

KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

GEORGIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgia applied for EU membership in March 2022 and was granted candidate status in December 2023. This recognition came with the condition that Georgia takes specific steps recommended by the Commission. Candidate status will open up new opportunities to align Georgia's education, training and employment policies with those of the EU. Adopting the law on transparency of foreign influence effectively halted Georgia's European integration process, presented in the European Council conclusions of 27 June 2024.

Georgia continues to show strong economic resilience and growth. The GDP growth rate, after a significant decrease in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, impressively increased in 2021 and 2022 and remained strong at the level of 7.5% in 2023. In the first five months of 2024, the real growth reached 9.3%. Growth in Georgia has been driven by capital accumulation. In contrast, the contribution of labour and human capital has been modest.

In the field of vocational education and training (VET), the objective is to increase private sector involvement in the management of VET providers, including their co-establishment and co-financing through public-private partnerships, internationalise VET provision by improving the skills and competences of teachers, and introduce VET pathways in upper secondary education.

In general education, special emphasis will be placed on enhancing teachers' professional development and raising the status and appeal of the teaching profession. From mid-2024 onwards, the salaries of approximately 70% of educators will be increased. Additional measures to improve the quality of general education include the devolution of some powers to schools to strengthen their capacity for decision-making at local level. Ambitious revisions of the national curriculum are underway, particularly at the level of secondary education, to facilitate students' exploration of their interests and abilities, and incorporate diverse programmes into vocational studies, the humanities and sciences alongside the core curriculum. Efforts to upgrade the educational infrastructure are ongoing, with major construction and renovation projects, aiming to complete the structural upgrade of all schools by the end of 2027.

Enrolment in VET increased slightly between 2021 and 2022, following a decline during the pandemic in 2020 when VET provision was suspended for several months. However, it remains low and further efforts are needed from the government to boost enrolment. The rate of participation in lifelong learning has registered a slight increase from 1.2% in 2021 to 1.6% in 2022, which may reflect recent government efforts to upskill and reskill Georgia's workforce through state-funded adult education programmes.

The labour market is beginning to show signs of recovery from the effects of the pandemic, as evidenced by a gradual improvement in key labour market indicators. In particular, the unemployment rate has decreased from 20.6% in 2021 to 16.4% in 2023. This improvement is attributable to the rapid recovery of the Georgian economy and a significant GDP growth in 2022 and 2023. The pandemic had a disproportionate impact on low- and medium-skilled workers. Although the activity rate remained broadly unchanged in 2022, there was significant gender disparity, with persistently low activity and employment rates among women.

In addition to women, young people continue to face significant challenges in the labour market. Despite a small decrease, the unemployment rate for young people (15-24) remains high, having dropped from 42.9% in 2021 to 34.5% in 2023. The share of young people aged 15-29 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) also decreased from 35.1% in 2020 to 26.9% in 2023, but remains disconcertingly high, highlighting the need for continued efforts in activation policies. The government must prioritise urgent, targeted and coordinated policy action to engage these young people and ensure they receive appropriate education, training, and opportunities.

1. KEY POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political developments

Georgia's legislative infrastructure, institutional framework, and dynamic civil society have positioned it for progress in democratic reform and the rule of law. However, persistent political strife, polarisation, and a lack of collaboration between parties have hampered progress, making it difficult to reach a consensus on key national issues, according to the European Commission Georgia 2023 Report (EC 2023).

On 3 March 2022, Georgia applied for EU membership. Based on the European Commission's opinion, Georgia was given a European perspective on 23 June 2022 by unanimous agreement between the leaders of all 27 EU Member States. The Commission's Opinion outlined twelve priorities that Georgia needed to address to progress on the path to the EU. On 14 December 2023, Georgia was granted candidate status by the European Council, on the understanding that the relevant steps set out in the Commission recommendation of 8 November 2023 are taken.

In February 2024, Irakli Kobakhidze, the former leader of the ruling party, was appointed as Georgia's new Prime Minister. The new government programme, entitled 'For Building a European State', outlines the government's main objectives, i.e. to ensure a stable and safe environment for citizens, to strengthen democratic institutions, and to stimulate the economy and take effective steps towards EU integration. To achieve these goals, the programme focuses on several key areas: (1) Foreign policy focus on EU integration, peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict, territorial recovery, enhancing security and raising Georgia's regional and global profile; (2) Economic development aiming to make Georgia a key economic hub through stability, structural reforms, trade development and EU integration, with a focus on improving tourism, agriculture and entrepreneurship to improve the welfare of citizens; (3) Social policy aiming to enhance access to healthcare, social protection, employment and education, promoting a knowledge-based society; and (4) Democratic institutions that prioritise the development of democracy and public services, and accelerating EU integration.

Adopting the law on transparency of foreign influence effectively halted Georgia's European integration process, presented in the [European Council conclusions](#) from 27 June 2024. In October 2024 the ruling party, Georgian Dream, again won the parliamentary election. At the time of the drafting this fiche it was too early fully assess the election process, however, according to the preliminary [findings and conclusions](#) of the International Election Observation Mission led by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), "the election day was generally procedurally well-organised and administered in an orderly manner but marked by a tense environment, with frequent compromises in vote secrecy and several procedural inconsistencies, as well as reports of intimidation and pressure on voters that negatively impacted public trust in the process."

Demographics

In January 2024, Georgia's population was just below 3.7 million, which means a 1% decrease in relation to the previous year. However, in the last ten years, the population size has been stable. According to UN projections, in 2100, the population will be below 3 million; thus, Georgia is regarded as a country with a relatively stable population.

The size of the population is affected by natural increase (relation between births and deaths) and net migration. During the last ten years, between 2014 and 2024, the natural increase was positive in six years and negative in the last four years. Net migration has been negative, except in 2020 and 2022. Positive net migration in 2022 was caused by migration from Russia, which was related to the war in

Ukraine. According to [estimates](#) from the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the first nine months of 2022 alone, 112,000 Russian citizens arrived in the country. According to official statistics of the Geostat, in 2022, 23 115 thousand Russian citizens immigrated to Georgia, and 57% of them were male. However, in 2023, the number of Russian citizens who emigrated from Georgia increased. In 2022, it was almost 6 000, and in 2023, it was over 35 000. The main reasons for the outflux of Russians are the feeling of being unwelcomed in Georgia and the uncertainty related to the legalisation of their status in Georgia (Kucera, 2024).

Georgia, for many years, has been an emigration country. According to recent UN estimates, in 2020, 861 000 Georgians lived abroad, about 19% of the total Georgian population (UN, 2020). Most of these emigrants were in Russia, with Greece, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, the United States, and Armenia hosting significant numbers. Migration patterns have shifted, especially after the 2008 conflict with Russia, favouring destinations such as the EU, Israel and North America due to better employment, security and living conditions (SCMI, 2019). Among the newer EU Member States, Poland has become attractive to Georgian migrants due to more flexible migration policies.

The population of Georgia is also ageing, as evidenced by the growing median age and steadily growing share of persons aged 65 and over, which in 2024 reached 16% (19% for females and 12% for males). At the same time, the share of the young population aged 15-24 has also been steadily decreasing, reaching 11% in 2024, while in 2004, it was 16%.

In 2024, 61% of the population live in urban areas, with 1.3 million (34%) living in Tbilisi.

Key economic developments

Georgia continues to show strong economic resilience and growth. The GDP growth rate, after a significant decrease in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, impressively increased in 2021 (10.6%) and 2022 (11%) and remained strong at the level of 7.5% in 2023. In the first five months of 2024, the real growth reached 9.3%. According to the World Bank, the growth is driven by the IT sector, professional services, financial services, construction, and transport.

The economy's structure shows a consistent pattern, with services contributing the largest share (61.7% in 2023) of added value, followed by industry (19%) and agriculture (6.1%). This indicates a sustained shift towards a service-oriented economy, with industry also playing an important role in economic structure.

According to the World Bank, growth in Georgia has been driven by capital accumulation and the contribution of labour and human capital has been modest. The contribution of the labour force to growth was negative in recent years, possibly due to an ageing population and the outmigration of young people. Human capital's contribution to growth has also been modest (World Bank, 2023).

The low contribution of the labour force to economic development is visible in the low employment rate and a relatively high share of employment in agriculture, which is characterised by low productivity.

The spatial distribution of economic development points to strong concentration. In 2023, almost 51% of value added was generated in Tbilisi and 27% in three main regions (Adjara, Imereti, and Kvemo Kartli), with three main cities: Batumi, Kutaisi, and Rustavi. Smaller cities cannot attract businesses and have lost their competitiveness. In many areas, particularly rural and remote, access to basic services remains a challenge.

Inflation fell sharply from 11.9% in 2022 to 2.5% in 2023, influenced by lower food and fuel costs and a weakening Georgian currency. This prompted the National Bank of Georgia to cut interest rates.

The employment rate increased slightly to 42.9%, suggesting a recovering labour market. Remittances remain crucial, underlining their importance for the socio-economic stability of Georgian families. The government's strategic focus on inclusive economic development, innovation, and private sector competitiveness is evident, aiming to create an environment that enables economic recovery and sustainable growth.

Georgia's Development Strategy Vision 2030, encompasses a wide range of initiatives designed to transform the country's economy by 2030, promoting growth, sustainability and closer integration with the European Union. The strategy focuses on several key objectives and targets, reflecting a comprehensive approach to economic development.

Key social issues

Georgia faces significant challenges in the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups in education and the labour market, characterised by regional, ethnic and gender disparities in equal access to quality education and employment opportunities.

Due to the improvement of the economic situation, poverty also decreases visibly. Between 2014 and 2023, the percentage of the population living below the absolute poverty rate, based on substance minimum, decreased from 23.5% to 11.8%. At the same time, relative poverty, measured as 60% of median income, also decreased, but to a lesser extent. In 2023, 19.8% of the population lived under this poverty line. The poverty was significantly higher in rural areas and among minors (0-17 years old). In the following years, due to economic growth, a further reduction of poverty is expected (UNDP, 2023).

According to the latest census in 2014, 13.1% of the country's population (488 136 people) have ethnic minority backgrounds, with Azerbaijanis and Armenians being the largest groups. However, in some regions, ethnic minorities account for about half of the population. Only 34% of people with ethnic minority backgrounds speak Georgian fluently, while in the case of Azerbaijanis, the share is only 19%.

According to the Law on General Education, minority groups in Georgia have the right to primary and basic education in their languages, although Georgian is the main language of instruction. In vocational education and training (VET), minority students can take entrance exams in their own language. However, they must enrol in Georgian language modules to participate in vocational programmes.

Disadvantaged and minority students, especially immigrants, have significantly lower educational attainment and school graduation rates. The current curriculum and resources of the education system do not fully cater to students from linguistic minorities or with special needs. The main barriers identified by the UN Women for children with disabilities to accessing school education include poor infrastructure, inadequate and scarce educational materials, teachers' limited competencies in inclusive practices, lack of professionals in special education, and low awareness among parents and school staff regarding inclusive education (UN Women, 2023). University admissions and the lack of financial support systems hinder access to higher education for students from low-income families, thereby reinforcing inequality.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

Education strategy and legal framework for education

Education in Georgia is compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 14. The school system is divided into elementary (six years, age group 6 to 12), basic (three years, age group 12 to 15), and secondary (three years, age group 15 to 18; or, alternatively, two years of vocational education). Access to higher education requires graduation from upper secondary school and passing national examinations to enrol in an accredited higher education institution.

In August 2021, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) continued its commitment to long-term planning by developing a new Single National Strategy for Education and Science for the period from 2022 to 2030¹. Building on the achievements under the previous strategy², this strategy aims to address the still-existing challenges in education in Georgia.

The new strategy sets three main priorities:

- **Quality and relevance:** focused on improving skills of teachers, enhancing access to good quality resources and investing in educational infrastructure, strengthening cooperation between schools and key stakeholders.
- **Equality, inclusion, and diversity:** focused on ensuring equal access to education regardless of socio-economic status, place of residence, ethnicity/language, special educational needs, and disabilities. The strategy envisages measures addressing the specific needs of disadvantaged groups, including eliminating gender biases, and underlines plans to invest in developing the competencies of special teachers and other educational institutions' personnel.
- **Governance, financing, and accountability:** concentrated on creating a preschool education system, development of monitoring and evaluation practices, strengthening system of monitoring of the situation of graduates, optimisation of the school system, combined with strengthening the autonomy of schools and increasing their capacity, enhancing external quality assurance mechanisms. This priority also includes revising the VET financing model, which will include the increased role of the private partners and elements of performance-based management, as well as strengthening the quality assurance mechanisms.

The single strategy includes the strategies for each sub-sector of education, including VET. However, adult education is in fact included in different elements of education system.

The Action Plan 2022-2024, which covers the whole education sector, provides details on activities to implement the various strategic goals and performance indicators with baseline and target values. The Ministry also publishes the Action Plan monitoring report every year. Work on the new action plan for 2025-2027 is in progress.

In December 2022, the **State Youth Strategy 2023-2026** and its action plan for 2023 were approved by the resolution of the Government of Georgia³. The strategy covers the following areas, among the others: development of non-formal education and youth work, youth economic empowerment, youth participation. The strategy is broadly aligned with EU objectives in youth policy field. At the end of 2023, responsibility for youth policies was transferred from the Ministry of Culture and Sports to the Ministry of Education and Science, leading to its rebranding as the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth. In addition, the Youth Agency is being brought under the jurisdiction of the renamed ministry. Its new leadership, appointed in 2024, is keen on accelerating reforms in non-formal education,

¹ All key strategic documents published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia are published [here](#)

² Unified Strategy of Education and Science 2017-2021

³ <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5675992?publication=0>

vocational education and training (VET) and general education, which led to the unveiling of a fresh reform policy agenda and priorities in 2024.

In December 2023, the Minister of Education presented for the first time a document setting out the national objectives for general education (from 2024 onwards) and announced the new priorities for the reform of general education:

1. **Revision of the national education goals:** this reform aims to strengthen students' national identity, teach values, and enhance their awareness of patriotism, Georgian traditions, culture, and family principles.
2. **Professional development of teachers** with an emphasis on improving the professional development framework for educators to ensure that they are well-equipped to meet the demands of modern education.
3. **Support for teachers and salary increases** include a substantial increase (GEL 500) in salaries starting from 1 July 2024, which will benefit around 70% of the teaching workforce. In addition, school administrators and support staff will also receive salary increases.
4. **School autonomy:** The reform includes measures to increase the autonomy of schools and to enhance their capacity for local decision-making while maintaining central government control over education policy.
5. **Public school principal selection process:** efforts will be made to improve the selection process for new principals, addressing challenges such as a lack of applicants and ensuring a fair and inclusive environment for candidate selection.
6. **Curriculum overhaul** with a significant update of the national curriculum, particularly at the level of secondary education, aimed at supporting students' self-discovery and their talents through integrated vocational, humanities and science programmes alongside the standard curriculum.
7. **Infrastructure development:** A major investment in school infrastructure has been planned, including the construction and refurbishment of school facilities, with a budget of GEL 1 billion to ensure that all schools are structurally renovated by the end of 2027. This includes the construction of 75 new public schools starting in 2024, with an investment of GEL 700 million.

In August 2024 Ministry of Education, Science and Youth approved a new **2024-2030 Strategy of professional orientation, counselling and career planning in formal education**⁴. The strategy takes stock of key challenges for the career guidance, such as low awareness of the importance of such services, fragmentation of services and lack of coordination between existing services in different parts of the education system and employment services, lack of qualified staff, nonexistence of quality assurance and control system and insufficient level of inclusiveness. The strategy formulates three key objectives:

- Support the quality, continuity and inclusiveness of career management services at all levels of formal education;
- Support for the institutional development of the career management system;
- Ensuring sustainability of career management services.

It should be noted that the strategy does not contain any measurable goals or targets or indicate the sources of financing.

In September 2024, the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth approved a VET Strategy for the period from 2024 to 2030. EU Skills4Jobs project has supported the government in drafting the Strategy as one of the elements of the Single National Strategy for Education and Science 2022-2023. The first draft of the strategy was prepared in 2022. Due to the delay in adopting the Strategy, in 2024,

⁴ Order No. 139/N of Minister of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia, August 27, 2024, Regarding the approval of the 2024-2030 strategy of professional orientation, counselling and career planning in formal education.

the Ministry submitted for consultation an updated Strategy for 2024-2030. The new Strategy has **three strategic goals**:

- provision of flexible, diverse and inclusive vocational education services;
- promotion of continuous development and autonomy of vocational education providers;
- transformation of the skills ecosystem through shared responsibilities between the public and private sectors.

The strategy envisages numerous activities, such as:

- increase access to vocational education by using the network of public schools;
- better aligning education content to the labour market needs;
- development of work-based learning;
- enhancement of key competencies as a part of vocational education and training;
- development of career guidance services;
- introduction of the new model of financing VET, performance base and strengthen management of VET institutions;
- improvement of competencies of vocational education teachers;
- investment in the infrastructure of VET providers;
- strengthening the inclusiveness of VET;
- Enhancing cooperation with key stakeholders;
- Investing in a quality assurance system;
- Promotion and internalisation of VET.

Education expenditure

Total general government spending on education registered a slight increase from 3.2% in 2022 to 3.7% of GDP in 2023. The share of total government spending on education increased to 12.3%.

The share of spending on VET in the total budget of the Ministry of Education⁵ has increased from 3.0% in 2018 to 4.3% in 2021. Despite the gradual increase in education spending in recent years, the amount is below the average of 4.4% in upper- to middle-income countries.

Access, participation and early school leaving

The level of educational attainment of the Georgian population (aged 15 and over) has been high and stable during the last ten years. In 2023, 31.2% are high-skilled, 58.1% have a medium level of skills, and only 10.7% are low-skilled. Women are slightly better educated, with 32.6% having a high level of education compared to 29.5% for men. In terms of aspirations, a high level of educational attainment has always been a social norm in Georgia.

Improving access to preschool education is one of the priorities of the Georgian government. Unfortunately, there is a lack of reliable data on the enrolment rate. According to the Geostat data, in the school year 2023/2024, 141 300 children attended public preschool education. It was 13% less compared to the academic year 2017/2018. At the same time, the number of children aged 2-5 old decreased by 4%. It shows that the actual access to public preschool education gets worse. When relating the number of children attending public preschool education to the total number of children aged 2-5, one can notice that preschool coverage decreased from 77.8% in 2017 to 70.3% in 2023⁶. A

⁵ Source: Ministry of Finance

⁶ Geostat, [Early and Preschool Education](#).

similar trend was observed by the UNICEF (UNICEF, 2023). According to the Child Welfare Survey, the main barriers to access to preschool education were the lack of available services in the neighbourhood and being on the waiting list (UNICEF, 2023). Children with disadvantaged backgrounds (living in rural areas, from ethnic minorities, with disabilities) have even more limited access to preschool education.

Participation in primary and secondary education in Georgia is almost universal. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, in 2023, Georgia's gross enrolment rate in primary education was 103%, and the net enrolment rate in 2018 was 96.4%. The country also has a high gross enrolment rate in secondary education (104% in 2023) and net enrolment rate (96% in 2018)⁷.

Georgia also has a **strong culture of pursuing higher education**. In the academic year 2023/2024, 178 thousand students studied. 51% of them were women, and 59% studied in public institutions. The most popular programs were social science, business and law (37% of students), health and welfare (24%), and science (14%). Women favour programmes in business and law, arts and humanities, and science. Men tend to dominate in programmes in engineering, manufacturing and construction. A similar gender distribution remains in terms of doctoral students (GEOSTAT, 2023).

Between the academic year 2014/2015 and 2023/2024, the number of students grew by 43%. At the same time, the gross enrolment rate increased from 46% to 78.5%. Faster growth was observed for men (52%) than women (36%), in private institutions (111%) than public (26%). Fields of study with the sharpest growth of the number of students were health and welfare (221%), science (127%) and education (109%). Some decrease was observed in humanities and arts (-18.5%) and Engineering, manufacturing and construction (-8.5%).

The share of VET students in upper secondary education has decreased during the last decade, from 14.6% in 2013 to 7.2% in 2022. Also, number of students dropped significantly from over 21 000 in 2014 to less than 11 000 in 2022 (by 50%). The number of girls and boys in VET is practically equal. Girls tend to dominate programmes in the health, social welfare, business, administration and law, service. while boys represent the vast majority of students in engineering, manufacturing, construction and ICT specialisations (GEOSTAT, 2023).

In Georgia in 2023, 96 authorised VET institutions were operating. Out of those, 54 are public. Vocational colleges account for 79% of all VET institutions, and higher education institutions⁸ account for 19%. The number of institutions dropped by 31% compared to 2014. The number of private institutions decreased sharply (- 60%), while the number of public institutions increased by 54%. At the same time, the conditions of VET education improved. The number of teachers in VET institutions has grown by 93%. Also, the budget allocated to VET education grew significantly from 0.1% of GDP in 2015 to 0.18% in 2023.

According to a recent study conducted by the ETF, **the leading cause of low enrolment into VET education** is low awareness of the VET institutions' offers, which is exacerbated by limited access to good quality career guidance. Additionally, only a limited number of colleges offer the most relevant and attractive courses and programmes from the labour market perspective. Another barrier is insufficient support in terms of meeting material and financial students' needs, particularly those with disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, financial obstacles limit access to VET education despite tuition-free education. Another limitation is the insufficient public transportation, particularly outside major cities. Older learners often combine education with work or other responsibilities, but the offer is not flexible enough, offering mostly long-term day courses.

The low level of completion of initial VET even worsens the situation. As stated in the VET System Development Report Summary from the Skills Agency, among the students who were supposed to graduate in 2022, only 56% completed their studies. Additionally, completion rates have decreased in the previous two years. According to the Ministry, it is primarily due to increased suspension rates

⁷ <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators#>

⁸ According to the According the Georgian Law of vocational education, higher and general education institutions have the right to implement vocational educational programs without attaining the additional authorisation. Among these, the higher education institution can implement any kind of vocational education programme, short cycle educational programmes, vocational training and retraining programmes and national language programmes. Source: <https://ege.ge/en/page/static/79/profesiuli-ganatleba>

rather than dropout rates. The completion rate is lower for men, younger persons, and for those studying in Tbilisi. Also, the completion rate is slightly lower in public institutions and dual programs compared to modular programs and some fields of study (Skills Agency, 2023).

A higher proportion of men than women drop out of VET. The profile of students who have dropped out of VET shows that this group is quite vulnerable, comprising people with disabilities, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and socially vulnerable people.

The most common reasons for dropping out of school are institutional, such as the inconvenient location of the VET institution, inflexible study schedules, parallel employment or study, lack of funds for food, transport, and accommodation on campus, a lack of possibilities for practical learning at VET institutions, and limited demand for VET certification by employers.

A new pilot scheme was launched in the autumn of 2024. Vocational education programs will be integrated with the National Curriculum in twenty public schools selected for the pilot scheme. This will allow students in the 11th grade to combine general and vocational education. Concerns about quality assurance in the context of the planned provision of VET need to be addressed to make the reform relevant for learners and the labour market.

In Georgia, the participation rate in lifelong learning remains very low. However, it recovered slightly to 1.2% in 2021 and further increased to 1.6% in 2022.

PISA results

Georgian students' scores are below the OECD average in all three domains. In mathematics, the average result for Georgia is 390 (OECD average: 472); in reading, 374 (OECD average: 476); and in science, 384 (OECD average: 485). Georgia's PISA 2022 results are stable compared to 2018 and 2012 but below the highs of 2015.

Georgia's results are characterised by a very high share of low-performing and a tiny share of high-performing students. In mathematics, 66.4% of students are low performers (scoring below Level 2), while the OECD average is 31.1%. Only 1.1% of Georgian students are top performers (scoring at Level 5 or 6), while in the OECD, it is 8.7%. In reading and science, the proportions are similar. In mathematics, girls and boys equally score on average. The share of low performers is significantly higher for boys than girls. In reading, the share of low performers among boys is 74.3%, while among girls, 59%. A similar situation is observed in OECD countries, although Georgia has a broader gap between boys and girls.

Socio-economic status plays a role in educational achievement, with advantaged students outperforming their disadvantaged peers by 65 points in mathematics. However, the system is characterised by a relatively high level of fairness. The mentioned above gap is smaller than the OECD average. This gap narrowed between 2015 and 2022, mainly due to the decrease in average performance in the top quarter, while students' performance in the bottom quarter remained stable. Socioeconomic status explained 8% of the variation in math scores in Georgia, which is lower than the 15% average across OECD countries.

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

The situation of youth in the labour market in Georgia is quite challenging. In 2023, only 21% of youth aged 15 to 24 worked, compared to an average employment rate of 35% in the EU-27. The low employment rate is linked to the high youth unemployment rate of 35% in 2023, while the youth unemployment rate in the EU-27 stands at 14.5%.

One factor contributing to youth underemployment may be the low availability of part-time jobs. From 2020 to 2023, on average, only 9% of employed youth held part-time jobs, which is significantly lower than in the EU. The scarcity of job opportunities for youth is a key reason for high rates of youth migration, increased participation in tertiary education, and a substantial percentage of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) (PMCG, 2024).

The proportion of people aged between 15 and 29 **not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) has decreased from 35.1% in 2020 to 26.9% in 2023** but remains high. The EU-27 average in 2023 is 11.2%. The share of NEETs is significantly higher among women (31%) than men (23%). It is linked to reproduction and care responsibilities, which are still mostly undertaken by women.

The NEET group is heterogeneous. For women, the most prevailing condition is economic inactivity, whereas unemployment is the most common status among NEET men. Yet, a sizable share of NEETs is discouraged or unavailable (World Bank, 2019). Having the status of NEET hampers skills building and increases the risk of labour market exclusion in the future.

Being a NEET correlates with one's socioeconomic status. More than 60% of NEETs belong to low-income families. Moreover, the probability of becoming a NEET is high for young people whose parents are unemployed or have emigrated (UN Women, 2023).

2.2 Initial VET and adult learning

Strategic and legal framework for initial VET and adult learning

In 2018, the Georgian Parliament adopted the Framework Law on VET – an important milestone for the development of skills and VET from a lifelong learning perspective. The Law covers both initial VET and adult learning.

Apart from the Law, VET in Georgia is governed by the technical regulations of the Georgian government and the following orders issued by the Minister for Education and Science of Georgia:

1. Decree of the Government of Georgia on approval of the rules and conditions for the implementation of the Vocational Education Programme/Short-cycle Education Programme/Vocational Training Programme/Vocational Retraining Programme in the form of work-based learning⁹;
2. Decree of the Government of Georgia on approval of the procedure and conditions for obtaining the status of a training enterprise¹⁰;
3. Decree of the Government of Georgia on the development and approval of occupational standard(s)¹¹;
4. Order of the Minister for Education and Science of Georgia on approval of rules on the drafting, development and approval of a VET standard and module(s)¹²;
5. Order of the Skills Agency on approval of methodological guidelines for sector skills organisations.

VET governance and financing arrangements

In January 2024, Georgia's Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) was renamed the **Ministry of Education, Science and Youth** (MoESY) when the youth policy portfolio was returned under the Ministry. The MoESY is the main policy-making body for education. The **Education Management Information System** (EMIS), which is a legal entity under the MoES, is responsible for collecting data and evidence on the education system as a whole. The **National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement** (NCEQE) is accountable for quality assurance at all levels of education. It authorises educational institutions by granting them licences and accrediting educational programmes, including vocational qualifications. It is used to coordinate the work of sectoral organisations in developing occupational standards, but this function has been transferred to the new Skills Agency.

⁹ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5541071?publication=0>

¹⁰ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5560778?publication=0>

¹¹ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5822204?publication=0>

¹² <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5900025?publication=0>

The **Skills Agency** was jointly established in 2021 by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It facilitates the introduction of new vocational programmes to address the needs of the labour market, supports innovative training initiatives and promotes employability. It has been operational since March 2022. The Agency supports skills development through research and development and facilitates the establishment of Sector Skills Organisations (SSOs). These are co-funded by the Agency to perform certain functions, such as developing standards. They are established jointly with sector-based associations and professional communities to ensure the labour market relevance of standards and qualifications and facilitate work-based learning opportunities. SSOs are involved in VET final examinations.

The **Skills Agency** is governed by a public-private partnership, and its supervisory board includes six business associations and six line ministries. The Agency is funded by a government subsidy, and its work is also supported by international donors such as UNDP and the Asian Development Bank. In 2023, it had approximately eighty employees, including short-term and contract staff.

The **Youth Agency** was established in 2019 and promotes and implements youth policies. The National Youth Strategy for the period from 2023 to 2026 was adopted in December 2022. The framework for the Strategy was set by the National Youth Policy Concept for the period from 2020 to 2030¹³, approved by Parliament in July 2020, which focused on developing a strategy and action plan that bring together Georgia's international and national commitments on youth. Since January 2024, the Youth Agency has been operating under the jurisdiction of the MoESY following the transfer of the youth policy portfolio from the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

The **National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC)**, under the jurisdiction of the MoES, aims to improve the quality of education through valid, fair and reliable assessment and examination. The NAEC provides a wide range of tests and other instruments for assessing achievement and competence, from school examinations to tests for civil servants. It also conducts the PISA Test in Georgia. The **National Centre for Teacher Professional Development** provides in-service training for secondary general and vocational teachers and trainers. The **Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency** deals with school construction and equipment. In 2023, the Ministry established a new **National Centre for Education Research**, which is responsible for analysis and research in the area of education policy. The focus in 2023 was on secondary education. The Centre has already published its first research papers on textbooks, professional and career development system for teachers, and the new curriculum.

Sector Skills Organisations (SSOs) are sectoral, not-for-profit organisations created to identify skills needs, develop and support the implementation of new qualifications, and enhance cooperation between VET institutions and business entities. Since January 2022, SSOs have been created in nine sectors, among others: tourism, information and communication technologies, energy, construction and engineering, artisan, sports, and agriculture. The Skills Agency coordinates and supervises the work of SSOs.

The **National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC)**, under the jurisdiction of the MoES, aims to improve the quality of education through valid, fair and reliable assessment and examination. The NAEC provides a wide range of tests and other instruments for assessing achievement and competence, from school examinations to tests for civil servants. It also conducts the PISA Test in Georgia. The **National Centre for Teacher Professional Development** provides in-service training for secondary general and vocational teachers and trainers. The **Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency** deals with school construction and equipment. In 2023, the Ministry established a new **National Centre for Education Research**, which is responsible for analysis and research in the area of education policy. The focus in 2023 was on secondary education. The Centre has already published its first research papers on textbooks, the professional and career development system for teachers, and the new curriculum.

¹³ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4936402?publication=0>

Qualifications, validation and recognition

Legislation regulating the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was adopted in 2019. The new framework has an eight-level structure, with the level descriptor categories ‘Knowledge and Understanding’, ‘Skills’ and ‘Responsibility and Autonomy’, compatible with the European Qualifications Framework.

General education qualifications are placed at NQF levels 2 and 4, vocational qualifications at NQF levels 3 to 5, and higher education qualifications at levels 6 to 8 (ETF, 2021b). Continuing vocational education leads to qualifications at NQF levels 2 to 5. Any legal entity can award vocational qualifications, including those outside the formal education system, when authorised¹⁴ to provide short-term training/retraining programmes independently or in cooperation with an educational institution.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) was formalised in 2010. However, there was no validation due to a lack of demand and fears of malpractice in its implementation. RPL was revised in 2019 to create a separate certification process for RPL providers and a network of certified assessors. As of 2023, validation services are available in eleven fields of study, and the number of VET providers authorised to offer validation services is gradually increasing. However, the results are still modest, as only nineteen applicants received partial certification, and one person received full certification (ETF, 2023). The leading causes of low uptake are a lack of awareness of the RPL and low confidence in and demand for formal VET credentials

Quality and quality assurance

The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) is responsible for ensuring quality in all levels of education, including VET. The Law on Development of the Quality of Education (2010) established a framework for quality assurance in VET institutions, which includes both internal and external mechanisms. VET institutions are responsible for setting up and implementing internal quality assurance mechanisms, while the NCEQE is responsible for external quality assurance.

The NCEQE grants licenses to educational institutions, authorising them to operate. The framework includes two key instruments for ensuring quality in the VET system: authorisation (licensing of educational institutions) and accreditation (quality assurance at the program level). In 2020, new standards for the authorisation of VET institutions were approved, focusing on assessing all aspects of the educational process and ensuring stakeholder engagement. In 2023, the NCEQE started using some EQAVET indicators to monitor developments in VET, following its participation in the ETF-led VET Quality Assurance Forum. The MoESY is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the VET strategy and system. It produces progress reports on strategy implementation, including VET (MoES, 2022). The MoESY also evaluates and monitors the strategies within its remit of competence. It can also request external evaluations, as was the case with Georgia’s VET Strategy 2013-2020, when the ETF was commissioned to conduct the evaluation. The State Audit Office also conducts thematic audits on the performance of the education system. Audit reports are available in English on the website of the institution¹⁵.

Work-based learning arrangements

In 2022, the Government of Georgia adopted Decree N 416 the ‘Rules and Conditions for Delivering Vocational Education Programme/ Short-cycle Education Programme/Vocational Training Programme/ Vocational Retraining Programme in the Form of Work-based Learning’. The new law was based on experiences drawn from prior pilots supported by donor organisations. The law defines two VET schemes that include work-based learning: dual learning and cooperative learning. Dual learning is a scheme of at least 24 months implemented jointly by a VET institution and a training enterprise, with at least **50%** of learning outcomes to be achieved in a real work environment, but, in practice, 60-70% of learning outcomes are achieved in this way. Cooperative learning assumes that less than 50% of

¹⁴ <https://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=9133&lang=eng>

¹⁵ <https://sao.ge/en/reports?IsAudit=true>

learning outcomes are achieved in a real work environment. Both run in parallel to school-based VET and they lead to formal VET qualifications levels and are open to people aged 15 and over (there is no upper age limit).

According to EMIS data, in 2023, 15% of all students enrolled in VET participated in work-based learning schemes, with only 3% participating in the dual scheme. Work-based learning was more popular among female students (21%) than male students (10%), reflecting the fact that the highest numbers of students enrolled in WBL are in programs dominated by female students, such as nursery (25% of all students enrolled in WBL programs), pharmacy (16%), and teaching (9%). Work-based learning schemes are also more prevalent among older students i.e. aged 25 and above (18%) than younger students aged 15-24 (13%).

Between 2022 and 2023, the number of learners enrolled in work-based learning schemes increased by 39%. Therefore, the share of VET students enrolled in work-based learning schemes rising from 12% to 15%. However, the growth of work-based learning can be attributed to the cooperative mode (an increase of 68%), while the number of students enrolled in the dual mode decreased by 16%.

Digital education and skills

The Unified National Strategy of Education 2022-2030 emphasises digital aspects of education in many ways. The strategy points to the need for developing digital skills as one of the key competencies and invests in digital resources and infrastructure to ensure better access to high-quality education. The strategy also underlines the plan to ensure safe and inclusive digital learning environments. The development of digital technologies is also seen as a tool for ensuring access to education for students from remote areas and with special educational needs.

Performance indicators to monitor progress in digitisation are provided in the EMIS Medium-Term Action Plan¹⁶ for the period 2023-2026, which describes the programmes, sub-programmes and activities to be implemented within the individual priorities. All public schools in Georgia (both primary and secondary), including VET, are connected to the internet.

While Georgia's general education system was better prepared to move to online learning mode during the pandemic, the capacity of the VET system was not up to the challenge and VET provision was suspended for several months. Over the past decade, VET institutions in Georgia have been extensively re-equipped with computer labs and infrastructure through various government or donor-supported initiatives (ETF, 2019). However, there has been no formal teacher training in digital skills and competencies (DSC), although the use of ICT-supported teaching across the curriculum is mandatory (ETF, 2019).

Despite various DSC initiatives in VET colleges and donor-funded DSC programmes, Georgia needs to strengthen its capacity to develop the digital skills of teachers and trainers across the VET system to ensure technology-enabled hybrid education and digitally-driven instruction for learners. The Skills Agency has developed an e-platform aimed at developing and strengthening the capacity of VET institutions in blended learning to deliver distance and online courses.

To better respond to the labour market demand for IT specialists, The Georgian Agency for Innovation and Technology (GITA) implemented Georgia National Innovation Ecosystem Project, supported by the World Bank, which enables over 3 000 people to complete advanced ICT courses¹⁷.

Statistics on education and training

Since 2012, the Education Management Information System (EMIS) has been operating under the Ministry of Education and Science as the legal entity responsible for collecting, aggregating, analysing and using data and information on education for policy planning, formulation, monitoring and evaluation at all levels – from early childhood to higher education.

¹⁶ [Medium Term Action Plan \(2023-2026\) N 1.1. Description of programs, sub-programs and activities implemented within the framework of priorities.pdf](#)

¹⁷ <https://www.ict.gov.ge/>

The EMIS has developed and maintains customised systems for different levels of education, including VET¹⁸. The authorisation rules for VET providers require all VET institutions, including those that are privately owned, to report to the EMIS. Although the EMIS is considered a reliable source of information and data, the use of data remains somewhat limited. The State Audit Office conducted a performance audit of the EMIS in 2019 (SAO, 2019) and recommended that the MoESY and the EMIS further develop the functionalities of the system to ensure a user-friendly data interface, including analytical dashboards, graphs and data visualisations, to make it easier for the Ministry and other stakeholders to analyse current developments.

The MoESY, with support from the World Bank, has launched a VET portal, [VET.ge](https://vet.ge), which provides user-friendly and easy access to the latest VET information, electronic databases and training materials. This initiative is designed to meet the needs of different stakeholders, especially VET students, by improving their access to career options. In addition, the portal serves as a resource for decision-makers in the VET sector by providing relevant data.

The MoESY conducts regular tracer surveys of VET graduates. The limited representativeness of the survey does not allow it to be considered a sufficiently reliable source of data, but the practice continues, and survey results indicate a gradual improvement in the employability of VET graduates (ETF, 2021a).

¹⁸ [Order N11 N On approval of the rules and conditions for the establishment and administration of the Vocational Education Management Information System.pdf](#)

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

Labour market characteristics

Georgia's labour market has significantly improved in recent years, but it continues to face structural challenges. These include a high share of persons not in employment, particularly high share of persons outside the labour market, a significant proportion of people engaged in subsistence farming through self-employment, difficulties for women in securing employment, and a lack of job opportunities for highly skilled professionals.

Between 2021 and 2023, the unemployment rate decreased from 20.6% to 16.4%, the lowest level since 2010. However, it is still significantly higher than the EU-27 average (6.1%). At the same time, the labour market participation rate for the age group 15 and over increased from 50.9% to 53.3%. The total number of persons active in the labour market increased by 4%. The employment rate has risen 40.4% to 44.5%, and the number of persons in employment increased by 11%.

Despite these improvements, Georgia's labour market situation still presents challenges compared to the EU-27. According to the Eurostat, in 2022 the labour market participation rate for individuals aged 20-64, stands for 65.9%, while the EU-27 average of 79.3%. The employment rate in Georgia stood at 54%, which is significantly lower than the EU-27 average of 75%.

The employment rate is particularly low for women, people with a lower level of education (primary, lower and upper secondary), young people and the elderly (age group 60 and over), and people living in rural areas.

■ Employment by sector and occupation

According to the Geostat data, the main sectors of employment in 2023 were agriculture, with a share of 16.5% of the total number of employed persons; wholesale and retail trade (15.5%); industry (12.2%), education (11.5%) and construction (8.8%). Health and social work (81% of employees were female in 2022) and education (80%) and construction (96% of employees were male), transport (87%) and industry (67%) are the sectors with highest sectoral gender segregation.

While the number of employed persons increased by 4% between 2017 and 2023, there are variations among sectors. The most significant increase was registered in the sectors of construction (40%), accommodation and food services (33%), administrative and support services (30%), and transportation and storage (22%).

The most significant decrease in the number of employed persons was registered in the sectors of agriculture (- 24%) and education (- 3%). The Information and communication sector also experienced a decrease of 31% between 2017 and 2022. However, in 2023, the trend was reversed, and the number of employed persons almost returned to the level observed in 2017, growing by 36%. This reversal could indicate a boost in the competitiveness of the Georgian economy, but it should be examined in the following years in order to confirm this trend.

In 2023, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development published a five-year skills and occupations forecast based on the macroeconomic model. According to current estimates, the number of employed persons will increase by 90 000 by 2027. The most significant absolute increase in employment is expected in public administration and defence, transport and storage, and education. The largest declines are expected in agriculture and industry.

New jobs will be created in almost all occupational categories, with the exception of skilled agricultural workers, and craftsmen and workers in related trades. On average, replacement demand is expected

to account for 70% of job openings, while new jobs (expansion demand) will account for the remaining 30%. The largest increase in employment is expected in the group of professional¹⁹.

■ **Groups facing difficulties in the labour market**

Some groups are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. Various studies show that women and young people are among **the most disadvantaged** compared to other groups (ETF, 2023). This is also the case for people with a lower level of education. There are also significant territorial disparities, with a clear disadvantage for people from rural areas.

Young people face challenges moving from school to work. It is also affected by the Georgian economy's low ability to create more competitive workplaces. The youth unemployment rate (for the age group 15-24) remains high, despite a decrease from 39.4% in 2020 to 34.5% in 2023, while the youth unemployment rate in the EU-27 stands at 14.5%. At the same time, labour market participation rate decreased from 34.7% to 31.6%, although the employment rate remained stable, changing from 21% to 20.7%, which indicates that young people moved from unemployment outside the labour force.

One factor contributing to youth underemployment may be the low availability of part-time jobs. From 2020 to 2023, on average, only 9% of employed youth held part-time jobs, which is significantly lower than in the EU. The scarcity of job opportunities for youth is a key reason for high rates of youth migration, increased participation in tertiary education, and a substantial percentage of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) (PMCG, 2024).

The decreasing economic activity of youth may be linked to their increasing enrolment in education activity. The gross enrolment rate in higher education has increased significantly in recent years, as described in Chapter 2. Also, the employment rate of recent graduates aged 20-34 increased by almost five percentage points, from 49.4% to 54.8%, which suggests that the situation of those with certain level of education and not in further education has been improving.

As mentioned above, the proportion of people aged between 15 and 29 not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) has decreased from 35.1% in 2020 to 26.9% in 2023 but remains high. The EU-27 average in 2023 is 11.2%. Despite the progress, 200 000 NEETs aged between 15 and 29 still represent a significant portion of the youth population. The share of NEETs is significantly higher among women (31%) than men (23%). They require urgent and coordinated policy action by the government. Implementing a guaranteed scheme could help play a crucial role in reducing the number of NEETs in the future.

Even employed young people often struggle to find stable jobs matching their qualifications. In 2019, more than 40% of young people (aged 15-24) with tertiary education worked in semi-skilled occupations, a significantly higher share than the 27.4% for persons aged 15 and over. This disparity underscores the urgent need for the Georgian economy to create more jobs for high-skilled workers and for young people to acquire skills relevant to the labour market's needs.

Women have a significantly worse position in the labour market than men. Women are more likely to remain outside the labour market. In 2023, the gender gap in the participation rates (15+) for men and women was 22.1 percentage points, with an activity rate of 65.1% for men and 43.1% for women. The gender gap in activity rates has not decreased and persists at 20 percentage points and above since 2015. The gender gap in employment rates (15+) is also significant at 16.2 percentage points, with an employment rate of 53.2% for men and 37.1% for women and the gender gap has persisted at 15 percentage points and above over the years.

Women spend five times more time on unpaid domestic and care work than men in Georgia. The unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men and the lack of accessible and quality care services coupled with existing social norms are major factors that hinder women's economic activity in Georgia. Although recently increased, the maternity benefit still falls short of ILO standards. Moreover, the lack of non-transferable paternity leave and the absence of a maternity

¹⁹ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (2023), [Development of a macroeconomic skills forecasting model for Georgia Analysis of the labour market for the next five years](#).

benefit scheme for those outside of formal employment remain primary challenges (UN Women, 2023).

Wage levels also point to discrimination against women in the labour market. In 2022, the average salary of women was 31.7% lower than the average salary of men. Although the situation has improved compared to previous years – the gap was 36% in 2019 and more than 50% in 2006²⁰ – the gap remains significant.

Georgia's National Statistical Office has estimated the adjusted gender pay gaps, taking into account demographics and job characteristics, to be in 2022 15.4% (hourly) and 23% (monthly)²¹, (EU average 12.7% according to Eurostat in 2022). The adjusted hourly gender pay gap is particularly high for craftsmen and workers in related trades (42.7%), plant and machine operators, and assemblers (49.3%).

Individuals with lower levels of education are less frequently employed. In 2023, only 15.4% of people with a low level of education (aged 15 and over) were in employment, compared to 58.9% of those with a high level of education. Among women, the situation was significantly more difficult, only 10% of those with low level of education were in employment, compared to 21.9% of men.

The risk of unemployment is also significantly higher for this group. In 2023, the unemployment rate was 22.1% for those with a low level of education and 13% for those with a high level of education.

People in rural areas are less economically active. According to the Geostat, in 2023, 49.2% of the population (aged 15 and over) in rural areas was economically inactive, compared to 45% in urban areas. The labour force participation of rural women is about 10 percentage points less than urban women, compared to about two percentage point gap between rural and urban men (UN Women, 2023). Notably, 31% of the population living in rural areas (13% of the total population aged 15 and over) are employed as subsistence farmers (producing agricultural products mainly for family/own consumption). This group is particularly vulnerable to poverty.

Furthermore, according to the Geostat, 16.5% of the employed work in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, while agriculture contributes only 6% to the gross value added. This indicates low productivity in agriculture, resulting in lower income level. In 2023, the average wage in agriculture was 68.8% of the average wage in the economy as a whole. Moreover, women employed in all agricultural sectors are paid less than men.

There is also a notable gender disparity in land ownership among agricultural holdings managed by women and men in Georgia: 82% of agricultural holdings owned by men and only 18% of agricultural holdings owned by women (UN Women, 2023).

■ Skills mismatch

The Georgian labour market faces many other challenges, mainly related to numerous imbalances. The most important is the skills mismatch, which remains a concern in the Georgian labour market, especially for those with higher education. In 2019, 22.4% of employees with upper secondary education worked in low-skill occupations, and 27.4% of employees with tertiary education worked in semi-skilled occupations. Many people with tertiary degrees are often forced to take less qualified jobs. Although labour market matching has improved since 2016, in 2019, just under half of workers in Georgia were still not matched to the highest level of education in their occupational category, suggesting that occupational mismatch is a significant problem in Georgia (ETF, 2023).

■ Low quality jobs

Employment in some labour market segments does not provide sufficient security, stability, and income. Structural problems persist, resulting in a pronounced polarisation of the job market in terms of high- and low-quality jobs as well as formal and informal employment (ETF, 2023).

²⁰ ILO (2023), [Gender Wage Gap in Georgia](#).

²¹ National Statistics Office of Georgia (2021), [Adjusted gender pay gap 2021](#).

The share of own-account workers in the Georgian labour market remains high, at 22% of the employed in 2023. It is significantly higher among men (30.5%) than women (12.1%). These workers are mainly found in rural areas, typically in agriculture, and often lack access to quality training and better employment opportunities.

Additionally, 5.7% of all employed individuals in 2023 were classified as ‘contributing family workers’, with a higher proportion among women (8.1%) than men (3.7%).

Informal employment accounts for a large share of the Georgian labour market. With 27.4% of workers in the non-agricultural sector. This was lower compared to 2020 (31.7%). Informal employment is common in rural areas (32.7%). Men (32.6%) were more likely to be in informal employment than women (21.7%). Informal employment is associated with negative consequences such as low productivity, low wages, poor working conditions, and limited access to social protection.

to address this issue, the government introduced the Public Works Programme in 2022, focusing on individuals receiving Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) who are believed to be working in the informal economy.

▪ Number of registered unemployed

Information on registered job seekers usually provides valuable insight into the labour market situation. However, it should be noted that employed persons can also register as a jobseeker.

According to the legal definition, registered job seekers are all persons between the ages of 15 and 65 who are registered with the Public Employment Service and are capable of working. The data refers to the end of the year (reference period) and is cumulative, i.e. the sum of the number of unemployed as of 1 January and the number of registered unemployed for each month.

Table 1. Number of registered unemployed and structure by sex, age and level of education

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	110,090	34,056	8,992	5,978	15,991
Male	47%	48%	43%	36%	41%
Female	53%	52%	57%	64%	59%
<-29	23%	25%	36%	31%	27%
>29	77%	75%	64%	69%	73%
Low education attainment	21%	12%	26%	37%	15%
Medium education attainment	75%	74%	68%	53%	59%
High education attainment	4%	14%	7%	10%	26%

Source: The platform Worknet.gov.ge; for 2013-2019 Social Service Agency (SSA). State Employment Service Agency (SESA) for the period from 2020 to 2023.

The number of registered jobseekers has decreased since 2019, but in 2023 the number increased to 15 991. The number is unrelated to the LFS unemployment rate, but results from regulations. In 2017, all applicants for Targeted Social Assistance (cash transfers for people at risk of poverty) had to register as job seekers. In 2020, this obligation was removed and as a result, the number of registered unemployed fell significantly. This suggests that TSA recipients are inactive.

On the other hand, job seekers have limited incentives to register because of the lack of unemployment insurance (and unemployment benefits) and limited offer of labour market measures and services.

Most registered jobseekers are women, people aged 29 and over, and people with a medium level of education. In 2023, the share of those with a higher level of education increased, which may result from improvement of the offer of public employment services. In 2023, expenditure on training increased by 86%.

▪ Number of job vacancies

In 2023, there were 11 470 job vacancies registered on the Worknet platform, managed by the State Employment Services Agency (SESA) – 15% more than in the previous year. At the same time, 39 972 unique vacancies were captured the ETF OJV tool²², collecting information from web portals²³. The number of online vacancies decreased by 33%. The characteristics of vacancies registered at Worknet and OJV vary. 75.8% of vacancies on Worknet were for jobs in the service sector, and 23.9% were from the industry. In the case of OJV, 92% of vacancies were in the services sector.

Among the advertisements submitted to Worknet, the most frequently sought employees were in the following sectors: wholesale and retail (31% of all vacancies), accommodation and food service activities (17.9%), and manufacturing (17.1%). The most frequently sought group of occupations were service workers and shop and market sales workers (32%), craft and related trades workers (18%), and elementary occupations (16%). The top five industries (level 2), identified on the basis of OJV, were: administrative and support service activities, computer programming, consultancy and related activities, wholesale and retail trade, accommodation, and education.

Labour market and employment statistics

The National Statistical Office, Geostat, conducts a quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) and publishes, quarterly and annually, key labour market indicators on its website. Worknet is the database of registered jobseekers and vacancies operated by the SESA, but its reliability still needs to be improved.

In 2020, Georgia adopted the new International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards for publishing labour market indicators (MoESD, 2022). The new standards define employment as ‘activities to produce goods and services [for others in exchange] for pay or profit’, excluding ‘own-use production work’ and ‘activities to produce goods and services primarily for own final use by the household’, which were included in the previous standards. According to the new standard, people working on their own family farm are no longer considered self-employed if the farm is not market-oriented and mainly produces agricultural products (more than 50%) for the family’s own consumption. Georgia’s National Statistical Office has only recalculated the aggregated data for key indicators for 2010-2019. These cover the labour force, employment, unemployment, inactive population, unemployment rate, employment rate and participation rate. The data is further disaggregated by gender, urban-rural areas, regions, and age groups, but not all indicators have been recalculated to allow full comparability with previous years.

Since 2017, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD) has provided labour market information to obtain updated information on labour market trends, career guidance and occupational profiles. The MoESD’s Labour Market Information System (LMIS) Division coordinates the analysis of labour market demand and produces regular analytical reports on the labour market, which are published on the LMIS website²⁴. The MoESD analyses job vacancies by sector and occupation using data from private and public job portals.

²² Vacancies posted on online platforms: https://solutions.emsibg.com/dashboard/ETF_GE.

²³ The most important platforms include: myjobs.ge, jobs.ge, hr.ge.

²⁴ <http://www.lmis.gov.ge>

3.2 Employment policy and institutional settings

Strategy and legal framework in the employment policy field

Georgia's **National Labour and Employment Policy Strategy for the period 2019-2023** was adopted in December 2019. The Strategy builds on and takes forward the activities included in the previous strategy and sets two priorities:

- promotion of employment;
- effective functioning of the labour market.

The first priority has three objectives, i.e. reducing the mismatch between demand and supply; strengthening active labour market policies (ALMP); and promoting the participation of women and vulnerable groups in the labour market through targeted social and inclusive employment policies. The second priority focuses on occupational health and safety, the protection of labour rights and improving the management of labour migration.

The Georgian government has drafted a new **National Labour and Employment Policy Strategy for the period 2024-2028**, which is supposed to be adopted in 2025. The draft strategy includes the following policy objectives:

- reducing the mismatch between demand and supply;
- strengthening active labour market policies;
- promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups and groups with different needs in the labour market;
- improving the legal basis and enforcement system for the protection of labour standards;
- contributing to the effective management of labour migration (emigration/migration);
- promoting and developing temporary legal employment of Georgian citizens abroad (circular labour migration).

The **Law on Facilitating Employment**²⁵, adopted in 2020, established a new State Employment Support Agency (SESA) and outlined new employment policy measures. ALMP were previously under the remit of competence of Social Service Agency. SESA's activities are aimed at employers, jobseekers and other stakeholders, and the Agency operates under the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons, Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MIDPLHSA).

On 29 September 2020, the Georgian Parliament adopted an important package of labour law reforms. By providing much greater protection to workers, the adoption of the reforms, which were developed with extensive ILO support, represents a significant step forward in bringing Georgia's labour legislation in line with relevant ILO standards EU directives and achieving a better balance between the rights and interests of workers and employers.

Law on Labour Inspection²⁶, adopted in September 2020, established the Labour Inspection Service as an agency under the MIDPLHSA. Its operations are being developed and, in 2022, the number of inspectors was increased to 109. The Labour Inspection Service provides training to enterprises. It has also reported an increasing awareness of training needs among employers. The EU has underlined the need to further strengthen the labour inspection system by ensuring adequate resources and trained staff. In addition, the Georgian government is considering ratifying ILO's Labour Inspection Convention (C081). Georgia has asked the EU to support capacity building at the Labour Inspection through a twinning project.

The EU has urged Georgia to proceed with quality improvements and timely transposition of outstanding directives. Draft legislation transposing several OSH directives has been developed. The

²⁵ <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4924109?publication=0>

²⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/110472/137421/F-1715825391/GEO110472%20Eng.pdf>

new version of the OSH Law²⁷, which aims to better align the existing Law with the EU *acquis*, was adopted in 2019.

The Confederation of Georgian Trade Unions and the Georgian Employers' Association have been closely involved, particularly in drafting the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the transposition of EU directives and the amendment of the Labour Code.

Initiatives to boost employment

Active labour market policies consist of labour market services and measures. Labour market services include job matching and counselling. In 2023, 12981 jobseekers benefited from these services, marking a 139% increase from 2022. The number of users of job-matching services decreased by 13%, while the number of job seekers using counselling services increased by 248%.

Labour market services were primarily utilised by women and individuals aged over 29, with women being significantly overrepresented among service users.

Table 2. Participants in labour market services

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Job matching	6,170	1,806	2,997	2,263	1963
Male	50%	72%	51%	44%	45%
Female	50%	28%	49%	56%	55%
Under 29	31%	13%	32%	27%	31%
29 and over	69%	87%	68%	73%	69%
Counselling	14,992	3,024	2,584	3,165	11,018
Male	54%	20%	37%	34%	33%
Female	46%	80%	63%	66%	67%
Under 29 years	20%	30%	45%	32%	27%
29 and over	80%	70%	55%	68%	73%

Source: The platform [Worknet.gov.ge](https://www.moh.gov.ge) for 2013-2019 Social Service Agency (SSA). State Employment Service Agency (SESA) for the period from 2020 to 2022.

The labour market measures (LMMs) refers to interventions aimed at supporting disadvantaged groups in the job market. These measures encompass various initiatives such as training, employment incentives, subsidised employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation, and start-up incentives.

In 2023, the total number of participants in LMMs reached 44 068, marking a 34% increase compared to the previous year. This significant increase can be attributed to the introduction of a new Public Works Programme in March 2022, which targeted social assistance recipients, regardless of whether they were registered as job seekers. In 2023, 91% of all LMM participants were involved in this programme.

During the same year, a total of 3 911 individuals took part in vocational training courses, representing a substantial 55% increase from the previous year. Notably, 77% of these participants were women, surpassing their representation among all registered job seekers, which stands at 59%. Additionally, the majority of participants were above 29 years old (70%), with youth slightly overrepresented.

In 2023, employment incentives accounted for a small proportion of participants in the implemented labour market measures, with only 144 participants, marking a 50% decrease from the previous year.

²⁷ <https://www.moh.gov.ge/uploads/files/2019/Failebi/08.06.2019.pdf>

Similarly, the subsidised employment and rehabilitation measure had the lowest number of participants, with only 14 individuals taking part.

The Public Works Programme, which has a significant budget, aims to activate recipients of Targeted Social Assistance (TSA). The Georgian authorities believe that many TSA recipients can work and are engaged in informal work, and the program targets this group. The program offers low-skilled or unskilled work that does not require special training or skills. In 2022, a total of 39 999 people participated in the programme. Participants in the Public Works Programme are not required to register in Worknet, making it impossible to estimate the number of registered job seekers involved in the program from a statistical point of view.

The characteristics of the Public Works Programme participants differ significantly from those of vocational training participants. In this case, men are overrepresented, accounting for 51% of all beneficiaries, and individuals aged 29 and older are also significantly overrepresented, making up 91% of participants.

In the Public Works Programme, TSA recipients are offered four options: to take up a job under the program, apply for a regular vacancy on the open job market, enrol in a short-term training/retraining course, or formalise existing employment relationships/economic activity status. If a TSA recipient chooses one of these options, they are granted a grace period of four years during which they will continue to receive their social assistance benefits without their income being reassessed. If a TSA recipient refuses all options, their household will be reassessed the following year.

Initial statistics on the program’s effectiveness reveal that about 60% of TSA recipients choose a job in the Public Works Programme. However, there is a significant difference between the capital and the provinces, with 7% of TSA recipients in Tbilisi choosing jobs under the programme, compared to 66% outside the capital. This reflects the scarcity of real job opportunities in the provinces compared to the capital city.

■ Transition from unemployment to employment

The main objective of the employment services is to help jobseekers find sustainable and decent employment. In 2021, a total of 3 812 jobseekers entered employment – a significant number, considering that 8 992 jobseekers were registered at the end of the year. The indicator achieved, which measures the number of registered unemployed who moved from unemployment into employment, was 42% of the stock of registered unemployed persons. It was significantly higher for women (49%) than for men (33.5%), and for persons under the age of 29 (82%) than for older persons (65%).

In 2022, a total of 12 645 and, in 2023, 15 899 persons moved from unemployment to employment. The significant difference compared to previous years is due to the additional participants in the Public Works Programme. The figures for 2022 and 2023 include two groups of participants: the group that SESA placed in jobs through its regular placement service and the group of participants in the Public Works Programme who opted for ‘employment on the open labour market’.

Table 3. Transition from unemployment to employment (number) by sex and age

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	1,415	908	3,812	12,645	15,899
Male	575	209	1,287	6,889	7,241
Female	840	699	2,525	5,756	8,658
Under 35	602	421	1,711	2,043	5,904
35 and over	813	487	2,101	10,602	9,995

Source: The platform Worknet.gov.ge for 2013-2019 Social Service Agency (SSA); State Employment Service Agency (SESA) for 2020-2022.

Initiatives to increase the capacity of the public employment services

SESA offers employment services through eleven regional offices across the country, with a staff of 254, and nearly 140 employees directly assisting jobseekers through counselling. Jobseekers in remote areas or outside regional centres have limited access to employment services, but SESA is working to improve accessibility.

The main challenge for the SESA is to ensure high-quality employment services and outreach in all regions. To outreach the remote population, mobile groups were established at the regional level, operational from mid-May 2023. 269 information meetings were conducted, with 4 321 individuals attending, 620 of whom have enrolled in SESA's services and programmes.

The budget for labour market measures increased in 2023 by 65%, compared with the previous year. Also, the number of offices increased, thereby improving access to services. It shows that capacity of the public employment services has improved, however still the scale is insufficient.

A new 'labour market information system'/WorkNet²⁸ is being developed. This task involves the establishment of a working group comprising members from SESA, EU TA, and the Information Technology Agency. Also, the design of the new system is consulted with the business sector to better respond to its needs. The system development in 2024 is supported by experts funded by the World Bank and Agence française de développement.

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²⁸ This differs from the LMIS providing information on labour market needs and developments and on VET and skills training/retraining activities, managed by MoESD, and instead effectively refers to WorkNet, the system managed by SESA for managing the matching of jobseekers and vacancies.

STATISTICAL ANNEX –GEORGIA

The Annex includes annual data from 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 or the last available year.

	Indicator	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
1	Total population (in thousands) ⁽¹⁾	3,725.3	3,720.2	3,722.7	3,708.6	3,712.5	3,760.4	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 and denominator age 15-64, %) ^{(1) c}	19.6	17.7	17.6	17.6	17.6	17.8	
3	GDP growth rate (%)	3.4	5.4	-6.3	10.6	11.0	7.5	
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	Agriculture	8.5	7.3	8.3	7.2	6.6	6.0
		Industry	19.8	20.0	21.1	21.1	21.3	19.0
		Services	60.4	60.1	57.9	58.7	59.0	61.7
5	Public expenditure on education (as% of GDP)	3.2	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.8	MD	
6	Public expenditure on education (as% of total public expenditure)	14.1	14.1	12.1	12.5	12.2	MD	
7	Adult literacy (%)	MD	MD	MD	MD	99.6	MD	
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15 and over) (%)	Low ⁽²⁾	10.7	11.9	11.2	11.3	11.0	10.7
		Medium ⁽³⁾	58.2	57.8	58.9	58.6	58.4	58.1
		High ⁽⁴⁾	31.1	30.2	29.8	30.1	30.5	31.2
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%) ⁽⁵⁾	Total	5.8	9.3	8.2	7.3	6.0	5.3
		Male	6.8	9.6	8.8	7.6	6.1	5.1
		Female	4.7	8.9	7.4	7.0	5.9	5.4
10	Total NET enrolment rate (%)	Lower Secondary	98.3	98.4	98.8	98.9	98.9	MD
		Upper secondary	95.7	98.1	98.3	99.6	99.4	99.4
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	9.0	11.2	7.6	6.6	7.2	MD	
12	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%) ⁽⁶⁾	Reading	51.7	64.4	N/A	N/A	66.9	N/A
		Mathematics	57.1	61.1	N/A	N/A	66.4	N/A
		Science	50.8	64.4	N/A	N/A	64.6	N/A
13	Total	66.8	62.9	50.5	50.9	51.9	53.3	

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Activity rate (aged 15 and over) (%) ⁽⁵⁾	Male	77.2	72.6	62.0	62.9	64.0	65.1
		Female	57.9	54.5	40.4	40.5	41.5	43.1
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15 and over) (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾	Total	33.2	37.1	49.5	49.1	48.1	46.7
		Male	22.8	27.4	38.0	37.1	36.0	34.9
		Female	42.1	45.5	59.6	59.5	58.5	56.9
15	Employment rate (aged 15 and over) (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾	Total	57.4	55.7	41.1	40.4	42.9	44.5
		Male	65.2	63.3	49.5	48.6	51.7	53.2
		Female	50.7	49.0	33.9	33.3	35.4	37.1
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15 and over) (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾	Low ⁽²⁾	30.9	30.5	14.7	13.1	15.3	15.4
		Medium ⁽³⁾	60.1	56.6	37.9	36.9	40.2	42.2
		High ⁽⁴⁾	61.6	63.9	57.5	57.6	58.3	58.9
17	Employment by sector (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾⁽⁸⁾	Agriculture	43.9	38.2	19.9	18.9	17.9	16.5
		Industry	11.0	13.9	17.6	19.0	20.3	21.1
		Services	45.2	48.0	62.5	62.1	61.8	62.4
18	Incidence of self-employment (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾		53.5	49.7	31.9	31.8	32.1	31.0
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾		52.1	47.7	29.0	29.1	29.0	27.9
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15 and over) (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾	Total	14.1	11.6	18.5	20.6	17.3	16.4
		Male	15.6	12.8	20.2	22.7	19.3	18.3
		Female	12.4	10.1	16.2	17.8	14.6	14.0
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15 and over) (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾	Low ⁽²⁾	8.5	10.9	26.5	33.8	27.1	22.1
		Medium ⁽³⁾	13.4	11.8	20.5	23.3	19.5	18.4
		High ⁽⁴⁾	16.1	11.3	14.8	15.5	12.9	13.0
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%) ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾	Total	33.8	30.4	39.4	42.9	39.4	34.5
		Male	31.7	28.9	40.1	44.3	39.8	32.9
		Female	37.6	32.9	38.2	40.5	38.8	37.3
23	Proportion of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	MD	MD	28.5	26.8	23.4	21.0
		Male	MD	MD	28.7	26.8	23.1	20.4
		Female	MD	MD	28.3	26.8	23.7	21.6
	Total	MD	MD	35.1	34.6	30.7	26.9	

	Indicator		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Proportion of people aged 15-29 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Male	MD	MD	32.1	32.1	27.2	23.2
		Female	MD	MD	38.4	37.3	34.5	30.9
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64) ⁽⁹⁾	Total	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.6	MD
		Male	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.3	MD
		Female	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.3	1.8	MD
25	Human Development Index		0.798	0.816	0.807	0.809	0.814	MD

Last update: 18/08/2024

Sources:

Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7: The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

Indicators 10, 11: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

Indicators 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24: INSTAT, LFS

Indicator 12: OECD PISA 2018 Results (Volume I) Annex B1; OECD PISA 2022 Results (Volume I)

Indicator 25: UNDP

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Estimation.

⁽²⁾ Low to lower secondary education and below.

⁽³⁾ Medium to upper secondary education, vocational program and secondary professional programme.

⁽⁴⁾ High to higher professional program, Bachelor, Master and Doctor programme.

⁽⁵⁾ 2017: break in time series.

⁽⁶⁾ PISA: 2018 refers to 2019.

⁽⁷⁾ The data before 2020 are in line with the ILO's standards adopted at the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians. The data from 2020 are in line with the ILO's standards adopted at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

⁽⁸⁾ Before 2021 according to economic activity (Nace rev. 1.1), from 2021 according to Nace rev. 2. ⁽⁹⁾ Applies to 2018.

⁽⁹⁾ Participation in training/lifelong learning refers to the last 4 weeks and not the last 12 months.

Legend:

C = ETF calculations

N/A = not applicable

MD = missing data

ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population (in thousands)	The total population is estimated as the number of people having their usual residence in a country on 1 January of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, countries may report legal or registered residents.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24) (%)	This is the ratio of the youth population (aged 15-24) to the working-age population, usually aged 15-64 (or 15-74 or 15 and over).
3	GDP growth rate (%)	Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2010 U.S. dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services. Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1-5 and includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4. Industry corresponds to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) tabulation categories C-F (revision 3) or tabulation categories B-F (revision 4), and includes mining and quarrying (including oil production), manufacturing, construction, and public utilities (electricity, gas, and water). Services correspond to ISIC divisions 50-99 and they include value added in wholesale and retail trade (including hotels and restaurants), transport, and government, financial, professional, and personal services such as education, health care, and real estate services. Also included are imputed bank service charges, import duties, and any statistical discrepancies noted by national compilers as well as discrepancies arising from rescaling.
5	Public expenditure on education (as% of GDP)	Public expenditure on education is expressed as a percentage of GDP. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
6	Public expenditure on education (as% of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education is expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
7	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 and over who can both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life, and understand it. Generally, "literacy" also encompasses "numeracy" – the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.

	Description	Definition
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15 and over) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group. This is usually measured in terms of the highest educational programme successfully completed, which is typically certified by a recognised qualification. Recognised intermediate qualifications are classified at a lower level than the programme itself.
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Early leavers from education and training are defined as the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education who were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0-2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes lasting under two years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 for data from 2014 onwards.
10	Total NET enrolment rate	Total number of students of the official age group for a given level of education who are enrolled in any level of education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education (in this case, upper secondary), expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
12	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	Low achievers are the 15-year-olds who are failing to reach level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.
13	Activity rate (aged 15 and over) (%)	The activity rate is calculated by dividing the active population by the population of the same age group. The active population (also called 'labour force') is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed people. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15 and over) (%)	The inactivity/out of the labour force rate is calculated by dividing the inactive population by the population of the same age group. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
15	Employment rate (aged 15 and over) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed people by the population of the same age group. Employed people are all people who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15 and over) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated. Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0-2), Medium (ISCED level 3-4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5-6, and ISCED 2011 level 5-8).
17	Employment by sector (%)	This indicator provides information on the relative importance of different economic activities with regard to employment. Data are presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. Agriculture/Industry/Services) based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with ISIC.
18	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the self-employed (i.e. employers + own-account workers + contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed.

	Description	Definition
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the own-account workers and contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15 and over) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15-64 or 15 and over who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15 and over) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15-64 or 15 and over who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months)). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: low (ISCED level 0-2), medium (ISCED level 3-4) and high (ISCED 1997 level 5-6, and ISCED 2011 level 5-8).
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15-24 who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
23	Proportion of people aged 15-24/15-29 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The indicator provides information on young people aged 15-24 who meet the following two conditions: first, they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the ILO definition), and second, they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training.
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64)	Participants in lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25-64 who stated that they received education or training in the 12 months preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated.
25	Human Development Index	The index is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living.

KEY DONOR PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

DONOR	PROJECT	BUDGET & DURATION
EU	Skills4Jobs Programme (supports VET, employment and labour market reforms, entrepreneurial learning)	2018-2024 €50.8 million
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), European Union (EU)	Private Sector Development and Vocational Education and Training in the South Caucasus	2017-2024 €46 380 000 (including €20 780 000 EU co-financing)
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation UNDP	Modernisation of the Vocational Education and Training and Extension Systems Related to Agriculture in Georgia	2022-2025 USD 4 million
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) – implemented by GIZ	VET in Georgia's Growth Sectors	2023-2026 €4.5 million
World Bank	Innovation, Inclusion and Quality (expanding access to preschool education and improving the quality of education and learning environments in secondary general and higher education)	2019-2026 USD 102.7 million
World Bank	Human Capital Programme (health sector, social services, education, labour market and employment support programme) – co-financed by AFD- Expertise France implements a TA component on labour and employment issues	2022-2028 USD 400 million
Asian Development Bank	Modern Skills for Better Jobs Sector Development Programme (supports VET reform)	2020-2027 USD 70 million
Asian Development Bank	Improving Learning Outcomes in Secondary Education Sector Development Programme – yet to be agreed with the Georgian government	2022-2028 USD 150 million
USAID	USAID Industry-led Skills Development Programme	2021-2026 USD 24 million
USAID	Educating for the Future – FEDU – supports teacher education and training and school governance	2023-2028 USD 14 million

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ALMP	Active labour market policy
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease of 2019
EC	European Commission
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GEL	Georgian Lari
GDP	gross domestic product
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
LFS	Labour force survey
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LMMs	Labour market measures
MoES(Y)	Ministry of Education and Science (and Youth)
MoESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
MIDPLHSA	Ministry of Internally Displaced People, Labour, Health and Social Affairs
MoCSY	Ministry for Culture, Sports and Youth
NAEC	National Assessment and Examinations Centre
NCEQE	National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement
NEET	not in employment, education or training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

NYPG	National Youth Policy for Georgia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OJV	Online job vacancies
OSH	Occupational safety and health
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PMCG	Policy and Management Consulting Group
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SAO	State Audit Office
SCMI	State Commission on Migration Issues
SESA	State Employment Support Agency
SSA	Social Service Agency
SSO	Sector Skills Organisation
TSA	Targeted social assistance
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
VET	Vocational education and training
WBL	Work-based learning
ZoiS	Zentrum für Osteuropa und internationale Studien

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