

## Project Update: March 2014

Seminars about speleogenesis of Georgian caves, biospeleology, palaeobiology, and the necessity for local cave conservation were conducted for public school pupils in the villages of Nikortsminda, Tsesi and Tlughi (Ambrolauri district, Racha region). Speleological, speleobiological and palaeontological investigation methods were used during investigation of Nikortsminda, Kakhidze, Tsakhi and Tsvitskala caves. The following collembolan species were collected in the caves: *Pseudosinella alba* and *Pseudosinella octopunctata* – in Kakhidze cave, *Tomocerus vulgaris* – in Kidobana cave, endemic of Caucasus *Plutomurus kelasuricus* – in Tsakhi cave, endemic of Caucasus *Tetracanthella caucasica* in Nikortsminda cave. *Pseudosinella octopunctata* is recorded for the first time for collembolan fauna of Georgia. Besides, endemic mollusc - *Oxychilus koutaisianus* was collected in Kakhidze cave. Palynological data of the caves modern sediments completely reflect peculiarities of the existed environmental conditions that will be of great significance to future studies of ancient cultural or natural layers preserved in the caves.



Left to Right: Entrance of Tsakhi cave; Kakhidze cave – entrance; *Oxychilus koutaisianus* & Tsakhi cave



Left to Right: Investigation in the dark zone of Nikortsminda cave; Nikortsminda school; Seminar at Nikortsminda school & Seminar at Nikortsminda