



# **EXPERIENCE AND PERSPECTIVES**

**GENDER  
ADVISORY  
COUNCILS (GAC)**

# CONTENTS

Instead of an Introduction	3
Project evaluation	4
Gender Advisory Councils – a mechanism for integrating gender policy at a municipal level	6
Perspectives of gender mainstreaming of local policy	9
Key to Success- Involvement of Various Groups of Society into the Process	14
Gender Highlights in Media	17
Needs assessment of population – basis for gender-responsive budget	21
Actions of Gender Advisory Councils for the prevention of Violence against Women	27
Kutaisi Gender Advisory Council: from the beginning to the results	30
History of Establishing and Functioning of Senaki Gender Advisory Council	35
Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Council – History of Project Implementation	40
Civil Society and Gender Equality Policy in Regions	44
Network of Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Councils – regional experience of successful project implementation	48
Network of Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Councils – regional experience of successful project implementation	51
Project results	54
Annex	56
Press-release	57
Regulations of Gender Advisory Council (GAC) under Sakrebulo	59
Memorandum of Cooperation between Ozurgeti Sakrebulo, City Hall and Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi”	62
Research of gender needs of civil groups in Senaki Municipality for integration in the local budget	66
Gender Analysis of Local Budget of Kutaisi Municipality	76

## INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION

This publication, more than any other, is a product of team effort.

We worked together, with pleasure and interest. Talking about your own positive results naturally causes such feelings.

This is why this book is different from numerous publications of Fund “Sukhumi”. It is the first time we have shared our experience in so much detail with the interested public. We have tried to show them how to do things like us, or even better than us so that they can achieve better results.

Our organization, Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi” was founded in Kutaisi in 1997 and has been active in the whole of Western Georgia for almost 20 years.

Our mission is promoting gender equality in Georgia and our projects implemented over the years serve this mission (whether it is prevention of violence against women or peacekeeping, youth empowerment or increasing women’s political participation).

In 2013-2014 Fund “Sukhumi” implemented a very challenging, important and ambitious project “Gender Advisory Councils – increasing women’s role in social changes of regions”. The project turned out to be more successful than expected- establishing Gender Advisory Councils in Kutaisi, Ozurgeti and Senaki helped increase women’s role and also brought some social changes to regions.

Effectiveness of our work has led many municipalities to express desire for establishing similar councils.

Moreover, state legislation now makes provisions for establishing gender councils.

How did we start? What did we do? How did we achieve our goals? Who supported us? What mark did we leave in the places where we did our work? The book tries to answer all these questions.

In this book we will tell you about the roads we took, our rich three-year experience, changes that we witnessed at the end of the project, the impact on society, government agencies and media, the people who contributed to these changes.

We always share our experience with everyone; help them to find new ways. For us a project is never for the sake of the project itself. Our aim is to find as many supporters as possible and help build a better life, bring more justice and equality to our country.

That was our goal in making our experience with gender issues public. Even throughout the project every activity and event was reflected on our webpage, now we offer every interested person, governmental or public group a recipe for dealing with problems, a guide for achieving good results, advice on what to do when you are starting, what works better and what to focus on.

We would like to wish success to all Gender Advisory Councils that will be established in our municipalities, success and many beneficial results.

We believe you are looking at a very interesting read.

# PROJECT EVALUATION

**Marina Gurbo**  
International Evaluation Expert

## SUSTAINABILITY

The project achieved important milestones to ensure that GACs become sustainable mechanisms of gender mainstreaming at the local level including amendments in legislations, creation of the network of GACs, guidelines for local governments, thematic recommendations and training capacity. There is confidence that GACs in three towns will continue functioning since they have been greatly supported by local institutions such as self-government and City Halls. Their ownership of the GACs was demonstrated through the approval of the GAC Regulations in all three cities (in 2014), co-financing joint projects initiated by GACs and adoption of local gender equality plans.

The capacity of staff and members of GACs developed under the project should be sufficient to continue analysis of needs, gender responsive planning and budgeting and training of staff by using their own pool of trainers. Appointment of Gender Advisers and their funding from the budget in 2017 should ensure that cooperation between representative (Sakrebulo) and implementation power structures (Gangeoba) will be promoted. Positive experience of cooperation of duty bearers (representatives of self-government) and right holders (through representatives of civil society) and media ensures confidence that such cooperation will continue. Overall satisfaction with the activities of GACs and their impact on solution of identified gender-sensitive problems manifested itself in increased involvement in work of GACs senior level decision makers and women from the target groups which demonstrates that the model proved its relevance to the needs of various stakeholders – representatives of duty bearers and right holders and there is willingness to disseminate and upscale this model in other municipalities.

Upscaling of GACs received strong support from the Gender Equality Council at the Parliament of Georgia and there are further steps defined that should improve coordination in implementation of gender equality plans between legislative and executive branches of power which should positively affect cooperation on the local level and strengthen institutional capacity of GACs to advance gender mainstreaming and to increase effectiveness of decision making. However, considering the significance of the results of this pilot project for anticipated dissemination of gender mainstreaming institutional mechanisms in all municipalities of Georgia, stronger participation of relevant national and regional level decision makers in elaboration and implementation of a sustainability and upscaling strategy for GACs could have been expected.

## IMPACT

The project produced evident impact on the legislation and local policy development which created more favorable conditions for dissemination and upscaling of GACs. As well, some impact was achieved at the institutional level of capacity of duty bearers represented by lo-

cal self-governments in three towns of western Georgia which enabled them to take over the GACs and continue implementation of gender equality plans developed with support of the project.

Capacity of right holders (women from the target groups) was also enhanced and their mobilization within Women Voter Clubs and mini-grant projects manifested itself in the increased numbers of participants in needs assessment and advocacy of gender respective needs at the local level. Participation of women became more visible through more transparent work of GACs and their accountability towards communities members regarding integration of identified needs and problems into local planning increased.

In addition, the project changed attitudes towards cooperation between local self-government and civil society and contributed to their expanded collaboration in establishment of GACs and advancement of gender equality in local communities. There was mutual recognition of benefits of such cooperation and complementarity of skills and expertise. Although the full potential that may come from consolidated efforts and increased involvement of civil society has not been explored yet, greater willingness to continue working together was demonstrated by both sides. In this regard, better synergy with other initiatives (such as self-help groups, women's rooms at the municipality and other) piloted with the support of international and civil society organizations and that promote women's participation and empowerment in the regions would be desirable.

## **GENDER ADVISORY COUNCILS – A MECHANISM FOR INTEGRATING GENDER POLICY AT A MUNICIPAL LEVEL**

**ALLA GAMAKHARIA**  
Project Director

How did it all start? This question is often asked when we start discussing the results achieved.

Well, five years ago, when the idea of the project still existed only in our minds and the possibility of effecting some change was still a dream, the words “gender” and “gender equality” were received with reservations in government bodies as well as wider public in Georgia.

Georgia was definitely moving forward outpacing its neighbours from southern Caucasus - Armenia and Azerbaijan and passing progressive laws such as Law on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence (2006), Law on gender Equality (2010), Anti-discrimination Law (2014). Several important international documents were signed such as Association Agreement between European Union and Georgia, Millennium Project with its 17 main goals. As a result, progress in gender issues became one of the priorities for Georgia.

At an institutional level, a parliamentary Gender Equality Council was formed, National Action Plan on Gender Equality was developed and adopted (2014-2016) with a key goal of increasing women’s political participation.

Even with the new legislation and signed agreements practical implementation of gender policy remained a challenge. Women’s participation in political decision-making and policy formation was still greatly disproportionate to men’s involvement in political processes and the tendency was towards decreasing the level of women’s participation in municipal and parliamentary elections. For instance, in parliamentary elections in 2004 women represented 17%, while by 2008 this representation had decreased to 6%. Similar trend could be detected in local self-government bodies where, for example, in 2002 12% were women while in 2006 this number was 11% and in 2010 -10%.

The existing situation was a cause of concern for Georgian women’s civil society organizations that put tremendous effort into advocating laws that would provide institutional and legislative framework for gender equality.

Fund “Sukhumi” has always been actively involved in the processes of formulating ideas in support of gender equality in the Georgian society.

Setting up and developing the Club of Women-Voters, School of Young Women Leaders, Women Support Centers contributed to empowering women, preparing them better for political participation, forming a new generation of young women prepared to defend their rights including the right of participation in decision-making at all levels.

Having analysed the situation we were convinced that existing gender disbalance at the national level could not be changed without first tackling it at a local municipal level.

Efforts made by women's NGOs during local elections in 2014 succeeded in increasing the number of women council members even if insignificantly from 10% to 11.6%. At the same time however, not a single woman mayor was elected in all 12 self-governing municipalities/cities. All the mayors are male and only one appointed 'gamgebeli' out of 59 is a woman.

We were constantly involved in discussing the question facing the women's civil society organizations "What should be done?"

What could we do? How can the gender situation be improved? A decision was made to apply the experience of cooperation with local government, the resource of the Clubs of Women-Voters, Women Support Centers, School of Young Women Leaders, partnership with other NGOs, Gender Network of Women of Georgia and start developing an innovative institutional mechanism to ensure gender equality at a local municipal level.

This was how the pilot project was born aiming at expanding women's participation in decision-making processes at municipal level through forming Gender Advisory Councils in three municipalities of Western Georgia – Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti. Gender Advisory Councils made up of elected members of the local Sakrebulo, community leaders, representatives of Clubs of Women-Voters and School of Young Women Leaders, local NGOs, journalists, IDPs and local population became the first institutional mechanism dealing with gender issues at the municipal level. The main functions of Gender Advisory Councils include

- initiating and participating in the development of gender-sensitive municipal program, gender policy and budget;
- monitoring and assessment of current activities from gender perspective;
- maintaining contact with the community and assessing gender needs of various social groups in the population;
- developing recommendations for local and national government bodies;
- lobbying women's involvement in decision-making processes in local self-government bodies.

The project led to increased participation of the civil society in municipal planning of annual budgets, made the process more transparent and accessible to the public, encouraged wider discussion of programs and projects targeting the community. Women's voices were heard in the process of decision-making in their municipalities and also, women became more prominent leaders in their own communities.

Local self-government is a primary structure providing population with public services including education, health care, transport, water supply and sewage system, electricity and security. It also stimulates economic development. All of this is vital for gender equality. Thus, building capacity of Gender Advisory Councils as an initial instrument in gender issues has served to increase women's participation in decision-making at municipal level. The mechanism was put into operation and male members of the local government freely admit its success:

**“When we demonstrate the effect to the public using practical examples, they will need no further guidance – they will make the choice in favour of women”.**

**Avtandil Mekvabishvili, Deputy Chair of Sakrebulo, Ozurgeti Municipality, 2014.**

**“Proposals made by women that will be put to the vote in Sakrebulo are guaranteed to get my vote.”**

**Zurab Apakidze, Member of Sakrebulo, Senaki Municipality, 2014.**

Active participation of women in the process of discussion and planning allowed to focus attention on certain issues reflecting the needs of not only women, but also other previously discriminated social groups. It has increased gender sensitivity of local governments mainly consisting of male members, lowered the level of inequality and drawn attention to specific needs of women and men.

**Gender Advisory Council means communication between representatives of various bodies, it means fruitful work. We have already solved several problems and that’s why I believe that creating GACs was a necessity”.**

**Dinara Khukhua, Member of Sakrebulo, Senaki Municipality, member of GAC, 2014.**

Raising awareness and capacity-building of local governments with regard to gender issues was an important part of this work. This mainly concerned representatives of key sectors of local administration, such as planning, budgeting and services. Local government officials lacked skills and knowledge to deal with gender issues, carry out gender analysis, process the collected information and consequently design gender policy, programs and budget giving due consideration to this aspect.

In accordance with the findings of the survey carried out among the members of the three Sakrebulos who participated in gender trainings, 85% of the participants recognized the value of the knowledge they had received. The trainings not only gave them additional knowledge, but also helped to build their skills in conducting research, raised their awareness of what gender budgeting is, how to prepare a project proposal.

**“Articles were added to 2015 budget as a result of research carried out by GAC. Unfortunately, our budget is not big enough to cover all the needs that were identified, but for the next year we have priorities that will definitely be taken into consideration. Close cooperation with executive bodies will continue and all the proposals from GAC will be analysed in detail. Thanks to better information and active cooperation with the community all the pressing issues will be reflected in the main financial document of the city –its budget.”**

**Irma Petriashvili, Member of Sakrebulo, Kutaisi, Chair of GAC.**



# PERSPECTIVES OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING OF LOCAL POLICY

**ALLA GAMAKHARIA**  
Project Director

On September 1, 2013 Fund “Sukhumi” started implementation of the project “Gender Advisory Councils – increasing women’s role in social changes of regions”.

This pilot project is aimed at establishing a new institutional mechanism for gender policy at municipal level. The project is supported by UN Women – Fund for Gender Equality (New York) and implemented in coordination with the UNW country office in Georgia. The main aim of the project is to increase the participation of women in planning and decision-making at the level of local government bodies in three towns in western Georgia through implementing 5 strategies:

The first strategy: increasing the participation of women in decision-making at the municipal level and inclusion of gender aspects in strategies and programmes of the local self-government through the establishment of GACs at Sakrebulo in Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti.

The second strategy: raising awareness of local government and society about the importance of gender equality and civil participation in decision-making at the local level.

The third strategy: promoting gender budgeting through providing guidance and training in gender analysis of budgets.

The fourth strategy: advocacy and lobbying of legislative changes concerning gender issues initiated by the network of GACs.

The fifth strategy: strengthening capacity and increasing participation of IDP and ethnic minority women in local processes.

In order to implement the five strategies the following short-term and mid-term goals were identified:

1. Established Gender Advisory Councils in three cities (Kutaisi, Ozurgeti, Senaki) have promoted gender components in local budgets and program planning.

In achieving this goal a set of activities was planned. First of all, local municipalities had to be officially notified of our desire to work in this direction and ensure that they showed not only willingness to cooperate with us, but also readiness to promote gender components in their policies, programs and budget.

Our task was to sign a memorandum of cooperation persuading the government to cooperate with us on gender issues specifically. Considering our years of experience of working with local governments in these three cities, well-established and active resource of women and successful previous cooperation on other issues, for example the issues of prevention of violence and support of its victims, we did not foresee serious obstacles and our expectations have proved accurate. We designed a draft of the memorandum that was discussed in detail in all three Sakrebulo by their legal services, relevant committees and bureaus going through all the established formal procedures. Of course, we had to organize several information meetings with the chairs of Sakrebulo, women members as well as men members whom we knew as active and progressive people.

Consequently, as planned three memoranda were signed in the three cities – Kutaisi, Ozurgeti and Senaki. The ceremony of signing took place in a formal setting in the presence of representatives of executive government and Sakrebulo, radio, TV and printed media journalists as well as civil society institutions.

This was the beginning of a very serious and responsible stage of the process – selection of the members of Gender Advisory Councils. According to the project GACs would be comprised of 5 Sakrebulo members and 10 representatives of civil society including NGOs, Women Voters' Clubs, School of Young Women Leaders, public figures and journalists.

We developed a questionnaire that served as the main instrument for deciding whether an individual could become a member of GAC or not. The project team formed a board whose responsibility it was to analyse all the materials and approve the acceptable candidates for GAC. This selection was of key importance for the project, for its future success or failure.

In the first meeting of Gender Advisory Councils they discussed the draft of “GAC Regulations” and elected their chairs and vice-chairs. Although a common “GAC Regulations” had been drafted, each GAC approached the document in a different way introducing their own changes, additions and comments.

Immediately after GACs were established, awareness-raising and educational activities commenced. In the process members of GACs received trainings in the following areas:

- the importance of gender and gender equality, legal obligations under the national legislation;
- social duties and social responsibilities of local self-government, advocacy of topical issues;
- project design and management skills, monitoring and evaluation;
- analysis of gender budget.

All the topics were interesting and topical, and some of the members had never even encountered them in practice. However, having completed the training course they became more gender-sensitive and developed new awareness of certain issues. This was of great value in their professional as well as social activities.

2. One of the crucial strategies of the project concerned involvement of civil society in decision-making at the local level as well as awareness-raising.

Clubs of Women-Voters took serious steps in this direction holding meetings every two months where they discussed the situation in their respective cities, most burning issues and obstacles to people's welfare that could be removed through the involvement of local government bodies. They covered a wide range of issues including road safety for school pupils, a single woman whose social assistance had been terminated, stray dogs, lack of recreation areas in some street or neighbourhood, shortage of toys in a nursery school, poor lighting of a street or a yard, among many others.

Clubs of Women-Voters discussed all the activities carried out by GACs, their recommendations and proposals that were based on completed research, suggestions for new budgets, etc. They invited GAC members, representatives of City Halls, Sakrebulos and Gamgeobas to provide explanations on the issues concerning the Women-Voters. There was a regular exchange of opinions and information, awareness raising of both sides i.e. representatives of government bodies as well as society. In this way civil society became more involved in the development of municipal policy and programs, took more active part in decision-making.

Also, regular information meetings were held with various community groups including women, IDPs, ethnic groups, students and young people, people with disabilities, single mothers, teachers and intelligentsia, etc. This was an opportunity to spread information about GACs and its activities and also to arrange meetings with the members of GACs who were Sakrebulo members. Some of the questions and issues raised by the public were transferred to Clubs of Women Voters for further advocacy, others were submitted directly to relevant authorities or passed on to lawyers who were active participants of the whole process.

The lawyers held monthly meetings with various community groups and informed them on possible legal solutions to the issues that had been raised. They helped citizens write applications, official letters and other types of documents, referred some questions to GACs, to relevant authorities, etc.

We realized that however many meetings we organized it was impossible to encompass wide enough population. Thus, we involved journalists from all forms of media – TV, radio, printed media, internet publications and social networks.

Each GAC had at least one member who was media representative. Once in every two months a meeting with journalists was organized in each city. In Ozurgeti and Kutaisi these meetings were mostly held in gender media centers. This allowed us to keep journalists informed, maintain friendly relationship with them, encourage them to write articles, produce TV and radio programs on gender-related issues. These were then widely circulated on local and central TV and radio channels, newspapers and magazines, internet sources.

In addition to all this, we designed a webpage and created a Facebook page where we uploaded the news, achievements, TV and radio programs, articles, etc. in three languages. This made the information accessible to a greater number of users, people from more than 100 countries have accessed this information online.

Journal “Gender Advisory Councils” is published annually as a summative document combining all the materials on the year’s results and describing our achievements, challenges and successes.

3. One of the most impressive outcomes of our efforts is a gender budget of the municipality. We are often told that all the budgets are gender budgets as they target all of the population of the municipality. Of course this sounds logical, but there was no one to carry out the analysis and show how many gender component the budget had, or how it compared to international standards. Fund “Sukhumi” developed methodology for gender-sensitivity analysis of the budget and conducted two studies in 2014 and 2016. Findings of both can be found on our website <http://fsokhumi.ge/>, they can be reviewed and compared.

Today we can say that the picture has changed. Although not all of the three budgets (in Kutaisi, Ozurgeti, Senaki) contain articles explicitly referring to gender, many of their articles or projects have some relevance to this area and the funds allocated have increased in comparison with 2014 and 2015. This is the results of tremendous amount of work in terms of researching gender needs of population in these municipalities. All the recommendations have been sorted and analysed, a list of proposals was made for joint examination with representatives of executive authorities. Project ideas emerged as a result of educational work and population survey on gender needs and challenges. 20 projects in all were funded, mainly co-financed by Fund “Sukhumi”, but for instance Ozurgeti local self-government provided 100% funding for two projects. The projects were extremely important for raising gender sensitivity and aware-

ness in the society. They also helped empower members of GACs even more as they were the principal implementers of the projects ideas. Wide coverage of the population, participation of an impressive number of young people, women and men helped promote ideas and information on the importance of gender equality and the possibility of changing people's lives for the better.

4. Another interesting and fruitful aspect of GAC's work was networking. The first thing we did was organize a meeting with Gender Equality Council of the Parliament. Vice-speaker of the Parliament of Georgia is the Chair of the Council. In the friendly and open atmosphere of the meetings detailed information was provided on the activities of GACs of the three cities. On October 13, 2014 an expanded meeting of four GACs (Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti) with the members of the Gender Equality Council was held in the parliament of Georgia. The results of the activities of the four GACs were presented, some issues were identified that would require involvement of the parliamentary council and development of a joint strategy.

Manana Kobakhidze, Vice Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia and Chair of the Gender Equality Council emphasized that this was the first meeting of this scale with members of Sakrebulo and it had set an important precedent.

"Developing gender policy and gender analysis of the budget" – this was the topic of networking meeting held on September 19-20, 2014 by Fund "Sukhumi" for members of Gender Advisory Councils formed at Sakrebulo in Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti. It became an opportunity for exchanging information, sharing experience, initiating discussions. All the participants tried to get maximum benefit from this exchange.

"Local authorities need to state their position on gender equality clearly and take specific measures for its implementation", - was a shared view at the meeting. Practical tasks revealed to the participants the need for increasing their efforts. They drafted an action plan for implementing gender policy in regions and outlined proposals with gender priorities to be included in local budgets.

On September 23, 2015 a memorandum was signed in hotel "Legacy", Batumi creating a Network of Gender Advisory Councils. With this memorandum Fund "Sukhumi" succeeded in bringing together GACs of Kutaisi, Ozurgeti and Senaki.

It is noteworthy that members of self-government of all four cities took part in the work of this conference thus demonstrating their positive attitude and trust. This mood was well expressed by the representatives of local self-government, who at the same time, are the members of Gender Advisory council: "My colleagues and I represent here Gender Advisory Council as well as self-government. We are fully aware that non-governmental sector and society as a whole possess enormous resources and the state, local self-government more than anyone, will be the losers if we fail to make use of this resource".

The networking meeting focused on the outcomes of the activities four GACs and their future plans that respond to existing challenges as well as the desire to affect changes in the condition of women, other social groups, fair allocation of available resources. There were presentations, discussions, opinion sharing demonstrating the scope of activities of individual branches, their achievements, challenges and future plans.

On February 11, 2016 Kutaisi hosted the next networking meeting of GACs.

The agenda included discussion of amendments to anti-violence law, the role of local self-government in preventing violence and supporting the victims. The meeting held in the hotel

“Riverside” in Kutaisi gathered representatives of GACs from Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti as well as members of Sakrebulo, Gamgeoba and City Hall.

An invited expert spoke about the amendments to anti-violence law that refer to the authority of local self-government. Groups of participants developed suggestions and recommendations concerning the role of local-self-government in preventing violence and offering support to its victims. These recommendations will be taken into consideration while working on the national action plan.

The participants evaluated the meeting as informative and productive and believe that their recommendations will contribute to making efforts toward violence prevention and victim support more effective.

Thus, promoting cooperation between municipality GACs and Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia contributed to exchange of information and consultations between local and central governments, helped build successful working relationship. This cooperation served as a channel of information regarding the needs of local population and self-government. All of this was conducive to establishing relevant institutional structure and adequate legislative environment for local authorities in offering new social services and including gender-related aspects in local policy and programs.

The high point of the project was introducing amendments to Law on Gender Equality and Local Self-Government Code approved by the President on April 28, 2016, i.e. four months before the conclusion of project activities connected with introducing Gender Equality Commissions into local municipalities and introducing the position of a gender advisor. Thus, an institutional mechanism that had been planned was not only created, piloted and tested in practice in four municipalities, but it was also supported on the legislative level. However, this does not mean that our work is completed. It is only one project that has been completed, a project that has opened new roads and routes that will be long and challenging. So, the work goes on ...

The three regional conferences held in Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti can serve as proof of this point. GACs had the responsibility for preparation and organization of the conferences and they handled this task successfully.

Over 150 people representing practically the municipalities of Kutaisi, Samegrelo, Guria and Adjara took part in the three conferences. This gave us a chance to acquaint new self-governing units with the work of GACs and their achievements and also to ‘infect’ them with the idea of establishing Gender Advisory Councils in their municipalities. The participants expressed their eagerness to get involved, change the situation in their municipalities, develop gender policy.

There can be no greater reward for the work done. This was the highest possible evaluation of our efforts.

## KEY TO SUCCESS- INVOLVEMENT OF VARIOUS GROUPS OF SOCIETY INTO THE PROCESS

**LALI SHENGELIA**  
Project Assistant

Gender Advisory Council (GAC) - this is the resources, knowledge and skills, cooperation between state and society, mutual understanding in order to achieve gender equality.

These are the words from a press release, which was issued at the beginning of the project.

Cooperation between the state and society is a particular aspect of work. Engagement of different groups of the society in the work is a prerequisite of a better effect.

That is why their involvement has become an important part of our project- continuous connection with different social groups.

The work was carried out in three locations in Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti:

- meetings with Women Voters Clubs
- informational meetings with different groups of the population
- legal informational-consultative meetings

Meeting with women voters and with different groups of the population took place every other month. As for the lawyers they met on a monthly basis- one meeting in a month.

Members of the clubs of women voters and many people from informational meetings participated in surveys every year, three times a year. The surveys aimed at evaluating gender needs by engaging people in the work of focus groups where they could state their opinions out loud, prioritize the problems and give recommendations.....

What is the contribution of the social branch to the success of the project?

**Women Voters Clubs** have a long history – they have been functioning in the regions since 2006. Fund “Sukhumi” had 9 clubs within various projects in different cities- in Kutaisi, Tskaltubo, Khoni, Poti, Zugdidi, Senaki, Khobi, Ozurgeti, and Batumi. Information-educational activities have been carried out in the clubs: women of different ages and different professions were united in the clubs for the purpose of promoting equality.

The clubs in all three cities renewed their work as soon as Gender Advisory Councils were set up. The club moderators were elected as GAC members and they began intensive work from the very first month: at the club meetings they got familiar with the full context of the project (what was happening in which city, what was new), they discussed pressing issues, worked on the plans of advocacy, made statements, wrote notices, participated in meetings of Sakrebulo, shared the information with the other members of the club. At their meetings the clubs regularly invited Sakrebulo members, members of different commissions, representatives of state agencies and with the joint efforts they solved the problems with so called “single window” method.

The clubs used the same strategy. The club network was set up and the meetings were held in Borjomi and Ureki.

Women Voters’ Clubs aimed at increasing the women's role in political life. Their aim was



to make the voters more active, to introduce women-candidates' programs to people and to help them make the best choice. The effort appeared to be productive- in 2014 the number of women in the local self-government increased. In Ozurgeti two Sakrebulo were formed. In the municipality one there were 5 women out of 43; and in Ozurgeti Sakrebulo there were 7 women out of 15 members. All tribute of course goes to the club's earlier work and even more intensive activities together with Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Councils.

**Information meetings** are a traditional format for were for Fund "Sukhumi". Throughout its history the organization has held information meetings to discuss a wide variety of topics. During the project their main topic of discussion was the implementation of gender policy by Gender Advisory Councils.

This topic was discussed in separate meetings from different perspectives. They talked about the importance of gender policy, gender budget, the budget for specific programs and regional problems like hard life of socially vulnerable people, resettlement of IDPs, gender-based violence, migration, poor infrastructure, unemployment, reproductive health ...).

The meetings were held in state agencies, in non-governmental organizations, in educational and culture institutions, in collective centers - with refugees and the local population, ethnic minorities, young people, disabled people and other social groups.

**Information-consultation meetings** were carried out by the lawyers involved in the projects. Thematic meetings were held where participants could discuss the interesting issues and receive consultation on different problems; individual and collective problems were advocated and solved at such kind of meetings.

As the lawyers say, legal counseling mainly covered the social field. There have never been any special circumstances which would lead to court proceedings and would need to defend a person or a group of people in court. However, various legal documents, appeals and legal suits were prepared for several persons to be submitted to the court.

**The dynamic of social components of the project was as follows: information meetings presented the problems, the problems were discussed and advocated at the club meetings and in case of necessity the problems were discussed at Gender Advisory Council meetings....**

**Coordinated work of local self-authorities and state agencies contributed to the success of the work and made it possible to solve the problems.**

**To make the picture clearer we can demonstrate the figures:**

**More than 50 problems were raised at the meetings of Women Voters' Clubs.**

**Up to 1000 people received information on different topics.**

**With the help of coordinated work:**

**The clubs solved more than 30 problems.**

**Up to 30 problems were solved with the help of the lawyers.**

The list of solved problems is quite impressive: transport timetables improved, some ecological problems solved (dead trees were cut down, harmful workshops closed, cleaning action was held), street dogs vaccinated and garbage bins disinfected, victims of violence and

people with disabilities assisted, drainage system improved, roofs repaired, street lighting arranged, sanitary situation improved in collective centers, kindergartens furnished, roads rehabilitated, water pipes installed.....

The results of three years of work are obvious:

People who were involved in the project have changed. Their attitude to problem solving has been modified. They all realized that you can advocate your own problems. Every problem solved by them, made them more self-confident and encouraged them to advocate a new problem. All of this has resulted in infrastructural and household changes in Kutaisi, Senaki and Zugdidi. Due to the project all three cities experienced informational support, legal solution of the problems and improvement of the existing situation.

Although the work is finished, many good things have happened: some problems are solved, good relationships are built and, most importantly there are people, human resources who know how to deal with state agencies, how to advocate more effectively.

There are people of different ages and professions in Kutaisi, Ozurgeti and Senaki who are ready to actively get involved in work and strive for more equality, more justice and more comfort...



## GENDER HIGHLIGHTS IN MEDIA

**LALI SHENGELIA**  
Project Assistant

Alongside with the development of technologies for obtaining and disseminating information stream of news in media is increasing constantly. A journalist is no longer simply a conveyor of information, but an active participant of social and political processes... Thus, it is logical that active cooperation with mass media was an important part of our project.

Who we cooperated with

“Akhali Gazeti”, “Kutaisipost”, “P. S.”, “Newpress”, TV company “Rioni”, “Mega TV”, “Free TV”, Radio “Tavisupleba”, Radio “Dzveli Kalaki” - in Kutaisi

TV company “Egrisi”, “Kolkheti”, “Mtavari Tema Samegreloshi” - in Senaki

“Alioni” “Guria News”, “Guria Region”, “Guriis Moambe”, “Guria TV” – in Ozurgeti

We had had years of successful cooperation with regional media even before the project started. In all three of these cities communities were well aware of Fund Sukhumi’s gender perspective, which of course helped with building our relationship with local journalists. The new project made this cooperation more active and systematic. Kutaisi, senaki and Ozurgeti councils all included journalists; regular information meetings with local media representatives were organized once in every two months; journalists were informed about project implementation and activities of Gender Advisory Councils (GAC).

Through this cooperation we aimed not only to ensure media coverage of fund “Sukhumi” activities but also to raise journalists’ awareness of gender issues. All the media representatives we met agree that they have become more interested in social issues and gender-oriented themes appear more frequently in their reports and articles. Even more importantly, these themes have proved to be interesting for the public ...

A part of the media materials of course covered the Fund’s activities within the framework of the project - Gender Advisory Council meetings, meetings with journalists, independent projects of the GACs, gender needs assessment, developing recommendations, gender budget and local policy.

Another part of the materials focused on women in these municipalities. This included women politicians, teachers, doctors, mothers of large families, young people and elderly women...

The third group of programmes dealt with a number of topical issues for the cities and villages - violence against women, early marriages, daily life of people with disabilities, migration, employment, refugee settlement, security, environment, free time for young people, bullying ...

During the three years over 150 TV and radio programs, more than 200 articles and over 300 additional materials.

According to sociologists, media is not only an institution of socialization, but also an agent of influence establishing norms, braking down stereotypes and contributing to emergence of new views. The journalists cooperating with fund “Sukhumi” do influence public opinion and act as coauthors of social change. There has been ample evidence of this over the three years of joint work.

We could start from the period before 2014 self-government elections when they prepared

materials about candidates and presented their positions to the community. These were gender issues highlighted by the journalists:

“Social issues of voters, problems of persons with disabilities and women, additional internal transport and an entertainment centre – these are the priority directions that the candidate will focus on if elected to the city council,” – Dea managadze (Kutaisi).

“In the case of socially-oriented issues a woman candidate will solve the problem better than a man; these include the question of nursery schools, the socially vulnerable, single mothers and large families –these are the issues that a man whose brain is more occupied with infrastructural projects, may not take as close to heart as a woman,” Tea loseliani (Ozurgeti).

A series of articles entitled “Women Politicians’ Week” published by “Guria News” and focusing on the members of the city council deserves a special mention. These are diaries of active women, weekly records of their day-to-day lives, their thoughtful and caring attitude towards people. These articles could provide enough material for a separate discussion. Among others this series included diaries of Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Council members. Below a few quotes are provided:

Lali Sichinava: “I have been a member of Ozurgeti municipal council and gender counseling board since 2014. I am well aware of what troubles my community which 26 years ago received me and took me to their bosom. I feel and fully appreciate constant support and affection of the villagers and repaying this debt of love is my main goal in life”.

Lali Natsvaladze: “Today I am receiving citizens in my capacity as a member of the council. Six people have come so far from various villages. Two of them had their social assistance terminated. Even though local government can only provide recommendations in such cases, our constituents insist that we get involved. They tell me they come personally to me because they know I will take their troubles to heart. It is frustrating to see when a person needs your support, but you can do so little to help. The ministry should revise the criteria and the grounds on which they terminate or refuse to assign social assistance to people in dire need. So, my solution is that the GAC will carry out research and then apply to the relevant ministry”.

Irina Sajaia: As a member of the council and chair of the commission, I have assigned specific days for receiving constituents, but the schedules do not really matter, when a person comes here, it is our duty to respond and help. For instance, today we had two people here from Anaseuli to enquire about Hepatitis “C” Elimination Program. The municipality funds examinations for defining treatment tactics for hepatitis C patients and this is very important for people suffering from this virus”.

The widest public response was drawn radio and TV programs. Radio “Dzveli Kalaki” (Old City) covered activities of Senaki and Ozurgeti Boards as well Kutaisi. An impressive number of programs covering our work and gender issues in general were produced by “Mega TV”, “Rioni”. “TV Guria”, “Guria News”, “Guriis Moambe”, “Egrisi”.

It would be unfair not to mention the contribution of individual journalists: Giorgi Girkelidze, Nino Nikolaishvili, Marina Chikladze, Mari Kodzoeva, Tamta Dolidze, Zhana Megrelishvili, Tatia Samsonidze, Giorgi Siradze, Tea loseliani, Nino Oniani (Ozurgeti), Nestan Chagelishvili, Lana Kokaia, Eka Shalamberidze, Dea Managadze, Eka Kukhalashvili, Khatuna Kirkitadze, Teona Melkadze, Magda Purtskhvanidze, Mako Kukhianidze (Kutaisi), Medea Baghaturia, Alexi Demuria, Tako Arziani, Nana Jibladze, Mari Shonia, Maia Gergaia, Inga Gvasalia (Senaki).

There have been a lot of interesting materials: an article on a migrant woman, an interview

from a violence shelter, a report on the problems of a woman with disabilities, a program about the only male headteacher of a nursery school in Kutaisi and about a grandfathers' club in one of Kutaisi's nursery schools, reports on trainings and workshops, gender-focused analyses of budgets, recommendations developed by GACs on the basis of research, on various interesting projects implemented by the Gender Advisory Councils, final conferences summarizing the work...

This has been a three-year campaign focusing on gender equality which has succeeded in demonstrating to the public the concept of gender vision, the benefits of gender budget, the importance of equality at all levels.

This campaign has transformed the journalists' own perception of gender-sensitive topics.

Tatia Samsonidze (having worked at TV company "Guria" she is now a correspondent of the newspaper "Guriis Moambe") believes that she has always been gender-sensitive, but her awareness of these issues and her intuition have developed recently. In her opinion "Gender Advisory Councils are a very serious project implemented by Fund "Sukhumi" and its outcomes will become more pronounced over time. Political situation might change, people in certain positions of power may be replaced, but the Council will still be capable of cooperating with everyone and obtaining funds to solve gender problems as this theme will remain a priority for all political forces."

Tako Arziani (Senaki TV company "Egrisi") regularly covered sessions and activities of Senaki Gender Advisory Council. She has made it her priority to focus her journalistic activity on socially vulnerable population, the elderly, IDPs, children, single mothers and mothers of large families. Tako strongly believes that a journalist's main function is to writing about and reporting on the burning issues of the local community: "People come to us with social issues and we try to bring their problems to the attention of the community, the local government. I think this is the role of a regional TV company".

Dea Managdze (journalist of "Kutaisipost") comments "Mass media is the fourth power and the society has become really dependent on what the media covers. Thus, journalists have great responsibility". She also claims that "Journalists have a lot of work to do from gender perspective and cooperation with fund "Sukhumi" is really fruitful and beneficial in this respect".

Two of the journalists have to be singled out . Nana Robakidze a member of Kutaisi Gender Advisory Council and Giorgi Girkelidze – member of Ozurgeti GAC. Both of them were involved in local gender needs analysis, GAC project development and implementation.

Nana Robakidze can be named as one of the most gender-sensitive journalists in Georgia. Her participation in any program and her own program TV journal "7 Days" always draws attention to the activities of GAC and gender-focused topics in general. However, she admits she did not always believe that these issues should be made public, did not really feel their relevance, was not involved emotionally. Since getting involved in the activities of fund "Sukhumi" she started to appreciate the importance of gender-sensitive journalistic approaches. Nana Robakidze says, "I didn't start working with gender issues because of some trend, I believed that with each phrase, report or program I was helping women who needed support from the community. It wasn't only what I as an individual journalist did. All this is greatly due to the support of TV "Rioni" management. The journalists who joined us later also showed great enthusiasm for working on gender issues. For them as well this is not a burden or an obligation imposed by someone else. We started a little ahead of time. If we hadn't started years ago, the results

would have been delayed... We already have the results in the form of laws on gender equality and prevention of violence passed by the parliament. These things don't happen on their own, we have all contributed to achieving these outcomes and I can see my own share in all this."

Girogi Girkelidze is a member of journalist network for gender equality as well as an experienced trainer who has conducted workshops and trainings on the issues of gender throughout the city and municipality.

Girogi supervises Ozurgeti gender media centre based in the office of "Guria News". 8 cities have similar centres but Ozurgeti one is the most active. It organizes journalists' meetings dialogues with local council members, members of GAC, young people. The gender media centre has its blog publishing a lot of interesting articles and gender-focused news on increasing number of women in politics, gender budgeting, Georgian roots of gender-sensitive approaches, social integration of persons with disabilities, the problem of early marriages, violence, selective abortions, etc.

It was on Giorgi's initiative that on September 8, 2015 a training was organized for Kutaisi and Ozurgeti journalists on the issues of gender budget and the role of media in budget formation. The training was conducted by the representatives of Democratic Development Union of Georgia Levan Khintibidze and Irakli Papava. In conclusion of the training session the participants met Lali Sichinava, member of the local council and the headteacher of village Tskhemliskhidi school. In spite of severe health problems in her past Ms Sichinava had refused to give up and later she implemented a project "Cancer is not a sentence" together with Ozurgeti GAC. This was a wonderful example of gender-sensitive allocation of the budget by local self-government and this case was eagerly discussed in the media. It is worth mentioning that every activity and event of the project was reflected on fund "Sukhumi" webpage [www.sokhumi.ge](http://www.sokhumi.ge), as well as a specially created webpage [www.gac.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.gac.fsokhumi.ge).

The fund "Sukhumi" has published a journal "Gender Advisory Councils". The first issue came out at the end of the first project year 2014, the second one – in 2015 and final third issue was published in August 2016. Kutaisi, Ozurgeti and Senaki journalists were actively involved in preparing materials for the journal alongside with fund "Sukhumi" staff.

The three years of cooperation have clearly demonstrated the great value of a media component. The results of this cooperation include

- a new and fairer vision of these problems and their solutions in media,
- more emphasis on social and gender issues,
- more sensitivity and empathy,

and most importantly, optimism and belief that serious improvement can be achieved if the government, NGOs, media and society all put a joint effort into this.

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF POPULATION – BASIS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGET

**EMA KAMKIA**  
Project Assistant

Local self-government code obliges local authorities to promote gender equality. Nowadays government officials are aware of the need to take specific responsibilities and fulfil their obligations. They all realize that it is not enough to just talk about the programs in support of women and other vulnerable groups; it is not enough to just demonstrate the political will. This corresponds to the country's international commitments, including the United Nations' sustainable development the goals and targets. At present this is one of the main objectives for local self-government.

One of the main components of our three-year project was the surveys which were conducted in each of the three target municipalities.

The project envisaged carrying out surveys to study the gender needs of local social groups as well as gender analyses of the budget of self-governments. Needs assessment was carried out in all three municipalities (years 2014, 2015, 2016); in 2014 and 2016 gender analyses of local budget was carried out twice.

Considering the cost of qualified surveys and the fact that usually such costs are very difficult to allow, there is a common practice to use the surveys conducted by non-governmental organizations. They, as a rule, are less ambitious but usually appear to be very effective if there are motivated groups to conduct field work following appropriate methodology and required rules and analysis is conducted competently. There are some advantages in such kind of surveys: target groups are selected in the region and the specialists and local experts are mobilized.

It could be claimed without exaggeration that the results of the surveys conducted within the project during the three years were considered as reliable not only among local society but also among the representatives of self-government. Positive evaluations were often heard from qualified specialists. The results of the surveys were often discussed while working on the local budget. Most importantly, they have laid a foundation for the municipalities to understand that:

- it is a must to introduce research-based programs based on local statistics;
- it is impossible to know the real need for the service, if you only have information about the beneficiaries who have been receiving the service for years or about those who applied to an appropriate office. There might be some people who are in need of the service more than others but they have never applied for assistance;
- it is essential to evaluate the impact and effect of the programs. Very often the program authors and the program users have absolutely different perceptions. We can give an example from the program that was implemented in Ozurgeti municipality: a school-leaver who had successfully passed the National Exams was awarded 3000 GEL and their school 1000 GEL. The program had many opponents and it was controversial if the budget could allow the expenses

the following year. However, the survey showed that the program was named to be the most successful program implemented by the local self-government.

Within the project we tried to perform gender analyses of the budget for the first time. It is not a widely used approach in Georgia. Highly qualified specialists admit that even methodology of conducting gender analysis of the budget has not been fully developed in Georgia yet.

Our aim was to conduct the analysis identifying gender differences that are already given in the budget; to ensure that gender requirements (including those of the people with special needs) are reconsidered while planning and implementing the next (and all the following) year's programs; to improve the activities of municipalities in terms of involving various groups considering the results of the analysis.

We believed that gender analysis would definitely encourage:

a) full involvement of women, men and other social groups in the local processes and accordingly, the full use of human resources in addition to fair distribution of resources;

b) an equal and proportionate access of both sexes and different social groups (young people, disabled persons, IDPs, ethnic minorities, etc.) to the controlling instruments of local authorities. The results of the analyses would also improve the quality of constructive communication.

Gender Advisory Council (GAC) members were supposed to be involved in the field work. To be honest, that was not easy as many of them had to acquire new area and master new skills. Even we, the organizers of the survey had to work very hard. Even though we had put a lot of effort in gathering information, it appeared that we were almost pioneers in terms of conducting surveys about local needs not to mention gender monitoring of the budget and its analyses. We realized that we could only follow general recommendations and methodology.

Nowadays we can safely say that our colossal amount of effort has had its results – lots of new information has appeared, new topics and innovative programs have been introduced, needs have been identified. Of course local government would be unable to respond to all these issues due to the lack of budget but they have become aware of their responsibilities as the citizens expect from them new projects, perspectives of development.

We think that this is a good incentive to move towards decentralization. This will encourage new investments and the local authorities will stop waiting for others, take responsibility for initiatives and decisions they are authorized to make by law.

We would even say that the project is a success even only for the fact that in target municipalities local self-governments are no longer considered to be an institution issuing only one-time assistance. We think this is a step forward.

As for research methodology, we can say that the activities for obtaining answers to the questions were conducted in several directions. Namely, target groups, whose needs were studied throughout this period, and persons responsible for research were identified; gender monitoring, including gender analysis of the situations, and analysis of the budget has been conducted of different categories and groups; the following issues have been studied:

- gender aspects of the local labour market;
- the quality of women's participation in local politics;
- analysis of gender competence of self-government bodies;
- gender vectors of budgetary priorities;
- analysis of local revenues and expenditures in terms of gender;



- share of gender-sensitive expenses in the local budget;
- gender aspects of education;
- gender impact on social welfare and health care programs for municipality;
- examination of the gender policy, with different groups - persons with disabilities, IDPs, ethnic minorities, large families, young people and etc.;
- discussion of long-term prospects.

The project studied the gender needs of IDP and vulnerable women, eco migrants, the young, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women involved in small business, large families and single parents. The project was implemented with the help of local experts and the recommendations were prepared for the local programs. On the other hand, the gender analysis of the budget could identify “the gender share” (in particular, education, health care and social welfare) in the expenses of local self-government. The analysis could identify how fairly the local resources are distributed according to the needs of citizens, the effectiveness of existing programs and how it responds to the challenges.

Having studied the 2016 budgets of local governments, we tried to answer the question: how far has the situation improved in terms of gender equality? why do we need to compare the results of 2014 to the results of 2016? Gender evaluation of the budget in dynamics allows us to identify what the situation was, what it is like now and what could be in the future in terms of distributing local resources; what could the municipality do and why does it need to change its approach? How has the social environment changed and how much has the situation of different social strata improved, especially the situation of women?

We were well aware that the task was very difficult. Taking into account that the local budget is calculated without gender parameters, it is very difficult to study the impact of gender on the process of budgeting, but it is not impossible. We can talk about the impact of policy, strategic approaches and different institutions on men and women and other social groups.

The results of the analysis of local gender policy show that any program or project has a different impact on men and women as well as on different social groups. They reflect different needs for development. That makes it necessary to conduct gender monitoring of budgets on its initial -planning stage.

While planning the project one of our main aims was to establish the principles of gender budget for the local self-government. Recommendations that were worked out according to the surveys, were sent to local self-government periodically. Some of the recommendations have already been introduced into the budgets of Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti municipalities.

Gender Advisory Councils have been trying to persuade people that self-government means a collective responsibility on how to distribute local resources; which social groups require more support and how to improve local policies, especially in case of long-term programs.

**Recommendations that have been considered** - the recommendations on pre-school education could be considered to be the most successfully implemented initiatives made by the GACs. In spite of the fact that pre-school education seems to be priority for all local self-authorities, it was new for them to evaluate the service according to gender parameters. The new approach displayed many issues that had never been considered for inclusion in the budget.

In fact, the expenses on baby food have increased in municipalities; in addition to this infra-

structure has improved in kindergartens. Qualification of kindergarten teachers and other staff has been increasing regularly; new classes have been open for toddlers to let their mothers use their time effectively and to encourage them to get involved in social activities (the program clearly shows the effectiveness of municipality expenses). More importantly, the needs identified by the surveys are being improved. That means that the salaries of pre-school teachers and other technical personnel have been rising step-by-step and social welfare is being improved.

Another significant example of changing the government's approach for the better which can only be attributed to GAC involvement and research is the following fact: in many municipalities private kindergartens were considered to be a private business and consequently were paid little attention. In target municipalities the program tasks and activities equally applied to both municipal and private kindergartens.

GACs believe that the changes that have been introduced in the budget are connected to the recommendations made by the GACs based on the opinions and views of experts and specialists of various fields. These developments include the internship for young people (Kutaisi), promotion of successful students (Ozurgeti), improvement of infrastructure and prevention of socially dangerous diseases (Kutaisi), increase of social assistance for large families (all three target municipalities) and so on.

Gender sensitivity in local self-government seemed to have a significant portion in the recommendations suggested by the GACs. This covers gender education for the local authorities as well. A lot of events took place in this direction with the participation of the GACs and with their financial assistance. The events included informational meetings and trainings in the villages (Senaki, Ozurgeti), advocacy of the issues initiated by women and the young (Senaki, Ozurgeti, Kutaisi), trainings for local self-governments (in all three municipalities).

Self-governments took into account the recommendations by the GACs referring to the youth and other social groups in terms of preventing the violence. Consequently, they financed the projects initiated by the GACs along with the fund "Sokhumi" (all three target municipalities).

Unfortunately, the projects in support of socially vulnerable groups are still a challenge for local self-governments. For the GACs' advocacy and lobbying at the local level of this issue, which is a social order that was outlined in women's needs analysis, is one of the priorities.

Also, despite advocacy and lobbying at different levels GACs have so far failed to implement targeted programs and projects for IDPs' integration into the society.

Until now almost in all municipalities gender issues are integrated into the priorities of health care and social welfare but without realizing their gender-oriented nature.

Leaders of target governments claim that they have already mastered gender-sensitive nature of these areas. In particular, they try to take gender issues into consideration while planning some projects in the following areas - pre-school education, large families, protection of the elderly, support of the young (for example, Senaki municipality is working on the criteria of homecare).

The most fundamental thing that the representatives of the government are well aware of, as they say, are the following theses: "Gender-sensitive budget does not mean separate budgets for women and men. On the contrary, it provides for introduction of gender awareness into individual policies and budgets." "Gender budgeting does not mean that women are entitled



to 50%, and men -50%. There is no specific recipe for its elaboration. Each country finds their way towards this goal."

They now freely admit that before budgeting any sphere, the project should be preceded by needs analysis, research into relevant statistical data. It would indicate how it reflects the problems faced by the municipality and whether the projects are created in accordance with urgency and purpose of the issue, in order to ensure fair distribution of budget resources.

Local self-governments are going to adopt the practice introduced by the GACs and apply them to planning of future projects. They say there are enough resources at the local level (including Gamgeoba specialists, representatives of Gamgebeli in villages, etc.) to create database of local statistics. It could be updated periodically (unfortunately, Geo-statistics information is not broken down according to municipalities).

According to government representatives the surveys conducted by the GACs show that not only is there a deficit of gender-specific data in the municipalities, but also in general it is difficult to obtain any of the local statistics. For example, it is difficult to obtain any information about beneficiaries involved in social programs; actual number of beneficiaries for new programs; number of students among school leavers; number of families with more than three children; natural growth rate of population; maternal and infant mortality benchmark; the scale of women's and other groups' economic activity; the scale of migration; indicators of women's economic activity; real state of labour market (to make the case vivid it should be noted that according to Senaki municipality, only two applicants are registered in the official database as employment seekers) and so on.

There is a great need for the programs that support and encourage young people including the incentives for successful young people or internship programs. Besides general improvement of economic situation, more investment and more work places will stop the drain of the youth. The government representatives admit that only one program was implemented in Ozurgeti that could be considered as an investment in education; a new model of professional internship was introduced in Kutaisi; serious discussions are still going on (and quite productively) in Senaki that in order to stop the drain of young people we need to offer them internship programs locally and assist them in finding employment.

The research made it clear that there are some crucial needs for women. It includes not only the improvement of social infrastructure but also implementing local programs for them to run small businesses or run household business (for example, the women who take care of disabled people and the elderly or sick, etc., and do not have the possibility of an active economic activity).

The survey showed that the municipalities are gradually establishing gender approaches and community as well as government representatives understand how important it is to consider gender education and gender approaches while planning the budget. This is illustrated by the issues that have been taken into account in all three municipalities. These issues were initiated by GACs. For example, assistance for victims of domestic violence, informational-educational activities in the villages, providing gender education for the personnel of local self-governments, elimination of domestic violence. All three municipalities showed budgetary support in those issues.

Research findings included suggestions of making children's healthcare a priority. Children's health should be examined periodically. All three municipalities reflected the recom-

mendation in the following year's budget. The representatives of local self-governments highly appreciate the significant results of the surveys conducted by GACs. This is not surprising as the GACs have large number of the representatives of self-government among their members and they were directly involved in the research process.

We are pleased that their experience was reflected in many of the projects and the process continues.

That means that local self-governments make some attempts to support principles of gender equality and promote their integration into individual projects and programs. Gender priorities of local self-governments have been identified. They are: awareness-raising, encouragement of educational programs, activities to take protective measures for gender groups such as people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence.

We can say that in the past they were very sensitive to the criticism of the budget in terms of its gender parameters. Government representatives thought that gender issues were included in the budget and there was no more need of that. Gender issues were covered in education, healthcare and social welfare; they believed that programs for mothers of large families, vulnerable families, orphans and so on were directly relevant to gender. But nowadays government representatives all realize that gender approach does not necessarily mean gender programs only. Gender approach means gender-fair programs when the budget is distributed fairly according to needs and priorities within "gender-oriented fields", when the impact of any program is measured by real statistics and the demand of the society.

There is one very important thing we can't avoid mentioning- the representatives of the government began to realize that gender development will be impossible if we do not say no to programs that have short-term social effects, especially for people who have potential to move from beneficiaries of care policy into those of developmental policy. These are young people, women with entrepreneurial motivation, refugees, people with disabilities, especially those who have the desire and the ability to be integrated into the society.

These are exactly the approaches that the surveys conducted by GACs support. This practice will contribute to more efficient use of the budget expenditure and will support the development of long-term targeted programs that will be reflected in the local budgeting.

**There is one more important issue to mention:** In all three municipalities the surveys conducted by pilot GACs were used as the basis for developing their action plans and long-term strategies for gender equality, which will subsequently underlie the activities envisaged by legislation..

**There is one tendency:** if the municipalities fail to produce a clear gender strategy and action plan (which should be based on the information obtained through research), it will be very difficult to plan and implement correct gender policy.

# ACTIONS OF GENDER ADVISORY COUNCILS FOR THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**KHATUNA GOGUA**  
Project Assistant

Recently, alarming statistics of violence against women in Georgia has brought this issue to the attention of state agencies. Shocking rates of femicide in 2014 became a turning point and led the government to change its approach and work towards creating effective preventive mechanisms.

UN Committee on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women also expressed concern about the scale of violence against women in Georgia. Namely, as a result of the review of the joint fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia at its 58th session in 2014, the Committee has urged the Government to take immediate measures to eliminate the increasing number of femicides committed by husbands and partners and other forms of domestic violence.

Due to the scale of the problem it was given a particular attention in Public Defender's report. He emphasizes ineffectiveness of mechanisms of victim support: "Often, we hear the argument that domestic violence is hard to identify, as it occurs in a closed social setting. However, violence against women has long spread beyond the closed environment. Apart from the indifference of the society, the key challenge is the inefficient use of the protection and assistance measures."

Fund "Sukhumi" started speaking about these issues long ago and prevention of violence against women has long been a priority. Increasing the role of local self-government in preventive mechanisms has been discussed many times during information meetings, round tables, debates or TV discussions.

Alarm signals from the public reached the authorities in the form recommendations and proposals. As a result, the state officially confirmed its responsibility towards the problem of violence and role and functions of local self-government in violence prevention received legal ground.

The amendment to the Organic Law of Georgia on Local Self-Government (Article 16. Paragraph 4) states that powers of local self-government include promoting gender equality as well as prevention of domestic violence, implementation of protection and assistance measures.

The Fund has more than 10 years' history of cooperation with Senaki, Kutaisi and Ozurgeti municipalities. Representatives of local self-government took part in the activities organized by Fund "Sukhumi". GACs of Senaki, Ozurgeti and Kutaisi were well-aware of topicality and dangerous social effects of violence against women. The amendment to the Law on Local

Self-Government was discussed at one of the networking meetings. Representatives of GACs and local authorities reviewed the action plan of the Law on Protection from Violence and expressed their attitude to the aspects falling under the authority of local self-government. The meeting was an incentive for the participants to actually exercise their powers.

Research conducted by GACs revealed the problem of violence against women, insufficiency of resources for victim protection and other obstacles. Based on the obtained information the need for violence prevention and measures for victim assistance was reflected in the recommendations as well as gender policy document that was prepared by GACs following the findings of research in 2015 and 2016.

For instance, Kutaisi GAC applied to the local self-government with a request for a one-off assistance for the victims of violence and establishing a rehabilitation centre providing a number of services.

One-off programs and violence prevention projects –this was a proposal of Ozurgeti GAC.

Recommendations prepared by Senaki GAC included one-off assistance for victims of violence and it was reflected in the budget.

**Ozurgeti** was the first to prioritize the problem and turned it into a project. A project “Young people against domestic violence” was co-financed by Ozurgeti Municipality and Fund “Sukhumi”. The project aimed to inform the young people and raise their awareness thus leading to reduction of the problem of violence in the long term. Meetings were held in five public schools in Ozurgeti. The participants viewed shorts and videos about healthy lifestyle and balanced relationships. Discussions were held and a mini-performance was staged on the topic of gender stereotypes.

Ozurgeti GAC developed other projects as well one of them aimed at prevention of early marriages. A forum theatre was established as part of the project; it performed various scenarios in Ozurgeti public schools and held discussions.

The title of the project is self-explanatory: “Protect Children from Violence”. It is aimed at providing gender education for the staff of pre-school educational institutions and the parents.

The problem of violence occupied a serious place in the recommendations of **Senaki** GAC. Representatives of the local self-government were particularly interested in these recommendations. The idea of establishing a regional crisis centre was given serious consideration. A possibility of using a state-owned building was suggested. Several municipalities became involved in establishing the centre. Local resources were not sufficient for the implementation of the idea. However, hopefully it will find financial support in the budget.

Local authorities of Senaki approved the recommendation of the GAC and for the first time in the history of the city GEL 2000 were allocated in the local budget for a one-off assistance for victims of violence. By taking this step the government took responsibility for solving the problem of violence.

The local self-government has put a lot of effort into gender education as demonstrated by joint projects initiated by GAC. Workshops were held on the topics of gender and domestic

violence for young people and civil servants, kindergarten teachers and parents. The initiative group continued its activities in villages. According to the members of Senaki GAC, they witnessed shortage of information in rural areas and they see the necessity of more active involvement of local self-government in solving the problem.

The term 'gender' appeared for the first time in **Kutaisi** budget through the efforts of GAC. In 2016 budget there is a budget line: "awareness of gender issues and gender-related challenges, practical implementation of targeted measure in this respect".

Following the recommendations of GAC the local self-government is prepared to provide one-off financial assistance to the victims of violence. The idea of establishing a rehabilitation room caused interest during the discussion of recommendations. When work on the next year's budget starts, consultations on this issue will be renewed.

An important place in GAC's recommendations was occupied by training of civil servants on gender issues, which was reflected in the local budget. TV programs concerning gender issues also found a place in the budget, a number of programs focused on women's need.

The projects designed by Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti GACs promote adequate perception of gender equality and its acceptance by the society. Strategies designed for this purpose and activities carried out confirm that Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti self-governments recognize violence against women as a serious gender challenge and intensive efforts in this direction will continue in future.

## **KUTAISI GENDER ADVISORY COUNCIL: FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE RESULTS**

**KHATUNA GOGUA**  
**Establishing the GAC**

Piloting started in three cities and consequently three GACs were established in Ozurgeti, Senaki and Kutaisi.

The first stage of the project started with forming a GAC in Kutaisi. According to regulations the GAC membership had to include the local government and civil sector. The main goal of the project, introducing gender component into the local budget, clearly stated the priority direction of future work.

Active consultations started with Kutaisi NGOs that were interested in gender issues.

Simultaneously, meetings were organized with representatives of Kutaisi self-government. They were well acquainted with the work of Fund “Sukhumi” and this created a beneficial environment for building new relationships.

Initially, everyone involved in the project was a little apprehensive, they were unsure that local authorities would meet the idea with positive attitude and understanding. There was a doubt that they would perceive gender-focused corrections to the local budget as a direct interference of an NGO. However, the very first meeting identified the outlines of future cooperation. Tamaz Margvelashvili, then Chairman of Sakrebulo, showed great interest in establishing Gender Advisory Council at Sakrebulo and this was soon confirmed by an official memorandum of cooperation.

Formation of GAC was completed soon and the first meeting was held on January 24, 2014. In the elections of local self-government in June 2015 new members of Sakrebulo were elected. Consequently, there were some changes in the membership of Kutaisi GAC and its structure was approved as follows: 8 members of Sakrebulo, 3 representatives of the City Hall, 7 civic activists, 1 media representative – 19 members in total. Irma Petriashvili, Chair of the Culture, Education and Youth Affairs Commission of Kutaisi Municipality, was elected as the chair.

As the members of the Council mention in their self-evaluation, one of the strongest points of Kutaisi GAC is its membership, motivated professional people who determine the success of the project and the results that were achieved within the three-year period.

The format envisaged joint projects with the local government focusing on gender issues. In 2015 active steps were taken in this direction. The GAC carried out local needs analysis and the findings showed a definite need for training nursery school teachers on gender issues. This is how the project idea was born.

In the same 2015 GAC was registered as a union and started working as a separate entity on joint projects in cooperation with local authorities. After registration GAC members initiated a project aimed at gender training of nursery school teachers. Unfortunately, the project implementation failed but within the framework of other projects of Fund “Sukhumi” a series of

workshops was held on gender-related topics in nursery schools and separately, for members of the union.

The GAC analyzed the existing situation and made a decision to draw on all resources and find new roads, as involvement of various segments of the society into the projects helps raise awareness of gender issues.

## **NEW MODEL OF COOPERATION – THE FIRST PROJECT**

At the time Kutaisi City Hall was working on the project of bringing Olympic flame to Kutaisi. GAC members had an idea of making a gender contribution to this large-scale project.

“Olympic Games Give Equal Opportunities” was the GAC’s project that became the first step, and this time a successful one, on the road to cooperation with local authorities.

There was very little time for project preparation but it proved possible to introduce some gender aspects into the event. The athletes were wearing T-shirts with “Kutaisi Gender Advisory Council” written on them and gender balance was observed in the Olympic torch relay.

Natalia Todua, the project assistant believes that the project helped to increase recognizability of the GAC. In the crowded atmosphere of the event its accessories (white T-shirts, laurel wreaths, caps, balloons) worked as promotional materials as well.

This project opened a new way in the relationship and made cooperation with the local government easier. It had a number of other positive outcomes: the event was covered by the local and national TV stations, printed media and it improved the image of the GCA. Gender issues became one of the priorities for the local self-government.

## **PROJECT TWO – YOUTH CAMP IN KOBULETI**

As expected the first project was soon followed by the second one “Youth Camp – Gender Education for Young Athletes” co-financed by the City Hall. The project idea was born at one of the GAC meetings during the discussion of the importance of gender education for adolescents.

Mamuka Mghvdeladze, member of the GAC noted: “When talking about gender education it is essential what form is chosen for presenting this information to teenagers. It is our goal to make the topic of gender interesting for them. I think it would be a good idea to organize a youth camp and promote gender issues in this format”. This idea was the basis of the new project.

During their stay in the camp the young athletes attended workshops on gender issues, took part in intellect club meetings and other educational activities. Their enthusiasm led to continuing discussions in five of Kutaisi schools with 190 participants.

The project contributed to changing gender stereotypes in sports: 5 girls from camp participants joined a wrestling club, four of them – arm wrestling and four – weightlifting.

The support from local authorities was evident as the Mayor, the Chair and members of



Sakrebulo all visited the camp. Various sports competitions, educational and entertainment programs were organized and the winning teams were awarded with special prizes.

The reports about the project were broadcast by TV company "Rioni", articles appeared in printed media.

Impressions of the young campers are interesting:

"We not only relaxed but we had educational workshops on gender. I had never spoken about this topic before. I even searched the Internet for information. I learned so much that at school at the lessons of civic education we had a discussion on this topic too."- Irina Alavidze

"In the camp many stereotypes were challenged connected with the idea that girls can't do "boys' sports", girls played football as successfully as boys". – Mari Gureshidze.

Camp participants later took active part in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. The members of the GAC give particular importance to the project. In their opinion the effects will become more and more pronounced in the future as the pupils will continue to think and work on these issues.

### **PROJECT THREE: TARGET – STUDENTS**

The GAC held regular meetings with various community groups. Representatives of universities attending one of these meetings came up with the idea of organizing gender trainings for students. This idea developed into a large-scale project "Strengthening gender aspects for active inclusion in the formation of local gender policies". Members of GAC who were also members of the local self-government actively lobbied the projects. Consultations with the Mayor were successful, the local self-government approved of the idea and the joint project was launched.

The project aimed at sharing GAC's experience, promoting university involvement and developing recommendations for the local self-government on the basis of analysis of students' gender needs.

The three-month project opened with a conference "Gender component in the local budget - the current reality, the positive developments, the prospects for the future." The conference brought together under the same gender umbrella representatives of the local self-government, non-governmental sector, educational institutions and focused their attention on the importance of gender issues.

More than 100 people attended the conference including guests from 17 municipalities of Western Georgia - Kutaisi, Batumi, Ozurgeti, Senaki, Zugdidi, Poti, Tskhaltubo, Khoni, Vani, Samtredia, Kharagauli, Zestafoni, Terjola, Tkibuli, Kobuleti, Chokhatauri, Lanchkhuti, as well as professors and students of three universities in Kutaisi.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity for Kutaisi, Ozurgeti, Senaki and Batumi GACs to share experience and exchange information.

After the conference 21 enthusiastic young people were selected and offered training on the issues of gender and technique of conducting workshops. The young trainers then held 63 workshops at Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi University and Kutaisi branch of Tbilisi State University. 856 students in total took part in the trainings. With their active participation,



students' gender needs were identified and a package of recommendations was developed. On the basis of these recommendations gender policy plan was designed and submitted to the local government for consideration.

At the third stage of the project student conference on the topic "Different social segments through gender prism – students' approaches, effective mechanisms of problem solution." Student presentations at the conference presented differing viewpoints on gender issues: Nino Kurua spoke about gender imbalance in Georgian politics; Nana Kekua focused on gender discrimination in workplaces; Teona Kintsurashvili's paper dealt with gender aspects of family conflicts. How well Georgian legislation observes the principle of gender equality – Irakli Urushadze believes that same retirement age for women and men would mean more gender balance in the legislation.

It is an important achievement of the project that students of three universities in Kutaisi were mobilized for the first time for the purpose of evoking their interest in gender issues. For the first time recommendations were developed on the basis of students' needs (student accommodation, tuition fee concessions, technical equipment for classes, transport fare concessions, introducing travel cards, concessions on cinema and theatre tickets, adapting the environment for all students, cooperation with partner organizations in terms of support and employment). There is hope that these needs will be reflected in the local budget.

In conclusion of the project a journal "Strengthening gender aspects for active inclusion in the formation of local gender policies".

## **PROJECT FOUR - A NEW MODEL PROMOTING GENDER-RELATED TOPICS**

Kutaisi Gender Advisory Council considers gender education of children as one of the major challenges. "Formation of gender awareness among children of preschool age" is the fourth creative project of the GAC. It is unprecedented in Western Georgia. Within the framework of the project shadow puppet theater performed a play based on the story of "The Wizard of Oz". The play advocates love, friendship, equality, patriotism. The main character, a girl called Pirimze, has friends with different abilities and needs: a scarecrow, tin woodman and lion. They are all very different but love, friendship and desire to help one another give them the strength to overcome all the obstacles and return to her country where all are equal and respect each other's capabilities. Performance challenges social stereotypes related to equality.

The first performance was attended by representatives of Fund "Sukhumi", members of the GAC.

The project aims to promote gender-sensitivity in the children of pre-school age, help nursery school teachers and parents think differently, break down gender stereotypes and develop skills needed to build a society with equal rights.

The project envisages giving performances in Kutaisi, Khoni and Tskaltubo. Nursery school pupils, teachers and parents are beneficiaries of the project.

## **LAST PROJECT – FINAL CONFERENCE**

In completion of the project Kutaisi Gender Advisory Council organized a final conference attended by representatives of 12 administrative units of Kutaisi municipality, members of Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti GACs, representatives of NGOs and media.

The speakers emphasized the main outcomes of the three years of work: the GAC made a serious contribution to forming gender policy at the local level, drew media attention to gender issues and promoted legislative changes.

There is clear evidence that a viable seed planted in public and political life will produce excellent results tomorrow and there every precondition for this.

This is briefly about Kutaisi Gender Advisory Council, its challenges and importantly, achievements that were so hard to predict at first, but due to our joint efforts they are already part of our history.

# HISTORY OF ESTABLISHING AND FUNCTIONING OF SENAKI GENDER ADVISORY COUNCIL

**TEA TORINAVA**  
Project Secretary-Assistant

## HOW IT STARTED

Selection of Senaki as one of the target cities of the project was not accidental. Fund “Sukhumi” has been implementing projects in Senaki and cooperating with the city’s self-government for a number of years. The local authorities were the first to finance youth mini-project of activists of the Fund, through which the young people had an opportunity to create a forum theatre in one of the schools and perform several plays on the topic of domestic violence.

Such examples are numerous. It was this positive experience of cooperation that influenced the decision of Fund “Sukhumi” administration to establish one of the Gender Advisory Councils (GAC) under Senaki Sakrebulo. The project team was confident that the pilot project envisaging formation of a completely new institutional mechanism at the local level would receive support from the local self-government. That is exactly what happened. Thinking back to the first meetings of the project team with the leaders of Senaki Sakrebulo we can say that they offered full support from the very first days.

Sakrebulo authorities were actively involved in the formation of GAC, selection of members of the Council. However, in this matter Fund “Sukhumi” and the Chairperson of “Sakrebulo” did not hesitate for long. At that moment only five out of 20 members of Sakrebulo were women and it did not seem reasonable to make selection out of these five. So, all of them were included in the GAC. In order to avoid the danger of excluding men representatives of Sakrebulo from the project, we invited one more Sakrebulo member to join the GAC. Other GAC members were selected from representatives of civil society. In accordance with the project GAC was to be comprised of 5 Sakrebulo members and 10 representatives of civil society, 15 in total. Those wishing to join GAC had to fill in application forms that were thoroughly analysed by project management team and coordinated with the Chairperson of Sakrebulo.

Thus, in December 2013 Senaki GAC was finally fully formed and it consisted of 6 members of Sakrebulo and 10 representatives of civil society, people with experience of work in a variety of areas, but most importantly, previous involvement in protecting community interests, with shared gender perspectives and who were prepared to contribute to creating a better future for their city.

At the same time as GAC was formed, a Memorandum of Cooperation with Senaki Sakrebulo was designed and signed on December 21, 2013. The signing of the Memorandum signi-

fied the beginning of active cooperation based on mutual trust, respect and sharing of views and principles of promoting gender equality.

## **THE FIRST STEPS OF SENAKI GAC**

In January 2014 the first meeting of GAC was held and Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson were elected. Gender balance was observed. A woman was elected as the Chairperson and a man as a Deputy Chairperson, both of them members of Sakrebulo.

From the very first meeting GAC started working with enthusiasm, discussing and reviewing the role of GAC, analyzing gender situation at the local level in terms of gender structure of Gamgeoba and Sakrebulo employees, the number of women in decision-making positions, number of women IDPs, socially vulnerable women, women involved in small business, etc. in the municipality.

The meetings focused on the discussion of local social issues and challenges, problems raised by the Club of Women Voters or during legal consultations and information meetings with local gender groups. All these meetings took place simultaneously with GAC's work and helped to study the situation locally and pass on the information concerning the social problems to members of GAC.

Issues and questions raised at the meetings were brought to the notice of the authorities and solved as far as possible. Some of the problems were solved applying a single-window method when representatives of relevant authorities were invited to meetings as well as beneficiaries themselves. In this way several local problems were solved.

Starting from 2014 members of GAC became involved in researching gender needs of local population. In three years they conducted three (i.e. annually) needs analyses of local social groups and collected quantitative and qualitative data. During the three years 1000 interviewees took part in the studies. The research aimed to assess the needs of various gender groups – women, IDPs, socially vulnerable families, young people, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, doctors, teachers, etc, and to develop proposals and recommendations for the local self-government.

On the basis of research findings GAC developed recommendations to be incorporated into the local budget and programmes.

As a result, a programme of medical screening for Senaki public school pupils of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> forms was included in the budget, as was the programme of one-time financial assistance for victims of domestic violence, co-financing GAC's educational programmes, trainings for Gamgeoba and Sakrebulo personnel and representatives of Gamgebeli of 14 territorial units of Senaki Municipality.

**Natalia Khubua, Head of Social Services of Senaki Gamgeoba (administration), first Chairperson of GAC:**

**- In GAC a new institutional mechanism appeared linking the self-government**

and population. There are serious challenges and I think, GAC responds to these challenges successfully.

It is a social instrument of achieving equal opportunities and accessibility of services in all spheres for all target groups and segments. The programme of medical screening for primary schools is a result of GAC's recommendation. There are other aspects. Our budget for the next year is much more gender-oriented.

**Merab Gegelia, Chief Specialist of Food Centre for Vulnerable Population in Senaki Municipality, Deputy Chairperson of GAC.**

**Establishing GAC and active work have changed the attitude to gender issues in the local self-government. This is a step forward and the main goal we have achieved so far. The local self-government is an elected body and thus, it has the highest degree of legitimacy. It also has the greatest responsibility. When self-government changes its attitude, it affects the budget and that is essential.**

Together with members of other GACs, the members of Senaki GAC participated in educational trainings on the topic of gender, gender-based violence, local self-government code, development of gender policy and gender budgeting, project design, etc. The members of GAC received new and useful knowledge, raised their awareness of gender issues, fully realizing the importance of their work and their participation in the development of gender policy at the local level.

Participation in various conferences, networking meetings of GACs, meeting with the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament gave the members of Senaki GAC a feeling of pride for their own contribution to the cause of increasing women's role and formation of gender policy. It inspired them to design new projects and initiatives.

After the local elections in 2014 the membership of GAC changed with the change in Sakrebulo leadership. New members of Sakrebulo joined the GAC and new Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson had to be elected. However, these changes did not hamper the work, the meetings were held on a regular basis, new project ideas were discussed, different ways discovered to obtain co-financing from the local self-government, new proposals and recommendations were developed.

## **PROJECTS OF GENDER ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Conducted research and gender policy of the city motivated the members of GAC to design projects. All the projects implemented by Senaki GAC fall under the same topic - domestic violence. During one of the training where GACs were planning future strategy an idea of the first project was born. It envisaged working in pre-school educational institutions of Senaki Municipality.

The project “Civic Education for Establishing Gender Equality and Healthy Environment in Preschool Premises of Senaki Municipality” aimed to improve the level of civic education in the issues of gender, violence and eco- sanitation among teachers, nurses, and parents of nurseries and kindergartens located in the city of Senaki.

It was a six-month project covering 10 pre-school institutions of the city. The project was implemented in accordance with the plan of gender policy developed by Senaki GAC with the financial support of Fund “Sukhumi” and local self-government bodies. Within the framework of the project 30 workshops for teachers and parents were held in the 10 kindergartens on the topic of gender, violence and eco- sanitation, a memorandum of cooperation was signed with Kindergartens’ Union, a round table was organized involving representatives of local self-government, an exhibition of local women’s work was held, a TV program was broadcast on local TV station “Egrisi”.

Another important aspect of the project was the opportunity it gave to GAC members to receive trainer training, master trainers’ skills, design modules that they used to conduct workshops in kindergartens independently. This experience and knowledge were very beneficial for them while implementing other, later projects.

Outcomes of the project include formation of a team of 11 GAC member-trainers, awareness-raising on the issues of gender, violence and eco-sanitation for 24 teachers and 150 parents. Also, all the ten kindergartens received toys and visuals as gifts and the pupils of kindergartens developed their personal hygiene skills.

It has to be noted that no similar work has ever been carried out in pre-school educational institutions before. This project gave an impetus to all later initiatives.

While discussing project outcomes at GAC meetings, the question of continuing work in the villages of municipality was given serious consideration as this was the issue that came up regularly during the workshops and meetings under the first project. This initiative was also supported by the local self-government without delay.

The project “Prevention of Domestic Violence in Senaki Municipality” envisaged work in 14 territorial units. The project spread to 60 villages. With Senaki Sakrebulo’s co-financing Gender Initiative Groups were formed in each territorial unit. Importantly, the idea of forming initiative groups came from self-government officials who were very supporters of the project. The groups consisted of representatives of Gamgeoba, majority members of the Parliament, teachers, doctors, women activists and young people, 235 people in total including 196 women and 57 men. The groups participated in special awareness-raising workshops on the topic of gender and domestic violence, developed recommendations, directed at preventing domestic violence. The project envisaged active participation of village youth. Active young people were selected from the members of initiative groups and a new training was organized for them. They were trained in trainer skills and methodology of working with groups of trainees. The trained young people independently organized information meetings with villagers – school and kindergarten teachers, pupils, students, doctors, etc. Interestingly, there were a lot of young men among the participants. In total 789 villagers were involved in project implementation.

Extremely interesting and useful initiatives of GAC and Youth and Gender Department of the Sports and Youth Unit of Senaki Gamgeoba were implemented with the support of Fund “Sukhumi” and local self-government. These include two mini-projects of GAC. Within the framework of these projects trainers of Fund “Sukhumi” gave four trainings on the topic of gender and gender equality for the staff of Senaki Sakrebulo and Gamgeoba, representatives of Gamgebeli in villages and two groups of young people (pupils and students). This resulted in awareness-raising of 24 employees of local self-government, 14 representatives of Gamgebeli and 51 young activists of the city. The trainings played an important role through increasing the participants’ consciousness of the seriousness of the problem of domestic violence and making them realize their own role in prevention and effective help for victims of violence.

Another mini-project of GAC, a conference summarizing the results and achievements of three years of work, proved to be an excellent opportunity for sharing the experience of GACs and discussing the results.

Apart from members of the Gender Advisory Council and representatives of the Fund the conference was attended by high officials of the municipality including Chairperson of Sakrebulo, Gamgebeli, deputies, heads of municipalities of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (Abasha, Khobi, Tsalenjikha, Martvili), representatives of Governor’s administration.

Presenters summarized the three-year experience of GAC’s work, shared information on completed projects, joint initiatives, conducted research into local gender needs, cooperation with the Club of Women Voters and local mass media.

Representatives of municipalities invited to the conference gave a positive evaluation the experience of Senaki GAC and emphasized the need to continue this work and support it further. They stated that this example will be very helpful in establishing their own gender councils in accordance with the amendment approved by the Parliament of Georgia concerning formation of such councils under municipality Sakrebulos.

It was emphasized again that although the project was completed, Senaki GAC would continue its activities and support implementation of the policy based on community interests.

The final project “With new Consciousness to the Formation of Non-Violent Society”, which is being implemented even after the end of Fund “Sukhumi” project, is a logical continuation of the project that covered villages of the Municipality. The main aim of the project is prevention of domestic violence through promoting methods of gender education in kindergartens. The project envisages consciousness-raising of teachers and parents of kindergarten pupils with regard to the concepts of gender and domestic violence, also training kindergarten teachers to enable them to introduce methods of gender education. The project will cover 17 kindergartens in 14 territorial units of the Municipality. Approximately 250 beneficiaries will be involved in the project.

To quote Nana Alania, member of Sakrebulo and Chairperson of GAC, it is crucial that majority of recommendations were adopted by Sakrebulo and Gamgeoba. She believes that Senaki budget has become much more gender-sensitive in comparison with the past years. And this is only a beginning...



## OZURGETI GENDER ADVISORY COUNCIL – HISTORY OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

**GURANDA GVANTSELADZE**  
Project Secretary-Assistant

History of Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Council consists of 9 completed or ongoing projects. Ozurgeti local authorities were the first to respond to Fund “Sukhumi” initiative that aimed to introduce gender policy at the level of local self-government. Cooperation that started with signing a memorandum proved to be really fruitful. Gender Advisory Council established within the framework of the project became actively involved in all gender issues from the very start. A year ahead of the general plan the Council developed a project idea focused on working with young people. The argument was as follows: starting something new can be quicker and more effective than replacing an old way of thinking with a new one. If the new generation realizes the importance of gender policy from an early age, the society of tomorrow will be different and they will have no difficulty making the right choice and creating better social environment. The members of the GAC managed to convince the local self-government that implementation of this innovative project would help develop civic thinking among young people and that working with younger generation, getting acquainted with their ideas and putting them into practice would have a beneficial effect on local policy.

This is how the GAC’s first project “Young people in support of gender policy” was born. The one-year project was co-funded by the local self-government and Fund “Sukhumi” and targeted five public schools in Ozurgeti. At the first stage of the project GAC provided trainer training for a group of 10 who then conducted workshops for 10th and 11th grade pupils on the following topics: the essence of local self-government, gender, the importance of gender policy, etc. 90 workshops were held in total each for 15 young participants. During the workshops participants received brochures “Basic Information on Gender”, which were also distributed in target schools.

The project closed with a forum “Culture of Gender” held in Ozurgeti Sakrebulo Hall. In evaluation of project activities it has to be said that young people were interested in the topic of equality and fully agreed with the need of promoting it in the community. It was evident that there was a feeling of protests against gender stereotypes and that they were ready for changes.

The most active of workshop participants were selected to form alternative Sakrebulo and Gender Advisory Council. Members of the youth Sakrebulo and Council meet once a month to discuss the problems of the city. They had an idea of building a skate park in Ozurgeti. So, they collected signatures and filed an application to the City Hall. They have several other ideas that are still working on.

Initiatives of the young people mobilized by the project inspired Ozurgeti city administration and the second project “Young People Against Domestic Violence” took shape. The project was co-funded by Ozurgeti Municipality, City Hall and Fund “Sukhumi”.



The project envisaged organizing public discussions on topical issues for young people. This helped increase their level of knowledge and awareness, develop their debating skills, form healthy values and encourage active participation in social and political life.

This five-month project was carried out by the young people independently: they held meetings in five public schools in Ozurgeti with 6th – 8th graders. The pupils were shown short films focusing on young people's attitudes to violence and drugs as well as videos promoting healthy lifestyle and balanced gender relations in the society. Within the framework of the project the young people staged a mini-performance "Gender Stereotypes in the Society". They performed it in the street in order to allow more people to see it and instigate some discussions. This method of raising an issue proved to be very interesting for the public; it helped the audience to realize seriousness and acuteness of the problem. Interestingly, the local self-government not only financed the project, but they also became actively involved in its implementation. For instance, during the performance all the senior officials – Mayor, Chair of Sakrebulo, Governor, Vice-Governor, majoritarian Member of Parliament of Ozurgeti were there. This proved to be really encouraging for the young people.

Young people participating in the project are still active in many different directions. They work with local authorities who unfailingly demonstrate willingness to support youth initiatives. Organized groups of young people will undoubtedly become masterminds of many important events.

In 2015 the GAC successfully implemented the third project "Cancer is not a verdict". The fourth and fifth projects shared the same name, but they were implemented in the city as well as municipality in 2016. These projects were special in a sense that they were exclusively financed by the self-government.

The project envisaged psychological support of oncological patients and information campaign directed at prevention of the disease. The project revealed the need for work to be carried out with healthy population in order to prevent cancer in addition to working with patients.

2016 budget includes screening program. This project is being implemented in both, the city and villages. GAC contacted the NGO "Caritas Czech Republic in Georgia" working on oncological disease prevention in Georgia and as a result of this cooperation 10 people were trained and meetings were organized with local population in 10 villages. The 10 trained people became educators in their own villages being able to inform others and explain that the best way to defeat cancer is early detection. The project envisages functioning of a screening center and prevention of breast, cervical, prostate and colon cancer.

Research carried out in Ozurgeti municipality has shown that the number of cancer patients is increasing. The project is still going on and the team is working on the possibility of opening a screening centre in the municipality as early detection means a lot of saved lives.

In 2016 the sixth project "Active Women for Better Future" was carried out with the support of Ozurgeti municipality and Fund "Sukhumi". 22 participants were selected and offered to take part in Easter cake festival at Easter and several other project activities. Six different organizations expressed their desire to take part. A workshop was organized for participant women on the topics of gender and participation in decision-making processes. The training was based

on practical examples in order to demonstrate clearly how important recognition of women's rights and gender equality are for the development of the society. The message of the project was the following: the role of women in family life is invaluable and they create masterpieces on a daily basis. However, it is essential to bring these women out of their kitchens and involve them in decision-making. The topic of the project and its message proved to be original and thus attractive for women. They grasped the main concepts, reassessed a lot and expressed their readiness for further actions.

The seventh project was a conference organized by the GAC independently and held on July 21, 2016. Its aim was to summarize three years of work and share experience with municipalities that have no Gender Advisory Councils as yet. Representatives of the Governor's Office, local self-government, Ozurgeti, Senaki and Kutaisi GACs, Guria (Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri) and Ajara (Shuakhevi, Khulo, Khelvachauri, Kobuleti) municipalities attended the conference.

The participants discussed legislative changes involving the amendment to the law on gender equality which concerns establishing gender councils in municipalities. This was the main aim of the project and activities of pilot GACs created within the framework of the project will set an example for other municipalities.

Representatives of the local municipality emphasized that analysis of local needs carried out by the GAC and their recommendations are the key document for the local self-government while gender policy plan and budget analysis also produced by the GAC serve as a handbook of how gender issues should be reflected and prioritized in a budget.

The conference highlighted the great contribution of the GAC to promoting gender issues. Guests from other municipalities expressed their enthusiasm for establishing such councils in their areas and Ozurgeti is ready offer them advice and counseling.

The three-year project of Fund "Sukhumi" was completed in August, but GACs continued their work from September. In the new academic year the GAC will start two new projects.

The eighth project "We have the Right to Life and Education" focuses on prevention of early marriages. It envisages establishing a forum theatre that will present various scenarios for pupils of Ozurgeti public schools and hold discussions. Early marriage is one of the topical issues in Ozurgeti municipality, especially for communities of ethnic minorities. There are a lot of discussions of disadvantages of early marriage, but it is too early to speak of any outcomes. Frequently, the reason for this is young people's skepticism and their distrust of adults. The project team believes that the truth delivered in the language of forum theatre and initiating discussions will be a more effective method. Young peoples' involvement, their vision of the problem and scenarios performed by them in their own language for the benefit of their peers will help break the ice. Youngsters who are at the greatest risk of early marriage will be the beneficiaries of this project.

On completion of the project there will be more teenagers with gender education who realize the dangers of early marriage and they will carry this information to their peers.

The final ninth project "Protect Children from Violence" aims at raising civic consciousness of the staff of early and preschool education institutions and parents with a purpose of eliminat-

ing violence against children. As the authors of the project believe the problem often lies in the lack of positive methods of upbringing in families. This has to be solved through developing relevant skills in parents. The higher a person's level of education the less likely it is that they will allow violence against children. Informal education starts from early and pre-school education institutions and people working there have to receive training in order to have accurate perception of what violence is. Good results can only be achieved if we work with parents as well. Nursery school, teacher and parent are the three sides of the triangle that should ensure that a child develops into a complete person. Project implementation will help prevent violence against children in Ozurgeti and this is a step to protecting our future generation.

More projects implemented than any other GAC, full support of local self-government and the prospect of successfully continuing into the future – these are the results of three years of work in Ozurgeti.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND GENDER EQUALITY POLICY IN REGIONS

**MERI GELASHVILI**  
Project Coordinator

Only a few years ago the issues of gender equality caused irony among majority of Georgian society and sadly, not only among men either. As far back as in 1906 a great Georgian writer Mikheil Javakhishvili wrote about inequality in his publication “From the History of Women’s Movement”: “If we look over the history of women, we will see clearly that until now the reason of women’s wretchedness was the right of the powerful. The right of the powerful has not disappeared today and will not be destroyed in the near future. However, it is obvious that little by little justice is defeating the right of the powerful and hopefully, one day will fully destroy it”.

109 years have passed since then and of course, women’s condition has changed considerably. The society is better informed about the importance of gender equality for building democratic society.

The government works actively towards developing and adopting laws and regulations in all areas of women’s rights protection and gender equality.

Georgia has joined international resolutions on women’s rights and has taken responsibility for their implementation.

The country’s legislative body – the parliament has Gender Equality Council headed by the Vice-Speaker of the Parliament.

Moreover, civil society is very actively involved in achieving gender equality. It is mainly due to local NGOs that at the local level serious effort are made to research and create effective mechanisms of community awareness-raising and activate them for the purpose of formation of gender equality policy.

Implementation of gender equality policy is important not only at central, but also at local (regional) level as needs in this respect are revealed in regions and the response has to be sought at the same level. Due to the fact that local self-government had no responsibility for solving gender-related problems, they did not try to show initiative in this direction. As an explanation, representatives of self-government claimed that law did not oblige them to do it, they had not received any direct orders “from above.”

Developing and implementing gender equality approaches in the state and regional policy will still require a lot of effort.

Focus on gender inequality is made difficult by unresolved social and economic problems, which are considered as more topical in political circles as well by majority of population.

It is still not fully recognized that gender mainstreaming in any sphere of politics i.e. systemic integration of gender parameters in policy formation, implementation, monitoring and assessment not only promotes gender equality but also ensures effectiveness of any policy.

Implementing gender-sensitive approaches and realizing various needs and problems facilitates implementation of a policy that is oriented towards social and state interests.

This goal can only be achieved through mutual influence of the society and state, when civil society helps the state in strengthening democratic institutes and the state contributes to developing civil society, empowering various civic groups. This should not be a one-off action but spreading into a long period of cooperation.

Fund “Sukhumi” had the idea of establishing Gender Advisory Councils after dedicating years of work and its creative potential to educating representatives of various groups of society and governmental structures in terms of the crucial role of gender equality as an inseparable part of democracy.

Project “Gender Advisory Councils - a new institutional model for gender-related changes in the regions” developed by Fund “Sukhumi” became a pilot project with long-term prospects. Its aim, creating special mechanisms at the local level for increasing the participation of women in decision-making, is based on studying women’s needs and advocacy of their problems.

Target areas for the project implementation were Sakrebulo of three regions: Kutaisi (Imereti), Senaki (Samegerlo) and Ozurgeti (Guria).

It was a great challenge for the organization, the author and implementer of the project: the success depended on how well we could persuade the public and non-governmental sector on the one hand and government structures on the other to get involved in the process of formation of Gender Advisory Councils. It had to consist of 15 members 5 of them from local government structures and 10 – from community, non-governmental sector and media.

The project united not only these 15 people, but also many others interested in its implementation, among them women from Fund “Sukhumi’s” Women Voters’ Club, representatives of ethnic minorities and IDPs, journalists. Working relations were established with the Gender Equality Council at the Parliament of Georgia.

The project was innovative and no analogues had ever been implemented in Georgia. Of course, there were certain projects of national NGOs but they were aimed at creating a position of gender advisor at Sakrebulo.

Gender Advisory Councils were a step forward because they included representatives of Sakrebulo as well as civil society who had experience and motivation to be actively involved in GAC’s activities based on the study of gender needs and topical issues.

Initially, at the stage of formation of GACs “Statute of Gender Advisory Councils” was developed for each region. At GAC meetings this document was discussed and approved.

The statute comprises six chapters: General Provisions, Main Aims and Objectives of GAC, Powers of GAC, GAC work procedures, Powers of GAC Chair, Powers of GAC Secretary-Assistant.

When working on the statute each region considered their specific considerations and needs.

Work of Gender Advisory Councils was based on the principles of teamwork and responsibility. Their members followed work plans outlined by secretary-assistants according to proposals and recommendations of civil society (Women Voters’ Club, ethnic minorities, refugees, media, participants of legal meetings).

Simultaneously, planned social studies were carried out to research social needs and gender policy plans for 2016-2017 were developed.

### SENAKI GENDER EQUALITY POLICY PLAN

1. Health care and social protection

**Aim:** incorporating gender aspects in the field of health care and social protection

2. Education and consciousness-raising

**Aim:** promoting issues of gender equality in the field of education and public awareness-raising

### OZURGETI GENDER EQUALITY POLICY PLAN

1. developing gender equality policy plan at the local level and facilitating its implementation

**Aim:** increasing activity of gender advisor and gender department at the City Hall

2. Education and consciousness-raising

**Aim:** raising public awareness of gender equality issues

3. Health care and social protection

**Aim:** incorporating gender equality aspects in the field of health care and social protection

### KUTAISI GENDER EQUALITY POLICY PLAN

1. developing gender equality policy plan at the local level

**Aim:** incorporating gender components in the local budget for 2016-2017

2. raising awareness of gender equality issues in the field of education

**Aim:** raising awareness of gender equality issues

3. Health care and social protection

**Aim:** incorporating gender equality aspects in the field of health care and social protection

4. Supporting youth programs at the local level

**Aim:** changing stereotypical attitudes of young people, forming gender-sensitive way of thinking

5. gender aspects in culture and sports

**Aim:** incorporating gender equality aspects in the field of culture and sports

While discussing gender equality policy plans of all three GACs it became evident that each region had planned activities in accordance with their budget resources. It must be noted that Kutaisi GAC included over 20 activities aimed at changing gender situation.

Gender equality policy plans outlined by all the GACs (Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti) were approved with calculated budgets (financial sources), clearly defined implementers and evaluation criteria (indicators).

The documents were designed based on conducted research and needs analysis considering financial capabilities of each region.

In the municipalities where GACs were active sustainable positive outcomes have been achieved and this includes introducing gender components in the local budget i.e. gender budgeting. The system was the following: identifying problems through research, discussing it at the GAC meeting, preparing a proposal for Sakrebulo meeting, making a decision about

financing which implies introducing a relevant budget line and identifying an implementer. This was proved to be an effective mechanism that ensures the decision is implemented.

This mechanism works better in regions because the problem exists at the local level and implementation also takes place locally.

Unfortunately, “good laws” don’t always bring “good results”, as there are no well-adapted mechanisms for their administration which would prevent government officials and political parties from using these laws to their own benefit.

For instance, National Action Plan for Gender Equality outlines main challenges and strategic goals, but gives no clear description of budgeting mechanisms, which has given government officials an opportunity to avoid their implementation. As a result, majority of planned activities never materialized.

Fund “Sukhumi” conceived the idea of establishing Gender Advisory Councils because of the concern that many laws of international standard either didn’t work or worked poorly. The analysis of this fact revealed that mechanisms of these laws could not ensure their implementation because all the mechanisms had centered on the national government. Consequently, it appeared logical that Gender Advisory Councils were established under local self-government in regions where most gender problems arise.

At first it was not an easy task, but it is possible to persuade the local government that gender problems need to be solved. It is noteworthy that the project implementation was facilitated by state policy directed at gender equality.

One of the latest demonstrations of the state will can be found in Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili’s speech at the international conference “Towards Gender Equality – Challenges and Opportunities in European Neighbourhood Policy” on 10 November, 2015: “We believe we are the generation that will fully eliminate discrimination of women based on the principles of gender identity, women’s rights and gender equality. I am sure that with a joint effort we will be able to achieve our goal.”

## **NOTE**

### **Main documents developed within the framework of the project:**

- Memorandum of Cooperation between Fund “Sukhumi” and Target Municipality (Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti)
- Statute of Gender Advisory Councils
- Gender equality policy for target cities
- Materials of gender needs analysis
- Brochure “Gender Analysis of the Budget”



## **NETWORK OF KUTAISI, SENAKI, OZURGETI GENDER ADVISORY COUNCILS – REGIONAL EXPERIENCE OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

**MERI GELASHVILI**  
Project Coordinator

The project “Gender Advisory Councils – increasing women’s role in social changes of regions” was piloted in three cities of Western Georgia – Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti and in effect it spread to three regions: Imereti, Samegrelo and Guria.

The project was innovative. It was an attempt on Fund “Sukhumi’s” part to develop, on the basis of these three regions, a mechanism ensuring implementation of laws and regulations in accordance with international standards.

The main idea of the project: changes in the law on gender equality so that the main burden of administering the law shifted to self-government bodies at local (regional) level.

The project aimed to demonstrate to local authorities and civil society as well as central government that it is advisable to start developing an action plan on gender issues from the ‘bottom’, from regions. It is certainly easier to determine the needs of the community in regions. Then, regional action plans should be integrated into a national one. This mechanism allows us to diagnose the needs more precisely and also, identify realistic ways of solving the existing problems.

We believe that the main achievement of the Fund is creating a shared perspective of the local government and civil society on gender equality issues. However, our second achievement, setting up a network of GACs of the three regions on the initiative of the members themselves, is of no less importance.

The idea of networking was spurred by trainings organized for the members of GACs of target cities. The network operated on a regular basis, success stories and challenges were shared online and at the meetings.

Network meetings were dedicated to discussion of GAC plans, future activities, and implementation mechanisms. There was a certain feeling of competitiveness in the best understanding of the word and to the benefit of all, as one GAC used information about other GACs’ activities, modified the idea to fit their own conditions and carried out the activity they wanted applying methods and techniques already tested by their colleagues.

At networking meetings GACs of all three cities expressed their gratitude to the donor UN Women and Fund “Sukhumi” who had given them this unique possibility to get to know one another, be informed about the events in neighbouring regions and share their success stories.

Within the framework of the project 4 networking meetings were held:

- 20 September, 2014 – Ureki
- 13 November, 2014 – Kutaisi, Parliament of Georgia.
- 30 June, 2015 – Batumi
- 11 February, 2016 - Kutaisi

The issues discussed at networking meetings were the following:

- Drafts of action plans for implementing gender policy for Gender Advisory Councils of target cities (20.09.14);
- Summarizing 2 years of work of Gender Advisory Councils, presentation of GACs, future project ideas and initiatives (30.06.15);
- changes in the law against violence, the role of local authorities in the prevention of violence and support of victims of violence (11.02.16).

Of particular importance was GAC members' meeting with representatives of Gender Equality Council (13.11.14) in the Parliament of Georgia (Kutaisi). The meeting was conducted by Manana Kobakhidze, Chairperson of Gender Equality Council and Vice-Speaker of the Parliament. Both sides took active part in the discussion exchanging information and experience.

The meeting was summed up by heads of Gender Equality Council and Fund "Sukhumi". The role of the project in terms of local perspectives on gender equality was emphasized. Fund management stressed the issues that require cooperation with the Parliamentary Council and development of a joint strategy.

Chairperson of Gender Equality Council of the Parliament, Vice-Speaker Manana Kobakhidze said: "I am happy to meet people who are closest to the needs of citizens. Government itself is needed mainly to make people's lives better and the budget should be spent on that. It is vital that we cooperate with you, the people who are qualified to discuss the existing problems and take this information to those in decision-making positions."

It was concluded that future meeting would be more topic-based thus enabling the participants to analyse issues in depth and make specific decisions.

Throughout the project period Fund "Sukhumi" and Gender Advisory Councils of Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti attended two conferences organized by different national and international organizations.

The first conference was held in Tbilisi on the topic "Introduction of Institutional Mechanisms of Gender Equality in Local Self-Government" (organizers: UN Women, Women's Information Center, Taso Foundation, with the support of OXFAM and UN Women).

The conference became the venue for public discussion of recommendations on the topic, including legislative changes proposed by NGOs and proposals of Fund "Sukhumi" and Gender Advisory Councils established by the Fund.

Among the conference participants were the Chairperson of Gender Equality Council and Vice-speaker of the Parliament, representatives of OXFAM, UN Women, administration of the Prime Minister Of Georgia and Tbilisi City Hall, members of GACs of Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti. The report on Fund "Sukhumi" activities was presented by the Chairperson Alla Gamakharia.

During the discussion, a representative of Tbilisi City Hall commented that work aimed at achieving gender equality is much more active in Western Georgia than in the capital and expressed a desire to get better acquainted with this experience.

The conference outlined recommendations concerning gender advisors and Gender Advisory Councils.

The topic of the second conference was "Principles of Gender Equality in Local Self-Government". It was organized by Women's Information Center (project implementer), UN Women, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Taso Foundation.

This two-day conference allowed the project implementers to present their projects in the following areas: institutional mechanisms, meetings applying a single-window principle, gender-sensitive budgeting.

Conference participants included Ms. Erika Kvapilova, UN Women Representative in Georgia, high government officials. On the invitation from UN Women conference was attended by members of Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Councils.

Alla Gamakharia, Chairperson of Fund “Sukhumi” made a presentation about the Fund’s work, achievements and challenges.

Chairpersons of GACs and representatives of local self-governments Irma Petriashvili (Kutaisi), Lela Natsvaladze (Ozurgeti) and Nana Alania (Senaki) spoke about their activities while participating in discussions. They discussed not only their successes but also plans for involving government structures and civil society emphasizing that adequate perception of gender equality has not been achieved yet.

They also remarked that appointing a gender advisor within a self-government body will not solve the problem. Unless the Chairperson of Sakrebulo takes the responsibility for gender-oriented activities, the results will be unsatisfactory.

One of the topics that were emphasized during the conference was gender budgeting that has to be conducted on the basis of the needs analysis. That is why is important that GACs include representatives of civil society and NGOs working on the issues of gender equality. The participants concluded that all three of the topics, institutional mechanisms, meetings applying a single-window principle, gender-sensitive budgeting, are stages that will bring our society closer to gender equality.

Participation in the events organized within other projects and focusing on the topic of gender is a way to avoid doing what has already been done, but based on the existing experience discover new creative approaches to solving problems.

Knowledge and skills acquired, GAC’s experience of networking, dissemination of information and the strategy for establishing Gender Advisory Councils developed by Fund “Sukhumi” – in accordance with the changes in legislation with regard to gender equality and local self-government- will serve as a guide for the success of gender councils formed under local self-government throughout Georgia.

# NETWORK OF KUTAISI, SENAKI, OZURGETI GENDER ADVISORY COUNCILS – REGIONAL EXPERIENCE OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

**MERI GELASHVILI**  
Project Coordinator

The project “Gender Advisory Councils – increasing women’s role in social changes of regions” was piloted in three cities of Western Georgia – Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti and in effect it spread to three regions: Imereti, Samegrelo and Guria.

The project was innovative. It was an attempt on Fund “Sukhumi’s” part to develop, on the basis of these three regions, a mechanism ensuring implementation of laws and regulations in accordance with international standards.

The main idea of the project: changes in the law on gender equality so that the main burden of administering the law shifted to self-government bodies at local (regional) level.

The project aimed to demonstrate to local authorities and civil society as well as central government that it is advisable to start developing an action plan on gender issues from the ‘bottom’, from regions. It is certainly easier to determine the needs of the community in regions. Then, regional action plans should be integrated into a national one. This mechanism allows us to diagnose the needs more precisely and also, identify realistic ways of solving the existing problems.

We believe that the main achievement of the Fund is creating a shared perspective of the local government and civil society on gender equality issues. However, our second achievement, setting up a network of GACs of the three regions on the initiative of the members themselves, is of no less importance.

The idea of networking was spurred by trainings organized for the members of GACs of target cities. The network operated on a regular basis, success stories and challenges were shared online and at the meetings.

Network meetings were dedicated to discussion of GAC plans, future activities, and implementation mechanisms. There was a certain feeling of competitiveness in the best understanding of the word and to the benefit of all, as one GAC used information about other GACs’ activities, modified the idea to fit their own conditions and carried out the activity they wanted applying methods and techniques already tested by their colleagues.

At networking meetings GACs of all three cities expressed their gratitude to the donor UN Women and Fund “Sukhumi” who had given them this unique possibility to get to know one another, be informed about the events in neighbouring regions and share their success stories.

Within the framework of the project 4 networking meetings were held:

- 19-20 September, 2014 – Ureki
- 13 November, 2014 – Kutaisi, Parliament of Georgia.

- 29-30 June, 2015 – Batumi
- 11 February, 2016 - Kutaisi

The issues discussed at networking meetings were the following:

- Drafts of action plans for implementing gender policy for Gender Advisory Councils of target cities (20.09.14);
- Summarizing 2 years of work of Gender Advisory Councils, presentation of GACs, future project ideas and initiatives (30.06.15);
- changes in the law against violence, the role of local authorities in the prevention of violence and support of victims of violence (11.02.16).

Of particular importance was GAC members' meeting with representatives of Gender Equality Council (13.11.14) in the Parliament of Georgia (Kutaisi). The meeting was conducted by Manana Kobakhidze, Chairperson of Gender Equality Council and Vice-Speaker of the Parliament. Both sides took active part in the discussion exchanging information and experience.

The meeting was summed up by heads of Gender Equality Council and Fund "Sukhumi". The role of the project in terms of local perspectives on gender equality was emphasized. Fund management stressed the issues that require cooperation with the Parliamentary Council and development of a joint strategy.

Chairperson of Gender Equality Council of the Parliament, Vice-Speaker Manana Kobakhidze said: "I am happy to meet people who are closest to the needs of citizens. Government itself is needed mainly to make people's lives better and the budget should be spent on that. It is vital that we cooperate with you, the people who are qualified to discuss the existing problems and take this information to those in decision-making positions."

It was concluded that future meeting would be more topic-based thus enabling the participants to analyse issues in depth and make specific decisions.

Throughout the project period Fund "Sukhumi" and Gender Advisory Councils of Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti attended two conferences organized by different national and international organizations.

The first conference was held in Tbilisi on the topic "Introduction of Institutional Mechanisms of Gender Equality in Local Self-Government" (organizers: UN Women, Women's Information Center, Taso Foundation, with the support of OXFAM and UN Women).

The conference became the venue for public discussion of recommendations on the topic, including legislative changes proposed by NGOs and proposals of Fund "Sukhumi" and Gender Advisory Councils established by the Fund.

Among the conference participants were the Chairperson of Gender Equality Council and Vice-speaker of the Parliament, representatives of OXFAM, UN Women, administration of the Prime Minister Of Georgia and Tbilisi City Hall, members of GACs of Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti. The report on Fund "Sukhumi" activities was presented by the Chairperson Alla Gamakharia.

During the discussion, a representative of Tbilisi City Hall commented that work aimed at achieving gender equality is much more active in Western Georgia than in the capital and expressed a desire to get better acquainted with this experience.

The conference outlined recommendations concerning gender advisors and Gender Advisory Councils.

The topic of the second conference was “Principles of Gender Equality in Local Self-Government”. It was organized by Women’s Information Center (project implementer), UN Women, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Taso Foundation.

This two-day conference allowed the project implementers to present their projects in the following areas: institutional mechanisms, meetings applying a single-window principle, gender-sensitive budgeting.

Conference participants included Ms. Erika Kvapilova, UN Women Representative in Georgia, high government officials. On the invitation from UN Women conference was attended by members of Kutaisi, Senaki and Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Councils.

Alla Gamakharia, Chairperson of Fund “Sukhumi” made a presentation about the Fund’s work, achievements and challenges.

Chairpersons of GACs and representatives of local self-governments Irma Petriashvili (Kutaisi), Lela Natsvaladze (Ozurgeti) and Nana Alania (Senaki) spoke about their activities while participating in discussions. They discussed not only their successes but also plans for involving government structures and civil society emphasizing that adequate perception of gender equality has not been achieved yet.

They also remarked that appointing a gender advisor within a self-government body will not solve the problem. Unless the Chairperson of Sakrebulo takes the responsibility for gender-oriented activities, the results will be unsatisfactory.

One of the topics that were emphasized during the conference was gender budgeting that has to be conducted on the basis of the needs analysis. That is why is important that GACs include representatives of civil society and NGOs working on the issues of gender equality. The participants concluded that all three of the topics, institutional mechanisms, meetings applying a single-window principle, gender-sensitive budgeting, are stages that will bring our society closer to gender equality.

Participation in the events organized within other projects and focusing on the topic of gender is a way to avoid doing what has already been done, but based on the existing experience discover new creative approaches to solving problems.

Knowledge and skills acquired, GAC’s experience of networking, dissemination of information and the strategy for establishing Gender Advisory Councils developed by Fund “Sukhumi” – in accordance with the changes in legislation with regard to gender equality and local self-government- will serve as a guide for the success of gender councils formed under local self-government throughout Georgia.

## PROJECT RESULTS

**ALLA GAMAKHARIA**  
Project Director

The program was designed very well by Fund “Sukhumi” from the very start. This gave the team a chance to work without serious obstacles and delays and carry out all the activities according to the plan.

Clear vision of objectives allowed Fund “Sukhumi” to obtain donor funding for the implementation of their strategies, remain independent and have possibility of cooperation at the local level.

Sound organizational management with competent and creative supervision and professional project staff was also of utmost importance.

Fund “Sukhumi’s” reputation, thorough knowledge of issues of gender and gender equality, long-term cooperation and partnership with local self-government, high officials and civil society organizations had prepared a sound foundation for success of the project.

A strategic decision to bring together and unite different groups of people (journalists, members of Sakrebulo and Parliament, private sector, NGOs and social activists) allowed us to integrate different perspectives on the most burning issues of the community, find effective ways to their solution and at the same time, make all these groups active and viable. Due to inclusive process of consultations, which continued throughout the project, all the groups became active.

Project participants gained deep knowledge that benefited their sustainable development and focused on taking initiative.

The project made a major contribution to increasing awareness and knowledge of gender issues not only among members of Gender Advisory Councils but also members of the local self-government.

Main achievements connected with the outcomes of project implementation can be described in terms of the following indicators:

- GAC is considered as an exemplary model of a successful mechanism for implementing gender policy at the local municipal level. This mechanism is now reflected in the laws on local self-government and gender equality.
- GACs members, including representatives of local self-government, have improved their knowledge and skills concerning gender budgeting, gender policy and problems, fundraising and designing project proposals.
- Local self-government officials show increasing interest towards active participation in GAC’s activities and receiving more detailed information concerning gender issues.
- Public awareness of the activities of Gender Advisory Councils has increased. Citizens have become more aware of their own role in developing local policies.
- The number of women and civil society representatives who attend Sakrebulo meetings and official sessions has grown.



- Gender needs of the population have been assessed; relevant units of local self-government have developed and approved gender equality action plans;
- For the first time, gender aspects have been integrated in local self-government budgeting.
- 20 gender-related projects have been implemented in the target areas, 16 of them co-financed by Fund “Sukhumi” and 4 - fully financed by local self-government (Ozurgeti).
- Informal network of GACs was created for the purpose of sharing information, best practice and experience.
- Gender issues have found great support in local media, particularly important is social media, namely Facebook.
- Regular meetings with population and media coverage of gender issues has increased local officials’ responsibility to the community and has contributed to solving some vitally important problems.
- Women members of Sakrebulo have acquired greater sense of power and belief that they can influence decisions of the local self-government.
- Recommendations developed by GACs have been given careful consideration by the local authorities and have partly been incorporated into the target cities’ budgets.
- GAC members not only received knowledge in the area of fundraising and project design, but have also designed 20 projects.
- Information obtained during legal consultations has helped beneficiaries in advocating for and solving their personal problems.
- Recognizability of GAC members and in particular, women members of Sakrebulo has increased women’s knowledge, self-esteem and positive image, making them into public figures. It revealed their responsibility towards society and absolute trust from local communities. This has created an environment conducive to their successful participation in future elections.
- in 3 municipalities (Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti) there was expressed readiness to form Gender Council according to the adopted law.
- 4 municipalities asked for methodological assistance in creation of Gender Council.

## ANNEX

This part of the publication contains some materials that were prepared within the framework of the project and may be used for the establishment of Gender Equality Council

Press-release

Statute of Gender Advisory Council (GAC)

Memorandum of Cooperation between Sakrebulo and Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi”

One of the Researches of 2016 on gender needs of civil groups (Researches of 2014 and 2015 are posted on the web-site of Fund “Sukhumi” [www.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.fsokhumi.ge), [www.gac.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.gac.fsokhumi.ge), in the category “Researches”)

Gender Analysis of Local Budget of one of the Municipalities prepared in 2016 (the other materials are posted on the web-site of Fund “Sukhumi” [www.gac.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.gac.fsokhumi.ge), [www.gac.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.gac.fsokhumi.ge), in the category “Research”)

The journal “Gender Advisory Councils” prepared within the framework of the project in Georgian and Russian languages is posted on the web-site [www.gac.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.gac.fsokhumi.ge), [www.gac.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.gac.fsokhumi.ge), in the category “Publications”

The project team of Fund “Sukhumi” shares its extensive experience with all stakeholders and wishes success in establishing of Gender Equality Councils

# PRESS-RELEASE

September 12, 2013

Kutaisi

## **GENDER ADVISORY COUNCILS - A NEW INSTITUTIONAL MODEL FOR GENDER-RELATED CHANGES IN THE REGIONS**

From September 01, 2013 to September 01, 2016 Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi” is implementing the project “Gender Advisory Councils – increasing women’s role in social changes of regions”.

The project is financed by the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality. The project will be implemented by Fund “Sukhumi” in coordination with the UN Women in Georgia.

The project is aimed at increasing the participation of women in decision-making at the local level through the establishment and strengthening of the capacity of Gender Advisory Councils (GACs) in three towns in western Georgia - Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti. The Councils will unite members of the local City Councils and civic activists - both women and men (IDP, local, ethnic minorities, media, NGOs).

The GACs will annually conduct a gender analysis of policies and budgets of local governments, develop recommendations to better reflect gender components in local budgets and will lobby for them. The GACs will also assess local gender needs, based on which the projects will be developed and presented to the local City Councils for co-financing.

The project will raise awareness of local government and society about the need to increase the women’s representation and their role in decision-making through regular meetings, information campaigns (journal, website, facebook account, TV and radio programmes), round tables.

The GACs will collaborate with the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia.

### **Expected outcomes:**

- Established Gender Advisory Councils in three cities (a model of institutional mechanism) have promoted gender components in local budgets and program planning.
- Informed citizens in target cities have supported increasing of women’s representation and their role in decision-making at the local level.

- The network of GACs has advocated for changes institutionalizing gender equality mechanisms on local level in the Gender Equality National Action Plan and the Organic Law of Georgia on Local Self-Governance.

**GAC - is combined resources, new knowledge and skills, cooperation between state and society, mutual responsibility for achieving gender equality.**

**GAC - a new institutional mechanism, the new model at the local level in the Georgian context.**

**Contact information:**

Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi”

Mgaloblishvili 6, Kutaisi 4600, Georgia

Tel: +995 (0) 431 27-29-02

womansukhumi@gmail.com

[www.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.fsokhumi.ge)

# REGULATIONS OF GENDER ADVISORY COUNCIL (GAC) UNDER SAKREBULO

## 1. General Provisions

1.1. The present statute define competences, activities and interaction with Sakrebulo of Gender Advisory Council (GAC), also conditions of its membership for experts, NGOs and activists.

1.2. GAC is established in order to inform the local government and society, and coordinate actions directed at seeking solutions to issues related to gender equality in the society.

1.3. The main aim of establishing GAC is to coordinate activities of local self-government bodies and civil society (including NGOs) representatives for implementation of the policy of gender equality in every sphere of public life; encourage discussion of gender issues and develop recommendations; increase women's participation in decision-making at municipal level.

1.4. In its activities GAC is guided by the Constitution of Georgia, laws and other regulatory acts, including international legal documents and the present statute.

1.5. GAC consists of representatives of local Sakrebulo and civil society (including NGOs), gender experts.

1.6. The Chair and vice-chair of GAC are elected out of the members of the local Sakrebulo. Fund "Sukhumi" appoints their representative as an assistant-secretary. GAC consists of 5 representatives of the local self-government and 10 representatives of civil society.

1.7. Proposals concerning changes in GAC membership are submitted to Sakrebulo in connection with personnel changes if necessary, also, at GAC meeting while approving a relevant decision.

## 2. Main Aims and Objectives of GAC

2.1. GAC's work is directed at protecting the principles of gender equality and human rights. Its activities will be carried out in compliance with three UN program approaches to women based on the principles of harmonization, comprehensiveness and human rights protection.

"Harmonized" approach implies link between international obligations and gender priorities determined by achieving gender balance at the national and local levels.

Comprehensive approach implies ensuring logical sequence and cohesion of activities throughout the project and relevance to the so called "change chain". This means that the task of ensuring gender equality should become a priority at every stage starting from the stage of identifying priority goals, analysis, advocacy within the framework of national and local strategies/programmes to the stage of fundraising.

2.2. Developing recommendations and proposals directed at policy formation and implementation in the field of gender equality, improving the role and status of women for their inclusion in the process of decision-making at the local level.

2.3. Strengthening coordination of the effort of governmental and non-governmental sectors in order to implement specific programmes aiming to improve women's social and economic conditions; prevention of all forms of violence and promoting gender equality in the society.

2.4. Ensuring participation of civil society in the planning and development of budgets and social programmes at the local level giving due consideration to gender needs of various groups.

2.5. Supporting mechanisms of information collection, analysis and distribution in connection with the statute and needs of various groups (including local women).

2.6. Supporting creation of data bases - exchange of information on gender issues (proposals, recommendations, programmes, events) among local self-government, women's non-governmental organizations, science institutions and mass media, accessibility of information for all interested parties.

2.7. Promoting TV programmes focused on gender equality issues and directed at replacing patriarchal gender stereotypes on local television.

2.8. Studying issues of gender education and preparing proposals and recommendations for their integration in the educational system.

### **3. Powers of GAC**

In order to complete its objectives GAC has the right to:

3.1. participate in the development and implementation of programmes oriented towards gender equality at the local level;

3.2. monitor within its powers local government programmes and events aiming at improvement of women's conditions and achieving gender equality;

3.3. review and develop proposals concerning ways of overcoming violations of gender equality principle;

3.4. support monitoring of the local budget, statistic and other types of research into women's conditions and their needs, and disseminate information about the results and findings;

3.5. assist in holding information meetings, round tables, conferences with public participation on the topic of gender policy implementation at the local level;

3.6. during the sessions hear reports on the measures taken to ensure gender equality presented by local government and civil society representatives;

3.7. engage with representatives of government, non-governmental organizations and media, specialists working on gender issues to research the issues within GAC's sphere of competence;

3.8. request information necessary for GAC's work from the representatives of the local government and public organizations;

3.9. form working groups out of GAC and invite volunteers from government, political parties and NGOs for preparing and analysing relevant issues.

#### **4. GAC work procedures**

- 4.1. GAC conducts its activities in accordance with annually approved plan;
- 4.2. GAC meetings are held as required at least once a month and its decisions are valid if the meeting is attended by more than a half of its members.
- 4.3. Meetings of GAC are conducted by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council and are organized by the assistant-secretary.
- 4.4. GAC decisions are made by simple majority by an open ballot and the minutes are signed by the Chair or Vice-Chair of GAC and the assistant-secretary.
- 4.5. GAC's decisions serve as recommendations and are submitted to representatives of local authorities for consideration.
- 4.6. Organizational, technical and information provision of GAC's activities is the responsibility of Sakrebulo together with Fund "Sukhumi"
- 4.7. The Chair of GAC and its members work on a voluntary basis.

#### **5. Powers of GAC Chair**

- 5.1. determines main directions of GAC activities in accordance with the recommendations of GAC members;
- 5.2. allocates responsibilities to GAC members;
- 5.3. approves annual and short-term plans of GAC;
- 5.4. conducts GAC meetings in accordance with an approved plan;
- 5.5. submits proposals for consideration to the local self-government according to membership of GAC;
- 5.6. represents GAC in front of authorities and international public organizations on issues within the powers of GAC;
- 5.7. signs GAC meeting minutes;
- 5.8. in case of the absence of GAC Chair these functions are performed by Vice-Chair (in accordance with the present statute).

#### **6. Powers of GAC Secretary-Assistant**

- 6.1. provides GAC annual work plan and minutes of its meetings;
- 6.2. provides materials for GAC meetings and organizes its work
- 6.3. informs members of GAC about the time, place and agenda of meetings;
- 6.4. works on GAC meeting minutes;
- 6.5. ensures control of implementation of GAC decisions, presents information to GAC Chair and administration of Fund "Sukhumi".



# MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN OZURGETI SAKREBULO, CITY HALL AND CULTURAL- HUMANITARIAN FUND “SUKHUMI”

**Ozurgeti Sakrebulo represented by the Chairperson Gela Kobaladze,  
Ozurgeti City Hall represented (in accordance with current legislation) by the  
Mayor Beglar Sioridze, and  
women’s non-governmental organization Cultural-Humanitarian Fund “Sukhumi”  
represented (in accordance with the statute of the organization)  
by the Chairperson Alla Gamakharia  
hereinafter the Parties**

- **recognizing** the vital role of cooperation and information sharing among the state and non-governmental organizations in the process of building a democratic society and establishing the principles of gender equality,
- **emphasizing** women’s role in decision-making and supporting civil initiatives.
- **adopting** a shared position in determining state priorities that envisage involvement of various social institutions in implementing national action plans of laws of gender equality and elimination of domestic violence,
- **demonstrating willingness** to promote informational and business relationships among public organizations and various branches of government for the purpose of fulfilling National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, laws on Gender Equality and Elimination of Domestic Violence and in other areas,
- **expressing** interest in the issues of social protection of victims of domestic violence and prevention of domestic violence,

**fully aware of their own responsibility and the need for common information  
space for gender equality and protecting women’s rights, hereby agree on the  
present memorandum**

## **Aim of the Agreement**

### **Article 1.**

- 1.1. to increase effectiveness of cooperation between non-governmental sector and local authorities in support of development of democratic principles in the civil society and gender fairness;
- 1.2. to improve the quality of public services for the society, including IDPs in order to achieve modern standards of life and human rights protection;
- 1.3. to improve institutional and organizational support base for the purpose of developing NGO sector;
- 1.4. to increase women’s participation in Ozurgeti local self-government and decision-making process through establishing the institutional mechanism of Gender Advisory Councils

(GAC) and building their capacity within the framework of the project “Gender Advisory Councils - a new institutional model for gender-related changes in the regions” (The project is implemented with the support of the UN Women’s Fund for Gender Equality).

## **Article 2.**

The present memorandum outlines the framework within which the Parties should organize joint projects in realization of their cooperation in order to improve women’s social and economic conditions, assist full integration of IDPs and ethnic minorities into the society, support innovative and interactive work of the representatives of social institutions with a view to promoting democratic principles and achieving gender equality.

## **Main Areas of Joint Activities**

### **Article 3.**

**The Parties hereby express their willingness to cooperate in the following areas:**

- 3.1. improving cooperation for implementation of innovative projects in civic engagement organized by Gender Advisory Councils (in particular for groups of women and IDP community);
- 3.2. increasing the degree and role of women’s participation in decision-making;
- 3.3. developing further the systems of sharing experience between government bodies and NGO sector;
- 3.4. encouraging NGO participation in developing priority social programs and projects at the local level;
- 3.5. organizing common information space, improving the system of information sharing;
- 3.6. conducting research into the conditions of various women groups in the local community and analyzing findings;
- 3.7. holding specific targeted initiatives and public campaigns in support of women;
- 3.8. jointly organizing a system of trainings and internships with a purpose of institutional development of the employees of governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- 3.9. cooperating in advocacy and lobbying as well as conducting active public campaigns, jointly participating in TV and radio programs;
- 3.10. creating a common database of proposals, applications, joint projects, etc.
- 3.11. creating common forms and methods of training specialists to improve provision of social services to the victims of domestic violence; encouraging participation of GAC members in exchange programs to help share international experience of effective gender policy;
- 3.12. contributing to improvement of IDP women’s psychological, social and economic conditions;
- 3.13. joint participation in youth project organization and implementation;
- 3.14. sharing information on planned future events (conferences, round tables, information meetings with civil society);
- 3.15. organizing professional training programs;
- 3.16. preparing and disseminating information on joint activities.

## **Obligations of the Parties**

### **Article 4.**

**4.1 On their part, Fund “Sukhumi” shall ensure achievement of project goals and integration of components through the following activities:**

**Education** – trainings, workshop, information meetings, masterclasses, publication of methodology manuals.

**Research** – survey, in-depth interview, focus groups, analysis

**Awareness** – periodicals, TV and radio programs, social networks, webpage, publication of bulletins, booklets, a methodology manual.

**Advocacy** - information meetings, round tables, public debates, open letters, appeals, legislative initiatives, citizens’ forums.

**Consultations** – legal and psychological consultations.

**Monitoring and Analysis** – monitoring of programs, budget and their analysis in terms of gender equality principles.

**4.2. On their part Ozurgeti Sakrebulo and City Hall shall cooperate with Fund “Sukhumi” and assist in implementing the above-mentioned activities.**

**They also take responsibility for the following:**

formation of Ozurgeti Gender Advisory Council and facilitating its activities;

implementation of gender-oriented budgeting methodology;

participation in the activities organized by Fund “Sukhumi” and directed at developing and empowering GACs;

considering Fund “Sukhumi’s” initiatives and supporting them to the extent possible;

involving GAC and Fund “Sukhumi” in the events carried out by the local self-government (information meetings, Sakrebulo sessions, etc)

supplying victims of domestic violence with necessary information and providing help;

supporting projects aimed at improving women’s social and economic conditions, their capacity-building.

## **Transparency of Joint Activities and Reporting**

### **Article 5.**

Issues connected with implementation of individual projects will be discussed and approved in separate bilateral minutes.

## **Memorandum Procedures**

### **Article 6.**

- 6.1. The Parties appoint responsible persons to coordinate the issues of cooperation and prepare a bilateral work plan;
- 6.2. Changes and additions to the present memorandum shall be introduced on the basis of agreement of the Parties;
- 6.3. The present memorandum shall come to effect immediately upon signing by the Parties for the term of three years and shall remain in force in the following years unless one of the Parties notifies the other Parties of the decision of its termination a month before to the end of term.

- 6.4. In the case of violation of the conditions of the present memorandum by one of the Parties or if significant changes are made to project implementation, any of the Parties is entitled to terminate their participation in the joint initiative and withdraw from the agreement after a written notification a month earlier.
- 6.5. The present memorandum is executed in Georgian in two original counterparts and signed. Both have equal legal force.

Cultural-Humanitarian  
Fund “Sukhumi”  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Alla Gamakharia

\_\_\_\_\_ 2014

Chairperson of  
Ozurgeti Sakrebulo

\_\_\_\_\_ Gela Kobaladze

\_\_\_\_\_ 2014

Mayor  
of Ozurgeti

\_\_\_\_\_ Beglar Sioridze

\_\_\_\_\_ 2014

# RESEARCH OF GENDER NEEDS OF CIVIL GROUPS IN SENAKI MUNICIPALITY FOR INTEGRATION IN THE LOCAL BUDGET

2016

## 1. SUMMARY

The research held in Senaki had an aim to reveal needs of local social groups, for their integration in the local budget in future. The target of the research was youth, women, socially unprotected, women in small business, IDPs, persons with disabilities. As a result of receiving qualitative and quantitative information, it revealed that in Senaki for satisfying the interests of different gender groups of population and establishing new budget programs achievement is seen.

Despite the fact that information about budget is public, quality of communication with society needs improvement, because practice of participation of different, mainly most vulnerable groups in the processes of planning budget, implementation and reporting is not still established, though meetings in the villages give such possibility.

Respondents consider that programs which are planned in according to tenders of infrastructure, economical, educational social protection, healthcare development and are envisaged by the different municipalities optimally in relevance with the priorities.

By their opinion planned programs in the sphere of infrastructure protection, social and health care, improve general economical and social situation of population and concrete social groups.

There were named local programs, which have obvious effect: for example in the infrastructural projects – programs of rehabilitation of houses for socially unprotected, in the programs of health care, high evaluation was given to examination of pre-school children on helminths. Funding high-tech research for citizens with impaired health; the program of co-financing for patients with C-hepatitis, etc.

Research showed, that needs of all vulnerable groups in the municipality of Senaki are not fully satisfied, as policy of their social condition and assistance is a part of broad network of activities and it always means accessibility to the sustainable employment, accommodation, healthcare and education, the aim of which is decreasing poverty and risks of vulnerability. Mainly strict are the problem of disabled people from the point of view of their social care, creation of labor conditions as well as creation of relevant infrastructure for them.

In order to stop the process of leakage, it is need for programs to promote the youth, to encourage young people, internships, even by improvement of the general economic background, by attracting investment, creating jobs.

Research has demonstrated the need for a women's farming, small businesses, which are associated with the ordering of social infrastructure, with the creation of local programs. Highlighting the need to increase salaries for technical staff and teachers of preschool system and improvement of their social protection. There is an acute issue of socio-economic integration of refugee women.

The research showed that in the municipality of Senaki it is gradually established need of gender approaches and necessity of envisaging gender vision in the budget, gender education, as it is understood by the society as well as representatives of self-government. It is proved by the issues, which were envisaged in the budget on the initiative of gender council of Senaki, for example – assistance for the victims of domestic violence, educational work in the villages.

On the basis of gained information there was identified need of social programs in the future, which envisage creation of day centers, delivery of psychological consultations for the elderly, single mothers and children, rehabilitation and assistive equipment for disabled and reduction of poverty in general, vulnerable risks, to meeting the needs of gender groups with complex activities to improve condition in municipality.

## **2. MAIN PART**

Research conducted in Senaki municipality: "Research of needs of local social groups" was carried out by order of Fund "Sukhumi" and the members of Senaki GAC were included in it.

The study was realized by obtaining quantitative and qualitative information. By the method of the survey, focus groups and in-depth interviews.

A total number of respondents was 236 (interview - 200 respondents, focus group - 34 respondents, in-depth interviews - 4 respondents).

### **2.1. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

200 respondents participated in the quantitative study conducted in Senaki municipality. Among them, 88% of women and 12% men. By the method of individual interview were asked the following social groups: youth, socially unprotected, women with small businesses, refugees. The survey was conducted in Senaki, and with population of villages: Teklati, Bataraiia, Mendzhi.

Age of the participants was from 16 to 30 - 32%, 30 to 50, 43%, 26% above 50. 68% of them live in the city, 32% in villages. 100% of city residents were young. (64% of young people, research participants). 17% of respondents have incomplete education, 32% - secondary vocational, 13% - incomplete higher education, 40% - with higher education. With higher education mostly were interviewed in a group of small businesses (32%).

On the question have you a stable income or not - a positive answer was fixed by 44% of respondents. Negative - 56%. The average monthly income of family up to 200 GEL had 40% of respondents, up to 600 GEL -42%, above 600 GEL - 19%. Among them, the income to 200 GEL noted 62% of socially disadvantaged. 84% of the group of small business had income up to 600 GEL. Above 600 GEL was indicated by 52% of young people, 16% - small business, 6% - the refugees, 0% disadvantaged.

**On the question have you relevant information about local budget programs or not,** the answer - “have full information” was fixed by 13 % of respondents. Less informed were socially unprotected – 0%, more or less informed – youth 22%.

Answer “have poor information” was chosen by 48% (youth 52%, small business also 52%, socially unprotected – 44%.)

Answer “have no information” was fixed by 39% of respondents. Among them dominated socially unprotected – 56% and refugees 44%.

**Respondents evaluated quality of communication of local self-government with society.** 44% of respondents consider it satisfactory. Mostly in small business (74%), youth (54%). Only 10% out of socially unprotected consider the issue satisfactory.

27% of respondents chose the answer “unsatisfactory”, mostly socially unprotected (43%). 30 % of refugees unsatisfactorily evaluate the issue. The answer “I am difficult to answer” was chosen by 30 % of respondents. (54% socially unprotected. 34% of youth, 10% of small business, 28% refugees).

Respondents of individual inquiry had possibility to evaluate the programs of local social protection and health care. These programs appeared to be satisfactory for 51%, mostly for the women in small business (72%) and for the refugees (68%). 22% of respondents consider unsatisfactory. Mostly socially unprotected think so (36%). 28% of respondents are difficult to answer (socially unprotected – 54%, youth 32%, refugees 16%, small business 85%).

**Respondents answered the question: while composing local budget, how important is to envisage problems of men and women equally (also of other specific groups of society).**

43% of respondents consider the issue very important (74% of youth group, 56% of refugees, 24% of women in small business, 22% of socially unprotected). 25% of respondents consider more or less important, 16% consider the issue important, 1% of them are hard to answer.

**Respondents were asked to name the priorities out of listed, in terms of funding at the local level. They were able to select 3 important questions out of them.**

24% of respondents chose "health." 18% - social protection; 19% - education; 19% economic development; 7% - public order and safety; 13% - infrastructure. Education often was called in the refugee group. An important issue for refugee groups was health. Women represen-



tatives of small business gave priority to the program of economic development, but it is typical that necessity of program of education see less of all. The need for infrastructure programs was named mostly by representatives of the youth group. Least of all this issue was touched by socially unprotected group.

**The respondents were asked to choose whose needs do they consider important to envisage in the local budget. They could choose 3 most important categories for them.**

“Youth families” was chosen by 8% of respondents, refugees – 11%, pregnant women – 6%, careless children – 10%, socially unprotected families – 16%, ethnic minorities – 1%, elderly – 8%. Disabled – 12%, single parents – 8%, small business – 5%, students – 5%, victims of domestic violence – 3%, mothers of many children – 6%. Youth group name most important the families of socially unprotected people (22%), disabled (17%), least of all single parents (2%).

Socially unprotected think that youth families should be the subjects of special care (19%), IDPs (17%) and socially unprotected families (17%) they do not see needs of ethnic minorities (0%) less needs of single parents (2%), small business (3%), students (3%).

According to women, involved in small business, socially unprotected families need most attention (18%), single parents (14%), elderly (11%).

Most important for the IDPs is caring about disabled (26%), according to them the elderly also need attention (14%). Importance of envisaging needs of IDPs at local level was chosen by 5% of them.

Respondents could not see importance to envisage needs of violence victim (about 3%).

**Respondents named 3 most important and vivid needs, which are necessary for socio - economical development.**

a) improvement of living conditions - 12%; Employment - 27%; availability of qualified education - 18%; integration of social assistance programs - 9%; protection of working conditions - 14%; support of family members - 9%; affordable loans - 12%.

Improvement of living conditions often was called by a group of socially disadvantaged (23%), refugees (13%).

Employment was equally important for respondents from the 25% to 31%. The need for qualified education least feel disadvantaged (9%). Most of the refugees (25% of responses).

The integration in local social programs is most important for 10% of the socially disadvantaged, and 16% of refugees.

The protection of working conditions as a vivid necessity is mostly called by the women included in small businesses (17%).

Family support is needed for the youth group (18%). Least of all - refugees (2%).

Need of affordable credit most have small businesses - 24%. 10% of young people consider the issue urgent. With regard to the refugee group (3%) and vulnerable (9%) are relatively indifferent to this question.

According to the answers of respondents it was found out that their contribution to the family is the most productive work (45%), reproductive work is a contribution to 28%, and mixed - for 27%. Part of the most productive work is in the group of small businesses - 94%.

**To the question, do they think it necessary to encourage conducted activity in unpaid sector (reproductive work – caring about children, elderly, sick, accommodation activities) from the side of local government, the respondents answer in such way.**

Yes – 59%, no – 23%, difficult to answer – 18%. Necessity of this question was seen by socially unprotected (26%). Most of all the youth and refugees (74%).

**Respondents expressed their attitude to the question, what mostly promotes to decreasing unemployment among women.**

To their opinion, the most important is creation of working places (62%), then comes municipal programs of small business development – 14%, creation of more equipped social infrastructure – 10%, informational centers of unemployment assistance and employment – 6%.

Creation of working places are mostly prior for the youth (72%).

Refugees (20% more pragmatically look at the issue of improving service of kindergartens, least of all – the youth (2%). Necessity of programs for development of small business mostly see the women entrepreneurs (24%). Necessity of this is seen by the women IDPs least of all (4%).

**Respondents name important activities to promote the education and development of young people, which to their opinion, should be done at the local level.**

Promotion of successful students by the results of the national examinations - Municipal voucher, scholarship - 19%;

24% of respondents named funding for students from disadvantaged families;

The opening of day centers for young people from disadvantaged families - 10%;

Funding for youth programs 18%; program is mostly necessary for youth group.

Answer - support for young families - 13%;

Providing qualified internship programs is important for 16% of the respondents.

**While defining social and other needs of the most vulnerable groups (refugees, disabled, single parents, mothers of many children, young families and etc.) of local population, respondents consider the following issues the most important:**

Gameoba / City Hall - 43%, Sakrebulo - 7%; Non-governmental sector - 11%; active group of citizens 27%; Media - 12%.

It should be noted that among the respondents there is the same attitude to the leading role of Gameoba. Especially in the group of small businesses (84%). In the group of socially vulnerable, this ratio is 22% - 16%.

It should be noted that 56% of refugees, 22% of young people recognize the leading role of

active citizens groups. 26% of the socially disadvantaged; small businesses representatives see their role the least of all (4%).

24% - a group of socially disadvantaged mostly recognize the role of non-governmental sector. Least of all - group of small businesses - 2%, and refugees (6%).

**Respondents of individual interview defined what structures are most actively involved in the activities of prevention of gender and domestic violence. after choosing 3 most important answers, they were allocated in the following way:**

- a) Social workers – 17%
- b) Law enforcement structures (police, prosecutor's office) – 18%
- c) Educational premises – 8%
- d) Structures of healthcare – 9%
- e) NGOs – 10%
- f) Local government – 15%
- g) Public defender – 10 %
- h) Media – 13%

Least of all the role of social workers is seen by the group of small business – 4%, most important is considered by socially unprotected – 29%.

Role of law protecting structures is seen by the representatives of small business (27%) and refugees (29%).

Role of educational structures was not mentioned in the group of small business (1%), mostly this structure is named by the youth group (20%).

Role of public defender is named by (5%) of small business, 14% of youth, 14% of socially unprotected, 21% of refugees.

25% of small business, 13% of refugees, 12% of youth and 11% of socially unprotected consider important inclusion of local government.

## 2.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

There were conducted 4 focus groups to obtain qualitative information (the total number of respondents 36) and four in-depth interviews with local experts (4 respondents). Totally 40 respondents participated in the qualitative research. 31 women 9 men. Focus groups were held with the disabled persons, women leaders of communities, teachers of pre-school premises, with parents, intelligentsia.

Gained information showed the degree of involvement of different social groups in the municipality, in particular in terms of information exchange, participation in the budget process. There was suggested a vision, that "budget should optimally reflect the interests of all stakeholders - women, disabled, youth, refugees and ethnic minorities. From the very beginning of the development of the budget it is necessary to include all stakeholders. After approval of the

budget all stakeholders should be informed about its objectives, priorities and plans", although in practice there was given rather different picture. Despite the fact that the government door seemingly is open to all, according to the disabled, people in their difficult condition are difficult to participate, existing infrastructure does not allow to move freely.

There were also other conclusions: "I think that social groups have no relevant information about their rights and resource, accordingly do not participate in defining budget priorities."

Experts involved in the research, while speaking about existing practice of defining budget priorities, mentioned that "central government and particularly the Ministry of Finances should find financial resources in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development for funding the project, elaboration of general plan for development of municipalities, which will give possibility to define programs and implement projects precisely, purposefully and efficiently".

According to respondents all current programs in municipalities are considered enough important, as for development of the city it is necessary equal duration of infrastructural as well as socio-economical, cultural and sport programs. They underline social programs funding of high-tech researches particularly for citizens with the poor health of the citizens, which is expensive and in most cases are not funded by the state program of universal insurance. And under this program it became available for the citizens.

Important novelty is a program for assistance of violence victims, which promotes to their social adaptation.

According to respondents, with the help of social programs aimed at the prevention of problems of the most vulnerable groups of local population and IDP community, for planned social programs for these groups, it was increased accessibility to medicines and to different health services. They consider that in the future social programs should include establishment of day-care centers, providing psychological counseling for the elderly, single mothers and children, rehabilitation and assistance programs for the disabled and other programs. To their opinion poverty reduction and vulnerable risks, needs of groups, will be satisfied with such complex activities as: availability of sustainable employment, housing, health and education, only such activities can neutralize the real condition of the state.

According information gained as a result of research, it was shown that the experts consider local activities for health protection and prevention of diseases effective and the indicator of this are number of statements for employment and satisfied citizens. They think that it is necessary to co-finance the medicine for the people with heart diseases despite their social status.

According to experts, the needs of all vulnerable groups are not fully satisfied as their social status and assistance policy is always part of a larger spectrum that includes access to sustainable employment, housing, health and education, they aim to reduce the increase of poverty and vulnerability risks. Only such complex activity may neutralize the real condition of the state.

There were arguments that professional economists and lawyers, in parallel with civil inclusion should define budget priorities. "*While planning the budget professionals together with representatives of different groups should take part in it. I think that the population should be inquired*". "*To my opinion inclusion of the youth and disabled is necessary, for envisaging their needs*".

There were shown positions that in the process of budget planning there should be kept records of effects of existing programs. *The costs are effective when it will be followed by the result and it will not be a one-term. For example I can sharpen the focus on infrastructure work, which is important for the welfare of the population. "In reality, analysis of applications from citizens in self-government, will give possibility to take into account the interests of the most vulnerable groups while planning priorities and social programs for the next year."*

Effective enough was the program for ensuring socially unprotected people with building materials which gives possibility to rehabilitate dilapidated houses and accommodation conditions of the citizens improves.

Citizens claim that for them also important is health programs. "Financing of health programs are more selected. Parasitological research of the area, included in the health program is also acceptable. "Also there was mentioned a program of co-financing the necessary studies for inclusion patients with C-hepatitis in the program of health care.

"I like the program of development of villages. The village is strong when there is a gas, water, and others. In the villages is good program of vouchers. When people in the village will have such assistance, the "Runaway" people in the city, will go back to the village. "

Citizens like the attention of the local government towards kindergartens, particularly in relation to nutrition of the children.

Women and other gender groups included in the research, in parallel to those programs that they consider suitable for them, speak about specific needs. Specially underlined were the problems of disabled. The issue was touched by both beneficiaries themselves and other community groups and experts. "Regarding the problem of disabled people, it would be better if the services existing in the municipality and the building will be adapted and infrastructure of the city will be arranged accordingly to needs of such people, so that they have opportunities of free movement without hindrance. Different building in Senaki have ramps, although there are lot of places, where entering of such is impossible."

The disabled themselves speak about integrity of their community in the society. "we permanently need help and not only economical. It will be good to activate the program of caring at home, as physical and psychological assistance would ease our condition".

It was mentioned that there should exist a program for employment of disabled persons. Also support such programs, which would help them to be integrated in the society. "Now I work with 18 disabled pupils and also with volunteers and make handicrafts, but I am worried with the lack of finances. No program was financed in the region, finances were not found for that".

It will be desirable to have legislative basis, where employment of disabled will be essential. According to them: "we want to earn money with our work. It will be acceptable if the state finds sources and will pay more attention on stable assistance of disabled."

Teachers of preschool premises consider that in the local budget there should be envisaged programs for professional training of teachers, as teaching programs and demands are sophisticated and also the need to promote gender education. Although the most painful question is low payment. "It is felt a progress in pre-school institutions, it will be good to take into account the growth of salary of employees for next year."

There was mentioned a problem of 6 year-old children, who were not admitted to schools and the kindergartens do not receive them back. "It will be good to open a group for children above 6, as often because of 1 month the child can not go to school and we can not return them back".

Teachers and parents agree that most part of assistance from the government should be used for pre-school premises. This is assistance for women.

It was said that the clearest need is in employment, followed by the question of migration, especially for women. "It is important to overcome the unemployment, creation of jobs. In the long term, in every village should be created enterprises for stopping population drain".

It was said that barrier to socio-economical development of population is small finances and credits, which touches 80% of population. It is important to give long-term low-percent loans, and local self-government should ensure consultative centers for interested persons and provide assistance for the specialists in technological maintenance.

*"For me, as for many others financial assistance is essential for implementation of small business plan. Of course self-government will not give such amount, but a hope they will support."*

*"I need funds for my project, which is envisaged for 25 students and we make nice handmade. Among these pupils 18 are disabled."*

Research participants consider that for strengthening the village it is necessary to have relevant infrastructure. Population should feel care from the side of government. "It is necessary to give gas to the population, it will be grate to gasificate old region of Senaki".

While speaking about long-term prospects of improving socio-economical situation, it was noted that in the municipality of Senaki there is conducted construction of cement factory of modern standards, which will employ thousands of local citizens, it is also planned rehabilitation of the monument of cultural succession Nokalakevi, which will support the growth of local revenue and transformation of Senaki, as a city with great tourist potential.

Investment should be gained for creation of jobs and in this direction in Senaki, little steps were made. Small factories of laurel and peanut are working, where most of employers are women. Citizens wish to increase government efforts in this direction.

For the participants of the research it is very important to carry out activities for the support of young people. There is a need of internship programs for young people to attract new staff. "It will be very good if the local budget will take into account the amount for students with higher academic progress with the aim of financial assistance, to facilitate their learning in high schools."

By the opinion of participants of the research, long – term prospect is an elusive by local budget. The envisaged events will not improve the socio-economic condition of the people, it is considered a short-term perspective, since the assistance, they receive is based on needs and for suspension of problems in a certain time interval. While the country will have socially vulnerable layer of society and the economic condition will not be improved, according to the local budget and certain parts of the country's budget in general, we can speak only about the short term prospects.



By the opinion of participants, in terms of women employment, the main thing is to conduct trainings and employ the women. Here should be envisaged private sector, it is mostly possible in the sphere of agriculture.

The experts think that establishment of enterprises of local importance, the development of agricultural programs and the attraction of investment determine creation of jobs and improve the social status of the population. The geographical location of Senaki municipality and natural resources make it possible to transform Senaki into tourist center. Also it may be reconstructed as spa resort. There is an interest of investors in this area, and by the active involvement of government it will be possible to create interesting conditions for investors.

There were expressed interesting vision towards promoting gender policies at a place. Research participants believe it is a merit of Senaki GAC. Experts believe that the work in terms of gender budgeting, gender education in general must be continued for inclusion of all vulnerable groups and creation of favorable environment for them. "Gender budgeting can be named as one of the components of gender-sensitive policies at a place, in the budget of this year it is envisaged financial assistance for victims of domestic violence."

Prevention of domestic violence is deemed a very important question – mainly here are named the projects implemented jointly with the Fund "Sukhumi". "It should be noted that in communities there is a lack of information in this area. It will be good if the activity in this direction will be more, more cooperation between the government, society and NGOs, a greater awareness for the effective implementation of prevention of domestic violence.

### **Recommendations**

- Elaboration of general plan of Municipality development
- Co-financing of medicines to patients with coronary artery disease despite social status.
- Activation of the program of home care for the disabled, for their physical and psychological support. Support of programs for disabled on employment and integration into society.
- There is a need of envisaging internship programs for the youth, in the budget.
- Senaki should become tourist destination. Also spa resort should be restored. There is an interest of investors in this area.
- Discussing the issue of increasing salaries for the teachers and technical staff of kindergartens.
- Maximal inclusion of civil groups, specialists of the fields while preparing budget programs.
- Encouraging young people with high academic achievements by local Programs. Activation of youth internship programs
- Improving the practice of rural meetings and active involvement of women's groups in the work.



# GENDER ANALYSIS OF LOCAL BUDGET OF KUTAISI MUNICIPALITY

**Given analysis was carried out  
by order of Fund "Sukhumi"**

**2016**

## **I. SUMMARY**

In the present report there is given, the investigation / analysis of the municipal budget and local gender policies of Kutaisi municipality envisaging gender parameters.

The aim of gender aspect analysis of the municipal budget of Kutaisi, is the definition and presentation of the existing social problems and how social justice and gender equality are satisfied at the local level, how is ensured the availability of existing resources for all groups of society, including those based on gender; how the budget responds to the different needs of women and men. This is a prerequisite for improving the management of the municipality.

Gender analysis of the budget is a research of various budget impact on women and men.

For the analysis there was carried out monitoring of different programs of Kutaisi local budget, there was held a focus-group with participation of experts, civil groups using the instruments of gender research.

Since the local budget in the municipality of Kutaisi is still being approved by the traditional method, it does not give an opportunity to clearly see and analyze its gender dimensions. It was decided to study and evaluate gender budget with the help of discussions of the focus group and research, conducted in this format. A focus group was held on June 23, 2016 it was attended by 12 competent persons.

Based on the materials of focus groups and different programs (articles), this report describes in detail the strengths and weaknesses of Kutaisi municipality budget identified in the gender analysis.

Gender analysis covered:

***Budget revenues and expenditures of the municipality.*** It was noted that the revenues of Kutaisi municipality for 2016 was 460 GEL per person. They lag behind the indicators of Tbilisi (715.3 GEL) and Batumi (635.3 GEL).

***Expenditures for the education, health protection and social protection.*** These costs compared to previous years increased and their share in the local budget is following: education - 15.4%; health care - 1.4%, social protection - 5.9%. It was noted that gender-oriented program is the program of nutrition for the poor people, which is carried out by the "Charity House". At the same time, there is lack of money, the statistics is not complete. The same ap-

plies to indicators of infant and maternal mortality, which is twice worse than the indicators of Europe.

***Gender aspects of pre-school and general education.*** It was said that education and development of schools is one of the priorities of the municipality. There still remains the problem of "aging" of teachers. It is difficult to engage young teachers, including men (their contribution - 35%).

***Expenditure on sports events.*** Budget is focused on the development of sports, but the involvement of girls is 6 times less than that of boys.

***Cultural sphere.*** Municipal budget provides support of talented and creative young people in the sphere of culture and art. The involvement of boys and girls are roughly equal.

***Infrastructure.*** According to experts, the costs are gender sensitive, but there are revealed many facts of standards violations.

***Economic activity.*** The budget includes the costs for the promotion of small and medium businesses, although these costs in 2016 are quite reduced.

***Unemployment.*** The unemployment rate in Kutaisi is high. According to experts, there is a gender imbalance, although there is no full statistics in the Municipality.

***The local labor market.*** The number of women with higher education seeking for the job is more than the number of men, although big difference is not felt. Precise data is not available.

***Questions of personnel policy and gender equality.*** The situation in the municipality is more or less normal, and there is a big difference in the balance between men and women working on the leading positions of the City Hall. Difference in salaries is small.

***Transparency of information, reflecting the gender policy and communication.*** On the Web page of the City Hall there is sufficient information about the current work and plans, although information about the employed staff is little.

***The reporting system.*** Special services often publish reports about implementation of municipal programs. Experts express their opinions about a fact that it is better, if the program will be based on qualified research. There will be planned public monitoring and evaluation of implementation. Gender Council solves lots of such problems.

***Policy on IDPs, as part of the gender policy of the municipality:*** IDPs have equal access to any program of the municipality, and there is no separate program based on their needs. There is a poor coordination with local as well as with central structures working on IDP issues.

### **Policy to increase local resources for the implementation of gender parameters.**

With the aim of implementation of gender policy, 2016 budget is designed to equal needs

of women and men. The budget does not reflect the question of implementation of gender into the policy. There is a hall has called GAC in the building of municipality. The process of searching additional funds (grants) for the implementation of gender policy - is not very active.

Listed issues are more clearly below. See appropriate recommendations at the end of the report.

## II MAIN PART

### Budget revenues of Kutaisi Municipality

After Tbilisi, Kutaisi Municipality is one of the biggest municipalities in Georgia. According to preliminary results of the census of November 5, 2014, in Kutaisi lives 197 thousand people. This represents 28% of Imereti region.

Budget revenues of the municipality in 2016, according to the forecast, should be 73555.6 thousand GEL which is 460 GEL per person out of the total population (for comparison, revenues in the municipality of Tbilisi per person is 715.3 GEL, in Batumi - 635.3 GEL).

It is necessary to set the overall gender profile of the budget costs of Kutaisi Municipality, in the first place, the budget priorities should be identified and their comparison should be held with the so-called "Gender costs" In this regard, the situation is following:

The ratio of the local budget costs of education, social security and health: education - 15.4%; healthcare - 1.4%; social protection - 5.9%. It should be noted that in comparison with the previous years, costs on education and social protection is increased.

Catering program is focused on the vital needs of the people and is gender-based. It covers more than 500 families (800 people totally). The beneficiaries of this program are: socially disadvantaged, disabled people of different groups, the homeless, persons below the poverty line.

It should be mentioned that for those, who are not able to receive rations in the places of catering, service is provided in a way of meals for home delivery. Beneficiaries are served by the "House of Mercy" (in general, according to 2015, 39 140 beneficiaries benefited from the social programs of the municipality).

Despite this, experts (according the results of focus groups) considered insufficient the resources allocated in this area. It turns out that there are no statistics of the beneficiaries in need of this service. They talk about the need to implement long-term programs, also the Institute of volunteering in this area.

In the budget of 2016 costs of social assistance is 5.1% out of municipal costs (3742.0 GEL). In 2015, these expenses were - 3.4% (2226.3 thousand GEL.). The amount allocated from the budget in the health sector in 2016 was 1023.0 GEL (1.4% from the total budget). In 2015 the financing of this sector was 856.3 GEL. Accordingly, in comparison with previous years, these expenses increased.

Despite the expressed gender character of existing costs, which often mention the representatives of self-government in municipalities there is no analysis of how many women and men

receive services within the allocated funds, what is their share of the local population and how many people are willing to receive such service. It is believed that under the current legislation, based on their needs they can be contacted by the persons who are registered / residing in Kutaisi - regardless of gender, i.e. the program is gender - neutral, but not always fair. Experience shows that women in this regard, are more socially active than men, respectively, the services are mostly provided to them.

*Also, it is not known what is the part of beneficiaries which remain outside joined social assistance. For this reason the research was not carried out.*

Out of 1574 families left homeless in twelve municipalities of Imereti region, the majority - 927 families - are registered in Kutaisi. Citizens are affected by a variety of reasons: natural disasters (landslides, hurricanes, floods, snowstorms, earthquakes, fires); old buildings; family conflicts; affected by the mortgage; family who do not have a living space, etc.

Unfortunately, in the region there is no social shelters. This is a gender-sensitive issue and must be addressed at the regional level.

To the citizens, registered in Kutaisi, the existing legislation makes gives possibility to use the programs of health care programs, regardless of gender. Despite this, there are no separate segregated data - whether there was the equal access to services for women and men or not, ie, how many women and men used the service, whether they have equal access to these services.

Based on the general analysis we can say that the programs, reflected in the budget are really focused on improving the everyday problems of socially unprotected families. For example, "program to promote the advancement of domestic problems of socially vulnerable families", which aims to co-finance the payment for electricity and waste removal; "Program of covering damaged roofs for socially vulnerable families", in this part with 60% of applications from the public are satisfied.

Totally still we can not say that analysis of the expenditure part of the budget is not complete, as there is no definition of growth welfare of social stratum. The introduction of such practice would make it possible to calculate the effect of each program for the future planning of the programs regarding vital needs.

#### Gender profile of the budget expenditure of Education

Pre-school education - one of the main areas of the municipality services. In the municipality of Kutaisi there are 37 kindergartens and expenditures for 2016 are determined in the amount of 9.74 million GEL. In comparison with last year they are more on 50 000 GEL.

Each month different amount out of the total amount goes per each kindergarten. The costs are not counted standardly. In services, of pre-school education number of pupils is 10 000 children. The number of kindergarten teachers - 614.

According to information from the municipality, the association monthly plans and conducts training for branch staff. All educators, psychologists, speech therapists and nurses are certified. Whole staff of teachers are with higher education.

We must welcome the fact that in recent years there is studied the number of pupils with inclusive, limited opportunities and different needs. According to the association, total number of such pupils is up to 50. They are included in various general programs with the aim of their integration into society. Insufficiently inclusive or innovative are the training programs for them.

It should be noted that expenses for food, health care and others are increased by 500 000 GEL in pre-school education programs. Cost per child in 2016 was 2.6 GEL and in comparison with 2015 it is slightly increased.

Educational program of studying is innovative. To the main program of the Ministry there are added Georgian traditional national themes. With regard to gender education, last year in this regard on the initiative of the Gender Advisory Council of Kutaisi trainings for kindergarten staff were conducted.

## GENERAL EDUCATION

There are 39 public and 13 private schools and Cadets Military Lyceum named after General George Kvinitadze (totally - 53) in Municipalities.

The number of teachers 2438 (among them in the public schools are employed 1,875 teachers in private schools - 520 and in Cadets Military Lyceum named after General George Kvinitadze - 43 teachers). The gender pattern of such teachers: 65% women, 35% - men (mainly - according to the data of military lyceum). It can not be said that there are used special measures to attract men - teachers, educating young teachers' staff, although there are various programs that promote the inclusion of young, energetic staff.

With the aim of development of schools and cooperation with coordinated educational premises, in the municipality of Kutaisi number of programs is implemented. Various activities are planned among the pupils with the aim of popularization of Georgian folk songs and dances, support of participation in international projects of participants from educational sphere of Kutaisi and the pupils, raising of educational level of pupils and adults. Very interesting is scholarship of the Mayor of the city for successful pupils and students, theatre festival of public schools, performances and announcing the winners, awarding in nominations: creative Olympiad of students; summer camp on the Black Sea resorts in three streams for disadvantaged students of 8-10-graders of public schools and successful students; creating a blog of public schools' stories of Kutaisi; awarding winner schools and the publication of the book "Chronicle of My School"; awarding successful teachers with icons; awarding outstanding and successful teachers in honor of the teachers' day; awarding students-winners of international competitions and the final rounds of national educational competition; funding of Kutaisi pupils and students for participation in international competitions and festivals.

That is - we can safely say that the development of schools - is one of the priorities of the municipality. It is advisable to update these programs annually according the interests of youth. From this perspective, the activation of Local Government will be an indication that it has taken the responsibility of institutional support of general education.

There is another serious problem: the monotonous gender (there are few men-teachers in schools) and age profile of teachers. If we take into account that 44% of teachers are above 50 and retirement age, its results in the future will be more acute. Accordingly, care for the young teaching staff, the involvement of men in school - should be in the interests of the municipality.

## **Gender-related costs for sport and cultural events**

Kutaisi - city of great sporting traditions and the costs in this field are clear, but more interesting for analysis is their gender evaluation. In Kutaisi there are 12 sport, focused on the development of 38 types of sports, where 4081 children are registered. Among them: boys - 3416, girls - 665 (5 times less). We see an obvious gender imbalance.

On the basis of 5 months reports of this year - for travel in this area there are allocated - 403 866 GEL. Among them: for men - 343 791 GEL for women - 60 115 GEL, which is almost 6 times less. Existing put under the question responsibilities, taken by self-management to support the popularization of different sports among women, promote healthy lifestyles, greater involvement of girls.

**Cultural sphere** – existing programs ensure support of talented and creative youth in the sphere of culture and science, popularization of honored representatives of cultural sphere, organization of cultural days, exchange tours, competitions, festivals and exhibitions.

In carried out activities, relatively evenly are included both boys and girls (in the current year interesting events were held, including several large-scale activities: for example, the Day of Kutaisi - May 2 for organizing of which 25 783.80 GEL were spent). At the same time, it is desired the programs and activities for more support of different gender groups. It would be good to show gender problems to the wider community through the performances of the Forum Theatre.

## **Gender Analysis of the expenditure in infrastructure and economics**

Infrastructure is one of the main directions of the local budget. In the priorities of Kutaisi budget are building of new infrastructure and rehabilitation of existing one. In this direction there were defined different important programs, part of which have gender character.

Distribution of amount: programs for road infrastructure, budget -14302.7 GEL; construction of roads and pavements, reconstruction and maintenance - 12 127 GEL improvement of roads to the multi-storied houses - 997 6 GEL; rehabilitation of sewage, rainwater, water systems - 537 2 GEL; for implementation of liquidation activities as a result of the disaster - 640.0 GEL; program "Housing", which mainly covers the repair of damaged roofs, entrances, water and sewage system, parapets of multy-storied buildings. The device of children's attractions - 3 279.0 GEL; installing ramps - 100.0 GEL; housing rehabilitation program, repairing of damaged roofs for socially unprotected - 305.0 GEL, etc.).

It is that most part of expenditures are gender sensitive and it should be greeted. Despite this, the specialists, part of society show tremendous scales of standard abrogation, which requires to pay attention to improvement of cost-effectiveness. Costs to address sanitary problems are gender-sensitive. Attention is paid to waste management and sorting. In different areas of the city there are special containers for collecting plastic bottles, this innovation should be noted. Measures for protection from stray animals are important, but the measures are still insufficient.



### **Economical activities**

Costs for economical activities are defined by 2016 plan and is 250,0thous. Gel. This is 0.3% of the budget. For comparison - in 2015 the costs were 1 672.0 thousand GEL; or - 2.6% of the budget, i.e. expenses decreased 6.6 times.

Statistical information on the dynamics of employment is not yet complete. Official information about the situation on the labor market is insufficient. Data on such categories as: self - employment; persons, working free in family enterprises - family income and profits of which (in cash or in kind) is created in Kutaisi reality, for example enterprise of furniture, bread, bakery products, confectionery products, etc. In the self - employed category should be included people who are selling cigarettes, matches, flowers in the streets... These are street vendors, also most people who are engaged in the sphere of traditional medicines, etc...

In the municipality there are efforts, to promote the development of small and medium businesses. Despite this, in terms of reduced cost on the economy, it is difficult to achieve. According to experts, it is needed to significantly improve the training / re-training of qualified personnel, improve efficiency, further simplifying of formal procedures within the competence of self-governments, reduce local taxes, this concerns mainly to gambling, building permissions and so on. Deep analysis of the impact on the economy is necessary and also support of its development, revision / adjustment of regulations.

According to experts, it is necessary to plan and carry out projects for a greater promotion of local products, both in domestic as well as in the international market, to support the participation of wide circles of small entrepreneurs in local and international exhibitions

**Indicator of unemployment** in the region: is based on statistic database, presented by different organizations, 30% of region residents are considered as self-employed. It is necessary to define how many women are employed in the business sphere. It is an indicator of activity of self-government bodies and civil society, and shows necessity of infrastructure development, which should be carried out by the municipality in frames of its legitimation. With this aim, there are separate efforts of the local labor market research, i.e. - there is certain statistics, how many women are employed in the business sector.

According to the research, conducted by the property service of local government and economic development of Kutaisi, in entrepreneurial activity of 2015-2016, in the manufacture of products (beer and soft drinks, furniture, bakery, confectionery, meat products, plastic and cardboard products, construction, etc.) there are included: 35% - women, 65% - men.

In the service sphere (hotels, catering, automobile technical service, fast loan, currency exchange, beauty salon, different economic and household activities) 55% - women, 45% - men.

In the area of trade: 63% - women, 37% - men.

For the gender analysis it is interesting, in addition to the research of the local labor market whether it is carried out research of economic indicators or not:

According to the research, in 2015 the share of profits in the industrial sector was - 75%, the losses - 25%;



In the area of trade, the share of profits - 80%, loss - of 20%. In the service sector: the share of profits - 86%, loss - of 14%.

For defining gender prospects it is necessary what kind of information exists on demanded professions. It seems that in the business-sector the most demanded professions are: administrator / manager, chef, waiters at restaurants, serving staff of the hotels, guide, carpenter, electrician, metallurgist, mason, welder, turner.

It should be noted that interest to these professions are not fully satisfied by the local labor market.

### **Gender aspects of local labor market**

There exists conditional statistics of how many women / men are the job seekers today. In terms of total unemployment out of the total rate of population a high proportion of job-seekers are among young people - 25-34 years. Out of this group 28.4% women and 32.2% men.

A large proportion of the employed population is among people with secondary education. General education was fixed among 37% of employed women and 43% men.

Among the number of unemployed women large proportion goes to women with higher education. And among men to those with secondary education. In 2015, there were 46% of women job seekers with higher education, and 46% of men with secondary education.

According to official statistics, in 2015, in the municipality average monthly salary of women was 618 GEL and of men - 980 GEL, which presumably does not reflect the real picture.

According to the 2015-16 period, average monthly salary of employed men in the business sector amounted to 940 GEL, which is 351 GEL more than monthly salary of employed women.

In reality, of Kutaisi municipality it is difficult to see the complete gender-segregated picture of labor market. The proportion of job seekers and employed ones with gender parameters and social accessories - is unknown.

According to the 2015 data salaries of women, employed in different types of activity, are relatively high in the production / distribution of electricity, gas and water, and in the other spheres they remain behind men's salaries by 11% and more.

### **Strategy of development of Imereti Region 2014-2021**

One of the objectives of the strategy – in order to achieve it, there are envisaged concrete directions of gender policy including development / implementation of such programs and activities as:

1. Improving demographic situation;
2. Inclusion of youth in the issues of development of the region;
3. Youth Development;
4. Integration of the various vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, IDPs, elderly, ethnic minorities, etc...) in the life of the region;
5. Development of adapted infrastructure and creation of conditions for free movement of persons with disabilities;

6. Strengthening of role of the state in the mutual cooperation of the population and increasing their involvement in the life of the region;
7. Support for gender equality.

### **Gender equality in the personnel sphere of municipal services**

In the apparatus of Sakrebulo of Kutaisi municipality, at different positions 35 persons are employed. Among them are women - 19 men – 16. Chairperson of Sakrebulo apparatus is a man and out of 4 heads of department - 3 women and 1 man. Here, the situation in terms of gender balance is quite good.

On the other hand, among the members of Sakrebulo there is a large imbalance. Out of 25 members there are 3 women and 22 men. Out of 14 officials 12 are men and only 2 are women. From 9 freelancers, i.e. taken to work under an employment contract there are 6 women and 3 men.

City Hall of Kutaisi Municipality: here the total number of employers is - 341, among them 180 men; and 161 women (including leading experts - 66, the main experts - 95).

An official aspect: on management positions 99% are men.

The average monthly salary of employed in the municipality, per the employed is (including premiums) in 2016 is 1114.70 GEL.

The gender dimension of consumption of salaries is based on the ratio of salaries of women and men professionals of the same level. The situation at this point in the self-government of Kutaisi is following: analysis of the wage of salary shows that the total monthly salary of officials of Sakrebulo is 24950 GEL. From them women's share is 3400 GEL. As for Sakrebulo apparatus, here monthly salary rate is 25,500 GEL, from where women's share is 12,000 GEL (47%), and men - 13500 GEL (53%). It is obvious that in the process of distribution of wages gender balance is abrogated and sharply differentiated in vertical of salaries.

If we take the statistics of programs and decisions, initiated by women, how they were supported, we will see that composition of Kutaisi Sakrebulo is represented by 3 women MPs: Irma Petriashvili, LelaKelbakiani, NatoKatamadze. 2 of them are chairpersons of committees of Sakrebulo: Irma Petriashvili - Chairman of the Commission of Culture, Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, LelaKelbakiani - Chairman of the Finance and Budget Commission of Kutaisi Sakrebulo.

At the meetings of Sakrebulo, there were actively discussed the issues raised by them, proposals, statements, a number of issues have been supported. For example, the issue of the large number of children in kindergartens of Kutaisi (as a result 3 kindergartens were built and number of kindergartens were expanded). The suggestions were considered and the issue of taking and placing children in kindergartens of Kutaisi was improved.

**For implementation of gender policies important issue is transparency of information and communication;** Information about activities planned by self-government, meetings of Sakrebulo, on the work of the commission and Sakrebulo fraction are intensively and efficiently laid out on the website of Sakrebulo / City Hall of the Municipality of Kutaisi. Despite the

fact that on the official website of the City Hall/Sakrebulo few information is published in the context of gender (eg. public is not informed about gender picture of the employed staff and others.)

**The reporting system.** Programs, reflected in the budget of Kutaisi municipality, is implemented by relevant service, it has a budget. The program is described, expected outcomes and assessment criteria are identified. Implementation of the program is planned in timeline. At the same time, as the experts of relevant areas note, it is desirable that the new programs should be based on research, how many beneficiaries are in need of a particular service, what resources are optimal to meet those needs, how to plan monitoring and evaluation of program implementation, studying the effect for the maximally fair consideration of all the comments on future prospects.

**Memorandum, signed with civil institutions can be considered as gender-sensitive activities carried out by the local self-government:** On December 18, 2013 memorandum of collaboration was signed between the Fund "Sukhumi" and Sakrebulo of Kutaisi.

At Sakrebulo of Kutaisi operates Gender Advisory Council with approved gender policy program. The Council was established on the basis of the Memorandum, signed on December 18, 2013 between the Fund "Sukhumi" and Sakrebulo of Kutaisi. It helped to increase qualification of kindergartens' staff in gender issues.

For the gender competence of self-government, with the help of Fund "Sukhumi", the Gender Advisory Council of Kutaisi municipality a plan of the gender policy was elaborated. With its influence, in the program of kindergarten unity, there is envisaged monitoring of implementation of gender issues. The local TV channel ("Rioni"), within the frames of gender equality plan, prepared and broadcasted a TV discussion on gender issues. The discussion was attended by representatives of local government and Sakrebulo. During 2016 the Gender Advisory Council, with the support of Kutaisi City Hall and the Fund "Sukhumi", several projects have been carried out.

**In the municipality there is established the institute of advisors on gender issues and the issues regarding the persons with disabilities:** member of the Gender Advisory Council is a representative of the Mayor of Kutaisi; in the Department of Social Affairs of Kutaisi City Hall there is a representative working on the persons with disabilities, who presents information about the needs of people in this category to the Mayor of the city. **These institutions have a certain impact on the gender policy of the local government.**

**In what items of the budget is entry "Gender" and in accordance with what programs:** in the budget of 2016 for the first time appeared a phrase - "The perception of gender issues and problems related to them and implementation of targeted measures in this direction in practice." Gender Advisory Council developed a gender policy plan in 2016 for inclusion in the local budget. Accordingly, the budget takes into account the ways of solutions of gender issues, which is reflected in the addition of new programs and sub-programs to find additional funding. Priorities and program of Kutaisi budget, mainly are focused on infrastructure of the city, social protection, health, education, sports and culture.

### **Policy on IDPs, as part of the gender policy of the local government.**

Programs, which are carried out by local self-government, theoretically are available to IDPs. They can use all the programs, that are carried out in the city by local government. But there are no such programs, **which are adapted only for their needs. Coordination and cooperation between central and local institutions, working on issues of IDPs and Resettlement is very weak. Less prior is the question of integration and the use of social resources to this category of citizens.**

**Interesting is the policy of increasing local resources for implementation of gender parameters – is there effective system of searching grants. Is there an attempt of cooperation with the donor with the aim of attracting investment, elaboration of local strategy, especially for the implementation of gender policy.**

2016 budget projects of Kutaisi are calculated for the needs of women as well as the needs of men. It is significant that in the budget there was a record about gender policy. In the City Hall there is a room "Gender Advisory Council". 2016 budget planning was considered from a gender perspective, but at this moment search for grants is not carried out for the implementation of gender parameters.

As part of the gender budget analysis it was studied, how effective are the local programs for the **protection of pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants**. As it turned out, there is no local statistics on infant mortality, moreover, members of the local governments feel odd to have such statistics. On the basis of national statistics, in Georgia in recent years 2012-2015 there was a trend of decreasing infant mortality. But the figures are still alarming (in developed countries, the mortality rate per thousand live births - 6, and in Georgia - 12. In recent years the rate of mortality per 1,000 live births - 10.6). Indicator of infant mortality is also twice more than in developed countries (576 infants died from 0 to 5 years old in 2015 year).

At first glance, Georgia reached the Millennium Development Goal. The target point is a recognized factor of -16, while in Georgia the statistics range is from 10.9 - 10.6. But this is also an alarming rate.

Experts believe that the health of parents and children is connected to the existing level of life in the country. This refers to category of gender indicator. The prosperous life becomes, the greater is the chance to reduce the mortality rate of newborns and infants. If general background improves, it will be affected on the health of women and children. Solving the issue, according to them, depends not only on the Ministry of Health, but also the private sector, the community, local government. It is necessary to improve the education of women on reproductive issues. And also conduct monitoring, what is the level of maternal health and health care during pregnancy; how a woman's body was ready for pregnancy, to give birth to a viable child, without pathologies and defects. Experts regret that when associated disease leads to death, the cases are not studied.

It is known that the National Center for Disease Control is planning to implement a pilot program of registration of maternal and child mortality - that is, the data will be registered on places, which is very important to address this gender-sensitive issue. Therefore, in the articles of the local budget, it is necessary to reflect the activities in this direction.

### III. Conclusion

The budget does not separately mark gender issues, and they are integrated into social programs. They do not have a specific target character. Despite the fact that with such approach can be also solved gender issues with the help of budget, but as a rule, during the budgeting process from the side of Municipality there is not carried out a study of local gender needs. Identifying the gender needs of the population, mainly is based on meetings which are held by majority candidates in their municipalities. Also, prior to the formation of the budget there are held two final meetings to review and discuss the collected information and preparation for submission to the government in the form of recommendations.

A precedent of local needs is to conduct a study by gender advisory council, which during three years is trying to study the needs of different population groups and submit relevant recommendations to the local government. It turned out that the experts are involved to set priorities and to develop economic strategy. They are developing a long-term vision. Recommendations reach the government and reflect them in the budget. But during formation of social budget similar inclusion of experts almost is not fixed.

**Based on the results of the research, it can be said that in the municipality of Kutaisi there is a certain range of gender problems, caused by different factors: the demographic situation; relatively low level of fertility; high levels of poverty; the problem of youth employment; social security system designed for short-term effect; not fully solved social infrastructure and others. These and other problems have influence on both social and economic situation of families and ultimately cause interference for creation and development of new families.**

**Drawing attention to these issues is a function of the municipal government, and should be part of the strategic planning and implementation of budget indicators.**

Experts think that more available for the municipality is revealing those families, which need assistance most of all.

Gender significant also is the development of small and middle business, based on the fact that women are mainly employed in these areas. **From a gender perspective, this is an indicator of civil society activity and identifies the need for the development of the infrastructure, which should be held by municipality within its powers. Results of fragment studies of the labor market also point to the need to work in this direction.**

**Local economic development strategy in line with the global objectives of sustainable development** (its 17 objectives and 169 tasks were signed by 193 countries, including Georgia.

Gender issues are mainly touched by the 5th goal. It says: We have decided that until 2030 we will defeat hunger and poverty everywhere; We will fight inequality in the country and between countries; build a peaceful, fair and inclusive society; protect human rights and promote gender equality, implement the rights of women and girls; ensure continuous protection of the planet and its natural resources. We decided to create the conditions for sustainable, inclusive economic development, taking into account different levels and capabilities of national development).

It is important that during the formation of the local budget it should be envisaged the mea-

asures for the implementation of these tasks. Especially significant is the support measures for the protection of women from gender-based violence, especially when the local government under the new legislative changes has responsibility to prevent violence and protect the victims.

It seems that local budget quite overwhelmed with social obligations, but often it is not adapted to the needs of women and specific groups.

At this time, we can say that formation of the Budget in gender parameters promotes to fair and effective redistribution of funds aimed at the target groups during the formation of the budget. Gender budgeting also contributes to the assertion of the principle of good governance, accountability and transparency. Envisaging data from a gender perspective will increase the level of gender responsibility of Kutaisi budget.

**With the help of conducted work it became possible to develop the following proposals of recommendation nature:**

#### **IV. Recomendative suggestions**

1. While formation of municipal budget, for reflecting specific needs of all groups by gender point of view and fair allocation, it is necessary for the self-government to base not only on the proposals received from the representatives of the municipal units and deputies. **In international practice, there is established implementation of socioeconomic researches with the active inclusion of the society.** In this regard, the grant can be used, which is allocated by international donors. It is possible to obtain through participation in grant competitions. In such competitions self-government can take part and / or NGOs, together with the local government. The municipal budget, formed with such approach would be more in line with international standards, global goals of sustainable development goals and objectives on gender directions, developed by the United Nations. Kutaisi municipality has all the necessary conditions for that.
2. Development of the municipality's annual budget at a higher level and improvement of positive results achieved in recent years is possible in case if the local government will have **database in all areas of its work (real statistics)**. But the national statistics may not always objectively reflect the real situation, a marked tendency that exists in cities and regions. It is in the interests of the citizens themselves. It is necessary to overcome the fear, that such database will be used by some political parties or politicians for their interests. **It is necessary to introduce the practice of official public transfer of the mentioned database from ruling political party to the next group.**
3. It will be good to involve volunteers in the processes of regulating and management of gender as well as other important issues of the city. **In general, it is necessary to study and implement European practices of volunteers Institute.** Good examples of volunteerism are shown by the such organizations as: "BagisKide" Association "Kutaiseli" and more.
4. The education system in order to attract young teachers, especially men, can give a good result of the introduction of compulsory internship for graduates. Encouraging the prac-



- tice to work as a teacher in public schools at the age of 25-45. For teachers in the retirement age to allocate a double pension. There also can be initiated the law.
5. Effective ways of establishing high gender culture in family and society on the first phase: introduction of innovative methods and instruments in pre-school education. One of such instruments should be appointment of specially trained staff on the position of educators: both – women and men, work of male and female teachers in one group, giving the children examples of their personal relationship. It would help to eradicate the defects existing in many families in the process of upbringing of children. It is advisable not to wait for the reforms from the "top". On its own initiative municipality may establish several pilot groups, and try this innovation. In the beginning, it will not be associated with high costs. According to preliminary evaluations, implementation of this initiative could be the ideal model of family education in children's groups. We believe that this idea will bring interesting and positive results, will affect the reform of pre-school education in the country, and will contribute to introduction of a new gender culture based on Georgian traditions.
  6. In order to reduce the gender imbalance in the sphere of economic activity from the point of view of both quantity and terms of payment, also unemployment of women with high education, self-management of Kutaisi in the next year's budget should take into account the target costs for funding those NGOs that carry out projects with priority of development of small businesses for women. In order to solve the problem, it is necessary targeted cooperation between local government, civil society and international organizations.
  7. Memorandum between Kutaisi self-government and fund "Sukhumi", creation of Gender Advisory Council and joint work on gender issues, is fruitful. This fact should be mentioned. Started cooperation should be continued and make more extensive. All this should lead to real gender balance and balance in payment of deputies and persons, working at key positions in Sakrebulo and City Hall.





**CULTURAL-HUMANITARIAN  
FUND "SUKHUMI"**

**Project Director - ALLA GAMAKHARIA**

**Project Coordinator - MERI GELASHVILI**

**Consultant - EKATERINA GAMAKHARIA**

**Assistants:**

**EMA KAMKIA**

**LALI SHENGELIA**

**KHATUNA GOGUA**

**TEA TORINAVA**

**GURANDA GVANTSELADZE**

**Translation - NINO NIJARADZE**

**Editor - LALI SHENGELIA**

**Design - LIA KOSTAVA**

**Address: Kutaisi,**

**6 Mgaloblishvili Street**

**Tel: +995 431 27 29 02**

**E-mail: [womansukhumi@gmail.com](mailto:womansukhumi@gmail.com)**

**Web-page: [www.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.fsokhumi.ge)**

**[www.gac.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.gac.fsokhumi.ge)**

