YOUTH-FOCUSED GENDER-SENSITIVE

LABOR MARKET ASSESSMENT

(Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti)

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Foreword

The present Youth-focused gender sensitive labor market assessment was developed within the "EU-4Youth: Better Skills for Better Future" project, which is implemented in 3 countries of Eastern Partnership – Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine. Save the Children's implementing partner in Georgia is Children and Youth Development Fund (CYDF).

The projects aims at promoting youth policies that are effective, gender sensitive, inclusive through youth in multi-stakeholder policy dialogue. Its objectives are: 1) Advocate for coherent and cross-sectorial youth policies at local, regional and national levels; 2) Contribute to developing the entrepreneurial potential of disadvantaged youth; and 3) Ensure increased access of youth to non-formal education and training opportunities for greater employability.

The project is supported by the European Union and implemented by the international non-governmental organization Save the Children. Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children. Its vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. Its mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

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List of Abbreviations

CDC	Creative Development Centre
CHCA	Charity Humanitarian Centre “Abkhazeti”
CSRDG	Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia
GITA	Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KEDEC	Kutaisi Education, Development and Employment Centre
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training (youth)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PWD	Person/People with Disabilities
SGH	Small Group Homes
SKYE	Skills and Knowledge for Youth Economic Empowerment
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WVG	World Vision Georgia

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Executive Summary

Despite the impressive economic growth in the previous decade, the Georgian economy has not been able to substantially increase the employment rate. Unemployment in Georgia is largely a structural phenomenon, which is primarily determined by the delayed structural transformation of the economy and a considerable skills mismatch. The Georgian economy is not producing a large number of high productivity jobs, and the labor market is primarily dominated by low-productivity service sector jobs.

Labor demand focuses on technical skills

Reflecting the structure of the economy, the demand for labor in highly-qualified jobs is scarce, particularly in the regions. Given the specific focus of the study, we have identified the most promising sectors in the target regions in terms of their potential to offer decent job opportunities to young people. Namely, in Kakheti the study covered companies operating in wine, ice cream and egg production, as well as in tourism. About 60% of demand in these companies is for low- to medium-qualified workers. However, it is worth mentioning that for most of the qualified positions (like mechanics, energy specialists, veterinarians, etc.) employers recruit staff from Tbilisi. This indicates a scarcity of these professionals in the region. Considering the information regarding the projects planned by governmental or donor funding in Kakheti, there will be limited demand for energy specialists, food and wine technologists, civil engineers, and ICT specialists in the next few years.

In Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti we focused on fish processing and conserving, cargo transportation and logistics, and food processing. Demand for workers in these sectors primarily focuses on individuals with vocational and higher technical education in their respective fields. Specialists in fishing and fish processing have been noted as being especially difficult to fill. As for the other regions, employers in Shida Kartli have been selected in the construction and food processing industries, where employers primarily talk about the difficulty of finding well-qualified welders, masons, microbiologists, agronomists, civil engineers, and IT specialists. Food processing has also been selected as a primary high-quality employment sector in Mtskheta-Mtianeti, where the demand primarily focuses on different types of technologists (food technologists), as well as administrative, finance, and sales managers.

To sum up, it can be concluded that employers in all the focus regions are primarily looking for people with medium to low levels of qualification. They have particular difficulties in finding the following specialists: electrical and electronics repairperson, computer specialist, plumber, carpenter, catering and hotel management specialist, engineer, mechanic, veterinarian, industrial electrician, machinist, chemical and food technologist, civil technician, and welder. The youth survey results, however, indicate that only 15% of respondents residing in the targeted regions have vocational education and they mainly specialize in pharmacy, informational technology, nursing, and construction work. In other words, there is a large mismatch in the qualification levels and fields of education requested and provided on the regional labor markets. It is critical to note that the demand articulated in the previous paragraphs captures the difficulty of filling certain positions and does not necessarily imply a massive demand in terms of the number of workers required.

Youth are missing technical, as well as transversal skills

While technical competence is of paramount importance for employers' hiring decisions, they also point towards the necessity of future employees having a certain set of transversal skills. During their assessment of young staff members and job applicants, company representatives noted that they usually *lack a sense of responsibility, punctuality, discipline, and motivation*. In terms of interpersonal transversal skills, ***employers demand the following: communication, cooperation, teamwork, leadership and problem-solving skills***. Most employers note that youth are lacking most of these characteristics.

The results of the survey confirm this finding. Based on their self-assessment ***the least developed skills among youth include: planning the activities of others, making speeches or presentations, instructing others, and training or teaching people (individually or in groups).*** Two thirds of youth have never done these kinds of activities, while others have done them only rarely. Half of the youth share information or cooperate with others every day; one third are involved in counseling, advising, or caring for customers or other people. With regards to problem solving, we can see that more than half of the youth solve simple problems which demand approximately 5 minutes regularly, less than 15% solve problems which demand approximately 30 minutes every day. About 20% of respondents do jobs which require physical work. As we see, young people are mostly experienced in simple communication skills, while the majority of them have no experience of more complex tasks.

Among transversal skills, we have also measured literacy, writing, and mathematical skills. In general, the literacy level of youth is rather low. Most of the respondents read letters and e-mails (one third do it every day), instructions (one third at least once a week) and books (only one fourth never read books). Half of the respondents never read newspapers, articles, manuals, or reports. It is important to note that 80% of the respondents have never read schematic materials (i.e. tables, figures, maps, etc.). The writing skills of youth are even less developed: around 80% and more never fill out forms, and never write reports or informational booklets. One third of the youth write e-mails every day. Mathematical skills are yet another weak point of the respondents. About 70% use calculators, while half of them never calculate prices or do any form of calculations (e.g. budgeting). More than 80% do not engage in calculations using decimals, percentages or fractions, creating tables, figures, or any other advanced mathematical or statistical procedures.

In accordance with labor market demands, we have measured the digital skills and knowledge of foreign languages among youth. 16-18% of youth do not have basic computer skills, but in general on a 10-point scale, they evaluate their knowledge as 5.63. A large part of the respondents have basic knowledge related to processing information, communication, security, and creating digital content, while problem solving is less prominent. Only 3% of youth possess professional digital skills and their self-evaluation of this is 3.29 on the 10-point scale. One third of youth speak neither English nor Russian; knowledge of other languages is even rarer. The average knowledge of English language is assessed at 4 points and of Russian at 3.54 on a 10-point scale.

In summary, we can conclude that transversal skills among the youth residing in the four target regions of Georgia are rather weak. Obviously, they are in no position to satisfy the demand of employers in this regard.

Non-formal providers have only a limited focus on technical and transversal skills training

Given this background, it is of crucial importance to examine the operation of non-formal education providers in Georgia. The study reveals that the absolute majority of non-formal education providers (especially those operating on a local level) focus on civil society development and respectively direct their training efforts to those topics (e.g. raising the civil awareness of local youth). This represents about 50% of the training content delivered by these organizations, while about 40% are on soft/transversal skills and only 10% on vocational training. Hence, a large part of non-formal education providers' efforts are directed at an area which has no direct bearing on increasing youths' employability.

A close look at training content reveals that non-formal education providers mainly focus on topics like making presentations, basic computer programs, job searching (CV writing and preparing for interviews) and foreign languages (particularly English). Only a few national providers also focus on entrepreneurial and IT skills. Overall, there is a clear deficit in training which nurtures the development of skills in problem solving and communication, and the ability of youth to be leaders and take responsibility.

Another critical point about the delivery of trainings is that despite the large number of organizations and projects providing trainings, the pool of final beneficiaries remains limited in relation to the total youth population of the regions. Respectively, the results of the survey indicating lower than average transversal skills among the youth should not be surprising.

Finally, it should be noted that the school-to-work transition mechanisms offered by non-formal education providers are limited to several projects including career guidance and internship components. As for the employers, they are oblivious to the importance of such mechanisms for their own benefit. They primarily cooperate with formal education providers and provide a small number of internship placements. However, even in this case, the scope of operation is so narrow that it cannot have any meaningful effect on mitigating youth employment problems.

Youth with Disabilities, IDPs, and NEETs are doing particularly badly on the labor market

The survey results revealed that the share of people with disabilities (PWD) among youth (14-29 years old) is 1.6%. The number of PWD acquiring higher education is minimal (1.4% BA and 0.8% MA degree). Most of them (97.5%) are excluded from the labor market, and this exclusion has a longitudinal character as the members of this group have skeptical attitudes and low motivation for future employment prospects and also indicate objective barriers: unadapted working conditions, unfriendly attitudes, and low employment chances due to their low level of education and essential skills for employment. Most PWD mentioned that they also had barriers during their educational process (no adapted infrastructure to access educational institutions, stereotypes of society, lack of support from family members, and lack of ability to achieve success in education). This might be one of the reasons why this group has the least developed skills, lowest level of orientation to the labor market, and least motivation for future development. The few members of the PWD group engaged in different support programs to increase their employability indicate the efficiency of the programs.

IDPs compose 7.2% of the youth (14-29 years old) residing in the targeted regions. They are unequally distributed between the targeted regions: the majority of them reside in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions. 81.2% of internally displaced youth left their home territory before 1995, while 18.8% fled after the Russia-Georgia war in 2008. That is the reason why most of them are well-integrated into the local context. Employers never mentioned any differences between IDPs and local youth. While evaluating their chances on the labor market, most IDPs do not indicate unequal chances, and if they mention this it is mostly connected with their acute living conditions or lack of financial capital. 61% of internally displaced youth were never employed, although 35% of them left a job due to dissatisfaction with working conditions, low salary, or personal reasons (marriage, small child, education). One third of unemployed internally displaced youth show readiness for employment. Every fourth IDP has higher education, and in this regard, they show almost the same achievements as employed youth. While evaluating their transversal skills, digital capacities, and knowledge of foreign languages, they mostly show equal or slightly less proficiency than employed youth. Although when measuring their orientation to the labor market, they have less developed skills than employed youth (having CVs in English and Georgian languages, motivation letters, using electronic databases to search for vacancies, etc.). The members of the IDP youth group show the highest motivation for future development, with regards to acquiring formal qualifications and developing digital skills or other types of transversal skills.

NEETs compose more than 60% of youth (14-29 years old) in the targeted regions. 60% of them were never employed, although others left a job due to unsatisfying working conditions, low salaries, or personal reasons (again marriage, childbirth, and household responsibilities). Every fourth member of the NEET group was searching for a job during the last four weeks. Those who are reluctant are skeptical about their possibility to find a job or, again, have personal reasons. In general, youth in the NEET group can be characterized as an inactive group as they show minimal intentions for employment or for future

personal development. Only 10% of them have higher education and 16.7% vocational education. Their transversal skills, digital capacities, and knowledge of foreign language are ill-developed as their orientation to the labor market is very weak. Although 59% of them have incentives for future development, namely in regard to acquiring vocational education (30%), higher education (20%) and studying foreign languages.

The share of employed youth among youth in the targeted regions is 22.8%. The mean length of their work experience is three years. They are less inclined to work mobility and most of them are not searching for new employment as they are content with their working conditions. Most of them are employed in the private sector, and 33% in the public sector. The share of entrepreneurs among employed youth is minimal and is 2.3%. The main three sectors of their employment are: healthcare, finance, and trade, which is in accordance with the regional economic profiles. One tenth of employed youth work in managerial positions, one fourth as professional specialists, and one fifth of employed youth work as unqualified workers. Their average salary is 500 Georgian Lari (GEL). The group of employed youth has the best-developed transversal skills, knowledge of foreign languages, and orientation to the labor market. 30% of them have acquired higher education, and 13% vocational education. Only half of employed youth have motivation for future development and if they do, it is mostly in relation to formal education (higher or vocational) and foreign languages. The employed youth with their abilities, skills, and qualifications best match the demands of the local labor market.

Gender inequality existing on the labor market and in the educational system is the result of culture and traditions

Gender analysis of the quantitative research data shows that girls' academic achievements exceed boys', indicating that gender inequality rooted in culture does not negatively affect girls' educational activities. The number of women with vocational education or a bachelor's degree exceeds the number of men with the same education. This result has been achieved by equal access of both sexes to formal and informal education mechanisms. Moreover, the family often provides for the education of girls, while some boys have to work and cover the costs of study from their salaries.

Women in the 14-29 age group are less employed than men, but it is not explained by a discriminatory attitude towards women in the labor market. Marriage, pregnancy, and childcare obligations force women to leave the labor market. The disappearance of women from the labor market is mainly caused by Georgian traditional cultural values and partly by a weakly-developed childcare system wherein women have no choices due to lack of physical access to a kindergarten. The survey results show that the labor market is gender segregated because of the different occupational preferences of male and female youth (while men choose professions related to physical activities, women choose specialties with a lighter workload) or due to easier access of men to power (e.g. more male youth are employed in the public sector), but this trend is not seen in the case of managerial positions, which are held more often by women than by men.

Analysis of the transversal skills and competences of young people on a gender basis shows that in the age group 14-29, a number of activities related to work, cooperation, training or teaching of others are more developed among men than women. The gender difference is expressed in the performance of physical work, too: half of men perform physical work every day or weekly, while physical work is done by 25% of women daily or weekly. Quantitative research revealed that girls' digital competences in four directions—information processing, communication, content creation, and problem solving—are better developed than boys'. The only area where male youth show higher digital competence is in safety. Girls' reading skills are also more developed than boys'. The level of English language competence is higher among girls than boys, but this trend is not seen in relation to Russian language. Documents needed for employment and orientation on the labor market are also more developed among girls than among boys.

Aim, Objectives, and Methodology of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess modern labor market needs and existing non-formal educational services, and analyze how youth's existing skills and available opportunities match the market demand in four regions of Georgia (Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Samegrelo Zemo-Svaneti, and Mtskheta-Mtianeti).

In achieving the above aim, the research touches upon the following specific objectives: a) Identifies current and future trends on the labor markets of the targeted regions with a focus on economic sectors that potentially require a highly skilled and qualified workforce; specifies the jobs and skills that are currently needed or will be generated in these sectors. b) Identifies what the support mechanisms (financial and other) are for youth in the selected regions to develop their entrepreneurial potential and which skills are necessary for youth to become successful entrepreneurs. c) Studies and assesses the scope of educational programs of non-formal education providers in the selected regions in order to see how the demand for skills is met by these trainings and specify the gaps. d) Evaluates the qualifications and skills which local youth can offer to the labor market and identifies the challenges that youth face on the local labor market.

The study targeted four groups of actors to achieve these objectives: local youth, private sector employers, non-formal education providers, and key stakeholders (including individuals with knowledge of the local socio-economic context, representatives of local municipalities, chambers of commerce, employers' associations, job centers, respective project staff, field experts, etc.).

The research design of the study focused on using qualitative and quantitative research methods (desk research, secondary data analysis, expert interviews, and a survey) in different phases of the research process.

To assess the main economic sectors in these regions, the main trends of the regional labor markets, and other region-specific information, reports of national agencies, research organizations, and international/donor organizations were analyzed. The database of business entities provided by the National Statistics Office (GeoStat) was processed in order to evaluate how sectors are performing and to purposefully select employers for the qualitative study.

To achieve the second part of the first objective and identify the skills demanded on the regional labor markets, sixteen private sector employers (four employers in each region) and thirteen key stakeholders (two in each region and five in the capital city) were interviewed. The relevant employers were defined by their field of work particular to the region's economy and their requirement for a highly skilled and qualified workforce. The key stakeholders were representatives of regional and municipal governments, employment centers, employer associations, vocational educational schools, trade unions, and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.

In order to identify what the support mechanisms (financial and other) are for youth in the selected regions to develop their entrepreneurial potential and what skills are necessary for youth to become successful entrepreneurs, the following research methods were used: document analysis and interviews with non-formal education providers. Overall, fifteen interviews were conducted with non-formal educational providers: three interviews each in Kakheti, Shida Kartli and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, and two interviews in Mtskheta-Mtianeti. The other four interviews were conducted in Tbilisi, in the central offices of the organizations to generate information about the regions. Documents (reports, tracer-studies, etc.) were obtained from the non-formal education providers after semi-structured interviews were conducted with their representatives.

The study of the youth labor supply and their problems on the labor market was performed via a survey. Considering the aim of the study was to concentrate on youth (defined as 14-29 years old) with special status, we divided the youth in each region into four sub-groups (youth with disabilities, IDPs,

other vulnerable groups such as Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) youth and youth who are already on the job). The overall sample size was 400 interviews, which was divided between four regions and four groups of youth. Thus, in each region 100 face-to-face interviews were conducted: 25 interviews were conducted with representatives of each group in each region. The sample design was a multistage cluster sampling. This sample design allowed us to cover sub-groups within the general youth population. At the first stage of the survey, interviewers identified families with youth (14-29 years old), at the second stage in the randomly sampled families, they filled out short questionnaires in order to screen if the youth in the family belonged to one of the target sub-groups. If there was such a family member, a structured interview was conducted with him/her. The two-stage sample design was useful not only for identifying the targeted youth, but also for calculating the share of each sub-group within the 14-29 year-old population. After calculating this proportion of each group, a statistician calculated the weight for each group and weighted the database in order to guarantee that the survey results were representative.

The survey fieldwork was done in the end of July-beginning of August 2018. The method for collecting information was face-to-face interviews. After fieldwork, the data was inserted into an SPSS database, cleaned, weighted, and statistically processed.

The research limitations of the selected designs and research conducted are related to the general limitations of the selected research method and also to this particular case. The first limitation is connected to the number of interviews conducted with employers in order to identify the skills required in the labor market. Due to limited financial resources and to save time, four interviews were conducted with employers to identify the skills required in the prominent field in each region, which could not cover all prominent economic sectors of the regions. However, we used desk research to balance the existing limitations, so we could have a relatively detailed and representative picture of each region's specifics.

Two types of restrictions were related to the survey: the sample design and the impact of third-person involvement in face-to-face interviews. Generally, the sample size is representative for youth (14-29 years old) residing in the target regions, but the sample size of target groups for research in each region (25 interviews for each group in each region) is small, which increases the sampling error of the survey. However, this limitation is balanced with the two-stage sample model and screening.

As indicated above, using screening questionnaires at the first stage of the survey guaranteed a calculation of the share of the targeted youth groups in each region. The calculated coefficient was used during data analysis to weight the quantitative data. The second restriction was related to the survey of young people with disabilities. In some cases, the special needs of the respondents with disabilities made it necessary to involve his/her parents or guardians in the interviewing process, which had little impact on the results of the survey.

Chapter 1. Overview of the Main Trends on the Georgian Labor Market

Structural Problems

From 2005-2016, GDP in Georgia increased by 5.7% on average, however, the effect on the employment rate was moderate. This is primarily due to the fact that economic growth was steered by increased productivity, rather than availability of more jobs (World Bank, 2017). Respectively, there are a number of problems on the Georgian labor market and the high share of unemployed is number one among them (the unemployment rate reached 13.9% in 2017).

High unemployment in Georgia is predetermined by several structural reasons. First of all, there is the large share of self-employed (52% in 2017)[1], the absolute majority of whom are subsistence farmers in agriculture. The income they generate is hardly enough to satisfy minimum living standards[2]. Including them in the group of employed individuals artificially decreases the unemployment rate. The inclusion of almost half of the Georgian labor force in agriculture is even more worrisome considering that this sector contributes very little to GDP (9% in 2016)[3]. This is a clear indication that agriculture is rather low-productivity. According to the World Bank, considering the level of Georgia's economic development, such a high share of workers in this field is abnormal. Thus, it can be argued that the Georgian economy is in dire need of a structural transformation and is not able to shift workers from agriculture to more productive economic sectors.

Manufacturing in Georgia is rather minor and has been stagnating since 2004 (World Bank, 2017). Nevertheless, it contributes significantly to GDP (16.4% in 2017)[4]. A number of studies indicate that manufacturing has good potential both in terms of increasing exports and the employment rate (GeoWel Research, 2016).

As for the service sector, there is a clear positive trend. Namely, the economic growth phase which started in 2005 was due to an increase in the service sector. From 2006-2016, the average annual value added by the service sector was 6% (World Bank, 2017). If not counting the agricultural field, the private service sector created the greatest number of jobs over the last decade. At the same time, employment in the public sector has been decreasing over the same period of time (GFSIS, 2016).

While the increase of private service sector jobs is an important positive development, one should also take into account the nature of these jobs. Based on the analysis of job data for 2009-2015, GFSIS concludes that the majority of these jobs do not require higher education/qualifications (i.e. university diploma) (GFSIS, 2016). For instance, 53% of jobs were created spontaneously in 2015. This refers to jobs that are created by the worker himself and which do not require any formal education (e.g. taxi drivers, petty traders, etc.). At the same time we should note that the unemployment rate among representatives of groups 4-9 of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) (e.g. clerks, assisting personnel, physical workers, craftspeople and operators) is 45.7% lower than the national average, while the unemployment rate among specialists is 20.8% higher than the national average (GFSIS, 2016).

Based on this information, it can be concluded that the Georgian economy is not producing a large number of high productivity jobs and the labor market is primarily dominated by low-productivity service sector jobs. Not counting agriculture, the largest employers in Georgia are trade and education. In terms of the dynamics of job creation, one should also highlight mining, hospitality, transport, real

1 www.geostat.ge
2 http://www.lmis.gov.ge/Lmis/Lmis.Portal.Web/Handlers/GetFile.ashx?Type=Content&ID=b0c44289-6d97-44a7-b59a-336ca9b885c7
3 http://geostat.ge/?action=page&p_id=145&lang=geo
4 http://geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/georgian/nad/Press%20release%20GDP%202017_Geo.pdf

estate, construction, and financial intermediation. Since 2015, these sectors have created the most jobs and they constitute one third of all jobs in the economy (World Bank, 2017).

The composition and size of companies also affects employment trends in Georgia. The majority of companies face a number of institutional challenges, which hinder their development, diversification of activities, and technological progress. This in and of itself negatively affects their potential to create more and better-quality jobs. The most important challenges include: lack of access to finances, lack of developed infrastructure, and taxes (World Bank, 2017). As a result of these factors, a large share of companies (90%) represent individual or micro-entrepreneurs (with less than 10 employees). They employ about 29% of the labor force. In reality, the majority of these companies have one or two employees. On the other hand, large companies (with more than 100 employees) represent just 1% of the total; however, they make up 43% of formal employment. The middle is disappearing—small and medium enterprises (employing 20-99 people) represent only 5% of companies and employ about 28% of the labor force (World Bank, 2017).

All companies, irrespective of their size, declare finding qualified staff members a major problem[5]. Large employers manage this issue with their own resources—they invest in staff training (e.g. many have created training centers)[6]. While small and medium companies cannot afford such investments, they depend on receiving qualified candidates from the labor market, which is becoming increasingly difficult.

Youth on the Georgian Labor Market

Youth in Georgia are one of the disadvantaged groups on the labor market marked by higher than average unemployment and activity rates (25.8% and 50.9% respectively for 2016). The share of youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) is also fairly high (32% in 2016)[7]. Young women in Georgia are less active than young men. The activity rates of young males and females increase with level of education; however, the increase is much more pronounced in men than in women. Respectively, young men have much higher employment rates than young women (47.1% and 27.5% respectively) (ETF, 2018).

The largest occupational groups among employed youth include “market oriented skilled agricultural workers” (36.4%), personal services workers (15.4%), business and administration professionals (9.2%) and associate professionals (8.2%) (see Table 1). It is clear that the trends are similar: the first three largest occupational groups are identical for youth and for the general population, however, at closer inspection, one can observe that the share of youth is smaller in the more “traditional” and “blue-collar” jobs such as skilled agricultural workers and drivers compared to the general population. On the other hand, their share is larger in more “modern” jobs like business and administration professionals or legal, social and cultural associates, compared to the rest of the workers. While this may look like youth have a more “privileged” situation in the labor market, the reader should note that this is only in comparison to the general population. Among young workers, most of them work as agricultural workers, personal service workers, and food preparation assistants, indicating that in reality the majority of youth are presented in the secondary labor market with less privileged jobs.

A youth study[8] carried out by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons, Labour, Health, and Social Affairs sheds more light on the working conditions of youth in Georgia. According to this study, young

5 https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2659895

6 http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/240291468030285150/SABER-workforce-development-country-report-Georgia-2014

7 Please note that this indicator was calculated by the European Training Foundation using data from the National Statistics Office of Georgia. The methodology used in this research is somewhat different, reflecting the different selection of questions asked during the survey. Respectively, the national and region-specific indicators should not be compared at face value. Nonetheless, it can be argued that NEET rates in the focus regions are much higher than the national average.

8 https://www.moh.gov.ge/uploads/files/oldMoh/01_GEO/Shroma/kvleva/55.pdf

people in hired employment work on average 5.4 days a week for on average 8.7 hours per day. The majority of those who reported working overtime work in the private sector. They stated working on average 10 to 12 hours overtime per week (MoLHSA 2016). According to the national integrated household survey of 2015, around 47% of youth reported working more than 40 hours per week, compared to 25% of the general population (GeoStat, 2016) indicating that if young workers manage to find a job, they work very hard.

Based on the same study, 91% of the employed respondents say they received regular monthly remuneration. For 63%, wages are below 500 GEL (see Figure 1). Based on this survey, the average salary among Georgian youth is around 500-600 GEL, which is significantly lower than the national average. It is important to note that the study revealed a statistically significant difference between the wages of young males and females: the latter mostly report wages in the range of 100-300 GEL, while men's wages are mostly over 400 GEL. Interestingly enough, the reservation wages as stated by the survey respondents are higher than their real wages for both men and women, and constitute respectively 749 GEL and 530 GEL on average (MoLHSA 2016).

Table 1: Total employment by economic sector (ISCO), 2016

Occupational groups	Total labor force (15+)	Youth labor force (15-29)
Chief Executives & Managers	3.6%	2.0%
Science and Engineering Professionals	3.2%	2.8%
Health Professionals	3.0%	3.2%
Teaching Professionals	4.3%	1.6%
Business and Administration Professionals	5.0%	9.2%
Legal, social, cultural & related associate professionals	4.3%	8.2%
General and keyboard clerks	1.1%	1.6%
Customer services clerks	0.9%	2.5%
Personal Services workers	9.9%	15.4%
Market-Oriented Skilled Agricultural Workers	48.2%	36.4%
Building & Related Trades Workers	2.6%	2.3%
Metal, Machinery & related trades workers	1.0%	1.1%
Electrical & Electronics trades workers	1.2%	1.6%
Food processing, woodworking, garment & other craft & related trades workers	0.8%	1.0%
Stationary plant & machine operators	0.6%	0.8%
Drivers & mobile plant operators	4.0%	2.3%
Cleaners and helpers	0.4%	0.0%
Agricultural, forestry & fishery laborers	0.7%	0.8%
Laborers in mining, construction, manufacturing & transport	0.3%	0.6%
Food preparation assistants	4.7%	6.5%

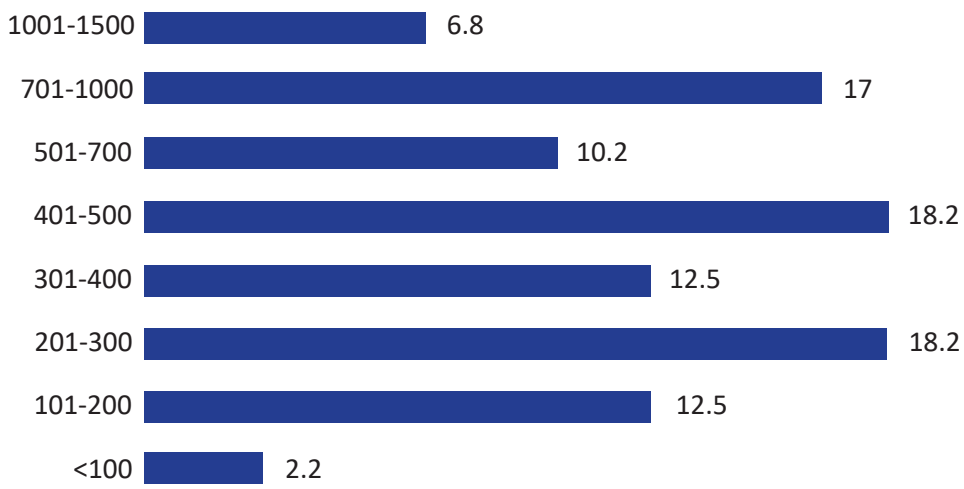
Source: Author's calculations based on data from the National Statistics Office

Youth have been rather outspoken about harsh working conditions, especially in the private sector. According to them, although they have written contracts with employers: "almost nobody reads the contract and those who read it need professional consultations to understand what is written in it" (MoLHSA 2016). In their assessment, contracts usually give more power to employers, if they terminate

the contract, they assume no obligations, however, if workers do, then they have to pay fines." This statement on the one hand indicates that young workers are not aware of their rights: according to the Georgian labor code, if the employer terminates the contract they have to provide severance pay. On the other hand, it also indicates that employers largely violate this clause of the labor code.

Young people also talked about other labor rights violations: in most cases they do not have a written job description which makes them bound to fulfil any orders from their employers. These orders usually go beyond the original agreements. As indicated earlier, there is a large share of youth working as "personal services workers" (e.g. in restaurants and supermarkets). A recent study by the Human Rights Monitoring and Education Centre (Chubabria, Gvishiani, & Jokhadze, 2017) provides a rich description of exploitation and violations of labor rights in these sectors, which resonates with the statements of young people presented in the MoLHSA study, making us conclude that precarious employment is prevalent among Georgian youth.

Figure 1: Average Salary of Young Workers in GEL



ource: MoLHSA 2016, Youth Employment Survey

This scant evidence suggests that while modern jobs (e.g. business and administration professionals, personal service workers) are more occupied by youth compared to the general population, it does not always mean a dream job for them. On the contrary, as some respondents have noted getting a job is a must to secure a source of income, rather than a fulfilment of one's professional goals. While assessing satisfaction with their workplaces, among those who expressed satisfaction it was mostly due to the "friendly staff and environment", while remuneration and social benefit packages were the lowest ranked features.

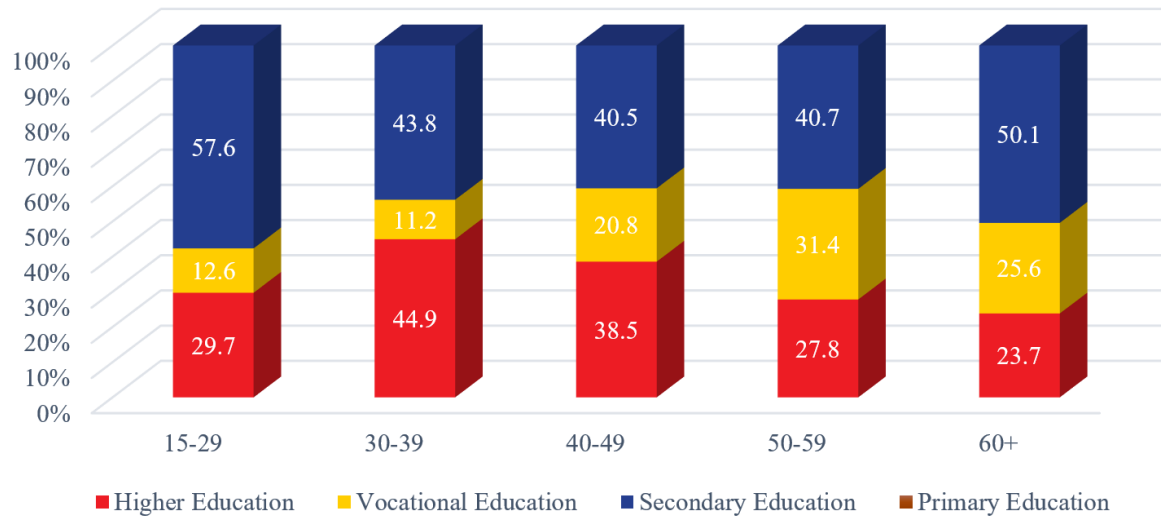
The Problem of Skills Mismatch

About 30% of youth have high education in Georgia, while only 12% obtain a vocational education diploma, indicating that young Georgians see university education as more desirable than vocational education (see Figure 2). This, however, contributes to a rather high skills mismatch on the job market, since Georgian youths' high educational attainment does not often correspond to the level and type of education required by employers. A STEPS skills study[9] carried out by the World Bank in 2013 indicates that the most important skills that young (under 30) workers often lack are technical competences and problem-solving skills, as well as lack of English, leadership, creative and critical thinking. This refers to both university and high school graduates. For example, close to 70% of employers say that university graduates often do not know English; over 50% say they lack leadership skills, and 40% say that

9 http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2013

they lack creativity and critical thinking skills. Occupation-specific technical skills are also quite often deemed a problem. University graduates have insufficient technical skills according to almost 30% of employers, and high school graduates have insufficient technical skills according to close to 40% of employers (World Bank 2013b: STEP Skills Survey). The survey also finds that in terms of personal traits, young workers mostly lack openness to experiences, which is alarming since it is the young people who should by definition be open to new experiences (World Bank 2013b).

Figure 2: Highest Level of Education Achieved by Age Group



In order to understand the problem of skills mismatch better, it is critical to examine labor supply and demand in much more detail. According to formally obtained qualifications, the largest share (30%) of the Georgian labor force is represented by "other professionals in the field of education". This group covers a wide range of social science specializations. In the case of Georgia, it includes 37% of economists, 21% of lawyers and 20% of linguists/translators. Respectively, one can argue that this is the most prevalent formal qualification in Georgia. This also reflects the fact that social sciences are the most popular among Georgian students. The other largest groups include physics, math, and engineering graduates (16%) and associate professionals (10%). Professionals with higher education diplomas in the area of engineering are very few in number[10]. Another striking feature of the Georgian labor force is the limited pool of graduates with vocational education. For instance, individuals with diplomas/certificates in metal work or mechanics and other craftspeople represent just 4% of the labor force.

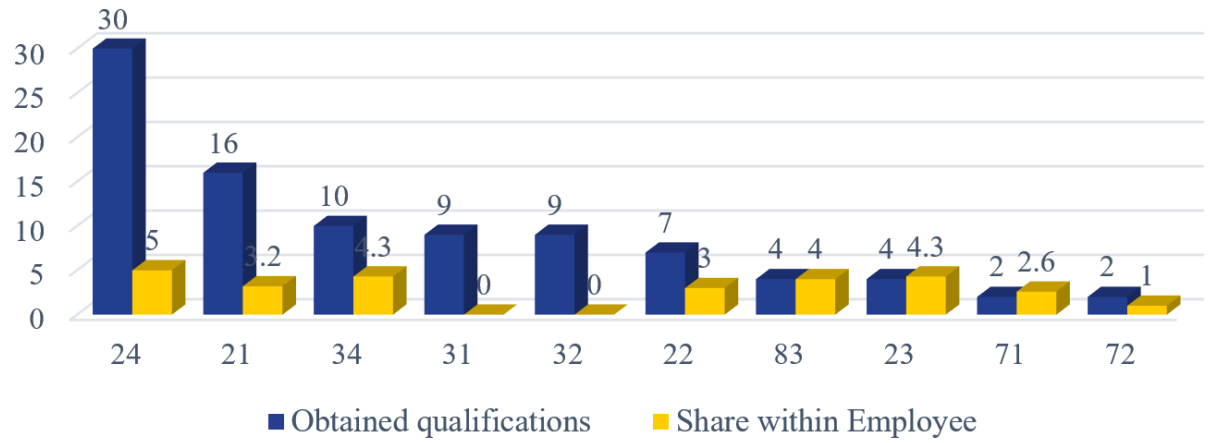
When we look at the occupational groups, the picture is somewhat different. Not surprisingly, the largest share is represented by qualified workers in the field of agriculture (48%). The next major occupational groups are personal service workers (9.9%), other specialists in the field of education (5%), nonqualified workers in manufacturing, construction, and transport (4.7%) and associate professionals (4.3%). It is important to note that representatives of the highly qualified occupations (e.g. professionals in engineering, mathematics, physics, and life sciences) represent only 6.2% of the total. Qualified craftspeople are also in shortage (2.6%).

Figure 3 compares the number of people holding a certain qualification and the number of people actually doing a particular job. The largest difference can be observed in the case of social science specialists, physics/math and engineering professionals, and associate professionals. The number of people with formal qualifications in these groups heavily outnumbers the number of people actually doing these jobs. Thus, presumably, these professionals are not in high demand and the unemployment rate

10 It is critical to note that while holders of diplomas in the field of engineering form the second largest group of the Georgian labour force, the absolute majority of these individuals are over 50 years old. As such, they were educated in the Soviet times, which makes their credentials obsolete.

among these groups of professionals is very high. It is worth noting, that occupations in physical and technical sciences and life sciences are less than 1% (Migration study).

Figure 3: Distribution of the Labor Force According to Formal Qualifications and Occupations (%)



Code Key: 24 – other professionals in education, 21 – physics, mathematics and engineering professionals, 34 – other associate professionals, 31 – physical & technical sciences professionals, 32 – life science & health associate professionals, 22 – life science & health professionals, 83 – drivers and mobile plant operators, 23 – education professionals, 71 – craft and related trades workers, 72 – metal, machinery and related trades workers.

This data clearly indicates a large mismatch of labor supply and demand on the Georgian labor market. The primary reason for this stems from the fact that the majority of Georgians seek education in the social sciences and generally in higher education, while the demand on the market is primarily for medium- to low-qualified service jobs and jobs requiring technical/vocational skills (Amashukeli et. al., 2017).

Given this background, highly educated workers in Georgia are forced to take positions for which they are overqulified; for instance, 14% of them work in agriculture, 10% do physical work and another 10% are sales representatives (ETF, 2018b). Several other studies confirm this trend. For instance, according to the World Bank, the unemployment rate is much higher among the medium and highly educated compared to those with vocational education. At the same time, 38% of the unemployed have higher education. Among the highly-educated unemployed, 27% are youth in the age range 25-39 (World Bank, 2017).

Another major problem created by overrepresentation in the workforce of people with university diplomas in social sciences, is that there are no people left to do technical jobs requiring higher but most often vocational education (such as plumbers, technicians, etc). According to the Vacancy Monitoring study[11] of the Social Service Agency in each region of Georgia, such professionals have been named the most difficult to find (SSA, 2017). On a national level, employers report having the most difficulty in hiring representatives of the following professions: physics/math and engineering professionals (23.4%), food technologists and related professions (17.8%) and individual services and guards (5%) (Ministry of Economy).

To sum up, in quantitative terms, there is large demand for service-sector related jobs. For instance, the most sought after professions are: assistant personnel in sales (16.1%), individual service workers and guards (7.5%), workers in mining and construction (6%), and drivers and operators (3.8%) (Ministry of

11 http://ssa.gov.ge/files/01_GEO/PUBLIKACIEBI/FILES/angarishi.pdf

Economy). This demand is relatively easy to satisfy, since there are masses of unemployed university graduates looking for jobs. However, in qualitative terms it is most challenging to find individuals with technical education (both vocational and higher) and respectively, they are the most difficult vacancies to fill.

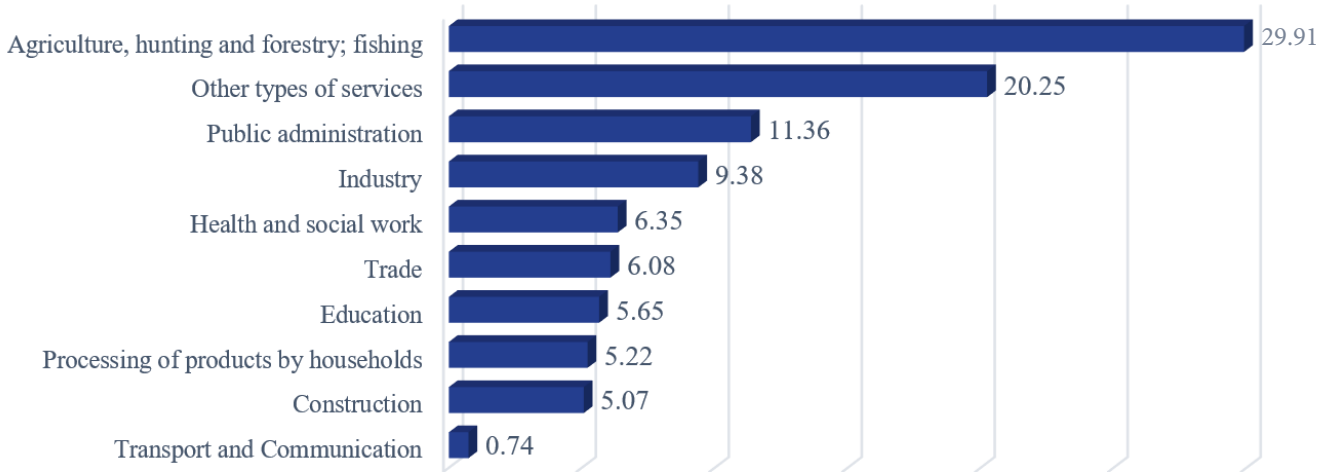
Regional Review of Sectors/Industries

General Description of the Kakheti Region

The Kakheti region is located in eastern Georgia and includes eight municipalities, nine cities, and 333 villages. Its area is 11,385 sq.km, and as of January 1, 2016 its population was 314.7 thousand. 22.7% of the population lives in urban settlements and 77.3% in rural areas (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018). In the period from 1994 to 2016, the population of the Kakheti region decreased by 31%. However, this tendency is more prevalent in rural than urban settlements: during the last 14 years, the population in urban settlements has decreased by 21% and in rural communities by 33%. According to expert interviews and review of documents, the significant challenge of the region is outmigration. This outmigration is more distinctive among youth, which intensifies the aging process of the population (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrustructure of Georgia, 2013). Experts perceive migration from the region as a serious threat to its development; they underline that if the local population is not able to grow more efficiently so that local residents receive higher revenue, then the migration process will be further intensified.

Despite the fact that the Kakheti region covers 17.5% of the total territory of Georgia and its share of the population is 8.4%, its share of GDP is only 5.8%. The largest share of gross domestic product (29.9%) comes from agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing and fisheries (see Figure 4) (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018). However, only 2.6% of the registered business entities operating in the region are in this category, and only two of them are medium-sized organizations (both are engaged in egg production), and the rest are small organizations. With its share of GDP (20.3%) the various services sector ranks in second place, while the state/public administration sector holds third place. Industry is less developed in Kakheti and its share of GDP is only 9.38%; according to data from 2016; 3.9% of workers in the region are employed in this sector. According to the Regional Development Strategic Plan 2014-2021, traditionally, the industrial sector is not developed in Kakheti: “The level of urbanization in Kakheti is low due to the mono-agrarian specialization of the region, indicating that in the nearest future the focus of Kakheti’s economy will not be transferred to industry”(Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2013, p.11). The experts interviewed also agree that the industrial sector in Kakheti is less promising.

Figure 4: Gross Value Added in the Kakheti Region



Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018

As of 2018, in the Kakheti region there were only 7,509 organizations registered, representing 5.8% of the organizations operating in all of Georgia. Regarding the size of the organizations, the majority of them are small-size entities; there are only three large business entities, all of them operating in wine production; there are a total of 52 medium-sized organizations (14 of those are in wine production). 3.9% of the organizations are private foreign property (or with foreign property preference), and only 0.4% of the entities (27 organizations) are in state and municipal ownership.

Table 2: Distribution of Business Entities Registered in the Kakheti Region by Number and Percentage

Types of Economic Activities	N	%
Retail trade, except for trade of motor vehicles and motorcycles	2445	32.6
Unidentified	1931	25.7
Trade of motor vehicles and motorcycles, their maintenance and repair	565	7.5
Wholesale trade and commission trade services, including motor vehicles and motorcycles	490	6.5
Manufacture of other food products including drinks	368	4.9
Construction	225	3.0
Hotels and restaurants	207	2.8
Land transport	179	2.4
Agriculture, hunting and services in similar fields	175	2.3
Other types of customer services	132	1.8

As shown in Table 2, among the registered business entities in Kakheti, trade (retail or wholesale) dominates; considering the numbers, food and beverage production, which includes wine production, is in fifth place on the list and is dominant for the region.

Experts point out that Kakheti's main resources are land and agriculture. Viticulture is a leading sector among the developed agricultural fields in the region. As experts underline, the largest share of grape production in the country comes from Kakheti. In addition to the fact that the vast majority of Kakheti's population is involved in viticulture, grape processing and wine production are the leading economic

sectors in the region; therefore, they are the largest employer in the region. The experts also mention that grain production, field work, and breeding are also developed in the Kakheti region. According to their information, 80% of Georgia's grain production is in Kakheti. Large scale lack of technologies and access to information on new approaches and innovations for the population as well as the population's low level of willingness to acquire additional knowledge on new agricultural risks and innovative methods of avoiding them are the main barriers for the development of agriculture in the region. As one of the experts underlines, existing knowledge in the agricultural sphere is outdated considering various new diseases and changing environment (soil, air, and land structure); thus, renewed knowledge is needed to cope with them.

Despite the fact that most of Kakheti's population is involved in agriculture mainly on the household level, the demand for daily workers in newly-developed farming industries or organizations (e.g., strawberry, peach, grape, and other cultivation) is gradually increasing and has become one of the most popular forms of local employment. Many villagers are involved chaotically in this type of activity. However, due to the specifics of this type of employment, this tendency neither reduces demand for qualified employees in the labor market, nor the existing unemployment problem.

Experts positively assess the Strategic Development Plan approved by the Ministry of Agriculture for the purpose of developing the agricultural sector in Kakheti. They note that without such a strategic plan, the agricultural development process was chaotic and depended only on individuals. Accordingly, the approved Strategic Plan will contribute to the consistent and structural development of the sector. It is noteworthy that this plan envisages the development of strategies for agrotourism, ecotourism, and cultural tourism, which are especially important for Kakheti; tourism is perceived by experts and the local population to be the second most promising sector.

Kakheti's tourism potential is big and growing. According to local experts, in recent years significant progress has been observed in the growing number of hotels as well as improved service. However, the tourism potential should also be reflected in the improvement of local production in order to provide tourists with local bio products. Despite the high potential of tourism, ecotourism is less developed in the region due to the failure of hotel management to offer local products to clients and lack of ecologically clean local products; this is directly connected to the deficit of qualified personnel in the agricultural sector.

Tourism is unevenly developed in rural and urban settlements; it is concentrated mainly in the city. For example, there are about 70 guesthouses in Telavi, while in the villages of Telavi municipality there may be only a few. However, villages near cultural heritage sites have increased tourist flows. In such areas, trade, transportation systems, family hotels and guesthouses are more developed, which in turn increases employment indicators and improves quality of life for the local population. However, villages without similar tourism trends have high levels of migration and local household budgets are filled with migrants' money transfers. In general, development of the tourism sector in the Kakheti region is hindered mainly by poor infrastructure; for example, in Telavi there are no paths or camping system. Other barriers for tourism development in the region are the poorly-qualified personnel involved in the hotel business, and lack of investment in this sector.

Experts point out that young people are employed mostly in hotel businesses, but they mainly fill positions with low-qualification requirements. In this regard, labor market demand is mostly for technical personnel and positions with vocational education requirements (for example, cooks). Although unemployment is a serious problem in the tourism sector (especially in hotels and restaurants), some of the vacancies remain unfilled due to the following reasons: compensation offered to potential employees is not satisfactory, lack of qualified staff in the service sector, and stereotypes associated with certain positions (e.g. waiter) which are often a barrier for filling vacant positions.

Experts consider trade a developed economic sector in the region, as well. Nevertheless, they assess it skeptically as it is not direct production, and the main priority sectors for Kakheti development are tourism and agriculture. As shown above in Table 1, the largest number of organizations operate in the trade sector, while it is in sixth position in terms of gross domestic product as well as being a leading sector with regards to employment.

Public and state institutions are also distinguished by high rates of employment of the local population. However, mostly middle-aged and older people are employed in the public sector, public schools, and kindergartens. Usually they occupy these positions for a long period of time and the rotation or outflow of staff in these positions is unlikely. This is the reason why creation of new jobs in the public sector seldom occurs and if such vacant positions appear, they are mostly of low social status (e.g., cleaner, security guard, unqualified worker, etc.) with low salary, which are less likely to attract young people.

Local self-government bodies and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia are considered potentially growing employers in the region, however, these positions are mainly project-based rather than structural (permanent positions). According to local representatives, the local self-government is mostly focused on implementing infrastructural projects, namely road maintenance, public transport development, and rehabilitation of various cultural heritage monuments. In the future perspective, the Tusheti road is planned to be rehabilitated. This project will have a significant impact on local trade, hotel businesses, and transportation networks, which will increase the overall employment rate. In Kakheti, the construction of a waste processing plant is also planned; an international rugby stadium is currently under construction and so is a sport-recreational complex up to European standards. These sectors will require new personnel with new specializations and qualifications in the future.

The Kakheti region has significant resources in terms of energy generation. The construction of several HPPs is planned. However, these projects will be more cost-effective in terms of efficiency and GDP growth rather than in employment growth rates. In terms of employment, medical activities where both low-skilled and highly-qualified personnel are employed are also important.

In 2019-2020 a Techno Park is planned to be opened in Kakheti. According to local public sector representatives, the Techno Park will arrange activities (e.g. hackathons) targeting the agricultural sector and the development of new technologists and knowledge in this sector.

International Organizations (World Bank, GIZ, EBRD, etc.) are actively engaged in the development of Kakheti by investing in the region. The Association Agreement with Europe has greatly benefited the region, also improving its financial position. Various projects with educational goals are also financially supported by the European Union. International actor GIZ actively participates in the Kakheti region's development; with its direct support the Telavi General Development Plan has been developed. This is a very important project which outlines the main priorities of the city as well as its development plan. When the General Development Plan is approved, any construction project in Telavi will be planned according to this document. Considering that tourism is the development priority for Telavi (Kakheti's regional center), construction of camping zones for low-budget tourists is planned with the support of GIZ. It will be a bounded protected area where tourists can stay in tents; construction of bathrooms and kitchens are planned, which will be available for tourists at a low cost. Support from international actors in the region is also reflected in agriculture. Initiatives of the local self-government in the agricultural sector are especially supported by such donor organizations as UNHCR, Czech organization PIN, and organization CARE. These organizations have financial resources to support agricultural projects. In 2017, in Kakheti, three major projects were implemented in wine-making; there were three enterprises developed into cooperative enterprises and millions of investments were made in each of them. Such organizations also promote the development and cultivation of berries in the region. Such small projects are implemented in the region by Association Elkana. It is important to mention as well that a

laboratory for soil research is planned to be launched in Kakheti.

Various projects in the region are financially supported by the Eastern European Partnership Program. These projects are aimed at sharing European experience of public sector governance and providing modern services to citizens. As part of these projects, it is planned to upgrade computer equipment in the local self-government sector and improve online services for citizens. Projects also provide trainings and workshops for staff.

With the financial support of the World Bank, a three-year project (750,000 EUR) is planned to be implemented in 2019. The project will involve a number of towns including Telavi, and will be called the "Agreement of Mayors". The project aims to plan and implement energy-efficient projects, which means reducing carbon dioxide in the air by up to 20%, creating and improving public transport, installing effective outdoor lighting, rehabilitating kindergarten and public school buildings with modern construction methods based on the principle of energy efficiency (the heating of buildings will be provided with energy efficient boilers that work on solar energy), planting greenery, and improving waste management.

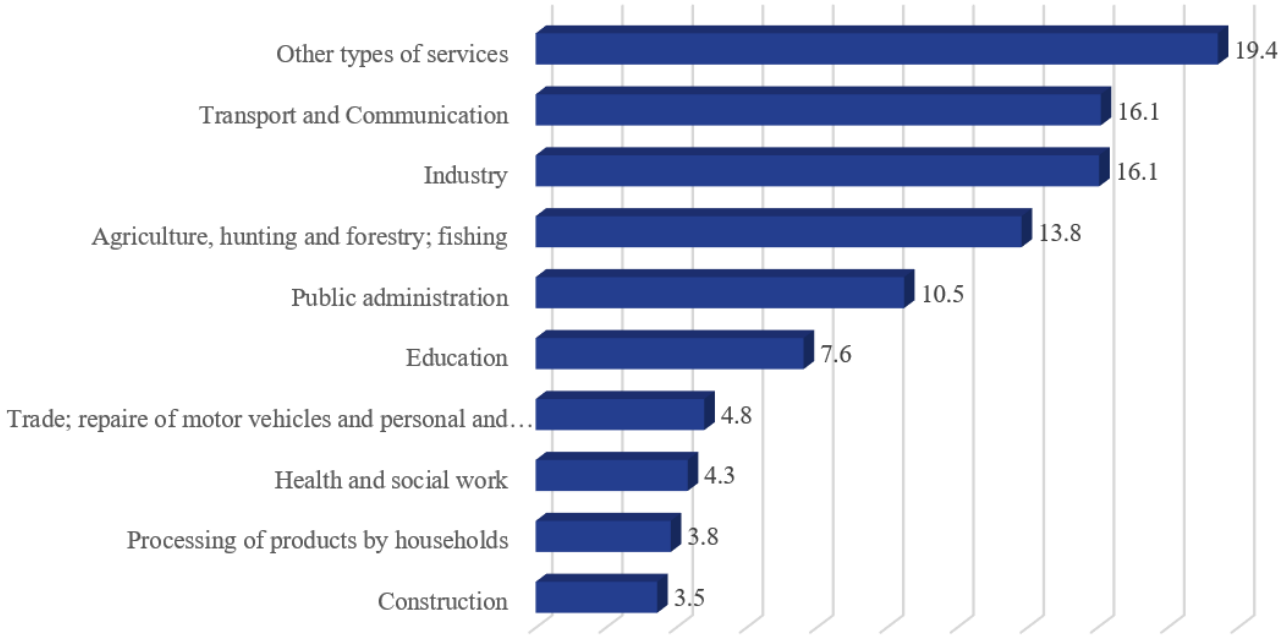
While the current state of the employment market in the region is underdeveloped and demand for poorly-qualified or unqualified workers is observed, the analysis shows that implementation of the projects and programs mentioned will increase the demand for relevantly qualified personnel in the following fields: energy, construction, services, information technology and management. However, this demand will not be significant enough to change the regional market requirements. The next chapter will analyze to what extent the region will be able to meet even such small-scale demand of human resources described above.

General Description of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region

The Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region is located in the western part of Georgia, on the Kolkheti lowland. The region is comprised of eight municipalities, eight cities, two towns, and 521 villages. As of January 1, 2016, the population of the region was 320.8 thousand people: 39.4% live in urban and 60.6% in rural settlements (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018). Since 1994, the population of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti has decreased by 26.4%. The population has decreased more in rural (28.2%) than in urban areas (23.5%). Negative balance of natural growth and migration are the main causes of the population decrease in the region (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2013). Compared to other regions of Georgia, the share of internally displaced people (IDPs) is highest in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. According to the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 89.5 thousand IDPs (28.8 thousand families) are registered in the region; this is 18.7% of the region's total population. IDPs live either in compact settlements (23.5%) or are settled individually. The housing problem still has not been solved for the majority of them (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2013, p.7).

Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti covers 10.8% of the country's territory and the region's share of the population is 10.66% (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2013). The share of the region's gross domestic product is 7% of the country's GDP. Unlike other regions, in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti the agricultural sector's share of production is in fourth place (see Figure 5). The service sector is the leading economic sector in this region (19.1% of GDP). The geographical location of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region and its port city of Poti make the transport and communication sector the most profitable (the share of the transport and communications sector in the region's GDP is 16.1%). However, only 3.9% of the total workforce is employed in this sector. Industry is the third most-developed economic sector in the region. According to the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, rapid growth of the industrial sector has been observed since 2010 in this region, which has developed hazelnut and timber industries (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2013, p.15).

Figure 5: Percentage Distribution of Total Value Added in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region



Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018

As of 2018, there were 8,711 organizations registered in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, which is 6.7% of organizations operating in Georgia. There are seven major organizations operating in the region: four organizations are engaged in supportive and supplementary transportation activities (mainly cargo shipment and transportation); three more organizations work on meat production, wholesale trade, and steel bottling. There are 73 medium-sized organizations in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. The majority of medium-sized organizations operate in support and transportation activities (15 organizations), food production (11 organizations), medical activities (10 organizations), and wholesale trade (7 organizations). 1.6% of the registered organizations (143 organizations) in the region are private foreign property (or with preference of foreign property), and only 0.4% of organizations (34 organizations) are in state and municipal ownership.

As shown in Table 3, the economic activities of many business entities in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region are unidentified. Among other organizations, retail trade, transport and warehousing, land transport, and wholesale trade activities prevail. The agricultural sector produces 13.8% of the region's gross domestic product and is the smallest in terms of number of organizations, as it only consists of 1.2% of total business entities. Based on the data, we can argue that production in the agricultural sector is mainly on the household level in this region.

Table 3: Distribution of Business Entities Registered in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region by Number and Percentage

Activity Type	Number	%
Unidentified	2695	30.9
Retail	2686	30.8
Transport and warehousing	855	9.8
Land transport and transportation with pipelines	594	6.8
Wholesale trade, except cars and motorcycle trade	436	5.0
Construction	309	3.5
Food products, including drinks	295	3.4

Provision of facilities, food and drink services	258	3.0
Real estate related activities	218	2.5
Health and social services	116	1.3
Agriculture, forestry and fish farming	106	1.2

Experts underline that the most important resources for Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti are land and agricultural activities. The region is primarily engaged in hazelnut, maize, and citrus production. The local population engages in agricultural activities mainly at the household level, however, there are organizations that work in the field of producing and processing agricultural products. Meanwhile, aside from traditional agricultural production, new crops are also cultivated in the region, for example, green cranberries and kiwi.

The Poti port, which is the main local employer, is a major resource in the region. However, port-related activities are significantly affected by the impact of international and local economic relations. For example, last year the volume of cargo shipments decreased by 70% due to the removal of Iran's economic sanctions. Local experts believe that the Poti port will be affected by the opening of the Anaklia port, as well. Experts estimate that sea cargo turnover in Georgia is not high enough to provide a full load to both ports—Poti and Anaklia—when construction of the Anaklia port is complete. Overall, a decrease of shipments in the port will cause a decrease in capacity for companies related to cargo handling and transportation, which will, as a result, reduce the number of employees. On the other hand, construction of the Anaklia port will increase the use of sea resources by the municipality. In addition, it will improve the employment rate of the local workforce during the construction process, as well as during its functioning (one local expert estimates that over the 3-year construction period around 3000 people will be employed).

Tourism is also an important economic sector for the region. Considering its location, the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region has high potential in sea tourism and in developing mountain, natural, and cultural heritage tourism. The development of this potential is highly supported by both the governmental and non-governmental sectors. Over the last 5 years, various festivals have been organized with state support, which has surely increased the flow of tourists into the region. The local workforce is employed in the preparation of festival infrastructure. The development of Martvili Canyon infrastructure (number of visitors reached 150,000) has greatly supported the employment of locals, including in the food service sector. In parallel to the growth of tourist flows, hotel networks and small hotel businesses are developing (six guesthouses have already been built in Anaklia and Gamukhuri alone); the city of Zugdidi is the most active in this sphere. Hotels are also being built in the region.

Local experts name general infrastructure problems as the main barrier for tourism development in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. The region has great resources to develop alpinism and mountaineering, but there is not the required safety system necessary to attract tourists. Deficiency is observed in all directions of tourism: low level of service in hotels and food facilities, and uncertified, unprofessional guides in museums. Experts consider the public sector the main employer in the region, including local self-government, educational, and healthcare facilities.

With the support of the local and central authorities, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, and other private organizations, the following projects are planned to be implemented in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti: construction of a highway, construction of a road in the direction of Tobavarchkhili, construction of ski lifts and slopes in the direction of Tetnuldi, project for Zugdidi water supply system, coast protection works, conservation of the old landfill in Tsaisi and creation of a landfill with new standards, transformation of the Enguri dam into a tourist attraction, building roads, parks, and a stadium, renovation of the Dadiani Museum and Botanical Garden, rehabilitating Zugdidi Theater, construction

of a swimming pool in Poti, and construction of a sports complex in Khobi Municipality. However, the major project is the construction of the Anaklia port. Some local experts are critical of its potential: one group believes that since the port is being built by a foreign company, they will not have a documented agreement with an obligation to employ locals, whereas another group of experts thinks that locals do not have enough knowledge, experience, and skills to be employed in the port's construction.

A company with a fishing license aims to expand its activities in the future and is planning to build two new factories in the region specializing in combined flour and animal food production. The companies operating in the food industry increase their production volume up to 20% each year, which accordingly leads to an increase in employment indicators annually.

Highly-qualified personnel in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region are primarily employed in public institutions: self-governing bodies, educational institutions, and law enforcement agencies. However, local experts are skeptical about the qualifications and professionalism of those employed in these sectors.

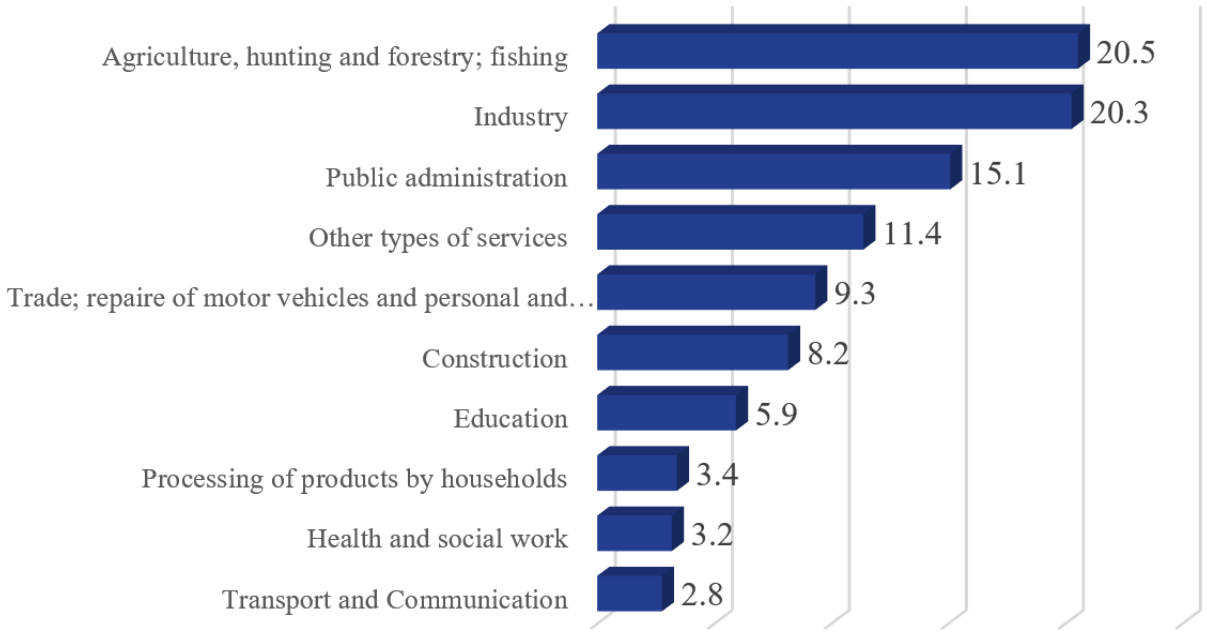
Like the Kakheti region, the educational migration rate from Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti is also high, though the tendency of young people to return is higher here. According to one of the experts, this is especially noticeable in Svaneti, and it is related to the development of tourism there. In Mestia, villages that were completely empty in the past, are now gradually filling with young people who returned to develop guesthouses.

General Description of the Shida Kartli Region

The Shida Kartli region is located in the central part of eastern Georgia. There are four municipalities in the region, four cities, two towns, and 373 villages. The area of the region is 3428 km^2. As of January 1, 2016, the population of the region was 259.3 thousand people (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018). 39.6% of the population live in urban settlements, and 60.1% in rural areas. Over the last 24 years, the total population of Shida Kartli has decreased by 23.3%: in rural settlements the population declined by 25% and in urban areas by 20%. When describing the region, we should consider the issue of IDPs. According to the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, "There are 250,658 IDPs living in Georgia. Among them 14,298 live in Shida Kartli, which is 5.7% of all IDPs living in Georgia and 4.5% of the population of the region. The majority of these IDPs (almost 70%) live in the Gori municipality, in the city of Gori itself. Socio-economic integration of IDPs is one of the main challenges of this region" (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2013, p. 7).

The Shida Kartli region covers 9.2% of the total territory of Georgia, and the population comprises 7% of the total population of the country (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2013). The gross domestic product of the region is calculated including the data from the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, together contributing a share of 6.2% of the country's GDP. Like other regions of Georgia, the agricultural sector is the biggest share of GDP in the Shida Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions (see Figure 6). The second largest sector is industry, followed by the state governance sector. The least productive sectors in these two regions are transport and communications, healthcare and social services, and product processing by households (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018).

Figure 6: Percentage Distribution of Total Value Added by Sectors in the Shida Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti Regions



Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018.

There are 5,860 business entities registered in Shida Kartli, which is 4.5% of the total number of business organizations operating in Georgia. Among those, three organizations are large-scale entities operating in the construction and healthcare sectors. 30 organizations are medium-sized: including five entities operating in the food industry, five in wholesale trade, four in healthcare, and three organizations in the processing industry. According to the ownership forms, 45 organizations are private foreign property or property with preference of foreign capital, and 13 organizations are in municipal and state ownership. As you can see, most of the organizations are local private properties.

As shown in Table 4, one third of registered organizations in Shida Kartli operate in retail trade, and the economic activities of one fourth of the organizations are unidentified. If we rank business entities operating in Shida Kartli, third and fourth place go to trade again, followed by land transport and production of food products and beverages; the list continues with the construction sector, followed by accommodation and restaurant services. Apart from the ranking of sectors, we can easily observe that, overall, the number of organizations operating in the region is quite low.

Table 4: Distribution of Business Entities Registered in the Shida Kartli Region by Number and Percentage

Activity Type	Number	%
1 Retail trade, except for automobiles and motocycles	1920	32.8
2 Unidentified	1498	25.6
3 Wholesale trade, except for automobiles and motocycles	506	8.6
4 Retail and wholesale trade of automobiles and motocycles including repair service	283	4.8
5 Land transport	274	4.7
6 Food production, including beverages	204	3.5
7 Construction	159	2.7
8 Hotel and restaurant services	151	2.6

9 Real estate operations	119	2.0
10 Other types of customer services	95	1.6
11 Agriculture, forestry and fishing industries	88	1.5
12 Health and social care activities	67	1.1

According to expert estimates, the main economic sector of the Shida Kartli region is the agriculture and processing industry. Also, natural resource processing and construction material production can be considered leading industries in the region. The municipality of Kaspi has cement material and clay as resources; accordingly two factories have been opened there—cement and brick factories. The leading employers of the region's population are organizations operating in the extraction and processing industry sectors. Many local residents are employed in food and beverage production in large and medium-sized organizations operating in Shida Kartli, as well as in construction companies. Then comes the public sector, where locals are employed in municipal structures, healthcare, and educational institutions.

Most of the population of Shida Kartli is involved in agriculture, but this economic activity is mostly within the sphere of the household, and has a low productivity rate and effect on GDP. Experts note that agricultural activities carried out without any plan and lack of professional agronomists are serious problems for agricultural sector development in Shida Kartli. The simultaneous cultivation of different crops by households on small plots has caused mutation of various diseases—a situation wherein a vegetable disease may also damage fruit—so the problem becomes much more difficult to resolve. Due to such problems, the agricultural sector is poorly developed in Shida Kartli. According to experts, at this stage Shida Kartli not only cannot supply other regions with agricultural products, but it itself has to consume imported agricultural products. Representatives of the public sphere underline that the state is implementing and planning various agricultural projects with the aim of promoting cooperatives and supporting individual entrepreneurship and farming. According to their information, the largest share of beneficiaries of the projects implemented in the development of agriculture in Georgia is in the Shida Kartli region. Consequently, this trend gives us hope that in some amount of time the quantity and value of agricultural products produced will increase. In addition to the projects supporting entrepreneurship and farming, the state is implementing improvement projects that are primarily aimed at the development of agriculture and will bring concrete results in the near future.

Experts do not name tourism as an important economic sector for Shida Kartli. As they note, there are two popular tourist destinations in the region: Uplistsikhe and Stalin's house-museum; though due to the very short distance to Tbilisi, it is visitors and not tourists who come to the region. Accordingly, the region does not have big economic returns from this sector. However, experts note that the region has other tourist attractions (e.g. Gori Castle) and their rehabilitation and infrastructural development can increase their value in this sector. Public sector representatives say that the government is working on constructing new tourist routes and better infrastructure in order to attract not only visitors but also tourists.

With the support of international organizations, the state is carrying out projects to repair road infrastructure and water and gas supply systems. The Osiauri-Chumateleti section of the highway is currently under construction, later work is planned in the Rikoti direction. Road repair works are in progress in tourist areas, specifically in Tani Gorge, Dzami Gorge, Kaspi municipality, and Tedzmi Gorge. An important project for the energy sector was building the wind power plant. Construction of a reservoir is planned in Kaspi municipality. After the implementation of this project, the population will have water supplies which will significantly help agriculture. With the support of USAID, the water supply in several villages has been improved and kindergartens have been built in the region.

Investments in the region over the last three years by the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia exceeded 20 million GEL. The Fund implemented important projects in Shida Kartli, namely: a sports complex was built in Kaspi; St. Ketskhoveli and Gorijvari streets were constructed in Gori, 10 mini-stadium rehabilitations were completed; drinking water wells were built in border villages; a water supply system was built in three villages in the Nikozi administrative unit; an emergency medical aid center was built in Tkviavi; and the full rehabilitation of Samepo Street in Gori is planned in the nearest future.

Despite the fact that various projects have been implemented in Shida Kartli, experts still talk about their short-comings. According to the experts, the projects implemented in the region are chaotically planned and developed, as there is no sustainable overall development plan for the region. For instance, in Shida Kartli's regional center, several streets were rehabilitated in order to attract tourists to the area, but as a result only two or three cafes and one guesthouse have been opened, and the rest of the commercial space has been acquired by approximately 20 second-hand stores that cannot attract tourists. In fact, after the rehabilitation of these streets, if the government had provided the local population with access to credit or improved their management skills, the projects could have been quite successful; but with such a chaotic approach, these goals were not achieved.

Experts underline that in terms of improvement of trainings and qualifications, the situation in Shida Kartli is better than in other regions as there are two higher education institutions as well as several professional institutions focused on training local personnel. However, the issue of qualifications remains a problem, especially in the tourism sector, where qualified personnel are difficult to find and the local professional institutions do not offer relevant training programs.

The development of the Shida Kartli region is significantly hindered by the neighboring conflict zone and the creeping occupation that threatens the stable economic development of the region. In order to raise the issue of creeping occupation, it is necessary to show the existing risks to tourists, too. For instance, they can see that the occupation line is only 200 meters away from Khurvaleti.

General Description of the Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region

The Mtskheta-Mtianeti region is located in the north-eastern part of Georgia. The region consists of five municipalities, two cities, six towns, and 599 villages. As of January 1, 2016, 93.9 thousand people lived in the region – 23.3% live in urban and 76.7% live in rural settlements (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018). Since 1994, the population of the region has decreased by exactly one third. The decrease in the number of people living in urban settlements (39.3%) exceeded the population decline in rural areas (31.1%) (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2018). The population decline can be explained by labor migration and depopulation of mountainous zones (it is interesting that 40% of the region's population lives in the Mtskheta municipality while only 5% of the population lives in the Kazbegi municipality); meanwhile the natural growth rate is volatile and cannot balance the high migration rate in the region (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2014, p.6).

After the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, as a result of the occupation of territory in the Akhalgori municipality and ethnic persecution of the local inhabitants, compact settlements of IDPs emerged in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region (Tserovani, Prezeti, Tsinamdzgvriantkari, etc.). IDPs living in Mtskheta-Mtianeti make up about 9% of the total population of the region (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, 2014, p.6). The Mtskheta-Mtianeti region covers 8.3% of the total territory of Georgia; its population is 2.53% of the total population of the country. Gross domestic product of this region is not calculated separately, as was already discussed with regard to the Shida Kartli region.

In the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region there are 2,130 business entities registered, which comprise only 1.6% of the total number of business organizations registered in Georgia. Despite the low number of registered business organizations, there are six large organizations registered in the region, three of which operate in the food industry, and the other three are in manufacturing, healthcare, and education. There are 22 medium-sized organizations registered in the region. Among the medium-sized organizations, three are active in the hotel/hospitality business, others are engaged in food and beverage services, construction, trade, and healthcare. 40 organizations are founded based on foreign private capital or by preference to foreign private capital, and 22 organizations are in state and municipal ownership. As the data shows, there are mostly small local organizations among the registered business entities in Mtskheta-Mtianeti.

As shown in Table 5, like in other regions, in Mtskheta-Mtianeti the trade sector is distinguished by a large number of business organizations. In terms of numbers, next on the list are the following activities: land transport, accommodation, food and beverage service, wholesale trade, and construction. However, the share of these organizations in the total number of entities registered in Georgia is very low. While the share of GDP is also low in these sectors of the economy, to study the situation, the data from two regions (Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Shida Kartli) has been combined.

Table 5: Distribution of Business Entities Registered in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region by Number and Percentage

Type of Activity	Number	%
Retail trade, except for trade with automobiles and motorcycles	547	25.7
Unidentified	524	24.6
Land transport	199	9.3
Hotel and restaurant services	154	7.2
Wholesale trade and trade through agents, trade with automobiles and motorcycles	124	5.8
Construction	99	4.6
Trade with automobiles and motorcycles, their technical service and repair	88	4.1

Food production, including beverages	64	3.0
Agriculture, fishery and forestry	37	1.7
Manufacturing of other non-metallic mineral products	36	1.7

The economic potential of the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region is determined by its geographical condition and useful minerals. Local experts state that zeolite, green diabase, and other useful minerals can be found in the region. Drinking and mineral water resources are especially important for the region. The region is known for the production of spring water "Sno", and "Kobi" water production is also underway. It must be noted that the drinking water supply for the capital city Tbilisi is provided by water production in Shida Kartli. The number of abundant rivers in the region significantly increases its potential for construction of new HPPs. Energy generated in Zhinvali HPP in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region is used to provide water supply facilities to the capital city, and Dariali HPP located in the same region is the most powerful HPP constructed since the country's independence. Construction work for new HPPs and maximization of the use of hydro resources is in progress. Tianeti Municipality is rich in timber resources; foreign companies with the relevant licenses are active in this sector.

Like other Georgian regions, the population of Mtskheta-Mtianeti is also involved in agricultural activities, but mainly on the household level. Two thirds of the region's territory is mountainous, making the breeding industry developed, especially in the Kazbegi, Dusheti, and Tianeti municipalities. In addition to agricultural activities on the household level, these activities are also remunerated. For example, the main employer in the region is the "Agricultural Scientific Research Center", which was granted 78 hectares of "Agro Cartu" land in Mtskheta municipality within the territory of the village Jighauri. The Tsilkani Selection Station is also property of the scientific center. The center is important not only for employment purposes, but also in terms of the educational activities provided for farmers. In the agricultural sector, locals are mostly employed by companies which produce onions, mushrooms, chandler nuts, apples, and grapes. The state and ENPARD provide 100% financing for farmers producing berries in the region, which is a very important instrument to encourage small farmers. By providing 70% financial aid within the project "Plant the Future", the state is promoting the development of perennial crops in the region. Agricultural activities in the region are supported by the organization "Produce in Georgia" through important projects that promote the creation of agricultural cooperatives and other projects. There are two large-scale organizations operating in the region in poultry, meat, and egg production.

The Natakhtari area in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region has become a food industry "island". The main employers in the area, which produce beer, non-alcoholic beverages, and food, are located here. Although a certain number of large- and medium-sized companies were established with foreign capital, employers underline the importance of employing local people in these enterprises.

Experts estimate that the tourism potential of Mtskheta-Mtianeti is quite high. This region has all the resources needed for tourism development: mountains, rivers, lakes, ancient towns, fortresses, and cultural monuments. However, the rich resources for tourism are not yet fully utilized. Mtskheta, Kazbegi, Tianeti, and Sioni are locations actively visited by tourists, but Dusheti's potential is only partially realized in this regard. Most tourists visit only Shatili, Barisakho and Mutso. Currently the roads to Pshavi are being repaired so as to attract more tourists in the future.

The city of Mtskheta is the main tourist destination in the region. In order to improve its tourism potential, there are a number of projects planned to be implemented in Mtskheta: construction of a new building for the Mtskheta Archaeological Museum, creation of a new tourist route system so that tourists can visit not only the Svetitskhoveli territory, but also Bebris Castle, including the cinema building. There is a plan to improve the infrastructure of Jvari Monastery, better organize the parking system, and open new trade facilities. Mtskheta is a good place to trade agricultural products produced in the region. Even today, the city can be viewed as the marketplace for trade from the Mtskheta villages, but supply and demand are not systematically developed. Local products are permanently on sale, but cer-

tain regulations are still necessary to increase the level of trade. In order to increase the tourism potential in the region, there is a plan to rehabilitate Chilashvili House and its square, Ananuri fortress-town, Dariali Monastery, and adjoining areas in the Dusheti municipality. Complete restoration of Gergeti Trinity and the bypass road are planned as well. The local population is actively involved in tourism: they have guesthouses, and provide services for transportation and food.

Various infrastructural projects planned for tourism development in the region are financed by the government, local, or international organizations. Usually, these projects have specific aims and targets, but in general they have a positive impact on the region's economic development, encouraging construction and supporting employment of the local population.

The main city of the region is also involved in the World Bank's three-year project "Agreement of Mayors" which aims to increase the efficiency of public systems and public servants, develop energy efficient infrastructure, and construct sports complexes. Under the auspices of the World Bank project, it is planned to improve and rehabilitate Dusheti. The Municipal Development Fund will allocate 35 million USD to the development of the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region. This funding will be used mainly for infrastructural projects in the region: planning of roads and other infrastructure in tourist places, setting up new tourist sites (such as Truso Gorge), creating a Gudauri development plan, constructing a ropeway in Gudauri-Kobi, constructing a kindergarten in Mukhrani, and improving the waste management system. Private investors are also involved in the improvement of tourism infrastructure. For example, the company Château Mukhrani plans to increase the tourism potential of the village of Mukhrani by restoring Dzalisi old town, Mukhrani Church with its old fence, and Niko Buri palace.

The Biomass Association of Georgia, which works in the Dusheti and Tianeti municipalities, has implemented a project to popularize biomass. As part of the project, an efficient heating system for biomass burning was installed at a school and an awareness-raising campaign was conducted about the efficiency of biomass usage. UNDP and USAID are implementing various projects on issues of energy efficiency and water supply in the region. Other important projects should also be mentioned: full internet coverage of the mountainous villages and providing them with medical first aid. In high mountain areas in villages above 1,000 meters, doctors will be retrained and provided with primary first aid equipment in order to serve the local population in these villages. Implementation of this project will increase demand for doctors with vocational education.

In general, the employment structure of Mtskheta-Mtianeti's population mirrors the proportion of economic sectors in the region. Experts estimate that most of the population is self-employed, which has gradually increased over the years; the rise in the self-employment rate is primarily due to household activities, but additionally due to an increase in family hotels and tourist services. A significant part of the region's population is employed by gas, electric, and hydro companies. Local people also work at the governor's office in the municipality. Some of them are also employed in the agricultural sector, food industry, and construction, but mostly in low-qualified positions. Local experts believe that this is due to the fact that big company investors prefer not to hire local people (they prefer someone from the capital or abroad) for highly-qualified positions. On their side, the employers claim that it is difficult to find personnel on the local level, which is why they have to invite personnel from the capital or abroad.

Despite the fact that there are trends of economic growth in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, the migration rate is still very high. The migration rate to Tbilisi is high due to territorial proximity to the capital; labor migrations abroad are also common. Labor migrants abroad are mainly women who work abroad in low-qualification positions, for example as a family helper; this leads to their disqualification. As a result of proximity to the capital city Tbilisi, there is a lack of educational institutions and other types of training centers in Mtskheta. Mtskheta is generally considered to be an already-developed tourist center not in need of additional attention, or considered a place where locals can always get the necessary services and resources from Tbilisi, which impedes the development of Mtskheta as an independent city and (re)trainings of the local personnel. That is why only one professional institution operates in the region.

Chapter 2. Demand on the Regional Labor Markets

Labor Market Demand in the Kakheti Region

This general description of the tendencies of the regional labor market in Kakheti will be based on the report "Monitoring Vacancies in Regional Labor Markets" prepared by the Social Service Agency of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs; monitoring was implemented with EU support in 2017 (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018). Within the scope of this research, large, medium and a few small-sized organizations from the leading economic sectors in the Kakheti region were interviewed. Considering that the research revealed a demand for personnel over the last six and next six months, the results are relevant to our research.

The results of this survey showed a rather negative picture of the labor market in Kakheti. Among the vacancies announced in the second half of 2017, vacancies for unqualified and low-qualified positions prevailed: unqualified workers: drivers, sanitation workers, and cleaners; personnel with special education: wood masters, mobile technical equipment operators, nurses, electricians, cooks, barkeepers, specialists working with customers; and among highly-qualified personnel the demand was for food technologists, assisting staff in statistics, mathematics and related spheres, accountants and auditors, and managers and doctors of enterprise-operation departments and financial-administrative departments. In the first half of 2018, employers planned to announce vacancies for the following positions: unqualified workers, drivers and technical equipment operators, doctors (urologist, traumatologist, radiologist), salespeople, engineers in construction, supply agents, financial and administrative department managers, and mechanics and specialists of mechanical and electronic devices (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018. P.90).

For a more detailed analysis of the existing situation, we will use the results of expert interviews conducted within the research mentioned; these interviews were conducted with local public sector representatives, formal and informal providers of education, and the leading economic sector employers of the region. Among the economic sectors, we chose large- and medium-sized enterprises from the wine, egg, ice cream, and tourism spheres. Employers' surveys show that their demand was mainly for unqualified personnel. The share of unqualified personnel among their employees is about 60-80%. Personnel under 30 are mostly employed in the service sector by tourism businesses, whereas enterprises mostly hire middle- and older-age personnel in general. Unlike other sectors, wine production is commonly staffed by a seasonal workforce; a large share of permanent staff is less qualified, and the share of young people is about one third of employees. Rotation of staff is more common in younger employees and occurs mostly in low-qualified positions. As employers state, this is due to better terms and career opportunities offered at other jobs.

During the interviews, the employers did not name any hard-to-fill vacancies in their sector. But the fact that in several organizations the positions of mechanical engineer, energy engineer, electrician, zoologist, and veterinarian are filled by people from Tbilisi (who either drive from the capital or have moved to live in Kakheti) indicates that finding personnel with similar specialization in the region has certain difficulties. Representatives of two organizations noted that they had to announce vacancies for the positions of electrician and housekeeper three times. It is worth noting that some of the personnel hired for positions with professional qualifications are old enough to retire; but while they are good professionals, the organizations employ them and do not seek or are not able to find other options.

Employment of people with disabilities is problematic in the Kakheti region. No people with disabilities are employed in the organizations studied (only one person with disabilities is employed in an organization's head office in Tbilisi). Employers note that no people with disabilities or any organization have applied for employment. But during the interviews, one of the employers wondered why people with

disabilities should be employed, which indicates employers' lack of awareness of the need for inclusion of minority groups in the labor market. According to experts, the working environment is not yet adapted to the needs of people with disabilities and it is often an insurmountable barrier. However, with the efforts of the NGO sector there has been a little progress at least. These organizations are trying to integrate people with disabilities into the labor market by improving their skills and qualifications, and also cooperating with local municipalities. In Telavi municipality at the Tamaz Antadze Sports Complex, there is a sports shooting corner, which is completely adapted to the needs of athletes with special needs and employs one person with disabilities. However, such cases are rare. Another expert states that most employers are quite open to hiring people with disabilities; if they have an opportunity to do so, they do it. Very often it is based on positive discrimination, but considering the results, it is still effective. The unemployment of people with disabilities is not only due to low demand, but also due to the attitudes of family members of those with disabilities, who for years have isolated them because of public pressure, which certainly leads to their disqualification.

IDPs are employed in a number of organizations but not based on their status. They are employed according to their qualifications and skills. Employers note that the number of IDPs is not significant in this region; they are mostly those displaced during the Abkhazian war in the 1990s and during this period of time they have adapted and integrated into the region so well that locals and employers do not take their status into consideration at all.

Table 6 shows the list of professions in demand in Kakheti according to qualifications. The list includes: results of quantitative surveys; professions that employers describe as not deficient but still are filled by human resources from other regions; and professions with potential to be in demand after the implementation of planned projects in the region. It is important to note that demand for unqualified and low-qualified positions is the highest, whereas demand for professional qualifications is comparably lower. However, it is difficult to find professional personnel, thus the lowest demand is for personnel with higher education and high professional qualifications.

Table 6: Demanded Professions in the Kakheti Region

Demanded Professions:	
Unqualified and low-qualification personnel	**Worker without qualification** **Driver** **Sanitation Worker** **Cleaner** **Salesperson and goods demonstrator in shops** **Hotel housekeeper**
Personnel with special education	**Wood craftsperson** **Nurse** **Electrician** **Mechanical engineer** **Zoologist** **Waiter (with knowledge of English)** **Barkeeper** **Cook** **Mobile technical equipment operator** **Specialist working with customers (cashier)**

High-qualification Personnel	**Food technologist** **Wine technologist** **Enterprise, operating, financial, administrative division manager** **Accountant** **Auditor** **Doctor** **Assistant staff of statistics, mathematics, and related fields** **Energy engineer** **Veterinarian** **Engineer in civil construction (especially with knowledge of energy efficiency principles)** **Information technology specialist (in terms of online services)**

Labor Market Demand in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region

The general description of trends on the labor market in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region will also be based on the report "Monitoring Vacancies in Regional Labor Markets" prepared by the Social Service Agency of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs; monitoring was implemented with EU support in 2017 (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018). In this research project, medium-sized organizations operating in the leading economic sectors of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region were interviewed.

Like all regions, in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region vacancies for unqualified and low-qualified positions prevailed among those announced in the second half of 2017: unqualified workers, drivers, sanitation workers; personnel with special education: nursing and obstetrics specialists and professionals, secretaries and operators, industrial and mobile technical equipment operators, mechanical engineers of electric and electronic equipment; and among highly qualified personnel the demand was for architects, engineers, and teachers at the secondary education level. In the first half of 2018, employers were planning to announce a minimum number of job vacancies; among these, the demand was for professions with first-level qualification requirements. The needs for special and higher-educated staff included vacancies for mechanical equipment technicians, operators of industrial equipment, electric and electronic equipment mechanical engineers, and managers of production and operation departments. For the following positions, vacancies were not filled: operator of industrial equipment (crane operator), manager of production and operations department, mechanical engineer of electric and electronic equipment, technician of mechanical equipment, teacher, and sanitation worker. (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018. p.161).

For a more detailed analysis of the existing situation, we will use the results of expert interviews prepared within this research; these interviews were conducted with local public sector representatives, formal and informal providers of education, and the leading economic sector employers of the region. Among the economic sectors we have chosen large- and medium-sized enterprises operating in: processing and conserving fish and fish products, cargo shipment and transportation, and food production of various directions. In the survey of employers from these sectors, demand was still high for the following positions – sea industry and fishing specialist, machine tools operator, mechanical engineer, electric welder, water welder, bookkeeper, turner, and repair engineer for hydraulic pumps and engines. Electricians who repair machine-tools in the food industry were so deficient that two companies

have invited specialists from Ukraine. Due to partnership with Turkey, there is high demand for personnel with Turkish language knowledge. Among qualified personnel, the demand is high for engineers, technologists, high voltage engineering specialists, food technologists, IT specialists, financial managers, manufacturing and operating managers, and laboratory experts in the food industry. According to a local expert, there is a serious demand for agronomists in the region. For example, in Zugdidi there may be only three or four agronomists with diplomas, which seriously hinders the development of agriculture as a prospective sector in the region.

In Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, a problem was revealed in finding personnel specializing in the sea industry and fishing. This deficit is mainly filled by attracting and employing people from the Adjara Autonomous Republic. In terms of providing prepared professional personnel, the vocational College Pazisi in Poti provides important support to organizations working in the fishing and cargo shipment industries.

Demand in the economic sectors selected for this research is mainly for qualified and highly-qualified personnel. All personnel in cargo shipment and transportation companies are highly-qualified, as they have to work with mobile technical equipment, and this requires not only qualification but also a special certification. This work is of high risk and can damage not only someone's property, but threaten the health and life of a person. In fish and fish product processing companies, qualified staff are 70% of the total, and in food production it ranges from 30% to 50%.

Employers note that they are less likely to have rotation of qualified staff in their organizations. Rotation is more common for unqualified personnel, which is not a challenge for the employers. Usually, almost half of the personnel in companies are young people. However, high-qualification and managerial positions are more often occupied by middle-aged personnel due to their experience and high sense of responsibility. It is worth noting, though, that employers positively assess young personnel's energy and knowledge of modern technologies.

During the interview, one NGO representative stated with regret that inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market is still problematic in the region. Despite the fact that the state has a political obligation to create an inclusive economic environment, no effective steps are being taken in this regard. The state generally ignores the educational needs of people with disabilities; it is also inactive in raising the awareness of the public, and unable to encourage employers in this regard. One of the experts positively assessed the Employment Project supported by the Social Service Agency, but noted that awareness of this project is very low among employers and people with disabilities, as well. This was evident when interviewing the employers: they did not have information about the possibility of employment support. Among the organizations researched, some have employed people with disabilities, but it usually happened based on personal networks or social connections. Experts noted that for people with disabilities, the Association for Disabled Women and Children "DEA" is carrying out several projects with the purpose of education and integration into the labor market. Based on a grant allocated by NGOs, people with disabilities have established and opened social enterprises (e.g. sewing factories).

Despite the fact that the share of IDPs in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region is the highest of all regions, no specific social programs are implemented for the integration of this social group into the local labor market. Most projects addressing IDPs are infrastructural projects implemented to solve their housing problems. As experts note, there is no special need for integration of IDPs into the labor market, as they are already well integrated within the local population and their status is not a barrier for employment in general. The survey revealed that IDPs are employed by all organizations; not on a preferential employment basis, but based on their competencies and knowledge.

Table 7: Demanded Professions in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region

Demanded Professions:	
Unqualified and low-qualified personnel	Unqualified worker Driver Sanitation Worker
Personnel with specific education	Nursing and obstetrician specialist/ professional Secretary and operator Operator of industrial and mobile equipment Electrical and electronic equipment mechanical engineer Mechanical equipment technician Marine industry and fisheries specialist Electric welder Accountant Turner
Personnel with high qualification	Architect Engineer Teacher in secondary education Manufacturing and operations manager Engineer-technologist Food technology specialist IT specialist High voltage electrical engineer Financial manager Agronomist

Labor Market Demand in the Shida Kartli Region

For the general description of trends on the labor market in the Shida Kartli region, we will use the report "Monitoring Vacancies in Regional Labor Markets" prepared by the Social Service Agency of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs; monitoring was implemented with EU support in 2017 (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018). For this research, 24 large- and medium-sized organizations operating in the leading economic sectors of the Shida Kartli region were interviewed.

Like in all regions, in the Shida Kartli region vacancies for unqualified and low-qualified positions prevailed among the vacancies announced in the second half of 2017– unqualified personnel in the spheres of construction, industry, and healthcare. Demand for personnel with special education was high in the construction and industry sectors for the following positions – locksmiths, house painters and related specialists, manual workers on wood, textile, leather, and other similar materials, welders, industrial and mobile technical equipment technicians/repairers, and sculptors, painters, and related art specialists. New vacancies emerged for agronomists, poultry specialists, and assistants to veterinarians. Demand at the fourth level of qualification was for specialists in positions including teachers in higher education, managers of various specializations in the production and food industry sector, engineers, and chemists. (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018. p.116).

For a more detailed analysis of the existing situation, we will use the results of expert interviews prepared for the research mentioned; the interviews were conducted with local public sector representatives, formal and informal education providers, and employers in the leading economic sectors in the region. For purposes of more detailed research, we have chosen large- and medium-sized enterprises operating in the spheres of construction, the processing industry, and food production.

The research revealed that the share of qualified personnel in all three sectors is 50% or less. The share of highly-qualified personnel is low and it is mostly concentrated at the top management level. Young people are least employed in business organizations. This is mainly due to the fact that the positions with high qualification requirements (which usually require vocational education) are occupied by middle-aged and older people. The organizations surveyed point out the existing economic stagnation and the negative impact of external factors, which hinder the expansion of organizations and creation of new job opportunities. In addition, the organizations have usually been functioning for a long time, and the personnel hired years ago are reluctant to change jobs. This means that no vacancies are available to employ the new generation. One of the reasons for low personnel rotation rates is the poor economic situation in the Shida Kartli region – existing organizations are not expanding and new organizations are not being created. Knowing the situation of the labor market well, employees safeguard their positions and stay in the same position in the same industry for years. Employers, as well, have no motivation to change personnel. They say that, apart from unqualified workers, every new staff member in the organization needs three to six months to adapt and become professional. Having no motivation to spend additional money on training, employers do not focus on recruiting new people. Personnel rotation is more likely in low-level positions, where people are temporarily contracted and leave their positions after the project is completed (especially in the construction sector), finding new (but still low-qualification) positions or migrating abroad.

In general, employers do not assess the employment of young people very positively. Although they realize the importance of employing young energetic personnel with better knowledge of information technology, employers are still less likely to think about special mechanisms for attracting and hiring young people. There are a few reasons for this: employers negatively evaluate the transferable skills and characteristics of young people (they often note that young people are less likely to be responsible, hardworking, organized, communicative, cooperative, enthusiastic, and motivated); employers also fo-

cus on cultural stereotypes and note that young people prefer “clean” office work rather than unqualified positions in the industrial sector; young people have higher education diplomas and not vocational knowledge, while in these organizations and in the region in general, there is a high demand for good electricians, mechanics, welders, locksmiths, turners, and laboratory specialists. According to one employer, the lack of personnel with technical knowledge is a result of the economic developments in the 1990s: after all construction and factories stopped functioning, young people decided not to choose those specializations with no future job opportunities. According to him, the situation today is changing – these spheres are getting stronger and demand is increasing. Gradually, more young people will be interested in getting an education in the field of technology, although this process will take some time.

Most of the organizations researched involve young people in industrial practices. These organizations cooperate with local vocational and higher education institutions and invite students for internships. However, cases of later employing the intern are rare, mainly due to lack of vacancies and less-qualified young personnel.

Two organizations participating in the research previously have employed people with disabilities in qualified and less-qualified positions, but we do not currently observe people with disabilities employed at any organizations. Employers have less information about the number of IDPs employed at their organizations, as they do not hire according to this social status. Organizations have never cooperated with the state or any non-governmental organizations on these issues; thus, they are not aware of any available employment programs. Only one organization representative noted that the municipal administration addressed them several times with a request to employ IDPs, and the organization considered this request within the scope of its capabilities.

Organizations rarely publish vacancy calls on websites; they usually use this option when seeking personnel for qualified or highly-qualified positions. Entrepreneurs have lists of people who are employed by them periodically; if a person with a specific qualification is needed, the employer usually uses contacts from their list. However, the practice of hiring through social connections is also quite common. The representative of one organization notes that when an employee asks to hire a friend or a relative, the request is usually considered, because the employer believes that a person employed on the basis of friendship/social connection is more trustworthy. A similar recruitment practice was also revealed in the Social Service Agency’s research (The Ministry of Labor, Health, and Social Defense of Georgia; The Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018, p.125).

Based on analysis of documents and expert interviews, Table 8 shows a list of professions demanded in the Shida Kartli region with the required qualifications.

Table 8: Demanded Professions in the Shida Kartli Region

Demanded Professions:	
Unqualified and low-qualified personnel	Unqualified worker Construction/road construction worker, dam repair worker Salesperson and goods demonstrator at shop Driver Sanitation Worker
Personnel with special education	Locksmith Welder House painter Office manager Manual worker on wood, textile, leather, and other similar materials Worker on metallic material
	Poultry farmer Head of security service Assistant to veterinarian Refrigerator systems specialist Industrial and mobile technical equipment operator Industrial and mobile technical equipment technician/ repairer Road master Electric and electrical equipment mechanical engineer Bookkeeper Mechanical engineer
Highly-qualified personnel	Doctor Microbiologist HR manager Agronomist Food safety quality manager Teacher in higher education Procurement specialist Financial and administrative division manager Engineer, civil construction (computer knowledge) Supply and distribution manager Safety, health, and quality inspector Sales and marketing manager Accountant Financier IT specialist (demand for AutoCAD skills)

Labor Market Demand in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region

The general description of the tendencies on the regional labor market in Mtskheta-Mtianeti will be based on the report "Monitoring Vacancies in Regional Labor Markets" prepared by the Social Service Agency of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs; monitoring was implemented with EU support in 2017 (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018). Within the research project, 16 large, medium, and small-sized organizations of the leading economic sectors in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region were interviewed. Considering that this research revealed demand for personnel over the last six and next six months, the results are relevant for our research.

Over a one-year period, in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region the demand was mainly for low-qualified positions, namely, for unqualified workers (which make up 41.7% of all vacancies). Alongside unqualified personnel, there was quite a high demand for workers with professional education in the industrial sector: cooks, operators of food processing machinery, operators of industrial equipment, mechanical engineers of electronic devices, technicians, and technical equipment operators. Among high-qualification positions, demand was for: construction engineers, production and operational division managers, administrative and financial managers, sales managers, marketing managers, accountants, supply and distribution division managers (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018. P.79).

For a more detailed analysis of the existing situation, we will use the results of expert interviews prepared within the research mentioned; interviews were conducted with local public sector representatives, formal and informal education providers, and employers from the leading economic sectors of the region. Among these economic sectors, we chose large- and medium-sized enterprises from the food industry.

Organizations operating in the food industry are primarily equipped with modern technology, therefore the share of unqualified staff in these enterprises is small (almost 30%), as even the bottler needs certain qualifications and knowledge of new technologies. But the number of highly-qualified staff is small, and these positions are mainly filled by personnel from the capital city. There are cases when top managers are invited from abroad. Due to the deficit of personnel with knowledge of new technology, there have been cases when trainers or consultants from Germany or Turkey were invited to train the local staff.

The share of young people in the organizations surveyed is 30-50%. Employers often prefer the younger generation due to their technological needs. The rotation of personnel in these organizations is low and occurs in low-qualified positions. However, there was one case when a competing organization poached qualified workers from another organization, which as a result had to hire new staff, retrain them, and redistribute functions internally among staff members.

As in all other regions, in Mtskheta-Mtianeti there is a shortage of personnel with professional education, especially in the technical and agricultural spheres. Private companies and public organizations complain about personnel deficiencies. The main reason they identify for this is the young people's "wrong" professional orientation—young people choose professions based not on the country's or the labor market's demands, but based on the social honor and prestige of the profession. Therefore, many graduates in the region have diplomas as lawyers, journalists, or economists, while there is a serious need for mechanical engineers, technologists, engineers, architects, accountants and financiers, veterinarians, agronomists, welders, geodesists, hydroelectric specialists, agronomists, and viticulture and winemaking specialists. Young people's wrong career planning is also due to the fact that young people want to start directly from the top level and earn a high income; they do not realize that time and effort are needed to build a successful career.

Some employers are uncomfortable with young people's personal characteristics and transferable skills. They often talk about their low level of motivation and ambition and their lack of hardworking personalities. The transferable skills of personnel in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region are less developed. One enterprise representative, who feels a social responsibility to employ local residents, mentions that he searched for a receptionist with knowledge of English and office programs for a long time (because meetings are held with foreign representatives); however, when someone was hired, it turned out that the employee felt uncomfortable preparing coffee for guests. Experts in the public sector underline the low level of knowledge of new information technologies; they state that it is a serious challenge for people employed in the municipal administration to use Excel.

These are the reasons why local employers say it is very important for employees to have transferable and specific skills, qualifications, and personal characteristics. Finding such personnel is difficult among the local population. As the food and beverage processing industry is mainly concentrated in Natakhtari, employers often select personnel from Tbilisi and in this way save training and retraining costs.

The representatives of the companies surveyed stated that the hired person always needs a certain period of time to be prepared/trained for their position. There are instances when the organization spends its resources training new staff members and then loses them to another company. During interviews, employers noted that they cooperate with educational institutions located locally and in Tbilisi and give young people the opportunity for internships. In some cases, this cooperation is based on a contract, though sometimes a verbal agreement is enough. It is rare, but there have been cases when an intern was hired by the company. The main practice for training newly-employed personnel in an organization is to learn from professionals in the organization; it is very rare that a new staff member is sent to a special training or trained by an invited trainer. According to one local expert, there is such a serious deficit of personnel in the region that very often an employer is unable send an employee who is in charge of a specific task to trainings.

There are two factors influencing young people's initiative and motivation for employment. While tourism in the region is quite a developed sector with a high number of self-employed local people, young people agree to take a paid stable job only if it offers a solid salary. For example, the representative of the Mtskheta-Mtianeti regional governor's office said that they needed workers in Kazbegi to pick up trash along the road with a special stick. The working hours were only 2 hours a day with a salary of 1000 GEL, but they could not find a person interested in this position. Of course, in this particular case the salary was not an issue, but the type of work was. If economic hardship were unbearable, people would take such positions, too. The second barrier for employment is the social allowance—in order to maintain it, people refuse to get a job.

Local experts also negatively evaluate the entrepreneurial skills of young people. Similar to other regions, in Mtskheta-Mtianeti there are a number of programs that provide both educational and material resources for individuals who want to start a business. Local experts have been able to provide just a few successful examples of local people managing to start a business; for example, the production of beekeeping products was started with this type of grant support. However, most young people do not know how to write a business plan, have difficulty in coming up with a business idea and formulating it. In terms of entrepreneurship, local people need to be trained and prepared so that they can formulate goals and tasks and create business plans.

The employment practice in the labor market depends on the need for different qualifications in the region. Organizations are always trying to recruit unqualified staff near their location, but to find qualified personnel they use websites and social connections, which increases the level of nepotism and makes the hiring process non-transparent.

One of the barriers for young people to be employed is the long-term experience required as a qualification. One employer noted in an interview that very often the organization announces a vacancy for an 18-25 year-old person and demands 5 years of experience. It is clear that young people are unable to satisfy such a requirement which causes their disappointment.

People with disabilities are not employed in the organizations surveyed. Employers note that employment in their enterprises is not recommended for people with disabilities because a number of operations may be harmful to their health. Public sector representatives noted that people with disabilities are not employed in the municipality, but they do not see significant or insurmountable barriers in this regard.

Considering that there is a high number of IDPs in the region, including compact IDP settlements, the employment rate of IDPs is high. However, representatives of business entities do not employ IDPs through any special programs; according to them, these people have been living in the region for years and are fully integrated with the environment and society, thus their employment is based on their skills and competencies and not on their status. One of the companies had a factory in the Akhalgori area. After the war in 2008, when they left the factory, all the qualified employees from the Akhalgori branch were later employed in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti factory.

Table 9 summarizes the professions demanded in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region based on quantitative and qualitative research:

Table 9: Demanded Professions in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region

Demanded Professions:	
Unqualified and low-qualification personnel	**Unqualified worker** **Driver** **Salesperson and goods demonstrator at shops**
Personnel with special education	**Cook** **Guide** **Waiter, barkeeper, kitchen personnel** **Nurse** **Food production machinery operator** **Industrial equipment operator** **Mechanical engineer of electronic devices** **Technical engineer** **Technical equipment operator** **Installation specialist** **Tractor driver** **Mechanical engineer** **Zoologist**
Unqualified and low-qualification personnel	**Civil construction engineer** **Engineer-technologist (in food industry and construction)** **Food technology specialist** **Architect** **Technologist (food industry, winemaking)** **Works manufacturer** **Accountant** **Manufacturing and operations manager** **Financial and administrative manager** **Sales and distribution manager**

Reasons for the Imbalance of Supply and Demand on the Labor Market

The research conducted in the four target regions clearly shows that almost every region faces an imbalance of labor supply and demand—on the one hand, there is a shortage of labor for certain positions, and on the other hand, unemployment rates, including among youth, are quite high. Based on analysis of expert interviews, we can explain the reasons contributing to this imbalance. These reasons can be divided into three groups: a) Demand imbalance – caused by the situation in the labor market; b) Supply imbalance—caused by discrepancy in human resources; c) Structural reasons caused by general social, economic, or cultural factors that ultimately lead to the imbalance on the labor market. Let us consider each of them separately.

a) Imbalance caused by the situation in the labor market:

1. Low salaries:

When there is high unemployment, employers offer low salaries to the workforce, especially for low-qualified and unqualified positions. This trend was also demonstrated in the Vacancy Monitoring Research conducted by the Social Service Agency.

In the Kakheti region, "the most low-paid position is of a sanitation worker earning on average 160 GEL. Low salaries are paid also to personnel working with the customers (cashiers, salespeople, etc.) (200 GEL), also to: nurses (267 GEL), couriers and porters (400 GEL), cleaners (400 GEL), waiters and barkeepers (450 GEL)" (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; The Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018, p.101). Sometimes, depending on the specifics of the working field, unqualified labor is required to have knowledge and skills that should not be low-paid. For example, employers in the tourism sector in Kakheti region require that employees (e.g. waiters) know a foreign language. Locals have difficulties in meeting such a qualification requirement, especially when the salaries for these positions are low.

In the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, the low-paid positions (average salary up to 200 GEL) are: cleaners, sanitation workers, nurses, secretaries, and operators (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; The Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018, p.163). Qualitative research has revealed that in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region it is difficult to find personnel, employees quit jobs frequently due to difficult physical working conditions and nonstandard working hours (for example, in fishing which requires work in severe weather conditions and/or at night hours).

In the Shida Kartli region "the most low-paid profession is the sanitation worker, who earns on average 165 GEL. Other low-paid positions are: security service worker (200 GEL), chemist (225 GEL), shop salesperson and goods demonstrator (230 GEL), nurse (237.5 GEL), safety, health and quality inspector (255 GEL), unqualified workers in trade and service spheres (281 GEL), driver and mobile technical equipment operator (300 GEL), poultry worker (300 GEL), and assistant to veterinarian (300 GEL)" (The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; The Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018, p.122).

As the quantitative research conducted shows, in Shida Kartli both low-qualified labor and qualified specialists are paid low salaries. An expert from the Georgian Trade Unions Confederation states that there is a shortage of labor quality inspection specialists throughout the country; he claims that this deficit will increase when the Law on Labor Safety enters into force. Consequently, a wage of only 255 GEL for such a rare profession can be the reason for failing to fill these vacant positions.

In the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region "the lowest paid position is of a cleaner earning monthly on average 180 GEL. The low-paid positions are: service workers serving customers (300 GEL), unqualified workers in trade and service spheres (300 GEL), unqualified workers (391.6 GEL), and waiters (450 GEL). There have been few cases when the employer pays the same salaries for both positions of the waiter and the cook" (The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs; The Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018, p. 85).

Within the qualitative research, it became quite clear that employee turnover occurs more often among unqualified positions. Employers note that such employees are constantly in search of new positions with higher salaries. Considering that employers have to spend resources to prepare even unqualified employees for new positions, the high turnover rate is not beneficial for business entities and results in a waste of resources. Very often, low-paid positions stay vacant due to fear of losing the social allowance; this issue will be discussed later when analyzing structural problems of unemployment.

2. Employers' excessive job requirements

Despite the fact that in the regions researched, the calls for vacant positions were mainly for unqualified personnel, very often the employers have excessuve qualification demads from unqualified candidates. For example, the above-mentioned report states: "Higher education requirement is often irrelevant for a vacant position. Employers require higher education from unqualified workers, servicemen, drivers, security personnel, nurses, electrical and electronic equipment mechanical engineers, manual workers on wood, textile, and leather" (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union to Georgia, 2018, p.99). In one of our interviews, the employer noted that higher education is less likely to be considered an advantage for a candidate, because almost every candidate applying for the position has a diploma; this trend might be the reason for demanding higher education, disregarding the real need.

Excessive requirements are sometimes observed in terms of candidates' general skills. For example, employers demand leadership, critical thinking, or problem solving abilities from unqualified laborers. Very often, the reason for such inappropriate demands is that employers are not clear about the exact requirements for the candidate to be employed (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018).

3. Non-transparency of the employment process

All the employers interviewed within the qualitative research indicated that they publish calls for vacancies on specific websites (www.jobs.ge, www.hr.gov.ge, etc.). However, they emphasized that most of the time this method is not successful in finding good candidates for the positions announced, and personal networks and social connections are much more effective in this regard. The same trend is observed in the Vacancy Monitoring Report conducted in our target regions (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018, p.104). Even when vacancy calls are published on websites, labor with low qualification or no competencies in information technology does not have access to this information. That is why employers in the regions mostly use local media in order to disseminate information about vacant positions.

Experts claim that nepotism is the main practice of employment in the regions. Employment through

friends is very common in the private sector, as there is not an official rule for filling vacant positions. Despite the fact that vacancies in the public sector should be publicly announced, experts point out that in this sector, as well, employers give information to acquaintances, friends, and relatives to apply for a vacant position. However, the monitoring system formally still exists in this process. That means that the applicant's skills and qualifications should be formally in conformity with the requirements stated in the call for a vacant position. According to experts, nepotism is more noticeable in cases employing middle- and low-qualified labor, while the deficit of highly-qualified personnel is high and nepotism is practiced less. As already mentioned, young people in the regions mainly work in low-qualification positions; lack of personal networks and social connections reduce their chances of employment and increase their vulnerability on the labor market.

4. Employment of non-local personnel by foreign organizations

Experts note that in the regions where large- and medium-sized businesses are founded based on foreign capital, the practice of employing non-local personnel is widespread. For example, in the Shida Kartli region, the Azerbaijani flour producing company employs either ethnic Azerbaijanis or citizens of Azerbaijan. In the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, large-scale employers employ personnel from Tbilisi. While the main benefit of foreign capital and foreign investments in general in the region is to employ local human resources, this practice has a very negative impact on the economic development of the region.

b) Supply imbalance – caused by discrepancy in human resources

1. Shortage of human resources with professional-technical qualifications and skills on the labor market

Over the last period, every report in the field of labor market analysis underlines that among the existing problems in the labor market, most acute is the shortage of skilled technical labor with professional education. According to the report "Regional Labor Market Vacancy Monitoring", every region of Georgia faces a professional labor shortage.

In the Kakheti region there is a shortage of labor with specific professional and technical skills: nurses, mechanical engineers for electrical and electronic devices, civil construction engineers, mechanical equipment technicians, and flooring installers (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Social Service Agency; European Union for Georgia, 2018, p.90). In the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region it is difficult to find personnel for the following positions: industrial equipment operator (crane operator), manufacturing and operations manager, mechanical engineer for electrical and electronic devices, and mechanical equipment technician. In the Shida Kartli region it is difficult to fill the following vacant positions: driver and mobile technical equipment operator, manufacturing and operations manager, physical and technical science technician, metal folder, welder, blacksmith, locksmith, mechanical engineer for electrical and electronic devices. As for the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, the following positions are difficult to fill: managers of manufacturing and processing departments, industrial equipment operator and workers in related professions (machine, crane operator, production operator, auto load operator, heavy equipment operator, pump operator, concrete factory operator, quarry machine operator, conveyor operator), metalworker, welder, mechanical engineer and assembler of electrical and electronic devices, accountant, auditor, mechanical equipment technician, assistant staff in statistics, mathematics and related fields (assistant accountant, assistant of commercial department, administrative assistant, logistics assistant), waiter, barkeeper and kitchen staff, carpenter and joiner, and installation worker at heights.

Within the qualitative research, employers from all four target regions indicated that their organizations faced serious problems in finding qualified professional personnel. In order to fill the shortage of labor with vocational education, the organizations use several strategies: hire a low-qualified candidate

and train them; find an employee who works in various organizations and occasionally comes to this organization; invite a specialist from the capital (which contributes to pendulum migration, mostly in eastern Georgia, and does not reduce the level of unemployment in the region); and invite personnel from abroad, which is quite expensive. Inviting a specialist from abroad occurs either at the top management level where the invited expert with high qualifications will have a high salary, or the organization temporarily invites the expert to consult with local personnel. This type of need mainly occurs in organizations when new technologies are launched and it is impossible to find experienced local personnel with knowledge of innovative technologies.

The shortage of professionally qualified labor is connected to other more systemic factors—society's attitude towards education, development of the educational system, and prestigious job opportunities; these will be discussed later when analyzing systemic factors.

2. Deficit of transversal and general skills in labor

Considering that employers have to train qualified and unskilled personnel themselves, the employees' transversal skills become very important. Employers often note that employees have poor communication and teamwork skills. However, with regards to the young labor force, employers mostly complain about their low level of motivation and enthusiasm, irresponsibility, and lack of hard work.

During the qualitative research, employers emphasized the need for general skills such are knowledge of a foreign language (mainly English, frequently Russian), computer skills, and work experience. In industrial enterprises in the construction sector, the need for foreign language knowledge is relatively low and it is mostly demanded from highly-qualified personnel, or from those who work with foreign investors, partners, or clients. Knowledge of foreign languages is more frequently required by organizations operating in the tourism sector, including from unqualified personnel. Local labor often lacks knowledge of foreign languages.

Computer skills are more often demanded by employers, but in terms of supply of labor with these skills they still have problems. Employers believe that younger personnel are more qualified in this regard than middle-age and older people, but possessing this general skill is still a problem. Local personnel with knowledge of specific computer programs (e.g. AutoCAD, Accounting Software, Management Programs, etc.) are almost impossible to find.

c) Structural reasons due to general social, economic, or cultural factors that ultimately lead to labor market imbalances

1. Social allowance vs. low-paid work

A serious barrier to employment at low-paying positions is the issue of the social allowance. If people receive the same amount of money from either social services or their work, then they prefer to get paid to not work. Refusal to find employment with this argument is quite common in the regions of Georgia. Salary from a job may slightly exceed the amount of the social allowance, but when making a decision, the potential employee considers the stability provided by the Social Agency and other benefits associated with the status of socially vulnerable person.

2. Negative attitude of society towards vocational education

Experts note that almost all young people in the target regions who have high academic achievements at school continue on to study in higher education institutions. This means that higher education is a value in and of itself for society, it determines social status and is not considered rationally in terms

of economic benefits from the perspective of job opportunities. Consequently, vocational education, which is in demand on the regional labor market, is less attractive to young people and especially to successful young people. After graduating with a higher education diploma, it becomes difficult for the young person to take a "low-qualification" position, in addition to not having any of the specific professional skills demanded by the market. Higher education as an important determining factor for social status is significant in all regions. For example, an expert interviewed in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti noted that not only higher education, but also the field of higher education, is chosen based on social prestige, and as a result young people in the region study law, economics, and international relations, when the region is really in need of qualified agronomists.

One of the experts noted that this trend is changing; under the influence of mass media, vocational education is gradually "recovering" its positive status, also the high employment rates of graduates of vocational education institutions will impact the process positively in the future.

3. The prestigious workplace

Cultural barriers in Georgian society hinder employment in a number of ways. One of the experts speaks about the widespread trend wherein a candidate's demands for a concrete position are not compatible with his/her knowledge and skills. This trend is especially prominent with regards to positions which are considered to be non-prestigious or undesirable in the region (for example, street sweeper, waiter, cleaner, hotel housekeeper, etc.). With tourism a leading and growing economic sector with high demand for service personnel, such cultural stereotypes lead to vacant positions. However, experts say that these stereotypes are gradually weakening among the young generation and if employees in such positions have higher salaries, the social discomfort can be overcome and young people will not hesitate to take such jobs.

4. Migration as a factor for the labor shortage

Migration in general is one of the most problematic issues in Georgia, and especially in the regions. Experts speak of the "brain drain" from the regions, which is especially high among young people. Young students of high academic excellence continue with higher education either in the capital or abroad after graduating from secondary education, and after finishing those degrees do not return to their home regions due to the deficits in the labor market and low-paid positions,. Consequently, the region is deprived of the vast majority of perspective young human resources.

Unlike educational migration, labor migration abroad very negatively affects local human resource skills and qualifications. While locals perform mostly unqualified work abroad, they can neither increase nor maintain their qualification level. This leads to the expulsion of returned migrant workers from the local labor market.

5. Weakness of state structures promoting the employment process

The main state structure for promoting the employment process is the State Service for Employment of the Social Service Agency; as the research has shown, it is addressed by every fifth organization operating in the region. The qualitative research also revealed that organizations operating in the tourism sector addressed the agency with information about vacancies, but in this case their cooperation had no result. Within the scope of the research, the experts outlined the following reasons for lack of efficiency within the State Service for Employment of the Social Service Agency: 1. Low level of awareness among employers, i.e. organizations operating in the region lack information about services from the state structure—what the Agency can offer and how it can simplify the process of finding necessary personnel; 2. The Social Service Agency itself does not have enough resources to study the situation in the labor mar-

ket in the region: visit companies, and offer their services; 3. There is a problem of supply and demand balance on the labor market. The Social Service Agency needs large human and technical resources to identify the needed workforce in the labor market and connect potential employers and employees.

We consider educational institutions to be the second instrument supporting the employment process. Within the qualitative research, such cooperation was more clearly identified. It is more effective when educational institutions cooperate with employers in advance, giving the students practice and internship opportunities in business enterprises. In such cases, the employer himself/herself chooses the prospective person and offers a concrete position. Examples of such cooperation are frequent in the tourism and wine industry sectors, specifically for personnel with special education (cooks, wine technologists, waiters or guides).

Other instruments for employment support are internship and volunteering within organizations; however, as experts state, these practices are less developed in the regions. There are two barriers to internship and volunteer practice: a) Young people expect to start directly with highly-paid jobs. In the course of their careers, it seems that they do not want any commitment on their part in advance; b) Problems occur on the other side too. Most companies claim to be open to interns, but in reality this is not the case. Employers expect young people to come to the company, choose a concrete position and define the internship or volunteer process themselves. In fact, this is impossible to accomplish; if the young person could so clearly define their own career and position with good planning, than this person could already be an entrepreneur or start-upper rather than an internship seeker.

6. Unregulated professions in the labor market

Experts interviewed in the regions often speak about the professional chaos created in the labor market when the employer does not pay attention to a person's formal qualifications at all. Local experts give examples of when a linguist is employed as an engineer, and the engineer teaches Georgian language and literature at school. On the one hand, this practice opens opportunities for actors in different spheres, but on the other hand considering the high level of nepotism in the employment processes, this practice encourages employment of non-qualified unprofessional labor. This problem is considered very acute in the Shida Kartli region, which supports the increase of regulated professions.

Experts assess the situation in the labor market as unfair when labor with professional qualification is demanded and the employer considers two candidates on an equal basis – a carpenter with one year of vocational education from a vocational education institution, and a carpenter with 2 months of practical experience learned from a master or with skills obtained from their ancestors. If the number of regulated professions increases on the labor market, which restricts employers from hire whoever they

desire, then the value of vocational education will increase and demand for higher education diplomas will decrease. While these regulations can be understood as limiting freedom of the labor market, experts believe that there is no time to wait to change society's mindset, so regulations are needed.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship in youth

Employment on the labor market does not consist only of paid jobs, it also considers self-employment and entrepreneurship development as employment. In this regard, however, the targeted regions do not have a very promising picture. Experts estimate that the low rate of growth in entrepreneurship development in the regions is due to several factors:

1. **Lack of initial capital:** A beginning businessperson must obtain initial capital as a start-up loan from either a bank or a donor. Start-up entrepreneurs seldom address banks because start-up loans have high interest rates or the amount of the loan is small (for example, experts mentioned a grant of 5000 GEL within the project "Produce in Georgia").

2. **Low level of knowledge:** The local population, including youth, do not have the required knowledge and skills to turn an entrepreneurial idea into a project and manage it; they have difficulty writing a project proposal, considering the details in the project, drawing up a timetable, and writing a budget. According to experts, this is the reason that the local population says that start-ups are not tailored to beginning entrepreneurs. One of the experts believes that locals make spontaneous decisions about starting a business, cannot estimate expected results and risks, and thus often fail. Experts also note that locals mostly do not have innovative entrepreneurship ideas, but often start a business imitating someone and later fail because of the high level of competition.

3. **Lack of motivation and fear of obscurity**: The analysis shows that there is no shortage of programs to develop entrepreneurial skills in the region. According to one representative of an educational organization, special trainings on startups and self-employment issues are attended mostly by middle-age or older people; young people are less involved in this process. One of the experts thinks that this is not due to young people's low motivation, but to their skeptical attitude towards self-employment: very often, young people who own land, still seek job opportunities with 200 or 300 GEL salaries. Despite the fact that young people can expand their businesses, communicate with each other, and collaborate to unite households into cooperatives to earn greater income, they still seek paid jobs because of the obscurity of the prospects of starting up a new business, they "prefer today's egg over tomorrow's chicken".

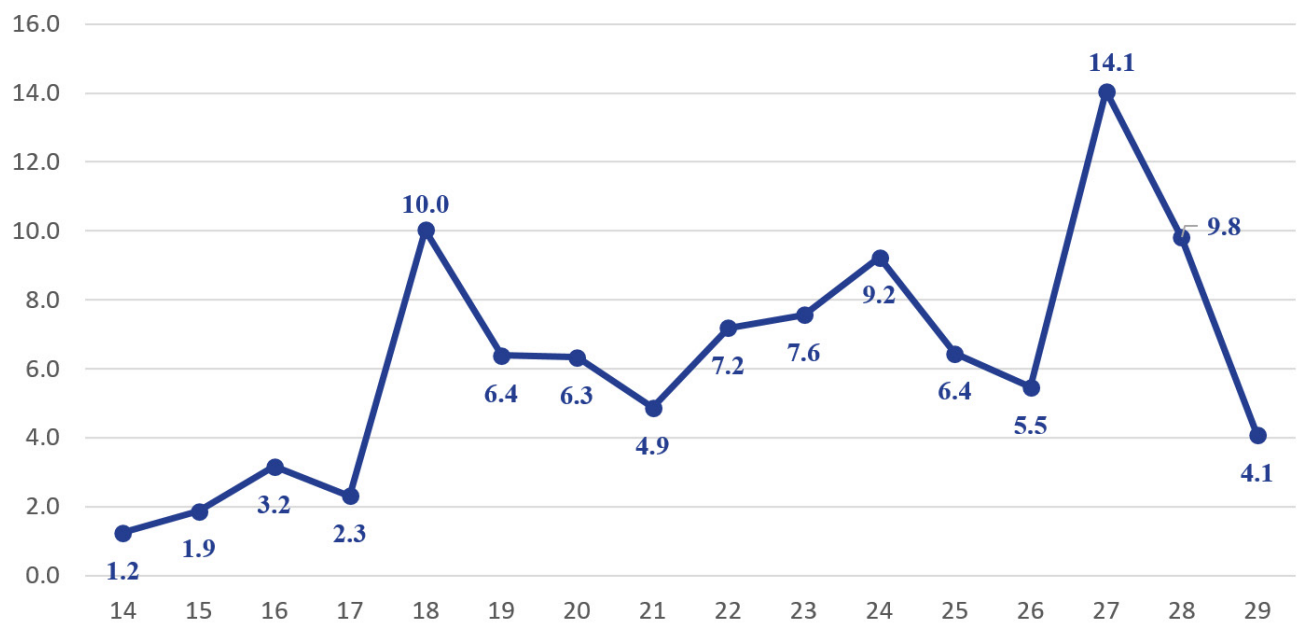
4. **Locals in the agricultural sector mainly work within the household and are less likely to create cooperatives.** Experts note that the local population primarily owns small plots and usually does not cooperate among themselves to create cooperatives, which would significantly increase their income. As experts underline, this is due to lack of communication and cooperation skills.

5. **No new relevant knowledge in traditional agriculture.** Experts point to the reluctance of the local population to gain knowledge and learn about new challenges. They say that local inhabitants are convinced that they take the best care of grapes, nuts, corn, or wheat, but very often this knowledge is outdated and ineffective against new challenges. For example, experts in the Samegrelo region say that the dramatic decline of the hazelnut harvest is not only because of harmful insects (brown marmorated stink bug), but because of fungal disease, which locals are uninformed about and do not know how to cope with it.

General Description of the Research's Target Groups (Demography)

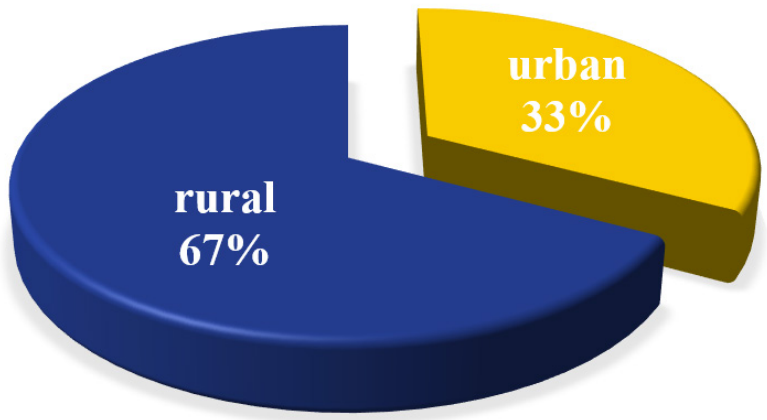
The target population of the research was young people in the 14-29 age category from four different regions of Georgia distributed into four target groups. Accordingly, 25 respondents were interviewed in each group in each target region, which adds up to 100 interviews total in each region and in each status group. 56.6% of the respondents were female, while 43.4% were male. Distribution of young people by age is shown in Figure 7. 8.6% of the respondents were underage. Young people with disabilities and IDPs are distributed almost equally across all age groups, while the share of NEETs and employed people is higher in the 18+ age category. There are only a few underage young people who neither study nor work, and the share of employed people among them is very low.

Figure 7: ***Distribution of Respondents by Age (%)***



From the total number of respondents, 32.9% come from urban and 67.1% from rural settlements (see Figure 8). If we observe the distribution of targeted youth by social status, we see that 28.1% of IDPs, 31.8% of NEETs, 32.5% of PWDs and 37.9% of employed people live in urban areas.

Figure 8: Distribution of Respondents by Type of Residence (%)



The sampling method of the quantitative research allowed us to determine each social group's share of young people in the total number of surveyed young people across all 4 regions. In general, among the 14-29 age group of young people from the four target regions, the share of people with disabilities is 1.6% and the share of IDPs is 7.2%. The share of young people who neither study nor work and are not involved in any educational activity is 68.4% and is the majority of young people in the regions. One fifth of the people from the age 14-29 category are employed with paid jobs (see Table 10).

Table 10: Distribution of social groups of young people age 14-29 by target region (%)

Status	Total share	Region	% of people with social status in the 14-29 age category in the region
PWD	1.6	Kakheti	0.9
		Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	1.9
		Shida Kartli	2.1
		Mtskheta-Mtianeti	1.5
IDP	7.2	Kakheti	0.5
		Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	14.3
		Shida Kartli	5.1
		Mtskheta-Mtianeti	10.2
NEET	68.4	Kakheti	75
		Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	65
		Shida Kartli	68.6
		Mtskheta-Mtianeti	57.5
Employee with paid job	22.8	Kakheti	23.6
		Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	18.7
		Shida Kartli	24.2
		Mtskheta-Mtianeti	30.8

Distribution of the target groups by regions and social status shows the following trends: young people with disabilities are least concentrated in Kakheti, whereas the highest number of young IDPs are in Shida Kartli. The share of young IDPs in Kakheti is only 0.5% and is less than the share of young people with disabilities in the region. Among the other three regions, the largest share of IDP youth is in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region (14.3%), followed by Mtskheta-Mtianeti (10.2%) and Shida Kartli (5.1%). Distribution of young internally displaced people in the target regions generally corresponds with the overall IDP distribution pattern in the Georgian regions.

The results of the quantitative research are analyzed in the following directions: description of young people living in the regions by gender and age; description of the four target groups (PWDs, IDPs, NEETs, employees) in terms of their situation, barriers, and encouraging mechanisms in the labor market; description of the four target groups of young people living in the regions based on the following: formal education and qualifications, general transversal skills (interpersonal and intrapersonal characteristics, digital literacy, foreign language knowledge), involvement in volunteer activity and orientation in the labor market (with the required documentation for employment and past experience); barriers to education for young people; young people's motivation and orientation for future development.

Description of Young People Living in the Regions by Gender

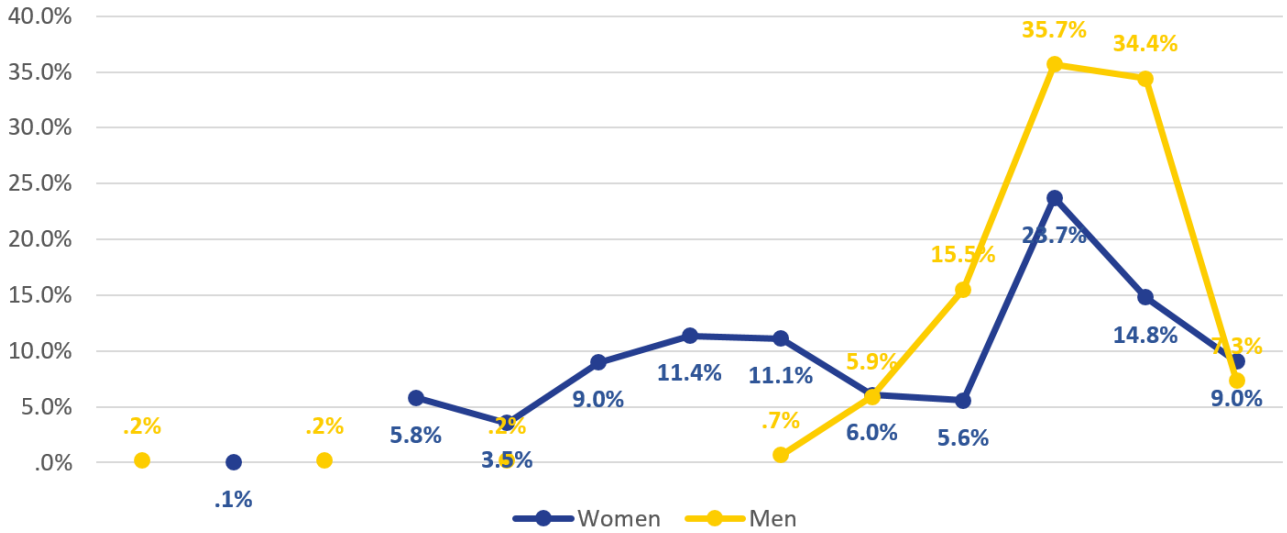
55.8% of youth (14-29 years old) living in the targeted regions are women, while 44.2% are men. The distribution of the targeted social groups within the 14-29 age category by gender shows the following tendencies (see Table 11): the share of men in the category of people with disabilities is slightly higher than of women. The share of girls in the category of IDPs is twice as high as boys, the share of girls in the NEET category is 2.4% more than boys, while the share of males amongst employees is 6.7% higher than the share of females. The current situation shows that young men are more integrated into the regional labor market than young women, although this difference is not high.

Table 11: Distribution of social groups of young people age 14-29 by gender (%)

Status	Women	Men
PWD	1.4%	1.9%
IDP	9.3%	4.5%
NEET	69.1%	66.7%
Employee with paid job	20.3%	27.0%

49% of the women aged 14-29 years old have at least one child up to 15 years old, and 14.9% of men have at least one child. If we analyze this data by age, we see the following tendency (see Figure 9): there are only a few cases of under-aged youth having a child, and these cases are among both girls and boys. However, girls are having child(ren) at younger ages than boys. The average age of women having at least one child up to 15 years old is 25, while among men the average age is 27.

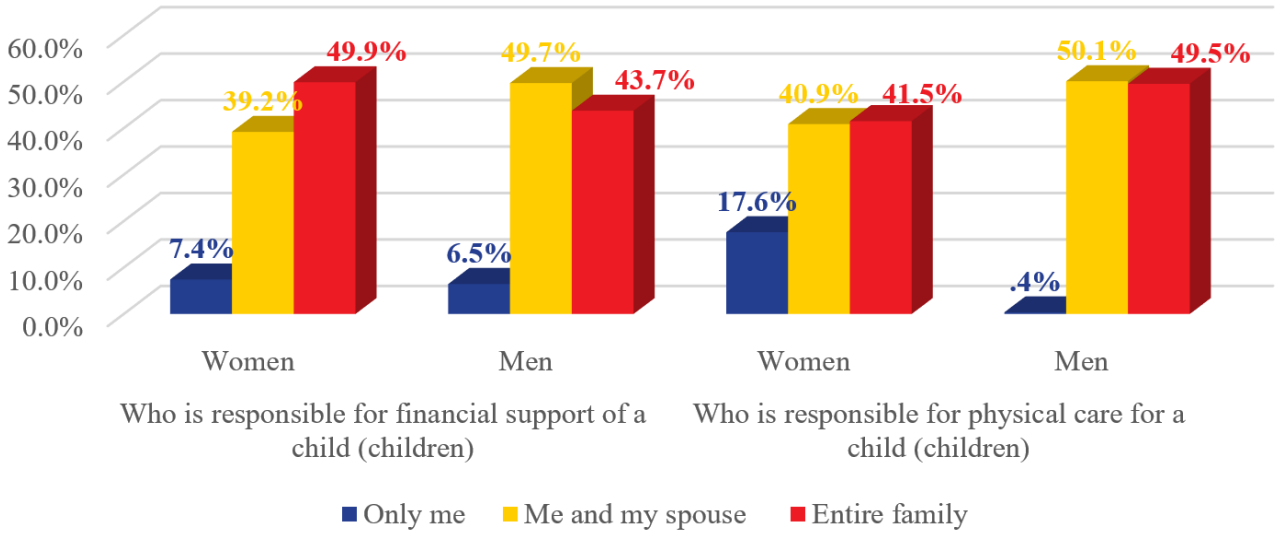
Figure 9: Distribution of Respondents with at Least One Child up to 15 Years Old by Age and Gender (%)



There has been much research and work done in Georgia about gender inequality in the family, politics, business, and generally in society (ACT & UN Women, 2013) (Kachkachishvili & Nadaraia, 2014) (Sumbadze, 2008) (Tsereteli, 2006). All researchers or authors evince that Georgian families are traditional "where both the husband and wife agree that the husband has more power and authority" (Tsereteli, 2006, p. 62). In this type of family, responsibility for childcare is primarily the women's duty. A study conducted in 2014 shows that "In a lot of cases (varying between 30% and 42%), fathers never prepare food, change diapers, or bathe children aged 0 to 6" (Kachkachishvili & Nadaraia, 2014, p. V). Besides childcare, women are responsible for the overall household work, which takes lots of time and effort and hinders women's full integration into the labor market.

In our survey, we asked the respondents who is responsible for the financial support and physical care of child(ren) (see Figure 10). The analysis underlined the importance of the extended family, wherein the entire family takes on the financial as well as the physical responsibility of childcare. A large share of the respondents (40-50%) indicated that both parents take care of under-age child(ren) financially and physically. However, male respondents more often indicate shared responsibilities than females do. There are cases when the financial obligation towards child(ren) are met only by the father or only by the mother. The portion of such cases is small but equal. This demonstrates that the stereotype of the "breadwinner-father" is changing. However, the stereotype of "caring mother" is firmer, as 17% of women indicate that they alone are responsible for the physical care of child(ren), which is never the case for men.

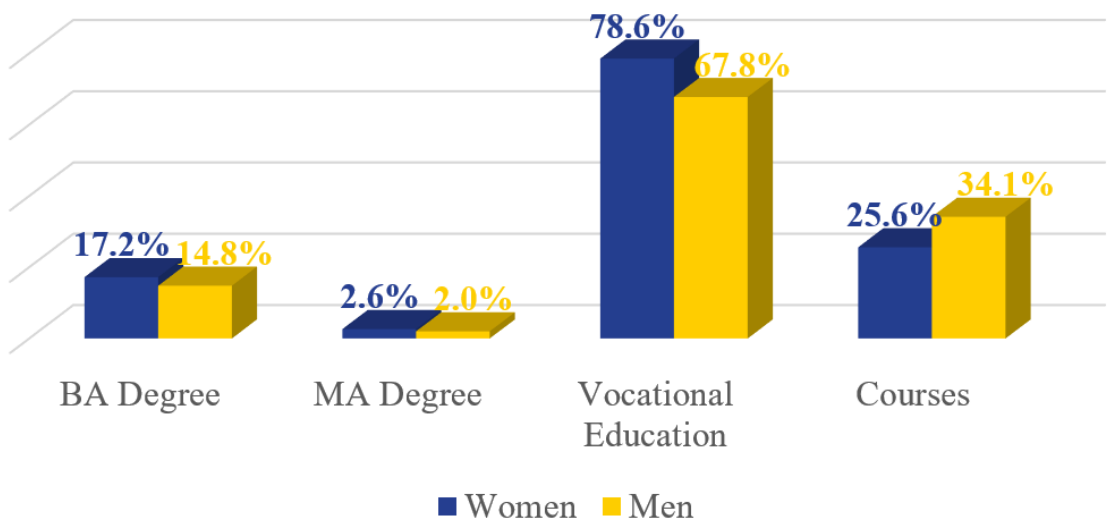
Figure 10: Who is responsible for financial support and physical care of child(ren)? * by gender (%)



As mothers remain the primary caregivers for child(ren), in order for them to integrate into the labor market, there should be well-developed childcare institutions. These institutions will weaken the mothers' responsibility for daily care and release their time for income-generating activities. 44.7% of the interviewees indicate that their children do not attend a kindergarten. The survey revealed that 13.7% of mothers do not have physical access to a childcare institution and they care for their child(ren) 24 hours a day and lose the possibility of employment.

The survey revealed the following gender aspects of educational attainment of youth in the target regions (see Figure 11): in comparison to boys, more girls have a BA degree (the difference is 2.4%); MA degrees are equally attained by boys and girls; 10.8% more girls have vocational education than boys, while 8.5% more boys took different courses.

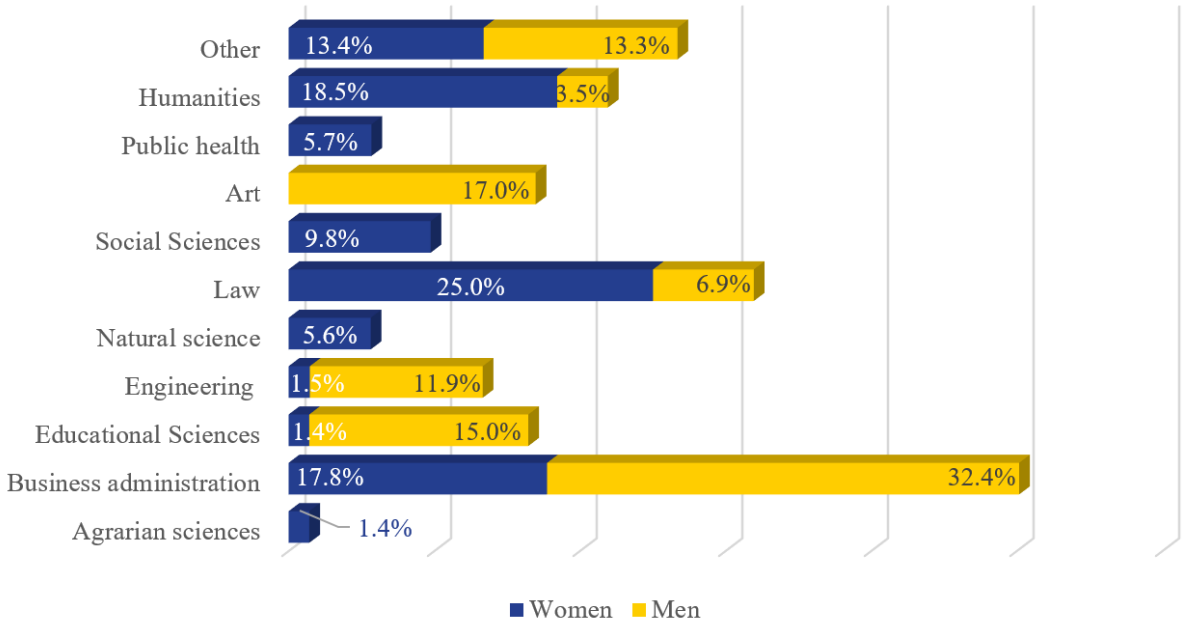
Figure 11: Level of Educational Attainment by 14-29 Year-old Youth *by gender (%)



Although gender inequality is not reflected in educational achievements, it is shown in occupational segregation by sex. As shown in Figure 12, women more often graduate in the fields of humanities, social sciences, healthcare, and justice, while men more often attain BA degrees in business administration, education, and engineering. These findings indicate that traditional views about acceptable and

desirable professions for girls and boys are still significant and influence the professional orientation of young people.

Figure 12: Specialization of BA degrees attained by 14-29 year-old youth in the regions * by gender (%)



Occupational segregation by sex happens in vocational education and courses as well: girls mainly choose pharmacy, accounting, nursing, and hairstyling, while boys more often choose professions such as information technologist, electrician, mechanic, metalworker, cook, and so on.

This survey revealed the accessibility of mechanisms supporting education for youth. Among youth with a BA degree, the state financed the studies of 25% of female and 26.4% of male youth. More families financed the BA studies of girls (76.9%), than of boys (67.6%). 12.2% of men covered educational expenses from their own salary, while we did not observe any such cases among women. There is no case when the municipality or employer covered youth's educational expenses.

During the research, the respondents evaluated the benefits of educational achievements. Girls (20.4%) and boys (26.1%) both considered personal development a positive result of BA study. The share of girls (55.9%) who said that a BA education had helped her to work is two times higher than the share of boys (25.8%) who said the same thing. 19.3% of young girls do not see any positive results from BA education, while 51.5% of boys think this. It is difficult to make a definitive conclusion from these cases, but girls find more practical benefits to education than boys do.

To summarize, we can say that in regards to academic achievements, girls show better achievements than boys, indicating that gender inequality rooted in culture does not negatively impact girls' educational activities. Moreover, more girls have vocational or BA-level education than boys. This result shows equal access to formal as well as non-formal educational support mechanisms for both sexes. Besides, the family more often support girls' education, while some boys have to work and cover the costs of study from their salaries.

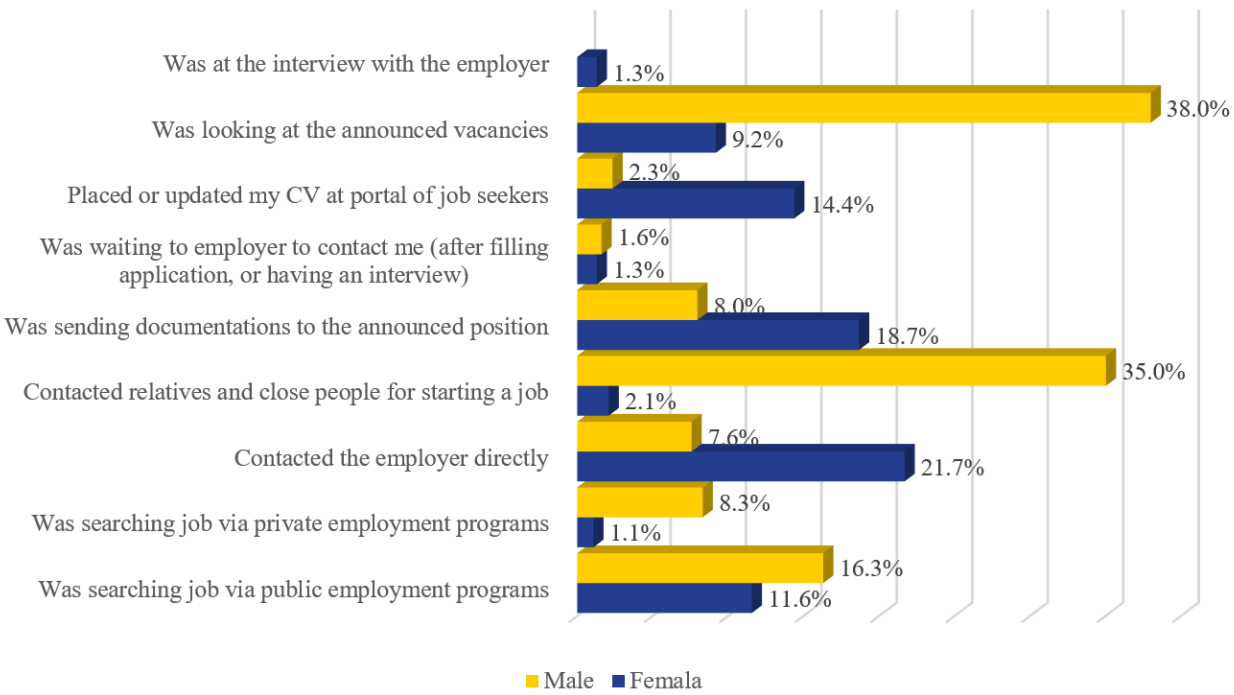
The share of girls in the 14-29 age group in the NEET category is relatively high, while their share in the category of employed youth is lower than boys', which indicates worse integration of young women into the labor market. The study revealed that 49% of 14-29 year-old girls had never been employed, while 47% of boys had never been employed. 29.8% of girls were employed and quit a job, while 25.2% of boys left the labor market.

The reason for leaving the workplace for 15.3% of girls is childbirth, while 11.3% are obliged to take care of child(ren) or adolescent(s). These kinds of obstacles only exist for female youth. Boys generally leave the labor market due to low salary, bad working conditions or schedule, or poor health. This data once again confirms that entry into the labor market for female youth is not a problem, but cultural norms force them to give up their jobs for family obligations.

Within the survey, we asked whether the respondent had looked for a job over the past four weeks. 18.1% of girls and 25% of boys were looking for jobs. 23.3% of unemployed girls named pregnancy or small child(ren) as a reason for not searching for employment, while 14.4% of female respondents are obliged to care for child(ren) and adolescent(s), which prevents them for searching for a place on the labor market. These factors never hinder boys' employment or job-seeking.

14-29 year-old girls living in the target regions who are looking for jobs would prefer to have a position with a flexible schedule (35.7% of cases), while only 10.5% of boys have a similar preference. The preferred wage indicated by job-seeking female respondents is rather lower than males: the highest preferred salary indicated by females is 800 GEL and average is 388 GEL, while the maximum wage for males is up to 1500 GEL and the average is 505 GEL. 11.4% of women seeking a job have no salary expectations, as employment in itself is very important, while only 2.5% of job-seeking men indicate the same thing.

Figure 13: Job searching strategies among men and women during the last four weeks (%)



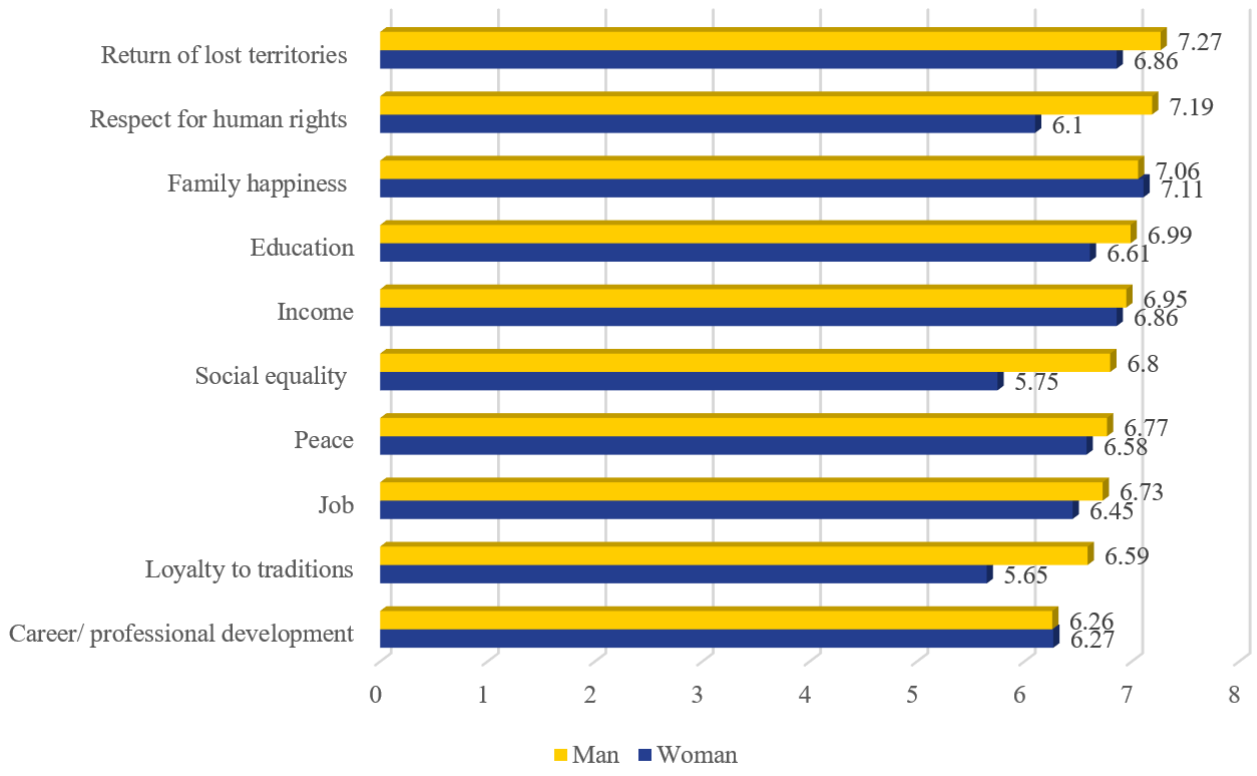
A significant difference is revealed when observing the gender dimension of job searching strategies among men and women (see Figure 13): men are more likely to use informal mechanisms; 35% of men try to find a job with relatives' help, while only 2.1% of women use this method. Women job seekers are more inclined to contact the employer directly, post a CV on the employment portal or send the required documentation to vacant positions. Job seekers have quite high motivation to work: 88.6% of job-seeking young women and 99.9% of job-seeking young men claim that they are ready to start working right away. Those young women who cannot start immediately explain it is because of their responsibility to take care of child(ren) or others in the family.

The largest share of employed 14-29 year-old young women in the target regions is employed in the private sector (72.5%); the majority of young men are also employed in the private sector (66.7%),

however the number is less than that of young women. More young men than young women are employed in the public sector (33.2% of men, 23.5% of women) and are entrepreneurs (2.8% of men, 1.3% of women). Gender segregation is observed in different fields of employment. The majority of employed women work in the following sectors: healthcare and social services (23.4%), trade (18.9%), financial activity (18%), and education (8%). The majority of employed men work in trade (16%), state governance (13.2%), construction (10.9%) and other areas. Occupational segregation, which takes root in the education period, further continues in the employment process.

The survey targeting 14- to 29 year-old youth of the target regions also revealed the value priorities of young people. Respondents were asked to evaluate ten different values (see Figure 13). The results show that gender significantly determines youth's value priorities. The first three priorities for 14-29 year-old young men are: "return lost territories", "respect human rights", and "family happiness". As for young women, the highest priority is assigned to "family happiness", followed by "return lost territories" and "income". Young women and men evaluate the following issues differently: men attach great importance to social equality and loyalty to traditions, while for women these values are less significant. Out of the 10 priorities suggested, young men have rated their careers and professional development as least significant and gave higher priority to a job. This indicates that a job is important as a source of income, while social recognition and advancement are less important values for the respondents.

Figure 14: Please evaluate how important the following ideas are to you * by gender (average, where 10 means very important and 1 absolutely insignificant)



Gender analysis of the data shows that the academic achievements of young women are slightly higher than of young men, and both have equal access to formal and informal support mechanisms during their education. There are fewer women employed, but this is not due to the fact that they are less likely to find a job; it is due to the fact that they are forced to leave the labor market after marriage, pregnancy, and childcare responsibilities. The disintegration of young women from the labor market is mainly due to existing traditional cultural values and partly due to the weakly developed childcare system.

Description of Young People Living in the Regions by Age

The targeted young people were divided into three age groups: minors (14-17 year olds), young people continuing their studies in vocational and higher education institutions (18-20 year olds), and 21 to 29 year-olds. The distribution of respondents by their social status into age groups is as follows (see Table 12): due to the uneven intervals among the age categories, it is difficult to identify concrete shares of people with different social statuses from different age groups; however some tendencies can be discussed. Young people with disabilities are observed more frequently in the 14-17 age group, although the number decreases as age increases. The age group of 18-20 year-olds has the smallest number of IDPs, which can be explained by their migration to the capital city for further education. The majority of NEETs are present in the 21-29 age group. This can be explained by the fact that younger people are mostly engaged in educational activities. The share of employed young people with paid jobs also increases with age. Only 3% of the employed are from the 14-17 age group, 19.3% from the 18-20 age group, and 77.7% are young people aged 21 to 29.

Table 12: Distribution of youth with concrete social status in the target regions by age group (%)

Status	14-17	18-20	21-29
PWD	30.7%	20.3%	49.0%
IDP	26.4%	17.6%	56.0%
NEET	7.9%	24.2%	67.9%
Employee with paid job	3.0%	19.3%	77.7%

The employment and work experience of 14-29 year-old young people increases with age. This is related to the completion of education and the entry or attempted entry into the labor market. Accordingly, data analysis by age group is useless.

Description of the Target Groups in Terms of Their Situation, Barriers, and Encouraging Mechanisms in the Labor Market

People with Disabilities (PWDs)

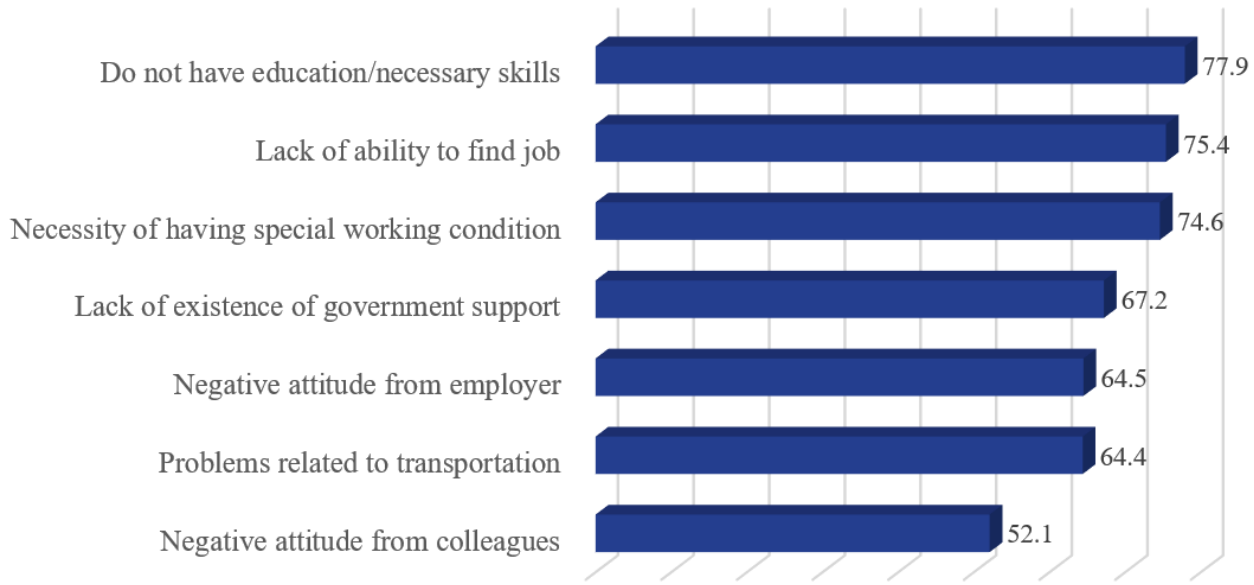
As already mentioned, the share of people with disabilities in the 14-29 age category in all four target regions together is 1.6%; considering gender, the distribution is asymmetric: 1.4% of women and 1.9% of men. The formal education level of the young PWDs is low (1.4% have a Bachelor's degree, and 0.8% a Master's degree). Most of them are excluded from the labor market (97.5%). 1.1% of them are working at the moment, while 1.4% were employed in the past but are currently jobless. In this case, personal decision – poor health—has been indicated as the reason for quitting a job.

People with disabilities are less motivated to be integrated into the labor market. During the period of the last four weeks, only 4.4% of them have tried to find a job. Self-stigmatization can be one of the reasons for such behavior, while 86% of them blame their limited abilities (in more detail they name: mental disabilities, lack of literacy, physical restraints, wheelchairs). People with disabilities also name the following barriers to job searches: education (2.6%), obligation to care for another family member (1.4%), and no employment expectations (1.5%). Among the PWDs seeking a job, 0.4% are looking for a job in the private and 0.7% in the public sectors. 3.3% of them are searching for a workplace adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. The desired monthly salary for people with disabilities ranges from 200 to 1500 GEL, and is on average 450 GEL. Among those who are looking for employment, there was only one person who tried to integrate into the labor market through an employment program. Two people with disabilities asked friends and relatives for help finding employment, one person used a private employment agency, and one person placed his CV on an employment portal.

Among the PWDs who are currently employed: one person works in the public sector and one is self-employed, another one is involved in hotel and restaurant services, one is assisting personnel, and one is self-employed in the sports sphere. Two individuals with disabilities were contacted by the organization itself, and one of them got a job with a relative's help. Two individuals work part time (about 15 hours per week), and one overtime (72 hours). PWDs with part-time employment receive a salary of 150 GEL, and for full time—300 GEL. Employed PWDs never demanded any changes to their workplace in order to perform their official duties—they believe that their disabilities do not hinder their performance at work.

During the research, PWDs were asked to evaluate the barriers to their employment according to seven categories suggested. The majority of them named all seven categories as barriers (see Figure 15). People with disabilities most often refer to lack of education and qualifications required for employment as the first barrier, which is followed by inability to orient in the labor market. Lack of special adapted environment for work was ranked as the third barrier on the list. Negative stereotypes from employers and society are named as less of a barrier, however this problem still hinders the employment of half of PWDs. 67.2% of people with disabilities state that a lack of support from the state is an employment barrier. 7% of them indicate that there is no barrier to their employment. Other barriers named were as follows: personal decision, lack of family support, public aggression, inability to work (physical or mental limits).

Figure 15: Do you consider the following issues barriers to employment for you? (N = 100) (%)



There were only two people with disabilities involved in the employment support programs for them (1.1%). One program was funded by an NGO and the second by a private organization. People with disabilities involved in the programs were assisted in developing transversal skills, foreign language and digital skills, employment opportunities and increasing self-esteem.

Analysis of the current situation clearly shows that people with disabilities are excluded from the labor market. Their skepticism and lack of motivation for integration further worsens this process.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

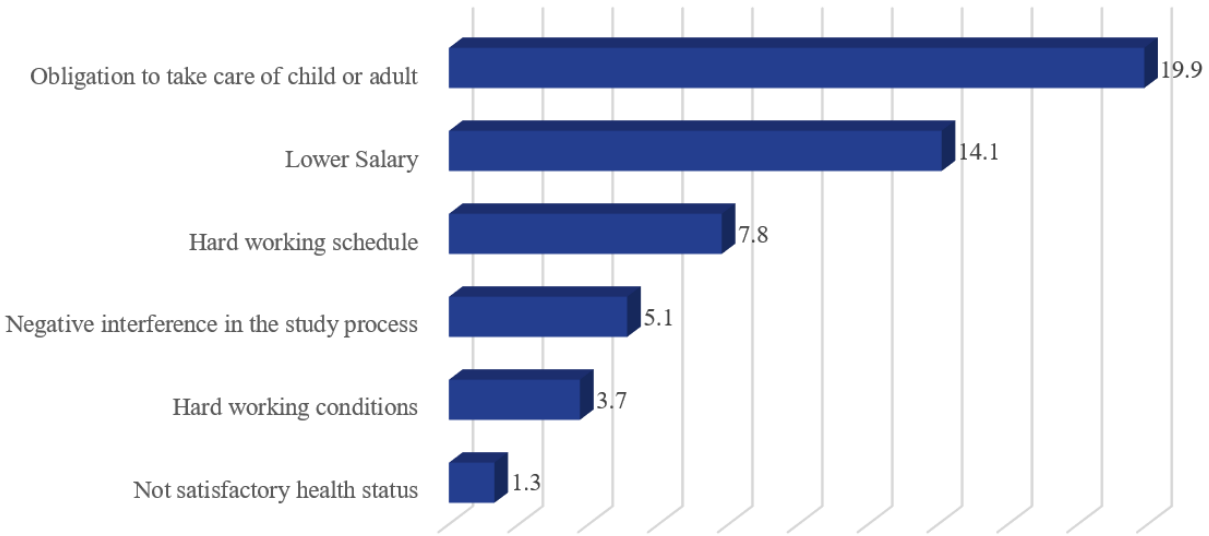
According to the survey results, the share of internally displaced persons in the 14-29 age category in all four regions is 7.2%. The highest populations of IDP youth are in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions, relatively fewer live in Shida Kartli, and the share of young IDPs in the Kakheti region is minimal. This distribution pattern of young IDPs coincides with the general distribution of IDPs throughout the regions of Georgia.

In terms of gender, the distribution of young IDPs is asymmetric: 9.2% are female and 4.5% male. The share of young IDPs decreases with an increase in age, which indicates their outmigration from the regions.

81.2% of IDPs left their homes before 1995, and the share of young internally displaced people from the 2008 Russia-Georgia war is 18.8%. 24.5% of the young IDPs live in compact settlements and 75.7% live on private properties.

61% of IDPs have never been integrated into the labor market; 4.1% have been employed and are currently working, whereas 35% worked in the past but today are unemployed. 24.4% of IDPs from the latter category have been unemployed for the last 2 years. The main reasons for leaving a job are personal – obligation to care for a child or adult family member, poor health, or wish to receive education. Among work-related problems, 25.7% are related to low salaries, or difficult working hours and conditions (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Main reasons for leaving the workplace for young IDPs (N = 35) (%)



36.4% of young IDPs are willing to integrate into the labor market (this desire is real, since 95% of them express a readiness to start working right away if there is an offer). The majority of those young IDPs who do not attempt to find a job name personal problems as the reason; these include: education (27.1%), obligation to care for child(ren) or another family member (18%), and unwillingness to work (4.5%). There were only a few cases (5%) when young IDPs are not searching for a job because of their skeptical attitudes (tired of useless searching, there are no jobs in my settlement, etc.).

IDPs searching for a job, give priority to employment with a flexible schedule (19.3%). 5.7% of respondents express a desire to work in the public sector, 4.9% in the private sector, 2% are willing to work abroad, and for 4.2% of respondents the most important thing is to be employed regardless of the form of employment. The preferred salary for young IDPs varies from 200 to 800 GEL and is on average 500 GEL; however for 8.8% of respondents salary does not have crucial importance. 45% of job-seeking IDPs say that their work should be in line with their level of education, and 29% think that it is normal if a job corresponds to a lower level of education. From the IDPs searching for employment: the majority look up job vacancies (12.5%), upload CVs on a job seekers' portal (8.4%), try to find employment with the help of relatives (6.8%), use employment programs (5.2%), or directly contact employers (4.9 %). Only one IDP has applied by sending an application for an announced vacancy.

Among the small number of employed IDPs, 2.7% work in the public sector, 1.7% are employed in the private sector, and 0.7% are self-employed. 3.8% of them work as qualified personnel and 0.8% are unqualified workers. 2.3% of the employed young IDPs found their jobs after uploading CVs on a job-seeking portal, and the rest were employed with the help of social connections. While searching for jobs, these individuals used different formal methods, such as contacting employers directly or asking relatives for help. The majority of employees are full-time staff (3.7%). Their average salary ranges from 250 to 800 GEL, and is on average 550 GEL. 4% of employees indicate that their position corresponds to their qualifications.

93.2% of young IDPs living in the target regions have not been involved in any program or project that would increase their employment opportunities. Programs supporting IDPs in the employment process were mainly funded by NGOs, the government, or private organizations. These programs assisted IDP beneficiaries in improving technical, transversal and job-seeking skills, foreign language competences and digital skills, and also helped them to connect with other IDPs, assisted in starting work, helped to increase self-esteem and to develop agricultural activities.

During the qualitative research, the experts interviewed indicated that young IDPs are fully integrated into society and do not have any employment barriers. Within the quantitative research we checked how much of this opinion is shared by young IDPs. 86.4% of young IDPs think that local and internally displaced people have equal opportunities for employment in the local labor market. 11.6% of respondents indicated that locals and IDPs do not have the same chances of employment, and name the following barriers: negative attitudes of employers (0.9%), lack of information about vacant positions (2.7%), limited personal connections (2.8%), less employment chances in compact settlement areas (2%), distrust of local population (2%), difficult social conditions (among them residential) (3.1%), low economic status that hinders their education/qualification opportunities (3.4%). We asked a similar question to young IDPs regarding entrepreneurship development. 81.8% of young IDPs think that IDPs and locals have equal opportunities to start a business. 13% of respondents who indicate uneven chances for starting a business, name the following reasons: absence of initial capital (13%), low access to loans/credit (0.9%), negative attitude of locals (0.7%), lack of information on start-up businesses (1.5%), limited personal connections (2.1%), low chance for start-up business in compact settlements (2.1%), difficult social conditions (including residential) (3.7%), low economic conditions which hinder development of business management skills (2%).

Let us evaluate the current situation. Young IDPs are more or less successfully integrated into local society and the labor market. The majority of them think that IDPs and the local population have equal opportunities in terms of employment and business development. IDPs interviewed in this research are mainly unemployed, however, most of the time this is due to education and family affairs (care for child(ren) or other family members). IDPs who are already integrated into the labor market, have used various methods, including formal ones, to become employed; currently, they are mainly employed according to their qualifications. Those IDPs who are not searching for a job are mainly busy with education or have their personal reasons for not doing so. One third of young IDPs are job seekers; these young people have high motivation and are ready to be employed, taking concrete steps to achieve this goal.

Young People Neither in Education, nor in Employment and Trainings (NEET)

The research shows that the share of young people in the four target regions who are not involved in any educational activities, nor work, nor are engaged in any training program (so-called NEETs) is quite high and equals 68.4%. Young people with this status are particularly concentrated in the Kakheti region (75%), and the fewest of them live in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region (57.5%). The share of women NEETs is slightly higher than men (69.8% female, male 66.7%), although a significant disproportion is not revealed. Youth in this category are almost equally distributed across all age groups, except for the 18 year-old category where 93.8% of young people neither study nor work. This is due to the fact that these young people graduated from school during our fieldwork period, and thus were not yet involved in higher education. According to the living places of NEETs, we have significant disproportions: 71.9% of NEETs live in rural and 28.1% in urban areas.

The NEETs' educational competences and skills are discussed in detail in the second chapter. In this chapter we analyze the reasons for their alienation from the labor market, their employment motivations, and past experiences of employment.

60.4% of NEETs have never been employed. 39.6% have worked but are currently unemployed: 3.5% of them have been unemployed for about 7-10 years, 6% of them for 3-6 years, and the plurality (21.9%) have had no work for the last 2 years. As for reasons for quitting the last job, 20.9% of NEETs name work conditions: low salary (7.4%), hard working conditions (7.1%), hard working hours (5.6%), and unhealthy environment (0.9%). Due to personal problems, a job was dropped by 10% of NEETs, naming newborn child(ren) and family obligations as the main reasons; shutdown of the organization, reorgani-

zation, termination of the term of the contract were the reasons for leaving a job for 3.9% of the NEETs. In about half of the cases, NEETs worked in unqualified positions during their last employment.

During the period of the past four weeks, 25.5% of NEETs were seeking a job; this can be considered a real desire, as 93.6% of them were ready to start working right away in case of a job offer. The remaining 74.5% who were not seeking a job name the following reasons: do not expect to find a job (14.4%), pregnancy or little child(ren) in the family (13.4%), obligation to care for child or adult family member (9.9%), other personal or family obligations (9.2%), no need/no desire to work (4%), and no job close to home (3.5%). It is important that 11% of people in this category cannot explain why they did not search for a job. NEETs also named other reasons for not looking for employment: desire to leave the country, wish to continue education (this category includes school graduates who are waiting for exam results), and health problems.

Over the last four weeks, out of the total number of NEETs seeking jobs, 4.4% preferred to work in the private sector and 3% in the public sector, 4.7% preferred working with flexible schedules, and for 7.9%, and the most important was to be employed regardless of other details. The desired salary for people in this category varied from 250 GEL to 1200 GEL and was on average 500 GEL. 5.9% of job seekers say that their job should be in line with their education, whereas 12.7% think that employment is important even if it does not correspond to their educational level. With the goal of becoming employed, 10.7% of NEETs were contacting friends, 5.3% were looking at job vacancies, 3.8% were directly contacting employer(s), 3.1% were looking for employment through employment programs, and 3.7% were sending applications to announced vacancies.

The group of young people who are neither in education nor in employment can be considered a very inert group. Most of them do not have any work experience (in this case underage and high school graduates are not considered) or motivation to be employed. People in this category claim that personal and family obligations are the main reasons for their inactivity; in this case, gender inequality and the burden of family obligations for women can be considered factors of distancing women of this age category from the labor market. However, the majority of NEETs are very skeptical about finding a job. Only one fourth of NEETs are motivated to find employment and take the necessary steps to achieve this aim. Very often, they are ready to take any job in spite of the position or salary, although this kind of readiness is observed only in less than one fourth of NEETs.

Young People Integrated into the Labor Market

In the targeted four regions, the employment rate of young people in general is 22.8%. Employment rates differ across the regions: it is highest in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (30.8%) and lowest in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (18.7%). There is a gender imbalance, as well, among the young employed people: 19.6% are girls and 27% are boys. There are only a few cases of underage employment; with an increase in age, the employment rate increases: the employment rate is highest (35-40%) in young people aged 25 and 26 years old.

The majority (66.9%) of employed people work in the private sector; less than one third (30.9%) in public/state administration, 2.3% of them are entrepreneurs, 1.8% are self-employed, and 0.4% are active in the non-governmental sector. The rates are different in all four regions (see Figure 17). The main employer of youth in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region is the private sector (84% of employees). In Mtskheta-Mtianeti, young people are least active in the private sector; half of young employees in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region are employed in the public/state sector. The rate of employment of young people in the public sector is lowest in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. Among young employees, NGO employees are found only in Mtskheta-Mtianeti, and entrepreneurs only in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti.

Figure 17: Which is the best description of your employment situation? * by regions (N=100) (%)

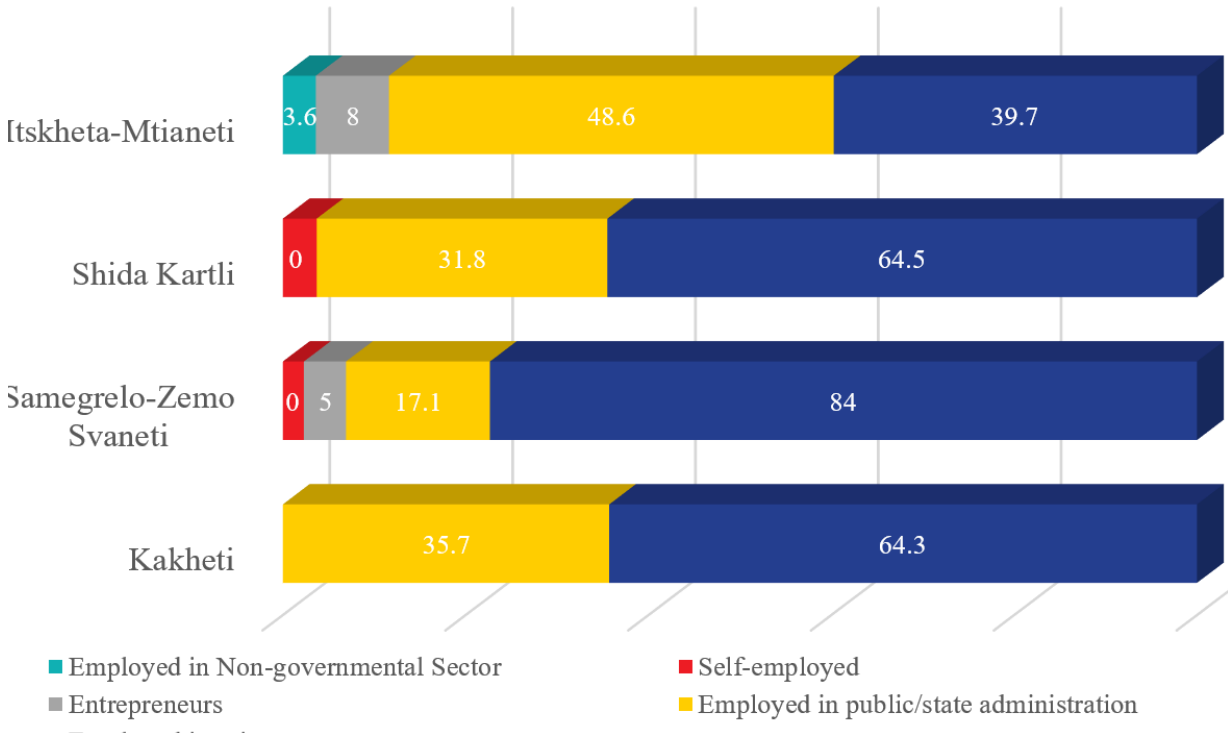
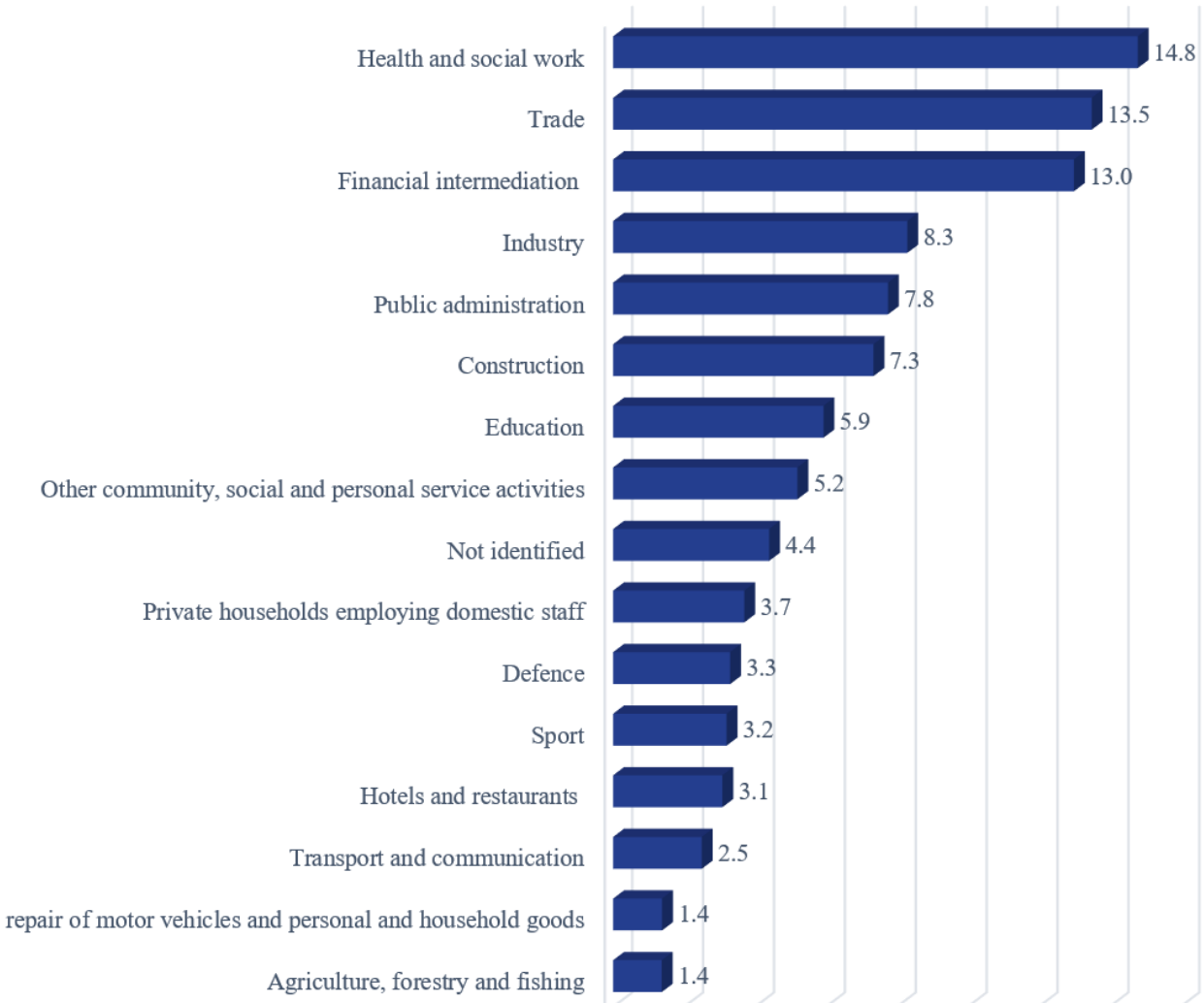


Figure 18 depicts the percentage distribution of respondents by employment sector. The three dominant areas of employment are: health and social services, trade, and financial activity, which coincides with the economic sectors developed in the regions. In the Kakheti region, after the trade sector (24.2%), the share of youth employed in industry (14.5%) is relatively high; every fifth young employed person in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region works in the financial sector. As for other sectors, here the distribution of employees is almost equal among the sectors. In the Shida Kartli region, the employed young people are almost equally distributed among the public, construction, and health and social service sectors; in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region the share of young people involved in healthcare and social services is relatively high at 29.7%, and 11.6% of young employed people work in agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishery and fish farming sectors.

Figure 18: In which sector are you employed? (N=100) (%)



More than a third of the employed young people cannot identify their position at work (see Table 13). The most frequent position occupied by young people is the position of specialist, followed by manager, then specialist-professional. The share of unqualified workers is small among the employed at 5.4%. However, if you sum up the shares of employees working in assisting positions, unqualified workers, and service workers in service and trade companies, we get 15.7%, which means that most of the positions are still for unqualified labor. The unqualified worker positions are mainly found in the construction, transport, and communication sectors; more than one third of employees hold the positions of specialist.

Gender analysis of employed youth reveals that women are more likely to be employed in assisting positions and office jobs; however, 14-29 year-old young women primarily occupy managerial positions. Men are more likely to occupy the positions of specialist and specialist professional, unskilled worker, service personnel at markets, craftsperson, and legislator. The result indicates that occupational segregation is either according to professions (when men choose professions closer to physical activities, and women specialties with lighter workloads) or access to authority, which is more available for men; however this trend is broken by the fact that the number of women occupying managerial positions exceeds the number of men by three times.

Table 13: What is your position at work? General and by gender (N = 100) (%)

Positions	Women	Men	%
Specialist	15.7%	20.8%	19.5%
Manager	16.5%	4.5%	11.5%
Specialist-professional	7.2%	8.2%	7.7%
Assisting personnel	14.6%	2.0%	5.6%
Unqualified worker	4.0%	6.1%	5.4%
Service personnel of service and trade companies	2.8%	13.6%	4.8%
Legislator		6.0%	3.4%
Office personnel	5.9%		3.2%
Maintenance person / worker with similar profession		5.1%	2.8%
Entrepreneur / owner		1.3%	.7%

Almost 40% of employees work in their communities/districts, 24.3% in the capital, 17% in the region, 10% in a city in another region/ municipality center/village, and 8.6% in their own village. This data differs significantly between regions. Only 7.5% of employees from Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti work in Tbilisi, while for the Kakheti region this indicator is 26.4%, 36.1% of Mtskheta-Mtianeti employees work in Tbilisi, and 35.5% of Shida Kartli employees are employed in Tbilisi. None of the employees from Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti or Kakheti who are employed in the capital work in low or unqualified positions, only young people from regions close to Tbilisi (Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Shida Kartli) work in low and unqualified positions in the capital.

76.7% of employed young people feel that their position is in line with their qualifications. 12.3% believe that they are overqualified for their position, and 2.4% think that the position requires a higher qualification (8.6% could not answer the question).

The majority of youth employed in the target regions are employed long-term, 38% of them have unlimited contracts, and 35.2% have contracts with a concrete term and prolongation option. It is worth noting that every fourth young employee does not know the exact term of their own employment contract.

Employed young people from the target regions have on average three years of work experience at their current work position. However, in one case a person has been employed in the same company at the same position since 2008. Young employees have difficulties in terms of vertical mobility: only three cases have been reported when young employees were promoted, in one of the cases, only after three years of work.

86.6% of the employees work full-time, but when they were asked about working hours per week only 14.7% of the employees work 40 hours a week, and 40% work overtime. The employment sector significantly determines employees' average working hours. Employees in the public sector work on average 41.99 hours a week, people employed by NGOs work exactly 40 hours. The workload of those employed in private organizations is on average 46.54 hours per week. Average working hours per week for entrepreneurs are significantly less than in other sectors at 17.83 hours.

As for the workload young people currently have, 55.7% wish to work without any changes in working hours, 31% would like to work more, and 9.8% would prefer to work less (3.4% could not answer). It is

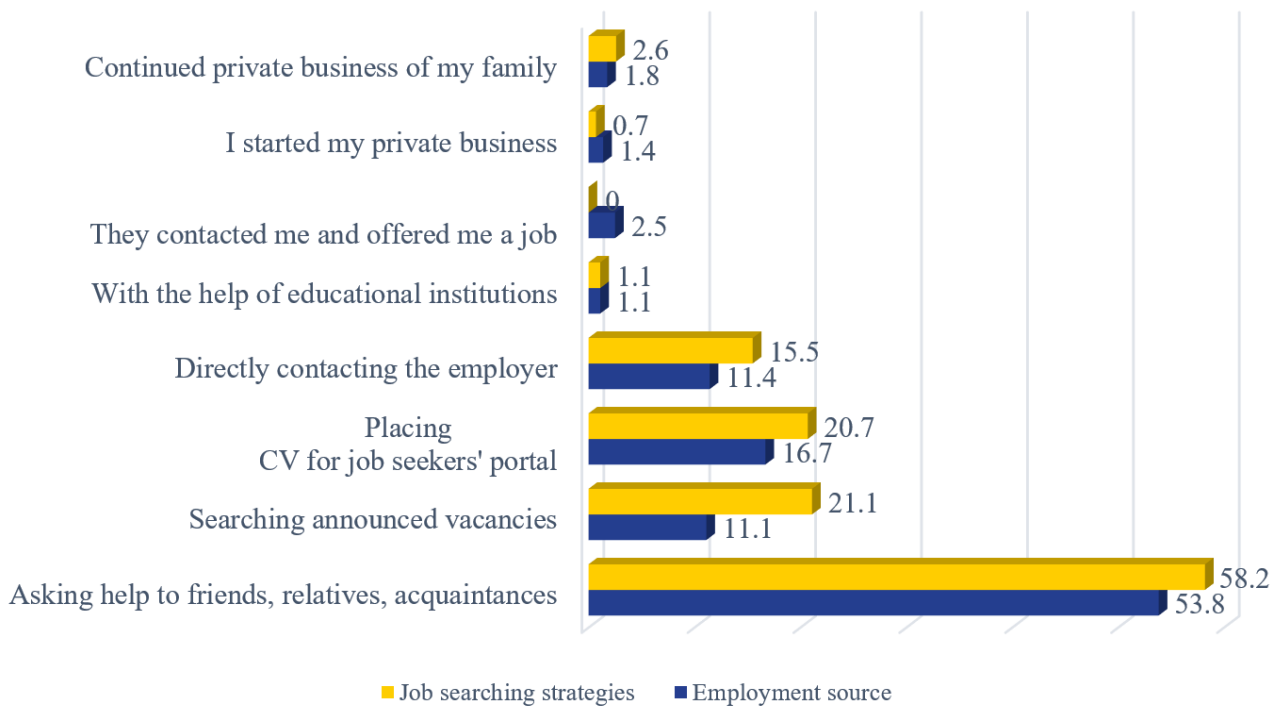
worth noting that young people's desire to work more or work less compared to their current workload does not depend on their current working hours.

The average salary of young employed people from the target regions varies from 50 GEL to 1000 GEL and is on average 496 GEL. The average monthly salary is not significantly different in different sectors: in the public sector it is 510 GEL, in the non-governmental sector: 400 GEL, and in the private sector: 497 GEL. However, the average salary depends on the place of employment, the position and the sector of the economy. The salary of young people employed in the capital city is 608 GEL while the salary of employees in the regions is 420 GEL. According to official positions, on average, the highest paid positon is maintenance person and related professions (average 856 GEL), followed by specialist (on average 655 GEL). The most low-paid positions are assisting staff (303 GEL) and unqualified worker (365 GEL). By employment spheres the wages vary as follows: the highest paid sector is industry (average salary 925 GEL), followed by the transport and communications sector (on average 850 GEL); the lowest paid are: hired workforce in private family households (200 GEL) and education sector (326 GEL).

Young employed people in the target regions are less prone to rotation (63.1% work in the same organization where they initially started). One third of the employed young people who changed their workplace name the following reasons for leaving their jobs: low salary (23.6%), better offer from another employer (12.1%), no prospects for career growth or professional development (9.8%). When changing jobs, employees most often stay employed in the same type of organization and field. The majority of employed young people are not searching for jobs (only 3.9% are job seekers), 94% of them state that they are satisfied with their current position.

As shown in Figure 19, most of the employed young people have found their job using social connections, which was in fact their initial strategy in job searching. Every fifth employed young person checked information about vacant positions, and 11.1% of those found a job. Like social connections, uploading a CV on job seekers' portals is also quite an effective tool for employment: this strategy was used by 20.7% of the employed people and as a result 16.7% were employed. 15.5% of young people contacted employers directly and as a result 11.1% of them became employed.

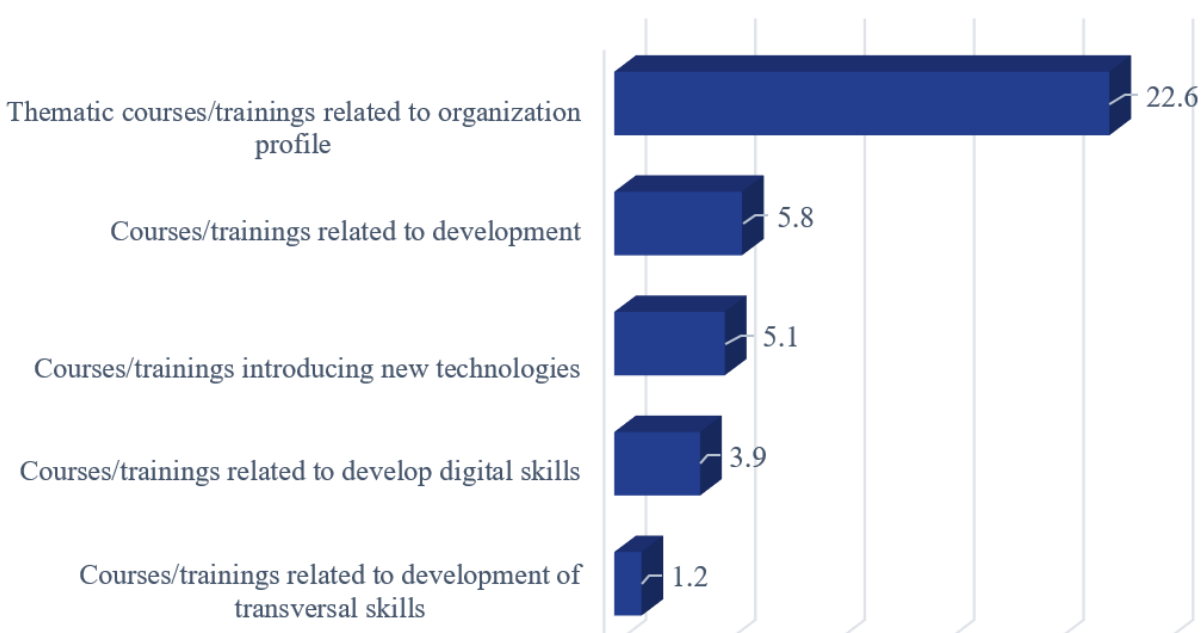
Figure 19: Job searching strategies and employment source (N=100) (%)



Employment strategies differ across employment sectors. For instance, only 24.4% of employees in the state/public administration indicate that they were employed with the help of acquaintances; experts have discussed the widespread practice of employment by social networks in the public sector. Employees in the public sector often indicate that they personally found a vacancy or personally contacted the potential employer. 77% of private sector employees indicate they found employment with the help of friends and acquaintances. However, every fifth employee in private organizations found their job by uploading their CVs to the job seekers' portal. 11.5% employed in the private sector are employed as a result of applying to an announced vacancy. There is no case of direct contact with private companies from job seekers.

The survey revealed that only a quarter of employees (25.1%) are offered training or retraining courses by their employers. The majority of the trainings offered are related to the organization's activity profile (22.6% of employees) (see Figure 20). Trainings related to the introduction of new technology are offered to 5.1% of employees. Only a small part of the trainings offered were aimed at improving the general and transversal skills of employees. It is interesting that training and retraining courses are equally available to employees in the public and the private sector. Those organizations that offer different trainings to employees conduct them quite intensively (8.5% per month, 5.6% per quarter, 2.6% once in six months, 7.6% once a year).

Figure 20: What are the topics of training/retraining courses? (N=100) (%)



To summarize, we can say that among the young employed people, the majority are male, which is mainly the result of gender inequality and is directly related to poorly-developed childcare institutions, the girls' obligations towards family and childcare, and other factors discussed earlier. The main employer in the target regions is the private sector; the number of young people engaged in entrepreneurship is very low. Employers' profiles often coincide with the leading economic sectors in the regions. Despite the fact that experts talk about the widespread practice of employing young people in unqualified positions, this has not been confirmed by the quantitative research conducted: only 16% of young people are employed in low and unqualified positions. Most employees are employed locally; however, the practice of employment in Tbilisi is more common in the regions located close to Tbilisi. Employed young people are less likely to experience rotation between organizations as within the organization or working sphere, which is a result of the shortage of vacant positions on the labor market. Almost half of the employees work overtime, but this practice is more common in private organizations. According to

the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the average salary in Georgia in 2017 was 999.1 GEL; however, the average salary of young people in the targeted regions is much lower than official data indicates and is only 496 GEL. Such inequalities between wages in the center and the regions can lead to a more pronounced labor migration process of young people from the regions. Quantitative research has confirmed the experts' opinions expressed during the qualitative research phase that the main policy of recruitment in the regions is social connections. Knowing this well, young people most often use this strategy to seek employment; nevertheless, this is not solving the problem in general, as young people's weak social networks significantly reduce their chances of employment.

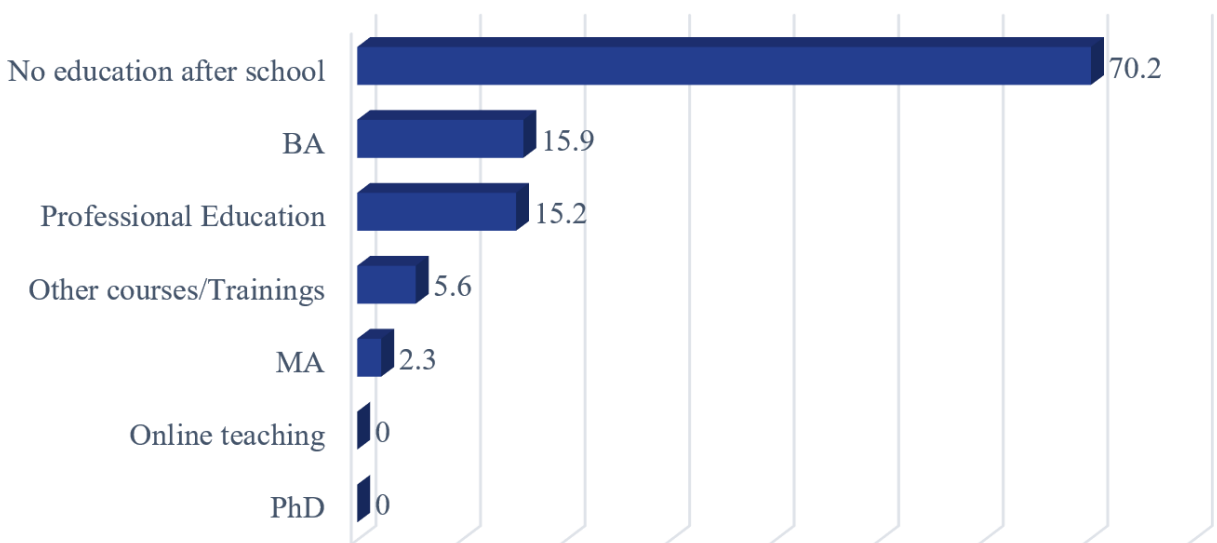
Evaluation of the Human Capital of Young People from the Four Target Regions of Georgia

Human capital is generally described as the stock of knowledge, habits, competences, and other social and personality attributes used to get economic value on the market. The human capital of the targeted young people with four different social statuses from age 14-29 was evaluated based on four criteria: formal education and qualifications, general transversal skills (interpersonal and intrapersonal characteristics, digital literacy, foreign language skills), labor market orientation (measured by documentation necessary for employment and past experience), and participation in volunteer activities. In the last chapter of this study, we will discuss the barriers faced by young people in education, as well as their motivations for and orientations toward future development.

Formal Education and Qualifications

The majority of the researched target group of young people (70.2%) have not pursued any type of education after completing general education. The most popular among young people are baccalaureate (BA) (15.9%) and vocational education (15.2%). 5.6% of respondents have participated in different types of training courses, while 2.3% received or are in the process of receiving graduate-level education (see Figure 21). Two categories (PhD and online/distance learning) are very unpopular, as none of the respondents were involved in such educational programs. This picture significantly changes across regions and social statuses.

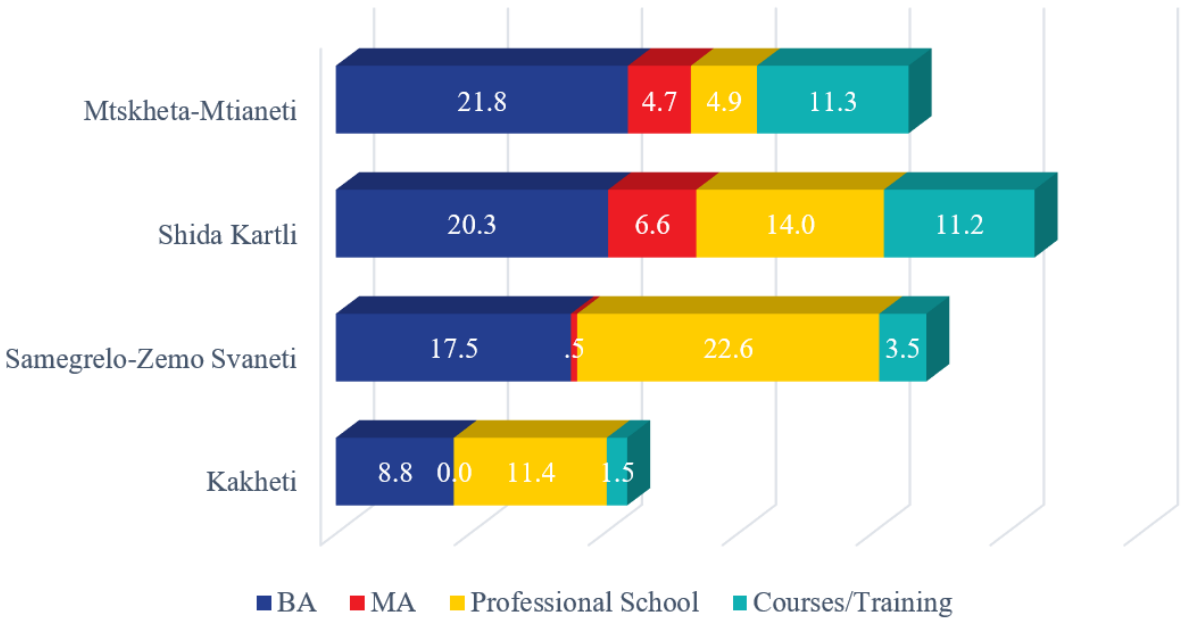
Figure 21: Type of education received by the respondent after completing general education



Generally, the lowest number of educational activities is among young people living in the Kakheti region, although the numbers are relatively high in terms of vocational education. Less than half of young

people (42.7%) in Mtskheta-Mtianeti have been engaged in educational activities; the share of young people participating in bachelor's degree programs and different courses and trainings is higher than participation in other educational activities in the region. In Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti the participation level in educational activities is 44.1%, and every fifth young person there has vocational education, which is the highest rate among the regions. Participation of young people in educational activities was highest in the Shida Kartli region; every fifth young person has a bachelor's degree, while vocational education and different courses and trainings are also very popular (see Figure 22)

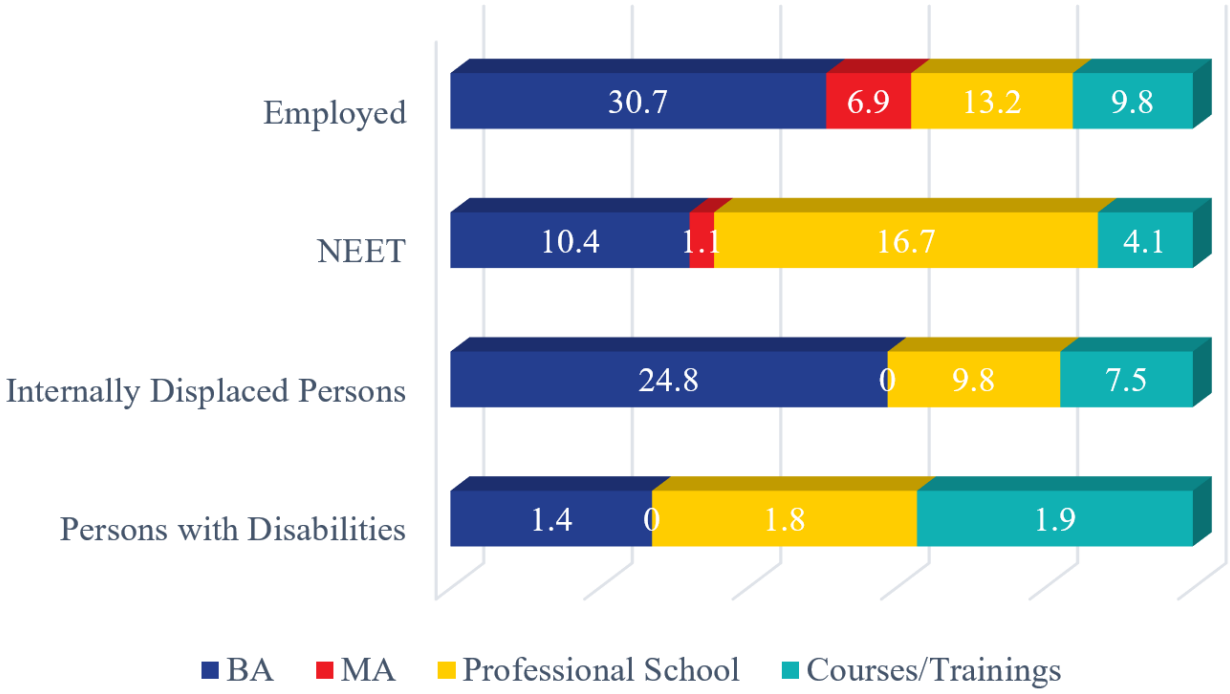
Figure 22: Type of education received by the respondent after completing general education * by regions (%)



Two young individuals with disabilities (1.4%) have continued studying at the higher education level (see Figure 23); 1.8% of PWDs received vocational education, and 1.9% have passed different courses/ trainings. 24.8% of IDPs interviewed in the target regions continued their studies on the Bachelor's degree level, however, none from this group have continued with graduate level studies. 9.8% of IDPs are receiving or have received vocational education, while 7.8% of them are participating or have participated in different courses or trainings. 10.4% of NEETs have obtained a Bachelor's degree and 1.1% a Master's degree. 16.7% of NEETs received vocational education and 4.1% of them were involved in various trainings or courses. 30.7% of employed young people have Bachelor's degrees, 6.9% have Master's degrees, 13.2% have vocational education, and 9.8% of them are participating or have participated in various types of trainings and courses.

Analyzing the respondents' education in terms of their social status gives the following picture (see Figure 23): young people with disabilities are the group least involved in educational activities after completing their general education (the share of those involved is 5.2%); activeness is also low among NEETs (32.2%), but the strong side of this group is that it has the highest share of young people with vocational education (16.7%). 42.1% of IDPs were engaged in different educational activities, the majority of them at the first stage of higher education. 60.6% of employed IDPs were involved in different types of educational activities mostly at the bachelor's degree level.

Figure 23: Type of education received by the respondent after completing general education * by social status (%)



Being involved in any type of educational activity is also determined by the gender of a young person. The survey revealed that the share of females participating in the main educational activities exceeds the share of male participants. However, participation of boys in different courses and trainings is higher than girls' participation. 77.8% of young people engaged in vocational education are female, while only 22.2% are male. In terms of age, people in the 19-24 age group are more often involved in vocational education, than those who are younger or older.

The research showed that young people prefer and most often choose to study economics in bachelor's programs; professions such as law, humanitarian sciences, education, healthcare, and social sciences are also quite popular. Among those who received a Bachelor's degree, 5.3% received higher education in engineering, while only one student chose agrarian studies. The same trend is observed at the Master's level: students mainly choose economics, management, journalism, and public administration. There are several cases when a Master's degree has been earned in information technology and engineering economics. Experts claim that young people from the regions do not pursue specialties that are relevant to the economic sectors developed in the regions (agronomy, engineering, technology), but choose popular professions, which then hinder their employment since demand for these types of professions on the local market is low. The higher education studies of 33.2% of young people were financed by the State; there is no case when higher education was financed by the municipality or the employer. 4.7% of students enrolled in higher education financed it on their own; and nearly two-thirds of students were supported financially by their families. 74.7% of youth with higher education studied in Tbilisi.

The popular fields of study in vocational education are: pharmacy, information technology, accounting, nursing, and construction work. Acquiring vocational education for 40% of young people was financed by the state and the rest by their families. One third of young people received vocational education in the capital, 54.4% in their own city/district center, and 13% in the regional center.

The courses and trainings the students attend are mostly in the sphere of information technology, but the fields of accounting, hair styling, and nursing are popular as well. There were only a few cases when young people participated in foreign language and professional skills development courses. Different special courses and trainings are mainly taken locally and financed by the state or individually by the participant.

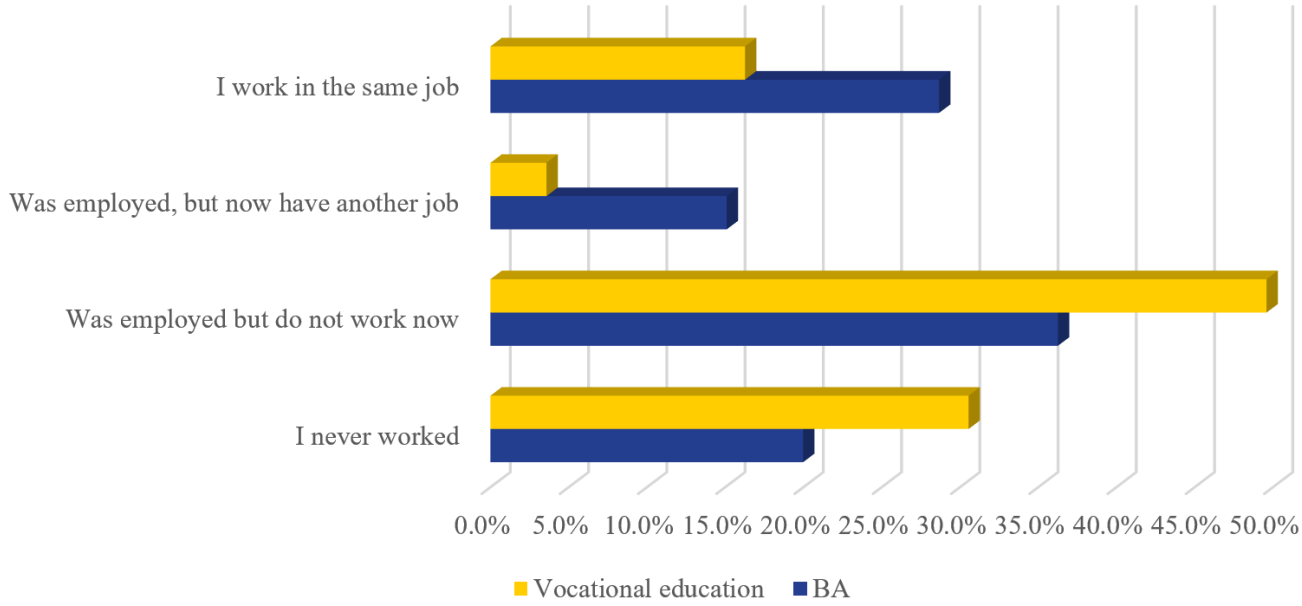
During the research, respondents were asked to evaluate the benefits received after they completed their education. Table 14 reflects on the benefits young people received after completing studies at a vocational institution or at the bachelor's level. Assessments are similar: the bachelor's degree enabled slightly more young people to become employed, whereas salary increase and career advancement are less related to the degrees obtained. Education is not an inspiration to start or develop entrepreneurial activities. Skepticism among young people with both levels of education that the education received did not help is quite high.

Table 14: Benefits of education obtained *according to education level (%)

	Vocational education	Bachelor's degree
Employment	6.8%	7.4%
Career advancement	0.6%	0.6%
Increase in salary/ income	0.6%	0.8%
Personal development	3.8%	4.6%
Nothing	4.6%	4.8%

Despite this skepticism, 56.3% of the young people with Bachelor's degrees are currently unemployed and 43.7% are working (see Figure 24); 79.6% of the young people with vocational education are currently unemployed and 20.4% are working. However, detailed analysis of the data makes it clear that after receiving vocational education, 30.6% of young people have not ever been employed, and after receiving a Bachelor's degree 20% have never worked. This means that half of the young people with vocational education, and a third of highly-educated youth find jobs in the labor market, but later they leave these jobs. It is important to find out what causes these people to disintegrate from the labor market and whether this is due to personal issues or problems related to employment.

Figure 24: Have you been employed? * by education level (%)



Young people with vocational education's reasons for leaving a job are as follows: health condition: 0.3%, desire to continue education: 8%, newborn child: 23.9%, obligation to care for child(ren) and/or other family member: 10%, low salary: 14%, and difficult working schedule: 13.8%. From this, we can conclude that as a result of vocational education, young people have normal chances of employment and almost half of them leave the labor market due to personal or family issues. Only 27.8% of young people with vocational education leave their jobs due to complaints related to the work.

Young people with higher education's reasons for leaving a job are as follows: continue education: 10.4%, newborn child: 3.8%, personal or family obligations: 14.3%, low salary: 29.9%, difficult working schedule: 24.5%, difficult working conditions: 15.4%. Thus, 28.5% of young people with higher education leave the labor market due to personal reasons, and 69.4% due to dissatisfaction with the work environment.

The explanations for leaving the labor force are differ based on the education level of the respondent; this can be explained as follows: people with vocational education are employed in positions according to their specialization and qualifications, thus they do not face any disappointment later. Due to shortages in the labor market, young people with higher education are employed in positions which require fewer qualifications; after a certain period of time these employees become disappointed with low salaries or poor working conditions, which leads them to leave the job.

To summarize, we can say that a large part of the young people surveyed in the target regions (70%) do not participate in any educational activities after completing general education; the number of young people with higher education and those with vocational education in the targeted groups are almost the same. Higher education is mainly financed by families; young people choose professions according to their popularity rather than market demand. Vocational education is often funded by the state and the professions studied are closer to labor market requirements. In terms of employment, young people with higher education have slightly higher chances of employment than those with vocational education; however, young people with higher education leave jobs more often than those with vocational education, who are more likely to leave the labor market due to family obligations or gender inequalities.

Among the four targeted groups of young people, the young PWDs generally do not continue with further education after completing general education; the rate of continuing education is moderate in case of NEETs and IDPs, and young employed people have the highest educational achievements. However, youth integration into the labor market cannot be explained only by the level of formal education, as there are other important factors such as general transversal skills and labor market orientation, which are also well-developed in employed people.

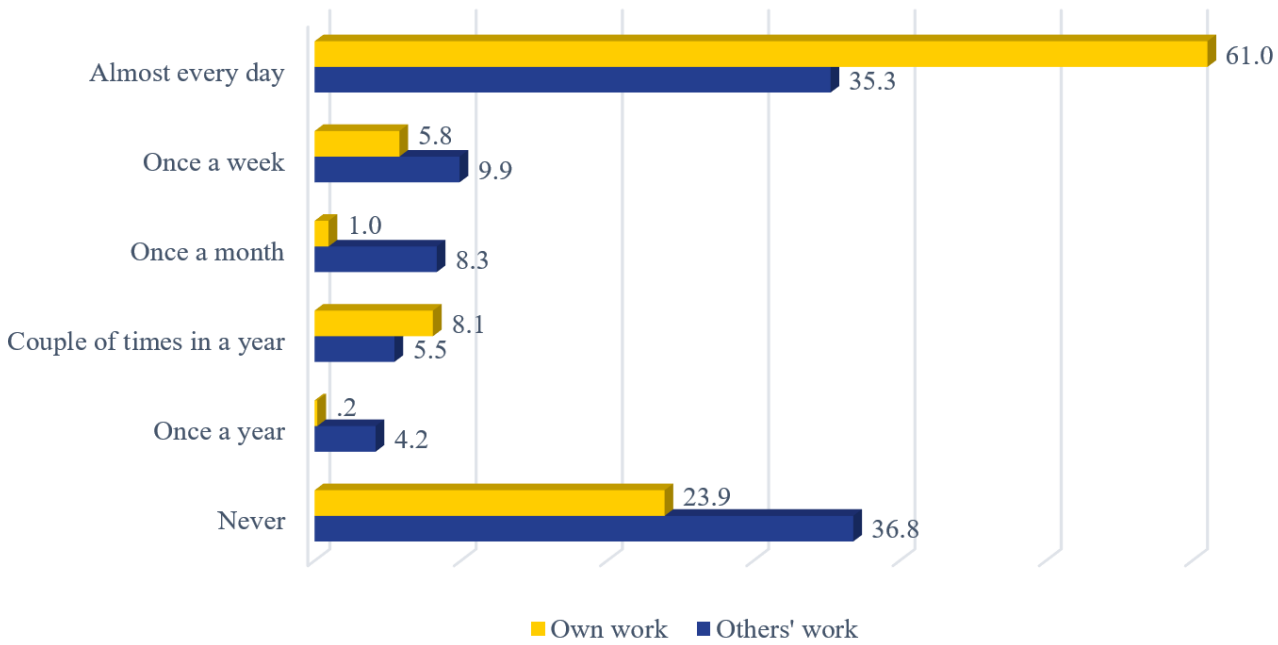
Transversal Skills

Within the labor market research project, current labor market demands were studied through document analysis and expert interviews. The survey revealed that employers often give greater significance to transversal skills than to special skills; first of all this is due to the quality of supply. Employers note that they do not remember almost any case when a new employee (qualified or unqualified) did not need time and resources for preparation/training. That is why employers often point out that a good employee first of all needs well-developed skills, as the job specifics he/she can learn on the spot (this is especially relevant for low and unqualified positions).

Employers most often emphasize the importance of the following **intrapersonal** characteristics for the employed: **responsibility, punctuality, neatness, discipline, and motivation.**

These are the skills that employers frequently complain about when discussing young people. Most employers note that despite the fact that young people are energized and have power, they often lack a sense of responsibility; this leads them to employ middle-aged people. As part of the management and planning research, we asked young people how often they plan their own and others' work (see Figure 25). As a result, it has been revealed that more than half of young people plan their work every day, and every third person plans the work of others. Every fourth young person does not plan his work at all, and every third does not plan others' work.

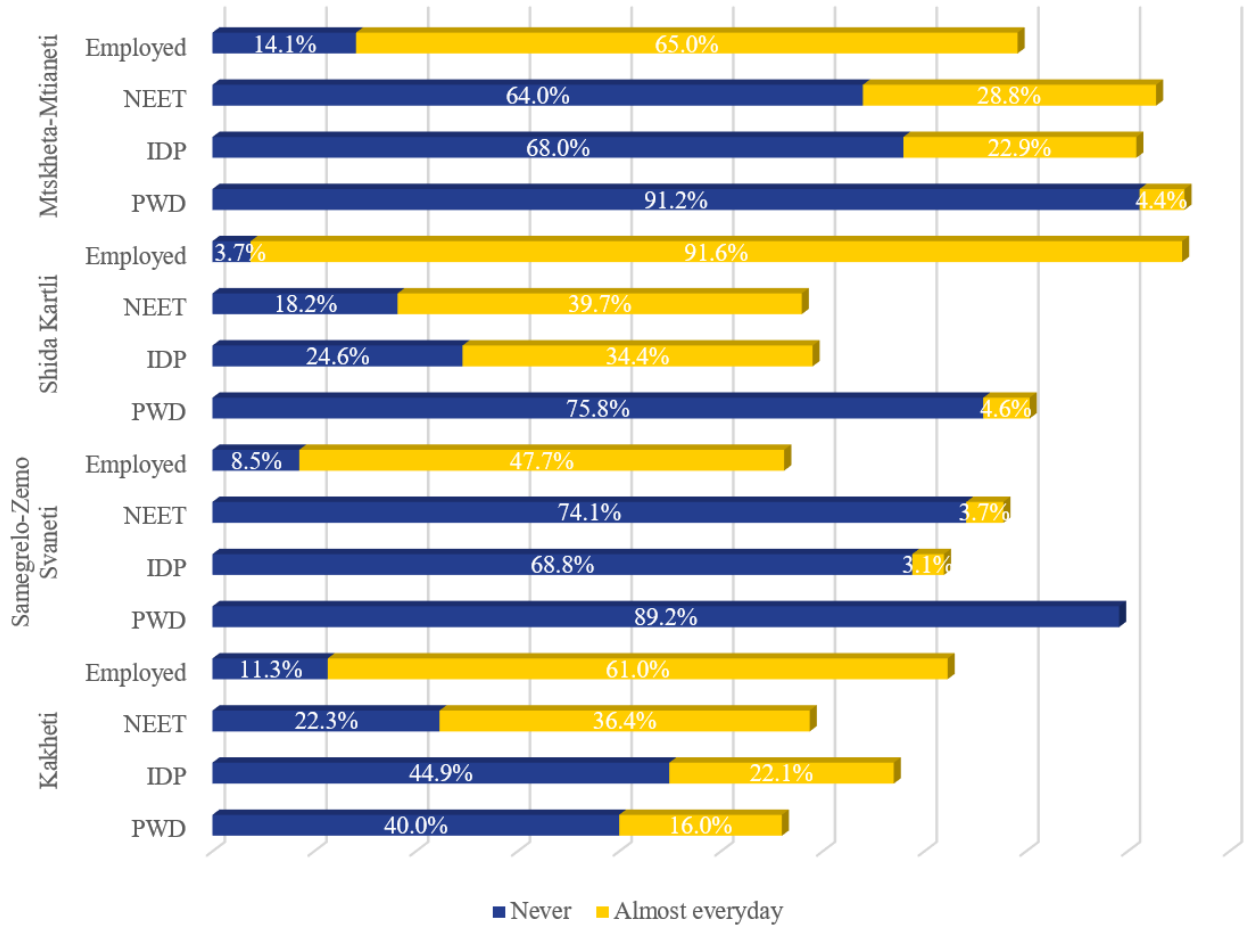
Figure 25: How frequently do you plan your own and others' work? (N=400) (%)



To study the issue in detail, we checked data about planning work according to region and social status (see Figure 26). In almost every region, work-planning skills are more developed in employed people, though this indicator is relatively low in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. People with disabilities do not possess this skill at all, but compared to other regions, we observe a better situation in Kakheti. NEETs from Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti rarely plan work, whereas management skills in Kakheti and Shida Kartli are more developed in young people of this status. In terms of work planning, IDPs are more unorganized in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Shida Kartli regions, and we see a relatively positive picture in the Kakheti region.

There is a slight difference when analyzing job-related activities by gender: cooperation, training of others (teaching), and job planning are performed more often by men than women. There is not a significant difference in the performance of other activities.

Figure 26: How frequently do you plan your own and others' work? * by regions * by social status



Out of transversal interpersonal skills, employers and experts consider the following skills the most important: communication skills, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking.

Experts indicate that very often young people do not know how to present themselves to an employer, or how to talk about their experience or knowledge. On the other hand, employers observe a low level of communication skills in the process of working. Lack of communication ability is observed in terms of teamwork, as well as in knowledge- and experience-sharing. A low level of communication skills in personnel is especially problematic for service providers. Research showed the importance of cooperation and collaboration skills, especially in entrepreneurship development. Some experts note that the low level of cooperative skills and culture hindered local residents from converting small lands into cooperatives; they still continue agrarian work at the household level. Employers often associate leadership skills with experience and age, and note that young people often lack these skills. These are the reasons why employers give priority to middle age and older personnel when hiring at managerial and high positions.

Research revealed that generally every second young person has interpersonal communication skills (information sharing, cooperation) (see Figure 27). One third of the young people give advice or consult others on an everyday basis. Among intrapersonal communications, the least developed is the practice of planning others' work, it is partly related to leadership, but is also associated with social status and role. Young people are less active in participating in trainings and courses, and negotiation skills are used by only half of the young people.

Figure 27: How frequently do you take the following actions? (N = 400) (%)

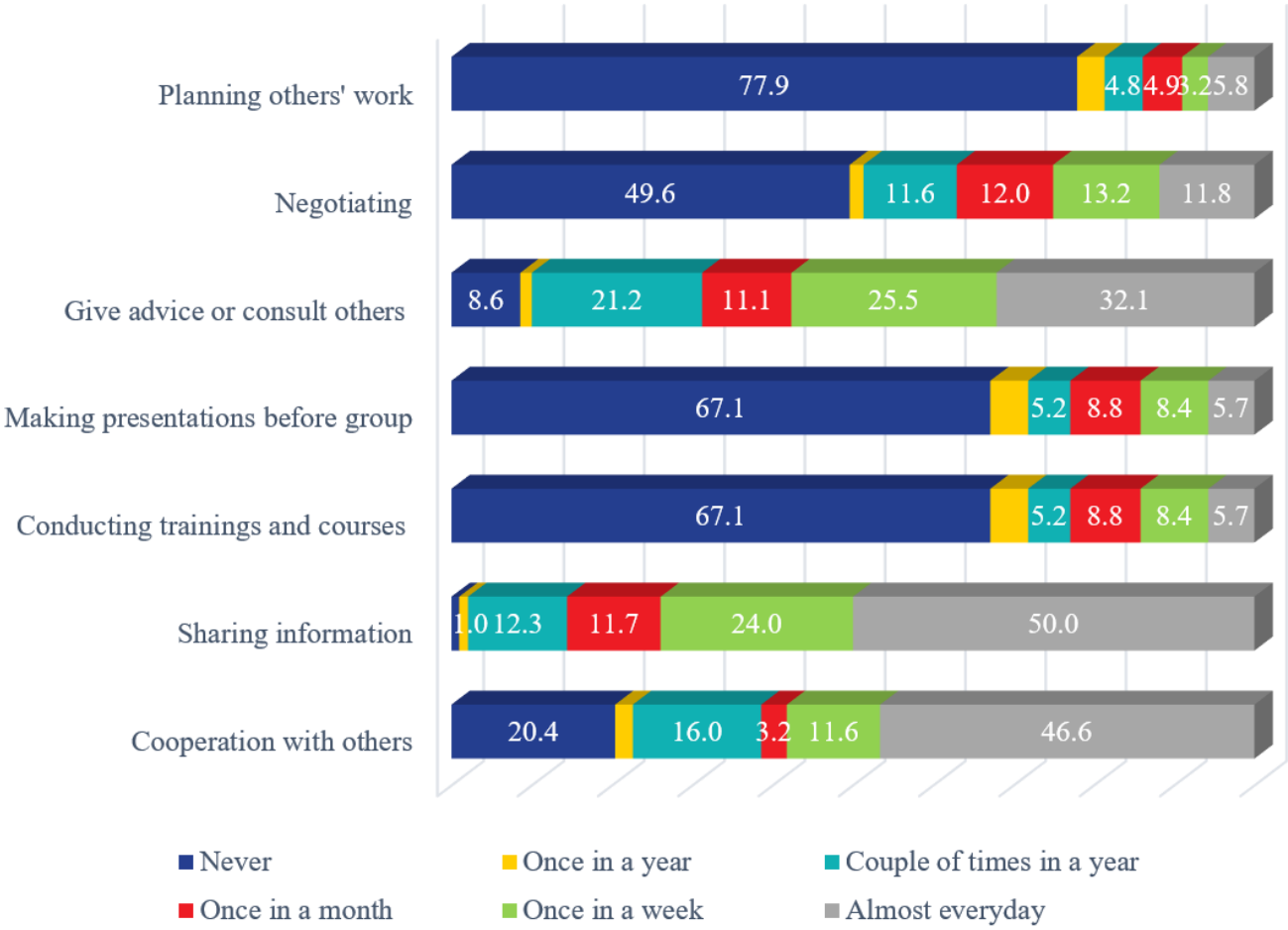
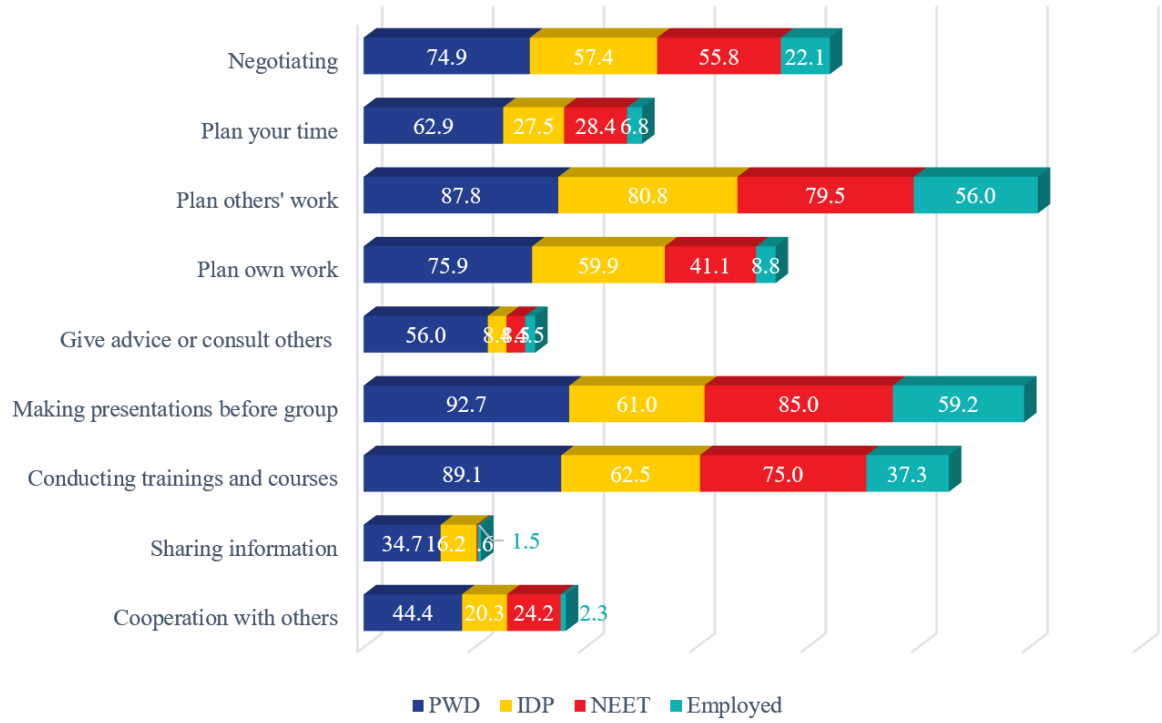


Figure 28 shows the data on these communication skills according to the social status of young people. The majority of the young PWDs do not often practice skills related to cooperation capabilities; of those, information sharing is the most developed skill among young PWDs. IDPs and NEETs show similar trends and these groups also cannot be characterized by a high level of communication skills. Representatives of these two groups are less likely to perform the following actions in particular: make presentations / reports to a group, plan others' work, and train others individually or in groups; more than half of them never negotiate or plan their work. Employed young people implement almost all collaborative activities, but actions such as making presentations/reports to a group or planning others' work are not implemented by half of them, while one third of these young people never conduct individual or group trainings.

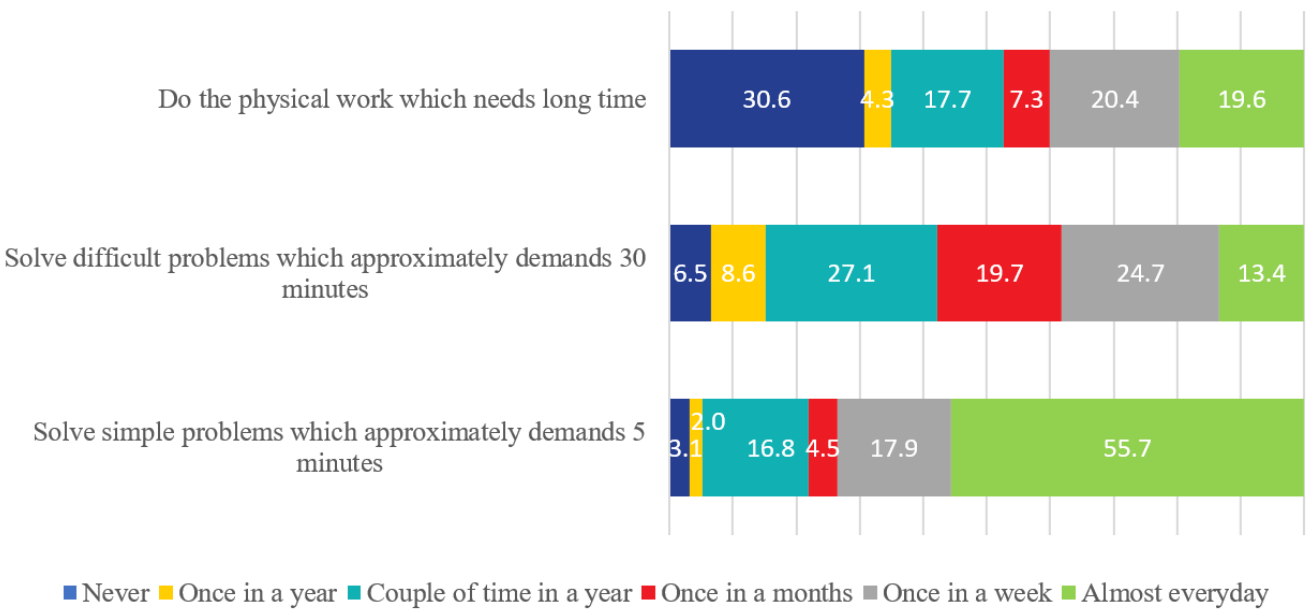
The research results indicate that in the context of communication, young people living in the regions have relatively simple communication skills; this includes skills for daily cooperation, exchange of information and advice, but they do not use management or high communication skills in everyday life. This can become a barrier for young people in the employment process as well as during work management.

Figure 28: I never take the following actions * by social status



The quantitative research has not revealed any direct demand for problem-solving skills from employers, however the quantitative survey conducted by the Social Service Agency found that employers demanded problem-solving skills for most vacancies, both for qualified or unqualified positions. The study revealed that more than half of the target region's youth solve simple problems (which need about 5 minutes) on a daily basis (see Figure 29). It is interesting that young people more often deal with issues that are related to physical activity. About 85% of young people can solve difficult problems that require about half an hour and intellectual work. Problem-solving abilities among young people differ according to their social status. Young employed people have the most developed problem-solving skills, however they decrease as the problem gets more difficult. The least developed problem-solving skills were observed in young people with disabilities.

Figure 29: How frequently do you take the following actions? (N=400) (%)

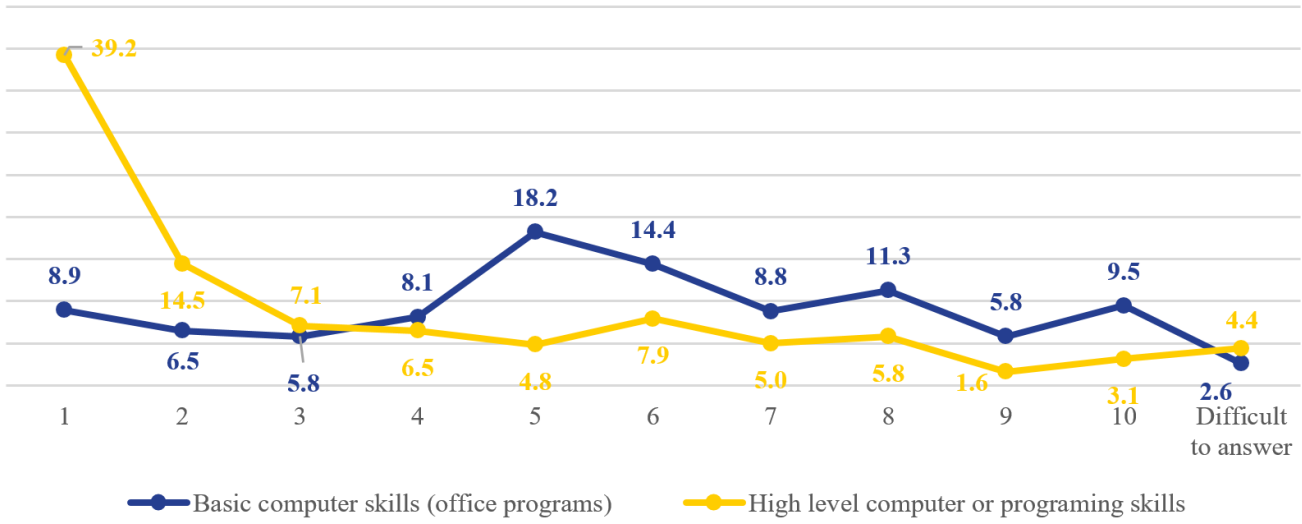


There is a slight difference when analyzing job-related activities on the gender dimension: cooperation, training of others (teaching), and job planning are more often performed by men than women. There is not a significant difference in the performance of other activities.

Digital literacy is also a transversal skill that is very often in demand on the labor market. Digital literacy is considered more advanced in the younger generations, however this is often a myth and employers in the target regions often point out that the competencies of young people in this regard are often low. In terms of young people's digital literacy, two problems were observed: 1. Computer skills are required for low-paid and unqualified positions, whereas the potential employee may not have these skills or may turn down the position due to low salary; 2. Employers demand not only general skills but also specific and specialized knowledge, such as AutoCAD, computer management of new technologies introduced in industry, etc. Young people very often cannot meet these requirements.

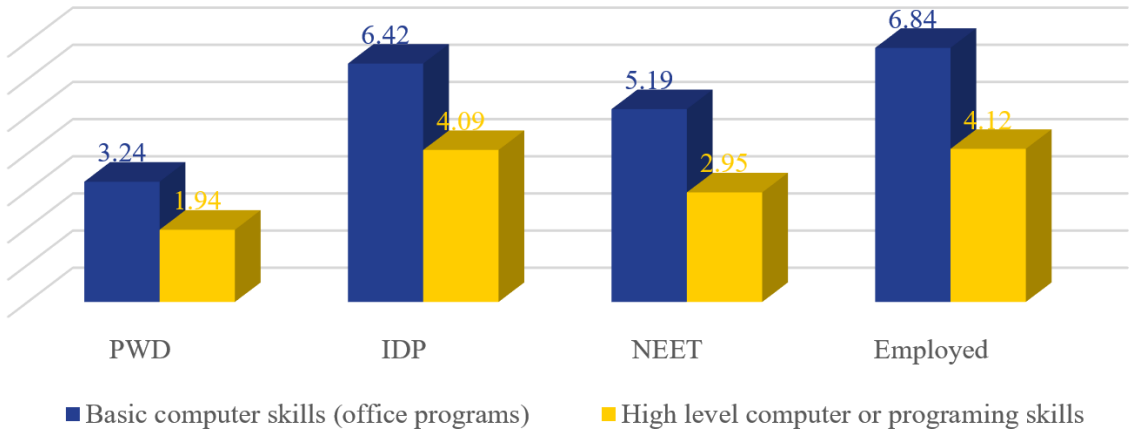
The digital literacy level of the target regions was measured by different types of questionnaires and scales. First of all, we evaluated young people's basic computer skills (office programs) and high-level computer or programming skills (see Figure 30). Respondents mostly have basic skills, about a tenth of them do not have these skills at all, and about 40% have high-level computer and programming skills. Measured on a 10-point scale (where 10 means perfect knowledge, and 1=no knowledge/skills at all), the average assessment of basic computer skills was 5.63, and for high-level computer and programming skills the evaluation was 3.29. Consequently, we can assume that young people can satisfy employers' demands only at the general level, and for positions with requirements of fundamental and specific knowledge the problem of supply will arise.

Figure 30: Basic computer skills (office programs) and high level computer or programming skills evaluated on a 10-point scale, where 10 means perfect knowledge and 1= no knowledge / skills at all (N = 400) (%)



Differences in skills development were revealed by the social status of the targeted young people. Every group of young people has developed basic computer skills more than high-level computer or software skills (see Figure 31). Young people with disabilities have poorly-developed basic skills, and none of them have a high level of computer or programming skills. Basic computer skills are developed at an above average level in young employed and internally displaced people, while higher level skills can be evaluated as poorly developed. Basic digital skills are evaluated as average in NEETs, but high computer literacy skills in this group are less developed.

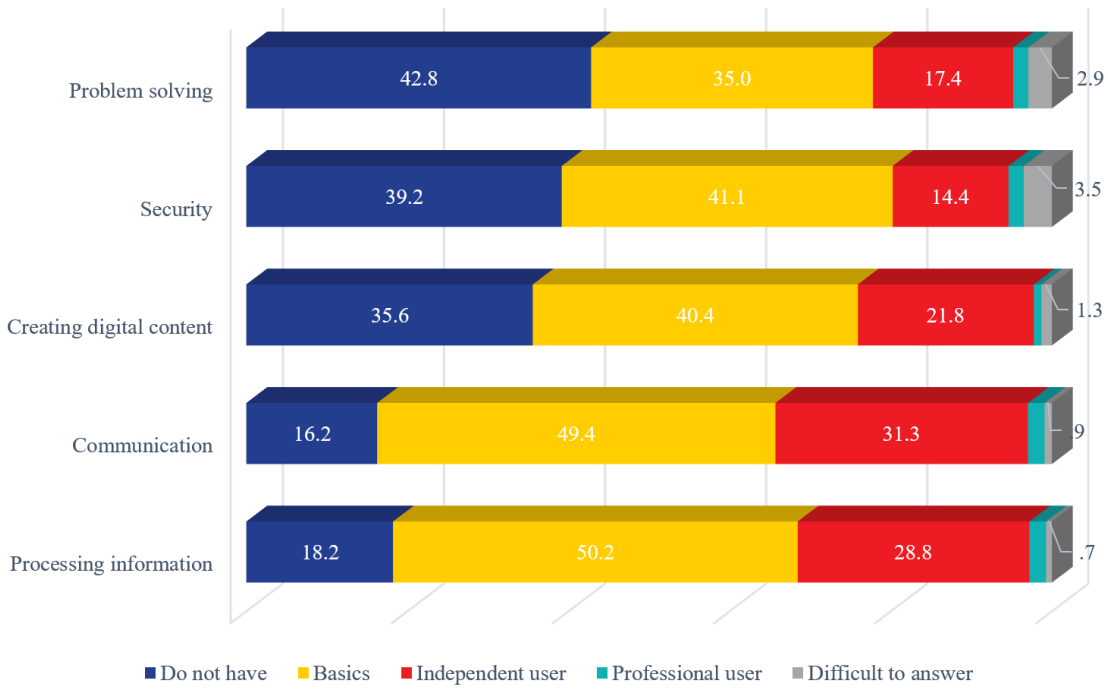
Figure 31: Average indicator of basic computer and high-level computer skills measured on a 10-point scale * by social status



We also measured digital literacy by EUROPASS instrument[12], where the five levels of digital competences are outlined—information processing, communication, creation of digital content, security and problem solving—and the assessment is carried out on a 4 point evaluation (0=no literacy, 1=baseline, 2=independent user, 3=professional user).

As shown in Figure 32, the young people interviewed in the target regions do not show any knowledge at the level of professional users. Independent users of digital technologies in terms of communication and information processing are the biggest share of young people, which is less than one third of the young people interviewed. Creating digital content, security, and problem solving can be done independently by one fifth of the respondents. The majority of the respondents are characterized by basic knowledge of digital technologies, and half of them have communication and information processing skills. Half of the interviewed youth are not able to solve problems when using digital technologies; more than a third cannot ensure security of computer systems and applications, or create digital content.

Figure 32: What are your digital skills in the following? (N=400) (%)



12 Source: https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/editors/en/cv/compose

The question presented revealed that the share of young people interviewed who do not have even basic digital skills varies from 16% to 18% and is slightly higher than the number of respondents identified in the above questionnaire who claim not to have any basic computer skills (8.9%).

Digital competences in youth with different social statuses are unevenly developed (see Table 15). The majority of people with disabilities indicate that they do not have digital skills developed in any direction, part of them can process and communicate information only at a basic level. Nearly half of NEETs have basic knowledge skills in processing and communicating information, and none of them can evaluate their own competences at the professional level. IDPs have developed average or above average digital skills and are mainly either basic level or independent users. The share of professional users varies from 1% to 5% in this group. The employed IDPs most rarely indicate not having any computer skills at all; they have basic knowledge or are independent users. The share of people with professional digital skills varies from 3% to 5%.

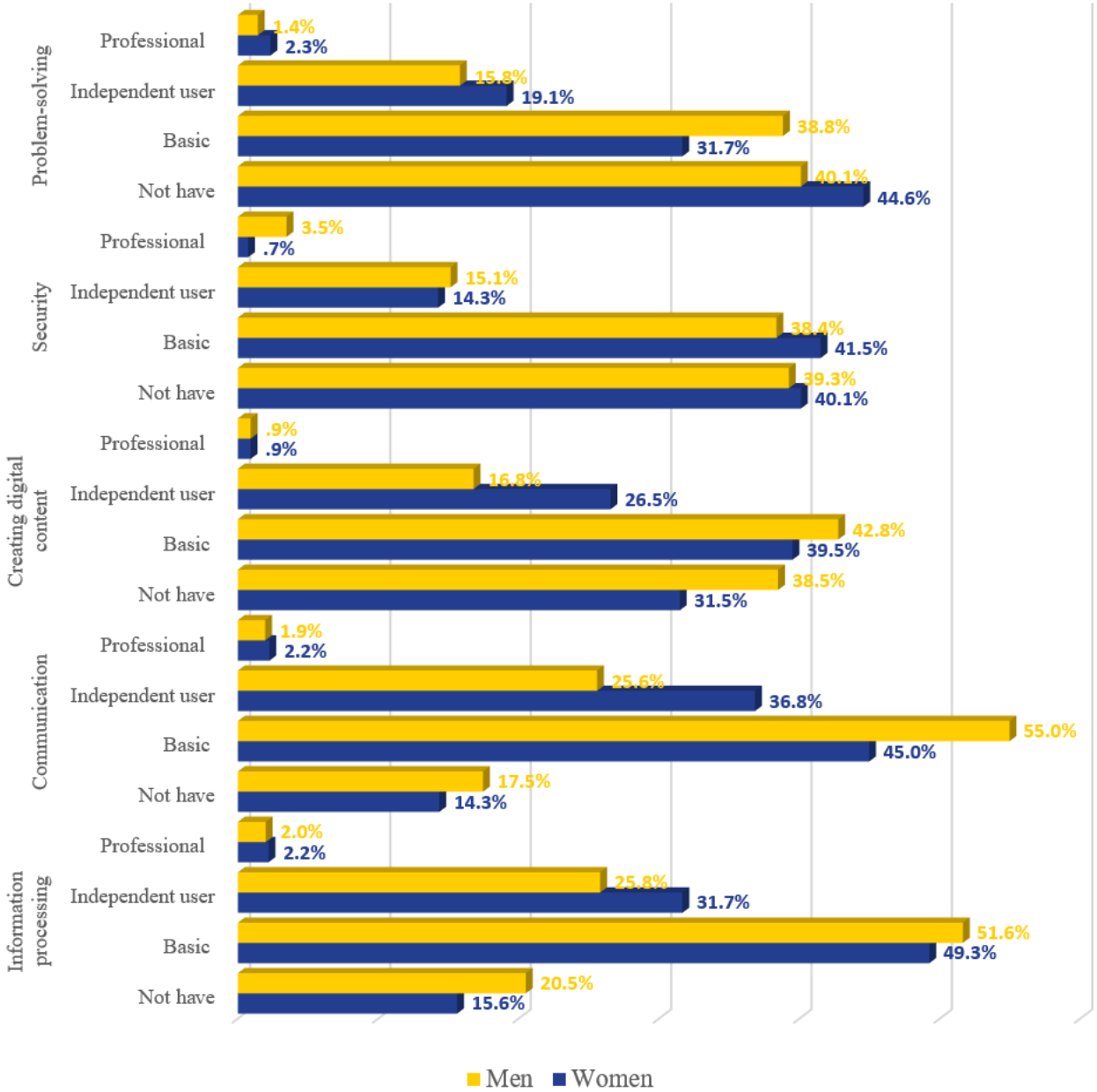
Table 15: Please choose the level of your digital skills from the list below. *by social status

		PWD	IDP	NEET	Employed
Information processing	Not have	61.9%	9.9%	22.1%	6.5%
	Basic	26.2%	46.5%	50.9%	51.1%
	Independent user	3.7%	42.8%	24.9%	37.3%
	Professional	1.0%	.7%	1.2%	5.1%
Communication	Not have	59.6%	14.2%	19.4%	4.5%
	Basic	28.3%	38.3%	49.0%	55.7%
	Independent user	5.6%	42.8%	29.4%	35.1%
	Professional		4.6%	1.0%	4.7%
Creating digital content	Not have	77.6%	25.8%	42.3%	16.1%
	Basic	15.2%	33.6%	37.8%	51.6%
	Independent user	4.0%	39.2%	18.7%	26.9%
	Professional	0	.7%	0	3.8%
Security	Not have	82.9%	42.8%	42.5%	25.1%
	Basic	11.0%	29.2%	41.4%	45.9%
	Independent user	2.9%	25.2%	10.3%	23.8%
	Professional		.7%	1.3%	4.2%
Problem-solving	Not have	81.9%	41.0%	48.0%	25.5%
	Basic	11.2%	30.6%	33.3%	43.0%
	Independent user	2.0%	24.1%	13.6%	27.5%
	Professional	0	2.0%	1.6%	2.9%

It is interesting to know how the digital skills of young women and men differ. Traditionally, it is believed that men have well-developed thinking and skills in technical matters, but our research indicates the opposite (See Figure 33). Young women's digital skills of independent and professional users surpass

those of young men in four issues (information processing, communication, creation of digital content, problem solving). The only issue where men perform with higher competence is safety.

Figure 33: Please choose the level of your digital skills from the list below. *by gender (%)



In order to reveal the competences of young people, we also studied their writing, reading and mathematical skills. It is to be noted that these are basic skills required for qualified and highly qualified personnel, but they are often necessary for low and unqualified personnel too, as they generally measure the level of education and literacy of a person. We have reviewed reading ability on eight criteria, evaluated according to the frequency of use on a 6-point scale.

Young people interviewed in the target regions have not-so-developed reading skills (see Table 16). Almost a third of young people often read letters and email notifications, and the share of those who never read any type of information is less than a third. The frequency of reading different orders and instruction texts is ranked second based on the general evaluation method; this type of information is received and read by 13.6% of young people, whereas 33.2% of them never receive or read them. By frequency, reading books is in third place. 26% of young people never read books, but only 9% read books daily, and the majority read books several times a year. Newspaper and journal articles are read

daily by 9.1% of respondents, however almost half (41.6%) never read them. Almost 60% of young people do not read textbooks, reports, or different financial documents (receipts, invoices). Rarely do young people read schematic materials (diagrams, maps, etc.). Reading skills are unevenly developed among 14-29 year-old young men and women. Young women read different material more frequently than young men (among the answer "never" the variation is 5% to 20%).

Table 16: Please evaluate at what frequency you implement or have implemented the following activities during your employment or in everyday life (N = 400) (%)

	Read orders and instructions	Read letters and e-mail notifications	Read letters and e-mail notifications	Read books	Read textbooks and reports	Read different types of financial documents	Read data tables, diagrams, maps, schematic materials
Never	33.2	29.5	41.6	26.0	58.2	61.6	80.4
Once a year	1.9	2.3	6.0	7.4	4.7	4.5	4.3
Several times a year	17.1	14.9	23.7	24.9	11.0	9.8	5.2
Once a month	12.8	6.1	7.6	14.8	6.1	13.8	2.8
Once a week	17.7	14.7	10.2	13.9	11.2	4.3	3.9
Almost every day	13.6	30.9	9.1	9.1	5.3	4.6	1.8

The writing skills of the young people interviewed in the target regions are even poorer than their reading skills (see Table 17). Writing skills are most commonly used in the form of writing letters (both online and handwritten), but there are 27.8% of young people who never practice this skill, while every third young person uses this skill on an everyday basis. 94% of young people never write any newspaper, magazine articles or information booklets, 83.6% never write any kind of report, and 75.5% never fill out any application form. While writing skills are less developed in young people, this does not seem to be a big barrier in the employment process, since employers do not demand written content from employees except from those in specific highly-qualified positions. However, in terms of entrepreneurship development, writing skills together with mathematical and other transversal skills are highly necessary to elaborate and implement a start-up project proposal. In these circumstances, when young people show such a low competence level, absence of these crucial skills can be regarded as one of the most important barriers to youth entrepreneurial development.

Table 17: Please evaluate at what frequency you implement or have implemented the following activities during your employment or in everyday life (N = 400) (%)

	Write letters, e-mail letters	Write newspaper, magazine article, information booklets	Write reports	Fill in different applications
Never	27.8	94.0	83.6	73.5
Once a year	3.2	1.6	2.7	4.6
Several times a year	18.3	2.9	5.9	5.9
Once a month	5.6	.8	1.1	5.4
Once a week	13.8	.3	3.6	4.4
Almost every day	31.3	.5	3.1	6.1

We assessed the mathematical skills of young people with 6 criteria (see Table 18). Among the mathematical skills, the majority of young people (70%) use calculators, half of them use cost calculation and budgeting skills, but the rest of the mathematical skills are never used by the majority of respondents. Like writing skills, mathematical skills are not demanded by employers unless they are necessary for a specific position; however, in this case, too, mathematical skills could be an important value in development of entrepreneurial activities among youth.

Table 18: Please evaluate at what frequency you implement or have implemented the following activities during your employment or in everyday life (N = 400) (%)

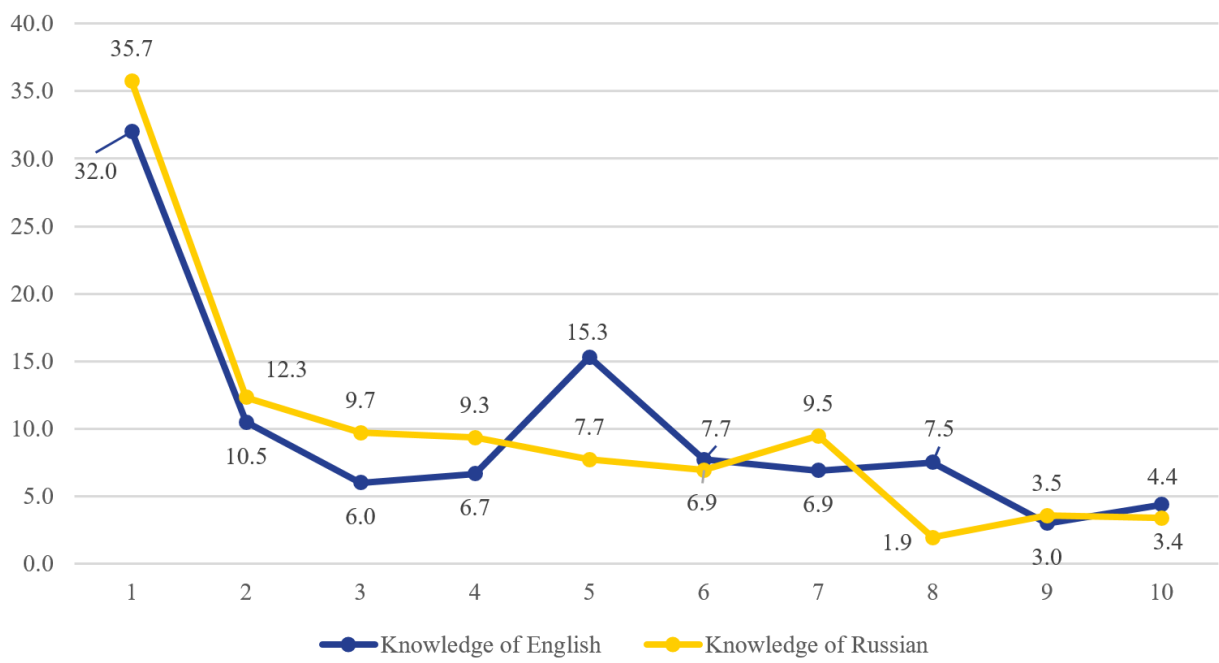
	Calculate value, costs, work on budgeting	Calculate fractions, percentages	Use calculator (digital or manual)	Create data tables, figures, diagrams	Use algebra and formulas	Use complicated mathematics (Calculus, algebra, trigonometry, regressive techniques)
Never	53.4	73.7	29.8	82.4	88.5	91.1
Once a year	1.8	5.1	5.6	2.2	1.1	2.1
Several times a year	9.4	9.4	25.1	6.1	2.6	1.4
Once a month	7.3	3.7	14.3	2.1	3.1	2.0
Once a week	15.2	5.4	13.8	4.5	2.7	2.9
Almost every day	12.9	2.9	11.4	2.7	1.9	.5

One of the most important skills among the competencies required by employers in the labor market is knowledge of foreign languages. Of course, this competence is less likely to be in demand for low-skill and unqualified positions, but in the tourism sector, which is one of the most growing and high-priority sectors in the regions, foreign language skills are becoming necessary for low-qualified personnel as well. Employers often say that this is an insurmountable challenge of employment for young people in the region. In addition, several important international projects are planned to be implemented in the

regions, which will support the business circles in exporting Georgian goods. Consequently, demand for foreign language knowledge will increase and a lack of this competence should not hinder developments in the future.

The quantitative research results show that 32% and 35% of the young people do not know English and Russian respectively. The share of young people who speak these languages fluently is not more than 5%. Looking at the evaluation data, we see that the average rate of English language literacy is 4 (on a 10-point scale, where 10 means perfect knowledge) and for Russian language it is 3.54 (see Figure 34). Gender differences are observed in the level of foreign language skills: young women have higher levels of English-language knowledge (arithmetic average 4.55) than young men (arithmetic average 3.32). In contrast, young men know Russian better (3.69) than young women (3.48).

Figure 34: Please evaluate your level of knowledge and skills where 10 means perfect knowledge/ skills, and 1: none (N = 400) (%)



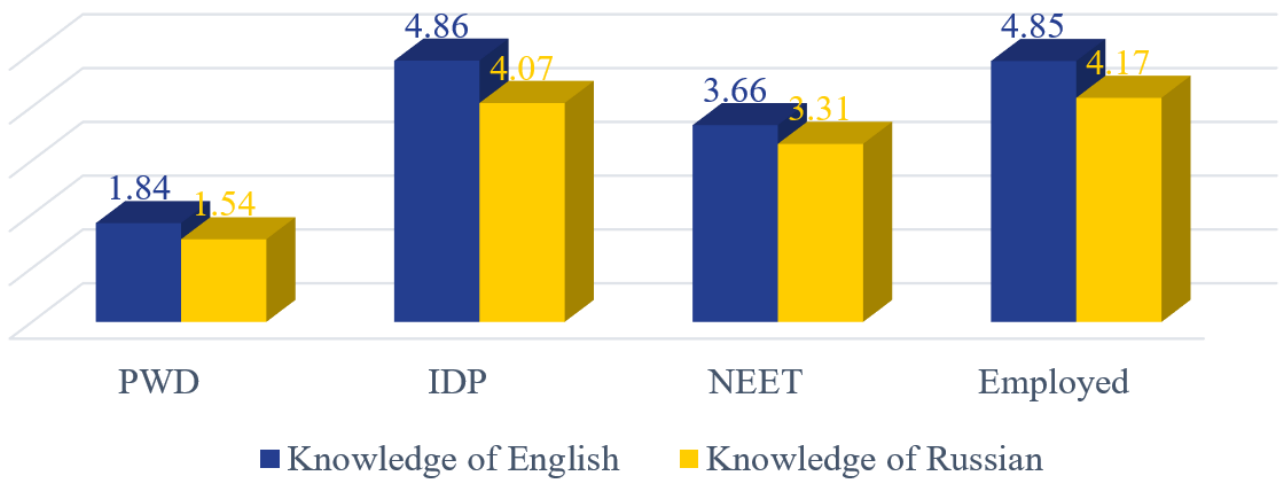
Besides Russian and English, 17.8% of the respondents speak other languages. In the case of knowledge of other foreign languages, the competence level is on average higher, at 5.17. Among other foreign languages, German and Turkish languages are most common, considering only a few individuals know other languages (see Table 19).

Table 19: Knowledge of other foreign languages (except English and Russian)

Language	%	Language	%
Italian	0.05	Polish	0.3
Chechen	0.05	Greek	0.3
Ossetian	0.1	French	0.6
Azerbaijani	0.1	Latin	0.8
Armenian	0.2	Turkish	4.1
Arabic	0.2	German	5.0
Chinese	0.2		

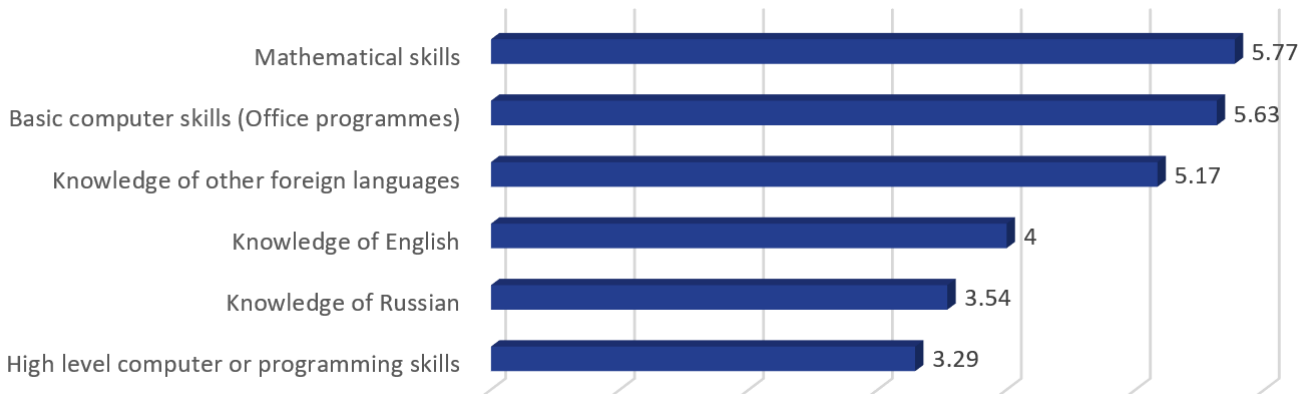
Foreign language knowledge skills differ in accordance with the social status of the young people (see Figure 35). People with disabilities show low competence in knowledge of both languages, 63.5% and 69.5% of them do not know English and Russian respectively. NEETs also show a low competence in language knowledge; their average assessment in both languages is low, 35.5% do not know English at all and 41.8% have no knowledge of Russian. Young IDPs and employed people have almost equally developed linguistic competencies. About 21% of either group speak English, but there is a significant difference between these two groups in terms of Russian language knowledge (which is not reflected in average ratings). 29.4% of IDPs and 16.1% of employees do not have any knowledge of Russian.

Figure 35: Please evaluate your level of knowledge and skills where 10 means perfect knowledge/ skills, and 1: none * by social status (N = 400) (average indicators)



If we compare the average indicators of foreign language, computer, and mathematical skills (see Figure 36) in general, we see that in each category young people have average or below average competence levels. High-level computer and programming competencies and knowledge of foreign languages are particularly deficient.

Figure 36: Please evaluate your level of knowledge and skills where 10 means perfect knowledge/ skills, and 1: none (N = 400) (average indicators)

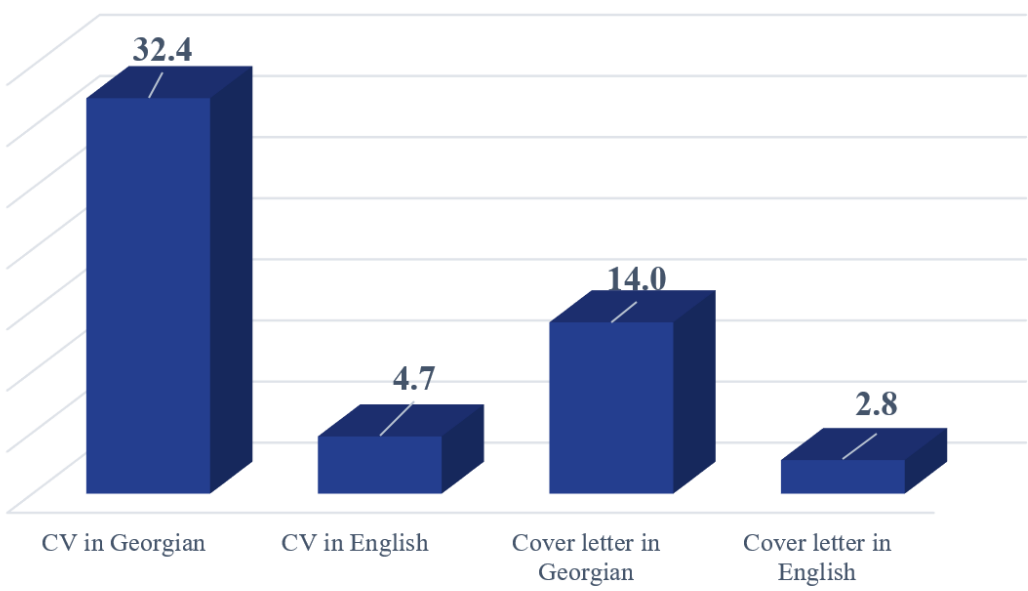


In general, the professional orientations and formal qualifications of the young people cannot meet the labor market demand for professional personnel; in addition to that, in terms of transversal skills young people from the regions cannot satisfy the labor market demand. Alongside the workplace deficit, the deficit of in-demand personnel is a challenge for employment; this is evident also by the fact that it is mostly the already-employed who have developed the mentioned skills. Thus, we can conclude that people with more developed transversal skills are already employed in the regional labor market. This is a serious challenge for the employment of other target groups (NEET, IDPs and PWDs).

Labor Market Orientation

The labor market orientation skills of the young people living in the four target regions were assessed by examining the required documentation and information availability during employment and engagement in this process. The results of the study revealed that young people living in the regions do not have important documentation for employment even in Georgian (see Figure 37). Every third young person has a CV in Georgian, although only 4.7% have one in English. 14% of respondents have cover letters written in Georgian, only 2.8% in English. Within the qualitative research, it was found that employers frequently announce vacancies on different websites which require presenting these documents during the hiring process. Quantitative outcomes showed that a large portion of young people would not be able to pass the formal procedures for employment due to lack of knowledge and experience.

Figure 37: What percentage of surveyed youth have important documentation required for employment? (%)



The results vary according to residence, social status, and gender (see Figure 38). Most of the young people from the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region have the documents required for employment ready (43.8% have a CV in Georgian, 12% in English; 22.2% cover letter in Georgian and 3.8% in English). After Mtskheta-Mtianeti, the Shida Kartli region is distinguished by the number of young people ready with the documentation required for employment, although only a minimum number of young people have the skills to create a CV and motivation letter in English. In the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Kakheti regions it is common to have CVs in Georgian, but the availability of other types of documents is rare.

Figure 38: What percentage of surveyed youth have important documentation required for employment? * by regions (%)

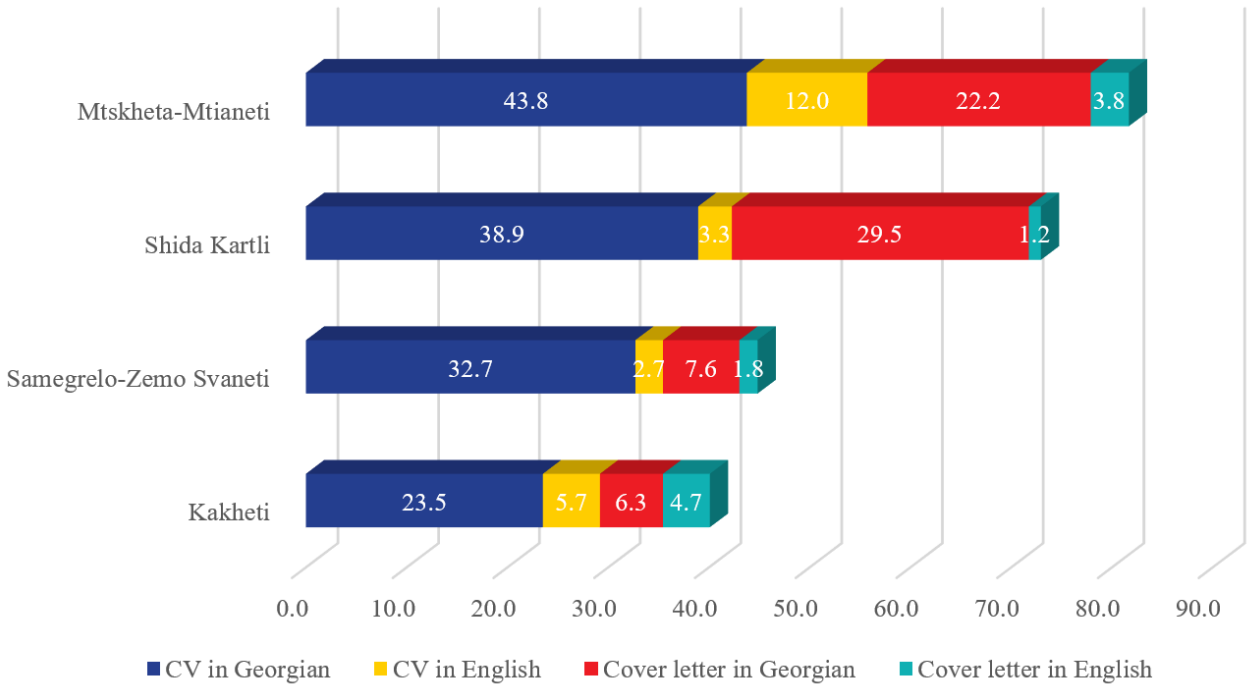


Table 20 reflects the availability of important documentation for employment according to the social status of young people. The survey revealed that the least prepared for employment are people with disabilities. They do not have the writing skills to prepare a CV or motivation letter in Georgian or English. The share of young IDPs able to prepare documentation in Georgian is relatively high, though it is less than of employed people; however, the problem of preparing documentation in English is a problem for this group too. NEETs have relatively better indicators in preparing CVs in Georgian, but indicators for the other three components are very low. The share of young people with all documentation ready is high in the group of employed people. It can be said that this skill is a precondition for this group's employment.

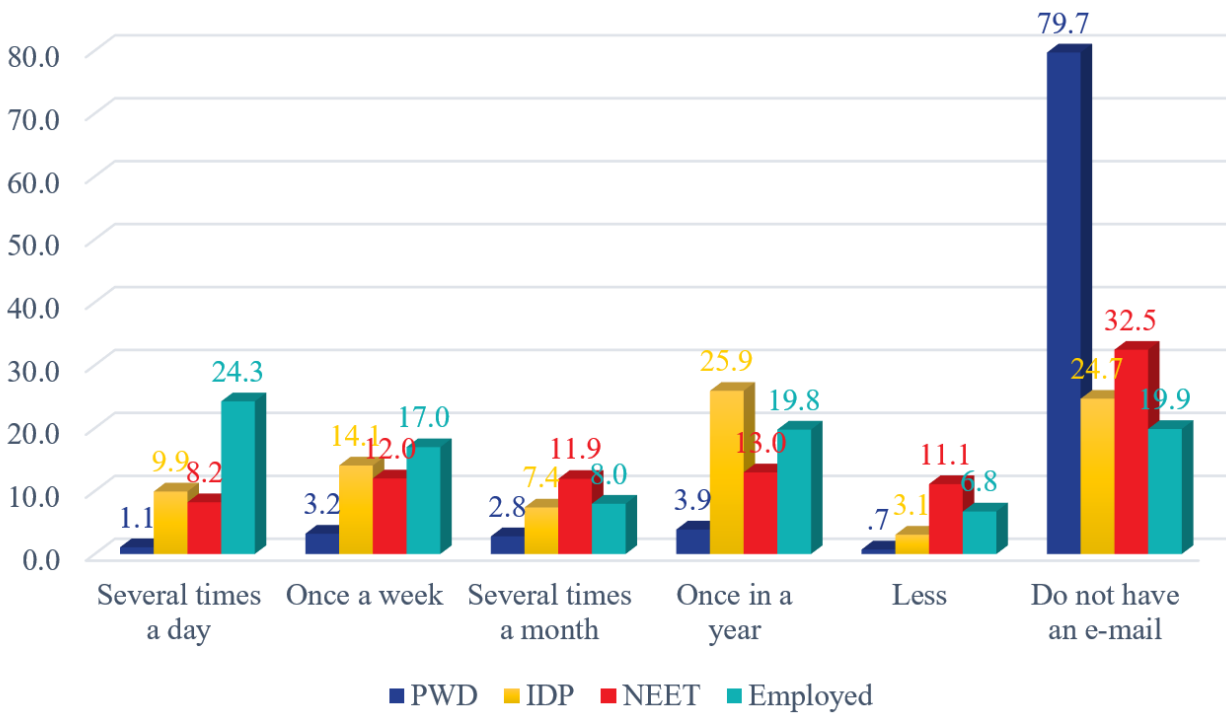
Table 20: What percentage of youth surveyed have important documentation required for employment * by social status (%)

	CV in Georgian	CV in English	Cover letter in Georgian	Cover letter in English
PWD	3.0	0.7	0.7	0.7
IDP	29.8	4.9	13.2	3.7
NEET	23.7	2.0	9.0	1.4
Employed	60.6	12.8	29.8	6.5

Gender analysis of the data showed that in general, girls more often have the necessary documentation for employment ready, but more boys have cover letters in Georgian ready. An interesting trend was revealed by age analyses: underage respondents of all four social status groups do not have any skills for the hiring process. Among the respondents above 18, increase in age gradually increases the share of prepared documentation necessary for employment in Georgian but not in English. In total, young people in the 20-25 age category have relatively good indicators in all four components.

Considering that vacancies are published online and potential employees engage in online communication at the first stage of the hiring process, we have additionally measured their digital skills (see Figure 39). 29.8% of respondents do not have an e-mail address. 11.9% of respondents send and receive e-mails several times a day, 13.2% of them once a week, 10.6% several times a month, and 24.7% once a year or less. The level of digital skills depends on the place of residence, social status, and age of the respondent.

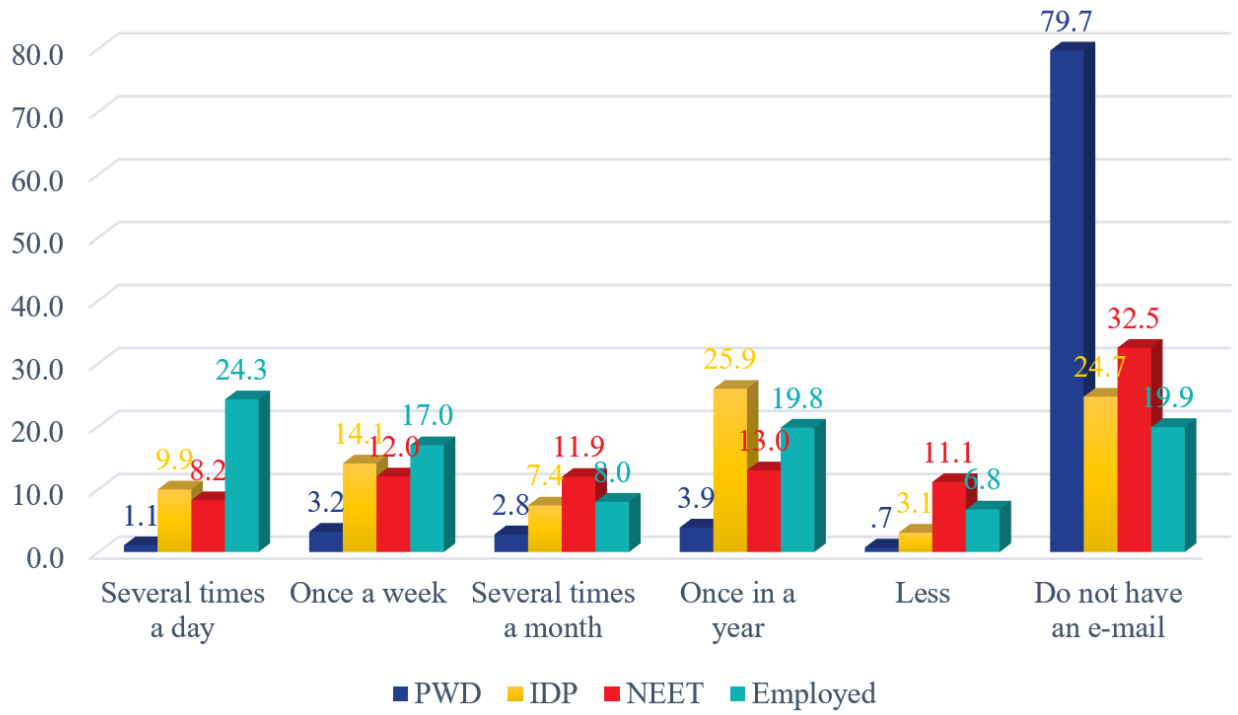
Figure 39: How often do you receive and send e-mails? * by regions (%)



As shown in Figure 39, the category "no e-mail" has the biggest share; this share is highest in Shida Kartli and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. Those young people from Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti who have email use it more intensively than youth in other regions.

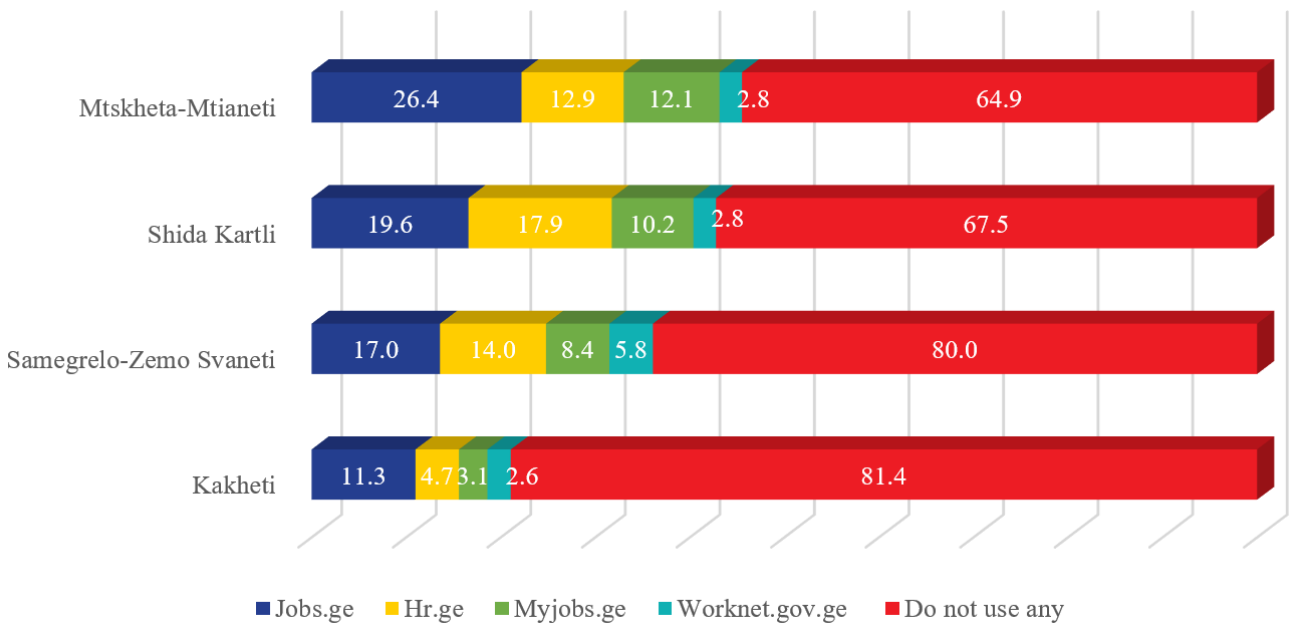
As for digital skills, there are more radical differences in terms of the social status of young people. 79.7% of people with disabilities do not have an e-mail address, while this is true for only 33% of young people from other social groups. Employed young people have the highest digital skills, followed by IDPs. Every third young person who is neither studying nor working has no e-mail address (See Figure 40).

Figure 40: How often do you receive and send e-mails? * by social status (%)



Considering that most vacancies are announced online, access to this information and use of it is a prerequisite for employment. The survey revealed that 75.9% of respondents do not use an online search system to find vacancies. Jobs.ge is the most popular job search engine, used by 16.7% of the respondents, followed by hr.ge, used by 11.9% of the young people. Website myjobs.ge was used by 7.5% of respondents and only 3% visited worknet.gov.ge – the website launched by the state to promote employment. Other online search systems (cv.ge, myvacancy.ge, ss.ge, and the state employment programs) are addressed by less than 1% of young people.

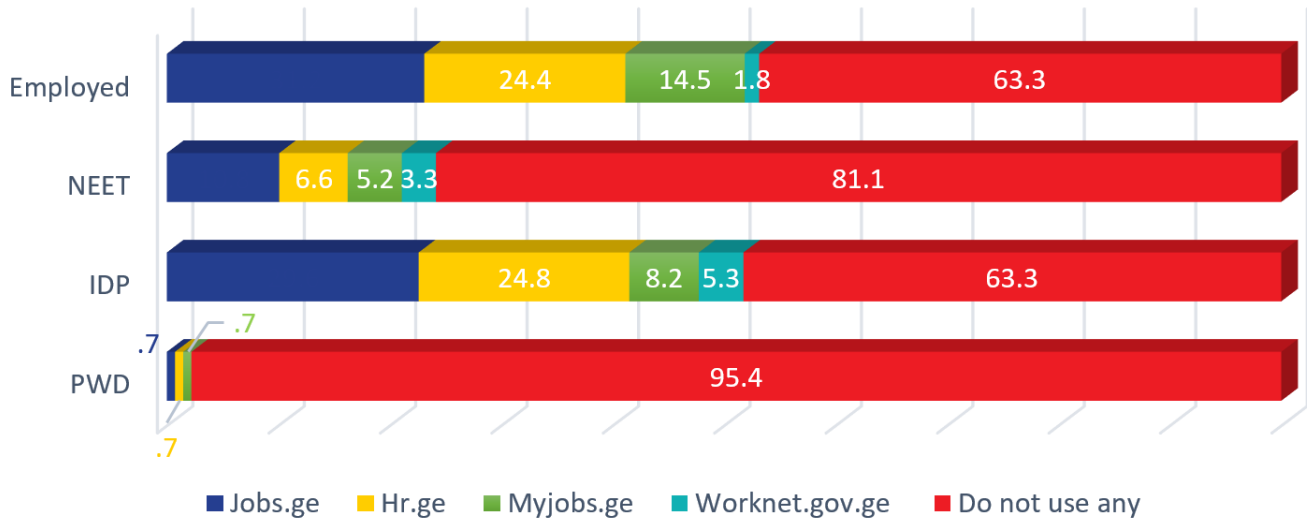
Figure 41: Which online search engines have you used? * by regions (%)



The survey revealed that the majority of youth (81.4%) do not use online search engines. The same trend is observed in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (see Figure 41), however unlike in Kakheti, sites such as jobs.ge and hr.ge are popular compared to other regions. Young people living in Shida Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti are more active in terms of using job search systems, though more than half of them do not have the skills to search for vacancies online.

Practices for online job searches differ according to the social status of young people (see Figure 42). Young employed and IDPs are characterized by similar and comparatively more advanced skills, however at least half of them still do not use any job search engines; the same is true for 95.4% of the young PWDs and 81.1% of NEETs. Jobs.ge is the most popular search engine, whereas Hr.ge is only used by IDPs and those already employed.

Figure 42: Which online search engines have you used? * by social status (%)

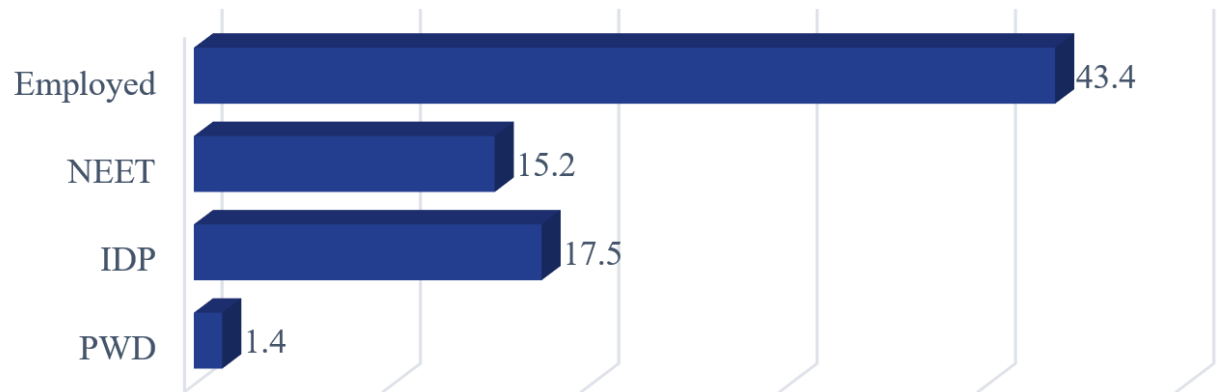


In the hiring process, it seems that interviewing potential employees is more popular than testing or written exams. 79.1% of young people have never written a test or exam, while 64.8% of respondents have no experience of job interviews. Respondents who have been tested or interviewed for employment, on average have been interviewed 3.2 times and have been tested by written exam 5.66 times. Among the 80% of young people who have never written a test for employment, the majority come from the Kakheti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions, and are PWDs and NEETs. Between the 65% of those young people who have never been interviewed for employment, the same groups (population of Kakheti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, PWDs and NEETs) are in the majority.

Young people who have been interviewed for employment were asked how successful their last interview was. 73.8% of respondents think that the interview was successful, and 12.2% indicate that it was more successful than unsuccessful. The results of the interview were negatively assessed by 13.7%. Among those who considered the interviews unsuccessful, the majority of young people are residents of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Kakheti regions, PWDs and NEETs, female and relatively older people. Young people mostly refer to lack of transversal skills (24.9%), lack of foreign language knowledge, lack of vocational knowledge, and insufficient qualifications as the reasons for an unsuccessful interview. According to the categories, insufficient professional knowledge is the reason for failure at interview named mostly by young people and IDPs living in Kakheti, whereas lack of transversal skills is primarily indicated by residents of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and NEETs.

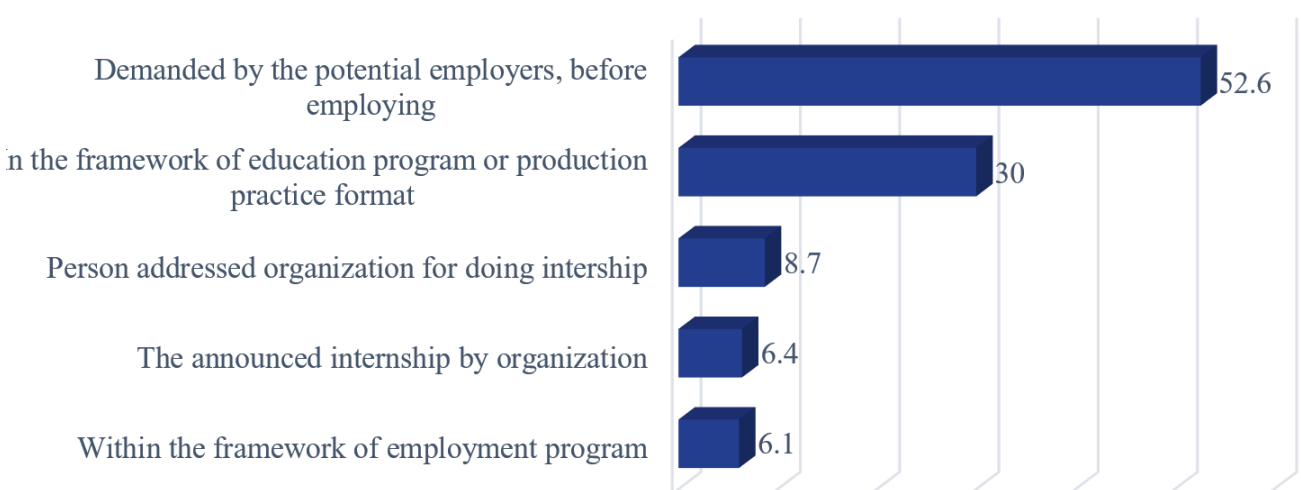
Interviews with employers and experts revealed that an internship is an opportunity for an intern to learn the working style, specifics, management model, and other details of an organization. It is an important process for further employment. There were cases when an intern was employed after completing an internship in the company. However, in the general assessment, experts pointed out that internships and volunteering are not very attractive activities for Georgian youth, since they want to earn money from the very beginning of their career. Every fifth young person (21.7%) participating in the research has completed an internship. The situation is almost the same in all regions (slightly higher in Shida Kartli, and slightly lower in Kakheti). In terms of internships, there are radical differences among young people with different social status (see Figure 43). Almost every second employed young person has been an intern while almost none of the PWDs have. In IDPs and NEETs this indicator is less than 20%.

Figure 43: Have you participated in internship programs? * by social status (%)



The duration of most internships is 1 month (29.3% of cases), but there are occasions when an internship lasts a year, one and a half, or even two years. The average duration of an internship is five months. Duration of internships differs from region to region. For instance, internships in Kakheti region have a duration of a month and a half, while in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti they last for almost five months, in Shida Kartli for half a year, and in Mtskheta-Mtianeti for 7 months. People with disabilities were interns for about a month, IDPs for a month and a half, and the employed young people for three and a half months. NEETs participated in the longest internship programs with a duration of on average 7 months.

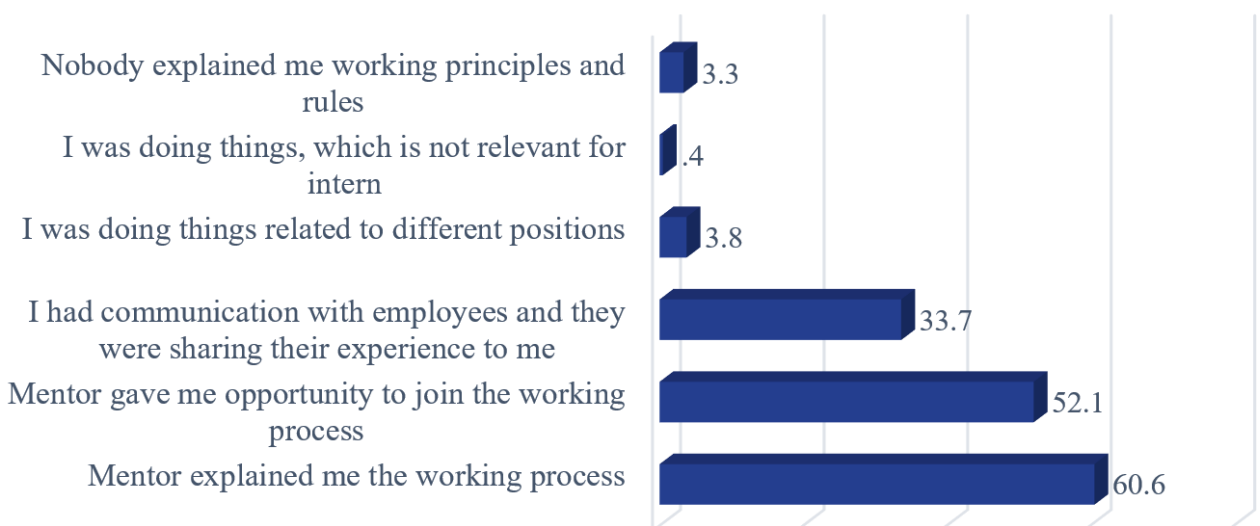
Figure 44: Internship formats young people have participated in (%)



As indicated by Figure 44, most of the time young people become interns at the demand of potential employers. This format of internship is most often found in Kakheti and Samegrelo, as well as among employed people. 6.4% of the total young people interviewed were interns in the education program and production practice format, which is almost half of those who have completed internships. Production practice internships are most common in Shida Kartli, then in Mtskheta-Mtianeti, followed by in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti; they are least common in Kakheti. Most often the employed people and IDPs chose production practice within their internships. There are a few cases of internships on the initiative of the young people (8.7% of total internships), but such initiatives are more common among the employed, then IDPs, and finally NEETs. There is no similar initiative among people with disabilities. IDPs have participated most frequently in internships within an employment program, more rarely, the employed and NEETs. There are no such cases of PWDs.

As the research revealed, young people with internship experience evaluate this process quite positively (see Figure 45). Only a few cases are recorded when an intern was involved in irrelevant work, or when an intern's duties were not explained. Young people describe the internship process positively: their mentor explained the work process, gave them opportunities to work independently, and had intensive communication with other employees.

Figure 45: Description of the internship process (%)



Research showed that internships are most efficient for understanding the sphere of work more deeply (see Figure 46). This aspect is particularly emphasized by the employed young people and NEETs, and residents of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. More than half of those involved in internships develop special skills; this was emphasized more in the IDP group and among residents of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. After the internship, every fifth intern started working in the same organization. The fact that internships are an efficient tool is confirmed by the trend that every fourth person became employed in the same sphere where he/she held an internship.

Figure 46: Result of internship (%)

In the qualitative research, the experts negatively evaluated the effectiveness of employment support programs. The state structure supporting the employment process is the Employment Promotion Department of the Social Service Agency; we decided to check young people's awareness of information on the projects implemented by the Department, their involvement, and how program beneficiaries evaluate the programs' efficiency; the questionnaire additionally included questions on municipal employment programs. Evaluation of the programs was carried out using the following criteria: awareness, engagement, and outcome. Table 21 shows the results of the survey.

Table 21: Awareness, participation, and efficiency of employment programs (%)

Employment programs	Awareness	Participation	Participation results
State program for professional training/retraining and qualification improvement of job seekers	13.0	6.9	Got employed
			Started Internship
			Became more competitive in labor market
			Learnt to prepare required documents for employment (CV, Cover Letter)
			Registered on worknet.gov.ge Received job vacancy information
			Can correctly evaluate own capabilities
			Consultations helped in career planning
			Met and talked to potential employers

Employment programs	Awareness	Participation	Participation results
Individual and group consultations for job seekers	4.2	5.1	Got employed
			Developed important (transversal) skills required for employment
			Started Internship
			Became more competitive in labor market
			Learnt to prepare required document for employment (CV, Cover Letter)
			Received information on rules of a job interview Registered on worknet.gov.ge
			Received job vacancy information
			Can correctly evaluate own capabilities
			Met and talked to potential employers
Employment forum	24.1	4.6	Developed important (transversal) skills required for employment
			Obtained/developed employment prospective profession
			Started Internship
			Received information on rules of a job interview
			Registered on worknet.gov.ge
			Received job vacancy information
			Met and talked to potential employers
Workplace salary subsidy	4.5	0.0	
Labor Market Information Management System worknet.gov.ge	10.9	5.4	Developed important (transversal) skills required for employment
			Started Internship
			Became more competitive in labor market
			Received information on rules of a job interview
			Registered on worknet.gov.ge
			Received job vacancy information
			Can correctly evaluate own capabilities Consultations helped in career planning Met and talked to potential employers
			Registered at the Employment Promotion Servicies of the Social Service Agency
			Became beneficiary of the workplace salary subsidy program

Employment programs	Awareness	Participation	Participation results
Professional counseling and career planning services		0.0	Developed important (transversal) skills required for employment
Supported employment	8.7	8.7	Became more competitive in labor market
Employment Shuttle	4.4	0.0	
IDP Employment Grant Program	5.7	1.2	Developed important (transversal) skills required for employment
			Became beneficiary of the workplace salary subsidy program
Employment municipal program	4.7	1.8	Obtained/developed employment prospective profession
			Can correctly evaluate own capabilities

In general, awareness of employment programs is low. The most famous for youth is "Employment Forum", which is known to every fourth young person. Every tenth young person knows "State program for professional training/retraining and qualification improvement of job seekers" and the "labor market information management system worknet.gov.ge". Information about the rest of the programs is not known to more than 5% of the respondents.

Lack of information about employment programs leads to low participation in these programs. The highest rate of participation is in the "State program for professional training/retraining and qualification improvement of job seekers" (6.9%). Although Employment Forum is the most recognizable employment program, its share of participation does not exceed 5%. Young people engaged in employment programs evaluate the programs rather positively in terms of their efficiency, but it is important that only two of the program beneficiaries were employed through the programs "State program for professional training/retraining and qualification improvement of job seekers" and "individual and group consultations for job seekers." The results of the survey indicate that people involved in employment programs consider these programs to be quite effective, but the main challenge for these programs is to increase society's awareness and desire to participate in them.

Within the scope of the project, the subject of the research was not only the person's employment process at paid jobs, but also entrepreneurial activities. 7% of the target group of employed people were entrepreneurs. Considering the importance of entrepreneurship development, similar to the evaluation of employment programs, we asked respondents to evaluate entrepreneurship programs according to their awareness, participation, and efficiency (see Table 22).

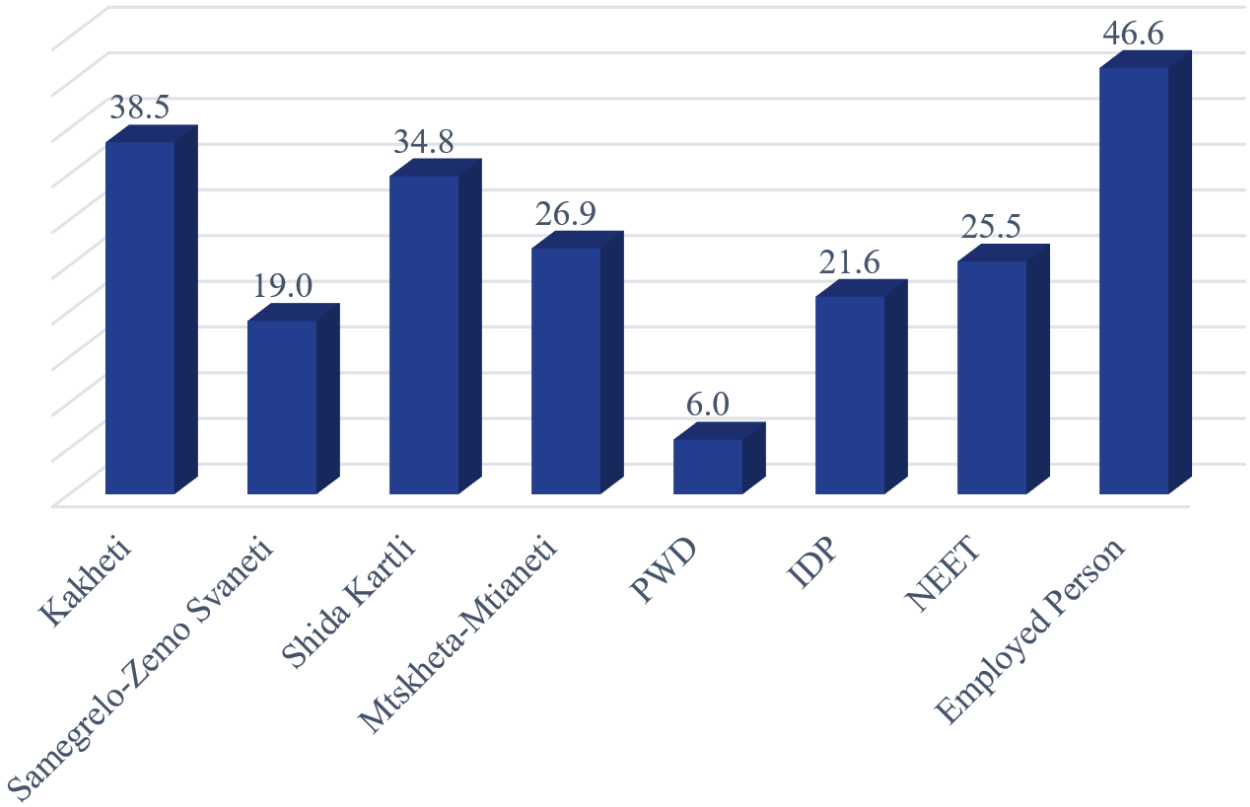
Table 22: Awareness, participation, and efficiency of entrepreneurship development programs (%)

Employment programs	Awareness	Participation	Participation results
Plant the future	40.1	2.7	No benefits received
Agricultural Promotion Program	19.6	0	
Preferential agro credit	27.6	0	
Young entrepreneurs living in villages support program "Young Entrepreneur"	14.7	0.0	
Produce in Georgia	56.5	0.7	Got full-scale financial support for business development
			No benefits received
Co-financing project for processing and storage industries	8.7	0	

Young people are more informed about the entrepreneurship programs than the employment programs. One of the most famous programs for entrepreneurship is the program "Produce in Georgia", which is known to more than a half of the young people; the most unknown is the support program for entrepreneurs living in villages "Young Entrepreneur". Very few of the young people surveyed in the regions participated in entrepreneurship supporting activities. The results of programs for entrepreneurship development are more skeptical. None of the four people involved in the programs evaluated their efficiency positively. Unlike employment programs, entrepreneurship programs do not need awareness-raising activities, but raising the effectiveness of their content is an important challenge.

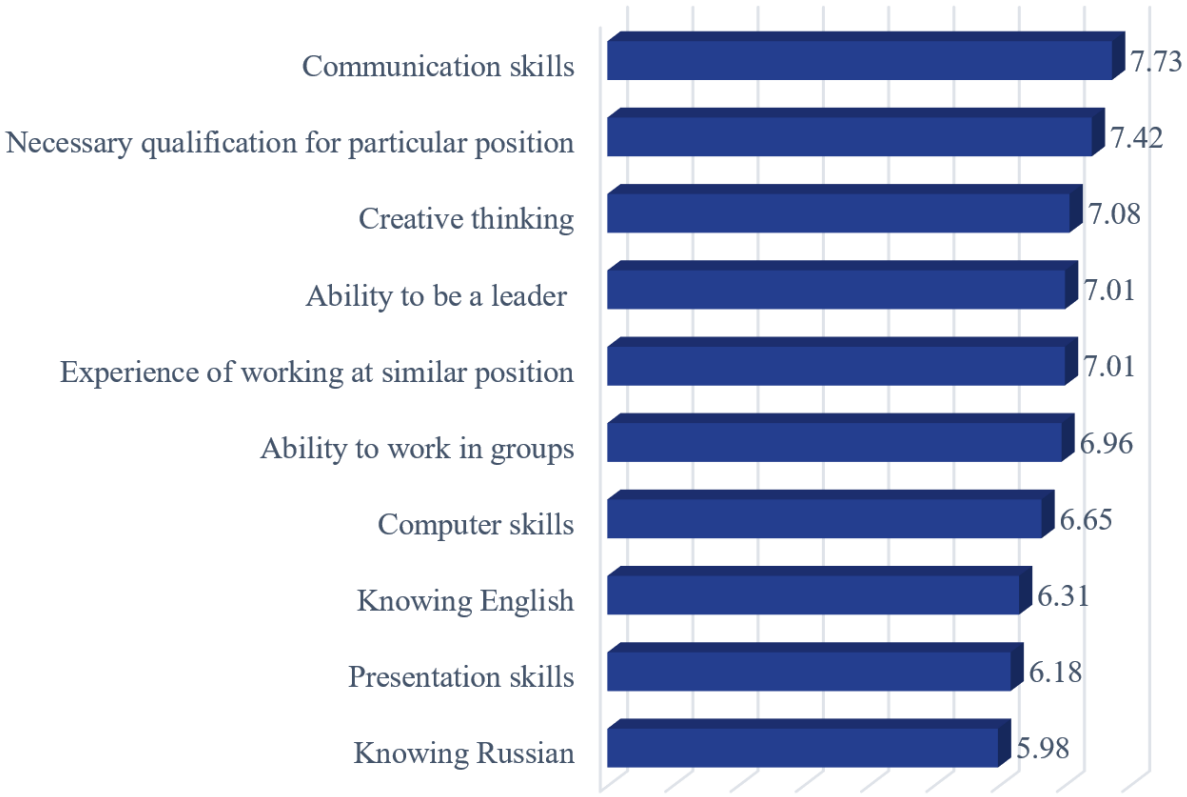
Labor market orientation, of course, means being aware of its requirements. During the research, respondents were asked whether they were informed about employers' demands for labor in the region. Only 29.8% of young people have this information. The most informed about these demands are employed people (46.6%) (see Figure 47), and the least informed are people with disabilities (6%). Every fifth IDP and every fourth NEET has information on labor market demands. By region, young people living in Kakheti and Shida Kartli are most aware of labor market requirements, and the least informed are young people living in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region.

Figure 47: I know the employers' demands in my regions * by region * by social status (%)



Young respondents, who were aware of labor market demands, evaluated ten criteria important for the employer on a 10-point scale. Figure 48 shows the average indicator for each criterion (where 1 is minor and 10 is very important). Young people have given each component a fairly high estimate, which is in principle compatible with employers' excessive demands. Out of the transversal skills, respondents considered the most important skills for the potential employer communication skills, critical thinking, and leadership skills. Qualifications are in second place and work experience shares fourth place with leadership skills. Interestingly, young people considered knowledge of foreign languages and digital skills less important than general transversal skills (knowledge of Russian was considered the least important).

Figure 48: Evaluate the importance of each aspect in the employment process for the employe a 10-point scale (most important=10, least important=1) (average indicators)



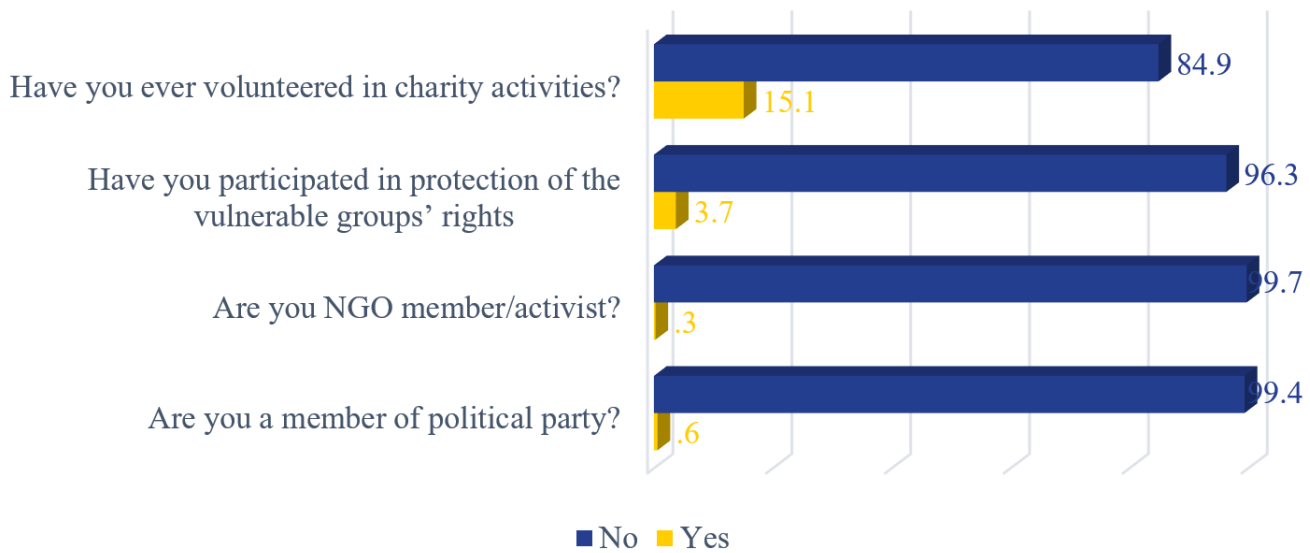
Results significantly differ among young people with different social status. People with disabilities value each component with a lower score (the highest importance is given to communication skills at 6.62 and the lowest to appropriate qualification for the position 3.59). Employees and NEETs give similar assessments to each component, although there are also differences. The young employed people gave the highest rating (7.75) to critical thinking, and the lowest to Russian (5.98), while NEETs consider appropriate qualification for the position the most important (7.57), and the least important presentation skills (6). Compared to other groups, young IDPs assign higher points to each component; the most important is communication skills (8.98), and the least important is knowledge of Russian (3.75).

Labor market orientation skills are less developed among the target youth living in these four regions of Georgia. Young people do not have the skills to prepare the necessary documents for employment, one third of them do not have the possibility to communicate with potential employers (no e-mail); more than two thirds of them do not use any online job searching systems; the majority have never participated in internship programs, have not had written job tests and have no job interview experience. The majority of the young people are not aware of the local market's demands. In the formal employment process (very often social connections are the main tool for employment) this situation can be an insurmountable barrier to employment for many of them. The targeted youth are less aware of employment support programs, but those involved in the programs consider them effective. Young people are aware of entrepreneurial programs, but the level of participation is low and there are no positive assessments. However, this may be due less to the initiatives and more to skepticism about entrepreneurship in general.

Volunteer Activities

The last component evaluated when studying the targeted youth of the four regions was their participation in volunteer activities. However, the respondents show low levels of activity in this direction. As Figure 49 demonstrates, local young people are very passive in terms of civic and political participation. There are only a few cases when young people are NGO members, activists, or political party members. Only 3.7% of them have participated in protection of vulnerable groups' rights. Relatively more young people have participated in charity activities, but this indicator is only 15.1%.

Figure 49: Characteristics of civic activity (N = 400) (%)



Young people's civic activeness is significantly determined by their place of residence (region), social status, gender, and age. There are four cases of political party membership: one is a person with disabilities and three are IDPs (two cases in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, one in Mtskheta-Mtianeti and one in Shida Kartli; three are male and one is female; their age group is 24-25 years). There are two members of non-governmental organizations: one is an IDP and the other young person is employed, both from the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, male and female, 17 and 25 years old. For the protection of vulnerable groups' rights, IDPs are relatively active (7.7%), as are employed people (5.6%), and people with disabilities (4.1%). NEETs are passive in this direction as well. Higher rates of activity in the protection of vulnerable groups' rights is observed in the Kakheti region (6.3%), followed by Shida Kartli (4.1%). The participants in this activity are gender balanced and of different ages. In charity activities, the participation of employed young people is 16%, followed by NEETs (15.2%), and IDPs (14%). Only 5% of young PWDs have been involved in charity activities. In regional terms, there is comparatively high activity in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region (28.8%), followed by the Kakheti region (16.8%). In charity activities, male participation is higher (20.1%) than female (11.3%); there is no unequivocal trend in terms of age.

In terms of charity activities, young people mainly provided support through financial resources or by collecting money (13.2%) (see Table 23). There are also a few cases of implementation of different types of activities.

Table 23: What were your actions within the charity activities? (N = 400)

Charity activity	%
Helped financially	6.7
Collected money	6.5
Helped physically	4.6
Helped with different resources (clothes, food, medication, etc.)	4.1
Organized charity event	3.3
Collected different resources (clothes, food, medication, etc.)	3.1
Was involved in environmental protection/clean up activity	3.0
Started information campaign to help an individual/group	1.9
Sang at a concert	0.3
Prepared a performance	0.3

In general, the young people targeted are characterized by a low level of civic and political activism. In charity activities, participation is relatively high, however it is only 15%. In volunteer activities, people with disabilities are also reluctant; slightly more active are the IDPs and employed people.

Barriers to Education

During the research, we asked the target group of young people what barriers they have faced or are facing in their education. The share of young people who faced/are facing barriers to receiving their desired education is 17% (4.1% have difficulty answering this question). Every second young person living in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (50.5%) refers to barriers faced in education, and each fifth young person in Shida Kartli speaks about it. 15% of young people living in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region speak about educational barriers. The share is lowest in Kakheti (5.8%). In the process of education, barriers were faced by 24.6% of PWDs, 17.1% of NEETs, and 15.1% of employed young people and IDPs. The existing barriers in education are evaluated differently by young women and young men. 20% of young women and 11.2% of young men claim that they have faced certain barriers in the process of receiving their desired education. However, a significant gender difference in content assessment does not occur, except that young women refer to the issue of physical access to schools more often than young men do.

Table 24 outlines the percentage indicators showing barriers to education at different educational levels and types of barriers. Young people participating in the survey face barriers at the bachelor's level of education more than in vocational education. At the stage of general education, PhD level, and certificate courses the occurrence of barriers is low.

The problem of physical access to an educational institution—the issue most important for PWDs—is a barrier at all stages of education. The lack of skills required for learning is still a problem for people with disabilities and can be found at the primary, secondary, and bachelor's levels of education. Although the State has taken on the obligation of inclusive education for people with disabilities, it seems that it has difficulties in fulfilling it. It is alarming that in Mtskheta-Mtianeti one PWD was denied general education at school. There is no well-organized educational infrastructure in the regions. The essence of educational integration of people with disabilities is also incorrectly understood. The main purpose of including PWDs in the education process is their integration and not the growth of academic performance. The fact that people complain about the lack of skills needed to start learning and difficulties in learning is a direct indication of an incorrect understanding of the concept of inclusive education.

Young people also noted financial barriers to education. Tuition fees and costs for studying are barriers to education at every level except general education, and are the main obstacle for PhD studies. The low level of learning is considered an obstacle at secondary schools, vocational and higher education institutions. However, the situation at schools is aggravated by bullying among pupils, which was mentioned quite often by respondents and which is characteristic of the general education level. Unequal distribution of gender roles are directly related to barriers at the higher and vocational education levels. Marriage, maternity, and obligation to care for child(ren) or an older family member are the main barriers to getting their desired education for many girls.

Table 24: In which educational activities have you faced/are you facing barriers? What were/are these barriers?

	%	What kind of barriers were faced
Primary school	0.1	Could not drive/walk to the institution
		No skills to start studying
Secondary school	0.5	Could not drive/walk to the institution
		Costs required for studying
		No skills to start studying
		Low level of teaching in the educational institutions
		Serious health conditions
		Was not accepted at school
		Bullying
		Problem with study program
Vocational education institution	4.4	Could not drive/walk to the institution
		Institution was far away and difficult to reach
		Study fee amount
		Costs required for studying
		Lack of information
		No skills to start studying
		Obligation of child and elder care
		Low level of teaching in the educational institutions
Bachelor's level	8.6	Could not drive/walk to the institution
		Institution was far away and difficult to reach
		Costs required for studying
		No skills to start studying
		No support from family
		Obligation of child and elder care
		Low level of teaching
		Marriage, pregnancy
		No information about entrance procedures
		Deaf-mute people are not accepted at higher education institutions

	%	What kind of barriers were faced
PhD	0.2	Study costs
Certificate courses	0.7	Could not drive/walk to the institution
		Study costs
		Obligation of child and elder care

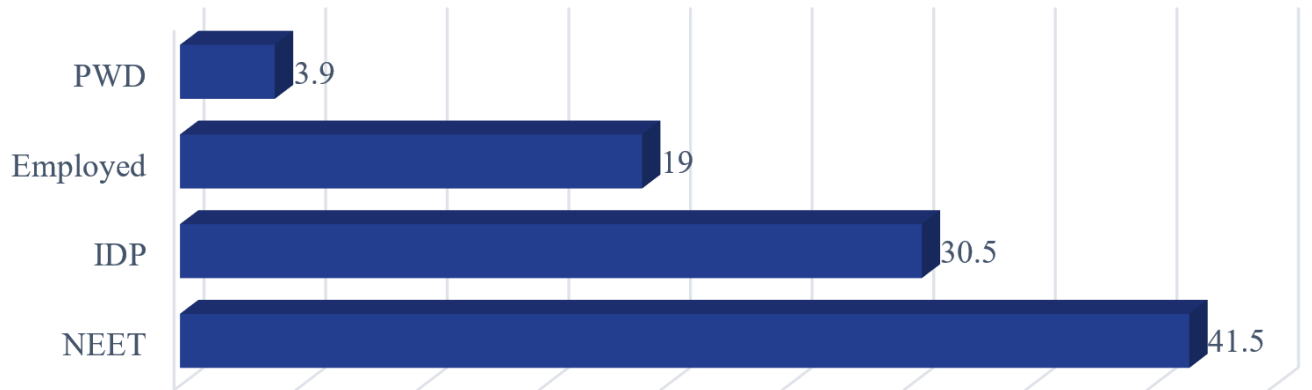
Unequal distribution of gender roles is a barrier to many girls not only in access to education but also in terms of labor market integration; this has been repeatedly observed in the research when female employees left their jobs because of marriage, pregnancy, or caring for child(ren) or other family members. One of the mechanisms to prevent such situations is well-developed childcare institutions (kindergartens) at the regional level. In the study we evaluated how the undeveloped childcare system can be a cause of unemployment.

From participants in the survey, 35% of young people aged between 14 and 29 years old have child(ren). Every second young person living in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti has child(ren). Representatives of this age group least often have child(ren) in Kakheti (25.1%), followed by Mtskheta-Mtianeti (30.1%) and Shida Kartli (32.2%) (see Figure 50).

Figure 50: Share of respondents with 14 year-old or younger child(ren) * by regions (%)

Only one underage respondent has a child. In terms of gender, 81.6% of girls and 18.4% of boys have child(ren). According to social status, only a few of the PWDs (3.9%) have child(ren). Numbers are also low in the case of young employed people: only every fifth person in this group has child(ren). Every third internally displaced person has child(ren). NEETs have child(ren) most often (see Figure 51).

Figure 51: Share of respondents with 14 year-old or younger child(ren) * by social status (%)



Research showed that physical care for child(ren) is the function of mothers in 17.6% of cases. Distribution of responsibilities for childcare between spouses was found in 43% cases, and sharing this responsibility in the extended family occurs in 41.7% of cases. This fact indicates that if a child is little or there is no kindergarten in the village, then about 17.6% of mothers will drop out of the labor market and look after the child at home. Cases where the mother is the primary caregiver happen most often in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (23.7%), and least often in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (11.3%). It should be noted that 46.2% of people with disabilities who have child(ren) are primary caregivers for the child(ren). Situations when the parent works and is primary caregiver at the same time occur only 4.4% of the time. 7% of respondents are the primary caregiver in financial terms. Financial responsibilities are shared between spouses in 41.8% of cases, and among extended family members in 48.5% of the cases.

The children of 55.3% of respondents are taken care of or taught in educational care institutions. Care institutions can deny access to a child only due to age (i.e. the child is not yet 2-3 years old). 13.7% of respondents indicate that the educational institution is not physically accessible to them. 43.3% of young parents in Shida Kartli and 8.9% in Mtskheta-Mtianeti face this problem. This very situation once again confirms our conclusion that existing cultural barriers hinder girls from receiving higher education and integrating into the labor market; this is further aggravated by poorly developed childcare systems in the regions.

Future Development Motivations and Orientations

Local experts talk about young people's lack of motivation most often in terms of entrepreneurship development. They note that young people lack the initiative, interest, and effort to think about starting a new business. According to one representative of an educational organization, when information about certain events or trainings on start-ups or self-employment is announced, only middle-aged and older people participate and youth are less involved in the process. Unlike attitudes towards entrepreneurial activities, young people tend to have more interest in receiving further education or improving different skills.

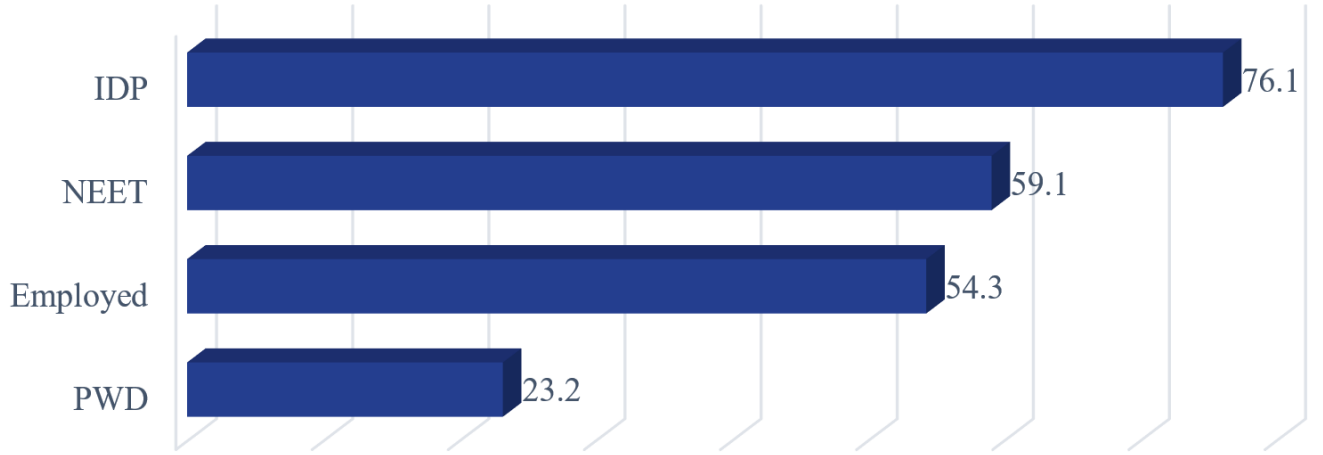
58.6% of the young people interviewed are willing to acquire additional skills or qualifications in the next 5 years. 32.2% of young people do not have a desire to pursue further studies and 9.2% of them do not have future plans. The young people's future education plans differ according to their sex, residence, and social status.

Young people with a desire to pursue further education reside mostly in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region; likewise, the majority of youth in Shida Kartli and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti are highly motivated; the least motivated are young people in the Kakheti region (see Figure 52).

Figure 52: Thinking about the next 5 years, do you wish to acquire additional skills or qualifications? * by regions (%)

Motivation for further education is highest among IDPs and NEETs; 54.3% of those employed are willing to acquire qualifications or develop their knowledge. Motivation for education is very low in young people with disabilities; only 23.2% of them wish to get a qualification or develop skills (see Figure 53).

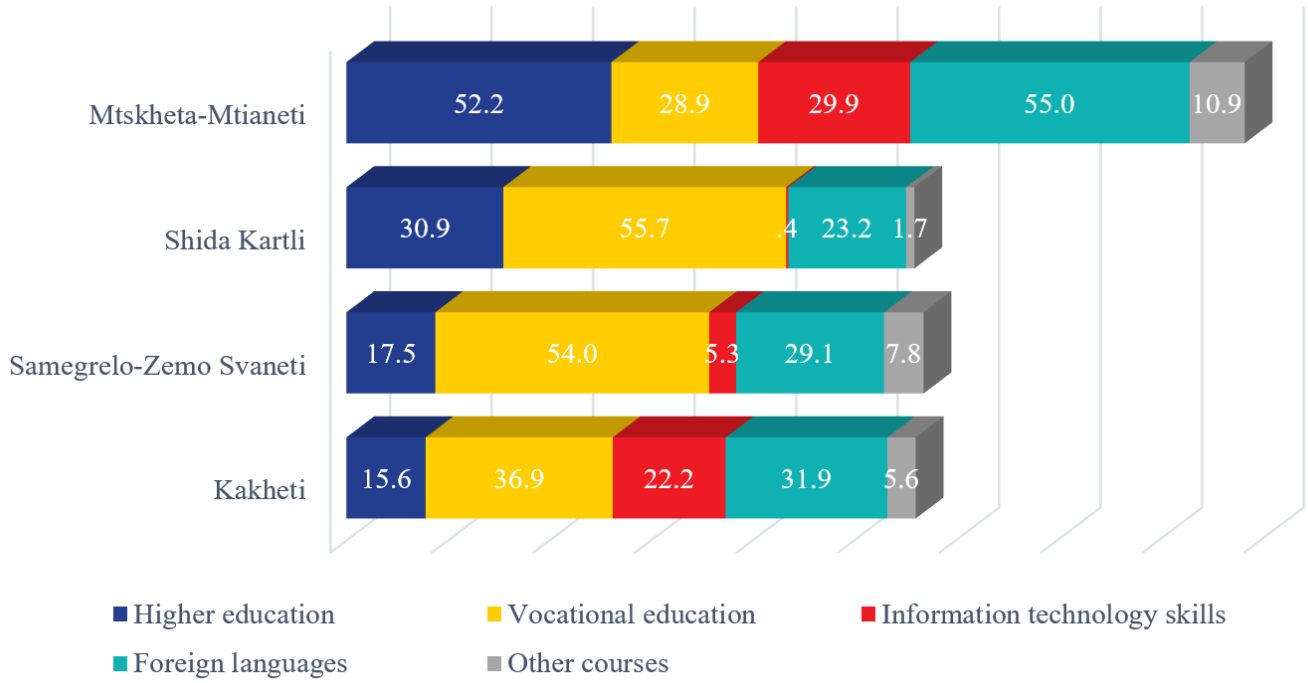
Figure 53: Thinking about the next 5 years, do you wish to acquire additional skills or qualifications? * by social status (%)



The majority of young people surveyed in the target regions (47%) are willing to receive vocational education. Their desire to get vocational education does not depend on the education already acquired by the person. Out of those youth who wish to acquire vocational education, 38% have a BA degree and 45.8% already have vocational education. 31.5% of the respondents wish to study a foreign language, every fourth young person desires to receive higher education (25.1%), and 11.4% want to develop information technology skills. 5.9% of respondents would like to attend other types of courses.

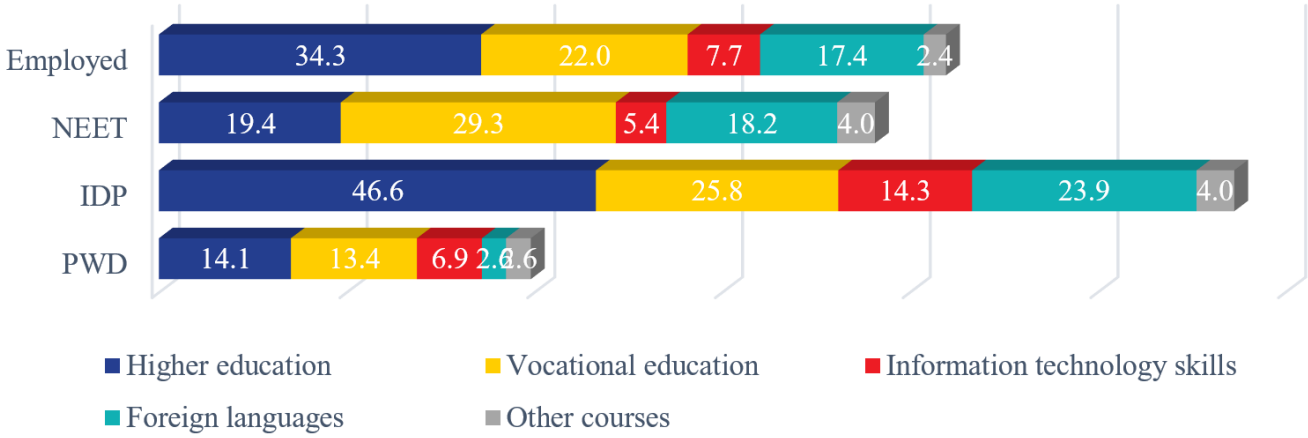
The type of education a young person wants to acquire is determined by gender, social status, and place of residence. As it turns out, the desire to get formal education is more often seen in boys than in girls, except for towards other types of courses. Motivation for education in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region is the highest (see Figure 54). Most of the young people living in this region want higher education qualifications, and more than half of them want to study a foreign language. More than half of the young people living in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Shida Kartli regions wish to receive vocational education, whereas this indicator is relatively low for Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. Motivation to develop computer, internet, and programming skills is relatively high in Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Kakheti, and is insignificant in other regions.

Figure 54: What type of qualifications and/or skills do you wish to develop? *by regions (%)



Future educational motivations are lowest among young PWDs (see Figure 55). 14.1% of them want to get higher education qualifications, 13.4% vocational education, 6.9% to develop computer, internet, and programming skills, and 2.6% to study a foreign language. Educational motivations are not very high among NEETs, and those interested in obtaining vocational education in this group exceed those who seek higher education. In this group, the share of young people who want to learn a foreign language is high, however, it is less than those who wish to develop computer, internet, and programming skills. The share of employed young people willing to receive education or develop different skills is less than the share of those among NEETs (this can be explained by the fact that young people in this group already have different levels of education). However, this group has more motivation for higher education than for vocational education. Among the employed, young people's desire to learn a foreign language is also high. Young IDPs have the highest motivation for education; almost every second IDP wishes to receive higher education, and every fourth vocational education. The desire of those in this group to study foreign language, or acquire information technology skills is much higher than in other groups.

Figure 55: What type of qualifications and/or skills do you wish to develop? * by social status (%



For Georgians, education is often perceived as not a pragmatic instrument for future income, employment, or career growth, but as a value in and of itself. This has been observed several times in the research. Every fourth respondent who plans to get education in different directions in the future underlines that in this case he/she will perceive him/herself as more successful (see Figure 56). Other reasons that are also highlighted are the motivation to perform duties better at current or future jobs. The least-mentioned motivators for education are specific goals such as increased income and career advancement. Among educational motivations, respondents also mention a wish to travel abroad, which is related to foreign language studies.

Figure 56: What benefits do you expect after acquiring that qualification or skill? (%)

Chapter 4. Non-Formal Education Providers

This chapter presents an overview of the non-formal education providers in the selected regions. Namely, it analyzes the programs/projects run by these organizations vis-à-vis the demand for labor and local economic development perspectives. Two groups of providers are differentiated: those operating on the national level and those operating on the local level. National level providers are usually headquartered in Tbilisi (with the exception of KEDEC, which has its head office in Kutaisi) and they operate in the regions either via local partners or via branch offices. The local providers, as the definition suggests, operate only in their region/municipality. The assessment of national providers' operations is provided separately but reflected upon in the sub-section on the specific region. Table 25 provides an overview of the organizations that operate in the four regions of interest.

Table 25: Non-Formal Education Providers in the Selected Regions

Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	National providers: GITA, KEDEC, WVG, CDC, CHCA
	Local Providers: Atinati, Dioskuria, Youth for Mountains
Kakheti	**National providers**: WVG, CDC, CHCA
	Local Providers: Knowledge Café, TEDEC, KRDF
Shida Kartli	**National providers**: CHCA, CDC, KEDEC
	Local Providers: Biliki, Welfare & Development Centre, Shida Kartli Civil Forum
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	**National providers**: CHCA, WVG
	Local Providers: For Better Future, Association for the Welfare of Society

The reader should bear in mind that the organizations which are reviewed in this chapter are not educational institutions. In the Georgian context, NGOs have taken the lead in providing non-formal education. Respectively, the report discusses not only the training content, but also the projects/programs implemented by these organizations, since it is under the auspices of these projects that non-formal education takes place.

National Non-Formal Education Providers

The study focuses on the five main providers in Georgia which have the largest scope of operations. These include Charity Humanitarian Centre Abkhazeti (CHCA), Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA), Creative Development Centre (CDC), World Vision Georgia (WVG), and Kutaisi Employment, Development and Education Centre (KEDEC). These organizations operate in several regions of Georgia, and, respectively, manage to cover a considerable number of beneficiaries. Below is an overview of their major areas of operations.

Charity Humanitarian Centre Abkhazeti (CHCA)

CHCA works in all four target regions identified in this study. The organization has four main operation areas: 1) livelihood support for vulnerable groups of the population 2) Youth and Child development 3) Charity for IDPs and 4) Peacebuilding. Under the sphere of Youth and Child development, CHCA currently has three projects:

1) Supporting children residing in small group homes

2) Supporting employment of children in conflict with the law

3) Supporting employment of children in the system of state care

The second and third projects are of particular importance for the given analysis, as they include provision of non-formal education, as well as other school-to-work transition mechanisms. Below we provide details about each project.

Supporting employment of children in conflict with the law

Project Duration: Spring 2017 – Spring 2020

Geographical Location: Kakheti, Shida Kartli, and Samegrelo

This project has two sub-components: 1) working in penitentiary institutions and 2) working with ex-offenders. The first component is carried out in two penitentiary institutions in Rustavi (Kvemo Kartli) and thus is not relevant for our current analysis. The second component covers 75 beneficiaries in the selected regions. CHCA supports them through provision of start-up grants and, in some cases, vocational education. Namely, there are three types of grant schemes:

a) Grants of 400 EUR + vocational training courses for 2-3 months. Training takes place outside VET colleges by CHCA hired trainers.

b) Grants of 1200 EUR + training in soft and business skills

c) Grants of 3000 EUR + training in soft and business skills. Beneficiaries are required to employ at least 1 ex-offender.

The soft skills training package includes the following topics: communication, conflict management, team building, and job search skills (CV writing, job interview skills, and looking for jobs online). This training is elaborated and delivered by the Centre for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSRDG). The entire package of trainings runs for four days. The business training is conducted by CHCA itself. This is a two-day training focusing primarily on the development of business plans.

Supporting employment of children in the system of state care

Project Duration: 2016-2019

Geographical Location: Shida Kartli, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti

This project targets youth in the 14-22 year-old age range who have just left the state care system. This includes small group homes (SGHs), foster care, daycare centers, etc. As CHCA representatives note, these are a rather difficult target group and involving them in project activities is difficult. CHCA wrongly assumed that all of them would be eager to work. It turns out many of these young people are not psychologically ready to start a job.

The project has two main components: trainings and internships, which should lead to employment. There are 115 beneficiaries in total. All of them are supposed to receive training, 92 out of 115 will undertake internships and at least 55 should find employment by the end of the project.

The trainings cover soft skills and social entrepreneurship. CHCA has two volunteers in each region, who received the ToT and who continue to train the final beneficiaries. The set of trainings includes:

1) perception objectivity management
2) verbal communication
3) non-verbal communication
4) conflict management
5) types of behavior
6) group work and leadership
7) self-branding
8) creativity
9) job search training (CV writing, job interviews, looking for jobs online)

Each training session lasts for four hours and a course usually takes two-three months. These are not standard classroom trainings. Given the participants' backgrounds (some of them cannot read or write) they must be non-theoretical and appealing. Thus, trainers use the forum theater method, role-plays, and movies to deliver the training.

The internship component is open to any project participant, however, some are very reluctant to engage in such an activity. For those who express an interest, CHCA identifies a relevant private company and starts the job mediation process. The CHCA project manager notes employers have a welcoming approach and are eager to open their doors to interns.

CHCA has two main ways to employ the beneficiaries of this project. Through job mediation in the private sector (as described above) and through the Social Enterprise (SE) grant scheme. Choice of employment sector is based on the beneficiary's wishes. CHCA starts the mediation process with companies once the young person has made up her/his mind about starting a job. CHCA has placed 20 youth in jobs this way.

Another way of increasing employment statistics is through providing social enterprise grants. CHCA

has come up with an original approach to social enterprise: namely, it has announced an open call for SE for existing businesses. This component has a budget of 17,000 EUR which was used to fund the establishment of six SEs (two in each target region). After selecting a business company, CHCA forms a joint venture with this company with 2/3 of votes belonging to CHCA. In this way, the organization ensures that the private company stays true to the social component of the venture and employs at least two project beneficiaries. The average number of beneficiaries employed per SE is five.

Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA)

GITA is the only state agency included on the list of non-formal education providers due to the significance and scope of its activity. GITA works to promote innovation and technology through infrastructure development, technical assistance and skills development, and access to finance. Their priorities are infrastructure for digital technology, technological support to SMEs, digital use in households, and collaboration with universities through the creation of Techno Parks, Fab-Labs, and Innovation Centers. With the financial support of the World Bank, GITA creates "Community Innovation Centers" throughout Georgia where they develop broadband fiber internet connections for all, so that everyone in a community has access to the internet. Regional innovation centers have four main components: a classroom for trainings, a computer lab, a co-working space, and a Maker Space (collaboration space for those working on developing prototypes). Innovation centers run trainings in social media, webpage development, HTML, print media, blog operation, and other tailor-made trainings. For the last couple of years, this has included trainings in innovation management, IT project management, and courses in different programming languages like Android, Java, iOS, PHP, Python, etc. It is critical to note that the selection of courses is based on market research and constant communication with the industry, making the trainings highly relevant.

It is critical to note, though, that Community Innovation Centers are just being established and at the moment of writing, exist only in Zugdidi, Baghdadi, Kharagauli and Choporti (except for Tbilisi, of course). Of these, only Zugdidi falls in this study's focus area.

Nevertheless, their scope of activities is quite tangible and GITA plans to expand its services by building more innovation centers in other regions of Georgia. The main funding comes from the government, ensuring sustainability of the program for the near future. The only challenge with the training courses described is that GITA does not follow training participants upon completion and thus cannot track and evaluate the long-term impact of its interventions.

Creative Development Centre (CDC)

CDC is a non-governmental organization which works very closely with GITA. It was established in 2014 with the primary objective of supporting youth from vulnerable backgrounds. Their three priority areas of operation include: non-formal learning, youth capacity-building, and social innovation. The organization puts great emphasis on developing IT skills and innovations among youth, and most of their projects are focused on this area. The most interesting intervention is probably the project "Developing Digital Marketing Skills in the Tourism Sector". The project was launched in 2019 and covers Samegrelo (Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, and Anaklia), Kakheti (Akhmeta) and Shida Kartli (Gori, Kaspi), where an open call was announced for participation. Anyone interested in engaging in tourist businesses (e.g. opening a guest house, renting a room on Airbnb) could join the program. CDC conducted trainings in areas like digital marketing, fundraising, website creation, registering a hotel online, etc. In total, 200 new businesses were established in the target regions. It's important to note that this project was open to all age groups, but youth ended up as the main beneficiaries. The project ends in 2021.

Apart from this, CDC runs a one-year project on strengthening civil society in the regions of Georgia. In this case, youth are the primary target group. Groups of young people in Leliani (Kakheti), Senaki (Samegrelo), Keda (Adjara), Baghdati (Imereti), Koda (Kvemo Kartli) and Gori (Shida Kartli) receive training/seminars on various challenging issues surrounding youth (unemployment, access to educational opportunities, etc.). Based on the information received during the seminar, the young participants organize a forum theatre performance to initiate public discussion on the topic. This project was one-year in duration and ended at the end of 2018.

CDC in cooperation with GITA run a number of other initiatives as well, which have nation-wide coverage, but their implementation does not take place in the regions. These include competitions and hackathons for any interested participant from Georgia. The selected participants are invited to Tbilisi, where they receive additional training and support. Since these activities do not have a specific regional focus, we have not included them in the analysis.

World Vision Georgia (WVG)

WVG operates in seven municipalities and three regions (Imereti, Kakheti, and Samtskhe-Javakheti). Enhancing youth participation and engagement to create positive changes at the individual, family, and community level is one of its three major work areas. Their program targets young people aged 13-17 (lower secondary school students) with the objective of increasing their civic participation. WVG operates through youth clubs at the community and regional level. The youth clubs have two main areas of activities: non-formal learning and a mini-grants scheme.

The non-formal learning component is comprised of a series of trainings in soft/life skills (e.g. communication, leadership etc.), while through the mini-grant component local youth get the opportunity to develop project ideas for local community development and apply for funding. WVG provides active support in project writing and applications, as well as financial support. In total, 50 community clubs and 30 school clubs have been created with each uniting around 20-25 youngsters (total number of beneficiaries, up to 1600 youth). The program is highly effective in mobilizing youngsters and increasing their public engagement, as shown by the number of community projects they have produced and implemented so far. However, this initiative can only have a marginal effect on the school-to-work transition, since "increased employability" is not the objective of the program and it focuses on "increasing youngsters' civic engagement".

Apart from the Youth Empowerment Programme, WVG launched the "Skills and Knowledge for Youth Economic Empowerment (SKYE)" initiative in 2017, which aims to increase the employability of youth aged 18-25. The program envisages the creation of "SKYE clubs" with 20-25 participants each. Club members meet on a regular basis (weekly) and a mentor provides counselling and trainings in four main directions: active citizenship, employability, leadership, and social entrepreneurship. There are a number of training modules under these topics:

Active Citizenship – SKYE and Myself, Me and Myself, Assessment, Advocacy, Diversity, Environment, Corruption, Health, Violence, Communication;

Employability – My Profession (my future, my strengths, opportunities, my labor rights); Personal Development (communication, conflict management, time management, decision-making, innovation, creativity, debating, and argument); Applying for a job (preparing a CV, job interviews, mentoring, attitudes of employers and employees); Financial responsibility (money and value of money, money flow dynamics, budgeting, saving, bank operations, bank credits, credit management);

Leadership – Leadership, Team leadership (creating and motivating a team);

Social Entrepreneurship – my entrepreneurial potential, business ideas, business plans, business operations, marketing, financial side of business, special topics related to social entrepreneurship (agribusiness, tourism, crafts).

At the moment, SKYE clubs operate in Samegrelo, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Tbilisi, and Samtskhe-Javakheti (four in this region). Thus, in total about 160 youth are involved in the program.

Kutaisi Education, Development, and Employment Centre (KEDEC)

Youth is one of the major target groups for KEDEC, which is headquartered in Kutaisi, but operates in other regions of Georgia as well. Two directions of KEDEC's activities are particularly interesting in the context of the school-to-work transition. These include the Economic Development and Training and Education components. These two form a well-developed package of activities, which KEDEC has practiced in a number of its projects. Namely, they carry out labor market needs studies and roll out vocational training courses based on them. These are usually combined with trainings in soft skills and personal development, as well as entrepreneurial learning. Starting November 2nd, KEDEC will launch a project aimed at supporting the employability of IDP youth in Samegrelo (Zugdidi) and Shida Kartli (Gori) regions. The project includes all the components listed above and will cover a total of 370 beneficiaries. The project is funded by the EU and has a 2-year lifespan.

Apart from this, KEDEC implements a number of projects focused on developing participants' entrepreneurial competences and provided them with start-up grants. Currently, KEDEC runs another EU-funded project, which aims to support existing and future social entrepreneurs. The beneficiaries of this project receive tailor-made trainings, develop business plans and receive funding. At the first stage, 95 applicants were selected and trained, 45 of them will proceed with developing business plans and finally 13-14 social enterprises will be funded. The project covers all of west Georgia, including the Samegrelo- Zemo Svaneti region.

Local Non-Formal Education Providers

Kakheti

Three main providers were interviewed in Kakheti. They include: Kakheti Regional Development Foundation (KRDF) located in Akhmeta; Telavi Education, Development, and Employment Centre (TEDEC) and social enterprise Knowledge Café based in the village Tsnori.

All three are non-governmental organizations. TEDEC and Knowledge Café originally exclusively targeted youth and children; however, over the course of the last few years they have widened their foci and included other target groups as well. KRDF was established with the support of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and as such the organization's main target group was refugees residing in Pankisi Gorge. Given the resettlement of refugees from Georgia to third countries and the subsequent decrease in the number of refugees, KRDF has also expanded its activity base by including local youth and women in their programs.

Training content – reasons for selecting specific trainings

Selection of training topics is, in most cases, not related to demand on the local market. For instance, Knowledge Café positions itself as a "knowledge provider" to help young people develop in a number

of areas. This results in a rather broad spectrum of training, starting from fundraising to culinary workshops. As they note, training and project ideas come from their interactions with young people, their wishes, and opportunities that other partners offer.

Table 26: Local Non-Formal Education Providers in Kakheti

Provider	Target Group	Areas of Operation	Training Areas	Comments
KRDF (Akhmeta)	Primarily refugees, but also work with local youth and women	Educational Centers for Youth and Women (ends in 2018)	Training in school subjects (history, geography) Vocational Courses (primarily felt work, also culinary courses, nurse preparation, carpenters, accounting courses) Computer literacy Presentation skills Dance Painting	Educational Centers are funded by the EU until the end of 2018. KRDF is currently looking for funds to continue operation.
TEDEC (Telavi)	Primarily Youth	Employment project for PWDs	Job Search skills (CV, application, job interview) Vocational courses	Project completed in 2017
		Internships for youth		10 beneficiaries only. Project ends in 2018
		Support to disadvantaged youth	English language training	Completed
Knowledge Café (Tsnori)	Youth Elderly	Cinema/Book/English Clubs Multimedia Library Lobbying youth topics to the local government	Orientation for local youth who are preparing to study in the capital Using ICT for business purposes Photography English training for teenagers Culinary workshops Developing online applications Fundraising	Has no ongoing projects

The KRDF educational centers have a rather specific focus: to prepare refugees to receive Georgian citizenship. For this reason, they teach the secondary school program including Georgian history, geography, and Georgian language, etc. which are necessary for them to pass the citizenship exam. KRDF also runs vocational training courses, which by definition are supposed to boost employment. The courses vary in duration; for instance, the culinary workshop lasts for four months, while the course on accounting runs for three and a half months. During the last year KRDF has provided courses in felt work, carpentry, nursing, accounting, etc. (see Table 26). The selection of these specific courses was based on a common-sense understanding of the most critical skills needed on the local market and to support self-employment, but no formal labor market analysis has been carried out. The organization does not engage in tracking the success of participants post-training.

The training component of TEDEC is rather limited. In previous projects, they have implemented job search trainings (training includes issues like CV writing, preparing for a job interview, looking for jobs, etc.) and English courses. TEDEC has partnered with local vocational education colleges to provide vocational courses, however, these components are not operating at the time of writing.

Inclusion of private sector

The inclusion of the private sector in selection, organization, or delivery of trainings is almost absent among the selected providers. Out of the three, only TEDEC has cooperated with private companies, which is due to their former experience working with companies and already established networks. However, even in this case, companies are approached as the recipient of a potential intern and/or employee, without including them in the preparation phase.

Overall Assessment of Non-Formal Education Provision and School-to-Work Transition Mechanisms in Kakheti

As is observed, local providers in Kakheti have a rather limited scope of operation. Most of the projects/trainings which they currently run, will finish by the end of 2018, with no specific plans for continuation. They rely on donor funding or partnering with a major national organization to continue operating. They provide a wide range of trainings in soft skills (CV writing, job search) and some vocational courses; however, the total number of beneficiaries remains modest. Local providers do not offer any school-to-work transition mechanisms.

As for the national providers, three out of the five discussed in the beginning of this chapter operate in Kakheti. World Vision Georgia runs a community youth center and a SKYE club, CDC is implementing the “Developing Digital Marketing Skills in the Tourism Sector” project and CHCA has two of its most important projects in the region, which have both a training and an entrepreneurship support component.

If we look at the efforts of all these organizations together, we can argue that soft skills trainings are most prevalent, while only CHCA and KRDF offer rather limited vocational courses. However, the latter largely does not reflect the demand described in chapter 3. Training in entrepreneurship is offered through CDC and CHCA. Given the described programs’ small number of beneficiaries, this is obviously not enough to have a tangible effect on the youth of this region.

As for school-to-work transition mechanisms, none are offered by local providers at the moment. Among national-level providers, it is only CHCA who provides start-up grants to a very specific subgroup of youth (persons in conflict with the law). Nor do the employers surveyed during the study have a structured approach to this topic. Some representatives of the wine industry have noted that they

cooperate with local VET colleges to source talented students, who are further trained in the company. Representatives of VET College Prestigi note that internships are mandatory for their students, and they usually send them for practical learning in companies. This cooperation is particularly fruitful in the case of cooks, and in the tourism and wine sectors—a large number of interns become employed during or after the internship. However, in absolute terms, this amounts to around 20-30 young people per year.

Samegrelo Zemo-Svaneti

The organizations studied in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region include Atinati in Zugdidi, Dioskuria in Poti and Akhalgazrdebi Mtistvis (Youth for Mountains) in Mestia. Like the providers in other regions, these are non-governmental organizations which focus largely on non-formal education provision. It should be noted that only Atinati and Dioskuria turned out to be actively running programs, while Youth for Mountains struggles to get projects funded.

While Dioskuria almost exclusively provides trainings, Atinati is the only organization among the three which carries out not only trainings but other school-to-work transition mechanisms: namely it organizes internship programs and provides youth with professional orientation support. What is more important is that these activities have been streamlined through projects and are provided on a nearly regular basis. Atinati selects a few partner organizations at the beginning of each year, which agree to receive interns and then matches these companies with youth depending on their interests. The internships vary in terms of duration (e.g. internships at Techno Park lasted two to three months, while internships at the Public Service Hall were only two weeks). Atinati stresses the need for the internship component, which is the only way they can attract students to their programs. As their representative noted, if students do not see any direct benefit (like potential for finding a job) they are reluctant to engage with NGOs. Professional orientation is provided through two main measures: organizing visits of young people to a certain employer (e.g. a visit to Poti port) and providing trainings on professional orientation (for both teachers and students).

Youth for Mountains is a very young organization which was established just two years ago. This is the only non-governmental organization based in the Svaneti region (in Mestia). The organization was established by local youth and it has very limited resources. The entire organization revolves around operating a local youth center named Betkili. The center hosts different events from time to time. They rely on donor and local government funding to hold these events. Several trainings and workshops have been implemented so far; however, the center is also used for movie screenings and birthday parties.

<u>Training content – reasons for selecting specific trainings</u>

As can be seen from Table 27, the content of trainings provided by these organizations is rather diverse. However, the majority of them feature civic education, which covers topics like leadership, group work, effective communication, etc. Atinati and Dioskuria have a strong emphasis on teaching IT and foreign language skills. Vocational courses are almost missing from the scene, with only sewing classes being offered by Dioskuria, which is a one-off project with a short lifespan. Atinati's STEM club is probably worth a particular mention since STEM subjects are not popular among Georgian youth. The largest share of students enroll in social sciences, while STEM areas remain neglected (see chapter #2).

No special studies are commissioned to determine training topics. All organizations base their decisions on their existing knowledge of the needs of young people. IT and foreign languages are considered essential for modern youth, for whom visa liberalization with the EU has opened up new opportunities. In other words, local providers in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti specialize in soft skills, while vocational courses are not prioritized. Respectively, the private sector's involvement in these trainings is rather weak.

Overall Assessment of Non-Formal Education Provision and School-to-Work Transition Mechanisms in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti

The Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region receives considerable attention from national level organizations, as all of them operate there. Respectively, there is a strong provision of all types of trainings (soft and hard skills, entrepreneurship). However, vocational courses are provided only by CHCA, though KEDEC will start them soon.

Among the regional providers, only Atinati offers school-to-work transition mechanisms such as internships and professional orientation trainings. CHCA and KEDEC also provide internship opportunities, career guidance, and small grant support.

When it comes to local employers, only a few examples of cooperation with educational institutions have been revealed. For instance, a fish processing company has employed 2 students sent from a VET college (Fazisi located in Poti), and another (meat producer Nikora) recruited an engineer from Kutaisi State University. These findings suggest school-to-work transition mechanisms in the region are rather weak.

Table 27: Local Non-Formal Education Providers in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti

Provider	Target Group	Areas of Operation	Training Areas	Comments
Atinati (Zugdidi)	Youth (primarily school pupils and students) Women IDPs	Integration of IDPs Raising capacity of socially vulnerable population Women's rights/capacity building	Civic education for secondary school teachers and pupils (6-11th grade) – leadership, team work, effective communication, tolerance School clubs providing trainings in civic education, healthy lifestyle, ecology, English STEM clubs – practical side of theory – experiments in Chemistry, Physics etc. Financial education – how to save and manage finances? Gender awareness	Majority of trainings end in 2020
Dioskuria (Poti)	Youth IDPs PWDs Socially vulnerable population	Computer Lab Speaking club Young Rangers club	Foreign languages: English, French, German, Turkish, Russian Sewing classes for girls with hearing impediments Trainings for rangers on eco topics	All trainings are focused on secondary school pupils
Youth for Mountains (Mestia)	Youth	Operates youth club "Betkili"	Protecting Natural Heritage Managing Guesthouses (taking photos, placing them on tourist websites)	The organization does not have any on-going projects/ trainings

Shida Kartli

As in the other regions, three main organizations in Shida Kartli have been identified. These include: Biliki, Welfare and Development Centre, and Shida Kartli Civil Forum. All of these NGOs operate in Gori, but their projects have beneficiares from neigboring villages and communities as well.

Biliki runs two daycare centers for children deprived of parental care, where they receive non-formal training and education. The NGO also has a training center which is designed for teachers, parents, and

for children themselves. Apart from trainings, Biliki arranges internships for their beneficiaries. Some of the host organizations include: the House of Justice, NGOs, and media, as well as private sector employers like car repair services, restaurants, etc. In recent months three to four children have been employed through internships. Last but not least, Biliki organizes visits to various workplaces/companies, so their beneficiaries become interested in a wide spectrum of working life (they especially emphasize agriculture and have taken children to visit a wine producer in the last month).

Welfare and Development Centre was established in 2011. Their primary focus was people with disabilities, but later they made youth in general a target priority. Within a USAID-funded project they worked on building civil awareness and tolerance among youth (age 16-26). They also run another project which focuses on democratic development and they focus on an even younger group in this case (age 14-20). Apart from trainings, both projects include an internship component, which has produced very modest results—a few students have been employed upon completion of their internships.

Welfare and Development Centre also runs three social enterprises: enamel production, a sewing workshop, and clay production. They try to engage project beneficiares in these enterprises and get them trained in the respective vocations.

Last but not least, Shida Kartli Civil Forum is given relatively less attention, as this NGO is primarily engaged in international youth exchange programs. They also host EVS volunteers and do trainings primarily in civic awareness and education. They also send Geogian volunteers abroad to work in NGOs for six to ten months.

Training content – reasons for selecting specific trainings

It is easy to see that local providers in Shida Kartli focus almost exclusively on soft skills and very broad topics like gender, human rights, domestic violence, etc. Obviously, selection of these topics is determined by the objectives of the projects, which are primarily focused on raising active citizens. Soft skills, particularly those directly related to employability, are only offered by Welfare and Development Centre.

It is worth noting that in the coming year Biliki plans a project to support 30 young people in conflict with the law. The project is exclusively oriented at building up the employability of these children. Thus, it will focus on topics like searching for jobs, CV writing, conflict management, enterpreneurship, and business administration (running small businesses). Apart from trainings, visits to different companies will be organized in the region.

Overall Assessment of Non-Formal Education Provision and School-to-Work Transition Mechanisms in Shida Kartli

Local providers in Gori have noted that cooperation with the private sector is rather difficult. They have been invited to job fairs several times, but without much success. On the other hand, winning the attention of local youth (especially students) is problematic. Like in Samegrelo, this group is only motivated to join the programs if they see prospects for employment. This is not very surprising, given the fact that most of the trainings are focused on rather general topics, which would have no effect on increasing youth employability.

CDC and CHCA, which also operate in the Shida Kartli region, have not mentioned the problem of mobilizing young participants. This could reflect the fact that both of them offer practical support in developing enterprises, which should be more appealing to local youth. Yet, vocational courses are not reflected in non-formal training provision in Shida Kartli, with the exception of short courses offered by CHCA.

The range of school-to-work transition mechanisms is modest here, just like in the other regions discussed in this report. Two of three local providers are actively engaged in finding internship opportunities for their project beneficiaries. In addition, CHCA provides small grants for persons in conflict with the law.

Table 28: Local Non-Formal Education Providers in Shida Kartli

Provider	Target Group	Areas of Operation	Training Areas	Comments
Biliki	Youth IDPs Children in state care institutions	Children program	At daycare centers: support in school program + crafts + culinary English courses	Daycare centers are for kids 6-18
		Civic Education	Gender equality Human Rights Active Citizenship Professional Orientation Domestic violence Media (movie production, scene writing)	from 8th to 11th grade
		Community Development Program Volunteers Program		
Welfare & Development Centre	Youth PWDs	Civic Education Running social enterprises	Human Rights Discrimination & Tolerance Ecology Advocacy Team Work Gender CV writing/job interviewing Leadership	All ongoing programs finish in 2020
Shida Kartli Civil Forum	IDP & non-IDP youth (14-29)	Youth Exchange programs (abroad) Volunteerism	Civic activism Gender Producing documentaries (the list is not exhaustive, they have millions of trainings)	

Mtskheta-Mtianeti

Non-formal education providers are very scarce in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region. Only two local organizations were identified during the research process: Association for the Welfare of Society and For Better Future. The first is a brand-new organization established at the beginning of 2018 with the objective of strengthening local civil society and increasing the participation of women and youth in decision-making processes. The main objective of their current (and only) project is increasing awareness about violence against women among high-school pupils. 20 girls are currently involved in this training. The project is funded by the Women in Georgia Foundation.

The other organization, For Better Future, was established in 2009 and as such has longer experience in running projects. Originally, it focused on IDPs only, however, it has widened the target group over the last few years to include youth and women in general. For Better Future concentrates on working in the IDP settlements of Tserovani, Frezeti and Tsinamtdzgvriantkari. They run a mobile library, which hosts a number of clubs. At the same time, they invite guest speakers. The project has been renewed for five consecutive years and the organization plans to continue it in the future.

In addition to trainings, For Better Future organizes a career day: they invite representatives of various (often not very popular) professions who talk about their careers. They pick the least popular vocations, in order to widen local children's understanding, as the majority of them want to become lawyers or businesspeople.

For Better Future has implemented projects supporting enterpreneurship, as well as trainings on increasing participants' employability. However, they do not operate in this area at the moment. The only connection to enterprenurship is that they run a Social Enterprise, which was established through a grant and now employs up to 12 young people.

Training content – reasons for selecting specific trainings

Training areas are obviously determined by the scope of projects. Since both organizations focus on civil society development in the broadest sense of the word, training content is diverse and covers a wide range of topics, which directly or indirectly contribute to the development of active citizens (see Table 29).

Overall Assessment of Non-Formal Education Provision in Mtskheta-Mtianeti

Provision of non-formal education is weakest in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region. Not only is there a scarcity of local providers, but also of projects run by national providers. Out of the five major providers in the country, only two (CHCA and WVG) have projects (establishment of social enterprises and SKYE club) in this area.

School-to-work transition mechanisms are basically absent, other than the career days organized by one of the local providers to help youth in making career choices. CHCA also offers an internship opportunity through one of its projects.

Considering this background, non-formal education provision in this region can under no circumstances be considered sufficient to meet the demand of local employers or to encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship.

Table 29: Local Non-Formal Education Providers in Mtskheta-Mtianeti

Provider	Target Group	Target Group	Training Areas	Comments
Association for the Welfare of Society	Youth Women	Civil society development	English club Reading club Movie club Financial Skills Development Program	2 running projects. Both end in 2018
For Better Future	IDPs Youth Women	Peacebuilding Civil Society development	English club Reading club Movie club Financial Skills Development Program	

Summary and Conclusions

Based on the major findings discussed in the report, it can be concluded that youth in the target regions have considerable difficulty integrating onto the labor market. This is primarily due to the following factors: young people lack the technical and transversal skills required on the market and there is a scarcity of school-to-work transition mechanisms they can make use of. On the other hand, the structure of the local labor markets does not really offer them innovative or highly-productive job opportunities, in which they could grow and thrive as professionals.

Although demand for workers with technical/vocational education is limited in numbers, it is extremely hard for employers to find workers with these qualifications. These positions are usually taken by middle age and senior workers who will retire soon. This will inevitably create a major gap in skills provision. Hence, this topic deserves serious consideration from both the private and the public sector. It is important to note that youth who reported having received vocational education received training in vocations that are largely misaligned with local demand (e.g. accounting is a rather popular specialization chosen by survey respondents, while employers in their regions are desperately looking for food and wine technologists, energy specialists, electrical and electronics repair people, carpenters, mechanics, civil technicians, and welders).

Considering this situation, the development of youth's entreprenurial skills and knowledge is gaining particular importance. However, there are only a few non-formal education providers in Georgia who target this niche (e.g. entreprenurial training and start-up support). On the other hand, youth themselves prefer mid-level but secure jobs rather than taking a risk and starting their own business.

The quantitative and qualitiative parts of the study show that transversal skills are critical for hired workers, but even more so for the self-employed. However, a point worth noting is that when asked about the importance of transferable skills in their hiring decisions, employers first of all refer to the personal characteristics and attitudes of young workers/job applicants. In their opinion, younger workers mostly lack a sense of responsibility and work ethic. In terms of transversal skills, communication skills, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, and problem solving have been noted as the most important.

The scope of school-to-work transition mechanisms available for youth in the target regions is rather limited. For instance, only about half of the assessed non-formal education providers arrange internships for their program beneficiaries. However, this represents an add-on to their other activities, rather than a well-established school-to-work transition mechanism.

As for the specific sub-groups covered during the study, youth with disabilities and NEETs stand out as most problematic. When it comes to people with disabilities, their primary issue is self-stigmatization and absence of family support. This hinders their social development starting with receiving education and ending with finding a job. NEETs are the second most vulnerable group. It is worth mentioning that the NEET phenomenon has a specific gendered dimension in Georgia. For young women, staying away from education, training, and employment is primarily determined by family responsiblities (e.g. taking care of the child(ren) etc.). Last but not least, IDP youth turned out to be on par with their non-IDP peers—there is a very small difference in skill levels and IDPs usually display quite high motivation and readiness for self-development.

In order to tackle the issues of concern identified during the study, three main areas of intervention can be discerned: 1. better employment policy-making (with a special focus on youth and women), 2. improving employment services and 3. stronger social dialogue.

Need for better employment policy

Georgia has rather limited experience in carrying out labor market and employment policies. Despite the fact that it has taken on the responsibility to have one by signing ILO convention 122 on "Employment Policy"[13] the most recent strategy on "Labour Market Formation"[14] was adopted only in 2013. The strategy did not feature youth as a specific sub-group and respectively there have been no specific interventions targeting them. It was assumed that young people would benefit from services and programs alongside other beneficiaries.

Another major challenge of the strategy has been its inherent assumption that employment policy should primarily focus on satisfying market demand. As indicated earlier in the report, a number of labor market studies in Georgia found that there are not enough inclusive and high-productivity jobs[15]. This primarily affects youth and women, who have been "left out of good jobs". ***Respectively, during the elaboration of the renewed Labor and Employment Policy Strategy, particular attention should be paid to a) shifting attention away from satisfying market demand (e.g. supply side policies) towards creating better job opportunities and generating demand for highly productive jobs (e.g. demand side policies) and b) paying particular attention to youth (among them the most vulnerable subgroups e.g. NEETs, youth with disabilities) as especially vulnerable groups on the labor market.***

Need for Improved Employment Services

With the launch of the Labor Market Formation Strategy and respective action plan in 2014, Georgia also established Employment Support Services within the offices of the Social Service Agency. At the moment they provide a range of employment services, however, the latter are suffering from severe limitations in financial and human resources, know-how and public trust. Nevertheless, they are the only state entity providing these services. As discussed in the last chapter of this report, there are a number of non-formal education providers who also provide services which by definition are "employment services", however, there is little to no linkage between the activities of state (formal) and non-formal actors in this regard. ***Given the limited resources, it would be of critical importance to join forces in employment service delivery. This, however, requires additional activity: in order to create a common framework of service delivery, the country needs national standards and guidelines, so that the activities of formal and non-formal actors are complementary.***

More precisely, this refers to the following services/programs:

- **Career Guidance**: The Georgian government adopted State Decree No. 721 on Developing Publicly Available Lifelong Vocational Counselling and Career Planning[16] in 2014. It was followed by the elaboration of the National Standards on Professional Orientation and Career Guidance. Despite the legal grounds being established, service delivery is in the nascent phase of development. Neither state nor non-state actors provide services that could cover the entire youth population. A number of challenging issues identified in this research can be addressed through the development of this service. For instance***, career counselors can point out the importance of vocational education as an alternative or supplement to higher education, which is much cheaper to acquire and may bring employment in a shorter period of time. This can alter the status quo and channel youngsters to vocational courses, which seem to be sought after on the regional labor markets***.

- **Transversal skills training**: the study clearly indicated a critical deficiency of transversal skills among the surveyed youth, and found that only a few non-formal providers focus on such trainings. For instance, despite numerous organizations providing trainings in job searches and CV writing, only 32% of survey respondents note having a CV in Georgian, and only 5% have one in English. This clearly indicates that the efforts taken do not have the necessary scope. ***Respectively, it is of paramount importance to scale up transversal skills training as part of both formal and non-formal education***.

13 https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312267
14 https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2659895?publication=0
15 http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/995521527068940160/Georgia-at-work-assessing-the-jobs-landscape
16 https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/download/2657572/0/ge/pdf

- **Enterpreneurship support:** support to entrepreneurship is one of the strategic goals of the Government's four point strategy[17]**.** Given this ambition, the government launched a number of state programs to provide technical and financial support for future entrepreneurs. The best-known of these are "Start-up Georgia"[18] implemented by the Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency and "Produce in Georgia"[19]implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. Neither of these programs has a special focus on youth. However, given the nature of "Start-up Georgia" which focuses on ICT and technology-driven innovation, a major share of beneficiaries is below the age of 30. These efforts are matched by various small-scale projects implemented by non-formal providers. It is evident, however, that these efforts have not stirred much entrepreneurial spirit among Georgian youth, who, as indicated by the study, prefer stable hired employment rather than starting their own business.

- **Re-qualification and training:** The Social Service Agency implements a training program for job-seekers twice a year[20]. A program assessment shows that the number of beneficiaries involved is increasing year by year. However, the post-training employment rates remain modest[21]. The scope of similar trainings provided by non-formal providers is very limited as well. ***In general, this creates a lack of training and re-training opportunities, which should significantly increase in order to bring more people back into the labor market. Young job seekers could be given special quotas for participation in the program. It is critical to note, however, that the design of such programs should be very much aligned with existing and/or future labor demand, which in itself requires development of a labor market monitoring and forecasting system.***

Need for better social dialogue

A number of research findings point towards the critical importance of constructive dialogue between the state, employers, and employees (e.g. social dialogue). Social dialogue at the moment is very weak in Georgia. It has been institutionalized through the establishment of the National Tripartite Social Partnership Committee in 2014[22]. The latter is supposed to be the main mechanism to establish regular discussion on the topic of labor relations. However, the committee currently operates only on an *ad hoc* basis to tackle the most urgent issues as they come up on the political agenda.

There is a need for a more systematic dialogue with employers to tackle the challenges related to workforce development. For instance, one of the major concerns raised by the surveyed youth as well as the regional experts has been the problem of inflated demands from the side of employers: they often require higher education credentials even for lower qualified positions. This phenomenon could be linked with the abundance of highly educated labor in Georgia. However, it creates confusion and provides a skewed picture of the labor demand in the country, which has an adverse effect in planning educational, as well as labor policies. ***The issue can be addressed by making the national qualifications framework (NQF) a reference point for the private sector. The NQF provides clear information on what educational background is required for a specific job and, if used by the private sector, would contribute to better articulation of labor demands.***

Other than the topics covered above, it is of crucial importance to consider the gender dimension of youth labor market integration. It is critical to ensure **better access to childcare services for (young) women, which would enable them to freely participate in the labor market**. This issue was named as particularly problematic in the Shida Kartli region, where 43% of young mothers noted that the absence of accessible childcare services was a major hindrance to them. In other regions, this issue has not been cited as a major problem.

17 http://www.economy.ge/uploads/files/2017/news/prezentacia_20_12_2017.pdf
18 http://startup.gov.ge/geo/home
19 http://www.enterprisegeorgia.gov.ge/ka
20 goo.gl/V53hhc
21 იქვე
22 https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2037256?publication=0

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