

**Investigating  
Comprehensive Security  
in the Humanitarian Context of  
Georgia**

**NOHA Field Trip  
10<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2007**

**Final Report**

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# 1. Introduction



In May 2007, the master program “Humanitarian Action” at the University of Groningen organized a field trip to Georgia. The field trip was jointly organized by students and staff members of the master course and embedded in the NOHA program of the second semester in Groningen. The field trip provided students with the unique opportunity to apply their recently gained theoretical knowledge to a practical humanitarian situation and exchange perspectives with humanitarian aid workers in the field as well as Georgian students. As such, the field trip has formed a valuable improvement of the educational program in Groningen, bearing in mind that NOHA Groningen is part of the European-wide NOHA-curriculum, which has been recognized as a *Master of Excellence* by the European Commission. Moreover, this initiative contributes to the Erasmus Mundus activities of NOHA in its efforts to extend its network beyond the European Union. Preceded by other NOHA partners, it will be the first time for NOHA Groningen to organize such a field trip abroad for its students. It can therefore serve as a helpful pilot project for possible future incorporation of field trips into the NOHA curriculum of Groningen.

This project wouldn't have been possible without the cooperation and support of many individuals and organizations. Therefore, we would like to thank all the organizations that were so kind to receive our group in Georgia: the warm hospitality and sincere interest we encountered made us realize how special the Georgian people and the humanitarian community are. We have profited tremendously from their willingness to share their expertise, experiences and opinions with us.

The field trip has been made possible financially by several supporting agencies. First of all should be mentioned the Gratama Foundation and the Groningen University Fund (GUF) with their major contribution to this pilot project. The Bureau of International Cooperation (BIS) of the University of Groningen with their subsidy for each of the student participants made it possible to include as many students as possible. Other contributions were received from the RuG Fund for the Internationalization of the Curriculum, the Centre for Development Studies and NOHA Groningen. The Centre for Development Studies also helped with financing this publication. In addition, it should be mentioned

that the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Georgia was so kind to sponsor our Georgian partner organization CIPDD for our joint seminar “Securing democracy: The role of independent media in Georgia”. To all our benefactors, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the donations that made this all happen.

That leaves us to thank everyone who helped with the field trip itself. Alex, Amandine, Angella, Aurélie, Ben, Coen, Jorike, Margot, Maria, Natthinee, Pilar, Rajeev and Sarah: as participants, your good-humored, enthusiastic and dedicated participation before, during and after the field trip made the organization of this field trip so much easier and clearly contributed to the success of this pilot project. To Camilla Marthinsen, Daphne Zwaaneveld and Erika Kastelein we would like express our appreciation for their help during the preparation of the field trip and our regret that you couldn't join us. The same regret is also applicable to our NOHA Director Joost Herman and our Program Coordinator Renée Bakker: your many hours spent on writing letters, e-mails, searching for funding, and a myriad of other practicalities made it a pity you were not with us in Georgia. Nevertheless, our heartfelt gratitude for your tremendous support. Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank Lika Sanikidze and Gia Gotua from our partner organization CIPDD in Tbilisi. Your hospitality, expertise and practical assistance were in one word: invaluable!

*Ulla Pape*

*Lara Sigwart*

*Jasmijn Melse*

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## 2. Idea & Objectives

The NOHA field trip to Georgia provided students of the master program “Humanitarian Action” with practical insights in the realities of humanitarian action in present-day Georgia. Participants of the field trip were able to apply the theoretical concept of “comprehensive security” to the humanitarian situation in Georgia. This theoretical framework, which is studied during the second semester in Groningen, forms an analytical tool that helps us to understand complex humanitarian situations that are characterized by an interconnection of different causalities that produce a general situation of insecurity within the affected population.

During the field trip the NOHA students investigated the different security fields in Georgia by meeting international and local aid agencies and discussing humanitarian and development topics with experts in the field. Moreover, a seminar with Georgian students from the University Tbilisi was organized, which enabled students to exchange ideas and experiences with their Georgian counterparts.

In short, the NOHA field trip

- linked the theoretical concept of “comprehensive security” to the humanitarian situation in Georgia,
- gave students an insight in the work of both international and local humanitarian aid agencies and state institutions,
- enabled students to analyze complex situations of insecurity and humanitarian response strategies,
- provided students with first hand experience in the realities of humanitarian action,
- gave students the possibility to exchange knowledge and ideas with their Georgian counterparts,
- contributed to the professional training of the NOHA students.

The Republic of Georgia in the Southern Caucasus was chosen as the destination for the field trip. Since its independence in 1991, the country has been confronted with a high level of insecurity caused by civil war, internal ethno-political conflicts (e.g. in Abkhazia and South Ossetia), the displacement of large parts of the population and a severe economic crisis after the end of the Soviet Union. Economic and political development in Georgia is further complicated by its problematic relationship with

Russia, Georgia's big neighbor in the north, since the new government, which came to power after the so-called Rose Revolution in 2003, opted for a Western-oriented policy. The violent conflicts of the 1990s led to a high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country. The IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been unable to return to their home regions, but are still facing problems concerning social and economic integration in Georgia proper. In this respect, the unsolved "frozen conflicts" still have an impact on the human security situation of the population in Georgia. Moreover, the country today finds itself in a process of rapid transition, leading to deeper inequalities within the population. All in all, this makes Georgia an interesting case where needs for humanitarian and development intervention co-exist. Because of the interrelatedness of Georgia's development and humanitarian problems, the country can serve as a salient field study for a comprehensive security analysis.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The set-up of the Field Trip to Georgia was inspired by the theoretical framework of comprehensive security used throughout the second semester specialization of the NOHA-program in Groningen.<sup>1</sup> The Field Trip offered the opportunity to obtain a deeper understanding of how this multi-angled approach could be used in practice to analyze security situations such as in Georgia. It provided an analytical guideline for assessing various aspects of insecurity in a complex humanitarian emergency situation.

Security used to be defined mainly in terms of states in the sense that it meant an absence of physical threats to the territorial and functional integrity of a given state.<sup>2</sup> From the eighties onward, however, security issues changed in character due to the end of the Cold War, the third wave of democratization, the emergence of non-state actors and the increasing globalization trend in the world. New transnational security threats such as environmental pollution, international terrorism and infectious diseases like HIV/Aids made it necessary to think beyond the state. Consequently, the narrow definition of security seemed to become seriously flawed.

One of the first to come up with a concept of 'comprehensive security' was the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security and its chairman Olof Palme.<sup>3</sup> In the commission's view, sustainable peace and security could only be attained if it was not merely shared by states but more broadly by all human beings and their organizations, thus including states and non-state actors. In a similar way, the UN developed the concept of 'Human Security' by focusing on securing a safe environment

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<sup>1</sup> See for a more in-depth description of how the thematic framework is interpreted and used in the NOHA-program of Groningen, the following text by Joost Herman & Rafael Wittek: 'Thematic framework for the second semester of NOHA/State University of Groningen: Comprehensive Security: Circumstances of decline, disappearance and reconstruction'. This paragraph draws mainly on this text.

<sup>2</sup> B. Buzan, *People, states and fear* (second edition; London 1991) p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Common Security. A Blueprint for Survival*, Palme Commission (Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues), Simon & Schuster (New York 1982).

in terms of food, social and medical security. 'Human Security' could thus best be understood as a shift in perspective, taking people as its point of reference rather than focusing exclusively on the security of territory or governments. The blending of these concepts into a more all-inclusive notion of security that stressed the quality of human life and respect for human dignity has influenced the present-day understanding of comprehensive security.

Following this line of thought, the NOHA-program of Groningen takes security as a mixture of both state security aimed at international peace and the territorial integrity of states on the one hand, and human security centered on human well-being on the other hand. In this perspective, security refers not only to the absence of threats against the physical and functional well-being of human beings and their organizations but it requires also the means to improve the quality of human life through political and social organization.

For analyzing disaster events and their treatment through humanitarian assistance interventions, we distinguish a normative and a subjective approach that are seen as necessary complements. The normative approach is top-down oriented and analyses firstly human security in terms of political human rights and in social and economic human rights on the one hand. Secondly, it focuses on state security in terms of military and economic security. Based on the issues prevailing within these topics, the security consequences are deduced for institutions, such as for markets, groups in society, states and organizations.

The normative approach however is then confronted with the subjective approach, which is more bottom-up oriented. In this approach, the focus starts on the subjective level of markets, primordial groups and organizations by analyzing their security situation concerning health, housing, food, physical and mental capacity, empathy, social skills, education, etc. This leads to an assessment of the general physical well-being and social well-being, which in turn can be seen as an expression of the level of comprehensive security in a region. A comparison of the distinct outcomes of these two approaches is where the most valuable insights surface.

The Comprehensive Security specialization course in Groningen has been organized according to the different kinds of securities identified in the normative and subjective approach. A similar approach has been used for the Field Trip to Georgia by focusing each day on a different kind of security: political security, economic security, health security, food security, social security, environmental security and comprehensive security in the regions.



These kinds of securities can be interpreted in different ways. Political security for example refers both to the state and its citizens. At the macro-level, political security can be defined as “the organisational stability of states, systems of government and the ideologies that give them legitimacy”.<sup>4</sup> On the micro-level however, political security focuses on the political security of the citizens within the state. The latter is guaranteed by the civil and political rights. Accordingly, threats to political security can be present both at state level, political decline, and on an individual level in the form of political repression.

As for economic security, this can be defined as “a steady flow of goods and services to live a decent life.”<sup>5</sup> Understandably, one of the major threats to economic security is poverty. Social security can be defined in terms of support provided to the individual in all kinds of social relationships, with the disintegration of social support functions as its main threat. Environmental security on the other hand also refers to a global dimension in the sense that it concerns itself with the “maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere.”<sup>6</sup> Common threats to environmental security are pollution, environmental degradation and resource depletion. Health security conversely has an individual dimension too as it can be defined as the “physical, mental and social well-being of humans”<sup>7</sup>, which is threatened by injuries and diseases. Linked to health security, food security can be defined as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life”<sup>8</sup> with hunger and famine as its opposites.

Achieving an essential overview of all these different aspects of security on different levels of aggregation helps to confront the myriad of intricacies present in conflict regions and the equally phenomenal complexities with which humanitarian interventions have to reckon, as we will see is the case in Georgia.

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<sup>4</sup> B. Buzan, O. Waever, J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (London, 1998), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Definition of the World Bank , <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (3 June 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Buzan, *Security*, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Definition of the WHO, <<http://www.who.int/en>> (23 May 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Definition of the World Bank , <<http://www.worldbank.org>> (3 June 2005).



## 4. Program

The program of the NOHA field trip to Georgia consisted of two parts. First of all, the participants of the field trip visited international and local humanitarian aid agencies in Georgia. As mentioned earlier, the meetings with the organizations were structured along the lines of the theoretical framework of comprehensive security.

For each of the six security fields that comprise comprehensive security (political security, economic security, social security, health security, food security, and environmental security) one humanitarian topic was chosen for discussion that was regarded particularly relevant for the humanitarian context of Georgia. For political security the topic of the internal ethno-political conflicts and the situation of the IDP population in Georgia was chosen. For economic security the focus was on economic development and poverty reduction. Within the field of health security we investigated the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country. Regarding food security, relief food aid to vulnerable populations was the topic in combination with a visit to projects of the World Food Programme. Within the field of social security we focused on social change and the situation of women in Georgia. On the score of environmental security we studied environmental protection in Georgia and in particular the ecological impact of the newly constructed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Next to those “classical” fields of comprehensive security we decided to have a special focus on the situation in the regions of Georgia that are facing particular problems with regard to economic development and minority integration. On a trip to the Southern region of Samtskhe-Javakheti we investigated the situation of the Armenian minority, which constitutes a majority in this southern border region of Georgia.

The second part of the program comprised a joint seminar on media development and democracy with Georgian students, which was funded by the Dutch Embassy in Tbilisi. The seminar with the title “Securing Democracy: The Role of Independent Media in Georgian Society” was jointly organized with the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD) and the Ilia Chavchavadze State University of Tbilisi. The seminar provided both student groups with the opportunity to

discuss the role of independent media as a securing factor for the development of democracy in Georgia.

The seminar was held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> of May at the Ilia Chavchavadze State University and was attended by 30 students from Georgia and Europe. In the morning, Ghia Nodia, head of the Department for Philosophy and Social Sciences, opened the seminar. After this, Eka Kvesitadze and Ia Antadze gave an account of the media development in Georgia after the Rose Revolution in November 2003. During the second part in the afternoon, the students discussed their views on the topic in an interactive way. To begin with, a guided discussion on the interlinkage of media and democracy was held concerning issues as the independence of media, freedom of expression and censorship. After identifying the main problems, students were regrouped into working groups in order to apply a problem-solving approach on the issues discussed beforehand. The day was concluded by a joint dinner.

### NOHA Field Trip Program – Investigating comprehensive security within the humanitarian context of Georgia

Thursday 10-05-2007	Friday 11-05-2007	Saturday 12-05-2007	Sunday 13-05-2007	Monday 14-05-2007	Tuesday 15-05-2007	Wednesday 16-05-2007
Departure From Groningen to Airport Cologne-Bonn Flight ST1140 with Germania Express at 20.50 to Tbilisi	Arrival Arrival at Tbilisi Airport at 03.05 Social Security 16.00 Caucasus Women's Research and Consulting Network (CWN)	Meeting with CIPDD 11.00 Caucasus Institute of Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD) 17.00 Academy for Peace and Development (APD)	Humanitarian Action in Georgia 14.30 Ms Sandra Roelofs, First Lady of Georgia 18.00 Excursion to Turtle Lake, joint dinner with Georgian students	Political Security <i>“Internal ethno- political conflicts in Georgia”</i> 10.00 Danish Refugee Council (DRC) 15.00 Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	Economic Security <i>“Poverty in Georgia – Vulnerable groups”</i> 10.00 EU Delegation to Georgia 13.00 UNHCR 16.00 Oxfam	Health Security <i>“HIV/AIDS in Georgia”</i> 11.00 NGO “Tanadgoma Center” 15.00 NGO “Georgian Federation of Children” 17.00 Reception at the Dutch Embassy
Thursday 17-05-2007	Friday 18-05-2007	Saturday 19-05-2007	Sunday 20-05-2007	Monday 21-05-2007	Tuesday 22-05-2007	Wednesday 23-05-2007
Food Security <i>“Relief Food Aid to vulnerable populations in Georgia”</i> 9.30 World Food Programme	Social Security <i>“Social Change in Georgian society”</i> 10.00 European Center on Minority Issues	Comprehensive Security in the Regions <i>“Minorities in Georgia”</i> Excursion to Samtskhe-Javakheti	Environmental Security <i>“Environmental protection in Georgia”</i> 10.00 Borjomi- Kharagauli National	Comprehensive Security and Media Development <i>“Securing democracy: The role of independent media in Georgia”</i>	Personal plans	Personal plans
					<b>Thursday 24-05-2007</b>	<b>Friday 25-05-2007</b>

<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>10-05-2007</b>	<b>11-05-2007</b>	<b>12-05-2007</b>	<b>13-05-2007</b>	<b>14-05-2007</b>	<b>15-05-2007</b>	<b>16-05-2007</b>
(WFP) 14.30 Visit to a Collective Center with the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA)	(ECMI) 14.00 PMMG / Multiethnic Resource Center	14.00 OSCE HCNM / CIPDD project on conflict prevention and integration 16:00 Armenian- Georgian Newspaper “Southern Gates”	Park 17.00 CENN / CYEN	Seminar with students of the University of Tbilisi and the University of Groningen 18:00 Farewell dinner	Food Security 9.00 Trip to the project sites of WFP	Departure Flight at 04.05 from Tbilisi to Cologne

# 5. Comprehensive Security in Georgia

## 5.1 Political Security

*a contribution by Jorike Looij and Maria Waade*

Within the field of political security we investigated the so-called “frozen conflicts” in Georgia, which still form a major impediment to the development of the country. The Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-South Ossetian conflict are called “frozen”, because the situation has remained largely unchanged for more than a decade. The process of conflict transformation has reached an impasse. On the one hand, the level of violence is rather low with a small number of incidents in the respective conflict regions per year. On the other hand, conflict transformation has not occurred either. Both parties to the conflict remain inflexible and decline the possibility of a peaceful compromise. Whereas conflict resolution plans of the Georgian government are all based on the notion of territorial integrity, the governments of the de facto independent republic of Abkhazia and South Ossetia insist on full independence.

Within the framework of the NOHA field trip to Georgia we have spoken with five organizations that are dealing with the internal conflicts and the situation of the IDP population in Georgia: the CIPDD, the Georgian NGO “Academy for Peace and Development”, the humanitarian organizations “Danish Refugee Council” (DRC) and “Norwegian Refugee Council” (NRC), as well as the UN agency “United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR).

### 5.1.1 Background Information

In the past fifteen years the politics of Georgia have been characterized by independence, two internal ethnic conflicts in the autonomous Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and by the Rose revolution in 2003 that brought the current president, Mikheil Saakashvili to power. Before describing the visits, some background information will be given on these developments. After the independence of Georgia in 1991/1992, two provinces of Georgia that had been autonomous during the Soviet Union wanted to gain independence. These were South Ossetia

and Abkhazia. The two conflicts resulted in death and the displacement of about 250,000 people.

## **South Ossetia**

Depicting the history of Georgian-South Ossetian ties is very difficult for the two parties have different versions of history. During Soviet times, starting in the 1920s, Georgia, Abkhazia, Ajaria and South Ossetia had different levels of autonomy. Georgia was a Soviet Republic, Abkhazia and Ajaria were made autonomous soviet socialist republics, while South Ossetia was made an autonomous oblast or region. South Ossetia had far less autonomy than Abkhazia and Ajaria. However, it wasn't just a part of Georgia since it had some autonomy, mainly culturally. Already during the Soviet period South Ossetia fought for more autonomy within Georgia, wanting to be an autonomous republic and in 1990 even declared itself independent within the USSR, as a reaction to measures taken by the Georgian government, which was implementing Georgian culture and language as the official language of South Ossetia in schools. Ossetians boycotted elections the next month that brought Gamsakhurdia to power and held their own parliamentary ballot in December. Gamsakhurdia's government frantically reacted, canceling the election results and abolishing the autonomous oblast status of South Ossetia on 11 December 1990.

When Gamsakhurdia came to power, he unleashed the forces of nationalism. According to many accounts, "Georgia for the Georgians" was Gamsakhurdia's attitude. Minorities were declared 'guests on Georgian territory' and ethnic clashes followed. Direct military confrontation started in January 1991 when several thousand Georgian troops entered Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, leading to a year of chaos and urban warfare.

In January 1992 a referendum in South Ossetia showed support for secession and integration with Russia. On 24 June 1992, in the Russian city of Sochi, the Russian and Georgian leaders Yeltsin and Shevardnadze signed an agreement that brought about a ceasefire. Today the government of Georgia has no effective control over South Ossetia.

The war's consequences were devastating: some 1000 persons dead, 100 missing, extensive destruction of homes and infrastructure and many refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The 1990-1992 conflict in the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia is estimated to have displaced some 60,000 persons, including about 10,000 ethnic Georgians. The vast majority, however, were ethnic Ossetians from both the breakaway



territory and other parts of Georgia, most of whom have fled abroad (primarily to the Russian Federation region of North Ossetia).<sup>9</sup>

In July and August 2004 the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict became, among all frozen conflicts in the South Caucasus, the most likely to spill over into full scale war again. After becoming president of Georgia in January 2004, Saakashvili made restoration of the territorial integrity a main goal and wanted to make South Ossetia again full part of Georgia. This did not go down well with the South Ossetians. It came as no surprise when South Ossetians voted overwhelmingly in favor of restating their demand for independence from Tbilisi in an unrecognized referendum in November 2006. A simultaneous referendum among the region's ethnic Georgians voted just as emphatically to stay with Tbilisi. Compromise seems a long way off. Tensions are never far from the surface and violence flares sporadically. Russia still has peacekeeping troops in South Ossetia although the Georgian parliament has called for them to be replaced by an international force.

## **Abkhazia**

At the time of the collapse of the USSR in 1991, around 18% of the people of Abkhazia were ethnic Abkhaz. The rest of the population consisted mainly out of Georgians. When Georgia became independent, supporters of independence and those with closer ties to Russia became more vociferous. In 1992 Georgia sent troops to enforce the status quo. In late 1993, they were driven out amidst fierce fighting. Several thousand people were killed. About 250,000 Georgians became refugees and are still unable to return.

In spite of a 1994 ceasefire accord and a peacekeeping operation, the dispute on Abkhazian sovereignty lingered on with two rival governments claiming authority. Over 83% of Abkhazian territory is controlled by the Russian-backed separatist government, which is based in Sukhumi. About 17% of the territory is directed by the representatives of the *de jure* Government of Abkhazia, the only body that is internationally recognized as the legal authority of Abkhazia. This government is located in the Kodori Valley in Upper Abkhazia controlled by Georgia.

Officially Russia recognizes the territorial integrity of Georgia, but unofficially it supports the breakaway of the regions. 90% of Abkhazia's population holds Russian passports, the currency is the Russian ruble and a number of retired people receive Russian pensions. Russia's

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<sup>9</sup> Data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).

motives for this support are mainly geopolitical. Regional experts claim the region provides Russia with a foothold south of the Caucasus Mountains. At the same time, Russia is concerned about separatist movements in its federation. If Abkhazia would successfully become a breakaway state, Chechnya's calls for independence could become more valid. Another issue is the Russian peacekeeping troops in Abkhazia, which remain controversial. IDPs in Georgia have held demonstrations, demanding the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the conflict zone.

Both the Georgians and the Abkhaz population consider themselves victims of ethnically directed violence. Abkhaz fled following ethnically based threats of violence and Georgians reportedly burned down Abkhaz homes during the war. Abkhaz leadership argues that anti-Abkhaz ethnic violence was intentional and planned. On the other side, most displaced Georgians state that they left because their lives in Abkhazia were in danger because of their Georgian identity. Ethnic cleansing and massacres of Georgians has been officially recognized by the OSCE convention in 1994 and again in 1996 during the Budapest summit.

### **The situation of the IDP population in Georgia**

There are around 220 000 ethnic Georgian IDPs in Georgia. Close to 95% originate from Abkhazia. The other 5% are Georgians from South Ossetia. Ossetians from Georgia and Ossetians from South Ossetia mainly fled to North Ossetia and are not present in Georgia proper. The Georgian population from Abkhazia primarily fled to the region bordering Abkhazia and to Tbilisi. A decade after the major clashes, the scale of humanitarian needs may actually have increased, rather than declined on several accounts:

- **Lack of material resources and lack of land and other immovable property:** Poverty and lack of material resources are problems widely spread among IDPs, as well as the general population. The majority of IDPs are uprooted from their habitual environment and usual means of production, most notably their land, hindering self-reliance.
- **Unemployment:** IDPs have a higher rate of unemployment in comparison with general data in Georgia. During the spontaneous accommodation of IDPs under conflict conditions, there were limited opportunities of offering job placements; and due to scarce social linkages and insufficient awareness as well as inflexibility of the labor market, it was difficult for many IDPs to find stable employment. For those IDPs who managed to find work, this often has been outside of their professional qualifications.

- **Housing Conditions:** The chaotic and incoherent accommodation of IDPs and the absence of a state policy on housing, has made housing conditions one of the most difficult problems facing IDPs. Even now, almost half (45%) of the IDPs are accommodated in collective centers. Most of these buildings are unsuitable for living. Of a total of 1,683 collective centers throughout the country, 70% do not meet minimum living standards, with inadequate access to clean water, unsafe electric systems and inadequate insulation. More than half of the IDPs are accommodated in private accommodation. However, it is believed that an increasing number of IDPs previously living in private accommodation have moved to collective centers as a result of decreasing willingness of local families to host them and their inability to pay rent.
- **Representation of IDP interests:** Currently the social capital of IDPs does not facilitate their integration; this results in their isolation and lower participation in civil spheres. IDPs also participate less in the creation of formal social structures.
- **Syndrome of dependence on assistance and lack of initiative:** Disappointment and desperation of many IDPs result in social passiveness, reluctance of initiative, and dependence on assistance. This is one of the most important problems as regards their social integration as well as their future return to their permanent places of residence.
- **Difficulties related to the return and insecurity of returnee IDPs:** Favorable conditions encouraging voluntary return of IDPs do not exist. However, there are cases of spontaneous return. Returnees live under significant risk due to the general criminal situation and the frequent and severe human rights violations by the de facto administration. Additional problems are caused by their unsatisfactory living conditions and lack of access to social services.

### **5.1.2 Organizations in Focus**

In 2003, Saakashvili, former minister of Justice of the government of Shevardnadze, led the Rose Revolution as a leader of the opposition. After days of mass street protests, he came into power. Its current government policy is characterized by a strong will to fight corruption, privatize as much as possible and bringing Abkhazia and South Ossetia back under the power of the Georgian government. Being students of humanitarian action, in this political security component we focused mainly on the consequences of these political developments on the situation of IDPs. We visited five organizations that deal with IDP issues:

The Caucasus Institute of Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), the Georgian Youth NGO “Academy for Peace and Development”, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

## **CIPDD**

At our second day in Tbilisi, we visited our project partner in Georgia, the Caucasus Institute of Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), where we were informed about the different activities of this organization. The meeting was conducted with several staff members of the CIPDD during two hours. After closing the auditory debate the participants had the chance to informally talk having coffee and refreshments.

Lika Sanikidze, CIPDD researcher and co-organizer of the NOHA field trip, gave an account of CIPDD’s profile and work. She emphasized the institute’s new projects in assisting the educational reform by conducting trainings for teachers, the establishment of an organizational think tank on the South Ossetian conflict and the very successful project on capacity building trainings for political parties being carried out in cooperation with the Dutch “Institute for Multiparty Democracy”. Ms Sanikidze stressed the problem of Georgian political parties being built around the persons leading them. This generates a focus on personalized debates, not on topics.

Marina Elbakidze presented the CIPDD/OSCE project on the participation of ethnic minorities in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The 30 local observers deliver monthly monitoring reports on the local situation, mainly on the relations between the Armenian and the Georgian population in that region.

Malkhaz Saldadze outlined the CIPDD’s project on the monitoring of the legal restitution process which is funded by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The project focuses on the South Ossetian conflict. In 2006, the Georgian government brought the restitution law on the way, which is about to be adopted now. In the beginning of the 1990s, the Ossetian population fled South Ossetia mainly to bordering North Ossetia, the Georgian population fled to central Georgia, mainly the capital. The Georgian governmental institutions proved to have insufficient capacity to deal with the restitution process. Crucial obstacles to the process are the lodging of IDPs in collective centers, their registration and the insufficient payments. On the contrary, the Abkhazian restitution process is very arbitrary for there are no figures and no programs, but only individual payments.

Gia Gotua, CIPDD researcher and co-organizer of the NOHA field trip and Emil Adelkhanov, CIPDD senior researcher and human rights officer, attended and supported the meeting with their remarks.

Sophie Smeets, a master student at the University of Nijmegen, gave an account of her research project on IDP integration in Georgia. She stated that the majority of the IDPs is integrated and holds a weak wish to return to their places of origin. Meanwhile, most IDPs consider themselves to be excluded within their new social context and to be perceived as a different minority group. However, the younger generation of IDPs proves to be much more integrated than the older generation. Stefano Berti, UNHCR associate program officer and alumnus of the NOHA master program, attended the meeting at CIPDD and introduced a critical view on the Georgian government's steps in the restitution process.

The evaluation meeting in the evening brought up several questions on the day's agenda:

- What is the IDPs' own perception of their situation and does it comply with the stance the state and non-state institutions working on the issue take?
- What is the role of international organizations in a given humanitarian context? What is the role of international organizations with respect to their cooperation with NGOs? Why is it that there is, for instance, no cooperation of the UNHCR with the CIPDD?
- How does the integration process of the IDPs go on after turning to private housing? Is there any sustained follow-up agenda? Will the IDPs still be supported by state institutions?
- What is, in general, the situation and what are the chances of IDPs in Georgia?
- How is the relationship between local NGOs and the Georgian government set up? How are NGOs seen publicly in Georgia?
- What are the main features of the ongoing privatization process in Georgia?

### **Academy for Peace and Development**

The Academy for Peace and Development (APD) is a youth NGO that was funded by young IDPs from Abkhazia. Initially they also worked in Abkhazia, but currently the target group concerns only young Georgian IDPs in Georgia. The main reason for closing down projects in Abkhazia was the strict control imposed by the Abkhaz de facto government.

APD provides various activities for the youth. One of the main activities is conflict resolution projects, in which youths learn about conflicts and

reconciliation in general. The conflict in Georgia is not addressed as it is too sensitive. APD also arranges trips abroad and holds courses in computer skills and English language. In addition they provide 'training of trainers' courses, and have workshops in youth clubs, focusing on issues such as HIV/aids, drug abuse, trafficking, gender issues etc.

Giorgi Kakulia, with whom we met at ADP, did himself flee from Abkhazia with his family in the 1990s. He is the current president of ADP. It was very interesting to speak with someone who had first-hand knowledge about IDP issues, and who had succeeded in using his experiences and knowledge to help other youths. In the evaluation of this visit general appreciation was expressed about Mr. Kakulia's openness and knowledge. The fact that he was a stark contrast to the stereotype image of 'victimized' IDPs passively waiting for a return also made the visit to ADP very worthwhile.

### **Danish Refugee Council**

The South Caucasus program of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is based on three main pillars: economic development (including food security and livelihood projects), institutional development (including the training of ministries and government officials) and physical and community rehabilitation. The visits at DRC provided a very good overview of the IDP situation in Georgia, and added new perspectives to the topic. For example, the 'behind the scene' political motives of IDP integration were discussed. DRC's work on capacity building among government officials was also discussed, which focuses on challenges with identifying training needs without being perceived as criticism.

### **Norwegian Refugee Council**

During the visit at the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), we were given information about its project on legal aid for IDPs. This project works with individual clients and provides support with regard to property issues, welfare benefits and other issues. The project also does advocacy work on a more systemic level in regard to protection of legal rights and the ability of people to exercise these rights. Interesting to note was NRC's work with the de facto governments in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. When providing legal aid NRC uses the legislation of the de facto governments if they see that this benefits the individuals. At the same time they recognize that this could be seen as recognition of these governments position in power. NRC also provided information about their Human Rights Education project. They have published a range of different materials that are being used in schools and other institutions.

In the group evaluation of the visits to the NRC and DRC it was agreed that it was interesting to visit two organizations with a fairly similar mandate, though they still seemed to operate quite differently. The DRC seemed to focus on emergency work and the NRC more on long-term development projects. The two organizations also seemed to have a different view on the Georgian government – perhaps linked to their choice of emergency focus versus development focus: the DRC seemed to take quite a distance to the government whereas the NRC seemed to have a closer collaboration with the government and to have more of a ‘make the best of the current situation’ approach.

## **UNHCR**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. In Georgia, UNHCR is dealing both with IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia and with Chechen refugees, who have fled the violent conflict in neighboring Chechnya in the Russian Federation. About 2,000 Chechen refugees are currently staying in the Pankisi valley.

At UNHCR, we met Stefano Berti, associate program officer to the agency’s IDP and West Georgia project and alumnus of the NOHA master program. Together with a colleague, Stefano gave us an overview of the activities of UNHCR in Georgia. The UN agency is Georgia’s Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation in dealing with IDP and refugees issues in the country. UNHCR contributed to the elaboration of the new IDP strategy that is aimed to improve the integration of the IDP population in Georgia. It was particularly interesting to learn about the negotiation process between the Ministry and different humanitarian organizations that preceded the decision on the new strategy. Although observers were doubtful in the beginning, the new strategy on IDPs was finally adopted. On the basis of the IDP strategy, UNHCR is currently working out an action plan that is meant to bring the good intention into reality.

### **5.1.3 Main Findings – Political Security**

By several of these organizations we were informed that the IDPs in Georgia are not very well taken care of by the government. Registered IDPs receive about 14 lari a month, which is the equivalent of 7 euros. This is not enough to build up a life. Most of them are still living in

unhealthy living conditions. About 50% still lives in former hotels, schools, hospitals etc.

The current privatization trend of the government affects the situation of IDPs directly. The government sells all buildings where IDPs are living. IDPs are entitled to a small allowance to resettle, but this is not always being paid to everyone. Besides that, houses are hard to find.

There is no policy of integration or permanent resettlement, and the IDPs are kept in very poor conditions. The NGOs characterized the situation as ‘IDPs being held hostage’. We learnt that the political reason behind this lack of government support is the will of the Georgian government to keep IDPs longing to return. The Georgian government has a clear interest that IDPs from Abkhazia don’t become too integrated and ‘comfortable’, as they will then lose their motivation to go back to Abkhazia – meaning that the Georgian claim on Abkhazia could become invalid. Would they be successfully integrated and not wanting to go back to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Georgian government would lose an important reason to claim Abkhazia and South Ossetia back as Georgian territory.

Another thing that was discussed in detail is the current policy of linking the so-called ‘My House-project’ with re-registration. Every two years IDPs have to reregister in order to keep receiving aid. However, the re-registration of IDP names is now not sufficient anymore. The government demands all IDPs to not only reregister their names, but also to point out their property back in Abkhazia. In order to identify property, the Georgian government uses satellite photos of the area, which infuriates Abkhazian authorities, worsening relations between both entities. IDPs who don’t want their property to be registered, or can’t show all the necessary papers are not registered as IDP and lose their government support.

## **5.2 Economic Security**

*a contribution by Coen Oosterveld*

Within the field of economic security we investigated the economic development and poverty reduction in Georgia. We were particularly interested in the political, economic and societal changes after the Rose Revolution of 2003. Did the new government under president Saakashvili succeed in reforming the economy and fighting the corruption, as it had promised? To what extent has the situation improved since the Rose Revolution for the “normal” population of Georgia? What has been done



for the vulnerable groups, e.g. the IDP population, in Georgia? How do external actors as the European Union assist in the process of economic development?

## **5.2.1 Background**

The transition from a socialist system to a market economy caused a sharp economic decline throughout the whole region of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), but the recession was deepest in Georgia. During the period 1992-1996 real national income fell by 78% compared to the 1990 level while state health expenditure per person fell to less than US\$1 a year.

Today, Georgia is still dealing with the problems of transition. Since the Rose Revolution, the country has made progress in economic development. The new government has succeeded in fighting corruption and improving the conditions for economic development and foreign investment.

## **5.2.2 Organizations in Focus**

In the framework of the NOHA field trip to Georgia we have been able to visit two organizations that deal with economic security in Georgia. First of all, we had a meeting with the European Commission's Delegation to Georgia, where we learned a lot about EU assistance to Georgia. Moreover, we met the NGO Oxfam, which is implementing poverty reduction programs in Georgia. In this way, we were able to study economic development from two different perspectives: macro level development assistance versus grass root level NGO programs on the ground.

### **European Commission's Delegation**

The NOHA group was welcomed by the ambassador for the EU in Georgia Mr. Per Eklund and three staff members of the European Commission Delegation (ECD) to Georgia and Armenia: Robin Liddell, Oliver Reisner and Maria van Ruiten. In his welcome speech, the ambassador pointed out that the ECD is representing the European Commission in Georgia and Armenia. The role of the delegation as a diplomatic mission representing the European Commission - the executive body of the European Union - is to present, explain and implement the European Union's policy in Georgia and Armenia, analyze and report on the policies and development of Georgia and Armenia. The delegation also reports on political developments in the two countries to

the European Commission. Reporting focuses on three areas: (1) socio-economic development in Georgia and Armenia, (2) the development of trade relations with the European Union, and (3) the impact of EU's development assistance and support of democratic institutions. The budget of the ECD covers € 124 million.

EU assistance to Georgia is linked to the implementation of the Action Plan within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which is comprised of eight priority areas:

- Strengthening the rule of law (judicial system, penitentiary system, democratic institutions and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms),
- Improvement of the business and investment climate, a transparent privatization process and the fight against corruption,
- Encouragement of economic development and enhancement of poverty reduction efforts and social cohesion, sustainable development including protection of the environment,
- Enhancement of cooperation in the field of justice, freedom and security, including the field of border management,
- Strengthening regional cooperation within the South Caucasus,
- Promotion of a peaceful resolution of Georgia's internal conflicts (Abkhazia, Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia),
- Cooperation on foreign and security policy,
- Transport and energy.

Before 2003, the situation in Georgia was, according to the members of the delegation, characterized by deep stagnation. After the Rose Revolution, a new government came to power inspired by a revolutionary zeal for change. The members of the delegation also shared their views on the political situation in Georgia. According to the ambassador, the two so-called "frozen" conflicts (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) are not frozen, but rather hot. In South Ossetia, peacekeepers were seized and temporarily held separate.

The situation in Abkhazia is somewhat calmer. There have been protests by Georgian students along the Georgian-Abkhazian border, which have intensified tensions between Abkhazia and Georgia. The government of Georgia is determined to resolve the internal conflicts in a mid-term perspective. Earlier statements of Georgian politicians to resolve the conflicts within a timeframe of one or one and a half years had to be withdrawn later. Currently, the Georgian government is very careful in making statements on the conflict resolution process.

The situation of the IDP population in Georgia is still difficult. IDPs can be seen as pawns in the conflict. Although the formal policy is focused on integration, the governmental policy in practice aims to keep the IDPs in a waiting position. The Georgian government wants to make sure that the IDPs still want to return to their home regions. Regarding the government policy on privatization, IDPs are often facing problems. In many collective centers, the whole building is cut off from energy supply if only one family is unable to pay the electricity bill. According to the ambassador, the government's policy on privatization is focused on selling everything that can be sold. Even collective centers are on the list of objects for privatization.

The ambassador also spoke about his experiences with dealing with the Georgian government. The members of the Georgian government are very young. Most of them are in their twenties or thirties. They are all well educated. Many government officials have got a degree from a university in the US or Europe. In general, the Georgian government is very eager to implement changes. The young government officials are often quite inexperienced, but also very enthusiastic, which makes it very pleasant to deal with them.

The objectives set by the EU action plan for Georgia concentrate on the rule of law and good governance, as well as on the improvement of the business climate in Georgia. While the delegation has set a timeframe of five years, the Georgian government wishes to achieve the established aims already within three years.

The Georgian government spends a large part of its budget on defense. This has to do with the fact that Georgia wants to become a member of NATO. This policy choice means that there is less money for other policy fields, e.g. health care. Between 30% and 40% of the Georgian population is currently living under the poverty line. Many people, particularly on the country side, have to rely on subsistence farming. The delegation is concerned about the state of the Georgian health care system. Particularly in the countryside, there are many vulnerable people, who are too poor to pay for health care services. Another serious concern is the penitentiary system in Georgia. In many prisons up to four inmates have to share one cell. Prison inmates often get only five hours fresh air per week. Cut corners for the delegation are health care and education.

Summarizing, we can say that there are many reforms carried out in Georgia, but that there is still much to do. According to the ambassador, on the whole, Georgia is on the right track. For example, the level of corruption has gone down significantly after the Rose Revolution. One of the first actions of the new government was a reform of the police, which

used to be very corrupt during the Shevardnadze government. All policemen were sacked. Later, a part of them was re-employed, but much better paid. After the revolution, many former ministers and high-ranking officials were sentenced for embezzlement. The privatization process in Georgia is not completely transparent, but there is no evidence of high level corruption. At present, there is generally much support for the president. This is a sign that most people are satisfied with the development of the country. Georgia receives much external assistance. The US has spent \$270 million on aid to Georgia, mostly for the improvement of the infrastructure. The US has a strong economic and geopolitical interest in the region of the South Caucasus.<sup>10</sup>

## **OXFAM**

Oxfam is an independent British non-governmental organization that works to find lasting solutions for overcoming poverty and suffering around the world. In Georgia, Oxfam started working in 1993 to provide emergency relief such as water, sanitation and shelter. Today, Oxfam's work in Georgia has a much more long-term focus. Oxfam is not working directly in Georgia, but operating through implementing partners. These are Georgian NGOs that carry out Oxfam's program in the country. We had a meeting with Nino Kareli, Oxfam's country program manager in Georgia.

The organization is providing primary healthcare to around 36,000 displaced and vulnerable people. Oxfam has provided loans to 3,000 farmers and urban entrepreneurs who have set up small businesses (since 2000).

Oxfam's programs in Georgia are focused on three main directions: (1) access to basic health care, (2) the poverty reduction strategy process (PRSP), and (3) enhancing economic security. Within its health care programs, Oxfam is improving the provision of affordable primary healthcare in poor rural communities. Oxfam's local partners have built new clinics or renovated existing facilities in 27 communities in the Zugdidi district. They are helping these communities to run and finance primary health care schemes. As part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process (PRSP) in Georgia, Oxfam is promoting the participation of civil society in monitoring the implementation of the health policy. Within its programs on economic security, Oxfam is helping poor and internally

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<sup>10</sup> The political development of Georgia is monitored by "The Caucasus Research Resource Centre", which provides all kinds of information on the country ([www.crrc.ge](http://www.crrc.ge)).

displaced people to make a living through small business activities, for example bread making or growing kiwi fruits. Oxfam's partner organization, the Small Business Development Foundation (SBDF), offers clients small loans at low interest rates to help them set up and develop businesses. Clients are given help to prepare professional business plans and they receive continued support each step of the way.

Oxfam is working with a rights-based approach, which means that all of its programs are based on five rights: the right to a sustainable livelihood, the right to basic services, the right to life and security, the right to be heard, and the right to an identity.

Ms Kareli gave an overview about the different activities of Oxfam. Within the healthcare program Oxfam tries to improve access to basic health services for vulnerable groups. The program is implemented by the Welfare Foundation, the Grassroots Support Centre and the Georgian Bio-Ethics Society. Additionally, Oxfam helps IDPs through small business activities. To stimulate small and medium business development loans, information on writing business plans and other skills are provided. The "Small Business Development Foundation" (SBDF) offers small loans at low interest rates. Interesting is, that one condition of the loan is that the entrepreneur has to hire a vulnerable person. In this way more people can benefit from one loan. A nice example is the hazelnut processing company, where many women are employed.

To prevent the risk that loans to poor people are not returned, Oxfam developed a strategy of small loans. Furthermore, the organization is carefully following and monitoring the business activities of its clients. Oxfam's partner organization, the "Civil Society institute", guides clients in preparing professional business plans and supporting each step they make.

Moreover, Oxfam is also active in disaster preparedness. After the flooding in the Kuhlo district Oxfam set up a humanitarian program to respond to natural disasters. The water systems in this district were fully rehabilitated to guarantee clean water for the population. Part of this program contains giving information to local communities to provide safe potable water in the future. Communities have been trained about prevention activities in emergency situations and natural disasters.

Another concern of Oxfam is the position of women in Georgian society and women's rights. Although domestic violence is a taboo issue in Georgia, the NGO has started a program to provide practical support for women who have become victims of domestic violence. Oxfam's partner organization "Sakhli" (House) is running a women's refuge centre in Tbilisi, where women can get counseling as well as psychological and

legal advice. Currently, the centre provides services to 700 women. Helped by these activities, the “Law on Domestic Violence and Protection and Assistance for the Victims of Domestic Violence” has been discussed and passed by the parliament.

In the Community and Budget Monitoring Project Oxfam supports the participation of Civil Society organizations in the formation of budgets and monitoring the expenditure. It is an example how local communities can be involved in the allocation and use of resources by the government and local resources. In a joint coalition of more than 50 organizations the population and the government are mobilized to attack poverty and to meet the millennium goals. This joint effort is needed because 40% - 50% of the population lives below the poverty line. This coalition is member of the international alliance the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP).

The coalition helps to raise awareness within the population and the governments. The coalition stresses the government’s responsibility to overcome poverty. Therefore, it organizes mobilization days like the World Poverty Day and the World Child Day where health and employment are the targets.

Summarizing, we can say that Oxfam is an important organization in the efforts to overcome poverty. The organization supports vulnerable groups and not only IDPs in Georgia. Oxfam’s programs are implemented by local organizations in concrete activities that are supporting the most vulnerable groups of society. By embedding the small business loans in support and monitoring activities, Oxfam’s projects appear to be successful. Empowerment, participation and awareness of vulnerable groups are key issues in the strategy of Oxfam.

### **5.2.3 Main Findings – Economic Security**

We may conclude that both visits on economic security were very interesting. Although both organizations, The European Commission Delegation and Oxfam, are very different, both gave us relevant information on economic security in Georgia.

The European Commission’s Delegation was very open in their assessment of the changes in Georgia. The members of the delegation were in general very optimistic about the political and economic chances in Georgia. They took the view that the situation in the country is improving. However, the delegation was also critical to some aspects of the government’s policy. In particular, the delegation was critical on the health care reform, the status of the penitentiary system and the rash

privatization. In our evaluation of the visits, some students argued that our discussion with the Delegation was focused rather on the political than the economic role of the European Commission's Delegation. We were all pleased by the welcome speech of the ambassador Per Eklund and were impressed that all of the attending members of the Delegation were interested in an open discussion with us.

The NGO Oxfam made a deep impression on us. The staff members gave an interesting overview of Oxfam's work and the projects that Oxfam is supporting in Georgia. Oxfam serves as a good example on how vulnerable populations can be supported with concrete activities on the ground. The empowerment of vulnerable groups can be strengthened by advice, advocacy work, and economic support through micro-credits. Oxfam supports women and is also dealing with issues that are taboo in the Georgian society, as for example domestic violence.

## **5.3 Health Security**

*a contribution by Alexandre Diquas and Natthinee Rodraks*

Within the field of health security we decided to focus on the issue of HIV/AIDS. Although HIV prevalence is currently low in Georgia, the country bears a high risk potential for the spread of HIV/AIDS. Increasing drug use among young people and relatively low level of information and awareness are particularly alarming.

### **5.3.1 Background**

Currently, the health system in Georgia is being reformed. The reform process already started in the 1990s. In 1995, in response to the economic crisis, the Georgian Government proposed a health sector reform and introduced a new model for health care financing, combining tax subsidies, out-of-pocket payments and mandatory health insurance.

Broader structural changes were also initiated, but these reforms were often incompletely implemented. Decentralization of key functions and responsibilities was not accompanied by adequate fiscal decentralization. Making health facilities autonomous without appropriate alternative governance structures weakened accountability of providers to both the government and the public. Separating outpatient from inpatient facilities, without new systems for referral, impaired the links between different levels of care.

Bold reforms in the health sector within the context of economic hardships and a transforming government's role in an emerging market, have not, as a consequence, led to desired results. The response by the Georgian government to the current situation is limited by the financial resources. It is necessary, therefore, to combine actions that directly finance and provide services and to take measures to develop an enabling environment that encourages both public and private providers to deliver effective medical care and enables individuals to access the services most appropriate to their health and social circumstances.

## **Core Health Indicators**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), life expectancy at birth is 70.0 years for males and 77.0 years for females. Health life expectancy (HALE) at birth is 62.2 years for males and 66.6 years for females. In 2005, infant mortality rate was 41.1 per 1,000 live births. The probability of dying under five is 45 per 1,000 live births.

The population of Georgia is 4,474,000. The total expenditure on health as percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) is 5.3% in 2004. The HIV prevalence rate for adults aged 15 to 49 is 0.2% (0.1%-2.7%).

## **HIV/AIDS in Georgia**

According to UNESCO, Georgia can be classified as a "low level" HIV/AIDS epidemic country. The main means of HIV transmission in Georgia is through intravenous drug use. Though HIV infection rates are on the rise, the United National AIDS program (UNAIDS) and Georgia's own program have taken many steps to reduce HIV infection.

Georgia is a recipient of Global Fund grants from UNAIDS. Under the Global Fund projects, the government of Georgia has already achieved remarkable progress. A legislative framework for harm-reduction programs is in place. HIV/AIDS information, education, voluntary counseling and testing services for youth and high risk groups have been expanded throughout the country. The prevention of mother-to-child transmission has been scaled up nationwide. Moreover, 100% accessibility to care and treatment have been ensured.

Currently, there are approximately 3,000 reported cases of HIV in Georgia, and a reported death rate of less than 200 per year. Approximately 70% of the reported cases are due to intravenous drug use.

Georgia's health care system is still heavily dependent on foreign aid. Years of underfunding and corruption have hampered its fight against the



disease. Georgia faces constant shortages in material and pharmaceuticals and physician training is substandard.

However, the government has taken steps to reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS. Georgia was one of the first former Soviet Republics to develop a national program in 1994 followed by a strategic action plan for 2003-2007. The action plan has seven priority areas:

- Advocacy for the development of an adequate legislative basis for implementation of effective prevention interventions among people likely to be exposed to HIV
- HIV prevention among injecting drug users, including users in the penitentiary system
- HIV and sexually transmitted infection prevention among sex workers, men who have sex with men, and their partners
- HIV prevention among young people
- Safety of blood and blood products
- Prevention of mother-to-child transmission
- Care, support and treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS

HIV and AIDS activities in Georgia are coordinated by the Governmental Commission on HIV/AIDS, STIs and other Socially Dangerous Infections. This commission, created in 1996, is now functioning as the Country Coordinating Mechanism with government, civil society and UN participation.

### **5.3.2 Organizations in Focus**

During our field trip to Georgia, we visited two Georgian NGOs that are dealing with HIV/AIDS prevention in Georgia: Tanadgoma Center and the Georgian Federation of Children.

#### **Tanadgoma Center**

We were able to visit the NGO “Tanadgoma Center”, which has much experience in HIV/AIDS prevention and care. At the organization we had an extensive discussion with its executive director, Nino Khetaguri, and his staff members. Moreover, Mikheil Dolidze, HIV/Aids Technical Consultant to the Country Coordinated Mechanism (CCM), joined our discussion.

Tanadgoma Center is a Georgian organization that has been working since the year 2000. The main objective of Tanadgoma Center is improving the physical and mental health of the Georgian population. The NGO has substantial experience in working with the issues of

reproductive health, reproductive rights, gender and patient's rights. The main goal is to improve the physical and mental health in the Georgian population.

The main areas of activity are:

- The provision of medical and psychological counseling on different health care problems, including reproductive health problems,
- Promoting human rights, patient rights, reproductive rights and gender issues,
- Identifying high-risk groups and other unprotected groups.

## **Georgian Federation of Children**

The Georgian Federation of Children (GFC) was established in June 1991 as a governmental organization for improving the state policy of children and youth affairs in line with the children's rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The organization aims to assist with the upbringing of a physically and mentally healthy and harmonized future generation and supporting children and youth of Georgia with problem identification and solving, and education. The federation organizes leisure time activities for children and youth. Furthermore, the organization is involved in the development and implementation of state educational programs. The Georgian Federation of Children aims to support socially vulnerable children (in particular, children from low income families) and realizes intellectual-creative, cognitive, recreational, psycho-social rehabilitation programs for children and youth, including children and adolescents from crisis regions (Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

At the Georgian Federation of Children we had a meeting with the deputy director Shota Makrakilidze and three young volunteers who are involved in the programs of the organization. Mr. Makrakilidze gave us an interesting overview on the activities of the organization and explained to us how HIV/AIDS prevention is included in GFC's general activities through peer-to-peer information and counseling. Peer-to-peer education contains the basic information on HIV/AIDS, its ways of transmission and the risks of drug use. The information is provided by peers and discussed within a group of young people. Apart from HIV/AIDS related issues, healthy lifestyles in general are discussed within peer groups as well. The three volunteers of the Georgian Federation of Children told us about their personal experience as peer-to-peer educators. They emphasized that peer-to-peer education is working very well in the Georgian context. In addition, information material, including posters and

leaflets, were shown as an example of what is used for campaigns in schools and in summer camps.

### **5.3.3 Main Findings – Health Security**

The two Georgian NGOs together form a fascinating comparison, as they approach the issue of HIV/AIDS prevention from a very different perspective.

From Tanadgoma Center we learnt that 70% of its clients are men, because women tend to avoid seeking counseling service. We also learnt that HIV prevalence is higher in Western Georgia, particularly in the region of Adjara, bordering Turkey. HIV prevalence in the region of Abkhazia is difficult to estimate because of the conflict situation.

According to Tanadgoma, injecting drug users (IDUs) are most vulnerable for HIV infection, because HIV is transmitted very easily through shared needles. Drug use is increasing among young people. Drugs in Georgia are usually more expensive than in neighboring countries such as the Ukraine. Sex partners of IDUs are also at risk of contracting HIV through sex. Georgia is considered a country with low HIV prevalence. Most HIV efforts of the Georgian government are targeted at prevention.

Tanadgoma Center is facing some constraints in its work and HIV/AIDS campaigning due to donor policies. USAID, for instance, does not allow the organizations to engage in advocacy work for female sex workers and is also reluctant in the promotion of condom use. In its approach to HIV/AIDS prevention, USAID focuses on the approach of abstinence and faithfulness (A and B), but not condom use (C).

The Georgian Federation of Children is a state-owned and funded organization. It started working on HIV/AIDS in 2004. The activities of GFC are focused on HIV/AIDS prevention among youth. The major program is peer-education. This means that the organization provides training for young peer-to-peer trainers on HIV, who are then working with their peers and friends by spreading information about HIV/AIDS prevention.

The organization produces a lot of materials on HIV/AIDS prevention, as for instance posters, leaflets and short film, which are shown at different occasions. The activities of the organization are supported by famous Georgians, who are helping in the campaigns against HIV/AIDS. Moreover, the NGO has its own radio program with information on reproductive health issues that are relevant for young people.

According to the volunteers of GFC, whom we discussed with, most young people in Georgia know about HIV/AIDS. However, most of the young people do not have sufficient knowledge about transmission and risk behavior. Due to the cultural tradition, the Georgian Federation of Children does not explicitly promote condom use. In its communication materials, condoms are referred to as 'protection tool'. Its communication materials that are used for awareness raising activities are also translated into minority languages, including Russian.

## 5.4 Food Security

*a contribution by Sarah Potvin and Margot Steenbergen*

Within the field of food security, the topic of relief food aid was chosen. One of the most relevant organization in this field can be considered the World Food Programme (WFP). At the Georgian branch of the WFP in Tbilisi, we had a meeting with three staff members of the WFP in Georgia – Khatuna Epremidze, Valery Zabalhidze and Yulon Tsilosani – who gave us a very interesting overview on WFP's activities in Georgia. In addition WFP Georgia was also willing to take us to a number of their project sites in Tbilisi and in Kakheti. This excursion helped us to get a deeper insight in the work of the organization.

### 5.4.1 Background

Georgia can be described as a low income food deficit country. Out of a population of 4.4 million people, an average of 39% lives below the official poverty line. Food insecurity in Georgia manifests itself in problems of food access and purchasing power and is closely linked to poverty and unemployment. Approximately one third of the Georgian population does not consume an adequate dietary energy intake. Nevertheless, the situation has come a long way since the Rose Revolution in 2003. According to official reports, poverty levels for example have since then decreased from 55% to a current 39%.

The World Food Programme in Georgia is working with the following definition of *food security*: “a situation in which all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” (World Food Summit, 1996)

According to the WFP, the level of success of attaining food security depends on the three pillars of: availability, access and utilization, which can be described as follows:

- Food *availability* (supplies, markets) refers to the amount of food that is physically present in the areas of the country through domestic production, commercial imports, food aid and national stocks.
- Household *access* (own production, market transactions, and other transfers) is a measure of the population's ability to acquire available food for the given consumption period through: its own stock, home production, market transactions, and other forms of transfers.
- Food *utilization* (use, consumption, nutrition) is defined as the capacity to make use of food in order to absorb nutrients. Food utilization depends on storage and preparation facilities, preparation knowledge and skills, health and hygiene status, cultural acceptance and taboos.

## 5.4.2 Organizations in Focus

### World Food Programme

The World Food Programme (WFP) has been providing humanitarian assistance in Georgia since 1993. With a wide array of activities, this organization manages to feed some 200,000 people, including 4,000 Chechen refugees.

#### *Strategies*

Since 1993, Georgia has been in a state of protracted crisis. For the first six years of its operations, WFP focused its attention on emergency operations (EMOPs), mainly targeting the IDP population. Other activities in this period concerned the Caucasus Logistics Advisory Unit (CLAU) and special operations (SO), such as aircraft support to regions. Since 1999, the focus of WFP has shifted towards protracted relief and recovery operations (PRRO). Apart from other vulnerable groups, WFP is also providing food aid to Chechen refugees in Georgia.

#### *WFP's activities 2003-2006*

During the period of 2003 to 2006, WFP has provided relief food assistance to most vulnerable population, including Chechen refugees and disaster affected people. The organization has rehabilitated and created agricultural and other assets through Food-for-Work activities in the poorest regions of the country. WFP has supported the de-institutionalization of children that had been living in children's homes.

Moreover, WFP has improved the concentration and learning capacity among primary school children. Next to this, WFP has improved the health status and nutritional support among TB patients.

During this period, 410,000 beneficiaries all over the country were provided with 41,000 tons of food through various project components. This breaks down in the following numbers: 63,800 households participated in FFW projects; FFW management committees formed in 400 communities and continue activity implementation; 90% of rehabilitated assets were further maintained by the communities and used in their agricultural activities; food production increased in 70% of the communities.

#### *WFP's activities 2007-2008*

For the period of 2007 to 2008 WFP in Georgia has set the following objectives:

- Improved food production and security among subsistence farmers in rural poor communities through rehabilitation of agricultural assets and preventive measures against disasters; this includes increased ability to manage shocks;
- Support to the de-institutionalization of children as well as improved concentration and learning capacity among primary school children;
- Improved health status and nutritional support to tuberculosis patients and people living with HIV/AIDS;
- Coverage of critical food needs among Chechen refugees and other most destitute persons;
- Promotion of ownership and build-on capacities among government counterparts on food security issues to facilitate conditions for a WFP's phase-out by the end of 2008.

As mentioned before, WFP is currently focusing on relief and recovery operations mainly, which consist of relief activities, institutional assistance (9,000 beneficiaries), refugee assistance (1,800 Chechen Refugees), contingency relief (12,000 disaster-affected people), recovery activities, food-for-work programs (36,200 participating households), food-for-education programs (26,800 children), and TB & HIV/AIDS control (3,800 beneficiaries).

As food-for-work programs (FFW) have received some scrutiny in the past we were particularly interested in the relationship between providing food on the one hand in this system and not distorting the market on the other hand. The explanation that followed cleared much of our initial criticism. Beneficiaries in WFP's FFW programs all worked on their own assets (such as land, irrigation channels, etc.). Since the fall of the Soviet

Union, land has been privatized. This resulted in enormous under-exploitation. FFW is designed as an incentive for people to work their own land and as such encourage rehabilitation. 80% of the overall WFP budget (US\$ 13.23 million for 2007-2008) is designated for the FFW scheme. The set-up was for the community to design a three-year plan, geared towards long-term food security. Regarding market distortion, WFP explained that in many areas there was no existing functioning market – and that the schemes are in fact set-up to increase food-production and as such help create markets. Whether communities prefer cash for work or food for work depends largely on their access to markets. If markets are very close, people logically prefer cash. However, in remote areas, where food transport is difficult, FFW is the preferred strategy.

### *Exit Strategy*

WFP plans to retreat from Georgia at the end of 2008. WFP's exit strategy can be accomplished through:

- Close collaboration with the government at all levels to promote national and local strategies and policies on food security;
- Capacity building initiatives for regional and district level authorities;
- Enhanced partnership with NGOs and civil society to strengthen their capacity and explore possibilities for continuation into development oriented programs;
- Implementation of innovative Food-for-Work/Cash-for-Work activities in support of the exit;
- Advocacy and partnership with donor community to facilitate the process of responsible exit;
- Effective collaboration with UN agencies through joint programs and activities within the framework of UNDAF and MDGs.

### *Needs assessment*

WFP carries out extensive vulnerability assessment and mapping analyses (VAM) in Georgia. These analyses are aimed to improve the targeting of food assistance in geographic and beneficiary terms. Moreover, the analyses are used for the evaluation of vulnerability and for food security monitoring.

For measuring vulnerability in Georgia, WFP uses a high number of indicators that show the vulnerability of a community. Those indicators include among others soil quality, livestock numbers, private land per household, percentage of inactive population, vulnerable groups, percentage of IDPs within the community, number of households with no

cattle, percentage of households getting water through pipes, estimated losses incurred by different natural disasters.

### **Excursion to the project sites of WFP in Georgia**

With regard to humanitarian activities, the real humanitarian action takes place in the field. Therefore some of the staff members of the WFP offered us to show several of their local projects and to introduce various local project managers.

The first project we visited is part of their Food-for-Work (FFW) activities. Recovery Food-for-Work activities constitute the biggest part of WFP's protracted relief and recovery operations in Georgia. Activities aim at rehabilitating basic agricultural infrastructure, such as irrigation and drainage channels, arable and pasture land, tea and citrus plantations, with the view to improve land cultivation and increase local food production and income for participant families.

The FFW project in the villages Badiauri and Kandaure, Agarejo District, Kakheti, aims at rehabilitating 12 kilometers of irrigation channel. The restored channel will improve the quality of 500 hectares of vineyards and arable land. As a result, the harvest increase is envisaged by 30% on average.

The second project, the CARITAS soup kitchen, belongs to the WFP's Institutional Feeding Component. The institutional feeding is a part of WFP's relief component under its current Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO). Through this component, WFP provides vital food assistance to 9,000 persons from the most vulnerable groups with limited or no potential for self-reliance: the elderly people, invalids, large families and destitute children.

Located in Tbilisi, the soup kitchen is run by an international NGO CARITAS. The NGO covers administrative expenses and a part of the food requirements. WFP provides basic food commodities including wheat flour, vegetable oil and beans. Hot meals are provided five days a week to 280 beneficiaries. The majority of beneficiaries are lonely elderly people with no family support and no income other than an inadequate state pension (US\$22 per month).

Another institution that benefits from the feeding component of the WFP is the St. Michael's School, a center for children with mental and physical disabilities in Tbilisi. The institution is run by the Ministry of Education. Despite of the fact that it is one of the enlightening examples of how to achieve social adaptation of children with mental and physical disabilities, for the feeding aspect the institution still heavily relies on its



donors. Budgetary allocation coming from the Ministry covers only administrative costs providing no means for in-school feeding.

The last project we visited, the WFP's TB Project, aims not only at the recovery of tuberculosis (TB) patients, but also at preventing others from getting TB and preventing the emergence of multi-drug resistant forms of TB. Tuberculosis is a disease strongly linked to poverty, which may impede access to adequate health care by deprived patients, thus leading to the emergence of multi-drug resistant forms. By providing food to the patients on a regular basis, WFP tries to tackle this problem. Upon visits to the doctor (bi-weekly), each patient receives a food parcel, consisting of five kilos of wheat flour, one kilo of sugar and half a liter of vegetable oil. Food for TB patients serves therefore not only as a nutritional supplement, but also as an incentive for poor patients to follow a course of the Directly Observed Treatment Strategy (DOTS).

### **5.4.3 Main Findings – Food Security**

Our visit to WFP was perhaps one of the most organized visits of the Georgia Study Trip. Before our visit, we had been sent an extensive agenda, including many Q & A sessions, on what in their words would be the most valuable for a group of students. This attitude of thinking along with the 'beneficiaries' was equally reflected in the work of WFP.

Some of our initial cynicism, regarding e.g. FFW schemes, was countered by WFP's explanations. Rather than distorting market mechanisms, this scheme instead seems to generate income (in the long run) for many poverty struck families. Better understanding of this was certainly facilitated by the opportunity to see some of their FFW programs, such as irrigation channels in the Kakheti region. Arriving at points where tourists would not ordinarily venture, we witnessed how many (mainly old Georgians) were digging their irrigation channels, which would provide water for their own fields and as such enhance their future yield.

The WFP visit was a fruitful experience and we learned a great deal about the practical application of attaining food security – along with certain pitfalls and successes.

## 5.5 Social Security

*a contribution by Aurélie Fabry and Pilar López-Dafonte Suanzes*

Within the field of social security we have focused on the topic of social change in Georgian society. Particularly of interest were the position of women in Georgia and the situation of ethnic minorities.

During our field trip we visited three organizations that are dealing with social change: the Caucasus Women's Research and Consulting Network, the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) as well as the Georgian NGO "Public Movement Multinational Georgia" (PMMG) and the related "Multiethnic Resource Center".

### 5.5.1 Background

Social security in a humanitarian context primarily refers to a field of social welfare services concerned with social protection, or protection concerning socially recognized conditions, including poverty, old age, disability, unemployment, families with children or others.

### 5.5.2 Organizations in Focus

#### ECMI

The European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) was founded in 1996 by the governments of Denmark, Germany and Schleswig-Holstein. It is a non-partisan and interdisciplinary institution which can draw upon an international core staff of the highest caliber, supplemented by a number of Visiting Fellows and Visiting Research Associates from all over Europe and beyond.

The Centre also maintains active relations with other institutions involved in conflict resolution and interethnic relations and engages in collaborative projects with them. While its core funding is provided by its governmental sponsors, the Centre actively pursues project-based funding to support its rapidly expanding activities. ECMI is governed by a board of nine members: three from Denmark, three from Germany, and one representative each from the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union.

ECMI conducts practice-oriented research, provides information and documentation, and offers advisory services concerning minority-majority relations in Europe. It serves European governments and

regional intergovernmental organizations as well as non-dominant groups in the European area. The Centre also supports the academic community, the media and the general public through the timely provision of information and analysis. The early monitoring, study and resolution of ethnic tension and potential conflict in all regions of Europe - East and West - provides one of the major focal points for the activities of the Centre.

In Georgia, the ECMI has a complex program, aimed at enhancing the integration of two regions with large concentrations of ethnic minorities: the predominantly Armenian region of Javakheti in the south of the country (constituting the eastern part of the Samtskhe-Javakheti Province) and the Azeri dominated but multiethnic Kvemo Kartli region in the southeast. By establishing a network of civil society actors, including representatives of major ethno-religious groups and government officials, ECMI's "Defusing inter-ethnic tension and promoting regional integration" project seeks to improve inter-ethnic cooperation, broaden the process of decision-making and increase public participation in local governance. The project promotes integration of the regions by involving region and state level policy-makers in the network, thereby creating firmer links between regional actors and central authorities. Through capacity building, training and community mobilization efforts the project will also enhance capacities in less advanced communities, for broad participation in the consultative process.

Since July 2004 the ECMI has conducted a comprehensive research project "Between Integration and Resettlement: The Meskhetians". Subjected to forceful deportation in 1944, the majority of Meskhetians, due to a number of reasons did not have a possibility to return to their homeland in the south-west of Georgia. A comprehensive comparative research conducted within the framework of the project will cover Meskhetian communities in nine countries of their settlement and provide a better view of their culture, traditions and daily life. The project intends to study the Meskhetians' concept of homeland and the impact that such concept has on their wish to stay in the host countries or return to Georgia. The project also facilitates series of seminars and consultations with the participation of local and international experts. The project will be completed by March 2006 and result in an authoritative volume on the subject to be published in late 2006.

## **CWN**

The Caucasus Women's Research and Consulting Network (CWN) was founded in August of 1997 by the International Center on Conflict and

Negotiation (ICCN) and is functioning with organizational support from ICCN. The objective of the network is to carry out research on gender inequalities issues and women's rights. The network supports women's movements and gender studies in Georgia, and especially to provide an alternative to some existing government aligned structures that do not reflect post-Soviet realities and democratic thinking and outlooks. Via their activities the beneficiaries are vulnerable women's groups and citizens of Georgia, while trying to help raising people's awareness towards equality and civil society building.

Since 1998, the organization has been involved in the development of a project proposal sponsored by UNIFEM. This project includes NGOs from three South-Caucasus countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The project title is "Women and Conflict - Women's Role in Conflict Management and Prevention".

Apart from this, CWN conducted a mass/media campaign in order to raise some very tabooed and hidden problems in society affecting women such as by means of publications in newspapers about abortions, trafficking, violence and minority women.

Nina Tsihistavi, the founder of CWN, explained during the visit that CWN plans to organize a country wide Women's Rights Watch (WRW), in order to promote women's rights, to easily provide assistance to women in the regions, to spread educational/consulting information in the regions of Georgia, to create the local Women's Forums in the regions, and to create a database on violence, discrimination and trafficking in women in Georgia. Furthermore, CWN plans to use the mass media for announcing news on real conditions and some hot problems regarding information from WRW, to lobby for legislation on gender equality in decision-making structures, in parliament and to influence parliament in order to create laws against trafficking in women and against discrimination towards women.

## **PMMG**

The Georgian NGO "Public Movement Multinational Georgia" (PMMG) is a Georgian non-governmental umbrella organization that includes representatives of 56 nongovernmental organizations of ethnic communities in Georgia. There are more than 12,000 individual members in the PMMG and all of them are volunteers.

The focal point of the PMMG is the equal participation of ethnic minorities in terms of equal rights and equal responsibility. While taking into consideration the new realities in Georgia, trends of democratization in the international community and the development of new democracies,

the new strategy of the PMMG regards equal participation as a major priority. They state that the development and stability of Georgia as a target democracy in the region, largely depends on integration of its multiethnic society, formation of civil society and making the best use of the resources created by the multiethnic society.

According to Mr. A. Stepanian, the chairman of PMMG, Georgia got independence before a real society was being build. After the revolution the government focused more on nation than state building and in doing so it forgot to include the minorities. He believes that integration is coming through protection: you can't start integration when society is not equal. Before starting to treat everyone as equal, you first need positive actions to promote the participation of minorities.

## **MERC**

An example of a positive action is the development of civic education by the Multi-Ethnic Resource Center (MERC), an organization which started its activities as a project of the PMMG and it now works as an independent organization. CORDAID is one of their main international partner-donors.

The MERC serves mainly the ethnic minority representatives living in Georgia, who have poor knowledge of the state language. The most important task of the center is to assist the formation of civil society based on equality, and the development of integration processes in Georgia. Moreover, the center plans to undertake trainings, seminars and excursions in the regions with ethnic population in order to improve contacts and communication between the center and the regions, diminish isolationist tendencies, and to motivate and activate the local population.

### **5.5.3 Main Findings – Social Security**

Reflecting on social security there is one very important question to ask: how should the government deal with minority issues? The government has chosen to support integration rather than maintaining and embracing ethnic diversity, while the ECMI, the CWN and the MERC on the contrary are stressing the importance of the protection of different groups within society.

Another interesting question to ask relates to the usage of the word ethnic. A lot of emphasis was put on explaining the needs of the ethnic minorities, while leaving the cultural and religious aspects out of the discussion. The reason for this became not quite clear. The ethnic categorization somehow gave the impression that other aspects, like

culture and religion, are not relevant to the discussion. Neglecting these aspects felt like a missed opportunity to fully understand the social problems Georgia is dealing with.

For now it seems important that the government finds the right balance between integration and protection. By perceiving the two concepts as complementary, instead of opposites of each other, a very positive step towards equal participation of minorities can hopefully be made.

## **5.6 Security in the Regions**

*a contribution by Benjamin Emuat and Rajeev Sharma*

During the field trip to Georgia, our investigations were not restricted to the capital Tbilisi. On the contrary, we were particularly interested in the regions of Georgia. The link of the regions to the center is for every transitional state a major issue. Connecting the regions to the center enhances infrastructure, economic progress, participation by access to political life and decisions.

We visited the southern region of Samtskhe-Javakheti, where we had a meeting with the local NGO “Tolerance”, with correspondents of the joint project of the OSCE and our partner organization, the CIPDD, and with Lela Inasaridze, the editor-in-chief of Georgia’s only bilingual newspaper “Southern Gates”.

### **5.6.1 Background**

Within our investigation of comprehensive security in Georgia, the process of political, economic and societal transition was of essential importance. As a part of this exercise, we had the opportunity to have an insight into the situation of ethnic minorities in Georgia. The excursion to Samtskhe-Javakheti provided the opportunity to learn more about the working relations between the Georgian and the Armenian population in this region.

Samtskhe-Javakheti is a border region in the southern part of Georgia. The problems of the region include its isolated position within the country, the poor state of the infrastructure and the high level of unemployment.

On 19 May 2007, we had the opportunity to visit the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti where majority of the Armenian ethnic minority population lives. They are mainly concentrated in the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda

districts of Samtskhe-Javakheti, where respectively they make up 94.3% and 95.8% of the population.

## **5.6.2 Organizations in Focus**

### **OSCE Project**

The meeting started with a short introduction on the subject by the project coordinator Ms Marina Elbakidze. She covered the main issues including the education of minorities, minority rights, and provision of services and creation of conditions for the integration of ethnic minority groups into Georgian society.

In the three years since the famous Rose Revolution, the conditions for minorities in Samtskhe-Javakheti have been improving in some respects, but overall their situation remains grim as the main issue of ethnic minority is still unresolved with the Armenians feeling sidelined in terms of language, state benefits and political representation. On the positive side, the Georgian government through its education reform program is trying to take into consideration the needs of the Armenians by undertaking a positive discrimination policy. For instance, all Armenians students have opportunity to learn Georgian language at school without paying any fees.

### **Local NGO “Tolerance”**

The meeting with the correspondents took place in the office of the association “Toleranti” (Tolerance). This local NGO works on civic education with regard to ethnic minorities in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti. The aim of the organization is to build up a tolerant multi-ethnic society.

We talked to Tsira Meskhishvili, director of the organization, who is an historian by education and has studied the history of the region and worked for the historical museum of Akhaltsikhe. We also had the chance to visit the museum, which is in the ancient fortress of the city of Akhaltsikhe.

Tsira Meskhishvili also told us about the effort of the organization on integrating Meskhetian repatriates. The aim of the project is to try to integrate the repatriates living in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Imereti (the south and western part of Georgia) into the society of today, as well as to defend their rights and customs, native language and history.

In 1944, people were deported from Meskheti in the south of Georgia to various regions, including Turkey. A group of them started returning to Georgia in the period of 1982-1995. Today, Meskhi people live in a small village of Samtredia region, called the ninth section of the Ianeti community. Together with help from the “Georgian Board of Trustees”, the Association “Tolerant” worked out a joint project called “Social Integration of Meskhetian Repatriates” in April 2005. This was financed by the European Union. Additionally, the European Commission has funded a micro-project that would help to establish a “Social Integration Center for the Meskhi Repatriates”. The project in general includes trainings on civil education, education reform, conflict control, gender issues and other topics, as well as the publication of a monthly newspaper and information booklet.

### **Newspaper “Southern Gates”**

The newspaper “Southern Gates” is Georgia’s only bilingual Georgian/Armenian newspaper. It is the leading independent media publication in the Georgian region of Samtskhe-Javakheti, which has a mixed Georgian-Armenian population.

Although this region has 210,000-250,000 inhabitants, there is little economic activity. “Southern Gates” was established in June 2004 by the Tbilisi office of the Institute on War and Peace Reporting and local journalists from the Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe districts. The newspaper is currently supported by the Dutch organization “Press Now”, which is providing financial support to ensure its uninterrupted printing and distribution.

### **5.6.3 Main Findings – Security in the Regions**

Our visit to Akhaltsikhe made clear that there is still a big difference between the center and the regions in Georgia. The overall development situation in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti is much worse than the situation in the capital Tbilisi. There is a double disadvantage as a consequence of the minimum access of decentral entities to the political center, and the minorities’ disadvantage at participating in political and social life.

The problem of integration of the Armenian population was a point of lively discussion during our visit. The correspondents of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities’ project on early warning and ethnic monitoring told us about the situation. The OSCE observers said



they would like their communities to have more impact on political processes and have a voice.

The bilingual newspaper of the NGO “Southern Gate” is the only newspaper which reaches both of the ethnic communities in the region. The NGO “Tolerance” is the only organization in the region who addresses the problem of the integration of Meskhetian repatriates.

## 5.7 Environmental Security

*a contribution by Angella Alfafara and Amandine Alglave*

### 5.7.1 Background

Today, social, political and economic transformations are altering century-old relationships between countries and communities, affecting and being affected by the natural environment. In the worst case, environmental stress and change could undermine security in the region. In the best, sound environmental management and cooperation can be a means for strengthening security in the South Caucasus, while promoting sustainable development.

The interaction between environment and other human security pressures is complex. Research suggests that the degradation, depletion or mismanagement of natural resources linked to demographic change can have a negative impact on local and international stability by:

- Reinforcing and increasing grievances in and between societies. Groups may compete for resources, creating opportunities for violence to emerge.
- Weakening states by depressing economic productivity, or by undermining the legitimacy of the state in the eye of the citizens.

Environmental cooperation can also be a basis for international peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, it should be noted that Georgia still possesses exceptional environmental resources. Prof.Dr. Michael Succow of the World Wide Fund for Nature formulated this as follows: “Not a single country in

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<sup>11</sup>“Environment and Security – Transforming risks into cooperation – The case of the Southern Caucasus”, UNEP, <[http://www.envsec.org/southcauc/pub/envsec\\_transforming\\_risk\\_enb.pdf](http://www.envsec.org/southcauc/pub/envsec_transforming_risk_enb.pdf)> (2004).

Europe possesses such rich flora and fauna as Georgia. No European country offers such diverse relief in such a small area. Nowhere in Europe is landscape preserved in such an original state as Georgia."

## **5.7.2 Organizations in Focus**

### **Borjomi- Kharagauli National Park**

In 1995, the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park was created with the support of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the German government. It was officially inaugurated in 2001 with the aim of preserving the diversity of wild nature areas, especially its virginal mountain forests.

The Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park is one of the largest in Europe and is located in central Georgia. It covers more than 76,000 hectares (nearly 1% of the territory of Georgia) of native forests and sub-alpine and alpine meadows, and it is home to rare species of flora and fauna.

The discussion centered on the three main components of the park:

- The support zone development program for the rehabilitation of this zone.
- Training and communication as part of environmental program education.
- Tourism.

The main purpose of the park, as a state natural reserve, is to protect the environment and the wildlife present in this area. For instance, at the beginning, there were 45 species in the park. Now, there are about 150. Protection is necessary because of the pollution problem in Georgia but also, because of the civilian exploitation of the wood. Indeed, waste collection in Georgia is problematic and even in the park, people leave their waste everywhere. In addition, water and air pollution are recognized as threats for the conservation of the park.

There are nine neighboring villages very close to the park. Since it is a poor area where people don't have access to electricity and gas, there is no alternative for them then to cut firewood in the forest. To channel firewood collection somewhat, one zone is kept for this purpose. To some extent, the local population is also included in the project as we will see below.

The education program is another important aspect of the project in order to promote the nature protection. The main target is schools. A handbook has been developed for the teachers and the park organizes visits for



Figure 1: BTC Pipeline

(source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Btc\\_pipeline\\_route.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Btc_pipeline_route.png))

children. Through interactive games and visits to the park, 2,500 children were reached by the program.

The Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park is the only park in Georgia that has possibilities for tourism.<sup>12</sup> From 2003 to 2005, the number of visiting tourists has increased to 2,519 tourists. The infrastructure consists out of four tourist shelters and nine tourist routes in the park where hiking with a guide is possible. According to the guide, hiking is mostly popular among foreign tourists, since Georgians generally don't go in the park for hiking in the mountains.

The park tries to involve the local population in the project. Indeed, there is a high level of unemployment and local people found jobs as a result of the park and related tourism, e.g. as rangers and freelance guards. Since there is only a demarcation for the limit of the park but no barriers, there are ten entrances with guards plus always 65 guards inside the park paid by the state. There are also guest houses for tourists in the park.

The tourism aspect is also important for the financing. Indeed, they receive financing from the state and from German funds but every year the budget from the park needs to increase. Therefore, the financing of the park is seen as the main threat.

The BTC (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) pipeline caused a vivid debate. Indeed, the project of the consortium headed by BP (British Petroleum) was presented to the population as a possibility of economic development and doing so, it encountered the support of most of the Georgians. Nevertheless, a controversial issue is the pipeline's route through the Borjomi region in western Georgia. This route is controversial for

<sup>12</sup> There are five natural parks in Georgia: Kolcheti, Tusheti, Lagodechi, Vashlovani and Borjomi-Kharagauli. One is developing tourism infrastructure but it is not opened yet.

environmental, social, and economic reasons. Indeed, the pipeline passes through the buffer zone of the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park and through the park's managed reserve. According to Georgian environmental laws, industrial activities are not allowed in managed reserves and buffer zones. Moreover, pipeline threatens the ecology of the Borjomi park system. According to Georgian scientists and ecological organizations such as WWF, the area crossed by the pipeline is of high conservation value, and is likely to be part of the migration routes for large mammals. Another point is that the pipeline would cross the Borjomula River. Any pollution or spill from the pipeline would pollute the Borjomula, which in turn would flow to the town of Borjomi and pollute drinking water sources and shallow mineral water springs.

In contrast to this information, the staff of the park answered to the question concerning the pipeline routes that the pipeline is quite far from the national park and that its risks are therefore negligible for the park itself. We will see that is not the same position that we encountered during the meeting with CENN in the afternoon.

### **Caucasus Environmental NGO Network**

The Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization. It was established in 1998. Through its various projects, CENN tries to foster regional cooperation by means of improved communication among environmental organizations of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (and partly Russia and Turkey). It is a structure aimed at supporting positive, productive communication and cooperation on environmental protection projects and issues.

The aims of CENN are capacity building of environmental NGOs in the region, the facilitation and promotion of joint activities in the Caucasus, the improvement of the effectiveness of solutions of environmental problems, the establishment and maintenance of an easily accessible environmental information space, and the coordination of efforts in the development of compatible environmental strategies and policies in the Caucasus countries.

CENN works in five directions:

- Reinforcing civil society.
- Research and policy works.
- Sustainable management of the resources.
- Business and civil society.
- Communication concerning the environment.

The work of CENN concerns the Caucasus as an ecological region and this is why it is active in three countries. Indeed, even if the problems of each country are different (In Armenia for instance, the main problem concerns the salinization of soil), they are interconnected. The priorities in the Caucasus are the pollution of the rivers that crosses borders, the land degradation (caused by e.g. deforestation, unsustainable agriculture and the use of illegal pesticide as DDT) and also the erosion process as a result of deforestation. Deforestation is an important phenomenon as Georgia is covered for 40% by forest. In addition, soil degradation is important as agriculture constitutes 70% of Georgian GDP. Another problematic consequence of this is the decrease in biodiversity. Furthermore, pollution creates ecological migrants.

CENN is also active in lobbying the government and it has been engaged in the protests against the pipeline's route. CENN is still critical regarding the new route as it threatens the ecological potential of the Borjomi region and as it is not following the law. However, the people that see the pipeline as an important source for economic resources do not agree with this standpoint.

Another aspect of CENN's work is education. Therefore, CENN had invited several youths to present their project. One project concerns setting up a 'green café' to frame environmental matters in a fashionable way. In addition, some youth activities involve cleaning the environment from waste. At the question if they saw a change of mind since the beginning of their activities, they answered yes. Several friends had joined them in these kinds of project.

### **5.7.3 Main Findings – Environmental Security**

Environmental protection is still a young field in Georgia. The obstacles to enhancing environmental action are the low capacities and sometimes the lacking will of governmental bodies. Foremost, a decentralized environmental management seems needed in the regions in order to protect the rich natural resources. In this respect, a transition of household fuel to gas is important for preventing further deforestation. Concerning the forests, poaching is a problem as well. Furthermore, the local authorities have problems with proper waste management. This is why water bodies such as rivers are sometimes heavily polluted.

At the same time, we could see that there are very active people involved in the process of improving environmental protection. One of their main tasks is raising awareness about environmental issues among the population and above all the youth. Another challenge is environmental

cooperation, both between state and non-state actors and on the international level between states.

## **5.8 Additional visits**

Besides the visits to humanitarian NGOs, we also had the pleasure of being received by Ms Sandra Roelofs, the First Lady of Georgia, and Onno Elderenbosch, the Dutch Ambassador to Georgia.

### **5.8.1 SOCO and Ms Sandra Roelofs**

Ms Roelofs was so kind to receive us on a Sunday afternoon. The meeting started off with a little introduction on the NOHA program, in which the First Lady showed a lot of interest. Then, the First Lady moved on and touched upon many different topics with a mixture of calmness and enthusiasm that she displayed during the whole meeting.

Regarding the SOCO foundation, she mainly elaborated on the shift in focus the organization has undergone in 2007. Traditionally, the SOCO foundation – as a local humanitarian non-governmental organization – was involved in a variety of little projects dealing amongst other with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), the elderly and children with leukemia. Although SOCO is still extending its aid to the vulnerable population of the entire territory of Georgia, since February 2007 the main scope has become reproductive health and neonatal care. According to Ms Roelofs the reason for this shift is threefold: First of all, the shift was partly caused by policy changes introduced by the new government. In order to avoid overlap and to improve the coordination with the stakeholders, she decided to shift the focus of the organization. Secondly, the declaration of the Millennium Development Goals – in particular goals three and four stressing the importance of gender equality, empowerment of women and reduction of child mortality moved her into this direction. Thirdly, being a mother herself and knowing the importance of a healthy lifestyle were also reasons to focus on reproductive health and neonatal care.

While giving an outline of the different projects, some serious societal problems were touched upon. The birth rate in Georgia is very low, 1.3. In order to have a constant population this should be at minimum 2.2. The average age that a woman gets pregnant for the first time is 33. Another alarming fact is that in the decade before the Rose Revolution (2004) approximately one million out of five million people living in Georgia

left the country, though this trend has been reversed after the Rose Revolution. Furthermore, the health infrastructure is still poor, the maternal mortality rates are high (in particular due to high risk on infection) and the changes of intoxication during pregnancy are greatly underestimated. SOCO deals with these problems by setting up free clinical diagnostic programs for women with a higher risk, offering amniocentesis, giving material assistance and multi-children families support (in case of more than four children per family) and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Subsequently, Ms Roelofs mentioned some of her initiatives that she cannot carry out under the SOCO umbrella, for instance the set up of a classical radio station, her palliative care program and her role as a good will tuberculosis ambassador for Eastern Europe.

She concluded the meeting by stating that at present Georgia is performing surprisingly well. This is not only reflected by a 10%-12% economic growth rate, but there is also a considerably rise in trust, tourism and investors, similar to a snowball effect. However, serious gaps exist, mainly victimizing the elderly and vulnerable children. According to Ms Roelofs the main problem is not poverty, but vulnerability. To overcome this problem she introduced insurance systems. By using a combination of popularization of insurances and by showing the best cases in the media, she tries to promote the new concept of effecting insurances, especially targeting on the middle income group.

As a final note she added that thanks to the economic developments after the Rose Revolution and the initiatives of the Georgian people, Georgian citizens and companies are increasingly involved in humanitarian action. The increase in local and national input can be conceived as a very positive trend as in the end they are the ones who are staying. People are more and more willing to tie themselves down to the future of Georgia, which she considers to be a very promising sign for future developments.

## **5.8.2 Residence of the Dutch Ambassador**

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Georgia, Mr. Onno Elderenbosch, invited us for a reception at his residence. The reception started with some warm words of welcome and a short overview on the bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Georgia, as well as Armenia to which this Embassy is also accredited. The ambassador stressed that the Netherlands supports the ongoing economic and political reforms of Georgia and Armenia in their transition to a market economy and pluriform democracy.

Mr. Elderenbosch is appreciated for his role as a mediator within the political arena of Georgia. By initiating meeting and dinners for members of the different political parties he tries to release existing tensions. In particular, staff of the Caucasus Institute of Peace, Democracy and Development and earlier the First Lady expressed their appreciation for his efforts during previously held meetings.

After a short introduction from our side, drinks and refreshments were served, while we spend a very pleasant afternoon at the residence's garden where the students also had a chance to talk to a Dutch intern working at the Economic Department.

## **5.9 Seminar “Media Development”**

The seminar intended to facilitate an exchange between students of the NOHA program in Groningen and students of the International Relations program at the Ilia Chavchavadze State University in Tbilisi. Students should get to know and be able to express their diverging perspectives on politics in transitional Georgia in the field of media development. Both the formal and informal interaction of the Georgian and the NOHA students were the main concerns of the seminar for bringing about this exchange of perspectives.

The topic “Media and Democracy” was chosen because the development of the media is a vital topic in political and public debate of Georgia after the Rose Revolution. In general, the media are crucial to any political process and as such, the topic was expected to provide a productive basis for the student groups' interaction.

The objectives of the seminar were:

- to have a debate with local experts from different backgrounds about media as a crucial factor of democratization and security in transition countries.
- to organize a meeting between Georgian and international students and have an exchange of opinions and perspectives;
- to further apply the concept of “Comprehensive Security” to the situation of Georgia in a practical way and give NOHA students the opportunity to achieve an in-depth understanding beyond theory;
- to provide an opportunity to students from different backgrounds to discuss the challenges of democratization, and more in particular, the situation of the media in Georgia;



- to start up an exchange / a cooperation between the NOHA program of the University of Groningen and the Ilia Chavchavadze State University in Tbilisi;

### **5.9.1 Background**

Free media, freedom of opinion and a diverse media landscape are an essential part of a democratic society. If media processes are fair and transparent, societal security is supposed to be enhanced since the media can form an effective control on the well-functioning of politics. At the same time however, the media also play a great role in both preventing and triggering conflict, even more for a conflict-driven country like Georgia. As such the media form a substantial factor for stability and democratization.

Since 2004, Georgia has been undergoing an ambitious process of democratization during which the Georgian president, Mikheil Saakashvili, took up promising reforms. Meanwhile, criticism of pressure on media stations and journalists grew frequent. The development of the media in Georgia is a high point of interest for the Georgian society in transition and the topic is strongly debated in Georgian public.

In order to give an account of the topic, presentations on the role of the media in Georgia were held by three referees, among which Ghia Nodia, head of the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences. Mr. Nodia opened the seminar by displaying the changes that Georgian universities and the Ilia Chavchavadze State University have undergone since the reforms in the aftermath of the Rose Revolution. Subsequently, Eka Kvesitadze from the newspaper '24 hours' and Ia Antadze from Radio Liberty / Radio Free Europe held presentations on the situation of the media in Georgia since 2003. The student participants then took the opportunity to pose questions and discuss with the referees.

During the second part the seminar took up an interactive design. First, an open discussion was held on the crucial problems that the media are facing. After this, working groups were set up to come up with constructive solutions and to intensify the exchange between the students by providing room for an interactive and controversial debate. Finally, the working groups presented their results.

### **5.9.2 Eka Kvesitadze**

Ms Eka Kvesitadze, journalist of the daily newspaper "24 Hours" in Tbilisi, started the meeting by stating that television media were much

more influential before the Rose Revolution and that the present government is trying to diminish the role of these media. With regard to printed press she has experienced fewer changes before and after the revolution and according to her the government has always been rather tolerant to this form of media.

A serious problem related to the printed press in Georgia is the low circulation. Several causes were mentioned. Firstly, the price of around €0.45 per newspaper is too high for those living in hardship. Secondly, there is no motivation to buy a newspaper due to the poor quality of the newspapers caused by low writing skills of the journalists and their 'laziness' to conduct real investigations. During the presidency of Shevardnadze, stories about corruption were easy to find, but now corruption is more sophisticated and therefore requires more research to be uncovered. Thirdly, the financial problems of the newspapers have led to low salaries and contributed to low quality. Compared to the television media, the salaries of the printed press are relatively low, although journalists working for television stations also face severe difficulties as they work on a short term base or even without contracts.

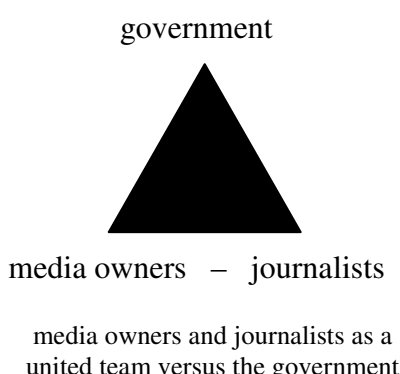
Concerning television media, there are three major channels. Rustavi 2 is the most well known television station in Georgia and this station was the leading player in the Rose Revolution. After the revolution, Rustavi 2 lost its mission and became more a propaganda machine for the government. According to Ms Kvesitadze, it is now in the invisible hand of the government.

To conclude she asked herself the question whether it is good for a television station to be biased, considering that as a journalist for Rustavi 2 she also took part in the revolution. She is still convinced that she did the right thing as the media had to do something. However, after the government gained leverage to control Rustavi 2, she decided to leave the television station and started working for the independent newspaper "24 hours".

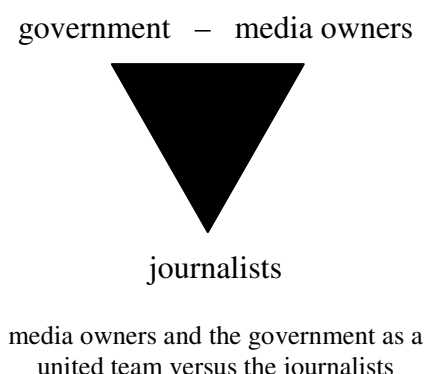
### **5.9.3 Ia Antadze**

The second presentation was given by Ms Ia Antadze, who works as a journalist for Radio Liberty / Radio Free Europe in Tbilisi. This presentation was in particular directed at finding the balance between values and objective truth. There is a considerable gap between reality and the law on the Freedom of Speech and support for journalists working in conflict areas. Journalists are not sufficiently protected and the quality of the printed media could be improved.

**Before the Rose Revolution**



**After the Rose Revolution**



Since in 2004 the new government launched the law on the media, there is a trend towards the weakening of local media. The only existing local newspapers of high quality are mainly financed by donor countries: high quality print media may be present in six cities, while qualified radio stations may exist in only three cities. Indeed, she said, the scope of information about the regions and regional politics lessened since 2004.

Concerning the private television stations, Ms Antadze concluded with the following observation that before the Rose Revolution in November 2003, media owners and journalists were widely unified against the repressive government of former president Shevardnadze. After the Saakashvili government took over power and introduced reforms in the media sector, the balance shifted to media owners and government standing together against the journalists.

### **5.9.4 Working Groups**

During the afternoon the seminar took on an interactive design in order to enable the students to discuss and exchange their views. The main goal here was to have the Georgian and the NOHA students exchange ideas deliberately by using the topic media and democracy.

The first part of the afternoon embraced an open discussion on prepared statements on media and democracy. During the second part of the afternoon, the students worked together in groups applying a problem-solving approach to the issues they had discussed beforehand.

## **First part of the afternoon**

Starting off the first part of the afternoon, prepared statements on media and democracy were presented to the students. These included several statements on media objectivity, media responsibility and freedom, and representativeness of the media. Discussing the partly provocative statements, the students were encouraged to take sides on each statement and to defend their views to their counterparts. This was accomplished by dividing the discussion room in three parts: one part for those in favor of the presented statement, one part for those against the statement and one part for those of a neutral opinion. The participants were encouraged to move across the room according to their personal opinion regarding the statements that were presented one by one. The following statements were used in the session:

### *Media objectivity:*

- The media should only provide information and not interfere with politics.
- The Georgian media are objective in their reporting of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

### *Media responsibility:*

- Privately owned media are not responsible enough in their behavior because they take into account privately owned interests instead of public interests.

### *Censorship:*

- For civil society and democratic development the government should be allowed to introduce media regulations in the public interest.
- Private media owners are also allowed to regulate their own media.

### *Freedom of the media:*

- The media in a real democracy should be completely free.
- Professionalism in the media is more important than freedom of speech.

### *Representativeness of the media:*

- Minorities are generally not well represented by national media.

With the presentation of each statement, vivid debates ensued often leading to questions such as: What is the role of media in the process of democratization? What is the role of media compared to the government's role? Should the government regulate media processes or not? What is media objectivity? Is it possible at all and is it desirable? Do

or should media speak for (civil) society? What is a satisfactory participation of minorities in media on a state level?

## **Second part of the afternoon**

During the second part of the afternoon, the students were split into three working groups with a mix of Georgian and NOHA students. Each group had to come up with a possible solution to a particular problem concerning the media. One group was assigned the topic media objectivity, the second group received the subject of media responsibility, and the third group had to deal with the media representativeness on minority issues.

In the group assignments, the groups had to identify and discuss the exact nature of the problem with regard to their topic. Subsequently, they were asked to think about alternative ways of resolving the problem they had defined, while trying to develop at least two alternative strategies. Following this, they had to assess each of their proposed strategies in terms of possible outcomes, resources needed, and feasibility in order to be able to choose their best possible strategy.

At the end of their deliberations, the groups were asked to give a presentation of at least five to ten minutes in order to explain each of the steps they had undertaken during the discussion and to justify the chosen strategy. The presentations resulted in the following outcomes:

Topic	Description	Identified problem	Strategy
Media objectivity	A problem is a lack of objectivity in media coverage of political issues. Certain political topics are presented by the media in a biased way, while some information is not even presented in news programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the media are not totally free;</li> <li>2. there is a lack of finances;</li> <li>3. a lack of professionalism (job security, education);</li> <li>4. source accessibility is problematic;</li> <li>5. public perception forms part of the problem.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. setting up standards by encouraging education, through association/union, and improving protection job security.</li> <li>2. raising awareness by organizing a public awareness campaign on critical democratic values and by organizing a campaign for journalists.</li> </ol>
Media responsibility	A problem is the lack of responsibility among private media sources, which often prioritize political and financial interests of their owners over the public interests. As a result, scandalous items are prevailing in the news programs. In addition, the media are not giving enough attention to the issues of art, culture and sciences.	The public interests are not taken into account sufficiently.	Introducing a code of conduct for the government and private media and having broadcasting quotas.
Media representativeness on minority issues	The insufficient representation of ethnic minority interests in the media is problematic. Issues concerning these groups are more often mentioned in a negative context, particularly with respect to tensions between majority groups and ethnic communities. Certain demands of some representatives of these groups, such as autonomy for regions populated by minorities, are usually not discussed in the media or receive only negative comments.	<p>While trying to identify the exact nature of the problem, the student group came to the conclusion that in Georgia there is not a real problem as the issues of minorities are in most cases not very different from the problems of the majority.</p> <p>This conclusion was not unanimously accepted and led to much discussion.</p>	

After the fierce debates during the day, the seminar was successfully concluded with a joint dinner in the evening.

## 6. Conclusions

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Georgia experienced violent conflicts, displacement of large populations and a sharp economic decline. The republic in the Southern Caucasus – once known for its beautiful holiday resorts and tasty wine – found itself in a phase of civic unrest and harsh depression. Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, which brought an end to a long period of political and economic stagnation, there is new hope for a better development. However, the so-called “frozen conflicts” still have a negative impact on the overall security situation of Georgia.

During the NOHA field trip we investigated comprehensive security within the humanitarian context of Georgia. By visiting international and local humanitarian organizations, by meeting experts in the field and by discussing with Georgian students we have learned a lot about the current situation of Georgia. Our conclusions are:

- Georgia is a case where humanitarian needs and development needs coexist. Although the overall political and economic development of the country is positive, there are vulnerable groups within Georgian society that are still in need of external assistance. One of the most vulnerable groups concerns the IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, who are not fully integrated in Georgian society and are struggling with the negative consequences of the privatization policy.
- Rather than exclusively looking at poverty levels in general, it is necessary to understand the particular vulnerabilities within the Georgian population. From our visit of the World Food Programme, for instance, we learned how this organization is assessing food insecurities and needs in Georgia.
- In Georgia, there is a strong presence of international aid agencies, which have a strong influence on the government’s policy as well as on the activities of Georgian NGOs. Aid agencies bear the responsibility to react on the changing situation of the country and have to make sure that they gradually hand over “ownership” to the population of Georgia.
- The so-called “frozen conflicts” are not static, but have their own dynamic. There are currently no functioning mechanisms to resolve the conflicts in a peaceful way. One major impediment for peaceful conflict resolution is the absence of a functioning dialogue between the conflicting parties on all levels.
- Regarding media and democracy, we may conclude that television media were much more influential before the Rose Revolution and that the present government is trying to diminish the role of the media. With regard to printed

press, the government is more tolerant, though since the new government launched the law on media in 2004, there is a trend towards the weakening of local media. A serious problem related to the printed press is the low circulation, mainly caused by a combination of low quality and high prices.

- The political and economic reforms that are carried out by the Georgian government are in general perceived by the population as very positive. However, the enormous speed of the reforms has also negative effects causing an increase in social inequality. The one-sided focus on nation-building rather than on state-building has the effect that ethnic minorities in Georgia feel left out and excluded. Next year's election will show whether the reforms will be able to keep pace with the desires and whether the government can fulfill the rising expectations of the international community and the population itself.

Also on a personal level, the NOHA field trip has been very fruitful. The overall majority of the participants described the field trip as a very positive experience. During the evaluation, participants indicated that the field trip has provided "insight in the practices of humanitarian action" and, in short, "was an eye-opening experience". Students gained "insight in the practices of humanitarian action" as well as "knowledge of the limitations of humanitarian organizations." According to one participant, it "was interesting to see the differences of Georgia during Soviet times and after its independence and to learn how the country is coping with its so-called rapid 'development' and globalization; like other developing countries, Georgia is experiencing a lot of political, economic and social challenges and utilizing its limited capacity to deal with these issues whilst striving for 'development' and finding its place in the world's politics."

Many participants pointed out that the field trip was useful for a practical insight in the humanitarian world. According to the students, the field trip was a good opportunity to get acquainted with the work of humanitarian organizations and to critically discuss the impact of their work. In practical terms, the field trip offered the opportunities to make contacts and to acquire information on internship possibilities.

Many participants emphasized the opportunity to meet and discuss with the Georgian students as a positive aspect of the field trip. The seminar on media development was particularly interesting because of the open discussion with the Georgian students. As stated by one of the participants, we can say that the field trip was a "wonderful human experience."



## 7. Annex 1: List of Organizations

Organizations	Address	Contact Person / E-mail
Academy for Peace and Development	10a, M. Asatiani Str., 7th Floor, #19 Tbilisi 0177 Tel: +995 32 45 32 11, Tel/fax: +995 32 39 07 72	Giorgi Kakulia E-mail: giorgi.kakulia@gmail.com
Caucasus Environmental NGO Network / Caucasus Youth Environmental Network (CENN/CYEN)	27 Betlemi Street, Tbilisi Tel: +995 32 75 19 03/04 Fax: +995 32 75 19 05	Nana Janashia (Executive Director, CENN/CYEN)
Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD)	1, Merab Aleksidze Str., 11th floor 0193 Tbilisi Tel: +995 32 33 40 81 Fax: +995 32 33 41 63 E-mail: info@cipdd.org Web: www.cipdd.org	Lika Sanikidze  Gia Gotua E-mail: gia-got@cipdd.org
Caucasus Women's Research and Consulting Network	5 Machabeli Street, Tbilisi 380007 Tel: 99 99 87	Nina Tsihistavi
Danish Refugee Council	58 Abashidze Street, 0162 Tbilisi, Tel: 25 11 54	Stephan Maurer E-mail: rikkefriis@drc.ge Mobile: 8 99 274 264
Delegation of the European Commission to Georgia	38 Nino Chkheidze Street, 0102 Tbilisi Tel: +995 32 94 37 63 Fax: +995 32 94 37 68 Web: www.delgeo.ec.europa.eu	Ia Ejibia (Secretary to Head of Delegation) E-mail: ia.ejibia@ec.europa.eu
European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)	Paliashvili 16 0179 Tbilisi Tel: +995 32 450 562/638 Web: www.ecmi.de www.ecmigeorgia.org	Giorgi Pasuri (Senior Program Officer ECMI) E-mail: pasuri@ecmigeorgia.org Mobile: +995 99 22 91 90

Organizations	Address	Contact Person / E-mail
Georgian Federation of Children	76-b Vajha-Pshavela Avenue Tbilisi Tel: +995-32 30 22 53 +995 32 30 31 91 +995-32 98 39 98 Mobile: 8 99 90 15 07	Shota Makrakilidze (Deputy Director) E-mail: Shoge7@yahoo.com
Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)		
NGO "Tolerance"		
Norwegian Refugee Council, Regional Office for South Caucasus and Central Asia	19a Tabukashvili Street Tbilisi From abroad Tel: +995 32 92 31 62/64 Mobile: +995 99 91 24 71 Locally Tel.: 8 22 92 31 62 / 64 Mobile: 8 99 91 24 71	Dima Zviadadze (Project Coordinator) E-mail: dima@nrc.ge
Multiethnic Resource Center		Alexandra Kalatozishvili
OSCE project on early warning and ethnic monitoring / CIPDD		Marina Elbakidze
OXFAM GB Georgia	47A, Paliashvili Street, Apt. 1 0179 Tbilisi Tel.: +995 32 25 28 81	Nino Kareli (Acting Country Program Manager) E-mail: KNozadze@oxfam.org.uk
Public Movement "Multinational Georgia" (PMMG)	10 Kedis Commun street 380005 Tbilisi Tel: +995 32 98 33 39 Fax: +995 32 93 56 41	Arnold Stepanian (Director) E-mail: arnostep@yahoo.com
SOCO Foundation	12 Zandukeli street Tbilisi Tel: +995 32 93 35 53 +995 32 92 35 32 Tel/fax: +995 32 98 20 40	Helen Phagava (Administrative and Program Manager) E-mail: soco@soco.ge
"Southern Gates" (bilingual newspaper)		Lela Inasaridze (editor-in-chief) E-mail: sg_lelainasaridze@yahoo.com

<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Contact Person / E-mail</b>
Tanadgoma Center	21, A. Kurdiani street (at the A. Tsereteli ave. No 8) 0112 Tbilisi Tel/fax: +995 32 35 21 32, E-mail: center@tanadgoma.ge	Nino Khetaguri (Executive director of Association "Tanadgoma") E-mail: N_Khetaguri@tanadgoma.ge
UNHCR Georgia	2a Kazbegi Avenue 0160 Tbilisi Tel: +995 32 31 12 89	Stefano Berti (Associate Program Officer, IDPs and West Georgia Project) E-mail: BERTI@unhcr.org
World Food Programme (WFP) Georgia	IX Floor, 39a Chavchavadze Ave. Tbilisi 0162 Tel: +995 32 25 36 67/68/69	Lola Castro (Representative and Country Director) E-mail: Lola.Castro@wfp.org Valery Zabakhidze E-mail: Valery.Zabakhidze@wfp.org



## Annex 2: Photo selection

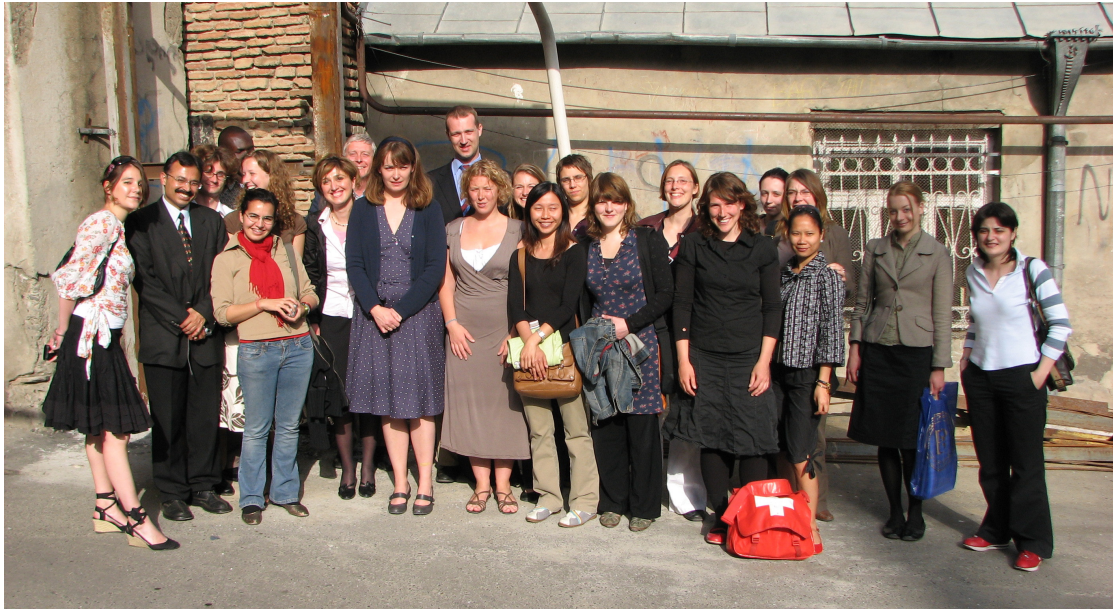


Photo 1: visit to Ms Sandra Roelofs and SOCO



Photo 2: visit to the European Commission's Delegation to Georgia





Photo 3: visit to the CIPDD



Photo 4: visit to the association Tolerant in Samtskhe-Javakheti



Photo 5: an IDP collective center



Photo 6: complete renovation of the former IDP-hotel Iveria





Photo 7: visit to the Academy for Peace and Development



Photo 8: visit to the head office of WFP Georgia





Photo 9: WFP project concerning food for TB patients at a TB dispensary in Tbilisi



Photo 10: a Food For Work-project of WFP in Badiauri en Kandaura



## CDS Research Reports

R. Lensink, N. Hermes, *Regulatory Change and the Allocation of Finance: the Role of Business Conglomerates in the Case of Chili, 1983-1992*, No 1

A. Maatman, C. Schweigman, A. Ruys, *Synopsis of a Linear Programming Study of Farmers' Strategies on the Central Plateau in Burkina Faso*, No 2

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