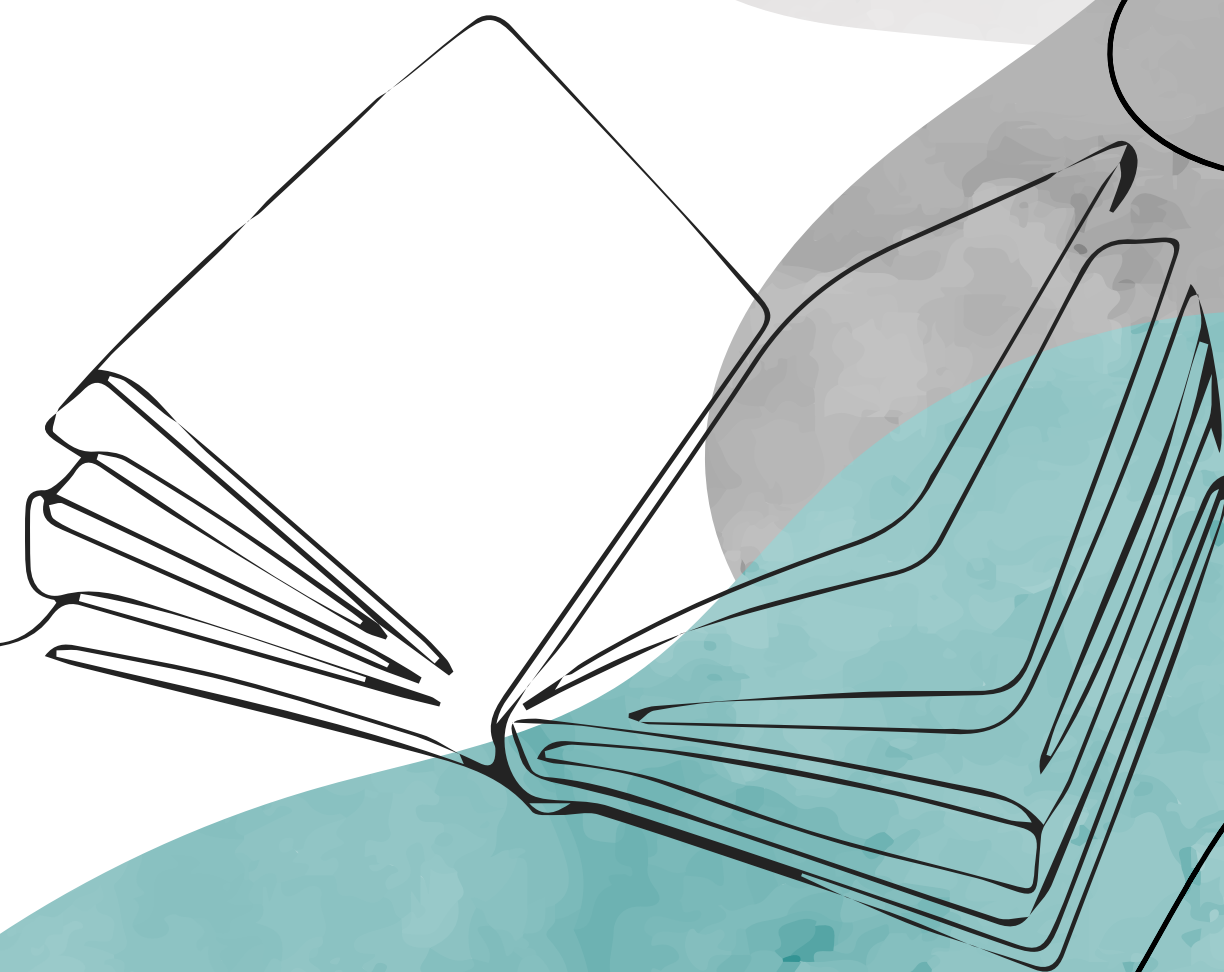


# Equality Policy in General Education System



GEORGIAN  
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## INTRODUCTION

Protecting the principles of equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the general education system is a social function of education and also an opportunity of carrying out the state policies in this direction and reaching the goals set.

The school textbooks are one of the main tools for implementing the national curriculum, especially in those systems, which are facing important challenges in regards with the teachers' competence and with using new approaches of teaching. Except this, the textbooks, as well as constructing knowledge, are functioning as social and ideological tools and impact greatly on the formation of values and attitudes of a student. Therefore, the broad understanding of a quality textbook is based on the assumption that the textbook, as the main learning resource, should promote the development of universal values, peace and equality in the students, as well as the development of the skills needed for a person's integration in the diverse society and other skills needed for peaceful cohabitation.

The aim of the research is analyzing the development and evaluation policies of the school textbooks in the context of ensuring equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination.

The first part of this paper describes the international practices of forming the school textbooks, doing so in the context of the educational system management form, as well as accessibility and inclusiveness. In order to depict the main tendencies, the paper describes the experience of European, as well as Asian countries. The analysis of textbook selection and evaluation was done following the methodological recommendations of the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization<sup>1</sup> and the Asian Development Bank.

The second part of the paper contains a review of the policy developed in Georgia for eliminating all forms of discrimination in the general education system. Particularly, by taking into account the main building parts of the anti-discrimination policy, this paper discusses the main normative and strategic documents that define the general education policy, also it analyzes the compatibility of the 3rd generation national curriculum and the subject standards with the principles of equality. Due to the main goal of the research, this paper also describes the change of the textbook development and approval rule from the historical standpoint and analyzes the main characteristics of the existing mechanism in the context of eliminating all forms of discrimination.

The compatibility of the existing models of textbook development and approval, as well as compatibility of the textbooks themselves with the principle of equality, is discussed based on the qualitative research in the third part of the paper. The analysis of textbook development and approval concentrates on the challenges of textbook development and approval, as well as the involvement of the schools and the teachers in this process. As for the content analysis, we used the framework based on the recommendations for the authors and the textbook evaluators, developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This framework was used for the research purposes, for determining compatibility of the textbook contents and design with the principles of equality. Also, we used the methodology applied by the Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI) in their research on textbooks in 2016.

In the end, the recommendations are developed both for the decision-makers as well as for civil society and to all the stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO. «Making Textbook Content Inclusive: A Focus on Religions, Gender and Culture.» (2011).; Smart, Andy, and Shanti Jagannathan. Textbook policies in Asia: development, publishing, printing, distribution, and future implications (Asian Development Bank, 2018) ; Roberts-Schweitzer, Eluned, Vincent Greaney, and Krezentia Duer, eds. Promoting Social Cohesion Through Education: Case Studies and Tools for Using Textbooks. (The World Bank, 2006).

## METHODOLOGY

This research has been done using mixed methodology, by analyzing secondary research data, by content analysis and in-depth interviews.

### Description of the secondary research data analysis

We researched the international and local experience in textbook development and approval by using secondary research data analysis.

In order to analyze the international experience, we studied the following:

- The evaluations and recommendations developed by the international organizations for implementing textbook inclusiveness and the principle of equality.
- Experiences of different educational systems - policy documents and reports. For the purpose of this paper, we have discussed the mechanisms of textbook development and approval in Estonia and Sweden separately. The main criterion for selecting those two countries was the system regulation quality. The system of textbook approval in Sweden is fully deregulated, in Estonia - the regulation is minimal. Additionally, the experience of Estonia, as a former Soviet Union state, is twice as interesting for analyzing the possible alternatives of textbook policy development in Georgia. As an addition to those examples, the description of textbook development and approval in this paper also includes examples from other countries' practices.
- International agreements on equality, eliminating all forms of discrimination, improving access to education and access to justice.

In order to describe the local context and challenges, we analyzed the following documents:

- The national goals of general education;
- Law of General Education;
- Concept and basic principles of national curriculum;
- The 3rd generation national curriculum and the content standards;
- Educational strategy 2017-2021;
- The rule of textbook approval and other related documents.

### Description of content analysis

For the purpose of determining compatibility with equality principles, we used the content analysis method and particularly conceptual analysis. Using this method, we studied the theoretical concepts that the subject of research is built on, we studied how correct is the description and usage of terms and how much does the textbook allow the student to realize social, cultural, economic and other processes in relation to human rights.

### Criteria for textbook selection:

Approval status: We chose the approved textbooks, which are nowadays used for teaching.

Grade: For the purpose of this research, we have chosen the 9th grade textbooks, since the approval competition of this grade will be announced in autumn 2020. Therefore, the problems identified in the frames of content analysis can be used for the new stage of the approval competition.

Subject group: For the purpose of this research we have chosen the public sciences subject group, since human rights studies in this subject group represent one of the main goals and not a collateral one. Throughout this subject group we have skipped the 9th grade history textbook, since it has been thoroughly studied in different researches, as opposed to the geography textbook.

## Criteria of textbook evaluation

To evaluate the compatibility with equality of the textbook content and design, we used the framework based on the recommendations for the authors and the textbook evaluators, developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as the methodology applied by the Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI) for researching the textbooks in 2016 (the framework and the evaluation criteria are presented in detail in the 5th chapter).

## Description of the in-depth interview method

In the process of diversified analysis, interpretation of the secondary research data and the content analysis, for the purpose of receiving feedback from the stakeholders and for developing recommendations, we conducted 13 in-depth interviews throughout the research process. The respondents were chosen specifically:

Status of the respondent	Number of interviews conducted
Education Specialist / Researcher	2
Relevant representative from the ministry	1
A reviewer of textbook content evaluation board	2
An International expert	2
Teacher	7
School headmaster	1
An author of the textbook	2
A representative of the publishing house	2

During the research, the discussion was conducted around the existing model of textbook evaluation and approval rule, in particular concerning the approval competition of 2018 and the changes planned in the 2019 competition. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire. The discussion topics for the in-depth interview were:

- The existing procedure of textbook creation, evaluation and approval, the main issues and challenges;
- The mechanisms of ensuring equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination in the process of textbook evaluation;
- Evaluating the quality of textbooks, taking into account the principles of equality and the condition of human rights teachings.

## Limitations

In the context of international practice, the fact that the description of other countries' systems is based only on the analysis of the available information, represents the main limitation of the research. Therefore, the existing data is not enough for a thorough analysis of the main challenges existing in the textbook development and evaluation politics.

On the one hand, the small number of chosen textbooks represents a limitation of research in the textbook analysis process, therefore the results describe only the chosen units and not all of the approved textbooks of the basic level education public sciences group. On the other hand, we were unable to receive feedback from the authors of those specific textbooks on the hereby identified challenges, which might have represented the issues differently from their point of view.

As for using the in-depth interview method, the results received here rely solely on the information provided by the respondents and generalization of their views on the groups that they represent is impossible. The second and also a significant challenge concerns the format of the interview and the topics of the interview. Particularly, after the spread of pandemic in the country, all of the interviews were conducted online, which created an uncomfortable environment for some of the respondents. Also, part of the interviews were conducted before starting the distance

teaching, therefore, we were unable to analyse the influence of the mentioned processes on the textbook policies with some of the respondents.

In order to minimize the effect of the above mentioned limitation and to fulfill the lack of information, in the frames of the research we have conducted interviews with the international experts of education, among them with the textbook specialist of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. In order to adjust the in-depth interview format to the respondent and to create a safe environment, we have not recorded videos. The transcripts and the audio-video records are accessible only for the researchers.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents of this research is protected. The description and analysis of the results does not make the respondent identification possible.

**PART I**

**REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES OF TEXTBOOK  
DEVELOPMENT, EVALUATION AND APPROVAL IN THE CONTEXT OF  
EQUALITY AND OF ELIMINATING ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION**

## INTRODUCTION

In spite of technological advancement, textbooks are still the main educational resource for the students, as well as for the teachers.<sup>2</sup> Even though a unified system of textbook approval does not exist, there is a centralized and decentralized model according to the international practice.

It is notable that the dependency on textbooks is higher in the countries which have teachers with low qualification and a lack of teaching resources. Especially in those places where the teachers traditionally did not participate in the planning of the teaching process and fulfilled the directions given by the centralized system.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, in the developed countries, textbooks play the role of an assisting material and do not represent the main source of teaching and learning.<sup>4</sup> In this case the national curriculum is more important for teachers than the textbook itself.

In the following chapters we will discuss the right to education and the importance of textbooks; Also, the international practice of textbook approval from the historical standpoint, as well as the contemporary perspective.

### International acts on the right to education

There is a global consensus on the importance of the right to education. Moreover, the right to education represents the means for realizing other rights. As for realizing this right - it is the responsibility of the states. The mentioned responsibility, first of all, is represented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). According to the document, everyone has the right to education. Furthermore, it is underlined that the quality education should be accessible for all. The right to education is stated in the following conventions:

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), in particular, the 13th Article reviews the importance of the right to education, also its goal and the obligation of the member states.  
“The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”
- Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960); Along with other issues, Article 6 underlines the following: “In the application of this Convention, the States Parties to it undertake to pay the greatest attention to any recommendations hereafter adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization defining the measures to be taken against the different forms of discrimination in education and for the purpose of ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment in education.”
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); Along with the main topics, the convention also touches on the importance of the textbooks that are based on the principle of equality - “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women.. (c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods:” Article 10.
- According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for the purpose of realizing the right to education, the states have the obligation to ensure accessibility of information and materials in the field of education for every child. Additionally, the convention obliges the states to encourage publication and distribution of the children’s literature.
- According to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, “States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). «Global education monitoring report summary 2016: education for people and planet: creating sustainable futures for all.» (2016).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). «Global education monitoring report summary 2016: education for people and planet: creating sustainable futures for all.» (2016).

<sup>4</sup> Miao, Fengchun, Sanjaya Mishra, and Rory McGreal. Open educational resources: policy, costs, transformation. UNESCO Publishing (2016).

basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning.”

Education is also one of the priorities according to the UN Sustainable Development Goals - goal N4: Ensuring inclusive and equal education and creating lifelong learning opportunities for all. This document underlines the importance of adapting the teaching materials to the children with special educational needs (the global indicator of UN Sustainable Development Goals). Regrettably, this is not mentioned in the national indicators and the target index applied to Georgia.<sup>5</sup>

In 2015, the UN developed a framework document providing a specific strategy and an action plan in order to reach the fourth goal of sustainable development. According to this plan, the states must ensure examination and renewal of the national curriculums and textbooks so that they do not contain gender stereotypes and are free of any form of discrimination. Additionally, the textbook must support equality, tolerance and promote human rights.<sup>6</sup>

### The importance of quality textbooks

There are two traditional definitions of a textbook: according to one of them, a textbook is a resource, which is accepted and approved by the state, the Ministry of Education and Science or by other responsible departments. This system is mainly active in the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs). According to the second, Anglo-saxon definition, the concept of textbook is defined by the civil society that is the publishing house, the author and the teacher.<sup>7</sup>

During centuries, textbooks represented the main educational resource. Except being informative, a quality textbook is helping to develop critical and creative thinking in students. Till today, textbooks, along with national curriculum and teachers, are considered as one of the most important components of a quality education.<sup>8</sup>

Textbooks are also an important resource for the teacher. In most of the cases, textbooks help teachers to teach according to the national curriculum and to structurize evaluation. It is notable that the quality textbooks balance the flaws of teacher’s qualification in the developing countries. In this aspect a teacher’s book is also very important, as it impacts students directly.<sup>9</sup>

There are several important components when describing the importance of textbooks:<sup>9</sup>

1. The effective policies of textbook development is greatly contributing to improvement of the system.

There are three directions often stated to be the quality components of education - the national curriculum, the textbooks and the evaluation system. We can consider textbooks as the middle components between the national curriculum and evaluation. An effective realization of the national curriculum mainly depends on quality textbooks, which also affects the evaluation system.

2. Good textbooks have an impact on the quality and accessibility of education:

According to the teaching-learning process and the international evaluations of student accomplishments, there is a strong correlation between the policy of textbook approval, the classroom pedagogy and the teaching results, since textbooks are the teacher’s main resources in most of the cases.<sup>10</sup>

As for accessibility, as we have already mentioned, those types of textbooks help to balance the issues of the teacher’s qualification and competence.

3. The private sector is an important stakeholder:

Historically, the private sector was playing an important role in developing textbooks. Based on the examples of many countries, we can assume that their involvement is determining and greatly impacting the textbook quality.

<sup>5</sup> Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), “Integration of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the Georgian national public policy” (Tbilisi 2019)

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO. Education 2030: Incheon Declaration: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All. (UNESCO: Institut for Longlife Learning, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Kovač, Miha, and Mojca K. Šebart. «Where East meets West: controversies of textbook publishing in small former communist countries.» (Publishing research quarterly 20, no. 3, 2004): 40-51.

<sup>8</sup> Smart, Andy, and Shanti Jagannathan. Textbook policies in Asia: development, publishing, printing, distribution, and future implications. (Asian Development Bank: 2018)

<sup>9</sup> Oates, Tim. «Why Textbooks Count.» Cambridge, (England: Cambridge Assessment, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Wilkens, Hendrienne J. «Textbook approval systems and the Program for International Assessment (PISA) results: A preliminary analysis.» (IARTEM e-Journal 4, no. 2, 2011): 63-74.

4. The digital material is an assistant of a textbook and not its substitute:

Despite the fact that the digital technologies are considered to be “the future of education” and they might positively impact quality and accessibility, none of the educational systems have wholly transferred to the digital technologies. Developed and resourceful countries use both printed and digital resources. Additionally we must mention the issue of finances here. It is considered that the digital technologies will reduce the expenses, but different practices show that sometimes it is happening vice versa, especially - within the short span of time. In this case, as we see from the example of different countries, implementation of digital technologies needs a fairly long-term strategy and policy, since if the policies implemented in this field are incorrect and hasty, they might risk the quality as well as accessibility.

From this perspective, we must mention the description of the role of textbooks from the researcher of education, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at the Cambridge University, Tim Oates. According to his paper, „Why Textbooks Count“, digital textbooks might bring substantial loss as well as positive results to the education system development. Oats states that the best way is to use a mixed approach, with both digital and printed versions available.<sup>10</sup>

5. Teachers play a crucial role in textbook development and assessment:

According to international practice, teachers have the most important role in textbook development and assessment. It is important for them to actually be the facilitators of this process, so that the contents and language of the textbook and the pedagogy issues are compliant with the students’ needs. The role of the state must be minimized, since according to a number of practices, the corresponding authorities of the Ministry of Education (e.g. in the direction of national curriculum) are usually fulfilling the main function.

## REVIEW OF THE TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PRACTICE

There are two main models of the textbook approval: centralized and decentralized. In spite of the fact that there is no direct connection between the state’s political ideology and the textbook policy, it still greatly impacts the quality of regulation of the textbook market and approval procedures from the state. In the centralized system, the state, via the ministry or its sub-structure, is checking how much the particular textbook is following the national curriculum and the teaching standards. In the decentralized system, the managing decisions are delegated to the local management bodies and the teaching process is thoroughly dependent on the teachers, the textbook contents - on the authors, the role of the ministry might be confined to the approval of the recommendation framework document.

After the Second World War, in most of the Western European states, the system of textbook development and publishing took different courses, according to their pedagogical and publishing traditions. Most of the countries had an open and competitive market and the textbooks were published by the private publishing houses. As for the schools and teachers, they could independently select different textbooks, which gave the option of introducing new practices in schools.<sup>11</sup>

For example, Australia had a regulation, according to which the textbook examination by the state was obligatory. As a result, only the verified textbooks entered the schools.

A different system existed in Western Europe, Scandinavia and the USA. These countries had a traditional decentralized system and they had no mechanism for examining textbooks. Moreover, the national curriculum was approved in the UK only in the 1980-s.<sup>12</sup>

The former Soviet Union states had a different development of events. After exiting the USSR centralized system, for many countries, the deficit of human resources and the financial crisis led to difficulties in developing a textbook market that would be based on democratic principles.

In the following chapter we will discuss two examples of textbook approval. We used the example of Sweden as a totally decentralized and deregulated system. Discussing the Estonian model is important since this country went through an important journey after leaving the Soviet Union and went from a totally centralized to a decentralized system. Today Estonia is one of the most advanced countries by the quality of freedom and autonomy, among the post-Soviet, as well as the European countries.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Kovač, Miha, and Mojca K. Šebart. «Where East meets West: controversies of textbook publishing in small former communist countries.» (Publishing research quarterly 20, no. 3, 2004): 40-51.

<sup>12</sup> Kovač, Miha, and Mojca K. Šebart, 40-51.

<sup>13</sup> Santiago, Paulo, Anthony Levitas, Péter Radó, and Claire Shewbridge. « OECD Reviews of School Resources-Estonia.» (2016).



## Textbook Development and Approval Policies in Sweden

The educational system of Sweden is decentralized on the municipal level. The municipality is responsible for managing administrative and financial issues connected to general education establishments. The schools are financed from the municipal budget and in separate cases by the target grant of the central state. The school is responsible for the teaching-learning process.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for developing the main framework of system management, as for the Swedish National Agency for Education and Schools Inspectorate, they are responsible for system monitoring, as well as developing the national curriculum. The national curriculum is setting the general principles for each subject and determines long and short term goals. Organization of the teaching-learning process, also the issues of the teaching resources are not regulated and are based on the teachers' decisions and choice. The system of the school textbooks' examination and approval does not exist. The schools select the textbooks and the publishing houses ensure provision.<sup>14</sup>

The Swedish educational system passed several phases before regulating the textbook approval system. The textbook approval system existed in 1938-1974. Starting from 1974, the state approved only the social sciences textbooks, doing so according to 4 components: price, design, content and language. In the following phase of deregulation, the teachers had a set volume of the compulsory teaching material in the total resources.<sup>15</sup> All the existing regulations were abrogated since 2011 and since 2017 the teachers decide independently which textbook, video-audio material and technology to use.<sup>16</sup> The Swedish educational system does not have a center or an organization, which examines the textbooks and establishes the list of compulsory authors or textbooks. The schools select the material individually, then they order it from the publishing houses and provide the resource for the students for free. The resources for students with special educational needs is an exception. This, along with adapting the material developed by the private publishing houses, is the responsibility of the Swedish National Agency for Education.

Since every school has its own approach for selecting textbooks, the information on the selecting procedure or on the textbook quality is less accessible. Although, international and local studies are giving the possibility to analyze the general criteria for teachers' motivation and assessment. The analysis of Swedish teachers' motivation and criteria for selecting textbooks, done in the frames of multiple studies, shows that while selecting textbooks, the teachers give the most importance to the textbook contents and to how easily understandable the text is. For most of the teachers the most important criteria is not the price but the experience of teaching with the textbook and the relationship with the publishers, also the recommendation of colleagues.<sup>17</sup>

Individual studies also indicate to the fact that the main criteria for selecting textbooks in the case of Sweden does not differ much from the criteria used in the regulated system. Although, we must take into account that most of the Swedish teachers do not rely only on the textbooks while teaching, therefore, as there are diverse resources and among them digital resources available, teachers are more flexible in the process of selecting textbooks.<sup>18</sup>

## Textbook Development and Approval Policy in Estonia

The Estonian system of education is decentralized and the responsibility between the central and local governments as well as schools is distinctly separated. The central government establishes regulations for financing education, state monitoring and quality assessment. The local government ensures that every child and teenager has the possibility of getting education in the educational establishments in the vicinity of their abode. Also, it administers the maintenance of educational establishments, as for the main decisions of the teaching-learning process, those are made by the schools itself. In the aspect of being autonomous in decision-making, 76% of decisions in Estonia are made on the school level. This number is much higher than the average 41% of the participant states of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD research - Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Sweden Overview, European Commission, 2020, available at: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/swedan\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/swedan_en).

<sup>15</sup> Anna Johnsson Harrie, The State and the Textbook. The State Approval Scheme for Textbooks and Teaching Aids in Sweden 1938-1999 (Linköping: Linköping University, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Reichenberg, Monica, And Rune Andreassen. «Norwegian And Swedish Teachers'choice Of Textbooks In A Deregulated System.» Iartem 1991-2016: 25 Years Developing Textbook And Educational Media Research: 117.

<sup>17</sup> Reiche Reichenberg, Monica, And Rune Andreassen. « Iartem 1991-2016: 25 Years Developing Textbook And Educational Media Research.

<sup>18</sup> Sweden Overview, European Commission, 2020, available at: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/swedan\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/swedan_en)

<sup>19</sup> Santiago, Paulo, Anthony Levitas, Péter Radó, and Claire Shewbridge. «OECD Reviews of School Resources-Estonia.» (2016).

The systemic reform of education started in 2014 in Estonia and the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 was developed. The Ministry of Education is responsible for reaching the set long-term goals, also for developing the framework document and preparing the national curriculum on different stages of teaching.

Estonia has a long history of creating and developing textbooks. After acquiring independence, Estonia was one of those few states who, having a small number of population, successfully managed to open the textbook market for private publishing houses. In contrast with other countries with similar characteristics, for example Slovakia, Estonia spent a lot of financial resources on developing textbooks, which, in the conditions of limited edition, raised the price of the textbooks.<sup>20</sup> In spite of the fact that on the early stages of market development the high price of textbooks was an issue, on the other hand, it was encouraging the authors and the publishers to improve the quality of books. Along with the change of the national curriculum in 2005, every textbook of each stage was updated. Estonia has not changed the policy of system deregulation and has maintained the minimal level of regulation in the textbook approval process up to now.

Schools are totally free to select their desired educational literature and teaching materials, including textbooks, exercise books, guide notebooks, e-books and others. Several alternatives of textbook series are available for each class. The state finances schools annually to purchase the needed textbooks, notebooks and teaching materials, which are free for the students.

In order to reach the results set out in the curriculum, the schools have the responsibility to select the teaching resources and to fulfil the minimal standards in this process. The ministry is defining the obligatory minimal standard for each class and subject for the process of evaluating the educational literature and for the evaluators. It is important that the process of textbook selection and evaluation by teachers in Estonia also includes the results of evaluation done by the students. In the textbook evaluation process, both teachers and students give priority to the text content and simplicity.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of the fact that we have scarce information on the strategy of selecting different subject textbooks, a big part of the studies done in this direction are dedicated to teaching history and to the practice of selecting history textbooks.

The teachers have been less and less dependent on textbooks since the 2014 reform. In order to show the issues from different perspectives, the history teachers often use old, as well as new textbooks. The contemporary textbooks are oriented on providing facts and those facts are then interpreted through the dialogue method, trying to consider all of the perspectives. Although, according to the specialists, covering such politically and emotionally sensitive topics in the history textbooks requires more caution and broader competence.<sup>22</sup>

In 2018, Estonia started developing e-textbooks and using them more in practice. Like the traditional textbooks, e-textbooks are also developed by private publishing houses and by other educational or publishing establishments and are accessible for the school students for free.

## THE ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL POLICY

The internationalization of education, including textbooks and the change of the main landmarks in the teaching-learning process has caused a change in the role of textbooks and also changed the textbook approval models.

The textbook policy discussion gained new dimensions.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, realizing the benefits of educational system decentralization and of giving teachers more freedom has caused the fact that the states are trying to deregulate the system and to give the teachers an opportunity to plan the teaching process and the teaching content.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, the main argument of the centralized system, cost-effectiveness, is questioned. On the other hand, the textbook market saturation under the free market makes the textbook selection process more difficult for the teachers, so in the decentralized system, we see the need of a minimal regulation mechanism development.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the mixed and transitive models are emerging between the distinctly centralized and decentralized models and they

<sup>20</sup> Kovač, Miha, and Mojca K. Šebart, 40-51.

<sup>21</sup> Rodríguez Rodríguez, J., T. B. Garcia, and E. Bruillard. «IARTEM 1991-2016: 25 years developing textbook and educational media research.» (Kongsberg: IARTEM, 2019).

<sup>22</sup> Oja, M, "The image of the other in the history of Estonia on the basis of contemporary textbook analysis.» Yearbook 2013–International Society for History Didactics ( 2013): 57-72

<sup>23</sup> Picciotto, Robert. «The logic of renewal: evaluation at the World Bank (1992-2002).» (2002).

<sup>24</sup> Wilkens, Hendrienne. «Textbook approval systems and the Program for International Assessment (PISA) results: A preliminary analysis.» (IARTEM e-Journal 4, no. 2, 2011): 63-74.

<sup>25</sup> Sousa, Joana, and Maria de Lourdes da Trindade Dionísio. «Evaluation and selection of textbooks in (Portugal, 2013).

are not compatible with one or the other category. Analyzing the transitive models of textbook assessment and approval is especially important, since, on the one hand, those types of systems have a similar concept, which gives us the possibility to talk about the mutual tendencies, and on the other hand the existing experience is corresponding to the development of textbook assessment policy dynamics in Georgia.

We will use the policy analysis framework which is based on the analysis of mutual tendencies and on the examples of the European and Asian countries. The framework of textbook selection and assessment analysis is based on the international practice of textbook policy analysis, also on the methodology of the World Bank, UNESCO and the Asian Development Bank.<sup>26</sup> View table 1.

Table 1: The framework of textbook policy analysis

Assessment component	Main questions for analysing the component
The state's role in creating textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are the roles divided between the state and private sector in the process of textbook creation?</li> <li>• How is the demand on textbooks determined?</li> </ul>
The textbook's role in reaching general education goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the role of textbooks in reaching the national curriculum goals determined?</li> <li>• How are the textbooks connected with the national curriculum and the exams</li> </ul>
The procedure of textbook creation, assessment and approval policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many phases does the textbook selection and approval consist of?</li> <li>• How often are the textbooks renewed?</li> <li>• Who is responsible for managing the selection process, if such a person exists?</li> <li>• What does it mean/what are the phases of the textbook selection and approval procedure?</li> <li>• What is the correlation between the price and quality when selecting textbooks?</li> <li>• How is the copyright/printing right ensured?</li> </ul>
The inclusiveness and transparency of the textbook selection process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the textbook evaluators?</li> <li>• How much is the process of selecting the evaluator/evaluation transparent?</li> <li>• Is this process open for the public and the stakeholders?</li> <li>• What are the criteria of quality textbook evaluation?</li> <li>• How are the schools and the teachers involved in the textbook selection?</li> </ul>
The accessibility of textbooks for students and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is purchasing the textbooks, is it the parent, the school or the state?</li> <li>• Are the useful, high quality textbooks provided for every student/teacher?</li> </ul>
The inclusiveness of textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the textbook inclusiveness a priority of the textbook policy?</li> <li>• Is the existing procedure ensuring the textbook content inclusiveness as per the international standard?</li> </ul>

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO. «Making Textbook Content Inclusive: A Focus on Religions, Gender and Culture.» (2011); mart, Andy, and Shanti Jagannathan. Textbook policies in Asia: development, publishing, printing, distribution, and future implications Asian Development Bank, 2018); Roberts-Schweitzer, Eluned, Vincent Greaney, and Krezentia Duer, eds. Promoting Social Cohesion through Education: Case Studies and Tools for Using Textbooks. (The World Bank, 2006).

## THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEXTBOOK POLICY IN THE TRANSITIVE SYSTEMS

For the purpose of the research, transitive model is considered to be a model in which:

- The state determines the national curriculum and therefore establishes certain standards for the textbooks in a centralized way.
- There is a system, a procedure, which determines the correspondence of the textbook with the standards and sets this textbook apart from the other textbooks on the market.
- The schools have the right to choose only from the textbooks approved by the ministry.

The above-mentioned model is characteristic for Japan, as for Vietnam, they announced the policy of “one curriculum, multiple textbooks”. Regarding Europe, a similar system is working in Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey.<sup>27</sup> There are three fundamental issues important for analyzing the transitive policy:

- The choice possibility between the textbooks and the role of textbooks in general education goals achievement and result evaluation;
- The level of regulations from the state and the process transparency.
- The accessibility of textbooks.

In the transitive system, the system decentralization and market deregulation managed by the state is determined by political, as well as economical context. Additionally, a number of countries choose the multiple textbook principle, so as to ensure the possibility to choose.

The multiple textbook approach means that the schools have the choice to choose the best from several textbooks, since it is considered that the educational systems, which give the schools and directly the teachers the possibility to choose the textbooks themselves, are providing better results.<sup>28</sup> It is important that in those cases, the textbook is oriented more on the national curriculum and less on the exams. Besides, the teachers’ involvement ensures that the textbook is more practical than academic (this is a challenge in case the Ministry of Education and the members of the academic field are playing an important role in evaluation and development). It must be considered that the exam topics must not be suited for only one textbook. As in the example of China, we can say that all the applicable textbooks are used in exams. As for the accessibility of textbooks, in this case the transitive states have different models: either all textbooks are free for all students, or only for the vulnerable groups, or for the students of a certain level.

### The process of textbook creation, assessment and approval

As the practice of the transitive systems shows, the process of textbook creation consists of several stages:

- Creating and presenting the textbook prototype;
- Textbook assessment and approval;
- Textbook printing and distribution.

Presenting the textbooks for participating in the competition: the transitive model countries mainly have a two-stage evaluation system. On the first stage, the publishing houses or the authors present a textbook model and get detailed feedback on it. In this case, both the publishing houses and authors are saved from extra work. Afterwards, they continue working on following the recommendations and preparing the final version of the textbook. It is considered that in the developed systems, it is a group of authors that create the textbooks. This group is made up of practitioner-teachers and possibly of the members of the academic field. This is the practice of Germany and Japan, for example.

The evaluators of textbooks: In most of the cases, the team of evaluators is staffed with the subject experts, as well as the practitioner-teachers. Besides this, in case the transparency of the process is a priority for the system, an annual rotation of teachers and subject experts is encouraged. It is a challenge to have the authors participate as evaluators. This practice was spread in the post-Soviet countries, also in Serbia and Greece, although, as per the contemporary practice, this is considered as a risk of corruption, therefore the authors are not appointed as the board members in

<sup>27</sup> Country profiles, European Commission, 2020, available at <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/>.

<sup>28</sup> Performers, Strong, and Successful Reformers. «Lessons from PISA for the United States.» (2010): 237-241.

most of the countries. There are different selection criteria for choosing the evaluation team members, although the main issues taken into account are of gender and regional balance.<sup>29</sup>

#### Example 1:

Using South Korea as an example<sup>30</sup>, there are a minimum of 5 members in the evaluation team:

1. A teacher;
2. A researcher in the academic field;
3. A parent;
4. A representative of a public organization;
5. A specialist from the publishing field (a person who has an experience with publishing textbooks);
6. A specialist of accounting/financial issues;
7. Other stakeholders, who have professional knowledge or experience in the specific subject or textbook.

The evaluation team might also have a non-evaluator member, who will be a moderator in the process of evaluation and observe how much the evaluation requirements are fulfilled. If needed, this member can ask other members of the team to be more specific in explanation of the evaluation issues.

The textbook content evaluation: As for the textbook and the evaluation criteria, according to common practice, criteria can be general, as well as content-related. Although, throughout time, the approach to the criteria changed and today, along with the content criteria, great attention is paid to the technical parameters of the textbook and to the consideration of e-learning components. The importance of protecting the principles of textbook inclusiveness is also growing. Below is the example of Hong Kong's textbook development principles in terms of content.<sup>18</sup>

#### Example 2

The principles of textbook development are created by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong. Those are also periodically renewed by the textbook committee of the same bureau. The purposes of those principles are:

- To provide teachers with specific criteria to select quality textbooks;
- To be a guide document for the publishing houses and other stakeholders;

#### Principles:

1. Content: curriculum;
2. Teaching-learning: methodology;
3. Structure and management: This is closely connected with the content; although, the publishing houses have the possibility to represent the themes creatively and differently;
4. Linguistic issues;
5. Scheme of the textbooks: visual and technical sides (e.g. size of the shrift, spaces etc.)

Each of the points is evaluated by different scores from max. 1 to 10. For example, in the first point, content - score 1, means that the goal and the objectives are linked with the national curriculum; score 10 - it encourages the students to get to know the additional materials and work independently; the textbook provides additional reading material and web-pages.

#### The accessibility of textbooks

The price of the textbooks and the main costs: textbooks and educational resources represent an important source of expense to the educational system. It is considered that expanding the life-span of the textbooks will significantly reduce the costs. Additionally, the low-income countries should take into account the volume of edition as per the subjects and the teaching stages; also they should control the re-production. In a number of cases, in order to keep the balance between costs, effectiveness and quality, the state is trying to regulate the retail price of the commercially published textbooks by determining the technical characteristics and pricing.

<sup>29</sup> Smart, Andy, and Shanti Jagannathan. Textbook policies in Asia: development, publishing, printing, distribution, and future implications. (Asian Development Bank, 2018). ;National Policies in Europe, European Commission , 2020, available at: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice>.

<sup>30</sup> Smart, Andy, and Shanti Jagannathan, 2018.

Printing and distributing the textbooks: timely printing and distribution of the textbooks is one of the indicators of a successful system. Therefore, the states also spend important resources in this direction. There are several models in the transitive system in terms of printing books: printing is done by the state printing office, or a publishing house which wins the state tender. It is also possible that the state purchases already printed books and ensures only their distribution.

According to the existing practice, there are four models of the textbook distribution:

- Centralized, free manufacturing and distribution by the state on the condition of one-time or repeated usage. Similar system is working in Turkey;
- The system of renting the textbooks, the rental cost is paid by the parents. This system was working in Serbia and also in the former Soviet Union states.
- The parents purchase textbooks.

Although, there are also some combined approaches as well. For example, the models of Serbia and several Asian countries.

**Example 3:**

There is a licensing system of textbooks operating in Serbia. A Competition is announced once every four years. However, there can be an exception of announcing it rather early owing to renewal of the curriculum. Schools choose books from the pre-approved catalogues.

Every year, the decision regarding full or partial funding of children from socially vulnerable families is made by the government. The government also establishes a specific rule determining which level or textbook should be subsidized by the state. Also, there can be set some criteria which help to decide whether the schoolchildren can be funded.

A different rule is applied to the textbooks printed in minority languages or to the textbooks that are designed within the scope of pilot program and are published in limited edition.<sup>31</sup> In such cases, publishing houses are responsible to allocate 2 % of total income received from printing textbooks in order to print limited edition textbooks.

Example 4:	Practice
Country	
Hong Kong, China	Parents themselves purchase textbooks: textbook prices are not regulated by the state and are dependent on publishing houses.
India	In most cases textbooks are free of charge and reusable.
Bangladesh	
Sri Lanka	
India	
Indonesia	In most cases parents are responsible for purchasing textbooks.
Japan	The state pays fixed price to publishing houses and schoolchildren are supplied with textbooks for free. Teacher`s books are purchased by schools.
China	A system of free textbooks operates in China (schoolchildren return textbooks at the end of the academic year).
South Korea	The prices of textbooks are established by publishing houses, however, in some instances the state can interfere with the aim of regulating the price.
Singapore	Except for the socially vulnerable groups, parents themselves have to purchase textbooks. In some instances the state has the authority to interfere in the matters of price regulation.

<sup>31</sup> Maghnoouj, Soumaya, Daniel Salinas, Hannah Kitchen, Caitlyn Guthrie, George Bethell, and Elizabeth Fordham. "The Serbian education system." (2020).



Inclusivity of textbook contents in the context of diversity and elimination of all forms of discrimination

As mentioned above, systems of education vary in the context of diversity and inclusivity; namely, a system of education can be governed by a dominant ideology and may attempt to ignore the minorities on the level of politics and practice. On the other hand, there are systems where diversity, social inclusivity and pluralism represent the main principles for planning and governing politics.<sup>32</sup>

Identification of inequality and potential discrimination in the system of education requires a well-organized system of managing, monitoring and collecting information. In such case, critical importance is drawn not only to the decision makers, but to any process which concerns diversity issues so that the process can be open, transparent and participative.

It is well-recognized that any pattern of textbook edition must ensure the inclusivity of textbooks as every schoolchild has the right to achieve a quality education which takes matters of justice and equality into consideration.

The inclusivity of the contents of a textbook implies that the contents, language and visual aspects of a textbook do not show characteristics of discrimination on the grounds of religion, gender or any other aspect.

The World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are actively engaged in this direction. Both institutions pay a special attention to the renewal of curricula and textbooks.

#### Example 5:

UNESCO suggests the evaluation guidelines for monitoring the inclusivity of textbooks to the countries. The basic criteria for evaluation of textbooks are:

- Usage of inclusive and neutral language in a textbook;
- Demonstration and acceptance of different identity;
- Integrated learning of human rights;

Grounds for discrimination can be different, therefore, the criteria used for a specific direction can also vary. For instance, in reference to gender equality, three main questions must be asked concerning textbooks:

- Whether or not a textbook contains impartial viewpoint/information about a person's (both a man and a woman) full potential (including texts and illustrations);
- Whether or not a textbook contains a sexist language;
- How equally a textbook represents men and women (implying the quality and scale of representation).<sup>33</sup>

The analysis of how these issues are envisaged in the process of textbook creation, must be given by the council during the revision of the contents.

The contents of textbooks in transitive systems are mainly based on national curriculum. Because of that, if the aim of general education is to develop social and intercultural values, skills of empathy and tolerance in schoolchildren, **then** this aim must be demonstrated, first and foremost, in the national curriculum, content standards and textbook evaluation standards.

However, it is difficult to say to what extent the standard complies with the contents of a textbook if the analysis of the contents has not been done. Therefore, in such instance, it is possible to discuss the international practice in the context of those standards which are set by the international organizations in order to ensure the realization of the right to education as well as inclusivity of education.

<sup>32</sup> Miao, Fengchun, Sanjaya Mishra, and Rory McGreal. *Open educational resources: policy, costs, transformation*. (UNESCO Publishing, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> De Decker, Jolien, Manoëlle Verschuere, and Barbara Ávila. (Paris: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017).

## SUMMARY

International practice of selection and approval of textbooks has demonstrated that if various aspects of textbook policies are determined according to the ideology of education system management, it always reflects on the quality, availability and inclusivity of textbooks. Therefore, benefits of quality of decentralization as well as benefits of market deregulation for the private sector must be evaluated in reference to these criteria.

Based on the analysis of transitive patterns of textbook approval mechanisms, it can be said that in the states, where a textbook represents a basic and main learning resource, process transparency as well as anticipation of principles of fair and inclusive selection must be extremely important.

The above-mentioned is also immensely important for ensuring the principles of social inclusivity in planning the contents of teaching. It enables to make sure textbooks cannot be turned into instruments that encourage social inequality and violation of legal status of minorities.

In the following part of the paper we will discuss the policy of textbooks in the context of Georgia.



## **PART II**

### **ANALYSIS OF DRAFTING, EVALUATION AND APPROVAL OF POLICY OF TEXTBOOKS IN GEORGIA IN THE CONTEXT OF EQUALITY AND ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION**

## EDUCATION POLICY WITH REGARD TO ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION IN GEORGIA

### Legal framework review

Protection of principles of equality is the basic builder of human rights and democratic state and is guaranteed by the Legislation of Georgia as well as by the international legislation.

According to the Article 5 of the Constitution, Georgia is a social state which shall take care of strengthening the principles of social justice, social equality and social principles. Based on the principles of equality, the Article 11 of the constitution prohibits any discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, origin, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other views, social affiliation, property or titular status, place of residence, or on any other grounds. The state is held responsible to ensure the right for every citizen, regardless of ethnic, religious or language affiliation, to maintain and develop their culture, and use their mother tongue in private and in public. Also, the state takes special measures to ensure the equal rights and opportunities as well as substantive equality between men and women.

With the purpose of creating a unified legislative base aimed at developing the anti-discrimination legislation and combating instances of discrimination in Georgia, the Georgian parliament adopted the “Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination”.<sup>34</sup>

*“This Law is intended to eliminate every form of discrimination and to ensure equal rights of every natural and legal persons under the legislation of Georgia”.*

The Article 2 of the Law defines the forms of direct and indirect discrimination:

*Direct discrimination is the kind of treatment or creating the conditions which prevent a person from enjoyment of the rights provided for by the legislation: as well as when a person is treated less favourably than another person in a comparable situation on any grounds or when persons in inherently unequal conditions are treated equally.*

*The form of indirect discrimination implies a provision, criterion or practice, neutral in form but discriminatory in substance, which puts persons having any of the characteristics specified in Article 1 of this Law at a disadvantage compared with other persons in a comparable situation, or equally treats persons who are in inherently unequal conditions.*

According to the Article 4 of the Law, in order to eliminate discrimination, any institution shall be obliged to bring its activity and regulating acts into conformity with the Law and respond to any alleged act of discrimination according to the Law;

Those international agreements which highlight the necessity of elimination not only specific forms of discrimination, but also all forms of discrimination, hold the Georgian State responsible to protect the principles of equality. According to Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of the Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination. The Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights holds the member states responsible to ensure the equality under the law and elimination of discriminatory acts according to the Article 14 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

One of the main mechanisms for the protection of principles of equality, exercitation of fundamental rights and maintenance of cultural and ethnic identity is the unlimited realization of the right to education. The Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN states that the education shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups. Articles 12 and 14 of the European Framework Convention highlight the importance of equal access to education and creation of equal opportunities. The latter also reviews the importance of multicultural and intercultural education as well as adequate retraining of teachers and preparation of quality textbooks in this process.

According to the Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, education shall be directed to the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including learning the human rights.

<sup>34</sup> Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (May 2, 2014).

## **A review of the state policy drafted for the elimination of all forms of discrimination in the system of general education**

Legal and institutional framework of the system of general education of Georgia is based on the Constitution of Georgia, Law of Georgia on General Education, Document of National Goals for General Education and on those international agreements and framework documents which hold the state responsible to adhere them including EU–Georgia Association Agreement, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Nationally determined targets within the scope of the fourth goal of the Sustainable Development of the UN.

According to the Article 12 of the Constitution of Georgia, everyone has the right to free development of their personality; according to the Article 27 of the Constitution of Georgia, everyone has the right to receive education and the right to choose the form of education they receive.

The goal of the system of general education is to develop a person as a free individual characteristic of national and universal values. The Document of National Goals for General Education clearly highlights that a school must support the upbringing of a tolerant and law-abiding citizen.<sup>35</sup>

The Article 3 of the Law of Georgia on General Education determines that the state must ensure openness and equal access to a lifelong general education for all persons. According to the Article 9, everyone shall enjoy the equal rights to acquire a complete general education. The Article 13 creates preconditions for neutrality and protection from all forms of discrimination and states, that using a studying process for the purpose of religious indoctrination, proselytism or forced assimilation shall be inadmissible. The sixth and seventh paragraphs of the same article hold the school responsible to ensure and facilitate tolerance and mutual respect in the educational environment irrespective of a pupil's/parent's/teacher's social, ethnic, religious, linguistic and world-view affiliations, as well as to protect rights of minorities to freely manifest their cultural affiliation.<sup>36</sup> Article 18 of the Law ensures the protection of the right to freedom of belief, confession and conscience for pupils, parents and teachers and considers it inadmissible to impose such obligations upon them that fundamentally contradict their belief, confession and conscience.

According to the governmental strategy 2014-2020, supporting education sector, and especially general education, is regarded as one of the fundamental priorities for development of the country.<sup>37</sup> With the purpose of exercising the strategy of the state in education areas, the Unified Strategy for Education and Science 2017-2021 has been drafted.

According to the Strategy, a specific goal of education system can be determined as - providing schoolchildren with the access to high quality general education that aims to prepare them for their future lives; also, to ensure that they achieve educational results which are in compliance with national and international standards.<sup>38</sup>

Provision of equality, inclusivity of the process of teaching-learning and equal and identical access to education are demonstrated in the basic guidelines of the education strategy.

Within the scope of N1 Strategy Goal, the state must ensure the access to quality education for schoolchildren who represent national minorities, have special needs or/and are socially vulnerable; for schoolchildren who live in villages adjacent to occupied territories of Georgia and in highland villages. The main mechanism to achieve this goal is the development of social programs and sub-programs, namely: providing schoolchildren with free transportation and textbooks, access to geographical availability and the development of school infrastructure, including adapted infrastructure.

Aspects of principles of equality, protection of human rights and elimination of all forms of discrimination are envisaged in Strategic Goals N2 and N3. The priority of general education is the creation of equality, inclusivity and non-violent environment for pupils and teachers. Another priority is the conduct of teaching-learning process with approaches oriented on schoolchildren. Apart from reaching the basic academic goals, the importance of establishing national and universal values for pupils, teaching human rights and intercultural education are also highlighted in this direction.

Within the scope of general education reform, the mentioned goals are demonstrated in the supporting program of general education by means of introducing the third generation national curriculum and a new school model. The

<sup>35</sup> Ordinance of Government of Georgia №48 on approval of The Document of National Goals for General Education (October 18, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Law of Georgia on General Education (April 25, 2005).

<sup>37</sup> Resolution of Government of Georgia N400 – On Approval of Socio-Economic Development Strategy of Georgia - 'Georgia 2020' and Associated Activities (2014).

<sup>38</sup> The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia; Unified Strategy 2017-2021 (2017).

mentioned goals are also demonstrated in the part of school's security policy, partially in the modules of professional development of teachers and in supporting programs for inclusive development.<sup>39</sup>

The national curriculum is the document determining the contents and organizing principles of teaching, hence, in the following sub-chapter we will be reviewing the concept of the third generation national curriculum in the context of teaching human rights, protecting principles of equality and developing intercultural competencies in schoolchildren.

### A Review of the national curriculum

The Third Generation National Curriculum was drafted in 2014-2016. The new national curriculum is based on constructivist educational concept oriented on the development of a person. A holistic design of teaching has been drafted with the purpose of active construction of knowledge and process of teaching-learning. This design includes key concepts, indigenous beliefs, key questions and complex tasks.<sup>40</sup>

Within the scope of the new national curriculum, the focus is made on strengthening the learning of civic education on the primary and basic stages. This is demonstrated by adding new subjects such as "Me and Society" and "Citizenship" to the learning grid. The conceptual section manifests the aspects that are related to understanding equality, tolerance and diversity among schoolchildren in terms of pervasive and subject competencies.

The competencies related to equality, tolerance and intercultural sensitivity are mainly manifested in the definitions of ethics, communication and collaboration competencies in the Article 7.

The competency of ethics implies the development of skills in pupils<sup>41</sup> such as protection of ethical norms, solidarity, empathy, acceptance of difference and responsibility on their own behavior. At the same time, within the scope of the communication and collaboration competencies, schoolchildren must be able to constructively review different ideas and beliefs as well as understand and appreciate personal values.

According to the Article 8, within the scope of bilingual teaching, in terms of teaching language to ethnical minorities, the national curriculum envisages the right of an adolescent to learn literary communication in his/her own mother tongue respectively to his/her age.

The methodological guidelines of the national curriculum highlight the importance of teaching which is oriented on a pupil; guidelines also indicate that every pupil is unique and that it is necessary for the learning process to be conducted in such positive environment, where a pupil feels that they are appreciated and recognized.<sup>42</sup>

Protection of equality is considered to be the basic principle of methodology in the process of teaching-learning. To ensure the mentioned, it is inadmissible for a school to divide schoolchildren based on their academic achievements and/or to create barriers against admission of pupils, as well as to segregate pupils based on their readiness for school or/and based on levels of achievement. With the purpose of providing pupils with equal conditions for development, schools are held responsible to offer pupils the learning process that is diversified and based on individual approach. Teachers on their part must ensure the equal engagement of schoolchildren in the learning process.

One of the priorities of the national curriculum is a cultural diversity. This is stated in the basic characteristics of a school's collective culture described in the national curriculum. Namely, according to the Article 18, the purpose of exercising the process of teaching-learning and of other additional activities is:

*"To establish tolerance and mutual respect among the members of a school society irrespective of their social, ethnic, religious, linguistic and world-view affiliations".*

It is also defined that a collective school culture shall help an adolescent to conduct intercultural dialogue in and outside the country; the collective school culture shall also assist to facilitate establishment of positive attitude towards cultural diversity as well as establishment of tolerant values. The latter implies:

<sup>39</sup> The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia; Program Concept - "Supporting General Education Reform", (Tbilisi: 2019). Supporting programs for inclusive teaching and education is available at: <http://inclusion.ge/geo/static/19>.

Order №06/5 of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture And Sport of Georgia on Approval of the Rules and Conditions of Safety and Public Order Protection in the General Education Institutions (January 29, 2019)

<sup>40</sup> The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, "National Curriculum": chapter 1 – "Administrative and Conceptual Issues of Organization of the Process of Teaching-learning" (2018).

<sup>41</sup> The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, "National Curriculum": chapter 1 – section II – Goals and Educational Principles of Teaching-learning (2018).

<sup>42</sup> The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, "National Curriculum": chapter 1 – section II, sub-section III – the Main Methodological Guidelines (2018).

*“Respect and acceptance of diversity (existing in the country or in the world) which represent one of the main conditions for people’s peaceful cohabitation. The collective school culture shall help an adolescent to understand that every person is an individual having his/her own language, culture and tradition and can make unique contribution to the progress of the country and the public”.*<sup>43</sup>

### **Compliance of Content standards of primary stage with equality principles**

Issues concerning quality, diversity and teaching human rights are demonstrated in the sections of goals and results of the content standards. Within the scope of the new national curriculum, content standards of only elementary and primary stages are updated. Taking into account a research selection, content standards are reviewed on the examples of subjects of primary stage.

History on the primary stage implies integrated teaching of the history of Georgia and the world history. It is stated among the goals of teaching-learning of the subject that history aims at helping to transform a schoolchild into a humane, state-oriented and patriot citizen<sup>44</sup>.

According to the results` section of the history standard, the teaching-learning process of history shall be oriented on the development of patriotism, state-focused mindset and cultural diversity.

After completing a primary stage, a schoolchild should be able<sup>45</sup>:

- To differentiate between facts, interpretations/opinions and stereotypes;
- To show positive attitude towards cultural, ethnic and religious diversity;
- To corroborate the necessity of state-focused mindset (patriotism) and principles of democracy (equality, participation) by means of giving examples from history.

Geography standard on the primary stage implies learning the geography of continents and Georgia. In the context of equality, diversity and teaching human rights, the learning-teaching process of geography aims to develop a tolerant attitude towards the other nations into schoolchildren.

In compliance with this goal, a schoolchild should be able to understand the underlying reasons or results behind changing peculiar properties (natural and mechanical movement, structure, density) of population in every geographic region and continent; a schoolchild should also be able to learn peculiar properties of population in the context of ethnic, racial and linguistic diversity.<sup>46</sup>

Within the scope of the Georgian language and literature standard, schoolchildren learn various types and genres of texts (novels of Georgian classic authors, contemporary literary fiction, non-fiction, etc.) on the primary stage.

In terms of manifesting equality and tolerant values, the teaching goal of the subject is to develop the respect and responsibility into schoolchildren for their own mother tongue and literature as well as for the Georgian culture in general;

Also, it aims to facilitate the transformation of a schoolchild into a creative and aspirant person who respects other cultures and is oriented on human values.<sup>47</sup>

The standard separates 3 main thematic frameworks. The mentioned thematic frameworks enable a schoolchild to discuss about a person both as an individual and as a member of society, to understand the importance of the culture and traditions of the homeland.

The standard is enclosed with the list of authors. The list of mandatory authors is reduced compared to the previous standard, and, as usual, includes only the ethnically Georgian authors. On the other hand, teachers are enabled to add new literature to the teaching material considering learning topics and learning objectives.

As for the standard of Georgian as a second language, the main objective of teaching is for schoolchildren to develop a skill for learning the language. The same objective aims at functional usage of the state language for exercising communicative purposes and learning activities.

<sup>43</sup> The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, *“National Curriculum”*: chapter 1 – section II – sub-section II - Goals and Educational Principles of Teaching-learning (2018).

<sup>44</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science, *National Curriculum: history – standard of primary stage (2018)*.

<sup>45</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science, *National Curriculum: history – standard of primary stage (2018)*.

<sup>46</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science, *National Curriculum: geography – standard of primary stage (2018)*.

<sup>47</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science, *National Curriculum: Georgian language and literature – standard of primary stage (2018)*.

It should be noted that in the context of creating equal opportunities and cultural diversity, the standard aims to develop skills of appreciation and respect for the other cultures in schoolchildren and to integrate them into the civil society.<sup>48</sup>

In the section of social and cultural competencies on the primary stage, a schoolchild should be able:

- To understand different cultural norms and values and to demonstrate a positive attitude towards cultural diversity.
- To integrate into different cultural contexts.<sup>49</sup>

The issues of equality and cultural diversity, various aspects of development of tolerance, human values, and intercultural competencies are manifested into the standards of visual arts and foreign language. As for the subject “Citizenship”, this subject also aims at teaching human rights, principles of equality and democracy, hence, we do not review the objectives of this standard separately.

To sum up, we can say that, for the most part, the concept of the national curriculum and the content standards conform to the equality principles and envisage the elements of teaching human rights. As the introduction of the standard on the primary stage has not yet begun, it is rather difficult to say how the textbook authors and teachers will be able to interpret and provide schoolchildren with the concepts which are reviewed in the standards. This is especially significant for learning the concepts of the mentioned democracy, statehood, equality, patriotism and diversity. In this instance, it is preferred that in the standards, especially in the social science group, Georgia should be demonstrated as ethnically and culturally diverse country which serves as the basis for its cultural diversity.

Secondly, the content standards are followed by the annual programs which serve as the recommendations for teachers, however, the practice demonstrates that, in some instances, teachers fully adhere to the standards and plans. In such cases, we consider it important to revise the content standards and to further clarify the diversity topic in the section of indigenous beliefs and concepts \_ we can discuss the annual program for the grade 9 in geography as an example: in this program, the topic of ethnic and cultural diversity is discussed only in the context of South Georgia, also, the section of indigenous beliefs states:

“The south of Georgia stands out with its ethnic and religious diversity”.

At the same time, thematic queries of the annual program of geography raise the questions when stating that Catholics are only in the south of Georgia.

It would be relevant if the issues of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity were demonstrated similarly in the learning sections of the other Georgian regions, especially, in the context of Highland Adjara and Kvemo Kartli.

It is obvious, that these topics will be presented in textbooks in one form or another, however, we consider that as national curriculum is the main guiding document for teachers and aims at constructing their beliefs, paying attention to these topics will help them to better understand issues of diversity and equality and will enable them to assist schoolchildren into developing tolerant values.

One of the mechanisms for introducing the new generation national curriculum is the approved textbooks. In the next chapter we will review the policy and practice of drafting and approving textbooks in schools of Georgia.

## A PROCEDURE OF DRAFTING, SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF TEXTBOOKS IN GEORGIA

After achieving independence, important steps were taken towards designing textbooks and improving their quality in Georgia. In 1997, within the scope of textbook funding program of “Open Society - Georgia Foundation”, publishing houses were given the opportunity to participate in the competition<sup>50</sup>. This initiative gave an impetus to design and provide new textbooks to schools as well as to gain credibility for the process of textbook drafting.

Creating textbook rental system also aimed to increase the accessibility to textbooks. The program started in 2002 within the scope of the project called “Transformation and Strengthening of Education” supported by the World Bank. As a result, parents in the pilot schools were able to rent textbooks from schools only with 30 % of the mar-

<sup>48</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science, *National Curriculum: Georgian as a second language – standard of primary stage (2018)*.

<sup>49</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science, *National Curriculum: Georgian as a second language – standard of primary stage (2018)*.

<sup>50</sup> Open Society - Georgia Foundation. *Review Report of the Georgian Education Development Project: Education Support Program (2002)*.



ket price and then return them at the end of the academic year<sup>51</sup>. However, accessibility and quality of textbooks remained challenging.

The reform in the system of education that has been in progress since 2004, fundamentally changed the process of drafting and approval of textbooks. The approval of the first national curriculum in 2006 brought about the necessity to design new textbooks<sup>52</sup>. The process of designing new textbooks was led by the National Curriculum Department. A procedure of drafting and approval of school textbooks was determined by the rule of approval of a recommended textbook.

### **Development of the rule of textbook approval in the historical context and a review of the existing practice**

On the basis of the order №428 of May 11, 2006 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, a rule for approving a recommended textbook was imposed<sup>53</sup>. Approving a textbook was possible by two means: on the basis of a competition or on the basis of a pilot program. Only publishing houses were able to participate in the textbook approval competition. The textbook approval had been operating before the introduction of new approved textbooks. A textbook's compliance with the standard was determined by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center and the group of experts by means of competition.

Publishing houses were able to participate in pilot projects if they filed in an application form and presented pilot materials. Allowing a textbook into a pilot project did not imply the necessity of approving this textbook. A competition for textbook approval used to be announced for one or several grades, for example, for grades I, III, X.

The approval rule of a recommended textbook ensured that associations and publishing houses were engaged in the process of creating assessment criteria. The same rule gave a professional support to publishing houses and enabled them to eliminate defects by means of giving a conditional approval of textbooks<sup>54</sup>. After meeting the requirements of the standard, a textbook was given either an approval or a conditional approval. As determined by the approval rule of a recommended textbook, the state did not interfere in the authority of printing and distributing textbooks as well as in the copyrights and the process of determining prices of textbooks.

167 textbooks prepared by twenty-nine big and small publishing houses were approved by the year of 2007. As evaluated by the national curriculum, the new textbooks envisaged individual characteristics of schoolchildren and difference between forms and abilities of learning; design and technical properties were improved as well.<sup>55</sup>

On the basis of the order №138 of March 18, 2009 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, owing to a new rule of approving a recommended textbook, the old rule which implied approving a textbook by means of pilot project as well as the possibility of the conditional approval were abolished.<sup>56</sup>

The changes were reflected on the authorities and duties of the Centre and publishing houses too. The rule of 2009 did not hold the Centre responsible to maintain cooperative relationships with publishing houses and textbook publishing associations anymore.<sup>57</sup> Also, according to the Article 12, the term for a textbook approval was determined for 6 years.

The recording which can be viewed as an attempt of the state to regulate prices, was at first seen in this rule of approval. The Article 5 (2) (F) holds a publishing house responsible:

*“To ensure the sale of a textbook throughout the whole territory of Georgia in the first academic year after a textbook is approved. According to the appendix of this rule, a textbook must be sold with the price which is determined by a publishing house and is pointed out in the textbook form”.*

The rule imposed in 2009, unlike from the other editions, envisaged placement of an approved textbook on a special catalogue page with its assessment, be it negative or positive. According to the experts' evaluation, by doing so, publishing houses, the state and schools shared responsibility on the quality of textbooks. Teachers were able to see the review of a specific textbook beforehand and then decide whether to use this teaching material or not.

On the basis of the order №19 of March 15, 2010 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on the ap-

<sup>51</sup> Giorgi Gabashvili, *The Case Studies* (Open Society Georgia Foundation, 2005).

<sup>52</sup> Order №841 of the Minister of “Education and Science of Georgia” on the Approval of National Curriculum (September 28, 2006).

<sup>53</sup> Order №428 of the Minister of “Education and Science of Georgia” on imposing a rule for approving a recommended textbook (May 11, 2006).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> *National Curriculum and Assessment Center, Annual Report 2007-08 (2007)*

<sup>56</sup> Order №138 of the Minister of “Education and Science of Georgia” on approving a rule of approval of a recommended textbook (March 18, 2009)

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

proval of a textbook, the state increased the standard and requirements to control the experience and qualifications of authors and editors of textbooks. Soon a recording appeared in the section of duties of publishing houses which held publishing houses obliged to cooperate with the Center on the basis of the agreement; to supply the Ministry of Education and Science with the fixed quantity of textbooks and workbooks at no cost.<sup>58</sup> According to the Article 8 of that same rule, the term for a textbook approval was determined for 5 years.

Since 2011, the state policy in educational sector has been changed qualitatively. The tendency of the state to strengthen control in all directions of education policy has been reflected on the process of textbook approval as well.

On the basis of the order №30/6 of February 25, 2011 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, a rule on the approval and determining price of a textbook of general educational institutions was imposed. Three main changes were made on the basis of this rule.

First of all, unlike from the previous editions, the right to participate in the approval competition, apart from legal persons, was given to private persons, to an author or to a group of authors.<sup>59</sup>

According to the Article 6 (1), an applicant who desired to participate in the approval competition, must have given assent that if his/her textbook/series of textbooks was approved, he/she would give the ordinary or special license to the Center via agreement with the right for the Center to use a textbook/series of textbooks.

According to the Article 10 (1), considering the necessary public needs, the Center was given the authority to give the right to use a textbook to any person who was interested as well as to copyright owners, but only with the obligation to pay 10 % of the whole cost of printing copies of an approved textbook as a honorarium.

The third change implied the introduction of a principle of approval of a series of textbooks. A series was to be intended for one subject included in the national curriculum within the scope of a stage. Also, if a series of textbooks was presented, each of the textbooks in the series should have met requirements of the approval, otherwise, none of the textbook in the series would get approved.

According to the Article 9 (5), the role and responsibility of the conciliation commission was highlighted among the other decision-makers in the process of giving an approval to a textbook. The working rules and members of the commission were determined by the minister. The commission was given the authority to approve a textbook/a series of textbooks without a textbook to go through the approval procedure.

Finally, applicants who desired to join the textbook approval competition, had to pay a fixed price for a textbook or a series of textbooks \_ the price was determined by the same rule.<sup>60</sup>

In 2012, the authority to conduct legal relations of the textbook approval procedure was given to the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. According to this change, the Center was given the authority, in urgent instances and based on interests of the state, to design a school textbook (one of the reasons to design a school textbook could be a profit) on the basis of the order of the Minister of Education and Science. Such type of textbook had to be presented to the conciliation commission for the approval. At the same time, the textbook approval price increased: the price for all types of textbooks participating in the competition became 1600 Laris instead of 500 Laris for one full set of textbooks.

In 2011, the state imposed a rule for publishing houses to give copyrights, however, the state began to use the mentioned right only in 2013 within the scope of “Free Textbook Program” and printed textbooks independently.

The accessibility to textbooks was increased, however, the issue of usefulness and renewal of textbooks was still a challenge. 57% of textbooks which were printed in 2013, needed reprinting annually because they included sheets of paper for cutting and writing. According to the compliance audit report of 2015, schools were unable to evaluate conditions of textbooks and provide the correct information on their quantity at the arranged time, so the data in the system of education management were not updated on time. On the one hand, this resulted in purchasing more textbooks than needed and caused misuse of the state budget; on the other hand, in some schools, schoolchildren had to use textbooks which were either copied, old or unsuitable for learning.<sup>61</sup>

In 2014, a working process on a new rule of approval started; however, it was difficult to conclude an agreement between publishing houses and the ministry because publishing houses had to prepay all the costs for designing new

<sup>58</sup> Order №19/6 of the Minister of “Education and Science of Georgia” on the rule of the approval of a textbook (March 15, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Order №30/N of the Minister of “Education and Science of Georgia”, on the approval of a textbook of general educational institutions (February 25, 2011).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> State Audit Office, Compliance Audit Report on Program of Provision of textbooks to Schoolchildren 2010-2014 (Tbilisi: September17, 2015).



textbooks when it was still unsure whether they would maintain the right to print those approved textbooks or would only get a copyright honorarium. The fact as to how the ministry was going to ensure the protection of copyrights was also ambiguous. After long-term discussions, certain agreements were achieved in those parts which implied determining a rule for textbook approval price, a copyright honorarium and, also, protection of copyrights. However, reaching an agreement concerning giving copyrights to the ministry was impossible.

According to the order №28/N of February 16, 2017 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, the new rule on the approval of a textbook/series of textbooks of a general educational institution was imposed. The approval competition in 2018-2019 was held/is held on the basis of this new rule.<sup>62</sup>

It was determined that the aim of the approval was to support the main goals of the state policy by means of providing schoolchildren with quality school textbooks.

The administration rule of the process was also changed. With the purpose of managing the process for the textbook approval administration, an electronic system for administrating the textbook approval was created. Its management was assigned to LEPL Education Management Information System. Also, the price for a textbook approval was abolished. In 2018-2019, the process of a textbook approval was conducted in five stages.<sup>63</sup>

The first stage implies the announcement of a textbook/series of textbooks approval competition on the basis of the individual administrative-legal act of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia.

The novelty in the approval competition is that an applicant can present a concept of a textbook to the ministry. The concept implies the principles of drafting a textbook, a table of contents and a sample chapter. Relevance of a concept is determined in relation to the national curriculum and the results are notified to the publisher, however, the results will not be reflected during the process of determined approval stages.

On the second stage, an applicant (a natural or legal person) who desires to participate in the competition, registers an application form in the electronic system of the approval process administration. On the third stage, which is the stage of reviewing an application form, compliance with the requirements is determined and if any defects are detected, an applicant is given five days to correct them.

On the fourth stage, a textbook/series of textbooks is evaluated according to the technical parameters and the parameters of the contents. Evaluation of the contents is divided into two steps:

First step \_ the main evaluation implies determining compliance with basic criteria of the contents.

Second step involves modifying and improving a textbook. During this process, evaluators of subject groups discuss their recommendations with authors/groups of authors.

Criteria for reviewing contents: for some of them a scoring system is used, and for others –an oral assessment. The oral assessment implies the following assessments: (“fully meets requirements”, “partially meets requirements”, “does not meet requirements”). A textbook moves onto the second stage of evaluation only if it fully or partially meets those criteria which are evaluated by the oral assessment.<sup>64</sup>

A textbook/series of textbooks undergoes technical assessment only if all of the textbooks from a series overcome 90% of content assessment barriers. The technical assessment also implies determining compliance with requirements on the first stage and correcting defects on the second stage. The review of textbooks is carried out by a subject group of reviewers.

On the fifth stage, the decision of granting an approval to a textbook/series of textbooks is made by representing subject groups only if:

On the first stage of a content review, a model of a textbook/each textbook from a series reaches the maximum (90% of total scores) standard which is set for content criteria (“a textbook model fully meets all those criteria which are assessed orally and also fully meets technical standards”).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Order №28/N of the Minister of “Education and Science of Georgia” on the approval of a rule of a textbook/a series of textbooks of a general educational institution (February 16, 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Order N768 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia on approval of technical and content criteria of review of a textbook/series of textbooks model for primary and basic stages of general education (December 31, 2018).

<sup>65</sup> On approval of technical and content criteria of review of a textbook/series of textbooks model for primary and basic stages of general education (December 31, 2018).

Right after approval is granted, the ministry enters into a license agreement with the copyright holders of all approved textbooks/series of textbooks. The license agreement regulates the amount of copyright royalties, as well as the provision of acquisition of copyright by the ministry. Specifically, before the schools select the wanted textbooks, the ministry sets the ultimate weighted/evaluated scores for the textbook in each and every subject. The weighted score is calculated by weighing the final score of the series and the discount that the applicant submits to the guarantor<sup>66</sup> right at the time of registration.

The weight of the final score of the textbook is 95% to the competition whereas 5% for the discount offered to the guarantor by the copyright holder. This correlation was 90 to 10 (9:10) in 2018.

In case the total number exceeds 3, schools will be given 3 units to select off the ranking list, and if the number of textbooks approved do not exceed 3 there comes no need for the ranking score to be calculated. The list of selected units is provided to the Education Management Information Agency that in turn is responsible for the further state procurement of schoolbooks to teachers and students. In 2018, this policy failed to procure all the textbooks approved, hence some schools were left unable to receive the textbooks they had selected.

Unlike the 2006-2011 approval procedure, the order 2017 sets out the rules of revising and updating textbooks, which conceptualizes the involvement of the copyright holder, the ministry and other stakeholders. According to Article 16 of the Rule, instead of 6 years, the validity period of the approved textbooks/series of textbooks is determined by the validity period<sup>67</sup> of the relevant subject curriculum.

With the intention of protecting the copyright, already approved learning resources are overprinted with holograms (hereinafter referred as the identification mark). Under the 2017 rule, it was the copyright holder's obligation overprinting the distinctive mark, under the 2018 amendment package though, this authority was granted<sup>68</sup> to the LEPL – Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency (ESIDA).

### **Content and technical evaluation of textbooks**

In terms of criteria, the approval procedure has not significantly changed and both the previous and the current rule evaluate textbooks with a sign of content language, the national curriculum compliance, structure and technical soundness. In the context of equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination, textbooks are evaluated under the distinctive approval procedures. In the year of 2006, standards were far more general and in some cases due to the textbook evaluation policy, blemishes were corrected right in the course of the approval process. The textbook evaluation criteria in 2009-2011 editions were far clearer and structured, besides, an important item in the evaluation prerequisites envisaged the textbook conformity with the law, *that is, a textbook was not evaluated if its content language contradicted the law, or the content or design of the textbook was discriminatory and discreditable.*

In the course of 2018-2019 approval process, the textbook content and technical review criteria were determined on the grounds of the review procedure. The content evaluation criteria had been quantified, and according to the National Curriculum Department, have been brought closer to the new national curriculum. In the context of equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination criteria, 5 fundamental standards are distinguished:

- 5.1 - Protection of equality principles, prohibition of discrimination and discrediting elements;
- 5.2 - Adherence to ethical norms;
- 5.3 - Prohibition of incitement to violence or hostility intensification;
- 5.4 - Prohibition of commercial advertising;
- 5.5 - Compliance with the Constitution of Georgia;
- 5.6 - Compliance with the principals of sustainable development.

As for the evaluators, in 2016, the intention of the textbook approval granting united the center and/or invited experts, including those involved in the process of developing the national curriculum in cooperation with field specialists. In accordance with the 2009-2010 rule, submitted textbooks were evaluating by experts, who were highly reputable, recognized field specialists.

Since 2010, a role of the National Curriculum Center (Hereinafter referred to as the Department Involvement) has

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Order №28 / N of the Minister of Education and Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, On Approval of the Rules of the Textbook / Series of General Education Institutions (February 16, 2017).

<sup>68</sup> Order N №46 / N of the Minister of Education and Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia

been diminished in the textbook evaluation process. Consequently, setting up the compatibility of textbooks with the national curriculum proved to be strenuous, since the motivation and competence of establishing the compliance of textbooks with the national curriculum turned to be far lower amongst external experts and practicing teachers. The principle mentioned had been altered right before 2018-2019 textbook approval process and the Department of National Curriculum rejoined the process of evaluation, besides, the exact composition of the subject group reviewers was distinctly defined, which includes: (Teachers, field scientists, philologists, psychologist, individual with the experience in developing a subject standard envisaged by the National Curriculum/National Curriculum Expert or other specialists). The year of 2017, demonstrates the engagement of parents represented by schools, and from 2018, of thematic specialists in the field of human rights as reviewers represented to the Ministry by the Public Defender.

In 2019, on the order #1222 basis of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, dated back October 3, 2019, an approval competition was announced for certain subjects of primary education, along with the number of subjects of the grade VII and textbook/series of textbooks<sup>69</sup> of the grade VIII.

Correspondingly, the approval competition for the qualifying units will end no later than June 19, 2020.

The next chapter presents an analysis of textbook approval mechanism built on the results of the qualitative research.

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<sup>69</sup> Order N 1222 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia on announcing the textbook approval competition for some subjects of primary and basic education and secondary school textbooks / series (October 3, 2019).

### **PART III**

## **ANALYSIS OF THE FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGES IN THE TEXTBOOK DEVELOPING, EVALUATING AND APPROVING PROCESS**

## REVIEW OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The analysis of the fundamental challenges in the textbook developing, evaluation and approving process is based on the findings of the research conducted within the qualitative research component.

### Textbook development

Upon the request of the state, textbooks are created by the publishers affiliate or independent author/authors. The textbook designing capability is affected by the author's competence, motivation and textbook designing deadlines.

### *Authors' competence and motivation*

The methodical maintenance of textbooks and their compatibility with the new national curriculum proved to be the principal challenges in terms of competencies. Another challenge for competency is the givens that the majority of the authors are still scholars in the field who have in-depth knowledge of the subject, albeit less pedagogical practice, which is well-reflected in the structure, methodology and language of the textbook. On the other hand, however, authors who are practicing teachers face challenges in terms of multifaceted representation of a particular topic or issue.

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*"We oftentimes witness cases where the content is designed with high professionalism, but remains incomprehensible to children."*

*A reviewer*

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Building a textbook based on the concept of the new national curriculum has proved to be a common challenge of authors with diverse qualifications and experiences. An obvious demonstration of the late is the fact that, while evaluating the seventh grade textbooks, shortcomings in terms of the textbook and the national curriculum compatibility prevailed. Herewith, part of the authors most frequently sought advice and assistance in this regard, both formally and informally through establishing communication with editors and national curriculum experts.

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*"When we started working on the textbook, most of the times we faced the problem of understanding the concepts of the new national curriculum, and the experts did assist us a lot in this regard, for instance, the issue of summery assignments and complex assignments turned to be vague in every way possible."*

*Author 1*

*„I deem myself to be a quality subject specialist and I am also good at writing, however, right after the evaluation, I came to realize that my notion of concepts was different from what the experts expected from me“.*

*Author 2*

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Yet another and equally significant challenge is the authors' low motivation. Authors and education specialists explain this away by the deficiency in assistance throughout the work process and the paucity of royalties.

Authors expect assistance from the editors first and from the ministry afterwards. However, this assistance is "virtually zero", they say.

This consideration is shared by one of the experts and they do believe that the state does not invest in the textbook preparation and evaluation process through assisting editors and authors, but only at the time of purchasing a ready-made textbook printable file. Therefore, in number of cases, the authors themselves have to plan, organize and finance their own work.

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*„An author themselves invest while writing a book“.*

*An education researcher*

*„High-end specialists do not develop textbooks or show up on the market, more likely due to very low royalties and quite specious workload“.*

*Reviewer 2*

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As for the range of royalties, the authors do believe that royalties are inconsistent with the workload volume, so do the publishers. Furthermore, one of the authors describes their work as “volunteering.”

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*„We had a pre-concerted feeling that all we were volunteers, and that we were doing it [developing the textbook] since we wanted the students and the teacher to really benefit, otherwise none of us would have worked so hard for meager pays“.*

*Author 2*

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#### **Approval terms and conditions**

Already identified challenges in relation to the development and subsequent evaluation of textbooks were compounded by the problem of condensed approval deadlines and series of the competition announcements.

In the year of 2018, authors had up to 3-4 months to work, on and by 2019 the deadline was extended to 5 months, however, citing the authors and publishers, this term is not adequate and they have to terminate all other processes in order to submit the material.

By some of the respondents' estimations, performing in a limited duration was in certain cases hampered by accompanying procedural shortcomings, with publishers noting that the content criteria and conditions of the competition for the 2018 and 2019 competitions were not known for the outset and authors and publishers had to completely rewrite already written textbooks.

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*„Terms are extremely short. “ We were like in - I need it yesterday situation.” [The 7th grade textbooks approval]“.*

*A publishing house representative*

*“The dominant problem this year was that we were given instructions in passing [2019-2020]. By and large, the thematic evaluation criteria were not at disposal almost to the eleventh hour.”*

*A publishing house representative*

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Besides, although the 2018-2019 competition for the series failed to be announced, as part of the research, the approval of series was dubbed as one of the major challenges and realistic risks.

Citing some of the respondents' evaluations, the approval of series affects the quality of textbooks in 2 dissimilar ways:

Part of the respondents thinks that announcing a competition for a series of textbooks diminishes the time and effort spent on a single textbook. In addition, particular authors hold their niche, however, within the scope of the series approval, other textbooks of the series are being prepared, which finds its way on quality.

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*“In terms of excellence, the series has its own charm that follows one concept, however, the internal quality of a single (1) textbook is more momentous.”*

*A person involved in the approval process management*

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Part of respondents however believes that, the approval of series intensifies the risk for compromising, by way of explanation: if a single (1) textbook of the series is not of proper quality, it may fail the entire series. In this case the concession is to allow 1 textbook of a low quality with the intention to maintain the other finer textbooks in the series.

### **Textbooks content evaluation**

#### ***Reviewing procedures and conditions***

The flow of the textbook content evaluation is divided into 2 steps, the reviewers first prepare individual remarks/recommendations, and then discuss them in groups and agree on the correctness of the recommendation depiction.

Challenges in terms of individual evaluation are associated with the competence of the evaluators and the transparency of their selection process.

It is noteworthy that the respondents themselves identified the lack of competencies in a number of cases not in the context of competencies each and every board reviewer, but only in terms of the field scientists' competencies, as they believe that they have the least experience in applying practical pedagogy and estimate the textbook from a narrow field perspective even in the course of evaluation.

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*“There actually is a deficiency of competence in evaluators with respect to methodology.”*

*Board member 1*

*“It is complementary that the board now has subject standard specialists.”*

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On the other hand, according to of one of the education specialists, unlike the national curriculum experts, filed scholars are less motivated to consider textbooks in the goal achieving and the national curriculum implementation context.

The discrepancy between the scores put during the individual evaluation and the verbal evaluation (substantiation) proved to be a problem.

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*„I looked at the evaluators, one thing casted a doubt ... for example, when a remark is substantive and the score is still low, there the sense of objectivity is doubtful. On the one hand, they defend professional dignity, write remarks, on the other hand, however, they feel sorry for the authors and reduce their scores.”*

*An approval process management*

*“It is uncertain how the evaluators write their evaluations and then publicly curse the very textbooks.”*

*An education specialist*

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It should be noted that, oftentimes, the fact that the National Curriculum Department is involved in the process of approval, is seen by respondents as one of the steps taken towards improving the evaluation process itself, which is driven by the expectation that the textbook will be more in line with the national curriculum, as well as focused on more practical needs.

Respondents' notion of the reviewers selection process itself and criteria is vague. The only exception in this regard is the person directly involved in the selection process. According to the late, the reviewers in the approval competition are selected on the contest basis, as a consequence of an interview.

However, no competition was announced for the year of 2019 and the selection was made amongst those reviewers who had worked as a part of the VII grade textbook approval competition. It is worth mentioning that respondents who are informed about the submission of reviewers by the Public Defender have more faith in the selection process than those who do not have this information.

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*“There actually is a deficiency of competence in evaluators with respect to methodology.”*

*Board member 1*

*“It is complementary that the board now has subject standard specialists.”*

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### **Group discussions and recommendations**

In the course of the textbook evaluations, the number, duration and moderation of discussions proved to be challenging at the stage of group considerations. Meetings are held infrequently and sometimes last longer than 8 hours.

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*“The board met only once last year and virtually worked until midnight to reconcile on recommendations.”*

*The ministry official*

*“It is absolutely scarcely credible to work in such stressful circumstances and maintain productivity, with virtually no breaks and working without allowing for minimal needs, which has become a practice since 2012.”*

*A reviewer*

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As for the decision-making process itself, as feedbacks from the evaluators involved in the 2018 approval process demonstrate, the rules and principles of decision-making process are not always clear to each and every reviewer. For example, how to introduce authors to recommendations. The problem in this regard rose in the reflection of the recommendations drawn by the Ombudsmen's reviewers in the context of human rights and equality.

All parties engaged in the process, as well as external stakeholders, had a common problem, namely, the absence of all-out communication between the reviewers and the authors, which, by the involved parties, effects the process both in terms of gap elimination as well as transparency.

These problems saw their solution in the year of 2019, in particular, the second, content reviewing (deficiency-elimination) stage of the competitions had been decided to be open, anonymity was removed, which guaranteed opinion exchanges between the authors and the reviewers.

### **Ensuring the compliance with the principals of equality**

In the light of the research focus, in addition to those challenges already listed, we separately analyzed the shortcomings that the approval process faces in the context of the equality principle compatibility. 2 fundamental challenges were identified: attitude towards the issue and the decision-making process management.

In terms of attitude towards the issue, all the parties come in agreement that textbooks must not contain the discriminatory elements, although respondents assess the significance of the issue distinctively.

For example, the Gender, Culture, and Human Rights Official offered by the Public Defender believes that in number of cases practicing teachers and scholars do not pay due attention to the issue and oftentimes choose to exaggerat-



edly consider this or that shortcoming, especially in terms of gender, ethnicity and religion. Citing the subject expert, the so-called “other specialists” recommendations are often blown up, artificial and less crucial.

According to the ministry official, the national curriculum specialists keep trying to normalize the discussion process between the “parties”. By the ministry official, it is fairly realistic to depict all the issues in the textbook in such a way that is authentic, shared with students and integrated with the academic objectives and less focused on reflecting diversity in numbers.

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*„Due to perfectionism, subject experts at-times were opposing other specialists, where believing that they were dealing with a quite artificial involvement: for example, when it is said that if one mentions so many male composers, there must be the female composer mention as well, right here comes a contradiction, namely, the functions and goals of music are primary and these themes should not be artificially “built on” in such a way. It hinders understanding.*

*[...] Georgian pieces of work, too, hold discriminatory relations ... For example, Bashiachuki is a great case of that. [...] To put in a nutshell, artificially inserted issues fail to work it there is no opportunity for in-depth understanding and if we do not assist teachers themselves in comprehension.”*

*The ministry official*

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As for the decision-making, although, in certain criteria, specialists do independently evaluate a textbook, they are not allowed<sup>70</sup> to make a decision over and above other specialists.

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*„I had not been involved in the process and it was utterly ambiguous how we were supposed to work, as it turned out, I was the only one evaluating by this criteria, but its reflection was up to others decisions, which felt really vague.”*

*A reviewer*

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### Selection of school level textbooks

Challenges disclosed in terms of the school level textbook selection are coupled with the openness of the decision-making process and the deficiency of information and competencies required to textbook evaluation.

The school level textbook should be selected in an academic department, through the consideration and evaluation of all the existing alternatives (in the event of possibility), however, if citing the respondents, decisions at the school level are in certain cases made subjectively by the principal and the school department is completely excluded from the process.

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*“We consistently analyze all the textbooks”, my knowledge of evaluation is more and I advise teachers for or against particular authors, tell them why this or that author is good or bad, however, I remember a teacher from one of the trainings saying that they knew little about the book since it was selected by the principal.”*

*A school principal*

*“If we have something to select we do so on the department level, however, as far as I know, for the most part, selections are carried out by the principals themselves.”*

*Teacher 5*

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<sup>70</sup> The proposal submitted by the Public Defender to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports on improving the process of reviewing the textbooks of general education institutions covers these problems in more detail and also on the basis of multifaceted feedbacks.

It is also enthralling to know which particular factors affect the teacher's decision when there is a choice around. Several factors that influence teachers include:

- A textbook by a group of familiar (old) authors;
- Availability of additional resources for teachers, such as a CD, a set of exercises;
- Closely-acquainted teachers engagement;
- Recommendations from colleagues, in and out of school;
- Less syntactic and technical errors in the textbook;
- Textbook methodology.

Teachers who focused more on the methodological part of the textbooks noted that the majority of teachers in Georgia do not have this competence and therefore it is preferable to have more available information about textbooks.

Discussions around textbooks and their compatibility with the principals of equality have disclosed challenges that lie in teachers' competencies.

Respondent teachers share the view that not each and every teacher or principal can identify problems associated with equality and human rights education, neither on the textbook selection level nor in the further teaching process.

Adherence to the principles of human rights and equality was the fundamental textbook selection criteria unanimously concerted by the teachers of civic education and the teachers of Georgian as a second language running parallel to those teachers, who, at different times, were trained in this regard.

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*“Teachers, occasionally not on purpose, but at the level of consciousness, cannot even imagine that they may impose certain stereotypes on children, which is why we keep bringing these issues up for discussion in the textbook.”*

*A decision maker official*

*“Teachers themselves cannot realize where the problem is. Trainings organized as part of the Millennium Challenge have encouraged teachers and they commenced discovering more and more problems, however, the issue is that oftentimes they themselves agree with these mistakes and keep on teaching students incorrectly/unethically.”*

*Teacher 3*

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### ***The role of textbook in teaching and learning***

The respondents involved in the study concerning the role of the textbook and its significance in achieving the teaching objectives agree that, the textbook is one of the fundamental, though still not the only mechanisms of the teaching-learning process.

Teachers differently assess the frequency of textbook usage, part of them:

- Refers to mostly only textbook recommended by the state, and at-times employs adjunct resources (at least one time a week);
- Refers to textbooks and other alternative resources (video, audio materials, adjunct literature, online sources, etc.) in combination;
- Refers to other teaching resources for the most part including inadvisable or even old, approval-expired textbook.

Teachers who had been interviewed as the part of the study note that to the majority of their colleagues, a book is a basic instructional program (curriculum) and they keep up with it, “they depend on the textbook.”

We have also asked teachers to rate basic-intermediate level textbooks that are approved back then prior 2018. The table below is to demonstrate those fundamental gaps that lie in the textbooks:

<i>Student textbooks evaluation – teachers’ perceptions</i>	
<i>Technicalities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stylistic, syntax and punctuation errors;</li> <li>• Incorrect numbering of exercises;</li> <li>• A plethora of textbook assignments that require notes directly in the book makes textbooks worthless for the further employment;</li> </ul>
<i>Conceptual and methodological aspects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factual inaccuracies;</li> <li>• Misinterpretation of terms;</li> <li>• Exercises irrelevant to both the topic and the national curriculum itself;</li> <li>• Texts written in a manner hard to students to completely comprehend;</li> <li>• In the Georgian as the second language textbook: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The textbook level and the complexity inconsistency; inability of ranking according to the tasks complexity;</li> <li>• Terms of textbook exercises are offered in Georgian only, they are not accompanied by dictionaries that would assist a student to understand and repeat various foreign words in the text alongside with explanatory words, like: underline, connect, mark, pair;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The development of text comprehension skills is the fundament each and every level textbook stands on, although, up to the 6th level no texts are virtually offered except for the letter, and the content language of the 6th level texts is complicated enough.</li> </ul>
<i>Equality and human rights education issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misrepresentation or portrayal of religious cultural and ethnic diversity only from an ethno-centrist perspective.</li> <li>• In the history textbook, the religious group of a number of cases is identified on the ground ethnos, which contributes to creating an “enemy icon” from the Muslims.</li> <li>• Textbooks, including the Georgian as the second language textbook refer to Georgian names only.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate portrayal of the female and male roles on the basis of gender: for example, while describing diverse activities, this or that particular historical social process, or modeling/illustrating household activities;</li> <li>• Omitting or misinterpreting female health issues;</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In terms of human rights education, teachers note that the civic education textbook covers everything at the information level, although they lean toward other sources;</li> <li>• Teaching human rights, especially children rights, to ethnic minorities remains a challenge, so long as even in this case the texts are given only in Georgian and students with low language competencies have difficulty understanding and grasping what rights and freedoms they have, let alone the ability of exercising and protecting these rights in practice.</li> </ul>

As for the quality and availability of the teacher’s book, the respondent teachers who were involved in the process of consideration noted that it was a minor resource to them, since the teacher’s textbooks bring about no tangible benefits, both in terms of methodology or theme teaching. More often than not, teachers’ textbooks had been described as “inferior”, “useless” and “a waste of time”.

Ultimately, it should be noted that, teachers who participated in the study after switching to a distance learning model, oftentimes noted that this process [distance learning] significantly changed their attitude towards textbooks and they looked “beyond the textbook”, which had a more positive effect than not on the learning process, it has become more diverse and engaging for both them and the students.

### **Access to Quality Textbooks for Students and teachers**

The year after 2013 was marked by launching a free of charge textbook program for students. The state purchases sets of educational recourses and provides the distribution itself. However, it does not guarantee that all, each and every student will enjoy a quality textbook throughout the learning process.

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*“Exercise copybooks came insufficient and were no longer printed after a single circulation. [...] Besides, if you delete the text 5-6 times in a row, it is not usable anymore.”*

*Teacher 6*

*“Children really do have books free of charge, although what kind of “free” books they are, oftentimes so filthy and dirty that even holding them would make you feel disgusted.”*

*Teacher 5*

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In addition, the quality of secondary and tertiary textbooks proved to be a problem. Teachers point out that the problem is especially acute at the elementary level, where students are not yet accustomed to the proper care of textbooks, so at the end of the academic year books are messy and unusable. Also, if books contain cutting out materials or assignments that are performed directly in textbooks it make them look virtually useless.

The procedure of a license agreement conclusion and the issue of copyrights transmission to the ministry, assessed by the authors as a “lever against them” in the hands of the ministry, which can be used at any time, have also been disclosed amongst the other approval-associated challenges.

### **SUMMARY**

According to the findings of the research, all the parties involved in the process share a view that investing more in the process of content development would definitely guarantee a bettered quality of textbooks.

More investments primarily envisages an increase in royalties, which in turn would boost the inspiration of authors to devote more time to work. Besides, it is important to invest in the development of authors or editors competencies, which, according to respondents, would have a positive impact on the quality of textbooks in the long run.

In addition, authors, editors, and education specialists believe that it is crucial to keep timelines and procedures flexible, described in details, and enabling stakeholders to start working on the textbook in a timely manner in order to achieve the desired quality.

Citing authors’ estimations, the textbook reviewing and approval process has two key challenges – the terms of the competition and the competence of evaluators. Education specialists share the view that, it is important when a textbook is evaluated by specialists who are sophisticated not only in subject teaching but also in the objectives and approaches of the novel national curriculum in general. According to teachers however, it is crucial that the practicing teachers themselves were involved in the evaluation process, which would validate the quality of the textbook and synchronously reflect their requirements and needs.

Specialists in the field of education as well as teachers, believe it is paramount to reconsider the role of the textbook in the context of modern challenges, as well as accessibility and quality. In particular, respondents estimate that the idea of the textbook availability is complementary and necessary, but it is also important to pay due attention to quality (technical and substantive), as well as to ensure all students and teachers with the equal opportunity to fully and indefinitely use the resource of books and other supporting materials. Part of the teachers and specialists also considers it mandatory to start working on the alternatives of a traditional textbook printing way and to develop more practical resources for teachers.

In the course of the textbook selection and evaluation, one of the key challenges was the role of schools and in number of cases the inability of teachers to make informed decisions. As reported by the teachers and school principals, the book selection process in schools today fails to be comprehensively enforced. The two determining factors to the late are the scanty inspiration of teachers on the one hand, and insufficient knowledge about textbooks on the other hand. Experts believe that enhancing the role of the school in the textbook selection process and intensifying the competencies of teachers should be one of the defining vectors of the textbook policy.

Challenges in terms of manifestation of the principles of inclusiveness and equality of textbook content prevail at all phases of the textbook development process. Specialists likewise teachers believe that greater-awareness of authors and reviewers over all types of discrimination and inclusive teaching is above all else. Still, it is vital to evolve teachers' competencies in the domain of discrimination and human rights education, as the immediate textbooks enclose discriminatory texts and photos, and just the teachers are supposed to right them in the teaching process.

By way of conclusion, it is critical to note that all the respondents to the study intuit that it is significant to foster a wider and partaking discussion over these issues, which would facilitate the parties involved to distinguish common interests and develop a best possible system.

## REVISION OF CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

### TEXTBOOK EVALUATION WITHIN THE LIMITS OF EQUALITY AND THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

The human rights-based methodology referred to develop/evaluate textbooks is centered on upholding the principles of equality and seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination through the subsequent plan of actions:

- Application of inclusive language;
- Diverse, equal representation of the individual/groups of individuals;
- Integrated learning of human rights;

In our attempt to evaluate the textbook content language and design compatibility with the principles of equality as a part of a study, we will make use of a research framework based on recommendations developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in support of authors and textbook evaluators. So too, the methodology by the Institute for Tolerance and Diversity (TDI) back then in 2016.

Framework on the textbook compliance with the principles of equality

Criteria for inclusive description	Criteria for diversity representation	Criteria for integrated human rights education
Objective and unbiased description of facts	Objective description of different groups/identities	Comprehensive and consistent teaching of fundamental human rights
Relevance and correctness of terms, concepts	Equal and impartial representation of characters	Reasoning over human rights in the course of delineating social, ethnic, political, cultural conflicts, controversies
Neutral representation of designs, illustrations, extra visual material	The illustrations presented are not discriminatory, biased and/or offensive on the basis of ethnicity, religious affiliation, and gender or otherwise	

Apposite clarification of the criterion is delivered in Appendix 2

The content analysis of textbooks divulged 2 fundamental challenges. For one thing, the textbooks inadequately cover gender, ethic, religious, cultural or other signs of diversity or evade them all the way. Likewise, textbooks fail to manifest the role of minorities in substantial socio-political processes in the dynamism of society and the state itself. Therefore, it is paramount to center not on what is written in a textbook, but on what should virtually be written. Achieve this, it is requisite to reconsider Georgian identity and repudiate the narrative of textbooks saturated with religious nationalism. It is critical authors, in coordination with teachers and scholars of conflict and national identity to develop a unified framework that would provide an explicit guidance on how present/past conflicts between ethnicities, nations and states can be taught in a way that would not make a student of any ethnicity or religious affiliation feel insulted or put them in a defensive position towards the majority.

Next in order is nothing less critical issue of human rights education. In the latter instance, the challenge is integrated human rights education. Herein we regard grasping significant themes, problems, facts, processes from the human rights paradigm, which would sustain students in realizing their own rights on the one hand, and safeguarding the rights of others on the other hand and developing a common civic consciousness. Detailed analysis of the textbook findings can be seen hereinafter.

### **Inclusive description**

The content language of the textbook is by and large descriptive and in number of cases explanatory. The narrative is academic in most cases, although at-times we find examples of unscientific, emotional, or biased descriptions.

### ***Nonscientific and nonacademic description***

Several sub-chapters of the textbook introduce typologies of notions and concepts that, on the one hand, do not ensure the full description of the concept and free up the room for vague interpretations and, on the other hand, are not based on recognized methodological, theoretical frameworks:

- In the chapter – “Free Will and Decisions”, a student is supposed to evaluate certain decisions according to an aggressive, passive, self-confident model of behavior. Each and every model measures different skills, values or decisions, for example: responsibility, expression of emotions, self-esteem, lies and intrigue. Such models of behavior and association amongst the model and this or that value are not plain, just so we get an inaccurate meaning: in line with the model of self-confident behavior, the notion of lies and intrigue is elucidated as a situation where a person uses lies and intrigue, only with a positive assessment, for example, flatters us (p. 15).
- The sup-chapter on “Personal and Public Conflicts” sets out the public and legal ways for conflict resolution. That sort of classification of conflicts is, on the one hand, vague and, on the other hand, does not fully describe conflict resolution strategies, for example, just the same text does not point out or anyhow explain other strategies and mechanisms for non-violent conflict resolution (p. 51).

Precedents of subjective evaluation and unscientific consideration of the author/authors may be found in the topics that detail the characteristics of different diseases or addictions.

- The HIV infection is currently categorized as the greatest threat to humanity following the thermonuclear war (p.133).
- Herein, in the means of protection against the AIDS virus we read:  
“Safeguard family purity and fidelity”;  
“Abstain from casual sex relations”

Family purity and fidelity is a way of life determined by a particular religious belief and not a disease prevention mechanism. If such is the case, it is accurate to evaluate sexuality not from the perspective of religion, but from the perspective of sexual education, which describes/should describe in detail all possible mechanisms for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

In the same chapter, in the section “It is interesting” there are offered 5 texts. The first describes violent methods of punishing people addicted to alcohol in different countries without any critical comment:

1. In ancient India, people addicted to drinking were forced to drink boiled wine or water from white-hot metal vessels till death.
2. Any Roman had the right to kill a wife if they were caught to be drunk.
3. In the Netherlands, female alcoholics were forcibly dipped three times in water.
4. Back then in 1917, drunkenness in the Red Army was subject to the penalty of execution.

Mention should also be made that the descriptions of examples 1 and 4 are gender neutral, while statements 2 and 3 respectively reinforce stereotypes about women and require explanatory commentary.

Texts 2, 3, 4 and 5 subjectively exemplify the role of wine in the history, folklore and mythology of Georgia. The description of these stories occupies 2 page in a row, which exceeds the coverage of such important subject matters as culture and multiculturalism (1.5pages).

### ***Inaccurately or incompletely defined terms***

In number of cases terms are misinterpreted, or described in an outdated way:

- The description of the principles of universality in its part of the human rights and freedoms states that ““Human rights are universal as they are based on the dignity of every human being - regardless of race, skin color, sex, ethnic or social origin, religion, language, nationality, age, sexual orientation, disability or any other distinctive status” (p. 20).

The term disability is obsolete, should instead be referred to as a Special Educational Needs, or Persons with Disabilities.

- Tolerance is defined as: benevolence and tolerance towards people of different opinions, cultures, races, genders, religions and beliefs, as a patient attitude upon with an opponent (p. 21).

The term tolerance suggests the ability of a person to recognize, respect or count the beliefs, behaviors, and values of another person. The goal of developing tolerant values is to enable students to establish<sup>71</sup> effective relationships with people of different cultures, races, genders, and religions following non-violent intents.

- Culture is a set of common values, beliefs and rules of conduct inherent in human groups (p. 55)
- Diversity: an approach that seeks to preserve and develop cultural diversity can be called multiculturalism. (P. 55)

Field experts and the public unanimously consent that the importance of culture and diversity is much broader, hence it is aspirational for the latter to be more detailed and explained from numerous perspectives, and above all else it shall be built on and capable of rendering equality as a value and a fundamental principle of peaceful co-existence.

- In the context of cultural diversity, the definition of coexistence reads the phrase: “There is a dominant group in the model with a monopoly of power, though that gives is wrong.” The second part of the definition accurately describes the content: “Different groups cooperate on the basis of common interests, maintain their own and recognize the culture of others.”
- Health is a state of complete physical spiritual and social well-being and not just the absence of illness and physical disability (p. 118).

Physical handicap, like disability, is not an inclusive concept, therefore it is not suggested to use this form, as there are more inclusive alternatives to the definition.

As suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO), “health is out-and-out physical, mental and social well-being, not just the absence of disease or infirmity, but the ability<sup>72</sup> to live a socially and economically productive life.”

- Drugs are defined as chemicals of plant and chemical origin. Drug abuse generates addiction, and a person who uses the drug for non-medical purposes is called a drug addict. That same definition does not incorporate the medico-legal and social interpretation of the drug. On the top of that, a more inclusive term to outline drug, alcoholism, and smoking is social diseases, which describes an illness/addiction itself rather than a person.

### Representation of the issues of diversity and different identities

The description of diversity covers 2 pages - 1 chapter of the textbook. It is emphasized that “in the evidence of Georgia, following the modern insight, a great number of different cultures coexist” [...] Ethnic and religious diversity is of special importance for Georgia and the corresponding diagram is delivered (p. 55).

Diversity and multiculturalism are associated with positive concepts: peace, coexistence, perception of one reality from different angles; however, examples of diversity or intercultural relationships are not delivered in the core text, likewise in the sections “This is interesting” or in the assignment and practical work. Also, in the elements of diversity, intercultural dialogue we fail to find a pervasive topic in other thematic units, coupled with the part of human rights, participation, democracy, conflicts.

### Withholding different identity/omitted personages

- Either one of the sub-chapters of the textbook puts up the mention of the role, merit, significance of ethnic and/religious minorities in the social, political, and cultural development of Georgia, coupled with the development

<sup>71</sup> Dictionary, National Curriculum Portal, 2020, <http://ncp.ge/ge/dictionary>.

<sup>72</sup> Georgian Young Lawyers` Association, Book for Patients “Human Rights and Healthcare” (Guideline) (Tbilisi: Open Society - Georgia Foundation, 2011).



of democracy, constitutionalism, and parliamentarism, likewise the textbook fails to display their vision and perspectives. There is no reference of any prominent politician, publicist, public figure who has significant merit in the struggle for Georgian statehood and human rights. For instance, Memed Abashidze, Fari Khanum Sofieva, Hovhannes Tumanyan.

- The illustrations presented in the textbook do not depict ethnic minorities, just as none of the names amongst cited characters are characteristic of an ethnic minority.

#### The role of men and women, and its gender-based representation

The illustrations in the textbook present 6 photos of women, 17 photos of men and 36 group photos. In the vast majority of group photos (in which sex can be identified) women are outnumbered by men. The review of economic activity (chapter “You and the Economy”) does not include any photo of a woman, likewise 13 photos depicting sports activity. That same textbook also displays statements by 11 prominent/recognized individuals, none of which belong to a woman. Merely 2 women are mentioned in the description of various processes/facts: Queen Tamar (AKA Tamar the Great) and Catherine II, most commonly known as Catherine the Great.

Gender roles and their significance are not well described and analyzed in any of the chapters of the textbook, including “Family - Basic Community Institution”. It is complementary that the role of women in the text is represented in various professional activities besides being a mother and housewife. On the other hand, however, female characters are not put up in the management and financial decision-making communities, which reinforces stereotypes about women’s capabilities and activities.

#### Reinforcement of stigma and negative stereotyping

Texts in the textbook and the discussion about healthy lifestyles and attitudes (drug addiction, alcoholism) reinforce the stigma that exists towards drug addicts. The problem and subject of reasoning is not addiction, but the person themselves as an addict. A drug addict is presented as a social criminal, idle, a threat to society. We encounter humiliating terms, similar to “degraded”.

- Drug addicts are poor workers, they induce great material damage to the family, they oftentimes provoke accidents (p. 130);
- An adolescent who has tried the drug develops substance dependence at the age of 25. Their personality is degraded as their psyche is immature and healing becomes very difficult (p. 130);
- 4 No to drugs: No to idleness [...] Drug addicts choose the path that deprives all of human qualities (p. 131);
- Beer consumption leads to generational degradation which can often be seen in the yard, communal entrance and on the street (p. 126).

#### Personality identification and problem personification risks

Delivering information on migration, trafficking and human trafficking is a particularly sensitive subject for students, as their parent, guardian, family member, friend might engage in illegal labor in migration. As a part of discussions, students, in a number of assignments, are asked to create portraits of physical or social characteristics of female and male victims, resembling tasks are chancy, since they boost victims’ personification or identification risks, exceptionally in small settlements where residents are way more familiar with each other and each other’s problems.

Just the same chapter delivers one of the cases of trafficking that is discussed on the example of a particular victim that had been transferred to Abkhazia. In such a case, it would be finer if the example of Abkhazia were substituted by a general illustration, or the close second would be to add a critical comment with the purpose of preventing origination of hostile attitudes by Abkhazians (p.111).

#### Intergrading human rights education

Although human rights are described and also thematically cited in various examples from the Declaration and the Constitution, the chance of addressing topics in the context of human rights is limited. Processes, facts and challenges are not discussed in the context of gender equality, equality and diversity, human rights protection. More to the point, the textbook and the set of tasks do not provide an apparent idea of who can protect their own rights, by what means, and what are the obstacles that prevent individuals or groups from exercising their rights, for example:

- The part on participation in public administration, participation in economic activities or the enjoyment of rights and freedoms fail to state why the exercise of this or that particular right might be restricted;
- Nothing is mentioned for instance regarding the difference between incomes on the basis of gender;
- Nothing is said about the ethnic difference in terms of employment, including the proficiency of the state language and the use of the right to education;
- Inside the boundaries of discussing the context of multiculturalism and diversity, in addition to personal and societal conflicts, the importance of non-violent solutions, as well as issues related to individual/group discrimination, are not evidently presented;
- The mechanisms and subsistence of protection of privacy and personal information are put forward in no way;
- Reasoning over the school safety describes a system based on punishment rather than care and misrepresents child rights issues. More to the point, the Code of Conduct lists various forms of punishment according to the gravity of committed, although the description of the response mechanisms does not provide information on how the student should protect his or her rights. For example, what to do if they are sent out of the lesson and who is that particular person/persons they could turn to for help.

### **Inclusive description**

#### ***Nonscientific and nonacademic description***

The text is mainly academic and descriptive in nature. In quite a few cases facts, data and illustrations are given without interpretation. Number of cases use emotional assessments saturated with nationalism to describe events, as for example:

- It is difficult to find Georgian who is not associated with the village by their roots [.....] but the village is still the basis of the country's economy and the prime core of Georgian folk culture and national traditions (p. 141).
- Traditionally, Georgians scarcely ever were leaving their homeland voluntarily. Abducted and forcefully sold Georgians would soon intermingle with the local population, likewise they were losing their Georgian self-consciousness. A rare and pleasant exception is the Fereydan Georgians, who have preserved the Georgian language and national self-consciousness by way of a compact settlement (p. 145).

At-times, the data is delivered by way of a map, table and graph wanting explanatory and/or critical comment over the date of data collection:

- The geography of offences asserts that, a difficult socio-economic situation leads to an increase in crime. A map is presented showing crime for every 100 people. That same map does not display the year of its compilation, nor is it explicit what crime it specifically addresses, likewise who had collected the data. Inaccurate representation of data retains the risk of constituting misconceptions about a particular city and region (p. 194).
- One of the illustrations demonstrates the occupied territories in Georgia, aside from Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhchivan. Same exact illustration is not accompanied by a critical comment.
- Notwithstanding the fact that the majority of ethnic minorities represented in Georgia are ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis, while the parties to the conflict are Armenia and Azerbaijan, and this may be a notably delicate issue for them (Fig. 1.1.7, p. 8).

The implication of inaccurately or incompletely defined terms

- The textbook uses the terms “sect” and “Gregorians” to refer to religious groups (pp. 154-155). Relevant groups do not define their identities close to aforementioned terms.
- Besides, the Assyrians are referred to as Aisors (p. 153). This epithet was prevalent in Tsardom of Rus and was thought to be derogatory.

Representation of the issues of diversity and different identities

The context of discussing ethnic diversity does not facilitate the possibility of developing positive reasoning and perceptions about diversity.

- Within the limit of Georgia's geopolitical location and change of territories, it is pointed out that our neighboring countries are marked by ethnic and religious diversity, which has often been the motive of conflict (p. 8).
- The narrative of the ethno-genesis of Georgians states that, despite the complex internal ethnic structure, a common Georgian consciousness established out soon enough (pp. 147-148).
- In the 19th century, the Russian Empire was concerned with settling different nationalities in Georgia and thus implementing the notorious principle - “Divide and Rule!” The textbook describes the settlement of Germans in Kvemo Kartli, Armenians in Samtskhe-Javakheti and of Greeks in Trialeti. Besides, it talks over mass-migration of Ossetians and the emergence of settlements of Russians, including sectarians.

- [...] The immigration process was remarkably intense, predominantly from Russia and Ukraine, which further tarnished the republic's ethnic representation (p. 150).
- Students are challenged to highlight the exceptionally complex ethnographic regions on the ethnic map basis (p. 150).

#### We and others

In matters of ethnic diversity, similar to history textbooks, there seems to be a reference to “We” - Georgians and “They” - to others. Relations between “Us” and the “Others” are discussed for the most part in the light of changes in the dynamics of the Georgian population. Ethnic minorities are referred to as non-Georgians, others who, at different times, entered, settled in Georgia, in our homeland and took up our [of indigenous Georgians] place.

Such a turn of reasoning is raised within the analysis of the formation of the territory of Georgia, together with the dynamics of the population and then with the ethnic-religious composition already.

The component over the population dynamics reads, “As for the Georgians themselves, their number was 3787 in 1989, which was 70.1% of the total population. [...] The decrease of the Georgian population came largely at the expense of other nationalities (p. 127).

- In the Medieval Period, the Georgian population was abducted, sold and forcibly relocated, and replaced by other peoples (p. 145).
- [...] In the Medieval Period, Georgians should not have been less than 90% of the entire population of the country. In the late Middle Ages, Ossetians, Armenians, ancestors of Azerbaijanis and some other peoples settled in our country. The relative share of Georgians has decreased.

However, it is relevant to note that the part over the population dynamics mentions the interest of Russia and subsequently the Soviet Empire in provoking conflict between the ethnic groups and thereby consolidating power. This creates a sound ground for critical reasoning (p. 150).

The chapter on ethnic minorities describes the dynamics of the establishment, settlement and population of Abkhazians, Ossetians, Russians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis and other ethnic groups in Georgia.

There are ambiguous records in the textbook regarding Abkhazians, more to the point, in number of cases Abkhazians are referred to as another nation. In this case though, we read that “apart from Georgians, Abkhazians are the only people among the peoples living in our country who have no other homeland outside Georgia” and [...] Abkhazia has historically always been part of Georgia (p. 150). And in the 17th century they [the Abkhazians] came off the Georgian world and (p. 151) this is how the alienation of these two peoples emerged (p. 151).

The ethnic minority overview unites a smaller number of ethnic groups under the classification of “Other Nationalities”, including: Kists, Assyrians, Dagestanis, Kurds (or Kurdish), descendants of Poles who settled in Georgia, Germans, Greeks, Jews and Estonians. As opposed to ethnic groups united under other nationalities, the description of Jews is relatively informative. As for the other ethnic groups – they are represented by 1-2 pages, or their names are simply mentioned.

“Christian people of ancient origin, their number in Georgia does not exceed 4,000” (p. 153).

The issue of ethnic composition of the population is also raised from the perspective of regions, in the topic “Population”.

- The note over the characterization of the population of Tbilisi reads that 84% of the population are Georgians, Armenians - 7%, Russians – 3% (p.215).
- In the event of Kakheti, it is stressed that “the national composition is not largely distinguished by diversity,” most of them are Georgians. Azerbaijanis, Russians and Armenians also live here (p. 219).
- “45% of the population of Kvemo Kartli is Georgian, likewise - Azerbaijanis. Armenians make up 6%, Greeks and other nationalities also live here (p. 222).
- In case of Samtskhe-Javakheti, it is suggested that the consequences of historical events are well expressed in the national composition of Samtskhe-Javakheti: Georgians live in Borjomi, Akhaltsikhe and Adigeni regions. Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda regions are taken up by Armenians who resettled from Turkey in 1829-30 (p. 236).
- Other regions are largely described by terms similar to homogeneous or monotonous.

With the objective to describe the religious diversity, the principal religions in Georgia are displayed, both on the map and in the form of illustrations (2 maps, 6 illustrations). All common religious denominations in Georgia are listed and depicted with relevant illustrations.

Talks over the Muslim confession hold examples of generalized reasoning, similar to:

[...] Part of the Georgian population was forcibly converted to Islam, which is why a certain number of Georgians profess Islam, part of the Adjarans and Ingiloyes are Sunni Muslims, and the Fereydans are Muslim Shiites (p. 155).

In a number of cases, religion is equated with ethnic group:

- Description of the demographic situation in Georgia holds the mention that Shida Adjara and Kvemo Kartli are distinguished with a high birth rate, where the majority of the population is Muslim, likewise Javakheti, where the Armenians make up the vast majority of the population (p. 130).
- [...] Representatives of different nationalities have lived in Georgia since ancient times [...] they were predominantly Abkhazians, Georgian Jews, and Armenians living in Georgian cities and, to a lesser extent, Muslims (p. 149).
- NATO member countries Romania and Bulgaria are listed among those countries that are not directly adjacent to Georgia but are within a 1000 km radius, and the rest are either Muslim or Socialist countries (p. 7)

Withholding different identity/omitted personages

The textbooks holds the mention of ethnic minorities, although their role in the socio-political-cultural life of the country is not reported or presented by way of illustration/additional information. For example, nothing is said (nor illustrated) about the contribution of Armenians to the economic, urban, social and cultural development of Tbilisi. For example, Sayat-Nova, Mikael Aramyants, Gavril Tamashev and others.<sup>73</sup> Also, the fact that the majority of the population of Tbilisi has been made up by Armenians for years is left out. Covering the merits/role of ethnic minorities affects the representation of ethnic Azerbaijanis and other ethnic groups similarly.

A narration of cultural diversity is also put forward in a dominant position: section 7 of the textbook describes the geography of tangible culture and traditions as follows: folk architecture, folk culture, dress geography, cooking and table traditions, and geography of rituals. All of the topics fail to contain textual or visual information about cultural diversity and its importance in Georgia. Georgian cuisine, folklore, clothing describes and characterizes only ethnic Georgians.

A remarkable place amongst the descriptions of folk traditions and rituals is granted to the depiction of Christian religious rituals. None of the ethnic minority rituals, holidays are referred to or illustrated. For example:

Virtually each and every village in Georgia has its religious name-day: in addition to ecclesiastical liturgy, various sports competitions and religious festivals similar to: Lasharoba, Lomisoba, Atengenoba, Mtskheta, Alavardoba, Teletoba (p. 207).

The role of man and women, and its gender-based representation

One of the sections in the textbook under "Persona" delivers the biographical information of persons with special merit in the development of the geography of Georgia. A total of 40 people are represented, none of them female. Naturally, there may not be 20 or more outstanding women in the area of physical geography, but providing that the textbook also describes physical, social, economic, and cultural geography, finding information about successful women working in this field should not be a problem.

In addition, equally to the civic education and history textbooks, the authors do not make use of the opportunity to discuss economic involvement, the difference in wages, demographic dynamics of the country in terms of gender, likewise sex-selective abortion, which is one of the determiner responsible for the expansion in the number of male children among newborns, (p. 129), migration processes, involvement in education.

<sup>73</sup> Institute for Tolerance and Diversity, "What We Need to Know about Ethnic Azerbaijanis", 2020, available at: <https://www.tdi.ge/ge/page/ra-unda-vicodet-tanamokalake-etnikuri-azerbajianelebis-shesaxeb>.

### Integrated learning of human rights

Significant themes, problems and facts displayed in the textbook are not discussed or described in the context of human rights. For example: when speaking about general education, it is stressed that education in Georgia is provided in 6 different languages and also, due to various social or economic conditions, some children of school age do not attend school at all (p. 195). It would be eligible to deliver these data numerically and to discuss possible reasons for the restriction of education, as for example: child labor, early marriage, lack of the state language proficiency, domestic violence, having special educational needs, etc. Involvement in higher education likewise in economic activities should also be presented in a gender and ethnic context, which would evidently exemplified the challenges facing by ethnic minorities.

## REVISION OF CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

As part of the research, we have analyzed the challenges associated with the existing model of approval, which we believe will have a significant impact on the quality of textbooks in the long run, particularly with respect to human rights education and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

### UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE TEXTBOOK SELECTION RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE SCHOOL

Analysis of international practice reveals that the authority to select textbooks in fully or partially decentralized systems is delegated to the school and municipality levels, while the central government is responsible for updating the curriculum that underlies textbook preparation.

As for the centralized system, which is, too, true of Georgia, all decisions about the textbook are made by the center and the role of schools is minimal or not clear at all. In the case at hand, such a distribution of decision-making powers, in addition to losing the role of the school in the process, also purports that the state is the only responsible for the quality of the textbook.

In our case, the state itself makes the demand on textbooks, sets the quality standard, evaluates, selects them and regulates the distribution. Decision-making at the school level and the involvement of teachers in the textbook evaluation process are minimal. Schools receive a list of already selected textbooks and choose one textbook from that same list, however, at-times the school is deprived of any choice meaning that, in certain cases decision-making at the school level is of a formal nature, and in the meantime, teachers are more often dissatisfied with the quality of textbooks selected “by the state” than not.

One of the components of improving the quality of textbooks is to grow the role of teachers and the school in the textbook selection-evaluation process, hence, it is crucial to proceed working and so increase the competencies of teachers and school management and uphold informed decision making. It is also indispensable to collect information about the decision-making process at the school with the purpose of analyzing the possibilities of transferring the processes to the school level and planning activities towards that end for the long-term period.

### THE EVALUATION-ORIENTED MODEL AND ITS IMPACT OVER THE AMELIORATION OF TEXTBOOK QUALITY

Analysis of the study findings in the context of the textbook quality assurance reveals that fundamental challenges are related to the process of textbook development itself rather than evaluation.

Aforementioned can be explained by the assumption that the textbook quality amelioration strategy in case of the prevailing approval model is more focused on evaluating the final product rather than on the process of the textbook development itself.

By the process-oriented approach, we mean that the system focuses on the process of textbook development itself, facilitates stakeholders` engagement through various support mechanisms, and thus refines the textbook before being submitted for evaluation. The product-oriented approach though centers on the textbook as a completed product and considers the improvement in the conditions, procedures and standard of the evaluation system as to be the principal mechanisms of quality improvement. Both approaches involve highlights and limitations.

The process-oriented system calls for more investment in support mechanisms similar to instructing authors and publisher officials, organizing public hearings as part of the reviewing process, prospective piloting costs etc. Besides, the process is longer, which could be a hindrance to parallel ongoing programs, similar to the student textbook program.

On the other hand, the main advantage of the approach is that there is less distinction between the anticipated and genuine quality of the textbook, since the requirements for authors are more precise to the authors in the process of writing, whereas the implementation of conceptual changes is relatively simple and realistic.

In the case of a product evaluation-oriented approach, investment is largely made in refining the textbook evaluation process. This approach is on the one hand more cost effective and at the same time allows you to work within a limited time frame (regardless of the end result). On the other hand, however, in the case of such a system, there is a greater chance of compromise, providing that a conceptual change of textbooks in the evaluation process is virtually impossible.



In 2018-2019, certain amendments were made to the rules of approval, which on the one hand increased the quality standard of textbooks (e.g., the minimum threshold for substantive evaluation was raised to 90%) and on the other hand, the process became more open to interested parties (e.g., the participation of specialists nominated by the Public Defender). Improving the evaluation system is in itself a vital condition, however, if at each subsequent stage of approval the strategy does not turn out to be focused on supporting the textbook development process, we get the already habitual situation when we have to choose better amongst the low quality textbooks under the guidance of high standards.

It is inaccurate to reason that the system should only operate with one strategy or another. It is most exact to say that the toughening of the evaluation standards should be followed by the development of the process of working through supporting and strengthening collaboration between authors, editors and other be parties.

## **THE POLICY OF THE TEXTBOOK AVAILABILITY AND ITS IMPACT OVER THE QUALITY OF TEXTBOOKS**

Access to textbooks in Georgia is guaranteed by a textbook program which is to provide students and teachers with textbooks free of charge. The program was launched in 2013 and has minimized internal economic expenditures incurred on textbooks. On the other hand, the ministry itself printed the textbooks on the basis of the license agreement. In consequence, small and publishing houses holding that same niche were affected and the market structure for textbooks has changed.

This program still has a significant impact over the conduct of the approval process on the one hand, and on the association between the ministry and copyright holders on the other.

The complex bureaucratic mechanism of public procurement to some extent determines the terms required for announcing and completing the approval competition, therefore textbooks development likewise evaluation and selection process is underway in an accelerated manner and in a deficient time. The principle of public procurement also applies to the calculation of the final score of the textbooks, although the price share in the calculation of the final score does not exceed 5% as far back as 2019.

On the other hand, although the license terms were revised in 2018-2019 and the authors' royalties increased, the issue of copyright remains a subject of discussion between the ministry and publishers, as publishers and organizations working on this platforms have low faith in the ministry. In order for the textbook provision and the approval process to work properly, it is requisite to blueprint the bureaucratic mechanism in such a way that would disunite the procurement and textbook approval processes, which, in turn, would give rise to the possibility of regulating and broadening of deadlines. On the other hand, it is critical to reconsider the issue of copyright transfers so that the latter no longer becomes a mechanism for achieving political or other purposes.

## **THE ANALYSIS ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION IN TEXTBOOKS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

The findings of the textbook evaluation mechanism in the context of human rights education, coupled with the content analysis of the textbooks themselves, demonstrate that the system faces series of substantial challenges in this respect.

Above all else, in the process of working over equality, diversity, human rights issues, the attitudes and problem-solving competencies of the people who develop, evaluate and use textbooks matter by and large.

The second and just as important problem is that the purpose, mechanisms and importance of the issues of equality are not properly represented in textbooks. The course of the study disclosed tendency that the discussion around the particularly sensitive topics reflection in series of cases delivers the content of the problem exaggeratedly and superficially. A vivid proof of that is the problem of even coverage of issues with gender. Put differently, the issue of gender equality in textbooks has acquired a context in which the problem is to balance the numbers of women and men in textbooks (including the composition of authors). If so, the problem-solving component and the purpose of comparing the number of female and male mentions are also neglected.

Much the same trend is particularly prevalent in the coverage of gender-based issues in general, organizing a public reasoning around the issue of "staring" running parallel to discussing a legislative initiative on sexual harassment for example, runs to the fact of the problem exaggeration, likewise the context distortion. On the top of undermining the actual content and objective of the issue and the changes, this fact has significantly contributed to the further reinforcement of the predominant stigmas about sexual harassment in the society.



It is noteworthy that part of the texts prepared on religious-ethnic topics in the textbooks are in series of cases described by means of a non-neutral language and are biased, or are put forward in the first person and are addressed only to ethnic Georgians, the description of relations with other ethnic groups is considered only in the context of confrontation and alienation with “our” dominant ethnic group or religious group. This whole thing hinders the perception of minorities as equal, plenipotentiary citizens, and also creates the risk that the state will be perceived as the property of one ethnic group [Georgians] and one religious denomination only [Orthodox].

With all aforementioned in mind, it is critical to the context and the depth of the problem of any changes made to reflect human rights and diversity in the course of the textbook development and evaluation process, be properly understood by all be parties. Herein, in the process of evaluating teachers` trainings or textbooks, it is important to make it clear that counting women and men, as well as quantitatively comparing subjects represented by ethnic-religious or any other signs, is a tool for the process of problem analysis and not the end in itself.

At long last, the approval process 2018 has specialists by the Public Defender`s Office involved in the evaluation process, which, as reported by all the parties, has had a positive impact over the textbooks and their progression. The challenge is the decision-making procedure and reflection procedure for specialists to request changes to the textbook. It is significant to determine, based on the experience of the 2018-2019 approval competition, issues of human rights experts will have the exclusive authority to decide on, and cases where it will be necessary for the board or individual board members to get the consent over the correctness of changes.

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings of the research, it can be argued that the challenges that lie in describing the principles of equality in the textbooks, fostering human rights education and thus eliminating all forms of discrimination are associated to the system of values, likewise with the fundamental principles of process management and decision making.

Inadequate understanding of equality and diversity as fundamental values, just as the authors' attitudes towards the issue are reflected in the content of the textbook, both directly and indirectly. On the other hand, the more habitual this or that stereotypical notion is in society, the more sensitive it is to identify problems in both the textbook evaluation and teaching process (by the teacher). In view of this, a key corner-stone of the education policy should be to raise the awareness of teachers, authors and other be parties in this regard, so as to ensure that over time the construction of textbooks on the principle of equality becomes a thoughtful and shared act and does not remain a forced obligation.

On the other hand, not only education but as well the state policy has a significant impact on the ability to eliminate all forms of discrimination in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, it is important to have a shared and agreed position on human rights protection and diversity issues at the state policy level. Tolerance and intercultural sensitivity are one of the basic and permanent principles of both public rhetoric and decision-making, which in the long run will also affect the evaluation of textbooks and preclude any compromise on human rights education.

The recommendations elaborated in the framework of the study are built on the analysis of international and local practices of textbook development, the feedback received in the scope of the qualitative research and the recommendations of local and international experts.

Recommendations are delivered in 4 fundamental parts and address the textbook development, evaluation and approval process, likewise proper reflection of human right issues at each and every stage. The prime addressee of these recommendations is the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, along with the structural units involved in the textbook evaluation, development and approval process.

### Recommendations to enhance the textbook development process

- The Ministry of Education and Science shall guarantee opportunities to authors and publishers for developing and adapting textbook competences. Aforesaid will gain the particular significance in addressing the challenges that arise while the textbook is being adapted with the national curriculum.
- It is critical to extend the terms for textbook procession, evaluation and selection process in such a way that would give the authors say the least 6 months to work on the textbooks of one class only. On the top of that, an additional one month is required to prepare, submit and receive textbook-concept-based feedbacks. If the process is hampered only by the state procurement procedure, it is important to separate the latter from the process of approval in the form a technical process.
- On the basis of the present practice of approval and the analysis of the challenges associated with it, it is apposite to maintain the approval rule of one grade textbook for the approval process of some basic and intermediate level textbooks.
- It is imperative to revise and change the conception of the teacher` textbook. In particular, the textbook should become a collection of helper methodological and practical resources, which will combine: practical tools and tips for various purposes in the teaching-learning process (assessment, feedback, introduction of a new topic). Also, fundamental methodological recommendations to be used for the proper understanding of the novel national curriculum and to be included in the teaching-learning process and the online resources to be used in teaching. Reinforcing the components of online resources would be a significant help on the one hand in consolidating the resources developed during distance learning, and on the other hand in the usage of online resources and various support platforms in the traditional learning process. It is desirable that all schools receive both print and e-version of the teacher's book.

### Recommendations to enhance the textbook evaluation/selection process

- Prior to the reviewing phase, it is significant that the evaluation procedure be detailed and that the decision-making principles and roles be obvious to all reviewers of the board. Besides, specialist independent from the ministry shall become the part of the selection process of reviewers, and the selection criteria shall be clearly defined.

- With the intention of making an informed decision at the school level, it is essential teachers to prepare reviews for all selection units prior to the selection of textbooks, which would more plainly highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks. Reviews are submitted to schools before the school-level textbook selection stage.
- It is expedient to prepare a video guide for teachers on understanding the basic criteria for textbook evaluation and textbook evaluation techniques.

#### Recommendations to enhance the process management and monitoring system

- As a means to effectively manage the textbook development, evaluation, and approval process, it is substantial to begin collecting data on school-level textbook evaluation, selection, and usage-related challenges, and to establish an open e-system that would enable teachers, parents, students, principals, and other be parties to record textbook deficiencies. This address should be put forward on the inside cover of all textbooks.

#### Recommendations to ensure the compliance of textbooks with the principles of equality

- In order to guarantee compliance of the textbooks with the principles of equality, it is crucial the human rights organizations and the Department of National Curriculum to prepare a guideline for authors, reviewers over the basic principles of inclusive coverage of ethnic, religious and gender issues in the textbook. It is central the guideline to contain practical examples and feedbacks on the most common mistakes made. It is desirable to develop an explanatory dictionary with the instruction that would combine contemporary and inclusive definitions of the terms and concepts most extensively used in textbooks in the context of equality, diversity and human rights education.
- In order to increase the reviewers' competencies and sensitivity towards the subject, it is desirable to organize consultations/webinars/online face-to-face trainings to increase the awareness over diversity and human rights, which would allow interested parties to understand the issue –related challenges.
- In support of constructive and result-oriented cooperation between the subject specialists and specialists nominated by the Public Defender's Office, it is advantageous to hold a small workshop on the basic principles concerning the development of the national curriculum as well as the textbook, which would help thematic specialists to bring the necessary recommendations closer to the textbook building principles.

Finally, at the evaluation stage of approval competition, it is critically important to clearly distinguish the authority of thematic specialists and subject experts in the evaluation of human rights issues, including the criteria that the "other specialist" will have the exclusive right to decide on, for cases the reviewers fail to achieve an agreement over the reflection of a particular issue, the recommendations should be reflected in the system and introduced to the author as optional.

Each and every stage of the study explicitly revealed the need for a broad and participatory discussions around the textbooks. Besides, it is noteworthy that the introduction of distance learning system has stipulated new challenges in all areas of education policy, therefore, it is important to schedule meetings on existing challenges before the initiation of the new textbook development cycle and to involve all the be parties, likewise civil society, subject and professional associations, and representatives of national and international publishers.

## Appendix 1

Criteria	Description
Criteria for inclusive description	
Objective and unbiased description of facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Information about the history, lifestyle, beliefs and attitudes of different groups, attitudes is delivered impartially and objectively;</li><li>▪ The characteristics of a particular group are not generalized to the whole population;</li><li>▪ The facts have not changed and/or been omitted;</li><li>▪ The texts do not contain vague, exaggerated and/or hyperbolic evidence;</li><li>▪ The academic flow of narration is maintained.</li></ul>
Relevance and correctness of terms, concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Definitions of terms/concepts are put forward correctly;</li><li>▪ The terms are relevant to the context and the theme;</li><li>▪ Different concepts, phrases do not serve the enhancement of stereotypes;</li><li>▪ Terms, phrases, pieces of work do not reinforce cultural, gender, ethnic, religious stereotypes.</li></ul>
Neutral representation of designs, illustrations, extra visual material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The illustrations provided are non-discriminatory, biased and/or offensive.</li></ul>

## Appendix 2

### Criteria for tolerance and diversity representation

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Objective description of different groups/identities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The description/characterization of one or another group does not lead to a negative stereotyping;</li><li>▪ Different groups/identities are comprehensively recognized, regardless of any distinctive features;</li><li>▪ Opportunity to discuss the different in the context of equality.</li></ul>  |
| Equal and impartial representation of characters     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Presented personages/characters/historical figures are not introduced in a biased way or neglected on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion or any other grounds;</li><li>▪ Gender aspects are taken into account when describing different social roles;</li><li>▪ The description does not reinforce ethnic, religious, gender stereotypes;</li></ul> |

### Criteria for integrated human rights education

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Comprehensive and consistent teaching of fundamental human rights   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Fundamental human rights and freedoms are consistently and fully represented;</li><li>▪ Discussion over the role and mutual-attitudes of the individual and the society envisages the principles of equality;</li></ul>  |
| Reasoning over human rights in the course of delineating social, ethnic, political, cultural conflicts, controversies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ In describing radicalism, religious intolerance, and (possible) fundamentalism in the context of disregarding the principles of human rights and equality, human rights debates are considered, including the possibility of exercising human rights mechanisms.</li></ul> |