Monitoring the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Georgia

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PREFACE

This research was conducted by WeResearch as a part of the project "Women 2030", funded by the European Union and implemented by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF).

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Georgia (pop. 3.7 million) is a middle-income country situated on the Black Sea, bordered by Turkey and Armenia in the South, Azerbaijan - in the South-East and the Russian Federation - in the North. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country gained independence in 1991, which was followed by years of domestic social unrest and economic collapse. Georgia's gradual advance towards political and economic stabilization was accompanied by democratic progress, with the first peaceful transfer of power in the country's history occurring in 2012 via parliamentary elections. Despite having made big strides in fighting corruption, building democratic institutions and fostering economic revitalization, significant challenges persist in the country due to persisting poverty and inequality. The situation is exacerbated due to two frozen conflicts in the northern part of the country and thousands of internally displaced persons.

In 2015, following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Government of Georgia took an initiative to join the global movement towards sustainable development and started the SDG nationalization process[1]. The Volunteer National Review (VNR) of the agenda implementation process was presented to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on SDGs in 2016. Georgia's government pledged responsibility over the achievement of all 17 goals, 95 targets and 215 indicators. Furthermore, a national roadmap was developed which explained correspondence between global and nationalized targets and indicators and specified relevant implementing and responsible bodies.

The main purpose of this shadow report is to synthesize research data and case studies in order to draw attention to gaps in the SDG implementation process in Georgia and highlight successful cases where appropriate. Given the expertise and the strategic direction of the work of WECF, the shadow report primarily focuses on the SDG 5 – Gender Equality. However, several additional targets will be considered from the SDGs 6 and 7 that are relevant to gender equality and empowerment of women in Georgia. Taking into consideration the short period elapsed since the nationalization of the SDG framework in Georgia, assessing progress gaps at the indicator level would not be informative at this stage. Instead, WeResearch team analyzed the current context and developments related to the selected targets and indicators, emphasized important cases and/or problematic issues under each target and developed relevant recommendations for future improvement. As such, the shadow report focuses on the SDG implementation gaps against its targets. The analysis of each target is structured as follows - document review results are followed by case analyses and respective recommendations.

As mentioned above, the process of SDG target selection is guided by WECF's expertise and experience. The table given below summarizes the selected global targets and respective adjusted targets for Georgia:

[1] More information on SDG nationalization is available here in Georgian

SDG GLOBAL TARGETS	ADJUSTED SDG TARGETS FOR GEORGIA
5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	5.1. Reduce all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage
5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life
5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	5.6. By 2030, Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
5.a. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	5.a. Undertake measures and address customary practices to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property and inheritance
5.b. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	5.b. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular, information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
6.1. By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	6.1. By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.
6.2. By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	6.2. By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.
7.1. By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services	7.1. By 2030, Georgia achieves significant progress in ensuring nationwide access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods approach was applied to collect and analyze data for the shadow report. At the first stage, detailed document review was conducted to analyze the context. Georgia's Public Defender's reports, as well as other research and progress reports from local watchdog organizations from 2016 until 2019 were reviewed to identify the main gaps (including statistical gaps, i.e. lack of statistical data) in the implementation of the selected SDG targets. At the second stage, eight in-depth interviews were conducted with state and NGO/INGO representatives to discuss the process of SDG nationalization, selection of indicators and gaps in the implementation of the selected SDG targets. Respondents were identified in consultation with WECF and based on document review. Interview guides were developed for each group of key informants (representatives of state institutions, international organizations and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs)). Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. During the document review and in-depth interviews, a special focus was placed on collecting significant cases that illuminated existing gaps in the SDG implementation process. At the final stage of the report writing, for the validation of the results and finalization of recommendations, developed by the experts working on shadow report, one day validation workshop has been conducted in July, 2019 with the participation of local NGOs, international organizations and government agency representatives.

FINDINGS

This chapter starts with a brief overview of the SDG nationalization process in Georgia along with challenges and gaps identified in the process. Next, SDG targets with respective global and nationalized indicators are discussed individually in subchapters, giving a general overview on the status of indicators and describing specific cases that emphasize critical issues around the targets. Each section is concluded with a list of recommendations addressed to government agencies and/or other local and global stakeholders concerned with SDG nationalization and implementation in Georgia.

NATIONALIZATION OF SDG INDICATORS IN GEORGIA

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development unites 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 232 indicators[2] and represents "an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership"[3].

Georgia started the SDG nationalization process in 2015[4] and the Administration of the Government of Georgia was designated as a coordinating entity. At the initial stage, the Government created technical working groups which identified the goals, targets and indicators which were relevant for the country context. Eventually, the Georgian Government adopted all 17 goals, 95 targets and 215 indicators and developed a national roadmap which serves as the primary document explaining the nationalized indicators along with relevant implementing and responsible bodies.

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2 The total number of indicators listed in the global indicator framework of SDG indicators is 244. However, since nine indicators repeat under two or three different targets, the actual total number of individual indicators in the list is 232.

3 The official web-page of Sustainable development.

4 More information on SDG nationalization is available here in Georgian

It is of note that countries themselves are responsible for the selection of targets and respective indicators. Some targets and indicators can be omitted while others can be added depending on the context in individual countries. Analyzing the SDG 5 and the relevant targets that have been selected to be applicable for the Georgian context, it is important to mention that some important targets such as **5.4: recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate** and respective indicators[5] were not selected. As explained by the interviewed government representative, the government's guiding principle in selecting targets and respective indicators was the current and anticipated policy in the country. Since the indicator 5.4 was deemed to be too "complex" and no corresponding activities were projected in the action plans of government agencies, it was decided to omit the target. This approach is problematic not only due to the resulting disregard for an important aspect of gender equality, but also, due to implications for the overall SDG 5 implementation process. As the target 5.4 is closely interrelated with other targets of SDG 5, the failure to r**ecognize and value unpaid care and domestic work** could impede the country's progress towards other targets of gender equality. To give an example, surveys show that unpaid domestic work is the main hindering factor for women's participation in politics and decision-making activities. Furthermore, domestic duties create barriers for women wishing to pursue economic activity on the labor market, which is eventually reflected in gender wage gap.[6]

Four thematic working groups were created in Georgia to facilitate and monitor the SDG implementation process: social inclusion, economic growth, human rights and sustainable energy and environment protection. While the Administration of the Government of Georgia is designated as a decisionmaker on policy level, the thematic groups coordinate the process among different entities, facilitate active communication and ensure the exchange of data among them. Additionally, non-governmental and private sector representatives are involved in the working groups in order to ensure transparency and experience-sharing. The working groups are to meet annually at least once. In 2018, each working group conducted two meetings. The first meeting involved only a technical group composed of government representatives while the second included representatives from private and non-governmental sectors. Currently, a web-page is under construction with the aim of monitoring the SDG implementation process. The web-page will also feature a database, offering a user-friendly and publicly available annual reporting system on the activities of the working groups. As reported by interviewees, 80 officials have already been trained on using the web-page to correctly input the data and administer the database.

It should be highlighted that the Government of Georgia presented a voluntarily conducted national review of SDGs[7] in New York at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2016. The report included general aspirations of the country for achieving the SDGs. The next report is planned to be presented in 2020, which will offer a detailed overview of the nationalization process and its progress.

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5 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

6 Women's Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia. Available here

7 Voluntary National Report on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2016. Available here.

The UN Development Group also assessed the integration of national policy with the SDGs using the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) approach, which is part of the UN's effort of technical support and advising in SDG implementation. According to the report, the level of policy integration in Georgia is more than 81%, which is considered as a very good result[8]. In 2018, IDFI assessed the integration level of SDGs in the Georgian public policy documents. The organization used the methodology guide developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Since IDFI's methodology was developed on the level of indicators, it is considered to be even more detailed than MAPS. The report argues that three targets of the Goal #5 are fully aligned with the existing strategic documents and action plans, 14 targets are aligned partially, and 10 targets are not aligned at all.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Diversify the set of responsible entities for each indicator. In the case of SDG 5, the responsible entity specified in the roadmap is predominantly the Administration of the Government of Georgia. As the Administration is responsible for reporting on developments but not for the implementation of relevant initiatives for achieving the indicators itself, it would be recommended to diversify the list of responsible entities and include those entities which are responsible for the actual implementation process. Furthermore, it is important to specify responsibilities for each designated entity. This will also help entities to better align their strategies and action plans to SDG indicators.
- Ensure sustainability of data provision. A number of surveys used in the SDG monitoring have been conducted with the funds and initiative of international organizations or non-governmental sector (namely MICS, GH survey etc.). As these are not part of the Geostat's regular survey plan, this approach might pose risks in the direction of sustainability in data provision. therefore, it would be recommended to develop a more systematic approach to data provision, namely, to include those surveys in Geostat's survey plan.
- Define the role and engagement of private sector representatives in the national roadmap;
- Improve collaboration between the entities, especially in terms of data provision and quality of statistical data. Ensure data disaggregation, as required by SDG standards;
- Nationalize the omitted targets. Particularly, the target 5.4 which measures the value of unpaid housework and which is closely related to achieving other important indicators on women's political participation, economic activity and wage gap;
- Align strategic documents and action plans with the SDG targets, in order to ensure their timely and efficient achievement;
- Create and systematize national metadata repository. This is particularly important for those indicators which were modified or added during the nationalization process.

[8] The Report will be available by the end of 2019

GOAL 5:
ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

TARGET 5.1: REDUCE ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS EVERYWHERE.

Indicator: 5.1.1: Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

Indicator definition: Indicator 5.1.1 measures Government efforts to put in place legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality.[9]

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Georgia is a signatory party of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Therefore, the country has a responsibility to ensure equality between men and women. Article 2 of CEDAW prohibits any forms of discrimination against women and requires the state to develop a national legal framework and implement actions accordingly. Furthermore, the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU, signed in 2014, obliges the country to bring the national legislation in accordance with international standards.[10]

Notably, Georgia has made significant progress in the past several years in terms of developing national policy and legislative framework in support of gender equality and for combating gender-based violence in the country.[11] Particularly the following laws[12] were adopted:

- 2006 Law of Georgia on Elimination of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Violence;
- 2006 Law of Georgia on Combating Human Trafficking;
- 2010 Law of Georgia on Gender Equality;
- 2014 Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination.
- 2019 Law on Sexual Harassment.

Adoption of these laws and the steps that were taken for creation and improvement of Georgian Legislation can certainly be assessed as a positive outcome. However, there still are a number of issues that have to be considered for further improvement of the legislation. As it is argued in the Public Defender's 2017 monitoring report of the gender equality policy, despite the fact that the legislative framework has improved significantly, it is still not fully harmonized with international standards.[13] UNDP's 2018 report analyses and identifies the gaps that exist in the national legislation in terms of

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9 Metadata document

10 UNDP (2018). Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations. The report is available here.

11 UN Women. (2017). National Study on Violence Against Women. The report is available here.

12 The Laws of Georgia are available here.

13 Public defender's Office. 2017. Implementation of the National Action plan 2014-2016 on Gender Equality – Results of Monitoring. The report is available here in Georgian.

gender equality, discrimination and violence against women, women's political and civic participation, their economic empowerment, etc. The report provides a detailed list of proposed changes in the respective laws and action plans for further improvement.[14] Finally, the international human rights organization - Equality Now - discusses the gaps in the Law on sexual violence and argues that the current legal framework gives a wide range of possibilities to the abuser to avoid punishment.[15]

CASE

The adoption of the Law on Sexual Harassment can be considered as an example of a successful collaboration between the society, activists and the state. Besides, the active role of media and NGO representatives should also be stressed here. The approval of the law was preceded by four sexual harassment cases publicized in the media. The victims of the sexual harassment fought for justice and sued the harassers undeterred by the absence of the relevant law at the time. In all four cases the harassers were powerful public figures, which made the cases widely known. The victims had to face a number of challenges, including the absence of the required legal framework and unfavorable public attitudes which did not consider sexual harassment as a crime and blamed the victims for both - the incident itself and the act of suing the harassers.

One of the cases lasted for a couple of years in court but its eventual success created an important precedent which later was used by human rights and feminist activists for lobbying the adoption of the law. As a result, sexual harassment is now regulated by the state legislation, particularly, by the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia and the Labor Code. The legislative changes also touched upon the law on the Public Defender and Civil Procedure Code of Georgia. Notably, shortly after the law was approved, there were several cases of its successful application.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support the implementation process of the law. Provide training for judges and other involved entities, to ensure successful implementation;
- Increase the awareness about the sexual harassment law in the society in two main directions: on the one hand, provide information on procedures: how to act in case of harassment, which entities to contact, etc. on the other hand, work in the direction of changing attitudes, as the practices of sexual harassment are deeply rooted in the masculine culture and are considered to be acceptable by large groups of the population;
- Create supportive programs/services for women who are subject to sexual harassment.

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[14] UNDP. 2018. Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations. The first volume of the report is available here. The second volume is available here.

[15] Equality Now. 2019. Roadblocks to justice how law is failing the survivors of sexual violence in Eurasia. The report is available here.

TARGET 5.2: ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES, INCLUDING TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL AND OTHER TYPES OF EXPLOITATION

Two indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 were assessed under this target. Each indicator will be discussed separately below.

Indicator definition: The Indicator 5.2.1 measures the percentage of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older who have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner, in the previous 12 months.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life[16]. Violence directed at women and girls is the most common form of gender-based violence. In male-dominated cultures and societies, violence between intimate partners tends to be widespread, especially in case of marital partners. Therefore, violence between intimate partners can be considered as a manifestation of deeply rooted gender inequality.

Five different types of domestic violence are distinguished in the Law of Georgia on Elimination of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Violence: Physical, Sexual, Psychological, Economical and Coercion.[17] In 2017, a representative study was carried out by UN Women in order to collect comprehensive data about the violence against women in the country.[18] The study found that violence is a common experience in many women's lives - of women aged 15-64 who had been in a relationship at least once, approximately 6 percent have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner and almost one in seven (13 percent) have experienced emotional abuse by an intimate partner. Overall, one in seven women aged 15-64 report that they have experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Notably women are more likely to experience repeated acts of violence rather than a one-off incident.

The study revealed that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a significant problem both in rural and urban areas (UN Women, 2017). Notably, reported rates of IPV were higher in urban areas (16 percent reporting physical, sexual or emotional IPV) than in rural areas (11 percent reporting physical, sexual or emotional IPV). However, the report argues that the higher percentage of IPV in urban areas might be explained by other influencing factors: women in urban areas have higher awareness; violence is less normalized in urban areas; and urban women felt more confident than rural women to disclose their experiences of violence.

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16 The full definition can be accessed here.

17 The Law is available here.

18 UN Women. (2017). National Study on Violence Against Women. The report is available here.

Chart 1: Experience of intimate partner Violence %

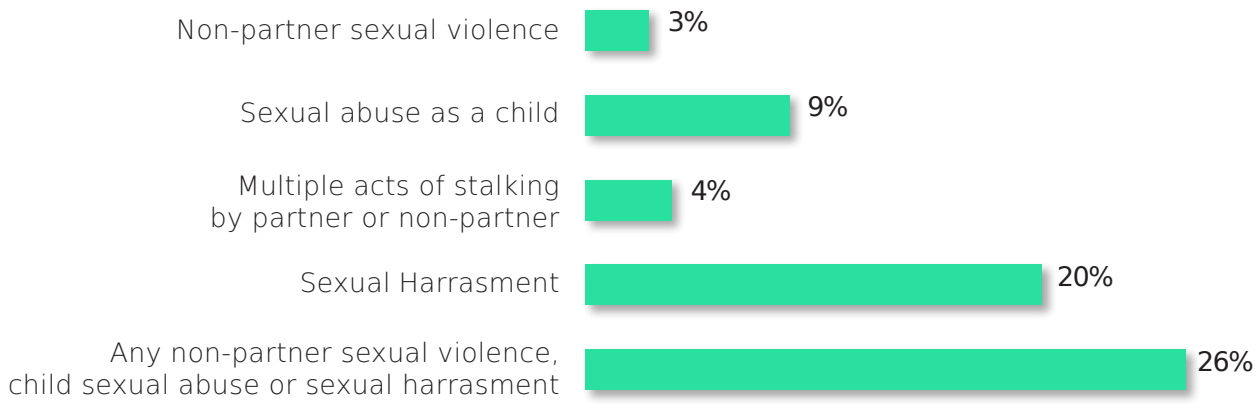
As for age differences, the study found that there is a higher prevalence of violence by an intimate partner among older women (UN Women). This could be explained by the fact that they have been exposed to the risk of violence longer than younger women. Based on the study results, 7 percent of women aged 30-49 reported lifetime IPV compared to 3 per cent among women aged 15-24.

Indicator definition: The indicator 5.2.2 measures the percentage of women and girls aged 15 years and older who have experienced sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner, in the previous 12 months.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread forms of human rights violations in the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2013 data, someone other than intimate partner has sexually abused 7% of women in the world.[19] Adequate policy response to this issue demands quality quantitative and qualitative data to inform actions.

Chart 2: Experience of non-partner Sexual Violence %



The 2017 UN Women representative study aimed to reveal the prevalence of non-partner violence in Georgia. Overall, 26 per cent of women reported having experienced sexual violence and/or sexual harassment by a non-partner, including sexual abuse as a child. The study found that 2.7 per cent of women aged 15-64 reported having experienced sexual violence by someone other than a husband or partner in their lifetime. Three percent of women reported having experienced an attempted rape and sexual assault by a non-partner. The most common perpetrators of non-partner sexual violence were male friends/acquaintances and complete strangers. Non-partner physical and emotional violence was also identified as relatively common among women in qualitative interviews. In particular, women reported experiencing physical and emotional abuse from family members, including parents-in-law, brothers, stepchildren and sisters-in law.

[19] Metadata Document

CRITICAL ISSUE

Sexual violence is defined as a sexual behavior that is imposed on someone. It includes abusive sexual contact, uses threatening behavior, abuses another person's helplessness and is categorized as a criminal offence. It is regulated by the Criminal Code Articles 137-140.[20] It is important to highlight the gaps in the legislation and its implementation which create additional challenges for victims.

S.Z. became a victim of sexual violence in 2016. Her case became widely known, since she decided to talk about it publicly. She was 22 years old when she was raped by two strangers late in the evening in the street. Even though many women make a decision not to talk about their experiences of sexual violence, S.Z. decided to talk openly about the incident and demand justice. There were a number of obstacles that she faced during the process:

- The attitudes from the policemen who initially blamed her for not being a "home girl" (most likely, implying that she was a prostitute), and later advised her not to talk about this case to not ruin her future life and prospects;
- The trials, where she was a victim and a witness at the same time. She had to recall each and every detail of the incident, since if there is no penetration, the act of violence is not considered as rape;
- Finally, the attitudes from society. Even though she had support from close friends and colleagues, many in the country put blame on her for bringing about the incident.

A recent report developed by Equality Now (2019) gives a comprehensive overview of the legal framework of the sexual violence and rape in Georgia and identifies existing gaps:

1. The definition of sexual violence is not in compliance with the Istanbul Convention. Specifically, the definition does not include the lack of voluntary and genuine consent on the part of the victim;
2. Investigative procedures are outdated, have not been changed since the Soviet times and, usually, are discriminatory towards victims. Possibilities that are ensured by the law are not used in practice i.e. although different types of violence are regulated by the criminal Code (articles: 137-138-139), in practice, only rape is considered as a form of sexual violence while other forms are largely neglected;
3. Child marriages are regulated by the Criminal Code (article 140), however, as it is argued by the representative of Equality Now, its implementation remains problematic. Particularly, relevant institutions, i.e. schools do not inform respective legal entities about the cases of yearly marriages. The issue is further aggravated by widespread traditional ideas which puts priority on the wishes of adult family members rather than underage victims. Usually, prosecutors hold the same attitude and side with the family;
4. Finally, there is no separate article regulating marital rape. Therefore, sexual violence between the spouses usually is not considered as violence by the victim and is not classified as such by the legal entities.

[20] The Criminal Code can be viewed here in Georgian

RECOMMENDATIONS[21]

LEGISLATION

- Ensure that the definitions of sexual violence crimes are in compliance with CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention and cover all forms of sexual acts committed without the victim's voluntary, genuine and willing consent. Namely, the law should explicitly say that any sexual conduct that does not have consent from the persons participating, is rape.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Ensure that sentences for sexual violence crimes (rape, sexual assault, compulsion to sexual intercourse, statutory rape, rape of a minor) are commensurate with the gravity of the acts by classifying sexual violence crimes in a more serious category;
- Recognize the specific nature of sexual violence crimes and ensure a gender-sensitive approach in investigation, evidence gathering, witness interrogation and prosecution processes of sexual violence, free from all stereotypes, including on the basis of disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation;
- Ensure that the victim's refusal to give a statement, or her changing the statement for the benefit of the perpetrator, is not the basis for concluding that "no signs of crime'' were found and for terminating the investigation or prosecution in sexual violence crimes;
- Ensure that each act of reported sexual violence goes into official crime records and collect and disaggregate statistics based on sex, age and any vulnerable status;
- Eliminate the practice of perpetrators going unpunished through procedural bargaining agreements for sexual violence crimes;
- Prosecute all cases of rape of minors as rape and not lessen the charges to statutory rape when there is evidence to support a charge of rape;
- Where applicable, eliminate the practice of allowing procedural bargaining for perpetrators of statutory rape with the purpose of imposing lower sentences;
- Explicitly criminalize marital rape and ensure it is included as an aggravating circumstance of rape;
- Effectively prosecute and punish marital rape as a matter of public interest.

[21] Please note that the recommendations are derived from the Equality Now's 2019 report.

TARGET 5.3. ELIMINATE ALL HARMFUL PRACTICES, SUCH AS CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Indicator 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

Indicator 5.3.2.2 The number of girls who dropped out from schools because of marriage

Indicator definition: the indicator 5.3.1. measures the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 while the indicator 5.3.2.2. assesses the number of girls who prematurely terminated their secondary education due to marriage.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Georgian Civil Code[22] prohibits the marriage of underage individuals (below 18 years) without any exceptions, hence, the number of officially registered marriages between underage girls and boys in Georgia is currently zero. However, this number only obscures the true extent of the problem as the practice of child marriages continues unabated in the unofficial realm. Due to its very nature, it is impossible to obtain exact data on the extent of the problem. Still, some useful insight is granted through the data on underage parents. Based on the childbirth data of the Ministry of Justice, there were 715 underage mothers and 23 underage fathers registered in 2018[23]. Although this number marks a decrease from the last year's indicator (835 underage parents), the issue is still alarming and emphasizes the need for further action. Another measure that seeks to estimate the prevalence of the practice of underage marriages in Georgia looks at the percentage of 20-24-year-old married women who created a family before turning 18. According to the latest estimates from 2017, that number stands at 14% in Georgia.

Despite the problem of child marriages in Georgia, the issue remains little understood in the society. UNFPA study of 2017[24] shows that early marriages are widely considered to be an exclusive problem of ethnic minorities residing in rural areas while, in practice, child marriages are a problem in ethnically Georgian urban settlements of Georgia as well and even, in Tbilisi. Another finding of the study highlighted that the definition of child marriages varies between different groups of society, as some people consider an early marriage as a problem only when a child's opinion is not considered in the decision-making process. Hence, an underage marriage that is motivated by child's own wish is taken to be just and acceptable. The study also showed that children and adolescents learn about marriage primarily from their peers, internet or parents which highlights the lack of institutional mechanisms oriented towards raising awareness and spreading knowledge on the issues of marriage, its timing in life, the right of a person to choose and so forth.

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22 The Georgian version of the Civil Code can be viewed here.

23 Public Defender's Report 2018 in Georgian can be viewed here.

24 Full report can be viewed here.

A multitude of factors contribute to the practice of early marriages in Georgia. Some of those drive adolescents to choose this path in life willingly:

- Georgian traditional norms restricting adolescents' freedom of dating push couples to make the decision of marriage early on in the relationship;
- The stigmas attached to premarital sex also drive adolescents to choose marriage as way of exploring their sexuality;
- Economic challenges, unemployment and lack of opportunities in many rural and urban areas of Georgia make marriage the only viable life choice for young girls and their families;
- Stigmatization of unmarried girls in their late 20s creates social incentives for starting a marital life at an earlier age.
- Mother-in-laws prefer to bring into the family a younger girl with a more pliable character who can be more easily "integrated" into the new family lifestyle and traditions.

The multitude of these factors highlights the importance of a holistic approach in the fight against child marriages. Interventions should be aimed at raising awareness, combatting stigmas and taboos as well expanding the opportunities of young girls and boys of Georgia.

Bride kidnapping is a tradition common in the Caucasus which exacerbates the problem of child marriages in the Georgia. Due to stigmatization of women, kidnapped brides are often pushed by their families or society to stay in the marriage despite their unwillingness to do so. In the areas with a high share of ethnic minority population the enforcement of the law prohibiting bride kidnapping remains problematic as law enforcement agents refrain from enacting harsh punishments, expecting the families to reach an agreement and resolve the dispute on their own.

CRITICAL ISSUE

Education and Early Marriages

According to the data of the Ministry of Education, in 2016, a total of 11,741 young people dropped out of school.[25] Out of these, 257 were officially recorded to have been caused by marriage, however a large percentage of cases is unclassified, making it impossible to deduce the real reason for leaving school. Still, the number marks a decrease from the previous year's indicator when 576 school students dropped out due to marriage.

Results of qualitative studies offer deeper insight into the reasons behind dropout rates. Respondents largely saw education and marriage as incompatible paths of life for girls due to challenges associated with combining the roles of a wife and a mother with that of a student. Secondary or higher education was considered to be more important for boys and therefore, compatibility of marriage and education was more accepted in the case of boys.

[25] Further information in Georgian can be viewed here.

The annual report of the Public Defender of Georgia stresses the problem of cooperativeness from schools in the identification of the cases of early marriages. For instance, in 2018, only 115 cases of early marriages were investigated by the Social Service Agency while the number of school dropouts due to the cause of marriage was much higher.[26] The cases examined by the Public Defender show that schools often hide the facts of underage marriages among their students by either not marking absences of girls in classes or classifying their dropout from school under a reason different than marriage. This practice also makes it difficult to enact the legal provision prohibiting sexual relationships by an adult with an underage person.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- School teachers can be powerful allies in combatting the practice of childhood marriages in the country and currently this resource is heavily underused. More effort needs to be directed towards raising teachers' awareness on the harms of early marriage for boys as well as girls and increase awareness on the responsibility of all to play a part in the prevention of this practice;
- Access to information can be the most powerful tool against the practice of childhood marriages. Therefore, more effort needs to be directed towards ensuring school students' access to information on family planning, reproductive and sexual health and rights;
- Gynecologists play an important role in providing the necessary information to adolescent girls on their reproductive health. Conversely, healthcare providers' biased views (such as aversion to premarital sex) or insensitive approach to the issues of adolescent girls can lead to their alienation from this important source of information and exacerbate knowledge scarcity on reproductive health;
- Despite the legal restriction on underage marriage, religious ceremonies between minors are being officiated by representatives of different denominations. Religious leaders need to be sensitized to the harmful effects of childhood marriages for boys as well as girls to diminish the incidence of religious weddings between underage girls and boys;
- Communication and better coordination between all relevant sectors – education, law enforcement, church, healthcare – is crucial for effective prevention of childhood marriages. Effective platforms for the exchange of information and the referral of cases needs to be established between these actors;
- Enhance the national referral mechanism to integrate the role and responsibility of health and social workers in it.

[26] Public Defender's Parliamentary Report 2018 can be viewed in Georgian here.

TARGET 5.5. ENSURE WOMEN'S FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS OF DECISION-MAKING IN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC LIFE

Indicator 5.5.1: Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments

Indicator definition: The proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments, currently as at 1 February of reporting year, is currently measured as the number of seats held by women members in single or lower chambers of national parliaments, expressed as a percentage of all occupied seats.

Indicator 5.5.2: Proportion of women in managerial positions

Indicator definition: This indicator refers to the proportion of females in the total number of persons employed in managerial positions. It is recommended to use two different measures jointly for this indicator: the share of females in (total) management and the share of females in senior and middle management (thus excluding junior management).

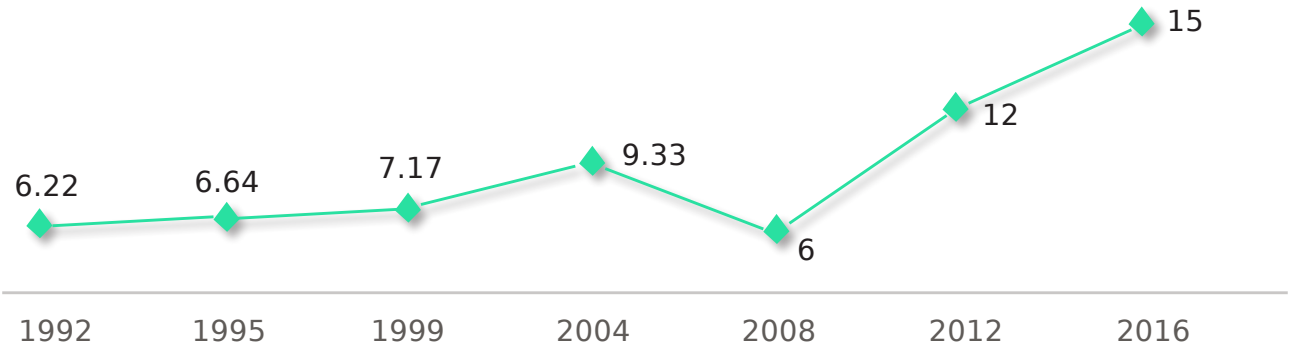
GENERAL OVERVIEW

Country-adjusted list of Indicators:

- 5.5.1. Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments Proportion of seats held by women in local governments: Target - 30%
- 5.5.1.1. Proportion of directly elected female mayors: Target 30%
- 5.5.1.2. Proportion of directly elected female governors: Target - 30%
- 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial position: Target - 30%
- 5.5.2.1. Proportion of women in decision-making positions in civil service: Target - 30%
- 5.5.2.2. Proportion of women in decision-making positions in the judiciary (positions at regional/city courts, appellate courts and the supreme court): Target - 20%
- 5.5.2.3. Gender wage gap: Target - 20%

Statuses of the Indicators:

Chart 3: % OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT PER ELECTION YEAR



Women's participation in decision-making processes in Georgia remains very low in the legislative and executive branches of government, both at the central and local levels (UNDP, 2018).[27] This is also reflected in the international rankings. Georgia ranks 99th among 149 countries for political, economic and social participation of women. Based on political empowerment, Georgia ranks 119th, according to the global gender index (World Economic Forum, 2018).[28] As a result of 2016 parliamentary elections, women occupy 15% of the seats in the Parliament (23 female MPs were initially elected but currently, only 22 are active MPs) and with that number Georgia ranks 138th among 193 countries worldwide, based on the percentage of women in Parliament.[29] This percentage marks the highest share of women in Parliament since Georgia gained independence in 1991, however it is far below the SDG target of 30% set by the Government of Georgia. As assessed by experts, achievement of that critical point or any significant increase in the share of female MPs is unlikely within the existing election system, gender-neutral election code and overall political landscape. The Election Code of Georgia established a mixed electoral system: 73 members of the 150-seats in Parliament are allocated from single-mandate constituencies, known as „majoritarian" electoral districts while the remaining seats are allocated from political party lists in a national proportional system (UNDP, 2018).

Even though the President of Georgia is female, women's representation in executive-level positions at national and sub-national levels is also low. Out of 12 national Ministries (including the Prime Minister), only four are women. There are no women among nine Governors.

Women are also under-represented in local self-government bodies. Following the 2017 municipal elections, there is a slight increase in female representation. Particularly, women make up 13.4% of the composition of local legislative bodies (Sakrebulo) while women's representation was only 11.3 % in 2014. All Mayors of the self-governing cities are men and out of 64 mayors of self-governing communities, only one is a woman (UNDP, 2018). Out of 21 members of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, only two are women and 29% of government posts are held by women.

Bearing in mind that the ruling party has a significant responsibility to promote gender equality and women's participation in politics, gender equality activists criticized the ruling party for nominating only 2 women for the Mayor's post out of 61 candidates in the last local election.

The only exception to the low representation of women in public sphere is the judiciary system. Women make up 53.7% of the judiciary (128 out of 238 active judges are women)[30], and 4 out of the 9 judges in the Constitutional Court are also female. [31]Women comprise 41.6% of the positions on the Supreme Court (5 out of 12). One of the explanations of such participation is that in the context of competition and genuine preference for qualified candidates, women are able to reach the same outcomes as men.

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27 Available here.

28 Available here.

29 Available here.

30 Information available here.

31 Information available here.

CRITICAL ISSUE

In order to promote women's political participation, five attempts have been made since 2002 to introduce gender quotas in Parliament and on party lists (UNDP, 2018). With this purpose, the Task Force (TF) for Women's Political Participation was created in 2014. The TF was comprised of representatives from local and international organizations, government units and women's rights activists. The TF is still active in lobbying the adoption of the law. In 2015, the TF submitted a legislative proposal introducing mandatory gender quotas for proportional lists for parliamentary elections. The legal committee rejected the proposal without presenting it to the plenary session. An alternative legislative initiative was submitted to the Parliament by two MPs which was discussed on the plenary session but never managed to reach the voting stage. The most recent initiative involved around 37 thousand citizens' signatures in support of gender quotas. The draft law proposed a 50% quota for the next parliamentary elections, in which every other person on the list should have been of a different sex. The legislative initiative was presented to the Parliament by the Task Force but was rejected in 2018. The task force as well as supporters in Parliament are working on a new version of the law. As indicated by one of the supporters of the law, it takes political will to endorse the law and in the current context, there are no other options left to civil society representatives but to exercise ongoing public pressure on key decision makers.

Gender quota is proven to be an effective way for increasing women's participation in politics, however, it is still important to disentangle the multitude of factors underlying the low level of women's political participation in Georgia. Above all, deeply rooted patriarchal values are shown to be limiting women's role to domestic caretakers. This is demonstrated by NDI's research on people's perceptions of women's participation in politics. 57% of Georgians consider that family responsibilities are the biggest barrier for women to be engaged in politics, followed by widespread stereotypes that politics is not the space for women and lack of social and financial support systems (2014)[32]. According to the research on women in Georgian politics published by GYLA (2017)[33], another important aspect is political parties' lack of will to provide gender-balanced electoral lists. No other measure can be as effective in guaranteeing women's political participation as political parties' ideologies and internal culture to promote women's participation. As suggested by one interviewed expert, political parties have a huge role and responsibility to provide support to women who lack financial and social resources but have competencies. Given such support, more women would be interested and motivated to be actively engaged in politics thereby, creating a platform for transformative change.

Researchers and activists claim that women's political participation cannot increase on its own if left to take a natural course. The previous elections proved that the majoritarian representation system is not conducive to growth in women's involvement. In addition, the absence of incentives and stimulating norms for women's political participation (specifically, the absence of mandatory positioning of women in top ten of the lists) accounts for the failure to ensure the growth of number of women in proportion to funding.[34] Based on these findings, several recommendations were derived which are presented at the end of the section below.

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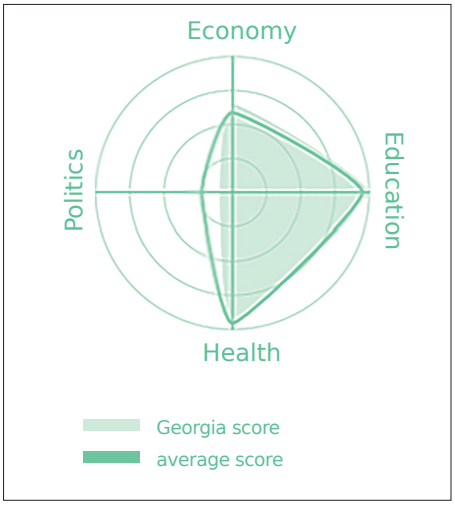
[32] Research report in Georgian available here.

[33] Research Report in English available here.

[34] The article in English is available here.

Indicator 5.5.2.3. Gender wage gap (Target - 20%)



Gender pay gap is one of the greatest social injustices worldwide (ILO, 2018)[35]. Georgia took a commitment to eliminate the economic injustice that women face through committing to SDG 5.5.1 target implementation. According to international rankings, Georgia is one of the lowest-performing countries in terms of achieving equal pay and on average, women continue to be paid less than men. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report for 2018, with the score of 0.656, Georgia ranks 85th among 149 countries worldwide based on economic participation and opportunity. Notably, Georgia ranks 69th on wage equality for similar work.

According to the report on earnings statistics published by Geostat, in the first quarter of 2019, average earnings equaled 876.1 Gel for women and 1294.1 Gel for men. Annual growth of earnings amounted to 58.0 and 22.4 Gel, respectively. Based on this data, the percentage difference between the salaries equals to 38.5%. The report states that in most sectors, average monthly earnings of men were higher compared to women. This data is based on the salaries of hired individuals and it does not cover the salaries of thousands of individuals employed in non-formal sector, employees who work without a contract or freelancers. Furthermore, in 2017, only 58% of women were economically active in comparison to 78% of men.[36]

The same trend is observed in the survey conducted by CRRC on women's economic inactivity and informal employment in Georgia (2018). The findings confirm that a significant driver of women's economic inactivity is weaker financial incentives for women to work, which in turn is reflected in the gender pay gap. Women earn significantly less than men.[37] In particular, the average annual income for women was reported to be about ~1,830 USD (GEL 4,517), compared with ~3,110 USD (GEL 7,681) suggesting a pay gap of 41%. The data proves that equal pay is a significant issue in Georgia especially, if it is compared to the data of the member states of the EU. In 2017, women's gross hourly earnings were on average 16 % below those of men in the EU (the highest pay gap is recorded to be 26%).[38]

Wage gap experts and researchers identify a number of issues with regard to calculating wage gap in Georgia and adopting internationally recognized standards to regularly monitor the gap. Furthermore, reliable evidence should be used by policymakers to adopt relevant policies to empower women economically. As argued by experts, the wage gap as an issue is recognized by a variety of stakeholders, however, the resources and willingness to ensure that there are legal and functional frameworks in place to address the issue is absent. Currently, there is also a lack of understanding and awareness on pay gap among gender activists as well as gender equality policymakers. In addition, as discussed by one of the interviewed experts, there is no court case on the pay gap

35 Report available in English here.
36 Report available here.
37 Report available in English here.
38 Information available here.

or gender discriminative approaches on payment that could be used for lobbying or awareness-raising purposes. The lack of court cases indicates that there are issues at the legislative level too. On a positive note, there are a number of amendments suggested to the existing Labor Code of Georgia, but the endorsement is not finalized. With the actions taken so far by the Government of Georgia and civil society, the achievement of the set target by 2030 remains unlikely and consequently, immediate actions need to be taken to ensure due implementation of the SDG target.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There is evidence that gender quota is a successful mechanism to ensure women's participation in politics. There are a number of factors that affect their engagement and one of such factors is the culture of political parties. Willingness of political parties to form gender-balanced electoral lists determines the level of participation of women, therefore, transparent processes of determining lists of candidates is considered to be an effective solution. Furthermore, political parties should have policies to ensure women's participation, including the processes of recruiting women politicians. Since one of the hindering factors is lack of financial and social resources for women, political parties should empower women through investing in women candidates;
- Civil society organizations should focus on increasing public interest towards the law on gender quotas in order to create public pressure on decision makers;
- There is a need to raise awareness on pay gap among feminist activists, civil society and policy makers. Progress towards equal political representation is hurdled by the lack of understanding among these groups which prevents the formation of political will and elaboration of strategic solutions.

TARGET 5.6. BY 2030, ENSURE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AS AGREED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROGRAM OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATION-ALCONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE OUTCOME DOCUMENTS OF THEIR REVIEW CONFERENCES

Indicator 5.6.1. Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care.

Indicator Definition: Proportion of women aged 15-49 years (married or in union) who make their own decision on all three selected areas i.e. can say no to sexual intercourse with their husband or partner if they do not want; decide on use of contraception; and decide on their own health care. Only women who provide a "yes" answer to all three components are considered as women who "make her own decisions regarding sexual and reproductive".

Indicator 5.6.2. National Laws and regulations guarantee women aged 15- 49 access to sexual reproductive health care, information, and education

Indicator definition: Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 5.6.2 seeks to measure the extent to which countries have national laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

In analyzing the state of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Georgia, it is important to draw a distinction between the two aspects of this issue. While reproductive health has been a matter of research and policymaking over the last decade, sexual health has largely been neglected in the public sphere. Experts argue that the issue is not understood in its complexity by policymakers and the public interest is centered solely on the issues directly linked with reproduction, such as maternal and child health, family planning, pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care. Sexual health, as a matter independent of the reproductive process, continues to be a taboo and is largely absent in the legislation as well as public discussions.[39] Experts emphasize the importance of using correct terms in legislation and policy discussions in order to prioritize the promotion of healthy sexual life but warn against causing public discontent given the controversy surrounding the term 'sexual education'. The need for a compromise led policymakers to replace the term sexual education with 'healthy lifestyle' in school curricula. Still, the introduction of the subject into secondary schools was met with resistance from a range of policymakers as well as the general public, fueled by the preconceived notion that education leads to the promotion of sexual activity at an earlier age.

Public Defender's 2018 special report on reproductive health in Georgia underscores the problems of low awareness in the population about the existence and use of different methods of contraception. Public Defender's annual report of 2018 highlights a number

[39] Amashukeli, M. and Japaridze, E. 2018. Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in Georgian context. The report is available here in Georgian.

of issues related to reproductive rights of Georgian women. Family planning services are not fully integrated in the system of primary healthcare and no unified and coherent approach is discernible in the government towards the issues of education and service provision. Family planning services and contraceptives are not covered by the state healthcare program and contraceptives are issued based on doctor's prescription which puts limits on their accessibility. Public Defender's analysis of the issue highlights further gaps in the accessibility of family planning services in rural areas as family planning is not considered a part of the ambulatory service package.[40] Furthermore, experts highlight low awareness among primary health professionals in rural areas on sexual and reproductive health services. While it is within their competence to provide consultation on family planning and contraceptive use, they predominantly choose to refer patients to gynecologists which increases patients' costs and limits the accessibility of information and services. Lack of access and affordability of family planning mechanisms translates into high prevalence of STDs and abortion rates in Georgia which is one of the major challenges in the healthcare system.[41]

In addition to these hurdles, accessibility of information and quality services of reproductive health is limited due to absence of hospitals and women consultation centers in rural areas of Georgia as well as lack of professionalism among medical professionals. Experts highlight that doctor-patient confidentiality is violated in the Georgian context as many doctors fail to ensure safe and intimate environment in their office while consulting a patient. Of special note are the problems faced by underage girls who seek family planning services or nonsurgical interventions to end pregnancy prematurely. Although according to the Georgian legislation, patients aged 14 and older have the right to seek certain medical services independently, medical professionals often notify patients' parents against the patient's will and seek their approval prior to delivering the service. This practice limits accessibility of reproductive healthcare to underage girls and drives them to seek illegal means of obtaining desired services which puts their health and life at risk. Additionally, the report of the Public Defender of Georgia underscores the problem of accessibility of the service of safe abortion. In many cases, medical professionals limit women's access to safe abortion by trying to persuade them to change their decision or even provide faulty information on their medical conditions, depicting abortion as an impossible alternative.[42]

Another area of concern that is largely neglected in policy discussions relates to reproductive and sexual rights of people with disabilities. No unified approach is developed on how to provide necessary sexual and reproductive education to PwD. Existing practice is discriminating and limits people's reproductive rights and access to services.

CRITICAL ISSUE

Studies demonstrate the lack of information among female adolescents on reproductive health and modern contraceptive methods. The newly introduced initiative to include sex education into school curricula was met with a harsh backlash from society as well as legislators. In result, an announcement was made by an MP that young people's access

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40 UNDP. 2018. Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations. The first volume of the report is available here.

41 UNFPA. 2017. Policy Brief: The Cost of Free Contraceptives. Available here.

42 Public Defender's Office. 2018. Report on Human Rights and Freedom in Georgia. Available here in Georgian

to reproductive education is to be restricted through the introduction of an amendment which would allow parents to choose not to enroll their children into the sex education class. It is of note that the lack of reproductive education among Georgian adolescents disproportionately affects girls as they are at higher risk of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Given the informational vacuum surrounding the issue of sex education, various civil society actors have come up with initiatives to offer necessary educational resources to adolescents and other vulnerable groups. One of such initiatives was authored by the Education and Labour Association, in the frames of which Khatia Akhalaia prepared sex ed YouTube videos to make this information accessible to the groups who have no other means of accessing it (adolescents, ethnic minorities, rural residents). The videos published by Khatia Akhalaia were followed by a public outrage that turned into threat messages.[43]

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Healthcare professionals (especially village doctors and gynecologists) need to be sensitized to the issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Training and awareness-raising campaigns need to be conducted among healthcare providers to ensure informed, gender-sensitive, confidential and non-judgmental treatment of patients;
- Promotion of healthy sexual life should become a part of government's healthcare, education and youth strategies. Close coordination between relevant ministries is instrumental for opening formal and informal channels towards healthy sexual life among Georgian adolescents;
- Reproductive and sexual health should be included into the universal healthcare package to ensure the accessibility of family planning services to the most vulnerable groups, including the women of poor socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnic minorities;
- An extensive social campaign is necessary to raise awareness about the importance of reproductive and sexual health and availability of modern contraceptive methods. While the promotion of healthy sexual life should be given due attention, careful consideration needs to be given to the Georgian context and the controversy surrounding the term 'sexual rights'. The campaign should specifically target marginalized persons from poor socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnic minorities. Georgian Public Broadcaster should be included in the informational campaign to increase Georgian population's access to information;
- Reproductive and sex education should be included in school curricula to ensure universal access to information, especially among the vulnerable groups of adolescents.

[43] Further information available here.

TARGET 5.A: UNDERTAKE REFORMS TO GIVE WOMEN EQUAL RIGHTS TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES, AS WELL AS ACCESS TO OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OVER LAND AND OTHER FORMS OF PROPERTY, FINANCIAL SERVICES, INHERITANCE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL LAWS

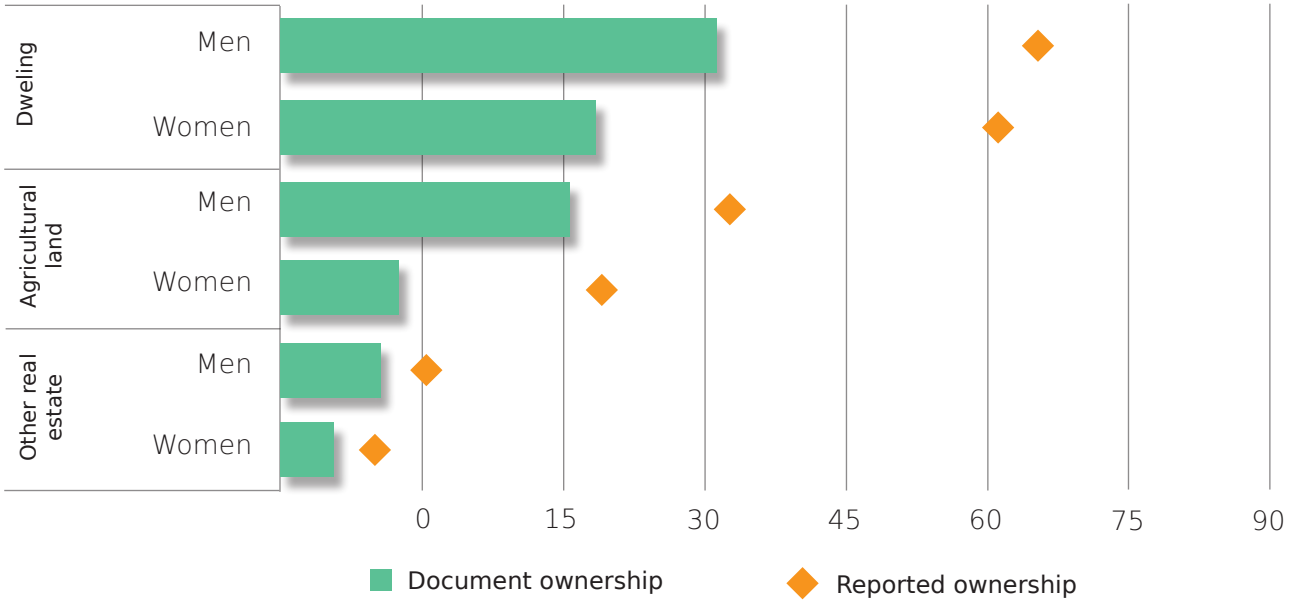
Indicator 5.a.1: (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure

Indicator definition: Land ownership is a legally recognized right to acquire, to use and to transfer land. In private property systems, this is a right akin to a freehold tenure. However, in systems where land is owned by the State, the term 'land ownership' refers to possession of the rights most akin to ownership in a private property system – for instance, long-term leases, occupancy, tenancy or use rights granted by the State, often for several decades, and that are transferrable. In this context, it is more appropriate to speak of tenure rights.

Indicator 5.a.2: Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control

Indicator definition: Indicator 5.a.2 looks at the extent to which the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.

INDICATOR STATUS:[44]



To make gender-disaggregated data available in the country, Geostat conducted a pilot study in 2018,[45] which focused on measuring asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective. The pilot study created an evidence

[44] indicators are classified as tier IIb indicators, which means that (i) data from countries are not yet regularly generated and (ii) guidelines and methodologies in collecting data and computing estimates are developed.

[45] The report in English is available here.

base for formulating policies aimed at fostering gender equality in Georgia. Even though the pilot study has a number of limitations, data provided is the only reliable source for the measurement of the abovementioned indicator. The study aimed to measure ownership of immovable assets including agricultural land. It distinguishes reported ownership and documented ownership.[46] The latter guarantees legal rights to ownership. The study indicates that among immovable assets, dwelling has the highest incidence of ownership. However, men own principal dwelling more than women. Around 80% of men and 76% of women report to own a dwelling, while 46% of men and 33 % of women are documented owners. The gender gap is most evident in the ownership of agricultural land where men are more than twice likely to be documented as owners than women.[47] A 14-percentage point gender gap is observed for reported ownership and an 18-percentage point gender gap for documented ownership of agricultural land. Ownership of agricultural land is higher in rural areas since agriculture is one of the main sources of livelihood in the area. Overall, gender disparity is more pronounced in rural areas.

Table 2: Ownership Incidence of Agricultural Land by Sex, Location, and type of Ownership (%)

Sex	Documented			Reported		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Men	45.2	18.2	30.6	72.4	26.8	47.7
Women	20.3	6.9	12.6	57.0	17.2	34.1

The pilot study shows that almost 70% of the owners of immovable assets are married. Results also show a large proportion of female owners of different types of assets (17%–28%) being widowed, separated, or divorced. Almost 20% of male owners have never been married. This implies a correlation between asset ownership for women and marriage but not for men. Men and women with the same educational level appear to have unequal (and inequitable) status of ownership and the disparity is even more prominent in documented ownership.

The study explores associations between ownership and acquisition of ownership. The result shows a considerable degree of gender disparity. A significant percentage of male owners received their assets through allocation or gifts from household and non-household members while women mostly acquired assets through marital law or custom. Acquisition through inheritance and allocation or gift are biased towards men. This can be partially explained by traditional perceptions and practices that men have privileges in inheritance even though women might have the legal rights over the assets. On the other hand, more than 20% of women owners acquired immovable assets (dwelling, agricultural land, and other real estate) through marriage as compared to only 3% of male owners.

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46 Reported ownership is on a respondent's perception and this type of ownership is exhibited when an individual or individuals consider himself/ herself to be an owner of an asset or are assigned as owners by a proxy respondent. This is regardless of whether or not their names appear on the document of legal ownership of an asset. Documented ownership on the contrary indicates that an individual has documented ownership and can enforce or claim his/her rights in law and is usually more protected by laws compared to owners whose names are not on the ownership document.

47 Geostat 2018, Women and Men in Georgia

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support, sustain or launch programmes that focus on increasing the number of land owners among women, this could be similar to the programmes on free and accessible land registration provided by the Public Registry under the Ministry of Justice. Such programmes would increase the number of women, who register their lands and own respective documents to prove the ownership over the agriculture land;
- Ensuring that there are alternative procedures/criteria for accessing the agro credits for those, who do not have documented ownership on land. Not owning a land (lack of documents on registered land) could become a hindering factor to access agro credits for those who lack documentation and other legal statements. Existing evidence suggests that this is particularly applicable to women, therefore, it is crucial to ensure that there are alternative procedures/criteria for qualifying for agro credits that in turn would support women's access to credits and as a result, contribute to their economic empowerment.

TARGET 5.B: ENHANCE THE USE OF ENABLING TECHNOLOGY, IN PARTICULAR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY, TO PROMOTE THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Indicator 5.b.1: Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex

Indicator definition: The proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex is defined as the 'proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex.[48]

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Mobile phone ownership and access to modern technology is becoming crucial for gender equality, especially, given the increasing multifunctionality of devices. Mobile phone ownership, in particular, is important to track gender equality since mobile phone is a personal device that, if owned and not just shared, provides women with a degree of independence and autonomy, including for professional purposes and also security reasons. Having independent access to a mobile phone means to have access to emergency services and different kinds of hotlines, including hotline for victims of domestic violence when help is needed urgently.

According to the official data, the highest shares of women and men owning mobile telephones are recorded in 15-24 and 25-54 age groups (95% man and 91% women, 97% and 93% accordingly). Comparably, low number of mobile phone owners are among the age groups 6-14 and above 75 (45% of boys and 48% of girls, 53% - of man and 46% - of women).49 while gender differences among mobile phone owners is under 7% in all age groups, this difference is always in favor of men, except in age group 6-14, where more girls own mobile phones compared to boys (difference equals 3%), the maximum discrepancy between male and female phone ownership is recorded in the age group above 75, where 7% more men own mobile phones.

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48 Metadata document

49 GeoStat. (2018). Publication "Women and Man in Georgia".

CASE

In February 2018 "112" launched a new innovative service, mobile application50 for emergency service. Application is free for users and has the support of Android and IOS systems. It's accessible in three languages: Georgian, English and Russian. The application has 3 major functions: making a call to 112, communication with the operator (chat-functionality), SOS (hidden call) for the situation when the initiator is in danger and cannot call or write. The main advantage of the application is that when a mobile is connected to the internet and GPS the application makes automatic identification of the location of an initiator. Application is also fully adapted for people with visual impairments. Additionally, the application can be used for spreading information on different topics. The application offers information on domestic violence (the forms of violence, how to respond to it, available services, etc.), control of tobacco use and natural hazards.

According to official statistics, as of September 2019, application was used by more than 20,000 people, averaging 150-170 users per day. There is no gender disaggregated data available about the usage of application, however/ The information about the application is spread by different media sources also by official Facebook page and during the periodic meetings with the population.[51]

RECOMMENDATIONS:

At national level:

- Increase access to internet service and smartphones, especially in regions, which will allow more people to have access to better information and innovative services offered by governmental, nongovernmental and private sectors;
- Ensure availability of alternative options for those who do not own smart phones;
- Government agencies should suggest innovative services based on mobile applications, for information accessibility and for accessing various government services online. This is especially important for people living in regions;
- Provide smartphones, with the 112-application installed, as an additional defense mechanism to those women who are under the defense of restrictive orders (recommended for the Ministry of Internal Affairs).
- For the "112" mobile application:
- Broaden the functions of the application and add more information on such topics as "sexual harassment" „stalking" etc.;
- Improve the availability of data disaggregated by gender, age, disability status etc. for analytical purposes which will allow government agencies to improve services;
- Create the application in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages which will allow minorities living in Georgia to access the service;
- Actively spread information on the application throughout the population using different information channels.

50 The application is located on the Google Play Store and App Store under the name «112 Georgia».

51 Information is taken from the interview with a "112" representative.

GOAL 6:
ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

TARGET 6.1: BY 2030, ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE DRINKING WATER FOR ALL

Indicator 6.1.1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services

Indicator definition: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services is currently being measured by the proportion of population using an improved basic drinking water source which is located on premises, available when needed and free of faecal (and priority chemical) contamination. 'Improved' drinking water sources include: piped water into dwelling, yard or plot; public taps or standpipes; boreholes or tube wells; protected dug wells; protected springs; packaged water; delivered water and rainwater.[52]

Target 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

Indicator 6.2.1: Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water

The Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water is currently being measured by the proportion of the population using a basic sanitation facility which is not shared with other households and where excreta is safely disposed in situ or treated offsite. 'Improved' sanitation facilities include: flush or pour flush toilets to sewer systems, septic tanks or pit latrines, ventilated improved pit latrines, pit latrines with a slab, and composting toilets[53]*.*

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Clean, accessible water and sanitation for all is a basic human rights issue.54 Water and sanitation issues affect women and men differently and this can be explained by several factors: difference in **biological needs,** such as menstrual hygiene management and/or maternal health - menstrual management hygiene requires access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities that are suitable for menstrual hygiene management and for disposing of menstrual hygiene materials such as disposable pads; **social norms,** as women are primary responsible for the care of family members and cleaning of house

52 Metadata document

53 Metadata document

54 On 28 July 2010, through Resolution 64/292, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights. The Resolution calls upon States and international organizations to provide financial resources, help capacity-building and technology transfer to help countries, in particular developing countries, to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

facilities which makes them also responsible for water collection and care for the sick; and **risk of violence** - any need to travel long distances alone for water or use of unsafe public toilets, especially if the trip is during the night, increases the vulnerability of women and girls to rape, harassment, etc.

Targets 6.1 and 6.2 have been selected by the Georgian Government and form a part of the set of nationalized SDGs. The data source defined for the indicator 6.1 is MICS55 survey, based on which, the baseline should be set in 2019[56].

Target 6.1: According to the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP) data, 71% of Georgian population has access to safely managed drinking water, there is a significant difference between rural and urban areas, in rural 55% of population has access to safely managed drinking water, compare to 85% of urban settlements.[57]

Target 6.2: According to the JMP Sanitation ladder 85% of Georgian population have access to basic sanitation, some differences has been observed between rural and urban areas, 17% of urban population have access to safely managed sanitation and 78% have access to basic sanitation, while in rural areas 26% of population have unimproved sanitation and 73% basic sanitation. It should be noted that basic sanitation can not be considered adequate. The pit latrines commonly used in rural Georgia are not sealed and contaminate the ground water which is often used as a drinking source from nearby wells.

55 The Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) is an international household survey programme developed and supported by UNICEF. 6th round of MICS survey in Georgia has started in 2018 year and has been implementing by National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat).

56 Survey results were not published by the time of report writing

57 Latest available data are for 2015 year can be accessed here.

CRITICAL ISSUE

Access to drinking water and sanitation is an important issue not only at household level but beyond it as well. Especially, this is critical issue for schools and preschool institutions, since it closely relates to children's and caretakers' health and their rights for education. As the global UNICEF survey "Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools: Global Baseline Report" shows[58], 74% of schools in Georgia have basic drinking water service[59], 16% have limited service[60] and 10% have no drinking water service[61]. The same survey says that in Georgia water quality testing is more common in urban schools than rural schools (UNICEF, 2018).

Another important source, Public Defender's 2018 monitoring report[62] on public schools, drinking water and sanitary, revealed further critical issues regarding the access to drinking water and sanitation at schools. According to the report, physical arrangements of public schools and sanitary-hygienic conditions are less oriented on children's needs and access to water, proper functioning of toilets and water facilities. Protection and improvement of hygienic norms still present serious challenges. More specifically:

SAFELY MANAGED DRINKING WATER:

- Most of schools (63.9%) have no central water supply system inside the school building or central water system in the school yard (54.6%);
- Number of schools were identified which have no drinking (17%) or technical water (10%). This creates problems for both, children and staff (especially for cleaners), since they have to fetch water from yards or public water facilities located several kilometers away, in such conditions, children are not able to drink enough water, wash hands, etc.
- In 71% of the monitored schools, quality testing of drinking water had never been conducted or was conducted irregularly.
- Only in 12 schools (out of 108), water monitoring is carried out once a year.
- Water turned out to be safe in 16 (out of 108) inspected schools.
- In addition, as public defender's report states, school administration is not properly informed on how water safety should be examined, or which agency is responsible for it.

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58 JMP. 2018. Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools. Global Baseline Report. Available here.

59 Drinking water from an improved source is available at school.

60 There is an improved water source but water was not available at the time of the survey.

61 No water source or unimproved source

62 Public Defenders Office in Georgia, 2018. Access to the Right of Drinking Water and Sanitation at Public Schools in Georgia.

SANITATION:

- In many cases, toilet booths are located outside the school building, especially in rural and mountain areas (57.4%, 53 schools). Toilet booths were located both inside and outside the building in 11 schools.
- Only 44.4% of the inspected toilets have soap, 26.9%-hand paper, 25.9%-flushing system.
- sanitary facilities are functional, technically effective and clean only in 18 (17%) out of 108 public schools

As the existing data shows, many households and schools use water of insufficient quality or do not have access at all. As for sanitation, people mostly use pit latrines which pollute drinking water. As accentuated in the Public Defender's report, "school environment, infrastructure, **access to water and sanitary situation are alarming and need to be urgently addressed**, which should be seen by the relevant agencies as one of the most important priorities".

DATA GAP FOR TARGET 6.1 AND 6.2

All the above-mentioned data give us information at household or organizational (school) level and not at the individual level. New approaches to examining intra-household deprivation will be needed in the future to identify inequalities between household members, or at least to have information among female and male headed households.

There is no data on water quality. As unpublished small-scale survey from WECF states, informal testing revealed poor quality of drinking water in many rural areas, exceeding limits of bacteriological indicators and nitrates.

Another legal issue to mention is that water systems with less than 50 users are not under state responsibility. Hence, these are often not maintained, and their quality is not tested.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TARGET 6.1 AND 6.2:

As it was mentioned above, the low quality or scarcity of sanitary and of water resources differently affects women's and men's quality of life. For women: 1) this increases the time required for housekeeping, since they are responsible for housekeeping activities; 2) this increases time required for caring for family members, since according the World Health Organization (WHO), 88% of diarrhea diseases are caused by inappropriate drinking water, sanitary and hygiene. Also, by social norms, women are mostly responsible for caring for family members; 3) it may cause problems for school attendance, since lack of sanitary conditions at schools can hinder girls to go to school during menstrual days; 4) lack of sanitary conditions at schools and workplace may cause reproductive health issues for women and girls; 5) and last but not least, this can increase the risk of violence, when women have to bring water by covering long distances.

Thus, improved accessibility, availability and quality of water and sanitation will increase women's ability to perform existing duties more easily. It will increase safety, dignity and privacy, particularly with respect to access to sanitation facilities. Based on the above-mentioned, these are the general recommendations which will require coordinated actions from different government agencies (including Geostat with regard to statistics) at national and local levels:

TO THE GOVERNMENT:

- Develop monitoring tools which will assess the gender dimension of policy implementation with regard to drinking water and sanitation;
- Existing data gives information only on accessibility of water, it is important to develop monitoring tools which will give information on availability and quality of water;
- Conduct public awareness campaign on sustainable sanitation solutions (e.g. dry toilets and grey water filters);
- Update technical regulations on water, sanitation and hygiene for public schools in accordance with the principals of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). Include dry urine diverting toilets as an option for schools with limited sewage and/or water access, including the safe use of its products: human feaces and urine in agriculture according to the WHO guidelines;[63]
- Update the regulations that will oblige responsible agencies to monitor and maintain water systems with less than 50 users;

TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORTS OF GEORGIA:

- Regularly conduct awareness-raising activities at schools for children, parents and staff on access and rational use of water resources, sanitation and hygiene norms (for example: http://www.wecf.eu/english/publications/2012/water-safety-plan.php). This could also be partly integrated in the curriculum
- Promote development/update of internal documentation and regulation on water, sanitation and hygiene in public schools.
- Ensure timely control of the provision of water pipelines, water quality and access to drinking water in educational institutions through cooperation with local municipalities.[64]
- In cooperation with local municipalities, suggest more efficient and ecologically sustainable solutions, such as dry toilets (detailed data on dray toilet principles, operations and constructions you can find on the link: http://www.wecf.eu/download/2015/November/Web_2015UDDTManual.pdf), this is especially important in regions where pit latrines are the most widely chosen alternative for schools.

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63 Please, see the link

64 Useful information on sanitation and hygiene at schools could be found on the link

GOAL 7:
ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL

TARGET 7.1. BY 2030, GEORGIA ACHIEVES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN ENSURING NATIONWIDE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE AND MODERN ENERGY SERVICES

Indicator 7.1.1. Proportion of population with access to electricity.

Indicator 7.1.2 Proportion of population primarily using clean sources of energy

Indicator 7.1.3 Proportion of population with access to reliable and modern energy services

Energy poverty is described as a condition in which individuals or families lack the

possibility to heat their dwelling or satisfy their energy needs at an affordable cost. Hence, energy poverty relates to physical accessibility as well as affordability of energy services. Some of the factors creating the conditions of energy poverty are: a poorly maintained infrastructure, increasing fuel costs and extreme weather conditions[65]. As of today, 99% of the Georgian population has access to electricity and 68% - to natural gas[66]. For the purposes of heating their homes, heating water and preparing meals, the population predominantly uses natural gas, firewood and electricity. In the total usage of energy in households, the share of natural gas amounts to 51.8%, firewood – 29.9%, and electricity – 16.4%. Firewood as a source of energy is much higher in rural areas (home to 41% of the Georgian population), reaching 82% of the total energy use. Such a high share of firewood use can be considered as an indicator of energy poverty as it points to the limited accessibility/affordability of cleaner sources of energy.

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65 More information on energy poverty can be found here.

66 Kvaratskelia, T. Margvelashvili, M. and Shatirishvili N. 2018. Energy Poverty and Vulnerable Consumers in Georgia. Report Available here in Georgian.

Energy poverty also has an important gender dimension as it disproportionately affects women. This is especially true in such developing countries as Georgia, where women have less economic opportunities and spend more time at home, fulfilling household chores and preparing meals with unclean sources of energy. According to the World Bank data from 2015, air pollution in Georgian homes is 30 times higher than the levels recommended by the WHO. Indoor air pollution can largely be attributed to the use of unclean sources of energy. Pollution from firewood puts people at higher risk of developing cataract, cardiovascular diseases, asthma, perinatal diseases and other health conditions (World Bank, 2012). Consequently, women are facing higher risks to their health due to their more extended exposure to unclean sources of energy in homes.

It is to be noted that energy efficiency and renewable energy is largely absent in the nationalised SDG framework of Georgia. The progress in this regard is primarily driven by CSOs and despite the efforts from civil society activists, lack of political will in the government stalls the process. Important steps have been made by CSOs in reducing energy poverty and increasing the use of clean and sustainable energy sources. Low-cost solar water heaters[67] have been installed by energy cooperatives[68] in rural parts of the country which provided easy access to clean and sustainable energy, reduced fuel costs and contributed to the mitigation of environmental degradation. It is important to emphasize however that scarcity of information on, as well as access to, modern, clean and efficient sources of energy is especially prominent among the socially vulnerable groups of the population. Disadvantaged groups lack information on the reduced and affordable prices of energy efficient bulbs and clean sources of energy and consider firewood as the cleanest and economically most sound alternative.

[67] The report is available here.

[68] The report is available here.

CRITICAL CASE

Although access to natural gas, as one of the most affordable sources of energy is growing in Georgia, a persisting cause of distress in the population is the concern over safety. Multiple cases were reported over the past year in which safety violations of natural gas installations caused deaths of men, women and children. These cases sparked discussions over the need for stricter safety regulations in energy services and a countrywide inspection of the safety standards in natural gas installations. Experts also point to the need of a largescale awareness-raising campaign in the country to abolish the widespread practice of self-installation of natural gas heaters and increase people's knowledge about protective measures, such as, continuous ventilation of their dwellings. According to the newly introduced legislative initiative, every household will have an obligation to conduct an inspection of the installed heating system. In the initial phase, the responsibility is taken on by the natural gas provider present in the area, but provisionally, starting from 2023, citizens will have to cover the costs of the services of private inspection companies on their own.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Combatting energy poverty should be regarded as one of the primary objectives of energy policy, to ensure wide access to safe, reliable, quality and affordable energy services. Special focus should be placed on regions where faulty infrastructure endangers people's lives and health as well as harms household appliances;
- An informational campaign should be conducted on energy efficiency and safe energy use. Special attention should be directed towards the regions to raise awareness about the health and environmental effects of using firewood as a source of energy and more efficient alternatives of energy supply. It is important to single out women in the informational campaign as the health consequences of firewood use are felt most acutely by women;
- Re-direct state sponsored social energy programs, providing subsidized firewood, electricity and gas towards using sustainable sources of energy (Solar Water Heaters, solar power) and improving energy efficiency in vulnerable households;
- An indicator on energy efficiency should be included in the nationalized SDG framework to incite political will and measure progress towards the goals;
- An indicator on indoor air pollution (which is often caused by inappropriate heating devices related to energy poverty) should be included in the indicators of either SDG 7 or SDG 3 (good health and well-being).