

Project Final Narrative Report

Public Movement Multinational Georgia

The name of the program: "Embrace Diversity – Respect for All"

Grant number: 2012-1054

Result summary/impact statement:

- Realized workshop in Bakuriani entirely dedicated to ethnic Armenian community in Georgia. Workshop hosted the civil societal, media, local governmental representatives as well as opinion leaders (total 15 participants) with ethnic Armenian background residing in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli and Adjara regions as well as in Tbilisi.
- Realized workshop in Bakuriani entirely dedicated to ethnic Azerbaijanian community in Georgia. Workshop hosted the civil societal, media, local governmental representatives as well as opinion leaders (total 15 participants) with ethnic Azerbaijanian background residing in Kvemo Kartli, Shida kartli, Kakheti and Tbilisi.
- Realized workshop in Bakuriani entirely dedicated to the representatives (total 15 participants) of different ethnic minority communities such as Russian, Kurdish, Assyrian, Ossetian, German, Greek, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Jewish and Ukrainian communities residing in all over the country.
- Developed reports: 1) highlighting the situation of ethnic Armenian community; 2) highlighting the situation of ethnic Azerbaijanian community; 3) highlighting the situation of ethnic Russian, Kurdish, Assyrian, Ossetian, German and Ukrainian communities residing in all over the country.
- Developed report on LGBTIs.
- Conducted 1 day Conference "Multiethnic Georgia for Cohesive Social Advancement" in Tbilisi
- Conducted 1 Day "Equality Forum" in Bazaleti
- Published Conference report
- Published "Equality Forum" report

Background:

The action implemented by the PMMG has been specially designed to promote enhanced protection and promotion of minorities' rights and interests in Georgia in line with encouraging initiation of new state integration policies as well as civic action better addressing the genuine needs and constraints of minority groups. To this end the project has embarked on the realization of the different set of objectives falling in harmony within the very spirit of the action including: a) gathering qualitative data on the perception of the main problems and ways for their solution from ethnic minority communities; b) facilitation of communication between ethnic minority communities with the respective stakeholders particularly newly elected Government; c) enhancement of the perception of the respective stakeholders particularly newly elected Government about the genuine needs and constraints ethnic minorities are facing in a course of civic

integration; d) delivery of assistance in strengthening the capacities of the major interested parties particularly newly elected Government to better formulate pro integration and civic cohesion oriented policies in order to deliver the comprehensive action towards the solution of the persisting problems minorities are facing in a course of assertion of civic, political, electoral, social, cultural and economic rights; e) Strengthening the role of civil society in advocating, sensitizing and lobbying the issues, problems and challenges LGBTIs are facing in Georgia.

Therefore, for the purpose of attainment of the stated goal and objectives the project has conducted needs assessment related workshops in Bakuriani; developed the report on LGBTIs; organized the conference "Multiethnic Georgia for Cohesive Social Advancement"; organized the "Equality Forum"; developed and published Conference report as well as "Equality Forum" report.

Activities:

The entire project implementation phase has been divided into two main parts: part 1: project preparatory phase and part 2: conduction of the main set of project prescribed activities. Therefore the whole structure of the presented report is designed according to this approach.

Part 1: project preparatory phase

For workshop conduction purposes:

As has been envisaged by the project in the preparatory phase of the action the project team has devoted considerable attention to the realization of logistic related works in order to timely and effectively conduct needs assessment related workshops in Bakuriani.

To this end the project team carried out respective informational campaigns in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Shida Kartli and Adjara regions as well as in Tbilisi in order to attract workshop participants (the project team has called 1 visit in each region). Local partner organizations as well as minority community leaders have been widely engaged in the informational campaign to outreach the targeted audience.

Through the careful review of the potential applicants the project has identified:

- a) 15 civil societal, media, local governmental representatives as well as opinion leaders with ethnic Armenian background residing in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Adjara regions as well as in Tbilisi;
- b) 15 civil societal, media, local governmental representatives as well as opinion leaders with ethnic Azerbaijanian background residing in Kvemo Kartli, Shida kartli and Kakheti regions and Tbilisi;
- c) 15 representatives of different ethnic minority communities such as Russian, Kurdish, Assyrian, Ossetian, German, Greek, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Jewish and Ukrainian residing in all over the country.

In total the project identified and selected 45 participants assigned into 3 separate workshop groups who have eventually participated in the project organized workshops in Bakuriani.

Moreover, the project attracted 4 facilitators (Mikheil Aidinov, Giorgi Geguchadze, Koba Chopliani and Girogi Gugushvili) who eventually facilitated the proceedings of the workshops. In addition, at this stage project invited facilitators developed the agenda of the workshop and in conjunction with the project team has drafted a questionnaire for the focus group participants for the conduction of the workshop in high quality manner.

In addition, the project attracted highly qualified experts (Presenters) (Giorgi Gugushvili – PBG, Talk Show “Our Yard”; Izabela Osipova – The Center on Tolerance at the Public Defender’s Office of Georgia; Kakha Gabunia – Expert, specializing in education and linguistic issues; Shalva Tabatadze - Center of Civic Integration and Multiethnic Relations; Giorgi Sordia - European Center on Minorities Issues and Koba Chopliani – Coordinator, Council of Ethnic Minorities at the Public Defender’s Office of Georgia) in minority issues who have carefully studied the workshop findings and developed the reports which were eventually presented on the conference.

For conference conduction purposes:

The project team has outreached a wider array of stakeholders to ensure their attendance on as well as direct engagement in the proceedings of the conference. To this end the draft agenda has been developed (encompassing the preliminary list of speakers) and communicated with the respective parties (including the respective ministries of the executive branch of the government, legislative organ, expert society, political parties, Public Defender’s Office, foreign diplomatic missions, international organizations, civil societal organizations). In addition, upon the completion of preliminary communication with the respective parties the project has developed the final agenda of the conference and distributed it with the invitation cards. As has been previously envisaged by the action the project team has outreached and invited respective parties from Armenia (Vladimer karapetian, expert, Suren Mkrtichian, NGO “Hayasa” and Gagik Avakyan, NGO “Cooperation and Democracy) and Azerbaijan (Larisa Reihrudel, Charitable Public Unity “Jewish Women of Azerbaijan and Afa Iskanderova, Polish Community of Azerbaijan) to attend the conference. Moreover, the project has produced the banner for the conference to ensure publicity of the project as well as Dutch funding.

For forum conduction purposes:

For the purposes of conduction “Equality Forum” the project team has carried out active communication with the partner organizations in Armenia (Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK)) and Azerbaijan (Free LGBT) in order to secure the representation of Armenian and Azerbaijanian experts in the project organized “Equality Forum”.

To this end, 1 Armenian and 1 Azerbaijani expert (Mamikon Hovsepian, Vugar Adigozalov) have been identified and invited to attend the Forum as well as make presentations regarding the current status of protection of LGBTI’s rights in the respective countries.

Several informational meetings (7 working meetings) were held during the preparatory period of the project. The leadership team has gone through the consultations with organizations working on the issues regarding LGBT, as well as with the representatives of human rights protecting organizations.

Upon the completion of communication with the stakeholders and potential speakers the project has drawn the final list of presenters as well as developed the final agenda of the “Equality Forum” and distributed them among the participants with the invitation cards.

Moreover, the project has also produced the banner for the Forum as well as carried out necessary logistics related works to rent a conference hall for the conduction of the event.

Finally, in the preparatory phase of the project the team has approached the representatives of LGBTI’s rights protecting organizations in Georgia including “Heinrich Boll foundation”, “Identity”, “LGBT Georgia” etc. to discuss the agenda of the “Equality Forum” to be organized within the scope of the proposed action.

The working meetings have been held to develop presentational materials, identify key issues for discussion as well as key speakers.

Part 2: conduction of the main set of project prescribed activities

1. Conduction of needs assessment related workshops in Bakuriani

Primary objective of the proposed set of activity was to ascertain and assess the specific needs and constraints minorities are facing in Georgia particularly in the local areas in order to develop clear vision of the eventual steps (policy options) to be undertaken towards the eradication of the emerged shortcomings.

To this end the project conducted three, two day long needs assessment related workshops in Bakuriani in February.

The first workshop has been entirely dedicated to ethnic Armenian community in Georgia. Workshop hosted the civil societal, media, local governmental representatives as well as opinion leaders (total 15 participants) with ethnic Armenian background residing in Samtskhe-Javakheti (8 people), Kvemo Kartli (1) and Adjara (2) regions as well as in Tbilisi (4).

The second workshop has been entirely dedicated to ethnic Azerbaijanian community in Georgia. Workshop hosted the civil societal, media, local governmental representatives as well as opinion leaders (total 15 participants) with ethnic Azerbaijanian background residing in Kvemo Kartli (10 people), Shida kartli (1), Kakheti (2) and Tbilisi 2).

The third workshop has been entirely dedicated to the representatives (total 15 participants) of different ethnic minority communities such as Russian, Kurdish, Assyrian, Ossetian, German, Greek, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Jewish and Ukrainian communities residing in all over the country (2 people from Samtskhe-Javakheti region, 2 from Adjara and 10 from Tbilisi).

The workshops have been facilitated by the project invited 4 facilitators (Mikheil Aidinov, Giorgi Geguchadze, Koba Chopliani and Girogi Gugushvili) who eventually facilitated the proceedings of the workshops.

The methodological part of the workshop has been designed in a way to allow the full coverage of the needs and constraints minorities are facing in the respective areas of the country. Therefore, the first part (day) of the workshop was dedicated to the identification and discussion of the problems, needs, constraints as well as challenges minorities are facing in the local areas regarding the protection and promotion of own rights including social, economic, cultural, political and electoral while the second part (day) of the event has been entirely dedicated to the identification of the necessary measures to effectively address the challenges and therefore development of the specific set of recommendations.

At the end of the event the workshop facilitators identified 29 most active participants out of the 45 workshop participants who eventually attended the project organized conference.

It has to be underlined that the findings of the workshops have been widely shared with the project invited experts who have collected, studied and analyzed all the factual materials of the workshop and developed the reports on the situation of the specific ethnic minority group in Georgia.

The reports have been entirely based on the findings as revealed in a course of conduction of the workshop and included two major parts: a) needs assessment and b) set of recommendations to introduce changes in the field. Therefore, 3 separate reports have been developed before the commencement of the Conference: 1) report highlighting the situation of ethnic Armenian community; 2) report highlighting the situation of ethnic Azerbaijanian community; 3) report highlighting the situation of Russian, Kurdish, Assyrian, Ossetian, German, Greek, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Jewish and Ukrainian communities residing in all over the country.

2. Development of the report on LGBTIs

The project has attracted 2 highly qualified Georgian experts (Davit-Michel Shubladze “LGBT Georgia” and Shorena Gabunia “Identity”) specializing in LGBTI’s rights and having in depth knowledge in this particular area of human rights field.

For the purpose of development of the respective reports the experts reviewed domestic, regional and international mechanisms available for the protection of LGBTs rights; studied and analyzed best international practice in the delivery of protective measures to this vulnerable group; studied and analyzed LGBTs current situation in Georgia: needs, constraints, problems, challenges, immediate interests etc.; provided concrete recommendations on how to better address LGBTs needs and interests in the country and thus promoted tolerance towards their private and professional activities.

3. Organization of the conference:

1 day conference "Multiethnic Georgia for Cohesive Social Advancement" was held in Tbilisi with the attendance and participation of up to 120 guests representing minority communities, state authorities, diplomatic missions, international organizations, expert society and media as well as representatives of Armenian and Azerbaijani expert societies.

Opening ceremony of the conference have been led by **Arnold Stepanian** – Public Movement Multinational Georgia, Chairman, **Pieter Jan Langenberg**, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Netherlands to Georgia, **Paata Zakareishvili**, State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration and Ucha Nanushvili, Public Defender of Georgia.

The first session of the conference has been moderated by Ucha Nanushvili, Public Defender of Georgia.

The first session of the conference has been devoted to the presentations made by the following project invited presenters:

Topic: "The problems, needs and challenges ethnic Azerbaijani communities are facing in Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli and Kakheti regions, as well as in the Capital". **Reporter:** **Giorgi Gugushvili**, TV anchor, Talk Show "Our Yard", Public Broadcaster. **Co-reporter:** **Sabina Talibova**, Democratic Union "Mtredi"

Topic: "The problems, needs and challenges ethnic Armenian communities are facing in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli and Adjara regions, as well as in the Capital". **Reporter:** **Shalva Tabatadze**, chairman Center for Civic Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations. **Co-reporter:** **Mikheil Avakyan**, Armenian National Congress of Georgia

Topic: "The problems, needs and challenges various ethnic minority communities are facing in Georgia". **Reporter:** **Koba Chopliani**, Ethnic Minorities' Council under aegis of the Public Defender's Office, Coordinator

Followed by the presentations made by the project attracted experts the conference has offered the space for presentations to the representatives of civil society:

Topic: "Current status of the protection of specific rights, as well as civic integration of ethnic minorities in Georgia: new trends, problems and future vision". **Reporters:** **Giorgi Khutsishvili**, International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN) (*security challenges and ethnic minorities*); **Giorgi Sordia**, European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) (*regional and political integration*); **Kakha Gabunia**, expert in the field of education and language (*education and state language*); **Bella Osipova**, Tolerance Center under aegis of the Public Defender's Office (*media and access to information*).

Kindly find the reports made by the presenters provided in the conference report published within the scope of the present project.

The second session of the conference has been moderated by **Ketevan Khutsishvili**, "Open Society – Georgia" Foundation, Executive Director. Welcoming remarks have been made by **Bidget Brink**, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy to Georgia.

The second session has been dedicated to explore the “Current practice of protection and promotion of ethnic minorities’ rights from the scope of public sector: problems, challenges and future vision”. To this end presentations have been delivered by: *Paata Zakareishvili*, State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration; *Ucha Nanuashvili*, Public Defender of Georgia; *Guram Odisharia*, Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia; *Giorgi Margvelashvili*, Minister of Science and Education of Georgia; *Manana Komladze*, Parliament of Georgia; *Sozar Subari*, Minister of Probation, Correction and Legal Assistance of Georgia; *Zakaria Kutsnashvili*, head of the Parliamentary Fraction “Georgian Dream”; *Davit Usupashvili*, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia; *Nino Revishvili*, Ministry of Science and Education of Georgia; *Rati Bragadze*, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs.

Some interesting findings can be observed from the speeches delivered by the invited guests:

David Usupashvili: “all the states are destined to failure if the rights of concrete individuals are not guaranteed despite his/her color, race, religious belief and ethnicity; therefore, it was almost impossible in case of Georgia to ensure proper protection of rights of minority groups when the rights of all citizens residing in the country have been massively violated; the newly elected government will approach the problem accordingly – first of all the individual rights should be respected and guaranteed; one of the biggest challenges is the inadequate participation of minority groups in decision making frameworks on both central and local levels. This problem should be eradicated; our primary objective is to promote and ensure adequate and full-fledged representation of minority groups in the legislative branch of the government. If this is the case then neither majoritarian nor proportional system existing in the country does not comply with the persisting challenges. This should be changed and to this end new reform should be initiated; all political parties should attract locally respected individuals – this would have very positive impact on political process leading to the genuine decentralization of the political system; decentralization process should be rested on the following pillars: local population should enjoy the ultimate right to have influence over the local political process by directly engaging in the decision of locally important issues – if this will take place then other problems will be easily resolved; Decentralization process should be supported and further promoted enabling better solution of local problems”.

Paata Zakareishvili: “the major challenge before the Government of Georgia is the issue of integration as far as numerous problems with this regard are still persisting and left without solution; the major problem is the lack of sense of full citizenship among national minorities; they feel comfortable within individual but not state identity; we should encourage the conduct of such state policy which would assist minority groups to make successful transition from individual to state identity; the national concept and action plan on integration need further improvements; as is well known the action plan expires on 2014. Therefore, our challenge is to develop the new one which would entirely encompass the persisting needs, challenges, constraints and interests on national minorities in the document; therefore, we call upon everyone to closely cooperate with the ministry in the development of the new action plan in order to make it more effective and reliable.”

Sozar Subari: “we will manage to build such a state in which the rights of all citizens will be duly protected and guaranteed, all will be the equal before the laws; all will equally participate in building of the state, and this state will protect and promote diversity as a treasure enabling its full-fledged representation in world commonwealth; we have to build such a state in which different ethnicities will not only coexist peacefully and tolerate each other but also contribute to the creation of common culture in which different cultural unites will support, promote and strengthen others”.

Manana Komladze: “representatives of national minorities should enjoy the right to have full access to education not only in their native but also state language which would promote their employment opportunities in state sector and thus limit the prospect of migration abroad; would be better and expedient if more representatives of national minorities would be more represented in public and political domains including executive and legislative branches of the government; national minorities should be active and equally participate in the political process on both central and local levels.”

Ucha Nanuashvili: “the previous government has undertaken certain measures towards the integration of national minorities, however, there are much more to be done to ensure genuine integration of minority communities; what is needed is to ensure genuine opposite to superficial integration in order to promote the sense of equal citizenship among minority groups; the role of engagement of national minorities in public and political process should be encouraged and further promoted”.

Giorgi Margvelashvili: “we are living in reality in which we should simultaneously act as the citizens of Georgia and part of the global world; this is utterly responsible duty in line with the promotion of our diversity”.

Guram Odisharia: “ we support all the initiatives regarding national minorities”.

Nino Revishvili: ”ministry of science and education will support and further encourage the implementation of all programs for national minority groups including the promotion of integration, learning of state and native languages etc.; the programs directly related to elementary education are utterly important to be carried out and further supported for children belonging to national minorities; the program related to learning of state language should also further promoted and supported despite some shortcomings and inconsistencies which have emerged during its implementation”.

Rati Bregadze:”we have launched the program aimed at the enhancement and promotion of electoral culture among the youths as well as sportsmen belonging to national minority groups; we are organizing youth festivals with the direct engagement of minority youths; some books are being translated into minority languages; currently we are running the project within the framework of which the book “the guest and the host” will be translated into Armenian language, DVD version of the book will be distributed in high schools; the radio show is being prepared which will host the journalists representing ethnic minority groups’.

Zakaria Kutsnashvili: “two main challenges can be identified regarding the promotion of full-fledged civic integration of national minorities – self-governance and elections; I do deeply believe that for the promotion of diversity as well as integration participation of national minorities in self-governance is utterly important; political parties should take decisive steps to ensure the translation and wider dissemination of their party programs among minority groups to promote higher degree of informed choice among the local voters; publication of bilingual election bullets is also important and this practice should be widely applied in any elections”.

In addition the conference offered the space for all ethnic minority community representatives as well as the representatives of invited foreign missions, CSO, international organizations to express own views regarding the major topic of the conference.

At the end of the conference the main conclusions have been drawn by *Kakha Gogolashvili*, Director of EU Studies, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies summarizing the results of the conference as well as reviewing those possibilities to better formulate and test new models of action in the field of civil integration of ethnic minority communities.

4. Organization of the “Equality Forum”

1 day “Equality Forum” as an open session has been organized on 24 February, 2013, at Bazaleti lake hotel, hosting the representatives of LGBTIs in Georgia, Public Defender’s Office, human right defending organizations including human rights defenders protecting the rights of LGBTs, international organizations, foreign missions, media as well as respective state structures dealing with and responsible for the protection and promotion of rights of vulnerable groups, particularly: Public Movement Multinational Georgia”, “Multiethnic Resource center”, “LGBT Georgia”, “Identity”, representative from the Dutch Embassy, “Public Defender Apparatus”, “Women Fund”, “Tolerance house”, “Women’s initiative supporting group”, “Human Rights Priorities”, “UN Aids”, “Public defender Office”, “Article 42 of the Constitution”, journalists, Youth Association “DRONI”, “Youth for peace and Equality”, “GYLA – Georgian Young Lawyers association”, “Tanadgoma”, “Tolerance center”, “Trans Georgia”, “Civic Education and Democracy development Center”, “Adjara Minorities”, “Civic Initiatives and development supporting Agency”, “Students international initiative”, “Association of young Journalists ‘New Vision’”, “Georgian Youth Center for Cooperation and Tolerance”, etc.

The forum itself has been divided into two parts: the first one has overlooked the problems of LGBT in Georgia, on the local level, while the second part has revealed the problems on International Scale.

The first part of the conference was opened by Shorena Gabunia, the representative of LGBT organization “Identity” with the report on domestic situation of LGBT people in Georgia. She has generally overlooked the mechanisms available for the protection of this very particular vulnerable group and the current issues that these people face in everyday life. The idea of gender inequality among Georgian Citizens and LGBT community was highlighted during the speech of Eka Aghdgomelashvili, the director of “Women’s initiative supporting group”. The speaker has pointed the vulnerable rights, such as the law about personal information that is not correctly used during the employment, education acceptance, health care, etc. She has also raised the problem of shelter, which the representatives of LBT face today. Ana Rekhviashvili from the LGBT organization “Identity” has mentioned the activities and strategies of NGOs working on this very particular issue. According to her words, Organization “Identity” since 2010 has been oriented on strengthening the community, promoting civic education, advocacy politics and researches.

The organization has held more than 20 lectures for university students, regarding the issues, connected to LGBT rights in Georgia. Ms. Rekhviashvili mentioned the problem of teachers’ inappropriate reactions towards the representatives of LGBT group amongst their students. One of the main topics, “Identity” works on is combating hate speech towards LGBT people. Natia Gvianishvili from “Trans Georgia” has talked about the human rights of Transgender people. She

has retold the research concerning 15 transgender person, and the issues they have faced. For example: Physical Assault, Physiological assault, harassment and assault during the medical and legal procedures, problems caused during employment and request of shelter. In addition to the mentioned above, Sopo Benashvili from the Public Defender's Office has specified the attitude towards the crime concerning LGBT people. Overcoming sense of fear, only one out of the hundred victims, writes a complaint. Sopo has also specified the vital problem of hate Speech, as well as raised the problem of violence monitoring, that is not yet developed in Georgia. One of the Representatives of Women's Fund, Mariam Gorgisheli was talking about Local Feminist Philanthropy development and the allocated grants.

The second part of the forum was oriented on international mechanisms regarding the LGBT people rights. In this very concrete part of the forum the role of Strasbourg Court and UN Human Rights Declaration played a significant role during the speaker's report. Such rights as unisex marriage, child adoption, issues that are caused with the blood donation, etc. Davit-Michael has spoken about international best international practice in the delivery of protective measures to this particular vulnerable group, LGBT people.

The forum has also been attended by Armenian and Azerbaijani experts, Mamikon Hovsepian and Vugar Adigozalov, who have shared their knowledge and experience to the Forum participants regarding the situation of LGBTIs in Armenia and Azerbaijan together with the silenced reality and facts. The experts have presented concrete recommendations to the Georgian stakeholders on how to better approach the issue of LGBTI's for the purpose of their enhanced protection and encouragement.

The agenda of the Forum has been designed in a way allowing the comprehensive understanding of the issue as well as elaboration of the preventive steps towards the eradication of the problem and constraints LGBTIs are facing in the country.

The Forum has been commenced by plenary session that has allowed the participants to express their own vision regarding the persisting problems LGBT are facing in traditional societies like Georgia (as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan). The discussion has been followed by the conduction of group workshops. The participants were divided into two groups, where they had to come up with the concrete ideas to challenge the issue, as well as have deepened the understanding of debatable questions. The first group was oriented on the local LGBT issues: impunity for crime against LGBT people, discrimination, and hate speech. The cases that had happened in Georgia in couple of last years have been overlooked and the possible strategies discussed. The second group was discussing international strategies and mechanisms for protecting LGBT rights as well as brainstorming the issues and problems on the international scale.

In general the Forum has offered the significant space for sharing the ideas, experience, exchanging information and elaboration of the collective vision towards the solution of the problem and constraints LGBT are facing in the country.

The Forum has been facilitated by Khatuna Samnidze, well known human rights activist and the project coordinator of Heinrich Boll Foundation, who has demonstrated readiness as well as dedication towards the protection and promotion of rights of the mentioned vulnerable group.

5. Publication of the Conference report

The project developed and published the Conference report encompassing the speeches delivered by the presenters as well as the recommendations for change as aired in a course of proceeding of the event. The report has been published in English and Georgian languages.

6. Publication of the “Equality Forum” report

The project developed and published Forum report encompassing the report on the protective measures of LGBTIs in Georgia as developed by 2 Georgia experts as well as the summary of the views and recommendations put forth by the “Equality Forum” participants. The report was published in English and Georgian languages.

General observation / Conclusions:

Taking into account the preparatory phase of the conference as well as the extent of stakeholders’ engagement in its proceedings following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Demonstrated wider interests on the part of the stakeholders towards the problems, needs, constraints, interests as well as challenges characteristic to ethnic minority communities in Georgia can be perceived as a higher level trust newly elected government can enjoy in a process of addressing minorities’ issues. There has been a clear sign and indication that such meetings can result in the attainment of concrete tangible outcome;
2. The extent of participation of the representatives of the respective state bodies in the proceedings of the conference has been unprecedented high;
3. The list of the problems as well as ideas discussed and deliberated on the conference has been rich, multifaceted and comprehensive;
4. Organization such a multi-party gathering has been utterly important as well as timely in order to allow the representatives of different ethnic minority communities in Georgia state their own problems, needs, constraints, interests and challenges as well as get informed with the similar issues other minorities are facing in the country. Moreover, enabling the representatives of different minority communities to share the ideas and personal views in line with the encouragement of direct communication will most probably lay the solid ground for the unification and consolidation of their effort for the attainment of the stated goal and objectives, that is the higher degree of rights protection as well as enhanced degree of realization of own social, economic, cultural and other related rights and interests.
5. Remarks made by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands have been widely applauded and shared by the conference participants. According to his observation the problem related to ethnic minorities are global by its very nature. Even Europe is facing

similar type of problems despite the presence of the available state policies and mechanisms. Georgia's strive towards European integration is highly defined by its readiness and concrete move to unify and integrate countries population. Therefore, its European future is entirely rested on the inside country integration process.

6. State Minister of Reintegration has pointed out that whole national identity should not oppose and fall in conflict with the essence of ethnic identity; on the contrary, the more satisfied and developed the ambition of one nation, the easier it becomes to share others assertions and interests.
7. Public Defender of Georgia made an interesting observation according to which it should not be allowed to divide the nation into first and second sort citizens.
8. According to the findings shared by the representatives of civic society it turned out that the representation of ethnic minorities in public structures is limited. Moreover, apart from own distinctive features and problematic, ethnic minorities are also facing the problems and challenges bearing whole national character. Among such problems are: a) problems with education (inadequate access to education), professional development of educators and teachers, school books, vocational programs and courses, access to higher education; b) inadequate access to theatres and movies; c) inadequately developed printed press and other means of media; d) underdeveloped civic sector; e) problems directly related to the youths including their employment, engagement in sports and public and civic affairs etc. f) inadequately developed trade unions.
9. There are some support programs and projects specially designed for ethnic minority communities. However, the degree of their publicity as well as communication with the respective stakeholders is not satisfactory.
10. Some ethnic minority communities are especially experiencing gender imbalance.
11. Proper realization of linguistic rights in judiciary is still persisting; the problems still persist in communication with revenue service; challenges are faced in agricultural sector, especially in land registration area.
12. Some constraints are still encountered in a process of assertion of cultural identity and assumption of self-governance; the same logic applies to the promotion of cultural values belonging to ethnic minority communities.

Recommendations:

- The state initiated programs should become more effective;
- Access to education for ethnic minorities should become wider and comprehensive in line with the further development and promotion of the following areas: development of state language learning programs, pre-schooling education, promotion of bilingual learning, development and further strengthening of school programs;
- Widening the extent of legislative engagement and Parliamentary participation of ethnic minorities;
- Integration process should acquire genuine character and concentrate on needs based analysis of the emerging problems; additional effort should be undertaken to enhance the

trust among the different ethnicities residing in the country utterly important for the consolidation of the whole state as an multiethnic country;

- Additional measures should be applied to improve the support to the means of media; more information should be provided in minorities languages; the state media support policy should become more vivid, active and result oriented; additional measures should be applied by the Public Broadcaster to provide information as well as developed programs in minority languages;
- Civil societal sector should be offered further assistance; cooperation between capital and locally based civil societal organizations should be uphold and further promoted;
- The strategy of civic integration of ethnic minorities should be review and revised in line with reflection of emerged and newly developed needs, interests and challenges minorities are facing in the country;
- Wider promotion of minorities' interests, views and opinions in the development of electoral reform (including the adoption of regional/proportional electoral system) as well as in the process of promotion of decentralization and local self-governance reform; promotion of wider engagement of ethnic minority communities in the locally available decision making frameworks;
- The problems and challenges faced by ethnic minority communities are different and should be studied and address separately: for example, Polish, Ukrainians, Czechs and other minorities are having problems directly related to the lack of the enough space for gathering; extreme poverty is observed inside Roma community; survival of own language is problematic for Udes, Khists and Kurds; the issue of protection of cultural inheritance and promotion of work of culture centers is utterly important and sensitive for Jewish community;
- The problems directly related to ethnic minority groups should be divided into different layers and consequently discussed within the following thematic frames: a) problems having a whole national character – democracy shortage, social hardship, unemployment, social and economic underdevelopment; b) problems having a regional character – infrastructure, employment, participation in local self-governance, media and communications; c) problems characteristic to ethnic minority communities – state language, civic engagement, migration flow; d) problems related to small ethnic groups.

