



### **3. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES:**

In the reporting period, PMMG team conducted the following activities as envisaged by the project:

#### **a. Setting up the CSOs**

In the reporting period, PMMG team continued providing of support to participants of the project willing to set up a CSO. The team was in touch with several participants from Akhalkalaki, Tsalka and Ninotsminda who either individually or in cooperation with other participants of the project intended/intend to register an organization.

The team has paid several visits to target municipalities and provided on-site consultancy to project participants on the issues related to setting up or operating a CSO. In particular, the visits took place with the following order:

- Akhalkalaki: 26-27 January, 2015 and 16-17 February, 2015
- Ninotsminda: 28-29 January, 2015 and 18-19 February, 2015
- Tsalka: 22 February, 2015

In the rest period, the project team members were communicating with the participants through phone and Internet to check and comment on the documents, etc.

The legal consultancy provided to start-ups were mostly related to definition and formulation of the specific organizational goals that appeared especially challenging for them (due to language barrier, etc.). Participants also needed assistance for the desining organizational structure, defining functions of the governing bodies, drafting statutes, collection respective data and supplementary documents required for registration, etc.

As a result, a group of participants from Ninotsminda has registered a CSO “Javakheti Youth Choses Integration” and have set up a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/772114306211734/>), while one organization in Tsalka and one in Akhalkalaki are currently in a process of registration.

During the field trips, PMMG team has visited already functioning CSOs participating in the project or individually met with their leaders (in case of organizations which do not have their own offices). PMMG leadership has discussed with them current challenges existing in the region, and has also observed their daily work to understand better their particular needs and constraints. In most cases, difficulties have been revealed related to the absence of appropriate technical equipment, office space, and qualified human resources that significantly hamper activity of the organizations.

#### **b. Development of the project proposals**

In line with provision of legal consultancy, PMMG team was also regularly informing participants about open competitions and calls for proposals announced by accredited diplomatic missions and various donors operating in Georgia. In addition, the team has

also provided guidance to some participants in the process of drafting the project proposals, and has commented on the text before it was submitted to donor.

The following projects were submitted to various donors in the reporting period and after it, namely:

- Project “Promoting environmental NGOs and their activities to ensure environmental education in Javakheti – trainings for secondary school teachers and open air lessons for pupils” by Javakheti Healthy Society (Ninotsminda) – submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia (approved)
- Project “Promotion of Healthy Lifestyle” by Javakheti Healthy Society (Ninotsminda) – submitted to the LEPL “Children and Youth Development Fund” functioning under aegis of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia (refused)
- Informational Campaign “Way to Europe” by NGO “Civic Education for Legal State” (Akhalkalaki) – submitted to the Eurasia Partnership Foundation (refused)
- Project “Informed Engagement for Change” - Raising awareness of ethnic minority communities in Samtskhe-Javakheti region about the essence, implications and benefits of the “National Concept as well as Action Plan for Tolerance and Civic Integration of Georgia for 2014-2020” by Civic Development Association “Future Corps” (Akhalkalaki) – submitted to the US Embassy in Tbilisi (refused at administration check due to incomplete project package)
- Project “Charming Highland” by coalition of NGOs, including NGO “Open Borders” (Akhalkalaki) – submitted to Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Program (EaPTC) (put on reserve list)
- Project “Strong Media for Informed and Integrated Javakheti” by NGO “Open Borders” (Akhalkalaki) – submitted to the US Embassy in Tbilisi (waiting for the results)
- Project “Organizational Development of the NGO “Open Borders” for the Integration of Javakheti region” by NGO “Open Borders” (Akhalkalaki) – submitted to the Czech Embassy in Tbilisi within the framework of Development Cooperation Program (small scale local projects - waiting for the results)
- Partnership Initiative for the Support of Local Media by NGO “Open Borders” (Akhalkalaki) – submitted to the RMSI program operated by IREX (approved as program partner)
- Project “Rainbow of Cultures” by NGO “Civic Education for Legal State” (Akhalkalaki) – submitted to the EUD (refused)
- Project “Young Poets of Javakheti” by an initiative group composed of the project participants (Akhalkalaki) – submitted within mini-grants program announced by the Caucasian House (refused)
- Project “Enhancing Cultural Cooperation between Javakheti and Gyumri” by NGO “Future Corps” (Akhalkalaki) – submitted to the EUD
- Project “In a Pure Heart - Pure Nature” by NGO “Javakheti Youth Choses Integration” (established within the framework of current project) – submitted to

- LEPL “Children and Youth Development Fund” functioning under aegis of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia (waiting for the results)
- Project “Promotion of Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Tsalka” by Center for Civic Education and Integration (Tsalka) – submitted to Eurasia Partnership Foundation (waiting for the results)

Some participants have also communicated and consulted with other donors and are currently working on the development of proposals.

In line with this, some more initiatives were either launched or joined by project participants in order to advocate for the solution of locally acute issues. This particularly includes but is not limited to the realization of the following campaigns:

- Ecological Campaign launched by NGO “Healthy Society of Javakheti” which includes conduction of an instruction for school teachers on the topic “How to conduct a lesson in the nature”, negotiation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia with regard to elaboration and publication of the out-of-school methodological handbook for schools teachers “How to conduct a lesson in the nature”, as well as collection of materials for the edition of CD compendium “Flora of Javakheti”.
- Campaign “Let’s Meet NATO” which envisages conduction of the informational sessions for high school and university students about NATO, its aims, functional mandate, NATO-Georgia cooperation, membership perspectives, etc. Another component of the campaign includes visits of those young people who have attended the informational sessions and demonstrated high motivation and understanding of the issue, to the villages of Akhalkalaki Municipality and dissemination of this information among local population.
- Campaign “Art-Culture” which envisages decoration of Akhalkalaki with street mosaic. The campaign is launched individually by participant of the project who has mobilized young motivated local artists, and has already negotiated and got permission from the local authorities for the implementation of given initiative. One building (as a pilot one) has been already decorated by young people.
- A group of participants is currently involved in lobbying the re-construction of the road in village Takhcha of Akhalkalaki Municipality. An initiative group which is composed by project participants and is joined by local population currently works on the petition to be submitted to Sakrebulo (Akhalkalki City Assembly) with a request to include amount required for the road reconstruction into the local budget for 2016.
- Participant from Tsalka is also engaged in the advocacy campaign which envisages reconstruction of the road connecting 12 villages of three municipalities in Kvemo Kartli (Tsalka, Dmanisi and Tetri Tskaro) with Tetri Tskaro municipal center. Reconstruction of the road is having enormous social implications for the local residents, and is further aggravated by the fact that several important social service facilities (an orphanage, a hospital, monastery, two hydrostations, etc.) are situated in these villages. According to already achieved agreement with the local authorities, 11 km of the road will be renewed.

- Celebration of the World Water Day in Ninostminda which was initiated by NGO “Healthy Society of Javakheti”. The action includes dissemination of the thematic leaflets by school pupils in public areas, conduction of out-of-school thematic classes, etc.
- Four participants of this project were also attracted to another PMMG operated project which is funded by Canada Fund for Local Initiatives. The project envisages promotion of wider engagement of ethnic Armenian constituencies residing in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities in the works of the local Self-Government. To this end the project implies to adequately inform local population about the new visions, activities, goals and aims of the Decentralization and Self-Governance Reform initiated by the Government of Georgia. Within the framework of the project, four trained educators conduct public lectures on the main principles of the Local Self-Government Reform in all 97 villages of mentioned municipalities. These 4 educators were selected from the number of NED project participants (Nana Broyan from start-ups group; Vagarshak Shakhbekyan, Anait Zalalyan and Agasin Zalalyan from CSOs group). So it can be stated, that those skills which they gained at the trainings most probably will be shortly used by them for the promotion of the local self-government reform. We think that this direction is especially important nowadays; while mix of skills gained during the NED funded trainings with the information received from Canada funded project will give them possibility to significantly increase efficiency of their work.

### **c. Local engagement and CSO development promotion**

As mentioned in the previous report, PMMG team mapped acute local civic problems and challenges, and based on the immediate interest of project beneficiaries has identified respective parties in the Capital for the arrangement of meetings to ensure liaison between local and capital based stakeholders, as well as provide space for project target groups to advocate for local issues with central government officials.

Given component implied to improve understanding of the project immediate beneficiaries of civil society works as well as make contacts with capital based stakeholders and therefore bring local needs, constraints, problems and challenges to the interested parties.

To this end, on 8-13 February and 24-27 February, 2015 the meetings with representatives of Tbilisi-based prominent civil societal organizations, governmental structures (both legislative and executive branches) and donors were organized. The meetings were attended by direct beneficiaries of the project – 15 start ups and 20 CSO representatives.

The agenda of the meetings was jointly developed by the project team in conjunction with target groups to ensure wide quantitative as well as qualitative engagement of the respective stakeholders on capital organized meetings.

The following meetings were organized:

- Giorgi Gvakharia, Business Ombudsman of Georgia
- Ketevan Vashakidze, Director of the Eurasia Partnership Foundation
- Davit Usupashvili, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia
- Gubaz Sanikidze, by that time Chair of the Parliamentary Committee of Diaspora and Caucasus Issues; currently Vice-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia
- Ruslan Pogosyan, Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Civic Integration
- Gocha Tsopurashvili, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Georgia
- Lika Gigauri and Giorgi Sharvashidze, Deputy Ministers of Education and Science of Georgia
- Tamar Manjavidze, Head of Executive Office of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
- Irakli Zhorzholiani, Director of the LEPL “Children and Youth Development Fund” functioning under the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia
- Nugzar Kandelaki, Head of Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia
- Tinatin Ghogheliani, Head of Civil Integration Division at the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality
- Koba Chopliani and Bella Osipova, Coordinators of the National Minority Council functioning under aegis of the Public Defender’s Office of Georgia
- Ivane Kiguradze, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Culture, as well as five MPs, members of the same Committee.

In addition, an excursion to the Parliament of Georgia, as well as to the Sports Museum maintained at the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia was organized for project participants.

*Pictures of the meetings are available upon request*

It has to be noted, that given project component was implemented in close cooperation with the members of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Civil Integration who participated in the whole process and assisted PMMG in the organization of the meetings with governmental representatives.

The meetings resulted in concrete actions and initiatives between governmental representatives and project participants. In particular, based on the agreement with the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, a working meeting on the draft law on State Language of Georgia was arranged and consequently took place with representatives of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Culture. The meeting resulted in adopting amendments to the draft law based on the constraints and alternative suggestions expressed by participants.

Another initiative relates to possibility of internship in the Parliament for young people from Samtskhe-Javakheti region which was suggested by Gubaz Sanikidze, current Vice-Speaker of the Parliament. Given initiative was entailed by the expressed constraints by

project participants related to inadequate participation of local population in public and political affairs of the state, as well as limited opportunities for self-realization for young people in the region. Participants of the project have already prepared consolidated list of young people which will be forwarded to the Parliament.

Some more concrete results were achieved, namely based on the concerns expressed and topics raised by project participants, field visits to the region were suggested and consequently organized by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia, etc. In addition, as result of mediation process conducted by Business Ombudsman of Georgia with the request of project participants, on 9 March 2015 Open Door meetings were held by the Revenues Service in project targeted two municipalities – Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda.

In addition, in the following up period after the meetings, one of the most active project participants was offered a job within the framework of the governmental program “Enterprise Georgia” and currently holds the position of SME Development Officer in Javakheti. The functional mandate of the officer includes provision of consultations on development and growth of small and medium enterprises in the region.

Information about the project organized activities was published in online newsletter Jnews.ge. Please see the below links for details:

1. <http://jnews.ge/?p=1644>
2. <http://jnews.ge/?p=1654>
3. <http://jnews.ge/?p=1839>

Information about the project was also published in PMMG issued newspaper “Multinational Georgia”, as well as was included into the periodical quarterly electronic newsletter of the Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum which is being spread among non-governmental and international organizations, as well as diplomatic corps accredited in Georgia.

Moreover, information about the events was also uploaded to PMMG’s website and Facebook page, as well as spread by means of PMMG’s partner organizations on the ground.

#### **d. Emergency support**

In the reporting period, within the framework of program and approved budget modifications, PMMG has provided emergency support to a number of civil society activists from Azerbaijan. In particular, financial support was provided to Nijat Imranli and Sanan Jafarov, representative of Human Rights Club, as well as Fuad Hasanov, representative of the Democracy Monitor NGO (visits to Georgia held on 9-23 January, 2015; 27 January - 1 February, 2015; 20 February, 2015; 26 March, 2015).

#### **4. ASSESSMENT or EVALUATION:**

Monitoring of the project activities was carried out by the project team in conjunction with the project attracted expert-trainers in order to timely identify the emerging problems and deliver adequate response. In the course of project implementation, the project team pursued permanent communication with all parties involved in the project realization. This allowed us to closely monitor the working process and ensure that activities envisaged by the project were implemented timely and qualitatively.

In general, it can be stated that the project has achieved all initially envisaged quantitative, as well as qualitative results. This is proved by presence of the following concrete evidences/products:

**Objective 1:** To strengthen the capacity of NGOs and civic initiative groups in ethnic minority regions of Georgia

**Indicator 1.1.** Participants of the seminars and consultations demonstrate a better understanding of the fundamentals of project design, fundraising, outreach and management.

The project team has elaborated special evaluation questionnaire which was used for the assessment of the trainings realized in the framework of the project. In line with overall assessment of the project relevance and design, the questionnaire included thematic questions according to the information provided to participants during the trainings. Questionnaires were individually (and anonymously) filled by participants after completion of each training. Review of the questionnaires made evident that participants have improved their knowledge and skills in respective areas.

In addition, the underlined positive impact has become obvious during the meetings with capital-based stakeholders during which participants demonstrated high interest as well as deeper understanding of the issues.

Improved skills are also proved by the increased quality of the proposals drafted by participants and submitted to various donors.

**Indicator 1.2.** Program participants are able to successfully apply to and receive funding from international donors

Given fact is proved by the number of submitted and funded projects. In particular, 13 projects were drafted/submitted by participants to various donors; out of this 2 projects have been approved, 5 refused, 1 placed on the waiting list, while 5 projects are pending.

**Indicator 1.3.** Assistance from PMMG results in the increase of number of NGOs in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli

As result of PMMG efforts, 1 CSO has been registered, while 2 organizations are in a process of registration.

**Objective 2:** To promote civic participation among ethnic and religious minorities



**Indicator 2.1.** Participants in PMMG’s trainings, networking activities, and consultations go on to launch public initiatives, advocate for local issues, or undertake other civil society activities.

Participants have launched 4 campaigns which are being implemented by them on the grass-root level.

**Indicator 2.2.** More representatives of ethnic minorities participate in new or existing civic initiatives in their region and at the national level.

Participants have joined 7 already existing campaigns or those which were launched as result of meetings conducted within the framework of the given project.

Another evidence proving giving indicator is related to the fact that as result of active civic position and public activity, one of participants of the project was offered a job in the program operated by the Government of Georgia.

It is also worth to mention that participants of our project have increased confidence in correctness of what they are doing. To remind you, during Saakashvili period (before 2012), initiatives were punishable. Up to date one can feel the fear towards law enforcement bodies which still exists in local population and CSOs. This surely fettered and limited locals in their actions. It is especially important to note that nowadays we see that except to other benefits, the trainings increased self-reliance of participants. They are now speaking out with more confidence, and it seems that the fear decreases that opens new perspectives for them.

## **5. NON-NED FUNDED ACTIVITIES:**

In line with NED funded project, PMMG was running two more projects:

1. “Promotion of wider engagement of ethnic Armenian constituencies” funded by Canada Fund for Local Initiatives. The purpose of the action was to promote wider engagement of ethnic Armenian constituencies residing in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities in the works of the local Self-Government including the newly created Volunteer-Based Community Councils in the villages as well as enhance the potential of local civil societal sector in monitoring the realization of the Local Self Governance reform as well as promotion of wider engagement of constituencies in the locally available decision making framework.
2. “Multi-stakeholder consultations in Georgia” supported by the European Commission and being implemented in cooperation with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. The project aimed to deliver assistance in raising the awareness of the main stakeholders about the essence as well as implications of the draft Law of Georgia on State Language, as well as to support the development of the language policy in Georgia taken into account the specific linguistic needs, constraints and interests of ethnic minority constituencies.

Both projects were complementary to the given action, as far as they provided a space for project participants to practice newly gained/enhanced skills in two thematic directions corresponding to the actual needs, constraints, interest as well as challenges faced by ethnic minorities in Georgia: Local Self-Government Reform and Elaboration of the Draft Law on State Language of Georgia.