

# **EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUOTA SYSTEM IN GEORGIA**

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კვლევა ჩატარდა და მისი ანგარიში გამოიცა სამოქალაქო ინტეგრაციისა და ეროვნებათშორისი ურთიერთობების ცენტრის პროექტის „კვოტირების სისტემის ეფექტურობის კვლევა“ ფარგლებში. პროექტი განხორციელდა საქართველოს გაეროს ასოციაციის „ეროვნული ინტეგრაციის გაძლიერება საქართველოში“ პროექტის ფარგლებში ამერიკის შეერთებული შტატების საერთაშორისო განვითარების სააგენტოს დაფინანსებით. კვლევაში გამოთქმული მოსაზრებები ეკუთვნით ავტორებს და შეიძლება არ ასახავდეს ამერიკის შეერთებული შტატების საერთაშორისო განვითარების სააგენტოსა და საქართველოს გაეროს ასოციაციის შეხედულებებს.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research is the first attempt to summarize the education affirmative action policy implemented for several years as part of the action plan of the Integration of National Minorities initiated in 2009. This document is an important resource for the analysis, revision and improvement of the policy on national minorities.

This research is a result of the valuable input and efforts of its authors, as well as many other individuals involved. It would be impossible to carry out the research without their commitment and motivation. Therefore we would like to express our great appreciation to all of them.

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We believe that the issues raised in the research will be appropriately addressed by the policy-makers, as well as the management of the university faculties and heads of the programs. Implementation of the recommendations provided by the research will significantly contribute to the improvement of the effectiveness of affirmative action policy and eventually to the advancement of national integration.

## INTRODUCTION

Equal opportunity to higher education is a right protected by all democratic countries and international community. However, the 21<sup>st</sup> century and its characteristics made the issue more important. Thus, new challenges and opportunities are given to higher educational institutions. As Gupta points out in transition from elitists to mass higher education, universities and colleges should enhance at one hand access and equity and on the other high quality of standards and excellence (2006). Affirmative action policy in admissions is one of instruments of enhancing equity. However, the benefits of affirmative action in admissions of higher education is strongly debated (Schmidt, 2001). Rhoads at all distinguishes between “backward-looking” and forward-looking” arguments of affirmative action (2005). “Backward-looking” arguments of affirmative action refer to importance of elimination and compensation of and/or correct past injustices and institutionalized forms of discrimination against minorities. “Forward-looking” arguments implies that the process of globalization bring necessity of diverse workforce capable of succeeding in multicultural societies Lehmuller and Gregory (2003) proposed Goldman’s identification of four types of affirmative action. Goldman described **backward**, **forward**, **weak reverse discrimination**, and **strong reverse discrimination** affirmative action programs. Backward programs look to correct past injustice toward ethnic minorities, while forward programs ensure future opportunity for them. Weak reverse discrimination gives preferences to minority candidates who are equally qualified to majority candidates. Strong reverse discrimination gives preference to minority candidates who are less qualified than majority candidates. The fifth type can be considered a quota system, which reserve spots for minorities. Gupta states that quotes and reservations are different from affirmative action, because the latter is open-ended and without any fixed numbers (2003). However the quote system can promote the affirmative action and can be analyzed as part of it.

This document is the report on research which was undertaken by the Center of Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations and financed by the United Nations Association in Georgia within the project “Advanced National Integration” funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The research aimed at the evaluation of the affirmative action policy towards the ethnic minorities in Georgia

The first chapter of the document reviews the ongoing affirmative action policy in admission system of higher education of Georgia.

The Second chapter describes the research methodology.

The third chapter overviews the process of recruitment of the entrants as well as the level of awareness of local population on affirmative action policy.

The fourth chapter reviews an effectiveness of the affirmative action policy in the context of equal access to higher education for ethnic minorities.

The fifth chapter evaluates the effectiveness of one year Georgian language program in terms of students’ preparation for undergraduate studies and effective preparation for a student’s life;

The sixth chapter describes the planning, implementation processes and instructional practices at the Georgian language program and how effective there are to provide students with proper learning environment.

The seventh chapter is concentrated on the specific challenges and problems of the affirmative action policy.

And the final, eighth chapter of the document sets up the recommendations for improvement of affirmative action policy effectiveness.

## CHAPTER 1

### AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION REVIEW IN GEORGIA

Before 2005 Institutions of Higher Education used to fully administer the entrance exams in Georgia. Since 2005 a new system of united national entrance examinations that was based on standard tests in skills has been elaborated. The education reform, presented in 2004 by the Ministry of Education and Science, aimed at ensuring the equal admission exams to all entrants. Unified national examinations system was developed and implemented within the frameworks of that reform, which required every entrant to pass three tests: Georgian Language, General Skills (in Georgian or Russian languages), and Foreign Language. The first year of the reform was quite a bit negative for ethnic minorities. E.g. in 2005, from Akhalkalaki, only two of the entrants became students, from Ninotsminda – 1 entrant and from Marneuli only 17. This indicator was significantly lower compared to the enrolments prior to the formal establishment of the united national entrance exam system.

From the very first year of the formal establishment of the united national entrance exams in Georgia, “an affirmative action” towards ethnic minority entrants has started. However, the forms, methods and approaches towards this policy in 2005-2010 changed constantly.

#### **Affirmative Action Policy in terms of Financial Aid**

Article 43.1.E of the Law on General Education envisages the state stipends for students, granted by the institution or from any other sources, in the form of the financial or material aid. In special cases, the government provides the social programs for financially underprivileged students (Articles 6.1C and 52.8). The social programs envisaged provision of funding for the students of non-Georgian schools for 2005-2009. Within the frameworks of the social program, the Government annually funded 15 students from Kvemo Kartli, 15 from Samtskhe-Javakheti and 10 from Tbilisi. This regulation works nowadays and non-Georgian students receive financial assistance

To mitigate the negative impacts of the 2005 united national entrance exams, the Ministry of Education and Science made some changes in the forms of the “affirmative action” and in addition to the funding it suggested other elements of the affirmative action to the ethnic minority entrants; With the view of decreasing the negative effects of the unified national exams, the Ministry of Education and Science modified the regulation and empowered the entrants to take the Georgian language, general skills and foreign language tests in Russian language. Training courses were delivered in Language Houses of Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki, with support of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. As a result of these interventions, the number of national minority enrollers significantly increased in 2006. 25 students were enrolled from Kvemo Kartli, and 31 from Samtskhe-Javakheti.

As a result of the 2006 amendments, the number of ethnic minority entrants in Georgian Higher Education Institutions has significantly increased. 25 entrants from Kvemo Kartli and 31 from Javakheti became students. However, the number of enrolled students in 2007 decreased again

due to the revocation of accreditation to the Javakheti Branch of Javakhsivili State University. Therefore, a need for more effective mechanisms of “affirmative action” has been raised as an issue that needs to be addressed on the Agenda.

In response to the issues mentioned above, in 2008, the Ministry of Education and Science had to take more significant steps to support ethnic minority entrants. Specifically, the regulation of unified national exams was modified, and the national minorities were given the option of taking the general skills tests in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. The Ministry also continued providing national minorities with the training courses for unified national exams. Important step was the establishment and accreditation of Javakheti College, a new legal entity of the public law, on the basis of the Javakheti Branch of Ivane Javakhsivili State University. In 2008, as result of the education reform, the Georgian language schools did not have any school graduates, which further increased the national minority chances for enrollment in higher education institutions. All the above mentioned has increased the number of registered and enrolled students belonging to national minorities in 2008. For example, 113 entrants took the general skills test in Armenian language, and 46 of them (40.7%) have successfully enrolled. 250 entrants took the test in Azerbaijani language, out of which only 29 have successfully enrolled (11.6%). Statistical data indicates that allowing the exams in national languages, has increased the number of both registered and enrolled national minority students (especially Armenian language entrants. In 2009, Non-Georgian Language schools also did not have graduates, which gave entrants a good opportunity, two years to prepare better for united national entrance exams.

As mentioned earlier in the paper, since 2005 the Ministry of Education and Science applied different forms and mechanisms of affirmative action to assist ethnic minority entrants to get enrolled, which helped them to make certain achievements. However, those efforts on the side of the minister still was not enough to make significant changes in terms of increasing accessibility of higher education for ethnic minorities. Considering the issues that national minorities have been facing during 2005-2009 unified national exams, the Ministry of Education and Science decided to introduce the affirmative action for national minorities. Specifically, the amendment of November 19 of 2009 to the Law on Higher Education, defined the number of national minority students to pass the training program in Georgian language. It also defined that the education institutions, which are to admit the students based on the results of the general skills tests only (administered in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages), must allocate 5-5% for such admissions for Armenian and Azerbaijani students, and 1-1% for Ossetian and Abkhazian students, from total 100% number of the students to admit, as defined by the National Centre for Education Accreditation (Article 52.5<sup>1</sup>). Also, considering the number of the entrants registered by the same year, to be admitted based only on the results of the general skills tests administered in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages, it is possible to re-arrange the percentage shares/allocations within their totals, in case of such decision by the higher education institution, and with the relevant approval from the Ministry of Education and Science. However the same rule about the Ossetian and Abkhazian languages went into effect only from 2012-2013 academic year (Article 90.2). The mentioned national minority admission system is temporary, and will stay in effect only until 2018- 2019 academic year (Article 90.2).

It was defined that the percentage share/number of the students to be admitted based on the results of the general skills tests, administered in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian

languages, is not the part of the total allocated number of spots for certified specialists and highest academic programs.

The Georgian Language Training program was introduced within the frameworks of the new initiative (Article 52.5), which helps the citizens of Georgia develop the necessary skills (written, reading, listening and speaking) for continuing certificate programs or for enrolling in bachelor degree programs, or medical/dentistry/veterinary certificate programs in accredited, newly established and licensed higher education institution that admit students based on the results of general skills tests, administered in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages. After graduating the Georgian Language Training program, the students that were enrolled based on the results of the general skills alone, must continue their studies on bachelor degree, certificate medical/dentistry/veterinary programs, in Georgian language, and pass the necessary number of credit hours, required by the legislation (Articles 2.35 and 47.4).

Higher education institutions in Georgia are allowed to administer admissions basing only on the general skills tests in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages, only for those students that were enrolled in the Georgian language training programs. The law amendment also defined the government authority to decide on the size and number of grant awards, issued to the students enrolled in Georgian Language Training Programs (Article 6.1.C.2).

Georgian Language Training Program is a 60-credit course (Article 47.2) and is mandatory on the first academic year. After completing the Georgian training program, the higher education institution issues the certificate of completion. The Ministry of Education and Science ensured the accreditation of Georgian Language Training programs before the academic year of 2012-2013. The Higher Education institutions obtained the accreditation for administering the Georgian Language Training Programs. The Georgian Language Training Program, launched by an accredited or a newly established higher education institution, was considered to be accredited, before the first accreditation of the Georgian Language Training Programs.

### ***Situation after Introduction of Quota System***

The results of the 2010-2013 entrance exams revealed interesting trends. The number of university entrants, who failed the general skills exam in their native language is significantly high. 27, 8 % of Armenian and Azerbaijanian entrants failed the general skills exam. This number also highlights that there are serious problems of quality of education in non-Georgian schools. The following table provides information on number of failed entrants and their ratio to the total number of entrants taking an entrance exam.

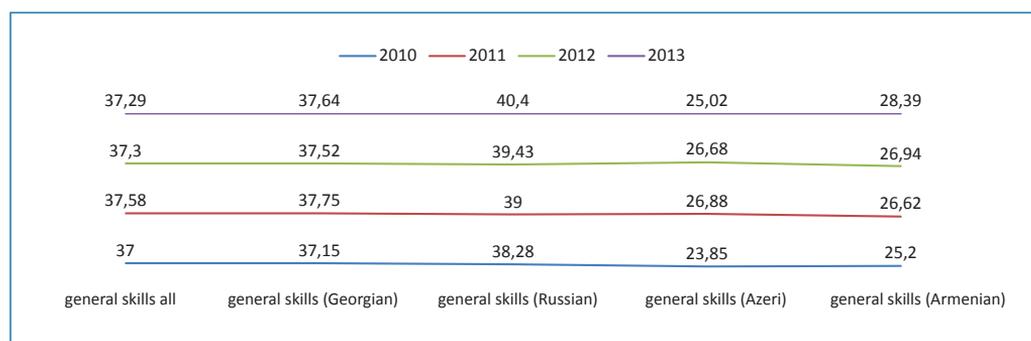
**Table 1: 2010-2013 general statistics of registered students and those taking an entrance exam**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Registration</b>	<b>Came to the examination</b>	<b>Overcame the minimum barrier in general skills</b>	<b>Failed</b>	<b>% of those who failed</b>
2010	588	491	331	160	32.587
2011	574	517	394	123	23.791
2012	869	803	614	189	23.537
2013	1460	1332	928	404	30.33
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3491</b>	<b>3143</b>	<b>2267</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>27.871</b>

Results of the entrance exams in general skills of the Armenian and Azeri speaking entrants and their comparison to the results of the entrance exams in general skills of the Georgian and Russian speaking entrants' gives a good background for analysis. Despite administration of the general skill exams on their native language, the results of the Armenian and Azeri speaking entrants on average are significantly lower than the results of the Georgian and Russian speaking entrants. This fact underlines the problems of quality of general education in non-Georgian schools. The table below describes the general skills exam results of students from schools of different language instruction:

**Table 2: Average score for year 2010-13**

Examination	2010	2011	2012	2013
General skills totally	37.00	37.58	37.30	37.29
General skills (Georgian)	37.15	37.75	37.52	37.64
General skills (Russian)	38.28	39.00	39.43	40.40
General skills (Azerbaijani)	23.85	26.88	26.68	25.02
General skills (Armenian)	25.20	26.62	26.94	28.39

**Diagram 1: Average score for years 2010-13**

## CHAPTER 2.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Goals and objectives

The goal of the following research was to study effectiveness of the affirmative action policy and Georgian language one year program at institutions of higher education introduced since 2010 for ethnic minorities, including getting comprehensive information on the following elements of the affirmative action: a) the degree of effectiveness of recruiting university entrants and awareness of population about the affirmative action policy b) the degree of effectiveness of affirmative action in terms of providing equal access to high education to ethnic minorities; c) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the one year Georgian language program in terms of students' preparation for undergraduate studies and effective preparation for a student's life; d) Assessment of Georgian language one year program in terms of the planning, implementation, infrastructure, teaching and learning environment; e) Identify the specific issues that ethnic minority university entrants, students of one year Georgian language program and undergraduate level students encounter during the study.

### Target Group of the Research

The study has encompassed stakeholders interested and included in the affirmative action implementation. Correspondingly, a focus of the study was four institutions of higher education, where Georgian language one year program is very intensively implemented. The following is the list of those universities: a) Tbilisi State University; 2) Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University; 3) Akhalkalaki College; and d) Ilia University. The targeted group comprised of students and teachers of the one year Georgian language program as well as students enrolled on an undergraduate level.

### The geographical scope of the study

In terms of regional arrangement, the research was implemented in Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions.

### Research Methods and Instruments

Considering the objective of the research, its methodology encompasses quantitative, qualitative and statistical methods. More specifically, the following instruments were used in the process:

1. **Desk Research** covered analysis of the training materials and manuals. The manuals and other supplementary materials used within the Georgian language program in the targeted universities were thoroughly studied. Additional materials are considered to be reading, visual and audio materials as well as curriculum, syllabuses and their arrangement. The analysis was conducted in all four targeted universities

- 2. Survey by questionnaires:** There was a standardized questionnaire developed for Georgian language program students, which helped to identify tendencies and directions of each university program towards students' perspectives.

### *Survey sample*

The students of Tbilisi State University, Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University and Higher Educational Institution – Akhalkalaki Collage participated in the survey. Here should be mentioned that Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki higher educational institutions has recently been merged and transformed in one – Samtkhe-Javakheti Teaching University, however the Georgian language program functions in both – Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki campuses.

In 2012-2013 Georgian language preparation course enrolled 353 students, whereas 314 students are distributed in Tbilisi State University and 39 in Samtkhe-Javakheti Teaching University. Consequently the primary target group of the survey was 353 students. During the survey was learnt that only 259 out of those 353 overcame the examination and were admitted to Bachelor programs. The distribution of the students among the universities was as followed: Tbilisi State University – 259 students. Samtkhe—Javakheti state university – 26 students from Akhaltsikhe campus and 13 students from Akhalkalaki campus, which makes totally 39 students. Out from total 298 target students 210 agreed to take part in the survey which makes 70% of total population. At the same time out of 259 students studying at the Tbilisi State University 185 students (71.42% of total) and out of total 39 students studying at the Samtkhe-Javakheti Teaching university 25 students (64,1% of total) were surveyed. The high representativeness of the participants make possible to generalize the results of the survey for Tbilisi State and Samtke-Javakheti Teaching Universities. It is worthwhile to mention that the outputs were also analyzed from each university individually. The university and gender distribution of the participants in the survey was the following:

**Table 3: Distribution of the participants between the universities**

Tbilisi State university		Samtkhe-Javakheti Teaching unvieristy		Female	Male
185		25		210	
Female 73	Male 112	Female 17	Male 8	90	120
39.4%	60.6%	68%	32%	42.8%	57.2%

- 3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Holding of FGDs was considered to be reasonable in order to reconcile different perspectives of the program participants. Correspondingly, FGDs were held with Georgian language program graduates, first and second year undergraduate level students, which gave us an opportunity to see program features in progress. FGDs were also held with the Georgian language program instructors, which was an effective tool to see the strength and weaknesses as well as threats and perspectives of the program. Moreover, in

addition to the thoughts and comments collected during the FGD, the process turned out to be a rich source of information on ideas and vision as well as coordination manner and analysis of the involved instructors and teachers. In addition, FGDs were also held with non-Georgian language school graduates in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions, which targeted at analysis of openness and accessibility of the program as well as students' expectations. FGDs revealed the self-estimation of personal potential by students, their motivation and rationality of their expectations toward program goals and objectives.

#### ***Total Number of Focus Groups***

- 4 focus groups with the Georgian language program graduates from targeted universities;
- 4 focus groups with the instructors involved in the Georgian language program implementation;
- 4 focus groups with the school twelve graders from Akhalkalaki, Ninotsmida, Bolnisi and Marneuli.

4. **Face to face Interviews:** There were face to face, in-depth interviews conducted with the heads of Georgian language one year program to learn about specifics of administering each program, its educational and supplementary resources as well as teaching resources and overall environment related to the program; also the interviews targeted at studying managers' vision on the future plans of the program and program development strategy.

#### ***Total Number of Face to face Interviews:***

In total 4 face interviews were held with program managers of all four targeted universities.

#### **Field Works:**

During the preparatory work, the questionnaires were tested and piloted among Tbilisi and Akhaltsikhe university students. As a result of this pilot a final copy of the questionnaire was developed. The field work was implemented in the 3 week period. During this time, the quantitative data of the questionnaire was collected and organized.

During the second phase of the field work, focus groups and face to face interviews with the program managers were planned and conducted.

Considering an existing environment in the country, the original in-depth interviews with 2 Deputy Ministers of Education and Science was revised (due to the change of the Cabinet of Ministers). The decision to discuss the research details with the new deputy ministers was considered to be irrelevant assuming that they did not have enough information on research topic.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Considering the goals and objectives of the research and information received through questionnaires, the decision was made that in addition to the descriptive analysis, t-test and parameter statistic methods will be used, which would enabled us with the assistance of cross tabulation to see the data by comparison of different parameters. The quantitative data was processed in SPSS. Qualitative data was transformed in transcripts and “Atlas” was used to analyze them.

## CHAPTER 3.

## THE PROCESS OF UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS' RECRUITMENT AND THE LEVEL OF THE AWARENESS OF LOCAL POPULATION ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

### Student Enrolment in One Year Program and Statistical Analysis

The students enrolled in one year program by universities are distributed in the following way:

**Table 4: Distribution of the participants between the universities in 2010-13**

University	2010	%	2011	%	2012	%	2013	%	Total	%
1. Tbilisi State University	177	56.5	305	69,5	368	62,4	338	37,7	1188	53%
2. Georgian Technical University	25	8	31	7,1	31	5,2	182	20,3	269	12,01%
3. Theater and Cinema University	1	0.3			2	0,3	1	0,1	4	0,17%
4. Agrarian University	5	1.6	1	0,2					6	0,26%
5. Medical University	20	6.4	40	9,1	50	8.5	67	7,5	177	7,9%
6. Kutaisi – Tsereteli University	1	0.3			3	05	4	0,4	8	0,35%
7. Ilia University	7	2.2	6	1,4	58	9.8	216	24,1	287	12,8%
8. Sokhumi University	10	3.2	4	0,9	18	3,0	22	2,4	54	2,41%
9. Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University	24	7.7	27	6,1	26	4,4	34	3,76	111	4,95
10. David Agmashenebeli University	0	0	0	0	1	0,2			1	0,04%
11. Tbilisi Banking/finance and Management University	1	0.3							1	0.04%
12. University for Economic Relations	12	3.8							12	0.53%
13. Black Sea University	5	1.6					2	0,2	7	0,31%
14. Talavi University	2	0.6	2	0.4	5	0,8%	6	0,7	15	0,66%

University	2010	%	2011	%	2012	%	2013	%	Total	%
15. University for International Relations	3	0.9							3	0,13%
16. Akhalkalaki Collage	7	2.2	16	3,6	13	2,2%	11	1,25	47	2,19
17. "Hipocrate"	1	0.3					1	0,1	2	0,08
18. Arts Academy	1	0.3			4	0,7%	1	0,1	6	0,26%
19. Batumi University	4	1.3	1	0,2	2	0,3%			7	0,31%
20. Georgian University	5	1.6			1	0,2%			6	0,26%
21. Gori University	1	0.3							1	0,04%
22. Rustavi (European International) Uni	1	0.3							1	0,04%
23. CEU			1	0,2					1	0,04%
24. Academy of Defense – Gori			2	0,4	5	0,8%	5	0,5	12	0,53%
25. University Panatsea			1	0,2					1	0,04%
26. University "Georgia"			2	0,4					2	0,08%
27. University Rvali	0	0	0	0	1	0,2%			1	0,04%
28. Caucasian International University					2	0,3%			2	0,08%
29. Tbilisi Open Teaching University							5	0,5	5	0,22%
30. Tbilisi Teaching University							1	0,1	1	0,04%
31. Euastern Europe Teaching University							1	0,1	1	0,04%
Total	313	100%	439	100%	590	100%	897	100%	2239	100 %

As the table shows, the majority of the students studies at Tbilisi Javakhishvili State University (53%), which is followed by Ilia University -12,8%, Georgian Technical University - 12, 01%, Medical University - 7,9%, Samtskhe-Javakheti University - 7,14 %, Sokhumi University - 2,41 %.

It is obvious, that since 2010, with the introduction of the quota system in Georgia, the number of entrants with ethnic minority background as well as enrolled ethnic minority students at the Georgian Institutions of Higher education has significantly increased. This is well reflected in the following table:

**Table 5: Number of enrolled students and existing quota**

Year	Total Number of allocated places	Number of Enrolled students	Utilized %
2010	2602	301	11,56%
2011	2100	431	20,52 %
2012	2242	584	26.04%
2013	3900	928	23.79%

The table above also clearly shows that the number of enrolled students is significantly lower compared to the quota and it's very important to continue working in that direction.

**Table 6: General statistics of registered Armenian and Azeri language entrants, those taking and passing entrance exams in 2010-13**

Year	Entrants with Armenian native language			Entrants with Azerbaijani native language		
	Number of Registered	Number of Examined	Number of entrants passed the General Skills exam	Registered	Examined	Overcame the minimum Barrier in General Skills
<b>2010</b>	253	188	137	335	303	194
<b>2011</b>	254	216	172	320	301	222
<b>2012</b>	290	262	207	579	541	407
<b>2013</b>	271	249	191	1189	1083	737
<b>Total:</b>	1068	915	707	2423	2228	1560

The table above creates a certain idea on the effectiveness of the “affirmative Action” and provides with a good opportunity for analysis. During 2010-2013 the number of Azeri speaking registered entrants as well as enrolled students has significantly increased; the indicator has at least tripled (the number of registered entrants in 2010 was 335 and it's 1083 in 2013; the number of enrolled students was 194 in 2010 and is 737 in 2013). As for the Armenian speaking entrants, there's no obvious progress (In 2010, 253 entrants registered in total and in 2013 the number is 271). The statistic of Armenian speaking entrants shows a need for additional activities in this targeted group.

It's also very interesting to track the data on continuation of studying after enrolment. If we analyze Tbilisi University data, we will see that 14, 99% of the enrolled students did not

continue studying at the one year Georgian language preparation program; and, if we compare the students enrolled as a result of the exams and the ones who continued studying on an undergraduate level, we will see that 24, 4% of students enrolled as a result of the exam do not continue studying on an undergraduate level. Another issue is an indicator on dropping of undergraduate level studying at the university (the final result in this direction will become evident after the end of undergraduate level courses).

The table below presents detailed information on that:

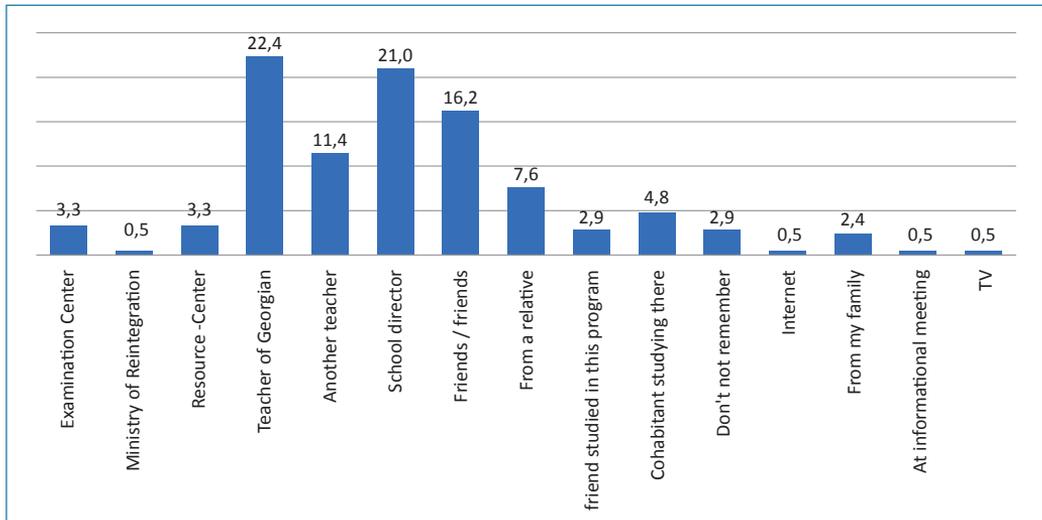
**Table 7: Statistics on enrollment and continuation of study in the Tbilisi State University**

	Number of admitted students based on national exams	Number of students at Georgian language program	Number of Students at BA program	Per-cent of students at Georgian language program out of enrolled students	Per-cent of students at BA program out of enrolled students
<b>2010-11</b>	177	156	155	88,1 %	87,5%
<b>2011-12</b>	262	256	233	97,7 %	88,9 %
<b>2012-13</b>	415	314	259	75,6 %	62,4 %
<b>Total:</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>85,01%</b>	<b>75,7%</b>

During research students' awareness and recruiting were identified to be an issue within twelfth grade students as well as within one year program students through FGDs and questionnaires. As a result the following tendencies were identified:

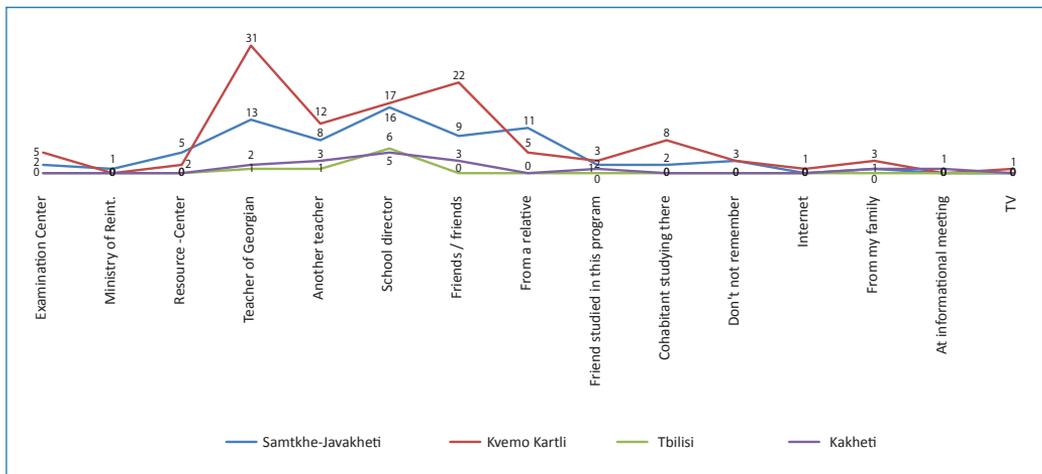
- 1) 54,8% of the pupils receive information on Affirmative Action from the Georgian language teachers, other teachers or the directors of the school and 31,5% get this info from friends/relatives/villagers (or from those who study in the program). Information is rarely provided by the formal state structures like (local resource centers, local self-governance and governance bodies, the Ministry of Education and Science, Examination and Evaluation center, Reintegration Ministry) or non-government organizations. These organizations inform only 7,1% of the pupils.

**Diagram 2: Sources of information about the affirmative action**



Receiving of information by regions is as follows:

**Diagram 3: Informational sources by regions**



The sources of receiving information are more or less logical and reasonable, meaning that information is basically spread on a school and community level. This tendency is the same in Tbilisi and in regions; however, the lacking of proactivity on the side of official government structures (mostly quality of providing information) creates issues. FGDs make it evident that frequently information on goals, procedures, terms and capabilities on “Affirmative Action” is nonhomogeneous and false. From this perspective, 12<sup>th</sup> grade students’ awareness of “Affirmative Action” is interesting. FGDs with 12<sup>th</sup> grade pupils from Ninostminda revealed several significant cases of having false information about Affirmative Action:

- „There are 4 exams in the Fall and then 4 exams in the Spring; You take entrance exams at the university with these scores”;
- *„I have heard that you pass an entrance exam with High School scores“.*

The same FGDs identified spread of false information on funding tuition fee and winning scholarship for the university

- *„If you get a score over 31, you will not have to pay any tuition fee“.*

It looks like that this piece of information is based on the existing practice that as a rule, entrants, receiving a higher score than 31 get some level of funding; and there’s no information on the conditions to win a scholarship.

Lack of public awareness also leads to a decision to continue studying at non-Georgian institutions of higher education. The same FGD participants from Ninotsminda stated that they mostly make a decision to continue studying in Armenia due to the limited skills in Georgian language as their existing level of Georgian language knowledge will not be enough to study specific programs.

- *„I could have barely studied at the Legal Faculty in Georgia...I did not know that I could have passed entrance exams on my native language and then study...“*

It is worth to note that implementation of the Affirmative Action is told to be directly linked with the name of the President of Georgia, Mr. Saakashvili.

- *„Generally, as far as I am aware, this is Mr. Saakashvili’s program“.*

To add to this point, the population is not aware about the program tenure and it expects an expiration of the program this year:

- *„I have information that this program will be stopped this year“....*
- *„Will this program be functioning this year?...“*
- *„We have heard that this program will be finished this year“.*

As it is obvious, information on finishing an Affirmative Action is related to the political figure – Mikhail Saakashvili and correspondingly, some people think that the program will be finished as soon as Mikhail Saakashvili is not a President of Georgia any longer.

In this respect, we received interesting information from FGDs in Akhaltsikhe. As it looks, Akhaltsikhe Educational University is actively involved in students’ recruitment process and frequently meets with entrants to attract them. Therefore, Akhaltsikhe University spreads information about quoting system and opportunities for ethnic minority entrants during those meetings. But as it turned out, that activity brought some confusion in Akhaltsikhe; more precisely, some participants of FGD in Akhaltsikhe has information that they could take exams using quoting system only in Akhaltsikhe university and not in all of the other Georgian State universities and also, students had information that they could take a Georgian language course in Akhaltsikhe University and select an undergraduate level program in any other university:

- *„I knew that I could have selected a Georgian language preparation course and undergraduate level program in different universities but it did not happen so“.*

To sum up, we can say that population is aware of quoting system; however, this information is not always correct. The reason is either an existing experience or wrong interpretation and inadequate understanding. Population still does not have organized comprehensive and complete information on affirmative action policy in admissions of higher education of Georgia. Frequently, people spreading information (school administration, teachers and even program participants) do not have complete information on affirmative action and one year program. Having correct information to make a right decision is very important.

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## CHAPTER 4

### THE DEGREE OF EFFECTIVENESS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN TERMS OF PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS ON HIGH EDUCATION TO ETHNIC MINORITIES

There is a significant increase in the number of ethnic minority students at higher education institutions of Georgia in 2010-2013. However, as mentioned earlier, an existing quoting system is not fully explored. In addition to the awareness, access to information is also an issue.

- 1) Following the decree N 79/N issued on June 24, 2013, **State provides funding** to the 17 state priority programs of higher education. This initiative became an issue for Armenian and Azeri speaking students enrolled in 2012 as a result of an “Affirmative Action”. These students could not get enrolled in the priority programs, because none of the legislative acts provided a mechanism on what principle should be used to enroll them in a desired state funded educational programs. More precisely, by passing unified national entrance exams, entrants fill in the spots identified for specific programs (e.g. 425 spots are allocated for humanitarian science faculty of the Tbilisi State University, which is completely filled in by the Georgian speaking entrants. Correspondingly, those programs are not accessible to the one year program participants, as there was and still is not any normative that regulates their enrollment in a preferred faculty under existence of a state grant. As of today, universities were granted an authority to enroll these students in the programs mentioned above, however, these programs are not free of charge for them unless they are awarded a grant and they will have to pay money to study those programs that are free of charge for Georgian entrants. On the one hand, this violates the rights of students and discriminates them and on the other it does not meet state policy wither to attract students or popularize those programs;
- 2) Following 2013 entrance exams, the **secondary enrolments** were authorized for those who passed the minimal barrier during entrance exams but could not get to the desired faculty and university. Such entrants were provided an opportunity to make a secondary choice and become a student as a result of the secondary enrollment. The same rule however did not apply to non-Georgian speaking entrants, those who passed the minimal barrier in general skills exam but could not get to the desired university and faculty. The non-Georgian speaking entrants are not authorized to become students through secondary enrollment. The issue is under discussion and we hope that it will soon be addressed.
- 3) **Financial Provision.** There is a state grant allocated annually to 100 Armenian speaking and 100 Azeri speaking entrants. In addition, the commercial organization “Soccar” awards scholarships to additional 100 Azeri speaking students. This positively impacts the increase in the number of Azeri speaking students at Georgian Universities. To spread state funding on 17 priority directions over entrants being enrolled as a result of the affirmative action also positively impacts on attraction of Armenian speaking entrants, which is also confirmed by the research findings, where financial provision of the entrants and students are announced to be one of the most significant factors:

- *„To get a scholarship is fairly easy in Tbilisi; this is why I made a decision to take exams in Georgia“;*
- *„At first, I wanted to take exams in Yerevan; However, when I have heard about Tbilisi opportunities, I decided to take exams in Georgia. I want to take exams here. If I get high scores, I can study free of charge“;*

Generally, in contrast to other countries, one of the incentives to study in Georgia is less financial costs and an opportunity to win a grant:

- *„Passing an exam and study is easy in Yerevan ... You can get a scholarship in Tbilisi, which is fairly complicated there“;*
- *„from our city, there is not a single student who can study free of charge there in Yerevan“;*
  - *„It’s very expensive to study there ... (Yerevan is meant);*
    - *„Of course, it will be more expensive in Yerevan“;*
    - *„Everything is very expensive“;*

(4) **Vicinity and comfortable location** is also one of the factors that positively impacts education accessibility as well as financial costs. Vicinity to the capital increases the number of willingness among Azeri speaking entrants in Kvemo Kartli to study at Georgian Higher Education Institutions. On the other hand, Armenian speaking entrants state that their location creates issues for them to study in Georgia especially if they do not have relatives in the capital, which usually makes them go to study in Armenia:

- *„I prefer to study in Armenia, I have relatives there“;*
- *In Yerevan they have relatives and it’s more comfortable from them“.*

Despite vicinity of Akhalkalaki College to the Javakheti population, they still face some issues, more precisely: (a) a limited number of students (11 students) that could be enrolled at the Akhalkalaki college with consideration to the affirmative action; (b) Limited prestige of the university among population – and prestige is one of the important criteria for entrants. 54% of the student is participating in the research announced that they had made their choice about a university based on the degree image of the university.

The following table shows the factors that the entrant used when making a decision about a university

**Table 8: Factors impacting choice of the students regarding the concrete university**

<b>Why did you choose your university?</b>		
This university is very prestigious	54	25.7%
Study at this university is convenient for me	24	11.4%
It will be easier to study at BA program of this university	15	7.1%
The BA program at this university conditioned my choice	14	6.7%
Lots of my friends are enrolled at this university	15	7.1%
Only this university has a BA program I want to choose	51	24.3%
The Georgia language program at this university is the easiest to study	24	11.4%
Can't answer	5	2.4%
I have passed the exam in Azeri and accordingly has no choice	1	0.5%
I wanted to study here since my childhood	1	0.5%
It gave me the opportunity to have a grant	1	0.5%
High quality of teaching	2	1%
My teacher advise me	1	0.5%
This is advantageous as I haven't pay for my study	1	0.5%
It's hard to get job without tertiary education	1	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

It should also be noted that, 72% of the students (18 students from 25) participating in Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki survey made a choice due to the comfortable location of the university.

Keeping in mind the answers of the students thoughts of the Georgian language program managers towards the role of Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki universities in the implementation of affirmative action is also very interesting. They think that considering geographical location and social environment, these universities have natural tools to successfully integrate ethnic minorities into Georgian society and they believe that it was a big mistake that none of the universities before 2004 had an opportunity to develop and establish the programs aiming at ethnic minority integration. This would have provided these universities with an opportunity to gain significant educational resources as well as rich experience earlier. According to survey results, the majority of students (72% of those students studying at Samkhe-Javakheti Teaching University) reported that they decided to choose this university because it was convenient for them. Consequently, their choice isn't determined by the prestige of the university, by quality of the Georgian language program or by the desirable BA program offered by the university. Nonetheless the teachers involved in the program have completely different attitudes towards the choice of the students. They believe that a majority of the non-Georgian schools prepare students for Georgian higher educational institutions. The lecturers and administration of the

Georgian language program have an expectation that students are highly motivated to be well integrated and socialized through university. For the students the program is mostly convenient due to the financial advantageous and grant accessibility though. The FGDs with students make also unclear whether non-Georgian schools are really so effective in preparation of the students for the Georgian higher Education institutions as it also concerns an academic or psychological readiness. Students are mostly talking about the cost-effectiveness of the Georgian education not about the high quality of education at the university. In other word students' motivation to be enrolled in this specific university and expectations of administrative and teaching staff about the students' motivation is quite different.

In reality, this discrepancy in the expectations may produce discrepancy in the program content in terms of students' needs and proposed program, where student integration support process is not stressed on right places.

It's very interesting to see the distribution of grants by regions, as well as percentage ratio of grants by regions. The largest amount of grant by regions goes to Marneuli entrants. Even though Marneuli leads with the number of entrants, the ratio between students who were awarded a grant and entrants in Marneuli are relatively low.

**Table 9: Grant Distribution by Regions in 2010-2013**

Based on raw data of the Center of National Examination and Assessment

Year 2010-2013	Entrants received the grant (Armenian)	Entrants received the grant (Azerbaijani)	Total number of received grants	% (Arm)	% (Az)	% (Total)
Batumi	1	0	1	0,25 %	0	0,125%
Tbilisi	43	20	63	10,7%	5,14%	7,97%
Telavi	0	5	5	0	1.28%	0,63%
Sagarejo		42	42	0	10,8%	5,32%
Lagodekhi		5	5	0	1.28%	0,63%
Aspindza	7		7	1,75%	0	0,88%
Akalkalaki	134		134	33,4%	0	16,9 %
Akhaltzikhe	50		50	12,5%	0	6,3%
Borjomi	4		4	1%	0	0,49%
Ninotsminda	120		120	29,9%	0	15,2%
Bolnisi	7	58	65	1,75%	14,9%	8,22
Gardabani	0	66	66	0	17,0 %	8,35%
Dmanisi	0	7	7	0	1,8%	0,88%

<b>Merneuli</b>	9	183	192	<b>2,24%</b>	<b>47,04</b>	<b>24,3</b>
<b>Rustavi</b>	0	3	3	<b>0,77%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0,38</b>
<b>Tsalka</b>	26		26	<b>6,48</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,29%</b>
<b>Total</b>	401	389	790	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

If we take a number of entrants and it's ratio to the entrants who had been awarded a grant, the results of the Armenian speaking entrants from Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Tbilisi and Bolnisi is obvious.

**Table 10: Ninotsminda, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Year	Armenian Entrants				
	Registration	Came to the examination	Overcame the min. barrier in general skills	Received grant	The percentage of those students who were examined and overcame the barrier
<b>2010</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>67,6</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>43,3</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>42,7</b>

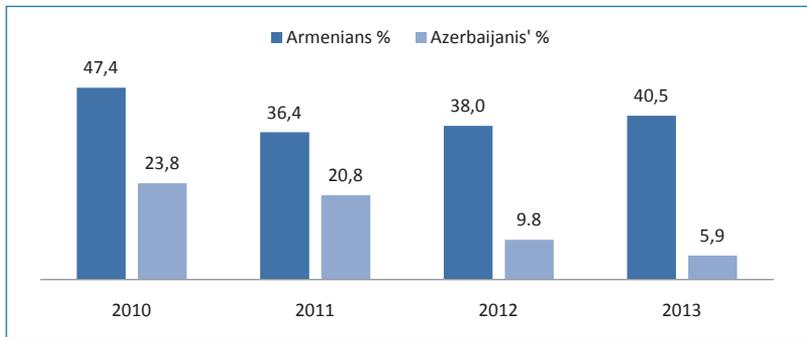
**Table 11: Akhalkalaki, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Year	Armenian Entrants				
	Registration	Came to the examination	Overcame the min. barrier in general skills	Received grant	The percentage of those students who were examined and overcame the barrier
<b>2010</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>64,9 %</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>47 %</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>46,5 %</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31,3 %</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>48,2 %</b>

**Table 12: Tbilisi, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Year	Were examined Armenian native speakers	Were examined Azeri native speakers	Received grant Arm. Native speakers	Received grant Az. Native speakers	Received grant totally	% Arm	% Azeri	% total
2010	19	21	9	5	14	47.4%	23.8%	35%
2011	22	24	8	5	13	36.4%	20.8%	28.30%
2012	29	51	11	5	16	38%	9.8%	20%
2013	37	84	15	5	20	40.5%	5.9%	16.50%
<b>Total</b>	107	159	43	20	63	<b>40,18%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>23.70%</b>

**Diagram 4: Statistics of grantees from Tbilisi in 2010-13**



**Table 13: Marneuli, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Year	Were examined Armenian native speakers	Were examined Azeri native speakers	Received grant Arm. Native speakers	Received grant Az. Native speakers	Received grant totally	% Arm	% Azeri	% total
2010	7	143	1	51	52	14.3	35.7	34.7
2011	8	165	3	35	38	37.5	21.2	21.9
2012	6	276	1	52	53	16.6	18.8	18.8
2013	14	545	4	45	50	28.6	8.2	8.7
<b>სულ</b>	35	1129	9	183	192	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

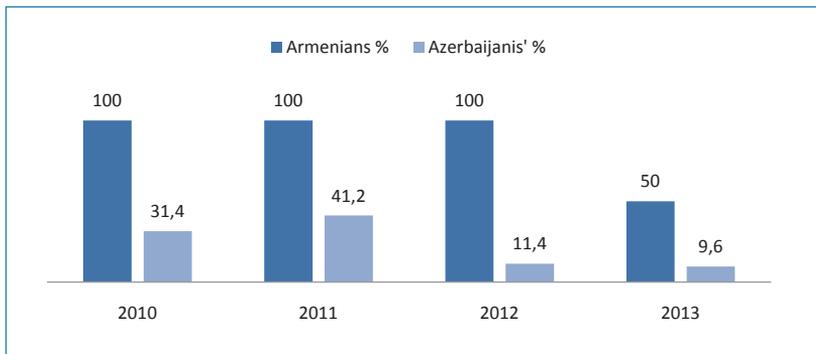
**Diagram 5: Statistics of grantees from Marneuli in 2010-13**



**Table 14: Bolnisi, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Year	Were examined Armenian native speakers	Were examined Azeri native speakers	Received grant Arm. Native speakers	Received grant Az. Native speakers	Received grant totally	% Arm	% Azeri	% total
2010	2	51	2	16	18	100	31.4	34
2011	1	51	1	21	22	100	41.2	42.3
2012	2	70	2	8	10	100	11.4	13.9
2013	4	135	2	13	15	50	9.6	10.8
სულ	9	307	7	58	65	77.77	18.9	20.5

**Diagram 6: Statistics of grantees from Bolnisi in 2010-13**



**Table 15: Dmanisi, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Years	Azerbaijani entrants				
	Registration	Were examined	Overcame the min. barrier in general skills	Received the grant	The percentage of examined students who received the grant
2010	12	12	6	2	16.7 %
2011	18	18	10	3	16.7%
2012	15	14	9	0	0%
2013	65	60	38	2	3.3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.7%</b>

**Table 16: Gardabani, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Years	Azerbaijani entrants				
	Registration	Were examined	Overcame the min. barrier in general skills	Received the grant	The percentage of examined students who received the grant
2010	62	56	40	20	35.7%
2011	67	65	50	17	26.2 %
2012	80	79	59	14	17.7 %
2013	146	135	97	15	11.1 %
<b>Total:</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>19.7 %</b>

**Table 17: Tsalka, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Years	Armenian entrants				
	Registration	Were examined	Overcame the min. barrier in general skills	Received the grant	The percentage of examined students who received the grant
2010	24	18	11	9	50 %
2011	28	24	16	6	25 %
2012	26	23	16	6	26.1 %
2013	18	15	11	5	33.3 %
<b>Total:</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>32.5 %</b>

**Table 18: Akhaltsikhe, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Years	Armenian entrants				
	Registration	Were examined	Overcame the min. barrier in general skills	Received the grant	The percentage of examined students who received the grant
<b>2010</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>61.1%</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32.5 %</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>41.7 %</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>43.1 %</b>

**Table 19: Kakheti, 2010-2013 data on the entrants who had received a grant**

Years	Regional district	Azerbaijani speaking entrants				
		Registration	Were examined	Overcame the min. barrier in general skills	Received the grant	The percentage of students who received the grant
<b>2010</b>	Telavi	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12.5 %</b>
<b>2010</b>	Sagaredjo	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>60 %</b>
Total:		<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>38.9 %</b>
<b>2011</b>	Telavi	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33.3 %</b>
<b>2011</b>	Sagaredjo	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>66.7 %</b>
Total:		<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>63 %</b>
<b>2012</b>	Telavi	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2012</b>	Lagodekhi	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15.4 %</b>
<b>2012</b>	Sagaredjo	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>42.3 %</b>
Total:		<b>49</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30.2 %</b>
<b>2013</b>	Telavi	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>33.3 %</b>
<b>2013</b>	Lagodekhi	<b>45</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8.8 %</b>
<b>2013</b>	Sagaredjo	<b>65</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15.3 %</b>
Total:		<b>119</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14.7 %</b>
Total for Kakheti 2010-2013		<b>219</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>27.4 %</b>

During grant reallocation, the issue of scarcity of information becomes obvious once more. Program managers talk about those misunderstandings that have happened about enrolment and funding during the second and third years of the program implementation. During the first year, all of the entrants willing to pass exams got enrolled at the university, which made the students and their parent believe that any ethnically non Georgian entrants, who could pass the exams in general skills would receive a full state funding for tuition. However, in the following years, the number of willing entrants to take exams have increased, which also increased competition among entrants, as a result not all of the entrants could receive 100% funding, which caused some dissatisfaction among entrant and their parents. Correspondingly, it's very important that grant allocation principles, as well as regional and language data and tendencies should be accessible to the ethnically non-Georgian society to let them make informed decisions.

(5) Participant students of Akhaltsikhe as well as Ninotsminda twelfth graders focus groups expressed their dissatisfaction with regard to the access to higher education for school graduates with Russian language of instruction. Namely, they are dissatisfied by the fact that affirmative action is extended only to those university entrants who pass exams in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Abkhazian or Ossetian languages. The participants of the focus group think that affirmative policy should also apply to Russian language students as many Armenians and Azerbaijanians graduate from Russian schools and have no opportunity to take advantage of this policy. The same problem applies to other ethnic minority students, who are dispersed across the country and graduate from Russian-language schools.

## CHAPTER 5

## EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ONE YEAR GEORGIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN TERMS OF STUDENTS' PREPARATION FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES AND EFFECTIVE PREPARATION FOR A STUDENT'S LIFE

Having finished a Georgian language one year program, students select an undergraduate level program where they continue studying. Student's choices of undergraduate level programs by universities and by programs are as follows:

**Table 20: The bachelor programs chosen by the students at Tbilisi State University**

Faculty/year	2011	2012	2013	Total:	%
Law	25	38	36	99	15.3 %
Humanitarian	36	42	66	144	22.25%
Social-Political	6	16	26	48	7.43%
Business and economic	51	66	70	187	28.9 %
Medicine	21	36	37	94	14.54%
Exact and natural sciences	13	20	24	57	8.8%
International school for Tourism	3	15		18	2.78 %
Total	165	223	259	647	100 %

**Table 21: The bachelor programs chosen by the students at Samkhe-Javakheti University**

Faculty/year	2011	2012	2013	Total:	%
Law	0	6	2	8	11,6
Social sciences, education and humanitarian	5	6	10	21	30,5
Business and economic	14	7	15	36	52.2
Natural	0	3		3	4,3
Informational Technology			1	1	1.4
Total	19	22	28	69	

**Table 22: The bachelor programs chosen by the students at Georgian Technical University**

Faculty/Year	2011	2012	2013	Total:	%
Law	3	5	3	11	25
Informatics	2	6	7	15	34
International Relations	1	0		1	2.3
Business Administration/Economic	2	3	4	9	20.5
Mass Communication	2	1		3	6.8
Construction	1	0	2	3	6.8
Pharmacy		2		2	4.6
Total	11	17	16	44	

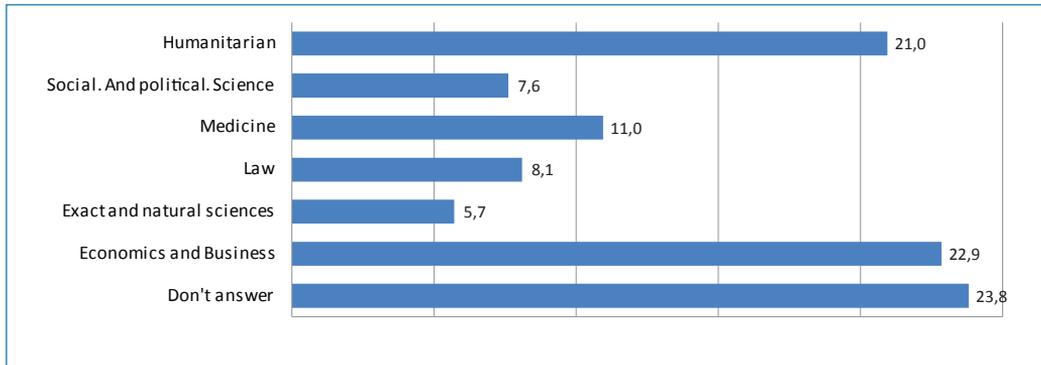
**Table 23: The bachelor programs chosen by the students Ilia University**

Faculty/year	2011	2012	2013	Total:	%
Law			3	3	5,66 %
Social sciences			3	3	5,66 %
Business administration	2		19	21	39,62 %
Humanitarian	3	4	11	18	33,96 %
Sports faculty/teachers of sports	1				1,89 %
Computer engineering/Math			7	7	13,21 %
Total	6	4	43	53	

Students representing ethnic minorities have very limited professional choices, which are mostly related to the widely spread stereotype about professions of being prestigious, with better chances to find a highly paid job and be among highly demanded professions. This is a natural tendency considering a scarcity of information on employment market and demanding professions in Georgia. Also, considering the existing vacuum of information on not only statistical data, but also ongoing social-political processes in regions where ethnic minorities are closely settled, we can assume that the stereotypes towards professions is somewhat more widely spread and popular among ethnic minority than regular Georgian entrants.

76.2% of interviewed students had their decision made on a desired faculty and undergraduate level program by the end of the Georgian language program; however, the rest 23.8% still did not have that decision by that time.

Within the research, the 76% of the students who had a decision made about the faculty and undergraduate program prioritized the list of desired faculties as follows:

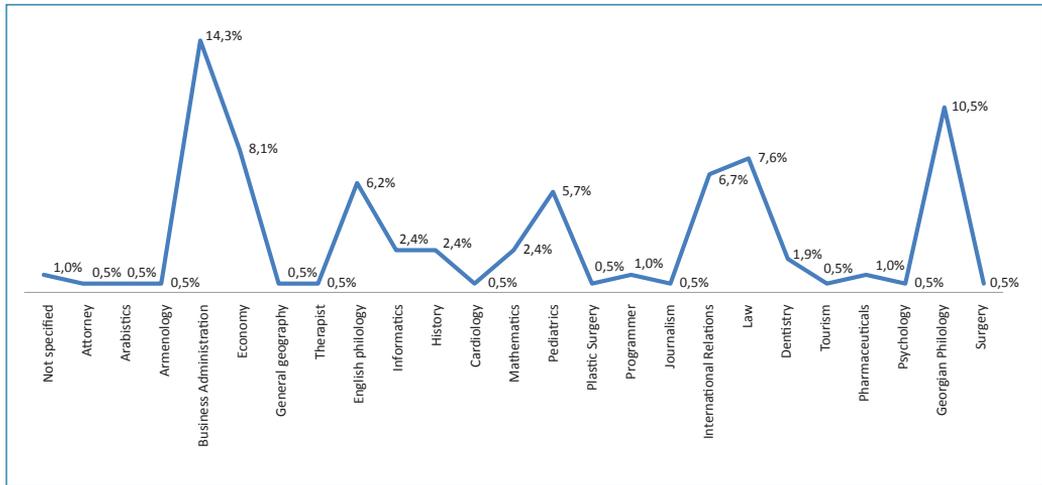
**Diagram 7: The faculties chosen by the students**

It's very clear from the diagram 8 below, that a fairly large percentage of the students, who states that, have a decision on where to continue studying, refrain from stating publicly the name of the faculty (23.8%). However, in the next question when asked about the name of the undergraduate level program, is responded not by the 23.8% as in case of the previous question but by 23.3% of students.

Students' survey results on selection of a faculty or program is in match with the statistics on distribution of undergraduate level program. The survey shows that the large majority of the students want to continue studying on business administration (14,3%), the next desired program is Georgian Philology with (10.5%), the third one is – economics (8.1%); approximately 6-7% of the respondents identify legal studies to be a desired program, 6.7% - International Relations, 6.2% English Philology, 5.7% Pediatrics and 2.4% IT and History. Tourism, Dentistry, Cardiology, Journalism, General Practitioner (therapist), Psychology, Mathematics and General Geography were listed under desired programs.

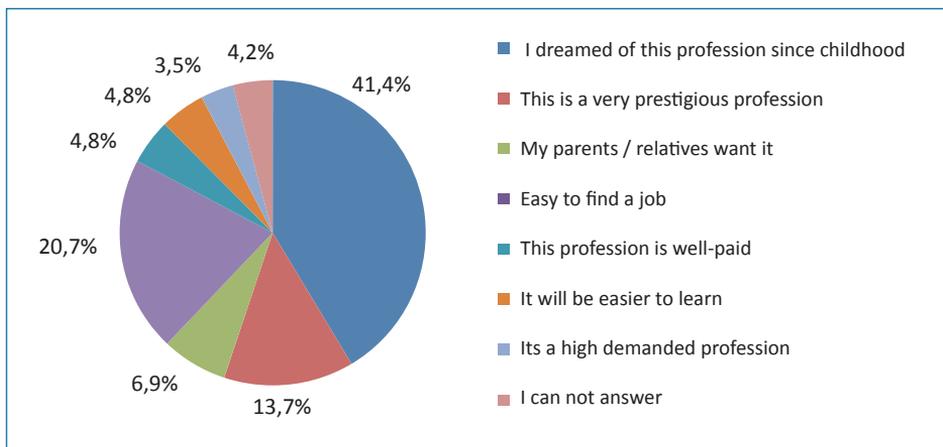
Considering these responses, we can conclude that the seventh among desired professions is a doctor with a different profile even though our research focus was definitely not Tbilisi State Medical University. Correspondingly, we can assume that when making a selection of the Georgian language program, the students were not aware of the existence of the Georgian language program at the Medical University.

**Diagram 8: the bachelor programs chosen by the students**



Students' responses help us to make one more assumption about the awareness and understanding of the students, which made a certain influence on their decision about desired faculty or program. Approximately 23% of the students does not refrain from stating publicly the desired faculty, but with high probability, he is not aware of the faculty that his desired undergraduate level profession. In this case, it's obvious that the problem is not only language limitations or lack of knowledge in general skills, but also lack of information about the faculty and programs under it. Information received from the students about the programs ("Tourism", "Therapistist", "Cardiologist") shows clearly that the students identify programs by desired professions, even though sometimes they can't name not only the key program requirements, but also the faculty.

**Diagram 9: The reasons and arguments for choosing the certain bachelor program:**



To this end, the responses on the question “why have you decided to select this program” also provide interesting information.

The largest majority (38%) respond that, he has been dreaming about this undergraduate level profession since his childhood; for 13%, it’s very important that the selected faculty is prestigious. For 7%, the parents’ and relatives’ decision is very important. It’s also interesting to hear the response about getting a job easily after graduating the program. 4% consider that the profession they selected and study on is highly paid. For the same percentage, it’s very important to study on the selected program with his limited Georgian language skills. 3% state that the selected program prepares them for demanded professions and also not very many students select that same profession. 4% found it difficult to give a response on those questions. 8% selected “other” and specified the reason of the selection.

It’s very natural that almost 40% of the students make a decision on the future profession considering their childhood dreams. However, to a fairly large group (36%), the decision is made based on assumption that the profession is prestigious, highly paid and highly demanded. These hopes mostly do not rely on objective and valid data, but on stereotypes. In reality, very small amount, only 7% analyze that the profession he selects could be highly demanding as there is a low competition over that profession or he makes a decision considering his language capabilities. It’s also very interesting that 7% makes a decision on the future profession considering family opinion and significantly relies on the relatives’ opinion about the desired profession. Let’s also discuss the arguments that the students stated in addition to the provided statements:

I like working in the bank	1
I like history	1
There are taught the subjects I am interested in	1
I know math well and it is a reason	1
I like when I help people	3
I like this profession	3
Because, it’s very important to speak Georgian well	1
There is a scarcity of staff in our village to teach Georgian	1

Additional responses are very interesting as 3 students can’t justify his words (though states that he likes a selected profession). In other cases, students make a very reasonable justification of their choices. They link the selected profession to the favorite course (“I like history”) or the level of knowledge of the course (I know well mathematics). Also, future job opportunities provide a strong argument for the choice (“I like working in the bank”) as well as future credo (“I like when I help people”). Arguments and future plans are directly linked in the following response – “There is a scarcity of staff in our village to teach Georgian”, also the following response deserves some thought – “because, it’s very important to speak Georgian well”, which most likely is the response of the student who selected a Georgian Philology as a future program, but who does not understand that the goal of the Georgian Philology is not learning Georgian language well.

So, the survey results show that ethnic minority students enrolled in the one year Georgian language program, even by the end of the program, do not have enough information as well as justified and analyzed arguments about their choices of undergraduate level program and future profession.

While still studying Georgian language, part of the students had their decisions already made about the future profession and knew exactly on which faculty, in which program he planned to continue studying whereas another part still did not know that. During the language course, the students did not have an opportunity to develop or enhance their knowledge about the undergraduate level programs. Even in the cases when a language program was held in the same building where undergraduate programs were underway, the students did not have a chance to meet undergraduate level professors and administration; could not attend demonstrative lectures and were not aware of syllabuses. In summary, part of the students realized only after commencement of the undergraduate level program that he did not have enough information to plan reasonably and select undergraduate level program. “This program turned out not to be the one in my imagination”. The language professors talk about the same issue. They strongly believe that wrong decisions about the undergraduate level programs by the ethnic minority representatives are mostly linked to the inadequate self-assessment of the course/subject.

– *„They pass exams on the Economic faculty and then find out that they can’t study mathematics, then they move to the humanitarian faculty and they believe that studying will be easier there”.*

On the other hand, one of the program managers talks on unequal conditions that are faced by students enrolled in the Georgian language program as a result of the affirmative action and his Georgian peers. Program managers think that those faculties that are desirable for the ethnic minority students are also very desirable for Georgian entrants; and while ethnic minority representatives select a desired profession by making one circle on the paper, Georgian peers had to make huge efforts to get on the same faculty or program.

Even this example gives a good foundation to discuss issues that lack of information creates both in ethnic minorities and staff involved in the policy implementation. This was obvious even in the opinion that ethnic minority representatives get the spots that they do not deserve and correspondingly the policy that is initiated by the government to integrate ethnic minorities is considered to be a discriminative action against majority. It’s a fact that the staff involved in the program has more experience and observation based information, which enables them to make specific recommendations to improve the program on the one hand and implementation of the affirmative action on the other. Within those recommendations, they think that there should be certain criteria developed and reflected in the admission rule, which will be considered in the process of awarding grants to the ethnic minority students; this will ensure education quality and equal opportunities for all participants. They believe that those entrants who in the examination process know where they plan to study have an opportunity to gain specific, profession oriented knowledge within Georgian language program and correspondingly be more competitive in front of Georgian peers.

For preparation of the students for an undergraduate level program, it’s interesting to prepare them both in terms of a) development of their language capacity, b) their integration into social and students’ life.

The professors involved in the one year Georgian program talk about the carefulness on the side of the students to express own opinion, especially own critical opinion. The face interviews to the professors and program managers showed that it takes a while for the ethnic minority students to express own attitude, opinion and expectations:

- *„They are accustomed from school that somebody takes a lead and notifies them in advance what to say as a pupil is not supposed to make a mistake. To make a mistake is considered to be a crime and the professor must punish him. When this is the background of the student, it's really complicated to expect him to give a comment to the peer. Initially, when they come to the program, the students consider their peers to be a group and the professor to be an enemy. This is the attitude of the students when they join the program, which little by little changes. Later, it becomes feasible for them to stay outside together with the professor and discuss non-university issues“.*

The issues that the professors discuss are well reflected in the questionnaires, where on questions with the simple and straightforward responses, students' respond in an extremely well balanced manner, which obviously does not show the reality. In the focus groups with the graduates of the one year program, where students openly talk about the program and post program issues, also the comments that the students initiated themselves at the end of the interview, as well as the responses expressed through the survey toward approaches of the program, educational resources and professors' teaching methodology gives us a good foundation to conclude that students try not to express their thoughts and opinion openly in questionnaires.

The responses on the questions that targeted at the general assessment of the Georgian language program were distributed as follows:

„Having passed a course in a Georgian language, I have equally well developed my reading, listening, writing and speaking skills“: more than half (51.9%) of the students agree to this statement; however, 16.2% does completely agree. Also, 21.4% agrees partially and 9.5% does not agree with it. There's only 1% who categorically disagrees with the statement. To learn about an adequacy of the students' responses, it's interesting to take a look and analyze the midterm and final exam results. Considering the fact that the exam consists of two parts and considers to complete a test in a section one and take an exam in speaking in a section two, the analyses of the results of the exam enables us to see how well the students analyze own capabilities, how relevant their analysis are and what factors prevent them from developing and expressing own opinion.

The issues of the students' self-assessment should also be noted here, which could be caused from lack of communication opportunities with the Georgian society. The survey results show that environment where students spend an entire year, does not ensure development of the normal relations and integration into the society of the Georgian students. The situation is the same outside of the program in terms of relations with the society:

- *„One of the students walked from Sololaki and wasn't getting on the bus under the excuse that he might be asked of something he could not understand“*

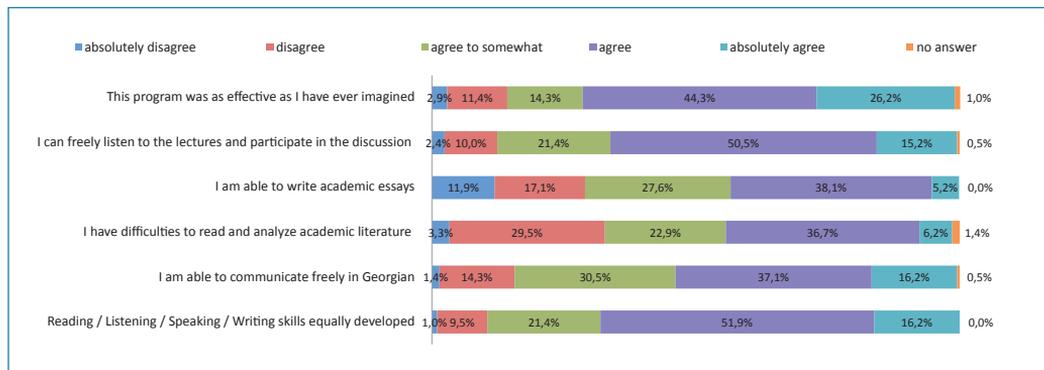
Correspondingly, the only mean to assess language capabilities and to see the progress is to assess his personal progress given the overall progress.

On the statement provided in the Questionnaire **“I have difficulties to read and analyze academic literature after finishing a Georgian language program”**, the large majority responded positively: 36.7% agree to the statement and 6.2% completely agree. 22.9% partially agrees to the statement, 30% does not agree and 1.4% refrains from responding.

As for writing of the academic essay easily after a program graduation, 38.1% have a positive response that they agree, 5.2% completely agrees, 27.6% partially agrees and correspondingly 17.1% and 11.9% either does not agree or absolutely does not agree.

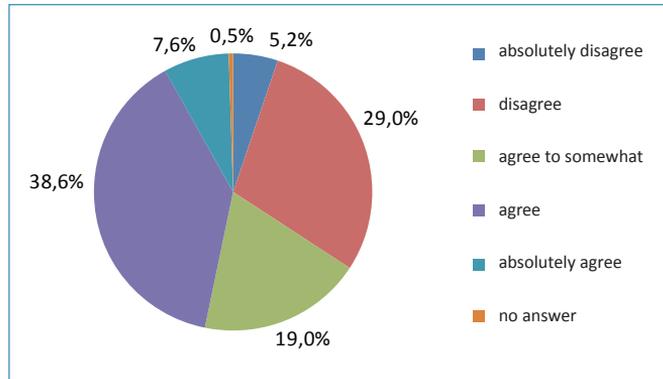
On the statement **„I can freely listen to the lectures in Georgian and can freely participate in the discussion after finishing a Georgian language program”** – the situation is as follows: half of the students (50.5%) agree to this statement and 15.2% absolutely agrees; 21.4% partially agree, 10% does not agree and 2.4% absolutely does not agree.

**Diagram 10: About the effectiveness of the Georgian language program**



On the statement **„This program was as effective as I have ever imagined”** – the students responded: a vast majority – 44.3% agrees and 26.2% absolutely agrees with the statement, thinking that the program was exactly what he expected it to be. However, knowing that students have very brief and in many cases wrong information about the program content and quality as well as the goals and positive results it brings, it’s difficult to get which expectations of the students were met. Still, such a positive assessment gives us a reason to assume that in general students are happy with the program and positively assess the opportunity that the program provides them with.

It’s noteworthy that if the students have been provided with an opportunity to see the programs in another institute, to talk to other students and to attend other lectures, they would have received an opportunity to critically analyze their program strength and weaknesses. In reality, mobility among program participants and sharing their experience would have been an excellent experience not only for the staff involved, but also students to learn how to develop a critical thinking, support with arguments and promote it. Students’ responses are much more open when making a self-assessment about integration with the Georgian society, planning of the extracurricular activities and development of relation within the program.

**Diagram 11: About the extra-curricular activities**

**„We did not use to have very frequently extracurricular activities”** - 38,6% agrees and 7,6% absolutely agrees to this statement, 19% partially agrees with it and for 34% this statement is not correct or is basically wrong. The professors and administration of Javakhsivili State University and Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki universities also talk about the scarcity of extracurricular activities and think that this is a real issue for the program from many perspectives. More precisely, the scarcity of extracurricular activities decreases the number of opportunities for students to socially interact with each other, to get to know each other better, including an opportunity of getting acquainted with the Georgian students from other faculties. Having extracurricular activities would have been a fairly effective mean to decrease the issues, which is identified by professors of all universities and considers an overall low educational level of ethnic minority students and lack of needed studying and research skills among them. Therefore, we can assume that one third of the students who think that the statement above is wrong can't really understand what is meant under extracurricular activities or/and think that it is an unnecessary and less important activity.

A good example for this are the activities implemented by Ilia university students, which on the one hand supports enhancement of students' initiative and motivation and on the other hand helps them to gain new skills and new interaction tools. And also, those activities deepen relations between students and the staff and program managers involved in those activities. One of such activities was a charity event for which students initiated collection of different types of presents to visit socially vulnerable children.

The statement – **“While studying, we did not have an opportunity to interact with Georgians”** – is true for 49,5% and is absolutely true for 11,9 %. 11,4% partially agrees with it. We should assume that this statistics reflects reality. More than 60% thinks that the program did not provide them with such a chance and 1,4% refrains from responding. 34% disagrees or categorically disagrees with the statement. We can assume that students could have filled that gap through personal links and relations and did not feel a real necessity of establishment and deepening of such relations. If we recall, an example of one of the professors, involved in the program (A student was afraid to get on the bus not to be asked a question in Georgian), we can conclude that such feeling of shame or fear was a good argument for some students not to consider lack of promotion of interaction with Georgian peers as a large issue of the program.

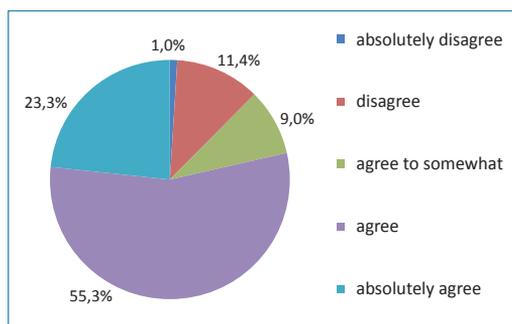
The same indifference is felt from the assessment of the students’ limited opportunities to participate in the university life. Almost half of the students (48.1%) disagree or categorically disagree with this statement. However, 36.7% thinks that this statement is true or very true. In fact, in addition to the program quality, in terms of language, social and academic capabilities, the questionnaire also provides us a good foundation to assume that even by the graduation time, the students are fairly closed for integration and have a feeling of mistrust towards that news that is accompanying university. However, the fact is that, their attitude as well as limited understanding, even within the one year language program, does not develop neither in terms of development of social skills nor in terms of their attitude and awareness.

**“Despite the fact that we studied in one and the same building, in one and the same time, we, the Armenian and Azeri communities did not have any relations with each other”** - 61.9% of the students agrees or absolutely agrees to the statement. 11.9% partially agrees to the statement and 11% refrains from responding, which also has some explanations. We can assume that students who refrain from responding do not consider relations between Armenian and Azeri students either necessary or feasible. And those students who partially or completely agree with the statement try to summarize the facts, which is openly discussed by the students and professors during the focus group discussions and which is a serious issue of the Javakhishvili University program where an excellent opportunity – to develop and analyze ethnic minority relations in terms of civic interaction – is in fact completely ignored without much justification just with some vague reasons.

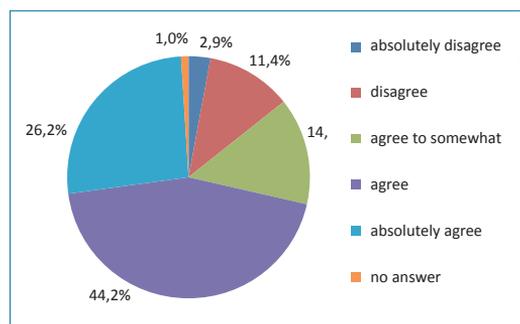
**„I hoped that the program would have proposed activities that enabled us to interact with Georgian students and peers “** – It’s interesting to analyze the responses on that statement by comparing them to the responses on another statement for the overall project assessment - **„This program is as effective as I could ever imagined”** .

While based on the 70% of the students’ responses they either agree or completely agree with the statement about expected and real program, the responses of the 78% of the students reveal that that they expected more activities with Georgian students within the program; 9% only partially agrees with the statement about such an expectation. We can assume that students have not really thought what they wanted to achieve within one year language program, which once more shows a lack of awareness of the program as well as university life and academic

**Diagram 12: Activities with Georgian students**

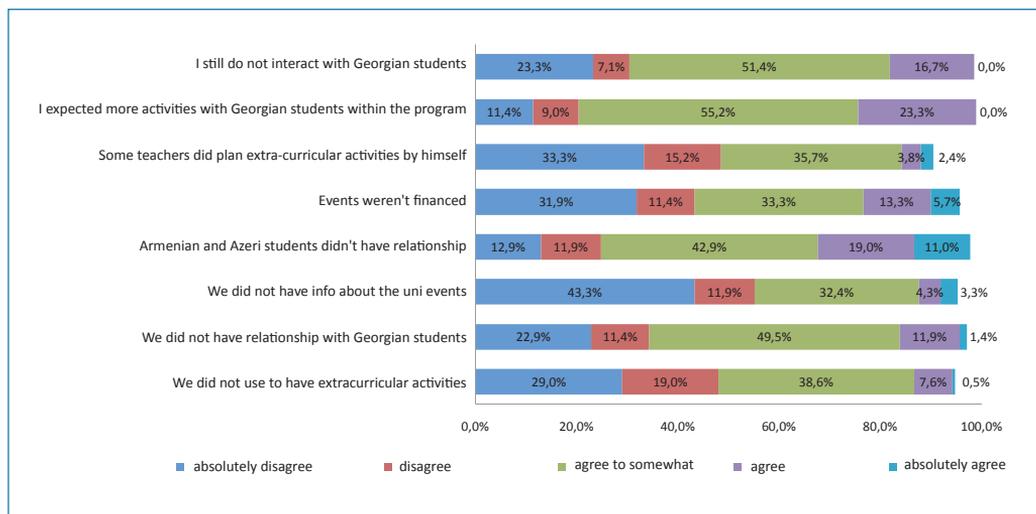


**Diagram 13: Assessment of program effectiveness students**



activities. “The program is almost over and I still do not interact with Georgian students like before when I first started studying – 68.1% agrees or completely agrees with that statement and 7.1% only partially agrees with it. It looks like that when the statement tries to summarize the fact, the students are more inclined to respond openly with due consideration to the facts. However, if the students see some phrases in the statement that are related to the activities of the staff or administration of the program or university, the students become less open.

**Diagram 14: Interaction with Georgian students after the completion of Georgian language program**



The students’ responses in the field at the end of the questionnaire – “do you want to add anything?” – provides important and significant information to assess Georgian language program.

You can read in the comments **“This program taught me nothing”** (student 1). It’s clear that you can’t judge about the program effectiveness on the bases of one student’s comment, however, the comment shows that the program administration pays less attention to those students who knows the language fairly well and whose participation required development of the individual approaches.

**„Some of the professors has insulted us”** – is also a fairly important message, which makes us think that the student has been keeping the offense for a while for the insult of “some” of the professors. Correspondingly, the fact that the student sent this message at the end of the program was intentional as his relation within the program was getting close to the end. However, the student wanted to request an attention to the issues that he had to undergo during the studying process and share it with others.

11 students out of 24 highlighted the importance of promoting an interaction within the program with Georgian students. Also, some of them tried to provide arguments about the positive aspects of that interaction.

One of the students, most likely Azeri student from Javakhishvili State University program makes a following note:

- *„I wanted to interact with Georgians and Armenians to learn Georgian better“.*

The fact that the students were separated from each other has been identified many times; however, the students' comments highlights another, not less important issues within the program, which is – students comments and opinion are not considered by the program administration. Messages that come from the students are very clear and categorical. We should assume that similar thoughts and wishes have been announced before..

- *„I wanted to interact with Georgians and have extracurricular activities“;*
  - *“I wanted to interact with Georgians and extracurricular activities would also have been nice“;*
  - *„It would have been great to interact with Georgian students“;*
    - *„I wanted to interact with Georgian students“;*
- *„Have I had an interaction with Georgian students, I could have learnt the language better“;*
- *„Have I had an interaction with Georgian students, I could have learnt the language better“;*
  - *„We really need interaction with Georgian students“;*
- *„I did not like the fact that I could not interact with the Georgians, it's very bad that we are in separate buildings“;*
  - *„Have I had interaction with Georgians, it would have been much better“.*

Georgian language knowledge and competencies, which creates problems for majority of the students during the studying process, is resolved through individual efforts. Part of the students along with group mates took lessons with the tutor, another part was assisted by the Georgian peers, and still some others applied to the former language professors for assistance. In particular cases, professors also mentioned an assistance center where successful Georgian students helped peers to overcome language and lesson issues (Akhaltzikhe University, which does not function at this point).

It's noteworthy that on the undergraduate level assistance provided by the professors and university to the students enrolled through quoting system is different; however, there are some approaches identified in universities. Tbilisi State University students indicate that part of the professors considers their language competencies:

- *„For example, I could not understand the meaning of a word, terminology like differentiation, which is not daily used, I will apply for an assistance and get an explanation“...*
  - *„Basically, the majority is there to help you. For example, in the second semester we were studying the subject XX, which is fairly difficult for everybody. Our professor was so good that before the exam he helped us with consultations. Even though it was not his obligation and he could have held only one consultation, he did it every day and allocated some time to us on a*

*daily bases; and for those who had to use the second try to pass the exam, he posted on the Facebook: Children, if you need my consultations I will do it again for you“;*

- *„I had very good professors; they always helped me as they knew that I did not speak Georgian well as it was not my native language“.*

Tbilisi State University students talk not only about the individual assistance provided by the professors but also on additional mechanisms that helped them to avoid low scoring as a result of the inadequate language competences and to ensure their grades are given based on the knowledge of the topic, skills and competences:

- *„We had cases when we were given 10 more minutes during the exam even though passing of an exam in economics was due in 50 minutes,“.*

This is a positive experience that has happened at the Tbilisi State University. It would have been excellent if other professors also share that experience. This attitude is very important if we consider the cases that students have identified during the focus group discussions in terms of less supportive actions by the professors.

Ilia University experience in that regard is very interesting. While students' support at Tbilisi State University depends on the individual professor, based on the students' statements there's a systemic approach at Ilia University in that regards and part of the university administration policy is to support students enrolled as a result of the quoting system. More specifically, Ilia University students indicate the following important activities implemented by the professors to support them on the undergraduate level:

- *„University administration informed professors about us and they give us some preferences“.*
- *„They summarize studying material for non-Georgian students and post the summary info on Argus“.*

The students indicate specific actions taken by the professors at Ilia State University that enables them to reveal their skills and knowledge and avoid issues caused from the language limitations:

- *„For example, the professor in mathematics gave me a right to write a test in Russian“;*
- *„If I confuse letters in the exam, it's not considered to be a mistake“;*

### ***Preparation for Student's Life and Facilitation of Social Integration of Ethnic Minority Students***

The students are not integrated in the university life within one year Georgian language program. Ethnic minority students do not have an opportunity to meet and develop relations with Georgians and students of other nationality. The language program is somehow a closed space, which is completely separate from the university life no matter whether it is in the separate or the same building of the university. This type of separation continues even after finishing the language program and commencement of the undergraduate level program. 60.9% of the respondents completely agree or agree to the statement that they had no relations with

Georgians. Only 25, 8% of the respondents state that they had an opportunity to interact with Georgian, which is a significant factor for their future integration in the students' life. It's also important how Armenian and Azeri students interact. Only 15,3% of the respondents state that they interacted with each other. The following table shows well the attitude of the respondents towards social integration and engagement in the students' life:

**Table 24: Non-curricular activities**

Non-curricular activities	Absolutely disagree	disagree	Partly agree.	agree	Fully agree	No answer
We did not use to have very frequently extracurricular activities	5.2%	29.0%	19.0%	38.6%	7.6%	0.5%
We did not have relationship with Georgian students	2.9%	22.9%	11.4%	49.5%	11.9%	1.4%
We weren't shared the information about the events and activities in the university	4.8%	43.3%	11.9%	32.4%	4.3%	3.3%
Despite the fact that we studied in one and the same building, in one and the same time, we, the Armenian and Azeri communities did not have any relations with each other	2.4%	12.9%	11.9%	42.9%	19.0%	11.0%
We wanted to participate in different activities in the university but have no financing within the program.	4.3%	31.9%	11.4%	33.3%	13.3%	5.7%
Some teachers planned different activities independently and took us to different places.	9.5%	33.3%	15.2%	35.7%	3.8%	2.4%
„I hoped that the program would have proposed activities that enabled us to interact with Georgian students and peers	1.0%	11.4%	9.0%	55.2%	23.3%	0.0%
By the time of Georgian language program completion I have no interaction with Georgian students as I used to do so in the beginning of the program.	1.4%	23.3%	7.1%	51.4%	16.7%	0.0%

Tbilisi State University students in the focus group discussions talked about the issues with the Georgian language program in terms of its low competence:

- 
- „No, the reason was not the fact that last year was very easy for us and we were requested very few things to prepare for the class, but when we moved over there we thought that it would not be very difficult from what we used to have; when I moved there, it was not difficult for me to understand what professors were telling, but the material was a lot, plus I was weak in mathematics and this had a very bad impact on my performance. It got very complicated and I had problems to study...”
  - „... Yes, the majority of students I know have language problems;”
  - „... I also know a lot of students who have language problems. For example, I have a classmate, male who passed only one subject from six as he can hardly talk the language“.

The focus group participants also openly talk about the issues to be prepared for studying on the undergraduate level in terms of social and students' integration.

Armenian and Azeri ethnic groups are divided into separate groups. The argument for this type of separation is the threat for the conflict between students on the ethnical ground. The focus group discussions as well as interviews with the students prove that there's no single case of such an accident so far. The students believe that dividing students by their ethnicity is not reasonable as they study together for one year and can hardly get acquainted with each other:

- „We have finished the program and by the end of it I could hardly recognize my Azeri group mates. We studied on the second floor and Azeri's were on the third“;
- „I can't understand why Armenians, Azeri's and we studied separately. We were on the first floor and they were on the second and the third and why??“

Divisions by ethnicity negatively impacts not only integration and interaction skill development, civic consciousness and tolerance establishment among students, but it also is not reasonable in terms of academic perspectives. The students believe that if the groups were mixed, the communication language between two different ethnic groups would have been Georgian; however, in the groups with only one ethnicity representatives, the students communicate in their native language:

- „I think that if there are Armenians and Azerbaijani students in the same group neither can speak his native language but only Georgian“;
- „A common language would have been Georgian“;
- „It would not be nice to whisper in Armenian, right? Correspondingly, we would have talked in Georgian“;

We can discuss the relations between different ethnic groups within Ilia University as a positive exception. The research shows that those Armenian and Azeri students who in the beginning of the program had some fear and aggression towards each other, after some weeks of the commencement of the program improved their relations and in some cases by the end of the program were friends. Such a positive ethnic intragroup integration, in addition to the fact that the students had to be together within the format of the program is a result of the approach of the program professors towards the issue. As the professors explained, from the very first lecture,

they show the reality to the students with different ethnic minorities, which is that in Georgia, Georgians, Armenians and Azeri's, should establish relations based on the understanding that they all have equal rights.

Administration of the University instead of planning and implementing extracurricular activities initiated by the students to improve integration between students and deepen relations between nations, created impediments to make the planned activities effective.

– *„We wanted to play football Armenians against Azeri. We asked for the key at the administration and they did not give us under the excuse that we may have a fight based on the results of the game“.*

For mixed groups implementing extracurricular activities were mostly linked to the activities of the individual professors. Students name some of them, the ones where they went together on the party or see sightseeing. Such activities are not considered within the program and are initiated only by individual professors without getting compensation of the costs incurred and without any support to organize such events.

One of the factors hindering integration process between Georgian and ethnic minority students was identified to be the limited tolerance of the Georgian students towards ethnic minorities. In the cases when professors involved in one year program talk about openness and readiness of the ethnic minority students for integration by the end of the program, they name cold attitude and inferior approach of the Georgian students towards ethnic minorities. The program staff tries to explain such attitude as a result of stereotypes.

– *„He is Armenian, he is Azeri“;*

– *„When Georgians pass by and hear talking in Azeri they loudly ask – Who are these people and what language are they speaking“.*

There were some specific examples of ethnic discrimination and humiliation identified:

– *„An Azeri guy was standing outside and smoking. One of the guests approached him and asked if he had any extra cigarettes. The Azeri guy opened a package and proposed it. The guy took 10 of them, threw down and squeezed it down. It's hard to persuade an Azeri student that this guy would have treated a Georgian student in the same manner“.*

Professors involved in the program also talk on a stereotype, which is common in ethnic minority students before the program starts. This attitude most likely is based on an experience outside of University and on information collected during the school time.

– *„More or less, everybody thinks that Georgian does not like me“.*

It's noteworthy that ethnic minorities reveal that type of attitude publicly at a certain stage of the program commencement, when they feel an absolutely equal attitude from the professors:

– *„Later, they become more and more open step by step“.*

- *„A police has stopped an Azeri student on Paliashvli Street and requested an ID. The police have asked why the student was with mustache in the ID and without it at the moment or the other way around. The Azeri student took that as an intentional insult. We try to explain that the police may treat the same way a Georgian student and ask the same question to him, but the student claims that this has happened to him because he has a different appearance“.*

The research identified that ethnic minorities have particular mistrust towards Georgians at the very first stage of education and they refer to their ethnicity for any problem they face. The research shows that, at the first stage of education, the students involved in the program are extremely sensitive.

- *„They leave the classroom and the groups of Georgians get in. This is normal (he laughs). Here one groups leaves and another comes in. All of them are attending classes. They took this as an insult. Therefore they got very upset, claiming that first we should leave a classroom and then they can get in“.*

Ilia University ethnic minority students also name intolerance of Georgian students towards them as being one of the serious problems. They state that it was important for them to learn many things about a Georgian culture; however, Georgians' knowledge about their culture is very limited, which prevents them to be tolerant towards ethnic minorities.

- *„One of the Georgians told me that the more Muslims he kills the closer to the heaven he gets. When he tells me that, I get very concerned. When I talk to Georgians about that, they laugh at me...“*
- *“I am going nuts when they call me Tatar”... .*

Ilia University ethnic minority students also indicate on the facts when they are not acknowledged to be a citizen of Georgia with equal rights and responsibilities and they usually face such issues both at the university and outside of it, in a real life.

- *„They talked about Georgian legislation. “You should not be interested in that, you are Armenian“;*
- *„He is very handsome; it's very bad that he is Azeri, I thought that he was Georgian“;*
- *I have heard in the streets, wow there are a lot of Armenians and Azeri“;*
- *“What are these Armenians and Azeri? They do not state who they are but what they are“.*

It's also interesting to hear about an approach that ethnic minority student develops to explain the replica of the majority targeted at no discrimination of ethnic minorities but rather an action targeted at maintenance of the personal identity and culture:

- *„We should not misinterpret sometimes such statements. If a Georgian says that we are speaking a different language and he finds it hard to develop relations with me, there's nothing wrong with that. If we are with our friends, we may also say that he is a very handsome guy, but he has a different religion“.*

Besides the fact that the student tries to understand difficulties inherent to living with the people of different origin and culture, it's interesting that the example he brings shows limited tolerance to diversity (he wants to be less concerned and tensed because of not understanding language), and the second student in his response tries to set a line between interdependence of different cultures, however, he does not completely reject it.

It's also noteworthy that limited tolerance of Georgian students towards ethnic minorities is explained by the limited understanding.

– *„They even do not know that there are such an amount of ethnic minorities living in Georgia and ethnic minorities will definitely hear in the corridors the comments like who are these people, what language they speak“.*

In addition to this, there's a direct link between tolerant attitude and level of respect to the difference on the side of Georgian students and their level of general awareness of ethnic minorities.

– *„We have students, studying Georgian as a second language and also Levan Sakhanyan who provides a course on “ethnic minority rights“. They are completely different“.*

In fact, when we talk about positive aspects of a specific program, a concept of an integrated program, which considers development of civic understanding of ethnic minority representatives and promotion of their integration on the side of professors, should be separately identified.

– *„We implement various activities targeted at making ethnic minorities forget the stereotype, to make sure that they have a feeling of being a citizen of Georgia with full and equal rights and responsibilities; we try to focus and make them believe that they are Georgian Armenians and Georgian Azeri; that nobody wants to make them Georgian and nobody wants to assimilate them with Georgians. We try to highlight that this is wrong and they need to keep their identity“.*

The survey has also showed that program staff does not have any idea about the life that graduates lead once they join an undergraduate level program. They think that ethnic minority students are completely integrated in the studying environment and can also easily integrate with Georgians. The focus groups with students, however, showed something else, more specifically the fact that ethnic minority students maintain friendly relations only with each other even on the undergraduate level and have less communication with Georgian students.

The research showed that there's no single academic or social support center for ethnic minority students either on the faculty or university level in any university. There was a similar center in Akhaltsikhe University, but it does not function any longer. Students and professors provided assistance to the ethnic minority students in need of academic assistance in Akhaltsikhe center. They like all of the freshmen had a right to participate in information meetings that was preplanned only for freshmen. It's noteworthy that students around all universities highlighted the high importance of pre-orientation session during the first year of their studies but none of them had a chance to attend it.

## CHAPTER 6

# EVALUATION OF ONE YEAR GEORGIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN TERMS OF PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING IT, ITS INFRASTRUCTURE, TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

At this point, the students enrolled based on the “affirmative action policy” study in 31 universities. The University programs got accreditation by the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement and the universities implement the programs based on that accreditation. There’s also a cooperation practice between universities in place; this happens when the university does not have an accredited program and students have to attend one year program classes in another university based on a memorandum signed between universities (e.g. The Academy of Art students attend the program at the Tbilisi State University). Each university has its own individual curriculum, which ensures teaching Georgian language skills to ethnic minority students that would enable them to continue studying on the next level. Each program consists of 60 credit hours following the Law on Higher Education.

It’s noteworthy that the majority of university programs is identical and is based on common vision and concept. More specifically, Tbilisi state University, Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University, Akhalkalaki College, Georgian Technical University, Medical University, Gori, Telavi, Kutaisi and Batumi State Universities Georgian language programs consist of the following courses:

Table 25: List of the courses of Georgian language program at the Tbilisi State University

Faculty courses / modules											
Program compulsory Courses - 60 Credits (ECTS)											
Code	Program course	Number of credits ECTS	Students' contact hours within the semester		Preparation for the practicum	Preparation for interim examination	Preparation for final examination	Passing the interim/final examination		Semester	
			Lecture	Working group/ practicum				Fall	Summer		
1	Verbal functions of Georgian language (a. speaking; b. listening; c. reading; d. writing) – 1	20		240	200	24	27	9	✓		
2	Verbal functions of Georgian language (a. speaking; b. listening; c. reading; d. writing) – 2	15		180	150	17	21	7			✓
3	Practical course of Georgian grammar - 1	5		45	60	8	9	3	✓		✓
4	Practical course of Georgian grammar - 2	5		45	60	8	9	3	✓		✓
5	Communicative aspects of Georgian language	5		45	60	8	9	3	✓		✓
6	Communicative aspects of Georgian language	5		45	60	8	9	3	✓		✓
7	Georgian spelling and orthography	5		60	45	8	9	3			✓

The program goals and objectives and targeted results are identical. The program managers identify provision of enough knowledge to the students to continue studying on the undergraduate level as a targeted goal. In fact, students' integration and socialization factor which is a prerequisite for the success at the university level is skipped from the program vision even though the program managers talk about the changes that they make based on their experience and adjust curriculum to the students' individual needs. In fact such changes does not consider equipment of the students with such skills and knowledge which he will need in addition to the language skills to continue studying on the undergraduate level and which itself will promote further improvement of the language skills. Program managers consider such changes only in terms of provision of students with effective skills to study a language and they consider those changes as the most important element compared to all other developments that can possibly be achieved within the program.

– „There was a big discussion over that issue: Should we include a little bit of Georgian history or a little bit of that, but the language element was very important and the program success is measured by outputs“.

A one year program at Ilia University is a bit different from that perspective, where you can find the following list of courses:

**Table 26: List of the courses of Georgian language program at the Ilia University**

№	Courses	status Compulsory/ selective	Credits	Contact hours	Semesters	
					Fall	Spring
<b>GSL_101</b>	Integrated course of Georgian 1 (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	12	180	X	
<b>GSL-102</b>	Integrated course of Georgian 2 (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	12	180		X
<b>GSL-103</b>	Language and cross-cultural dialogue (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	6	32	X	
<b>GSL-104</b>	Media course 1 (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	6	32	X	
<b>GSL-105</b>	Media course 2 (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	6	32		X
<b>GSL-106</b>	Mini-projects 1 (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	6	32	X	

<b>GSL-111</b>	Mini-projects 2 (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	6	32		X
<b>GSL-107</b>	Branch language course (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	3	32		X
<b>GSL-108</b>	Pre-examination course (Georgian as a second language)	<b>compulsory</b>	3	32		X
<b>GSL-INTRO-GEN-112</b>	Basic computer course for non-Georgian students	<b>compulsory</b>	3	32	X	
<b>GSL-INTRO-GEN-113</b>	Informational literacy for non-Georgian students	<b>compulsory</b>	3	32		X
<b>GSL-109</b>	Functional Writings	Selective	3	32	X	
<b>GSL-110</b>	Grammar of Georgian language (Practical course)	Selective	3	32		X
INTRO-COM-GEN-101	Academic writing	Selective	6	32	X	
INTRO-COM-GEN-102	Techniques for communication, presentation and discussions	Selection	6	32		X
INTRO-HUM-EL-105	Caucasian languages and their role within the world languages	Selection	3	32	X	
INTRO-HUM-EL-106	Woman and her role in Caucasian reality and folklore	Selection	3	32		X
HUM-KART-EL-114	Introduction to Caucasiology	Selection	6	32	X	
HUM-ORS/HIST-EL-102	Islam	Selection	6	32	X	
HUM-LIT-EL-107	Literature masterpieces in 20 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>th</sup> centuries	Selection	6	32	X	
HUM-HIST-KART-EL-124	History and culture of North Caucasian people	Selection	6	32		X
HUM-ORS/HIST-EL-101	Political processes in the Near East	Selection	6	32		X

As it becomes clear, the programs throughout all universities are focusing on the language skill development and consist of courses aiming at development of writing, reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary and grammar competences and skills. Ilia university curriculum concept and methodology incorporates an integrated studying of the language and content. Correspondingly, the program does not only consider those subjects that aim at the development of the language skills, but also focuses on the development of different civic and practical skills and incorporates studying of language through different subjects. The philosophy of Ilia university one year program is very clear even in the name of the program, which is “Georgian as a second language and integration program”. In the Ilia university curriculum, you can find the following subjects: media course, mini project course, basic course on IT skills, communication, presentation and discussion tools, informational literacy, language and intercultural dialogue, Caucasus languages and their place among the world languages; a woman and her role in the Caucasus reality and folk narratives; Introductory to Caucasus, Islam, the XX-XXI century masterpieces in literature, political processes in modern Middle East; the history and culture of north Caucasus people.

The Tbilisi State University focus group participants talk only about the language course issues and a negligence of other integration subjects by the university. This problem is more urgent for those students who had a fairly good knowledge before joining the one year language program:

- *„I may be saying something wrong, but I have lost this year. It’s very difficult when you study for 12 years, then you come here and study nothing and then you go to the state University and you know nothing. It’s very difficult. Therefore, I really regret that I had to lose a year”...*
- *„I can’t say the here, the sessions were normally held, like seminars at school”...*
- *„We did not have a lecture here. I saw a lecture at the State University”...*

It’s also noteworthy that the program was not modified or updated neither based on the experience received in the 2010-2013 programs nor on existing issues or successes. There’s a different picture at Ilia University, which made the following important changes in 2010 program based on the experience received:

- The program curriculum became more sophisticated and a mini project course was added in the second semester.
- The program name was changed and became: “Georgian as a second language and integration program”.
- Within the course the following changes were made: medial educational environment - students go to different organizations, take interviews and collect information that helps them to develop social, communication skills gain a practical experience in terms of language use. For this reason, the students went to different medical clinics on health topic, to the theatre, cinema and university music center on entertainment topic; they met with people of different profession on the topic of profession, took interviews: at beauty salons, from bus drivers, at Mtatsminda park; they also went to different food places on the topic of food.

The prepared programs are loaded in the Moodle platform and each project is then discussed and assessed.

- The software runs on Moodle online portal, where new material is uploaded all the time. Students are also assigned to upload new tasks and projects, which helps them to learn how to use an online space.
- New materials are being created for the program. More specifically, with financial support of Rustaveli Foundation the old and modern Georgian language online portal is being developed, which aims to develop an online portal to study a Georgian language.
- In addition, an additional video has been created with the support of the university to train the students in the Georgian language. Ilia university students participated in filming of the video footage.
- An authentic material has been constantly created within the program that has a positive impact on studying a Georgian language.
- The university library fund has also been enriched. The reader preparation procedure has improved and a special form to complete information about the reader has been created.
- A new system to evaluate educational programs was established in the “Argus” software, an university electronic system, which enables the user to make an online assessment of any educational course at the end of each semester as well as a professor of the program and administrative activities implemented within that program (instead of completing hardcopies of the questionnaire)

It's also noteworthy that changes implemented by the Ilia University are acknowledged by the students to be a positive action. Ilia University focus group participants identified introduction of mini project course, which was established as a result of changes implemented within the university, as one of the most positive approach.

- - „New Methods“;
- - „The focus is on the practical work“;
- - „We listen to the video recordings“;
- - “We are sent to get an interview“;
- - „We have mini projects once per week“;
- - „We get interviews, we got one at the Ethnographical Museum“;
- - „We were at the football Federation for an interview (topic was sport)“;
- - „We have heard about Rafting“;
- - „We went to the Tennis Federation“.
- - „We plan those interviews with the assistance of the professors and tutors. We have tutors helping us. Each group has one tutor; and the tutors themselves are students“;
- - „These activities help a lot. We learn a lot of things. We learn a lot of places and Georgian also learn about us“;

Ilia University students note that mini projects and tasks that were assigned to them within the program were a very important tool to integrate them into Georgian society:

- „I have met Georgian through these interviews“...
- „We have heard about Trinity“...
- „...also about a Georgian culture“...

There were certain changes also in Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University and Akhalkalaki College within the program. More specifically, the program managers state:

- *„Yes, we have made some changes. Starting from the second semester, we introduced a spelling course. Each following year helped us to determine the small changes that were reasonable to introduce. We made a decision to continue a communication grammar also in the second semester, as the students do not study a systematic grammar course and it’s also not necessary for them to learn one; therefore a communication grammar course turned out to be very important for them. The students find it very hard to understand the lecture through listening and they requested to continue the course in the second semester. Therefore, we introduced a course, continued teaching it in the second semester and we called the subject “special course”. The course considered: providing the students having different major selected with different adapted texts and then work on those texts. We could not provide the students with such text under “reading strategy” as it was difficult for them to work on such texts in the first semester“.*

The changes that were made in Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University and Akhalkalaki College are mostly related to the language program as other changes were hardly implemented within the program. In the case of a University or a College, it’s even more complicated as there’s one more issue of coordination of consistency. Since Akhalkalaki college does not formally have a status of independent institute and it is the part of Akhaltsikhe University (currently, Samtskhe-Javakheti University), the program manager believes that a Georgian language program should be unified not only to the curriculum but also to the teaching approaches and methodology.

- *„Once Javakheti University got merged with us, we faced that necessity; we do not want to work with two different polarized programs in one university“.*

In this case, the issue of consistency between educational environment and curriculum arises in terms of making a goal for the managers and instructors to unify programs.

The survey results show that the instructors involved in the program make a very positive assessment of the program and in general of an affirmative action as in addition to the improvement of language competences, it also considers promotion of ethnic minority integration.

- *„I think that, this is one of the very serious steps in favor of the state policy. This is the population that did not recognize Georgian Lari a few years ago and today, these children, come without any aggression to study. This is very correct and serious step in terms of State functioning“.*

When talking about the efficiency of the state policy and defining of privileges for the students, part of the program managers consider keeping of the balance in the process of granting privileges to the ethnic minority students, being a big challenge. There was an opinion expressed that when funding on the highest level is an issue and is also very limited, the conditions providing ethnic minority students with studying opportunities should be well defined to avoid inefficiency of spending money.

- *„A privilege does not mean to grant an unlimited right, I do not want to violate moderateness“*

The program manager considers an additional simplification of mechanisms to get a grant to be violations of moderateness, which will definitely, have an impact on the quality of education.

In addition to the general evaluation of an affirmative action and identification of its key positive aspects, the research results show that there is a set of challenges that are getting clear even during planning stage of the Georgian language program.

### **1. Administration of the One Year Language Program**

The research showed that there are a set of issues in Tbilisi State University, where the number of ethnic minority students is the highest (53% of overall enrolled ethnic minority students study at Tbilisi State University), in terms of program administration.

In terms of administration, there was a very serious problem identified also during the students' registration at Bachelor programs. The data, which was based on the test results and lists, were not timely provided to the university administration and the freshmen were not registered in any university to undergo compulsory procedures to start the first year of their studying. They also could not select a desired professor or courses. In Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University, in the summer, the students who had a one year Georgian language program finished, but had not still been registered as a student in any of the bachelor's level database, could not get a certificate from the university administration to prove to the Military Commissariat that he was already enrolled at the university.

The fact that there is not strategy to support development of communication and cooperation among professors involved in the program should also be considered as an academic-administrative issue. Even in the cases when the instructors express their readiness to share experience and material developed in the studying process, their initiatives are absolutely not supported. For example, within one of the programs, some professors have a strong desire to have an electronic space where they can post material and resources that they developed and used while working with the students. Such a request has also been stated many times at the administration of the university, but it has never had any follow-ups. The professors also talk about a need of regular meetings among professionals to have an opportunity to share experience, discuss successful methods and cases. Such meetings have not been organized in any of the researched universities.

- *„As for the materials, each teacher tries and gets ready for each lecture; he searches, finds and brings something. And then, the teachers do not exchange with the material except textbooks. It would have been great... Tata and I had an idea to look for material and post it together somewhere in a certain internet space to make it available for everybody“.*

– *„I prepare a text for each lecture,...let’s say reading professors and writing professors together exchange with these texts at least once per month and talk to each other about what has worked and what has not... provide recommendations on what to complicate a bit and then share with the colleagues what has really worked well. This is not only mine and my goal is to support the program, isn’t?...“*

The Samtskhe-Javakheti State Teaching University manager also talks about a lack of cooperation and accompanying problems:

– *„When we started the program, we got together once in every two weeks and shared what had happened; we were all very much enthusiastic to talk about our achievements... but then little by little we got separated, the enthusiasm was also gone somewhere. To be very honest: in the end who was teaching what was a bit confusing and we thought that it was time we tried to save this program or Akhalkalaki would run away from us. Here, we ourselves would go away; therefore, a decision was made to schedule meetings. We invited Ms. Natela and assigned her those two programs in terms of material and methodology. Because of the nature of the problem, we decided to have a contracted teacher to coordinate the program“.*

It’s noteworthy that the materials prepared for the program not only require an update but in some cases it’s completely useless for the next stream of students:

– *„Some material is useless as we have now the students with different background and knowledge“.*

In fact, each new group of students have a better knowledge of language according to the program managers and professors, which gives a signal about a necessity to develop new components, methods and new focuses; however, you can hardly notice the readiness of universities to make such changes.

Also a scarcity of simple, low cost stationary is another problem for the instructors, which prevents them from using more effective and interactive methods with the students:

– *„I am tired of putting A4 format papers on one another as I do not have a flipchart. I am ashamed to disturb every time XX to print out a document“.*

In terms of infrastructure, Tbilisi State University professors also identify issues, which create barriers to hold a lecture using modern methods:

– *„I want to add one more thing about an environment: the environment is not really what it should be. When we touched the issue of motivation... you saw yourself the classrooms. Of course for post-soviet space, it’s a very nice environment; however, if I want to have group works during the lecture, the desk is stretched from one wall to another, so when I say to the students turn around they get confused how.. I mean the environment is not really suitable for teaching using modern methods“...*

In addition, Tbilisi State University professors talk about administrative and bureaucracy issues. They can initiate and organize extracurricular activities for the students on their personal expense; however, the program does not consider financial resources for similar activities and therefore, you can’t implement them even you have a great desire:

– „... And excursions... I have been fighting for the whole year to take students on an excursion. In the end, I found that it was not under the competence of the administration but of the self-governance body. But the self-governance body refused claiming they can't do it now.. In the end, I could not take students on an excursion”.

However, we also have many positive examples and experiences in terms of program administration, which on the one hand focus on an individual approach toward the students and on the other aim to integrate the program into the unified university space in order to see it as a part of that unity.

Following Ilia University program, **internal program mechanisms** of program administration is different and is based on overall coordination of all activities of all the staff involved in the program as well as sharing of common vision on program implementation and achievements.

The teachers involved in the program constantly share teaching methods, cases and experience with each other. The most efficient way of sharing info is considered to be an e-portal, where each professor leaves a comment at the end of each lecture about an individual case or provides a general opinion over the issues.

In addition, the material is also exchanged through e-platform where all newly elaborated material as well as changes made as a result of testing the pilot material is posted and available for any interested person.

The strategy of **external administration of the program** is also very effective, which considers coordination with the dean of each faculty at the University not only when the students finish the program and need to be assigned to different facilities by major but also from the very beginning of the program. As a result of the effective administration, at the end of the program, development of the individual curriculum, for the student enrolled in the first year of the undergraduate level study, becomes feasible. Following that plan, those students who reach B2 level of the Georgian language knowledge are free from a necessity of studying a Georgian language on the undergraduate level and make a free selection of the courses within their free credit hours. In addition, as a result of coordination with the language program, individual curriculum development becomes feasible also for the ethnic minority students on the first year of their undergraduate level studies, and ethnic minority students can reschedule subjects that are compulsory course for the undergraduate studies

Those students, who finish a one year program with the lower than B2 level of the language knowledge, continue studying a Georgian language at the Center within selective credit hours, which is also coordinated with the language program staff. In the cases when the bachelors' level program does not consider selective credit hours, the English language course that is compulsory for the students is replaced by the Georgian language, as the secondary language and English language studying is then reschedule to the third semester.

## Program Planning and Implementation

As mentioned earlier, one year program curriculum in each institute is unified and is common for all students. Correspondingly, such a unified program requires different efforts from students with different language competencies to ensure that their academic achievements are sufficient to enable them to study on the undergraduate level.

The research showed that curriculum is not equally effective to all students because of their different competences in the language. Correspondingly in some cases, objectives of the language program facing students with different language competences either exceed or do not meet their expectations. There are several reasons for this issue, including:

### (a) The grouping criteria

The grouping criteria from the very beginning of the program are inefficient both in the Tbilisi State University as well as Samtskhe-Javakheti State Teaching University. The students are enrolled into the groups based on the test results and interview. However, that type of testing is not enough to identify language competences of the student. The students name the specific examples when one of the students does not complete the test just only because he wants to be with the friend in the same group. The students also named other examples through FGD meetings:

– „I wanted to say that we had to take a test initially to divide into groups. Some of the students cheated during the exam, which was bad for their own sake, some others did not write well intentionally as he wanted to be with the friend in the same group“.

The professors also talk about an inefficiency of grouping students and they confess that in some cases there's a big difference between language competences of the students enrolled in the same group. This is an issue for the program as following the program plan, there should be “strong” and “weak” groups created and working in those groups should begin with due consideration to the baseline.

– „ This is not differentiated well and this is a real problem. All of the practioners at the university face that issue and this is very tangible and obvious. We also try in the beginning of the year to identify weak and medium students, but in each group there still is some discrepancy in terms of language competences of the students“.

Such groups continue existence in the second semester as well. Correspondingly, the students have no interest to be involved in the inter-program mobility and make changes in grouping by personal performance and achievement. Such grouping immediately creates “cliché”, i.e. the status that certain students are in a “strong” or “weak” group. As a result, professors and students expectation on their performance is consistent with the particularity of the group. .

Still, there is a minor but an important detail that makes a grouping system at Ilia University different from other universities. Following the pretest results, the students are grouped into orientation groups; then they are regrouped couple of times for the first two week until the most efficient grouping is not achieved. In this case, the students know in which group they are enrolled – strong or weak group. However, the program staff teaches the students in the

process to the tools the students need to use to get into the most comfortable group for them instead of getting into groups because of the friend and relative. In this program, students are not differentiated by ethnicity.

### **(b) Program Content**

The research showed that the program content is completely focused on the development of the students' language competences; however, equipment of the student with other necessary competences and knowledge isn't also the goal of the secondary significance. As mentioned earlier, the exception is Ilia University program, which is an integrated program and incorporates computer courses aiming at improvement of students' language skills; however, the computer cause also positively impacts on the development of the technological skills of the student. More specifically, through computer courses students can use e-platform to post their homework; however, students are also supposed to submit their homework as a hardcopy as well as a project and video files. Computer courses are also graded as part of the overall grade. In most cases, the language course does not consider the students' academic interests. It's very chaotic and is not systematic at all. The students think that the topics that are taught during the program do not absolutely help with the development of the academic and critical thinking:

- *„We are taught such texts, which are very easy. “My village”, my family”, “ostrich”. This is neither interesting nor useful in terms of academic development“.*

Ilia University program thematic is not also directly focusing on the development of academic language competences. It follows thematic („Can do“) identified on the bases of the European language knowledge framework and aims at development of the language communication skills. The teaching methodology and approach at the university plans to prepare a student for the undergraduate level through researches, theory and practical work, reflection, personal opinion statement and etc.

Students can't learn program related specific terminology within the language program, which creates issues for them to learn on the undergraduate level. In some cases (Akhalsikhe university, Akhalkalaki College, Ilia University), students are proposed to learn field specific terminology within certain hours of the language program, which is called a “special course” or “field language course”. Such courses are planned from the second semester; however, the course is not differentiated and all students are provided with various field terminologies at the same time despite the student's choice of the undergraduate level program. Therefore, the duration of such a course is not enough to learn the needed terminology and it is also not adjusted to the specific needs of the students. **A language program** format is also not focused on development of the student's academic work skills.

- *„This program was good in terms of studying a language. Those who had a desire and who worked hard could make a certain achievement in terms of language knowledge within the program; but I believe, it would have been much better if children were asked in the beginning which profession they plan to choose on the undergraduate level and focus on the development of the student in that direction. For example if a student wants to become an economist, students should be provided with such literature that is related to economics to make sure that he does not have a problem when he starts studying on the first year. I am telling this as*

*students used to study well and they spoke Georgian, but now they have difficulties in terms of terminology.*

In addition to the terminology difficulties, students also reveal academic unreadiness for the university and highlight issues they face in terms of scarcity of other basic skills in addition to the language competencies. And even language program could have been closer to the undergraduate level study process according to them.

- *„When I got on the first level of the undergraduate study, I have realized what the lecture is. This was definitely not lessons“;*
- *„i.e. we were very much spoilt during this one year, then we get there and we face huge issues“.*

Tbilisi State University students think that they are “spoilt”, “made lazy” within the program and instead of them getting prepared for the undergraduate level program, their mobilization is further deteriorate. Tbilisi state University professors also share the “make lazy” tendency. The professors participating in the focus group state:

- *„The “make lazy” tendency is very obvious. In previous years, they independently worked and this year I have a feeling that they think they can overcome the barrier and get enrolled anyway and that’s the reason they are not studying... This year, laziness was very obvious, I have not had such...“;*
- *„Based on the previous years, they know that they could be given several other chances to pass an exam as it has happened before once, the second and the third time and then everybody could pass it. Once they know that this will not happen again, their motivation will go up as well as their independence and everything else“...*

There was some other interesting opinion on the program content expressed in the students’ survey. More specifically, the survey identified comments that had been made by the students on program content, methodological and pedagogical characteristics. That information is very useful not only to plan, implement and monitor the program, but also to improve an affirmative action. The following are the comments on program content, methodological and pedagogical characteristics:

- *„Had the book been translated into Azeri, it would have been great“;*
- *„More attention should be paid to the written homework“;*
- *„More lessons on listening and speaking“;*
- *„We need more colloquial Georgian and had we studied more of it, it would have been great“;*
- *„The program quality is desirable to improve“;*
- *I wanted to get trained in legal terminology in the second semester, but only one professor trained us in legal, economic and scientific terms“;*

- *I want professors to be more demanding in the future”.*

One more comment from the survey is also noteworthy: “I want to know all about bilingual studying”. The fact that the student writes about his/her desire in the present tense makes us think that he/she got that desire not long ago. If we also consider the fact that students have completed the questionnaire by the time they were choosing an undergraduate level program, we can think that the student does not have information on where he can get details about desired program or studying methodology and thinks that it’s more reasonable to reflect his/her desire in the survey than to get clarifications on that from professors involved in the program or administration.

The broader comments, which relate to the policy planning has the following format:

- *„I have a desire to study one more year in this program and I wish more courses were available, e.g. Mathematics, English”;*
- *„Had the duration of the program been for 2 years, it would have been fantastic“.*
- *In the end, two students expressed their approval and gratitude toward the program:*
  - *„It’s a very good program and helped me a lot to study Georgian“;*
  - *„I speak better Georgian after this program“.*

This environment indisputably indicates a positive impact that the program has on students’ language as well as general social approach.

Iliia University staff talks about a lack of such basic skills among students in the beginning of the program, as for example relevant approach towards mistakes, ability to work independently (instead of copying directly from any source), ability to express his/her opinion in two words and etc. At the same time, they indicate that the program works towards development of such skills and even after a few weeks the positive results are already obvious.

### **(c) Duration of Language Program**

The research shows that duration of the program is not enough for all students to develop language competencies and start studying on an undergraduate level. In addition, the program often is useless for those students who have a fairly good knowledge of the state language and in fact spending time on one year program is waste of time and money for them. In addition, the contact hours distributed by the credit hours within the program are not usually enough for some students. Correspondingly, the program needs to be more flexible and it needs to be adjusted to the students’ needs; therefore keeping a balance between contacting and independent work hours and their interrelation is very important.

- *„You know, there’s a problem, even in the second half of the year the so called strong groups and weak groups have the same problems to solve the exam. One of the teachers (Sh. T.) states: what can I do, these students speak Georgian and I do not know what problem I should give it on the exam while there’s another group I have a huge problem to make it speaking and say at least one complete sentence“.*

The decision of the Ilia University administration to fund additional contact hours (6 hours) for those students who have the most severe language issues and have a really small chance to continue studying on an undergraduate level, could be considered as a positive experience. In reality, the program that is based on European framework principles and has identified 70 contact hours on the A1 and A2 levels, gets flexible in specific cases and increases the number of contact hours without changing an overall format of the program. Ilia University, like any other university provides a chance to all students to start a bachelor's program; however, the reality shows that part of the students, who after graduation of the Georgian language course (as mentioned above, students who's knowledge of the language = or > B2, an additional course is provided within the bachelor's program, which also should be considered as an effective mechanism of the program that is tailored down to the individual student's needs) within free credit hours can't improve his/her academic achievements has to leave the program.

This problem is obviously acknowledged by the Samtskhe-Javakheti State Teaching University manager and he talks about it openly. He believes that the biggest issue within the program is program separation from the undergraduate level. He strongly believes that Georgian language should definitely be included in the undergraduate level program at least on its first year as one year is usually not enough for the majority of the students to develop communication skills and gain academic knowledge of the language.

#### **(d) Assessment System**

The key mechanism for grading of the program, which really works, is grading of individual courses and accumulating of 60 credits. Each course is graded through the midterm and final exams, which consists of writing and speaking parts. Despite students' attendance being one of the parts of the grading mechanisms, the research shows that this mechanism is ignored and professors give a passing grade to all students despite the intensity of his/her attendance.

- *„We spoilt them. We threatened them to give zero at the end of the year as we have not seen them, however, in the end we always were generous“.*

The instructors also talk about a tendency to loyal approach at the last exam. Correspondingly, ethnic minority students are sure that in the end they will anyway collect enough scores.

- *„They know that they can pass at least on the second or a following try“.*

On the other hand, professors talk about an efficiency of grading system in Akhaltsikhe within the program. The fact that the program grading system is built on university principles and is universal for the program students and undergraduate level studies, makes the students within the program accustomed to it.

Ilia University teachers' survey shows that the attitude towards students is very different. There are students who were given a warning in the first semester that they would not be able to continue studying on an undergraduate level and moving them to the second semester was considered as giving them a chance. During all three years, there were some graduates from the program who continued studying on an undergraduate level under some conditions. Following these conditions, part of the students had to leave universities.

The validity of the quizzes also gets under a question. The focus group interview showed that in one case the midterm and final quiz problems were the same. Also, there was another problem in the quiz that students have tackled at the lecture.

– *„There was one and the same problems when I first had the exam and then at the university. I had it for the midterm then at the final exam... So, I had the same problem in the first semester, then during the midterm in the second semester. I thought that I had no chances to have that same problem at the final exam and I did not study, but I had it again.*

The key problem of the program assessment system is in its universality. Both, the students and professors state that one year of studying is not enough for all students to get needed knowledge of the language. Therefore the universal assessment system is not efficient. Professors' talk about a need of introducing an assessment system by levels of language knowledge, which will clarify the competences needed by each level and correspondingly students will have to take exams by these levels.

– *„Probably this should also be considered during exams. A, B and C category certificates are very good and they are acknowledged everywhere; so it would be easier for students as well as universities if the students can submit the certificates with different A, B and C categories to the universities during examination“.*

Differentiation by categories is considered to be a good mean to evaluate the student's progress. In fact, such testing system enables a student to move up from a low competence category to the higher one step by step and reveal his/her knowledge in an effective manner. However, the survey showed that in spite of the fact that all university programs everywhere define the level of knowledge of the language based on the European framework categories and Georgian language knowledge categories, there is not a tool of assessing these categories and even when the student accumulates enough credits and passes an exam it turns out that his/her language competence does not meet the competences identified by the program.

– *„He is working, does his/her homework, we make presentation, he/she is involved, there's some interaction, if there's a group works, he does as much as he/she can. If I set this as a target he/she can never get that ten point; however, he has made some achievements within his/her capacity“.*

The lack of assessment system also creates practical problems. Part of the students who has a good knowledge of the language does not have an opportunity to prove his/her knowledge by some valid assessment mechanism. There were two specific cases identified during the FGDs, which directly relate to the nonexistence of the special tool of acknowledgement of the language competences. More specifically, Tbilisi State University student who went abroad requested a certificate acknowledging his language competences, which would have been based on the results of the test developed on some specific methodology. Of course, the university could not issue a similar certificate as neither within that university nor throughout the country is there a valid assessment tool for the language competences, which could have acknowledged the knowledge of the Georgian language. In this respect an Akhaltsikhe FGD case was also very interesting. One of the students made a decision to take a year out as he was informed that there were chances to make the bachelor's level course he was enrolled free of charge starting from the following year. The student could not take that year as the university informed him/her

that the validity of the certificate acknowledging his/her language competences was only one year; therefore, he could not have continued studying on an undergraduate level in a year as he would not have a certificate acknowledging his/her language competence; in addition to this there was not any tool to check his language competences at all. Therefore, the only alternative for the student was to retake a one year program in case he wanted to take a year out on the very first year of his undergraduate level.

### **(e) Learning Environment**

The study identified the tendencies, which in certain cases had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the one year Georgian language program:

- a.* Its separation from the rest of the programs;
- b.* Lack of accessibility to the supplementary educational resources;
- c.* An environment, which is not focused on students', youth' life (these children should have at least one café as they spent all day here");
- d.* Existence of no library where students could have either studied or read extracurricular literature together
- e.* In certain cases, additional resources (example, computer classes) which are identified for students are either partially or in a limited manner accessible to the students

We can consider as a positive experience:

- a.* Students' complete integration into educational space of the university when students enrolled in the program study in the same classroom where the rest of the students does.
- b.* Classrooms that are equipped with needed technology (projector, computers and etc.)
- c.* Student's center, which is involved and active in the studying process of the students enrolled in the program;
- d.* NGOs created on the bases of the university that make extracurricular period of the students interesting in terms of content, cognitive and focused on their development as well as promote creation of the space where students have opportunities to develop relations with the Georgian peers and correspondingly integrated into the university life.

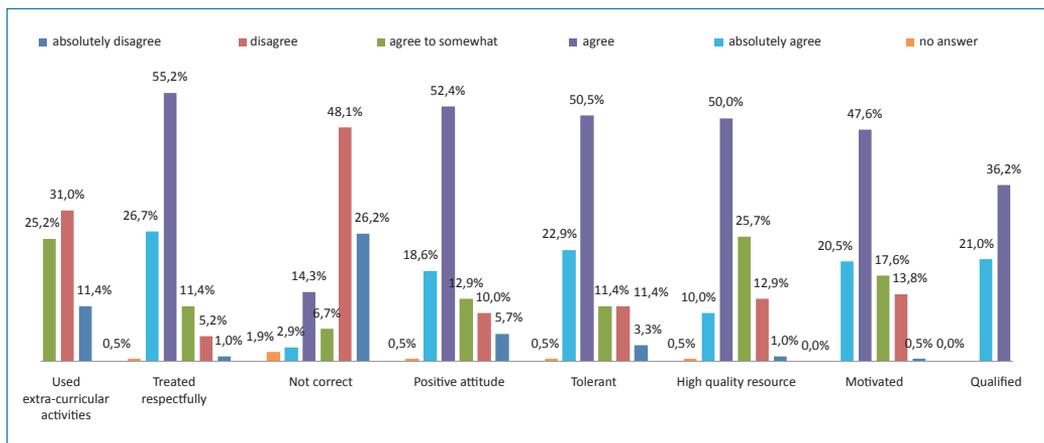
### **(f) Qualification of the Instructors of the Program and Opportunities for their Professional Development**

Information received from the universities under the research confirms a high qualification of the teachers involved in the program and their good experience. The study showed that the majority of the students are either happy or very happy with the teachers' qualification. The following table shows the students' assessment of the teachers' qualification and their positive attitude towards teachers:

**Table 27: Evaluation of the teachers’ qualification by the students**

C2. Assessment of Resource	Categorically disagree	Disagree	Partly agree	Agree	Fully agree	No answer
All teacher teaching us were equally high qualified	2.4%	20.0%	20.5%	36.2%	21.0%	0.0%
All teachers teaching us were equally motivated to enhance our language competences	0.5%	13.8%	17.6%	47.6%	20.5%	0.0%
All teachers teaching us provided us with comprehensive syllabus and learning resource	1.0%	12.9%	25.7%	50.0%	10.0%	0.5%
All teachers teaching us were tolerant to groups of ethnic minorities	3.3%	11.4%	11.4%	50.5%	22.9%	0.5%
I always felt positive attitude of every teacher towards the group of my ethnicity	5.7%	10.0%	12.9%	52.4%	18.6%	0.5%
The teachers joked improperly toward group of my ethnicity	26.2%	48.1%	6.7%	14.3%	2.9%	1.9%

**Diagram 15: Students’ evaluation about the treatment towards them**



On the other hand, it’s noteworthy to state the critics towards teachers involved in the program that was expressed by some Georgian language program managers. In their opinion, a large discrepancy between teachers’ competences, experience and pedagogical approaches has a

negative impact on the unity of the program, as well as students' achievements and teachers' self-identification. The managers also talk about a tendency of streaming the teachers out of the university which is mainly caused either due to more prestigious employment offers or highly paid job proposals; on the other hand there are cases of interuniversity mobility as well when teachers in case of their decision prefer to work on an undergraduate level than in the program:

- *„The issues is that the part that had been trained turned out to be busy for this task or more precisely, they were busy on the undergraduate level program and we had to involve other teachers. To be honest, it was very strange to me that none of the teachers expressed his desire to get into this program as it's a very difficult task“.*

Program manager talk openly about a non-homogenous qualification of the teachers and consider the fact as one of the most important challenges.

Part of the students gave a negative response on the question of tolerance and respect of the teachers expressed towards groups of different ethnicity (26,1% intolerance towards groups of different ethnicity, 28,6 % - intolerance towards students of different ethnicity and 23,9% - improper joke about an ethnic group). Despite the fact that the percent of positive answers are fairly high, we can assume that there are cases in universities when teachers' attitude towards students of another ethnic group is not tolerant. There were similar cases identified in FGDs both with teachers and students. In addition, there were also some other specific cases identified when students were very unhappy with the attitude that some specific teachers had towards them.

It's noteworthy that there was an intolerant attitude towards students identified also in FGD with teachers. There are quite a few cases when students are classified by their ethnicity. Moreover, some opinion towards these groups is generalized.

- *„It's not a secret to anybody that if it is not a real exception and the student does not come from a real Georgian space in order to pass an exam and get a student in an easy way, these people suffer from information vacuum. For example, students from Tsalka or Marneuli have lack of knowledge of very basic school material, I do not mean here... When we have very simple texts, like capitals of very famous European countries, I can't talk about all but probably 1 student from 12 students knows that Eiffel Tower is in Paris and Big-Ben is London.. I mean Azeri groups“.*

Moreover, in some FGDs, there was a low expectation was identified towards some ethnic groups' cognitive and studying capacity:

- *„I do not work with Armenians any longer, I work with Azeri and now I can openly say that their general IQ is significantly lower compared to the IQ of our weak Georgian students ... For example, when I wanted to make a presentation, it took me about a full lecture and a half to explain what the presentation is“.*

There was even some aggression identified in FGD with teachers in Akhaltsikhe for treating them in a preferred manner:

- *„This is very easy for them, it's like a trick to get to the University without studying, payment or losing a year; why should they face any issues mentioned above when they have a preferred*

*last name, place of registration and the nationality is also preferable and this is a real problem of this program, we need all to confess it. And in fact this issue grows incrementally and covers more and more people every year. For example, Azeri and Armenians residing in Tbilisi or any other region who speak Georgian very well as they study at a Georgian school also participate in this program; they use this as a tool to become a student without complications, it's very simple“.*

In addition to the aggression, the ambiguity of the program goals has also been identified. Some teachers strongly believe that if the program does not get more dynamic, an integration process can't be considered successful. They speak about a transitional significance of the project, which has very specific and clear functions. They believe that the end of this function should be timely identified and correspondingly a new strategy identified. From such discussions we can assume that teachers' view about the program goals, objectives and capacity is under a very strict frame, which is limited because of the program's "transitional" function. When there's such an attitude towards the program, it's clear that the program capacity is also considered to be limited in terms of format, content and functional significance.

However, the role, function and involvement of teachers in programs are different. More specifically, in Javakhsivili, Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki university programs, teachers are divided by language competences; correspondingly, one professor coaches students in grammar, another in reading skills, still other in – speaking and etc. There's a different situation in Ilia University program where almost all teachers coach all groups and language coaching process is integrated and therefore is not divided by competencies. As a result, teachers are ready to implement complex method of coaching and plan working with the students in close coordination with each other.

In spite of the fact that professors analyze well their focus group specific needs and challenge it they turned out that they either do not have information at all or they have wrong information about former students who continued studying on an undergraduate level. In fact, teachers have a very limited knowledge of issues that former students have in terms of academic and social perspectives. The FGDs revealed that professors talk about a complete integration of former students with Georgian peers while ethnic minority students still talk about a closed system they have to deal with on the undergraduate level as well. "We passed them to another patron like chickens" is an attitude that describes well graduation of a Georgian language program and commencement of an undergraduate level program. Actually, teachers involved in the program are only in certain cases aware of their former student's activities, however, in majority cases this depends a lot on how active the student is and if he makes up his mind to apply to his former teacher to assist him to overcome language issues.

There are certain activities implemented to improve the capacity of the teachers. Teachers and professors are involved in different research or academic projects (Ilia University, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Javakhsivili State Universities), which helps them to develop their capacity (through exchange programs, trainings, experience sharing, networking and etc.). For example: Georgian language teachers from all four universities are involved in the EU program "Development and introduction Multilingual Teacher Education in Georgia and Ukraine". Within this program there were many capacity development programs planned and implemented. In addition to this, there are different workshops organized within universities. There was a practice

of having a workshop on an ongoing bases established at the Tbilisi State University; however, this initiative turned out to be unrealistic due to the busy schedule of teachers involved in the program. In all universities, there was a lack of the following capacity development forms for the university professors: a) mentoring b) attendance and positive feedback; c) model lessons and lectures; d) cooperation among university professors; e) interuniversity cooperation and etc.

### ***g) Educational Resources within the Program***

All university staff admits that there's a scarcity of educational materials at the university. According to the statements of the Georgian professors and managers involved in the language program, they work on additional education material needed for the program on their own. However, the methodology to use these educational materials is different in universities. In the cases of Tbilisi State, Akhaltsikhe State Teaching and Akhalkalaki universities all teachers can use all documents accessible to them, which were issued by different authors in different time. However, the intensity of using these documents, dependence on these materials by professor, objectives that they set based on that material and expected achievements are individual and different. Part of the professors does not use that material at all and they develop their own.

The major part of the educational material at Ilia University is developed by the program staff, which is different in terms of format compared to other programs and basically is expansion of video situations and video footage processed by themes. The program has a very clearly stated concept, which is elaborated in full compliance with EY framework and aims at introduction of everyday situations to the students at an initial stage. The material that is not elaborated within the program is prepared in an animated file format, which is also expanded further. It's noteworthy that all of the professors work further on the material used, which helps to have improved and the most updated material all the time.

Tbilisi State University professors talk about a common use related issue that is caused from existence of a common database for educational material. In addition they also talk about advantages of having a process of adjusting this common material to the needs of specific group of students on place, which would have created a need for permanent update and improvement of these documents and promoted an establishment of a shared vision on a program coaching. Despite doing of such analysis, educational materials are still developed in a chaotic manner and are tailored to the vision of an individual professor.

Akhalsikhe State Teaching University Georgian language program professors have a different vision. They also develop supplementary materials for the students on their own but they do not think that validation, common discussion and exchange of these materials are important. They have an explanation to this vision. The teachers coach based on their competence and therefore they strongly believe that material that is developed by one professor is not useful for another.

## CHAPTER 7

### SPECIFIC ISSUES AND PROBLEMS THAT ETHNIC MINORITIES AT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF GEORGIA

In addition to the issues mentioned above, there were several other important issues identified through the survey in terms of effective implementation of the quoting system, more specifically:

#### 1) Financial Issues by Universities;

One of the interesting issues is effective and efficient management of the program funding. The survey showed that, those universities which enroll a fairly large amount of students within the program (i.e. the revenue received is high), spend a very limited amount of money for the program.

**Table 28: Income (Tbilisi State University)**

Year	Quantity of the students	Study fees	Received income
2010	156	2250	351 000
2011	256	2250	576 000
2012	314	2250	706 500
Total	726	2250	1 633 500

Public information derived from Tbilisi State University

As for expenditures – made on behalf of the program at the Tbilisi State University, they mainly consist of salaries of the teachers and administration and costs incurred for procurement of needed equipment, stationary and textbooks that are essential for the program operation:

**Table 29: Expenditures (Tbilisi State University)**

Year	Teachers' salary	Administrative expenses	Techniques, stationary and books' expenses.
2010	92 340	Unknown	
2011	202 140	Unknown	
2012	268 200	Unknown	
Total	562 680	Unknown	10 803

Public information derived from Tbilisi State University

The table shows that in addition to the salaries of the administration, expenditures made at Tbilisi State University comprise only one third of the overall revenues received. Correspondingly, the program provides a financial opportunity to make the program diverse and organize extracurricular activities aiming at civic integration as well as propose support to the students.

The situation is the same at Akhaltsikhe State Teaching University:

**Table 30: Income and expenditure of the Akhaltikhe program**

Year	Teachers' remuneration	Other expenses	Total expenditure	Income
2010	5640	3840	9480	28500
2011	5280	3500	8780	59500
2012	6000	3570	9570	49500
<b>Total</b>	<b>17920</b>	<b>10910</b>	<b>27830</b>	<b>137500</b>

Public information derived from Samtskhe-Javakheti University

The table above clearly shows that revenues received provide a real opportunity for the university to make effective administration of finances and implement extracurricular or supplementary activities.

The situation is completely different in those universities where number of students is very low. In many cases, spending on program exceeds revenues received within the program. The good example would be Batumi, Kutaisi and Telavi Universities as well as Ilia University in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The revenues received by these universities could not cover expenditures. The table below illustrates the statement made in this paragraph:

**Table 31: Income and expenditure of the Ilia University program**

Program for preparation in Georgian for Azerbaijani native speakers			Program for preparation in Georgian for Armenian native speakers		The salary for the teachers involved in the program is determined as:  App. 16.500
Year	State study grant (100%)	Finances paid by the students or/ and donor	State study grant (100%)	Finances paid by the students or/ and donor	
2010	2250	4500	2250	4500	
2011	4500	0	2250	2250	
2012	6750	87750	9000	2250	

Public information derived from Ilia University

The table shows that 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 expenditures at Ilia University exceed revenues; however a reasonably planned studying process and expenditures caused a significant increase in the number of students at Ilia University in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, which should be considered as a positive experience of the University; Correspondingly, sharing and spreading of that experience over other universities would also have been a step forward.

## **2. Logistic Problems at the beginning of the One Year Program**

One year program participants, who come to Tbilisi from the region, identify issues they face at the beginning of the year as the most serious issue.

- *„The first year was very difficult, it was too difficult to get here, I was thinking that I will not stay here at all, but when I met professors, all of them have really helped me;*
  - *It is very difficult to find an apartment and to move in the strange city”.*

It's noteworthy to state that pupils of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade during the FGD identified logistics to be the problem number one. They rely more on their relatives in the capital, but those who do not have anybody in the capital, try not to come to Tbilisi Universities at all for that reason. However, the lodging issue is common for not only those students who come to Tbilisi but also for the ones who study in Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki. The issue usually is lack of transportation from the mountainous and nonadjacent villages as well as high transportation fee and inflexible transportation schedule. None of the universities have a mechanism to support or solve that issue for the students. In addition, the survey showed that students, with the previous year experience, are not organized enough in terms of providing assistance to freshmen. Ilia University has a very interesting practice in that regard. Its former students work as tutors and help freshmen; however, that assistance is fairly limited and lasts for a very short period of time, until beginning of the academic year and it only includes logistical support of the freshmen. There's no other coordinated action implemented at any university either from the side of administration or students. It's very much possible that if logistical issues are regulated, number of students who have a desire to take exams in Tbilisi universities, increases, especially among Armenian community who face that issue more due to having a long way to get to the capital.

## **3. Registration in the database and issues related to the selection of courses**

Registration on the undergraduate level and selection of courses afterwards was identified as the second most important issue after graduation from the one year program in all places, including: Tbilisi State, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Ilia Universities. Registration and issue of selection of the courses is common for all students; however, students who enroll based on the quoting system face additional barriers, which are mostly related to their registration into the database and selection of the courses. Tbilisi State university students state that this issue is mostly related to the first semester of the undergraduate level program while they are still not registered as students:

- *„We had to go there every day for three days, there were long lines and we could not get in. And we got responded for all three days that our names had not been registered into the database. They were supposed to submit documents there and it has not happened until we went there and told them that these people kept us waiting for days”.*

- *„I faced the same issue. Registration was over. Databases were closed and the classes were supposed to start that day. We started studying on 17th and my personal data was still not sent to the Humanitarian Faculty“;*
- *„No, there were the same issues related to the students from the preparation class in other places. The administration of the University has not received data or there was another problem“.*

However, some students note that they have similar issue later during the year in other semesters as well:

- *„The issue was a database; I could not open it, so it was late when I could in the end open it and I had issues to select those professors and times that I wanted. The databases were supposed to get opened at noon on March 4; so when I tried, I could not open it and then the spots were occupied. I have developed a schedule for myself. I wanted to start at 9 as if you have to attend the lectures in the afternoon the whole day is gone. So, meanwhile the schedule got all and then I had to attend lectures at 3 p.m. There were some days when I had only one lecture and some others I had 7 of them, for example on Friday, it was very problematic, it was very difficult for that one year.“.*

Ilia University students are also concerned with that issue; generally, registration is related to getting a student's documentation; Students note that getting students' documents late also have a negative impact on their finances in terms of transportation fee for example as they can't use the preferences that students usually have:

- *„We are getting late in terms of registering into the database and we can't select the courses. Later the spots are occupied and we can't register where we want“;*
- *„We can't get a student's ID before we are registered into the database“;*
- *„We can't use privileges that students have in the transport and we end up to pay more“;*

Ilia University students note that some members of the university administration do improper things and discriminate them while working on solution of the database and registration issues:

- *„There is a coordinator on each faculty. XXX works as a coordinator of the faculty. I am always afraid that she will shout on me and make me feel uncomfortable in front of students“;*
- *„. . . The coordinator always tells me, “this is not my business”, I can't change the course for you, this is not our problem, that's your problem““;*
- *– „Are you still here? This is your business, leave me alone“;*
- *„. . . I observe that he/she treats Georgian children in a different way; she always shouts over us; however, when Georgian students enter, she does not say anything, when we enter she/he immediately starts shouting, are you still here?“*

Ilia University students also indicated about a bureaucracy of the system, which creates problems for them:

- *„Bureaucracy makes you tired, all day to and from. You have to go to Nutsbidze for something, and then they will send you here for another thing, all day that way“.*

Akhaltshikhe State Teaching University FGD gave a very interesting picture. According to students', their registration and grouping is based on an English language competencies and university has a very interesting grouping system in that regard. Those students who have passed an entrance exam in English are registered in a one group and those who have not in another. Students enrolled based on the affirmative action do not have to pass an exam in English as they get enrolled on the bases of the results in skills. Correspondingly, they are registered in a different group and even on the first year of the undergraduate level program they are isolated; however, their English language competences sometimes are higher than those of Georgians who passed an entrance exam in English. In fact, a university does not have a grading mechanism for them and therefore such students are mechanically placed in a certain group, which make students enrolled through quoting system very unhappy and disappointed.

#### **4. Absence of Students Status in Transitional Period**

Akhaltshikhe State Teaching University FGD participants identified lack of a status during the period they finish a one year program before they get enrolled in the undergraduate level program and get registered to be a very specific issue. Following students' explanation they are not either university students or one year program students as they already have the program finished and a certificate received. Therefore, this is the period when they can't show a students' ID. This problem is more important for boys as they reach the age when they have to go to the military service and if they can't get a student's ID, they have to join the military service:

- „I could not get a certificate from the university... In fact I was hiding or I would have had to go to the army as a result of having no certificate“.

#### **5. Lack of Awareness in the Beginning of Undergraduate Level Program**

Students around all universities identify a lack of awareness of undergraduate level programs to be a big issue. They think that they had not had enough information about an undergraduate level program when they had to make a choice. Still, all students around all universities note that there are meetings held with the representatives of different faculty to listen to their presentation about the programs:

- *„It would have been great if faculties had held informational meetings. There was a meeting, but I could really get not enough information“.*

At the same time, students state that there were cases when professors helped them to select a program:

- *„Professors gave us a consultation while we were making selection of the program. I planned to choose business administration but the professor recommended that with my computer skills I would have been better in technology engineering and I have followed his recommendation“.*

In addition, part of the students at Ilia University stated that they had an opportunity to get information about undergraduate level programs from the meetings organized by United Nations Association of Georgia or ALPE; however, these meetings were not accessible to all students.

In spite of the fact that there are some positive signs, students still highlight their low awareness of undergraduate level programs for the time they have to make a decision. This creates two types of problems for students enrolled as a result of the quota system: a) they face issues on the undergraduate level program; b) after graduation from the university, there is not much perspective to get an employment as their decisions have not considered the labor market demand. Correspondingly, students believe that getting a consultation is a key priority for them to plan a career as it will enable them to make a right choice and let them realize their capabilities and interests.

## **6. Extracurricular Civic and Integration Promotion Activities**

Despite the issues that students involved in the program state in terms of their opportunities to get completely integrated into the university society, they also talk about a positive impact that activities and projects implemented by outside organizations make over them in terms of their integration with the rest of the students within the program, raising their civic awareness and developing their communication skills. Ilia University students put a special focus on those actions that were implemented within the common project of UNAG and ALPE and a tolerance center created on the basis of Ilia University. A special attention was also paid to the field training conducted within the civic action, which involved students along with Georgian peers. Students also think that regular training in civic activities are very important, which on the one hand improve very important skills for them and help them gain needed knowledge and on the other hand create a positive and interesting space for their interaction with the Georgian peers.

## CHAPTER 8

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY IMPROVEMENT

To address the issues identified through the research, it's very important to make some changes in terms of planning of affirmative action policy as well as in legislative provision as these changes will also raise effectiveness of an undergraduate level program. We propose the following recommendations that we believe will help to continue a 2010 reform more effectively with the highest achievements.

#### 1. Recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Science

- It's very important that the Ministry of Education and Science comes up with a policy on development of an instrument of assessment of the Georgian language competences. The assessment of Georgian language competences can be undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Science itself or its structural unit as well as an institute created by the university or by independent institution. Development of the language competence assessment system and assessment instrument will be important not only in terms of affirmative action policy implementation but it will also help to overcome issues in labor market, in the process of granting citizenship and in public service;
- It's also very important to make Georgian language knowledge certification system legally functional, including identifying the validity of the certificate;
- The research showed that students who do not speak a state language in the beginning of the program, can't overcome the language issues within the one year program; moreover, they face language issues on an undergraduate level as they do not have enough communication skills at the end of the program as well as have huge issues in terms of academic language competences. Correspondingly, it will be reasonable to set a minimal barrier for people who have a desire to continue studying at the university. Passing the minimal barrier should be a precondition for the student to be enrolled in the one year program. Additional mechanisms can become functional in case an university entrant can't pass the minimal language barrier. More specifically, they can get involved in an intensive two month language courses and only then be moved to the one year program;
- Along with the development of the assessment system and instrument for the language competences, there should legal mechanisms for those students meeting language knowledge criteria be defined: including, these students should get an authority to continue studying on an undergraduate level any time after passing an exam (which means that they will not waste one year in the program and money will also not be spent to train such students within one year program”;
- The program managers and professors participating in the research talk about a complicated bureaucratic procedures in the university as well as in the National Center of Education Quality Enhancement to make changes in the program, which prevents them from making

needed changes in the program in a flexible way. It's very important to develop mechanisms to simplify modification, accreditation and changing mechanisms of the Georgian language program. Quality management departments on the state and university levels should focus on improvement of program quality and not on appealing quality improvement of development of bureaucratic obstacles;

- It's also very important to plan affirmative action awareness campaign effectively. This information is often incomplete, distorted or biased. Correspondingly, development of **comprehensive information bulletin** for ten, eleven and twelve graders of non-Georgian schools as well as for school administrators, teachers and parents of students on their native language is of crucial importance.
- It's very important that the Ministry of Education and Science spreads funding on those 17 directions that the Government of Georgia announced to be priority and provided funding for meaning that studying on those programs are "free", over students enrolled as a result of an "affirmative action" to attract them on these programs as well as keep equality in terms of education accessibility. It's desirable that state funding spreads on students enrolled on the bases of quoting system in proportion with quotes established by legislation (5% of overall funded spots for Armenian students, 5% for Azeri, 1% - for Abkhazians and 1% for Ossetians). This policy will be important to attract Ossetian and Abkhazian language speaking students.
- It will also be very important to consider the interests of those ethnic groups within an affirmative action who has not been part of that action up to now and correspondingly are discriminated at this stage. It's highly desirable that a certain quota is identified for Russian school or Russian sector students. In addition, to ensure justice and avoid migration between schools with the motivation of getting a benefit, there should be additional control mechanisms introduced to validate the right to use privileges under affirmative action. Only those students who study at a Russian school or Russian sector at least for the last five years should be authorized to have a right to use the affirmative action privileges. Russian speaking entrants' quota could be 1% or less of the overall number of allocated spots. This change will have a positive impact in several directions: (a) Will help to attract Armenian and Azeri entrants with the Russian education in Georgian high education system and will put them in an equal condition to the Armenian and Azeri peers; (b) Will support civic integration of ethnic groups residing in dispersed settlements and will put them in an equal condition with entrants from compact settlements; (c) It's also noteworthy that introducing quoting system for Russian speakers could also positively impact attraction of Abkhazian and Ossetian entrants into Georgian Universities; (d) The decision may also play a minor role to improve political-diplomatic relations with Russia.

## 2. Recommendation to Higher Education Institution

### (a) Recruitment of Enrollments and Public Awareness of Population of Affirmative Action

- It's very important that higher education institutions got actively involved in the enrollments' recruitment process as well as pre-meetings with ten and eleven year pupils, their parents, school administration and teachers and inform them about a one year Georgian language

program as well as undergraduate level programs that the entrants will have to select after graduation of the one year Georgian program;

(b) Preparation for one year Georgian Language Program and Studying on an Undergraduate Level and Integration into Students' Life

- It's highly desirable to prepare a special orientation program before commencement of one year Georgian language program that will help ethnic minority groups to get a better understanding of the university structure, the function of these structural units and their scope of work. It's also very desirable that such orientation meetings are organized by Georgian student groups through development of promotional mechanisms and conditions for them. This will also help to establish and develop relations between students of different ethnicity.

- Students' support to deal with logistic issues in the beginning of the academic year

Planning and development of good working relations with the city municipality structures, which will enable ethnic minority students coming from rural settlements or regions to get useful information about existing services of the strange city, transportation along with its schedule and social and cultural life. It's noteworthy that such cooperation would not only help the students in terms of their orientation but also integration and their active involvement into the public life.

- Regulation of database and bureaucracy issues with the university administration during transitional period between one year Georgian language program and undergraduate level study, including regulation of legal issues about the status of these students as well as general bureaucracy related to it;
- Establishment of Students' Academic Support Center to help these students during one-year Georgian language program and undergraduate level studies;
- Development of certain guidelines for administration and professors and organization of workshops in terms of intercultural communication;
- Organization of intercultural activities on an university level and active involvement of Georgian students to improve their intercultural sense;
- Support interaction between Georgian students and ones who have been enrolled based on quoting system through organization of extracurricular activities and projects and further expansion of syllabuses with intercultural activities;
- Support interaction between Armenian and Azeri speaking students enrolled on the bases of the quoting system and promote common activities between them;
- Organization of planned or extracurricular activities for students enrolled on the bases of quoting system targeted at their social integration;
- Popularization of the culture of the students enrolled on the bases of the quoting system among Georgian peers, professors and administration and highlighting their role and importance in the establishment of Georgian state and Georgian culture;

- 
- Organization of public awareness activities with the participation of students enrolled on the bases of the quoting system and other students;
  - Organize information meetings for the students enrolled on the bases of the quoting system before making a selection of the undergraduate level program; provide them with an opportunity to attend undergraduate level lectures and develop mechanisms supporting planning of their student and career life (tutors, advisors, student and academic career planning support center and etc.);
  - Establish certain approaches that will ensure integration of the students enrolled on an undergraduate level on the bases of the quoting system into university life and their prevention from facing problems in the process of development academic, social skills and competences due to language limitations. Sharing and exchanging of experiences between universities would have been very useful in the process (simplification of teaching materials, consideration of language issues in the grading system and provision of an opportunity to respond in a different language, extension of the exam time because of the need of more time due to language limitations and etc.).

#### (c.1) Administration of the One Year Language program

- It's very important for all universities involved in the program to cooperate and exchange with positive experience that they have. The facilitation of this process can be led by international organizations and NGOs. In spite of the fact that there's some cooperation among certain universities, involvement of all universities in this process would be definitely a rational decision;
- It's very important that program planning and financial provision does not include only teacher's and administration salaries. It's very important to provide students with additional educational resources, including library, language cabinet and computer lab. Also, it's crucial to implement extracurricular activities focusing on social integration, which in the end should become an essential part of the one year program. It's also very important to allocate financial resources to the project and research activities as planned by syllabus as their implementation requires additional financial resources; in the end these activities should also become an integral part of the program. As the analysis made it clear for us, financial source for implementation of these activities can become revenues collected by the university specifically under this program.
- It's very important to develop an internal mechanism at the university that will ensure cooperation between one year Georgian program and the rest of the faculties, as it will enable students of the Georgian language program to get involved in all academic and cognitive activities, which they find interesting and useful for them.
- It's crucial that universities regulate students' registration issue for those students who got enrolled in the Georgian language program, so that students can be provided with a corresponding order and all other relevant documentation as well as get solution to all other issues related to this problem;
- The program manager should also ensure cooperation between teachers. Moreover, promotion of cooperation between professors of different universities, development of

common educational resource database, exchange of these educational resources among them and sharing of their experience would have been very useful;

- Universities are supposed to provide fully functional institutions to the students in terms of infrastructure (internal café, relaxation room, bathroom and etc.);
- It's very important that universities develop an e-platform for programs and include modern technologies in the educational process to make educational material easily accessible to the students as well as prepare students for the teaching methodology that is used on an undergraduate level. In addition to this, e-platform ensures more effective cooperation between teachers;
- Development of cooperation mechanisms between one year program faculty and other faculties is very important to increase effectiveness first in the undergraduate level program selection and then in the undergraduate level studying process.

#### (c.2) Planning and Implementation

- It's crucial that universities develop diversified, effective and valid mechanisms for grouping students, which will be based on the comprehensive language competence grading system and exclude its invalidity. Also, universities should develop intergroup migration system for students as it will raise students' motivation to permanently improve their academic achievement;
- It's very important that university programs do not only focus on language learning skills that program content also covers civic education, informational and computer technology, intercultural communications and other courses. These courses could be used to develop language skills as well as teach the course itself through integrated teaching approaches;
- The majority of the existing one year programs focus on development of communication language skills; however, students on an undergraduate level need an academic language competences; Correspondingly, it's crucial to plan a program with the consideration that students' academic language skills require further development. It's also possible to develop additional language courses once communication language skills of the students are developed. This may be done by increasing contact hours for the students or organizing summer-winter courses. Development of summer courses will be very reasonable when students more or less have an idea which program they will select on an undergraduate level. Therefore, organization of academic language courses for the desired program will more effectively prepare them for an undergraduate level program;
- The majority of the one year Georgian language programs include only compulsory courses within 60 credit hours. It will be very good to propose to the students multiple alternative courses that will focus on individual needs of the student and enable them to select the courses they need based on self-estimation. The proposed system will ensure additional preparation of students for a teaching system on an undergraduate level; In addition to this, it's highly recommendable that those students who can handle it get an authority to make a selection from the alternative courses and get a credit for the course. This will positively impact student's opportunity to get acquainted with the undergraduate level teaching format on the one hand and on the other hand get broader knowledge.

### (c-3) Program Duration

- It's highly desirable that the program duration is flexible and is based on student's individual needs. Generally, it may cover two semesters per year; however, in case of a need, the university may propose to the students a different, four semester course. The course may include 45 contact hours, but if there's a need contact hours may increase up to 75 hours.
- It's also reasonable that those students, who have a need and desire, get an opportunity to continue a Georgian language course within the first four semesters on the undergraduate level as part of undergraduate level studies and credit systems or as an independent course.
- Therefore, it's reasonable that universities have several modules of the same course and based on the students' needs use different modules;
- In order to find an optimal duration of the course a cooperation among the Higher Education Institutions, Ministry of Education and Science, Education Quality Development Center is essential;

### (c.4) Assessment System

- Higher Education Institutions are desirable to work with the Ministry of Education and Science to identify an instrument defining language knowledge levels and use this instrument to grade students' language competences;
- It's very important that Higher Education Institutions define the level of language knowledge that is mandatory to study on the undergraduate level; correspondingly, an academic language knowledge level should become an essential component in the process of identification of the student's language competences, which will then become a precondition for him to continue studying on an undergraduate level.

### (c.5) Learning Environment

- Higher Education Institutions are desirable to ensure provision of the students enrolled on the bases of the quoting system with the accommodation in the same area other students are to avoid isolation of such students from the rest of the students and support their full integration into students' life;
- Administrations at the Higher Education Institutions, are desirable to provide access of academic and scientific tools of the university to the students following certain regulations to promote development of students' professional and technological competences, improvement of their motivation and establishment of an academic space supporting integration of ethnic minority students with the rest of the students.

### (c.6) Qualifications of the Teachers and their Professional Development

- Organization of teachers' professional development programs and teachers' promotion to participate in it is highly desirable;

- It's also important to organize teachers' professional development programs in the intercultural communication direction and improve their capacity in that direction;
- It will be very good if mechanisms to cooperate among teachers within the university and among universities become functional;
- It's very important to develop the following approaches towards teachers' professional development: a) mentorship; b) attendance and positive feedback; c) sample lessons and lectures; d) workshops
- Teachers belonging to the students' ethnic group, should be heavily involved in the program to create adequate environment for the students in terms of their culture; and also, these professors will be a model for these students that should be followed;

It will also be very good to have criteria to define the competences and experiences of the teachers, which in addition to the pedagogical experience will be based on certain academic achievements.

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## **EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUOTA SYSTEM IN GEORGIA**

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