

ETF-ILO NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEM REVIEWS

Questionnaire and country reports

NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEM REVIEW

GEORGIA
2022

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DCFTA	– Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
EMIS	– Education Management Information System
ESIDA	– Education and Science Infrastructure Development Agency
EU	– European Union
GCCI	– Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GEA	– Georgian Employers’ Association
GIZ	– Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoG	– the Government of Georgia
GE	– General Education
HE	– Higher Education
LEPL	– Legal Entity of Public Law
MIDPLHSA	– Ministry of Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs
MoCSY	– Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth
MoES	– The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
MEPA	– Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture
NAEC	– National Assessment and Examination Center
NCEQE	– National Center for Education Quality Enhancement
PCCP	– Professional Consultation and Career Planning
SESA	– State Employment Support Agency
SME	– Small and Medium Enterprises
TPDC	– Teachers’ Professional Development Center
UNDP	– United Nations Development Program
VE	– Vocational Education

1. CONTEXT AND SYSTEM OVERVIEW

1.1. Context

Georgia is a Southern Caucasus country, neighbouring Turkey, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. Georgians represent majority of population (83.8%), with Azeris (6.5%), Armenians (5.7%), Russians (1.5%) being the largest other ethnic groups¹. The population is 3.7 million. 57% of the population live in urban areas, among them 1.1 million in the capital of Tbilisi. The share of youth (aged 15-24) among the general population has been decreasing (from 20.8% in 2013 to 17.7% in 2019), indicating that the Georgian population is gradually ageing. Two primary factors explaining the decrease are low natural growth rates and emigration.² As many as 746 000 emigrants (16% of the country's population)³ live abroad (the main destination countries have been Russia, Ukraine, Greece, Germany, Spain, the United States and Turkey), with the age group 25–29 being the highest, followed by those aged 30–34 and aged 20–24.

Georgia is an upper middle-income country⁴ with a growing gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, which increased from USD 8 000 in 2012 to USD 11 400 in 2018. Over the past 10 years Georgia's GDP growth has fluctuated considerably, falling from 7.2% in 2011 to only 2.7% in 2016. However, after catching up in 2017, the Georgian economy continued to perform well in 2019, with GDP growth standing at 5% until Covid 19 turned the growth figures into negative in 2020 (- 6.8%)⁵. The main contributors to GDP in 2019 were services (60.4%), followed by industry (20.0%) and agriculture (6.2%). Services are also the fastest growing sector, with hospitality and financial services leading the way.

In recent years Georgia has continuously improved the business environment for all enterprises (including SMEs) by simplifying administrative regulations, reducing the tax burden, fighting corruption, facilitating free trade, promoting privatisation and initiating a policy partnership platform to build a national lifelong entrepreneurial learning concept. The World Bank's Doing Business assessment of 2020 ranked Georgia 7th out of 190 countries⁶.

TABLE 1. MAJOR EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS

	2010	2015	2019	2020
Population (in thousands)	3 799.8.	3 721.9	3 723.5	3 716.9
Workforce (15+ age group)	1603,8	1675,6	1572,8	1523,7
Employed	1167,6	1308,5	1295,9	1241,8
Hired	710,0	855,3	897,5	845,3

¹ Geostat

² Policies for Human Capital Development Georgia, 2020. ETF

³ Geostat

⁴ <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

⁵ <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/23/mtliani-shida-produkti-mshp>

⁶ <https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/reports/global-reports/doing-business-2020>

Self-employed	455,2	445,6	397,9	395,9
Unemployed (15+ age group)	436,2	367,2	276,9	281,9
Activity rate (% of 15+ age group)	51,5	55,5	51,8	50,5
Employment rate (% of 15+ age group)	37,5	43,3	42,7	41,1
Unemployment rate (% of 15+ age group)	27,2	21,2	17,6	18,5
Unemployment rate (women)	25,0	20,0	16,0	16,2
Youth (15-24 age group) unemployment rate	36,8	31,8	27,8	41,1

Source: Geostat, 2021: <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/683/dasakmeba-umushevropa>

Georgia aspires to closer integration with the EU. In 2014 Georgia signed an Association Agreement with the EU, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Georgia conducts and develops policy consistent with the framework of relevant EU policies and practices. The EU is currently Georgia's main trading partner, accounting for 28% of Georgian imports and 22% of Georgian exports in 2018⁷.

A long-term analysis of labour market indicators shows that it gained a momentum between 2010 and 2015, however, is on decrease over the past 5 years, marked by decreasing activity and, therefore, slightly decreasing unemployment rate (across all categories). Despite the sustained mediocre economic growth of the past decade, the Georgian labour market continues to have three structural problems: 1) limited job creation (especially, for skilled workers); 2) a high share of self-employment in subsistence agriculture; and 3) a high level of urban unemployment, especially among young people. Roughly speaking, half of the total employment is in the services sector, 40% in agriculture and 10% in manufacturing. The employment share of services has been increasing in the last decade at the expense of shrinking agricultural employment.

Informality, together with its implications (low levels of productivity, low wages, poor working conditions and poor access to social protection), is also a challenge as it accounts for a large share of the Georgian labour market. Georgia's labour force participation rate is relatively high, especially among older people. The activity rate (aged 15+) decreased from 65.2% in 2013 to 62.9% in 2019. There was a pronounced gender gap of 21 percentage points between the activity rates for men (67.0%) and women (46%) in 2020. The gender difference in employment rates is also significant, with 15 percentage points between the employment rates for men (49%) and women (34.0%) in 2020. Among employed, women (76%) are more likely to be in hired employment, than men (61.7%), however, self-employed women are more likely to be contributing family members (46.2% of self-employed women), than men (14.2%). Men are more likely to be employed in industry and agriculture, than women: 26% of men are employed in industry, as compared to 8.4% of employed women, 22.4% employed men and 16.5% of employed women work in agriculture. Consequently, services are dominated by women (75.1% of employed women, versus only 51.6% of employed men)⁸.

⁷ Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (2019)

⁸ Women and men in Georgia/ labour force, earnings, Geostat. 2021

Lower female participation rate is partly explained by a lack of childcare opportunities, significant wage disparities between men and women (about 35%), and a lack of flexible employment opportunities.

The overall unemployment rate (aged 15+) has been declining, falling from 26.4% in 2013 to 17.6% in 2019. The unemployment rate is higher for males (18.9%) than for females (16%). There are also significant geographical disparities. In 2019 the unemployment rate in rural areas of Georgia was 16.7%, compared with 18.2% in urban areas⁹. People with higher education are slightly less affected by unemployment than individuals with lower skills (10.2% against 10.5% in 2020).¹⁰

Young people face particular challenges in the labour market. The youth unemployment rate remains high, standing at 30.4% in 2019, but it has declined in recent years (it was 36.8% in 2010), through COVID 19 pandemic seems to hit this age group most (41.1% in 2020). It is higher for young women (32.9%) than for young men (28.9%). Youth unemployment by educational level shows that rates are lowest for the group with low levels of education, while the difference between the rates among those with medium and high levels is not significant. This might be explained by agricultural self-employment among the lower educated. Despite their limited numbers, VET graduates generally have higher unemployment rates than graduates of general education and higher education¹⁸. The proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) remains high and actually increased from 24.8% in 2017 to 26.9% in 2018 before declining again to 26.0% in 2019. However, the trend is downwards in recent years (from 29.9% in 2013). Young women are more prone to becoming NEETs, with a rate of 29.1% compared with 23.3% for young men in 2019. Young people with lower levels of education are less likely to become NEETs, unlike young people with an intermediate education (especially VET graduates) and university graduates, who face the highest risk of becoming NEETs¹¹.

The majority of jobs in Georgia are in traditional, low-productivity sectors, whereas only a minority are in modern, high-productivity sectors. The share of employment in sectors with higher productivity and wages (for example, industry and services) has been steadily increasing over the past decade, but subsistence agriculture continues to be a large source of employment. In 2018, 38.2% of employment was in agriculture, 48% was in services (up from 45.5% in 2013) and only 13.9% was in industry. The share of self-employment in the Georgian labour market remains high at 49.7% of the workforce in 2018 (down from 57.2% in 2013). Self-employed workers are predominantly in rural areas, typically in agriculture, and are less likely to have access to high-quality training and better employment opportunities. Georgia also has a relatively high share of people classed as 'contributing family workers', who typically do unpaid work associated with the agricultural sector.

Skills mismatch is a growing concern in the Georgian labour market. An ETF study¹² found that there is both over-qualification and under-qualification, as people work in jobs that do not necessarily correspond to their educational levels. The analysis also shows that the highest incidence of over-education in Georgia (30%) is among semi-skilled professions (clerks, service and sales workers, and operators and technicians). This is because a large proportion of those with tertiary education take lower-skilled jobs and work in occupations that do not require a tertiary degree. They are often compelled to accept less skilled jobs because there are not enough jobs that require higher skills.

There is also under-education in semi-skilled professions, probably owing to a limited supply of VET graduates. In 2017 the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD) commissioned a labour demand survey with a large representative sample of 6 000 companies. The survey results revealed that it is difficult to fill blue-collar vacancies, particularly in food processing and related

⁹ Geostat, 2021 <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/683/Employment-Unemployment>

¹⁰ Geostat.2021. Women and men in Georgia. Statistical publication

¹¹ European Training Foundation, Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET): An Overview in ETF Partner Countries, 2015. Available at:

http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/NEET ETF_partner_countries

¹² Policies for Human Capital Development Georgia, 2020. ETF Available at:

https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-03/04_trp_etf_assessment_2019_georgia.pdf

occupations and those requiring stationary-plant and related operators. This is a direct reflection of the recruitment problems facing the manufacturing sector. The low qualification level among jobseekers and employees makes it necessary in many cases to seek workers from abroad. The survey also showed that the main challenges that businesses face when filling vacancies are applicants' lack of qualifications and experience and their salary demands.

TABLE 2. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ACTIVE POPULATION (2020)

	women	Men	Total
Lower Secondary or less (ISCED 0-2)	24	27	26
Upper Secondary (ISCED 3-4a)	39	46	43
Vocational (ISCED 3-5b)	12	9	10
Tertiary (ISCED 5-8)	25	18	21
% early leavers from education and training (among people 18-24)	8.3	9.5	8.9

Source: Exploring the Diversity of Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). worldbank.2019¹³ (calculations based on LFS, Geostat)

1.2. System overview

Career development support in Georgia is currently under the responsibility of three ministries (and/or their agencies): the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MIDPLHSA), and its State Employment Support Agency (SESA); the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) (and schools, VET colleges and universities within education system); and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), and its Youth Agency. Besides, labour market information (LMI) is created under Labour Market Information System (LMIS) division under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD).

The career development support policy for the job seekers is probably the most advanced. The SESA, created in 2019, provides career guidance to job seekers covering both employment support (registration in a job seekers database, informing on career opportunities, profiling, competency assessments, career guidance and counselling, training/retraining, career education, as well as vacancy analysis and support with recruitment services for employers) and mediated employment (job mediation, salary subsidies, internships, labour migration). The SESA provides the aforementioned services through its 12 service centres (5 located in the capital and 7 in the regions).

The employment related services started to be developed since 2012, when employment related functions were added to the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (now MIDPLHSA) and its Social Services Agency (in 2020 succeeded by SESA in the employment support related functions). The service model in place originated within the Concept on Professional Consultation and Career Planning adopted in 2014 and the "new Service Model" introduced by the EU Budget Support Project, which is being further developed over the past 7 years.

¹³ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/591061559766670862/pdf/Exploring-the-diversity-of-young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-NEET-the-gender-profile-of-NEETs-in-Georgia-and-Armenia.pdf>

In the education system career development support is weakly developed. In general education, career education is supposed to be provided cross-curricular through primary, lower and upper secondary education levels (in Georgian education system called basic and secondary general education respectively) and also included within so called Class Teacher's Hour. Career education has a few learning outcomes dedicated to studying labour market, self-awareness and making career choices and is supposed to be taught by subject teachers¹⁴. Class Teacher's Hour is a program delivered by the class supervising teacher and includes working with students at least once a fortnight at primary and at least once a month at lower and upper secondary education. While old National Curriculum (2011-2016) was more explicit about the program of the Class Teacher's Hour related to career guidance and professional orientation, the new National Curriculum (2018-2024) has less focus. The old version of the National Curriculum states that at basic and secondary education levels, for the age groups 15-17 (grades 9, 10, 11), the class teacher hour should focus on professional orientation and career guidance, which is no longer traceable in the new version of the National Curriculum, where the instruction is limited to "delivering age appropriate content".

At vocational and higher education levels having career guidance services at colleges and universities are a requirement under respective authorization standards (at vocational education level the new standards have been enforced only in 2020). Each institution, therefore, has career guidance specialists and provides basic career guidance services, mostly related to employer relations, internships and job placements, outreach to potential students and conducting tracer studies with recent graduates.

Some 25% of schools are covered by a MoES program Vocational Skills Development Among Pupils.¹⁵ The program aims at improving professional orientation of general education school students at grades 8 and 9 through offering a mix of the services, mostly through short-term vocational training offered at school. Within the framework of the program, 200 short-term courses were implemented in 2017, 348 in 2018 and 590 in 2019. By 2020 the number of schools covered by the program was up to 700.

It should be noted that the MoES in 2016 launched a more robust Professional Consultation and Career Planning Program for general education students coordinated by the Education Institutes' Mandator's Office (an agency under the MoES). The program envisaged creation of a pool of career coordinators at the Mandatur's Office and career counsellors at Education Resources Centers (the MoES regional offices) that should have created methodologies, guidebooks, career information and career education modules to be delivered at school level to students of grades 9, 10 and 11. However, the system was abolished the next year of its enforcement, since the measure was considered too expensive.

A third system providing basic career development support services for youth under 29 is under the Youth Agency, an institution currently under the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth. The services here cover the following components: key competencies training provided to youth through various programs (summer schools and camps, hobby centers etc), as well as a career information portal www.myprofession.gov.ge which was launched in 2015 as an online alternative to career guidance services targeting youth, but it is still not fully developed. Moreover, within the recently adopted Concept on Youth Policy¹⁶ a more structured vision of how to provide effective services to youth is suggested including introduction of a youth worker institute,¹⁷ reaching out to NEETS, further development of the career planning online platform, improving access and equal opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship, through better targeted ALMPs and economic support programs, improving coordination between different actors in the youth sector and monitoring of youth policy implementation.

¹⁴ MoES.2016. National Curriculum 2018-2024

¹⁵ 2019 Implementation Report of the Unified Strategy of Education and Science (USES), 2020. MoES

¹⁶ Concept Paper on Youth Policy for 2020-2030. 2020. Parliament of Georgia

¹⁷ Following relevant EU, European Council and UN documents youth work in Georgia is defined social and educational practices delivered at community level aiming at youth development and wellbeing. Their active participation and integration in the society, including developing key skills for life through informal education (hobby centers, mass sports, cultural-creative clubs and summer schools) (abstracted from the Concept of Youth Policy, 2020. Parliament of Georgia, Draft State Youth Strategy 2025, the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth. Forthcoming)

The Labour Market Information System, currently coordinated by a division under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD) operates a labour market portal www.lmis.gov.ge that collects information on labour market and educational/training opportunities from mostly labour market surveys administered by the division, State Statistics Service (Geostat) and the MoES. The MoES runs an education information portal www.vet.ge, which provides data and search engine on formal vocational education and training opportunities in Georgia.

The MoESD and Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) are major actors with a portfolio of creating conducive environment for business and innovations, supporting start-ups through various mechanisms, including through training needs analysis, capacity building and training initiatives mostly targeting skills for SMEs in the sphere of access to finances, accessing international markets, IT and media-technologies.

2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

There is no unique term used to refer to Career Development Support in Georgia. It is referred to either as Professional Consultation and Career Planning (PCCP) within the Concept Paper approved by the Government of Georgia in 2014 or Employment Support (ES) within the Law on Employment Promotion (approved in 2020). Moreover, in formal education system the relevant services are referred to either as Career Support Service (Higher Education authorization Standards), or as Professional Orientation, Consultation and Career Planning System (Law on Vocational Education). Below definitions are listed from relevant regulatory documents to get an good idea to what each term refers to, however the report uses the term Career Development Support system to denote all of the services mentioned below.

The Law on Employment Promotion puts the following definition: employment support service refers to measures delivered to job-seekers, i.e. an unemployed or employed person, who is actively seeking a job, is able to start a job and is registered in the job-seekers' database, or any other persons defined by the Law [Law on Employment Promotion] to support the process of job seeking and professional development; also services to employers to support the process of finding workforce capable of performing relevant jobs.¹⁸

The Concept on Professional Consultation and Career Planning (2014) and, based on it, PCCP standards (2015) gave foundation to the following definition: services to any interested person at any time in life that will enable them manage their careers, choose appropriate educational pathway and make career choices.

The law on vocational education makes reference to Professional Orientation, Consultation and Career Planning system and defines it as the unity of measures aiming to support an individual at any time in life to determine their capabilities, competencies and interests with regards to choosing an education and/or profession and manage their own career¹⁹. This definition is further specified in the Vocational Education Authorization²⁰ Standards. The standards do not give the definition of the services per se, however, from the indicators of the standards it can be assumed that Career Support Services are professional orientation and employment measures, delivered to current or potential students that includes the provision of information on employment/vacancies and further career development opportunities, as well as the regular study of the employment status of students and graduates²¹. Similar definition can be assumed from the Higher Education Authorization standards.

The Georgian legislation is not consistent as to the career development support legislation, services and responsibilities. This stems from the fact that different government documents adopted in the area as

¹⁸ Law on Employment Promotion of Georgia. 2020, Parliament of Georgia

¹⁹ Law on Vocational Education, 2018, Parliament of Georgia

²⁰ Authorization is an official procedure in Georgia for acquiring a right to deliver educational programs. Authorization is done by Authorization Boards and is administered by an agency under the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia called National Center for Education Quality Enhancement

²¹ Vocational Education Authorization Standards, Charter on Authorization, 2010 (amendment 2021)

well as the relevant terminology and approaches are not synchronized and lastly the documents are sometimes ambiguous as to the distribution of roles or responsibilities in certain areas.

The system has been reformed during the last 7 years. In 2014, a Resolution N721 (26/12/2014) on approving a concept for Professional Consultation and Career planning System (პროფესიული კონსულტაციისა და კარიერის დაგეგმვის სისტემა) (accompanied by the action plan 2015-2017) was issued by the Government of Georgia, which covered the responsibilities and functions under the ministries: the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (since then reorganized into the MIDPLHSA) seen as a lead in the process, as well as the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Sports and Youth (reorganized into the MoCSY). The concept saw the following target groups: jobseekers, students within formal education at any level, employed persons wanting to change a job or career, people with special needs. The responsibilities between the three ministries were distributed in line with the institutional set-up: employment offices, schools, colleges and universities and webpage targeting youth (until 29).

The concept was followed by the approval in 2015 of the Standards for Professional Consultation and Career Planning System. The concept on PCCP and related standards were never revoked, however, new legislation adopted in the area (referred to below) does not make reference to those and were adopted as independent documents.

Recently approved Law on Employment Promotion (2020) envisages a single-window system (in physical or virtual space) to all to support employment, supply of qualified personal for employers, motivating job seekers for employment or self-employment and developing workforce in line with the structural changes in Georgian economy. The law provides for the creation of the SESA that is responsible for providing services to jobseekers and defines the responsibilities of different state actors in the sector as well as the menu of the services provided within the law. MoES is responsible of career guidance at each level of education as well as provision of training/retraining opportunities, MoESD manages LMIS and ensures mediation between the investors and SESA, and MEPA - guidance and contribution to training in agriculture. It should also be noted that the Law gives the first ever definition in Georgian legislation of the vulnerable as “a group of people, who, because of some physical, psychic or social characteristics, might have a high risk of poverty or social difficulties, than the mainstream population of the country”. The law provides for the interagency coordination for the effective functioning of the system, including representation of trade unions and employment associations within the board and the partnership between the state and the private sector, including procurement of services in selected cases. While admitting the positive effect the law will have on the sector, experts indicate that the document lacks in clarity and cohesion²².

The career development support services to be provided within the formal education system is regulated by the respective laws (Law on vocational Education of 2019, Law on Higher education of 2015, National Curriculum for general education and Authorization Standards for vocational and higher education levels).

The National Curriculum 2018-2024 provides for the system of Class Teacher's Hour – a regular program to be delivered by a teacher supervising a class, aiming to raise students' awareness on cross curricular topics, which, though not stated explicitly, can cover career education and professional orientation. The document is not as specific with regards to the contents related to career development as its predecessors. Besides, there is neither the syllabus for the program approved, nor supporting reference materials developed. Furthermore, class teachers do not get any pre-service or in-service training or technical support, therefore the component in general education schools is barely implemented.

The Law on VET defines the system of career guidance, counselling and career planning in formal education as “a wide range of measures that help a person, at any stage of formal education, to

²² Uncertain chances of success: A review of the Georgian law on employment promotion, Boergen, Ruediger; Burisch, Michael. 2021. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/georgien/18163.pdf>

determine his/her abilities, competences and interests to make decisions related to education and choosing a profession, as well as to manage his/her career”²³. The law also obliges the MoES to “approve a strategy of career guidance, counselling and career planning in formal education and colleges”, and “to ensure the implementation of the measures provided for by the legislation of Georgia within the system of career guidance, counselling and career planning in formal education”. The draft strategy is under public discussion and is summarized below.

In line with the respective laws (Law on Education Quality Enhancement of 2010, Law on Higher education of 2004 and Law on Vocational Education of 2018), all education institutions are subject to authorization, which is a process of getting a right to provide education services. The process is coordinated by the MoES Agency the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) through Authorization Boards represented by education institutions, employers and other sector experts. The authorization process checks the compliance of the institutions mission, programs, human, material and financial resources, as well as management, educational, assessment and support services to the standards. The authorization process is accompanied by regular self-assessment and monitoring processes. The Authorization standards for both vocational and higher education call for creation of career support services.

The standards oblige each education institution to set up and run career guidance services and have career guidance specialists. Career guidance specialists are full time or part-time employees of education institutions. Major services offered by vocational and higher education institutions are career guidance, developing career management skills, mediation of employment, work placements or internships, tracer studies, engagement of employers and graduates in program development.

And lastly, the functions of Youth Agency also cover professional orientation and career planning of youth. As defined within the Law on Supporting Children's and Youth Unions, Charter of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Charter of Youth Agency, the Agency “develops and implements programs to build ICT competencies of youth, to provide professional orientation and career planning support with the aim of youth empowerment, and support to employment and education to work transition. In so doing, the Agency ensures the inclusion of different vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, NEETS, IDPs). The newly approved concept on Youth Policy in Georgia for 2020-2030 prioritizes economic empowerment of youth (decreasing youth unemployment (4.1.), decreasing NEETS rate (4.2.), decreasing inequality in youth employment and activity rate (4.3.), malpractices in youth employment and hiring is decreased (4.4.), entrepreneurship level among youth is increased (4.5.) and creation of formally recognized institute of youth worker (2.1.) to contribute to youth policy implementation and youth empowerment. The concept puts Youth Agency in charge of coordination among central and local government institutions and external actors in youth policy implementation”²⁴.

The major document giving the strategic directions in the area of career guidance is the Labour and Employment National Strategy of Georgia (2019-2023), but career guidance is covered partially also by sector specific strategies like the SME strategy 2021-2025, the VET Reform Strategy 2013-2020, the Unified Education and Science Strategy 2017-2021. Career guidance is mentioned in the Draft Education Strategy for 2022-2032 and the MoES is working on a Strategy for Career Planning in Formal Education System (2021-2025).

National Strategy 2019-2023 for Labour and Employment Policy of Georgia²⁵ is the key strategic document that outlines the major areas of focus for labour market policy in Georgia: Reducing the discrepancy between supply and demand; strengthening Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP); promoting involvement of women and vulnerable groups in the labour market; improving the system of enforcement of workplace safety and protection of rights; improving labour migration management. The strategy details the responsibilities by each state actor within the sphere as detailed above within the

²³ Law on vocational education, 2018. Parliament of Georgia
<https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4334842?publication=0>

²⁴ Resolution #7054 of the Parliament of Georgia on Approving the Concept of youth Policy in Georgia for 2010-2030, 2020. Accessible at <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4936402?publication=0> (in Georgian)

²⁵ https://www.moh.gov.ge/uploads/files/2020/Failebi/strategy-13.12.19_final-translation.pdf

Law on Employment promotion, including the MoES, MoESD and MEPA and covers actions targeted to unemployed, special vulnerable groups, students in formal education system and SMEs and start-ups, as well as promotion of selected economic sectors. The strategy is accompanied by the detailed action plan for 2019-2021. Besides, each year the government approves an Employment Support Services Programme, with specific targets and funding for each direction identified under the Employment promotion Law and the Strategy, including those related to career development support.

The SME Development Strategy 2021–2025²⁶ covers career development support system from the point of view of labour market information and labour market management systems (www.lmis.gov.ge and www.worknet.gov.ge). The strategy envisages further improvement of the systems, so that the improved visualization and functionality of LMIS enables different target groups to find and analyse labour market information, and that worknet.gov.ge provides improved automated professional orientation and career development services. As its predecessor, the SME Development Strategy 2016–2020, the current strategy also aims to make it easier for SMEs to access financing, improve entrepreneurial learning, encourage innovation, entrepreneurship, promote exports and foreign direct investments in Georgian economy.

Both VET Reform Strategy 2013-2020 and Unified Strategy for Education and Science 2017-2021 had a focus on developing a professional orientation and career guidance system within formal education at all levels (e.g. Specific Strategic objective 2 (general education): “Improve the quality of education to increase the possibilities of transition to the next level of education, to develop vital skills in the students and to achieve better academic results” included the “revision and further development of the current model of professional orientation and career planning of students”). Similar objectives were set for vocational and higher education levels²⁷. However, implementation and evaluation reports of both strategies only show some actions within vocational education, but none at general and higher education levels.

Unlike the aforementioned strategy, the draft Unified Education Strategy 2022-2032 identifies the challenges of students with making informed choices because of the absence of career development systems, however, the only activity it advocates for in this direction is the creation of a centralized database of employment of vocational and higher education graduates²⁸.

Besides the Unified Education Strategy, the MoES is developing VET Development Strategy 2021-2025, which, according to the MoES decision makers, will be more detailed in VET sector, than it could be included in the unified education strategy. The strategy draft is accompanied by an action plan for 2021-2022. The strategy will focus on improving accessibility to VET services, continuous development for VET providers and improved efficiency of VET governance. Under Priority 1, the strategy advocates for a spectrum of support services targeting employment and education of VET students (Strategic Priority 1.3), which will create a unified career management system at all levels of education (including career information, career education, career counselling) coordinated with education institutions, employment services and external stakeholders: employers and self-governance bodies, etc. The strategy speaks also of creating employment support services (work-based learning, entrepreneurship and support to develop start-ups etc) and social services (support with accommodation, transportation, other financial aid, as well as psychological counselling).

A more detailed outline of the career development system model offered for the education sector is given in another draft document²⁹ - Strategy for the Development of the Professional Orientation,

²⁶ http://www.economy.ge/uploads/files/2017/ek_politika/sme_strategy/sme_development_strategy_2021_2025_.pdf

²⁷ <https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=7755&lang=eng>

²⁸ Unified Education Strategy 2022-2032 . Draft. MoES. 2021

https://www.mes.gov.ge/mesgifs/1638884672_განათლების%20და%20მეცნიერების%20სტრატეგიის%20პროექტი%20-%2006.12.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1-j-PPdRxC9nepOINhyhyNS5ZhNh2fKw8iWLZnt-QHJwTHKGUlojxHfO

²⁹ The new Law on Vocational Education obliges the MoES to develop a system of career guidance, counselling and career planning in formal education.

Consultation and Career Planning System in Formal Education (2021-2025)³⁰. The draft of the strategy envisages: creation of a career development support system in line with the international standards and good practice, widening, diversification, introduction and quality assuring of career development support services and ensuring accessibility of quality career information for all for informed career decision making. The draft strategy advocates for a centralized model for career planning in the education system with a core career counsellor team placed within the MoES who will directly provide services to general education school students and coordinate the career development specialists in vocational colleges. The services will be gradually decentralized after a successful pilot, meaning that the model advocates for the services to be provided at institutional level, after all. The model also envisages cooperation with non-education actors, SESA, Youth Agency, Private HR associations, employers and NGOs. Based on ETF taxonomy of career guidance services³¹, the concept offers the four career guidance models - curriculum model, career center model, specialist model, a virtual career guidance model that will offer the 7 components (career information, career management education, work experience, testing, individual guidance, group guidance, counselling) through a mix of physical and virtual, individual and group services. And lastly, the draft strategy advocates for quality career information that will cover economic trends, information on skills demands by professions, education and training opportunities and employment opportunities. Further improvements of LMIS and VET and NCEQE databases, career guidance support for each student and tailored services for Special Educational Needs are envisaged.

Another draft strategy document is the State Youth strategy 2025 (and action plan 2022-2023). In line with the aforementioned Youth Policy Concept, the strategy has 5 priorities:

- Increasing youth participation, equality and civil activism.
- Youth empowerment and support to realization of their potential through youth work and non-formal education
- Increasing youth health and welfare
- Youth economic empowerment through employment and entrepreneurship
- Improving the governance of the youth sector

Within the priorities, the strategy implies creation of youth workers institute (in line with EU, Council of Europe and ILO recommendations), that will contribute to youth empowerment, activation and advocacy. The strategy will also result in improved access to non-formal education and hobby-education programs, youth programs, information and counselling, summer-schools and engagement in voluntary activities for the age groups 6-14 and 15-29. The strategy will achieve better targeting of youth with ALMPs that are provided by the SESA, contribute to improved and equal employment opportunities for youth, including SEN within, contribute to creation of online career development support services, will achieve better targeting and accessibility of SME and startup support programs by EDA and GITA and development of IT, green, entrepreneurship skills among youth. The strategy will also support youth programs and strategies at municipal level. The strategy will have an interagency council to coordinate activities among different state actors.

3. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

3.1. Promoting coordination, cooperation and good governance

Chapter VIII of the Law on Employment Promotion outlines the responsibilities of the institutions involved in Employment Promotion System and forms of co-operation needed (see Table 4 below). The Law also refers to an interagency coordination council to “exchange information about the demand and supply in the labour market”, represented by the MIDPLHSA, MoES, MoESD, MEPA, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Statistics National Service of Georgia from the government institutions, also three members of a Tripartite Social Partnership Commission – a chairperson of the Commission,

³⁰ Strategy for the Development of the Professional Orientation, Consultation and Career Planning System in Formal Education (2021-2025). Draft. MoES.2021. Unpublished

³¹ ETF (2020). International Trends and Innovation in Career Guidance.

one representative from Trade Union and one representative of Employers' Association.³² This council has not so far been created.

In 2021 the SESA appointed an advisory council. The council is summoned once a year and, in line with the charter of the council, it has functions related to discussing policy initiatives in the sector and making recommendations to the SESA director³³. It has up to 12 members, who are appointed for 3 years from the representatives of the line ministries, employer and employee organizations, and education institutions. The council can invite also other international and national experts, as needed. In 2021, the council held two meetings, one approving the operational framework of the council and another discussing policy initiatives in the sphere of employment.

The major actor in the sector is SESA. It was established in October 2019 to implement Georgia's active labour market policy and provide quality employment services, including the development of temporary and legal employment opportunities abroad (circular labour migration). The SESA has an annual budget of approx. GEL 4 million and a total employed staff of 86 people³⁴. Of this total, 46 contracted staff are field-based in the regions, while the remaining 40 (out of 52 defined by the decree on SESA staff) work in 5 Tbilisi, both in 5 territorial offices and the headquarters.

The MoES has functions related to providing career development support services in the formal education system. The MoESD oversees and manages LMIS. Other government entities cooperate within their mandates.

The law also defines the roles of MEPA, municipalities and private sector to be played within the system. The law envisages the possibility to delegate certain components of employment promotion to private sector, however, so far, this has not been practiced. The only case that can be regarded as a pilot, is within the EU funded ESCape project³⁵ (Project Skills4Jobs), which aims to contribute to continuous/life-long career guidance and employment service development in Georgia. SESA reported that they are referring "hard to employ beneficiaries" to get career guidance services more targeted to this group to the service centers created by the project in 6 regions of Georgia.

TABLE 4: RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Institution	Responsibilities
The Parliament of Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To determine and supervise the state policy for the promotion of employment.
The Government of Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create drafts of laws and bylaws to regulate employment sector ■ Prepare agreements with competent bodies and organizations of foreign countries on labour migration
Interagency Coordination Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To collect and exchange all information on labour market demand and supply³⁶

³³ Decree of SESA Director on Approving the Charter of the Advisory Council to the State Employment Support Agency. 2021.

³⁴ SESA correspondence, December 2021

³⁵ Co-implemented by Education Development and Education Center (EDEC), Democracy Development Agency (DDA) and Konrad Adenauer Foundation (FES).

³⁶ See also beginning of this chapter for functions of the council in line with the SESA charter.

Ministry of Education and Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To promote professional consultation and career planning at all education levels ■ To create effective mechanisms to develop professional orientation and career management competencies at general education level
Ministry of Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To observe the trends in labour market ■ Developing strategies, forecasts and state programs to support employment and short-term training of job seekers ■ Developing normative instruments to ensure equal opportunities at labour market ■ Supporting implementation of state employment programs and active labour market policy, in the sector of employment international relations and preparation of contracts; ■ Planning and implementing monitoring and evaluation of SESA
Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Providing consultation to those seeking employment in agriculture ■ Supporting creation and implementation of training programs in agriculture
Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Studies Occupational Groups (in line with the ISCO classification) within the labour market analysis component and provides relevant recommendations to other agencies ■ Cooperates with other government bodies in the sphere of exchanging information and managing and developing LMIS ■ In case of investment projects implying employment opportunities, mediates between the investor and the SESA
State Employment Support Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Providing services within ALMP ■ Providing mediation services in the labour market ■ Providing career counselling to the job seekers, offering and partially or fully financing training programs ■ Based on request from employers, supporting with recruitment of new staff; providing support services to employers ■ Undertaking research with the view of observing trends in labour market ■ Creating databases of SESA programs, collecting and analysing the related information ■ Managing electronic system for job matching
Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supporting SESA regional representations in employment promotion ■ Undertaking their functions under the Code of Local self-governance related to employment promotion
Non-commercial private sector representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be delegated some of the functions for employment promotion, if the services provided by them are more efficient and timelier, cheaper and of higher quality than the ones provided by the state

Source: Law on Employment Promotion. 2020, GoG

The interagency coordination is implied by the Labour Market and Employment Promotion Strategy 2018-2023 and SME development Strategy 2021-2025 as well, which include career development support related activities under the mandate of MIDPLHSA (and SESA), MoES and MoESD and its agencies – Georgian Innovation and Technologies Agency and Enterprise Georgia. However, the gaps in coordination are still visible and can be traced down even to the Law on Employment Promotion and the lack of clarity and consistency therein. Both the law and strategies ignore another important actor in

the field, the Youth Agency, currently under MoCSY. The youth sector policy documents, on the other hand, the Concept paper on Youth Policy 2020-2030 and draft National Youth Strategy make reference to such coordination and envisage the role of Youth Agency, municipalities, SESA and MoESD agencies in youth career development and employment support activities.

In the formal education sector, the roles are distributed between the MoES which should define the policy with regards to career development support services within the formal education system, NCEQE, that sets the standard for the services and education institutions, who are responsible for autonomously designing and delivering such services. The exception are general education institutions that have the service defined within the National Curriculum. The education sector documents do not imply cooperation with line ministries or other actors in the field, however, the need is already recognized within the draft Strategy for the Development of the Professional Orientation, Consultation and Career Planning System in Formal Education (2021-2025) mentioned in the previous chapter

3.2. Key civil society stakeholders

The Employment Promotion Law of Georgia 2020, and the charter of SESA Advisory Council envisage the participation of non-governmental actors, including trade unions and employer associations in implementation of state policy on employment promotion, as described above.

The Georgian Employers Association (GEA) with the financial and technical support from the Government of Germany, has been implementing vocational education programs since 2017. The program, among other activities, included:

- Piloting a model of career guidance for students of partner general education institutions
- An informational database on demanded skills based on the survey of HRs of member companies
- Training of career guidance specialists in partner colleges.

Depending on the availability of financial resources, GEA plans to systematize the activities as their permanent services.

Another active player from employers' organizations, Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) launched series of meetings with businesses, called Open Dialogue with Business, aimed at facilitating dialogue between the public and private actors, increasing awareness on available state programmes and projects that support business in the spheres of education, access to finance, business start-up, technological advancement and export. The project is implemented with the technical and financial support from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) for Munich and Upper Bavaria. Under the project, as well as with technical and financial support from GIZ, GCSE started to carry out surveys of businesses aiming at: identification of skills needs in selected sectors and satisfaction of employers with dual education services. As a regular service to business, GCSE provides counseling as to developing and authorizing training and retraining in vocational education programs (with the authorization, the training programs will be eligible for public funding) and setting up dual education programmes with authorized vocational colleges.

GCCI is one of the two co-founders of Georgian Skills Agency (established in 2021) that is in charge of vocational and further education policy implementation in Georgia. GCCCI is represented in the supervising council of the Agency. The Agency, among others, will be responsible for career development support policy development in vocational education sector.

In 2022, GCCCI launched a three-year project with the support of Stuttgart Chamber of Commerce aiming at:

- Training in-company trainers in planning and organizing in-house training
- Contributing to cooperation between colleges and businesses for their mutual benefit
- Organizing visits to general education institutions with the view of increasing awareness on employment opportunities and popularization of certain demanded professions.

In General, GCCCI plans to increase its services and impact in skills matching.

There is a well-developed market of private and public organizations in the sphere of HR services and education consultation. The Georgian Business registry www.yell.ge provided more than 37 entries in the former and 44 entries in the latter direction, and of course, the registry is far from being comprehensive.

The typical services HR companies provide, include:

- Recruitment and headhunting;
- HR outsourcing
- HR counselling and teambuilding
- Corporate trainings
- Job fairs and professional development services to employees
- Vacancy postings and CV banks

The services provide mixed web-based or physical activities and orient on internal as well as international job markets. The services try to respond to existing challenges in the Georgian labour market, such as lack of information and informational asymmetry between the potential employers and job seekers, high turn-over and skills shortages in certain sectors, access to international high-paying job markets, etc.

On the other side, education consultation is mostly directed at recruitment for foreign universities and advising and providing information on different educational opportunities and grants and scholarships to this end (while Georgian universities do the recruitment for their students themselves). The organizations are mostly located in big cities and, though try to have regional outreach, still accessibility to their services might be limited.

A number of international development partners are active in supporting the GoG within the career development sector:

Most importantly, International Organization for Migration between 2005-2012 provided initial support to the GoG to pilot different initiatives in career guidance and support services and draft initial employment support policy. IOM actively continues technical assistance, which includes policy advice, training of professionals and development of methodological guides.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been supporting the government of Georgia between 2016 – 2017 in the sphere of the regulation and implementation of circular labor migration processes; In close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA) of Georgia, IOM supported MIDPLHSA to create a temporary labor migration management model for the employment of Georgian migrant workers abroad, that has contributed to the design and implementation of the currently regulated labor schemes with different countries of destination of Georgian migrants.

IOM Georgia continues to support the Ministry to the operationalization of the temporary labour migration schemes through providing expertise, capacity building, and delivering technical support to the staff of the MIDPLHSA and the State Employment Support Agency in the field of circular labor migration, as well as, development of related information materials and facilitating pre-departure orientation training courses.

The EU is another development partner who has been providing a comprehensive and systemic support for the last 10 years. EU programmes support reforms in employment, skills development and entrepreneurial learning, targeting young people and vulnerable groups in particular. The interventions include designing career development support policy (concept papers, strategies, guidebooks), as well as capacity building of government actors (e.g. training of SSA and SESA staff involved in career development support) and provision of career development support services (at least 3 grants projects within Skills4Jobs project contain career development support components aimed at developing and piloting at small scale within their focus regions viable models of services to different target groups, including jobseekers, NEETs, general school students).

TA component of Skill4Jobs project (2019-2024) provides support to 4 ministries involved in the sector, MoES, MIDPLHSA, MoESD and MCSY to develop sector strategies, train staff, develop methodological

tools and instruments and mentor and coach on the spot. Recent related outputs from the project include:

- Draft VET Development Strategy 2021-2025 (and action plan 2022-2023).
- Draft Strategy for the Development of the Professional Orientation, Consultation and Career Planning System (2021-2025)
- Draft State Youth strategy 2025 (and action plan 2022-2023).

The project works on further development of LMI and SESA service quality and effectiveness by providing methodological tools and guides.

The EU further distributed several grants within its Skills4Jobs project aimed at improving skills delivery and employment and entrepreneurship systems through improved regional and sectoral partnerships. At least 3 projects have career development support components.

The LINKS project (2020-2023) implemented by UNAGE and OSGF targets to achieve:

- Supply of actionable data, tools and platforms for improved skills anticipation and matching by skills training, VET education, career counselling and employment support service providers.
- Evidence-based, market-relevant design and delivery of career guidance and skills development opportunities.
- Accessibility, quality and inclusiveness of entrepreneurial studies and lifelong learning for the most disadvantaged populations – young men and women in rural areas, NEETs, IDPs, PwDs and other vulnerable groups.

Skills4Success (2020-2023) implemented by Save the Children in partnership with Youth Agency of Georgia, Association of Youth Workers and Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) will focus on international partnerships for the transfer of knowledge in the sphere of youth policy. The project will achieve the following, targeting 4 regions of Georgia:

- Develop tools and methodologies to contribute to institutionalization of youth work in Georgia;
- Target vulnerable youth, including NEETs with career guidance, training and entrepreneurship opportunities
- Building online platforms for NEETS to access labour information as well as create platforms for experience exchange in youth sector between EU and Georgia.

ESCAPE project (2020-2023) is implemented by a consortium including the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia, Young Pedagogues' Union (YPU) and Georgian Civil Development Association (GCDA). It includes the following actions in the area of career development support:

- Provision of career guidance and counselling for students and job seekers;
- Support to job search and vacancy management,
- Provision of employment services and job placement for jobseekers
- Promotion of non-formal education and key competences training
- Strengthen innovative learning and digital competences, including entrepreneurship;
- Strengthen labour market monitoring,
- Support to active labour market measures for jobseekers (job search, labour market training & retraining, employment subsidies, self-employment & entrepreneurship, internships & apprenticeships, public work);

UNDP within its Modernization of VET and Extension Services Project Phase 1 (2013-2018) has contributed to the MoES programming (2015-2017) for general education students within Vocational Skills Development Project (2017, 2018, 2019).

The project developed a career planning and professional orientation model which implied the partnership between vocational colleges and general education schools. The program provided career guidance services for lower secondary school students, but was more focused on career training as extra-curricular activity to enable students try-out certain professions. The program was centrally financed and managed by the MoES and implemented in up to 1/4 of schools between 2017-2019. Unfortunately, the MoES was not able to continue its implementation in 2020-2021 (due to the COVID 19 pandemic) and the schools could not find enough resources to independently carry on with the

program. The limitation of the program is that it is biased towards vocational education and fails to provide full-scale professional orientation and career guidance. The program is not systematized in general education policy and schools are financially and technically dependent on the MoES to carry on the activities.

MCA ISWD (2013-2017) program trained career management specialists from all vocational colleges and provided guidebooks for quality provision of services.

4. MAIN SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

4.1. Education, training and work-based learning for youth

The Concept for Professional Consultation and Career Planning System and Professional Consultation and Career Planning Standards envisage a lifelong career development support system from preschool to adulthood for all, with well-coordinated actions. However, both the concept and the standards are weakly applied, especially outside employment sector.

Currently, at secondary education level career education is supposed to be taught across curricula at all primary, basic (lower secondary) and secondary levels. The competency framework for career education is really limited and includes studies of basic information on major economic sectors and some information on professions, capacities of students to assess their interests and capacities vis-à-vis requirements of the labour market, oral and written communication on their interests and experience and opportunities for further education. Most of the related learning outcomes are concentrated within social sciences block of subjects within the National Curriculum 2018-2024. Besides, programs of other subject groups (sciences, arts, etc.) also require teachers to indicate and underline links of all studied topics with their applicability in the world of work³⁷.

Additionally, Class Teacher's Hour (which is a bi-monthly or monthly program offered by the class supervising teacher targeting important age-appropriate topics that can range from civic education to health education) can also focus its time on career guidance and career education. As mentioned earlier, Class Teacher's Hour program in the current version of the National Curriculum is not as explicit about the content of the program as the previous version, leaving it up to schools and teachers to design the program towards the needs of the students. Teachers do not have access to supportive materials, despite the fact that some of them were developed within international programs (like GPriEd by USAID³⁸).

Judging from the views of the consulted education experts, civic education teachers and directors of public and private schools, the program is weakly realized in practice. This is confirmed by youth opinion studies³⁹ that indicate that young people often have to take career decisions without any skills, information and external assistance. This can be stemming from insufficient time for career education allocated within the National Curriculum, but more so the competencies of teachers who are supposed to deliver the curriculum without prior being taught in the relevant contents and teaching methodologies. The approach to teach career education across curriculum, rather than as an individual subject

³⁷ National Curriculum 2018-2024, 2016. MoES

³⁸ Between 2016-18 G-PriEd within its business skills component adapted Junior Achievement's programs for career and financial education, developed supportive materials, for school grades 1-6, and piloted it in 62 public schools. The materials are available fee-based from Junior Achievement's local office. The project staff, as well as piloting school directors and teachers consulted, mentioned that the materials and the program were effective. Some of the teachers that participated in piloting still use the program within Class Teacher's Hour, or use it for their subject programs. However, schools note that currently they do not receive adequate technical and financial support from the MoES to continue its application across the board.

³⁹ <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/georgien/15957.pdf>

exacerbates the situation even more, since unskilled professionals have to deal with the topic. Teachers themselves are often the source of conviction that the right career choice is to try to achieve the highest possible education, thus little by little herding all students towards either higher education or sense of career failure.

Secondary schools normally do not provide career guidance services to students and their parents, nor have staff responsible for career guidance and only provide weak outreach to third parties for outsourcing the component. This could be due to limited resources as well as low awareness of the importance of the topic on the side of administration.

In general, as guaranteed by the authorization standards, all vocational and higher education institutions have career management services and provide:

- outreach to potential students;
- individual and group counselling, job mediation/vacancy postings, internship or work-based learning placements;
- undertake tracer studies of graduates and surveys of students and graduates; they are supposed to use the information for further development of the services.

However, recent studies show that the gap is big at these levels as well. As a study conducted by FES in 2020⁴⁰ – Youth Policy implementation at the Local Level: Imereti and Tbilisi - confirmed, the youth of all age groups indicate that they do not have access to information on professions and services that will help them with selection of career pathways. Interviews with the career guidance specialists from VET colleges revealed the fact that career guidance services are understaffed and have to implement big volumes of tasks related to student recruitment, outreach to employers and counselling students. Sometimes, the functions of career guidance managers include tasks beyond their portfolio, which further strain the already limited time. Qualification of a career manager is not regulated, so some colleges manage to employ people with relevant skills having social sciences degree and relevant training and work experiences, or have to hire unqualified staff and train it on the job. Most of the career managers have received short-term training related to their job on Training in Career Planning (EU TA- Skills4Jobs), ToT in Career Development and Planning (MCA ISWD project), Qualitative and Quantitative research methods for labour market study (by research NGO ACT), professional Orientation – an experience from Germany (by Georgian Employers Association). However, no systematized qualifications standards and programs are yet in place for career managers though and limited information exists how sufficient the trainings undertaken are for the career managers in place.

Last but not least, the cooperation between SESA and colleges exists (colleges reported that SESA administers group consultation sessions to VET college students and informs them on possibility to register on job-seekers site, however, the cooperation is not well structured and SESA with its limited resources currently cannot guarantee adequate time for VET and higher education students). In general, the career guidance methodologies, tools and career information to which career managers at education institutions have access to is limited and poor. LMI is not user-friendly and does not provide career information in that detail, to be useful for career managers (it provides only desegregated information on trends in economic fields without regional and qualification level specifics), methodological guides for career specialists have been developed by a number of organizations (like IOM, World Vision and Youth Agency and HR management Center), however, they all provide introduction to the sector and are less specifics on methods that career managers can apply to their practice.

Work-based learning is a compulsory part of all vocational education programs and is integrated as end of program internship within a company to provide opportunities for applying competencies in real work situations, develop work attitudes and improve social and communication skills. Each student in vocational education should be guaranteed such an internship. Increasing number of students is offered dual education programs. As of 2020, 500 students were pursuing a dual education track.⁴¹

⁴⁰ <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/georgien/15957.pdf>

⁴¹ VET Reform Implementation Report 2020, 2021. MoES.

In higher education institutions, students' career development support services are integrated into universities' electronic management systems, where students are able to create CVs, access career and training information and apply to potential vacancies. Career management specialists provide individual and group consultations aimed at developing some career management skills, like CV writing, efficiently managing job interviews etc. 6 higher institutions were part of a Capacity Development program within the EU Erasmus program in early 2000s and therefore have received technical and financial assistance to set up and develop their career centers.

The state standards for the services mentioned earlier are general and not applied in reality, therefore the quality of delivered services greatly varies.

4.2. Unemployed support and support to NEETs

Services to job seekers registered into the state employment support portal www.worknet.gov.ge are structured and delivered in line with the Law on Employment Promotion, state Standards for Professional Consultation and Career Planning System, substandard for Professional Consultation and Career Planning for job seekers (see above) and recently in line with the Concept of Youth Policy for 2020-2030.

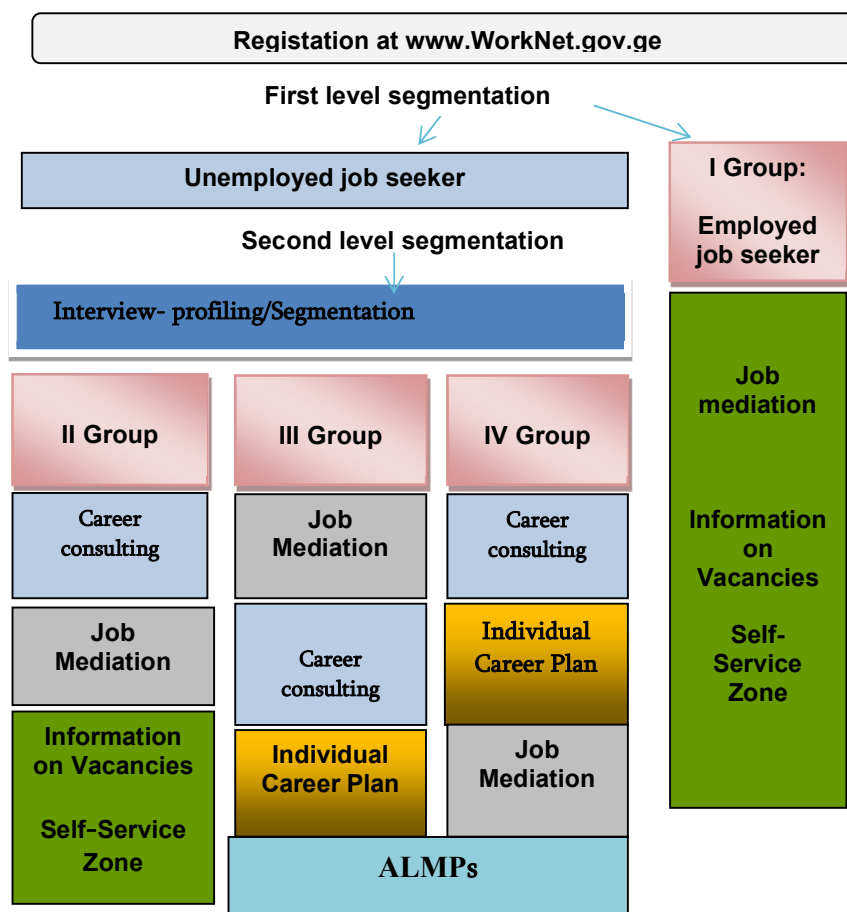
The services are provided by the State Employment Support Agency (before the establishment of the agency in 2020, the service was provided by the employment department of Social Services Agency) within so called New Service Model and include:

- Registration of the job seekers into the www.worknet.gov.ge
- Profiling – creating individual competency profiles and categorizing the clients according to their needs
- Support to assessment of competencies
- Access to vacancies (including sms service)
- Individual and/or group counselling
- Development of individual career plans
- Training or retraining opportunities
- Job mediation
- Subsidies salaries (for people with special needs)
- Internships
- Labour migration opportunities
- Support to access to finances and self-employment (in cooperation with GITA and Enterprise Georgia)
- Job fairs
- Local vacancy surveys
- Personal recruitment services for the employers

The services are supported by the electronic platform and follow strict guidelines developed in line with international good practice. The job seekers according to their employment status and competencies are categorized and referenced to relevant support systems. As recommended by the methodological guide⁴² the services that registered job seekers may receive are included the intervention logic shown in diagram 1 below.

⁴² **Guide for Serving Job-Seekers. 2021. SESA**

DIAGRAM 1: SESA SERVICES TO JOB SEEKERS (NEW SERVICE MODEL):



Source: SESA. Guide for Serving Job-Seekers. 2021

SESA publishes annual reports of implemented activities on the MIDPLHSA website. In 2021 SESA provided the following services to the 19150 beneficiaries:

TABLE 6: STATE EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM NEBEFICIERIES (2021)

2021 (as of 1st December)	Total (N)	Female (N)	Youth (N)
New registration as a job-seeker in Worknet.ge in 2021	8673	4,968	3,135
Job Mediation	2,894	1,400	932
Career Planning/Individual Consultations Regions	1,782	1302	862
Career Planning/Individual Consultations Tbilisi	2,444	1519	1134
Supported employment	220	95	88
Salary subsidies	7	1	
Participation in job fairs	2,014		

Training/retraining program applications	2,010	1144	814
Internships	122	72	46
Key skills trainings	550	427	324

Source: SESA 2021

Despite the structured approach to provide services to registered job-seekers, the capacity of SESA is limited and inadequate to provide efficient services to all target groups. SESA is expected to cope with hundreds of thousands of job seekers already registered at www.worknet.ge, while the number of clients with diverse needs is ever rising (SSA beneficiaries receiving targeted social assistance from the state are required by law to register as job-seekers, the enforcement of the clause has been postponed because of the COVID 19 crisis management activities for the last 2 year, however, will greatly strain SESA resources). The newly adopted youth policy concept expects SESA to adapt their services to youth, especially vulnerable youth, which are almost not served within current programs, since they are unlikely to be a registered job-seeker. SESA has had attempts to outreach to students of vocational and higher education institutions, however, currently the tools within self-service zone and online resources are underdeveloped, therefore, highly unlikely, that SESA will manage to allocate structured services and time to this particular group of potential clients. And most importantly, with only 7 regional offices, SESA is weakly represented geographically, therefore, has poor outreach to potential beneficiaries.

Experts from private providers of employment support services consulted (like HR HUB, KMS), indicate that the state replaces the services that were more or less well covered by the private provider (e.g. job fairs, labour migration), and, on the other hand, is not able to deliver services to the most difficult categories (hard to employ groups of job-seekers or potential job-seekers). Despite the legal window to use third party services for outsourcing some of the SESA functions, there is little to no experience in this regards, despite the fact, that so far SESA lacks both competencies and experience in managing certain target groups of the clientele (hard to employ individuals, NEETs) and in delivering services to students and for international labour migration.

4.3. Workers/Employed

Officially, SESA provides services to all potential beneficiaries that can be classified as a job seeker and register on www.worknet.gov.ge. Depending on the category of job seeker, the employment services will select appropriate measures within the inventory listed above, including counselling on access to finances and self-employment opportunities. Within the latter, SESA cooperates with other government Agencies: GITA and Enterprise Georgia, who support improvement of business environment in Georgia through providing access to finances as well as accompanying measures (e.g. TNA, training courses, mentorship etc.) for small, medium and large companies.

Enterprise Georgia (EDA) and the Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency provide financial and technical assistance for entrepreneurship, innovation and export promotion, and support the growth of SMEs. Besides, EDA ran a pilot initiative in 2016, 2017 and again in 2020 to analyse skills needs and gaps at sector level, and work is underway on improving skills intelligence to inform companies and training providers.

However, as mentioned above, the self-service zone of the SESA and inventory of online resources are underdeveloped, therefore SESA is not capable of outreach and providing sufficient services to this group of clientele.

As mentioned above private HR associations are active in providing services to all job-seekers, including those with a view to self-professional development on a career ladder. However, the accessibility to the service can greatly vary, since most of the organizations are located in big cities, provide internet-based services and/or have specific sector portfolio. Which means access to services could be far from universal.

5. FUNDING

All employment promotion services are free for beneficiaries and is financed from state budget.

TABLE 6: STATE EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BUDGET

Budget Item	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
State Program for developing employment promotion services	676000	700000	700000	700000	770000
State Program for training and retraining of job seekers	2 014 000	2 090 000	2 090 000	2090000	2090000

Source: SESA 2021

While the number of beneficiaries is ever increasing, the budget provided for SESA programs remains more or less stable, which poses a challenge to cover regular programming and development needs of the agency.

6. ACCESS

Currently SESA is represented only with 7 regional offices throughout Georgia, each of which is supposed to cover an entire region, and 5 offices in Tbilisi. The old employment support structure was made up of 69 territorial SSA offices. The limited number of offices may reduce the outreach of services, particularly in rural areas, so the accessibility of services to the population can be an issue. SESA plans to develop a strategy to increase outreach, while it also negotiates with the Ministry of Justice to use the latter's 70 community centres in the regions to register jobseekers.

Another indirect indicator of limited access to career development support is the share of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET). This indicates the proportion of young people who are unemployed and those who are inactive. Georgia is a leader even in the regional context in this regard. The share of NEETs was almost 27% of the total youth population aged 15 to 24 in 2018. It increases even further with age, reaching almost 30% for the 15 to 29 age group. There are more NEETs among women and in urban areas. According to one study⁴³, younger NEETs can also be rural residents, which is in line with the higher share of early school leavers in rural areas. Their orientation to the labour market is very weak and they lack most of the transversal skills.

High incidence of early school leaving and the inequalities in educational attainment stemming from belonging to certain ethnic groups or family with a low social economic status indirectly speaks of poor career development support at school level. The schools that provide high quality educational and support services should and are able to perform an important role in social mobility. The results of a recent youth transition survey conducted face-to-face with 2 000 young people⁴⁴ shows the influence of family origin on educational attainment. The results of the survey show a strong degree of intergenerational inheritance of education levels: 65% of respondents whose parents' highest level of education was lower secondary education also end up in the lowest education group, whereas this applies only to 1% of respondents with at least one parent with tertiary education. Similarly, there is a pattern of intergenerational transfer of VET educational attainment. The share of VET degrees is highest among persons whose parents had a VET degree as their highest level of education. The advantages that people from privileged families have is also visible in the link between parental wealth and educational attainment. For example, respondents who assessed the financial wealth of their parents as (fairly) poor ended up in basic education (21%) three times more often than respondents who

⁴³ SAVE-DEPA, 2018

⁴⁴ Badurashvili et al, 2019

reported that their parents were (fairly) wealthy (Badurashvili et al, 2019). The survey showed also a clear ethnic inequality in educational attainment, as ethnic minorities are over-represented at the lower education levels of basic secondary (or lower) and upper secondary. Around 9% of respondents dropped out of education.

A more direct evidence of poor career development support is provided through youth surveys⁴⁵ where the respondents directly speak of the deficiency in the professional orientation and career support system they face and the uninformed career choice they make as a result. Unfortunately, there is no evidence from older population as to the accessibility and quality of services.

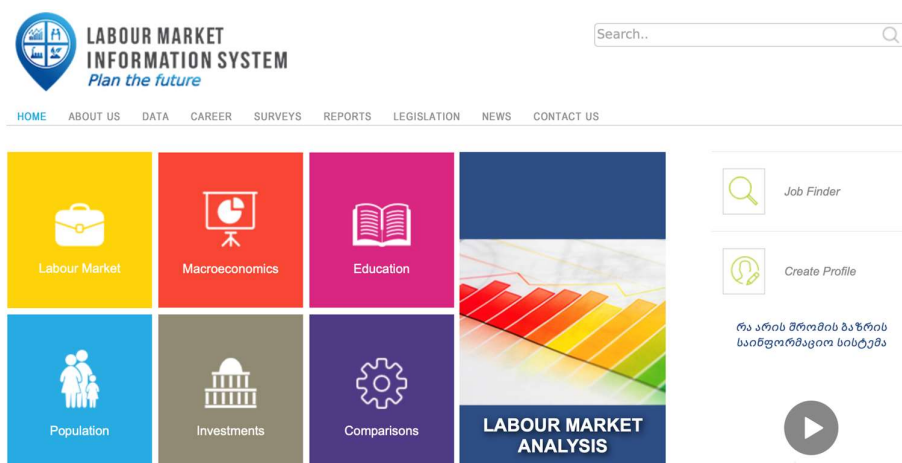
7. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The services SESA provides is automated. www.worknet.ge is an electronic system created to support the state employment promotion policy, unites the databases of the jobseekers as well as vacancies, allows career guidance practitioners from SESA to electronically process data and provide some parts of the services electronically. The program allows for profiling of job seekers and their segmentation/categorization according to the service model described above. It produces administration related documents and some statistical reports. The system allows for automated vacancy referencing. However, the current capacity of the program is limited and SESA is working on the further development of the electronic portal.



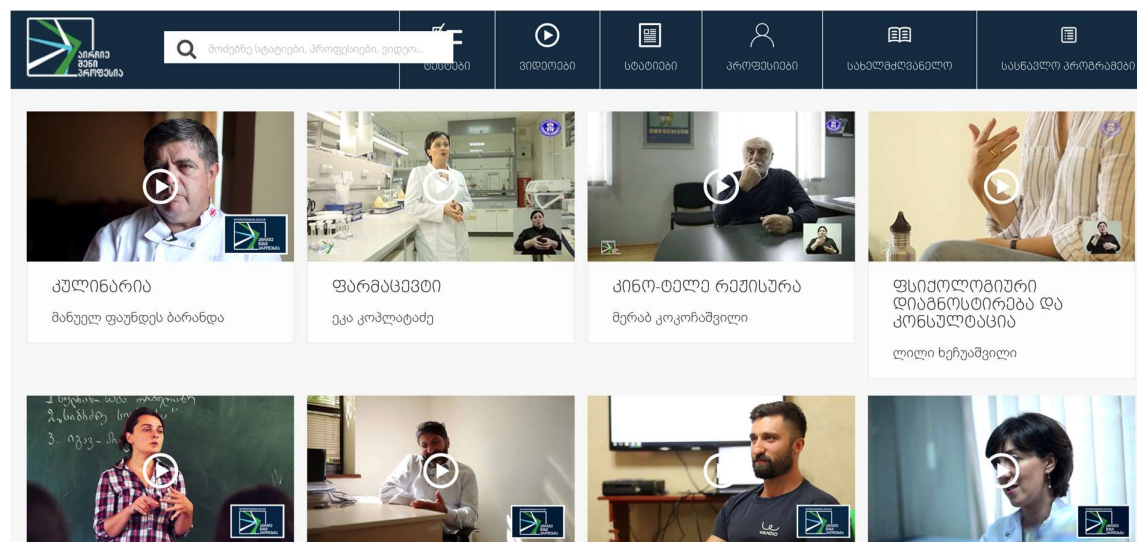
LMIS platform www.lmis.gov.ge is operated by the MoESD and aims at providing updated and comprehensive labour market information. It unites the data on education opportunities, labour market demand trends from Geostat and surveys administered directly by the LMIS division under the MoESD. Unfortunately, the platform is not targeted to any client groups, therefore its applicability by final beneficiaries (job seekers, students etc.) or career development practitioners is limited.

⁴⁵ FES, 2020



www.vet.ge is administered by the MoES and provides information and search opportunities to beneficiaries on short-term and long-term vocational programs. Both www.lmis.gov.ge and VET.ge have less user-friendly design and provide only limited information to be used for career development purposes either by beneficiaries or career development professionals.

My.profession.gov.ge



Myprofession.gov.ge administered by Youth Agency is so far the best career counselling resource targeting young people. The service the website performs is currently limited to information on some professions/groups of professions, self-assessment tests and career management skills information. The Youth Agency has plans to further develop the portal, but it will never be able to provide labour information unless LMIS and worknet.ge services will make such information available and user - friendly.

8. QUALITY OF PROVISION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SERVICES WITHIN A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

8.1. Standards

The state standards for Effective Professional Consultation and Career Planning Services (PCCP), and sub standards for the PCCPS Services for job seekers were approved in 2015. The standards provide the description of the PCCP services, details on coordination between different actors, information base, as well as requirements to human, material/technical, methodological resources and monitoring of the services.

PCCP services are defined as career planning and professional consultation services and are provided by employment services, and by educational and youth organizations in cooperation with employment services to different target groups. Information base should consist of working and regularly updated labour information management system with accessible and relevant information on demand and supply, short term and long term demand on labour market, educational and employment opportunities etc. and informational materials (guidebooks, posters, leaflets, videos on professions) as well as well-defined methodological materials (methodological procedural guides for professionals, high quality self-assessment materials adapted to the needs of the target groups).

The services should be provided by qualified professionals. The service standards contain professional standards for career counselors, describe the functions they should perform and knowledge and skills required therein. It also specifies qualification requirements and maintains that career counsellors should have higher education qualification in social fields and 3 years working experience in relevant sphere and undertake special professional training in career counselling (also, be included in regular professional development).

Career information should be regularly updated and adapted to the needs of the target group. There should be relevant infrastructure for individual and group counseling with internet and computers and access to labour market information management system (that will also include individualized profiles of the beneficiaries).

The monitoring system should consist of internal and external procedures and include feedback from potential beneficiaries (employers, job seekers, educational institutions) as well as provide possibilities of comparing services provided by different institutions and their relative effectiveness.

The MIDPLHSA and its agencies (SSA formerly and SESA currently) apply internal methodological and procedural guides for providing services to job-seekers (so called New Service Model) and operational instructions that were initially developed based on the standards and are updated based on the experience and new technical knowledge.

The service models have been reformed since in the employment policy sector, however the approved standards have not been updated. Little evidence exists, whether these standards are applied in the employment support policy sector (considering the service models are being constantly updated and reformed) or in education.

Education institutions have to comply with authorization standards to be able to launch any educational activity. Authorization standards, among other aspects, set requirements for career guidance services. The Table 2 and Table 3 below show criteria and indicators from authorization standards for vocational and higher education respectively for career development services at education institutes. As seen from the tables, the standards are basic and does not define enough detail (as PCCP does) with regards to qualifications of staff involved and minimum requirements for delivering the services.

Table 2: Vocational Education Authorization Standards related to career support services

Criterion	Indicator	Evidence
3.2.2. Vocational Education Institution (VEI) has a career support service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Career support services are available to existing and potential professional students; ■ VEI is constantly providing vocational students and alumni with up-to-date information on employment opportunities / vacancies and further career development opportunities; ■ VEI periodically conducts surveys on the employment of vocational students and graduates ■ Based on the feedback received from the study of the career services, the institution improves the quality of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planned / implemented activities related to professional orientation and employment; ■ Methodology for surveying the vocational students and graduates; ■ Analysis of survey results; ■ Documentation of the planned / implemented activities based on the results of the survey; ■ Results of interviews with vocational students and stakeholders.

Source: Authorization Standards, Amendments 2020. NCEQE

TABLE 3: HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORIZATION STANDARDS RELATED TO CAREER SUPPORT SERVICES

Criterion	Indicator	Evidence
5.2. Student Support Services		
HEI has career support service, which provides students with appropriate counselling and support regarding employment and career development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HEI has career support service, which provides students with professional orientation and other information events regarding employment and career development; ■ Institution finds information on potential employers, and ensures cooperation with them; ■ A unit/person responsible for career support services facilitates employers' involvement in the creation and implementation of educational programmes, implementation of internship and practice corresponding to educational programmes; ■ HEI creates employer database and constantly informs students and alumni on employment opportunities/ vacancies; ■ HEI regularly conducts surveys of its students and alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Career support services; ■ Implemented and planned and implemented activities (employment forums, workshops, thematic conferences, individual student counselling, etc.); ■ Student and alumni employment indicators, including according to the qualifications granted; ■ Alumni tracer study regarding career (including employment rate with obtained qualification) and academic development; ■ Implemented internship and practice programmes; ■ Cooperation with employers and its results; ■ Survey results; ■ Interview results.

Source: Authorization Standards, Amendments 2017. NCEQE

8.2. Staffing

Despite the fact that the service standards set specific requirements as to the qualifications of staff involved in the system, the requirements are generally drawn up by institutions themselves (with no reference to the service standards described above).

No structured training programs, so far, are available for career development support specialists. However, lots of international technical support is exactly in this area (see chapter 3.2 for detailed information).

SESA is staffed with up to 100 officers who were exposed to on the job training from SESA coordinators and international development partners, however, there is no structured approach to the recruitment requirements and further development of career guidance professionals.

The PCCP standards contain qualification requirements and competency framework for career guidance professionals, however, little information exists whether the standards are at all applied. No structured professional development program is in place and offered as a systemic service to all career professionals who want to gain or further develop their qualifications.

Considering the numbers of beneficiaries SESA has to deal with, the agency seems greatly understaffed.

PCCP standards are not applied in formal education, either. Career management specialists at vocational and higher education institutions have to comply with the internally defined qualification requirements. The offices are mostly represented by one staff, in many cases, dedicated only part-time to this job. Again, lots of international donor organizations have developed and provided one-time training in career guidance to employed specialists in vocational education, however, there is no structured approach to human capital development in the sector.

Career education and guidance at general education level is completely delegated to class and subject teachers, with no prior training or professional development.

8.3. Quality of data and information

The career information is limited and not provided in user-friendly format. Labour market information is collected by MoESD LMIS unit (and partially by www.worknet.ge through the registrations of vacancies and job-seekers), however, the information is not collected and presented in the required level of detail, does not allow desegregation to information categories needed for beneficiaries and career development practitioners. Most frequently cited limitation is the inexistence of regional specific data and presentation of data by occupation groups. Most of the information is presented in PDF files, and the platform is not accompanied by a search engine, that would enable beneficiaries to search for data and information specific to different categories. Regular updates and linkages between various career information websites is another challenge.

While information on services planned and delivered by employment support structures (SSA or SESA) is publicly available, little is known on how the services are delivered within the formal education system.

SSA Employment Department and SESA produce annual reports detailing the administrative data on types of services delivered and beneficiaries covered, however, the data is collected and published only on specific target groups prioritized within policy documents above, namely, on total numbers of beneficiaries by received types of service, desegregated by gender and youth/non-youth categories.

Within internal and external quality assurance procedures, vocational and higher education institutions have to report basic information on compliance with authorization standards. The information is very limited and does not provide any insight as to the quantity and quality of the career development support activities undertaken.

So far, no data on evaluation of the effectiveness of the employment support policy is available.

8.4. Monitoring, evaluation and policy feedback

The employment programs and strategy implementation are accompanied with detailed monitoring and reporting systems. Earlier when ALMP was the mandate of employment department of Social Services Agency, the department published detailed reports of the implemented activities. There is an annual report 2020 published by the SESA, as well, detailing the type of services and number of beneficiaries (totals and desegregated by basic categories, like gender and youth/non-youth) during the reporting year.

The Labour and Employment Strategy 2019-2023 envisages the framework for monitoring and evaluation of the sector and strategy implementation. By the beginning of 2022, an implementation report 2020 and 2021 of the Labour and Employment Strategy 2019-2023 will be available, in accordance to the representative of the Employment Department of the MIDPLHSA.

However, focus seems to lie on administrative reporting, in terms of what of the actions planned where implemented, and how many clients were reached, etc., but reports do not focus on assessing the effectiveness and impact of activities/services and policies, therefore offering little use as source for service and policy improvement. In line with the SESA representatives, internal quality assurance system is built in the institutional and operational set up of the SESA. The agency has a monitoring and statistics department, which is responsible for preparing and publishing annual reports. Besides, each department has a coordinator, who coaches staff employed within the division and closely monitors that work is administered in line with the organizational instructions, provides recommendations for improvement of the procedures and programmes of the employment services and updates instructions. The new staff organizational chart is ready to be approved and new technical specifications for www.worknet.ge are being developed.

Higher and vocational education authorization process entails the assessment of starting conditions (baseline) as well as regular monitoring that education institutions comply with the authorization standards. For the purposes, educational institutions submit self-assessment reports and NCEQE/authorization board commissions also an external evaluation of the standard compliance. However, in the absence of operational national standards for professional consultation and career planning services at vocational and higher education institutions, also limited technical expertise of both internal and external quality assurance specialists, the assessment and evaluation process seems to be superficial. For example, the analysis of selected external evaluation reports from vocational authorization shows that experts have tried to identify the evidence that career management support services exist based on the interviews with the college personal and in some cases, the internal institutional charters, however, they failed to collect any evidence on the quantitative or qualitative parameters of the services. Being mere statements that such services exist and they conduct career guidance activities and tracer studies, the assessment only collected evidence of tracer study/student/graduate survey questionnaires, not evidence of the effectiveness of services being implemented.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations do not represent final solutions but are aimed at guiding policy and practice discussions. They follow the key pillars of this report and cover system, provider and practitioner level:

Policy framework

Short-term

- Ensure that the interagency coordination council is created at a level and with authority to make it a meaningful and effective organization aimed at ensuring that the legislation and practice in the area is following a coherent system approach: ensure that the council does not just have a

role in collection and exchange of information (as defined by the law), but also at operational level and that its functions include the steering, overlooking and approving of the development, review, and continuous improvement of legal and sublegal acts, standards, strategies, competence frameworks etc. that frame the national career development support system. For that reason, next to the bi-annual meeting of the council, sub-committees should be established and assigned to steer, overlook and move forward concrete tasks to be approved in the council who recommends to the legislator.

- Add youth policy practitioners, researchers and NGO representatives and private providers as members of the interagency coordination council to ensure an integrative system approach
- Include recommendations made in this report related to career education in the Strategy for Career Planning in Formal Education System (2021-2025) and the VET Development Strategy 2021-2025
- Ensure that all existing services defined by law have resourced institutions assigned and appropriate implementing methods and tools that meet the needs of the various target groups at their disposal

Medium-term

- Ensure improvement of the legislative framework in the area of career development support, including the consistency and synchronization of all existing legislation, terminology applied, existence of updated standards, definition of responsibilities across different actors working in education, employment, youth, social services, economic development and labour policy - as legislation is not consistent due to different government documents adopted in the area. E.g. Review and update the concept for Professional Consultation and Career planning System to bring together the education, employment, youth and social policy sides into one system, ensuring that a well-coordinated and synchronized strategy for career development support that meets the challenges of the time is in place (e.g. by making labour market and employment strategy more comprehensive). All sector strategies like the youth policy concept 2030 and National Youth Strategy, MoES' strategy of career guidance, counselling and career planning in formal education and colleges should be aligned to this overall long-term strategy.
- Review and update all existing standards for career guidance (e.g. standards for Professional Consultation and Career Planning System and substandard for Professional Consultation and Career Planning for job seekers, NCEQE authorization standards for vocational and higher education, and related service models (reformed in the employment policy sector) and integrate them into one set of standards for all service providers in education, employment, youth, social services and private sector addressing all various client groups: standards are to define the outcomes of career guidance for clients, and the standards of services, including online services and platforms.

Coordination and Cooperation

Short-term

- As first priority, discuss the outcomes of the review of the national career development support system in the framework of the interagency coordination council established by the Law on Employment Promotion (2020) with the objective of developing a national theory of change (ToC)⁴⁶, as long-term vision guiding the development of a national career development support system, and action plan(s) to prioritize certain reform initiatives;

Medium-term

- Ensure structured cooperation and collaboration between provider organizations in education and employment to allow for seamless and neutral service provision to beneficiaries; e.g. secondary schools, VET and higher education institutions, SESA and employer organizations and unions should naturally cooperate closely to provide services to secondary schools

Services

Short-term

⁴⁶ See [Developing national career development support systems | ETF \(europa.eu\)](https://european-training-foundation.eu/en/developing-national-career-development-support-systems)

- As high priority due to the need to (a) address high skills mismatch of youth, (b) reduce the level of NEETs, and (c) prepare all young people for a changing world of work with changing skills requirements: ensure access of all the high priority target groups (school pupils, college and higher education students, NEETs, youth, etc.) to existing career development support services (by schools teachers and class teachers within class teacher's hour or civic education subjects, SESA and its regional employment services, VET and Higher education institutions, private providers); as much as possible, make efficient and effective use of existing provider networks and existing tools and materials:
 - o provide career education to all secondary school students through class teacher's hour and civic education by using piloted quality checked career education curricula and career service standards and through inclusion of trained career professionals through training of existing professionals, or outsourcing the services to third party providers. E.g. add to the National Curriculum 2018-2024 a specific syllabus, reference materials, support materials and in-service training for teachers
 - o core career counsellor team within the MoES to coordinate and lead the development of a career management skills competence framework as basis for coordinating and leading the development of career education programmes for ALL learners at different education levels aimed at gradually developing career management skills to empower all individuals to manage their own education and careers, with a focus on increasing career readiness, lifelong career adaptability and employability through learning about themselves, about the world of learning and work (either as part of existing subjects, or as stand-alone subject and/or integrated through extra-curricular activities but in any case as integral part of formal education). This way career guidance is preventive.
 - o offer career guidance and counselling services within schools for all learners of all grades and their parents, either by (a) establishing a career guidance centre in schools with a full-time qualified career guidance coordinator who ensures coordination on career learning with internal and external stakeholders (incl. employers and parents) or by (b) establishing a career guidance centre for several schools in a geographic area like a city district or municipality with a full-time qualified career guidance coordinator or by (c) ensuring cooperation of schools with SESA career guidance practitioners or by (d) outsourcing the services to third party private/non-government providers – while in all cases, practitioners would have a fixed day and time per week and physical space in schools available to provide services to those learners who were identified in the learning programme for all or by other subject teachers or by themselves as individuals with need for more personalized support. A strong emphasis is to be given to the work with learners and parents to help avoid the high skills mismatch by developing a new mindset, shifting from the traditional idea of aiming at the highest possible education (university) as guarantee for future decent employment towards taking well-informed decisions based on LMI. For this, each education institutions, should develop and implement a career development support plan for their students.
 - o Connect to previous work carried out by the Education Institutes' Mandator's Office and the Education Resources Centers (the MoES regional offices), USAID GPriEd Project, EUVEGE and Twinning projects creating methodologies, guidebooks, career information and career education modules to build professional teaching and learning resources.
 - o Apply the same to higher and vocational education institutions, whose learners face high risks of becoming NEETs.
- Design particular career guidance methodologies and outreach activities for NEETs.

Medium-term to long-term

- Design particular SESA services for youth and VET and higher education students, including self-assessment and online tools and services;
- Design particular services to workers and employed including in non-standard forms of employment (e.g. platform workers, dependent self-employment).

Funding: Short-term

- Identify in the interagency coordination council new funding sources for ensuring access to career guidance services for all employed people within private and public sector and all vulnerable groups (e.g. in precarious employment or informal sector) facing the need for re/upskilling in the context of digital and green transitions.
- Ensure appropriate financial support to outreach to each potential user, especially for rural areas

Medium-term

- Implement new funding schemes for all employed/working population in close partnership with relevant stakeholders such as employer organizations and unions

Access:

Short-term

- Develop outreach activities inter alia through cooperation with social workers and youth workers to provide services to NEETs for both urban and rural areas
- Review and update the client profiling system to ensure tailoring services to the specific needs of individuals, thereby improving the quality and effectiveness of services, and to ensure dealing effectively with the increase of clients (all workers) with limited resources: clients can be grouped according to their needs, e.g. those that can be referred to self-help services (e.g. online), those with limited, and those with intense support need. Also different qualifications of practitioners are required for these different support roles.

Medium-term to long-term

- Use the need to increase the number of service offers throughout Georgia (currently 7 regional offices and 5 offices in Tbilisi of SESA) to conceptualize an outreach approach that goes beyond the traditional idea of a SESA office where clients step in, towards following the logic of a multi-channel approach to the delivery of career-guidance services to meet the needs of diverse clients, increase access to and the quality of guidance services: from telephone, online, distance (telephone, radio, TV), third party providers, personalised, group to self-directed service offers

Use of technology

Short-term

- Ensure platforms that provide adequate online tools and information are in place (self-assessment tools, information on careers, professions, labour market trends, information on career guidance tools and services available, information on education, training, mobility and employment, self-employment opportunities etc.)
- Ensure all platforms are regularly and timely updated

Medium-term

- Adapt ICT services to various user groups' needs (e.g. parents, youth, career guidance practitioners, employed, job seekers) to ensure user friendly information and learning opportunities instead of a webpage with one type of information for all;
- ensure a one-stop entry point for the services; Integrate existing ICT services (myprofession.gov.ge, www.lmis.gov.ge, www.worknet.ge ; www.vet.ge and others) to bring together the different elements of the career-guidance system as an integrative factor to improve effectiveness and efficiency;

Quality, professionalization and continuous improvement:

Short term

- Develop occupational standards for all different career guidance practitioners across education, employment, youth, social service sectors at different qualification levels as needed
- Develop retraining programs for practitioners in the field or targeting requalification of professionals in related fields of study e.g. social sciences to meet the needs of current or upcoming practitioners across education, employment, youth, social service sectors: e.g. certificates for all subject and class teachers, certificate programs and/or minor at BA and/or MA degrees in social or education sciences for career guidance practitioners providing counselling at SESA, youth workers, career guidance specialists at college and university levels, etc. – thereby building on work done so far by national and donor initiatives

- Use tracer studies conducted by educational institutions in VET and higher education to improve and inform career guidance services

Medium-term

- Develop BA and MA programs (major/minor) for up-coming career guidance practitioners across education, employment, youth, social service sectors
- Conduct training programmes, and BA and MA programmes
- Structure and institutionalize a continuous professional development system for all career guidance practitioners e.g. by making a minimum amount of continuous professional development hours within a calendar year mandatory for career guidance practitioners by integrating requirements in each career guidance practitioner's annual performance objectives or provider organisation's annual action plan, and make minimum requirements for continuous professional development hours of head teachers, class teachers and subject teachers about career guidance within a span of 2-3 years mandatory
- Improve/integrate monitoring and evaluation of career guidance services and career education in the formal education system from primary to VET and higher education in the wider quality assurance system of education: looking at (a) inputs (including expenditure, number and qualifications of practitioners, volume of career guidance and career education and compliances of the provided services with the national standards for professional consultation and career planning, form of the services (e.g. for career education whether it is across curricular, extra-curricular, as stand-alone subject, career centres per school), number of online services and their form (one-stop website entry point, several diverse offers on websites of different stakeholders, various apps; content and quality of online and offline materials, e.g. self-learning, LMI, job offers, international job offers etc.); (b) service outputs, such as number and type of interventions, number and type of clients; satisfaction with the services and (c) service outcomes including learning outcomes of career learning programmes, changes in employment status, transitions in training and education, transitions in employment status
- Establish a universal M&E system of professional consultation and career planning services across all sectors from education, employment, youth, to social services as provided by the concept on PCCP, including internal and external evaluations and feedback loops from clients;
- Ensure access to quality tools and information for practitioners that allow for adapting methodologies and tools to client needs;

List of documents and informants used for desk research

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