



UNFPA

IN GEORGIA

15 YEARS of **PARTNERSHIP**
FOR PROGRESS

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.



UNFPA - because everyone counts

UNFPA IN GEORGIA

15 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP FOR PROGRESS

The 15th anniversary of opening UNFPA Georgia Country Office provides an opportune moment to reflect on successes achieved during the last decade and a half, and to strategize for the future priorities to contribute to Georgia's sustainable development.

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We are very happy to mark the 15th anniversary of UNFPA's presence in Georgia this year. Together with the Georgian authorities and civil society we have made a great progress in reducing maternal and child mortality, in making sure that girls go to school. Women's participation has improved and women have better access to family planning.

But there is still so much to do, because there are inequalities in the system. Not everybody who needs and wants services has access to them. Georgia has a large youth population. We need to make sure they grow up as responsible adults and that they have access to jobs to build a better Georgia. We need to ensure that the human rights of people continue to be the basis of human development. These are the things we need to continue to look at and work with the government and people of Georgia.

Babatunde Osotimehin, UNFPA Executive Director



UNFPA Globally: Transforming ICPD into Reality

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is an international organization which strives to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, Egypt 20 years ago was a pivotal event in linking population and development. During this conference, 179 countries concurred that balanced development required major advancements in universal education, in health, including reproductive health, in gender equality, in preventing HIV/AIDS. The conference adopted a 20-year Programme of Action (PoA), which focused on respect, protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights to improve the lives of men, women and youth everywhere. UNFPA was mandated to lead the implementation of the ICPD PoA.

In 2014, the world celebrates the 20th anniversary of the adoption of ICPD PoA. In 2013, a UN global review of

the core message of the ICPD PoA - that the pathway to sustainable development is through the equitable achievement of dignity and human rights, good health, security of place and mobility, attained through good governance.

Historically, the ICPD's focus on linkages between population dynamics, development and poverty has been reinforced by larger development priorities of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Both the ICPD PoA and MDGs call for universal access to primary education, gender equality and empowerment of women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, ensuring universal access to Reproductive Health and combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases before 2015. Investing in individual human rights, capabilities and dignity — across the multiple sectors of the ICPD and throughout the life-course with particular focus on adolescents and young people — is the foundation of sustainable development to be integrated into UN's Global Post-2015 Development Agenda.

"I call on all development partners to join me in recommitting to the Cairo Programme of Action until all of its promises are fulfilled"

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General

progress, gaps, challenges and emerging issues in relation to the ICPD Programme of Action documented considerable progress in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; it also revealed the challenges that still remain in terms of improving the quality of lives of people, ensuring equality and equity and protecting the environment for succeeding generations. The ICPD beyond 2014 framework re-affirms

"UNFPA's position for the post-2015 agenda is clear: The empowerment of women, adolescents and young people to exercise their reproductive rights; universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, within a framework of human rights and gender equality; and, an understanding of the implications of population dynamics, are at the core of sustainable development. And we believe that the future of global development agenda will succeed only if women, adolescents and youth are at its center."

*Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin,
UNFPA Executive Director*



UNFPA Georgia: 15 Years of Making a Difference

When in 1991 Georgia started transitioning to a free market economy, a rapid decline in the standard of living and unemployment pushed many families into poverty. Later, conflicts in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region displaced more than 257,000 people who are still unable to return home. Significant gaps emerged in the provision of basic services by the state as the country teetered on the edge of collapse. Against this backdrop, in 1993, UNFPA launched its first contraceptive supply project in Georgia as part of its Reproductive Health programming. Six years later, in 1999, a fully-fledged Country Office was established to support Reproductive Health projects in the country. In 2006, UNFPA Georgia started to provide assistance in the country through a 5-year Country Programme modality.

UNFPA Georgia is now supporting its Second Country Program and continues to help the country in bridging the gaps in quality and availability of sexual and reproductive health services for women, men and youth, and promoting reproductive rights; UNFPA Georgia has been promoting greater gender equality, helping in combating Domestic Violence and building national capacities for generating reliable population data for evidence-based policy making and planning. Crucial to UNFPA Georgia's success has been the partnerships it has built with the Government of Georgia (GoG), civil society, international technical institutions and donors.

To maximize its programmatic impact UNFPA Georgia aligns its support with Georgia's national development priorities, the MDGs, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework's priority areas for poverty reduction and democratic development in Georgia.

Year 2014 marks 15 years of UNFPA's development programming in Georgia.



UNFPA Georgia: Reproductive Health in the Centre of Human Development

UNFPA Georgia has been supporting improved reproductive health, empowerment of women and youth, and reducing inequities to contribute to harmonious development of the Georgian society. To support Georgia in achieving these goals, UNFPA Georgia uses a multi-tiered strategy, interlinking actors on all levels to foster change: on the policy level, by creating an enabling legal and policy environment that promotes improved services and rights; on the systems' level, by building national capacities to deliver quality services; on the grass-roots level, by raising awareness to stimulate demand for services and rights;

Everyone has the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. All couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so.

Principle 8, ICPD

The organization has advocated for and promoted the policy dialogue for better legislative framework, policies, regulatory systems and standards in the area of reproductive health customized to suit Georgia's

development priorities and context. To contribute to improved enabling environment, the Fund has been supporting building the awareness of parliamentarians and staffers on reproductive health and rights issues, thus creating a corps of sensitized decision-makers, who can advocate for lasting improvements of the reproductive health of the population. Since 1999, UNFPA Georgia helped the country develop and/or revise its national policies and laws on reproductive health issues, including on new technologies in the RH area. To promote policy dialogue, UNFPA Georgia helped improve coordination between the Ministry of Labour Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA), the Parliament of Georgia, National Professional Associations and civil society by supporting the National Council on Reproductive Health (RHNC). Since 2014 UNFPA has been providing technical support to the MCH Council, which took over to lead the national efforts directed towards improving maternal and child health in the country.

UNFPA Georgia's work in promoting reproductive health and rights naturally encompasses the high-level policy dialogue on rights-based Family Planning. Throughout its First and Second Country Programmes, UNFPA Georgia, in collaboration with MoLHSA and national professional associations, supported adaptation of clinical guidelines and protocols on Family Planning. In 2005, having studied the reproductive health commodity security situation in Georgia, the organization, assisted MoLHSA in developing the RH Costing Tool and in establishing a Reproductive Health Commodity Security Unit. The Unit, which was



tasked with managing and maintaining the reproductive health commodity supply, received capacity building and technical and financial support from UNFPA Georgia. Additionally, UNFPA Georgia, working through its implementing partners, secured an uninterrupted flow of free reproductive health supplies and modern methods of Family Planning to the healthcare system. All throughout its presence in Georgia, UNFPA continued to advocate for increased access of population to FP services through increased state funding, sustainable commodity provision and improved national technical expertise at MoLHSA to forecast contraceptive needs and manage procurement and distribution processes.

Recently, UNFPA Georgia contributed to the formulation of the national health strategy by presenting the findings of the 2013 study on Gap Analysis of Family Planning Services in Georgia. The research findings suggest that integration of the FP services in the Universal Health Programme is an effective way to contribute to reducing maternal mortality and improving overall reproductive health of the population.

One of the important areas of UNFPA's support has been to ensure that reliable data on Reproductive Health status of the population is available and used for policy making and programme planning. The three consecutive nationwide household-based Reproductive Health Surveys (1999, 2005, 2010) operationally and financially supported by UNFPA (co-funded by USAID and UNICEF) provide wealth of knowledge and age-disaggregated data on the

current status as well as the trends in all major areas related to women's reproductive health and constitute the main basis for analysis and national policy planning. Numerous clinical service guidelines and protocols in the area of reproductive health, maternal healthcare, family planning have been adapted with UNFPA support and in partnership with professional associations. This was done in order to increase the availability and use of integrated reproductive health services that are gender-responsive and meet human rights standards for quality of care and equity in access and to bring the quality of service provision to internationally agreed levels.

“Governments from all regions hold a common perspective that universal access to comprehensive, quality and integrated sexual and reproductive health is one of the highest priorities for the global development agenda beyond 2014 and is essential to sustainable development and poverty reduction”

Report of the UN Secretary General “Recurrent themes and key elements identified during the sessions

of the Commission on Population and Development”,

15 July, 2014



The organization assisted in improving the regulatory framework on maternal health by advocating for increased state funding of the National Referral Mechanism for maternal health and supported, financially and with technical expertise, the elaboration of national guidelines and protocols on effective emergency obstetric care services. In 2006, UNFPA Georgia and MoLHSA co-funded the procurement of two fully equipped reanimobiles (for infant and adult care) for emergency obstetric care thus strengthening the National Referral System. In 2013, UNFPA Georgia reopened policy dialogue on safe motherhood and, in collaboration with the national partners and experts from MAYO clinic (USA), supported assessment of the quality of care at a number of selected maternity houses in Georgia, training of trainers in Emergency Obstetric Care and offered recommendations for more adequate distribution of resources and for improved standards of emergency obstetric care in order to help reduce the maternal mortality.

UNFPA Georgia sought to ensure that women, adolescents and youth at every socioeconomic level could access and utilize quality reproductive health care, including rights-based family planning, at various levels of Georgia's healthcare system.

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“The lives of mothers can be saved by training and deploying midwives, making family planning accessible, providing timely obstetric care to women with pregnancy complications and making sure that women use sexual and reproductive health services, especially in rural, marginalized and remote areas.”

*Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin,
UNFPA Executive Director*

“Family planning is not a privilege, but a right. Yet, too many women and men are denied this human right. Women who have access to family planning can contribute enormously to economic development. The accumulated effect of these highly personal decisions can influence entire countries and regions.”

*Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin,
UNFPA Executive Director*

To increase access of the population, and especially the most vulnerable groups to quality reproductive health services during the uneasy years of health system reform, since 1999, UNFPA Georgia has been providing essential medical supplies and equipment, and most importantly, free of charge modern Family Planning methods to the healthcare system. The organization supported the distribution of free modern FP methods in the healthcare system through its implementing partners and delivered FP

supplies and information through various service delivery mechanisms, such as RH Mobile Teams, Youth-Friendly Reproductive Health Centres, and other reproductive health service provision points.

Moreover, since 2002, UNFPA supported Condom Social Marketing Initiative targeting youth and reaching over 1.5 million individuals in Georgia. The initiative has since become fully self-sustainable.

According to the 2010 UNFPA Georgia Reproductive Health Survey the use of contraceptive methods (all methods) among married women aged 15-44 years increased from 41% in 1999 to 53% in 2010. More than half of married women aged 15-44 in 2010 (53%) reported using contraception, including 35% using modern methods. The greatest increases were for the intrauterine devices (IUD) and condoms.

During 2000-2012, UNFPA Georgia helped population overcome geographic, financial and cultural access barriers to quality reproductive healthcare by deploying five Reproductive Health Mobile Teams (RH Mobile Teams). Using modern medical equipment and supplies, the 4-member RH Mobile Teams provided counselling and treatment for reproductive health illnesses, including the provision of Family Planning counselling and free FP methods, as well as ultrasound scanning, STI testing and early detection of reproductive system cancers. During this period, RH Mobile Teams treated, counselled and referred over 42,000 individuals through Georgia, while working on average 240 days a year and reaching all municipalities of Georgia. Additionally, RH Mobile Teams were vehicles for awareness-raising and capacity development. They routinely disseminated information and educational materials among population they served and provided on-the-job medical training to the local reproductive health service providers. Annually, more than 100 service providers received trainings on contemporary issues in reproductive healthcare via RH Mobile Teams' on-site visits.

According to the 2010 UNFPA Georgia Reproductive Health Survey the unmet need for family planning supplies in 2010 was only half of the level documented in 1999.

UNFPA Georgia's efforts to strengthen national capacity for provision of quality reproductive health services aspire to increase the access of the population to quality reproductive health services through the development of quality standards and protocols and their implementation in the healthcare system, including by building the capacity of service providers. UNFPA Georgia's this approach ensures longer-term and sustainable changes in the system. To improve the quality of reproductive health service provision, the organization partnered with MoLHSA and national professional associations and provided support in adaptation of international guidelines and protocols in the areas of reproductive health, maternal care, obstetric, emergency obstetric care, and so on. Once developed and approved by MoLHSA, these instruments became part of a unified knowledge resource on reproductive health and served as a foundation for developing the training curricula for RH service providers and PHC doctors, accredited by the state.

Throughout its First and Second Country Programmes, UNFPA Georgia in partnership with Zhordania Institute of Human Reproduction training center supported training of over 3,000 health professionals (RH service providers, family doctors, general practitioners, nurses, mid-wives, village doctors) and health managers throughout Georgia. Comprehensive trainings for RH services providers significantly contributed to improving the quality of services provided and introduction of modern evidence-based approaches and methods. Trainings on FP guidelines and protocols captured diverse audiences of service-providers nationwide, sensitized trainees on cultural conditions and ensured that patients were provided with detailed information about modern FP methods. Additionally, in order to meet the capacity development needs for expanding contraceptive method mix, UNFPA Georgia, began strengthening private sector partnership with companies, who run government-funded medical insurance schemes during UNFPA's Second Country Programme. UNFPA contributed to strengthening the primary health care in Georgia by training of 570 village doctors and primary health care providers on reproductive

health & rights, voluntary family planning, ante- and post-natal care, cancer awareness and breast and cervical cancer screening in PHC provider's practice. These interventions greatly increased the impact of organization's awareness-raising campaigns as well.

Make services safer, affordable, more convenient and accessible for clients and ensure, through strengthened logistical systems, a sufficient and continuous supply of essential high quality contraceptives.

ICPD PoA, 7.23(c)

For national capacity development on reproductive health commodity security, UNFPA Georgia piloted, in 2006, a supply-chain management system – CHANNEL and trained implementing partners on its use. In 2013-2014, the organization trained three decision-makers at MoLHSA in a Total Market Approach to Family Planning and helped them develop an Action Plan for implementation of Total Market Approach in Georgia, whereby the government takes on a stewardship role of the total FP commodities market, and coordinates commodity security actions with the private sector. The Action Plan developed in Georgia is geared towards expanding access, ensuring equity, and maximizing financial resources for reproductive health commodity provision in the country.

At the grassroots level, UNFPA Georgia has long supported public awareness-raising campaigns on reproductive health and rights, including on Family Planning, as a strategic intervention for improving reproductive health status of the population. These serve to generate demand for quality services by empowering women, men and youth to learn about their reproductive health and rights, as well to change harmful practices and risky behaviours. Organization's awareness-raising campaigns in Georgia have been ground-breaking in many ways. From early interventions such as meetings with women in the regions to talk about their reproductive health and rights, to more sophisticated demand-generating multi-media campaigns, including TV and Radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs), condom social marketing initiative for youth, youth forums on reproductive health and rights, and the informational-educational sessions and distribution of IEC

materials in the government-funded youth summer camps, UNFPA Georgia have reached women, men and youth in all regions of Georgia. Agency's diverse awareness-raising initiatives on family planning were designed primarily for the public-at-large, but also targeted pharmacists, police academy cadets, etc., as these groups perform functions that can be used to increase the impact of these efforts.

HIV prevention has been fully integrated in awareness raising efforts – the examples include specifically designed Information Education Communication (IEC) materials on STIs and HIV prevention distributed through reproductive health service delivery units and partner NGOs. The efforts to prevent stigma and discrimination has been directed towards a wide range of target groups at risk for HIV infection, such as youth and key population (MSMs, sex workers, and others).

Information, education and communication efforts should raise awareness through public education campaigns on such priority issues as: safe motherhood, reproductive health and rights, maternal and child health and family planning.

ICPD PoA, 11.16

Feature: Partnership with the Government of Adjara Autonomous Republic for Improving Access to RH services

In 2014 UNFPA launched the partnership with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Adjara Autonomous Republic by signing of a co-financing agreement aimed at contributing to reduction of morbidity and mortality of women of reproductive age in the Adjara Autonomous Republic. The initiative focuses on achieving two important results: improved access to reproductive health services at the Primary Health Care level in Adjara, with special emphasis on vulnerable groups, including rural population living in the highlands and increased use of the services by these communities.

UNFPA Georgia: Focus on Prevention of Reproductive Tract Cancer

UNFPA Georgia is committed to preventing reproductive system cancer in order to address the main causes of morbidity and mortality of women of reproductive age in the country. UNFPA Georgia in partnership with the Tbilisi Municipality increased population's access to cancer screening services at the National Cancer Screening Centre (NCS) through the Breast and Cervical Cancers Screening project in Tbilisi. Being first of its kind in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the project improved the capacity for prevention and early detection of reproductive system cancer to reduce cancer-related mortality amongst women of reproductive age. In 2009, the NCS was awarded Pearl of Wisdom during the Cervical Cancer Prevention Summit Meeting at the European Parliament. In 2010, based on the success of the Tbilisi Cancer Screening Programme, the breast cancer screening programme was replicated in four regions of Georgia, and in 2011, a comprehensive cancer screening programme, which now covers breast, cervical, colorectal cancer screening and prostate cancer risk management, became available to the entire population of Georgia.

In 2006, UNFPA Georgia opened the policy dialogue on cancer prevention by advocating for improved national capabilities for cancer prevention and early detection and for increased state funding for screening programs. The same year a National Cancer Screening Centre was established in Tbilisi, and the breast and cervical cancer screening programmes were launched with co-funding from Tbilisi Municipality. UNFPA continued to foster the enabling policy environment on cancer prevention by advocating for integration of cancer screening into Georgia's healthcare system, and for extending the

geographic coverage of screening programme to cover the entire country. Since 2013, UNFPA Georgia, in partnership with MoLHSA, the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC&PH) and the European Cervical Cancer Association (ECCA) has been supporting the elaboration of the Cancer Screening Strategy as a part of the wider, national Cancer Control Strategy. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Georgia's cancer screening programmes UNFPA Georgia has been providing technical support to MoLHSA and NCDC&PH for the development of a comprehensive plan on launching the organized cervical cancer screening programme as the model that could be replicated for screening breast and colorectal cancer as well.

UNFPA Georgia supported a number of national and international forums to foster policy dialogue on effective strategies for cancer control, among them are the International Conference on Health Advocacy and Cancer Control in 2007, summit of Politicians for Cervical Cancer Prevention at the European Parliament in 2009, Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in 2011, and Breast Cancer Education, Outreach and Advocacy Summit in Tbilisi in 2013.

National capacity building to strengthen strategic planning, clinical management, implementation and quality assurance of the breast and cervical cancer screening programme



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has been one of the priorities for UNFPA Georgia. With agency's support, the national guideline for cervical cancer screening has been elaborated and adopted by the government and cancer screening services in Georgia have been brought in line with international standards. The organization trained service providers involved in the breast and cervical cancer screening programme in all regions of Georgia on best practices, standards and protocols in breast screening radiology and digital mammography, new technologies in cervical cancer screening, Pap test cytology and so on. The quality of service provision in cancer screening improved as leading experts from the European technical institutions such as the European Cervical Cancer Association, Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Programme Management of UK NHS, Italy

and Netherlands, ACS and Emory University (USA), Vrije University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, Mammography Screening Programme in the Capital Region of Denmark, European School of Oncology and International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) conducted professional trainings in Georgia.

More than 400 medical professionals, including health managers, were trained on breast and cervical cancer screening and prevention thus expanding the reach of the cancer screening programmes and its popularity. Furthermore, for a longer-term national capacity building, UNFPA Georgia partnered with NCDC&PH to establish a Cancer Registry, which allows to monitor cancer-related morbidity and mortality in Georgia. The organization also provided staff trainings on its use.

In parallel, UNFPA Georgia supported a number of large-scale public awareness-raising campaigns to generate demand for cancer screening services amongst the population. The organization raised awareness by producing and regularly broadcasting cancer-related PSAs, co-producing a video feature with CNN, by launching various outdoor information campaigns, web-based media campaigns, by creating and distributing IEC materials, and through conferences, summits, and so on. Due to these efforts, the demand for breast and cervical cancer screening increased resulting in the dramatic increase of cancer detection at the early stages, thus saving many lives.

Since its inception in 2006, National Screening Centre provided free screening and diagnostics of cancer to over 155,000 people in Georgia.

Feature: The Black Sea Coalition for Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention

The Black Sea Coalition for Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention, launched in 2009, is an alliance of policy makers, technical institutions, experts and clinicians from the countries of the Black Sea basin and the South Caucasus. The coalition was founded on the belief that joint and coordinated efforts will allow the participating countries to effectively fight the high prevalence of breast and cervical cancer in the region. The Coalition has been initiated by UNFPA Georgia and is now supported by UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Turkey, and Ukraine. The Ministries of Health of these countries have appointed representatives to the Coalition. The Coalition's activities focus on national capacity building, sharing of knowledge and expertise, partnership-building and advocacy to engage governments, non-government and international organizations in an effort to reduce breast and cervical cancer related mortality in the region.



UNFPA Georgia in Abkhazia: Reproductive Health, Transcending Boundaries

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Abkhazia, located on the Black Sea coast of Georgia, is a break away region of Georgia. While the international law does not recognize Abkhazia's territorial claims, once prosperous autonomous republic is now politically and economically isolated and remains impoverished, with inadequate basic services and social protection.

In 2005 UNFPA Georgia in line with its core mandate of supporting improved access of the vulnerable population to quality reproductive health services

and information, launched a stand-alone project in Abkhazia, Georgia. In partnership with its implementing partners and in close consultation with the Georgian-Abkhazian Coordination Council, the organization has since contributed to improved access and quality of reproductive health services, including cervical cancer screening in the region.

Supply of basic RH equipment and commodities, including modern Family Planning methods and public awareness-raising on Reproductive Health and Rights was UNFPA Georgia's first initiative in Abkhazia, Georgia. UNFPA supported public education initiatives on reproductive health, Family Planning, HIV prevention and cervical cancer screening used IEC materials, print media, local TV and radio to reach wide audiences. Because the project in Abkhazia largely replicates the similar interventions



supported by UNFPA in other parts of the country, the IEC materials were translated, adapted and distributed throughout the region.

In parallel to awareness-raising activities, UNFPA Georgia has been supporting knowledge-sharing and capacity building of reproductive health service providers in Abkhazia since 2007. The organization supported cascade trainings on reproductive health - family planning, which covered 220 service providers, including doctors, nurses and midwives. With the introduction of cervical cancer screening services in 2011, UNFPA Georgia trained local service providers on screening guidelines, screening programme management and facilitated workshops for professionals from Tbilisi and Sukhumi in Turkey. To ensure that quality standardized services were provided to patients in Abkhazia, Georgia, UNFPA Georgia used training materials and know-how accumulated within the Tbilisi Cancer Screening programme. Since 2012, the residents of Sukhumi, Abkhazia can get free cervical cancer screening at the Reproductive Health Centre and three affiliated facilities in the town. The organization also seconded international experts and trainers from UNFPA's

own roster to Abkhazia. So far, five gynaecologists, two coloposcopists and two cytologist were trained on cancer screening PAP-based national guidelines, and 150 primary health care personnel were trained on cancer awareness and screening. Not only did these trainings build a cadre of qualified Reproductive Health service providers in Abkhazia, but they also created opportunities for networking with regional professional associations and created a platform for productive professional relations and confidence-building between Georgians and Abkhaz.

In 2014, UNFPA Georgia, together with UNICEF and UNDP, launched the EU-funded UN Joint Programme called: Access to improved quality healthcare in Abkhazia. The programme aims to improve access to quality healthcare for people in Abkhazia region with focus on children, mothers and other vulnerable groups receiving primary and specialized services in the areas of reproductive health, maternal and child healthcare, and HIV/AIDS and STI through further strengthening skills and knowledge of professionals as well as generating demand among the local population in this region for quality healthcare services.



UNFPA Georgia: Youth as a National Development Priority

“To achieve genuine development, we must transform our approach with and for young people, and in particular, young women and girls. Young people are drivers of change. They must have the choices and tools to fully participate in development, realize their potential and contribute to their societies”

*Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin,
UNFPA Executive Director*

Today, Georgia’s youth are actively engaged in shaping social and economic development of the country, challenging social norms and values and striving to contribute to social progress and influence policies that affect their lives. With specialized expertise in sexual and reproductive health and with a strong capacity for policy advocacy, UNFPA Georgia has been advancing youth agenda in Georgia in four strategic directions: evidence-based advocacy for comprehensive youth policy development and implementation, youth education on reproductive health and rights issues, capacity building for sexual and reproductive health service delivery, and promoting youth leadership and participation.



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In 2006, UNFPA Georgia began implementing EU funded three-year “Reproductive Health Initiative for the Youth in the South Caucasus” (RHIYC) project to improve youth health and make their behaviour safer through increased awareness and improved knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The results achieved within the frames of this project have served a cornerstone for youth advocacy and later, for the development of youth policy in the country.

UNFPA Georgia’s advocacy and policy dialogue has been largely focused on reproductive health needs of the youth, a major demographic segment targeted by the ICPD PoA. Since 2002, UNFPA Georgia generated evidence on youth reproductive health through periodic research, which served as a basis for UNFPA-supported Reproductive Health Policy Papers. These primarily served as a tool to advocate for universal access to youth-friendly reproductive health services at the primary health care level and, through the referral system, at the secondary health care level. A 2009 survey explored youth reproductive health awareness and behaviour and was a major step towards informed national youth policy development.

In 2010, UNFPA Georgia used a more comprehensive approach to youth reproductive health and advocated for the incorporation of the “National Concept on Youth Healthy and Harmonious Education”, developed through a participatory approach with UNFPA-EU support, in the National Educational Plan of the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Georgia (MES).

UNFPA Georgia’s policy dialogue and advocacy effort for youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health policies and services supported three National Youth Reproductive Health and Rights Forums, in cooperation with the Healthcare and Social Issues Committee of the Parliament of Georgia. These Forums opened up a space for youth to contribute, in the form of policy recommendations, to the high-level policy dialogue on improving the provision of youth-friendly reproductive healthcare, on capacity-building and knowledge-sharing and on youth awareness-raising and access to information.

In 2013-14 these efforts culminated in the elaboration by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs (MSY), with technical and financial assistance from UNFPA Georgia and UNICEF Georgia, of a National Youth Policy, where Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and gender equality have been fully integrated. This policy is a display of government commitment to support a sustainable development of youth in Georgia. A multi-stakeholder Inter-Agency State Coordination Body led by MSY has become a driving force for the Youth Policy review and subsequent drafting of a National Action Plan (NAP). In 2013-14 representatives of more than 100 youth organizations participated in the National Youth Conferences and forums and ensured that Youth Policy and Action Plans reflected their needs and priorities. The Youth Policy, adopted by GoG in March 2014, fully integrates the ICPD agenda for youth, thus ensuring equal access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and age-sensitive SRH information through formal and informal education systems.

Feature: Making of the Georgia National Youth Policy

UNFPA Georgia, in close collaboration with GoG, civil society and youth has laid the groundwork for national youth policy development in Georgia. The organization has supported research, data collection and analysis of the whole spectrum of youth reproductive health issues and supported elaboration of the national Concept on Youth Healthy and Harmonious Education. This, together with several UNFPA-supported high-level national and regional Youth Reproductive Health and Rights Forums, strong partnership with European Parliamentary Forum and parliamentarians themselves, as well as increased youth engagement in national policy-making on youth generated a strong political will and youth activism necessary for policy change. Importantly, the national youth policy includes youth reproductive health and access to the youth-friendly reproductive health services and information in both formal and informal education systems. UNFPA Georgia remains at the centre of the national youth policy development and supports effort geared towards formulating workable, implementable National Action Plan on youth policy.

In 2010, UNFPA Georgia and a Georgian life-style magazine Amarta collaborated on a special issue of the magazine and the monthly newspapers to highlight reproductive health, abortion, reproductive tract cancer prevention, healthy lifestyles, early marriages, youth, violence against women and male involvement in combating gender-based violence, trafficking, demography and ageing. Over 35,000 copies were printed and disseminated, targeting youth and increasing public awareness on these topics.

The organisation identified Georgian policy-makers as a specific target group for capacity strengthening during the development of National Youth Policy and Action Plan.

To this end, in 2013, a group of seven policy-makers and planners travelled to Scotland, UK on a study tour to observe and learn how gender-sensitive youth policies and services were developed and implemented. Additionally, UNFPA Georgia built the capacity of other groups who play an important role in meeting needs of Georgia's youth; among them are civil society actors, educators and community-based organizations. In total, 1,172 teachers and 1,707 community leaders across Georgia were reached.

UNFPA Georgia based its efforts to develop the national capacity for youth-friendly reproductive health services on bridging the gaps in health services identified through the youth-friendly reproductive health surveys. Since 2006, UNFPA Georgia supported a number of nation-wide trainings where WHO-approved curriculum was used to train reproductive health professionals who provide youth-friendly services. Furthermore, since 2010, UNFPA Georgia provided Youth Reproductive Health (YFRH) Centres with medical supplies, IEC materials and on-the-job trainings. UNFPA Georgia strengthened partnerships with YFRH centres and developed their capacity for expanding contraceptive method mix by organizing, in 2013, the first Summer School on Adolescent/Youth Behaviour and Sexual and Reproductive Health in partnership with the Lausanne University's Research Group on Adolescent and Youth Health, MoLHSA and NCDC&PH. Here, 40 service providers and managers from YFRH centres were trained in a variety of topics, including youth risky behaviour, condom social marketing for youth, etc.

To ensure youth's access to high-quality reproductive health information and services, UNFPA Georgia supported opening of 15 YFRH medical-information centres and five YFRH information centres throughout Georgia. UNFPA ensures the sustainability of youth services through partnership agreements with private sector medical facilities, whereby hosts provide youth with information and free services, while UNFPA Georgia provides the facilities with free contraceptives, HIV and STI testing kits, IEC materials, etc.

UNFPA Georgia has been widening the access and affordability of quality family planning supplies for youth,



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and specific high-risk groups through Condom Social Marketing initiative of a condom brand “Favorite”. Since 2006, approx. 1 mln condoms have been distributed via existing pharmacy chains as well as non-traditional distribution channels in Georgia. The initiative is now fully self-sustainable and is expanding target population and dismantling access barriers.

More so than in any other programmatic area, awareness-raising on youth sexual and reproductive health and rights supported by UNFPA has pioneered new approaches and strategies for engagement. Based on the knowledge gaps identified through UNFPA Georgia-funded surveys, the organization developed and piloted a Youth Peer Education methodology under RHIYC project. Since 2006, trained Peer Educators reached approx. 55,000 young people and shared knowledge and information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, STIs, HIV/AIDS, puberty, sexuality, gender equality, domestic violence and so on. Specific awareness raising and empowering modalities included Youth Forums, Youth Festivals, AIDS Day celebrations, town-hall meetings, youth and journalist contests, youth information sessions at summer camps, dedicated web-sites, TV and radio PSAs, distribution of educational materials - all ensuring comprehensive and widespread coverage. Under RHIYC, UNFPA Georgia also pioneered the Youth-Friendly Reproductive Health Information Centres established at

country’s universities, which have facilitated youth’s access to comprehensive reproductive health information.

In later years, UNFPA Georgia expanded the use of Peer-Education approach to promote gender equality, and to fight gender-based and domestic violence in Georgia during, inter alia, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaigns. Overall, more than 600 Y-Peers have been trained on gender equality, HIV/AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, women’s rights, gender equality, gender-based violence and other topics.

Feature: Georgian Youth Development and Education Association – GYDEA

Founded in 2010 by a group of UNFPA trained Peer Educators, this youth-led NGO is committed to promote the ICPD agenda and contribute to development of young people in Georgia and in the Caucasus Region at large. Since its establishment the GYDEA partnered with UNFPA, UNICEF, USAID and other donors and implemented projects aimed at youth awareness rising on SRH&R, HIV prevention, Gender Equality, Domestic Violence and stimulating youth demand for Youth-friendly RH services. The organization has been actively involved in the dialogue and consultations on elaboration of the National Youth Policy and the Action Plan.

“Breaking the cycle of adolescent pregnancy requires commitment from nations, communities and individuals in both developed and developing countries to invest in adolescent girls. Governments should enact and enforce national laws that raise the age of marriage to 18 and should promote community-based efforts that support girls’ rights and prevent child marriage and its consequences,”

*Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin,
UNFPA Executive Director.*



Early Marriages

During the First and Second Country Programmes, UNFPA Georgia strove to identify youth-related issues, which, while grave in their consequences, remained outside the social and policy discourse. In 2013, UNFPA Georgia supported elaboration of the Fact Sheet on early marriages through undertaking the qualitative research and analysing existing information and data. According to the statistics, up to 17 per cent of women in the country were married before the age of 18, alerting about the necessity to accelerate the prevention efforts. With full awareness of various negative effects child marriages entail in terms of health outcomes, poverty, education and sexual and reproductive health and rights, UNFPA Georgia worked hard to ensure that the issue of early marriages entered the public discourse and was acknowledged as a harmful practice requiring serious policy-level response.

“Child marriage is an appalling violation of human rights and robs girls of their education, health and long-term prospects. A girl who is married as a child is one whose potential will not be fulfilled. Since many parents and communities also want the very best for their daughters, we must work together to end child marriage.”

*Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin,
UNFPA Executive Director.*

UNFPA Georgia, guided by twin imperatives on youth reproductive health and stopping violence against women in the country, has prioritized the prevention of early marriages through evidence-based policy dialogue and planning. In May 2014, in partnership with the Public Defender of Georgia UNFPA organized a high-level advocacy meeting between the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament, Georgian Public Defender, government ministries, civil society, international organizations, donors and the UN Gender Theme Group and discussed the issues of prevention of early marriages, advancing gender equality and improving reproductive health of women. The meeting showcased UNFPA Georgia's Early Marriages Fact Sheet and the section of Georgia's Public Defender's 2013 Report to the Parliament on the same issue. The meeting concluded with a set of recommendations calling for establishing additional legal safeguards in the form of minimum legal age for marriage and stricter criminal penalties for offenders, primary healthcare system response to provide counselling to adolescents and their

mothers, education system response both, to prevent early marriages and to reintegrate married adolescent girls into school life, undertaking additional research and public awareness-raising campaign on negative effects of the practice, strengthening gender and reproductive rights of adolescent, and incorporating child marriages in national policies and action plans on human rights and gender equality. Because early marriages reflect ethnic, religious, and regional idiosyncrasies, UNFPA Georgia has advocated for adopting effective initiatives to increase awareness amongst ethnic minority communities on negative consequences of child marriage.

As a result of the organization's efforts early marriage has become a joint advocacy issue for the Gender Theme Group and UNFPA Georgia is assisting the Parliamentary Council on Gender Equality in integrating early marriages in the Gender Equality National Action Plan for 2014-2016.

Feature: Youth Festivals

The Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus (RHIYC) project, implemented in 2006-2009, was a comprehensive, multifaceted initiative to improve youth sexual and reproductive health in the three South Caucasus countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Implemented by UNFPA with EU funding, the project made remarkable improvements in the sexual and reproductive health of youth aged 15 to 24 and empowered them to realize their rights to accessible, youth-friendly, high quality sexual and reproductive health services and information.

One of the most profound outcomes of RHIYC has been the empowerment of the youth to take a leadership role in advocating for their rights, for healthier and more productive lives shaped by informed decisions. Advocacy and greater youth participation in the national decision-making on youth health and rights were central to three Youth Festivals hosted in Georgia. Piloted by UNFPA, these annual festivals were dedicated to reproductive health, healthy lifestyles and HIV prevention and included indoor and outdoor activities, youth marathons, contests, press conferences, photo exhibitions, concerts, trainings, sports activities and youth forums, raising awareness on youth sexual and reproductive health and rights and healthy lifestyle issues. However, the most tangible and long-term impact of these festivals was through Youth Reproductive Health and Rights Forums. These forums offered a unique opportunity to build new partnerships between youth, civil society, and decision-makers from the participating countries and allowed youth to influence decision-making on youth policy. During these Youth Forums more than 100 youth delegates, decision-makers, and civil society representatives issued two joint Declarations of Commitment on promotion of Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the South Caucasus.

UNFPA Georgia continues to support Youth Festivals and Forums in partnership with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the local authorities in Kakheti, as powerful interventions to empower young people and to mobilize public support for prioritizing youth development in the national development agenda.



UNFPA Georgia: Where Population and Development Agendas Merge

Population-related goals and policies are integral parts of cultural, economic and social development, the principal aim of which is to improve the quality of life of all people – ICPD, Principle 5

Human, social and economic development of any nation is interlinked with population dynamics, age structure, fertility and mortality, migration and so on. Availability of reliable and accurate data and its analysis are vital for evidence-based national policies formulation, its planning, implementation and monitoring. In line with this, UNFPA Georgia supported an increased availability of

reliable population data and analysis to streamline policies that address current and future human development needs of the country.

Political commitment to integrated population and development strategies should be strengthened by public education and information programmes and by increased resource allocation through cooperation among Governments, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector, and by improvement of the knowledge base through research and national and local capacity-building - ICPD PoA, 3.8



As the key strategic partner of GoG on population dynamics, UNFPA Georgia has actively supported the country in carrying out two Population Censuses - in 2002 and in 2014, and maintained dialogue with the government to galvanise political commitment for the implementation of the relevant National Action Plans. Despite a delay in the 2010 Census due to the 2008 War and the global financial crisis, UNFPA Georgia nurtured the national dialogue on Census and, in 2012-13, together with GeoStat and the

Government Coordination Board on Census co-hosted donor meetings, mobilising over USD 1 mln in donor contributions for Census 2014.

UNFPA Georgia invested in national capacity building for quality data collection and analysis for Census, but also on Reproductive Health, Population Dynamics, Gender Equality, HIV/AIDS, and Youth issues to foster people-centred decision-making at the policy level. Since its establishment, UNFPA Georgia helped develop core competencies of the national statistics office (GeoStat) to ensure that censuses were conducted using the internationally-recognized data collection methodologies. To achieve this, UNFPA in partnership with UNECE, supported capacity development of GeoStat on census methodology, planning, implementation, data analysis and dissemination. Additionally, UNFPA Georgia helped introduce Geographic Information System (GIS) methodology at GeoStat and provided software and equipment, while also creating local capacity for using this methodology, thus Georgia is one of the first countries in the region, which applied GIS system in 2014 Census planning, data gathering, analysis and data dissemination.

Countries should establish information mechanisms, where appropriate, to facilitate the systematic collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization of population-related information at the national and international levels, and networks should be established or strengthened at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels to promote information and experience exchange - ICPD PoA, 11.26

UNFPA Georgia: Generating Knowledge and Creating Quality Content

Throughout its two Country Programmes, UNFPA Georgia created quality knowledge resources for informed decision-making and to advocate with policy- and decision-makers using hard evidence and in-depth analysis on reproductive health, family planning, domestic violence, gender equality, and so on.

UNFPA Georgia has supported the preparation and analysis of Population Censuses and other population-based surveys in Georgia since 1999 and, by doing so, ensured that reliable data and evidence are generated for policy making and planning. The major researches, supported by UNFPA include the following:

The **Population and Housing Census** – this most complex and massive peacetime exercises has also been one of the most important tools for policymakers to take stock of country's human capital. UNFPA Georgia provided support to the country in the undertaking of population and housing censuses in 2002 and in 2014.

UNFPA Georgia has supported a **Generations and Gender Survey** contributing to increased knowledge of the behavioural, social and economic conditions of individuals of different generations. Two waves of GGS have been undertaken in 2006 and 2009 with reports made available in 2007 and 2010.

Women's Reproductive Health Surveys (1999, 2005, 2010) collected comprehensive information on reproductive health status and the utilization of reproductive health and maternal and child healthcare services in the country. Because these surveys provided a baseline and identified trends for essential health indicators, their results were instrumental in designing and implementing new health strategies and programs and for promoting healthcare reforms.

Adolescents Reproductive Health Survey (2002, 2009) provided essential baseline data on the reproductive health status of young people, and was used for the development of youth policy and programming.

Male Reproductive Health Survey – conducted in 2006, the survey highlighted a variety of male reproductive health issues, reproductive awareness, attitudes, and behaviour.

Survey of Attitudes of Doctors Towards Family Planning Issues (2010, 2013) revealed strengths and weaknesses in doctors' knowledge about family planning methods, abortions and other reproductive health procedures, identified awareness level and attitudes of doctors towards these issues, and studied social factors that affect family planning.

Survey on Youth Friendly Reproductive Health Services (2007) assessed physical and financial availability and quality of sexual and reproductive health services and the information-education aspects of these services for youth.

National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Georgia (2009) through quantitative and qualitative approaches, this first nation-wide research on this issue gathered comprehensive data on the scope of and the perceptions about domestic violence in Georgia using the WHO methodology.

Reproductive Behaviour and Needs of Young Women in Georgia (2012) used the data from Georgia Reproductive Health Survey 2010 for in-depth analysis to highlight key survey findings and general trends in reproductive behaviour and needs of young women in Georgia. The report includes a set of recommendations on addressing the challenges identified through this research.

Changes in Women's Reproductive Health in Georgia (2012) is yet another in-depth analysis based on Georgia

Reproductive Health Survey 2010. It discusses the reproductive health status of women in the country and recommends actions to address the challenges identified through the survey.

Men and Gender Attitudes in Georgia (2013) researched men's attitudes and behaviour – along with women's opinion and reports on men's practices – in regards to gender equality. The survey results informed further policy dialogue and public awareness-raising to build understanding, redress prevailing inequalities, drive policy development and monitor policy implementation to promote male involvement for greater gender equality.

Gap Analysis of Family Planning Services in Georgia (2013) researched and provided recommendations for improved policy environment, access to quality family planning services, commodity supply management, availability of contraceptive methods, and youth-oriented services provision.

Fact Sheet of Early Marriages in Georgia (2013) explored child marriages/early marriages in Georgia, reviewed national legislation, analysed current practices and attitudes towards child marriages, and offered recommendations on addressing the issue.

Research on causes and consequences of Skewed Sex Ratio at Birth (2014) studied the causes and consequences of skewed sex ratio at birth and offered policy recommendations on addressing this practice.

Population Situation Analysis (2014) - on GoG request, UNFPA Georgia undertook this comprehensive appraisal of the population and reproductive health dynamics to research their linkages and impacts on poverty, inequality and development. The findings will be used to mainstream population dynamics, reproductive health and gender issues into the National Development Strategies in post-2015 agenda and to reflect these issues in the process of public policy formulation and implementation.

Accurate population information and statistics are indispensable to study how demographic trends are affected by, and have an impact on, social, economic and environmental factors. The collection and appropriate analysis of data on these complex interactions are critical if policy makers to formulate development programmes that respond to the needs of their intended beneficiaries.

Aging in Georgia

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) are two seminal documents that address aging in Europe. Meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities connected to population ageing needs to be reflected in a range of policy areas. In 2008, UN Economic Council for Europe (UNECE) established an intergovernmental Working Group on Ageing, which started preparing Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing. The Road Map is a country-specific plan of concrete steps and policy recommendations in line with internationally agreed strategies to reflect aging in all policies and to achieve greater social integration of older persons.

Population ageing is new reality for both developed and developing countries. Its social and economic implications must be fully understood and properly addressed. In 2013, at the request of MoLHSA, UNFPA Georgia and UNECE started working on Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing in Georgia. UNFPA has facilitated the national policy dialogue on ageing by organizing multi-stakeholder meetings to assess the aging situation in the country and to create a list of concrete steps and recommendations on developing the national policy on ageing.

Public awareness-raising and information dissemination on ageing is another priority area for UNFPA Georgia. The organization announced an essay contest in order to bring the voices, experiences and recommendations of senior citizens to the policy making level and to further contribute to the elaboration of policies on ageing in Georgia.

UNFPA Georgia: Changing Mindsets, Changing a Reality

Georgia has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.438, ranking it 81th out of 148 countries in the World Bank 2012 gender index. This means that 6.6% of parliamentary seats in 2012 were held by women, and 89.7% of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education; that for every 100,000 live births, 67 women died from pregnancy-related causes, and that female participation in the labour market was 55.8%. Gender Inequality Index, World Bank, 2012

We Are All Equal

Advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, and eliminating all forms of violence against women, are the cornerstones of population and development-related programmes.

ICPD - Principle 4

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Since its opening, UNFPA Georgia supported enhanced gender equality through its core resources and three multi-year projects: UN Joint Project for Greater Gender Equality (pooled funding from UNFPA, UNDP, UNIFEM/UN WOMEN, UNICEF, UN RC Office with UNFPA as a Managing Agent 2006 - 2011), Combatting Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus funded by the Government of Norway (2008 - 2011) and the UN Joint Programme to Enhance Gender Equality in Georgia funded by the Swedish Government (2011-2014).

The first 2006-2011 UN Joint Project in Georgia (UNJP) – a joint initiative of the UN agencies focused on gender equality, has been managed by UNFPA Georgia. UNJP's initial focus on domestic violence in Georgia shifted, in 2008, to supporting greater gender equality through improved coordination, collaboration and strengthening of National Machineries for Gender Equality.

All countries should make greater efforts to promulgate, implement and enforce national laws and international conventions to which they are party, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, that protect women from all types of economic discrimination and from sexual harassment, and to implement fully the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. - ICPD PoA, 4.5

Since 2006, UNFPA Georgia promoted legal and policy reforms on gender equality by using evidence-based advocacy tools in high-level policy dialogue. Throughout the First and Second Country Programmes, the organization continued to build support for the integration of reproductive health and rights and gender equality in the population policies and frameworks.

The Gender Equality Advisory Council under the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia, established in October 2004, is a high-level advocacy organ for gender equality, which reviews national gender policy, promotes gender mainstreaming in legislation, cooperates with and coordinated the activities of international and local organizations working on gender issues. In 2010, Gender Equality Council became a permanent body at the Parliament of Georgia regulated by the Law on Gender Equality.

Mainstreaming gender equality principles in the policy frameworks is a commitment undertaken by the UN Country Team and UNFPA Georgia. Within the UN Country Team's gender equality efforts, the organization contributed to the creation of Gender Equality Advisory Council at the Parliament of Georgia (GE Council) in 2004. Since then, UNFPA Georgia played an important role in the shaping and developing the capacity of GE Council, while the two UN joint projects have become mechanisms for technical and financial assistance to GE Council from the UN Country Team.

Through these two UN Joint programmes, UNFPA Georgia helped mainstream gender into laws and policies and improved the quality of 3-year Gender Equality Action Plans (NAP). The organization assisted the GE Council in reviewing systematically and monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and its cyclical National Action Plans. These regular, analytical reviews informed the development of each follow-on National Action Plan on Gender Equality.

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Feature: National Forum - Supporting Greater Gender Equality in Georgia – Steps Forward to 2015

The UN Joint Programme provided technical and operational support to the GE Council to elaborate the 2011-2013 NAP on Gender Equality in order to implement and enforce a new Gender Equality Law (GE Law), while also maintaining policy dialogue and engagement with the civil society in the process. To this end, the GE Council in 2010 organized a national consultation for the 2011-2013 draft NAP on Gender Equality at a National Forum entitled: Supporting Greater Gender Equality in Georgia – Steps Forward to 2015. The Forum informed participants on the state GE policy and recent legislative changes for enhancement of gender equality in the country. The spotlight of the event was on validating aims, objectives and priorities of the draft 2011-2013 NAP,

to gather recommendations from stakeholders, and to identify interim priorities of state policy on gender equality until 2015. Over 150 participants were present, hailing from the legislative and executive branches of the government, regional municipalities, international organizations and civil society organizations promoting women's rights and civil activism in the country.

The event created an opportunity for the state and non-state actors to engage in the dialogue and define short-term and mid-term strategies and actions for establishing the "de jure" gender equality in the country.



UNFPA Georgia has continued to advance gender equality in Georgia by expanding the enabling policy and sociocultural environment to reinforce Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and gender equality principles in the relevant policies and action plans. In order to reduce inequalities and redress prevailing discriminatory practices, UNFPA Georgia promoted gender-sensitive Youth Policy development through evidence-based policy dialogue.

Based on Georgia's national priorities and UNDAF, UNFPA Georgia has prioritized strengthening of the national capacities for improved policy development for gender equality, its implementation, monitoring and coordination in its two Country Programmes. To help the country deliver on its international obligations, UNFPA Georgia assisted GoG in drafting national legislation and policies, which enhanced gender equality and developed the capacity of policy-makers to do so. Trainings for parliamentarians and parliamentary staffers conducted by international experts, have been continuous and covered a range of subjects, including gender impact assessment of policies and legislation, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Gender Equality, mainstreaming ICPD principles in the legislation, and so on.

Within the framework of two UNJP, UNFPA Georgia bridged the awareness gap in the society on gender equality by educating youth, men, faith-based organizations, media representatives, and others on

women's strengths, vulnerabilities and needs in a variety of situations. Throughout years, UNFPA Georgia advanced public education on gender equality through a variety of awareness-raising activities, which made effective use of mass media and delivered targeted messages on gender equality to the wide audiences. Numerous news features, TV and Radio talk shows on leading channels have been produced with focus on gender equality. UNFPA Georgia artfully incorporated social media in raising awareness on gender equality, and a number of Facebook pages, including on Sensitive Reporting initiated by UNFPA-trained journalists, have been created and supported in recent years. Social media has become an effective platform for sharing news, updates and discussions on many sensitive topics. UNFPA Georgia used the annual 16 Days of Activism against Violence Against Women campaigns to coordinate efforts with like-minded organizations and to speak with one voice on gender equality, women's rights and their political, and social-economic empowerment.

Understanding the impact media has on the formulation of public opinion on pressing social issues, UNFPA Georgia specifically targeted journalists and editors with capacity development initiatives on gender equality. More than 100 media representatives were trained in gender equality and sensitive reporting since 2006. Journalist trainings proved successful as evidenced by increased number of TV, Radio and print news and articles published in both national and regional newspapers and journals.

Feature: Male Involvement for Gender Equality: Men Talking to Men

Realizing that men are important partners and agents of change to advance women's rights, UNFPA Georgia's First and Second Country Programmes prioritized initiatives that increased men's sense of ownership over women's empowerment and gender equity and equality. In many societies men often decide on the number and variety of sexual relationships, use of contraceptives, and as community, political or religious leaders – often control access to reproductive health information and services, finances, transportation and other resources. As husbands and fathers, men often wield enormous power over many aspects of women's lives. Therefore, UNFPA Georgia, recognizing the rights, perspectives and influences of men and boys, has sought to involve them in promoting gender equality, improving reproductive health and ending violence against women and girls. UNFPA Georgia views men and boys as partners for gender equality and women's empowerment since it started to engage on gender issues in Georgia.



responsibility of men in ascertaining gender equality, ending violence against women and ensuring the respect of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Since 2010, UNFPA Georgia has been using the TOT materials to turn male politicians, policy-makers, and community leaders into agents of change and partners for gender equality and fight violence against women. To-date, 150 men completed the TOT and have become valuable allies in addressing gender equality, and promoting reproductive health and rights.

A pivotal moment in UNFPA Georgia's campaign for greater gender equality came in the spring of 2010, when a prominent international expert, and a co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign – Dr. Michael Kaufman, on UNFPA Georgia's request, conducted a regional Training of Trainers (ToT) on Male Involvement in Advancing Gender Equality and Ending Violence against Women. The representatives of government institutions, non-governmental organizations, media and academia from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia attended the training, which was held exclusively for men. The national experts later customized the initial TOT materials in order to replicate the trainings for male trainers in the three South Caucasus countries. These trainings advanced the role and

To magnify the impact of ToTs and raise awareness of men on the grass-roots level, UNFPA Georgia supported a series of information sessions on male involvement using Men talking to Men methodology, derived from the regional TOT by Michael Kaufman. The methodology has since been expanded to include Gender Equality and Sexual and reproductive health and rights. To-date, Men talking to Men methodology is being used to reach out men and boys in the capital and regions of Georgia.



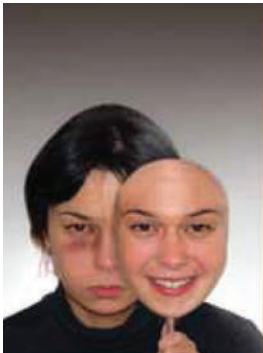


Addressing the Phenomenon of Skewed Sex Ratio at Birth

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a highly skewed sex ratio at birth (SRB) has been observed in the South Caucasus, with Georgia's ratio of 111 being among the highest in Europe. The causes and consequences for such troubling rates in three South Caucasus countries have to be studied and more attention is necessary to craft policy responses to this phenomenon in order to prevent possible demographic and social consequences.

Taking into account that the issue is of significant interest to the government and society and that the problem of the skewed SRB lies on the crossroads of the reproductive health and population issues as well as gender equality, in

2014, UNFPA Georgia, within the framework of the UN Joint Program for Enhancing Gender Equality in Georgia, has launched the research on the causes and long-lasting social and demographic effects of prenatal sex selection and skewed sex ratios at birth. Undertaken in collaboration with the World Bank, this in-depth analytical study provides substantive evidence for policy dialogue, advocacy and targeted campaigning in an effort to reduce sex imbalances at birth in the country. The research findings will be used to raise awareness on this important issue among policy-makers, professionals and to open a public debate about son preference, gender-biased prenatal sex selection and to elaborate policy response.



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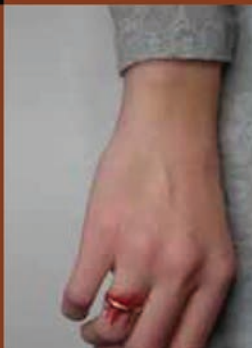
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“როგორც ჯი
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 (მსხვერპლი)



Domestic Violence – Breaking the Vicious Cycle

Gender-based violence (GBV) reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims. The links between gender-based violence and poor health outcomes requires a strong response through country's health care systems. Combating gender-based and domestic violence has been an important programmatic area of UNFPA Georgia throughout its First and Second Country Programmes. While active all along, UNFPA Georgia has become a true engine behind ending violence against women and girls in the country with two projects: a 3-year project *Combating Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus (2008-2012)* and a *UN Joint Programme to Enhance Gender Equality in Georgia (2012 – 2015)*.

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Launched in 2008, Combating Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus Project was a regional, multi-pronged, 3-year initiative implemented by UNFPA and co-funded by the Government of Norway. The project contributed to the national response to domestic violence in the countries of South Caucasus: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and strengthened democratic governance in these countries by promoting the respect for human rights, gender equality and women's participation through research, awareness-raising, strengthening of national legislation, coordination and response mechanisms.



The UN Joint Project to Enhance Gender Equality in Georgia is a 3-year project promoting gender equality and women's empowerment - funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The project is a consolidated UN initiative to empower women's political and economic participation, foster an enabling environment to eliminate violence against women, and to advance gender equality by enabling the realization of Reproductive Rights of the population.

Since 2008, UNFPA Georgia has been focusing its efforts on improving the policy frameworks, protection systems and national coordination and monitoring mechanisms to respond more effectively to Domestic Violence (DV) and GBV. In this regard, strengthening the enabling policy environment to achieve zero tolerance towards domestic violence has been an integral part of UNFPA Georgia's high-level advocacy efforts in the country. The organization welcomed the adoption of the Law of Georgia on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection of and Support to Its Victims (DV Law) in 2006 and within the frames of the UN Joint Project supported the first coordination meeting among the relevant ministries on implementation of the DV law to advocate for the establishment of a state body to lead national efforts in combatting DV. Thus in 2006, Georgian State Inter-Agency Council for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (the Inter-Agency Council) has been established as a coordination, consultative and monitoring body for all activities on DV and has received technical and financial support from UNFPA Georgia.

Furthermore, since 2007, UNFPA Georgia has collaborated with the Inter-Agency Council on drafting, regularly, a series of two-year National Action Plans that operationalize the DV Law. In subsequent years, the agency also assisted the Inter-Agency Council in monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plans. The National Action Plans and their monitoring reports specified concrete tools, mechanisms and approaches to implementing the law, and served as learning instruments to inform the formulation of follow-on National Action Plans.

In 2009, UNFPA Georgia sponsored a review of practical application of the DV Law in order to strengthen further the legal framework for combating DV. With organization's guidance, an Ad Hoc Expert Working Group was created and prepared a package of amendments to the law, with recommendations on strengthening the DV Law itself, but also the Administrative Code of Georgia, Law on Firearms, the Police Law, other legal documents. The package of amendments has since entered into force.

Since the adoption of the DV Law, the need to develop a National Referral Mechanism for the Victims of DV has become obvious. In 2009, with UNFPA Georgia's co-funding, the Inter-Agency Council developed a set of documents outlining the National Referral Mechanism for the victims of DV, including the standards for the crises/intervention centres, service provision standards for shelters, and victim identification tools - which was adopted in 2009. In 2011, having recognized weakness in country's Referral Mechanism, UNFPA Georgia conducted a comprehensive analysis of healthcare system's standard response to DV, and produced a report, with recommendations for incorporating victim identification and referral mechanisms into the primary and secondary healthcare systems of Georgia.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is an action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the protection and rehabilitation of victims of domestic violence. The objective of the NRM is to determine actions to be taken to prevent DV as well as to protect and support victims. The NRM was adopted in 2009 and determines the entities participating in efforts to combat and prevent DV, and protect and rehabilitate victims, as well as defines each entities' functions and powers. The NRM is implemented in three main stages: identification of DV; identification of victim and abuser; and protection and rehabilitation of victim.



Additionally, UNFPA Georgia, within the framework of the UN Joint Project, continued to collaborate with MoLHSA, the Inter-Agency Council and others, to develop recommendations on the health system's response to violence against women and children. Thus, in 2013, Guidelines on Revealing, Treating, and Referring Cases of Physical, Psychological, and Sexual Violence against Women and Children were developed, which comply

with WHO 2013 Guidelines. The instrument outlined ways in which healthcare providers should respond to violence against women and children, including clinical interventions and emotional support. In collaboration with UNFPA Regional office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the European VAWE network, UNFPA Georgia piloted this tool through trainings for medical professionals in 2014.

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In 2009, within the framework of Combatting Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus Project, UNFPA Georgia conducted a qualitative and quantitative countrywide research on the causes and consequences of domestic violence, implemented by ACT Research and the Centre of Social Science. The research used the WHO methodology and synthesized the responses from 2,385 women aged 15-49 years. The survey findings were used as a baseline for the formulation of national policies and plans as well as for advocacy and public awareness-raising campaigns on domestic violence and women's rights in Georgia. The survey was the first region-wide initiative of this kind, implemented simultaneously in three countries of South Caucasus – Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia.



In line with its commitment to support national capacity building to improve state response to and strengthen service mechanisms for combating DV, UNFPA Georgia funded trainings for service providers, over 200 law enforcement officers, 100 public attorneys and policy-makers on the issues of gender-based and domestic violence, gender equality, women's rights, and reproductive health and rights. The patrol and district police officers were trained because they play a pivotal role as first responders in managing the DV cases. The public attorneys/legal aid provides representation and counselling for the victims of DV on existing laws and regulations, victim's rights and remedies such as shelters. By building the capacity of these groups, UNFPA Georgia has multiplied the effect of its awareness-raising initiatives in Georgia. To support the sustainability of its capacity building efforts, a systematic approach to police training was devised, whereby a unified training module was developed with the support of UNFPA Georgia and the State Fund for Protection of and Assistance to (Statutory) Victims of Trafficking in Persons (the Fund) to be taught at the Police Academy of Georgia. This curriculum was endorsed by the Inter-Agency Council and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and was recommended for future police trainings.

Since 2011, UNFPA Georgia has engaged with the faith-based organizations (FBOs) of Georgia to change behaviour,

attitudes and perceptions on issues of reproductive health, maternity, childcare, domestic violence, etc. Within the framework of the UNJP, UNFPA Georgia established a close collaboration with the Patriarchy of Georgia and its subsidiary organs: Theological Academy and Radio Iveria. At the Theological Academy, a student conference was held where students used UNFPA Georgia's own data, reports and research papers on sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDs, gender and domestic violence in preparation of conference papers. Additionally, UNFPA Georgia collaborated with the Radio Iveria to air talk shows and to disseminate evidence-based, scientifically accurate information on reproductive health, domestic violence, etc., in order to educate wider societal groups.

Throughout its First and Second Country Programmes, the organization prioritized working towards the goal of bridging the awareness, knowledge and information gap on gender-based violence and gender equality in order to combat violence against women and girls in Georgia. UNFPA Georgia achieved this through various annual and special public awareness initiatives. Annually, UNFPA Georgia has been showing solidarity with the global campaign to end violence against women and girls called: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. During this traditional, multi-stakeholder campaign UNFPA Georgia supported dozens of activities in Georgia, such as:



series of TV and Radio talk shows, TV and Radio PSAs, press conferences and briefings, large-scale outdoor awareness-raising campaigns, photo contests and exhibitions on women's rights, media roundtables, thematic conferences, movie screenings, presentations, information sessions, street actions, and others. Additionally, UNFPA Georgia observes, annually, the International Women's Day and World Population Day celebrations, and in 2009 joined in the UN Secretary General's campaign for women's rights called UNiTE to End Violence against Women, bringing public's attention to gender equality and women's rights through press-conferences, presentations, radio and TV PSAs, newspaper articles, exhibitions, etc. In 2009 UNiTE campaign culminated in the adoption of a Declaration of Commitment to End Violence against Women at the Parliament of Georgia.

In order to systematically raise awareness about gender equality and GBV among different target groups, UNFPA Georgia launched a two-tier Target Group Education initiative. Initially, nine Target Group Education sessions were conducted using five-day ToT curriculum, which prepared 180 Peer Educators on issues of gender equality, gender-based and domestic violence. In 2009, during the second stage of the initiative, a larger-scale educational campaign was launched, whereby trained Peer Educators conducted cascading educational sessions with approx.

1,000 youth, men and women on gender issues, women's rights and equality, gender-based violence and DV.

In 2010, UNFPA Georgia, capitalizing on the power of media in educating a wide variety of audiences, held a contest on best media reporting on gender. By raising journalists' professional interest in covering issues of women's rights, gender equality and GBV, the initiative contributed to increased public awareness as media reported more on these vital issues. Throughout the year, over 100 contest entries were collected from electronic, print and web-based media and the winners were identified for Best Article, Best TV footage and the most active journalist in the field of women's rights protection 2010. Since then, UNFPA Georgia has regularly partnered with media and has been supporting annual journalists' contests and workshops. Additionally, the organization has conducted trainings on gender-sensitive reporting for media in order to strengthen journalists' capacity for sensitive reporting since 2009. Up to 65 leading representatives of TV, print media and radio were trained. Additionally, in 2010, UNFPA Georgia supported the Inter-Agency Council in the development of media standards on gender-sensitive reporting, which have been integrated into the Code of Conduct adopted by the National Communications Commission in 2011.

Feature: National Referral Mechanism for the Victims of Domestic Violence

TBILISI, Georgia –*la B. is a fit, elegant woman with bright hazelnut eyes, fashionable clothes and a vibrant personality that shines through her dazzling smile. She hasn't always looked this poised and self-confident: According to Indira Robakidze, a programme coordinator at the Tbilisi-based shelter for the victims of domestic violence, la's life was in shambles when she first entered the shelter. "She was pale, frightened and disoriented," Indira recalls. "Look at how far she has come."*

la, now 45, spent 15 years in a marriage with an abusive husband. Throughout the years, she lived in constant fear as her husband controlled, harassed and battered her on a daily basis. A prisoner in her own home, she was afraid to leave and afraid to stay, knowing she would be 'punished' for every act her husband disapproved. "I had to ask for permission every time I left the house," she recalls. "He beat me in front of my children, he beat me in front of his parents. He beat me constantly, all the time. I was suffering, but even worse, my children were suffering too."

Spreading the word makes a difference

Then came the day when la decided she couldn't take it anymore. That was the day she saw a TV public service announcement on domestic violence. It said that domestic violence is a crime in Georgia and provided a hotline number for victims who sought help. la found herself dialling the number before the clip was over. The next day she went to an interview where she told her story and was offered accommodation for herself and her children. She fled her home the very same day and entered the shelter where she would spend the next eight months recovering and finding peace.

la's story of domestic abuse is not unique, but her determination to speak up and her courage to seek help outside of her home is the exception rather than the rule. According to a national survey carried out by UNFPA

Georgia in 2009, 75 per cent of the women in Georgia believe that domestic violence is a private affair and should not be spoken about outside the family. The same research shows that only 2 per cent of women reach out to police, lawyers and other service providers when they face violence at home.

The reasons behind these numbers vary, but lack of information about the fact that domestic violence is punishable under law and about existing protection mechanisms are among the leading factors for why women choose to keep the bruises of domestic violence secret.

Getting the word out

In order to change this situation, UNFPA Georgia spearheaded a large-scale awareness raising campaign highlighting the criminal nature of domestic violence under Georgian law, advertising a national hotline on domestic violence, and encouraging women to call to seek help. UNFPA and its partners produced and aired several public service announcements on national TV stations and through social media, and put up billboards indicating the hotline numbers across the capital, Tbilisi. In addition to the media campaign, UNFPA organized awareness raising sessions for over 2,000 community leaders, teachers, students and journalists across Georgia, spreading the message about the harmful practices taking place against women in Georgia and the remedies available for their protection.

la is convinced that picking up the phone and calling the advertised hotline number was the best decision she has made in her life. la spent many months in the government-run shelter where she was provided with physiological, medical and legal assistance. Her two children were able to go to school, do their homework and play for the first time without the constant fear and aggression that they had had to endure until then. la is grateful to the shelter and the people who run it. Without the shelter, she says, she would have had nowhere to go. She would have been lost.

Services for victims of domestic violence change lives

Until a few years ago, such opportunities were not available to the victims of domestic violence in Georgia. It was only in 2009 that the national authorities began operating shelters for the survivors of domestic violence, following active lobbying efforts by international aid organizations and local NGOs. UNFPA has been at the forefront of the initiative from the beginning: back in in 2008, UNFPA supported the Georgian Parliament with the adoption of amendments to the domestic violence law. It then provided technical assistance for setting up a national referral mechanism for the victims of domestic violence and supported instituting mechanisms to protect victims and respond to domestic abuse. Currently, UNFPA helps the government to further strengthen the national response to domestic violence by integrating national referral mechanisms and the health system.

Partnering with men to end violence against women

Although Georgia has made important progress in establishing an enabling environment for the protection of women's rights, and of survivors of domestic violence in particular, this small country wedged in the mountains of the South Caucasus still has a long way ahead. In deeply traditional Georgia, where patriarchal culture is strong, men are the decision makers, and as the popular Georgian saying goes, "Women know their place."

That's why UNFPA has been working to engage men and boys in the cause of ending violence against women. Hundreds of men have been trained through the "men-talking-to-men" methodology, encouraging them to assume responsibility for ending violence against women and accepting gender equality. The project was launched in 2010 and is on-going with further plans for deepening and widening the initiative. In a country where virtually all decisions from policy issues to family affairs are made by men, having them as partners in the quest for zero tolerance against gender-based violence makes all the difference.



Public service announcements and posters like this one encourage women to be strong to end violence against women

Toleration perpetuates the cycle of violence

Experts say that tolerance of domestic abuse is the biggest hold-up to progress in Georgia. The phenomenon is still widely accepted both in the private and public spheres. Ia recalls the time when she called the police after her husband severely beat her and threatened to throw her out of the house. “As soon as the police came, my husband quickly put on a mask of a polite person, apologized for his temper and told the police that he would never do anything to hurt his family. The police then took me aside and told me – ‘In a family, who doesn’t fight? One day you fight, another day you love each other. You are a woman after all; you should try to find ways to make things better with your husband.’”

This incident happened in 2009. Since then, the Georgian police forces received extensive training on domestic violence, supported by UNFPA and its partners. Trainings specifically focused on police forces in rural areas where domestic violence is particularly prevalent and the police have little capacity to deal with it. UNFPA further lobbied for the incorporation of domestic violence in the curriculum of the National Police Academy and produced a handbook for police on domestic violence, which was distributed to police officers nationwide.

Encouraging other women to seek help

Asked if there is a message she wants to convey to other women who find themselves in abusive relationships, like the one she put up with for over 15 years, Ia’s eyes sink and her face saddens as she thinks about the past. But after a few seconds, her dazzling eyes are back. She finally speaks up: “I do have a message for other women: Do not wait as long as I have waited. There are places to go and people who will help you in starting a new life. Do it for yourself, and, more importantly, do it for your children. Otherwise you ruin your life and you ruin theirs, and it’s too late.”

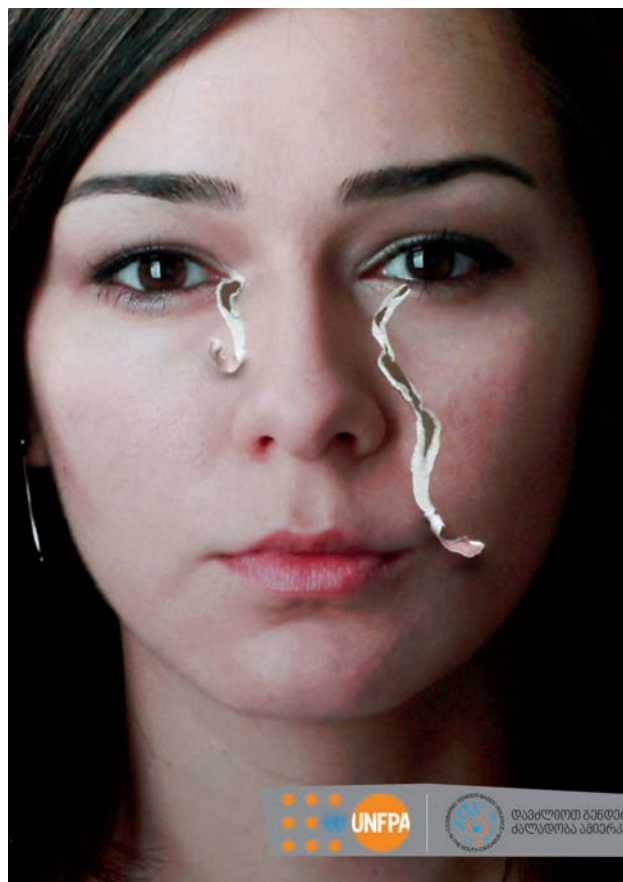
As Ia prepares to leave, putting on a pretty beige coat and a bright yellow scarf complementing her ivory skin tone, she apologizes she can’t stay for too long. She now has a

job and works double shifts at a Germany-based company where she is paid well enough to pay the rent and support her family. Her litigation over the property she owns with her ex-husband is still pending, as the State Fund for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking and Domestic Violence continues to provide legal support to win her case.

If all goes well, she will soon have a roof of her own to raise her family. Her hope is that other women who are suffering in silence will find the strength and courage – and support -- to find their own ways to speak out, escape the violence and start over.

Tamar Vashakidze for UNFPA

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UNFPA Georgia and Humanitarian Emergencies: from Preparedness to Response

In times of conflict, sexual violence and exploitation soar, while reproductive health and obstetric services become unavailable. In emergencies, UNFPA has taken the lead in providing supplies and services to protect reproductive health, customizing its interventions to meet the needs of the affected communities, while taking into consideration special needs and vulnerabilities of women and young people.

Feature: Addressing SGBV in Emergencies – 2008 War

In the aftermath of the 2008 August War, UNFPA Georgia mobilized additional resources through the UN-wide Flash Appeal in order to bridge the gap in the provision of medical supplies and basic reproductive health services to internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Tskhinvali region. UNFPA Georgia met the immediate needs of IDPs by providing 11,000 Family Dignity Kits in more than 140 IDP collective Centres thus covering approx. 44,000 individuals. UNFPA Georgia deployed five RH Mobile Teams who provided quality reproductive health, sexual and gender-based violence-prevention services, including emergency RH services, to 7,000 IDP women (examination, counselling, medicines, IEC materials on RH, SGVB prevention) in over 60 IDP collective centres throughout the country.

“I would like to thank UNFPA Georgia for successful cooperation in the post-conflict period. Together we were able to meet the needs of the displaced population, particularly women, and the most vulnerable target group in the post conflict situations. This cooperation was timely and efficient considering the emerging needs of the displaced.”

*Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili, Vice Speaker of the Parliament,
the Chairperson of Advisory Council on Gender Equality Issues under the Chair of the Parliament*

42 *To further integrate the response to gender-based and sexual violence into humanitarian response programme UNFPA Georgia and UNHCR Georgia co-funded a local NGO Sakhli to provide psychosocial and legal counselling to women, including IDP women, in Tbilisi, Gori and surrounding areas. Additionally, in collaboration with UNDP and UNHCR, UNFPA Georgia supported a Gender Resource Centre in Gori, enabling the centre to coordinate activities of international and local actors who focused their assistance on gender-related issues, and worked in geographic areas most affected by 2008 war with Russia.*

UNFPA’s Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Reproductive Health is a coordinated set of life-saving activities designed to prevent and manage the consequences of sexual violence; reduce HIV transmission; prevent excess maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality; and plan for comprehensive Reproductive Health services, availability of contraceptives, treatment for STIs and anti-retroviral drugs to be implemented at the onset of every humanitarian crisis. It forms the starting point for sexual and reproductive health programming in the emergencies.

In 2011, UNFPA Georgia continued its engagement with GoG on initiatives to address reproductive health needs in emergencies. The organization supported policy dialogue, advocacy, and coordination activities to integrate and institutionalize the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) in national contingency plans for emergencies and international humanitarian assistance frameworks. In order to strengthen collective preparedness for emergencies, UNFPA Georgia, together with GoG, the UN, and medical institutions developed a National Action Plan called: Emergency Preparedness/Contingency Planning for Future Scenario, which was integrated into the National Emergency Response Plan in 2012. Additionally, UNFPA Georgia contributed to strengthening of the state emergency response systems by piloting a tool for assessing Georgia’s readiness to launch MISP for Reproductive Health during humanitarian crises.



UNFPA Georgia: Looking Ahead

In accordance with UNFPA's Strategic Plan for 2014-2017, the UNFPA in Georgia remains committed to help the country in Accelerating progress towards universal access to reproductive health (RH), including voluntary family planning (FP) and safe motherhood; advancing the rights and opportunities of women and young people to lead healthy reproductive lives and using population data to anticipate tomorrow's challenges and promote evidence-based policy making.

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Feature: UNFPA's 2014 Planning Meeting for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia

In February 2014, a high level delegation, headed by UNFPA's Executive Director – Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin visited Tbilisi, Georgia for the first time in the history of UNFPA. The visit, which took place within the framework of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Planning Meeting, aimed to discuss UNFPA's Strategic Plan for 2014-2017 as well as other region-specific issues. The high-level delegation met with the President of Georgia, the Prime Minister, line Ministers, donors and UN Country Team members to reiterate UNFPA's support to the country and reassure them that UNFPA's global work within the post-2015 development agenda would remain focused on reproductive health, population development, gender equality - with youth and adolescents being quintessential to achieving long-term progress on these critical issues.

UNFPA Georgia: Partnership in Action

UNFPA has been promoting, building and strengthening partnerships in Georgia to help the country in achieving its international commitments related to the ICPD and MDGs. It has joined hands with the Government ministries, Parliamentarians, donors, the UN sister agencies, professional associations, national institutions, NGOs and youth organizations to meet common development goals for Georgia.

In Reproductive Health, UNFPA Georgia's leading partner has long been the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs collaborating to increase availability and use of integrated sexual and reproductive health services that are gender-responsive and meet human rights standards for quality of care and equity in access. UNFPA's partnership with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Adjara Autonomous Republic has been directed towards making quality RH services more accessible to population in highland Adjara and thus contribute to improving reproductive health status of the population. However, many other entities contributed significantly to the realization of the above-mentioned goal, amongst those:

- The Reproductive Health National Council – established under MoLHSA in 2006-2014 and chaired by Sandra E. Roelofs, ex-first lady of Georgia the Council served as a platform for policy dialogue on reproductive health, for policy advice and coordination of all sector-specific activities. The Council has been addressing the gaps and priority needs in the area of reproductive health since its establishment; The MCH Council at the MoLHSA, established in 2014 has further advanced the national efforts directed towards reducing maternal and child mortality in Georgia;
- Zhordania Institute of Human Reproduction – a long-term partner of UNFPA Georgia for national capacity development for provision of quality RH services. Zhordania Institute also played a critical role of overseeing the operation of the Reproductive Health Mobile Teams;
- Mayo Clinic (USA) – UNFPA Georgia collaborated with MAYO Clinic (USA) in assessing maternity houses in Georgia and assisted MOLHSA in identifying shortcomings and generating evidences for the national referral mechanism;
- The SOCO Foundation – established in 1998 by the ex-first lady of Georgia - Sandra E. Roelofs, the

SOCO Foundation is a charity with reproductive health focus. UNFPA Georgia and SOCO Foundation jointly operated Reproductive Health Mobile Teams and worked to increase youth's access to sexual and reproductive health information and services;

In Commodity Security, UNFPA Georgia collaborated with USAID/John Snow, Inc. – a public health management consulting and research organization, to share the CHANNEL software for effectively managing distribution of free contraceptives to the population of Georgia.

UNFPA Georgia has been supporting the country in reducing the breast and cervical cancer-related morbidity and mortality since 2006 and has partnered with a variety of groups and individuals in this effort. Among them are:

- Tbilisi Municipality and UNFPA Georgia jointly funded Cancer Prevention and Early Detection and Screening Programme for Tbilisi population, which later expanded to the rest of Georgia;
- The National Screening Centre, an implementing partner for Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Programme.
- NGO Union Tanadgoma has been supported by UNFPA Georgia to implement cancer screening and awareness-raising project in Abkhazia, Georgia since 2011;
- The Black Sea Countries Coalition on Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention - a voluntary alliance of policy-makers, technical institutions and experts, and UNFPA Georgia cooperated fruitfully to improve breast and cervical cancer prevention in the Black Sea region;
- European Cervical Cancer Association (ECCA), – the key technical partner in developing the policy papers on cancer screening in Georgia and planning and piloting the organized cervical cancer screening in Georgia;
- Vrije University of Amsterdam, European School of Oncology, Copenhagen Screening program, European Partnership for Action Against Cancer, European School of Screening Management, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Training Centre for Breast Cancer Screening LRCB in Netherlands – all provided technical assistance and training for UNFPA Georgia-supported Breast and Cancer Screening project in order to improve quality of screening services and to develop quality assurance instruments, among other things.

UNFPA Georgia's work in the broader context of strengthening the national health systems has been geared towards ensuring that youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and information are widely available and are aligned with international standards and best practices. This has been undertaken jointly with a range of national and international partners, of which Ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Education play significant coordination roles in promoting healthy life-style and reproductive health among youth. Other important contributors and partners are:

- The State Inter-Agency Coordination Council on Youth Policy- created in 2013 for elaboration of the Youth Policy and the Action Plan and promoting the issues of youth health, education, employment and mobility;
- South Caucasus Parliamentarian's Forums on Youth Reproductive Health issues – is a network of legislators, practitioners and decision-makers, created under UNFPA's RHIYC project, to ensure knowledge-sharing and acquisition of innovative capacities at national levels in three Caucasus countries;
- European Parliamentary Forum (EPF) - a network of European parliamentarians, who are committed to promoting sexual and reproductive health. Since 2006, EPF partnered with UNFPA's RHIYC, facilitating regional and inter-regional networking and knowledge-sharing, supporting annual multi-sectoral regional forums, facilitating outreach and public relations activities in EU member states, EC to promote youth sexual and reproductive health and rights in the South Caucasus;
- Caucasus Social Marketing Association - founded in 2002, this non-governmental organization has become a long-term implementing partner of UNFPA Georgia, working to reduce risky behaviours and promoting healthy lifestyle through youth peer education projects and the condoms social marketing schemes.
- Centre for Inforamtaion and Councelling on Reproductive Heatlh Tanadgoma – long lasting partner of UNFPA in the area of Youth SRH&RR promotion and education, including Peer-Education and HIV prevention with particular focus on population at risk of HIV prevention.
- GYDEA – Founded in 2010 by a group of UNFPA trained Peer Educators, this youth-led NGO partnered with UNFPA in youth awareness rising on SRH&R, HIV prevention and stimulating youth demand for Youth-friendly RH services. The organization has been actively involved in the dialogue and consultations on

elaboration of the National Youth Policy and the Action Plan.

- European Youth Parliament (YEP) Georgia – Partnered with UNFPA in promoting youth participation for Youth SRH&R advocacy efforts through integrating these issues into the International Session of the EYP organized in Tbilisi in October 2013 with more than 300 young delegates.

In order to advance Gender Equality, end domestic violence, empower women and girls and to ensure their reproductive rights, including for the most vulnerable and marginalized women, adolescents and youth, UNFPA Georgia collaborated with the Parliament of Georgia and various line Ministries, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as the following bodies and organizations:

- The Gender Equality Council – established under the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia in 2004. In 2010, Gender Equality Council became a permanent entity at the Parliament, and is regulated by the Gender Equality Law. UNFPA Georgia, within the UN Joint Programme, collaborated with the Council on policy development and national capacity building;
- The State Inter-Agency Council on Domestic Violence – established in 2008 by a Presidential Decree, it supports, strengthens and coordinates the implementation of Law on DV. With UNFPA Georgia's support, the Inter-Agency Council has led the policy dialogue and coordinated national capacity development initiatives for ending domestic violence in the country;
- The State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking – initially an anti-trafficking agency, its mandate was expanded in 2008 to cover victims of domestic violence. The state fund thus participates in the National Referral Mechanism for victims of domestic violence and is an important partner of UNFPA Georgia;
- Georgia Public Defender's Office – collaborated and coordinated with UNFPA Georgia on raising awareness on Gender equality and gender-based violence issues, including advocacy against child/early marriages.
- International Center for Conflict Negotiations (ICCN) partnered with UNFPA Georgia to implement the TOTs and cascade trainings on gender-based and domestic violence in 2009 and 2010;
- ACT – a Georgia-based polling and research company, and the Center for Social Sciences – a think-tank, collected quantitative and qualitative data and analysed it in support of UNFPA Georgia's research on causes

- and consequences of domestic violence in 2008-2010;
- American Bar Association/Rule of Law Initiative and Young Lawyers Association of Georgia collaborated with UNFPA Georgia on amending the Law of Georgia on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection of and Support to Its Victims in 2009.
- Women's Information Centre – partnered with UNFPA Georgia on implementing the projects aimed at strengthening male involvement in combating domestic violence and advancing gender equality

In recognition of the importance of effective partnership, nongovernmental organizations are invited to foster coordination, cooperation and communication at the local, national, regional and international levels and with local and national governments, to reinforce their effectiveness as key participants in the implementation of population and development programmes and policies. - ICPD PoA, 15.6

UNFPA Georgia's effort to strengthen national policies through evidence-based analysis of population dynamics issues, the organization built the capacity of National Statistics Department (GeoStat) and the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health to collect and analyse data. Georgian Centre for Population Research has been a partner in undertaking the Gender and Generations Survey in Georgia

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The role of media in supporting UNFPA Georgia's work is immeasurable. The organization partnered with national regional and electronic media outlets to mobilize public support for reproductive health and rights, for demand-generation for quality reproductive and cancer screening services youth-friendly services, for awareness raising on healthy lifestyle, risky behaviours, rights-based family planning, etc;

UNFPA Georgia has garnered support and built solid partnerships with many private sector entities, among them are Georgian lifestyle magazine Amarta, Karl Storz International Training Center "CAUCASUS in Tbilisi and many more. The organization has many years of fruitful collaboration with the private clinics for provision of youth-friendly reproductive health services and information.

UNFPA Georgia is particularly grateful to its generous donors for their financial and technical support, for their commitment and belief that UNFPA Georgia will deliver best possible results in most effective, efficient, transparent and accountable manner. Special thanks and recognition are due to the Tbilisi Municipality, Government of Adjara Autonomous Republic, the European Union, the Government of Norway, the Government of Sweden, the UN Country Team, British Petroleum (BP), and many more.

UNFPA Georgia: Team That Makes Change Happen

UNFPA Georgia's success over the years is, in great measure, due to the dedication, professionalism, effectiveness, integrity and accountability of its staff members. Throughout years, the organization has employed a number of outstanding individuals, who shaped UNFPA Georgia's reputation in the country and orchestrated the implementation of the organization's mandate and its global agenda.

Currently, the very talented team of UNFPA Georgia is comprised of individuals who have versatile and fluid professional profiles, each bringing to the team a very specific, yet complementary skill-set. The following short profiles offer snapshots of each member of the team.

Ms. Tamar Khomasuridze, MD, PhD - joined UNFPA Georgia office as National Programme Officer in March 1999, and in 2004-2013 served as UNFPA Georgia CO Assistant Representative.

Ms. Lela Bakradze, MD, MBA - Assistant Representative since 2014, Ms. Bakradze oversees the implementation of UNFPA's mandate in Georgia. She has been with UNFPA Georgia since 2005 in a capacity of the National Programme Officer and Programme Analyst;

Dr. Giorgi (Gegi) Mataradze, MD - Program Analyst, joined UNFPA Georgia in June 2014 to oversee the RH and Population and Development related programmatic aspects;

Ms. Natalia Zakareishvili, MD, MPH - Programme Analyst, in charge of programmatic aspects, primarily focusing on HIV/AIDS, and Youth;

Ms. Marina Tsintsadze - the longest serving member of UNFPA Georgia team, joined the organization in March 1999 to manage its administration and finances;

Ms. Anna Tskitishvili - Programme / Logistics Associate, with UNFPA Georgia since 2008;

Ms. Tamar Bakhtadze – Secretary and Communication Focal Point, joined the organization in 2003;

Mr. Vladimer Shvelidze – Driver; with UNFPA Georgia since 2008.

Mr. Jaba Baliashvili – Programme/Logistics Assistant, with UNFPA Georgia since 2006;

Ms. Mariam Sikharulidze – Communication Assistant since 2013;

Throughout years, UNFPA Georgia has welcomed into its family a large number of talented professionals, who made significant contribution to the results achieved over the years. Among those are:

Zurab Japaridze, Levan Kobaladze, George Robakidze, Gvantsa Asatiani, Nino Darchiashvili, Jaba Sirbiladze, Tamar Naskidashvili, Tea Skhiereli, David Peradze, Arsen Gvenetadze, Nino Mushkudiani, Maiko Baratashvili, Levan Jugeli, Keta Bejanishvili, Nino Gogoladze, Mariam Bandzeladze, Giorgi Kopaleishvili, Mirian Jugheli, Nino Dzneladze, Nugzar Manjgaladze, Thea Maisuradze, Tea Jaliashvili, Tamar Vashakidze, Nino Edilashvili, Mariam Maglakelidze, Lika Mikaberidze.



Text: Thea Maisuradze
Design: Natalia Glonti
Published in 2014



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UNFPA IN GEORGIA 15 YEARS of PARTNERSHIP FOR PROGRESS