



**Policy Research Center of Zurab Zhvania
Georgian Institute of Public Affairs
(GIPA)**

Project Proposal:

Examining the Necessity for Affirmative Action for National Minorities in Georgia

Applicant Information

The Georgian Institute of Public Affairs is a premier graduate institution in Georgia specializing in providing comprehensive education in the fields of International Affairs, Public Administration, Local Governance, Law and Media Management. Since its inception in 1995, GIPA had established itself as an institution which effectively brings academic insight and knowledge into the policy world and successfully helps educate the future generation of the government officials and civil society leaders. Its faculty is comprised of the professionals with extensive education and professional experience in their respective fields of sciences. Annually, around 300 graduates from GIPA join the middle to top layers of the government agencies, international organizations and businesses.

GIPA is a member of various international organizations including the National Academy of Public Administration (The United States) and maintains strong institutional linkages with several major institutions in the US and Europe. More information about the institute can be found at: <http://www.gipa.ge>

Policy Research Center

The Policy Research Center was established to act as a primary resource of the Institution to synthesize research, education and policy insights and link those worlds in a manner which will enable them to reinforce and enrich each other. Due to absence of the tradition and resources, and lack of political awareness on the importance of the aforementioned, research had usually been relegated as a matter of secondary importance in policy making, an activity, that was assumed, would not have a direct impact on policy. So too, the lack of material and human resources in the Georgian academia limited the research potential in the education sector to the extent that research is today associated with either a limited case study or reading and summarizing occasional papers. The importance of research methodology or of the presence and availability of research resources -- archives, scholarly publications, books, and data -- which are expensive for the median educational institutions, and thus, not readily available to everyone, can not be understated. The primary function of the Center is to serve as a platform where the GIPA faculty and researchers from outside institutions can have access to both knowledge and resources for research. The research projects undertaken by the Center are essentially designed to produce impact and benefit for the educational potential of the Institute as well as furnish the key decision-makers with useful insights, analysis and guidance on various aspects of public policy.

Context of the Project: Necessity for Research

Georgia is a heterogeneous country with the principal nationality -- the Georgians -- comprising around 70% of total population. Such a context calls for an adequate analysis of national

minority situation in the country. There are several important reasons for this. First, neglected minority could inspire ethnic tension and subsequently, conflict. Second, the exclusion of minority from political, economic and/or social processes could lead to the formation of identities incompatible with national identity and thus, lead to the deterioration of overall situation. Third, the exclusion of minorities from the aforementioned processes means not using adequately the human resources available to the nation.

Whether and to which extent minorities suffer from these ills needs to be established. It is widely assumed that knowledge of the common language, access to secondary and higher education and the availability of credit and markets are some of the common problems that affect several ethnic communities in Georgia. However, we see a danger of blindly assuming the existence of readily available “knowledge of the problem” and hence call for a greater role for an in-depth research and assessment to identify the core causes of problems. In theory for example, lack of secondary education in women of a hypothetical ethnic group could be attributed both to some sort of deliberate discrimination by regional authorities or to the local customs of marrying young women in their very early ages where difficult household labor forces them to trade-off their education.. Hence, a completely different approaches to alleviate the problem. An in-depth research in this case serves as a guide to root causes rather than the superfluous expressions of the problem which many analysts mistakenly take as a problem *per se*. As a result of the proposed research, we shall be able to answer the two principal questions on what the society can do in order to change the situation if necessary. Mainly: *Should there be an affirmative action implemented or are there other ways to improvement? What kind of affirmative action would be the most efficient one to address the problem?*

The main foreseen problems to the research are operational. Firstly, due to the poor infrastructure in Samtskhe-Javakheti region the questionnaires may not be distributed to the remote villages, thus, compromising sample selection to a degree. Furthermore, the interlocutors may not be always answering the questionnaires in an open-minded option. The latter holds true for any social survey, thus, we shall try to minimize such developments by administering two or more interrelated questionnaires reinforcing one another. In sum, the aforementioned risks will not have significant impact on the research outcome as the main findings will hold to statistical scrutiny in the light of the well-designed questionnaires.

The Scope of the Project

It will be inefficient and ineffective for the small group of researchers to assume the responsibility of implementing research on the nationwide level given financial and human resource restrictions. We believe the project should have somewhat limited geographical and theoretical scope in order to produce tangible results. Nonetheless, the project will shed light on important implications that could be taken into account with sufficient benefits. At the very least, the research shall serve as a pilot project for future inquiry and action.

Thus, the geographical scope will be limited to Tbilisi and Samtskhe-Javakheti, and the issues examined shall be limited to the participation of national minorities in public sector. The causes limiting or enhancing this participation shall be examined as well.

Needs Assessment

Methodology

The research shall be divided into two major directions: archives and field research.

Sources:

Statistical Data Analysis

Statistical data regarding employment, education, and income of various ethnic groups shall be examined data permitting. E.g., we will be looking at an average income, and education of a Georgian citizen and compare it with an average income and education of a Georgian citizen representing a national minority. At the same time, we will be interested in the employment data of national minorities in the public sector (central and local government agencies, public enterprises, and commissions). Cause-effect relationships between education and employment, as well as education and income will be examined in the control group (sample of citizens of Georgia), and the sample of citizens representing national minority. If there is a statistically significant correlation established in this regard the suggestions shall be incorporated in the policy proposal. The statistical analysis will take into account the generational and gender factors as well. Thus, we shall be examining these issues in the light of various age/sex subgroups as well and compare the outcomes with the general group outcomes. The questionnaires shall discriminate between the young, adult and elderly ages as well as gender groups. The detailed survey will be developed throughout the preparatory period indicated in the project timetable which envisages the review of existing resources and the development of survey instruments.

Comparative Analysis

Following the compilation of the data, and the initial analysis we shall compare the existing gap (if there is any) to the similar data obtained from the Statistical Departments of various western countries. We will examine the corresponding legislation and policy in Georgia and in the western countries that are examined. In the light of the recent developments in France we will try to focus on the policies that brought successful results. The French and the US experience shall be paid particular attention for the following reasons: Both of the countries contain large ethnic/racial minorities; both of them are liberal democracies; their attitude towards this issue has been more or less contrasting. In France, there is no clear-cut affirmative action in place, while in the US the affirmative action has been one of the key issues for more than a decade. We shall examine their experience and try to explain the outcomes in each case. As stated above we shall not be circumscribed by these two countries alone and shall also pay an attention to Central and Eastern European states. The details on additional countries to be assessed will be available upon the completion of the recruitment of the research team and the preparatory period.

The literature for the appropriate depth of the analysis will be selected during the preparatory period as well. However, the project team will focus on the publications addressing the

affirmative action as a theory and practice and its application in selected countries. GIPA's access to a Scholarly Journal Archives (JSTOR) will be instrumental in this regard as it provides easy and cost-effective access to the most valuable literature on the subject worldwide.

All these will, subsequently, guide us towards the elaboration of suitable affirmative action in Georgia. We shall pay closer attention to the cases similar to Georgia, namely, where the ratio of national minority to the whole population and the employment, education and income of the former demonstrate the resemblance with the Georgian case. As we are mainly concerned with the practical application of the findings in the policy field, we shall be examining the western experience and policies from 1980 to present.

Field Research

Any gaps that will invariably exist in the data concerning Georgia shall be made for by devising appropriate questionnaires and interviewing the aforementioned groups. Moreover, the questionnaires will shed the light to the questions that cannot be answered by the statistical data no matter how comprehensive and all-encompassing it may be. E.g., the questions formulated in the questionnaires shall try to shed the light on the root causes of supposed low levels of employment, education, and income among national minorities of Georgia. Moreover, if the cause-effect relationship between education and employment is statistically significant, but explains only small portion of variance, the field research shall concentrate on the incorporation of factors that could help improve the variance (e.g. customs, traditions, etc.)

These sources shall provide us with the information that will show what percentage of national minority is employed in the public sector in Tbilisi and Samtskhe-Javakheti areas. Then, we will look at the education level of median citizen as compared to the median national minority representative. We will also be looking at their income level. The findings shall give us clearer idea of the problem, and will make it easier to address the issues associated with the overall aim of the project as described above. These particular regions have been chosen for the following reasons: first, we could not possible cover all of Georgia at this time given the financial constraints; second, Tbilisi would serve as an example of the dynamic, modern city environment, while Samtskhe-Javakheti serves as an example of a less-developed rural environment; third, we have given preference to Samtskhe-Javakheti over the other similar regions of Georgia (e.g., Marneuli), because of the more pressing problems it faces. Namely, the withdrawal of the Russian bases affecting the job security of the local population, and the expected return of the Turk-Meskhethians to the region as foreseen by the understanding between the Government of Georgia and Council of Europe. These two issues may aggravate the ethnic tension in the region.

For these reasons, we believe Tbilisi and Samtskhe-Javakheti will provide informative case findings that could be generalized nationwide.

Results of the Project

The project will deliver two major outputs and three related outcomes:

A) Major Outcomes of the Project:

(A.1) Research Report

The Project will have a comprehensive report as a key deliverable. Written in a scholarly manner, the report will furnish all the available and relevant information to its readers. The report will describe the methodology employed and the key assumptions upon which the researchers have based their judgment. The report will then analyze the data and generate insights into the nature of the problems which will be identified by the research process. The report will conclude with several alternative proposals for addressing these issues.

Additionally, two presentations shall be made depicting the progress and final outcomes of the project. First presentation shall describe the interim results, and the second, concluding presentation shall be made at the end of the project. We plan to request the presence of the representatives from the following organizations: Eurasia Foundation, Open Society Institute – Georgia Foundation, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, United Nations, and its relevant agencies, the other NGOs active in the field, the executive and legislative branches of the national government, regional, and local governments, the media, universities and research institutions, and some free-lance experts of the field. Shall circumstances so allow a designated presentation for the legislators will be held in the Parliament of Georgia as well.

(A.2) Policy Paper

The research paper will give us the possibility draft a policy paper to be shared with the relevant government agencies. The policy paper will be shorter, more concise and more "action oriented." It will be distributed to serve the needs of the policy-makers in making more informed decisions with enhanced flexibility of options. While specific foresights on the contents of either the research findings or in particular, policy paper recommendations are not currently available, it is possible to outline the basic structure of the paper:

- The executive summary of the research
- Policy problems identified by the research team
- Suggested policy alternatives for the government which will also contain a policy forecasting section outlining costs and benefits of each suggested alternative
- List of resources and data used
- Information on the Research Center and the research team

Both the Research Report and Policy Paper will pay a particular attention to the issues that surround to adjustment of Georgian legislation and practices to the requirements of the European Charter on National Minorities. The research and policy papers will both provide the insight into the nature of the challenges that exist in this particular dimension of policy and present recommendations in this regards as necessary.

(A.3) Training and Education Plan

The findings of the research will be used by the Center to develop a new set of educational programs including new syllabi, training courses and regional seminars, which will address the issues and problems raised by the research report. By doing so, the research will help build a

long-term capacity for addressing the problems that will be identified. It will be unwise to detail the contents of those programs till we have a comprehensive research report. However, the programs will be multidimensional. They will address the three important "layers" of society: (A) Central government/policy level; (B) Regional/local government level and (C) Civil society and media - public awareness "layer" of the region. These programs will be designed according to the nature of the problems and suggested approaches for their alleviation, mitigation or resolution. Provided the growth of the public interest to the issue Georgian Institute of Public Affairs will seriously examine the possibility of launching the graduate program in National Minority Studies.

B) Other outputs of the project:

(B.1) Research Workshop

By the time of the conclusion of the project's research phase, the workshop will be convened with the key stakeholders participating to share research findings with the broader audience of decision-makers, national and international organizations and the relevant media outlets.

(B.2) Study at GIPA

The research team will presumably meet many talented young people in the regions who will be eager to be trained in the fields of public administration and local governance but unable to bear the necessary costs. Upon the recommendation of the Project Coordinator the Institute will offer a fellowship to up to three young persons to attend GIPA programs. This will be an indirect, although no less important outcome of the project. The selection shall be both social and need based. While the preference shall be given to the most talented applicants, the Institute will make sure that at least three regions of Georgia are represented. The recruitment procedure will follow the pattern of GIPA student enrollment process which includes the public announcement of this opportunity, transparent review of the applications and a panel interview with the short listed applicants. The representatives of Eurasia foundation will be kindly invited to participate in the process of application review and interview.

Project Team

- **Project Coordinator:** *Mr. Bakur Kvashilava, GIPA Policy Research Center; Education: International Affairs, MA Degree from Yale University;*
- **Research Advisor:** *Mr. Levan Tsutskiridze, Director, GIPA Policy Research Center. Education: International Affairs, MA Degree from the Johns Hopkins University. 10 years of project management experience;*
- **Research Team of two persons** to be recruited through competitive application process within the Institute;
- **Project Assistant** to be recruited through competitive application process.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The following evaluation and monitoring tools will be used to ascertain that the project maintains a positive dynamic:

- **Research Analysis**

The project coordinator shall convene monthly meetings with the research team to ascertain that the research is maintaining its positive impetus and retaining academic impartiality; to this end, available data and future research actions will be reviewed.

- **Research Analysis: Peer Review Process**

Research Report will be sent to the other specialists of the field during its early draft and final production phases. The feedback will be used to correct any errors in methodology, factual information or style. This will enable the Research Team to enhance the quality of the product. The methodology of the peer review process will be a standard anonymous process, which by definition implies that neither the reviewers nor the authors of the report are knowledgeable of the personalities involved in either the review or research analysis part. The personalities participating in the process shall be defined at the later stage when the funding had been secured, the specific target groups selected and the survey already administered. This will allow for a more careful selection of the reviewers.

- **Workshop**

The attendance to and the engagement in the workshop by major stakeholders and relevant community representatives will measure the values of the subject as well as the performance of the project team in general.

- **Distribution of the Research Report and Policy Paper**

The successful distribution of research and policy papers and positive feedback will measure the valuations of the project by key government agencies and major civil society actors.

- **Development of the Training and Education Proposals**

The development of a detailed, substantive and targeted education, training and re-training program proposals will be another key indicator of the project's effectiveness

- **Monthly Review Meetings**

The Project Coordinator will convene monthly meetings with the project staff to discuss the progress and identify key issues to be addressed on managerial or an analytic level;

- **Financial Monitoring:**

Project Assistant shall brief Project Coordinator on a weekly basis and produce financial statements regularly

- **Respect to the timetable**

The timely implementation of the project activities will ensure that project is completed as pledged in the proposal and key deliverables produced on time.

Total Project Budget: 26,788 USD

Details of contact:

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