

**Information from the Government of Georgia with regard to
implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 22/3 –
“The work and employment of persons with disabilities”**

**1. Do the National or local constitutions or law of your country prevent or restrict
access to any student with disabilities to regular schools at any level?**

The Constitution of Georgia adopted on 24 August 1995 Last amendment 27.12.06, “ *Everyone shall have the right to receive education and the right to free choice of a form of education.*” (Article 35 points1) “*The state guarantees that educational programs conform to international standards and rights*” (Article 35, point 2); General and Special education in Georgia are regulated with the law of "General Education" and the National Curriculum 2011-2016. It should be noted that in 2010 in both regulatory documents were made significant changes to provide quality education for Special Education Needs in Georgia. By the Law of “General Education” was interpreted the meaning of Special Education Needs, Inclusive Education, Individual Learning Plan, Multidisciplinary Team and Special Teacher. In National Curriculum is reflected the process of Inclusive Education at Schools, importance of Individual Education Plan, the attendance of Special Education Needs at school, the assessment their academic progress and school living certification.

At the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia exists the Inclusive Education Development Division, which function is to create Inclusive Education policy and strategy, to strengthen Inclusive Education according to the international Inclusive Education model, to make a coordination of current activities and monitoring of Inclusive Education, to collaborate with the international, national and nongovernmental organizations.

**2. Is all education of children and adults with disabilities under the control of the
Ministry of Education?**

For a long time, homogeneity in the educational system was a natural phenomenon for Georgian society, which was part of the Soviet legacy. Students with special educational needs were strictly segregated from society and did not have the opportunity of receiving education in the mainstream educational environment, together with peers. These students were predominantly

accommodated in special education institutions. In some cases, they were left behind any education processes.

The first inclusive education project implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science was launched in 2006-2008. Funded and supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and implemented by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center, the project “Introduction of Inclusive Education in 10 Public Schools of Tbilisi” “contributed greatly to integration of the children with disabilities and socially isolated children into society. US Government support to inclusive education reforms is provided through the USAID project Supporting Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities, implemented by Save the Children (SC) and its partners Collation for Independent Living and World Vision Georgia.

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The “Introduction of Inclusive Education in 10 Schools of Tbilisi” has yielded some important results:

Nearly 105 students with SEN have been introduced to mainstream education processes;

One hundred and fifty teachers have been provided with professional development opportunities in the field of special education. These interventions helped increase the comfort of social and psychological environment for students with SEN;

All the participating general education schools have been adapted to the needs of students with SEN. The schools were provided with equipment that helped created a comfortable physical environment for students with SEN;

A multidisciplinary team including psychologists, special education teachers, speech therapists and occupational therapists has been established. The primary tasks of the team includes identification and assessment of students with SEN and their introduction to participating mainstream schools; performance as classroom teacher aids in development and implementation of individual education programs for students with SEN; assessment of academic and social achievements of students with SEN participating in the project; school assistance in the implementation of the inclusive education project.

The Project “Development of Inclusive Education in Public Schools in 10 Municipalities of Georgia” has been carried out in 2009 - 2012 within the framework of the Grant Agreement (01/02; 06.03.009) and its amendments (First amendment dated as 15.11.2011; Second amendment dated as 24.08.2012) signed between the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoES) and the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway (MoER).

The aim of the project was introduction of inclusive education in Georgian regions and formation of the sustainable system of inclusive education.

The implementation of the project was in line with following documents:

- “The Law on General Education”,
- “The National Education Plan of 2011-2016”
- “The Strategy and Action Plan for Education of Students with Special Education Needs (for 2009-2012)”
- UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action

Fulfillment of project activities supported Georgian Education System to make steps forward towards ratification of “The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006”

Following seven main directions in the project were based on fundamental principles of this convention (Referred to Articles: 5, 8, 9, 17, 24, 30):

1. Rising public awareness on issues of inclusive education;

2. Establishment of the inclusive education supporting system at regional level – formation of the multidisciplinary teams and their professional development;
3. Enhancement of human resources – professional development of the heads of educational resource centers, school principals, teachers, parents and other specialists on issues of inclusive education;
4. Adaptation of the physical infrastructure at schools;
5. Inclusion of children with special educational needs in public schools and provision of adequate educational environment/conditions for them;
6. Provision of inclusive education collaborative network at regional level;
7. Enhancement of the role of higher education in the field of inclusive education.

At the same time, project created a baseline for introduction of inclusive education in Vocational Education and Training System in Georgia. Basing on obtained experience, Georgian educational system and the society showed readiness to deal with new challenges that consider formation of adequate educational environment for inclusion of students with special educational needs to Vocation institutions. To achieve this goal, the MoES will be working next three years.

It should be stated, that on June 14, 2010, Project “Development of Inclusive Education in Public Schools in 10 Municipalities of Georgia” was nominated as the “Best State Program” at the forum-exhibition dedicated to the International Disability Day, organized by the Coalition for Independent Living, Public Defender’s Office and international organization ”Save the Children”.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia recognized inclusive Education as a part of Education System.

Introduction of Inclusive Education in Vocational Education and Training (VET) System in Georgia

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia started implementation of Inclusive Education in Vocational Education and Training system in 2013. This new approach is supported by

Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research in the frames of project „Introduction of Inclusive Education in Vocational Education and Training (VET) System in Georgia “. The purpose of the project is to:

1. Creation Recommendation for changes on Legislation level;
2. Increasing role of social partners in the process;
3. Development of Human resources in VET for effective practice;
4. Preparing physical environment for people with special needs in VET;
5. Recruitment of Special Need Children and Their involvement in VET centers.

The Ministry of Education and Science created and proved the special procedures of Vocational assessment. In 2013 nearly 70 Special Education Need people were registered at 11 Vocational Education centers and assessed by Multidisciplinary team.

Integrated Classes in Public School in Georgia

From September 2013 the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia started to implement the program “Support Inclusive Education”, by this program was opened three integrated classes. 1class For hard of hearing pupils, 1 class for the pupils with AUTIST and By the European Standard of Care of Children with cancer – the article 11”The right of the hospitalized child 3. “Play and Education Facilities “All children in hospital should have the right not only to education but also to enjoy recreational activities appropriate for their age. These are essential to maintain a degree of normality and to continue the child’s social and educational development throughout their cancer pathway. Within a ward, there must be one room dedicated to 20 education and a separate room available for relaxation and play. Funds should be available both for materials as well as staff to provide these services” – The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia opened the class for children with leukemia at M. Iashvili Child Central Hospital.

3. Does your country have a plan or program that progressively promotes the transformation of the education system into an inclusive education system including some or all of the following measures?

In 2005 with the support of Norwegian Government and UNICEF Ministry of Education and Science Georgia started to develop inclusive Education. With the support USAID and Save the Children was created the first the State Strategy and Action Plan for Special Education Needs 2009-2011. Above mentioned strategy was determined as transition, preparation period of time for achieving long-term goals for Special Education Needs. The purpose of the Ministry of Education and Science, with the State Strategy and Action plan was to improve the methodology and material technical base of Special schools and to develop Inclusive Education.

To create state strategy and action plan of 2013-2016 for special need educators, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia leads with UNESCO - the "Education for All" program, the aim is, in spite of their educational needs by 2015 all children, have the opportunity to:

- To get general education near the place of residence or any other elected public schools;
- To obtain diverse, flexible knowledge, to development academic and social skills through education programs;
- To be involved in the process of uninterrupted education, including pre-school, vocational and higher education.
- To have equal rights and to develop their personal potential.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia created state strategy and action plan of 2013-2015 for special need educators

The new strategy for 2013-2015 consists of four main directions: 1) Legal framework and management system of Inclusive Education; 2) To increase the quality education for Special Education Need pupils and Students. 3) To provide adequate financial system for Special Education Needs; 4) To create monitoring system of Inclusive Education.

The Strategy and Action plan is 2013-2013 created by the Ministry of Education and Science became the part of the State Strategy and Action Plan for Disabilities 2013-2016

1. Legal framework and management system of Inclusive Education

- 1.1 To create recommendations for the additions and changes in the education legislations (the Law of General, Vocation and high Education) of Georgian, for the special need education pupil's continuous and efficient education.
- 1.2 To develop legislative acts which specifically regulates the education of SEN pupils;
- 1.3 To determine the responsibility of SNE in the education management structures.

2. To increase the quality education for Special Education Need pupils and Students

- 2.1 To inculcate effective education mechanism for SNE pupils;
 - 2.1.1 To create special financial system for SNE;
 - 2.1.2 To create the mechanism of academic assessment of SNE pupils;
 - 2.1.3 To create monitoring system of Inclusive Education;
- 2.2 To improve the quality of education of SNE pupils;
 - 2.2.1 To Start the process of adaptation of SNE pupils' identification instrument;
 - 2.2.2 To improve education process and create new methodology for boarding-public schools (there are 9 boarding schools in Georgia 1 For blinds pupils, 2 for deaf pupils, 1 physics and mathematics, 4 mentally disorder, 1 for behavior)
 - 2.2.3 To train public, boarding-schools teacher, teachers from vocational institutions.
 - 2.2.4 To create guidelines on based on National Curriculum;
 - 2.2.5 To create, print and spread text-books and educational materials for pupils and students;
- 2.3 To provide important physical infrastructure and education environment for SNE pupils.
 - 2.3.1 To adapt the physical environment of schools
 - 2.3.2 To provide blind and deaf pupils with text-books;
 - 2.3.3 To start the research of distance learning protection for SNE pupils and pilot it.

3. To provide adequate financial system for Special Education Needs;

- 3.1 To create new formula for funding SEN pupils and students;
- 3.2 To pilot new financial system;
- 3.3 To inculcate new financial system.

4. To create monitoring system of Inclusive Education

- 4.1 To inculcate standardized instruments for early identification and assessment of SENs;
- 4.2 To create statistic data base of SENs on general, vocational and high education;
- 4.3 Nonstop analyze of needs of SEN pupils and students;
- 4.4 to create support system in Special, Inclusive , vocational and high education system;
- 4.5 To increase the quality of Public school teachers and other specialists in general and vocational system;
- 4.6 To increase the number of multidisciplinary team

Special Schools in Georgia

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia 2009-2010 made the assessment of all 14 special schools of Georgia. After assessment was reformed the system and was left 8 Special schools instead of 14: 1 for blind and low vision, 2 for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, 1 Behavior and 4 for Mentally Disorder.

2009-2010 the Ministry of education and Science and Save the Children conducted an assessment of deaf and hard-of- hearing children attending special schools within the framework of USAID-funded project, Supporting Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities. The purpose was to eradicate the Soviet idea of defectology in assessed schools. Defectology was substituted by modern approaches that support continuation of every child's development and learning notwithstanding his/her speech and hearing abilities. Besides, the special schools work on developing child's speech and hearing skills by using new generation [modern technology] hearing aids as well as by introducing improved methods of speech development.

Sign language and other communication means became the basis of teaching and learning processes and should be taught from Grade 1. Teaching methods as well as curricula brought into compliance with acknowledged child development and national curricula requirements.

In 2013 the Ministry of Education and Science provided the special school for blind pupil with the text books with Braille;

Traditionally, a significant part of financial resources of schools is secured by state budget funds. The system of vouchers works for funding schools. This financial system allow schools to receive state funding according to the number of students they serve. The primary intention of this particular reform initiation is to provide fair and effective funding of schools. Per capita funding and consequently monetary calculations per voucher are standardized. The public schools did not get any additional funds for Special Education Needs till 2013. Low salaries and lack of financial incentives create a difficult environment for schools to recruit and retain teachers of high quality. Since 2013 the Ministry of Education and Science plans to finance the wage of special teachers and also created the project for different voucher formula for rural schools.

All special schools get the voucher for each Special Education Need pupil. The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia carries out the project “Special Education Need Child’s support program at Special schools”. By this program we support boarding house, medical insurance and close only for the pupil which get education at special schools.

Training

1. Train special educators to serve as additional resources to regular teachers;

Special education teachers in Georgia represent a small group of specialists, working with pupils with special needs in both, regular and special schools. The majority of special educators are employed as assistant teachers, the rest are coordinators of inclusive education.

Qualification of special educators:

- Bachelor degree in so called “defectology” or special needs education.
- Bachelor/master degree in pedagogy, psychology and so on. And additional trainings and courses in special education.

To promote continual professional development of special educators professional standards for special education teachers was set up by the National Center for Teachers Professional Development and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in 2010.

Special training course for special educators was established and piloted in 2012. The special course is provided by the National Centre for Teachers Professional Development. The course consists of 75 contact hours. The main topics are as follow:

- Developmental disorders
- Learning difficulties and effective teaching strategies

Development of individual education plan

- Behavior disorder and classroom management

The training course is accessible for all specialists working at school (regular teachers, special teachers, inclusive education coordinators, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists etc..) Since April 2013 five courses in special education was conducted; the number of participants in each group varied from 15 to 25. Teachers have opportunities to register on the course during the whole year.

Teacher Professional Development Center (TPDC) provide the following support teachers to meet different needs of students:

1. In-service trainings for regular teachers. Training module was established and piloted in 2011. The topics of training was defined based on pilot outcomes. Training module consists of 25 contact hours and describes teaching environment and methodologies helping the teacher to meet different needs of the pupils (including those with special education needs).

Abovementioned training course is provided in regions as well as in Tbilisi. Almost all regions of Georgia have been covered and more than 3000 teachers have been trained.

2. Individual consulting program – TPDC provides individual consulting program for regular teachers; for whom trainings are not helpful/ informative enough and need additional help in teaching students with special needs, can apply to the centre and ask for consultancy. Consultants form the centre will assist regular teacher in defining appropriate teaching strategies, making individual goals, organizing teaching environment for the particular student with special need.

Teachers need to be supported to make an inclusive teacher environment in the class. Most of teachers have to teach at large classes of 25 and more children which makes difficult for them to

meet all different needs of all students. In the west majority of school buildings physical environment is not adapted for wheelchairs or students with visual or hearing impairments. Transportation of children with limited movement from home to school is also a problem, especially in regions. Transportation problem makes necessary home education to be provided. In order to assist teachers to adapt curriculum and make individual education plans, trainings and individual consulting program are provided.

Monitoring

In the State Strategy and Action Plan of 2013-2015 for special need educators is one chapter “to create monitoring system of inclusive Education”

Statistic Information

Total Number of pupils	Number of Special Education Needs at Public Schools	of Number Assessed by Multidisciplinary Team	of pupil Pupils at Special Schools	of Public Schools with ramps
557097	3737	2082	628	211

