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Governance of TVET Teacher Development and Management: the example of recent TVET reforms in Georgia

Abstract

The quality of TVET teaching has an immense impact on both the reputation and relevance of a TVET system and its programmes. However, in order to be able to provide high-quality teaching in the field of TVET, teachers must be guaranteed a working environment which allows them to achieve this aim. For example, TVET teacher standards should be put in place to guarantee clear job profiles, recruitment criteria and quality assessment, as well as relevant pre-service training. Ideally, TVET teachers should regularly undergo training to continue honing their practical skills and to stay connected to emerging state of the art trends in the labour market. Furthermore, they need secure working conditions, including career pathways and attractive remuneration. To be able to implement this (by no means complete) list of preconditions for high-quality TVET teaching, every TVET system needs to put effort into TVET teacher development and management (TDM). Therefore, TDM must become a priority in TVET governance. The following article will shed light on the measures taken by the country of Georgia in recent years to improve the quality of its TVET system through TVET teacher development and management. The information presented in this article is derived primarily from two sources: first, desk research, and second, the experiences two of the co-authors collected during their involvement in the preparation and implementation of the World Bank project “Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education”. The study will introduce recent reform initiatives in Georgia’s TVET system and take a close look at the recently introduced TVET teacher standards, the freshly defined concept of TVET teachers and the Code of Ethics for TVET teachers.

Keywords: TVET teacher development and management, TVET reforms, Georgia, governance.

1 Introduction

TVET teachers are an important prerequisite for improving and expanding the quality and reach of TVET systems worldwide. As TVET teachers act as agents of change within a TVET system, the quality of their own education, training and management has a direct impact on the quality of TVET. In contrast to general education systems, TVET systems are constantly faced with the conceptual challenge of linking societal goals and expectations of TVET with labour market demands for skilled professionals. For TVET teachers to be able to cope with this requirement, they must be aware of current labour market trends such as new technologies and work practices. Furthermore, they need to be skilled professionals themselves, which presupposes that they are motivated and well trained with regard to both theoretical and practical skills and knowledge in their respective field of expertise.

In order to create better links between TVET education and actual labour market needs, the government of Georgia has been developing and implementing important reforms in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training throughout the past decade. These reform initiatives had become necessary as the country's TVET system faced a series of challenges including skills mismatches, difficulties in youth transition from education to the labour market system and the need for highly skilled jobs, especially in the fast-growing transport and tourism sectors (ETF 2019 -a). To overcome these challenges, recent reforms sought to identify skills more precisely and facilitate a smoother transition from education to the labour market. The TVET system became more demand-led, with a focus on current and future (international) labour market needs (ETF 2019 -b, 7; ETF 2020, 42).

This article will present recent reforms and approaches which have been introduced in the Georgian TVET system in order to better prepare TVET teachers for the aforementioned challenges.

2 Methodology

The methodology of this paper is primarily based on a desk research approach. Multiple documents have been evaluated, many of which were found online, especially on the website of the European Training Foundation (www.etf.com). As the European Commission's Centre of Expertise for human resource development in partner countries outside the European Union, the ETF has been actively engaged in the EU-supported TVET reform process in Georgia. While accompanying the reform process, the organisation published several documents on planned reforms, as well as on recent developments in education, training, and employment. Further relevant documents were published in the context of the ETF Torino Process, which describes “a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of the vocational education and training (VET) policies in a country” (ETF n.d.).

Other documents, especially those on TVET teacher standards, recruitment, professional development, career advancement, remuneration schemes, etc., were developed within the grant project “Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education”. The project was implemented by the World Bank Group in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, with UK Government financial aid from June 2019 to February 2021. As reform is ongoing and the newly established Skills Agency of Georgia continues its efforts to update, finalise and digitalise the TDM system outline prior to official approval of regulatory framework by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, only two documents have been published so far on the World Bank Group's portal: TVET teacher standards (World Bank 2021 -a) and code of ethics (World Bank 2021 -b). It should also be mentioned that two of the co-authors have been actively involved in preparing and implementing the TDM outline through the grant project. In addition, they continue to contribute to the development of the TVET sector in Georgia in different capacities, enabling them to conduct an up-to-date case study of the Georgian TVET reform process, particularly in relation to TVET teachers.

3 TVET teacher development and management (TDM)

Megatrends such as greening, industry 4.0 and digitalisation are affecting the world of work and the demands placed on the current and future workforce. Skilled workers are expected to cope with a constantly changing world of work. Modern TVET systems are challenged to take this expanded image of the skilled worker into account by preparing today's employees for the challenges and transitions of tomorrow's labour market. According to UNESCO, "investing in the future by building the capacities of TVET leaders and teaching staff is essential for the successful navigation of these transitions" (UNESCO-UNEVOC n.d.). This implies that TVET teachers themselves must be prepared to work and teach in an unpredictable future of rapid technological and societal change. Besides educating and training young people for the future labour market, TVET teachers are required to integrate current trends into their respective national TVET systems and to act as agents of change for the development of innovative and flexible TVET systems. TVET teachers themselves need to be aware of innovations in the labour market and educated in a way that allows them to cope with current and future challenges and developments.

3.1 TVET teacher development and management: scope and prerequisites for achieving high-quality TVET teaching

When researching TVET teacher development and management (TDM), one is struck by the fact that there is neither an internationally binding definition of "TVET teacher" nor a clear conceptual distinction between the term "TVET teacher" and "TVET trainer" or "instructor". Some institutions draw a clear line between the different terms, others use them as synonyms. However, one can state that the term "TVET teacher" usually refers to a more theory-focused educational profile, while "trainers" and "instructors" tend to focus on the development of practical skills and the quality of work (Ahmed 2010). No matter which term is used to describe TVET teaching personnel, it is essential for them to possess both pedagogical and didactic basics, as well as in-depth insights into the world of work, job-related tasks and processes. Especially with regard to the latter, it should be emphasised that practical competences are not acquired through a once-only learning process, but need to be expanded and updated throughout professional life in its entirety.

The concept of TVET TDM is based on two objectives: the development of TVET teachers and TVET systems, and the management of TVET teachers, including accountability. These partially contradictory objectives need to be aligned and coordinated in order to achieve qualitative excellence of TVET teachers and, by extension, the TVET system.

TVET teacher development refers to the training of TVET personnel at different learning sites and in different development phases. The learning sites can include university settings, industry placements and teacher training institutes, while the development phases can range from pre-service training to in-service training and also include Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of TVET teachers. Typically, TVET teacher development will be a component of national education standards as well as teacher training standards. It should be

noted that the development of TVET teachers is a very complex issue. The job profile is diverse and TVET teachers can come from widely different economic sectors and educational pathways. In addition, according to the type of TVET teacher needed, teacher development may take different forms. Whereas theory teachers might need deeper competences and skills in theoretical and pedagogical topics, practice teachers should focus on up-to-date practical skills and current labour market trends. However, the persistent shortage of work-based learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic has further reinforced the need for a more complex approach to training for TVET teachers or trainers who have the occupational expertise and experience to design and implement practical learning in schools, as well as the pedagogical skills to incorporate soft skills development in teaching.

TVET teacher management, on the other hand, focuses on more organisational topics such as career guidance of TVET teachers, recruitment, deployment, remuneration and evaluation mechanisms for teacher performance. Here, recruitment strategies, institutional induction and mentoring, as well as competitive remuneration schemes and attractive career pathways, play an important role in guaranteeing a systematic approach towards TVET teacher management. In addition, industry cooperation is key in the context of TVET teacher management in order to ensure that TVET teachers are conversant with the latest practical and work-related skills. Without the cooperation of industry, TVET teaching will quickly become outdated and lack labour market relevance. TVET teacher management aims at providing a TVET system with a sufficient number of quality TVET teachers. To do so, relevant policy measures must be taken at a fairly high institutional and administrative level to guarantee the recruitment, deployment and retention of motivated and qualified TVET staff. TVET teacher management can thus play a key role in achieving a gender-balanced and socially recognised TVET teacher profession.

As can be seen, there are many aspects that should ideally be taken into account when establishing a high-quality scheme for TVET teacher development and management. Examining all of the aspects mentioned above would go beyond the scope of this article, so the authors have decided to limit their study to selected features of teacher development and management that have been the subject of recent reform approaches.

3.2 Challenges faced when tackling TVET teacher development and management

Most national TVET systems face a series of challenges when it comes to the implementation of TVET teacher development and management. The following list is not exhaustive, but it enumerates some specific challenges in the context of TVET TDM, most of which will be addressed in the context of Georgia.

- **Overall poor reputation of the TVET teaching profession** combined with low social status and insufficient job security. Working conditions for TVET teachers tend to be less attractive than those for teachers in general education. For instance, working contracts for TVET teachers are less secure than those awarded in general education (CEART 2018, 16-17). A similar imbalance can be found when looking at the overall

reputation and esteem of TVET teaching as a profession in comparison to teaching jobs in general education (CEART 2018, 13). In a worst-case scenario, this creates a vicious circle, where the profession of TVET teaching will only be chosen in the absence of alternatives, which would further deteriorate the profession's reputation.

- **Lack of defined TVET standards and clear job profiles:** As mentioned above, there is no clear and binding definition of the term “TVET teacher”. If TVET teachers work in a country without a defined TVET teacher standard, this has a negative impact on the overall image of the profession. With no precise quality standards laying out the qualifications needed to engage in the teaching profession, the quality of teaching may suffer.
- **Lack of systematically implemented Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for TVET teachers:** CPD is an essential element of TVET teacher management. Teachers need to keep track of the constant changes and developments in the labour market in order to provide learners with up-to-date skills and knowledge. For teachers to be motivated to engage in CPD measures, these need to be formally certified, which is seldom the case (UNESCO 2014). Furthermore, teachers should be incentivised to engage in CPD in order to enhance their teaching performance and potentially gain access to new career pathways. However, many TVET systems are dominated by hierarchical structures where career development is not necessarily linked to performance evaluation (CEART 2018).
- **Need for TVET teachers to update their practical skills and labour market knowledge continuously:** TVET teachers can only provide relevant and high-quality practical skills if they themselves stay up to date. To this end, TVET teachers need regular practical refreshers at industry workplaces to learn about new technologies, machinery, organisational structures etc. However, many TVET systems lack strong relationships with industry, which are so vital to TVET teachers' structured learning experiences.
- **Need to adapt to current labour market trends and disruptive changes:** Current labour market trends such as digitalisation, greening, inclusion and Industry 4.0 require new competences. These must be taught by TVET teachers who themselves need to be trained accordingly so that they can cope with a rapidly changing labour market. However, many TVET teachers lack practical learning, which leaves them out of touch with labour market developments. Global crises such as the COVID 19 pandemic further underlined the education system's exposure to disruptive change. TVET teachers need to be able to adapt quickly and flexibly to new situations. Digital literacy and teachers' competences and skills play a crucial role, as innovative teaching methods become increasingly relevant in order to cope with rapidly changing circumstances.
- **Need for competitive remuneration** to be able to keep pace with jobs in the private sector: Many national governments only attribute a fraction of their education budget to the TVET sector. This results in TVET teachers being paid disproportionately low salaries compared to their counterparts in general education. This makes TVET

teaching a rather unattractive option for many professionals in education (Axmann et al. 2015). In addition, TVET institutions also compete directly with the private sector when it comes to recruiting qualified personnel (CEART 2018). Consequently, TVET institutions face severe challenges when it comes to the recruitment and retention of qualified and motivated TVET teachers.

As seen above, the challenges TVET systems face in moving towards meaningful and substantive TVET teacher management and development are many and varied. They do not all need to be addressed at once, and some challenges are certainly more urgent than others. In the course of this article, we will shed light on the priorities the Georgian government has defined when looking at how to overcome the challenges in the field of TVET TDM. Before diving into the concrete steps undertaken by the Georgian government in cooperation with its partners, the following section will provide an overview of recent legal and institutional developments in Georgian TVET governance.

4 Legal and institutional developments in TVET governance in Georgia

Over the last decade, the Georgian TVET sector has undergone an ambitious process of reform which has led to significant changes in the governance of TVET systems. The process has been actively supported by the EU, donors, development agencies and banks, and other international institutions. A consistent and intensive TVET reform process was initiated in 2013, with the introduction of the first long-term TVET Reform Strategy of Georgia 2013-2020. As well as improving financial access to TVET, there was a shift in focus towards the introduction of competence-based and modular approaches, work-based learning (including dual education models), inclusive education, and public-private partnerships. Efforts were made to double the number of network providers in order to broaden geographical access. Greater emphasis was also placed on adult education and youth-oriented TVET.

A new Law on Vocational Education was adopted in 2018, designed to act as a framework for a new model of vocational education in Georgia (MoES n.d. -a). Furthermore, in accordance with strategic priorities and development needs, the new TVET law provides a legal basis for further changes to the TVET system. This includes a stronger focus on work-based learning, the integration of upper secondary education outcomes into TVET pathways and the establishment of a systematic approach to training, professional development and career advancements for TVET teachers (MoES n.d. -a). All in all, the new TVET law is intended to support the case for a lifelong learning perspective in the TVET system and to facilitate flexible adjustments to the needs of the labour market (ETF 2019 -b, 11). The consistent nature of state policies in TVET was further manifested in the first Unified Strategy for Education and Science 2017-2021 (ETF 2021, 7). Significant steps have been taken to develop an inclusive education system, to approve a national qualification framework similar to the European model, to introduce a mechanism for the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes, and to introduce standardised enrolment in educational institutions. Care has been taken to implement new parameters for authorisation, eliminating so-called deadlocks,

establishing an adult education system, involving private TVET providers in the state funding system, and scaling up work-based learning, including dual education. These are some of the measures to have positively impacted TVET graduates' rate of employment and self-employment (MoES 2022, 12-13).

As it works towards a flexible and demand-oriented TVET system which will provide the future labour market with competent employees, Georgia introduced a new institutional arrangement for TVET governance before the end of 2021. In this new model, key functions and responsibilities are delegated to the public and private sectors. Accordingly, to enhance the development of the country's human capital through collaboration and shared duties among the public and private sectors, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia established the Skills Agency (SA) as a non-commercial and non-profit legal entity, together with the Georgian Chamber of Commerce. As well as providing equal cooperation opportunities to public and private sectors, the new model also “facilitates the development of TVET policies and services that will raise the quality and relevance of the skills ecosystem and significantly decrease the labour market mismatch” (European Commission 2022, 3):

A new institutional arrangement redistributed the functions in the TVET system management. Within the new setting, the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) has the authority to approve all key policies within its competence, including TVET teacher-related regulations, etc. It is in charge of establishing new TVET institutions, as well as coordinating and funding existing ones. MoES also provides the Skills Agency with programme and administrative funding for delegated key functions related to, for example, the development of modern skills and qualifications, inclusive vocational education tailored to individual needs, and the internationalisation of TVET.

All TVET teacher-related functions, previously housed under the National Centre for Teachers' Professional Development (TPDC, a legal entity of public law within the MoES system) have been transferred to the Skills Agency. Previously, TPDC concentrated on select priority areas in TVET, namely the development and implementation of professional standards, the provision of in-service training for the professional development of TVET teachers, and the organisation and implementation of other projects determined by the national TVET policy.

The TVET system of Georgia is further supported by several legal entities of public law under the MoES:

- The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) is responsible for quality assurance procedures in the TVET system. It was responsible for the development of the Georgian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and is now supervising its implementation (Tsiramua 2021). NCEQE is the only recognised national body authorised to implement external quality assurance mechanisms to ensure and improve the quality of general, vocational and higher education in Georgia.

- The National Assessment and Examination Centre (NAEC) concentrates on TVET assessment. It is Georgia's largest professional organisation in this field. The NAEC organises entrance examinations prior to the enrolment of TVET students in TVET programmes or short cycle programmes and conducts Unified National Examinations, Professional Tests and State Assessments. The centre is also accredited to conduct a number of international examinations (MoES n.d. -b).
- The Education and Science Infrastructure Development Agency (ESIDA) is responsible for the construction and maintenance of TVET institutes in Georgia, including the recently introduced Centres of Excellence. The agency also focuses on providing TVET institutions with the necessary inventory and technology to conduct TVET classes and training (CEB 2016, 2).
- Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) – is responsible for collecting and disseminating education data and statistics, including TVET (EMIS n.d.). EMIS also ensures the collection, storage and administration of electronic data in the Georgian education system, including the creation, implementation and administration of information systems for the management of general education, vocational and higher education institutions. EMIS allows for the issuance of a duplicate of a vocational education diploma and vocational education certificate in accordance with the rules established by the Ministry. Lastly, EMIS ensures the registration of personal data of students' parents, students/professional students, graduates and persons employed in the educational institutions, etc.

Despite the numerous reform approaches initiated throughout the last decade, TVET remains a second-choice option for Georgian youth (ETF 2019 -b, 18). One way to increase demand for TVET programmes among students lies in improving the quality and reputation of the TVET system. Here, the role of TVET teachers plays a crucial role. However, TVET teachers must be seen as part of a TVET governance system, as they are dependent on policy reforms regarding the aforementioned aspects of TDM, such as remuneration schemes, CPD plans, teachers' standards and pre-service training.

In 2021, in accordance with all of the above, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) developed a new long-term Unified National Strategy covering the period 2022-2030 for the entire education and training system, as well as for research and innovation topics, providing clear grounds and goals for further development.

5 Study on the Methods and Instruments for Teacher Performance Evaluation in the Georgian TVET System

One of the goals in the Unified National Strategy of Education and Science 2022-2030 is to develop an innovative and flexible vocational education system focused on the needs of society and the economy. The priorities include, but are not limited to, the promotion of lifelong competencies, the internationalisation of the vocational education system, the strengthening of entrepreneurship education and promotion among young people. All of the

aforementioned priorities are closely linked with improved policies and practices for the teaching of key competencies, digital competencies, foreign languages, and the development of the ecosystem of green competencies in educational institutions. Internationalisation will also be supported through the Erasmus+ programme, providing opportunities for student and teacher exchange programmes as well as through the implementation of exchange and joint programmes with foreign educational institutions. Various mechanisms of international mobility will also be promoted.

None of these, of course, can be reached without a well-trained teaching force. The two related objectives aim at a) equipping vocational education students/trainees with the necessary skills and competencies for continuous employment in the local and international labour market, and b) the promotion of vocational education teachers' continuous professional development. According to the Unified Strategy, "mechanisms will be created at all levels of the educational system to attract successful teachers, trainers, and education specialists to the profession and for their continuous professional development and career growth" (MoES 2022, 28).

For vocational education this will be reached through the elaboration and implementation of a solid TDM system, inclusive of continuous career development and evaluation. Moreover, there are plans to introduce a school-based approach for continuous professional development and career advancement and to enhance the role of TVET teachers and educational institutions in planning and delivering TVET. Collaborations with diverse groups of providers to ensure the TVET teacher training and continuous professional development programmes (MoES 2022, 29) are also envisaged.

Reaching this objective is crucial, given the documented scarcity of incentives for professionals to enter the TVET teaching profession, exacerbated by a lack of pedagogical skills, capacity building or continuous professional development of TVET educators, as noted in the 2013-2020 TVET Strategy (MoES 2013, 6) and the Unified National Strategy of Education and Science 2022-2030 (MoES 2022, 17-18). Nevertheless, a highly qualified and motivated TVET teaching force is a prerequisite in order to overcome the multiple challenges facing the Georgian TVET system. Most importantly, the TVET system must become capable of attracting more students. Today, even with significant progress made, TVET is still considered a second choice compared to higher education (ETF 2019 -b, 18). Only a small portion of the respective age cohort chooses a pathway in vocational education (ETF 2021, 7). As a result, many employees holding university diplomas are overqualified for their jobs, yet underskilled when it comes to the necessary practical skills needed in the workplace (ETF 2019 -b, 26). As a result, the TVET sector needs to increase its attractiveness, accessibility and the quality of teaching in order to be considered an attractive option by school leavers and adults with regard to career development.

In the following section, we will have a look at the concept of TVET teachers in the Georgian TVET system, before taking a deep dive into the recent reforms which have been put forward to improve the quality and image of TVET teaching in Georgia.

5.1 Introduction to the concept and image of TVET teachers in Georgia

As seen in chapter 3.2, TVET teacher development and management is hampered by multiple challenges. This is also the case in Georgia, where the ETF's evaluation of Georgian TVET strategy states that TVET teachers in Georgia are confronted with an “ambiguous status” (ETF 2021, 56). In the Georgian context, TVET teaching is not traditionally considered a full-time profession. In fact, the majority of TVET teachers (around 60%) are employed on a part-time basis, partly because TVET schools find full-time contracts too expensive (ETF 2021, 57; ETF 2020, 22). Furthermore, work contracts for TVET teachers tend to be less secure than those for teachers in general education (MoES 2013, 13). TVET teachers are usually employed by school principals who decide who to hire and how long teachers are employed for (ETF 2020, 22). There is, however, no obligatory pre-service education for new TVET teachers. Consequently, many teachers have no formal pedagogical qualifications and are employed solely on the basis of their practical skills. TVET teachers are often trained on the job by their respective TVET providers, leaving them without formal training regarding practical and professional skills.

All the above-mentioned points have resulted in rendering the TVET teaching profession unattractive for new entrants and highly skilled professionals, who often prefer to look for better jobs in the private sectors.

5.2 Recent reform initiatives in the field of TVET teacher TDM

According to the Unified Strategy of Education and Science 2022-2030 (MoES 2022, 29), one of the priorities to achieve set goals and objectives is the formation of a “flexible system of vocational education teacher commencement, professional development and career advancement”. This system will be based on the relevant model developed in cooperation with the World Bank project “Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education and Training” (2021). The basis for establishing an appropriate regulatory framework has been secured through a new law on TVET in Georgia, adopted in 2018. The latter formulated a list of sublegal acts to be approved and introduced for a new TVET system. Four of them directly concerned regulations for TVET teachers:

1. Vocational Education Teacher Professional Standards
2. Vocational Education Teacher Code of Ethics
3. Rules and Regulations of Commencement of Work, Professional Development, and career progression of Vocational Education Teachers
4. Remuneration Rules and Regulations for Vocational Education Teachers

Other sublegal acts regarding new TVET funding mechanisms, quality assurance mechanisms for secondary vocational education programmes, procedures and conditions for obtaining the status of an educational enterprise, may need to be taken into consideration when developing a TVET teacher-related regulatory framework.

In 2020 and 2021, TVET teacher development and management were the focus of the “Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education and Training” project, implemented by the World Bank Group in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, with financial aid from the UK Government from June 2019 to February 2021. For more than a year and a half, national and international experts cooperated with Georgian TVET stakeholders on activities aimed at the development of TVET teacher standards, the new model of professional development, and a new remuneration scheme for TVET teachers (Vocational Education Development Department 2022, 15-16). The most important achievements of the project will be outlined below.

5.2.1 TVET teacher standards

The development of teacher standards for TVET teachers can be considered one of the main outcomes of the aforementioned World Bank Group project. Two sets of standards have been developed. The first set of standards describes the core functions to be carried out by TVET teachers (Professional Standards for TVET Teachers), the second set (Standards for Additional Functions) refers to additional functions teachers might take on, such as specialist roles in learning coordination or quality assessment (World Bank Group 2020, 6).

Both the Professional Standards for TVET Teachers and the Standards for Additional Functions are further divided into six key areas which concern the following aspects of TVET teachers’ core functions: (i) Analysis and Planning; (ii) Preparing the Learning Environment; (iii) Leading the Learning Process; (iv) Assessing the Achievements of TVET Students; (v) Establishing Ethical and Effective Working Relationships and (vi) Maintaining and Improving Quality and Continuing Professional Development. Under each key area, there are one to four specific standards setting out the different performance criteria required of competent TVET teachers. The criteria are to be used for the assessment and evaluation of TVET teachers. In addition to these criteria, each standard defines essential knowledge and understanding units, representing a basis for the teachers’ development and training in order to meet the standards’ requirements (ibid.).

One success of the elaboration of TVET teachers’ standards consisted in the participatory approach in which TVET institutions and their teachers were asked to review the draft standards and provide feedback. Additionally, government agencies, government representatives and employers were included in the development process across six phases: firstly, an occupational analysis of the entire Georgian TVET teaching sector was carried out. This was followed by a functional analysis of TVET teachers’ work according to government objectives. After comparing the results to existing standards and best practices from other countries, a first set of occupational standards was drafted. Based on feedback from the above-mentioned group of stakeholders, the draft was adjusted and turned into a final standard. The final step saw the development of knowledge and understanding units (World Bank Group 2020, 8). A detailed glossary provides clarification on key concepts and terms such as “assessment instrument” or “quality criteria” with explanations and examples (World Bank Group 2020, 65-67).

The standard is limited to pedagogical/andragogical competencies. When it comes to the assessment of a teacher's vocational and occupational skills, classroom observations need to be carried out in addition to applying the set of teacher standards. In future, the evaluation of occupation-related skills might fall under the responsibility of the sectoral skills organisations which are currently under development.

5.2.2 *Definition of the concept of TVET teachers*

As mentioned, there are various definitions and concepts with regard to the profession of a TVET teacher. According to the TVET teacher standards developed in cooperation with the World Bank Group in 2020 and 2021, the Georgian TVET system differentiates between three different types of TVET teachers (World Bank Group 2020, 5):

- The **Vocational Teacher** is responsible for teaching theoretical and practical contents in vocational education programmes in TVET institutions.
- The **Company Instructor** is responsible for instructing learners in the workplace, where he/she ensures the development of practical skills and key competencies. Company Instructors are employed by the companies themselves on account of their expertise in their respective field of practice.
- Finally, there is the concept of the **Invited Teacher**. This refers to an expert from industry who occasionally works in the TVET system as a “guest teacher”. Invited Teachers are employed for a limited period, usually on a part-time basis. As practising specialists in their respective fields, they are responsible for ensuring that learners acquire vocational and key competencies, whilst also familiarising them with modern practices and technologies from the world of work.

This definition of the three different types of TVET teachers is essential in order to be able to implement TVET teacher standards sustainably. It also helps to define professional profiles and improve the quality of TVET teaching. Applicants for teaching roles are thus better positioned to choose a job profile according to their skills and their professional experience.

5.2.3 *Code of Ethics for TVET Teachers in Georgia*

Another positive outcome of the “Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education” project was the new Code of Ethics for Georgian TVET teachers. The code is based on Article 22 of the new TVET law, which refers to the conditions for beginning and continuing a career as a TVET teacher in Georgia, reflecting “the perceptions of stakeholders on the roles of TVET teachers and their responsibilities in the country” (World Bank 2021 -b, 3). The overall aim of the code of ethics is to define “positive ethical principles” to help new TVET teachers enter the profession and to encourage the established teaching force to act as role models, whilst maintaining high ethical standards in their professional relations with learners and their parents. Ultimately, the key ethical principles outlined are meant to foster public trust in the TVET teacher profession and to increase its prestige (World Bank 2021 -b, 3-4).

The main pillars on which the code of ethics is built are respect, integrity, care and trust. These are represented in the six key principles, which should be applied to all interactions between TVET teachers and other stakeholders such as learners, parents and other members of the school community. The key principles concern teachers' responsibility to the profession, the need to keep professional knowledge and practice up to date and to maintain professional relationships with learners. With regard to teachers' professional knowledge and development, the code requires TVET teachers to maintain and improve a high quality of professional practice. This shall be acquired by seeking support and guidance and by seizing opportunities of "career-long professional development" (World Bank 2021 -b, 5-6). Furthermore, teachers' responsibilities towards their institution, the wider TVET community and other stakeholders such as parents are underlined by the code of ethics. Lastly, TVET teachers are required to apply effective, efficient and proper use of the institutional resources, for example, by paying attention to environmental protection and sustainable development issues (World Bank 2021 -b, 4-8). The code of ethics applies to all types of TVET teachers in all types of TVET institutions, including in-company instructors who teach practical skills in the workplace (World Bank 2021 -b, 3).

6 Summary and outlook

As evidenced, the TVET system of Georgia is steadily changing to align itself with labour market demands, individual needs of learners and European TVET standards in accordance with the country's European aspirations. This alignment includes a shift from short-term efforts to long-term strategies and action plans, policy evaluations and informed decisions as well as public-private partnerships. The targeted efforts have positively impacted TVET outcomes. According to the Unified National Strategy of Education and Science, "the employment rate of graduates of vocational education programmes has increased by 20% compared to 2014 (2014 – 42%; 2019 – 62%)" (MoES 2022, 13). The TVET system is now ready to focus on priorities set forth in the strategy: quality and relevance; equality, inclusion and diversity; as well as governance, accountability and funding.

The operationalisation of a new, modern TVET system as per the new TVET law and the improvement of quality requires strong institutions, a qualified cadre and dedicated professionals. These need to be nurtured and supported through a diverse set of mechanisms, sublegal acts, policies and programmes. The Government of Georgia has experienced significant support, enabling the institutions responsible to take the lead in implementing reform with confidence. The draft documents and concepts developed within the framework of the grant project "Strengthening Teacher Quality in Vocational Education and Training" regarding the TVET teacher regulatory framework are meaningful contributions, offering a careful reflection of international benchmarks and local needs/challenges.

However, as reform is ongoing, the draft concepts require an update to capture the recent developments in the TVET management system, redistribution of functions, new institutional development vision, TVET funding mechanisms and the sublegal acts that have been

developed or approved. As the newly established Skills Agency of Georgia continues its efforts to update, finalise and digitalise the TDM system outline with donors' support prior to official approval of the regulatory framework by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, it is essential that the final versions stay relevant to the development stage. This includes being user-oriented and functional as well as reflecting international standards and some of the best local practices. Most importantly, the timely finalisation of such measures and the implementation of a complete TVET teacher regulatory framework are absolutely necessary if the goals and priorities set forth by all strategic documents are to be achieved, thus contributing to continued progress in the TVET area.

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