INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

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Coalition for Children and Youth, registered in Georgia in December 2016 and is an union of 41 child-and-youth oriented international and local civil society organizations, aiming to develop the current child and youth welfare system and promote protection of children and youths’ rights.

**It’s mission** is to unit all wiling organizations of the Child Welfare sphere, with the mission of ensuring that all vulnerable children have their rights respected, are protected and have available the systems, services, policies, behaviors and other means to ensure their rights and wellbeing and their participation in actions and decisions that affect them.
Coalition history started in June 2012, when 22 NGOs united and created the informal union to support to the fulfillment of joint goals. Nowadays, the Coalition units 41 organization, working in the field of Child Welfare and is focused on the following problematic areas:

- Prevention of Child Abandonment and Development of Family Supporting Services;
- Access to Justice;
- Protection of Children and Youth from Violence and Neglect;
- Mechanisms for Assisting Youth Leaving Care.
871,532 lives children in Georgia

Only 10,069 are officially registered as having some type of disability.

In the same census data, it appears that 25,925 children suffer from some kind of disability or health condition according to self-reporting made by their family members and legal representatives.
In Georgia the inclusive education approach acquired significance in 2006, when, in the Law on General Education, Georgia recognized the right of persons with disabilities to attend general education institutions together with other children. By the same law, the school has no right to refuse admission of a child with disabilities.


2009 inclusive education piloted in regional public schools within a project supported by Norway “Development of Inclusive Education in the Public Schools of 10 regions of Georgia”. 
Multidisciplinary group has been established to assess individual needs of Children around Tbilisi

Nowadays multidisciplinary group works in Tbilisi and 9 regions of Georgia

In 2013 inclusive education has been institutionalized in the system of professional education

2013 ministry implement the “Inclusive Education Support program”. In the frame of this program three integrated classes were opened: the class for pupils with Hearing Problems; the class for the Autistic children and the class for the children with leukemia.

2014 Law on early and Preschool Education has been adopted
MULTIDISCIPLINARY GROUP

Functioning In Tbilisi and 9 regions of Georgia:

- Assessment of children academic and functional skills
- Preparation of recommendations on children special educational needs
- Consulting Parents and Teachers
Till 2010 Georgia had 14 Special Schools (Boarding Schools for children with disabilities)

In 2009-2010, MoES conducted assessment of all 14 special schools of Georgia. Only 8 Special schools were left to continue functioning:

- 1 school for Blind and Low Vision persons,
- two schools for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons,
- one school for persons with Behavior Disorders and
- 4 schools for persons with Mental Disorders
LEGISLATION REGULATING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

1. Law of Georgia on General Education

2. EU Child Rights Convention

3. The Convention on the Right of People with Disability (Ratified in 2014)

4. Law of Georgia Early and Preschool education
CHALLENGES OF EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

- Currently, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia defines early and preschool education policy, although kindergartens fall under the auspices of the local governments.

- No statistics as to how many children with disabilities are enrolled in early-stage education programs.

- Preschool institutions are not certified yet, even it should be done till April, 2017.

- Lack of qualified human resources.

- Non-adapted infrastructure outside and inside preschool institutions.

- No mechanism of assessing the needs of children with disabilities.
CHALLENGES OF INCLUSIVE GENERAL EDUCATION

- Lack of human resources in regions of Georgia
- Lack of regulation of the multidisciplinary teams of the ministry and monitoring of the quality of inclusive education based on Georgia Law of General Education
- Absence of a mechanism for identifying children with disabilities
- Child Educational needs assessment is based on parents wish and it is not obligatory
- Non-adapted infrastructure outside and inside the school
- Insufficient number of special education teachers and poor resources for their professional development
- Lack of qualified human resources
- Along with human resources, poor material-technical base is a serious problem. Teachers do not have enough supplementary textbooks to work with children who have SEN
- Absence of a mechanism for monitoring attendance and early school leaving
- Lack of the non-governmental sector to work on increasing public awareness
Table 1. Difficulties and barriers experienced during the implementation of inclusive education in Georgia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The main difficulties that schools face in the process of implementation of Inclusive Education</th>
<th>The main duties and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia</th>
<th>Public schools’ needs in the process of implementation of Inclusive Education</th>
<th>The major barriers that learners with SEN are encountered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skilled special educators</td>
<td>To train so as mainstream as special educators on regular basis</td>
<td>Skilled mainstream educators</td>
<td>Their rights to education are violated</td>
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<td>Deficiency of competency of mainstream teachers</td>
<td>To create appropriate environment for learners with SEN</td>
<td>Adapted environment</td>
<td>Absence of perception among mainstream pupils about Inclusive Education</td>
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<td>Non-adapted environment for learners with SEN</td>
<td>To satisfy all needs for promoting Inclusive Education</td>
<td>Technical and financial support</td>
<td>Existence of “Soviet legacy”</td>
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<td>Negative attitude of mainstream parents towards Inclusive Education</td>
<td>To effectively implement Inclusive Education</td>
<td>Having special educators, psychologists and speech therapists at schools</td>
<td>Technical barriers (non-adapted facilities)</td>
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<td>Lack of special materials and equipments (resource classrooms)</td>
<td>To organize awareness raising actions</td>
<td>Society’s positive attitude towards inclusion</td>
<td>System barriers (inconsistent steps from decision-making institutions)</td>
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<td>Negative attitude of the society towards SEN children and their inclusion</td>
<td>To closely cooperate with parents and introduce them new reforms</td>
<td>Organizing events for raising public awareness</td>
<td>Dependent barriers (attitude-based obstacles)</td>
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<td>Unstable financial system</td>
<td></td>
<td>Existence of SEN model</td>
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<td>Transportation problem</td>
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<td>Financial support for arranging resource classrooms</td>
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<td>Absence of SEN standards</td>
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<td>Adapted transport for transferring SEN learners</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Own research

Inclusive Education in Georgia: Current Progress and Challenges,

Nikoloz Kavelashvili, University of Wroclaw, Faculty of Social Sciences, Koszarowa 3, 51-149 Wrocław, Poland, Article May, 2017
THANK YOU!