

**Local Democracy  
Agency Georgia**

**2022 Annual Report**



## Capacity building for local self-government and non-governmental organizations

### Promoting active citizenship and good governance

#### Civil Society STAR Initiative

##### Imereti Regional Hub

When evaluating the activities of the civil society by Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Georgia, it is necessary to touch on its strength and stability of development.

The civil society represented in Georgia is not flawless and there are many effective steps to be taken to strengthen it. Despite the good precedents of public and civil sector cooperation, the issue of proper trust in the civil sector remains in doubt. In some cases, civil society organizations themselves also play an important role in determining their strength.

Depending on the regions, we have different levels of development of civil society organizations, which is determined by the demographic situation, urban life, socio-economic development potential of the regions. At the regional level, different levels of organization development are determined by the economic situation, which is closely related to many factors (school, teacher, media, etc.). Therefore, the landscape that is presented in Georgia today is logical.

Civil society organizations faced significant challenges during the COVID pandemic.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated several of the civil sector's long-standing gaps in financial capacity and financial resilience.

The pandemic has clearly shown the civil sector how necessary it is to develop a crisis and good management plan, to act in a timely and gradual manner in crisis situations. It is important to diversify the finances of civil society organizations, to have alternative sources of financing and to easily adapt their activities in crisis situations. During the pandemic, the issue of effective coordination between civil society and state institutions has been further advanced.

Some important recommendations are worth noting, which in crisis situations like the COVID 19 pandemic, will prevent the state and society from making a number of mistakes and respond to challenges in a timely manner:

- The pandemic clearly showed the civil sector how necessary it is to develop a crisis and a good management plan and to act in a timely and gradual manner in crisis situations. Civil society organizations should have long-term visions, it is necessary to determine in advance the administrative and organizational development costs of projects, as well as equipping with technical skills and transferring this knowledge to vulnerable groups.
- It is important for civil society organizations to become financially independent, to have alternative sources of funding and to easily adapt their activities in crisis situations. Also, mobilizing finances so that even a small delay does not threaten the existence and sustainability of the organization. For this,

it is necessary to acquire relevant knowledge and competences, to train the employees of the organization properly.

- To get out of crisis situations, it is important to receive support from donor organizations, just like in the usual mode. That is why it is recommended not to focus only on specific directions when announcing grant competitions and to give the opportunity for development to small organizations with a narrow profile working at the regional level. Especially newly formed organizations should be given the opportunity to receive funding, because otherwise it is impossible for them to develop and have a stable existence in the civil sector.
- During the pandemic, the issue of effective coordination between civil society and state institutions, as well as the need for proactive communication, has been further advanced.
- Civil society organizations should see the need in every crisis, show the decision-makers this need and turn the crisis into an opportunity.

In 2017-2020, Local Democracy Agency Georgia was selected as a regional hub in Imereti region, whose task was to better mobilize and strengthen civil society. More specifically: increasing the influence of civil society members at the local level, establishing new contacts, increasing the qualifications and capabilities of representatives of civil society organizations; improving results through the implementation of joint activities; increasing the resources and capacities of civil society; effective planning and organization of various activities. The regional hub has successfully implemented the first phase of the project, which is evidenced by the evaluations of civil society organizations related to the activities of the hub.

#### *Assessments of civil society organization representatives:*

*"The project is a good opportunity for our organization. Forums and organizational development trainings were a great support for us."*

***N(N)LE Zaza Gochelashvili - Tkibuli District Development Fund***

*"The regional hub of Imereti was formed, within the framework of which we, non-governmental organizations working in this region, were given the opportunity to promote our capabilities. We were informed about all new grant competitions."*

***Maka Khetsuriani - N(N)LE Women for Regional Development***

*"The project gave me the opportunity to use their platform many times at different levels."*

***Eliso Jikidze - an active citizen***

*"This organization has created a kind of platform for generating new ideas. The civil sector operating in Imereti brought us very close to each other, made us friends."*

***Eliso Jikia – N(N)LE Happy Women***

*"The regional hub does a very good job not only for the civil sector, but also for businesses and civil servants. A number of forums that were implemented by them were very important."*

***Marika Vacharadze - N(N)LE Regional Initiatives Center "Bright Future"***

*"Very important activities were the training modules, activities where we were directly trained and consulted and grew as an organization."*

***Bachana Basilaia – N(N)LE Center for Integration and Promotion of Internally Displaced Persons***

*"Within the framework of the project, the relationship with our municipality was established and developed."*

***Nana Feradze - N(N)LE Union "Orion"***

*"A number of meetings took place, representatives of different fields contacted each other. The project of regional hub was very important for the civil society located in Samtredia municipality."*

***Sofio Kirtadze - N(N)LE Regional Development Resource Center***

*"An organization that carries out very important activities in Imereti region. A forum was held in Kutaisi, where non-governmental organizations had the opportunity to meet the representatives of donor organizations."*

***Leila Ashordia - N(N)LE Women's Association, Let's Do It Together.***

*"The project involving civil society organizations of Terjola municipality was interesting. I think that the project fulfilled its purpose effectively and efficiently."*

***Rusudan Kovziridze - an active citizen***

Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Georgia in 2021-2024 continues to implement activities within the framework of the regional hub and to strengthen the civil society operating in Imereti region, which will be achieved by maintaining the sustainability of CSO's/CBO's, ensuring the increase in the quality of transparency and accountability. Organized by Imereti Regional HUB – Local Democracy Agency Georgia (LDA Georgia) and Education Development and Employment Center (EDEC), Akaki Tsereteli State University hosted a Civil Society Regional Forum in Kutaisi. The main purpose of the forum was to promote a culture of volunteerism, to attract potential donors and to strengthen civil society in Imereti region. The forum was attended by local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), students, donors, representatives of self-governments and media outlets. The forum was held in three parts and included a discussion on the needs and challenges facing the civil society; a meeting between donors and organizations was held in "World Cafe" format. The third part of the forum was devoted to the presentation/exhibition of the activities of civil society organizations. More than 300(three hundred) people from Imereti region attended the forum.



### *Regional Forum of Civil Society, Imereti region*

The regional hub of Imereti within the framework of the project created an SMS platform, the purpose of which is to provide information to the CSO's and CBO's representatives of the region about various events planned at the regional or national level. The platform is located in the organization's web page. The activity supports sectoral cooperation and the opportunity to engage in various networks.

Within the framework of the project, Imereti regional hub formed a youth club, which was given seminars on the importance and role of civil society. The aim of the seminars was to change the attitudes of young people/students towards civil society and community organizations; promoting volunteering among young people and increasing their interest in the activities of civil society and community organizations. As a result of the activity, public attitudes, as well as the interest of students and youth in general towards the civil sector has increased.



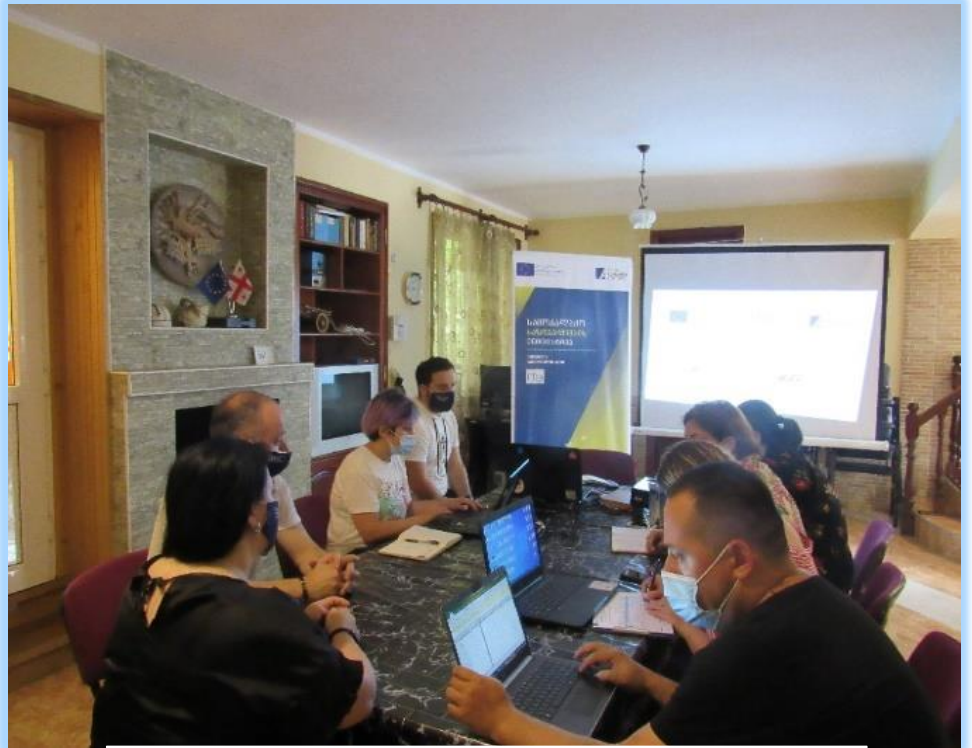
### *Youth club*



The regional hub of Imereti held consulting meetings within the framework of the project. The purpose of the meetings was to provide consultation to the representatives of civil society and community organizations on the management of the organization, providing information about grant competitions announced in Imereti region; informing about the citizen feedback platform. As a result of the meetings, on the one hand, Imereti Regional Hub provided information about the needs of the organizations operating in the municipalities, and on the other hand, appropriate consultations were provided.

Imereti regional hub held meetings with persons responsible for relations with

non-governmental organizations in municipalities. At the meetings, the main focus was on the needs of civil society organizations in the municipalities. The aim of the activity was to promote the growth of the role of civil society in public policy. The result of the activity was that the municipalities became more aware of the positive role of civil society organizations in public policy, which was clearly demonstrated by the municipalities' active involvement in the activities carried out within the framework of the regional hub.



*Tskaltubo - Consultation meeting*



*Kutaisi – Public consultation*

Within the framework of the project, Imereti Regional Hub held 4 public meetings and gave public consultations at the regional level. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss important issues with the involvement of relevant actors at the regional level.

Within the framework of the project, Imereti Regional Hub organized study visits/job shadowing for CSO's/CBO's representatives in Zugdidi and Guria municipalities. The purpose of this activity was to gain experience and share successful examples, as well as to share the possibility of cooperation between CSOs/CBOs in the bordering regions. A total of 6 meetings have been held.



*Ambrolauri – Job shadowing*

Within the framework of the project, trainings were held for CSO's/CBO's representatives, who were retrained on the topic of project financial management and advocacy. A total of five trainings were held, 50(fifty) participants were trained.

Within the framework of the project, four civil society organizations have been selected, with which, in cooperation with the consortium member organizations, intensive work carried out on structural improvement and development of internal management documents. The best precedent was created throughout the region in the direction of structural development of newly created organizations.

The operation of the hotline service creates an additional mechanism for proactively receiving information. Which is a good opportunity especially for civil society organizations working in high mountain municipalities. The mentioned service allows any interested person to remotely receive information on the activities planned within the project, on the one hand, and on the legal procedures for the registration of N(N)LE, on the other hand.



### **Increasing the Quality of Citizen Involvement in Local Self-Government**

Citizens' participation in the local decision-making process is the basis of local democracy, since local self-government is a government for the people and by the people.

The latest reform of local self-government was marked by the new Local Self-Government Code in 2014, which, among other things, aimed to define additional mechanisms for citizens' participation in self-government and refine existing ones. Despite the provision of a general legal framework, participation mechanisms in municipalities are heterogeneous. The number of people who have information about participation mechanisms is still small. Despite many implemented projects, the involvement of the population in the decision-making process is still low. All this indicates the existence of several serious problems. The presented grant was aimed at solving such kind of problems.

The goal of the grant was to increase the quality of citizens' involvement in the decision-making process and ensure the accountability of local authorities.



The grant included the following tasks:

- ❖ To establish an effective mechanism of citizens' appeal to the local self-government;
- ❖ To empower women, youth in order to identify needs and priorities at the local level, solve them and advocate;
- ❖ To strengthen dialogue and cooperation between community organizations and local authorities in the decision-making process;
- ❖ To initiate effective cooperation mechanisms between local self-government, civil advisory councils and citizen initiative groups, including advocacy of issues.

The grant covered eleven (11) municipalities of Imereti region, namely: Baghdati, Samtredia, Vani, Khoni, Tskaltubo, Sachkhere, Chiatura, Terjola, Zestafoni, Kharagauli, Tkibuli.

#### **Involvement of citizens in the decision-making process - advocacy;**



Various meaningful activities were carried out to achieve the goal of the project. In the first stage, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the mayors of the municipalities of Imereti and the chairmen/chairwomen of the city councils.

A qualitative study was conducted in the target municipalities using the focus group method.

The discussions aimed at clarifying/identifying the community needs/problems of the municipalities

and post-COVID-19 challenges. During the focus group interviews, the following issues were discussed, such as: agriculture, tourism, economic development programs, local business, manufacturing and marketing, migration and employment, infrastructure issues, access to education, sports/cultural activities, civic engagement mechanisms, health programs and social services, awareness and new needs caused by Covid-19.

Relevant and interesting groups were identified for the purposes of the study: representatives of local municipalities , formal and informal community leaders and representatives of vulnerable social groups. Through the focus groups, it was possible to obtain important qualitative information about the existing challenges, based on the views of the participants.

The budget programs of the municipality, the local economic development action plan and the document of priorities were studied.

For each municipality, a document of the needs of the local population was created with attached recommendations and budget programs.



The development of democracy is directly related to the presence of active citizens in the country. As more citizens participate in democratic processes, the government assumes increased responsibility for managing the country. For this purpose, initiative groups were created on the basis of focus group members in municipalities, which united representatives of different groups of society (women, single parents, disabled people, young people, etc.).

The goal of the initiative group was to create a resource that would support citizen engagement and needs advocacy campaigns at the local level.

Group leaders who were actively involved in grant activities were identified.

Trainings were held for them on the specifics of advocacy, which represent the specifics of advocacy at the local level. The following issues were discussed at the training: three sectors of the state; what is advocacy? principles of active citizenship; types of advocacy; basic elements of advocacy; identifying the problem of advocacy, the specifics of advocacy. This training gave the members of the initiative group the opportunity to get information on topics unknown to them, which are related to the specifics of advocacy. After the training



sessions, it can be said that with the information received, the participants can put a specific problem on the agenda and take immediate actions aimed at the welfare of the community through the improvement of local services.

### **Increasing the level of accountability of self-government officials and improving communication with the population.**

Effective communication with local authorities is essential. In order for citizens to provide local self-government with their opinions on active and urgent issues, an online citizen feedback platform was implemented as a pilot on the official website of Kharagauli, Baghdati, Samtredia, Vani, Khoni and Tskaltubo municipalities. In the first stage, social programs were assessed as a pilot.

In general, the platform is a good opportunity for a citizen living in the municipality, who has already benefited from specific programs/services of the municipality, to record electronically his/her opinion on the usefulness of the provided service or program.

The feedback platform allows the citizens of the municipality to evaluate social programs. Also, through the platform, any citizen living in the municipality is given the opportunity to express their opinion and indicate solutions, to contribute to the activities planned and implemented by the self-government. A universal questionnaire was developed, which allows to reflect the existing need / problem and also indicate their opinion / recommendation on ways to solve this problem. These platforms are developed in Georgian, are in line with the design of existing websites of municipalities, are adapted for smartphones and tablets. After the received answers, in order to obtain statistical information, the platform automatically summarizes the percentage of answers to the "mark" questions and anyone can see them if they wish.

Organization cooperated with Municipal Service Development Agency (MSDA), and provided assistance to the municipalities of Tskaltubo, Terjola and Zestafoni in the preparation of legal documentation of the electronic platform "Your Idea to the Mayor".

It is a sort of moral obligation of a citizen to make maximum use of the opportunities granted by the constitution and law and to actively participate in the management of the state, or even of his/her own city or municipality. To activate citizens, within the framework of the grant, Local Democracy Agency Georgia appealed to Imereti municipal councils to reduce the minimum 1% threshold for petition voters, since the majority of citizens face a significant barrier in the process of submitting a petition - the problem of mobilizing the minimum number of citizens defined by law. The initiative was positively assessed by Samtredia, Baghdati, Khoni, Tskaltubo, Chiatura and Sachkhere municipalities. The result was a reduction of the standard 1% threshold for registered voters to 0.5%.

Consequently, the voters of these municipalities have the opportunity to easily ensure the mobilization of 0.5% of registered voters, collect signatures and submit a joint petition. This helps the municipality to strengthen the involvement of citizens in public life and participation in the activities of local government.

There is not live broadcast of the city council sessions in the municipalities of Imereti. The introduction of livestream became even more necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic, when citizens could not attend the

session of the City Council due to the imposed restrictions. Within the framework of the grant, in seven municipalities - Khragauli, Sachkhere, Baghdati, Samtredia, Khoni, Tskaltubo, Tkibuli - live broadcasting of the council meetings was introduced. In order to inform the citizens, the agenda and the date of the meeting of the municipal council were posted in advance on the website of the official social network of the municipality. Which means that part of the population, who could not attend the session due to the pandemic or other reasons, could watch the session via live stream and listen to the positions expressed and the decisions made regarding the discussed issues.

Roundtable format meetings, both face-to-face and online, held due to the pandemic. Both local self-government representatives and members of the initiative group attended the meetings.

At the meetings, through the project team and the initiative group, the problems identified in specific municipalities as a result of the research were presented. The attending public assessed the existing problems and discussed effective ways to solve them. Also, they discussed what is the situation at the local level in terms of citizens' involvement and how ready the local self-government is for population participation and solving local problems.



Through thematic meetings, the results of the survey, identified problems and developed recommendations were presented to the members of the councils working on issues of gender equality, civil advisors and disabled people of municipalities. At the meeting, they discussed the needs identified as a result of research. The members of the councils expressed their opinions about the existing important challenges on the issues that belong to the sphere of competence of the local self-government.

The purpose of the meetings was to create a basis for the councils represented at the local self-government level to establish a tradition of consultation not only with the civil sector, but also to involve citizens in the process.



It is necessary that the mayor's deliberative body fulfills its function responsibly, to review the municipality's activities, programs and other important administrative-legal documents, acting as an intermediary between the self-government and citizens. For this purpose, the project team actively worked with the members of the civil advisory councils. They were trained on the functions and importance of the council. The following issues were discussed at the training: the importance of citizen involvement in the process of local self-government implementation; functions and responsibilities of the civil advisory council; sharing practical experience on the activities of the civil advisory council; samples of the statute of the civil advisory council, the minutes of the meeting, the agenda. As a result of the trainings, the council members understood their duties.



The mayor of the municipality and the member of the municipal council are obliged to hold public meetings with the voters of the municipality and submit a report about the work done to them at least once a year, no later than November 1, in accordance with the relevant resolution of the municipal council and answer the questions asked by the voters of the municipality while reviewing the report. Unfortunately, the law does not define the definition of "public discuss", which in most cases allows the mentioned engagement mechanism to be misused. Within the framework of the grant, cooperation with municipalities ensured the implementation of good public reporting practices, which on the one hand increased the degree of citizen involvement, and on the other hand increased the accountability of local self-government.



As soon as the grant started the mayor of Baghdati municipality conducted an online meeting to represent the annual report of 2020 year.

The 2021 report was also presented to the public by the mayor of Khoni municipality. He spoke in detail about the projects implemented during the reporting period and answered the questions asked by the population. The mayor focused on the good practice of cooperation with non-governmental and donor organizations. The meeting was attended by journalists, non-governmental sector representatives, City Hall employees and other interested parties.



The summary report of the mayor's activities during 2021 was posted on the official website of Kharagauli municipality. The mayor's report details the results achieved during the year in the fields of infrastructure, social, health, culture and sports.

Local Democracy Agency Georgia held a regional conference on citizen engagement mechanisms, which was attended by grant donor organizations, invited speakers, members of the local self-government of Imereti region and the initiative group created within the grant. The regional conference aimed to share best practices and existing challenges on each engagement mechanism with the participation of different municipalities in Imereti region, as well as to devote some of the conference to presenting the results and achievements of the implemented grant.



The second part was dedicated to the importance of ensuring citizen engagement mechanisms and sharing of best practices by the representatives of Imereti municipalities, also an online citizen's feedback platform was presented, which was piloted for Vani, Khoni, Kharagauli, Samtredia, Baghdati and Tskaltubo municipalities.

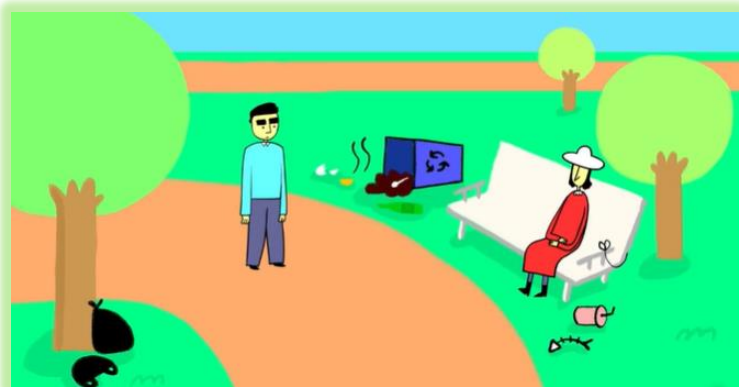
## Raising the level of legal awareness of civil society working in municipalities for better expression of the interests of target groups;

Within the framework of the project, training was conducted for the representatives of civil society organizations in the target municipalities of Imereti region. The training module covered issues such as:

- ❖ Citizen engagement mechanisms;
- ❖ Citizen participation in the implementation of local self-government;
- ❖ The role / function of the civil advisory council in the process of local self-government implementation;
- ❖ Program budget processes and stages;
- ❖ Main principles / authorities of local self-government;
- ❖ Local self-government in a democratic state;
- ❖ Municipality Finances.



The training improved the skills and local networking capabilities of the organization's representatives, which in the future will contribute to their improved coordination, communication with the local self-government, citizens and representatives of the civil sector.



A 2D animated video clip was prepared, the purpose of which was, on the one hand, to raise the awareness of citizens and local actors about the mechanisms of citizen involvement, and on the other hand, to increase the accountability of municipalities at the local level.

In total, one hundred and twenty (120) meetings were held in the target municipalities. On-site meetings and online engagements covered up to seven hundred (700) beneficiaries.

### Specific needs:

- ❖ To inform the population about the projects to be implemented;
- ❖ To Access agricultural services and agro-techniques;
- ❖ To develop skills in writing business applications;
- ❖ To train qualified guides, agronomists, veterinarians and bringing these professions to the forefront;
- ❖ To access the certification process determining the quality of honey;

- ❖ Encouraging existing farmers and business entities;
- ❖ Encouraging youth and promoting their involvement in economic development programs;
- ❖ To implement programs supporting the development of tourism;
- ❖ Raising awareness about citizen engagement mechanisms;
- ❖ Raising awareness of citizens about environmental issues;
- ❖ The issue of stray dogs;
- ❖ Checking the suitability of drinking water;
- ❖ Involvement of the vulnerable category and teenagers living in the highland villages in the educational process;
- ❖ Implementation of programs aimed at strengthening single parents, a mother of many children;
- ❖ Adapted infrastructure for disabled people;
- ❖ Availability of psychologist services;
- ❖ Existence of a day center for the elderly;
- ❖ Refinement of the system of assigning the status of the socially vulnerable.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia:**

- ❖ In terms of agricultural development, it is important to develop and implement programs adapted to local needs and citizens' interests;
- ❖ Review of existing programs and improvement of conditions;
- ❖ It is important to develop and introduce new forms of awareness of citizens about the programs that are implemented in terms of agricultural development together with the municipality;
- ❖ To promote the renewal of agricultural machinery on the ground;
- ❖ Frequent counseling and assistance regarding the procedures of participation in the program should be provided to the persons (farmers) who wish to participate in the programs.

##### **Enterprise Georgia:**

- ❖ It is important to promote the strengthening of citizens' skills in such matters as writing a business application;
- ❖ It is important to review and improve the existing programs as a result of communication with the population in the municipalities, so that they are adapted to the needs (at least of the region) and capabilities of the citizens;
- ❖ To facilitate the strengthening of business and computer skills of citizens willing to participate in the programs.

##### **Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia:**

- ❖ To facilitate the availability of professional education in the direction of agriculture in the municipality..

##### **Local Municipality:**

- ❖ Close cooperation of the municipality with various international organizations, development of small grant programs, economic encouragement of young people and women to reduce migration is important;

- ❖ Together with other targeted state agencies, promote the economic diversification of the municipality;
- ❖ It is important to introduce different mechanisms of communication in order to improve the awareness of citizens.
- ❖ To promote the raising of citizens' awareness about the mechanisms of involvement.
- ❖ It is important to increase the access of the population living in rural areas to short-term professional education programs (promotion of training based on work practice, financing of transportation during professional trainings, etc.).


## Online Citizen Feedback Platform

The right of citizens to participate in the management of public affairs is a basic principle of democratic governance. Representative democracy is characterized by broad involvement of various interested parties in the process of public policy development, during which each branch of government is obliged to have and develop mechanisms of public involvement.


Local Democracy Agency Georgia continues to work actively for the development of self-government and support the development of local democracy, has been actively working for many years to advocate for the problems of the population, especially vulnerable groups throughout the region of Imereti.

In order to engage and activate citizens, an online citizens' feedback platform was introduced on the official website of six (6) municipalities of Imereti region (Baghdati, Samtredia, Vani, Khoni, Tskaltubo, Kharagauli), with the support of UNDP DGG project in 2021.


მოქალაქეთა უკუკავშირის პლატფორმა




ბიუჯეტის  
კვანძები




შეწყობილი  
პეტიციები







შეგნობის  
და  
საქმიანობის  
შედეგები



უკუკავშირის  
პლატფორმა




შეფასების  
ფორმები

პლატფორმა შექმნილია საქართველოს მთავრობის დახმარებით UNDP-ის, დანიას საგარეო საქმეთა სამინისტროსა და საქართველოს მთავრობის შიდა საქმეთა სამსახურის, პლატფორმის გამომცემი  
 მხარეებმა ერთხელად და შექმნა ამ ქვეყანაში მთავრობის საზოგადოებრივი ინტერაქციის მხარდაჭერის მიზნით.

This platform was prepared with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Georgia. The views expressed in this platform are  
 those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the organisations listed above.



This is the platform for governments to demonstrate a commitment to greater citizen engagement. Citizen feedback is an important means by which government engages with citizens. Local authorities will use this form of communication, which requires relatively less human resources, to measure the effectiveness of municipal services.



The purpose of creating the online platform is to evaluate the services/programs implemented by the municipality from the citizens' side.

The platform is a good opportunity for a citizen living in the municipality, who has already benefited from specific programs/services of the municipality, to record electronically his/her opinion on the usefulness of the provided service or program.

The feedback platform allows the citizens of the municipality to evaluate social, youth and infrastructure programs. Also, through the platform, any citizen living in the municipality is given the opportunity to express their opinion and indicate solutions, to contribute to the activities planned and implemented by the self-government.



The municipality is responsible for the effectiveness of citizens' participation. At the initial stage, information was provided to the municipalities and meetings were organized in terms of strengthening the online platform, so that the representatives of the municipalities were actively involved in the process of launching and activating the platform in practice. The discussion at the meetings touched on activities increasing the functions and capabilities of the online citizen feedback platform, in particular the addition and evaluation of youth and infrastructure programs.

A draft version of the citizen feedback platform implementation rule was prepared and approved by the Order of the Mayor in the target municipalities. Also, by the Order of the Mayor, the persons who ensure the effective functioning of the platform were determined.

Informational meetings with the citizens were organized in the administrative units of Samtredia, Vani, Kharagauli, Baghdati, Khoni and Tskaltubo municipalities. The aim of the meetings was to introduce the idea and purpose of the citizen feedback platform.



An information booklet was distributed at the meetings and a practical presentation was made on how the platform is filled and how the received answers are converted into a quantitative indicator.



Technical support was provided to IT specialists of the municipalities. As a result of technical support, the existing version of the platform was better implemented in practice. Other resources of the platform were utilized, and new municipal programs were added to the program.

The project team communicated with the heads of social, youth and infrastructure services in the municipalities in order to provide public information related to the

programs 2022. As a result of the provided programs, the process of integration of the programs was carried out.

Based on the identified needs, electronic infographics were prepared for each municipality, where the most priority needs named by the citizens are presented both in diagrams and at a quantitative level. The mentioned information in the pre-budget period will enable the municipalities to correctly determine and plan the next year's budget.



## Various activities

Executive director of LDA Georgia met with the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the United States of America to Georgia H.E. Kelly C. Degnan.

With the mentioned meeting, the Ambassador completed the 2022 tour cycle in our country, which was dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Georgia and the United States.

Civil society organizations operating in Imereti municipality also attended the meeting. At the meeting, they talked about the needs of Imereti region and plans to continue cooperation.



## Open Government Partnership-OGP Program

Local Democracy Agency Georgia (LDA Georgia) became a member of the "Open Government Partnership" local program (OGP Local).



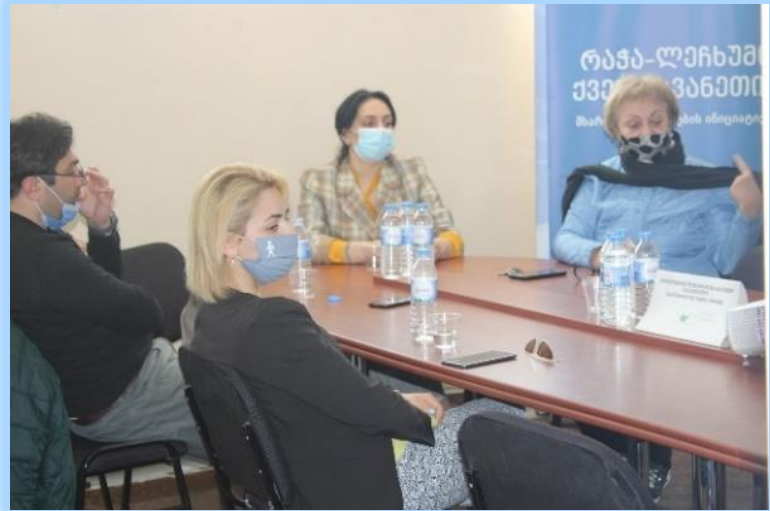


## Digital Tools for Active Citizens

LDA Georgia presented the results of the research “Digital Tools for Active Citizens”, which was attended by local CSOs’ representatives.

The research aimed at understanding how civil society organizations in the Black Sea Region are using digital tools to advance their mission, manage their resources (human, financial, etc.) and to outreach to donors and beneficiaries, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the research, CSOs in the Black Sea Region have:

- ❖ Insufficient media and digital skills;
- ❖ Lack of resources & funding for online civic activities;
- ❖ Lack of knowledge on how to advocate and participate online;
- ❖ Lack of access to Internet (coverage, quality, cost);
- ❖ Lack of confidence in the impact of digital activism;
- ❖ Lack of access to technology.



The research took place in 4 countries: Romania, Georgia, Ukraine and Armenia, as part of the sub-granting scheme of the project “Black Sea NGO Forum: Building CSO Capacity for Regional Cooperation within the Black Sea Region”, implemented by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND, with the financial support of the European Union.

## Youth Exchange program "YOU.TH" in Italy

Young people sent to Italy by LDA Georgia - Local Democracy Agency Georgia within the project "YOU.TH".

The project "YOU.TH" aimed at equipping youth workers with methodologies and practices that are mainly used in the field of theater and can be used to implement inclusive activities in non-formal education.

Four young people from Georgia were involved in the exchange program. In this youth exchange program 34 youth workers from eight different countries (Italy, Spain, Georgia, Portugal, Ukraine, Armenia, Jordan, the Republic of North Macedonia) learnt together in 7 days of training course in Morfasso (Italy).



## Open Door Day at Akaki Tsereteli State University



Local Democracy Agency Georgia (LDA Georgia) held an Open Door Day for young people at Akaki Tsereteli State University.

At the meeting students received information about the activities of the Local Democracy Agency Georgia, youth exchange programs; had the opportunity to undergo an internship announced by the organization; to listen to exchange program participants who were recently in Italy within the framework of the "YOU.TH" program.

Also, they had the opportunity to fill in the application form of the youth club at the base of the

organization and become members of the club.

## Youth club of LDA Georgia

The youth club of LDA Georgia has renewed its activities with new members. Youth club members were selected based on their experience and motivation. Nino Khukhua, executive director of LDA Georgia talked about the club's work, past projects, and future plans. Also, participants shared their expectations and motivation for joining. From next year (2023), club members will be actively involved in volunteer activities, trainings and various social campaigns. The youth club was established in 2016. Since 2016, the members of the club have already implemented a number of important projects.



## International Forum "Cities Challenges and Way Forward"

Local Democracy Agency Georgia participated in the Second International Forum "Cities' Challenges and Way Forward".

At the forum, the Executive Director of LDA Georgia - Nino Khukhua spoke about the role of civil society organizations in the process of economic stimulation of municipalities and good governance. In order to share good practices, she reviewed the projects implemented by the organization in the recent past, in particular, SMS online platforms were created to promote good governance, medium-term development strategies and investment profiles were developed, an Entrepreneurship-Investment regional forum was organized, etc.



The following participants: partner cities and regions of Kutaisi City Municipality; Cities from the Eastern Partnership and Western Europe; Representatives of civil society and the business sector, experts from around the world, took part in the forum.

The forum was organized by Kutaisi City Municipality; Co-organizer - United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The event is supported

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