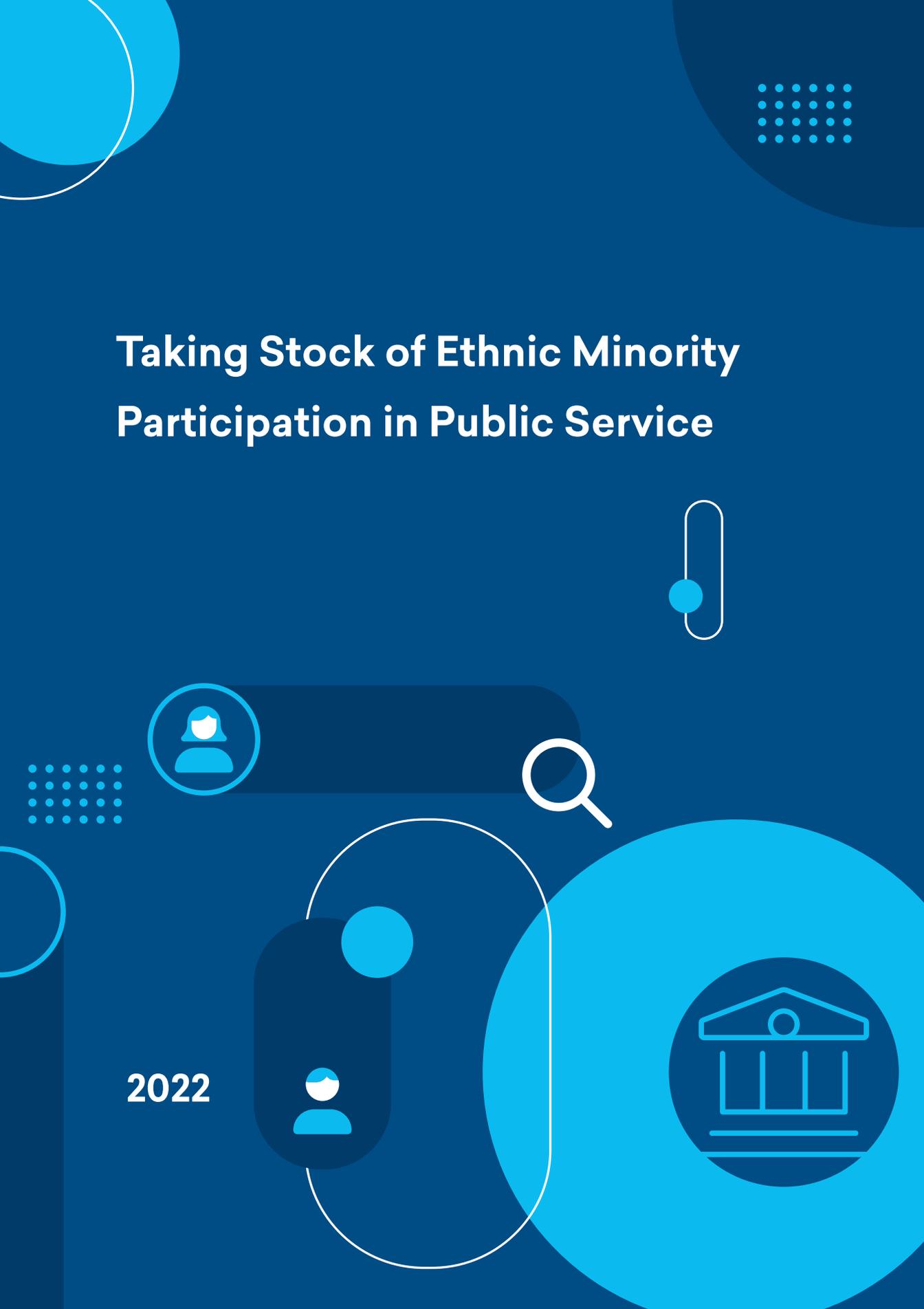
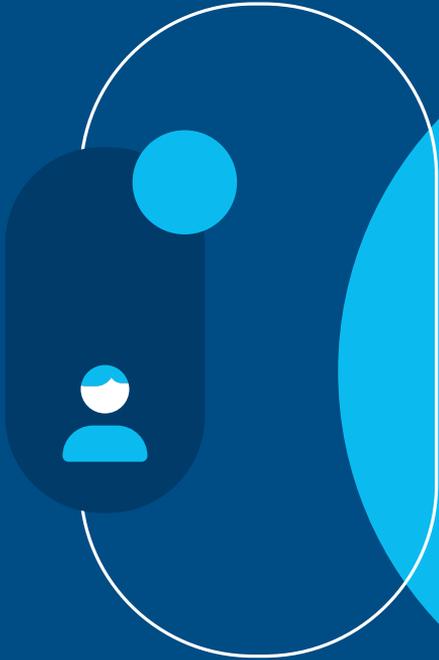


Taking Stock of Ethnic Minority Participation in Public Service

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Research



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1. Foreword

Collecting data on people's ethnicity is an important prerequisite for promoting ethnic diversity in various institutions and organizations¹. The collection of this type of data is recommended by a number of international agreements or organizations, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular, indicator 16.7.1 b.

Public Administration Reform brought significant positive changes in terms of collecting and processing key demographic data of civil servants in Georgia. As a part of this reform, a new system of ranking civil servants was brought in line with international standards.² In addition, electronic human resources management system has been introduced, which enables generation and analysis of statistical information. Based on the collected statistical data, the Civil Service Bureau (Bureau) annually publishes statistical reports on its website.

The fact that the Bureau does not collect information on additional demographic characteristics, in particular, the ethnicity of civil servants, still remains a challenge. This characteristic is a very important factor due to the ethnic diversity of the country. Although the information on the ethnicity of civil servants is not collected in government agencies, specific NGOs periodically request this data to examine the degree of public service inclusiveness. The reports prepared based on these data demonstrate unequal involvement of ethnic minorities in the public service in different municipalities³.

Access to reliable statistical information is essential to examine the level of ethnic minority engagement, promote greater involvement, and evaluate the effectiveness of the steps taken in this regard. Therefore, it is important to introduce the unified practice of data collection on ethnicity of civil servants across the country. Along with the quantitative data, it is important to identify the challenges and barriers that may hinder the engagement of ethnic minority officials and subsequently, to take appropriate steps to address them.

Data on ethnicity belong to a special type of data, the collection of which carries certain risks. It is, therefore, necessary to define the methodology and procedures of data collection in detail and to avoid the dangers associated with the misuse of data. In order to maximize the potential benefits of data collection and minimize risks, it is important to assess stakeholder attitudes towards the process.

¹ Ventura & et. al (2021) Boosting European Security Law and Policy (203-256).

² International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO-08.

³ Center for Social Justice, Assessment of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration, 2021.



2. Goal and objectives of the study

The study examines the extent to which the existing public service system and approaches contribute to the representation of ethnic minorities and what challenges exist in this regard. Special emphasis is placed on the availability of data related to the ethnicity of civil servants and the ability to process them.

To this end, the study answers the following questions:



What is the demographic picture in public service? What are the shortcomings in terms of data collection and analysis, especially regarding the SDG Indicator 16.7.1b?



What barriers do ethnic minorities face in starting to work and career development within the public service?



What is the level of awareness on the representation of ethnic minorities in the public service and what mechanisms should be introduced to increase their participation?



3. Methodology

The research is based on a mixed methodology and combines quantitative and qualitative methods. At the initial stage, general assessment was carried out based on the desk research of the ethnic inclusiveness of the public service in Georgia. To this end, legislative framework and relevant documents were reviewed; moreover, international best practices of data collection on ethnic characteristics were also analyzed.

Research aimed to study the engagement of youth and women representing ethnic minorities. It is logical to think that they might have faced greater barriers than ethnic Georgian women and youth, or men representing ethnic minorities. Since the specific statistical information on civil servants representing the ethnic minorities is not available, the study was focused on municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities, to study the participation of youth and women. In particular, according to the 2014 census, 10 target municipalities were identified (Table 1). In six of these municipalities (Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Tsalka, Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki) ethnic minorities are quantitatively dominant groups; In the four municipalities (Gardabani, Akhaltsikhe, Sagarejo and Lagodekhi), ethnic Armenians and ethnic Azeris make up a relatively smaller, but significant share of the total population.

TABLE 1: Ethnic distribution of the population by municipalities

MUNICIPALITY	GEORGIAN	AZERI	ARMENIAN	OTHER
Ninotsminda Municipality	4%	-	95%	1%
Akhalkalaki Municipality	7%	-	93%	0%
Marneuli Municipality	9%	84%	7%	0%
Bolnisi Municipality	31%	63%	5%	1%
Dmanisi Municipality	33%	65%	0%	2%
Tsalka Municipality	47%	7%	39%	7%
Gardabani Municipality	54%	44%	1%	1%
Akhaltsikhe Municipality	64%	-	35%	1%
Sagarejo Municipality	66%	33%	0%	1%
Lagodekhi Municipality	71%	23%	1%	5%

SOURCE: National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2014 census data.

This approach is based on the assumption that the participation of ethnic minorities in public service is high in ethnic minority municipalities. Consequently, the share of women and youth in the total number of civil servants in these municipalities creates certain picture of the participation of youth and women from ethnic minorities. As a part of the quantitative part of the study, the demographic characteristics of professional civil servants employed in the City Halls and City Councils in 2016-2020 were analyzed by gender and job rankings. These dynamics are compared to professional civil servants employed entirely in the public service. It should be noted that the access to comprehensive statistical information on the age distribution of civil servants was found to be significant limitation for the quantitative part of the study. Consequently, due to the risk of producing non-valid information, it was impossible to analyze the information on civil servants disaggregated by age.

At the next stage of the study, key informants were interviewed (Appendix 1) in two relevant groups:



with stakeholders who are directly involved in the process of collecting administrative data or working to strengthen public agencies in this area;



with state and Civil Society Organizations (SCOs) working in the field of ethnic minorities, and aware of the problems faced by representatives of ethnic minorities in Georgia.

As part of the focus groups, we explored the work environment created for Armenian and Azerbaijani-speaking civil servants and the challenges they face in their day-to-day activities or career development. The focus groups were attended by civil servants representing ethnic minorities, heads of human resources management departments of public agencies; as well as graduates of the 1 + 4 internship program and other persons seeking employment in the public service (Annex 2). As a result of the involvement of these groups, the data were supplemented with issues related to the difficulties of starting career in the public service. In addition, the attitudes of both employees and those seeking employment in the public service regarding the data collection on ethnicity was discussed in focus groups.

It is noteworthy that focus groups with civil servants belonging to ethnic minorities were conducted by Armenian and Azeri-speaking researchers in minority languages. The aim of this approach was to ensure active engagement of the participants, despite the possible language barrier. Besides, the involvement of researchers of similar ethnicity in the process has a positive effect on the sincerity of the participants and may reduce the likelihood of presenting socially desirable views by the respondents.

Focus groups conducted with the heads of human resources management departments of public agencies assessed the level of awareness on ethnic minority issues. This part of the study engaged HR representatives from municipalities with high percentage of ethnic minorities (Appendix 2), as well as from central government agencies and municipalities where the percentage of ethnic minority population is smaller and, consequently, HR managers are relatively less experienced in this regard (Appendix 2).

The research team was supported by the Civil Service Bureau and the human resource management departments of specific public agencies in finding the civil servants to be engaged in the focus groups. Representatives of local SCOs and the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration assisted the research team in establishing communication with the graduates of the 1 + 4 internship program and those seeking employment in the public service.



4. Context description

4.1 Sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 SDGs. By recognizing these goals, Georgia has committed itself to ensuring that all forms of poverty, inequality and climate change are combated.



One of the first steps made by the Georgian government in this process was nationalization of the Global SDGs and development of country-specific indicators⁴. In addition, the relevant baseline indicator, data source and agency responsible for collecting data on the particular indicator have been identified.

The implementation of the SDGs is coordinated by the Administration of the Government of Georgia. SCOs and international partners are actively engaged in the process. Subsequently, an electronic system sdg.gov.ge has been created to monitor the mentioned process. In 2017, the SDG Council was established, comprising four thematic group.⁵ The Council is responsible for inter-agency coordination in the implementation of the Plan of SDGs and their integration into national policy.

In 2016, Georgia completed the first Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the SDGs, and a repeat report was prepared in 2020. Despite the successes achieved in implementing the SDG agenda, access to reliable and complete data is one of the main challenges in this process⁶. International organizations and SCOs, together with the National Statistics Office of Georgia and various government agencies, play an important role in the data collection process.

⁴ National Document on Sustainable Development Goals

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4732470?publication=0> (21.12.2021).

⁵ Social inclusion, economic development, democratic governance, sustainable energy and environment.

⁶ State Audit Office of Georgia (2019), Performance Audit of Preparedness for Implementation Of Sustainable Development Goals.

4.2 SDGs and promoting inclusive public service

SDG # 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and relevant indicators aim to promote inclusiveness and representativeness in the public sector. Representation can be passive and active. In the case of passive representation, the public service must accurately reflect demographic characteristics that are observed in a given society, while active representation assumes the advocacy of the interests of respective groups⁷.



The literature indicates that representativeness, even in a passive form, can have a positive impact on the policy level and lead to increased trust in public institutions⁸. Assessing active representation requires not only measuring the share of minorities in public service, but also assessing their representation on managerial positions⁹.

The SDG Global Indicator 16.7.1b measures the extent to which a public service is representative by age, gender, disability status, distribution of managerial positions, and other characteristics relevant to a particular country. Additional characteristics for a particular country may include religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and etc.

To measure this indicator and assess the participation of ethnic minorities, it is necessary to collect data on ethnic characteristics. Based on these data, it is possible to assess general integration of ethnic minorities, identify weaknesses and develop the diversity management strategy. With such data, it is possible to combat discriminatory practices (both at a group and individual levels) and to provide additional rights or benefits to ethnic minorities¹⁰. At the same time, inter-sectoral cooperation between different agencies is needed to maximize the usefulness of this data.

It should be noted that data related to ethnicity, race, and disability belong to a special type of data and some countries avoid collecting it due to the sensitivity of the issue¹¹. This restriction is mainly explained by the threat that the information collected may contribute to discrimination against minorities. The EU Member States collect data under the Data Protection Directive¹², which prohibits the processing of data by certain categories, including ethnic origin. At the same

⁷ Meier, K. J., & Hawes, D. P. (2009). Ethnic conflict in France: a case for representative bureaucracy?. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 39(3), 269-285.

⁸ Pitts, David W. "Representative bureaucracy, ethnicity, and public schools: Examining the link between representation and performance." *Administration & Society* 39.4 (2007): 497-526.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ventura & et. al (2021) Boosting European Security Law and Policy (203-256).

¹¹ United Nations Development Programme, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre – SDG 16 Policy Brief, Advancing Inclusive Decision Making for Sustainable Development: Representation in the Public Service through SDG 16.7.1b.

¹² Data Protection Directive.

time, the directive allows exceptions in several cases¹³ and makes it possible to collect similar data if it is done with the informed consent of the entity and on the condition of anonymity¹⁴.

4.3 Methods of collecting data on ethnic minorities

Gathering information about ethnicity is not an easy objective. Numerous methodological nuances need to be considered in order to collect valid information and not violate ethical standards¹⁵.

Firstly, it is important to define appropriate categories for classifying individuals. Different criteria of ethnicity and race are used in different countries depending on what is considered most relevant to the country¹⁶. In this regard, an interesting case is the United Kingdom, where racial categories are present and at the same time, sub-categories of ethnicity are distinguished within each category¹⁷. Most important is that these categories are updated periodically, as needed.

There are four main approaches to obtaining data directly related to ethnicity: identification by third party, Auto-Hetero Perception, identification using objective criteria, and self-identification¹⁸. Each of the listed methods has some advantages and disadvantages over the other methods. However, the use of a particular method depends significantly on the end goal for which the specific data is collected.



Identification by the third party: The assessment is made by the third party who assigns the subject, according to this or that characteristic, to a specific ethnic category. This method of data collection is the most problematic because the evaluation is done independently of the subject and ignores individual choices.

¹³ Article 8.2 of Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

¹⁴ Lilla Fankas (2017) Analysis and comparative review of equality data collection practices in the European Union, Data collection in the field of ethnicity.

¹⁵ Ventura & et. al (2021) Boosting European Security Law and Policy (203-256).

¹⁶ Ruedin, D. (2009). Ethnic group representation in a cross-national comparison. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 15(4), 335-354.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Chopin, I., Farkas, L., & Germaine, C. (2014). Ethnic Origin and Disability Data Collection in Europe: Measuring Inequality–Combating Discrimination. Policy Report.



Auto-Hetero Perception: Subjects evaluate themselves, to which category they belong, depending on their characteristics. The method is based on the assumption that individuals are discriminated against not on the basis of self-identification but on the basis of their assessment by other groups. Therefore, this method is considered to be one of the best ways to study discriminatory experiences, although it fails to adequately provide statistically reliable data collection.



Objective criteria: Evaluation is based on data that is not directly related to sensitive information, but indirectly allows the subject to belong to a specific group (citizenship, place of birth, mother tongue, etc.). The method allows data to be collected without using sensitive information and avoids any limitations that may exist in terms of processing data related to ethnicity. However, on the other hand, in this case the right of self-identification by the individual is neglected¹⁹.



Self-identification: The subject determines which ethnic group s/he belongs to. It should be noted that when using the method, two approaches are distinguished: in one case, the questionnaire provides pre-defined categories, and in the second case, the subject him/herself determines and indicates the desired ethnic group²⁰. In the case of pre-defined categories, there is a risk of data loss. To reduce these risks, it is important to have broad list of categories identified in advance in the questionnaire, the development of which should involve minorities themselves²¹.

If an open-ended question is asked about ethnicity, the issue of statistical processing of data becomes more difficult, although this approach allows us to cover a wide range of categories. When using any approach, it is important to ensure that the question about ethnicity is not mandatory and that there is an opportunity for the subject to identify more than one category. Due to respect for the individual's choice, self-identification is considered to be the most optimal method according to international standards²² and is used the most frequently, respectively²³.

¹⁹ Ventura & et. al (2021) Boosting European Security Law and Policy (203-256).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Chopin, I., Farkas, L., & Germaine, C. (2014). Ethnic Origin and Disability Data Collection in Europe: Measuring Inequality–Combating Discrimination. Policy Report.

²² Ventura & et. al (2021) Boosting European Security Law and Policy (203-256).

²³ Ringelheim, J. (2008). Collecting Racial or Ethnic Data for Anti-discrimination Policies: A US-Europe Comparison. *Rutgers Race & L. Rev.*, 10, 39.

However, it should also be noted that this method may not provide fully reliable data collection, as subjects may refrain from citing information, or identify the wrong category if affiliation with a particular ethnic group is stigmatized in the community²⁴.

4.4 The importance of collecting information on ethnicity in Georgia

According to the 2014 census²⁵, ethnic minorities make up 13% of Georgia's population. Of these, ethnic Azeris (6.3%) and ethnic Armenians (4.5%) are the two most numerous groups. Nevertheless, the National Document on Sustainable Development Goals of Georgia does not identify ethnic origin as a relevant category for the country, according to which data will be collected in public agencies.

At the same time, empirical data confirm that there are a number of problems in ethnic minority groups, such as a low level of knowledge of the state language and low access to higher education²⁶. Moreover, these groups are characterized by low levels of engagement in public and political life and are more prone to poverty and unemployment²⁷. It should be noted that across the country, the municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities create an additional barrier to the integration of these groups.

Although there is a lack of empirical research on ethnic minorities in the public service, we can assume that many challenges existing in general population of ethnic minorities have significant impact on civil servants as well.

It should be noted that other vulnerable groups may be identified within the ethnic minority group²⁸. For example, women and youth representing ethnic minorities can be viewed as two subgroups whose involvement in decision-making might be associated with more barriers than of adult men from the same ethnic group.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The description covers the territory controlled by the Government of Georgia and, therefore, does not apply to the territory of the Republic of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia.

²⁶ Open Society Georgia foundation, (2019), Study of the Participation of Ethnic Minority Representatives in Political Life.

²⁷ USAID Georgia (2020) Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS).

²⁸ Ruedin, D. (2009). Ethnic group representation in a cross-national comparison. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 15(4), 335-354.

Despite the increasing trend of women in managerial positions in the public service of Georgia, the share of women in senior positions is still much lower than that of men²⁹. The lowest rate of women in managerial positions is in the regions³⁰. It should be noted that age is particularly important variable for female civil servants and young age is a barrier to their career advancement³¹.

Therefore, the fact that the Civil Service Bureau does not collect information on the ethnic characteristics of civil servants is a significant shortcoming on the way of promoting inclusiveness. Whereas, in the absence of baseline data and the ability to measure progress, the introduction of inclusive policies is a significant challenge³².

4.5 Legislative framework for ethnic minorities in the public service

The legal basis for career management of a civil servant in Georgia is provided by the Law on Civil Service adopted in 2015.³³ This law (Article 9) ensures the equality of every citizen to hold the position of a civil servant and to enjoy equal rights, regardless of his or her ethnicity. However, at the legislative level there are no additional mechanisms that would facilitate or encourage the increase of ethnic minority representation in the public service; and the mechanisms at the policy level can be assessed as weak.

The Bureau develops human resource policies and implements them throughout the public service. The Bureau also administers vacancies published on the Civil Service Website (hr.gov.ge). The Bureau periodically checks the compliance of the application with the competition requirements, analyzes the competition protocols and monitors the interviews. However, this monitoring is of a general nature and does not focus on identifying discriminatory practices on ethnic grounds. Each public institution has a human resource management unit (Law, Chapter III, Article 24) that is responsible for managing human resources in a particular public institution.

²⁹ Bozhadze Mariam, A. Koberidze (2021) Manager Women in Georgian Public Service, Career and Professional Development.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Giorgi Urchukhashvili, G. Tushurashvili (2019), Career in Public Service and Gender Equality.

³² Lilla Fankas (2017) Analysis and comparative review of equality data collection practices in the European Union, Data collection in the field of ethnicity.

³³ The Law on Civil Service defines a professional public servant as a person who is appointed for a permanent position in the public service intended for an official by a state, an autonomous republic, a municipality, a legal entity under public law; Exercises public legal powers as his/her main professional activity, which ensures the protection of public interests by him/her; And in return receives appropriate remuneration and guarantees of social and legal protection (Law on Public Service, Chapter 1, Article 3).

It should be noted that the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2021-2030 includes certain mechanisms that should encourage the representation of ethnic minorities in public service. First of all, this is an internship program for 1+4 graduates of the educational program³⁴. The program allows young people belonging to ethnic minorities to complete an internship in government agencies for one to six months. This program serves to increase the competitiveness and skills of young people. As long as the program does not provide support for post-internship employment³⁵, it can be said that the impact of this initiative on the growth of ethnic minority representation in the public service is only indirect.

Among the mechanisms directly affecting civil servants is Objective #2 of the Civic Equality and Integration Strategy, and in particular, indicator 2.1.1, which aims to increase the number of civil servants involved in the state language teaching program. This is especially important given that the Civil Service Law provides for knowledge of the state language to start a career in the public service. Nevertheless, ethnic minority municipalities face language challenges³⁶. It should be noted that LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration offers both state language courses, as well as specialized field programs in Georgian. These programs aim to assist non-Georgian-speaking civil servants in improving their Georgian language skills in specific areas³⁷.

³⁴ The program is implemented by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality in cooperation with the Civil Service Bureau of Georgia.

³⁵ The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality does not produce statistics on further employment of interns in public service.

³⁶ Khishtovani Giorgi, m. Berianidze M. Komakhidze, (2021) Professional Development of Public Servants - Promoting the Introduction of Online Training, Research Document, PMC Research Center.

³⁷ Jurisprudence, Infrastructure, Management, Finance and Procurement.



5. Challenges of ethnic minorities in public service

Study respondents, based on surveys of individual organizations and personal observations, indicate that Armenian-speaking civil servants in Samtskhe-Javakheti are overwhelmingly represented in the public service. However, the opposite is true for Kvemo Kartli - despite the fact that ethnic Azerbaijanis are the dominant ethnic group here, their share in public service is very low³⁸.

Stakeholders of the study highlight the challenges that are common to ethnic minority-populated municipalities for both Armenian- and Azeri-speaking civil servants. Among them are the problem of knowledge of the state language, improper involvement of women, widespread nepotism, and political influences. However, it should also be noted that the intensity of each of these problems is more or less different in Armenian and Azerbaijani-speaking municipalities.

5.1 Starting career and professional development in public service

All stakeholders of the study name inadequate knowledge of the state language as the most pressing problem for civil servants, belonging to ethnic minorities. Representatives of non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of state bodies are focused on this issue. However, it is important to note that this problem, according to these parties, is more acute in Armenian-speaking municipalities than in areas densely populated by ethnic Azeris. In municipalities where the Armenian and Azerbaijani-speaking people are the dominant ethnic group, finding state-language speaking staff is a significant challenge.

Both the review of vacancies posted on hr.gov.ge and the information received from the focus groups show that in announcements of vacancies there is no demand for a specific level of knowledge of the state language. Moreover, the language proficiency test is not used in the practice of the public agencies participating in the study and the determination of the level of Georgian language proficiency is usually limited to interviews. Only a small proportion of the civil servants and those seeking employment in the public service surveyed had experience with written assignments. Also, in the case of Samtskhe-Javakheti, it was revealed that the interview could be conducted in Armenian.

„The interview is in Armenian, and in general, during the interview, we have a civil servant who speaks different languages, who helps us with translation if necessary (male, an Armenian-speaking group of civil servants).“

³⁸ Center for Social Justice, Assessment of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration, 2021

Consequently, it can be stated that at the regional level, knowledge of the Georgian language, for the most part, is not an obstacle for ethnic minorities to start a career in public service. However, we must also consider that the situation in the municipalities is heterogeneous. Human resources management specialists point out that when it comes to choosing between existing candidates, they give preference to a person who speaks the language. Consequently, the higher knowledge of the state language is among the local population, the more the lack of knowledge of the language can become an obstacle to starting a career in public service.

HR managers noted that the need for communication in Georgian (especially writing skills) in order to perform official duties in certain public service positions is higher. This affects the distribution of positions between Georgian and non-Georgian civil servants. According to them, ethnic Georgians or ethnic minorities who know Georgian better usually hold specialist positions. Citizens who do not speak Georgian well are elected to the position of mayor's representative and elected officials.

„Basically, [...] representatives of ethnic minorities are employed in the villages, either in the position of a representative of the mayor or an assistant. They do not have any difficulty communicating with the people in their village because they speak their mother tongue (HR group of Armenian-speaking municipalities).“

The study found that public agencies often use the services of an interpreter when it comes to formal litigation. Also, they often have to rely on Georgian-speaking employees to perform specific tasks. However, when it comes to communication with citizens, the language of ethnic minorities becomes relevant. Consequently, the role of bilingual civil servants in these institutions is particularly large.

The vast majority of civil servants participating in the study agree that an employee should definitely learn the state language, because without knowledge of the language it will be very difficult to work. Nevertheless, civil servants³⁹, who have only a basic knowledge of the language, or do not speak Georgian at all, believe that they are still adequately performing their duties. However, within the focus group, the work process described by the civil servants indicates that not knowing the language negatively affects their productivity.

„[...] every day we receive a document or work and it is in Georgian, we take the document and rush to find someone who can translate it, to continue the work. It is a bit difficult, but it does not hinder us much because in the City Hall we have people who know the language, they always help us (female, Armenian-speaking group of civil servants).“

³⁹ There were significant differences between the civil servants participating in the focus groups according to their knowledge of the Georgian language.

Part of the civil servants indicate that they are participating in trainings within the framework of the professional development program. However, the volume of knowledge gained by an individual as a result of the mentioned trainings significantly depends on the level of knowledge of the Georgian language.

The majority of civil servants express positive attitude towards the servants' evaluation system. They note that the process is transparent, and the evaluation is done according to pre-defined criteria they are familiar with. However, among the civil servants participating in the study, it was not revealed that this could have a significant impact on their career advancement. The assessment mechanism for civil servants is mostly associated with the identification of the need for state language courses.

Civil servants' assessments of Georgian language proficiency as a barrier to promotion was nonhomogeneous. In those municipalities where the level of state language proficiency is generally low, civil servants believe that their career advancement is not endangered by the issue of Georgian language proficiency; Whereas, other participants of the study noted that for promotion, along with professionalism, the knowledge of Georgian is also critically important. All civil servants in the focus groups agreed that knowledge of the state language is crucial for promotion outside the region.

Significant proportion of civil servants expressed the view that their career advancement opportunities are largely limited by local governments and have very little chance of being able to find job in central government bodies, or even regional centers. They attribute this to the lack of inclusion of ethnic minorities in central government agencies. It should be noted that the lack of involvement of ethnic minorities at the central level was also mentioned as a challenge by the representatives of the human resources departments of the ministries. However, it should be noted that according to their estimation there are no artificial barriers to the employment of minorities. They state that the candidates representing ethnic minorities are less competitive due to less access to quality education.

„General trend is problematic. They do not submit applications and if they do, they will not be able to move to the next level. The problem, I think, is not that we are preventing them with barriers, but the problem is something else - their general education (HR group of ministries).“

Part of the civil servants participating in the study also indirectly pointed to nepotism as a factor having a significant impact on promotion, although they refrained from talking about details. It has also been suggested that political views and "excessive" civic activism may hinder both public service employment and career advancement.

The graduates of the 1+4 program participating in the study, as well as other young people, interested in employment in the public service, noted that they often encounter nepotism in the process of starting work in the public service. HR managers have also confirmed that there is a belief in the public about nepotism in public service and because of this, it is possible that a large proportion of applicants will refrain from applying for the vacancy at an early stage.

5.2 Working environment for ethnic minorities and prospective for HR managers

The vast majority of the participants of the focus groups of civil servants representing ethnic minorities noted they did not feel clearly discriminated or even treated differently in the public service. Civil servants rate the environment as largely friendly and kind to them. Similar assessments were made by young people participating in the internship program⁴⁰.

HR managers also highlighted a friendly work environment and a satisfactory degree of integration. Only the level of knowledge of the state language is considered challenging. Consequently, they see their role in resolving these issues - on the one hand, providing access to state language courses, and on the other hand, providing translation assistance when needed in the work process.

At the central level, the issue is of high sensitivity among civil servants. They are aware that these groups may face more barriers and are willing to provide support in overcoming them.

The study found that in municipalities where the share of ethnic minorities in the population is small, HR managers do not consider this issue relevant. The reason for this is that the representatives of ethnic minorities employed in their municipalities usually do not have a language barrier and are fully involved in the work process. According to HR representatives, there is no problem of integration and they do not see the need to strengthen the work in this regard.

According to Armenian-speaking HR managers, the degree of integration and differential treatment in their municipality is not a problem due to the ethnically homogeneous composition of the staff. Armenian-speaking civil servants in Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki shared similar view. In their estimation, it is even inconceivable for them to face facts of discriminatory treatment, as they work in a largely mono-ethnic environment where ethnic Armenian civil servants form the majority.

⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that all the young people participating in the study had completed internships in local self-governments.

Within Armenian-language focus groups, small number of civil servants recalled cases of discriminatory treatment while participating in trainings outside their own municipality. Cases like this usually involve remarks that call into question the quality of the work done by a non-Georgian-speaking servant due to language skills or imply gross call for learning the state language. Part of the civil servants talked about the cases when they felt confused or could not fully participate in the events that were held outside their municipality and where simultaneous translation was not provided.

„I have come across something like this, I was at the Council of Europe training in Tbilisi, I will not tell you which municipality the person was from, but he tried to start a conflict with me as an Armenian, but he was taken out and not allowed to attend the training. He was telling me that we treated Georgians poorly and I replied that there almost no Georgians in our place and why should we have bad relationships (male, Armenian-speaking group of civil servants).“

The vast majority of Azerbaijani-speaking civil servants mentioned that they had never felt any different attitude from their colleagues, although small number stated that they had had similar case while interacting with citizens, in the process of fulfilling their duties. In addition, the Azerbaijani-language focus group noted that they are not entitled to a day off the holidays that are important to them, which puts them in an unequal position compared to their colleagues.

Civil servants noted that knowledge of the language has a significant impact on the attitude of ethnic Georgians towards ethnic minorities. Therefore, they believe that improving language skills is the way to solve this problem. Only in a few cases was the focus placed on public awareness and established negative stereotypes.

The focus groups engaged citizens representing ethnic minorities, interested in employment in the public service who had an experience of living outside the region (particularly in the capital) while studying at the university. They spoke about discriminatory remarks toward them because of their ethnicity.

„I, personally, have faced such discriminatory treatment many times. For example, in a work process, in a bank, or in transport. I also had quarrels with certain individuals over this. The main reason for this often is the language or religious origin (male, an Azeri-speaking group of people seeking employment in the public service).“

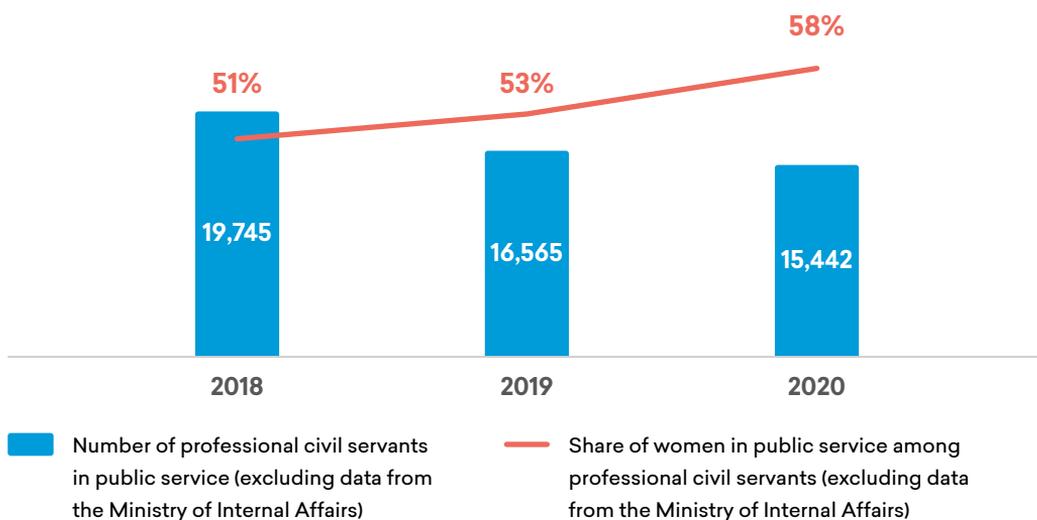
5.3 Engagement of women and youth belonging to ethnic minorities



Quantitative data analysis

According to the Civil Service Bureau data for 2020, 15 422 professional civil servants are employed in the civil service, apart from employees in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁴¹ From 2018, the total number of civil servants has been declining, although the share of women among civil servants has been steadily increasing. In 2018, the share of women was 51%, by 2020 the figure had risen by seven percentage points and reached 58% (Chart 1).

FIGURE 1: Number of professional civil servants in the public service (excluding data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs⁴²) and share of women among employees



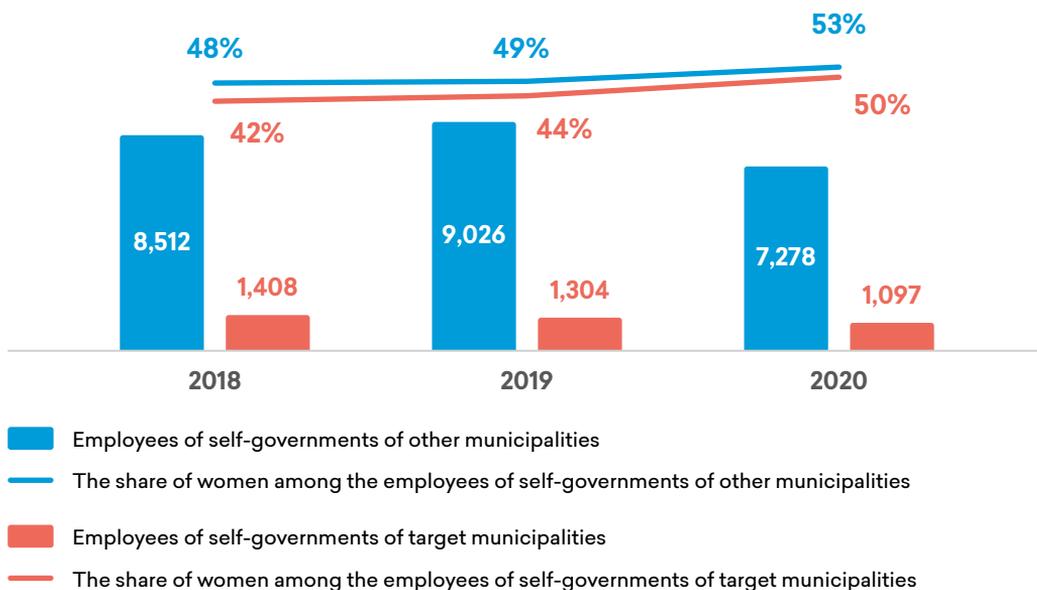
SOURCE: Civil Service Bureau

⁴¹ Data are obtained from total number of civil servants employed in the following agencies: Administrations of the Government of Georgia and the President, administrations of the governors, the Parliament of Georgia, courts of the Autonomous Republics of Adjara and Abkhazia, legal entities of public law, sub-departments, ministries and offices, Local self-government bodies.

⁴² The data are analyzed with the exception of data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as this agency requires specific work to be done and the vast majority of employees are men.

There is a growing trend in the involvement of women in municipal self-governments as across the country, so in 10 target municipalities⁴³. This figure increased from 42% to 50% in the self-governments of the target municipality, and from 48% to 53% in other municipalities (Figure 2).⁴⁴

FIGURE 2: Total of civil servants in the self-governments of the target and other municipalities, and share of women in this number



SOURCE: Civil Service Bureau

When discussing the dynamics of employment of women in public service, it is interesting to compare the municipalities where Armenian speakers (Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Tsalka)⁴⁵ and Azerbaijani-speaking populations (Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi) are the dominant ethnic groups.

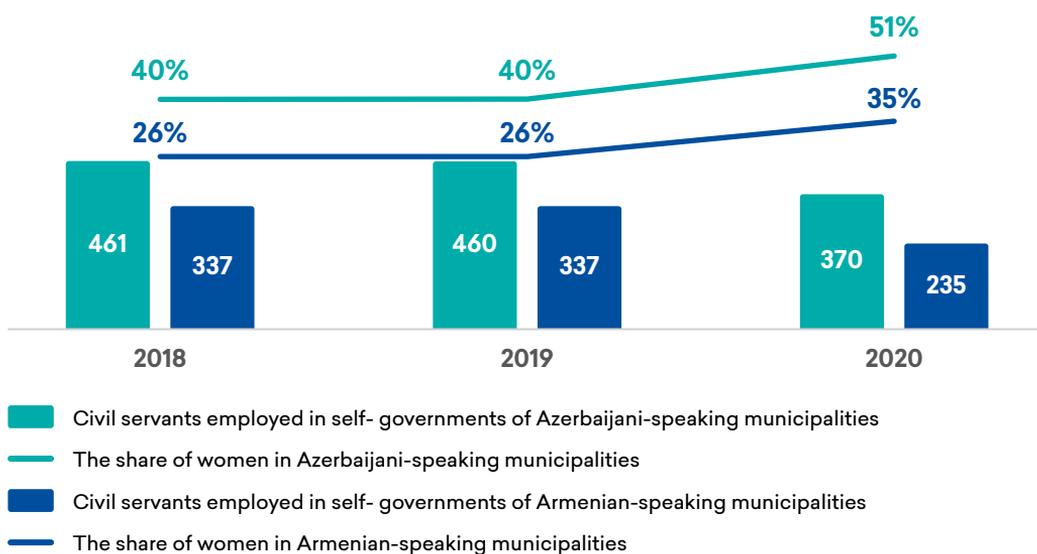
⁴³ The target municipalities in the study are the municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities: Ninotsminda, Akhalkalaki, Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Tsalka, Gardabani, Akhaltsikhe, Sagarejo and Lagodekhi.

⁴⁴ All other municipalities in Georgia, except for 10 target municipalities are mentioned as other municipalities in the study.

⁴⁵ Although the share of ethnic Armenians in Tsalka is 39%, as the majority of the population in these municipalities are national minorities, Tsalka data are analyzed with data from Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki.

In Azerbaijani-speaking, as well as in Armenian-speaking municipalities, the share of women in public service has been increasing from 2018 to 2020. It should be noted that in the analyzed period, Azerbaijani-speaking municipalities had higher rate of female involvement in public service compared to Armenian-speaking municipalities (Figure 3). However, since the Civil Service Bureau does not collect information on the ethnicity of civil servants, based on these data we cannot say that the involvement of Azerbaijani women in public service is higher.

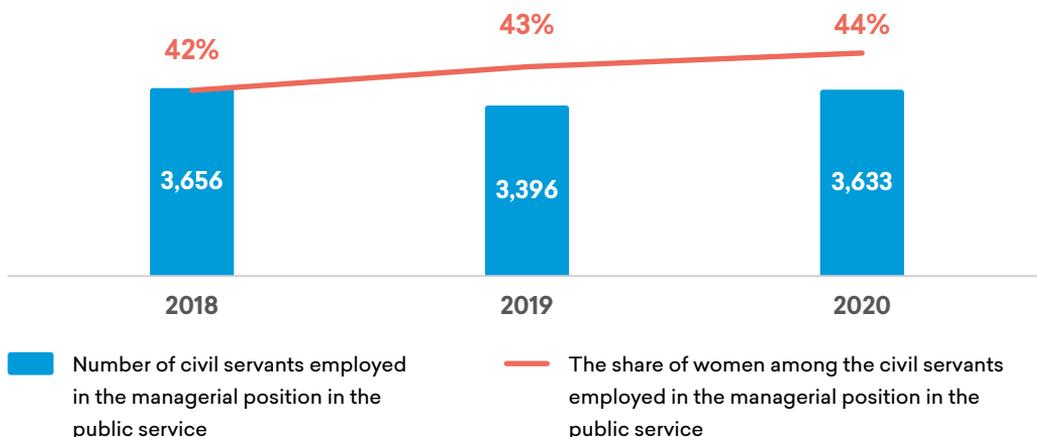
FIGURE 3: Total of civil servants employed in self- governments of Azerbaijani-speaking and Armenian-speaking municipalities and the share of women in this number



SOURCE: Civil Service Bureau

In terms of employment of women on managerial positions in public service (excluding data from the Ministry of Interior), across the country, no significant change is observed in 2018-2020. This figure is significantly lower than general participation of women in public service. By 2020, the share of women among employees on managerial positions was 44%, while the share of female civil servants was 58% (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: Number of civil servants employed in the public service (excluding data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and share of women among them



SOURCE: Civil Service Bureau

The share of women in managerial positions in target 10 municipalities of the study is just slightly behind the share of women in self-governments across the country (Figure 5).

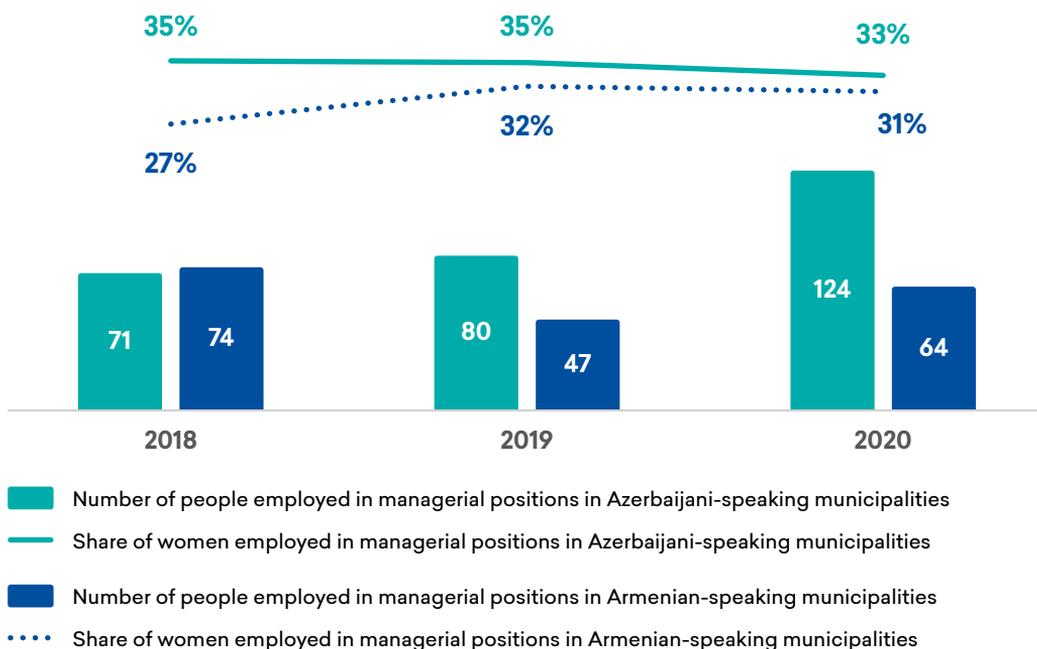
FIGURE 5: Total of civil servants employed in managerial positions in the target and other municipalities, and share of women in this number



SOURCE: Civil Service Bureau

As for the share of women in managerial positions in the public service in the Armenian-speaking and Azerbaijani-speaking municipalities, they do not differ significantly. It should be noted that in both Azerbaijani and Armenian speaking municipalities, the general participation of women in public service during the analyzed period was higher than the share of women in managerial positions (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6: Number of people employed in managerial positions in the self-governments of Azerbaijani and Armenian-speaking municipalities and the share of women



SOURCE: Civil Service Bureau

The main reasons why the quantitative part of this study failed to assess participation of young age groups in public service are the shortcomings and inaccuracies identified in the age data of civil servants. An additional challenge, however, is the fact that the Bureau collects data on the age of civil servants according to pre-defined categories: 18-25, 26-40, 41-55, 56 and above, and retirement age. The division into similar age groups does not allow for a reliable assessment of the share of young people. One of the important requirements of the SDG 16.7.1 indicator is to distinguish under 35 age groups.



Analysis of qualitative data

Among the research participants, the level of awareness of the potential barriers that women may face in the process of working in the public service and career development is quite low. Both female and male civil servants participating in the study believed that opportunities for success in public service were equal for women and men and cited the success stories of individual women for justification.

Compared to Armenian-speaking municipalities, Azerbaijani-speaking civil servants and HR managers identified clearer that the involvement of ethnic Azerbaijani women is a significant challenge. They noted that culture and traditions are the only barrier to women's involvement, however, added that the situation is changing for the better. Hence, at this point, they do not see the need for additional support mechanisms from public agencies for the involvement of women in this process.

„In the past, because of the mentality, unfortunately, it was more acceptable for women to work only as teachers or doctors. [...] Now the number of active women is slowly increasing. "Currently, there are 5 Azerbaijani women working in the City Hall, which is also a great success, in my opinion (male, an Azerbaijani-speaking group of civil servants).“

Civil servants, as well as HR managers, emphasize importance of active participation of youth and state that this will solve the problem of inadequate knowledge of the state language in their agencies. Within the focus groups, civil servants noted that young people do not face special barriers to starting a career in the public service. However, on the other hand, due to the cultural values of the local community, young people may need more effort to prove their competence and professionalism.

„I have not heard of discriminatory treatment based on age. We simply respect elder civil servants more, because they have more experience (male, an Azerbaijani-speaking group of civil servants).“

Focus groups with 1 + 4 program interns revealed that often, municipalities meet interns unprepared. Therefore, they are not properly involved in the work process, and consequently, the interns are not able to develop necessary skills. At the same time, the resources of the interns are not used properly by the institution itself.

Representatives of the SCOs participating in the study indicate that graduates of the 1 + 4 educational program speak the state language much better than the majority of the local population in regions densely populated with ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, according to NGOs, the public service still employs people who do not speak the state language at a basic level. This trend has a negative impact on public service efficiency, as well as on the motivation of young people to better mastering the state language.

During the study, all stakeholders, including civil servants, indicate that attracting 1 + 4 graduates and employing them in the public service would significantly improve the knowledge of the state language in the regions.

International practice for promoting representation in public service



In Australia, Belgium, Ireland and New Zealand HR Departments of public service partner with HR agencies, NGOs and the private sector to attract more representatives of ethnic minorities to vacancies.⁴⁶



The Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan have introduced internship programs for ethnic minority youth. The goal of the programs is to increase competitiveness in the labor market and employment opportunities in the public service.⁴⁷



In South Korea, public service internship program has been introduced for young people living in the regions. Ethnic minorities living densely in the regions have the opportunity to participate in this program and gain experience of working in the public service.⁴⁸



France has grants for various groups, including ethnic minorities, to prepare them for entrance exams at the National School of Public Administration.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Fostering Diversity in the Public Service, OECD 2009 [paper-fostering-diversity-public-service.pdf \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/paper-fostering-diversity-public-service.pdf) (21.12.2021)

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.



In 2015, the Republic of Northern Macedonia adopted a law on public employment, one of the aims of which is to promote ethnic representation. Since 2017, the law obliges state agencies to create an annual employment plan, which should describe the ethnic distribution/composition of employees. The report also includes a recruitment plan that should be adequate for the country's ethnic composition.⁵⁰



Serbia amended its constitution and legislative framework to facilitate the inclusion of ethnic minorities in the public sphere, including public service. An amendment was made to the Constitution stating that the ethnic structure of the population and the relevant national representation should be reflected in managerial positions in the public service.⁵¹



Hungary, under the Better Employment Opportunity program, allows gypsy women to take language and education courses for further employment.⁵²



New Zealand has started collecting data on ethnic Maori women in the public service to study wage inequality and take appropriate action to address the problem.⁵³



Since 2008, public institutions in Kenya have conducted annual audits to assess the ethnic composition of people employed in the public service. This aims at promoting peaceful ethnic coexistence in the country.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Report of the Republic of North Macedonia on the Fifth Round of Observation under Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Council of Europe 2020, [Report of the Republic of North Macedonia on the Fifth Round of Observation \(coe.int\)](#) (21.12.2021)

⁵¹ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Council of Europe 2019, [16809943b6 \(coe.int\)](#) (21.12.2021)

⁵² European Social Charter, Government of Hungary, 2020 [16809e67a2 \(coe.int\)](#) (21.12.2021)

⁵³ Eliminating the Public Service Gender Pay Gap, New Zealand, Public Service Commission, 2020 [GPG_Action_Plan_Progress_Report.pdf \(publicservice.govt.nz\)](#) (21.12.2021)

⁵⁴ Ethnic and Diversity Audit of the County Public Service, National Cohesion and Integration Commission, 2016 [Ethnic-and-Diversity-Audit-of-the-County-Public-Service-2016.pdf \(cohesion.or.ke\)](#) (21.12.2021)



6. Access to statistical data on civil servants belonging to ethnic minorities

6.1 Existing forms of data collection on ethnic characteristics

In Georgia, the issues related to personal data collection, storage, and further processing, including information related to ethnicity, are regulated by the Law on Personal Data. The law stipulates that such data may be collected with the written consent of the subject or in specific cases outlined by law.⁵⁵

The practice of collecting information on ethnicity in state agencies is limited and fragmented. Data collection is linked to specific types of initiatives and is of an irregular nature. However, in these cases, ethnicity is identified according to objective characteristics (beneficiaries of specific programs, graduates of non-Georgian language schools, etc.).

One of the goals of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2021-2030 is to improve the collection and analysis of the statistical data related to ethnic minorities by public agencies. In this regard, it should be noted that changes have been made to the methodology used during the general population census in relation to ethnic characteristics; consequently, in the next census process, the subject will be able to specify more than one category of ethnicity.

As part of the study, representatives of public institutions in municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities noted that they often have to share information about the ethnic composition of employees upon request of SCOs. However, this data is not collected using an identical methodology. Each public institution determines the form and method of data collection. There is also a different approach to how similar information is stored within the organization after it is shared.

„[...] we fill in the staff list and indicate the year of birth, surname, first name, father's name, nationality, education [...] then sign to confirm provided information. The photo is also attached (HR group of representatives of Armenian-speaking municipalities).“

In some cases, a civil servant is identified by the human resources department according to his or her last name or native language, which excludes self-identification by the servant. In some institutions, information is collected with the written consent of the civil servant, although even in this case, the principle of anonymity might not be ensured. The extent to which civil servants have the freedom of choice or an opportunity to change that choice in the future also requires further study.

⁵⁵ Law on Personal Data, Chapter I, Article 6

6.2 Opinions on collecting ethnicity data

Representatives of state agencies emphasize that the benefit of collecting, storing, and processing information about ethnicity is not justified. Most SCOs are inclined to the position that the collection of this data is necessary and important to identify the fundamental and systemic challenges existing in terms of the representation of ethnic minorities in the public service. However, some representatives of the organizations also expressed the opinion that data collection could be useless. In their view, it will be much more important to allocate the resources for addressing the challenges such as language skills and access to quality education. There is a heterogeneous attitude toward data collection among both civil servants and HR managers. Collecting this type of data is not new to HR managers in an ethnic minority-dominated municipality. However, the purpose for which a state agency might need to collect ethnicity data on regular basis was less clear to them.

In municipalities where there is no practice of collecting data on ethnicity, the opinion of the HR specialists involved in the discussion on supporting the introduction of such an initiative was divided in two. For some HR managers, it was even confusing what criteria could be used to collect and for what purpose such information could be used.

“Firstly, let’s decide, why do we need this? Why this information should be recorded? Could this lead to some kind of discrimination? Why do we divide people if they all are our citizens? (HR managers, regional municipalities)”

Positive attitudes towards data collection on ethnicity were expressed by those seeking employment in the public service and graduates of the 1 + 4 internship program in both Armenian and Azerbaijani focus groups.

In contrast, groups of civil servants were more skeptical about the initiative, although there is a difference between Azerbaijani and Armenian-speaking servants. Data collection is less acceptable for Armenian-speaking civil servants than for Azerbaijani-speaking ones. This may be due to the fact that in the municipalities where the Armenian-speaking population is the dominant group, their representation in the public service is also high. Consequently, they expressed some suspicion that such an initiative might be driven by motives against the Armenian-speaking population.

Civil servants, participating in the study, who do not accept the collection of data on ethnicity believe that this process cannot make a significant difference in the integration process. However, some of them expressed the opinion that collecting the data on ethnicity without providing proper information could be perceived as their targeted classification as representatives of specific nationalities; hence, will even be a step backward on the way of promoting integration.

"[...] I, personally, would support it, but don't think that many people would support the idea. Georgia is a diverse country, many different nationalities live here, and I think people do not want someone to say that this person is Armenian and is different (male, Armenian-speaking group of civil servants)."

There is also a risk that old practices and methodologies will continue to be used in public institutions, where human resources departments have experience in collecting data on ethnic characteristics. These practices may not be based on new approaches to international data collection and international standards.

In addition, to maximize the potential benefits of these data, it is important that information on ethnicity is collected and made available in both gender and age categories. Otherwise, subgroups within ethnic minorities could not be studied.

Within the interviews with stakeholders, it was also noted that the issue of the validity of the collected data may also be raised, as civil servants may refrain from indicating data on ethnicity. Ethnic minorities may also refer to themselves as "Georgians" on the basis of self-identification, as they perceive this as a manifestation of "good citizenship".

To mitigate the risks listed above, it is important to conduct targeted information campaign on the goals, potential benefits, and general significance of such data collection. It is also necessary to provide additional information to HR managers to implement a unified methodology.



7. Recommendations

Recommendations for data collection



The respective indicator (indicator 16.7.1) of Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) of the Nationalized Document of Sustainable Development Goals, does not identify ethnic minorities as a relevant group in the Georgian context. Therefore, at this stage, there is no obligation to collect data on the representation of the mentioned groups in the public service. Hence, it is important that the Government of Georgia recognizes the need for including ethnic minorities in public administration and reflects this vision in the national SDG plan, which will provide grounds for the regular collection of data on ethnicity.



Currently, in municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities, individual public entities periodically collect information about the ethnicity of their employees, for different purposes and using different methodologies. It is important to determine the agency responsible for the collection of similar types of data, which will develop the appropriate methodology and promote its implementation throughout the public service. It is essential to base the methodology on the principles of self-identification, voluntariness, and anonymity, and eliminate the practice of ethnic identification by a third party. In addition, the collected information should be accumulated in the Civil Service Bureau, and the annual reports of the Bureau should reflect information on ethnic minorities disaggregated by gender, official ranks, and age groups.



Currently, the Civil Service Bureau collects data on young employees in overly broad categories, including the 18-25 and 26-40 age groups. SDG indicator 16.7.1 recommends analyzing the category under 35 years separately, while processing data, to describe more accurately younger age groups. Therefore, it is recommended for the Bureau to collect direct information about the age of civil servants and process them by categories at the analysis stage.



At this stage, public institutions have a low level of awareness regarding the importance of collecting data on ethnicity and its potential benefits. Therefore, it is important to properly communicate information regarding the need to collect ethnic data at different levels of the public service, which will reduce the risks of collecting invalid data.

Recommendations for improving the level of participation and integration of ethnic minorities in public service



Within the framework of the research, significant challenges were identified regarding the level of awareness of HR managers of the ethnic minority issues. In many cases, the issue of integration and potential discrimination of ethnic minorities is associated only with the knowledge of the state language. Therefore, it is important to raise the awareness of HR managers at the regional and central levels of the importance of participation of ethnic minorities. In addition, it is desirable to introduce mechanisms supporting ethnic minorities in the process of finding and selecting candidates for vacancies.



The results of the study suggest that among civil servants who do not live in ethnically diverse municipalities, low sensitivity to the issues of ethnicity may be a challenge. Employees may, knowingly or unknowingly, use discriminatory remarks and comments towards colleagues of non-Georgian origin. Therefore, it is important to raise the level of awareness of ethnic diversity among civil servants in general. Also, it is important to strengthen communication between ethnic Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani civil servants employed in various public agencies.



At this stage, the involvement of ethnic minorities in public administration is largely limited to mayors and councils of municipalities populated by ethnic minorities. The main reason for this is the lack of language skills. While the lack of language skills at the municipality level is often not an obstacle, at the regional and central levels employment without knowledge of the Georgian language is associated with much more difficulties. Accordingly, in order to increase the representation of ethnic minorities beyond the municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities, it is important to improve Georgian language teaching programs.



Currently, the internship program offered within the framework of the 1+4 program does not adequately fulfill the goal of increasing the involvement of ethnic minority youth in public service. Two main reasons for this were identified: 1. The inefficiency of the internship in terms of developing young people's skills; and 2. Absence of programmatic mechanisms to facilitate youth transition from internship to employment. It is necessary to clearly define the requirements of the 1+4 internship program for the beneficiary institution and the expected results of the internship for the participants. Besides, evaluation tools shall be implemented to increase the accountability of civil servants in relation to the internship program. At the same time, it is important to offer activities focused on the development of young people's skills, opportunities to visit other public institutions, and interview with civil servants working in different positions. The 1+4 program may

become an important tool for raising the level of knowledge of the Georgian language in local government. For this, it is important to introduce specific support mechanisms in public service to facilitate inclusion of youth who have graduated from the program.



Involvement of ethnic minority women in public service is a challenge, especially in the case of Azerbaijani-speaking female civil servants. Therefore, it is important to strengthen the work and encourage the involvement of women in the public service, including within the framework of the 1+4 internship program.



To implement the good governance principles, it is important to ensure that civil servants know the state language and that they have access to all important legislative and political documents. Language proficiency of local representatives also has a significant impact on their ability to advocate for the interests of local populations at the regional and central levels. It is desirable to encourage candidates who know the state language while selecting new employees in the public service; and in order to increase the knowledge of the state language among the current employees, it is important to introduce incentive mechanisms for those civil servants who will improve their language competence.



Within the framework of the mentioned study, in the municipalities densely populated by ethnic Armenian and Azerbaijani citizens, the challenges of civil servants representing ethnic minorities were evaluated. Accordingly, the civil servants participating in the study work in local government bodies, and in this context, examples of discrimination at workplace are less due to the ethnically homogeneous environment. However, it is important to study the working environment of ethnic minorities in central government bodies and at the level of other municipalities where the share of ethnic minorities in total is low.



Annex 1

List of organizations the representatives of which participated in the study:

Interview	Organization	Number of Respondents
1	Civil Service Bureau	2
2	State Inspector Service	1
3	National Statistics Office of Georgia	1
4	Office of the Public Defender	2
5	Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality	1
6	LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration	1
7	Center for Civic Integration and Interethnic Relations	1
8	Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)	1
9	Social Justice Center (EMC)	1
10	European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI)	2
11	Platform Salam	1
12	Youth for Democratic Change	1
13	USAID Good Governance Initiative in Georgia (GGI)	1



Annex 2

Distribution of respondents participating in focus groups

Number of focus groups	Group	Number of respondents
4	Azerbaijani-speaking civil servants	18
4	Armenian-speaking civil servants	20
1	Armenian-speaking participants of the 1+4 internship program	5
1	Azerbaijani-speaking participants of the 1+4 internship program	5
1	Armenian-speaking citizens seeking employment in the public service	5
1	Azerbaijani-speaking citizens seeking employment in the public service	6
1	HR representatives of ministries	6
1	HR representatives of Armenian-speaking municipalities	4
1	HR representatives of Azerbaijani-speaking municipalities	5
1	HR representatives of other regional municipalities	6



Annex 3

Research tools

Civil Servants' Focus Group Guide

Starting career in public service

1. How easy do you think it is to get a job in public service for an ordinary citizen living in your municipality?
 - What difficulties can the civil servant face?
 - Have you, or people around you, faced similar difficulties?
2. In your opinion, what are the additional barriers that a non-Georgian-speaking civil servant may face?
3. What do you think, in case of your municipality should knowledge of the state language be essential condition or is this unnecessary barrier?
4. In your opinion, to what extent is imperfect knowledge of the state language an obstacle to the performance of daily activities?

Assessment of work environment and career development

5. In your opinion, how friendly is the working environment for ethnic minorities in the public service?
 - Do you face the problems, Georgian-speaking civil servants do not worry about?
6. To what extent are you allowed to take advantage of professional development trainings?
 - What kind of trainings have you undergone?
 - Have you taken the state language course?
7. How easy do you think it is to get promoted at your job?
 - What is key point for this?
 - What role does ethnicity play? What about knowledge of the Georgian language?
8. How easy do you think it is for you to get promoted at the regional level? At the central level?
 - What is key point for this?
9. What do you think about the performance appraisal system? In your experience, what impact has the appraisal had on your performance and professional growth?
10. In your opinion, what is the attitude towards women in public service? Have you ever been treated differently because being a woman? / because of young age?
 - Who was it from, a supervisor or an employee?
 - What do you think was the cause of this?
 - What was your reaction? Have you mentioned this problem anywhere?
 - How can this attitude be changed?

Discrimination and promotion of ethnic diversity

11. In our country, there is still no proper level of awareness regarding the issues of ethnic minorities. We come across cases when people knowingly or unknowingly use inappropriate words or show stereotypes based attitude towards non-Georgian speaking citizens. Have you ever been treated differently at work because of your ethnicity? What did this manifest in?
 - Who was it from, a supervisor or an employee?
 - What do you think was the cause of this?
 - What was your reaction? Have you mentioned this problem anywhere?
 - How can this attitude be changed?
12. In many parts of the world, organizations often collect information about the ethnicity of employees in the form of an anonymous questionnaire, in order to promote diversity and, where necessary, support their own employees. Currently, in Georgia the Public Service Bureau does not collect such data. How good do you think it would be if we started collecting this information?
 - Would you support this initiative? Why?
 - Why not?
13. Integration of ethnic minorities is a problem in all areas Across the country. In your opinion, what should the state do to promote the involvement of non-Georgian-speaking civil servants in the public service?
 - To promote career advancement?

Focus group guide for those seeking employment in public service / graduates of the 1+4 internship program

Motivation for employment in public service

14. How interested are you in starting career in public service?
 - Why are you interested? What is your motivation?
 - Why not?
15. Have you ever sent a CV to a public service? Are you registered on Hr.gov.ge?
 - How would you rate how easy the procedure is? Did you need someone to help you with this process?
16. How easy do you think it is to get a job in public service for an ordinary citizen living in your municipality?
 - What difficulties can the civil servant face?
 - Have you, or people around you, faced similar difficulties?
17. In your opinion, what additional barriers might a non-Georgian-speaking civil servant face?
18. Do you think, in the case of your municipality, should knowledge of the language really be a necessary condition for a civil servant, or is it an unnecessary barrier?

Interview/ starting career

19. Have you ever been to an interview in a public service?
 - How easy was the process?
 - What language were you interviewed in?
20. Did you have to do an additional written or oral task?
 - How easy was the process?
 - In what language was this assignment written?
21. How were you informed about the results of the interview?
 - What was designated as the basis for refusal?
 - At what extent did it comply with truth?
22. How would you rate the effectiveness of the 1+4 internship program?
 - How much do you think the program contributes to the employment of non-Georgian speaking youth in the public service?

Discriminatory treatment

23. In our country, there is still no proper level of awareness regarding the issues of ethnic minorities. We come across cases when people knowingly or unknowingly use inappropriate words or show stereotypes based attitude towards non-Georgian speaking citizens. Have you ever been treated differently at work because of your ethnicity? What did this manifest in?
 - Who was it from, a supervisor or an employee?
 - What do you think was the cause of this?
 - What was your reaction? Have you mentioned this problem anywhere?
 - How can this attitude be changed?
24. In many parts of the world, organizations often collect information about the ethnicity of employees in the form of an anonymous questionnaire, in order to promote diversity and, where necessary, support their own employees. Currently, in Georgia the Public Service Bureau does not collect such data. How good do you think it would be if we started collecting this information?
 - Would you support this initiative? Why?
 - Why not?
25. Integration of ethnic minorities is a problem in all areas Across the country. In your opinion, what should the state do to promote the involvement of non-Georgian-speaking civil servants in public service?

The focus group guide for HR managers

Recruiting and hiring personnel

1. What general problems exist in your/public agencies in terms of staffing?
 - How difficult is it to find qualified staff?
 - What qualifications are applicants unable to meet?
 - To what extent imperfect knowledge of the state language is hindering factor?
2. Have you had interns, graduated the 1+4 State Internship Program?
 - How would you rate the qualifications of these candidates?
 - How much do you think this program can help you in finding qualified personnel?
3. How frequent are the cases when civil servants need to present a special certificate?
4. Is the level of knowledge of the state language tested in any way?
5. Do you think there is a need for this? How are written/oral assignments and interview questionnaires developed?
 - If the candidate's native language is not Georgian, do you take this into account when developing the questionnaire/task?

Assessment of work environment and career development

6. What do you think are the hindering factors for the career advancement of civil servants?
 - Is there any difference between Georgian-speaking and non-Georgian-speaking civil servants in this regard?
 - To what extent is insufficient knowledge of the state language hindering factor?
 - What other obstacles do you think exist for ethnic minorities?
 - To what extent does the 1+4 internship program contribute to the integration of ethnic minorities in public service? Why yes/no?
7. What mechanisms do you use to solve this problem?
 - How often do non-Georgian-speaking civil servants use special state language programs?
 - In your opinion, how effective are these courses?
8. Do you think there is a need in your agency for non-Georgian-speaking civil servants to benefit from additional support/benefits in order to be provided with equal opportunities for career advancement?
 - Women?
 - Youngsters?
9. Have representatives of ethnic minorities approached you about any kind of discrimination?

Data collection

10. Do you collect information about the ethnicity of civil servants in any way?
 - In what form? Based on self-identification or identification by the HR manager?
11. In your opinion, how important is it to collect along with other demographic data (distribution by sex, age, managerial positions), information on ethnicity and to provide to the Civil Service Bureau?
 - What positive consequences could follow collecting such information?
 - What are the negative consequences?
12. According to your observation, what is the distribution of Georgian-speaking and non-Georgian-speaking civil servants in high managerial positions?
 - Are there any internal vacancies, highly demanded by ethnic minorities, which they cannot occupy due to lack of qualification?
13. How high is turnover?
 - Mainly, for what reason do people leave the public service?
 - In this regard, is there a difference between Georgian-speaking and non-Georgian-speaking civil servants?

