



INSTITUTE FOR
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About the Institute for Sustainable Communities

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) is an independent nonprofit organization that helps communities in existing and emerging democracies resolve problems while building a better future for themselves and the world. ISC give communities—and the organizations that support them—the training, advice, and grants they need to solve their own problems and shape their destinies long after ISC's work with them is finished. It focuses on environmental, economic, and social concerns, and on the need to address all three to succeed. To ensure that its work is successful, ISC involves different groups within a community, from the most to the least powerful, to encourage fair and lasting results.

ISC is based in Vermont, a state that values grassroots democracy and environmental stewardship, and it has international offices in Macedonia, Russia, and Ukraine. Since its founding in 1991 by former Vermont Governor Madeleine M. Kunin, ISC has managed international projects in more than 16 countries with support from individual donors, private and corporate foundations, and the U.S. government. The majority of ISC's employees speak multiple languages and many have advanced degrees in their fields of expertise, ranging from community and organizational development to pollution prevention and resource management. Its board of directors includes highly respected U.S. and European leaders from the government, nonprofit, academic, and business sectors.

All ISC projects are designed and carried out with the assistance of partners. This immeasurably improves the appropriateness, effectiveness, and permanence of the work they do together. Partnership also ensures that the benefits of ISC's projects are multiplied. For example, many community action projects are managed jointly with national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), regional governments, and municipalities, which then share the lessons they learn with other communities. Over the years, ISC has been fortunate to work with hundreds of committed partners that teach as much as they learn.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Overview	4
Activities.....	4
Results for the Parliamentary Election	5
Subcontractors for Voter Education and Media Activities	6
Subcontractors for Civil Society and Issue Advocacy.....	14
Monitoring and Evaluation	17

Introduction and Overview

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) signed task order subcontract 1-3600-Ib-011 with IFES on November 6, 2007, to support the latter's Election and Political Process (EPP) program in Georgia, funded by USAID Task Order DFD-I-00-05-00225-00. Under this subcontract, ISC agreed to assume responsibility for the execution of two of the six overarching EPP program deliverables: Task 2, Increasing Participation of Civil Society in the Election Campaign; and Task 5, Voter Education and Mobilization, Especially Among Traditionally Underrepresented Groups. ISC also agreed to serve as advisor and administrator for competitive subawards issued under the EPP program.

In coordination with IFES, ISC designed a range of activities to address these tasks and meet the objectives laid out in IFES' Task Order Proposal. Immediately on signing the task order subcontract, however, the political situation in Georgia changed dramatically. Subsequent to the government crackdown on opposition protests on November 7, snap Presidential elections were called for January 5, 2008. IFES' and ISC's activities needed to be accelerated, and also adjusted to fit the rapidly changing environment. Subsequent to the Presidential elections, IFES and USAID conducted a substantial reprogram of the remaining Task Order activities and budget to reflect the changing reality of the situation on the ground. Funds in support of Task 2 were curtailed significantly, resulting in fewer subawards and more limited activity in this area. Ten of the Task 5 subawards made during the Presidential campaign carried over to the Parliamentary election period as well. Following the Parliamentary election on May 21 and the closing of all outstanding ISC-administered subawards, ISC closed its program activities.

Activities

In coordination with ISC, IFES released an RFA on February 1 entitled "Grant Competition to Support Civil Society Participation and Issue Advocacy around the Parliamentary Elections in Georgia." IFES sought to award several subawards under this competition in the \$15,000 to \$25,000 range to raise public awareness of key issues and challenges critical to Georgia's future, engage political parties and candidates in addressing those issues, and monitor government action on those issues after the election. A team of 10 independent evaluators served as an Evaluation Committee that scored the proposals according to set criteria, and made funding recommendations. Based on these recommendations, and in consultation with USAID, IFES and ISC decided to approve 3 subawards on April 21.

In addition to the civil society RFA competition, ISC continued to support existing subrecipients in continuing voter education initiatives for the Parliamentary campaign period. These 10 subrecipients supported voter education and mobilization and independent media coverage, particularly among traditionally underrepresented groups. In total, 75% of the subrecipient pool focused their efforts exclusively or substantially on traditionally underrepresented groups (Armenian, Azerbaijani, IDPs, women and youth). Regardless of their focus, all subrecipients

were required to exercise gender inclusiveness and many showed an even balance of male and female participants, even in areas where this has traditionally proved problematic.

Results for the Parliamentary Election

- Collectively, the subs produced and distributed over 400,000 printed materials containing technical election information and information on the candidates in 5 languages: Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Russian, and Ossetian. These materials covered voting procedures, voter list issues, election law, parties and their platforms, and how to identify and report violations and fraud. In many cases, these materials were distributed door-to-door by hundreds of volunteers.
- Hundreds of local and regional journalists received expert training in covering election issues effectively.
- Dozens of radio and television PSAs, news reports, and special programs were produced and broadcast in every region of Georgia.
- Live televised debates conducted by Kavkazia, and several debates pre-recorded by Studio Re and broadcast by 19 regional television stations, were well received and highly successful – in the majority of cases, this programming represented the only independently produced/broadcast election-related television content during the entire campaign period.
- There was robust voter turnout among traditionally underrepresented groups. Participation in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti regions exceeded that of any previous election save the Presidential in January.
- Several community leaders and service providers reported double normal turnout among refugee and IDP populations.
- Numerous project participants and beneficiaries provided anecdotal evidence of significantly increased ability on the part of the electorate to vote correctly, and identify and document when violations occurred.
- NGOs proved effective in engaging party leaders on a number of substantive issues, including environment and conservation, national minority concerns, independence of the judiciary, and many others. Parties included positions on these issues in their platforms, many for the first time, and addressed them in debates and public statements. Related information campaigns raised public awareness of critical challenges facing Georgia and the role of the election in meeting those challenges.

Subcontractors for Voter Education and Media Activities

Following are summaries of the activities of the subcontractors engaged to implement Task 5 voter education and independent media activities.

1. Ltd. Avantazhi, Project “Informed Choice” (Covering Both Elections)

Ltd. Avantazhi is a Kutaisi-based print journalism organization affiliated with three newspapers across Georgia, “Akhali Gazeti” (Imereti), “Samkhretis Karibche” (Samtskhe Javakheti) and “Spektri” (Kakheti). Activities included:

- Provided training for 25 journalists from all three newspapers in Gurjaani over two days in March; also sought and received accreditation for coverage of election processes from the Central Election Commission.
- Published over 40 articles in all three newspapers in the run-up to the election, prepared by the journalists trained above.
- Created 9 mobile groups of 5 journalists each who monitored and reported on election-day developments and events.
- Distributed 200,000 copies of a special 8-page, full-color newspaper insert in three regions of Georgia: Imereti, Samtskhe Javakheti and Kakheti, both through regular circulation and door-to-door campaigns conducted by 75 teams of roving volunteers.

Journalist Training. Training for journalists of three regional newspapers built on the training conducted previously during the Presidential campaign. The main purpose was to give journalists special insight into election-related issues and prepare them for their joint work on the election-related newspaper insert. Specific topics included:

- Professional standards and ethics in Georgian journalism;
- How to cover elections;
- Journalistic skills applicable during election processes;
- Providing balanced information during elections, ‘white’ and ‘black’ PR in Georgian media; role of media during elections;
- Content of newspaper insert.

Newspaper Insert. 200,000 copies of the special newspaper insert were printed on May 16th and distribution took place from May 17th through May 21st. The insert was distributed among the Imereti, Samtskhe Javakheti and Kakheti regions as follows: 80,000 in Imereti (50,000 Georgian and 30,000 Russian), 70,000 in Samtskhe Javakheti (50,000 Armenian, 5,000 Georgian and 15,000 Russian) and 50,000 in Kakheti (40,000 Georgian, 5,000 Armenian and 5,000 Russian). Articles covered the following topics:

- Voter lists;
- Election administration: duties, obligations, composition, etc.;
- Amendments to election legislation;

- Parliamentary candidates and party lists and their platforms, as well as whether they had equal rights in conducting their pre-election campaigns;
- Monitoring of pre-election processes.

Results/Impact

For many voters in the target regions, the insert was the only printed information they received about voting procedures and candidates' positions on the issues. Particularly among refugee, diaspora, and national minority groups, civic leaders reported strong voter turnout, attributing and attributed the strong showing to the efforts of Ltd. Avantazhi. Avantazhi journalists also served as election monitors, documenting violations of election procedures they had been writing about for the previous three weeks, and followed up with articles on the conduct of the elections and areas that need improvement in the future. All documentation regarding such violations was published and distributed by Avantazhi the day after the election – the only immediately available tabulation of problems identified the previous day.

2. Public Movement Multinational Georgia

Multinational Georgia is an umbrella organization representing NGOs across Georgia working with 56 distinct ethnic groups and 18 diaspora populations. Their focus is on the rights of national minorities and increasing the participation of ethnic minorities and diaspora in public decision-making. With funding from SIDA and CORDAID, Multinational Georgia has an ongoing civic education initiative on fostering equal opportunities for equal participation.

Funding from IFES enabled Multinational Georgia to expand its efforts and focus on the election process in particular, with a strong emphasis on the national minority populations in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti. Activities included:

Election Observation Trainings. Multinational Georgia carried out trainings of more than 200 election observers in 13 districts in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti. They also prepared a guideline fact sheet, in print and electronic format, for election observers that was used by an additional 400 observers and journalists on election day.

Voter Education Materials. Posters and pocket voter guides were produced in Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani. One thousand guides in each language were distributed to village centers in the weeks preceding the Parliamentary election. An additional 6000 booklets on the parties and their platforms were produced in all three languages and distributed through Multinational Georgia's network of local member organizations.

Telephone Hotlines. Hotline numbers were included in all posters and printed materials. Multinational Georgia fielded hundreds of calls with questions on voter procedures and election violations in three languages.

Public Information Seminars. A panel of experts conducted pre-election voter education seminars in the Gardabani, Aspinza, Rustavi, Marneuli, Adigeni, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, and Ninotsminda districts in the Russian, Azerbaijani, and Armenian languages.

Consultations with Mass Media. In the week before the election, PMMG organized workshops for media outlets in Kvemo Kartli and Samstkhe-Javakheti on election procedures and election coverage.

Results/Impact

As the only Tbilisi-based organization with widespread credibility among the national minority populations of Kvemo Kartli and Samstkhe Javakheti, Multinational Georgia was able to leverage its strong network of local member organizations to reach out to otherwise isolated and overlooked minority populations. Election officials noted record interest and turnout in these regions during the Parliamentary election.

3. Union of Democrat Meskhs, Akhaltsikhe, Samstkhe-Javakheti

For the Parliamentary election, the Union's activities consisted primarily of two initiatives. The on the preparation and publication of 5 special newspaper editions in coordination with the newspaper "Samkhretis Kabriche." This newspaper has a regular subscription distribution of 5,000, with an additional 5,000 sold through local newsstands and shops throughout Samstkhe Javakheti, and is published in Georgian, Russian and Armenian. The second initiative involved exit polling of voters in Samstkhe-Javakheti.

Special Newspapers. In cooperation with "Samkhretis Kabriche," UDM helped journalists prepare special articles on election law, voter lists, common examples of electoral fraud, parties and their platforms, and technical information regarding polling places and voting procedures. Four special editions of the paper were printed and distributed in the 2 weeks preceding the election.

Exit Polls. UDM engaged a lawyer and a journalist to train 50 participants (journalists, local leaders, and interested citizens) in election-related law and procedures. Participants then conducted informal exit polls on election day to gauge voter reaction, complaints, and positions. Polls conducted both before and after the election helped illuminate popular opinion on substantive issues and the Parliamentary candidates.

Results/Impact

As a local organization in touch with the concerns and questions of local citizens in Samstkhe Javakheti, UDM was uniquely positioned to prepare relevant and timely voter education

materials for the majority ethnic Armenian population. By producing and distributing 50,000 newspapers in local languages in the period immediately preceding and after the election, UDM was able to reach voter blocs otherwise isolated from media coverage. Election commissions reported record voter turnout in this region.

4. Journalists' Association "Post Factum"

Post Factum focused its efforts for the Parliamentary election on the refugee and IDP populations in Samegrelo and Shida Kartli. Activities consisted of the production and broadcast of radio programming on technical election-related issues, and a series of informational seminars for IDPs in both regions.

Six voter education seminars were conducted for IDPs and national minorities in Lagodekhi (Kakheti) and Ninotsminda (Samtskhe-Javakheti) on technical voter issues, with over 150 journalists, civic leaders, and local officials attending. Post Factum also organized the broadcast of five radio programs, in three languages, covering technical election issues, election law and code, party lists, and party platforms.

In the week before the election, Post Factum organized a roundtable discussion in Tbilisi for seminar participants from each region, as well as journalists who participated in the production of the radio broadcasts. The roundtable served as a platform for the coordination of voter turnout and monitoring activities conducted on election day.

Results/Impact

Local civic leaders reported that IDP and refugee turnout for the Parliamentary election was double that of previous elections, due in large part to the on-the-ground organizational and information campaigns conducted by Post Factum. This was the first time a concerted effort was made to inform IDPs of their voting rights and ensure their participation in the electoral process.

5. Radio "Atinati"

Located in Zugdidi, Samegrelo region, Atinati conducted the following activities prior to the Parliamentary election:

- A public opinion survey conducted among Zugdidi voters
- Daily news programs; 11 per day, 2 of which are Russian-language programs;
- Radio program "Right to vote" aired every Tuesday and Thursday starting from April 15th through May 21st;
- Radio debates aired every Wednesday and Friday starting from April 15th through May 21st, plus one program after the elections;
- PSAs aired daily over the same period.

Public Opinion Poll. In early May, Atinati conducted a public opinion poll on technical election issues to identify areas of concern. Of 523 respondents (321 women and 202 men), 27% were able to answer the poll questions correctly. 22% failed to get any correct answers, while 9% refused to answer the questions. This represented a significant improvement over a similar poll conducted during the Presidential round.

Daily News Segments. 5-minute news segments were broadcast 11 times daily between April 15th and May 21st, 9 per day in Georgian and 2 per day in Russian, for a total of over 300 news segments. Each segment consisted of 3 parts: 3 minutes dedicated to election-related issues in Samegrelo, 1 minute dedicated to election-related issues in Georgia and 1 minute – to world-wide news. Issues covered in these segments included pre-election preparations in PECs; problems with the voter list; election administration – preparations in Zugdidi district PECs and DEC; work of branch offices of political parties in Zugdidi district; local and international observers; preparations for election day; election results.

Special 30-minute Broadcasts. Seven special programs entitled “Right to Vote” were broadcast from April 15th to May 21st.

Radio Debates. Nine radio debates took place at the radio station. The debates were 45-minute long programs facilitated by one journalist and a lawyer. Representatives of 7 political parties took part in these debates.

PSAs. Four PSAs prepared by Atinati’s implementing partner were aired regularly.

Results/Impact

As the only viable and continuously operating independent radio outlet in Samegrelo, Atinati provides the sole source of broadcast information to a majority of the population of this region. By programming frequent, diverse election programming, Atinati ensured that the electorate in Samegrelo was informed and prepared regarding technical election procedures and the positions of the various candidates. Opposition and pro-government candidates alike lauded Atinati for its fair, balanced, and professional election coverage.

6. Association “Independent Journalists’ House” – Batumi, Adjara

IJH’s activities for the Parliamentary election focused particularly on youth and first-time voters.

- Training for student government bodies at Adjara universities in turning out youth voters and election-related issues;

- A “Young Voter” competition, designed to stimulate the production of election-related newspaper articles by young people before the parliamentary elections. The three best articles were published in the “Informed Voter” column of the newspaper “Batumelebi.”
- An “Informed Youth” competition soliciting project proposals for small activities designed to increase youth voter turnout in Adjara. The three best proposals were selected and supported with small stipends.
- Election-related articles and a special election-related edition of Batumelebi in April.

Special Newspaper. 105,000 copies (100,00 Georgian and 5,000 Russian) of the newspaper “Elections 2008” were printed. Topics included:

- Why should we participate in elections;
- How to protect our votes;
- Situation before elections; article called “They never lie as much as before elections”;
- Several short interviews with voters – “Why I participate in elections”;
- Detailed information on voting procedures;
- Information on voters rights;
- Information on voters lists;
- Information on plebiscite;
- Full list of Batumi, Khelvachauri and Kobuleti PECs;
- Information on local organizations observing elections.

Results/Impact

IJH produced and distributed over 100,000 copies of a special newspaper dedicated to election-related issues. IJH engaged over 1,000 young people through universities in Adjara, with student government bodies reporting increased interest, registration for, and participation in the election over Presidential election levels.

7. Center for Social Sciences, Tbilisi

CSS is a media think tank specializing in the training of journalists and the production of material on professional and effective journalism. For the Parliamentary election, CSS conducted the following activities:

Journalists’ Guide to Election Coverage. CSS produced a comprehensive guide to election coverage in the media for print and broadcast journalists, published in April 2008.

Legal Support. CSS retained an attorney specializing in election law and media issues to assist journalists nationwide with technical election questions and other legal issues throughout the Parliamentary campaign. Over 100 consultations were provided.

Research and Public Opinion Polling. CSS conducted public opinion polls and research on the state of the election code in February and March. Results of both were made available to journalists nationwide for their use in preparing media content on the election.

Training for Journalists. Twelve trainings in Tbilisi and in several regions of Georgia helped prepare over 120 journalists to cover the elections, with a special focus on ethics and standards.

Results/Impact

CSS raised the bar for professional journalism across Georgia and served as a clearinghouse for vetted expert information on election-related issues and election coverage. Local and regional journalists throughout the country made use of these materials to produce better quality print and broadcast material, coordinated with each other to ensure lessons learned in one region were replicated in others.

8. Television Lt. Kavkazia

Kavkazia upgraded its equipment so that it could conduct effective and independent election coverage. In April and May, Kavkazia aired a special series of moderated debates, 3 per week for each of the 8 weeks preceding the election for a total of 24 debates. Moderators were chosen from among university students, civil society leaders, prominent journalists, and interested citizens. Panels of moderators posed questions to parliamentary candidates and political party representatives in front of a live studio audience; telephone lines allowed viewers to phone in with questions of their own. Each debate focused on a particular substantive issue, such as education, government reform, healthcare, etc. Several were moderated by youth participants. Kavkazia's website was also revamped to allow streaming video of these debates to be offered online.

Results/Impact

The Kavkazia debates were well received and generated massive and enthusiastic response from viewers. In many cases, these debates represented the only professionally produced and broadcast television content that could be considered free of influence from the ruling party. As such, they provided a vital and neutral counterpoint to state-influenced media coverage of the pre-election campaign.

9. Ltd. Chokhatauris Matsne, newspaper "Guria News"

Guria News implemented the following activities for the Parliamentary election:

Workshops/Seminars. Guria News conducted workshops in Chokhatauri, Ozurgeti, and Lanchkhuti (Guria region) with those who expressed interests in pre-election an election monitoring processes, and with representatives of the local NGO and media sector. At the workshops, experts explained in the details of election process, and also covered possible violations of this process. Experts touched upon methods of preventing of such violations before and after elections.

Consultations. The Guria News information/consulting center in Ozurgeti was open daily and specialists answered election-related questions and provided free consultations.

Brochures. Journalists at the center prepared printed materials for distribution covering the following topics: advice to media outlets and journalists working on balanced coverage of elections-related processes (“Role and functions of media”); voting procedures; and frequently asked election-related questions (examples: do results have binding force, when does the pre-election campaign stop, when do polling stations begin and end their work, which documents are needed to be able to vote, etc.). These brochures were distributed publicly by teams of volunteers throughout the region, wearing items of clothing making it clear they did not identify with any political party but rather were impartial observers.

Local journalism. Guria News conducted meetings and facilitated coordination of local journalists’ coverage of the election. They also established a “press patrol” of journalists accredited by Guria News to cover the election, and an online “databank” of material produced by these journalists for use in preparing news features and special election-related publications.

Results/Impact

Guria News represented the only impartial source of election-related information for citizens in the Imereti region. Beneficiaries frequently expressed equal amounts shock and appreciation for the fact that Guria News purported to support “democracy, not any particular candidate.” This impartiality leant credibility to its consultation activities and its printed materials, and resulted in widespread reliance on Guria News on election day for accurate news coverage.

10. Newspaper “Kakhetis Khma” – Kakheti

Kakhetis Khma represents a coalition of newspapers and journalists from the Kakheti region. A summary of their activities is as follows:

- Training for journalists – 21-25 February’08;
- Info meeting with Georgian population as well as with representatives of national minorities residing in the region – February-April;
- Publications on election issues – February-May;
- Radio programs – February-May.

Training for Journalists. Kakhetis Khma conducted an intensive four-day training for 30 journalists from every region of Georgia on election-related coverage and professional standards.

Mobile Groups. The purpose of the mobile groups was to: 1) increase public awareness on election-related issues as much as possible, and 2) increase media and society involvement into election processes. Eight mobile groups of 3-5 members each were created. Two meetings/seminars were conducted by a trainer invited from ISFED for the members of these groups. Topics discussed were: election administration, balanced and fair coverage of election processes, possible fraud/violations, voting procedures, etc. The mobile groups were active in voter education activities at the village level with groups of up to 30 participants from February through May, targeting national minorities in particular (Ossetians, Azerbaijanis, and Lecks).

Leaflets. 25,000 informational leaflets were printed and distributed in Kakheti: 5,000 in Russian, 10,000 in Azerbaijani and 10,000 in Georgian. The leaflets were titled "Informed Elections: What You Need to Know," and included the following questions and answers: who can participate in elections, detailed voting procedures, inking, video cameras at PECs, secrecy of vote, etc.

Radio programs. During the pre-election period - as well as after elections – radio "Hereti" aired two election-related radio programs: live political debates called "Hot line" (as listeners could make phone calls during the program) and a program called "Your rights". Total number of programs aired was 45, and 7 out of these were aired in Azerbaijani. Topics covered in the latter program were: election code and news in election legislation, voting procedures and e-day, party lists. On e-day radio "Hereti" was broadcasting hourly news prepared on the basis of information provided by mobile groups.

Results/Impact

Kakhetis Khma, through a range of print, broadcast, and organizational activities, ensured that voters in the Kakheti region – of all ethnicities, and with a special emphasis on Azerbaijani citizens – were informed and prepared to participate in the election on May 21st. They also provided independent news coverage – the only media outlet in its region to do so consistently.

Subcontractors for Civil Society and Issue Advocacy

1. Association Studio Re

Studio Re's objective for this project was to ensure that citizens in the regions and outside of urban centers were informed about issues critical to Georgia's future, as well as each party's position on those issues. In order to accomplish this objective, Studio Re invited representatives of the first five parties on the party list to participate in recorded studio debates on substantive

issues. These debates were then distributed for broadcast to 19 participating television stations across Georgia. For broadcast in minority areas where language was a barrier, the debates were translated into Russian before being broadcast.

Six pre-recorded debates were produced, covering issues such as sustainable development, the environment, independence of the judiciary, unemployment and poverty, conflict resolution, healthcare and services, separation of powers, national minority representation, and national defense, among others. Studio Re identified these issues in advance by conducting stakeholder meetings in six regions to gauge what challenges, needs, and concerns citizens were most interested in.

Party representatives universally expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to conduct balanced, rational discussions about national issues and regional challenges, and were particularly pleased that their statements in the debate would be broadcast to their regional constituents. Radio stations in Marnuelie and Samtshke-Javakheti conducted “man on the street” interviews following the broadcast of the debates, in which citizens expressed their appreciation for the programs and for the opportunity to ascertain a complete picture of the election and the choices before them.

Following the broadcast of the debates, Studio Re and its partner, the Civic Integration Foundation, organized follow-up meetings with national minority populations in Marnueli and Samstkhe-Javakheti. These meetings were intended to provide opportunities for party representatives and national minority citizens to interact directly, ask and answer questions, and share their visions for Georgia’s future. Six meetings were conducted in each region with an average attendance of 30 people per meeting. The meetings were audio-recorded and rebroadcast over local radio stations.

Results/Impact

Studio Re debates represented the only impartial broadcast content showcasing parties’ positions on key issues in Georgia to be broadcast nationwide. Many viewers reported that due to these debates, this was the first truly informed election in which they had participated in Georgia. Follow-up meetings provided a unique opportunity for party representatives to engage national minority populations directly and in their home regions – again, most for the first time.

2. Association Green Alternative

Green Alternative is a civil society organization dedicated to raising awareness of environmental and conservation issues in Georgia. Under this subcontract, they contacted and worked with 12 political parties to engage their leadership on the issues of conservation, water, pollution, energy, logging, construction, mining, and natural disasters, among others. Experts from Green Alternatives worked with willing party members to inform them about these issues and also solicit their positions on them. As a result, when the parties released their official

platforms 5 of the 12 contained specific information and action items around conservation and the environment. This marked the first time any political party had ever addressed these issues in their platforms or written public statements.

In addition to working with the political parties, Green Alternative engaged in a comprehensive public information campaign. They printed 20,000 full-color brochures on environmental issues that were distributed with newspapers across the country. They also produced a like number of calendars and information cards using photographs of natural resources as backdrops, and distributed them at public events. Green Alternatives developed and published special election-related information on its website, www.greeningfuture.net, which received 16,000 unique hits and 50,000 page views between April 24 and May 20.

Results/Impact

Five of 12 political parties addressed environmental and conservation issues in their platforms for the first time. Thousands of Georgian citizens received information on party positions, and on environmental and conservation issues critical to Georgia's future.

3. Marnueli District Social-Economic Development Foundation

Marnueli focused on engaging the political parties on national minority issues, and raising the profile of those issue with the Georgian public more generally. In March and April, Marnueli conducted 25 roundtable meetings in the Marnueli, Bolnisi, and Gardabani districts (population 85% Azerbaijani) to identify the most important issues facing residents of these areas. More than 400 participants provided their opinions, from which Marnueli developed a list of questions for political party representatives. All of these meetings were recorded, and all completed successfully despite attempts by police forces to intervene in some cases. Most commonly cited concerns included the need to complete state forms in non-native languages, scarcity of agricultural machinery, and service and infrastructure deficits in these districts.

Following these activities, Marnueli prepared an open letter to all political parties inviting them to respond to these concerns, and also inviting them to come to Marnueli to meet directly with national minority populations to discuss these and other political issues. The most active participants of the roundtable meetings were sent in person to present the open letter and invitations to party leaders. The letter was also published in two issues of the local newspaper, 12,000 copies each (6,000 in Russian, 6,000 in Azerbaijani). Marnueli helped organize television debates on the local television station and invited political party representatives to attend.

Marnueli faced a serious challenge in its efforts in the way of resistance or reluctance of the political parties to come to these districts – traditionally considered ruling party strongholds hostile to opposition parties. Nevertheless, three parties sent representatives that participated both in local meetings (the first time national opposition parties had done so), and in the televised debates. Marnueli's efforts also garnered coverage by national print and online outlets who reported on these events nationwide.

Results/Impact

National minority concerns were identified and transmitted directly to 12 political parties, many of whom subsequently addressed these concerns in their published platforms. National minority citizens in these districts were engaged on these issues through direct meetings and newspapers, and provided venues both for expressing their opinions to candidates and for hearing those candidates' responses, often for the first time in both cases.

Monitoring and Evaluation

IFES/ISC personnel conducted site visits with every subrecipient in the weeks preceding and following the Parliamentary election to monitor progress and attend trainings, seminars, and other events. Subrecipients were required to submit detailed narrative and financial reports on their activities, including on their results and how they were measured. Work products –print and broadcast, as well as records of seminars and trainings conducted – were also submitted and compiled.

Many subs conducted public opinion surveys prior to their activities, the better to design and organize them, and some conducted such surveys after the election to measure the effectiveness, quantitative or qualitative, of their efforts. ISC provided all subrecipients with pre-designed and publicly available tools to facilitate this process.

The summaries of subrecipient activity are based on the subs' narrative reports, the observations of IFES/ISC personnel who conducted multiple site visits, surveys conducted before and after the election, and the anecdotal comments of project participants and beneficiaries.