

The Main Directions in Higher Education Development in Georgia

Sound higher education system is essential to the modern state. The Government of Georgia is fully aware that the higher education is of paramount importance to the well-being and democratic development of a society. Reforming the old system and achieving international standards require adequate legislative framework, which is unattainable without a clear strategic vision.

In June, 2001 initiated by the Georgian Parliament and supported by the Council of Europe and “Open Society – Georgia Foundation” (OSGF) a special project aiming to elaborate the conceptual paper determining the main directions of higher education development in Georgia started.

A task force (TF) of Georgian and International experts was established: George Sharvashidze – TF leader, Education Expert; Michael Chachkhunashvili – OSGF Executive Director; Marine Chitashvili – Professor, Tbilisi State University, OSGF Social Sciences Support Program Director; Irakli Machabeli – Professor, Head of Science and Information Department of the Ministry of Education of Georgia, Vice-rector of the International Black Sea University; Vasil Maglaperidze – Head of the Education, Science and Technology Sub-committee of the Georgian Parliament; Gigi Tevzadze – Professor, Tbilisi State University, Member of the Anti-corruption Coordination Council; Lika Glonti – Associate professor, Tbilisi State University, Project Corapporteur; Salome Shelia – Project coordinator; Natia Japaridze – Council of Europe Tbilisi Information Office Director; Mary-Ann Hennessey – Council of Europe, Directorate of Education, Administrator/Deputy to the Head of Co-operation and Technical Assistance Division; Jochen Lorentzen – Professor, Copenhagen Business School, Project Corapporteur; Virgilio Soares – Professor, former Rector of Lisbon University, Head of Universities’ Foundation; Balasz Varadi – Professor, Central European University. The World Bank nominated Mr. Halil Dundar - education specialist as a contact person for the project.

For the purposes of assessing the current situation in Higher Education sector in Georgia a special pool of Georgian experts prepared 11 background papers: B. Gomelauri (Professor, Executive Director of the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions) - “Accreditation, Licensing and Quality Assurance of the higher education institutions in Georgia”; N. Gurgendidze (Education Expert) – “Admissions/Selection Practices at Georgian Higher Education Institutions”; K. Glonti (Director of National Observatory, European Training Foundation) - “Higher Education and Labour Market in Georgia”; I. Kachkachishvili (Associate Professor, Tbilisi State University) - “Study of Private Higher Educational Institutions in Georgia”; A. Khelashvili (Professor, Vice-rector of Tbilisi State University) - “Research at Higher Education Institutions”; E. Kodua (Professor, Head of the Department of Sociology, Tbilisi State University) - “Academic Staff – Current Situation and Perspectives”; T. Kupatadze (Professor, Dean of the Department of Telecommunications, Georgian Technical University) - “Evaluation System”; I. Machabeli (Professor, Head of Science and Information Department of the Ministry of Education of Georgia) - “Accreditation of Georgian Higher Education Institutions”; S. Machavariani (Professor, Vice-rector of State Institute of Economic Relations) - “General Analysis of the Management Process in Higher Education Institutions of Georgia”; A. Samadashvili (Professor, Head of Post-graduate Programs Department of Georgian Technical University) - “Quality of Teaching”; T. Zaalishvili (Head of the Department, the Ministry of Finance) - “Analysis of Financing the Higher Education System of Georgia”.

In developing the final draft of the “Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia” were actively involved the representatives of the following institutions: Tbilisi State University, Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi Pedagogical University, State University of Language and Culture, State Medical University of Georgia, Institute of International Economic Relations, Tbilisi Agrarian University, State Institute of Business, Kutaisi State University, Telavi State University, State Conservatory, University of Chicago (USA), Chiba University (Japan), University of Lund (Sweden), The Royal Danish School of Pharmacy (Denmark), Association of

Private Higher Education Institutions, European School of Management, Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, Caucasus School of Business, Central Institute for Teacher Training of Georgia, National Observatory of European Training Foundation, Liberty Institute, Ministries of Finance and Culture, student organizations of Higher Education Institutions.

In August-December, 2001 fourteen round table meetings were organized in the framework of the project with all interested parties involved; a special seminar for mass-media representatives was organized in October, 2001; in December, 2001 – seminar for members of the Parliament and a final international conference with participation of Council of Europe and World Bank experts were held.

An inter-factional group of parliament members (Revaz Adamia, Temur Beridze, Demur Giorkhelidze, Archil Gogelia, Nodar Grigalashvili, Kote Kemularia, Giorgi Kokhreidze, Vasil Maglaperidze, Maia Nadiradze, Natela Patarkalishvili, Irakli Gudushauri, Guram Sharadze) greatly contributed to finalizing the document.

On December 22, 2001 the Parliament of Georgia adopted the document “Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia” by first hearing. An editing commission (head – Nodar Grigalashvili) was created in order to work out the final version of the document.

On March 1, 2002 the Parliament of Georgia adopted the decree “The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia” by second hearing, defining the aims, principles and objectives, which will serve as the basis for further higher education legislation.

The Task Force would like to express deep gratitude to all the contributors to the project and is looking forward to future cooperation.

Decree of the Parliament of Georgia on Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia

A sound higher education system is an essential precondition for reduction of poverty and social exclusion.

Higher education system of Georgia is still steeped in the Soviet tradition of a highly centralized system, producing graduates for a planned economy and this stand in the way of development of higher education.

Higher education in Georgia is under-funded and this contradicts to the declared top priority of the higher education system. The price of neglect is abysmal teaching and research facilities in almost all of the country's institutions of higher education. Marginal salaries drive many of the most talented and skilled people to look for work abroad or outside the sector.

Curriculum content and delivery bear little relevance to the requirements of the labor market. Teaching and learning methods, as well as programs are largely outdated. Career choices are not flexible. In the context of highly specialized degree programs already at undergraduate level, choice of the profession just after the graduation from the high school is against the principles of liberal education.

The quality of teaching and learning standards in the majority of higher education institutions is poor. Apart from negative implications this has for creating a highly skilled workforce, it also breeds corruption.

Practices that stand in the way of guaranteeing transparent access and high quality prominently include admissions based on entrance examinations and the absence of proper means testing.

Despite its problematic past, the higher education system also has a number of strengths. It enjoys a high prestige, has in select fields produced world-class results, and involves an increasingly active and articulate student population.

The modern system of higher education can help address the many problems that plague Georgian society. A vibrant democracy and market economy need concerned, articulate, and competent citizens, who are aware of their freedoms and responsibilities. Georgia must have clarity as to what expectations it wants its higher education institutions to fulfill. There must be clarity about the aims and objectives of higher education.

1. Four main aims of the HE system in Georgia are: a) encouraging and strengthening responsible citizenship; b) honing modern skills and competencies; c) training public personnel to overcome the current reform blockage and guide the reform process; d) training and retaining new academic staff for teaching and research to ensure the viability of the system.
2. Main principles, to achieve these goals are: a) open access, liberalization of higher education; b) reconcile teaching, learning and research; c) life-long learning; d) quality assurance and transparency.
3. To implement these principles, following steps are needed:
 - 3.1. The state should ensure support of the strategic fields of study and research, but at the same time, higher education must be oriented on the labor market.
 - 3.2. Systems of state funding of HE shall be: a) student learning grants, based on merit and need; b) competitive research grants; c) special state programs to support strategic fields of study.
 - 3.3. The current admission system that uses entrance examinations to decide on enrolment to public institutions of higher education must be radically changed to make place for the national secondary school leaving exam.
 - 3.4. Modern system of quality assurance in higher education should be developed. Quality assurance systems in the context of decentralized teaching, research and

administrative units are needed to allow staff at all levels to accept ownership for their work. Two main parts of the quality assurance system are: a) new systems of governance and management in higher education institutions on the basis of the credit system, and b) development of the accreditation system in the state, which will identify higher education institutions of high quality. These institutions will enroll publicly subsidized students, become government research grants and work on state programs.

- 3.5. Diplomas and certificates of institutions (both, state and private) that fail accreditation will not be recognized by the state.
 - 3.6. After the implementation of above-mentioned systems, the problem of consolidation of some state higher education institutions could be addressed. In case of staff redundancies state should provide social guarantees.
 - 3.7. The governance of the system must be set on a new footing. This entails clearly defining rights and responsibilities of the state and higher education providers. Mutually beneficial relationship between both public and private higher education providers and the state should be developed. Both the market and public regulation can be geared toward achieving a dynamic and equitable system. Higher education institutions should be given a special non-profit status.
 - 3.8. Autonomy of the higher education institutions should be clearly defined in the context of decentralized governance system.
4. Reform of the higher education in Georgia requires serious funding. The vision animating in this document and supported by the Parliament of Georgia will help to mobilize local funds and use effectively the support of donor organizations.

Explanatory Note

1 Preamble

Education is of paramount importance to the well-being of all generations in society. Scientific and technological achievements, development of culture and arts in modern world are all unfeasible without a flawless education system.

Sustainable development, the defeat of poverty, and the achievement of a democratic society in respect of fundamental freedoms and human rights, at peace with itself and with its neighbors, rely on responsible and informed citizens who are committed to making their contribution to a better future. Higher education is key to achieving this aim.

Society is best served if the higher education system enjoys academic freedom and the requisite institutional autonomy. The state must guarantee that.

Higher education is not just for those adults currently attending university. It is also important for children because primary education cannot expand without an adequate supply of teachers and administrators trained to graduate qualifications.

Principal stakeholders include students and their parents, employers, taxpayers, the government, and the staff at higher education institutions. Among the latter, the rectors play a fundamental role. Change and reform can happen only with the active participation of all stakeholders.

The fundamental changes that affected Georgia during the 1990s have placed knowledge and higher education at the center of national development. Higher education institutions in Georgia have been actively involved in education system reform. For example in 1994 TSU developed a new university conception.

At the world conference on higher education it was noted that “parliaments, as the voice of the people, have an important role to play in consolidating this alliance and in making it widely known and effective.” (UNESCO, n.d. 6).

The Parliament of Georgia is fully aware that human capital formation is key to political and economic development and reform, and a premise for mutually beneficial integration both regionally and with Europe and the world at large. Parliament appreciates that the existing system of higher education falls short of offering Georgian society the promise of an articulate, vibrant democracy and sustainable economic growth.

For this reason, Parliament is committed to higher education reform. It is planning to conceive and ratify a new law on higher education in the course of 2002, and to set a timeframe for further institutional and programmatic reforms. Till then the Parliament of Georgia has to adopt a decree on “The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia” (hereafter “the Decree”) defining those goals, principles and objectives based on which will the further higher education legislation be developed. To this end, it has created a Task Force of local experts, who collaborate with a team of international experts associated with the Council of Europe. The remit of the joint group is to spell out the strategic choices Georgia faces in order to reform the existing system of higher education. The present decree on "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia" is the result of its deliberations.¹

This decree on "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia" is not yet a detailed blueprint for reform. The latter requires data, feasibility studies, and in general a more solid knowledge base about the implications of reform proposals than currently available. It sets out a direction and suggests how to get there. Operationalization of its proposals must follow in a second stage.

¹ Information about the higher education system in Georgia is based on a series of background papers commissioned by the Task Force for the purposes of designing this decree on "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia" They are listed individually in a separate section following the reference list.

2 Higher Education in Georgia: Past and Present

Educational traditions have a long history in Georgia. In the Middle Ages a number of important educational centres were actively involved in the development of Georgian culture. When the country gained independence at the beginning of the 20th century, one of its first acts was to establish a national university, the first in the Caucasus. With the occupation of Georgia, Tbilisi State University was integrated into the Soviet system of higher education. The problems this caused persist to the present day. The Soviet legacy is one of over-centralisation, institutional fragmentation, and micromanagement of student career choices. Under Soviet rule the Central Ministry for Higher and Specialised Secondary Education was the sole responsible body for policy decisions. National bodies and institutions merely implemented strategic decisions made elsewhere. Internally, hierarchies were very steep and power was executed without much control by or extensive cooperation with staff, let alone devolved systems of governance. Institutions of higher education had the status of universities, academies, or institutes. While their respective roles were clearly demarcated in the past, this is no longer the case and leads to confusion regarding the status and standing of individual institutions. Authorities determined student supply by setting so-called state orders for each degree programme, thus planning human input for a planned economy. The state order system continued in the post-Soviet period even though it went counter to the conditions of an emerging market economy and despite the fact that the state does not possess the resources to manage it.

But the system also had strengths that provide important points of departure for a new start for higher education provision in Georgia. Notwithstanding the absence of a legal guarantee of academic freedom, higher education institutions harboured intellectual dissent and managed to preserve Georgian culture and sponsor, within limits, objective scholarship. Higher education still commands a lot of prestige. Demand for degree programs is strong, and parents are willing to invest in higher education for their children. In select fields, Georgian higher education and research has contributed to world-class results, such as in mathematics, physics, physiology, psychology, aerospace engineering, archaeology, linguistics and etc. Despite the hard times, the institutions of higher education managed to retain qualified academic staff, and – though brain drain continues – a younger generation of academics trained in Europe and the US is in touch with their local alma maters. It is imperative to create the conditions and incentives that slow down the brain drain and motivate highly qualified academics to return to Georgia.

Students, perhaps the most important agents of change in the system, have shown their desire for reform in a variety of ways.

Indeed, some institutions have started reforms that have made positive contributions to emerging from the old system and making Georgian higher education more compatible with higher education systems in OECD countries, namely the 4+2 format for undergraduate/graduate programs and the introduction of a credit system. A few have started to experiment with doing away with entrance examinations. Private institutions have come in to offer an at times attractive alternative to the public sector. State universities, too, have partially privatized their teaching programs. Doubts persist, however, about the quality of some of these programs. And it is clear that there are too many; Georgia currently counts 26 public and 214 private institutions of higher education. When markets fail, governments must create conditions under which the market participants have an incentive to address the failures.

The World Bank acknowledged Georgia's willingness to reform by providing a credit facility for the "Strengthening and Realignment of Secondary Education Sector in Georgia". Secondary school graduates are the most important capital of any higher education system. Thus, the foundation for reforming the Georgian system of higher education is already being built.

3 **Rationale: The Need for a Radical Overhaul of the Higher Education System in Georgia**

Georgia aspires to a good life for all its citizens. Yet widespread poverty, generally low-income levels, and unsatisfactory growth have accompanied the transition to a market economy. This situation is reflected in the problems that exist currently in higher education. But higher education is not just the victim of a bad situation. *It is also part of the problem.*

3.1 **Lack of funding**

The funding of the country's institutions of higher education accounts for only a marginal share of national income. In relative terms, in the past decade Georgia has been allocating less than half the share of national income to education than developing countries and roughly three times less than developed countries (see Table 1). Allocations have been on a downward trend; by 2001 public spending on higher education amounted only to 0.5 per cent of the budget.

Table 1. – Education in National Income, 1998

| Country | Per cent of GDP |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Georgia | 1.7 |
| Developing countries | 3.9 |
| Developed countries | 5.1 |

Source: UNESCO (1998)

Though the education statistics just as statistics in other fields can not be considered completely reliable it is doubtless that the situation is dramatic. The funding shortage has manifest consequences for the reality of teaching and learning. Apart from very few exceptions, higher education institutions do not provide adequate learning environments for students, and they demotivate teaching and support staff through facilities of abysmally low quality. The situation is so severe that there is a danger that Georgia is wasting a whole generation of human capital. Some of the most talented intellectual potential of the country leaves to work under better conditions abroad. In recent years an average of 2 out of 100 residents emigrated (Institute of Demography and Sociology 2001). Although this is an average figure, indications exist that it disproportionately affects highly skilled people. Thus the country is increasingly isolated from global knowledge networks. The inability to acquire and absorb global knowledge throws up the specter of irremediable marginalization. Experience from other higher education reform projects shows that the resource problem cannot be addressed piecemeal. Universities that become *de facto* glorified secondary schools act as a break on development much like primary schools that do not teach children literacy and numeracy (cf. World Bank 2001a, 8).

Only investments in quality higher education make sense. The lack of resources is a big problem. It underlines yet more the challenge to improve efficiency in the allocation of currently available funding and to provide the right conditions for new resources required for system reform.

3.2 **Lack of education policy planning and management**

Higher education is a complex system. To prosper it needs leaders that plan how to commit present resources to future expectations. To function it needs managers who implement strategic

plans in the day-to-day operation of the organization. To develop it needs staff with the ability to take charge of their area of impact, to evaluate their own performance, and to improve processes. For individual institutions to survive, they need stakeholders at all levels that identify enough with an organization to make it both compete and cooperate with its peer institutions. But education planning and management is a largely unknown skill in Georgia. In the Soviet Union, much of education policy was an ideological tool. Planning took place exclusively from the top down. While UNESCO classifies a full 47 education professions out of 557 different occupations, Georgia has not even one third of these. This leaves the country short of modern education managers.

3.3 Traditional curricula

Curriculum content and delivery bear little relevance to the requirements of the labor market. One of out three unemployed has a higher education degree. Graduates seldom find a job in their field of study. For example, for many departments at state institutions of higher education the ratio is as low as 4 out of 100. Graduates in employment are not satisfied both in terms of their career objectives and remuneration. Employers, in turn, complain unequivocally about a shortage of skilled labor. More than 90 per cent polled in 1998 reported dissatisfaction with the qualifications of their employees. But success stories exist alongside the failure of the system as a whole. Close to 9 out of 10 graduates from Tbilisi's most renowned private higher education institutions find a job immediately upon graduation. 26 per cent of graduates from faculties of state universities that have introduced reforms also land jobs.

Thus in general the efficiency and the purpose of public funding for higher education are in doubt. Every modern society needs skilled workers, technicians, professionals, managers, and other leaders. Georgia currently does not have the right mix. Furthermore, the underutilization of talent may breed discontent and turn a young and enthusiastic generation willing to make sacrifices for reform into a disappointed youth that expects nothing from society and, in turn, is not willing to contribute to making Georgia's reform experiment a success.

3.4 Outdated teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning do not promote independent thinking and competent problem solving. Learning aims, where made explicit, do not include cognitive and transferable analytical skills. Instead, course content favours memorization in the context of more than 400 overspecialized subjects. But in a fast changing world, static curricula run the risk of outliving their usefulness.

3.5 Limited flexibility in career choices

Career choices are not flexible. When students graduate from high school, they are often too young to know what they want to do as adults. So frequently parents enroll their children in what they perceive to be in their best interest. In the context of highly specialized degree programs already at undergraduate level, this leads to prohibitive switching costs when preferences change. A higher education system that integrates elements of advanced secondary and vocational training into a system of tertiary education would accommodate changing demands for skills and qualifications by allowing especially for young people to transit from one pathway into new sectors to another. Thus it is necessary to redesign undergraduate programs with the purpose of providing broader education.

3.6 Corruption and elitism

The quality of teaching and learning standards in the majority of higher education institutions is poor. This is a source of corruption. Students are brought up to value connections over quality. This compromises their personal integrity as well as the substance of their achievements. In a world that increasingly tries to negotiate global standards of transparency in the public and the private sector, corrupt study and teaching practices put Georgian youth at odds with major international trends within and without higher education. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Transparency International rank Georgia among the most corrupt transition economies (EBRD 1999, Transparency International 2000). This impairs not just the establishment of high quality standards in higher education. It is also likely to nullify the positive effects higher education reform may have on poverty reduction. For corruption is a regressive tax. When the poor are asked to pay bribes from the little they have, they suffer disproportionately (World Bank 2001b).

Corruption exists in different forms. It involves cronyism, bribery, and extortion. All of them contradict professional ethics of educators. Corruption is often indirect. Low quality is one of the mechanisms that keeps it alive. Private tutorship is an example. Prospective students make use of it to improve their admission chances to institutions of higher education because their tutors often sit on the exam committees. Patronage is another example. Clientelist relationships between students and parents on the one hand and teaching staff and other patrons on the other allow the use of subjective criteria in determining the outcome of entrance examinations, class assessments, and the like. The corrosive effect of these practices may be worse than direct bribery.

The current system reinforces elitism. Students with disadvantaged backgrounds have difficulties in opting for a higher education. The lack of a more equitable distribution of education opportunities implies unevenly distributed likelihoods of enjoying a fulfilling adult career. This is bad news for rural and mountain folk, minorities, and refugees. It is also bad news for Georgian society at large because exclusion is poor policy, economically, socially, and politically.

3.7 A different vision

Higher education could be part of the solution.

Economic catch-up relies on fast rates of productivity growth. Basic literacy and numeracy as imparted in elementary schools, and more advanced skills acquired at secondary-school level are necessary ingredients for a productive society. By raising the value and efficiency of labor, they also help raise the poor from poverty. Yet they are not sufficient. In the modern world of work, the generation of high value added demands people with sophisticated analytical and organizational competencies able to solve problems in rapidly changing environments. It also demands people who are sufficiently flexible to swap one set of tools for another to engineer improved outcomes. And finally it demands people who have learnt how to learn outside school and who can substitute their old profession, when it is no longer viable, for a new profession.

Likewise, even in firms not at the world technological frontier managers must master product designs and processes that are new to them in order to succeed in increasingly competitive and innovation- and knowledge-intensive product markets.

In sum, growing economic integration and accelerated technological innovation have raised the competency threshold for successful participation in the global economy. Only higher education can satisfy the resulting demand for human capital.

The establishment of the institutions for an emerging market economy and parliamentary democracy such as Georgia further underlines the need for a relevant, high-quality higher education system. Reform processes can only be successful if they are based on careful design, competent implementation, transparent control, and independent evaluation. The management of modern societies is complicated. Transition is even more complicated. To be successful, it needs a deep layer of competent private and public sector administrators. Leaders are important for inspiration,

strategic planning, and oversight. But implementation depends on middle management. For even in the presence of good intentions, lack of adequate human capital leads to reform blockage.

Acknowledging the problems of the higher education system in Georgia is only the first step toward solving them. In most countries, higher education systems are under critical review by public and private stakeholders. For example, OECD members have been looking for decades at how best to enable their universities to meet society's expectations. New members such as Hungary have followed suit. Other transition countries, too, have first assessed their problems to then pursue reforms. Although sharing experiences is helpful, a one-size-fits-all solution to higher education reform does not exist. Georgia must have clarity as to what expectations it wants its colleges and higher education institutions to fulfill. There must be clarity, in other words, about the aims and objectives of higher education.

4 Aims and Objectives: What Is the Higher Education System Expected to Deliver for Georgian Society?

A vibrant democracy and market economy need concerned, articulate, and competent citizens. Poverty and discrimination are inimical to building consensual societies in which conflicts are solved by peaceful means and where the promise of a better life is open to all. States can only command loyalty among their citizenry if they are perceived to advance its aspirations and to protect its interests. At many different levels of its polity, economy, and society, Georgia is in the process of establishing its place in regional co-operation and in the international community. The more it can do so through informed discussion, of constraints and opportunities alike, by its citizens, the more it can lay claim to meaningful self-determination. And the more its voice will be taken seriously by its neighbors and by its distant partners. Openness to the experiences of other countries should inform this discussion. One can learn from their mistakes and from their success stories, and put both to good use.

Thus higher education in Georgia has the quadruple function of

- Developing in individuals a strong sense of citizenship; encouraging values without which the existence and development of a civil society is impossible;
- Ensuring human capital with skills and competencies matching modern standards;
- Training and retaining of young scientific personnel in order to guarantee the development of the country and the viability of the education system; providing conditions for, ensuring and developing scientific research.
- Ensuring access to higher education, training, and lifelong learning in order to pursue personal goals and desired skills.

In order to achieve the above stated goals the following objectives are to be met:

Life-long Learning. Higher education must be organically linked with secondary and post-graduate education, and must represent an inseparable part of the whole system. On each stage of higher education the content of the degree conferred has to be defined, and this has to be a single and continuous process in higher education institutions.

Promote access. Access is paramount. Although international experience shows that economic growth need not benefit the poor, integrating the poor into the labor market almost always leads to more growth (Lundberg and Squire 1999). Inclusion makes eminent economic sense. International experience also shows that the market cannot always be relied upon to facilitate higher education access for all those with the motivation and the talent to benefit from higher education, but without the means to pay for it. This means that in Georgia the state will continue to play a role, albeit hopefully alongside an increasingly important private sector.

Reconcile teaching and research. In the past, the Soviet government financed education and science according to political priorities and military imperatives. Science was compartmentalized; next to research in the universities and in the academies of science, military research was a separate elite activity that received the strongest support by the state. Links between the three types of

research centers were weak. Teaching and research were also largely separate activities. In today's knowledge-based economies the separation of research and teaching is more dysfunctional than ever. Graduate teaching and research stimulate each other, thus advancing and disseminating knowledge. Mastering rapid technological and economic change requires more frequent updating of skills for everybody in the classroom: lifelong learning is becoming a reality for both students and teachers. And both groups benefit from a grounding in analytical tools that only research imparts. Industrial innovation through technology transfer has long been recognized to be a two-way process up and down the value chain, involving firms simultaneously as originators and receivers of technology. Likewise in academia, departments with strong research records tend to have a vibrant PhD student component while, in turn, a critical mass of students with visible research profiles tend to attract high-profile researchers.

Make minds mobile. Learning is becoming a life-long process insofar as today's skills may not suffice for tomorrow's challenges. Global processes of economic integration imply that people may have to move to keep their old job or find a new one. Technological innovation implies the end of some professions and the emergence of others. And the transition from a former Soviet Republic to an independent state with a wide range of economic and social problems to address implies that people must graduate to successively higher levels of value added activities. Therefore, classroom activities must not be aimed only at graduation, but at fostering the capability for future geographical, horizontal, and upward mobility. For students this means acknowledging that they have to prepare for possibly a multitude of careers. For teaching staff it means that they must continuously revise and update their curricula to ensure their relevance. And for higher education management it means that departments and teaching units must be given the opportunity to re-invent themselves.

The emergence of life-long learning requires a new understanding of how people (re-)learn and (re-)train. This means that next to training the educators, higher education must promote research into educational processes so as to generate recommendations about content, methods, and organization of education.

Invite outside scrutiny. Higher education systems are service providers. Their mission is to help create a competent and responsible citizenry. Therefore, they are of utmost importance to modern, democratic societies. Society – students, parents, employers, public authorities, funding bodies, professional associations, and other stakeholders – has a right to assess the quality of the service higher education institutions provide. This right comprises an assessment of the quality of the learning experience, the transparency of financial administration, and the direction of strategic management. Higher education institutions must be accountable to the public about how and what they teach, how they allocate resources, and which strategic priorities they identify for their development.

Choose open standards. Of course it makes sense for Georgia to create a new higher education system that best suits its needs. But whatever the final shape of the reformed system, its underlying procedures must be internationally compatible. Georgian students must be able to communicate their transcripts to host universities for their exchange year. Georgian academics that trained abroad must be able to have their titles recognized when they return home. Exchange students from neighbouring or distant countries that study in Georgia should be able to transfer easily between credits earned in Georgia and elsewhere. And junior academic staff trained to PhD level should be allowed and encouraged to take their place as equals in established and emerging research networks, without being hobbled by a traditional differentiation of postdoctoral qualifications.

Following the 1997 Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the Europe Region, European ministers of education pledged in a series of declarations –in Bologna in 1999, and in Prague in 2001 – to create a European area of higher education. They aimed at adopting a system of easily readable and comparable degrees based on two main cycles, namely undergraduate and graduate. They also promised to establish a system of credits – such as ECTS – to promote the most widespread student mobility, along with

institutionalized recognition of research and teaching time staff spent abroad. Finally, they agreed to promote co-operation in quality assurance, curriculum development, mobility schemes, integrated programs of study, and training and research.

In sum, the aim of higher education reform is to create a sustainable system based on the objectives of

- non-discriminatory access
- high, measurable quality
- high, verifiable relevance.

To achieve this aim Georgia must make strategic choices.

5 Strategic Choices for a Viable Future of Higher Education

5.1 The Role of the State

In the past the role of the state in higher education was dominant. This is no longer functional or desirable. The future of higher education in Georgia lies in a mutually beneficial relationship between both public and private higher education providers and the state. The state must design a general framework conducive to reaping high social returns from higher education. The market must harness the potential inherent in bringing people who want to learn together with the institutions that provide the learning experience. The regulatory framework is likely to be most effective if it is based on as few as possible, clear, and transparent rules. Likewise, outcomes from open access to internationally compatible standards as desirable depend on a partnership in which the broad outlines of state policy on the one hand, and strategy at the level of individual higher education providers on the other overlap.

5.2 Access and Entry

Education is a human right.

Article 26(1) of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that

[e]veryone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (quoted in UNESCO n.d., 2).

The 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the 1998 World Declaration of Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century also emphasize the principle of equal access. Georgia is a signatory to these texts and thus committed to promote all relevant provisions through legislative and regulatory channels and through actual educational practice.

The current admission system that uses entrance examinations to decide on enrolment to public institutions of higher education contradicts the objectives of transparent access and high quality. It indirectly favors those with more money over those with less, produces non-transparent outcomes, facilitates corruption and is thus, by definition, not meritocratic. The outcome is elitist.

Although the growth of private institutions has improved access for underprivileged groups, the system is generally still skewed against them. It must be radically changed to make place for an alternative that is more equitable and that at the same time nurtures talent.

In the past, when the main objective of higher education was the development of basic sciences, universities administered entrance examinations to protect themselves against unreliable high school scores. But today the key success factors for the development of higher education are the principle of equal opportunity and the ability to train highly qualified graduates across a range of professions. Entrance examinations are not the right tool to achieve this.

Yet the problem of guaranteeing quality screening for enrolment in institutions of higher education exists and must be addressed. The planned introduction of a national secondary school leaving exam, supported by the World Bank, may help to address the problem. Due to its

circumscribed scope and in view of the lack of experience in administering it, especially it at the local level, it will not solve it entirely, however. It is important to accompany this new initiative with critical evaluation. Ultimately it is an experiment whose outcome cannot be taken for granted in terms of substituting the current system of entrance examinations. In general, the knowledge base for interventions in higher education must be improved. What is currently known about detailed operational aspects of the system, let alone about the track record of reform, is not yet sufficient to ensure that a system overhaul be successful. Thus, reform design must be reflexive and open to alteration along the way. It must also ensure to involve all stakeholders in the process. As much as they are part of the problem, they are also part of the solution.

Caveats notwithstanding, the general direction is clear. Once an objective measure of relative student performance across the country exists it can be used to distribute places in public institutions of higher education. In the new system, following high school graduation students would indicate one or more preferences of both subject and institution. A national clearing body would assign acceptances based on availability and students' scores. So the best high school graduates have the highest probability of studying the subject of their choice at their chosen institution. Lower scoring graduates might have to compromise over their choice of subject or institution, or both. This guarantees that talented students with a good track record are rewarded for their performance.

However, it does not yet guarantee equitable access. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with disabilities are less likely than typical middle-class children to do well in secondary school. This is not because they are less talented but because the means at their disposal to develop this talent are inferior or totally lacking. If Georgia wants to redress these initial disadvantages, the system must compensate through means testing.

There are various ways of doing this. They each have advantages and disadvantages. Which one is most suited for Georgia depends largely on what is fiscally feasible and on the strategic priority accorded to higher education. For example, a certain percentage of each year's entering cohort could be offered (partial or total) tuition-free enrolment (e.g. through vouchers). This would cover the top students in terms of high school marks and some students from disadvantaged backgrounds. So while merit ultimately decides where and what one studies, the lack of financial means is not a total impediment to enrolling in a higher education institution. In addition, in a model where the government underwrites the risk of commercially arranged student loans, the best and the unluckiest could be offered more lenient servicing terms.

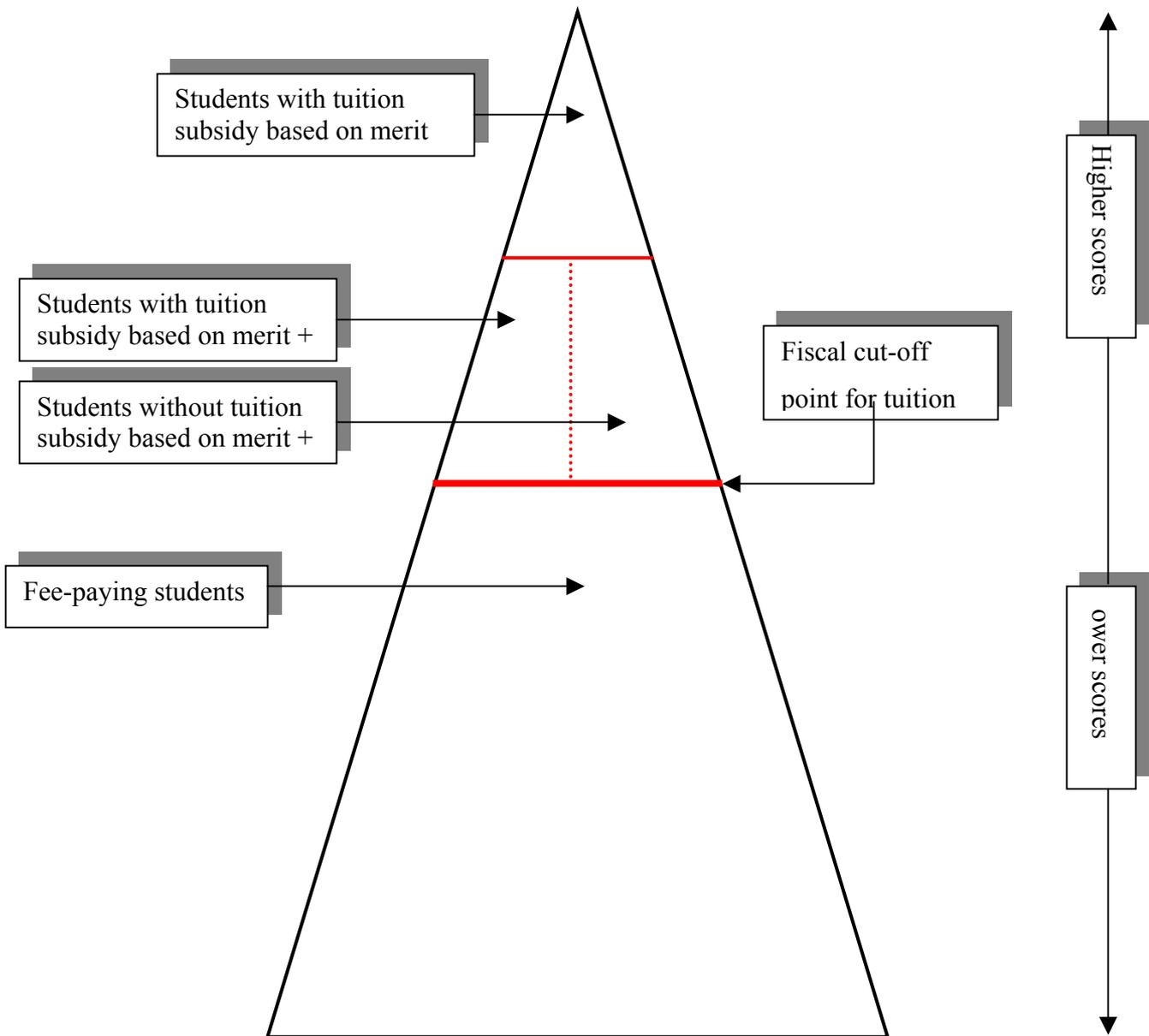
The key problem is to decide on an appropriate mix of merit-vs-equity criteria for enrolment, to then design a system that produces the desired outcome. The key principle of government subsidies to tuition costs is that the money is allocated to students who then take it to the higher education institutions of their choice, including private institutions, to which they have been accepted.

5.2 Quality

A higher education system can only deliver high-quality output if the conditions under which it operates favor as much. Apart from a legislative framework conducive to strengthening quality as one of the key criteria to evaluate the performance of the higher education system, higher education institution management must provide individual units, not just in teaching but also in administration, with incentives to live up to their stated goals. Quality mandated from above can never have the same powerful effect as a concerted effort of quality assurance from the bottom up in the context of strategic quality promotion. Therefore, individual units such as departments must accept ownership over the content of what they offer, how they present it, what changes they undertake to the curriculum in reaction to stakeholder evaluations or external changes, etc. This means both that the system as a whole must be geared toward quality and that quality assurance mechanisms must be located at the lowest level possible. Such mechanisms are not substitutes for

but necessary complements of a national system of quality assurance that combines bottom-up initiatives with top-down review.

Figure 1. High School Graduation Scores and Merit/Need-Based Subsidies



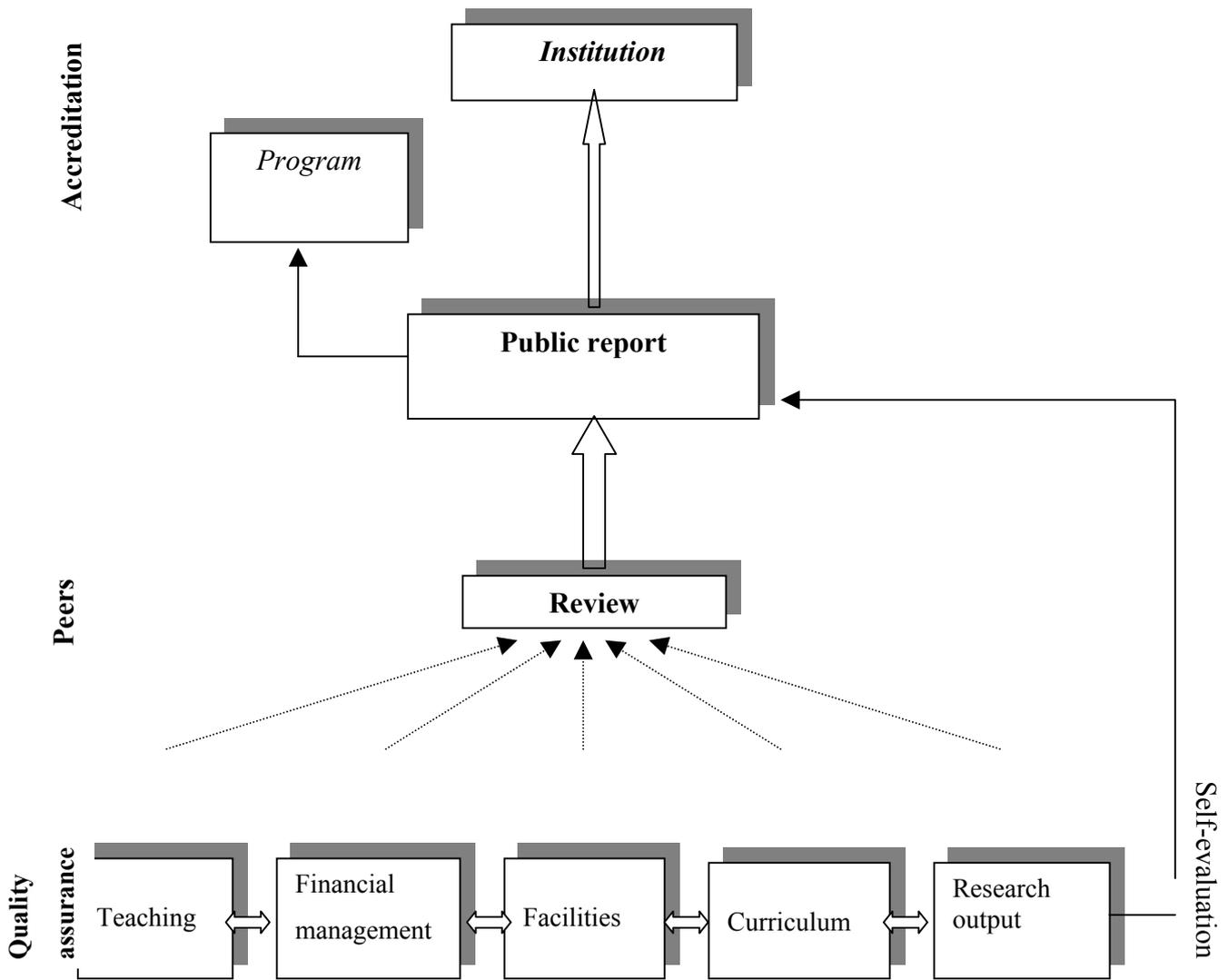
Georgia has no modern system of quality assurance in higher education. Attempts to remedy this have been unsuccessful. This is a weakness that must be addressed. Functioning quality assurance systems tend to strengthen the institutions that create them. Though costly, under certain conditions they pay for themselves because they improve efficiency (International Consultative Forum on Education for All 1998). Self-monitoring is an asset, not a liability – including for rectorates. It helps fulfill the contract between higher education institutions and society – an institution that openly and self-critically evaluates how well or badly it accomplishes its stated aims and objectives is more likely to be perceived as worthy of public funds. It contributes to staff identification with the programs with which they are associated. The internal diffusion of critical information such as unsatisfactory success rates, student discontent with the learning experience, or a low research profile of the faculty is also likely to galvanize the energy needed to overcome the underlying causes. Thus quality assurance provides powerful, decentralized incentives for quality improvement.

Quality assurance is especially important in the context of fundamental reform. No single institution, let alone individual, can hope to micromanage the major curricular and didactic changes that are needed to transform the country's higher education institutions into modern education providers. In turn, it is also not feasible for units of the system to do whatever they feel is appropriate. The institution of quality assurance systems is a solution to this dilemma because it forces units to think about, and subsequently publish, their aims and objectives as well as how they intend to achieve them. Units must also decide which indicators they want to use to evaluate their performance. And finally, they must decide how to address the gap between their stated and realized goals. Of course, higher education institution management can and should help them in this endeavor, also to make sure that quality assurance is undertaken with the seriousness it deserves and without which it does not work.

Thus higher education institutions are granted total flexibility in how to set up and operate the quality assurance system that individually fits them best. But they must follow a series of rules. First, quality assurance must follow a regular (e.g. annual) cycle. Second, it must be subjected to peer review. Peers must be drawn from outside the institutions, may include non-academic stakeholders, and academics from outside Georgia. Third, peer review leads to a report which is made public. The reviewed institution has the right to react to the report and is expected to spell out how it intends to address shortcomings identified in the review. Finally, the willingness of an institution seriously to subject its quality assurance to outside review is a precondition for state accreditation.

State accreditation of higher education programs and institutions entails that the degrees they award are recognized by the state. It is also a prerequisite for obtaining non-profit status. To qualify for accreditation, institutions must be licensed and must have undergone one peer review of quality assurance that led to the publication of a review report. All private and public institutions of higher education can submit to the accreditation process. This aims to bring transparency into the market for higher education and to ensure that prospective entrants can make informed choices regarding what and where they want to study, and that employers can decide where best to recruit. Institutions that gain accreditation are entitled to receive students whose tuition expenses are subsidized by the state. They are also entitled to receive public research funding. Institutions that fail accreditation may not receive publicly funded students or receive research funding. However, they may continue to operate. They may also apply for a review of their status.

Figure 2. – Quality Assurance and Accreditation



5.3 Efficiency

At present, higher education institutions in Georgia are collectively underresourced and individually oversupplied. This also applies to tertiary institutions such as technicums. They are underresourced insofar as adequate learning facilities are widely unavailable. They are oversupplied in that some departments have more staff than students, plus other underutilized assets. This allocation of resources is dysfunctional in terms of ensuring a high-quality environment. It is also inefficient. But Georgia cannot afford an inefficient system of higher education.

Responsibilities of the state have to be clearly defined. The state has to develop the terms for accreditation and licensing which will create conditions for the education market, currently going through the establishment process, to by itself regulate the number of higher education institutions as well as of employees in these institutions.

What is clear is that with new provisions for accreditation as outlined above, the market would reduce the number of institutions along with the staff levels. For example, low-quality faculties that fail accreditation and may no longer accept students with public scholarship funds likely also fail to attract fee-paying students. Over time these pressures will force them to close down. In the longer term consolidation frees resources that can be spent toward fulfilling Georgia's goal of having an open, high-quality, and high-relevance system. A reduction of the total (academic and non-academic) workforce in higher education will allow to pay talented, young academic hopefuls, including those with international training experience, salaries sufficient to retain them in higher education institution service. This is of utmost importance for the preservation of high-quality human capital.

Consolidation will have a cost in terms of the settlements to be reached with staff affected by lay-offs. The negotiation of severance and compulsory retirement packages must be handled with utmost sensitivity and calls for involvement of the state in order to avoid as much as possible an increase in social tension and an exacerbation of deprivation especially among those staff with the most difficulties of finding another job.

All accredited institutions of higher education are eligible for non-profit status in acknowledgement of their key role for the political and economic advancement of Georgian society. This status applies to their teaching and non-commercial research activities. Legislation must detail that universities and colleges are expected to honour special financial reporting requirements, including publicly available annual reports, approved by certified auditors.

5.4 Governance

The democratic state and the market are newcomers to higher education in Georgia. In the past, a distant and undemocratic state presumed to be in charge of planning everything. The market presumed nothing in that it did not exist. For some ten years now the two newcomers have co-existed. The relationship has been conflictual and not always clear. The new Law on Higher Education must bring clarity by defining responsibilities and duties of the state and of higher education providers. The changes the Conceptual Paper recommends set the respective roles of the state and the market onto new footing. The market is important because it introduces competition to a hitherto closed sector, both public and private. It also mobilizes resources. When individuals pay for their education, they free up public funds that the state can then spend on other tasks. And the state is important because it specifies the rules that make the market work in Georgia's best interest without pretending to micromanage specific outcomes. It is also important because it addresses problems of equity and strategic issues in a long-term framework. Public and private providers of higher education enjoy the same rights and responsibilities. They compete for the best students and are also both entitled to bid on public research contracts. The point is to train good minds; not whether the training takes place in public or private premises.

The strategic challenges listed in this Conceptual Paper are daunting. The chances of rising to the challenge are highest if academic personnel at all levels perceive the reforms as in their own and the country's best interest, and a process to which they can make a meaningful contribution. Although Georgian institutions of higher education train more women than men – and half of the staff doing the training are also women – do women rarely occupy senior teaching or administrative positions commensurate with their overall role in higher education. For internal and external stakeholders to accept ownership over the reform project around the ideas of transparent access, high quality, and high relevance, the currently highly centralized and male-dominated internal structure of the higher education institutions must be changed. Decentralization means empowerment. A devolved structure with substantial autonomy of individual units and departments would require people to assume responsibility for their mission. Higher education institutions must give themselves new statutes based on the ideas of wide staff and student participation in decision-making and internal governance, conditioned on favorable and predictable incentive systems.

Their formal autonomy from the state must evolve into effective autonomy. Currently budgetary allocations from the state to the higher education institutions are line-item defined. Higher education institution administrators are held to rigid spending parameters. It is difficult to expect them to feel complete ownership over what they manage under these conditions. Since they are likely to know better than ministerial bureaucrats how funds should be allocated in detail, this is also inefficient. What is true for both public policy and institutional administration is that there cannot be good management without good data and sound, especially financial analysis. Future allocations of public funds to teaching and research can support the strategic development of higher education only if technical governance capabilities in the relevant ministries and higher education administrations are strengthened so that the relevant authorities rise to the challenge of guiding and supporting the reform project. Key is an understanding of the role of new technologies in education delivery to overcome the limitations of outreach that traditional residential campuses operate under. This underlines the importance to train and recruit education specialists to guide the planning process.

6 Stages of Implementation

Starting a reform is difficult – sustaining it over a considerable period of time even more so. It is important first to lay the groundwork so as to have solid foundations for the entire construct. A new law on higher education developed on the basis of the decree on "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia" has to become a foundation for further reforms. Reform must be anchored in a new Law on Higher Education whose general provisions may be inspired by the vision reflected in the "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia". A blueprint is then needed to map out an action plan that defines how gradually to transform the current system to a new, sustainable system of higher education, and what to do in the interim (Stage 2). This involves operationalizing the strategic direction outlined in the "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia", identifying budgetary implications, informing the Parliament's work on the implementation provisions of the new Law on Higher Education, and deciding on a timeframe of reform sequences. The implementation of the reform (Stage 3) must be phased so that developments that take longer (e.g. a full national accreditation cycle) are supported by others that are easier to implement (e.g. quality assurance initiatives at departmental level). The different elements of reform must communicate with each other and they must be mutually supportive. For example, rationalizations must quickly translate into salary increases for remaining staff to legitimize both the costs of reform and to illustrate its benefits. The overall timeframe must allow for flexibility. With a medium-term planning horizon of five to ten years, not all events can be foreseen. When project components develop differently from how they were envisaged, project leaders must intervene to reassess the situation.

The complexity of planning the reform requires a dedicated task force to drive, coordinate, and communicate the process of creating a blueprint. It should be staffed by experts and given a proper budget. It should also have direct access to key decision makers. The task force would liaise with Parliament and all key stakeholders to ensure that its deliberations have as wide a mandate as possible. The blueprint would have the double function of informing Parliament's work on the implementation provisions of the new law and of preparing the actual implementation. Its drafting requires much further work, *inter alia*, on the following:

Data. Proper education planning and management depends on reliable, informative and readily available data. Currently this does not exist in Georgia either at the level of public administration or individual education providers. For example, it is impossible to evaluate career paths unless one has information where and how graduates enter the labor market. The task force should identify which data from higher education providers are required for education planning to become a rational public policy management tool. Reporting requirements could include information on costing, fee structures, etc.

Funding. The proposed division of government education funding (into student grants research contracts and special programs) has implications that must be studied. The same goes for the fiscal effects resulting from the introduction of non-profit status for accredited institutions. The desirability of regulating tuition fees in the public sector must also be addressed. The feasibility of a state subsidized commercial loan scheme must be studied and the means of its financial, legal and social implementation determined.

Code of Ethics. The presence of corruption will not be solved by legal means alone. Legal texts are easier to enforce if they are incentive compatible. Yet even a mere legal provision that unequivocally sanctioned unethical behavior would reduce the social tolerance of such practices.

Access. The challenge is to translate equal opportunity from principle to reality. How will Georgia manage greater access for citizens in outlying areas, which tools will it develop for means-testing etc., what will replace entrance examinations to facilitate truly merit-based enrolments?

Quality assurance and accreditation. What is needed here is an institutional set-up that ensures that accreditation is done on the basis of objective and verifiable criteria. Georgia's small size may mean that truly disinterested peer reviews are impossible. This would suggest regional and international cooperation on quality assurance and accreditation.

Transition. This is likely to be one of the most complicated parts of the blueprint. Although the system sketched in the "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia" is designed to be sustainable in the long run, it is not clear what resources will be needed to finance the cost of transition, namely severance packages, temporary tax shortfalls because of the introduction of non-profit status, etc. Transition costs – both one-time charges and variable costs – must be estimated. The feasibility of donor funding to cushion the costs of reform should also be studied. Sequencing is key, too. Both the legislative and operational elements of the reform will have to be phased so that implementation follows a clear strategy. Finally, the principal mission of the reform must be clearly communicate to the various stakeholders and the general public in order to raise awareness and build broad acceptance.

7 The Role of Donor Organisations

The motivation behind "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia" would not exist were it not for the generous support international organisations have been extending to students and staff in Georgian higher education. For without their support, Georgia might not be in a position even to ponder the feasibility of launching an ambitious reform project.

Throughout the 1990s, donors extended a lifeline to a system under severe distress. For example, the Open Society—Georgia Foundation in one year alone supported more than 600 scientists and students. Through its Science Journal Donation Program it helps natural scientists keep connected with global knowledge networks. US exchange programmes such as IREX, Muskie, and Fulbright funded grants for hundreds of scholars to study and research in US universities. The

German DAAD provided similar support for stays at German universities. Multilateral organisations such as the EU and the World Bank are active in international university cooperation, technical support, and programme design and funding. Other donors include UNESCO, the Council of Europe, numerous foundations, professional organisations, and many more.

Some of the beneficiaries of these grants are now associated with higher education reform ideas which the Conceptual Paper manifests. To be truly effective they now need support in addressing the policy and institutional challenges of reform.

The chances for this are better than ever before. In the past, reform was often fragmented. While instrumental to the survival of the system it did not follow an overall design of strategic direction. This is different now. The vision animating the Conceptual Paper lends itself to bringing disparate reform initiatives together. Pursued jointly they are more likely to achieve the aim of setting the higher education system on a new footing.

8 Outlook

Higher education reform is about making hard choices. First, education is no panacea. It is necessary for development. Yet it does not guarantee it. And it makes its contribution to reform only if nourished by an environment that strives for good governance. So taking on the higher education system makes sense only in conjunction with strengthening governance capabilities in public administration. In the long run, a relentless pursuit of quality will yield efficiency gains. In the short run it will cost tremendous effort. Successes are likely to materialise slowly, and most will at first be visible only to the trained eye. Hence much leadership is asked for to keep all stakeholders and the public committed to the reform programme in the long run.

Investment comes at the cost of consumption, and investing in education may mean not investing in something else. Georgia does not have the resources to satisfy all those who make justified claims on them. Building a viable higher education system does not come on the cheap and may imply, *ceteris paribus*, cutting down on other public expenditures. To many it will appear like sacrificing tangible gains available soon for lofty and uncertain aims that are really an investment into the future. Especially older and unskilled people will be susceptible to this view. It will take an exceptionally gifted and committed leadership along with resourceful and talented managers to communicate the importance of the reform process for Georgian society to those who are sceptical of its benefits.

Investing in higher education reform also makes eminent sense. Human capital is Georgia's most valuable resource. Without the stamina and perseverance of its people, Georgia would be much worse off after living through an exceptionally difficult and in many ways traumatic decade. Investment in human capital is not speculative. If embedded in the appropriate framework, it provides the best point of departure for re-launching the fortunes of a country out of luck for much of the 1990s. Education nurtures development. Development, in turn, promotes education because economic growth makes available the resources to expand education opportunities. What makes education systems sustainable is an appropriate balance between initial schooling, advanced training and research, and everything in between. In Georgia this means that higher education must satisfy the demand for able public sector administrators, competent private sector managers, reliable technicians, and accomplished professionals. For without them, the primary and secondary parts of the education system cannot flourish. In short higher education reform is about beginning to create the conditions today that will enable a better future tomorrow.

Without a viable and sustainable higher education system, Georgia will lose its brightest people. In the past, people had mostly little choice but to study in their home country. But now they can go anywhere. Increasing competition and technological innovation are eroding perceived tacit advantages of "home" over "foreign" universities. Increasing competition, because the market for higher education has become more transparent. This means that what an institution half way round the globe offers becomes comparable, as a product package, to what the home institution delivers.

And increasingly sophisticated ex-post evaluations of the match between graduates' expectations and their fulfilment in professional life, including salary levels, make it possible realistically to compare the discounted net future benefits of low and high-tuition programs of study. Technological innovation also effectively integrates the formerly more disparate markets for higher education in many fields because the opportunities of the internet reduce the cost of accessing (even formerly expensive) degree programs.

Small countries have big problems. Georgia's geopolitical position makes stability an overarching concern. The most promising precept for stability and peace is mutually beneficial integration with neighbouring countries and international partners. In an increasingly globalized world, highly educated populations will fare better economically and politically. They may not be safer from the many threats that bedevil peace and prosperity. But they will be much better placed to cope with them.

Abbreviations

| | |
|------|---|
| DAAD | Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service) |
| EBRD | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| ECTS | European Credit Transfer System |
| TSU | Tbilisi State University |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| IREX | International Research and Exchange Board |
| MOE | Ministry of Education |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |

Glossary

Academic freedom

is the right of scholars to pursue their research, to teach, and to publish without control or restraint from the institutions that employ them.

Academy

school or place of learning or any association formed for literary, artistic, musical or scientific pursuits. In modern times many institutions of higher learning in special subjects such as naval, military, fine arts, music, or commerce have been called

Accountability

the responsibility of an educational agency to be held answerable to the public for its performance

Accreditation

official recognition given by a competent agency or association to an educational institution after it meets accepted standards

Assessment

evaluation of the quality

Certification

official authorization granted by a state department of education to a teacher or other professional

Course

- 1) an individual unit, at the high school, college or university level consisting of a series of instruction periods (as lectures, laboratory sessions, etc.) dealing with a particular subject
- 2) a series of such courses, coordinated to constitute a curriculum and leading typically to a degree.

Course of study

a planned program for teaching or learning a given subject at a given level

Credit

award granted for one completed unit of study

Curriculum (Educational program)

the set of courses offered by an educational institution

Degree

- 1) an academic title conferred honorarily in recognition of outstanding individual achievement;
- 2) a title conferred upon students by a HEI upon completion of a unified program of study currying a specified minimum of credits, passing of certain examinations, and often completion of a thesis or other independent research project.

Higher education

any of various types of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning and usually affording at the end of a course of study a named degree or certificate. The institutions include not only universities and colleges but also various professional schools that provide preparation in specific fields.

Institutional autonomy

the freedom of the university, functioning collectively, to make its own decisions on all these matters.

Licensing

is the awarding of the permission to operate a new HEI or a new study program based on an evaluation of appropriate plans.

Program

a plan determining the offerings of an educational institution

University

institution of higher education consisting of a liberal arts and sciences college as well as graduate and professional schools, having the authority to confer degrees in various fields of study.

Quality assurance

is used as an all-embracing term to include all the policies, processes and actions through which the quality of HE is maintained and developed. It emphasizes the external aim of evaluation.

Voucher plan

an allocation of public funds to students' parents who then purchase education for their children in any public or private school.

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