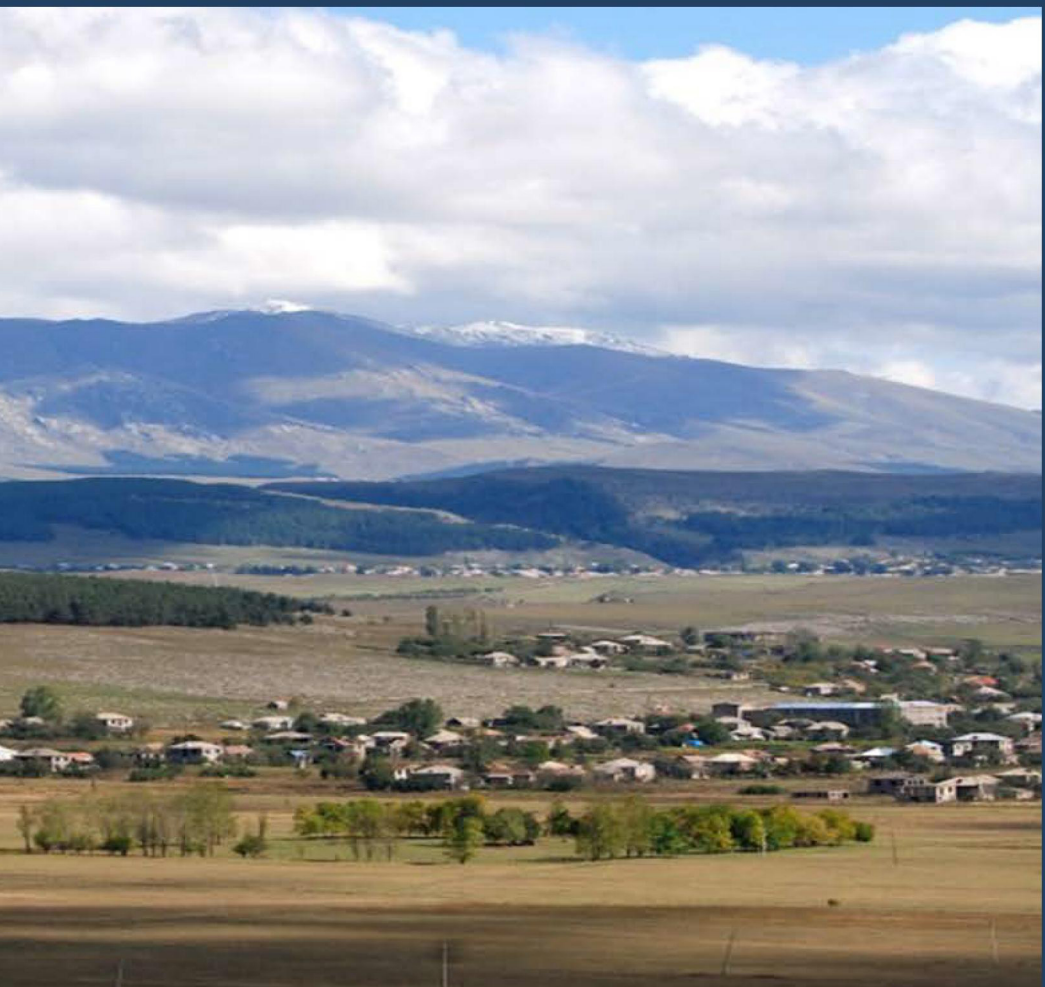


Guidelines

*For Application and Implementation
Of the Gender Equality Policy of Georgia
By Local Self-Government Bodies*



Guidelines

For the Implementation Of the Gender Equality Policy of Georgia By Local Self-Government Bodies

About the Guidelines

These *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Gender Equality Policy of Georgia by Local Self-Government (LSG) Bodies* are an instrument for municipalities to ensure the equal participation of women and men in local government and decision making. The Guidelines are aimed at local self-government representatives and local decision-makers. The first version of these Guidelines was written in 2012 to enable LSG to improve gender mainstreaming in their operations and facilitate the inclusion of women in the community meetings thus ultimately improving the access of rural women to public goods. These guidelines were based on *The Law on Gender Equality* (March 26, 2010), the *Local Self-Government Code* (February 5, 2014, additional changes in the Local Self-Governance Code were adopted on July 26, 2017) and Article 14 (concerning Rural Women) of the *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW). The Guidelines are endorsed by the Ministry of Rural Development and Infrastructure and may be found on their website (www.mrdi.gov.ge).

This version of the guidelines has been updated to include changes in the *Law of Local Self Government of Georgia*¹ which contains new

¹ Approved by the Georgian Parliament in July 22, 2015 and enacted on September 1, 2015

requirements for citizens' participation in local self-governance; it also includes amendments in the *Law on Gender Equality* (May 13, 2016 and April 28, 2016) concerning the establishment of Municipality Gender Equality Councils and the appointment of Public Servant Responsible for Gender Issues; and changes in the *Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence*, and the *Assistance and Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence* (February, 2016) concerning the mandate of local self-government to help prevent gender based domestic violence and assist victims.

These guidelines also clarify the link between Georgian Gender Equality Law and the **CEDAW Convention**, the United Nations Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, of which the Government of Georgia is a signatory and is obliged to report to every four years with the results published internationally.

The guidelines also contain detailed information and references to the **Women's Room service**; a municipal service which is a resource space and consultancy service for women which is currently present in 19 municipalities of Georgia.

The **Annexes** of the document are a resource detailing *the Georgian laws on which the Guidelines are based* (Annex 1 & 2), *the key aspects pertaining to rural Local Self Government in the CEDAW Convention recommendations to Georgia* (Annex 3), *the Women's Room Municipal Service* (Annex 4) and *explanations of general gender concepts* (Annex 5).

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1. Introduction

This document contains guidelines which will allow local self-government personnel to understand and apply the key points of current legislation and policies on gender equality in Georgia in their work

These guidelines for LSG representatives answer the requirements of the *Law on Gender Equality* within the framework of the *Code for Local Self Government*.

LSG representatives should understand the key aspects of the of the *Law on Gender Equality*, summarized in Box 1 below, and translate them into practice as summarized in Box 2 below.

Box 1. Summary of the Articles of the Law on Gender Equality, for a full description please see Annex 2

Article 2: Aim of the Law

To ensure the prevention of discrimination based on sex

Article 3: Definition of Terms under the Law:

This section of the law defines key terms: gender, discrimination, gender equality. (See Annex 5. Understanding Gender Concepts)

Article 4: Guarantees of Gender Equality:

The state and the government structures guarantee equality, freedoms, including freedom from violence, rights and opportunities for men and women in all spheres of life.

Article 5: Keeping Statistics of Gender Related Matters

All official reports must contain sex disaggregated data. Data on women (girls) and men (boys) must be collected and analyzed separately. Comparison of these two groups of data allows for inequality to be identified and addressed.

Article 8: Equal Access to Information Resources

All public bodies are obliged to provide equal access to public information held by them to interested persons irrespective of their sex.

Article 10: Gender Equality in Family Relations

The Law emphasizes the necessity of ensuring equality in family relations. LSGs need to support gender equality at both household and community level.

Article 13: Provision of Gender Equality by Local Self-Government Bodies

Local self-government bodies shall develop and carry out activities to ensure detection and elimination of discrimination locally. The budget of local self-government units, priorities of social economic development, municipal programmes and plans shall be developed according to men and women's needs equally, to prevent discrimination and to protect universal human rights and freedoms. The Municipality Sakrebulo is authorized to establish the Municipality Gender Council. The Municipality Gamgebeli/Mayor has to establish a new position of a public servant who will be responsible for research, planning and coordination of the gender equality policy.

Box 2: Key Points of LSG Gender Equality in Practice

1. Gender Disaggregated Data is collected;
2. The Municipality Sakrebulo representatives, the Municipality Mayor and City Hall public servants act and work in compliance with gender equality principles;
3. Local Government ensures gender equality at household level and reacts to domestic violence by assisting and protecting the victims.²
4. Local government is informed about central government's initiatives related to gender equality including international agreements and conventions;
5. There is general understanding of terms and concepts such as *gender programmes, gender balance, gender equality, gender approach, gender needs* and *gender statistics*, etc.;
6. Gender related policy developed at the level of local self-government is based on evidence and impartial information rather than influenced by gender norms and gender biased impressions;
7. There is a clear strategy for identifying and developing ways to change traditional discriminative practices related to men and women in the rural population.

² The Georgian Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, Assistance and Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence, Articles 6, 7, 20.

2. Integrating Gender Equality in Local Self-Government

LSG Representatives and local decision makers should clearly understand the problems and barriers that prevent women or men from participating in local self-government activities. The following represent the most common issues encountered at LSG level:

- Traditional roles and functions of men and women including their perceived spheres of influence e.g. inside or outside the home, private or public life, as well as stereotypical beliefs about the different capacities of women and men e.g. in public speaking often limit women's social and political inclusion.
- Women often do not have the same level of access to information as men. This includes issues such as where and how information is disseminated e.g. in a language appropriate to the target community, the places where information is made public and the times when meetings are held which often prevent women from being involved.
- Women are often less mobile and travel less outside the home than men. This can be due to care duties, lack of transport or not being allowed to travel unchaperoned. This can mean they are physically unable to attend meetings.

Forms of Citizens Participation in Local Self Government

In all the existing and new forms of public participation and decision making in local self-governance, detailed in the update to the Code of LSG and described below, *women's and men's equal participation is vital* to represent the needs and harness the energy of the whole community.

Figure 1 below summarizes the main principles to be adopted to gain this participation:

Equal access to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure</i> Women and men have equal access to information, and that information is spread in a way that reaches men and women equally.
Equal attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure</i> An equal number of men and women are invited to attend meetings; equal participation is encouraged and promoted by local decision-makers.
Free and equal self-expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure</i> Women and men have an equal opportunity to express their opinions, and that free expression is encouraged and promoted by local decision-makers
Equal opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure</i> Women's and men's opinions are taken into consideration equally in the decision making process.
Equal participation in all stages of policy making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure</i> Women and men participate equally in the decision making process at planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring stages.

Forms of Citizens' Participation

The Code on local self-government specifies five forms of citizens' participation in local self-governance and stipulates that overcoming existing barriers to gender equality *is possible through finding open spaces for women's participation in decision-making by the new provisions of the Law (Code of LSG, Chapter XI, Annex 1)*. The forms of participation are listed below:

1. General Settlement Meeting (previously named the Village Meeting). In the new code this name has been changed to General Settlement Meeting but people in villages still call it 'Village Meeting'.

The General Settlement Meeting is a self-organized meeting of a town or a village aimed at ensuring citizens' participation in local decision making, debates and discussions of local importance. It also has the mandate to initiate issues for further inclusion in the local self-government agenda and to set a plan for implementation. It can be initiated and organized by local self-government representatives and/or by a person chosen by the General Meeting and/or by a special initiative group created from at least three local people. The full powers and procedures of the General Settlement Meeting are determined by the Code of LSG (Chapter XI, articles 85², 85³, 85⁴, 85⁵). The Code requires that men and women participate equally (Section 10 of the Article 85²).

2. A Petition is a document initiated by community members to communicate opinions, problems, initiatives etc. from the community to LSG (Article 86). Petitions can be initiated by a minimum of 1 % of the overall population of the community. The General Settlement Meeting is the venue where decisions on drafting a petition can be made.

3. The Citizens Advisory Board of Local Self-Government represents the consultancy body of the local Municipality Gamgebeli/Mayor. Its members are local citizens, representatives of local business circles, non-governmental organizations etc. The composition is approved by the Gamgebeli/Mayor. The charter of the Citizen's Advisory Board regulating the detailed activities and powers of the board will be defined and approved by the local municipality Gamgebeli/Mayor. The Advisory Board gathers once every three months. The law stipulates that the number of a single sex on the board should not be

more than 2/3 of the entire composition of the board (Article 86¹). The Citizens Advisory Board should operate in accordance with gender equality principles. It should be composed of an equal number of male and female members.

4. Public hearings of public reports on work undertaken by the Mayor and the Municipality Sakrebulo members are an important form of citizens' involvement in local self-governance. The Local Municipality Mayor and the Municipality Council have the obligation to organize public hearings, inform people about their work and give them the opportunity to ask questions and actively participate in hearings and meetings according to existing procedures (Article 87).

5. A Reporting session of the Mayor and the Municipality Council members: A reporting session should be organized before November 1st of each year. In this meeting the Mayor and Municipality Council Members report on their activities from the past year. The Mayor and the Council members should ensure the attendance of citizens and the publishing of reports (Article 88). The reports are expected to be gender sensitive.

*The recent changes in the Gender Equality Law of Georgia stipulate one more form of citizens' participation – the **Municipality Gender Equality Council** which is responsible for monitoring implementation of gender equality policy in local self-government. The members of the Council should be local NGOs and female and male community representatives and the key people responsible for implementing gender equality in LSG (see the next chapter). The Council should coordinate with the *Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia* (Annex 2, Article 13).*

3. Key People Responsible for Implementing Gender Equality in LSG

Mayor and Head of Sakrebulo

The Mayor is the head of the executive branch of local self-government. The Head of the Sakrebulo is responsible for the functioning of the local legislative office. Both of these positions are elected. They are expected to adhere to the Law on Gender Equality.

The Gender Advisor and the Public Servant Responsible for Gender Issues

In September 2013, the Georgian Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure recommended the appointment by LSGs of a Gender Advisor. The Advisor is responsible for identifying and highlighting gender related issues and developing the gender sensitivity of local self-government bodies. Their activity is governed by Municipality Gamgeoba regulations. The main points of the Municipal Gender Advisor's role are in ensuring the appropriate reporting from meetings, the collection of gender disaggregated data and its analysis.

In April 2016 *the Georgian Law on Gender Equality* obliged municipal Gamgebelis /mayors to designate a public servant responsible for the gender-related issues in an appropriate Gamgeoba (a local administration) /City Hall to study gender-related issues, schedule activities to be performed and to coordinate appropriate measures within the municipality³.

³ Law of Georgia No 5069 of 28 April 2016 – [website](#)

Gamgebeli Representatives

The Gamgebeli representative is the member of LSG who is the most involved in community life. She/he feels its pulse and their work is very important for the implementation of gender equality in practice. Gamgebeli representatives convene the Settlement General Meetings (village meetings) and liaise with the local population in group or individual meetings. Citizens may voice their concerns and issues directly to the Gamgebeli representative who is responsible for the establishment of the relationship between the population and local self-government, reporting back to both the Gamgebeli and villagers. The Gamgebeli representatives meet with the citizens on an everyday basis. The Gamgebeli and the Sakrebulo use the Gamgebeli Representatives to transmit information to the local population.

Women's Room Manager

The Women's Room service, a resource centre and consultancy service provided by local self-government bodies contributes to enhancing women's access to public goods and rural women's participation at local decision making fora (see Annex 4 for more details). The Women's Rooms managers are Gamgeoba/City Hall staff members who work in close contact with LSG bodies. The main activities performed by Women's Room staff members are management of the Room and services, signposting visitors to other municipality services, consultation and information provision, training municipality staff, assisting municipality staff with the preparation of the annual activity reports including gender disaggregated data, organizing WR activities and collecting and sharing data relating to Women's Room usage, activities and impact.

**Municipality
Mayor**

Legitimacy:
Elected by administrative unit citizens

•Responsibilities and working instruments

Develops gender sensitive policy, promotes gender equality, implements integrated gender approaches; consults with Gender Advisers and Women's Room staff; supports development plans to help prevent gender based violence and assist victims of domestic violence.

**Municipality Council
Head**

Legitimacy:
Elected by Municipality Council members

•Responsibilities and working instruments

Checks gender sensitivity of adopted local regulations; promotes women's participation in the community gatherings and promotes the attendance of women in Council Meetings; consults with the Gender Advisers and Women's Room staff; develops plans to help prevent gender based violence and assist victims of domestic violence.

**Gamgebeli
Representative**

Legitimacy:
Appointed a public servant

•Responsibilities and working instruments

Works closely with communities, responsible for ensuring accurate information communicated to LSG on community lives and problems, as well as assisting communities to communicate with local self government, ensures participation of women in Community Meetings; collects and relays information on domestic violence.

**Public Servant
responsible for Gender
Equality Issues**

Legitimacy:
Assigned to the Municipality Gamgeoba

•Responsibilities and working instruments

Responsible for identifying and highlighting gender related issues and developing the gender sensitivity of local self-government bodies; responsible for capacity building of local self government representatives, collects information about cases of domestic violence and informs relevant public servants to take measures.

Women Room Staff

Legitimacy:
Assigned to the Municipality Gamgeoba

•Responsibilities and working instruments

Managing the Women Rooms; gathering gender related data and information; providing appropriate information and linking to resources; serving as contact person between women and men and LSG.

•Figure 2 above summarizes the gender equality policy related responsibilities for key LSG representatives.

4. Code of Conduct & Meeting Checklist for the Representatives of Local Self-Government Bodies

The following *Code of Conduct* and *Meeting Checklist* contain the simple steps to be followed by representatives of LSG to ensure that their attitude and the meetings which are the main instrument of communication and exchange between citizens and LSG allow for the participation and development of both women and men.

As stated in the previous chapter the Gamagebeli Representative (Village Representative) has the closest ties with the community and is the main instrument of contact between the villages and LSG. Thus the meetings organized by them are the main channel for women and men to communicate to LSG. The following *Code of Conduct* and *Meeting Checklist* should be followed by the Gamagebeli Representatives to ensure the participation of women in the General Settlement Meetings and also by any member of LSG organizing a meeting with citizens:

Code of Conduct For Representatives of Local Self Government

1. LSG representatives should be dedicated to gender equality principles and do their utmost to ensure equality in their communities and villages.
2. Women's equal participation in decision making at the household and community levels should be made a value shared by the community.

3. The differences in women's and men's roles and needs in their communities should be ascertained and addressed based on accurate gender disaggregated data.
4. Justice for both women and men should be promoted.
5. Access to education for girls and boys should be promoted.
6. Female headed households should be taken into consideration when distributing information and public goods.
7. Accurate information on the number of female headed households in the community/village should be generated.
8. Initiatives that arise to help women become agents of their own development should be supported.
9. The cultural constraints that tend to keep women away from direct participation in community meetings and important community and village decisions should be assessed.
10. While scheduling meetings give consideration to the time/mobility/access constraints women (and men) might have and follow the Citizens Meeting Checklist below to address them.
11. Create an environment for both sexes in which they are protected from verbal and behavioral harassment.

Meeting Checklist

For Gamgebeli/Mayor Representatives & Other Representatives of LSG

To ensure women's and men's equal participation in the General Settlement Meetings and other forms of citizens' participation the following measures should be taken into consideration:

1. When planning a meeting or other important events of the village, ensure that not only men but women also are informed in advance about the activity. For this purpose use information dissemination

methods that target women e.g. via children and neighbours; placing announcements in schools.

2. Choose times of the day convenient for both men and women; ask them about this in advance; take into consideration when they are most busy during the day (e.g. working in the field, looking after children and livestock).

3. Help create an environment which will be acceptable and safe from your cultural perspective and which is acceptable to both, men or women.

4. Where cultural norms restrict the formation of mixed groups (composed of men and women), encourage married couples to participate.

5. Allow women or men from coming to meetings with their children.

6. Register attendees; indicate in the attendance list how many women and man participated in the event.

7. Verbally encourage those families whose members (both men and women) attend the meeting.

8. There are some issues to which the principle 'one member from each family/household' does not apply. Remember to treat people; men, women, young people, old people, people with higher and lower economic status, married and single people as individuals who are different from each other. Consider that, when discussing an issue if you act only based on "family principle" you will never know the opinion of for example a 35 year-old, unmarried women and never have a chance to use her capacity in solving some particular problem.

9. Never assume that the ideas expressed by men fully reflect the opinions of their female family members. Encourage women to share

their own issues and concerns as well as possible solutions.

10. Pay special attention to the participation of breadwinning women. They are often more engaged in community affairs and may have more to say.

11. When discussing issues important for the village make sure that women of different ages and from different social strata have the opportunity to express their opinion.

12. Any activity you plan needs implementers and supervisors. Try to distribute roles across more or less the same number of men and women.

Annex 1. Code of Local Self-Government of Georgia

The Code of Local Self-Government of Georgia

Chapter XI, Article 85 of the Code determines the following forms of citizens' participation:

- a) General Assembly of a village/city
- b) Petition;
- c) Citizen Advisory Board;
- d) Participation in the Municipality Sakrebulo and the Municipality Sakrebulo Sessions;
- e) Attend public hearings of reports on performed works by the Gamgebeli (Mayor) and the Sakrebulo members.

Article 85.2:

10. The General Assembly shall ensure equal participation of men and women in its activity.

Article 86. Petition

Article 86.1 Citizens' Advisory Board

Article 87. Citizens' Participation in the Municipality Gamgeoba and the Municipality Sakrebulo meetings and hearings

Article 88. Participation in reporting sessions of the Municipality Gamgebeli and the Municipality Council members

Annex 2. Law on Gender Equality of Georgia

Article 2: Aim of the Law

The aim of the law is to ensure the prevention of all kinds of discrimination based on sex in all spheres of life, create appropriate conditions for the implementation of the equal rights, freedoms and opportunities of women and men and to support the prevention and elimination of all kinds of discrimination based on sex.

Article 3: Definition of Terms Used in the Law

1. The terms used in this Law have the following meanings:

- a) **Gender** - a social aspect of relation between sexes which is expressed in all spheres of public life and implies opinions formed about different sexes through socialization;
- b) **Gender equality** - a part of human rights which implies equal rights and duties, responsibilities and equal participation of men and women in all spheres of personal and public lives;
- c) **Discrimination** - actions defined in sub-paragraphs (d) and (e) of this paragraph;
- d) **Direct discrimination** – the treatment or the creation of the conditions in which a person is treated less favorably on grounds of sex than another person in a comparable situation with respect to the enjoyment of the rights established by the legislation of Georgia or in which persons in inherently unequal conditions are treated equally, except when such treatment or situation serves the statutory purpose of maintaining public order and morals, is objectively and reasonably justified and is necessary in a democratic society, and the means of achieving that purpose are appropriate.
- e) **Indirect discrimination** - a situation where a provision, criterion or practice, neutral in form but discriminatory in substance, puts a person on the grounds of sex at a disadvantage compared with another person in a comparable situation, or equally treats persons who are in inherently unequal conditions, unless such situation serves the

statutory purpose of maintaining public order and morals, is objectively and reasonably justified, and is necessary in a democratic society, and the means of achieving that purpose are appropriate.

f) **Special measures** - measures which are intended to remedy the consequences of discrimination and are intended for a circle of persons requiring special protection due to their gender;

g) **Equal opportunities** - a system of means and conditions for achieving equality of rights and freedoms for men and women;

h) **Equal treatment** - recognition of equal rights and opportunities for both sexes in family relations and other aspects of social and political life when determining education, labor and social conditions, as well as the inadmissibility of discrimination on the grounds of sex.

Chapter II: Gender Equality Guarantees

This part of the Law presents a list of areas where the State supports and ensures equal rights for men and women.

1. The State shall support and ensure equal rights for men and women in political, economic, social and cultural life.

2. To protect gender equality, the following shall be ensured without discrimination:

- a) Equal individual rights and freedoms of men and women;
- b) Equal access to education for men and women and free choice of education at any stage of learning
- c) Equal rights of spouses;
- d) Equal rights and duties in matters relating to children;
- e) Equal rights and duties of men and women with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship, or adoption of children;
- f) Supporting elimination of violence in families and society;
- g) Free choice of profession or career, promotion, vocational training/retraining;
- h) Assumption of public office based on professionalism, skills and qualifications;

i) Equal treatment in evaluation of the quality of work of men and women;

j) Equal social security for men and women in cases of illness and infirmity;

k) Creation of equal opportunities for men and women to receive health care

l) Creation of equal opportunities for men and women to access information.

3. The legislation of Georgia on gender equality is based on the Constitution of Georgia, treaties and international agreements of Georgia, this Law and other normative acts.

Article 5: Keeping statistics of gender related matters

Official statistical reports on gender issues shall contain sex-disaggregated data.

Article 8: Equal access to information resources

“State and local self-government bodies and legal entities under public law shall be obligated, as prescribed by the legislation of Georgia, to provide equal access to public information held by them to interested persons irrespective of their sex.”

Article 10: Gender equality in family relations

1. In family relations, during marriage and its dissolution, men and women shall have equal personal and property rights, including the right to choose a family name, profession and occupation. Their responsibilities shall be equal as well. Discrimination or preference related to rights and duties shall not be allowed in family relations.

2. Men and women shall have equal rights in the family to independently solve issues related to participation in labour and public activities.

Article 13: Provision of gender equality by local self-government bodies

1. Local self-government bodies, according to the Organic Law of Georgia - Local Self-Government Code, and other legislative acts of Georgia shall develop and carry out activities to ensure detection and elimination of discrimination locally.
2. The budget of local self-government units, priorities of social economic development, municipal programs and plans shall be developed in such a way that any form of discrimination is excluded.
3. State bodies, within the scope of their authority, shall provide organizational, informational, and other kinds of assistance to local self-government bodies in order to prevent discrimination in the activities of local self-government bodies and to protect universally recognised human rights and freedoms.⁴
4. The Municipality Council shall establish a Municipal Gender Council aimed at the implementation and coordination of gender equality policy in conjunction with the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia. The composition, status, functions and powers of the Municipality Gender Council shall be determined by the procedures of the Municipality Council and the charter of Municipality Gender Council should be approved by the Municipality Council.
5. The Municipality Gamgebeli or Mayor has to appoint a new position of a public servant who will be responsible for gender equality related issues in a municipality.

⁴ *Law of Georgia #1964 as of February 5, 2014 - webpage 19.02.2014*

Annex 3. CEDAW and its Recommendations

The Law of Georgia on Gender Equality is largely based on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Convention is the main and comprehensive instrument for the protection and development of women's human rights. CEDAW was adopted in 1979 and its ratification started the same year. In 1994 Georgia joined the Convention and undertook the responsibility to implement its requirements in all the spheres.

Article 14 of the Convention provides for women in rural areas as a separate group needing special attention since it is acknowledged that the risk of gender discrimination is higher in this particular group: women less participate in family decisions as well as the decisions taking in their villages; they have less access to information, services, retraining and loans, they have more difficult working conditions and lead more difficult lives.

Article 14:

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present convention to women in rural areas.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:
 - (a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;
 - (b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counseling and services in family planning;

- (c) To benefit directly from social security programs;
- (d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;
- (e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;
- (f) To participate in all community activities;
- (g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;
- (h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

The CEDAW Committee Recommendations

All the signatory states, among them Georgia, shall submit reports to the UN Committee on the elimination of discrimination against Women every four years. The Committee, on its part, gives recommendations on the measures eliminating discrimination against women and inequality.

On July 8, 2014, the Committee listened to Georgia's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports on discrimination against women and prepared concluding observations/recommendations in which establishment of Women's Rooms in Dmanisi, Tetritskaro and Tsalka Municipalities is considered one of Georgia's achievements. According to Article 32, municipal service Women's room established in 2013 can serve as a platform for discussing community related issues.

Here are excerpts from the CEDAW Committee recommendations. They refer to responsibilities of the Local Self- Government bodies, point to

women's insufficient local participation and emphasize the importance of gender equality for women in rural areas. ⁵

Temporary special measures

17. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt temporary special measures, including statutory quotas, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and in line with the General Recommendations # 25 (1992) as part of a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of women's substantive equality. It also recommends that the State party establish temporary special measures, targeting disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women (such as rural women⁶), evaluate the impact of such measures and make its findings, including gender relevant statistics, available to the public.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

19. The Committee recommends that the State party further strengthen its efforts to overcome stereotypical attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society and promote equality of women. The Committee also recommends that the State party study the scale and consequences of child marriages and take urgent measures to prevent child marriages of girls among all ethnic groups; undertake information and awareness raising measures targeting the public, parents and religious leaders about the harmful impact of this practice on girls, in particular on their health and development potential.

Participation in political and public life

25. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure full and equal participation of women in political and public life, especially at senior and decision making levels, including in local legislative bodies.

⁵ Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia.

⁶ Inserted from Article 16

In particular, it recommends that the State party introduce mandatory quotas for political parties in order to significantly increase women's representation both in national and local legislative bodies.

Rural women

32. The Committee notes the establishment of a Municipal Service Women's Rooms in 2013, which serve as a platform for discussing community related issues. It is however concerned about the continuous inequalities between the State party's urban and rural women with respect to their access to social and healthcare services, access to economic opportunities as well as their participation in political and public life, including in decisions related to the agriculture sector. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of child - care facilities in rural areas as well as lack of shelters and other services provided to victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, the Committee regrets the lack of sex disaggregated data on land ownership.

33. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that rural women, have adequate access to social, healthcare and other basic services, economic opportunities and equal opportunities to participate in political and public life;

The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure the availability of shelters for victims of domestic violence and provide sex disaggregated data on land ownership in its next periodic report.

40. The Committee also recommends that its concluding observations be disseminated in the relevant form at the local community level to enable their implementation.

Annex 4. A Municipal Service Women's Room

The **Women's Room**⁷ is a new municipal service housed in the LSG building in each municipality. It is a resource center and communal space which aims to help the local population, especially women residing in rural areas, access local government and its resources and encourage and increase women's participation in decision making.



The Women's Room is used by the municipality to offer its community (especially women and children) certain services, including internet access, library resources, consultations and children's corner as well as providing a meeting space for trainings and community initiatives. It also serves as a hub for data collection and the training of village representatives on gender related activities and ensuring the participation of women in village level meetings.

The purpose of the Women's Room is to:

- ✓ Help the municipality and its employees to understand the principles of gender equality and implement the corresponding law;
- ✓ Serve as a hub for data collection of gender related data
- ✓ Serve as a hub for village representatives on gender related activities and ensure the participation of women in village level meetings

⁷ There are already 19 Women's rooms in 19 municipalities of Georgia. 3 Women's Rooms in Kvemo Kartli and 6 Women's Rooms in Adjara were established by facilitation of the SDC (Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency) funded Mercy Corps implemented Alliances Lesser Caucasus Programme. A further 10 rooms and capacity building of Women's Room managers was done by USAID funded project "Broadening Horizons: Improved Choices for the Professional and Economic Development of Women and Girls." The project is implemented by International Centre for Conflict and Negotiation in partnership with Mercy Corps Georgia.

- ✓ Ensure provision of information about state and local services, benefits and opportunities which can significantly change the lives and wellbeing (e.g. provide information on health and agricultural programs, etc.);
- ✓ Increase access to information for men and women by offering free Internet access and library;
- ✓ Help women and men voice their opinions so that the local government becomes aware of them;
- ✓ Encourage women's initiatives targeting local needs;
- ✓ Involve the municipality in new projects aimed at women's empowerment (language courses, courses for young mothers, capacity building for entrepreneurship, business training, farming, computer courses, charity and cultural events etc.).

The coordinator/manager (staff) of the Women's Room is selected and appointed by the municipality.

Annex 5. Understanding Gender Concepts



Understanding Gender

Definition: The social differences and relations between men and women, boys and girls. Ideas about gender are learned, changeable over time and can be different within and among cultures.

Gender is a social construction. It denotes men's and women's characteristics, behaviour, roles, functions and rights that are associated with their sexes in the given culture. Gender is formed and developed in a social and cultural environment. Gender is a social explanation of differences between women and men.

Therefore, humans are born as males and females, but they are taught and expected to behave in this or that way, hold a certain position in family and society, establish a certain type of relationship, develop certain female and male qualities, follow definite rules, etc. All that is what is described by the term 'gender'.

Differently from sex which is related to physical and bodily differences between women and men, the concept 'gender' implies psychological, social and cultural characteristics. It is important to remember that sex is unchangeable whereas gender is changeable due to the possible changes in men's and women's situations in their social environment: For example: 1. Women's and men's rights might be expended or restricted or 2. Women and men might get involved in activities and acquire characteristics that were natural for the opposite sex in the past or due to good or bad laws, wars, change of political regimes.



Understanding Gender Equality

When the needs, activities, goals and opinions of men (boys) and women (girls) are equally valued and considered by society we say that gender equality is established and preserved in the given society.

Gender Equality implies that a person's rights, opportunities and responsibilities are unrelated to his/her sex. Gender equality also implies that men and women are allowed to equally develop, make a free choice and self-actualize, work in equal conditions and receive equal reimbursement.

Why are gender equality and discrimination a topical issue for Georgia? The data 2017 on Gender inequality in Georgia:

- Women represent only 16 % of parliament members and only 8.5 % of Ministers are women;
- Women constitute 13.46% of Sakrebulo members;
- Out of 64 elected mayors only 1 is held by women;
- Out of 64 Sakrebulo chairmen only 2 are women;
- None of the large Georgian companies is managed by a woman;
- Out of the ten large universities in Georgia only one is headed by a woman.

In the case of gender equality, the law provides equal rights to both men and women. They enjoy these equal rights and divide responsibilities in family and society. Men and women are equally treated. They are given equal opportunities in education, work and development. Information, jobs and employment opportunities, assistance and development programs are equally accessible. They equally participate in and contribute to decisions taken at different levels, from family decisions to the decisions taken at the state level. They are equal in using material benefits like financial benefits, bank loans, property, heritage, reimbursement, etc.



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