

IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR GENERAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (PUBLIC SCHOOLS): OPEN SCHOOLS NETWORK

POLICY PAPER SUMMARY



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Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform is an association of local and international non-commercial legal entities registered in Georgia, aiming to promote and implement the goals set by the Joint Declarations of the Prague, Warsaw and Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summits and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement of European Neighborhood Policy and other joint events.

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Summary

Education is a part of social life, where the interests of the citizens and the state are tightly intertwined. In addition, the future generation is the most important resource for the development of a country. Currently, exactly 59722 teachers are employed by Georgian public schools, embodying the interests of all age groups, while the students represent the most populous social class.

The state education policy is a combination of various activities, steps, decisions of the state and public authorities which serve one mission: “to coherently develop the Georgian education system”. However, the term coherent may not adequately reflect the past 20 years of state policies of Georgian statehood development. Especially the processes taking place in the education sector has not been coherent, has been politicized, reforms have been narrowly focused by particular political interests, and they have not taken into the account the state’s and the public interests, especially during the 2004-2012.

The territorial branches of the Education and Science Ministry of Georgia – education resource centers and public school employees, who were fired due to political views - were studied by a special commission and published in a report (2015) which included 2006-2012:

“as a result of the Commission’s work, it has been identified that both, for political views as well as various legal violations, that had become an established practice in the Ministry and throughout other state bodies, certain persons have been fired, which one the one hand, resulted in violating human rights, and on the other hand, has negatively affected carrying out the state education policy’s core provisions and its relevant implementation.”

Currently, the most actual issue is the democratic management of schools. The education sector employees understand the importance in the ongoing processes to include every person employed in the education sector.

Humanism in education, human life and health, free development of a person, priority of universal values; civic education, labor, respect for human rights and freedoms, patriotism

These principles compose a framework, within which the essence of education is being defined, education methods are formed, and the crucial vectors of educational policy development. The main principle of the state education policy is the recognition of the free development of personality, which in the education process means the right to self-identification and the right to have an independent stance regarding these issues.

Liberty and pluralism in education

The education system in a democratic society must be free, ensuring the freedom of opinion, perspective and conviction. Otherwise, it will be impossible to raise an independent and a free person. Which in turn will lead for it to be impossible to realize many constitutional rights (freedom of opinion, creativity, etc.).

State-social aspects of education management; autonomy of educational institutions. Democratic institutional development of educational systems

In education management, during the institutional development, the democratic state-social aspect implies active participation of the society in this process: the society (community) is actively included in education management, institutional development, in establishing school culture, traditions and values.

This paper discusses the implementation of the institutional development of schools and includes relevant recommendations for education management, school culture, democratization, and the participation of large groups in society (inclusion).

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Engage every individual responsible for school education system decision-making, in the decisions and determination of final results. The 2004 national debates in France could serve as an example for Georgia to renew and enrich school education.
- Further train educational management professionals (school directors, deputies, consultants) while simultaneously refining the educational system in line with global, continuous and integration principles.
- Reform the evaluation of effectiveness and productivity in education.
- Revise education policy regulation, procedures and legislation. The existing system has suffered from inconsistent changes, which has complicated education legislation (created several incorrect and legal gaps) and limited its ability to be effectively implemented.
- Support the institutional development of the education system in a sustainable manner, while taking into account the country's culture and traditions, considering public opinion in significant changes, and in this context, developing a 15-year strategy (at least) for the reforms (systemic development).

This study has been fully based on the policy document "Differential approach to education policy" (2015), prepared by the Coalition Education for All – Georgia (www.efageorgia.ge).

Which accurately states:

“differential approach to schools affords more possibilities for the state to foster conditions for school development”, which is guaranteed to support the implementation of institutional development policy and vice versa.

This policy document was prepared based on experience accumulated on several educational programs: “Open school development program in Georgia” (with the Eurasia Foundation and USAID financial support), Teacher and Parent Associations Program (OSGF), and the program “Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking” (<http://www.rwctic.org/>).

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