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The findings presented in this report are the results of the survey and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of donor organizations.

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National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia
Dear Members, Friends and Partners!

It is my honor to greet you on behalf of the National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia. For the past 15 years NCYOG has worked honorably to live up to and respect the principles and values established at its creation. One of the main preoccupations of NCYOG for the past 2 years has been to conduct research into the problems and spheres of interest of Georgian youth. This research has been the most extensive attempt so far to collect detailed information on Georgian youth and the aim of the research has been to collect the most relevant and detailed data about young people directly from them.

Based on our observations, a successful implementation of a youth policy and the resolution of the problems facing Georgian youth should be preceded by a thorough investigation into those problems and the development of an effective national youth policy. The present report, “National Report on Georgian Youth”, is a practical reference tool and of great value for everyone involved in youth issues.

The report is an important step towards the formulation of a Georgian state youth policy, which unfortunately has not been given sufficient attention, with many undesirable consequences. The lack of a satisfactory youth policy has had a negative affect on youth development in our country. The socio-economic conditions of young people have worsened. More specifically, unem-
Employment has increased, the demographic situation has deteriorated, there has been a considerable rise in juvenile crime rates and drug addiction has reached catastrophic proportions. We think that it is high time to begin giving these youth issues the attention they deserve.

The report provides information about the problems, needs and demands of young Georgians and will be equally useful for international organizations and the non-governmental sector, as well as for the Georgian government departments responsible for youth policy. Based on this research, they will be able to develop a national youth policy which will directly impact the future development of the country. The report gives us an opportunity to determine the priorities of a state youth policy and to solve the problems and challenges of young people today.

I would like to express my special gratitude for supporting this research to the United Nations Development Programme and Mr. Jos de la Haye for their fundamental contribution to the implementation of this project, as well as to the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Civil Institutionalism Development Fund and Tbilisi City Hall.

Vakhtang Asanidze
Chairman
National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY
Official name: Georgia
Capital: Tbilisi
Independence
On the 31st March 1991 a general referendum was held with a single question: "Do you want to restore the independence of the Republic of Georgia based on the Act of 26th May of 1918?" 98% of the population, including Abkhazians and Ossetians, responded positively to this question. On the 9th of April 1991, based on the result of the referendum, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia passed 'The Act of Restoring the State Independence of Georgia'. On the same day the United States Congress passed a special resolution confirming the legitimacy of the March 31st referendum, expressing their de facto recognition of Georgia's independence.

The Georgian Constitution was ratified on the 24th of August 1995.

STATE SYMBOLS
National Anthem
The Georgian national anthem, Tavisupleba (Freedom), was established according to the organic law of Georgia. The anthem has been valid since 21st of May 2004, after receiving the signature of the president of Georgia. Davit Maghradze was responsible for the words of the anthem, Zaqaria Paliashvili composed the music and the complete anthem was produced by Ioseb Kechakmadze.

Coat of Arms
This depicts a silver Saint George, on a crimson shield with a golden halo and a silver spear ending in a golden cross, riding a silver horse and triumphantly slaying a silver dragon. The shield is adorned with the Georgian or Iberian crown and supported by two golden lions. At the base of the shield a stylized Georgian vine ornament is
illustrated, plaited into a motto ribbon. The motto is written, in the Mkhedruli alphabet, on a red and white ribbon. The designer of Georgia’s coat of arms is the painter and heraldist Mamuka Gongadze.

Flag

The Georgian flag consists one rectangular red cross on a silver background with small crosses in the four corners. This is a common symbol of Christianity and the five crosses represent the Savior and the four evangelists. This symbolic design first appeared as a heraldic mark in 1099 on the emblem of crusader Godfrey of Bouillon, as this person was granted the title of defender of the Savior’s tomb.

The Political Organization Of Georgia

Georgia is a mixed-type semi-presidential republic. The state leader is the president who is elected in direct elections every five years. Executive power is implemented by the government, which is led by the prime minister. The supreme legislative organ of the state is the parliament, with a single chamber of 150 members elected every four years through a proportional and majority system.

Leader of the State – the President

The president of Georgia is the state leader of Georgia, Commander-in-Chief and the country’s highest representative in international relations.

Executive Power- the Government

The government of Georgia is the supreme organ of the executive power and according to Georgian legislation implements the country’s internal and external policy. The government consists of the prime minister and ministers, including state ministers, and reports to the president and the parliament of Georgia.

Legislative Power - Parliament of Georgia

The parliament of Georgia is the supreme representative organ of the country. It retains legislative power, and decides on the main directions of internal and external state policy. It also controls government activity according to the terms of the constitution and implements other authority powers. The Georgian parliament consists of 75 members elected through a proportional system and 75 members elected through a majority system. All parliamentarians are elected for four years through general, equal and direct elections.

Judicial Power - Constitutional Court

The Georgian Constitutional Court is the organ of constitutional control and ensures that all normative acts passed by the president of Georgia, the parliament and other organs are in accordance with the Georgian constitution. The Constitutional Court is the guarantor of the supremacy of the Georgian constitution.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Georgia is the highest and final instance of the appeal court and executes justice on the whole territory of Georgia.
Administrative Division

The country is divided into 9 regions: Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Shida Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Racha-Lechkhumi Kvemo Svaneti, Samegrelo Zemo-Svaneti, and 2 autonomous republics: Abkhazian AR and Adjarian AR.

GEOGRAPHY

Location: Georgia is located in the central part of the South Caucasus, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, on the ancient, and shortest, route connecting Europe and Asia. The country is bounded by the Russian Federation to the north, Azerbaijan to the south-east and Armenia and Turkey to the south.

Nature: The northern part of Georgia is dominated by the Great Caucasian Range with the highest mountains in Georgia: Skhara 5068m, Kazbegi (Mkinvartsveri) 5047m and Ushba 4710m. The southern border lies in the Small Caucasian Range or South Georgia Plateau. The lowest point of the country is 1.5m, in the vicinity of Lake Paliastomi. There are in fact 860 lakes in Georgia and 26 000 rivers, the longest of which are the Mtkvari, the Alazani, the Tergi, and the Rioni.

Mineral resources: Georgia is rich in mineral resources which include: iron, magnesium, copper, zinc, silver, gold, basalt, granite and a small reserve of coal and oil. However the country is also famous for a variety of mineral waters drawn from its 2000 or more mineral springs of which Borjomi, Sairme, Nabeghlavi and Java are the best known. The country is indeed rich in fresh and thermal waters, whose temperatures reach about 110° C, the highest in the world.

Climate: Georgia occupies a comparatively small territory which nonetheless comprises almost all possible types of climate zones, from subtropical to alpine zones and from dense forests to semi-deserts. The Likhi Range divides the country into two dramatically different climatic areas: west Georgia with a subtropical climate and frequent rains, and the east with a dry, continental climate. The coldest month of the year is January, when average temperatures are between +3°C to -2°C, and the warmest is August with average temperatures of 23-26° C.

Geographical Parameters

 Territory: The country covers 69,700 km² and the total length of its borders is 1776 km, of which 1.461 km is the land boundary (with Armenia 164km, Azerbaijan 322km, Russia 723km and Turkey 252km) and 315km the Black Sea boundary.

Other details

Region: Southwest Asia (Caucasus)
Geographical Coordinates: North 42.00, East 43.30
State Language: Georgian and, in Abkhazia, Abkhazian also
Religion: main religion Orthodox Christianity.
National Currency: Georgian Lari (GEL)
Time: GMT +3
Telephone: country code 995, Tbilisi code 32.
Country Code: GEO
Internet Code: ge

DEMOGRAPHY

(data of January 2009)
Population: 4,385,400
Age structure: Age range 0-14: 17% (males 395,400, females 354,200). Age range 15-64: 69 % (males 239,500, females 390,800)
Average age of population (2009 estimations): 37 years (male population 33, female population 38)
Biggest cities: Tbilisi, pop. 1,136,600, Kutaisi 188,600,
Rustavi 117,400, Batumi 122,500, Sokhumi, no census conducted, Gori 42,000, Zugdidi 69,000, Poti 47,400, Tskhinvali 7,000  
Ethnic groups: Georgians 83.8%, Azerbaijanis 6.5%, Armenians 5.7%, Russians 1.5%, other 2.5% (2002 data)  
Religion: Orthodox Christians 83.9%, followers of Armenian apostolic church 3.9%, Catholics 0.8%, Muslims 9.9%, other 0.8%, no religion 0.7% (2002 data)  
Language: Georgian 71% (official), Russian 9%, Armenian 7%, Azerbaijani 6%, other 7%  

HISTORICAL INFORMATION  
The Georgian name of the country SaqarTvelo derives from the root Qart, from the ancient tribal name which may be spelt Qartu or Kardu or Khalb.

Georgian history is more than 4000 years old and its location has provided privileged conditions for human settlement since ancient times. Archeological excavations carried out in Dmanisi are testimony to this assertion, since the fragments of human skeletons found in Dmanisi are estimated to be 1m 600 000 – 1m 800 000 years old and are the oldest in the whole of Eurasia. It is claimed that the humans who lived in Dmanisi were the first inhabitants of the Eurasian region.

Georgian culture has developed along with Georgia’s long history and has spawned a strong literary tradition. The Georgian alphabet, unique among the 14 recognized world alphabets, was created in the 5th century BC.

Christianity began to spread in Georgia in the 1st century and became widespread under the guidance of Andria Pirveltsodebuli and Svimon Kananeli. The Georgian autonomous apostolic Orthodox Church is considered one of the oldest among the world’s Christian churches, and is related to the name of Andria Pirveltsodebuli. It is worth mentioning that by 325 Christianity had taken hold in western Georgia, being based on the existence of an episcopacy in Bichvinta, whose bishop, Stratofile, had attended the world’s first ecumenical church council in Nikea.

The declaration of Christianity as a state religion in Georgia is linked to the name of Saint Nino from Cappadocia. Saint Nino endured a long and difficult journey before arriving in Kartli and as her final destination she chose Mtskheta. Tying vine leaves into her hair she created a cross and began to preach Christianity. Christianity was declared a state religion in the early 4th century (337 AD), when the country was under the reign of King Miriani and Queen Nana.

Georgian Christianity encouraged the development of a national self-awareness among Georgians and the belief in Georgian independence, in spite of continuous attacks and assimilation attempts by foreign invaders.

Throughout its long history, Georgia has always been surrounded by the greatest and most powerful empires. This explains why the strongest Asian states attempted for centuries to take over Georgian territory. But despite the many invasions and wars, the best-known and greatest king of Georgia, Davit the Builder (1089-1125), managed to reunify the country in the 12th century. The periods when the country was governed by King Davit and Queen Tamar (1184-1213) are remembered in history as a time of state building, cultural renaissance, social and economical development and the building of churches and monasteries.

There have been few countries to compare with Georgia, which has survived innumerable attacks and still preserved intact its independence and identity till the present day. The many churches and castles scattered over Georgia bear witness to the country’s troubled past.

The most recent invader, Russia, annexed the country in 1801 and for 200 years Georgia was considered part of the Russian

...
empire, at first as a Russian province and later as a soviet republic. After the Russian revolution, Georgia obtained a brief freedom which lasted only three years before its full annexation by soviet Russia. In 1991 the supreme council of Georgia declared independence from the Soviet Union and in March of the same year Zviad Gamsakhurdia was elected first president of the Republic of Georgia, and this was confirmed with a general presidential election on 26th May of the same year.

In 1992 Georgia became the 179th member of the United Nations Organization.

In 2003, the rigging of elections by the government caused a great outburst of protests among the people, which eventually took expression in the democratic Rose Revolution and resulted in the dismissal of the Georgian president, Eduard Shevardnadze. In January 2004, Mikheil Saakashvili was elected president of Georgia. In his pre-election program, Saakashvili promised to ensure the recovery of territorial unity, the liquidation of the results of ethnic cleansing and the return of IDPs to their rightful homes.

On August 8th 2008 the Russian Federation launched an aggressive military attack on Georgia and occupied the territories of Abkhazia AR and the Ckhinvali region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey conducted on such a wide scale is an unprecedented event in Georgia. It covers almost all important issues related to young people between the ages of 16 and 30 and analyzes the attitudes among this sector of society towards a wide range of social and political issues.

The methodology of this research is based on common sociological theories. It is a structured approach to the study of youth issues, whereby quantitative and qualitative data, gained through inquiries and in-depth interviews, are closely combined.

The survey was carried out in accordance with the ESOMAR social and marketing research code of ethics.

The aim of the survey was a detailed study of the following issues related to Georgian youth:
1. Youth policy
2. Demography
3. Socio-economic situation
4. Employment
5. Health
6. Education
7. Social activity
8. Rights of young people
9. Religion and culture
10. Entertainment and leisure time
11. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

It is clear that a wide range of issues have been researched, and is evidence of the importance to be attached to the work. For this reason, the views of experts in youth issues were considered in developing our research instrument and methodology.

The target audience of the survey were young people aged 16-30, representing 24.12% of the population of Georgia.

The area of research was 19 big and medium-sized Georgian towns and cities considered representative of the Georgian population. The research was based on random selection principles and interviews were with respondents in the 16-30 age group.

The survey was conducted by 80 interviewers from IPM (Institute for Polling and Marketing) during the period 13th – 30th October 2009. After completion, all questionnaires were checked, coded and computer-processed using the sociological data pro-
cessing program SPSS. This program enables results to be grouped by different parameters and to make correlations.

The expert interviews covered the following issues:
1. Youth employment and ownership (private business)
2. Prioritized problems of a youth policy
3. Issues of young families
4. Issues of youth education
5. Health protection of youth

In addition, other problems related to Georgian youth were taken into consideration.

In carrying out this research, we have a qualitative method which includes identifying, processing and preparing identifications for indicators on the quantitative stage: the most effective method for gathering detailed information.

The research instruments were detailed guided interviews and questionnaires designed according to the basic goals of the research.

Interviews were face to face and recorded with the agreement of the interviewees. After each 90-minute recorded interview, a transcript was made of the recording, and the report is based on these transcripts.
YOUTH POLICY

GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES

Since the end of the 80s, young Georgians have been actively involved in almost every political process of the country. However, the signs of their political involvement were also seen during the Soviet period, and particularly at the end of the 1970s when the suppression of Georgian language use by the Soviet government resulted in angry protests among the population.

The attitude of the government towards youth is a different issue and implies asking questions such as how those governmental structures responsible for involving young people in developing a youth policy are organized, how flexible the legislation is and whether it continues to improve, and how developed the existing youth organizations are.

As far as the youth policy is concerned, the decree 92 of 12th March 2001 should be mentioned. This decree “State support for youth” was passed by the president of Georgia, but unfortunately was never implemented. The decree 132 of 6th April 2000, entitled “Public Youth Council based with Administration of President of Georgia” and passed by the President, was also an important step. But it ceased to be effective in 2004.

In order to analyze these issues the questionnaire included a special section with questions about young people’s general attitude towards the government and their possible perceptions.

The results of the survey give negative data from the start. To the question “Does the government care about young people?” only 3% of respondents answered positively, 58% of the target age group (16-30) think that the government ‘more or less’ cares about young people, 21% noticed no government attention to their problems, and 18% find it difficult to answer this question. This kind of attitude can probably be explained by the fact that the country faces numerous large-scaled problems regarding society in general and living conditions in particular. Thus the government has fewer resources to focus on comparatively less tangible problems, including youth issues.

The first governmental structure to deal with youth problems - the State Department of Youth Issues and Sport - was established in 1994. Its aim was to start work on addressing all issues concerning young people, but this did not become a priority area of state policy.

At present, responsibility for the development and implementation of the youth policy is shared between the following state structures: the Georgian Parliament committee of Sport and Youth matters, the Ministry of Culture and Monument protection and Sport, the Georgian Department of Sport and Youth matters and its Children and Youth Development Fund, and the Children and Youth National Centre. (see chart below)

In spite of the large number of government structures managing youth issues, no national youth policy has so far become an official document.

When we turn to the funding allocated for youth issues, we
see that the budget of the Department of Sport and Youth issues of Georgia amounts to 2 million GEL, almost all of which is spent on organizing ‘patriotic camps’. The Children and Youth National Centre receives 500,000 GEL from the state budget, to which is added 1,219,350 GEL from the World Bank, specifically for the development of regional youth centers. The Children and Youth Development Fund has been allocated a budget of 100,000 GEL.

Survey results show that most young people are unaware of financial allocations for implementing the youth policy actions. Of the one thousand respondents, only 21% are aware that state and other sources are allocating funds for financing youth programs and 66% have no information about this.

However, their evaluation of the use of finances for programs that target youth is relatively positive (see the chart). 30% of those asked¹ think that allocated money was spent effectively and 46% think that expenditure was more or less effective. Only 7% of young respondents evaluate expenditure as ineffective.

Despite these results, it is obvious that over the last few years the government has been giving more attention to school age children as well as students.

The general attitude of young people towards the state and society is also interesting. Even though young people are conspicuous and well represented in protests related to employment in governmental structures and activities in political parties, this fact is not born out by the results of this part of the survey. 79% of young respondents give positive answers to the statement “My friends and I do not participate in social activity”. And even more (88%) state that they “Do not take part in political activity at all”.

The result is less conclusive when they are asked about their general attitude, rather than their participation in political or social activity. 44% of young people think that there is no need for free expression of their own opinion, while 23% freely express their opinions on political or social matters.

It is interesting that, on the question of local self-government, young people express a more active position. 63% think that taking care of the place where they live is not only the government’s responsibility and that they should take an active part in this themselves. Only 28% say that they don’t care ‘how the government illuminates streets’.

Their attitude towards young people’s role in state rule and development is relatively cautious. 19% of young people think that “Adults know better how to build a new country”, while 73% think that “Adults should take into consideration the opinions of young people regarding any aspect related to youth”. We can see that young Georgians are still trying to avoid taking any responsibility upon themselves for the development and implementation of a state policy.

All respondents were asked, “How far do you trust the city administration/municipality?” (See the chart).

It is quite difficult to determine the level of trust according to this data. Complete trust in city administrations is expressed by only 7% of young respondents. More curious is that 67% of respondents who say that they ‘more or less’ trust their city governments have an indifferent attitude towards the issue and/or they really cannot conceive any form of action by city governments that would increase their level of trust. 16% do not trust their city governments at all.

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¹ Data is gathered from 207 respondents – “Have you heard about financing the youth programs?”
LEGISLATIVE BASE

The work on the development of a legal framework and admission of regulating acts began only in the late 1990s in Georgia. Significant steps have already been made in this direction but, as our data show, there is still a lot to do. Today there are two main laws related to youth:

- The law concerning state support to children and youth unions (April 27, 2001)
- The law concerning the protection of under-age children from harmful influence (September 28, 2001)

According to our respondents in the qualitative part of the survey, there has been some attempt to create new legislation regulating youth policy. The following structures are working on these issues:

- Sport and Youth Matters Parliamentary Committee
- Youth Scientific Consultancy Council, established in 2008 on the initiative of the Sport and Youth Matters Parliamentary Committee, and which comprises representatives of non-governmental organizations, the government and student unions.
- State Department of Sport and Youth Matters
- National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia

In a specific section of the survey, we aimed to analyze the attitudes of young people aged 16 to 30 towards a youth policy as a formal factor. Responses in this section revealed relatively few positive results. Regarding recognition, only 24% of respondents give a positive answer to the question “Do you know what Youth Policy is?” A similarly low number of positive answers (34%) were given to the question “Does the government implement a youth policy?” – a question put only to those respondents who said they were familiar with the youth policy.

Factors that may explain these low rates of positive answers may be the low level of social activity of young people and a lack of interest in political and social issues. The results revealed in the previous chapter (see Youth organizations) may also be a relevant factor in these responses. However, it is possible that young Georgians do not see themselves as an abstract unity – a distinct group in society - and consequently consider “youth policy” as a vague notion.

Answers to the next question tend to confirm this. To the question: “Do you think it is necessary to accept a separate law related to youth?” only 26% (of 1000 respondents) give a positive answer, 48% cannot see the necessity for an additional separate law and 25% find it difficult to answer.

It is curious that, even among those respondents who think that a separate law about youth is necessary, the majority would
list problems that are common to the whole population rather than being specific to youth-related issues. When asked the question “Which of the most important issues should be regulated by this law?” most young people named the problem of unemployment (42%) or the fight against drug addiction (10%). Many others however could not answer this question (25%).

DIRECTIONS AND PROGRAMS OF THE STATE YOUTH POLICY

Directions of the national youth policy are the following:

• Directions of the Sport and Youth Department of Georgia (encouraging healthy life-styles, organization of leisure time, the fight against drug addiction, supporting youth employment, reducing crime rates, non-formal education of young criminals etc.)
• The Youth Council of the Sport and Youth Parliamentary Committee has started working on a youth-related legislative base

Youth-related state programs include:

• Summer camps;
• Financing conferences and festivals run by youth organizations;
• Financial support for non-governmental organizations’ programs;
• Summer and fall employment programs;
• Students’ days;
• Scholarship programs;
• Healthy sports events/projects;
• Non-formal education support program;
• Free language and computer courses for socially vulnerable youngsters;
• Youth information center establishment project;
• A project to promote healthy life-styles;

EXPERT OPINIONS

The following opinions were expressed during conversations about the national youth policy directions:

• The state does not have a common youth-related policy or direction
  
  As far as I know, there is no common youth policy in Georgia today. The state doesn’t have a common policy... There are separate programs, patriots’ camps etc... But concrete legislation doesn’t exist for sure. We haven’t seen any document written with a long-term or short-term perspective and it doesn’t exist … [international sector]

  I can’t say that the state has any kind of common strategy relating to youth … [non-governmental sector]

• Directions of Sport and Youth Department of Georgia:
  
  … The main emphasis is put on strengthening a healthy way of life. This involves organization of leisure time, the fight against drug addiction, support for youth employment, prevention and reduction of different criminal actions in cooperation with different institutions. We also have non-formal education, support for handicapped children of course. [Governmental sector]

• The Youth Council with the Sport and Youth Parliamentary Committee started working on youth-related legislation.
  
  Through the efforts of the Sport and Youth Parliamentary Committee it was decided to create a working group, staffed with representatives of non-governmental organizations and the state. This group is working on a legislative initiative which should be ready as a law in 2010. The most important thing is that we try our best to match the law to Georgian reality and to make it in accordance with youth interests. [Governmental sector]
According to respondents, the biggest program financed by the government is “Patrioti”, a program of six annual summer camps which bring together 15-20 thousand young people aged 15-18. As part of this program, young people are employed for a modest remuneration.

EVALUATION OF STATE YOUTH POLICY DIRECTIONS AND PROGRAMS

Positive
- Making friends, entertainment, recreation, living together and an active way to spend their leisure time for young people from different parts of Georgia (Patrioti summer camps);
- Integration and development of interests, favored by mutual contact between young people (Patrioti);
- Opportunities for recreation for socially vulnerable people (Patrioti);
- Possibility to expand one’s knowledge (competitions);
- Employment programs;
- Preferential credits for youth education;
- Support for NGOs (for example: economic, health, etc.);
- More effective administering of youth issues.

Negative
- The potential benefits of gathering together young people are not fully exploited (Patrioti summer camps);
- Concentrating funding on a single program (example of Patrioti summer camps);
- Often inspired by patriotism and a hint of nationalism (Patrioti summer camps);
- Oriented to a short-term rather than long-term outcome;
- Lack of common policy/view/approach;
- Single/ineffective/superficial programs which do not justify the high financial costs (for example: youngsters have learned only the national anthem at camps, they only have fun, etc.);
- The program is corrupt (corruption in the process of being included in the program and winning the competition for it).

The needs in institutions’ work on youth issues
- Development of international relations with other young people for all young Georgians;
- More support for NGOs;
- Introduction of long-term social assistance;
- Development of a legislative base related to youth issues.

EXPERT OPINIONS

Programs under the national youth policy receive different assessments. Below are some examples of negative assessments of these programs.
- The potential of youth is not fully exploited in Patrioti summer camps.
  This format gives an opportunity for productivity, but that’s all and this policy is finished here. [Non-governmental sector]
- Funding is concentrated on a single program (the example of Patrioti summer camps).
  It simply is not effective, because many things are done in one specific direction. The same concerns the department, which spends a lot of money on camps … [governmental sector]
- The programs are often inspired by patriotism and tend to kindle a form of nationalism (Patrioti summer camps)
  Gathering together young people from different regions
of Georgia is often accompanied with patriotic zeal and a tendency to nationalism. [Non-governmental sector]

• Oriented to a short-term rather than long-term outcome

   The problem, just as everywhere, is that programs have a non-permanent character. It means that there is no formed or planned view of development issues that we are trying to solve. [Non-governmental sector]

• Lack of common policy

   I can’t say that state has any unified strategy regarding youth. [non-governmental sector]

• Single/ineffective/superficial programs which do not justify the high financial costs (for example: youngsters have learned only the national anthem at camps, they only have fun, etc.);

   I would say that the conducting of one program can not be considered to be a state policy. [Non-governmental sector]

• The program is corrupt (corruption in the process of being included in the program and winning the competition for it).

   Only those who have relatives or know people who are making decisions are included in programs. [Non-governmental sector]

Below are some examples of positive assessments of these programs.

• Making friends, entertainment, recreation, living together and an active way to spend their leisure time for young people from different parts of Georgia (Patrioti summer camps);

   The fact that a lot of young people have the opportunity to relax, play and be entertained we can consider a success. [Non-governmental sector]

   There are patriotic camps which work in different ways.

But they encourage youngsters to be more active in the ways they spend their leisure time… [Non-governmental sector]

• Integration and development of interests, favored by mutual contact between young people (Patrioti);

   Patriotic camps … also serve as a place where representatives of different regions are together and foster mutual integration … [Non-governmental sector]

   [campaigns] give an opportunity to meet different people… this is very good for communication. When so many young people take part in one event, they can get acquainted with students from different universities and develop their interests. [Governmental sector]

• Opportunities for recreation for socially vulnerable people (ref. Patrioti).

   (Patriotic camps) give an opportunity for socially unprotected people to relax somewhere. [Non-governmental sector]

• Possibility to expand one’s knowledge (Competitions conducted in schools and colleges give the winners the chance to attend state-funded educational courses in different countries.)

   [Camps] are only for entertainment. But they learn a lot during this time. And the same applies to the competitions that are organized in schools and colleges, with the winners having an opportunity to study in educational institutions of different countries with state funding. [Governmental sector]

• Employment programs.

   As far as I know there was a program in the summer which included an employment aspect, and which was supported by the City Hall last year and the year before… [Non-governmental sector]

• Preferential credits for youth education
The improvement is most noticeable in the educational sphere. There are new privileges for students like credits, the introduction of benefits for students, which didn’t exist 4 years ago… [Non-governmental sector]

- Support of youth NGOs.
  Additionally there is also an opportunity to receive grants for youth organizations… [Non-governmental sector]

Besides evaluating the programs of the national youth policy, those taking part in the survey also talked about the needs of institutions working in the youth sphere. They think it would be good to finance the following strategies:

- Development of international relations between young people and more financial support for NGOs.
  ... it would be also good to allocate finances for the development of international cooperation … the same can be said about non-governmental organizations [Governmental sector]

- Introduction of long-term social assistance (for example, social benefits and medical care packages etc. for youth and young families).
  The money that they paid out as remuneration in the employment program can be spent as social assistance, for instance, on social warranties for young families, medical care etc. [Non-governmental sector]

- Development of legislative base related to youth issues.
  A legislative base is the thing which we consider the most important and on which we work actively. At the first stage a common concept should be created, which would not necessarily be called a law. [Non-governmental sector]

### YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The collapse of the Soviet Union triggered an irreversible process of changing values, which greatly influenced young people’s lives. This tendency is valid for youth unions and organizations as well. The soviet organization Young Communist Union was abolished, having been based on a need for spiritual and ideological control of young people and making membership practically obligatory for every young person. The abolition of these organizations created a short-term vacuum in society regarding youth leisure activity. Georgian youth faced a new reality and began to develop a new system of values which encouraged the creation of new aspirations and interests.

The first youth organizations in Georgia were founded soon after the country’s independence and the pioneers in this field were the university student unions and councils. These organizations were the first groups to work specifically on youth and youth policy issues.

The events of the last 15 years have shown, however, that even students’ unions, whose normal preoccupations should be centered on defending students’ rights and creating better conditions for studying, have usually tried to enter politics, with the covert or overt support of different political powers. Most of the students’ unions were in fact the youth wings of political parties or social movements, and hence were not focused exclusively on youth policy and issues. This tendency obviously related to the leaders of these students’ unions and not to all the members, but the fact still remains. With this in mind, there is no longer any doubt why most political parties have their own youth wings. A similar situation still applies, since almost all political parties active in Georgia have their own youth groups.

It should be mentioned that in 1995 the National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia was created, quickly succeeding...
in uniting the main youth NGOs into a single organization, and since then has actively worked on youth policy issues at national and international levels.

Besides the politically oriented unions, in the same period another group of youth organizations came into being in Georgia: the so-called NGO group. These NGOs focused mainly on obtaining grants from foreign organizations in order to conduct one-off events. The majority found themselves with no valid aim or function once they were unable to obtain grants.

We should point out that both tendencies still exist in today's Georgia. But, along with the above-mentioned types of youth groups, today there are also youth organizations which are more oriented towards culture, education, the defence of young people's rights and other social issues. The last few years have moreover seen a noticeable weakening in the focus of youth on political issues, and this tendency is highlighted in our findings.

These results from questions asked about youth organization memberships show that the most popular type (50%) is organizations involved in cultural issues. Less popular are organizations providing advice to teachers and parents, with almost equal percentages (40% are interested). But only 29% of respondents are interested in membership of youth organizations that work on relations with the government. It seems that many young people are unwilling to associate themselves with political issues.

In addition, it appears that the majority of young people are not acquainted with any youth organizations' members. One survey question asked: “Do you know any members of any youth organization?” to which only 26% gave positive answers. Taking into consideration the target group (aged 16-30), this figure is quite low.

4 Results are given from 1000 respondents.
SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

In the last 20 years Georgia’s development has not progressed smoothly and we have seen frequent dramatic events. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the minimal achievements of a new national government made the first years of independence “unforgettable” for people. The severing of the economic ties with Russia that had existed under the Soviet Union resulted in a sharp and unexpected deficit of industrial – and even agricultural - products. It was not surprising that the Georgian economy, which was dependent on the economic system of the Soviet Union, could not fill this deficit, even less in a short enough length of time to alleviate the population’s difficulties. Attempts at solving the economic problems revealed the weakness of the fiscal system, and the exchange rate of the new hurriedly introduced currency Kuponi (issued in 1993 to replace the Russian currency) changed every month and soon even every day. This kind of hyperinflation practically destroyed the purchasing power of the currency. A few of the inevitable consequences were long queues for food, a total freeze on job recruitment and the failure of banks to guarantee their customers’ investments.

The final crash of the economy was caused by two ethnic conflicts. As a result of armed confrontation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the economy was destroyed and these two territories were practically lost for Georgia.

The same period coincided with civil war and military revolution. However, from the mid-90s, the situation in the country started to stabilize, though all the above-mentioned problems remained unsolved. The economy of Georgia was linked to the Russian Federation, the main market for Georgian products and its principal source of energy. At the same time, corruption in governmental structures was added to the list of local problems.

Stabilization of the fiscal policy was brought about, in the second half of the 1990s, by issuing a national currency – the Lari - which proved to be a much more stable currency, being under the supervision of the International Monetary Fund.

Taking into account all these problems, it is not surprising that youth issues and policy were not of primary importance in this period. Moreover, Georgia was a post-soviet country and youth-related issues were never perceived in the Soviet Union in the same way as in western countries and, if there was a youth policy at all, it was not the result of structured well-formed planning. Hence, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgians did not inherit any traditions in this area. Therefore young people, along with different government structures and organizations, had to start building a youth plan from scratch.

DEMOGRAPHY

Demographic data revealed during the research are the following: 43% of young people are male and 57% female. 60% are not, and have never been, married, 35% are married and 3% are divorced.

Regarding age structure, the data according to groups are relatively similar: 38% of young people are in the 16-20 age group, 30% are between 21-25 and 32% are in the 26-30 age group.

Regarding ethnicity, the majority of young people (93%) are Georgian, 3% are Armenians, and 1% of Azerbaijan ethnicity. Other ethnic groups account for under 1% and fall in the invalid category.

36% of young people have children and the average number of children per family is 1 or 2 (see chart).

The question of ownership of homes is also interesting. Most often the parents are the owners of the apartment where a young unmarried person lives (61%), and in 16% of cases the owners are parents of one of the spouse. Only 7% of young people
have their own homes and 10% live in rented or mortgaged accommodation. The results of the next question are mostly based on this data. To the question “Who do you live with?” 70% of respondents answered that they live with their parents. Living with parents in most cases means having siblings and the rate for living with siblings is also high at 44%. (see chart below).

35% of young people live with their spouse and children and 8% with relatives. Only 1% of respondents live alone.

The average number of family members fluctuates between 3-5 members (74% of respondents), while for 16% of respondents there are 6-7 members in their family.

Regarding employment, it appears that about 20% of young people are employed \(^5\) (see the chart) and the number of employed family members is from 1-3 (84%). For 14% of respondents, none of the family members are employed.

Young people’s attitude towards income is quite interesting, though not enviable. With reference to the income of the whole family, only 7% of respondents say that this income allows them to live in comfort. Most of the respondents (46%) claimed that “Our income is enough for us to make ends meet” and 41% claimed that it is difficult or very difficult to live within their income.

Respondents were also asked to assess the material conditions in their families according to standard criteria. This revealed that the families of 8% of young respondents are in such bad economic conditions that even buying food is a challenge for them. 33% have the means to feed their families but cannot afford to buy clothes. Simple analysis shows that 41% of respondents lack elementary living conditions. 21% of respondents may be considered ‘middle class’ and can afford to buy different household appliances while only 7% of families have no financial difficulties.

### EMPLOYMENT

The problem of unemployment was not so acute in the Soviet Union as it is in the whole world today. This is why Georgia, as a new state, needed time to recognize unemployment as a phenomenon, before calling it a problem and beginning to look for ways of solving it. In this situation, it is no wonder that no attention was paid to youth employment. Moreover there were other problems - energy blockades by Russia, elections, internally displaced persons - which were considered to be far more urgent.

The problem of unemployment is still present in Georgia today and it has worsened with the global economic crisis. However, it would be unfair to compare this situation with that of the 90s. Youth unemployment is a problem, however this research does not concern only the lower age groups (16-21 for instance) who are not in the labor market \(^6\); it concerns the 16 – 30 age group in its entirety. According to our November 2009 data, only 20% of young people from this target group (1000 people) are employed (see chart). Respondents answered the question: “Have you worked this month at least one hour a week?”

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\(^5\) In the framework of the survey, ‘employment’ is considered to mean a minimum one hour’s work per week in the last month.

\(^6\) In this case, unemployment can be explained by the fact that youth of this age group are in their final grades at school or Bachelor’s degree students and are too busy with their studies to look for a job.
An unemployed person is one who is able and willing to work and is seeking employment, but not receiving any type of pension or financial assistance (exception: pensions for those who have lost their bread-winners).

Do you work?

- Yes, 20%
- No, 80%

It is to be mentioned that, following the Rose Revolution, the Georgian government has been actively conducting youth employment-oriented projects. A notable example was a student employment program, conducted in several phases, which involved quite a large number of young people. Although it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of this unfortunately short-lived program, the data (only 20% respondents employed) suggest that spending money on it cannot be justified.

Specifically, projects initiated under this program were either projects providing additional professional training, in which the state was supported by private companies, or projects to give students training in practical work-oriented skills for their future usage. These ‘apprenticeships’ were of 1.5-3 months’ duration only. In both cases, students received from the government a certain sum of money as a scholarship but they received no pay from the host companies where they worked.

Here another tendency was revealed: in most cases, students only appeared a few times at their appointed work places, while the directors or managers of these companies approved the document certifying, with signature and seal, that students had attended the whole course as stipulated by the project. Their participation in the project finished there, and students were just taking the ‘scholarship’ money allocated to them under the project. In this situation, it would of course be pointless to think that students were getting any kind of education, knowledge or practical skills.

According to the survey results, even among the 20% who are employed, spheres of employment are distributed in a quite interesting way (see chart).

Trade/Distribution, the sector that compared to others, does not require any special training or knowledge and provides a reasonable income, is in first place with 18%. The second and third places are occupied by spheres which make it possible to combine work with study. Jobs in healthcare can be supposed to be occupied by final year students on probation who have taken up full or part-time jobs in the same place after graduating. Those working in education are either students of Master’s Programs (teaching at the same time in pre-school kindergartens or at school) or young people who have failed to find a job in the profession their university studies prepared them for and are obliged to work in a different sphere; and there are relatively more job opportunities in education than in other sectors.

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7 In should be mentioned that similar project was maintained by government for higher age groups (18-60) as well.
Employment rates are similar for both sexes (male 23%, female 18%).

Employment rates for the different age groups are also worth mentioning and here there are sharp differences (see chart).

We see that the employment rate is considerably lower for the lower age group (16-21) than for the higher age groups. This can be explained by the fact that the 16-21 age group consists of students in the final grades of schools or university students: these spend most of their time in educational institutions and have little time for work. Another factor is that qualifications in this group are not of a sufficient level to justify being given a job.

In the higher age groups (22-30) the rate of employment is much higher. This is the age when young people already have Bachelor’s-level diplomas and are free to work. Students in the 22-26 age group commonly go on to take Master’s courses (although we should point out that pursuing one’s studies beyond first degree level is more the result of social stereotyping than the wishes of young people). A large proportion of young Georgians continue their studies in Master’s programs and delay finding a job for as long as possible, but Master’s programs demand less study time and examples of combining work with study are more frequent. It is among this age group that part-time jobs are most frequent.

After finishing their Master’s programs, very few young people opt to continue their academic studies, or are unable to. Consequently, the highest rate (36%) of employment is in the 27-30 age group, for whom studies have become of secondary importance.

We can add that, as the following chapters will reveal, the age of 25 is considered by both male and female respondents as the optimal age for starting families. So we can assume that many in the 27-30 age group already have their own families and that financial problems are more pertinent for them. And paid employment is a solution for this problem.

It should be highlighted that 68% of employed people work 30 hours or more a week, and therefore can be said to have full-time jobs, and 57% are working in the field corresponding to their education.

Work satisfaction levels are also high at 61% (see chart), which can be explained by the fact that for the majority of our target age group this is their first experience of work. It is also possible that they do not have high expectations or demands and that they are easily satisfied with their jobs - with the salary, for instance.

As far as the type of employer is concerned, 47% of those employed work in the private sector and only 23% in public sector institutions or organizations.

The demography of unemployed youth also shows interesting trends. 70% of unemployed people have never worked at all - probably due to their being in a low age group – while among the unemployed only 28% had been actively seeking jobs in the previous 4 weeks.

Stated ways of seeking jobs are also enlightening (see chart). 8 According to our research, material problems are the most acute for young families.
What means did you use to find a job?

- I suggested my candidature to relatives: 51%
- I was looking for vacancies in the press, on the Internet etc.: 44%
- I connected employer by myself and offered him my candidature: 18%
- I referred to employment agency: 15%
- I placed an advert in a newspaper, on the Internet: 12%
- I filled in a form at my workplace: 1%

51% of respondents try to find jobs through their relatives, 44% consult the press and internet, and only 15% consider employment agencies as places that can help them find a job. This kind of attitude might be explained by job-seekers being ignorant of exactly what the state employment agency is able to do. This agency is not clearly advertised or promoted and large sections of society are even unaware of its existence. The state employment agency has built a huge database of people seeking employment, but the agency has been responsible for no known recruitments, its focus apparently having shifted to part-time and one-off employment programs of the kind discussed above.

For their part, private employment agencies are mostly engaged in head hunting and earn their fees by persuading the best qualified workers in one company to work for another. There is a deficit of jobs and agencies cannot be responsible for creating new jobs. To stay in business, their solution therefore is to offer existing companies – their clients – the best available candidates and to entice these away from their current jobs.

The difficulties faced by respondents who are unemployed and looking for jobs are first of all the simple lack of available jobs (70%) and the absence of ‘useful’ acquaintances (35%). (See chart)

Respondents who are not looking for jobs in spite of being unemployed (72% of unemployed people) have study-related reasons for this: I am a student and don’t have time for work – 27%; I study at school – 21%. The third most common reason is having children (I have a small child – 20%).

The difficult situation in youth employment is also illustrated by the respondents’ predictions about future unemployment rates: only 29% of those questioned think that unemployment will decrease in the coming year – that the employment situation will improve – while 31% think that the situation will get worse.

Unemployment in Georgia during next year

- Will increase: 23%
- Will decrease: 17%
- Will remain same: 31%
- I don’t know/difficult to answer: 29%

9 Results from 223 respondents, unemployed and looking for a job.
10 Results from 573 respondents, unemployed and not looking for a job.
11 Results from 1000 respondents.
EXPERT OPINIONS

In the opinions of the research participants, the situation in the labor market is quite difficult, not only for youth, but for the country as a whole. (“Very few people work in their field”). However, it should be mentioned that according to some respondents’ opinions, “young people are more often employed” and “even privileged in comparison with middle-aged people”.

While talking about the causes of youth unemployment, the research participants named the following:

- Poor socio-economic situation in the country
  
  This is a more general problem. I mean that this problem is not related only to young people. [Non-governmental sector]

- Outcome of years of stagnation and immobility in the country
  
  This situation generally existed in the country. There was a time when the state was stationary. It was a period of immobility. The country couldn’t develop. [Governmental sector]

- Lack of qualified workers in certain fields
  
  The reason is the lack of professional knowledge and in a sense the weakness of the educational system as well. [Non-governmental sector]

- Low motivation of young people
  
  It would be much better if they were motivated to find jobs. If someone really wants to find a job, they will go and find one. [Governmental sector]

- Irrelevance of education for labor markets, lack of information about professions which are in demand and qualifications required for different jobs (“Young people are choosing professions which are not in demand on the market”).

  There is no place where a person can get information about the skills and knowledge that will help him to find a job. It is unclear where, what and how you should seek, what you should know to find this or that job. [Non-governmental sector]

- Lack of appropriate skills (e.g. skills related to communication, information seeking and ethics etc.) for finding a job among young people.

  Unfortunately the young don’t have these skills necessary for finding job. They expect that somebody will find them and offer them a position. This is also a problem of employment, although it is not strange that it exists. [Governmental sector]

- Lack of models demonstrating the positive effects of education on their success or identification with harmful ideals (Young persons try to get success as fast as those of their age have done, in the government). Young people want only prestigious posts and it is necessary to find ways to change this mentality.

  Young people at the age of 23-25 work in quite high positions in governmental structures. The young person who sees that also wants to have the same success at the same age. Consequently, he/she loses interest in progressive step-by-step development. This is also a problem and no one works on it at all. [Non-governmental sector]

Regarding spheres in which young people are mainly employed, respondents expressed different opinions:

- Different services/service spheres
- Commercial structure (mainly banking, young people under 35 employed)
- NGO sector
- In prestigious sectors of government structures: Ministry of Finance, Department of Economy etc.

12 In it interesting that one of the respondents, while answering this question, mentioned: “Mainly in private companies, for some reason they avoid jobs in the government sector”.
In prestigious sectors of international organizations: Public Relations, International Relations, etc. While answering the question about the state supporting programs for youth employment, the respondents remembered several programs:

- Students’ employment programs organized by Tbilisi City Hall and other big cities for short-term Fall and Summer jobs
- Students’ probation programs

Programs and events organized for the young by the government are mainly evaluated negatively by the research participants, because (1) their effect was short-term (one-off compensation) and this approach does not solve the problem, and (2) this approach does not fully satisfy youth demands (because they could not work in their profession fields and received a single small remuneration).

However, the respondents’ view is that similar state-run employment programs for youth will presumably continue in the future (e.g. short-term employment during Fall and Summer, organized by City Hall of Tbilisi and other big cities) and will be more intensified in the period prior to elections 13.

Respondents expressed their opinions about what should or can be done to solve the employment problem:

- The state must support the development of the private manufacturing sector, so that jobs may be created (to open new branches, factories, etc.).
- It is important to support young people with limited ability.
- It is necessary to establish youth clubs or centers in all regions, where young people have opportunities to learn the skills that will then help them to find a job.
- The communist mentality (“A diploma guarantees a job”) must be changed.

It is interesting that one of the respondents mentioned that state employment programs for youth are mostly conducted in the period before elections.

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13 It is interesting that one of the respondents mentioned that state employment programs for youth are mostly conducted in the period before elections.
er essential factors are religion (64%), common interests (58%), sufficient income (56%) and sharing the same values (54%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important factors in creating a family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutual love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average-level income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple’s own home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate income to cover living costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same nationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

92% of respondents name financial issues as the main problem for a young family, 71% mention unemployment and 55% their place of residence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most important problems for young families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material/financial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of young people (65%) think that marital infidelity justifies a divorce, 46% name physical violence, 43% alcohol or drug addiction, 17% mental disorder of the spouse and 16% have listed other justifying factors.

50% of respondents think that three is the ideal number of children for a family. 25% think that this number is two and 12% consider it to be four children (see chart).

Young people name financial conditions (90%) as the determinant factor in deciding on the number of children. The second most important factor is health (47%), the third is the mother’s wishes (44%) and 43% of respondents think it is the family’s accommodation.

99% of respondents think that the mother should take on the most important role in a child’s upbringing, and 97% state that this is what actually happens. 88% reckon that in ideal circumstances the father should perform the most important role in children’s upbringing and 83% think that in reality fathers are quite active in this process.

95% of respondents say that the state kindergartens are financially accessible, while 57% say that they cannot afford private kindergartens and 66% cannot afford to employ a nanny or child minder.

The main problematic issues with state kindergartens are:
- Their generally insufficient number or, in the villages, their complete lack.
- The large numbers of children in the kindergartens and consequently insufficient individual attention being given to them.

96% of respondents consider that polygamy is absolutely unacceptable. 94% say that homosexual/same-sex marriages are inadmissible. 71% consider it unacceptable for a baby to be born outside marriage and 65% think that sexual relations before marriage are also inadmissible.
1% of respondents are unaware of any state assistance for young families. Almost every survey respondent claims that there are no state programs for young couples that no such programs are planned or they have heard nothing about them.

**PRIVATE BUSINESS**

Against the background of high unemployment rates and the recent economic crisis, many try to find a way out through creating their own business. At the same time, trade is often considered to be a new business direction. This is perfectly natural as it is relatively easy to start a business; it requires little start-up capital and similar precedents are numerous.

38% of our young respondents have considered the possibility of launching their own business, and this is a significant figure. However, only 25% (93 respondents) of those planning to start a business (377 respondents) have taken any specific action. General preparatory activities are excluded from these figures; for instance, 54% of the above-mentioned 93 respondents claim to be gathering information and 23% are working on business plans. Indicators for other actions are insignificant compared to these two.

It is also interesting to see what obstacles young people encounter when they work on their own business (93 respondents). The survey results show that the main obstacle is that of insufficient initial capital (59%) and this is followed by taxes and responsibilities (10%) and credit refusal (8%).

Hence, the major problems in launching a business are of a financial nature, which reflects the situation in the country.

Several further questions were put to this group of 93 respondents with business plans. These questions referred to the state guarantees regarding the launching and conducting of a business. To the question ‘Does the state make available documents and permissions?’ 50% of respondents gave a positive answer and 30% a negative answer. A relatively smaller positive indicator concerns property protection guarantees; 40% of respondents are convinced that their property will be properly protected. On the issue of profit, the positive indicator is even smaller; only 34% of the respondents think that the state will not hinder their attempts to make a realistic profit.

**ECONOMIC CONDITION**

The survey contains questions that investigate the respondents’ economic conditions, at present and in the future, as well as providing an analysis of their attitudes towards various economic developments.

It is worth mentioning that young people give a positive assessment of the current living conditions. 41% of respondents (out of 1000) state that living conditions are improving, 43% think that the conditions have remained the same, while only 13% deem living conditions to have worsened.

The respondents are less positive in their attitude towards unemployment in the coming year (see chart).

14 The data concern 93 respondents who carry out particular measures for launching their own business.
Only 31% of respondents expect a reduction in unemployment in the future, while 29% are of the opinion that the situation in this sphere will deteriorate, and 23% predict that the situation will remain unchanged.

Young people have a tendency to identify positive future developments when the issue at hand directly concerns their lives. Our respondents were asked to evaluate their own current and future situations on a 10-point scale from “the worst” to “the best.” Their assessment of the current situation gave indicators ranging from 3 to 8 (92% of respondents), i.e. an average evaluation. As for the future, the assessments were distributed between 5 and 10 (90% of respondents). The majority of young people therefore feel optimistic.

Their expectations are also optimistic with regard to personal income. The questions concerned changes in personal income over the previous and coming years. Only 14% of respondents say that their salaries were raised while 38% of respondents hope that their salaries will rise next year. During the previous year, 19% of respondents saw a drop in their salaries and 4% assume that in future their salaries may fall. Their income remained unchanged for 59% of respondents in the previous year whereas only 29% expect their income will not change in the coming year.

It is worth mentioning that, to the question “Is it possible to achieve success in Georgia through hard work?”, 64% of the 1000 respondents give a positive answer while 24% give a negative answer. Hence, young people appear confident that their work will not be undervalued.

The data concern 1000 respondents

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The same section contained questions on the economic crisis and its impact. For the majority of families the crisis was reflected in price rises (57%) and job losses (18%). 15% of respondents have seen their salaries decreased, while 23% have noticed no difference.

Another question asked: “Have you suffered from a lack of finances in providing normal living conditions for your family over the past year?” 32% of respondents gave affirmative answers to this question (see chart).

A significant number of respondents (41%) also have problems with providing food for their family.

Ownership of home appliances was also covered in our survey and the results are given in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appliance</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>I don't know (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone (line)</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV-set</td>
<td>98.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villa</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridge</td>
<td>88.4%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas cooker with a stove</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing machine</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water heater</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum cleaner</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric radiator</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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15 The data concern 1000 respondents
MIGRATION

IN-COUNTRY MIGRATION

21% of respondents have changed their permanent place of residence in Georgia. Of these, 61% moved to Tbilisi, 17% to a regional center and 14% to a district center. The main reasons for changing homes are related to: marriage (33%), education (21%) and better employment prospects.

83% of respondents have no plans to move house in the coming year.

Young people think that the biggest problems in their city are unemployment (70%), drug addiction (16%) and families’ financial situation (15%). They name the employment problem (42%) and financial hardship (26%) as the main challenges for their families.

Problems in the city

Employment program 70
Drug addiction 16
Hard financial conditions of the family 15
No entertainment places 8
Education problems 6
Low education level 5

Problems in the family

Employment program 42
Hard to answer 29
Hard financial conditions of the family 25
No problems 6
Unsatisfactory living conditions 3
High education fees 2

Young people from the regions and from Tbilisi express differing opinions on the question of barriers to their relationships. Those from the capital consider ‘differing opinions’ and disagreements to be the main obstacles (34%) and this parameter is also considered as a barrier for those in the regions (13%). The second significant barrier for Tbilisi youth is ‘different development level’ (20%) and this indicator too is similar (21%) in the regions. The third major barrier is ‘different education levels’ - Tbilisi (10%), regions (28%). The data show in fact that all the young respondents highlight the same obstacles, albeit in a different order of priority. For Tbilisi residents the sequence is as follows: differing opinions, different development levels and different education level. As for those in the regions, the sequence is: different education levels (28%), different development levels (21%) and differing opinions (13%).

Respondents express the view that, when they move to a big city, young people receive no help from the state in their efforts to adapt and have to rely on their own talent and skills. The main problems that young people face in cities are the following: (1) they cannot find jobs, (2) they have to work at different places, (3) they have to launch their own small business, and (4) they find it difficult to pay their rent. However, the opinion was also expressed that young people who arrive from the regions easily adapt, as they do not suffer discrimination and often get assistance from relatives and friends living in the city.

16 “One of the problems is student accommodation. When you arrive and have no relatives here, you have to rent a flat. The prices are too high. Only a few universities have hostels. This is another social problem.”
MIGRATION ABROAD

19% of respondents say that they have been abroad since turning 16. The majority (53%) of them have been abroad once, 17% twice and 12% three times. As many young people from the regions (18%) as from Tbilisi (18%) have traveled to one or more foreign countries. The reasons for their trips differ. 52% of Tbilisi respondents traveled abroad as tourists, 10% have lived abroad with relatives and 9% have worked abroad. Those from the regions have radically different reasons, the most common of which (34%) was to find work. A considerable number have traveled on holiday (30%), 22% have lived abroad with relatives and only 3% have been abroad for their education.

27% of respondents have thought about going abroad for education purposes, and 24% for work.

48% of all respondents are considering the possibility of improving their education abroad within the coming two years; with a higher percentage of such responses (52%) from those in Tbilisi than from those in the regions (38%).

Germany (26%) is named as the number one destination for education, followed by the UK (22%) and the USA (19%). However the opinions of young people in Tbilisi and regions differ in their choice of country. Tbilisi respondents put countries in the following order: Germany (25%), UK (25%), USA (16%). Those from the regions put them in this order: Germany (27%), USA (27%), UK (10%).

44% of the respondents (271) who have considered going abroad for their further education over the past two years have already begun to prepare for this eventuality.

The question was also put on intentions to work abroad in the coming 2 years. 39% of the 239 respondents with plans to leave the country state that they plan to find a job abroad. It is interesting how aspirations differ in terms of preferred countries. Greece is the most desirable country for working abroad (19%), and particularly for those from the regions (27%). Germany (15%) is the overall second choice, but particularly for those from Tbilisi (20%). 33% (of the 239 respondents) have already started preparations for leaving.

Overall, 21% of respondents have family members living abroad and, of this group, the majority (66%) has one family member living abroad temporarily. Only 18% of the groups have one or more family members with permanent residence abroad.

Main reasons for migrating abroad:
• Job-search/improvement of economic conditions
• Education
• Wish to realize personal potential (in sport or other fields), opportunities for which are unavailable in their homeland
• Conviction that money-making/getting wealthy is easy abroad
EXPERT OPINIONS

The issue of youth migration was studied in two parts: (1) abroad, (2) within Georgia.

The respondents claim that, despite slightly improved living conditions, many young people wish to leave the country – though this conviction is less wide-spread among Tbilisi residents. Young Georgians mainly migrate to the USA and western European countries. Reasons for migration are as follows:

• Job seeking/improvement of economic conditions
  Certainly, like in all countries, in Georgia too the main reason for youth migration is improvement of economic conditions… (NGO sector)

• Education
  As I see, all those who have the opportunity go abroad to study or work there. Perhaps many of them intend to return later but many people wish to stay abroad. (NGO sector)

• Wish to realize personal potential (in sport or other fields), opportunities for which are unavailable in their homeland
  In their native country they do not find the opportunity to realize themselves. So they have no opportunities at the local level (NGO sector)

• An erroneous view of easy money-making and getting wealthy abroad
  They have a wrong attitude that they can easily become happy abroad, find a job and earn money. One reason is that they do not have opportunities at the local level and another is that they have wrong attitude towards earning money easily (NGO sector)

Young people think that they will easily earn money abroad, but it is not realistic. (Governmental sector)

It is also important to look into the migration of young people within the country borders.

The respondents give the following reasons for migration of young people from the regions to cities:

• Misguided state policy towards the regions/districts (e.g. 80% of income is spent in the capital, only unimportant region-related issues are addressed, etc).

  Nowadays 80% of income is spent in Tbilisi. The capital gets rich and the villages get poorer and poorer. (NGO sector)

• Little industrial activity in the regions

  It is difficult to find a job in the region. No factories or plants function there. (NGO sector)

• Lack of infrastructure in regions

  There is no infrastructure and structure in the regions and no opportunities for realization and advancement. (International sector).

• Unfavorable social-economic situation in the regions (leading to young people using drugs, alcohol etc., and raising the level of crime).

  They are in a very difficult situation, in harder conditions that the youth in Tbilisi. All this makes them resort to harmful habits - drugs and alcohol. (NGO sector)

• Lack of entertainment facilities for young people

  Besides the fact that the matter concerns jobs and daily problems, young people also need entertainment and they have many other requirements. It is difficult to make these
people stay in the village. (Governmental sector)

- There are more education and job opportunities in the cities

  *The migration from villages to cities is big. In the villages young people cannot develop. They cannot get a proper education, job, or information. Consequently, they migrate to the cities.* (NGO sector)

- Low level of awareness of available opportunities in the country (lack of computers/internet)

  *Along with employment, another main problem for young people is that they are not informed about the developments in the country. They do not know what challenges they may face, where they can study. Internet and computers are available for only some of them.* (NGO sector)

  *They live in a different information environment, social situation and level of development…* (NGO sector)

- Young people in regions have plenty of unorganized free time

  *Another motive for youth migration is the problem of free time. Young people are especially troubled by the fact that their free time is unorganized. This factor is very important and in Tbilisi the entertainment opportunities are more than in the regions. Hence, they attract the youth.* (NGO sector)

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**SOCIALLY VULNERABLE GROUPS**

When society in general faces acute problems, those who are socially vulnerable are particularly affected. It is therefore useful to see which groups are perceived as socially vulnerable by young people and on what basis they identify these groups.

21% of young respondents think that a socially vulnerable group consists of disabled people, 19% think that they are orphaned children, 5% include people with mental disorders in the category and 3% think that these are people living below the poverty line. We should add that the majority of respondents (60%) are unable to find any definition of 'socially vulnerable'.

To the question “Is there a socially vulnerable young person in your family?” of the 3% of respondents who said that this was the case in their family, one-third referred to mental disorders and two thirds to physical disability.

Respondents were asked also to assess the degree of social integration of mentally and physically disabled people. Grading on a 5-point scale, 9% of respondents think that this group are not socially integrated at all, while 7% say that they are fully integrated. The majority of respondents (72%) give an average assessment and 12% find it hard to answer at all.

Questions in this section also addressed the rights of physically and mentally disabled people. The responses suggest that their rights to medical assistance (for 50% of physically and 46% of mentally disabled people) and a place to live (for 45% of physically and 37% of mentally disabled people) are on the whole respected. The least protected is their right to employment and holidays. 25% of respondents say that this right is protected for physically disabled people and only 15% for mentally disabled people.

The data concerning young peoples’ attitudes towards socially vulnerable groups are interesting (see chart).
These findings show a reasonably positive view with regard to personal relations and friendship, although attitudes toward mentally disabled people are slightly less positive. And young people think that it would be a problem to have a socially vulnerable colleague.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)

Since the two ethnic conflicts in the 1990s the problems regarding IDPs are still very acute in the country. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that in August 2008 tens of thousands more were added to the number of IDPs.

5% of respondents are IDPs. The figures for the number of IDPs in these respondents’ families are as follows: (see chart)

The average number of IDPs in families ranges from 3 to 6 persons (76%)18.

The survey also looked into the main problems of IDPs and all the respondents (1000) were interviewed on this question. This sampling was decided by the fact that the views of all young people on these problems was of more interest than those of IDPs alone.

The survey revealed that the majority of IDPs, according to 57% of the 1000 respondents, are mostly concerned with the problem of accommodation (see chart).

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17 Russia-Georgian war on Georgian territory
18 The data concern 50 IDP respondents
19 We should point out that some indicators may be not valid in statistical terms due to the small sample size (only 50 people)
Unemployment is thought to be the second biggest problem (32%) (Though this is an acute problem for all young people, and indeed the whole of society) and this is followed by ‘hard economic situation’. The remaining problems, which include the problem of regaining lost territories (14%), are considered much less important. It is obvious that social and economic problems are more important for young IDPs than other issues of state significance.

The attitude of young people towards compensation for property lost or abandoned in conflict zones is also interesting. Only 16% of respondents think that IDPs will be reimbursed for these losses, 61% give a negative answer to the question and 23% find it hard to answer.

As for the issue of who is responsible for compensation, the largest portion of respondents (74%)\textsuperscript{20} name Abkhazia, 22% South Ossetia and only 8% Russia.

Respondents were also asked to express their views on state responsibilities towards IDPs. For this purpose, specific possible provisions were read to them. Their responses show that in this regard the majority put all the responsibility on the state (see chart).

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 Provision & Yes & No & Hard to answer \\
\hline
 Providing accommodation & 96 & 5 & 3 \\
 Providing jobs & 89 & 7 & 4 \\
 Providing free medical treatment & 95 & 3 & 2 \\
 Social assistance/privileges & 97 & 2 & 1 \\
 Assistance/preferences for various services & 95 & 3 & 2 \\
 Assistance/privileges in education sector & 92 & 4 & 1 \\
 Special assistance for large families & 96 & 3 & 1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

However, some young people (6%) are not of the opinion that the state must provide jobs for IDPs or provide any privileges in their education (4%).

\textsuperscript{20} Data from the 159 respondents who think that the damage will be compensated.
EDUCATION

Education is especially important in terms of youth policy as almost all its aspects are closely connected with youth issues.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, developments in Georgia were also reflected - for the worse - in the education system. During the first years of independence it seemed that the new Georgian system of education was closely following the Soviet system, albeit with minor changes. The structure of education institutions, standards, assessment system, curriculum rules… remained the same. Unfortunately significant corrupt procedures were also inherited and as independence strengthened these also increased. At the same time, teaching standards worsened. In addition, a failure to implement the law on education that had been adopted delayed reforms in the education system.

Since 2003 however, there has been visible progress in the field of education. The changes brought in concerned all levels of education, from elementary schools to higher education institutions. The population welcomed the authorities’ new initiatives but today the euphoria generated by these reforms has disappeared and has been replaced by wide-spread criticism.

The introduction of a national exams system, which has been effective in fighting corruption, may be considered an important achievement. At the same time, there have been various encouraging programs – even if some have been short-lived.

Despite undeniable progress, people find the changing standards and rules in education to be a source of many problems: versions of course books that are different from one year to the next, the gap created between educational levels of different generations due to continual reforms.

In the soviet period, Georgia always stood out by the number of diplomas per person. And after independence, this tendency continued, with even greater numbers of diploma holders and numbers of diplomas per person, due to a corrupt education system which made it easier to enter universities, complete courses and get diplomas. In the long run all this contributed to the growth of unemployment. It was still assumed that people with university diplomas and qualifications (even if only ‘formal’) could expect to be given prestigious and well-paid jobs. However, the number of such jobs was restricted during the first years of independence and is limited even now. As a result, job-seekers in the highly qualified category refuse to accept low-qualification jobs and automatically join the ranks of the unemployed.

Nowadays the graduates of higher education institutions (32%) constitute the biggest category in terms of education status among the 16 - 30 age group (see chart).

As for the quality of the education provided by different types of institution, it is in secondary schools and technical institutions that the situation is the worst (see chart). The situations at other levels are almost equal but the Master’s courses in private and public institutions are distinguished by their quality.
Other indicators also point to the unsatisfactory level of education. The question “Is it possible to enter a higher education institution on the basis of a secondary school education basis?” prompted twice as many negative answers (57%) as positive (28%) (see chart). The attitude is also negative towards the 12-year system of secondary education (see chart), which may be due to this reform being considered an unreasonable step and likely to be withdrawn in the near future.

As for practical manual skills obtained through informal means, the indicator is quite high: 29% of respondents have such skills. The most common (69%) is knitting/sewing/embroidery, and this is followed by skills in building and repair work (15%).

It should be mentioned that the popularization of vocational training and craftsmanship was triggered by the changing demands of professions. The construction boom of the previous decade automatically caused the growth of demand for certain professions and the unemployed were encouraged to master new practical skills.

Since Georgia gained independence the idea of education abroad has become popular. The increase in the attraction for foreign education was partly due to the inability of a stagnant education system to provide useful knowledge or skills. At the same time we should not forget another factor: in the Soviet Union going abroad and getting education there was fraught with difficulty. So the removing of this soviet barrier helped to cause a large outflow of young people abroad.

In the 1990s studying abroad was associated with students’ exchange programs under the control of university authorities. This being the case, corruption – and the inability to pay large sums - was an obstacle for many students. Later, studying abroad was organized under distinct programs and competitions run by certain universities. From the second half of 1990s English language tests were introduced in Georgia and this significantly simplified the procedure for going abroad for education.

The trend of the previous years underlined the advantages of studying abroad: the top positions in state (i.e. prestigious) structures are occupied by people educated abroad.

Despite these circumstances we can conclude that the demand for education received abroad is growing. However the number of opportunities remains the same and 43% of those interviewed (see chart) think that they have no chance of furthering their education abroad.

If we add the 16% (2nd bar) to the 42% (1st bar) on this 5-point scale, it can be seen that over half of young people assume they will never be able to study abroad.

As for the problems related to going abroad for studying, these are quite diverse and as a rule, they are not limited to a particular kind of difficulty. However, problems of financing stand out in this list. (see chart)
The problem of inadequate language knowledge is third in importance at 10%.

A small number of respondents (15%) wish to work in scientific fields despite the popularity of Master’s courses and a positive attitude towards the other upper education levels. The young specialists who want to work in scientific fields think however that they face two main obstacles: a low salary (22%) and an uncertain future (19%). Again, this response may be explained by the fact that there are large numbers of people with diplomas in Georgia, including young people, and it is quite difficult to find jobs requiring high qualifications.

As for the data on education abroad - living abroad for study, attending trainings and workshops to improve qualifications – the number of respondents answering positively is so small that the data are not valid and consequently not subject to discussion and analysis.

More interesting is the assessment of the Georgian education system in general, and especially in comparison with European and American education systems (see chart).

The chart shows that American and European education systems have the advantage over Georgian education system on this 10-point scale. Clearly the main deciding factor in this judgment is a general loss of trust in the Georgian education system. It is understandable that when you graduate from the top higher education institution in the country and remain unemployed you automatically conclude that your education has failed you. While young people educated in Europe or the USA manage to find prestigious and high level jobs, reflecting the superiority of the western education system.

We see that insufficient finances are the problem in the education field and this concerns studying at local universities as well as abroad. However, in parallel with the introduction of national exams, the state made some steps towards financing studies as well when a system of partial financing was introduced. This system provides financing of students according to their results in national exams. 100% financing is also available but only for students with the highest grades and only a dozen or so students manage to get this.

A president’s grant program also provides student grants and allows talented young people the opportunity to continue their studies at European and American universities.
Despite these sources, and despite the state’s efforts to keep university fees at the universities under its control to a level which is accessible for everyone, the payment of ever-increasing university fees still remains a big problem. And there are other problems.

The first is that there are many private universities in the country that can offer lower fees and at the same time these private institutions employ the same teachers who also work at state universities, i.e. they offer education of the same quality at a lower price. Another problem is that over the last ten years several private universities have become especially popular. These demand fees that are two or three times higher than at state universities but they offer a western education system and their graduates are more likely to find jobs.

The survey respondents have varied views of the Georgian education system and they mentioned the following positive and negative features of the system:

**Positive**

- Corruption problem regarding university entrance more or less solved
- Improvement in teaching quality and compatibility with contemporary western standards
- Greater motivation of young people to study
- Studying all subjects at equal levels to achieve final overall mark
- Effectiveness of national exams (equal chances for all young people)
- Sending Georgian language teachers to the territories settled by ethnic minorities (e.g. Samtskhe-Javakhety)

**Negative**

- Advantage of foreign diplomas over Georgian ones
- Problems for national exams caused by large number of textbooks by various authors
- School books expensive
- Inadequate sanitary-hygienic conditions in Secondary schools
- School infrastructure not developed (no canteen, outdoor sports grounds, heating, lighting, etc)
- Ineffectiveness of reforms (school leavers ill-prepared for higher education and thus need private tuition)
- Cancellation by Youth department of traditional students’ days/competitions of students’ work
- New university teachers few in number and poorly qualified
- Young people educated in Georgia not competitive on the international market
- Lack of/insufficient availability of scholarships
- Practice of appointing directors
- Different school programs (chosen by schools themselves)

The attitude towards education provision is as follows:

We can claim it is available because:

- there are free secondary schools (a voucher system functions at some schools)
- students in higher education institutions can work and study simultaneously
- state social programs assist socially vulnerable people to get education
- successful students get 100% state financing
- Bachelor’s courses (but not Master’s courses) financed by the state
We can claim it is unavailable because

- frequent changes in secondary school textbooks means extra expense for families (use of same book by second and third children in the family impossible)
- school textbooks and other materials (note-nooks, pens, etc) expensive
- big segment of socially vulnerable pupils (e.g. street children) left without support
- high fee-levels for private education institutions offering better education
- state programs/scholarships open to only a few students

Scientific studies in Georgia are especially difficult in fields that incur high expenses (e.g. for laboratories) or they have been simply discontinued (e.g. physics, mathematics).

- Scientific studies not financed/have no relevant state support
- Hard economic conditions in the country (scientists look for ways of applying their skills and qualifications abroad, or they move to more profitable types of work, etc)
- Some scientific fields in Georgia not developed at all
- Scientific education expensive

Although in terms of employment a foreign diploma is privileged, an education in Georgia is still enough for adaptation to present reality and many people educated in Georgia have been successful. Our respondents note however that this adaptation is more effective for those young people:

- who have been educated at certain prestigious commercial institutions (e.g. ESM, etc)
- who have easy access to the Internet and to information
- who are highly motivated

Despite the fact that, according to some respondents, the state does nothing to assist young people educated in Georgia in their adaptation process and scientific development, or they have no knowledge of this, a small proportion of those interviewed named some programs - state or other - related to these issues:

- Various state scholarships and programs (e.g. president’s fund) that enable young people to study at approved institutions abroad and obtain post-graduate (Master’s or Doctor’s) degrees
- Grants provided by international organizations (e.g. British Council program, etc)
- NGOs/funds (financing youth education, providing grants for scientific research, etc)

Respondents expressed their opinions regarding what should be done to improve the education system in Georgia:

- Use of modern technologies at schools and universities
- Inviting professors from international universities to provide master classes
- Providing teachers with in-service training to improve their mastery of modern methods (greater focus on student’s needs and more interactive communication during classes, etc)
- Arranging work-attachments for students with various enterprises as well as with their university/institute
- Ensuring that young people educated abroad return to Georgia and work for their country
- State provision of free education for more students
KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

For historical reasons, during the Soviet period Russian was the second language in Georgia; since the 19th century Georgia developed alongside, and in a sense within, Russia and used its language as well. Another reason for this is that, in that period, Russian was predominantly used in official documents. The trend is maintained even today since, along with Georgian (99%), 84% of young Georgians know Russian as well (see chart).

![Knowledge of Georgian and foreign languages chart]

However, it should be noted that Russian language competence is not as high as it was in the Soviet period. The reason for this is the popularization since independence of English and the interest of young people in learning English. 61% of young people know English, which is now in third position – albeit with a low indicator of fluency in speaking and writing. German (11%) and French (4%) follow in 4th and 5th places. Among other minority languages, only Armenian is included in the validity frames and 4% of young people know this language.

It should also be emphasized that, due to the ethnic conflicts in the 1990s, which were aggravated in August 2008, the research companies are unable to conduct polls in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and this restriction applies to the current survey as well. And this factor explains the absence of the Abkhazian and Ossetian languages in the survey results.

SELF-REALIZATION

Respondents think that the enabling factors for young Georgians to realize their potential are:

- There are more and better opportunities than before.
- There are more opportunities to get an education abroad.
- In job recruitment, attention is given to candidates’ skills rather than to their CVs.
- Schools teach skills that make it easier to move from one field to another.

Factors that are considered to hamper young Georgians in their efforts to realize their potential are:

- There is no youth policy in the country and there are no, or very few, youth programs.
- There are no data on staff supply needs in different professions – resulting in large numbers of specialists being available in one field and thus increased unemployment and difficulties in changing one’s field, etc.
- The state is corrupt and it does not enable all young people to develop equally

The state is interested in the future of those young people who are successful. Everybody should have opportunities for normal and worthy development... (NGO sector)

- Unstable economic (young people think about helping their families) and political (aggressive neighbors, occupied territories, etc) situations.

When the main problem of 19-20 year-olds is how to help the family it is very difficult to realize one’s capabilities. Young people have to work to earn a living. (NGO sector).
• Irrelevant education system
• High unemployment rate
• Success depends largely on contacts (relatives, friends, etc)
• Unhealthy social environment (revolutionary, nationalistic ethos)
• Expectations of assistance by young people and lack of motivation

Respondents also expressed their opinions on what should be done to support the self-realization of young Georgian people:

• Improvement of the country’s economic and political situation to facilitate business development
• Activating young people’s energies
• Making clear the state priorities and goals
• Implementing realistic employment programs
• Improving the education system
RELIGION AND CULTURE

Georgia has a long history and rich cultural heritage. A modern independent state was established not long ago, but its system of values was formed over centuries. The country has been built on the unity of Orthodox Christianity which brings together Asian and European elements.

The developments of the 1990s and the demise of the Soviet Union have created a new reality for Georgia. Earlier Georgia was not considered by the world as a separate social and political entity and consequently it had little access to different cultural values. But through close contact with the rest of the world Georgian culture has been molded by a new environment and new directions have emerged.

The collapse of the Soviet Union modified the religious make-up in Georgia. This was due to the fact that, once borders were opened, large numbers from the ethnic minorities residing in Georgia returned to their homelands (e.g. Jews, Greeks). This trend was also partially linked to the ethnic conflicts and tension between Russia and Georgia, due to which some Russians and Ossetians left Georgia.

Moreover, following the end of the Soviet Union, many religious denominations gradually appeared in Georgia, many of which most Georgians had not heard of before. However, the followers of these denominations are not numerous.

Nowadays the religious groups in Georgia are the following (see chart):

Orthodox Christianity 93%
Islam 2%
Gregorian 1%
Christianity 1%
Sun worship 1%
Other 2%

Orthodox Christianity largely dominates this list. And to the question “Is religion an important part of your life?” 87% of respondents gave affirmative answers (see chart).

Presumably, such an attitude is based on firmly established historical and traditional values. The number of church-goers is also quite high and 46% of the population attend religious services at least once or twice a month, and 24% at least once a week.

Independence had a deep impact on cultural values too. New types of music began to establish themselves in Georgia, along with a variety of new sorts of entertainment. New directions emerged in terms of people’s perception of Georgia as a state and Europe-inspired aspirations appeared, and these trends were closely connected to youth. The younger generation have always played an important and active role in cultural developments.

The results of the survey underline all the difficulties that Georgian young people face. However, we start with their perceptions of Georgia as a state and find that 30% of respondents think that Georgia is a European country, while 15% consider it to be Asian (see chart).

It is also notable that for 44% of respondents Georgia is a European as well as an Asian country.

Factors affecting these views are linked to the question of historical self-identification. Until the 18th century Georgia had no political or cultural rela-
tions with Europe; geographically Georgia was located among the Asian countries and consequently was influenced by them. Considering these characteristics, Georgia should be included in the list of Asian states. However, there is another factor. In the 19th century European values spread to Georgia via Russia, as Russia itself was influenced by the cultures of France, Germany and other countries.

Under the Soviet Union both of these trends were frozen for a long time and there was an attempt to establish a Soviet society. However, following Georgia’s independence, in the 1990s a tentative regional orientation emerged. Asian features were quite strong in society but soon the influence of Europe became very visible.

Today, it is difficult to say whether in the 20 years of independence Georgian society has advanced and has firmly chosen one of the directions or whether it intends to establish an independent and distinctive orientation. In terms of official policy, Georgia aspires to membership of the European family. However, some stereotypes that dominate in the society and the mentality of some social groups suggest the contrary.

VALUES

It is interesting how young people assess the relative importance of personal qualities. (see chart):

- Loyalty (56%) and frankness/openness (39%) - features linked to mutual trust - are the most highly valued qualities. We can assume that the developments of the last two decades - ethnic conflicts, civil war, unfavorable economic conditions, a change of government without elections and political instability – are the reasons for these features occupying the top places in the list. Other results of the survey also confirm these findings: respondents were asked to name the most important factors and ‘reliability’ appeared in first place with 40%.

Responses to questions on the degree of satisfaction with one’s own lifestyle show that 69% of young people are satisfied with their way of life. This figure is possibly the result of the numerous youth programs implemented by the state in the past few years. However, there are significant differences in responses between age groups. Satisfaction is higher among the 16-22 age group at 76%, whereas the corresponding figure for the 23-30 age group is 62%. This difference is explained by the fact that the above-mentioned state programs were probably directed towards the 16-22 age group, and their feeling of satisfaction reflects this. At the same time, the problems of the older age group have not been seriously addressed.

Other factors linked to satisfaction are quite interesting. 50% of respondents who express satisfaction with their lifestyle think that trust is the main reason. According to another 50% this is their attitude towards other people. It is worth mentioning too that factors such as ‘belonging to a good society’ (18%) and success (22%) are included in the top ten.

The survey provided a question which investigated, in a concrete way, the respondents’ relations with their neighbors, and this provided an analysis of young people’s values that are most, and least, acceptable. (see chart):

23 Encouraging school programs, summer camps, “deer’s leap” program, president’s scholarship program at universities, etc
24 692 respondents
It transpires that progressive values are not firmly established among young people and/or they are influenced by public opinion and try to choose answers that they assume to be acceptable to the majority.

Also, despite the fact that the interview was conducted at the respondents’ homes, considering the specifics of polls conducted in Georgia, in many cases another person (in the case of these age groups a parent) is also present during the interview. Hence, young respondents may be influenced by their parents and try to give answers acceptable to them. There may therefore be errors in some answers, but avoiding these goes beyond the competence of the research company and the interviewer.

The most acceptable of the listed features for young respondents is having a neighbor of another nationality (77%). However, if we consider the fact that throughout its history Georgia has been a multi-ethnic country and that people are used to living next to those from other ethnic minorities, this high percentage rate is still low.

In terms of acceptability the second position is occupied by ‘having a neighbor of another religious denomination’ (50%). One factor should be taken into consideration in this case: within its history Georgia was always an Orthodox Christian country, though the followers of other confessions were continuously present. In the 20th century the Soviet Union and its dismissive attitude towards religion had a great impact on society, including contemporary youth attitudes. Namely, restrictions in expressing one’s religious beliefs in the Soviet period were the cause of feelings of frustration and, as soon as these restrictions were lifted, society began moving towards the “forbidden.”

At the same time, we should also consider a principle of religious belief that is valid for all people in every region of the world: a growth of belief and deep religiousness are caused by pessimism in society, disasters, uncertainty, the inability to objectively analyze developments, etc. In the 1990s unfortunately almost all these signs could be identified among the Georgian population. It is important therefore that students and young people in general give active expression to these signs.

Hence, society began to seek for a way out in religions protected for centuries. At the same time, pseudo-nationalist state politics caused an antagonist attitude towards ethnic minorities and restriction of their rights. Some ethnic minorities moved to other countries and others moved to territories lost in conflicts.

The combination of these developments played an important role in the changes brought about in the religious map of the country and for a long time it remained as the accepted dogma for the Georgian people. Perhaps this explains the relatively low percentage rate (50%) of religious tolerance, despite the European orientation of the Georgian state.

It is worth noting that the most unacceptable types of neighbor for young Georgian people are traitors (only 3%) and drug addicts/dealers (only 4%). Alcohol addiction is also seen as a negative factor (13%). We can conclude that these respondents do not care about their neighbors.

25 Def: Turning of a common, passive believer into an active church member

26 Such an indicator may be considered satisfactory if we talk about any mono-ethnic (Asian type) state
The religious-cultural situation in Georgia is as follows:

- The Orthodox Church’s aims are not in line with the country’s foreign policy and the attitudes of the Church and state towards the west are in contradiction with each other.
- The Church has a more powerful and profound influence on society than the government.
- The congregation of the Orthodox Church has considerably increased, particularly among the young where the crime rate has improved.
- Religious choice is free and nobody is oppressed for following their own beliefs.
- There is an undisputed dominance of the Orthodox faith and young people accept its dogmas without questioning them.
- Although Georgia claims to be building a democratic state, some religious minorities are not treated fairly and followers of various confessions and sects are oppressed.
- The Orthodox religion and church has an undesirable influence on some education issues (e.g. distorted knowledge among young people of issues related to safe sex etc).
- The mass media have a negative impact on cultural values.
- Some ethnic problems persist and include the inability of ethnic minorities to speak Georgian (or other languages).

The following actions have been taken in Georgia with regard to religious and cultural issues:

- State bodies conduct various activities, namely: (1) The Youth and Sport Department of Georgia organizes summer camps where children of various confessions meet and attend training courses and workshops. The aim of these camps is to teach children that the strategic goal of the state is the peaceful co-existence of people of different religious confessions. (2) The Youth service of Tbilisi City Hall holds meetings with the representatives of ethnic minorities. (3) The Ministry of Education has launched a program to enable ethnic minorities to learn Georgian.
- The Orthodox Church supports a youth organization which carries out a number of actions with a religious focus.
- NGOs and international organizations work on religious and cultural issues with young people (e.g. ethnic and religious minorities) to raise their levels of awareness and tolerance.

EXPERT OPINIONS

Participants in our research had different views of the religious and cultural situation in Georgia. Their comments were as follows:

- The Orthodox Church’s aims are not in line with the country’s foreign policy and the attitudes of the Church and state towards the west are in contradiction with each other.

  … The Orthodox Church plays a big role, although its role in some issues is obscure. If we consider integration with NATO and Europe as a Satanic environment, as the Church does, it appears that the opinions of Mother Church and state are different and they don’t agree on this issue. The church must be loyal to the country’s foreign course. [Non-governmental sector]
- The Church is independent and has a more powerful and profound influence on society than the government.

  The government admits the church has the advantage… Especially after the demonstration in November 2007 it has seriously lost popularity. And a dispute with the church is very dangerous for them. [Non-governmental sector]
I think religion has much influence on young people and has a big role in the country, not only in spiritual but in political aspects as well. [Non-governmental sector]

The church has an influence on Orthodox Christians, but it’s important to perceive the rights and duties of religion and state correctly. The church and religion has its own place. [Non-governmental sector]

- The congregation of the Orthodox Church has considerably increased, particularly among the young where the crime rate has improved.

  When I enter the church and see so many young people there, I am very glad… When they go to church it already means much, and this is very good… This way, they touch not only religious truth, but also values such as respect for the motherland and their ancestors as well…. [Governmental sector]

  There is an increasing tendency to being active believers. This is one of the modern tendencies. [Non-governmental sector]

  The parish has obviously increased, especially among young people. Herewith, the criminal situation has improved and besides police and other law defenders work actively. Perhaps one of the reasons is the church as well, because there are lots of practicing young people. [Governmental sector]

- Religious choice is free and nobody is oppressed for following their own beliefs.

  Religious freedom really exists and I don’t think that anybody is oppressed because of religion. If somebody is oppressed, these are isolated incidents, caused by people because of their personal feelings. But this isn’t a tendency. [Non-governmental sector]

  Georgia has always been famous for its tolerance towards different religions. Young people remain tolerant towards minorities and show religious tolerance. [Governmental sector]

- There is an undisputed dominance of the Orthodox faith and young people tend to accept its dogmas without questioning them.

  And still, the primacy is held by Orthodox Christianity, because most people are followers of this religion. [Non-governmental sector]

  It would be better if our culture were different. Young people should ask more questions and not accept everything as they are told. So, there is a lack of forethought. When somebody tells another person that something is as it is, too few people ask why. Fasts and other things are observed in our religion, but nobody asks why and what for. They don’t understand deeply why they do so. That’s why they are fanatic. [Non-governmental sector]

- In contradiction with Georgia’s claims to be building a democratic state, some religious minorities are not treated fairly and followers of various confessions and sects are oppressed.

  A “Servant of the Orthodox Church” is free from military service when nobody from other religions has this privilege. I don’t oppose Orthodox Christian being free from military service; I mean that if we are to have equal rights, followers of every religion must have this benefit. We wanted to bring our priest to Rustavi Prison to preach to followers of our [islamic] religion, but it appeared that we had to get ap-
proval from the Patriarchy. I think that this is unfair.”. [Non-governmental sector]

Religion and culture are closely connected with each other in Georgia, so this might be another problem. If a young person has different religious opinions and is the follower of it, he or she may have problems with integration in the society. . [Non-governmental sector]

As for other religions, the number of different sects has increased and sometimes this causes arguments among youngsters. [Governmental sector]

- The mass media have a negative impact on cultural values.

As for culture, I still think that our information sources must adopt a healthier policy. They help the devaluation of national values by propagandizing artistic production. It would not be fair to accuse the government of this, because I think that television is still a free zone. [Governmental sector]

- Some ethnic problems persist and include the inability of ethnic minorities to speak Georgian (or other languages).

There are ethnic problems as well. We don’t speak about opposing each other; the problem is the integration of such groups in the life of the country. The majority of them can’t speak the language of the country they live in. So their integration is hard and slow. This problem is very serious in the regions. Often they can speak neither Georgian, nor Russian and even hardly speak their native language. [Governmental sector]

In order to improve the religious and cultural situation in Georgia, government and non-governmental organizations make different arrangements.

Almost 100,000 children have attended our summer camps and we try to hold different types of trainings and seminars. Here Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox Christian and Jehovah witness children lived together. We try to explain to them that we must all live together and that this is one of the priority interests of the country. [Governmental sector]

We had meetings with representatives of ethnic minorities and we agreed that we must help their integration as much as possible. Even the Ministry of Education itself had a program ‘Teacher of the village.’ They visited villages and taught Georgian language. [Governmental sector]

- The Orthodox Church supports a youth organization which carries out a number of actions with a religious focus.

...Orthodox Christian church has youth organization, which holds religious arrangements. [Non-governmental sector]

- NGOs and international organizations work on religious and cultural issues with young people (e.g. ethnic and religious minorities) to raise their levels of awareness and tolerance.

One of the issues of our job is education among cultures, in which religion is united. In my opinion children have to know what different religions are in advance, what it means to be the follower of Armenian Gregorian church, or what it means to be Muslim. This information must be spread by all means. [Non-governmental sector]

There are non-governmental organizations working in this direction. They are staffed by the representatives of minorities. They know this problematic issue and try to solve it. There is encouragement from international organizations as well. We are interested in their integration. The more in-
The part of the research concerning entertainment and leisure time was aimed at finding out the most popular ways of spending free time. In answer to the question: “How have you been entertained in the last 3 months?” 86% of respondents mentioned watching TV. This is a form of entertainment they experience every day. ‘Having fun with friends’ is the second most common entertainment (67%), and is followed by ‘listening to music’ (55%).

As for the Internet, it takes fifth place with 41% and computer games are placed 12th with 12%.

For the majority of today’s global society, where technical progress and the development of communications have reached a high level, human relations are limited. In such ‘developed’ countries, the Internet, video and online games and music are the main sources of entertainment. In Georgia, when young people name ‘having fun with friends’ as one of their forms of entertainment, this may be explained in two ways: first, in our country new means of communication (internet) are not so developed and widespread that they influence human relations and second, that this process has just begun and needs time.

It’s also worth mentioning that in the issue mentioned above, the cultural originality of Georgian society plays a big role.

The particular ways of having relations with friends and others are reflected in the traditional ways of creating entertainment. Receiving guests is placed 10th (22%) in ‘forms of daily entertainment’, but it is placed 1st among things that people do once a week to entertain.

The situation is simpler while speaking about the dependence on television. Among the existing TV channels, Imedi and Rustavi2 are the market leaders. Almost the same number of young people watch each of them (Imedi 41%, Rustavi2 40%). In third and fourth places, well behind the leaders, are Alania and Sakartvelo, with 2% each. The data for other channels, including Public Broadcaster, show very small figures.
Attitudes towards music are very interesting as well. 23% of Georgian youngsters listen to Georgian singers, so ‘Georgian art’ is in first place. ‘Rock, Pop and Jazz’ take second place with 23%.

‘Foreign art’ with 18%, ‘classical music’ with 17% and ‘folk music’ with 16% are in third, fourth and fifth places. The figure for ‘rap’ is very small (0.1%) and of course invalid. As this type of music is known to be popular among young people and TV channels show many rap music clips, we may doubt this figure. It is possible that the young interviewees were once again influenced by outsiders.
HEALTH

The health of young people, as of any other age group, depends on several important factors. Among them the most important are the environment and life-style. The latter is affected by everyday social habits that often have a negative effect on health.

In the Soviet Union period, medical training in Georgia included very few modern achievements and many accidents prevented the cure of diseases which were easily curable in the West. The post-soviet period brought more problems in this field. It became clear that Georgian medicine was excluded from resources, in the same way as economics, politics, etc. And this dearth of resources is still obvious today; in spite of having good specialists and large numbers of medical professionals, it is only in recent years that it has become possible to provide local hospitals with the types of equipment that are not considered a luxury in developed countries and which are part of everyday health care, but which Georgia could not afford. The last few years have seen medical professionals being sent abroad to get higher qualifications, exchange programs and innovative medical projects being implemented together with other countries – all of which were rare in the first years of independence.

In addition, the absence of a law governing medical treatment was a problem for the healthcare sector. The necessity of this document became clear for everybody when several cases ended in fatalities and the families of the patients made a court appeal, prompting work to begin on the law.

As compared to standards in western countries, one of the problems is the sparse knowledge among young people about sexual relations. For many years, youngsters got information about sex from the internet or from friends or certain magazines. However, several steps have been taken in recent years by the Georgian education authorities to rectify this situation and a short sex-awareness course is now given in public schools. It should be added however that a large part of society reacted negatively to this initiative, signaling that society as a whole is not mentally ready for such reforms.

Today, the right to health care is guaranteed for every citizen according to Georgian law. But the extent to which this law is applied in reality needs to be investigated. We therefore found out how positive or negative the perceptions of young adults are in this matter and what their concrete health care problems are.

The first – unsurprising – result of our enquiry was that respondents in the lower part of our 16-30 age group give more positive answers than older people. The first thing then is that, as a general tendency, positive responses tend to become rarer as the respondents’ ages increase. The second one is that the majority of our 16-30 year old respondents live with their parents and receive financial support from them. Because of this dependence on parents, most continue to see themselves as children, so they do not face many problems. As a result, they are inclined to have a positive view.

45% of young Georgian adults consider their health to be ‘very good.’ (See the chart.)
Taking the combined data of bars 5, 6 and 7, we see that 88% of young people in Georgia are satisfied with their health at present.

Answers to a different question reinforce these positive results. The question was put to all 1000 respondents and refers to their general physical and moral health over a one day period. The question was: “How did you feel yesterday,” and 66% answered that they felt satisfaction and 55% that they were happy. Negative feelings were far less common: 29% felt ‘anger’, for example, and 14% felt ‘disturbance.’ The majority of young people are obviously positive about their health and general mood.

Despite these positive views, everyone needs some form of medical care from time to time. People continue to discuss the quality of health care and almost 20 years after independence negative views are on the increase, probably because of people’s greater expectations in this area. In any case, it is worth finding out how accessible health care services are for adults.

Events of the early 1990s had a disastrous impact on the Georgian health care sector and at all levels - hospitals, clinics, emergency care - the services were depleted. In this situation, it is difficult to talk about the quality of the medical services. The work of reviving the health system began in the late 90s and accelerated in 2004-2005, but only in some specific areas. The greatest achievement is considered to be the organizing of an effective emergency service, although some express reservations on this question. They point out that the service does not operate in many regions and in particular in those places that cannot be reached by ambulance. The situation is better in hospitals and clinics since many have been privatized. As a result, doctors’ salaries have risen and working conditions have improved.

Everyone has periods in their life when they fall ill and need medical treatment. One of our survey questions therefore sought to analyze what young people do in such a situation and who they address, with the proviso that the question refers to a life-threatening disease. It appeared that 47% of respondents think that a doctor is the proper person to consult when you are ill, 42% consider it to be family members, 11% friends and relatives and 10% say they find their own cure when they fall ill.

The responses also show that the most accessible is the emergency service; 73% of young people say that it is wholly accessible. (See the chart.)

![chart]

Polyclinics and first aid centres are the second most accessible. Analysis of these results is quite easy. Protecting health is closely connected to financial means and those who have money can get use a medical service; those who don’t have to resort to the emergency service. This fact explains the high accessibility of emergency service and polyclinics. The emergency service is usually free and the polyclinic fees are also low. In contrast, stationary medical services are very expensive and for 28% of young people are not accessible at all. The same is true of diagnostic service, especially over the last few years, and this is out of reach for 32% of young people. As for medicines, they are partly accessible (40%), but 23% are unable to buy medicines at all.

Obviously, the situation in the medical sector is not satisfactory and access to specific service-types is difficult. This is born out by data on visits to medical institutions. The question “Which
medical institution did you visit recently?” was given to those who say have been to a medical service center at least once. The responses show here too that polyclinics lead with 61%, while hospitals are placed second with 25%. It is also significant that dentists are visited by 3% of adults. This means that they go to those medical institutions that are cheaper.

With the need of medical services, the issue of confidence in medical staff is also relevant. In line with the typical Georgian mentality, in times of ill-health people try to find the doctors and surgeons they need among their friends and relatives, whose professional experience they are familiar with. This dependence on certain medical staff is explained by people’s lack of confidence in others. People seek out those doctors they are acquainted with, regardless of their social standing. This has its roots in the historical and traditional values of Georgian society and is reflected in modern young people as well.

The data on confidence show that 21% of young people fully trust doctors. (See the chart.)

A further 36% choose the 4 bar, which means that 57% of adults trust doctors. 26% opt for bar 3, suggesting that they cannot express either confidence or lack of it, but we prefer to consider bar 3 results as a negative expression; respondents who cannot decide whether they trust doctors or not imply either that they themselves have had a negative experience with doctors or that they have heard of one from someone else.

Overall, it is difficult to speak about confidence in doctors for 33% of young people, while 6% do not trust them at all. We should also mention that a lack of confidence in doctors is closely linked to the sanitary conditions of the doctor’s place of work; it is difficult to trust a doctor who works in a centre where elementary sanitary norms are not respected, where repair works have not been carried out for years and where cases of infection are frequent. This is why people do not trust doctors.

However, it is clear that the demand for doctors is still high, even for relatively harmless diseases. Perhaps this is because of the appearance in recent years of several new infections and viruses which are largely unknown for the general population.

In spite of some progress, the health system situation in Georgia is still problematic and young people are aware of these problems.

It is interesting to see what our target group thinks about the question of a healthy way of life. Their responses show that a healthy way of life is mostly connected with sport (68%), correct nutrition (41%) and avoiding tobacco (24%) and alcohol (15%). And 10% of young people think that avoiding drugs promotes a healthy life.

The issue of doctor’s salaries and fees in medical institutions has been a subject of debate for several years. This profession is now considered to be one of the highest paid, and in Georgia doctors’ income has been moving in this direction for several years. Today, doctors in medical centres have higher salaries than they had in the 1990s. However many would claim that they are still not high enough, and it is common practice to give additional money to doctors and medical personnel.

Another issue is that of “shadow payments” – a custom inherited from the Soviet Union period and common in medical and
other sectors; doctors did not officially record a patient’s visit in writing and were unofficially “given” money for the visit.

We see some evidence of this mentality even today among young people and 15% of respondents admit to having given “additional” money to doctors unofficially.

In Georgia, young people have a poor view of the health system:

• The medical service is barely accessible to young people because of the adverse economic situation, an under-developed insurance sector and minimal commercial activity.
• The medical service is difficult to access for young people because of the cancellation of existing state programs.
• The health problem is not on the agenda because of state support and effective work by insurance companies.

The following arrangements have been, or are being, made with the aim of improving the health system for young people:

• Non-governmental (UNICEF) and governmental organizations (Union of Young Medics, Association of Young Doctors) run a number of programs in the medical sphere.
• The state plans to organize several programs for young people in the medical sphere.

EXPERT OPINIONS

Our survey shows a range of views among young people of the health system in Georgia. Some respondents think that the healthcare system is not accessible while others consider that the system works perfectly.

• The medical service is barely accessible to young people because of the adverse economic situation, an under-developed insurance sector and minimal commercial activity.

  It’s partly accessible. The medical service is at a particular stage of development and in some cases insurance companies are guilty as well. They do not carry out door-to-door actions and do not advertise their services. This would be more effective. [Non-governmental sector]

  ... No insurance system has been developed which would be affordable for everybody. [Non-governmental sector]

  It is not secure at all. If I get sick in the street nobody will give me emergency service or pay attention to me. You won’t be operated on if you don’t have money. We haven’t developed the insurance system, which is quite bad. I don’t speak about insurances for GEL 5 and similar systems. A real insurance system should exist which would serve every citizen and every young person. [Non-governmental sector]

  The healthcare problem is the hardest problem in Georgia and especially for young people, because this all is connected to money. Youngsters seldom have their own income. . [Governmental sector]

• The medical service is difficult to access for young people because of the cancellation of existing state programs.

  It’s very difficult, because existing state programs were
completely abolished during the last year. [Non-governmental sector]

• The health problem is not on the agenda because of existing state support and effective work by insurance companies.

  I don’t think that we have problems in this direction today. The government has successfully activated state insurance. In my opinion if a person thinks that he needs a doctor or wants to go there for prophylaxis, it is accessible through this program as well. [Non-governmental sector]

  There are programs, cheap insurance, etc, which give people the chance to benefit from them. [International sector.]

Participants in our research are not familiar with any programs implemented by state or non-governmental organizations to improve health care in Georgia. Although several respondents named arrangements which have been, or are being, planned:

• Non-governmental (UNICEF) and governmental organizations (Union of Young Medics, Association of Young Doctors) run different programs in the medical sphere.

  I know that UNICEF has reproductive programs connected to health, they are very interested in this sector and some NGOs are involved in it. There are youth NGOs that have been working on this theme – the Union of Young Medics, Association of Young Doctors, for example. [Non-governmental sector]

  Our organization holds seminars on the issue of infectious diseases spread by sexual contact. We are mostly targeting AIDS and drugs- what drugs are how they influence young people’s healthy way of life. [Non-governmental sector]

• The state plans to organize several programs for young people and adults in the medical sphere.

The state works on programs that should ensure this… There are no concrete programs for adults. [Governmental sector]

In our research different opinions were expressed about the healthcare system for adults in Georgia. Some respondents think that the system is not accessible while others consider that it functions perfectly.

  Together with all other kinds of information, information about health programs is not accessible. [Non-governmental sector]

  Few people have access to this information, because people like us (NGOs that work on healthcare issues) are very few and it would be better if we had no more than 200 beneficiaries a year. We aren’t able to deliver this information to everybody. [Non-governmental sector]

  It’s fully accessible. There are advertisements on TV almost every minute. [Non-governmental sector]

Respondents have also expressed their opinions about what should be done to improve the situation:

• People should engage in sports activities from school-age.

  Although the government and municipalities open many good stadiums and sports fields, this doesn't help to recover the health of Georgian youngsters in reality. I think that there is a lot of work to be done in the educational system. I think that there should be special anti-tobacco, anti-alcohol and anti-drug campaigns. Today any child can buy cigarettes and alcohol in the stores without a problem. [Non-governmental sector]

• The law allowing the free advertising of alcohol should be re-examined, especially where this is near schools and kindergartens.

  It’s very bad that the government has changed the law
about advertising alcohol. It was forbidden to advertise alcohol on TV and billboards but now it is legal. Advertising alcohol was forbidden within 100 meters of schools and kindergartens. This will increase the number of criminals and car accidents. [Non-governmental sector]

- Returning to the practice of having full-time doctors in schools

  There was a doctor in every school in old times, but now every school doesn’t have it, that’s very bad. School doctors are really necessary, not only to help children in case of accidents, it’s also necessary because a close eye can be kept on students’ health. [Governmental sector]

INSURANCE

Health care and health insurance are indivisible in the modern world. In Georgia, insurance as a service appeared quite recently and covers only a few types of risk; only travel insurance, vehicle insurance and property insurance are available. For health insurance, ‘corporative’ insurance is becoming very popular. This means insuring a group of people who work together and it gives them a chance to benefit from a range of services while paying a modest sum of money. Individual insurance packages were introduced very recently but only a few insurance companies provide this service, which is more expensive than for corporative packages.

In 2008, the government started to work on a project to introduce an ‘inexpensive’ health insurance program, which was quickly implemented through the joint collaboration of the government and insurance companies. The project was widely advertised and has increased the popularity of the health insurance service.

To the question “Do you know anything about the free health insurance service?” 77% of young adults answer positively while 11% say that they have partial information. Only 18% of respondents have state insurance. (See chart.)
These data refer to a situation where the state project has been going on for a long time, having been widely publicized and explained, and allowing those who could not purchase it immediately to register at a later date. We sought to find out whether those who have state insurance use it or not (see same chart). Among the adult respondents (175 people) who have inexpensive insurance, 45% use it. What is the reason for such a high percentage?

The inexpensive insurance program offered by the state has specific features and it covers a narrow range of benefits. The first is analysis, which can be carried out in any polyclinic and is very inexpensive, the second is emergency hospital treatment, and the third is insurance against accidents. The other additional services, which are included in the above-mentioned packages, are not included in state insurance packages. The government’s action is positive however since they can argue that additional benefits would make the insurance expensive. But the fact is that the services of this inexpensive insurance package are not needed or used by young people in the 16-30 age group.

However, it is worth mentioning that the majority of the 45% (79 respondents) who have used this inexpensive insurance package at least once are content, and 34% of respondents to this question are satisfied with the inexpensive insurance service. (see chart)

20% of respondents (bar 4) are also happy with the service, while 9% are totally dissatisfied. Two remarks to explain these figures: the sample is small in this case since only 79 respondents had used the insurance package in question and if the insurance covered emergency hospital treatment the patient would of course be more satisfied.
ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Smoking tobacco and alcohol are problems for most countries and are harmful for all societies, especially when they are youth problems.

We can say that, for Georgia, the data are reasonably satisfactory. Our survey shows that only 21% (of 1000 respondents) of 16-30-year-old people smoke. However, again it is plausible that the presence of third parties – parents for example - during the interviews has a direct effect on the responses, as well as the fact that young smokers may refrain from answering the question correctly: young people (16-21) make a secret of their smoking habits and they would naturally not divulge this information in an interview.

Regarding the frequency of smoking, 62% of smokers (207 respondents) smoke 11-20 cigarettes, or up to one packet, a day. 18% smoke on average 6-10 cigarettes a day and 8% 1-5 cigarettes. The most active smokers, who smoke 21 or more cigarettes a day, are only 11%.

Information on the dangers of smoking has greatly increased in the 21st century, in Georgia as in the rest of the world. Books have been published, regulatory decrees have been issued about cigarette adverts and “smoking kills” is a compulsory text on cigarette packets. As a result, 74% of respondents consider smoking to be very harmful.

Young smokers (207 respondents) were asked the question “Have you ever tried to give up smoking” and 44% answered in the affirmative. With regard to alcoholic drinks, 41% of young people do not drink at all, while 35% drink once a month.

These data are interesting because one of the traditional values of Georgian society is connected to the culture of wine and vineyards. Wine and other alcoholic drinks (vodka, cognac, beer) are prominent features of receiving guests and have great tradi-
AIDS/HIV INFECTION

Acquired immune-deficiency syndrome is one of the most dangerous diseases of our time. Cases of HIV infection occurred during the Soviet Union period, but state policy did not allow this issue to be made public. After Georgia became independent, such facts gradually came to light, with the result that the population assumed that AIDS had not existed before, and that it was the opening of borders and foreign travel that were the cause.

Another contributory factor in the spread of AIDS was weakened border control in the first years of independence and the resulting large quantities of drugs that entered the country. It is well-known that in most countries the main cause of HIV infection is drugs use.

The spread of AIDS was also in some measure due to young people not having access in their education to information about sexual relations. Young people at the age of 16-30 involved in our research are not confident in such situations. This is a period of fast development, when youngsters gain new skills and habits and face new problems. They have new possibilities and run risks of making mistakes which can affect their health.

There is no lack of information about infections spread through sexual contact and AIDS as a disease is known to 95% of young people. C hepatitis is known to 68% and syphilis to 51% but figures for other diseases are lower.

Several general and concrete questions aimed to measure the amount of information available on AIDS.

9% of young people give a positive answer to the question “Have you ever heard about someone with an HIV infection or who has died of AIDS?” Their opinion about HIV infection is very interesting: 55% of young people think that a healthy looking person can be infected by HIV.

During the analysis of ways of getting infected with HIV, it becomes clear that 80% of young people are aware that one can be infected through a used syringe while 29% consider that one can be infected by food that has been touched by an infected person. It is worth mentioning that some respondents (27%) named mosquito bites as one of the ways of getting infected.

Regarding protection from HIV infection, 71% named ‘systematic protection during sexual intercourse’, and 62% named ‘relations with only one partner.’ It is interesting to note that 53% of young people mention sexual abstinence as one of the ways of being protected from HIV/AIDS.

Respondents were then asked to consider some specific HIV-related situations and to answer questions on them, following which an analysis of their opinions on HIV infection was made. (See the chart).

As we see, 31% of young people think that they can eat with an infected person, and 17% think that it is acceptable to buy food from them. The most positive opinion was associated with their own age group since 41% agree that students infected with HIV should be allowed to continue their studies. It seems that they make parallels with themselves and are therefore more tol-
Approximately 30% would accept in their homes a relative with HIV infection. Despite holding a relatively tolerant view of HIV infection, the majority of young people would hesitate to reveal this. To the question “Would you keep the fact of HIV infection of one of your family members secret?” 48% of answers are affirmative and 22% negative. (See chart).

26% of young people do not know how they would react in this situation. These findings suggest that the people are not informed about AIDS or that their information is incorrect. Most people identify AIDS with death and start to isolate themselves from those infected, which is the reason why people keep their infection secret. For the same reason, most infected people do not go to proper medical institutions, with bad results.

**PREGNANCY AND ABORTION**

Reproductive health is one of the main components of health protection and has special meaning in almost every country of the world, among them in developing countries. The incidence of new viral infections has provided doctors with relevant information to observe in a short time.

The issues of pregnancy and abortion are the subjects of serious discussion, especially when they are connected to young people.

It is only recently that a protection system for reproductive health has been created in Georgia. During the Soviet period there were no surgeries where people could consult doctors on protection during sexual contact. Some protection methods were known in old times, but they were general. In the last few decades, guidance on the planning of pregnancy has also appeared but, according to our research, hard facts about pregnancy planning are rare. Among the respondents who have children (360 respondents), only 35% planned their pregnancy while for 35% it was quite unplanned. (See chart).

Regarding planning pregnancy in the future, only 23% say that they will plan their pregnancy in advance, and another 77% do not pay attention to it and consider pregnancy a spontaneous fact of life.

It is clear that the situation in the planning of pregnancy is not satisfactory. Young people are not interested in this issue, perhaps because of their lack of sex education or simply a carefree attitude.

On the questions of contraception and abortion, we find that contraception is a less problematic issue in Georgian society, and for this reason we are able to get more objective answers on the questions connected to it.

The survey shows that the most well known contraceptive methods for young people are medical contraception (64% of 1000 respondents) and mechanical contraception (55%). 7% of
respondents are unaware of any well-known methods of contraception, which indicates a lack of sexual education. And 23% of respondents are unable to name any means of contraception.

The issue of abortion is more problematic. First of all, as we have seen above, the majority of the Georgian population are Orthodox Christian, a religion that forbids abortion. The second concern is that the population of Georgia is decreasing.

These two factors explain the general disapproval of abortion. The majority of respondents consider abortion to be possible only in the most extreme situations. (See chart.)

Nearly equal numbers of respondents (77% and 78%) say that abortions may be carried out when the life of either the mother or the child is at risk. But for 16% of young people abortion is wholly unacceptable.
CIVIL PARTICIPATION

In the first years of Georgia’s independence young people were involved in all political processes and they actively participated in frequent mass meetings and demonstrations. In the late 80s and early 90s university students were responsible for organizing many of the dissident movements.

Students were active during elections and referendums, especially during the first years of independence when people were filled with enthusiasm and society had a common goal. Over the following years, the lack of progress in political processes, as well as civil war and ethnic conflicts, made the population gradually lose their enthusiasm. New political parties and movements appeared on the national stage. Also a dual direction in foreign policy emerged - the country looked to developing relations with Russia and at the same time moving towards Europe.

This all fostered the feeling among young people that their efforts were in vain and that only politicians could decide the future of the country and society. Besides this, Georgian youth faced many hard choices: which party to choose? what foreign policy to support? which was more important: studying or finding a career with the help of the university students’ union? etc. The result was a decrease in political and social activity.

CIVIC POSITION

Our survey shows that 54% of young people have taken part in elections or referendums held during the last 3 years. This is a relatively good result, however it is interesting to know why the number of young voters decreased. Those respondents who have participated in elections in the last 3 years were asked: “Why did you take part in elections?” 60% of the 536 respondents concerned answered that they ‘were fulfilling their civil duty’, 22% said that they ‘wanted to change something’ by voting, and 15% answered that it was because they ‘had a favorite candidate’. Only 3% took part in elections as a member of a political party.

Other young people have taken no part in elections or referendums over the last 3 years. 62% (453) of these respondents say that they did not have the right to participate because of their age - which is understandable for our respondents (16-30-year-olds). The second most popular answer is “I am not interested in politics” (14%), followed by “My vote is not important” (10%).

This means that a quarter of young people who did not take part in elections think that they should vote only when politics becomes an issue that interests them or when their voice will become important.

This shows an erroneous perception of elections, and is a subjective view; the respondents admit only that political reality that is important for them and/or which has humiliated their po-
itical self-respect so that they don’t consider themselves as valuable members of society. We must look for the reasons of this attitude in their bad experience of previous elections or referendums and not in young people themselves.

6% of young people give a concrete reason for not voting in elections and this is election rigging. Here again it is a matter of a bad experience in previous elections or referendums. In spite of this we must recognize that young people seem to decide subjectively, and consider that when their preferred candidate loses, this is the result of election rigging.

It is significant that only a small number of respondents take part in demonstrations and mass meetings; only 9% admitted that they have taken part in demonstrations or mass meetings in the last three years. 42% of these respondents explain that they wanted to change something with their vote and 30% say they were fighting against unfairness. 14% participated in demonstrations out of interest and 13% because their friends asked them to. It is obvious that young people who take part in demonstrations do this for no clear reason.

The attitude of those who have not taken part in demonstrations and mass meetings is also important. Most of them (59% of 876 respondents) explain that they could not justify such a protest and 28% claim that demonstrations serve no purpose. 6% consider such demonstrations as avanturism.

One more question on elections was asked: “Would you justify the rigging of an election if your relative/friend was a candidate,” to which 89% of young people answered negatively. Only 5% supported election rigging and 6% refused to answer.

EXPERT OPINIONS

Our survey team members (NGOs, political parties, state institutions, election officials) expressed different opinions about young people’s participation in society. Many of them do think that they are involved in social life:

They are involved. If the political situation is tense, young people act immediately. [Non-governmental sector]

Unfortunately, the ‘activeness’ of young people is defined by how politically active they are. [Non-governmental sector]

Young people are involved in social life. These are mostly youth NGOs and political organizations. Their involvements is reflected in the demands expressed in street demonstrations because in reality they represent the opposition. They are involved but nobody listens to them. As for youth NGOs, they are on a very low stage and they concentrate only on their own local projects. The media don’t pay any attention to them. [Non-governmental sector]

Other members of the research team consider that young people are not involved in social life.

At first glance, young people seem to be active, but if we look closer, they are passive, politically and socially. There are two reasons for this. Either they are so busy with their own prosperity that they forget about being socially active, or they often have a wish, but don’t know how to make it happen. [Non-governmental sector]

Young adults are not very involved in social life and there are several reasons. They don’t think that they can change
anything. Being involved in the social sector is not profitable, they have low salaries and prefer to go into business or international organizations. [Non-governmental sector]

Respondents express different opinions about the protection, and the violation, of young people’s rights in Georgia:

- The rights of young people — and indeed the term ‘youth’ — are not defined in Georgian law and their rights are not considered separately from human rights.

  The concept itself “rights of youth” does not exist. The rights of young people aren’t distinguished from others. [Non-governmental sector]

  It is difficult to speak about the rights of young people, because the term ‘young people’ is not defined in the Georgian code. The rights of the young will be defined and they will have privileges and advantages. [Governmental sector]

  As far as I know, the rights of young people have not been formulated. [Non-governmental sector]

  The youth of our country, just like any other citizens, are protected. There is no legal basis for young people. I don’t know if it is violating the rights of young people or not, but it is violating their interests. [Non-governmental sector]

- Young people do not know their rights.

  Young people don’t know their rights, so it’s difficult to say whether their rights are protected or not, because when person does not know his rights, he won’t know whether they are infringed or not. [Non-governmental sector]

  Young people don’t know what rights they have. When you don’t know your rights, you can’t know if they are protected or not. This is the most important thing. [Non-governmental sector]

- Violating young people’s rights according to the law (they are judged as grown-ups).

  The rights of young people are violated illegally, the law is not perfect and they are infringed according to international standards. The painful sphere is justice. Justice for young people should take place separately and children must not be judged by the same principles as grown up people. The environment pushes these children to commit crimes and then they are treated beyond any standards. [Non-governmental sector]

- The rights of youth are violated in the social sphere (unemployment, no privileges, etc.)

  If we say that so many things are inaccessible this means that the rights of youth are violated as well. Perhaps the rights are most obviously infringed in the search for employment. [Non-governmental sector]

  The rights of young people are violated in social life. When you are under-age, there should be a state policy, which will support you and be a stimulus before you reach the age and have a stable income. It must help young people in health and education and housing problems. [Non-governmental sector]

  Many respondents consider that there is no policy, from the state, NGOs or international organizations, to involve young people in social life and to protect their rights. Others claim that different projects and programs have been
implemented and planned by organizations from different sectors.

• NGOs work with young people (e.g. through training and seminars) to improve the quality of youth participation in social life and protection of their rights.

  We are mainly busy with informal teaching about different issues, including their rights in election and city administration. They are involved in training, seminars, workshops, etc. This is all written in our programmes. [Non-governmental sector]

  We do training and seminars for youth organizations which work with young people. We try to increase the active involvement of youngsters and to lobby the issues with different governmental structures. We always want to involve many youngsters in our trainings. [Non-governmental sector]

• NGOs try to cooperate with each other in order to involve young people in social life.

  As far as the NGO sector is concerned, there is a development fund for children and young people, which finances NGOs working with young people. The fund provides them with a concrete sum every year to increase their activeness and gets them more involved in the youth sphere. [Governmental sector]

• NGOs try to cooperate with government structures in resolving the issue of youth rights.

  The project we are working on is about protecting the rights of young people. Their rights are violated in a legal sense. Young people should not be judged according to principles applied to grown-ups. There are no rehabilitation programs either... [Non-governmental sector]

  We try to increase young people’s motivation to act and we try to lobby the same issues with government structures. [Non-governmental sector]

  Our organization’s position towards the involvement of young people is that they should be given the right to take part in the decision making process. When young people are active, this motivates them to be more involved in decision making, and that is ensured by law. [Non-governmental sector]

• NGOs cooperate with international organizations on issues connected with young people.

  We are involved in the work of the European Youth Forum, which cooperates with the EU and the Council of Europe. The representative of our organization is a member of the European Youth Organization’s advisory council, and has a chance to participate in defining the EU youth policy. [Non-governmental sector]

• International organizations work on the issues of protecting the rights of young people and involving them in social life.

  We had a program about the protection of rights. Several youth centers were opened in the regions with our support. There were sport programmes, a youth media network, etc. Young people gained new skills which they will use in the future... Maia Kurtsikidze

  Respondents consider that the mechanisms by which adults are able to protect their rights are: being actively involved, being informed, NGOs, the Ombudsman’s Office, law courts and self-government for students.

  Respondents also shared their ideas about what can or must...
be done to increase the involvement of young people and to protect their rights in Georgia:

• Learning about about civic responsibilities and rights should start from school age.

  Young people should be prepared at schools and taught their rights. Children should get used to the idea that they are citizens and are obliged to take part in social life. Of course they should know their rights...There are civil obligations as well. In our schools teaching civil rights should be privileged. [Non-governmental sector]

  There are some areas in need of improvement. Teaching civil rights in schools and universities is very important for adults. They should know their rights in order to protect them. There are three aspects: knowledge, skills and habits and the attitude towards this issue. [Non-governmental sector]

  Some changes must be made in the education system. For example, human rights should be taught in order to know whom to address when their rights are abrogated, what the constitution is, what crime is, how the government works. All this should be implemented in the education system. [Non-governmental sector]

• Information about their civil responsibilities and rights should be delivered to young people.

  First of all, the level of information campaigns should be higher and should reach court and legislative levels. [Non-governmental sector]

• Adults should be actively involved in the state decision-making process.

  When we speak about involving young people, the most
FOREIGN POLICY

As part of our research, young people were given statements which aimed to look into their attitude towards the country’s foreign policy. The statements concerned relations with NATO and the EU. (See chart)

According to the survey results, young people in their majority think that Georgia should become a member of the EU (83%) and NATO (78%) and agree to take part in NATO peacekeeping missions (65%). However, on the question of foreign military bases in Georgia, opinions are more negative, with 41% being against this.

Today the government of Georgia has set a western course in its policy and continually speaks of joining NATO and the EU. The correlation between regional conflict issues and joining NATO and the EU appears to be quite clear. To the question “Would you agree to postponing the issue of returning South Ossetia and Abkhazia into Georgia if it delays Georgia’s integration with NATO and the EU?” the result is similar for both organizations (See chart).

Most respondents (43%) would not agree at all to setting aside the territorial sovereignty question even for a short time and a further 13% have a similar view. 5% however would fully agree with a postponement of the issue for the sake of integration with NATO and the EU, and 6% show less emphatic agreement with the idea.
CONFIDENCE IN DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS

As a measure of the political mood, we investigated the degrees of confidence of respondents in different organizations. The highest confidence rating is given to political parties (10%) and international organizations (7%). Only 3% of the respondents trust students’ councils and NGOs and 1% have confidence in professional/workers’ unions.

Among those who trust political parties (103 respondents), 71% favor the National Movement, 13% the Christian-Democratic Movement and the remainder prefer the Labor Party (5%).

As far as confidence in international organizations is concerned (67 respondents), the UN leads with 39%, while the EU takes second place (10%) just ahead of UNICEF (UN Children’s Fund - 9%) and NATO (8%).

A section was also devoted to rates of confidence in specific institutions. It appears that young people mostly trust banks (65%), the police (54%) and the president (42%) and other institutions are less favored. (See chart).

It is significant that institutions such as courts, the press, the electoral system, etc. which are considered trustworthy in western countries, do not appear in the top 5 in Georgia.
THE RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In the 1990s, following Georgia’s independence, the question of improving the country’s legislative framework was delayed while the government – mistakenly - tried to adapt old Soviet Union laws to the new reality.

The constitution was adopted in 1995 but even today legislation is not fully re-organized – although far more advanced than it was in the first years of independence. The concept of human rights protection was also finally established but still the population are not clearly informed about it.

Only 51% of the respondents appear to be informed about their legal rights, a result that suggests that our society is not aware of the meaning of ‘rights’ and there are no relevant written documents to study.

Our research also revealed the level of young people’s legal protection and shows that 34% of respondents think that they are fully protected in this area, 42% are partly protected and 16% that they have no legal protection.

The main areas of young people’s rights violation are given as unemployment (41%), freedom of speech (28%) and the right to education (25%). (See chart)

These three issues received more answers than the fourth-placed ‘right to be informed’ (10%) and others: the right to one’s own opinions (freedom of conscience), the right to medical care, the right to vote and the right to demonstrate (8% each).

335 respondents (33%) could not answer this question, which does not mean that they do not feel their rights are violated but rather that, under the influence of many factors, they are unable to specify which of their rights has been violated. In this case the low levels of information and knowledge play a big role.

The next question: “Have you had a legal problem in the last 2 years?” received 91% of negative replies. Less than 1% of respondents in fact mention legal problems.

The issue of free legal services is very important as well. The question “If the service was free, which legal service would you use?” was asked and 51% of young people named ‘private consultations at the office.’ Other respondents would consider the service of a lawyer (23%) and only 10% think a telephone consultation to be a useful legal service.

Moreover, actual cases of use of any form of legal service in the last 3 years were limited to only 9% of the 1000 respondents consulting relatives and friends. If we complete these data with service institutions, it appears that of those who benefited from free legal services (85 respondents), 28% of them addressed a private law firm. The state legal service center and GYLA attracted 15% each, while 7% of respondents addressed NGOs.

More generally, information on free legal services is known to 36% of the 1000 respondents.

Opinions are mixed and mainly negative on the protection of young people’s rights:

• The rights of young people, as well as the term ‘young people’ itself is not defined in the Georgian code. The rights of young people are not distinguished from human rights.
• Young people do not know their rights.
• The rights of young people are violated in the legal process. (They are judged in the same way as grown-ups.)
• The rights of young people are violated in the social sphere. (unemployment, lack of privileges, etc.)

Many respondents consider that state, non-governmental and international organizations have taken the following actions to involve more young people in social life:
• Non-governmental organizations work with young people (training, seminars, etc.) in order to increase their involvement in social life and the protection of their rights (not to be judged as if they were grown-ups).
• Non-governmental organizations try to cooperate with state structures in order to correct the deficiencies in legislation related to young people.
• Non-governmental organizations try to cooperate with international organizations and work on the issues affecting young people.
• International organizations working in the field of youth rights’ protection help to raise the level of young peoples’ involvement in social life.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The survey addresses the issue of discrimination against women, which is still a problem in Georgian society. The question “Are women discriminated against in Georgia?” received positive answers from a large number of young respondents (24%), while a further 21% consider that women suffer partially from discrimination. The most common forms of discrimination include psychological (78%), physical (75%) and sexual (53%) violence.

To find out if women and men have equal status in Georgia, the respondents were asked for their views on appointing women to different positions. The most acceptable position for women appeared to be ‘member of parliament’ (96%). Young people also consider that women can be managers in their working places (89%), as well as presidents (78%) and leader of local community (76%).

In general there is no discrimination of women in Georgia with respect to professional aptitude and young people consider it acceptable to have a woman as a boss at work – a progressive notion.

Attitudes towards discrimination against young women in Georgia is different and there are cases where their rights are violated:
• Violating women's rights in the family (the problem of working, violence, etc.)
• Traditionally women have a modest position in the family and society.
• Women are rarely represented in many structures and positions (e.g. ministries, parliament).
• Women are not recruited to decision-making positions of responsibility.
• Women are judged by their appearance in the work place.

A proportion of respondents consider that there is no state policy on discrimination against women and that gender issues are mainly discussed by NGOs and international organizations. However, several respondents quoted some initiatives implemented by the state in this area:
• Parliament has implemented a policy, introduced by Rusudan Kervalishvili, to eradicate discrimination against women.
• The government have taken measures to prevent sexual violence (e.g. by TV adverts, information, etc.)
• The Department of Sport and Youth of Georgia together with the UN People’s Fund has been conducting training and seminars on “Gender balance and the battle against violence in the family” for the last 3 years.
• There are plans to set minimal quotas in political parties.

According to some respondents, the state policy against the discrimination of women is effective (‘Women get acquainted with their rights with the help of seminars and tell their friends about them.’) while other respondents think that there are no results.

EXPERT OPINIONS

Some of our survey team members consider that discrimination against women does not exist in Georgia and historically such acts of discrimination have never happened in society or in families. Georgian legislation has never differentiated men and women.

In our legislation, there is nothing concrete written that would distinguish men and women from each other. This already excludes discrimination. In 1918 North Ossetians asked who could study at the university. Ivane Javakhishvili answered that everybody could study regardless of nation, religion and sex, and the only condition was knowledge of the Georgian language. The situation is the same today. [Governmental sector]

However, other respondents do not agree with this opinion and say that the subject is taboo. They claim that, from their childhood, women suffer from discrimination in many ways.
• The rights of women are violated in the family (working problem, violence, etc.)

Unfortunately the facts of women discrimination are undeniable and first of all this happens in families. The rights of women are not protected in families. [Governmental sector]

It is said that there are families where women don’t have equal rights and can’t start working [Non-governmental sector]
• Traditionally women have a modest position in the family and society.

We are different people, we admit gender balance, but in practical terms we don’t use it. It’s obvious that historically women have a modest position in the family and society. [Governmental sector]

• Women are rarely represented in many structures and positions (e.g. ministries, parliament).

In many spheres, women are less represented [Governmental sector]

To take the parliament as an example, there are about 7 women there. And in ministries, men have head positions and women are under their command. [Non-governmental sector]
• Women are not recruited to decision-making positions of responsibility.

It’s very difficult to prove that somebody was not given a job because of being female, and this is coming from culture and mentality. Perhaps many women are involved in non-governmental or governmental spheres, but they don’t have decision-making positions. [Non-governmental sector]
• Women are judged by their appearance in the work place.
They are generally discriminated against. When a woman goes to work, she is estimated as a modeler (judged only by her looks) and in this case, her rights can be violated. [Non-governmental sector]

Respondents have also expressed opinions about what can be done to decrease the problems of female discrimination:
- Women must be allowed longer maternity leave. (This will have a positive effect on them, on their children and on the country.)
- Mentalities must be changed in order to solve the problem of violence in the family.

CORRUPTION

Corruption is an issue that has been a subject of discussion for many years. In recent years, several progressive steps have been taken to fight it, but many people believe it has moved to even higher levels although this is not noticeable to ordinary people in everyday life.

The opinions of young people on this issue are interesting, with 48% of the respondents believing that corruption is a widespread phenomenon. (See the chart).

However, when we ask the question “Have you or your family had any experience of corrupt practices in the last year?” only 1% (13 people) give an affirmative answer.

But there are different results when we ask the same question about the last three years and include as corrupt practice making a gift for solving a problem.

The chart below shows the degrees of perceived corruption in different spheres. (see chart):

INFORMATION

Different opinions were expressed about the accessibility of programmes of non-governmental and government organizations. Generally, respondents consider that in the 21st century information is mainly accessible through the Internet. But besides the Internet, NGOs and government organizations use other sources of information:
- Private contact with research groups
- Using the contact lists of research groups and sending e-mails
- Using booklets/brochures and fliers etc.
- Press-conferences for mass appeal

It’s worth mentioning that some respondents consider information barely accessible for young people and they call for this issue to be improved:
Information is not concentrated in one place.
Spreading information in the regions is possible only by youth services.
Information is not systematized.
The mass media are not interested in supporting NGOs’ activities connected with youth.

MILITARY SERVICE

Under the Soviet Union, military service was compulsory. But the first ten years after independence were marked by a chaotic situation in the military, which started with civil war and continued against a backdrop of military rebellions and a lack of planning in military formations.

The last sign of instability in the military system was the planned military conflict in 2008. It ended in failure and conveyed the feeling among the population that the signs of instability still remain in the military system.

The issue of avoiding military service has been a hot question since Georgia became independent. To the question “Do young people try to avoid military service?” 52% of respondents answered positively. Such an attitude can be linked to the fast-growing speed of globalization and consumption; in the modern era of globalization, the traditional meaning of ‘patriotism’ is no longer valid and in addition there exist a wide range of interesting prospects and directions for young people to follow.

The reasons given by our respondents for avoiding military service are discussed here.

The majority of those young people who avoid military service quote the possibility of war as the main reason (48%). But here, one factor must be taken into account: the bad experience of ethnic conflicts in 1990s has been partly forgotten by young people and if they had been asked this question before August 2008, perhaps the threat of war would not even be among the answers. The events of 2008, which unfortunately caused a large number of mortalities, added one more negative precedent to the military system and are responsible for the importance of ‘the threat of a new war’ as a reason for avoiding military service.

The second reason named by respondents is poor living conditions (20%). This means that, despite many attempts over the last few years to show that living conditions are improving, large parts of society are still not convinced.

For 44% of our respondents, military service is unacceptable because of the military discipline and Command structure, which don’t correspond to their lifestyle.

The concept of professional armed forces and an alternative military service seem more attractive: 74% consider a professional army as a positive thing and 20% are neutral, while 64% judge an alternative military service to be a positive innovation and 26% are neutral.

Opinions of young people on military service call-up

Negative

- The events of August 2008 caused increased distrust of those in charge of the army.
- Serving in the army is not considered to be in a good tone.
- There is a common fear that army living conditions are harsh (hunger, cold, etc.).

Positive

- There is reassuring information about improved conditions in the army (in food and living conditions) compared to previous years.
• A planned reform, which intends to form an army of professionals, gives young people the possibility to choose this as a valid career.
• The military accessories are often used in clothes, that means military service is popular.
• In the respondents’ opinion, in order to interest young people in joining the army, the following measures must be taken:
  • Awakening patriotic feelings about their obligation towards the country;
  • Informing youth (for example in the higher classes at school, students should get acquainted with conditions, rules and life in the army);
  • Improving living conditions in the army;
  • Motivating young people;
  • Marketing the army as a prestigious service (for example, only those with university degrees go into the army).
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