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GENDER & CONFLICT ANALYSIS

"Youth Voices for Peace" in Georgia

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List of acronyms

ABL	Administrative borderline
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
CSO	Civil society organization
EU	European Union
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission
GID	Geneva International Discussions
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International non-governmental organization
KII	Key informant interview
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PWD	Person with disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	The UN Refugee Agency
UNOMIG	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WOSCAP	Whole-of-Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Executive Summary

This Gender and Conflict Analysis 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 is implementing in the following municipalities and communities: Gori (Mereti community), Bolnisi (Kazreti community), Zugdidi (Rike community) and Tsalenjikha Municipalities (Muzhava community).

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. Based on the purpose and objectives of the analysis, some respondents were pre-selected and several other key stakeholders were identified and interviewed through the key informant interviews (KII). Furthermore, the data obtained from the focus group discussions (FGD) and quantitative survey were used and analyzed.

The gender analysis revealed that in order to develop appropriate policies and interventions for more meaningful participation of male and female youth in peacebuilding, it is essential to know the needs of different gender groups in society. The information obtained based on quantitative and qualitative research conducted in specific communities of Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Gori, and Bolnisi allows us to better understand the gender roles relations in the community. **Domestic labor** remains the exclusive burden of women. Domestic work is not equally distributed among different members of the family and its value is not recognized by the society in general. Even when talking about equal distribution of domestic and care work, it is always implied that feminine and masculine tasks exist. The involvement of women in domestic work is also explained not as an ingrained pattern but as a result of women's unemployment and having free time. It is never mentioned that the reason for unemployment could be involvement in reproductive labor.

A prevailing belief and norm in the communities observed for this analysis is that it is the duty of women only to take care of children, the elderly, and the sick. Still, only the physical and time resources of this labor are considered, and the emotional labor that women perform in the process remains beyond attention. While the intensity of involvement in domestic labor and care often defines a woman's role in society, the invisibility and non-remuneration of housework downplays the women's contribution to the wellbeing of families and communities at large. The ongoing, daily and significant time such work takes is also a barrier to women's entry in the public realm. **Decision-making** in households is mainly understood in terms of managing finances and making decisions about the children's education. Young people (both young women and men) are rarely seen as part of the decision-making process in families. In families, decisions are made by those who have the financial resources. Despite the fact that men are typically the breadwinners in the household, women also participate in decision making on these types of issues. However, women may manage several household issues, pay utilities, and redistribute financial resources, but the last word belongs to men. It can be observed that the power and authority of men, in some cases, are superficial and serve to maintain the image of dominant men. It was observed that women make the most important decisions, but they also try to maintain the traditional hierarchy in the family so that men do not think that they lose the reins.

There are grounds for further strengthening of women's agency. Even though they dominate the private sphere, their power is not recognized, and their voice is not considered equal to men. The overall sense

of **Security** can be assessed as satisfactory in the communities. People are pretty confident in claiming that they feel safe. On the other hand, an in-depth analysis of their security issues shows that they also feel vulnerable in their communities. There is a difference between the responses of borderline and non-borderline communities. The people from borderline communities (both men and women) tend to indicate the safety issue more than the respondents from non-borderline communities. For borderline communities, safety means to be protected from the "Other." In borderline communities, men are said to be at risk of kidnapping and are more vulnerable in this sense, as a result.

The faulty infrastructure and domestic violence are perceived as issues that affect women specifically. The risk of violence poses a significant challenge to women in the communities, while in the case of men, it is not named even among the main threats. The faulty infrastructure also affects women and children, as they restrain themselves from visiting spaces that are poorly equipped or dangerous during the night.

Except for the domestic violence, leaving near the borderline, environmental issues (like natural disasters and threat for Eco migration), people also name the scarcity of the resources (essential programs and services) directed to them from the government. They suffer from poor economic conditions and limited access to healthcare, which make them insecure and unprotected in their communities. **Gender based violence (GBV)** is understood as domestic violence in the communities. Domestic violence is mainly linked to physical abuse. On the other hand, while they name the reasons for women staying with abusers, they explain that women are victims of economic violence in their families - they have no financial independence and the abusers use it to their advantage. Listed domestic violence cases include violence against children, elderly women, and women (wives, sisters, mothers) in general. Victims of domestic violence are rarely seen and understood by society. The people still believe that the case should be discussed in the families and no one should interfere. Victims of violence tend to be silent because there is a stigma in society blaming women for not being good enough or being inappropriate. While men confirm cases of domestic violence, they also confirm that women provoke conflicts themselves sometimes. Young men and women are more informed about the forms of domestic violence; they see the covid-19 pandemic as a threat that results in the growing number of domestic violence in their communities. Young women also think that they are less vulnerable to GBV than older women. They believe that practices of violence against women has become a thing of the past and the new generation of women will not tolerate being in such a subjugated state. They also see young boys as allies in the process and believe that young men will not support the oppression of women. There are no services for victims of violence, but there is also a lack of awareness about what services survivors need (psychological, health, legal and consulting). Even though people talk about shelters in some cases, they also specify that women don't want to call the police and the police are the only way to get there. On the other hand, it is believed that women will be more confident to leave the oppressor if there are relevant services.

The general pattern of power relationships observed by the respondents is that the men think that they are superior to women and have the right to subordinate women of different generations in their families. Young respondents argue that women should reclaim their rights in their families and fight against violence themselves, as the men will always try to maintain their privileges and power. **Access to public spaces and services** is believed to have positive effect to women's participation in community and political life as they will discover the skills of leadership, public speaking, etc. The existence of accessible and friendly gathering spaces is seen as gaining confidence for community members to voice their problems. While the public spaces (sports facilities and playgrounds, gathering places, halls, culture houses) are for everyone, they are not friendly for women, children, and disabled people. It can be observed that social norms also prevent women from being in the stadiums or gathering spaces because men occupy and control them. Therefore, women prefer to gather at home and have less access to the spaces where men gather and discuss various issues. Nevertheless women see the existence of public spaces as the chance

for increasing their involvement in the public sphere. Reproductive health services are not available for women and girls. Pregnant women cannot receive consulting and other emergency services locally. The need for special services for disabled people is also emphasized. Although women indicate the need for healthcare services, they are not informed about their rights to services in general (legal, consulting, psychological services). Access to kindergartens and shelters for elderly people is also considered a significant problem. It is women mainly who report these challenges as they take responsibility for the child and elderly care. **Participation in the public decision-making process** is perceived as a necessary right for citizenship, regardless of gender. It can be observed that reproductive roles (childbearing responsibilities and domestic tasks) prevent women from being present when decisions are made in their communities. On the other hand, they are never informed about such opportunities. There was also a lack of knowledge on how to or if they should be involved in the decision-making processes. Although some women respondents claim that they lack confidence, the general belief is that the community members do not make decisions. Also, women face barriers in being involved in political and social life due to poverty and social norms. If the woman is active in political and social life, the community blames her for being idle and lazy at home. On the other hand, young men and women argue that women are more productive and efficient for their societies. It can be observed that women are becoming more independent and powerful -migration processes affect this differently – if men are in immigration, women who stay, take responsibility for the households, and become leaders; if women leave country to work, financial independence gives them voice and power. It is believed that if women participate in decision-making processes, they should meet some criteria, while no criteria are discussed in the case of men. Despite the positive trends, women lack support from both families and society as well as the government. They see their power but still cannot imagine themselves as actors of change because the existing system make them invisible and unheard.

The **conflict analysis** identified that the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality is the main state institution responsible for peace building, reconciliation and minorities in the country, which implements its responsibilities through following schemes:

- Interim government commission for responding to the needs of the affected population of borderline villages
- State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration
- Minister's Vision on the Policy of Peace

It's important to mention that the state strategy of Georgia on de-occupation and Peaceful Resolution of Conflict is being elaborated at the moment by the inter-agency state commission and is expected to be out by the end of the year, although the office of the State Minister has policy-making and coordinating functions and highly depends on partner institutions and donor organisations when it comes to implementation of the action plans. The legal framework related to the areas of the interest of this study includes the following documents:

- The law of Georgia on occupied territories
- National concept on tolerance and civic integration

Despite the fact that there are no open conflicts between internally displaced persons (IDP) and representatives of hosting communities taking place in the areas targeted by intervention, and no hostile attitude was expressed by participants of FGD towards another group, certain degree of isolation, discontent and the lack of integration was revealed in Mereti, Kazreti and Rike communities.

Situation is different in Muzhava community, where according to FGD participants (both, IDP as well as representatives of hosting communities), internally displaced people are fully integrated and the relations are harmonious. Representatives of hosting community explain this with the small size of the community and the long history of IDP presence in the community. Situation on relations with ethnic and religious minorities looks similar in Mereti and Kazreti communities. In both areas, most of the FGD participants (Georgians (IDP and representatives of hosting communities) as well as representatives of ethnic minorities) demonstrate almost perfect relations with ethnic and religious minorities during discussions. However, occasional remarks of some participants reveal certain signs of segregation, prejudices and latent conflicts. It is noteworthy, that FGD revealed a tendency of ethnic minority representatives in Kazreti community to refrain from expressing their real needs in day to day life, possibly out of fear of escalating intergroup conflicts in the community. There are no ethnic minorities represented in Muzhava and Rike communities. A Few families with different ethnic backgrounds living in the communities are fully integrated and are not perceived as representatives of minorities by the mainstream society. Only one religious minority – the witnesses of Jehovah are represented in Samegrelo region. According to respondents they are not discriminated against and stigmatized. The competences of local government of Tsalenjikha municipality on inclusive decision-making process is low, which causes discontent and even a protest of local population.

According to the study, the lowest number of respondents feel completely safe to live in Mereti community (21%). This number is relatively higher in other borderline communities - Muzhava (44.4%) and Rike (71.1). Even though all borderline areas share key causes of insecurity – living close to the borderline and detained civilians, there is one more factor that makes difference between the borderline communities of eastern and western Georgia. Creeping occupation in Mereti community and constant uncertainty related to this phenomena seems to be an enormous threat to perceived security of community members. Living environment is assessed as fairly safe in Kazreti community. It is evaluated as equally safe for all ethnic and social groups represented in Kazreti. The main concern related to security in Kazreti community is the issue of law enforcement and equality of rights in this respect. The trust of citizens towards the police is low in all target communities (including hosting community – both, Georgians and representatives of ethnic minorities as well as IDP).

Involvement of local government in conflict management processes and peacebuilding interventions is assessed as passive in all target communities. Local policy-makers do not hold enough competence in regard to peacebuilding and do not have strategic vision in this direction.

Based on interventions, carried out by civil society organisations (CSO) in target communities in recent years, involvement of civil sector in peacebuilding interventions is evaluated as active and much more efficient comparing to local government in all communities except Kazreti. Respondents from Kazreti community cannot recall any cases of CSOs participating in conflict resolution. Ethnic Georgians living in target communities – IDPs as well as representatives of hosting communities and representatives of ethnic minorities are not hostile towards different groups, although certain isolation, the lack of integration and minor prejudices in the communities are obvious. Muzhava community seems to be the most peaceful and close-knit community out of all target areas. Young people with different ethnic and religious backgrounds hold less prejudices towards each other and have stronger connections comparing to adults in Mereti and Kazreti communities.

According to study findings, religious institutions do not interfere in conflict situations in Mereti and Kazreti communities. Respondents do not have clear opinion on the role of religious institutions in conflict management in Muzhava community, while in Rike community, the opinion on the role of religious institutions is divided. Part of respondents believe that involvement of religious institutions escalates conflicts even more, while others believe that religious leaders can have a positive impact on conflict

resolution. European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission, which operates in Georgia since 2008. Strangely enough, EUMM has not been mentioned by study respondents in borderline communities as a meaningful stakeholder having impact on conflict situations or peacebuilding in the community. National-level media channels are considered as non-sensitive towards the local context and oriented on their own commercial interests by community members in Mereti and Kazreti. Local media is considered to contribute to conflict resolution through conflict-sensitive approach, although is perceived as too weak to have a meaningful impact on peacebuilding processes. Teachers are considered to have an important role in the issues of equality and relations between different ethnic groups, although according to representatives of ethnic minorities, very few of them are aware of their potential impact on the issue.

Percentage of respondents, thinking that involvement of women in peacebuilding activities is very important turned out to be lowest in Kazreti community (27.5%). So is the percentage of respondents, who believe that men should be involved in conflict management (28.3). Even though percentage of respondents in Kazreti, who support involvement of young people in peacebuilding interventions is relatively higher (41.7%), findings demonstrate the low level of awareness of Kazreti community members on peacebuilding and involvement of men, women and youth in conflict resolution initiatives. Percentage of respondents, supporting involvement of men, women and youth in peacebuilding processes are relatively higher in Mereti, Muzhava and Rike communities. Nevertheless, the need of awareness raising of community members on peacebuilding interventions as well as participation of men, women and youth in conflict resolution is obvious. It's worth mentioning, that there is significant difference between the percentage of respondents who believe that involvement of men in peacebuilding is very important (74.4) and those who think that women should be definitely involved in peacemaking (42.2) in Rike community. This indicates the need to especially focus attention on working on awareness raising of male members of the community regarding the participation of women in peacebuilding and conflict management.

Majority of respondents are willing to participate in peacebuilding processes although very few of them claimed to have the experience of involvement in conflict resolution activities.

According to findings of this study, language barrier is one of the biggest dividers in Mereti and Kazreti communities. The lack of communication and discussion among different ethnic and social groups as well as the lack of joint initiatives undermines harmonious coexistence of different groups, including ethnic minorities and IDP in Mereti and Kazreti communities. Healthy communication of different groups in all target communities can be significantly harmed by prejudices, existing towards different social, religious and ethnic groups. Passive position of government in conflict management and peacebuilding in all target municipalities does not contribute to connection of community members and their involvement in peacebuilding processes. The lack of competence in peacebuilding is an important obstacle for community members on the way to initiating peacebuilding actions and involvement in conflict resolution interventions in all target communities. Gender-based segregation revealed in Kazreti and Rike municipalities in regard to peacebuilding may lead to the lack of motivation and participation of women as a result. The lack of peacebuilding initiatives in Muzhava community with high involvement potential and motivation undermines the trust of the community towards the CSOs, international non-governmental organisations (INGO) and government. At the same time, perceived lack of acknowledgment of their role in peacebuilding by youth and women in Muzhava community may lead to the lack of their motivation and participation. The lack of inclusive decision-making process is an obvious divider existing in all communities. Controlled crossing point, creeping occupation and detention of citizens significantly threatens the security of the communities and has a meaningful negative impact on community life in Mereti, Muzhava and Rike communities.

Civil society organisations, implementing various interventions is a strong connecting factor in all target communities. Young people who are more receptive towards different groups and more connected to each other regardless ethnic, religious or social background, play a meaningful positive role in strengthening the bonds of the community members in Mereti and Kazreti communities.

Private company – Rich Metals Group is the main employer in Kazreti community and provider of youth-related, infrastructural and social initiatives, thus connecting community members of different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds. Experience of living in multiethnic community is another connecting factor for the population of Kazreti community, as well as joint involvement in social life, which can have a meaningful impact on harmonious coexistence of different groups. Interest in peace and security is a strong connecting factor, potentially uniting the community around the common needs in borderline communities (Mereti, Muzhava and rike) as well as shared experience of living close to the ABL. Community members, strongly motivated to get involved in peacebuilding initiatives is a strong connecting factor in Muzhava and Rike communities. Absence of prejudices towards different groups is an important connector in Muzhava community.

The following recommendations are suggested for the project based on this study's findings:

✚ Equal redistribution of domestic labor should encouraged:

- By raising awareness about redistribution of the tasks in the households (via particular textbooks and leaflets);
- By recognizing the importance of domestic labor for human life;
- By challenging gender roles assigned to men and women in the societies;
- By involving information about domestic and care work in the educational programs, training, etc;

✚ Women should be encouraged to enter the public space by

- Raising awareness about the need for participation;
- Enabling environment that helps them to leave households during daytime (more childcare facilities);
- Supplying them with the formal and informal educational programs in the community for examining their abilities;
- Integrating women in the formal economy and employment;
- Assisting local organizations and government to include more women in their activities
- Assisting local organizations and government to tailor the projects and initiatives to the needs of specific groups of women;
- Developing gender-responsive budgeting practices for the stakeholders

✚ Access to healthcare and SRH services for women and girls (especially those who are socially excluded or live in poverty) should be set as a priority

- Ensure having access to information about reproductive health and family planning;
- Ensure having access to the medical services in their communities
- Ensuring that disabled women have access to appropriate SRH services and infrastructure

✚ GBV should be recognized as one of the main challenges in the communities, and all the relevant actors should be involved in the elimination process.

- Prevention practices of GBV should be identified for the communities;
- Access to crisis centers and shelters should be set as a priority;
- Access to GBV related services (psychological, legal, medical, referral services) should be ensured;

Local Government - It is highly recommended to strengthen the competences of local officials on inclusive decision-making process in all target municipalities, especially in Tsalenjikha municipality, where the lack of involvement of citizens in decision-making and neglecting their requests led to open conflict between citizens and local government.

Internally Displaced People - Due to the signs of isolation and latent conflicts between representatives of hosting communities and internally displaced people in Mereti, Kazreti and Rike communities, it is highly recommended to engage groups in joint activities in order to provide opportunity for equal-status cooperation, as an efficient scientific tool for decreasing intergroup tensions and perceived intergroup threat.

Ethnic and Religious minorities - In order to prevent potential escalation of suppressed conflicts, minimize prejudices and tensions, it is essential to arrange opportunities for joint involvement for different ethnic and religious groups in Mereti and Kazreti communities. It is crucial to use culture-sensitive approaches and take the local context into consideration. It is important to make a special focus on women-oriented activities in Kazreti community. Additionally, it is highly recommended to raise the awareness of Kazreti community members of all ethnicities and religious backgrounds on human rights, especially on the rights of ethnic and religious minorities. Separate meetings, as well as joint activities, involving different ethnic and religious groups would be desirable for the best results.¹

Security - Security in borderline communities is an extremely complex issue, which consists of multiple factors and depends on coordinated efforts of various actors. Unfortunately, character and amount of efforts, required to solve security issues, exceeds the capabilities of civil sector. Certain interventions, however can still be implemented in this regard. Since the trust of citizens toward police is low in all target communities, it is recommended to plan context-sensitive intervention in order to improve communication between the police and local groups.

Actors and their role in conflict resolution/transformation - It is highly recommended to strengthen competences of local government representatives on inclusive decision-making, including involvement of men, women and young people in peacebuilding interventions in all target communities. It is important to support local decision-makers in identifying and understanding their role in conflict management and forming their vision in this regard. It is important to strengthen competences of community members on peacebuilding and conflict-management in all target communities, empower them to initiate interventions, advocate for them and get actively involved in peacebuilding activities.

It is important to raise the awareness of teachers on their role in equality issues and supporting harmonious multiethnic environment in Mereti community. Since Rich Metals Group (RMG) is one of the biggest and incredibly influential actors in Kazreti community, it is highly recommended to establish and maintain communication with project officers and/or factual decision-makers in the company in regard to social, infrastructural and youth-related projects in Kazreti in order to ensure synergetic effect of coordinated efforts.

Involvement of Men, Women and Young People in Peacebuilding Processes - It is recommended to initiate interventions in regard to awareness raising of community members of all social, ethnic and religious backgrounds on importance of involvement of men, women and young people in peacebuilding processes. Special focus is needed on working with male representatives of communities in order to raise their awareness on importance of involvement of women in peacebuilding processes. Raising awareness of community members on involvement of women in peacebuilding initiatives needs special attention, since this issue turned out to be most problematic in most target communities. Since study revealed perceived negative attitude² towards participation of young people in peacebuilding in Muzhava

¹ Separate sessions would give different groups opportunity to openly express their needs and challenges, while joint activities will strengthen the bonds between community members of different ethnic and religious background

² Young people in Muzhava community believe that their role in peacebuilding is not recognized and supported by adults, even though neither survey results, nor FGD confirmed this thought. Objectivity of the judgement can only be assessed through further research, therefore in this study, attitude is evaluated as perceived.

community, it is recommended to pay special attention to acknowledgment of the role of young people in peacebuilding.



Introduction

Project Background

CARE in partnership with IDP Women Association Consent is implementing the project “Youth Voice 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.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose and objective of the Gender and Conflict Analysis are three-fold:

1. To identify the various gender-specific barriers, opportunities, gaps, and needs concerning male and female youth more meaningful participation in peacebuilding. This will involve exploring the following lines of inquiry: sexual/gendered division of labor, household decision-making, etc.
2. Develop Conflict Profiles of the targeted communities and identify the local capacity for peace with a specific focus on existing systems and mechanisms for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.
3. Provide recommendations to advance project strategies on gender and conflict transformative approaches.

The specific objective of the **Gender Analysis** is to identify and explore the different factors that need to be taken into account to ensure that male and female youth, including the most marginalized and vulnerable of them, can participate and thrive from the project. This involves studying these groups’ distinct day-to-day barriers, risks, and opportunities to participating in advocacy and public decision-making in general, as well as exploring their different needs and incentives in doing so.

The specific objective of the **Conflict analysis** is to ensure that the project is safely embedded within a full and comprehensive understanding of the conflict drivers, dynamics, and risks and that all measures to

mitigate the risk of inter and intra-communal tension have been mitigated against. Besides, it should focus on better understanding of the actors and stakeholders involved and the societal changes brought about by conflict

The study results should **set the basis for a gender audit and conflict assessment**, which will take place at the end of the project as part of the project's final evaluation. The gender and conflict assessment therefore shall provide a "baseline" against the changes in attitudes and perceptions among the target population that can be measured at the end of the project cycle. Hence, based on the study results, measurable baseline indicators for a gender audit and conflict assessment will be developed and relevant baseline figures will be assigned from the qualitative and quantitative survey results.

Since the project is planning to provide youth groups with access to small grants to launch community initiatives around key peace and security concerns, the gender and conflict analysis should **inform the design of the small grants scheme** and outline the **selection criteria** and guidelines for grant distribution. Focus Group Discussions with the project target audience (youth) and key informant interviews with the local authorities, CSOs working in the area and other stakeholders will enable to identify the needs of the local youth, their concerns related with peace and security issues, which in its turn should assist to develop recommendations on selection criteria for the grants. In order to achieve research purpose and objectives most relevant methods will be used. The detailed methodology for research are presented in chapter below.

Methodology

The Gender and Conflict Analysis 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 gender and conflict analysis and the results were used for a better contextual understanding. According to the study goals, 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, I/NGO reports, 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, international and local NGOs/CSOs, local youth group leaders from the targeted communities and representatives of the national and local authorities in targeted municipalities and UN Agencies (like UN Women, UNHCR, and UNDP). The KII respondents were selected from the project stakeholders. Particular respondents were identified in consultation with the project team. 26 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) from IDP compact settlements (or ethnic minorities), and wider community groups along the administrative borderline (ABL). Specific groups included girl heads of households, out-of-school girls and boys, women, and girls who are early married, and adolescent mothers (see the detailed criteria for selection of FGD respondents in Annex). In total, 12 Focus Group Discussions (4 FGDs in Kazreti community, 3 FGDs in Rike community, 3 FGDs in Muzhava community, and 2 FGDs in Mereti community) were carried out. From 6 up to 8 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

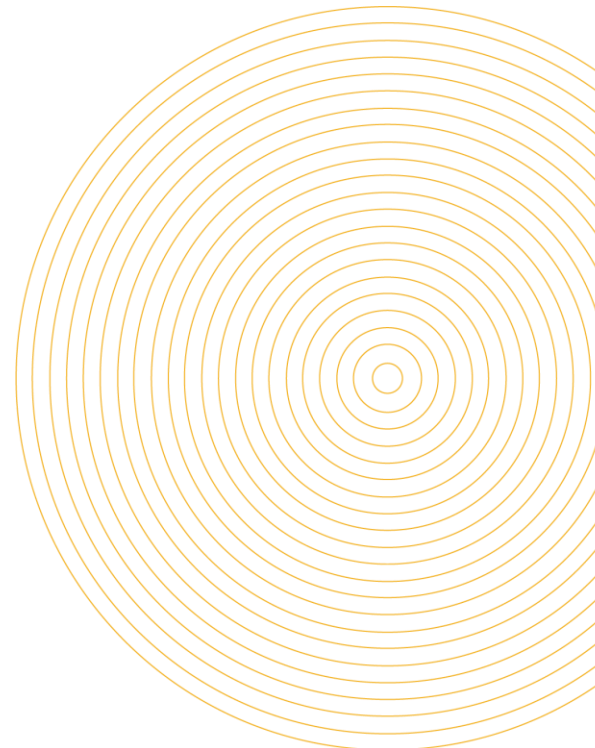
current state of civil participation of female and male youth (age 14-29) in formal (government-led) and informal (civil society-led) decision-making spaces in the project communities, related barriers, and available opportunities. Besides, quantitative survey supported to determine the status of indicators 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.



GENDER ANALYSIS

1. Distribution of domestic labor in the households

Attitudes towards the division of domestic labor

The traditional perspectives that men are the breadwinners in the family and women are mainly responsible for household activities has led to a relatively conservative gender stereotyping across the country. The patriarchal gender roles regarding responsibilities within the household, household decision-making, and day-to-day care are firmly guided by these stereotypes. They dictate family relationships by assigning the reproductive role to women in Georgia³. A recent report⁴ by UNDP and UNFPA shows promising changes in perceptions since 2013. Especially younger women overwhelmingly disagree that women's primary duties are to look after the home and family rather than pursue their professional aspirations. Over 83% of women and 52% of men aged 14-24 years disagree with the statement mentioned above. We can observe a clear generational gap in attitudes and a positive change since 2013. In the age groups 55-64, only 39% of women and 64% of men disagreed with that statement.

We surveyed the respondents' behavior and activities in the households - what they do and the gender distribution of these roles. Observing and researching domestic labor and seeing what people are involved in is the answer to how much a person can be socially active in society.

During the survey, respondents were asked about the activities and responsibilities they take at home. The listed activities included dishwashing, washing clothes, cleaning, cooking, childcare, taking children to school or kindergarten, care for the elderly and sick, collecting firewood, repairing household items, shopping, and agricultural works.

G3. Please name who does the household chores listed below

Chart #1 cooking

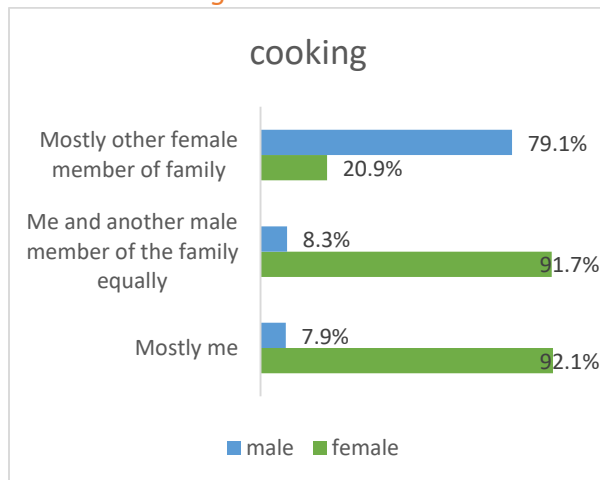
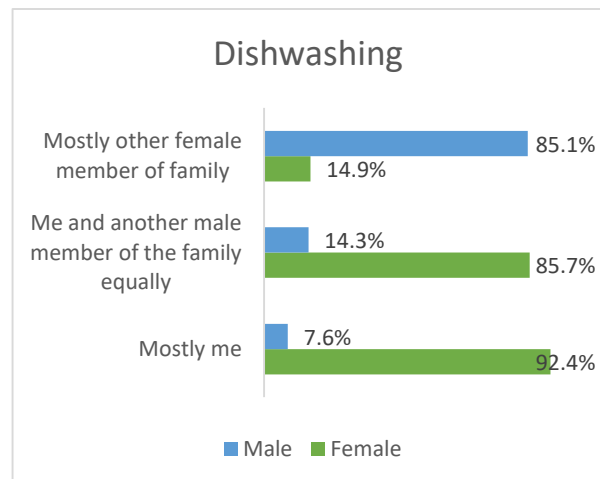


Chart #2 dishwashing



³ OECD SIGI Index (2019), Georgia.

⁴ Rakshit, Deboleena and Ruti Levtoy, Iago Katchkachishvili (UNDP and UNFPA): Men, Women and Gender Relations in Georgia, Tbilisi, 2020.

Chart #3 house cleaning

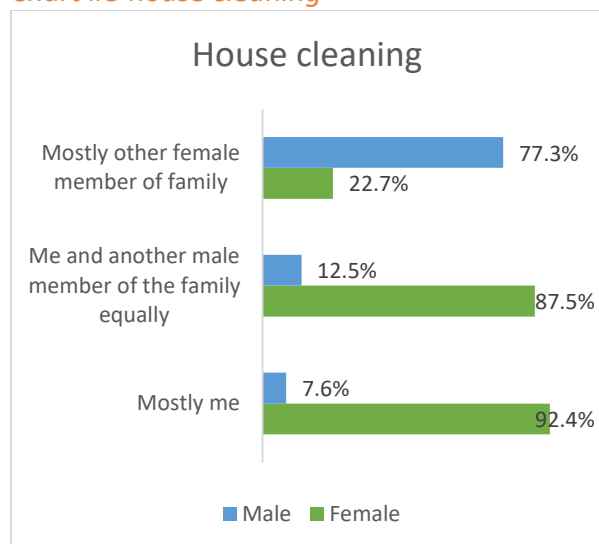
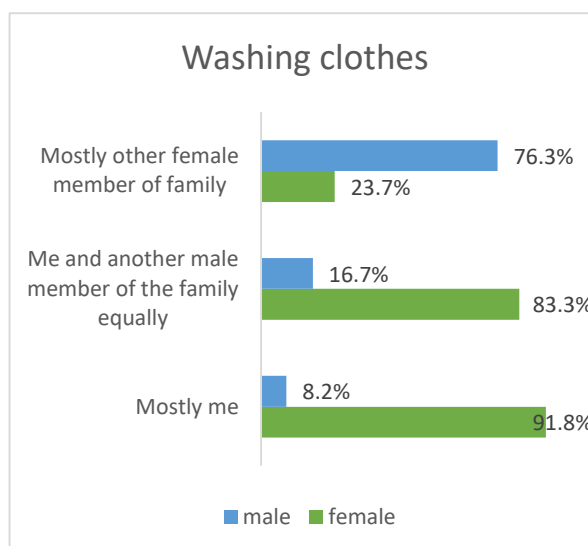


Chart #4 washing clothes



When asked about cooking, dishwashing, house cleaning, and washing clothes, only 8% to 10% of men say that mostly they are responsible for these tasks. In contrast, 91%-93% of responses relate to women who confirm that they are the ones who take responsibility for these tasks.

Childcare is also a practice that is related to women mainly. Women and men respondents both indicate that women are responsible for childcare. The majority of those women respondents to whom this question was applied said that it is mainly their task, while none of the male respondents confirmed similar. The situation slightly changes when it comes to taking children to school or kindergarten. 8.3% of responses go to male respondents who say that this is primarily their responsibility (chart #6).

Chart #5 Childcare

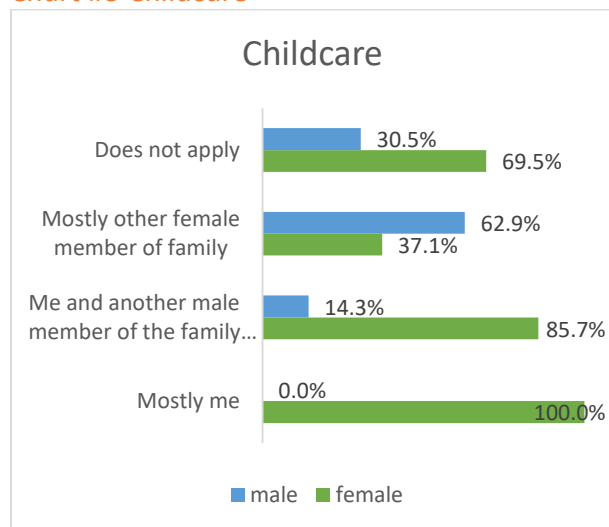
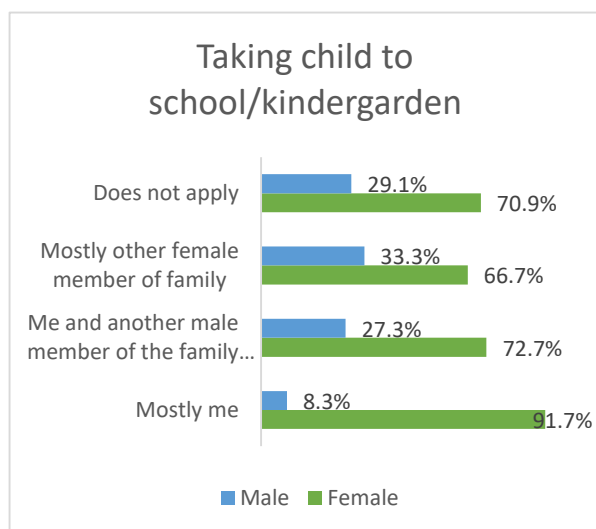


chart #6 Taking children to school/kindergarten



Caring for elderly or sick family members is mostly personal responsibility for 81% of female respondents and 19% male respondents (Chart #7). Along with this, "going shopping" is mostly a personal task by 78.8% of women respondents. These numbers show how enormous the burden of domestic labor is on women. Women's everyday life is loaded with home activities and caring for dependent (children, disabled, sick)

or independent/capable family members. It should be noted that physical labor is often associated with the emotional labor that accompanies caring for physical bodies.

Chart #7 caring for an elderly or sick

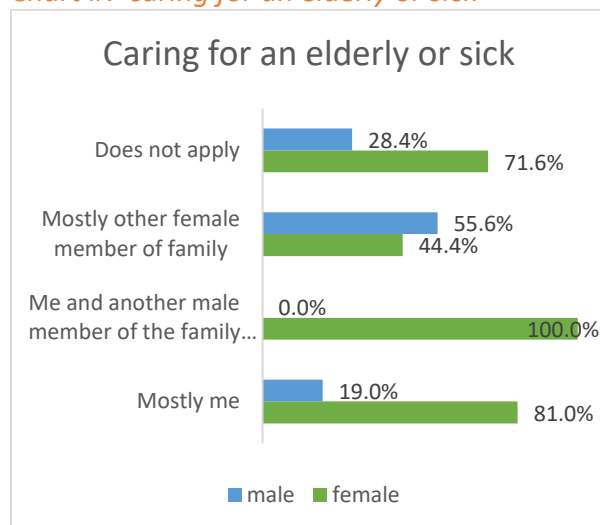
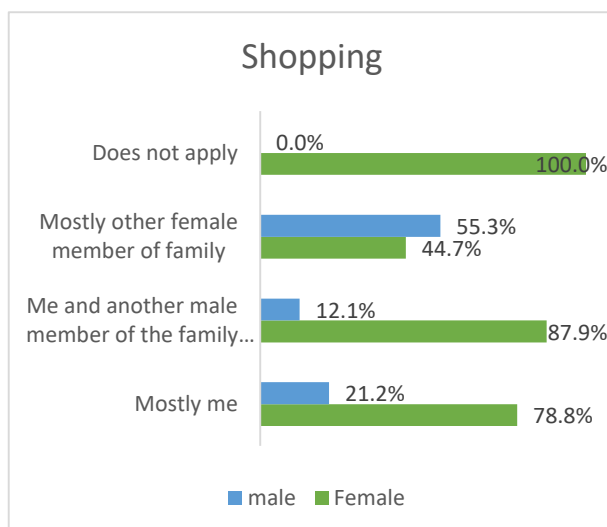


chart #8 shopping



The questionnaire included the tasks that are related to the household but are believed to be men's responsibility. Although the share of men who do these tasks are high (55.7% of men indicate "mostly me" as an answer for repairing household items, 53.3% of men note that agricultural works are primarily their responsibility, and 73.2% say the same for collecting firewood, women are still involved in these activities.

Respondents also were asked who should be responsible for the same tasks (no matter how the labor is distributed now in the households). We wanted to observe a difference between the reality and expectations or attitudes they have towards domestic labor.

G4. Who do you think should be responsible for the activities listed below?

Chart #12 cooking

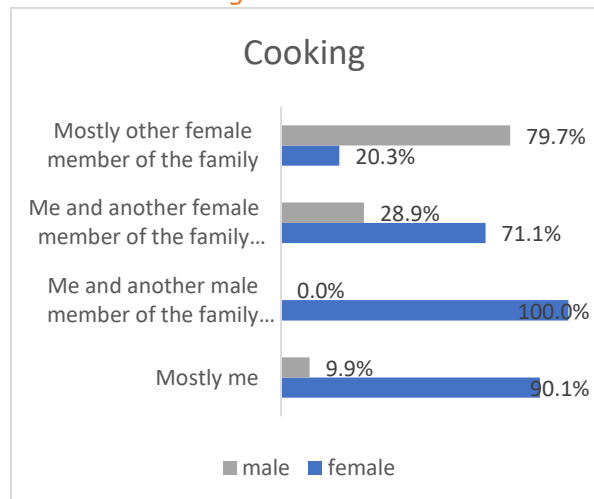
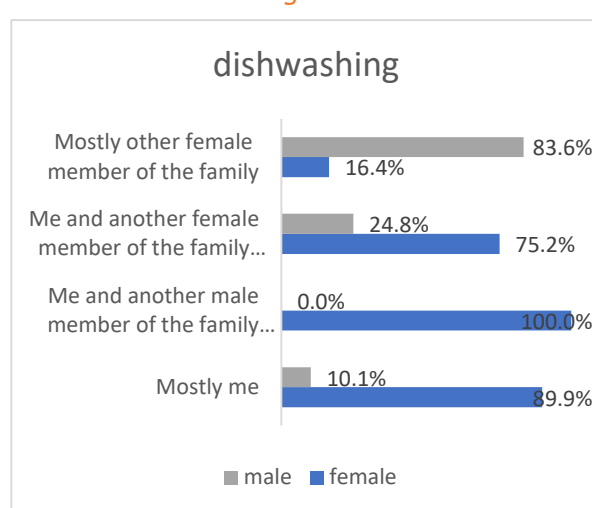


Chart #13 dishwashing



While analyzing respondents' responses, it can be said that they believe that there should be a certain kind of division of labor between men and women, and most of the activities related to housework should be assigned to women. Among those who indicated "mostly me" while asked who should be responsible for

listed tasks (cooking, dishwashing, clothes washing, house cleaning, the majority was women (from 89% to 91%). The number of responses saying "mostly another female member of the family" is also high (Chart #12, 13, 14, 15). These responses clarify that activities related to housekeeping and care are unconditionally the responsibility of women, and there is a low awareness that these tasks need to be redistributed.

Chart #14

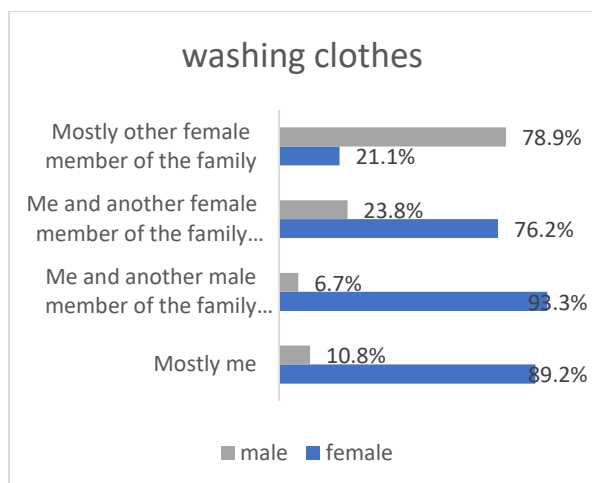
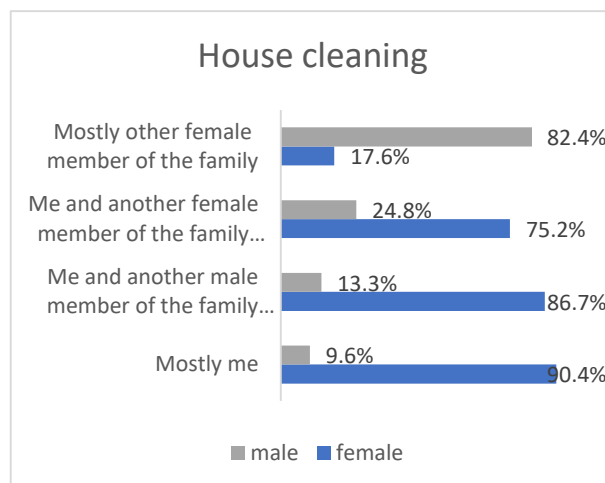


Chart #15



The same applies to childcare activities. Only 2.2% of male respondents (to whom the question applied) said that it should be their responsibility, and 65.7% believed that child care is related to other female members of the family (chart #16). A similar pattern of responses was observed about taking children to school and kindergarten. Only 11.1% of "Mostly me" responses belonged to men.

Chart #16 Childcare

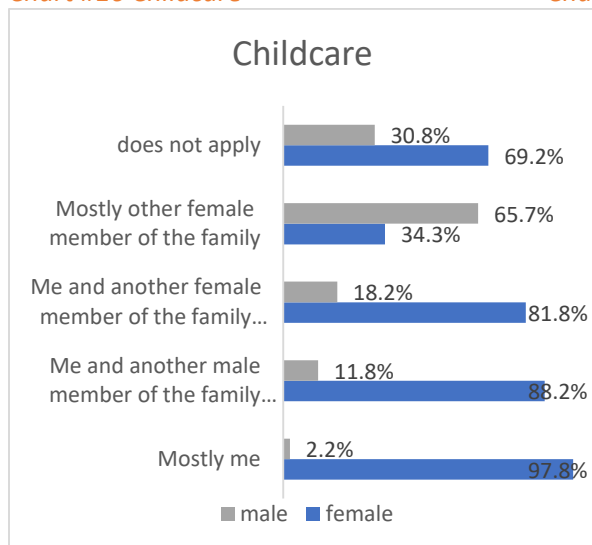
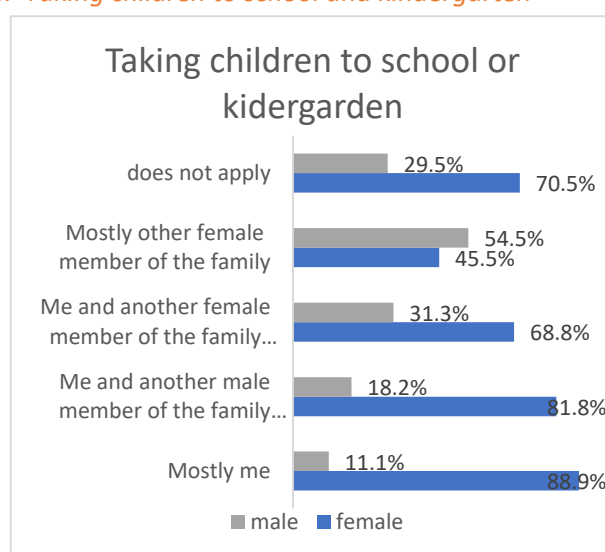


Chart #17 Taking children to school and kindergarten



Tsalenjikha, Muzhava

When respondents were asked about the redistribution of domestic labor, their answers often referred to a description of the desired situation. In some cases, they refused to say that there is an unequal distribution of work in their families, although they mentioned that women and men should share domestic labor equally. Respondents aged 14-18 (boys and girls) specified that their parents were involved equally in raising them, but the mother had more responsibility than the father. Girls were more likely to emphasize the need for division of domestic labor than boys. The boys also predicted that this distribution would never be equal as women do it better. In general, the discussions often focused on the natural roles of women and men concerning their biology.

It is crucial to emphasize that a large share of work refers to giving care to young children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and people who do not need special care when it comes to housework. Still, according to entrenched gender roles, it is also attributed to women.

"I live with an elderly sick father... Mostly I have to take responsibility for household chores."

a woman from the Muzhava community

When men talk about housework, they think it is evenly distributed. If not, there is a counterweight reason for unequal redistribution. These reasons are linked to men's involvement in other activities, such as paid work or agricultural activities. Also, when they want to explain the disproportionate involvement of women in housework and care work, they note that this is linked to women's unemployment - they are doing housework as they have a lot of free time. Simultaneously, there was a tendency to compare women's domestic labor and paid labor, making some hierarchy between them.

Bolnisi, Kazreti

Men respondents argued that housework is and should be done mainly by women. They also generalize their responses to the whole community. Some of the women respondents say that they try to change the situation in their families and redistribute responsibilities at home. Mainly, women agree that women do housework and do not challenge existing women's existing roles in their families.

In addition to this, when respondents agree on the equal redistribution of domestic labor, they mean a certain kind of division. There is a kind of hierarchy between the performed works in the households - it is believed that cooking is the sole duty of a woman while splitting the firewood is men's responsibility. Such explanations closed the discussion on these issues - believing that this is the correct perception of redistribution.

"Dinner should be prepared by women, and wood should be splitted by men. It is already a redistribution."

Man from Kazreti

There was more openness and acceptance to the redistribution of domestic labor in the youth groups. They understood the division of domestic labor as an equal redistribution rather than a hierarchy between tasks. They highlight that times have changed, and now women and girls are more active in the public realm. Although, there was also a difference in the answers of young women and men. Women supported the idea of equal distribution of domestic labor, while young men specified that men have other staffs to deal with.

"It has to be redistributed in some ways, but also it should be considered that some tasks are done better by women."

The young man from Kazreti

There were also positive examples of young men discussing domestic labor as men's duty to fulfill as well.

"It's your home, and you have to take care of it...we love a clean house, and there is no task which is only my mother's duty. We all do everything."

The young man from Kazreti

Gori, Mereti

In general, women were quite confident in claiming that the main burden of domestic labor and care was on them. Interestingly, men perceived participation in domestic affairs as a man's responsibility, linking it to being head of the family.

"I do women's and men's tasks at home. If my husband washed the dishes, he would break all of them... Georgian men will not get used to doing this kind of work."

Woman from Mereti

Based on FGDs, it was clear that the issue of housework and attributing housework to women and girls is linked to women's access to decision-making and public space. In some cases, it has been identified that men decide when women can go out to work - when a man financially supports a woman, then it is considered that there is no reason for leaving the household daily.

Notwithstanding the above mentioned, it should also be noted that attitudes regarding the distribution of domestic labor are the subject of the discussion in the households. Many respondents (mainly women) point to positive changes and hope for more. They point out that this is also an education issue and the boys (like girls) need to be taught how to do domestic chores.

"Considering that women and men should be equal, the domestic labor should be done equally by women and men. My husband doesn't do any dishwashing, but I teach to my boy that he should do everything and there is no women's or men's task."

Woman from Mereti

Zugdidi, Rike

According to the respondents, mainly women and mothers are responsible for household chores. Although, both men and women agree that domestic labor should be distributed equally. Respondents highlight the issue of women's immigration and say that this has changed the situation in families to some extent - men have to do what was previously the duty of women in their community.

On the other hand, some respondents claim that men are responsible or should be responsible for the household. However, in their responses, they refer to men as the head of the families and breadwinners and do not mean household chores like cooking, cleaning, caring for children, etc.

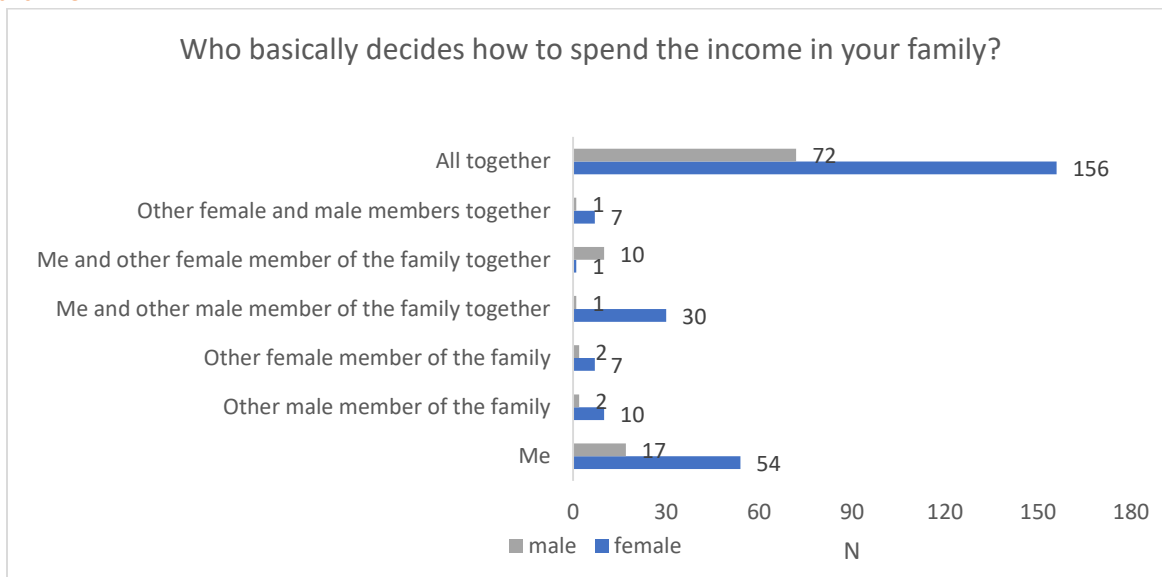
2. Characteristics of decision-making processes in households

Woman and man as decision-makers in the families

Gender stereotypes, patriarchal system, and women's image of mother and caregiver create problems for women's participation in decision-making in private and public realms.

During the survey, respondents were asked who made decisions about spending family income in their households. Responses showed that the majority of men and women respondents believe that all the family members participate in this process equally. Out of 265 women respondents, 54 said that they make decisions, and out of 105 men, 17 respondents indicated the same.

Chart #20



Even though respondents' responses show equal participation of family members in the decision-making process, during FGDs, respondents explained decision-making characteristics in the households in detail.

Tsalendjikha, Muzhava

When it comes to decision-making, a significant proportion of respondents note that women and men participate equally in the decision-making process in the family. A significant proportion of respondents also say that decision-making is the responsibility of men. Women may manage several household issues, pay utilities, and redistribute financial resources, but the last word belongs to men. A minimal number of respondents indicate that all adults, including young people, should be involved in the decision-making process in the family.

The ability to make decisions is often linked to who manages the finances in the family. Part of the women respondents explained that while their husbands could not support the family financially, they managed all the financial resources in the households.

Bolnisi, Kazreti

Some of the men respondents argue that in Kazreti, things have changed, and women and men are equal now. Somehow, they fail to explain how this equality is manifested. The youth have clear answers regarding equal involvement in decision-making in the families. They explain that all the members of the family should have a voice.

"Only one person should not be responsible for everything. I will not listen to such a person, whoever it might be"

A young man from Kazreti

Most of the women respondents from ethnic minority groups agree that women make decisions regarding the management of finances, the education of their children, etc., in the family. Even though they try not to make a decision independently, they have a certain kind of agency in the managing processes of households. They make it clear why their involvement is essential - they know better, what works best for their families, what products to buy, and what expenses are impulsive.

Gori, Mereti

In rare cases, women linked decision-making to domestic labor - they emphasized that they know how to manage the family effectively so that there are fewer expenses and maximum benefits for household members. Although, even in such cases, women added that these decisions should be double-checked with men.

Notwithstanding the marking of men as decision-makers in the households, the women's agency they have developed to deal with family problems and maintain families with minimal resources is notable. It seems that the decision is in their hands as well. They make the most critical decisions, and men are more likely to take the position (of decision-makers) to maintain their roles and authority in society. Women can control and manage, and the need for this is obvious, but formally they must constantly affirm the superiority of men.

Zugdidi, Rike

Some of the young participants of FGDs say that their parents make decisions by agreement, and sometimes they include them in this process. For instance, when the decision is about their education, public life, they are involved as equal individuals.

Some of the women respondents say that nowadays, all the informal responsibilities are on them. According to them, now there is a tendency for a woman to take over everything in their households, and then if something is not right, they are blamed for this.

"I am man and woman in our family."

Woman from Zugdidi, Rike

Although some of the respondents believe that times have changed and now women and men are equally involved in decision-making in the households, the responses revealed that decision-making characteristics are changing for the women. Decision-making for women does not mean having the last word but shifting all the responsibilities to them.

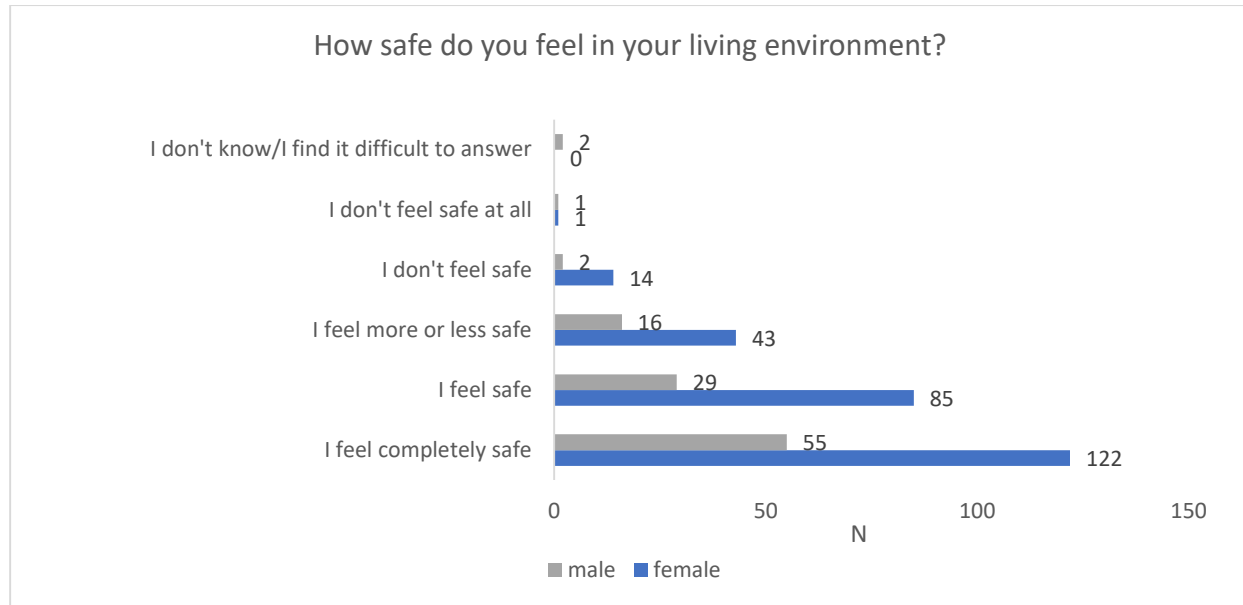
3. Security

Women and girls in Georgia face various forms of gender-based violence. The registered numbers of violence do not reflect the whole picture because there are traditional gender norms and attitudes of non-disclosure and the lack of social support and trust in relevant support groups and law enforcement. There is also a high risk of femicide for those women who were/are victims of violence. A coordinated response and access to justice are especially crucial for women living in rural areas and IDP and ethnic minorities. Overall, Georgia made progress against domestic violence and other forms of violence.⁵ Although this process is ongoing – significant gaps existing in the system should be addressed.

⁵ United Nations Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, 9

When asked about safety, most respondents said that they feel completely safe in their environment.

Chart #21



It was interesting to observe how safe respondents from borderline communities and non-borderline communities feel. In borderline communities, about 16 respondents noted that they do not feel safe, while none of the non-borderline communities said the same. The number of respondents who indicate "I feel more or less" is relatively high (56 respondents). In the case of non-borderline communities, only three respondents give the same response.

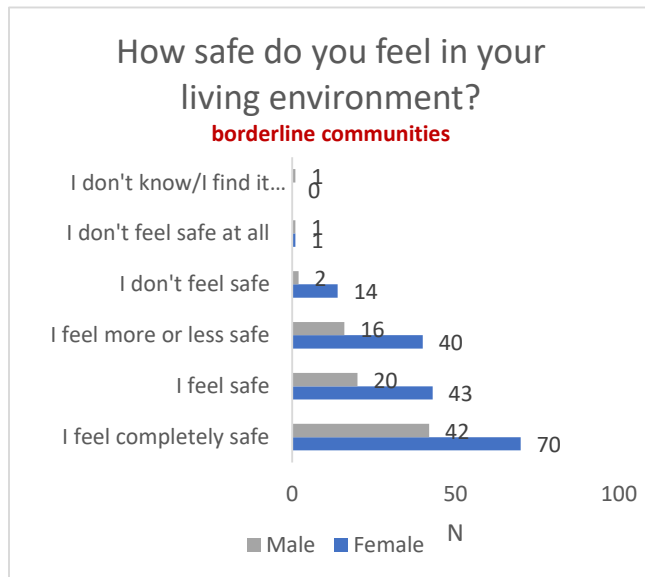


Chart #22

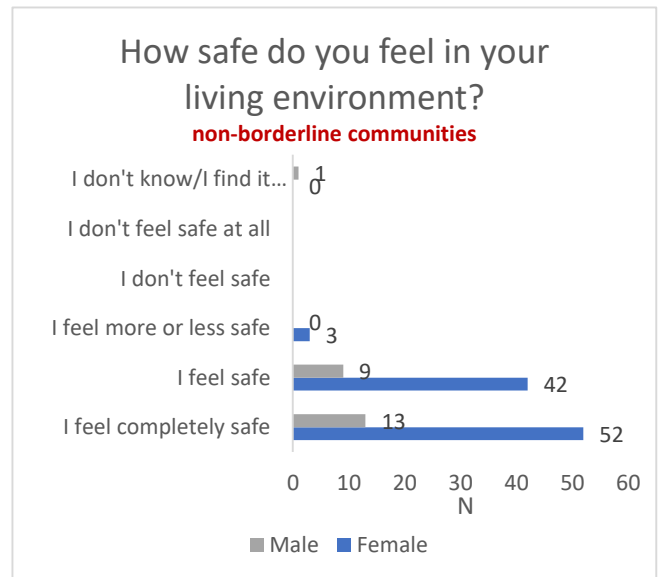
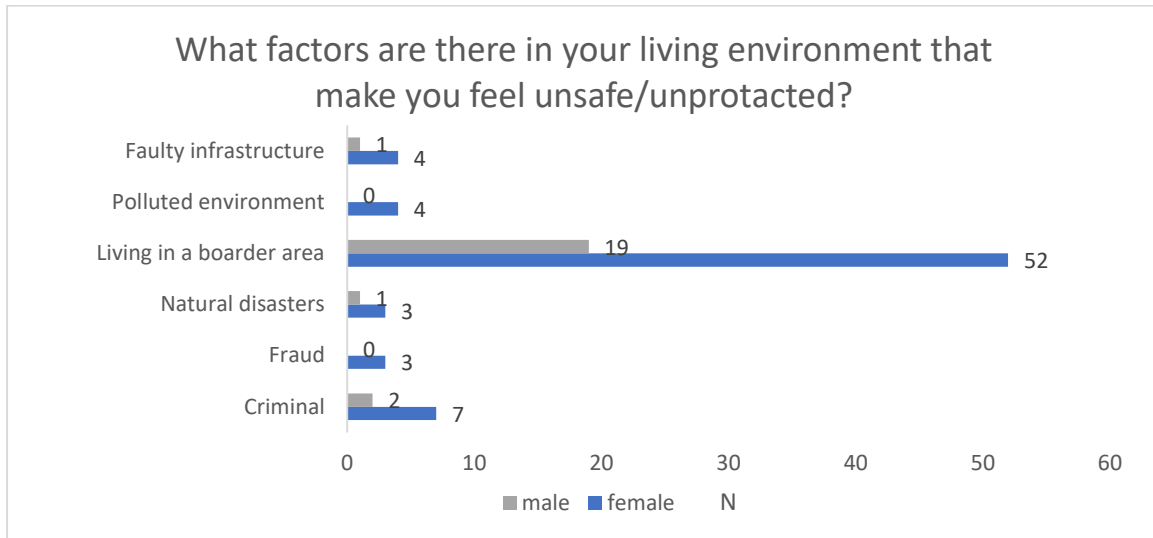


Chart #23

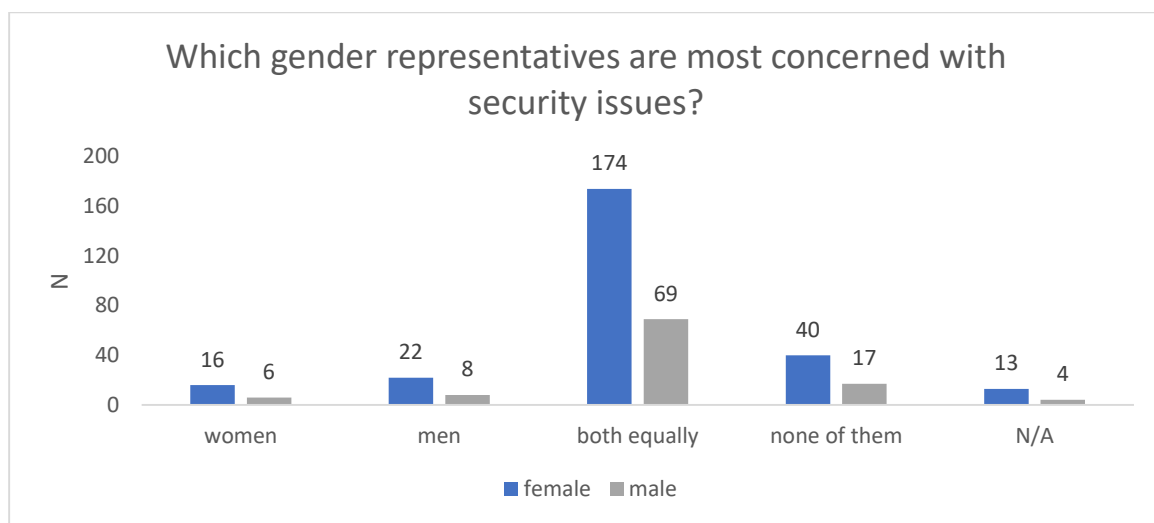
Although they assessed the overall feeling of security and in the following question, it was visible that they have specific concerns related to security. Living in a border area is something that makes both women and men respondents unsafe. Women named criminals more than men as the factor influencing their sense of protection.

Chart #24



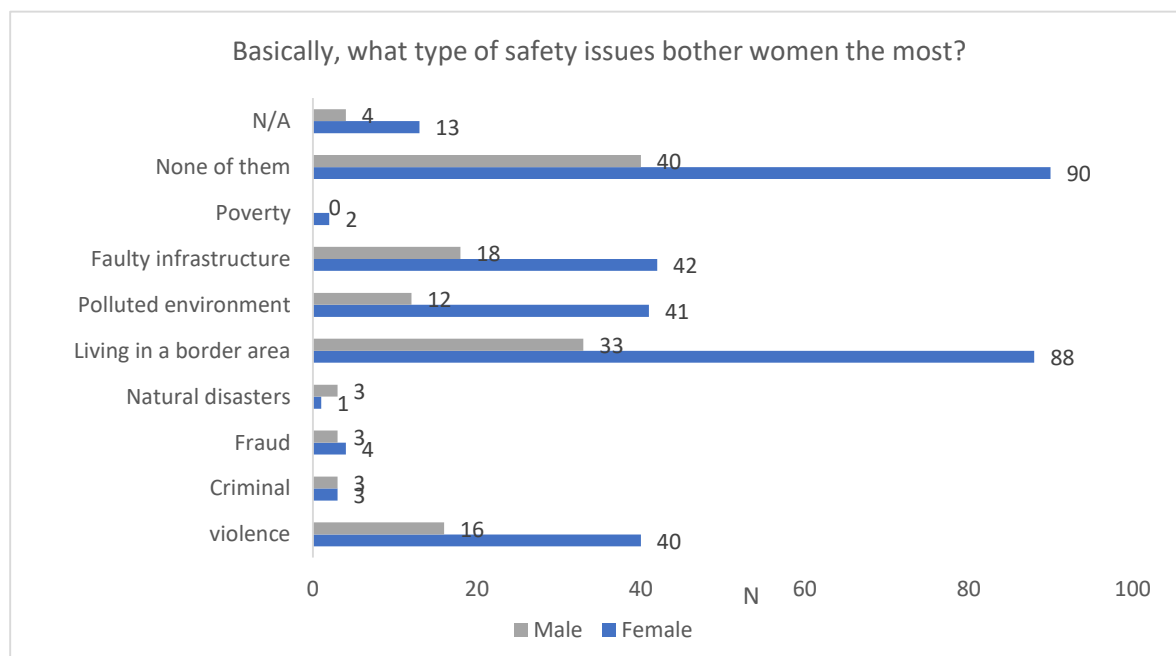
Most of the respondents believe that the security issues refer to women and men equally; some of the respondents believe that men are more concerned, but this can also be explained by the threat of living near the border.

Chart #25



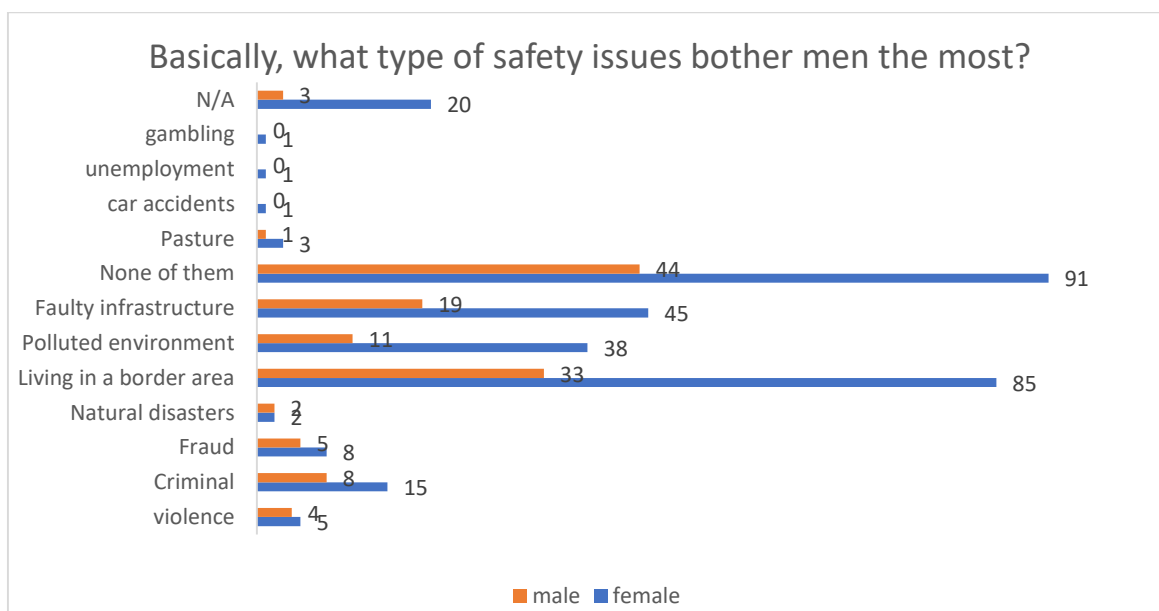
Respondents believe that living near the border area is one of the most critical security issues for women (88 women out of 265 and 33 men out of 105). Also, many respondents (90 women and 40 men) believe that there are no such threats for women. On the other hand, faulty infrastructure (60 respondents) and violence (56 respondents) are named issues related to women specifically.

Chart #26



About the safety issues that bother men the most, respondents named "none of them" and "living in the border area" most frequently. In the case of men, violence was not named among one of the main threats, but faulty infrastructure, polluted environment, and criminal. Although very few answers are recorded, it is noteworthy that gambling, unemployment, and car accidents were added in the case of men. According to the respondents, these issues are related to the sense of security of men.

Chart #27



Tsalendjikha, Muzhava

During the group discussions, it was revealed that the sense of security for the people living near the border was connected to the constant fear that a "stranger" would come to their home or kidnap their community member. During discussions, respondents have stated that they have no guarantee from the state that they will be protected.

Safety was also understood in the context of possible damage from the environment as well. Respondents linked this sense of danger to both the real danger of a landslide and the lack of information about the possible steps that the government will take.

Respondents noted that the men face the danger of kidnapping more than women, as they visit farmland frequently.

Bolnisi, Kazreti

When respondents were asked what security meant to them, they mainly mentioned the police. Some saw the police as a guarantee of security, while others emphasized the weakness and bias of the police. Respondents also noted that they are not equally protected, as there are selective approaches in police structures.

Notwithstanding the above, women and men note that their community is a safe place to move safely even at night. Members of ethnic minorities also confirm that they feel safe in the community. Respondents agree that the environment in their community is equally safe for all groups, without exception.

When discussing existing infrastructure for the communities, women from ethnic minorities mention the lack of safe spaces for children - safe playgrounds near their neighborhoods.

Women and men also mention that some spaces (for instance, community centers, halls) are not safe for women, but they had difficulties explaining what kind of threats women have in these spaces.

Gori, Mereti

Respondents noted that they feel safe in their communities, although there is always a risk from the outside, from the border. More fear was felt in the women's conversation. One respondent explained what a sense of security was for her:

"It means that if I leave the house and go to the field, I will come back again."

"When we are doing something near the area (border), and the children in the gardens make noise, I am afraid we will catch too much attention."

A woman from Mereti, Koshka

According to respondents, if there is no ongoing war, it does not mean that community members feel safe. They feel insecure because of the scarcity of the resources directed to them, because of the economic conditions, limited access to healthcare, etc.

Zugdidi, Rike

Respondents think that security is associated with calmness, order. For them, it is not only linked to security forces but also the community members. They emphasize the role of religious institutions like the church in maintaining a peaceful environment in the community.

They believe that the living environment is equally safe or dangerous for men and women. However, in their responses, it can be observed that men especially faced the threat of kidnapping and arrest near Enguri shores in the past.

4. Gender-Based Violence

Tsalendjikha, Muzhava

Gender-Based violence is mainly understood as domestic violence among the respondents. During almost every focus group discussion, respondents confirm that there is a problem of domestic violence in their communities. Listed domestic violence cases include violence against children, older women, and women (wives, sisters, and mothers) in general.

"Women hide cases of violence, believing it is a shame. They are afraid that people will talk about it".

Woman from Muzhava

While men report cases of violence, they also try to explain the respective reasons. Some of them argue that if women are victims of violence, in some cases, they provoke conflicts themselves.

"There is no violence in our community. Mostly, families live in peace. 1-2 cases are due to drinking problems. Women get angry, and then the actions taken are fair".

Man from Muzhava

Young women and men also talk about the characteristics of gender-based violence. It is noteworthy that they have more knowledge about the forms and causes of violence. According to them, domestic violence cases increased in the community during the Covid 19 pandemic - spending more time together resulted in frequent domestic violence cases. The young respondents also give more complex and in-depth definitions of GVB. They continue that adults have limited knowledge about gender-based violence and are more vulnerable to it.

Bolnisi, Kazreti

Women try to describe the characteristics of domestic violence in their communities. They explain that in villages, violence is not visible, as women prefer to hide it. They specify that the victims of violence and community members think that the problem should be solved in the families.

"I have seen many of them (women) bruised, silent, with tears in the eyes."

Woman from Kazreti

Respondents note that, in most cases, women are not independent of their husbands and relatives financially. They cannot make decisions about leaving their husbands while they have no guarantee for safety and support.

According to one of the representatives of the community, there are problems in the legislation as well. The abuser should not be fined, especially if they are socially vulnerable.

"There was one case when son abused elderly mother, and then the fine was paid from mother's pension."

A representative from Kazreti community

Community members say that there should be special mandatory activities for the abusers, which will be helpful in the community and distance the victim from the abuser.

The respondents from the young men's focus group discussions avoided talking about gender-based violence, claiming that they would know if there is any. They tried to have short responses to the answers related to gender equality in general. In the FGDs, where both young women and men participated, young women tended to be also silent about GBV. In the discussion attended by adult women, women were more open to talks about the cases of domestic violence and the challenges women face in their community, in general.

Gori, Mereti

Respondents note that violence against women results in violence against children in their community. The oppression of a child follows the oppression of a woman. Women who are victims of violence are themselves vulnerable and often fail to protect their children or become abusers themselves. While respondents confirm domestic violence cases, they also discuss whether or not people should report such cases to the police.

"Now times have changed, and women have more rights than men. There were cases when a man was arrested; then we were informed that it was because of touching a woman."

a man from Mereti, Koshka

It is noteworthy that the respondents do not know how to act in case of violence - they believe that it is an issue of the specific family, and if they try to fix the situation, they will be blamed for interfering. There is a lack of awareness both in young and adult respondents. The young women and men confidently say that there is no domestic violence in their community.

Zugdidi, Rike

While some respondents (mostly men) say that gender-based violence is not a problem for their community, the majority of respondents confirm the existence of this challenge. Respondents also believe

that the police do not identify domestic violence cases because people try not to involve others in their "personal lives."

According to the respondents, domestic violence in the families is gender-based - women are weaker and more vulnerable in the families headed by males. The general pattern of power relationships is that the men in their community think that they are superior to women and have the right to subordinate women of different generations in their families.

"Even in the modern times, men think that they are boss and can frighten women with the stick (for beating)."

Mostly, young respondents argue that women should reclaim their rights in their families and fight against violence themselves, as the men will always try to maintain their privileges and power.

Attitudes of the community towards victims of Gender-Based Violence

Tsalenjikha, Muzhava

According to the respondents from the Muzhava community, society is not always loyal towards the survivor. They may find it difficult to call the police, believing that it is not their job to deal with family issues. Some of them also claim that reporting to the police may cause damage to the family. They point out that this is a form of protection for the victim because she will regret it and be late.

The solidarity from the society depends on the characteristics of the conflict in the families. According to one of the respondents:

It is essential to know why women became the victims of violence. If worthy of pity, she will deserve solidarity."

Man from Muzhava

Respondents point out that society's attitudes are so disloyal that often women cannot even divorce their husbands for fear of neighbors - society believes that women should compromise to maintain a family. Even though respondents confirm that domestic violence is a challenge for their community, they also see that society's attitudes are still stereotypical.

Bolnisi, Kazreti

Respondents emphasize that the situation in Kazreti is not different from the situation in the country - people do not interfere when it comes to domestic violence. Respondents note that awareness about Gender-Based Violence is deficient among the people. However, respondents' conversations also show that they do not know the power dynamics between the victim and the abuser. It is argued that often women choose to live like this and do not leave their families.

Respondents from ethnic minority groups talk about different kinds of characteristics of violence in their communities.

"There is a problem among our people especially (meaning Azerbaijanis). If you are a woman, you cannot; if you are a man, you can. It does not matter what kind of man you are."

Woman from Kazreti

Gori, Mereti

Respondents say that society blames women for staying with abusers, not realizing that women do not own any property or other resources to leave their families. On the other hand, respondents also note that women hide that they are victims of violence, as they do not want to have this status in society. According to community members, men play a crucial role in this regard. They do not challenge the violent environment; they continue communication with abusers. Thus, they contribute to maintaining the oppression of women, including their wives, sisters, daughters.

Zugdidi, Rike

When asked what attitudes society has towards the victims of violence, some of the respondents share their attitudes. Some believe that it depends on the case; if the person is not guilty, they will have empathy. What they mean by "guilty" they do not specify.

On the other hand, respondents talk about the stigma in society linked to domestic violence. Respondents believe that victims of domestic violence face bullying:

"They may shout to them in the street, "Oh, you are the one your husband beats."

Some community members may blame the victim for cheating her husband on in general, causing the violent behavior.

Ultimately, respondents' opinion is divided into two. Some think that society is still cruel to the victim and blames her or does not help, while others believe that society is loyal and stands next to the victim. They believe that there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of raising awareness.

There are no essential differences observed between the attitudes of young and adult respondents. Although, the young respondents tend to talk more openly and confidently confirm that there are problematic attitudes in society towards domestic violence.

Access to services (related to GBV)

Tsalenjikha, Muzhava

The respondents who confirm high numbers of domestic violence in their communities emphasize the need for relevant services. Some of them see the police as one of the main actors in this process. The restraining orders are seen as one of the most robust mechanisms for eliminating domestic violence. However, some of the respondents still believe that such services would not be beneficial because victims of violence will not apply them in the village.

Some of the respondents confirm that women are even thrown out of their families and have nowhere to go. Some of them link overcoming violence to the existence of services - if there are relevant services, women will be more confident to leave the oppressor.

Bolnisi, Kazreti

When asked about existing services, respondents find it hard to give examples of such services, even when some of them confirm their existence in their municipality.

"If such services would be in regions, defending women's rights and providing psychological services, would help some women. There are such cases (means violence)".

Woman from Kazreti

One of the respondents noted a center for violence victims in Bolnisi, and Dmanisi municipality also applies to this center. The main problem is that cases of domestic violence are rarely identified.

"If you will not call the police, you will not be able to live in the center."

Respondent from Kazreti

Respondent specifies that there are cases when women are forced to go to the center. They can stay in the center for ten days and use all the services (doctor, psychologist, lawyer, etc.).

Although most respondents say that such services will not be used by victims of violence (because of social norms), the fact is that knowledge (therefore, access) about these services is minimal.

Gori, Mereti

Some of the respondents believe that there is no need for services for victims of domestic violence. Some of them point out that often the cases are exaggerated, and the services are not even necessary. Respondents also recall positive experiences when community members attended training about domestic violence with the involvement of the police. They were provided with information about shelters and hotlines. It should be noted that access to similar knowledge is available to women who are more actively involved in public activities.

One of the women respondents, a representative of a local organization, noted that "The Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims" registered those arrested and moved to Tskhinvali. They remember only one case when the victims of physical and psychological violence received the necessary medical care for free.

Zugdidi, Rike

Respondents do not have any information about the services related to GBV in their community. Very few believe that if you call the police, they will connect victims to the relevant services.

Mostly, respondents claim the need for the services; they mention the need for psychological services in the community and not in nearby villages and the city. According to respondents, the low number of identified cases and the fact that victims stay with abusers are linked to the services' absence. The problem is access to the information and the lack of trust they have in the community and the relevant institutions that fail to address their needs.

5. Access to Public Spaces and Services

In addition to economic hardships, vulnerability to violence, access to decision-making processes, young women and girls face early marriage and limited access to youth-friendly public spaces and healthcare services. Even though there are some changes regarding early marriage in Georgian legislation, social norms still play a crucial role in maintaining these practices.⁶ 29.5% of young people in Georgia are married. Among them, 40.6% of young women and 18.1% of young men are married. The majority of young people married in all regions are female.⁷ Marriage and traditional norms embedded in both society and public institutions prevent women from accessing public spaces, like parks, stadiums, gathering places, theaters, cinemas, hospitals, spaces of neighboring villages and towns.

Sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls are not fully included at the primary healthcare level in Georgia. State-funded health insurance often does not cover the most basic needs. Women from minority communities and rural and poor women face particular challenges in their access to healthcare facilities and medical services. Contraceptives are not available for those most in need. It should also be noted that the maternal mortality ratio is still high in Georgia due to weak monitoring and the low quality of services, which hinders women's access to quality health care, especially for women living in the regions.⁸

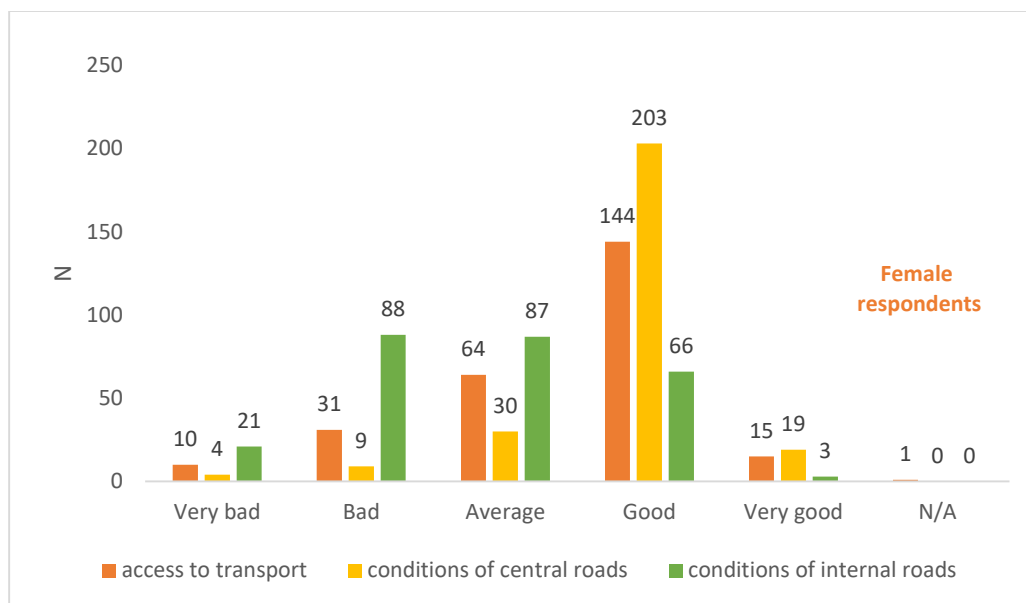
Respondents were asked about the access to public transportation and the conditions of the road. Most women respondents indicate good (144 women out of 265) or average (64 women) access to public transport. Forty-one women respondents believe that their access to public transport is "bad" or very "bad". The conditions of central roads are assessed as "good" by most women respondents (203 women). In comparison, the conditions of internal roads are believed to be "bad" or "very" for 109 women and "average" for 87 women.

Chart #28

⁶ Country gender profile of Georgia, 2020, UN Women Georgia, <https://bit.ly/34suoKY>, 80

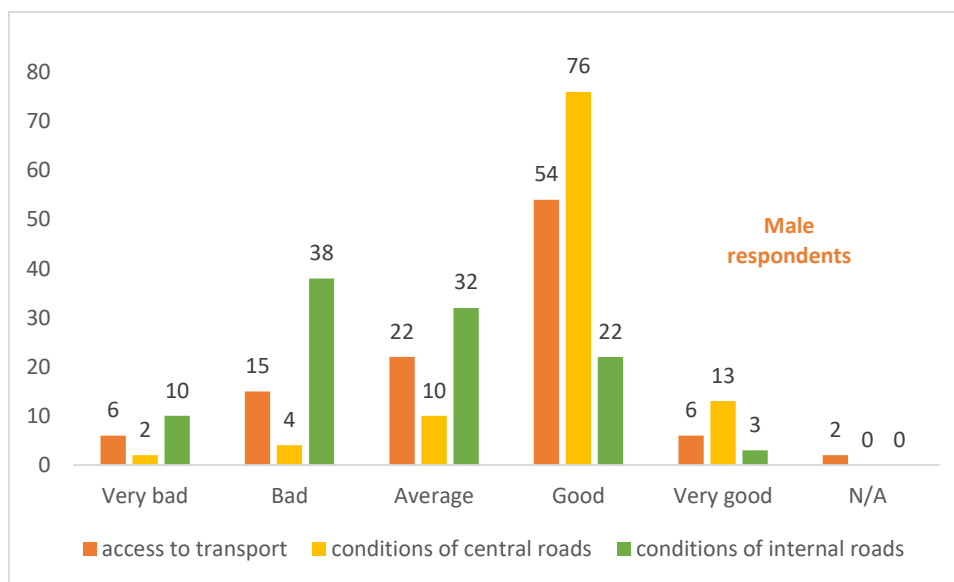
⁷ Youth National Survey in Georgia - Analysis of the situation and needs of young people in Georgia, UNICEF, 2014

⁸ Country gender profile of Georgia, 2020, UN Women Georgia, <https://bit.ly/34suoKY>, 33-34



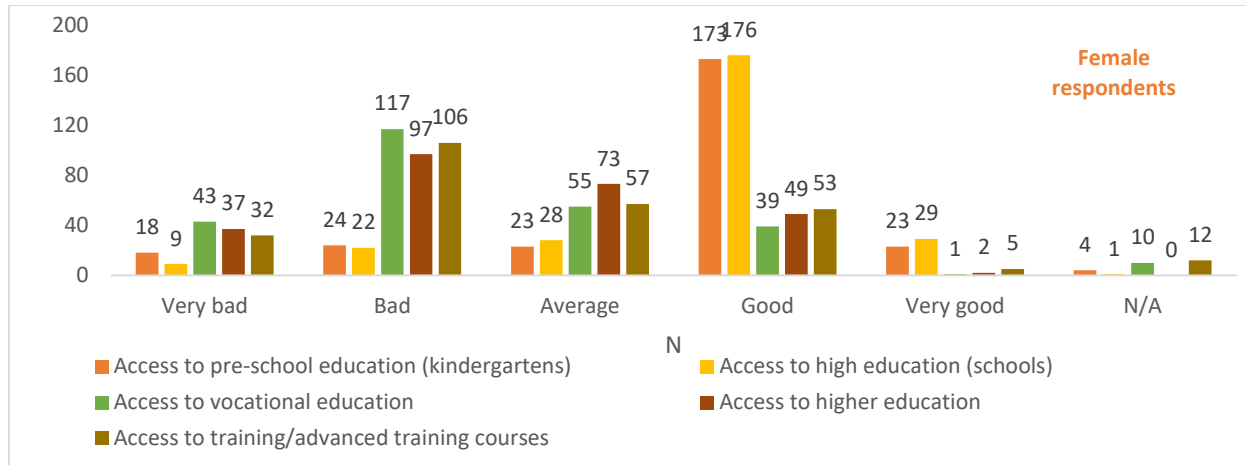
The same pattern of answers was found while analyzing the responses of men. Men are also not satisfied by the conditions of internal roads (48 respondents indicate "bad "or "very bad," while 32 - "average").

Chart #29



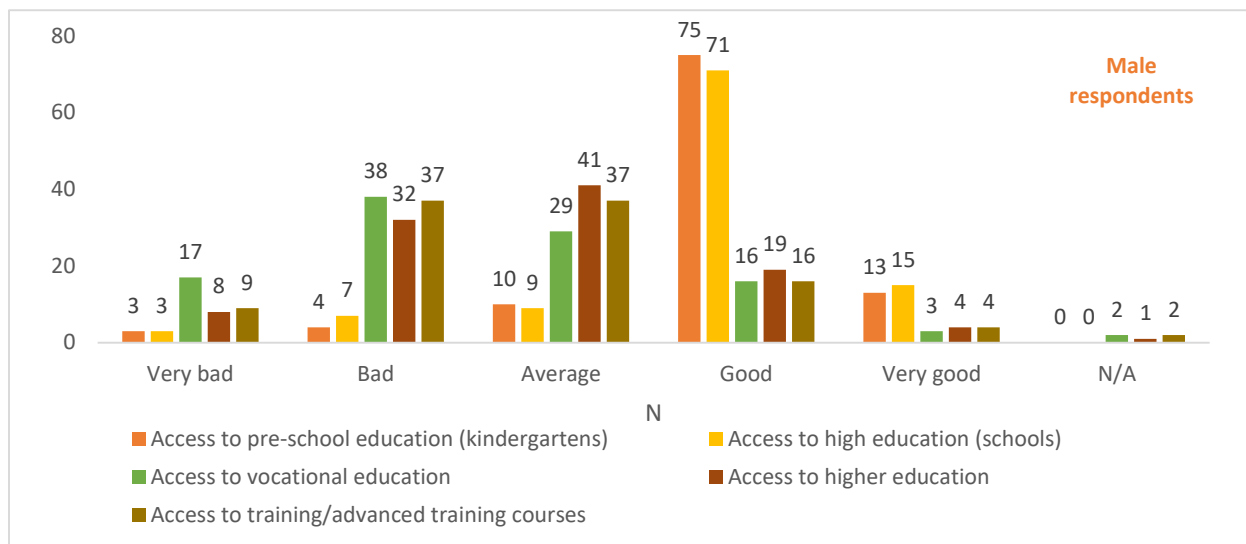
Respondents were asked about access to kindergartens, schools, higher education, vocational education, and training. Access to pre-school and school is assessed as good by the majority of women respondents. Insufficient access to vocational education is among the most frequent responses. More than 150 women respondents indicate that access to vocational education is low. Access to training/advanced training courses is also problematic for women respondents. It was revealed that women do not have access to vocational education and training information, and the responses indicate that they are interested in having more access.

Chart #30



Access to vocational education and training is also a problem for male respondents. They (75 and 71 out of 105) believe that young people have access to kindergartens and schools but claim that vocational education and training are still unavailable.

Chart #31



Access to sports fields, youth, and entertainment spaces was also measured during the research. Data shows that access to sports fields/gym is high, but access to youth and entertainment spaces is very limited. According to responses, it can be observed that both men and women lack access to listed spaces.

Chart #32

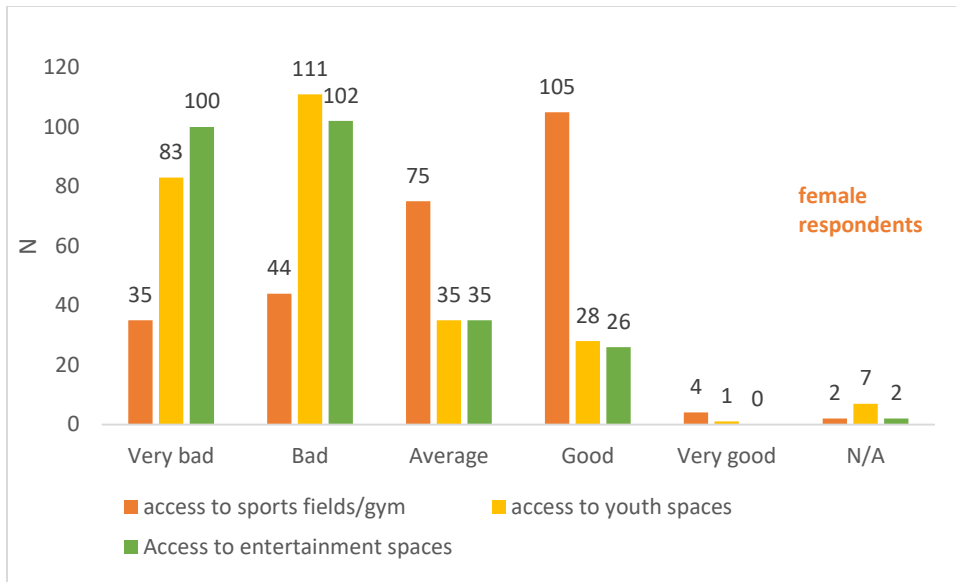
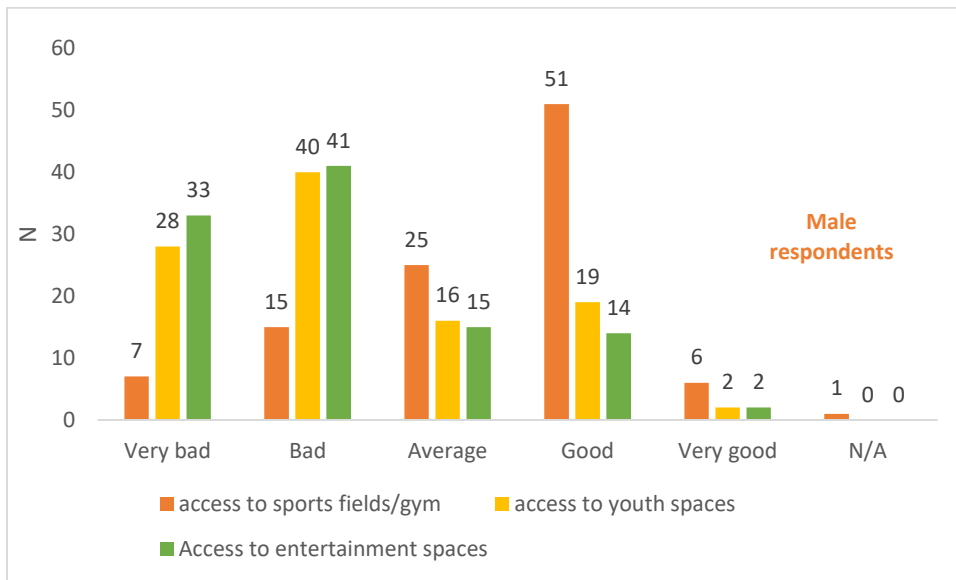


Chart #33



The respondents also assessed access to medical services and the quality of these services. The majority of women and men respondents assess both access and quality of medical services as "good." However, the need for access to specific services was highlighted in focus group discussions, which provides more information on if women have access to relevant medical services.

Chart #34

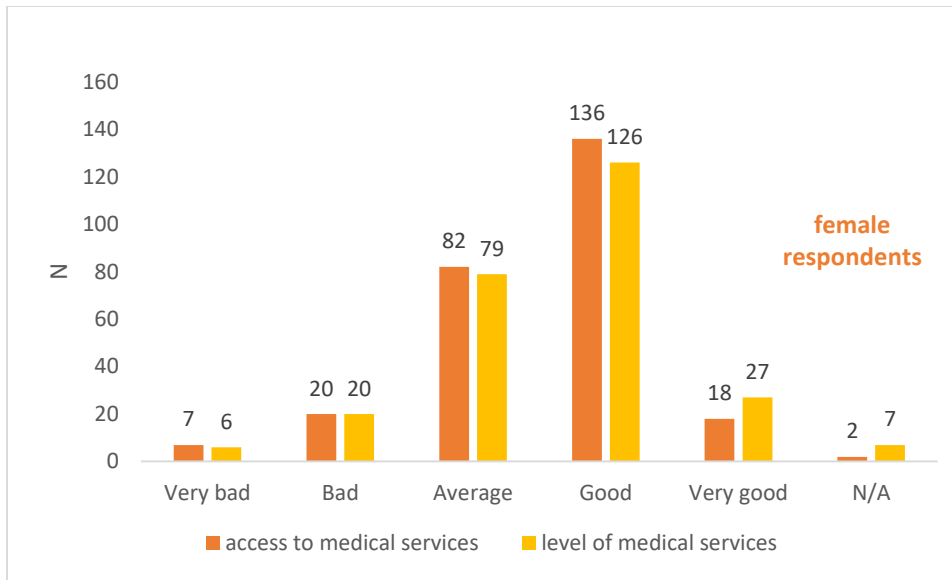
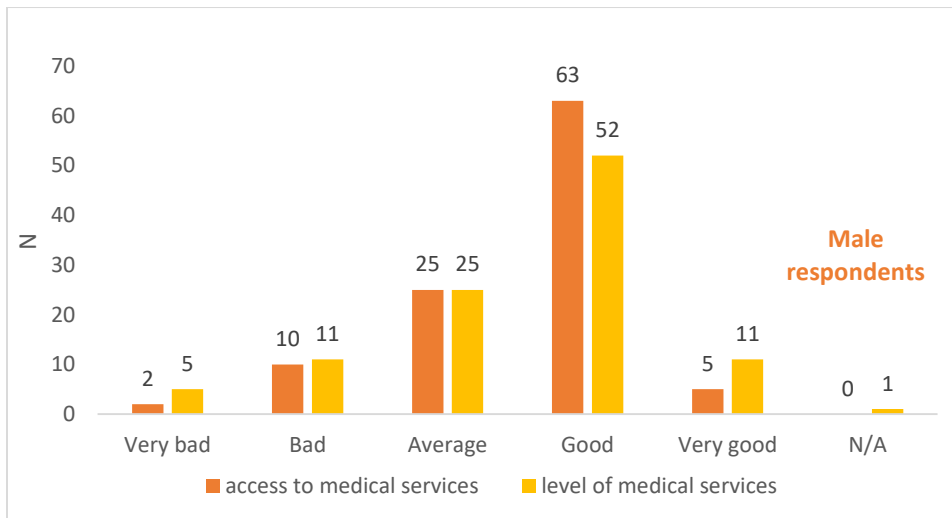


Chart #35



Most importantly, the survey also assessed respondents' access to water, electricity, and gas resources. Data shows that access to electricity is the least problematic for the respondents. Almost the majority of the respondents do not name access to electricity as an issue for their communities. If we sort the data in descending order, then access to gas comes next. Despite the fact that a significant share of respondents believe that they have no problems accessing gas, a significant number also name that population access to gas is not only poor but very poor (42 women out of 265 and 22 men out of 105).

Access to water resources is also problematic for 57 women and 17 men. It can be said that women are more concerned about the issue of access to water resources, which may be explained by their involvement in domestic labor and taking most of the responsibilities of cooking, washing, and house cleaning on themselves.

Chart #36

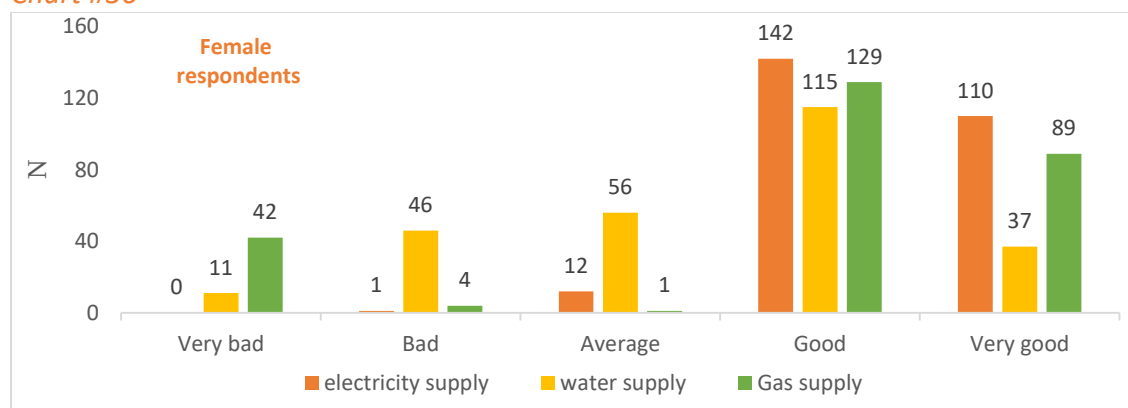
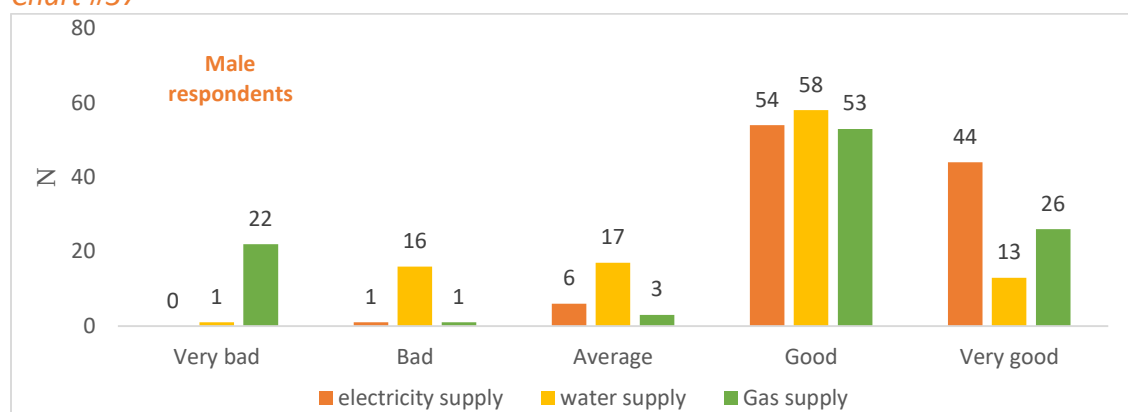


Chart #37



Tsalenjikha, Muzjava

While talking about public spaces, respondents noted that everyone would benefit from it if there were any spaces. They believe that, even though existing infrastructures are faulty, they are accessible for all community members except disabled people.

"New Stadium is not adapted for disabled people in the community."

Woman from Muzhava

Women claim that if there are public spaces, women's participation will grow, and they will discover the skills of leadership, public speaking, etc. Respondents see the existence of public spaces as gaining confidence for community members to voice their problems. In addition to the need to renovate existing places (clubs, halls, houses of culture, etc.), respondents note that access to the internet will benefit community members. Women and men agree that decisions for managing/using public spaces should be made equally. Although they agree that these places belong to everyone, they see that they are not friendly to everyone. According to the respondents, some spaces do not seem safe for women and children. Respondents mentioned stadiums, clubs, and gatherings spaces and specified that they are not tailored to women's and child's needs as they do not meet basic safety rules.

"The club for is dangerous for women and children in terms of safety; the power lines are open, the lighting is poor, it is cold, etc."

A man from Muzhava Even though respondents do not mention why the poor lighting or faulty infrastructure, in general, is problematic for women, still, they see different needs for the safety of women in their community.

As for public services, respondents note that public schools and kindergartens are not enough for decent living conditions. Although they indicate the need for healthcare services, they are not informed about their rights to different services in general.

Bolnisi, Kazreti

When asked about public spaces, respondents name stadiums, parks, and some chosen places to hang out (they call it Birja). Women note the sports infrastructure is not for women and girls; there should be various possibilities to ensure that girls will also use these spaces. They specify that culturally girls are not seen as footballers or involved in other "manly" activities.

According to respondents, there is a hall in the house of justice, but children and young people use it for accessing Wi-Fi. They do not know if this space is suitable for discussing problems in their communities.

Respondents discussed sports infrastructure, and both men and women agreed that playgrounds and other facilities are not planned for women and girls. They point out that girls often need separate spaces for different kinds of sports. They support the involvement of women in sports but do not observe positive changes.

Respondents emphasize the need for special services for disabled people in their communities.

"One of the mothers carries her disabled child to the city for special services because we have none."

Woman from Kazreti

Based on respondents' responses, it is clear that healthcare services are the most needed in the community. Women from ethnic minority groups talk about access to reproductive health services. They specify that reproductive health services for women and girls are not available; pregnant women cannot register in Kazreti, so they should travel to Bolnisi. In pregnancy, traveling is associated with some kind of effort, financial resources, and, first of all, safety. Even the hospital is for first aid, and women cannot give birth there.

It is noteworthy that mainly women talk about the need for services. For instance, according to them, in Kazreti, there are not enough kindergartens. It shows that this is a concern for women, as caring for children is basically on them.

Women from ethnic minority groups talk about shelter for elderly people. They recall the project when they worked as care workers for elderly people. They went to the houses of elderly people, cleaned their houses, prepared food, and had a salary for this. Now a daily center exists for elderly people, but these centers were closed frequently or opened only during specific periods during the pandemic. Respondents think that these services improve the general condition of the community and make the burden of domestic labor easier for women.

Gori, Mereti

As for public services, respondents note that they have no access to consulting, healthcare, or educational services in their community (Koshka). Men point out that there are spaces for men to gather, but women go to each other's houses. This division is emphasized quite frequently during the discussions. However, respondents do not perceive this as a practice of exclusion of women from the public space. They explain

that in places where men dominate, children and women cannot join, so parks and playgrounds will eliminate this problem.

Girls talk about sports infrastructure and say that the stadium became a place for hanging out. They rarely play football there. They specify that they lack spaces where they will discuss important topics and exchange ideas. Respondents believe that it may lead to discussions about their needs and increase their involvement in decision-making processes.

Women see the existence of public spaces as the chance for increasing their involvement in the public sphere.

When it comes to legal, medical, or consulting services, respondents from Mereti say that people should go to Gori; locally, none of them are accessible. Women mainly emphasize the need for daily nurseries and improving infrastructure in kindergartens in general. IDP respondents did not mention the existence of psychological or other related services in their community.

Zugdidi, Rike

The respondents name libraries, parks, schools, clubs, and stadiums as the main places where they meet or attend some events. As the FGDs revealed, the school is also used for organizing different kinds of events - community members should have permission from the director.

When asked if women and men have equal access to public spaces, respondents said that stadiums are the only infrastructure. It does not meet the needs of every community member, including women. Some of the men respondents pointed out that stadiums are also not suitable spaces for women:

"Girls are afraid of going to stadiums at night because they are afraid of damaging their reputation."

In other cases, respondents agree that the community faces' main problems refer to all of the community members. They have difficulties in identifying the different needs of people in their community.

"Women and men have different needs, but we also have the same, large-scale problems."

Man from Zugdidi, Rike

Men and women agree that the well-equipped and organized infrastructure will meet the needs of young girls and boys in their community and increase their participation and positively influence their active life.

Respondents believe that women and men should have access to relevant services that differ from each other. Women respondents especially emphasize the need for healthcare services for themselves and their kids.

"There is no normal building in the village, it is raining inside the building (of the hospital), the floor has collapsed, and when the doctors arrive from the city, they provide medical care for children in one of the rooms of the cooperative building".

Woman from Zugdidi, Rike

Women talk about the absence of reproductive health services in their community. They say that not every woman can afford to go to the city.

"At least once a year to have access to medical services (gynecologist, mammologist, etc.) for women in the village."

Woman from Zugdidi, Rike

Respondents think that even the services they have in their community are very disorganized and unreliable.

6. Claiming Rights and Meaningful Participation in Public Decision-making

Based on the country gender equality profile (2020),⁹ low numbers of women are involved in public life decision-making processes. Women did not exceed 15 percent in the Parliament of Georgia in 2019. They are rarely found in managerial positions and face horizontal and vertical segregation in all types of institutions. Since the law on gender quotas has been accepted, there are now some hopes in this regard - the introduction of a mandatory quota mechanism (25% in 2020) should encourage positive practices to increase women's representation in the Parliament of Georgia.¹⁰ In addition to this, women, especially in rural areas, have no voice in the decision-making process in their households and communities, resulting from traditional gender roles rooted in society. Land ownership (especially for rural women) is also an issue that matters for women's emancipation processes and changing power dynamics in Georgia. Although ensuring equal access of women and men to agricultural land and real estate is reflected in Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2020,¹¹ gender-segregated data on land/real estate owners indicate that the situation is unfavorable for women.

Women face financial hardships in Georgia that are tacitly manifested and have their gender dimension. In 2018, 36.1 percent of the total population were economically inactive, with 44.4 percent of women and 26.4 percent of men.¹² There are high numbers of informal women workers that result in a lack of protection and stability for them. Poverty among women is also caused by lower wages that they have as they are mainly employed in low-paying sectors. Even though women have higher education levels than men, their involvement in the labor market is lower. It should also be noted that unemployment is highest among women with higher education.¹³ Gender also plays a crucial role in accessing education for students from underprivileged groups (for instance, ethnic minorities (higher number of drop out of girls), families with a lower socioeconomic status, etc.).

When it comes to women and peacebuilding processes, women are rarely present as decision-makers. They do not participate in dialogue formats as well that are linked to conflict resolution. Many IDP women (Women comprise 53 percent of the IDP population¹⁴) face poverty, increased risk of violence, unemployment, access to economic resources, housing, education, health (including reproductive services for women) and care services (kindergartens), underrepresentation in elections, exclusion from development projects.¹⁵

Based on UNSCR resolution 1325, women are not only affected by conflict, but they should also participate in conflict prevention and resolution. Resolution 1325 calls member States to increase womens

⁹ Country gender profile of Georgia, 2020, UN Women Georgia, <https://bit.ly/34suoKY>

¹⁰ <https://civil.ge/archives/370851>

¹¹ Human Rights Action Plan (2018-2020)

<http://myrights.gov.ge/en/plan/Human%20Rights%20Action%20Plan%20for%202018-2020>

¹² GEOSTAT, 2018.

¹³ GEOSTAT, Women and Men in Georgia, 2019.

¹⁴ GEOSTAT, Women and Men in Georgia, 2019

¹⁵ Study on Needs and Priorities of IDPs and Conflict-Affected Women and Girls, UN Women Georgia.

participation in decision-making at all levels and developing mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict. The word "meaningful" plays a crucial role in the implementation process of UNSCR resolution 1325; as increasing the number of women is not enough, they should influence the process accordingly.¹⁶

In 2011, the Government of Georgia adopted its first National Action Plan for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security for 2012-2015; the periods 2016- 2017 and 2018-2020 were followed.¹⁷

Same are the barriers to participating in peace processes. The last word belongs to the men; the men resolve the conflict with their strategies closely connected with masculinity and masculine culture. One of the main barriers in this process is that ministries participating in implementing the Women, Peace, and Security plan do not have a gender strategy or analysis of gender equality issues and have not adopted any gender-sensitive policy documents. The Ministry of Defense of Georgia was the first, which adopted a gender strategy emphasizing women's role in decision-making processes of peacebuilding. It should also be mentioned that it has become a positive trend to promote gender equality. The Government of Georgia has established several entities responsible for gender equality and women's empowerment not only at the national level (The Interagency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Gender Equality Advisory Council, The inter-ministerial commission on gender) but also at the local level (Municipal Gender equality councils, gender advisers and women's rooms).

Underrepresentation of women in the Ministry of Defense (23 percent in 2018) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (for instance, out of 63 ambassadors and head of missions, 10 are women) can be seen in numbers. Women's expertise and lived experience are not accordingly recognized in peacebuilding processes in Georgia. Devaluation of women's experiences and capacities, not seeing and hearing them, is standard practice. Even when women are involved at every level of conflict resolution, they are not perceived as experts and actors. In addition to this, when women participate in peacebuilding processes, they are assigned to tasks related to so-called "women's issues" (health, education, etc.)¹⁸

It should also be mentioned that women in informal peace processes are more recognized and preferred - it means that they will ensure conflict resolution with their direct communication with people involved in conflict or will be doing projects and researches about women in peacebuilding, but men will make decisions - they also have the exclusive right and knowledge to negotiate. This is also the reason why women are underrepresented in formal peacebuilding processes.¹⁹

While asked about the involvement in the decision-making process, the most significant number (71 respondents) of women say, "It's not necessary. If I don't intervene, at least the decision will be made, which would be in my absence." Also, 59 women respondents say that they want to be involved, but certain circumstances prevent them, while 45 claim that "It's not necessary, the population will be able to make the right decision even without me." A significant number of men (47 out of 105) said that

¹⁶ Benchmarks, barriers and bridging the gaps: enhancing women's meaningful participation and contribution to peace processes in Georgia, 2020, UN Women Georgia.

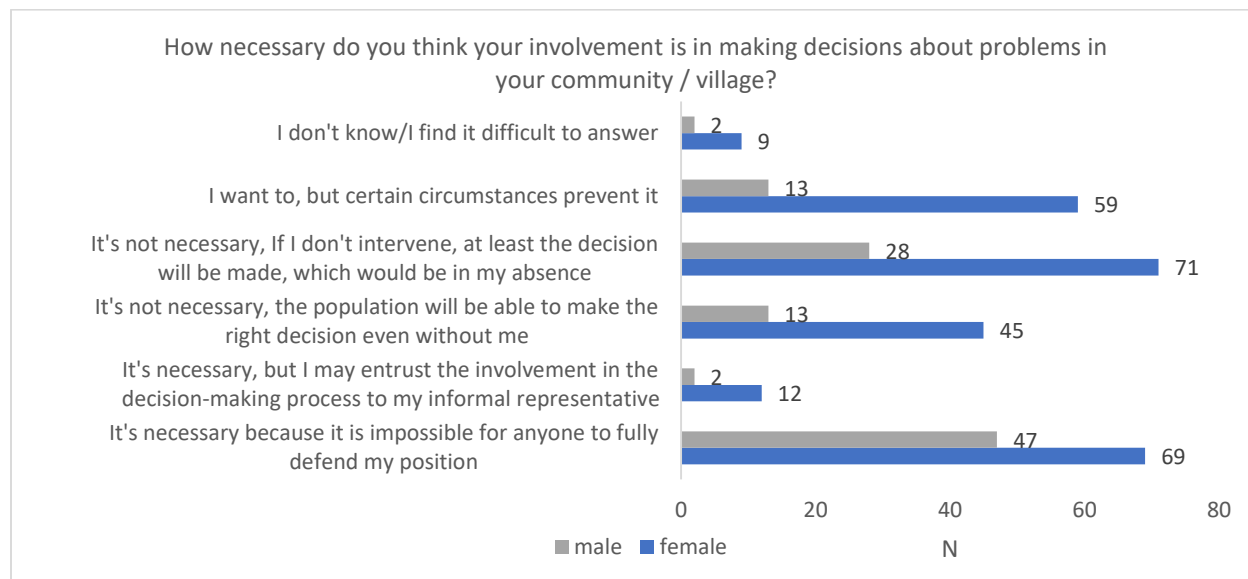
¹⁷ Independent Monitoring of the 2016-2017 National Action Plan of Georgia on Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (Women's Information Center and UN Women, 2017),

¹⁸ Benchmarks, barriers and bridging the gaps: enhancing women's meaningful participation and contribution to peace processes in Georgia, 2020, UN Women Georgia, 24-25

¹⁹ Ibid, 12

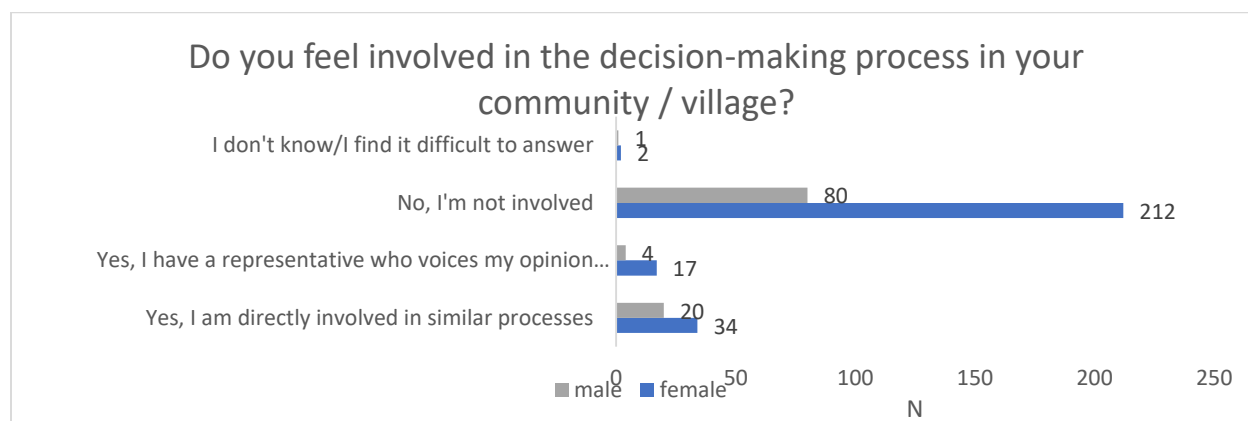
involvement is necessary, as their positions should be voiced and defended. Sixty-nine of women respondents claim the same.

Chart #38



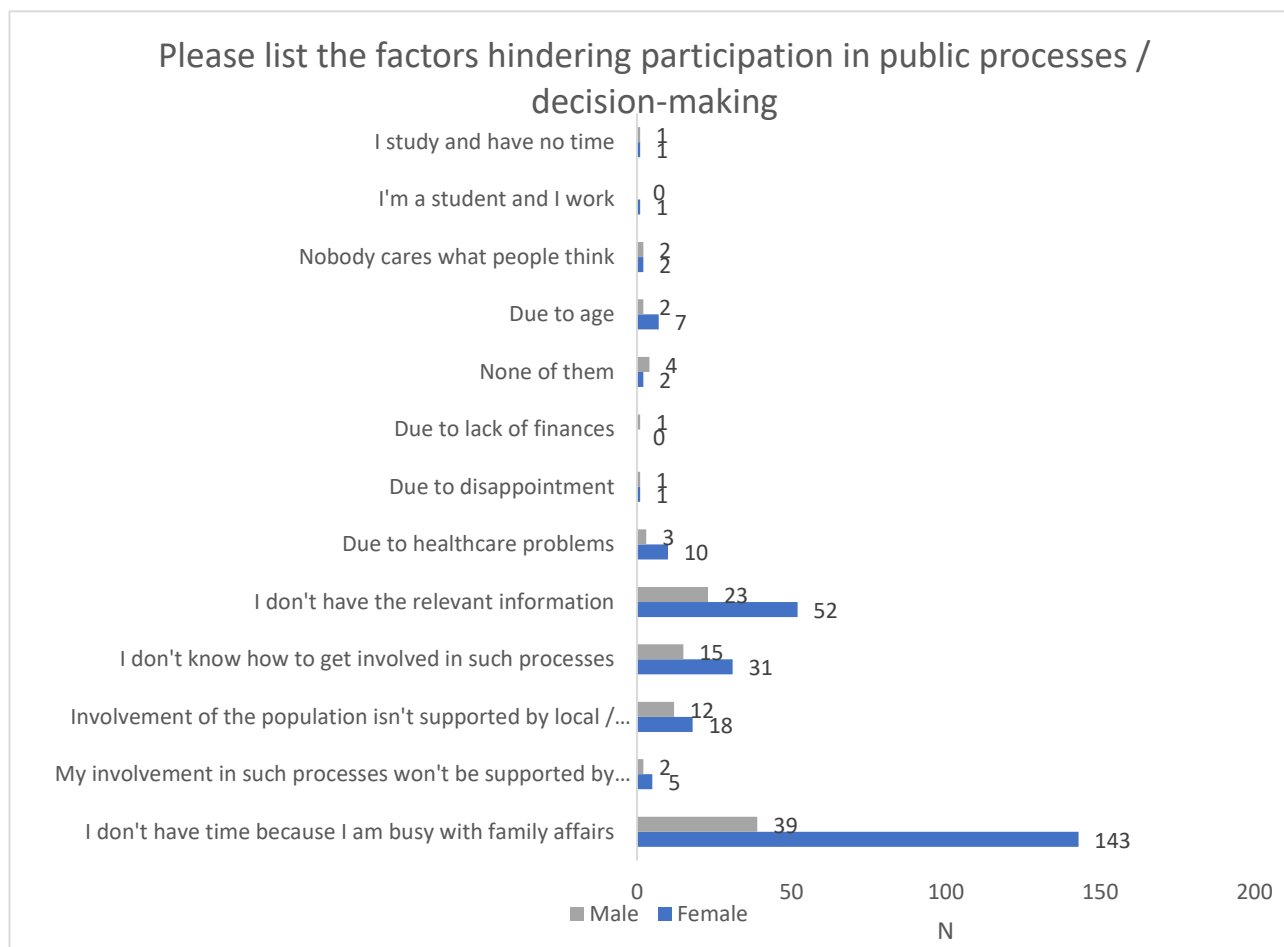
When asked if they feel part of decision-making processes in their communities, the vast majority of men and women indicate they are not involved. More than 50 respondents (out of 370) claimed that they were directly involved in similar processes.

Chart #39



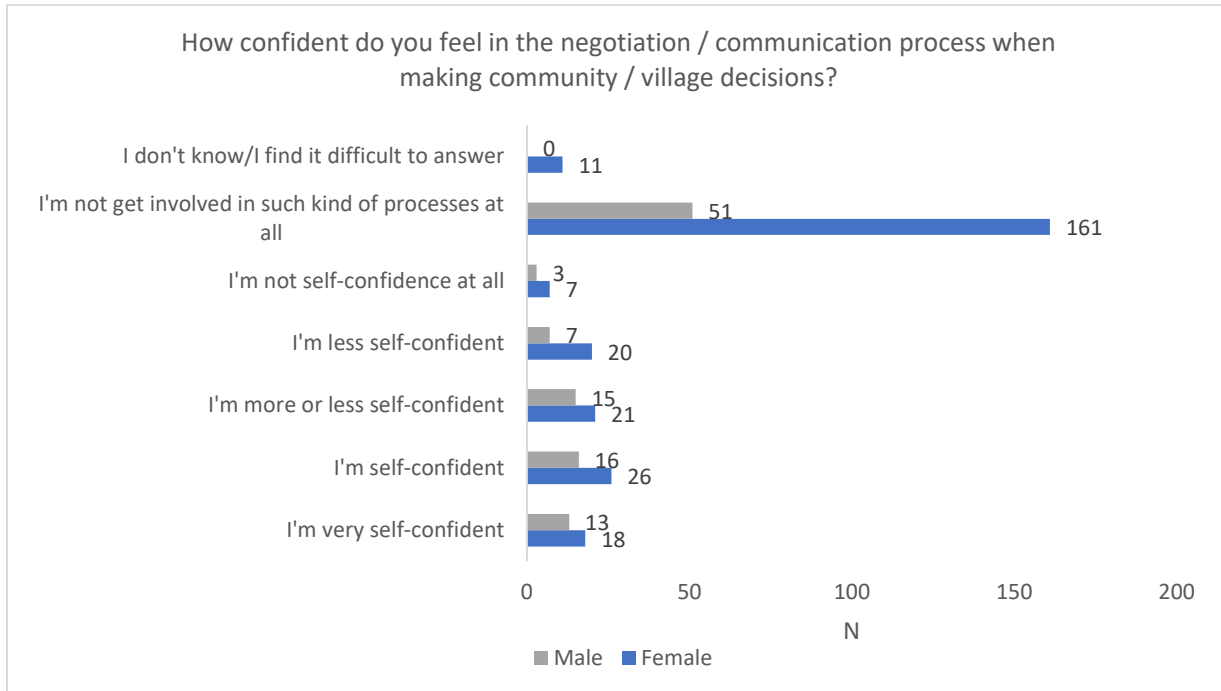
The reasons for not involving in public processes are as follows. Respondents do not have time for public participation as they are mostly busy with things related to the household. This reason is named by the women most frequently. Other reasons refer to lack of information and lack of knowledge on how to get involved, which are quite the same in this case. About 30 respondents also blame the local community leaders as they don't support the population's participation.

Chart #40



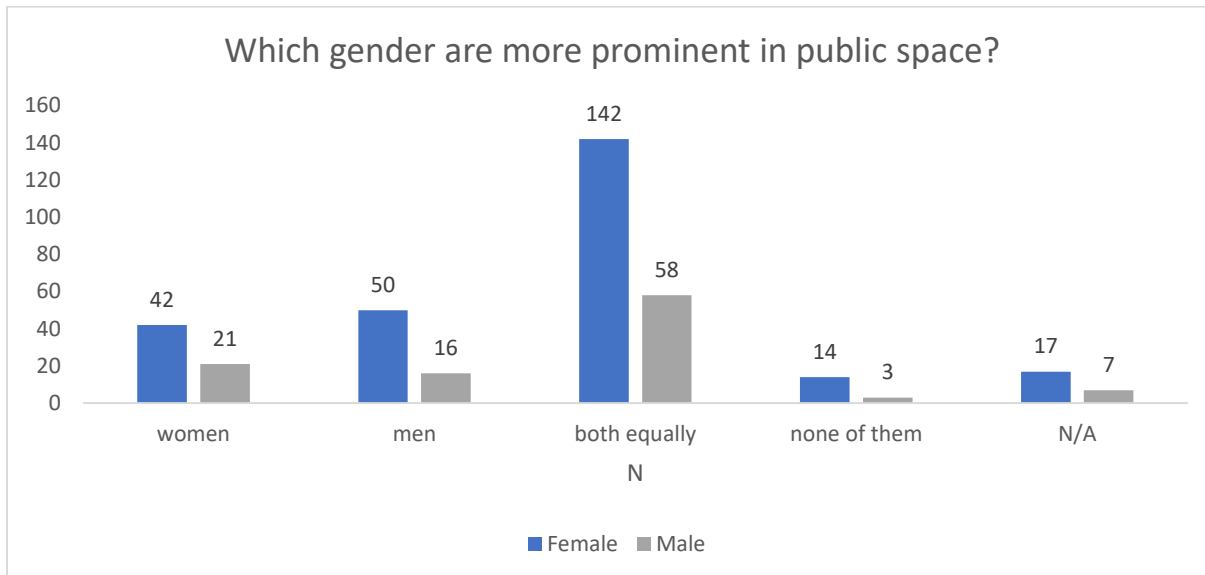
More than half of the respondents (211) say that they do not participate in the communication process when making decisions about their communities. Although some women respondents also claim that they lack confidence, the general belief is that the community members do not make decisions.

Chart #41



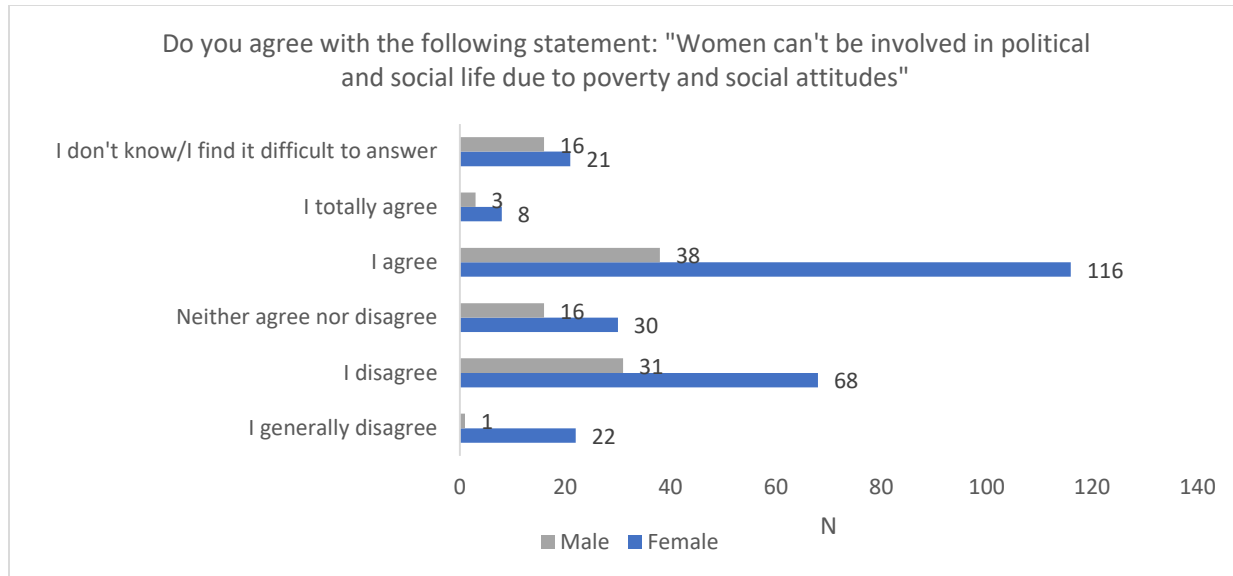
Respondents believe both genders are prominent in public life. The number of respondents claiming that women or men are more prominent in public spaces is quite the same (66 and 63 respectively).

Chart #42



The most significant number of respondents (154 respondents out of 370) agree that women can't be involved in political and social life due to poverty and social attitudes, while 99 disagree with this statement.

Chart #43



Tsalenjikha, Muzhava

When asked about women's participation in the public sphere and decision-making, respondents, both men, and women agree that women should equally participate. They say that women's role in their community is irreplaceable. On the other hand, if women participate in decision-making processes, they should have some qualities, while no criteria are discussed in the case of men.

"If a woman has the potential and ability to do good things, it is necessary to consider her opinion."

Man from Muzhava

Women specify that women have better ideas than men. However, men do not admit this. Women tend to be involved in cultural events, while men tend to sports and sports competitions.

Respondents positively assess women's capacities and productivity. They specify that women were those who saved families during various crises in Georgia.

"Women are different from men. If a woman works and has financial resources, she will support children and take care of the house. She spends money wisely".

Woman from Muzhava

Most of the respondents agree that women participate in public events as much as men do. They believe there is no such kind of division. Respondents explain that there are limited opportunities for men and women, and no one will be against women's participation.

Respondents say that despite society's stereotypical attitudes, their community supports women's active involvement. According to them, many men are in migration, and the women tend to become leaders in the community.

Women's activity sometimes is seen as inappropriate as they should be doing something productive in households. Respondents believe that the younger generation is more open to the changes. Respondents from youth groups justify this claiming that women and men should be equal and active politically.

During focus group discussions attended by women only, women argued openly that sometimes men are barriers for women; they have complexes, which prevents women from being active and confident. They recall when a woman could not be active because of the "head of the family."

When asked if they feel like a full-fledged citizen, women say that they should have access to respective rights. Still, the ignorance of the government and limited access to the information leaves them without fundamental rights and resources.

Bolnisi, Kazreti

During one of the focus group discussions, ethnic Azerbaijan women stated strong messages about women's participation in public life. The single mother of a six-year-old boy said that she managed to attend training while having a child next to her. She says that her plans were changed because she was forced to marry. Now she tries to be active again and is a member of the youth council in the municipality.

Young women tell quite the same stories of early or forced marriages which was a barrier for their active life. Although, as the discussion revealed, they continue education and search for jobs after having a child.

When asked about attitudes towards women's active social life and involvement in decision-making, respondents say that this is still not acceptable for many. Society thinks that if a woman is out and is not with her children and husband all the time, she is not a good wife or mother.

"Such women are called empty-headed in our community."

Woman from Kazreti

Respondents point out that women do not hold leading positions in Kazreti. Their rights are often violated when decisions should be made; women's opinions are not considered men's.

Respondents do not see themselves as active citizens whose interests and needs are seen and understood.

"I do not feel that I am an active citizen; I am a housewife."

Woman from Kazreti

Based on respondents' answers, community members need support from the government to be more active and involved. They also lack access to information about ongoing activities and projects in the municipality.

Gori, Mereti

Focus group discussions showed that women from Mereti are active and have the interest to be more active. Although, attitudes towards their involvement and ideas are skeptical.

The road was with the help of one young woman, but people said that she had no other jobs to do.

"When you take a step forward, people make fun of you. There was one case when I became quite active, but the attitude from the community was so cynical that I wanted to stop everything".

One of the men respondents note that in their community, there exist matriarchal rules; women manage; women make changes as their initiatives are insightful and tailored to the needs of communities.

Men's responses show that they do not fully agree with women's involvement in public life. They believe that a woman should not work instead of a man. They think it's a man's shame.

When men are asked if women in their community occupy leadership positions, they agree and name the positions of teacher and nurse.

The general opinion stated during FGDs indicates that the government does not support women's active participation in public life. Women are encouraged neither in their community nor on the level of local governance to be decision-makers and voice their needs and reflect the opinions of society.

Zugdidi, Rike

According to respondents, women's involvement in public life is crucial as they are not presented there. Some men respondents argue that women have the same rights to be active as men have, but they are not interested in being more active. They also believe that women and men have the same capacities for being active in their community. Respondents also talk about when women didn't attend the event because they had no permission from the family. They also observe that women leave such events earlier or are represented in low numbers.

"For example, I started active life when I was 14-year girl, they opposed me first. It is a shame that families do not let girls go out."

Woman from Zugdidi, Rike

On the contrary, men's activities are acceptable and even desirable, and they have more opportunity and support to develop themselves.

Respondents think that the situation is different in big cities, but in small villages, where everyone knows everyone, people are stricter, especially older generations. Respondents point out that for society, the public activity of women is just a waste of time.

"Woman can be involved in public life, but she should not be in the street the whole time."

Man from Zugdidi, Rike

According to the respondents, women are not believed to be leaders or in their community or local government. They suppose that the only women who are more or less active are teachers. Even at schools, a director's position is occupied by a male, when women represent all other positions and have lower salaries.

Respondents talk about the support of society regarding women's involvement in public life. They think that society's stereotypical attitudes change, but these changes only refer to so-called feminine activities. Women are encouraged to be involved in cultural activities or do other activities related to their feminine nature. Still, decision-making, talking loudly about the problems, and mobilizing and gathering people do not fit them. Respondents believe that women can be involved in everything, but the reality attaches them to housewife roles.

Respondents believe that the government will do nothing to empower women in their communities. They think that women should also be represented in local governments and community centers because men should not be the only ones who make decisions about community life. Women respondents point out

that the only case when women and men have equal access is participation in elections. They argue that women and men have the same intellectual capacities if developed accordingly.

Respondents also do not observe positive practices of women supporting women; they say that women are also alienated. Mainly this refers to women of different generations. It seems that they have different values and knowledge as well.

"I was attending an event, and a dispute between a young girl and a woman started. A woman told me that she was right, but after checking the information, it was the opposite".

Woman from Zugdidi, Rike

Women say that they do not feel that they are citizens with all the rights because they don't even have the opportunity to meet and exchange their problems and ideas. They also link active citizenship to having a public job and do not see domestic labor as something that maintains society.

7. Key Findings and recommendations

To develop appropriate policies and interventions, it is essential to know the needs of different gender groups in society. The information obtained based on quantitative and qualitative research conducted in specific communities of Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Gori, and Bolnisi allows us to see the gender relations in the community.

Domestic labor remains the exclusive burden of women. Its recognition is under the question mark, while domestic work is not equally distributed among different members of the family. Even when talking about equal distribution of domestic and care work, it is always implied that feminine and masculine (defined biologically) tasks exist. The involvement of women in domestic work is explained not as an ingrained pattern but as a result of women's unemployment and having free time. It is rarely seen that, on the contrary, the involvement of women in reproductive labor hinders their employment.

A prevailing belief and norm in the communities observed for this analysis is that it is the duty of women only to take care of children, the elderly, and the sick. Still, only the physical and time resources of this labor are considered, and the emotional labor that women perform in the process remains beyond attention. While the intensity of involvement in domestic labor and care often defines a woman's role in society, the invisibility of housework and non-remuneration downplays the women's contributions to the wellbeing of families and communities at large. The ongoing, daily and significant time such work takes is also a barrier to women's entry in the public realm.

Decision-making in households is mainly understood in terms of managing finances and making decisions about the children's education. Young people (both young women and men) are rarely seen as part of the decision-making process in families. In families, decisions are made by those who have the financial resources. Despite the fact that men are typically the breadwinners in the household, women also participate in decision making on these types of issues. However, women may manage several household issues, pay utilities, and redistribute financial resources, but the last word belongs to men. It can be observed that the power and authority of men, in some cases, are superficial and serve to maintain the image of dominant men. There are grounds for further strengthening of women's agency. Even though they dominate the private sphere, their power is not recognized, and their voice is not considered equal to men.

The overall sense of **Security** can be assessed as satisfactory in the communities. People are pretty confident in claiming that they feel safe. On the other hand, an in-depth analysis of their security issues shows that they also feel vulnerable in their communities. There is a difference between the responses of borderline and non-borderline communities. The people from borderline communities (both men and women) tend to indicate the safety issue more than the respondents from non-borderline communities. For borderline communities, safety means to be protected from the "stranger." In borderline communities, men are also believed to be under the threat of kidnapping and, in general, are believed to be more vulnerable.

The faulty infrastructure and violence are perceived as issues that affect women specifically. The risk of violence poses a significant challenge to women in the communities, while in the case of men, it is not named even among the main threats. The faulty infrastructure also affects women and children, as they restrain themselves from visiting spaces that are poorly equipped or dangerous during the night.

Even though the violence, leaving near the borderline, environmental issues were named frequently, people also name the scarcity of the public services directed to them. They suffer from poor economic conditions and limited access to healthcare, making them feel insecure and unprotected in their communities.

GBV is understood as domestic violence in the communities. It is mainly linked to physical abuse, although naming the reasons for women staying with abusers characteristics of economic violence can be observed. Listed domestic violence cases include violence against children, elderly women, and women (wives, sisters, mothers) in general.

Victims of violence are rarely seen and understood by society. The people still believe that the case should be discussed in the families and no one should interfere. Victims of violence tend to be silent because there is a stigma in society blaming women for not being good enough or being inappropriate. While men confirm cases of domestic violence, they also confirm that women provoke conflicts themselves sometimes. Young men and women are more informed about the forms of domestic violence; they see the covid-19 pandemic as a threat that results in the growing number of domestic violence in their communities. Young women also think that they are less vulnerable to GBV than older women.

There are no services for victims of violence, but there is also a lack of awareness about what services survivors need (psychological, health, legal and consulting). Even though people talk about shelters in some cases, they also specify that women don't want to call the police and the police are the only way to get there. On the other hand, it is believed that women will be more confident to leave the oppressor if there are relevant services.

The general pattern of power relationships observed by the respondents is that the men think that they are superior to women and have the right to subordinate women of different generations in their families. Young respondents argue that women should reclaim their rights in their families and fight against violence themselves, as the men will always try to maintain their privileges and power.

Access to public spaces and services is believed to have positive affect to women's participation in community and political life as they will discover the skills of leadership, public speaking, etc. The existence of public spaces is seen as gaining confidence for community members to voice their problems. While the public spaces (sports facilities and playgrounds, gathering places, halls, culture houses) are for everyone, they are not friendly for women, children, and disabled people. It can be observed that social norms also prevent women from being in the stadiums or gathering spaces because men occupy and control them. Therefore, women prefer to gather at home and have less access to the spaces where men gather and discuss various issues. Nevertheless, women better understand the existence of public spaces as the chance for increasing their involvement in the public sphere

Reproductive health services are not available for women and girls. Pregnant women cannot receive consulting and other emergency services locally. The need for special services for disabled people is also emphasized. Although women indicate the need for healthcare services, they are not informed about their rights to services in general (legal, consulting, psychological services).

Access to kindergartens and shelters for elderly people is also considered a significant problem. It is women who report these challenges as they take responsibility for the child and elderly care.

Participation in the public decision-making process is perceived as a necessary right for citizenship, regardless of gender. It can be observed that reproductive roles prevent women from being present when decisions are made in their communities. On the other hand, they are never informed about such opportunities. There was also a lack of knowledge on how to or if they should be involved in the decision-making processes. Although some women respondents claim that they lack confidence, the general belief is that the community members do not make decisions.

Also, women can't be involved in political and social life due to poverty and social norms. If the woman is active, the community blames her for being idle and lazy. On the other hand, young men and women argue that women are more productive and efficient for their societies. It can be observed that that women gain more and more power. Migration processes also affected this differently – if men are in immigration, women who stay, take responsibility for the households, and become leaders; if women leave country to work, financial independence gives them voice and power.

It is believed that if women participate in decision-making processes, they should have some qualities, while no criteria are discussed in the case of men. Despite the positive trends, women lack support from both families and society as well as the government. They see their power but still cannot imagine themselves as actors of change because the existing system make them invisible and unheard.

Recommendations:

✚ Equal redistribution of domestic labor should encouraged:

- By raising awareness about redistribution of the tasks in the households (via particular textbooks and leaflets);
- By recognizing the importance of domestic labor for human life;
- By challenging gender roles assigned to men and women in the societies;
- By involving information about domestic and care work in the educational programs, training, etc;

✚ Women should be encouraged to enter the public space by

- Raising awareness about the need for participation;
- Enabling environment that helps them to leave households during daytime (more childcare facilities);
- Supplying them with the formal and informal educational programs in the community for examining their abilities;
- Integrating women in the formal economy and employment;
- Assisting local organizations and government to include more women in their activities
- Assisting local organizations and government to tailor the projects and initiatives to the needs of specific groups of women;
- Developing gender-responsive budgeting practices for the stakeholders

✚ Access to healthcare and SRH services for women and girls (especially those who are socially excluded or live in poverty) should be set as a priority

- Ensure having access to information about reproductive health and family planning;
- Ensure having access to the medical services in their communities
- Ensuring that disabled women have access to appropriate SRH services and infrastructure

- ✚ GBV should be recognized as one of the main challenges in the communities, and all the relevant actors should be involved in the elimination process.
- Prevention practices of GBV should be identified for the communities;
- Access to crisis centers and shelters should be set as a priority;
- Access to GBV related services (psychological, legal, medical services) should be ensured;
- Efforts should be directed to the rehabilitation of survivors of GBV, and all the stakeholders should allocate resources for this;
- Alternative behavioral programs should be introduced for abusers;
- The police should receive training focused on how to manage cases in small communities;
- ✚ To develop mechanisms for women and girls to become informed about meaningful participation; to step up and be leaders in their communities
- By awareness campaigns/training about women's leadership and political participation;
- By setting the priority or quota of having more women and young girls in public gatherings organized by the government, community centers, local organizations;
- By supporting the projects and ideas which aim at young women's and women's advancement in local communities.

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

1. National Level Overview

1.1. Background

Unresolved conflicts in breakaway regions of Georgia create major challenges for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, although frozen conflicts and war-affected population are not the only areas where actors coming from different sectors shall focus their attention and peace-building efforts.

Georgia is a multilingual and multiethnic country. According to the 2014 census, ethnic Georgians make up about 87% of the total population, while other ethnic groups constitute 13%. Within these groups, Azerbaijanis account for just over 6 % and Armenians almost 5 %.

The legacy of Soviet ethno-linguistic policies leaves a strong mark and is a major reason why both Georgians and ethnic minorities find it difficult to view themselves as members of a single, united civic nation-state (Carnegie Europe, 2020) ²⁰

Integration of minorities into the country's political, economic and cultural life is essential for the process of democracy-building. This, however, may require a lot of work with different actors on different levels.

1.1.1. Overview of Conflicts in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region (South Ossetia)

The first conflict in Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia) evolved in 1989, culminated in the region's de facto secession from Georgia in 1992, and remained unresolved despite the declared ceasefire and numerous peace efforts.

In August 1992, ethnic tensions in Abkhazia exploded into 13 months' full-scale war. Abkhazia seceded from Georgia in 1993 and declared its independence in 1999.

Several thousands were killed and many more wounded in both wars. Hundreds of thousands were displaced from their homes.

In 2008, war broke out involving Georgian and Russian forces in Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia). The legacy of this short war – lasting just five days – had a profound impact also on the unresolved Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. In the aftermath, Russia and a small number of other states officially recognized both Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. Russia also stationed military bases in both territories.

Many in Georgia have since then viewed the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia as purely Russian military occupation of Georgian territory and no longer acknowledge Abkhaz and South Ossetians as parties to the conflicts (Conciliation Resources, date unknown, extracted on June 12, 2021). ²¹

The protracted conflicts over Abkhazia and South Ossetia have isolated these two societies from Georgia proper for almost three decades. Both regions have been out of Tbilisi's control for thirty years and run by de facto authorities that are heavily influenced by Russia.

The framing of the conflicts continued to be entirely different on each side. Sukhumi and Tskhinvali portray the Russian military presence on their territory as being a guarantor of their security, while Tbilisi stresses that both regions are suffering from the illegal deployment of Russian occupation forces, who exercise effective political control there.

²⁰ <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/06/09/georgia-s-minorities-breaking-down-barriers-to-integration-pub-84689>

²¹ <https://www.c-r.org/programme/caucasus/georgian-abkhaz-conflict-focus>

Georgian insecurity has also been increased by the ongoing process of “borderisation”—the de facto authorities building barbed-wire fences and detaining people along the administrative boundary lines (ABLs) between Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Georgia proper. “Borderisation” focuses Georgian public discourse on the issue of Russian occupation (Carnegie Europe, 2021).²²

1.1.2. Deadlocked negotiations

The official talks on the conflict are now called the Geneva International Discussions (GID). Talks were initially mediated by the UN, and since 2008 have been co-chaired by the European Union, United Nations and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). They include Georgian, Russian, Abkhaz, South Ossetian and US participants. Progress towards peace has so far been very slow, and the ordinary people continue to suffer the consequences from the unresolved conflict (Conciliation Resources, date unknown, extracted on June 12, 2021).

1.1.3. Peace Missions in Georgia

United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) was established in August 1993 to verify compliance with the ceasefire agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Abkhaz authorities in Georgia. UNOMIG’s mandate was expanded following the signing by the parties of the 1994 agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces.

UNOMIG came to an end on June 2009 due to lack of consensus among Security Council members on mandate extension. (United Nations, 2009)²³

The OSCE Mission to Georgia was established in December 1992 in response to armed conflicts in the country. The mission assisted the Government of Georgia in conflict settlement, democratization, human rights and the rule of law. The Mission’s mandate expired on December 31, 2008 (OSCE, 2009).²⁴

European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission of the European Union. The mission was deployed in September 2008, following the EU-mediated Six Point Agreement which ended the August war. Aiming at facilitating the resumption of a safe and normal life for the local communities living on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Lines (ABL) with Abkhazia and South Ossetia; ensuring that there is no return to hostilities; building confidence among the conflict parties and informing EU policy in Georgia and the wider region. More than 200 monitors from various EU member states patrol in the areas adjacent to the ABLs with Abkhazia and South Ossetia (EUMM).²⁵

²² <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/05/12/re-examining-radicalizing-narratives-of-georgia-s-conflicts-pub-84508>

²³ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/unomig/index.html>

²⁴ <https://www.osce.org/georgia-closed/43383>

²⁵ https://www.eumm.eu/en/about_eumm/mandate

1.2. State Actors, Legal and Regulatory Framework

1.2.1. Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality

Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality is the main state institution responsible for peace building, reconciliation and minorities in the country.

Various functions related to different domains in this study, such as elaborating initiative proposals and formats for peacekeeping in conflict regions, managing the peace-keeping process, elaborating institutional mechanisms for protection of the rights of IDPs and contributing to their implementation, elaborating, coordinating and implementing the civil-integration policy of the government and many other are officially declared by the Office of the State Minister as part of their responsibility.²⁶

Implementation of abovementioned responsibilities occurs through following schemes:

Interim government commission for responding to the needs of the affected population of borderline villages

Commission was established on October 4, 2013 as a body, responsible for needs assessment in borderline communities, elaboration of relevant borderline community assistance proposals for the government of Georgia, and coordination of implementation of such programs.

According to the report of the commission for 2013-2018, number of assistance projects have been implemented in borderline communities in the areas of gas, electricity and water provision, agriculture, healthcare, economics, entrepreneurship, rehabilitation activities, access to state services, education, culture and sports. (Progress report of the Interim Government Commission for Responding to the Needs of the Affected Population of Borderline Villages, 2018)²⁷

State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration

According to the state strategy for civic equality and integration (2015-2020), document aims to provide civic equality and integration, so that citizens of Georgia, regardless of their ethnic origin, could contribute to the country's economic development, political and social life and democratic development process. The document aspires to assist public authorities in implementing their work towards protection of ethnic minority rights, to ensure coordinated and unified interagency efforts, and to establish and implement consistent policy in various areas of public life that seeks to improve the level of civic participation of ethnic minorities.

According to the strategy, the ultimate goal of the state policy is the long-term promotion of proper participation of ethnic minority representatives in different systems, be it political institutions, public service, civic society, economy, private sector or education sphere.

Creating equal social and economic conditions and opportunities, improving access to quality education and increasing state language knowledge, preservation of culture of ethnic minorities and establishment of tolerant environment are the main chapters of the strategy.

According to the document, at the end of each year relevant agencies are responsible for developing an action plan for the subsequent year, which outlines specific projects and activities – in accordance with the goals set by the strategy and general activities, under consideration of the already achieved results and shortcomings revealed. A state Inter-Agency Commission is created to monitor and report on

²⁶ <https://smr.gov.ge/en/page/5/smr-office-functions>

²⁷ https://smr.gov.ge/uploads/prev/_202b5254.pdf

implementation of the goals and activities set out in the strategy. The Commission is coordinated by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality.

According to the progress reports, various activities in the following directions have been implemented:

- Involvement of ethnic minorities, especially women in training opportunities (including gender-related non-formal education activities);
- Information campaign on functioning of western institutions, including translation of promotional materials into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages;
- Language classes for ethnic minorities;
- Informing ethnic minority representatives on their rights, public services and elections;
- Translation of COVID-19 related information materials into Armenian and Azerbaijani;
- Legal aid to representatives of ethnic minorities, etc. (progress reports on implementation of the action plan of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration);
- Educational activities for ethnic minority representatives (with special focus on youth);
- Internships in public institutions for young representatives of ethnic minorities;
- Women empowerment programs ²⁸

Implementation of the annual action plans is monitored by interagency group which involved the experts of different international organizations too.

The strategy for 2021-2030 is currently being elaborated by the group of stakeholders led by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality.

Minister's Vision on the Policy of Peace

The policy of peace of the state is based on the vision of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, which includes eight main objectives:

1. Protection and provision of peace
2. De-occupation and de-escalation –with regard to Russia
3. Direct dialogue, confidence-building, reconciliation—with regard to the Abkhazian and Ossetian communities
4. Cooperation based on mutual interests, status-neutral and humanitarian formats of problems solving
5. Taking care of the conflict-affected people
6. Offering more services and opportunities in the state space of Georgia/easing access for residents of the occupied territories
7. Sharing new opportunities and benefits arising from the formats of cooperation and rapprochement with EU and other partners
8. Mobilization of international support to the peace policy objectives, effective cooperation with the international community, partners; effective use/activation of international mechanisms (web page of the office of state minister of Georgia for reconciliation and civic equality) ²⁹

In order to fulfill abovementioned objectives, the state strategy of Georgia on de-occupation and Peaceful Resolution of Conflict is being elaborated at the moment by inter-agency state commission. The strategy is expected to be out by the end of the year.

²⁸ <https://smr.gov.ge/ge/page/31/samogalago-tanasworobisa-da-integraciis-saxelmwifo-strategia-da-samoqmedo-gegma>

²⁹ <https://smr.gov.ge/en/page/35/ministers-vision>

1.3. Legal and regulatory framework

The main laws and regulations related to the areas of the interest of this research are the following:

1.3.1. *The Law of Georgia on Occupied Territories*

The purpose of the Law is to define the status of the territories occupied as a result of the military aggression by the Russian Federation and to establish a special legal regime in the above territories.³⁰

1.3.2. *National Concept on Tolerance and Civic Integration*

The National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration was developed under 2005, August 8 Presidential decree and aims at supporting the building of democratic and consolidated civil society based on common values, which considers diversity as a source of its strength and provides every citizen with the opportunity to maintain and develop his/her identity. The National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration elaborates national strategy and objectives in six main directions: rule of law; education and state language; media and access to information; political integration and civic participation; social and regional integration; culture and preservation of identity.³¹

1.4. Security along the ABL

The case study report on Georgia, produced in the frames of the project “Whole-of-Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding” (WOSCAP) covers the period between 2008 and 2017, and focuses on security issues along with multi-track diplomacy and governance reform. According to the report, perceptions of insecurity heightened in the areas bordering South Ossetia and Abkhazia after the war in 2008, when the existing mandates of the UN Observer Mission to Georgia (UNOMIG) and the OSCE were blocked by Russia, and the EU’s Monitoring Mission (EUMM) became the only international mandated monitoring organization.

In this sense, it is relevant to point out that the areas bordering South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain tense with reported shootings, kidnappings, improvised explosive devises, booby-traps, and other acts of violence (WOSCAP, 2017).

According to the Georgian State Security Service, the occupying forces in two Russia-controlled Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali (South Ossetia) have detained 327 Georgian citizens for “illegally crossing the border” between 2017 and 2019. (news portal: agenda.ge, 2019)³²

Provocative “borderisation” by Russian-led security forces along the administrative boundary lines of Abkhazia and South Ossetia take place continuously.

1.5. Integration of Internally Displaced People

Integration of internally displaced people, as a crucial predictor of peaceful coexistence of displaced citizens and the representatives of hosting communities in target areas is one of the key elements of local conflict profile.

³⁰ <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/19132>

³¹ https://smr.gov.ge/uploads/prev/National_C_a650ee97.pdf

³² <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2019/527>

According to Intentions Survey on Durable Solutions: Voices of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, IDPs from Abkhazia and the citizens displaced from South Ossetia in 1990s report higher level of integration (62.3% and 63/6% respectively) than IDPs displaced in 2008 (49.2%).³³

IDPs living in Tbilisi and other urban areas attest to a higher level integration than those living in villages.

According to the same study, older respondents demonstrate a lower level of integration than younger respondents: only 47.9% of respondents who are 60 and older feel fully integrated, while 70.6% of respondents in the age group 16-24 indicate that they are fully integrated.

Responses from female IDPs indicate that they are only slightly more integrated (59.5%) than their male counterparts (53.8%).

IDP families with a higher monthly average family income show a greater level of integration, while families with lower average monthly incomes feel only partially integrated or not integrated (UNHCR, 2015).

Internally Displaced People believe that the image of IDPs portrayed by the media does not show them in the best light. Regardless of the great number of thriving IDPs who are successful in their careers, media paint poverty, powerlessness and desperation as indispensable parts of the IDP image.

IDPs talk about the existing prejudice against them in hosting communities. Insulting labels, the lack of compassion and negative attitude are part of their everyday communication with representatives of hosting communities (Center for Memory Studies of the Caucasus, 2016).

1.6. Integration of ethnic and religious minorities

Civic, political and social integration of ethnic minorities remains as one of the most problematic aspects of the development of Georgian Democracy. Despite many projects and initiatives implemented in this direction in the recent years, no significant progress has been made in terms of integration and inclusion of ethnic minorities in political life (Public Defender's Office, 2018).

Ethnic minority representatives do not have a sense of political identity with the state; majority of them are in fact distanced from the Georgian public and lead somewhat autonomous, or, in a worst-case scenario, excluded life (National Democratic Institute - NDI, 2018).

Georgian Government has elaborated a five-year long strategic Action Plan in pursuit of enhancement of civic equality and integration, in order to enable citizens of Georgia, regardless of their ethnic origin, to participate in political and social life and the country's economic and democratic development. The Action Plan highlights that the legislation of Georgia guarantees social and economic equality for every citizen, however, due to certain reasons (lack of knowledge of the state language, geographic location of the region, low level social and political involvement) there is some risk of national minorities finding themselves in unequal conditions from the standpoint of the ability to enjoy economic rights and benefit from social policies.

The major challenge for the ethnic Azerbaijanis in Kvemo Kartli is an inadequate proficiency level of the Georgian language leading to a lack of the awareness, general education and civic engagement, as well as unemployment and low-level participation in social and political life.

³³ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/55e575924.html>

Representatives of ethnic minorities consider the lack of access to information and insufficient coverage of minority-related topics by mainstream media as serious obstacles to participation (Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy-NIMD, 2017).

Another reason that may lead to the lack of participation is the low level of trust towards the governmental institutions. 21.2% of the respondents trust (“mostly trust” or “fully trust”) the Parliament, 22.9% trust the executive government, and 27.5% trust the court system. The level of trust is clearly low towards the President among ethnic minority groups compared to the general population – only 26.2% of the respondents from ethnic minorities trust the institution of the President.

It is important to mention that 45.5% of the Azerbaijani-speaking study representatives do not know the topics the local nongovernmental organisations work on in their communities (Caucasus Barometer, 2017).

1.6.1. Women

The level of indirect political participation of female representatives of ethnic minorities is relatively high comparing to direct participation, although the point of view they hold is often influenced by male family members.

When it comes to direct forms of political participation, such as advocacy and participating in elections as a candidate, the situation is exacerbated. The data suggest an extremely low level of political participation of minority women. The cases when they are involved in activities related to policy advocacy are limited in number and if present, are almost exclusively related to formal work that minority women undertake. Besides the structural factors, influencing the level of women’s participation (electoral system, party recruitment practices, state language knowledge), cultural factors, such as gender prejudice and stereotypes, and perception and fear of politics have huge impact on the degree of involvement of women in political life (Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy-NIMD, 2017).

1.6.2. Youth

According to the youth needs assessment conducted in Bolnisi municipality, one of the main challenges named by young people are the difficulties related to integration of youth representing the ethnic minority. Young people are concerned with the lack of participation of youngsters from ethnic minorities in community life. They believe that the language barrier is the main obstacle for ethnic minority youth to actively engage in public life on local level (Youth Agency, 2020).³⁴

1.6.3. Religious rights and freedoms

According to the research report from 2020, religious minorities, including Muslims face unequal access to rights and discrimination at many levels, including legislative initiatives, unequal state funding of religious institutions, religious education, use of public space, etc. (Tolerance and Diversity Institute – TDI, 2020).

1.7. Involvement of young people in Peacebuilding Activities

³⁴ [Youth Needs Assessment Bolnisi](#)

Despite the significance of UNSC Resolution 2250, which “urges member states to consider ways to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict...”, and “calls on all relevant actors, including when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to take into account as appropriate, the participation and views of youth...”, peace-related actions are not considered in youth policy document at any level. Neither national youth policy strategy, nor municipal youth policy documents emphasize the importance of participation of young people in peacebuilding activities. Peace-related actions are not actualized and reflected in youth-related documents of the municipalities, located along the ABL (Administrative Boundary Line) either.

According to youth needs assessment reports from borderline municipalities, peace-related activities on the local level are carried out by the civil society organizations. CSOs claim to involve young people in peacebuilding actions, although the degree of youth participation in peace-related activities needs to be investigated further (Youth Agency, 2020).

2. Community Level Analysis

2.1. Mereti community, Gori municipality

2.1.1. *Types of existing and potential conflicts*

According to FGDs as well as local government representatives and civil society, majority of conflicts taking place in Mereti community occur on the basis of everyday situations. Nevertheless, FGDs revealed a number of potential conflicts, which have to be addressed proactively.

Internally Displaced People

Mereti community has a small IDP population, collectively settled in former school and kindergarten buildings. Even though, according to focus group participants, this has never escalated into a serious conflict, representatives of hosting communities express their discontent towards the IDP group and the events taking place around the buildings occupied by them.

Several participants of the FGDs find it unfair that IDPs were paid monetary compensation, while local residents were deprived of attention. Representatives of hosting community believe that it would be much more reasonable to use the buildings for their intended purpose. According to the participants,

there were several unsuccessful attempts to negotiate the relocation of IDPs, although this did not create hostility between the IDPs and the hosting community.

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.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is highly recommended to engage both – IDPs as well as representatives of hosting community in joint activities in order to provide opportunity for the equal-status cooperation, as an efficient tool for decreasing intergroup tensions.

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

According to FGDs, there are no ethnic-based and religious conflicts in the community. Participants note, that there is a lot of respect towards each other's religions, people in community make friends with each other regardless ethnicity and religion, 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 organizations. Nevertheless, certain signs of segregation and prejudices among adults are manifested in discussions, while young people express more tolerance and acceptance towards different ethnic and religious groups.

"Sometimes you might have a negative attitude, but you have to take into consideration relationships of young people"

Participant of FGD

"We're angry sometimes, but we don't express this"

Participant of FGD

"We have witnesses of Jehovah among friends, we don't touch the topic of religion in order to avoid arguments"

Young participant of FGD

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is highly recommended to engage all the ethnic and religious groups, living in the community in joint activities through culture- and context – sensitive approaches.

2.1.2. Security

Only 21.1 % of survey respondents stated that they feel completely safe to live in borderline community of Mereti. In 98% of cases, the main reason of insecurity is living in the borderline area.

According to FGDs, as a community, located along the ABL, Mereti village does not feel like a safe place to live for its population. Citizens say that they are already used to shootings, although children are sometimes even afraid of fireworks and the suitcases are always half packed just in case.

According to FGD participants, as a result of creeping occupation, half of the community graveyard is already on the other side of the border.

Detaining people is a big concern for the community. People are afraid to work in their land plots and try not to make too much noise. Participants said that detaining people and extorting money for their release has become ordinary business for Ossetian side. According to FGD participants, most of the men in the community have already been captured and released, since men have to work more on land plots located close to borderline.

According to study, healthcare, economy and the border line are the main areas of insecurity for local citizens.

According to young people participating in the FGDs, they feel safe, although not because it's safe, but because they got used to living there. They noted that the demonstrations of citizens against the occupation organized in bigger cities threaten the security of people in borderline communities.

Trust of local citizens towards the police is low.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is recommended to plan context-sensitive intervention in order to improve communication between the police and local groups and build trust towards police on the local level.

2.1.3. Actors and their role in conflict resolution/transformation

Following actors have been identified for Mereti community

- Local government
- Civil Society Organizations
- IDPs
- Ethnic Georgians
- Ethnic minority groups
- Youth
- Police
- Religious institutions
- European Union Monitoring Mission
- Media
- Other actors:
 - Teachers

According to participants of FGDs, local government is not actively involved in conflict resolution activities, while the role of civil society organizations is considered as far more important in this regard. At the same time, participants noted, that potential role of both in peacebuilding processes is crucial.

The local government underestimates its role in conflict management processes in the community and does not have a vision and specific plan in this regard.

Citizens, including ethnic Georgians, ethnic minority groups and IDP are not hostile towards different groups, although there is certain isolation and the lack of integration that has to be addressed, especially in the case of IDP.

Young people of different ethnicities and faith hold less prejudices towards each other and are connected by friendship much stronger than adults.

Police are mostly not trusted.

According to participants of FGDs, religious institutions do not usually engage in conflict situations and do not play any role in conflict resolution.

EUMM is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission of the European Union, which is deployed in Georgia since 2008, although it has not been mentioned by any of the participants of the FGD as an actor having an impact on conflict situations or peacebuilding in the community.

Media - local media is considered to contribute to conflict resolution and peace building, while channels, broadcasting on national level are perceived by local society as non-sensitive and oriented on own commercial interests.

Teachers are considered to have an important role in the issues of equality and relations between different ethnic groups, although very few of them are aware of their potential impact on the issue.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is highly recommended to raise the awareness of local government in regard to the peacebuilding and actualization of their role in the process. In order to moderate the isolation between different ethnic and social groups, it is important to involve them in joint, equal-status cooperation activities. It is important to raise the awareness of teachers on their role in equality issues and supporting harmonious multiethnic environment.

2.1.4. Involvement of Men, Women and Young People in Peacebuilding Processes

52.2 % of survey respondents from Mereti community find it important to involve women in peacebuilding process, while 18.9% find it very important. 53.3% think that involvement of men is important, while 38.9 believe it's very important. 44.4% of respondents find it important to involve young people in peacebuilding initiatives, and 46.7% think that youth involvement is very important. Most of the participants of FGDs stated that participation of men, women and young people in peacebuilding initiatives is equally important and expressed their motivation to be engaged in peacebuilding process. Few male participants think that peacebuilding is solely men's role. Several women express the lack of motivation regarding participation, as they are not optimistic about the results.

None of the abovementioned groups claimed to be involved in peacebuilding processes during the FGDs. 94.4% of survey respondents from Mereti community also never participated in any peacebuilding initiatives. Even though 44% of survey respondents say that young people are more or less involved in peace building initiatives, young people themselves do not confirm this during the FGDs. The main reason, given by participants is the lack of opportunities to get engaged.

Civil society organizations, as well as local government representatives recognize the importance of including women and young people in peace building processes.

The lack of NGOs on the other side of the ABL is considered a serious obstacle for the peacebuilding process as well.

According to participants of FGDs, Russian border guards are considered an important barrier in the peacebuilding process which undermines the harmonization of relations of civilian population on both sides of the border.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is important to raise the awareness of community members (especially men) on conflict management, peacebuilding and involvement of men, women and youth in peacebuilding initiatives.

2.1.5. Dividers

Language barrier seems to be a serious obstacle for the quality communication and cooperation of different ethnic groups.

The lack of communication and discussion among different groups, especially IDPs and representatives of hosting communities.

Prejudices towards the IDPs can significantly harm healthy and harmonious coexistence of different groups in the community.

The lack of joint initiatives is a hindering factor for harmonious and efficient coexistence of different groups, including ethnic minorities and IDPs.

Controlled crossing point, creeping occupation and detention of citizens significantly threatens the security of the community and has a meaningful negative impact on community life.

Passive role of government in conflict management and peacebuilding is a high number of lost opportunities to connect community members, involve them in peacebuilding processes and make an impact on the community.

Gender-based segregation in regards to peacebuilding may lead to the lack of motivation and participation of women as a result.

The lack of awareness on peacebuilding process, methods and tools is an important obstacle for community members to initiate peacebuilding interventions.

2.1.6. Connectors

NGOs implementing various interventions in the community are a strong connecting factor; Experience of living in borderline community is a connecting factor for the populator of target community as well.

Young people who have less prejudices towards different groups and are more connected to each other play an important role in strengthening the bonds of community members.

Interest in peace and security is a strong connecting factor, potentially uniting the community around the common needs.

Shared experience of living in borderline community, facing security issues is a connecting experience for Mereti population.

Table 1.

	Dividers/Tensions sources	Connectors/Capacity for Peace
Systems and Institutions	Osetian side of Controlled Crossing Point Passive role of government	Civil Society Organizations, INGOs
Attitudes and Actions	Isolation, the lack of discussion The lack of joint civic participation Gender-based segregation in regard to involvement in peacebuilding The lack of inclusive decision-making processes The lack of awareness of community on peacebuilding	Connected youth; Involvement in joint activities
Values and Interests	Prejudices, perceived prejudices, stereotypes in regard to IDPs	Peace, Security
Experiences		Shared experience of living in borderline community; Joint involvement in social life
Symbols, occurrences	Language barrier, Detention of Georgian citizens, creeping occupation	

2.2. Kazreti community, Bolnisi municipality

2.2.1. Types of existing and potential conflicts

According to FGDs, as well as other stakeholders, majority of conflicts taking place in Kazreti community occur on the basis of day-to-day situations. However, FGDs disclosed number of latent conflicts, which have to be addressed in advance.

Internally Displaced People

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

☑ **Recommendations:**

Since there are certain signs of isolation visible, it is highly desirable to engage both – IDPs, as well as representatives of hosting community in joint activities in order to provide opportunity for equal-status cooperation, as an efficient tool for decreasing intergroup tensions.

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

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 young people coming from different ethnic backgrounds. They recall only two serious conflicts that occurred on ethnic grounds.

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 on 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 believe that more joint activities will contribute to better coexistence of people with different ethnic backgrounds.

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 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

It is noteworthy that ethnic Georgian women expressed relatively more discontent with and disapproval of ethnic minorities.

“We almost talk to them in their own language. Actually, I’m just saying that, I would not really care about addressing them in their language”

Female, ethnic Georgian participants of FGD

“Unfortunately, there are more mixed marriages taking place nowadays, unfortunately for me personally.
“

Female, ethnic Georgian participants of FGD

☑ 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 and religious minorities. For the best results, it is desirable to conduct both – separate, as well as joint activities involving different ethnic and religious groups.

It is highly recommended to involve all the ethnic and social groups, coexisting in the community in joint activities. It is crucial to use culture-sensitive approaches and take the local context into consideration. Working with women groups is particularly important in the case of Kazreti community.

2.2.2. Security

Living environment is assessed as fairly safe by representatives of the ethnic minorities as well as by ethnic Georgians both according to surveys and the FGDs. 54.2% of survey respondents stated that they feel completely safe to live in Kazreti community, while 42.5% feel safe. FGD participants believe that it’s equally safe for everyone in the community. Several respondents expressed their concern regarding the law enforcement and equality of rights in this respect.

2.2.3. Actors and their role in conflict resolution/transformation

Following actors have been identified for Kazreti community

- Local government
- Civil Society Organisations
- IDPs
- Ethnic Georgians
- Ethnic minority groups
- Youth
- Police
- Religious institutions
- Rich Metals Group – Private company
- Media

According to participants of FGDs, local government is quite passive in conflict prevention and management activities. Participants cannot recall any cases of CSOs participating in conflict resolution

too. The level of awareness on the role of local government and civil society organizations in conflict management is low among community members.

The local government does not have a clear idea of its role in conflict management processes in the community and does not have a policy and, therefore specific plan in this regard.

Citizens, including ethnic Georgians, ethnic minority groups and IDP are not hostile towards each other, although there is certain tension that requires attention.

Young people from different ethnic and religious groups are more receptive towards each other and have stronger connections comparing to adults.

Police are mostly not trusted.

According to participants of FGDs, religious institutions do not involve themselves in conflict situations and do not take part in conflict resolution.

Media - local media is considered too weak to contribute to conflict resolution while channels, broadcasting on national level, are perceived non-sensitive towards the local context.

Representative of private sector, Rich Metals Group (RMG) operating in the community is named as a main employer, furthermore, almost the only employment opportunity in the community and main contributor to youth-related activities in Kazreti community

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is highly desirable to strengthen the role of local government on conflict management and raise their awareness on their role in the process. In order to minimize the level of isolation between different ethnic and social groups in the community, it is recommended to involve them in joint, equal-status cooperation activities.

2.2.4. Involvement of Men, Women and Young People in Peacebuilding Processes

27.5.2 % of survey respondents from Kazreti community find it important to involve women in peacebuilding process, while 26.7.9% find it very important and 35.8% find it neither insignificant, nor important. 38.3% think that involvement of men is important, while 28.3% believe it's very important and 29.2% think it's neither insignificant, nor important. 28.31% of respondents find it important to involve young people in peacebuilding initiatives, 41.7% think that youth involvement is very important and 20.8% find it neither insignificant, nor important. Understanding of the role of men, women and youth in conflict management and peacebuilding is low among community members, although the attitude towards the participation of men, women and young people in peacebuilding in general is positive.

Most of the respondents expressed their motivation to be involved in peacebuilding process, although 95% of survey respondents said they have never participated in any peacebuilding activity.

Non-governmental organizations and local policy makers are aware of importance of including women and young people in peace building processes.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is extremely important to raise the awareness of all groups on conflict management, peacebuilding and involvement of men, women and youth in peacebuilding activities.

2.2.5. Dividers

Language barrier seems to be an important obstacle for the communication and meaningful cooperation of different groups in the community.

The lack of communication and discussion among different ethnic and social groups undermines harmonious coexistence of different groups, including ethnic minorities and IDP.
The lack of joint initiatives is a hindering factor for amicable living of different groups, including ethnic minorities and IDP.

Passive position of government in conflict management and peacebuilding does not contribute to connection of community members and their involvement in peacebuilding processes.

The lack of competences of local community on peacebuilding process makes it hard for community members to address communication obstacles at the early stages.

2.2.6. Connectors

Private company – Rich Metals Group is the main employer in the community and provider of youth-related, infrastructural and social initiatives, thus connecting community members of different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds.

NGOs carrying out different activities in the community are a strong connecting factor;
According to FGD participants, elderly center existing in the community connected people of different ethnicities and religions much better, than being neighbors for decades. Having space for sharing each other's cultures, similarities and differences made great influence on relations between different groups.

Experience of living in multiethnic community is a connecting factor for the population of target community as well.

Young people who are more receptive towards different groups and more connected to each other regardless ethnic, religious or social background, play a meaningful positive role in strengthening the bonds of the community members.

Joint involvement in social life is a strong connector, which can have a meaningful impact on harmonious coexistence of different groups in the community.

Table 2.

	Dividers/Tension sources	Connectors/Capacity for Peace
Systems and Institutions	Passive role of government in conflict management and peacebuilding	Civil Society Organizations, INGOs Rich Metals Group (RMG) Elderly center

Attitudes and Actions	Isolation, the lack of discussion The lack of joint civic participation The lack of awareness on peacebuilding processes	Connected youth; Involvement in joint activities
Values and Interests	Prejudices, perceived prejudices, stereotypes	
Experiences		Joint involvement in social life
Symbols, occurrences	Language barrier	

2.3. Muzhava community, Tsalenjikha municipality

2.3.1. Types of existing and potential conflicts

According to FGDs and interviewees from different sectors, majority of conflicts happening in Muzhava community are based on regular, day to day situations – family conflicts, conflicts between young people in the streets, conflicts based on political views.

Local population explains the absence of conflicts in the community with the small size of the community, the lack of diversity of ethnic, religious and social groups.

Local Government

There were cases of tensions between the population and the local government, when local citizens staged a protest against the local government for neglecting their multiple requests to fix the roads in the community.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is highly recommended to work on awareness raising of local government regarding inclusive decision-making process.

Internally Displaced People

FGD participants state, that as the IDP moved to Muzhava community quite a long time ago, they are fully integrated and the relations are harmonious. Respondents noted, that due to the high level of integration, people sometimes are not even aware about each other's' IDP status.

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

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

2.3.2. Security

44.4 % of survey respondents stated that they feel completely safe to live in borderline community of Muzhava and 34.4% feel safe. Nevertheless, during the FGDs there were various concerns on security issues expressed by respondents. According to participants, the main factor of insecurity is the borderline location of the community. Participants noted, that greater involvement of government and INGOs in security issues would allow them to feel safer. According to several respondents, safety in their community is just an illusion.

“If it was safe, this would not happen. Four people drowned while crossing the border “.

Community member

Focus group participants believe that environment is less safe for those, who live closer to the border line.

2.3.3. Actors and their role in conflict resolution/transformation

Following actors have been identified for Muzhava community

- Local government
- Civil Society Organisations
- IDPs
- Local community
- Youth
- Police
- Religious institutions
- European Union Monitoring Mission

According to FGDs, local government is not active in peacebuilding interventions, while respondents believe it's potential role in peacebuilding is crucial.

The local government has a limited awareness on its role in conflict management processes in the community and does not have strategic vision of the process.

FGD participants assess involvement of CSOs in peacebuilding interventions as active, although some respondents believe that higher degree of involvement of experienced civil society organizations and INGOs in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, especially initiating such interventions is crucial.

IDPs are fully integrated in hosting community and are not considered as a separate social group.

Local community – Hostile attitudes are not common in the community, community members are peaceful and motivated to be part of the peacebuilding process.

EUMM is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission of the European Union, positioned in Georgia since 2008. Nevertheless, none of the actors mentioned EU monitoring mission as an actor, having an impact on security, conflict situations and peacebuilding.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is highly recommended to strengthen the awareness of local government on peacebuilding and help them to actualize their role in the process.

2.3.4. Involvement of Men, Women and Young People in Peacebuilding Processes

51.4 % of survey respondents from Muzhava community find it important to involve women in peacebuilding process, while 27.1% find it very important. 35.7% think that involvement of men is important, while 58.6 believe it's very important. 37.1% of respondents find it important to involve young people in peacebuilding initiatives, and 52.9% think that youth involvement is very important.

Majority of FGD participants strongly believe that involvement of young people and women in peacebuilding process is crucial, although young people fear that the older generation won't support youth participation in peacebuilding due to the lack of experience of young people. Women believe that diplomacy and constructive communication are strong sides of the female that can be efficiently used in public diplomacy, although some of them suppose that part of male population of the community might not be happy with women involvement.

Civil society organizations and local civil servants recognize the significance of involvement of women and young people in peace building activities.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is recommended to raise the awareness of community members (especially men) on conflict management and peacebuilding processes, as well as importance of participation of men, women and youth in peacebuilding interventions.

2.3.5. Dividers

The lack of peacebuilding initiatives in the community with high involvement potential and motivation undermines the trust of the community towards the CSOs, INGOs and government.

The lack of awareness on peacebuilding process, methods and tools is an important obstacle for community members to initiate peacebuilding interventions.

The lack of inclusive decision-making process is the lost chance of connecting community members stronger.

Perceived lack of acknowledgment of their role in peacebuilding by youth and women may lead to the lack of motivation and participation as a result.

Controlled crossing point and detention of citizens undoubtedly threatens the security of the community and has a significant destructive impact on the life of community members.

2.3.6. Connectors

NGOs implementing various initiatives in the community is a strong connecting factor;

Shared experience of living in borderline community is a connecting factor for Muzhava community.

Community members, strongly motivated to get involved in peacebuilding initiatives is a strong connecting factor.

Absence of prejudices towards different groups is an important connector in Muzhava community.

Interest of community members in peace and security with potential uniting effect on the community is a strong connecting factor.

Table 3.

	Dividers/Tensions sources	Connectors/Capacity for Peace
Systems and Institutions	Abkhazian side of Controlled Crossing Point	Civil Society Organizations, INGOs
Attitudes and Actions	Perceived lack of acknowledgement among young people Perceived (and possibly real) negative attitude of men towards participation of women in peacebuilding initiatives. The lack of awareness on peacebuilding The lack of peacebuilding initiatives	Integrated IDP community Strong motivation to get involved in peacebuilding initiatives
Values and Interests	The lack of inclusive decision-making processes	Peace, Security
Experiences		Shared experience of living in borderline community;
Symbols, occurrences	Detention of Georgian citizens	

2.4. Rike community, Zugdidi municipality

2.4.1. Types of existing and potential conflicts

According to participants of focus group discussions and other actors, most conflicts taking place in Rike community happen on the basis of everyday situations and politics – conflicts between neighbors, family conflicts, conflicts at school, conflicts based on political views etc. Nevertheless, FGDs revealed a number of hidden conflicts, which have to be addressed in advance

Internally Displaced People

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, certain discontent and prejudices towards the IDP were expressed during the FGD.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is highly desirable to organize joint activities for internally displaced people and representatives of hosting community in order to provide them with equal-status cooperation opportunities.

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

According to respondents, there are no ethnic minorities existing in Rike community. There are several families of different ethnicities in Zugdidi municipality – Assyrians, Ukrainians and few others, who are fully integrated in local society.

There is only one religious minority in Zugdidi municipality – The witnesses of Jehovah. According to respondents, attitude towards this particular minority is neutral.

2.4.2. Security

71.1% of survey respondents stated that they feel completely safe living in Rike community and another 15.6% feel safe. Participants of FGDs clarify, that unlike Shida Kartli region there is no creeping occupation in Samegrelo region, and people feel relatively safe with fixed borders. Certain doubts were expressed about security due to the distrust of the police. According to number of FGD participants, it doesn't feel safe when you know that detentions of local citizens can take place at any given time.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is desirable to come up with relevant interventions in order to strengthen the communication between the police and local population.

2.4.3. Actors and their role in conflict resolution/transformation

Following actors have been identified for Rike community

- Local government
- Civil Society Organisations
- IDPs
- Local community
- Youth

- Police
- Religious institutions
- European Union Monitoring Mission

The role of local government in conflict resolution and peacebuilding was assessed by FGDs as passive, while respondents consider its potential role in peacebuilding as important. The local government does not have a clear vision of its role in the process and has no strategy developed in this regard.

One of the participants expressed an opinion, that peacebuilding issues are usually solved more on national level rather than local, although could still think of some initiatives that can potentially contribute to peace on the local level.

„Peace issues are not solved on the local level, they are usually solved on national level, although escalation of conflicts can also be prevented on the local level through different activities, such as cultural events for instance”

Focus group participant

The awareness of community members on peacebuilding is low.

Involvement of CSOs in peacebuilding activities is evaluated by FGD participants as active and much more efficient comparing to the role of local government.

IDP seem to be integrated, although certain prejudices existing towards the group in the hosting community is obvious.

Trust of local citizens towards the police is low. According to representative of the CSO, police was much more helpful and constructive 5-7 years ago and is often a source of conflict themselves these days.

The opinion on the role of religious institutions in conflict management and peacebuilding is divided. Part of respondents believe that involvement of religious institutions potentially escalates conflicts even more, while other respondents believe that religious institutions (church in this case) can play an important role in conflict resolution and bring positive examples from their experience.

EUMM is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission of the European Union, which operates in Georgia since 2008. Strangely enough, EUMM has not been mentioned by respondents and interviewees as a stakeholder having impact on conflict situations or peacebuilding in the community.

☒ **Recommendations:**

It is highly desirable to strengthen capacities of local government in regard to the peacebuilding in all three components of competence: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Raising the awareness of local community on peacebuilding and their potential role in the process can have an important impact on involvement of community members in peacebuilding process.

It is highly recommended to engage IDPs and representatives of hosting community in shared events in order to minimize prejudices and strengthen bonds between groups through equal-status cooperation.

2.4.4. Involvement of Men, Women and Young People in Peacebuilding Processes

42.2% of survey respondents from Rike community find it important to involve women in peacebuilding process, while 30% feel it very important. It's noteworthy, that 23.3% find it neither insignificant, nor important. 23.3% of respondents think that involvement of men is important, while 74.4% believe it's very important. 30% find it important to involve young people in peacebuilding initiatives and 64.4% think it's very important to involve youth in peacebuilding processes.

It's important to note that according to survey results, involvement of men in peacebuilding initiatives is supported much better than involvement of women. This indicates the low level of awareness of women's role in peacebuilding and gender-based segregation in this regard.

Majority of FGD participants strongly believe that involvement of citizens, and especially women in peacebuilding process is crucial. According to respondents, women have specific set of characteristics that makes them efficient in peacebuilding, although they believe that specific competences are also necessary to participate as efficiently as possible.

Representatives of CSOs also recognize a crucial role of female and youth participation in peacebuilding. Furthermore, they believe that peacebuilding competences can and should be developed from kindergarten age.

90% of survey respondents stated that they have never participated in any peacebuilding intervention. Nevertheless, participant of FGD shared their experience on involvement in peace program, which includes meetings with Abkhaz peers on the neutral territory.

☒ **Recommendations:**

Raising awareness of community representatives (especially men) on peacebuilding and participation of men, women and youth in conflict management activities is crucial.

2.4.5. Dividers

Prejudices towards the IDPs can strongly undermine healthy relations of different groups in Rike community.

Gender-based segregation in regard to peacebuilding may lead to the lack of motivation and participation of women as a result.

Controlled crossing point and detention of civilians has a meaningful negative impact on security and the quality of life in the community.

The lack of competence in peacebuilding is an important obstacle for community members on the way to initiating peacebuilding actions.

Police, which according to respondents lost the trust of people, is a great source of feelings of insecurity and uncertainty, which undermines harmonious life of the community.

The lack of inclusive decision-making process denies them a chance to connect and participate in community development.

2.4.6. Connectors

Civil society organisations, organizing different actions in the community are a strong connector. Shared experience of living in borderline community and community members, determined to participate in peacebuilding interventions are strong connecting factors for Rike community.

Importance of peace and security for each and every community member is a strong connecting element too.

Table 4.

	Dividers/Tensions sources	Connectors/Capacity for Peace
Systems and Institutions	Abkhazian side of Controlled Crossing Point, Police	Civil Society Organizations, INGOs
Attitudes and Actions	Gender-based segregation in regard to involvement in peacebuilding, The lack of inclusive decision-making processes, The lack of awareness of community on peacebuilding	Strong motivation to get involved in peacebuilding initiatives
Values and Interests	Prejudices towards IDPs	Peace, Security
Experiences		Shared experience of living in borderline community
Symbols, occurrences	Detention of Georgian citizens	

3. Conclusions

Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality is the main state institution responsible for peace building, reconciliation and minorities in the country, which implements its responsibilities through following schemes:

- Interim government commission for responding to the needs of the affected population of borderline villages
- State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration
- Minister's Vision on the Policy of Peace

It's important to mention that the state strategy of Georgia on de-occupation and Peaceful Resolution of Conflict is being elaborated at the moment by inter-agency state commission and is expected to be out by the end of the year, although the office of the State Minister has a policy-making and coordinating functions and highly depends on partner institutions and donor organizations when it comes to implementation of the action plans.

The legal frame related to the areas of the interest of this study includes following documents:

- The law of Georgia on occupied territories
- National concept on tolerance and civic integration

Types of conflict:

Internally Displaced People

Despite the fact that there are no open conflicts between IDP and representatives of hosting communities taking place in the areas targeted by intervention, and no hostile attitude was expressed by participants of FGD towards another group, certain degree of isolation, discontent and the lack of integration was revealed in Mereti, Kazreti and Rike communities.

Situation is different in Muzhava community, where according to FGD participants, internally displaced people are fully integrated and the relations are harmonious. Representatives of hosting community explain this with the small size of the community and the long-standing nature of displacement of IDP.

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Situation on relations with ethnic and religious minorities looks similar in Mereti and Kazreti communities. In both areas, most of the FGD participants demonstrate almost perfect relations with ethnic and religious minorities during discussions. However, occasional remarks of some participants reveal certain signs of segregation, prejudices and latent conflicts.

It is noteworthy, that ethnic minority representatives in Kazreti community tend to refrain from expressing their real needs, possibly out of fear of escalating intergroup conflicts in the community.

There are no ethnic minorities represented in Muzhava and Rike communities. Few families with different ethnic backgrounds living in the communities are fully integrated and are not perceived as representatives of minorities by the mainstream society. Only one religious minority – the witnesses of Jehovah are represented in Samegrelo region. According to respondents they are not discriminated and stigmatized.

Government

The competences of local government of Tsalenjikha municipality on inclusive decision-making process is low, which causes discontent and even a protest of local population.

Security

According to study, lowest number of respondents feel completely safe to live in Mereti community (21%). This number is relatively higher in other borderline communities - Muzhava (44.4%) and Rike (71.1). Even though all borderline areas share key causes of insecurity – living close to the borderline and detained civilians, there is one more factor that makes difference between the borderline communities of eastern and western Georgia. Creeping occupation in Mereti community and constant uncertainty related to this phenomena seems to be an enormous threat to perceived security of community members.

Living environment is assessed as fairly safe in Kazreti community. It is evaluated as equally safe for all ethnic and social groups represented in Kazreti. The main concern related to security in Kazreti community is the issue of law enforcement and equality of rights in this respect.

The trust of citizens towards the police is low in all target communities.

Actors and their role in conflict resolution/transformation

Involvement of local government in conflict management processes and peacebuilding interventions is assessed as passive in all target communities. Local policy-makers do not hold enough competence in regard to peacebuilding and do not have strategic vision in this direction.

Involvement of CSOs in peacebuilding interventions is evaluated as active and much more efficient comparing to local government in all communities except Kazreti. Respondents from Kazreti community cannot recall any cases of CSOs participating in conflict resolution.

Ethnic Georgians living in target communities – IDPs as well as representatives of hosting communities and representatives of ethnic minorities are not hostile towards different groups, although certain isolation, the lack of integration and minor prejudices in the communities are obvious. Muzhava community seems to be the most peaceful and close-knit community out of all target areas.

Young people with different ethnic and religious backgrounds hold less prejudices towards each other and have stronger connections comparing to adults in Mereti and Kazreti communities.

Police are not trusted in all target communities

According to study findings, religious institutions do not interfere in conflict situations in Mereti and Kazreti communities. Respondents do not have clear opinion on the role of religious institutions in conflict management in Muzhava community, while in Rike community, the opinion on the role of religious institutions is divided. Part of respondents believe that involvement of religious institutions escalates conflicts even more, while others believe that religious leaders can have a positive impact on conflict resolution.

European Union Monitoring Mission is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission, which operates in Georgia since 2008. Strangely enough, EUMM has not been mentioned by study respondents in borderline communities as a meaningful stakeholder having impact on conflict situations or peacebuilding in the community.

National-level media channels are considered as non-sensitive towards the local context and oriented on their own commercial interests by community members in Mereti and Kazreti. Local media is considered to contribute to conflict resolution, although is perceived as too weak to have an impact on peacebuilding processes.

Teachers are considered to have an important role in the issues of equality and relations between different ethnic groups, although according to representatives of ethnic minorities, very few of them are aware of their potential impact on the issue.

Actor from the private sector – Rich Metals Group (RMG) operating in Kazreti community is considered as a main employer in the community and leading contributor to youth-related initiatives in Kazreti.

Involvement of Men, Women and Young people in Peacebuilding Processes

Percentage of respondents, thinking that involvement of women in peacebuilding activities is very important turned out to be lowest in Kazreti community (27.5%). So is the number of respondents, who believe that men should be involved in conflict management (28.3). Even though percentage of respondents in Kazreti, who support involvement of young people in peacebuilding interventions is

relatively higher (41.7%), findings demonstrate the low level of awareness of Kazreti community members on peacebuilding and involvement of men, women and youth in conflict resolution initiatives.

Percentage of respondents, supporting involvement of men, women and youth in peacebuilding processes are relatively higher in Mereti, Muzhava and Rike communities. Nevertheless, the need of awareness raising of community members on peacebuilding interventions as well as participation of men, women and youth in conflict resolution is obvious.

It's worth mentioning, that there is significant difference between the percentage of respondents who believe that involvement of men in peacebuilding is very important (74.4) and those who think that women should be definitely involved in peacemaking (42.2) in Rike community. This indicates the need to especially focus attention on working with male members of the community.

Majority of respondents are willing to participate in peacebuilding processes although very few of them claimed to have the experience of involvement in conflict resolution activities.

Dividers

According to findings of this study, language barrier is one of the biggest dividers in Mereti and Kazreti communities.

The lack of communication and discussion among different ethnic and social groups as well as the lack of joint initiatives undermines harmonious coexistence of different groups, including ethnic minorities and IDP in Mereti and Kazreti communities.

Healthy communication of different groups in all target communities can be significantly harmed by prejudices, existing towards different social, religious and ethnic groups.

Passive position of government in conflict management and peacebuilding in all target municipalities does not contribute to connection of community members and their involvement in peacebuilding processes.

The lack of competence in peacebuilding is an important obstacle for community members on the way to initiating peacebuilding actions and involvement in conflict resolution interventions in all target communities.

Gender-based segregation revealed in Kazreti and Rike municipalities in regard to peacebuilding may lead to the lack of motivation and participation of women as a result.

The lack of peacebuilding initiatives in Muzhava community with high involvement potential and motivation undermines the trust of the community towards the CSOs, INGOs and government. At the same time, perceived lack of acknowledgment of their role in peacebuilding by youth and women in Muzhava community may lead to the lack of their motivation and participation.

The lack of inclusive decision-making process is an obvious divider existing in all communities.

Controlled crossing point, creeping occupation and detention of citizens significantly threatens the security of the communities and has a meaningful negative impact on community life in Mereti, Muzhava and Rike communities.

Connectors

Civil society organisations, implementing various interventions is a strong connecting factor in all target communities.

Young people who are more receptive towards different groups and more connected to each other regardless ethnic, religious or social background, play a meaningful positive role in strengthening the bonds of the community members in Mereti and Kazreti communities.

Private company – Rich Metals Group is the main employer in Kazreti community and provider of youth-related, infrastructural and social initiatives, thus connecting community members of different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds.

Experience of living in multiethnic community is another connecting factor for the population of Kazreti community, as well as joint involvement in social life, which can have a meaningful impact on harmonious coexistence of different groups.

Interest in peace and security is a strong connecting factor, potentially uniting the community around the common needs in borderline communities as well as shared experience of living close to the ABL.

Community members, strongly motivated to get involved in peacebuilding initiatives is a strong connecting factor in Muzhava and Rike communities.

Absence of prejudices towards different groups is an important connector in Muzhava community.

4. Recommendations

Types of conflicts

Local Government

It is highly recommended to strengthen the competences of local officials on inclusive decision-making process in all target municipalities, especially in Tsalenjikha municipality, where the lack of involvement of citizens in decision-making and neglecting their requests led to open conflict between citizens and local government.

Internally Displaced People

Due to the signs of isolation and latent conflicts between representatives of hosting communities and internally displaced people in Mereti, Kazreti and Rike communities, it is highly recommended to engage groups in joint activities in order to provide opportunity for equal-status cooperation, as an efficient scientific tool for decreasing intergroup tensions and perceived intergroup threat.

Ethnic and Religious minorities

In order to prevent potential escalation of suppressed conflicts, minimize prejudices and tensions, it is essential to arrange opportunities for joint involvement for different ethnic and religious groups in Mereti and Kazreti communities. It is crucial to use culture-sensitive approaches and take the local context into consideration. It is important to make a special focus on women-oriented activities in Kazreti community. Additionally, it is highly recommended to raise the awareness of Kazreti community members of all ethnicities and religious backgrounds on human rights, especially on the rights of ethnic and religious

minorities. Separate meetings, as well as joint activities, involving different ethnic and religious groups would be desirable for the best results.³⁵

Security

Security in borderline communities is an extremely complex issue, which consists of multiple factors and depends on coordinated efforts of various actors. Unfortunately, character and amount of efforts, required to solve security issues, exceeds the capabilities of civil sector. Certain interventions, however can still be implemented in this regard.

Since the trust of citizens toward police is low in all target communities, it is recommended to plan context-sensitive intervention in order to improve communication between the police and local groups.

Actors and their role in conflict resolution/transformation

It is highly recommended to strengthen competences of local government representatives on inclusive decision-making, including involvement of men, women and young people in peacebuilding interventions in all target communities. It is important to support local decision-makers in identifying and understanding their role in conflict management and forming their vision in this regard.

It is important to strengthen competences of community members on peacebuilding and conflict-management in all target communities, empower them to initiate interventions, advocate for them and get actively involved in peacebuilding activities.

It is important to raise the awareness of teachers on their role in equality issues and supporting harmonious multiethnic environment in Mereti community.

Since Rich Metals Group (RMG) is one of the biggest and incredibly influential actor in Kazreti community, it is highly recommended to establish and maintain communication with project officers and/or factual decision-makers in the company in regard to social, infrastructural and youth-related projects in Kazreti in order to ensure synergetic effect of coordinated efforts.

Involvement of Men, Women and Young People in Peacebuilding Processes

It is recommended to initiate interventions in regard to awareness raising of community members of all social, ethnic and religious backgrounds on importance of involvement of men, women and young people in peacebuilding processes. Special focus is needed on working with male representatives of communities. Raising awareness of community members on involvement of women in peacebuilding initiatives needs special attention, since this issue turned out to be most problematic in most target communities.

³⁵ Separate sessions would give different groups opportunity to openly express their needs and challenges, while joint activities will strengthen the bonds between community members of different ethnic and religious background

Since study revealed perceived negative attitude³⁶ towards participation of young people in peacebuilding in Muzhava community, it is recommended to pay special attention to acknowledgment of the role of young people in peacebuilding.

³⁶ Young people in Muzhava community believe, that their role in peacebuilding is not recognized and supported by adults, even though neither survey results, nor FGD confirmed this thought. Objectivity of the judgment can only be assessed through further research, therefore in this study, attitude is evaluated as perceived.

ANNEX 1 – Criteria for selection of FGD respondents

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted in each target community with female and male youth (14-29 age group) from IDP compact settlements (or ethnic minorities), and wider community groups along the administrative borderline (ABL). Specific groups included girl heads of households, out-of-school girls and boys, young boys and girls with disabilities, women and girl survivors of violence, women, and girls who are early married, and adolescent mothers. Recruitment of the focus group participants was based on above listed criteria as indicated on the Table below:

Mereti (in Gori)	2 FGD	Youth from the communities along the ABL (1 FGD Male; 1 FGD Female) Criteria for participants: - 29- age group, including: male/female, socially vulnerable, PWD family member, employed, unemployed, student, girl heads of households, out-of-school girls/boys, survivors of violence, early married women/girls, adolescent mothers
Muzhava (in Tslenjikha)	1 FGD	Youth from IDP settlements - 29- age group, including: male/female, socially vulnerable, PWD family member, employed, unemployed, student, girl heads of households, out-of-school girls/boys, survivors of violence, early married women/girls, adolescent mothers
	2 FGD	Youth from the communities along the ABL (1 FGD Male; 1 FGD Female) - 29- age group, including: male/female, socially vulnerable, PWD family member, employed, unemployed, student, girl heads of households, out-of-school girls/boys, survivors of violence, early married women/girls, adolescent mothers
Rike (in Zugdidi)	1 FGD	Youth from IDP settlements - 29- age group, including: male/female, socially vulnerable, PWD family member, employed, unemployed, student, girl heads of households, out-of-school girls/boys, survivors of violence, early married women/girls, adolescent mothers
	2 FGD	Youth from the communities along the ABL (1 FGD Male; 1 FGD Female) - 29- age group, including: male/female, socially vulnerable, PWD family member, employed, unemployed, student, girl heads of households, out-of-school girls/boys, survivors of violence, early married women/girls, adolescent mothers
Kazreti (in Bolnisi)	2 FGD	Youth from Kazreti community (1 FGD Male; 1 FGD Female) - 29- age group, including: male/female, socially vulnerable, PWD family member, employed, unemployed, student, girl heads of households, out-of-school girls/boys, survivors of violence, early married women/girls, adolescent mothers
	2 FGD	Ethnic groups (mixed gender groups) (1 FGD Georgians; 1 FGD Azerbaijanis) - 18+ age group, including: male/female, socially vulnerable, PWD family member, employed, unemployed, student, girl heads of households, out-of-

		school girls/boys, survivors of violence, early married women/girls, adolescent mothers
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ANNEX 2 – 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

ANNEXES

Quantitative survey questionnaire

[Questionnaire-piloted - 27.05-clean.docx](#)

Guides for key informant interviews and focus group discussions

[Qualitative-guides-revised-31.05.2021_Final-clean.docx](#)

Respondents consent forms

[Consent forms.zip](#)

List of documents consulted

[List of documents consulted.docx](#)

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

[Gender Analysis.pptx](#)

[Conflict-Analysis.pptx](#)

Transcripts

[Transcripts.zip](#)



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