



Evaluation Report

Baseline Evaluation of the Strategic Actions for Youth – Youth Employability and Skill Development (SAY – YES) Program

October 31, 2018

World Vision Georgia

Acknowledgements

The Strategic Actions for Youth – Youth Employability and Skill Development Program (SAY YES) Baseline Evaluation is a result of a collaboration between CRRC-Georgia and World Vision Georgia. The CRRC-Georgia team would like to thank the following people for their support in carrying out the evaluation: Dariko Bakhturidze—Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Officer (WVSC); Irakli Giorbelidze—Youth Technical Program Coordinator (WV Georgia); and Kristine Ter-Abrahamyan—Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Senior Coordinator (WVSC), and Rati Cheishvili (Independent Youth Expert).

Affirmation

Except as acknowledged by the references in this paper to other authors and publications, the evaluation herein consists of our own work, undertaken to secure funding, implement the activities, describe and advance learning, as part of the requirements of World Vision’s Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Learning System.

Primary data collected throughout the study remains the property of communities and families described in this document. Therefore, the information and data must be used only with the project beneficiaries’ consent.

Executive Summary

Georgia faces significant challenges, with youth un- and under-employment, particularly in rural areas. To attempt to help improve the situation, World Vision South Caucasus is implementing the Strategic Actions for Youth – Youth Employability and Skill Development Program (SAY YES). The project will take place between 2018 and 2021 in Armenia and Georgia.

The overall objective of the project “is to contribute to the (self)-employability of young women and men aged between 15 and 35 years old, particularly those with fewer opportunities as the most vulnerable amongst youth.”¹ The program will consist of two primary components. The first component will consist of formal and informal educational competency development, while the second component will focus on improving the youth support infrastructure and development of the quality of education, according to the project proposal.

The specific objective of component one is to increase the opportunities youth have to develop professional competencies through formal and non-formal education. The specific objective of component two is to strengthen the support structures for youth employability at the local and national levels through formal and informal education using cross-sectoral cooperation. The project aims to achieve the above specific objectives through five activity clusters, consisting of 18 activities.

As described in the terms of reference to this project (Annex 1), the purpose of this baseline evaluation is to describe the situation within the project area in Georgia at baseline. In addition, the baseline evaluation provides input on the attainability of the proposed indicators and makes recommendations on working with the project’s target groups. The specific objectives for the evaluation that are relevant to Georgia, as given in the project’s terms of reference are as follows:

- Determine the status of indicators at the start of the action against which future measurements will be made to see the change over time;
- Provide information for setting targets for project objectives;
- Provide specific recommendations including specific target groups.

To achieve the above objectives, this study has used a mixed methods approach, consisting of two surveys and in depth interviews with Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions. While one survey was carried out with businesses in the agriculture and tourism sectors in the project area, a second survey was carried out with 15-35 year olds in the project area. Overall, 2663 respondents participated in the survey of young people, and 51 businesses (29% of businesses in relevant sectors in the project area) in the business survey.

The results of the study lead to a number of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The first indicator the project aims to change is the unemployment rate. Yet, the project did not use an appropriate employment question to measure this indicator in Armenia. The question is also unable to accurately measure employment according to internationally recognized definitions (e.g. ILO 2013), because it does not accurately capture part-time employment or contributing household worker status. While the indicator that was used for the project suggests an employment rate of 32%, the internationally accepted indicator results in an employment rate of 45% in the project area for 15-35 year olds. Given that it is not feasible to re-do the survey in Armenia, the baseline indicator should be considered 32% for Georgia. At the same time, this indicator should be treated with appropriate caution as social attitudes rather than actual change could lead to shifts in the indicator. For example, if people who work for family enterprises start to consider this employment, a change in this indicator could result even though the facts on the ground have not changed.

With the indicator more broadly, a 10% change in the unemployment rate is suggested in the project’s logical framework. After the clarification of the project team, a 10 percentage point change was found to be indicated by the logical framework rather than a 10% change. The indicator is unlikely to be attainable at the project area level. Indeed, if it did, the project would likely be the best economic intervention ever recorded. To put

¹ Project proposal.

this in perspective, the project budget in Georgia is around Euro 600,000, and the youth population of the project area is around 130,000. Hence, an increase of 10% in employment would imply the project generates 13,000 jobs – about Euro 46.15 per job. By comparison, in developing and developed countries creating one job usually requires in the realm of 30,000 USD. Job training programs such as the present one generally cost between USD 500 and USD 3000 per new job (Robalino 2018).

A number of solutions could resolve this issue. First, rather than measuring unemployment or employment at the project area level, World Vision could look at its direct impact on the participants of the program. Through looking at their employment status before and after, a 10 percentage point effect size is lofty, but within the realm of possibility. Through having a comparison group identified within the survey, the effect could be rigorously measured. Based on the above considerations, it is recommended that:

- World Vision measures the impact of its projects among direct beneficiaries rather than at the project area level;
- World Vision notes clearly in the project's logical framework that a 10 percentage point rather than a 10% change.

The second indicator the project aims to change is soft skills. The project logical framework suggests that the project aims to increase the average score of people in the project area by 20%. Given that the average score on a five point scale index was 4.28, this change is mathematically impossible (a score of 5.136 would represent a 20% increase). The relatively high score that individuals in the project area report on the scale may suggest a number of things. Individuals may have high levels of soft skills already. Alternatively, the young people in the survey may believe they have a high level of soft skills even though this is not the case. In general, people who were employed were more likely to score highly on the two indexes of soft skills used in the report as were people with higher education. This could be a result of these experiences (higher education and employment), or alternatively could be a result of the different social and economic backgrounds that individuals had before these experiences. In contrast to the first index that is used, the second index (the grit scale) has enough variation to increase by 20%. However, this scale was not used in the Armenia survey. Based on the above considerations, together with the fact that the project requires comparable data with Armenia it is recommended that:

- World Vision decreases the indicator for Georgia to 10% on the employability scale;
- World Vision adds a change in the grit scale of 10% to the project's logical framework for Georgia.

Through making these modifications, it is possible to a) have a mathematically possible indicator, and b) maintain an ambitious goal for change.

The third indicator the project aims to measure is use of Worknet. At present the study suggests 74,145 young people (under 35) registered at Worknet. The project aims to increase this figure by 10%. A quick look at the portal, however, shows that most of the jobs listed there are in areas outside of the project area. Moreover, there are only 13 jobs listed on the portal for the entire country. Hence, while it may be advantageous for project participants to be aware of this tool, it may not serve the direct purpose of helping young people in the project area find jobs in their communities. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- World Vision consider removing this indicator from the project logical framework, or;
- World Vision actively promote the use of Worknet by employers in the project area.

With the latter option, it is important to keep in mind that a significant share of employers reported that they do not advertise jobs. In general, it is widely believed that relatively few employers in Georgia advertise jobs, as they can rely on their social networks to find employees. Because of this, it may be better to focus more on bringing young people into contact with employers at networking forums, than on promoting Worknet use.

When it comes to unemployment among young people, the study suggests a relatively low level in the project area. This in large part, however, stems from the fact that many people are in self-employment or contributing family workers. Hence, many in the study are likely to be under-employed. This is particularly likely for people in the target group. Notably, many of the employers hire extensive seasonal workforces and have relatively

small full time staff. Hence, even if successful partnership results from the program, it may not lead to better employment for project participants. For these reasons, rather than focusing solely on the development of soft skills for VET students, the project should consider providing entrepreneurship training to young people entering VET, thus encouraging self-employment that has the potential to be higher in quality.

Analysis of the employment status data collected within this baseline study suggests that women in the 26-30 age range are particularly unlikely to be part of the labor force. The likely cause is reproductive related decisions, as studies of Georgia and the region more broadly have shown (UN Women, 2018). Activities aimed at helping young women stay in the labor force in the age range prior to this, hence, are likely to be important to project success on the employment indicator. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Activities involving young women within the project aim to prevent labor force drop out in the 26-30 age range.

The fourth indicator the project aims to change is businesses’ willingness to hire VET graduates. This was measured through looking at how much businesspeople agree with the statement, “For my business activities, I prefer to hire people with vocational education.” Overall, 35% of businesses agreed with this statement. However, only 4% disagreed with the statement, with the remainder neither agreeing nor disagreeing or responding don’t know. More broadly, among businesses in the project area that participated in the study, a plurality did not have strongly formed opinions about VET graduates. When it comes to work based learning, relatively few had either hired unpaid or paid interns. This suggests that work based learning models are not well known. However, a number of businesses did note that they wanted to find unpaid and paid interns. Hence, the model may be feasible at a small scale. Importantly though, most of the businesses within the study were relatively small, and there were only 175 registered businesses in the sectors of interest in the entire project area. This suggests that it may be difficult to find enough businesses for young people to work with. Given the above findings, it is recommended that:

- The project aims to raise awareness about the benefits of working with VET graduates;
- The project provides businesses with success stories for both employers and employees about work based learning models;
- The project provides other incentives for work based learning to businesses.

If the above recommendations are followed, they are likely to make the environment more amenable to a work based learning model.

When it comes to VET, the project aims to ensure that at least 40% of project partners have vulnerability related policies and practices. Interviews with the four project partners within this baseline evaluation suggest that 100% of current partner institutions already have policies to support vulnerable people, and particularly people with disabilities. Hence, it is recommended that:

- The project team develop a more ambitious goal in relation to partner institution policies.

In sum, the study suggests the following baseline values for the project’s logical framework:

Figure 1: Table of baseline indicators

Youth employment rate in the project target areas	Youth employability	Youth grit	Percent of project partners and public and social stakeholders integrated vulnerability or disability sensitive programming into their organizational practices	Private companies reached during the project report increased willingness to employ graduates of VET and WBL programmes	Number of Worknet users between the ages of 15-35
32%	4.28	3.43	100%	35%	74,145

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List of acronyms

CRRC-Georgia	Caucasus Research Resource Center – Georgia
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
ToR	Terms of Reference
VET	Vocational education and training
WBL	Work-based learning
WV	World Vision
WVG	World Vision Georgia

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Background and Context

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The overall objective of the project “is to contribute to the (self)-employability of young women and men aged between 15 and 35 years old, particularly those with fewer opportunities as the most vulnerable amongst youth.”² The program will consist of two primary components. The first component will consist of formal and informal educational competency development, while the second component will focus on improving the youth support infrastructure and development of the quality of education, according to the project proposal. The specific objective of component one is to increase the opportunities youth have to develop professional competencies through formal and non-formal education. The specific objective of component two is to strengthen the support structures for youth employability at the local and national levels through formal and informal education through cross-sectoral cooperation.

The project aims to achieve the above specific objectives through five activity clusters, consisting of 18 activities. Within component one, there are three activity clusters consisting of 11 activities, while in component two there are two activity clusters consisting of 7 activities. The activities are provided below as per the project proposal by activity cluster.

Activity Cluster 1: Non-formal education programmes for competence development and e-learning

- Internal review of SKYE Club progress and achievement reports in Armenia;
- Conduct vulnerability mapping of youth and desk research on available career guidance practices with the focus on vulnerable youth in Georgia;
 - Conduct vulnerability mapping of youth;
 - Conduct desk research on career guidance practices for vulnerable youth;
- Integrate career guidance component in non-formal education models in Georgia;
- Operate the SKYE Clubs in Armenia and Georgia;
- Development, launch, and operate e-learning programmes.

Activity Cluster 2: Non-formal catch-up programme for school early school leavers in Georgia

- Conduct desk research on existing catch-up programme in Europe for early school leavers;
- Develop a catch-up programme for early school leavers in cooperation with the MoES in Georgia;
 - Development of the catch-up programme;
 - Advocacy meetings for accreditation of the catch-up programme;
- Piloting the catch-up programme for early school leavers in cooperation with the MoES in Georgia.

Activity Cluster 3: Needs and skill-based inclusive VET programmes

- Survey on skills needed in the agrarian sector and motivation of youth to pursue a career in the agricultural sector in Armenia and review of existing labour market research findings to identify required VET qualifications in Georgia;
 - Survey on skills needed in the agrarian sector and motivation of youth to pursue a career in the agricultural sector in Armenia;
 - Review of existing labour market research in Georgia;
- Development and implementation of non-formal educational WBL programmes in the agrarian sector in Armenia;
- Development, accreditation and implementation of two agrarian VET curricula and one agro-tourism VET curriculum in compliance with WBL approach in Georgia.

Activity Cluster 4: Exchange of practices and multi-stakeholder dialogue

² Project proposal.

- Organize coordination meetings with relevant stakeholders to foster exchange of practices in the youth sector, on gender and ability sensitivity programming, and the integration of the action's approaches into existing educational programmes;
 - Annual coordination meetings on youth work practices with relevant stakeholders working in the youth sector in Armenia and Georgia;
 - Coordination meetings on integration of project approaches in youth work in Georgia;
 - Coordination meetings with local CSOs working with vulnerable youth in Armenia;
- Organize two vocational education and training forums, regional career fairs and two innovative transnational youth skill competitions connecting VET institutions, youth-led structures, private companies and VET graduates/ students;
 - Vocational Education and Training Forums in Georgia;
 - Regional career fairs in Armenia;
 - Transnational youth skills competitions;
- Organize awareness raising and outreach campaigns for the promotion of vocational education with WBL for vulnerable groups in Georgia and about non-formal education in compliance with WBL in Armenia;
 - Awareness raising and outreach campaign for vocational education with WBL in Georgia;
 - Awareness raising campaign for non-formal education in compliance with WBL in Armenia;
- Implementation of capacity building programmes on gender, ability, and vulnerability sensitive programme for project partners and stakeholders in Georgia and on career guidance for young people with fewer opportunities in Armenia;
 - Capacity building programme on disability awareness and mainstreaming ability sensitive programming in Georgia;
 - Capacity building programme on vulnerability for project partners and stakeholders in Georgia;
 - Capacity building programme for career guidance in Armenia.

Activity Cluster 5: Assistance to youth support structures

- Implement capacity building programme for VET colleges to carry out mechanism of VNFIL and pilot VNFIL assessment processes in VET colleges in Armenia;
 - Pilot VNFIL assessment processes in VET colleges;
- Develop recommendations to the MoES in Armenia on refining the regulation of the VNFIL mechanism and establishing regulations for work-based learning;
- Facilitation and promotion of a referral mechanism for disadvantaged youth to the WorkNet platform in Georgia.

Based on the above activities, a wide variety of expected results are anticipated. For the project overall, a 20% increase in the “employability among young men and women participating in the project” and a 10% decrease in the “youth unemployment rate in project target areas” are expected. Besides these expected results at the project level, a number of components have specific outcome indicators relevant to the present report. Outcome 2 is “Support structures for youth employability are strengthened at local and national level and quality development of formal and non-formal education for fostering youth (self)-employability is enhanced through cross-sectoral cooperation.” Whether this outcome is achieved will partially be measured by whether or not 50% of companies “report increased willingness to employ graduates of VET and WBL programmes.” This outcome’s success will also be measured by the “% of project partners and public and social stakeholders integrated vulnerability or disability sensitive programming into their organizational practices,” with at least 40% being the expected value. Finally, this outcome will also be measured through the number of users between the ages of 15 and 35 that use the WorkNet platform, with a 10% increased expected.

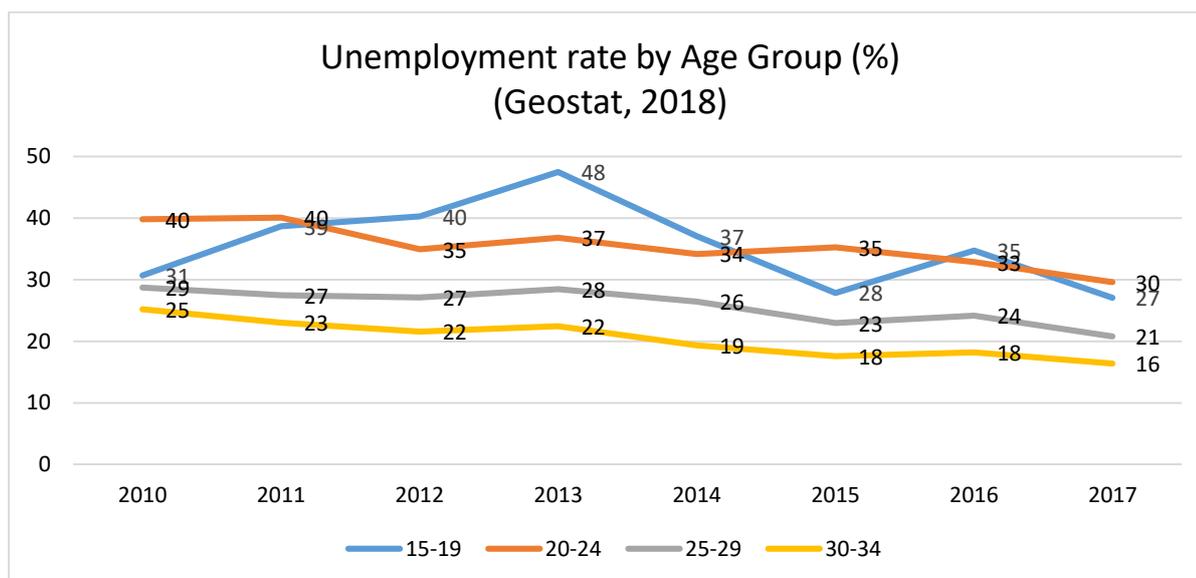
These outcomes aside, the project expects to have numerous other outcomes and outputs. However, they are not discussed in this report, because they are outputs that will be measured through project monitoring activities or are outcome measures that have a baseline value of 0. For readers interested in the full list of outcomes and outputs, the project logical framework is provided in annex to the report.

Country Context

Georgia is a lower middle income country, with a GDP per capita of USD 4078 as of 2017 (WB 2018). Economic growth has returned to 5% in 2017, following a period of weak growth between 2013 and 2016. Unemployment at the national level stood at 14% as of 2017 (Geostat 2018).

Youth unemployment is problematic in Georgia. By comparison to the national rate of 14%, the unemployment rate among the 20-24 year old population was estimated at 30% in 2017. In general, by the time individuals reach the 30-34 age range, their employment rate is broadly comparable to the national employment rate. Despite the high unemployment rate, there is a positive trend in youth employment in Georgia (Geostat 2018).

Figure 2 Unemployment rate by age group



Note: Due to small sample size within the 15-19 age range, unemployment data should be considered to have large confidence intervals, and changes should be only inferred with caution.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgian agriculture shifted from a focus on production of crops intended for export to other Soviet Republics to subsistence agriculture. The sector has recovered to a certain extent since, particularly with growth in the export of hazelnuts and wine. Nonetheless, agriculture has relatively low levels of productivity. This is demonstrated by the fact that while it is the main sector of employment in the country, at 41% of employment (WB 2018), agriculture makes up only 7% of GDP (WB 2018). The sector is largely made up small holders who are informally employed or informally self-employed.

In contrast to the agriculture sector, tourism is experiencing significant growth in Georgia. In 2017, the sector's direct contribution to GDP was 9.3%, up from slightly over 3% in 2008. Adding, the indirect and induced contribution of tourism to the picture suggests that tourism was responsible for 31% of GDP in 2017. Generally, tourism's importance for the economy is forecasted to increase in the coming years (WTTC 2018).

Clearly, agriculture and tourism are important sectors for the Georgian economy, albeit in different ways. No data exists at present on the size of the agro-tourism sector to the best of the research team's knowledge. Yet, intuitively, the sector has significant potential in Georgia. The country has significant natural beauty, with rural destinations experiencing significant tourism flows, particularly in mountainous regions. The domestic rural tourism market is also significant, with 380 thousand visitors and 456.8 thousand visits to primarily rural regions in Georgia during 2017 (Geostat 2018). The country's wine is gaining grounds internationally, and currently has a relatively high export value (Anderson & Pinella, 2017). Overall, the available data suggest that agro-tourism has significant potential in Georgia. Given that agro-tourism will generally lead to higher value added production than small-scale agricultural production, the sector should also be a priority for those

working to improve the situation in rural areas, which are generally more impoverished than urban ones in Georgia.

For agriculture and agro-tourism in particular to be successful, a semi-skilled workforce is required. For agro-tourism, soft skills are likely to be important, because of the consumer facing nature of the industry. Yet, these skills are often lacking in rural areas in Georgia. A small study of Mukhrani's³ tourism potential highlighted its significant potential, while also pointing out a "Lack of tourism knowledge and skills" and "Lack of tourism training" (Georgian Journal 2018). There is no significant reason to expect the project area to be in a significantly different situation.

³ A medium sized village about one hour from Tbilisi.

Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

As described in the terms of reference to this project (Annex 1), the purpose of this baseline evaluation is to describe the situation within the project area at baseline. In addition, the baseline evaluation provides input on the attainability of the proposed indicators and makes recommendations on working with the project's target groups. The specific objectives for the evaluation that are relevant to Georgia, as given in the project's terms of reference are as follows:

- Determine the status of indicators at the start of the action against which future measurements will be made to see the change over time:
- Provide information for setting targets for project objectives.
- Provide specific recommendations including specific target groups

The project's objectives and indicators relevant to the present baseline evaluation are provided in the table below. Proposed indicators that likely should be modified are bolded in the table below. The justification for the suggested changes are generally provided in the methodology and conclusions and recommendations sections of the report.

Figure 3 The project objectives and indicators

	Objectives	Indicators	Methodology
Overall Objective	The (self)-employability of young women and men with fewer opportunities is enhanced in Armenia and Georgia through coordinated private public partnerships for the development of skills on demand in the labour market in the agricultural sector.	Indicator 1: Youth employment rate in the project target areas is increased by 10% Indicator 2: Youth employability increases by 20%	Survey conducted among youth aged 15-35 municipality (Georgia).
	Support structures for youth employability are strengthened at local and national level and quality development of formal and non-formal education for fostering youth (self)-employability is enhanced through cross-sectorial cooperation.	Indicator 1: Private companies reached during the project report increased willingness to employ graduates of VET and WBL programmes	Survey among private companies to be reached during the project
		Indicator 2: Percent of project partners and public and social stakeholders integrated vulnerability or disability sensitive programming into their organizational practices	Document review – guidelines of project partners and public and social stakeholders should be reviewed (check list)
		Indicator 3: Increase in WorkNet user rate among young people aged between 15-35 years old	User rate should be requested from WorkNet

Methodology

The study has used a mixed methods approach, consisting of two surveys and in depth interviews with Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions. While one survey was carried out with businesses in the agriculture and tourism sectors in the project area, a second survey was carried out with 15-35 year olds in the project area. This section provides an overview of the data collection and analysis methods used for the study.

Quantitative data collection and analysis

For the survey of young people, a survey representative of the eight municipalities the project worked in was carried out. The survey questionnaire was developed based on the survey carried out with young people in Armenia. In addition to the key variables used as indicators for the project, the survey contained an additional block of questions to measure grit as this would reasonably be expected to be improved by the SKYE Club model's soft skills training, and studies in other contexts suggest it is a significant predictor of employment (See Duckworth et. al. 2007). The survey also contained a number of questions designed to measure respondent vulnerability, thus enabling the research team to carry out the vulnerability mapping exercise as well as the baseline survey.

The survey used clustering with stratification to gather a representative sample of the population. The municipalities served as the survey's strata, and the municipalities were further sub-stratified into urban and rural. The sampling frame was the list of electoral precincts in Georgia in the target areas of the project, and electoral precincts were selected for interviews with probability of selection proportional to the size of the adult population. Systematic random walk was used to identify households to carry out interviews in. Only households with people between the ages of 15 and 35 were eligible to participate in the survey. The World Vision team also had a special interest in the attitudes of people with disabilities, as they are a target population for the project. Given their relatively low incidence within the population, an additional question was asked prior to identifying the respondent for interview. If the household contained a person with a disability between the ages of 15 and 25,⁴ the respondent was interviewed. In cases when there was not a person with a disability within this age range or that person was unable to participate in the survey, the last birthday method was used to select respondents within the target age range. The survey of young people had an average margin of error of 2.9%, and a sample size of 2663. The interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI).

For the survey of businesses in agriculture and agro-tourism, no sample was taken do to the small number of registered businesses in these sectors in the project area. The list of businesses was obtained from the National Statistics Office of Georgia's business registry. The business registry contained 175 businesses within the project area that work either in agriculture or tourism. All businesses in the tourism sector were included in the list of businesses for two reasons. First, the business registry does not contain sufficiently detailed NACE⁵ identification numbers for sectors to identify businesses in the agro-tourism field. Second, the research team assumes that many tourism businesses will offer agro-tourism products, even though they work primarily in a different field of tourism. Since a sample was not taken of the businesses, it is not technically correct to calculate a margin of error for the survey. However, under the "pretend it's something else" assumption, we assume that non-response was random and that a survey rather than attempted census was carried out. Under this assumption, the margin of error for a question which 50% of the businesses responded yes to and 50% responded no to, at 95% confidence, is plus or minus 11.75%. A question which 5% of businesses provided a response of no to and 95% provided a yes response to would result in a margin of error of 5.12%. The interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The survey questionnaire was developed based on previous business surveys done in the country. Additional questions were added to the survey to understand businesses' attitudes towards VET graduates.

⁴ The age range 15-25 was selected, because the survey was also used for a vulnerability mapping exercise, which required an oversample of people within this age range.

⁵ NACE codes (nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne) are internationally recognized domains of economic activity. The first digit of NACE codes provide the general sector of which a business is working in. The second digit provides a broad sub-sector. The third and fourth digits provide more specific detail. For more detailed information about NACE codes, see:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5902521/KS-RA-07-015-EN.PDF>

Two indexes are used in the report below. The first index was developed for World Vision, and aims to measure soft skills writ large. The second index was developed to measure grit, another soft skill that is significantly correlated with success on the labor market. For both indexes, the project team used a mean score to index. A mean score was chosen over factor analysis or principal components analysis as per the request of the World Vision team for the first index and as per common practice with the grit scale.

In terms of data analysis, the report primarily makes use of descriptive statistics, including frequencies and cross tabulations. However, in a number of cases, inferential statistics are used to identify whether any specific demographic groups have higher or lower soft skills scores. A base demographic model is used in the report that includes gender (male or female), age (15-35), settlement (municipality), respondent's and respondent's parents' education coded into three categories (Secondary or lower, vocational, and tertiary), marital status (married vs not married) and labor market status (employed, unemployed, and outside the labor force). In two cases, labor market status is used as the dependent variable and the indexes described above are used as independent variables. The **weighted** descriptive statistics for these variables are provided in the table below:

Figure 4 Demographic characteristics of the weighted sample

Gender	Male	50%
	Female	50%
Age	15-25	49%
	26-35	51%
Municipality	Mtskheta	9%
	Akhaltzikhe	4%
	Adigeni	3%
	Kutaisi	35%
	Zestaponi	10%
	Bagdati	4%
	Senaki	8%
	Zugdidi	27%
Respondent's Education	Secondary or lower	45%
	Vocational	15%
	Tertiary	40%
Father's Education	Secondary or lower	40%
	Vocational	27%
	Tertiary	33%
Mother's Education	Secondary or lower	36%
	Vocational	29%
	Tertiary	36%
Marital status	Married	49%
	Not married	51%
Labor market status	Employed	45%
	Unemployed	18%
	Outside the labor force	37%

Qualitative data collection

Within the project, in depth interviews were conducted with four different VET institutions. The in depth interviews had the dual purpose of providing qualitative information about VET institution work based learning (WBL) practices as well as providing a baseline measure of whether these institutions have policies that specifically aim to benefit the socially vulnerable.

Limitations

The study has a number of limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting the results of the study. First, a non-standard question was used for the measurement of unemployment. This question was developed and deployed by the research team in Armenia prior to the start of the study in Georgia. To maintain

comparability, the study used the same question. However, the question used does not enable the measurement of unemployment rates. Hence, in the survey below, both the appropriate set of questions and the question used in Armenia is used. Second, the margin of error within each municipality is high due to small sample size. The samples are nonetheless representative. This limitation stems from the fact that to obtain an average margin of error of approximately 5% in a municipality, depending on the specific characteristics of the municipality, approximately 1000 interviews are required. In the present case, this would have entailed carrying out approximately 8000 interviews. In terms of resources, this would have been beyond those available for the present project.

Key Findings

This section of the report provides answers to the research questions provided above. The section starts with a discussion of young people's participation in the labor market. Next, employability in terms of soft skills is described for the project area. The section then provides data on the attitudes of employers in the tourism and agriculture sector within the project area. Finally, a number of findings are presented from interviews with vocational education and training institutions.

Youth Labor Market Participation

As noted above, youth unemployment is a significant issue in Georgia. Within the project area, youth unemployment is also high. According to the question World Vision developed for the baseline indicator, 35% of young people are unemployed and looking for a job and 19% of young people have permanent wage employment. When broken down into whether individuals are working or not, 32% report some form of employment and 68% report no employment. There are more women (19%) unemployed and not looking for a job than men (6%). In addition, men (21%) are slightly more likely to be permanent wage employees, than women (16%).

Figure 5 Employment situation by age groups and gender

	15-35 years old		18-35 years old		Total 15-35 years old both male and female
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Refuse to answer	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Don't Know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unemployed, looking for a job	33%	37%	37%	41%	35%
Unemployed, not looking for a job	6%	19%	7%	22%	13%
Unemployed as I am a pupil	14%	10%	1%	1%	12%
Unemployed as I am a student	8%	8%	8%	9%	8%
Wage permanent employment	21%	16%	25%	18%	19%
Wage part-time employment	5%	3%	6%	3%	4%
Wage seasonal / project based employment	4%	1%	4%	1%	2%
Self-employed in my agricultural land plot	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Self-employed in not agricultural sector	6%	2%	6%	2%	4%
Self-employed not permanent (seasonal) not agricultural work	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Intern or volunteer / paid	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unpaid work, e.g. supporting family business	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Intern or volunteer / unpaid	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%

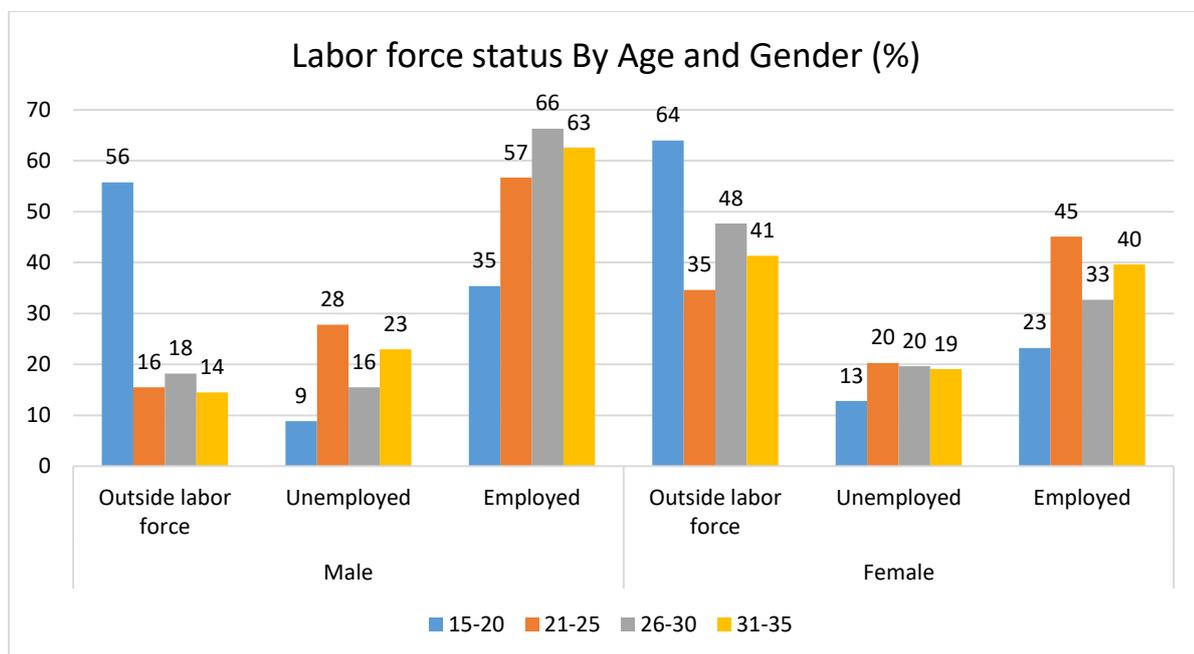
Using the formal definitions of unemployment, employment, and labor force participation established by the ILO provides a different picture than the above. Individuals which help in a families' business or agricultural activities are considered employed if those activities indirectly contribute to monetary income for the families, even if the person is not directly paid for their work (ILO 2013). These individuals are considered contributing family workers and employed. When it comes to the difference between unemployed and outside the labor force, to qualify as unemployed, an individual must a) not qualify as employed; b) be interested in a job; c) be able to start a job in the next 2 weeks if a suitable one was offered; and d) have looked for a job in the last 4 weeks. Individuals that do not meet these criteria are considered outside the labor force. The survey suggests that 45% of young people are employed, 18% unemployed, and 37% outside the labor force. The labor force participation rate, defined as individuals who are either unemployed or employed divided by the size of the labor force, for the project area is 63%. These data lead to an unemployment rate of 29% for 15-35 year olds in the project area.⁶

⁶ The unemployment rate is calculated as the share of unemployed within the labor force.

Breaking this data down by age and gender provides a number of insights. As is the case throughout Georgia, women’s labor force participation rate is significantly lower than the labor force participation rate of men. While 28% of men are outside the labor force, 46% of women are. The unemployment rate for women (34%) in the project area is also significantly higher for women than men (25%).⁷ In terms of age, labor force participation is significantly lower in the 15-20 year age group (41%) than in older age groups (21-25, 74%; 26-30, 67%; and 31-35, 72%).

The decline in labor force participation in the 26-30 year old age range overall is explained by the decrease in women’s labor force participation in this age range. While labor force participation increases significantly for both men and women after exiting the 15-20 year old age period, women’s labor force participation declines significantly upon entering the 26-30 year old age range. In the 31-35 age range, women’s labor force participation recovers slightly, but does not return to the level women in the 21-25 year old age range. This pattern is likely associated with reproductive decisions during this period, as have been found in other studies of the country and region (UN Women 2018).

Figure 6 Labor force status by Age and gender



When breaking down the data by settlement, the employment rate varies significantly. The employment rate is higher in Zestaponi (53%), Mtskheta (58%), Akhaltsikhe (61%), and Adigeni (69%) relative to Senaki (44%), Kutaisi (48%), Bagdati (49%) and Zugdidi (29%). The unemployment rate also varies significantly between the settlements within the project area. While the unemployment rate is 11% in Adigeni, in Senaki it is 35% and in Zugdidi 34%.

⁷ The unemployment rate is calculated as the number of individuals who are unemployed divided by the size of the population in the labor force. Individuals who are outside the labor force are not included in this calculation.

Figure 7 Labor force status By Settlement (%)

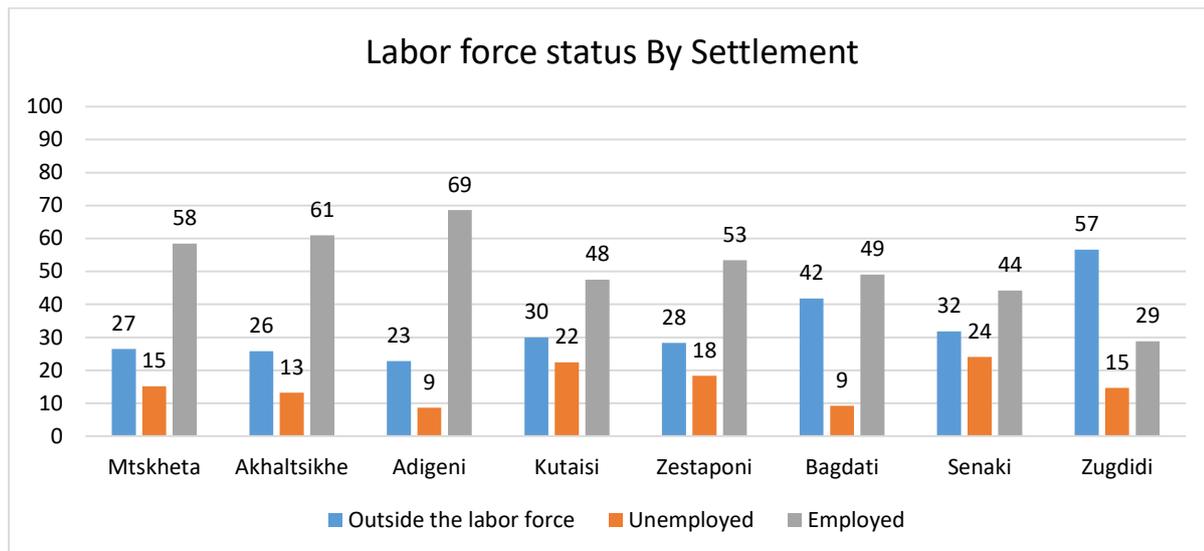
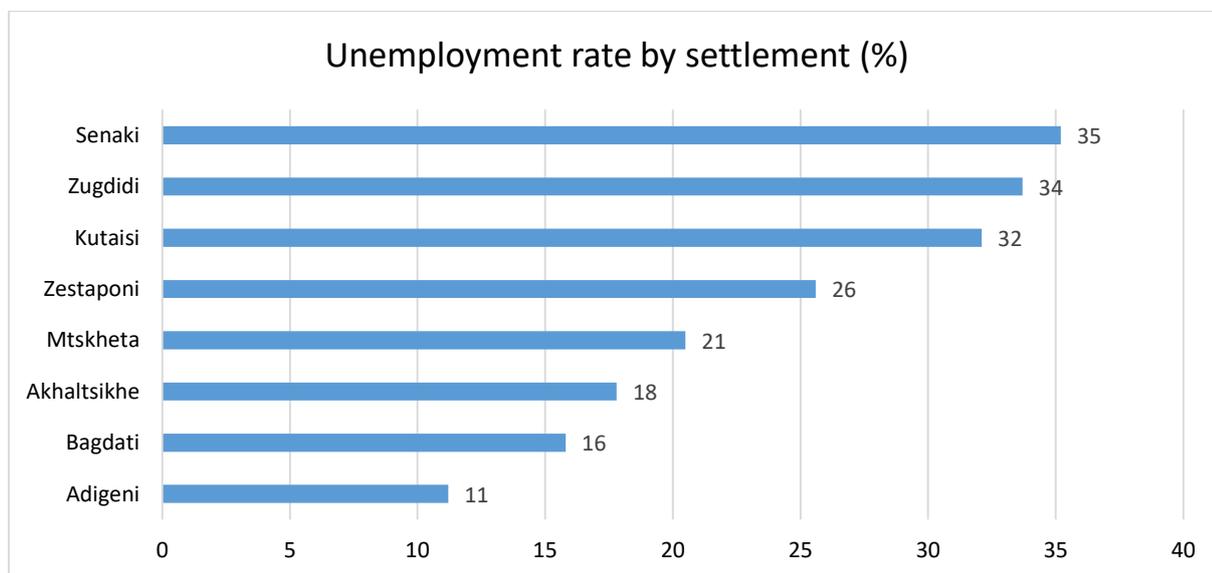
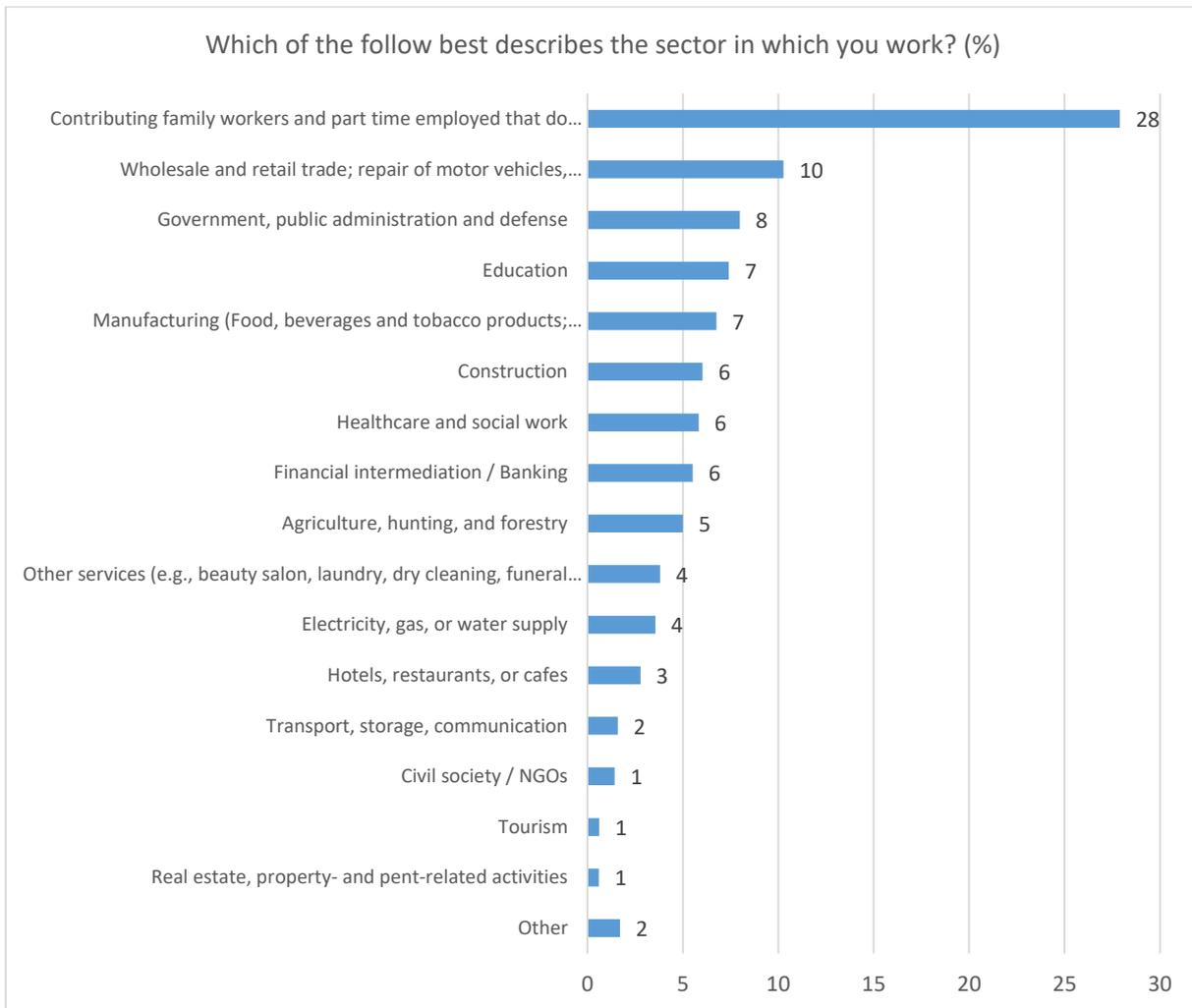


Figure 8 Unemployment rate by settlement (%)



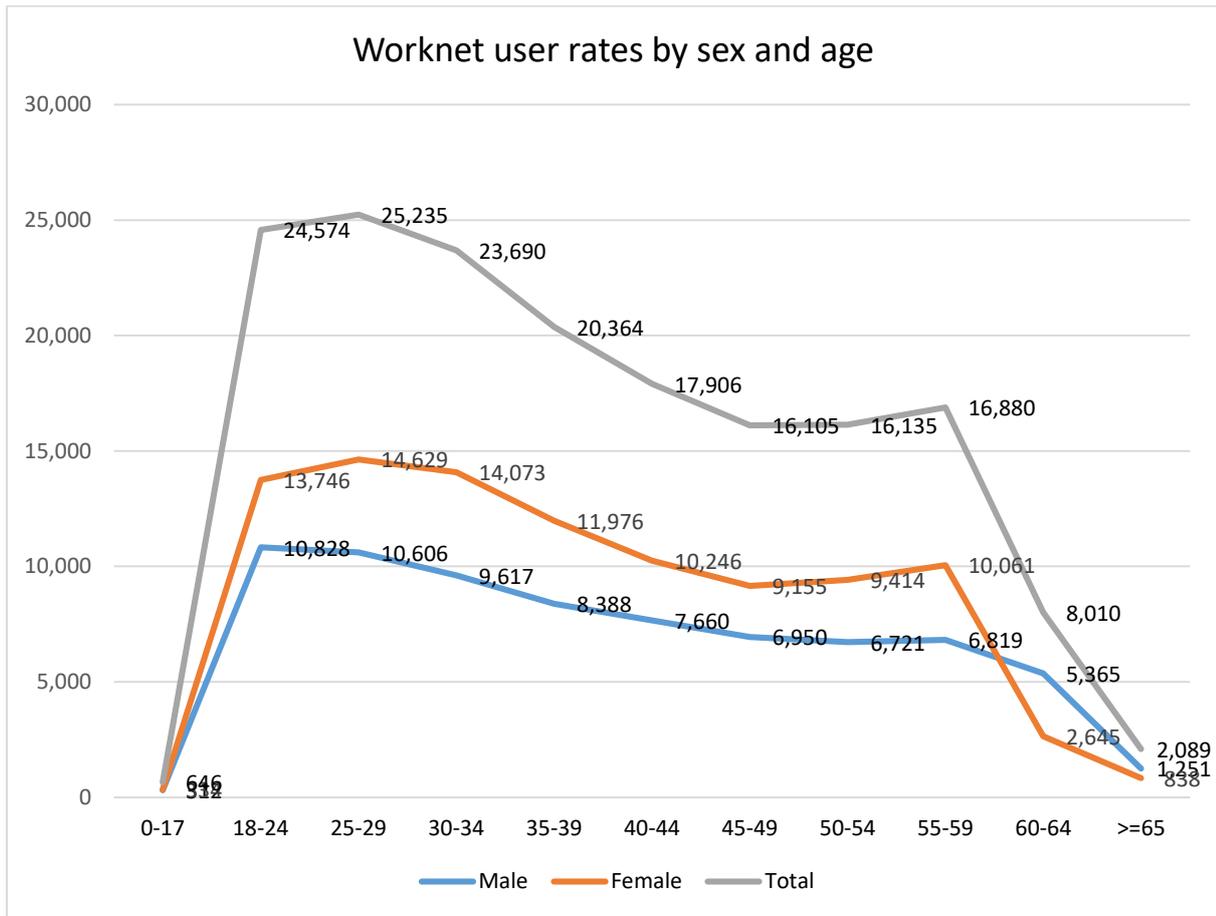
Although there are relatively low unemployment rates, in a number of settlements, this likely stems from the rurality of the settlements. In general, the main sector of employment was wholesale and trade. However, this masks the fact that 28% of people who are employed did not consider themselves employed, and hence were not asked the questions about what sector they work in. Given the fact that most people in Georgia work in agriculture, it is likely that the majority of these individuals also work in agriculture.

Figure 9 Employment sector (%)



The third indicator the project aims to measure is use of Worknet. At present the study suggests 74,145 young people (under 35) registered at Worknet. The project aims to increase this figure by 10%. A quick look at the portal, however, shows that most of the jobs listed there are in areas outside of the project area. Moreover, there are only 13 jobs listed on the portal for the entire country. Hence, while it may be advantageous for project participants to be aware of this tool, it may not serve the direct purpose of helping young people in the project area find jobs in their communities.

Figure 10 Worknet user rates by gender and age



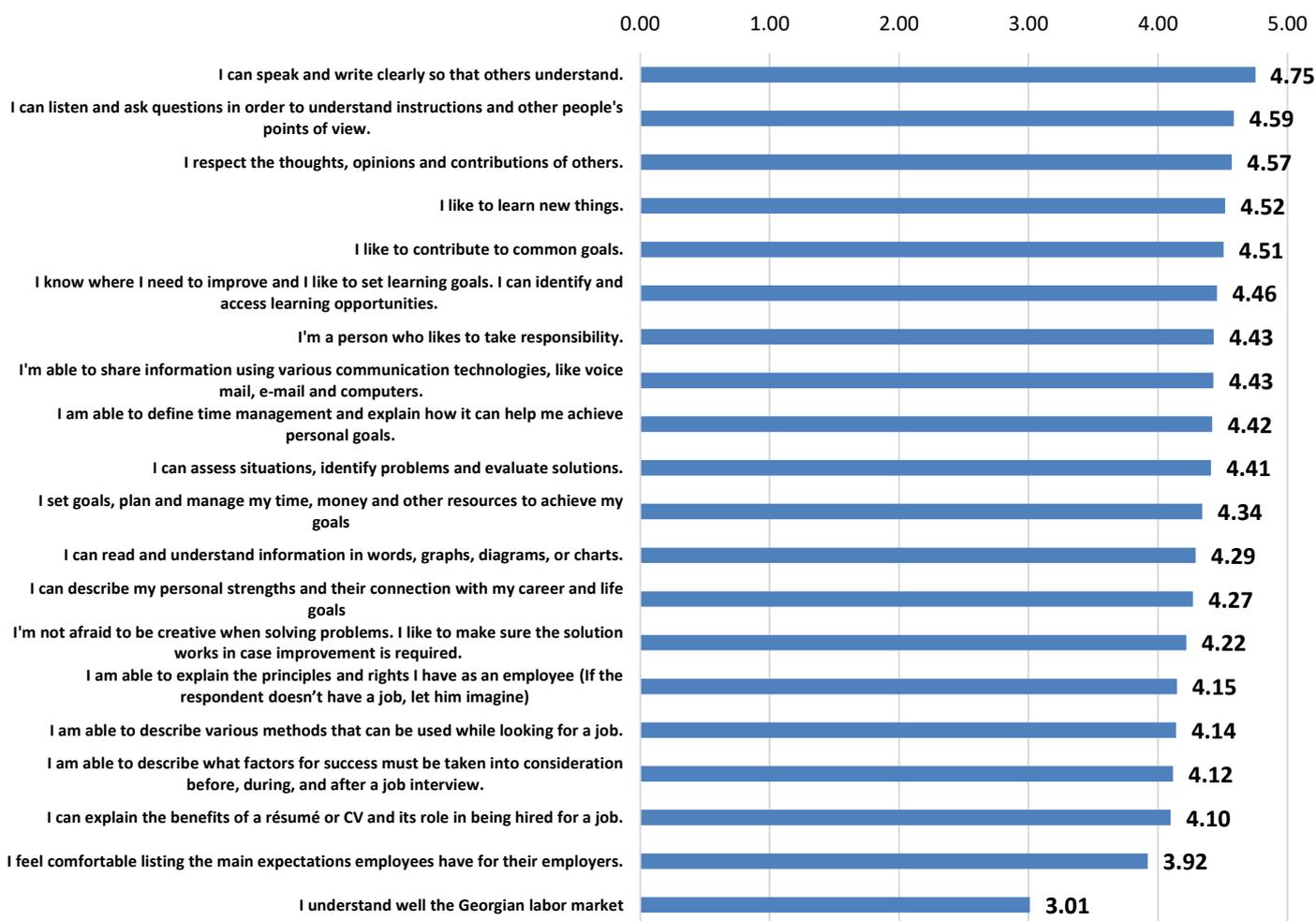
Soft skills for employability

While hard skills like knowledge of how to use various equipment are important aspects of employability, softer skills such as the ability to follow directions and to work independently are also critical. To understand the relative level of soft skills among young people in the project area, two indexes were used on the survey. The first provides a general measure of soft skills (e.g. understanding career and life goals, skills in planning and time management, understanding the Georgian labor market etc.). The second index measures grit, a quality that is also connected to successful employment practices, and can generally be thought of as encompassing perseverance, self-control, and focus. The questions for both indexes employed 5-point scales and for both indexes mean scores are calculated.

Employability index

The first index consisted of 20 different statements. The highest self-assessment is for “I can speak and write clearly so that others understand.” Almost everyone reported strong levels of agreement with the statement. The other statements with strong agreement included “I can listen and ask questions in order to understand instructions and other people's points of view” and “I respect the thoughts, opinions and contributions of others”. The statement that was agreed to least often was “I understand well the Georgian labor market.” The average response to this statement was three. Only one other statement had an average score of less than four (“I feel comfortable listing the main expectations employees have for their employers”, average score = 3.92).

Figure 11 Soft skills for employability index: averages by statement



After indexing the scores on the above statements, the overall average score was 4.28. The scores varied slightly between the different municipalities in the project area, with Adigeni scoring slightly lower than the average, and Bagdati slightly above the average. Nonetheless, there is little variation, and overall respondents have high self-assessed soft-skills when it comes to the first index.

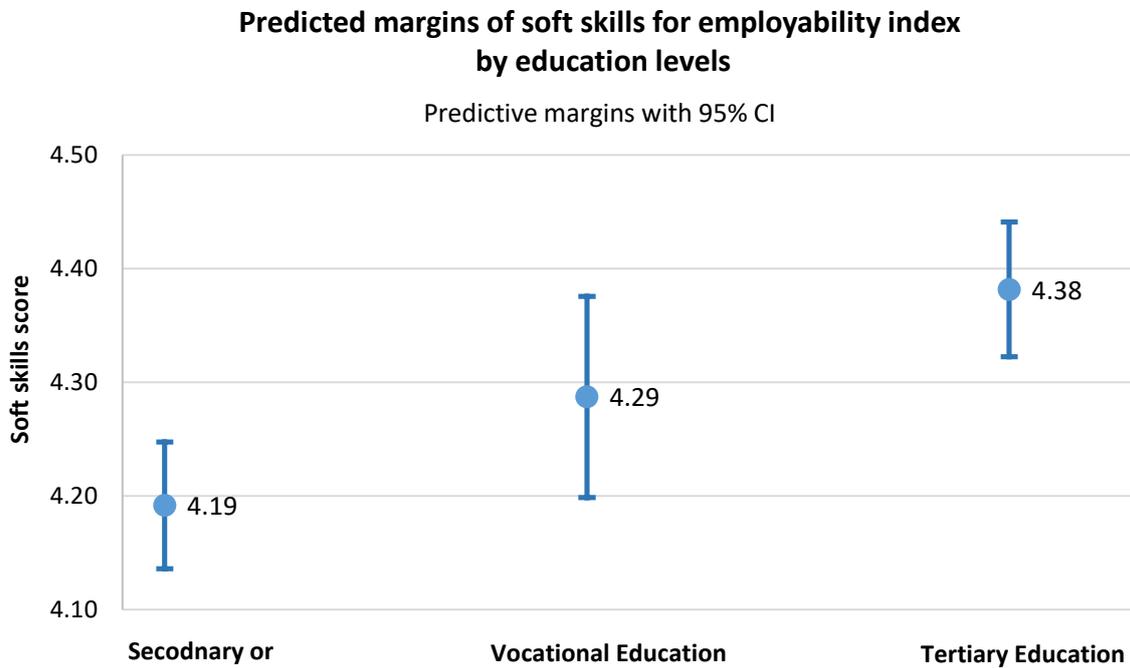
Figure 12 Soft skills for employability index by municipalities

Settlement	Mean scores
Mtskheta Municipality	4.15
Akhaltshikhe Municipality	4.15
Adigeni Municipality	4.08
Kutaisi	4.40
Zestaponi Municipality	4.31
Bagdati Municipality	4.33
Senaki Municipality	4.29
Zugdidi Municipality	4.20
Whole sample	4.28

To understand what factors contribute to higher or lower levels of soft skills, a regression analysis was carried out. The data suggest women assess their skills at a higher level than men do. Controlling for other factors, women on average score 4.34 compared with men scoring 4.23. Although both scores are high, the difference between women and men is statistically significant. All factors equal, young people have higher self-assessments as they grow older. Controlling for other factors, young people with secondary education or lower have 4.19 points on the general soft skills index, while the same indicator for young people with tertiary education is significantly higher (4.38). People with vocational education score in-between those with higher,

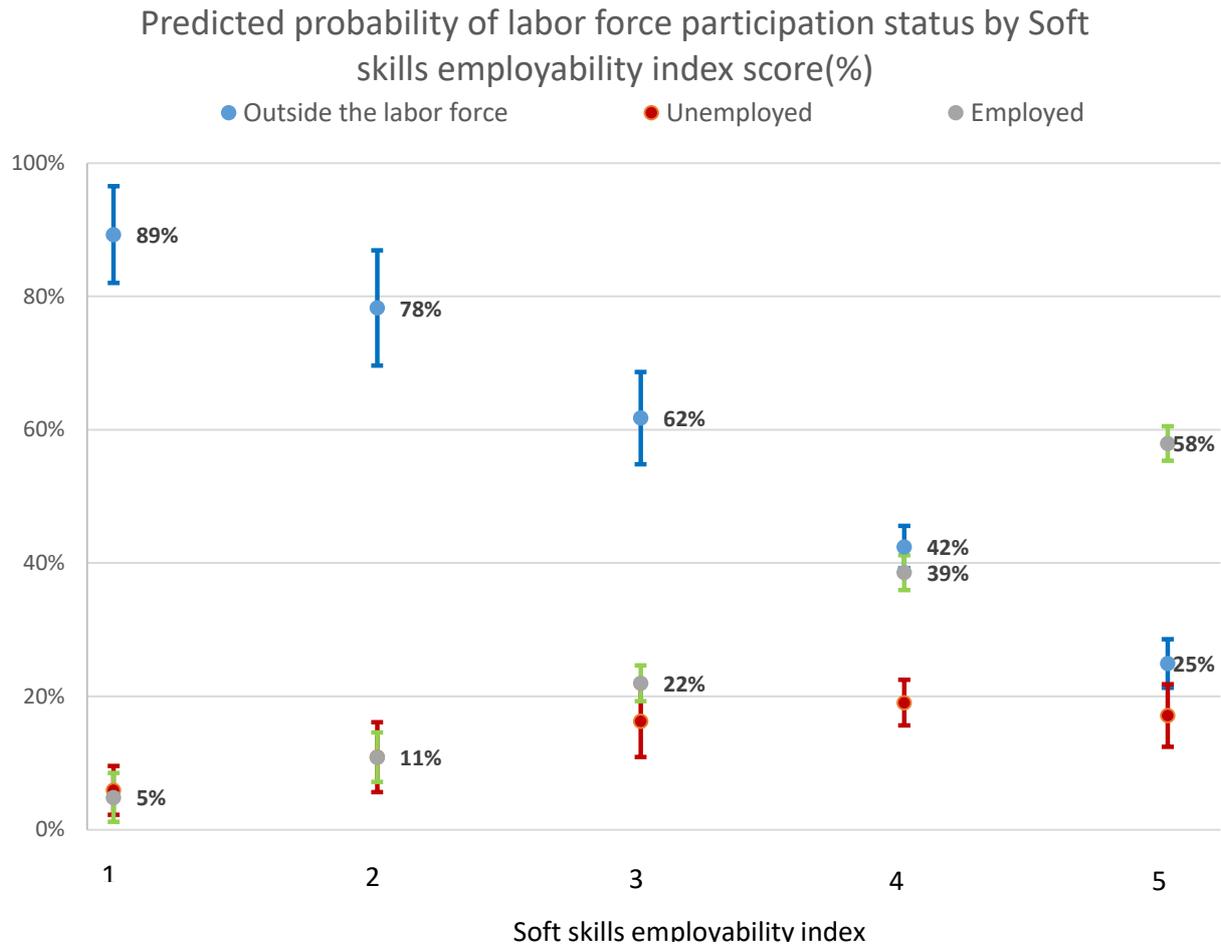
but their scores are not significantly different than either group. All factors equal, young people who are currently employed (4.39) or unemployed (4.38) have a higher self- assessment score, compared to those who are outside the labor force (4.10).

Figure 13 Predicted margins of soft skills for employability index by education levels



Changing the model to understand someone’s chances of being a) outside the labor force, b) unemployed, or c) employed, suggests that the scale is a significant predictor of employment status, when controlling for other factors. An individual with a score of one on the scale has an 89% chance of being outside the labor force. In contrast, a young person that scores five has a 25% chance of being outside the labor force. The chances that an individual will be unemployed also increase from around 6% to 17%. The chances that an individual will be employed go from 5% to 58% when they move from one point to 5 points on the scale.

Figure 14 Predicted probabilities of labor force participation status by soft skills for employability index



Grit

Twelve questions were used to look at an individual’s grit. The statement “I am a hard worker” (average score of 4.48) has the highest average score, while the lowest scoring statement was “My interests change from year to year” (average score 2.34). In general, the statements that are about maintaining focus tended to have lower scores, while the statements about hard work and working through challenges had higher average scores.

Figure 15 Grit: averages by statement



Overall, there was significant variation in the scale compared with the first index which aimed to measure soft skills more broadly. The mean score for the entire index was 3.43, compared with 4.28 on the employability skills index. In all settlements, the index scores are lower than four, however it is still higher than the middle point of the index. Similar to the general soft skills index, grit scores are lowest in Adigeni. The highest levels of grit are in Senaki.

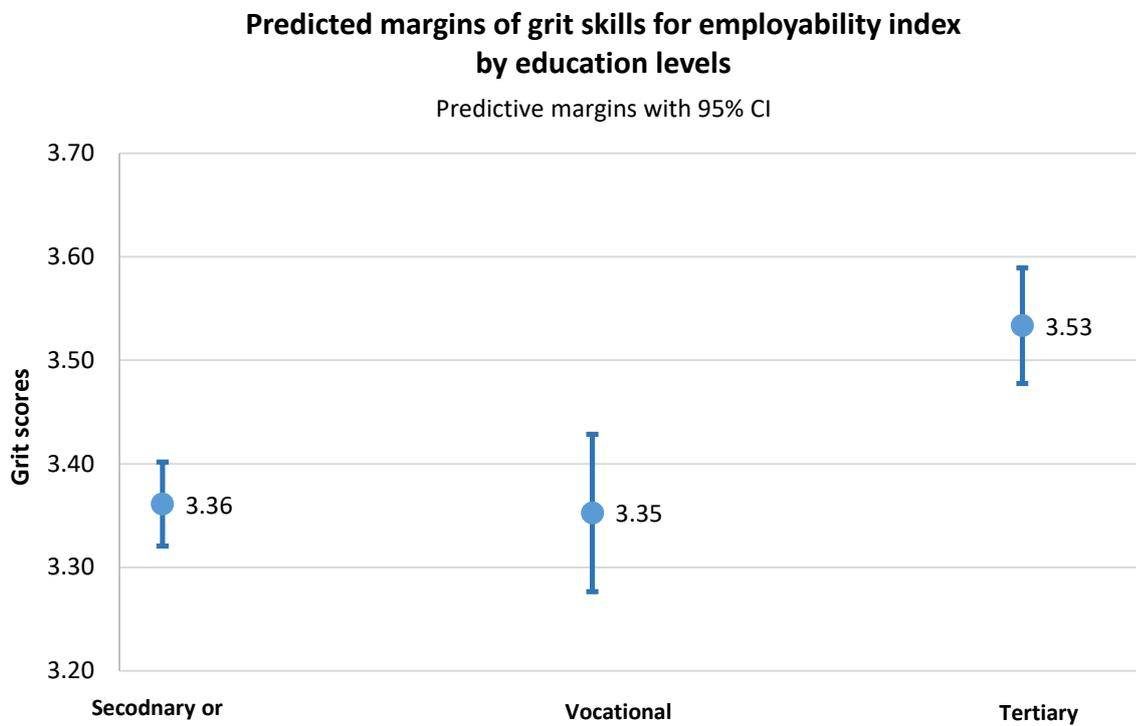
Figure 16 Grit skills for employability index by municipalities

Settlement	Mean scores
Mtskheta	3.43
Akhaltzikhe	3.35
Adigeni	3.30
Kutaisi	3.43
Zestaponi	3.53
Bagdati	3.36
Senaki	3.61
Zugdidi	3.38
Whole sample	3.43

A regression analysis with grit as the dependent variable suggests a number of differences. The relation between age and grit is similar to the situation with the first index: as age increases, so does grit. However, the difference between the lower and upper ages is larger than in the case of the general soft skills scale. When it comes to education, the situation is also different. There is a difference between young people with secondary education or lower (3.36) and tertiary (3.53). People with vocational education (3.35) are more similar to the young people with secondary education or a lower level. When it comes to labor force participation, controlling for other factors, young people who are outside the labor force (3.36) and

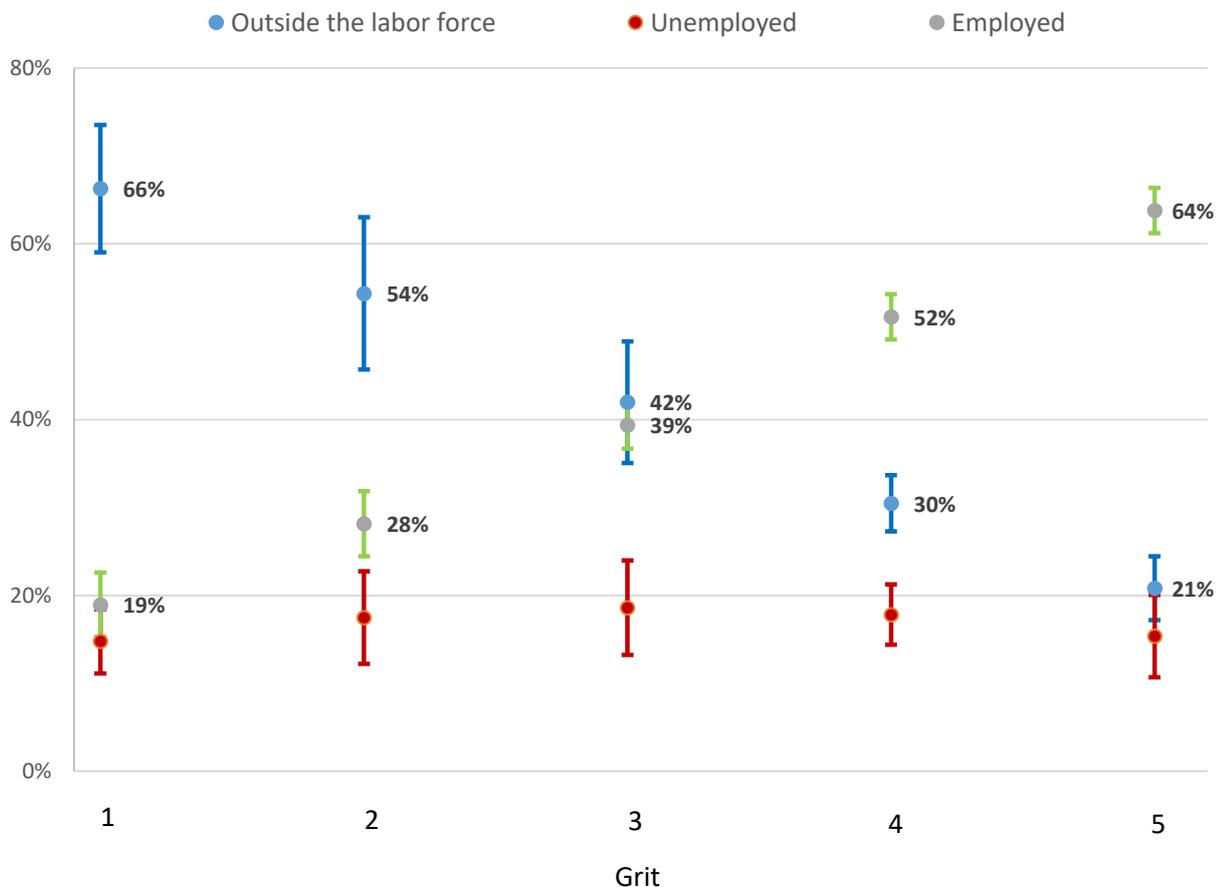
unemployed (3.37) score similarly. In contrast, employed young people (3.5) have statistically higher levels of grit. Controlling for other factors, there are no statistically significant differences among women (3.44) and men (3.41).

Figure 17 Predicted margins of grit skills for employability index by education levels



Changing the regression to look at whether the grit scale predicts someone's labor market status suggests that grit is a significant predictor of whether a person is outside the labor force or employed. While someone who scores a five on the scale has a 21% chance of being outside the labor force, all else equal, someone who scores a one on the scale has a 66% chance. A person who scores one on the grit scale has a 19% chance of being employed while someone who scores five has a 64% chance. An individual's chances of being unemployed do not significantly vary based on their score on the grit scale.

Predicted probabilities of labor force participation status by Grit



Businesses' attitudes towards work based learning and vocational education

The project aims to encourage work based learning models. Hence, the question emerges of whether businesses within the project area have had experience with work based learning. Moreover, given that attitudes towards vocational education are often negative in Georgia (GeoWell, 2010), employers may also be reluctant to participate in programs engaging VET institution graduates. After graduates complete their studies, they may further encounter issues due to the negative attitudes towards VET institutions.

The size of the surveyed agriculture and tourism businesses in the project area is relatively small. On average, they employ 8 people on a permanent basis and four on a part time or seasonal basis. Employees are predominantly male and ethnic Georgians. There are 14 business that have all male employed staff and women are the majority in just 11 businesses. Only five of the 51 businesses had at least one ethnic minority employee. People with disabilities are also uncommon: only four businesses employ people with disabilities. The situation is more skewed toward men when it comes to the part-time and seasonal employment. In only 5 businesses are women the majority of the part-time and seasonally employed. Few employ ethnic minorities and people with disabilities in part time or seasonal employment.

Businesspeople were asked whether or not they agree with the statement, "For my business activities, I prefer to hire people with vocational education." A plurality (21 businesspeople) reported they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. A further 18 reported they agreed. Only four reported that they disagreed, and eight reported they did not know. This data suggests that among the businesses in the survey, attitudes are not strongly formed about hiring people with VET degrees.

The majority of businesses have no specific policies aimed at hiring people from different minority and vulnerable groups. Only two business indicated that they have any approach that favors hiring ethnic

minorities when two candidates' qualifications are otherwise equal. On the same question, seven businesses reported favoring hiring people with disabilities and eleven women. When it comes to the favoring of socially disadvantaged people when having two equally qualified candidates, the number is the highest among groups asked about. Eighteen businesses reported they would prefer to hire a socially disadvantaged person, all else equal. When business were asked if their office or place of business was wheel chair accessible, just one third of them (15) reported it was.

Among the businesses that participated in the survey, only two had had an unpaid intern and eight had paid interns in 2018. The companies that had interns tended towards having less than 10 employees. When asked why companies did not have unpaid interns, the most common reason was that they did not need unpaid interns as they had enough paid staff (28 companies). Several companies (6) also noted that they had never thought about hiring them. A few companies (4) also noted that they wanted to, but could not find anyone. Four companies also stated that they can't make someone work for free all day. When asked about paid interns, the main reason companies reported having them was that they had enough staff, and hence did not need unpaid interns (29 companies). Six companies also stated that they could not pay for internships. Two companies reported that interns are not qualified enough, and two other companies reported that they wanted to but could not find any.

A significant portion of the companies appear not to be interested in unpaid interns. When asked "If there were a candidate who has undergone qualified training sessions in your field, would you hire him as an unpaid intern?" 30 companies reported probably no, because there is no need for an unpaid intern. A further 10 companies reported they would hire the candidate for a paid position. Eight companies reported they would probably hire the candidate. The situation is similar surrounding paid internships. Thirty companies reported they would probably not hire them, because they have enough staff. Six companies reported they would probably not hire them, because they cannot afford to. Eleven companies reported a willingness to hire paid interns.

When it comes to VET institutions themselves, the project aims to ensure that at least 40% of project partners have vulnerability related policies and practices. Interviews with the four project partners within this baseline evaluation suggest that 100% of current partner institutions already have policies to support vulnerable people, and particularly people with disabilities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The above data and analysis lends itself to a number of conclusions, recommendations, and the setting of project indicators.

The first indicator the project aims to change is the unemployment rate. Yet, the project did not use an appropriate employment question to measure this indicator in Armenia. The question is also unable to accurately measure employment according to internationally recognized definitions (e.g. ILO 2013), because it does not accurately capture part-time employment or contributing household worker status. While the indicator that was used for the project suggests an employment rate of 32%, the internationally accepted indicator results in an employment rate of 45%. Given that it is not feasible to re-do the survey in Armenia, the baseline indicator should be considered 32% for Georgia. At the same time, this indicator should be treated with appropriate caution as social attitudes rather than actual change could lead to shifts in the indicator. For example, if people who work for family enterprises start to consider this employment, a change in this indicator could result even though the facts on the ground have not changed.

With the indicator more broadly, a 10% change in the unemployment rate is suggested in the project's logical framework. After clarification with the project team, a 10 percentage point change was found to be indicated by the logical framework rather than a 10% change. The indicator is unlikely to be attainable at the project area level. Indeed, if it did, the project would likely be the best economic intervention ever recorded. To put this in perspective, the project budget in Georgia is around Euro 600,000, and the youth population of the project area is around 130,000. Hence, an increase of 10% in employment would imply the project generates 13,000 jobs – about Euro 46.15 per job. By comparison, in developing and developed countries creating one job usually requires in the realm of USD 25,000-30,000 in investment. Job training programs such as the present one generally cost between USD 500 and USD 3000 per new job holder (Robalino 2018).

A number of solutions could resolve this issue. First, rather than measuring unemployment or employment at the project area level, World Vision could look at its direct impact on the participants of the program. Through looking at their employment status before and after, a 10 percentage point effect size is lofty, but attainable. Through having a comparison group identified within the survey, the effect could be rigorously measured. Based on the above considerations, it is recommended that:

- World Vision measures the impact of its projects among direct beneficiaries rather than at the project area level;
- World Vision clarifies whether its goal is to make a 10 percentage point or 10 percent change in unemployment (or employment) through SAY YES activities;

The second indicator the project aims to change is soft skills. The project logical framework suggests that the project aims to increase the average score of people in the project area by 20%. Given that the average score on a five point scale index was 4.28, this change is mathematically impossible (a score of 5.136 would represent a 20% increase). The relatively high score that individuals in the project area report on the scale may suggest a number of things. Individuals may have high levels of soft skills already. Alternatively, the young people in the survey may believe they have a high level of soft skills even though this is not the case. In general, people who were employed were more likely to score highly on the two indexes of soft skills used in the report as were people with higher education. This could be a result of these experiences (higher education and employment), or alternatively could be a result of the different social and economic backgrounds that individuals had before these experiences. In contrast to the first index that is used, the second index (the grit scale) has enough variation to increase by 20%. However, this scale was not used in the Armenia survey. Based on the above considerations, together with the fact that the project requires comparable data with Armenia it is recommended that:

- World Vision decreases the indicator for Georgia to 10% on the employability scale;
- World Vision adds a change in the grit scale of 10% to the project's logical framework for Georgia.

Through making these modifications, it is possible to a) have a mathematically possible indicator, and b) maintain an ambitious goal for change.

The third indicator the project aims to measure is use of Worknet. At present the study suggests 74,145 young people (under 35) registered at Worknet. The project aims to increase this figure by 10%. A quick look at the portal, however, shows that most of the jobs listed there are in areas outside of the project area. Moreover, there are only 13 jobs listed on the portal for the entire country. Hence, while it may be advantageous for project participants to be aware of this tool, it may not serve the direct purpose of helping young people in the project area find jobs in their communities. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- World Vision consider removing this indicator from the project logical framework, or;
- World Vision actively promote the use of Worknet by employers in the project area.

With the latter option, it is important to keep in mind that a significant share of employers reported that they do not advertise jobs. In general, it is widely believed that relatively few employers in Georgia advertise jobs, as they can rely on their social networks to find employees. Because of this, it may be better to focus more on bringing young people into contact with employers at networking forums, than on promoting Worknet use.

When it comes to unemployment among young people, the study suggests a relatively low level in the project area. This in large part, however, stems from the fact that many people are in self-employment or contributing family workers. Hence, many in the study are likely to be under-employed. This is particularly likely for people in the target group. Notably, many of the employers hire extensive seasonal workforces. Hence, even if successful partnership results from the program, it may not lead to better employment for project participants. For these reasons, rather than focusing solely on the development of soft skills for VET students, it is recommended that:

- The project should consider providing entrepreneurship training to young people entering VET.

Analysis of the employment status data collected within this baseline study suggests that women in the 26-30 age range are particularly unlikely to be part of the labor force. The likely cause is reproductive related decisions, as studies of Georgia and the region more broadly have shown (UN Women, 2018). Activities aimed at helping young women stay in the labor force in the age range prior to this are likely to be important to project success on the employment indicator. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Activities involving young women within the project aim to prevent labor force drop out in the 26-30 age range.

The fourth indicator the project aims to change is businesses' willingness to hire VET graduates. This was measured through looking at how much businesspeople agree with the statement, "For my business activities, I prefer to hire people with vocational education." Overall, 35% of businesses agreed with this statement. However, only 4% disagreed with the statement, with the remainder neither agreeing nor disagreeing or responding don't know. More broadly, among businesses in the project area that participated in the study, a plurality did not have strongly formed opinions about VET graduates. When it comes to work based learning, relatively few had either hired unpaid or paid interns. This suggests that work based learning models are not well known. However, a number of businesses did note that they wanted to find unpaid and paid interns. Hence, the model may be feasible at a small scale. Importantly though, most of the businesses within the study were relatively small, and there were only 175 registered businesses in the sectors of interest in the entire project area. This suggests that it may be difficult to find enough businesses for young people to work with. Given the above findings, it is recommended that:

- The project aims to raise awareness about the benefits of working with VET graduates;
- The project provides businesses with success stories for both employers and employees about work based learning models;
- The project provides other incentives for work based learning to businesses.

If the above recommendations are followed, they are likely to make the environment more amenable to a work based learning model.

When it comes to VET, the project aims to ensure that at least 40% of project partners have vulnerability related policies and practices. Interviews with the four project partners within this baseline evaluation suggest

that 100% of current partner institutions already have policies to support vulnerable people, and particularly people with disabilities. Hence, it is recommended that:

- The project team develop a more ambitious goal in relation to partner institution policies.

In sum, the study suggests the following baseline values for the project’s logical framework:

Figure 18: Baseline indicators

Youth employment rate in the project target areas	Youth employability	Youth grit	Percent of project partners and public and social stakeholders integrated vulnerability or disability sensitive programming into their organizational practices	Private companies reached during the project report increased willingness to employ graduates of VET and WBL programmes	Number of Worknet users between the ages of 15-35
32%	4.28	3.43	100%	35%	74,145

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Appendix I: Terms of Reference



SAYYES Baseline
ToR.doc

Appendix 2: Project Logical Framework



Say Yes Logframe
.docx

Appendix 3: Evaluation matrix



SAY YES Evaluation
Matrix.xlsx

Appendix 4: Survey Questionnaires

Survey of young people



Young People
Survey ENG.docx



Young People
Survey GEO.docx

Survey of businesses



Business
Survey.docx



Business Survey
Georgian.docx

In depth interview guide with Vocational Education and Training Institutions



VET Interview
Guide.docx

Appendix 5: Descriptive statistics tables, including gender disaggregated cross-tabulations



World Vision
Baseline Results.pdf

Appendix 6: Results of the Business Survey



Business Survey
Results.pdf