

GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMME

***Assessment of the Gender Equality Policy
in Georgia by Women's Organizations***

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Introduction

After the post-Soviet period, gender and gender equality became objects of active discussion in Georgia.¹

Gender is a socially constructed category which is created by the culture to denote the concepts of man and woman.² By gender we mean not only the qualities that characterize men or women, but also the models of behavior, thinking, and action that society and culture establish for men and women. As noted by Wharton,³ gender is a kind of central organizing principle of social life in every culture.

Gender relations determine how equally men and women use, have access to, and control resources.⁴ We encounter a lot of cases of inequality and discrimination that are caused by models of behavior and expectations established according to gender roles. Division and differentiation between people by gender that leads to gender inequality are characteristic of almost every society.⁵ The World Bank report of 2003 says that issues of gender inequality that manifest themselves in unequal participation of men and women, for example, in the areas of education, health care, and politics, affect the development of the world.⁶

Georgia and Gender Equality

In countries like Georgia which have a traditional culture and where patriarchal norms are dominant, it is accepted to think that women, due to their gender role, should be engaged in household chores and child raising and that they are not required to be active in social and political life. Besides, women are also expected to be submissive and more passive than men in the family. As a common saying associated with a woman's getting married goes, "women are delivered to their masters", which means nothing else but a woman's master is first, her family and then, her husband's family.

A study conducted on women in 2010 – National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Georgia,⁷ – makes it clear that 50.7% of the women surveyed think that a good wife should obey her husband even if she does not agree with his decision, and 45% believe that a man must show his wife/partner clearly who is the head of the family. The data of Caucasus Barometer 2010 also

¹ Directorate General of Human Rights (2004) "National machinery, action plans and gender mainstreaming in the Council of Europe member states since the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)" Available at: http://books.google.ge/books/about/National_Machinery_Action_Plans_and_Gend.html?id=LRaGtgAACAAJ&redir_esc=y Accessed: July, 1.2012

² Butler, J. (1990), "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity". New York: Rutledge, p.163–71

³ Wharton, A.S. (2004), "Gender inequality". In: G. Ritzer, ed. Handbook of Social problems. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, p.156-17

⁴ Magnus, E. (2003), "Gender analysis in NRSP. DFID NRSP Programme Development Report PD123". Available at : <http://94.126.106.9/r4d/PDF/Outputs/NatResSys/PD123Rep.pdf> Accessed: July 14.2012

⁵ Kimmel, M.S. (2000), "The gendered society reader." Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.2

⁶ World Bank (2003), "Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals." Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Publications/20169280/gendermdg.pdf> Accessed: June 29.2012

⁷ Chitashvili, M., Javakhishvili, N., Arutiunov, L., Tsuladze, L., Chachanidze, S. (2010), "National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Georgia." Available at: <http://www.genderbasedviolence.ge/conimages/annual-eng.pdf> Accessed: July 5.2012

confirm the attitude of the society that the man's rights should be given priority in the family, since 63% of those surveyed think that the man should be the main decision-maker in the family, and 83% believe that the man must be the breadwinner.⁸

These figures show a trend according to which men are in a priority position due to their gender role. They are not only entitled, but also required to be socially active and make decisions.

We may think that these data plays into the hands of those who assess strengthening of women's rights and the importance of gender equality critically and often think that women are satisfied with their subordinated position and do not want changes.

It is possible to assume that this is really so and a lot of women do not want any changes, neither seek to get involved in social or political spheres, or to have more power in their families, and they comply with the gender stereotypes. But, in such case we fail to pay attention to the fact that, often, women simply do not realize the existing opportunities due to having been raised in a traditional and patriarchal family, or because they do not have real information about opportunities. In reality, women are often deprived of the possibility to make real and informed choices and, thus, free themselves from a state of rightlessness.⁹ A number of studies show that inequality hinders many economic and social processes, there is a close link between gender equality and defeating the poverty,¹⁰ and women's active involvement, particularly in the area of politics, has a decisive importance for democracy building.¹¹

It is obvious that women in Georgia are passive in politics, which is manifested in the fact that the executive and legislative bodies are mainly represented by men. According to the data of 2011, only nine out of the active 138 members of the Georgian Parliament are women.¹² Low representation of women in decision-making positions is directly connected with the severity of the problem of gender inequality in the country. Work and discussion of the resolution of this problem started in 1994, as a result of which Georgia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).¹³

In 2006, the state adopted the Law against Domestic Violence,¹⁴ while in 2010 it passed the Gender Equality Law which envisages ensuring women's safety, equality on the job market, and supporting women's involvement in politics.¹⁵

⁸ Caucasus Barometer 2010 Available at: <http://www.crrc.ge/oda/> Accessed: August, 10.2012

⁹Sumbadze, N. (2008), Gender and Society." Available at : http://www.undp.org/ge/files/24_425_824113_gender&society2008.pdf, Accessed: July, 8.2012

¹⁰ Derbyshire, H. (2002). "Gender Manual: A Practical Guide for Development Policy Makers and Practitioners, Department for International Development (DFID)". Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/gendermanual.pdf>. Accessed: July 3.2012

¹¹ Beer,C. (2009) "Democracy and Gender Equality, Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID)", *Business and Economics*, Volume 44, Issue 3, p.212-214.

¹²Available at: http://www.parliament.ge/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=2&Itemid=117&lang=ge. Accessed 12.08.2012

¹³ Gaprindashvili, L., Samnidze, Kh., The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Equality, Legislation and Reality. Available at: http://georgien.boell-net.de/downloads/CEDAW_final_publication.pdf. Accessed: August 3, 2012

¹⁴ Sabedashvili, T. (2007), "Gender and Democratization: the Case of Georgia 1991-2006". Available at: http://stopvaw.org/uploads/gender_and_democratization.pdf. Accessed: July, 2012

In addition, women's NGOs also work particularly actively on the resolution of the problems of gender inequality. The main goal of the NGOs is to empower women in Georgia, develop gender equality, make gender policy a topical issue, protect women's rights, increase women's involvement in social, political, and economic life, and build peace and democracy.

As far as I am informed the organizations that work on women's issues and protection of women's rights make up about 12% of all NGOs in Georgia.¹⁶

The organizations carry out a lot of projects and studies to support the gender equality policy and are also engaged in disseminating information about gender equality and women's rights.

In spite of the changes made at the legislative level, Georgia occupies a very undesirable position in terms of gender equality. For example, according to the UN Human Development Index of 2011, the country takes the 75th place among 187 countries in terms of human development; it occupies the 73rd place among 146 countries according to the Gender Inequality Index and the 86th place among 135 countries according to the Global Gender Gap Index of 2011.¹⁷ Despite the fact that the government, on the one hand, and women's organizations, on the other, spare no effort to contribute to the development of gender equality in Georgia, the country's undesirable position in the international indices, naturally, forces us to ask what the social actors represented by women's organizations, think about the gender policy in Georgia.

The Aim of the Study

The present study aims at finding out how representatives of organizations working on women's issues assess the gender equality policy in Georgia, specifically, what types of problems and difficulties they see in the implementation of the gender equality policy, in which spheres they encounter the most cases of gender discrimination, which steps taken during the past ten years they consider important for the successful achievement of gender equality, how they assess the state initiatives and changes made in the legislative system, and what opportunities and risk factors they see in terms of the development of gender equality in Georgia.

Methodology

To achieve the aims of the study, I used the methodology of qualitative research, specifically, semi-structured in-depth interviews. I selected the target group on the basis of a list of NGOs active in Tbilisi provided by the Women's Fund in Georgia. The Women's Fund in Georgia was founded in 2005; it is the first local grant-giving organization which supports the activities and initiatives of women's groups in Georgia. The activities of the Fund are directed towards resolving

¹⁵Duban, E. (2010), "Gender Assessment USAID/GEORGIA. Available at: http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/crosscutting_programs/wid/pubs/Georgia_Gender_Assessment_Jun-2010_508.pdf. Accessed: June 17, 2012

¹⁶Rusetsky, H., Delemenchuk, A., Metreveli, T. (2007), "Assessment of needs of women's movement in Georgia." Available at: [http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/gcgp.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/1Assessment2007/\\$FILE/1Assessment2007.pdf](http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/gcgp.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/1Assessment2007/$FILE/1Assessment2007.pdf). Accessed: July 26, 2012

¹⁷Bendeliani, N. (2012), "Beyond the Human Development Index: Assessing the Human Development in Georgia through International Indices and Rankings". Available at: http://css.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=23&info_id=433. Accessed July 24, 2012

various problems, and it helps different women's groups and NGOs achieve their goals. I chose to start looking for respondents for this study with the help of this organization, because it receives the most grant applications from groups, organizations, and individuals working on women's issues and gender equality.

I addressed the Women's Fund and selected a target group that matched the objectives of the study from the list provided by them.

From the list of NGOs working on women's problems in Tbilisi, eight organizations were selected that had worked in the direction of the development of gender equality for an average of six or seven years; two NGOs that have worked for two years and try to strengthen gender equality with their priorities for action; two representatives of the Women's Fund itself; and another, no less active foundation in Georgia - Taso. The study also involved a representative of the Asian Development Bank who works on contributing to gender mainstreaming in Georgia in this bank.

The aforementioned organizations include:

1. Women's Fund Georgia www.womensfundgeorgia.ge
2. The "Taso" Foundation www.taso.ge
3. The Asian Development Bank www.adb.org
4. Women's Information Center www.wicge.org
5. NGO Identoba www.identoba.ge
6. Sakhli - advice center for women www.saxli.gol.ge
7. Women's Initiatives Supporting Group <http://women.ge/>
8. The Anti-Violence Network in Georgia www.avng.ge
9. Human Rights Priority www.hrp.ge
10. The Civil Society Development Center <http://csdc.gol.ge/> <http://www.facebook.com/csdc5>
11. Helping Hand www.ngo.org.ge
12. Association for the employment of women - Amagdari
13. The Caucasus Feminist Initiative www.wprc.org.ge

The organizations aim at:

- Making gender policy a topical issue
- Protecting women's rights
- Increasing women's involvement in social, political and economic life and in democracy building

- Creating equal rights for citizens
- Raising public sensitivity towards women's issues
- Supporting women's joint initiatives
- Creating a gender-sensitive environment

From the aforementioned organizations, I selected directors of organizations, coordinators working in projects that relate directly to gender equality, and, in case of the foundations, grant managers, as respondents of the study. In-depth interviews were only conducted with 18 persons. The interviews were conducted at the respondents' workplaces, based on an advance arrangement, and with a full guarantee of confidentiality. In the analysis the respondents who took part in the study are referred to as experts, since I attach great importance to the information provided by them due to the work they do, their knowledge, and professional experience.

The semi-structured interview guide about the strengths and weaknesses of the gender equality policy in Georgia included questions about the respondents' attitudes and opinions about what had improved in Georgia in terms of gender equality during the past years (after the post-Soviet period), what should be improved, and in general, how they assessed the existing situation.

Each interview lasted for about 50-70 minutes and was recorded on an audio recorder. The information received was processed by deciphering the records and preparing detailed transcripts.

Assessment of the Gender Equality Policy in Georgia

All the 18 experts who took part in the study emphasize that the ultimate goal of the development of gender policy is to ensure that every member of the society, regardless of their gender, race, religion, and ethnic origin, has equal access to the resources existing in the country. The respondents explain that a high level of gender equality is a sign of the high level of democracy in a country. They think that maximum development of gender equality will contribute to the achievement of the goals our country has set.

"In general, achievement of gender equality in all areas of life is a sign of a high level of democracy and will significantly increase the striving towards the aims Georgia has set." (R12)

"A society in which gender equality is as developed as possible is much healthier and includes more happy people." (R3)

The respondents point out that the gender equality policy has really developed in Georgia in comparison with the post-Soviet period. In the recent past, gender-based discrimination and domestic violence were not recognized in any way either in the legislative or public space. At present, the situation has improved, which is manifested in the fact that in 2006 the state adopted the Law against Domestic Violence¹⁸ and in 2010 it passed the Gender Equality Law.¹⁹

¹⁸ Sabedashvili, T. (2007), "Gender and Democratization: the Case of Georgia 1991-2006." Available at: http://stopvaw.org/uploads/gender_and_democratization.pdf. Accessed: July 23, 2012

Amendments were made to the Law on Election Quotas. The amendments relate to political associations and contribute to increasing the participation of woman politicians in the decision-making process.

One of the successful steps in the implementation of the gender equality policy singled out by the respondents is that the Consultation Council on Gender Equality under the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia has become a standing body, is involved in the process of implementation of the gender policy, and takes part in devising of action plans.

"We have never had such support from the legislative and executive branches. The donors always supported these issues, but there was no will." (R17)

"In the recent years, there has been an improvement in the direction of gender equality both in terms of implementation of the policy and the response of the society. Whereas there was earlier a cynical attitude to the topic of domestic violence, today this attitude has changed. It can be argued that the level of consciousness of the society has increased." (R2)

"There is progress in comparison with the previous years, which is also confirmed by studies. The number of people who think that men and women should be represented equally in politics has increased. The number of those who think that women should have independent income has increased. There has been an increase in the number of women who realize and recognize that they have been discriminated ; I mean concrete cases, people who are, victims of violence and recognize and protest it." (R6)

However, each expert thinks that despite the aforementioned changes and steps forward, it is very difficult to pursue the gender equality policy in Georgia. When asked about the reason for such a judgment, the experts give answers which can be summarized as follows: First of all, the existing laws are not sufficiently well-developed and adapted to the Georgian reality, and, what is the most important, the laws often fail to be enforced. To strengthen their arguments, most of the experts give statistical data which, for example, make it clear that Georgia occupies the 86th place among the 135 countries of the OSCE in terms of gender equality.

"From the viewpoint of policy, the existing situation is catastrophic. I say this based on the statistics and data we have. We occupy the last place among the OSCE countries. This is the reason why changes were made to the legislation. The future prospects depend on political parties and whether they will agree to cooperate and make changes to include women in their ballots with the ratio necessary to bring them to power." (R1)

"Gender policy does not exist in Georgia. We have a lot of laws on the paper, we have ratified the CECAW, but in reality no actions are taken. We have a new project on women's rights, and we conduct flash mobs in which the attitudes of the society and the police are clearly visible. I have personally witnessed a fact of violence. We protected a girl and called the patrol police. The police were disposed very cynically towards all this, which irritated me very much." (R13)

The experts believe that the gender equality policy should, first of all, be implemented by the state followed by political parties, governmental organizations, and NGOs. The implementation of this policy should be based on genuine will. Each of the aforementioned structures should realize the real importance of gender equality and accordingly, try to cope with inequality. The majority of the

¹⁹ Duban, E.(2010), "Gender Assessment USAID/GEORGIA." Available at: http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/crosscutting_programs/wid/pubs/Georgia_Gender_Assessment_Jun-2010_508.pdf. Accessed: June 17, 2012

respondents noted that the implementation of the gender equality policy should not depend on international donors whose priorities and action plans include the development of this sphere. The experts also emphasized that the state lacks the will to pursue a full-fledged gender policy.

"If we talk about political will, I would say that there is no political will in our country. The fact that no one prevents its existence does not mean that someone supports it. They adopted a law, but the state does not allot funds for its implementation, which means that this is not a priority for it. However, it won't get in the way, and it will be glad if its implementation is funded by SIDA, for example." (R6)

"The gender policy in today's Georgia is created by the normative requirements that characterize the international community, because there are too few forces within the country to implement this policy. The policy is implemented if we take the years 1994-1997, when the CEDAW was ratified, as a starting point." (R2)

Several experts note that the interest of the state of Georgia in gender policy and its implementation in the country is caused by the demand of the international community. In their opinion, if not the pressure from international organizations, Georgia might not have considered implementing gender policy for a long time.

The fact that the international organizations are really interested in the resolution of gender-related issues in Georgia is demonstrated clearly by the OECD data²⁰ which show the amounts of sums the international community transferred to Georgia from 2006 to 2010 for the resolution of the issues of gender equality.

Table 1 below shows that in the years 2006-2010 the sums transferred by the international donors for funding projects of women's organizations, fluctuated between USD 56,600 and USD 51,995. By 2008 the funding increased sharply and in 2009 it already reached USD 3 million. By 2010, the amount of the sums transferred in the direction of gender equality dropped to half a million dollars.

Table 1 – Sums transferred for women's organizations by international donors in 2006-2010. (The sums in the table are indicated in USD.)

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
0.056609	0.051995	0.963423	2.944804	0.544944
0.056609	0.051995	0.963423	2.944804	0.544944

Among the countries that have funded women's organizations, Germany and Sweden lead the way. More than 90% of the sums transferred in 2010 were donated by Germany, and the amount transferred to Georgia by Sweden to contribute to gender equality in 2009 made up USD 3 million.

²⁰ See the OECD data at the following link: <http://www.stats.oecd.org/> Accessed: July, 10. 2012

Table 2 – Sums transferred by Germany and Sweden for the development of gender equality. (The sums in the table are indicated in USD.)

Germany	Sweden
2010 წელი	2009 წელი
0.483444	2.882524

According to the OECD data the sums transferred for the development of gender equality were higher in 2008-2009 than in other years. The transfer of the biggest amounts in these years may be connected with the fact that, in general, in 2008-2009 Georgia received increased financial aid from different donors in different directions, and the sums transferred for gender equality from the aforementioned financial flow also increased (see Table 3).

Table 3 shows the sums provided for Georgia due to the agreement between Georgia and international donors which it was supposed to receive from 2006 to 2010. The sums envisaged for the years 2008-2009 sharply exceed the transfers envisaged for 2006-2007. By 2010, the sums decrease again.

Table 3 – Sums provided due to the agreement between Georgia and international donors that it was supposed to receive in 2006-2010. (The sums in the table are indicated in USD).²¹

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
723.98419	371.7368	1242.4513	1192.4769	892.88623
515.92599	209.27506	783.44164	651.04163	620.47803

The fact remains that funds are allotted and different organizations in the country are trying to resolve the problems in this area. But how and using which methods is the development of gender equality supported?

When asked this question the experts indicate to changes made to the legislation. However, they themselves note that the laws are not sufficiently well-developed and adapted to the Georgian reality. The logical question comes forward: why do they believe that a number of steps have been made, for example, in the legislative field, if the law is not sufficiently well-developed and often fails to be enforced? The experts name lack of will on the part of the state as the reason. Some of

²¹ See the aforementioned data at: <http://www.stats.oecd.org/> Accessed: July, 10. 2012

them note that the Georgian government is forced to obey the normative requirements that are established by the international community and donor organizations; for this reason the state implements this type of policy artificially, and the country still lacks the will to fully implement the gender policy.

"There would be no political will if all this were not imposed by the UN. The shadow reports of the convention also reflect this: several pages are sent from Georgia, while an enormous binder is sent from Britain. All this happens for getting pluses." (R18)

Under the artificial implementation of the gender policy the experts mean that the state allots insufficient sums for the development of gender equality; they think that at this stage much more physical, human, and financial resources are needed to implement the gender policy in Georgia, while the state fails to focus on this issue and allots very scarce sums. And even these sums are allotted simply to comply with the demand of the international community.

"There is no political will in our country. The fact that no one prevents its existence does not mean that someone supports it. They adopted a law, but the state does not allot funds for its implementation, which means that this is not a priority for it. However, it won't get in the way, and the state will be glad if its implementation is funded by SIDA, for example." (R6)

Apart from the insufficient funding by the state, the experts also talked about insufficient funding by donors. They think that the funding provided today is absolutely inadequate for successful development of gender equality, and much more funds are required to implement projects and carry out future activities. However, they did not specify what types of projects and activities they meant.

"The funding is too scarce for the colossal work that the organizations do. Apart from the scarcity of funding, it is bad that the projects last for six months or one year which comes as an absolute shock to the organizations and sometimes makes us victims of violence ourselves, because deadlines, reports and projects are constantly pressing." (R9)

"It is very difficult to get funding. We were unable to carry out a lot of projects, and we won't be able to carry out many of them. Funding from donors is limited." (R4)

"... is not sufficient at all. It cannot change the environment either, because the reality is different. I'm not talking about whether someone uses these sums honestly or not. This is the misfortune of poor countries. When you finance such social changes in a country with a more or less stable economy, it's a different story, but when there is such a crisis and the level of poverty is so high in the country, of course, more money is required." (R6)

Only one respondent believes that the funding allotted for gender policy and related projects are sufficient, though these sums are not spent purposefully.

"There is enough money if spent purposefully! ... A lot of money is spent, but in a wrong way. This is our money, and women's organizations and experts should be in charge of it." (R2)

We can assume that under unpurposeful spending the respondent means funding of projects carried out only in several "traditional" directions, such as domestic violence, women's reproductive health, and ongoing studies on women's political participation, since, when talking about projects carried out in the direction of gender, the experts note that particular attention is devoted to the

issues of domestic violence, women's reproductive health, and women's political participation. As for other topical issues, such as employment, economy, etc, they remain beyond the attention of the society and NGOs.

"The issue of violence is studied the most..." (R18)

"... domestic violence, women's political participation, as well as reproductive health, on which studies are conducted. The areas of employment, women's participation in the economy, agriculture, etc. have been studied to a lesser extent... NGOs are often deprived of the possibility to employ a researcher who will plan these projects well, so there is less trust towards the projects. The same applies to the Service of Statistics; they often complain about the lack of resources to conduct separate studies about gender-related issues." (R10)

When talking about the problems that are related to gender inequality, we should take into account that we encounter gender-based discrimination which makes women's position very disadvantageous in many areas apart from domestic violence and women's passivity. Why do the Georgian experts believe that only several severe issues have been studied and other, no less severe, issues remain beyond the spotlight? Only a small part of the experts gave a specific answer to this question. In their opinion there are very few donors in Georgia constantly funding the same NGOs they know well and trust.

This may be one of the reasons why only certain directions are under focus. If the same organizations working on the same issues meet the requirements of the same donors, this can result in a situation in which only a small number of issues are studied and projects are carried out only in a limited number of directions, which was pointed out by the experts themselves.

"There are very few donors in this field. They say that they fund women's issues broadly, but this is not the case. There are very few sources of funding, and all women's organizations have the same donors. These are the Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash, Filia, and Urgent Action Fund." (R18)

"There is a lack of donors. The ministries are less interested unless it concerns education. When they hear that it concerns gender, their interest decreases." (R13)

"... monopolization of this topic, those entities that do not understand this issue at all, as well as in terms of healthy competition. The level of professionalism among the staff of women's organizations should also be enhanced." (R1)

So far our discussion has revolved around the financial problems relating to gender equality. If we summarize the opinions of the experts, the main problem with the development of gender equality in Georgia is connected with the lack of will of the state and limited funding both by the state and donors. Of course, without financial resources it is impossible to have physical resources, and accordingly, it will be impossible to carry out a lot of projects and studies in this direction. Can the resolution of the financial issues alone turn out to be insufficient to improve gender inequality in Georgia? One of the most important criteria of gender equality is the number of women in politics and decision-making positions.

All experts interviewed confirmed that the number of women in politics is very important. Apart from financial issues, it is precisely women's passivity in politics that they consider a serious problem.

"I still think that women are the most disadvantaged in politics. The number of women in the Parliament is very small. They are now increasing it, but the general attitude is still negative." (R9)

"It will be very good if more women are involved. In our country, the majority of people involved in politics are men." (R3)

Why Is Women's Involvement in Politics Important?

The experts emphasize that women's participation in decision-making processes will contribute to successful implementation of the political and social processes going on in the country.

"It has been confirmed by a number of studies that women's participation in decision-making processes and equality of the number of men and women in representative bodies significantly improves the quality of decisions and the processes that are under way in the country. This influences all areas in their own way, because women know their and children's needs better, they know more about family issues, and, accordingly, they are going to make more correct decisions." (R12)

"It would be very good if there were more women in the Parliament. In some ways, men are cleverer, but in other ways, women are more intelligent." (R13)

"After women became part of the bar in France at the end of the 1970s, the society felt that a different atmosphere had been created in the system of justice, because women put forward a different vision and approach to resolving problems which turned out to be much more desirable for the society." (R11)

The respondents think that in any democratic country a high number of women in politics is a **strength** of gender equality.

"We can enumerate countries where there is gender equality and where GDP and economic parameters are much higher than in other countries, political decisions are much more balanced, and everyone's interests are taken into account. The social policy will improve. If we talk about the country's development," (R2)

At this stage there is a lack of women's involvement in Georgia, which itself is a **weakness** of the gender equality policy and significantly hinders its successful implementation. The experts hope that women's active involvement in politics in the future will bring such important issues as health care, education, and employment to the fore. Women's involvement in politics will result in new and possibly more effective decisions and approaches to eradicating problems in these areas.

"Many states have recognized the necessity of gender mainstreaming in different areas of life. Regarding women's participation in decision-making process," (R12)

"The examples of a number of countries have shown that women are more sensitive towards social problems, and later, women in politics introduce this attitude to their political agenda. This is very useful for a country. The social problem is one of our biggest problems. We have a lot of vulnerable groups, and we don't have programs." (R3)

"Involving women equally and fully in the labor process will increase GDP by one and a half. Georgia, which has a population of three million people, does not have a right not to use its labor resources fully." (R2)

In the respondents' opinion, a high number of women in decision-making positions cause the allotment of more funds by the state for the resolution of problems of such groups as female

victims of violence, the elderly, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and marginalized groups.

As several respondents point out, at this stage, gender equality in Georgia is only focused on the equality of men and women, and members of society who are discriminated for any other reason remain beyond the framework of gender equality.

"The very fact that LGBT is not integrated with the sphere of gender equality is the reason why gender is discussed as men and women. This group remains outside of the scope. Naturally, this is a big weakness, and we have a lot of work ahead to improve this... Another group that is also discriminated in every area consists of rural women. They are in a very hard situation. If you ask me, giving a brochure with a list of women's rights to a woman who lives in a village of highland Adjara is equivalent of making fun of this person." (R6)

The conversations/assessments of the experts also reveal a no less important problem – the passivity of women in politics and decision-making positions. We can regard this problem as one of the weakest points of the gender policy in Georgia.

It is difficult to talk about implementing the gender equality policy in a country where women are so underrepresented in state structures. The fact that women constitute only 6% of the members of the Parliament of Georgia²² is the most serious weakness in Georgia's gender policy. Proceeding from this, we can conclude that even if the problems mentioned by the experts had been resolved and the non-governmental sector received substantial funding for the resolution of the problem of inequality, the situation might still not improve (assuming it does not deteriorate) until more women got involved in the resolution of the problem at the government level.

Why Are Women Passive?

To the question why women are passive, the experts answer that the Georgian society is not sufficiently informed about gender and gender equality. This factor makes it difficult to enforce the laws that have been developed and carry out different social activities effectively.

The experts particularly emphasize women's passivity and believe that one of the **weaknesses** of the gender equality policy in Georgia is the lack of women's consolidation, which, in its turn, hinders the formation of women's movement.

"Women's consolidation and women's movement do not exist in Georgia; that the political will should, generally, be strong..." (R1)

"The society is not active enough in this respect, and women have little motivation to take part in resolving their problems." (R12)

"I think women are more problematic today than men; women, in their social status, are inclined to be conservative. A change should take place in women and they should start taking the first steps." (R2)

²² See the information at: http://www.civil.ge/files/files/2012/Pre-Election_Delegation_Statement-GEORGIAN.pdf
Accessed: July, 29. 2012

"Unfortunately, women in Georgia often don't support gender equality and don't want to be equal with men. I think there is much work to do to achieve a situation where women make decisions and are equal to men. I don't think that women should not be in the family; they should be both in the family and in active social life." (R4)

The experts talk about indifferent, if not aggressive, attitude of the society to gender equality. They say that more trainings and a systematic information campaign would change these attitudes, and the society would assess the existing situation relatively more adequately. The respondents explain that very often the discriminated women, due to lack of information about their rights, do not actually know that their rights are violated.

"Perhaps more training should be conducted for both women and men living in Georgia. Women often don't know that their rights are violated... For some reason, women are less interested." (R13)

However, the information about projects carried out by women's organizations which I collected from their web-sites and the list of projects mentioned in the interview indicate to the opposite. It is precisely informing the society about gender-related issues and, particularly, women's awareness a lot of projects were devoted to.²³ It is possible that what is done is not enough and the problem lies in the society itself. Perhaps the society finds it difficult to perceive these trainings, information campaigns and seminars appropriately, since it does not consider gender issues worth paying attention.

Several respondents tried to explain women's passivity with economic hardship. What connects economic hardship with passivity, inactivity and silence is that it is impossible for a woman in poverty to have motivation and time to be actively involved in different social and, the even more, political processes. The experts explain that women can only be activated through economic strengthening and suppose that as soon as women of the middle class become strong economically, their inertness will also disappear and they will get involved in different social processes.

"A woman you want to strengthen should have an income; she can't take the social responsibility when her child does not have shoes to go to school... together with the growth and strengthening of the middle class, which is automatically related to the disappearance of inertness and activation of women, so that they protect their rights." (R15)

"In order to improve the gender policy, the state must allot funds for the resolution of women's problems, so that they become more active and get involved in politics." (R9)

Part of the experts believes that poverty hinders women's activity in the public and political spheres. And if we look at this opinion more globally, there is a vicious circle both ends of which are connected with the gender equality policy.

The experts note that successful implementation of the gender policy requires a combination of active involvement of the state, more funding than is provided today in Georgia, and women's consolidation. But in the opinion of the experts, the will on the part of the state is low, which is manifested in the scarcity of funds due to which a lot of women's problems remain unresolved. Women's unresolved problems and their hard economic condition, in their turn, cause women's

²³ Detailed information about the projects carried out by each of the organizations can be seen on their web-sites.

passivity, which is one of the biggest problems in the implementation of the gender equality policy.

"When the economy gets stronger and better jobs and education become available, when women graduate from institutions of vocational or higher education, work, and are no longer dependent on their fathers and then husbands, they will no longer think that they are weak." (R14)

If the experts think that there is a link between economic condition and women's activity/passivity, it is logical to suppose that the higher economic level a woman is at, the more actively she should be involved in decision-making process.

I decided to verify this supposition by means of the dataset of Caucasus Barometer 2010.

The respondents' answers to the only gender-sensitive question in Caucasus Barometer – **"In your opinion, which household member should be the main decision maker in a family – a man or a woman?"** – were compared to one another according to the economic condition of the female respondents. If the experts' supposition is correct, then women's economic condition should influence their responses about equal involvement in the decision-making process in the family. The better off a woman is economically, the more she should believe that decisions in the family should be made by representatives of both genders rather than by the man only, or even by the woman.

I divided the female respondents of **CB 2010** into two groups. The first group includes employed women and women whose total income of their family is more than USD 800, while the second group consists of unemployed women and women whose total income of their family does not exceed USD 50. It should also be noted that, in total, employed women make up 23% of the women selected through Caucasus Barometer 2010, while unemployed women make up 77%. Women with overall family income more than USD 800 make up 2%, while the women with overall family income less than USD 50 make up 10%.

According to the data of CB 2010, 68% of employed women think that the man should make decisions in the family, 1% believes that the woman should be the decision-maker, while 29% think that both the man and woman should make decisions. In the case of unemployed women, there is less number of women (13%) who think that both women and men should make decisions equally in the family.

Table 4. Attitudes of employed and unemployed women about who should be the decision-maker in the family

		Which household member should be the main decision maker in a family – a man or a woman?			
		DK	A Men	A Woman	Equally
Do you have a job?	Yes	0.9%	84.9%	0.9%	13.1%

No	1.0%	68.3%	1.2%	29.0%
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Forty-three percent of the women with overall family income more than USD 800 think that the man and woman should make decisions in the family equally, while only 16% of the women with overall family income less than USD 50 think in the same way. 57% of the women from the first group think that the man should be the only decision-maker in the family, and none of them name the woman as the sole decision-maker. As for the women from the other group (with less than USD 50 income), 81% of them think that the man should be the main decision-maker, while 1% name the woman as the main decision-maker.

Table 5. Attitudes of women about who should be the decision-maker in the family, according to the level of their family income

		Which household member should be the main decision maker in a family – a man or a woman?			
		DK	Man	Woman	Equally
HH total monetary income	800 and more USD		57.4%		42.6%
	Up to 50 USD	1.6%	81.3%	0.7%	16.3%

At the first sight, to some extent, these data strengthen the experts' arguments about women's economic empowerment and activation, because CB 2010 shows that a greater number of employed women with high family income believe that the man and woman should be equal in the decision-making process than those women who are unemployed and the income of whose families is extremely low. But it must be noted that all the questions about economic condition in Caucasus Barometer imply the general economic condition of the family and the common income of all of its members rather than the personal income of individual respondents. Due to this, it is possible that the women who are included in these two groups have no personal income at all, or that they do not differ from each other with the amount of their personal income. For this reason, we cannot stand up for the experts' argument with these data. However, it is noteworthy that far many employed women with high family income support the involvement of representatives of both genders in the decision-making process in the family. But is it possible to assume that it is only economic and material condition that determines women's stereotypical attitude to gender-sensitive issues? Is it only high or low income that determines how a woman assesses her passive and silent role in the public sphere?

Several experts gave me different explanations of women's passivity that are directly connected with the Georgian culture and traditional values.

In the experts' opinion, Georgia is dominated by patriarchal values, norms, and traditions, which may be one of the causes of women's passivity; and it is the traditional values that cause the absence of women's movement in Georgia.

"What creates the problem is the absence of women's movement..." (R6)

"There are issues relating to consciousness and education which should be resolved in the country, so that the values are ingrained in men, women, and everyone and they know that gender is not a bad thing. The biggest problem is the absence of an information strategy. It should be resolved at the level of policy." (R1)

"First of all, we need people, women who are active in the society, and there are, of course, many clever and serious people among them who will give all this the right direction. If there is will, all the other resources can be found." (R7)

The extremely negative attitudes towards the issues of gender equality in Georgia are also reflected in the questionnaire of Caucasus Barometer 2010. Recognition of the uniform norms of sexual behavior for men and women can be considered the most sensitive indicator of gender equality.

The data of Caucasus Barometer 2010 show the society's patriarchal attitude towards women's behavior, and, what is very interesting, in this case there is no essential difference between the opinions of male and female respondents. Much like men, women assess the woman's sexual freedom and her right to live independently from her parents and cohabit with a man without marriage very negatively. Fifty-two percent of the women and 48% of the men surveyed believe that it is not acceptable for a woman to live separately from her parents at any age; 47% of the men and 53% of the women think that it is not acceptable for a woman to have a sexual intercourse before marriage at any age; and, also, 47% of the men and 53% of the women believe that it is not acceptable for a woman to cohabit with a man without marriage at any age.

Table 6. Attitudes of male and female respondents to gender-sensitive questions

It is not acceptable for a women at any age to live separately from parents before marriage	
Woman	Men
52%	48%
It is not acceptable for a women at any age to have sexual relations before marriage	
Woman	Men
53%	47%
It is not acceptable for a women at any age to cohabit with a man without marriage	
Woman	Men
53%	47%

The analysis of the data of CB 2010 and the interviews with the experts makes it clear that discussion on the gender equality policy and gender-related issues reveals two major aspects – financial aspect and the attitude of the society, though both of them should be taken in to the consideration. The experts talk about either the scarcity of financial resources or the negative

attitude of the society to gender equality; part of them touches both issues, but, according to them, these two issues are independent factors that hinder the implementation of the gender policy in Georgia separately. And, in the opinion of part of the experts, in order to successfully implement the gender policy in Georgia, first of all it is necessary to resolve financial issues while the other part considers it necessary to resolve the problem of the negative attitude of the society in the first place.

But resolution of financial problems may be insufficient to resolve the problem of gender inequality in the Georgian society, and a change in the attitude of the society alone may not be enough to contribute to the implementation of the gender policy in Georgia.

Redistribution of Resources or the Problem of Recognition?

When talking about the importance of gender equality, the majority of the experts that I interviewed explain that gender equality means equal access to the resources existing in the country for everyone. Proceeding from this, if people, regardless of their gender, race, and ethnic, sexual and religious belongings, have equal access to the existing resources, we will have much fewer cases of gender-based discrimination and inequality in the country. But there are social justice theories that negate this approach, and the founder of one of such theories is the internationally recognized American scholar Nancy Fraser²⁴ who claims that only equal redistribution of resources makes no sense unless the problem of recognition is resolved.²⁵ By recognition Fraser means recognition of difference which is directly related to the cultural values of society.

N. Fraser asks to what extent the theories of just distribution can take into account the issues of recognition of difference. In her opinion, the standard theories of just distribution neglect the issue of recognition of difference and are only focused on redistribution of resources, while the theories of recognition are characterized with an opposite shortcoming – they do not pay enough attention to economic equality and redistribution of resources and do not cover the issues of just distribution. Since the most part of social injustice is a combination of economic and cultural injustice, Fraser in her analytical theories develops the concept of a new normative system which includes both the policy directed to redistribution and the policy of recognition of difference. This system of social justice assesses social systems and institutions according to how well they can ensure equal participation of people in the society.

In her work “Redistribution or Recognition?”²⁶ Fraser develops the idea that justice requires both redistribution of resources and recognition of difference, since, taken separately, none of them is sufficient. She believes that the contemporary society should realize the importance of both components and treat the issues of redistribution of resources and recognition of difference in a

²⁴ See complete information about Nancy Fraser at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy_Fraser Accessed: August, 3, 2012

^{25/26} Fraser, N. (1995), “Recognition or Redistribution? A Critical Reading of Iris Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference*”, *Journal of Political Philosophy*, Volume 3, Issue 2, p.166–180

complex manner, in relation to the problem of inequality that exists in the society, rather than independently from each other.

N. Fraser introduces the concept of bivalent collectivity to show why justice has socio-economic and cultural dimensions which are intertwined with and inseparable from each other.

A bivalent collectivity is a group of people that faces both the problem of unjust distribution of socio-economic resources and the problem of inadequate recognition which is related to culture.

The injustice faced by such a collectivity is created simultaneously in the economic and cultural spheres. An example of such bivalent collectivity, in Fraser's opinion, is gender, because gender inequality is caused partly by economic system and partly by the norms of a given society. Fraser believes that, since gender and race are paradigmatic examples of bivalent collectivity, all groups that are based on social class, sexuality, and identity are bivalent collectivities. In addition, Fraser explains that, for example, in the case of class, social injustice may be more connected with economic reasons than with the reasons related to culture, while in the case of sexual orientation the reasons of injustice are caused by cultural aspects to a much greater extent than by economic aspects. But, in the case of each such injustice, we must take both the economic and cultural phenomena into account, because, at this stage, in her opinion, the theories of just distribution pay no attention to the dimensions relating to the culture of injustice, while the theories of recognition neglect economic dimensions and the requirements of redistribution of resources. At the same time, Fraser claims that it is impossible to modify the theories of just distribution in such a way that they take into account the requirements of recognition, just as the theories of recognition are unable to take into account the requirements of redistribution of resources. Accordingly, we need the bivalent concept of justice which includes both redistribution and recognition, and both of these concepts are equally important.

The problems that were raised by the experts when they assessed the gender equality in Georgia may be suited well to Fraser's model of justice theory. The experts talk about scarcity of funds and name insufficient funding by the state as one of the main problems. In addition, part of the experts explains both women's passivity and their indifference to gender-related issues with material hardship. If we discuss this problem with Fraser's approach, we will come to the conclusion that women's passivity is best explained by the cultural values and is manifested in the problem of recognition. According to the data of Caucasus Barometer, it is precisely cultural values that explain the entire society's negative attitude to the woman's sexual freedom and her right to live independently and separately from parents. It is because of cultural values and the problem of recognition that the respondents of National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Georgia say that the wife, regardless of whether or not she agrees with her husband, must still be submissive to him.

As it seems, neither women nor the entire society recognize the essence of gender equality, the problem of inequality, and the issues that cause women's underrepresentation both in public and political spheres. And these problems and injustice are not recognized because they are caused by cultural norms and women's rightlessness and silence are considered as a norm rather than as social injustice.

If the society does not realize the essence of gender inequality and, accordingly, does not recognize it as a problem, despite how fairly the financial resources are distributed and how hard the state tries to empower women economically, women may still remain passive and inert and may entrust the resolution of the problem to the representatives of the opposite sex. The reason for this is that in Georgia gender-related injustices are caused not only by economic reasons in Georgia, and are directly related to the attitudes and norms established by our culture. And recognition of the problem of inequality may be hindered more by cultural norms and values than by insufficient funding allotted by the state for the resolution of issues of gender inequality.

Conclusion

Representatives of organizations that work on women's issues single out a lot of issues when assessing the gender policy in Georgia. First of all, each of them notes that although a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations have worked to create gender policy and improve gender equality in Georgia, the institutions that contribute to equality are weak and insufficiently well-developed. The experts think that it is necessary to perfect the changes that were made to the legislation and adapt them to the Georgian reality.

When assessing the gender policy, the respondents name three most essential problems that hinder its successful implementation: the state's insufficiently strong will to implement the gender policy, insufficient funding from the state and donors, and incorrect attitude of the society to gender-related issues.

The experts consider it necessary for the society and the state to focus on such issues as increasing women's participation in politics and to study the areas of education, health care, and employment from the perspective of gender discrimination. Almost all the experts note that the gender policy should, first of all, be implemented by the state itself and its implementation should not be caused by the demand of the international community. There should be a genuine will inside the country to resolve the issues of inequality. Each of the experts believes that the development of the gender policy will contribute to the development of democracy in Georgia, and a high number of women in politics will contribute to the resolution of many social problems. However, the most important aspect connected with gender equality is the attitude of the society to the issue of equality/inequality. The experts explain that it is necessary to raise the consciousness of the society in relation to the issues of gender and to provide it with more information through intensive trainings. In particular, they point to women's passivity in public and political spheres, which, in their opinion, is caused by economic hardship, on the one hand, and the patriarchal norms existing in the country, on the other. The experts believe that economic hardship reflects very negatively on women and their desire to be involved in different social or political processes. Due to this, women who are at a low economic level first seek to resolve their financial problems and it is only after this that they may have time and desire to get involved in the decision-making process in the public and political areas and be active in the resolution of different social issues. But we must take into consideration that the resolution of financial problems may still be insufficient for women's activation. It should also be taken into account that, nowadays, even women who are well-off are not active on the social and political scene. And statistical data makes it clear that the

attitude of the society to the issues of gender equality is unanimously critical and typical of a patriarchal society.

It remains a fact that a very big part of the society cannot see the need for women to become active and fails to realize the essence of the problems that are related to gender inequality. Our cultural values and norms require submission and passivity from women, and the society that was brought up with these attitudes finds it difficult, or fails, to accept the idea of gender equality, since it does not recognize the essence of the problem. According to Nancy Fraser's theory, redistribution of resources alone, which, in case of Georgia, implies women's economic strengthening, will not resolve the existing problem, because, apart from redistribution of resources, it is also necessary to recognize the essence of the problem. Although the experts say that more frequent and effective trainings and information campaign will increase the society's awareness of gender issues and may also weaken the wrong and negative attitude of the society, according to Fraser's theory, neither equal redistribution of resources nor recognition, taken separately, will be enough to cope with the problems of gender inequality. Fraser believes that the contemporary society should realize the importance of both components and treat the issues of redistribution of resources and recognition of difference in a complex manner rather than separately from each other. And in case of the gender policy of Georgia, this means nothing else but empowering women economically and informing them about the issues of gender equality at the same time. In such case, active trainings and information activities may bring more significant and fruitful results and create grounds for the Georgian society itself to demand that the state implement the gender policy actively in the country, instead of international donors and NGOs demanding it.

About the Author

Elene cooperates with CSS since 2010; she is a PhD student at the international PhD program in Gender Studies. Her doctoral thesis considers studying Drug Addiction Issues from the Perspective of Gender. Elene got her MA in Social and Political Science at the Ilia State University and holds BA in Social Psychology from Tbilisi State University. During her BA Elene studied at the University of Saarbrücken, within the framework of a student exchange program, where she had training courses in qualitative research planning. After returning to Tbilisi Elene started to work at Market Research & Consulting Company ACT. During her MA degree studies she planned and conducted different social research projects under the supervision of the Ilia State University research team. In 2010-2011 she joined CRRC's Junior Research Fellow program, and planned and conducted different research projects.

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