

POLICY BRIEF

IMPROVING QUALITY AND EQUITY IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN GEORGIA: KEY CHALLENGES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Commissioned by UNICEF as part of the joint Education Policy Forum initiative
implemented by the ISET Policy Institute, UNICEF, and the World Bank

By Eric Livny and Tamuna Bakradze

June 2018

“Focused, personal attention paid to the young children of poor families isn’t some warm, fuzzy notion, [Jim Heckman] argues. It’s a hard-nosed investment that pays off in lower social welfare costs, decreased crime rates, and increased tax revenue. And he has the numbers to prove it. He calls this the Heckman Equation, and shares it relentlessly in public lectures around the country and the world. “The argument is not just an appeal to the poor,” he says. “We’re saving money for everyone, including the taxpaying middle class and upper class. Right now they’re supporting prisons, health, special education in schools. The benefit is broadly shared. ... It’s something that would actually accrue to the whole country.”

Excerpt from a Bloomberg [interview](#) with Jim Heckman, a Nobel economist with the University of Chicago
January 17, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION	7
ACCESS TO EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION	8
Urban areas.....	8
Rural areas	9
Children from ethnic minority groups.....	10
Children with special needs	10
QUALITY OF EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION	12
Infrastructure and technical equipment	12
Qualification/training of preschool personnel.....	13
Governance and management framework.....	15
KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
BIBLIOGRAPHY	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief is a result of a joint Education Policy Forum initiative by UNICEF, the World Bank, and the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University (ISET). It is one of a series of four papers taking stock of Georgia's entire education system: early learning, general schooling, vocational education and training, and lastly, higher education. The purpose of this series is to review what has been achieved so far, identify outstanding challenges, and suggest – based on discussions with stakeholders and a careful analysis of relevant data and incentive structures – what can be done to address existing bottlenecks.

* * *

Delivering on its electoral promise to ensure universal access to early learning and school readiness programs for every Georgian child, as of the 2013/14 school year, the Georgian Dream coalition made public preschool education free for all kids in the 2-5 age group. As a result of this reform and a sizeable investment in infrastructure, Georgia has seen a significant increase in preschool enrollment for children aged 2-5: from 41%¹ in 2011 to 63.7% in 2017². During the same period, the share of public provision in the total increased given that the quality/price ratio of public kindergartens increased relative to the expensive private alternative.

To provide the legal basis for universal access to early and preschool care and education, and ensure its adherence to the highest quality requirements, on June 8, 2016, the Government of Georgia (GoG) amended the Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education³. In October 2017, the GoG approved a number of new National Standards and Technical Regulations, most of which are supposed to come into force by 2020. The law envisions a rigorous procedure – yet to be developed – whereby all new and existing public and private kindergartens in the country will be required to go through an authorization process assessing their ability to meet rigorous standards concerning kindergarten buildings and playgrounds, equipment and educational supplies, hygienic conditions and nutrition, formal qualifications and experience of preschool personnel.

The recently adopted national standards of early and preschool education follow the best global practices in the field. However, given the reality on the ground, they are easier declared than implemented in practice.

✚ One aspect of the problem is the sheer size of the gap between the status quo and what is being mandated by the National Standards of Early and Preschool Care and Education. For example, the new regulations pertaining to per child space requirements would require a massive *one-time* investment in the construction of new, and renovation of existing, kindergarten buildings. The new education, hygiene and nutrition standards imply a *permanent* increase in annual operating costs.

An increase in public funding for preschool education will reflect a shift in national priorities from short-term results to longer-term strategic objectives.

✚ Another grave challenge concerns the need to rid the system of unqualified, unskilled and unmotivated workers, and replace them with a new cohort of young, well-trained (and well-compensated) personnel. On the one hand, this challenge has significant budgetary implications – new cadre will be difficult to attract without a substantial *permanent* increase in remuneration for qualified personnel. On the other hand, however, efforts

Tackling this political economy bottleneck will boost staff morale and allow human resource policies to be based

¹ UNICEF, Welfare Monitoring Survey (2011).

http://unicef.ge/uploads/WMSFinal_final_Copy_for_web_1_USAID.pdf

² UNICEF, Welfare Monitoring Survey (2017).

³ Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education

http://ssa.gov.ge/files/01_GEO/KANONMDEBLOBA/Sakanonmdeblo/42.pdf

<p>to bring new blood into the system have been so far blocked by perceived “political sensitivities” associated with employment in the public education system, and the (difficult-to-resist) tendency of all Georgian administrations to enlist education workers in political campaigning at the local level.</p>	<p><i><u>on actual needs and objective performance criteria rather than political convenience.</u></i></p>
<p>✚ Third, given the vast rural-urban divide in access to high quality early learning and preschool education, the national government will have to <u>put in place an attractive package of incentives (including remuneration, housing and career opportunities) for young preschool personnel willing to move to rural locations that suffer from an acute shortage of qualified staff.</u> Only in this way will Georgia be able to come closer to providing every child with an equal opportunity at the start – regardless of location, ethnicity or the socio-economic status of his/her parents.</p>	<p><i>By promoting equity within its preschool education system, Georgia will enhance social solidarity and unlock its potential as a developing economy.</i></p>
<p>✚ Finally, Georgia has to <u>engage and integrate into the public preschool education system children from the weakest strata of the population:</u> subsistence farmers in remote rural areas, ethnic minorities, families raising children with disabilities and other special needs. Doing so will require not only a communication campaign seeking to overcome existing prejudices, but also a conscious effort to address the root causes of these prejudices. On the one hand, a large investment will be required in infrastructure and relevant professional capacities. On the other hand, Georgia will have to use greater flexibility in the application of existing national standards in order to allow and, indeed, <u>encourage local innovation and experimentation with alternative, non-standard models of early learning, child care and education that engage families, whole communities and their social partners.</u></p>	<p><i>By departing from a one-size-fit-all approach to early learning and preschool education, Georgia will be able to put in place an education system suited for a wide range of economic geography circumstances and its needs as a multi-ethnic nation</i></p>

Given these challenges, the way forward involves a bold strategic adjustment along the corresponding four dimensions:

1. **Funding.** Georgia will have to adjust national priorities and increase funding for early and preschool education;
2. **Leadership and management.** The preschool sector needs a strong institutional ‘parent’ and champion at the national level. The sector will be impossible to reform with the current, highly decentralized preschool management model whereby every municipality is left to its own devices. The Ministry of Education and Science must be given the policy tools not only to set national standards but also actively manage the sector – reallocate human and financial resources from Tbilisi to remote locations, create regional management units to provide support to, and monitor the quality of preschool education provided by, the municipalities;
3. **Human capital.** The level of professionalism in the sector is utterly inadequate. Georgia will have to come up with a program to retire incompetent personnel and hire new staff based on objective performance criteria and the sector’s needs. The system for educating and training preschool workforce, including its in-service training component, will have to be upgraded to serve the sector’s human capital needs;
4. **Innovation.** The preschool sector should not be overregulated to allow and encourage local experimentation with alternative delivery models suited to different social circumstances, economic geography settings, and different needs (ethnic minorities, disabilities). Such models should allow to engage and better communicate with parents, bring in social partners, and change public perceptions of the individual, social and economic value of preschool

education. Novel pilot programs and policy interventions should be properly assessed and scaled up when deemed successful.

Specific recommendations:

- **Fees and targeted subsidies.** The transition towards higher quality standards should follow a feasible path. If funding availability is a binding constraint for reducing group sizes and improving the child/teacher ratios, consider reintroducing modest tuition fees while providing targeted subsidization of preschool costs to lower middle class families, and not only the poor. This will relieve the pressure on the budget and help maintain private provision at an acceptable level.
- **Regional preschool education management units.** To facilitate the introduction of new preschool education standards, we recommend to establish under the Ministry of Education and Science regional units performing the following functions with respect to clusters of up to eight individual municipalities (or Georgian regions): facilitate inter-agency coordination and regional cooperation; monitor performance at the municipal level; coach municipal preschool management staff in the implementation of rigorous authorization procedures, regular inspections and observations; coordinate the delivery of training addressing gaps in professional skills.
- **Transparency and accountability.** Systematic collection and publication of data concerning the preschool education sector would strengthen the sector's accountability to the public, inform policy decisions, and help parents make better educational choices for their children. The following categories of data should be put in the public domain:
 - administrative data about the sector (number of children/staff in public and private institutions, staff qualification, quality of infrastructure/facilities);
 - impact assessment studies concerned with pilots and novel policy interventions;
 - surveys (e.g. parent satisfaction surveys) and child performance studies and observations.
- **Independence and self-governance of preschool institutions.** Preschool institutions should be allowed greater freedom to create the new and the different. In and of itself, such freedom could serve as a powerful incentive to improve performance. Of course, greater freedom must be accompanied by greater accountability to the parents and social partners, who should be actively engaged in the governance and monitoring of preschool institutions.
- **Teacher training.** Georgia has to create new and improve existing education programs, at all levels, preparing future cadre for the preschool education sector, including online and face-to-face continuous education programs. A fast track training and recruitment path could be introduced for new teachers, similar to Teach for Georgia program.
- **HR policies.** The following measures could be considered in order to attract a new generation of teachers and caretakers, and encourage existing staff to invest in own skills and serve in remote locations:
 - Increase the basic level of remuneration for qualified personnel to a competitive level so as to encourage existing staff to go through relevant trainings and certification exams, and incentivize young Georgians to join the preschool caretaker/teacher profession;
 - Encourage early retirement of educators who lack necessary skills and qualifications and are not willing or able to go through requisite trainings and exams;
 - Offer extra remuneration to people with highly demanded qualifications, such as special needs teachers, pedagogy experts and psychologists;

- Offer special incentives (higher remuneration, free housing, career opportunities) to young preschool teachers and caretakers willing to relocate – for a certain period of time – from Tbilisi and other major cities to rural locations suffering from an acute shortage of qualified personnel.
- **Communication.** The Georgian government may want to work with civil society organizations and international partners in order to implement awareness campaigns and generally improve communication to overcome stigma, inform parents and caretakers of their rights and obligations, train and otherwise engage parents. Early education centers for children of 0-2 age can be an excellent means of exposing parents to the advantages of preschool education.
- **Teaching materials and educational resources.** Georgia should continue investing in the entire range of teaching materials serving preschool education needs, including those tailored for special needs children, multilingual and multicultural settings.
- **Online registration procedures.** As long as access to public preschools falls short of demand, it may be important to do more to prioritize socially vulnerable families in the process of online registration. Such families may need assistance with getting all the required paperwork in order. Currently the status of socially vulnerable families is assigned to families scoring below 100001, however, this threshold may be increased to prioritize a larger number of families. The online registration procedure should assign children to kindergartens that are closest to their place of residence.
- **Voucher financing and private provision.** Children who were denied access to the public preschool system should be provided with a voucher fully or partially covering the cost of education in private preschool institutions, if such are available in the area. Voucher financing of private preschool education can be a viable alternative to building new public kindergartens in neighborhoods experiencing a temporary spike in fertility (such as when populated by young families) or small communities in which construction public institutions is not economically viable in the medium term.
- **Infrastructure and transportation bottlenecks.** To address space shortages, municipalities can repurpose and renovate publically-owned buildings to serve preschool education purposes. Municipal vehicles could be used to help transport children to kindergartens located in nearby villages and towns while adhering to strict safety measures.
- **Bilingual programs.** In order to increase enrollment of ethnic minority children, Georgia has to make a significant effort to develop bilingual programs, study books, games and educational resources. Teachers and caretakers should be trained to deliver bilingual programs. Communication efforts target ethnic minority families should inform them about the benefits of preschool education.
- **Special needs programs.** Existing kindergarten infrastructure should be upgraded to serve children with disabilities and other special needs.

THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Georgia's early learning and preschool education sector is governed by the Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education, most recently amended on June 8, 2016⁴. In October 2017, the GoG approved new National Standards and Technical Regulations in order to promote the quality of preschool education:

- National Standards for Early and Preschool Care and Education⁵;
- Catering and Nutrition Standards for Early and Preschool Care and Education Entities⁶;
- Sanitary and Hygiene Standards for Early and Preschool Care and Education Entities⁷;
- Professional Standards for Preschool Teachers.

A number of other rules and regulations are yet to be approved⁸:

- Rules for the Authorization of Preschool Education,
- Infrastructure Standards,
- Rules for Teacher Remuneration
- Teacher training modules (to be developed by the Ministry of Education and Science),
- Professional standards for preschool personnel,
- Qualification requirements for preschool directors.

Certain requirements of the law - e.g. the number of children per group, children-to-teacher ratio, provision of child-focused physical environment, as specified by the Technical Regulation of Sanitary and Hygiene in the Early and Preschool Care and Education Entities, will enter into force in 2020.

According to the law, local municipalities are mandated to finance and provide preschool education, ensure its quality in compliance with the national standards, norms and regulations. The role of central government is limited to establishing and approving the national standards and, within its area of competence, supporting local municipalities in improving the quality of preschool education.

Legally established as noncommercial nonprofit legal entities (in Tbilisi and Gori) or branches of kindergarten unions (mainly in the regions), public preschools are managed in three alternative ways:

- by a municipal kindergarten agency (in Tbilisi),
- by kindergarten unions established by municipal authorities,
- or by a department within municipal governments (such as departments for culture, education, sports and youth affairs).

In several municipalities, kindergartens are financed on a per capita basis. In other locations, kindergarten management units (kindergarten unions) under the local municipality are provided with targeted financing (a lump sum) to centrally procure all necessary inputs and services – according to local kindergarten needs and in line with preapproved budgets.

It should be noted that since the establishment of kindergarten management agencies and unions in 2010, the tendency to encourage kindergartens' autonomy has been on decline, as these agencies and

⁴ Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education

http://ssa.gov.ge/files/01_GEO/KANONMDEBLOBA/Sakanonmdeblo/42.pdf

⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uvvw-dxhGD89GMwbRpWks2ngPQHURf6Q/view>

⁶ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3838370>

⁷ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3837404>

⁸ 2018-2020 Strategy for implementing Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education, Council for coordination of implementation of Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education

unions have partially overtaken kindergarten management functions (procurement, human resources, paperwork, budgeting and financial accounting, etc.).

ACCESS TO EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

According to UNICEF's most recent Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS)⁹, the share of Georgian children aged 2-5 who have attended preschool education gradually increased from 41% in 2011 to 63.7% in 2017. As of December 2017, there were 1,438 public kindergartens in Georgia serving 153,230 children and employing 12,394¹⁰ teachers and caregivers. Unfortunately, the data on private kindergartens are not readily available, neither for policy research nor policymaking needs.

Despite these very positive developments, access to public preschools remains a challenge, certainly when compared with EU's average participation rate of more than 80%.¹¹ The reasons for a lack of access to preschools differ in large cities and smaller rural communities. In urban settings, 11% of children who are not enrolled in preschools are waitlisted for a lack of available *places*. In rural areas, 25.6% of children are not enrolled in preschools because none exist at a reasonable *distance* from their place of residence.¹²

Obviously, the construction of new kindergartens and the hiring of additional personnel is constrained by the budget available for this purpose. The pressure on the budget could be somewhat relieved if parents were to pay modest fees for their children's preschool education (with vulnerable families getting targeted assistance and/or full relief). Such a change in policy may be in fact considered by the Government (as stated by the Prime Minister in December 2017). However, this policy would run the risk of exacerbating existing inequality among children from well-off and poor families.¹³

Indeed, providing an equal opportunity is a key challenge in Georgia's preschool education field. According to the WMS data from 2017, access to education differs in urban and rural areas and for kids from different socio-economic strata (54.87% for the poor, 76.26% for the rich¹⁴). There is no accurate recent data concerning enrollment of special needs children and ethnic minorities. According to the World Bank's Poverty Assessment Report (2009) enrollment rates for the Azeri and Armenian children ages 2-5 stood at 15% and 5%, respectively¹⁵.

Urban areas

According to WMS 2017 data¹⁶, 79.1% of children aged 2-5 and living in urban settlements attended preschools. Group sizes in public kindergartens often exceed allowed norms and, yet, they are not able to fully accommodate existing demand due to growth in urban population and children's transition from private to public kindergartens.

The latter phenomenon has two explanations. On the one hand, the quality gap between private and public preschools has shrunk during this period given significant improvement in infrastructure, equipment, and the quality of food provided by public kindergartens. On the other hand, public preschools have become absolutely free.

⁹ UN Children Fund, 2017 Welfare Monitoring Study (WMS)

¹⁰ http://geostat.ge/?action=page&p_id=2602&lang=geo

¹¹ PF3.2: Enrollment in childcare and pre-schools

https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF3_2_Enrolment_childcare_preschool.pdf

¹² WMS 2017, *ibid*

¹³ <http://unicef.ge/44/access-to-early-and-preschool-education/525/Ingeng>

¹⁴ WMS 2017, *ibid*

¹⁵ World Bank, (2009) Poverty Assessment Report Georgia.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/132471468244171912/pdf/444000ESW0P1071C0Disclosed041281091.pdf>

¹⁶ WMS 2017, *ibid*

Greater enrollment and the increase in the share of kids served by the public system may be considered positive developments from the point of view of equalizing opportunities for children from different socio-economic backgrounds. Still, the significant increase in the demand for (free) public preschools comes with its own challenges. First, the public system is overloaded (even those parents who can afford *private* kindergartens often choose to take their children to free *public* kindergartens). Second, private kindergartens struggle to compete with the free services provided by the public sector, causing many to exit the market.

Since 2012, Tbilisi Kindergarten Agency, as well as other large cities have been trying to address the gap in supply by constructing new kindergartens¹⁷. However, the pace at which municipalities can build new kindergartens does not allow them to keep up with demand: kindergartens remain overloaded, and waiting lists do not get any shorter.

The electronic registration procedure employed by the Tbilisi Kindergarten Agency could be further streamlined. First, a targeted assistance service would benefit some of the vulnerable and less educated families who do not always know *how* to register their children – e.g. what documents to submit, etc. Second, the algorithm assigning children to kindergartens should consider a child's place of residence. At present, children who live in the vicinity of one kindergarten may be automatically assigned to a more distant kindergarten, causing inconvenience and adding to traffic congestion problems in the capital.

Rural areas

The situation is quite different in Georgia's rural areas. The main challenges here are dilapidated infrastructure, remoteness, difficult road access to, or a complete lack of, kindergartens, and absence of skilled and qualified personnel. A large percentage of rural kindergartens are in very bad condition, with even the most elementary hygiene norms not being properly upheld and basic technical issues remaining unresolved; many kindergartens cannot be considered safe¹⁸.

Ensuring that all children in rural areas have access to preschool education will require a major investment in physical infrastructure and personnel. And given the relatively small number of children to be served in many rural locations, increasing enrollment may be a very expensive undertaking, requiring a very large one-off investment (mostly in infrastructure) and high (per child) personnel and maintenance costs.

To add insult to injury, existing regulations may not be particularly accommodating when it comes to the possibility of trying alternative modalities of preschool education. According to the Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education, public kindergartens (except for school readiness programs) should operate 9 hours and provide 3 meals per day. This restriction rules out other possibilities, such as half-day educational programs for kids in small rural settlements.

Another provision in the law establishes an upper limit (15) on the number of children in a mixed-age group. While serving a legitimate goal of making sure that children of different ages receive adequate attention¹⁹, in reality, given that the amount of funding is not adjusted upwards if an additional group is created in line with the standard, this provision incentivizes kindergartens that lack sufficient space or personnel to limit the number of children they accept to 15 or only accept kids belonging into one age cohort (say, 3-4 or 4-5 year olds). Some children in this situation may be left without preschool education.

¹⁷ <http://kids.org.ge/projects/completed-projects/post/26>

¹⁸ Special Report on Monitoring of Early Education Institutes. 2014. Children Right Centre of Georgia's State Ombudsman. <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3326.pdf>

¹⁹ The evidence on mixed age groups – their impact on educational outcomes – is rather mixed. Some specialists suggest that mixed age groups are naturally suitable for kids' development.

An additional factor restricting access to kindergartens is the difficulty faced by many poor families to cover the cost of gifts and extracurricular activities, clothing and shoes, hygiene products and stationery, which may be informally required – or expected – by many early education establishments.

Children from ethnic minority groups

According to the Ombudsman’s monitoring report, preschool enrollment is particularly low among ethnic minority children²⁰. The reasons range from an insufficient number of preschools in ethnic minority regions²¹, to a lack of educational programs tailored for an ethnically and linguistically diverse environment, to a lack of teachers with the qualification and experience to handle such an environment²².

The deficit of viable preschool education options for ethnic minority children was discussed in the 2014 Georgian State Ombudsman’s Report on Ethnic Minorities. A key finding in this report is that in municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities, children do not have the option to learn *both* their own native language *and* Georgian – the official language of the Georgian state.

The problem is broader than just a lack of adequate infrastructure. Teacher training programs do not prepare caregivers and teachers for work in a culturally, linguistically and ethnically diverse environment. Consequently, very few caregivers and teachers have the requisite skills and experience. Finally, there are very few educational resources – educational games, brochures, etc., – to support teachers working in a bilingual and multicultural environment.

In 2013, the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science attempted, with the UN support²³, to tackle one aspect of the problem by developing and piloting a special “Nene, Dudu and Tsiko” education package. Consisting of a teacher’s guide, a child’s album and a workbook²⁴, this package was targeted at kindergarten groups of 5-to-6 year-old ethnic minority children in order to help them learn the Georgian language. Having been piloted in several municipal kindergartens, the Nene, Dudu and Tsiko package did not receive wider circulation despite positive feedback from both teachers and parents.

Importantly, while lacking access to native language pre-schooling options, some ethnic minority parents may be reluctant to send their kids to Georgian language kindergartens, even when such are available²⁵. Overcoming parental resistance, if it exists, will require a two-pronged effort: to develop proper bilingual and multicultural preschool education programs for ethnic minority children combined with a communication campaign focusing on the importance of early education.

Children with special needs

According to UNICEF data, in 2013, special needs children were enrolled in 187 kindergartens (about 15% of the total). However, a special education teacher was available in only 23 of these

²⁰ Special Report on Monitoring of Early Education Institutes. 2015. Children Right Centre of Georgia’s State Ombudsman. <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3326.pdf>

²¹ For example, out of 9,000 children in the Marneuli municipality, which is home to a large Azerbaijani minority, only 1500 children are enrolled in preschools which have a total capacity of 890 places.

²² Report on the implementation of the State Strategy of Civil Equality and Integration and 2015-2016 Action Plan. Ethnic Minority Council at the Georgia’s State Ombudsman Office, 2016.

²³ Two UN Children Fund programs contributed to the project: (1) Supporting ethnic minority children of preschool age in learning Georgian language, and (2) Implementing preschool policy to achieve equal access to, and improve the quality of, early learning in Georgia.

²⁴ Report on the implementation of the State Strategy of Civil Equality and Integration and 2015-2016 Action Plan. Ethnic Minority Council at Georgia’s State Ombudsman Office, 2017.

²⁵ There is rigorous evidence on this point, and further research would be required in order to address linguistic diversity issues.

kindergartens, all of them in Tbilisi (21) and large urban centers in Adjara and Imereti (one in each). In other words, not a single special education teacher served Georgia's smaller towns and villages²⁶.

Tbilisi provides some good examples of how to integrate children with special needs. In recent years, as a result of efforts by the Georgian government and the NGO community²⁷, there appears to be greater public awareness about education for special needs children; many teachers have been trained in relevant methodologies; appropriate teaching materials and guides have been developed; at least one special needs teacher is employed in every public preschool managed by the Tbilisi Kindergarten Agency.

Despite considerable progress, the way special needs children are actually integrated and benefit from participation in the preschool education system is yet far from satisfactory, even in Tbilisi. The main bottleneck concerns the skills of teaching personnel, however, many other problems have not been fully resolved either. The vast majority of typical kindergarten buildings, constructed in the Soviet or post-Soviet period, are not adapted to special needs kids²⁸; kindergartens are not allocated sufficient budgets to hire individual assistants or teachers to take care of children who need greater individual attention and physical support. Moreover, the parents and preschool sector officials are not always informed about their rights and obligations. The parents are often not aware of their right to request additional assistance for their kids. Kindergarten administrators are not always aware of the need and the possibility to allocate additional funds and human resources for this purpose, preferring to reject special needs children or limit their stay at the kindergarten to a few hours.

Addressing the challenge of special needs kids would require an increase in public funding in order to upgrade the physical infrastructure, and provide preschools with necessary equipment and educational supplies. While involving significant cost, however, infrastructure and equipment problems are relatively easy to address. A much greater challenge concerns the need to recruit, train and retain qualified personnel, on the one hand, and ultimately change public perceptions concerning the value of early learning for special needs children's development and social integration, on the other hand.

Today's kindergarten personnel lack some of the most basic competencies for special needs education, starting with correct diagnostics. Evidently, there is a critical deficit of qualified special needs teachers, psychologists and education experts at all levels – both in the kindergartens and relevant municipal departments. A 2015 study by World Vision provides a glimpse into the situation in three Georgian regions. Accordingly, only 16% of the surveyed kindergarten personnel currently work with special needs children; 29% may have worked with such children in the past, 44% have no prior experience; 11% were not able to answer the question²⁹.

To date, the Georgian society, including many parents of children with disabilities, do not fully understand the value of (good quality) preschool education for their children. And, very unfortunately, a lack proper expertise within the public preschool education system tends to reinforce existing stigmas, causing many Georgian families to give up.

²⁶ <http://data.unicef.ge/en/datasets/preschool-census>

²⁷ Three philanthropic organizations are particularly active in the field of special needs education: Portage Association, McLain Association for Children (<http://macgeorgia.org/en/>), First Step Georgia (<http://www.firststepgeorgia.org/>).

²⁸ Special report on monitoring of preschool entities, Georgia's State Ombudsman and Children Right Centre (2015) <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3371.pdf>

²⁹ Early childhood Development and Care. Situation Analysis.2015. World Vision

QUALITY OF EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

It goes without saying that preschool education is only effective if it is of high quality, tailored to a child's developmental needs. Low quality preschool education – and socialization – can even hamper a child's development.

The quality of early and preschool education is an outcome of many factors. As summarized in the 2007 report by Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child ("A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy"), "for young children from low-income families, participation in very high-quality, center-based, early education programs has been demonstrated to enhance child cognitive and social development [if they provide] some combination of the following characteristics:

1. highly skilled teachers;
2. small class sizes and high adult-to-child ratios;
3. age-appropriate curricula and stimulating materials in a safe physical setting;
4. a language-rich environment;
5. warm, responsive interactions between staff and children; and
6. high and consistent levels of child participation.³⁰

Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education envisions the creation of government agencies responsible for the drafting of relevant standards and technical regulations in order to ensure high quality care and education services. Approved by the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science (MES), the National Standards for Early and Preschool Care and Education cover key child development milestones and all quality requirements that educational programs are supposed to meet, such as safety and security, curriculum and methodology, physical environment, nutrition and hygiene, etc.

The highly decentralized model of preschool education management that is currently in place makes Georgian *municipalities* responsible for financing and implementing preschool education programs in compliance with the national quality standards. At the same time, the municipalities are also mandated to establish monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems for the purpose of assuring quality in the early education systems under their supervision.

Infrastructure and technical equipment

According to the latest census of the Georgian preschool education sector (1,259 institutions in 2013), most kindergartens assess the condition of their physical premises as satisfactory, good or even very good. Yet, data show a clear Tbilisi/urban/rural divide. For example, only slightly more than 10% of Tbilisi kindergartens report their buildings to be in bad (need major renovation) or very bad (building under the threat of collapse) condition. The share of kindergartens reporting their physical infrastructure to be in bad or very bad condition is much higher in Georgia's rural areas: almost 70% in Samtskhe Javakheti, and more than 50% in Kvemo Kartli, Samegrelo and Kakheti.

A similar divide is observed in all other aspects of kindergarten infrastructure and equipment. For example, only 12.8% of Tbilisi kindergartens are not equipped with a playground, whereas the national average is much higher – 42.3%. As could be expected, the vast majority (74.1%) of kindergartens not equipped with a playground are located in rural areas. On the positive side, in most rural kindergartens, kids have access to a yard and plenty of fresh air. Only 2.6% of all kindergartens report having neither a playground nor a yard (13 in urban areas and 20 in rural areas).³¹

³⁰ A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy, Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007 http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Policy_Framework.pdf

³¹ UN Children Fund, Census of Georgia's Preschool Institutes (2014).

http://unicef.ge/uploads/UNICEF_Preschool_Census_GEO_FINAL.PDF

A special report by the State Ombudsman has similar findings: 55% of examined preschool buildings need renovation. A majority of the kindergartens lack furniture, tools, methodological resources, books and toys³². The situation is particularly dire in small towns and villages.

Qualification/training of preschool personnel

The situation with the skills and professional qualifications of kindergarten teachers, caregivers and other staff is truly alarming³³, as reflected, for example, in the Georgian State Ombudsman's report (2015).

According to UNICEF's Preschool Census (2013)³⁴, Only 32.2% of preschool teachers have higher education (a Bachelor's or Master's degree) in preschool education or teaching; an additional 35.4% have a vocational degree in preschool education or teaching; and 32.5% have no relevant qualification at all. According to the same data, teachers find it difficult to individualize programs according to children's needs and manage difficult behavior. Non-teaching preschool personnel also lack necessary skills and professional qualifications, especially in the regions where trainings are less available.

According to our interviews with Preschool Education Development Division at the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science³⁵, preschool principals are not qualified and not informed about the ways in which they could support and train their staff. This is a very weak link in the system. The procedures for training caregivers and preschool education specialists ("methodologists") are being developed in coordination with the Teachers Professional Development Center (TPDC). TPDC will coordinate trainings beginning in June 2018. For the moment, TPDC has only 2-3 persons dealing with preschool educators and is in the process of hiring additional staff. Some of those trained will be qualified as "trainers" and will be employed to train "caregiver pedagogues". Salaries of qualified personnel will be upgraded accordingly, but relevant procedures are yet to be developed.

One causal factor for the lack of professional qualification in the early education system is the nonexistence of relevant formal education programs. Such programs have been introduced at the vocational level only in 2006. At the higher education level, only one program is available at Ilya State University³⁶. Moreover, this program constitutes a "minor" within an undergraduate teacher training program and does not provide students with the qualification to teach in the preschool system.

Another related challenge is the lack of a systematic approach (at the national level) for in-service training and further professional development of kindergarten personnel. There are some examples of kindergarten unions and agencies financing the training of their education personnel. For example, in 2016-17, Tbilisi Kindergarten Agency has financed the training of all psychologists, special teachers, speech therapists, and pedagogy specialists (so-called 'methodologists') by Iliia State University. Similar trainings are unfortunately not available in places where they are most needed – in Georgia's small towns and remote villages. Some short training programs, targeting these locations, are organized and financed by nongovernmental organizations (with donor funding); a few training programs are offered by Georgian universities. However, teachers would often have no choice but to finance their participation in trainings as such costs are rarely included in the budgets of their kindergartens or Georgian municipalities. Relevant pedagogy literature is printed in small quantities

³² A Special Report on Monitoring of Preschool Institutions, Georgia's State Ombudsman and Children Rights Centre (2015), <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3371.pdf>

³³ Ibid, ibid

³⁴ UN Children Fund, Census of Georgia's Preschool Institutes (2014).

http://unicef.ge/uploads/UNICEF_Preschool_Census_GEO_FINAL.PDF

³⁵ Interview with Nino Beselia and Mariam Gilashvili, Head and Senior Specialist, respectively, with the Preschool Education Development Division at the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science, April 26, 2018

³⁶ Correspondence of the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement, 2017

and is mostly available electronically; when delivered it is often not accompanied by training, which limits its practical utilization.

The thrust of the Georgian government's efforts so far has been to establish and promote new professional standards for workers engaged in the preschool sector. The government approved such standards for teachers and caregivers, and is developing a qualification framework to be used in the design of university-level education programs. Additionally, the Ministry of Education launched the process of developing new teacher training modules. The government's 2017-2021 strategy³⁷ includes a plan to implement two cycles of training for pedagogy experts in all municipalities, deliver a special training module for teachers, as well as train trainers for the preschool education sector needs.

Yet, for the stronger standards and qualification framework to bear their fruit, the government has to increase the preschool sector's attractiveness for a new generation of preschool teachers, caregivers and other personnel. A key piece of the puzzle is remuneration. Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Education determines that teachers' minimum remuneration shall be determined by a respective normative act of GoG. This requirement of the law is yet to be fulfilled.

In recent years, remuneration of preschool staff has slightly increased, however, the pace and magnitude of improvement leaves much to be desired³⁸. In the absence of central regulation, compensation levels are quite different in different municipalities. While precise administrative data are not available to MES Preschool Education Development Division staff, our interviewees³⁹ assess that teachers and caregivers salaries range from 150 to 200GEL in the regions and about 400 GEL in Tbilisi. Practically all caregivers and teachers work from 9am till 5 or 6pm, not part-time. Principals might be paid about 400-500 GEL in the regions, and 600 GEL in Tbilisi. A 2016 study by Civitas Georgika⁴⁰ reports slightly higher numbers but agrees with the main point: preschool education workers find themselves at the lowest end of the earnings distribution in the Georgian economy, hardly providing any material stimulus for new and existing staff.

An additional factor hindering the efforts to improve the quality of preschool personnel is the tendency of all Georgian governments (and their regional branches) to enlist preschool and general education workers in political campaigning at the local level. On the one hand, this tendency translates into a lack of political will to implement painful restructuring measures that would necessarily impinge on the interests of incumbent workers. On the other hand, attempts at political manipulation of preschool teachers and directors, as reported by Transparency International-Georgia⁴¹, adversely affect preschool staff motivation and performance.

Finally, for young people to want to join the preschool education sector – and for existing staff to be able to do their job – teachers and caretakers must be offered an enabling environment in which they could thrive professionally: working with small groups, in a properly heated and air-conditioned space, with access to necessary educational supplies and support services.

Unfortunately, the kind of environment teachers and caregivers have to cope with in Georgia is often far from 'enabling'. The children-to-teacher ratio in many cases exceeds acceptable limits (40-60

³⁷ Early Education Development Strategy 2017 of the Ministry of Education and Science

³⁸ Teacher as a profession and early education. 2015. Ana Janelidze <http://mastsavlebeli.ge/?p=1629>. Will the salaries of kindergarten teachers increase – plans of political parties 2016. Salome Gorgodze <http://liberali.ge/articles/view/24808/gaizrdeba-tu-ara-baghis-aghmzrdelebistvis-khelfasi--ra-gegmebi-aqvt-politikur-partiebs>

³⁹ Interview with Mariam Gilashvili and Nino Beselia, *ibid*.

⁴⁰ <http://kids.org.ge/news/hot-news/post/149>

⁴¹ Use of administrative resources in 2017 municipal elections in Georgia. 2017. Transparency International Georgia

children in one group), which may be a reason for the prevalence of violence and inappropriate professional conduct by preschool personnel, as reported in the Georgian Ombudsman's monitoring study of the preschool sector. Indeed, one of the most alarming findings in the report⁴² is the prevalence of psychological and physical violence (and/or physical punishments) towards children, cases of which were reported in about 70% and 40% of the 61 monitored preschools, respectively.

Governance and management framework

Given the lack of a strong individual and institutional champion, at times it appears that preschool education is an orphan child that gets very little attention from national policymakers and only survives thanks to education-focused international organizations, such as UNICEF, and a small number of civil society organizations.

Thus, preschool education is far from constituting a top priority for the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science (MES). Created only in 2013, the Ministry's Preschool Education Development Division consists of just two persons whose main responsibilities are to (i) coordinate the development of all standards and technical regulations for the preschool sector and (ii) implement the educational standard. Going forward, the Ministry might become the national coordination unit for the implementation of *all* standards and technical regulations, in which case the tiny division dealing with preschool education will be upgraded to a department.

The Ministry's education resource centers, which are located in every municipality, presently deal with general education. If MES does assume additional management or regulatory functions with respect to the preschool sector, these centers may have to hire additional staff (one or two person) specialized in preschool education. The physical monitoring, data collection, preschool inspection functions may be outsourced to a private company, leaving the ministry staff responsible for analyzing the data, reporting key results and developing policy recommendations for MES, the municipalities, and the public.

A lack of leadership is also reflected in the poor quality data concerning the preschool sector. Administrative data on preschool enrollment, staff qualifications, infrastructure is not systematically collected and analyzed, either at the municipal or the national level. The main sources of information are the annual household survey by the Georgian Statistical Office (GeoStat), which is not at all focused on the preschool sector, and occasional surveys commissioned by international organizations, such as UNICEF's Census of Georgia's Preschool Institutes (most recently conducted in 2014). Neither the government nor the municipalities have any information about private provision of preschool education. Private kindergartens are not required to register as such and are impossible to identify in the general business registry.

The 2016 Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education envisions a procedure – yet to be developed – whereby all new and existing public and private kindergartens in the country will be required to go through a rigorous authorization process in the course of which institutions will be assessed on their ability to meet the national standards concerning physical space and playgrounds, equipment and educational supplies, sanitary and hygienic conditions, food and nutrition, formal qualifications and experience of preschool personnel. Yet, the law does not include any mechanisms to enforce the new regulations and penalize unauthorized activities in the field of early and preschool education. In the absence of such mechanisms, the private sector may not have the incentives to comply.

Indeed, many practicalities of the envisaged authorization process are yet to be worked out. Who will be primarily responsible for authorizing preschool institutions? Will municipal governments be able to acquire necessary knowledge and skills for a fully decentralized authorization system to be

⁴² Ibid.

implemented in a professional and economically efficient manner? If not, what is the best way to distribute this responsibility as well as other management and control functions between the Ministry of Education and Science, municipal authorities, and municipal kindergarten unions and agencies.

Adjustments will also be needed in the system of funding preschool institutions, which for the moment is lagging behind the regulatory framework. Is free preschool education for all, regardless of income and social status, the right approach for Georgia? Would it not make sense to introduce means testing and targeted subsidization of preschool education?

The current funding scheme make the amount of public funds allocated to a preschool institution a direct function of the number of kids served. While simple to administer, such an approach does not take into account the quality of service provided by preschools. For example, it does not create any incentives to reduce the size of groups, increase the number of teachers and caregivers, or engage additional staff to work with problematic kids or teach another language.

Finally, preschool sector workers, just like other public sector employees, often find themselves involved – against their will – in political campaigning on the side of the dominant political parties. As reported by Transparency International-Georgia⁴³, attempts at political manipulation of preschool teachers and directors adversely affect preschool staff motivation and performance. Political tit-for-tat in the sector is also a factor hindering painful but necessary reforms.

KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recently adopted national standards of early and preschool education follow the best global practices in the field. However, given the reality on the ground, the new standards are easier declared than implemented in practice. A bold strategic adjustment along the following four dimensions will be required for the preschool education sector to perform its social function:

5. **Funding.** Georgia will have to adjust national priorities and increase funding for early and preschool education;
6. **Leadership and management.** The preschool sector needs a strong institutional ‘parent’ and champion at the national level. The sector will be impossible to reform with the current, highly decentralized preschool management model whereby every municipality is left to its own devices. The Ministry of Education and Science must be given the policy tools not only to set national standards but also actively manage the sector – reallocate human and financial resources from Tbilisi to remote locations, create regional management units to provide support to, and monitor the quality of preschool education provided by, the municipalities;
7. **Human capital.** The level of professionalism in the sector is utterly inadequate. Georgia will have to come up with a program to retire incompetent personnel and hire new staff based on objective performance criteria and the sector’s needs. The system for educating and training preschool workforce, including its in-service training component, will have to be upgraded to serve the sector’s human capital needs;
8. **Innovation.** The preschool sector should not be overregulated to allow and encourage local experimentation with alternative delivery models suited to different social circumstances, economic geography settings, and different needs (ethnic minorities, disabilities). Such models should allow to engage and better communicate with parents, bring in social partners, and change public perceptions of the individual, social and economic value of preschool education. Novel pilot programs and policy interventions should be properly assessed and scaled up when deemed successful.

⁴³ Use of administrative resources in 2017 municipal elections in Georgia. 2017. Transparency International Georgia

Specific recommendations:

- **Fees and targeted subsidies.** The transition towards higher quality standards should follow a feasible path. If funding availability is a binding constraint for reducing group sizes and improving the child/teacher ratios, consider reintroducing modest tuition fees while providing targeted subsidization of preschool costs to lower middle class families, and not only the poor. This will relieve the pressure on the budget and help maintain private provision at an acceptable level.
- **Regional preschool education management units.** To facilitate the introduction of new preschool education standards, we recommend to establish under the Ministry of Education and Science regional units performing the following functions with respect to clusters of up to eight individual municipalities (or Georgian regions): facilitate inter-agency coordination and regional cooperation; monitor performance at the municipal level; coach municipal preschool management staff in the implementation of rigorous authorization procedures, regular inspections and observations; coordinate the delivery of training addressing gaps in professional skills.
- **Transparency and accountability.** Systematic collection and publication of data concerning the preschool education sector would strengthen the sector's accountability to the public, inform policymaking, and help parents make better choices. The following categories of data should be put in the public domain:
 - administrative data about the sector (number of children/staff in public and private institutions, staff qualification, quality of infrastructure/facilities);
 - impact assessment studies concerned with pilots and novel policy interventions;
 - surveys (e.g. parent satisfaction surveys) and child performance studies and observations.
- **Independence and self-governance of preschool institutions.** Preschool institutions should be allowed greater freedom to create the new and the different. In and of itself, such freedom could serve as a powerful incentive to improve performance. Of course, greater freedom must be accompanied by greater accountability to the parents and social partners, who should be actively engaged in the governance and monitoring of preschool institutions.
- **Teacher training.** Georgia has to create new and improve existing education programs, at all levels, preparing future cadre for the preschool education sector, including online and face-to-face continuous education programs. A fast track training and recruitment path could be introduced for new teachers, similar to Teach for Georgia program.
- **HR policies.** The following measures could be considered in order to attract a new generation of teachers and caretakers, and encourage existing staff to invest in own skills and serve in remote locations:
 - Increase the basic level of remuneration for qualified personnel to a competitive level so as to encourage existing staff to go through relevant trainings and certification exams, and incentivize young Georgians to join the preschool caretaker/teacher profession;
 - Encourage early retirement of educators who lack necessary skills and qualifications and are not willing or able to go through requisite trainings and exams;
 - Offer extra remuneration to people with highly demanded qualifications, such as special needs teachers, pedagogy experts and psychologists;
 - Offer special incentives (higher remuneration, free housing, career opportunities) to young preschool teachers and caretakers willing to relocate – for a certain period of

time – from Tbilisi and other major cities to rural locations suffering from an acute shortage of qualified personnel.

- **Communication.** The Georgian government may want to work with civil society organizations and international partners in order to implement awareness campaigns and generally improve communication to overcome stigma, inform parents and caretakers of their rights and obligations, train and otherwise engage parents. Early education centers for children of 0-2 age can be an excellent means of exposing parents to the advantages of preschool education.
- **Teaching materials and educational resources.** Georgia should continue investing in the entire range of teaching materials serving preschool education needs, including those tailored for special needs children, multilingual and multicultural settings.
- **Online registration procedures.** As long as access to public preschools falls short of demand, it may be important to do more to prioritize socially vulnerable families in the process of online registration. Such families may need assistance with getting all the required paperwork in order. Currently the status of socially vulnerable families is assigned to families scoring below 100001, however, this threshold may be increased to prioritize a larger number of families. The online registration procedure should assign children to kindergartens that are closest to their place of residence.
- **Voucher financing and private provision.** Children who were denied access to the public preschool system should be provided with a voucher fully or partially covering the cost of education in private preschool institutions, if such are available in the area. Voucher financing of private preschool education can be a viable alternative to building new public kindergartens in neighborhoods experiencing a temporary spike in fertility (such as when populated by young families) or small communities in which construction public institutions is not economically viable in the medium term.
- **Infrastructure and transportation bottlenecks.** To address space shortages, municipalities can repurpose and renovate publically-owned buildings to serve preschool education purposes. Municipal vehicles could be used to help transport children to kindergartens located in nearby villages and towns while adhering to strict safety measures.
- **Bilingual programs.** In order to increase enrollment of ethnic minority children, Georgia has to make a significant effort to develop bilingual programs, study books, games and educational resources. Teachers and caretakers should be trained to deliver bilingual programs. Communication efforts target ethnic minority families should inform them about the benefits of preschool education.
- **Special needs programs.** Existing kindergarten infrastructure should be upgraded to serve children with disabilities and other special needs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Convention on the Rights of Children (1989). Downloaded on 6/12/2017 from:

http://unicef.ge/uploads/CRC_georgian_language_version.pdf

Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education. Downloaded on 6/12/2017 from:

http://ssa.gov.ge/files/01_GEO/KANONMDEBLOBA/Sakanonmdeblo/42.pdf

Decree №141/N dated May 20, 2010 by the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Care of Georgia on Approval of the Rule of Estimation of Social and Economic Condition of the Socially Unprotected Families. Downloaded on 6/12/2017 from:

http://ssa.gov.ge/files/01_GEO/KANONMDEBLOBA/Kanon%20Qvemdebare/249.pdf

Use of administrative resources for the 2017 local municipal elections in Georgia. 2017. Transparency International-Georgia.

Government of Georgia (30/10/2017). Resolution # 488 on Approval of the National Standards of Early and Preschool Care and Education. Downloaded on 11/12/2017 from:

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3838798>

Government of Georgia (27/10/2017). Resolution # 478 on Approval of Professional Standard for the Kindergarten Teacher. Downloaded on 11/12/2017 from:

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3837404>

Government of Georgia (30/10/2017). Resolution # 487 on approval of the technical regulation on Food and Nutrition Standards for Early and Preschool Care and Education Entities. Downloaded on 11/12/2017 from: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3838370>

Government of Georgia (27/10/2017). Resolution # 485 on approval of technical regulation Sanitary and Hygiene Standards of Early and Preschool Care and Education Entities. Downloaded on 11/12/2017 from: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3837694>

2018-2020 Strategy for Implementing Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education, Council for coordinating implantation of Georgia's Law on Early and Preschool Care and Education at the Legal Committee of the Parliament of Georgia

UN Children Fund. 2017. Annual Research of Population Welfare

Georgia's State Ombudsman (2015). Special Report on Monitoring of Preschool and Early Education Entities. Downloaded on 6/12/2017 from the link <http://www.ombudsman.ge/ge/reports/specialuri-angarishebi/specialuri-angarishi-skolamdeli-saagmzrdelo-dawesebulebebis-monitoringis-shesaxeб.page>

Report on Monitoring of the Implementation of the National Strategy of Civil Equality and Integration and 2015-2016 Action Plan. Ethnic Minority Council at the State Ombudsman of Georgia. 2017. Published in February.

Special Report on Monitoring of Preschool Education Entities. 2015 Georgia's State Ombudsman, Children Rights Centre. Downloaded on 6/12/2017 from the link

<http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3371.pdf>

Correspondence of the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement, 2017

Early Education Development Strategy of the Ministry of Education and Science, 2017

Teacher as a profession and early education. 2015. Ana Janelidze, downloaded in 6.12.2017 from <http://mastsavlebeli.ge/?p=1629>

Salome Gorgodze. Will the salaries of the kindergarten teachers increase? – Plans of political parties, 2016. Downloaded on 6.12.2017 from: <http://liberali.ge/articles/view/24808/gaizrdeba-tu-ara-baghis-aghmzrdelebistvis-khelfasi--ra-gegmebi-aqvt-politikur-partiebs>

Data of the survey of the municipalities. Civitas Georgika. 2017