department estimates of population by single-year age-group).

Education can play an important role in improving the competitiveness of the economy, currently dependent on low-income agriculture and unsustainable exports such as scrap metal and aircraft repair services. The IMF finds that, while Georgia still ranks lowest among the countries in the region in the 2005-6 Global Competitiveness Report (World Economic Forum 2005), there is evidence of improvement in a range of indicators of business conditions and competitiveness since 2003, thanks to the drive against corruption. It recommends continued structural reforms, as well as prudent macroeconomic and flexible exchange rate policies (IMF 2006). More dynamically and for the longer run, these will be supplemented by improvements in the quantity and quality of education, which could transform the factor endowment of the economy, shifting its comparative advantage away from products and services based on natural resources and cheap, relatively unskilled labor towards skill-based products and services. International evidence, including cross-country regressions and many country case-studies, is consistent with this hypothesis, which implies an active role for education in changing economic prospects. As Ireland has shown in the past twenty years, a high-quality education system is one of the pre-conditions for a small economy, with a history of chronic labor export, to transform itself and find a prosperous niche within Europe.

### ***b. An overview of education reform so far***

The scope and pace of Georgian education reform since 2003 are unique in the region. In particular, reforms of **financing and governance** of educational institutions, that other countries have been grappling with for years, have been initiated at a stroke. They introduce the *per capita* financing principle of 'money follows the student' in both general and higher education. The state undertakes to provide twelve years of free **general education**<sup>1</sup>, and primary, basic and general schools (which have been converted from local-government budget organizations to autonomous Legal Entities of Public Law or LEPLs) are funded directly from the Ministry of Education and Science, receiving an amount per pupil (a voucher) which varies only according to the location of the school (highest for those in highlands, lowest for those in cities) and covers current but not capital expenditures. Small schools can receive an extra amount per pupil from the central budget, and extra educational and teaching services and special educational curricula can be financed locally. Each school has a Board of Trustees, composed of elected teachers and parents, a student representative and in some cases a local-government nominee, which elects the school director, approves the budget, and oversees and advises school management. The lump-sum amount received from the MoES (paid into the school's own bank account) can be spent in any way that school management, approved by the Board, decides, subject only to a minimum salary rate for teachers, depending on their qualifications, experience and the number of pupils

<sup>1</sup> See the Law of Georgia on General Education, April 8, 2005, for the overall framework and Decree N 182 of the Government of Georgia, October 14, 2005, for details of the funding formula.

per class. Local education departments have been replaced by **Education Resource Centers**, which facilitate (but do not control) schools' educational activities by collecting data, conducting research, organizing training, workshops and seminars, etc..

Per student funding model has been applied to **higher education**<sup>2</sup> (HE). Within this model, upper limit of tuition fees is set for state universities, but not for private ones and this upper limit equals the highest amount of grant issued by the state. Uniform grants to a relatively small number of students (2005) have been replaced by grants on a sliding scale to a larger number, but still merit-based (2006)<sup>3</sup>; and a student loan scheme has been initiated in cooperation with commercial banks (2006). In line with Georgia's admission to the Bologna process, a three-cycle degree system has been adopted. The HE management system has been changed making HEIs autonomous bodies and their heads are no longer appointed by the President but elected by each institution's Academic Council (the highest representative body consisting of elected professors from each department).

A crucial contribution to reduction in corruption and reform of higher education admission has been made by the introduction of unified entrance examinations, held in 2005 and 2006<sup>4</sup>, using sophisticated testing methods across a range of subjects. These are administered by a new agency, the **National Examination Center**, under the governance of but at arm's length from the MoES. On both occasions the conduct of the examinations was monitored by Transparency International. In its report on the 2006 examinations, together with the American Councils for International Education, the testing process was judged to be well organized and transparent. Wide support for the new system was found throughout the country, and a large majority of test takers, parents and administrators felt confident that it would help to eliminate corruption in university admission (Transparency International 2006)<sup>5</sup>. Together with university admission examinations the Agency is administering other examinations, as teacher certification, international student examinations, etc.

Similar management model has been established and relevant agencies have been set up in other areas important to quality assurance and control. The **National Education Accreditation Center**, established in March 2006 is responsible for carrying out the accreditation of higher education institutions. The number of authorized HEIs has already been reduced through a courageous two-step institutional accreditation process from 227 in 2004 to current 43. The Center intends to extend accreditation to general and vocational schools, and is developing criteria for this purpose as well as encouraging a process of self-evaluation. The **National Curriculum and Assessment Center**, established in April 2006, has introduced new curricula, designed to encourage active learning rather than mechanical transfer of knowledge, at first in grades 1, 7 and 10, and on a pilot basis in grades 2, 8 and 11. Authors have developed new **textbooks** in response to the new curricula: a textbook rental scheme has been piloted but not implemented nationally. The **Teachers' Professional Development Center**, established in July 2006, aims to develop standards and qualification requirements for teachers, to conduct a process of accreditation of teacher training and retraining programs and to introduce a system of teacher certification<sup>6</sup>. After many years of attention to in-service training, reform of pre-career training is regarded as the greater challenge.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, December 21, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Depending on their scores in the new unified entrance examinations (next paragraph).

<sup>4</sup> For detailed discussion, see National Assessment and Examinations Center (2006: chapter 1).

<sup>5</sup> For a review of the 2005 unified examinations process, see Lomaia (2006).

<sup>6</sup> See Ministry of Education and Science (2006) for more detail.

**Georgian National Scientific Foundation** was established in July 2006 in order to support scientific and technological researches through the distribution of state grants on competitive basis.

The MoES is implementing state educational policy through the activities of the agencies described above as well as through various programs. These include physical rehabilitation of schools and ICT development, childcare and deinstitutionalization programs, civic integration and state and native language support programs, national contests for pupils.

An ambitious computerization program, known as the **Deer Leap Program**, was launched in March 2005, with the aim of: providing every school with computers, Internet access, educational software and services and technical support; upgrading the ICT skills of teachers and students; integrating ICT into the curriculum through computer-aided instruction in a wide range of subjects; and computerization of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) at school, local and national levels. This four-year program (2005-2009) is modeled on the Estonian Tiger Leap program and managed by a Foundation and the Board consisting of representatives of government, the Parliament, civil society, business associations, university academics and teachers<sup>7</sup>. The budget of the program over four years totals GEL 38 million. Additional 7.5 million have been contributed by donors in 2005-06. The task of this program, is extensive and challenging considering the fact that in 2004 before the program started the student to computer (normally second-hand computer) ratio in general schools was 200/1.

At the same time, major improvements have been made for physical rehabilitation of schools. For the first time during the last 20 years general schools were rehabilitated and new schools were built within the President's national program Iakob Gogebashvili for School Building Rehabilitation. The program will spend over GEL 390 million on restoration and repair work over the next four years.

Another area of innovation is **vocational education**. A recently adopted law on Vocational Education regulates initial vocational education: activities of the National Professional Agency, curricula and management of VETs. According to the Law the National Professional Agency will create national qualifications and accreditation system and vocational education standards will be developed by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center. In parallel the MoES has started the process of rehabilitation vocational training schools. 11 schools have been rehabilitated and opened in 2006-07. The MoES is planning to optimize the network of existing vocational schools and rehabilitate the best ones in the coming two years.

Professional higher education, reshaped to respond to labor market demands, will take place in HE institutions. It will be regulated by the Law of Georgia on Higher Education and integrated into HE area.

In some areas development of new approaches is still at a relatively early stage. In **early childhood care and education**, the need to address the issue of school readiness among 3-6 year olds is recognized, through development of regulatory policies (including flexible financial systems, operational protocols and professional standards), legal changes and national pre- and in-service teacher training curricula (Ministry of Education and Science 2006a).

Children Deinstitutionalization and Abandonment Prevention Program implemented jointly by the MoES, with donor support been aiming at the reduction of the number of children

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<sup>7</sup> See Ministry of Education and Science (2005) for more detail.

deprived of parental and family care in special institutions in order to help such children be better integrated in social life. The activities of the program include reorganization of childcare institutions, deinstitutionalization and creation of alternative family and parent support services.

For children with special educational needs<sup>8</sup>, a pilot project for the introduction of **inclusive education** in general schools is being mounted in ten schools in Tbilisi. This involves development of a national policy for inclusive education, preparation of training modules, adaptation of the physical, teaching and social environment of the selected schools, training of disabled children and their parents, introduction of inclusive teaching under the supervision of an elected coordinator, publication of a manual, establishment of libraries, increasing public awareness, and monitoring and evaluation (Ministry of Education and Science 2005a).

Policy is also addressing the particular educational problems of **ethnic/linguistic minorities** in the regions, the biggest of which is inability to speak the state language. A textbook on Georgian as a second language has been produced for non-Georgian schools in Samtshke-Javakheti (Armenian) and Kvemo-Kartli (Azeri); incentives for qualified Georgian language teachers to work in minority schools have been provided under a short-term program while long-term goals are to be pursued through teacher training and human resource development programs.

In order to provide equal access to HE representatives of minority groups together with other citizens belonging to vulnerable groups are offered an opportunity to attend free preparatory courses for Unified National Admission Examinations. Another benefit offered to such students is the provision of state social grants to cover tuition fees at universities.

The speed with which education reforms were initiated after 2003 owes much to the ground that had been laid since 2001 by the Education System Realignment and Strengthening Program, since renamed the **Ilia Chavchavadze** project, financed by a World Bank credit of \$26 million. The new financing formula and funding mechanisms, the outcome-based national curriculum for general schools, the national assessment and examinations system and the system for professional development of teachers were all tools developed by this project, ready for use when the political moment arrived. The project also financed improvements in textbooks (including the piloted but not yet implemented rental scheme) and the establishment of an EMIS. The second phase of the project continues the development of the curriculum, the assessment system and teachers' professional development, but devotes 45 per cent of its budget to improving the physical learning environment in schools.

Among other donor agencies, USAID, in its \$9.3 million 2005-2008 General Education Decentralization and Accreditation (GEDA) project, is helping: to build up the new system of regional management and educational support (the Education Resource Centers mentioned above); to develop and institutionalize a quality assurance and accreditation system for general, vocational and higher education; and to increase capacity within the MoES to manage the new systems. USAID has also provided technical assistance for establishment of the new initial vocational education centers. GTZ and the EU have been involved in assistance to vocational education, and the EU is financing changes in selected higher education institutions through its TEMPUS program (European Training Foundation 2005). In addition, the MoES actively seeks

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<sup>8</sup> Defined by the MoES to include: children with disabilities and handicaps; members of ethnic minorities; street children; children with social problems; children with emotional disorders, speech and behavior problems; and girls who have problems of access to and retention in schools.

advice and support for smaller scale programs through bilateral donors and UN agencies and works closely with the NGO community.

### ***c. Principles underlying Education Strategy (2007-2011)***

The Government of Georgia has acknowledged the international evidence, discussed above, on the importance of education for the development of economic competitiveness of a small country. The main goal of the development of educational system is the creation of knowledge-based society and economy through providing to each citizen the opportunity of full realization of his/her potential regardless of age, ethnicity or social standing.

The following are the strategies to be pursued in order to achieve this goal:

- democratization of management processes and the active involvement of society into the process;
- decentralization of the system of management and guarantee of independence and autonomy to educational institutions;
- promotion of outcome-oriented management in the educational sector through the introduction of relevant quality management schemes and mechanisms for resource distribution;
- an increase in the amount of funding provided for the education sector and development of its material-technical basis;
- improvement of educational contents at every level in order to ensure positive learning and labor market outcomes;
- integration of education and science with international trends and development of educational and scientific centers in higher educational institutions.

The extensive and radical education reform program since the beginning of 2004, described in the previous section, has been part of this strategy. State policy on education during the reforms has been aimed at improving governance and funding mechanisms for education, granting autonomy to educational institutions, deregulation/decentralization of the system, improving learning and labor market outcomes of educational programs.

The ultimate goal of the reform is to establish a system which will ensure the provision of highly qualified, self-reliant and internationally competitive human resources leading the country to poverty reduction, social welfare and economic growth. Thus the education reforms in Georgia are based on the globally acknowledged principles of a knowledge-based society and economy.

More specifically, a number of action lines have been identified in the course of educational restructuring. These action-lines are as follows:

- increase and diversify sources of income and financing;
- provide an appropriate regulatory framework;
- eradicate corruption;
- intensify international cooperation;
- involve all the major stakeholders in education planning and management;
- assure the sustainability of the system by providing life-long and life-wide learning opportunities;
- maintain high-quality education, training and research by means of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and peer review.



The conceptual, legislative and structural basis for the system has been established. Currently the following are identified as medium-term outcomes expected through the realization of the sector action plan:

***Sustainability*** – Since the institutional foundations of the process are already in place, the introduction of relevant legal mechanisms for transparency and accountability, as a next step, can ensure the sustainability of the system. This in its turn will provide for compatibility and comparability of Georgian education with international educational systems.

***Social inclusion*** – The implementation of various programs and projects will maximize the inclusion of the citizens of Georgia in education. This, on the one hand, will reduce social injustice due to unequal opportunities and, on the other, will provide essential resources for further development of the system.

***Competitiveness*** – In order to ensure high quality of education competitiveness shall be encouraged at three levels: individual, institutional and national. The system of education will be involved in the European system on an equal basis with other countries and with enough capacity to compete with them.

#### ***d. Sectoral components of the strategy***

##### **i. Pre-school education and early childhood development**

The early years of life are increasingly considered throughout the world as the right time for investing in a child's development. Equipping children below school-age with relevant life skills prepares them for school education and supports their early socialization. Another important rationale for developing early childhood care and education is to provide support for parents' involvement in social life.

Currently the pre-primary education sector in Georgia is to a large extent underdeveloped. As in some other post-communist countries pre-primary education system collapsed in the early 1990s<sup>9</sup>. Since then, this level of education, unlike other levels, has not been through an extensive reform process. Therefore, there is an urgent need to introduce substantial changes in this sector –legislative as well as structural and operational.

The reorganization of pre-primary education carried out in 2005 was aimed at the decentralization of the system which was previously centrally governed. As a result local self-management units became responsible for the establishment of pre-school educational institutions, approval of their statutes, and appointment of a person responsible for the representation and control of their affairs. However, currently there is certain confusion over the management and organization of pre-school education: there are no principles of management and control in place; the role and extent of involvement of central government are largely undefined; funding mechanisms for pre-school education have not yet been devised; and there is no standard licensing procedure.

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<sup>9</sup> ECA Human Development, Discussion Paper Series, Europe and Central Asia Region, the World Bank, June 30, 2005

Unfavorable economic conditions caused a sharp decrease in the amount of funding available for pre-school institutions, resulting in halving of their number between 1990 and 2003 (Table 2). A number of private kindergartens have been established, especially in urban areas from early 1990s, which makes it very difficult to make an accurate estimate of the number of children enrolled in pre-primary education. The absence of standard licensing procedure allows these institutions operate informally and remain unregistered.

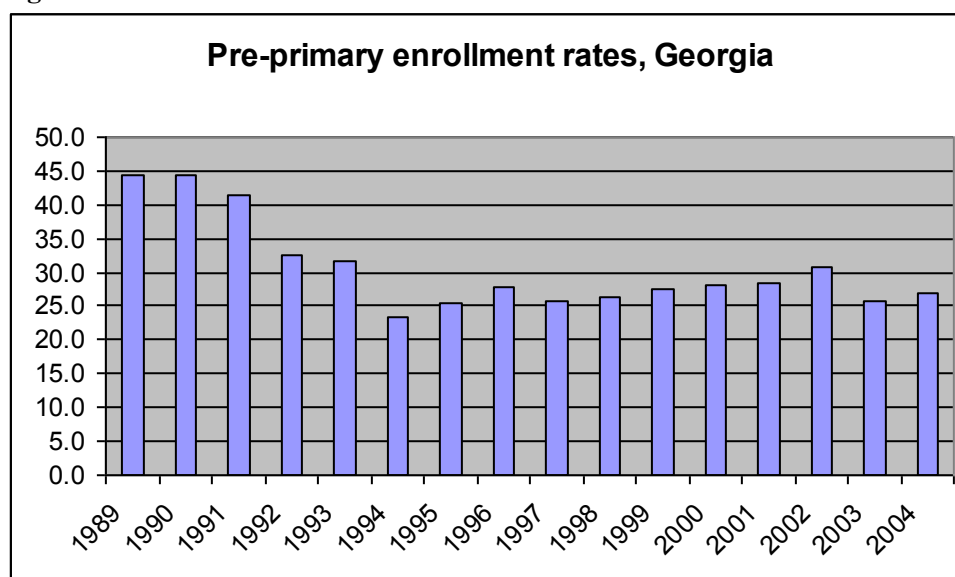
**Table 2: Number of public kindergartens and number of children enrolled, 1990-2005**

Year	Number of kindergartens	Number of children enrolled
1990	2,454	199,982
1996	1,253	83,081
2003	1,203	72,629
2005	1,215	76,416

Source: National Department of Statistics of Georgia

Although there is disparity in the data provided by different sources on pre-school enrollment rates, all of them testify that the rate has dropped sharply starting from early 90s, as Figure 1 shows.

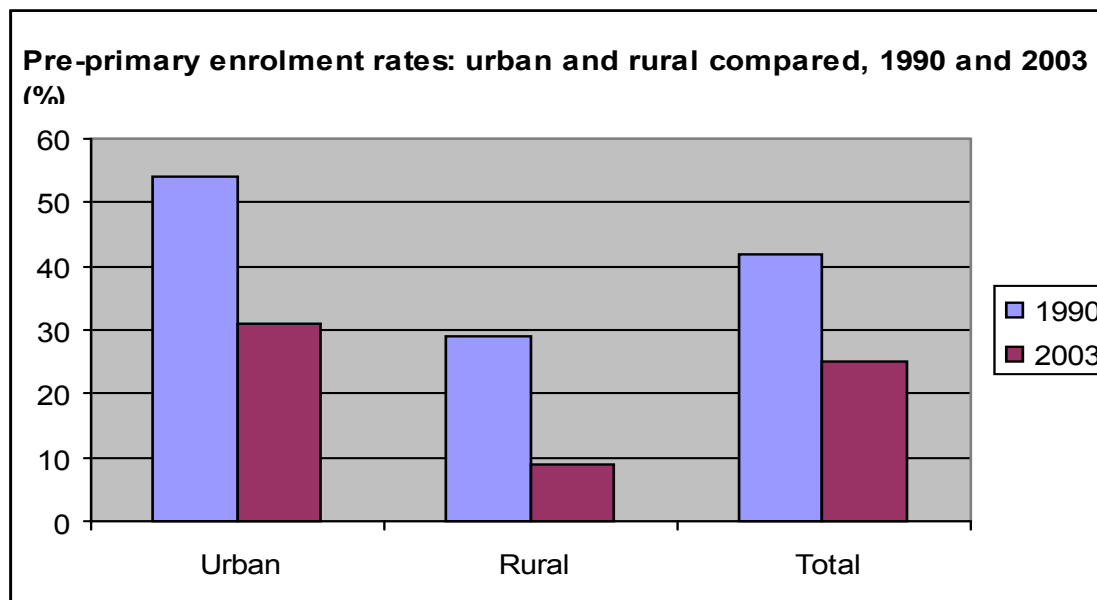
**Figure 1:**



UNICEF TransMONEE databases

Geographical and social factors affect pre-school enrollment rates (in this Figure as a percentage of 3-6 year olds) and disparities are observed in this respect. Enrollment rates in rural areas are at a rough estimate three times lower than those in urban areas (Figure 2).

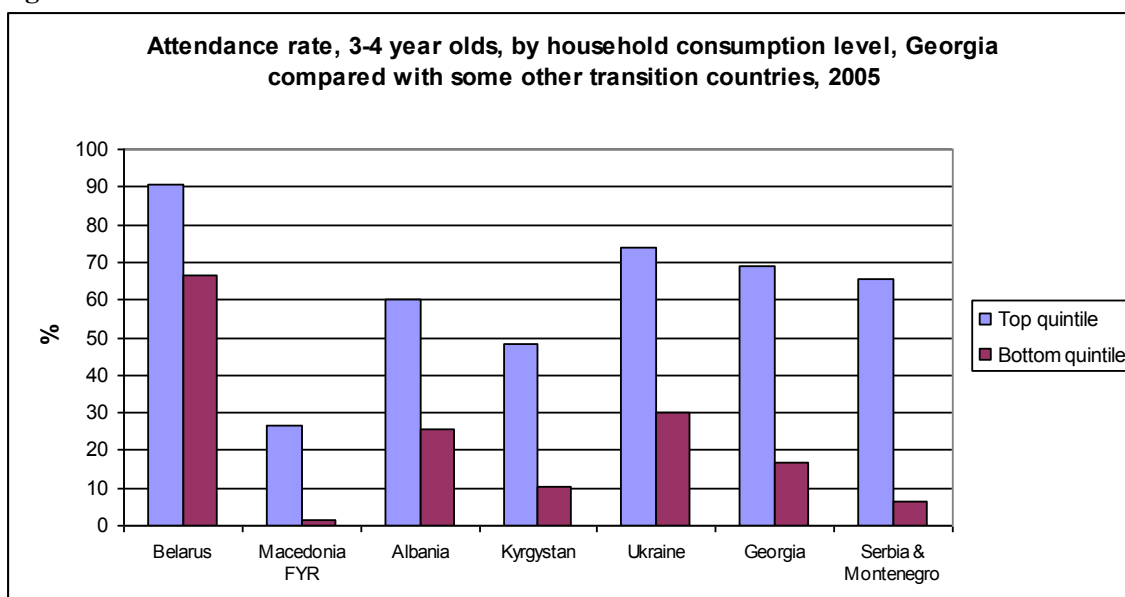
**Figure 2:**



Source: Department of Statistics of Georgia

Access to pre-school also depends on family income. As Figure 3 shows, only 17 per cent of 3-4 year olds from the poorest families attended pre-school in 2005, compared with 69 per cent of those from the richest families – a pattern that was similar to that in every other country shown. This is partly because private kindergartens charge fees that are too high for poor families.

**Figure 3:**



Source: UNICEF (forthcoming), based on MICS 2005 provisional results.

Scarcity of financial resources has resulted in the deterioration of pre-school infrastructure. According to the estimates of the National Department of Statistics of Georgia out of 1,215 public pre-school institutions functioning in Georgia in 2005, 923 needed capital repair

and 217 were in emergency conditions. Schools lack such essential facilities as heating, roofing and educational materials. Similar problems are apparent in educational programs and teaching methods: staff qualifications are not adequate.

Georgia is currently in the initial phase of formulating a national strategy for Early Childhood Development (ECD), in recognition of the universally acknowledged importance of “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education” (EFA goal No 1). UNICEF is providing extensive technical and expert support in this process.

A comprehensive model will be set up for pre-school education and early childhood care. The principles of organization and management will be clearly defined within the model as well as mechanisms of funding. The model will contain clear delineation of rights and responsibilities of local and central governments in the management and control of pre-schools.

Although responsibility for management of pre-school institutions lies with local governments, central government will be involved in developing normative framework for ECE. Specifically tasks and responsibilities of the MoES will include:

- Establishing standards for ECE;
- Providing support in the introduction and implementation of standards;
- Assuring ECE quality.

An important factor for supporting smooth performance of pre-school education system will be the introduction of a feasible and efficient funding scheme that will enable it to reach those pre-school-age children who are currently not attending. There is an agreement that inputs to funding will be made jointly by local municipalities and central government. State policy towards developing pre-school education will be focused on providing assistance to those experiencing financial problems thus reflecting social needs of population.

In order to eliminate both geographical and social discrepancies in access, in accordance with the national social assistance policy, pre-school education (immediately prior to grade one) will be subsidized for 5-year-olds from the socially most vulnerable families.

The urgent need to reach the neediest layers of population will be met by the development and introduction of diversified forms of ECE (community based centers, daycare centers, family and parent education, Sunday schools, etc.) which will be easily accessible for all, as well as the development and provision of learning material for about 50 per cent of children in these age groups who otherwise do not have access to such resources.

A crucial area for further development of ECE is improvement in the quality of learning achievement. This will be done through improving teacher qualifications and development of curriculum and learning material for pre-school education.

## **ii. General education**

The State provides a free twelve-year general education for all its citizens. General education in Georgia consists of primary (grades 1 to 6), lower secondary (7 to 9) and upper secondary stages (10 to 12). It is regulated by the Law of Georgia on General Education. Basic nine-year education is compulsory. The three stages are regarded as one – general level in the

system of education in Georgia, i.e. there is no separate primary schooling system. Management and funding (per capita funding as described in section B) of this chapter) is common for a general school comprising the three stages. Therefore funding allocated for general education is divided between primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education proportionally with the number of students enrolled in each of these stages.

In accordance with the National Goals of General Education adopted by the Government of Georgia in October 2004, as well as international obligations and commitments assumed by the country, the general education system aims at developing all its citizens as free individuals equipped with essential mental and physical skills and capacities, nurturing civil consciousness based on democratic and liberal values.

The state is committed to achieving this goal through using the following tools:

- policy and legislation on general Education;
- the general education schooling system;
- general education regulation and quality assurance mechanisms;
- the national curriculum.

The following are the major objectives to be achieved by 2011 in general education:

- ensure openness of general education and equal access for all;
- integrate the Georgian general education system into the international educational area;
- introduce national assessment, curricula development and accreditation systems in general education;
- ensure efficient and effective governance of general secondary schools;
- ensure more equitable use of all necessary educational, physical and financial resources;
- ensure autonomous governance of schools;
- ensure the support to inclusive education.

### Structure and governance

The education reform program referred to in the previous sections has laid solid legislative and structural foundations for all of the aspects referred to above. At this stage it is crucial to ensure sustainability and long-term efficiency of the structures and practices that are already in place and further improvement of the system. This can be done by laying emphasis on the following three areas:

- Capacity building
- Information management
- Monitoring and evaluation

First of all, the need for reliable and accurate statistical data and information on expenditure requires improvement in the capacity of school directors and administrators in the principles of autonomous school governance, financial accountability, managing budgets, handling financial information, fundraising, liaison with communities, etc.. School boards of trustees will also receive training on the nature of their responsibility and the skills needed to exercise it.

General education territorial management reform carried out in 2006 has been important for improving governance of general education. Instead of previously existing educational departments with double accountability (both to local and central governments), ERCs are established in each district as the MoES territorial units facilitating activities of the schools located in the district. Recruitment and training of the heads and staff of ERCs, rehabilitation and

equipment of ERC buildings was carried out by USAID support through General Education Decentralization and Accreditation Program. All ERCs will be rehabilitated and equipped and staff trained in 2008.

It is crucial to ensure that information is communicated freely between three levels of governance: schools, MoES at central and ERC levels. Electronic databases containing the following information will be established, operational and regularly updated at all levels:

- agreed statistics on the number of pupils enrolled in and attending each grade, by sex and age;
- statistics for each level and type on number of teachers, non-teachers, class sizes, institution sizes, etc.;
- statistics for each level and type on total consolidated expenditure (public central + public local + extra-budgetary), broken down by personnel (teachers), personnel (non-teachers), utilities, subsidies and transfers, other current, and capital expenditure;
- statistics for each level and type on sources of revenue, broken down by central government, local government, and extra-budgetary (distinguishing between fees, sale of goods and services, donors, etc.).

Together with building the capacity of administrators at all levels it is essential to ensure that all the activities and measures taken are followed by the appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedure at all levels (school, ERCs and the MoES) and that outcomes of activities meet the targets set in advance.

#### Enrollment and access

As a country committed to the performance of Millennium Development and EFA goals, Georgia will seek to ensure that enrollment rates in general education do not decline and equal access to education is guaranteed to all children. Table 3 shows the enrollment rates recorded by the Education Management Information System for 2005.

**Table 3: General school enrollment rates in 2005**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
School enrollment primary (% gross)	97.15%	96.59%	97.74%
School enrollment basic (% gross)	90.63%	90.32%	90.96%
School enrollment secondary (% gross)	51.12%	49.08%	53.21%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
School enrollment primary (% net)	91.71%	91.36%	92.09%
School enrollment basic (% net)	89.33%	88.91%	89.76%
School enrollment secondary (% net)	53.44%	51.58%	55.36%

Source: EMIS, National Department of Statistics

In line with EFA Goal No 2, efforts will be focused on providing increased opportunities of learning for representatives of certain vulnerable groups. Key concerns that have to be addressed in terms of eliminating inequalities in access to education and achievement are those related to unequal distribution of income, geographical distribution and ethnic minorities. A drive to increase enrollment rates and improve quality at this level (to the benefit of productivity and international competitiveness) will concentrate on children belonging to these disadvantaged categories. Specifically, enrollment efforts will focus on the members of the following disadvantaged groups:

a) Minority population. Currently there are 423 non-Georgian schools and non-Georgian sectors of instruction at schools in Georgia with 123,745 students. Languages of instruction in these schools and sectors are Russian, Armenian, Azeri and Ossetian. Of these, 273 schools are located in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli - two regions densely populated by Armenian and Azeri populations respectively. Quality of general education in these schools is low due to several reasons: firstly there is the lack of qualified teaching staff, especially in remote areas where majority of these schools are located. Further, inadequate knowledge of Georgian as a state language hinders the process of their social inclusion and civic integration.

The Ministry of Education and Science through cooperation with donor agencies has introduced a set of initiatives in order to ensure individual and collective right of members of minorities to use their native language, preserve and express their cultural values on one hand, and on the other, to provide them with teaching state language. For this purpose in December, 2004 the MoES started its Civil Integration Program. It aims to solve the problem of teaching language, facilitate the process of social integration, and raise public-awareness through teaching the state language to all the citizens of Georgia, through the following activities.

- elaboration of new teaching programs and standards for learning the Georgian language and literature, as well as methodological recommendations, and organization of teacher training (financial support for teaching the Georgian language in non-Georgian schools of Samtskhe-Javakheti is provided by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. 4 programs have been implemented through cooperation with this agency during two years (two in Georgian language both in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli and two in native Armenian and Azeri languages in each of the two regions respectively);
- creation of an appropriate learning environment, as well as an effective system of teaching and knowledge assessment, within the framework of secondary school reforms;
- support for the integration of non-Georgian teachers and students through partnership projects between non-Georgian and Georgian schools;
- provision of Georgian textbooks, books, magazines and newspapers to non-Georgian schools;
- encouragement of participation in the Unified National University Admission Examinations and preparation of non-Georgian applicants for the exams in Georgian language and literature.

In the medium-term perspective it is planned to proceed with implementing some of the activities described above necessary to give equal opportunities to quality education for minorities. Particularly, preparatory courses for admission exams and state grants to cover tuition fees at HEIs will continue to be offered to the students who finish non-Georgian schools. However more attention will be drawn to designing and implementing long-impact and measures with sustainable results. Special general education curricula are being designed and introduced in non-Georgian schools and sectors of instructions. Special emphasis will be placed on developing capacity and strengthen human resource potential in the regions densely populated by minorities. To provide equal opportunities for access to quality education for national minorities special pre-service and in-service training programs will be developed for teachers in the regions densely populated by national minorities. In addition to this, incentive schemes for students enrolled in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs and teachers will increase the motivation of young people to apply to these programs and be committed to work in minority schools.

b) People living in high-mountainous areas. Another group potentially deprived of quality education is the population of high-mountainous regions and conflict zones. Currently 69,861 students study in 636 schools located in such regions. In order to ensure adequate quality of education in these schools, they are entitled to receive highest amount of voucher funding per

head. In addition, small schools can also receive extra funding per student. The plan is to further refine the per capita funding formula to reflect the individual needs of schools of all sizes.

Due to the lack of qualified teaching staff in high-mountainous regions it is important to introduce an appropriate system of incentives at university teacher education programs to attract young and motivated professionals to such regions.

One more area of the reform program where additional measures will be taken to ensure efficiency is the ongoing school optimization process which has been designed in two stages and has reduced the number of public general-schools by almost 1000. Although this has improved fiscal efficiency, additional challenges have emerged that will be addressed; specifically those connected with the access of children to schools located at remote distances. In order to address this problem free transportation opportunity is offered to students: 30 school-buses were purchased by the MoES and 20 were donated to schools. However due to high demand it is planned to purchase more to ensure that children do not experience any difficulties in access.

c) Groups affected by other social factors. Within the medium-term expenditure framework, the social dimension will be given appropriate consideration. Consistent with the nationwide social assistance policy, benefits will be offered to the families identified as the most vulnerable and disadvantaged and hence unable to provide a proper educational environment for children.

### Quality

Increasing the quality of general education has been and still is a crucial part of the education sector reform program. The drive for Georgia to integrate with European education systems implies a need to bring the general education system of the country up to international standards. Quality improvement will be focused on two aspects: (i) the content and (ii) the learning environment at schools.

A number of measures have already been taken and more are planned in order to improve quality in terms both of learning and knowledge outcomes and of relevance and labor market outcomes.

a) The prime responsibility for quality assurance is with a school itself. At the national level, quality assurance and control are implemented by the MoES through the agencies under its governance: the National Curriculum and Assessment Center, National Examination Center, National Education Accreditation Center and Teachers Professional Development Center.

The newly established National Curriculum and Assessment Center develops national educational curricula, which include achievement standards and recommended learning programs. These are based on the National Goals of General Education. All public and private schools are obliged to meet national curriculum goals and criteria while being free to design part of the curriculum (25%) on their own. Schools are free to choose the form and content of study within the curriculum framework but the state has the means to measure achievement and if needed can participate in improving the quality of learning. Piloting of the national curriculum started in 2005-2006 and was implemented throughout the country in the academic year 2006-2007 (in three grades). New curricula and textbooks are first piloted and then introduced in each subsequent class. Introduction of national curricula will be complete at lower and upper secondary levels in 2008-2009 and at primary level in 2011-2012.



Professional development of teachers is high on the agenda in the education sector action plan. Important measures that have already been introduced include the establishment of the Teacher Professional Development Center, preparation of a Concept paper on Teacher's Professional Development and Preparation and introduction of amendments to the Law of Georgia on General Education laying legal basis for regulating the teacher's profession. The Teachers' Professional Development Center aims to develop standards and qualification requirements for teachers, to conduct a process of accreditation of teacher training and retraining programs and to introduce a system of teacher certification by 2008. Currently, after many years of paying predominant attention to in-service training, reform of pre-career training is regarded as the greater challenge and area where further investments and improvements are needed: pre-service teacher training programs at higher education institutions are obsolete, overloaded with theoretical issues and lacking exercises for the development of teaching skills. Therefore Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs will be designed and introduced at Georgian universities, in the capital, as well as in regions.

Crucial factor for ensuring high quality in teaching at schools is low teacher salaries thus reducing their incentives. General schools are now autonomous entities. This means schools themselves bear responsibility for establishing teacher salary rates given that they observe minimal rate recommended by the MoES. This system automatically implies that the rise of salaries will depend 1) on the amount of per capita funding available for each school and 2) on the decision of school board and management. As annual increase of per capita funding is planned, it is expected that at current teacher salaries will increase (by 72% in 2011) thus making it possible to make teacher's profession more attractive. In addition results of teacher examination and certification process will help offer better compensation to those teachers who are better qualified and accordingly raise motivation of teachers.

In order to adequately assess the outcomes of accomplished and ongoing changes, appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures will be established at every level for assuring and controlling quality. At school level all general schools will develop quality assurance mechanisms and tools for self-evaluation, to be monitored by district ERCs. The MoES will evaluate the compliance of learning process and outcomes with national curricula and development standards through a general school accreditation process carried out by the National Accreditation Center of Georgia. In order to ensure that learning outcomes of general school students are measurable nationally as well as internationally, they will be assessed through National Assessments administered by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center as well as through participation in international assessment programs PIRLS and TIMSS to compare performance of Georgian students with learning achievement of their foreign peers.

b) The second major means of increasing the quality of education is the improvement of learning environment at schools. Efforts have been focused on two major areas: rehabilitation of physical infrastructure and the introduction of ICT in general education.

Due to the fact that no capital rehabilitation works of general schools had been carried out in Georgia for almost a decade, schools were in extremely poor physical conditions and in need of substantial rehabilitation and refurbishment. The President's National Program Iakob Gogebashvili for School Building Rehabilitation was designed to address this need. Within the scope of this program, 106 public schools have been fully rehabilitated, 35 new schools have been built and partial rehabilitation works has been carried out in 217 schools throughout the country in 2006. All schools will be fully or partially rehabilitated within this program planned to last for four years. Apart from rehabilitating physical infrastructure, appropriate measures will be taken to provided up-to-date learning material and facilities to general schools.

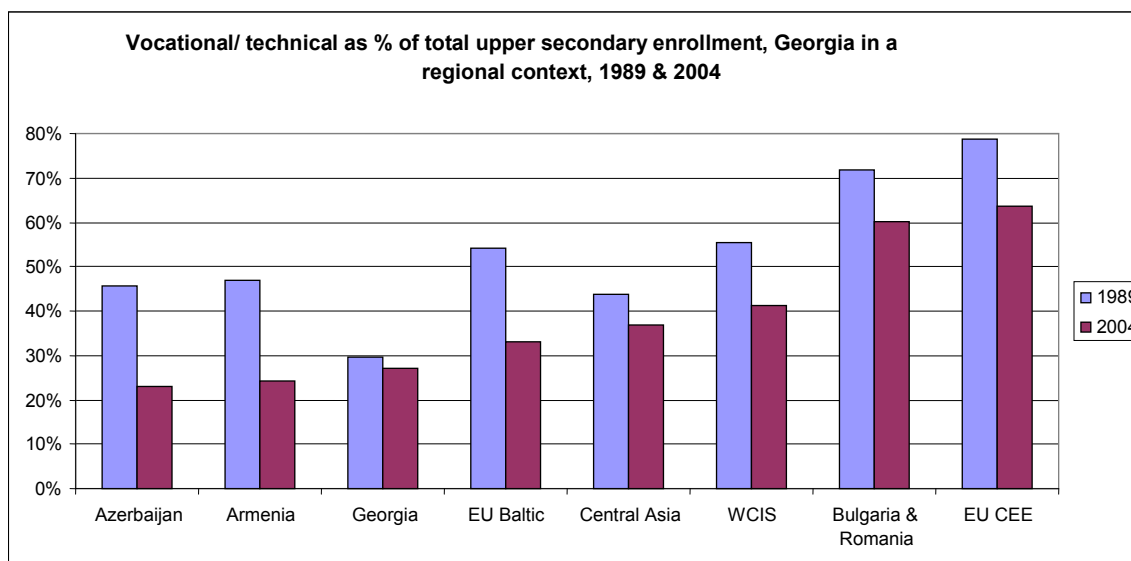
Within the framework of school computerization Deer Leap Program it is planned that general schools in Georgia will be equipped with computers and will have internet access by 2008. Upon completion of the program student to computer ratio is expected to be 20/1 (it was 200 secondhand computers per student before the program started). Furthermore, ICT will be integrated into the national curriculum and used for teaching other subjects. By the end of 2007 all public schools in Georgia including highland villages will have internet access and educational internet network will be created by the end of 2007. The educational network was projected by Deer Leap and provider companies were selected on competitive basis encouraging them to advance and improve their services and thus contributing to the development of ICT infrastructure in the country. Training of teachers in ICT technologies is also part of the program. 70% of all teachers will have basic ICT skills by the end of 2008 and 10 % will be able to train others.

### **iii. Vocational education**

Vocational education has been another priority area for improvement and development within the wide-scale education reform program. The new concept of vocational education places it within the framework of life-long learning. It aims at setting up proper institutional framework and network of vocational training centers, colleges and training programs responding to contemporary requirements and growing demand on the labor market. It is expected that enrollment in vocational education (which compares unfavorably with some of the successful Western countries) will increase through providing high-quality courses corresponding to international standards and thus improving chances of employment on the labor market. On the other hand, the enrollment rate in upper secondary education is currently estimated at 73.11 per cent (gross). Thus there is the need to provide opportunities for professional development for those who leave schools after the completion of basic level. Vocational education will be offered to school leavers as well as to those who stay in schools at upper secondary level through providing vocational training courses at general schools.

Currently vocational education is not in a position to attract young people. The share of vocational education in the total number of enrolled in upper secondary education is considerably lower than observed in some other countries in the region and EU countries (Figure 5).

#### **Figure 5:**



Source: UNICEF TransMONEE database.

A major recent development in vocational education recently has been the elaboration of a legislative framework, in particular, the Concept of Vocational Education and a Draft Law of Georgia on Vocational Education. The following have been identified as major goals of vocational education in the country.

- to meet the professional and educational demands of the population, support professional development;
- to prepare adequately qualified professionals for the internal as well as the external labor market;
- to support the competitiveness of workforce through retraining and qualification improvement programs;
- to support adaptation to new socio-economic conditions through private business and self-employment initiatives.

Vocational education will acquire a special role for development of Georgia's regions. The potential medium-term benefits of establishing vocational training centers will include the reduction of the intensity of migration and support of the economic development of regions. This will be done through the identification of specific economic development priorities, local business perspectives and employment opportunities within each region in the process of planning.

The recently adopted Law of Georgia on Vocational Education sets out the institutional and organizational framework that will help achieve these goals. The new system will consist of *initial vocational* and *professional higher* education. Initial vocational education will be offered by vocational training centers, while accredited HEIs will be offering professional higher education to be regulated by the Law of Georgia on Higher Education. A network of community colleges will also be established in the regions on the basis of existing institutes and colleges.

One of the most efficient ways of improving the governance of vocational training centers as well as labor market outcomes is fostering cooperation and partnership with the private sector and the government stakeholders. The National Professional Agency, responsible for the elaboration and approval of the list of professional qualifications and professional standards, will be composed of the representatives of ministries, professional associations, employers' associations and vocational schools and colleges. Educational-entrepreneurial partnerships will be

strengthened through the establishment of professional councils, composed of employers, professional associations and line ministries.

Each vocational training center will be governed by a supervisory board, consisting of the representatives of employers and local self-government units, as well as teachers and parents. In order to ensure efficient funding of vocational education, voucher funding – the money follows the student approach – will be introduced: instead of allocating lump sums to individual institutions, funding will be provided on a per capita basis. The size of the voucher will vary according to specializations and will reflect program-specific requirements.

The national program of Revitalization of Vocational Educational Institutions which started in 2006 aims to attract more students through providing quality teaching that corresponds to labor market requirements. Within the framework of this program, 11 schools are being renovated, equipped and staffed as initial vocational education centers. These schools cover a wide range of subjects including ICT, tourism, transport, agriculture, applied art and construction. Out of the 11 new centers 4 are located in Tbilisi and the others in various regions of the country.

The Government is committed to rehabilitate and reestablish more initial vocational training centers. However it is expected that private initiatives for developing vocational education will be launched and share of private involvement will increase resulting in the establishment of the network of VET centers responding to specific labor market requirements.

New vocational training centers will offer training to students with complete basic education and to adults for retraining new skills/profession or qualification improvement courses. In line with the life-long learning principles, there is no upper age limit set for initial vocational education. As the pre-requisite for entering higher academic or vocational education is the completion of general secondary education (grades 1-12) there is a significant risk of blocking upward mobility of those students who enter vocational training centers. In order to avoid this risk and in line with modern tendencies of integrating secondary and vocational education, it is planned to introduce vocational training courses at the upper secondary level of general education – the courses offered by vocational training centers will be incorporated in national curricula. Another approach designed to prevent this problem is granting the opportunity to young people to complete general secondary education concurrently with vocational courses as external students.

#### **iv. Higher education**

Development strategy for the whole education sector and higher education in particular is consistent with the wider national goal of the country to ensure political, social and cultural integration into Europe. Therefore, joining the Bologna process and implementing its guiding principles has been the top priority for the education system of Georgia.

To meet the minimum requirements for joining the Bologna Process the following major reform directions were identified:

- harmonization of the legislative basis with European standards;
- elimination of corruption;
- introduction of a new model of financing;

- introduction of up-to-date study programs, curricula, and syllabi at higher education institutions (HEIs);
- introduction of ECTS and the three cycle degree system etc..

New Law on Higher Education provides for entirely new organizational and management structure for higher education institutions, makes public universities more autonomous, more accountable to the public and democratically governed from the inside. Governance and management here are based on the principle of election, and new legislation defines faculty members, students and professors as chief agents in HE. Heads of HE institutions are no longer appointed by the President, but instead are elected by the members of Academic Councils - the highest representative body of a HEI. At state universities, a third of seats in the representative bodies known as Senates will be reserved for students. The recent changes and improvements in HE governance should have a positive impact on efficiency, transparency and quality of HE.

The funding model of higher education institutions has also changed substantially. The input-based *lump sum financing model* of education has been transformed into per capita financing. Consequently, vouchers and grants have been introduced. This shift is primarily directed to increasing efficiency and transparency of financing.

Apart from state-awarded student grants, HEIs are entitled to receive funding from the following sources: (i) funds received through private grants, contributions or a will; (ii) research grants awarded by the state on the basis of competition; (iii) special state-budgetary programs designed to encourage the enrolment in those specialties of a higher education institution, which represent priority for the state; (iv) program financing allocated by the ministries of a relevant field; (v) any other sources of income allowed by the Georgian legislation, including revenue from economic activities.

Three-cycle degree studies (bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies) have already been introduced in all accredited HEIs in Georgia. Almost all students below doctoral level are enrolled in the two-cycle degree system (except for certain specific specializations). Another effort taken in order to ensure consistency with international HE systems was the introduction of ECTS. Since one of the accreditation criteria in 2006 was whether HEIs already started introducing ECTS, presently all accredited HEIs have already met this criteria. However additional support in terms of human, material, and financial assistance is required to make the system operational and effective. The MoES has assumed the responsibility to reform university curriculum and harmonize teaching contents with Bologna process requirements and European HE contents.

Another priority area for meeting Bologna process principles is the integration of research and HE, which is currently under way in Georgia. This is also one of the main priorities within the European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan. The MoES has initiated a competitive system of research funding and has established Georgian National Scientific Foundation to create a competitive model of funding science. First national call for applications to receive funding for scientific projects was announced in 2006 winners were identified on competitive basis.

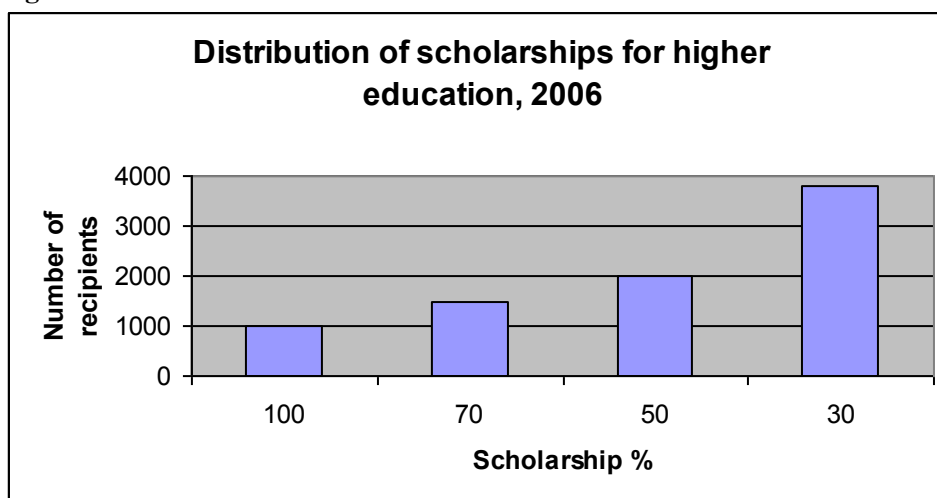
Another important change carried out in science management process was the establishment of scientific institutes as legal entities of public law. The MoES encourages cooperation between research institutions and HEIs including establishment of scientific, academic and institutional links. The positive action taken towards integration of the two areas will be the strengthening of research components in graduate programs and doctoral study programs.

As part of the broader stride towards fighting corruption, major efforts were made to improve the transparency of the education system. In 2005 Higher Education admission policy was modified and the Government successfully introduced the first unified national university entrance examinations. The new system of examinations provided by the law on Higher Education produced first tangible results of increased objectivity, transparency and equality in the admission of applicants to higher education institutions. The system, developed and implemented by the National Examination Center, requires all applicants to pass centralized examinations in order to be admitted in any institution of their choice. It is essential to note that the new scheme has also introduced General Aptitudes test in Georgia for the first time, providing opportunity to assess wide range of intellectual skills of students. Aptitudes test together with Georgian Language and Literature and foreign languages test is compulsory to take for all applicants while selected tests are administered for individual departments in: literature, mathematics, history and social sciences, natural sciences.

Unified National Examinations have produced some excellent results in fighting corruption present for many years at entrance examinations of higher education institutions. Both in 2005 and 2006 the conduct of the examinations was monitored by Transparency International. In its report on the 2006 examinations, together with the American Councils for International Education, the testing process was judged to be well organized and transparent. Wide support for the new system was found throughout the country. The survey conducted by Transparency International Georgia testified that a large majority of test takers, parents and administrators felt confident that it would help to eliminate corruption in university admission.

At National Admission Examinations students compete for placement at state or private HEIs determined by the as National Accreditation Center. State grants are awarded to those students who are best achievers at Unified National Admission Examinations. This grant can be redeemed as tuition waiver at any state institution or accredited private higher education institution. Following the examinations administered in 2006 instead of 100 percent funding available in the previous year to all scholarship recipients, more scholarships were offered on a sliding scale (100, 70, 50 and 30 percent) to a greater number of students (Figure 6).

**Figure 6:**



Source: NAEC

As a result, a higher proportion of entrants was entitled to receive some funding from the state compared with the previous year (Table 4):

**Table 4: Applications, enrollment and scholarships, HEIs, 2005 and 2006**

<b>Year of examination</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Applicants	31171	32791
Enrolled	16507	19479
Scholarship recipients	4198	8271
% of applicants who were admitted	53	59
% of the enrolled who received scholarships	25	42

Source: NAEC

The allocation of scholarships is merit-based, and top-scorers at the examinations are entitled to receive it. An attempt to address equity concerns was the initiation of a social assistance program by the MoES. Students belonging to certain vulnerable groups who are admitted but do not get enough funding are offered state grants to cover tuition fees within the framework of this program. Scholarships are annually offered to over 500 students, who live in high-mountainous regions, in conflict zones, non-Georgian secondary schools in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities. The successors of the people who died for territorial integrity of Georgia and who were deported from Samtskhe-Javakheti during Communist regime are also recipients of this grant. In addition, over 200 students belonging to the same groups attend annually free preparatory courses for Unified National Admission Exams.

A student loan system was introduced in Georgia in 2006, in cooperation with the leading commercial banks of Georgia (TBC Bank, Bank Republic, BazisBank and the Bank of Georgia). 2,463 students have so far been provided loans with various coverage terms and interest rates. Further improvement of student loan schemes will be made to increase number and availability of loans as well as lending conditions.

Alongside with policy reform quality issues are of utmost importance. The goal is to have a national quality assurance system which will be in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area. All HEIs will have adequate internal quality assurance units. External quality assurance will be carried out by the National Accreditation Center through program accreditation. Institutional accreditation that is already in place serves as a precondition for program accreditation. Carrying out program accreditation is now one of the biggest challenges HE in Georgia is now. Extensive preparatory works need to be designed and conducted for this purpose including the elaboration of accreditation standards, training/retraining of experts, training QA staff in HEIs, ensure availability of material on QA and accreditation standards and criteria for HEIs and information on their accreditation status for public.

#### **v. Lifelong learning and non-formal education**

The changes introduced into the system of education of Georgia ensure the operation of two fundamental principles of contemporary education – continuous education and lifelong learning (LLL): each citizen of Georgia will have the opportunity to proceed to his/her academic or professional career from any level of education. Provision of education will not be restricted by such factors as previous education, age, ethnic origin or sex. It is crucial that citizens have an

opportunity continuously to renew their knowledge, skills and competencies. However, there must be efficient communication and cooperation mechanisms in place between providers at different levels of education.

It is essential that the citizens of the country have an opportunity to update and upgrade their knowledge and skills on regular basis. Currently there are no accurate data available for the rate of non-formal or adult training and education. However it may be assumed that there are not enough opportunities for retraining and qualification improvement for adults to meet new requirements emerging on the labor markets. Therefore there is the need to develop a coherent and efficient approach for supporting life-long and non-formal education in the country.

Planning of life-long learning in Georgia will be consistent with the European Neighborhood Action Plan - the tool to carry out European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) of the European Union to which Georgia became a party in 2004. Support to life-long learning is one of the priorities of ENP.

Development of the national strategy and action plan for LLL is currently under way. An important part of these activities will be the elaboration of National Qualifications Framework allowing translation of qualifications across different levels and forms of education not only in the country but abroad as well.

At the current very initial stage several measures have already been taken to support both adult learning and non-formal educational. The recently adopted Law of Georgia on Vocational Education contains provisions stipulating the recognition of qualifications received through non-formal education. This, in its turn will encourage those who are not officially enrolled in educational institutions at any level regularly improve and update their knowledge and skills.

Adult training has been receiving significant consideration and support both from the government as well as from donor agencies. Specifically several initiatives were launched for the education of minority population. A school of public administration established in 2005 provides training programs for minority population and trains about 450 public officials annually. The program helps not only capacity development among government officials but fosters civic integration of minorities.

Adult training centers are established in Samtskhe-Javakheti – the region populated by Armenian minority through financial support of European Commission and the German Government. OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities supports the operation of Language Houses in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions. These institutions will proceed with their activities and further measures will be taken to enlarge the adult educational network through the establishment of two more adult training centers.

#### **vi. Inclusive education and children with special needs**

The children with special needs have been receiving considerable attention from policy-makers at national level. In line with global trends for ensuring equal access of all citizens to



education notwithstanding their capacities and background, the trend of providing special institutional settings for children with special needs has been shifting towards their deinstitutionalization and their gradual integration into society. In accordance with the national goals of Georgia for education and EFA goals educational system of the country shall offer each citizen equal opportunity to receive full benefits of education at all levels and shall be adjusted to meet individual needs.

In Georgia the following categories of children are identified as having special educational needs:

- Children with disabilities and handicap students;
- Representatives of ethnic minorities;
- Street children;
- Children who have the social problems;
- Children with emotional disorder, speech problems and behavior problems;
- Any student at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

Medium-term goals of education in Georgia include the establishment of appropriate legislative and structural setting for the introduction of inclusive education at all levels. However this task should be handled with great care and extensive preparatory measures need be taken with regards of raising public awareness and encouraging acceptance of such children by society, as well as developing and introducing relevant standards and methods of teaching at all levels of education for the people with special educational needs.

Building on the experience of the past couple of years particular emphasis will be laid upon deinstitutionalization and creating alternative forms of care for vulnerable children. The previously existing system of special needs children care that would allow for the operation of various types of childcare institutions: for orphan children, for the children with physical or mental disabilities, has undergone transformation. Country-wide efforts have been taken with the purpose of providing alternative forms of care for orphan and abandoned children. The process of deinstitutionalization of orphanages and integration of orphan and abandoned children into society is proceeding at a high pace.

On February 13, 2004, the Parliament of Georgia approved the “*Main Trends of Social Policy of Protection of Rights of Disabled Children*”. Based on the above document, the government was assigned the task to develop specific implementation strategies for improving child welfare.

For this purpose an extensive governmental program started in 2005 to transform existing childcare system. Specifically, an optimization plan was elaborated aiming at optimization/transformation of childcare institutions with an ultimate goal of their significant reduction.

The following new programs have been introduced and implemented by the MoES:

- Social services
- Shelters for mothers and infants
- Daycare centers
- Youth centers
- Small family-type houses
- Grant program for children deprived of parental care
- Prevention of children abandonment and deinstitutionalization

- Urgent support for families

The table below shows the dynamics of deinstitutionalization resulting from the implementation of this program:

#### Dynamics of deinstitutionalization

	2003	2004	2005	2006	total	To
<b>Reintegration</b>	66	44	54	342	6	50
<b>Prevention</b>	86	84	124	383	7	67
<b>Adoption</b>	89	42	70	108	9	30
<b>Total</b>	241	170	248	833	92	14

Successful performance has been particularly enhanced by the increase in funding allocated from state budget for childcare programs (about 2.5 % of total MoES budget).

The second step after deinstitutionalization should be the integration of children in the mainstream educational process and through it – into social life. The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has launched a project for introducing inclusive education for general education institutions (for ten schools in Tbilisi). This project is a pilot initiative which, upon successful implementation will serve as a basis for the development of national policy for inclusive education and for introducing similar initiatives throughout the country.

The strategic approach towards the inclusion of the children with special needs in mainstream education is to prepare all public schools, teachers and community at large to accept and facilitate the this process. Therefore it is important that all schools are equipped with appropriate facilities and human resources to meet specific individual needs of children. With this purpose various methods of teaching (special classes, support classes, individual programs) responding to the special needs or disabilities of children will be designed and introduced throughout the country. During the introduction process it is essential to train teachers and improve their capacity to interact with the special needs children and enhance their capacity to appropriately address their peculiarities. Further, it is important that these children have unrestricted access to special educational material at schools, such as audio books, visuals, toys, etc.

However the idea of inclusive education will not be restricted to schools only and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that there are education opportunities (vocational, higher academic and professional, life-long learning) adapted to the needs of adult citizens.

Introduction of inclusive education at general schools should be carried out by joint efforts of officials, teachers, non-teachers, and most importantly students and parents. That is why raising public awareness on the principles and importance of inclusive education is essential.

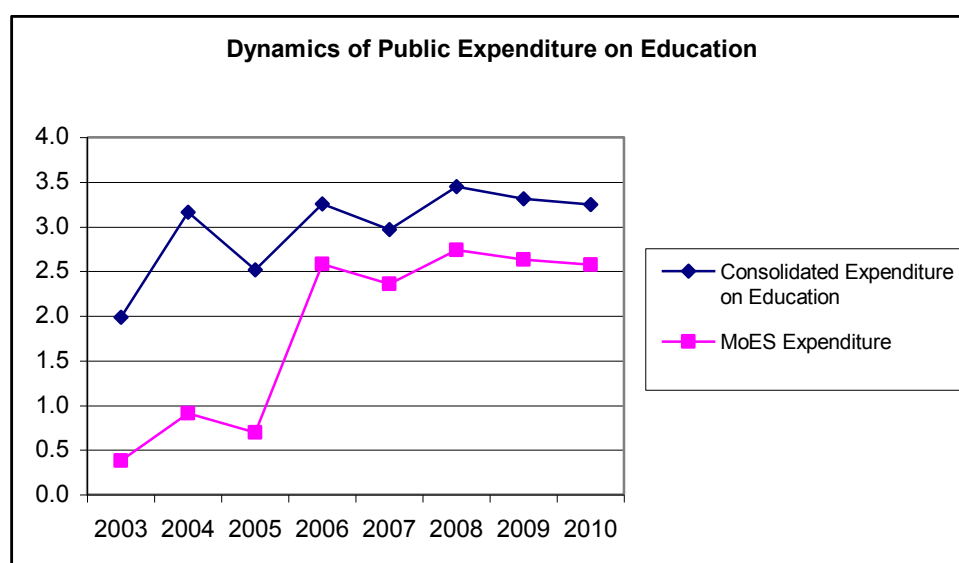
Although the idea of inclusive education in principle means the inclusion of all disabled children in the general education process, it does not consider placing all children with disabilities in general education schools. In some cases children will have to be placed in special institutions

(sometimes as a necessary temporary measure). Therefore rehabilitation and equipment of existing special educational institutions will be high on agenda (particularly so that the introduction of inclusive education is in its very initial phase). There is the need to rehabilitate infrastructure, readjust teaching methods and curricula in accordance with latest standards and best international practices and update learning material, train/retrain teachers in such institutions in accordance with updated standards. To facilitate access free transportation will be available for the children to special schools.

## 2. Action Plan for the Education Sector (2007-2011)

### a. Current and medium-term public expenditure on education

Education is considered as one of the top priorities for the Government. Share of consolidated public expenditure on education in GDP has been increasing over the last few years and is projected to increase further. However due to the projected rapid growth of GDP over the next five years the share of expenditure on Education will not change significantly. Consolidated public expenditure consists of the expenditure of the MoES, expenditure of local authorities and other ministries on education. The following diagram shows the dynamics of public expenditure over last few years and medium-term projections<sup>10</sup>.



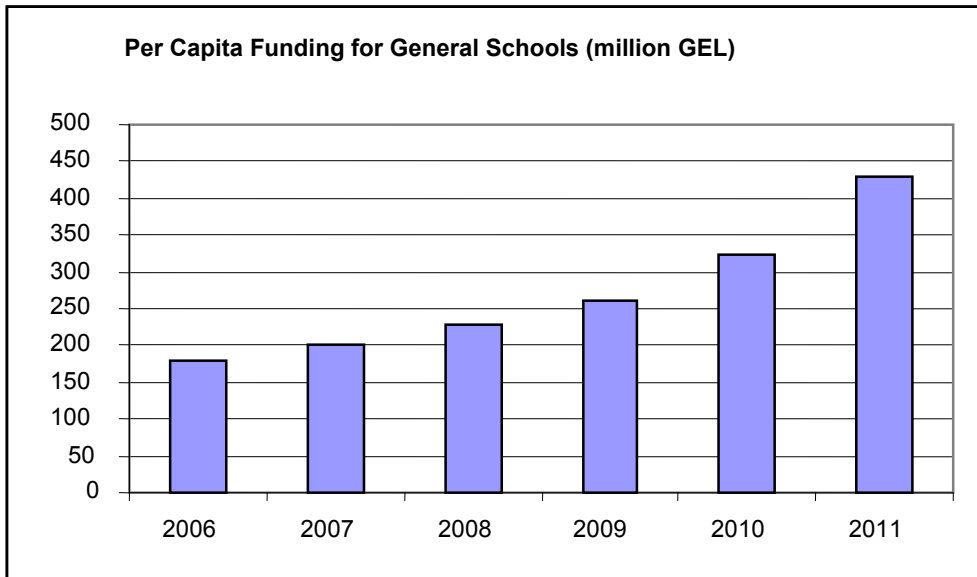
Source: MoES budget, Government of Georgia, Basic Data and Directions, 2008-2011.

The diagrams given below display the major activities funded by the MoES budget in the medium-term projection<sup>11</sup>.

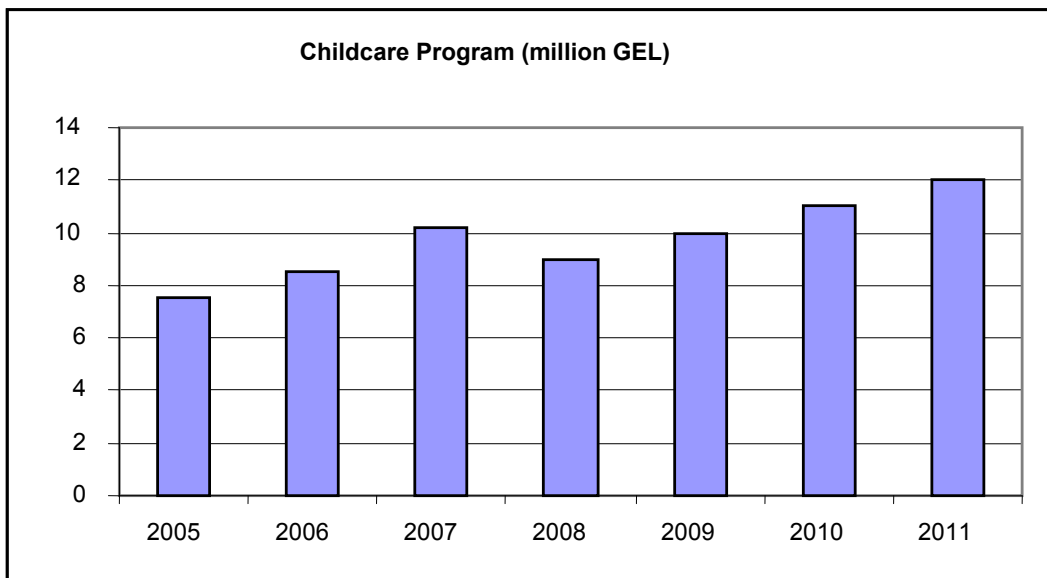
- a. Funding of general secondary schools (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels) through per capita (voucher) system. The system was first introduced in 2006 when GEL 180 million was spent on it. This amount will increase to GEL 430 million by 2011 based on MTEF projections.

<sup>10</sup> Figures from 2003 to 2006 are actual figures. Figures for 2007 are approved in 2007 budget and for 2008 onwards are MTEF projections. No estimates available for 2007-2010 for expenditure other than MoES budget, it is assumed that the ratio of MoES budget to consolidated public expenditure on education will remain unchanged throughout the future period.

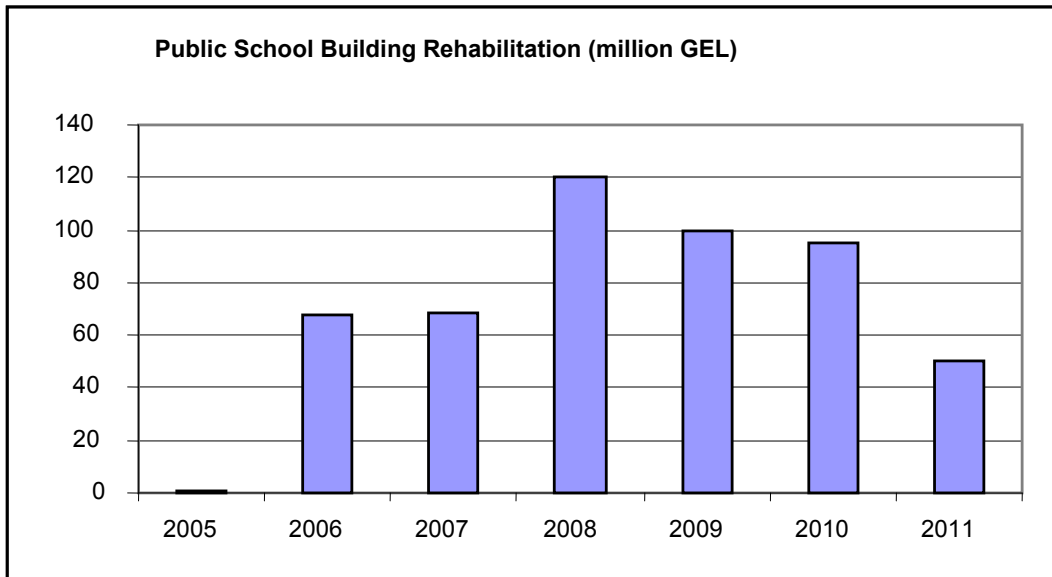
<sup>11</sup> In these diagrams figures for 2005 and 2006 are actual expenditures, figures for 2007 are approved in 2007 budget and figures for 2008 through 2011 are based on MTEF projections.



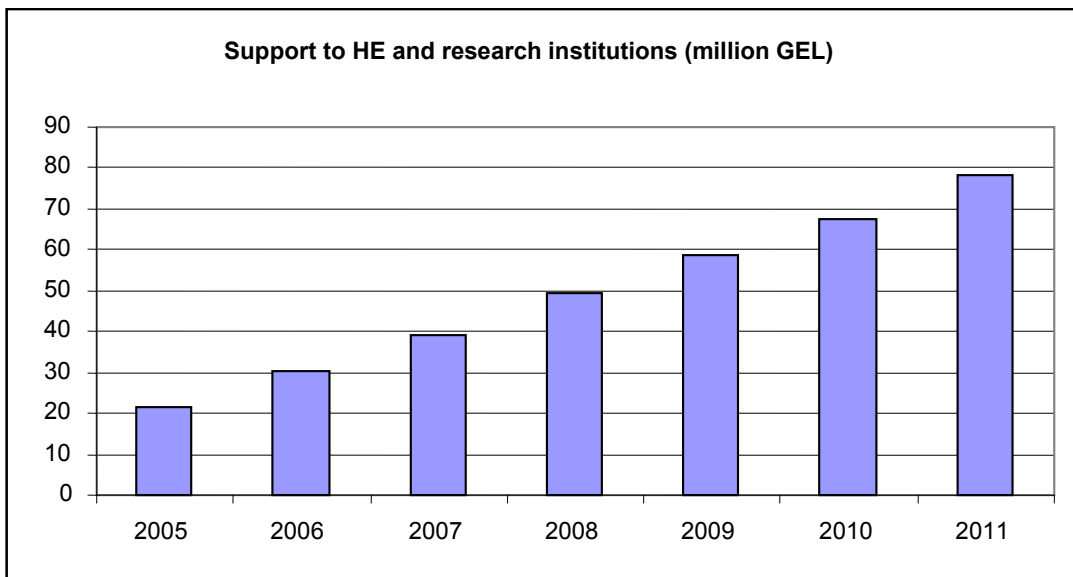
- b. Childcare Program. This program covers children's deinstitutionalization and prevention of abandonment, designing and introducing alternative forms of childcare, supporting schools for the children with special needs.



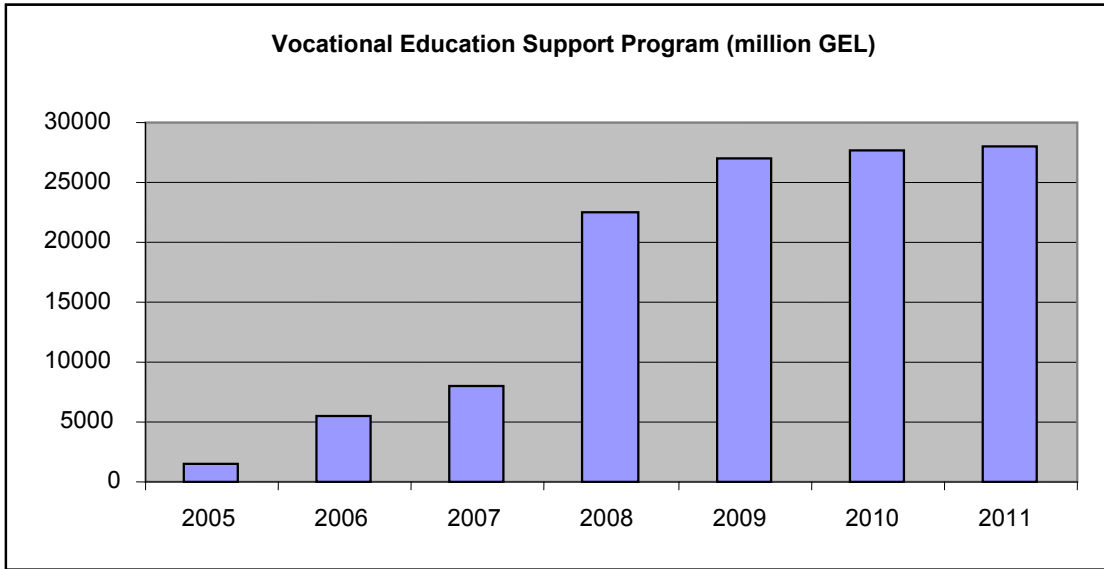
- c. Rehabilitation of public school buildings. Within the Presidential program for public school building rehabilitation - Iakob Gogebashvili - all public schools will be fully or partially rehabilitated. The total of about GEL 500 million will be spent for this program. After the completion of the program the Government of Georgia is committed not to withdraw this portion of funding from education sector thus making it possible to switch the funds to use for other purposes, such as increasing remuneration for teachers, improving learning and teaching contents.



- d. Providing support to higher education/research institutions. This includes: direct distribution of state grants to students to cover tuition fees at universities, infrastructure development for HEIs, support in curriculum and textbook development.



- e. Support to vocational education. This component includes current expenditure on vocational education as well as funds allocated for rehabilitation of initial vocational training centers and community colleges.



***b. The matrix for the plan***

The following matrix contains the activities planned to be designed and implemented for various levels of education within the medium-term framework. The initiatives that are already in place and implemented on regular basis are not contained here. Cost estimations given in the matrix are based on the Budget Law of Georgia of 2007 and Medium Term Expenditure Framework - the Government spending framework which contains ceilings for the expenditures of government agencies over four-year period.

Objective	Activities	Indicators/ outcomes	Timeframe	Estimated cost ('000 GEL)	Already funded in MTEF ('000 GEL) <sup>12</sup>	Un-covered funding gap ('000 GEL)
<b>1. Early Childhood Development and Pre-Primary Education</b>						
To improve readiness of children aged 3 to 7 for primary education through providing equal access for all to quality pre-school education	Conduct a systemic analysis of pre-school education consisting of household, institutions and children readiness studies	Accurate quantitative data on pre-school education is available (number of institutions, number of children, enrollment rates, geographical distribution, etc.)	2007	121	0	121
		Needs of parents, institutions and children are identified				
		Barriers to access to pre-school education for various social groups are identified				
		Teaching and school preparation practices in institutions as well as in families are studied				
	Develop national concept on pre-primary education; elaborate a comprehensive, efficient and sustainable model for pre-school education	The mechanism for organization and management of pre-school education is devised	2007	107	0	107
		Governance and funding schemes for pre-school education are elaborated				
Rights and responsibilities of local and central governments in managing pre-school education are clearly defined and delineated						

<sup>12</sup> The values given in this column reflect the amounts allocated to education sector within the Government's Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. The funding available under the project Ilia Chavchavadze funded through World Bank credit is also included here. The amounts allocated under this project will be marked by \*



		Rate and forms of involvement and intervention of parents, non-governmental organizations and community at large are determined				
		Social assistance schemes for vulnerable families are developed and sources of funding are identified				
		Models for diversification of early childhood care provision are considered				
		Legislative framework required for efficient operation of the devised model is designed; potential changes to be introduced to existing legislation are identified				
	Establish appropriate legislative and normative framework for pre-school education	Relevant changes are introduced in the legislation	2007-2008			
		Physical standard for pre-school institutions are developed such as: presence of various facilities in buildings, space available per children, norms of hygiene and nutrition, etc.				
		Operational standards are developed including: educational programs and curricula, teacher qualifications, etc.				
		Development standards are developed, such as: age-specific skills, school readiness indicators, etc.				
Increase the participation of the children of relevant age-group in pre-school education	Design diversified forms of education for pre-school age kids	Alternative pre-school education programs (daycare centers, pre-primary classes at general schools, parent education programs) designed	2008-2009	500	0	500
	Introduce the subsidization of pre-school education component for the needy children as a pilot initiative	Costs of educational component in allocations for ECD are covered by the MoES for the needy children all over the country	2008-2009	2,000	0	2,000
	Create electronic databasis for pre-school education practices	Data available on the enrollments in all forms of pre-school education by disaggregated by age and sex	2008-2009	150	0	150
Improve quality of pre-school education	Develop and introduce pre-school teacher training programs (2008-2009)	In-service training programs for pre-school teachers introduced based on teacher qualification standards and educational	2008-09	725	0	725

		curricula				
		Initial Teacher Education programs developed and introduced in 5 universities throughout the country (professional higher education and BA programs)	2008-09	500	0	500
		Curriculum developed for pre-school education with indicators of achievement and assessment tools				
	Develop and distribute learning material for pre-school age kids from socially vulnerable families	Learning material (books, toys, etc.) developed and available for about 50% of all pre-schools age children through various means	2008-09	1,000	0	1,000
<b>Totals for Early Childhood Development and Pre-Primary Education</b>				5103	0	5103
<b>2. General Education (I-XII grades)</b>						
To finalize reform of general education governance system and achieve sustainable results in terms of efficiency and transparency	Establish and reinforce self-management bodies at all general schools throughout the country	All schools have elected school boards/principals. Second round of school board elections has been run	2007-11	980	980	0
	Build the capacity of elected school directors and administrators on autonomous school governance and financial accountability issues through intensive training sessions: completing school census forms, finance and accounting, etc.	School census data are accurate and provided on a regular basis	2007-09	1,200	0	1,200
		At least 80% of schools are using modern accounting instruments using ICT	2007-10			
		Financial data is regularly published and available on school level	2007			
	Increase the awareness of school boards of trustees on the principles and efficiency of autonomous governance	School maintenance manual is published and used by all schools	2007-08	115	23*	92
		Regular decrease in inquiries concerning school management issues at the central level	2007-11			
	Further improve per capita funding formula	Per capita funding formula including all valid variables is in place	2007	55	55*	0
	Introduce the information based management system at all levels of governance	MoES at central and ERC levels, schools are using the data from EMIS for the decision-making	2008-11	124	124*	0
Electronic database containing information on schools, pupils, teacher is online and available for the use on different levels		2008				

	Establish and equip education resource centers (ERC) in all districts throughout the country, build capacity of ERC staff	ERC staff are using the tools on financial and statistical data analysis and reporting All ERC are provided with appropriate equipment, facilities.	2008-09	1,598	0	1,598
	Introduce quality assurance mechanisms within MoES	Standard operating procedures are finalized and implemented in MoES/ERCs	2008	N/A		
	Rationalize teacher/pupil and pupil/class ratios	The growth of average teacher/pupil ratio towards 1/16 in Urban/Rural schools (not including schools in mountainous regions)	2007-11	N/A		
		Number of schools with less than 300 pupils is reduced in densely populated areas		N/A		
	Prepare schools for transfer to non-profit legal status	Research is carried out on the efficiency of non-profit legal status for schools	2009	171	0	171
Recommendations and instructions developed						
To ensure equal access of population to general education and provide incentives for enrollment for vulnerable groups; reduce discrepancies in enrollment and attendance between various population groups	Monitor enrollment and completion trends in general education	Yearly reports of MoES using EMIS are published	2007-11	N/A		
	Improve access to quality general education in the regions densely populated by ethnic minority groups	Action plan for improving quality of education in non-Georgian schools adopted by the MoES	2007	N/A		
		Free preparatory courses for admission examinations to HE offered to the applicants from minority regions	2007-2011	Covered by HE preparatory courses program, (see HE)		
		Special ITE programs for primary school teachers are developed for applicants to HE from minority regions in 3 universities	2008-09	300	0	300
		Teacher incentive schemes are introduced for the applicants to initial primary teacher education programs committed to work in minority regions	2008-09	800	0	800
		At least 80% of non-Georgian speaking schools are studying according to new curriculum using new textbooks	2007-11	1,000	400	600
	Improve teaching of Georgian in non-Georgian schools through	Qualifications of the teachers of Georgian are regularly improved and updated	2007-08	500	500	0

	teachers' professional development and development of learning material	Adequate teaching and learning resources for learning Georgian are available for all schools on all levels of teaching	2007-2011	2,650	2,650	0
	Ensure availability of quality general education for the inhabitants of high-mountainous regions	Distance learning programs are introduced	2008	Covered by Deer Leap program		
		Teacher incentive schemes are in place for the applicants to initial primary teacher education programs committed to work in high-mountainous areas upon graduation	2008-09	800	0	800
	Provide assistance for children who have problems in access to general education	Where necessary free transportation of pupils to schools is provided	2007-11	5,358.8	0	5,358.8
		Textbook provision mechanisms for primary school students in need are implemented	2007-09	1,832	0	1,832
To ensure improvement of quality of learning outcomes of general education	Ensure the functioning of the evaluation mechanisms on local and central level	At least 80% of schools are using the self evaluation mechanisms	2008-09	8,500	0	8,500
		School accreditation standards are developed	2007			
		ERCs are prepared for accreditation	2007-2008			
		Accreditation material published and available for general schools	2008			
		Accreditation of general schools is finished	2009-2011			
		Participation of Georgia in international assessment systems: PIRLS, TIMSS	2007-11	182	182	0
	National Assessment has been held in Grades 4 and 9 at least in 2 subjects	2009-11	500	500	0	
	Introduce unified national educational curricula in all public schools	85% of all subjects are taught according to the new curriculum; teachers trained in new methods of teaching	2007-11	855	855	0
	Improve professional qualifications of educational staff	Modern Initial primary Teacher Education curricula are developed and introduced at 5 Georgian universities	2008-09	500	0	500
		1000 teachers of foreign languages teaching primary classes are trained	2008-09	1,000	0	1,000
	Introduce teacher certification and examination system	60 % of all teachers are examined	2008-11	3,591	3,591	0
		Teacher registration introduced, all teachers are registered	2007-08	109	109	0
	To improve physical	All public schools are fully or partially	2007-11	445,170	445,170	0

	environments at general schools	renovated and refurbished				
		School construction standards are finalized and being used for licensing the schools	2007-08	N/A		
	Improve the access of children to the education media	All public school libraries are provided and regularly updated with children's literature, audio and video materials	2007-11	2,050	725*	1,325
		All schools have access to the science lab equipment either in their own school or at ERC	2007	680	680*	0
	Equip general schools with computers and internet access, introduce ICT in teaching (Deer Leap program)	All public schools are equipped with personal computers and internet access	2007	49,000	49,000	0
		All public schools and ERCs are enrolled in Educational Network	2007			
		70% of teachers are given initial computer training courses and 10 % are offered second level InTech based retraining courses	2008			
		Growing electronic collection of educational resources is available on Georgian net	2008-2011			
		ICT is integrated through the National Curriculum in all subjects	2007			
		Educational software for the use at schools is available for all main subjects of National Curriculum	2008			
<b>Totals for General Education</b>				529620.8	505544	24076.8
<b>3. Vocational Education</b>						
To establish an appropriate legislative and institutional framework for vocational education and introduce efficient governance system	Optimize vocational schools; establish the network of vocational education centers and colleges	At least 20 VET centers existing throughout the country	2007-09	74,000	70,000	4,000
	Re-establish and introduce new licensing system for existing vocational education institutions	Relevant changes introduced in legislation, new licensing system is in place	2007-09			
		All existing vocational education institutions meet new licensing criteria				
	Create national agencies regulating vocational education, strengthen educational-entrepreneurial partnerships	National Professional Agency is established	2007	700	0	700
Professional councils composed of employers, professional associations, representatives of line ministries are		2007-09	N/A			

		established for all major sectors				
		A list of qualifications for all professions is available	2007-08			
	Introduce a new governance and funding model for vocational institutions	Standard regulations are developed for VET centers and colleges		N/A		
		Per capita funding for VET schools introduced for each specialization	2007-09	60	0	60
	Introduce vocational training courses in general secondary schools	The specializations in which students can be trained at general schools are identified and relevant courses are incorporated in national curriculum	2008-2009	N/A		
		Schools offering vocational courses are equipped with necessary facilities and resources	2008-2009	3,000	2,000	1,000
To ensure provision of high quality vocational education and positive labor market outcomes	Develop national vocational education standards and curricula according to labor market needs	New vocational education standards and curricula are developed and piloted by National Curriculum and Assessment Center	2007-08	N/A	0	0
		Vocational education standards and curricula are approved and introduced at all VET centers and colleges	2009-11	150	150	0
		Unified assessment system is developed and piloted in vocational schools	2007-08	22	0	22
		Unified assessment system is approved and introduced in all vocational schools	2008-09			
	Develop and introduce national professional standards for teachers; introduce training and retraining programs for teachers and instructors	Teachers and instructors engaged in vocational education institutions are trained	2007-11	1,700	0	1,700
		Initial vocational education teacher/instructor training courses are accredited and introduced at universities based on teacher training standards developed by the Teachers' Professional Development Association of MoES	2007-11	450	0	450
	Introduce teacher certification and examination system	The system for teacher certification is developed	2007-2008			
		Teachers and instructors engaged in vocational education are certified and examined	2008-09	85	0	85
	Develop a model for career planning ho help students find	All vocational education institutions have career planning units	2009	320	0	320

	placement on labor market					
	Carry out accreditation of vocational education institutions	Standards for vocational education institutions are developed	2008-09	25	0	25
		All vocational education institutions go through accreditation procedure				
<b>Totals for vocational education</b>				80,512	72,150	8,362
<b>4. Higher Education</b>						
To ensure efficiency of governance and organization of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in accordance with the principles of Bologna Process	Establish HE degree system that is comparable to international systems and recognized internationally	ECTS credits are allocated in all first and second cycle programs, enabling credit transfer and accumulation	2008	N/A		
		Academic partnerships are established with European universities	2007-2011	N/A		
	Establish governance mechanisms that are transparent and efficient at all accredited HEIs according to Bologna principles	All HEIs have rectors elected by academic councils	2007	N/A		
		Students participate at four levels: - in the governance of national bodies for QA - in external review of HEIs and/or programs: either in expert teams, as observers in expert teams or at decision making stage, - in consultation during external reviews - in internal evaluations	2007	N/A		
		New model of funding for Master's and doctoral programs is developed and introduced	2007	33	0	33
	Integrate higher education and research areas	Research centers (centers of excellence are established at universities)	2007-2010	N/A		
		Research activities are incorporated in postgraduate programs	2007-09	N/A		
	Introduce professional higher education at HEIs	Professional higher education programs are developed and integrated at existing HEIs	2007-2008	170	0	170
		Network of community colleges offering professional higher education are established throughout the country	2007-2008	5,420	3,000	2,420
	To ensure equity and transparent access to all levels of higher education	Introduce unified entrance examinations for entrants to master's programs	Unified examination procedure is an essential prerequisite for admitting students to master's programs in 2008	2008	2,000	0

	Devise and introduce diversified sources of funding higher education services	Free preparatory courses for admission examinations are provided on regular basis for entrants belonging to certain vulnerable categories	2007-2008	640	640	0
		Social grants are allocated for the students belonging to vulnerable groups who qualify for enrollment in the Unified National Admissions Exams but do not receive state grants	2007-2011	8,598	8,598	0
		Student loan scheme is further improved: more opportunities to take long-term low interest loans	2007-2011	N/A		
		Increasing number of students have access to student loans	2007-2011	N/A		
		Increasing private sector activity in funding higher education	2007-2011	N/A		
	Carry out regular observation and analysis of enrollments and admissions to HE	System for providing regularly updated electronic data on admissions and enrollments in HE by region, sex and social status is available	2007-2008	150	0	150
To ensure the provision of quality higher education and to introduce relevant quality control mechanisms	Establish Quality assurance units at various levels and incorporate into European QA Network	A national QA system in line with the <i>Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA</i> is fully operational	2007-2011	450	0	450
		National QA unit for HE is established	2007			
		All HEI have internal QA units	2007	270	0	270
		Evaluation of programs or institutions includes three elements: - internal assessment, - external review, - publication of results	2007			
	Prepare framework for programs, transform university curricula and prepare textbooks in accordance with current international trends	Doctoral programs are developed and introduced; standard regulations for doctoral studies are developed	2007-2008	N/A		
		Curricula in line with the Tuning methodology are developed for at least 12 subject groups in higher education	2007-2009	2,500	2,500	0
New textbooks are developed		2007-2009	2,400	2,400	0	



	Modify institutional accreditation procedure	New model of institutional accreditation in place	2007	25	0	25	
		Licensing and accreditation experts are trained		40	0	40	
	Prepare and carry out program accreditation procedure	Program accreditation of regulated HE and LLL programs in higher education institutions with participation of professional associations and foreign experts carried out	2008-11	250	0	250	
	Publish resources and material on accreditation published	Institutional accreditation standards and indicators are published	2008	25	0	25	
		Textbook on self-evaluation is published	2008				
		Standards and indicators on program accreditation are published	2008	5	0	5	
		National Accreditation Center annual report is published	2008-2011	20	0	20	
	Ensure positive labor market outcomes of higher education	A comprehensive survey on the relations between competencies and qualifications provided by HEIs and labor market is conducted	2007, 2010	62	22	40	
		Higher education curricula take account of labor market demands	2008-2011	N/A			
		Career planning services are available at universities	2008-09	205	0	205	
		Universities have detailed information on the programs provided and qualifications awarded displayed and regularly updated on their webpages	2008-09	N/A			
	<b>Totals for higher education</b>				23263	17160	6103
	<b>6. Non-formal Education and Lifelong Learning</b>						
	To establish a legal and structural framework for non-formal education and LLL	Develop a national concept and strategy for life-long learning	A concept paper on life-long learning and a detailed strategy and plan of action is available	2007-2008	30	0	30
There are procedures/national guidelines or policy for assessment of prior learning as a basis for 1) access to higher education programs, and 2) allocation of credits			2007-2008				

		towards a qualification and/or exemption from some program requirements				
	Develop a National Qualification Framework	National qualification framework for LLL and EHEA established as a comprehensive reference of transparent qualifications	2007-2008	120	0	120
		Translation of qualifications across different levels and forms of education is feasible				
		NQF is self-certified and compared to overarching framework of qualifications in Europe				
To provide increased opportunities for non-formal education and lifelong learning	Establish career planning and counseling services in educational institutions to help students define future academic or professional career	A model of career planning and counseling is piloted	2007-2008	350	0	350
		Career planning and counseling units established at all vocational education schools and general schools				
		Informative newsletters and bulletins published by HEIs and Centers	2007-2011			
	Set up a network of centers for non-formal education and life-long learning	Adult training centers established in Kutaisi and Marneuli	2008-2009	1,150	0	1,150
	Develop special programs for civil servants from minority regions	Up to 450 public servants retrained every year	2007-11	3,500	3,500	0
	Introduce distant learning initiative	Distance learning programs is piloted in one of Tbilisi universities	2007-08			
<b>Totals for vocational education</b>				5150	3500	1650
<b>7. Inclusive Education and Children with Special Needs</b>						
To adjust the educational system of the country to meet individual needs of all its citizens	Establish appropriate legal and structural framework for inclusive education	Concept paper on inclusive education developed	2007-2008	30	0	30
		Inclusive education strategy is in place				
		Viable funding mechanisms for educating children with special needs developed for each level of education		33	0	33
		Develop educational and development standards, norms and methods for the children with special needs		34	0	34

	Raise public awareness on inclusive education	School administrators and principals are aware of the principles of organization of inclusive education	2007-2008	35	0	35
		Parents and family of children with special needs are fully aware of the benefits of inclusive education and all the opportunities offered by the government or NGOs for such children	2007-2008			
		Citizens with special needs are provided with the information on the opportunities of life-long learning (distance-learning programs, etc.)	2007-2009			
To improve access of citizens with special needs to education at all levels	Educational institutions at all levels are prepared for admitting students with special needs	Physical infrastructure of rehabilitated schools is adapted to the needs of SNC	2007-2010	Covered by School Rehabilitation Program		
		Training programs designed for people with special needs are introduced in selected specializations at vocational training centers	2007-2011	Covered by vocational training program		
		Transportation provided for special needs children who have difficulties in access. 12 new adapted buses are operating	2007-08	615.6	0	615.6
	Create support services for children with special needs and their families	Child & Family Services (C&FS) (Family outreach resource-center and counselling, Integrated Centers for Learning disabilities, Autism, Educational Psychology, Physical Disabilities, etc.) are piloted in two major cities, Tbilisi and Batumi	2008-2009	2,500	0	2,500
	Introduce Community Action	Community Action project introduced and piloted in 2 cities, Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Over 500 students are involved	2008-2009	256.5	0	256.5
To improve quality of education for people with special needs	Raise qualifications and awareness of teachers on inclusive education and special education	ITE and teacher in-service training programs (for pre-school, general and vocational education teachers) are consistent with the principles of inclusive education	2008-2009	34	0	34

		Various methods of teaching (special classes, support classes, individual programs) are designed based on the specific needs of the children	2008-2009	50	0	50
		Teacher training material developed and teachers from all public general schools are trained in inclusive and special education	2008-2009	500	0	500
		System of Initial and continuing training for staff, teachers, and managers working at special schools is created. 480 specialists (managers, teachers, staff) working in 12 institutions are re-trained	2008-2009	410.4	0	410.4
		Materials for professional development of teachers at special needs schools published (developed/translated) and available	2008-2009	34.2	0	34.2
		Contemporary methods of teaching and care of children with special needs introduced. ToT program developed. 20 ToTs are trained	2008-2009	77	0	77
	Provide improved learning environment for people with special needs	Standard package of learning materials (books, visuals, etc.) is developed and equipment available for the children with special needs at all public schools	2007-08	4,600	0	4,600
		Educational institutions for the children with special needs are rehabilitated. 12 specialized institutions are rehabilitated taking into consideration latest standards	2007-08	2,400	0	2,400
		Special schools are equipped with computers. Computer labs (with adapted computers) in 12 institutions are in place	2007-08	Covered by Deer Leap program		
<b>Totals for Inclusive Education and Children With Special Needs</b>				11609.7	0	11609.7
<b>Totals for Education Sector Action Plan</b>				655258.5	598354	56904.5

### c. Scenarios and gaps: resource analysis

The resource envelope for the action plan for the education sector is provided by the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for 2007-2011, expanded to include estimated expenditures by local governments. The resulting projections of macro-economic indicators and the consolidated education budget are shown in Table 5. A 94 per cent increase in nominal GDP is assumed between 2006 and 2011, with little change in the share of consolidated government expenditure and a slight increase in that of consolidated public expenditure on education in GDP.

**Table 5: Projections of macro-economic indicators and consolidated education budget, 2006-2010**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1. Nominal GDP (million GEL)	11621	13784	16527	18878	21219	23852
2. Average annual inflation (%)	7.9%	8.4%	9.0%	6.3%	5.0%	5.1%
3. Real GDP growth (%)	9.6%	9.4%	10.0%	7.5%	7.0%	7.0%
4. Consolidated government expenditure (million GEL)	2904	3953	4994	5564	6366	7156
5. Consolidated government expenditure as % of GDP	25.0%	28.7%	30.2%	29.5%	30.0%	30.0%
6. MoES expenditure as % of GDP	0.7%	2.5%	2.3%	2.4%	2.3%	2.5%
7. MoES expenditure as % of consolidated govt exp	2.8%	8.8%	7.7%	8.1%	7.8%	8.2%
8. Total MoES budget (million GEL)	80.9	348.4	382.2	452.9	498.2	589.9
9. Total consolidated public expenditure on education (million GEL)	288.7	439.1	480	569	626	741
10. Consolidated pub exp on ed as % of GDP	2.5%	3.2%	2.9%	3.0%	2.9%	3.1%

Source and Note: Lines 1-8 are from the MTEF (Government of Georgia 2007). Lines 9 and 10 are estimated on the assumption that the ratio of consolidated education expenditure to the MoES budget remains unchanged throughout the period.

As Table 6 shows, many of the activities included in the plan are already covered by the budget projected in Table 5 above, but some are as yet unfunded. The overall funding gap, at 56.905 million GEL, is equivalent to US\$33.5 million and to 3 per cent of the MoES budget for education as projected in the MTEF over the period 2007-2011.

**Table 6: Estimated cost of planned activities, extent of coverage by projected budget and funding gap, 2007-2011 ('000 GEL)**

Level	Estimated cost	Already in MTEF	Funding gap
1. Early childhood development and pre-primary education	5103	0	5103
2. General education	529620.8	505544	24076.8
3. Vocational education	80,512	72,150	8,362
4. Higher education	23263	17160	6103
5. Non-formal education and lifelong learning	5150	3500	1650
6. Inclusive education and children with special needs	11609.7	0	11609.7
7. TOTAL	655258.5	598354	56904.5

Source: Matrix (above).

Three scenarios are developed in this plan for the sub-sectors of education (early childhood development/ pre-primary education and general education) that are particularly relevant to Education for All<sup>13</sup> — the current-resource, middle and high scenarios.

<sup>13</sup> Shortage of reliable data prevents the development of comparable scenarios for other sub-sectors.

The current-resource scenario assumes that no resources are available beyond what is already in the expanded MTEF (Table 5 above). The middle scenario assumes that only part of the extra gap-filling funding (60 per cent) is available, allowing only partial fulfillment of plan targets, while the high scenario assumes that 100 per cent of the extra funding is available, allowing plan targets to be fully achieved.

Table 7 shows the current-resource scenario for early childhood development and pre-primary education. An 80 per cent increase in public expenditure at this level between 2006 and 2011, combined with an increase in the student/ teacher ratio, allows a 126 per cent rise in non-personnel current expenditure, which will help to finance some of the quality-increasing components of the plan. However, this outcome depends on keeping the enrollment rate at its current level.

**Table 7: Current-resource scenario for early childhood development and pre-primary education**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change between 2006 & 2011
Public expenditure (GEL million)	39.650	43.343	51.361	56.498	66.897	71.445	+80%
Personnel expenses (GEL million)	20.680	21.989	23.951	25.906	27.863	29.093	+41%
Other current expenditure (GEL million)	17.926	20.212	26.057	29.104	37.272	40.470	+126%
Personnel exp as % of current exp	52.7%	52.1%	47.9%	47.1%	42.8%	41.8%	
Capital expenditure (GEL million)	1.044	1.142	1.353	1.488	1.762	1.882	+80%
Number of institutions	1214	1214	1214	1214	1214	1214	
Number of students ('000)	73.734	72.317	73.621	75.185	76.958	76.958	+4%
Gross enrollment rate (as % of 3-5 year olds)	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	
Number of teachers ('000)	6.274	5.831	5.641	5.488	5.363	5.131	-18%
Students per institution	61	60	61	62	63	63	+4%
Student/ teacher ratio	11.8	12.4	13.1	13.7	14.4	15.0	
Average personnel expenditure per teacher (GEL)	3296	3771	4246	4721	5196	5671	+72%
Non-personnel current expenditure per student (GEL)	243	279	354	387	484	526	+116%
Public expenditure per student (GEL)	538	599	698	751	869	928	+73%
Capital expenditure per institution (GEL)	860	940	1114	1226	1452	1550	+80%

Notes: Since pre-schools are not included in the MTEF, the assumption underlying this table is that they will account for the same proportion of public consolidated expenditure as in 2005. Enrollment rate is expressed as a percentage of 3-5 year olds, to ensure comparability with international sources (see Section 6 below). Average personnel expenditure per teacher is total personnel expenditure divided by the number of teachers (the number of non-teaching staff at this level is unknown) – it is assumed to increase at the same rate as in 2000-2004.

Table 8 shows the current-resource scenario for general education. A 94 per cent increase in public expenditure at this level between 2006 and 2011, combined with an increase in the student/ teacher ratio, allows a huge increase in non-personnel current expenditure. This would help to finance some of the quality-increasing components of the plan, and there should be some resources left over to fund another crucial prerequisite of improvement in the quality of general education – a further increase in teachers' salaries towards an adequate and competitive level. It should be noted, however, that this scenario assumes no increase in the enrollment rate.

**Table 8: Current-resource scenario for general education**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change between 2006 & 2011
Public expenditure (GEL million)	251.0	280.8	367.7	381.8	426.0	488.0	+94%
Personnel expenses (GEL million)	158	166	166	164	162	159	+0%
Other current expenditure (GEL million)	17	39	57	91	154	261	+1,392%
Personnel exp as % of current exp	90.0%	81%	74%	64%	51%	38%	
Capital expenditure (GEL million)	75.464	75.9	144.7	126.5	110.0	68.7	-9%
Number of institutions	2517	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	
Number of students ('000)	597	597	572	548	527	503	-16%
Gross enrollment rate (as % of 7-18 year olds)	87.9%	87.9%	87.9%	87.9%	87.9%	87.9%	
Number of teachers ('000)	66	61	54	48	43	39	-42%
Number of non-teachers ('000)	29	27	24	21	19	17	
Students per institution	237	398	381	365	351	335	+41%
Student/ teacher ratio	9.0	9.8	10.6	11.4	12.2	13.0	
Student/ non-teacher ratio	20.3	22.1	23.9	25.7	27.5	29.3	
Average personnel expenditure per staff member (GEL)	1651	1888	2126	2364	2602	2840	+72%
Non-personnel current expenditure per student (GEL)	29	65	101	167	291	519	+1,672%
Public expenditure per student (GEL)	420	470	643	697	808	971	+131%
Capital expenditure per institution (GEL)	29982	50582	96448	84328	73357	45776	+53%

Notes: Public expenditure on general schools consists of the MTEF allocation and their share of the President's rehabilitation program.

Table 9 shows the medium scenario for early childhood and pre-primary education, which assumes that 60 per cent of the funding needed to fill the gap in the action plan will be available. An increase in the enrollment rate is also targeted. This boosts personnel expenses and squeezes the funding available for non-personnel current expenditure. However, implementation of 60 per cent of the activities envisaged in the action plan matrix should still be possible.

**Table 9: Medium scenario for early childhood development and pre-primary education**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change between 2006 & 2011
Public expenditure (GEL million)	39.650	43.956	51.973	57.111	67.510	72.057	+82%
Personnel expenses (GEL million)	20.680	22.734	25.574	28.539	31.640	34.022	+65%
Other current expenditure (GEL million)	17.926	20.063	25.031	27.067	34.092	36.137	+102%
Personnel exp as % of current exp	52.7%	53.1%	50.5%	51.3%	48.1%	48.5%	
Capital expenditure (GEL million)	1.044	1.158	1.369	1.504	1.778	1.898	+82%
Number of institutions	1214	1214	1214	1214	1214	1214	+0%
Number of students ('000)	73.734	74.767	78.610	82.828	87.388	89.995	+22%
Gross enrollment rate (as % of 3-5 year olds)	51%	53%	55%	57%	58%	60%	
Number of teachers ('000)	6.274	6.029	6.023	6.045	6.090	6.000	-4%
Students per institution	61	62	65	68	72	74	+22%
Student/ teacher ratio	11.8	12.4	13.1	13.7	14.4	15.0	
Average personnel expenditure per teacher (GEL)	3296	3771	4246	4721	5196	5671	+72%
Non-personnel current expenditure per student (GEL)	243	268	318	327	390	402	+65%
Public expenditure per student (GEL)	538	588	661	690	773	801	+49%
Capital expenditure per institution (GEL)	860	954	1128	1239	1465	1564	+82%

Notes: See Table above.

Table 10 shows the medium scenario for general education. The increase in public

expenditure at this level between 2006 and 2011 rises to 96 per cent. This is offset by an increase in the enrollment rate, but the resources available for non-personnel expenditure still rise substantially. Again, these should be enough to finance some of the quality-improving components of the plan, while allowing a transfer of funds towards a further increase in teachers' salaries.

**Table 10: Medium scenario for general education**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change between 2006 & 2011
Public expenditure (GEL million)	251.0	283.7	370.6	384.7	428.9	490.9	+96%
Personnel expenses (GEL million)	158	168	169	169	168	166	+5%
Other current expenditure (GEL million)	17	40	57	90	150	256	+1367%
Personnel exp as % of current exp	90.0%	81%	75%	65%	53%	39%	
Capital expenditure (GEL million)	75.464	75.9	144.7	126.5	110.0	68.7	-9%
Number of institutions	2517	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	-40%
Number of students ('000)	597	603	582	563	547	526	-12%
Gross enrollment rate (as % of 7-18 year olds)	87.9%	89%	90%	90%	91%	92.0%	
Number of teachers ('000)	66	61	55	49	45	40	-39%
Number of non-teachers ('000)	29	27	24	22	20	18	-39%
Students per institution	237	402	388	375	365	351	+48%
Student/ teacher ratio	9.0	9.8	10.6	11.4	12.2	13.0	
Student/ non-teacher ratio	20.3	22.1	23.9	25.7	27.5	29.3	
Average personnel expenditure per staff member (GEL)	1651	1888	2126	2364	2602	2840	+72%
Non-personnel current expenditure per student (GEL)	29	67	98	159	275	487	+1565%
Public expenditure per student (GEL)	420	471	636	683	784	933	+122%
Capital expenditure per institution (GEL)	29982	50582	96448	84328	73357	45776	+53%

Table 11 shows the high scenario for early childhood development and pre-primary education, which assumes that 100 per cent of the funding needed to fill the gap in the action plan will be available. Again, an increase in the enrollment rate is envisaged, but this time on a more ambitious scale. Personnel expenses increase, but at a slower rate than other current expenditure.



**Table 11: High scenario for early childhood development and pre-primary education**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change between 2006 & 2011
Public expenditure (GEL million)	39.650	48.446	56.464	61.601	72.000	76.548	+93%
Personnel expenses (GEL million)	20.680	23.163	26.507	30.054	33.812	36.857	+78%
Other current expenditure (GEL million)	17.926	24.007	28.469	29.924	36.292	37.674	+110%
Personnel exp as % of current exp	52.7%	49.1%	48.2%	50.1%	48.2%	49.5%	
Capital expenditure (GEL million)	1.044	1.276	1.487	1.623	1.897	2.016	+93%
Number of institutions	1214	1214	1214	1214	1214	1214	+0%
Number of students ('000)	73.734	76.177	81.479	87.224	93.387	97.495	+32%
Gross enrollment rate (as % of 3-5 year olds)	51%	54%	57%	60%	62%	65%	
Number of teachers ('000)	6.274	6.143	6.243	6.366	6.508	6.500	+4%
Students per institution	61	63	67	72	77	80	+32%
Student/ teacher ratio	11.8	12.4	13.1	13.7	14.4	15.0	
Average personnel expenditure per teacher (GEL)	3296	3771	4246	4721	5196	5671	+72%
Non-personnel current expenditure per student (GEL)	243	315	349	343	389	386	+59%
Public expenditure per student (GEL)	538	636	693	706	771	785	+46%
Capital expenditure per institution (GEL)	860	1051	1225	1337	1562	1661	+93%

Notes: See Table above.

Table 12 shows the high scenario for general education. A 116 per cent increase in public expenditure at this level is enough to allow a substantial increase in the enrollment rate, towards international standards (see section below), while funding some of the plan's quality-improving activities (under 'other current expenditure') and transferring some funds to a further increase in teachers' salaries.

**Table 12: High scenario for general education**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change between 2006 & 2011
Public expenditure (GEL million)	251.0	286.8	315.5	358.0	435.7	541.7	+116%
Personnel expenses (GEL million)	158	169	171	172	173	171	+8%
Other current expenditure (GEL million)	17	42	58	89	149	254	+1353%
Personnel exp as % of current exp	90.0%	80%	75%	66%	54%	40%	
Capital expenditure (GEL million)	75.464	75.9	86.4	96.7	113.8	116.4	#+54
Number of institutions	2517	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	-40%
Number of students ('000)	597	607	590	574	561	543	-9%
Gross enrollment rate (as % of 7-18 year olds)	87.9%	89%	91%	92%	94%	95.0%	
Number of teachers ('000)	66	62	56	50	46	42	-37%
Number of non-teachers ('000)	29	27	25	22	20	19	-37%
Students per institution	237	404	393	383	374	362	+53%
Student/ teacher ratio	9.0	9.8	10.6	11.4	12.2	13.0	
Student/ non-teacher ratio	20.3	22.1	23.9	25.7	27.5	29.3	
Average personnel expenditure per staff member (GEL)	1651	1888	2126	2364	2602	2840	+72%
Non-personnel current expenditure per student (GEL)	29	70	99	156	266	468	+1497%
Public expenditure per student (GEL)	420	473	535	623	776	997	+137%
Capital expenditure per institution (GEL)	29982	50582	57623	64478	75849	77602	+159%

***d. Results Framework: Education Sector Development  
Indicators for the Action Plan***

	<b>Georgia Base Date</b>	<b>Comparator Base Date</b>	<b>Georgia Target 2011</b>
1. Pre-primary gross enrollment rate (as % of 3-5 year olds)	49%	78%	60%
2. Pre-primary gender parity index	1.15	0.98	1
3. Pre-primary school life expectancy	1.4	2.2	2
4. Primary net enrollment rate	95.06%	96%	97%
5. Primary gender parity index	0.99	0.98	1
6. Primary gross intake rate to last grade	98.6%	99%	95%
7. Primary completion rate	90.98 %		100%
8. Lower secondary gross enrollment rate	96.5%	103%	100%
9. Upper secondary gross enrollment rate	73.1%	99%	90%
10. Total secondary net enrollment rate	87.4%	91%	90%
11. Total secondary gender parity index	1.00	1.02	1
12. Tertiary gross enrollment rate	41%	70%	70%
13. Tertiary gender parity index	1.03	1.32	1
14. Pre-primary pupil/ teacher ratio	10	15	15
15. Primary & lower secondary pupil/ teacher ratio (FTE)	12	c.15	15
16. Total secondary pupil/ teacher ratio	9	11	16
17. Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP	3.0%	5.7%	3.3%
18. Current expenditure as % of total public expenditure on education	97%	93%	94%
19. Public current expenditure on pre-primary education as % of GNP	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
20. Public current expenditure on pre-primary education per pupil as % of GNP pc	14.7%	13.4%	14%
21. Public current expenditure on general education as % of GNP	1.7%	2.4%	2%
22. Public current expenditure on general education per pupil as % of GNP pc	9.8%	c.20%	15%
23. Academic staff compensation as % of current expenditure on education	68%	61%	65%
24. Ratio of primary teacher's salary after 15 years' experience to GDP per head	MoES	1.3	
25. PIRLS - average scale score in reading achievement, grade 4	2006	2006	An improvement (to be specified) on 2006 score
26. TIMSS - average scale score in mathematics, grade 4	2006	2006	An improvement (to be specified) on 2006 score
27. TIMSS - average scale score in science, grade 4	2007	2007	An improvement (to be specified) on 2007 score
28. TIMSS - average scale score in mathematics, grade 8	2007	2007	An improvement (to be specified) on 2007 score

29. TIMSS - average scale score in science, grade 8	2007	2007	An improvement (to be specified) on 2007 score
30. PIRLS gender parity index (i.e. female score ÷ male score)	2006	2006	An improvement (to be specified) on 2007 score
31. TIMSS mathematics grade 4 gender parity index	2007	2006	An improvement (to be specified) on 2007 score
32. TIMSS science grade 4 gender parity index	2007	2007	An improvement (to be specified) on 2007 score
33. TIMSS mathematics grade 8 gender parity index	2007	2007	An improvement (to be specified) on 2007 score
34. TIMSS science grade 8 gender parity index	2007	2007	An improvement (to be specified) on 2007 score

Notes: Base dates for Georgia, indicators 1-13, 15-20, and 22 = 2004, 14 = 2005, 21 = 2006; base dates for comparator, indicators 1-13, 15-19, and 22-23 = 2004, 14 and 20-21 = 2003.

Comparator = North America and Western Europe average, indicators 1-13, 15-19, and 22; OECD average, indicators 14, 19-20 and 23; EU average, indicators 24-33.

Sources: For Georgia and comparator for indicators 1-13 and 15-17, and for comparator for indicators 18-19, UNESCO (2006); for Georgia for indicator 14, MoES MIS database, and for indicators 18-22, World Bank (2007); for comparator for indicators 14, 20-21 and 23, OECD (2006); for both Georgia and comparator for indicators 24-33 (in due course) <http://timss.bc.edu/>.

### ***e. Priority areas and components most relevant to Education for All***

This section of the plan provides a brief description of the priority areas identified within the plan which are considered as the most important for achieving the EFA goals. These are also the areas which are not covered either by the governmental commitments in MTEF or by in-country donors.

#### **Priority area 1\* – Early Childhood Development and Pre-school Education**

Pre-school education, as described above, unlike other levels of education, is the domain where legislative and structural foundations have not yet been laid. Absence of unified national policy on pre-school education and lack of a clear distribution of commitments and responsibilities among different levels of government makes it difficult as yet to plan specific activities in this field. However, there is agreement that this is a priority area for improving the readiness of young children for school and life-long learning as well as developing basic social and life skills at an age when it is most appropriate to intervene.

Currently a number of activities have been identified which are to be carried out in order to improve the readiness of pre-school-age children for primary school and provide opportunities for quality pre-school education to those children who currently do not enjoy them.

#### ***Component 1. Develop Initial Teacher Education and in-service training programs for pre-school teachers and curriculum***

Teachers are an important source of information for children enrolled in pre-school education and key players in developing essential skills and capacities. No major transformation of the pre-school teaching concept has been introduced since Soviet times. Therefore, the methods and ways children are taught at pre-schools are outdated and not up to modern development standards. Therefore, pre-service as well as in-service training programs will be organized for teachers, including:

- Professional higher education programs at HEIs or community colleges;
- BA programs for primary and pre-school teachers.

Translating and publishing relevant methodological resources for teachers will be part of this component.

Together with teacher training programs curricula will be elaborated for pre-school education taking into account age-specific requirements and development standards that are to be achieved in order to ensure appropriate readiness of a child for primary education. Children's books will be designed specifically for pre-school age since most of the books that are used at pre-schools are outdated and not responding to contemporary needs and standards.

#### ***Component 2. Design diversified forms of providing pre-school education***

Although it is difficult to make an accurate assessment of enrollment rates in pre-school education in Georgia and distribution by geographical location as well as by the size of income, it

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\* Order of priorities is arbitrary and it does not reflect the order or preference

is apparent that enrollment is low, and major disparities are observed between rural and urban as well as between high-income and low-income families. Urban-rural differences are explained by the difficulty in physical access to pre-school facilities while in the second case inability to pay fees for pre-school services plays the key role. Designing diversified forms of providing pre-school education and introducing/promoting them through the cooperation of local municipalities will be helpful to support increased access. Such alternative forms will include:

- daycare centers
- pre-school classes in general schools
- Sunday schools
- parent education

*Component 3. Produce and distribute educational material and resources for pre-school age children*

A school readiness study carried out by UNICEF in 2004 demonstrated that, in the 40 per cent of homes with children aged 4 to 6, there were no children's books; and paper and drawing material (necessary to develop the critical skills of holding pencils and crayons and drawing) were present in only 27 per cent of the observed households. As already discussed, children who attend pre-schools tend to come from more prosperous and educated families. Therefore the ones who stay at home are more likely to be the disadvantaged. Educational materials and resource packages will be produced and distributed to the neediest 50 per cent of the 5-year-old population (immediately prior to entering schools).

*Component 4. Subsidize educational component of pre-school care for the needy children (pilot initiative)*

As mentioned in the previous sections, children enrolled in pre-schools are disproportionately from prosperous families. One approach to solving this problem and enrolling more needy children in pre-school education is the introduction of partial subsidization of the educational component of early childhood care for 5-year-old children from poor families. This will be done through the introduction of flexible schedules at pre-schools and through diversified programs referred to above. Only those pre-schools or care centers which take in needy children will be given the amount needed to cover educational costs per child (teacher remuneration, teaching material, etc.). As there is no legislative and structural basis yet in place for ECD this will be a pilot initiative which upon successful performance (actual increase in enrollment and improvement in school readiness) will be taken over as a committed responsibility by the MoES.

*Costs*

- Design alternative pre-school education programs and subsidize the educational component for the most needy children for one year through the diversified forms of education - GEL 2,500,000
- Teacher in-service training programs (in-service and pre-service) – GEL 725,000
- Initial teacher education programs and curriculum development - GEL 500,000
- Development of learning material and distribution to the children from needy families - GEL 1,000,000

***Total – GEL 4,725,000***

**Priority area 2 - Support to ongoing school consolidation process through the provision of school buses in remote areas**

### *Rationale*

Geographical characteristics of Georgia should be taken into account in ensuring free and unrestricted access of all to education. School students, particularly in rural and high-mountainous areas, often experience problems in getting to schools located at large distances from their residences. This problem became more apparent following the large-scale school optimization process. The process, which started in 2005 and is implemented in two major phases is aimed at reducing the number of small schools through their merger and consolidation. As a result the number of public schools was effectively reduced from over 3200 to current 2300. The second phase of optimization will be over before the start of academic year 2007-2008.

Reduction in the number of schools generated a problem of access, which was addressed by the Presidential Program for Rehabilitation through the provision of school buses for transportation of children from remote areas. 47 public schools are served now by school buses (30 were purchased from the budget and 20 more were donated). However the demand for school buses is greater: currently 108 public schools have applied to the MoES with requests to provide free transportation for students (including 11 requests for the provision of specialized buses). Currently no amount is allocated in the budget for covering these expenses while the necessity to do it is apparent.

### *Activities*

The problems with physical access to general schools can be solved through the purchase of school-buses for the areas where this problem exists.

Together with the purchase of school buses it is essential to publish two user manuals: one for drivers and another for parents and children to ensure safe maintenance and usage of buses.

### *Sustainability*

The current project approach of funding capital expenditures for educational institutions will shift to the approach based entirely on per capita funding, i.e. the costs that are currently covered under various programs will be incurred by schools from the per capita funding amount allocated for them. However, the Government of Georgia is committed to not withdrawing the funds from the MoES budget after the completion of these programs. Therefore this amount can then be channeled to increase per capita funding and to ensure that schools have enough resources and capacity to use buses properly, as well as to cover maintenance and depreciation costs.

### *Costing*

Number of buses - 97

Unit price – Gel 55,040

Total for buses – Gel 5,338,880

Costs for manual preparation and publishing – Gel 20,000

**Total - GEL 5,358,880**

## **Priority area 3 - Provision of textbooks to students in need through the design and implementation of a textbook rental scheme**

### *Rationale*

Notwithstanding the latest positive social and economic developments in the country and the upward trend of economic growth, the share of population living in poverty is still quite large. Creating a viable and efficient social security system is an essential pre-requisite for the country's development. Reducing poverty to minimum and improving social conditions in general is one of

the most important priorities for Georgia currently. The Government of Georgia has introduced a unified social assistance policy to ensure efficient allocation of resources for the most needy. In line with this policy, there are efforts to be taken in educational domain as well to provide equal opportunities of learning for all citizens of the country. Due to the hard financial conditions of households mentioned above, many parents are unable to purchase books for their children. Operation of secondary book markets and used book donating practices help solve this problem. However, those students who are exposed to new national curricula do not have access to used books as new textbooks are designed along with curricula. Currently there are no textbook rental schemes in place, hence the chances are big that those students from vulnerable families who are studying according to new curricula will have no access to textbooks.

#### *Activities*

To solve this problem a low-cost textbook rental scheme will be introduced for primary school students from poor families.

#### *Sustainability*

The textbooks will be distributed through schools to needy students at a low price. Upon the use students shall return books to schools. Schools will be responsible for ensuring sustainability of the system through compensating depreciation costs.

#### *Costing*

Number of students covered: 45000

***Cost of the activity: GEL 1,832,000***

### **Priority area 4 - Building capacity of autonomous school administrators**

#### *Rationale*

One of the most significant outcomes of the reform program in general education is the quick and total decentralization of the system: establishment of schools as LEPLs and granting full autonomy to them in administration and governance.

Observations of the school management reveal that schools lack the capacity to perform financial management in a professional manner. Thus intensive training/consultancy services will be introduced and implemented on a regular basis. School training needs will be assessed by needs assessment studies conducted on annual basis.

Improvement in the capacity of school administrators and principals in financial, general management as well as in monitoring and evaluation will be one of the top priorities. This capacity will then be institutionalized in schools and the knowledge gained in the training sessions will be transferred to the school level.

#### *Activities*

Two representatives from each public school will be provided intensive training sessions in accounting, expenditure reporting and using relevant ICT. The ultimate goal is to ensure that information provided by school officials is accurate, reliable and well-communicated to all levels of education management.

#### *Sustainability*

A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy will be designed to monitor and evaluate the outcome of training conducted for school administrators. The application of the

training in practice and dissemination of the information at school level will be of high priority for the school administrators. This way the sustainability of the training programs will be assured.

*Costing*

Number of schools - 2300

Total costs for software installation and training per school - GEL 521

***Total estimated costs: GEL 1,200,000***

**Priority area 5 - Supporting Initial Teacher Education and in-service teacher training for primary education**

*Component 1. Designing Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses for primary school teachers*

*Rationale*

Teacher qualifications play a key role in ensuring high quality of education. Upcoming teacher examination and certification process will serve as an incentive for acting teachers to improve their qualifications in accordance with contemporary standards. Several in-service teacher training initiatives have already taken place (teachers in 1162 schools were trained within the Education System Reform and Realignment Program). However it is crucial to pay particular attention to ITE, which is largely underdeveloped currently in Georgia.

*Activities*

Primary school teachers according to the Law of Georgia on General Education should possess minimum BA degree to be able to teach. An effort to improve teacher qualifications through ITE will include the following:

- designing a BA program (240 credits) for primary school teachers
- introduction of the program in Georgian universities (Tbilisi as well as at universities in regions)
- translation and publication of methodological material for students.

*Component 2. Conducting trainings for foreign language teachers*

*Rationale*

In the light of current developments and the growing international context for education, retraining foreign language teachers is an issue of prime importance. This is particularly true of rural areas in regions – teachers lack essential skills and capacities needed for training in foreign languages which is then reflected upon poor performance of students. Therefore it is essential that the capacity be strengthened in the most low-performing schools in foreign languages.

*Activities*

Designing and conducting brief training sessions for foreign language teachers at schools with the weakest language-teaching capacities. Sessions will be provided for foreign language teachers who teach in primary classes. Trainings will focus on teaching methods and techniques. Training material will be provided for the trained teachers upon completion.

*Component 3. Designing and introducing special ITE programs for primary school teachers in minority regions and introducing teacher incentive mechanisms*

*Rationale*

The regions densely populated by national minorities (Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli inhabited by Armenians and Azeri respectively) are the ones potentially most threatened by



the lack of qualified and motivated teaching staff. Surveys carried out in these regions have demonstrated the low level of preparation of teachers. Teaching Georgian as a state language is the most significant challenge in these regions since insufficient language skills prevent the residents of these regions from entering HEIs and later finding suitable opportunities on the labor market. Attracting young qualified professionals through well-designed ITE programs and appropriate incentive schemes will help the regions develop their human potential.

#### *Activities*

Special ITE programs for primary education in minority regions will be developed, along with incentives for attracting skilled staff to minority schools. In particular primary school teachers' professional development in minority regions will include:

- designing special BA programs for primary school teachers from minority regions
- introduction of appropriate incentive schemes to encourage young people to apply to these programs (e.g. scholarships for students)
- designing bilingual training model for primary education its incorporation into ITE.

#### *Component 4. Introduction of incentive system for applicants to ITE programs committed to work in high-mountainous and minority regions*

#### *Rationale*

Qualifications and skills of teachers are the factors that are crucial in ensuring the quality of education. High-mountainous regions and regions populated by ethnic minorities are the ones most threatened by the absence of qualified and motivated teaching staff. Therefore it is important to introduce an efficient incentive scheme for encouraging young people to apply to ITE programs and upon graduation work in those regions.

#### *Activities*

- Offer full scholarships (covering tuition fees and living costs) for the students who apply to ITE programs for primary school teachers in exchange for their commitment to work in high-mountainous and minority regions.

#### *Costs*

Design of ITE program for primary teachers (including preparation, translation and publication of methodological and training material) – GEL 500,000

Training 1000 foreign language teachers - GEL 1,000,000

Design of ITE program for primary teachers in minority regions teachers (including preparation, translation and publication of methodological and training material, design of bilingual model for primary education) – GEL 300,000

Incentive schemes for teachers from minority and high-mountainous regions - GEL 1,600,000

***Total – GEL 3,400,000***

### **Priority Area 6 – Improving Access to General Education and Quality of Learning for the Children with Special Needs**

#### *Component 1. Preparing all general schools of Georgia for educating the children with special needs*

*Rationale*

In accordance with EFA Goals, the state will ensure giving equal opportunities to all for inclusion in education notwithstanding their abilities. Currently majority of the children with special needs are either located in special institutions (those with physical or mental disabilities) or their special needs are not addressed properly (those with emotional and psychological disorders). Following the introduction of inclusive education within the pilot project in 10 model schools in capital all the schools in the country must be ready to educate the children with special needs.

*Activities*

In order to be able to respond to individual learning needs of all the children general schools should be equipped with appropriate learning material as well as teaching staff who are aware of and applying the principles of inclusive education in practice. Therefore the following are the activities aimed at improving schools' readiness for providing quality education for those who are vulnerable for marginalization and exclusion:

- Providing intensive training teachers form all public schools;
- Monitoring further dissemination of the knowledge and capacities gained at the training;
- Preparation of learning materials (audio books, special software, visual material, toys, etc.) for each public school.

*Component 2. Improving access and quality of learning at 12 special schools**Rationale*

While recognizing the need to integrate children with special needs into mainstream educational processes in the country, it is nevertheless important to realize that in certain cases children will be placed in specialized schools in order to meet their individual demands. Therefore, in the medium term there is an essential need to rehabilitate and improve learning environment as well as access in the existing special needs schools which will be retained.

*Activities*

Currently there are 11 schools for the children with special needs. Out of them 4 are located in the capital and 7 in the regions. Activities needed to improve learning environment for these schools will include:

- Physical infrastructure rehabilitation of the schools
- Retraining teachers

Additionally 11 specialized schools buses will be purchased to enhance access of students to these schools.

*Costs*

- Training teachers form all public schools (6900 teachers) and monitoring of further dissemination of information in schools – GEL 500,000
- Designing the package of learning material and distributing to all public schools – GEL 4,600,000
- Rehabilitation of special schools – GEL 2,400,000
- Training teachers in special schools – GEL 410,400
- Purchasing 11 adapted buses for special schools – GEL 615,600

***Total - GEL 8,526,000***

**TOTAL COSTING**

<b>No</b>	<b>Priority Area</b>	<b>Cost (GEL)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Early Childhood Development and Pre-school Education</b>	<b>4,725,000</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Support to ongoing school consolidation process through the provision of school buses in remote areas</b>	<b>5,358,880</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Provision of textbooks to students in need through the design and implementation of a textbook rental scheme</b>	<b>1,832,000</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Building capacity of autonomous school administrators</b>	<b>1,200,000</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Supporting Initial Teacher Education and in-service teacher training for primary education</b>	<b>3,400,000</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Improving Access to General Education and Quality of Learning for the Children with Special Needs</b>	<b>8,526,000</b>
		<b>25,041,880</b>