Strengthening National Capacity of Georgia in Entrepreneurship, Employment, Innovation, and Education for Sustainable Development

The implementation framework of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 as a tool for green transformation and resilience

UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

- The UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, at its eighteenth meeting, supported implementation of the fourth priority area on "Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD" in Georgia, based on the request received from the government of Georgia

- Funding from the ECE Regular Program for Technical Cooperation supported by the donor Contribution of the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation

- The overall goal of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of Georgia in implementing the fourth priority area of the implementation framework of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development on "Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and education for sustainable development".

- The workshop was focused on the following main objectives:
  - To analyze the current situation in Georgia
  - To investigate the readiness of selected educational institutions for using ESD for developing required framework of educator competences and entrepreneurial skills for learners;
  - To share experiences from EU, ECE and other countries;
  - To develop problem-solving recommendations for the implementation of the priority area in focus in Georgia.

UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

- It was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia, with the assistance of the UNDP Office in Tbilisi.

- The workshop was attended by 36 participants, representing the following national and international organizations and institutions:
  - The Ministry,
  - The Skills Agency,
  - Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA),
  - Chamber of Commerce of Georgia,
  - Public and private educational institutions
  - International experts from Austria, Cyprus and Switzerland

General Education

The national goals of general education are related to definitions of entrepreneurship in a broad sense. **Entrepreneurship is a crosscutting competence that is a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes**, that supports realization of economic ideas.

Entrepreneurship initiatives	• Showing interest and curiosity in the teaching-learning process; • Exploring new ideas, approaches, opportunities and their implementation in order to improve learning; • Willingness to accept challenges, to take bold steps.

General Education

The curriculum has been designed to integrate sustainable development concepts and entrepreneurship education across various subjects:

- **"Geography" – Grades VII-XII**: Sustainable development is a key cross-cutting concept. Students are exposed to global and local challenges.

- **"Citizenship" - Grades VII-IX:** the curriculum assists students in recognizing their personal capabilities, requirements, and professional orientation, develop age-appropriate financial literacy.

- **"Citizenship" - Grades X-XII: C**ompulsory topic titled "Entrepreneurship and Business." Students are encouraged to assess the positive societal impact of entrepreneurs as employers and providers of goods/services, human demands and broader perspective on economic dynamics.

- **"Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship" - Optional Subject at Secondary Level:** students are exposed to the hands-on exposure equips students with valuable entrepreneurial skills and a deep understanding of real-world business operations. They receive practical experience by establishing companies and participating in local and international entrepreneurship events,

- **Optional Subject - Geography of Tourism (that will be introduced this year)**: This subject covers issues related to tourism that can be conducted in a sustainable manner. This implies that students learn about the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impacts of tourism and explore strategies to ensure that tourism contributes positively to local communities and natural environment.

General Education

- Textbooks (Teacher's guide, student's book and workbook) are available to all students as part of the compulsory program.

- Textbooks are not available for elective courses.

- Availability of online resources in Georgian language is limited.

General Education

➧ Are the main teaching methods that promote entrepreneurship teaching explicitly within the given program, where 1 indicates ineffectiveness and 4 indicates effectiveness?:

Methods/Strategies/Approaches	rate			
	1	2	3	4
Project-based learning				+
Analysis of cases				+
To solve the problem				+
Systematic thinking				+
critical thinking				+
Creative thinking				+
Cooperation and group work				+
A holistic approach				+
Self-regulated learning				+

General Education

➡ Rate the possible coping mechanism, where 1 indicates ineffectiveness and 4 indicates effectiveness

| coping mechanisms	rate			
	1	2	3	4
1. Update of policy documents				
1. Updating programs				
1. Integrate new courses/subjects			+	
1. Creation of educational resources				+
1. Improving the competences of teachers/lecturers				+
1. Implementation of a whole school aproach				
1. Improving the infrastructure of the school				+
1. Strengthening partnerships with business and external stakeholders				+
1. Strengthening international partnership				+

General Education

- 97 schools from all regions of Georgia filled the questionnaire. It was anonymous, and not mandatory to answer each question.
- The majority of teachers see the need for professional development (37% rate 4, 39% rate 3).
- Trainings are offered by the state, teacher's house, non-governmental and international organizations. However, many do not have information about the trainings;
- Some schools offer incentives for teachers to teach entrecomp (Appreciation from school 45%, verbal 35% and etc.)

16. აქვთ მასწავლებლებს სურვილი განვითარდნენ სამეწარმეო კომპეტენციების მიმართულებით?

სურვილი გააჩნიათ

97 responses
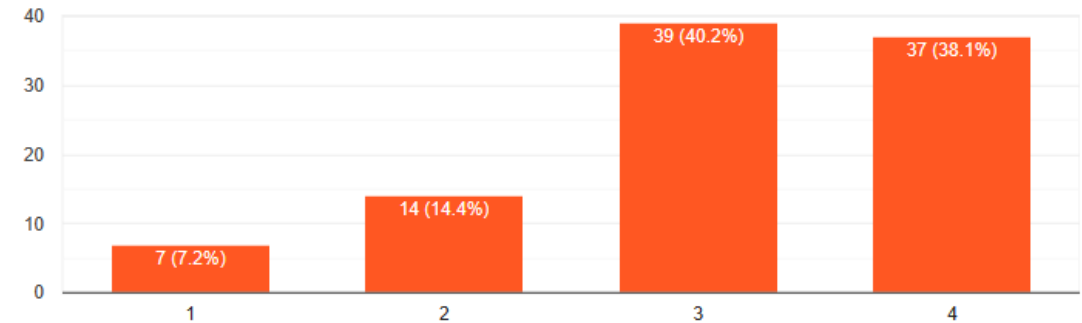
General Education

- Most schools do not have long-term partnerships with businesses or social enterprises, with protected areas or museums. They cooperate only within the framework of projects.

- Basically, the school involves parents in such initiatives (48%)

- Only a third of schools have mechanisms for gathering feedback from stakeholders

- In the 2023-2024 academic year, 56% of schools are planning new initiatives

- **The entrepreneurial competencies are not linked with sustainability competencies. They are different strands and teachers rarely link them.**

Vocational Education

- The unified strategy for 2022-2030 prioritizes the promotion of entrepreneurship as a fundamental competence. The strategy includes an analysis of essential competencies, identifying key stakeholders in both formal and informal areas.

- The strategy emphasizes the strengthening of entrepreneurial education and its promotion among young people, which is significant for the advancement of the country's economy and social inclusion, for individual personal and professional growth, advocacy of lifelong learning and adjustment of the Georgian vocational education system to the European educational context.

- To achieve these goals, pedagogical approaches (such as work based learning and others) and the promotion of technological progress by developing innovative methodologies are emphasized.

Vocational Education

1) to develop the personal qualities and skills necessary for entrepreneurial thinking in students ,

2) to increase students' awareness of self-employment as a possible career option,

3) to lead entrepreneurial projects and activities that will strengthen students' entrepreneurial skills

4) to develop knowledge, how to start and run a business. The entrepreneur module is taught to third and fourth level students, the main requirement being the development of an individual business plan. They should select a business idea (appropriate to the profession).

Vocational Education

- Ministry representatives express their satisfaction with the availability of resources for students and teachers.

- Vocational education programs are designed with student-centered approaches and teaching methods, case studies are frequently used, the main challenge remains the lack of green competences

- The opening of fablabs in vocational schools was successful, which changed the ecosystem.

- 80% of schools believe that students have entrepreneurial skills, as it is an obligatory

- Among the events, competitions are held most often, Initiatives are encouraged but irregular,

- However, when we ask the question about the availability of funds for student entrepreneurial initiatives, 62.5% answer that there are no funds.
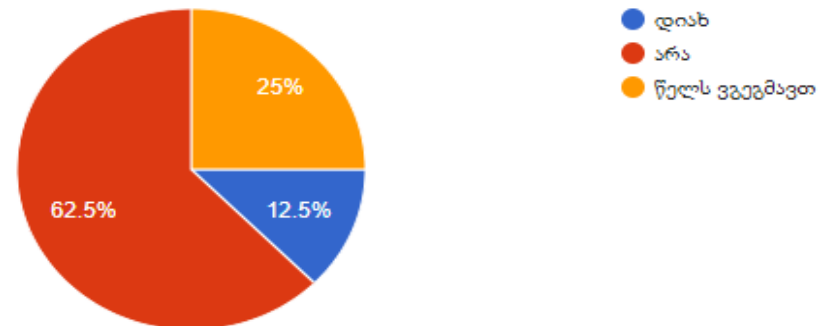
Vocational Education

- All institutions reported that their teachers are confident in their knowledge of teaching entrepreneurship topics. However, they have strong desire to develop entrepreneurial and green competencies.

- The trainings are offered for teachers to develop entrepreneurial competencies is through skills agency (88.5%), followed by local staff (7.7%) and on-site trainers (3.8%). Other ways of training are not selected.

- Girls are equally active, even exceed in 15%, in only 11 % stated that they are less interested in participation/

- Most of the respondents (24) said that teachers are supporting students' initiatives. 64% of educational institutions offers students legal support to develop startups and start businesses.

21. აქვს სასწავლებელს ბიუჯეტში განსაზღვრული ფონდი სტუდენტთა სამეწარმეო ინიციატივების მხარდასაჭერად?

24 responses

- 🔵 დიახ
- 🔴 არა
- 🟠 წელს ვგეგმავთ

(62.5% — არა, 12.5% — დიახ, 25% — წელს ვგეგმავთ)

Vocational Education

- Majority of respondents (56%) said that there is an equipped space for students working on entrepreneurial projects in the educational institution, and 36% said that they use any available space.

- Educational institution of students' entrepreneurship skills alumni network is established in 7 institutions, 7 are planning to establish it this year.

- For development, there is a connection with businesses (57.7%), followed by startups (15.4%) and social enterprises (7.7%). They all acknowledge the importance of cooperation with successful entrepreneurs and mentors who can share their experience and advice with students.

- Most institutions (66.7%) do not assess the impact of their program on student success.

Vocational Education

- Institutions understand the importance of entrepreneurial education for the future of the country and youth. They suggest:
  - To extend funding and management support.
 - They need hands-on activities and projects that help students develop entrepreneurial skills and mindsets.
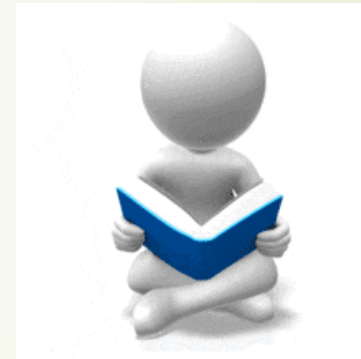
Higher Education

- According to the Ministry, there are 64 authorized higher educational institution,

- Entrepreneurship component mainly integrated into the curriculum of business administration programs

- The mentioned courses have appropriate literature, and the lecturers have competence

- They have an innovation center, fablab, financial literacy center where students can work on ideas
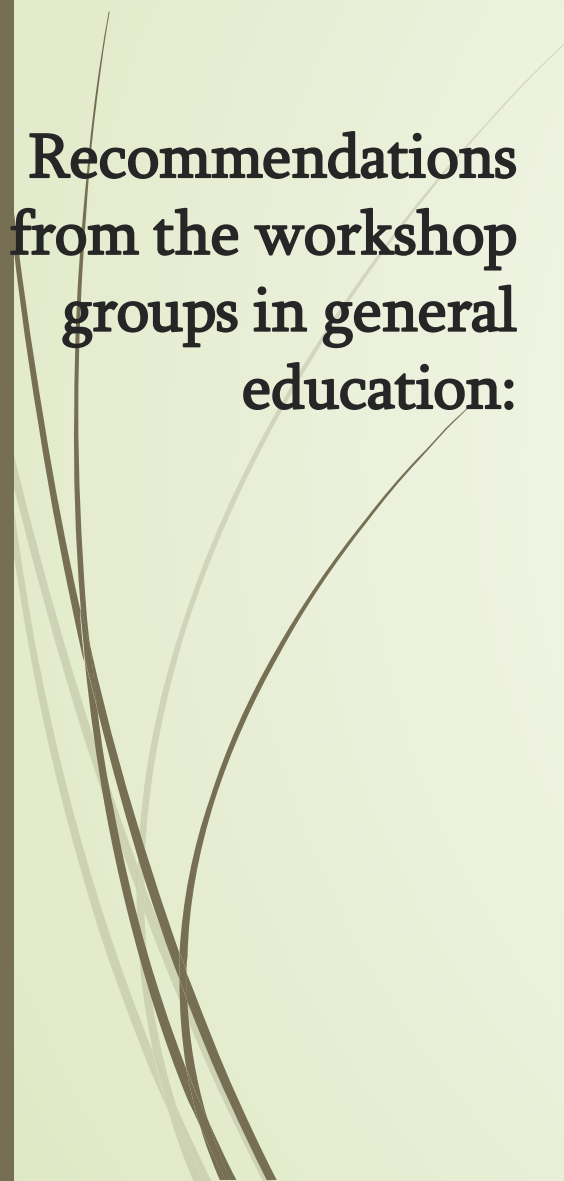
17. სთავაზობს უნივერსიტეტი ლეგალურ მხარდაჭერას სტუდენტებს განავითაროს სტარტაპები და წამოიწყონ ბიზნესი?

15 responses
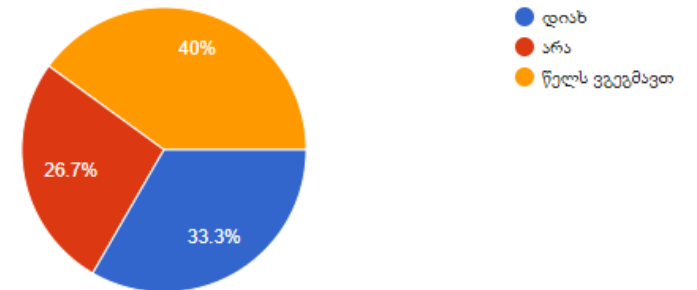
Recommendations from the workshop groups in general education:

Integrated Curriculum: Implement an integrated curriculum that seamlessly incorporates entrepreneurial skills aligned with sustainability principles across various subjects

Teacher Training: Prioritize teacher training in entrepreneurial education align with sustainability principles.

Support for Clubs: Encourage the establishment of entrepreneurial clubs within schools to provide students with opportunities for practical skill development of green innovation.

Teacher Recognition: Recognize and reward teachers for their efforts in integrating sustainable entrepreneurial education into the curriculum.

Curriculum Expansion: Develop and expand elective subjects focusing on entrepreneurship and sustainability include real-life case studies.

Resource and Infrastructure Enhancement: Allocate resources and improve infrastructure to facilitate effective sustainable entrepreneurial education within schools.

Collaboration: Foster connections between schools and local industries, startups, and businesses to support students' entrepreneurial endeavors and provide them with real-world experiences. Collaboration with NGOs and International organizations to accelerate projects.

Integration of Sustainability: Promote the integration of sustainability principles into entrepreneurial education, emphasizing the importance of responsible citizenship and global development.

Recommendations from the workshop groups in vocational education:

Accessibility of Resources: Support development and allocation of educational resources on entrepreneurship, innovation and education for sustainable development.

Student Involvement: Encourage active involvement of students in entrepreneurial activities align with sustainable principles, competitions, and practical skills development.

Teacher Development: Strengthen sectoral network of teachers with providing relevant capacity building activities aligned with sustainable principles.

Curriculum Enhancement: Expand entrepreneurship courses and sustainability subjects within vocational education programs to provide students with a range of options for skill development.

VET Institutions' Management Development: provide professional development activities to VET institutions' administration to build capacities on entrepreneurial education aligned with sustainable principles.

Industry Partnerships: Strengthen connections between vocational institutions and local industries, startups, and businesses to enhance students' entrepreneurial experiences.

Integration of Sustainability: Integrate sustainability principles into vocational programs, emphasizing the importance of environmental basics and responsible citizenship.

Recommendations from the workshop groups in higher education:

Comprehensive Emphasis: Develop and implement regulatory documents that emphasize the cultivation of entrepreneurial competences within higher education, ensuring that specific actionable measures are in place.

Revise Programs: Integrate subjects on entrepreneurship and innovation in universities' educational curriculum aligned with sustainable principles.

Collaborative Initiatives: Continue and expand pivotal initiatives.

Student Involvement: Strengthen and support youth initiatives targeting positive sustainable change in educational institutions and local communities.

Professional Development: Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for university faculty to stay updated on best practices in entrepreneurial education and sustainability principles.

Infrastructure and Support: Ensure that universities have the necessary infrastructure and resources to support student initiatives, including funds, space, and legal support for developing startups and businesses.

Industry and Alumni Connections: Strengthen connections between universities and industries, startups, and social enterprises, businesses to enhance students' opportunities in entrepreneurship. Utilize alumni networks for mentorship and support.

Feedback and Impact Measurement: Implement feedback mechanisms and impact measurement tools to assess the effectiveness of entrepreneurial education programs in cultivating entrepreneurial competences and sustainability principles.

Policy Recommendations

- Stakeholder Advisory Board
- strategy and Action Plan
- Funding for Youth Involvement
- International Experts' Recommendations
- Create an action plan for sustainable entrepreneurship education with stakeholder participation.
- Align with Georgia's Youth Policy Concept (2020-2030) to promote youth entrepreneurship.
- Foster inter-ministerial cooperation and establish a national steering group.
- Promote regional entrepreneurship education and define evaluation indicators.

Entrepreneurial Learning Experience:

- Foster entrepreneurial mindsets from primary level using engaging methods (games, festivals).
- Introduce innovative teaching methods (mini-companies, value creation pedagogy).
- Encourage youth initiatives and celebrate their projects.
- Involve graduates and stakeholders in educational activities.
- Use local case studies for practical learning.
- Evaluate programs with portfolios and certificates.

Curricular Integration:

- Integrate sustainable entrepreneurship education across curricula.
- Make "Principles of Entrepreneurship" a compulsory subject in high schools.
- Support vocational schools in creating learning companies.
- Implement awareness programs like "Changemaker" in universities.
- Promote active learning methods and establish entrepreneurship education centers in teacher education.

Support for Educators:

- Train teachers and youth workers in innovative entrepreneurial methods.
- Encourage school leadership to embed entrepreneurship in school culture.
- Hold festivals and challenges to promote entrepreneurship education.
- Establish teacher networks and awards for entrepreneurship educators.

Business and Community Involvement:

- Create platforms for sharing educational resources.
- Establish local entrepreneurship centers to link schools with businesses.
- Encourage businesses to support educational programs through CSR initiatives.
- Facilitate internships for students and teachers.

Communication:

- Raise awareness about the broad scope of entrepreneurship education.
- Organize festivals, competitions, and awards to highlight successful programs.
- Participate in European entrepreneurship competitions to gain international exposure.

Uncertain future:

While our recent workshop has demonstrated the potential for sustainable entrepreneurship in Georgia, the future remains uncertain due to the recently approved foreign interest law. The law require International organizations, NGOs and media organizations that receive more than 20 percent of their funding from foreign sources to register as organizations "carrying the interests of a foreign power".

Here are possible implications:

- The proposed law would self-marginalize Georgia, isolating it from international support and collaboration in education and research.

- The new regulations would hinder the ability of educational institutions, academia, young people to operate effectively, disrupting educational programs and limiting opportunities for educational institutions.

- Many educational initiatives, including workshops like ours, or research rely heavily on international partnerships and funding.

- It will limit the researchers to conduct researches in an ethic manner, as the personal information couldn't be protected.

- Restricting our partners activities would have broader economic and social impacts, stifling innovation and progress.