

To the National Association of Local Authorities  
A letter of Recommendation for Oni Municipality  
For Best Municipal Practices

It is with great pleasure that I offer my highest recommendation for Oni Municipality as a candidate for the best municipal practices contest.

Since 2022, I have been working as a Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) of Georgia, assigned through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Under the common vision of enhancing equitable access to quality early childhood education and care (ECEC), I have closely worked with Oni Municipality. The municipality's leadership and commitment to ensuring quality ECEC service for all young children have been truly exceptional.

Quality ECEC is vital for a child's healthy development, shaping cognitive, social, and emotional competencies. However, access to quality ECEC is not uniformly distributed across communities and regions in Georgia. The standard public kindergarten model is effective in certain contexts but may fall short in including children in remote regions with limited access to resources, like Oni.

Against this backdrop, the MOES and its partners consider diversifying ECEC provisions as a potential game-changer. Alternative and flexible ECEC models – such as home-based or school-based provisions – can effectively respond to diverse needs and contexts, including remote areas, economically disadvantaged communities, and those with unique cultural or religious backgrounds.

For the past years, Oni municipality has committed to supporting home-based and school-based ECEC services in distant villages. By leveraging innovative approaches and community-driven initiatives, these models have offered a glimmer of hope for children and families previously marginalised by the limitations of traditional preschool systems.

Based on the experience of Oni Municipality, the MOES, in partnership with JICA and other agencies, is currently compiling a national concept note and policy recommendations for diversifying ECEC models, which will be considered by the parliament in 2024. The municipality's innovative practices and commitment towards leaving no one behind in quality ECEC opportunities should deserve wider recognition.

I offer Oni Municipality my highest recommendation. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,  
Masahiro Kato

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading '加藤正寛' (Masahiro Kato).



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**მასაჰირო კატო**

JICA ადრეული ასაკის ბავშვთა განვითარების მრჩეველი

საქართველოს განათლებისა და მეცნიერების სამინისტროს სკოლამდელი განათლების სამმართველო