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EVALUATION

FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FOR THE STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES PROJECT (SEPPS) IN GEORGIA

August 2018

This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared independently by Dr. Sean R. Roberts of the George Washington University, Dr. Bakur Kvashilava of the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, and Khatuna Ioseliani of Open Society Foundation Georgia.

ABSTRACT:

USAID/Georgia began a five-year project entitled Strengthening Elections and Political Processes (SEPPs) in 2014, two years after the first peaceful transfer of power in the country, at what looked like a promising time for the development of Georgia's democratic political processes. This evaluation explores the performance of this effort based on the progress that had been accomplished towards its objectives and ultimate goal. The overarching goal of the project – “Georgia's democratic electoral and political processes are deepened and institutionalized” was pursued through three objectives: strengthening of political parties, improvement of government capacity to administer and oversee free and fair electoral processes, and enhancement of civic engagement and national consensus around electoral and political processes. These objectives were pursued via interventions implemented by three international (IFES, IRI, and NDI) and three local (ISFED, GYLA, and TI-Georgia) partners. The evaluation addressed five primary questions specified by USAID: Did the performance of the project's six activities meet expectations and achieve expected results? Were there gaps in achieving the three objectives? Did the activities meet the expectations of their direct beneficiaries? Were the project's goals feasible given the ability of USAID to influence? Did the project offer lessons learned from utilizing local partners? The evaluation team adopted a multi-faceted and mixed-method approach to its evaluation. This approach included extensive documentary research, interviews with the implementing partners, and three primary evidence-based research methods with stakeholders: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and a mini-survey. The evaluation established that the project's objectives and sub-objectives are generally on target to be met. However, there are structural issues in Georgia's political system that continue to hinder political competition. In this context, it will be critical for USAID going forward to tackle the more fundamental objective of making political competition an acceptable and assumed part of the Georgian political system.

Final Performance Evaluation for the Strengthening Electoral and Political Processes Project (SEPPs) in Georgia

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This paper was prepared by Dr. Sean R. Roberts, Dr. Bakur Kvashilava, and Ms. Khatuna Loseliani, who conducted research for the evaluation June-August, 2018.

DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS

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| ADS | Automated Directives System (USAID Operational Policy) |
| CEC | Central Elections Commission of Georgia |
| CEPPS | Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DEC | District Elections Commission |
| DEO | Domestic Elections Observer |
| EDR | Election Dispute Resolution |
| EMB | Electoral Management Body |
| EU | European Union |
| GD | Georgian Dream Political Party |
| GDC | Georgian Dream Coalition |
| GDP PC | Gross Domestic Product per Capita |
| GEL | Georgian Lari |
| GYLA | Georgian Young Lawyers Association |
| IFES | International Foundation for Electoral Systems |
| IP | Implementing Partner |
| IRI | International Republican Institute |
| ISFED | International Society for Free Elections and Democracy |
| ISSA | Institute of Social Studies and Analysis |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NDI | National Democratic Institute |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OGP | Open Government Partnership |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PEA | Political Economic Analysis |
| PIRS | Performance Indicator Reference Sheets |
| PMP | Performance Management Plan |
| PPP | Purchasing Power Parity |
| PPR | Performance Plan and Reports |
| PWD | Person with Disabilities |
| SAO(G) | State Audit Office of Georgia |
| SEPPs | Strengthening Electoral and Political Processes Project in Georgia |
| SOW | Scope of Work |
| TI-Georgia | Transparency International – Georgia |
| TWG | Technical Working Group on Elections |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| UNM | United National Movement Political Party |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USG | United States Government |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation Purpose and Background

Two years after the first peaceful transfer of power in Georgia’s history via the free and fair elections of the Parliament in 2012, USAID/Georgia began a new five-year project entitled Strengthening Elections and Political Processes (SEPPs). As this five-year project comes to an end, this evaluation explores its performance. In doing so, the evaluation team was asked to examine the progress that this project had accomplished towards its objectives and ultimate goal, while also exploring a variety of questions related to both the performance of the project and the scope of its objectives, keeping in mind the externalities of political developments in Georgia that are beyond the control of both USAID and its implementing partners.

Project Background

The **development hypothesis** the SEPPs project was based on is that “sustainable, democratic political competition can be enhanced at the national and local levels by continuing to build the capacity of institutions and organizations related to elections and political processes and by ensuring broad citizen engagement in those processes.” The project’s **theory of change** is that “if civil society is informed and engaged in civic life and, together with the government, increases its capacity to advance and solidify sustainable practices and inclusive participation in the country’s electoral and political processes, then democratic institutional change will be strengthened, and groups across all strata of society will be empowered to assert their voices and rights as citizens in a democratic society.”

The overarching goal of the SEPPs project – “Georgia’s democratic electoral and political processes are deepened and institutionalized” –was pursued through three main objectives (Sub-Purposes): the strengthening of political parties, the bolstering of government capacity to administer and oversee free and fair electoral processes, and the enhancement of civic engagement and establishment of a national consensus around electoral and political processes. These in turn were further divided into specific intermediate results and were carried out in six activities implemented by three international NGOs (IFES, IRI, and NDI) and three local NGOs (ISFED, GYLA, and TI-Georgia) respectively. While the different activities under the SEPPs project each contribute to fulfilling all of the project’s sub-purposes, NDI and IRI have been primarily responsible for Sub-Purpose 1, IFES – for Sub-Purpose 2, and ISFED, GYLA, and TI-Georgia – for Sub-Purpose 3.

Political Background for Project Period

Given that any work done in political development, particularly as it relates to elections and political processes, inevitably depends upon political factors outside the control of USAID and its implementing partners, the report also includes background information about the political context in which this project was implemented in Georgia from 2014 to the present. This context has been shaped initially by the Parliamentary Elections of 2012, which ushered in a new era in Georgian politics. Those elections represented the first time that an incumbent accepted defeat in elections and agreed to the peaceful transfer of power. The Presidential Elections of 2013 and Local Elections of 2014 completed the process as the Georgian Dream Coalition (GDC) won both elections handily. However, since 2014, a true consolidation of the democratic transition in Georgia has not taken place as the political field in Georgia remains polarized and uneven as some old challenges to political pluralism remain from the pre-2012 era and other new challenges have emerged from the nature of the present ruling party. In particular, the political system in its present form tends to facilitate a

“winner-take-all” system where the incumbent party dominates political competition through control of political financing and administrative resources.

The incumbent Georgian Dream Party (GD) now holds 115 seats in a 150-member Parliament commanding a comfortable constitutional majority that has led a complete one-party dominance of the political space. This dominance has also been replicated on the local level where GD holds all but two mayoral seats in the country and controls the majority of all local councils. Given its power over administrative resources and its consequential ability to raise almost endless finances for party operations and political campaigns, this situation translates into a virtual stranglehold on power that has retarded the development of any capable opposition parties. Subsequently, public trust in political parties and their platforms is presently decreasing, and political processes are dominated by strong personalities and patron-client mobilization rather than a competition of policy agendas. Recent constitutional amendments may change some of the “winner-take-all” aspects of the system, but they do not go into effect until 2024, and only through the implementation of these changes will it become apparent that they actually can foster more political competition and the establishment of multi-party democracy. It is in this complex political context that SEPPs project has sought to promote further consolidation of democratic political processes in Georgia since 2014.

Evaluation Questions

Providing technical guidance to the evaluation team, USAID/Georgia gave the evaluation team five primary evaluation tasks:

- 1) Did the six SEPPs activities¹ satisfy the SEPPs project purpose?
- 2) What gaps, if any, still remain to achieve the three SEPPs project objectives?
- 3) Did SEPPs activity interventions meet their needs and priorities of beneficiaries/stakeholders?
- 4) Were the SEPPs problem and purpose statements developed at a level within USAID’s ability to influence?
- 5) What lessons have been learned from utilizing local partners in implementing the SEPPs project?

These core questions were also accompanied by a variety of more specific sub-questions that examined the sustainability of interventions, the quality of the SEPPs partners’ M&E systems, and the future appropriateness of different interventions.

Methods

In evaluating the performance of the SEPPs project, the evaluation team adopted a multi-faceted and mixed-method approach to its research. This approach included extensive background research, preliminary and follow up discussions with the implementing partners and three primary evidence-based field-based research methods: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and an internet-based mini-survey. Fieldwork for the evaluation was conducted in the cities of Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Marneuli, and Batumi July 3-26, 2018. The work in the field included 48 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, chosen by the criteria for potential interviewees in the evaluation’s SOW. These interviews were conducted in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, and Batumi and produced both quantitative and qualitative data. Additionally, the evaluation implemented a country-wide survey administered via the internet with the direct beneficiaries of training from NDI, IRI, and IFES.

¹ “Activity” refers to the stand-alone direct awards provided by USAID/Georgia to an implementing partner to implement a project (e.g. the Strengthening Electoral Processes activity implemented by IFES).

Finally, the evaluation worked with the Institute of Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA) to convene ten focus groups conducted with secondary beneficiaries (citizens interested in politics, but not political party activists, government officials, journalists, or NGO activists) conducted in Tbilisi, Marneuli, and Batumi. While these three data collection methods were focused on answering the five evaluation questions provided to the team by USAID/Georgia, as with any data collection methods used to measure the results of political and democratic development, they have their expected limitations. However, the evaluation team sought to mitigate these limitations as much as possible through the selection of a broad spectrum of informants and the disaggregation of data collected.

Findings

In general, the evaluation team found that the SEPPs project was diligently implemented according to each activity's program description. It also found that each partner organization was seriously, sincerely, and professionally engaged in its work to meet the project's objectives. Furthermore, the project's objectives and sub-objectives are generally on target to be met as is demonstrated by the progress on meeting the project's many performance indicators.

However, it is more difficult to assert that Georgia has indeed made serious progress towards the consolidation of democratic processes since 2014. While there has not been a retreat into authoritarianism during this time (an accomplishment in itself), one could argue that progress towards more democratic political processes in Georgia has stagnated over the last four years. The reasons for this apparent stagnation are mostly outside the control of USAID and the SEPPs implementing partners. However, the disconnect between positive project performance and the lack of significant progress towards democratic consolidation provides food for thought regarding future programming.

The report's more specific findings are organized by the five evaluation questions provided by USAID. In answering the first evaluation question, the evaluation team found that each of the six SEPPs activities did fulfill the project's various sub-purposes, which only call for improvement rather than transformational change. However, the extent of "improvement" in each of the sub-purposes was limited by structural issues that have stifled political competition and, subsequently stalled political party development as well as disrupted the civic consensus on electoral and political processes in the country. That said, the progress made in the project's objectives was critical in ensuring that Georgia did not reverse its trend towards democratization, hopefully further establishing the groundwork for future progress.

Political party strengthening was the most challenging objective undertaken by the project. Overall, it was the assessment of the evaluation team that, despite the poor conditions for the development of political parties in Georgia, these efforts had helped to create some progress in the core objectives of strengthening parties in the country: improving the democratic processes within parties, increasing party engagement with and empowerment of their regional branches, increasing the effectiveness of party factions in both national and local legislative branches of government, enhancing the position of women, ethnic minorities, and youth in parties, in elected office, and in party platforms, and increasing public awareness of the platforms of political parties. However, it was questionable whether the limited improvements made in these different areas of party development would be sustained and result in stronger parties given the various factors in the political system that were stifling political competition and facilitating one-party dominance.

The strengthening of government capacity to administer free and fair elections under the SEPPs project produced more progress as it was evident that the CEC had become more professional

during the project period and appeared more capable of asserting its non-partisan character in the face of political pressure from the ruling party and opposition parties alike. However, it was also found that the effective and non-partisan performance of state election institutions since 2014 had occurred in a context without serious political competition, raising questions whether they would be capable of performing as effectively in the event of more contested elections. Furthermore, the recent decision to determine the composition of electoral commission on the basis of different parties' proportion of Parliamentary seats, which would lead to commissions being dominated by a single party for the foreseeable future, brings into question the future non-partisan character of these election management bodies.

With regards to the project sub-purpose of increasing civic engagement in elections and the reform of the political system, the evaluation found that there was marked progress in this area with regards to the activities of professional CSOs, but this did not translate into a broad-based increase in the engagement of citizens in the country's political processes. In fact, the larger population of the country has in recent years become only increasingly cynical about politics, political parties, and politicians.

In answering the second evaluation question, the evaluation found that there did exist some gaps in the project, at least in the level of effort spent on different issues. In particular, there are four aspects of the project that could have been expanded or altered to realize the objectives more effectively. The first would be to incentivize political party development, the second would be to find more demand-side means to promote the establishment of concrete policy agendas within political parties, the third would be to do more work on how parties can advocate their positions between elections through means other than campaigning, and the fourth would be to expand the public policy debate initiated in the consideration of constitutional changes to encompass the structural aspects of the political system that hinder political competition.

In addressing the third evaluation question, the evaluation found that stakeholders and beneficiaries of the SEPPs activity interventions were quite satisfied with the assistance they received. However, beneficiaries of trainings from the SEPPs project did provide constructive criticism of the assistance they were provided. The most prominent of these criticisms suggested that many trainings focused on broad and general themes rather than being grounded in the realities of the Georgian political system. While political party beneficiaries did suggest that they frequently employed skills and tactics they learned in trainings in their own work, it was not apparent that this was translating into sustained changes in the ways that parties operate more generally.

With regards to the fourth evaluation question, the evaluation found that the SEPPs problem and purpose statements were developed at a level within USAID's ability to influence, largely due to the fact that that the goals of the project were limited to continued improvement rather than transformational change. However, the evaluation did question in retrospect whether the problem and program statements had focused on the issues most pressing for the consolidation of democratic political processes in the country. In particular, the evaluation found that the project had not identified increased political competition as a core goal of the project when it appears to be one of the biggest obstacles to further consolidation. In terms of the project's measurement of results, the evaluation found that the international partners working on the project had done a good job in developing their M&E systems, but they had done little coordination amongst themselves to establish a cohesive sense of how results in different activities addressed common goals. Furthermore, the evaluation found that the local partners working on the project had less impressive M&E systems that needed improvement.

In answering the fifth and final evaluation question regarding the lessons learned from utilizing local partners in the project, the evaluation team found that the use of local NGOs as implementers offered multiple benefits both to the project and to the organizational development of the local partners themselves. At the same time, while one would hope that these organizations could eventually supplant international NGOs in Georgia, the evaluation team found that this is unlikely to take place anytime soon given the importance that Georgian political forces place on the role of international organizations, particularly from the U.S. and Europe, in their political processes.

Conclusions

Overall, the evaluation team was impressed with the SEPPs project and its accomplishments during a critical time in Georgia's political development. It was telling that, when asked about the importance of all six partners to the democratic development of Georgia, stakeholders almost unanimously stated that they were very important without reservation. However, it is more difficult to assert that Georgia has indeed made serious progress towards the consolidation of democratic political processes since 2014. While there has not been a retreat into authoritarianism during this time (a significant accomplishment in its own right), one could argue that progress towards more democratic political processes in Georgia has stagnated over the last four years. This disconnect between positive project performance and the lack of significant progress towards democratic consolidation suggests that perhaps the project's development hypothesis and theory of change no longer applied to the political environment that had evolved since 2014.

In particular, the project's focus on strengthening institutions did not account for structural factors in Georgia's political system that limit the effectiveness of these institutions in actually facilitating a functioning and competitive multi-party democracy. Some of these structural factors include the ways that money flows into political processes, the importance of administrative resources to elections, and a lackluster political culture in the population, which has produced a growing cynicism about politics writ large in the country. All of these factors tend to favor the incumbent political party in elections, which in turn leads to a "winner-take-all" political system devoid of real competition. As a result, while the SEPPs project did succeed in making some progress in the goals it undertook, this progress was limited by factors that could not be addressed by institutional strengthening.

This conclusion should not detract from the project's important successes. It is also a conclusion that would not have been likely envisioned when the project was first designed in 2014. However, it provides food for thought for future programming related to Georgia's political processes.

Recommendations

While it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to provide detailed recommendations for follow-on projects, especially given that USAID/Georgia was concurrently conducting a sector-level assessment of political process development, the SOW did request the evaluation team's general recommendations for future work based on lessons learned from the implementation of the SEPPs project since 2014. In the report's recommendation section details ten substantive recommendations for USAID/Georgia regarding future steps in supporting the consolidation of democratic political processes in Georgia. The evaluation makes the following recommendations, which are explained in much more detail in the report's recommendations section.

- 1) **Conduct an *Applied Political Economy Analysis (PEA)* to revisit the project's *development hypothesis and theory of change* when contemplating future work in this sector**

- 2) Focus more on citizen involvement in politics in future work related to democratic political process strengthening
- 3) Improve M&E systems through more partner coordination and mentoring local partners in projects like SEPPs, which employ multiple international and local partners to undertake different activities under the umbrella of a single project
- 4) Develop sustainability plans for activities where possible if a follow-on to SEPPs is considered
- 5) Seek innovative ways to incentivize political party development in future work with parties
- 6) Do more work with parties on how to promote their policy agendas through public advocacy or awareness-raising campaigns between elections
- 7) Seek ways to localize training opportunities for political parties, primarily through the establishment of internal party training departments or centers
- 8) Foster a public debate on impediments to political competition as the Parliament harmonizes the election law with the recent constitutional changes
- 9) Put increased pressure on the government to reverse its recent changes to the composition of electoral commissions
- 10) Civil society organizations involved in elections should do more outreach to the public at large to reinvigorate citizen interest in elections and political processes as well as to ultimately enhance the political culture of the country.

I. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Purpose

Given that the SEPPs project ends at the beginning of 2019, USAID/Georgia commissioned a final performance evaluation of its activities in order to take stock of the work done and prepare for future interventions in support of democratic political processes in Georgia. For this purpose, the Mission contracted with three experts who could conduct fieldwork and use evidence-based methods to evaluate the performance of the project in achieving its objectives. Dr. Sean R. Roberts, Director of the International Development Studies program at The George Washington University, was chosen as the international elections and political process expert and team leader. Dr. Bakur Kvashilava, Dean of the School of Law and Politics at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, was selected as the local elections and political process expert, and Khatuna Ioseliani of the Open Society Georgia Foundation was chosen as the local evaluation expert.

The evaluation is primarily concerned with examining the performance of the project and assessing its ability to meet its intended objectives. This is particularly important given that the project was envisioned as helping to consolidate the development of democratic political processes at a time when it was thought that Georgia was on the cusp of creating a stable democracy, but as the project is closing, most observers are more skeptical of the country's sustainable democratic trajectory. Since 2014, for example, Freedom House's indices measuring freedom and democracy (Freedom in the World and Nations in Transit) suggest that little has changed in the country's political processes, continuing to categorize the country as "partly free" and a "hybrid regime" respectively.²

While the evaluation is primarily intended to examine performance, USAID/Georgia also requested that the team highlight lessons learned from the project and to provide recommendations for future programming focused on enhancing the democratic nature of Georgia's political processes. Since USAID/Georgia has also commissioned a broader assessment to help with future project design, this evaluation focuses its recommendations on the gaps it has found in the present project design and on ways to improve the performance of future projects, rather than offering in-depth guidance on future interventions.

Evaluation Questions

In providing technical guidance to the evaluation team, USAID/Georgia gave the team five primary evaluation questions, most of which include sub-questions, that this report should answer:

- Did the six SEPPs activities³ satisfy the SEPPs project purpose? What interventions⁴ implemented as part of the six SEPPs activities were *effective* at addressing the SEPPs project purpose or sub-purposes in a sustainable manner? What interventions were *less effective* at addressing the project purpose or sub-purposes?

² See Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2018: Georgia Profile," (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/georgia>) and Freedom House, "Nations in Transit 2018: Georgia Country Profile" (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/georgia>)

³ "Activity" refers to the stand-alone direct awards provided by USAID/Georgia to an implementing partner to implement a project (e.g. the Strengthening Electoral Processes activity implemented by IFES).

⁴ "Intervention" refers to the separate tasks implemented under one of the six SEPPs activities (e.g. training workshop, parallel vote tabulation, providing technical expert, etc.)

- What gaps, if any, still remain to achieve the three SEPPs project objectives? What current or proposed activities, or specific interventions, show the most promise in being able to fill these gaps?
- Did SEPPs activity interventions meet the needs and priorities of beneficiaries/stakeholders? Are beneficiaries/stakeholders satisfied with the quality of services (i.e. training, technical assistance, etc.) provided by implementers of the SEPPs project? How committed are beneficiaries/stakeholders to sustain the benefits of the assistance received?
- Were the SEPPs problem and purpose statements developed at a level within USAID’s ability to influence? How was project effectiveness and results measured? If any shortcomings, how might results be better measured in future programming?
- What lessons have been learned from utilizing local partners in implementing the SEPPs project?

These questions served as the basis for the evaluation’s approach, both in terms of whom it engaged during fieldwork and in the design of interview and focus protocols as well as of survey questions. In the report, these five questions also serve as a structure for reporting on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation team regarding the performance of the project.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The SEPPs Project

During what looked like a promising time for the development of democratic political processes in Georgia, USAID/Georgia began a new five-year project entitled Strengthening Elections and Political Processes (SEPPs) in 2014. This took place two years after the first peaceful transfer of power in the country via free and fair elections when Mikheil Saakashvili’s United National Movement Party was defeated by Bidzina Ivanishvili’s Georgian Dream political coalition in the 2012 elections. In this context, USAID saw an opportunity to make substantial progress towards the consolidation of democratic processes in Georgia.

The project itself was initially composed of three activities implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) respectively. Later, in 2016, three other activities were added to the project and implemented by local Georgian NGOs: the International Society for Free Elections and Democracy (ISFED), the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA), and Transparency International Georgia (TI-Georgia). While these organizations had previously had sub-grants from the CEPPs’ international partners, from 2016, they received direct grants from USAID/Georgia.⁵

According to the Scope of Work (SOW) for this evaluation (see Appendix I), the SEPPs project “is based on the **theory of change** that if civil society is informed and engaged in civic life and, together with the government, increases its capacity to advance and solidify sustainable practices and inclusive participation in the country’s electoral and political processes, then democratic institutional change

⁵ It is important to point out that the SEPPs international partners belong to a consortium of international democracy NGOs based in the United States – the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPs). In the report, when the phrase “CEPPs partners” is used, we are referring to only NDI, IRI, and IFES, which are members of this consortium. When the report mentions “SEPPs partners,” it is referring to all six of the partner organizations, both local and international, implementing activities under the project.

will be strengthened, and groups across all strata of society will be empowered to assert their voices and rights as citizens in a democratic society.” Furthermore, the SOW states that “the SEPPs project is based on the **development hypothesis** that sustainable, democratic political competition can be enhanced at the national and local levels by continuing to build the capacity of institutions and organizations related to elections and political processes and by ensuring broad citizen engagement in those processes.”

The overarching objective of the SEPPs project is “Georgia's democratic electoral and political processes are deepened and institutionalized.” This is illustrated further in three sub-objectives or sub-purposes, which are further divided by intermediate intended results:

- **Sub-Purpose 1:** Political parties strengthened at the national and regional levels and expected outcomes of this sub-purpose include: 1.1: Improved organizational capacity and intra-party democracy within democratic political parties.; 1.2: Improved capacity and engagement of regional branches of democratic political parties; 1.3: Increased percentage of women MPs of all MPs after 2016 Parliamentary elections; 1.4: Party caucuses in Parliament and local councils more effectively contribute to law-making and oversight of executive policy implementation; 1.5 Parties take on issues of importance to women, young persons and ethnic minorities; 1.6 Parties are systematically promoting regional members and members from disadvantaged groups to leadership positions at the local and national levels; and 1.7 Increased public awareness of key policy issues in beneficiary party platforms
- **Sub-Purpose 2:** Government capacity to administer and oversee free and fair electoral processes improved and expected outcomes include: 2.1: Consolidated system of entities responsible for election dispute resolution and safeguarded from political manipulation; 2.2: Legal frameworks and oversight of campaign and party finance improved; 2.3: Improved capacity of the EMB, especially in national minority areas and in the event of structural reforms; 2.4: Strengthened systems for monitoring and resolving the misuse of administrative resources during election campaigning; and 2.5: Improved access of people with disabilities (PWDs) to polling sites
- **Sub-Purpose 3:** Civic engagement and national consensus around electoral and political processes enhanced and expected outcomes are: 3.1: Increased citizen engagement in and understanding of key aspects of priority electoral and political reforms; 3.2: Greater participation of marginalized groups (women, ethnic minorities, youth, PWDs) in electoral processes; 3.3: Independent observer groups mount credible monitoring missions; and 3.4: Target electoral and political reforms consistent with international law and good practices following broad consultation with key stakeholders

While the different activities under the SEPPs project each help to fulfill all of these sub-purposes, NDI and IRI have been primarily responsible for the first Sub-Purpose, IFES – for the second, and ISFED, GYLA, and TI-Georgia – for the third. NDI’s primary interventions have been in building the capacity of political parties in their work in the Parliament and local councils (*Sakrebulo*s), but they have also offered campaign assistance to political parties more broadly around elections and have fielded election monitoring missions. IRI’s primary interventions have involved the capacity building of parties through demand-driven training focused on a variety of issues in party organizational development, but these activities have also expanded to campaign training and election observation missions during electoral cycles. IFES’ primary interventions have been in the areas of election administration, working with the Central Elections Commission (CEC), the State Audit Office of Georgia (SAOG), and other state and non-governmental bodies responsible for aspects of elections.

In addition, IFES has implemented an intervention focused on promoting the study of democracy in Georgian universities. ISFED's primary interventions have been to prepare and mount credible large-scale election monitoring missions with local observers that result in recommendations for improving the electoral system and engaging legislative changes to the system. GYLA's primary interventions have been to monitor electoral disputes, providing legal assistance where appropriate, and providing recommendations for the improvement of the election dispute process. TI-Georgia's primary interventions have been to monitor the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns as well as the abuse of administrative resources in elections with the aim of providing recommendations for improvements in the regulation and prevention of abuses in these areas.

Given that any work done in political development, particularly as it relates to elections and political processes, is impacted by political factors outside the control of USAID and its implementing partners, it is critical to also provide some background information here about the political context in which this project was implemented in Georgia from 2014 to the present. This contextual information is important to understanding the performance of this project and in determining what aspects of its activities may be more or less promising in achieving results if USAID decides to continue its work in support of democratic political processes in Georgia.

Political Context in Georgia, 2014-2018

2012 Change in Leadership

The Parliamentary Elections of 2012 brought a new era in Georgian politics. That was the first time that an incumbent party accepted defeat in elections and agreed to the peaceful transfer of power. The Presidential Elections of 2013 and Local Elections of 2014 completed the process as the Georgian Dream Coalition (GDC) won both elections handily. These developments looked highly promising for democracy as the formerly ruling United National Movement (UNM) did not disappear from the political stage, but remained the most prominent opposition party. Despite the significant advances that UNM made towards state building, eradication of corruption, and efficient reforms of services provided by the state from 2003 to 2012, there was a growing concern that UNM's strangle-hold on power had stalled democratic processes in Georgia. The 2012 elections and their consequences changed this outlook, and there was renewed hope that the transition in power would help consolidate the democratic gains that had been made in Georgia following the Rose Revolution.

However, since 2014, a true consolidation of the **democratic transition** in Georgia has not taken place, and according to the Freedom in the World index, Georgia remains a partly free country with a combined score of 3.0 unchanged since 2014. Another index used by the Freedom House *Nations in Transit* also places Georgia in the middle of the continuum from democracy to authoritarianism as a *Transitional Government or Hybrid Regime* with a democracy score of 4.68⁶ -- the same score it received in 2014. **Socioeconomic conditions** remain challenging despite the fact that the country ranks among the world leaders in World Bank's *Doing Business* ranking occupying the 9th place in the world in 2018.⁷ Still economic growth remained moderate in 2014-2017 averaging 3.8% annually with GDP PC in PPP at just over 10 000\$, and the GINI index nearing 0.4 mark.⁸ Even more disturbing are the UNICEF Welfare Monitoring Survey results that showed a significant increase in extreme and general poverty in 2015-2017, especially among children.⁹ Unemployment remains high at 11.5%,

⁶ Freedom House. *Nations in Transit: Georgia Country Profile*. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/georgia>

⁷ Doing Business Rankings. <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>

⁸ World Development Indicators. <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=GEO>

⁹ UNICEF Georgia. *Welfare Monitoring Survey 2017*. http://unicef.ge/uploads/WMS_brochure_unicef_eng_web.pdf

and it can be considered higher if one takes into account that more than half of those employed are in agriculture which contributes only around 8% to overall GDP. This shows that many of those employed are engaged in subsistence level farming and earn significantly less than the GDP PC figures show. The provision of adequate levels of national security from external threats remains problematic as Russia continues to occupy around 20% of Georgian territory with Russian military bases inside a 40-mile radius of the Georgian capital. Furthermore, instances of a so-called *creeping occupation* regularly occurring around the administrative border of the Russian controlled Tskhinvali region does not contribute to creating a stable political and economic environment in the country.

Evolution of Georgian Dream's Control of Government

The political field remains polarized and uneven as some old challenges remain and other new ones have appeared. Although the UNM was consistently polling as the second most popular party in subsequent elections following their loss of power in 2012, the incumbent and opposition continue to depict one another as irreconcilable enemies. The public trust in the political processes took a dive as the ratio of undecided voters has increased significantly. On the demand side, the proliferation of independent political players has only served to make the political field is even more dominated by a single political party. As GDC dissolved with Georgian Dream Party (GD) retaining government control, the rest of the coalition partners have been either subsumed into GD (Conservative Party, Industry Will Save Georgia) or have left and failed to clear the 5% electoral threshold in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections (Free Democrats, Republicans, and National Forum). UNM also suffered from similar processes as Girchi, Our People, and later European Georgia split from its ranks. In this transitional context for political parties, GD now holds 115 seats in a 150-member Parliament, commanding a comfortable constitutional majority compared to the 85 seats it had following the 2012 elections. The fact that GD controls these seats as a single party rather than as a coalition, as was the case in 2012, only exacerbates the level of one-party dominance. This trend was confirmed by the 2017 Local Elections in which GD took control of 62 out of 64 contested mayoral races.

Constitutional changes that were initiated by the UNM in 2010 continued throughout the period examined, facilitating the last vestiges of Presidential rule being fully transformed into a Parliamentary Republic. The new arrangement, however, gives too much power to the executive headed by the Prime Minister as compared to the Parliament. Some important political figures in the GD do express the desire to increase the powers of the legislative branch in the future. The recent amendments to the constitution envision abolishing direct elections of the President that will take effect after the 2018 Presidential Elections. This move has been highly controversial as the opposition and general public are opposed to the change. It must be noted, however, that these developments fall within the established constitutional practice of Parliamentary rule. At the same time, given the absolute dominance of GD in the Parliament, the directly elected President could have served as the only available check and balance on the party's power. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the Georgian political system will remain a one-party dominated system into the future. In particular, the constitutional changes in the electoral system also abolish the majoritarian election component of the national legislature for the 2024 Parliamentary Elections. This move has been welcomed by the opposition and constitutional experts, but many hoped that the changes would take effect much sooner. In the initial proposal they were to be in full force by 2020, but later GD decided to move the date one election cycle further to 2024. Of course, much could happen politically in the six years until this amendment is to be implemented.

If implemented, this change should increase the political diversity in the Parliament and allow for fairer representation. The present system has allowed GD to dominate the Parliament despite receiving less than half of the party-list votes during parliamentary elections. In 2016, for example, GD received 48% of the popular vote but took close to 77% of seats as they won 72 out of 73 majoritarian districts. The 2017 Local Elections furthered this trend as more than 95% of the

Sakrebulo seats that were contested through majoritarian elections went to the incumbent party nationwide. These results can partly be explained by the enormous impact administrative resources play in Georgian elections that are compounded by the endemic weakness of the political parties. According to the data provided by the National Statistics Office of Georgia in 2015, 52% of those employed (excluding the self-employed) were in the public sector. It is likely that the incumbent party enjoys significant initial advantage at elections as most of these voters could consider it in their interest to cast their ballots for the incumbent given that the creation of independent civil service is in its initial stage, and public employment is yet unprotected from political interference.

Political financing further enhances the uneven political field. As there is no effective cap on electoral spending – the Law on Political Association of Citizens states that parties cannot spend more than 0.1% of the previous year’s GDP on elections¹⁰ – private contributions are decisive in securing financial advantage. As the data from the State Audit Office of Georgia demonstrate, more than 90% of private contributions have gone to the ruling party since 2013.¹¹ In the 2017 Local Elections, for example, GD received more than 15 mln GEL in contributions while the next 4 major parties garnered under 2.5 mln GEL. While opposition parties suggest that there is political pressure put on any business that decides to fund opposition campaigns, the influence may be less direct, like that on public employees, and businesses might merely view the funding of the incumbent party to be in their best interest. Finally, the fact that Georgia’s wealthiest man, Bidzina Ivanishvili, is also the leader of GD suggests that this party has an endless amount of resources at its demand.

All of these factors have together served to reduce the political competition in Georgia since the 2012 elections. Most of these factors do not suggest electoral fraud or the violation of the law. Instead, they are structural issues embedded in the way that Georgia’s political system is presently configured. Given the structural nature of these issues, it is difficult to imagine that a technical approach will deter their negative influence on political competition and, thus, on the consolidation of a democratic system in the country. GD’s stranglehold on power has decreased the public popularity of the party over time, and many analysts in the country feel that it is a matter of time before the Georgian electorate votes in a new government.

That said, the opposition political parties in the country are quite weak, and few people seem to see a viable alternative to GD at present. Virtually all political parties still rely on clientelistic and charismatic linkages to obtain public support. Furthermore, as NDI, IRI, and other polls demonstrate, the public trust in political parties is falling. Only 21% of those surveyed viewed political parties as favorable in 2018 as compared to 37% in 2014.¹² While such growing mistrust of politicians and political parties is in many ways a global phenomenon, it is also helping to stall a consolidation of Georgia’s multi-party democracy.

While international evaluations of elections in Georgia have generally been favorable since 2012, there is also a marked decrease in the Georgian public’s favorable opinion of the country’s Central Electoral Commission (CEC), whose favorability has declined from 50% to 36% since 2014. This could be motivated by the recent changes in the CEC rules of composition that gives more seats on the commission to the party holding more seats in the Parliament.¹³ It is noteworthy, for example, that there was already a growing impression among Georgians that the CEC was politically biased in the run-up to the 2016 Parliamentary Elections when IRI polls noted a decrease in those polled who viewed the CEC as politically neutral from 68% in February 2016 to only 53% in March 2016.¹⁴ With

¹⁰ Legislative Herald of Georgia. Law on Political Association of Citizens. <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/28324>

¹¹ State Audit Office of Georgia. Political Party Monitoring. <https://monitoring.sao.ge/en>

¹² IRI. Public Opinion Survey: Residents of Georgia. http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2018-5-29_georgia_poll_presentation.pdf

¹³ Georgian Legislative Herald. Election Code of Georgia. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1557168>

¹⁴ IRI. Public Opinion Survey, Residents of Georgia. March-April 2016. http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/georgia_2016.pdf

the recent changes to the composition of the Commission, it is likely that an even larger number of citizens will begin doubting the neutrality of the organization.

Impact on SEPPs Project Performance

On the one hand, the political context in which the SEPPs project has been implemented since 2014 has not been one of crisis or of significant democratic backsliding. On the other hand, it has also not been a period of dynamic political competition or democratic consolidation. In this context, the political environment during this time did not interfere with the project's general performance, but it was also not particularly conducive to the project making substantial in-roads towards its ultimate objective of creating a sustainable environment for democratic consolidation in Georgia. The lack of political competition in the country has weakened institutions meant to create checks and balances within governance, growing public distrust in politicians has not allowed for any serious growth in the role of political parties in society, and waning public interest in democratization has not created enthusiasm among citizens for holding government accountable. This is not to suggest that the SEPPs project was unable to make important contributions to Georgia's ongoing democratization. As will be discussed further below, the project generally did stay on track in achieving its M&E targets and in achieving its intermediate results. However, the generally stagnate political environment in the country since 2014 has served to limit the extent to which the SEPPs project could make transformational contributions to Georgia's democratic consolidation.

II. EVALUATION DESIGN, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

The evaluation team adopted a multi-faceted and mixed-method approach to its evaluation. This approach included extensive background research, including a review of project documents and preliminary discussions with the implementing partners responsible for different activities within the SEPPs project. Additionally, the team examined the OSCE reports on the 2016 parliamentary and 2017 local elections as well as public opinion polls commissioned by NDI and IRI that cover the period 2014-2018. Finally, the evaluation team also conducted extensive interviews with the core staff of all six implementing partners as well as separate interviews with the IFES, NDI, and IRI staff responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation of the project's activities.¹⁵

In addition to this background documentary research and targeted interviews with implementing partners, the team employed three primary evidence-based research methods in its fieldwork, which was conducted in the cities of Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Marneuli, and Batumi July 3-26, 2018. Given that over a quarter of the country's population lives in Tbilisi, which also remains the center of political activity, the evaluation concentrated most of its fieldwork in the capital city. Additionally, the team traveled to the next two largest cities in the country, Kutaisi and Batumi, in order to obtain a perspective on the regional dimensions of Georgia's political processes. Finally, the evaluation also conducted focus groups in Marneuli, which has a large ethnic Azeri population, as a means of understanding the inclusion of ethnic minority communities in Georgia's political processes. The methods employed in the fieldwork included 48 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, and Batumi that offer both quantitative and qualitative data, a country-wide survey administered using the internet with the direct beneficiaries of trainings from NDI, IRI, and IFES, and ten focus groups conducted with secondary beneficiaries (citizens interested in politics, but not

¹⁵ Since ISFED, GYLA, and TI-Georgia had less complicated and sophisticated Monitoring and Evaluation, their M&E processes were discussed in the larger meeting.

political party activists, government officials, journalists, or NGO activists) conducted in Tbilisi, Marneuli, and Batumi.

These three data collection methods were focused on answering the five evaluation questions provided to the team by USAID/Georgia. The resultant data provides a strong impressionistic vision of the progress made towards the SEPPs' project objectives since 2014 and offers direct feedback from beneficiaries on the performance of SEPPs implementing partners. However, as with any data collection methods related to political and democratic development, they have their limitations. First, attribution for changes, positive, negative, or neutral, in political processes are almost impossible to determine given the constellation of factors that influence these processes. Policy decisions that impact political processes are inevitably political decisions that are influenced by domestic and international political concerns outside the purview of capacity building and technical assistance interventions. Second, restrictions of time and resources prevented the evaluation team from meeting with the full spectrum of stakeholders and beneficiaries, thus at least partially limiting the findings of the evaluation. Finally, the answers to various questions about the progress in democratic political processes during the time evaluated were likely tainted by the political positions of those interviewed (e.g. members of the ruling party were more likely to suggest that there was significant progress while those from opposition parties often had the opposite view).

The evaluation team sought to account for some of these limitations by interviewing and conducting surveys with a representative sample of stakeholders and beneficiaries, by conducting focus groups with citizens without specific political agendas, and by disaggregating answers to questions by political affiliation. However, the problem of determining attribution remains predictably a limitation for which the team could not reasonably account. Below, each of the primary evaluation methodologies is described in more detail, providing information on those from whom data was solicited and how it was processed.

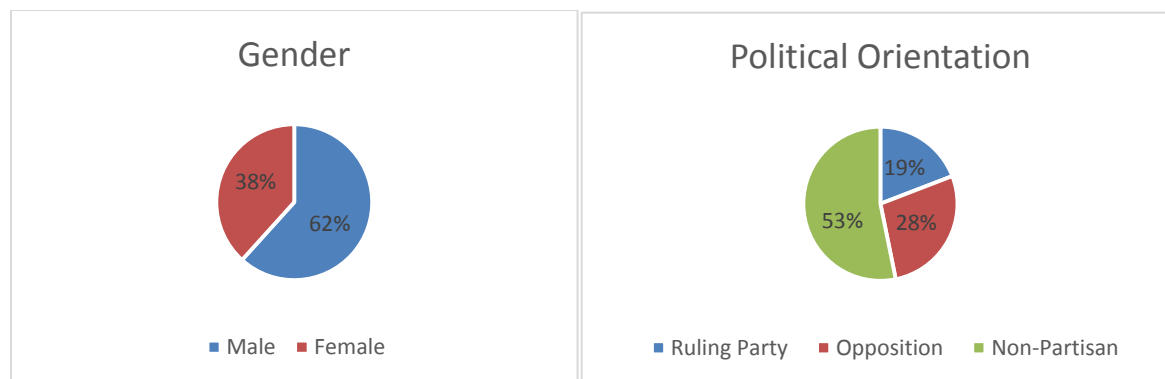
Semi-Structured Interviews

The evaluation team conducted 48 semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders involved in and/or interested in Georgia's political processes and the SEPPs project. Interviewees included political party members, both elected officials and those who do not hold office, staffers from parliament and *Sakrebulo*s, civil society actors, including both think-tank experts and NGO activists, elections-related officials, and representatives of international donors on the elections Technical Working Group (TWG). Of the interviewees, 38% were women, and 62% were men. While this is a sample that favors male respondents, it does include a larger percentage of female respondents than is characteristic of the stakeholders interviewed. Given the preponderance of interviewees from political parties, almost half of respondents were partisan (i.e. either from the ruling party or opposition), and 53% were non-partisan. That being said, of the 53% non-partisan respondents, a number were political appointees who owed their jobs to the ruling party.

In the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix IV for interview protocol), respondents were asked to answer a series of multiple choice questions measuring progress towards the objectives of the SEPPs project. While answers to these questions often reflected one's position in the political spectrum (i.e. the ruling party overstating progress towards democracy and the opposition politicians understating it), this was easily disaggregated to give a clearer view of the situation. In addition to these multiple-choice questions, which also solicited explanation from interviewees for their scaled answers, each respondent was asked to discuss their work with the SEPPs partners and their estimation of the value of this work. This allowed the evaluation team to delve further into analyzing particular interventions undertaken by each of the SEPPs activities and to get a beneficiaries' perspective on the reports of activities provided to USAID.

Overall, these semi-structured interviews took up the majority of the evaluation team’s time in country and serve as the central source for the evaluators’ findings and conclusions. However, these interviews were bolstered by two more data collection methods, which provide other perspectives on the performance of the SEPPs project since 2014.

Figure 1: Semi-Structured Interviewees by Gender and Political Orientation



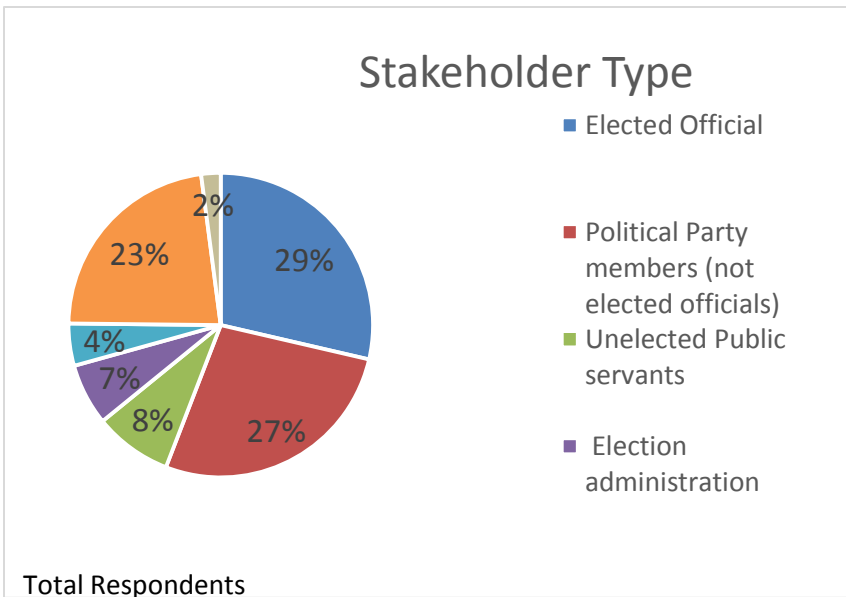
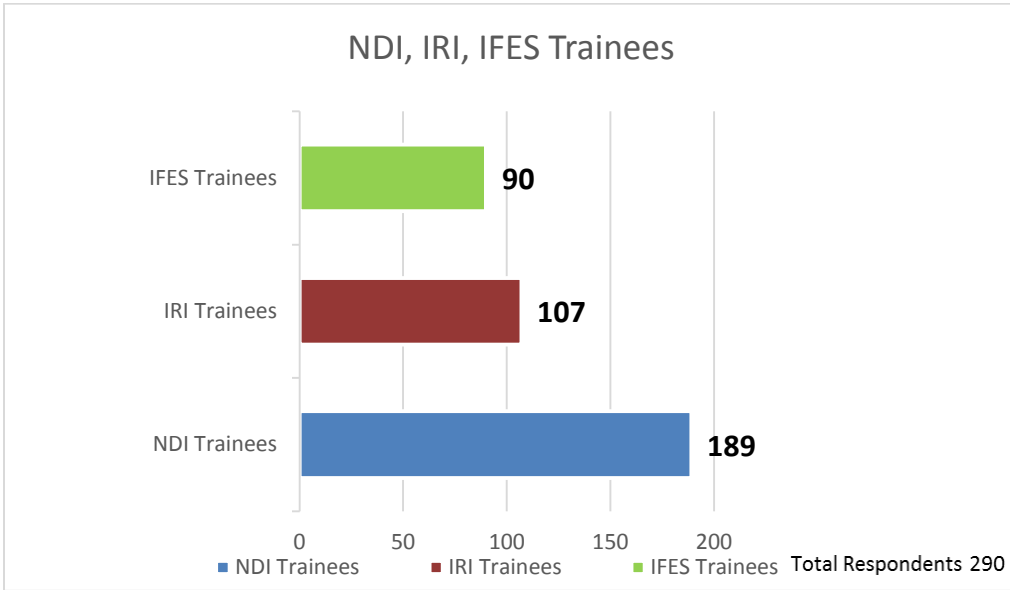
Internet Poll of SEPPs Trainees

In addition to these semi-structured interviews, the evaluation team sought feedback from those who had been the direct beneficiaries of the project – those who had received training and/or technical assistance from IFES, IRI, and NDI. In order to facilitate this, the evaluation team used an internet-based survey to get feedback on the quality of assistance given by these organizations. In an effort to protect the privacy of those who had received training and technical assistance from these organizations, the requests to respond to the survey were sent by the implementing organizations themselves. However, the message sent out to participants in the survey made it clear that the organizations involved would not have access to the raw data from these surveys and that all data would be handled by a third party, the evaluation team. In addition, the evaluation team was “cc-ed” on all correspondences with respondents sent out by CEPPs partners, albeit with respondents’ emails masked.

The evaluation team collected responses, cleaned the data (removing respondents who did not answer the questions for at least one of the CEPPs partners), and analyzed the results. While the final analysis will be available to IFES, IRI, and NDI, the raw data and the responses of individuals will not be released to them. The survey was successfully sent out to approximately 1183 people (about 410 by NDI, about 237 by IRI, and about 236 by IFES). However, the actual number of respondents who received an invitation to participate may be lower given the likelihood that many people received invitations from multiple organizations. While a total of 396 respondents began answering the questions to the survey, the evaluation team found that 290 of them had filled out the survey enough to be useful to the dataset created. Among these 290 respondents, 189 had received training or technical assistance from NDI (46% of those receiving invitations from NDI), 107 from IRI (45% of those receiving invitations from IRI), and 90 from IFES (38% of those receiving invitations from IFES). This would suggest that the response rate was likely at least 40% given the number of people who likely received multiple invitations to participate. Trainees included political party members, both staff members and those elected to office, instructors for IFES’ civic education program, election officials, civil society representatives, and un-elected public servants (see Figure 2).

Questions focused on the quality of trainings and technical assistance, including the competence of trainers, the appropriateness of material covered, the organization of trainings or assistance, and the assistance’s relevance to the trainees’ or recipients’ own work (see Appendix VI for the survey questions). In addition to simple scaled multiple-choice questions, the survey allowed for open-ended answers that provided advice for improving the technical assistance offered by each organization. This survey offered a rather broad means of capturing the customer satisfaction of those who have received direct assistance from these organizations since 2014. While the respondents do not represent all recipients of such assistance, they do offer a fairly broad cross-section.

Figure 2: Internet Survey Respondents by Organization from which Training was Received and by Stakeholder Type



Focus Groups with Citizens

Finally, the evaluation team worked with the Institute of Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA) to convene ten separate focus groups with different segments of the population both inside and outside Tbilisi. The criteria for the focus groups was that those participating be interested in politics, but not an active political party activist, not a journalist, not an NGO activist, and not somebody working for the government on elections or other political issues. These participants represented the secondary beneficiaries of the SEPPs project – those people who would not have received training or technical assistance from any of the activities’ interventions, but who likely have a vested interest in the project meeting its objectives of establishing a free, fair, and democratic political system. In reviewing the final transcripts, there were a few participants who did not completely meet the criteria originally established, but it was decided that their inclusion was useful to the evaluation as indicative of important voices, which otherwise would not have been included in the report. These participants included some of the youth participants in Tbilisi, who had been volunteer short-term election observers for ISFED and one of the female participants in Marneuli, who had actually been on the party list of the New Georgia Party for the *Sakrebulo* elections in the region.

The purpose of these focus groups was to gain a broader insight into the performance of the SEPPs project in meeting its objectives and to identify gaps in assistance that may be more apparent to the general public than to the politicized dimension of the population who are the direct beneficiaries of SEPPs project interventions. The ten focus groups were spread between Tbilisi (6 groups), Marneuli (2 groups), and Batumi (2 groups). All groups were unisex in order to get more open answers to issues related to gender inequality and to avoid gender dynamics interfering in and influencing discussions. In Tbilisi, there were two focus groups (one male and one female) specifically targeting youth (ages 18-29), whose greater involvement in politics is among the SEPPs’ objectives. Additionally, there were male and female focus groups with older citizens (ages 30-65) who tend to vote for the same party in consecutive elections as well as male and female groups within the same age group composed of those who do not vote for the same party in consecutive elections, representing the undecided or “swing vote” population. In Marneuli, male and female focus groups were held with ethnic Azeris (ages 25-60) in order to gain more insight into the SEPPs objective of increasing minority inclusion in politics. Finally, in Batumi, male and female focus groups (ages 25-60) were held to establish a better understanding of the political environment outside Tbilisi and outside the minority majority regions of the country.

The focus groups followed a common list of questions that again covered the various objectives of the SEPPs project (see Appendix VIII for the Focus Group protocol). In addition to being asked to evaluate progress towards these objectives since 2014, participants were asked to discuss why they provided such an evaluation. The focus groups were also asked to explain their general attitudes towards political parties, elections, and civil society organizations. The breakdown of focus groups was as follows:

Figure III: Focus Groups Held for Study

| # | Place | Gender | Ages |
|----------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Tbilisi | Male | 18-29 |
| 2 | Tbilisi | Female | 18-29 |
| 3 | Tbilisi (party loyalists) | Male | 30-65 |
| 4 | Tbilisi (party loyalists) | Female | 30-65 |

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 5 | Tbilisi (non- party loyalists) | Male | 30-65 |
| 6 | Tbilisi (non- party loyalists) | Female | 30-65 |
| 7 | Marneuli | Male | 25-60 |
| 8 | Marneuli | Female | 25-60 |
| 9 | Batumi | Male | 25-60 |
| 10 | Batumi | Female | 25-60 |

III. FINDINGS

General Findings

In general, the evaluation team found that the SEPPs project was diligently implemented according to each activity’s program description. It also found that each partner organization was seriously, sincerely, and professionally engaged in its work to meet the project’s objectives. Furthermore, the project’s objectives and sub-objectives are generally on target to be met as is demonstrated by the progress on meeting the project’s many performance indicators (see Appendix V).

However, it is more difficult to assert that Georgia has indeed made serious progress towards the consolidation of democratic processes since 2014. While there has not been a retreat into authoritarianism during this time (an accomplishment in itself), one could argue that progress towards more democratic political processes in Georgia has stagnated over the last four years. The reasons for this apparent stagnation are mostly outside the control of USAID and the SEPPs implementing partners. However, the disconnect between positive project performance and the lack of significant progress towards democratic consolidation provides food for thought regarding future programming, which will be addressed later in the recommendations section.

Many interviewees and focus group participants highlighted structural issues in Georgia’s political system that continue to hinder political competition. While complaints of structural impediments to political competition were most apparent in interviews with opposition party members, they were also voiced by non-partisan political experts and even among citizens in focus groups. While none of these structural issues violate core democratic principles, they are likely to continue to reinforce a political dynamic where there are incentives to both donate to and vote for the incumbent party, hence perpetuating a “winner take all” political system that fosters one-party rule for long periods of time. While recent constitutional amendments may help change this dynamic by hopefully creating a system of parliamentary representation that better corresponds to the will of voters, these changes will not necessarily eradicate the present “winner take all” political system, particularly given that they do not become active until 2024, at which time political party development may have already evolved very unevenly.

In what follows, the report provides more in-depth findings regarding each of the evaluation questions asked by the Mission in its evaluation SOW. In doing so, the report draws from data collected via the team’s multiple research interventions.

Evaluation Question #1: Did the six SEPPs Activities satisfy the SEPPs Project Purpose?

In general, the six SEPPs activities did satisfy the project purpose, but they also had limited positive impact regarding each of the project's sub-purposes due to structural issues that have stifled political competition and, subsequently stalled political party development as well as the civic consensus on electoral and political processes. That said, the progress made in the project's sub-purposes was critical in ensuring that Georgia did not reverse its trend towards democratization, hopefully further establishing the groundwork for future progress.

SEPPs Sub-Purpose #1: Political parties strengthened at the national and regional levels and expected outcomes of this sub-purpose include

Political party strengthening has been among the more challenging objectives undertaken by the project since 2014. In general, the development of political parties depends on many factors, most of which are outside the control of USAID and its implementing partners. The resources available to parties, the interest of the general population regarding party affiliation, and the organizational capacity of parties are all interrelated issues that are dependent on the political context, structural issues regulating political processes, and the political culture of society at large. While technical assistance and training can help stimulate party development, the will to develop must come from the parties themselves, and the strongest incentives to do so inevitably come from prospective voters' demands of parties.

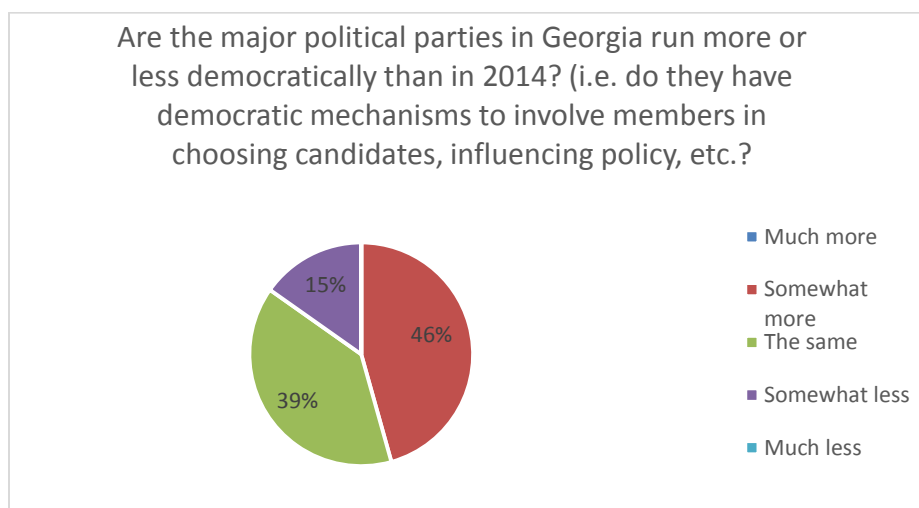
The SEPPs project engaged political parties via numerous interventions. Through IRI, SEPPs offered political parties a variety of demand-driven training opportunities, and through NDI, the project engaged parties on their work in both the Parliament and local *Sakrebulo* councils. In addition, both NDI and IRI provided campaign assistance to political parties, NDI had a program that subsidized interns for party factions and councils in the Parliament and in *Sakrebulos*, and IRI did additional capacity building with *Sakrebulos* where NDI did not work.

Overall, the evaluation team found that these efforts had helped to create some progress in the core objectives of strengthening political parties in Georgia: improving the democratic processes within parties, increasing party engagement with and empowerment of their regional branches, increasing the effectiveness of party factions in both national and local legislative branches of government, enhancing the position of women, ethnic minorities, and youth in parties, in elected office, and in party platforms, and increasing public awareness of the platforms of political parties. It would be an exaggeration to suggest that progress in any of these areas of party development has been transformative since 2014, but there was a clear sense that all of these issues were more central to debates about party development than previously and that within parties, there were champions of further progress in all of these areas.

In terms of the democratic processes within political parties, interviewees offered mixed feelings about the progress that had taken place since 2014. Nobody suggested that the internal workings of political parties had become much more or much less democratic; rather most people answered that either nothing had changed in this area or that there had been some limited advancement. Only a small number of interviewees asserted that the internal democracy of parties had become a bit less democratic since 2014, and most of these people made this assertion on the basis of what they perceived as the strongly centralized nature of power in the ruling party under the direction of its leader, Bidzina Ivanishvili. However, virtually all of those who answered that the nature of party internal democracy in Georgia had not changed since 2014 did so with negative connotations. For these respondents, political parties in Georgia have never been run in a democratic way.

That said, the 46% of interviewees who noted some progress in this area were able to provide concrete examples of how positive change has occurred since 2014. For the most part, these interviewees noted that the opposition parties in Georgia had adopted more democratic procedures for their internal management since 2014. However, as one respondent from UNM noted, this does not mean that all decisions within parties are made transparently and democratically. As this interviewee noted, the democratic procedures that have been put into practice within the party are often superseded by central decision making when the party leadership feels strongly about an issue. Others expressed positive opinions about the democratic nature of the internal organization of the European Georgia party, which is not identified with any singular leader. Some of the improvements in the democratic processes within parties that were highlighted in our interviews included the decision-making of parties' political councils and the internal election of people to Party Lists in advance of elections.

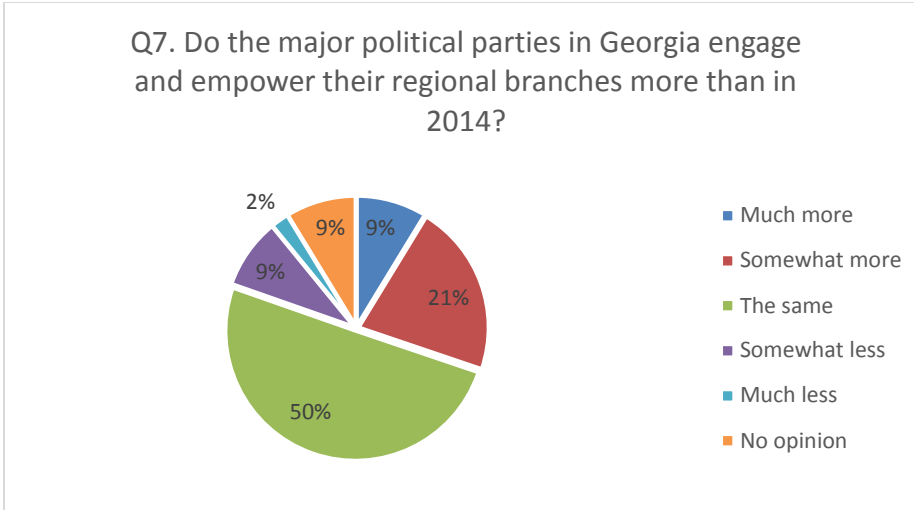
Figure IV: Respondents' answers to questions about political party internal democracy.



Our interviewees provided quite similar answers regarding the extent that political parties were empowering regional branches, but those noting some progress were fewer than those who saw advancement in the internal democracy of parties. Only 30% of our interviewees suggested that there had been advancement in the regional outreach and empowerment undertaken by political parties. By contrast, 61% of interviewees said either nothing had happened in this realm since 2014 or that the situation had worsened in this time. Noting no change in this instance was once again a negative answer since those expressing this view generally believed that parties have never empowered their regional branches. The reasons cited for this situation were that the GD Party did not engage in two-way communications with their regional branches and that the opposition parties no longer had the resources to build up regional branches.

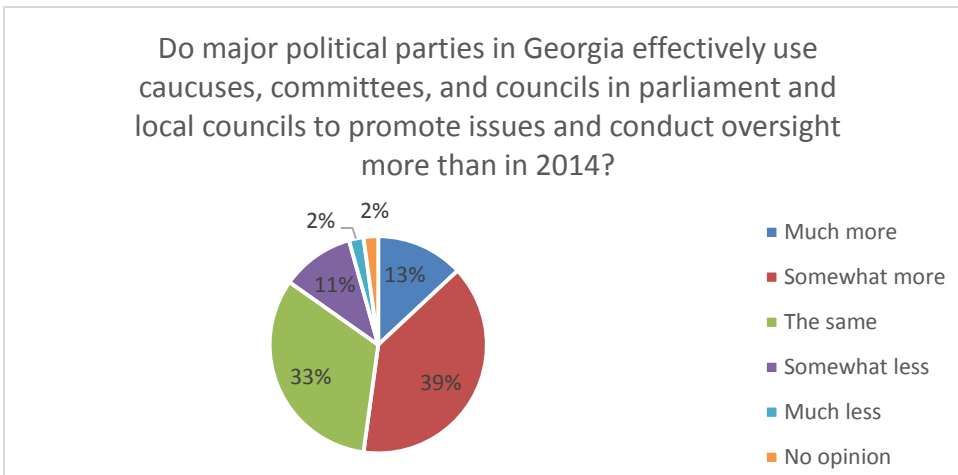
Among those who cited at least minimal progress in this area, most noted that opposition parties were seeking more engagement regionally and were gradually experiencing success with this strategy. Several party representatives cited as evidence of this trend an increasing representation of regional party activists both in the management of the party and on voter lists during elections. However, even those suggesting such limited progress noted that the meager resources of opposition parties prevented them from engaging regional representatives to the degree that they would like.

Figure V: Figure IV: Respondents' answers to questions about the empowerment of regional branches



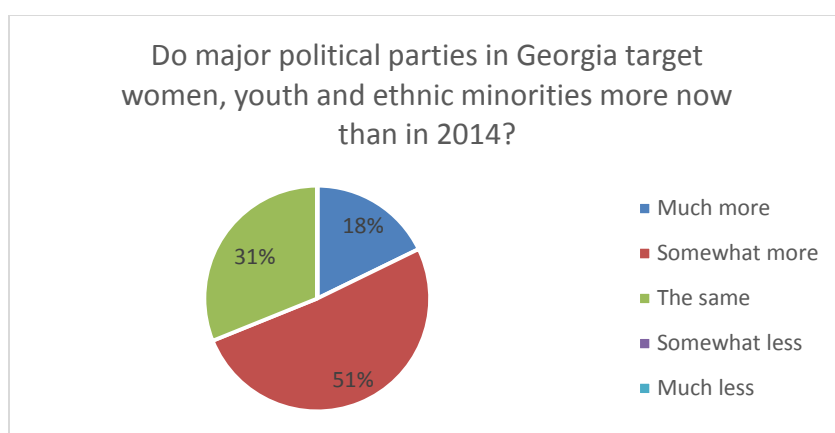
In terms of parties' use of factions and councils within the Parliament and *Sakrebulo*s, interviewees were a bit more positive in their opinions. Over 50% of interviewees suggested that there was some progress in this area. While there were still many people who asserted that nothing had changed in this realm since 2014 or that the situation had gotten worse, most of those who answered negatively to this question blamed the perceived backsliding in political party activities in the Parliament and *Sakrebulo*s to be due to the lack of party diversity in the Parliament and the *Sakrebulo*s, both of which are controlled by the GD party. However, those who saw improvement suggested that it had developed largely out of the work done by NDI and IRI in this realm. They suggested that assistance from NDI and IRI helped them organize the agendas and workplans for factions and councils as well as these bodies' strategy for reaching out to the public. Frequently they would also speak particularly highly of the opportunities that came out of the NDI-sponsored interns with whom they had worked.

Figure VI: Respondents' answers to question about parties' use of factions and councils in the Parliament and *Sakrebulo*s



In terms of the engagement of political parties with women, ethnic minorities, and youth, the results were particularly positive. A wide majority of interviewees offered a positive view of achievements in this area with almost 70% suggesting some or much improvement in parties' engagement with these target groups. Furthermore, nobody suggested that parties now engaged these groups less than in 2014. While this is quite positive, it is noteworthy that most interviewees providing positive feedback to this question also stipulated that most of the progress had occurred with regards to women. Furthermore, most believed that the parties' increased engagement of women was mostly an outcome of new state funding for parties that included at least 30% women on its party list during elections. This makes it somewhat difficult to attribute positive changes in party engagement of women to the work of NDI and IRI.

Figure VII: Respondents' opinions about political parties' engagement with women, youth, and ethnic minorities.

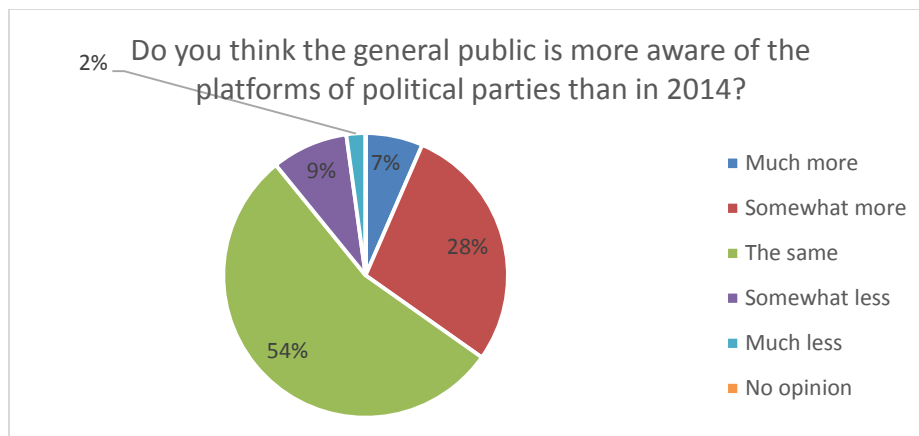


While some interviewees suggested that parties were beginning to engage ethnic minorities and youth more as well, respondents also believed that these efforts had not been very effective. This finding is also reflected in focus groups done for this evaluation. For example, in the focus group with Azeri women in Marneuli, one woman said “We did a survey of political party pre-election programs and could not find one that would address concerns of ethnic minorities” (Marneuli, women, ages 20-50). A similar sentiment was expressed regarding youth in the focus group conducted with young men in Tbilisi where one participant stated “Political parties are not interested in youth, because they are not active voters; in general, pensioners and middle-age people more actively participate in elections... therefore, parties focus less on youth” (Tbilisi, men, ages 18-29).

Perhaps the most challenging objective of the SEPPs work with political parties is to increase citizen awareness about party platforms. Only 37% of interviewees suggested that there had been progress in this area since 2014. Even more problematic in this finding is that many people who answered negatively about this issue suggested that the primary problem was that parties did not have distinct and comprehensive platforms that can easily be distinguished from each other. It is noteworthy, however, that most political party representatives interviewed suggested that the reason for the poor attention to platforms was that citizens themselves do not have a strong interest in exploring the policy issues that are upheld by different parties. These issues were also highlighted in focus groups where participants both expressed doubts about the legitimacy of party platforms and admitted that they more often voted for specific personalities. As one party-loyalist in Tbilisi noted, “They all have the same promises (regarding platforms); I focus on their experience and whether they have financial or human resources (Tbilisi, men, ages 30-60, party-loyalist)

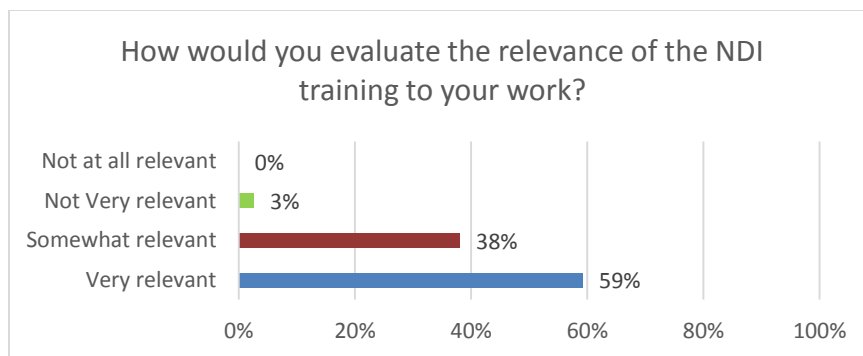
Of those who did note some progress in this area, many suggested that both parties and citizens were beginning to engage on policy issues, indicative of a potential shift to more policy-based political processes. This was also apparent in both the focus groups with citizens and the team’s interviews with political party activists. However, comparing the focus group attitudes of citizens with the perceptions of political party members also demonstrates the divide between these two critical players in the political process. As one young male participant articulated his feelings in a Tbilisi focus group, “in my opinion, Georgian politicians do not know how to make politics, and parties do not have clear ideas whether they are left-wing, right-wing or centrist; that’s why I cannot trust them: I do not know who this or that politician is and what she/he stands for” (Tbilisi, men, ages 18-29). When confronted with these types of attitudes, the politicians from political parties in Georgia suggest that there are increasingly concrete platforms that outline their ideological perspective, but the citizens themselves do not seem to vote by policies, but rather by personalities.

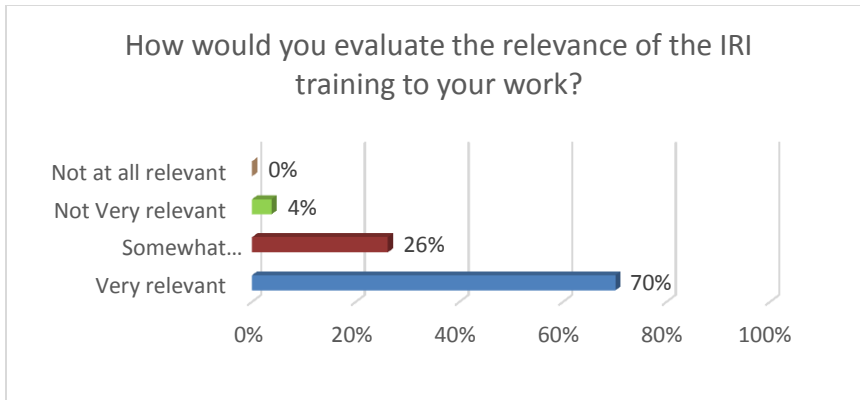
Figure VIII: Respondents’ attitudes towards citizen knowledge of political party platforms



While the results in political party development since 2014 have been mixed and perhaps even dissatisfying, one clearly can note that there has been some impact from NDI and IRI’s assistance on the parties’ attempts to develop their organizational capacity, to widen their regional reach, to engage women, youth, and ethnic minorities, and to articulate clear policy agendas. However, one can also note that the parties themselves are challenged by both the political culture of the country and the concentration of power and resources in the ruling party. In this context, it appears that party representatives found the assistance of NDI and IRI to be critical to the limited development they had achieved since 2014, as is demonstrated in the results of the internet polling of their trainees, who overwhelmingly found that their training was relevant to their work (see Figure IX).

Figure IX: Trainees’ evaluation of relevance of trainings to their work





SEPPs Sub-Purpose #2: Government capacity to administer and oversee free and fair electoral processes improved

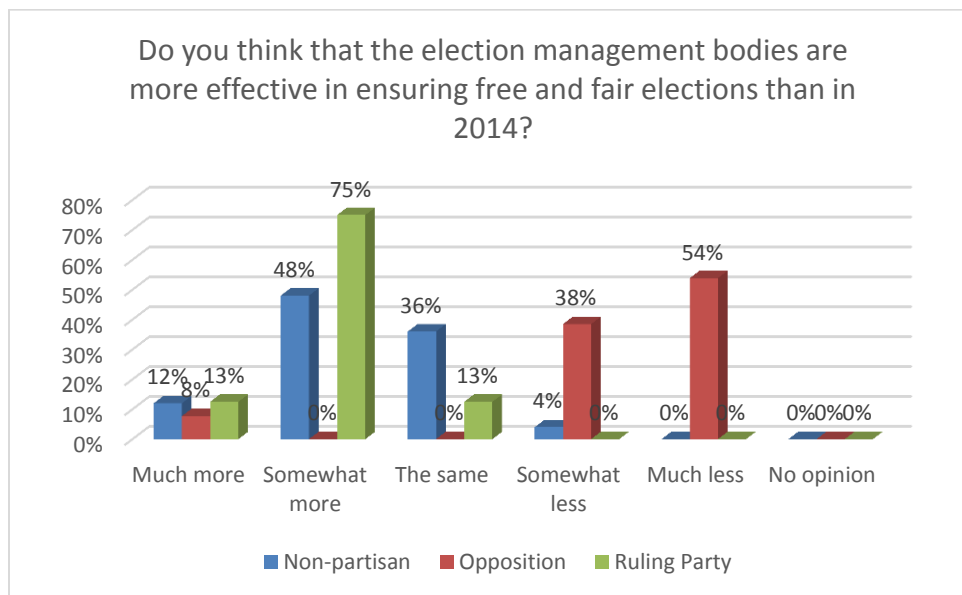
The SEPPs project has been particularly successful in helping to build government capacity to oversee free and fair elections. There is a clear indication from both stakeholders and citizens that people in Georgia generally trust election management bodies to carry out elections freely, especially on election day. While interviewees suggested that this sentiment already existed prior to 2014, the evaluation team saw signs that the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the District Election Commissions (DECs) have been establishing a new level of professionalism over the last several years, much of which has been supported by the SEPPs project. That said, new rules regarding the appointment of the members of these commissions that heavily favor the ruling party are raising red flags that all of this work could be in jeopardy and the CEC and DECs increasingly subject to political pressure in the future.

This objective has been implemented by four different SEPPs partners: IFES, ISFED, GYLA, and TI–Georgia. The work of these partners in the field of elections is well delineated and covers a variety of aspects of the government’s capacity to conduct elections freely and fairly. IFES primarily provides direct technical assistance to government entities, including the CEC, the DECs, and the State Audit Office (SAO), which regulates political party and campaign financing. ISFED serves as the primary local election monitoring organization in Georgia and fields large short-term and long-term observation missions for every Georgian election, providing recommendations where appropriate for improving the country’s electoral system. GYLA monitors election disputes, providing legal assistance to those filing claims of electoral violations, and provides recommendations on how to improve the election dispute process. Finally, TI monitors political party and campaign financing as well as the abuse of administrative services in elections and campaigns, providing recommendations on how both of these issues are regulated during elections.

Together, these interventions cover a broad array of issues related to and approaches towards ensuring free and fair elections. While IFES is the primary source of capacity building assistance, the other three local partners are serving as critical watchdogs that hold the government accountable for its implementation of elections. Thus, their combined interventions provide interconnected, but different means for building a capable system for the state’s administration of elections, and all evidence suggests that it has yielded positive results since 2014. That said, the evaluation team found that representatives from opposition political parties generally suggest that the electoral system has become less reliable since 2014. Given that these opposition interviewees were outliers in their responses to virtually every question related to elections, one can assume that they are biased, likely because their performance in elections since 2014 has been consistently worsening. That said, these outlier perspectives are also important and point to some of the structural issues related to elections that threaten its reliability into the future.

In assessing the progress towards a more effective implementation of elections by the various levels of electoral commission, interviewees generally suggested that the CEC and the local election commissions have all demonstrated improved implementation of elections. For example, nearly 90% of ruling party representatives we interviewed asserted that election management bodies were doing a better job now than in 2014. While more modest in their evaluation, 60% of non-partisan stakeholders interviewed also stated that the work of the state in implementing free and fair elections has improved at least some since 2014. In contrast, over 90% of the opposition party members interviewed suggested that election administration in Georgia had worsened at least some. In particular, opposition parties claim that both during the campaign and on election day, the CEC favors the ruling party in its decisions.

Figure X: Respondents’ attitudes towards election management bodies



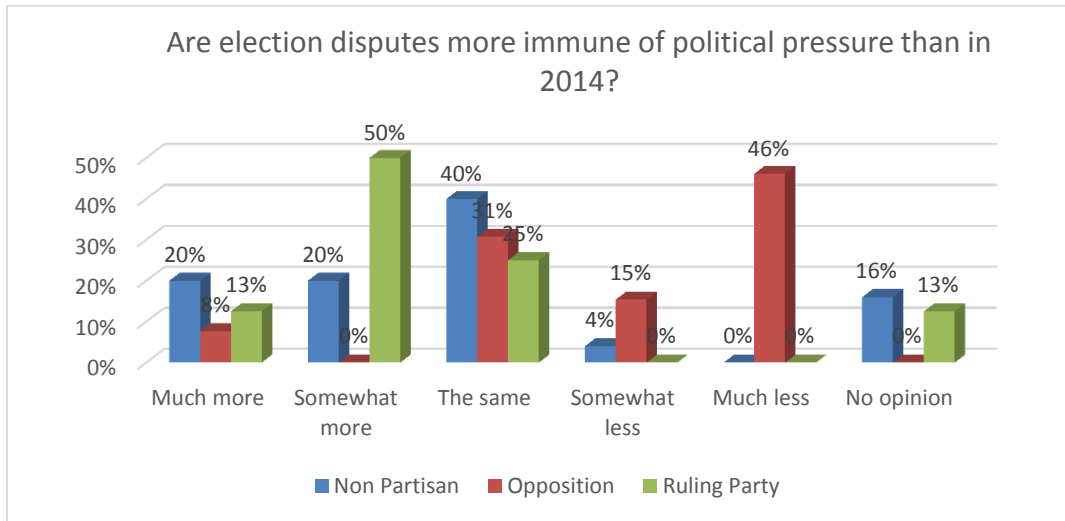
In particular, the opposition parties believe that the CEC looks the other way when there are clear violations by the ruling GD party. During fieldwork, the evaluation team especially heard complaints related to the way that GD activists used voter lists to mobilize voters they felt were likely to vote for the incumbent party. While this may be an emergent issue that impacts future elections, the evaluation team generally found that these actions were not necessarily against the law. However, it is noteworthy that focus group participants in Batumi and Marneuli pointed out that violations on election day that are against the law were worse outside Tbilisi, and many of them gave concrete examples to back this up.

Similarly, interviewees asked about the election dispute mechanisms suggested that this was also improving and has improved since 2014, particularly with regards to their immunity from political pressure. 63% of ruling party representatives and 40% of non-partisan interviewees suggested that the mediation of election disputes had improved since 2014. Another 40% of non-partisan respondents claimed that the process had not changed since 2014, but was already working without political bias at that time.

Again, as one might expect, interviewees from opposition parties were far less inclined to praise the dispute process, with over 60% stating that disputes suffered more from political pressure than previously. However, even these claims of politicized dispute resolution from members of opposition parties were largely based on the slow process under which cases were heard and a reluctance from the CEC and the courts to acknowledge violations. While people interviewed from GYLA agreed

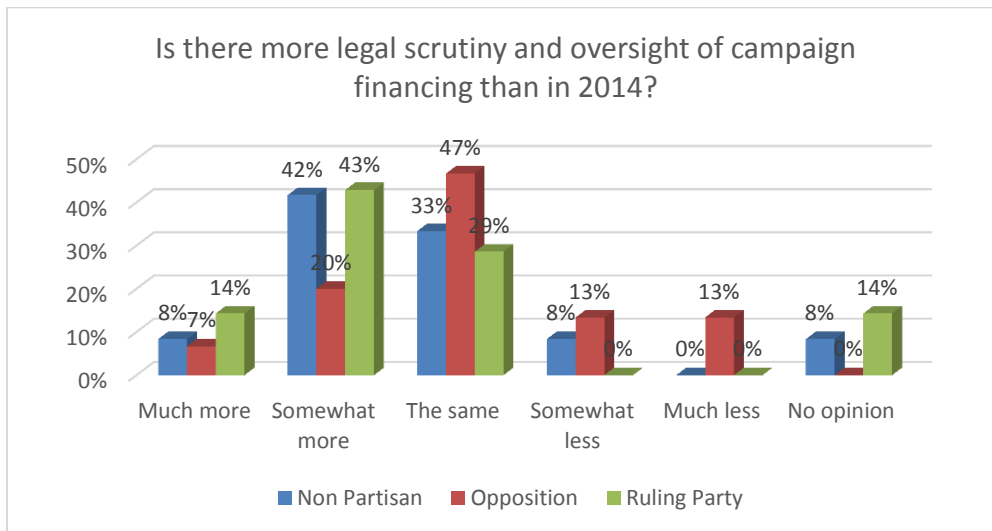
that these were problems in the system, they also suggested that they impacted both the ruling party and the opposition equally.

Figure XI: Respondents' attitudes towards election dispute resolution



By most accounts, the SAO has proven to implement its oversight of party and campaign financing relatively well. While it does not have the investigative capacity to check documents provided by parties, it does diligently record the financing that parties receive and flags discrepancies as they appear, seemingly without political bias. Among non-partisan respondents, 50% noted that this system had improved markedly and 33% believed it had not changed. Even among respondents from opposition parties, only 26% claimed that this system had worsened since 2014.

Figure XII: Respondents' attitudes towards party and campaign financing oversight

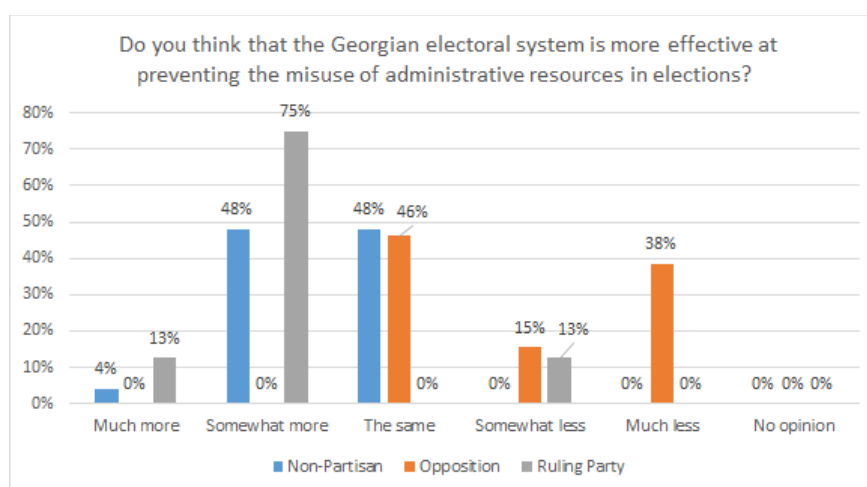


That said, interviewees still flagged numerous problems related to party and campaign financing that adversely impact political processes in Georgia. The lack of investigative capacity in the SAO means that there remains a lot of grey money in the country's political system, and this is allegedly abused by both the ruling party and the opposition. More importantly, the present system favors the incumbent GD party for multiple reasons. First, very few businesses are willing to donate to opposition parties

fearing that it could hurt their business, but the ruling GD party receives a substantial amount of money through private donations, seemingly with the intention of currying favor with the existing government. Furthermore, GD is led by the wealthiest man in Georgia, which gives the party additional access to endless amounts of resources. This has been a significant impetus for the uneven development of political parties since 2014 and the resultant waning of political competition in the country. Likewise, in focus groups, citizens generally felt that the electoral system was made for the wealthy and powerful. As one focus group participant in Tbilisi noted, “when I go to the elections in general, nothing wrong is visible, everything goes on democratically... (but) If you don’t have big money you cannot get on the (party) list...” (Tbilisi, Women, ages 30-60, party-loyalist). However, these are issues related to money in elections for which the SAO is not responsible. Rather, they are issues that emerge from Georgia’s present financing rules.

Finally, oversight of the abuse of administrative resources during elections mirrors the issue of financing parties and campaigns. On the one hand, most non-partisan interviewees (52%) suggest that the prevention of these types of abuses has improved since 2014, and none claimed that this prevention had worsened during this time. On the other hand, the majority of opposition politicians interviewed (53%) suggested that these prevention mechanisms had deteriorated over the last four years. However, like the issues regarding money in politics, the abuse of administrative resources is a larger problem than the present definition of such abuse allows. For example, the complaints of opposition parties about administrative resource abuse frequently touched on legitimate issues related to the overwhelming influence of the ruling party over voters that were technically not against the law. As one focus group participant noted, “the most important problem that we must fight against is that people who are employed in public sector are demanded from their heads to vote for ruling party otherwise they will have a problem” (Tbilisi, Men, ages 18-29). While this may not be entirely true, there was a sense among many people that being employed by the state came with an expectation of loyalty to the ruling party. Even as a perception, this creates an obvious advantage for incumbent parties. Despite these issues, at present the CEC’s implementation of the existing system does appear to have improved during the period of the SEPPs project or at the very least has not gotten worse

Figure XIII: Respondents’ attitudes towards the abuse of administrative resources



SEPPs Sub-Purpose #3: Civic engagement and national consensus around electoral and political processes enhanced

Finally, the third objective of the SEPPs project focuses on the role of civil society and the citizenry in the electoral and political processes. In general, it appears that the SEPPs project has made

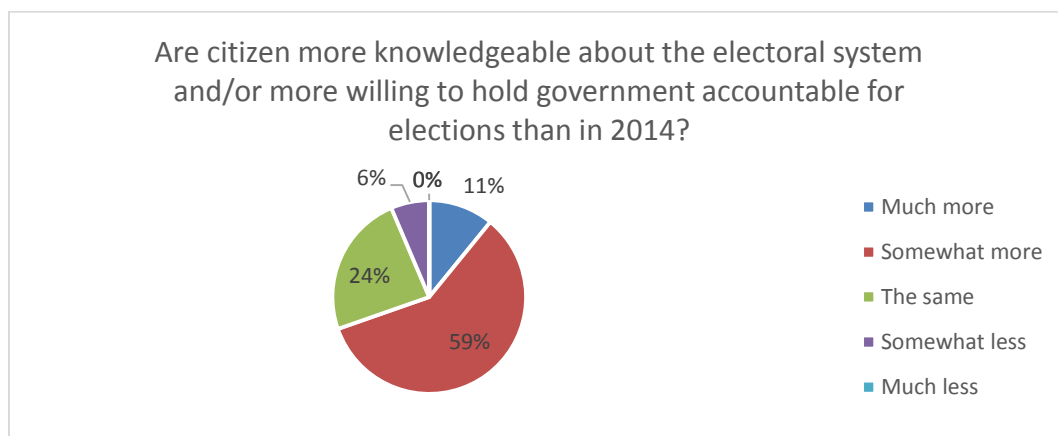
substantial progress towards this objective as well, but there also remains much to be done in this area. The intermediate results of the objective include fostering better knowledge of and engagement in elections and reform processes by the Georgian citizenry writ large, more inclusion of women, ethnic minorities and other disenfranchised groups in political processes, the mounting of successful and credible election monitoring missions by local Georgian NGOs, and the involvement of NGOs in reform processes.

The primary SEPPs partners contributing to this objective are the three local Georgian NGOs implementing activities – ISFED, GYLA, and TI. In addition, IFES contributes to this objective through its university-level democracy education program. By most accounts, each of these interventions has had some substantial success, but, at the same time, there is a sense that the national consensus on electoral and political processes could be gradually deteriorating. This was most apparent in what many interviewees and focus group participants called a growing political nihilism in Georgia where people do not really feel that the political system and politicians are addressing the issues that are of most concern to them. This political nihilism is particularly pronounced among the youth. As one young male focus group participant from Tbilisi articulated it, “nobody asks for our opinion; there is little communication between the ordinary citizens and politicians... they will listen to you out of courtesy and then will do whatever they want to do; we do not have any influence at all” (Tbilisi, Men, ages 18-29).

That said, other interviewees suggested that these attitudes may also be indicative of a gradually more sophisticated political culture in the population where citizens are becoming more demanding of politicians, but politicians have not yet become capable of delivering. Whether the growing dissatisfaction with politics in society is a sign of increasing or decreasing political activism, it is a part of changing political culture, which takes time to evolve and is difficult to measure or attribute to a five-year development project.

In terms of the first intermediate result of increased citizen knowledge of and engagement in electoral and political processes, interviewees generally suggested that there was progress in this area, but it was gradual. 70% of interviewees believed that citizens were more knowledgeable and active in elections than in 2014, but the majority (59%) felt this was only somewhat more active.

Figure XIV: Respondents’ assessment of civic knowledge and engagement in electoral and political processes

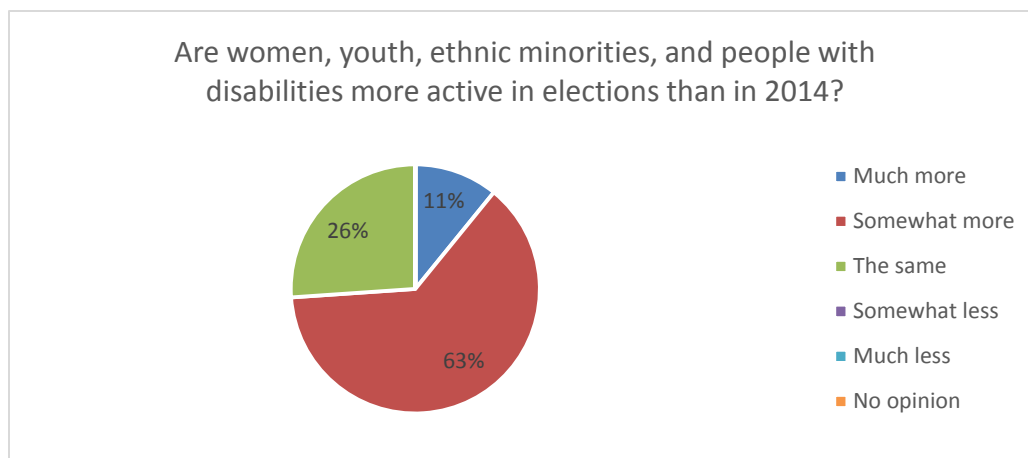


In further discussions about this question, with interviewees, they noted that people in Georgia were increasingly demanding that politicians speak to concrete policy issues. It is difficult to determine whether the SEPPs project directly contributed to this phenomenon or not. IFES’ university level course on democracy, for example, has been quite successful and is now in 29 universities, many of

which require the course as part of specific degree programs. While this is impressive, it is unknown whether undergraduate students taking this course might impact the overall civic attitudes of citizens.

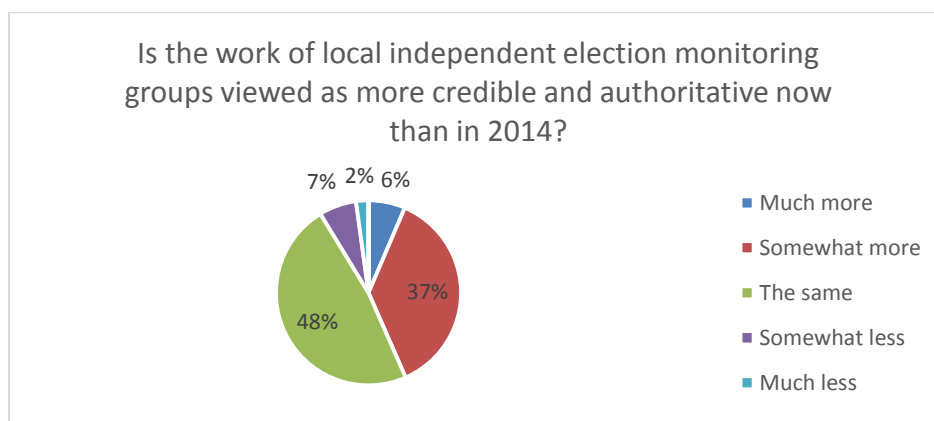
A similar analysis might be offered regarding the second intermediate result of greater political inclusion for women, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized groups. In general, interviewees believed that there was also progress in this area. 74% of the stakeholders interviewed suggested that there was progress in political inclusiveness, but 63% of them felt there was only somewhat more inclusion. Many people attributed this change to the work of the CEC, which with assistance from IFES had improved access to elections for both ethnic minorities (by having multi-lingual ballots) and for people with disabilities (providing Braille ballots for the blind and creating wheelchair access at polling stations). Others pointed to the incentives for parties to include women on their party lists as being critical in engaging women more in elections. Numerous people also pointed out that ethnic minorities were becoming more discerning voters. Whereas they previously voted almost exclusively for incumbents, many were demonstrating increased interest in opposition parties. This assertion was further substantiated by the focus groups in Marneuli where participants included a healthy mix of supporters of opposition parties and those who admitted to generally voting for the incumbent party regardless of its character.

Figure XV: Respondents' assessment of the inclusion of marginalized groups in electoral and political processes



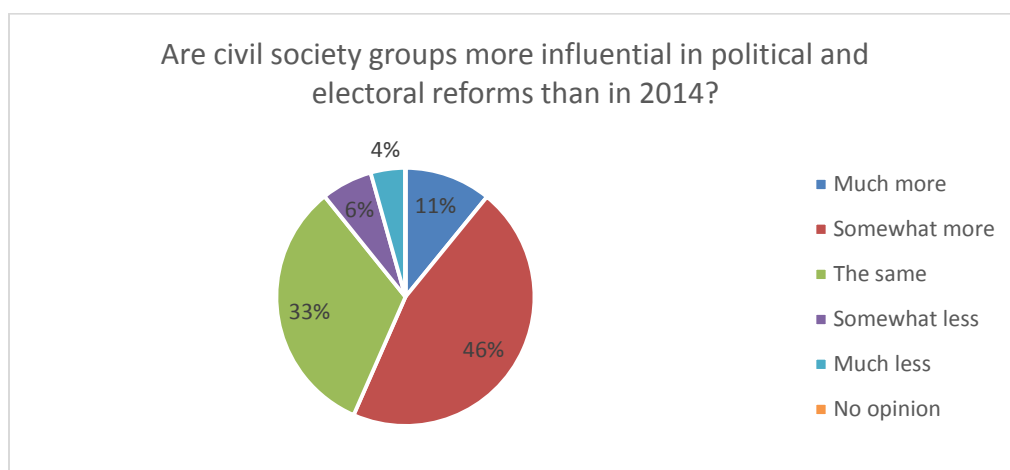
The third intermediate result regarding the mounting of successful and credible local election monitoring missions is more directly attributable to the SEPPs project since the project funds the largest local monitoring mission. To this question, respondents again gave an overwhelmingly positive assessment. While only 43% of interviewees suggested that there had been progress in this area, 48% suggested that there was no change in these organizations' credibility and authoritativeness, suggesting that these organizations were also highly professional and respected prior to 2014. However, many respondents noted that organizations like ISFED, GYLA, and TI-Georgia were increasingly viewed as elitist and irrelevant to the population as a whole. That said, most focus group participants were aware of these groups, and, while some participants viewed them with suspicion, the majority thought they were important to holding government accountable. Such sentiments were particularly pronounced among younger participants. As one young woman participating in a Tbilisi focus group stated, "I think NGOs in Georgia fulfill their role; they are voicing concerns; without them things would have been much worse" (Tbilisi, women, ages 18-29). However, despite these generally positive impressions of the role of civil society organizations, it was also apparent that few focus group participants viewed these organizations as connected to the citizenry. Rather, they viewed them more as political organizations that engaged the government, mostly for good reasons.

Figure XVI: Respondents' assessment of the credibility and authoritativeness of local election monitoring missions



Finally, regarding the last intermediate result, most interviewees believed that civil society organizations (CSOs) were also playing a larger role in electoral and political reforms than in 2014. 57% noted that there was progress in their engagement, and 33% suggested there was no change because these groups have long been influential in reform processes. It is noteworthy, however, that many interviewees believed that while these groups were becoming more active and often enjoyed a seat at the table for discussions about important reforms, they also expressed doubt regarding the degree to which government officials took their recommendations seriously.

Figure XVII: Respondents' assessment of the role of civil society organizations on electoral and political reform



Evaluation Question #2: What gaps, if any, still remain to achieve the three SEPPs project objectives?

If it appears that one can claim some progress in all of the SEPPs project objectives since 2014, there did exist some gaps in the project, at least in the level of effort spent on different issues. In particular, there are four aspects of the project that could have been expanded or altered to realize the objectives more effectively. The first would be to incentivize political party development, the second would be to find more demand-side means to promote the establishment of concrete policy agendas within political parties, the third would be to do more work on how parties can advocate

their positions between elections through means other than campaigning, and the fourth would be to push for a broader public policy debate on how the structural aspects of the political system that hinder political competition can be changed.

Incentivizing Political Party Development

It is always more difficult to incentivize political party development than it is to spur NGO development, the proliferation of independent media, or even the facilitation of state-level reforms. NGO development can be incentivized through grants to those organizations that adopt certain principles or organizational structures. Similarly, independent media outlets can be incentivized to create principles of independent journalistic ethics by offering those who adopt such principles grants of equipment, etc. Finally, even governments can be incentivized to adopt certain reform agendas by rewarding those which do with financial assistance or low-interest loans. However, rewarding specific political parties with resources that are not distributed equally among all parties would be an intervention fraught with ethical dilemmas for an international donor and bring up legitimate accusations of international support for a given political force within the country's domestic political process.

As a result, political party development frequently encounters years of capacity building efforts on specific aspects of party development, which do not spur changes in the ways that parties operate because they have no incentives to adopt these changes. This is especially true when elections do not necessarily reward the parties that have the most democratic internal operations, the strongest and most empowered regional branches, or the most coherent and developed policy platform.

However, there may be ways to incentivize certain elements of political party development by providing more technical assistance to those parties that adopt certain organizational development policies. In the SEPPs project, NDI has already found a way to provide parties additional resources by sponsoring interns for parliamentary and *Sakrebulo* factions and other legislative bodies that are open to all political parties. The evaluation team found that this was an intervention that was almost universally appreciated by party members working in these bodies. However, the evaluation team also found that this successful intervention was not fulfilling its complete potential as some bodies used these interns for more substantive work while others utilized them as glorified clerical staff. Alternative ways to utilize such incentives will be addressed in the recommendations section of the report below.

Creating Demand-side Means to Promote Political Party Policy Agendas and Platforms

Similarly, the technical assistance approach to fostering stronger policy agendas and platforms among political parties has had limited success because parties do not see the direct benefits of adopting the practices such assistance promotes. At present, IRI has successfully used polling as a means to demonstrate how policy agendas can appeal to certain parts of Georgia's electorate. While this approach appears to be making some progress among parties, many of the interviewees engaged for this evaluation suggested that voters were still more interested in voting for specific leaders on the basis of personality than on the basis of their policy orientation. This sentiment was also quite apparent in focus group discussions. For better or for worse, the only way to incentivize parties to adopt and promote coherent policy platforms distinguishing themselves from their competitors is if this strategy can gain them more votes during elections. For this reason, the project could have benefited from a more demand-side approach to fostering a demand for policy agendas from voters themselves. This would likely entail working more with the public than with political parties on the importance of concrete policy agendas to determining one's choice during an election. How this

might be accomplished in the context of SEPPs or a follow-on project will be further discussed in the report's recommendation section below.

Working more with Parties on Promoting their Policy Agendas between Elections

While IRI and NDI both provide assistance to political parties on the work they should be doing on party construction between elections, little of this work presently focuses on how parties can promote their policy agendas during this time as a means of bolstering their popularity within particular segments of the population. This is particularly important for parties without significant or any representation in *Sakrebulo*s or the Parliament. Parties without elected officials, as well as those with elected officials, would benefit from working to promote civic advocacy campaigns on certain issues that can help define the parties' position on various key issues. While party representatives with whom we spoke tended to dismiss such ideas on the basis of their lack of resources, the use of social media and mass email campaigns offer a means to do such work with virtually no financial investment.

At present, the one party that appears to be doing this type of work is the Girchi Party. While this party has proven unable thus far to garnish much support from voters, it has established a lot of interest among young Georgians, whom other parties have had trouble courting. This is partly because Girchi takes on particularly controversial issues of interest to youth, such as drug legalization and the abolishment of the military draft, and uses flamboyant tactics to get their message out. However, it is also because they are creating a distinct identity based on their positions on key issues. The youth focus groups conducted in Tbilisi, for example, demonstrated that Girchi was the only party that elicited a vibrant political debate among youth participants. How such party activities might be promoted among other parties in the context of SEPPs or a follow-on project will be further discussed in the report's recommendation section below.

Facilitating a Reform Movement to Address the Structural Aspects of the Georgian System that Hinder Political Competition

Finally, as already noted above, there exist numerous structural aspects of the Georgian political process that have hindered political competition in the country. These include how to define and regulate the abuse of administrative resources in electoral campaigns and the ways that parties and political campaigns financing can create a more even distribution of resources. The SEPPs project already has activities engaging in these issues through TI and IFES, and all of the SEPPs partners have engaged the government on the constitutional amendments and amendments to electoral code recently. However, given that the government has been selective in adopting the recommendations of both international and local NGOs, these issues may need to be discussed at a broader societal level if they are to be tackled. How this might be accomplished in the context of SEPPs or a follow-on project will be further discussed in the report's recommendation section below.

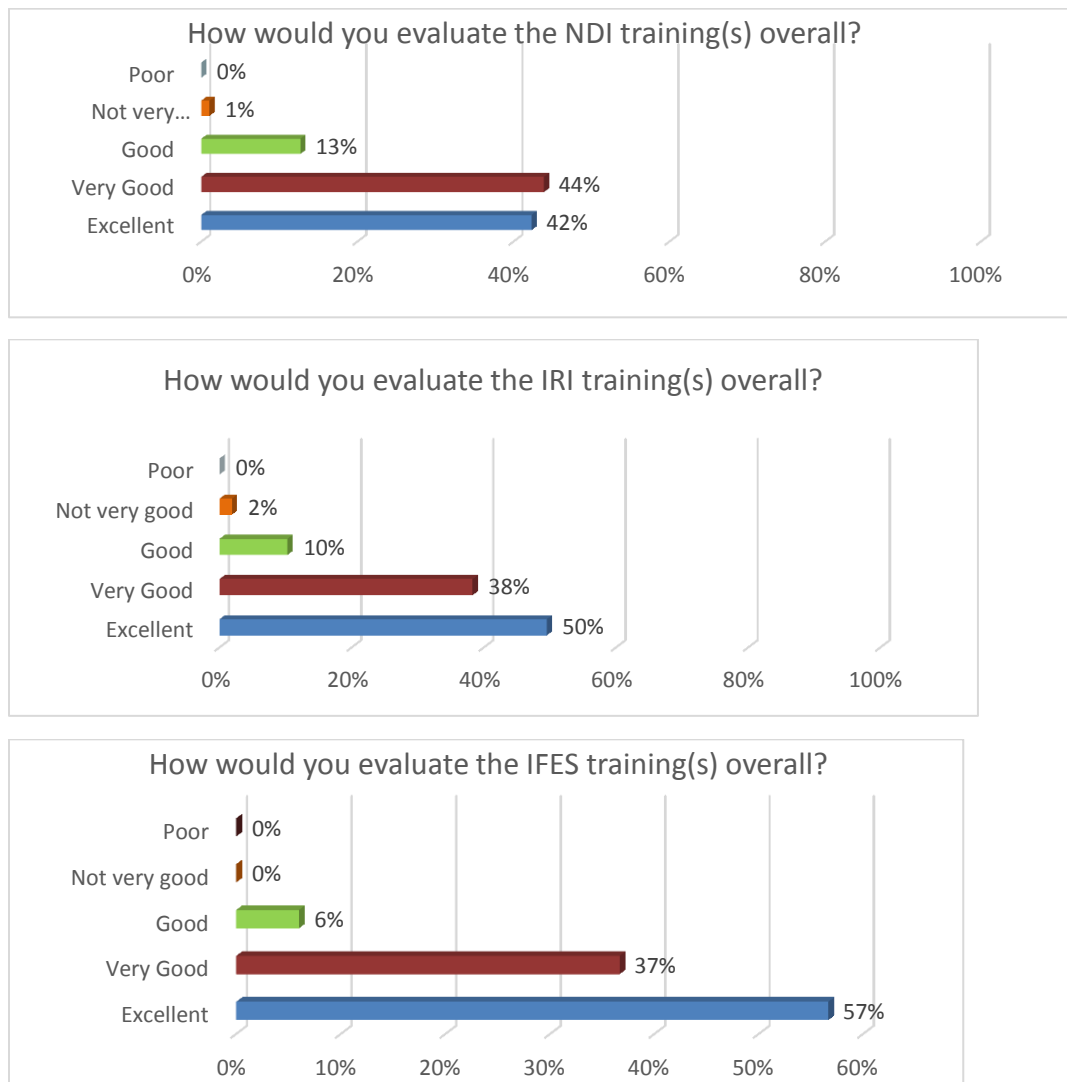
Evaluation Question #3: Did SEPPs activity interventions meet the needs and priorities of beneficiaries/stakeholders?

Beneficiary Feedback on SEPPs Activities

In general, the evaluation team found that stakeholders and beneficiaries of the SEPPs activity interventions were quite satisfied with the assistance they received. In our internet survey of beneficiaries of NDI, IFES, and IRI trainings and technical assistance, most respondents had very

positive things to say about their experiences. Almost no respondents provided negative assessments of the assistance they received from these organizations. In fact, the overwhelming majority rated the trainings and assistance they received from NDI, IFES, and IRI as either excellent or very good, with only small minorities rating them as good (see Figure XVIII). There were similar results with regards to feedback on the usefulness of the trainings to the respondents' own work. While there are obvious limitations in the accuracy of such internet surveys given that beneficiaries may want to provide answers that they think the assistance providers want to hear, it is noteworthy that we heard similar positive feedback from semi-structured interview participants who had participated in these programs. This is not to say that beneficiaries did not also provide some constructive criticism of these trainings.

Figure XVIII: Internet survey rating of NDI, IFES, and IRI trainings and technical assistance



One critical comment that frequently arose in the internet surveys was that trainings done under the SEPPs project are sometimes too generic and not grounded enough in Georgian reality. This was also brought up in several semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. Additionally, some respondents noted that certain trainings for *sakrebulo*s and the Parliament were too basic and that

there was a need for more in-depth trainings on specific issues rather than general trainings on the operations of factions or committees.

Most other critical feedback from beneficiaries focused on the need to have more training opportunities, especially for regional actors outside Tbilisi. While the CEC already has its own training center that can replicate IFES trainings for larger groups, no similar local source of training exists for political parties that could multiply the impact of NDI and IRI trainings through local replication.

Aside from these instances of constructive criticism, the evaluation team found that all of the SEPPs partners were extremely well respected by the stakeholders with whom they work and that these stakeholders are eager to continue to work with the organizations if given the opportunity. In this sense, it seemed that there was not the type of training fatigue that one encounters elsewhere, especially regarding regional actors, who appear to be eager to consume any assistance they are afforded. However, given that training provided by international training partners cannot be continued endlessly, the evaluation's recommendation section will provide some ideas regarding how this training can be further localized over time.

Sustainability of SEPPs Interventions

Generally, the evaluation team found that most SEPPs interventions were not sustainable without continued assistance. Virtually every stakeholder interview suggested that progress towards democratic political processes in Georgia could not be sustained without further assistance from USAID and other international donors. This lack of sustainability is particularly acute among political parties, which appear to be in a transition period at the moment. In this context, it is questionable whether parties will retain various organizational and procedural changes they have made with the assistance of SEPPs partners. Furthermore, none of the political parties appeared to have their own training sources outside those provided via international donor programs.

That said, there were some signs of SEPPs activities that had established at least the basis for sustainability. IFES' assistance to the training center of the CEC, for example, serves as a model for localizing the training needs of election officials, and it will likely less outside assistance in the future as it is both financially sustained and well trained. Similarly, IFES' democracy courses in universities appeared to be sustainable given the paucity of Georgian language higher education textbooks and the high demand for them. Universities throughout the country were willfully taking on these classes and paying instructors to teach them without any particular incentive from IFES.

In terms of the sustainability of the work done by the three local SEPPs partners, there is little sign that these organizations can carry out the same work without outside assistance. They do have significant capacity conduct the important "watchdog" work they are presently doing, but there are no feasible local sources of funding for them to do so.

While it is difficult to create sustainability in political development, there are numerous ways that the SEPPs project could have better sought to establish mechanisms for the retention of their assistance. This will be addressed again in the recommendations section of the report.

Evaluation Question #4: Were the SEPPs problem and purpose statements developed at a level within USAID's ability to influence?

SEPPs Problem and Purpose Statements

In general, the SEPPs problem and purpose statements were developed at a level within USAID's ability to influence, but the objectives of the project were obviously also dependent on factors outside the control of USAID and its implementing partners. Given that the goals of the project were limited and focused on continued improvement rather than transformational change, it is the opinion of the evaluation team that USAID indeed was able to influence the problem it diagnosed for making progress towards more democratic political processes in the country.

That said, as mentioned at the onset of the Findings section of this report, the overall consolidation of democratic political processes in the country has only progressed minimally during the course of the project. This suggests that some of the basic assumption of the project, such as its theory of change and development hypothesis, may need to be revisited if USAID/Georgia intends to remain active in this area. In doing so, it may also want to make its objectives more ambitious. This will be discussed in more depth in the conclusions and recommendations section below.

Measuring the Impact of the SEPPs Project

In evaluating the SEPPs implementing partners' M&E processes and plans for the project implementation period, the evaluation team carefully reviewed the documents supplied by the IPs and conducted in-depth interviews with the SEPPs project implementation teams to understand general strength, weaknesses, opportunities and gaps in the M&E processes.¹⁶ Since most of the project's activities/components were still ongoing at the time of the evaluation, it remained too early to evaluate the project's final results, but it was significant that most performance indicators were on track for fulfillment.

SEPPs implementing partners regularly reflect on the project implementation progress in their quarterly reports, assessments (faction assessments, political party scorecards), PMPs, Performance Plan and Reports (PPR), and mid-term reviews. However, the review of the partners' monitoring and evaluation efforts revealed that these efforts were not always equal among all partners. Out of six SEPPs partners, for example, only NDI had a designated M&E Officer, while others assigned the task to various project management team members. Also, there was little coordination between the M&E efforts between activities, which would have been helpful in providing a clearer understanding of how the different activities contributed to common goals. However, the largest discrepancies were between the international and local partners: the local SEPPs partners had less sophisticated monitoring tools and instruments, limited sets of indicators for tracking progress and insufficient data to accurately assess performance. Some examples include:

Data is not always accurate or is missing:

e.g. TI PMP: there are no targets or actuals for the following indicators:

- Improved electoral management
- International and domestic reporting on Georgian elections and electoral financing
- # of references to party financing, misuse of administrative resources or transparency on financial aspects of the campaign in international monitoring report

¹⁶ The evaluation team did not conduct separate M&E interviews with the local SEPPs partners, but it did discuss M&E in our larger meetings with these partners.

Additionally, there is no baseline of targets and actuals for 2016 and 2017 for the following indicator in GYLA's PMP:

- Legal support for independent candidates

According to the ADS 201 Performance indicators are not required for measuring progress toward achieving a Goal. However, ISFED's and TI's PMP still include them:

ISFED

Goal: Accomplishing more transparent, inclusive and competitive electoral and political processes in Georgia.

Indicator: Freedom House Nations in Transit Democracy Score.

TI

Goal: Fair and transparent elections

Indicator: Improved electoral management

Such shortcomings in the local organizations' M&E efforts were likely due to a lack of experience with USAID M&E systems, but they also suggest a need for more guidance and perhaps mentorship. This is an issue, which will also be addressed in the report's recommendations section below.

Overall, the SEPPs project did well in meeting its objectives. At the outcome level, targets were exceeded for IR 1.1.5 Factions appreciated the purpose of carrying out regular and systematic outreach to media (NDI), IR1.2.3 Future women leaders program provides female local council faction member with skills to constructively contribute to the local legislative process (NDI), and Objective 1.1 Democratic parties improve organizational capacity and intra-party democracy (IRI). At the output level the targets were exceeded by all SEPPs partners in their training and capacity building efforts for *Sakrebulo* members, political parties, election officials and domestic election observers (DEOs).

While the measurement of results was rather limited among local implementing partners, the international CEPPs partners measured progress towards results and objectives using qualitative, quantitative, and rating scale indicators defined in their respective PMPs, and interviews with them revealed that the indicator selection was mostly based on the partners' past experiences. The baselines have not always been defined in PMPs. Their absence had limited the scope of the analysis of performance.

USAID's ADS 203 requires Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) to be completed for all performance indicators. It provides indicator definitions, guidance on data collection methodology and other data collection features for each performance indicator reported to USAID. PIRS were not available in the documents supplied by IPs. Upon inquiry, only NDI was able to provide PIRS for its indicators to the evaluation team.

To ensure that progress toward each level of project results was sufficiently captured, at least one indicator per desired result was needed. Additionally, different indicators for outputs and outcomes were required, since they described changes at different levels. Upon reviewing the PMPs the team has found that the same indicator was used to measure the achievement of an objective and several IRs (IRI:Objective 1.1.0.1 and IRs 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.2, 1.1.1.3).

Monitoring inclusivity of women, youth and ethnic minorities in the SEPPs project activities was essential as the SEPPs project's anticipated outcomes included the following:

- 1.5: Parties take on issues of importance to women, young persons and ethnic minorities.

3.2: Greater participation of marginalized groups (women, ethnic minorities, youth, PWDs) in electoral processes

In order to track how effectively assistance contributes to the increased participation of marginalized groups, PMPs should have included sex, ethnicity and age disaggregated data. While the partners often segregate data by sex, less segregation is done by age or ethnicity. Indicators associated with measuring the progress towards greater participation of marginalized groups could have been made more precise. (Objective 1.3: An increased number of women, youth and minority candidates participate in the elections, Indicator 1.3.0.1 Percent of participating political parties who demonstrate improvement in the “inclusive outreach and representation” category of their respective development scorecards, Indicator 1.3.1.1. Number of USG-assisted political parties implementing initiatives to increase the number of candidates and/or members who are women, youth, and from marginalized groups (IRI).

Besides their own reports and expert analysis, the project teams should also have considered using other options for obtaining data from sources such as other organizations, universities, think tanks reports, and survey firms. For example, in measuring Objective 1 (Improved government capacity to administer free and fair electoral processes), IR 1.1 (Improved election laws and procedures), SEPPs utilized Indicator 1.1.1 (Degree to which standards and procedures of EDR are clearly defined), IFES utilized exclusively its own data sources (i.e.: IFES reports and IFES expert analysis). Using external data sources would have enhanced the objective assessment of progress towards this result.

The ultimate impacts with respect to strengthened electoral and political processes that the project is pursuing are not fully under the control of the implementing partners or USAID. The influence of external factors on the outcomes is also significant. Although partners regularly provide context analysis in their reports, use of context indicators for tracking the conditions and external factors relevant to the implementation of projects, would have been useful. Instead of targets, the IP teams could establish thresholds, which if crossed would urge certain actions or be used to inform decisions.

Despite these shortcomings, it was the opinion of the evaluation team that NDI, IFES, and IRI were doing a good job both formulating their M&E plans and using them for analysis of project implementation. While local partners ISFED, GYLA, and TI-Georgia had less sophisticated M&E plans than the international partners, they did collect data appropriately for the indicators used and engaged their results in their reporting. Developing indicators to chart progress in political processes will always be a difficult endeavor, and the international SEPPs implementing partners are obviously at the forefront of coming up with creative solutions, which will likely only become more sophisticated with time.

Evaluation Question #5: What lessons have been learned from utilizing local partners in implementing the SEPPs project?

Overall, working with local partners in the SEPPs project had multiple benefits both to the project and to the organizational development of the local partners themselves. First, the use of local partners in programming that focuses on political processes allows for those partners to take a more active role in reform processes than international partners since the local partners are also active actors in Georgia’s politics. While not always part of the SEPPs project, all of the local SEPPs

partners are continually involved in policy discussions with government and are sought after as local experts with knowledge of international standards and best practices. Thus, they each played a critical role in the public discussions of the constitutional reform over the last several years in a way that international organizations could not.

Furthermore, such direct support to local organizations has obvious benefits for these organizations' own development, both in terms of capacity building and in terms of financial stability. ISFED representatives, for example, told us that receiving the SEPPs grant allowed them to plan further into the future knowing that they had stable funding for several years. This is a critical form of assistance to local NGOs, which often must shift their missions to funding preferences and depend upon short-term plans for their operations. Each of the local partners also noted that they greatly appreciated the assistance from USAID in improving their financial management and accountability, which is a pre-requisite for direct assistance of this kind.

Another lesson learned from utilizing local partners in this project was that the local partners found themselves closely coordinating their actions knowing that they were all working on a common goal where duties were well delineated. As a result, the local SEPPs partners often held joint press conferences and coordinated joint statements. This is a strong asset for local advocacy NGOs and can serve as an example of how local NGOs can work together rather than compete in seeking to promote critical reforms.

While one would hope that these organizations could eventually supplant international NGOs in Georgia, the evaluation team found that this is unlikely to take place anytime soon. One reason is that Georgia is a country where international organizations are viewed as particularly authoritative, especially in a geopolitical context where most political forces in the country are focused on winning the support of the U.S. and Europe in their quest to ensure Georgia's security from Russian interference and aggression. Another reason is that none of these groups have the skill set to do capacity building for political parties and, given their status as local watchdog and advocacy organizations, such a role would not be appropriate for them. While they may be able to take on some of the training roles that IFES presently fulfills with election officials, the position of IFES as an international honest broker on electoral issues will likely make them an important player in Georgia into the future.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

General Conclusions

Overall, the evaluation team was impressed with the SEPPs project and its accomplishments during a critical time in Georgia's political development. It was telling that, when asked about the importance of all six partners to the democratic development of Georgia, stakeholders almost unanimously stated that they were very important without reservation. Interestingly, this was the general response from all stakeholders, regardless of their political orientation, indicating that presently almost all political actors in Georgia have an interest in continuing, or at least appearing to continue, along a democratic path of governance. At the same time, across the political spectrum, there was a sentiment that international organizations were critical to keeping them on this track and holding them accountable for progress towards democratization.

Likewise, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders suggested that there was some progress in all of the objectives of the project, a trend that is also substantiated by the fact that the indicators for

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project performance provided by all SEPPs partners are mostly on track. While this incremental progress has not been transformational enough to facilitate changes in global indices of democratization like those of Freedom House, it was also an accomplishment that Georgia had not backslid in its democratic development since 2014 at a time when global trends were showing growing authoritarianism around the world. While it is difficult to suggest that this achievement can be attributed to the SEPPs project, it is interesting that many interviewees did assert such attribution.

However, the findings also demonstrate that Georgia continues to struggle with certain structural issues within its political system and in its political culture that tend to favor the idea of a “winner take all” political system where political competition and opportunities to build coalitions are stifled by the concentration of power once a certain political force takes over. Some of the findings from interviews and focus groups that lead to this conclusion include: 1) the ways in which the majority of political money flows to the ruling party, 2) the ways that the large public sector gets mobilized, directly or indirectly, to support the ruling party, 3) the growing political nihilism of the public, and 4) the tendency of apolitical voters to vote for the incumbent party by default. The lack of political competition fostered by these factors has stalled further democratization in the country and keeps open the possibility of future backsliding.

It is noteworthy that most of these factors impeding political competition in the country are not related to the strength of institutions, but are more related to policies and political culture. Furthermore, there is obviously little incentive from any party to change the situation once they are in power and capable of fostering such changes. This situation poses challenges for USAID/Georgia if it chooses to continue working in this area. In particular, it brings into question both the SEPPs theory of change and development hypothesis going forward.

The SEPPs project is based on a **development hypothesis** that “sustainable, democratic political competition can be enhanced at the national and local levels by continuing to build the capacity of institutions and organizations related to elections and political processes and by ensuring broad citizen engagement in those processes,” and its **theory of change** is that “if civil society is informed and engaged in civic life and, together with the government, increases its capacity to advance and solidify sustainable practices and inclusive participation in the country’s electoral and political processes, then democratic institutional change will be strengthened, and groups across all strata of society will be empowered to assert their voices and rights as citizens in a democratic society.” While these are reasonable assumptions in many consolidating democracies, especially with past histories of democratic governance, they appear to be less applicable to the present moment in Georgia for a few reasons. In the Georgian context, the strengthening of institutions as presently configured and of a civil society that is disconnected from most citizens does not appear to lead to a more robust political competition without structural changes and a more sophisticated political culture. While there is evidence that the SEPPs project contributed to the strengthening of state electoral institutions and a professional civil society, this has not led to the desired result of “groups across all strata of society... (being) empowered to assert their voices and rights as citizens in a democratic society.” As is discussed further in the recommendations section, in these circumstances, USAID/Georgia should likely revisit its **development hypothesis** and **theory of change** going forward if they choose to stay engaged with the SEPPs project objective going forward.

This is an important conclusion of the evaluation that should not detract from the project’s important successes. It is also a conclusion that would not have been likely envisioned when the project was first designed in 2014. However, it provides food for thought for future programming related to Georgia’s political processes. In the remainder of this section, conclusions will be addressed in terms of each of the evaluation questions that serve as the basis of the overall report.

Conclusions: Evaluation Question #1

As noted in the findings section, the SEPPs project did achieve its sub-purposes by fostering some progress in each of them. However, this progress varied by sub-purpose. Among the three primary sub-purposes or objectives of the project, the evaluation found that the first one – “political parties strengthened at the national and regional levels” – was the most problematic. While findings showed that the SEPPs project had succeeded in building some capacity in parties, the political environment during the project had disempowered most of the parties in the country with the exception of the ruling GD Party. In some ways, this disempowerment had forced many parties to look inward and consider positive changes to their organizational structure and their policy agendas, but a combination of lack of resources and a paucity of incentives had at the same time discouraged significant restructuring or engagement with substantive policy issues. In interviews with the evaluation team, opposition party representatives frequently expressed frustration with their inability to connect with a larger base of supporters and tended to blame GD’s stranglehold on power, their own lack of resources, and the weak political culture of the citizenry for their lack of success and inability to get across the importance of their platforms to perspective voters.

Additionally, the findings showed that, while USAID has long sponsored trainings for political parties on such basic organizational questions as parties’ internal democracy, use of regional branches, and the development and promotion of well-articulated and substantive platforms, progress in these areas of development has been chronically slow and often not sustained. This is largely due to the fact that party representatives often do not see the direct benefits of making such reforms. As one of the former members of the Free Democrats Party noted in an interview for the evaluation, “we were a model for how parties should be organized, but we never were able to compete successfully in elections.”

Overall, the findings suggested that the same factors hindering political competition in the country serve as some of the biggest obstacles to the further strengthening of political parties. This includes the regulation of party and campaign financing, the various ways that administrative resources work in favor of the ruling party, and the level of political culture in the country as a whole. That said, there are also ways that parties can be incentivized more evenly while facing these obstacles to develop into the strong institutions required of a multi-party democracy in Georgia. The recent constitutional amendments that will change Parliamentary elections to fully party-list based starting in 2024 may provide some of these incentives, but there are also others that might be considered. These will be highlighted in the recommendations section below.

The second of the primary sub-purposes of the project - “Government capacity to administer and oversee free and fair electoral processes improved” – experienced more progress than did political party development over the course of the SEPPs project. As noted in the report’s findings, stakeholders and citizens alike generally held the technical aspects of the electoral process in high-esteem, especially regarding the conduct of elections on election day itself. However, both in interviews and focus groups, the team found that many people expressed a belief that the results of elections were often already decided by election day through an unequal campaign process and a disinterested public. Furthermore, many of the election experts, but not election officials, with which we spoke expressed concern that the system appears to work smoothly now because there is a lack of political competition. In a competitive political environment, they worried that the system could be easily influenced by political forces, especially from the ruling party. This concern has been magnified by recent changes to the composition of electoral commissions, which will effectively give the ruling party a majority on all commissions.

Thus, in the election sphere, like in political party development, it was evident that the SEPPs project had helped to facilitate institutional strengthening, but this did not necessarily create sustainability for free and fair elections. There remain other structural issues that must be addressed in order to ensure

a sustainable free and fair elections system. The recommendations section below will further discuss how these may be addressed.

The third sub-purpose of the project - “Civic engagement and national consensus around electoral and political processes enhanced”- was perhaps the objective where there was the most progress in the SEPPs project. Most interviewees and focus group participants generally viewed CSOs, particularly the primary ones working in elections and political processes, favorably and believed that they have become even more active since 2014. However, interviewees suggested that many CSOs, and especially those involved in political processes, had become increasingly disconnected from any particular constituency within the citizenry. While focus group participants did not voice this concern overtly, they generally spoke about these organizations as political institutions that were meant to engage the government, but not them.

This situation may explain why there is presently increased policy engagement from professional CSOs, like the SEPPs grantees, but this has not translated into a national consensus around electoral and political processes. In fact, there was significant evidence from focus groups that citizen cynicism about politics has been increasing since 2014. In order to consolidate democratic political processes in Georgia, this will need to change, and there needs to be a greater political consciousness among the populous as well as a generally more mature political culture. The recommendations section will provide some measures that could be taken towards this end in the future.

Conclusions: Evaluation Question #2

The evaluation team found some gaps in the SEPPs program that should be filled if USAID/Georgia plans to engage political processes in the future. Some of these gaps represent goals that the SEPPs project did not pursue, and others are more a product of the level of effort spent on various goals. Overall, the team found that there were at least four gaps in the project as implemented since 2014 that should be addressed in any future programming contemplated. These were: 1) incentivizing political party development, 2) seeking more demand-side means to promote the establishment of concrete policy agendas within political parties, 3) more work on how parties can advocate their positions between elections through means other than campaigning, and 4) establishing a broader public policy debate on how the structural aspects of the political system that hinder political competition can be changed.

In general, most of these gaps can be further boiled down to linking citizens more to political parties as well as to political reforms more generally. The evaluation team found that while SEPPs partners had all been involved in the various debates on reforms to Georgia’s electoral and political processes that took place since 2014, little of this involvement linked directly to the population as a whole, which is increasingly disenchanted with the political system. Similarly, little had been done with the population as a whole to encourage them to ask more of Georgia’s political parties. All of these gaps will be addressed once again in the recommendations section below where the report will provide suggestions on how to fill them going forward.

Conclusions: Evaluation Question #3

In general, direct beneficiaries were very positive about the assistance they had received through the SEPPs project. Even beyond direct beneficiaries, the broader sample of stakeholders interviewed suggested that the work of the SEPPs partners is indispensable to democratic development in Georgia. Several survey respondents did suggest that some trainings offered by the SEPPs project could be improved, viewing these trainings as either lacking relevance to the Georgian context or as being too basic. This suggests that the SEPPs partners could examine their training modules and update them to the local context, an issue that will be further discussed in the recommendations section below. Other feedback from beneficiaries focused on having more training available to more

people. Given limited resources, this would necessitate finding more localized training options, which will also be discussed in the recommendations section below.

Regarding the sustainability of the SEPPs projects, the findings suggested that most interventions in the project were not sustainable without continued involvement of the SEPPs partners. Several of the interventions implemented by IFES were an exception to this rule. This suggests that the project has not been sufficiently focused on sustainability options, another issue that will be discussed in the recommendations section below.

Conclusions: Evaluation Question #4

In terms of the goals of the SEPPs project and USAID's ability to influence the results it anticipated, the evaluation team found that the goals of the project were measured enough to be within USAID's reach, but they may have actually been too unambitious. All of the sub-purposes of the project were merely focused on making some progress rather than reaching any transformational goal. While more ambitious objectives would have risked failure, they may have also limited results by not reaching far enough. This observation also links back to the general conclusions above about revisiting the **development hypothesis** and **theory of change** on which the project is based, both of which assume that incremental progress in institutional development will eventually result in the consolidation of democratic political processes in the country. If this is not the case, then it would be better to have objectives that are benchmarks of the change that is envisioned.

The evaluation team generally found that the monitoring and evaluation processes for the SEPPs project were satisfactory. However, they were much better among the project's international partners than among local partners. There were also some gaps among all partners, particularly regarding the disaggregation of data, the use of context indicators, and the organization of their results in standardized PIRS forms. Furthermore, the findings suggested that there was little coordination across activities with their M&E systems. All of these issues addressed below in recommendations as will suggestions for the improvement of SEPPs local partners' M&E procedures.

Conclusions: Evaluation Question #5

In terms of lessons learned from giving direct grants to three local partners in the SEPPs project, the evaluation team found that generally this had been a fruitful approach that both built local capacity and took advantage of the unique position these organizations have as vehicle for policy advocacy. Furthermore, given the fact that these local organizations had personal stakes in the future of Georgia, they proved to be excellent at coordinating activities, statements, and advocacy efforts.

In general, the professionalism of these organizations made them excellent implementers, and they claimed to be well-trained in the accounting principles and reporting demanded by USAID. That said, as discussed above, they still need to improve their monitoring and evaluation procedures, and working with USAID on this would be both helpful to the general SEPPs project, if it continues, and would build local capacity that can eventually supplant the work of international NGOs in Georgia.

Recommendations

While this performance evaluation is not intended to provide specific recommendations regarding how USAID/Georgia may decide to work in the field of political process strengthening in the future or whether it should do such work at all, its SOW does ask the evaluation team to provide recommendations for improving the approach of the SEPPs project if it is decided to create a follow-on project. Below, the evaluation team provides such recommendations. It begins with broad recommendations for approaching any contemplated follow-on work in this area, followed by more

specific recommendations related to improving the work done by the project since 2014 in its three primary interventions – political party strengthening, election management improvement, and strengthening the role of civil society in elections.

General Recommendations

1) Conduct an *Applied Political Economy Analysis (PEA)* to revisit the project’s *development hypothesis and theory of change*: As noted above, the project’s **development hypothesis** and **theory of change** are too focused on strengthening institutions and increasing the engagement of civil society organizations when it appears that these efforts alone cannot result in significant progress towards the consolidation of democracy in Georgia given its current state of political development. Throughout this evaluation, findings suggested that the stagnation of political competition in Georgia has halted the country’s further democratic development and that this is not due to a lack of institutional capacity, but is related to structural issues in the political system and the general political culture of the country. In this context, it will be critical for USAID going forward to tackle the more fundamental objective of making political competition an acceptable and assumed part of the Georgian political system. To do this, it will need to think more creatively about how opposing political actors can come together to agree on rules of the political game that have a level playing field and encourage, rather than discourage the active participation of multiple parties in governance. Using USAID’s applied PEA framework undertaken at the issue-level would provide the type of analysis needed to determine the obstacles that hinder political competition and the incentives that different actors may have to either promote or oppose addressing these obstacles.¹⁷ This level of analysis would assist USAID/Georgia in revisiting its **development hypothesis** and **theory of change** for consolidating Georgia’s democratic political processes. It is possible that the assessment of the sector being done presently by USAID will provide this level of analysis, or, if not, it can serve as a basis for a future PEA.

2) Focus more on citizen involvement in politics: Findings throughout the evaluation point out that there is a disconnect between political parties and citizens as well as between citizens and government-determined political reforms. While local NGOs have become more active on these fronts, numerous interviewees suggested that these NGOs have become increasingly disconnected from the population as a whole. As a result, there is growing cynicism among the population regarding political parties, politicians, and even elections and politics more generally. Getting the citizenry more involved in political reforms and in forcing parties to take stances on substantive issues could go a long way towards re-energizing Georgia’s political processes and revitalizing political competition. It could also address two of the gaps identified in the evaluation’s findings – “seeking more demand-side means to promote the establishment of concrete policy agendas within political parties” and “establishing a broader public policy debate on how the structural aspects of the political system that hinder political competition can be changed.” Finally, it would help build a political culture in Georgia where political competition is regularized. While recommending specific approaches towards increasing citizen involvement in politics is beyond the scope of this evaluation, the above-recommended applied PEA would assist with this as may the USAID sector assessment.

¹⁷ For a variety of USAID resources related to undertaking an Applied Political Economy Analysis, see: **Thinking and Working Politically (TWP) through Applied Political Economy Analysis (PEA): Core Resource Documents** (<https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/thinking-and-working-politically-twp-through-applied-political-economy-analysis-pea-core>)

3) Improve M&E systems through more partner coordination and mentoring local partners: As already discussed, the M&E systems in the SEPPs program have been sufficient, but they could be improved. One way to do so would be to increase coordination between partners regarding their respective M&E plans, indicators, etc. This could provide a better picture of how the multiple activities in the project all work towards common goals and would ensure more uniform quality of data and analysis across activities. Some areas where uniformity is needed includes the establishment of common context indicators, the establishment of a common PIRS form for all activities, and the joint use of disaggregation by sex, age, and ethnicity. As the evaluation findings also showed, the M&E systems of the local SEPPs partners are predictably less sophisticated than are those of the international CEPPs organizations. It would be useful if any contemplated follow-up using both international and local partners included a means for some mentoring by the international partners of local partners in project management and especially M&E systems. This would provide both local capacity building and an opportunity for more commonality across activities in the ways and means used to measure results.

4) Develop sustainability plans for activities where possible: While not all of the SEPPs interventions can be expected to foster sustained change and most of them will likely not be able to do so in the short term, the project should have plans that are focused on longer-term sustainability. In this regard, any follow-on projects working on political processes should be responsible for sustainability plans that have benchmark indicators tracking their success. One area, for example, where sustainability should be sought is in the training of political parties through training departments within parties themselves, a recommendation that is also made below. Other aspects of sustainability should be considered from the perspective of what any future projects' development hypothesis and theory of change help form its over-arching objectives and sub-objectives.

Recommendations Related to Political Party Development

5) Seek ways to incentivize political party development: One of the biggest challenges to providing assistance to political party development is finding ways to get parties to adopt best practices when the parties themselves do not necessarily see the direct benefits of doing so. This is apparent in the slow progress that parties in Georgia have made towards self-reliance. While any assistance to political parties must avoid appearances of an international donor favoring any party over another, the SEPPs project has already found some creative ways to provide parties with additional resources by offering them to all parties. One particularly successful intervention of this kind utilized by NDI has been its provision of interns to the Parliamentary and *Sakrebulo* factions and committees. However, as noted in the findings sections of the report, these interns are not always used to substantively improve the work of the bodies where they work. If this program could be linked to specific reform efforts within parties by providing interns who will only work on party internal democratic processes, the development of regional branches, or the development and promotion of policy platforms, they would add multi-dimensional utility to the project's overarching objectives. Furthermore, such interns would not be limited to work with *Sakrebulos* or the Parliament, but would be offered to all interested parties for their headquarters or regional branches. This would be one option to build on an existing intervention as an incentive for parties to adopt more democratic management processes, strengthen their regional branches, and develop and disseminate their policy platforms. Other similar incentive structures might be built into other interventions with parties and could be identified in the course of the above-mentioned applied PEA.

6) Do more work with parties on how to promote their policy agendas through public advocacy or awareness-raising campaigns between elections: As mentioned in the findings section, this is an intervention that could further the goals both of making parties more issue-based in their approach to voters and of making parties, especially those not represented in the Parliament or *Sakrebulo*s, more competitive when elections take place. While several party representatives interviewed for the evaluation have suggested that they are hampered in doing such work by their lack of resources, the proliferation of social media makes such campaigns less costly. Given the apprehension voiced by some interviewees to undertake such work between elections, this may also be an activity that could be incentivized by a sponsored intern or other means.

7) Seek ways to localize training opportunities for political parties: By localizing training for political party representatives, the evaluation team means both tailoring training to local conditions and finding ways to sustain training through local sources. The majority of feedback from political party beneficiaries of SEPPs training collected by the evaluation pointed to one of two deficiencies in the training offered party representatives. The first was that many trainings were too generalized and not tailored to the context of Georgia. The second was that there was not enough training available, especially for regional party activists. There are certainly ways that the SEPPs training for political party representatives could be more tailored to the Georgian context by the local offices of NDI and IRI. This might include working closely with trainers who come from elsewhere to ensure that they are able to use the Georgian context as a base and provide case studies either from Georgia or tailored to the Georgian context. As far as facilitating the provision of more training, this would necessarily need to be done by helping to establish local sources of training. With regards to political parties, the best local sources would be the parties themselves. If parties were encouraged and assisted in establishing their own training departments, the SEPPs partners would be able to train their trainers and allow for a far greater impact with regards to parties' membership.

Recommendations Related to Elections

8) Foster a public debate on impediments to political competition as the Parliament harmonizes the election law with the recent constitutional changes: As is highlighted in the findings, two of the most critical obstacles to increased political competition in Georgia are the structural issues that allow the ruling party to control the majority of political donations as well as to utilize administrative resources. While the SAO does an adequate job of overseeing the collection and use of political donations and the CEC – a decent job of identifying the abuse of administrative elections during elections, these efforts are limited by present rules and regulations. For example, there needs to be a broad public discussion about the role of money in politics that also attracts the attention of citizens. This was an issue that came up frequently throughout the evaluation's findings as numerous people recounted how businesses were punished by authorities if they gave to opposition parties and how donors to the ruling party would often receive preferential consideration in state tenders. It may be, for example, that Georgia should adopt quite severe campaign finance limits, which would create a more level playing field. Whatever the solution, a public discussion needs to be stimulated on this topic. Similarly, a broader understanding of the abuse of administrative resources both before and during campaigns is needed. This would include identifying pressure put on businesses to not give to opposition parties or to give to the ruling party as well as more strictly controlling conflict of interest issues with businesses that do work with the government. The time to seek to bring about such changes would be as the Parliament begins harmonizing the election law with constitutional changes over the coming years.**9) Increased pressure put on the government to reverse its recent**

changes to the composition of electoral commissions: The changes to the composition of electoral commissions based on parties' representation in the Parliament appears to have no logical purpose other than to invite bias into what appears to be an increasingly non-biased and independent CEC. This is an issue that requires urgent attention before it becomes institutionalized and threatens the non-partisan nature of electoral commissions. It may also be the case that the aforementioned applied PEA could assist those working on political processes to identify how this may be reversed.

Recommendations Related to Civil Society Engagement with Elections

10) Civil society organizations involved in elections should do more outreach to the public at large to reinvigorate citizen interest in elections and political processes: As the evaluation findings point out numerous times, there is a growing political nihilism among the population of Georgia. In addition, numerous stakeholder interviews suggested that civil society organizations, while more politically active in the Parliament and with the government, have cultivated an elitist image since 2014, leading to decreased engagement with the population as a whole. As part of the more general recommendation above regarding increasing citizen engagement in political and electoral reforms, it is recommended that civil society organizations, and particularly the SEPPs local partners, engage citizens more on reform issues from the grassroots. This may prove to give them more leverage with the government and the Parliament than is the case now and could both stimulate more citizen involvement in politics and facilitate more rapid changes to the structural issues that hinder political competition in the country.

APPENDIX # 1:



USAID | CAUCASUS

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

STATEMENT OF WORK

Final Performance Evaluation

OF

Strengthening Electoral and Political Processes (SEPPs) Project

I. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this final performance evaluation is to define what has worked and what has not in the activities under the Strengthening Electoral and Political Processes (SEPPs) project and what would be the best way forward in 2019 and beyond. The timeframe to be covered by the evaluation is from the start of the project in June 2014 through summer 2018.

The results of the evaluation will be used by USAID/Georgia for defining the future course of action in the area of strengthening electoral and political processes in Georgia. The audience of the evaluation will be USAID/Georgia and, in particular, its Democracy, Governance and Social Development (DGSD) office, as well as the Political/Economic Sections of the US Mission in Georgia, and key stakeholders such as the Central Election Commission (CEC) and CEC's Electoral Systems Development, Reform and Training Center, Parliament of Georgia, State Audit Office of Georgia (SAOG), National Agency for Public Registry (NAPR), Local Government (LG), political parties, other donors working in this area, and interested civil society organizations (CSOs).

II. SUMMARY INFORMATION

The performance evaluation is a final evaluation of the Strengthening Electoral and Political Processes in Georgia (SEPPs) project implemented through six awards, as described in the table below.

| Activity Name | Implementer | Cooperative Agreement # | TEC | Life of Activity | Active Geographic Regions | Mission DO |
|--|---|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Strengthening Electoral Processes in Georgia | International Foundation for Electoral Systems - IFES | AID-114-LA-14-00003 | \$6,000,000 | 7/25/2014-1/31/2019 | Countrywide | DO 1 - Democratic Checks and Balances and Accountable Governance Enhanced |

| Activity Name | Implementer | Cooperative Agreement # | TEC | Life of Activity | Active Geographic Regions | Mission DO |
|---|--|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Strengthening Political Parties in Georgia | International Republican Institute - IRI | AID-114-LA-14-00006 | \$5,300,000 | 7/31/2014–1/31/2019 | Georgia: A09 | DO 1 - Democratic Checks and Balances and Accountable Governance Enhanced |
| Strengthening Political Processes in Georgia | National Democratic Institute - NDI | AID-114-LA-14-00005 | \$5,300,000 | 8/1/2014-1/31/2019 | Georgia: A09 | DO 1 - Democratic Checks and Balances and Accountable Governance Enhanced |
| Strengthening Political and Electoral Environment for Democracy in Georgia | International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy - ISFED | AID-114-A-16-00002 | \$1,385,030 | 2/11/2016–2/10/2019 | Georgia: A09 | DO 1 - Democratic Checks and Balances and Accountable Governance Enhanced |
| Promoting More Competitive, Fair, and Inclusive Electoral Environment for 2016-2018 Election Cycle in Georgia | Georgian Young Lawyers' Association - GYLA | AID-114-A-16-00003 | \$555,030 | 2/17/2016–2/15/2019 | Georgia: A09 | DO 1 - Democratic Checks and Balances and Accountable Governance Enhanced |
| Monitoring of Political Party Finances and Misuse of Administrative Resource during Electoral Processes | Transparency International Georgia - TI | AID-114-F-16-00001 | \$274,914 | 2/02/2016–2/21/2019 | Georgia: A09 | DO 1 - Democratic Checks and Balances and Accountable Governance Enhanced |

III. BACKGROUND

A. Description of the Problem, Development Hypothesis and Theory of Change

The 2012-2014 national election cycle resulted in changes to Georgia’s political and civic order. The 2012 Parliamentary Elections represented a transition of power from the United National Movement (UNM) to the Georgia Dream (GD) coalition and the 2014 Local Elections extended this transition from national government to local government.

Georgia’s October 2016 Parliamentary and 2017 Local Elections were characterized by an open political environment, a competitive campaign, overall results that were validated by credible observers, and some underlying problems that need concerted attention. Georgians had the freedom to form and join political parties. Parties and candidates gained access to the ballot

without facing unreasonable restrictions or discrimination. They were able to campaign throughout the country, were free to express their messages to the public, and had adequate opportunities to do so, particularly given Georgia's vibrant and pluralistic media environment. Citizens were able to exercise their voting rights freely. These are commendable credentials.

Yet the elections highlighted some problems. The most pressing of these were incidents of violence and intimidation that occurred throughout the process; concerns about the qualifications, neutrality, and competence of some polling station commissioners; and questions about the impartiality and consistency of adjudication measures. In addition, the elections underscored shortcomings related to the legal framework, parties' campaign strategies, election observation, campaign financing and the misuse of administrative resources, and the underrepresentation of women and minority groups. Therefore, concerted efforts to address these issues now would help to ensure that Georgians have full confidence in future elections. Building trust in electoral integrity on all sides should be a priority for the new parliament and government, as well as all parties and civil society.

As in the wake of any democratic election, it now becomes important for the parliament and new government to strive to represent all citizens, including those who did not vote for the majority party, and to seek to include a wide range of views in its decision making. The voices of opposition parties, both within and outside the parliament, independent media, and civil society groups should be respected and their rights should be defended¹.

As a result of 2016 parliamentary elections, Georgia's ruling political party DG has secured a constitutional majority. Given GD was polling at about 15% in June 2016, the scale of the victory caught Georgia watchers by surprise and has completely altered the political landscape. With the constitutional majority enjoyed by GD and the unexpected split of the UNM opposition party, accompanied with deserting of many parties by their leaders, preserving political pluralism becomes critically important for strengthening democratic processes in Georgia. In 2017 municipal elections, Georgian Dream (GD) won 1,592 out of 2,058 local council seats (77.36 percent), with only three other parties passing the 4 percent threshold. The United National Movement (UNM) received 17.1 percent, European Georgia (EG) secured 10.4 percent, and Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (APG) won 6.6 percent of the votes. Out of 58 mayoral positions, GD got 56.

To meet the challenges of enhancing sustainable political competition at the national and local levels in Georgia, USAID/Georgia has been implementing the Strengthening Electoral and Political Processes (SEPPs) project that has three major objectives:

1. Strengthened political parties at the national and regional levels;
2. Improved government capacity to administer and oversee free and fair electoral processes;
3. Enhanced civic engagement around key electoral and political processes and reforms.

¹ FINAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE ON GEORGIA'S OCTOBER 2016 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, *November 14, 2016*

USAID's SEPPs project is predicated on the development hypothesis that sustainable electoral and political processes can be enhanced at the national and local levels by continuing to build the capacity of institutions and organizations related to elections and political processes and by ensuring broad citizen engagement in those processes.

The project is based on the **theory of change** that if civil society is informed and engaged in civic life and, together with the government, increases its capacity to advance and solidify sustainable practices and inclusive participation in the country's electoral and political processes, then democratic institutional change will be strengthened, and groups across all strata of society will be empowered to assert their voices and rights as citizens in a democratic society. The SEPPs project is based on the **development hypothesis** that sustainable, democratic political competition can be enhanced at the national and local levels by continuing to build the capacity of institutions and organizations related to elections and political processes and by ensuring broad citizen engagement in those processes.

The SEPPs Monitoring and Evaluation Plan can be summarized as follows:

Project purpose is: Georgia's democratic electoral and political processes are deepened and institutionalized.

Sub-Purpose 1 is: Political parties strengthened at the national and regional levels and expected outcomes of this sub-purpose include: 1.1: Improved organizational capacity and intra-party democracy within democratic political parties.; 1.2: Improved capacity and engagement of regional branches of democratic political parties; 1.3: Increased percentage of women MPs of all MPs after 2016 Parliamentary elections; 1.4: Party caucuses in Parliament and local councils more effectively contribute to law-making and oversight of executive policy implementation; 1.5 Parties take on issues of importance to women, young persons and ethnic minorities; 1.6 Parties are systematically promoting regional members and members from disadvantaged groups to leadership positions at the local and national levels; and 1.7 Increased public awareness of key policy issues in beneficiary party platforms

Sub-Purpose 2 is: Government capacity to administer and oversee free and fair electoral processes improved and expected outcomes include: 2.1: Consolidated system of entities responsible for election dispute resolution and safeguarded from political manipulation; 2.2: Legal frameworks and oversight of campaign and party finance improved; 2.3: Improved capacity of the EMB, especially in national minority areas and in the event of structural reforms; 2.4: Strengthened systems for monitoring and resolving the misuse of administrative resources during election campaigning; and 2.5: Improved access of people with disabilities (PWDs) to polling sites

Sub-Purpose 3 states: Civic engagement and national consensus around electoral and political processes enhanced and expected outcomes are: 3.1: Increased citizen engagement in and understanding of key aspects of priority electoral and political reforms; 3.2: Greater participation of marginalized groups (women, ethnic minorities, youth, PWDs) in electoral

processes; 3.3: Independent observer groups mount credible monitoring missions; and 3.4: Target electoral and political reforms consistent with international law and good practices following broad consultation with key stakeholders

Given the political sensitivity of support to elections and political processes, USAID support under Sub-Purposes One and Two, as well as support for international election observation, is being provided through assistance mechanisms under the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) Leader with Associate Award. CEPPS partners NDI, IRI and IFES have strong relationships with Georgian stakeholders and extensive experience working in this political context. Three local organizations are provided with direct awards to support civic engagement, particularly related to domestic election (including Parallel Vote Tabulation PVT) and political process monitoring.

The following documents will be provided to the evaluation team:

1. PAD and all its attachments.
2. M&E plans for each of the six activities.
3. Implementing partners' periodic progress reports.
4. The most recent election-related reports.
5. Other documents as requested by the evaluation team.

B. Summary of Activities to be evaluated

The SEPPs project is being implemented through 'Consortium for Elections & Political Process Strengthening' (CEPPS) III Leader with Associates cooperative agreements with NDI, IRI and IFES and three awards with local organizations, utilizing USAID's Local Solutions Strategy. SEPPs activities can be summarized as follows:

Strengthening Electoral Processes (SEP), implemented by IFES, aims to deepen and institutionalize Georgia's electoral processes by: 1) continuing to build the capacity of institutions and organizations related to electoral processes; and 2) ensuring broad citizen engagement in electoral processes. Some of the major achievements of the activity include:

- Renewed discussions of election law reform with emphasis on international standards and best practices among a diverse range of stakeholders including lawmakers, government, civil society, and political party representatives;
- Increased capacity of the CEC as evidenced by adoption of first ever strategic plan, Elections Integrity Management Plan and gender mainstreaming plan;
- Increased demand for and continued expansion of IFES' university-level civic education course, now offered at 27 universities, academies, and professional training institutions throughout Georgia;
- Signing of first ever Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CEC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs that created a common framework under which both institutions could work to ensure electoral safety and security.

Strengthening Political Parties in Georgia (SPP), implemented by IRI, aims to deepen and institutionalize Georgia's political processes by 1) continuing to build the capacity of political parties at the national and local levels; and 2) enhancing independent oversight of elections.

Some of the major achievements of the activity include:

- As a result of trainings of Political Parties (9) aiming to increase their organizational capacity and intra-party democracy and ideology, the parties changed intra-party structure, and started working on party strategy and ideology;
- Due to trainings for women politicians and youth branches on political debates, outreach, leadership, party regional activities etc., parties became more focused on developing young leaders;
- As a result of various trainings and conferences that IRI has organized, participating parties state that their intra-party democracy is improving by working with their youth, women and regional organizations.

Strengthening Political Processes in Georgia (SPP), implemented by NDI, aims at assisting political party caucuses at the national and local levels to better organize themselves in order to more effectively represent the interests of citizens, as well as conduct international elections observation. Some of the major achievements of the activity include:

- The Parliament drafted and adopted Open Parliament Partnership (OPP) Action Plan with NDI's assistance. This initiative will increase transparency and accountability of the legislator.
- As a result of OPP, draft Code of Ethics has been drafted and initiated in the Parliament
- For the first time, 6 targeted Sakrebulo (city councils) presented report on their activities and future plans to wide public

Strengthening Political and Electoral Environment for Democracy in Georgia (SPEED), implemented by Georgian NGO ISFED, aims to mount credible electoral and political process monitoring activities for the election cycle in Georgia, which includes 2016 Parliamentary, 2017 local, and 2018 Presidential elections and to inform the public of their recommendations in order to help engage citizens in electoral and political processes in Georgia. Major achievement of the activity after one year of implementation is:

- Reliable and comprehensive election monitoring of 2016 parliamentary elections conducted, including Parallel Vote tabulation (PVT) that provided ground for validating official results and convincing radical opposition parties in acknowledging election results

Promoting More Competitive, Fair, and Inclusive Electoral Environment for 2016-2018 Election Cycle in Georgia, implemented by Georgian NGO GYLA, aims to promote establishing the equally accessible, competitive and transparent electoral processes in Georgia for all. The project promotes independent investigations of criminal charges against political activists; monitors and evaluates law enforcement actions against electoral candidates; and provides legal support to approximately 10 independent municipal election candidates for politically motivated criminal and administrative cases. Major achievement of the activity after one year of implementation is:

- Measures taken to prevent deterioration of the electoral environment and incitement of physical confrontation, despite highly polarized electoral environment through targeted legal intervention, publicity and advocacy with the key stakeholders that had preventive impact

Monitoring of Political Party Finances and Misuse of Administrative Resources during Electoral Processes, implemented by local NGO TI-Georgia, aims to monitor the transparency of election campaign funding, political finance, and use of administrative resources for electoral purposes. Major achievement of the activity after one year of implementation is:

- Contribution made to raising public awareness on misuse of administrative resources and political party finance issues during electoral processes through respective monitoring reports and creation of new party finance [web-platform](#), that to certain extent, had a preventive impact and despite isolated violent incidents, resulted in competitive and largely calm election campaign

IV. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation must answer the following evaluation questions:

- 1) Did the six SEPPs activities² satisfy the SEPPs project purpose? What interventions³ implemented as part of the six SEPPs activities were *effective* at addressing the SEPPs project purpose or sub-purposes in a sustainable manner? What interventions were *less effective* at addressing the project purpose or sub-purposes?
- 2) What gaps, if any, still remain to achieve the three SEPPs project objectives? What current or proposed activities, or specific interventions, show the most promise in being able to fill these gaps?
- 3) Did SEPPs activity interventions meet their needs and priorities of beneficiaries/stakeholders? Are beneficiaries/stakeholders satisfied with the quality of services (i.e. training, technical assistance, etc.) provided by implementers of the SEPPs project? How committed are beneficiaries/stakeholders to sustain the benefits of the assistance received?
- 4) Were the SEPPs problem and purpose statements developed at a level within USAID's ability to influence? How was project effectiveness and impact measured? If any shortcomings, how might results be better measured in future programming?
- 5) What lessons have been learned from utilizing local partners in implementing the SEPPs project?

² "Activity" refers to the stand-alone direct awards provided by USAID/Georgia to an implementing partner to implement a project (e.g. the Strengthening Electoral Processes activity implemented by IFES).

³ "Intervention" refers to the separate tasks implemented under one of the six SEPPs activities (e.g. training workshop, parallel vote tabulation, providing technical expert, etc.)

V. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team is requested to conduct a final performance evaluation of the SEPPs project. The evaluation team must suggest the use of various data collection and analysis methods, both quantitative and qualitative, including document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, survey instruments, and others. For the survey or mini survey of beneficiaries, the number of respondents and their selection process should be explained and justified. The same is true for key informants as well. Selected respondents must be representative of women, youth and minority groups, where appropriate.

The evaluation team must develop a detailed evaluation design, including data collection plan and data collection tools. This plan must be presented to the Mission during the in-brief in more details and adjusted later based on the Mission’s comments. The evaluation design must include the evaluation matrix (an illustrative evaluation matrix for this study is given below to be revised by the evaluation team). The team must also explain, in detail, the limitations and weaknesses of the methodology.

The evaluation team must also describe a data analysis plan that details the analysis of information collected; what procedures will be used to analyze qualitative data collected through key informant and other stakeholder interviews; and how the evaluation will analyze and use quantitative data.

| Questions | Suggested Data Sources (*) | Suggested Data Collection Methods | Data Analysis Methods |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1. Did the six SEPPs activities satisfy the SEPPs project purpose? What interventions implemented as part of the six SEPPs activities were <i>effective</i> at addressing the SEPPs project purpose or sub-purposes in a sustainable manner? What interventions were <i>less effective</i> at addressing the project purpose or sub-purposes?</p> | <p>USAID partner organizations working on SEPPs; Central Election Commission (CEC); Electoral Systems Development, Reform and Training Center; Parliament Members (MPs); Staff of the Parliament; State Audit Office of Georgia (SAOG); National Agency for Public Registry (NAPR); Local Government (LG) representatives (mainly partner Tbilisi city council members); Political Parties (both parliamentary and non-parliamentary, their youth and women’s</p> | <p>Key informant interviews with USAID partners, key government stakeholders. MPs and members of TWG on elections; Focus group discussions with CSOs, political parties; Desk review of project documentation; Review of CEC and parliament documents and websites, etc..</p> | <p>To be determined by evaluation team</p> |

| Questions | Suggested Data Sources (*) | Suggested Data Collection Methods | Data Analysis Methods |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| | wings); Members of Technical Working Group (TWG) on Elections (includes donors as well); Civil society organizations (CSOs); Project documentation; Websites of CEC and Parliament of Georgia | | |
| 2. What gaps, if any, still remain to achieve the three SEPPs project objectives? What current or proposed activities, or specific interventions, show the most promise in being able to fill these gaps? | USAID partner organizations working on SEPPs; CEC and Electoral Systems Development, Reform and Training Center; MPs and Staff of the Parliament; SAOG; NAPR; Political Parties; CSOs; Project documentation | Key informant interviews with key government stakeholders and MPs; Focus group discussions with CSOs, political parties; Desk review of project documentation. | To be determined by evaluation team |
| 3. Did SEPPs activity interventions meet their needs and priorities of beneficiaries/stakeholders? Are beneficiaries/stakeholders satisfied with the quality of services (i.e. training, technical assistance, etc.) provided by implementers of the SEPPs project? How committed are beneficiaries/stakeholders to sustain the benefits of the assistance received? | Central Election Commission (CEC); Electoral Systems Development, Reform and Training Center; Parliament Members (MPs); Staff of the Parliament; State Audit Office of Georgia (SAOG); National Agency for Public Registry (NAPR); Local Government (LG) representatives (mainly partner Tbilisi city council members); Political Parties | Key informant interviews with key government stakeholders and SEPPs beneficiaries, including focus group discussions; Desk review of project documentation. | To be determined by evaluation team |
| 4. Were the SEPPs problem and purpose statements developed at a level within USAID's ability to influence? How was project effectiveness and impact measured? If any shortcomings, how | USAID partner organizations working on SEPPs Project documentation | Key informant interviews with USAID partners working on SEPPs. | To be determined by evaluation team |

| Questions | Suggested Data Sources (*) | Suggested Data Collection Methods | Data Analysis Methods |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| might results be better measured in future programming? | | | |
| 5. What lessons have been learned from utilizing local partners in implementing the SEPPs project? | USAID local partner organizations; CEC and Electoral Systems Development, Reform and Training Center; CSOs; Donors working on Electoral reforms (members of TWG) Project documentation | Key informant interviews with USAID partners, key government stakeholders; Focus group discussions with CSOs, political parties. | To be determined by evaluation team |

VI. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation must be conducted by a team composed by international and local experts:

1.) Elections and Political Processes Expert (International):

Required qualifications:

- Extensive, demonstrated experience in conducting quantitative and qualitative analysis of electoral and political systems.
- Experience of serving as Election and Political Processes technical expert on evaluation teams, including internationally.
- Master's degree in the field of political science or other relevant fields.
- Fluency in English language
- Excellent writing skills and demonstrated ability to produce well written and sound evaluation deliverables.

Desired but not necessary:

- Experience in Georgia and/or in the Europe and Eurasia region.
- Experience designing election and political processes development programming.
- Experience conducting performance evaluations of development programming.

2.) Evaluation Expert (International):

Required qualifications:

- Extensive, demonstrated experience in planning and conducting performance evaluations using various data collection and analysis methodologies.
- Fluency in English.
- Excellent writing skills and the demonstrated ability to produce well written and sound evaluation deliverables.

- Master's level education in the field of statistics, qualitative and quantitative research methods, or other relevant fields.

Desired but not necessary:

- Experience in Georgia and/or in the Europe and Eurasia region.
- Experience evaluating election and political processes development programming.

3.) Georgian Elections and Political Processes Expert (National):

Required qualifications:

- Extensive experience working with or analyzing political and electoral processes in Georgia, including civic engagement in these processes, with particular focus on inclusion of youth, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and/or women.
- English language proficiency including professional-level English writing skills.
- Fluency in Georgian language, both speaking and reading.
- Master's level education in the field of political science, social science or other relevant fields.
- Ability to provide logistical support to the team (setting up meetings and assisting with arranging local transportation and interpretation, if needed).

Desired but not necessary:

- Experience of participating as a team member in conducting a USAID or other donor-funded project assessments/evaluations.

The evaluation team must provide their CVs and explain how they meet the requirements set forth in the evaluation SOW. International experts will need to submit a sample report written by him/her. USAID may request phone interviews with the team. All team members will be required to provide a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest or describing any existing conflict of interest.

USAID/Caucuses may delegate one or more staff members (or involve staff of other USAID missions) to work full-time with the Evaluation Team or to participate in the field data collection activities in-country. The Evaluation COR will inform the evaluation team about any full-time/part-time USAID delegates no later than three working days after the submission of a draft/updated Evaluation Work Plan. All costs associated with the participation of full-time/part-time USAID delegates in the evaluation will be covered by USAID/ Caucasus.

VII. DESCRIPTION OF WORK AND EVALUATION SCHEDULE

The deliverables associated with this contract must be completed and accepted by USAID/Caucasus by mid-August, 2018. The team must provide both an in-brief upon arrival and an out brief prior to departure. The evaluation should take place in.

Estimated Start Date: on or about May 29, 2018
 Estimated End Date: on or about August 15, 2018

Illustrative Schedule of Evaluation

| Timing (Anticipated Months or Duration) | Proposed Activities |
|---|--|
| May 29-June 1, 2018 | Preparation work and finalization of the evaluation design |
| June 4-6, 2018 | USAID review of the work plan and final evaluation design |
| June 4-8, 2018 | Travel and preparations for data collection |
| June 11-June 13, 2018 | In-Briefing |
| June 11-July 6, 2018 | Data Collection (in Georgia) |
| July 6, 2018 | Out-briefing |
| July 9-16, 2018 | Data Analysis and report writing/submission |
| July 16-July 23, 2018 | USAID review of Draft Report |
| July 23-27, 2018 | Incorporate USAID comments and prepare Final Report/submit |
| July 31 | Deadline for the final report. |

Estimated LOE in days by position for a team of four

| Position | Preparation | Travel to/from Country | In-Country Data Collection | Report writing/finalization | Total LOE in days |
|--|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>International expert</i> | 6 | 4 | 24 | 16 | 50 |
| <i>International Evaluation Expert</i> | 6 | 4 | 24 | 16 | 50 |
| <i>Local expert</i> | 6 | 0 | 24 | 16 | 46 |
| Totals | 18 | 8 | 60 | 48 | 146 |

VIII. LIST OF ANNEXES

USAID/Georgia will provide the Evaluation Team with the following documents:

- USAID/Georgia CDCS
- SEPPs PAD;
- Activity descriptions of each award under SEPPs PAD;
- Implementing Partners’ Quarterly/Annual Reports;
- Initial list of in-country contacts;
- Project results framework;
- PMP indicator tables;
- M&E plans for each sub-award submitted and approved by USAID;
- Other deliverables (expert reports, publications) produced by partners;
- Other documents as needed.

IX. LIST OF DELIVERABLES:

1. Detailed research (evaluation and/or assessment) design and work plan: The research design must be an integral part of each proposal and must explain, in detail, the methodologies that will be used to collect required information. The design must outline, in detail, what methods the team will use to get answers for each evaluation question. *The evaluation team should also comment on questions provided in the SOW and suggest modifications, if any.* The

evaluation design must include a detailed evaluation matrix (including the key questions, methods and data sources used to address each question and the data analysis plan for each question), draft questionnaires and other data collection instruments or their main features, known limitations to the evaluation design, a work plan, and a dissemination plan. The methodology section should address strengths and weakness of the proposed methodology, and how the latter will be mitigated. The refined design must be sent to the contract COR three days prior to the team's arrival in-country. This information together with the Mission's comments will be discussed in detail during the in-brief meeting with USAID.

The Work Plan must include the anticipated schedule and logistical arrangements and delineate the roles and responsibilities of members of the evaluation team.

The Dissemination of Results Plan must include the ways to reach the stakeholders with the evaluation results. These may be teleconferences, workshop, and briefings. Summary of charts, tables, and findings should be created to facilitate the design of future political process support projects.

2. In-brief with the mission: Within three (3) days of arrival in country, the evaluation team must present a design plan and a work plan. This will be a 15 minute presentation on how the questions asked in the SOW will be answered. Prior to the in-brief, the research team may have working meeting(s) with the contract COR to agree on all the details of the design.

3. Out-brief with the mission: Prior to departure, the evaluation team must present an outline (in bullets, possibly in power point or as a handout) of the evaluation report with general findings, conclusions, and anticipated recommendations. This will be a 15 minute presentation. Prior to out-brief the team may have working meeting(s) with the contract COR to agree all the details of presentation.

4. Outline of the report to present at out-brief (in bullets, possibly in power point or as a handout to be presented at the out brief) including findings, conclusions and recommendations.

5. Draft Report: The evaluation final report should adhere to the [USAID Evaluation Report Requirements](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/201mah.pdf)⁴. The report will be peer reviewed utilizing the agencies [Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/201maa.pdf).⁵

The evaluation team must submit a draft report within seven (7) working days of completing the out brief with USAID. This document should explicitly respond to the requirements of the SOW, should answer the evaluation questions, be logically structured, and adhere to the standards of the USAID Evaluation Policy of January 2011 and the criteria to ensure the quality of the evaluation report.

The evaluation report should include an abstract; executive summary; background of the local context and the strategies/projects/activities being evaluated; the evaluation purpose and main evaluation questions; the methodology or methodologies; the limitations to the evaluation;

⁴ <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/201mah.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/201maa.pdf>

findings, conclusions, and recommendations. For more detail, see “How-To Note: Preparing Evaluation Reports” and **ADS 201mah, USAID Evaluation Report Requirements**. An optional evaluation report [template is available in the Evaluation Toolkit](#).

The executive summary should be 2–5 pages in length and summarize the purpose, background of the project being evaluated, main evaluation questions, methods, findings, conclusions, and recommendations and lessons learned (if applicable).

The evaluation methodology shall be explained in the report in detail. Limitations to the evaluation shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (e.g., selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.)

The annexes to the report shall include:

- The Evaluation SOW;
- Any statements of difference regarding significant unresolved differences of opinion by funders, implementers, and/or members of the evaluation team;
- All data collection and analysis tools used in conducting the evaluation, such as questionnaires, checklists, and discussion guides;
- All sources of information, properly identified and listed; and
- Signed disclosure of conflict of interest forms for all evaluation team members, either attesting to a lack of conflicts of interest or describing existing conflicts of.
- Any “statements of difference” regarding significant unresolved differences of opinion by funders, implementers, and/or members of the evaluation team.

Summary information about evaluation team members, including qualifications, experience, and role on the team.

6. Final Report: The evaluation team must incorporate USAID’s comments and submit the final report to USAID/Georgia within five (5) working days following receipt of comments on the draft report. Final evaluation report should follow USAID’s template, and should not exceed 35 pages, excluding executive summary and annexes. The contractor will make the final evaluation reports publicly available through the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at <http://dec.usaid.gov> within 30 calendar days of final approval of the formatted report with USAID consent. In case it is determined that the full report includes sensitive information, sanitized version will be produced and submitted to DEC.

Per ADS 201maa, Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report, draft and final evaluation reports will be evaluated against the following criteria to ensure the quality of the evaluation report.

- Evaluation reports should represent a thoughtful, well-researched, and well-organized effort to objectively evaluate the strategy, project, or activity.
- Evaluation reports should be readily understood and should identify key points clearly, distinctly, and succinctly.
- The Executive Summary of an evaluation report should present a concise and accurate statement of the most critical elements of the report.

- Evaluation reports should adequately address all evaluation questions included in the SOW, or the evaluation questions subsequently revised and documented in consultation and agreement with USAID.
- Evaluation methodology should be explained in detail and sources of information properly identified.
- Limitations to the evaluation should be adequately disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.).
- Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay, or simply the compilation of people’s opinions.
- Findings and conclusions should be specific, concise, and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.
- If evaluation findings assess person-level outcomes or impact, they should also be separately assessed for both males and females.
- If recommendations are included, they should be supported by a specific set of findings and should be action-oriented, practical, and specific.

7. All records from the evaluation (e.g. interview transcripts and summaries, focus group transcripts, code books, databases, etc.) must be provided to the evaluation COR as requested. All quantitative data (datasets and supporting documentation such as code books, data dictionaries, scope, and methodology used to collect and analyze the data) collected by the evaluation team must be provided in machine-readable, non-proprietary formats as required by USAID’s Open Data policy (see ADS 579) and submitted to the USAID Development Data Library. The data should be organized and fully documented for use by those not fully familiar with the project or the evaluation. USAID will retain ownership of the survey and all datasets developed.

X. PAYMENT METHODS

USAID will provide payment in two tranches. The first payment equal to 25% of the level of effort will be transferred at the moment once the detailed research design and work plan is approved by the COR. The second payment equal to 75% of the level of effort will be transferred at the moment the final report is approved by the COR.

Payment for all services will be in US dollars within the first 21 calendar days of the approved deliverables. Local consultants should take in consideration all related taxes as USAID doesn’t retain or report individual taxes. Taxes are the full responsibility of the employee/contractor.

Appendix #2: Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements from Evaluation Team

Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluations

Instructions:

Evaluations of USAID projects will be undertaken so that they are not subject to the perception or reality of biased measurement or reporting due to conflict of interest.¹ For external evaluations, all evaluation team members will provide a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest or describing an existing conflict of interest relative to the project being evaluated.²

Evaluators of USAID projects have a responsibility to maintain independence so that opinions, conclusions, judgments, and recommendations will be impartial and will be viewed as impartial by knowledgeable third parties. Evaluators and evaluation team members are to disclose all relevant facts regarding real or potential conflicts of interest that could lead reasonable third parties with knowledge of the relevant facts and circumstances to conclude that the evaluator or evaluation team member is not able to maintain independence and, thus, is not capable of exercising objective and impartial judgment on all issues associated with conducting and reporting the work. Operating Unit leadership, in close consultation with the Contracting Officer, will determine whether the real or potential conflict of interest is one that should disqualify an individual from the evaluation team or require recusal by that individual from evaluating certain aspects of the project(s)

Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

1. Immediate family or close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant/material though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant/material though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.


¹ USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 8); USAID Contract Information Bulletin 99-17; and Federal Acquisition Regulations Part 9.5, Organizational Conflicts of Interest, and Subpart 3.10, Contractor Code of Business Ethics and Conduct.

² USAID Evaluation Policy (p. 11)

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

| | |
|---|--|
| Name | Sean R. Roberts |
| Title | Director, International Development Studies |
| Organization | The George Washington University |
| Evaluation Position? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member |
| Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract, cooperative agreement, grant, etc., if applicable)</i> | 72011418P00026 |
| USAID Project(s) Evaluated <i>(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i> | Political Process projects in Georgia (SEPPS Program) |
| I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> <i>2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.</i> <i>3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.</i> <i>4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> <i>5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> <i>6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.</i> | |

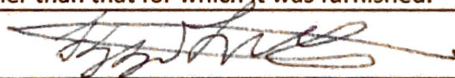
I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Signature |  |
| Date | June 7, 2018 |

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

| | |
|--|--|
| Name | Bakur Kvashilava |
| Title | Dean |
| Organization | Georgian Institute of Public Affairs |
| Evaluation Position? | <input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member |
| Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument) | 720114118P00027 |
| USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable) | |
| I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. | |

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Signature |  |
| Date | June 5, 2018 |

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

| | |
|---|---|
| Name | KHATUNA IOSELIANI |
| Title | MANAGER |
| Organization | OPEN SOCIETY GEORGIA FOUNDATION |
| Evaluation Position? | <input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member |
| Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract, cooperative agreement, grant, etc., if applicable)</i> | |
| USAID Project(s) Evaluated <i>(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i> | |
| I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> <i>2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.</i> <i>3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.</i> <i>4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> <i>5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> <i>6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.</i> | |

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change.

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Signature | K. Ioseliani |
| Date | June 5, 2018 |

Appendix #3 – List of Interviewees

| | Name of interviewees | Organization |
|----|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | David Aprasidze | EU civil society support in region |
| 2 | Guguli Maghradze | GD |
| 3 | Nika Samkharadze | Parliament |
| 4 | Ann Tsurtsumia-Zurabishvili | Parliament |
| 5 | Kornely Kakachia | Georgian Institute of Politics |
| 6 | Aleko Elisashvili | |
| 7 | Giorgi Sordia | Ceter for ethnicities and multiculturality |
| 8 | Irakli Chikhradze | |
| 9 | Tamar Kekenadze | Free Democrats |
| 10 | David Usupashvili | Development Movement |
| 11 | Keti Mukhiguli | GIPA |
| 12 | Shalva Natelashvili | Labor Party |
| 13 | Tamar Chugoshvili | GD |
| 14 | Nikoloz Lataria | Municipality Kutaisi |
| 15 | Avtandil Osepashvili | DEC |
| 16 | David Gogisvanidze | EU Georgia |
| 17 | Giorgi Chigvaria | Mayor |
| 18 | Giorgi Kirtadze | UNM |
| 19 | Aslan Chanidze | Independent Journalist House |
| 20 | David Tordia | |
| 21 | Tamila Dolidze | Tv Ajara |
| 22 | Mikheil Kumsishvili | Labor Party |
| 23 | Levan Samadashvili | GGI |
| 24 | Giorgi Imedashvili | UNM |
| 25 | Zaza Bibilashvili | UNM |
| 26 | Tamar Zhvania | CEC |
| 27 | Nana Zaalishvili | CEC |
| 28 | Zurab Aznaurashvili | SAD |
| 29 | Levan Khabeishvili | UNM |
| 30 | Vakhtang Shakarishvili | GD |
| 31 | Khatuna Gogorishvili | EU Georgia |
| 32 | Salome Verulashvili | |
| 33 | Tina Bokuchava | UNM |
| 34 | Tamar Taliashvili | GD |
| 35 | Salome Mukhuradze | EECMD |
| 36 | Kate Khutsishvili | EU |
| 37 | Archil Pashelashvili | Council of Europe |
| 38 | Eka Chitanava | TDI |
| 39 | Nodar Tangiashvili | EWMI ACCESS |

Appendix #3 – List of Interviewees

| | | |
|----|---------------------|--|
| 40 | Tamar Pataraiia | Civil Council |
| 41 | Ramaz Aptsiauri | UNAG |
| 42 | Saba Buadze | IDFI |
| 43 | Giorgi Gogvadze | GCSD |
| 44 | Nino Gogoladze | OSCE/HCNM |
| 45 | Gigi Bregadze | UNDP |
| 46 | Natia Samsonishvili | Monitoring and Evaluation Officer NDI |
| 47 | Keti Chaduneli | Assistant Program Officer (NDI) |
| 48 | David Ghongadze | Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (IFES) |
| 49 | Irakli Mezurshvili | Georgian Dream MP |

Appendix #4: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Questionnaire # _____

Name _____ M/F Organization _____ National/Regional

Stakeholder Type:

Political Party /Election Official/Civil Society/Media/Government/Expert/Other

Location: Tbilisi/Kutaesi/Batumi/Other

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Do you think Georgia's democratic process has become more sustainable since 2014? (i.e. Do you think it is more or less prone to reversing to authoritarianism?)
A) Much more sustainable now; B) Somewhat more sustainable now; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less sustainable now; E) Much less sustainable now F) No opinion
Explain:
2. Do you feel that the present political parties in Georgia offer a broader diversity of choice for voters than in 2014, including for women, youth, and ethnic minorities?
A) Much broader; B) Somewhat broader; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less broad; E) Much less broad F) No opinion
Explain:
3. Do you trust elections more or less than you did in 2014?
A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less
F) No opinion
Why?
4. Do you think civil society in Georgia is more or less of a factor in ensuring free, fair, and well-informed elections than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less F) No opinion
Why?
5. What are the most pressing issues facing the consolidation of democracy in Georgia?
Explain:

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT

1. Are the major political parties in Georgia run more or less democratically than in 2014? (i.e. do they have democratic mechanisms to involve members in choosing candidates, influencing policy, etc.?) A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

2. Do the major political parties in Georgia engage and empower their regional branches more than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

3. Do major political parties in Georgia coordinate their votes and oversight efforts in parliament and local councils more than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

4. Do major political parties in Georgia target women, youth and ethnic minorities more now than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

5. Do you think the general public is more aware of the platforms of political parties than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY

ELECTIONS

1. Are election disputes more immune of political pressure than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

2. Is there more legal scrutiny and oversight of campaign financing than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

3. Do you think that the election management bodies are more effective in ensuring free and fair elections than in 2014, particularly in ethnic minority areas? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

4. Do you think that the Georgian electoral system is more effective at preventing the misuse of administrative resources in elections? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY

1. Are citizens more knowledgeable about the electoral system and/or more willing to hold government accountable for elections than in 2014?; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

2. Are women, youth, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities more active in elections than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

3. Is the work of independent election monitoring groups viewed as more credible and authoritative now than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

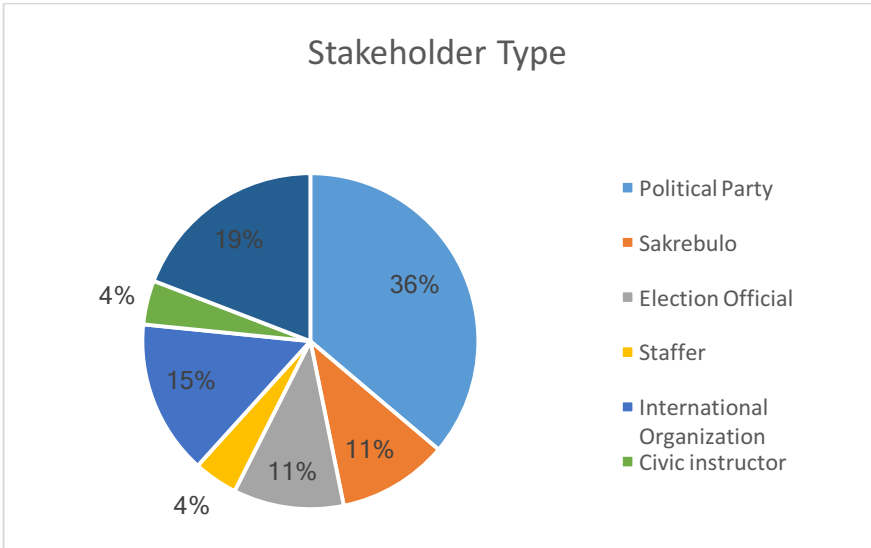
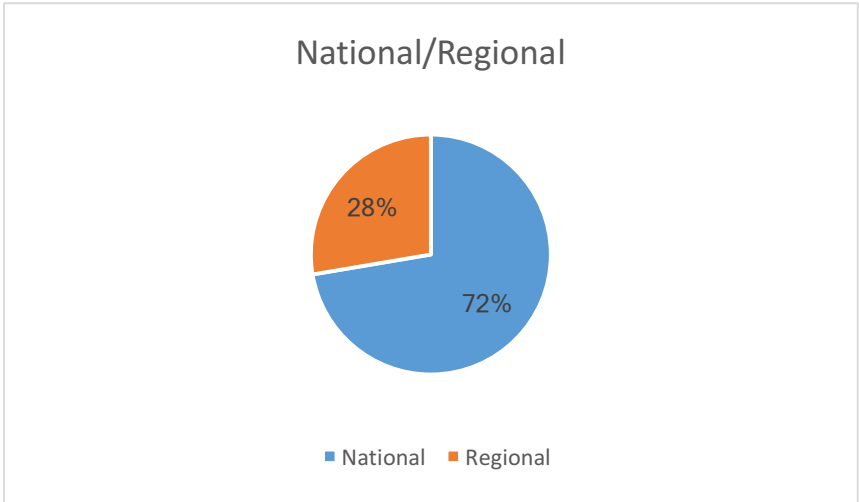
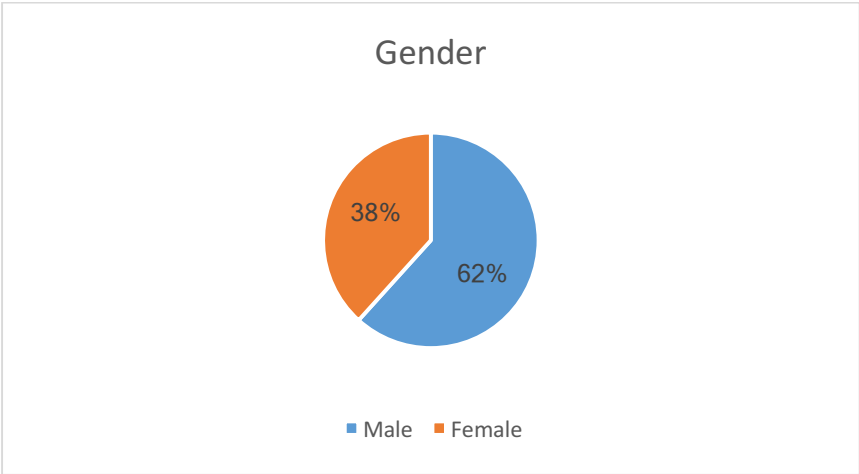
4. Are civil society groups more influential in formulating political and electoral reforms than in 2014? A) Much more; B) Somewhat more; C) The Same; D) Somewhat less; E) Much less; F) No opinion

Explain:

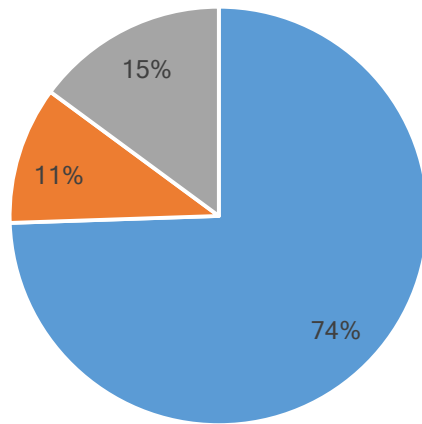
ADDITIONAL NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APPENDIX #5: DATA FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Demographics:

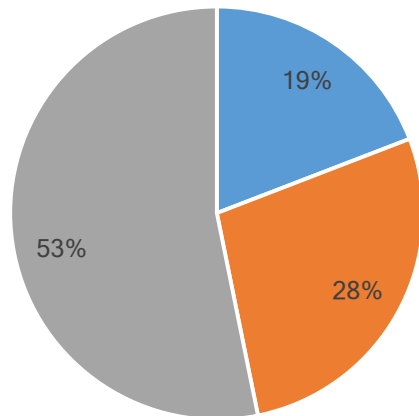


Elected Official



■ No ■ Yes - Parliament ■ Yes - Sakrebulo

Political Belonging

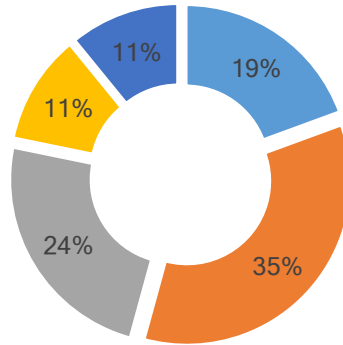


■ Ruling Party ■ Opposition ■ Non-Partisan

| Organization | # |
|---|---|
| CEC | 2 |
| Center for Ethnicities and Multiculturality | 1 |
| Civil Council | 1 |
| Council of Europe | 1 |
| DEC | 2 |
| Development Movement | 1 |
| EECMD | 1 |
| EU | 1 |
| EU Civil Society Support in Region | 1 |
| EU Georgia | 2 |
| EWMI ACCESS | 1 |
| Free Democrats | 1 |
| GCSD | 1 |
| GD | 7 |
| Georgian Institute of Politics | 1 |
| GGI | 1 |
| GIPA | 1 |
| IDFI | 1 |
| Independent Journalist House | 1 |
| Independent Politician | 1 |
| Labor Party | 2 |
| Mayor | 1 |
| Municipality Kutaisi | 1 |
| OSCE/HCNM | 1 |
| Parliament | 2 |
| Patriot Alliance | 1 |
| SAD | 1 |
| TDI | 1 |
| TV Ajara | 1 |
| UNAG | 1 |
| UNDP | 1 |
| UNM | 5 |

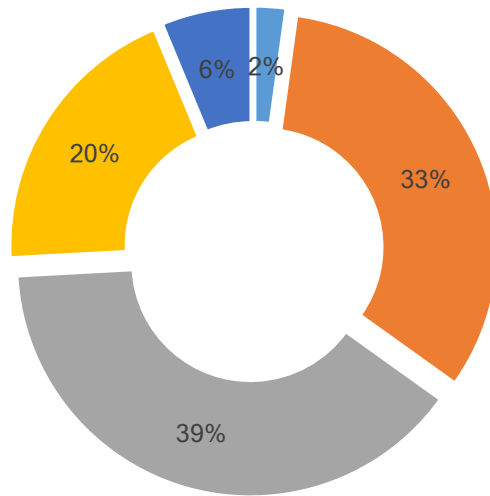
Questions:

Q.1 Do you think Georgia's democratic process has become more sustainable since 2014? (i.e. Do you think it is more or less prone to reversing to authoritarianism?)



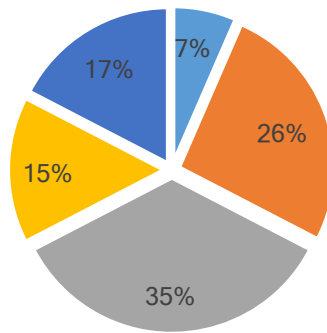
■ Much more ■ Somewhat more ■ The same ■ Somewhat less ■ Much less ■ No opinion

Q.2 Do you feel that the present political parties in Georgia offer a broader diversity of choice for voters than in 2014?



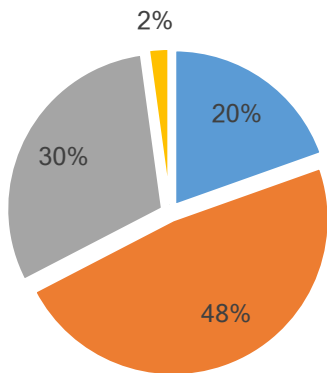
■ Much more
■ Somewhat more
■ The same
■ Somewhat less
■ Much less
■ No opinion

Q.3 Do you trust elections more or less than you did in 2014?



■ Much more ■ Somewhat more ■ The same ■ Somewhat less ■ Much less ■ No opinion

Q4. Do you think civil society in Georgia is more or less of a factor in ensuring free, fair, and well-informed elections than in 2014?

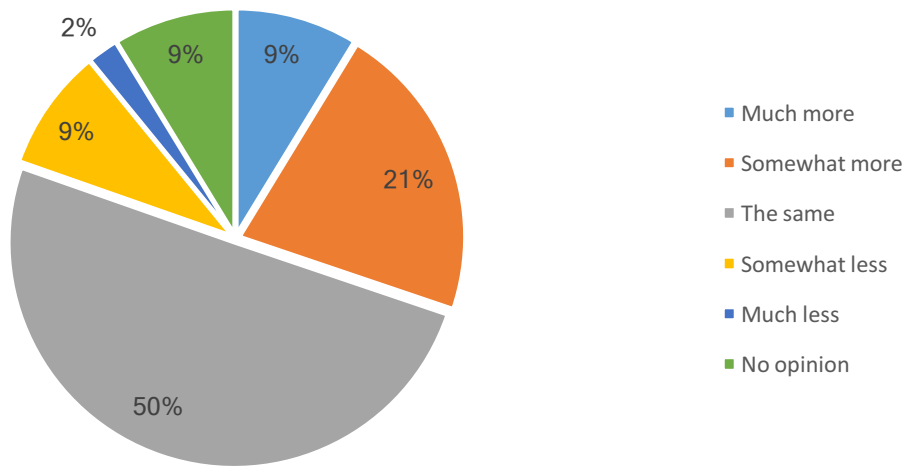


■ Much more ■ Somewhat more ■ The same ■ Somewhat less ■ Much less ■ No opinion

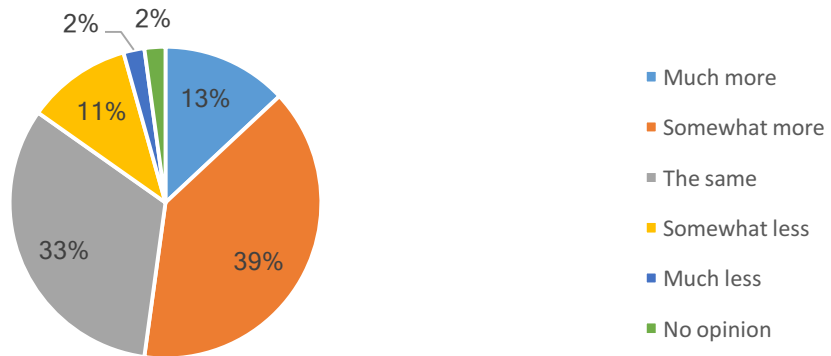
Q.6 Are the major political parties in Georgia run more or less democratically than in 2014? (i.e. do they have democratic mechanisms to involve members in choosing candidates, influencing policy, etc.?)



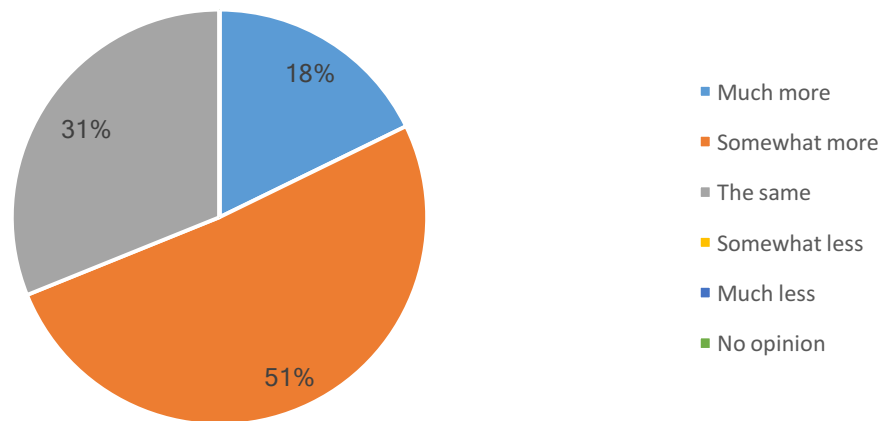
Q7. Do the major political parties in Georgia engage and empower their regional branches more than in 2014?



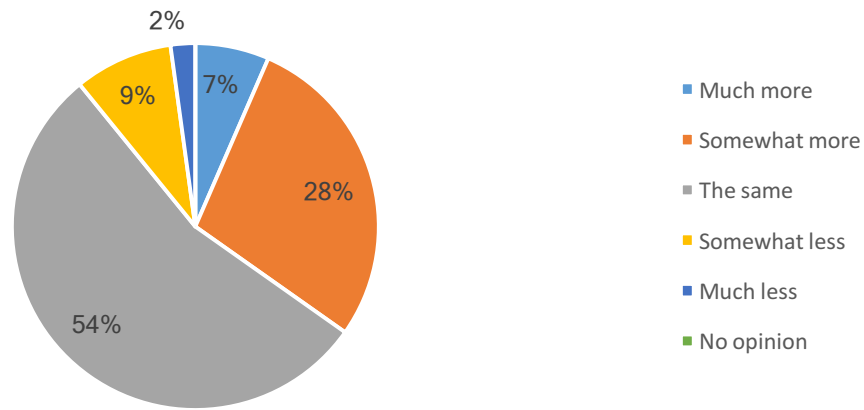
Q.8 Do major political parties in Georgia effectively use caucuses, committees, and councils in parliament and local councils to promote issues and conduct oversight more than in 2014?



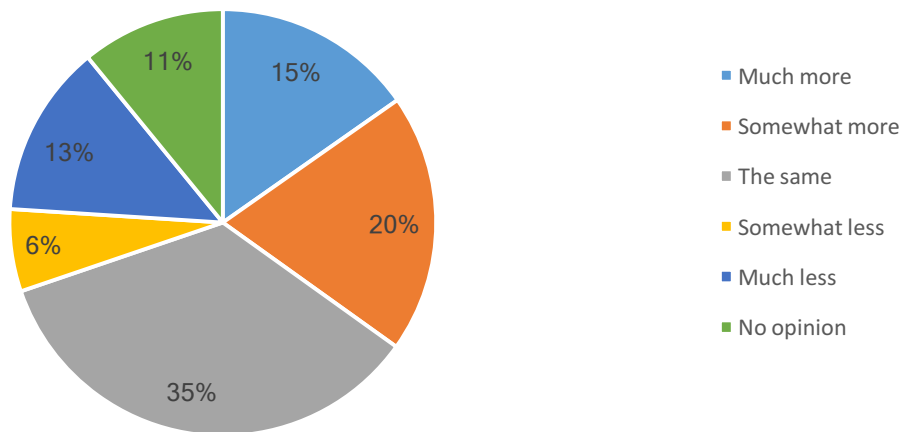
Q.9 Do major political parties in Georgia target women, youth and ethnic minorities more now than in 2014?



Q.10 Do you think the general public is more aware of the platforms of political parties than in 2014?



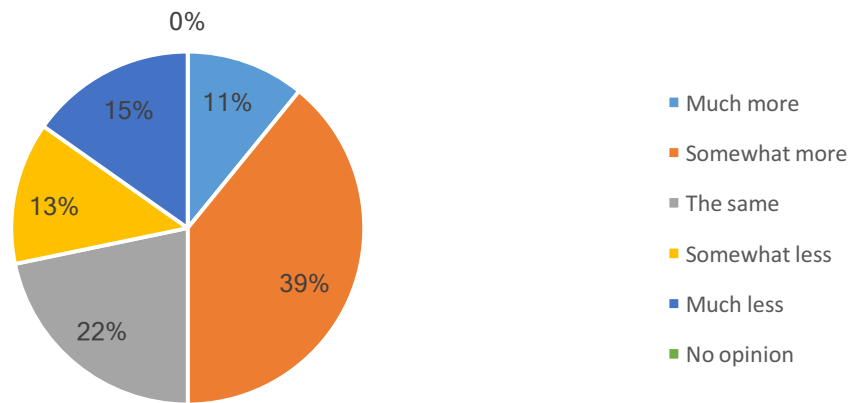
Q.11 Are election disputes more immune of political pressure than in 2014?



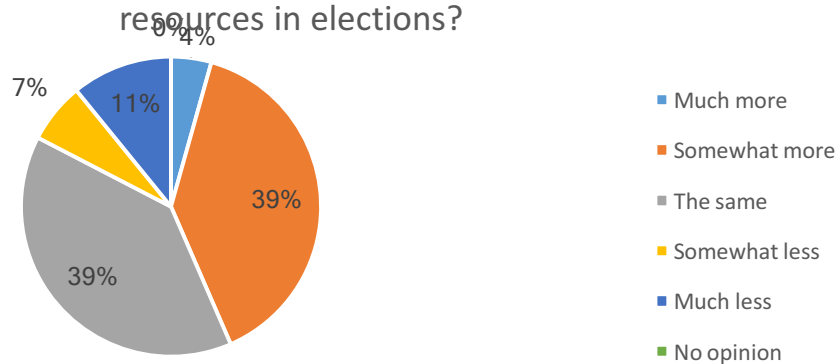
Q.12 Is there more legal scrutiny and oversight of campaign financing than in 2014?



Q. 13 Do you think that the election management bodies are more effective in ensuring free and fair elections than in 2014?



Q.14 Do you think that the Georgian electoral system is more effective at preventing the misuse of administrative resources in elections?



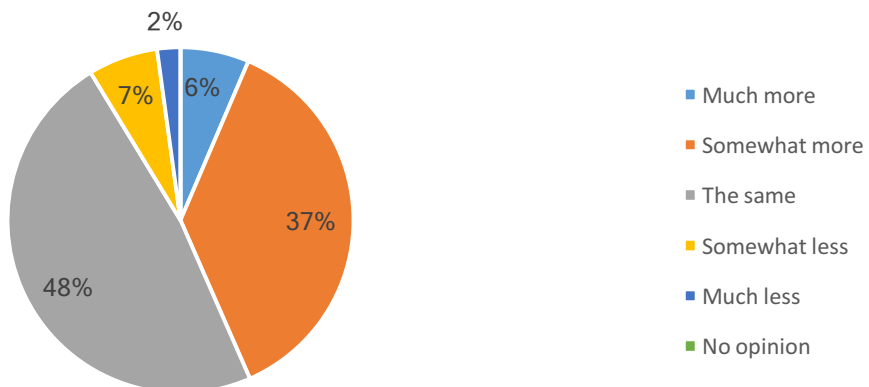
Q.15 Are citizen more knowledgeable about the electoral system and/or more willing to hold government accountable for elections than in 2014?



Q.16 Are women, youth, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities more active in elections than in 2014?



Q.17 Is the work of local independent election monitoring groups viewed as more credible and authoritative now than in 2014?



Q.18 Are civil society groups more influential in political and electoral reforms than in 2014?



APPENDIX 6: Internet Poll with Trainees of NDI, IRI, and IFES

Demographics:

Type of organizations: A) Political Party; B) NGO; C) Election Commission; D) Government; E) Other _____

(optional) Name of Organization _____

Gender: A) Male; B) Female; C) Other

Age: A) Under 30; B) 30-50; C) Over 50

Training:

Organizations from which you have received training (choose all that apply):

A) NDI; B) IRI; C) IFES

Subject(s) of Training: - _____

Location(s) of Training _____

How would you evaluate the knowledge level of the trainer(s)?

A) Very Knowledgeable; B) Somewhat Knowledgeable; C) Not Very Knowledgeable; D) Not at all Knowledgeable

COMMENTS:

How would you evaluate the relevance of the training to your work?

A) Very relevant; B) Somewhat relevant; C) Not Very relevant; D) Not at all relevant

COMMENTS:

Have you used anything in particular from the training(s) to improve your work? YES/NO

If Yes, please tell us the particular skills or tactics you have used from the training(s):

How would you evaluate the training(s) overall?

A) Excellent; B) Very Good; C) Good; D) Not very good; E) Poor

COMMENTS

How influential do you think are NDI, IRI, and IFES on the political development in Georgia

A) Very influential; B) Somewhat influential; C) Not Very influential; D) Not at all influential

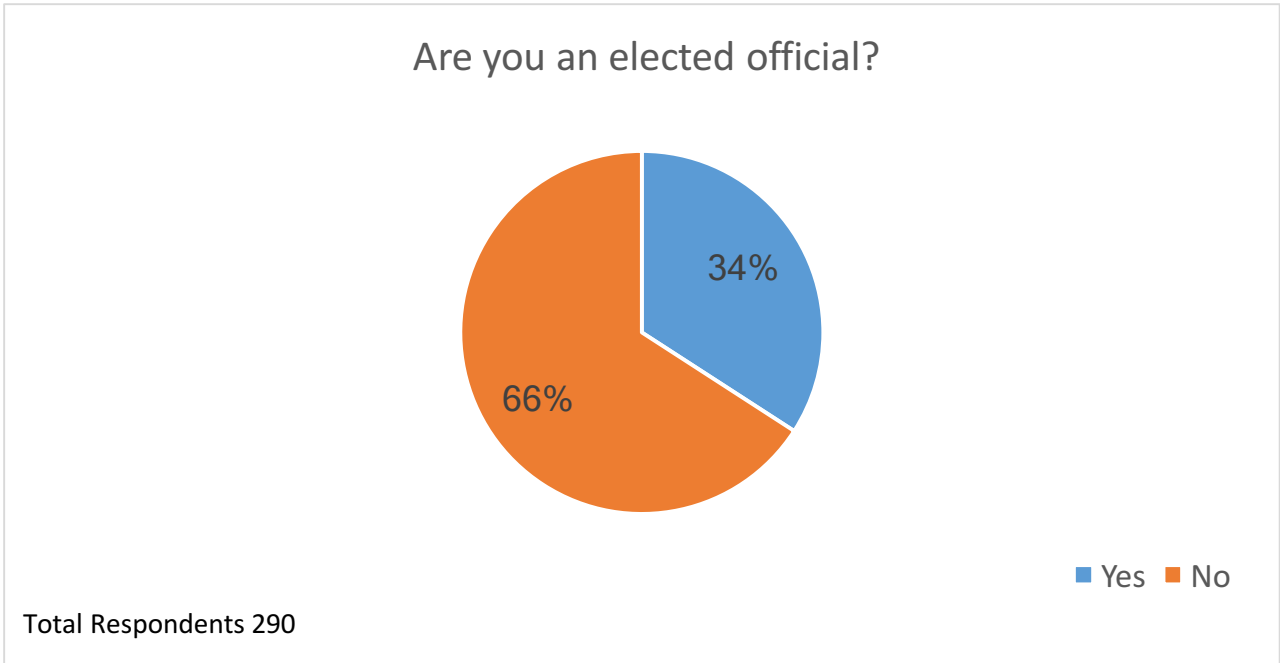
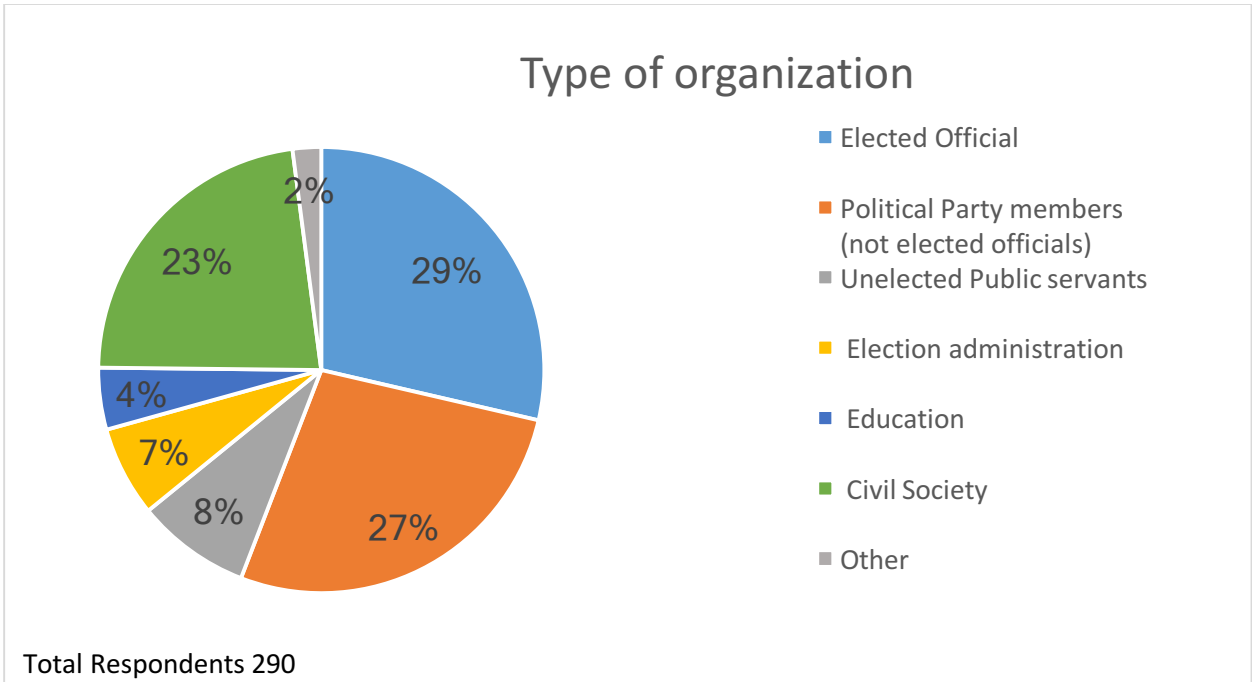
COMMENTS:

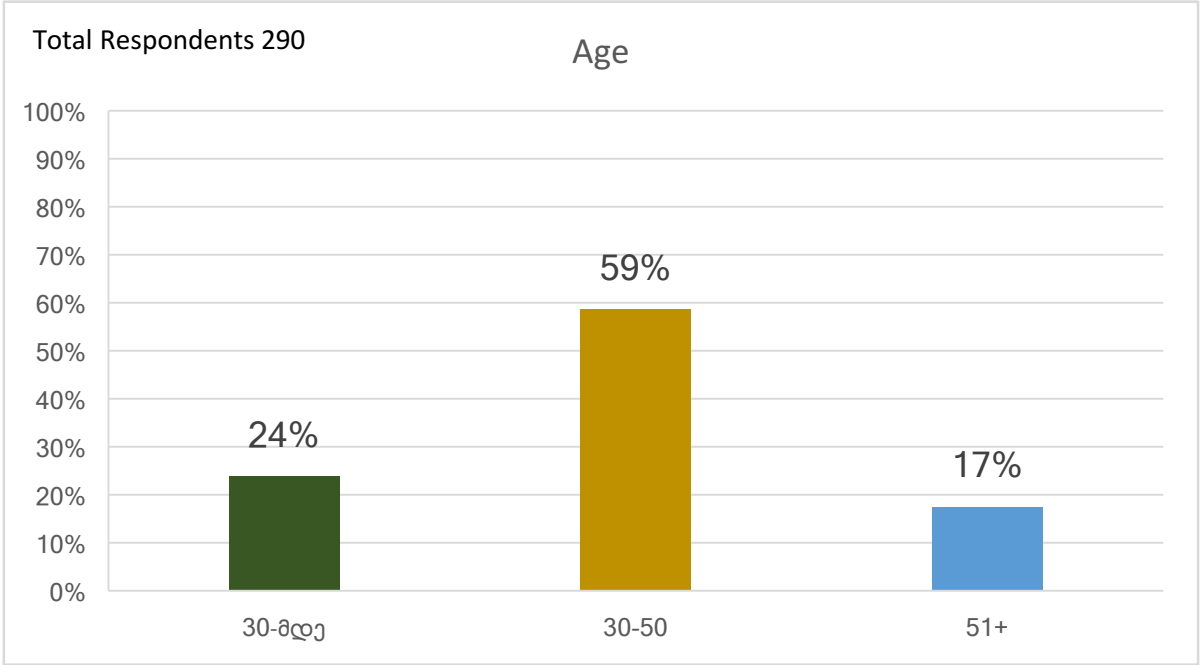
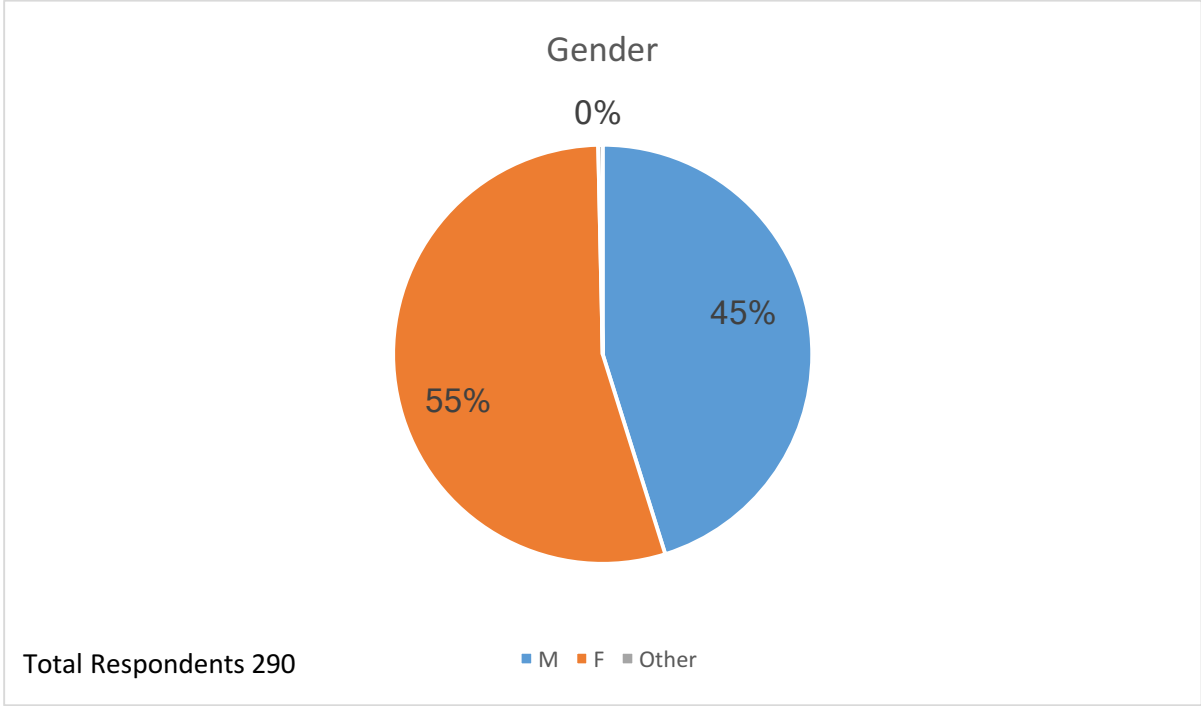
What are these organizations' most important contributions to Georgia's political development?

What are their biggest weaknesses?

APPENDIX #7: DATA FROM INTERNET SURVEY

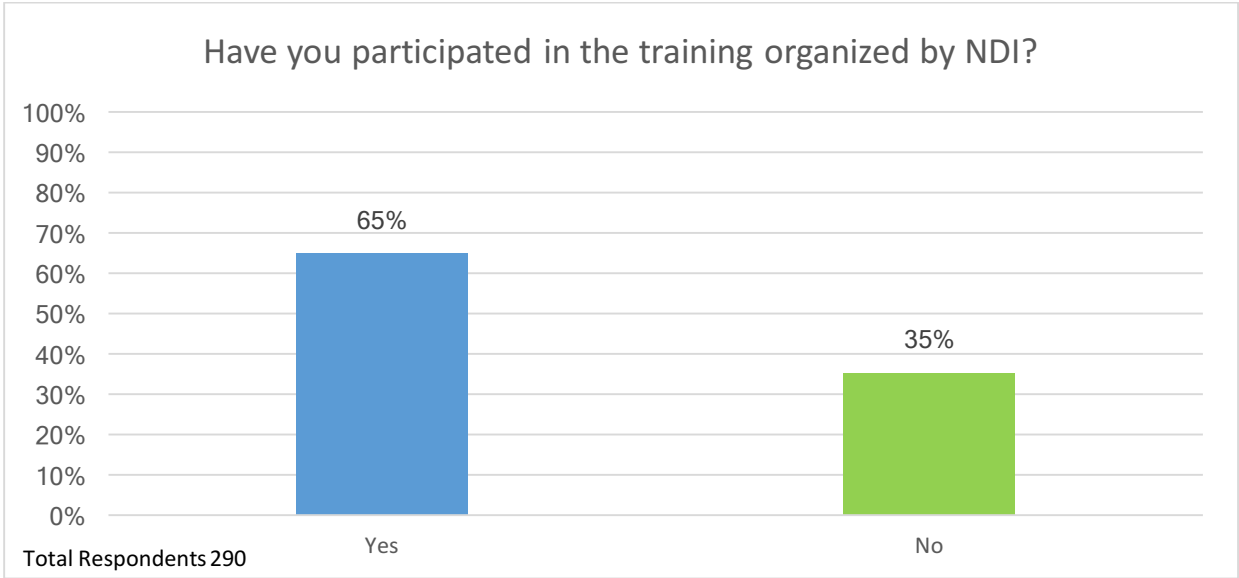
Demographics





NDI Sector

Q1. Have you participated in the training organized by NDI?



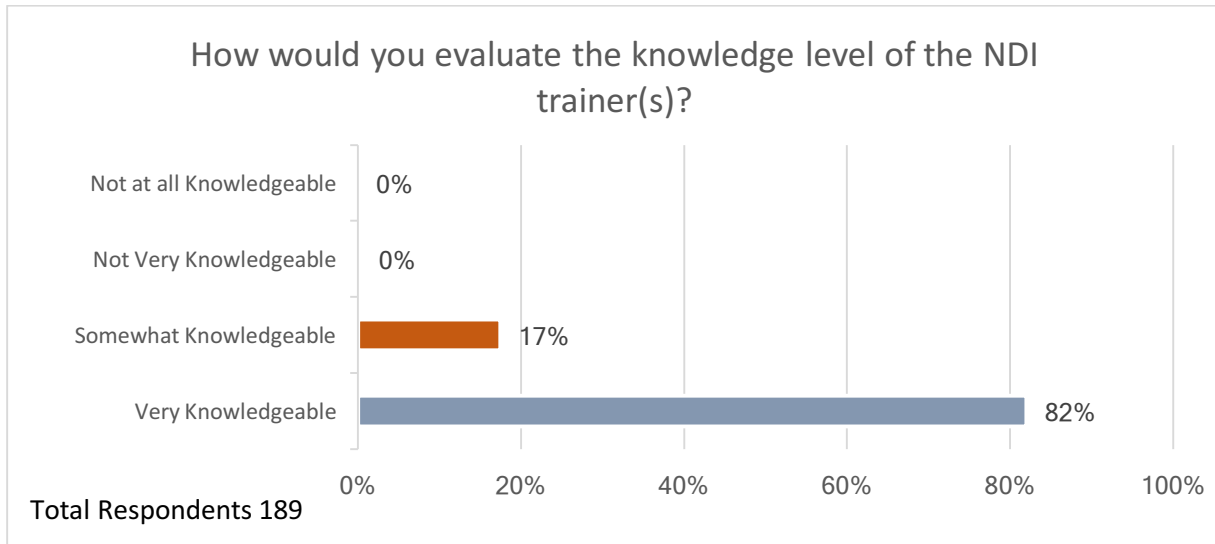
Q2. Subject(s) of NDI Training

Open-Ended Response No Graph

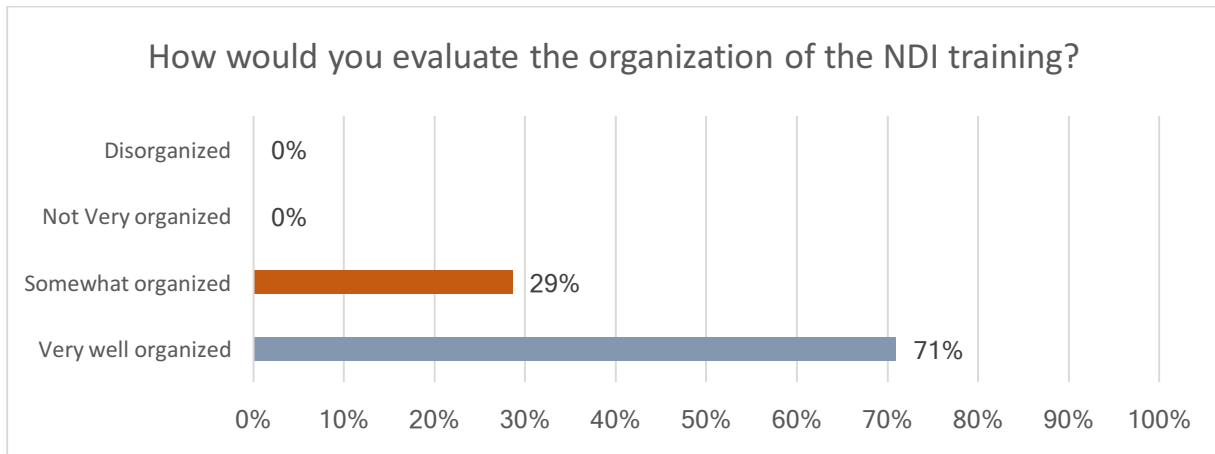
Q3. Location(s) of NDI Training

Open-Ended Response No Graph

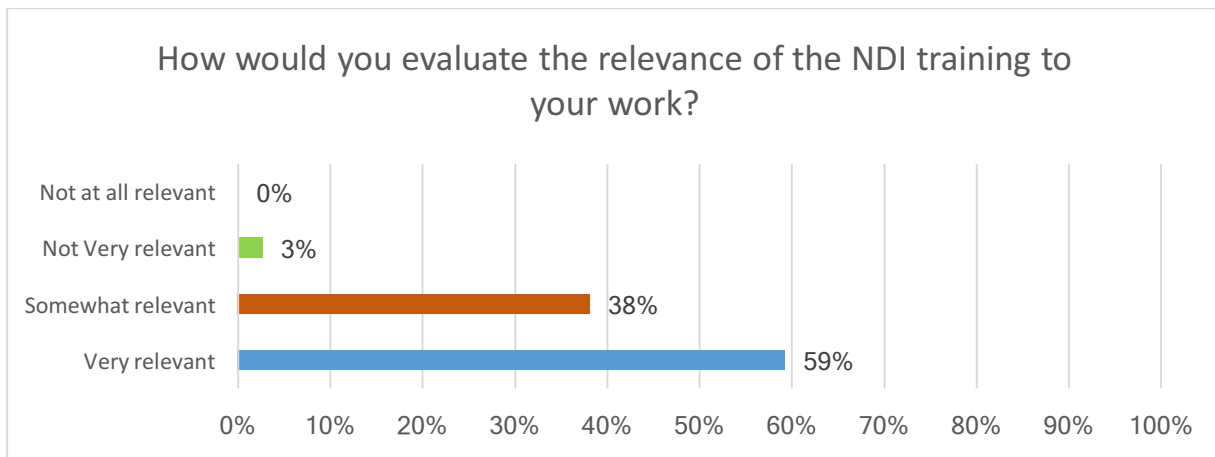
Q4. How would you evaluate the knowledge level of the NDI trainer(s)?



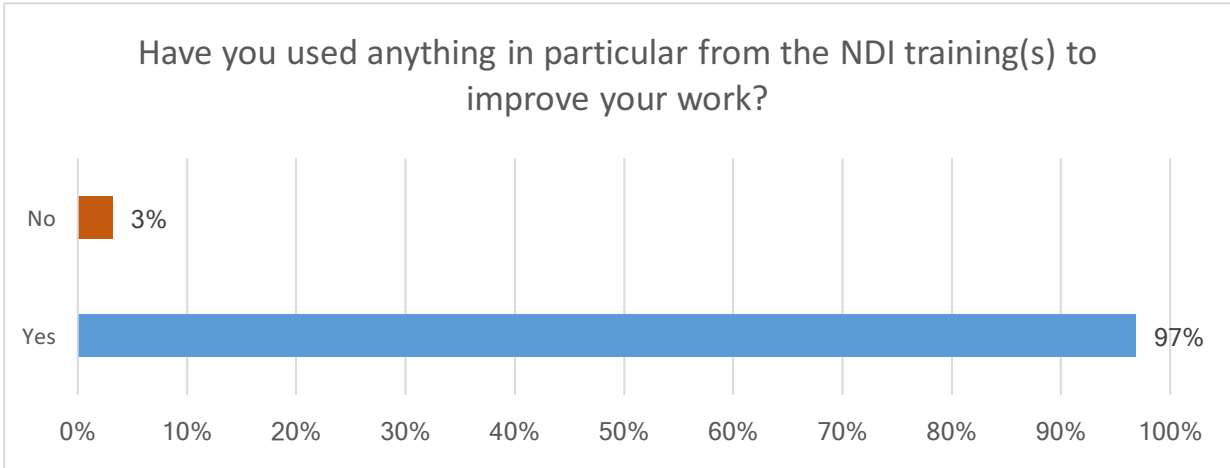
Q5. How would you evaluate the organization of the NDI training?



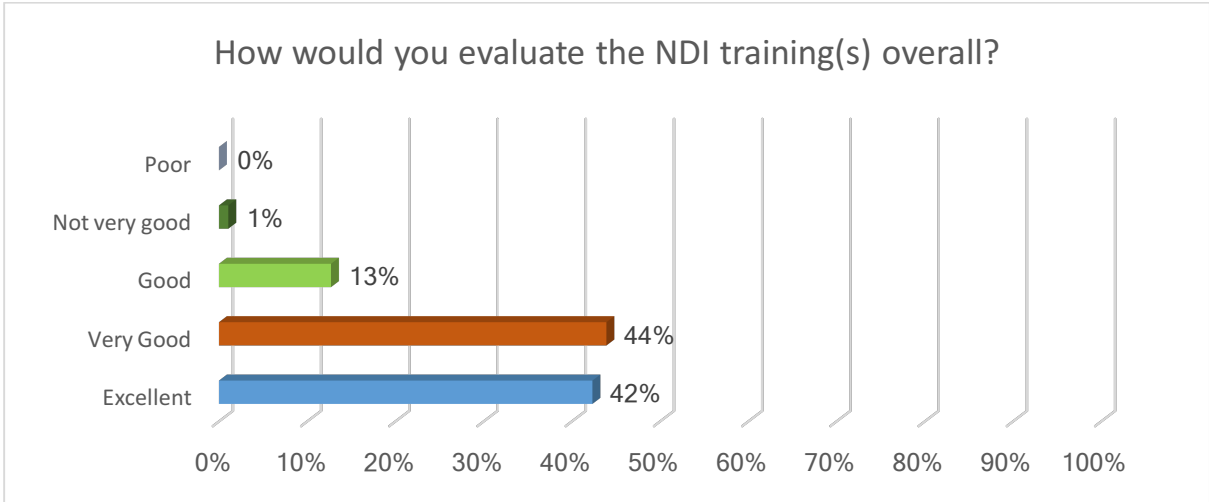
Q6. How would you evaluate the relevance of the NDI training to your work?



Q7. Have you used anything in particular from the NDI training(s) to improve your work?

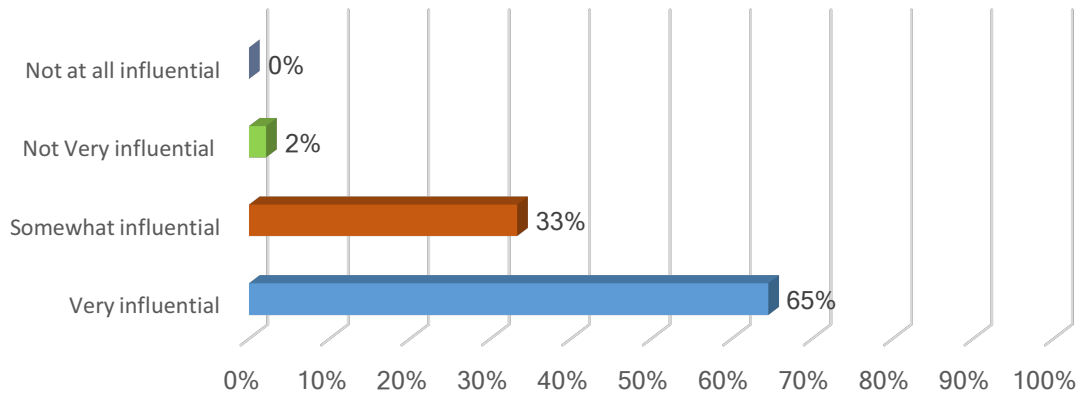


Q8. How would you evaluate the NDI training(s) overall?



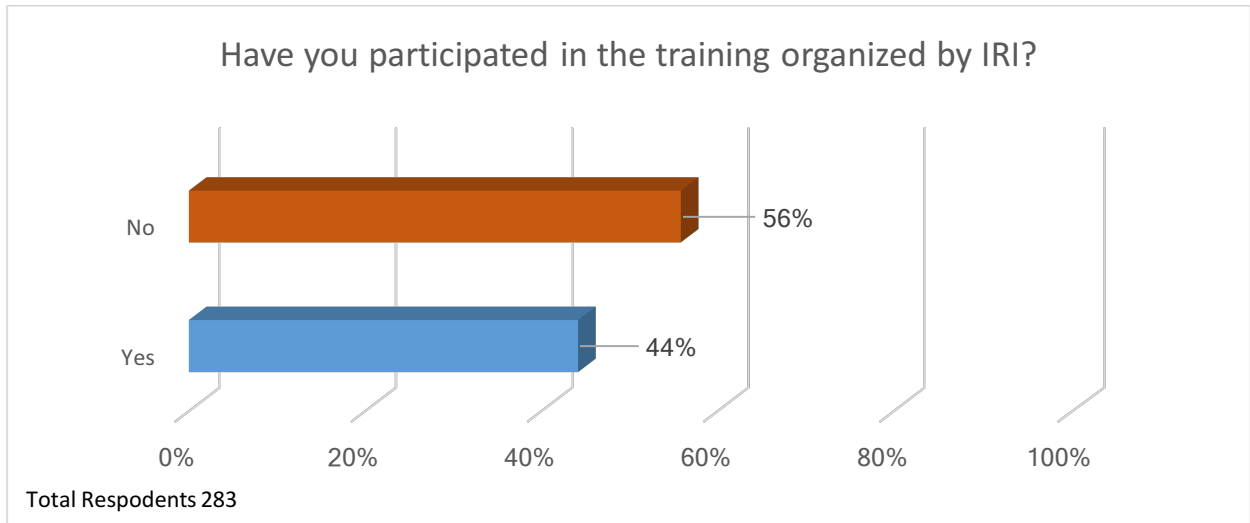
Q.9 How influential do you think is NDI on the political development in Georgia?

How influential do you think is NDI on the political development in Georgia?



IRI Sector

Q1. Have you participated in the training organized by IRI?



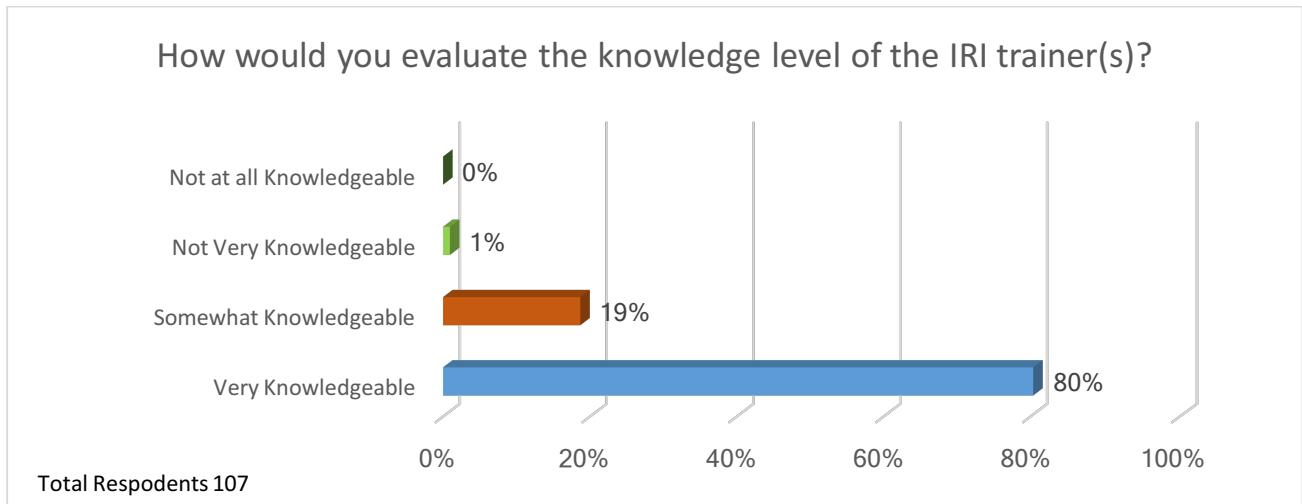
Q2. Subject(s) of NDI Training

Open-Ended Response No Graph

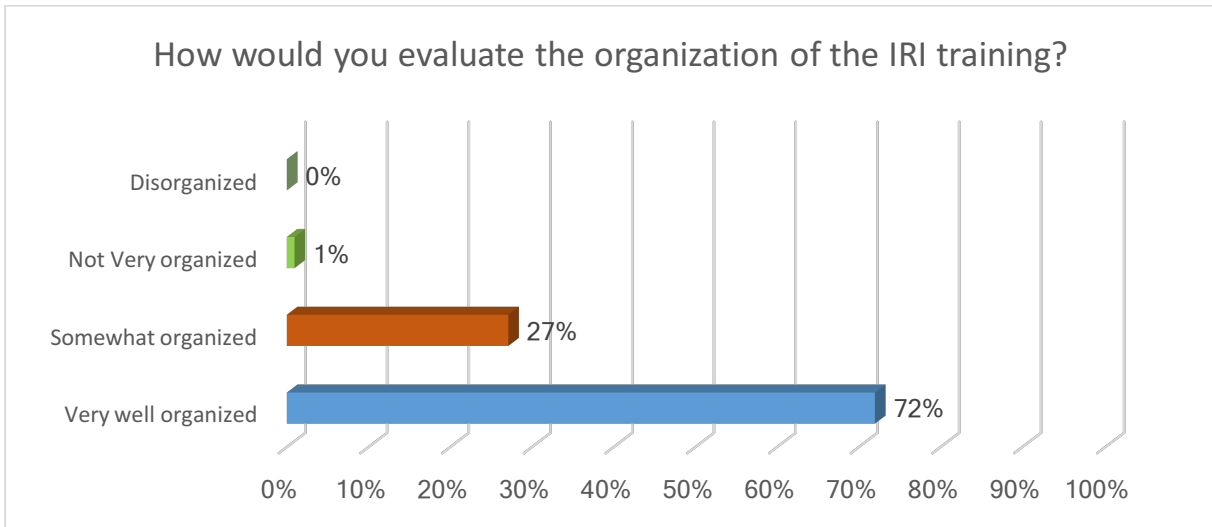
Q3. Location(s) of NDI Training

Open-Ended Response No Graph

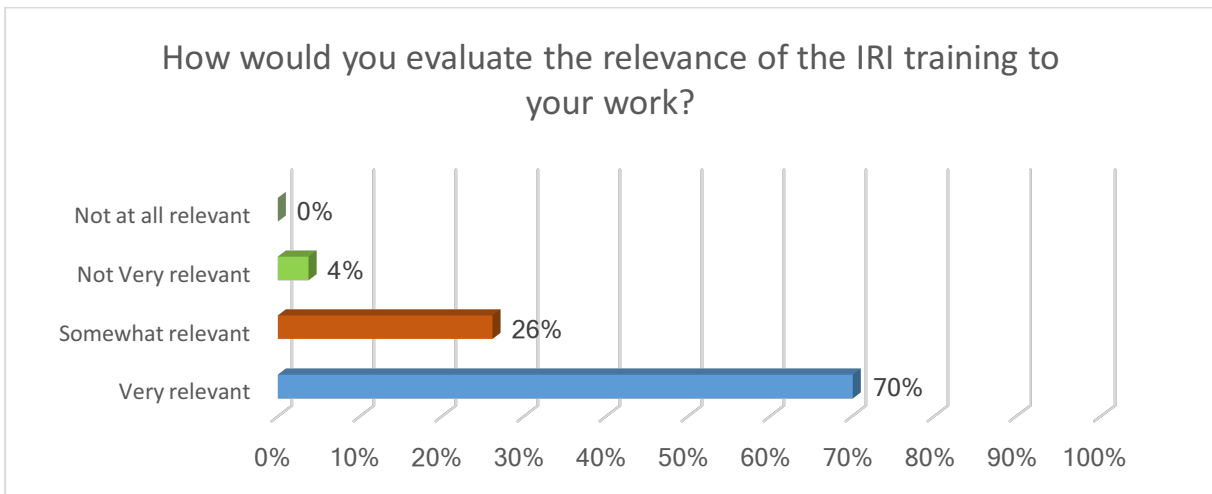
Q4. How would you evaluate the knowledge level of the IRI trainer(s)?



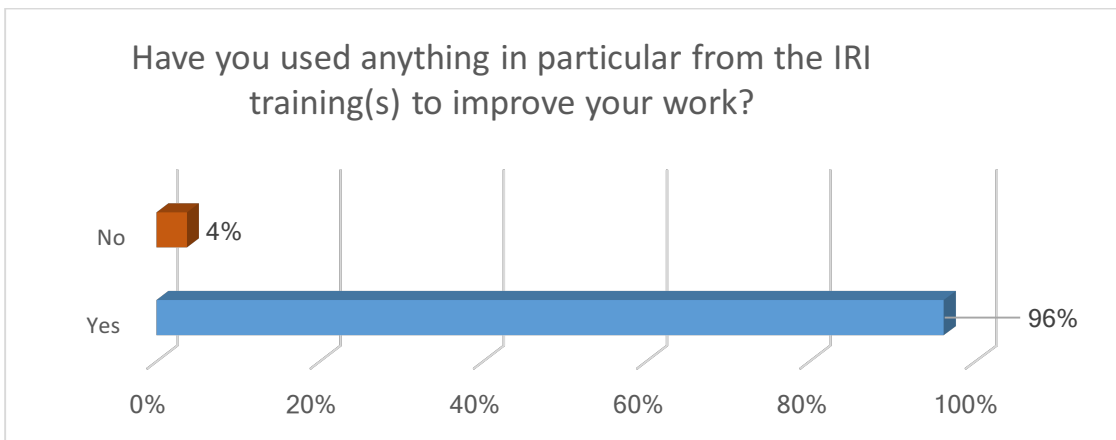
Q5. How would you evaluate the organization of the IRI training?



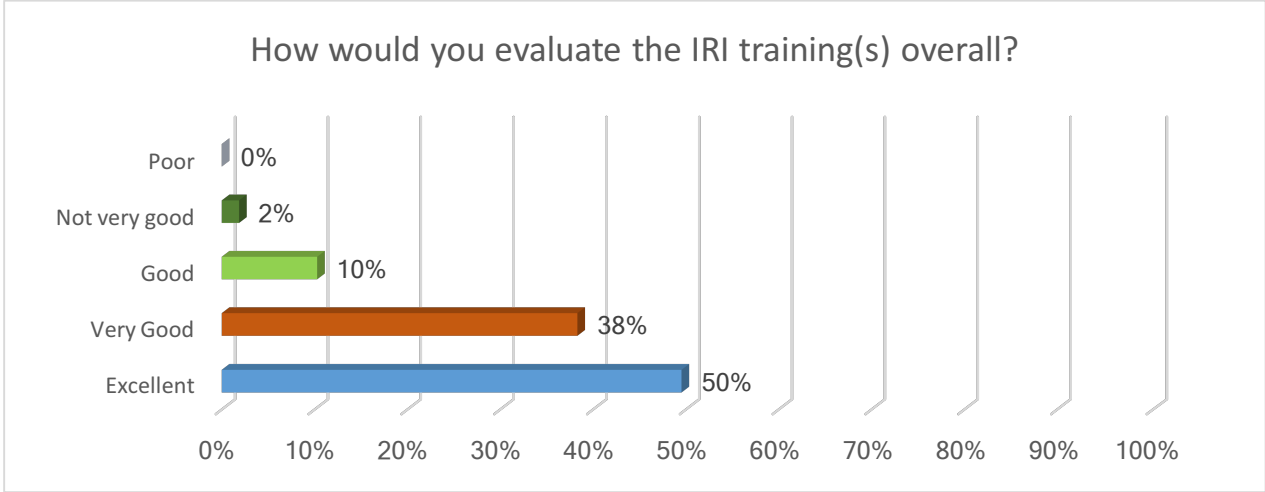
Q6. How would you evaluate the relevance of the IRI training to your work?



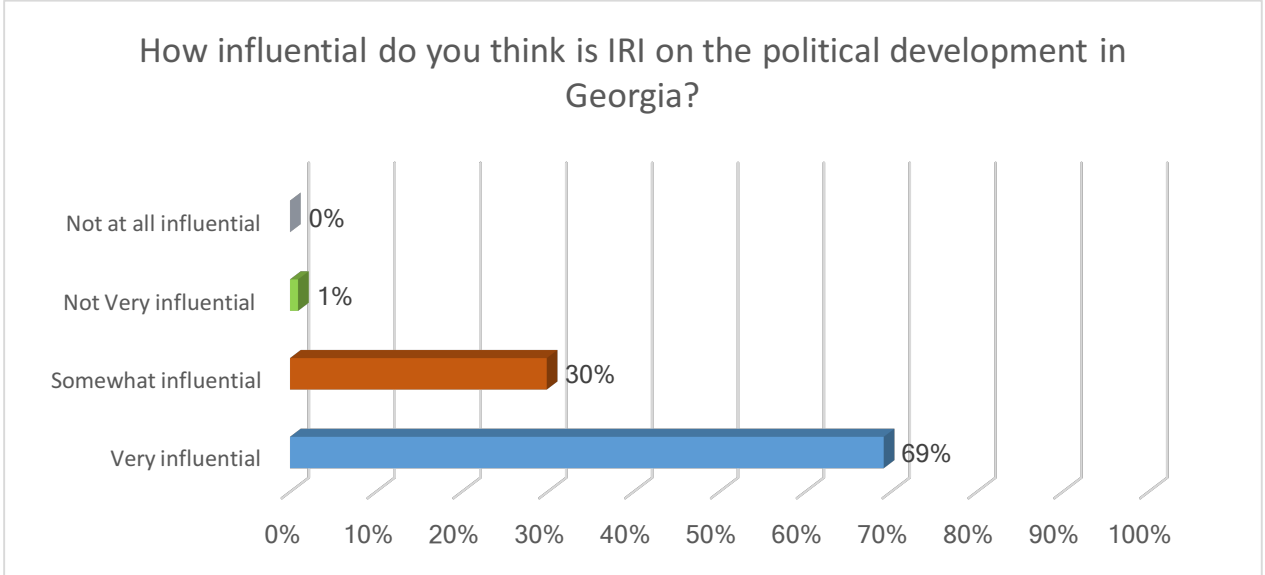
Q7. Have you used anything in particular from the IRI training(s) to improve your work?



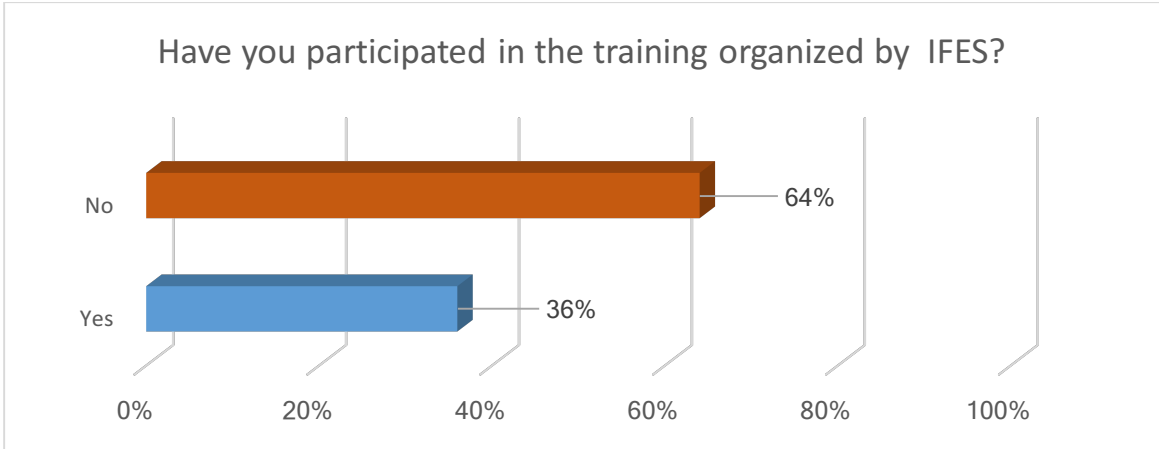
Q8. How would you evaluate the IRI training(s) overall?



Q. 9 How influential do you think is IRI on the political development in Georgia?



Q1. Have you participated in the training organized by IFES?



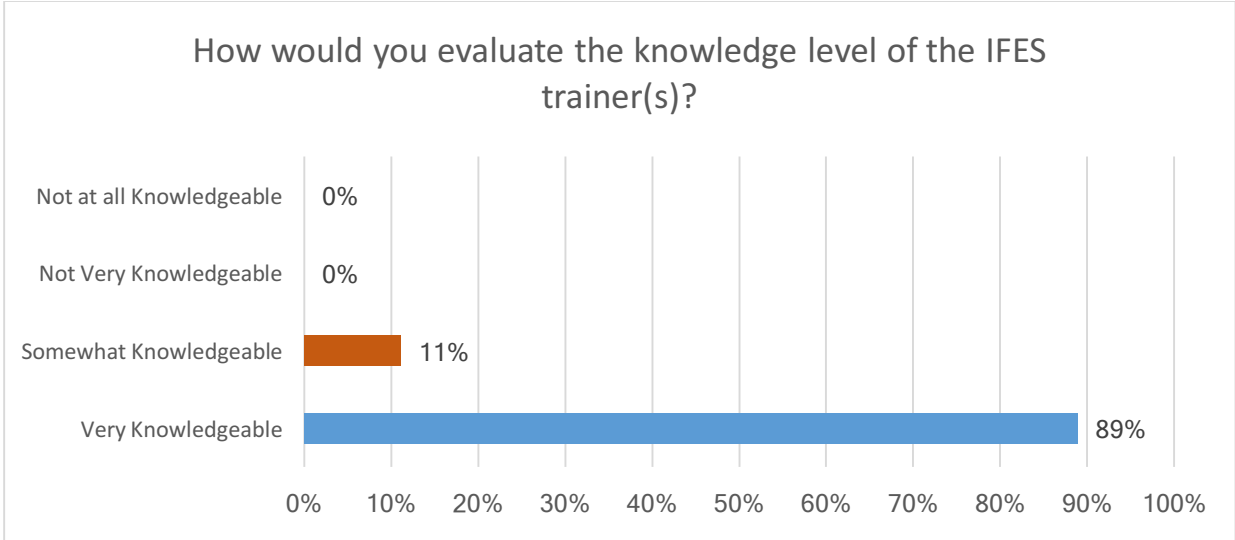
Q2. Subject(s) of NDI Training

Open-Ended Response No Graph

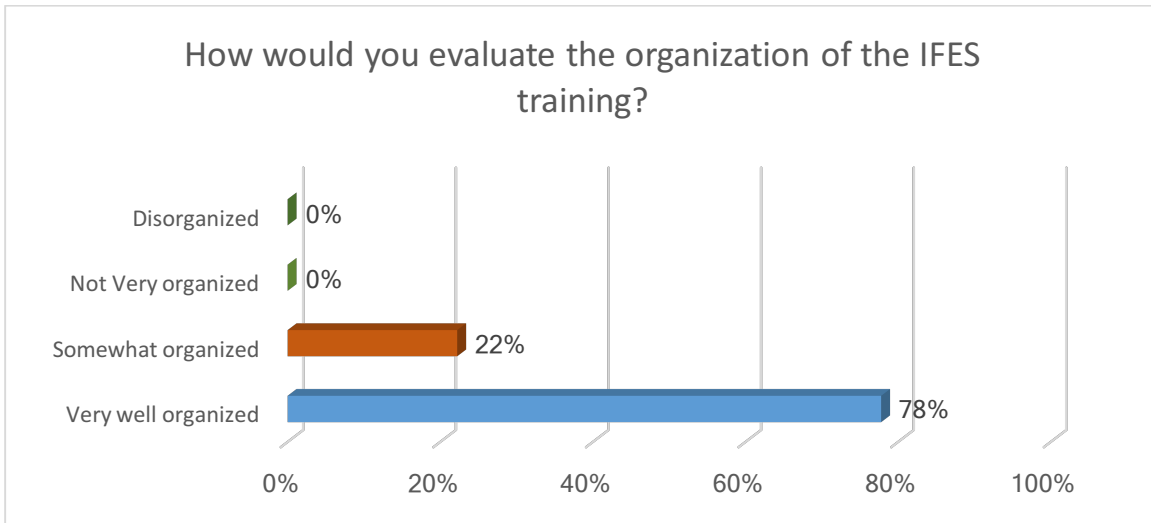
Q3. Location(s) of NDI Training

Open-Ended Response No Graph

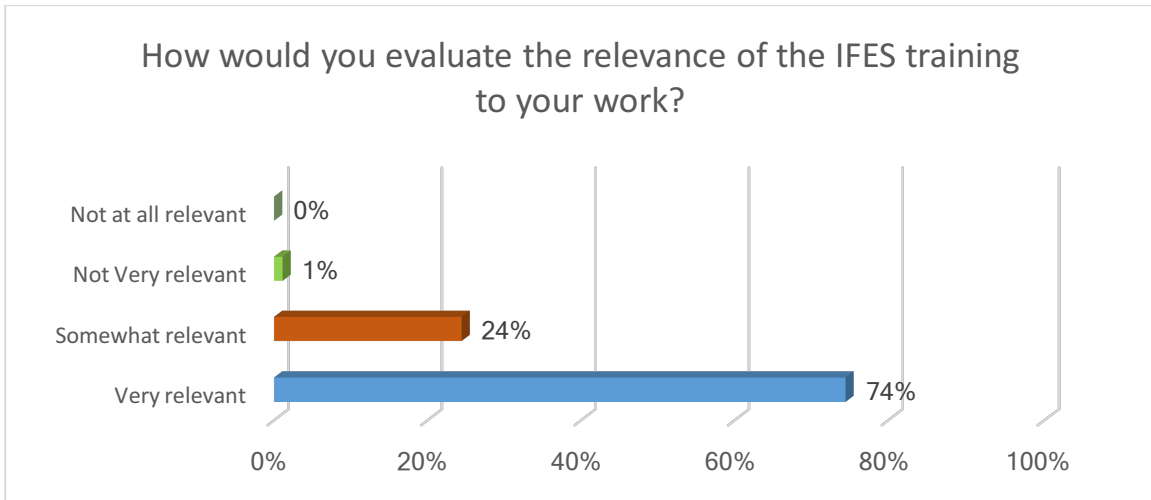
Q4. How would you evaluate the knowledge level of the IFES trainer(s)?



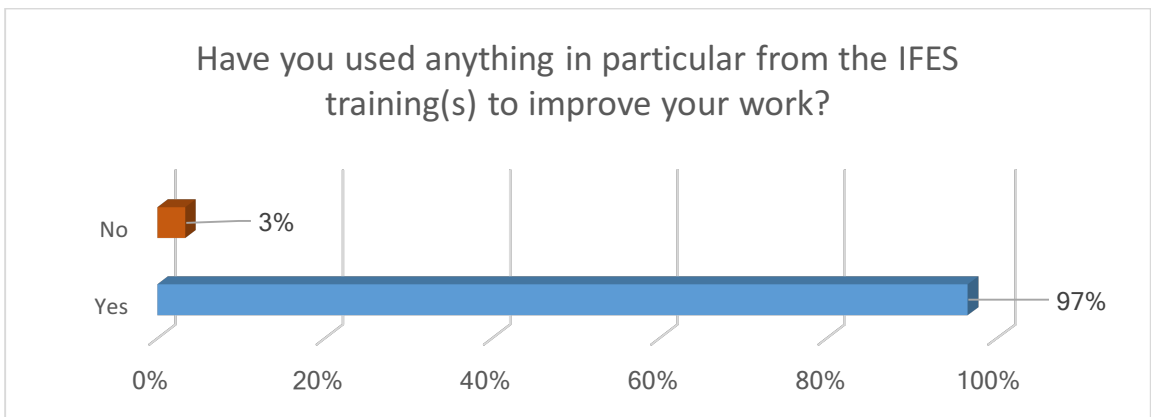
Q5. How would you evaluate the organization of the IFES training?



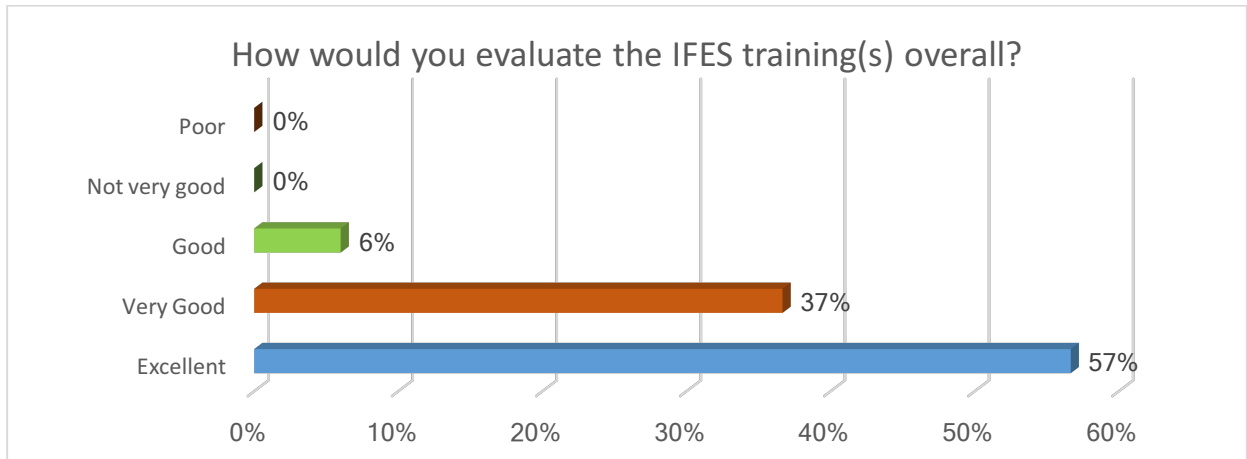
Q6. How would you evaluate the relevance of the IFES training to your work?



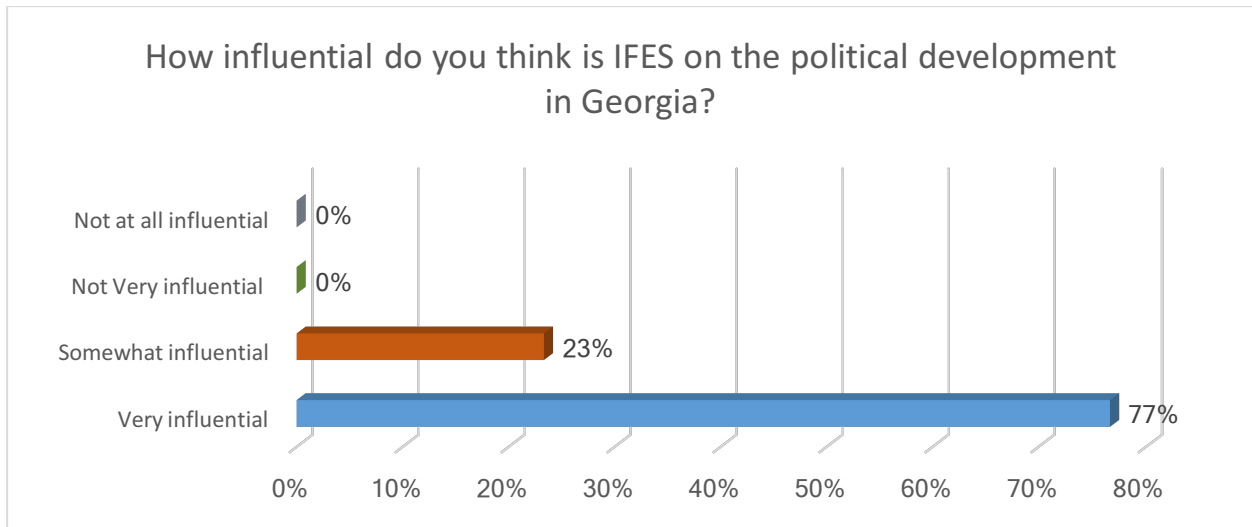
Q7. Have you used anything in particular from the IFES training(s) to improve your work?



Q8. How would you evaluate the IFES training(s) overall?



Q9. How influential do you think is IFES on the political development in Georgia?



Appendix #8: Protocol for Focus Groups with Citizens

General criteria for all focus groups: People who are NOT: 1) in elected office, 2) political party activists, 3) election officials, 4) NGO activists, 5) journalists

Tbilisi

Six Focus Groups:

- One Focus Group of men ages 30-60 who generally always vote for the same political party in elections
- One Focus Group of women ages 30-60 who generally always vote for the same political party in elections
- One Focus Group of men ages 30-60 who generally do not vote for the same political party in elections
- One Focus Group of women ages 30-60 who generally do not vote for the same political party in elections
- One Focus Group of men 18-29
- One Focus Group of women 18-29

Ethnic Minority Region (one of two regions where Azerbaijanis and Armenians live)

Two Focus Groups

- One focus group of ethnic minorities – men 20-50
- One focus group of ethnic minorities – women 20-50

Another Region

Two Focus Groups

- One focus group of men 20-50
- One focus group of women 20-50

Questions

General Political Environment

- Do you trust politicians? If not all, some?
- Do you believe that the Georgian political system is a functional democracy? Why?
- Has the quality of democracy increased or decreased since 2014? Why?
- What would you like to see change in the political system? Why?

Political Parties

- Do you think political parties represent concrete and distinguishable policy agendas?
- Can you characterize the specific platforms or policy agendas of any parties? Which ones?
- If they do represent concrete policy agendas, do they collectively cover the most important policies to average citizens?
- Why do you (or do you not – *depending upon the group*) vote for specific parties?
- What would make you vote for a specific party and be loyal to it?
- Do political parties seek to specifically appeal to women? Youth? Ethnic minorities? (perhaps asked of different groups in different ways) Do they have enough representation of these groups among their candidates?
- If so, how?
- Do the political parties focus on regional or local issues in their platforms or do they mostly focus on national issues? (this may be especially for the groups outside Tbilisi)
- Do local politicians from a given political party represent the same ideas as the national politicians in the same party?
- What would you like political parties improve in their interaction with citizens?

Elections

- Do you usually vote in elections?
- Do you feel well informed about the choices when you go to vote? Where do you get most of your information on different candidates or parties?
- Do you feel that Georgian elections are free and fair? Why?
- Have elections improved or gotten worse since 2014? Explain
- What do you think is the biggest problem with elections in Georgia?
 - o Follow-up questions – what does this do to politics? Do election officials or NGOs try to limit this problem? What would you do to fix the problem?

(following questions would depend upon if any of the problems are mentioned above)

- Do you know how political parties or candidates finance their campaigns?
- Is this a good thing or as bad thing for politics? Why?
- Do you think the government still uses its administrative resources to influence elections? If so, how?
- If this problem exists, do election officials or NGOs do anything to try to stop it? Are they successful?
- (For outside Tbilisi) – do you think these problems are worse in your region than in Tbilisi? Why?
- How would you like to see elections change and why?

Civil Society

- Do you know any NGOs active in election observation or in trying to promote political reforms? Which ones? (*If not mentioned, prod on the following groups: Georgian Young Lawyers' Association – GYLA, Transparency International Georgia – TI, and International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy – ISFED*)
- What do you think of their work? Do you trust them? Support them? Why?
- Do you think such organizations are more or less active now than before 2014? Why?
- Do you think they make a difference in how elections are administered or in what political reforms are adopted?

- What would you like to such organizations do more of in the future?

International Organizations

- Have you ever heard of the following international organizations that work in Georgia to help make elections more democratic and promote democratic reforms?
 - o National Democratic Institute (NDI)
 - o International Republican Institute (IRI)
 - o International Federation of Electoral Systems (IFES)
 - o United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Do you think these organizations make a positive or negative impact on politics in Georgia?
- Have these organizations been more or less important to Georgia since 2014?
- What would you like to see these organizations do more of in the future?

APPENDIX #9: Transcripts of Focus Groups with Citizens:

Focus Group #1

Location of the focus group: Tbilisi

Participants: 18-29 years old men

Moderator: Natia Karchiladze

Moderator: Hello, friends, thank you and sorry for starting late. I am Natia, from the Institute of social studies and analysis. We are conducting a research about democracy in Georgia, political parties and your attitudes towards the parties in general. The video is being made to make a transcript later and of course, it will be confidential. If you are ready, let's start. Our focus group will last approximately an hour or hour and a half. Start one by one. Introduce yourself, your name, age and what you do.

#1: 24 years old, I am working currently and I have a profession in social and political science.

#2: 26 years old. I have a job. I have graduated in journalism and now I am finishing my master's studies now.

#3: 20 years old. I work and study.

#4: 23 years old. Sociologist, Master. Currently, I am working for a tourist company.

#5: 24 years old. I have a higher education. Currently, I have a job.

#6: 27 years old. I am a student.

7: 19 years old. I work at a hotel and study in IT.

Moderator: Thank you. Firstly, I wonder how much you are interested in political processes and how you see yourself as a part the political system that is around you. Let start the one who wishes.

4: I will start. I am interested in political processes, I actively watch it via social media and tv, though I don't see myself as a part of the political processes, I am not its part and I feel rejected from it.

Moderator: What do you think what is the reason for it?

#4: There are many reasons and we can talk too much about it, though, at the first time maybe the fact that ruling political party has occupied while political field and there is no space for the other opinion.

Moderator: What do the others say?

7: Mostly I observe the political processes through social media, posts of my friends and I watch the tv less. I am less likely a part of the processes because I have no relation to all these and the best I can do is to write a status or my position.

6: It is an awkward situation, we want it or not, we are involved or not, it doesn't matter, because every field is connected with politics and that in some extent has an influence on us. I am involved as much as I have to have the touch from my work field. The degree of involvement is also very important. However, the fact that you read something and heard that someone was fired or appointed, it is not an involvement in politics.

Moderator: How do you feel that you are part of the political process?

6: Nobody asks us anything and there is no connection between the people and politics.

#2: In my opinion, people and politicians are generally away from each other. People can not make politics, politics are being made by elites and millionaires who are sitting in parliament. We ...

6: I will recall an example regarding constitutional meetings, the meetings that were held in Kakheti, Kutaisi and so on. They talked too much. Talakvadze and others were sitting and giving silly answers to the questions about the self-government, that was profitable for them. This is it, there is no communication. He will listen to you just for the purpose of duty and then he will go and do whatever he wants. We have no impact on them.

5: It is some kind of formality, that they can't avoid

Moderator: Do you want to add something?

#1: There is some kind of interest, but how I am involved is a different matter, I am satisfied with the dose I am involved in. The most important is that you can express your ideas nowadays.

3: In general, I am less likely interested in politics, the thing is that I get the information through the social network.

Moderator: I understand, thank you. What are your attitudes towards the Georgian politicians? Do you trust them, or do you trust one of them? Is there a politician that you trust?

#7: To trust politicians is a strange thing because they normally lie, but I like the leader of "Girchi" Zurab Japaridze. First, he promises that there will be more communication with his voters, facebook-lives will be once a month, where his positions will be heard and people can express their opinions, they will have a monthly briefing, where they will answer journalists' questions. It will become more transparent and we will feel that we mean something and someone listens to ordinary people.

Moderator: Do others want to add something?

#2: In my opinion, in general, politicians don't know how to make politics in Georgia and parties don't have an established ideology, whether they present left or right wing, or centrists, that's why I don't trust them because I don't know what is the certain politician and what he wants. Basically, they only think to come and earn money. So far.

#6: They promise one and do the other.

#4: I would say that I don't have trust with Georgian politicians though there are some people who are honestly performing their duties, this kind of people is very few in Georgian politics. Such celebrities I personally do not remember.

6: I trust only Bidzina (laughs). He said he would be in politics for a year and then he went indeed. Nobody has ever fulfilled a promise. It is a very bad question, which politician we have to trust, what is trust. Someone must explain something, do something to trust him. An average Georgian man or woman can't trust anyone, doesn't matter. You can't name anyone who has done something to have a desire to vote for him/her for the second time. Nobody can name such a person.

Moderator: I understand, thank you. Do you think the Georgian political system, ie government, or parliamentary or political process, is a valid and real democracy?

1: There are many indicators of democracy. For example a strong opposition. But as for the process, in my opinion, it goes with a right direction comparing to the gone years, or decades. As for the democracy, involvement of people and a strong opposition is necessary.

Moderator: Political system?

#1: As for the political system it is in governments' hands. The main thing is to be there a feeling within the society that what happens everything is for us. The most important thing is that there is a freedom of speech and media is independent and we have strong opposition and freedom of business as well.

#7: Democracy isn't effective

#2: Why?

#7: Have they done anything for you?

#2: No

#7: Of course, they have done everything for them

Moderator: How transparent are the processes and effective democracy around us?

#2: I can't be democratic, because we can't get rid of the mania to have a leader and until we are dependent on one person, we can't talk on the democracy. There was Zviadi at first, then Edika, then Misha and now Bidzina has come. In my opinion, when everything depends on one person, to talk about the democracy and policymaking by people is funny to me.

Moderator: Where is the problem in implementation or in a political system?

#2: In a system as well. We don't know where we are or where we will be tomorrow. I don't know what the country wants and what we are going to do, so in my opinion, there is no system.

#4: I think that if we compare to Georgia several years ago, or the situation in the Caucasus region, of course, there is a certain progress and of course the situation is better than the previous. However, every initiative that goes into parliament goes by the government's influence and goes without a discussion. Apart from this, there is a problem with us, the people, because we don't have political awareness, because we don't give other forces possibility to get into parliament. As an instance Majoritarian elections will be enough.

Moderator: How does the system enable other parties to engage in political processes?

#4: System gives us a possibility. For example, you can vote for one party in proportional and vote for another candidate in majoritarian, who might not be a member of a ruling party, but we get a situation when a man votes for a candidate according to his/her party and the ruling party uses the majoritarian system to double the number of places in parliament. So the people have a nihilistic attitude towards political activities. Democracy is not only the political acts, it can be defending someone's rights and interests through a non-governmental organization. These kind of activities are new to us. So I support this kind of creations, that try to defend, bring initiatives and improve different fields, it can be the environment, ecology, labor or other.

Moderator: Do you want to add something?

#6: What can be added, everything was said

Moderator: Okay, thank you. Since 2014, the quality of democracy has increased or decreased and why do you think so?

6: I will tell about it. It has obviously increased and it is seen in particular places. Democracy is seen in many ways: Some see like that, some see it differently. Only freedom of speech....ranging from a mine-worker to the people working at state institutions, everybody says that there is much more freedom, and democracy is more than a control of government by people. In that case, we can count it as a progress. People are not raided anymore, people aren't killed. Let's take the last moment, the murder case of Saralidze's son, a commission has been created and witnesses and culprits are questioned and this happens transparently and it is a big step forward and shows the level of democracy that was before 2014.

#5: All this is logical after all, this wouldn't finish like this, the child was killed, there were made so many mistakes after all everything has become clear and this determines the democracy quality.

#6: I have always loved demonstrations, I have been attending demonstrations since 2003, if someone used to beat us there, there is no such fact now, we have developed in this direction.

#2: The authority learned not to disperse people, just to stop and wait. They know if they let them be, in a week, it doesn't need even a week, in two days the riot will be dispersed itself. It is a fact that they approach the process pragmatically and wisely. They don't need to use excessive force, riot disperses itself.

#4: I think that the degree of democracy has decreased. The fact that the riots are not dispersed anymore doesn't mean that the level of democracy has been increased, this is a part of any normal country. It is understandable that they don't disperse the crowd but they don't listen to people and that's why they disperse. Apart from this, there has been revealed tendencies of changing the power in one hand, in fact, the opposition does not exist and the constitutional majority has a ruling party. It is very difficult for them to make changes and do not really want to make real changes. Political will as such does not appear. This is my opinion.

6: Another issue is freedom of speech not to mention only the demonstrations, decisions of the constitutional court were very democratical and it was a step forward to democracy. Because it was unimaginable during Saakashvili period. Who would dare it? Now the initiatives and other things, the opposition is a different issue and they are to blame. There is "good" draft law because of parliament members because they announce awful things and bring drafts worse than the others. Do you recall any significant initiative from Talakvadze? Boys must join the army, should the cars be insured or not?! He is such a populist guy.

#4: As for the constitutional court, there have been made such decisions that were not important to the ruling party to change. The other thing is what they would have done if it had been important. Today the court faces the crisis, it is indisputable and the recent events show that.

#6: Everything faces the crises...the power structures, parliament and all...and I will give you a question, is there a political party in Georgia or not?

#2: No.

#6: That's the main thing. There is no party, they don't adhere to any ideology. We are in the air and depend on goodwill. Either they are very clever, or we are lying to ourselves.

#4: That what I was talking about, what you said in the end, that means that the quality of democracy has not increased in recent years.

#6: Yes, you should ask questions more specifically, which were the aspects of interest.

Moderator: yes there will be concrete questions as well. Now I wonder if you share ideas of any political party and if you know its agenda and election program? So, for example, you say support "Girchi" which ideas do you share?

#7: The aspects I share...for example they talk about the devaluation of Lari, which will improve the economy. Besides, they claim they will refuse to the presidential palace. It is understandable that a president is a president but one doesn't need that big house to live in, it's better to...

#2 Bidzina said the same, that the president should not enter in that apartment where he is living now.

#7: Indeed, he was saying that and I shared the idea and I share it now. He could not realize the hopes and hopefully, this one will realize it, but he will not come to power.

Moderator: Beside this aspect, what initiatives do you share?

#7: Improving drug policy for example

#6: Girchi has very good church and I totally agreed to make many such churches in Georgia. That's what I like in Girchi.

#7: Creativity. For example, the meeting where they served guests with shashlik and beer. Zura Japaridze is not a chairman anymore they chose Iago Kvichia because they don't want to have the same chairman and they wish to redistribute it to others. They said they are not the team which depends on one person.

5: They speak on the topics in a form that differs from other parties. Let say about drug policy and decriminalization, they spoke on it loudly and everybody remembers the fact on "Girchi".

Moderator: Let others express their opinion ...

#4: I can not single out anybody and I do not trust any party and share it.

Moderator: All right, do you know of any initiative or agenda?

#4: Yes I know programmes and initiatives of many parties though I don't share any of them because they don't have country development program and have no goal that would settle redistribution of responsibility, I mean both opposition and ruling parties if crisis moments and situations will happen...there was a time when I supported "National forum", I shared their ideas and values but at the stage, I don't support anyone nor share ideas and values.

#2: I do not support any party, because my worldview does not fit into their values and goals. I do not consider "Girchi" as a party at all, these people do not leave the impression of serious people in general. Yes, they behave as populist, they do what people, young people like, but I think it's not what the party should do. I am left, accordingly, I do not support any party as there are not any leftist parties in Georgia.

#6: In turn, Social Democrats and Natsvlshvili are in Parliament. (Laughs)

#2: Yes they are but what kind of leftists they are this is the question.

#7: Which party is ideal for you?

#2: People-oriented, working on social programs and social issues.

#7: Everybody has social programs, even the labor party talks about the issues.

#6: The labourists yes but Shalva Natelashvili is an odious person and I can't consider him as a serious person. The man you want to entrust your and your country's future should be like neither Zura Japaridze nor Iago Khvichia nor Shalva Natelashvili, because it is not serious?

Moderator: What would you say ?

#1: What I have liked lately was Kaladze's "City full of life" and Night economy.

#6: What is the night economy?

#2: He speaks about night economy which even has a minister and after that he raided Basiani.

#1: That's right

#6: Once me and my friends were sitting and discussing different events and one of my friends said that he/she liked a republic party, said they had a very good program: They don't restrict peoples' orientation, say don't give money to the church and so on. Freedom, no to occupation, this and that. Then I asked him/her who he/she voted for and replied that he/she voted for the National Movement. It doesn't matter who we like, whose program we like or what ideology we have, the voting is determined by other factors. For example personal characters.

#2: Here nobody takes into account neither ideology nor point of view.

6: I know for example that Aleko is alone and loves Tbilisi and took the second place, Kaladze is a footballer, he is a good guy, dresses well and people have gone crazy. No ideology, yes there was "city full of life" and night economy but what else...there are no particular steps...

#1: I remember one thing when the subway engineers went on strike and people took the bus and sat on each other, rather than to be under pressure in the City Hall. We are impulsive society who wants everything promptly and so on. In general, everything has its time. Night economy has many pluses, this is a source of money, people arrive here and spend their money. Georgia has neither oil nor 80 million population, it is mostly meant for tourists, that come from Russia, Ukraine, our neighbors, Iran, Arabian, there are afro-Americans, Indians. Everything this has its calculation that this economic pressure move somehow.

#6: Ok, I understand economy increase, but I can't get this night economy, the term itself.

#1: What is the night economy, you are in a club with your friend and then you walk out of there...I think it doesn't have a big idea. How do we get money? Tourists arrive in Batumi and we get money. This is a source of money. Yes, we sell "Bakuriani" water for one or two Laris, but still. (laughs).

Moderator: Thank you. Do you participate in elections and what do you think how do you think your participation in elections is important for democracy process? Whom did you vote for?

#7: In my opinion, everyone should come to elections, despite the fact one is voting for someone or not. I didn't vote for anybody, I went and crossed out every candidate, so my vote was counted. In my opinion, it will be better if every person goes to elections and let the government see that the people don't vote for anybody. Other things must happen, new parties should be created, with a different ideology, this must be changed.

Moderator: What would others say?

#6: Even in my opinion people should go to the elections. I did not even vote for anyone, but I was in the election.

#5: Every vote is necessary, everyone should come to the elections. I couldn't manage this time, I wasn't I Georgia, though every vote is necessary.

#4: I was and always go to elections, because, it is the only way to express your political will. There are a few other things like a riot or joining a party but this is also an important thing.

Moderator: Have you been to elections and if you have voted for any political party and why?

#4: Yes I have.

Moderator: Can you name them, and why?

4: I voted for the coalition "Georgian Dream" in 2012. I voted for them because there were united several people, whole oppositional specter. The people who I trust. By the way, "Georgian Dream" had a good program back then, but, ultimately they couldn't realize our hopes and many clauses what were written in the program were not fulfilled after that. So I have just changed my point of view and now I go to elections simply that a ballot paper not to be lost.

#6: It doesn't matter if you go and vote or not. Everything is already preceded by the announcement and publication by means of media, that someone is a winner or someone will be a prime minister. They spread the rumors preliminarily after that tv shows are made in media and they form an expectation that one will be our president or prime minister. For example, Georgian Dream didn't introduce their candidate in Mtatsminda district, but Kvirikashvili openly supported Salome Zurbashvili, who later won the elections. In fact, we are writing a scenario to some extent beforehand. In 2012 when there were student manifestations and we really wanted to change the regime and destroy the system, we stood there and Georgian Dream won. Then there waged such campaigns that people always order something and when you go there it's just justification and nothing more, the elections have no impact.

#5: Even before the exit-polls 70% of Georgia knows how the elections will end.

#1: What determines strong elections. There should be strong opposition, but such situation shows that people don't trust the opposition and majority votes for ruling party and in that case elections have no sense, but it is still essential to go there. It is significant to be high activity.

#7: I have heard about coercive voting. Nobody forces the one to vote for Georgian Dream like many did, in order to the National movement couldn't win the elections.

#2: Georgian Dream deliberately left the National movement to justify themselves against their opponents. Georgian Dreams' polemics with national movement is very easy because they can say everything to the national movement and even if they are wrong, they will remember the nine years...

#5: They are beaten in polemics this is the thing, despite so many arguments

#6: There are many ported representatives of a national movement in Georgian dream, who couldn't raise their voice for their whole lives.

#2: In general, the Georgian Dream is not a party.

#6: Dato Darchiashvili, who was a member of the National movement and had left republic party together with Barnov in 2010. He said that they didn't have a party, they were in a comfort zone where Saakashvili kept them well.

#2: The same happens in Georgian Dream

#6: We don't have a party, in reality, there is just a name. If you think that anyone can remember Kvichia if you stop someone in the street. Everybody will remember Zura Japaridze

Moderator: You have already talked about the party problems but can you single out a party that tries actualization of the youth problems, what needs do you have that you want to be set by a political party? You, , spoke about the "Girchi" and about your approval to them, please tell us, how does party "Girchi" satisfy your as young man's needs?

#7: Satisfaction is not the word, you can't tell what they do, everything is on a paper, nothing has happened so I can't trust anyone. I am just sympathetic to them. I don't say that I am going to vote for them, I may not and probably I will not. I like them because they brought something new, for example, their attention to the young people, when the "Basiani" case happened and people were raided Zura Japaridze was one of the persons who came there and supported young people, he showed his support that way. Besides, he was one of the first people in Saralidze case, but when the National movement involved everyone separated from it. Everyone did the same though Japaridze... Then the prime minister, Kvirikashvili came but they threw bottles at him. People don't love them. I like (Japaridze) him because it is interesting to listen to him. I can't listen to even a single member of Georgian dream, they can't form an opinion during the polemics, they don't know what they want, the only thing they know is Bidzina...

Moderator: For example, you as young, what kind of prospects do you like in the future, except for marijuana decriminalization and Zura Japaridze?

#7: I didn't like it, this is just...freedom, more freedom. The more freedom implies that...you go in the street and you are not afraid that a policeman stops you and checks you and puts something in your pocket. Yes, we are given Schengen visa but researches should be corrected in this way, to integrate more in Europe and to be one other of the European countries. Now that is the most urgent thing, my city kills and it really does, the level of pollution should be corrected first and foremost I do not know how, but most of all I would like to see it as a young.

Moderator: Do you also want to say something? Do you know any party that can express your problems?

#1: There are certain initiatives in ruling team but I can't see it deeply.

#6: The only person who can express and present my problems is "Building movement", established by Usupashvili. But when I look at the others everyone is very populist and a liar. They do nothing. They are the same. One speaks of more freedom and marijuana and everyone follows that. Another says that he wants to visit Shaurma-house and others follow him. The same happens every day. It does not matter until someone writes something valuable and it will be executed. Keep writing the laws, that's why we have so many senseless laws that even they can't understand and they think they got some philosophical stuff. Can any party tell me what they did? A national movement is an opposition party, a good one, they took second place in the elections and they are in the parliament today. They were full of young people and motivated, what did they promise and which promise did they fulfill for youngsters and people? Nobody can tell that because it is a lie from elections to elections, it is like giving a present that there is something in the box and it will come true. Let's say, a man is young till 35 years. What preferences can we have? We are young people let us not pay 20% of the taxes and give us only 10%, Will anyone do this for the young? To promote us in making a family or do something? No. A year that we lose in the army (Girchi made a very good thing) is there any help? Instead of this, they are going to raise it until 60 years by Talakvadze's initiative. Young boys aged 22,25,26 die in mines and this one is raising the contingent to take us in the army. What the hell...The parties have nothing written about, they speak just for speaking on television and to applaud each other, nobody is interested in real problems.

#2: Parties don't have an interest in young people as well, because they are not voters. They are more interested in pensioners and people of middle age because they go to the elections more frequently. The youth is not active in that way, respectively, parties have less focus on the young people. The only party who has, "Girchi" for example their rating 1,5%. They don't care about the old people, but they are less interested in the young people for the reasons I mentioned above.

#7: Girchi is not a party that should be in a parliament. This kind of party should always be in constant opposition because this party is opposed the most and...

#2: What is the difference between "Girchi" and other activist groups?

#6: They are registered as a party and has a presidential candidate.

#7: yes. An activist group can gather but it doesn't mean they are a party.

#6: Look at the other countries, there is the same problem though they have some niche and they fight for it. When you said the "Girchi" is not a serious party, there is a party in Italy that gained 2% or more in local self-government elections and they entered the parliament. They had a very cynic attitude but they won. They know what to do when they are in power, some are fascists, some are liberals. Here is nothing like that. Here one starts to think after he/she gets a position. Even if Japaridze had won the elections he could have done nothing, because he doesn't have a person to lead the ministries and etc. The small party like this will have to arrange with another party. For example, I helped representatives of a national forum, Shota Iamanidze and then others. I was inside, was looking at the processes and couldn't imagine which party I would join. I would join none.

Moderator: Thank you. I asked you about the elections, let's are more specific when you go to elections how informed are you on the participants that take part in the elections? And where do you get the information about them, their programs from?

#7: Even if you don't want it, you will hear it anyway, the whole Tbilisi is full of posters, writings, there are commercials and social media are loaded with such advertisements. You will hear it anyway. You will hear something and if you get interested then you will start reading but after some time you will realize that it is a rubbish and most of them is a lie.

#6: If you don't see anything for a day neither see anything in the streets when you get home everyone asks you, if you don't know anything or if you don't live in the country.

#5: The information is provided with a dose one know and imbibes everything involuntarily. You may not be interested in that but this happens with a dose that you get interested involuntarily.

#1: Even if I try I can't avoid it because at the entrance of the building are posters and even glue over each other.

#5: Then a collision might happen on that, this poster is more obvious, mine is less clear and etc.

#4: I think that I have absolutely no information about the people who are in politics, it is clear that there are posters and we hear political commercials but we don't know it in reality. My choice mostly is not regular. My choice depends on recognition and deeds made in the past. But when we choose proportional list on parliamentary elections, we don't know who these 150 men are, we know only top 10. We don't know who the people are and what they represent. We don't know majoritarian candidates mostly. The only known thing is that one studied in the west and let's trust him/her.

#2: And if he is a millionaire he might to do anything for the district...

#4: Yes, I don't know the people, especially who are in ministries, committees, what kind of person they are, what they represent, what they get their salaries for, why they were chosen, I don't know to tell the truth

#2: It turns out that the people are followers of the 5-10 men.

Moderator: In your opinion, how is the process of elections free and fair in recent years in Georgia?

#7: It has been refined and there is no falsification. We don't know exactly but I have such an impression

#2: It is not so clear but in general it still exists

Moderator: How has the election process improved since 2014?

#2: In my opinion, it hasn't improved much. Falsification doesn't happen as much as it used to: By carousels and putting ballot papers, but the most important problem that we must fight against is that people who are employed in public sector are demanded from their heads to vote for ruling party otherwise they will have a problem. This is also a form of falsification. The form is maintained and will be maintained for a while because here usually wins a party which is a ruling one otherwise you need a lot of money to make a revolution.

#6: And how is that falsification then?

#2: Falsification is not only to put ballot papers in a box but also means to have a psychological impact on a human.

#6: Then we have to vanish PR campaign at all

#2: No, no there is no talk about a PR campaign. For example, you will be intimidated or threatened to get out of work ...

#6: I don't think that they are intimidated like that now

#2: When there were constitutional discussions, publicly, in Philharmonic Hall, the whole hall was full of their people: Teachers, public officials and so on.

#6: It is true but it can't be falsified in that way...we have the possibility to get media there, observe them

#2: For example let's take "Girchi" and "Georgian Dream" these two parties can never be placed in equal conditions.

#6: Even if you get equal conditions for these parties, Georgian Dream will win anyway because Japaridze is considered as a not serious person.

#2: Okay, let's say this. If there were a strong opposition party and strong ruling party, the latter will always prevail because it has state resources.

#6: Yes, they use administrative resources to intimidate people. But when Shalva Natelashvili comes out and says that the elections were falsified no one believes in that

#2: I don't speak on him, he is a comic person

#6: Besides we must note the fact that there is no falsification with little parties and what about the big one is that one might be intimidated, or he/she sets the mind to vote for the ruling party when the elections approach.

#4: In my opinion, the election system hasn't changed much. The scope of the falsification has changed because the ruling party has no need for it, though, the international observers do not monitor the process as needed and they go to restaurants with the representatives of ruling party and that was noticed. Besides, particular parties demanded recounting that has not been made until today, because the court refuses to do so. Though 29,000 votes were falsified in Adjara and this causes a strong suspicion. In my opinion, the "Georgian Dream" or elite, doesn't give this kind of orders, this is a system fault. People got used to acting in this way and give the necessary votes to the ruling party. This happens mostly in majoritarian elections in order to gain constitutional, majority. If a question will be placed tomorrow will the Georgian dream be a ruling party or not then they will use it because the election system hasn't changed since national movement era. We face the same situation today.

#6: Election system is good. Have you ever worked as an observer or have you spent a day from beginning to the end? The is the most difficult procedure. On the election day, you have to be there from 6-7 o'clock in the morning till 4-5 o'clock in the morning as well. You must work there and if you miss a thing everything can fail. So what this means: There were incompetent people, overaged, some of them didn't know how to read and write and couldn't fulfill their duties, they had mistakes in terms of procedure and eventually the most important was that they knew the one was a head who would set a number during the counting, we are Georgians and they didn't follow the order, there was chaos, they didn't follow the code and we had spent almost 24 hours there, we hadn't slept and suddenly someone decided that the ballot paper was abolished and that's it. Everything went chaotic way. After that, they started to speak, referred to the regional district, and nobody was going to count 50,000 votes there...There is not much problem in the election system as in the counting procedures, these processes must be organized well. If a camera observed the process for 24 hours that would be great for the process. There are many good persons in CEC but many incompetent persons attend the election process appointed by a party. There is no problem in election system but the people employed there for one day, two days or a month decide everything.

#4: I will share my experience, I was an observer once and I had to fight to count the votes swiftly. Firstly, a representative of one of the parties was trying to get me out of my election and

so I could not take my eyes off it, so I had to count votes myself and observed the distribution of the number of votes. In my opinion, no video surveillance will help, moreover, the observers are aware of each other and are not going to denounce each other, even though they represent different political parties

#6: Yes that's right, they are from the same district, they are neighbors...

#4: Non-governmental organizations watch the process very superficially, rarely someone raises a voice, but mostly everyone keeps silent.

#6: I will say something sorry. Non-governmental organizations are many and different, when I was an observer at the Saburtalo district there were very young representatives of different NGO's. I came out on the break and I see a representative of national movement surrounded by representatives of every NGO. I can also establish an NGO but it doesn't happen in this way, there are influential non-governmental organizations and organizations that were created two days ago. For example, a non-governmental organization established by Giga Nasaridze who made films on Bidzina Ivanishvili and "Transparency international Georgia" that has weight.

#4: I will add that I am disappointed with the work of international organizations because they don't fulfill their duties honestly. The only solution is an electronic system because you can't deceive the electronic system

#6: Why you can do something with that

#4: Like Russia interfered in USA's elections

#6: Was Trump really elected by Russia?

#4: There is a doubt. The most trusty way as human factors are the biggest problem for us is an electronic system.

#6: Frankly speaking, when a man and a ballot paper are alone in the booth, Do that people think with ideology when they vote for Georgian dream?

#4: At least the vote won't be abolished. I mean that it doesn't matter much to me if they vote for, Georgian dream, national movement or Girchi. The crucial is not to falsify the votes.

#6: Nothing is falsified, they just count in a way that is most preferentially for them

#4: In an electric system, there is an algorithm that you can not change

#6: Imagine it's like a vacancy wrote by yourself, you can make a system that you can break anytime you want when you pay money.

#4: If it breaks, new elections will be held, this is a very simple procedure. In this case, when we talk about counting the papers, you register a claim and the court refuses it and it's

understandable why. Legislative, executive and judicial authorities are related to each other. We have the problem in Georgia and that's why we have to bring objective elements that you can't deceive, for example, electronic system. If you break it this will become clear and new elections will hold the following day. There was citizens' union, national movement, coalition Georgian dream but none of them had the political will to make this change.

#6: Do you think that system change can change the mentality of Georgian people?

#4: It won't cause mental change but they will know that the people will go to elections. And we will know that people chose the National movement, Georgian dream and so on. This is a democracy.

#6: Ok, we can't agree on that. There is no problem in system problem is in the consciousness of people, everything must change mentally.

#4: The electric system will cause that an observer won't be needed, who is oriented to get the salary and doesn't make sense for him/her how the election passes. International observers sit in restaurants and don't monitor what happens in reality.

Moderator: I have a question on non-governmental organizations, you have discussed on it but let's return in more details, how well do you know any non-governmental organization that is actively involved in the election process or tries to involve in process of political reforms? If you know, a name which organizations are these, I mean organizations that exist in Georgia. How do you trust and support their activities? How would you evaluate their work?

#6: They are weak I would say, because their activity is not efficient, they are just passing interests of their donor organization. I understand when you can't say anything or do something, but they aren't doing what they have to do. GYLA has its own judicial interests and that's all. The day of elections is the hardest where no NGO can stay to the end. I will add one to the end that may be bad, but this gibberish when they come out and talk, writing reports are done just for the NGOs and in fact, there is no contact with people as well as from political parties.

Moderator: Please, express your opinions, how does the activity of NGOs satisfy and control the election process?

#4: These organizations actively talk on election system reform and this is important

Moderator: What do you think how the activity of non-governmental organizations has changed together with the governmental changes, and how effective has it become or vice versa?

#7: In my opinion, it hasn't changed much, it has been developed a bit but they still work in the same fashion

#4: I think it has improved because they have improved their activities in different directions, the media also spend a lot of time on it and respectively they have an impact on the decision-making

process. However, it has become a trend that the leaders of non-governmental organization move to the government, it has become a certain mean of career progress.

Moderator: What do you want, in what directions should they continue their work, what should they do in the future

#6: Let's stop wool-gathering, secondly, to communicate with people and not just to each other, and more importantly think about the changes and not the career.

#4: Regarding NGOs people have an association that they are grant-eaters and so on. I agree with and more communication with people.

Moderator: We will finish soon, I know you are tired, I have only one question. I wonder if you have any information on an international non-governmental organization that fosters democratic processes in Georgia. Such are NDI, IRI and etc. If you know, what do you think how positive or negative impact do their existence have on our political system?

#2: I remember NDI that it conducts pre-election researches, though people don't trust it. In my opinion, they need to conduct such studies to understand what is happening in the country and what is the attitude of the people.

#6: I don't trust studies of IRI and NDI because neither their methodology nor anything is known

#4: I think that these organizations have positive roles in Georgian politics, though it depends on which organizations we are talking about. People were disappointed because of the fact that we have seen studies that turned out to be unreal.

Moderator: The last question, what do you think in which direction these organizations should invest

#4: The main thing is to communicate with people, this will give them confidence.

Moderator: Thank you, thank you. If you want something to add to it. Good then, thank you for participating in the study.

Focus Group #2

Focus group of women aged 18-29

Tbilisi

09.07.2018

Moderator – Mariam Devidze

I am Mariam Devidze a sociologist from Institute of social studies and analysis. I want to inform you that our discussion is being recorded, though the information is confidential and will not appear in public space. My first question is as follow – I wonder how much are you interested in ongoing political processes in Georgia and how much are you involved in the processes? Before you answer, please, represent yourself

From the moderator to the left:

1. NN1 28 years old
2. NN2 21 years old
3. NN3, 24 years old
4. NN4 24 years old
5. NN5 22 years old
6. NN6 26 years old
7. NN7 25 years old
8. NN8 19 years old

Resp1: I am 28 years old, we are the participants of the political processes

Moderator: What do you mean by politics?

NN1: Everything is politics. As a citizen I am in the space where I make my choice, that has an impact on us. How informed am I? I am not informed or I am more or less.

NN2 is my name, I am 21 years old, I am a student and I study political science. Respectively I am involved in politics. I participate in different political schools and we had some relations with the political parties.

My name is NN3. I am 24 years old. I am not involved in politics. In fact, I am involved as much as are the citizens of the country. I have information about the main events that happen in the country. There are issues that I am interested in and I want to be involved more in them but because of my lifestyle, profession and other issues don't help me to be more involved. Though as far as I can, as a citizen I try to be aware and active. I am a journalist by profession but never worked.

My name is NN4. I am more or less involved in politics. I am aware of everything that happens in the country.

My name is NN5 I am 22 years old. I work in the public sector and that's why I have a relation with politics. Thus I have information about the actual ongoing events in the country.

Moderator: Do you feel as a participant in the process?

Respondent: Yes of course

My name is NN6 and I am 26 years old. Nevertheless, I have been trying to be separated for politics for years, now I realized that it is impossible to be apolitical and separated from everything. I was told by my foreign acquaintances that they didn't know who their country's prime minister was and so on. I was very surprised because we are so actively involved in politics since our childhood. There has always been tension, some kind of fever, so everybody is

linked with political life and who bears responsibility and feels obliged before the society, In my opinion, is involved in politics and takes part in it.

resp1: When a citizen takes part in the elections I think that the one is a participant of the political process.

Moderator: NN6 you said that you were not involved in politics, why?

resp6: I have always been active, though I didn't have any interest in politics and I tried to be separated but it is impossible because I feel responsibility. There is a lot of problems today around us and we the young people have to be engaged in politics.

I am NN7 25 years old and I tried to be cognizant of political issues. We have no emotional mood to be interested in politics but we have to get information via media. I am less involved

I am Nini 19 years old, I have never tried to be involved in politics. In my opinion, it is necessary to know what happens around us because it is true that politics are deemed as a dirty business and we don't want to involve but our lives are governed by politics. Without politics, important issues are not solved. That's why we take part in elections. If we want to have a good future we must be active.

Moderator: I wonder what is your attitudes towards Georgian politicians? How much do you trust them and what conditions your trust?

resp6: I cannot say that I am totally disappointed, though I can't really tell that I trust someone. Politicians nowadays try to adjust on the target audience they are working on. Consequently, the changes appeared. Generally, I have nihilistic attitudes. I watched revolutions when I was a child, there were many disappointments toward the ruling individuals. Weather changes fast in politics and attitudes change even in political parties, they change their places. It is impossible not to change attitudes, after all, I think the people have lost their trust.

Moderator: Who do you mean by famous politicians?

Respondent: Mostly the member of the ruling party and opposition politicians. Shalve Natelashvili always shouts but I don't think he is a politician.

Resp4: I don't trust the members of political parties, firstly because I don't know them then it will find out that they did something wrong in the past. You cannot trust anyone completely, especially the politician. The process goes by itself. Sometimes they do such things that I cannot see that anything changes for the country and I blame politicians for it. Political parties, governments have power by they try less or they cannot do it.

Resp2: I trust neither old nor new politicians. For example, I remember when a justice minister was appointed, opposition argued that she had graduated ENA and she was not allowed to be in the position. She doesn't have a legal education. No political figure managed to gain my trust, such things happen.

Resp1: I don't trust the majority of them. Fulfilled and not fulfilled promises. I assess them with the criteria. Promises are not fulfilled. They promise more than they can do. I have an impression that they don't even count what they promise. It is incomprehensible how they form the election program. It doesn't matter who you vote every time, it will not be fulfilled anyway. Nothing specifically changed for me.

Resp7: I like the politicians who are loyal to their ideas and parties. They have certain values and defend them. Politicians often change their parties that is not serious and how can you trust them?!

Resp5: There are people who unconditionally trust politicians that resolve into fanaticism it is irrational somehow. I can't single out the politicians and name them, though there are good politicians, for example, Tbilisi mayor Kakhi Kaladze, I think not only the voters of "Georgian

Dream” but supporters of other parties have positive attitudes toward him. I can not see opposition candidates as politicians, there are parties and politicians who do not seem to be adequate, in the ruling team there are adequate politicians where they are formed.

Moderator: Do the Georgian political systems and processes present effective and real democracy?

Resp1: What do you mean by political systems?

Moderator: Formation of government, ongoing processes in parliament and so on. Do the political processes go democratically?

Resp8: They say, for instance, they are holding democratic elections, but in reality, we are still far from the Western countries in this direction. It is good if we move towards the west but we are not democratic now. I think that people’s opinion doesn’t play a big role in reality. I can not feel that we can change something.

Resp4: In my opinion, this is because the society has no choice. The choice between the parties and politicians. I think we have moved a little forward regarding elections. The old processes that I remember don’t happen anymore. I don’t base my opinion upon a specific example I just infer this from the attitude of the society. It is way better now. However, this doesn’t mean that politicians are better it is because people have the opportunity to express their opinion now more likely than they had before.

Resp2: There is more freedom though we should not imagine that everything is okay when the country is ruled by a man and we have a one-party parliament, there are no changes in this direction.

Resp1: We have freedom of expression. Our problem is that we don’t know who to choose and we cannot make a right choice. We choose between bad and the worse and I will continue about the parliament – in my opinion, it is impossible to talk about the democracy when there are no different opinions within the majority. How should all agree or disagree? Is it possible that a Kareli municipality deputy and a deputy of a district in Tbilisi have the same opinion about everything ?!

Moderator: Why does this happen?

Resp1: One man plans it and instructions come from him. I don’t have any other idea. We are many people here and everyone has different opinions. If an ideology unifies us it is possible that our ideas will be more or less the same, but it is impossible to have the same position on everything. If one decides and others follow that means that there is no democracy.

Resp6: Democracy means people’s rule, right? We don’t rule, we are ruled by them this is evident. They do what one man wishes so I feel insulted as an ordinary citizen. I was in parliamentary elections as an observer and I think that civil consciousness has been raised. New generation is coming, we started to assess events more critically but when I saw what was happening on one of the voting stations when a representative of “Georgian dream” was calling to people and was telling them who to vote for and I was looking at the people and realized that they were ruled by a specific person. Some might be ruled by a party. I am not saying that “Georgian Dream” had an influence on the voters. This is an ugly system that I don’t know how to help. Maybe something has changed but I don’t think so.

1: Voters who are afraid of losing their jobs are forced to vote. Therefore, I do not see any difference between the fact when during Shevardnadze’s period they used to put voting papers directly into the ballot boxes and when they threaten you to vote or you will lose the job.

Resp1: As far as I know, a chairman of the building was pestered and forced by them to mobilize voters. One of the chairmen told me that she didn’t know what to do as they had told her to bring

people or leave the position. These cases were more likely to be my last surveillance than in 2016. Fewer people forced a voter to come to the voting stations. Now they use social networks more frequently than before they are fixing it by writing to them and they don't have to be active near the voting stations.

Moderator: We will return to the elections topic once again. Let's end the topic about the political situation. What changes do you wish?

Resp6: I demand from the parties relevant evaluation of the reality and relevant promises. When a politician tells me that he will do this and he lies to me, I feel disappointed. Elene Khoshtaria has sprung to my mind, who I didn't like at first but then I realized that she had adequate promises, she had calculated everything, I don't know exactly she might lie but her promises were convincing. Unfortunately, the government came because their leader was a billionaire that had made promises and the majority believed. I expect adequacy and respect of society from the parties.

Resp7: I would like to have a variety of choices, if the other parties were more adequate, to have a view adjusted on modern and ideology, it would be great. Democracy would progress in this direction.

Resp4: I cannot tell anything different, it is important that our citizens feel that they rule and politicians should do beneficial things. Unfortunately, I think that the situation will not be like this for a long time. I agree with the opinion that we have no alternative to political parties

Moderator: Let's move on to the party's topic and talk about which political parties we have in general and characterize their programs if you have information about it

Resp5: As far as I know there are more than 200 parties in Georgia which is unreal, for the little country, where live more than 4 millions of people. Among the parties, I would single out ruling team – "Georgian Dream", "United National movement", "European Georgia" but a ruling party doesn't have a stable alternative or strong opposition.

Moderator: How would you assess the parties that you have just named?

Resp5: If we compare "Georgian dream" and "Nationals", it was necessary to have the results what we had in 2012, when "Georgian Dream" came in the government. Before 2012 I had seen what was happening in Georgia especially in regions. Especially in the extreme region such as Samegrelo. I think that the most adequate party is "Georgian Dream" because people mostly have negative attitudes toward "National movement", I know them, what they did and I don't see the future in them or in European Georgia. I think they are the same. I cannot support "The alliance of patriots" because of their policy, neither Natelashvili nor Kukava.

Moderator: How do you single out "Georgian dream"? What causes your sympathy in terms of programs?

Resp5: It depends on different programs, the reforms that have been implemented in terms of the economy lately by prime minister Bakhtadze are very good. I mean reforms implemented in the banking sector. As I know banks have been restricted to lend loans. This is good to some extent. They are oriented on tourism which is very good. We should work hard in the education system and the government should invest there because we don't have natural resources and that's why. We should look after the education.

Moderator: Are education issues in the programs of any political party?

Resp5: Everyone has a little bit. In fact, I do not see progress in this regard. The ministers of education change so fast that people are unable to clear up

Moderator: NN3 what would you say regarding political parties? Do you know their programs?

Resp4: I know badly. Despite the fact that I have information. I try to avoid it consciously. I think it is a pre-election pledge that will never be fulfilled. I'm skeptical and I do not believe in from the very beginning. When I hear that something was done, then I become interested.

Moderator: Let me ask. As I see you cannot see the differences between the two ramifications of “Georgian Dream” and “National movement

Resp4: It's hard to evaluate. I know the program of none of them, thus I cannot assess

Resp8: I paid attention if any politician or political party would say anything about the education in the pre-election period. As I see, everything comes from education and they talk about it the less. Mostly they talk about the increase in pensions.

Resp2: Mostly pensioners come to the elections, respectively the main target are they. In my opinion “Girchi” is distinguished, I like them because they are oriented on the young people and they realized that they should be focused on the young. They are liberals and I like them. They pay attention to the young people.

Resp8: “Girchi” is trying to involve young people in politics. No one has ever talked about drug-policy besides “Girchi” and they appeared suddenly. “Girchi” is focused on particular issues. One cannot thrive economy in a day. Drug policy is one project and they have such an approach that distinguishes them from the others.

Resp1: The government promised to reduce utility taxes, improve the ecological situation and we all know what happened, everything increased on the contrary. I don't trust “National movement” because they sacrificed the whole country just for 5 individuals. So I will not read the programs it has no idea. As for the “Girchi” I don't trust them either, because they are offspring of “National movement”. They haven't changed, they just saw that this segment was not adopted and they are working on the issue now. They work well it's no doubt. When there is a lot of bananas on the market I will not import bananas I will import apple instead. Thus acts “Girchi”. If they come in government can they do anything else? Will they be able to settle other important issues? The only political party that I like is the Republican party, their members are educated, they talk reasonably, they talk with facts, they prove why the certain change is important, I like Levan Berdzenishvili very much because he is an intellectual person, other members of the party are interesting people as well. When the Republican party was in the coalition they were the most democratic party, they were distinguished with draft initiatives. Members of “Georgian Dream” say that they are right-wing centrists but it is not visible. Only Republicans are loyal to the ideas and what is important they know it. Majority of the members of parliament cannot explain the terms that they use in speaking.

Resp6: I prefer an educated person with a little bad past to an uneducated one who doesn't know what is she/he doing and is not able to do anything. It is easier to rule an uneducated person than the educated one. I see the solution, that we like different parties but I can't see the people united in one political party and I think that they should unite and not disperse into different parties. For example, as far as I dislike Giga Bokeria, so much I like the addresses of his wife, Tamar Chergoleishvili

Moderator: What do you like in terms of content?

Resp6: They make a right political evaluation. I am not saying that they have serious strategies and objectives in terms of country development. When we talk about the attitudes towards politicians the only importance has how much my opinion matches his/her.

Moderator: Can you characterize the programs of political parties?

Resp5: Everybody tries to choose its own segment. We talked about “Girchi” here. They talk about such issues that many families and young people worry about. Drug policy, for instance, it is interesting for them who are concerned.

Moderator: Does any political party talk about the needs of women?

Resp2: Republicans do, they supported to set women quotas in parliament.

Resp1: What I like with Republicans is that they try to protect the interests of minorities. When the majority wins it doesn't mean they shouldn't protect the rights of minorities. They talk about the rights of disabled people and sexual minorities and what is more they don't talk superficially because they are a minority in politics and they know what it means

Resp3: I want to say about the Republican party that they indeed have educated people in the party but I have never seen their radical steps to changes. They have resources but they don't do anything. As for setting quotas for women and ethnic minorities, I think it is a serious problem and I cannot remember a party where the people are presented in normal numbers. I remember only Elene Khoshtaria who was a mayor candidate. They said that it was an advantage that she was a woman and it was good but there were 30 men behind her when she was on tv. In reality, men are making an agenda and it is unequivocal. It has no meaning to talk about the ethnic minorities.

Resp1: I remember that Republican party had a representative of LGBT community during the local self-government elections.

Resp3: Women are not in the foreground. We all know only some instances

Resp2: When a party list is planned for the elections, the budget of parties are increased if there are women on the list. I think that women don't have a desire

Moderator: You said that you would wish education issues to be in the election program

Resp1: Human rights should be presented

Moderator: Constitution regulates it, doesn't it?

Resp1: Yes, it does but it is necessary to talk about it in order to control it and not to be violated. One thing is what is written in the law and the other how it is implemented. What's the point if it will not be implemented?! There is written in the constitution that everybody has the right to get an education but is it really accessible?! If we don't implement what is written in the law, what's the idea?! They should promise that they will protect and they must. Another important issue is ecology.

Resp4: I know the programs of some parties but as it was said here they write everything in the programs. We are sure that they will not fulfill anything from there. Therefore, voters should have faith that the promise will be fulfilled.

Moderator: “Girchi” is focused on the young people, is this more acceptable for you or the parties that are oriented on the different segment?

Resp4: I think it is better if the party is oriented on different issues.

Resp1: One political party will demand decriminalization other will demand to protect rights and so on. I think it will not be bad.

Moderator: Eka, what would you like to insert in programs political parties?

Resp7: There are many problems in the country but in my opinion the health care field needs attention. Regardless it is paid attention but this is not enough. In my opinion, there must be an opportunity to mend something elementary.

Moderator: Let's move on to the elections that we partly discussed in the beginning. I wonder how often do you go to the elections and do you know the parties' programs when you go to the elections?

Resp6: I was not in the last elections because I didn't know who to vote for. I think that to participate in the elections is a must because, in my opinion, it can change the political weather.

Resp1: Our country will become democratic when one doesn't vote for a party because his cousin is in the party.

Resp3: I wasn't able to go to the last elections because I am not registered in Tbilisi and couldn't vote. However, when I was there none of the names of candidates were familiar to me. Then I voted for the one who I knew more or less and was acceptable to me.

Resp5: I have never participated in the elections. Because I was not an adult then and after that, I was not in Georgia. I couldn't vote abroad. So I have not voted yet and I will go definitely. I know the main parties. It depends who will be on the next elections. There are many parties which I don't know.

Resp2: I voted because in the party were qualified and education people

Moderator: what other criteria did you give priority to the party with?

Resp2: I had information about the two parties and I made my choice between them as I said I voted according to the qualification

Resp4: I voted in 2012 for the last time and I chose between the bad and the worse.

Resp7: I voted in 2012 too and I haven't been to the elections since.

Resp7: I was in the elections of 2014. A voting station was opened in my school and my teacher who was an observer forced me to vote for the specific party. I haven't had a desire to vote since,

Moderator: Can we generalize this particular case and say that it is a systemic problem?

Resp7: Yes maybe. Generally, I think that an observer shouldn't be from the public sector. I have an impression that they follow you to sack you from the job. I have heard a case when a teacher left school because she didn't take part in the agitation.

Moderator: What other shortcomings do you remember?

Resp3: I was an observer in the elections of 2016 presenting "International Transparency Georgia" and there was no shortcoming there. I was very surprised, I was ready to fulfill my job honestly. I didn't see anything special. I didn't notice anything that was mentioned here.

Resp5: There is no such falsification as it was before when they burst into the voting station and put papers into the ballot box. I work at exit-polls and saw how the coordinator mobilized voter.

Resp1: Yes, I noticed mobilized work of coordinators. They had a list where they checked who came and who didn't.

Resp6: When I asked people about exit-polls who they had voted for they were confused they didn't even know who they had chosen and why they had been in the elections. It was evident that they were going to elections unreasonably and this is how is decided who will come into the government.

Resp2: I have heard that they move in the streets and deliver voters to the polling stations. They serve them with cars. Observers and commission members cannot see what happens outside the precinct.

Moderator: Don't the non-governmental organizations monitor outside?

Resp2: Not permanently they just look over

Resp2: Observers broke the rules during the counting process they came and observed how we were counting the votes they not only interfered but also were giving directions

Resp1: The fact that an agitator always is at the voting station and tries to control participants of the voters is a systematic problem that should be settled.

Moderator: Do you know where the parties get their finances from?

Resp1: I know for sure that they are financed from the budget. We know who finances Bidzina Ivanishvili. We don't know exactly who gets finances from Russia and USA.

Resp4: "Alliance of Patriots" is probably financed from Russia because they try to implement the policy what Russia has.

Moderator: Let's move on to the next issue that touches upon the role civil society organizations in the election process. How much do you know any non-governmental organizations that are actively involved in the election-monitoring process or tries to facilitate the political reforms? Which organizations do you remember?

Resp1: I think that non-governmental organizations are ruled by the political parties, some like one and some like the other.

Resp5: I have just remembered "Transparency Georgia", "Fair Elections" where Mikheil Benidze is a director. These organizations always observe, are always active in media and are everywhere.

Resp3 I remember GYLA

Resp5: More than 17 thousand organizations are registered and only several dozens of them are active.

Resp4: I trust everyone whom I had contact with, "Transparent Georgia" GYLA and others. I was very happy when I was an observer from "transparency Georgia" I trusted them and I knew that I wasn't defending the interests of a particular party but my duty was to contribute to the democratic conduct of the elections.

Moderator: What would you say about GYLA?

Resp8: I had contact with GYLA but not in terms of elections. My acquaintances work there and I know that they are monitoring the elections. I trust GYLA the most because I have never heard from anyone that they pursue the interests of any particular political party, they are objective as much as possible and try to fulfill their duty honestly.

Resp5: Non-governmental organizations mostly are financed from foreign donor organizations. Their sponsors are listed on their web pages. Information about their finances is open and public.

Resp6: I am not aware and cannot say exactly anything, though I think that non-governmental organizations fulfill their functions in Georgia. They say what they have to say. It would be worse if they were not here.

Resp1: There is much control

Resp4: I can't really say but it is good that they exist and it is obvious that they have an impact

Moderator: Do you trust them?

Resp4: I trust them more

Resp1: It is good that they exist but for me are important the activities they spend money on. It seems to me that they spend a bigger amount of money than there is gain. As we are the calamitous country we must spend the less and gain more. As a rule, when ministers are changed, they don't refine or hone the things that were made but start to make their own business. This is evident in the educational system. The reason for it is that they lack long-term plans and they are not educated this is the problem. There is no resource to build new things every time.

Moderator: Eka what will you say? What role should non-governmental organizations have in Georgia in terms of conducting democratic and fair elections?

Resp5: I appreciate their work they are active and we get a lot of information from them?

Moderator: In what direction should they be activated?

Resp5: It is hard to say

Resp6: I think they should express their position more clearly they have a neutral position now and accordingly they have less influence. There should be the evident difference between them and government organizations.

Resp3: After all that I see I don't think that they are neutral

Resp6: I am saying that they are not active enough and they don't say their message sharply. The sources of their finance are not as important as the work they do. I single out the work on women's rights non-governmental organizations are active in this regard.

Moderator: What can they do in election processes?

Resp6: They should make processes more transparent.

Resp1: They should control the agitators that work inside and outside the elections. Non-governmental organizations can also control the fulfillment of promises that are made by the political parties. To prepare that in a form of a report and tell us what was done.

Resp3: Every non-governmental organization has its own work-field and direction so they cannot do the job, it doesn't have a mandate to do this, can't divert from the main direction. We can't demand and have the expectation they will do the work that is not in their responsibility.

Resp1: Every NGO should ask for answers according to their directions. Those who work on women request answers from the government about women. Because the resource is spent and there is no result.

Moderator: I wonder if you know about the international organizations that are working in Georgia to make elections more democratic and facilitate to conduct the democratic election.

Resp3: Yes I know but I can't remember

Resp1: I know that observers come from abroad within the different mission, if you name it I may recall.

Moderator: For example NDI

Resp1: Yes I know the organization

Moderator: Also IRI

Resp1: Yes, this too

Moderator: IFES and USAID

Resp1: NDI is the most famous among them

Moderator: How would you evaluate the activity of the organizations?

Resp5: I think that these organizations have little trust in Georgia. I see the negative attitude of the public and the politicians towards them. For example, the "Georgian Dream" is sharply negative towards NDI, because what NDI says "Georgian Dream" does not approve.

Moderator: What influence do the organizations have on the election process in Georgia?

Resp4: I don't know I have no answer

Resp8: The organizations have some kind of fear of the organizations. They try to please them because they get finances from them

Resp2: They are always trying to impress the organizations.

Resp8: International organizations spend a lot of resource in terms of finance in Georgia

Resp3: Political parties always take into account the international organization. I personally have a positive attitude towards them.

Moderator: The impact of international organizations after 2014 is the same as it was or has it changed?

Resp6: I cannot answer that question because in that case, I must know the activities of a particular organization to make inferences. They have done lots of things regarding education. I don't think that something has been changed radically.

Moderator: In the future, what would you wish the organizations to make in Georgia?

Resp6: Rule of law and transparency is the most important to me and if they continue to work in the direction it will be good. In terms of elections, every violation must be announced publicly because they say that a single vote and a violation is nothing. The organizations have a lever to change the situation they have the possibility to spread the information.

Moderator: Would you like to add something?

Resp3: I will add what should be written in the programs. I think that there is a resource to create more jobs and I think that political parties should work on this. Unemployment is a serious problem in our country.

Resp6: I'm most worried about the budget expenditure. Bonuses and additions that officials receive. There is a difficult situation in the country and we should face the reality. My money should not be eaten by someone politician Gia Volski,

Resp1: Or even the Patriarchate or any other confession functioning in Georgia.

Resp5: I want to say something regarding the bonuses, as we know government optimization is going on and according to new rules it is impossible to take bonuses anymore and the number of bonuses was distributed on the salaries.

Moderator: Thank you very much for interesting discussion.

Focus Group #3:

Men who vote for the same party

Focus group

Tbilisi

Hello. I am Mariam Devidze a researcher from Institute of social studies and analysis. Today I am representing the study that touches upon the evaluation of the current political situation and this encompasses political parties as well. We will talk about the election system, about the organizations that are involved in improving the election system and we are interested in your opinions regarding these. We are recording it on a video, though this means that it will stay with us just for our organization, the information that you will discuss here will be confidential, this means that there will be no quotes from the discussion under your name that might be identified in public space. Please be candid, let each other speak in order to listen to your voices clearly and we will talk approximately for an hour and a half. If you are ready please introduce yourself and tell us your name, age, and occupation.

43 years old, currently unemployed.

- , 46 years old, I am employed.

-NN

-, 33 years old, I am employed and married as well

- NN2

- 58 years old

- NN3, 48 years old

Nice to meet you. Let's move to the questions. Firstly, I wonder how much are you interested in political events and how do you feel that you are a participant in the processes?

(43 years old) – I am not interested in politics.

- **Do you get information every day?**

(43 years old) – No, I don't

- **What would the others say?**

NN2 - For example, I switched on the tv yesterday and I saw such things that I turned it off.

- **How do you deem yourself as a participant of the current political processes?**

(33 Years old) - I think we are engaged in the process involuntarily. It depends on the doses of course. Society still gets information via media, social network. Plus the fact there is not the proper situation as in developed countries, where 7 out of 10 don't know who their president is. It is vice versa with us. People are more involved in politics I can't say whether this is good or bad.

- **What do you mean by involvement, the information they get or involvement itself?**

(33 Years old) - They get information. As for involvement, politicians come on active contact at decision-making process and one who has intention enters in dialogue with them

NN - Yes I am interested

- **I am interested in your attitudes towards Georgian politicians. How much do you trust them and what conditions your trust or distrust?**

(33 Years old) - We are following the process blindly at the process. We make our decision between bad and worse.

- **There is not an election period now and what is the level of your trust? It is understandable that the indicator is high in the pre-election period but what is it like at the stage?**

NN - Level of trust is as the opposition acts...I don't know how many years one party should rule to make something. They come, do something in the beginning then they cease to do it. Then they leave. Others come. I don't know, will there be help for us?

- At least we have hope now. We have trust as well. Some kind of trust. I have. Maybe someone appears who will have some good idea and does something for the country.

- **Are the politicians who you trust the members of majority or the opposition?**

- Mostly they are members of the majority.

- In terms of the trust, I don't know who I can trust. They are liars. Has anything been fulfilled what they promised people? They promised they would plant greenery, would give us something but...The gardens and squares are being hacked. Pine trees are withered in Didube and nobody thinks of cutting them down. There will be no reaction until it falls on someone's head. They can't settle even a rudimentary thing and how can they make bigger ones? They don't care about ecology or democracy. They lie to us every day.

- **Mr. NN2, what do you think?**

NN2 - We have the same mentality what we had after the Soviet Union.

- **What do you mean?**

NN2 - I mean that what is done in Tbilisi, mostly is made by the previous government. This government has done nothing that we can appraise them for it. What they did, it had been done or started by the previous government. In the previous government, I mean National movement.

- **I understand, so you have distrust towards the government because of that. What about the national movement?**

NN2 - As for the national movement, they had many negatives indeed but they did many things, at least they made something. Anyway, they did more than the government, it's no doubt.

- **All right. In terms of the trust. Do you trust the members of national movement now?**

- It depends. I trust some, some I don't.

NN2 - In National movement, I trusted shvili for example, but now he is in prison.

- **Mr. , What were you saying?**

- There is good and bad with this government and with previous. They did many things but they did bad even more. This government has done many bad. They have done something good as well. You can't erase everything just like that.

- **What conditions your trust or distrust towards the politician?**

- An individual himself. One's deed and keeping his word.

- **Let's talk about Georgian democracy in General. What do you think is this a democracy and are the systems in accordance with it?**

- It depends on what you mean in democracy. Democracy is freedom, the right to work, it means people's rule. This is the right to work when you have the right to speak.

NN - We have semi-slavery labor rights. The poor people work, one may work for 14 hours a day and accept a low salary because of the poverty.

- **Let's talk about the systems. Election system, parliament, shifting process of the politicians. How democratic and transparent are these systems?**

- When elections are falsified in the country what democracy you can talk about. They say the elections are falsified. 10 % of it. This parliamentary composition expresses the opinion of the people. 80% of them are from the ruling party. When this government changes by revolution I think, the new government will come and dismiss everyone. They will appoint their own people. As it happened with the National movement, their representatives were dismissed and our government appointed their people. Then the other will come. I want to say that you are insecure. You may be a good professional but someone will come and fire you. You were the image of the government and you can not work anymore.

- **Mr. NN3, what do you think? How would you assess the democracy?**

NN3 - There is no freedom and democracy in our country. They get what they want and they forget about their people.

- One of the main principles of democracy is equality. Everyone should be responsible for their actions equally whether he is a minister or an ordinary citizen. This is one of the principles but a minister can commit a crime when an ordinary citizen can not.

- I think that there is no democracy in Georgia

- **What hinders us?**

- We lack willingness. We don't have a desire as well. Nobody has it. We can not grow up so far.

- **Mr. NN What would you add?**

NN- We cannot develop. There is some kind of democracy comparing to communists but we still can't evolve.

- We are in better condition than we were 20-30 years ago, but still....

- **Where else do we need to develop?**

- More activity is needed, society needs to raise its awareness to strengthen the educational system to take a right direction. They may not make it swiftly but we should walk in a proper direction. There is more chaos today than a progress to the right direction. People can't form these directions. Lawmakers and government should do it. It is necessary to find the right way and the people will be active afterward.

- **I'm also interested in others. Mr. said that we are not as we were 20 years ago. How do you view it? And if we take into consideration the events that have happened recently, do you see any development in terms of democracy?**

- People are becoming more law-abiding. You adapt to changes, the order to some extent and you realize that it is good, you know what is bad and so on.

- Some process goes and then may happen such thing, for example, what happened in Petriashvili street, that leaves so radical mark that we realize we are 10-15 years behind. If he were an ordinary citizen he would have been imprisoned for 15 years. The murder happened 6

months ago, a killer exists and they can not end the case. Is this a case for us to decide? Other countries are watching it. And this kind of cases drugs us behind, in terms of everything.

- **Let's move to the parties. What parties can you name? Which parties are in Georgia?**

(33 Years old) - Can I name? I will name the parties their existence makes sense. We all know the ruling party. There are oppositional parties. The national movement, that is competitive. Labourists, Inashvili.

- **What other parties do you recall?**

(33 Years old) – New Georgia, European Georgia

- Girchi

(43 Years old) - Democrats

NN - National forum

- **That's enough. Mostly the parties are active in our political field and I wonder if you know their election program and political agenda. What differences do you see? What promises can you recall?**

NN- Healthcare, agriculture was the promises of the Georgian Dream.

(33 Years old) - They started well in the beginning if we touch upon the agriculture issue. A farmer received finances, some kind of status. In mountainous regions, they were financed differently comparing to the valley. They cultivated the land and there were many aids for example petrol, cultivation, tools and many more. After two years they realized that it was expensive and instead of continuing and changing some structure, they ceased it. As for the program, there was written so much, about the depreciation of gas taxes, electricity taxes though they raised instead. They installed water numerators and if you use water for irrigation you would probably have to pay half of your salary. So I can't use water and cultivate the land. We pay 700 Laris just to install the numerator. Give the poor people the numerators at least.

- **What are the differences between European Georgia and National movement?**

(33 Years old) - I think the idea is the same. They have the same promises. Giorgi Vashadze's party is different. They are more oriented on technology, technology refining. Inashvili's party has written everything well, the main thing is their fulfillment.

- **What about "Girchi"?**

(43 Years old) - Girchi is oriented on scandalous topics. Their policy is just to make a comment.

- **In your opinion do the promises of the parties include the needs of an average man, average citizen?**

- If I am given 50 000 dollars as a gift this would be nothing. If the economic situation doesn't develop you can not build a country. You can offer that you can or can not do something. The may or may not compromise. Production level, agriculture should be improved in the country.

(33Years old) - We need a better economic situation in the country. Employment, plus agriculture, the whole country lives in Tbilisi. They must pay attention to the regions, they should give a stimulus to a man to cultivate the land to sell produced goods and their labor must be appreciated. Azerbaijan took nectarines in large quantities form Kakheti 2 years ago. The farmers were very pleased, the customs tariff was 10 Tetris for a kilo. Now when the season came it has become 90 Tetris. No matter how much are you going to buy you are paying 90

Tetris for a kilo anyway. Imagine how much they raised the tariff and not even a kilo was brought to Azerbaijan. In fact, this source has been closed for the farmer.

- **Georgian dream had a policy for small enterprises. How would you assess the program?**

- I haven't heard but it would be good if it were implemented.

(43 Years old) - Nothing has been done in reality. My friend had the case. They were making an enterprise, they were financed, they were going for 3 years to them in hope for they would be given money. They had to invest 30% or 20% of their money, they got it but they couldn't fulfill it anyway. They would employ the people. Oil and spirits would be distilled and the remaining wheat and maize would be used for combined enterprise. They were made to go there for 3 years, writing projects and then they bid farewell.

(33 Years old) - Put Agara Sugar Factory in motion. We also received text messages about it. They congratulated people on the fact that the Agara Sugar factory had been commissioned. I received it as well that we had moved to the Georgian product. But there is no production. You can see the warehouse. Sugar is brought here, packed with Georgian writing and sold.

- **As far as I know, they produce the sugar there.**

No, no they don't.

- **Mr.NN what would you say? What are the other issues parties should work on?**

NN - Firstly, I think that our country is an agro-state. We have always been involved in agriculture. Agriculture should be strengthened, everything comes from the village. This is the economy. We have fruits. Make a juice factory. You should export integrated products. Yes, some things are done. We have wine, Borjomi. I remember we had wheat...Do we import 100% wheat now? I remember that we produced 50% of wheat in our country before. We should make a factory people will be employed and we will have our own production.

- **Besides the economic issues, what else can you single out to be presented on political parties' agenda and to work on them?**

- One of the most important is the education system, health care is also very significant.

(33 Years old) - Maybe strategic objects, topics of strategic significance...Our enemies – Turks are importing flour. 20% of our flour maybe more are imported by Turks. They are genetically our enemies, they want our extinction and they bring it. Does anyone control what kind of flour is that? What causes it in humans?

NN- They are taking our potatoes and bringing theirs.

(33 Years old) - This is the state's responsibility. People cannot do this, right?

- **What should parties change in relation with the people? What do you think?**

(33 Years old) - They should meet us intensively and not only in the election period. There must be some program with people, district, yards, there is some kind of self-government. I don't know exactly what the structures are like. They may not come to every family but there are problems that have yards, buildings, regions. There must be some contacts and not only in the pre-election period. They only pay attention to our problems when elections come. Then the programs are ceased mostly. May there happens some things and I am sure there is but it is very few.

(43 Years old) - If you don't change situation fundamentally there will be no way out. If we don't change the election system someone will always falsify it. Then a revolution will happen.

After 10-15 years people will come out and destroy everything that is built. Then the new ones will come and start to falsify.

- **How often do you go to the elections?**

(43 Years old) - I always go to the elections

- I took part only in two elections. First I participated in national elections.

- **How many elections did others attend? Mr. Alexander I wonder when you go to the elections do you know the programs of the parties and what do you depend on while making a decision?**

NN2 - The promises are the third issue for me; I can vote for the party that has already done something.

- According to the merit. Pre-election promises are nothing. They can promise to Americans to EU but they can not fulfill them. What kind of people they are personally, what they have done...

- **Mr. NN3, what is decisive for you when you vote for a party?**

NN3- I go and vote as I deem necessary

- Perhaps more personality, education, and experience. What they have done so far

(43 Years old) – They should promise fundamental changes on the elections. At first, I determine whether a party is pro-western or pro-Russian.

(33 Years old) - They all have the same promises. I focus on their experience and whether they have financial or human resources. No party touches upon the issue of territorial integrity. They should do something or negotiate when they come in power. I know that negotiation with Russia is impossible but there is diplomacy, right?! Something should be done without Russia, either with Abkhazians or Ossetians. There should be some projects. I am making a choice in terms of experience.

- **In your opinion, how free and fair elections are held with us?**

(33 Years old) - Stalin once said you may know it: “The one who makes research wins the elections”.

- I think that they were chosen by society. There might be some falsifications but I think it was objective.

(43 Years old) - There is no falsification on the precinct. Because falsification rate is up to 10%. The reason is finances. The companies used to finance the national movement and after they went the companies began to fund Georgian dreams. Everything starts from there, from television.

- **What do you think Mr. ?**

- The biggest mistake of our people is that they don't go to the elections. If they go to the elections they can not falsify the elections.

- **What do you think why don't people go to the elections?**

- Because they don't know what it means. They don't get that it is important.

- Nothing changes with that. If I go there or not.

(33 Years old) - What changed when I voted for the last time?

- **As far as I know, you voted for the same party at the last two elections. What conditioned your choice?**

(33 Years old) - The only plus that it has is that accustomed old problems are easier to deal with than with new ones.

- **What shortcomings did you hear about in the election period?**

(43 Years old) - I heard about the shortcomings. The coordinators were allowed inside during the election period. They controlled who came and who didn't. There are lots of case like this. I am comparing now. There were falsifications during the National movement's rule but they did it differently. They brought Inashvili into parliament by falsification. She didn't overcome the margin she was not able to enter into parliament so the government abolished the voting stations were she didn't win. These precincts were abolished with some formal reason.

- **Where do you get the information from?**

Mostly from internet

- **How do you want to change the elections?**

These Majoritarian must be abolished. We don't need assembly as well. They are bribed. It should be proportional and everything will be in accordance with that. It is inadmissible to get 44% and enter the parliament with 80%.

- **Let's talk about the role of civil society, as you know there are local organizations that are engaged in election monitoring process and in system reforming issues. Have you heard of such an organization?**

(43 Years old) - Fair elections, transparency international.

(33 Years old) – Young lawyer's association

- **How much do you trust the organizations and what is their role in your opinion?**

- Maybe Transparency International

(43 Years old)- In my opinion, these organizations more or less are really objective. They have some standards and they satisfy minimal standards.

(33 Years old) - Of course, if more organizations involved in the process the falsification will decrease. But not with 100%

- **Besides the local organizations, there are international organizations that are involved in the elections. Which organizations do you remember?**

(33 Years old) - It is interesting by which criteria these organizations are chosen. Who brings them? Who invites them? US embassy is actively involved, we remember that Shashkin was named as one of the founders of NDI.

- **What is your attitude toward the organizations? How much do you trust them?**

- I don't trust them. They all have their interest.

(33 Years old) – 50/50, I don't trust anyone with 100%

- **ახდენენ ისინი გავლენას საარჩევნო პროცესებზე? Do they have an impact on the election process?**

(43 Years old) - They can not directly do it.

- **Okay, let's finish then. Thank you very much for visiting, for your time and for this interesting discussion.**

Focus Group #4

Location of the focus-group: Tbilisi

Participants: Women of 30-60 years, who as a rule, vote for the same party

Moderator: Mariam Devidze

Moderator: Let's start, hello once again. First, I will introduce myself and the objectives of our research. I am Mariam Devidze, a researcher from the Institute of social studies and analysis. We gathered here to conduct a focus group, a discussion. We will talk about the political issues, we wonder what kind of democracy we have in Georgia that we will separate into following issues: political systems, election procedure, election system in general, parties and the organization that are involved in the election systems and we are interested in your opinions about the issues. We are recording the discussion on the video and audio device, though the research will be confidential, which means that your names will not appear in the public space, so please be candid. Another request I would like to say is, not to speak simultaneously because your voices will cover each other and we will not be able to hear your opinion properly. Our discussion will last an hour and a half and if you don't mind let's start. Let's start with you.

1: , 30 years old, a teacher

#2: , 42 years old, self-employed

#3: , 52 years old, an engineer, currently unemployed

#4: , 51 years old, a doctor

#5: , 50 years old, owns a private business

#6: , 54 years old, economist

#7: , 35 years old, philosopher, I work for an insurance company.

Moderator: Sounds interesting. I will ask you the first question then. I wonder how much are you interested in ongoing political processes and how much do you feel as a part of the process?

#1: I am interested very much but I don't know how much I am participant...one is a participant when someone is interested in your opinion and shares it, no one shows interest in our opinions

#7: I think we are all involved, this is our everyday life.

Moderator: How much are you interested in these processes?

#7: I am interested more or less, I don't watch the news every day, but I get the information via social networks anyway.

Moderator: Would you add something?

4: We all are more or less involved. We hear the news so we are involved

#3: We are less likely involved, we are listening to the news. My tv is always on, I know ongoing processes, but I think that I am not involved actively, because I don't attend the meetings and such events, but I think that nobody will our opinion into account.

Moderator: Let's move on to the second question, I wonder what attitude do you have towards Georgian politicians? How much do you trust them? What conditions the level of your trust?

#1: I don't trust them

Moderator: Why don't you trust?

#4: When the government is new the trust factor is high, then it decreases gradually and after 4-5 years, it becomes low for the next elections, that is necessary for the next stages

#7: Attitude that you have from the beginning remains to the end, you know from the first time what they are capable of. They say that everybody is good from the beginning and they spoil later, I don't have an attitude like that.

#4: Did everyone realize you hope you had hoped for?

#7: More or less they did, I have an established opinion from the beginning

Moderator: What is your attitude towards the majority?

#7: I have total distrust towards our political majority.

Moderator: What do you mean by majority? political parties that are in the majority, or the politicians in general?

#7: Mostly politicians. I less likely trust them than I trust

Moderator: Why? What conditions distrust?

#7 Their unconvincing way of speaking causes distrust, in my opinion, they don't have a formed idea about certain things that are their duty, and I think they don't know why they come, they are brought by someone, they are relatives of someone, and they do not know, why they are coming.

Moderator: Mrs. what do you think?

#5: No, I think that not everyone is in the same boat, one may be a good politician but the one cannot make a decision

Moderator: Do you think that things happen like this?

#5: Yes I do

Moderator: Whose interests are they presenting then?

#5: I don't know exactly but someone is ruling them

Moderator: What is the level of your trust?

#5: There are some politicians that I like. I cannot say that everyone is the same.

Moderator: What conditions your trust, how do you choose the politicians you trust?

#5: I had a case with politicians.

Moderator: Do you mean local or central government?

#5: I mean local. I like the minister of healthcare.

Moderator: All right. What about you Mrs.?

3: You know, I spent my whole childhood in the Soviet Union. Then we had the same persons for 30 years, I will not name their identities, then we wanted to remove the people so much that we were excited because of that, the whole nation was like that. We expected the changes and there was some, but after it, chaos began. You know, when they come they try to allot the places and after some time they begin to forget about everything, their promises, their people, they become totally different people, I don't mean a single person, they are all the same. All these years, the experience formed me in a way that I don't believe in anyone now because when they came you were waiting for some changes and nothing noteworthy happens for the people, I don't trust anyone indeed and I don't trust anyone whoever will come, my trust has vanished. I know for sure they will allot the places and nothing will change, we are in a vicious circle, in a maze and we cannot find the way out.

#1: They listen to people before the elections, they give promises and when they get the places, they care about their interests.

Moderator: Mrs. would you share your opinion with us?

#2: They become totally inadequate after the elections, one cannot understand what they want, they change their positions, one minister changes another and still does nothing, you cannot say about anyone that this one did something important

Moderator: So you think that they have opportunities however they don't use them and don't act in a way as you want

#2 In some cases, some of them have, but due to the one's interest, they don't do it. They may have resources but they don't do anything. They are obliged, they have competence but they are under someone's interest and cannot do anything.

#6: Maybe they are not allowed assuming to make something themselves

Moderator: What do you think about, what exactly are the cases.

#6: You know, since the 90's we have been watching the same faces, transfers from one party into another, from one position to the other, I cannot really say that they are totally ignorant but the fact is that they can do nothing, the same goes for the former and present government, how is it possible to assign a person to a position that the one doesn't know, how they can make anything. I am speaking because of the development level of our country, if they could do something this would have an effect on the country. There is nothing to say, we are frozen in the same place. If new faces appear in the politics, they will disappear before we manage to get familiar with them, the old ones are still there, from the national movement, we watch the same people all the time.

#7: The same people are shown on television, those who can talk.

#6: One criticizes the other, and four years pass by while they are blaming each other.

#1: The source of the problem, in my opinion, is that the political parties, in general, are financed by the businessman. This is very bad, that they never criticize, we accept the political parties they come and establish into our country, we don't care where they come from and who they protect, who finances them, by which businessman or a company, they carry out others interests and work on them. They don't work on people and that's a huge problem

#7: They have impact, they work on how to have an influence.

#1: They spend all their money on PR

Moderator: You have aroused a very interesting topic, the financing rule of the parties if you know where the parties are financed from how much you like the financing system

#1: I don't like because they implement the interests of the one who finances them, of course, the person, the team or an organization whoever it is, has influence on them and the politicians aren't free anymore and are very biased and think very little on people, and they act accordingly to the above-mentioned that's why nothing happens and they are in the same place.

#4: We are to blame I think, we should have the right to summon a deputy that does nothing and without any riots, you should be able to cancel their authority. Do you remember anything like that?

Moderator: We will talk about the issues later. I want you to evaluate Georgian political systems in general, how much they are democratic and transparent. How you would asses. By political systems, I mean elections, the formation of the parliament, how you see that, how democratic we are as a state

#6: We are not democratic at all

#7: I would rate by 2 points in the 10 point system.

Moderator: Why? Let's discuss the issue

#7: None of the governmental bodies are transparent. The information about their deeds is inaccessible to us, whether it is finances or other issues. It is inaccessible to us.

Moderator: What other shortcomings would you single out that hinders democratic development?

#7: Can I say something about the freedom of speech?

Moderator: Yes you can say everything how you see it.

#7: It seems that there is freedom of speech, as they say, but it is not true in any direction. Let's take the latest issues, there was no democracy in my opinion. If we take the latest facts, there is no democracy in the issues.

Moderator: Mrs. , I think you wanted to say something...

#6: You know, I think that there is quite a big level of nepotism in our nation, we cannot call this democracy. Any government that comes into power brings its own people, how can we evaluate this as a democracy. We cannot even assess the knowledge level of the individuals that are brought by them. One government was changed by the other, how come that not even a single person was relevant to the new government?! They sack them all and bring their own people. We cannot say that it is a democracy. Personally, I get the information from the social networks, television, even about the elections one channel say that the elections were held properly and the other states that there were some violations. What we should believe. If you are not involved and don't watch with your own eyes, we cannot understand anything and we don't know who to trust. I have very low trust because I have been watching the situation for 30 years and our country isn't going forward but on the contrary, we are staggered on the same place and the nepotism and all...

Moderator: All right, what do you think?

#5: I agree with the lady, but I didn't take part in the elections, I think that nothing happens at the polling station itself, but I don't know what happens after

Moderator: Did you work as an observer?

#5: Yes, I worked as an observer

Moderator: Did any shortcomings reveal at the polling station?

#5: Not at the polling station

Moderator: Was it in the region or in Tbilisi?

#5: It was in Tbilisi

#4: You know, there is no need to reveal the shortcomings during the elections, it might be conducted properly but one doesn't know what they will think after that, when a member of a certain party changes his mind and finds out himself in another party, then you will find out that they are agreed and are very good at each other you can no longer understand what's going on

#2: They defended interests of one party for 10 years and they can sacrifice citizens for that, and suddenly you will find out that they have moved into another party and share their ideas by 200%. When you see it, that a person who dedicated 10 years to a certain party and sacrificed everything through the years and then he transfers into another party and shares its interests, the level of trust decreases to zero for me.

Moderator: What about the democracy itself?

#2: For me, democracy is under zero, in that case, I evaluate everything in this fashion because when a judge in the judicial system is chosen by life-long, undefined period of time when they want to adopt a law which restricts us in electing the president. Some may be apolitical and not be interested in politics but there is a person who is interested in politics and wants to know who will be the president of the country. What can we do in that case? Sit and wait who chooses a president for us? What law will they impose to the president? How will they act? What will you think in that case?

Moderator: Do you think that this is a restriction of expression of human rights?

#2: There is a restriction of human rights and a decrease of democracy as well

Moderator: Is participation in the political processes restriction of human rights?

#2: I am apolitical, I would rate myself by 5 points out of 10, but when such things happen, I am very irritated, and I think that we are living in an unfair state. The fate of the country shouldn't be decided by 200 men. Others should take part, those who are interested in the country's fate. It doesn't matter whether they are young or old

Moderator: we, the people have the freedom of expression, right?

#2: Nobody cares, they will go in the certain region, collect the activists of the parties, switch on the tv and will make them speak what they want, for me it is unacceptable

#1: Everybody sees the freedom of speech differently. It is true that we are not arrested because of saying something, we can say whatever we want, but the thing is that they don't care about our opinions at all. They don't even listen to us

4: Have you been at the rally at least once? Have you tried to go there and say something? You might have been granted by the chance to speak

#1: They would give you that chance, it depends on how others see the freedom of speech. If I say the word, I would like to be a reaction after this and see the result. The thing is, neither will they respond, nor can I see the result.

#5: Not only one should say it, this is our fault.

#1: Yes we lack unanimity and the country isn't democratic at all, because we are in an informational vacuum. Society, the people don't get any information. We only get it via media, television. The television is divided on political grounds, and the tv channel depending on who they support to cover the information by their interpretations. Thing is that we have no idea what is happening around us, that is very bad. Where is the democracy? Who talks with the people? Does anyone tell us anything? I have just heard that there is a law that you are able to summon the majoritarian

#4: You know what?! No one will come out and announce it. The people who are interested in, for example, journalists, NGOs go there, I didn't know it, this is your right, it is public information

Moderator: Which law are you talking about?

#4: We are entitled to summon a majoritarian deputy, we can attend a meeting. We have the right to do it, but nobody uses it.

Moderator: How do you know that?

#4: I read it on the internet, one of the deputies said that If we were not satisfied it would be better to summon them than to make a rally, said we had right to do that

#7: I think that behind the deputy is someone that the people cannot overthrow

#4: No, people have the power. When one starts to speak, the other will follow. They will be worried

Moderator: You took part in the last elections, I wonder if you see any improvement since 2014 and please, talk about the democracy. Let Mrs. speak

#3: When I go to the elections in general, nothing wrong is visible, everything goes on democratically, there may be incidents and quarrels but I have never witnessed anything like that. I will talk about my precinct, everything conducts very democratically there, no one tells you anything, you can simply go and vote, that's it. For me, it is important how democratic is a person who we choose. Firstly, a big amount of money stands behind him. If you don't have big money you cannot get on the list, we know everything, because a candidate should hold meetings, introduce himself to people and one spends a lot of money on that, but after the candidate will enter the parliament, he can support or don't support the law, he can sleep during the meetings and the 4 years will pass by like this and nobody knows about the people on the list,

because they invested money and that's all, they want to compensate their money, start new business, lobby someone. In my region, a deputy of my home district was put on the positions just like that, he didn't know anything, didn't even say a word. He passed 4 years like this.

Moderator: Did people vote for the candidate in the elections?

#3: Because he came from the list. He was an acquaintance of someone important. He earned a big money, gave jobs to his people, the nepotism is thriving with us

Moderator: Okay. Mrs. , do you see the gradual development of a democratic process or not? And why do you think so?

I think it is at the same level, I don't see any changes

Moderator: Why do you think so?

#5: Why? Because nothing changes in any field

#6: I will tell you an example about the democracy here. There is a accommodation in Temka settlement, that was factory or something similar before, where people are settled. I had some kind of relationship with social service and one of the men told a story about it. Do you know what kind of people live there?! Those, who lost their flats and are socially insecure. The man said that they had been living in the building since 2012 and they voted for the former government, and in 2016 none of the families in the building received ballot-papers, they had appealed against it but they could do nothing, he said they didn't know if they would have a chance to vote. They were sheltered into the building before 2012 by the former government. So they haven't received the ballot-papers since. There are 90-100 families.

Moderator: Do you think that they were blocked on political grounds or do you think there could be any other fault?

#6: He says himself. They think like that

Moderator: Could there be a registration mistake?

#6: Not even a family? Only two people received the papers. They said they couldn't get how they had got it.

#7: The activists of the government, I mean the Georgian dream, are very aggressive, they don't act properly in the elections. I witnessed the fact in the last elections, in general, they go from family to family and they know who is going to vote for them. I went there in late hours and when a man, whom they had been waiting for didn't come, they began to speak loudly and there was some kind of quarrel between the activists, they went to the man by taxi, brought there to vote for Georgian dream. I didn't see this kind of fact before, the previous government was more transparent.

Moderator: You said they knew who voted for someone, how would you explain that? Do they have preliminary lists?

#7: You know about the activists, how they act, every party has activists that meet the population and they know who is their supporter, who came and they count them during the elections. They are very aggressive if one doesn't vote for Georgian dream

#5: It was worse during the National movement

#1: I will tell you an example, one of the neighbours came to me, I found out that she was a deputy and she asks me who I am going to vote, firstly, it wasn't her business and I was not obliged to answer but I nodded confirming that I was going to vote for the Georgian Dream. Then she asks me about my 7 neighbors, I told that they were supporters of the National movement. She was amazed and decided to go there, I told her that it had no point and they would probably throw her from the window. She asked if they were going to the elections, I

answered that they went to the elections always, she said that it would be better for her if they wouldn't come than to vote for the National movement. They are blocking such people

#4: Did they take part in the elections?

#1: Yes they did. There is another big problem, the educational level is very low in Georgia and people are treated like puppets. When I was in the elections this year a woman came, she knew nothing, and the other woman, probably her neighbor, told her that she should vote for 41. The woman probably didn't know how to read and write. There were lots of people like her, they knew nothing.

Moderator: Let's listen to Mrs.

#5: Did you witness such facts only during Georgian Dream? People were afraid of voting for the other party than national movements, they might have been arrested

#2: This happened in my family, we live 5 there, me and my mom were born in the family and we have been living there up to date and I have never changed my residence and have never had any problem about the ballot-paper, my brother-in-law is registered temporarily there, he is a refugee. In the pre-election period, they were checking who lives there, who died and who left. They conducted this census and wrote down everything. After that activists came asking who we were going to vote, my sister on principle maintained the positions of the certain party. At the elections, we found out that everyone got ballot papers. My brother-in-law, my mother and I, my sister didn't receive a ballot-paper

Moderator: All right, let's move on to the political parties and I want you to name the parties you remember. Who do you know? Who is more active? How would you evaluate them?

#1: Georgian dream, national movement, Inashvili and Tarkhan-Mouravi

#2: Labour party

Moderator: Are you familiar with the agenda of the parties? What issues do they have in their programs? How much are these programs different from each other? If you don't know them, what is the reason for it?

#1: We know from television

Moderator: What are the issues?

#1: I don't know they always talk and do nothing. The Georgian dream are adopting the laws adjusted on them as Misha did before, now they do the same

Moderator: What issues do they have in their election programs?

#1: The issues in their election programs are pleasant to read but they don't implement them

Moderator: Talk about "Girchi"

#4: Marijuana legalization

7: I remember 400 GEL pension by a national movement

#2: I read 3 days ago that one of the presidential candidates wrote such unreal things that he was in the field of fantasy.

#3: Free gas and electricity was Natelashvili's promise, free water, electricity 10 Tetris, natural gas 5 Tetris. They all deliver their own newspapers in the pre-election period and for me, it is waste paper, because you will never have a desire to read it, very ambiguous, arranged into some platforms, I am not interested. I prefer if candidates talk about the issues that are worth hearing. It shouldn't insult the other parties but talk about the issues, arrange them by priority and talk in a way to have a desire to listen to him

Moderator: Don't the parties of today act like this?

#3: No they don't. Their newspapers are waste paper, with some gibberish in it and with photos from people meeting.

Moderator: Don't you remember the content of the program?

#3: Absolutely nothing

Moderator: What were the promises of Georgian dream? What program did they have?

#3: Not the program but I remember their speech from television, 1 billion to agriculture, cheap money, loans in 3%, depreciation of utility taxes, I remember these. The decrease in the petrol price was very actual topic back then, at that time 1 lari went to Misha's pocket but now it is more expensive. I was looking forward to the depreciation of the petrol price

#7: I was waiting for depreciation of utility taxes, I didn't believe in Georgian dream I don't know why they were so persuasive about the subjects that I thought that utility taxes would be cheaper.

#3: Healthcare has improved we have to recognize that, it was among their promises, free kindergartens, and books. There are some issues, but....

Moderator: Do you think that programs of Georgian dream and National movement differ?

#3: To tell the truth I haven't read them but from the television, they are the same

#5: They are the same

#3: They start with social problems

#1: Which one has a free education in their program?

#7: I think it was Shalva

#3: Shalva's every promise is unreal

#1: Yes, it is unbelievable

Moderator: What about the other parties? Let's take "European Georgia" and "National movement". Do their programs differ?

#6: I don't know, I can't remember anything from "European Georgia"

#3: Pension raise, for example

#1: I liked the promise of the National movement very much. As I remember creating jobs, employing people, increasing pensions.

#3: Support of small business

#1: Yes, yes, this one too

Moderator: What is the difference between these two? European Georgia and National movement

#1: I think that they are the same. I see them as one party, both of them are "National movement"

#7: I don't think that they are the same

#1: There was some misunderstanding between the individuals and some left the party, in fact, it is like a pyramid, they have the same ideas and values

Moderator: Which another party would you single out and how are they distinguished?

#7: Giorgi Vashadze's little party is also a good one. I don't exactly remember what he says but he speaks meaningfully and this is very good...

#1: He is very clever

#7: In my opinion, he is a very clever human being and can do something for the country

#4: Yes, indeed. He tells us the grounds that we can base upon a certain promise. Economic growth and so on. Others come out and speak aimlessly. It must be calculated, what will happen to our budget if they raise pensions to 400 GEL, will we have money for something else?

#1: "Georgian dream" was throwing such promises.

#5: Whoever had a big business during the "National movement", was suffocated by them, the UNM was creeping into his pockets. There is no such danger now.

#7: No one has a business now and accordingly they cannot seize the business

#6: No, "Georgian Dream" made some kind of benefits.

#3: No, I still think they didn't

#6: Personally I had contact with "Produce in Georgia" and this kind of projects that support the business.

#7: Cheap loans. I have heard about it as well

#6: Those who were studying in vocational institutions were employed. I know that in Mtskheta-Mtianeti beekeeping was financed.

#7: Did the government finance it?

#6: yes, it has happened recently

#7: Even now they choose selectively, not everyone gets finance. Here is also nepotism.

#6: I don't know that but they got their finance indeed.

#1: Do you know what I think? They may want to do something but have no resource in their minds. Sometimes I think like that

#7: Those who have mind resource are not allowed making decisions independently

Moderator: Which groups' interests are covered by the programs of political parties? What do you think should the program of party cover the interests of each group or should it touch upon the interests of specific groups?

#7: Mostly all political parties are focused on the most vulnerable groups

Moderator: What vulnerable groups?

#7: Pensioners, socially insecure people, refugees, those who are in large quantities

#6: The poor, for example, socially vulnerable people, their control is easier and by small promises, they achieve what they want

#7: They are large in numbers and they focus on that, thus they cover the more people

Moderator: How do the parties work on the issues of the young people?

#7: They show no interest in this at all. In terms of young, I remember the former government, "National movement". Misha had calculations on the issue compared to the present government. Recently, I do not remember any initiative at all

Moderator: Is the national movement working on the issue? Do they still have an education component?

#7: I don't remember if "National movement" has anything like this now, but "National movement" during Misha's era focused on the issue actively. But I cannot remember anything from this "National movement" now and not even from other parties.

#3: Firstly there must be a student supporting program, bringing them forward....

#7: I remember student employment during the national movement's rule

#1: Yes I worked

#3: Young people don't have job perspective if they don't have an acquaintance on big positions and they stay like this. Nothing is made for the young people, moreover, they are hindered. Those who have "protectors" have the jobs, no matter what profession they have

#4: Yes but none of my family members who started a job, got any help

#3: This is one in those cases

#5: It depends on the place, whether private or public sector. They will employ you in the private sector

#7: When I was on a job interview in the public sector, there were 200 people for 2 positions. Is there any idea to go there? Not at all.

Moderator: I wonder how the needs of women are considered in the programs of political parties?

#1: They don't have an emphasis

Moderator: In general, are women's representatives or quotas protected?

#3: I think there shouldn't be quotas at all

Moderator: Why do you think so?

#3: Because it is a huge folly. It is not necessary to have so many women

Moderator: At a party?

#3: Neither in party nor in parliament. It should not be a necessity to have a certain amount of women in parliament or anywhere

#1: No quota at all.

Moderator: Okay, forget about quota. How should the women needs be presented? Or is there no need to single out them?

#3: I think there is no need to single out women needs like this. I think the problem is in the private sector, they don't want to employ women, because women have children and they should pay for their maternity leave. In the public sector, it doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman, due to the nepotism you will get the job. There is no problem in the public sector, as far as I know, private sector declines women

Moderator: Mrs. what would you say?

#6: You know what? I don't think that women's rights are violated in terms of employment

Moderator: Not only the employment issues. I mean the other as well

#6: You know I don't know what kind of laws they have adopted regarding women violence, I only know it from television but women are not restricted or abused in a way to have such an emphasis.

#7: I agree. If anything happens, that's because they want to be like this

#1: Nobody oppresses you just because you are a woman

#7: Recently, I was watching a tv show about one of the best students, there was no such restriction on men or women, half of them was a boy, half a girl. With state funding, they are allowed to enter the leading institutions.

#4: Yes there are some cases. Do you know what? One must be active. When I am at home, unemployed and waiting for someone who finds a job for me, it's not like this, is it? I am unemployed as well. It depends on an act of an individual, who is active and looks for a job it will definitely find something. If you cannot find a job with 1000 GEL a month for the first time get a job with 300 GEL and then you will develop there and learn something ...

Moderator: I wonder, why aren't you active?

#4: I am not active because I have a grandchild at home, I wasn't active from the beginning and I am sorry for that know, I did wrong, if I had been active, I would have started a job, like my family members. Who was active and was looking for a job, they are in good positions with good salary. They learned, raised their educational level and now they are well

#3: They are young and that's why

#6: You should not be very ambitious and not everybody should wish to be a director.

Moderator: I wonder, is it necessary to be representatives of ethnic minorities, women and of such groups in the parties, in order to provide their interests?

#3: No, of course not

#4: No

Moderator: The members of parties, to be ethnic minorities, women and etc. in order to be their needs presented in the party

#1: There is no such necessity, they are already there

#3: If they wish they can enter there I think so

#6: They have the opportunity to take part, so I don't think there is a necessity to set quotas.

#1: May the person doesn't have a resource, it can still do nothing if you assign somewhere

#3: If we demand from them to enter someone there, they will place their relatives on the list. I prefer someone to be active and engage in processes like that

#4: In the times when it wasn't necessary to know state language to start a job in state institutions these people didn't pay any attention to Georgia language. I am from Tskaltubo by origins and when they used to come there, they knew neither Russian nor Georgian, now they bring their children as interpreters. Now they are interested but they didn't before. They bring their children to Georgian schools hoping they will start working in city hall or a bank. It's not necessary to set that 5 Armenians or Azerbaijanians should be there, it is necessary to raise the education level of the people and then they will wish to be more educated, study in university and get into the government. The people will vote for them when they will see that a candidate is educated, clever talk normally, knows mother language, your language and etc...When a human lives in my country and doesn't know my state language he/she disrespects us and can do nothing for the country.

Moderator: All right, Mrs. I wonder, what should the political parties change to get better and cover all the needs?

#5: I think that they should have a more close relationship with the people

#4: They shouldn't forget that they were chosen by the people

#5: They should be more involved and people should be more active and demanding

Moderator; So the pre-election meetings are not enough...

#5: It's not enough indeed

#2: One should have his promises on the wall, in the cabinet, one should remember well, what he/she promised people

#7: And make pluses on the promises he/she have fulfilled or failed (laughs)

#4: They shouldn't promise things aimlessly, they should sit and talk to and fulfill the things they can. It is our fault as well when they say they would do a thousand things and we believe them like fools and bring them in power.

#7: Yes, this is the biggest problem

#3: I don't trust them anymore

#4: People in the village believed in Bidzina Ivanishvili, that he would give us 1000 GEL. I failed to convince them that this wasn't true, why should this man give 1000 GEL to everyone

Moderator: All right, what do you think, what should political parties change?

#7: In my opinion, political parties should change their approach, which encompasses active communication with the population. Not in a way to say it via television but to hold meetings spontaneously in different settlements and get acquainted with population problems. Hence they should make infer and change their point of view

#3: At first, they should change their members

Moderator: What kind of members should they have?

#3: Educated, clever

#7: Those who can communication and discussion with the population

#3: Those who can think, count and tell what the state is able to do in reality and pledges real things. People who came out of the people and aren't in their positions due to their fathers' money. The rich shouldn't be able to interfere...when they have such people, the population will be satisfied and will vote for them

#7: perspicacious advisers will be also good

#3: And communication with the population, at first. I remember that during the last elections there was a knock on the door, my child went to the door, asking who was there and a person from the opposite side answered: “your deputy” (laughs). I loved the moment a lot

#7: I liked them “from door to door” campaign too, it was direct and had good communication with people

Moderator: All right then, what would you add ?

#1: For me, it is important that they should listen to people and have active communication with them. They should sack the idle members, those who do nothing. There must be some kind of regulations within the party as well. Whoever wishes to be a politician, and is a celebrity, shouldn't come in politics, I mean they shouldn't be accepted that easily in parties. I will add, there are so many idle parties that there should be a law that determines certain border and those who get lower votes than border must vanish. Because we are financing them all... I don't like that so many indolent parties are financed from the budget when in the USA there are only two parties. There is no need to have more than 100 parties in a handful of state. What are they doing? Nothing... Why on earth are there so many deputies in the parliament? We don't need so many parties and people in politics.

Moderator: Okay, let's move on to the elections. We talked about it before but I want you to talk directly on the issue now. I wonder how often do you go to the elections?

All: Yes, we all go

#3: I missed only once

Moderator: I wonder, when you go to the elections and you want to vote for a certain candidate, how much you are familiar with the alternatives, how your decision is based on their promises. What is the main reason that you vote for a candidate?

#1: I less likely believe in their promises. I listen to it but I never read their booklets. I have a certain opinion, formed idea towards a party, hence their activities

Moderator: What do you mean by activities?

#1: What they have done...for example, when the “Georgian dream” came, they had promised that I didn't believe at all, I knew that the promises would remain unfulfilled and had no trust. I had a certain formed opinion towards the “national movement” and I voted for them because of that. It is true that I didn't agree with them in lots of stuff, and I disliked many things, but I saw as well what they did for the country....

Moderator: Did you ever think of voting for the different opposition party?

#1: No, I didn't about it, because in fact, I did not see a serious opposition party. who? Natelashvili?

Moderator: What would others say? I want you all to talk about the issue

#3: I must admit that, unfortunately, I vote for an individual

Moderator: Even in parties' elections?

#3: Yes even in parties' elections. It turns out that I vote for an individual, even though I may not always want to do it, unfortunately, I must admit

Moderator: All right. Mrs. what will you say?

#2: I agree with the lady. It turns out that you vote for an individual because there are 1 or 2 leaders at least in every party, after which you support the whole party and the party is associated with the person for you

Moderator: I wonder, do you know other members of the party as well or just leaders?

#2: Those who are on television and are party's activists, who do something and we are looking at the same people so long, that we know who they are in reality even if they change their names and parties. We have a certain attitude towards them, what the man or woman can do for us, nobody trusts them blindly now

Moderator: All right. What would you say, Mrs. ?

#4: Do you know what? I have been thinking about it recently....When I was going to the last elections, I thought why I should choose between the bad and the worse but I voted for the party I had voted before, thinking they would get better. Now I am thinking about whom I can vote. "National movement" made everything hectic and they began thinking as if they were gods. Now we have these and started daydreaming with Bidzina. I am thinking about whom I can vote. There is no party that can offer you something new. The same old "Georgian dream" and "national movement" or their satellites, that implement the parties interests as if they are independent parties

Moderator: What do you mean by new? You said you were waiting for something new...

#4: By now, I mean new faces, the old ones are out of date now, and the potential may be in the young people. We want a person who comes and explains to people that yes we do want 500 GEL pension but there is no resource for this in reality. One who explains to us normally, what should we do, what can we empower, from the beginning one cannot notice any development but still...We should look after the agriculture or education, in order to have resulted in your old age. It may be difficult for us but if we don't look after the children and if we don't raise the awareness, there will be no way out for us

#7: Indeed. We should look after the education

Moderator: I see. Mrs. what would you say?

#5: I think that we have no alternatives at parties, I don't see it, I cannot see the new faces either

Moderator: What conditions your choice when you vote for a party?

#5: I don't vote for anyone because I don't have an alternative

Moderator: What would you say?

#6: The same situation was in my case. The only alternative back then was "Georgian dream", we didn't have any other. Then they came, 4 years passed and I didn't see any alternative either, I didn't like them to tell the truth but I had a little hope. I had no hop in 2016, though I couldn't see any alternative there. Now I am asking myself, is there any point in going to elections? Because we don't have a choice in reality and we don't know whom to vote

#4: Do you know what? In 2012 people went to elections with no force, with their own initiatives...the old people carried each other to vote. Eventually, I think that these hopes will vanish and so much disappointment causes indifference and dissatisfaction in people

Moderator: , tell us, what conditions your choice?

#7: I am kind of voter that has been voting for the same party for a long time and has formed an opinion. That's what I am, no activist can change my mind, but not because of obstinacy. I think that nowadays we don't have a better alternative in Georgia. Everything that Georgia needs, education, progress, democracy I don't see it in the ruling party, what I want

Moderator: Some of you said that you voted for the same party at the last two elections. And as the main reason, you singled out that you couldn't see any alternative. Were there any other reasons why you decided to vote for the same party?

#1: The biggest reason is that we have no alternative

#3: I voted for them because there was no other alternative, though I didn't want to vote for them

#4: There was also fear that “National movement” would return. They thought they were gods...Maybe our people have the character, they think if they return everything will be in terror. We are afraid of it.

#1: I think that this government has kind fools and the former had evil clever members, I prefer evil clever because we shouldn't give them the possibility to make evil. These are fools and I don't want fool government

#6: The past that has had its time should leave

#1: Parliament is full of deputies from the Shevardnadze era. Isn't it passed?

Moderator: All right. , I wonder in your case, as you said you hadn't given your vote for the governing and dominant party. When you go to the elections and vote for the former government do you have a feeling that you want their return in the majority, or you just vote for them because you don't want to vote for the ruling party?

#7: No, the first one I think. I want them to return

Moderator: Do you have a feeling that they can return in government?

#7: Yes, of course, that's why I vote for them and not just to lose my vote

Moderator: Okay, it's clear

#4: Until we don't cease to act out of spite...”I will vote for them”, “What were you doing” and so on. Now you are in the rule and make it better...there will be no way out. This not pertains only to the government and parties, the same happens in families.

Moderator: All right. In your opinion, if you heard or worked as an observer, How fair and transparently are the elections held? What is your attitude towards the issue?

#1: In 2012 I think it was held objectively and when Misha had come. Misha won other elections as well but they were conducted unfairly because this only happens in Georgia that we win by 90% there is no similar case in other countries.

#7: No, Georgian dream has never won by 90%

#1: Yes I know, I didn't mean it exactly

#7: During Misha's era he used to win but he wanted more and more votes. The same is here. These are conducting everything unfairly...They used the fact that fewer people went to the elections at the last time and it is our fault, we help them to falsify, if we go to the elections they will not be able to falsify

#5: I don't know what happens in CEC, districts, or in places where votes are counted but falsification doesn't happen in precincts

#3: The violations don't happen at the polling stations. We go, vote and I don't think that observers in the district falsify anything

#6: When we go to the elections we don't notice these violations unless a miracle happens. We don't know what happens during the counting process

#5: There was a falsification during the national movement, though

#4: Probably they are falsifying it if they knew they are loosing they would falsify it

#7: Do you know how that happens? There is preliminarily written percent in CEC for every party. There is no bigger falsification than that, it is my opinion. That's exactly what happens now.

Moderator: Mrs., what do you think?

#3: I think it is not noticeable at the polling station, because whenever I have been there and I have been for many times, everything is going on in a calm, serene way, journalists are coming, I have seen foreigners as well, there is no duress nor something similar, but I think that something

happens after that, during the counting process...I am not sure how it is falsified exactly, how it happens

Moderator: What do you want to change or improve in the election system?

#3: You know, the system doesn't need improvement if there is no duress from the ruling party. I think that the ruler party always has some impact on CEC. I mean the high echelons when ballot-papers gather at the last point, falsification happens there. I think that if everyone talks about it, this will not be far from the truth. If the approach of the ruling party is democratical and wins the one who is a real winner, then we will have democratic elections.

Moderator: Do you think that CEC isn't impartial?

#3: It is not impartial. CEC has always been under the pressure of the ruling party, just like the court, and many other institutions in Georgia

Moderator: Mrs. would you like to add something?

#5: I know that in districts there are representatives and supporters of ruling party

Moderator: What about you Mrs.?

#6: I think like that. First of all, it should consist of people who will not be from the ruling party. The observers in CEC should be from every party and stop this pressure somehow. Even the ruling party should want this, maybe opposition has some impact on them. We cannot really say that it can be their influence as well. CEC should get people's trust by conducting fair elections. For me, the trust factor is very significant.

Moderator: What conditions your level of trust? What can raise your trust?

#6: It should be free from any party's pressure, this will be the main factor for raising trust

Moderator: How will you measure this?

#6: I don't know how

#7: Involvement of foreign observers would be a step forward in settling the issue

Moderator: Why the foreigners?

#7: Because bribing them, nepotism and so on is less likely possible from their side

#4: There is a bribe among them, they are bribed as well

#3: The foreigners lobby the parties so their corruption is easily possible

#7: Yes, but I think that they will conduct elections transparently comparing to the Georgian observers and their kin relationships. I trust them more

Moderator: We have stopped on the issue that I wanted you to speak, there are non-governmental organizations, that engage in the election process, monitor the process and work on the election system in general. Which of these organizations have you heard? Let's speak about the local at first and then about the international.

#5: GYLA is actively involved

#7: International transparency Georgia.

#3: I cannot remember the name of the organization...that counts the votes

Moderator: Do you mean "Fair elections"?

#3: Yes, Fair elections

Moderator: How would you characterize them? How much do you trust them in the processes?

#3: I think they are under some kind of pressure. If CEC belongs to the ruling party, these organizations are under opposition control, some of them are under the ruling party's pressure. They aren't fully fair-minded. They also undergo pressure but not only from the government but from the opposition as well

Moderator: what do you think?

#1: I think the same, as I noted before, mostly private sectors are independent in Georgia, the other, including NGOs that are private as well still undergo pressure from parties

#4: NGOs' word has huge significance because they often appear on television and we hear their voice. So the people's impression changes accordingly what they say about the certain party.

#5: Some people and many don't want even to hear NGOs

#4: They don't but they hear it every day, they say one thing then another and you get acquainted with it...

#3: Our ombudsman came from the non-governmental organization, didn't she? Ranging from the counselor of the president to many more....GYLA is number one NGO

#7: Yes, but I don't like GYLA's present stuff.

Moderator: How would you evaluate their role in developing the election system?

#7: I trust Georgian NGO less than international, but I trust them more than other institution, but in my opinion, there should be more international observers during the elections, I mean observers who come from abroad

Moderator: Okay, what role do local NGOs have in fair conduct of elections?

#7: In my opinion, they are one-sided to some extent

Moderator: What do you think who controls them?

#7: They are not only under the influence of the ruling party but under the control of some opposition party. Some NGOs have a good relationship with "National movement" and "European Georgia".

Moderator: What about you Mrs.?

#5: I don't know. The only thing I know is that there are very good young people in GYLA and they are involved in the election process

Moderator: I understand. What else should they do? We mentioned impartiality and they should be less partial, what else should they improve?

#3: Do you know what? I think they work very well. It is true that they are under control, but you cannot disapprove of their work. They are very active, very talented. I think they don't need to be more active

#5: They are quite active and well aware of the election process

#3: I think they don't need anything

Moderator: Not just the election process, I mean system improvement in general...

#6: In general yes. I had relations with GYLA and they left a very good impression on me, they helped me a lot. I like the organization very much.

Moderator: Okay, let's move on to the international organizations, which international NGOs do you recall, that are involved in the process and work on the system improvement?

#7: NDI, IRI.

Moderator: What else? Have you heard about NDI and IRI as well? Have you heard of ISEF?

All: NDI and IRI yes we have heard about but not IFES

Moderator: USAID?

#7: Yes of course

#1: Yes, yes

Moderator: How would you assess the organizations? How much do you trust them?

#1: I have a very positive attitude towards NDI

Moderator: What conditions that?

#1: I don't know. I cannot draw the arguments, to tell the truth, but I think that they work very well and I trust them, they make public some researches. They say that they aren't objective but I think on the contrary

Moderator: Mrs. what were you saying?

#4: NGOs even the international ones are divided into supporters of Georgian dream and other parties. NDI is widely believed to be a supporter of "National movement"

#1: I don't think so

#7: I don't think so either. I have heard this for the first time

#5: Yes, when they publicize ratings, some of them shows government supporting ratings and others show ratings that are beneficial for the National movement

Moderator: So you think that they aren't objective, Mrs., right?

#5: I don't know but it seems to me

#7: But I still like the involvement of such international organizations in elections

#4: They should be involved otherwise it will be worse

Moderator: What influence do the organizations have in the election process?

#7: I don't think they have special influence

#4: Thing is that the influence hinders their development, not to start falsification. They are a bit in awe of them and that's why they don't do such things

#7: I don't think that these organizations have a big impact

Moderator: So do you think that their influence is superficial and symbolic?

#7: Yes I do

#3: Partly it is true, because...

#7: They are not involved largely and actively

#3: They are involved more at the precinct level if everything goes democratically there if they poured the mixture on the hand if anyone quarreled. They don't go further

#7: They are not in every precinct and they are not always there

#3: They are involved at a rudimentary level, where the ballot papers go or how they are counted, they don't know, they are not involved in the process

Moderator: Mrs. what do you think about the international organizations?

#2: The only thing I don't like is that international organizations conduct researches in the pre-election period and publicize statistics after that from the government and other parties come to pressure, they confuse the people who don't know which is right and which is wrong. So they are programming population preliminarily, that certain party has a rating before the elections and their rating should coincide the election result, that's all

Moderator: Do you think that this has an influence?

#2: Yes it has an influence on the people. They shouldn't say that a party will have a certain rating because some politician will come out and disagree with that and so on. You should make a zombie out of a human being. They are doing it, by conducting preliminary research.

#1: We still go to the fact that the education level is very low and that's why it is so easy to have influence

Moderator: What do you think, what activities should the organizations implement in the future? What direction should they work? What issues should they work on?

#1: At first, the organizations, if they are interested, should listen to people, criticize the government, what they do, in what direction they work, if they try to settle the problems in Georgia or not, and they should bring these things to light. Not only elections, they must be more active...

#7: They should control the election programs. The election programs should be more realistic. They must advise the big parties. I don't know if they have the right to do it but...

#3: It probably requires money...

#7: In general, it would be good to advise major parties.

Moderator: Okay, I don't have any more questions, if you want to add something about the elections, parties, organizations feel free to say.

#4: I want to say that, the feeling of patriotism in the parties is significant. When an individual loves his homeland like Americans do, he will not think to ruin something, when one grows up, he/she will think, that if the one chooses a right governor for the country it will be good.

#3: You know, I think that the people we chose and the people who are in the power now don't lack patriotism but they are tempted by their positions, I don't know what happens to them when they are in power.

#1: That's why the parties should be filtered and there will be no such persons

Moderator: All right, thank you very much for coming and thank you for an interesting discussion

Focus Group #5

Location of the focus-group: Tbilisi

Participants: 30-60 years old men who as a rule don't vote for the same political party

Moderator: Mariam Devidze

Moderator: Firstly, hello and thank you for coming. I am Mariam Devidze a researcher from Institute of social studies and analysis. We are studying quality of Georgian democracy. Also, we will talk about Georgian political space, Georgian parties, and the election system. We are recording the conversation on video and audio material, however, the information we will talk about will be confidential and the information you will express will not get into public space. Our discussion will last approximately an hour and a half and if you don't mind let's start. First, introduce yourself: your name, age, and your occupation.

#1: 40 years old, unemployed.

#2: 50 years old, unemployed.

#3: 60 years old. I work at a social rehabilitation center for disabled persons.

#4: 30 years old, I work at Tbilisi airport.

#5: 55 years old, I am a certified driver

#6: 55 years old, builder.

#7: 60 years old, professional engineer, currently unemployed, I have a vacation (laughs)

Moderator: Thank you. Let's talk about your interests in political processes and how do you feel as a participant in the processes?

#1: Of course we are. We all are experts in politics and football.

#7: We know the issue

#1: We are interested in, the life has brought it, he has a computer and all.

Moderator: How do you feel that you are involved in the process?

#1: Nobody asks us anything, neither during elections nor afterward

#3: I agree, there is always such a process: nobody asks us anything, they choose whoever they want. We are more or less interested in

#2: On the one hand everyone is interested in because it relates to us.

#4: Back in my studenthood I was involved in politics. I used to go on demonstrations and nothing more. But in recent years I don't.

Moderator: Mr. what about you?

#5: I watch the news, I always have my tv on and I determine everything from there. If I want it or not Tv is on and you always hear the news.

Moderator: I wonder what is your attitudes towards Georgian politicians. Do you trust them or not?

#1: Do you know what? One can trust or don't trust the ruler. Here in our country our politicians and government decide who will be the minister of environment protection...we can't even choose 4 ministers, minister of defense, of internal affairs, minister of education and security minister. we can't decide anything. We are not independent.

Moderator: Why do you think so?

#1: Are we independent? We are a colony, Algeria has more independence than we have. Nobody asks us anything, what we are doing in Afghanistan...Italy doesn't have a single soldier there, Spain doesn't have a soldier there, what are we doing there? Are we fighting against the Taliban? What a stupidity...We take part in some senseless fights and so on. That's why I am telling that nobody will ask us anything. So it doesn't matter who politician will be, why I should trust them. I can't see a politician I can trust.

Moderator: What do others think?

#1: The only minister you can trust is Sergeenko, he did something and...who else?

Moderator: Mr. Demur, what do you think?

#7: I don't feel as a participant in the processes. Though I want to be involved in I have no access. In 2011 it was the time that something should be changed, I and my friends walked 40 villages in Chiatura and I was sure that we would beat the regime because people were so excited. The people in advance gave the verdict to the regime. We beat them with bigger numbers than it was shown after some time. There was falsification but our advantage was so great that there was no other way. Then I went to the head office of the Georgian Dream. I have been working in every election for 40 years, as a deputy of commission as an observer and so on. I offered my help and they told me that they didn't need my help. I told them that I didn't want their positions, said I would give them some directions, but they said they didn't need my help, that they knew everything.

#1: Yes, they attended 3-month training with Americans.

#7: A Georgian man thinks that he knows everything and then he finds out that he can't and starts lying to people. I will tell you a case. 4-5 years ago, on the second floor of Movie House, I ran into 7 persons: Irma Inashvili, Manuchar Machaidze, Zaza Mamaladze, Tarkhan-Mouravi and representatives of the party. I told them what they wanted in government that they had to be in opposition and they would do their job better. I told them that they would forget everything

and would change after their entry in parliament or government. They replied that they wouldn't but they changed, the chair changes everyone. If only we had people who don't change in power and think of their homeland while on their positions. We need such people but where are they? Even Zviad Gamsakhurdia didn't have a man on his team that would be useful for our country.

#1: We don't have a country that has its own interest. It only thinks about EU's interest and the USA's interest. It doesn't have an interest in anything else.

Moderator: What would you say about Russia?

#1: What can I say about Russia? If I seized something from you If I am not giving it back and you wouldn't speak to me someone should interfere. There are two ways of gaining the territories back: it is either hostilities or negotiations. We have invented the third: Gait near the border with waving flags and to show it on the internet. You have to think somehow, what a rubbish...what we are doing, we are mocking ourselves...Why do they think that Russia and everyone thinks of Georgia? Are they interested in what happens here? I mean it.

Moderator: I understand. Mr. , what do you think about the politicians?

#6: We hoped that everything would go in a proper way but it didn't. It's simple they love neither their homeland nor their people.

Moderator: Do you mean the government?

#6: Yes of course. When a government doesn't love its people, there is nothing to say.

Moderator: What would you say about the politicians Mr....?

#3: I thought that people's condition would improve, but nothing changed and it will remain to the end. Which politician can you trust? Visually they look good.

#7: When a deputy of parliament comes out and says that he didn't know the president was that bad, that he was mistaken, what one can say after that.

Moderator: How would you evaluate, do we have a democracy?

#7: What democracy? Where is democracy at all? Not we but, even the countries who claim it doesn't have it.

#1: What do people think about democratic governance? This is the rule of the people. Democracy and liberal values are totally different things ... It's people's will when people make a decision it's a democracy. I don't think that there is democracy anywhere...

Moderator: What shortcomings do we have? How do you characterize it?

#1: Do you know what kind of democracy we have? Only guest's rights are protected not the host's. They try to protect the rights of minorities but not the majority. The majority is more oppressed here than the minority.

Moderator: In what terms are they protected?

#1: What do you mean by that? Now they force to bear such individuals, maybe I don't want it. First, they have reached to remove privileges form the Patriarchate of Georgia, these were very elementary privileges. Why? The same condition have the representatives of Evangelist church...94% of the population think of themselves as a believer, right? Then why did they do it? Can anyone do the same in Turkey?

Moderator: Besides the religious issues, can you name the other? Mr. ... what would you say?

#2: What we lack is that we don't know what democracy is. In fact, we don't have democracy because democracy is a totally different thing. You have just mentioned it (points to #1) I agree there is democracy in nowhere.

#1: There is no democracy in America and nobody asks Americans anything. In France, millions of people demonstrated against homosexuals. Did anyone consider their opinion? No one did.

Moderator: Okay Mr., how would you characterize Georgian democracy?

#3: People are rummaging into rubbish this is our democracy. What kind of democracy do we have? This man is right, there is no democracy even in the USA and it will be the same for a long time.

#7: Norway has been in the first place by living conditions in the world for 20 years and 2 years ago they recognized incest as a national tradition. It is obvious that the majority doesn't want this but a mayor and a couple of vile persons want it and that's all. There is no democracy as well.

#3: We need a century more.

#7: Last year when I asked friends of my mother, who they voted for one of them told me that she didn't know but voted for 41. So they don't know who they voted for and what democracy you are talking about.

Moderator: Mr. what do you think? How transparent and democratic is the system?

#4: When we moved to a parliamentary system, it should have been good but it isn't because only several people make decision and parliament don't review the issues that are important to people. That's what I think.

Moderator: Do you see any progress in recent years?

#4: Progress? No, I don't. However, there is no such ruling and violence as it used to be. We, Georgians expected more and even promises were more, but it never fulfilled. You have to fulfill everything that is written in your election program or you should be overthrown immediately or you have to depose yourself. Only 5-10% of promises were fulfilled.

Moderator: What hampered it, why it hasn't fulfilled?

#4: We were fooled and deceived

#7: When 52 millionaires win out of 52 majoritarians, on what democracy you can talk there.

#3: If they had improved people's social condition for the first time, everything would have been corrected and would continue properly but they did nothing...

#1: Until people see government as their breadwinner nothing will change.

#3: They are waiting for the time when the government will show mercy to them

Moderator: Mr. what do you think, is there any progress in any field or where do you see worsening?

#5: Isn't there everything aggravated? My heart breaks. People have always stood tall in Georgia we know the price of freedom but I can't get we happen to us, what calamity is over us. The nation is enslaved.

#7: There is no protest in people. I was at the meeting at the parliament but I left it in an hour. When I saw the people, I turned back. But I consider it as a positive thing, that the government was a bit scared and felt something. They started to act as if democratical government and began an investigation.

#3: If the government doesn't look after the ordinary people nothing will happen, neither democracy nor anything. Do you know how we are? Russia used to hit us in the head, now the USA is doing the same, it doesn't matter. They have their own interests.

Moderator: What can be the interest of the USA? Don't they appeal them to democracy when they monitor the processes?

#3: Of course they do but how is this democracy implemented?

#1: I understand an alliance in this way, as Russia did to Assad, they supported him to the end and they devastated the so-called opposition. What kind of ally is the USA to us?

Moderator: I understand, I wonder which parties do you remember and which has a significance for you? Which do you prefer?

#3: Of course in 2011 when the National movement had to be changed, it's clear that we should have been on Georgian dream's side and we voted for them.

Moderator: What other parties can you name?

#1: "Alliance of patriots" is the only party that really works and wants to have good relations with Russia

#4: Also "Girchi" that is like greens party.

#5: Oh I almost forgot Labour party

#1: National movement, Labours, NDP and the parties like that are the same, it doesn't matter. And Republicans as well.

Moderator: I wonder how well do you know their political agenda? What promises do you remember of each party?

#3: I remember "alliance of Patriots" "promise they said they would talk to Russia and they have started it indeed.

#1: The same promise had the Georgian dream back then, said they would détente relationship with Russia in order to get territories back.

Moderator: What other promises do you remember?

#7: I met leaders of "alliance of patriots" 2 years ago in Kutaisi and asked if they had settled relationships with Russia after their visits and being in parliament?

Moderator: What promises did Georgian dream have before the elections? Some of them were named and can you name more?

#5: Relief of social situation...

#7: They promised would raise pensions, but where is it? Nationals did the same

Moderator: What promises did National Movement have?

#3: That pensions would rise by 50 Lari

#4: "There's a lot to be done" was their slogan.

Moderator: I wonder whom the parties focus on? Which segment do they work for? I mean parties in general...

#5: I will tell you who they work for...usury is developed in Georgia. They implement only the interests of banks, they are rummaging in our pockets. They seized people's houses and destroyed the people. This is their only interest...

#1: They support the interests of commercial banks.

#5: Only usurers and businessmen are in government. How it is possible to be a businessman and rule the field at the same time. Though in Georgia everything happens. I can go now and make an operation in reanimation, they do the same.

Moderator: From the previous focus-groups revealed that the main voting segment for "Georgian dream" and "national movement" are pensioners. How do you think who they are focused on and why? Or is it a populist act from their side?

#5: What they do is populist...

#3: Pension was the only non-populistic promise that "Georgian dream" had, their other promises were populist.

#5: I have a question for you all. It's true that we lost the war in 2008, and we keep saying that we won it. They are fooling us...In the lost wars what Georgia passed, extermination of generation, fearless boys died in Georgia and whole generation was exterminated and the participants of wars, who are veterans now they have 22 laris as their salary and compare them with other veterans of the world, how they are appreciated...you are comparing to Europe while your politicians tell tales to you...Your veterans are not appreciated who loves your country. When you cannot appreciate them how can I appreciate you.

Moderator: What other segments should parties' election programs cover? Whose requirements should they consider?

#5: They should focus on the people I have just mentioned.

Moderator: I understand, what else?

#3: They must have social programs. This should cover everything: pension raise, salary raise, everything that supports the welfare of people.

#4: It must consider everybody's interest. All kinds of people live here: the rich, socially insecure people, the poor...

Moderator: What kind of program do they have now? Who is this program adjusted?

#4: There was the necessity for electricity, gas, water, petrol before. But now it should include that neither the rich nor the poor be oppressed and everybody must think of the state and it must be presented in their programs.

#1: 2 out of 100 men read these programs. In 2012 there was the demand of people to remove national movement, there was no big choice...

Moderator: What expectations did you have?

#1: Come on, we live in Georgia. What do you think that someone in Akhaltsikhe reads a program?

#5: I will answer why they don't read programs. They invent such things that you have no desire to read it. You lose your belief and it doesn't matter what they will write. They will lie anyway. They are mocking at us. Do we have any pride at all?

#4: There should be considered social programs because this is the biggest problem. It is a national problem. I work at the airport and I see such people arrive and behave in a way that the flow should be reduced.

Moderator: What about tourism development?

#4: Tourism should develop of course but we have to protect our nation.

#1: You know what? Firstly, this tourist goes to Italy as well but the tourist isn't more than an Italian citizen. Secondly, you can't buy a land in Italy just like that, you can't do what you wish there. What economic progress should we have if a Nigerian buys our land? Regulations should be established.

#5: You know what I would do? The yellow buses, the people are transported with, I would transport parliament members with these buses in the heat and then they would know how people suffer every day. Once I entered the bus and a nigger (I don't know discrimination and all, I am not a racist) didn't yield his place to an old woman, he sat directly. If you enter the bus in the evening, you will see that Georgians are very few the others are from different nations. Some Indians smell and....

Moderator: What do you think, why don't they work on the issues? What don't they put them on the agenda?

#5: I mean a totally different thing. The nigger sat down and a boy told him to yield his place and the nigger replied: "What's the problem boy?" we turned to him and the women interfered told us not to beat him and he kept sitting calmly. This is your democracy, these are your tourists...this is your Georgia...Let them be on these buses where is no air-conditioner and they will see everything.

Moderator: What problems are dominant in Georgia that are expressed by parties?

#1: Opposition parties have nothing. If only they said, what they would do when they come in power....

Moderator: wanted to say something...

#4: I wanted to say that the state doesn't settle the problems just because they will not get any financing from non-governmental organizations then.

#1: What on earth we want in Afghanistan or Iraq. Let's withdraw our troops from there. Let them write a promise that they will not do the same again.

Moderator: Do you think that they should focus on national issues?

#5: There must appear a man with clear past that people can trust. We are all oppressed

#7: Since your independence every party starts to work on social problems, to attract people but as soon as they get into the government they start instantly not do what people want but they do everything the west wishes.

Moderator: Doesn't the west want to improve social condition with us?

#4: It's not convenient for them. Then we will think about democracy and will have different demands

#7: Everything stands on their hegemony.

#1: Then you will demand to implement your national ideas and that's inconvenient for them. For example, in the USA the situation is like this if you love the traditions you are regarded as anti-American automatically. They don't even hide that their biggest enemy is the Orthodox Church. Today we only think of what to eat and we can't think of other things.

Moderator: What other problems would you name? You have mentioned education recently...

#1: Yes education but it must be national.

#5: Yes. I saw on television that a journalist stopped a person and asked a question...I couldn't imagine that people didn't know who Ilia Chavchavadze was and they thought Shota Rustaveli was a king. Mostly young people, I don't mean all but most of the young people are like that...

#3: By the way, in communist times education was at a higher level than it is now...

Moderator: I understand. Let's move to elections. How often do you go to elections? Do you go always there?

#3: Yes I always do. You have to go there if you want it or not

#7: There is no other way, you have to go

Moderator: When you go to elections if you're familiar with other parties' programs and what is the factor you should vote for?

#4: At first when I became 18 years old I get acquainted with the programs then but so many parties came after that you have to read their programs all the time...

Moderator: When you vote, what is the decisive factor that determines your vote for a party?

#4: As a rule, it should be a program but it doesn't happen to us.

Moderator: What do you pay attention to?

#4: The past of the party, what they did. I vote like this: Who he was, what he did for the country.

#2: I read statutes and programs of parties but it is all the same. Everyone has the same promises. A decisive factor is how they consider the social condition of people, employment, to keep their families, to give education to children, why should a man take a loan from the bank when he can work honestly and pay taxes. The majority is unemployed and they impose such high taxes that people are pressed.

Moderator: How do you choose a party? How do you chose whom are you going to vote for?

#2: I consider the condition of people. But the previous government was so bad that I may vote for Shalva. I don't want to talk about it now...

#3: In my case was the situation, I voted for "Georgian dream" because of social programs but it hasn't changed so I am not going to vote for them next time. I vote for the one who presents the better program.

#4: We had only health care program and they have abolished it I think...

#1: "Georgian Dream" has the only good thing, they unleash Misha who says he would make tunnels and return and after that there is no need for the program. Majority of people vote for them because of that.

#7: I was forced to vote in previous elections, this is awful. You don't want to vote but you have to. This government is not good but I preferred it to that terrible party.

Moderator: Why did you vote?

#6: If they promise territorial integrity and economic progress I will vote for anyone.

#3: When we get to NATO, then there will be no territorial integrity.

#5: I remembered a cool thing. The National Movement pulled the teeth of the old people in the pre-election period, and then abandoned them and left them without teeth.

Moderator: What do you think does the National Movement have a potential?

#5: What potential should they have after all these?

Moderator: What can you say about other opposition parties, do you see strength in them to overcome the barrier?

#4: Elisashvili was the last who had some chances

Moderator: What about “alliance of patriots”?

#3: I told that “alliance of patriots” has a good program regarding Russia. I will vote for them

#1: Usupashvili is more or less good.

#6: The two will be the opposition and government again. Either “national movement” or “Georgian dream”

#3: National movement will never return and Georgian dream will stay.

#7: If nothing changes in people’s self-awareness, “Georgian dream” will stay as long as it wishes.

Moderator: What do you think what should change the people or a party itself?

#7: Not the party, people’s way of thinking should change. We are not at the level to have a better life, better government... We have no sense of protest, we are reluctant to come out of houses. When I heard of some injustice I came out immediately, though I didn’t like people there and I will go everywhere where the protest is and will demand justice. When you are reluctant to do this and you relinquish that’s why we will never avail. 7-8 years ago in the Netherlands, the price of petrol was raised and people protested it, so the government reduced prices and it became lower than it used to be. These are the people. Whatever you want to make here, nobody cares people will not come out.

Moderator: What do people need? Why can’t they come outside?

#7: They need education and development in order to have democracy. This requires time. We progress slowly but still.

Moderator: How would you characterize elections? Does it go in compliance with all standards? How transparently does it go?

#1: More or less it goes forward

#7: There are little falsifications but it doesn't have a decisive impact on the results

#3: There are falsifications but not in a scope as it used to be.

Moderator: Do you have information about where are the parties' election campaigns financed from?

#4: I don't really know it.

#3: Non-governmental organizations are financed from Europe but I don't know anything about parties.

#5: When you create a party and get 3-4 percents then you will get finance from the government. They depend on the money. They are funded from the budget and that's why they implement their interests.

#1: There are different sources but mainly from the business.

Moderator: You say that there is no longer falsification, whose merit is that, in your opinion?

#7: They don't need it anymore. They have such preliminaries and bribery that they do not need falsification of elections.

Moderator: If this bribery happens, doesn't this underline the shortcomings of the election system?

#7: Of course it does, but bribery doesn't exist in Norway, Netherlands, and countries like this. Here it is because a man is poor when you give and then give you something to him he believes.

#4: They avail from the social condition. If there is no poor parties can't bribe the people.

Moderator: What other shortcomings are there in the election system?

#1: We have no need of the majoritarian system, the president's position is senseless. It should be as in Germany. Majoritarians do nothing. I have never seen a majoritarian deputy with an initiative.

#7: There were 52 majoritarians and all of them were millionaires. Who can one trust them? Why poor, honest, patriot could not win...

#5: Majoritarians do nothing, they only think about making a business and lobbying it...

#1: These systems should be refined

#5: Majoritarian deputy must be close to people and listen to them

Moderator: Mr.Vano what shortcomings do you see in the election system, not only at election stations? What do you remember?

#2: I remember shortcomings and carousels that were before, bringing ballot boxes in and out. The process is much fair now, in my opinion. Bribing people is less now but they attract people with promises, they always make promises but never fulfill them.

Moderator: Do you think that fair elections are held in Georgia nowadays?

#3: Yes. Yes.

#7: It is not wonderful, but there is no comparison with the previous government, the election process itself is freer.

#4: When I enter the booth I am not afraid that there is a camera and someone is watching

#1: I couldn't even dare to raise voice back then, now you can talk, though, everything is not ideal.

Moderator: What was the reason for your vote? What was your reason for the change?

#3: To woke the government up and made them do something.

#5: I voted for National movement and I am confused now. "Georgian dream" does nothing and I don't know what to do.

Moderator: You don't see perspective, right?

#5: I can't see it yet. The national movement was a mistake and I cannot imagine how one can vote for them for the second time. They told they would return our homeland but they made people poorer and we lost territories.

Moderator: What should be corrected in the election system?

#5: Do you know what should change in the election system? Frist the parties must change and structure will amend itself. The will not bribe the people. When this finishes then everything will change and settle.

Moderator: As you know, there are local non-governmental organizations that are engaged in the election process as observers and work on system improvement. Do you remember any of them? Do you know about their activities?

#1: I remember none. Non-governmental organizations no matter where they get finance from must be shut. They are all the same.

Moderator: Do you know “Georgian young lawyers’ association”, “international transparency Georgia”, “fair elections”?

All: Yes we have heard of them

#1: Aren’t they all the time on tv? Everybody talks about them and we know

Moderator: What attitude do you have towards the organizations?

#3: I can’t tell anything. I don’t have information.

#2: I can not say, I don’t know their specific.

#3: I know one thing they should not interfere in the election process.

#4: They have no business there. Elections should be monitored by the election commission and relevant bodies, non-governmental organizations are irrelevant.

Moderator: They are members of the commission

#4: Oh, if they have the same authority then it’s okay.

#7: We are our non-governmental organizations financed from abroad? In order to work as they want, right?

Moderator: So do you think that these organizations shouldn’t monitor the election process as external observers?

#1: Yes. Because they get finance from abroad if they give you money that means they have their own reasons and goals.

Moderator: Mr. Demur, How would you assess the role of the organizations in the process and do you trust them?

#7: I have received help from GYLA many times but nobody listens to them regarding elections. There are so many one-man parties, and it must be substantiated that it doesn’t exist, there are only 2 men in a certain party and there is no need for so many parties.

Moderator: In the previous focus-group it was said that voting stations consisted mostly from two parties. How do you think how important is it to have observers from other organizations in the election process?

#3: They say one, while reality is the other. I have seen that there are observers from other parties as well...

#1: There is a shortcoming in the law, non-governmental organizations shouldn't be members of the commission.

Moderator: Okay, let's move on the international organizations, that are involved in the election process.

#4: You mean NDI, right?

Moderator: Yes, NDI and many more.

#1: This is an organization that always lies. At least once you can predict the truth, they always say wrong.

Moderator: What other organizations do you know?

#1: Democrats and Republicans these two American parties decide everything in Georgia.

Moderator: When they announce results of exit-polls, does that have an influence on the election process?

#1: Do you know what exit-polls were like in National movement period? According to NDI and IRI results National movement had 60% but they lost elections. The organizations don't have a negative influence but make certain expectations. I know that they work to drag "European Georgia" forward somehow. The main problem of non-governmental organizations is that they are not realistic at all. They have certain goals that they serve.

Moderator: What impact does it have on the political situation?

#1: They can not have a basic impact. But they serve the interests of "European Georgia" and "National Movement".

Moderator; I understand. In your opinion, how do the organization's impact on the political process?

#5: They were wrong once, twice, three times and a clever man gets suspicious and will not trust them

#2: They don't have trust, they are always wrong, they couldn't fulfill their duties. They try to engage in processes but they can't.

#7: They have no impact anymore, their influence is insignificant. They had influence before.

Moderator: How did they have influence?

#7: They couldn't influence my opinion even before, but there are people who were under the influence. It is meant for the mass of people and the mass is not ready to overcome the authority of NDI and IRI.

#3: They had an influence on people's mind, they create opinion artificially. They conduct some research and they want people to believe that and think as they want. They are dripping this to people slowly.

#1: Not only communists had propaganda, no one has ever had propaganda as the National movement had. They are looking for Russian propaganda everywhere.

Moderator: You mentioned the connection between a party and NGO. Do you think that NDI exit-polls serve the strengthening of the national movement?

#1: Not national movement, European Georgia.

#7: They are the same.

Moderator: I have no more questions and feel free to add anything you want regarding parties, their programs, we can talk.

#3: That's all, what else we can say.

#1: I will say one thing. A party "Girchi" has only 2% but they are in every tv-show. That means they have someone there, otherwise, their opinions are uninterested.

Moderator: It is clear, then we can finish. Thanks for coming and your discussion. goodbye.

Focus Group #6

Location of the focus group: Tbilisi

Participants: Focus groups with women of 30-60 years, who as a rule, do not vote for the same party on the elections

Moderator: Mariam Devidze

Moderator: Hello, at first I will introduce myself. I am Mariam Devidze a research of the Institute of social studies and analysis. The subject of research is Georgian democracy, political processes, we will talk about the Georgian parties, election system, also about the organizations that are involved in refining the election process. We are recording this conversation on video and audio tape, though it will be just for our organization, so the information that you say here will be confidential and won't appear in the public space by your name or surname in a way to be identifiable. I must ask you to let each other speak otherwise we are unable to record it clearly. We will talk for approximately an hour and a half and if you don't mind, let's start. First, introduce yourself: Name, age, and your occupation

#1: 56 years old, currently unemployed

#2: 38 years old, a private tutor

#3: 60 years old, a housewife

#4: 48 years old

#5: professor, a doctor in journalism, trainer-expert

#6: music and drama theatre actress

#7: 33 years old, I am a doctor by profession though I haven't worked a day by it, I own a private business

#8: 40 years old, doctor-dermatologist

Moderator: It's pleasure. Let's start, how much are you interested in political processes and do you feel you are a participant in the political events?

#8: We live in Georgia and therefore we all are politicized and involved in the process.

#6: Of course we are interested in what is happening in the country. I am involved and watch the events as far as I can. I think it is everybody's duty and we should go to the elections and be involved in the issues.

#5: In this country, you are forced to be involved in political issues and my family members are involved as well. Which is expressed by voting in the elections and expressing our opinion regarding certain people. Unfortunately, no one is interested in our opinions, it is just on the paper

#4: Yes I am involved whether I want it or not. I want to be a participant in some progress

#3: Of course we are involved and aware of everything, we watch via television and monitor the part of society

#2: I am also involved and I think that every single citizen is obliged to be interested, hence this pertains to the welfare of our country.

Moderator: What sources you do get the information from?

All: From television

#5: from the press as well

#1: I get it from television

#3: Television is so loaded by soap-operas that you must know the exact time to watch the news. Therefore, for me, the internet is more convenient because I search the information I am interested in

Moderator: I wonder which Georgian politicians do you know and what is your attitude towards them? Do you trust them or not? What conditions your trust/distrust?

#5: In my opinion, the same people are there, therefore, we know all of them. Unfortunately, in Georgia everybody knows every politician, I lived abroad and there was another reality. The society in our country is well aware in terms of politics.

#3: I think that people are so poor economically that they expect salvation from the politicians. There is such perception that politics are linked with the economy and that's why Bidzina Ivanishvili was chosen as a leader of our country because that though that because of his money the country would be saved. Now I have a very negative attitude towards him because everything has become expensive, that affects middle and lower classes and not the elite. The elite lives very well and they seize the last sources from the poor people for their bonuses. Now they have changed the word "bonus" with "additions" and there are 37 millionaires in parliament in such a poor country. Everything is said by that. This is a small country and everybody knows how they came to parliament and when they become millionaires. They know if they spend a million they will get three times the bigger money in 4 years. That's why they aspire to politics and not for the welfare of people.

#5:

There are so many undeveloped countries like us and you can feel some progress everywhere but here, everything is frozen in the same place. That's why there is so big outflow of young people to the abroad. Nepotism is everywhere, if you have no acquaintance, no matter what merits you have, you cant start working even as a cleaner. Everything is politicized and everybody cares for its own. Let's take elementary statistical data isn't it possible for them to drive ordinary cars instead of Jeeps? Or when their every member of the family has a car. All right let them have but not at people's account. They say one thing and do another. They advise to walk in the fresh air, come from the jeeps and walk yourself. Of course, it is good to have a comfort, a member of parliament may drive a car but it is inadmissible considering the living level of the people. It's a terrible situation here. People choose politicians because they trust them but they have triggered distrust in me.

Moderator: Have you always had distrust or it has shifted over time?

#5: As the lady noted, I also had hope when Bidzina came, that something would change for the better, though it was a big disappointment. I am so disappointed now that I don't think that anyone in the future will be normal. 20 years have passed since the Soviet Union, different governments but none of them cared for the people.

#1: I think systemic changes are necessary, it is not important whether there is Bidzina or someone else, the most important is to change system and laws. The judicial system should be changed at first, as well as the election system. We implement the reforms backward, we are not changing the system, therefore I think that it is our fault because people don't choose right. For example, we chose Bidzina unanimously, to tell the truth, I didn't vote for him, we shouldn't choose money we should choose education

#8: For example?

#1: Society is divided into two parts here – UNM supporters and Georgian Dream supporters. Nobody listens to the other. For example, Giorgi Vashadze’s program, has anyone read it?

#3: I think that nobody reads the programs

#1: For example, I would do a good mix from Giorgi Vashadze, I like many things in “Girchi”, Davit Usupashvili is quite educated and clever politician, we haven’t had such deputy of parliament. So we must learn how to choose right, we should choose one as a minister and the second as a mayor and so on, after that we will have no problem. Plus, we shouldn't stay at home and must be active citizens. And what kind of government you have, such are your people, this is my opinion.

#5: I respect your opinion lady but I was invited to Vashadze’s party and I saw such things there, my students are still there and I know many things from them as well, so I cannot trust him. He looks quite different though

Moderator: How would you assess Georgian democracy, Do we have democratic institutions in the country?

#2: I think that democracy doesn’t exist in our country. We are not free and we don’t have free choice

#6: We have free choice in written form. I still look at things optimistically and I see positive changes for the better in present and previous generations

#1: We do not have the right to choose.

#3: If the situation in elections is not regulated, election lists aren’t formed and the election system is not changed, there will be no way out for us.

#4: There is no law for these people, it exists only for lower and middle classes, in the upper class they do whatever they want

#3: I was shocked when I heard the salary of CEC deputy. Not to mention the fact that every member of the commission is appointed by the ruling party. The seven members are their people and respectively the ruling party has their voices. Plus the seven observers, their people, 12-15 coordinators at every polling stations that are paid and that’s it, they win the precinct, this is how elections are falsified. From a polling station of 1500 people, 600 voters are going to the polling station and 200 votes from them mean victory. We will never have multi-party parliament because of the system. And if we don’t have multi-party parliament then nothing will happen according to the law.

#4: I will start from that everybody goes to the elections because they are waiting for something better and I voted Ivanishvili not because of his money but because of the prison footages I had seen before. If there had not been this fact I could haven’t voted for him. So were many people around me. Since this government came I have seen fewer things done and more inactivity. I think this is a gathering of fools though they are very clever for themselves. No matter what we change, either it is law or prosecutor’s office, if an individual doesn’t change and doesn’t have the different approach to law, with a different sense of responsibility, we will not be saved. Nobody cares for the economy. Some work abroad, some arrive in Tbilisi, the old people are begging or bargaining. My sister sends 400 Euros to look after the cornfield, if not her money my members will not be able to keep themselves. Tea is imported from Turkey. Why? When you are able to develop your own economy. And the most concerning thing for me, if politicians loved our country as we, ordinary people do, we would probably be saved.

#3: Back then, the village kept the city but now it is on the contrary. Until the period returns they economy will not develop. So we will always depend on imported product and this dependence will not progress the economy.

#7: The state doesn't create the conditions to live in the rural areas, people are merely trying to save themselves, and it is inadmissible to treat your people like that. It is unacceptable, that your people go to work in another country and you encourage foreigners to come here and live. Or how the judiciary system will change, the same people work there and they cannot mend their mistakes

#8: I stay as an optimist, I think I am realized because I have a job, that is a huge problem nowadays. As I am working in the healthcare field, I can say that during the previous government only a few people were able to visit doctors, now you cannot find a patient that doesn't have insurance. Yes, they have made lots of mistakes, they don't have a program but in healthcare the progress is visible.

#3: I agree but I have a question, what is the difference if I go to the doctor, he makes diagnose but I cannot afford to buy the medicine and I die and if I cannot go to the doctor at all?

#8: I understand, but lots of things are financed, my daughter was operated on the thyroid gland and I didn't pay anything. I want to say that my child is studying in Alasania's university and without any help of acquaintances or relatives, Goderdzi Sharashia helped her as a perfect student and now she works as a journalist and is in the 4th course

Moderator: Do democratic processes have progress?

#8: I think yes, I would be ungrateful if I don't note it considering my experience, but I understand everybody. I see problems as well, my brother was Kukava's assistant but now he is unemployed.

#7: Our salvation is in the youth, but you shouldn't make them go. You should look after your talented youth, they are workaholic, I am saying this due to my child.

#5: I think democracy is ostentatious, everything is staged. Democracy is only written on paper and if they want they use it for themselves. My heart is broken by what I see here and abroad, I realized that what people achieve there in 5 years, people need whole lives to do the same here. Considering my distress I don't get even the minimum, I would totally go there but I cannot leave my parents. I have status and respect here, but no comfort, I would have comfort there, when I am not their citizen and never will. They don't even listen to their citizens here. I am an author of 5 books and I encountered lots of obstacles, during the defending my work, there had been such obstacles that I should have given up. This is not a democracy.

Moderator: Which parties do you recall when you talk about them?

#1: Besides, UNM and Georgian Dream, the Republican party, Girchi, Giorgi Vashadze – New Georgia.

#3: Free Georgia

#2: Shalva Natelashvili, industrialists

Moderator: Let's talk about the programs of the parties. Do you know them? And on what issues were the attention paid?

#3: Free Georgia had a very good program, but I am sure nobody has read it, there was talk about the agriculture, how to make cooperatives, there was tax paying programs, I don't remember wholly but I have to mention that idea of withdrawing a deputy by people. Other parties had promises that nobody fulfills – depreciation of utility taxes, raising pensions, reducing taxes, creating jobs and so on that get on people's nerves

#1: I think everybody tells the thing that sells good, otherwise nobody is going to do anything. Popular things like – pension raise and etc.

#3: Election program is determined on the pensioners and socially vulnerable people. It is just playing with words or everybody has the same program with the same content.

#7: Unfortunately, they remember people only in the pre-election period and then again after 3-4 years.

#1: They are doing a grudging favor, saying they would raise the pensions, they aren't raising anything it's people's money. They said they had built the road. This is our money as well and why they reproach I cannot understand.

#2: The social assistance program for socially vulnerable people is also bad. The poor don't work or cultivate the land fearing they will lose social aid

#4: In my opinion, the Georgian dream made a mistake during the election period when they the young people's votes, they were promising legalization and decriminalization back then, which was a very dirty move. And they wanted to gain votes by giving freedom to 17-18 years old boys and adolescents, which we result in a bad way now. I wish there were National movement in this regard because today there is more murder, robbery, theft and so on. Most of the young people are fooled by marijuana. The state should aid the parents to raise their child and protect them and not, on the contrary, now you can walk in the drug-stores and terrible medicines are sold there.

#8: Nobody considers that they come out in famous tv-shows and creating propaganda about it

Moderator: And yet what would you single out of the election programs?

#5: I think that everybody is the same, it is psychologically calculated for assistance and pensioners to gain votes from them. They have no elementary pattern, to note what they wrote in the program or what they did.

Moderator: Do you think that any political party is meant for any segment?

#5: I don't see that

Moderator: Is there a focus on the women's needs?

#5: There is an emphasis on the women's rights and on women involved in politics, I like that and women become more active. I think it is their calculation as well

#1: Should I engage in politics just because I am a woman? They should choose me because what I do and will make in the future. For me, it is more discriminative and insulting approach because I am a woman

#3: I don't like it either, the honorable candidate should pass. Women more likely work in social direction, the women choose the positions by themselves. Maybe men are more capable of settling certain problems and that's it

#5: Yes political parties gain more pluses by international standards when there are more women involved.

#1: Unfortunately, this is the approach that a woman cannot "make it" to the big position. It is very good they have established it for the balance, but I reiterate that I don't want them to call me a woman, but a smart woman. For this, there is no need for setting quotas

Moderator: How much the parties consider the needs of the young people?

#8: Yes, they more consider the needs of women and young people nowadays in terms of financing.

#2: Today every political party has youth organizations and they are mostly used during the pre-election period for communication with the population. They may consider their needs as well. Young people attend training and deepen their knowledge in terms of elections

#5: I have a relationship with people of every age and I know well that they use the young people. They train them and offer jobs and many ignorant and impertinent young people occupy higher posts than I have, just because, they are employed by the party. So they use the young people for themselves because their control is far easier.

#3: The young people go to the parties that have money. Without it they cannot attract them, they promise many things.

#4: I know that during the UNM era, they used to send young people abroad to raise the qualification

Moderator: What do you think, what other needs should the parties represent in their pre-election programs?

#1: The education is vital. 7 ministers have changed in the last 6 years, one hasn't started when the second one is coming.

#5: They should have experience in school work, it is good to sit in a cabinet and issue directives and orders, which we can do as well. The ministers of education haven't worked a day in school. They should pass all the stages and then become an official. That goes for every field. When they come out on television and pretend themselves as formal people, let them pass all the stages, work in lower positions for some months at least. They don't know the system where they start to work. Can a justice minister be a minister of education like Shashkin?

#6: Not everyone affords to study at university. So the vocational institutions should be developed and have the professional manpower. We have self-taught workers.

#3: Every system had its advantages, even the Soviet Union order, I remember very well the stages that I passed to get the position but now nobody suffers to get the same place. I had practical experience, I didn't know what bore was but with just one glance on the draft I knew how to climb up or down. I passed many stages to get the job and everything that due to my experience and not the red diploma

Moderator: What other needs should the parties present in their program?

#3 Agriculture is highly important, as I noted before it is necessary that the village must keep the city and not vice versa. Maybe a farmer knows how to cultivate the land but one doesn't know how to realize it. So the cooperatives should be made, to get a realization of the harvest.

#6: When Bidzina Ivanishvili came at the first, I remember very well that he invested a lot of money in Kakheti to help the farmers to cultivate the land, he distributed tools, pesticide spraying apparatus. But we are lazy people, many people live in villages as if they are in the city, they don't work physically.

#4: We may be lazy, but when in Guria they plant hazelnut trees hoping they will sell it, and when the selling time comes, the price of hazelnut goes down. This is deception, misleading of a man. The same is with grapes. This is not acceptable, they are starting a business and a certain percent of the business goes to the state budget. Don't import Turkish and Chinese juices and produce them here, in Georgia.

#3: Kukava wanted to make an enterprise everything was calculated. It was about citrus when lots of tangerines had been wasted in Batumi, there would have made Juices out of that.

#1: What does Kukava think? How is it possible to make such a factory?

#3: It should have been a budget factory

#1: Why they should make a budget factory I don't understand. It is inadmissible

#3: They could have made some kind of some kind of warehouse, not to waste so many citruses.

Moderator: Let's move on the election issue. How often do you go to the elections and When you do, how well do you know the programs and do you have formed idea whom to vote and why?

#5: Yes I always vote meaningfully, I have never voted blindly.

Moderator: What is the decisive factor that you vote for?

#5: What they offer according to the social and state situation. For me the priority is job issues, during the communist order the one who didn't work was arrested, they can follow their example in some cases, can't they? An employed man less likely wants to commit something bad

Moderator: Did any party have the issue in their program?

#5: Yes, Bidzina Ivanishvili had the project of building the factories. The factories need manpower. If you walk down the Eliava street you will see the workers that stand there idle, their employment is necessary. Firstly, it is important employment and economic-social issues. In terms of educational direction, it is necessary for socially vulnerable to have free programs. I have prepared children for 7 years for free. The volunteer-like involvement is important. This culture is at a very low stage in our country.

#8: I am not comparing the parties but I am not madly in love with any of the parties and I don't like their program either, but everything is comparative. I prefer economic issues because of a state based on the economy. If you are economically strong, we will be strong in every field, but none of the programs is good

#7: For example, I didn't vote for anyone in the last elections, in protest, because I do not see any suitable candidate.

Moderator: What would you vote for?

#7: If I see that something is being done for the people I will vote for them. Nothing is being done for the people now

#6: I prefer the candidates that are linked with my field, I mean culture, and what plans one has regarding culture

Moderator: Which party had the similar program?

#6: UNM had the programs in this regard earlier.

Moderator: And now?

#6: You know, I have changed my views now

#1: I like innovations and Giorgi Vashadze accordingly. He had quite an interesting program in terms of economy. I don't know how well he packs it and how he will fulfill, but somehow I trust him. Plus, he has part experience. I also like Usupashvili he is a poised politician

#2: Election programs mostly are the same, I evaluate candidates personally, how realized, wealthy or patriot the candidate is and how he worries about his country

#3: For me, personality and past are important, how clean a person is. For example Kakha Kukava, none of the parties, even the old and new ones managed to show compromising material about him. They always rake up something about the new candidate, but nothing has ever been announced about Kakha. He is quite balanced, professional, clever politician. It has a huge significance. Only Ivanishvili called him in and told to broke up the party.

#4: I always go to the elections with a hope that something will change for the better. I know the mistakes of parties but I still go and vote for them, hoping they will mend their mistakes this time

Moderator: As I see, you voted for different parties at the last two elections, Was your choice conditioned by that fact that one of them had disappointed you and you have the chance to the other?

#4: Yes it was exactly like this. I thought they wouldn't make the same mistakes but they disappointed me. I don't want the young people to have total freedom, there should work fear factor. Now I regret one thing, I prefer to do the job and make mistakes. The young people should have fear, that they will be punished if they do wrong.

#5: I had hoped for the changes but I was disappointed with them, they turned out to be the worse than each other. I always vote for the different parties hoping for the improvement but nothing changes still. I voted for Ivanishvili now, in the previous elections I voted for the UNM, at least they had the intellect and I don't see anything similar now

#8: I was also disappointed, they couldn't realize their candidates, only foreign education means nothing, they should have practice. I don't like anyone now, I voted for the Georgian dream and opposition party.

#3: There should not be so many parties and they should not have the right of establishing it either. 225 political parties are in Georgia. There should be some regulations. In China and India, there are only 12 parties...

Moderator: What shortcomings were revealed during the elections? What would you add about the shortcomings?

#5: I see shortcomings even from television, some people are telling voters in advance whom to vote for and they pay for it. They have lists and try to negotiate with people. Nobody can dare to offer this to me from my neighborhood.

#3: There is the same situation at every polling station. Election law should be changed as well. Some parties mustn't have such big financing and it should be distributed equally. The budget must be shortened in order to identify which one is better,

#4: I know that in the pre-election period, the young people were promised that they would free their family members from prison and they did it. I know such people. This happens in Tbilisi

#1: I saw such situation at the polling station. A woman who was a representative of the National movement said that she had to bring one group and she was bringing people. That happened when I was at exit-polls. The most disgusting fact was when they invited the people on the meal that was placed on the car trunk. How can you sell yourself to this? This was awful

#3: 32 people are registered in a flat with a room and a half. Is it admissible?

#4: At the expense of this we are forced to make revolution and start changes in this way

Moderator: What do you think should be changed in terms of the election system?

#8: Election lists are composed incorrectly, they should have some programs in order to conduct perfect elections

#3: I think there shouldn't be majoritarians at all, the budget allotted to them is spent by themselves for their own pleasure. This is a play with millions. I know many who accrued lots of money to Georgian dream as a donation to become majoritarians. Lots of money is spent on making lists. One of Georgian Dream's candidate was French who owned micro-financing organization and had donated 2 million Laris to the party. Now he has 16 such organizations.

Moderator: You probably know the organizations that care for changing the system and participate in elections as observers. Which local organizations do you know?

#1: Fair elections

#2: GYLA

#6: Transparency International

Moderator: What is your attitude towards the organizations?

#1: I welcome their existence, I know that "Fair elections" is actively involved in election processes and have a good reaction. Their inferences have significance and impact.

#8: On some, I have the impression that they are one-sided, UNM has one of them, Georgian dream has another and they write rating as they wish

#4: Everything should be transparent and they shouldn't accept money for selling the votes.

Now everything is wrong, there were lots of mistakes like fat. Every violation should be revealed

#1: They reveal it, what else should they do? NGO can do nothing more

#4: Every single case should be revealed and not 1-2 because of we now that there are more

#3: They say it here and there but they should be more and not because they are meant to be rumored. These organizations should be fair and strict.

#5: They should be strict and result-oriented, there should be some kind of sanctions and fines for violations. These organizations write different inferences considering the interests of different parties

#4: I think it is not necessary to vote in the booth, behind the curtains, there is a possibility and it is possible to vote electronically.

#7: It should be based on real facts and result by the organizations

Moderator: And move on to the last issue. Which international organizations do you know, that monitor the election processes?

#5: NDI

#6: GORD

Moderator: I will read them for you: IFES, GYLA, NDI, IRI, USAID. What is your attitude towards the organizations?

#5: Their results are more real for me, I have read one of USAID and I like it. It is more clear.

#3: When the foreigner observers appear at the polling station then is the calm and quiet situation, nothing suspicious happens. They are for an hour and a half there and after that everything changes, accordingly, the observers are satisfied.

Moderator: Do they have an influence on how the elections will be conducted?

#7: They say what they see

#1: They have. Europe will express their worries based on what they organizations write

Moderator: What should the organizations do in order to have a fair election system?

#1: I think they fulfill their duty, they are monitoring the process and draw inferences out of that, however, they cannot punish them. This inference should be taken into account by the government and if violations reveal relevant bodies should take care of the cases.

#3: When there is a complaint the ballot boxes should be opened and checked. Their organizations must help in that

#7: The system is so poorly assembled, that they can prove you everything to the contrary.

#1: The best solution will be an electric system

#2: As far as I know there is talk about changing the existing system by an electric one, but I don't know when this happens

Moderator: All right, I don't have any other questions, if you want to add something feel free. It was a pleasure to talk with you, thanks for coming.

Focus Group #7

Location of the focus group: Marneuli

Participants: Men of Ethnic Minorities 20-50

Moderator: Mariam Devidze

Moderator: Hello I will introduce myself and tell you why we are here. I am Mariam Devidze, a researcher from Institute of social studies and analysis. This organization is a research institution: individuals, organizations, representatives of state structures order us to conduct a research on different topics and we go to people and conduct focus groups, interviews and so on. In this case, we are conducting research about democracy: Georgian election system, political parties, organization that are monitoring election processes and my questions will be about all these. I am recording this discussion on video and audio device, this is for my organization as I cannot remember everything that you will say here and we will need it at analysis stage not to miss information, though this will be confidential, your name will not appear in public spaces, it is happening just because to deliver information and analyse it. If you don't mind let's start and introduce yourself: Your name, age and what you do.

#1: 22 years old, a student.

#2: I work in one of the organizational offices. I am 50 years old.

#3: 40 years old, unemployed

#4: 34 years old, I work at "Gorgia".

#5: 30 years old, unemployed.

#6: 41 years old, unemployed.

#7: 41 years old, I work at Geostat.

Moderator: Well, my first question is: how much are you interested in political processes and if you think you are participating in these political processes?

#7: I am very active. I take part in the elections. I always participate when meetings are held in society. I am interested what happens and I am interested in everything that is linked with politics.

Moderator: How much do you feel that you are a participant in the processes and your involvement is significant?

#7: It is very important. I am very active and I take part in a political meeting if there is any. If we say it by percent I am 80% active.

Moderator: Very good. What would others say?

#1: I am interested and I take part in the elections this is my political activity.

#4: I vote in every election and express my personal opinion.

Moderator: How do you think that your opinion is significant?

#4: Yes, of course, even a vote can change everything and I am trying to be involved as much as possible.

#1: I take part in the elections of course. But mostly I am an observer, but to tell the truth, my vote is not decisive because everything is decided before they open the ballot box, everything is clear, who will be the winner, as it often happens in Marneuli. Hence, I believe that my voice does not change anything here.

Moderator: Let's talk about the processes in general, If you try to be informed, if you watch the news and other significant events.

#1: Yes of course. But I am a student and I still try to have a neutral position

Moderator: Where are you studying by the way?

#1: I am studying at Technical University

Moderator: Do you watch the television? Which channels and t shows do you watch? Or do you watch them in Azerbaijan language?

#7: Mostly we watch Azerbaijanian channels here. However, we watch Rustavi 2, Georgian broadcaster and other Georgian channels as well but we get information from the internet, via Facebook.

Moderator: How often do you watch television every day?

#7: I may watch several times a day, but there are days when I watch it several times. I always try to watch tv when something very important happens.

Moderator: What about you? Do you watch the Georgian channels?

#7: I watch both Azerbaijanian and Georgian channels

#3: Besides, I watch Turkish and Russian channels as well.

Moderator: How often do you watch Georgian channels?

#5: I try as much as possible to watch Georgian channels every day

Moderator: What about your family members?

#7: Yes If the women and wives know the Georgian language they watch Georgian channels if not then we prefer to watch Azerbaijanian channels

Moderator: Do they have information about what happens in the country? Or they don't because of that?

#7: Often they don't understand in Georgian so they prefer to watch Azerbaijanian and Turkish channels.

#2: My 8th grader child, who studies in Georgian school always watches Georgian channels and accordingly we watch them as well and are familiar with Georgian channels and our child translates it for us.

Moderator: I am interested in your attitudes towards Georgian politicians: How much do you trust them and what conditions your trust? If you don't trust them why is that?!

#2: I don't know, they speak but I don't know what they do.

#3: I have a normal attitude

Moderator: Do you know or remember any of them? Do you know them more from central government or from local?

#2: I know many politicians in parliament and in local government as well

Moderator: And what is your attitude? Do you trust him?

#2: I don't know, they say something and it seems that they do something as well

#4: We trust because everything is in their hands. So I trust them as much as possible

Moderator: What conditions your trust?

#6: Everybody who is in state bodies has the goal to make our country progress, develop and they care for changing people's life to better. So I trust them

#4: I have a normal attitude towards them and I trust them more or less

Moderator: Why?

#4: They are officials and because of that we trust them

Moderator: Do you have a feeling that they are elected by you and there are accountable? Or do you think that they know better and we should just obey?

#5: Of course they are elected by us, they are our representatives and therefore our trust towards them is quite high.

Moderator: Mr. Ramin what would you say?

#3: I agree with them in everything

Moderator: And do you have more confidence in the local government or the central government? Or do you trust them equally?

#2: Who is here, what they decide it doesn't matter, everything in the Parliament and above is settled, local politicians are looking at them, they can't do anything and if they allow doing something then they will do if they have power.

#5: We have a close relationship with local authorities and accordingly it is more convenient for us because we have direct contact and relationship

Moderator: How would you assess their work?

#5: They work quite well

#6: It depends on a problem. They work well on the certain problem but they find some problems hard. Some try to solve the problems as much as possible at the local stage, while some find it difficult and cannot settle it. This is sometimes due to the complexity of the problem, and sometimes they do not.

Moderator: What are the problems that they don't work on and what do you want the local and central government to work on? I mean your needs...

#6: Mostly we have a water problem. Both drinking and irrigation water. Local representatives and politicians do their best to solve the problem and they have been working on the water problem for a year and they have started to make water system for the population for several days already

Moderator: How were the people involved in these processes?

#6: We applied to channels and television they filmed it and accordingly the local politicians reacted

Moderator: I wonder how would you assess the Georgian democracy? Are the systems what we have democratic?

#7: In whole Caucasia and in the former the Soviet Union Georgia is the most democratic republic

Moderator: Why do you think so? What conditions your choice?

#2: Over the past few years, they made roads, water systems, both irrigation and drinking, and gas as well.

#7: In other countries, in Caucasia and the former Soviet Union, freedom of speech and human rights are more violated. You can express your opinion here freely and corruption level is lower here. It less likely happens in Georgia.

Moderator: What would others say?

#5: I agree. Here is a better situation

Moderator: Would you single out shortcomings which should be corrected in your opinion?

#1: In my opinion, Georgia is not a democratic country. For me, Georgia is a country that is near to democracy. Of course, comparing to the other countries in Caucasia it is more democratic but if we take look at the modern reality our country is ruled by one oligarch, one party and if you oppose them, I don't know...you understand what will happen...As for the freedom of speech, in recent times, especially the events that happened in May violated these rights and especially freedom of speech and expression.

Moderator: Would you add something to what said?

#2: While we are sitting here, we don't know, who serves, we don't know what functions we have in society. We don't know who is the politician in reality what kind of past he has and so on.

Moderator: Is the lack of information a problem? Or do they decide everything by bargains behind the scenes?

#2: I do not mean this. I mean that all politicians have their own personal opinions and start working in different directions. However, the law provides that every politician should serve the state. All of them are saying this, but nothing really changes.

Moderator: Does the civil society develops from elections to elections? What do you think what is the situation?

#6: The situation 10 years ago and no isn't different of course. The situation 10 years ago was much better.

Moderator: Why do you think so?

#6: There is a huge difference between the former and present states.

Moderator: Do you think that the National movement was better than Georgian dream? What is the reason?

#6: The law was less violated 10 years ago while the laws are violated more and are less protected.

Moderator: What would you say Mr. Isman?

#3: Our present state cannot develop. During the previous government a citizen was more protected and felt oneself better, but now theft is common and drug addiction is widely spread.

Moderator: Mr. what would you say?

#7: I agree with them, back then we felt that human rights were protected and we had more hope. I thought that everything would be different. For example, it was easier to start a car business back then, while it is far difficult to do the same now, we used to do it easier now it is terrible. We have neither trust nor hope, politicians were closer to us before.

#1: I, as a nihilist person would say, we all know what was happening in the previous state, but the former government facilitated development more and we were developing ourselves. As for the human rights, this is the same, for me, nothing changed.

Moderator: Let's move on to the political parties, I wonder what political parties do you know? Can you name them?

#7: At first, "Georgian dream", "National movement", "European Georgia", "Christian-Democrats".....

#6: We don't know their names, we know them by numbers

#7: We know that the number 41 is for „Georgian dream“, 5 is for „National movement“, 2 is for „European Georgia“ and so on.

Moderator: Do you know the candidates of the parties?

#7: Yes we know the local candidates

#6: We don't know any political party or candidate in reality because we don't know the language. Accordingly, we are unable to watch the news and we cannot monitor political processes duly. When something happens here it is in the Georgian language sometimes they translate by mostly it is in Georgian, respectively we cannot involve in the processes and we don't know them

Moderator: When you go to the elections, how much do you think about who you vote? What do you build your decision on?

#7: They introduce their candidates and programs they come and hold meetings with population

Moderator: Do the population come to the meetings?

#7: Yes, we are informed several days before the meeting and people start to get ready, prepare questions and then they ask the questions to candidates. They come to introduce their programs and after that, we give them questions

Moderator: You can but most of the people cannot attend the meetings

#7: It goes without saying

#6: In fact, they promise us lots of things, but we determine by debates and questions whether there is a possibility to fulfill the promises and we react accordingly.

Moderator: When you decide which one you are going to vote for, what conditions your choice?

#4: Candidates come, present their programs and based on that we decide which is better

Moderator: Is the election program your priority? What do you remember from the last elections? What promises did they have? What were the promises of “Georgian dream”, “National movement” and “European Georgia”?

#7: All three promised to solve the problem of drinking water, but the real result was nothing.

Moderator: Were there any differences between the programs?

#6: There was a water problem in my village and when the parties came there all of them were focused on the problem

#7: When political parties go from village to village they know about the problems and they start talking accordingly. Some villages have a different problem and they talk about it and so on.

Moderator: All the parties talk about the problems that exist in the village, how do you make your choice if the programs are the same? What do you base your choice on?

#7: If there are two representatives of two parties and we have to make choice, we choose a representative from the ruling party because the balance in the country should be maintained...In fact, local self-government is balanced by parliament. Therefore, we also make the choice on the ruling party, as they are in the parliament and therefore, the chances of resolving problems by the ruling party's representative, in this case, are bigger than the rest of the opposition

Moderator: What would you say about the parties and programs? If there is any difference between their programs? How do you make your choice? Does the same factor determine your choice that the ruling team gives you the bigger chance to solve problems?

#4: I listen to everybody's program and I make my choice accordingly.

#6: Everbody promises us something, opposition, government but in fact, nothing happens. Those who want to win elections even go to the funerals to get a vote.

#5: Irrigation and dring water was a problem, we told about it our representatives but there was no reaction so I don't trust anyone.

#2: In Marneuli district, there is a village where 15,000 people live and in fact, half of the village has a drinking water problem. Everybody promises that they would solve the water problem but in reality, no one keeps the promise. One who wants to gain the votes should come and build pipes and settle the problem and one will have 15 000 votes, the problem is so big in our village. Agriculture is the main source of income and it is a very big problem. In fact, we buy water for 1 GEL once in three days.

Moderator: After the election, do not you ask that this had been their promise before the elections and why didn't they do it?

#6: In fact, we haven't seen the local representative that we chose and we don't know who to ask for.

Moderator: Is that local or foreign?

#7: Yes he is local but we haven't seen him and he hasn't contacted us either.

Moderator: Where is he?

#6: I don't know, he goes to funerals that we see his face. In fact, when we go to the elections we know that whoever we choose the one will not fulfill the promise anyway and does nothing for us.

#2: It was winter, they were building gas pipes and they damaged the road and everything was muddy. This problem was added to other problems after all.

Moderator: What do you think for what reason do people around you vote for the United National Movement?

#7: Firstly, because there are lots of criminals and drug users in the country and they were fighting against them. Also because of the banking system?

Moderator: Do many people vote for them by the way?

#7: I cannot say, I don't know, who votes for whom

Moderator: I mean the people who support them openly and speaks about it.

#7: Yes they have quite many supporters. Because people less trust the government and their rating is falling down. 3-4 years ago the rating of “Georgian dream” was higher.

Moderator: What would you say about the other parties? Don’t you know any of them?

#7: Mostly we know “National movement”, “Georgian dream” and “European Georgia”

Moderator: What about Irma Inashvili or “Girchi”?

#7: No, they are not with us.

Moderator: What would you say ? What is the difference between them?

#1: I mostly go to the elections as an observer and I cannot vote. Though I was once and I crossed out everyone. No one expresses my interest.

Moderator: Besides the water problems what other needs do you have that you want to be presented in the election programs?

#5: The water problem is so big with us that we don’t pay attention to other problems.

Moderator: But what other problems do you have?

#7: Jobs, we are basically all unemployed or self-employed here.

#5: Mostly drinking and irrigation water problem.

#6: If the water problem isn’t settled in each village, nothing will come out.

#7: We are involved in agriculture and cattle-herding, accordingly in order to develop these fields it is necessary to solve the water problem. Hectares of harvest are devastated because of drought.

Moderator: I understand. You, as representatives of ethnic minorities, are your representatives in their parties?

#6: Many don’t participate and aren’t involved, but the ones who do they participate to take salaries.

Moderator: Do you think that your representatives should be in every political party?

All: Yes of course

Moderator: Why do you think so? What will they change for you?

#7: Because we are the biggest ethnic minority living in Georgia

#4: Yes, it is necessary. That will help us more

Moderator: How will this help you?

#7: They know our problems better and can deliver them to the government or relevant bodies.

Moderator: Let's move on to the elections, I wonder what is your attitude towards the elections and how free and transparent are the election processes?

#4: From our side everything is transparent

Moderator: What about a system in general?

#4: We vote but we don't know where our votes go after that

Moderator: Have you visited all the elections?

#7: Yes, I have visited most of them. We are very active.

Moderator: When we monitor the process it seems that the highest level of violation is here and in Samtskhe-Javakheti. Do you agree with this and why is that?

#4: We have no idea what is going on whether there are violations or not

Moderator: Have you ever noticed some kind of violation at your polling station?

#7: I was a deputy in the elections and everything was happening transparent and everybody had the opportunity to express an opinion, video cameras were recording everything. Everyone knows everything and fulfills one's duties.

Moderator: Bribe, falsification of the votes... Do the things like that happen in your region?

#5: It seems it doesn't happen but in fact, there are the same problems here

Moderator: Have you heard about such things?

#1: Yes, my mother was offered money. They gave 50 GEL to her and told her to vote for them because my mother is a teacher and they think that they will influence her easily. How they can have an influence on her I don't know but they think like that.

Moderator: What was the situation like when you were an observer?

#1: Yes, of course, I was from a non-governmental organization. There were violations I even had to write a lot of fines and many warnings as well.

Moderator: What were the violations that you wrote fines for?

#1: At first, they didn't check them with a laser, they didn't mark them one after another.

Moderator: Which polling you were in?

#1: In one of the villages of Marneuli. There were several cases where I had to write a fine because two individuals were in the booth at the same time. This is a direct violation and the facts like this were happening there.

#7: If an individual needs assistance, the other can help how to vote and so on

#1: Maybe yes but the man didn't need any assistance indeed.

Moderator: Do you know where the political parties get their finances from?

#4: Mostly they are financed from the state budget.

Moderator: Are they financed partly or wholly by the state?

#6: They are mostly financed by the businessmen.

#5: By influential businessmen.

Moderator: I wonder about the shortcomings. Don't you remember any shortcoming in the Georgian election system?

#7: It depends on the citizens mostly that enter the booth. They make choice.

Moderator: You said that you knew in advance who would win the elections

#7: Everybody says that but in fact, the only thing that is proven is that you go and vote. And what kind of decision the CEC will take, and as it calculates, the one is the winner.

Moderator: Do you think the same?

#6: I don't know what happens there.

#7: The thing that we know who will be the winner is an activity that is embarked on in purpose of provocation because the elections are not conducted and therefore the winner has not yet been revealed.

Moderator: But you voted for the governor whom you don't know. How much do you trust the people and do you still vote for the people when you go to the elections?

#7: He is a governor, he at least once comes before the elections and introduces himself to everyone he talks with representatives of every office and attends the pre-election meetings. Mostly the one is a candidate whom we have known for several years and we have been working for years with him and everyone knows him.

Moderator: About the role of NGOs in the election processes. Have you ever heard about the NGOs that attend the election process and work on to improve the processes? Have you heard about such organizations?

#6: I can say that I have never heard about the organizations

#7: I know that such organizations take part and monitor the process, they are young people but most of the population don't know anything about them. They don't know what NGO means.

Moderator: Have you heard about GYLA?

All: No we haven't

Moderator: "International Transparency Georgia"?

#2: No, I do not know about them in Georgia.

Moderator: What do you think what role should NGOs have in the process of elections and its development?

#7: They should facilitate the conduct of transparent elections. To conduct elections democratically

Moderator: Do they have an influence on the election process?

#7: Their representative is an observer and takes part in everything to conduct the process properly. They are recording the process and if there are any violations, then all the violations are reported.

Moderator: What would you say, as an observer, what experience do you have and do they have an influence?

#1: Some of them have

Moderator: Which ones have and what kind of influence do they have?

#1: For example "International Transparency Georgia". They have influential observers and are allowed to participate into everything and quite active training is conducted for them, in order to conduct elections transparently and encourage the population to express their opinion and not to be hindered in that

Moderator: Do they have an influence on the whole process?

#1: They have an impact on the processes in terms of monitoring the process, not to be a violation during the counting process and to be everything properly. Counting is a fast process and it is necessary to intervene in time.

Moderator: Let's talk on the last issue, besides the local organizations, there are international organizations and I wonder if you know about them, they are working on the election and election system. Have you heard about them via television or from other means?

All: No

Moderator: I will name them for you: NDI, IRI, USAID and so on?

All: No, we haven't

#7: I have heard about USAID. Interpreters used to come and write things on the elections.

Moderator: What were they doing?

#7: They were monitoring the process and were writing down memos. For a few minutes, 5-10 minutes.

Moderator: Do the organizations have an impact and contribute to the system? What do you think?

#7: I have never seen anything bad from them and otherwise

Moderator: What would the others say?

#1: Their main objective is to conduct transparent elections. Comparing to the locals, international organizations have bigger experience and they know more. When they come everybody is warned that they are coming and everything is put in an order at the polling station that it is unbelievable.

Moderator: Do you think it is fake? How real is this order?

#1: In fact, it is fake because this kind of order appears when they come, as they are afraid of them and it is good.

Moderator: Would you add something regarding elections, political parties, Georgian democracy?

All: Everything has been said

Moderator: All right, thank you for coming and for your time

Focus Group #8

Location of focus-group: Marneuli

Participants: Women from ethnic minorities 20-50

Moderator: Mariam Devidze

Moderator: Hello, I am Mariam Devidze from the Institute of social studies and analysis. This is a research organization and we conduct researches on different issues. Today, in our case it is focus-group, survey and the main topics that we are going to discuss are a democracy, elections political parties, organizations. I will give you questions and talk about the issues. If the translation is needed, we will get help...we are recording on video camera but please don't be confused it's just for our organization to encrypt what you discussed, I can't remember everything and it will be confidential, your name and surname won't get into any report or elsewhere. I will have a request not to speak simultaneously otherwise your voices will cover each other and we will not be able to get the idea. Let's start. At first, represent yourself, your age and what you do for a living.

#1 44 years old, a teacher in Russian school. I have been working on elections since 2008, I worked as an observer and monitored the elections.

#2 26 years old, works in a shop. She was a candidate in elections. Her name was on the party list. (Giorgi Vashadze)

#3 20 years old, student, participated in elections.

#4 22 years old, participated in elections, works in an organization as a registrar.

#5 51 years old, the housewife, took part in elections as an organizer.

#6 "Democratic Union", in free time works as a coordinator since 2008. I work with "Multinational Georgia". I am also a trainer of observers.

#7 35 years old, housewife, I participated in elections.

#8 29 years old, I was an observer and took part in the elections as well.

Moderator: All right, let's move on the first question, I wonder how interested you are in the political processes and how much do you feel to be a participant in these ongoing processes?

#8: Personally I am interested because this is our future. What will be decided in Parliament but I don't think that anyone takes into account our opinions. It doesn't happen in a way we say, never comes the one we want, for example in city hall etc. They bring their own people.

Moderator: How much are you interested in and how are you getting information?

#8 I don't know, here in the office for instance, or from television, many people come here, some say something but our opinions can't do anything in reality.

Moderator: What do others think?

#3: I totally agree, because they bring the one who they wish. And we don't choose the one we want but the one they want. They simply want us to choose one from the people they want. Do you understand?

Moderator: You mean the elections, right? So the parties represent their candidates and you have to vote, this is the principle of the elections in general. What do you imply?

#3 They ask you to express your opinion but they don't take into account it, that's my opinion. They ask to show your opinion but everything goes as they wish.

Moderator: What kind of opinion do you express for example?

#4: In general, for example, you take part in the elections, then you find out it was falsified, I don't trust the idea that our votes are not falsified, it has been falsified so many times that I don't believe otherwise now.

Moderator: Let's talk on the elections later. How are you interested in political processes and how do you observe it?

#3 I am interested in. I observe it via media, organization, take part in training and etc.

Interpreter: Can I say my opinion? As a participant. In my opinion, we need to raise awareness in the first place, for example, we know that most of the Azerbaijanians live in Kvemo Kartli, 80% of them. But we don't have the means to get information, what happens in politics, in the state. We have heard the news from facebook groups recently, the Public broadcaster has an Azerbaijanian show, not everybody watches it. So we are little behind in this regard. For example, a man comes and wants to write a notice for the ministry of internal affairs and he doesn't know that two ministers have been changed, how can it be possible to change the ministers all the time. We don't know the names of whom we write a notice. Things are like that. Our political processes are changed regularly. That's why the people are confused. Ministry of education, 3-4 ministers were changed in one term, I don't know what to do how to act. Minister of internal affairs, Prime minister, minister of external affairs, everyone is like that. It is hard to keep up with processes.

Moderator: Is there a problem with the Georgian language?

Interpreter: Of course there is but not among the young people, they get the information somehow, but the elder people 50 years old and above have no means to get the information

Moderator: So you think that the older generation doesn't know Georgian language and because of that they can't get the information?

Interpreter: Of course. They watch Azerbaijani tv-shows, to tell the truth, they cant get anything if they watch Georgian shows and they have no intention to understand it. The project on Public broadcaster in Azerbaijani language is a project of US embassy and owing to that they can get some information but not at that level.

Moderator: By the way do you watch the channel?

#7: I watch it in Georgian.

Interpreter: I watch in Georgian as well

#5 I don't watch it, the channel isn't shown at my place.

Interpreter: Also Public broadcaster has started some programme "Multinational Georgia" in Armenian and Azerbaijanian languages, young people make some tv-shows. I am sure that no one watches them.

Moderator: Why don't they watch it, is there no awareness?

Interpreter: There is no awareness, it is easy to sit in Tbilisi and talk but what happens in villages, if people watch them or not, is it interesting for them or not nobody cares and that is the problem.

Moderator: How much are you interested in getting the information for example on Facebook, do you look for the information or you read what appears on the screen?

#2 It is interesting for me when I look for it

Moderator: Do you think that your opinion is important in Georgian politics? How do you think that you are a participant in politics?

#2: You must know, we have become very popular in Tbilisi, owing to the recent events, I am interested in what happens in Marneuli and what happened in our city hall at the political level.

Moderator: And why did you decide to be a member of a political party? You noted that you are a member.

#2 I was in Vashade's party and Sharupov was a candidate there, my acquaintance and relative he asked and I entered.

Moderator: You are no longer a member?

#2: No, now I am not.

Moderator: Would you like to add something?

#6 Now it is very interesting for me how our central government works, what it does. Euro-integration and relations between Georgia and Europe are interesting for me, how they from it or

how the processes go. How the international law is happening in Georgia. The reason why these are interesting for me is that the strong state means strong self-government. There is local self-government with us but they can not fulfill their activities properly. I am angry with the local self-government that they are not properly qualified and do not try to develop themselves. There is no trust in the employees of local self-government. Local population must be involved in local self-government activities but there is no such precedent by far. But it is very important for the municipalities to develop at the local level than at the regional and state level. But there is no such case yet.

Moderator: What about you say that people don't trust local self-government....

#6: Not people, the employees don't trust each other.

Moderator: Why don't they trust each other?

#6 Because if people involved in activities of local self-government, many will learn many will have the desire to get the position and participation. Every party is going to overcome the barrier before the elections but this is only before the elections. After the win everything is different.

Moderator: What do you think why don't people try to ask and make them accountable?!

#6 For example when I refer or make a statement, they keep you silent, they send someone for you

Moderator: It happens on important political issues or on every issue

#6: On every issue. I work in several organizations here and the non-governmental organizations always move, and there was a car accident, someone crashed into a car, but the one who crashed was a relative of some official, a local deputy came and asked him to withdraw the complaint. But he didn't know that he would be fined if he would withdraw the complaint, that is because he doesn't know his own rights. If you have an uncle or a relative there, only then the law will be for you. You can do anything kill a man, beat him, there is no problem if you have someone.

Moderator: So you think that human rights are not protected in our country?

#3: I can say shortly, kinship is more preferable in this country rather than education and knowledge.

#6 Maybe human rights are protected somewhere, but you need to become such a person to protect yourself

#8 There have been many examples in my case when my rights were violated, but I know many places where to apply, hotline, general prosecutor's office, I will go to Tbilisi if it is needed.

Moderator: What was it about?

#8 For example people of 26, beneficiaries, where I entered the people, are disabled people, socially insecure and this is a fight against the government. For example, I have no house for 20 years. My husband participated in the war in Abkhazia and in 2008. I have two children, my son studied in Black Sea University. I was young when I became a mother. Now I am 39 years old and I have 22 year-old-child who studied at Black Sea University, just because I was unable to pay the tuition the child gave up who speaks in 5 languages. I told this directly to our mayor, that I wanted my child to sit on the chair like he did and he dismissed me in a rough way and that served him good. I applied to everyone, the television I phoned in Tbilisi. President was here and I met him and told about our problem and they helped my son indeed, not with 100 percent but they covered 30%. As for the politics, generally I represent the opposition because such things happen, soon I will join the party where it is needed. I don't like many things, for example, my husband is a participant of war and why...

Moderator: So in order to make government fulfill your requests, is it necessary to be in the opposition?

#8: not it is matter of principle. If there will be demonstrations in Tbilisi I will go there and speak my word. I grow my children like this, I say to them that you are citizens of Georgia and you must fight for your country.

Moderator: I am interested in your attitudes towards Georgian politicians. How much trust do you have and if you don't why is that? Also your attitudes regarding political systems and what conditions them.

#8: For example, I don't trust them at all. Let's take our mayor. We don't know him, we wanted to have a local mayor, that would know local problems, his placards were hanged everywhere and I managed to see him after 5 months. He didn't receive me. I just saw on the posters that he was the candidate, I didn't know him at all. I wanted to vote for someone. This is the usual policy. They put him on the chair. That's why I don't believe.

Moderator: Do you think that people did not vote for him?

#8: Of course they didn't. They assigned him to the position. The one who tells, go home, woman, is he a politician? He told me like that.

Moderator: Are locals employed in local self-government?

#8 Yes there are. I don't know how it is in percents, but there are. Girls from Tbilisi work in City Hall mainly, are our young people bad or what? There are so many clever girls but they don't receive them, they bring from Tbilisi and Rustavi.

Moderator: Have you heard, for example, you, have you ever wanted to get a job in local self-government and you couldn't?

#8: Yes of course. I have an acquaintance Lika Kveladze, you may know her, she is such a talented girl, she has graduated from two universities, she is a journalist and she always tries to

get a job in City Hall, she had perfect marks in everything, why they don't let her start work there, she worked in Rustavi 2. This girl has been going there for 3 years and they don't accept her.

#5: I know several persons who applied but they didn't receive them. There is no vacancies and nothing in general.

3: When you look for a job either you search for a vacancy on the internet or it must be placed somewhere, but you don't know how to get there we are informed after someone is appointed on a certain position. How this happens no one knows.

Moderator: Get back to the question, Mrs. Aminda what do you think how much do you trust politicians and political processes.

#7: I don't trust them. They do everything for their own purpose.

Moderator: How well do you know representatives of central government, who is a prime minister, ministers and so on, do you trust them?

#7: I don't know, I know the local representatives, not else

#1: It has been many changes recently, they keep change but there is no result. I know everyone at the local level, I have never applied but I know them.

Moderator: Do frequent changes of personnel condition your distrust?

#1: They don't know their work, they are not specialists in the field and that's why they change them and the result is still nothing.

#8: A new minister of education comes, invents something and the child has to study everything from the beginning. It is wrong for the psychology.

#7: I do not trust completely political space.

#6: Leila Mamedova is a very clever woman, She used to work in ombudsman's office, we told that to Georgian Dream but it didn't take that into consideration and later she represented herself in another party. She has been working in the society for years, we have many clever women.

Moderator: Are there women in the parties?

6: There are no women. We want to have a gender balance at least in the party. 20% of women and ok, let there be 80% of men but we haven't achieved that as well.

#6: Our society is distinguished by its attitude towards women, so I don't trust the political system, because what they speak are meant for European society to see and the do nothing in reality. I have been an observer since 2008 and the falsification system doesn't change during the

elections. My observers have not been allowed on the election process by the representatives “Georgian Dream” lately. There were serious infringements during the national movement era, but there was not even a case when they didn’t allow or threatened our observers. They tried to think of some reason for it. However, in 2016 on the parliamentary elections, a certain amount of people, activists of Georgian Dream, used to go to different districts and threatened observers from Tbilisi, mainly the young people. They saw that they were young and they put pressure on them. We saw it with our own eyes but it was difficult to prove it, because they vanished suddenly and it was unable to find them, we were not able to be on 85 election district at the same time. Respectively, the observers don’t know their faces nor their names and surnames, however, when these people were threatened they indeed had badges of “Georgian Dream”. They were also giving people the directives in the booths for whom to vote, I knew it because these people came to me at home. They told me that when they circled the ballot paper, they should take a picture of it and their passport. We the observers gathered and discussed how to state this, but we couldn’t do it because observers are not allowed to enter the booth, even if we hear a murmur in the telephone. We knew that this kind of things happened but we couldn’t seize it, we were unable

#1: Apart from this there were cases of falsification earlier. They circled themselves and put it in ballot boxes. I was an observer and the representatives of parties came to me asking which party I was representing to negotiate with them. When they realized that there were many righteous observers they started to mobilize the people and they brought people by a car in the districts. These people didn’t know who they voted for why did the vote, respectively we have to live long and study much to have normal elections

#6: The thing is not that the elections are not worth it, the thing is that the problem is in the political system itself. It starts with elections and is everywhere both in central government and at the local level. By the local level, I don’t mean only the municipality but villages as well. There has been rural development program since 2006 and a certain amount of money is allotted annually for infrastructural development, however, now we have a fact that light is only in the streets where a deputy or former deputy lives and not in other streets. The program was ceased in 2016. It was feasible to build Georgia in 10 years, though the money went in others’ pocket. Why does Europe think that democracy is developing rapidly with us? Because they receive reports from Georgia that everything is being done properly but in reality, it’s not like that. The biggest trouble is that we, the organizations don’t have the possibility to monitor and write alternative reports for European society. Respectively, that’s why the European funds don’t finance such projects. Europe told us, I gave you much money to stand up and now you have to continue by yourself, because of that they are funding small-budget projects now.

Moderator: Here we are talking about the elections and let other participants speak, what shortcomings did you see in the election process?

#7 They came to my neighbors by and took them and told them who to choose. So they can’t express their free opinion.

1 When I was young and I participated in elections for the first time an observer came close to me and told me who to choose. I replied that I didn't know her/him and I would choose anyone I wanted. The commission members don't know the rules themselves, don't know the procedures, how to act, they are brought from the streets.

4: In our village, the situation is like this that commission members are people who can not read. They are brought from the streets directly.

Moderator: Where do they bring these people from?

#2: Village trustees bring the commission members, the one who doesn't raise a voice they are more convenient, hence there is such a situation.

#3: I took part in the elections last year, they told me to write down my name and surname on the list in Georgian and had signed the paper before I entered the booth. They didn't finish the school and were surprised when I wrote down in Georgian.

#4: As for the elections, I am going too. Nobody forces me who to choose but after elections, we all lose trust in them because nothing changes. It's been a year that we applied for the 26 families but there is no outcome. President of Georgia arrived here a month ago, we told about the situation but there is no response yet. There live such people, disabled, very poor.

#8: I am one from the 26 families, we applied everyone, there are families with many children, some don't have legs, I write to all, they come and see, it is true that everything is going forward but not fast. We have been living here for a year and 5 months. When I forced the city hall they came promised something but they are doing nothing, they are working for their own pockets. I found out their salaries, our mayor only had 4800 GEL, I showed him the paper, telling that he had so much income and he was obliged to help me, 80 Laris were cut from my income that went to his pocket that's why he was obliged to help me, I tell the same to everyone.

Moderator: What can you say about the elections?

#1: I worked myself as an observer, a boy had a list and looking at it, then he said: "come in". They think that I can't understand Azerbaijanian, but I know it well. One told the other Why didn't you give me 50 Laris that you gave to the other and the boy was hushing her, the old woman didn't know that she mustn't speak about it. I recorded all this, it was placed on the Facebook. Such things happen, there are shortcomings, of course.

Moderator: What do you think these shortcomings are in the whole region or only at your polling district

#8: in the whole region, when I watch the tv I see that the same happens in the whole region. My son is 22 years old he has been to elections only 3 times, I tell him, Nika come, you never know what your vote can change and he replies that he doesn't believe

Moderator: Who voted before 2014, were there any shortcomings during the previous government? I want to know if there is any progress if we are moving to democracy.

#8: Everything went backward after Saakashvili, I see it so. He was not an angel either but if he did something wrong, I mean the prison shots, he did something good as well. He used to go in villages, giving flours, something, after Saakashvili when number 41 came they are doing nothing. There are far more murders, I am afraid of going out at night, I wasn't afraid of that during Saakashvili government, the law prevailed at that time. I think that the government must be changed.

Moderator: What the others will say

#7: We are going backward

Moderator: Why do you think so, on what basis?

#3: I will tell you, on this election people came in my grandmas street, I won't name the party, I don't like the 5 or 41, they simply came, who brings the old people there and told them they would give money if they voted for someone. They paid money and everybody voted for that guy. This is not a democracy nor a progress. You simply choose who they want because they pay.

#8: You must take a photo when you go there, and after that, they will give you money

Moderator: Let's move on the parties, which parties do you know?

#1: Georgian dream, European Georgia, National movement

Moderator: You name only the 3 parties don't you know the others?

#3: They don't represent themselves, they just stick their placards and that's all. This is number 3, this number something, we don't know them. I don't even know the names of them only from their posters by number

Moderator: what do you know about parties, what difference do you see among them?

#3: #3 They just fight each other, nobody thinks about the people, they are interested only in their positions.

Moderator: Mrs. Eter what do you think?

Interpreter: Our center works actively in the pre-election period, we invite political parties to represent their platform. 2-3 candidates came and met the population and a serious fight outbreak here. But when they represented their platform nobody came except non-governmental organizations. People trust no one, I wanted to say that. Only the NGOs came who are interested in the work.

Moderator: Mrs. what can you say, what differences do you see between the parties?

#6: I think that there is no difference. Everyone has the same goal; To lie to many and win much. Every candidate said that if they won they would raise the pensions and would return sold lands possessed by Arabians, Indians or Chinese and rarely Turkish. They bought the whole Georgia. They gave us unimaginable promises, such promises that didn't pertain to their positions. I don't want to say that this touched upon only this elections, the same system goes everywhere more or less, but in other countries, in Europe, they lie in certain limits, but with these lies have no frame and no status and if you know the system a bit then you have nor trust neither hope. So I don't think that the parties differ from each other. They need the problems to make own pr, when they are in opposition and make it bigger when they are in the government. The existence of a problem helps them to maintain the authority. Of course, certain things are made but very slowly....

Moderator: So you see the improvement in the processes?

#6: Yes but in a slow pace

Moderator: Are your, ethnic minorities' needs presented in any party, Does any political party make an accent and if doesn't what must be taken into account?

6: No. We made a survey with political parties there was not singled out the problems of ethnic minorities and not in the programmes of parties or candidates were listed the problems. They may speak about it when they meet the people, but one thing is what you are talking about and the second what they are paying attention to

Moderator: What will you say, Are your interests and needs presented in any party and if they are not, what should be listed

#5: I think that unemployment problem must be included in the electoral programmes because so many young people are unemployed, a foreigner must come and make a factory, why, can't we do the same? Unemployment is a serious problem in our region.

Moderator: Mrs. what do you think?

#7: I think that unemployment must be settled

Moderator: What do you, the young people want to be taken into consideration regarding ethnic minorities or young people and what should parties work on?

4: unemployment is the main problem

Moderator: Even among the young people?

#4: yes even among the youngster. It would be great to have universities. There used to be in Marneuli. Approximately 3000 young people flow out from the region so educational institutions must be here.

Moderator: Why, what will this facilitate?

4: rent money, tuition all together is difficult to cope with, so it would be nice if it were here

#6: yes it is very expensive, transportation, eating and etc.

#1 It is like a chain everything is connected. If a real democracy will be in Georgia then there will be no ethnic minorities' problem. For example, there are many national minorities in the USA, but they all are Americans, nevertheless that some are French, some are Canadians and so on. The real democracy is when a man says "Us" and not "me" and thinks not only about himself but about the whole society.

Moderator: I am wondering why they vote for Georgian Dream

#3: because they pay, I am a witness of the fact when they told to my grandma that there is a woman in the district who controls things like that and they told to my grandmother, they would give her money 50 or 20 laris to vote for 41. But this doesn't pertain only to number 41. Most of them agreed, wrote down their names, signed it and voted for 41.

Moderator: What else, why do they vote for them?

#3: For example, I was going to vote for 41 because I thought that something could change, but then changed my mind. I haven't participated in elections this year, it would be falsified for sure and there was no sense.

Moderator: What do you think why do they vote for National Movement?

#3: I will tell you my opinion if you wish. Mostly Azerbaijanians from Marneuli vote for them. Because they trust them more and maybe they did something for them. They don't give them money. People trust them indeed I don't know but this is a fact. If I ask them why they would answer because they are better and that's why. They vote for either number 41 or 3 but they say, I trust it, they will do it.

Moderator: Let's move on the organizations that monitor the election processes, what organizations have you heard of that monitor the election processes and What organizations are trying to involve in politics in order to improve election processes?

3: I have heard nothing

Moderator: None?

#1: I know, I was as an observer but it is local non-political organization.

Moderator: I will name some and you might know. Have you heard about Georgian young lawyer's association?

#8: yes, if we have some problems they come and help us

#4: I have heard of it but I don't have information, generally I know about them but I don't know if they monitor the elections

Moderator: What about "Transparency Georgia"?

Interpreter: Nobody knows but I know it.

Moderator: Mrs. do you know "transparency Georgia"?

#8: yes but I have never had business with them

Moderator: And "Fair elections"?

All: No

Moderator: Ok, I wonder, in your opinion what role can non-governmental organizations have to conduct elections more transparently and democratically?

#3: they can give education to society, who don't have it and raise their awareness. How the elections are held, how to participate in the elections, what rights do they have and make people aware in all the stuff?

#5: I have not seen bad yet, but it's the same.

#1: If it were not neutral observers, it would be a total mess on the elections. They help the election process at a certain level, in order to hold it properly but it's not enough. They stay at the district for 2 minutes when everything goes properly but after they leave the falsification begins. They come to me and offer negotiation but I stand there because I am neutral and not for negotiating with them. Because of that, they are necessary for the process but they have to be more efficient. Of course, they help us but it is not enough.

Moderator: We were talking on local organizations. I wonder if you know anything about international organizations that monitor the election process and work on election system development?

All: No we don't know.

Moderator: For example, NDI, IRI have you heard of them? What do you know about it?

Interpreter: No they don't know about it.

Moderator: Haven't you heard it from TV?

Interpreter: I have heard all of them, IRI, NDI, IFS, USAID. I have heard a lot on "Transparency Georgia" that is an international organization. I know about NDI which often makes events about the elections and I have been an organizer of some.

Moderator: And what is your attitude towards their work?

Interpreter: Work, work but there is no outcome.

Moderator: What prevents them to have results in given activities?

Interpreter: The reason for it is the lack of professionals at the local level. Some don't have competence. They must work, not only from elections to elections. They must work in general. Election monitoring is not enough they must work in villages. Nothing happens in Marneuli. People are not aware of them because they work from elections to elections.

Moderator: Mrs. , Will you answer if I give you a question? What do you know about international and local organizations that monitor the election process and work on its improvement? Which organizations do you recall that work on the issue and how would you evaluate their activity? Do they have an impact on the processes?

#6: "Multiethnic Georgia" observes the processes with us, several international organizations were here. NDI, USAID, IRI. All of the organizations were here.

Moderator: How would you evaluate their work and how much you trust them?

6: You know what?! All these organizations have their area of action. For example "Multiethnic Georgia" covers our region and work here. Other international organizations work on election districts and monitor the problematic districts. That's why I can't evaluate their activities in general, because each has its own principle of work. Though I know that every monitoring organization tries to give relevant information operatively to relevant bodies, there is some competition between them which refers the information on violation earlier. I can say only this and how qualitatively happens it I don't know and it is a different question. Though every organization says that elections were held transparently and democratically. However, we can not prove that the violations happen and that is their main problem. Due to that many violations remain unreported.

Moderator: I wonder if you could add something to what we discussed? Elections, parties...I wonder what you see here in terms of political system, does the same happen in Tbilisi, or in other regions?

#1 The same goes for every region

#6: I think that there are more violations in the regions populated by ethnic minorities than in other regions. In Samtskhe-Javakheti, there are more such violations in my opinion.

Moderator: And why is it so, in your opinion?

6: First it is ignorance of the state language. Also certain fears, which I don't know where they come from. Also, the absence of civic responsibility which is very important and the feeling that nothing will change no matter who wins the elections. Also education, I mean political education. If they give us the stimulus to get the education I think it will change for the better then. However, unfortunately, we have been monitoring the same process in recent years and nothing changes for the better.

Moderator: Would you add something else? If you would n't, then I thank you very much for coming.

Focus Group #9

Men focus group

Batumi

Moderator: Ochi Kontselidze

Moderator: Thank you for coming and please introduce yourself, what is your name and occupation

Resp1: 27 years old, interpreter

Resp2: 28 years old, a guide in a tourist company

Resp3: Student, 22 years old

Resp4: unemployed, 32 years old

Resp5: unemployed, 33 years old

Resp6: repairer

Resp7: a quality manager in crewing company, 42 years old

Resp8: a photographer, 25 years old

Moderator: My first question is as follows – How much are you interested in ongoing political processes in the country? How often do you watch the news, political processes and so on? No matter who begins to speak, the sequence does not matter as well.

Resp5: I am less likely interested

Resp3: Personally I don't watch it and I am not interested either

Resp4: I watch rarely

Resp1: More or less I am involved

Resp2: I show interest if it pertains to the subject that I am interested in

Resp8: I watch it via social network and I am interested in ongoing issues

Resp7: If something important happens in Georgian politics I show interest in such cases, but not systematically.

Resp6: When I am with my friends, we discuss the ongoing issues. I am not exceptionally interested in it

Moderator: (addresses to Respondent #3) You said that you were less interested in political processes. What conditions your low interest?

Resp3: It is not my field and so I am not interested in politics, however, I am interested in ongoing processes in our country, if something important happens in the country, I get information about it

Moderator: So you drop a boundary between political processes and other events ...

Resp3: Yes

Moderator: What is your attitude towards the politicians? I want the others to engage in discussion

Resp6: I trust none

Resp5: They don't have big trust among the people. If I told you that I trust them I would lie

Resp8: I trust neither politicians nor their politics. Though, there are politicians who are more or less successful in their career. The background that they have isn't smeared with black spots

Resp7: I agree with the opinion that there is no trust towards the politicians among the people. The general mass of politicians don't have trust in the population

Resp2: There are some politicians that I trust more or less

Moderator: We will talk about the issue, who you trust and why, but let's finish the topic first..., how much do you trust the politicians?

Resp1: According to their activities I have trust towards them more or less.

Moderator: What is another reason for mistrust, besides the fact they don't fulfill the promises?

Resp7: Lies are everywhere and in everything. Many things are visible in their pre-election campaigns, they say one thing and do another.

Resp6: The ultimate goal is to get into the parliament, government and they really do everything to reach the goal. They want to live well and they don't care for people. Can anyone name a politician that cared for the people? I don't mean several cases. They started a business after their entry into parliament and did nothing for ordinary people

Moderator: Do you have different opinions regarding the trust towards politicians?

Resp5: No

(Others confirm)

Moderator: Some of you said that, there were some politicians, who you trusted. I wonder, what is so special with these politicians?

Resp2: For me, trust is caused by the fact that they talk about those issues that I am worried about and talk about the problems that people really have now and they do not talk about virtual Georgia, which is not real and never will exist.

Resp7: I respect a politician, no matter which party he/she belongs to, but has own opinion and attitudes regarding different issues. The one who isn't afraid to express his/her opinion and utters his/her say

Resp6: Everybody talks the truth, gives us good promises, but nobody fulfills them. They are adopting laws to themselves, don't care for people. Which law was adopted for people?

Moderator: you said you had trust towards some politicians, what conditions your trust?

Resp8: The politicians that we know from social networks and internet, have made such things that they have become publicly known figures due to their stupid expressions, their perceptions regarding current political processes, we also see that in the ruling party every decision is made by raising hands, there is no discussion in order to refine the draft, there is no coordination between different institutions, for example when the roads are built they don't envisage drainage channels, everything is made superficially and nobody studies the case deeply. Even in Batumi, on 26th May lake, the experts concluded that there is nothing wrong with the lake, but any nonspecific person will notice that there is something wrong with the lake

Moderator: Let's get back to the trust issue....

Resp8: For me, it is enough, if a politician doesn't lie to me and does nothing wrong, I mean Margvelashvili. He doesn't agree with Georgian dream, I am not a fan of Margvelashvili, he just has individualism, that is very important

Resp6: For example, when so many people say to do a certain thing and we agree on that, then we shouldn't change the course and must finish it. Georgian dream has that problem, they don't finish the job, they don't even make half of it and they start from the beginning again. The work result may be good or bad but you will see it after everything finishes.

Resp1: What hinders the Georgian Dream to do it? They are the majority and they decide issues as they want

Resp2: There is a fear factor. For example, everybody knows that there is awful drug-policy in Georgia and it has to be changed, there are deputies in Georgian dream who agrees with that, though they are afraid to lose votes and thus many lives and freedom are sacrificed to that drug-policy.

Moderator: What should happen to have trust towards a political party? What should a politician do? Besides what has just said...

Resp1: The results should reflect positively on the population, this is the most important

Moderator: A tangible change?

Resp1: Yes

Moderator: What else should a politician do to gain your sympathy?

Resp4: I agree that there should be the result after some time

Resp2: Start from common problems that we face every day, that are easy to settle and don't need much effort

Resp8: Their political past is also highly significant

Moderator: What do you mean by political past?

Resp8: One may not have political experience but may be a public figure and may have people's trust. However, unfortunately, we are forgetting the past of the politicians and the new generation doesn't know much about them. They are using pr campaign, and we are deceived easily and they make us seem that we need something and we vote for them

Moderator: , what do you think a politician should do to gain your trust?

Resp7: A politician should protect the interests of society and the state, with a work and not only with a word

Moderator: What are the public and state interests?

Resp7: They should care for people's difficulties, protect the state's interests, security, welfare and so on

Resp2: Yes but people's interests differ, not everyone has the same interest

Resp7: Yes, but do we know what we want when we vote? They pass such laws that people haven't heard about, they assign such ombudsman, that cannot have a single vote in Georgia

Resp6: In my opinion, it doesn't matter if one gets my vote it is important that he/she do what is necessary. One can get many votes but doesn't do anything, haven't we seen many examples like this?

Resp8: Politicians have a problem with communication because they can not actually provide us with information.

Resp5: If you aren't a patriot and think only about yourself what should you expect? A politician must do his work from the heart, it should be manifest that he puts his effort and knows how to make that.

Moderator: What does the love of homeland mean for you? In what is it revealed?

Resp5: I don't understand – when you are chosen by your people, you are obliged to do at least minimum for your people, this is the love for your homeland when you feel the responsibility for your country and people. Not everything what is being done now is bad, however, it is possible to do more

Resp6: What is done for the people? Hotels and restaurants are being built and opened, that means nothing to me, it changes nothing for me.

Resp1: It is private sector and employs people

Resp6: If there is no encouragement from the state even private sector can do nothing, For example, in Turkey, an entrepreneur starts to cover his credit after 10-15 years, that's their preference. The state should control this. The private bank will never issue loans in low percentage. Bad quality products are imported from Turkey. Why are we importing tangerines from Turkey, when we are producing it as well?

Moderator: I understand. I wonder how well do you know the programs of parties?

Resp6: I less likely get acquainted with them. They are the same for every election

Resp4: I know because the promises of the parties are actively covered by the pre-election campaign

Moderator: I don't mean the tv commercials, have you read their programs?

Resp4: I have read booklets, nothing more. There are written promises shortly. Georgian dream has the bigger booklet, where are named the works they have done

Moderator: I am interested in other opinions

Resp3: I have neither read nor been interested in them

Resp8: I don't even know where I can read them

Moderator: Okay let's talk about specific plans and promises of the parties. Do you remember something specific?

Resp: UNM has made a commercial about the promises of "Georgian Dream" that they had promised people to depreciate petrol prices, reducing utility taxes and so on, they joke about it in social networks, but in fact, it is a distressing issue

Resp2: I remember a recent promise by "Girchi", they want to create a free retail zone, many have disapproved of this idea, but I find it interesting

Moderator: Have any of you read the election program?

Resp7: I haven't because I don't trust them and there is no point in reading it, I will not change my mind, I am not going to lose time

Resp8: In reality, political parties have state funding to share their plans if the broader society does not know their plans, it is a problem for the political party, not the voter.

Resp7: I think we don't really guess what the program is. A program must be written in details and substantiated, it is shared and presented while at the meeting with people. Some parties didn't have a program at all if I am not mistaken. Petrol depreciation and tax-reducing is not a program. I see a program as a strategic document, development plan and view

Moderator: How much interest is there in people to get acquainted with the detailed program?

Resp8: I don't know, we will probably move to the trust issue, if you don't have trust, you will not be interested and will not read.

Resp1: "Georgian dream" had a program about small entrepreneurship development, implementation of agricultural programs and so on

Moderator: To sum up the discussion about the political parties, I wonder, how the needs of people are envisaged? How were the problems that people have, drawn forward?

Resp1: The programs envisaged the necessities that people have, may not with 100%, but it was presented indeed

Moderator: What do others think?

Resp7: Every political party emphasized the economic development of the country, creating new jobs, but they played with it, used it, benefited from it, and reached their goal. The population is interested in economic issues.

Moderator: Do you participate in the elections?

Resp6: I have never voted

Resp8: I always take part

Resp7: Except for the last one, I did before

Resp5: Yes

Resp4: Yes

Resp3: No

Resp2: Yes

Resp1: Yes I go there as well

Moderator: It is interesting that most of you take part actively in the election regardless of the mistrust. I wonder, what is the main reason or motivation for going to the elections?

Resp5: Proximity plays an important factor

Moderator: What do you mean by that?

Resp5: When you vote for your relative, acquaintance, when they ask you to vote for them and so on. I have been a coordinator of “Georgian dream” for a short time and I have seen many examples there, when people voted for just because their relatives asked them to do so, as they didn’t know who the candidates were. There is so big mistrust towards the parties, if a man votes for the candidate he wants, he knows that the candidate will not fulfill anything and tries not to break his relative’s heart. Someone should come right?! So they prefer coming of their relatives or acquaintances, that may be helpful to them in the future. It is more logical

Resp7: When I vote, I want to happen some changes regarding the system or government as it was in 2012. When I see no opportunity I don’t participate then. In general, any change should be for the better otherwise there is no point in participating in the election. As it was said here, there is short-term financial interest, when people are bribed or helped financially

Resp6: Firstly, I am interested in my family’s welfare, if a family is strong the country will be strong as well

Moderator: Do you envisage foreign political orientation when you vote for the political party or the candidate?

Resp5: I think it is very important. Mostly there are two directions for our parties – the west and Russia. But the main problem is that there is no rivalry between our parties, we don’t have a big choice. When you go to the elections, no matter whom you vote for, you know who will be the winner and that’s the biggest problem. They say that Georgian people choose Europe... (interrupts resp6)

Resp6: What is the choice of Georgian people? Who asks us? We must do as Europe and USA say, we have no choice. I wonder, why we cannot get into NATO so many years? We have the most troops in their missions comparing to other countries and they still don’t let us enter in NATO. Why? They are always saying they will envisage the fact but 10 years have passed since that

Moderator: Let’s talk about the foreign politics later in details, let’s finish the issue, , how important is the political party's political orientation when you make a decision?

Resp2: It doesn’t have decisive importance but it is significant of course

Resp1: It has because foreign politics are reflected in our lives

Moderator: Well, let's move on to the question, how much are the political parties trying to protect different groups, for example, the representatives of ethnic minorities, women and young people, as well as people with disabilities, religious minorities and so on? How are political parties focused on particular groups?

Resp8: They touch upon everything but they change nothing. For example, any building should be adapted, but every wheelchair ramp that I have seen is not in accordance with standards. When city hall approves projects, they don’t take into consideration the interests of disabled people. There is no adapted entrance, toilets and so on. As for the ethnic minorities, they couldn’t settle the problem up to date, to give id cards to the gypsies living in Georgia. In fact, the people are born in Georgia, grew up here and became old but they still don’t have a document, that they are the citizens of the country. Consequently, they cannot participate in the elections. None of the parties has ever thought about it, because they are minorities and no politician cares about minorities in our country

Resp7: Talking about minorities is profitable right now, especially about the sexual minorities

Moderator: Why is it profitable?

Resp7: Protecting their rights are very profitable because they receive money and grants because of that

Resp2: Those who protect the sexual minorities, who is going to vote for them?

Resp7: They don't say anything but they win the elections because they have support from the west. It is a different issue what is actually done for the minorities in reality, how their condition has been improved in the country, I mean disabled people, children and so on...

Resp6: There are state projects for the people with disabilities, they help them and their families. My friend's children who are disabled, have been sent to Tskaltubo for a holiday for 15 days. If such things don't happen, what do we need the state for?

Moderator: Do you remember any politician who represents ethnic minorities?

Resp7: I remember Baiburt. But it is just for their PR and they are not politicians, in fact, they obey the government, anyone who is in the government. There may be some others but they aren't popular and nobody knows about them

Resp8: Not only ethnic minorities but they don't have women on their lists.

Moderator: Let's continue talking about the women, how important is it to have women involved in politics more actively? How important is it to be a talk about their needs by politicians?

Resp5: There can be several but if 40 or 50% in government will be women I don't know what happens then

Resp7: Women involvement in politics shouldn't happen artificially. I am against quotas

Resp1: In my opinion, there should be no restriction. How many women wish to involve in politics let them involve. The same goes for the ethnic minorities. I don't think that their involvement in politics is restricted

Resp5: I remember the bill was about to make 50 percent of the women in parliament. I think this kind of approach humiliates women, by saying that they say to women that they are secondary people. So I share a position that if a woman deserves she will get into politics and be successful as well

Moderator: I wonder how are the political parties focused on the regional and local problems in their programs? Are they focused on the national problems more?

Resp1: I think they talk about general problems.

Moderator: What are the general problems?

Resp1: unemployment, gain the territorial integrity and etc.

Resp2: Raising pensions

Resp6: I am from Khoni by origins and I was in the region when Gigi Ugulava ran his campaign in Khoni and Vani. When he was there, he was saying that he was from Khoni. He had never mentioned that before in his life. When he was mayor of Tbilisi, he was saying that he was from Tbilisi and now he has become Khonian for the elections. When he came to meet the people, he told them that we ought to get in EU and NATO. A farmer doesn't need NATO or EU he needs a job, income and not to think whether his children will be hungry or not

Moderator: The issue you are talking about now is very important. What kind of communication should a politician have with voters?

Resp7: Pre-election period means meetings with people in every yard, district. I see that it is hard to maintain the regime for 4 years but, mustn't you meet your people twice a year and talk about the future? Nobody has ever come to people after elections

Moderator: If a politician comes to your district what kind of communication will you have? What will you discuss?

Resp7: About the things that a politician didn't or couldn't do. About the problems that weren't settled

Resp1: Have you heard about Jambul Khozrevanidze?

(Respondents say that they haven't)

Resp1: He is representative of Georgian dream in Adjara and this man goes to everywhere – in Keda, Shuakhevi, and Khulo. He covers his meeting with people via Facebook. This is good because I can watch his activity and I know what he has done today, what he did yesterday and two weeks ago. Communication via social networks is the best way nowadays. There may be better ways but in my opinion, this is the best by far

Resp7: Murman Dumbadze had his cabinet open when he was majoritarian and met with voters once a month. The other thing is what Murman Dumbadze did indeed, but the communication was good.

Moderator: I want to give you some questions about the elections. How much do you have information on your rights when you go to the polls to vote?

Resp8: I was an observer at many elections.

Resp1: I have never been an observer but the information about our rights was spread in the pre-election period, what procedures should we pass, how to check ourselves and so on. I know what is my right and what is banned.

Resp2: I know the standard process

Moderator: I have omitted one question. Where do you get the information about the programs from?

Resp1: Via television and social network

Resp7: I read newspapers. Of course television and facebook

Moderator: To summarize, are elections in Georgia fair and free?

Resp5: In my opinion, there are some violations but it is not unfair

Resp2: It is better now comparing to the past, I mean the period before 2012. Today is far better. The one who is able to win wins the elections. There is no mass falsification

Resp5: Negligence and ignorance of some people are problems as well, as they don't know how to behave at the elections, a governor of one village "showed himself" and tried to falsify the elections, this is ignorance than the fault of the government which wasn't involved in falsification

Resp4: Violations are made before the elections. Like bribery, they bribe so many people that they are sure they will win. So they don't have to falsify elections.

Moderator: Let's sum up the topic. I wonder if the elections were more democratic and more democratic during the Georgian Dream's rule. From 2014

Resp4: I think there is no difference

Resp1: In my opinion, there is no difference as well

Resp2: I think they don't need falsification it and that's why they don't falsify it. If they were in need they wouldn't be able to falsify it massively

Moderator: I wonder, they cannot falsify it or they will not do it

Resp2: Both. I think that we are at the point that we understand the elections shouldn't be falsified

Moderator: Here were named several factors that hinder to conduct fair and democratic elections, bribing of voters, using administrative resources, in particular, pressure on the people working in public sector, low awareness level of electorate, which is expressed in the fact that they don't know whom to vote for, they may not know them nor read their program. Can you name other factors?

Resp8: Freedom of expression in the public sector is limited in the view that if you do not vote for "Georgian Dream" and say openly that among your co-workers you face the danger of losing a job

Moderator: Do you have information where the parties are financed from?

Resp1: I know they are financed from the state, as well as private individuals, donation

Resp7: Officially we know where they get the finances. It is no secret where the Georgian dream gets the additional finances (laughs)

Moderator: Is the rule of financing acceptable to you?

Resp1: Yes it is, they should get finance from the state in order for a party to get stronger. It is necessary

Resp8: There should be some limit. The financing should be proportional

Resp1: Yes it is like that

Resp8: I mean that if for example, Bidzina invests 1 billion Laris in pr campaign he will win the elections with no doubt, so there should be some borders

Resp1: I would say that the commercials of Georgian dream was more frequent than that of the other parties, and it should be regulated as well. During the elections it doesn't matter who is in the government, everyone should have equal rights.

Resp7: Mostly the commercials of UNM and Georgian dream are on, others are blocked

Resp8: Ultra radicals should be blocked, I mean Georgian march and others.

Resp7: Why should they be blocked? What kind of democracy is that?

Moderator: Okay we have little time left. Are the problems that hinder elections, equally problematic in villages and in the city?

#2: For them, it is better to happen in regions because they feel more secure because the violations may not be covered there and that's why...They try to avoid this in the cities

#1: They try not to do it in the city

#4: It is easier to do it in regions and villages because in village everybody knows each other and are acquaintances and everything happens due to their relationship.

#8: There were cases, when I was as an observer, that 4-5 men were standing outside, they weren't allowed to come in, but they were speaking with people. There was a moment of intimidation and respect. I don't know, it is not difficult to convince someone or intimidate a person, it depends on an individual as well.

#7: There, where is a financial hardship and low educational level, even political, there is easier to bribe, in my opinion

Moderator: All right. I wonder if you know NGO that works on the election issues. Do you know Georgian non-governmental organizations?

#7: We know "Fair Elections". There are many more that work on the issue

#4: I know "Gorbi", that worked in 2014

Moderator: Yes, I know that they worked on exit-polls though. I am interested in the ones that observed the elections

#8: CEC, ISFED, Transparent Georgia, GYLA

#7: Is CEC an NGO?

Moderator: No, CEC isn't. How would you assess the organizations based on the information you have? How important role do they have to conduct fair elections?

#8: It is very important because, the training that I attended, neither deputy of the elections nor the observers had any knowledge in this regard and they asked me not to write a report because they didn't know the rules and so many things were done in a wrong way. So we taught them how to do a certain thing, in order to avoid writing the report again. Plus, the observers of political parties had the same problem, so their existence had no point because they couldn't identify any violation, they just stood there for hours and suffered, nothing more. I would add about the plus that ISFED had, we counted the voices in just 15-20 minutes, the system was elaborated in a way...there might be 1% error at maximum...As soon as they counted the votes we knew who the winner was.

Moderator: , what about you?

#7: Of course, the role of NGOs, training, monitoring are highly important, simply the organizations must be interested in conducting fair elections and not to protect their own interests

Moderator: What are their interests?

#7: For example, supporting certain political groups and stuff like that

#2: I am sure, if there had been such violation nobody should have said anything

#8: I will tell you how the NGOs work: Everything is being recorded on the camera, but there were so many violations that we reported to the headquarters about it. We were agreed on simple violations that we were not going to report about it, but we explained to them it was not right, but they don't know the rules well either

Moderator: Do you think that the main reason for violations is ignorance?

#8: Yes, yes

Moderator: What about the organizations that work on the issue?

7: Yes of course. NDI, IRI, the two organizations

#8: NDI yes

Moderator: Do you think their role is important?

#7: Yes, if they are not interested

#2: Yes, Yes

Moderator: Are they interested in this case too?

#7: Yes, NDI is. In my opinion, they are. Let's have a look at the UNM rating (laughs)

#1: Why should a foreigner be an observer, let it be Georgian

#8: No it is good they come and check because our country is not at the level if others don't control us...

#1: That's the thing, we shouldn't need that

#8: We shouldn't, but we need it. In fact, where I was, they came just for 10 minutes it is impossible to monitor or check anything in this span of time

#2: They fulfilled their duty

#8: When the foreigners come, everybody tries to put in order and meet the foreigner accordingly

#1: It shouldn't be like this

Moderator: , how do you think, is the role of non-Georgian and foreign NGOs important in the processes?

#5: I haven't thought about it, but supposedly it is important to some extent

Moderator: Why is it important?

#5: In order to be the process clearer. They cannot decide the results of elections but it is good for more transparency

#6: Whom are they making the processes transparent for? (laughs)

#5: I think it is kind of masquerade, to show the people what the results will be...If the government orders a certain organization, this fact was revealed in several precincts, that a government-ordered, I mean exit-polls. NGOs showed the same results they government wanted. Yes, there were some organizations that were hired by the opposition parties and they had different results. That's why I am telling that to some extent it may be significant. You can't say that decisively. I think it makes the process more transparent

#1: In my opinion, they don't give us any outcome

Moderator: Don't they have an impact?

#1: The practice that foreigners are arriving here is unacceptable to me.

#7: It would be good if they didn't have interests

Moderator: In principle, I have the last question. What can the NGOs do in the future to make the process more fair and transparent? What they can do about the problems you mentioned: Bribery, intimidation and so on... if the organizations can do anything?

#8: I think yes. The moment that all the NGOs work asunder...They should elaborate system together with state institution...for me, the fair thing will be if they introduce every party to people, with their promises and past and make a system where will be more confidentiality. When I go to the elections, there is no agitation, walking with parties' shirts and etc. but it is 21st century now and it will be good if no one asks whom I am going to vote ...because in villages everybody knows who votes for whom. I cannot understand that, how they know, but they know it exactly who you voted for

#7: In my opinion the role of NGOs is important and they should try maximally not to get under the state's influence and protect the ideas of what names they have. "Fair elections" should provide fair elections, that they cannot do now.

Moderator: I understand. Would you add something?

#8: I would. In my opinion, when they highlight the pension and wage issues, it will be better if they underline the education reforms and work on that

#1: Yes I agree

Moderator: Okay, besides the education, what are the other significant directions which should be emphasized by political parties? What should be a priority?

#1: Agriculture

#7: Education and drug-policy is vital for me

#1: Agriculture because in recent years I have seen total urbanization in Georgia. Village residents come to the city because they produced potatoes, brought here, sold them for 30 Tetris, grew greenery or something but they couldn't sell it because it is imported from Turkey. Urbanization is going on, people came to the city and that's all. They have no jobs here and they

go to Turkey. They can't just get into the government and sit in the cabinets. They should do something and they go to Turkey and works in tea-fields for Turkish people

#6: If the local economy isn't developed, there will be no salvation to the country. No matter what elections you conduct if you don't develop the economy and don't produce anything, you won't be saved

#5: We shouldn't be dependent on another country, as we are today

#6: No matter how many and what kind of candidate comes, the same will be everything. The economy is a priority for all the countries. As you start to build the foundation, you will finish it accordingly. You cannot build from the top, you should establish a foundation first. You should envisage everything in advance. When a politician comes to meeting once a year, you can't have the result out of that.

#7: For me, the biggest problem with the political parties is their values. Everybody talks about the EU, Georgia, but we don't know what the value is. If you want Georgia to be a part of globalization, if you want Georgia to join the EU, then don't mention religion and so on. Don't use the issue. You go there, to protect sexual minorities. If your value is "Language, homeland, religion" or EU, you should say it loudly and don't hide it. Everything is mingled, they are orthodox Christians and at the same time, they want euro integration.

#5: They should spend more on social programs. The problems are less visible in cities, unlike the rural areas. Poverty is a significant problem

Moderator: Thank you very much, for coming and for your time

Focus Group #10

Women focus group

Batumi

14.07.2018

Moderator – Ochi Kontselidze

Moderator: Firstly thank you for coming, that you spared your time and came on today's focus group. I am representing a research organization Institute of social studies and analysis. We are conducting a research in three regions of Georgia including Batumi and it touches upon social-political issues such as state of democracy in the country, population's attitudes towards political parties and politicians, your opinions regarding election system and etc. I want to warn you that our discussion is being recorded, as we don't want to miss the main findings and interesting opinion when we move on to the stage of analysis. Of course, it will not appear in public space there is no such interest, confidentiality will be maintained. The format of our meeting is a discussion, I have prepared questions that I want you to answer. Please tell me your name and briefly tell me what you are doing.

Resp1: NN1 22 years old, last year graduated from university, currently unemployed.

Resp2: NN2 45 years old, an employee of the department of statistics

Resp3: NN3 22 years old, a student

Resp4: NN4 47 years old, self-employed

Resp5: NN5, 46 years old, self-employed

Resp6: NN6, a 34-year-old teacher and a director of LTD that organizes cultural events in Adjara region.

Resp7: NN7, 33 years old, service manager at the private corporative bank.

Resp8: NN8 29 years old, unemployed

Moderator: My first question is as follows – How much are you interested in political processes?

Resp4: According to the fact that I live in this country, of course, I am interested in.

Resp5: I watch the news on tv at least once a day.

Resp2: In general we are very politicized and we get information about it whether we want it or not.

Resp6: No matter how apolitical and not interested we are, there is such a situation in the country, there is so much problem, that everybody is interested in it. We are not involved but still....

Moderator: I will for sure give you question about your involvement, but before let's finish the topic. NN1, how much are you interested in political processes?

Resp1: I can't really say that I don't miss the news and I am interested in everything. It's not true but if I come across I listen and I get news from a social network as well.

Moderator: The information that you get from television or by other means do you get it by chance or automatically?

Resp1: I look through the information that I come across facebook. I less likely get it from television.

Resp8: Tv is always on in my house, I hear what is happening in the country if I want it or not.

Moderator: Well, I wonder, do you think that you are participating in the ongoing political processes in the country?

Resp4: As an ordinary citizen

Moderator: What does this mean?

Resp4: I take part in elections. As well as in surveys.

Resp6: How can we change the political weather this is another issue, but my participation is probably determined by the fact that if there is a protest in public for showing public support, I will take part in this. This shows my involvement in politics. My participation in politics is shown by expressing my opinion.

Resp4: If there appears a discussion in the social network about actual topics I make comments and discuss there. I have no time to hold a mobile phone all the time and involve in I but sometimes I still do.

Moderator: NN7 and you?

Resp7: I can say the same. If I get the information it happens by chance as for the participation – yes I go to elections.

Moderator: As it has been revealed participation in political processes is shown by your participation in elections and thus you determine who will be in government. You also take part in a demonstration that touches upon the different actual topics and you say that you are active in social network and discuss significant political issues. Would you add something else?

(Participants say that they have nothing to add)

Moderator: I am interested in your attitudes towards politicians, if you trust them or not, if you trust them in what case and if you do not what is the reason for it?

Resp7: I can't evaluate everyone as the same but I have a negative attitude. I trust them less

Resp6: The main reason for it is distrust, nevertheless that in public there is an openness to trust someone, figures and leaders reveal sometimes when society decides that a savior has revealed in the country and they decide to trust him. And then, it turns out that it was built on false hopes. Consequently, as the years go by, they lose confidence.

Resp5: Promises are good for everyone, but none is fulfilled.

Resp7: They drive it towards their own interests.

Resp5: The main reason for politicians is to fill their pockets.

Resp4: Everything is the same since the 9th of April 1989, I was 18-19 years old then and we have been coming with enthusiasm since but nothing changes, hopes are often dashed. But we are not fully disappointed

Moderator: What is the reason for distrust besides the fact that promises that politicians promise are not fulfilled?

Resp5: We aren't moving to better, the main demands what people have don't change this is the situation. Unemployment, poverty and so on.

Resp1: The biggest disappointment is when the promise is not fulfilled, there is no trust as well. What more do we want from politicians ?! The main thing is to fulfill the promise. However, there are some politicians who deserve certain trust.

Moderator: Why do you trust the certain quantity?

Resp7: Maybe because we see that they are trying to do something, they are willing to do som but they can't because of other reasons or they make at least something. Majority of them, when they achieve something they want after they become indifferent towards their citizens

Moderator; NN8 how much do you trust political parties and politicians?

Resp8: More or less. For example, there is no different opinion in "Georgian dream" because they talk the same. If someone doesn't agree with them the one loses its positions.

Moderator: Let's continue the trust issue, I wonder in order to have trust towards political parties and politicians what should happen?

Resp6: They should have promises, though it depends on promises as well. They must create an environment in the country that people will not be afraid to live in. Utility taxes, gas, water taxes have been raised instead of reduction. Wages do not raise while utility taxes increase. If we look at the situation in terms of business I am involved in the business at some point and I pay 48% to the government. For what, I can not get why. I pay value-added taxes and income taxes. What do I pay this amount of money to the state for? people who try to keep oneself, have a job and reach success, are restricted by the state.

Resp2: Most of them go abroad to save themselves.

Resp5: People die because there is no helicopters and roads in resorts and at the same place where a man had died, government deputy went with a helicopter and advertised the resort. People die in hospitals, because of doctors and their licenses are confiscated just for 3 months. Unfortunately, it happens and there are lots of facts in every field. Illegal constructions are being built in the city. A blink an eye and you see an enormous building is built so close in front of you that you can shake hands with your neighbor from opposite balcony. We live in such a situation. Technically defective machines and public transport move in the city and government does nothing.

Moderator: A small group of politicians who may be in different parties and you have more or less sympathy towards them, what conditions this liking?

Resp1: One may not fulfill or cannot implement their promises due to different factors but he tries to settle it, or explains why he cannot make it, is more self-effaced and so on. There are some politicians that I like

Moderator: Can you tell us who are these politicians?

Resp1: Tbilisi mayor Kakha Kaladze and former prime minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili

Resp5: I have a positive attitude towards Kakhi Kaladze because he doesn't receive his salary and it goes to the poor children fund, I liked it very much. If everyone did the same it would be better.

Moderator: NN7, Do you have a positive attitude or trust towards any politician?

Resp7: I can not single out.

Resp6: I would single out Giorgi Margvelashvili because he has right view about ongoing political events, though he doesn't have latitude and is restricted from all sides. I do not know what a politician he is, but he is a distinguished political figure today.

Moderator: Can you be more specific and tell us why he is the distinguished figure?

Resp6: In my opinion, he had a right position regarding the decisive issues. I mean judicial independence, violence from the police and etc.

Moderator: NN8 do you like any politician?

Resp8: Davit Usupashvili. He deserves to be in parliament.

Moderator: Why? What is so exceptional with him?

Resp8: He has characteristics of a politician. He is a balanced person.

Resp5: I like Davit Bakradze. He is balanced as well he never uses bad language. I have positive attitudes towards him

Moderator: Do you know the election program of any party?

Resp6: I listened to parties' programs during parliamentary elections. Every party had good promise. The parties gave promises to spite each other. In reality, these are futile words.

Moderator: Which promises do you remember?

Resp6: Reducing utility taxes, low taxes, funding health care and more support and so on. Healthcare insurance policy has changed in a way that they don't fund cases as they used to do.

Resp1: I was a student last year, I have finished it already and several months ago I had to go to the doctor and I didn't pay anything. The change depends on your income, that determines your insurance. If one has more than 40 000 annual salaries, his/her insurance will be funded with less amount of money.

Moderator: Don't go into details please, let's talk about parties' programs. NN3, how well do you know the programs?

Resp3: Personally I am not interested in politicians hence I don't know their programs

Resp2: National movement's slogan is imprinted on my brains – “ Working instead of speaking” I can't get it out of my head.

Resp4: Agriculture development, also the development of small-entrepreneurship and etc. were in a program of “Georgian dream”

Resp6: Fair trial, promotion of learning

Resp5: Rise of pensions

Resp6: If you listen to election programs you will be excited.

Moderator: Have you ever read the programs of parties? I know that you listen to it by other means

Resp6: I haven't read it completely

Resp4: When they give us booklets I read there because there everything is briefly. I have never read any program completely

Moderator: NN8 do you know political programs of parties?

Resp8: No I don't.

Moderator; Do you think that political parties have a specific and distinguished view and agenda?

Resp6: If any party had distinguished, obvious and understandable I would support them. I mean a realistic view and plan

Moderator: You may not agree with a plan but it may be considered, sequential and realistic

Resp7: They can read and write, they can think of slogans but they have no trust and they can speak and write as much as they want.

Moderator: Do you think the programs that have political parties reflect the needs of the population?

Resp3: That's exactly adjusted

Resp4: Everything is calculated. They have a pr, so they try to convince us.

Moderator: As you said here most of you take part in elections, I wonder how do you choose a party and candidates?

Resp5: It depends on their political past if they were in politics before or not, if they had implemented reforms, if they are active, have a specific view, in that case, I may prefer them

Resp3: We have to choose between bad and worse.

Moderator: What is worse and what is bad? Can you explain it?

Resp3: I made my choice in favor of more democratic forces, at least in 2012, I was thinking so.

Resp1: If each of our votes is decisive, I will bring the person who will support my country, in that case, everyone should vote. I always go to elections.

Moderator: How do you decide who to vote for?

Resp1: It is important to have a clear past, not to raise doubts and if I agree with him/her on different issues. As for topics, it is highly important for me to have judicial independence, justice and I vote for the party that has these topics closer.

Moderator: NN3, how do you decide which political party or candidate you vote for?

Resp3: When I make a decision I take into consideration the past of a political party or a politician. As for individual traits, I don't like when politicians insult each other and act disgusting.

Resp5: Election program has significance for me, it should attract you somehow, though the past has significance as well

Resp4: Foreign relations are also important, what orientation a politician has, his values and etc.

Resp6: I agree that foreign policy has significance, also how they express our say, how understandable their explanations are for us. Before the last elections, on parliamentary elections 2016, I voted for the Republican party, because I am sure even today that they think differently, they have values and therefore it would be great to if they got into parliament. It is also important to share the common way of life with politicians, similar priorities, tastes, attitudes, etc.

Resp8: I voted for "Georgian dream" at last elections because I don't like the violent policy of National movement. They always talk about to topple, oppress, or arrest someone. These kind of appeals are unacceptable to me.

Moderator: How democratic is the country after 2014?

Resp1: I think we live in the more democratic country. Freedom of speech is more expressed, is more protected. People have the possibility to express their opinions more freely, no one oppresses us, the most striking example is the recent rallies in Tbilisi, where people freely objected to what they wanted to protest. I welcome this process and it is very appreciated.

Moderator: The opinion of others is also interesting, has the quality of democracy increased in the country, has it been reduced or has it been at the same level in recent years?

Resp6: I do not see change, maybe the form has changed but nothing substantially changed.

Moderator: What results do we have?

Resp6: There is totally mess in the country. What democracy we are talking about when children are killed (I mean a case of Khorava street) we know the murderers but they are not arrested. They brought the nationalist groups near the rally held by the young people and the latter were forced to disperse because they should have been raided by the groups.

Resp1: Did they bring the members of "Georgian March" in (means nationalist group) or did they show themselves?

Resp6: They brought the group in

Moderator: Now it is a matter of debate and let's don't stop on this whether they came on their purpose or were brought in. To complete the topic tell me what other factors affect your choice when you vote for a party or a politician?

Resp6: In the political situation that we have now I doubt that anyone will have a hope there will appear, politicians that have no connection with both current and previous governments, in this case, they will have a chance to have our support. When Misha came people were excited because he appeared out of the blue and the new force will appear as well.

Moderator: Do you think that we need to be excited with a politician?

Resp6: No we don't. We need a man who will have people's trust in the current political situation. There is no one the nation can depend on. This is my opinion, I didn't participate in the last elections and I am not going to the next unless someone new appears.

Moderator: I wonder how actual is the issue of women on the political parties agenda? How do they consider the needs of women?

Resp3: I don't remember that they were especially focused on the women.

Moderator; I want to ask others, I want to ask others, do not you remember from the political parties, for instance, the bills on women's needs?

Resp3: Maybe, but I do not remember.

Resp6: Non-governmental organizations work on the issue and if I am not mistaken Republicans tried to speak about violence on women and to make amendments in law as well. I don't remember the other.

Moderator: Do others remember anything?

Resp6: There was a discussion about setting quotas and there are changes to better in this regard, the issue was reviewed by the parliament as I know. Elene Khoshtaria's speeches about women violence and setting quotas sprang to my mind.

Moderator: Do others remember anything?

(Respondents say they don't)

Moderator: What about the young people?

Resp3: Create more possibilities for young people, this kind of appeal I heard from politicians.

Resp2: About getting an education abroad

Resp8: The new prime minister says that young people should be brought forward.

Resp4: During the rule of National movement, they paid great attention to age in terms of employment and perspective.

Moderator: Are we finished with the information about the young people?

Resp5: Yes (others confirm)

Moderator: What about the needs of ethnic minorities and their involvement in politics?

Resp2: I don't remember the program but I think that their rights are protected in Georgia

Moderator: Don't you think they need additional attention?

Resp2: Everything needs additional attention always.

Resp5: I don't think they are oppressed

Resp4: I have heard that ethnic minorities are engaged in politics where they compactly live

Moderator: Do you remember politicians of ethnic minorities?

Resp6: No, I do not recall. Wherever they live there will be such local authorities.

Moderator: Do you remember any politician concretely representing ethnic minorities?

Resp2: No I don't recall anyone

Resp8: Neither do I

Resp6: Fact that we don't remember doesn't mean that they don't exist

Moderator: I wonder if you remember anyone...

Resp6: No I don't remember anyone either maybe because they don't show them well enough and I am not interested in politics as much to watch everything.

Resp4: I don't remember anyone at the national level.

Moderator: Is it important to have a representative of ethnic minorities in politics?

Resp6: Yes they must be, their voices must be heard.

Resp2: Why not?!

Moderator: How much are political parties focused on the local problems and is there a talk about the local community's needs in their programs?

Resp4: I don't know maybe there is

Resp2: When there are elections they go from door to door and talk about it

Moderator: Yes but I wonder what kind of issues politicians are focused on – Are these of local or national level?

Resp6: It's hard to say but maybe about the local issues because they think that the population can not get the "big" topics and they start to eradicate problems by settling the local issues.

Moderator: Let's ask others too, do you agree?

Resp1: I don't know I have never thought about it. They should talk on both, I don't remember exactly but maybe they talk about the both "big" and local issues.

Resp7: There is a topic about regaining lost territories in every program, they mention it definitely.

Moderator: What do you think what should politicians change in relations with citizens?

Resp1: More involvement is required.

Resp2: They must be honest.

Movement: What do you mean by involvement?

Resp5: Politicians should not remember their citizens only during elections. Politicians and their activists don't give us breathing space before the elections, someone knocks on the door every day and give us various fliers. Communication should be systematic and when a politician decides to do something he/she must ask us what we prefer.

Moderator: What kind of relations should it be? By what means?

Resp6: Make surveys. They should have an interest in that and show initiative.

Moderator: Do you have a desire to meet politicians after some time?

Resp6: If there is a severe problem, of course, I will have a desire to meet and talk.

Resp5: We are talking about the results now.

Resp4: I will tell you about the relations with politicians. They say that my neighbor is a deputy of the board who made a page on facebook and if local population see any shortcoming, for example, if there is litter in the yard, a stray animal or street lights are burnt out and etc. A citizen can inform the deputy about it or one can take a picture and send it to him or call him. I saw the page as well and I liked it very much, people write to him and give information.

Resp6: If he reacted then it is good, I welcome this fact.

Resp5: It is good to show an interest as well when you see that a politician is concerned with your problem and is trying to do something.

Moderator: In the case of local politicians it is understandable. What about the politicians of the national level?

Resp6: It is understandable that they can not meet citizens every day due to their way of life.

Resp2: If there were tv broadcasting where politicians would have the possibility to have communication with voters that would be good because everyone would hear how the politician thinks.

Moderator: I wonder how often do you vote?

Resp5: I take part in elections but I didn't at the last elections in 2017, I was ill

Resp6: As I mentioned before, I lost trust and that's why I didn't go to the last elections. I thought it had no idea to participate in the elections.

Resp5: I go to elections because my vote will not be lost

Resp4: I agree that we should go to elections but I was late on the last one, I was outside the city and I remember that a coordinator one of the parties phoned me and asked why I was not coming.

Moderator: What exactly did coordinator say? To participate in elections or to vote for a specific party?

Resp4: No she/he told me to participate in the elections.

Resp7: Political parties conduct surveys before the elections and they know in advance who votes for whom and after that on the election day coordinators phone people and remind them of going to the elections.

Moderator: Have you heard of similar cases, which has NN7 just said?

Resp6: No, I have just heard of it

Resp8: Women mostly from “Georgian dream” and “national movement” come to us in the yard before the elections

Resp7: Then coordinators write on the elections who came and who did n’t, when someone didn’t go there they phone the person. Though, there is no guaranty that one vote for the party that one said one would do during the survey.

Moderator: how do you think how fair and free are elections in Georgia?

Resp5: It is free.

Resp6: It is free indeed, but is it fair?

Resp2: Every part has its own observer and I don’t think there is a violation.

Resp7: I had a case when I was an observer, 10 men of the same appearance and same clothes came to the voting station and voted instead of someone who didn’t live in Georgia or in Batumi. Maybe they knew statistically that people weren’t going to elections. Though one came and it turned out that someone had already voted instead of him

Moderator: When did this case happen? Which elections do you mean?

Resp7: It was at the national movement’s period

Moderator: Do we have the same situation today? Since 2014?

Resp1: In my opinion, it is transparent and is not falsified, it is fair and free, what was happening at the time of the National Movement is no longer happening.

Resp8: Influence on the elections and election falsification in rural areas are more frequent than in the city. Governors summon the people and telling whom to vote, otherwise, they are threatened to leave the job and they summon not only one and two, but many.

Resp6: There is no falsification on the precinct but elections are falsified in the pre-election period.

Resp2: The process itself is transparent.

Resp6: There was an attempt at my work when a director summoned us and told to vote for a concrete party...

Moderator: Was it a piece of advice or was it a strict request?

Resp6: In the form of blessings.

(everybody laughs)

Resp6: Though my “blessed vote” went to someone else

Moderator: Where do you get the information about the candidates from?

Resp5: From television

Resp3: via the internet

Resp6: form a social network

Resp3: Booklets, programs are given and you can read them

Moderator: We discussed it partly, though I want you to single out what do you think is the biggest shortcoming in Georgian election system?

Resp4: I think it has refined. As I know, we could vote online.

Resp6: There is a big problem outside the precinct. The pressure that is on the voters from the coordinators or government, hinders the elections and this shortcoming should be mended.

Moderator: Would you add something?

(Respondents said they had nothing to say)

Moderator: Do you have information about who finances political parties and candidates in Georgia?

Resp2: Part is funded from the budget I know it for sure. They get finances from businessmen.

Resp6: It is possible that specific countries USA and Russia are financing them

Resp1: My brother participated as the majoritarian in Poti, he was an independent candidate and he funded his own campaign.

Resp6: I think only Ivanishvili can finance his own campaign, what amount of money is enough to wage your own campaign?!

Moderator: We partly talked about using administrative resources....

Resp2: Ruling party has a resource to use administrative resources.

Resp1: Yes, in the public sector one may tell you who to vote but there is always the possibility to vote for whoever you want when you are alone in the booth and making a choice.

Moderator: And as it was already said that the pressure and intimidation attempts are less severe for the voters living in the cities, in Batumi and in Tbilisi than in villages, right?!

Resp4: Maybe the impact is more visible in little settlements than in big cities. Though there is a much more administrative resource in the cities and respectively there can be more influence on voters that are employed in the public sector.

Resp6: Yes but city residents are more active and less likely to be affected under such influence

Resp7: Yes there is more chance that they will say about duress

Moderator: How is the non-governmental sector involved in the monitoring process and are they trying to facilitate political reforms? Before you answer that question, I want you to recall non-governmental organizations that directly work on the election process.

Resp5: Transparency Georgia

Resp4: Fair Georgia

Moderator: What about GYLA?

Resp7: Yes of course

Moderator: What do you think about the organization's activities?

Resp2: I like GYLA (Georgian Young Lawyers' Association) very much because they serve the citizens for free and I appreciate them because of that, they are real professionals

Moderator: You mean judicial service as I see and what can you say about their activities in terms of elections?

Resp2: It is noteworthy that they are more active comparing to the others. As for the elections they monitor the process, make reports and as far as I know they evaluate how fairly the elections were held and they send observers everywhere.

Resp4: We can say the same about transparency Georgia, not only about their activities in elections they cover other issues actively, they often are on the television and speak on different violations.

Resp6: If not non-governmental sector the population would be in an informational vacuum. Non-governmental sector is the force, that people are based upon. They reach our voices to government, parties. The other issue is how well they provide it and what else they can make, but I have hope in them.

Moderator: As I see you all positively assess the activities of the non-governmental sector, or is there any different attitude?

Participants said that the work of the NGO sector is positive in the elections.

Moderator: What is the trend of NGO activity in recent years? Were they more active before, let's say 4 years ago than they are today?

Resp5: I think it is the same

Resp7: They used to be more active than they are now.

Moderator: Why?

Resp7: They seemed more active. I don't know exactly

Resp6: Did they notice more violations before? We are not experts to assess their activities.

Moderator: Do NGOs have enough influence and leverage on how will the elections be held in Georgia?

Resp6: They have influence but their impact is limited because they are observers at the elections and make reports about the election. The government holds elections and the government has a decisive influence on how elections will be held.

Resp1: NGOs monitor the process and have an influence, they count, observe and the government is afraid, is under control and they act more carefully, they have more influence than they do not have.

Resp5: Our citizens have more information about the election process, about their rights

Resp7: There is a control otherwise there would be a mess. NGO sector has a great contribution in helping better elections than it used to be.

Moderator: Let's touch upon the international organizations that are working in Georgia. Do you remember such organizations?

Resp1: I do not recall but I know exactly that they come and watch. They report violations and prepare reports. The government is also trying to make it less likely to be a violation because the information about the violations goes out. This will negatively affect the image of Georgia and no one wants this.

Moderator: Do you think that the roles of international observers that monitor the process are positive?

Resp4: Hence the fact that they are working on to have fair and democratic elections, their roles are positive in that case respectively.

Moderator: Do you recall the international organizations that are working in Georgia?

Respondents said they didn't

Moderator: All right, I will name some of them and tell me if you know. "International Republican Institute"?

(They kept silence)

Moderator: IRI?

Resp4: IRI I know

Others don't know

Moderator: The International Foundation for Electoral Systems? IFES?

Respondents do not know this organization

Moderator: National democratic institute?

They remain silent

Moderator: also known as NDI

All of them noted that they are aware of the National Democratic Institute and are more or less familiar with their activities.

Resp3: Yes I know, NDI researches are known in Georgia

Moderator: American Development Agency (USAID)?

Resp6: US embassy finances many events in Georgia including the elections may be. I trust international organizations and their opinions

Resp2: I think they are neutral. I don't think that any party is under their protection.

Moderator: Do you agree with the opinion?

Other participants noted that they did

Moderator: Has the role of the organizations increased or decreased since 2014? What do you think?

Resp1: I think it has increased because I heard more about their activities in the last elections. I think it has increased

Resp4: I remember NDI research review. They often discuss their activities in Georgia.

Moderator: What can international and local organizations do in order to have fair and democratic elections? What directions should they work?

Resp6: They must care more and facilitate to hold better elections and appeal to citizens to participate in the elections and prove them that every vote has an influence.

Resp2: That these organizations can protect the votes, can support citizens when they are not on the list and have different problems

Resp8: I would say that people are scared because they think someone would know who they voted for and these organizations must ensure the people that there is no threat.

Resp5: People are afraid of losing their jobs and that's why they get under the influence. Non-governmental and international organizations should work in this direction.

Resp7: The influence of coordinators is less, employed people have more difficult situation since they are faced with a real danger to lose their jobs.

Moderator: Can you add something else that you think is important that I should have asked and I didn't ask?

Resp5: I do not know how a person can not be at the risk of losing a job when we are talking about such pressure, what can the NGO sector do? If you they do, it will be good.

Resp2: More information is needed for voters, how it is protected, what rights they have, if one's rights are violated during elections, etc. Organizations should be oriented on voters.

Moderator: Thank you for coming and good luck!

APPENDIX # 10: Consolidated M&E Results for Project

| | Indicator | Baseline | Target 2014- 2015 | Actual 2014- 2015 | Target 2015- 2016 | Actual 2015- 2016 | Target 2016- 2017 | Actual 2016- 2017 | Target 2017- 2018 | Actual 2017- 2018 | Target 2018- 2019 | Actual 2018- 2019 |
|---|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| NDI: Strengthening Political Processes in Georgia 8/1/2014- 1/31/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CEPPS Sub-purpose 1: Political parties strengthened at the national and regional levels | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Number of factions at national and local levels with clear structure, strategies and procedures (NDI) | Will work with 4 pol parties | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | Parl -3 Local 19 | Parl -3 Local 19 | 3 | | Parl 3 Local 23 | |
| USAID OBJECTIVE 1: Legislative effectiveness of party factions and parliamentary bodies in legislative bodies increased | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CEPPS OBJECTIVE 1.1: Party factions in Parliament and parliamentary bodies will more effectively negotiate over legislation and provide oversight for executive branch and policy implementation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Intermediate Result 1.1.1: faction organization sessions impart tools to establish goals, review progress, assess strengths and weaknesses and establish their needs (IR was updated in the year 2) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.1.1 | Number of political party factions receiving USG assistance to help them develop more programmatic platforms and policy agendas(NDI) | Will work w/4 pol party factions | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | | 3 | |
| 1.1.1.2 | Number of participants in factions workshops or orientation sessions | Needs assessment based | 30 | 64 | 40 | 32 | 60 | 57 | 60 | | 30 | |
| 1.1.1.3 | Number of actions or initiatives factions come up with as a result of CEPPS/NDI workshops and training sessions (updated in year 2) (NDI) | Needs assessment based | 4 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 3 | | 2 | |
| 1.1.1.4 | Degree to which factions utilize organizational tool imparted from CEPPS/NDI activities(NDI) | Needs assessment based | 3 out of 5 | | 4 | 1 | N/A | N/A | N/A | | 2 | |
| 1.1.1.5 | Number of initiatives/tools utilized by factions as a result of lessons learned from the study missions (updated yr 2) (NDI) | Needs assessment based | 3 out of 5 | 6 | 4 | 1 | N/A | N/A | N/A | | 2 | |
| IR 1.1.3: Faction members and parliamentary bodies conduct regular outreach activities aimed at increasing public awareness of the legislative process and learn more how to address constituency needs through legislation (IR updated in yr2) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.3.1 | Number of outreach meeting faction members and parliamentary bodies conduct (updated in yr | | 6 | 2 | 6 | 14 | 4 | 3 | 6 | | 3 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--------------------|----------------|-----|----------------------|-----|--|-------------|--|--------------|--|
| | 2) (NDI) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.1.4 CEPPS/NDI fellows provide factions and parliamentary bodies with research and analysis to use in carrying out oversight | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.4.1 | Members of parliament and heads of parliamentary offices indicate satisfaction with the level of research and analysis support they are receiving from CEPPS/NDI fellows (updated in yr 2) (NDI) | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | | N/A | |
| 1.1.4.2 | Number of fellows whose research and analysis is used within the work of parliamentary bodies (created in yr 2) (NDI) | 4 | N/A | N/A | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | | N/A | |
| 1.1.4.3 | Number of parliamentary party staff improving research, communication and policy analysis skills (created in yr3) (NDI) | 3 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | Reported in yr 4 | 8 out of 15 | | 10 out of 15 | |
| IR 1.1.5: Factions appreciate the purpose of carrying out regular and systematic outreach to the media (IR updated in yr 2) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.5.1 | Number of faction members and journalists attending the "Report to journalist" meetings (updated in yr 3) (NDI) | Average 10 journalists and members per mtg | 15 faction members | 22+25 12+26 | 15 | 10+24 17+26 | 20 | 46 | 25 | | N/A | |
| 1.1.5.2 | % of journalists attending "report to journalist" meetings producing articles and news stories (updated in yr 2) (NDI) | 10 per meeting | 10% | 12 articles | 25% | FD-30% UNM - 15% | 25% | Minority- 20% Maj- 100% UNM- 70% | 25% | | N/A | |
| IR 1.1.6: Parliamentary bodies and factions regularly communicate with the executive branch on their activities | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.6.1 | Number of oversight activities carried out by parliamentary bodies and lawmakers (retire in y3,4) (NDI) | | 2 | | 20 | 170 59 Min 138 | | | | | | |
| IR 1.1.7: Parliament introduces new mechanisms to make its work more accountable and transparent | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.7.1 | Number of Open parliament AP initiatives adopted (created in yr3) (NDI) | | N/A | N/A | | | 5 | | 5 | | 2 | |
| CEPPS Objective 1.2: Party factions in local councils will more effectively negotiate over legislation and provide oversight for executive branch policy implementation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.2.1 Party factions in local councils are able to effectively organize themselves to solicit constituent input and enact policy/legislation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1.1 | Number of local political party factions receiving USG assistance to help them develop more | 4 factions in 6 mun | 15 | 21 21 | 10 | 4 20 | 19 | 8 14 | TBD after | | 23 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|-----|----------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|----------------------|--------------------|--|------|--|
| | programmatic platforms and policy agendas(NDI) | | | 20 | | 20 19 | | 20 18 | local elections | | | |
| 1.2.1.2 | Number of trainings or individual consultations(NDI) | N/A | 4 | 1 7 8 | 20 | 18 7 22 24 | 50 | 10 19 6 12 | 25 | | | |
| 1.2.1.3 | Number of sakrebulo members attending trainings or individual consultations(NDI) | N/A | 25 | 80 48 74 | 80 | 48 71 118 80 | 80 | 10 44 84 95 | 80 | | 100 | |
| 1.2.1.4 | Percentage of interns(NDI) | Interns in two Sakrebulo s | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | 100% | 50% | | 100% | |
| 1.2.1.5 | Percentage of interns who contribute to contribute work of sakrebulo factions and commissions through research, analysis, and constituent outreach (indicator created at the end of year 3). (NDI) | Interns in two sakrebulo s | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | 100% | 50% | | 100% | |
| IR 1.2.2 Party factions develop platforms that reflect constituent interests and concerns | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.2.1 | Percentage of target local factions undertaking initiatives considering constituent concerns (updated in yr 2) (NDI) | 4 pol party factions in parliament and the local level | 6 | 21 21 20 | 30% | 30% | 35% | 28% | 30% | | 35% | |
| 1.2.2.3 | Number of local council faction initiatives undertaken considering constituent concerns(NDI) | N/A | 3 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | | 5 | |
| 1.2.2.4 | Number of target factions utilizing diverse democracy tools (including online tools) to improve citizens' outreach, engagement and data tracking practices (created in yr3) (NDI) | Defined after 2017 LG elections | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | 2 | | 5 | |
| IR 1.2.3 Future women leaders program provides female local council faction member with skills to constructively contribute to the local legislative process | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.3.1 | Number of USG-assisted political parties implementing initiatives to increase the number | 4+2 | 4 | 7 6 | 6 | 4 6 | 6 | 6 4 | 6 | | 5 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------|------|--|
| | of candidates and members who are women youth and from marginalized groups (NDI) | | | | | 5 4 | | 5 | | | | |
| 1.2.3.2 | Percentage of participants of FWL that effectively incorporate the skills learned (NDI) | | 3 out 5 | 4 out of 5 | 30% | 85% | 80% | 50% | | 60% | | |
| IR 1.2.4 Local sakrebulo regularly communicate with the local executive branch on their activities | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.4.1 | Number of meetings conducted with executive branch representatives at the local level(NDI) | Adjust in consultations w/factions | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 2 | 2 | 1 1 1 | 3 | | 5 | |
| USAID Objective 2: Independent oversight of elections enhanced | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CEPPS Objective 2.1 International observer groups mount credible monitoring missions for 2016, 2017, and 2018 as agreed w/USAID | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.0.1 | % of regions that are covered by CEPPS international observer missions(NDI) | N/A | 80% | | | | N/A | 81% | 100% | | 60% | |
| 2.1.0.2 | % of regions that are covered by LTOs commencing two months prior to E-Day and including up to a one m post-election period(NDI) | N/A | 40% | | | | 100% | 100% | 100% | | 100% | |
| 2.1.0.3 | Number of improvements undertaken by stakeholders (NDI) | N/A | 50% | | | | | | 3 | | 2 | |
| 2.1.0.4 | Percentage of Georgian population who express confidence in election processes (NDI) | N/A | 70% | | | | | 47%-well 36%-average | 40% | | 45% | |
| CEPPS/IRI : Strengthening Political Parties in Georgia, 7/31/2014– 1/31/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| USAID Objective: Political parties strengthened | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.0.0.1 | %of participating political parties that improve in all categories of political party scorecard | | 50% | 3 out of 8 38% | 50% | Scores to be tabulated | 50% | 2 out of 9 22% 4out of 9 in most categories 44% | 50% | | | |
| 1.0.0.2 | % of participating political parties that report satisfaction with IRI assistance | N/A | 80% | 6 out of 8 25% | 80% | Scores to be tabulate | 80% | 7 out of 9 22% | 80% | | | |
| 1.0.0.3. | Number of individuals who receive training | N/A | 150 200 200 300 | 388 (56 w) 1277 (208W) | 400 800 1000 100 | 414 (179W, 161 Y) 895 | 200 400 1000 1000 | 183 (102 W, 49 Y) 79 (26W,12 | 400 400 800 800 | 390 (136w, 120y) | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|---|------------------|---|--|--|
| | | | | 1251 (653W, 335 Y) 899 (458 W, 334 Y) | | (511W, 309Y) 1418 (731W,33 5 Y) 899 (458W, 334 Y) | | Y) 242 (146 W, 115 Y) 778 (235 w, 179 y) | | | | |
| 1.0.0.5 | % of citizens who are confident in political parties | 37% | Tracking indicator | 25% | | 16% | | 20% | | | | |
| CEPPS Objective 1.1: Democratic political parties improve organizational capacity and intra-party democracy | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.0.1 | % of participating polparties who demonstrate improvement in "organizational capacity and intra-party democracy" of scorecards | Baselines during strategic planning and reflected ins scorecards | 50% | 4 out of 8 | 50% | To be tabulated | 50% | 7 out of 9 78% | 50% | | | |
| IR 1.1.1 Parties hold regular party congresses to discuss party plans with leaders/members from around the country (indicator 1.1.0.1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.1.2 Parties have established regional party network (indicator 1.1.0.1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.1.3 Parties agree on a format and rules of engagement for party congress(indicator 1.1.0.1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.1.4 Parties have a draft platform that can be discussed at the congress | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.4.1 | Number of political parties receiving USG assistance to help them develop more programmatic platforms and policy agendas | N/A | 8 8 8 8 | 2 7 4 7 | 3 8 5 8 | 2 3 2 4 | 2 8 8 8 | 2 1 19(16 poll briefings) 3 | 2 8 8 8 | 2 | | |
| CEPPS Objective 1.2 Democratic political parties improve capacity and engagement of regional party branches | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.0.1 | % of participating parties who demonstrate improvement in "regional party development' in scorecards | Developed during strategic planning consultations | 50% | 5 out of 8 63% | 60% | To be tabulated | 60% | 4 out of 9 44% | 60% | | | |

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|---|--|--|------------------|--------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--|--|
| IR 1.2.1 Parties have permanently established regional party branches with a regional party leader and leadership committee that is capable of directing party operation in that region (indicator 1.2.0.1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.2.2 Parties have regional activist network, with an activist recruitment, registration and engagement strategy (indicator 1.2.0.1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.2.3 Party national leaders have regular meeting with regional party leaders and members to coordinate party platforms and activities (indicator 1.2.0.1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.2.4 Regional parties are included in the party congress (indicator 1.2.0.1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.2.5 Regional parties coordinate the deployment of qualified election monitors in their regions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.5.1 | Number of domestic election observer and/or party agents trained with USG assistance | N/A | | 500 | 91 (58w) 69 (33w) 713 (386w, 85 y) | 100 500 | 56 (25 w, 10 y) 47 (21 w, 34 y) | | 285 (166 w, 123 y) | | | |
| IR 1.2.6 Georgian citizens vote or send comments via text messages during party youth debate broadcasts | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.6.1 | Number of party youth debates | N/A | 19 | 7 4 7 | TBD | 3 10 | 19 | 2 12 N/A | | | | |
| CEPPS Objective 1.3 An increased number of woman, youth and minority candidates participate in upcoming elections | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3.0.1 | % of parties who demonstrate improvement in the “inclusive outreach and representation” of scorecards | Baseline during strategic planning consultations | 50% | 5 out of 8 63 % | 60% | To be tabulated | 6 out of 9 67% | | | | | |
| IR 1.3.1 Parties are systematically promoting women, young persons and marginalized groups to leadership positions, including candidate positions, at the local and national levels | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3.1.1 | Number of parties implementing initiatives to increase the number of candidates and/or members who are women, youth and from marginalized groups | Baseline during strategic planning consultations | 1 1 1 1 | - 1 1 - | 1 1 1 1 | 2 5 - 2 | 1 1 1 1 | - - 1 1 | 1 1 1 1 | 2 - - - | | |
| USAID Objective 3: Independent oversight of elections enhanced | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 3.1 International observer groups mount credible monitoring missions for 2016, 2017, 2018 as agreed with USAID | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1.0.1 | % of regions that are covered by IRI international election observation teams | N/A | 80% | N/A | 100 | 10 regions | | 100 | | | | |
| 3.1.0.2 | % of regions covered by IRI LTO teams commencing two months prior to E-Day and including upto 1 mo post-election period | N/A | 40% | | 100% | 10 regions | | 100% | | | | |
| 3.1.0.3 | % of recipients of IRI EOM reports who indicate | | 50% | | | | | 78% of | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|-----|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| | that these reports were relevant and useful | | | | | | | | feedback Evaluations responded positively to IRI's efforts | | | | |
| 3.1.0.4 | %of Georgians who express confidence in election processes | N/A | 70% | | | | | | 42% | | | | |
| CEPPS/IFES: 2/11/2016– 2/10/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Objective 1 Improved government capacity to administer free and fair electoral processes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IR 1.1 Improved election laws and procedures | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.1 | Degree to which standards and procedures of EDR are clearly defined | 3 | N/A | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | | | |
| 1.1.2 | Degree to which campaign finance laws and regulations reflect international best practices | Factor 1: 3 Factor 2: 4 Factor 3: 3 | | Factor 1: 3 Factor 2: 4 Factor 3: 3 | Factor 1: 4 Factor 2: 4 Factor 3: 3 | Factor 1: 4 Factor 2: 4 Factor 3: 3 | Factor 1: 4 Factor 2: 4 Factor 3: 3 | Factor 1: 4 Factor 2: 4 Factor 3: 4 | Factor 1: 4 Factor 2: 4 Factor 3: 4 | Factor 1: 4 Factor 2: 4 Factor 3: 3 | | | |
| 1.1.3 | Number of specific recommendations made by electoral stakeholders to improve legal provisions for EDR and campaign finance | 0 | 1 | 17 | 10 | 3 | 3 | - | 3 | | | | |
| 1.1.4 | Degree to which changes to the electoral code and related legislation reflect the outcome of debate | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | | | | |
| 1.1.5 | Degree to which electoral laws and rules conform with international standards | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | | | |
| IR 1.2 Improved effectiveness of election dispute resolution practice | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1 | % of electoral stakeholders who report improvement in EDR system | determined by baseline survey | | EDR process is clear and understandable | 3 % improvement for each group | Due to the election schedule stakeholder survey conducted | 3 % improvement for each group | EDR process is clear and understandable | 2 % improvement for each group | | | | |

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|-------|--|-----|----|---|-----|--|-----|---|-----|--|--|--|
| | | | | (NGOS: 63 % somewhat agree, n=19; Parties: 47 % strongly or somewhat agree, n=26) | | in the following period to allow for stakeholder experience with the EDR. | | (NGOS: 61 % somewhat agree with this statement, n=31; Political Parties: 33% strongly or somewhat agree with this statement, n=12) | | | | |
| 1.2.2 | # election officials and staff trained | N/A | 20 | 89 (27 w 62 m), Gender, Elections, Media and Communications, Procedures and Internal Frameworks | 150 | 582 (309 w), Strategic Planning, Legal Writing, Electoral Security, and Electoral Operations | 80 | 399 Strategic Planning, Legal Writing, Electoral Security, PWD tot, EMB cascade ToT, TOT for election administrators and Electoral Operations | 150 | | | |
| 1.2.3 | # of civil society reps trained on monitoring techniques for EDR system implementation | N/A | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | N/A | | | | | |

| INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.3: Improved implementation of campaign and party financing regulations. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1.3.1 | %of parties and csos confident in neutrality and independence of SAOG | Determined by survey | Baseline established | SAOG acts in a neutral manner when making decisions about campaign or political finance (NGOs: 58 % strongly or somewhat agree, n = 19; Political Parties: 27 % strongly or somewhat agree, n=26). | 3% improvement for each group | Due to the election schedule, the stakeholder survey will be conducted in the following period to allow for adequate stakeholder experience with the SAOG, and EDR systems | 3 % improvement for each group | acts in a neutral manner when making decisions about campaign or political finance (NGOs: 68 % strongly or somewhat agree, n = 31; Political Parties: 41 % strongly or somewhat agree, n=12 | 3 % improvement for each group | | | |
| 1.3.2 | # of recommendations on improving SAOG implementation accepted for final consideration/approval | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 15 | 3 | ? | 3 | | | |
| INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.4: Improved capacity of the EMBs, especially in national minority areas, and in the event of structural reform. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.4.1 | Number of election officials trained | N/A | N/A | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.4.2 | %of women participants in IFES-supported trainings who go on to work with Election Management Bodies, public service or civil society-related positions | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | |
| 1.4.3 | #of members of ethnic minority community, and other | N/A | N/A | N/A | 20 | 371 (189 | 125 | 371 (189 | 125 | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|--|-----|---|-------------|---|-------------|---|-------------|--|--|--|
| | individuals who serve such communities trained on elections and their administration | | | | | women); ethnic Azeri, and ethnic Armenian | | women); ethnic Azeri, and ethnic Armenian | | | | |
| 1.4.4 | % of citizens who are confident in the CEC | 22%, number based on April 2014 NDI survey | 30% | 69% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that the CEC perform its work in a trustworthy manner | 2% increase | 53% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that the CEC perform its work in a trustworthy manner | 3% increase | 50% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that the CEC perform its work in a trustworthy manner | 2% increase | | | |

OBJECTIVE 2: Enhanced civic engagement around key electoral and political processes and reforms.

Intermediate Result 2.1: Increased citizen engagement in and understanding key aspects of priority electoral reforms

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|-----|-----|---------------------|-----|---|-----|---|-----|--|--|--|
| 2.1.1 | Number of individuals receiving voter and civic education through USG-assisted programs | N/A | 800 | 1,940 (1,280 women) | 800 | 8,999 (5,541 w), plus broadcast audience of 250,000 | 800 | 2141 (1272 w) plus broadcast, U.S. Embassy Education Fests and #America Days, audience of 300,000 | 800 | | | |
| 2.1.2 | % of youth-led advocacy initiatives that are partially or completely able to meet goals. | N/A | 70% | To be reported | 70% | 100% | 70% | 100% | 70% | | | |
| 2.1.3 | # of education professionals who are trained through IFES funded programs | N/A | 20 | 22 (12w, 10m) | 35 | 66 (39w) | 40 | 67 (37w) | 30 | | | |
| 2.1.4 | % of students and youth reporting increased use of knowledge from civic education trainings | N/A | 95% | N/A | 80% | N/A | 80% | N/A | 80% | | | |

Intermediate Result 2.2: Greater participation of marginalized groups in electoral processes (women, ethnic minorities, youth and people with disabilities)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|----------------------|-----|--------------|-----|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2.2.1 | % of Georgian citizens who think participation of ethnic minorities is important for Georgian democracy | Baseline established | N/A | Question not | N/A | 47% | | | | | | |
|-------|---|----------------------|-----|--------------|-----|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------|-----|----------------------------|-----|--|------------|------------------------------|------------|--|-------------------|--|
| | | w/survey | | included in partner survey | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2.2 | # of gender NGO monitoring reports on GoG's national action plan for Gender Equality | N/A | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | | | | | | |
| 2.2.3 | % of women trainees (new and returning staff) who work in election administration during 2016, 2017 and 2018 elections | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | |
| 2.2.4 | # of citizens taking part in discussions and lectures on participation of minorities in Georgian politics. | N/A | 100 | To be reported | 100 | 134 (79 women), Kartli Region, Kakheti region, Tbilisi | 100 | 242 (78 Azeri; 164 Armenian) | 100 | | | |
| 2.2.5 | # of consensus building forums (multi-party, civil/security sector, and/or civil/political) held with USG assistance | N/A | 10 | 47 | 15 | 63 | 15 | 28 | 15 | | | |
| 2.2.6 | # of USG-funded organizations representing marginalized constituencies trying to affect government policy or conducting government oversight | N/A | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 2.2.7 | Degree to which electoral laws facilitate the participation of women and members of marginalized groups as candidates for office | 2 | 2 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | |
| ISFED: Strengthening Political and Electoral Environment for Democracy in Georgia 2/11/2016– 2/10/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Goal: Accomplishing more transparent, inclusive and competitive electoral and political processes in Georgia | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | FH Nations in Transit democracy score | 4.65 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | 4.61 | | | 3.5 | |
| | Electoral process score | 4.5 | | | | | | 4.5 | | | 3.5 | |
| Objective 1: Providing impartial assessment of the elections and political developments based on sound and credible methodology | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | ISFED Reports referenced in high level election reports and US State Dept HR Reports | 12 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 8 | 18 | 8 | | 8 (24 cumulative) | |
| 1.2 | ISFED engagement in international election programs | 3 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | At least 2 | 4 | At least 2 | | At least 2 | |
| Result 1: Credible monitoring mission conducted | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sub-result: Qualified observers and reliable methodology activities: Preparation, recruitment and training, pre-election, e-day, post-election observation, evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | # of DEO trained Disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability | 1200 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 1100 | 1078 | 1100 | | 800 | |
| | % of STOs passing the post-training tests | 96% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 97% | 93% | 98% | | 99% | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|--|
| | Accuracy and response rate of the SMS simulation | 98% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 98.50% | 98% | 99 % | | 99.50% | |
| | LTOs evaluated positively | 70% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 75% | n/a | 80% | | 85% | |
| | E-day response rate | 100% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 98% | 99.70% | 98% | | 98% | |
| | PVT confidence level | 95% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 95% | 95% | 95% | | 95% | |
| | % of complaints upheld | 70% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 70% | 55% | 70% | | 70% | |
| Objective 2: Increasing awareness on the electoral processes among the citizens and other target stakeholders | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Level of understanding of electoral processes among citizens | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | TBD | n/a | TBD | | TBD | |
| | Voter awareness assessment through E-Day sms | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | TBD | | TBD | | TBD | |
| Result 2: Relevant stakeholders reached | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sub-result: communication strategy activities: target groups, channels and tools defined, reports and assessments prepared and distributed, traditional and new media used for target audiences | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Social media followers | 19,000 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 26,000 | 26.026 | 33,000 | | 40,000 | |
| | # of press events /presentations held | 12 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 8 | 10 | 8 | | 8 | |
| | # of statements and reports issues | 20 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 20 | 26 | 20 | | 20 | |
| | # of visualizations used | 30 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 30 | 43 | 30 | | 30 | |
| | Media coverage statistics | Ranked #4 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | In top 3 among NGO ratings | In top 3 among NGO ratings | In top 3 among NGO ratings | | In top 3 among NGO ratings | |
| Objective 3: upholding recommendations for improved electoral framework and political processes | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | # of laws or amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG TA | 5 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 4 | 9 | 4 | | 4 | |
| Result 3: Advocacy conducted | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sub-result: partnership activities: recommendations developed, presented and followed up, policy proposals prepared | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | # of recommendations developed | 5 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 5 | 12 | 5 | | 5 | |
| | # of policy proposals prepared | 0 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2 | 3 | 2 | | 2 | |
| GYLA: Promoting more competitive, fair and inclusive electoral environment for 2016-2018 electoral cycle in Georgia 2/17/2016– 2/15/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Objective 1. Promoting investigation of politically motivated criminal and administrative charges | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Monitoring and evaluation of actions by law enforcement against candidates | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | 1 preliminary findings prepared | | | | |
| | Legal support independent candidates | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | 10 (cumulative) | |
| Objective 2. Promoting access to fair trial and creation of the uniform litigation strategy | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Strategic litigation on electoral disputes in courts of Tbilisi and 8 regions | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | 18 lawsuits | | | 60 lawsuits | |
| | Observation of electoral dispute adjudication in Tbilisi and 8 regions | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | 12 complaint | | 6 complai | 80 cases | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|-------------------|--|-----------------|----|--|
| | | | | | | | | | s | | nts | | |
| Objective 3: Promoting inclusive electoral environment for women, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | # recommendations for supporting participatory and engaging electoral environment | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | 1 research report | | 2 | 10 | |
| | Sub-grants to CSOs | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | 2 | |
| TI: Monitoring of Political Party Finances and Misuse of Administrative Resource during Electoral Processes- 2/02/2016– 2/21/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Goal: Fair and transparent elections | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Improved electoral process | FH2016 Electoral process score for Georgia 4.5, EOP 4.25 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | | |
| Election financing is transparent and misuse of administrative resources during electoral processes is minimized | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Improved electoral management | 71, EOP 75 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | | |
| | International and domestic reporting on Georgian elections and electoral financing | N/A EOP: at least 5 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | | |
| | # of references to party financing, misuse of administrative resources or transparency on financial aspects of the campaign in international monitoring report | N/A EOP 3 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | | |
| Outcome 1: Civil society monitors the funding of political parties in the period leading up to the elections | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Two reports published on political finances | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | 1 | | |
| | 4 of blog posts and statements on political finances published | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | 4 | |
| Outcome 2: Civil society monitors the misuse of administrative resources for political purposes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 reports published on misuse of administrative resources | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | 1 | 2 | |
| | At least 4 blog posts and statements on misuse of state resources published | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | 4 blogs 2 js | 4 | |

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Activity descriptions of each award under SEPPs PAD

Implementing Partners' Quarterly/Annual Reports

PMP indicator tables

M&E plans for each sub-award.