



## **Needs Assessment Report**

**Staff and Students Rights and Ombudsman Office**

**Akaki Tsereteli State University  
Kutaisi, Georgia**

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## **A. PURPOSE**

In the frame of the ERASMUS + Erasmus+ Key Action 2 - Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education Project: Advocacy Establishment for Students through Ombudsman Position (AESOP) **561640-EPP-1-2015-1-AZ-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP** universities from Georgia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine:

Akaki Tsereteli State University (ATSU), Georgia  
Caucasus University (CU), Georgia  
Georgian American University (GAU), Georgia

Khazar University (), Azerbaijan  
Nakhchivan State niversity (NU), Azerbaijan  
Nakhchivan University (NU), Azerbaijan  
Ganja State University (GSU), Azerbaijan

Kyiv National Economic University (KNEU), Ukraine  
Poltava University of Economics and Trade (PUET), Ukraine

conducted needs assessment in their Universities. The assessment was focused on finding out/ understanding the needs of students and staff in terms of their rights, satisfaction with services they get, procedures they go through and overall need of establishment of Ombudsman Office at their universities.

## **B. DATA COLLECTION**

### **Methodology**

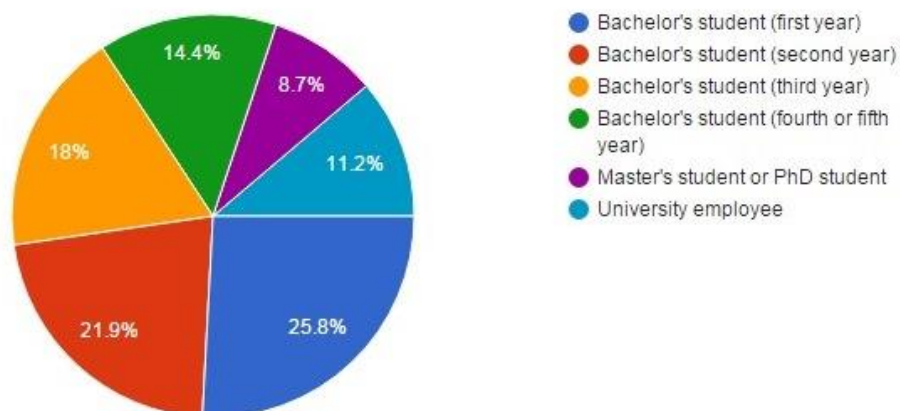
#### **Tool**

Using qualitative tools the assessment was conducted targeting students and staff at Partner Universities. The survey tool was designed to get data on interviewers general information, such as country of residence, university, year of study and degree. It also included questions that focused on collecting information about current situation, assistance students/staff get, needs and challenges faced by them. The analysis of the survey results was conducted by using Excel.

The questionnaire designed on google platform was filled in by students and staff. The total number of participants is 1788, of which 1588 (88.8%) were students and 200 (11.2%) staff members. The questionnaire was completed by randomly chosen students and staff from different faculties. Sample size for each university was: at least 100 and not more than 200 students and at least 10 and not more than 20 staff members. Effort were taken to ensure the surveys were completed by students to capture data from the number of students defined by the project. The questionnaire included general data collection, in addition to key informative questions. The survey included the question which focused on the necessity of Ombudsman Office as a structure helping in resolving the raised issues.

## I am a...

1,788 responses



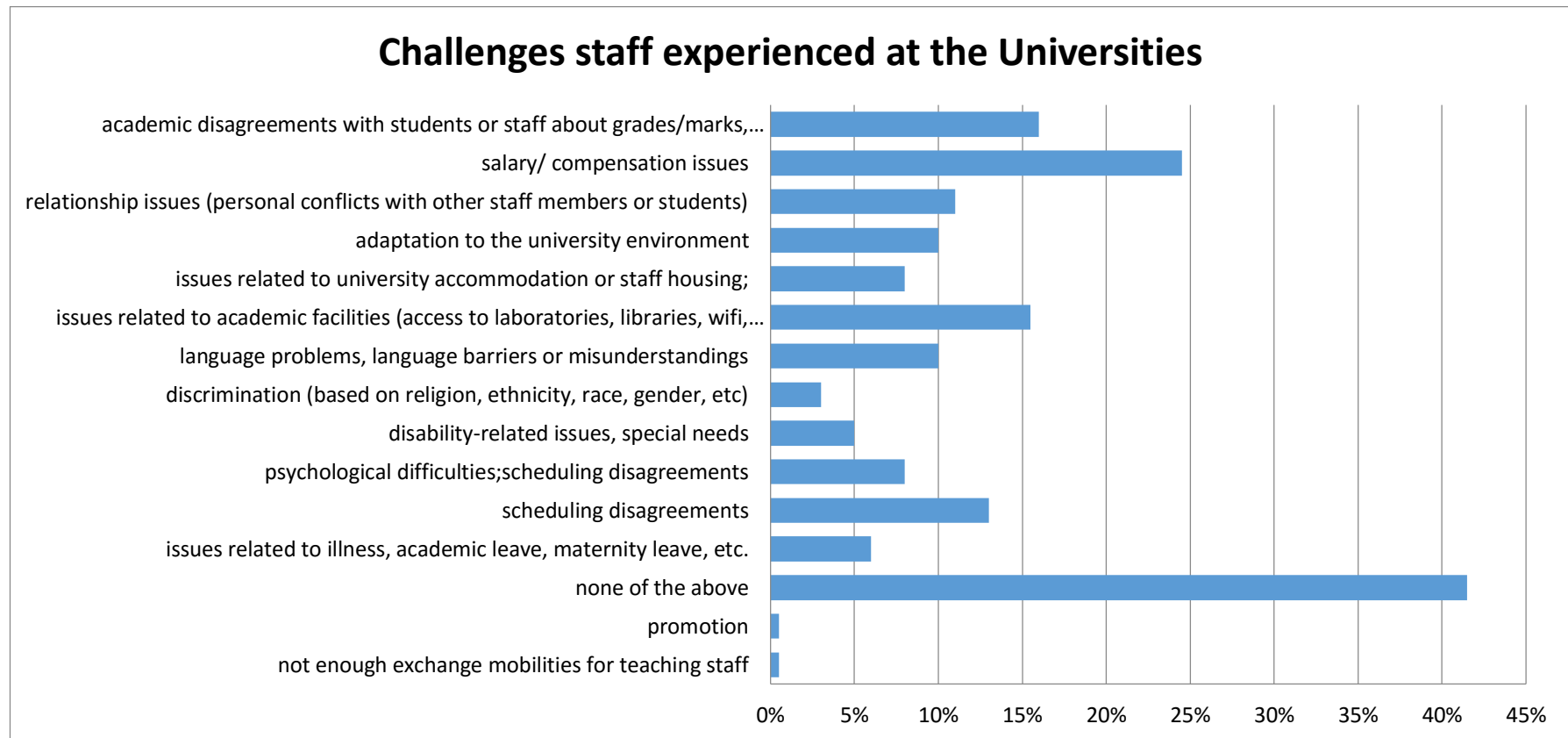
### Participants of the survey (Universities in Georgia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan)

Bachelor's student (first year)	462
Bachelor's student (second year)	391
Bachelor's student (third year)	322
Bachelor's student (fourth year)	257
Master's student or PhD student	156
University employee	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>1788</b>

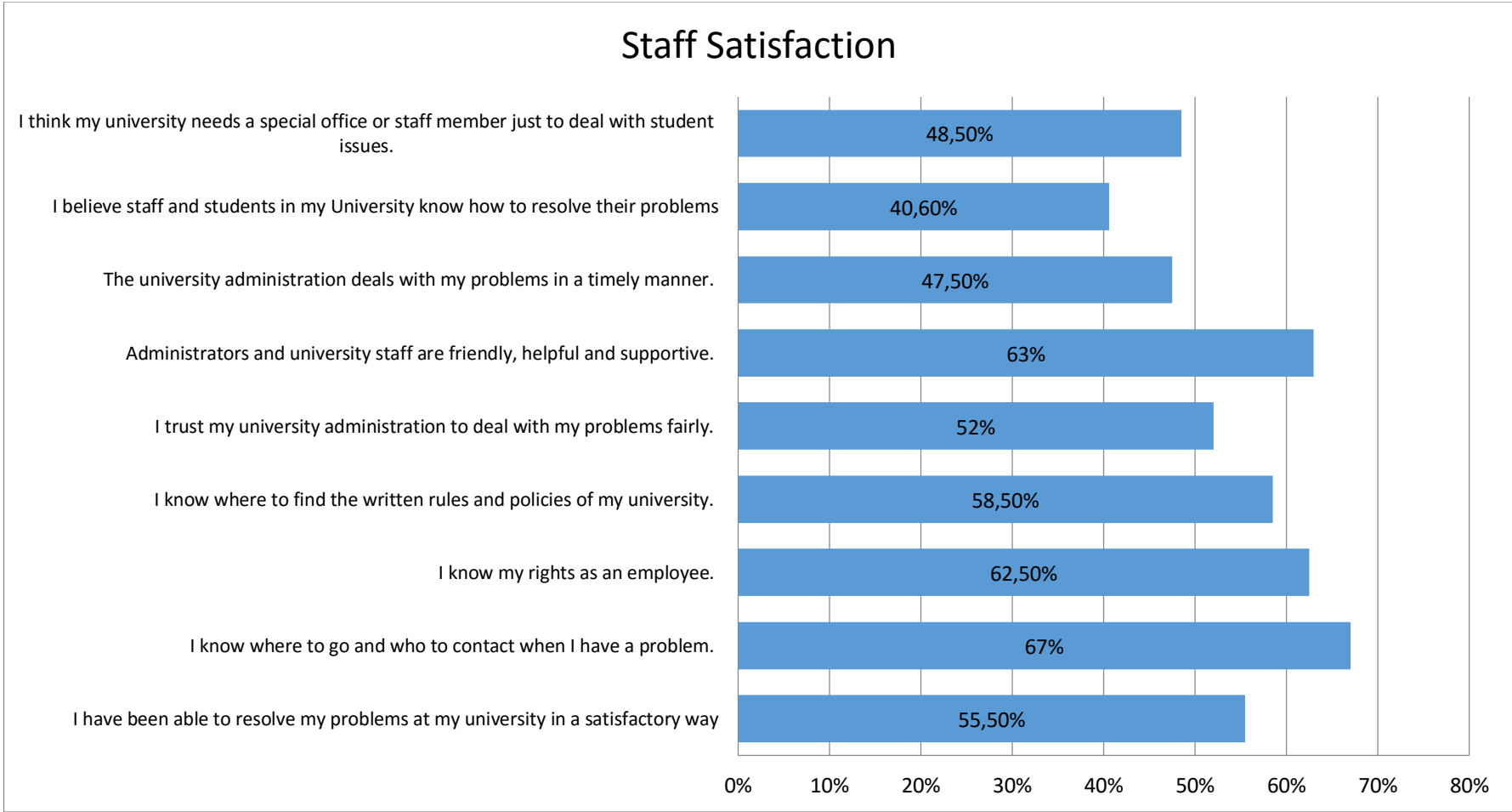
## C. ANALYSIS

### Staff

Respondent staff were asked about the challenges they experienced during the time they were working at their Universities. Most frequent issues they had to deal with were salary/compensation issues (24.5%) and academic disagreements with students or staff about grades/marks, examinations, etc. (16%), issues related to academic facilities - access to laboratories, libraries, wifi, computers, etc. (15.5%) and scheduling disagreements (13%). Issues related to language problems, language barriers or misunderstandings (10%), adaptation to the University environment (10%), illness, academic leave, maternity leave, etc.(6.%) were also selected. 41.5% stated that they do not have any problems.

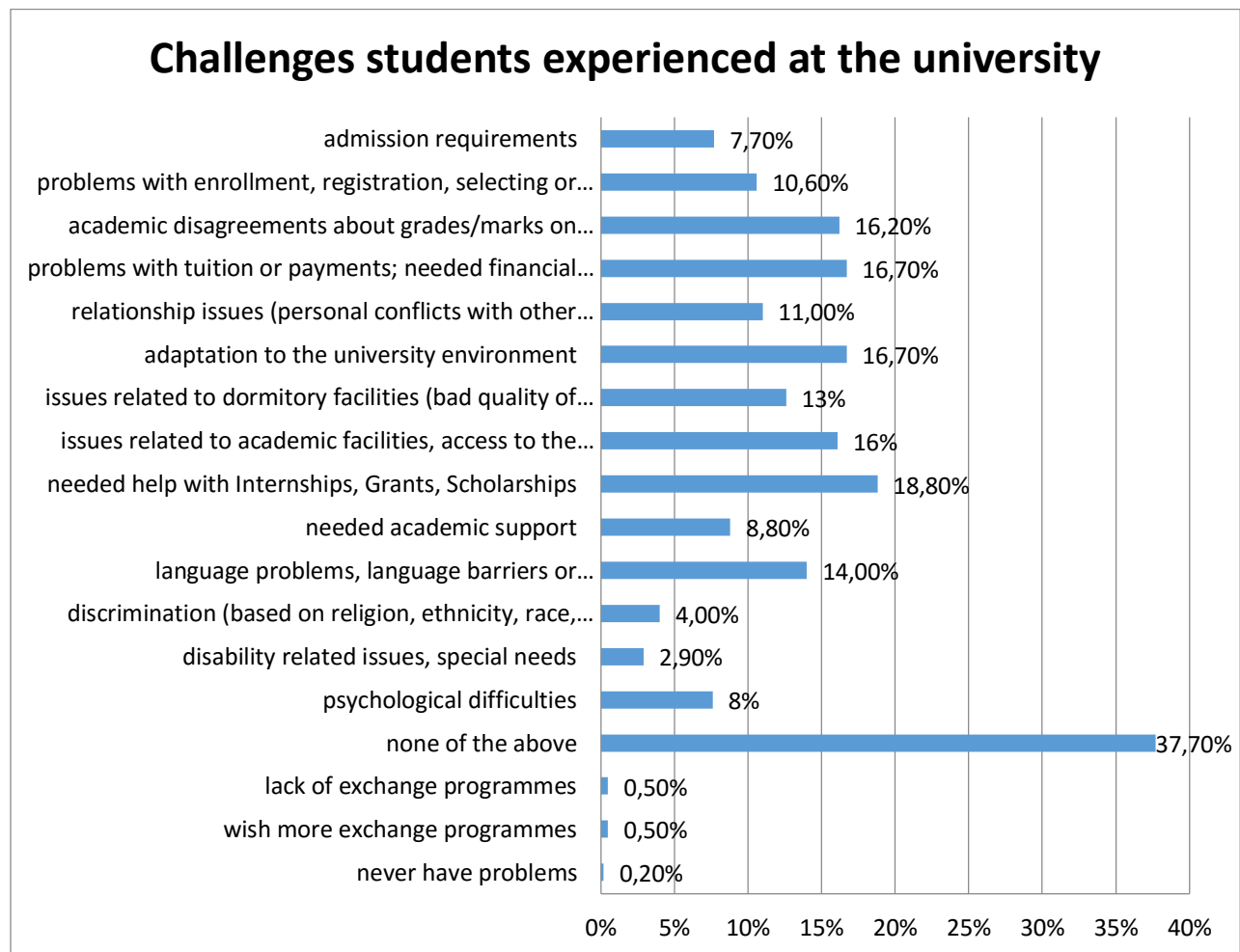


In general, the data collected shows that staff employed at partner Universities are not experiencing dissatisfaction by the services, attitude and possibilities of problem solving at their Universities. The majority of respondents, which reached 67% reported that they know where to go and who to contact when they have problems, know their rights as employees (62.5%) and know where to find the written rules and policies of their University (58.5%). 63% of respondents name the administrators of their University as friendly, helpful and supportive. On the other hand 47.5% of staff stated that University deals with their problems in a timely manner and 40.6% believe that staff and students know how to solve their problems. 48.5% percent of university staff support establishment of a special office / staff member that will deal with their issues.

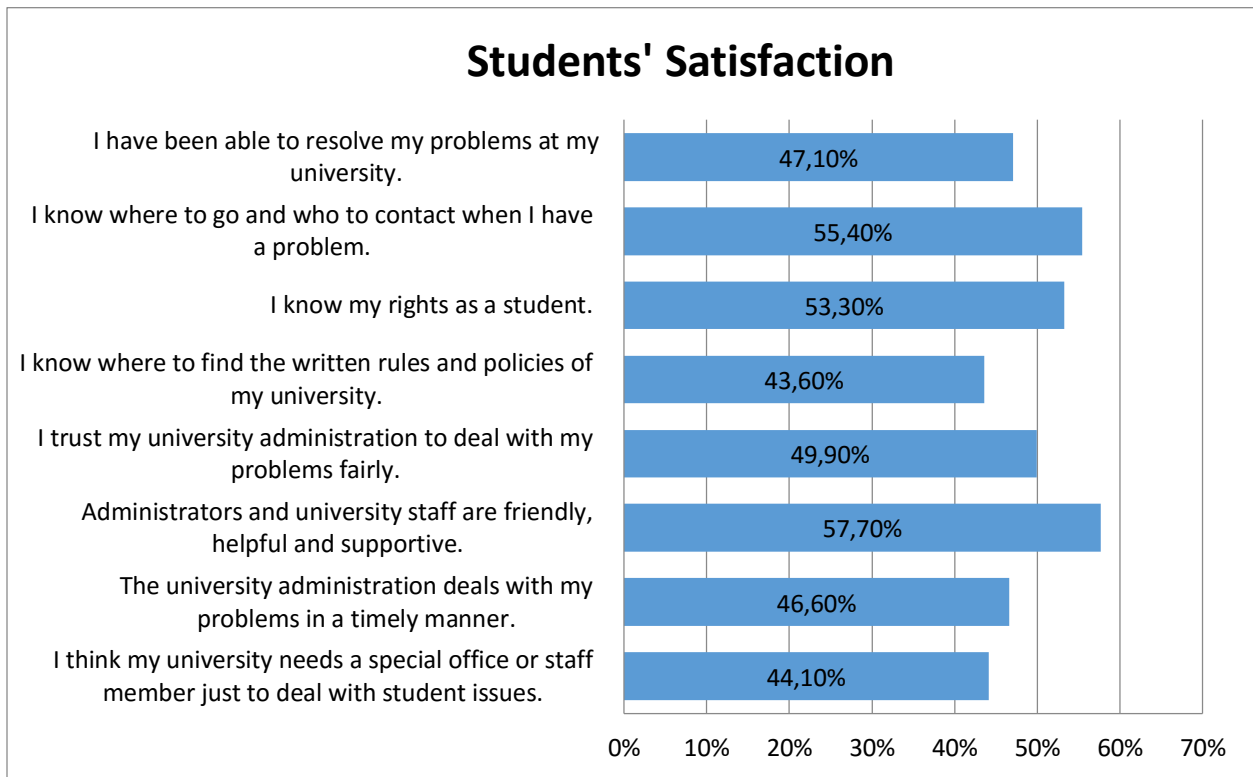


## Students

Respondent students doing their Bachelor (I, II, III, IV), Master and PhD degree were asked about the challenges they experienced at their Universities. Most frequent issues they had to deal with were help with internships, grants and scholarships (18.8%) and problems with tuition or payments (16.7%). 16.2% have academic disagreements about grades/marks on course assignments, examinations, etc.; Then come the issues related to academic facilities, access to the laboratories, wifi, computer rooms (16%), 13% needed help with issues related to dormitory and its facilities. 10% of cases is connected with problems with enrollment, registration, selecting or changing courses (10.6%). 37.7% of students stated that they have not got any of the problems listed in the questionnaire and are satisfied with the situation. Approximately 1% of students felt lack of exchange programs and mentioned this issue in the section “other”.



Mainly, collected data have reflected that generally students are not experiencing dissatisfaction by the services, attitude and possibilities of problem solving at their University. The majority of respondents, which reached 53.3% reported that they know their rights, 55.4% know where to go and who to contact when they have problems; 50% trust their university administration to deal with their problems fairly. However, the number of students who claim that the University administration deals with their problems in a timely manner is less and reaches only 46.6% in comparison with the number of satisfied students. Significant percentage of students raises the need for a special office / staff member that will deal with students issues (44.1%).



#### **D. SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Despite the fact that students and staff at the Universities in general are not experiencing difficulties in solving their problems, significant percentage of respondents raised the need for a special office/staff member that will deal with student/staff issues.

Solving problems in timely manner is reported to be a concern of both students and staff. Establishment of Ombudsman Office could be an option used to minimize bureaucratic procedures and would allow staff and students deal with their problems effectively and on time.