

IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION (CASE OF GEORGIA)

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Abstract

Given paper overviews trends and economic impact of international educational migration in Georgia. Economic outlook and recent economic indicators of Georgia demonstrate the importance of socioeconomic factors in shaping human capital. They emphasize the need for the Georgian government to consider them when designing policies, particularly, educational policy. Unemployment level is not dramatically high in Georgia, however, the majority of employed people are self-employed and their incomes are quite small. This factor is the main cause of labor and educational migration. In recent years, the share of young people in labor and educational migration has been significantly increased in Georgia. The increase in educational mobility has been facilitated by the involvement of Georgian higher education institutions in the Bologna process. Georgia joined the Bologna process in 2005. The main directions of growing international educational migration from Georgia are the higher education institutions of Europe and USA. The number of incoming educational migrants to Georgia is also increasing. The high rate of youth migration is due to the high level of competition on the labor market, with the desire to find high quality education and higher paid jobs. Assessment of the potential of student migrants in socio-economic development has particular importance for the post-Soviet countries. The integration of qualified migrants into the society triggers the introduction of new knowledge and technologies, creates sustainable and inclusive economic growth conditions in the country. Educational-professional mobility is quite prevalent in Georgia, since the latter is considered to be one of the priority directions for acquiring the experience of self-actualization and self-realization, independent living, learning and working experience for young people in an unfamiliar environment. Labor migration is a serious problem for Georgia. It is mainly aimed at improving socio-economic conditions. Youth are actively involved in migration processes. This category is the most mobile social group. International migration for youth is an opportunity to improve life for themselves and their families, achieve educational goals and strengthen professional skills. They also have motivation to accept the challenges of socio-economic processes abroad and to implement best practice after their return to the country.

Keywords: Human Capital, Migration, Educational Migration, Globalization of Education, Youth employment,

1 INTRODUCTION

Georgia is actively involved in global migration processes. Therefore identification of the socio-economic consequences of migration for the country is very important. Effective management of migration became one of the prerequisites for ensuring country's security and long-term stability. Also it represents an important instrument of getting closer with the European Union and facilitates effective use of migration potential in the process of socio-economic development of the country. Based on this, planning of migration processes and policies, improving efficiency of its management are among the priorities of the government of Georgia [1]. By 2015 Georgian population decreased by 600 thousand people in comparison to the year of 2002 and today this figure is 3.7 million [2]. The trend of such a reduction is one of the most important challenges that should be considered in the priority directions of the Migration Strategy, particularly including ways to return Georgian citizens residing abroad and promote their reintegration.

Assessment of the potential of student migrants in socio-economic development has particular importance for the post-Soviet countries. The integration of qualified migrants into the society triggers the introduction of new knowledge and technologies, creates sustainable and inclusive economic growth conditions in the country. Research of the migration capabilities of young people, identifying factors that determine efficient educational migration and have positive socio-economic impacts for the country are important in terms of getting close with EU standards and effective management of

migration processes. The modern tendencies in educational migration processes in the world are the greatest challenge for Georgia with respect to assess intellectual potential. Educational-professional mobility is quite prevalent in Georgia, since the latter is considered to be one of the priority directions for acquiring the experience of self-actualization and self-realization, independent living, learning and working experience for young people in an unfamiliar environment.

Aim of the research: Today, European countries are actively working to create a unified higher education space that facilitates development of academic cooperation between the states. Georgia is actively involved in the Bologna process, positively uses the diversity of educational traditions, knowledge and experience of various fields. Recognition of education document (diploma) in accordance with the integration of Georgia's educational sphere in Bologna Process takes place in 102 countries in the world. In Georgia there is a tendency of growing interest of young people on European education, but the process is chaotic, as their motivation, the factors that affect educational migration, and the socio-economic outcomes obtained by it have not been studied. The goal of the research is to identify educational migration factors through the study of youth motivation, orientation of values and life strategies in Georgia and to develop recommendations on efficient educational migration through the assessment of social and economic impacts of the process.

2 METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research, systematic and economic-institutional approaches, as well as general statistical methods and desk research were used for problem analysis and evaluation. Conclusions about existing challenges are made using relevant method and the recommendations for their solutions are developed.

3 RESULTS

In terms of globalization it has become important for Georgia to identify the role of migration in socio-economic, cultural, political and demographic processes in the country. Accordingly, Georgia's migration strategy 2016-2010 has been developed. It is a Major determinant of migration policy and aims at achievement of country's security and long-term stability through efficient management of migration. The migration policy aims to create a legislative and institutional space for migration management in Georgia by 2020 by insuring country's approximation with the EU, promoting peaceful coexistence of different religious, cultural and ethnic groups, protecting immigrant's rights and their successful integration into society, reintegrating returned migrants by using positive economic and demographic aspects of migration for the development of the country and increasing the legal migration capabilities for Georgian citizens (3). Implementation of the legislative amendments regulating the migration sphere in Georgia has become necessary for getting closer with the EU. Several legislative acts have been adopted, from which the new organic law on "Georgian citizenship" is important [4] which simplified the definition of Georgian citizenship and regulated the procedures for obtaining Georgian citizenship. In addition, the law came into full compatibility with the United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961.

For the purpose of regulation of labor migration and for the development of legal labor migration, the Law of Georgia on Labor Migration [5] were adopted in which the national migration regulatory mechanisms were established and the principles of implementation of state governance in this field were determined. In order to effectively manage the migration sphere, other regulatory legislative acts and strategic documents [6] have also enacted.

In the recent period Georgia's economy is characterized with growing trends. The estimated real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in March 2019 equaled 6.0 %. In March 2019 the estimated real growth compared to the same period of the previous year was posted in the following activities: Trade, Transport, Other community, social and personal service activities, Real estate, renting and business activities. A decrease was registered in Construction [7]. In the first quarter of 2019, Georgian economic climate slightly improved. In this period, Georgian economists assessed Georgia's present economic situation positively. The assessment of present economic situation in this quarter has deteriorated compared with the first quarter of 2018; However, it has improved compared to the fourth quarter of 2018 [8].

In terms of economic growth, it is expected that demand within the country will increase as on qualified as well as on the less qualified human resources. In order to maintain such economic growth, labor market research is important. The labor market research was carried out in 2015 by the Ministry of

Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia [9]. However, it is necessary to conduct such studies regularly, and on the other hand, to conduct research on educational migration. Such researches will provide answers to the following questions: on which specialities is demand growing and how the labor market responds to rising requirements; what is the socio-economic situation of young people in Georgia and how it affects employment indicators; which factors affect educational migration; what are the problems in the education sector and how the migration indicators change in line with the internationalization process of this sector? What is the Georgian youth's availability of high-paid employment opportunities in developed economies and so on?

Labor migration at the modern stage is a serious problem for Georgia. Research conducted by the State Commission on Migration Issues states that migration is mainly aimed at improving socio-economic conditions [10]. In addition, the problem of unemployment in rural areas is more acute than in urban areas [11]. Migration survey of households determines the regularity of migration where it is estimated that three quarters of respondents in Georgia are in permanent migration [12]. The labor migration indicators from villages to cities are especially high, which is due to several reasons: In farming, especially in household farming, labor productivity is low; the land market is underdeveloped (the market price of land is low, the level of fragmentation of land is high, the institutional infrastructure is underdeveloped, land cadastres aren't regulated, etc.); household incomes are low and etc [13].

Mobility strategies of Georgian population, [14] problems of formation of labor resources and employment arrangements in the cities of Georgia [15] are studied by Georgian researchers. The labor market and migration issues are also investigated, [16] international migratory streams are characterized [17], reasons and consequences of migration from Georgia are studied [18], the situation on the Georgian labor market is estimated, [19] gender problems of migration are revealed [20] and etc..

Studies conducted in Georgia show the regularities of internal and external migration of population [21]. The main emphasis is made on the social consequences of migration, labor market conditions, education of migrants and so forth. The researchers believe that the migration of the population from village to city happens while seeking better and the higher output and the improvement of the economic situation [22]. Migration in Georgia today is perceived as a strategy to save households, because households are ones who make migration decisions [23].

The majority of migration studies recognize the importance of economic factors in making migration decisions. Migration is also accelerated by other stimulating factors such as low tax on land, state regulation system, etc. In addition, it should be taken into account that this system affects migration decisions differently. Migration processes from rural areas are also observed in developed countries. As studies show, migrants are mostly poor people. For them it is a way for survival [24]. In addition, the difference between the city and rural lives is of great importance [25]. Other studies are trying to explain why migrating from the village happens when jobs are being reduced in the urban areas [26].

Youth are actively involved in migration processes. In general, young migrants occupy more than 10% of the total number of international migrants. This category is the most mobile social group and they represent the majority in migration processes. International migration for youth is an opportunity to improve life for themselves and their families, achieve educational goals and strengthen professional skills. They also have motivation to accept the challenges of socio-economic processes abroad and to implement them after their return to the country. Unemployment rate among young people in almost every country is twice as less than the overall rate of unemployment [27].

Studies of indicators of labor market for youth, trends and policy directions focuses on market instability and structural issues. Between 1997 and 2017, the youth population grew by 139 million people, while the youth labour force shrank by 35 million people. This dynamic is also reflected in a declining youth proportion of the overall global labour force, from 21.7 per cent to 15.5 per cent. The youth labour force participation rates have deteriorated in the past 20 years from 55.0 per cent to 45.7 per cent, an estimated 70.9 million [27, p.5].

Generally speaking, the growing trend in unemployment of young people is small but still rising. The corresponding research has shown that this indicator will slightly increase in 2018. In the near future, increase in the unemployment rate of young people is expected to be 0.2%, while in developed countries this figure remains unchanged, meaning that the growth is expected from developing countries [27, p.15]. In addition, demand will increase on science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as partially on different specialties, and decrease on specialties that require medium-level skills [27, p.5]. It is therefore necessary to adapt to new jobs and make young people able to adapt to these processes. In particular, in most countries, special attention is paid to the factors that

affect satisfaction from labor [28]. Research also finds correlations between economic motivation and migration of youth [29].

Modern theoretical and empirical studies of the European perspectives of migration and social transformation emphasize the structure of migration and mobility [30]. The variation of migrants' happiness is determined by examining economic consequences of migration and motives behind migrants' happiness in Eastern Europe [31].

Youth are the most important part of the country's labor resources and strategic resource for socio-economic development. The share of youth in the population not only significantly changes its sex-age structure, but it also changes professional-qualification composition of labor potential. Youth unemployment levels in Georgia are still high. The unemployment rates of young people in Georgia are different with respect to the age, especially the trend of change in the 15-19 years old unemployment data is observed. In 2007-2016 unemployment levels increased among 20-24 years old youth and slightly decreased among youth of 25-29 years [32]. (see Fig. 1)

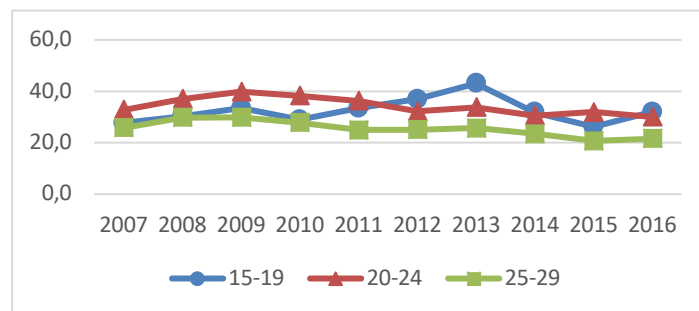


Fig. 1 Youth unemployment level in 2007-2016 in Georgia (%) (designed by authors according official statistical data)

Analysis of employment indicators showed that employment levels of 20-24 years olds were increased in the same period (see Fig. 2)

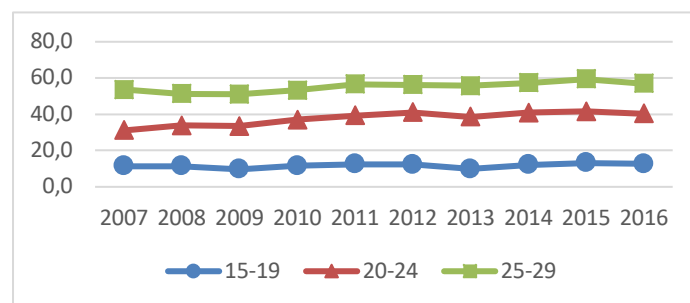


Fig. 2 The employment of youth in 2007-2016, (%)

The study of employment trends on the labor market of Georgia indicates that the largest share among hired employees comes on those with higher education (58%), the share of employees with school education is 23% and the smallest number of employees with vocational education (19%) is observed [33, p 28]. The results of this study are almost analogous to the trends revealed in the 2015 labor market research. Most of the employed people have higher education (451 thousand), 133 thousand have vocational education and 290 thousand employees have secondary (school) education [34].

It is noteworthy that employers' qualification requirements, especially in the public sector, legally requires higher education. On the national labor market high percentage of aged workforce can be observed. 76% of this segment has a Soviet education and can not compete with young workforce. However, it is noteworthy to mention that even in the case of employment of young workforce there is a problem with working according to their specialties, there is little employment rate of Bologna system graduates (18%) [33, p.25]. Salary satisfaction greatly contributes to the work satisfaction for all age group, except for 18-25 age categories. In the case of this group, the promotion prospects and having the job is much more important as the prerequisite for career advancement [33, p.105].

The real disbalance in terms of supply and demand on the labor market in Georgia indicates a weak institutional link between education policy and labor market. Disbalance between the supply of higher education and the labor market demand is not only due to the weak state policy of education but the stagnation of the employment market where new jobs in modern and high-product sectors emerge at a slow pace [34].

According to the data, unemployment levels are not dramatically high in Georgia, however, the total number of employed people is highly expressed in the self-employed and their incomes are quite small. This factor is the main cause of labor and educational migration. In recent years, the share of young people in labor and educational migration has been significantly increased in Georgia [35].

The increase in educational migration has been facilitated by the involvement of Georgian higher education institutions in the Bologna process. Georgia joined the Bologna process in 2005 and became an affiliate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in 2013. Recently the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement became full member of ENQA. The demand on the labor market is incompatible with the higher and vocational training level of young people. The labor force with inadequate education provides the main source of structural unemployment [11].

Educational migration of graduates of higher education institutions in Georgia is varying in dynamics. In 2008, 2405 graduates went to study in different countries, including 307 graduates in Spain, 450 in Italy, 409 in Russia, 223 in Austria, 141 in Latvia, 193 in the US, 21 in Czech Republic, 12 in Poland, 17 in Turkey, 61 in Israel, 82 in Ukraine, 39 in Belgium, 18 in Bulgaria, 40 in Portugal; 16 in Norway, 115 in Azerbaijan, 46 in Lithuania, 14 in Estonia, 34 in India, 23 in Kazakhstan, 3 in South Africa, 9 in Cyprus, 18 in Great Britain, 14 in Netherlands, 3 in Finland, 3 in Hungary, and 5 in Slovakia. According to the 2017 data, these figures are increased and the number of funded scholars has also increased (see Fig.3).

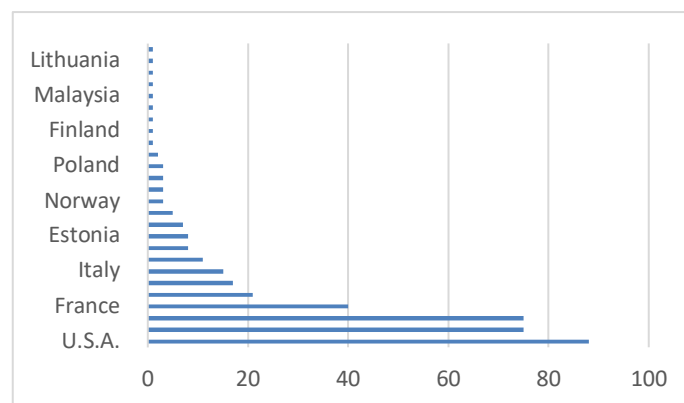


Fig.3 Study migrants funded with scholarships by countries, 2014-2017

The main directions of international educational migration from Georgia are the higher education institutions of Europe and USA and the dynamics of this number is growing. This high rate of youth migration is due to the high level of competition on the labor market, with the desire to find high quality education and higher paid jobs. Georgian youth' migration abroad for education and qualifications' trainings is supported by the following sources of funding: 1. Scholarships and exchange programs provided by foreign countries; 2. Funding from the Government of Georgia; 3. Non-state funding. In 2014, the International Education Center established at the government administration provided financial support to 77 Georgian citizens to study in the world leading universities [36].

The number of international mobility students in the world has increased by almost 70% over the last 10 years and exceeded 4,5 million in 2015 [37]. Along with the growing number of foreign students, modern education systems play a decisive role in internationalization of education. For the effective involvement in globalization processes and socio-economic development of the country implementation of the economic policy promoting study of youth abroad is important, as well as the implementation of policy aiming to attract foreign students to Georgia. In recent years the number of foreign students has increased in Georgia. In 2013 country hosted more than 4,000 foreign students, while in 2016 more than 9,000 foreign students from 87 countries studied in Georgia (see Fig.4). Georgia's reputation of safe country and lower costs of study play a crucial role in attracting foreign students [38].

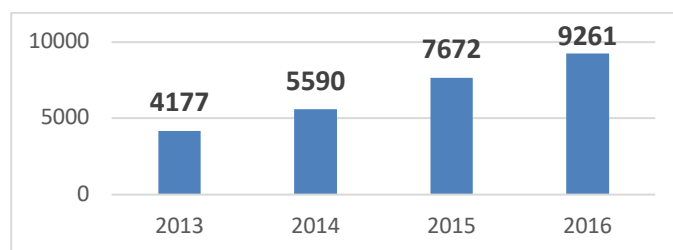


Fig. 4 Dynamics of mobility of foreign students in higher education institutions of Georgia

90% of foreign students in Georgia are citizens of Azerbaijan, India, Iraq, Nigeria, Turkey and Russia. In addition, the number of students from Azerbaijan, Iraq, India and Nigeria has been increased significantly in recent years, while the number of Turkish and Russian citizens is relatively stable.

Promoting the increase of the number of foreign students is important for the successful social and economic development of Georgia and for successfully entering higher education institutions of Georgia into the international educational sphere. Under Georgian legislation, foreign students pay higher rates of study compared to Georgian students, which has a positive economic effect for the country. Foreign students also have a positive impact on improving curriculum and quality of education in Georgia. To attract foreign students, it is important to adapt to educational needs not only locally, but also according to the demands of international markets and provide students with appropriate infrastructure.

According to one of the goals of the Bologna process, foreign students' mobility should increase in Georgia from 3% of today to 20% by 2020. The internationalization of the education system is largely dependent on the implementation of appropriate migration policies. Educational programs built based on the requirements of the international labor market are essential not only for attracting foreign students, but also for the growth of competitiveness of human capital. This, in turn, is a necessary factor for promoting circular migration and attracting investments in Georgia. In accordance with the labor market strategy, it is necessary to institutionalize regular labor market research and periodically update the list of demanded specialties.

Since 2013, the most students admitted to higher education institutions have enrolled into *social sciences, business and law* programs. Since 2014 the proportion of students admitted into *science* programs has been increasing and since 2016 there has been an increase in admissions to *health and welfare*. The proportion of students admitted into *humanities and arts* in the total number of admitted students has been declining. The number of foreign students studying in Georgia in the 2017-2018 academic year is 10,152. The majority of foreign students participate in bachelor's (31%) and master's programs including residencies (68%). In 2017-2018 academic year, 65% of foreign students studying bachelor's programs are students of *social sciences, business and law*, while 97% of foreign students studying master's programs are pursuing *health and welfare* programs [39].

The origins of educational migration could be found in inefficient secondary education in Georgia as well as in inequality in education. migration is Georgia's Human Capital Index of 0.61 indicates that children born in Georgia today will only be 61% as productive as they could have been given a complete secondary education and full health. The Index highlights losses of productivity in the national economy that can be attributed to gaps in education and health. These gaps can be larger in the case of lower socioeconomic groups where health and educational deprivation hinders the fulfillment of individuals' potential. Based on students' performance on the PISA international competence test, overall, 51%, 52%, and 57% of Georgian students fail to reach the basic proficiency levels in science, reading, and math, respectively. In the top socioeconomic quartile, the respective proportions are 32%, 32% and 36% while for the bottom quartile, the underperformance rates reach 68%, 70%, and 76% [40].

Migration in general, and especially educational migration, is strengthened by the gender inequality in Georgia. As statistical evidence and rigorous studies conducted by researchers and non-governmental organizations suggested gender inequalities in employment, education and income distributions still prevails in Georgia. Not all groups in society have equal access to employability and entrepreneurial opportunities. The main part of society in Georgia formally shares the idea of gender equality. Certain percentage of population are in favor of traditional distribution of the gender roles [41].

In the last 5 years, there is a decrease in the potential of higher education in Georgia. This tendency is caused by the increased access for young people to low cost or even free education abroad. This

process is also affected by strong labor market established in the country that has, in turn, influenced alternatives for continuing education. The role of educational system reforms is also important in a forms of national exams and university accreditation. Educational migration has a positive and negative impact on socio-economic development of Georgia. Following conclusions and recommendations have been drawn based on the results of impact analysis.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- The share of educational migration in Georgia in the overall number of migrants is still small, and the demand for foreign education is quite high. It is recommended to provide new scholarships and exchange programs that will enable Georgian citizens to go abroad for study or enhancing their knowledge and experience;
- Educational migration of Georgian youth is rising, but the trend of their employment is not relevant to this indicator. Knowledge received abroad is not a precondition for their effective employment. After returning in the country the government of Georgia should provide employment opportunities for them in the public service. Such opportunities should be available also to those citizens of Georgia who have received higher education abroad with the help of non-state programs;
- Educational migration is effective in the economic and social development of the country. Migrants with foreign education bring in international experience, new knowledge and skills, modern technologies and values, ideas and innovations, and even small financial capital. It is recommended to consider this potential of migration in planning and implementation of migration or other policies;
- Educational migration affects socio-economic development at different levels (national/regional) and fields (business, culture, education). Effective management of educational migration can contribute to optimal utilization of the country's complex development potential;
- Youth migration to Georgia is accompanied by positive demographic, social, cultural and economic consequences. It is advisable to develop relevant state programs and policies with regard to these effects of migration;
- Foreign students' demand for higher education institutions is increasing. In addition, high taxes imposed on them positively affect the development of the country's economic and educational programs. However, this influence is short-term. In order to increase the economic benefit in the long term, it is necessary to improve the quality and service of teaching at universities;
- Among the study migrants, the share of MA students is high. At the same time, the chances of employing a person with a Master's Diploma is 70% higher than of one with the Bachelor's degree. However, the Master's degree does not condition significant increment in salary earnings. Accordingly, the master's in Georgia is not a way to increase income, but to increase the probability of being employed, which reduces the incentives of these targeted migrants. It is necessary to create compensation system appropriate for highly qualified employees;
- Considering the migration potential in the development of the country will facilitate the use of migration benefits and reduce negative impacts. For effective use of the above resources it is important to inform the public about the potential impact of educational migration and use of acquired experience in migration, financial and other resources to invest in Georgia;
- Number of foreign students in Georgia is small and does not influence the internationalization process. It is necessary to promote internationalization of programs in higher education institutions and develop relevant administrative resources. Also, regular study of the needs of foreign students living in Georgia and popularization of Georgian educational institutions outside the country are important;
- One of the main challenges in the process of forming a migration policy today is the lack of reliable data that negatively impacts the process of forming adequate statistics and the decision-making process. In this direction it is necessary to improve the collection of statistical data, elaborate the performance mitigation efficiency indicators and collect relevant new types of data from the side of the state agencies engaged in the process and the National Statistics Office of Georgia. It is of utmost importance to improve the information and means of collection and exchange of information between the agencies;

- It is important to make changes in the legislation regulating migration in Georgia for the purpose of approximating with the European standards and improving the migration management. Understanding the challenges identified in the migration field and the complex nature of migration, it is essential to develop a migration policy based on the socio-economic development strategy of Georgia.

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