With funding from

Austrian Development Cooperation

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

"Youth Voices for Peace"

July, 2021

The Project "Youth Voices for Peace" is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) with funds of the Austrian Development Cooperation

75 YEARS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABL	Administrative borderline
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
CSO	Civil society organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDP	Internally displaced person
KII	Key informant interview
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PWD	Person with disabilities

EXECUTIVE SUMMERY

Baseline assessment was commissioned under the project "Youth Voices for Peace" funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) with funds of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) and is being implemented by CARE Caucasus and its local partner IDP Women Association Consent in close collaboration with CARE Austria. The project was launched in January, 2021 and will last until the end of 2022. The **overall objective of the project** is to contribute to more peaceful, inclusive, cohesive, and equal societies in Georgia by increasing the voice of female and male youth in community-level and national decision-making processes in peacebuilding. In particular, it seeks to achieve that female and male youth have the capacities to become active members of their communities and stakeholders in decision-making, and to contribute to making local-level decision-making processes more inclusive and responsive to the needs and human security concerns of female and male youth. The project will directly target 450 female and male youth (age 14-29) from IDP compact settlements, communities along the administrative borderline (ABL), and ethnic minority groups, as well as local government representatives and other local leaders. Project target areas are 2 communities of Zugdidi and Tsalenjikha municipalities, in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, 1 community of Gori municipality in Shida Kartli region, and 1 community of Bolnisi municipality in Kvemo Kartli region.

The **purpose and objective of the Baseline study** is to: a) Provide a baseline for all project Log-frame indicators, including relevant disaggregations, to serve as a point of comparison for the project's midterm assessment and final evaluation; b) Provide key data on the current status and context of female and male youth participation in local decision making and peace building processes; and c) Inform project design, indicators and targets for enhanced inclusion (target groups) and improved refinements to ensure that the project is being monitored in the most specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based manner. The Baseline Evaluation was based on Mixed-Methods Approach, including: desk research, qualitative survey (key informant interviews and focus group discussions) and quantitative survey (370 Face-to-Face Interviews in target communities).

Baseline evaluation findings conclude to the following:

Demographic features of the target communities

- Comparison of 2014 and 2002 census data in each target community showed that significant decrease of population is likely to three target communities, while in Kazreti on contrary population increased three times. The reasons for population increase mostly lies in employment opportunities on local level.
- Almost half of residents are above 50 years old and only 18% represents the age group of youth from 14 to 29. 7.7% of the population are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and almost 3% are persons with disabilities (PWD).
- Target communities can be characterized with relatively high level of education in comparison with average statistics in rural areas. 20% of the population have vocational education and over 23% has been involved in higher education, while according to the 2014 Census data, this figure for the rural types of settlements equals to 14.7%.

Employment and financial security

- Majority of population is employed in private sector as a hired staff (42.9%), followed by those engaged in informal (non-registered) sector (35.4%) and public sector (17%). Very small share of respondents appear registered as a small/individual entrepreneurs (2.6%) and even less are involved in private sector in a status of an employer (2.1%).
- 30% is self-employed, while majority (70%) is employed as a hired staff. The biggest share of the local residents are employed in industry/production sector, which is mainly due to the high percent of employed people in RMG Gold in Kazreti. 15.3% are self-employed in agriculture. Equal share of population (10%) are employed either in educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, vocational colleges, etc.) or self-employed in their own enterprise/farm.
- The most common sources of income are: pension and social assistance (62%), income from agriculture (54%) and income from hired employment (48%).

Youth participation in local decision making and peace building

- Analyzing the level of youth participation in decision-making process in target communities on the basis of the "Ladder of Participation" theory revealed that in three target municipalities (Gori, Zugdidi, Bolnisi) the level of involvement of young people in decision-making process by the local government can be evaluated as non- meaningful (level 2-3). Unlikely, the level of participation of young people in activities can be assessed as relatively meaningful in Tsalenjikha municipality (level 4-5). Despite the existing youth policy documents, the lack of strategic vision, mechanisms of youth involvement and relevant methods of youth needs assessment, leads to the assumption that implementation of the municipal youth policy documents and action plan is rather superficial and does not comply with the quality standards of youth policy implementation and youth involvement. Although, the plan to follow the principles of youth policy document and the action plan sounds promising.
- The level of participation appears much higher, and most importantly, more authentic in case of interventions implemented by the CSOs. As it seems, CSOs manage to involve young people at the higher levels of the ladder of participation – responding to the initiatives of young people on one hand and constantly carrying out the needs assessment through meetings, focus groups and surveys on the other. The level of participation in this case matches the lower rungs of "participation level" of the ladder (levels 4 to 6) and can be acknowledged as meaningful. Although there is still quite a lot of space for improvement.
- Bolnisi municipality is distinguished by having a private sector representative (RMG) as a main contributor to youth-related activities and social projects in a highest participatory manner, as youth projects are based on the initiatives of local young people. Thus, the level of youth involvement in decision-making process in the projects, carried out by RMG was assessed with a highest score (level 7-8 of the ladder of participation).
- Unequal access to information on youth opportunities is one of the biggest challenges of inclusive participation in all target communities. Besides, awareness about youth participation and mechanisms of participatory decision-making appears to be very low as well.
- There is great support and positive attitude from the broader community towards youth engagement in community / village decision-making processes as large majority of respondents (95%) agree that youth involvement in community / village decision-making is important.

- Lack of relevant platforms and tools of engagement of young people in decision-making process on local (community) level is confirmed by quantitative survey results as well, as majority (59%) of community members either think that there are no relevant platforms and tools or find this question difficult to answer. Others think that the local board (18.2%) or school (15.4%) are available platforms for youth engagement and few refer to City Hall (5.7%), NGOs and village club (5.1% each).
- Low level of involvement of community population in the decision-making process is also definite from the survey results, which has revealed that 79% of the community population is not involved in the decision-making process at all. The most common form of engagement is attendance of the public meetings (55%) and participation in local self-government elections (36%), and lowest share of the population (1.4%) has applied with an initiative to the local government.
- The most common reasons hindering participation of general community members in decision-making process include: lack of personal readiness/lack of time (51.1%), lack of relevant information and knowledge on how to engage in decision-making processes (34%), lack of support by the local community leaders (8.4%).
- The most commonly mentioned major obstacle for young people to get involved in the decision-making process is their low level of motivation (46.3%), followed by the lack of infrastructure (26%) and lack of information on relevant mechanisms and opportunities for involvement (26%), lack of interest from the local government (21.5%), and poverty (14.7%). Low level of motivation is also visible among the community members, where majority report that they are not involved and neither willing to engage in volunteering (65.7%), however, 23.2% expressed desire to be involved.

Access to education, infrastructure and services

- Level of education at school and access to pre-school (kindergarten) and school education is mostly assessed positively by the majority of respondents, while access to vocational education, higher (university) education and non-formal education opportunities (training courses) are assessed rather negatively. The main reason of the lack of access to vocational education, identified during the FGD is the small number of vocational education institutions operating in the regions. Another reason identified in Kazreti community is related to traditions limiting especially female gender representatives to move to bigger cities for studies, while existence of vocational schools nearby would significantly contribute to giving young girls better access to education.
- The lack of non-formal education opportunities as a mean for capacity building as well as instrument for improving intergroup relations is one of the strongest concerns of young people and adults in all target communities.
- Access to sports fields/gyms is assessed mostly as average and good, while access to youth spaces and entertainment places is the biggest concern of both – adults and youth.
- Access to drinking water and garbage bins/cleaning appears to be the most problematic issues for all target communities.
- Some part of community population stated to have an ideas related to community development, mostly related with community buildings, sports fields, parks / squares and agricultural initiatives. Business and education related ideas/initiatives appear the subject of interest of the smaller share of local residents, followed by tourism development and environment related initiatives. Majority of population appeal to the local government for support when they have a community development initiative (58.2%),

and very small share apply to NGOs (12%). Quarter of respondents who claimed to have an idea/initiative regarding community development, have not applied to anyone. This might indicate low level of motivation/trust in obtaining support, lack of available NGO programs on the ground and lack of awareness of mechanisms how to apply with an idea/initiative.

Social integration and ethnic minorities

- Despite the fact that there is no open conflict between the IDPs and the hosting community in Mereti, still representatives of hosting communities express their discontent towards the IDP group and the events taking place around the buildings occupied by them. Thus, clear signs of isolation and the lack of integration are obvious.
- Similarly to Mereti, IDPs living in Kazreti were claimed to be fully integrated, although, as mentioned by several respondents, IDPs live separately and the communication is active only between the young people from IDP community and the hosting community. All ethnic groups living in Kazreti community are fully integrated and equally involved in community life. However, traditions of ethnic minorities are considered as some kind of obstacle for joint involvement of community members in social life. Ethnic Georgians as well as representatives of ethnic minorities believe that young generation faces less difficulties in communication and peaceful coexistence than the older ones and thus the bonds are especially tight between young people coming from different ethnic backgrounds. Besides, as it cleared up, elderly center existing have a significant role in the community in terms of connecting people of different ethnicities and religions by providing space for sharing each other's cultures, similarities and differences.
- In Muzhava and Rike communities high level of integration of IDPs with the hosting community is noticeable, as people sometimes are not even aware about each other's' IDP status. Thus, relationships between the hosting community and IDPs are friendly, peaceful and free from tensions.
- 87% of survey respondents believe that there no obstacles for the joint involvement/joint initiatives of IDPs/representatives of ethnic minorities and representatives of hosting communities, while 5.7% think that there is a language barrier playing an important role. 3.8% stated, that difference between religious beliefs is the main obstacle for joint activities, while 1.9% think it is intercultural differences, which hinder engagement in joint initiatives.
- In all target municipalities CSOs and local government organizations are believed to have an important role/potential to contribute to integration of minority groups. Joint educational activities for young people and adults, joint summer camps, sports and cultural activities, joint projects and youth spaces are the most frequently listed opportunities that respondents think can have a positive influence on relationships of different ethnic and social groups.

The following **recommendations** can be developed for the intervention in target communities:

- Raise awareness of young people as well as CSOs operating in the target communities on youth participation and participatory decision-making process, assist them in strengthening competences on youth needs-assessment and advocacy of youth-related issues as well as empower them to initiate and manage youth-related activities;

- Contribute to strengthening the system of external monitoring of the quality of youth policy implementation on municipal level through specific indicators of the action plan. One of the best practices of the external monitoring is assigning the monitoring function to the youth councils;
- Assist the local government in development of an efficient mechanisms for informing young people and conducting the youth needs-assessments;
- Strengthen competences of local government representatives and young people in inclusive decision-making in order to contribute to the development of more efficient and structured dialogue between the actors;
- Support Muzhava community representatives in founding and development of local CSOs in order to support facilitation of democratic processes on the local level;
- Engage both – IDPs and representatives of hosting communities in joint activities in target areas in order to provide opportunity for the equal-status cooperation, as an efficient tool for decreasing intergroup tensions, building trust, eliminating prejudices and harmonizing relationships. Apply similar intervention to ethnic and religious groups through culture- and context-sensitive approaches;
- Raise the awareness of community members (Georgians, as well as ethnic minorities) on human rights, and specifically on the rights of ethnic and religious minorities as well as IDPs. For the best results, it is recommended to conduct both – separate, as well as joint activities involving different ethnic, social and religious groups;
- Strengthen the motivation of local citizens to get involved in public life through best practices existing in Georgia and beyond;
- Empower community representatives to properly justify their needs (especially, the minority-specific ones) and advocate for them;
- Carry out the complex activities in regard to women empowerment. In ideal case, the activities shall include working with women, men, local non-formal leaders and official decision-makers;
- Facilitate improving access to youth spaces to the extent possible in frame of the project resources;
- Provide local youth with non-formal education opportunities as a mean for capacity building (including training in soft skills). Support raising motivation/trust of local youth and awareness of mechanisms, forms, and procedures on how to apply with an idea/initiative. Launching a small-grants pilot program together with relevant trainings and consultations for youth would be highly recommended;
- Facilitate access to vocational education, on-the-job training and to the extent possible provide tools for employment;
- Mostly use the regional media and public meetings for information dissemination. However, social media can appear effective in case of youth as well.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

CARE in partnership with IDP Women Association Consent is implementing the project “Youth Voices for Peace” funded by the ADA with funds of Austrian Development Cooperation, within the framework of the bilateral program and project support of the ADC, aiming to sustainably improve the living conditions and development perspectives of the population in developing countries and contribute to poverty reduction.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to more peaceful, inclusive, cohesive, and equal societies in Georgia by increasing the voice of female and male youth (age 14-29) in community-level and national decision-making processes in peacebuilding. In particular, it seeks to achieve that female and male youth have the capacities to become active members of their communities and stakeholders in decision-making, and to contribute to making local-level decision-making processes more inclusive and responsive to the needs and human security concerns of female and male youth.

The project will directly target 450 female and male youth (age 14-29) from IDP compact settlements, communities along the administrative borderline (ABL), and ethnic minority groups, as well as local government representatives and other local leaders. Project target areas are 2 communities of Zugdidi and Tsalenjikha municipalities, in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, 1 community of Gori municipality in Shida Kartli region, and 1 community of Bolnisi municipality in Kvemo Kartli region.

The project aims to reach three main results:

Result 1: Trained female and male youth are better able to identify, articulate and advocate for their peace and security concerns.

Result 2: Communities understand, encourage and support peace and security concerns identified by female and male youth.

Result 3: Consultative mechanisms are responsive to the concerns of female and male youth.

The 24-month project was launched in January, 2021 and will last until the end of 2022.

1.2. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The **purpose and objective** of the Baseline study is three-fold:

1. Provide a baseline for all project Log-frame indicators, including relevant disaggregations, to serve as a point of comparison for the project's midterm assessment and final evaluation;

2. Provide key data on the current status and context of female and male youth participation in local decision making and peace building processes; and

3. Inform project design, indicators and targets for enhanced inclusion (target groups) and improved refinements to ensure that the project is being monitored in the most specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based manner.

The **specific objectives** are, but not limited to, the following:

1) Determine baseline values of all impact, outcome, and output indicators, disaggregated, as relevant, by sex, age, and geographic data.

2) Collect and analyze data and information on the current state of civic participation of female and male youth (age 14-29) in formal (government-led) and informal (civil society-led) decision-making spaces in the project communities, related barriers, and available opportunities.

3) Examine community members' and stakeholders' attitudes towards female and male youth civic activities and identify relevant consultative mechanisms.

4) Define the level of awareness of female and male youth (age 14-29) concerning their rights and existing opportunities and mechanisms for engaging in the decision-making and peace-building processes.

5) Gather data concerning the readiness, openness, and willingness of the national level duty bearers to include the concerns of female and male youth in their planning processes.

6) Inform the project concerning the support required for ensuring meaningful engagement and participation of the most marginalized youth specifically those with disabilities, and about which main challenges and obstacles in relation to the engagement of youth with special needs have to be considered in the given context, to maximize their inclusion.

7) Provide an analysis and recommendations concerning the most convenient sources of information dissemination for female and male youth (age 14-29), available communication channels, and desired communication means.

8) Based on the above findings, provide recommendations for project interventions, and if/as required, on how to refine the project's design (to maximize inclusion and diversity), as well as Log-frame indicators and targets to ensure that the project is being monitored in the most specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based manner.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Baseline Evaluation was based on Mixed-Methods Approach, including: desk research, qualitative survey (key informant interviews and focus group discussions) and quantitative survey (Face-to-Face Interviews).

The desk research was conducted at the starting phase of the baseline evaluation and the results were used for a better contextual understanding and collecting baseline data. According to the evaluation needs, two types of desk research were used - internal and external. During the internal desk research project-specific documents were reviewed, while external desk research focused on national and international studies, government strategies at national and local levels, official statistics, etc. Desk research results additionally contributed to elaboration of the quantitative survey questionnaire (see Annex) and guides for key informant interviews and focus group discussions (see Annex).

Besides, the study included Key Informants Interviews (KII) with the project staff, local NGOs/CSOs, PWDs, local youth group leaders, youth council members from the targeted communities and representatives of the national and local authorities in targeted municipalities. The KII respondents were selected from the project stakeholders. Particular respondents were identified in consultation with the project team. 24 KIIs were conducted in total (see the list of KII respondents in Annex).

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted with female and male youth (14-29 age group) and general community representatives. Recruitment of the focus group participants was based on certain criteria, including age, social status, employment status, education, etc. (see the detailed criteria for

selection of FGD respondents in Annex). In total, 20 Focus Group Discussions (5 FGD in each community) were carried out. From 8 up to 10 participants participated in one FGD.

In frame of the quantitative survey 370 face-to-face interviews were conducted with the target community representatives using the random sampling method. Quantitative survey aimed assess the current state of civil participation of female and male youth (age 14-29) in formal (government-led) and informal (civil society-led) decision-making spaces in the project communities, related barriers, and available opportunities. Besides, quantitative survey supported to determine the status of indicators set to achieve project objectives at the start of the action.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In frame of the study, the following procedures were followed in order to uphold ethical principles:

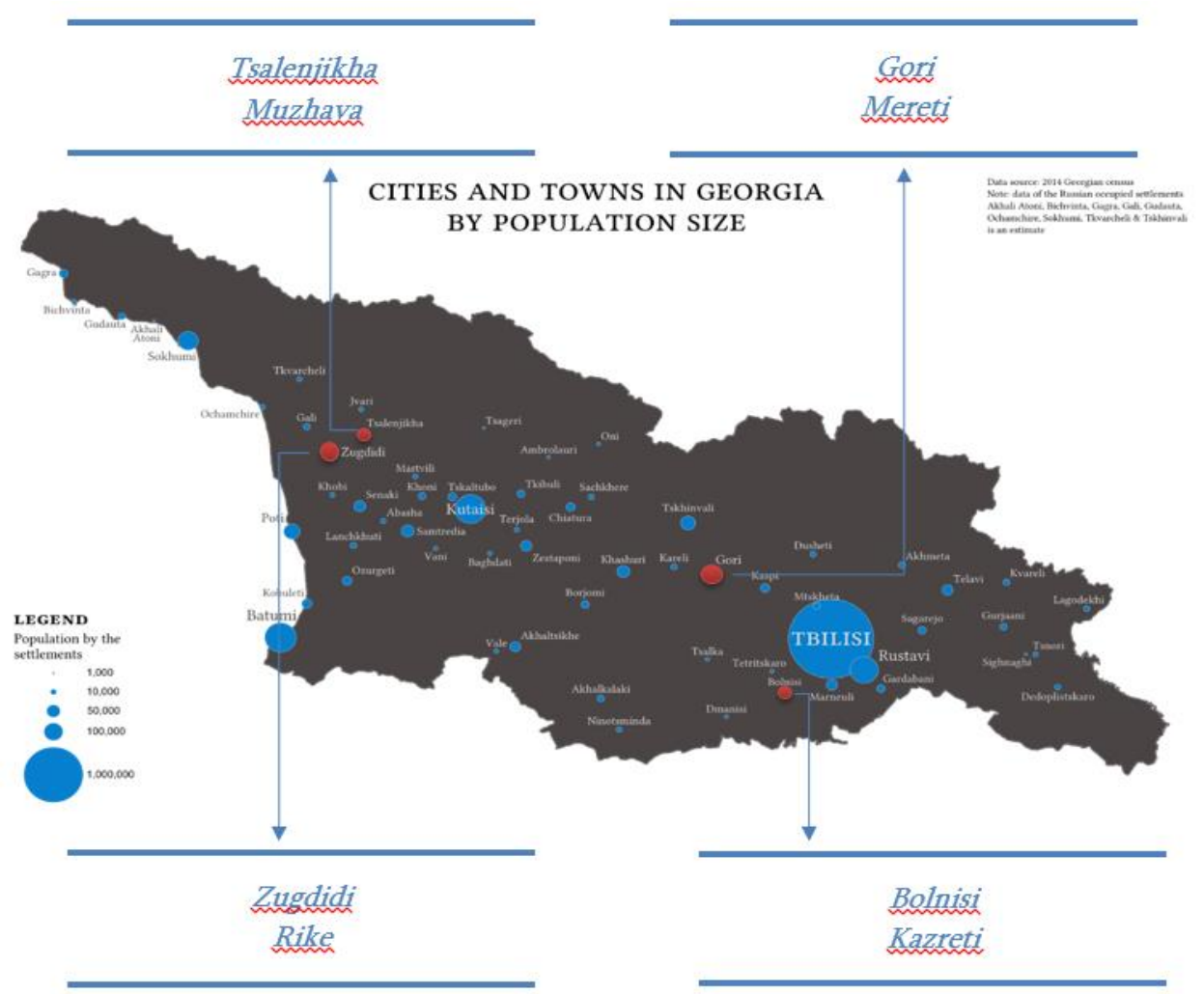
- **Informed consent** was received from the respondents before the quantitative survey, KIIs and FGDs, meaning that before they agreed to take part, they were kept informed specifically what was the study about and what they were being asked to do, how/why they were selected as the participants, and what the information would be used for and even if they would agree to take part, they could change their mind at any time, without explaining.
- **Anonymity maintained** by removing the respondents' names, as well as other information that can help to identify people.
- **Privacy and confidentiality respected** through considering how much information the respondent wanted to reveal or share, and with whom; privacy was also kept in the processes of information gathering/data collection and storage.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE TARGET COMMUNITIES

Two communities targeted by the project are located in the Eastern part of Georgia (in Gori and Bolnisi municipalities) and two – in Western part (in Zugdidi and Tsalenjikha municipalities). Location of the project target communities is shown on the map below.

Picture 1. Project target area



Mereti Community is located in Gori Municipality, Shida Kartli Region. According to the 2014 census, population of this community reaches 2,702 people, and compared to 2002 there is a decrease of local population approximately by 700 people (3405).

Kazreti is a small town in Bolnisi Municipality, Kvemo Kartli Region. According to the 2014 census, there are 5,123 citizens living in Kazreti, while this figure was five times smaller in 2002 (1,023).

Rike Community is located in Zugdidi Municipality, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region. According to the 2014 census, 1,552 residents live in the community. In 2002 population living in Rike was 3,265, thus, significant decrease of the number of population is evident.

Muzhava Community is located in Tsalenjikha Municipality, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. According to the 2014 census, 719 people live in the community, which is less than the population number in 2002 (1,126).

As mentioned above and reflected on the Table 1 below, decrease of population is likely to three target communities, except Kazreti, where the possible reasons for population increase will be discussed in the chapters below.

Table 1. Share of population by age groups

	# of population (2002 Census)			# of population (2014 Census)			Increase/ Decrease	
	Male	Female	**Total**	Male	Female	**Total**		
Mereti Community	1657 (49%)	1748 (51%)	**3,405**	1,364 (50%)	1,338 (50%)	**2,702**	20.6%	⇩
Kazreti Community	492 (48%)	531 (52%)	**1,023**	2,512 (49%)	2,611 (51%)	**5,123**	400%	⇧
Rike Community	1,542 (47%)	1,723 (53%)	**3,265**	786 (51%)	766 (49%)	**1,552**	52.5%	⇩
Muzhava Community	555 (49%)	571 (51%)	**1,126**	362 (50%)	357 (50%)	**719**	36.1%	⇩

In 2020, average age of the population living in Georgia was 37 year, while in the target communities average age of the population is 45, with 52.1% female and 47.9% male (calculated from 1089 members of interviewed households). This means that in target communities population is relatively elderly than in the rest of the country. Average age of the respondents is – 50, with 71.6% female and 28.4% male respondents.

Distribution of the population by age groups shows that almost half of residents are above 50 years old and only 18% represents the age group of youth from 14 to 29 (see the Table 2).

	Female	Male	Total
-14 Age group	53%	47%	17.7%
14-18 Age group	52.7%	47.3%	6.1%
19-29 Age group	51.3%	48.7%	11.8%
30-39 Age group	51.7%	48.3%	12.8%
40-49 Age group	50.4%	49.6%	13.0%
50 + Age group	52%	48%	38.5%

Table 2. Share of population by age groups

As shown on the Table 3, more than half of the population in target communities are married (51.4%), 21.2% is in non-marriage age (children), 15% is single, 9.2% widow(er) and very few are divorced or in an unregistered marriage.

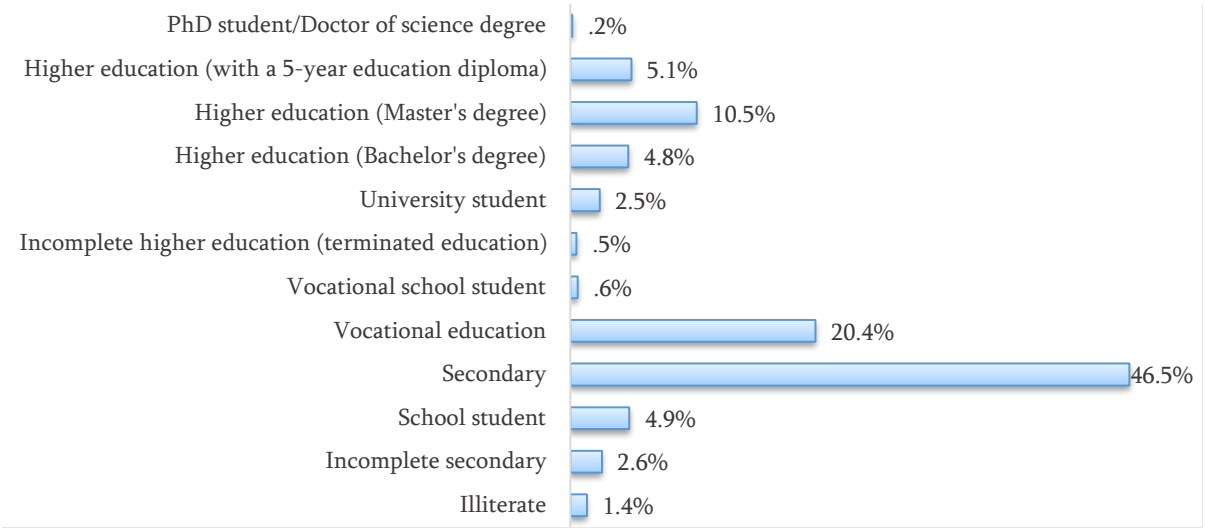
Married	51.4%
Single	15.0%
Divorced	1.8%
Being in an unregistered marriage	1.4%
Widow/widower	9.2%
Non-marriage age	21.2%

Table 3. Population by marital status

For almost half of the target community population, complete secondary education is the highest level of education achieved (46.5%). 20% of the population have secondary vocational education. It is noteworthy, that over 23% has been involved in higher education (including 10.5% - graduated master degree), while

according to the 2014 Census data, this figure for the rural types of settlements equals to 14.7%. Distribution of the population according to the level of education achieved is presented on the Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Level of education achieved



It is interesting to look at the distribution by social statuses of the population in target communities. As the survey results show (see Figure 2), 17% of population is a pensioner, while 15% holds the status of socially unprotected. 7.7% of the population are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and almost 3% are persons with disabilities (PWD).

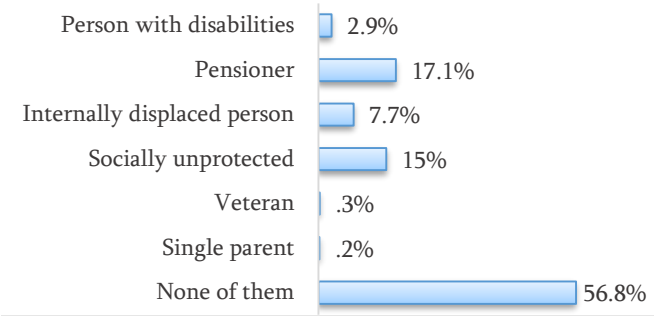
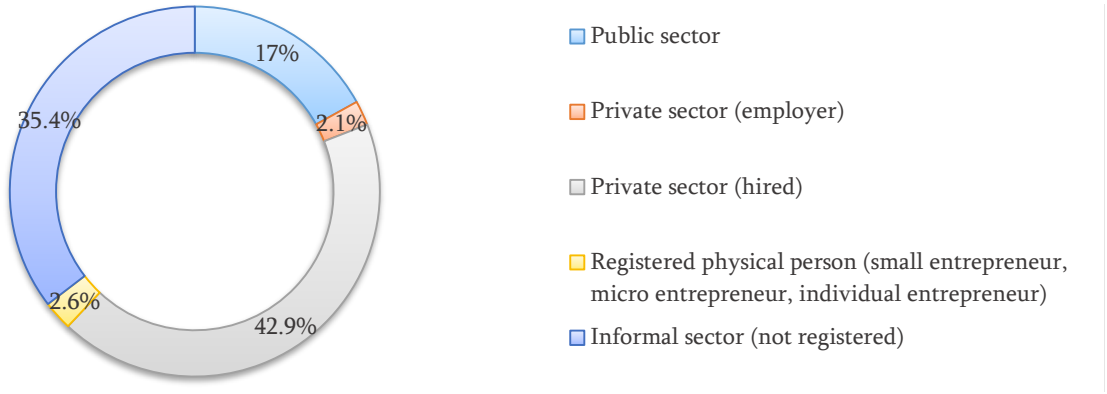


Figure 2. Social status

3.2. EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

According to the quantitative survey results, 43.2% of the population of target communities have been employed for at least one hour in the last four weeks. Figure 3 below shows the employment distribution by sectors. Share of population employed in private sector as a hired staff appears to be in majority (42.9%), followed by those engaged in informal (non-registered) sector (35.4%) and public sector (17%). Very small share of respondents appear registered as a small/individual entrepreneurs (2.6%) and even less are involved in private sector in a status of an employer (2.1%).

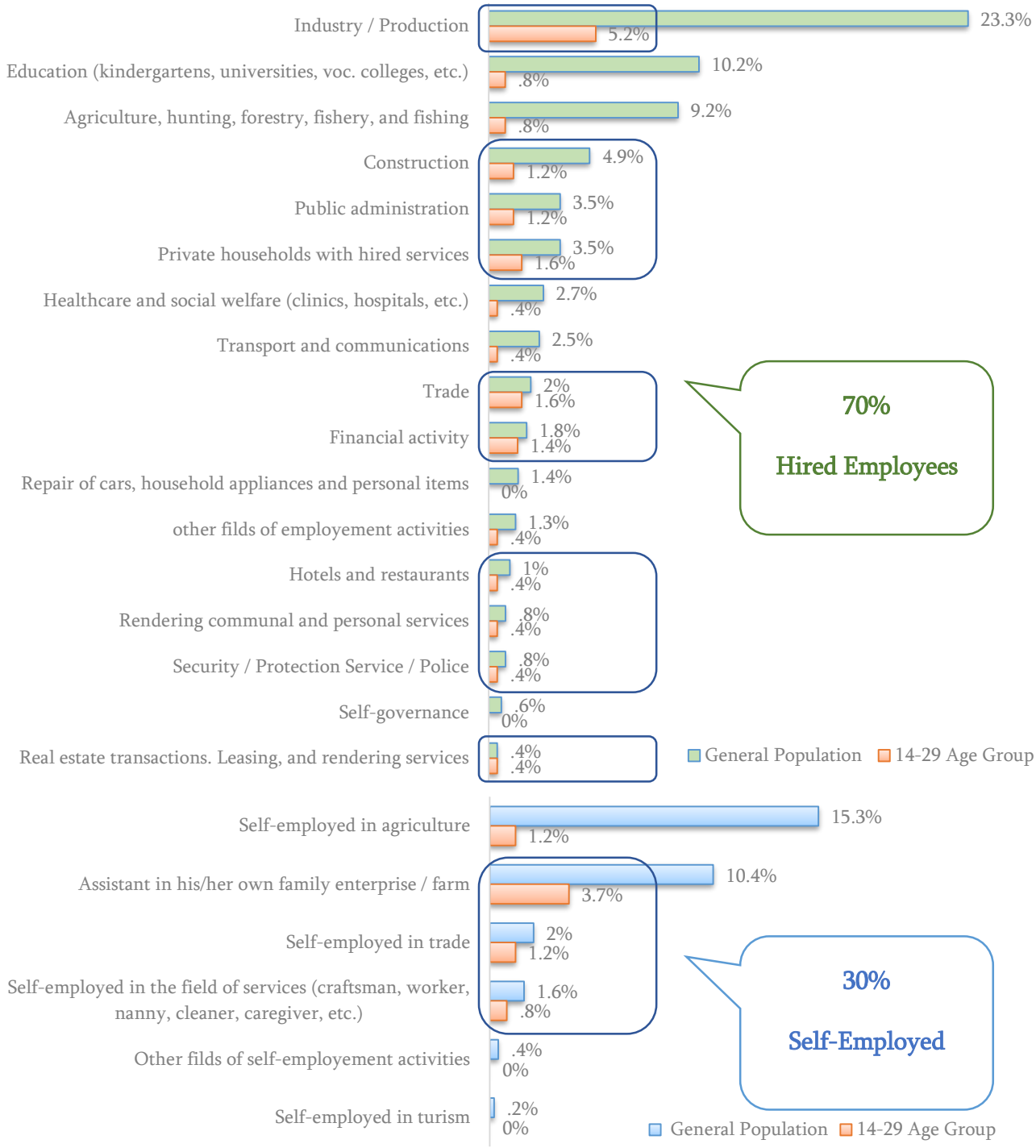
Figure 3. Sector of employment



Out of the employed population of target communities 30% is self-employed, while majority (70%) is employed as a hired staff. Figure 4 below shows the distribution of the general population and youth (14-29 age group) in both types of employment. The biggest share of the local residents are employed in the industry/production sector, which is mainly due to the high percent of employed people in RMG Gold in Kazreti. 15.3% are self-employed in agriculture. Equal share of population (10%) are employed either in educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, vocational colleges, etc.) or self-employed in their own enterprise/farm. Other sectors of employment are presented on the Figure below.

Among young people aged between 14-29 years old, likely to the general population, highest share is employed in the industry/production sector (5.2%), followed by the 3.7% assistant in their own family enterprise/farm. There are several sectors that seem to be mostly employed by this age group: trade, financial activity, hotels and restaurants, real estate, etc. (Figure 4).

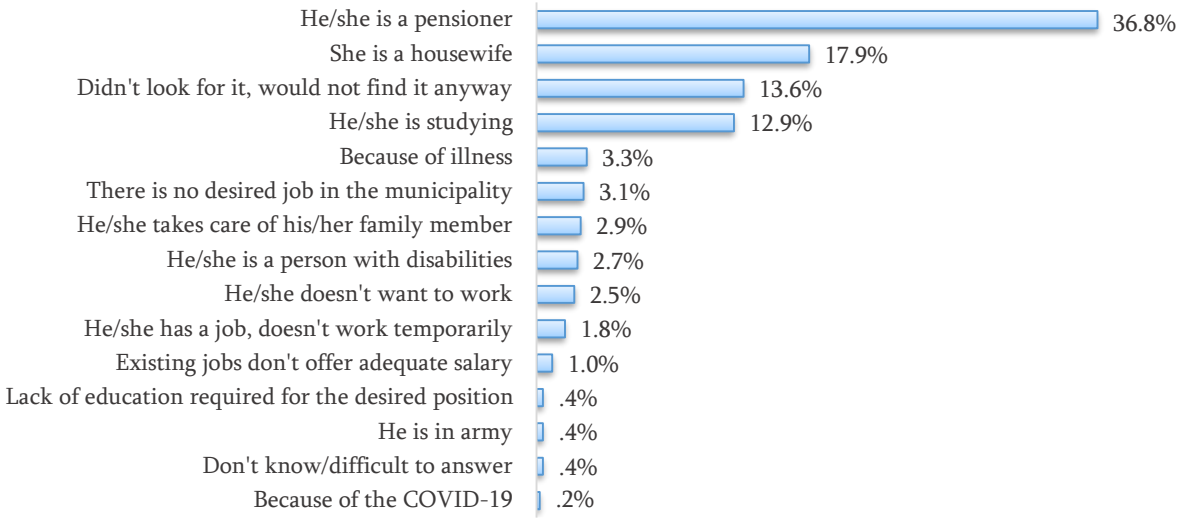
Figure 4. Types of Employment



Out of those who are not employed only 23.5% were trying to find / start a paid job in the last four weeks. Others (76.5%) did not try to find a job due to the reasons listed in the Figure 5 below. It is worth highlighting that 18% of the population does not try searching a job due to being a housewife. This kind of patterns are studied and discussed in more details in gender study. Besides, 13.6% of those who are

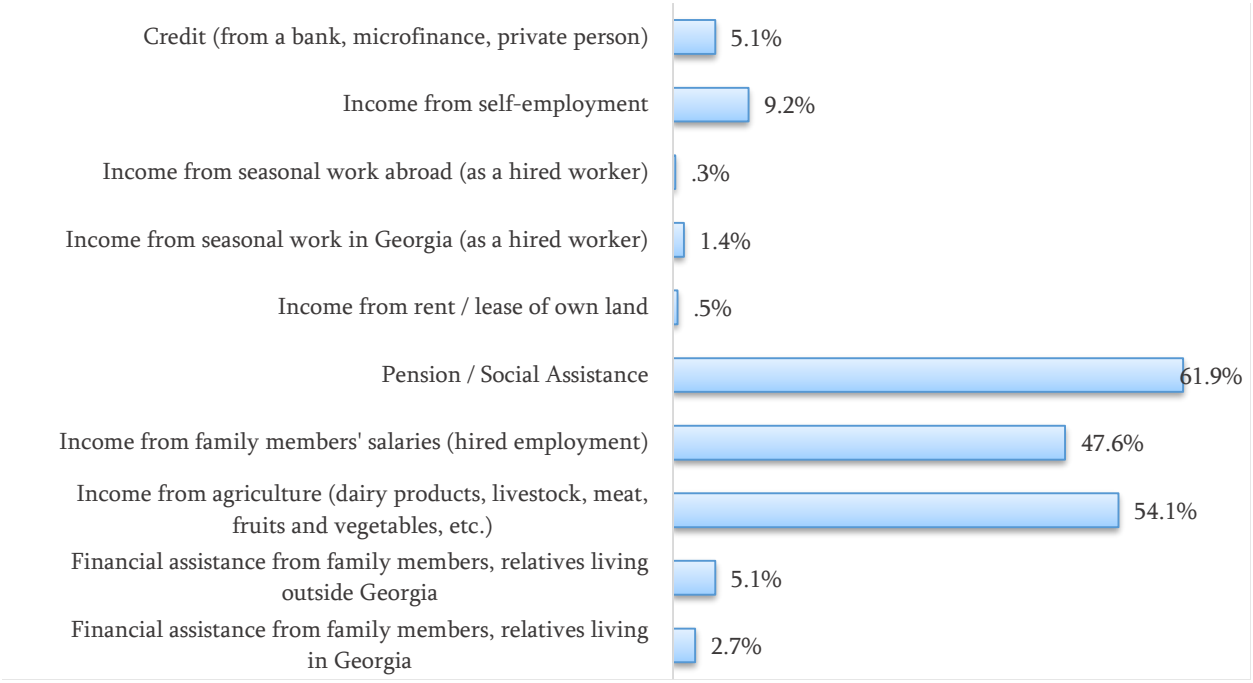
not looking for a job due to being pessimistic about finding it, is also an important sign of the psychological attitudes regarding the job in target communities.

Figure 5. Reasons for not searching the employment



When asking about the sources of income, pension and social assistance (62%), income from agriculture (54%) and income from hired employment (48%) was mentioned in most of cases. Income from self-employment was declared in 9.2% of cases. Relatively rarely mentioned sources were credits (5.1%), financial assistance from family members/relatives leaving outside of Georgia (5.1%) and from family members/relatives leaving in Georgia (2.7%).

Figure 6. Which of the following sources does your household receive income from?



Qualitative study results reveal some interesting features related with employment on community level. Particularly:

In **Mereti** (Gori municipality), according to the FGD participants, most of the population is engaged in short-term ad-hock jobs or in agriculture, however, the locals have a problem with irrigation water, which affects the yield and, consequently, the income. Due to lack of necessary services and lack of cultural and educational spaces, unemployment and other issues, local young people go to the capital (or outside the country) and do not return back. Referring to the greenhouses in Khurvaleti, which enables locals to get employed, respondents expressed willingness to have similar opportunities in Mereti, so that people are able to work for a salary and do not leave the villages.

Kazreti (Bolnisi municipality) is known for its mining-enrichment plant, copper and gold ore (RMG Gold). For the locals, the natural resources of the borough, along with public and educational services, are a major source of employment, therefore young people mostly choose professions (like Geology) that will be useful for their employment in the company. Despite the fact that RMG Gold is a big employer which offers a job to an important part of the local population, unemployment still remains a significant issue.

In **Muzhava** (Tsalenjikha municipality), respondents note that a large part of the rural population is engaged in agriculture: honey production, cattle breeding, wine production, etc. However, the motivation of young people is low due to low incomes and they are less involved in agricultural activities. Most of them aims to get higher education and move from rural to urban areas for a better employment.

In **Rike** (Zugdidi municipality), FGD respondents state that the community population is mostly employed in Agriculture (mainly growing blueberries, maize, hazelnuts). Available jobs are mostly seasonal and salaries are very low. Due to high level of unemployment and social issues, migration is high.

3.3. YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING AND PEACE BUILDING

3.3.1. Youth Participation Measured According to the "Ladder of Participation" Theory

The level of youth participation in decision-making process in target communities is analyzed on the basis of the "Ladder of Participation" theory[1], developed by professor of environmental and developmental psychology, Roger Hart.

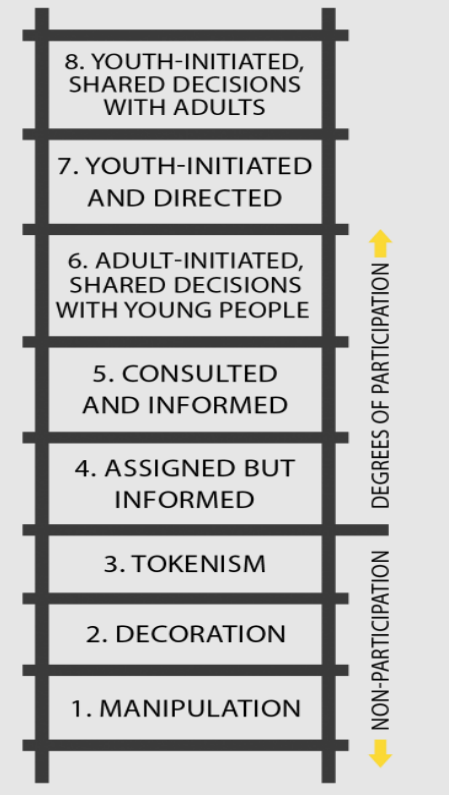
According to professor Hart, it is not enough to say that young people do or do not participate. There are different degrees to which youth can be involved or can take over responsibility, depending on the local situation, resources, needs and level of experience. Roger Hart proposes a model of the so-called "ladder of children's participation", which illustrates the different degrees of involvement of children and young people in projects, organizations or communities.

Roger Hart defines eight degrees of youth involvement, each of the degrees corresponding to one rung of a ladder. The top five rungs, in the 'Participation' zone all represent different, but valid forms of participation while the three lowest rungs are all designated as "non-participation".

In this report, the level of youth participation which matches the non-participation level rungs of the ladder is considered as non-meaningful participation, while the level, matching participation-level rungs is considered as meaningful participation. Another criteria is the size of youth group involved in decision-making process, since the level of involvement of small, privileged group of young people without the mandate to represent the needs and concerns of other young people of the community cannot be generalized to the whole youth. Thus, the approach which does not ensure covering the wider group of youth cannot be considered as a meaningful involvement of young people.

[1] https://www.youthpower.org/youth-drg-toolkit-3-models-roger-hart-ladder

Picture 2: The ladder of participation [2]



Rung 8: Youth Initiated shared decision-making with adults - Projects or ideas are initiated by young people, who invite the adults to take part in the decision-making process as partners.

Rung 7: Youth initiated and directed - Projects or ideas are initiated and directed by young people, with little input from adults - the adults might get invited to provide any necessary support, but a project can carry on without their intervention.

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth - Adults initiate projects but young people are invited to share the decision-making power and responsibilities as equal partners.

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed - Projects are initiated and run by adults, but young people provide advice and suggestions and are informed how these suggestions contribute to the final decisions or results.

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed - Projects are initiated and run by adults; young people are invited to take on some specific roles or tasks within the project, but they are aware of what influence they have in reality.

[2] https://bestengagementceremony.blogspot.com/2020/03/youth-engagement-ladder.html

Rung 3: Young people tokenised (tokenism) - Young people are given some roles within projects, but they have no real influence on any decisions. The illusion is created (either on purpose or unintentionally) that young people participate, when in fact they have no choice about what they do and how.

Rung 2: Young people as decoration - Young people are needed in the project to represent youth as an underprivileged group. They have no meaningful role (except from being present) and – as happens with any decoration – they are put in a visible position within a project or organisation, so that they can easily be seen by outsiders.

Rung 1: Young people manipulated - Young people are invited to take part in the project, but they have no real influence on decisions and their outcomes. In fact, their presence is used to achieve some other goal, such as winning a local election, creating a better impression of an institution or securing some extra funds from institutions that support youth participation (Have Your Say, manual, COE, 2015).[3]

Mereti community, Gori municipality

According to the representative of local government, youth affairs in Gori municipality are managed on the basis of the youth policy document and the action plan for 2018-2028. Claiming to be familiar with the Ladder of Participation theory, interviewee declares, that due to the necessary bureaucratic measures, involvement of young people does not reach the highest possible degree, but the process definitely falls on the side of top rungs of the ladder as there is a granting scheme for local youth organisations developed and group of people is empowered through different non-formal education activities. Nevertheless, focus group participants, as well as representatives of local non-governmental organizations declare, that the granting scheme, as well as youth empowerment activities are carried out for a very limited number of CSOs and young people. According to the focus group discussions, as well as interviews with NGO representatives, needs of the majority of young people are not considered in the process of planning of youth-related activities at municipal level.

Implementation of the municipal youth policy document and the action plan in Gori municipality seems to be superficial and does not comply with quality standards of youth policy implementation and youth involvement. Thus, the level of participation of young people cannot be considered as meaningful (rung 3).

According to the FGDs, the level of participation is much higher, and most importantly, more authentic in case of interventions implemented by the CSOs, although there is still quite a lot of space for improvement. The level of participation in this case matches the lower rungs of "participation level" of the ladder (level 4-5) and can be acknowledged as meaningful.

Recommendations: It is highly recommended to raise the awareness of young people on youth participation, assist them in strengthening competences on youth needs-assessment and advocacy of youth-related issues as well as empower them to initiate and manage youth-related activities. It is

[3] https://rm.coe.int/16807023e0

recommended to contribute to strengthening the system of external monitoring of the quality of youth policy implementation on municipal level.

Kazreti Community, Bolnisi municipality

According to the representative of local government of Bolnisi municipality, it is essential to base municipal youth-work on the real needs of young people. With newly adopted youth policy document and the action plan, local government is highly optimistic about meeting the needs of young people, reflected in the needs assessment, which was conducted in the process of youth policy development.

Youth Policy Document and the action plan of Bolnisi municipality are based on youth needs assessment and are designed in a highly professional manner, although successful implementation of the action plan requires high level of competence and commitment, dedication and careful monitoring, which hopefully will take place in the case of Bolnisi municipality.

According to the focus group discussions, young people are usually involved in discussions regarding their needs only prior to elections and ignored at other times. Most of the young people do not have access to information about youth-related activities carried out by the local government. Young people as well as adults are aware of the youth council that is about to start off in Bolnisi municipality, although they are skeptical about its efficiency and positive impact on the level of youth involvement.

Long experience of only being noticed right before the elections and feeling invisible at other times undermined the trust between the target group and the local government. The level of involvement of young people in decision-making process cannot be assessed as meaningful, although the plan to follow the principles of youth policy document and the action plan sounds promising (rung 2-3).

According to the FGDs, civil society organisations are more active, although their contribution to youth participation is not that significant either.

The level of awareness on youth participation is different among representatives of civil society organisations, operating in target community, and this is highly reflected in compliance of their activities with standards of participatory implementation of youth-related activities. The level of youth participation in activities carried out by CSOs can be assessed as meaningful only in few cases, although in the majority of cases young people are not meaningfully involved in decision making process (rung 4-5).

Representative of private sector, Rich Metals Group (RMG) operating in the community is named as a main contributor to youth-related activities in Kazreti community and the one conducting its social projects in highest possible participatory manner. According to FDGs both with youngsters and adults, RMG fully bases its youth projects on the initiatives of local young people and guarantees high level of involvement of youngsters in decision-making process at all levels of project cycle management. The level of youth involvement in decision-making process in the projects, carried out by RMG reach the highest rungs of the ladder of participation and can be assessed as meaningful (rung 7-8).

Recommendations: Young people as well as CSOs operating in the region need an assistance in raising the awareness on youth participation and participatory decision-making process. Strengthening competences of young people on youth needs-assessment and advocacy of youth-related issues will highly contribute to democratic participation of young people in the target community. Contributing to external monitoring and accountability systems on implementation of youth policy document and the action plan will motivate the local government to keep the high standards in this regard.

Muzhava community, Tsalenjikha municipality

Local government of Tsalenjikha municipality believes that the process of decision-making on youth-related activities is highly inclusive. According to representative of local government, there is a youth city hall functioning in Tsalenjikha municipality, which gives young people chance to get involved in planning of youth-related activities. From the words of the interviewee, young people are given opportunities to attend the meetings in the city hall and the city council, express their opinions and needs.

Representative of community education center confirms careful consideration of youth needs by the local government.

I've seen, for instance, young people wrote in social media "Would be great to do this…" and it happened.

Representative of community education center

Part of the young people from FGDs expressed their appreciation for the support they received from the local government in implementation of their initiatives.

According to most respondents, youth needs assessment is mainly based on verbal announcements from the side of young people and activity ideas initiated by them.

Abovementioned practices are an ultimate step forward in the process of development of inclusive decision-making; however, involvement of small number of proactive young people without strategic vision of youth involvement and youth policy development is not sufficient measure for the high-quality youth policy management.

Evidence-based approach of the local government towards youth-related activities is indeed praiseworthy, although more efficient mechanisms of needs assessment and the ways of involvement of less active young people need to be developed. Nevertheless, the level of participation of young people in activities can be assessed as relatively meaningful (rung 4-5).

Recommendations: It is highly recommended to assist local government in the development of efficient youth needs-assessment mechanism. Strengthening the competences of local government representatives and young people on inclusive decision-making will significantly contribute to the development of more efficient and structured dialogue between the actors. Supporting local community representatives in founding and development of local CSOs will play a meaningful role in facilitating democratic processes on the local level.

Rike community, Zugdidi municipality

Zugdidi municipality was one of the first municipalities, where youth policy document was developed. Nevertheless, public institutions, as well as non-governmental organisations, state that just a small part of young people in Zugdidi municipality is involved in decision-making process and youth-related activities in general. Only proactive young people are involved in youth activities and those are limited to sports and cultural events.

According to representative of public institution responsible for youth affairs, youth needs assessment is only carried out in a verbal manner through informal meetings with young people.

Even though, according to one part of FG participants, local government is open for dialogue, it is obvious, that the local government does not have strategic vision and mechanisms of youth involvement and the methods of youth needs assessment despite the existing youth policy document. Based on abovementioned, the level of involvement of young people in decision-making by the local government can be evaluated as non- meaningful (rung 3).

Civil society seems to be more active. CSOs manage to involve young people at the higher levels of the ladder of participation – to respond to the initiatives of young people on one hand and to constantly carry out the needs assessment through meetings, focus groups and surveys on the other. Therefore, we can assume, that the level of participation of young people in the activities organized by CSOs is meaningful (rung 5-6).

CSOs believe that public sector shall put more effort in youth involvement, continue the work that has been started.

Part of young people participating in FGDs, state that they find it fairly easy to communicate with local government and get their support, while another part says that they have never been able to get help from the local authorities. The same goes for the CSOs, part of young people participates in a number of activities, while others have no access to any of them. Some young people are not even able to judge whether or not youth in Rike community are involved in decision making process. This indicates that the unequal access to information on youth opportunities is one of the biggest challenges of inclusive participation in Rike community.

It should be underscored, that most of the participants of the FGDs are not familiar with the topic of youth participation and their awareness on mechanisms of participatory decision-making is very low.

Recommendations: It is highly recommended to assist/encourage local government in establishing an efficient mechanism for informing young people. Strengthening the competences of young people and local government in inclusive decision-making will significantly improve the quality of youth participation. Empowering young people to advocate for their needs will be very beneficial for democracy-building on the local level.

Current status of youth involvement in targeted municipalities and communities can be summarized in a following way for the Specific Objective indicator in the project Logical Framework:

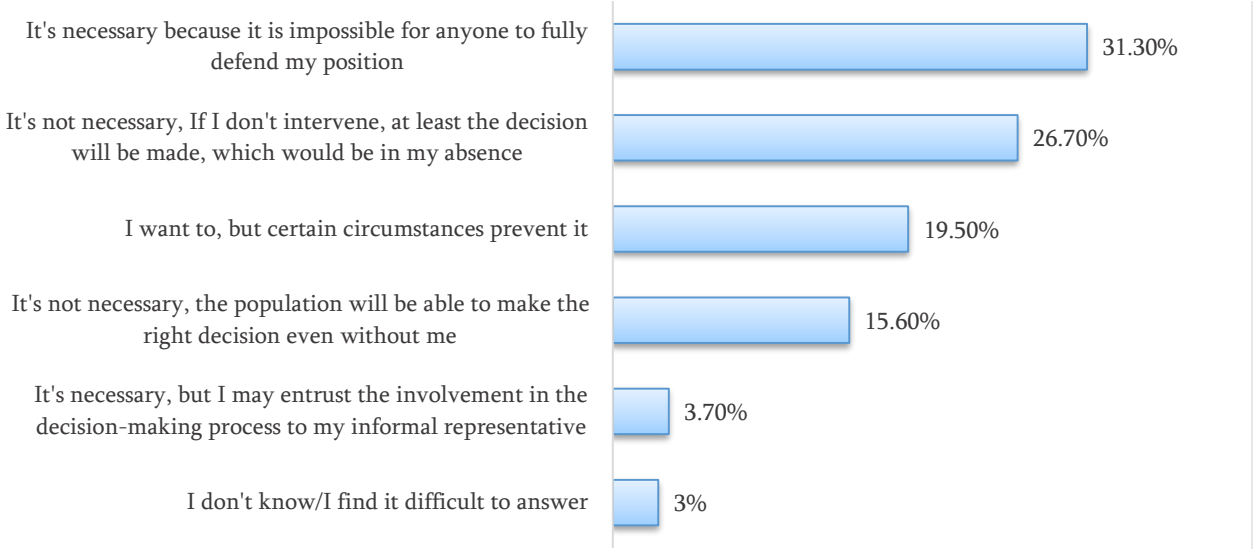
Table 4.

Indicator	Baseline Value	Comment
# of female and male **youth** who have meaningfully participated in formal (government-led) and informal (civil society-led) decision-making spaces	Gori (gov-led – rung 3, CSO-led – rung 4-5) Bolnisi (gov-led – rung 2-3, CSO-led – rung 4-5) Tsalenjikha (gov-led – rung 4-5) Zugdidi (gov-led – rung 3, CSO-led rung 5-6)	It is advised to adjust the indicator so that instead of the number of youth who have participated, it measures the level / degree / forms of participation in order to reflect "meaningful participation" or set the baseline value 0 and measure the indicator value/achievement for the project beneficiaries only.

3.3.2. Engagement in Decision-Making Process from the Perspective of General Community

Target community members were asked about their views / motivation regarding involvement in community decision-making processes. Third of respondents (31.3%) admitted that it is necessary that they engage in decision making process directly. However, majority of the population (42.3%) think that their engagement is not necessary, as their involvement will not change intended decisions (26.7%) or others will make right decisions even without them (15.6%). For 19.5% of the population their involvement in local decision-making process is hindered due to certain circumstances (see the Figure 7 below).

Figure 7. How necessary is your involvement in making decisions about problems in your community / village?



Respondents were asked how involved they feel themselves in the decision-making process in their community / village. As it appears from the survey results (see Table 5), majority of the population (79%) is not involved in the decision-making process at all, however over 20% of the population noted that they are involved wither directly (14.6%) or through their representative (5.7%).

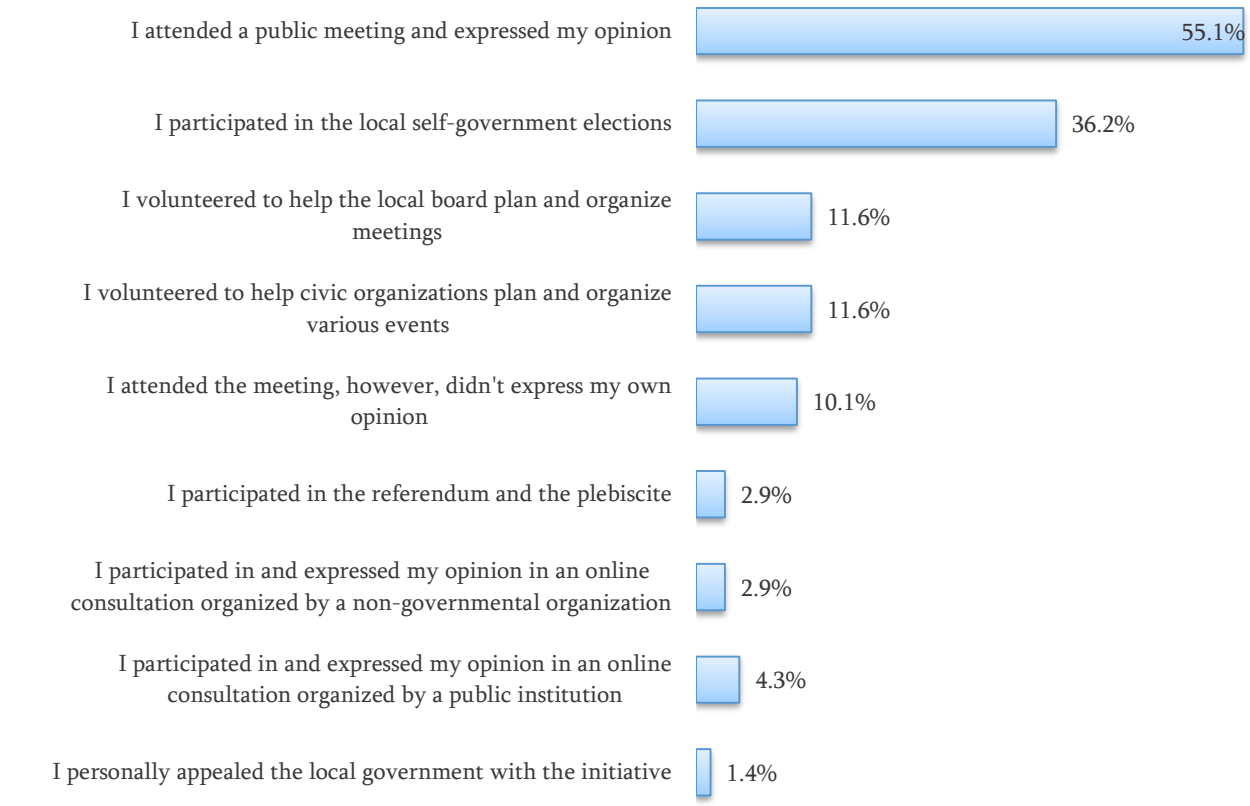
Table 5. Do you feel involved in the decision-making process in your community / village?

Yes, I am directly involved in similar processes	14.6%
Yes, I have a representative who voices my opinion during the process	5.7%
No, I'm not involved	78.9%
I don't know/I find it difficult to answer	.8%

In order to understand what the population considers as involvement / engagement in the decision-making process, it is interesting to look into the forms of participation. Survey results show that the most common form of engagement is attendance of the public meetings (55%) and participation in local self-

government elections (36%). It is worth to highlight that the lowest share of the population (1.4%) has applied with an initiative to the local government (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. In what form have you participated in the decision-making process?



The most common reason hindering participation in decision-making process appears personal readiness (as reflected in the questionnaire - lack of time). However, quite an important share of respondents (34%) stated that they either don't get relevant information (21.1%) or they don't know how to engage in decision-making processes (12.9%). 8.4% think that involvement s not supported by the local community leaders (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. The factors hindering participation in public processes / decision-making

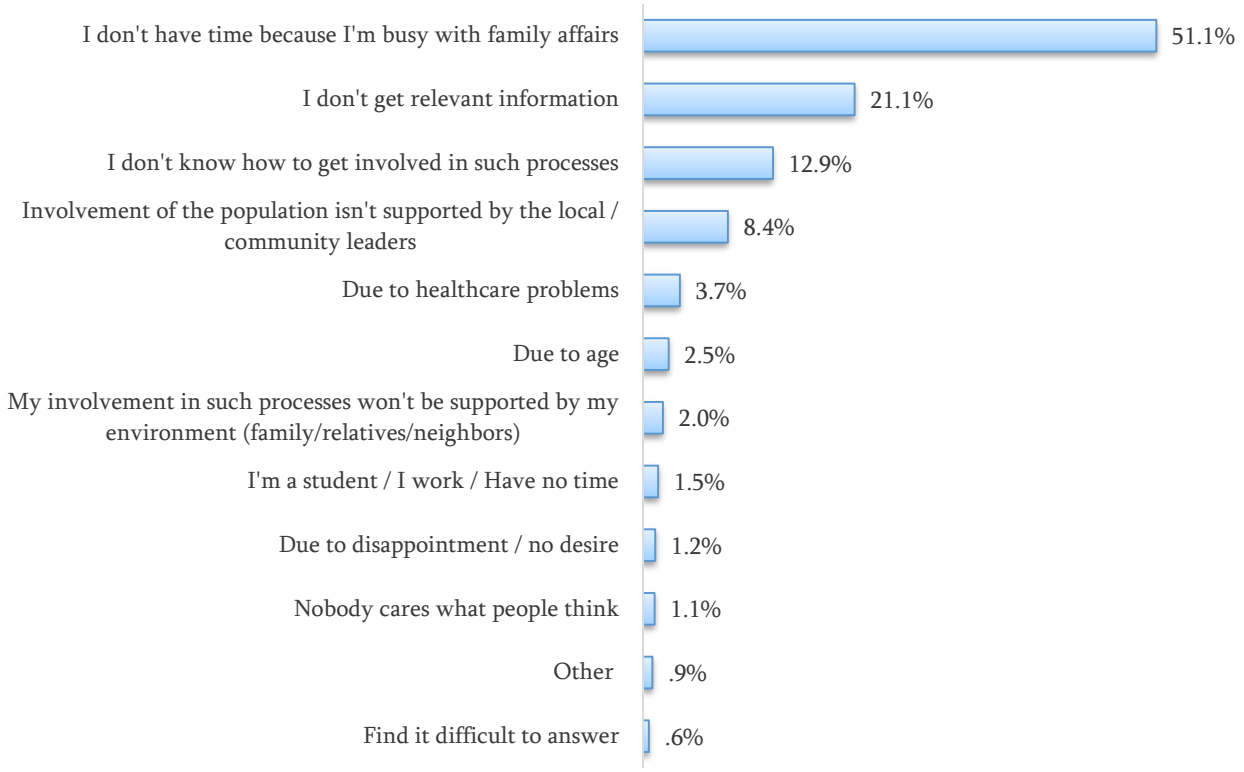
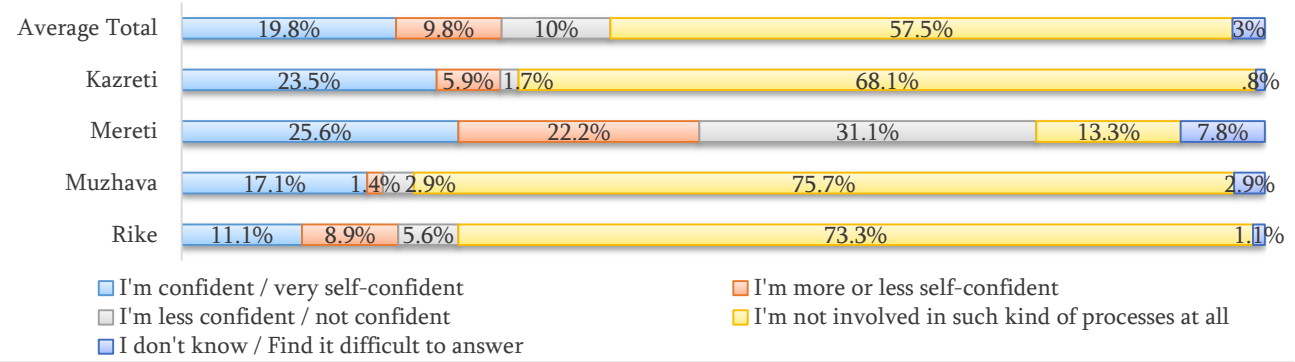


Figure 10 below shows the level of confidence of the interviewed respondents during the process of negotiation and communiciation related with the community/village decisions. Majority is not involved in such processes, however those who are engaged feel more confident about themselves. Community level analysis shows that large share of the general population in Muzhava and Rike, followed by Kazreti not involved in decision-making processes at all. It is interesting to note that representatives of Mereti community feel relatively more engaged in comparison with other three communities.

Figure 10. How confident do you feel in the negotiation / communication process when making community / village decisions?



Community members were asked about their perception of youth involvement in local policy planning/decision-making process (see Table 5 below). In 23.6% of cases respondents found it difficult to

answer this question and 22.8% think that young people don't participate in such processes at all. The rest of respondents listed several forms of youth participation, where most commonly nominated forms were participation in events organized by the City Hall (25.5%), participate in public discussions (20.6%), submission of private initiatives to the local municipality / village board (17.9%) and participation in projects initiated by the NGOs (14.9%).

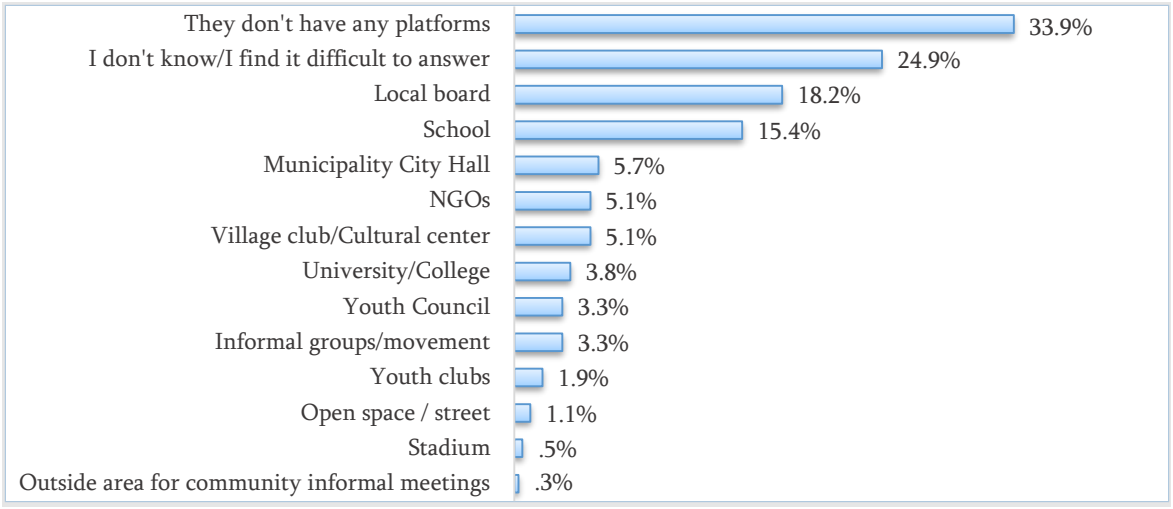
Table 5. In your opinion, how are young people involved in the local policy / decision-making process?

They participate in events organized by the City Hall	25.5%
They don't participate in such processes at all	22.8%
They participate in public discussions	20.6%
They submit private initiatives to the local municipality / village board	17.9%
They participate in projects initiated by NGOs	14.9%
They participate in volunteering activities	.5%
They are passive	.3%
They're involved in charity	.3%
Meeting with the business sector, a laboratory of ideas	.3%
I don't know/I find it difficult to answer	23.6%

It is worth highlighting that the large majority of the respondents (95%) agree that youth involvement in community / village decision-making is important, including 42% thinking that it is even very important. Thus, this result indicates great support and positive attitude from the broader community towards youth engagement in community / village decision-making processes.

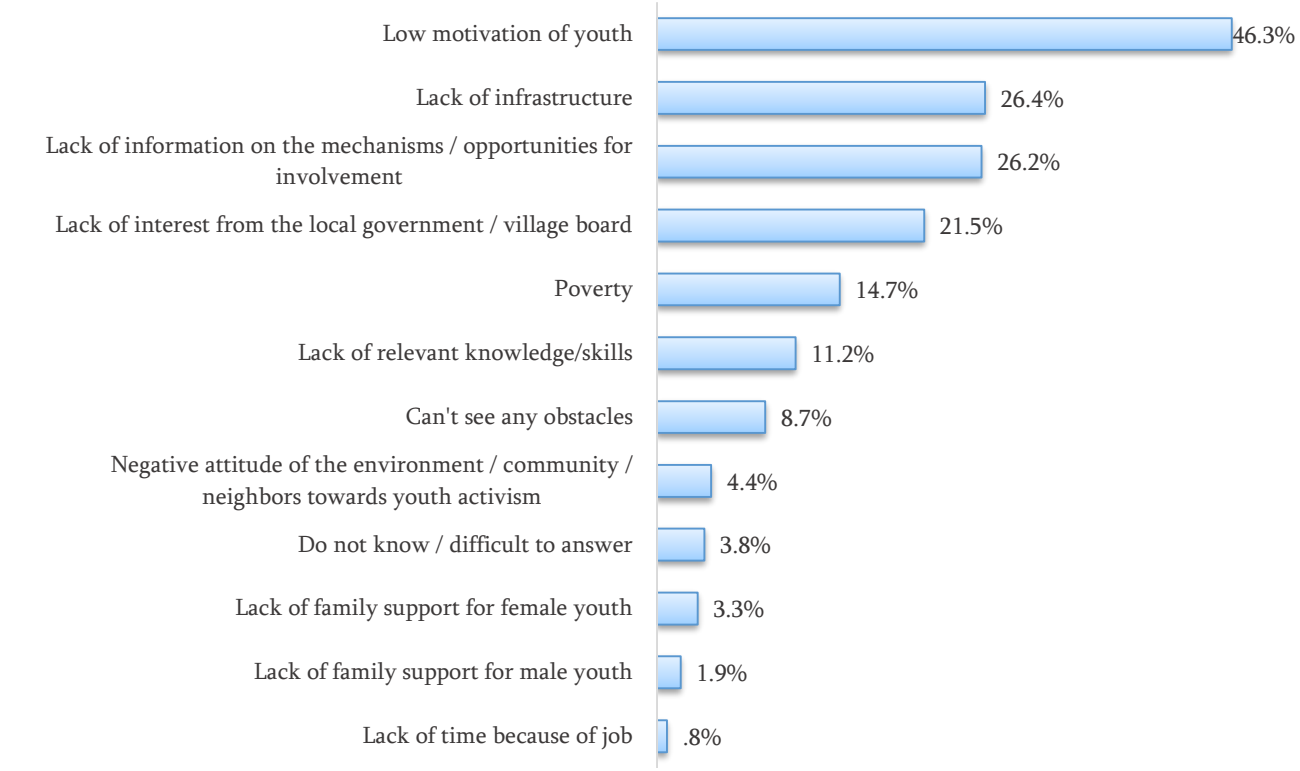
As for the spaces, platforms and tools of engagement of young people in decision-making process, majority of community members either find this question difficult to answer (25%) or think that they don't have any platforms to engage (34%). Others think that the local board (Administrative Units) (18.2%) or school (15.4%) are available platforms for youth engagement and few refer to City Hall (5.7%), NGOs and village club (5.1% each). Even smaller share of population think that the university, college, youth council, informal groups, youth clubs or open spaces are the comprehensive spaces and platforms for young people to engage in public policy and decision-making process (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Spaces / platforms / tools young people have to engage in public policy / decision-making



The most commonly mentioned major obstacle for young people to get involved in the decision-making process was their low level of motivation (46.3%). Other reasons such as lack of infrastructure and lack of information on relevant mechanisms and opportunities for involvement were marked as an obstacles as well (26% for each), followed by the lack of interest from the local government (21.5%), poverty (14.7%) and lack of relevant knowledge and skills (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Major obstacles for young people to get involved in the decision-making process



3.3.3. General Community Engagement in Volunteering Activities

Community members were asked about their involvement in volunteering activities. Surprisingly, the biggest majority of the population is not involved and neither willing to engage in volunteering (65.7%), however, 23.2% expressed desire to be involved. Very small share of respondents appeared involved in voluntary-based activities (4.3%), few appear to be a member of the political party (3.5%) or NGO (2.4%)

Table 6. Are you involved in any type of activity for which you don't receive remuneration/other benefits?

No, I'm not involved and I have no desire	65.7%
No, I'm not involved but I have a desire	23.2%
Yes, I am involved in volunteering activities	4.3%
Yes, I am a member / activist of a political party	3.5%
Yes, I am a member / activist of a NGO	2.4%
I don't know/I find it difficult to answer	.8%

Out of those who confirmed involvement in volunteering activities, most frequently mentioned activity was cleaning / environmental protection (20.5% of cases), followed by assisting a community member / neighbor in household activities (16.7%) and organizing sport activities (12.8%). Caring for the elderly / disabled, charity events and organizing cultural events was mentioned in 9-10% of cases (see Table 7).

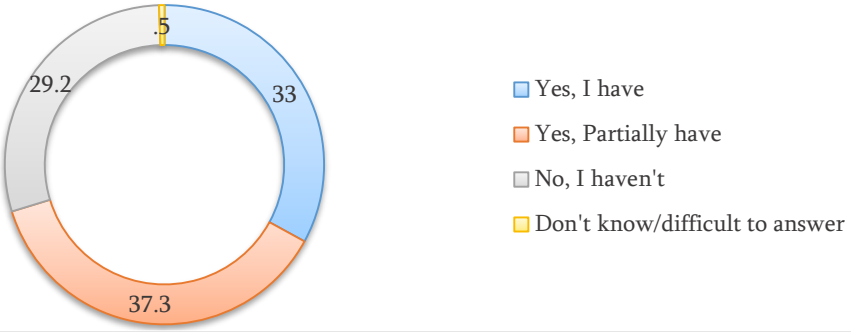
Table 7. What type of volunteering activities have you participated in?

Cleaning / environmental protection	20.5%
Assisting a community member / neighbor in household activities	16.7%
Organizing sports activities	12.8%
Caring for the elderly / disabled	10.3%
Charity events	10.3%
Organizing cultural events	9.0%
Peer assistance in learning	5.1%
Involvement in business sector	5.1%
Religious activities	2.6%
Regarding the elections / Participate in the elections	2.6%
Political events	1.3%
Counting the damage from the disaster	1.3%
Head of commission	1.3%
Agitator	1.3%

3.3.4. Awareness of Civil Rights and Responsibilities

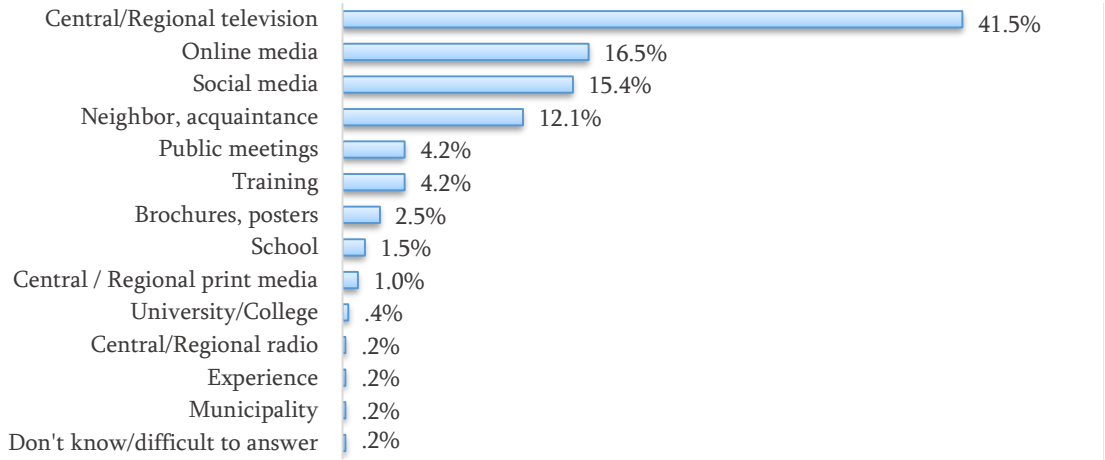
In light of the above discussion regarding the youth (and general population) engagement in social life and decision-making processes, it is interesting to explore what is the perception of the local population regarding their awareness about their civil rights and duties/responsibilities. As the survey results show, 33% of respondents state that they have information / knowledge about their civil rights and duties / responsibilities, 37.3% is partially informed and 29.2% - have not information.

Figure 13. Do you have information / knowledge about your civil rights and duties / responsibilities?



It appears that the biggest share of respondents consider the central and regional television as the priary source of information about their civil rights and responsibilities (41.5%). Online and social media and informal sources like neighbor/acquaintances were also mentioned (12-16% of cases).

Figure 14. From which sources of information did you learn about your civil rights and responsibilities?

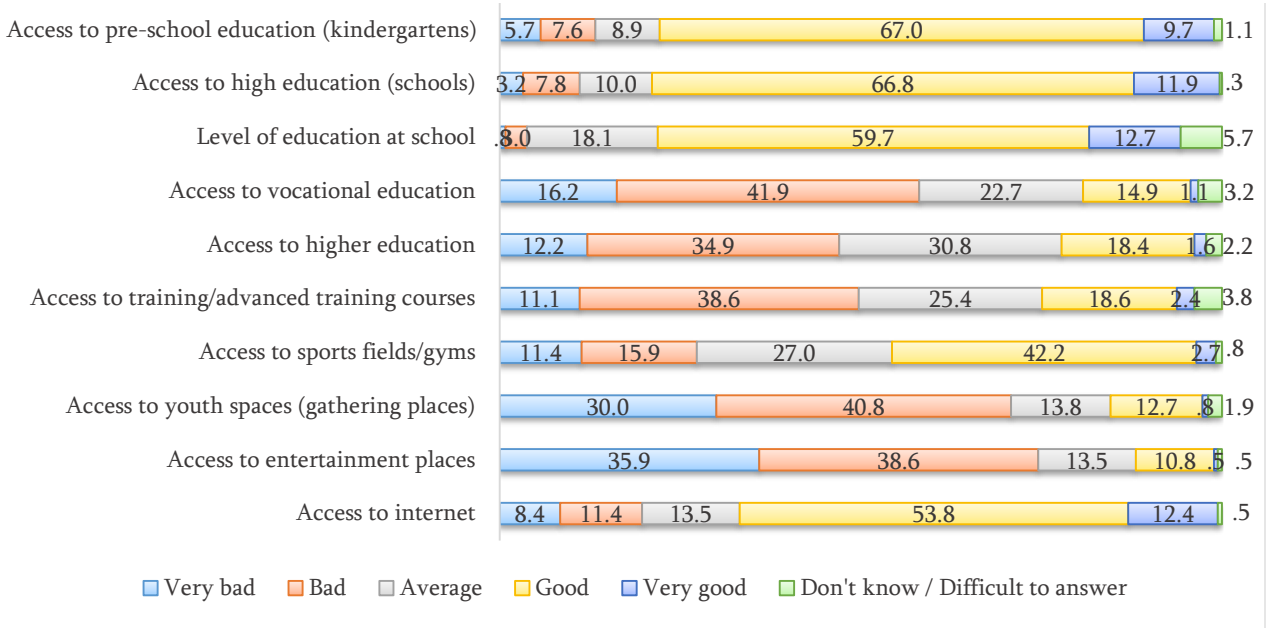


More than half of the respondents (54.3%) claim that they do not need more information about their civil rights / responsibilities, while 43.2% would like to learn more. According to the majority of respondents, government is primary responsible for providing such information (77%), 12% refer to NGO sector and 9.5% - to families.

3.4. ACCESS TO EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Results of the assessment of the access to education and youth related infrastructure shows that majority of respondents mostly assess positively level of education at school and access to pre-school (kindergarten) and school education (good and very good – 73%-79%). In Mereti community, respondents noted, that the school and kindergarten buildings are occupied by IDPs, and all attempts of hosting community to convince IDP families to move away were unsuccessful. Representatives of hosting community mentioned, that having another kindergarten in the community would increase access of citizens to pre-school education. Even though this has never escalated into conflict, certain tensions around this issue is obvious. It's noteworthy, that during the FGDs in Kazreti community respondents mentioned, that a lot of families move from villages to Kazreti in order to have a better access to kindergartens and schools. Another issue underlined by FGD participants is the quality of education. They noted, that the level of school education is not sufficient to successfully pass entrance exams and unless family has enough resources to hire private teachers for their children, access to higher education is denied. Despite the issues mentioned by the FGD respondents, the quantitative assessment of these three areas are mostly positive (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Access to Education and Youth Related Infrastructure



Unlike the pre-school and school education, access to vocational education, higher (university) education and non-formal education opportunities (training courses) were assessed rather negatively (very bad and bad – 47%-58%). The main reason of the lack of access to vocational education, identified during the FGD is the small number of vocational education institutions operating in the regions. Another reason identified in Kazreti community is related to traditions. According to the FGD respondents, a lot of Muslim families do not let their daughters move to bigger cities for studies, while they would be fine with their daughters studying in Kazreti. They believe that the existence of vocational schools in the community

would significantly contribute to giving young girls better access to education. Besides, FGD participants from all target communities mention financial issues as the main obstacle for getting higher education, although in Kazreti it was mentioned, that sometimes due to traditions Muslim families abstain from letting their children (especially girls) get higher education. Representatives of Muzhava community mentioned changes in granting schemes for students from borderline communities, which turned out to be unfavorable for the youngsters from Muzhava due to limiting access to privileged funding scheme.

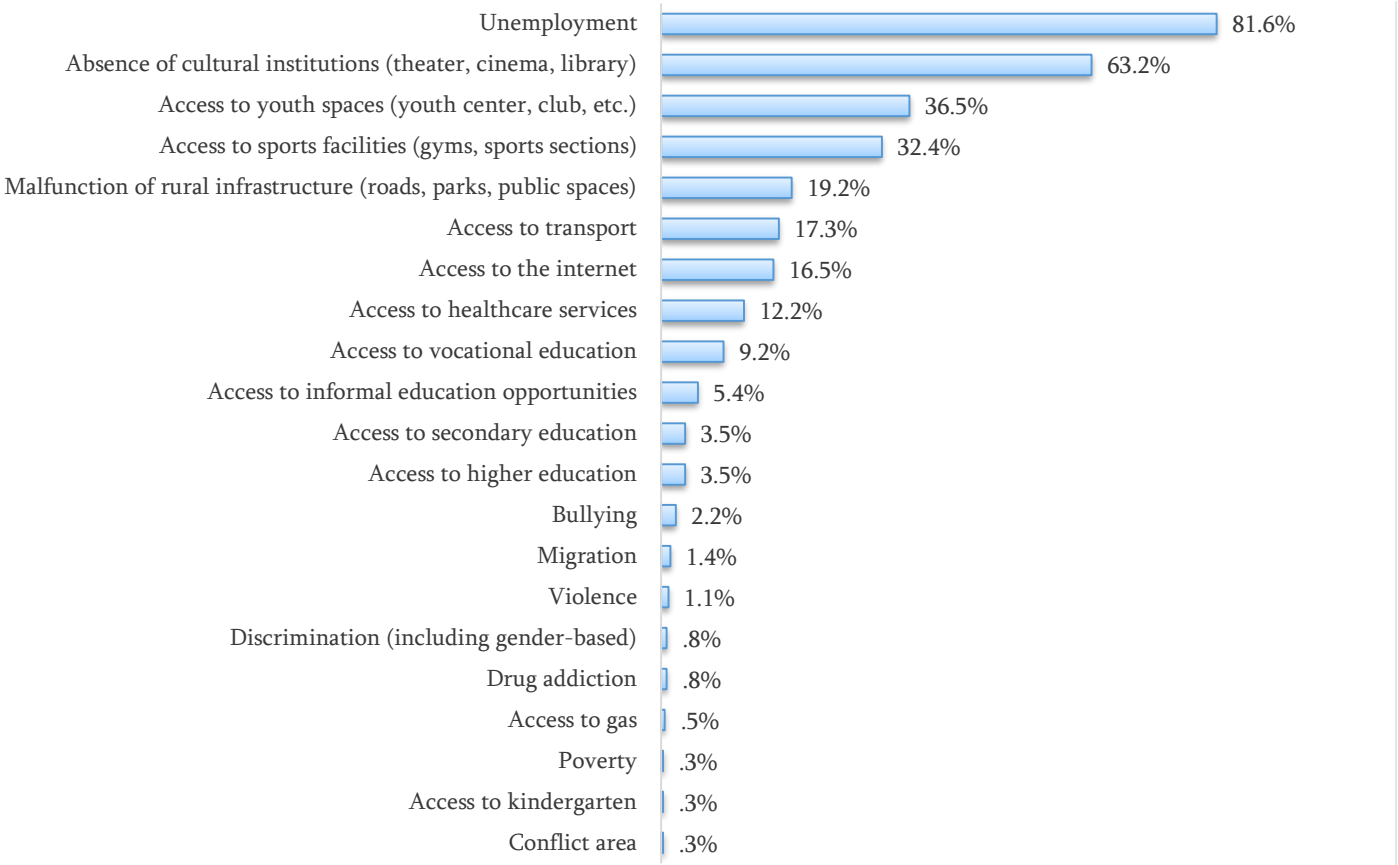
The lack of non-formal education opportunities as a mean for capacity building as well as instrument for improving intergroup (social, ethnic and religious groups) relations is one of the strongest concerns of young people and adults in all target communities. FGD participants express their strong desire to get engaged in joint non-formal education activities and believe, this can boost their awareness on certain topics on the one hand and strengthen their bonds with other groups living in the community on the other.

Access to sports fields/gyms is assessed mostly assessed as average (27%) and good (42.2%). The result can be explained by general policy of youth departments of local governments, where majority of funds are directed towards sports.

As for the access to youth spaces and entertainment places, it is evaluated rather negatively (very bad and bad – 71%-75%). This result was also confirmed by the qualitative study results, where the FGD respondents from the target communities emphasized that the access to youth spaces and entertainment places is the biggest concern of both – adults and youth. Young people as well as their family members and broader society believe that existence of youth spaces in the communities would enable young people to get involved in social life, participate in decision-making and contribute to community development. Young people and their family members consider access to healthy entertainment opportunities as one of the main preconditions for harmonious development of youngsters and prevention of juvenile delinquency. As for the internet, it does not appear to be a problem, as majority of respondents (66%) assess the access to internet in target communities as very good and good.

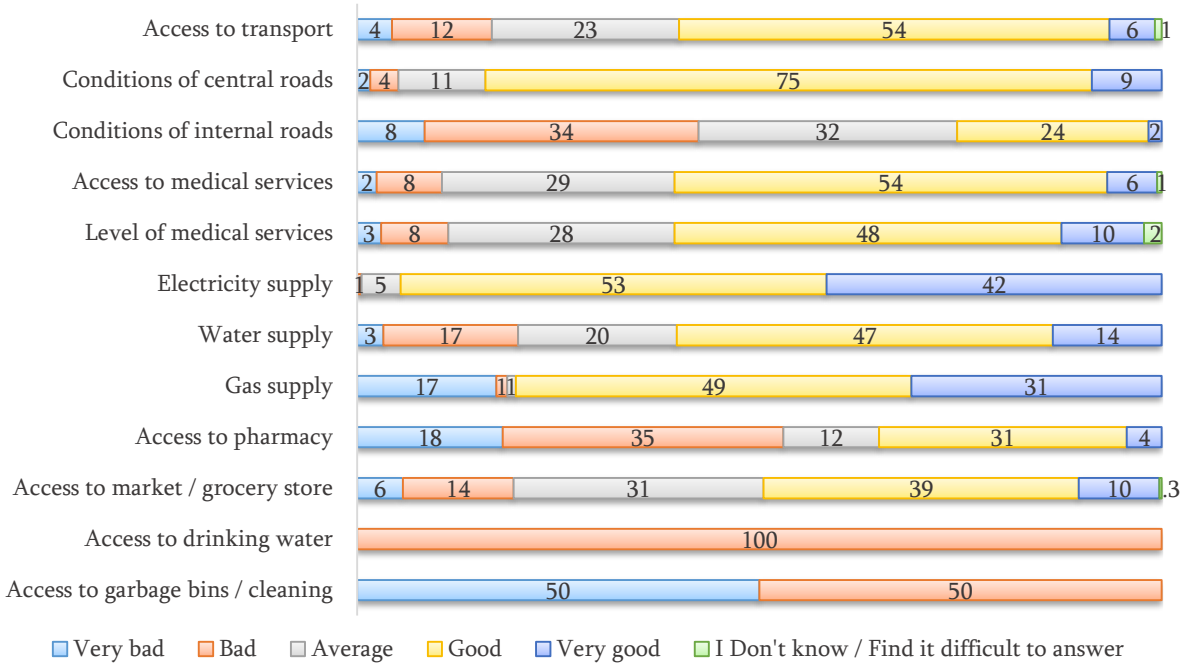
When asking about the main problems facing young people in target communities, quantitative survey respondents reconfirm the above mentioned issues related with lack of access to youth spaces, sport and cultural facilities. Most frequently mentioned problem faced by youth is the unemployment problem. In addition, malfunction of rural infrastructure (roads, parks, public spaces), and access to transport was mentioned as well (see Figure 16 for more details).

Figure 16. Main problems facing young people in your community / village / neighborhood



Access to different types of village infrastructure and services was also assessed by the community members (Figure 17). Access to transport was mostly assessed as average and good and very good by 83% of respondents. Conditions of central roads and electricity supply is assessed positively (from average to very good) by even more respondents (95% and 100% respectively), while internal roads appear to have rather negative assessment. Access and level of medical services are both claimed to be mostly average, good and very good (76% and 83%), while the pharmacy appears less accessible for the majority of population (53% - very bad and bad). Water supply seems to be different in target communities, as for 20% it is very bad and bad, for 20% average and for 61% good and very good. Gas supply appears accessible for the majority (80%), however it is not available for 18% of population. Access to market/grocery store varies from average to very good for 80%. Lastly, access to drinking water and garbage bins/cleaning appears to be the most problematic issues for all target communities (100% - very bad and bad).

Figure 17. Access to village infrastructure and services



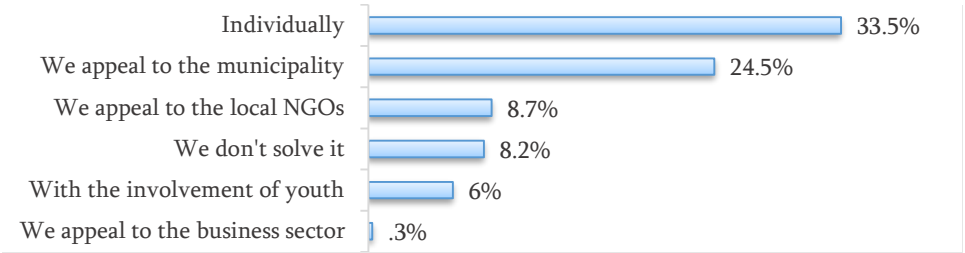
Few points regarding the access to particular infrastructure and services can be made from the qualitative survey. For instance, in Mereti, FGD participants pointed out the issues related with the infrastructure and social services (roads, drainage and irrigation systems, pharmacy, shop, medical facility and etc). Especially, lack of access to grocery shop in the villages was highlighted.

"There are so many villages, there is not a single shop in the village, you have to walk to Mereti, not everyone has a car. Half of the village is occupied, so people are not worth opening a shop or doing anything about."

Mereti community resident

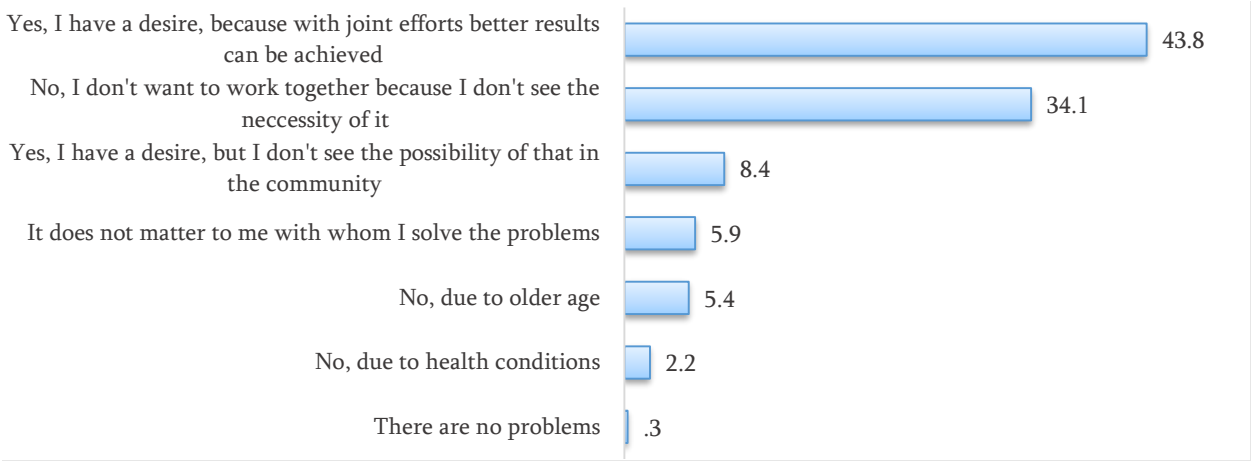
Community residents try to solve the problems emerging in the community / village / neighborhood mostly individually (33.5%) or by appealing to the municipality (24.5%). Relatively small share of population appeal to NGOS (8.7%) and even less involves youth in this process (see Figure 18 below).

Figure 18. How do you solve problems in the community / village / neighborhood?



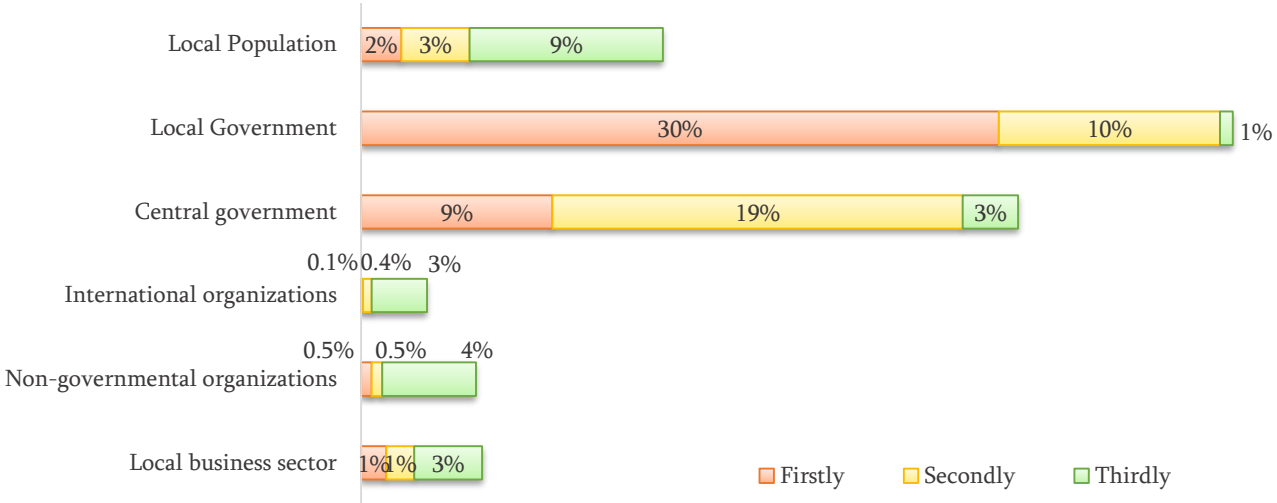
52.2% of respondents expressed desire to work with their villagers / community members on community / village / neighborhood problems (including 8.4% who don't see the possibility of such cooperation in their community), while 34.1% don't see the necessity therefore expressed lack of desire for mutual work.

Figure 19. Are you willing to work with your villagers / community members on community / village / neighborhood problems?



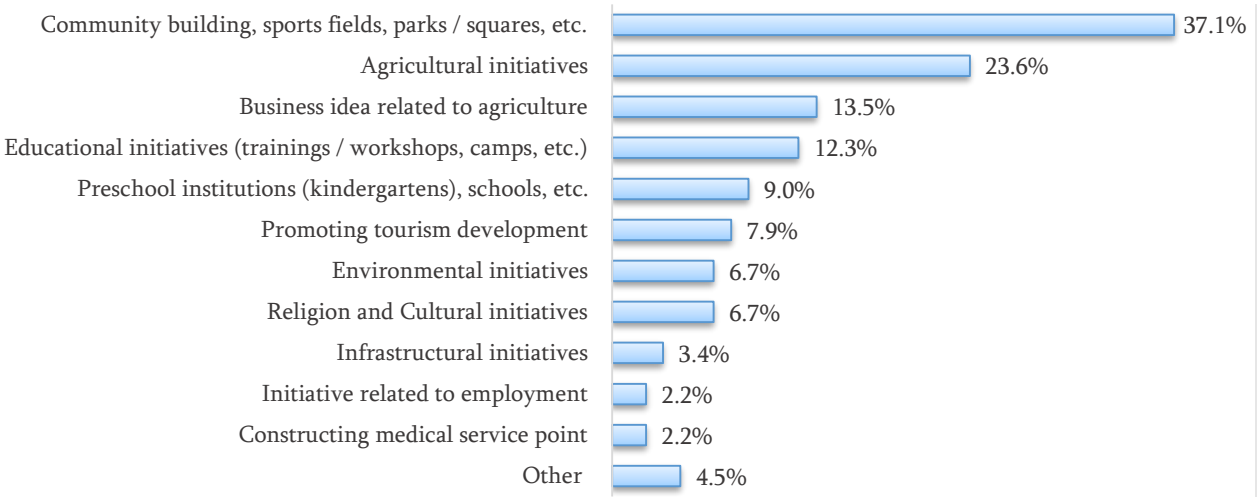
Population of the target communities consider the local government to be the most responsible party for solving the above listed problems (40% stating their responsibility in a first and second place), followed by the central government (28%). Local population is considered less responsible for solving the problems, even less obligation is perceived for the NGOs, local business and international organizations (see Figure 20 below)

Figure 20. Who is responsible for solving the problems in the community / village / neighborhood in first, second and third place?



25% of the population stated that they have some ideas related to community development. These ideas mostly referred to Community building, sports fields, parks / squares (37.1%) and agricultural initiatives (23.6%). Business and education related ideas/initiatives also appear the subject of interest of the local residents, followed by tourism development, environment and religion/culture related initiatives (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Which of the following does your idea apply to?



In most cases, local population appeal to the local government for support when they have a community development initiative (58.2%). Quite a significant share (25.3%) of respondents who claimed to have an idea/initiative regarding community development, stated that they have not applied to anyone. Relatively rarely were mentioned NGOs (12.1%), central government (11%), community representatives (8.8% - 8 cases), local business (5.5%), international organizations (3.3%) and others (see Figure 22).

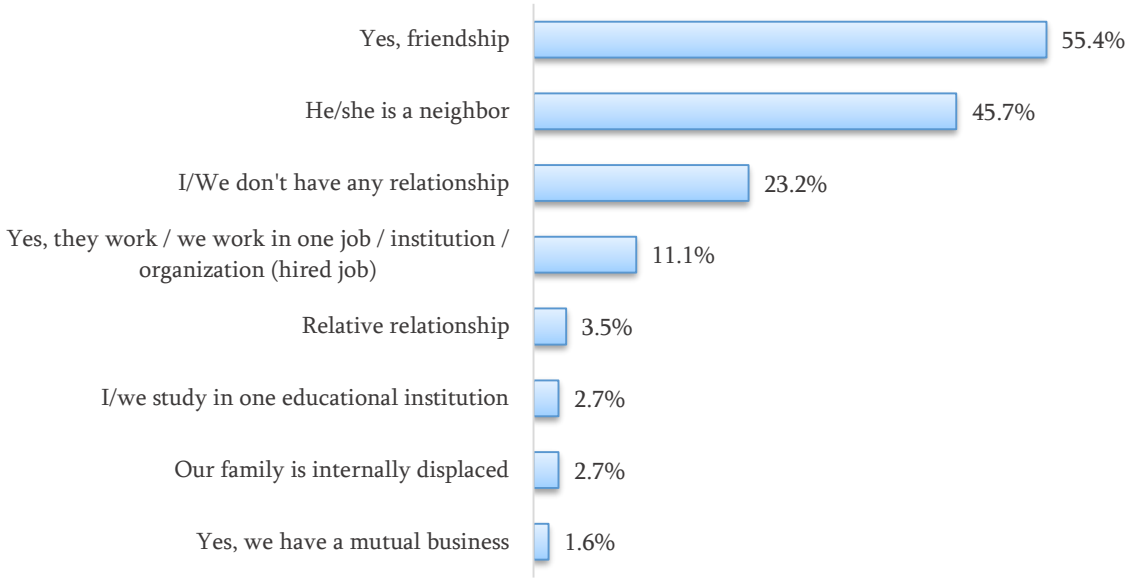
Figure 22. Who do you appeal to for help if you have a community development initiative?

3.5. SOCIAL INTEGRATION

IDPs (in Mereti, Rike and Muzhava) and Ethnic Minorities (in Kazreti)

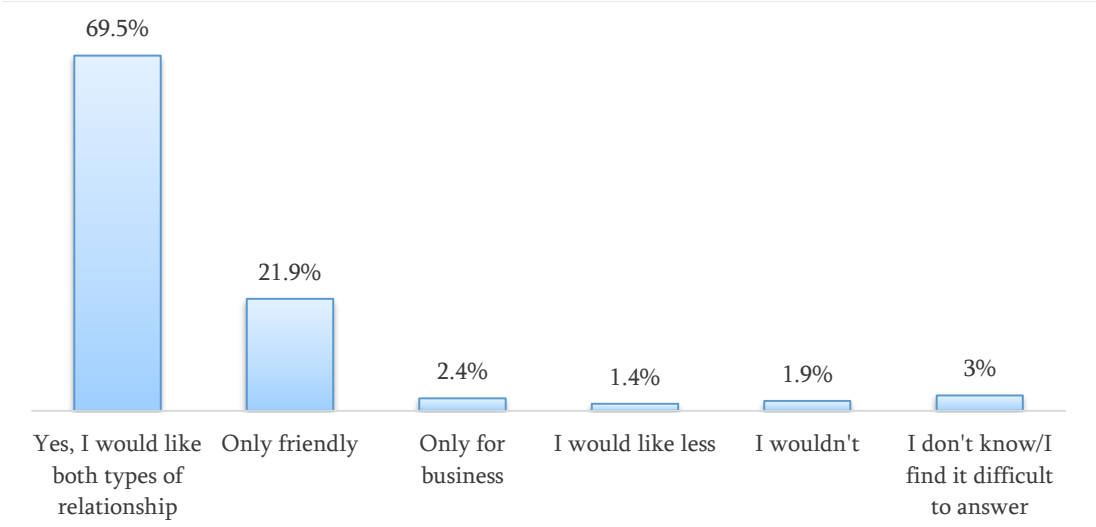
As a quantitative survey results reveal, large majority of respondents have either friendly (55.4%) relationship with the IDPs/representatives of ethnic minorities, or have IDPs / representatives of ethnic minorities among neighbors (45.7%), or among colleagues (11.1%), or relatives (3.5%), or study together in the same education institution (2.7%), or represent IDP/ethnic minority themselves (2.7%). Very few (1.6%) stated they have a joint business with IDP/ representatives of ethnic minorities. It is noteworthy that 23.2% claimed that they don't have any kind of relationship with IDP / representatives of ethnic minorities (see Figure 23).

Figure 23. Do you or your family member have any relationship with IDPs/representatives of ethnic minorities?



According to the survey results, majority (93.8%) of respondents are willing to have either friendly (21.9%), business (2.4%) or both types of relationships (69.5%) with IDPs / representatives of ethnic minorities. Small share of respondents (3.2%) expressed that they would like to have less or no relationship at all with internally displaced people and/or representatives of ethnic minorities (see Figure 24).

Figure 24. Would you like to have a friendly or business relationship with IDPs/representatives of ethnic minorities?



Mereti community has a small IDP population, collectively settled in former school and kindergarten buildings. Even though, according to FGD participants, this has never escalated into a serious conflict, still representatives of hosting communities express their discontent towards the IDP group and the events taking place around the buildings occupied by them. Thus, despite the fact that there is no open conflict between the IDPs and the hosting community, clear signs of isolation and the lack of integration are obvious.

According to qualitative survey, there are no ethnic-based conflicts in the community. Participants note, that people in community make friends with each other regardless ethnicity and engage in joint activities. According to FGDs, there are quite a lot of mixed families existing in the community. A similar point of view was expressed by both – representative of local government as well as member of civil society organization. Nevertheless, certain signs of segregation and prejudices are manifested during discussions.

Most of the FGD participants from Kazreti community noted, that IDP living in the community are fully integrated and the relations are harmonious. Although, several respondents mentioned that IDP live separately and the communication is active only between the young people from IDP community and the hosting community.

According to FGD participants, all ethnic groups living in Kazreti community are fully integrated and equally involved in community life. Hence, coworkers, neighbors, friends of different ethnic background actively communicate, solve community problems together and even celebrate each other's religious holidays. They find it important to mention, that the bonds are especially tight between young people coming from different ethnic backgrounds.

Same idea was expressed by the representative of civil society organization. Former teacher and civic activist remembers the 90s, when ethnic conflicts based on bullying, discrimination and stigma were very prevalent. According to her, situation is much better now.

Majority of FGD participants in Kazreti community expressed their wish to be involved in joint activities more frequently.

According to FGDs in Muzhava community, since IDPs moved to the community quite a long time ago, they are fully integrated and the relations with representatives of hosting community are harmonious.

"We will be glad if IDP family moves to our neighborhood"

Participant of FGD

Respondents noted, that due to the high level of integration, people sometimes are not even aware about each other's' IDP status.

According to FGD participants, there are no ethnic or religious minorities represented in Muzhava community.

During the FGDs, Rike community members declared that the relationships between the hosting community and IDP are friendly, peaceful and free from tensions. According to FGD respondents, representatives of both communities help each other, and sometimes, don't even distinguish between IDP and non-IDP citizens.

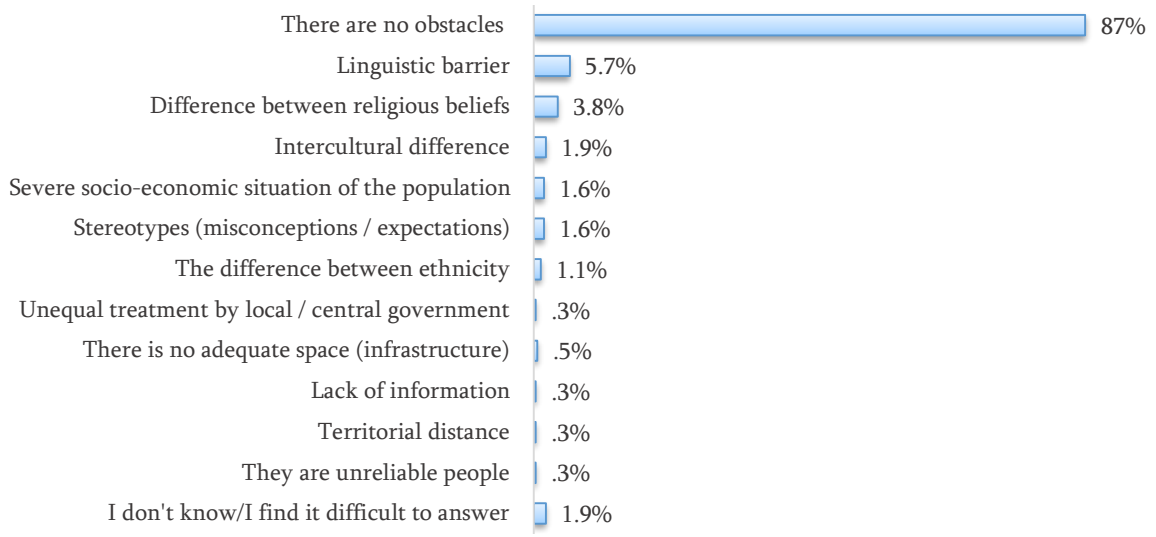
"I spend whole summer in IDP settlement, with my peers, I get along with them better than with my neighbors"

Participant of FGD

According to participants of focus group discussion as well as representatives of CSOs, there are no open, escalated conflicts between the IDP and hosting community, although certain discontent and prejudices towards the IDPs were expressed during the FGDs.

87% of survey respondents believe that there no obstacles for the joint involvement/joint initiatives of IDPs/representatives of ethnic minorities and representatives of hosting communities, while 5.7% think that there is a language barrier playing an important role. 3.8% stated, that difference between religious beliefs is the main obstacle for joint activities, while 1.9% think it is intercultural differences, which hinder engagement in joint initiatives. 1.6% of respondents believe that severe socio-economic situation of the population is the reason of the lack of cooperation, while another 1.6% blame stereotypes. 1.1% of respondents think that ethnic differences are the main obstacles for joint involvement, 0.3% think it is unequal treatment of different groups by local and/or central government, and 0.5% think that the lack of infrastructure is the main reason. 0.3% name the lack of information, another 0.3% believe it's a territorial distance that makes joint involvement problematic, 0.3% think its unreliable people who create challenges and 1.9% find it difficult to define the reasons behind poor cooperation among different ethnic and social groups.

Figure 25. What are the obstacles for the joint involvement / initiatives of locals and IDPs/representatives of ethnic minorities?



Majority of FGD respondents in Mereti community believe that there are no obstacles for joint involvement of different ethnic and social groups, while small number of participants think that the language barrier as well as traditions of ethnic minorities limit involvement of ethnic groups in joint activities.

According to the representatives of ethnic minorities, as well as ethnic Georgians in Kazreti community, the language barrier is mostly common in the villages, as much as in Kazreti community children study Georgian language already from kindergarten and school. Therefore, language barrier concerns the citizens, who recently moved to Kazreti from the nearby villages. In addition, the lack of communication and cooperation opportunities is identified as an obstacle for joint involvement by ethnic Georgians as well as representatives of ethnic minorities.

As noted by the FGD participants in Kazreti, elderly center existing in the community connected people of different ethnicities and religions much stronger than being neighbors for decades. Having space for sharing each other's cultures, similarities and differences made a great influence on relations between different groups.

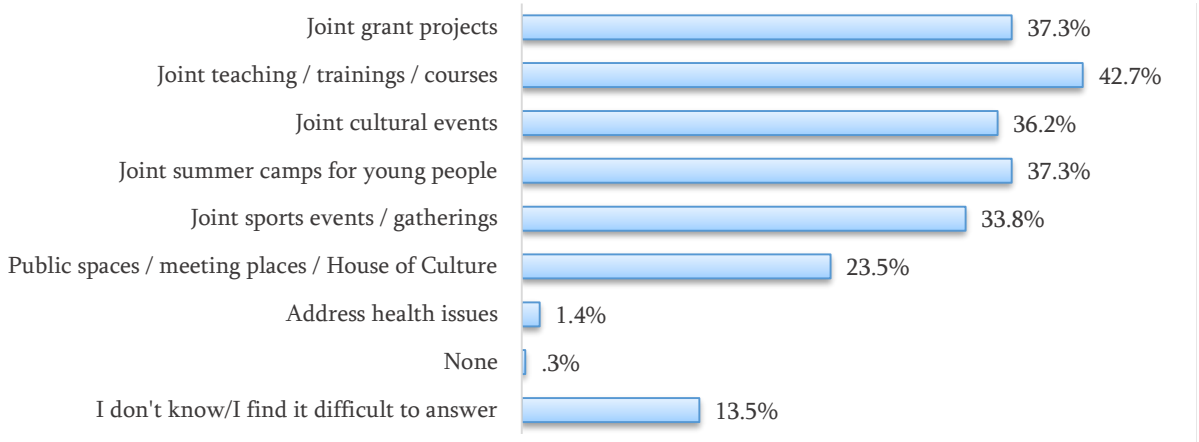
Traditions of ethnic minorities are considered as another obstacle for joint involvement of community members in social life. Ethnic Georgians as well as representatives of ethnic minorities believe that young generation faces less difficulties in communication and peaceful coexistence than the older ones.

Majority of FGD participants in Muzhava community declare, that there are no obstacles existing for mutual and equal involvement of different ethnic and social groups. Small number of participants believe, it is stereotypes and prejudices that limit harmonious coexistence of different groups.

FGD participants from Rike municipality do not see any obstacles for joint involvement of different ethnic and social groups in local activities.

42.7% of survey respondents from target communities believe that joint educational activities can help IDPs/representatives of ethnic minorities and ethnic Georgians representing hosting communities/local population (non IDPs) to establish friendship or start a joint business. 37.3 % of respondents think it is joint grant projects that can help different groups to cooperate more. 36.2% believe that joint cultural events can support mutual collaboration, while 37.3% think, that joint summer camps for young people would strengthen bonds between different groups. 33.8% stated, that joint sports events and gatherings would support cooperation and/or friendship between groups, while 23.5% think it is public spaces, meeting places that can boost the communication. 1.4% think that addressing health issues can be useful in this regard, while 3% think there is nothing that can lead to better communication. 13.5% find it difficult to define the measures that would improve relationships and/or cooperation between different ethnic and social groups.

Figure 26. What kind of support do you think is needed to start / develop a business or friendship?



FGD participants in all target municipalities believe that civil society organisations and local government can significantly contribute to integration of minority groups. Joint educational activities for young people and adults, joint summer camps, sports and cultural activities, joint projects and youth spaces are the most frequently listed opportunities that respondents think can have a positive influence on relationships of different ethnic and social groups.

Religious Minorities

According to respondents in target communities, conflicts based on religious belonging are extremely rare. FGD participants in Kazreti community noted, that most of them celebrate all religious holidays together and they can only recall very few conflicts related to religious background of community members. FGD participants from Mereti community stated that there is a lot of respect towards each other's religion and people in the community establish friendly relations with each other regardless religious belonging.

According to FGDs, there is only one religious minority in target communities located in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region – the witnesses of Jehovah. According to respondents, attitude towards this particular minority is neutral, they are not stigmatized, discriminated or excluded.

People with Disabilities

Situation regarding the people with disabilities is quite similar in all target communities.

According to FGD respondents as well as interviewees with disabilities, civil society organisations address the needs of PWDs from time to time. There are so called "resource spaces" for children with disabilities and ramps available in schools. In some communities there are daycare centers for PWD operating, although most of the infrastructure existing in target municipalities, including public spaces and transport are not accessible for PWDs, they are highly dependent on the support of their family members or friends, both – physically and psycho-emotionally and therefore, are deprived of the opportunities to integrate, communicate and get involved in joint activities with other community members.

Recommendations:

It is highly recommended to engage both – IDPs as well as representatives of hosting communities in joint activities in target areas in order to provide opportunity for the equal-status cooperation, as an efficient tool for decreasing intergroup tensions, building trust, eliminating prejudices and harmonizing relationships. Similar intervention applied to ethnic and religious groups through culture- and context-sensitive approaches will significantly contribute to strengthening intergroup relations.

It is highly recommended to raise the awareness of community members (Georgians, as well as ethnic minorities) on human rights, and specifically on the rights of ethnic and religious minorities as well as IDP. For the best results, it is desirable to conduct both – separate, as well as joint activities involving different ethnic, social and religious groups.

It is highly recommended to work on awareness raising of local government regarding inclusive decision-making process and equality as important pillars of democratic development.

3.6. ETHNIC MINORITIES

According to the official statistics, 13.2% of the population of Georgia are populated by different ethnic groups, mostly represented by ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis, majority living in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions. In targeted communities a big majority (94.2%) are ethnically Georgians, while 2.6% are Azerbaijanis, 1.2% - Armenians, 1% - Ossetians and the remaining 1% represent other nationalities. Barriers to political participation of ethnic minorities include but not limited to the problem of integration, lack of political identity with the Georgian state, the language barrier, low level of employment in the public service, etc.

3.6.1. Involvement in Decision-Making Process

According to the FGD participants, most of them are not involved in decision-making process, as local citizens are only asked to express their needs prior to elections and their opinions are almost never taken into consideration. From their words, they would love to get involved in elaboration of development plans, although they are not hopeful that their voice will be heard. FGD participants note, that the abovementioned applies not only to representatives of ethnic minorities, but to the population of the community as a whole.

The low level of trust in local government, and the lack of motivation caused by the hopelessness is clear to see. Furthermore, trust in the local government on community level (Kazreti) is lower, compared to Bolnisi level.

Representatives of ethnic minorities believe that women in Kazreti community are quite active, they are not restricted in expressing their opinions and their activeness is adequately perceived by local society. However, they mention that Azerbaijani women, living in rural areas are more restricted; they mostly can't leave their homes alone, even for business purposes. This limits their inclusion in social life. Participants of FGDs note, that sometimes young girls are not even allowed to attend language classes.

FGD participants think, that the obstacles to involvement in decision making in Kazreti community are the same for both – ethnic minorities and ethnic Georgians. They believe that existence of place to gather would give them the opportunity to be more active and generate new ideas.

Recommendations: It's crucial to raise the awareness of citizens and local government representatives on participatory decision-making, as well as supporting the dialogue between the citizens and local authorities through proven and efficient methods. It's important to strengthen the motivation of local citizens to get involved in public life through best practices existing in Georgia and beyond.

3.6.2. Needs

The main problem emphasized by the representatives of ethnic minorities is unemployment. Sometimes, there is a hint on ethnic-based differences in relation to access to jobs, even though most of the participants of the FGDs are or have been employed in the recent past. One of the participants is employed in an elderly center, another one was involved in home care program in the past, one more participant is the member of Bolnisi youth council.

Some of them state that they had to face the unemployment issue for family reasons.

"I used to work in a non-governmental organization before, then I was married off and I lost touch with the field."

Representative of ethnic minority

Representatives of ethnic minorities think the active involvement of girls in public life is still relatively problematic in the community. There have been cases, when young girls were not allowed to leave to

bigger cities for study. FGD participants believe, that the existence of vocational schools in the community would significantly contribute to giving young people (especially girls) better access to education. The same goes for non-formal education activities. According to FGD participants, if activities are carried out in the community, 99% of girls will be able to participate in them.

In other respects, the needs of ethnic minorities coincide with the needs of ethnic Georgians. They are concerned with absence of cultural spaces, vocational school, public transportation. FGD participants are disturbed with lack of doctors, a laboratory, and the opportunity for full medical examination in local hospital. The absence of free legal aid and notary office in the community were also mentioned among main challenges.

There is an obvious tendency from the side of ethnic minority representatives to refrain from expressing their needs. This seems to be related with the fear of causing conflict, on one hand and hopelessness in getting the desired result, on the other.

"They [the government] don't even do a small thing, how likely it is that they do this?.... And, even if the mosque is built, I'm sure that adults, Christian men and women will not agree to this."

Representative of ethnic minority

This topic is emphasized by the representative of civil society organization too. According to her, local citizens often try to avoid speaking about their problems, as they are not hopeful about the resolution.

According to representatives of ethnic minorities, as well as ethnic Georgians, the language barrier is mostly common in the villages, as much as in Kazreti community children study Georgian language already from kindergarten and school.

***Recommendations*:** It's very important to empower community representatives to properly justify their needs (especially, the minority-specific ones) and advocate for them. It's recommended to carry out the complex activities in regard to women empowerment. In ideal case, the activities shall include working with women, men, local non-formal leaders and official decision-makers.

3.6.3. Rights

One of the female participants of the discussion notes that she is highly aware of her rights thanks to her experience of working in a non-governmental organization. Moreover, she has helped others too. She brought the example of helping a young girl, who was forced to get married at a very young age. Other participants of FGD are also more or less aware of their rights, although they believe that awareness on human rights and the rights of minorities is low in the community and it's necessary to empower community members in this regard.

Representatives of ethnic minorities state that Georgia is their motherland, and they consider themselves full-fledged citizens of this country. They note that not everyone shares this point of view and some

community members consider themselves inferior in terms of citizenship rights. They believe that this issue has to be solved by local society – by all ethnicities together.

During the FGDs, it has been mentioned that that population of Kazreti community tries not to express too much protest and discontent out of fear of losing hard-won jobs. Participants noted that this applies to everyone regardless their ethnic background.

There is an obvious tendency to silence problematic issues related to rights, which is caused by variety of reasons, including the fear of losing a job and the fear of complicating the relations in the community.

Recommendations: It is highly recommended to raise the awareness of community members (Georgians, as well as ethnic minorities) on human rights, and specifically on the rights of ethnic minorities. For the best results, it is desirable to conduct both – separate, as well as joint activities involving different ethnic groups.

3.6.4. Attitudes/Conflicts/Security

Representatives of ethnic minorities, as well as ethnic Georgians participating in the FGDs note that ethnic conflicts are not common for Kazreti community, and that the people of different ethnicities live together peacefully. They find it important to mention, that the bonds are especially tight between the young people coming from different ethnic backgrounds. They recall only two serious conflicts that occurred on ethnic grounds.

The same idea was expressed by the representative of civil society organization. Former teacher and civic activist remembers the 90s, when ethnic conflicts in the community were very prevalent. According to her, situation is much better now.

Ethnic minority representatives mention, that they can only recall minor cases of segregation by ethnic background, such as cases of prioritizing Georgians in the long queues, or local government giving more attention to Christians rather than Muslims during religious holidays. Opinion was expressed, that some Georgians feel as though they have more rights because of their ethnic belonging.

During the FGDs, it has been revealed that community members living in Kazreti for a long time have better relations among each other than the ones who have migrated to the community recently. There is a tendency of segregating local community in this respect, rather than based on ethnic background.

According to FGD participants, religious-based conflicts are extremely rare in Kazreti community. Participants note that they celebrate all religious holidays together. They only recall one case of a religious conflict when local Muslim citizen conducted religious studies at his own home. Neighbors were against this, but, as there is no mosque available in the community, an agreement was reached between the citizen and the neighbors. The conflict never repeated itself again.

Participants of FGD note, that religious institutions never get engaged in conflict situations.

Representatives of ethnic minorities proudly state that no conflicts are happening between ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Kazreti community.

Local citizens state, that the conflicts in the community are mainly based on day-to-day problems, although, at the same time, they believe that more joint activities will contribute to better coexistence of people with different ethnic backgrounds.

Living environment is assessed as fairly safe by representatives of the ethnic minorities as well as by ethnic Georgians. They believe that it's equally safe for everyone in the community.

According to the representatives of ethnic minorities, they believe that Kazreti is where they belong and they do not consider themselves living elsewhere, including their historical motherlands.

Despite the positive responses regarding the relations among different ethnicities in the community, there is a feeling that representatives of ethnic minorities refrain from expressing their resentment and discontent in order to prevent damaging the relationships.

Different opinions regarding domestic violence have been expressed during the FGDs. Some participants talk openly about the issue, while others prefer to avoid the topic. Representative of civil society organization, working on the rights of women, state that the domestic violence is a serious problem in the community.

Recommendations: It's highly desirable to carefully actualize the issue of domestic violence in the community and address the problem through Do-No-Harm approach. It's important to involve all stakeholders, including women, men, religious institutions, and local government.

General recommendations:

It's extremely important that all the activities except for the rare and justified exemptions are carried out with participation of all ethnicities. Efficiency of this method is validated by the phenomena of social psychology called "Equal Status Cooperation", according to which, the most efficient tool for decreasing inequality and prejudices is through participation of different groups in some kind of activities on an equal status.

4. LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

During the stakeholder mapping analysis, the following important limitations and lessons learned should be considered:

- ⊗ In general, the studies are limited with certain methodology and pre-determined time recourses which does not enable to identify all the organizations and structures working on youth-related issues. Consequently, the study lacks possibility to interview all the organizations which could be possible stakeholder in the target communities and municipalities, therefore, missing those in the

mapping. The same can be said for the youth programs, which might be missing in the analysis due to the lack of available information.

- ⊗ The analysis is based on the information obtained from the respondents representing different organizations who has expressed their opinions and views, which could be biased with a subjective interpretation of the situation and circumstances.
- ⊗ Due to the fact that some of the respondents might not have accurate information on certain issues, some results of the study might be the subject of discussion or revision.

5. CONCLUSIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE TARGET COMMUNITIES

- Comparison of 2014 and 2002 census data in each target community showed that significant decrease of population is likely to three target communities, while in Kazreti on contrary population increased three times. The reasons for population increase mostly lies in employment opportunities on local level.
- Almost half of residents are above 50 years old and only 18% represents the age group of youth from 14 to 29. 7.7% of the population are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and almost 3% are persons with disabilities (PWD).
- Target communities can be characterized with relatively high level of education in comparison with average statistics in rural areas. 20% of the population have vocational education and over 23% has been involved in higher education, while according to the 2014 Census data, this figure for the rural types of settlements equals to 14.7%.

EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

- Majority of population is employed in private sector as a hired staff (42.9%), followed by those engaged in informal (non-registered) sector (35.4%) and public sector (17%). Very small share of respondents appear registered as a small/individual entrepreneurs (2.6%) and even less are involved in private sector in a status of an employer (2.1%).
- 30% is self-employed, while majority (70%) is employed as a hired staff. The biggest share of the local residents are employed in industry/production sector, which is mainly due to the high percent of employed people in RMG Gold in Kazreti. 15.3% are self-employed in agriculture. Equal share of population (10%) are employed either in educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, vocational colleges, etc.) or self-employed in their own enterprise/farm.
- The most common sources of income are: pension and social assistance (62%), income from agriculture (54%) and income from hired employment (48%).

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING AND PEACE BUILDING

- Analyzing the level of youth participation in decision-making process in target communities on the basis of the “Ladder of Participation” theory revealed that in three target municipalities (Gori, Zugdidi, Bolnisi) the level of involvement of young people in decision-making process by the local

government can be evaluated as non- meaningful (level 2-3). Unlikely, the level of participation of young people in activities can be assessed as relatively meaningful in Tsalenjikha municipality (level 4-5). Despite the existing youth policy documents, the lack of strategic vision, mechanisms of youth involvement and relevant methods of youth needs assessment, leads to the assumption that implementation of the municipal youth policy documents and action plan is rather superficial and does not comply with the quality standards of youth policy implementation and youth involvement. Although, the plan to follow the principles of youth policy document and the action plan sounds promising.

- The level of participation appears much higher, and most importantly, more authentic in case of interventions implemented by the CSOs. As it seems, CSOs manage to involve young people at the higher levels of the ladder of participation – responding to the initiatives of young people on one hand and constantly carrying out the needs assessment through meetings, focus groups and surveys on the other. The level of participation in this case matches the lower rungs of "participation level" of the ladder (levels 4 to 6) and can be acknowledged as meaningful. Although there is still quite a lot of space for improvement.
- Bolnisi municipality is distinguished by having a private sector representative (RMG) as a main contributor to youth-related activities and social projects in a highest participatory manner, as youth projects are based on the initiatives of local young people. Thus, the level of youth involvement in decision-making process in the projects, carried out by RMG was assessed with a highest score (level 7-8 of the ladder of participation).
- Unequal access to information on youth opportunities is one of the biggest challenges of inclusive participation in all target communities. Besides, awareness about youth participation and mechanisms of participatory decision-making appears to be very low as well.
- There is great support and positive attitude from the broader community towards youth engagement in community / village decision-making processes as large majority of respondents (95%) agree that youth involvement in community / village decision-making is important.
- Lack of relevant platforms and tools of engagement of young people in decision-making process on local (community) level is confirmed by quantitative survey results as well, as majority (59%) of community members either think that there are no relevant platforms and tools or find this question difficult to answer. Others think that the local board (18.2%) or school (15.4%) are available platforms for youth engagement and few refer to City Hall (5.7%), NGOs and village club (5.1% each).
- Low level of involvement of community population in the decision-making process is also definite from the survey results, which has revealed that 79% of the community population is not involved in the decision-making process at all. The most common form of engagement is attendance of the public meetings (55%) and participation in local self-government elections (36%), and lowest share of the population (1.4%) has applied with an initiative to the local government.
- The most common reasons hindering participation of general community members in decision-making process include: lack of personal readiness/lack of time (51.1%), lack of relevant information and knowledge on how to engage in decision-making processes (34%), lack of support by the local community leaders (8.4%).
- The most commonly mentioned major obstacle for young people to get involved in the decision-making process is their low level of motivation (46.3%), followed by the lack of infrastructure

(26%) and lack of information on relevant mechanisms and opportunities for involvement (26%), lack of interest from the local government (21.5%), and poverty (14.7%). Low level of motivation is also visible among the community members, where majority report that they are not involved and neither willing to engage in volunteering (65.7%), however, 23.2% expressed desire to be involved.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

- Level of education at school and access to pre-school (kindergarten) and school education is mostly assessed positively by the majority of respondents, while access to vocational education, higher (university) education and non-formal education opportunities (training courses) are assessed rather negatively. The main reason of the lack of access to vocational education, identified during the FGD is the small number of vocational education institutions operating in the regions. Another reason identified in Kazreti community is related to traditions limiting especially female gender representatives to move to bigger cities for studies, while existence of vocational schools nearby would significantly contribute to giving young girls better access to education.
- The lack of non-formal education opportunities as a mean for capacity building as well as instrument for improving intergroup relations is one of the strongest concerns of young people and adults in all target communities.
- Access to sports fields/gyms is assessed mostly as average and good, while access to youth spaces and entertainment places is the biggest concern of both – adults and youth.
- Access to drinking water and garbage bins/cleaning appears to be the most problematic issues for all target communities.
- Some part of community population stated to have an ideas related to community development, mostly related with community buildings, sports fields, parks / squares and agricultural initiatives. Business and education related ideas/initiatives appear the subject of interest of the smaller share of local residents, followed by tourism development and environment related initiatives. Majority of population appeal to the local government for support when they have a community development initiative (58.2%), and very small share apply to NGOs (12%). Quarter of respondents who claimed to have an idea/initiative regarding community development, have not applied to anyone. This might indicate low level of motivation/trust in obtaining support, lack of available NGO programs on the ground and lack of awareness of mechanisms how to apply with an idea/initiative.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

- Despite the fact that there is no open conflict between the IDPs and the hosting community in Mereti, still representatives of hosting communities express their discontent towards the IDP group and the events taking place around the buildings occupied by them. Thus, clear signs of isolation and the lack of integration are obvious.
- Similarly to Mereti, IDPs living in Kazreti were claimed to be fully integrated, although, as mentioned by several respondents, IDPs live separately and the communication is active only between the young people from IDP community and the hosting community. All ethnic groups living in Kazreti community are fully integrated and equally involved in community life. However,

traditions of ethnic minorities are considered as some kind of obstacle for joint involvement of community members in social life. Ethnic Georgians as well as representatives of ethnic minorities believe that young generation faces less difficulties in communication and peaceful coexistence than the older ones and thus the bonds are especially tight between young people coming from different ethnic backgrounds. Besides, as it cleared up, elderly center existing have a significant role in the community in terms of connecting people of different ethnicities and religions by providing space for sharing each other's cultures, similarities and differences.

- In Muzhava and Rike communities high level of integration of IDPs with the hosting community is noticeable, as people sometimes are not even aware about each other's' IDP status. Thus, relationships between the hosting community and IDPs are friendly, peaceful and free from tensions.
- 87% of survey respondents believe that there no obstacles for the joint involvement/joint initiatives of IDPs/representatives of ethnic minorities and representatives of hosting communities, while 5.7% think that there is a language barrier playing an important role. 3.8% stated, that difference between religious beliefs is the main obstacle for joint activities, while 1.9% think it is intercultural differences, which hinder engagement in joint initiatives.
- In all target municipalities CSOs and local government organizations are believed to have an important role/potential to contribute to integration of minority groups. Joint educational activities for young people and adults, joint summer camps, sports and cultural activities, joint projects and youth spaces are the most frequently listed opportunities that respondents think can have a positive influence on relationships of different ethnic and social groups.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can be developed for the intervention in target communities:

- Raise awareness of young people as well as CSOs operating in the target communities on youth participation and participatory decision-making process, assist them in strengthening competences on youth needs-assessment and advocacy of youth-related issues as well as empower them to initiate and manage youth-related activities;
- Contribute to strengthening the system of external monitoring of the quality of youth policy implementation on municipal level through specific indicators of the action plan. One of the best practices of the external monitoring is assigning the monitoring function to the youth councils;
- Assist the local government in development of an efficient mechanisms for informing young people and conducting the youth needs-assessments;
- Strengthen competences of local government representatives and young people in inclusive decision-making in order to contribute to the development of more efficient and structured dialogue between the actors;
- Support Muzhava community representatives in founding and development of local CSOs in order to support facilitation of democratic processes on the local level;
- Engage both – IDPs and representatives of hosting communities in joint activities in target areas in order to provide opportunity for the equal-status cooperation, as an efficient tool for decreasing intergroup tensions, building trust, eliminating prejudices and harmonizing

relationships. Apply similar intervention to ethnic and religious groups through culture- and context-sensitive approaches;

- Raise the awareness of community members (Georgians, as well as ethnic minorities) on human rights, and specifically on the rights of ethnic and religious minorities as well as IDPs. For the best results, it is recommended to conduct both – separate, as well as joint activities involving different ethnic, social and religious groups;
- Strengthen the motivation of local citizens to get involved in public life through best practices existing in Georgia and beyond;
- Empower community representatives to properly justify their needs (especially, the minority-specific ones) and advocate for them;
- Carry out the complex activities in regard to women empowerment. In ideal case, the activities shall include working with women, men, local non-formal leaders and official decision-makers;
- Facilitate improving access to youth spaces to the extent possible in frame of the project resources;
- Provide local youth with non-formal education opportunities as a mean for capacity building (including training in soft skills). Support raising motivation/trust of local youth and awareness of mechanisms, forms, and procedures on how to apply with an idea/initiative. Launching a small-grants pilot program together with relevant trainings and consultations for youth would be highly recommended;
- Facilitate access to vocational education, on-the-job training and to the extent possible provide tools for employment;
- Mostly use the regional media and public meetings for information dissemination. However, social media can appear effective in case of youth as well.

ANNEX 1 - Project Logical Framework – Baseline Values

Research Objective	Baseline Value	Comment
Specific Objective: To strengthen the participation of female and male youth (age 14-29) in local decision making and peacebuilding processes		
# of priority concerns identified by female and male youth incorporated in community plans[4]	0	There are no community action plans in target communities at this moment
# of female and male **youth** who have meaningfully participated in formal (government-led) and informal (civil society-led) decision-making spaces	Gori (gov-led – level 3, CSO-led – level 4-5); Bolnisi (gov-led – level 2-3, CSO-led – level 4-5); Tsalenjikha (gov-led – level 4-5); Zugdidi (gov-led – level 3, CSO-led level 5-6).	It is advised to adjust the indicator so that instead of the number of youth who have participated, it measures the level / degree / forms of participation in order to reflect "meaningful participation".
# of female and male youth-led initiatives that influence policy change or amended policies, legislation, public programs, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of female and male youth	0	Since given indicator is ambiguous in terms of its content and measurability, it is recommended to specify it to make more relevant to the intervention.
Expected Result 1: Trained female and male youth are better able to identify, articulate, and advocate for their peace and security concerns.		
1.1. % of female and male **youth** project participants that report motivation to engage in community decision-making processes	0	As this indicator refers to the project participants, baseline is 0 at this point. However, question about the attitudes regarding engagement in community decision-making processes was asked during the survey.
Expected Result 2: Communities understand, encourage and support peace and security concerns identified by female and male youth		
2.2. % of female and male community members with a positive attitude towards female and male youth civic activities	Community members with a positive attitude towards: Female	Female community members with a positive attitude towards: Female engagement – 1.5%

[4] Community Action Plan is a model for engaging marginalized citizens to identify and prioritize their collective needs and devise action plans aimed at influencing local development planning.

	engagement in youth civic activities – 1.1%; Male engagement in youth civic activities – 5.7%; Equal engagement - 87%.	Male engagement – 4.5% Equal engagement – 87.5% Male community members with a positive attitude towards: Female engagement – 0% Male engagement – 8.6% Equal engagement – 85.7%)
Expected Result 3: Consultative mechanisms are responsive to the concerns of female and male youth		
3.1. # of platforms/ fora/meeting where female and male youth present their views and concerns	5	The following 5 different platforms were identified in targeted communities, where youth can express their views/concerns: 1. Youth Councils; 2. An 8-month school self-government project; 3. Trainings on various topics related to civic activism from social workers in rural schools; 4. Online petition; 5. Online youth platform on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube).
3.3. # of female and male national level duty bearers who are committed to include the concerns of female and male youth in their planning	0	It was discussed and agreed with the project team that this indicator will be counted once engaged in project, so the baseline will be 0.
Gender related Indicators:		
% of individuals (youth) who report confidence in their own negotiation and communication skills	29.5% (Including: very confident – 8.4%; self-confident – 11.4%, more or less confident - 9.8%)	Calculated for the general population based on quantitative survey results
% of respondents who report gender equitable attitudes	0	To be measured by the project
% of individuals reporting that they could work collectively with others in the community to achieve a common goal	43.8%	Calculated for the general population based on quantitative survey results

Inclusive Governance related Indicators:		
% of people of all genders with knowledge & awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens	70.3%	This includes 33% who have stated that they are fully aware and 37.3% partially aware about their civil rights and duties / responsibilities
% of leaders, disaggregated by sex with strengthened capacities to channel demands of marginalized citizens and engage in decision-making	0	It was discussed and agreed with the project team that this indicator be measured after the project starts and the baseline will be 0.
# and % of accountability spaces with joint plans of action agreed, over the last 3-6 months	0	
# or/and % of priority actions (in plans agreed in accountability spaces) that have been implemented	0	

ANNEX 2 – Criteria for selection of FGD respondents

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted with female and male youth (14-29 age group) and general community representatives. Recruitment of the focus group participants were based on certain criteria, as indicated in the Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Mereti (in Gori) Muzhava (in Tsalenjikha) Rike (in Zugdidi) Kazreti (in Bolnisi)	2 FGD	Gender Specific groups (1 FGD Male; 1 FGD Female) in community. **Criteria for participants:** 29+ age group representatives including: 1 having PWD family member, 2 socially vulnerable, single parent, employed, unemployed, parents of project target groups)
	2 FGD	Youth Specific (mixed gender group) in community. **Criteria for participants:** - 14-18 age group including: school students, VET students, university students, NEETs[5], employed, single/married/divorced - 19-29 age group including: VET students/graduates, university students/graduates, NEETs, employed, single/married/divorced
	1 FGD	General Community Representatives (mixed gender group). **Criteria for participants:** - 29+ age group including: individuals from education system, healthcare, agriculture, local business, local leaders, etc.

[5] Not in Education, Employment, or Training.

ANNEX 3 – List of KII respondents

N	Respondent	Organization	Position
National Level			
1	Lali Devidze	State Ministry of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality	Ministry Representative
2	Davit Kaikatsishvili	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia	Head of the IDP and Eco-Migrant Policy Division
3	Giorgi Toliashvili	Internally Displaced Persons, Eco migrants and Livelihood Agency	Head of Registration and Restitution Unit
4	Nino Tsilosani	Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia	Member of the Gender Equality Council
5	Salome Kusikashvili	UNHCR	National Protection Officer
6	Mariam Begiashvili	UNDP	M&E Specialist
Gori Municipality			
1	Dimitri Gogiashvili	Education, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Unit	Head of Youth Dep.
2	Misha Chitadze	Gori Information Centre	Director
3	Marika Mghebrishvili	NGO “Biliki”	Head of the NGO
4	Mariam Ispiriani	Youth Agency	Youth Worker
5	Nino Chibchiuri	Radio “Mozaika”/”Liakhvi Gorge” Magazine	Journalist
Bolnisi Municipality			
1	Giorgi Satskovi	Education, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Unit	Head of Youth Dep.
2	Irma Zurabishvili	NGO “Bolnisi Language House”	Head of the NGO
3	Marine Bzhalava	NGO “Women of the World”	Head of the NGO
4	Ana Ugrekhelidze	NGO “Bolnisi Youth House”	Head of the NGO
5	Peride Tvildiani	TV “Bolneli”	Journalist
Tsalenjikha Municipality			
1	Korneli Kvaratskhelia	Education, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Unit	Head of the Unit
2	Maia Tchanturia	NGO “Jvari Community Center”	Head of the NGO
3	Zurab Samushia	Tsalenjikha City Hall	City Hall Representative
4	Kakha Kvaratskhelia	TV “Jikha”	Director
Zugdidi Municipality			
1	Nino Sitchinava	Education, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Unit	Head of the Youth Dep.
2	Ana Dzimistarishvili	Student Youth Palace	Representative
3	Giorgi Jojua	Platform “Mtavari Taoba”	Founder of the platform
4	Rusudan Kalichava	Association “Atinati”	Director
5	Gia Khasia	Radio “Atinari”	Director
6	Nana Todua	NGO “Mercury”	Head of the NGO

ANNEX 4 - Quantitative survey questionnaire

Baseline Evaluation Questionnaire-piloted - 27.05-clean.docx

ANNEX 5 - Guides for key informant interviews and focus group discussions

Qualitative-guides-revised-31.05.2021_Final-clean.docx

ANNEX 6 - Respondents consent forms

Consent forms.zip

ANNEX 7 - A PowerPoint with the summary of the findings, learnings and recommendations of the reports

Baseline Study_CARE_06.08.2021.pptx

ANNEX 8 - Transcripts

Transcripts.zip