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Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe

Final Country Report

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1. Socio-economic and Political Overview

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the economic systems in all post-Soviet countries began to change. The transition period in Georgia was particularly complicated due to territorial conflicts and armed civil confrontation at the beginning of the 1990s. After the independence, separatist movements were fuelled in two regions of Georgia, namely in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region (so-called South Ossetia) – regions which during the Soviet Union period had an autonomous status. The consequential short armed conflicts forced the majority of the Georgian population in those regions to flee to other parts of Georgia and abroad. In the beginning of 1992, the first democratically elected president of Georgia was removed with the consequence that a civil war between his supporters and opponents began and lasted for almost 2 years. The former Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze was elected President in 1995 and stayed in power until the so-called Rose Revolution in 2003, which included widespread protests over the disputed parliamentary elections. In 2004, Mikheil Saakashvili won the elections.

In spite of a ceasefire in Abkhazia in 1994, the deployment of Russian troops and subsequent years of negotiations, the dispute over the status has not been resolved and the conflict flared up on several occasions. The situation was similar in Tskhinvali Region, where joint Russian, Georgian and Ossetian peacekeeping forces were deployed. The last conflict escalated into a full-scale war between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia in August 2008. Russian troops remained in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and Russia recognised both regions as independent countries while Georgia considers the regions to be parts of its sovereign territory. Diplomatic relations between the two countries have been cut since then.

The socio-economic and political development of Georgia after 1990 can be divided into three main periods:

- 1991-1994 – Total political and economic stagnation
- 1995-2003 – Political and economic stabilization
- 2004-present – Economic development

The above mentioned territorial conflicts caused an economic collapse and despite ambiguities of official statistics, all evidence indicate that after 1989 Georgia experienced a disastrous drop in industrial output, real income, consumption, capital investment and virtually every other economic indicator. By 1994, GDP had fallen by 72% compared to the level of 1990 (EC, 2011, p. 7).

Since 1994, due to economic and political stabilization, a stage of slow economic development started in Georgia. The reforms initiated in 1994-1995 were not, however, sustained. Over the period 1996-2003, the state became increasingly incapable of resisting pressure from vested interests with serious adverse consequences on the provision of basic public services. GDP growth in 2002 was positive and Georgia's economic performance was slowly improving with GDP growth of 3% in 1999, and 11.3% in 2003 (Table 1.1).

Since 2004, Georgia implemented macro-economic reforms, which accelerated economic growth dramatically, but the economic situation was severely affected by the war with Russia. The economic reforms allowed the country to: a) register consistently high economic growth rates (average real GDP growth of 9.6% from 2003 to 2008); b) become a high performer in terms of Foreign Direct Investment¹ (however the FDI inflow, which drove growth till 2008, plummeted in 2009-2010 due to the war, the privatization of most major assets and the global economic crisis); c) significantly increase budget revenues² (particularly the share of tax revenues as a consequence of improvements in tax collection system) and d) reduce corruption. However, a large and growing trade deficit (28% of GDP in 2007) and high inflation rates (peaking in March 2008 at 12.25%) have also accompanied the positive economic developments (ETF, 2010, p. 7).

¹ Net FDI in 2008 amounted to €1.2 billion compared to €483 million in 2004.

² The state budget was €700 million in 2003 compared to €2.8 billion in 2008.

Georgia maintains no currency controls, allows foreign investment in all but a few sectors deemed strategically important, and has implemented a privatization program which started in 1992, including land privatization. Georgia was the second country of the former Soviet Union to join the World Trade Organization (on 14 June, 2000,) making a move which provided additional opportunities for development. Trade turnover grew from €800 million in 2002 to €2.7 billion in 2009.

Georgia's economy has undergone a significant structural change over the last decades. Before the transition, productivity in agriculture, industry, and services has been more or less equal with shares in GDP of 32%, 33%, and 35%, respectively. Since then, productivity of the agricultural sector has declined significantly and stood at 8.3% of GDP in 2009. The share of industry also fell during the initial years of transition (1990–1994) as in other transition economies, but it then stabilized and subsequently picked up. Its share is now estimated at 24.9% of GDP. Before the transition, the services sector, particularly market-oriented services, was underdeveloped. Since the transition, with the rapid development of trade, transport and financial services, the services sector now accounts for 62.1% of GDP (WTO, 2010).

Economic growth was accompanied by a growth of GDP per capita at current prices and PPPs from \$2,395 (€2,145) in 2001 to \$5,054 (€3,812) in 2010^{3,4}. However, it should be noted that economic growth did not translate into an increase of labour force participation and employment rates. According to official statistics, employment rates steadily fell from 58.8% in 2001 to 52.3% in 2008 and only experienced a slight increase until 2010 up to 52.9%. The unemployment rate increased from 12.4% in 2004 to 16.3% in 2010, including particular high rates for youth (aged 15-24) - one third of them are unemployed⁵.

The majority of employed population works in agriculture (accounting for slightly more than half of the total number of employees). However, since according to ILO methodology a person is considered to be employed if s/he works at least one hour per week, the majority of rural population is deemed employed as they work in their own land despite the fact that not all of them work full-time. This contributes to the fact that polls show that 71% of respondents consider themselves unemployed, even if they are labelled as self-employed – essentially an euphemism for acute underemployment (Navarro, 2011). Despite GDP growth since 2004, many Georgians consider that their living standards have not improved (Papiashvili and Porsughyan, 2009). This self-estimation is confirmed by a Welfare Monitoring Survey carried out by UNICEF during May – July 2009, using the poverty threshold of 2.5 USD (€1.8) per day, 41.5% of Georgian households or 44.8% of the population was poor (UNICEF, 2010, p. 17).

2. Main emigration and internal migration trends and patterns

2.1. Main emigration trends

More than one million people born in Georgia or 25% of its recent population (World Bank, 2011) live outside of the country. According to the above mentioned estimates two thirds of international migrants from Georgia have settled at the territory of Commonwealth of Independent States, the majority of the total number of migrants (over 60%) resides in the Russian Federation. However, a significant part of the migration to the Russian Federation is

³ UNECE Statistical Division Database, <http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/dialog/Saveshow.asp?lang=1> (accessed on 12 October 2011).

⁴ Throughout the whole report, figures in US Dollar are translated in EUR equivalents according to the annual European Central Bank exchange rates, see http://sdw.ecb.europa.eu/print.do?printType=full&trans=&start=&end=&snapshot=&periodSortOrder=&SERIES_KEY=120.EXR.A.USD.EUR.SP00.A (accessed on 12 October 2011).

⁵ Calculated by the National Statistics Office of Georgia according to ILO methodology, see http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=146&lang=eng (accessed on 12 October 2011).

irregular with estimates ranging from 200,000 to as much as 1,000,000 of both legal and undocumented migrants from Georgia (IOM, 2008b, p. 11).

The International Organization of Migration confirms that the Russian Federation is the main destination country for migrants from Georgia followed by the United States, Greece, Germany, Turkey, Austria, and other EU member states such as Spain (IOM, 2008b, p. 11).

The easy entry due to the non-visa regime (before 2000) as well as pre-existing linkages, historical and economic ties, geographical and cultural proximity and knowledge of Russian language made Russia an attractive destination country. However, due to changes in Georgia's geopolitical orientation and its standoff with Russia, followed by the introduction of visa regime in 2000, as well as the armed conflict and border closure in 2008, the latter started losing its attraction as the main destination for Georgian migrants. Meanwhile, Greece and Turkey have become important destinations for Georgians as well. According to OECD data, the stock of Georgian labour force in Greece constantly increased during the last ten years and almost multiplied tenfold by 2009 with 25,631 Georgians⁶. After the abolition of Turkey's visa requirements for Georgian citizens in 2006 and the closure of borders with the Russian Federation in 2008, Turkey has become one of the major destination countries for Georgians (IOM, 2008b, p. 12). Moreover, there is evidence of transit migration from Armenia, Iran, the Russian Federation and Ukraine towards Turkey and the European Union via Georgia. However, Georgia is not a key country for transit migration since its transportation system is underdeveloped and the country is not located on the most direct route between the countries of origin and the destination countries.

The massive out-migration is a new phenomenon for Georgia. Before the collapse of the USSR, migration between Georgia and the other republics of the Soviet Union was considered as internal migration, undertaken mainly for economic or private purposes, but also strongly regulated by the Soviet rules. During the Soviet period ethnic Georgians tended to remain in Georgia. More than 95% of them lived on the territory of Georgia. Their migration was primarily within the republic towards its capital Tbilisi.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the creation of new international borders changed the situation radically and many people belonging to minorities or suffering from economic hardship felt trapped inside the new independent countries and were eager to emigrate (Tishkov et al., 2005). Furthermore, as crossing the international borders of the former Soviet Union without special permission was illegal, new opportunities for emigration towards Western countries or Israel emerged.

Thus, as a typical post-Soviet country Georgia has been seriously affected by out-migration after its proclaimed independence in 1991. The last 2002 population census in Georgia registered a drop of some 20% of the number of population registered in the 1989 census (Badurashvili, 2011). Part of this drop is due to the decline of fertility, but the main reason is emigration. Georgia has the second highest net migration rate after Kazakhstan in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Mansoor and Quillin, 2007).

The official statistics on migration in Georgia characterizing in figures the size of phenomenon is presented in the Figure 2.1. As observed in the statistical data, a sharp increase in out-migration from Georgia occurred in the 1990s. The migration out-flow became even greater after 1991 and remained at the high level during the whole period of 1992-1996. Later in the 1990s, international migration flows from Georgia somehow stabilized with the negative net migration not exceeding 30,000 persons per year. Since 2004, a reverse trend in net migration is observed in Georgia, with some fluctuations in subsequent years and positive balance (34,200) between in- and out- migrants' flows for the last available period - 2010.

Some researchers (CRRC, 2007, p. 7) have classified Georgia's external migration as occurring in three waves:

⁶ International Migration Database OECD, <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=MIG> (retrieved on 13 October 2011).

1. Collapse and conflict – corresponding to period of 1990-1995
2. Economic struggle – 1996 to 2004
3. Hope and economic rebuilding – after 2004

Each period under scrutiny has its specific characteristics and implications resulted from the peculiarities of political and socio-economic developments of Georgia in the definite time-periods.

Similar to many post-Soviet republics, non-Georgians constituted the biggest flow of emigrants from Georgia in the first half of the 1990s. Georgia was historically a place of considerable ethnic diversity, and when Soviet-era restrictions on migration eased, migration among Georgia's ethnic minorities grew. In the late 1980s, Greece offered residency rights to anyone proving Greek descent, leading about one third of Georgia's 95,000 ethnic Greeks to emigrate by 1993 (de Waal, 1994). Similarly, large-scale migration of Soviet Jews to Israel included many Georgian Jews. These ethnically-motivated migration flows created social networks linking Georgians to former compatriots in Israel, Greece, and other countries.

As a result, the share of ethnic minorities in Georgia shrank from 29.9% in 1989 to 16.2% in 2002⁷. By 2002, Greeks, Ukrainians and Jews had all disappeared, while 80% of ethnic Russians and more than half of the substantial ethnic Armenian population had departed from Georgia. Some western authors use this fact as an outstanding example of ethnic intolerance which has taken place in Georgia during that period (Beissinger, 1996, p. 158). In this regard, the specialists in Georgia point out that "...on the eve of dissolution of USSR, Georgia was being led by political newcomers, inexperienced elite who tried to establish themselves at the helm using the easiest possible way – political slogans. But some influential representatives of political elite managed to use the slogans so that patriotism became perceived as unrestrained nationalism. In those days several statements made by political figures concerning ethnic non-native population, which influenced mass consciousness, caused the feeling that a sharp rise in intolerance was happened. Uncertain and anxious, the people of different ethnic groups who did not feel themselves as "native" decided to emigrate" (Gachechiladze, 1997, p. 27).

The migrant flows from Georgia towards the Russian Federation, immediately following Georgia's independence, were also of ethnic character. They comprised mainly ethnic Russians who had previously moved to Georgia from Russia or were born to Russian immigrants. But, gradually, the share of ethnic Georgians migrating to the Russian Federation increased due to economic motivation, as life in Georgia grew substantially worse than in Russia.

The deep economic collapse during the first years of transition in Georgia continued with the phenomena of inflation, corruption, unemployment and poverty. They contributed to the deep social crisis in the country. The chaos Georgia endured in the early 1990s spurred also the emigration of ethnic Georgians due to the social and economic crisis and the dramatic deterioration of living conditions in Georgia. These flows were represented by particularly highly-skilled and/or elites moving primarily to neighbouring Russia, which had no visa regime with Georgia at that time.

Due to the prolonged social-economic crisis and the lack of prospects for improvement in the near future, many Georgians continued to migrate abroad for temporary or even permanent settlement. The result was the intensive emigration flows of Georgians during the whole period of "economic struggle" - 1996 to 2004. Experts agree that migration from Georgia since the mid-1990s became primarily economically-driven and temporary, and continued at an increasingly brisk pace (Badurashvili, 2004, p. 11; CRRC, 2007, p. 7). Europe and North America became increasingly popular destination countries for Georgians, although Russia remained to be the primary destination country. By the opinion of experts "...external

⁷ Despite the exclusion of Abkhazia and South Ossetia from the 2002 census, these numbers seem relatively accurate. Richard Rowland (2006) compared 1989 and 2002 census data for only the territory currently under Georgian control and found a 10% shift, from 26.3% ethnic minorities in 1989 to 16.2% in 2002.

migration became a nationwide strategy” (CRRC, 2007, p. 10) and the overall rate of migration fluctuating between 6-10% of the population has remained relatively stable over the past few years (Ibid, p. 21).

At the same time Georgian official statistics insist that there is no evidence of large scale emigration from Georgia after 2000: "Since 2000 there is no evidence of further large scale migration, implying that those who wished to leave have done so and those who are left are content to remain where they are. There is a steady stream of Georgians flowing out of the country but this is more than balanced by a net inflow of foreign nationals. On this evidence the population is now increasing rather than decreasing..." (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006, p. 10).

However, a different picture is revealed if the numbers of asylum applicants are compared: emigrants from Georgia continuously apply for political asylum in third countries. The number of asylum applications by Georgians has increased steadily since 2000 and this development so far peaked in 2009, when 11,000 nationals of Georgia applied for political asylum abroad, moving Georgia from the 21st place of source countries of asylum-seekers (2006) in 44 selected industrialized countries to the 10th place (2009) in only four years (UNHCR, 2010, p. 12).

According to the United Nations estimates presented in the Table 2.1, the share of international migrants in the overall population of Georgia comprised 4% during the last five years (2005-2010).

As it was already mentioned, the recent emigration flows from Georgia are mainly directed to labour migration and are of temporary nature. The duration of stay of Georgian labour migrants abroad is on average 3 years (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006; CRRC/ISET, 2010). According to the last nationally representative survey on migration⁸ the number of migrants from Georgia currently abroad is estimated at approximately 140,000 people; another 138,000 are estimated to be returnees. Hence, between 7% and 8% of the current Georgian population has experienced some kind of migration, i.e., either they are absent migrants or they have migrated and returned (CRRC/ISET, 2010, p. 9).

The surveys on returnees⁹ show that only a minor number of Georgian migrants return to their homeland. If they return, in most cases this is due to specific private reasons such as family problems (Badurashvili, 2005, p. 27; National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006, p. 30).

2.2. Main internal migration trends

Official statistics on internal migration in Georgia do not exist since 2005 and the data available for the period before is also very poor and unreliable¹⁰. So, its usage for our analysis of main internal migration trends in Georgia is very limited.

However, some analysis of internal migration trends and features for the period until the 2000s may be conducted on the basis of the results of the last Georgian population census of 2002. The census questionnaire included a special question concerning each household member: "Does the person live in this settlement since birth or not, and if not, from which settlement did he/she move?" So the census data contains information on current and previous residence of people covered by the population census, but obviously it does not include information on households which migrated by whole composition before the census of 2002 and have not been interviewed in 2002.

According to the abovementioned information, 27.4% of the total Georgian population does not live at their place of birth¹¹. The majority of the migrants (92.3%) changed their place of

⁸Survey of up to 1500 households of three categories (households with no migrants, households with currently absent migrants and households with returned migrants) conducted by CRRC at the end of 2008.

⁹ Survey of 960 returned migrants conducted by Georgian Centre of Population research in 2003 and 329 returnees interviewed by Georgian statistical office in 2006.

¹⁰Authors' discussion on statistical data sources on migration in Georgia is presented in Annex 3.

residence inside the country: every fourth person has moved from one settlement to another within the territory of Georgia. The share of internal migrants is higher in the urban¹² population: 32.2% compared to 17.9% in the rural population of country. Especially high it is in Tbilisi, where each third resident arrived from other Georgian settlements. However, as we can see from the Figure 2.2, there were also some flows directed to rural areas in the 1990s, both from urban and other rural settlements.

The period at the beginning of the 1990s was characterized by the large-scale forced migration of native population from the territories of Abkhazia and former Soviet Ossetia due to military conflicts. Thus, considerable shares of total migrants (around 35% by population census in 2002) were IDPs. The flows of internal migrants since the beginning of the 1990s up to 2001 were also more directed toward urban areas, as the proportion of migrants among residents of cities is as much as twice higher than among rural citizens (see Table 2.2).

Census data gives some possibilities to analyze the internal migration trend in Georgia during the period of 1995-2001¹³ on annual basis (see Figure 2.3). In order to distinguish the voluntary and forced migration flows in the total migrants stock we have calculated the internal migration rates in Georgia without taking into account the flows of IDPs in the migration movements inside Georgia, as in 1995 there were still many IDPs flows between different regions of Georgia. Concerning the data on internal migration in Georgia for early 1990s available statistics for this period is based on the administrative data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that has been found in Georgian statistical office only for the period of 1990-1992. Despite its deficiency, it shows the diminishing of urbanization's process in Georgia during early 1990s, as the number of persons migrated from rural settlements to urban areas of Georgia has decreased threefold: from 14.8 thousands in 1990 to 4.9 thousands in 1992.

Hence, available data shows the diminishing of urbanization processes in Georgia during the period of "collapse and conflict" in the early 1990s, its revival in the period of "economic struggle" (since the mid-1990s) and promising developments for the future after 2003 Georgian "Rose Revolution". Hence, the instable political and socio-economic developments in Georgia after independence from one side have pushed the external migration flows from Georgia, described in details in the paragraph above, and from the other - caused the stagnation of the urbanization process in the country.

The economic crisis that took place in Georgia in the 1990s caused enormous changes in the whole structure of Georgian economy and the reduction of available employment opportunities at the factories and industries located in the urban areas of the country. This led to a decrease of rural-urban migration, and even the opposite flows of people moving from cities to rural areas have been observed. These processes became more apparent since the initiation of land privatization in Georgia in 1993, when many residents of Tbilisi (capital-city), originally being from rural settlements, returned to their places of origin and tried to become farmers (Tukhashvili, 1996, p. 33). The same conclusions are made on the basis of the results of migration research focused on the region Imereti in the West of Georgia, describing that with the socio-economic crisis of 1990s not only rural-urban migration flows have been diminished, but reverse flows to rural areas have been mentioned in this period as well. Authors of the study note that 86.5% of migrants who moved to rural areas of Imereti in the

¹¹ Statistical tables processed on the results of population census of 2002 provide information on migrants by duration of living in residence specified up to a time-period of 10 years, which gives possibility to calculate migration stocks and rates for the period 1992-2001.

¹² Georgian population is almost equally distributed between urban and rural areas (53% and 47% correspondingly). Urban settlement is identified as a territorial unit comprising at least 5,000 inhabitants, having an urban-oriented socio-cultural and economic infrastructure; On local self-government, see <http://www.parliament.ge/special/kan/files/1739.pdf>, (retrieved on September, 5, 2011).

¹³ Statistical tables processed on the results of population census of 2002 provide with information on migrants by duration of living in residence specified by single years only up to 5 years of duration of living in this residence. Then the aggregated data on number of migrants living here during 6-9 years is presented. Hence, the number of persons living in the residence during 6 years was calculated by authors as an annual average of number of migrants for the period 6-9 years, or total number of migrants divided on 4.

1990s were from Tbilisi and other urban areas of Georgia (Beridze and Chipashvili, 2001, p. 171).

After the stabilization the political situation in Georgia in the second half of the 1990s, migration flows directed to the urban areas again started to grow. Data extracted from Integrated Household Survey of Georgian statistical office for 1996-2008 confirm this trend. According to this source of information, the peak of rural-urban migration in Georgia was at the end of 2003, immediately after the Georgian “Rose revolution”, when the highest numbers of rural citizens moved to Tbilisi. According to the abovementioned source of information, the most recent internal migration flows in Georgia are still directed from rural to urban areas, but the trend seems to be more or less stabilized.

Internal migration caused by the desire to have access to higher education is also significant for Georgia. Universities are naturally concentrated in big cities, that motivates younger generation to migrate to urban areas (especially in Tbilisi, where the majority of universities is located) in order to obtain higher education. After their termination of studies, these migrants often apply for a job in the city where they have graduated, as there are more chances to find a professional job linked to their studies. Sometimes whole families migrate with the students for better opportunities.

According to the data from Georgia Civil Register for 2006-2009, each year around 8-9 thousands persons from rural and other urban settlements arrived in Tbilisi for permanent residence. That means that the population of Tbilisi grows by almost 1% per year due to new arrivals¹⁴. Keeping in mind that these figures represent only those who officially declared their change of permanent place of residence, the real scales of urbanization in Georgia might be significantly higher.

As mentioned above, forced migration is one of the features of the internal movements in Georgia since its independence. Two main flows of internally displaced people (IDPs) have occurred in Georgia since 1990. In 1991-1993 approximately 300,000 persons were internally displaced due to territorial conflicts in Abkhazia and South-Ossetia. After the end of the conflicts in 2008, Georgia had lost the last areas it controlled in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and Russia subsequently recognized the independence of both. Hundreds of people were killed, thousands more were injured, and more than 138,000 people were internally displaced to and within Georgia. IDPs in Georgia are often divided into the “old” and “new” caseloads. In mid-2010, the Georgian government reported that there were still some 233,000 “old” IDPs and about 22,000 “new” IDPs in Georgia. The first figure is the number of people displaced in the 1990s and their descendants registered as IDPs as of 2009, while the second figure includes about 17,000 people given IDP status after the 2008 war, plus an estimated 5,000 who were formally recognized as such later. Most “new” IDPs are from South Ossetia, and about 3,600 had already been displaced in the 1990s (Walicki, 2011, p. 63).

2.3. Main characteristics of migrants

Due to the high prevalence of undocumented migration, reliable statistics on the socio-demographic characteristics of emigrants from Georgia is hard to find. Available official statistics on annual migrant flows from Georgia due to its deficiency¹⁵ do not provide information on demographic characteristics of migrants. Other available national and international data sources, as it will be shown below, give quite distinctive characteristics of migrants. By the opinion of experts, the lack of conformity in defining a “migrant” and “migration” on national and international level might be explained by the fact that statistical data collection systems are unable to capture details of irregular and illegal migrants (ETF, 2011).

¹⁴ Population of Tbilisi is slightly more than 1 million persons.

¹⁵ Authors' discussion on statistical data sources on migration in Georgia is presented in Annex 3.

For example, comparing the data on gender composition of emigrant flows provided by Georgian population census of 2002¹⁶ and data provided by the UN Population and Migration database for 2000 and 2010, we see the significant discrepancies in the percentage distribution of Georgian emigrants by sex. While according to UN estimates female share in total emigrant flows comprised 56-57% in the total emigrant flows from Georgia in the period under scrutiny, 2002 population census provides us with data concerning 40% of females among all emigrants from Georgia¹⁷.

Analysing the data on gender composition of migrants collected through migration surveys, we should keep in mind the issues related to the methodology of sampling that might poorly represent the national population and address only definite regions or specific groups of population. Some changes in the demographic characteristics of Georgian migrants might also contribute to the comparability of the data over the time.

However, plenty of studies have noted the growing number of female labour migrants from Georgia, particularly among migrants going to Europe and the United States. While migration surveys conducted in 2000-2002 indicated that women represented between one-third and 40% of the total number of Georgian migrants (Badurashvili, 2001; Dershem and Khoperia, 2004; IOM, 2002; IOM, 2003), the 2005 World Bank Survey on returnees¹⁸ estimated a 60% share of women among Georgian migrants (CRRC, 2007, p. 47). Feminization of migration flows from Georgia in the latest period is noted by many specialists (Hoffman and Buckley, 2008; Zurabishvili and Zurabishvili, 2010; Lonjanidze, 2010).

In general, specialists in Georgia agree that there are some gender-related preferences for migration to particular countries, which explains the prevalence of women in migration flows to Greece and Germany (Lundkvist-Houndoumadi, 2010; Melashvili, 2008), and higher concentration of Georgian men among migrants to Russia and other countries of CIS-territory (Badurashvili, 2004; National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006). Russia, the main destination country of Georgian citizens, has been believed to attract predominantly male migrants, because of the demand on physical work.

Age seems to be a highly migration-selective factor for Georgian migrants despite the destination country. The majority of Georgian migrants (from 70% and 80% by different surveys) are in the best age from the point of view of labour efficiency – between 20 and 50 years with a considerable share of migrants in their 30-ies and in their 40-ies, cohorts that in their average are the able-bodied and professionally skilled and experienced. At the same time, the share of migrants aged below 30 years is remarkably higher among the migrants to “far abroad”¹⁹ and makes up to 40% according to the latest available data (Badurashvili, 2011, p. 92). Some Western European countries, such as Germany, France and UK, may be distinguished by the fairly young composition of migrants from Georgia, that may be explained by the practice of organized migration - “au pair” in families abroad and migration for studies (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006; Melashvili, 2008).

Available data²⁰ confirms that age composition of internal migrants in Georgia is fairly young as well. Data presented in the Figure 2.4 clearly shows that internal migrants are distinguished by a high proportion of people aged between 25 and 45 years - 37.6% among migrants contrary to 28.0% among non-migrant population.

¹⁶ During the census a special questionnaire on emigration has been worked-out (Form EM) that interrogated each household member who had left for abroad at least for one year. The total number of emigrants recorded by population census of 2002 was only 113726 persons. This figure challenged a lot of critics in Georgia and it came to conclusion that the census's questionnaire on emigration actually did not work. At the same time it should be mentioned that census data about migrants are not far from those about temporary absent family members by the Integrated Household Survey of National Statistics Office of Georgia.

¹⁷ Some bias in the census estimates is related to the fact that households emigrated from Georgia by whole composition were not recorded as emigrants during the population census, as there were nobody in dwelling to provide information on them.

¹⁸ The data are calculated by authors from the database of a survey on 1200 returnees conducted by the WB in 2005 in frame of the project “Enhancing Gains from International Migration in Europe and Central Asia”.

¹⁹ All European countries, USA and Israel.

²⁰ Data-set of Caucasus Barometer (Data Initiative-2007) conducting on annual basis by CRRC-Georgia allows to distinguish the internal migration flows in Georgia.

In general, migrants from the post-Soviet states are distinguished by the high educational level (Mansoor and Quillin, 2007). Most abovementioned emigration studies conducted in Georgia in the period under scrutiny confirm this rule: seven to eight of ten migrants from Georgia have secondary or higher education; at least half of the Georgian migrants hold a university degree. Educational level of Georgian labour migrants is almost twice as high as that of the average Georgian population in general. In most cases, labour migration does not require such high education and can therefore be characterized as a certain type of "brain waste". Nevertheless, this "brain waste" frequently increases; sometimes significantly, as increasing family's income can be characterized as a typical behaviour of a population during a crisis situation (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006; Badurashvili, 2011; Savvidis, 2011).

As a matter of fact, while young, well-educated Georgian women are more likely to migrate towards the Western European countries and the USA, mainly married, less educated men aged around 40 are migrating to work towards the NIS-countries. The educational differences of migrants are more pronounced among males: when we compare the level of education for those who migrated to the CIS-countries and beyond, we see that the relative number of persons with higher education is as two times higher among migrants to the Western European countries (Badurashvili, 2005, p. 9).

Going abroad for work requires migrants to be well informed about the situation of the foreign labour market, possess foreign language skills and be flexible in terms of territorial mobility. According to the latest available data²¹, 36% of the former migrants in the sample of returnees from "far abroad" (13% in the sample of returnees from Moscow) have a good or fluent command of English and 84% (98% in the sample of the returnees from Moscow) of Russian (Badurashvili, 2011, p. 94). These people have the ability to establish contacts in destination countries and to adapt to the new environment. The potential of this population group is not properly used in Georgia and thus, they are pushed to go abroad for jobs that usually do not correspond with their qualification and experience.

A higher educational level, compared to that of the general population, is also observed in the flows of internal migrants in Georgia. According to the Caucasus Barometer of 2007²², while in general population persons with tertiary education (first and second stages) constitute 35.7%, among migrants they constitute nearly half of the total number (49.3%; Figure 2.5.).

All available migration studies indicate gender differences in the labour activity of Georgian migrants in the European countries. While Georgian males mostly work in building and construction, women are mainly employed as care givers for elderly and auxiliary staff in the service sector; this occupational stratification is almost unchanged during the whole period under scrutiny. However, construction is an area which is also well represented in the sample of male returnees from Russia, especially in the most recent flows. According to official data from the Russian Federal Migration Service, 40% of overall migrants in the Russian Federation are engaged in the construction sector. Regarding earlier migration flows, the EBRD²³ financed survey on remittances, conducted in Georgia and in Russia in late 2006 and early 2007, revealed that most of the polled migrants from Georgia in Russia worked in the areas of service, unskilled labour, agriculture or industry (EBRD, 2007c, p. 158).

Some ethnic communities in Georgia are more involved in migration processes than others. They have transformed migration into a coping strategy for their families. For example Armenian and Azeri males of working age, particularly compactly settled in South Georgia, tend to engage in seasonal migration to Russia, usually in the fields of construction and trade. Although ethnic minorities on average tend to be less educated than ethnic Georgians, the economic motivations and strategies for migration are similar. Both communities migrate

²¹ Survey on 500 returnees in Georgia conducted in 2009 in frame of ArGeMi project "Comparing out-migration from Armenia and Georgia" supported by Volkswagen Foundation:
<http://www.oei.fu-berlin.de/en/soziologie/forschung/ArGeMi/index.html>.

²² Annually conducted by CRRC-Georgia.

²³ Survey was conducted in January 2007 and 5005 Georgian adults were interviewed all over the country except Abkhazia and Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti regions.

due to economic necessity; for ethnic minorities, it is viewed as a mainstream strategy rather than one of last resorts. Although Russia is the traditional destination for ethnic Azeris and Armenians, Greece became a destination country for them as well.

In the abovementioned EBRD survey on households in regional comparison of ten administrative units in Georgia, Samtskhe-Javakheti (mostly populated by ethnic Armenians) with 18% of the polled recipients, tops the list of the most remittances' receiving areas, followed by the Western Georgian areas Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (12%) and Imereti (11%) (EBRD, 2007b, p. 63). Both accommodate a high percentage of IDPs, which may be also considered as the distinctive community with higher prevalence of migrants abroad.

3. National-wide labor market and social development trends under the influence of emigration

3.1. Economic and labor market developments

Specialists declared in 2007 that "...Georgia is in the midst of a demographic crunch, with an ageing population and stagnant natural population growth which is only expected to worsen in the future...This dramatic loss is attributed to the combination of emigration, low birth rates and an ageing population" (CRRRC, 2007, p. 13). As the majority of migrants are young people, it is one of the factors deepening the process of ageing. Population ageing represents a particular challenge for Georgia in the forthcoming period, as during the transition to a market economy Georgia undoubtedly was not able to accumulate the the necessary wealth and resources as the market economies of the West did. And adaptation to forthcoming changes in the social protection systems, labour market, healthcare, etc. requires sustainable financial and human resources.

Due to emigration Georgia faces a serious problem of brain drain and brain waste. As already mentioned, labour migrants tend to be more educated than the general population, but in most cases labour migration does not require such high education and can therefore be characterized as a certain type of "brain waste". Nevertheless, this strategy frequently increases, sometimes significantly, as increasing family's income can be characterized as typical behaviour of a population during a crisis situation (Badurashvili, 2005).

Available data shows that the work performed by Georgian migrants abroad usually does not correspond to their educational status. This holds particularly true for women as in general they have higher educational status than male migrants. According to the survey on 500 returned migrants in Georgia conducted in 2009²⁴, only 5% of the female returnees (contrary to 20% of males) stated that the work they performed abroad corresponded to their education. Illegal status of many Georgian labour migrants abroad (discussed below in paragraph 3.2) as well as the restricted range of jobs available for migrants force them to get employed at unskilled, non-prestigious and poorly paid work places. This holds true for migrants of both sexes in spite of the differences mentioned above. According to the survey of 2005 conducted by the World Bank²⁵, 83% of Georgian migrants earned less than 100 USD (€80) per month, and almost half reported that they couldn't provide for the basic needs of their families. The latest survey data for 2009 indicated that 55% of migrants earn less than 100 USD (€71.7) per month (Badurashvili, 2011).

The abovementioned survey showed that more than half of migrants who were professionals in Georgia worked as service workers or shop and market salespeople abroad and 11% of them as unskilled workers; one third of technicians and associate professionals were employed abroad as unskilled workers. However, it should be said that the analysis of incomes of Georgian migrants by some social characteristics of respondents shows that the better educated migrants earned more than the less educated. It seems that the ability of

²⁴ See footnote 21.

²⁵ See footnote 18.

better adaptation to new social environment abroad along with the capacity to find a well-paid job are closely related to the educational status of respondents (Ibid).

Remittances are significant for Georgian population; many Georgian families heavily depend on them²⁶. The financial transfers of Georgian migrants constitute by different data sources from 20% to 40% of the average monthly personal income (Badurashvili, 2004, 2009; National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006).

According to the World Bank, the amount of remittances has been increasing in the recent years. Thus, in spite of GDP growth, its share in GDP has stayed almost constant since 2001 at around 6% (Fig. 3.1). Russia is the main source of remittances accounting for more than half of the total amount. Overall, remittances of migrants residing in Russia constitute the major part of the sum remitted to Georgia each year. In 2010, transfers from Russia amounted to 56% of total transfers (€388 million), followed by the USA at 8% and Greece, Ukraine and Italy at 6%²⁷.

Migration studies revealed the wide usage of unofficial cash transfers by Georgian migrants. For example, according to the EBRD survey on remittances, “a very low percentage of remittance recipients have a bank account and thus access to credit and other financial investment products. In Azerbaijan and Moldova, about one fifth of recipients have a bank account, while in Georgia the percentage of those with a bank account is even lower – 11%” (EBRD, 2007a, p. 5).

The survey further states that 9% of Georgian adults – approximately 317,000 persons – received remittances on a regular basis during 2006. An average Georgian remittance recipient receives money 8 times a year. The average amount of remittance fluctuates from €160 (Ibid) to €220 (Badurashvili, 2011). Recipients spend approximately 85% of the received money on basic daily expenses such as food, housing, clothing, utilities and medicine. Extra expenses in case of sickness, accident, physical disability or childbirth can ruin household’s welfare, even if it does not belong to the vulnerable groups of the population. Thus, large share of remittances are spent for families’ basic needs, for improving living standards rather than for business activities (EBRD, 2007b). The World Bank survey conducted in Georgia in 2005²⁸ also confirms this finding. Its data showed that if the remitted amount rises, usage shifts from consumption needs to property purchases or renovation of housing. In fact, 63% of households receiving remittances spend them for renovating their homes. Relatively few respondents reported the use of remittances on expanding their business.

Despite spending abroad – 85% of interviewed managed to make savings while staying abroad and the average sum was 20,000 GEL (€ 8470) per migrant (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006) – returnees seem to be reluctant to start a business. The abovementioned WB survey conducted among 1200 returnees showed that the majority of them at the time of interview (in 2005) were certain that they didn’t want to start a business and only a small share (18%) showed such an intention. As a main reason for not wanting to start a business 61% of interviewees mentioned the lack of capital/ savings; the high cost of entry and no idea where to invest were the other reasons (CRRC, 2007, p. 49).

There are some indications that returnees experience difficulties in finding a job similar to the one they had before their departure or finding any job at all. The data processed on the base of 2005 WB survey shows that unemployment among returnees was roughly equal to levels prior to departure, although 42% of returnees who were unemployed before migration had found jobs after their return. At the same time the survey shows that also those returnees who were employed before found themselves unemployed after return: among those who held senior and/or skilled positions before departing, only about 50% retained a similar occupational status upon return; 25-33% found themselves unemployed. Due to the absence of relevant data it is difficult to say whether the Georgian labour market is not in the position

²⁶As the EBRD survey indicates: approximately 1 million Georgians benefit from remittances.

²⁷National Bank of Georgia, see <http://nbg.gov.ge/index.php?m=306&lng=eng> (retrieved on 4 September 2011).

²⁸ See footnote 18

to integrate the returnees and to make use of the skills and knowledge the migrant acquired abroad, or whether the migrant is not willing to enter the Georgian labour market due to specific expectations related to wages and working conditions.

The volume of remittances and impact of these monetary flows both on private recipients and the national economy of sending and receiving countries are much discussed issues not only in literature on international migration, but also in - sometimes speculative - public and political discourses.

Some recent research²⁹ found that an absent migrant in the household changes the income and employment profile of its members significantly. For example, the income of returnees is higher compared to incomes of those without any experience of migration. Particularly in Tbilisi those returnees who are employed usually enjoy highly-paid jobs. In rural areas the risk that members of the migrant's (absent or returned) family are unemployed is 10% lower compared to the risk of unemployment of members of families with no migrants (CRRC/ISET, 2010).

Over the years, a few diaspora organizations have emerged, but they have a limited capacity and tend to be organized around informal social networks. Their main functions are limited to local cultural activities, charity and advocacy of Georgia. No evidence of large-scale economic activity is available, although it is known that the diaspora became much more active after the Rose Revolution in 2003 and attempted to take on new business opportunities (CRRC/ISET, 2010).

3.2. Social Security

In spite of the fact that migration from Georgia is significant, there are no effective mechanisms in the Georgian government which would support labour migrants in any way (CIPDD, 2009). This is especially true for the coverage of social security, as the majority of migrants are leaving their country illegally.

While bilateral agreements for labour migrants would be beneficial to all engaged parties, the Georgian government has been reluctant about establishing them even with the top destination countries of Georgian migrants such as Greece, Turkey, Ukraine, Italy, Germany and Russia (CIPDD, 2009). It should be noted that agreements with the latter are not expected anytime soon, as the Georgian government refused to have any official contact with the Russian government after the short armed conflict in 2008.

However, the governments of Georgia, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Uzbekistan have signed an agreement (valid since 2002) guaranteeing rights in the field of citizens' pensions. It means that citizens of Georgia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan as well as their family members are entitled to pension under the legislation of the state in which they permanently reside. According to this agreement, if a pensioner moves to another state the pension is granted under the legislation of the new state of residence and is paid by the receiving state. The pension is paid in the new state starting from the month after cancellation of payment in the previous state of residence. If more than 6 months have elapsed after cancellation in the previous state, only 6 months will be reimbursed in the receiving state.

According to the agreement between the governments of Georgia and the Russian Federation, if the legislation of a pensioner's new state of residence does not provide the right for such pension benefits, the state which the pensioner has arrived from shall continue paying the pension (until the right to a pension is introduced in the new state of residence).

As it was noted by SSA (Social Services Agency) officials, documents of pensioners covered by this agreement are held in paper, so no statistics about this group are being collected. It was also noted that after the war in 2008 Georgia ceased to participate in the agreement with

²⁹ Survey of up to 1500 households of three categories (households with no migrants, households with currently absent migrants and households with returned migrants) conducted by CRRC at the end of 2008. It was a part of a six-country study of the relationship between migration and development funded by the Global Development Network.

the Russian Federation and that the agreements with Ukraine and Uzbekistan were not utilized extensively due to a very small number of beneficiaries.

Social assistance policy in Georgia is based on targeted assistance based on household's socio-economic standing calculated according to the Proxy Means Testing methodology. The methodology does not take into account migrants and so, family members left behind by migrants are not privileged or disadvantaged in any way in the process of assigning social assistance. Moreover, absent emigrants are not counted as household members when delivering benefits to the household though they can apply for social assistance after return.

The currently implemented health insurance system is closely linked with the methodology being used in the social assistance system aimed to identify households entitled to free health insurance policies. As stated above, considering that the methodology does not privilege or disadvantage migrants and their family members, the current social assistance and free health insurance systems don't allow targeting this group in any way. Although category-based social assistance and health insurance systems are also available (e.g. for single pensioners, orphan children, etc.), migrants are not covered by them neither. So, currently no special social assistance is being delivered to migrants or their family members left behind.

Georgia used to have an unemployment benefit system, but the amount of benefits was very small (€ 8.8) and thus it had very low impact. The benefit was discontinued in 2005 after introducing the targeted social assistance system.

3.3. Poverty and Social Inclusion

As it was mentioned above, the massive out-migration from Georgia was characteristic for the period of the beginning 1990s. The estimation of poverty level started only in 1996, when the National Statistics Office (Geostat) commenced the Household Budget Survey (HBS), which later in 2003 was modified into the Integrated Household Survey (IHS). This survey is the main source for poverty rate estimation in the country³⁰.

In 2009, 21% of the Georgian population was in relative poverty with respect to a poverty threshold of 60% of median consumption. However, if one takes the poverty threshold according to the subsistence minimum into account, the poverty was much higher and amounted to 41.2%. Poverty rates were much higher in rural than in urban areas indicating the low income in the agricultural sector and the high share of subsistence agriculture. Comparatively high level of poverty is reported for IDP households, households with children and households where pensioners are living together with non-pensioner family members (EC, 2011, p. 89ff). Poverty rate in the households composed by only pensioners is lower (UNICEF Georgia, 2010). This situation suggests that social transfers are more effective for the elderly than for other household members.

The share of household income due to migration remittances is important in the household budget. This is proven by the data of IHS conducted by the Geostat, as well as by the particular surveys focused on migration issues. According to the IHS, approximately 7% of the population residing in Georgia receives remittances from abroad. This corresponds to the estimates that between 6% and 10% of all households have family members working abroad. These remittances compile less than 5% of the average household income in Georgia, but for those households receiving these remittances it is almost a half of their budget – 48.3% (Table 3.1).

³⁰ The calculation of poverty rate in Georgia is based on the household consumption expenditure. Until 2005, the National Statistics of Georgia published absolute poverty rates in relation to the subsistence minimum which was based on a food basket that accounts for 70% of the amount and 30% of non-food items. Since 2006 the poverty threshold was considered to be 60% of the median consumption. Occasionally different researchers publicize the poverty indices obtained using different other thresholds, e.g. 2.5 US Dollar per day.

The findings of the project “Development on the Move” explain better the impact of remittances of migrants on the welfare state of households in Georgia.³¹ The detailed statistical analysis of the results of the survey has shown that remittances improve households’ economic well-being. However, remittances of migrants have a stronger impact on households in urban than in rural areas (Gerber and Torosyan, 2011).

Households receiving remittances from abroad are likely to spend more on personal services, medical care, and debt payments. A higher increase in spending is observed in categories like clothes, electronic goods and furniture. Expenditure on medical care increases, and there is a higher level of spending on education, including the additional fees households pay for higher quality education. Tbilisi residents increase their expenditures on vehicles, while households in rural areas spend more on gifts for others. It is important to note that households receiving remittances have higher savings, and the effect is robust across all types of settlements, with some variation. Even if remittances do not directly contribute to business activities of recipients, such positive effect of remittances as the acquisition of land, or sending young adults to school, appear to play a largely positive role in Georgia’s longer-term economic development.

Data from the Integrated Household Surveys 2004-2009 show that remittances contribute to alleviate poverty - taking into account the poverty threshold of 60% of median consumption, poverty rates would have been higher by 2-2.5% without remittances (Figure 3.4). However, it should be pointed out that in different income groups the share of those households who receive remittances is different. If we look at the remittance-receiving households according to consumption quintiles, 3-4% are from the poorest, first quintile group, while this number is two-three times higher (8-9%) for the wealthiest 5th quintile (Table 3.1). However, if migrants’ remittances are excluded from the household consumption there will be already 15% of remittance receiving households in the first quintile group and only 3-4% of such households will belong to the 5th quintile (Table 3.2). Furthermore, in the poorest quintile the remittances contribute only 1% to the total disposable income, while for the richest quintile remittances’ share is 5% (WB, 2009, p. 51). That proves that remittance receiving households are rarely presented among the poorest households.

Thus, migrants’ remittances contribute to overcoming the poverty threshold and increasing the welfare of poor households. They also diminish the inequality between households, as the Gini-coefficient calculated without migrants’ remittances increases by approximately 2 percentage points (Figure 3.3).

Regarding the regional disparities, the presented data show that households living in urban areas benefit more from remittances, as the share of remittance receiving households there is more than twice higher than in rural areas (Table 3.1). This suggests that remittances increase inter-regional inequalities.

4. Labour market and social development trends in net migration loss/gain regions

4.1. Identification of net migration loss/gain regions

As it has been already mentioned, since its independence and due to external migration Georgia has lost 20% of its total population. Emigration processes for permanent settlement and temporary labour activity abroad have involved different strata of the Georgian society and all Georgian regions participated in these processes in a certain degree.

However, some Georgian regions may be distinguished by the different patterns and extent of migration on the basis of average levels of migration rates. Due to the lack of data on

³¹ The survey was conducted in November-December of 2008 and it was a part of a six-country study of the relationship between migration and development funded by the Global Development Network. The survey included 493 households with absent migrants (33.2%), 347 households with returned migrants (23.4%) and 645 non-migrant households (43.4%) (CRRRC/ISET, 2010).

internal out-migration and in-migration at the level of administrative regions in previous years, we mainly base our analysis on external and internal emigration rates for the years 2003-2008 of the data from Integrated Household Survey of Georgians statistical office. Population change data retrieved from the population censuses of 1989 and 2002 cannot depict a comprehensive picture on migration loss or gain in these regions, since it includes a natural increase³². According to this data, during 1989-2002 a decrease of the number of population is observed in almost all regions of Georgia. The only exception is the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, where a 10% population growth has been detected (Table 4.1). This is mainly caused by the fact that Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti is a bordering region to Abkhazia and a large number of IDPs were settled in this region (approximately 86,000³³). Without IDPs the population decrease in the given region would be around 11%.

The more recent data on external migration between 2003-2008, presented in Table 4.3, confirm that emigration is most pronounced in the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions, where the average yearly shares of emigrated population over 18 are 22.8 and 17.5 per 1000 persons respectively. This is approximately twofold of country's overall indicator (10.1). The Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions are situated in South Georgia, which is populated by ethnic minorities representing more than a half of the region's population. 55% of ethnic minorities of the territory of Georgia (controlled by the Georgian government) are residing in these two regions. The main ethnic minority in Samtskhe-Javakheti are Armenians, while in Kvemo Kartli – Azeris. This migration is mainly temporary and mainly the non-ethnic Georgian population (Armenians, Azeris and Greeks) participate in it. These regions have a long-standing tradition of labour migration; already in the Soviet time some male Armenians from South Georgia used to go for temporary labour migration to Russia. They were leaving Georgia every spring, jobbing as contract workers in Russia (so called "shabashniki") and returned to their families in autumn. The same is true for the Azeris living in the rural area of the Kvemo Kartli region. Findings of a Russian survey about immigrants from Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan (EBRD, 2007c) prove the distinctively high proportion of remittances sent from Russia to the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia. Almost the whole territory of Samtskhe-Javakheti and some parts of Kvemo Kartli regions is mountainous. The major field in both regions is agriculture, namely: cattle-breeding and potato breeding. Industrial production is rather weakly developed in these regions. The biggest industrial city of Kvemo Kartli region is Rustavi, where several big factories are operating.

In the Table 4.2 other data from the Georgian population census of 2002, which are based on the information on family members who emigrated abroad (permanently or temporary) before year 2002, are presented. Despite its deficiency, this data show that for the beginning of 2000s regions Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti had the biggest share of emigrated population after Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. Hence, the regions Kvemo-Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti may be considered as representatives of the *first cluster* in our classification of migration loss regions in Georgia.

According to IHS data, migration is also significant in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and united Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti regions³⁴, where respectively 4.3% and 3.9% of the population on average leave the region every year. However, only 15-20% of the total migration is directed abroad, the majority are internal migrants (Table 4.4). Samegrelo and Imereti are the largest regions of Georgia. Accordingly 10% and 16 % of the country's population is living in these regions. There are many IDPs from Abkhazia in these regions, who are very mobile and constantly change their place of residence. One of the main factors of intensive migration from the Imereti region is the closure of the factories in several industrial cities in this region.

³² The national statistics of Georgia publishes vital statistics at administrative level only from 2001 onwards.

³³ Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons From the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, <http://mra.gov.ge/main/GEO#section/50>, retrieved on 3 January 2012.

³⁴ These two regions are presented as one in the IHS.

Hence, the *second cluster* of regional out-migration is connected with the former industrial cities, which are characterized with intensive flow of population during the whole period after the re-establishment of the independence of Georgia. Former Georgian industrialized rural zones, which during the Soviet time have developed into industrial centres, have lost their function after the sudden cease of economic activity. The examples are the cities of the Imereti region: Kutaisi, Tkibuli and Chiatura in West Georgia and the major city of the Kvemo Kartli region - Rustavi (former city of metallurgists) in East Georgia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, all state activities have ceased in Georgia and after the first waves of departure of ethnic Russians considerably presented in such industrialized areas, native population also started to migrate in significant numbers towards Tbilisi and out of Georgia to find jobs. The majority of households who had maintained a house in rural areas, returned to their villages where there was more possibility for nutrition during that times. Landru describes the situation in Tkibuli as "the skeleton of abundance" and explains: "the completely empty houses are evidence of the departure of whole families, particularly for the suburbs of Tbilisi, if the heads of the households found employment there in construction or as salesmen. But if their education allows them - that is, if their language abilities allow them - they leave their families in the countryside to find resources abroad, generally in Russia" (Landru, 2006).

Mountain areas of Georgia such as Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti are also distinguished by intensive depopulation processes which started already long ago and accelerated by the poor socio-economic conditions in the last decades. We will identify them as the *third cluster* of migration-loss regions. Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti are the smallest regions by the number of population³⁵. They are situated in the west of Georgia on the southern side of the Caucasian mountain. Weakly developed production, lack of fertile lands and difficult climate conditions force the population of the region as a whole to leave their dwellings and move to another region to find a job. It is worth mentioning that due to the small number of residents, the data for this region is not processed separately in social surveys and is being merged with the data of the neighbouring region Imereti.

Those villages which are still inhabited, are mainly populated by elderly people and if no measures are taken, they might be abandoned as well. These events had largest effects on the mountain areas of regions³⁶. For example in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region every 10th village is abandoned and less than 20 people live in half of the rest of the villages. Almost 56% of households of the villages of the Racha-Lechkhumi region consist of one or two, mainly elderly members³⁷. Tianeti, a small settlement in the mountains (in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region) is most often by experts referred to as an example of particularly high emigration. The special migration study implemented in 2008 has detected that one third of households there reported having at least one adult currently abroad (IOM and IFAD, 2009d).

There are some important challenges related to the impact of internal migration on regional development of some other regions. The analysis of internal migration rates for the period 2003-2008 reveal that Guria region is distinguished by the highest intensity of migration from the region to other settlements of Georgia with on average 5.2% of its adult (over 18) population emigrating every year during 2003-2008 (Table 4.4). Guria is a small region³⁸ in western Georgia; 75% of its population lives in villages. In Soviet times, agricultural production industry specialized in the production and processing of tea and citrus was developed there. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and loss of selling markets, tea processing had almost stopped and citrus production had minimized. The cease of traditional production in traditional fields caused an out-flow of population searching for this kind of employment in other regions. Today Guria is one of the poorest regions in the country.

Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, has always been the main destination for internal migrants, as it offers the best employment opportunities for both unskilled and professional labour migrants in the country. Moreover, as the majority of well-known universities are concentrated in

³⁵ 1.2% of country population is living there.

³⁶ A map of administrative divisions of Georgia can be found in Annex 2.

³⁷ Calculated on the base of data by the Georgian population census of 2002.

³⁸ 3.3% of the country population is living in Guria.

Tbilisi, the city is a natural destination for educational migrants as well. So from this point of view, it may be actually classified as a migration-gain region. But due to intensive emigration flows from Georgia in 1990s, it also has lost its native citizens and suffered from a population's decrease of 165,000 people (see Table 4.1). However, according to the recent data from Georgian Civil Register during 2006-2009, each year around 8-9 thousands persons from rural and other urban settlements arrive in Tbilisi for permanent residence.

4.2. Employment, poverty and social exclusion in net migration loss / gain regions

According to the data of the National Statistics Office of Georgia, in 2002-2007 years unemployment rate in the country was 11-13%. Since 2008, unemployment rate has increased and in recent years varies between 16-17%. There is a considerable difference between the rural and urban data. Particularly, the unemployment rate in the rural areas is less than 8%, while in the city it reaches 28%. However, high (self-) employment in mainly subsistence agriculture in rural areas does not safeguard from poverty which is also reflected by higher poverty rates in rural areas. Integrated Household Survey data shows that in 2009 78.8% of employed rural population was working in agriculture, while this indicator is 10.8% in urban areas. Consequently, unemployment in Tbilisi is considerably high compared to other regions.

The poverty level according to 60% of median consumption fluctuated between 21% and 22% countrywide in the period of 2004-2009 (Table 4.5.). It is the lowest in Tbilisi – 13.6-17.1%. Until 2007 it was also low in Samtskhe-Javakheti at 8.2%, but it increased sharply in 2009 to 26.2%. Major reasons for it could be the war between Georgia and Russia and the world economic crisis of 2008. Both of these events had their impact on remittances. Besides, Tbilisi, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti have lower poverty rates compared to national average. These are all regions with intensive migration flows and remittances might have an impact here. The average poverty rates are highest in the Kakheti region and the mountainous region Mtskheta-Mtianeti as well as in Shida Kartli which borders with Tskhinvali region and suffered a considerable damage during the war with Russia in 2008.

The material deprivation index is considerably higher in rural than in urban areas (Table 4.8). The lowest deprivation is observed in Tbilisi. In Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti this index almost equals the average index of the country, while in the regions Guria, Samegrelo and united Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti regions it is significantly higher compared to the national average. As it seems, notwithstanding the fact that the households with migrants most frequently are purchasing long-term consumption goods, this is not enough to eliminate material deprivation in these regions.

As for the access to healthcare services, Tbilisi is distinguished among the regions, accumulating the majority of highly qualified medical personnel. In contrast, remote and mountainous settlements face the problem of long distances from regional and district centres and bad quality of connecting roads. In order to increase healthcare quality, healthcare infrastructure is being improved and new hospitals are being built in every region. In order to facilitate access to health care also for the poorest population, health insurance is provided for free, as part of the social assistance benefits (see also chapter 3.2). Despite the fact that the private health insurance system is developing rapidly, only 40% of population is insured at the moment and healthcare is inaccessible for the majority of the population.

The highest percentage of social assistance recipients is reported in the Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti region (Table 4.8). 42.7% of households of this region receive financial assistance, while 62.8% has free healthcare insurance. The share of beneficiaries is slightly less in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, while in Samegrelo, Guria and Imereti it is slightly higher compared to the average country rate. The lowest number of social assistance beneficiaries is reported from Tbilisi (6.2%).

5. Impact of migration on vulnerable groups

5.1. Women

Available studies on migration in Georgia show that due to high costs of migration usually only one family member of the household leaves and remits money back to Georgia³⁹. According to the WB 2005 migration survey in Georgia, up to 85% of 1200 interviewed returnees have migrated abroad alone, with no other household member accompanying him/her. Hence, for couples a migration of one partner in majority of cases causes a spousal separation that may prolong during the whole migration period.

Unfortunately, there are no studies available in Georgia allowing analysing the issues related to the impact of migration on women left behind in their families and society, on their behaviour and position in an extended family, on emotional well-being and personal problems.

However, several studies are devoted to the feminization of migration flows from Georgia, specifics of female labour in definite countries of destination (e.g. Greece), financial support to family members left behind, and impact of female migration on their position in the family and society. Our findings presented below are based on limited research on female migration in Georgia available for this moment, which are mainly focused on the behaviour and experience of migrating women.

Experts found that in the new economic conditions, Georgian women manage to adapt better to the changing economic situation than men, find new types of employment more easily than men, and felt more responsibility toward their families, while men remained rather apathetic and depressed (UNDP, 2008; Zurabishvili and Zurabishvili, 2010). The study of female migration from a small rural community in the Georgian mountain area Tianeti (IOM, 2009d), provides the picture of a typical situation of female migration, when women rarely accompany their husbands; on the contrary, they are the only family members to migrate, although they may bring their husbands abroad after establishing themselves in the receiving country.

In this regards, specialists note that female emigration challenges traditional gender perceptions of the “divisions of labour and responsibilities; women become breadwinners and transnational mothers, whereas men lose their role as family providers” (Lundkvist-Houndoumadi, 2010, p. 53).

Of course, this process is quite painful for such traditional society as the Georgian one. Besides, the participation in the local labour force is the norm for women in Georgia, mainly because of the Soviet labour policy, while labour migration has traditionally been a male-dominated activity in Georgia. Hence, female migration presents a challenge to these traditional gender norms.

On the basis of semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in Tbilisi in 2007 with nine female international migrants who have returned to Georgia, Hofmann and Buckley concluded that Georgian women, motivated by poverty and assisted by strong international networks when migrating abroad suffer from the local norms stigmatizing the absence of woman from the family and neglecting family responsibilities. “Two cognitive strategies for adapting to their norm challenging behaviour emerged from the interviews. First, all of the respondents present labour migration as their only available option for economic survival, rather than an active choice among various options. This was particularly true among women who did not have husbands who could support them. Secondly, most respondents were quick to differentiate their individual migration experience from situations linked to stigmatizing or “bad” migration” (Hofmann and Buckley, 2008, p. 24). Authors mention that in the interviews, women tended to speak less about the money they earned, and more about how difficult it was for them to be separated from their families, particularly their children (Ibid, p. 15).

M. Lundkvist-Houndoumadi, who in 2008 interviewed female migrants from Georgia in Athens and implemented anthropological research in Georgia, reports about the inner conflict

³⁹ See footnote 18.

experienced by the Georgian migrant women due to support of both, the traditional gendered expectations and actual practices. "...Narratives of condemnation and admiration of the emigrated women exist alongside each other. The women's own narratives often constitute ways of avoiding the condemnation by trying to adapt the gendered expectations to their altered practices. The way the emigrated women describe their emigration is often a process by which they seek to justify their choices [...] It was generally reported by both men and women, migrants and non-migrants that females are better migrants than males because they can earn and send home more money" (Lundkvist-Houndoumadi, 2010, p. 51).

In order to (re-)gain respectability from the family left apart, Georgian female migrants try hard to justify their separation from the family and in particular their children by sending money from abroad more and/or more frequently. In order to be able to contribute more to the financial support of their family members, women deprive themselves of basic needs: they do not take days off, hardly limit their private expenses, work extra hours, take extra weekend jobs, etc., thus often ending up with serious psychological and health problems (Zurabishvili, 2010, p. 78).

Available studies show that women who spend a long time abroad experience particular difficulties in reintegration and adaptation in homeland after return. Besides, they also experience problems in adapting to the differences existing between the social and cultural conditions in Georgia and abroad, especially obvious in peripheries of Georgia with low developed infrastructure. Hence, they wish again to migrate. According to the survey of returnees conducted in 2009-2010, 37.5% of the female returnees from Greece wish to migrate again (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation, 2010, p. 47).

5.2. Children

There are no official data in Georgia concerning children left behind by their parents. However, cases of mothers leaving their minor children behind with their relatives seem to be frequent. As stated by Zurabishvili on female migrants from the village Tianeti "...similarly to other cases of female migration - such as Central American, Mexican and Caribbean - female migrants from Tianeti become 'transnational mothers', taking care of other people's children and leaving their own children in the care of husbands and/or other members of their families, such as grandparents" (Zurabishvili, 2010, p. 78).

The share of women who have left their husbands and families in Georgia among the total number of female migrants is estimated by experts to be 35%, of which 37% have children (Jashi, 2010, p. 3). Hence, having the children in Georgia does not seem to impede migration. Cases when children are abandoned by both parents seem to be more rarely in Georgia, as usually only one of the partners leaves for temporary migration abroad.

According to a special study implemented by USAID on monitoring the gender situation in Georgia, specific economic, social and migration factors have altered the sustainability of the family structure and manifested the delegation of gender roles. Consequently, the parental influence of families on children and young people has weakened in Georgia, which manifested in the growth of juvenile delinquency and problems associated with homelessness and begging (USAID, 2003, p. 39).

The results of one small-scale qualitative research⁴⁰ devoted to the study of psycho-emotional impact of migration on children left behind in Georgia have confirmed a heavy negative impact of parental absence on the emotional well-being of children, even in case of sufficient care provided by care-givers, be they members of the extended family or closest relatives: "Conducted analysis revealed that children demonstrate separation anxiety by different behaviours, such as crying and whining, clinginess, silence, extreme shyness, protesting going to kindergarten, truancy, low interest in schoolwork and consequent

⁴⁰ In frame of study supported by CRRC-Georgia in 2007 6 families with children aged from 6 to 18 left with any migrated parent were interviewed. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight children in total, their parents and extended family members/surrogate caretakers.

disruption in academic performance, unwillingness to interact with other people including peers, disobeying school rules and fighting, anxiety and irritation, difficulties to go to sleep/nightmares, and stomach problems. The analysis also revealed that, although separation anxiety significantly lessens several months after separation from parent(s) children never completely recover from distress caused by parental migration, particularly by the maternal one” (Svintradze and Ubiria, 2007, p. 20).

Interviews conducted with Georgian women-migrants in Greece have shown that migration of women sometimes raises problems not only with minor children: “Often the boys left back in Georgia find themselves under unfavourable influence of the street. We have a lot of cases when grannies call the parents asking them to return, no more being able to handle the situation... One of the women-respondents told that her daughter got married when she was away. Being left all alone with her problems she decided to get married “to have a foothold in her life” (People’s Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation, 2010, p. 39).

5.3. Elderly

The impact of emigration on the position of elderly people left behind still does not seem to raise serious concerns in Georgia. However, elderly parents left behind by their children and not being sufficiently provided by the state also became a vulnerable group of society. In the condition of limited institutional arrangements for elderly in Georgia (there are just 2 state owned homes for the elderly) the problems of alternative elderly care providers in case of children migrating abroad might become an issue of serious concern.

5.4. Post-conflict Refugees and IDPs

For almost two decades, the plight of IDPs remains one of the most painful aspects of the Georgian reality. Constituting above 5% of the whole society, internal displacement also posed significant and multifaceted challenges on the socio-economic development and the stabilisation of the country, while many IDPs continue to live almost in the same dire conditions as fifteen years ago. The majority of IDPs remained, and still remains, poor and vulnerable, their housing conditions are often still abominable, they do not have regular and adequate sources of income, they are not sufficiently integrated into the host societies, and there is little hope of return to their homes. The issue of IDP livelihood is among the most important policy challenges in Georgia, particularly after the war of August 2008.

Inadequate housing remains one of the main problems IDPs are facing in Georgia. About half of IDPs live in private accommodation while the other half are housed in government-provided accommodation, including former military barracks, schools, health resorts and municipal buildings, so called collective centres (CC). The majority of CC has not been refurbished for nearly 20 years, leaving residents in poor conditions with insufficient privacy and space. Shared kitchens and bathrooms are generally dilapidated and unhygienic, electrical wiring is often unsafe and buildings are poorly insulated. Hence, living conditions in most of the CC are extremely poor, and the residents of the CCs are considered as the most vulnerable IDPs. At the same time UNHCR reported that IDPs in private accommodation live in similar or even worse conditions, with over 50% of homes in need of refurbishment (Walicki, 2011, p. 70).

In recent years the Georgian government makes efforts to buy houses for IDPs living in CC or gift the space where they are currently living. In a move to crack down on squatters in the Georgian capital, the government in August of 2010 started to evict IDPs from private and state-owned Tbilisi buildings not classified as official shelters. The process stopped amid a public outcry and expressions of concern from the international community that resulted into various consultations about the standard procedure for IDP evictions. In January of 2011, the government started the evictions again, targeting 22 Tbilisi buildings. An estimated 500 families – over 1,500 people – were affected. Evicted IDPs were transported, with their belongings, to the accommodation of their choice - often, a relative or friend’s nearby apartment; in the case of 39 families, to government-provided housing outside the capital.

IDPs, who were evicted from the capital Tbilisi complain about the systematic lack of basic utilities and occasional sub-par building conditions (Corso, 2011).

After the 2008 war over South Ossetia, Georgia received substantial foreign financial aid to accommodate and integrate refugees not only from that area, but in general. After nearly 17 years of indolence and indifference, Georgia has now pledged to actively address the problems of refugees from Abkhazia and to provide accommodation by 2013. However, until today such attempts often remain insufficient, since the newly built refugee settlements are located in remote and structurally weak areas where the new settlers remain unemployed (Gvalia, 2011).

According to the most referred 2008 Survey on Housing and Socio-Economic Conditions of 3000 IDPs households, the economic situation of IDP households is highly alarming. Every sixth IDP household regards itself as extremely poor, claiming to be constantly starving, while approximately the same number of households would consider their economical conditions as so hard that they hardly manage to feed themselves. Almost one half (48.1%) of IDP households state that their income (or their harvest) is enough only for nutrition, while 17.3% of households are more or less satisfied with their economical conditions (Nadareishvili and Tsakadze, 2008, p.20).

As an abovementioned study has shown, social assistance (including pensions) is the main source of income for the IDPs. Average amount of social assistance per IDP household equals € 61.7 (135 GEL). IDP assistance and pension constitute the largest share of it. Every fourth household states that the social assistance is the only financial source they have to provide the household with food.

The high incidence of poverty is directly linked with the high rates of unemployment among IDPs. According to abovementioned survey, only 31.3% IDPs at the working age (16-65) are employed throughout the country. The majority of them (more than one half) work in private or state establishments, approximately one fifth is self-employed, while more than one tenth work on their own land plots and approximately the same share has some kind of temporary employment (Nadareishvili and Tsakadze, 2008, p. 50). However, employment statistics even based on survey data may be misleading, as for example those working on their own land plots are not considered unemployed. Therefore, IDPs living in rural areas, due to the lack of sufficient agricultural land or its lower fertility, may experience much higher food insecurity than other rural dwellers involved in subsistence or commercial agriculture, even if they are not considered as unemployed.

Comprehensive and current data on the health status of those displaced in the 1990s is unavailable, but according to a study commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme in 2004, the overall health status of IDPs, particularly of those living in collective centres, was worse than that of the general population (Zoidze and Djibuti, 2004). There is no entirely reliable and consistent information on morbidity of IDPs. However, considering unhealthy life style, low quality of life, continuous stress caused by an uncertain future, and the impact of traumatic memories among IDPs, aggravated by a frequent lack of access to quality medical services, morbidity is expected to be much higher among IDPs than among the general population.

By the time the a.m. survey was conducted, 45% of IDP households were given a loan in order to satisfy health, nutritional and other everyday needs. About half of the IDP households have one or more members with social health insurance. Due to worse economic conditions of the IDPs in small towns and villages in comparison to large cities, most of IDPs living in small towns and villages (two thirds) are included in the vulnerable family's assistance program and therefore are covered by the social health insurance anyway. This is not true for IDPs living in Tbilisi where only one third of IDPs are insured. This difference is also observed between those IDPs who are privately accommodated and those from collective centres: two thirds of the households from collective centres are insured compared to merely one third in the private accommodations.

One additional aspect of IDP vulnerability is the frequent separation of families due to labour migration. According to 2008 survey on Housing and Socio-Economic Conditions of IDPs, countrywide, 100 IDP households have 19 migrated members on average, while estimates on number of migrants in all Georgian households according to IHS for the same period do not give figures higher than 8 emigrated members on average per 100 Georgian households. The share of migrants in IDP households is the biggest in Tbilisi and Imereti – 25-26 migrated members per each 100 households. Approximately two thirds of migrants live in Russia, 7.8% in Greece, 5.4% in the Ukraine and 3.3% in Germany (Nadareishvili and Tsakadze, 2008, p.53-54).

While a migrant family member may help to improve the economic situation of a household, those left behind often acquire additional vulnerability due to a lack of physical capacity in the family. At the same time this would also mean a much higher number of households with women as breadwinners, single mothers and family heads, which is an explicit illustration of an additional gender-related vulnerability dimension of IDPs.

5.5. Roma

The Roma community is the most marginalized and disadvantaged ethnic community in Georgia. By the population census of 1989 the number of people considering themselves as belonging to this ethnic group in Georgia amounted 1744. According to last estimates, the Georgian Roma community consists of approximately 1000 persons (Sordia, 2009), excluding the Roma community in Abkhazia. However, in 2003 the total number of Roma population was thought to be up to 1,500 persons (HRIDC, 2003). Roma settlements today are scattered across Georgia, none holding a population of more than 300 people. In Tbilisi, where the largest community can be found, approximately 250-300 people live in rented apartments and homes.

The overall situation for the Roma in Georgia has significantly deteriorated since the Soviet period, leaving the population practically deprived of any means to retrieve themselves from their often devastating circumstances, thus causing emigration of Roma population since Georgia's independence. It must also be noted that Roma people have preserved connections with their relatives in a large Roma community in Russia, where they used to travel with a certain frequency before. Many Roma in Georgia are eager to rejoin their relatives who moved there in the past decade (Szakonyi, 2008, p. 17).

Extreme poverty, unemployment, lack of education and health care, and isolation from the majority society comprise several of the major problems the community as a whole is facing. Notwithstanding is the fact that problems in the Roma community as a whole have remained unchanged over the past several years (Sordia, 2009).

Roma in Georgia are engaged in distinctive economic activities. Those living in more urban areas, such as Kobuleti, Kutaisi and Tbilisi, are able to engage in petty trade through buying cheap goods from Turkish traders and selling them on the street. Women generally do most of the trading, whereas men largely stay home to take care of their children. In the villages, the situation is quite different. The majority of the male population is out of work. Irregular employment comes in form of construction jobs. Depending on the available means of public transport, women along with their children travel to larger towns and cities for two or three days a week to beg for money throughout the day (HRIDC, 2003, p. 8).

A lack of relevant identification documents and the issue of residential registration is one of the most important problems for the Roma population living in Georgia. The possession of documents by a Roma person largely depends on the age of the respondent. For those born during the Soviet Union, the frequency of registered documents is extremely high. However, the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of a weakened Georgian state hindered many Roma from filing out official documents of birth, death, pensions, etc. Besides Roma children are usually being born at home, not in a hospital, so extra steps are needed to be taken to acquire forms and to register. Internally displaced Roma from Abkhazia are almost completely without documents, as they were forced to flee from the region during the civil war

in 1992-93, leaving most possessions behind. On the whole, however, most Roma living in urban areas are most frequently in possession of document (Szakonyi, 2008, p. 11).

Very low rates of school attendance were observed across all Roma communities. This tendency can be explained by several reasons, first and foremost by the fact that parents do not insist on school attendance of their children. One of the reasons for such attitude is the high level of poverty in the community which prevents parents from purchasing the necessary school supplies, clothes, and textbooks. Children are also sent to trade or beg; this is an additional source of income for the family. In some cases parents are out at work during the whole day and prefer their children to stay at home and perform household duties. Hence, the vast majority of school-age children either remains at home throughout the day or is in the streets begging for money.

As in the situation of education and pensions, the lack of registration prevents many Roma from acquiring medical care. Facilities are available near almost every settlement, but even if proper documentation exists, Roma cannot take advantage of the health care offered due to lack of money. Most children have never been to a doctor in their life, and thus lack all immunizations and protective treatments. Children are largely born at home and exposed to numerous health complications as well. A high death rate among infants and children and a very low life expectancy have been two very notable characteristics stated by many of the Roma interviewed (Ibid, p. 13).

Furthermore, not being registered with the state authorities, Roma are deprived of the benefits that the Georgian state offers to its citizens – from IDP assistance for persons displaced from the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict to pensions for elderly people and free education for children.

Migration patterns of Roma may be identified as an active seasonal internal migration, as roughly half of the Roma interviewed in 2007 in the various settlements claimed to have been engaged in some sort of internal migration within Georgia (Szakonyi, 2008). Usually, one parent, the mother in most cases, with several children, moves during the summer to capitalize from the large number of tourists visiting the Black Sea Coast. The Roma settlement in Kobuleti (small town at the sea side) for example sees its numbers doubled from May to September, with relatives from Tbilisi joining the already cramped residents. However, relatively stable populations are found in each of the settlements during the winter.

In terms of outward migration, many Roma in western Georgia, through a long history of nomadism prior to their arriving in Georgia, claim to have roots as well as contacts in countries as far as Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, some of them – in Azerbaijan. It seems that the local network of the Roma community helps those who wish to move to Georgia. In the recent period it was announced that among various people engaged in begging in the different places of Tbilisi Roma who came to Georgia from Azerbaijan were also mentioned⁴¹.

6. Policy responses

6.1. Encouragement of circular migration

A specific feature of the Georgian labour migration is its illegality. Accordingly, Georgian migrants usually rely on unofficial, and often illegal, migration industry – the reason why Georgian labour migration is rather expensive. Georgian migrants use different methods to reach a host country and find a job there. Most of them are unable to get official work permits and work mainly on the “black” labour market (IOM, 2000; Badurashvili, 2005; People’s Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation, 2010).

At the same time there is some practise of sending Georgians for work abroad through intermediate employment agencies. Private employment agencies and individuals are currently the only suppliers of job matching services on the Georgian labor market having no competition from public employment service which was abolished by the government in 2006.

⁴¹ Based on information from www.globalvoicesonline.org dated 27.10. 2010 and accessed on April, 5, 2011.

At present, no legislation regulating private employment agencies and labour migration exist. The main official private agency carrying out recruitment abroad in Georgia is “Red Star”. The company carries out the first selection of candidates with whom representatives of the final employer conduct personal interviews. Most other private agencies do not identify themselves as private employment agencies. The International Labour Organization implemented in 2007 a special study on employment agencies in Georgia and concluded that officially no private employment agency exists at the moment apart from vacancies published online and few foreign companies employing Georgian citizens or implementing cultural or educational programs abroad (ILO, 2007, p. 11). And the situation in Georgia has not changed since that time.

From time to time, the Georgian mass-media publishes bad practice examples of recruitment of Georgians for labour abroad, what however does not diminish the number of persons wishing to use the services. The last example (in 2010) was a scandal with Georgian labour workers arriving to Qatar who were not able to perform the job due to insufficient professional skills. According to the information provided to authors by the national project coordinator from ILO office in Georgia Mr. Aleksandria, a private employment agency (Red Star) organized this trip, all these people had proved by certificate their professional skills, and the agency did not have either wish or capacity to test the skills of applicants case-by-case. So, these people appeared abroad without money, with no valid contract and in need of assistance of Georgian representatives.

In this regard it is important to mention that there are no bilateral agreements regulating the labour migration flows of Georgian citizens abroad. Numerous attempts to develop a labour migration law in Georgia have failed for various reasons. The cooperation with different countries aimed at regulating labour migration has also been unsuccessful.

Experts state that Georgia currently has “...neither a migration policy nor legislation to regulate inward and outward movement of citizens despite the importance of migration for the country and the national economy. In addition, there is no control over employment agencies and labour migrants are not registered. Meanwhile, foreigners can enter Georgia without any difficulty, get employment permission freely and change their status easily. This liberal policy is aimed at boosting international tourism in Georgia. On the other hand, however, it is a major stumbling block to easing the visa regime with the European Union” (CIPDD, 2009, p. 3). While this partly reflects capacity constraints and the lack of an appropriate infrastructure, it is also the consequence of liberal economic policies that the Georgian government has embraced. As a result, there are no legal mechanisms to protect Georgian labour migrants when their rights are violated.

At the same time, the Georgian government expresses its intention to stimulate circular migration: “Georgia’s main priority is facilitation of legal labour movement including agreement on labour and circular migration opportunities. Accordingly, we consider as a priority projects related to exchange of information concerning the labour market and related legislation” (Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, 2010, p. 39).

In 2009, Georgia together with the European Commission and 16 EU Member States moved to the implementation phase of the Mobility Partnership (MP), which is an important event encouraging circular migration. The MP is aimed to strengthen the collaboration between Georgia and EU Member States on different aspects of migration management such as labour migration, readmission of irregular migrants, reintegration of returnees, validation of their professional skills etc. It is aimed at supporting the legal employment of Georgian citizens in EU countries and is expected to result in the liberalization of the visa regime between Georgia and EU and in the development of circular migration. At present, however, the focus of the MP implementation lays on the readmission and reintegration of forced returnees.

In the opinion of the interviewed experts from IOM, Georgia may benefit from Mobility Partnership, e.g. through models of bilateral agreements on circular migration used by some of the EU Member States such as Bulgaria and Romania. On the other hand, also the old

MS, in particular those with rich experience as host countries for labour immigration may provide their best practices. France, as the first EU Member State, offered to Georgia the conclusion of a bilateral agreement on circular migration, which would provide possible employment for 500-600 persons per year under a short-term scheme. However, as an expert from ILO mentioned, the signing of the agreement that was planned for October 2010, still has not taken place, as the Georgian side is not yet ready for its signing and implementation.

The main obstacle for effective improvements in the fields of facilitating labour migration from Georgia is that the government follows the idea of liberal economic policy and does not consider necessary any management of labour market in Georgia, supposing that it will be regulated by itself in the conditions of market economy. For now there is no appropriate infrastructure for labour market management, no state employment agencies, no registration of unemployed, no benefits for them, and no regular information on Georgian labour market supply and demand. In these conditions, taking any effective measures for the facilitation of circular migration for Georgians seems to be impossible.

6.2. Encouragement of return migration and support of integration of returnees

The main Georgian authority responsible for reintegration of returnees is the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees, (MIDPOCRA). In July 2007, a new division on migration has been established within the Directorate on migration, asylum and repatriation with the task to monitor the migration flows and prepare, in co-operation with other ministries, a migration policy with implementation measures.

For the moment, there is a working group on “migration strategy” under State Migration Commission (SMC) acting since the end of 2010 as an advisory body to the Georgian government and leading the working group to draft the migration strategy for the government. According to the information provided in October 2011 by the Director of the project “Support Reintegration of Georgian Returning Migrants and the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Readmission Agreement - Targeted Initiative for Georgia” (TIG) Ms. Bela Hejna, this is to be drafted by December 2011, but they expect it to take longer (mid-2012). The document is being prepared in collaboration with international organizations (as International Organization for Migration, Danish Refugee Council, government of Czech Republic, and others) in frame of project TIG. On April 12, 2012 on the meeting of SMC, the draft of this policy document has been presented⁴². According to the information recently provided by Marc Hulst, Programme Coordinator from IOM Mission to Georgia, the final draft version will be available soon and then shared with the international community and civil society for commenting, before it will be sent to the government for approval.

International agencies continue to support the process of integration of Georgia to the European Neighborhood Policy of the European Union and even activated their intervention after the inclusion of Georgia to the Mobility Partnership process.

In order to support reintegration capacity in Georgia, EC allocated € 3 million for a 3 years project in the frame of the mobility partnership “Targeted Initiative on supporting of Georgian returning migrants and implementation of EU-Georgia readmission agreement”. An additional contribution of EUR 20,000 is provided by the Italian Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies. The Project is being implemented by the government of Czech Republic in conjunction with 8 other EU Member States. The International Organization for Migration, Mission to Georgia, is its implementing partner, which also provides administrative support to the project. The main aim of the Targeted Initiative for Georgia is to strengthen migration management by increasing the capacities of competent authorities in Georgia, to support

⁴² http://www.justice.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=23&info_id=4318 – dated 12.04.2012 and accessed on April, 29, 2012

dignified sustainable return and reintegration and to address challenges posed by irregular migration.

In frame of this Targeted Initiative for Georgia in MIDPOCRA in March 2011 a Mobility Centre has been created with three pillars of activities: (1) migration policy development; (2) reintegration of returning migrants (counseling, guidance; VET training and business start-ups); (3) dissemination of information on what the mobility centre offers to the consulates and migrants abroad. Specific websites where migrants can make an online application are available as well (www.informedmigration.ge). As the Director of the a.m. targeted initiative Ms. Bela Hejna has mentioned during the interview on 07.09.2011 that so far the centre has received 150 clients and 80 of them received some kind of support. Half of the clients were forced returnees as they are implementing the readmission agreements between Georgia and the EU, and the other clients were volunteer returnees. Until the end of project (December 2013), it is aimed to reach 1100 beneficiaries and provide 400 trainings.

Within the project two Job Counseling and Placement Centers (JCP) have been established in Tbilisi and Kutaisi, in addition to the already functioning seven JCP centers operated by IOM - Georgia. These two centers will be active until January 2014 supported by the EU funds and they accept only returnees as clients.

IOM-Georgia has established a first Job Counselling Centre in Tbilisi in June 2007 and then in September 2008 opened a second one in Batumi. The goal of the centres was to prevent illegal migration and maximize the integration of returnees through an increase of employment opportunities for individuals in Georgia more efficiently. In 2010, IOM with the financial support from USAID, has created an employment facilitation network in Georgia by expanding Job Counseling and Placement (JCP) Centers in Tbilisi and Batumi and creating five new JCP Centers in Kutaisi, Poti, Akhaltsikhe, Gori and Telavi. They are strategically located to ensure that a higher number of beneficiaries is reached and the project's impact is maximized.

The main activities of this network are:

- *Job counselling/referral, and outreach to employers*
- *Qualification/Skills Development*
- *Micro Financing*

A coordinator of one regional JCP centre (in Gori) stated in a discussion that the lack of successful small business activities in Georgia is caused not only by the fact that people in Georgia do not have sufficient funds for it, but also by the lack of knowledge and skills to organize and more importantly make this business sustainable. That is why these regional centres conduct special training before granting funds for business-initiatives. In 2010, several returnees received a grant, half of them were IDPs. According to the expert, the volume of the amounts granted is rather small ranging between one and two thousand USD (€716-1433).

The JCP centres accept anyone who requests employment services including IDPs, migrants and returnees, as no state employment agency exists in Georgia. According to the information updated on 30 June 2011, in total 2275 job seekers attended vocational (re-) training courses and 4275 people have been employed through the JCP centres' network. Facilitating availability of employment opportunities during 2011, IOM has organized two job fairs in Tbilisi and Batumi in the field of tourism and services, as these fields are very much promoted now by the Georgian government. IOM has created a database of 16000 jobseekers' profiles.

The funding of the regional centres will be terminated in February 2012 and the future of the centres is not clear. Considering the need for additional funds to sustain these centres, the central government is not willing to overtake them yet. IOM started to negotiate with some local authorities in the regions on this issue. For the moment it is already decided that the government of the autonomous republic of Ajara will support the functioning of JPC in Batumi and the municipality of Rustavi will also support the local JPC.

One of the pillars of the project “Targeted Initiative for Georgia” implementing in the frame of EU-Georgia Mobility Partnership is to address challenges posed by irregular migration through support of dignified sustainable return.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Georgia has the longest history of implementing return and reintegration programmes in Georgia. Assistance of individuals on voluntary return and reintegration in Georgia has started in 2003 and by information updated in April 2011⁴³, 1338 individuals were covered by this programme. According to the information of IOM, the great majority of these people are still in the country and continue their business activities initiated by the programme.

Individual return and reintegration assistance provided by IOM-Georgia includes:

- provision of social-economic, medical, housing and business related information prior to departure,
- meeting at Tbilisi airport and organization of onward transportation to final destination,
- introductory counselling,
- job counselling,
- referral to relevant medical institutions and doctors, assistance in testing and treatment,
- assistance in small business start-up.

However, according to expert opinions most efforts were targeted toward rejected asylum seekers, who represent a small proportion of returnees. Limited awareness and a small number of countries with programmes also limited the scale of the initiative (CRRRC, 2007, p. 52).

Georgian office of IOM also coordinates the European Commission - United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) which is funded by the European Union through its 'Thematic Programme for the Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum'. The initiative is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is managing the programme in Georgia. This project was launched by IOM in Georgia in February 2010.

The JMDI projects funded in Georgia have countrywide as well as regional focus and aim to help to find new ways of making migration work for development, with particular emphasis on maximizing its impact on regional development in the Imereti region and Poti. The four projects funded through the EC-UN Joint Initiative on Migration and Development in Georgia aim at utilizing the migrant potential for enhancing the economic development of Georgia. This includes strengthening links with Georgian Diaspora to facilitate business development in Georgia, promoting cooperation between migrant communities and Georgian local authorities to contribute to socio-economic development at the community level, improving skills and qualifications of returned migrants and integrating them into the Georgian labour market.

The total funding for the projects in Georgia is around € 735,000. The projects are implemented by the selected Georgian civil society organizations in partnership with their respective EU based counterparts from the Netherlands, Germany and Latvia.

One of the distinguished JMDI projects is: “Integration of Georgian Migrants into Labour Market” aiming to achieve reintegration of high qualified returned migrants and IDPs into the Georgian labour market. The Georgian Employment Association (GEA), in cooperation with the German Employment Association, is implementing the project. This project devotes to the area of capacity building of returnees, as well as IDPs, and their integration in the labour market, as it is believed that this enables the mentioned target group to stay in their country of origin. According to the information available for the moment, the abovementioned project can be considered as the starting point for creating a database on returnees in the future.

⁴³ No updated information at the website is available for the moment.

According to the information provided by the GEA, together with ILO, they support small business initiatives and try to improve existing businesses for Georgian returnees. They also provide counselling, guidance and job placement for potential migrants in order to avoid their emigration. So far, 85 returnees and IDPs were employed through the facilitation of GEA, and 17 people have started their own business within the Migration and Development Project.

As Ms Makharashvili (from GEA) expressed in the discussion, the main approach of GEA is the idea to involve employers into the process of reintegration of returnees and other target groups of the population. As GEA is an association with more than 800 collective members, it has the capacity and practical tools to monitor demands of employees, as well as adapt and meet corresponding supply from the labour market. In frame of the project migrant-returnees are trained and acquired professional skills to work in different areas under demand. GEA pays for vocational training. One of the best practices of their recent activity is the employment of 42 returnees and IDPs in a big supermarket named “Goodwill” in Tbilisi. 42 migrants and IDPs passed the interview, were trained for 4 different positions, increased their qualification and were employed in this supermarket.

In the frame of Migration and Development Initiative, there are 3 other projects⁴⁴ devoted to this issue of interest, but information concerning the impact is not available yet.

The project “Georgian Diaspora for Development in Kutaisi” encourages entrepreneurship and enhances entrepreneurship skills by promoting business and management training for people in the city of Kutaisi as well as among the Georgian Diaspora in the Netherlands, and by supporting small and medium enterprises (SME) in Kutaisi.

The project “Turnaround Migration for Development (TMDP)” also has a regional impact and is implemented in city Poti in West Georgia. Its goal is to use the knowledge and experience of Georgian as well as foreign migrants in order to train 20 trainers in the city of Poti. 10 best trained trainers will be employed by the Poti Professional Retraining Center where they will train minimum 200 individuals in 5 most wanted professions. The training programs and methodologies will be designed by the Dutch Universities. Within 3 years, a minimum of 600 citizens can share the knowledge and practice of skilled migrants obtained in European companies and organizations. Information about trained individuals will be collected in a databank and introduced to the major employers of the city. This initiative aims to create 24 new job placements in the city of Poti.

The project “Promoting Cooperation among Migrants communities and Local Governments for Local Development” focuses on the improvement of capacities of local authorities by developing a migration system in the region of Imereti, thus making a better use of the capacities of migrants and their communities for social and economic development at the community level. This goal is to be achieved through an information campaign in local communities of the Imereti region, creation of migration offices at local authorities, provision of training and development of operational procedures to ensure efficient performance by local authorities, etc.

The importance of the Diaspora to Georgia has been emphasized by the creation of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues. The office has organized Diaspora days, the festival of Georgians living abroad “Chveneburebi” and other cultural activities such as inviting scientists from the Diaspora to participate in scientific forums. The office has also been working with the Diaspora to help attract foreign investments to Georgia. For example, in 2010, the Diaspora was actively engaged in inviting businessmen to invest in Georgia⁴⁵. However, there is no information on whether or not these activities were successful and contributed to increasing foreign investments in Georgia.

In September 2011 with the support of TBC Bank, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia on Diaspora Issues organized a business-conference named “Back to Georgia.” Georgian businessmen from different countries of the world, foreign investors and the representatives

⁴⁴ Georgian Diaspora for Development in Kutaisi (1); Turnaround Migration for Development (2); Promoting Cooperation among Migrants communities and Local Governments for Local Development (3).

⁴⁵ Retrieved from: <http://diaspora.gov.ge/>, date of access: 10 September, 2011.

of Georgia in Trade Chamber attended the conference. TBC Bank and its partner organizations made presentations of several big projects which are being implemented throughout the country. Among them were the project of “Lisi Development” and its “Green City”, also some projects of Tbilisi Mayor and the National Agency of tourism, etc. The aim of the conference was to present Georgian business climate for Georgian businessmen working outside the country aiming at their further participation in the development of country’s economy. The coordination between Georgian businesses and Georgian businessmen outside the country aims at implementing mutual economic and investment projects.

6.3. Reintegration of IDPs

In 2009, the Georgian government adopted an updated action plan⁴⁶ to implement its strategy for IDPs which concerned all internally displaced population and aimed to provide housing, promote socio-economic integration and inform people about decisions affecting them. Elements of that action plan are yet to be implemented, especially in relation to the wave of IDPs from 1992-93.

During the winter of 2008/2009, the Government of Georgia rapidly constructed homes for the persons internally displaced during the war with Russia. Finally, a total of 38 new settlements were completed in the regions Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli and Mtskheta-Tianeti where nearly 20,000 IDPs are living. During 2009 and 2010 the government continued to provide housing solutions to IDPs displaced in the 1990s and in 2008. It refurbished collective centres, offered IDPs ownership of their assigned collective centre space, built new housing and offered cash in lieu of housing. It also sent contractors to new settlements built for IDPs displaced in 2008 to address reported housing defects. By late 2010, about 6,800 families displaced in the 1990s had signed purchase agreements in approximately 330 collective centres, and 8,000 families displaced in 2008 had received a house, apartment or cash. However, most of the progress was achieved in 2009, and the momentum had slowed in 2010. While the living conditions of many IDPs improved, the impact of the government’s efforts differed: the quality of refurbishment varied, the criteria to select collective centres where residents could become owners were unclear, many IDPs who signed purchase agreements had not received their ownership documents by the end of the year, and many IDPs could not make an informed choice between the options open to them since they were provided only by sparse and inconsistent information. Many IDPs who had opted for cash were still waiting to receive it at the end of 2010. Meanwhile, IDPs who were renting, housing or living with relatives or friends had so far been excluded from this housing support. In the summer of 2010, over 1,000 internally displaced families were evicted from collective centres and other temporary shelters not destined for privatization in Tbilisi. Depending on their status, some were offered alternative accommodation or cash. However, according to observers, IDPs were given insufficient notice or information on alternative accommodation, and the latter was often of a worse standard and in areas offering few livelihood opportunities. The process was soon halted, so that procedures could be developed to improve the protection of IDPs’ rights; these procedures were in place at the end of the year (IDMC, 2010).

In addition to the housing programme, a Community Technology Access Programme is being implemented in Georgia for the benefit of people of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the communities in which they live. The goal of the programme supported by UNHCR is to improve access of IDPs to education and livelihoods through computer literacy, distance learning, and vocational training; creating income-generating activities and enhancing their entrepreneurial skills.

⁴⁶ State Strategy for Internally Displaced Persons was adopted by Georgian government in February 2007 and the IDP Action Plan for Implementation of State Strategy for IDPs has been adopted on July, 30, 2008. But due to new developments related to consequences of military actions in Tskhinvali region in August of 2008 it has been revised in 2009.

Community Technology Access Centres (CTA) have already been established in nine IDP settlements and two villages in the Pankisi Valley where refugees from Chechnya and the Russian Federation live.

Another project should also be distinguished here - the EU-supported project "Supporting the socio-economic integration of IDPs and their host communities through engagement in active dialogue and decision-making" (working title "Together We Can") implemented since September of 2009 to March, 2011. The project has been implemented by Oxfam from Great Britain and its partner organizations Association of Young Economists of Georgia (AYEG), Association of Disabled Women and Mothers of Disabled Children DEA and Welfare Foundation. The project helped the IDPs with their socio-economic integration in the host communities and enabled them to raise their voices and get actively engaged in the decision-making processes. The IDPs from 1992 and 2008 conflicts living in four regions of Georgia (Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Shida Kartli, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Kakheti regions - total of 35,000 IDPs from both conflicts) received support for capacity building, integration and the rights to basic services. In the frame of the project, 218 women were trained through two training cycles dubbed as How to Start Business and 107 women have already started businesses by today. Moreover, 200 people received jobs; more than 2200 IDP had undergone free medical screening to diagnose their illnesses. Seven municipal socio-economic plans were developed in the municipalities of Zugdidi, Khashuri, Gori, Kareli, Mtskheta, Dusheti and Kaspi with a close participation of local authorities, IDPs and the local population (Patsuria, 2011; EU Delegation in Georgia, 2011).

6.4. Development of net migration loss/gain regions

Different measures are being taken by the government to decrease internal migration flows, keep the population in their settlements and develop the local labour market. These include the transfer of some important government bodies to the regions (as already realised by the moving of the Constitutional Court to Kutaisi and forthcoming the move of the Georgian Parliament to Kutaisi), implementation of large infrastructural projects (building roads and other infrastructural objects in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti and Adjara) and the creation of attractive environment for investors in the regions. The employment of local population in all these projects is a prioritized issue.

There are also some private small-scale business activities and investments supporting the regional development, like the Dutch company which has recently bought the granite quarry in West-Georgia. Another example is that of a local businessman who had spent several years in Russia and established a garment factory in Ninotsminda, in the region Samtskhe-Javakheti. Although these activities are a first step towards the revitalisation of the regions, it must be noted that these investments are very seldom and on a small scale and do not result into employment of many persons.

At the same time, the practice shows that in many cases governmental plans of regional development are performed without taking into account the availability of labour resources on site. For example, in the last period large resources were invested in the autonomous republic Adjara, one of the most attractive tourist regions of Georgia. But the region actually experiences a lack of qualified professionals, as appropriate labour was not prepared in advance. IOM's Labour Market Survey has shown that the pressing problem in entire Georgia is structural (by professions) and qualitative (by qualification); disproportion between workforce demand and supply; lack of the orientation of vocational education system to the labour market demand; and underdeveloped infrastructure of the labour market (lack of public employment services, underdeveloped private service, difficulties in access to them etc.). An increased effort of the state is necessary to form a mobile and effective employment service and thus optimize the relationships between workforce demand and supply (IOM, 2009e).

It should be mentioned that actually all regions in Georgia are in a disadvantageous situation compared to the capital Tbilisi which is distinguished by the economic and business activities. Life in Georgia is divided between two different styles and levels: life in Tbilisi and elsewhere, either in other cities or rural areas of Georgia.

As it is known the overcoming of poverty in rural areas is much dependant on the process of land privatization. As of 2007, average family farm size in Georgia was 0.7 hectares, with poor households averaging 0.4 hectares and extremely poor households holding 0.2 hectares (World Bank, 2009). As stated by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), more than 80% of the country's rural population depend entirely on their own farms for subsistence, and a typical household consumes more than 70% of what it produces. Productivity is low, underemployment and unemployment rates in the sector are high, and income is inadequate. Most rural households are trapped at the minimum subsistence level, and about 45% of all rural households in Georgia live under the national poverty line⁴⁷. USAID began supporting land privatization in Georgia in 1997. Assistance included an assessment of the situation and the drafting of key legal documents, laws, and procedures for early registration of the newly allocated parcels of both agricultural and non-agricultural land (USAID, 2010).

There are some other projects on rural development that should be mentioned, as project "Rural Development in the Racha-Ichkhumi Region" (RDRL)⁴⁸. The project is supported by the Switzerland Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It started in July 2009 and has been prolonged until November 2011. The project focuses on the development of the agricultural production in the region and its budget is € 499,831.78. It includes several components aimed at increasing the accessibility of the market for socially vulnerable population, the diminishing of risks of natural catastrophes and local governance.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has the longest history of supporting agricultural development in Georgia. The urgent need to address issues of rural poverty provides the rationale for IFAD involvement in development assistance to Georgia. The relevant Government policy context for such assistance is laid out in the 2003-2015 Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Programme of Georgia (EDPRP) and the Ministry of Agriculture's 2009-2011 Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS).

The Rural Development Programme for Mountainous and Highland Areas (RDPMHA) has financed the development of poor mountainous communities and aims at developing self-help societies to improve crop and livestock production and generate increased income from farm products. Until recently, the programme experienced significant implementation problems which were related to both management deficiencies and design faults. Due to unsatisfactory financial reporting, the project was suspended in August 2006 and has been totally reformulated in two stages in terms of components and implementation structures in 2008. The Rural Development Project (RDP), IFAD's third project, which is co-financed with the World Bank, is in the third year of implementation. Implementation progress under this project has been satisfactory with respect to rural finance, food safety and institutional support activities. The implementation of the supply chain component, as it is currently designed, is very limited and the Fund is working with the implementing agencies in redirecting the activities under this component. At present, the RDP has both a facility for commercial banks to refinance rural investments and a component for microfinance institutions (MFI), which is in its initial stages and will operate in complementarities with proposed ASP activities. By March 2009, 23 projects had been financed for 19 clients, with total disbursements at USD 5.3 million. Most sub-projects are in agro-processing, with 17 company clients and 2 individual clients. The smallest refinanced investment is around USD 12 000 and the largest USD 500 000, which is also the upper commitment limit for the RDP. The average interest rate applied to their clients by the four commercial banks currently participating in the scheme is 14.9%. However, current rural finance operations in Georgia are not as yet reaching very many rural women and men and moreover generally not reaching poorer rural people⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Rural Poverty Portal, Georgia: <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/georgia> - retrieved on January, 9, 2012.

⁴⁸ Information concerning the project may be found on: <http://www.georgia-racha.ge/ge/main.php?id=1287402073>.

⁴⁹ IFAD, Georgia, Agricultural Support Project: <http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/design/98/georgia.pdf>.

6.5. Support to vulnerable groups related to migration

The impact of migration on the position of vulnerable groups other than IDPs still is not considered as a serious problem in Georgia and has therefore not been addressed in any policy paper.

Actually; there is an EU-funded project “Effects of migration in Moldova and Georgia on children and elderly left behind” implemented by the University of Maastricht and the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance in collaboration with the International Centre for Social Research and Policy Analysis in Georgia. Ms Elene Chkheidze, the research coordinator of this project in Georgia, confirmed that issues related to the impact of migration on the position of elderly left behind have not been studied in Georgia before. She informed the authors of this report on the project activities, which include qualitative research completed for the moment (in-depth interviews, focus groups, and roundtable discussions with key experts and stakeholders) and quantitative migration survey which had to be initiated in Georgia in October 2011 (4000 randomly chosen households around whole Georgia), but according to the information available for the moment have not yet been started. The results of the qualitative research (in-depth interviews with elderly people, observations of psychologists in hospitals, institutions etc.) implemented in the frame of project’s activities will be summarised in a report which is not available yet.

7. Key challenges and policy suggestions

7.1. Key challenges of the social impact of emigration and internal migration

Strategic issues. Georgia still does not have a written migration policy document. In fact, there is neither a single government agency in Georgia coordinating migration management nor, alternatively, clear terms of reference for the division of tasks between the existing agencies dealing with the migration process and with competences in different areas of migration management. The State Commission on Migration created in 2010 is an advisory body of the Georgian government, covering both immigration and emigration policies, but for this moment it does not have enough human and financial capacity to play this role. The commission also coordinates the implementation of the visa facilitation agreement and the readmission agreement with the EU. However, until now the Commission is not able to implement its main goal - to coordinate the migration management activities among the different institutions involved in migration management processes.

Further, there is no coherent system for collecting and analysing migration data; the data exchange mechanism between institutions dealing with migration in Georgia is inefficient. There is a lack of accurate information on the number of labour migrants, both legal and illegal and the absence of a proper system of migration statistics obviously hinders the development of effective migration management policies.

Labour market in Georgia and perspectives of circular migration. The main obstacle for effective improvements in the field of facilitating labour migration from Georgia is that the government does not consider any management of labour market necessary. There is no governmental infrastructure for labour market management, no state employment agencies, no registration of unemployed, no benefits for them, and no regular information on Georgian labour market supply. Under these conditions taking any effective measures for the facilitation of circular migration for Georgians seems to be impossible.

Private employment agencies and individuals are currently the only suppliers of job matching services on the Georgian labor market. At present, no specific legislation regulating private employment agencies and labor migration exists (ILO, 2007). The establishment of private employment agencies takes place in accordance of the law “On entrepreneur” and private employment agencies are not required to acquire a permit for performing their activities. Existing legislation gives the same opportunities for recruitment for work abroad for

individuals in Georgia as well. Consequently, it is impossible to find out which private organization or individual person carries out job matching activities in Georgia. Under the conditions of nonexistent bilateral agreements between Georgia and any other country only limited opportunities for Georgians to go legally abroad for work are available. Thus, companies and individuals dealing with organizing trips abroad profit a lot, as many people in Georgia are eager to pay for going abroad.

The Georgian government promises the increase of work places in Georgia in the nearest future combined with an on-going economic development. However, the existence of an economic policy does not necessarily lead to an increase in employment as the experience in the recent year shows. Although the Georgian government declared to promote the return of Georgian nationals, it opened the border for low skilled and cheap labour from South-Asia and Africa without the consideration of the local labour market specifics. For employed persons there are no legal provisions or institutions in charge to verify whether the employment of an alien is justifiable vis-à-vis the availability of the local work-force. Similarly for self-employed persons there is no institution and no legal provisions in place to carry out the “economic benefits test” verifying the economic viability and interest of Georgia in any particular small or medium enterprise venture.

Skill validation and professional education. The process of ‘skills-matching’ between potential migrant workers in Georgia and available jobs abroad is the key for an efficient labour mobility. At the same time there is neither the comprehensive information on skills that potential labour migrants in Georgia may provide to partner countries, nor the practical mechanisms to improve recognition of their qualifications or training schemes for facilitate validation of skills.

The success of Georgia in the process of European integration and especially expecting the new opportunities of circular migration for Georgian citizens cause new challenges related to skill testing, validation and proper professional education. In this regard, the necessity to meet European standards in matter related to education and particularly in the validation of labour skills in order to meet the increasing demand for qualified and competitive human resources either in foreign labour markets or in Georgia became of a particular importance. In order to solve these problems, the Georgian government recently made significant steps towards the settling of appropriate system of vocational education in Georgia. But in the opinion of experts,⁵⁰ there are still plenty of obstacles for development of VET and its proper functioning. Among them should be mentioned: lack of state support, non-comprehensive policy in educational system, low funding from the state, incomplete material technical base of VET institutions, etc.

Migration and development. Social security of return migrants. In spite of the fact that temporary labour migration from Georgia is significant, there are still no effective mechanisms to support legal labour migration in any way. While bilateral agreements for labour migrants would be beneficial to all engaged parties, Georgian government has been reluctant about establishing them even with the top European destination countries of Georgian migrants such as Greece, Turkey and others. This situation severely affects the social security coverage of the migrants and their families in the long run. The absence of portability of pensions schemes for Georgian migrants abroad might become a crucial issue in the future when the country will move to a statutory system of workers’ contributions to national pension fund. The same concerns the accessibility to health insurance for Georgian migrants upon return. Accessibility of proper health treatment is an acute issue for Georgia in general as for the moment only 15% of the population is covered by the voluntary insurance scheme.

The development of the impact of migration through accumulation and effective usage of migrants’ remittances is an issue of special concern in Georgia. Key actors at community level are not involved in maximizing the effect of sustainable return to Georgia causing a significant gap in the effective usage of migrants’ remittances for development. General public actually experiences a lack of information regarding tools to generate the remittances

⁵⁰Based on discussions from the International conference “SKILLS VALIDATION FOR RETURNING MIGRANTS UNDER THE MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP” in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 10-11 November 2011.

values on the base of community projects which might significantly improve the economic position of households especially in the rural area.

Vulnerable groups of migrants. Unfortunately, the situation of migrating women or women, children and elderly left behind has not received any attention until now, though the negative impact of emigration on the sustainability of the family and relationships is well-known from the experience of other countries. Elderly parents under the condition of limited institutional arrangements for elderly in Georgia and lack of alternative elderly care providers are a specific vulnerable group and long-term care in general is an urgent issue for policy intervention.

Regarding IDPs, there is a number of serious challenges for the government in addressing IDP issues effectively. While today there is an understanding among decision-makers that sheltering is the absolute priority in resolving the IDP vulnerability and social integration issue, it is obvious that unless income generation opportunities are secured for IDPs, no shelter will bring them out of poverty and despair. Government plans to increase IDP employment but the tools to make these plans more realistic are not clearly formulated. Even if some technical and vocational training programmes have been put in place, prioritized services to assist and support IDPs in regaining their livelihoods or securing employment do not exist.

7.2. Policies to be taken

The main policy objective of Georgia should be to create effective mechanisms for managing and monitoring migration flows. The government has to strengthen its capacity to understand and assess the actual and potential sources of regular and irregular migration from Georgia and increase the effectiveness of existing national and regional migration policies.

Coupled with the fact that the general public in Georgia is less informed about new initiatives and opportunities in the frame of the collaboration with the EU through the Mobility Partnership, it is necessary to organize public discussions on this topic in order to know the expectations and requirements of ordinary people in Georgia regarding circular migration.

The development of a coherent system of regular monitoring of Georgian labour market is a key issue for achieving the “win-win-win solution” for three sides involved in migration processes: for the migrant himself, the donor country and the recipient country. The availability of comprehensive information on the Georgian labour market’s needs (structural or temporary) in different sectors, occupations or geographical regions is crucial for avoiding the adverse economic and social effects which may accompany new perspectives of circular migration.

At the same time it is necessary to increase job opportunities at domestic markets, to stimulate and facilitate the return of migrants, providing them with consultation and support in applying their skills on the domestic market, to create special educational and training programmes, institutions and financial instruments which will stimulate and facilitate investments of remittances in business and entrepreneurship.

One of the main gaps in Georgia is the absence of public employment services, which have been the main focal point for the implementation of Mobility Partnership process in countries such as Moldova. The urgent priority is to provide support to the Migration Resource Centres, which are under the budget of MIDPOCRA, to develop the relevant legal framework for a database of returnees, and to develop IT tools for its usage in order to support the reintegration of returnees and their employment on the local labour market.

In order to facilitate the circular migration for Georgian citizens, a gradual extension of visa liberalisation and other activities under the Mobility Partnership should be activated, conclusion of labour and social security agreements have to be approached and conditions for sustainable return of labour migrants should be created. Nowadays, assistance packages to returnees are implemented by many international agencies and sometimes there is a lack

of coordination between them. So, it is important that activities between the implementing organizations are coordinated in order to avoid overlaps and save resources.

The approach for considering the return process as a factor contributing to the formation of the middle class in the country is also important in order to promote sustainable return of individuals and efficient use of the returnees' potential and their experience in economic and social development of Georgia. Starting business in terms of legislation is very easy in Georgia now and this may attract those emigrants who have accumulated some money and want to return. To stimulate their return, some tax incentives or other types of privileges could be established for people who want to start a business. In this context, it is also important to develop mechanisms for validations of the skills which migrants have acquired abroad.

It is necessary to promote best practice examples and success stories concerning community project development. Sharing experiences of other countries would have a positive impact. For example, Turkey has created a system of advantages for migrants sending money to Turkey, such as privilege exchange rates in case of opening accounts in local banks, advantages in taxation of amenities and goods brought by migrants to the homeland. In order to stimulate investments in the local business, an investment bank of foreign workers that supports the business development projects implemented by migrants and foreign workers has been created. For example USA and Latin America created an international network of remittances, which significantly diminish the related expenses for migrants and improved the environment for healthy competition at the local financial market. Any of such experiences may be useful for Georgia.

Training programs and access to micro credit facilities for returnees are also in high demand. Such programmes should make special provisions to target women in particular, as research shows that women make the most effective use of remittances.

The absence of any internal migration policy in Georgia is also an issue of serious concern. As it is known, incomes in agriculture in Georgia are very low. To prevent youth from migrating to urban areas the profitability of agriculture has to increase by introducing new technologies in this area, providing credits for farmers at low interest rates and by facilitating the access of the products to the markets. Implementation of new technologies in agriculture will naturally lead to farm amalgamation which will cause a new wave of unemployment. In this case it is necessary to be well prepared and to create employment opportunities outside the agricultural sector. In general, regional development strategies implemented by the state should go hand in hand with employment policies including the training and re-training of the local workforce.

International donors should continue to work with the Government of Georgia to further develop the rural land reform, including, for example the testing of new approaches of leasing or privatizing land still held by the state and complementing these reforms with additional investments to make the new owners more competitive agricultural producers. Donors should also continue to provide technical support to government institutions responsible for reforms in the sphere of agriculture.

As regards IDPs, durable solutions for IDPs securing their livelihood are needed. Municipal governments should, where appropriate, allocate land to IDPs to lessen their dependence on state benefits and users should receive documentation confirming their right to use the land as well as support to cultivate it. Beyond the allocation of land, the government should also develop and implement policies supporting a micro-financing assistance for income generation opportunities of IDPs and creation of sustainable jobs through prioritization of the investment in areas with a high concentration of IDPs.

Measures aimed at raising public awareness are necessary in order to enhance public participation in decision-making processes and gain support for planned policies. Particularly important is the involvement of IDPs in public debates and decision-making related to their own destiny, and in monitoring of the implementation of programmes.

Annex 1. Tables and Figures

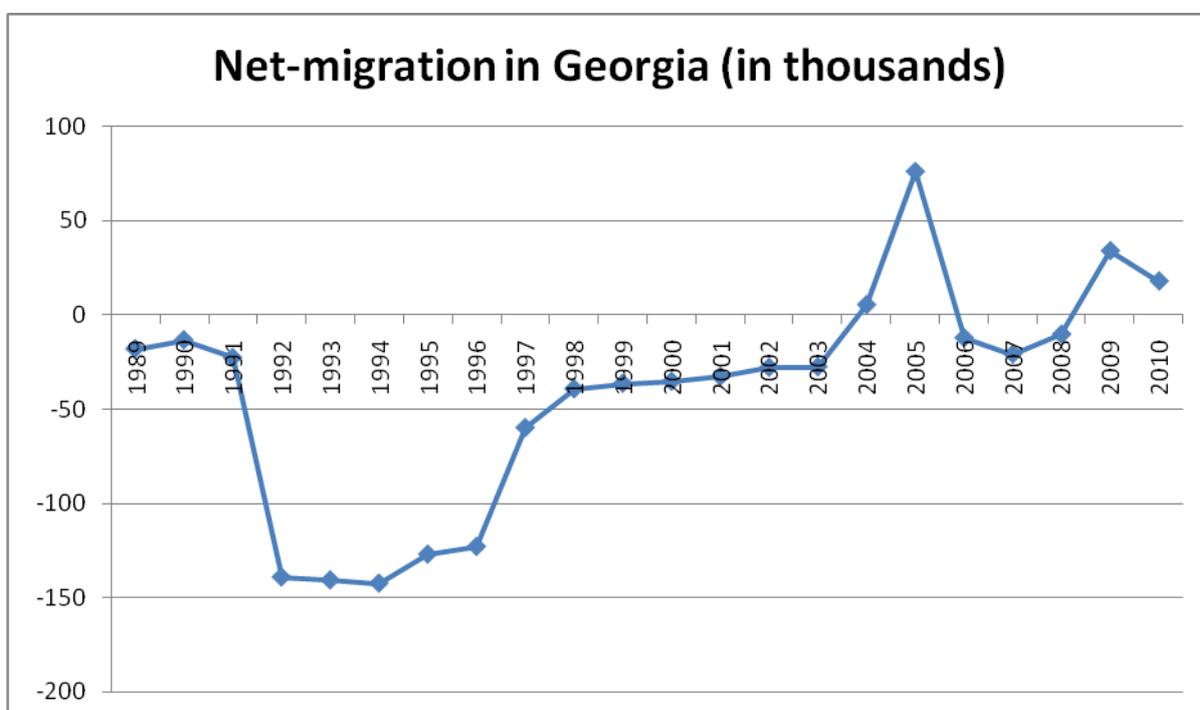
Table 1.1. Gross domestic product, constant prices, percent change, 1995-2010

Year	Percent change
1995	2.6
1996	10.5
1997	10.6
1998	2.9
1999	3.0
2000	1.9
2001	4.7
2002	5.5
2003	11.1
2004	5.9
2005	9.6
2006	9.4
2007	12.3
2008	2.3
2009	-4.0
2010	2.0

Source: International Monetary Fund - 2010 World Economic Outlook,

http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2010/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?sy=1994&ey=2010&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&c=915&s=NGDP_R%2CNGDP_RPCH%2CNGDP%2CNGDPD%2CNGDP_D%2CNGDPRP%2CNGDPPC%2CNGDPDPC%2CPPP%2CPPPGRDP%2CPPPGRDPC%2CPPPGRDPC%2CPPPGRDPC%2CPPPGRDPC&grp=0&a=&pr.x=44&pr.y=8#cs1,
retrieved on 6 January 2011.

Figure 2.1. Net-migration in Georgia (in thousands), 1989-2010



Source: 1989-1999: State Department for Statistics of Georgia, 2003, p. 67;

2000-2010: National Statistics Office of Georgia,

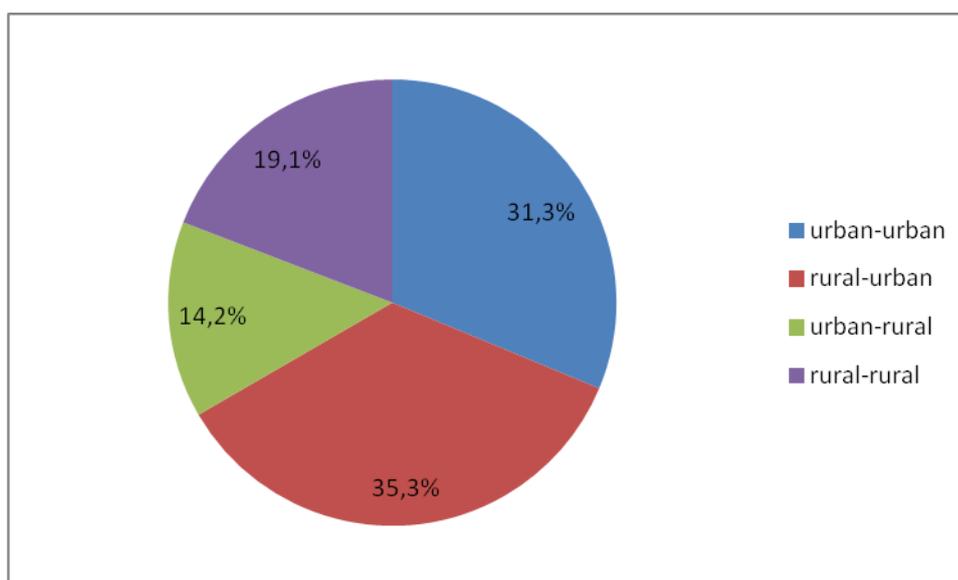
http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=173&lang=eng, retrieved on 06 January 2012.

Table 2.1. Migration profile of Georgia for 1990-2010

Indicator	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Estimated number of international migrants at mid-year	338,300	249,900	218,600	191,220	167,269
Estimated number of refugees at mid-year	0	50	6,400	2,528	1,210
Population at mid-year (thousands)	5,460	5,069	4,745	4,465	4,219
Estimated number of female migrants at mid-year	190,206	141,112	124,389	109,084	95,496
Estimated number of male migrants at mid-year	148,094	108,788	94,211	82,136	71,773
International migrants as a percentage of the population	6.2	4.9	4.6	4.3	4
Female migrants as percentage of all international migrants	56.2	56.5	56.9	57	57.1
Refugees as a percentage of international migrants	0	0	2.9	1.3	0.7
Indicator	1990-1995	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	
Annual rate of change of the migrant stock (%)	-6.1	-2.7	-2.7	-2.7	

Source: United Nations Population and Migration Database: <http://esa.un.org/migration/>

Figure 2.2. Directions of internal migration in Georgia between 1992 and 2001 (in % to total stock of internal migrants)



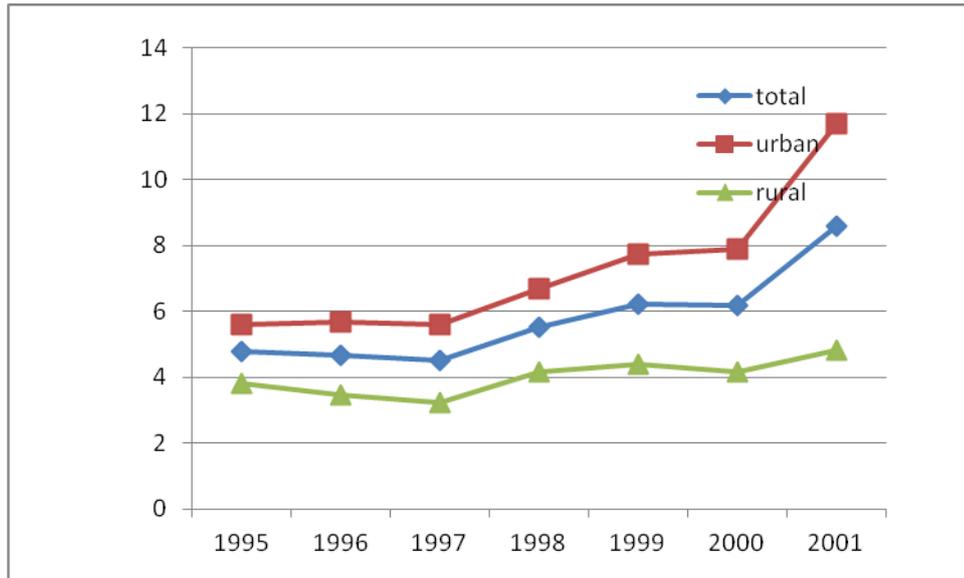
Source: Calculated by authors on the base of data by Georgian population census of 2002.

Table 2.2. Internal migration in Georgia in 1992-2001

	Number of persons changed the residence during last 10 years			In percentage to population number		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Total migrant stock	463,017	320,791	142,226	10.1	13.3	6.5
Migrants without IDPs	301,215	202,696	98,519	6.6	8.4	4.5

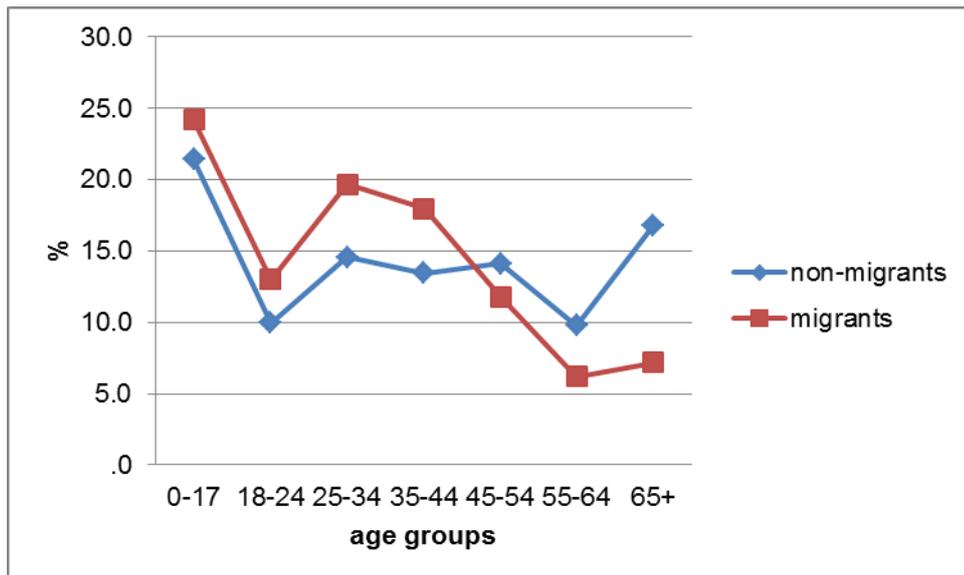
Source: Calculated by authors on the base of data by Georgian population census of 2002.

Figure 2.3. Internal migration rates in Georgia (per 1,000 of population), 1995-2001



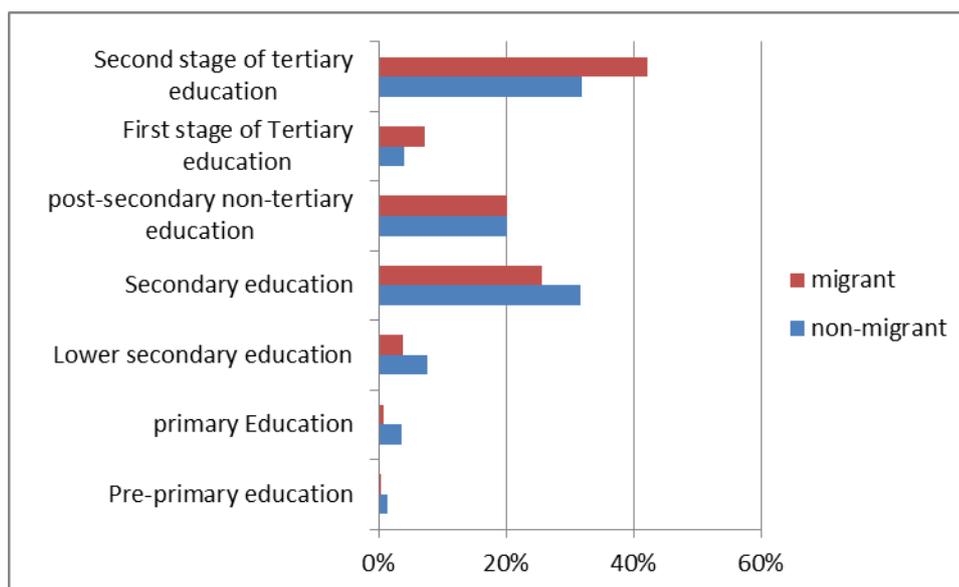
Source: Calculated by authors on the base of data by Georgian population census of 2002.

Figure 2.4. Distribution of internal migrants and non-migrants by age groups, 2007



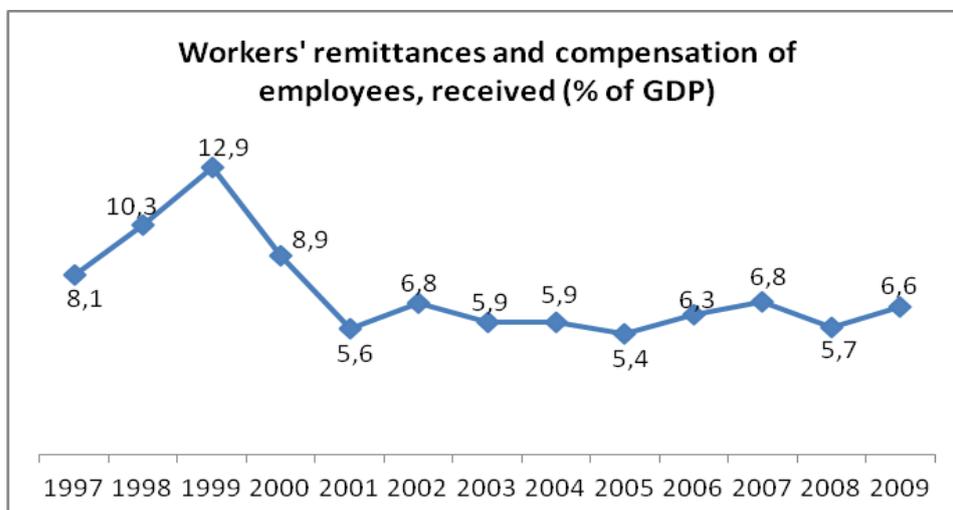
Source: Calculated by authors using the data-base of the Data-initiative-Georgia for 2007, <http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/>, retrieved on 14 March 2011.

Figure 2.5. Distribution of internal migrants and non-migrants in age over 17 years according to the level of education, 2007



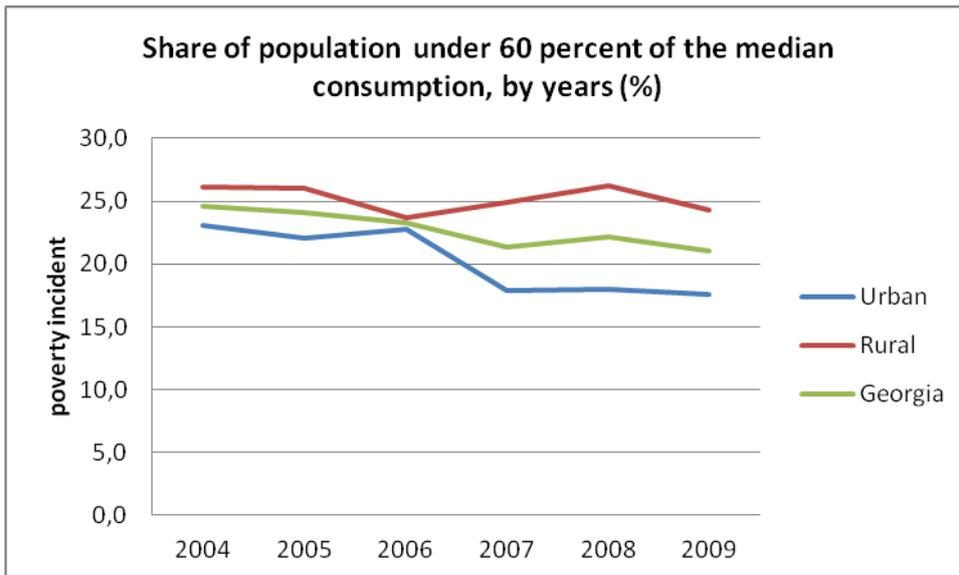
Source: Calculated by authors using the data-base of the Data-initiative-Georgia for 2007, <http://www.crrcenters.org/caucasusbarometer/>, retrieved on 14 March 2011.

Figure 3.1. Workers' remittances and compensation of employees, received (% of GDP), 1997-2009



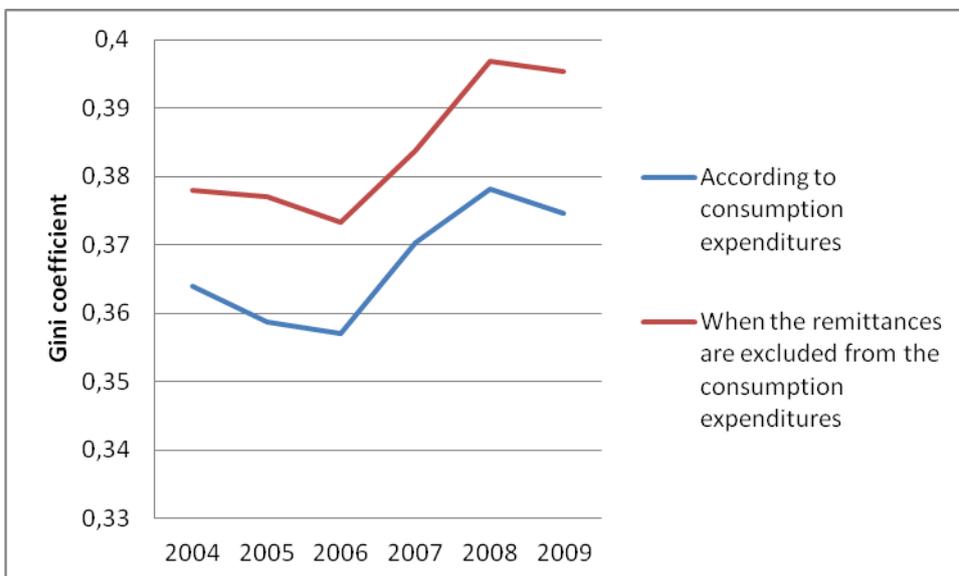
Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/georgia>, retrieved on 3 April 2011.

Figure 3.2. Share of population under 60% of the median consumption, 2004-2009



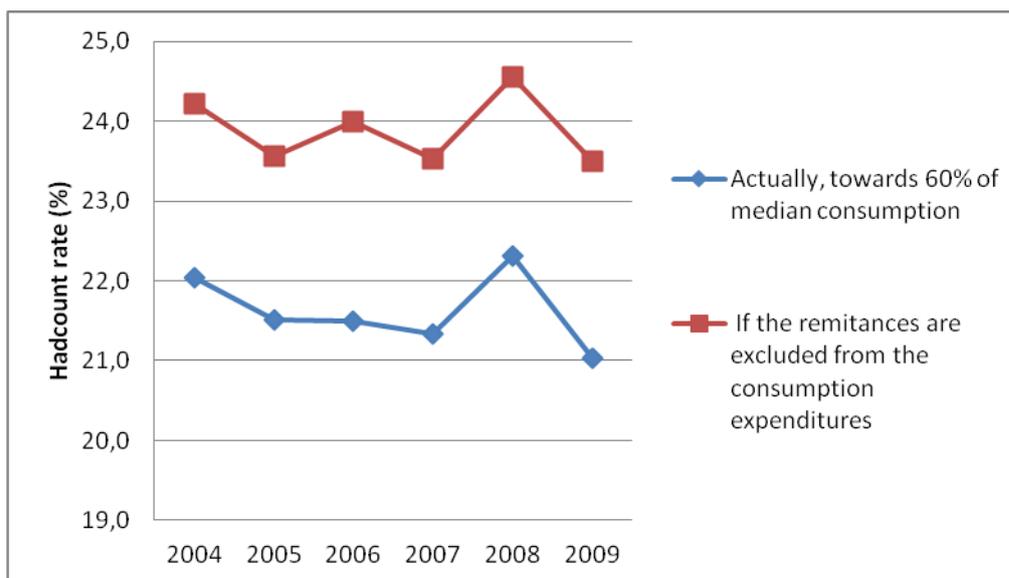
Source: www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=188&lang=eng, retrieved on 2 November 2011.

Figure 3.3. Influence of the remittances on Gini coefficient, 2004-2009



Source: Calculated by authors based on the data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Figure 3.4. Influence of the remittances on the poverty headcount rate, 2004-2009



Source: Calculated by authors based on the data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia

Table 3.1. Share of households that receive remittances from abroad and share of remittances in household budget (%), 2004-2009

Year	Share of households that receive remittances from abroad								Share of remittances in household incomes					
	Quintile groups					Urban	Rural	Georgia	Average per household			Average per recipient household		
	1	2	3	4	5				Urban	Rural	Georgia	Urban	Rural	Georgia
2004	3.8	5.0	6.4	8.1	9.3	8.3	4.7	6.5	6.8	2.6	4.5	49.6	38.4	45.4
2005	6.1	5.2	4.9	7.7	9.6	8.1	5.3	6.7	6.1	3.1	4.6	48.9	41.8	46.2
2006	4.0	5.6	6.0	7.5	8.7	8.6	4.1	6.4	6.6	2.1	4.4	54.9	37.1	49.1
2007	4.5	5.0	5.3	6.9	9.7	8.1	4.4	6.3	6.3	2.6	4.6	54.3	38.9	49.5
2008	4.4	5.2	5.8	6.5	9.6	8.0	4.5	6.3	5.0	3.0	4.2	47.7	42.9	46.0
2009	3.2	6.0	5.4	7.5	9.0	8.4	4.0	6.2	5.7	2.5	4.3	52.0	39.9	48.3

Source: Calculated by authors based on the data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Table 3.2. Share of households that receive remittances from abroad, in quintile groups, in case the remittances are excluded from the consumption of household, 2004-2009, (%)

Year	Quintile groups				
	1	2	3	4	5
2004	14.1	5.0	4.5	5.1	3.9
2005	16.0	5.3	4.2	4.1	3.8
2006	15.5	5.2	4.3	3.6	3.2
2007	14.0	5.0	3.9	3.8	4.7
2008	14.8	5.1	3.8	3.7	4.0
2009	14.9	4.9	4.4	3.5	3.3

Source: Calculated by authors based on the data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Table 4.1. Change of the number of population in Georgian administrative regions between 1989-2002

Region	Population (in thousands)						Population change (in %)		
	1989			2002			Total	Urban	Rural
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural			
Tbilisi	1246.9	1243.2	3.3	1081.7	1073.3	8.2	-13.2%	-13.7%	148.5%
Adjara	392.4	181.3	211.1	376.0	166.4	209.6	-4.2%	-8.2%	-0.7%
Guria	158.1	45.2	112.9	143.4	37.5	105.8	-9.3%	-17.0%	-6.3%
Imereti	766.9	409.2	357.7	699.7	323.8	375.9	-8.8%	-20.9%	5.1%
Kakheti	441.0	100.1	340.9	407.2	84.8	322.4	-7.7%	-15.3%	-5.4%
Kvemo Kartli	608.5	271.0	337.5	497.5	186.5	311.0	-18.2%	-31.2%	-7.9%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	133.9	38.1	95.8	125.4	32.1	93.3	-6.3%	-15.7%	-2.6%
Racha-Lechkhumi & Kvemo-Svaneti	59.8	12.6	47.2	51.0	9.6	41.4	-14.7%	-23.8%	-12.3%
Samegrelo and Zemo-Svaneti	424.7	170.7	254.0	466.1	183.1	283.0	9.7%	7.3%	11.4%
Samtskhe-Javakheti	235.5	86.2	149.3	207.6	65.5	142.1	-11.8%	-24.0%	-4.8%
Shida Kartli	321.6	135.9	185.7	314	113.8	200.2	-2.4%	-16.3%	7.8%
TOTAL	4789.3	2693.5	2095.4	4369.6	2276.4	2092.9	-8.8%	-15.5%	-0.1%

Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia, data by population census.

Table 4.2. Population and number of emigrants in Georgia, according to 2002 population census in Georgia

	Population (in thousands)	Number of emigrants	Share of emigrants
TOTAL	4371.5	113726	2.6%
Tbilisi	1081.7	32793	3.0%
Adjara	376.0	4084	1.1%
Guria	143.4	1658	1.2%
Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo-Svaneti	750.7	17420	2.3%
Kakheti	407.2	8773	2.2%
Kvemo Kartli	497.5	16561	3.3%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	125.4	3256	2.6%
Samtskhe-Javakheti	207.6	6656	3.2%
Samegrelo and Zemo-Svaneti	468	15872	3.4%
Shida Kartli	314	6653	2.1%

Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2006, p. 8.

Table 4.3. External migration rate by Georgian regions (per 1,000 of population), 2003-2008

Region	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	annual average in 2003-2008
Tbilisi	10.5	12.1	8.7	7.5	10.3	6.2	9.2
Adjara	0.6	5.3	5.1	6.5	9.3	8.9	6.0
Guria	1.8	2.4	3.0	6.5	6.8	11.1	5.3
Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi & Kvemo-Svaneti	6.4	15.4	10.5	10.1	8.1	7.1	9.6
Kakheti	5.7	7.6	6.7	8.8	13.1	11.1	8.8
Kvemo Kartli	14.6	20.8	28.3	19.7	11.6	10.0	17.5
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	9.1	19.3	7.7	6.4	4.1	1.1	8.0
Samtskhe-Javakheti	13.0	20.2	17.7	33.9	34.8	17.3	22.8
Samegrelo and Zemo-Svaneti	13.3	10.6	4.0	6.5	7.0	6.5	8.0
Shida Kartli	6.5	11.9	2.9	8.3	8.8	6.5	7.5
TOTAL	8.7	12.7	10.0	10.4	10.6	8.0	10.1

Source: Calculated by authors based on the data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Table 4.4. Internal migration rate by Georgian regions (per 1,000 of population), 2003-2008

Region	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	annual average in 2003-2008
Tbilisi	13.7	21.8	24.9	19.6	25.5	18.9	20.7
Adjara	0.7	17.1	21.0	20.5	18.5	15.9	15.6
Guria	35.6	45.9	41.6	85.1	66.9	35.6	51.8
Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi & Kvemo-Svaneti	26.0	32.1	22.9	39.3	25.9	26.0	28.7
Kakheti	21.0	37.2	29.7	40.6	31.6	28.2	31.4
Kvemo Kartli	11.0	17.9	18.7	19.4	20.4	10.3	16.3
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	11.4	23.2	46.3	45.4	24.3	22.4	28.8
Samtskhe-Javakheti	7.4	10.9	6.5	16.1	19.3	12.4	12.1
Samegrelo and Zemo-Svaneti	20.3	39.7	30.7	28.3	54.2	39.2	35.4
Shida Kartli	15.7	21.0	27.6	24.1	38.7	28.9	26.0
TOTAL	16.5	26.4	25.0	29.1	29.7	23.0	25.0

Source: Calculated by authors based on the data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Table 4.5. Poverty headcount rate with respect to 60% of median consumption in Georgian regions (in percentage), 2004-2009

Region	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Tbilisi	14.9	14.4	17.1	14.0	13.6	13.7
Adjara	33.9	28.1	32.4	42.3	34.9	24.5
Guria	19.0	20.3	23.0	26.1	25.6	23.3
Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi & Kvemo-Svaneti	12.1	13.4	16.5	16.0	15.4	14.8
Kakheti	26.4	27.0	33.3	34.2	35.2	35.5
Kvemo Kartli	41.6	39.8	24.5	20.9	29.3	27.2
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	28.0	27.9	23.1	33.6	33.6	30.6
Samtskhe-Javakheti	17.9	19.9	12.8	8.2	14.2	26.2
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	18.6	18.4	19.9	19.2	22.1	18.0
Shida Kartli	25.3	26.1	21.9	23.8	30.6	29.1
Total, Georgia	22.0	21.5	21.5	21.3	22.3	21.0

Source: Calculated by authors based on the data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Table 4.6. Unemployment rates by Georgian administrative regions (in percentage), 2006-2010

Region	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total, Georgia	13.6	13.3	16.5	16.9	16.3
Urban	26.1	23.9	28.9	28.8	27.2
Rural	4.8	5.4	7.1	7.8	7.9
Tbilisi	30.2	28.0	29.8	29.6	30.1
Adjara	18.9	25.4	25.6	22.1	17.9
Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi & Kvemo-Svaneti	9.7	7.2	11.8	13.2	11.6
Kakheti	6.5	5.3	9.3	11.0	11.1
Kvemo Kartli	8.4	7.6	10.7	10.7	9.2
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	6.4	6.1	11.8	13.1	14.3
Shida Kartli	10.2	8.1	16.3	16.6	12.7
Other regions*	6.4	6.5	8.0	8.3	8.9

* Samtskhe-Javakheti, Guria, Mtskheta-Mtianeti

Source: http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=145&lang=geo, retrieved on 2 November 2011.

Table 4.7. Unemployment rates in Georgian administrative regions by settlement type in 2008 (in percentage)

Region	Share of the urban population	Unemployment rate	
		Urban	Rural
Tbilisi	99.2	30.0	21.7
Adjara	44.3	43.0	15.2
Guria	26.2	6.5	3.2
Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo-Svaneti	44.4	24.9	4.8
Kakheti	20.8	23.9	6.6
Kvemo Kartli	37.5	24.7	4.8
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	25.6	26.0	15.6
Samtskhe-Javakheti	31.6	24.7	3.3
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	39.3	25.9	5.9
Shida Kartli	36.2	32.2	10.7
Total, Georgia	52.1	28.9	7.1

Source: Calculated by authors based on the data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Table 4.8. Share of households who lacked of a certain number of selected durable goods by settlement type and region (in percentage).

[Shaded cells indicate proportion of households lacking 5 or more types of goods.]

Number of selected types of items lacked	Total, Georgia	Urban	Rural	Tbilisi	Adjara	Guria	Kakheti	Kvemo Kartli	Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti	Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo, Zemo Svaneti	Shida Kartli
7	5.1	3.4	6.9	2.2	3.3	5.8	4.7	7.6	7.7	11.5	3.2	6.5	5.9
6	16.6	6.6	26.6	3.6	14.1	22.8	11.2	16.1	25.9	22.7	11.5	33.4	26.4
5	18.9	13.8	24.2	9.9	23.0	26.0	21.3	20.6	22.4	19.3	26.3	19.9	24.8
4	17.9	19.6	16.2	18.8	18.3	21.3	23.9	20.2	14.0	14.3	22.0	16.5	12.4
3	15.8	18.2	13.3	19.7	15.5	13.1	18.8	13.9	13.1	13.8	17.1	11.4	13.6
2	12.9	18.2	7.5	21.2	13.7	6.3	12.8	12.4	7.9	8.1	10.3	6.3	9.9
1	9.1	14.5	3.6	18.5	8.8	2.7	4.0	8.8	5.2	6.1	6.5	4.6	3.1
0	3.7	5.7	1.7	6.2	3.2	2.0	3.4	0.4	3.7	4.2	3.1	1.3	3.9

Source: Calculated by authors based on the 2009 data-file of the Integrated Household Survey of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

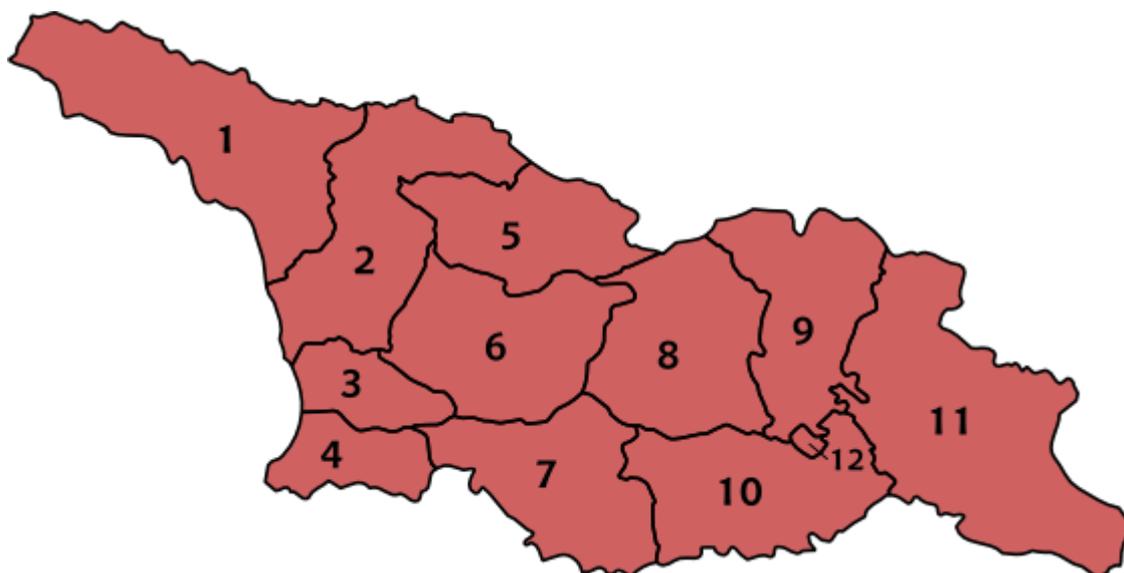
Note: Material deprivation is measured here in terms of certain durable goods in a household. The following items have been included in the analysis: refrigerator, washing machine, TV, vacuum cleaner, sewing-machine, car, gas-cooker/electric cooker.

Table 4.9. Shares of households and their members receiving social assistance and medical insurance registered in the united database, by regions (by January, 2011)

Region	Share of social assistance receivers (%)		Share of medical insurance receivers (%)	
	Household	Population	Household	Population
Tbilisi	6.2	4.4	12.4	11.0
Adjara	11.1	10.9	27.4	30.1
Guria	15.7	13.0	31.9	29.9
Imereti	16.8	13.7	30.9	28.2
Kakheti	18.1	13.0	31.2	25.1
Kvemo Kartli	8.8	6.4	18.4	16.3
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	22.1	14.1	45.3	34.5
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo-Svaneti	42.7	33.0	62.8	53.2
Samtskhe-Javakheti	9.3	6.1	16.6	14.5
Samegrelo – Zemo Svaneti	11.9	9.8	29.1	26.5
Shida Kartli	20.3	15.8	35.4	29.6
Total, Georgia	12.8	9.8	25.0	22.3

Source: <http://ssa.gov.ge/index.php?mid=1175>, retrieved on 2 November 2011.

Annex 2. Map of Georgian administrative regions



Legend:

1. Abkhazia (out of government control)
2. Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti
3. Guria
4. Adjara
5. Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti
6. Imereti
7. Samtskhe-Javakheti
8. Shida Kartli (including Tskhinvali region, so-called South Ossetia, out of government control)
9. Mtskheta-Mtianeti
10. Kvemo Kartli
11. Kakheti
12. Tbilisi

Annex 3. Official statistics on migration in Georgia

During the Soviet era, out-migration from the USSR was practically impossible and all changes of residence were subject to out- and in-registration. As a consequence, it was believed that relatively good-quality statistics of migration flows were available, especially for inflows. However, in the opinion of some authors, the Soviet migration registration system was far from being perfect (Anderson et al., 1994). In particular, rural-rural migration flows were poorly registered, and persons migrating within the same administrative unit (in case of Georgia – so called “rayon”) from one rural settlement to another were not subject to statistical registration. Nevertheless, it seems that migration statistics of that time covered inter-Republic flows rather well for rural-urban, urban-rural and urban-urban migration, which made possible reasonable estimates for the total internal migration.

Concerning the so called “inter-republican” migration, the USSR Goskomstat (the statistical office of the Soviet Union) centralized information from local authorities (republican statistical offices) and established a complete matrix of inter-republic migration flows based on entries, as it was believed that the registration of persons at the place of their new residence in the condition of strike “propiska” system works quite properly. Hence, each Soviet republic used the data on out-migration received from the central statistical authorities in Moscow and on in-migration – based on its own statistics, either for internal or external movements.

With the collapse of the USSR, migration statistics in Georgia deteriorated for three main reasons: migration outside the former Soviet Union became possible, inter-republic collaboration to produce a general matrix ceased, and the quality of in- and out-registration declined. Hence, the accurate assessment of migration in Georgia since the 1990s became quite a problematic issue due to the lack of the relevant reliable statistics.

In 1992 the old “Soviet” so called “propiska” system has been abolished in Georgia and replaced by the system of registration of citizens by their place of permanent residence. Statistical registration of migrants in this case was pursued as before: a special statistical form had to be filled out by the local administrative body on each person declaring a residence change and these individual forms were send on a monthly basis to the Georgian statistical office for statistical data-processing. Persons migrating in the frame of the rural settlements of the same “rayon”, again, were not subject to statistical registration.

On the basis of this administrative data, the Georgian statistical office annually produced the official statistics on external and internal migration flows in Georgia, on the distribution of total number of migrants by age and sex and by countries of destination. But of course, the abovementioned system cached only those migrants who were willing or in need to state their new place of residence and applied to local authorities officially. In case of external migration – some people left Georgia permanently at that time – someone needed the incentive to pass this procedure of registration as well as some country-recipients, as for example Russia and Israel required from immigrants official documents confirming their off-registration in the country of origin.

At the same time, in the conditions of “open” borders inside of Commonwealth of New Independent States, the majority of migrants were leaving Georgia without any official application to local authorities. That is why the official statistics on migration published at that time by the national statistical office, which was based on the administrative system of population registration, were insignificant in terms of numbers and did not represent the real scope of these migration movements (e.g. State Department for Statistics of Georgia, 2002),.

For this reason, starting in 2003, the Georgian statistical office finally decided not to use the abovementioned source of information for its estimation of out-migration and did not publish these data anymore. Moreover, since 2005 the National Statistical Office of Georgia does not receive the information on population movements from the local registers and consequently does not have any statistical information on migration based on administrative data on population registration. Some limited statistics on flows of registration changes in Georgia for the recent period are now available on the web-site of the Georgian Civil Register: http://www.cra.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=45&lang_id=ENG.

Regarding the out-migration statistics in Georgia, since 2004 the official statistical estimations are based on the data on passenger-flows provided to the National Statistics Office by the Georgian Border Department. This data informs only about the gross numbers of entries and exits and there is still no way to track individual comings and goings in order to distinguish migrants from other passengers. Consequently, the annual population estimates in Georgia are produced on the basis of data on cross-border flows. No other official statistics on migration in Georgia were published since 2003 aside of the yearly updating figures on net migration flows and corresponding rates calculated on the basis of data from the Georgian Border Department. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the methodology of producing migration data since 2006 has been changed: while for 2003-2005 net migration is based on the balance between passengers' in- and out-flows (Georgian citizens only), for the later period the balance is done on stock of all passengers. Furthermore, no posterior changes to existing migration statistics for 2003-2005 were made in order to insure the comparability of statistical data-series on migration.

In general, the Georgian official statistics on migration, particularly those before 2002, are viewed with scepticism (Badurashvili et al., 2001, 2003; Gachechiladze, 1997; Meladze and Tsuladze, 1997; Tsuladze, 2005).

The population census held in Georgia in 2002 allowed the statistical office to reassess the inter-census population counts for the 1990s and to provide more reliable estimates of migration flows between 1989 and 2002 (State Department for Statistics in Georgia, 2003, p. 67). The methodology of these estimations was not published. As we have concluded from the discussions with its authors, total net-migration is calculated on the basis of the total population change in the period between two population censuses, excluding the total natural increase for the corresponding time-period. Then, the total net-migration is interpolated on the annual basis according to the experts' opinion concerning migration trends between 1989 and 2002.

However, some alternative estimates on out-migration from Georgia may be found in the publications of independent experts (Badurashvili, 2009; Gachechiladze, 1997; Gugushvili, 1998; Tsuladze et.al., 2008; Duthe et al., 2009) and in regular publications of international organizations, such as the annual "World Population Prospects" by the United Nations and others.

Annex 4. Information on expert interviews and communications

Name	Organisation	Function/ Area of expertise	Type of consultation and form of documentation	Date and duration of consultation
Marc Hulst	IOM Mission to Georgia	Programme Coordinator	Personal interview, type-recorded	20.04.2011, 1 hour 07.09.2011 1 hour
Elene Chkheidze	International Centre for Social Research and Policy Analysis	Research Coordinator of the Project	Telephone consultation	20.04.2011 30 minutes 12.09.2011 30 minutes
Tsiuri Antadze	IOM Mission to Georgia	Coordinator of Tbilisi Job Counseling and Referral Center	Personal discussion	20.04.2011, 40 minutes
Danelia Akaki	Social Services Agency	Head of Department of Statistical Analysis	Personal discussion	15.04.2011, 1 hour
Tornike Nozadze	Office of the Vice Prime Minister of Georgia		Telephone consultation	04.05.2011, 20 minutes
Tsiuri Antadze	IOM Mission to Georgia	Coordinator of Tbilisi Job Counseling and Referral Center	Personal interview, type-recorded	06.05.2011, 1 hour
Gocha Aleksandria	ILO office in Georgia	National Project Coordinator	Personal discussion	06.09.2011 1 hour
Bela Hejna	Director of the project „Support Reintegration of Georgian Returning Migrants and the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Readmission Agreement”	Director of the project „Support Reintegration of Georgian Returning Migrants and the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Readmission Agreement”	Personal discussion	07.09.2011 1 hour
Giorgi Gabrielashvili	Georgian Civil Registry	Deputy Head of the State Migration Commission	Personal discussion	07.09.2011 1 hour
Elene Makharashvili	Georgian Employers' Association	Head of Department of International Relations	Personal discussion	08.09.2011 1 hour
Manana Amonashvili	Job Counselling and Placement Center in Gori	Coordinator of Center	Personal discussion	08.09.2011 1 hour

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