



LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement

Minutes N1 of the meeting with the Coordinating Council of the Center

31 May 2021

The first meeting of the renewed Coordination Council of the Center was held on May 31 of this year. Considering the pandemic in the country, the meeting was held online via the platform Zoom. Tamar Makharashvili - Director of the Center, deputy directors Lasha Margishvili and Kakhaber Eradze, heads and employees of the Center's structural units attended the meeting together with renewed composition of the Coordination Council.

The coordination council meeting was attended by the following members of the council:

- a) **Heli Mattisen** - Director of the Estonian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA)
 - b) **Cay Etzold** - International Expert in Higher Education;
 - c) **Maya Shukhoshvili** - Head of the Higher Education Division of the Department of Higher Education and Science Development of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia;
 - d) **Shalva Mekravishvili** - Civic education expert within the framework of National Curriculum Development Sub-Program under the program "National Curriculum Implementation and Monitoring" of the Department of the Preschool and General Education Development of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia;
 - e) **Rusudan Sanadze** - Head of the Department of Education Sciences of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences at LEPL Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University; Accreditation Expert of Higher Education Programs;
 - f) **Anastasia Kitiashvili** - Expert of vocational education; ცოდნის მართვის და ინოვაციების სპეციალისტი
 - g) **Tea Gulua** - UNDP Knowledge Management and Innovation Specialist, Vocational Education Expert;
 - h) **Maka Abuladze** - Representative of the Student Organization of Georgia NNLE, PhD student at the Georgian Technical University- LEPL ;
 - i) **Kakhaber Tchelidze** - Professor of LEPL Tbilisi State Medical University, Head of the Department of Internal Medicine at the University Medical Center of Higher Medical Technologies;
 - j) **Irma Kurdadze** - Professor of Samtskhe-Javakheti State University LEPL;
 - k) **Natia Jojua** - Professor of "European University" Ltd, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.
- Zaza Purtseladze** - Director of the British Council for the South Caucasus and Georgia - did not attend the Coordination Council meeting.

The meeting of the Coordinating Council started at 12:00 and ended at 14:40. The meeting was held in accordance with the agenda. See the agenda in the annex.

The meeting with the renewed composition of the Coordinating Council of the Center began with a greeting and congratulations from the Director of the Center. She thanked each member of the Council for the great responsibility they have for their involvement in the work of the Center's

Coordinating Council. She also stressed the fact that the said composition of the council shall start its activities with completely renewed functions, in accordance with the statute of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. As the director of the center noted, the participation of stakeholders in the development process is especially important for the center. She also noted that the Coordinating Council is represented by both local and internationally qualified members who have in-depth knowledge of the education system and a good understanding of the specifics of Georgian education system. Their involvement will help the center to make decisions at both the micro and macro levels.

The Director of the Center presented each member of the Coordinating Council. They welcomed the meeting participants, thanked them for their trust and stressed that it is a great responsibility and honor for them to be a member of the Coordinating Council. Heli Mattisen noted that participating in the twinning project was an interesting stage for her. Her involvement in the Council after the completion of the project is a continuation of the cooperation and friendship that has existed for years between Estonia and Georgia, and she hopes that this friendship will contribute to the future development of the Center. Cay Etzold noted that it is a great honor for him to be a member of this council and he plans to support the internationalization of Georgian higher education from this platform. Maia Shukhoshvili noted that the composition of the council is impressive and stressed the fact that everyone from different positions has one goal and that goal is to take care of the quality of education. Other members of the council also welcomed the Center's readiness to increase the role of the Coordinating Council in the Center's development processes.

After greeting the members of the Council, Tamar Makharashvili presented the strategy of the Center for 2021-2025 and its goals. During the review of each goal, the director of the center emphasized the main tasks that the center should carry out in the defined period of the strategy.

After the presentation of the director of the center, during the question and answer session, Rusudan Sanadze asked to clarify whether, in addition to the process of developing the action plan, the stages of clarifying and correcting its target benchmarks would be the function of the council as well. The Director confirmed that at any stage, after the evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan, there may be a need to revise the Action Plan and the council will have to engage in this process.

In the second part of the meeting, Deputy Director Kakhaber Eradze made a presentation on the activities planned in the field of general and vocational education in 2021 and beyond. After the presentation of Mr. Kakhaber Eradze, Shalva Mekravishvili asked a question about alternative school curricula in a question-answer format, whether there is already an outline of what alternative school curricula should imply. In response, the deputy director explained that this would be an adoption of a more learning outcome-oriented curriculum that has a different structure from the national curriculum, that national curriculum's macro-objectives would be mandatory, and that the school would have complete freedom to pursue these macro-objectives in its own way. These macro targets will be declared in the national curriculum.

The next question was asked by Anastasia Kitiashvili, she wondered whether it was planned to develop clear job descriptions for experts, as their work is on the verge of ethics. She also noted that in his subjective opinion, this direction has been improving recently. In this regard, Mr. Kakha noted that in the field of vocational education, with the help of the United Nations Development Program, a job description has been created and the expert training program is based on that. In the direction of continuous development, these activities will be long-term in order to maintain their expert status. It will be a process of constant development. A concept of their activities has also been developed, which

is entirely based on their profile, they will be assessed in terms of both professional and personal skills. Lasha Margishvili, Deputy Director of Higher Education, noted that the Center has worked with authorization experts in the direction of the experts pool and plans to work with accreditation experts in 2021-2022, also it is planned to conduct attestation by fields and directions, because a cluster accreditation is planned to be introduced from 2022-2023. Also, trainings were conducted for student experts.

Irma Kurdadze noted that the 10-stage competition for expert certification was complex and was held at a high level. Additionally, Maka Abuladze, a member of the council and a student expert, responded to Anastasia Kitiashvili's question and noted that during the training organized by the center, a lot of time was devoted to the issue of ethics and the center focused on this area. Anastasia Kitiashvili noted that experts in her practice have subject knowledge, but have a problem in communication, although she added that the situation in this area has recently improved.

At the next stage of the meeting, Deputy Director Lasha Margishvili made a presentation on 2021 priorities for quality assurance in higher education.

The next part of the meeting was dedicated to questions and answers. Anastasia Kitiashvili asked the question that when there are no standard curricula in higher education, how should the balance be maintained, so that on the one hand there are frameworks, some standardization and on the other hand, the freedom of program authors is not restricted and its quality is increased. In this regard, Deputy Director Lasha Margishvili replied that the sectoral benchmarks will be of a general nature and will definitely allow the heads of the programs to add their know-how to the program and have distinctive features. As it is known, academic freedom and autonomy are prescribed by the Constitution in Georgia. Naturally, neither the standard nor the sectoral benchmarks can contradict the Constitution, therefore, it will always be the golden line. The Director also added that since the minimum standard of sectoral benchmarks would be of a recommendatory nature, a specific working group would be separated from the group that creates the sectoral benchmarks, whose duty would be to conduct relevant trainings with implementing institutions and let them know what they can do. The same trainings are held for experts. In the same format, Cay Etzold noted in the direction of piloting cluster accreditation that it is very important to have a common understanding of specific directions among experts. For example, if there is a talk about history, it should be clear to all experts what is meant by it. Lasha Macharashvili added that it will be possible to achieve that when the system is fully switched to cluster accreditation. Rusudan Sanadze asked the next question as to whether it is planned to create a portal, or a unified space, which will enable the institutions to monitor when accreditation or authorization is expected, what are the preconditions, etc. For planning, it would be a kind of tool that would be centrally managed and provide help for institutions. The director answered the question and noted that this issue is not within the competence of the center, however, she instructed the staff of the center to investigate the issue in order to inform the council.

The last part of the meeting was dedicated to the election of the Chairman of the Coordinating Council and to the issue of removal of certain functions of the Center from the Center. The director of the Center raised the issue of electing the chairman of the coordinating council. Council member Maia Shukhoshvili nominated Rusudan Sanadze as a candidate. The members of the Coordination Council supported the election of Rusudan Sanadze as the Chairman of the Coordination Council.

Kakhaber Eradze, the Deputy Director, raised the issue of initiating the necessary changes in the Statute of the Center due to the establishment of the N(N)LE Skills Agency for consideration by the council. Kakhaber Eradze, in accordance with Article 5¹ and paragraph 7 of the Center's Statute,

asked the Council for consent to remove the Coordination Function for the Development of Vocational Education Standards from the Center's Statute, because this function is now entrusted and transferred to the newly created Skills Agency. According to him, the strategy and action plan of the center should be revised and relevant activities should be removed, as well as the activities related to the organization and coordination of national and international competitions to promote vocational education. The Coordinating Council unanimously (11 votes) agreed to amend the statute, to edit the Center's strategy and action plan.

Chairman of the meeting:



Rusudan Sanadze- Head of the Department of Education Sciences of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences at LEPL Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University; Accreditation Expert of Higher Education Programs;

Secretary of the meeting:



Maka Abuladze- Representative of the Student Organization of Georgia NNLE, PhD student at the Georgian Technical University- LEPL;

Annex: 4 annexes (The agenda and presentations):

Annex 1. Agenda

**Working meeting of the Coordinating Council of
LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement
31 May 2021
12:00 - 14:30: Agenda**

12:00 - 12:30 -greeting, introduction of the members of the Council - Tamar Makharashvili, Director of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

12:30 - 13:00 - Strategic goals and objectives of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement for 2021-2025.

Role and Functions of the Coordination Council - Tamar Makharashvili, Director of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

13:00 - 13:15 Q&A;

13:15 - 13:35 Development of a quality assurance system for general and vocational education: Priorities of 2021 - Kakhaber Eradze, Deputy Director of National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement;

13:35 - 13:50 Q&A;

13:50 - 14:10 Development of Higher Education Quality Assurance System: Priorities of 2021 - Lasha Margishvili, Deputy Director of National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement;

14:10 -14:30-Q&A.

Annex 2. Presentation: Strategic goals and objectives for 2021-2025 of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. Roles and Functions of the Coordinating Council.

Annex 3. Presentation: Development of quality assurance system for general and vocational education: Priorities of 2021.

Annex 4. Presentation: Development of higher education quality assurance system: Priorities of 2021.