AN ASSESSMENT OF GEORGIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Report of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index

2010

FOREWORD

The development of civil society is entering a new stage in Georgia. Inspired by the 2003 Rose Revolution and the widespread and ongoing post-revolution euphoria, and shaped by the events and processes of recent years (protest demonstrations, elections, the war, economic crisis) Georgian society is currently re-evaluating its values. A significant part of Georgian society seems to be disappointed, as years of revolutionary changes have not brought the results they expected. Thus, there is a need to find new ways to solve existing problems. Georgian civil society is also affected by this slow progress. In this regard, every effort to facilitate the re-evaluation of these change processes and to help identify new goals should be welcomed and supported.

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index project, implemented by the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD) under the aegis of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and with the kind financial support of the Open Society Institute, is one of the first attempts to analyse and understand the new reality in which Georgian civil society operates. The project was supported by different, and sometimes opposing, civil society organisations, and provided for an active dialogue with segments of civil society that are often excluded from participating (e.g. mass media, business community, political parties). We hope that the atmosphere of cooperation and good relations generated through this inclusive project will survive beyond the timeframe of the CSI project and continue to positively impact the development and consolidation of civil society in Georgia.

This report was prepared by David Losaberidze, PhD, Programmes Coordinator and Member of the Executive Board, Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development.

We wish you an informative and pleasant reading.

Kind regards,

Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD)
Tbilisi, September 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCI	Basic Capabilities Index
CIPDD	Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSI OS 2009	CSI Organisational Survey
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EPS	External Perceptions Survey
FGP	Focus Group Participants
FH	Freedom House
HDR	Human Development Report
NIT	National Implementing Team
NWP	CSI National Workshop participants
PS	Population Survey
SWR	Social Watch Report
TI	Transparency International
VGS	Values of Georgian Society Survey
WVS	World Values Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present study aims at assessing the state of civil society in Georgia. This is done by measuring five dimensions: Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact and the External Environment in which civil society operates. The implementation of the project was severely impeded due to unpredicted changes in the National Implementation Team (NIT), as well as limitations of funding. Another limiting factor was the question of the reliability of the data collected throughout the project (see Appendix 2: Colour Coding Exercise).[2]

The original plan included a study of all segments of civil society. It was discovered, however, that the persons involved in the study, despite their correct understanding of civil society, have mainly focused on Civil Society Organisations (CSOs/NGOs) and have referred to other segments of civil society (such as media, political parties, faith-based organisations) only to the extent where those have had an impact on CSOs. This illustrates the generally dominant role that formal CSOs play in people's perception of civil society.

During the process of the social forces mapping, it was revealed that a majority of CSOs identify two value groups in the country. These are: a) a retrograde value system, which has totalitarian origins and mostly favours Northern (pro-Russian) orientation in foreign policy; and b) a democratic value system, which is perceived as Western (European and Euro-Atlantic) oriented. A majority of Georgian CSOs consider themselves supporters of the latter. The strongest power in the country, due to the underdeveloped civil society and business sectors, is the executive government, particularly the President of Georgia. The Georgian Civil Society Diamond below illustrates the current state of civil society in Georgia.

FIGURE 1 Georgia Civil Society Index Diamond

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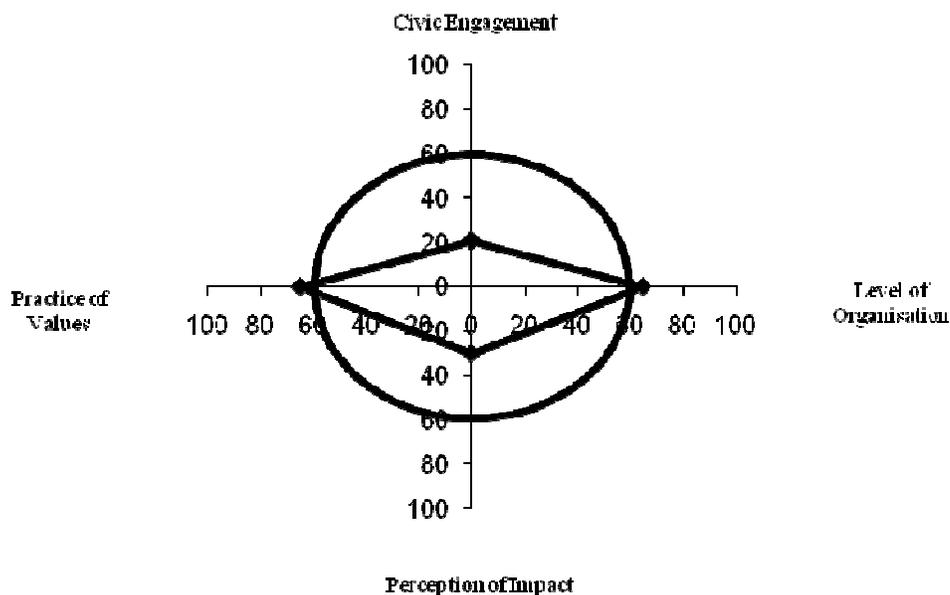
[2] The validity of sources in Georgia is generally very questionable: data from international and national sources, as well as from various governmental sources often radically disagree.

TABLE 1: Georgia Civil Society Index dimension scores

Dimension		Score (%)
1	Civic Engagement	20.6
2	Level of Organisation	64.5
3	Practice of Values	64.7
4	Perception of Impact	30.3
5	External Environment	59.6

The CSI data was collected both qualitatively and quantitatively, through various surveys and literature reviews. However, participants at the CSI National Workshop expressed doubts regarding the accuracy of parts of the data, particularly the relatively high scores for the Level of Organisation and Practice of Values dimensions. The low scores for the Civic Engagement and Perception of Impact dimensions, on the other hand, were identified as realistic. Participants also severely questioned the score for the External Environment, as they considered the reality is that there is a significant impediment to civil society development and activities.

The National Workshop identified the weaknesses of civil society in Georgia, including: a low impact on society, significantly low levels of organisation and a disenabling external environment due to the concentration of power with the authorities. The strengths of civil society mentioned were: organisational experience, the dominance of democratic values among CSOs and potential for development, should other actors (predominantly international and donor organisations) increase their involvement (as CSOs at present primarily exist due to international financial support).

Furthermore, it was identified that the leading aim of civil society was to support and encourage the formation of strong public demand based on democratic values. Among the measures needed to attain this goal are the development of policies based on shared values and active networking. Such measures will contribute to increased public awareness and hopefully increase the levels of civic involvement and participation in ongoing processes in Georgia.

A positive development that has recently emerged in the wake of the government's diminishing credibility is that authorities have given a clear signal that they would like to cooperate more with civil society groups on numerous issues. Unfortunately, civil society has been substantially weakened in the last seven years and is thus no longer usually able to respond adequately to new challenges.

At various meetings organised within the CSI project implementation process in Georgia, the majority of participants, regardless of their sympathies or affiliations, pointed out that recent developments (especially reduction in funding and decreased attention from the governmental institutions) portend new types of challenges for civil society in Georgia:

- The optimistic scenario foretells an empowerment of democratic institutions within Georgia and the formation of a sustainable basis for the stable development of democratic institutions through international support and mobilisation of society as a whole.
- The pessimistic scenario however suggests further consolidations of authoritarian rule in Georgia as a potential threat, in conjunction with a deteriorating economy, high emigration, the domination of police structures and the increasing power of international criminal cartels (for example, drug and weapons smuggling).

CSOs believe that only the support of further developments of the civil society sector may lead to the achievement of the optimistic scenario.

I.   CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT AND APPROACH

Civil society is playing an increasingly important role in governance and development around the world. In most countries, however, knowledge about the state and shape of civil society is limited. Moreover, opportunities for civil society stakeholders to come together to collectively discuss, reflect and act on the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities also remain limited.

The Civil Society Index (CSI) is a participatory action-research project assessing the state of civil society in countries around the world, and contributes to redressing these gaps and limitations. It aims at creating a knowledge base and momentum for civil society strengthening. The CSI is initiated and implemented by, and for, civil society organisations at the country level, in partnership with CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The CSI implementation actively involves and disseminates its findings to a broad range of stakeholders including civil society itself, government, the media, donors, academics and the public at large.

The following four sections provide a background of the CSI, its key principles and approaches, as well as a snapshot of the methodology used in the generation of this report in Georgia and its limitations.

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The CSI first emerged as a concept over a decade ago as a follow-up to the 1997 *New Civic Atlas* publication by CIVICUS, which contained profiles of civil society in 60 countries around the world (Heinrich and Naidoo (2001). The first version of the CSI methodology, developed by CIVICUS with the help of Helmut Anheier, was unveiled in 1999. An initial pilot of the tool was carried out in 2000 in 13 countries.[3] The pilot implementation process and results were evaluated in 2001. This evaluation informed a revision of the methodology. Subsequently, CIVICUS successfully implemented the first complete phase of the CSI between 2003 and 2006 in 53 countries worldwide. This implementation directly involved more than 7,000 civil society stakeholders (Heinrich 2008). Georgia was one of the countries that implemented a shortened version of the CSI methodology between 2003 and 2006.

Intent on continuing to improve the research-action orientation of the tool, CIVICUS worked with the Centre for Social Investment at the University of Heidelberg, as well as with partners and other stakeholders, to rigorously evaluate and revise the CSI methodology for a second time before the start of this current implementation phase in 2008. With this new and streamlined methodology in place, CIVICUS launched the new phase of the CSI in 2008 and selected country partners, including some previous and some new implementers, from all over the globe to participate in the project. Table I.1.1 below shows the list of implementing countries in the current phase of the CSI.

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[3] The pilot countries were Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Romania, South Africa, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Wales.

TABLE I.1.1 List of CSI implementing countries 2008-2010[4]

Albania	Ghana	Niger
Argentina	Italy	Philippines
Armenia	Japan	Russia
Bahrain	Jordan	Serbia
Belarus	Kazakhstan	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Kosovo	South Korea
Burkina Faso	Lebanon	Sudan
Chile	Liberia	Togo
Croatia	Macedonia	Turkey
Cyprus	Madagascar	Uganda
Djibouti	Mali	Ukraine
Democratic Republic of	Malta	Uruguay
Congo	Mexico	Venezuela
Georgia	Nicaragua	Zambia

2. PROJECT APPROACH

The current CSI project approach continues to marry assessment and evidence with reflections and action. The following key steps in CSI implementation take place at the country level:

1. Assessment: CSI uses an innovative mix of participatory research methods, data sources, and case studies to comprehensively assess the state of civil society using five dimensions: Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact and the External Environment.
2. Collective Reflection: implementation involves structured dialogue among diverse civil society stakeholders that enables the identification of civil society's specific strengths and weaknesses.
3. Joint Action: the actors involved use a participatory and consultative process to develop and implement a concrete action agenda to strengthen civil society in a country.

This approach provides an important reference point for the work carried out within the framework of the CSI. As such, CSI does not produce knowledge for its own sake but instead seeks to directly apply the knowledge generated to stimulate strategies that enhance the effectiveness and role of civil society. With this in mind, the CSI's fundamental methodological bedrocks which have greatly influenced the implementation that this report is based upon include the following:[5]

Inclusiveness: The CSI framework strives to incorporate a variety of theoretical viewpoints, as well as being inclusive in terms of civil society indicators, actors and processes included in the project.

Universality: Since the CSI is a global project, its methodology seeks to accommodate national variations in context and concepts within its framework.

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[4] Note that this list was accurate as of the publication of this Analytical Country Report, but may have changed slightly since the publication, due to countries being added or dropped during the implementation cycle.
[5] For in-depth explanations of these principles, please see Mati, Silva and Anderson (2010), Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide: An updated programme description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index Phase 2008-2010. CIVICUS, Johannesburg.

*Comparability***:** The CSI aims not to rank, but instead to comparatively measure different aspects of civil society worldwide. The possibility for comparisons exists both between different countries or regions within one phase of CSI implementation and between phases.

*Versatility***:** The CSI is specifically designed to achieve an appropriate balance between international comparability and national flexibility in the implementation of the project.

*Dialogue***:** One of the key elements of the CSI is its participatory approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders who collectively own and run the project in their respective countries.

*Capacity Development***:** Country partners are firstly trained on the CSI methodology during a three day regional workshop. After the training, partners are supported through the implementation cycle by the CSI team at CIVICUS. Partners participating in the project also gain substantial skills in research, training and facilitation in implementing the CSI in-country.

Networking: The participatory and inclusive nature of the different CSI tools (e.g. focus groups, the Advisory Committee, the National Workshops) should create new spaces where very diverse actors can discover synergies and forge new alliances, including at a cross-sectoral level. Some countries in the last phase have also participated in regional conferences to discuss the CSI findings as well as cross-national civil society issues.

*Change***:** The principal aim of the CSI is to generate information that is of practical use to civil society practitioners and other primary stakeholders. Therefore, the CSI framework seeks to identify aspects of civil society that can be changed and to generate information and knowledge relevant to action-oriented goals.

With the above mentioned foundations, the CSI methodology uses a combination of participatory and scientific research methods to generate an assessment of the state of civil society at the national level. The CSI measures the following core dimensions:

(1) Civic Engagement
(2) Level of Organisation
(3) Practice of Values
(4) Perceived Impact
(5) External Environment

These dimensions are illustrated visually through the Civil Society Diamond (see Figure I.2.1 below), which is one of the most essential and best-known components of the CSI project. To form the Civil Society Diamond, 67 quantitative indicators are aggregated into 28 sub-dimensions which are then assembled into the five final dimensions along a 0-100 percentage scale. The Diamond's size seeks to portray an empirical picture of the state of civil society, the conditions that support or inhibit civil society's development, as well as the consequences of civil society's activities for society at large. The context or environment is represented visually by a circle around the axes of the Civil Society Diamond, and is not regarded as part of the state of civil society but rather as something external that still remains a crucial element for its well being.

FIGURE I.2.1 The Civil Society Index Diamond
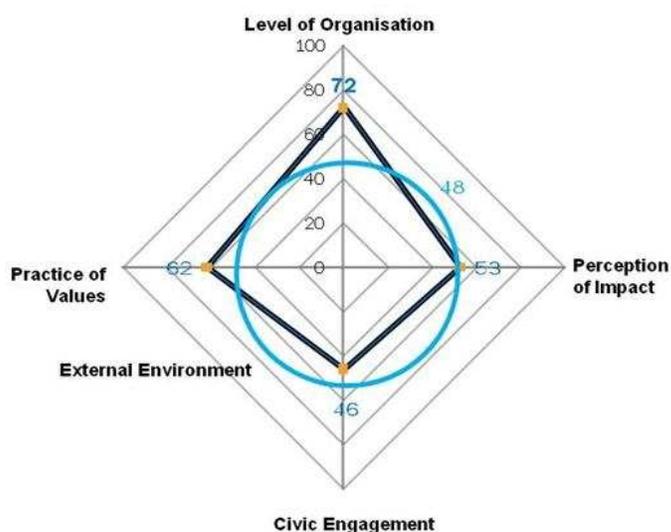
The CSI research provided exactly the needed framework and opportunity to discuss existing strengths and weaknesses as well as to develop future plans. This is precisely because previous research on civil society in Georgia has mainly focused on the organisational capacity of different CSOs (Nodia, 2005). Further, the perception of who was or was not part of civil society was rather narrow, and included mainly non-governmental organisations supported by international donors. As a consequence, important groups, such as religious organisations, associations of artists and other less formal groups were largely overlooked. This narrow definition of civil society reflects a broader problem of the dominance of NGOs on the social landscape of Georgia. Additionally there have been weak ties between various types of CSOs. As a consequence, very often organisations and groups are unaware of the activities even of groups operating in the same sector. Often, groups cohere around the specific issues of their focus. This often hinders cooperation between groups. This reality made even more acute the need for a common platform for discussing the problems and challenges that civil society faces.

3. CSI IMPLEMENTATION

There are several key CSI programme implementation activities as well as several structures involved, as summarised by the figure below:[6]

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[6] For a detailed discussion on each of these steps in the process, please see Mati et al (cited in footnote 5 above).

FIGURE I.3.1 The Civil Society Index implementation model
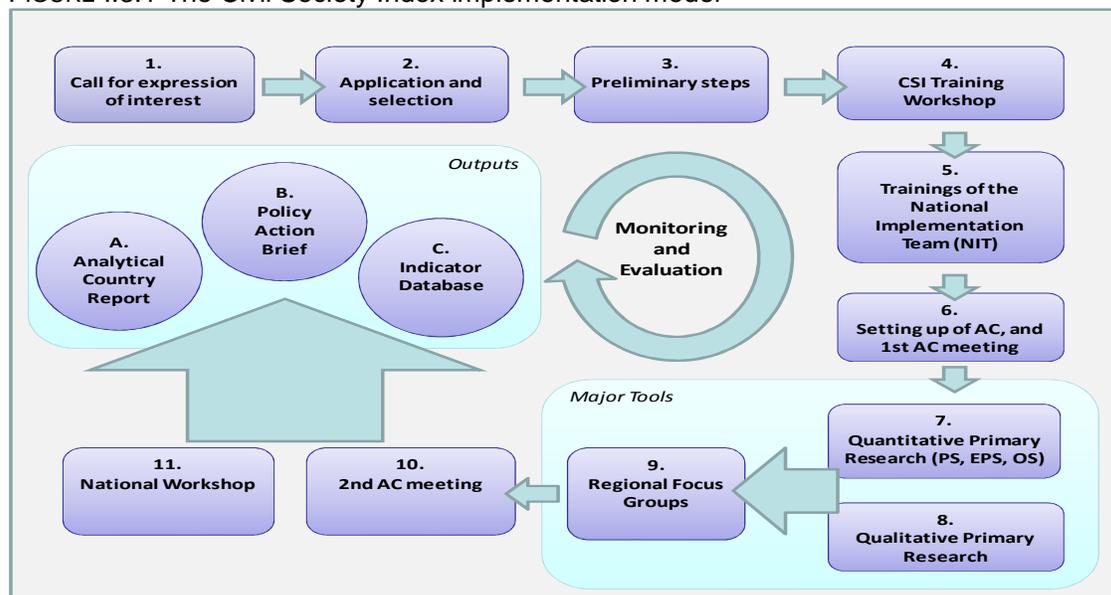
The major tools and elements of the CSI implementation at the national level include:

- Multiple surveys, including: (i) a **Population Survey**, gathering the views of citizens on civil society and gauging their involvement in groups and associations; (ii) an **Organisational Survey** measuring the meso-level of civil society and defining characteristics of CSOs; and (iii) an **External Perceptions Survey** aiming at measuring the perception that stakeholders, experts and policy makers in key sectors have of civil society's impact.
- Tailored **case studies** which focus on issues of importance to the specific civil society country context.
- **Advisory Committee** (AC) meetings made up of civil society experts to advise on the project and its implementation at the country level.
- Regional and thematic **focus groups** where civil society stakeholders reflect and share views on civil society's role in society.

Following this in-depth research and the extensive collection of information, the findings are presented and debated at a National Workshop, which brings together a large group of civil society and non-civil society stakeholders and allows interested parties to discuss and develop strategies for addressing identified priority issues.

This Analytical Country Report is one of the major outputs of the CSI implementation process in Georgia, and presents highlights from the research conducted, including summaries of civil society's strengths and weaknesses as well as recommendations for strengthening civil society in the country. It is accompanied by a Policy Action Brief, which makes practical recommendations for policy initiatives in the light of the CSI findings.

Following the guidelines provided by the CSI methodology, CIPDD concentrated on gaining broad support from civil society and creating consensus around the project implementation methodology from the project onset. The Advisory Committee (AC) played a crucial role in this process. Comprised of representatives from different sectors (including ethnic groups, advocacy NGOs, and environmental activists), the AC also included donors and representatives from business and the government.. The wide diversity of positive interests in this group had a significant impact in terms of the quality of discussion and the establishment of ties between civil society and the project team.

One of the challenges encountered by the implementation team was to operationalise the concept of civil society and define its boundaries for the purposes of the project. The Advisory Committee contributed greatly to the easing of this process. In particular, the boundary between religious groups and CSOs was a hotly debated topic during the first AC meeting, as was the question of whether to include political parties in the sampling for future research. While these debates did not result in consensus, they were very useful in helping the National Implementing Team (NIT) find workable and inclusive solutions to these problems..

In accordance with the methodology developed by CIVICUS, three quantitative surveys and at least five qualitative case studies were conducted for this project. Data from three different surveys, as mentioned above, was used as the main source for further analysis and informed the topics for the case studies. Secondary data was also gathered and analysed.

The Population Survey (PS): The majority of the questions addressed in this survey were derived from the World Values Survey (WVS) 2009, as the CSI methodology allows. Fortunately, for Georgia, we were able to get the 2009 WVS data which had been collected in Georgia by the research firm GORBI, under the supervision of Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRC). Findings of the 2009 WVS Georgia data served in the construction of the Civil Society Diamond. However, some of the questions on which indicators of CSI research are based were not presented in the current wave of WVS. To address this problem, an additional survey was commissioned from the social and marketing research company ACT. However, some technical problems arose regarding whether data from the WVS or other additional data should be used to construct indices in certain cases. This problem was addressed in a logical manner by researchers from the CIVICUS CSI team and the NIT. In both cases, representative samples of Georgia's population were selected based on similar procedures.[7]

The Organisational Survey (CSI OS 2009): The purpose of this survey is to obtain factual information and learn about the attitudes of civil society representatives on diverse issues, including organisational practices, relationships with state authorities, and the evaluation of their own success. Structured interviews were conducted with top-level representatives from 100 Georgian CSOs. A major problem in the preparation of this survey was the absence of a comprehensive database of civil society groups in Georgia. As a consequence, a purposeful sampling of different categories of CSOs was done using the 'snowball' method and existing data. Representatives of each sector of civil society were asked to name other prominent organisations working in their field. As a result, several organisations from each sector were selected to participate in the survey. The ability to select a representative sample of a diverse number of CSOs was one of the strengths of this approach. In addition, expert evaluations weighting the importance of various groups within civil society were used to determine the composition of the sample.

The External Perceptions Survey (CSI EPS): This survey served to assess decision makers' attitudes and opinions towards civil society activities and their impact. A varied scope of people answered the questionnaire, including journalists, politicians, intellectuals and business people (25 persons in total). Although access to some categories of respondents was difficult (most notably state representatives from different ministries), a balanced representation of views has been achieved through the inclusion of various elite groups.

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[7] It should be noted that no major discrepancies between the two sets of data were found as a result.

The Case Studies: In addition to quantitative data, the CSI research also included five qualitative case studies, one per diamond dimension, informed by the quantitative data. The topics of these case studies were determined through consultations amongst local project staff and the CIVICUS CSI team. Through this process, problems that are particularly challenging in Georgia were selected. The majority of the case studies are based on in-depth interviews with stakeholders, as well as on secondary data. One of the case studies was based on the analysis of electronic and visual media, particularly focusing on the content of news programmes broadcasted by the three leading Georgian TV stations (Public Broadcaster, Rustavi 2 and Imedi TV).

Following surveys and case studies, **Regional Focus Groups** were also conducted. Ten focus groups were held in different regions of Georgia, each attended by 13 to 25 participants. During these sessions, the preliminary findings of the research were shared and used as a framework for initiating further discussions on the state of civil society and drafting recommendations for further measures to improve the situation. Interestingly enough, no significant difference in opinions was registered between representatives of various regions, thus underlining the major similarities in concerns and the social position of various CSOs in Georgia.

The majority of participants in these focus groups were civil society representatives. There were, however, a few representatives of local governments, the business sector and academia. The focus groups revealed once again that as a consequence of the few opportunities for CSO representatives to come together and discuss their projects, participants needed more time than planned for to 'warm up' and open up to others.

The Second Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting: The findings of the empirical research were presented at the second AC meeting. Prior to this meeting, the data matrix containing all the data scoring values was distributed to the members of the AC. In general, the work of the NIT was positively appraised and some analytical insights were suggested. Validity of the collected data was evaluated and some values for indicators were identified as unreliable.

The National Workshop: The data and the civil society diamond were then presented to various civil society sectors, the media and other stakeholder groups during the national workshop. Sixty-five representatives attended this workshop. A range of sectors of civil society were represented, each of them contributing their unique point of view to the discussions. While civil society in Georgia tends to be rather fragmented around different social and political issues, a certain balance between the workshop participants was achieved. Despite the differences, participants mostly agreed with each other in their interpretations of the research findings. At the national workshop, participants and the NIT developed an **Action Plan** for how different actors, including civil society itself, can contribute to strengthening and consolidating civil society in Georgia. However, voices of dissent were also given the opportunity to speak during this workshop and their views examined. The result was a more insightful discussion regarding the problems that civil society in Georgia faces today.

4. LIMITATIONS OF CSI STUDY

Two limitations regarding this study should be particularly mentioned. One important limitation is connected to the sampling process. The absence of a sampling frame made sampling quite complicated. As a solution to this problem, a detailed list of different sectors of civil society was developed and the sample was selected through the snowball sampling method within each identified category. The CIVICUS CSI team later approved the choice of methodology. By using the mentioned method, a wider range of CSOs were included in the sample and this improved the validity of the research as whole. At the same time, the

difficulties with this approach are related to the non-random character of the sampling. As a consequence, the possibilities for generalising the findings of our research are significantly limited, compared to cases in which more correct statistical procedures were applied.

A second limitation of this study relates to the comparative nature of the research. As experts noted, some of the indicators do not reflect the realities of civil society in Georgia. According to them, the framing of the research questions is the main reason for this. In some cases, due to inadequate research questions, an incomplete picture of the social reality could be the result. For example, with the question of whether a concrete CSO has a board or another type of governing body, most of respondents replied in the affirmative. According to the experts, the reality in most of these organisations, however, is that these bodies exist on paper (for various reasons), while decision making internally in many organisations is mostly based on informal structures. While follow-up questions could help to solve these kinds of problems, answers to these questions cannot and should not be considered for any comparative analyses.

The obvious contradictions between some of the data are the most striking results of the civil society assessment. Relations between external actors (the rest of population, the government, and business community) and civil society, as well as the relationship between different segments of civil society itself, and even the CSOs' self-assessment, are often rather controversial. Although the CSI PS was chosen as the primary source of information, we also tried to record the (often sceptical) opinions of various civil society representatives, including the majority of the national workshop participants (NWPs) and experts, and the arguments (considered to be often inadequate) they put forward to support their views.

A third challenge and limitation to this study lies in the lack of reliability of information, especially the national statistical data. Information provided by international organisations was more trustworthy, though sometimes it also seemed contradictory and unreliable.

II.   CIVIL SOCIETY IN GEORGIA

1. CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN GEORGIA

Thus far, there has been no public debate over the concept of civil society in Georgia because Georgia, like other post-Communist countries, only began using the term 'civil society' relatively recently. Georgian civil society - non-governmental organisations, mass media and some political parties – agree overall with CIVICUS' definition of civil society as "*the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests.*" When discussing issues related to civil society, CSOs often refer to concepts such as democracy, participation, the unity of active citizens, freedom of speech, transparency, different civil actions and the rule of law. It therefore seems that most civil society representatives in Georgia prefer to use the term "the unity of active citizens" in their definition of a civil society and during self-assessment. The table below summarises responses received from the Organisational Survey on the question of how respondents understand civil society.

TABLE II.1.1 How do you understand civil society?

The unity of active citizens	36.6%
It represents public interest and defends democracy	16.9%
A form of citizens' association	14.9%
The most responsible part of society	6.0%
People who are aware of their rights	5.9%
The unity of political institutions	4.0%

(CSI OS 2009)

At the same time, liberal values have gained a firm foothold in Georgia. This phenomenon is characteristic of the post-Soviet period and can be seen as a direct result of strong anti-Socialist sentiment in the country. That is why part of Georgian civil society does not consider radical marginal groups, such as political or religious extremists, to be part of civil society. Moreover, a considerable number of CSOs refuse to recognise even trade unions as elements of civil society, claiming that they are relics of the Soviet past. Discussions regarding the challenges facing CSOs often result in an even narrower understanding of civil society. On the one hand, participants of these discussions define civil society in broad terms (including parties, church, unions, media and civil society institutions) and positively assess its role in the state-building process. On the other hand, however, as far as specific problems of civil society are concerned, they usually speak only about problems of CSOs, while other civil society segments are discussed only in relation to the CSOs. For this reason, we decided to focus the report mainly on the problems of CSOs, while other segments are covered as much as possible using materials we have collected.

2. HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN GEORGIA

Georgian civil society dates back to the middle of the Nineteenth Century, provided we exclude the country's medieval orders of knighthood, craftsmen unions, merchant guilds, and, of course, the Georgian Orthodox Church (whose history dates back to Fourth Century). In the early Nineteenth Century, Georgia was annexed by Russia and became part of the Russian Empire. The processes that unfolded at that period were similar to those that developed within Eastern Europe, namely national movements and educational activities aiming at modernisation in line with the European model, sovereignty and independence or at least, wide autonomy. The Georgian Society for Promoting Literacy in the Georgian Nation, which was founded in 1879, is now widely seen as the country's first-ever modern-style CSO.

At the turn of the Twentieth Century, Georgian civil society was already quite strong and functional, and its activities extended to almost all spheres of social life. Together with civil society in Poland, the Baltic countries and Finland, it formed the most democratic segment of the Russian Empire. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the occupation of the Georgian Democratic Republic (1918-1921) by the Russian Red Army, however, put an abrupt end to the development of civil society in Georgia. Instead, a new process - the creation of a quasi-civil society[8] - was triggered in Georgia after it was annexed by Soviet Russia in 1922. Similar developments took place in other Soviet republics as well. Various 'civil society organisations,' such as sport clubs, writers' and art workers' unions and trade unions, although they were largely formal, were created in Georgia during Soviet times (1921 to1991), but all of them were under the complete control of the Communist Party and the secret services and political police of the USSR (KGB).

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[8] These quasi-civil society organisations were developed by the totalitarian state, for creating a democratic façade for their own population and the international community. These organisations were supposed to be formally independent, but in reality, they were serving the political objectives of the government and hindering the development of true CSOs.

The reforms that contributed to the end of the USSR in the 1980s and 1990s helped revive and/or strengthen the banned (political parties, democratic media) or restricted (church, freedom of conscience) elements of civil society in Georgia. At that time, the existing CSOs had their principle goal to regain Georgia's sovereignty and independence and democratise Georgian society. Unfortunately, Georgia lacked the experience of democratic governance, a factor that greatly contributed to the ignition of a civil war, political crisis and ethnic conflicts that have ravaged the country since the breakdown of the Soviet Union. In 1992, the first post-Soviet and democratically elected government of Zviad Gamsakhurdia was overthrown in a military coup. Soon afterwards came a civil war and two violent conflicts, in large ethnic autonomies, with severe social, political, and economic consequences. Russian security forces played a mostly indirect, but at times direct, role in these events.

As an obvious consequence, civil society activities ceased to develop during this period. However, and it is questionable if these groups should be considered as civil society, many paramilitary and nationalistic criminal groups, engaged in activities such as drug and weapons smuggling, emerged during this period.

Once stability gradually returned to Georgia after Eduard Shevardnadze came to power in 1992, initially as 'Chairman of the Parliament - Head of The State' and then in 1995 being elected president, Georgian civil society also regained some strength partly due to substantial financial, economic and political support from the West (especially the USA and the EU). In this new era, a new civil society segment - non-governmental organisations (NGOs) - came to life in Georgia in addition to political parties and the media.

In recent years, Georgian civil society has gone through several phases of development, as enumerated below:

1. Birth and early "childhood" – 1992 to 1995: During this period, the government had more serious problems to deal with than imposing control over independent civil society groups. Also, civil society was too young and weak to play a significant role in the society at that time and was not regarded as a threat by the corrupt bureaucracy.

2. "Oasis" years – 1995 to 1999: It was a time of unhindered growth, quantitatively and qualitatively, of predominantly NGO-type CSOs. The government's interference in the third sector continued to be minimal in this period, though NGOs began giving the authorities some headaches. However, as the government was eager to boost its democratic credentials in the eyes of the West, it preferred to turn a blind eye to NGO activities and abstained from stifling dissenting voices.

3. The independence period of the third sector – 1999 to 2003: Civil society's willingness and readiness to take part in social processes appeared to increasingly irk the government. At the same time, Georgian civil society appeared 'mature' enough to mobilise for protest actions and demonstrations to defend its rights.[9] In response, the government launched a campaign, with the help of pro-government media, to discredit NGOs and applied financial and political measures to suppress civil society. But the government's measures only consolidated civil society and made these groups more determined to fight for their rights. As a result, after a large-scale rigging of parliamentary elections by the authorities in 2003, civil society became one of the main driving forces of

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[9] This is illustrated by the massive protest actions in Tbilisi in November 2001, which were prompted by an abortive raid by the officers of the state security service on the office of the independent Rustavi-2 TV. The scale of the protests was so immense that the president was forced to sack the security and interior ministers in order to appease public opinion.

a peaceful revolution (known as the Rose Revolution) that ensued (Losaberidze, 2007: 194).

4. Post-revolution period – 2003 to 2008: The role of civil society noticeably increased at this time. This period saw many representatives of civil society, independent media institutions and democratic political forces being promoted to key positions in government. At the time, the government began a successful campaign to defeat the criminal and corrupt oligarchy that had gained strength in the 1990s. The social capital and efficiency of the government substantially increased as a result. At the same time, however, the post-Revolution euphoria paved the way for the so-called 'dragon syndrome', which holds that one must become a dragon to defeat a dragon. The government's radical policy/actions revived a sense of estrangement between society and the establishment. The government's mistakes, such as the crackdown on a mass protest rally in Tbilisi in November 2007, the large-scale rigging of the snap presidential and parliamentary polls in the 2008 winter and spring, and the decision to retake South Ossetia by force, which led to a direct Russia-Georgia military conflict with disastrous consequences for Georgia, ruined Georgia's image as a "beacon of democracy" both at home and abroad.[10]

5. The "turning point" (since 2008): The civil society sector realised that it needed to develop a new strategy. Georgian civil society was in deep trouble at that time as electronic media was almost fully controlled by the government, and donor organisations reduced their support to CSOs and channelled their resources mainly to governmental programmes. In the course of the last two to three years, this policy has brought about rather negative consequences. Many civil society activists have left the civil society sector. Some of them found new jobs in governmental institutions or businesses; others migrated to foreign countries. Few new activists came to replace those who left. Although the donors renewed their assistance programs for the CSOs in 2009, civil society was no longer as strong, united and committed to shared values as it was in 2001. It has lost momentum.

3. MAPPING CIVIL SOCIETY

During the analysis of the research findings, CSO experts, members of the Advisory Committee and focus group participants (FGPs) identified the following (Figure II.3.1) major segments that have a significant impact on civil society in Georgia:

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[10] US president George W Bush dubbed Georgia the "Beacon of Democracy" after the so-called Rose Revolution in 2003 in Tbilisi, CNN, 10 May 2005.

FIGURE II.3.1 Civil society mapping [11]
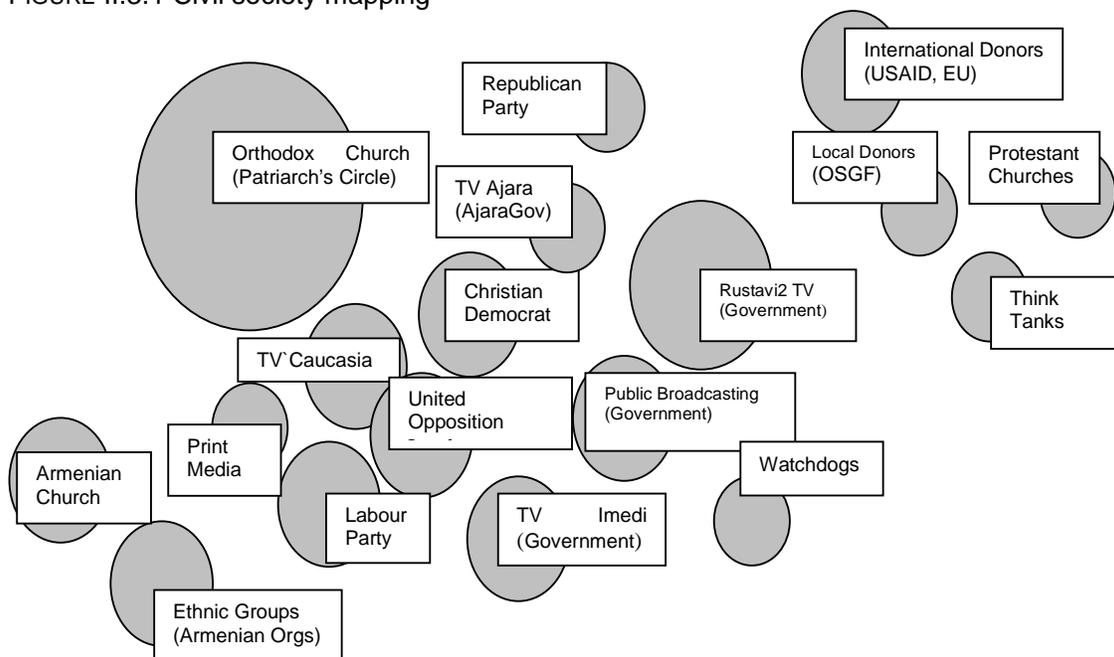
As a rule, the Georgian Orthodox Church is largely regarded by civil society experts as one of the most influential institutions and a guardian of traditional values ("motherland", "language", "faith") in the country. Next comes several civil society segments that also claim to be defenders and proponents of traditional values (independent and regional TV companies, a majority of the Georgian newspapers and other periodicals, radical and patriotic opposition parties, other "traditional" churches, for instance Armenian Apostolic Church, and groups representing the interests of ethnic minorities).

On the other hand, there are some actors that promote modern liberal and democratic values, such as international and donor organisations, an overwhelming majority of CSOs and several political parties, for instance the Republican Party, though their influence on society is rather weak, while their activities are usually limited to intellectual discussions and/or theoretical deliberations.

The government and state-controlled media (main national TV companies: Georgian Public Broadcasting Company and formally independent Rustavi-2 and Imedi TV channels) are seeking to maintain a balanced approach between traditional and liberal values, but the analysis of real social forces and influences, an exercise that was part of the CSI project, yields a very different picture (see Figure II.3.2 below).

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[11] The size of the circles correlates with the level of dominance of a particular actor in the public discourse.

FIGURE II.3.2: Analysis of social forces
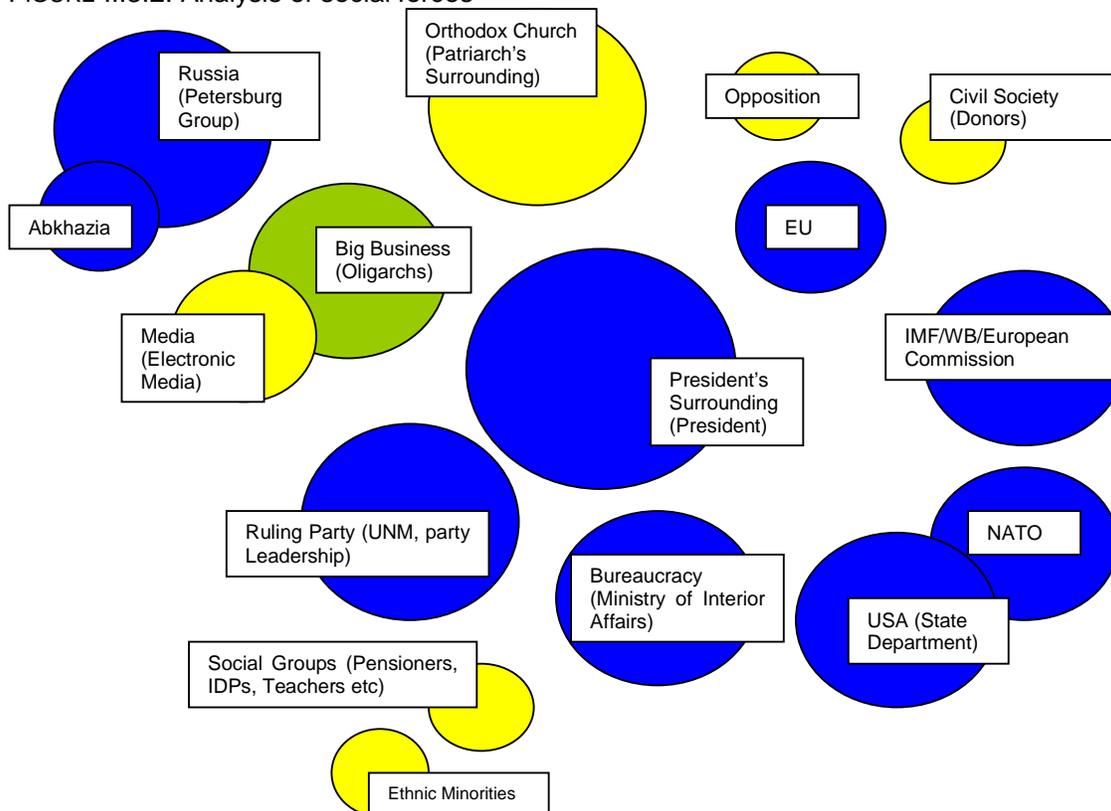
Similar to the case of the Civil Society Mapping, two large interest groups play important roles in this social forces analysis. The first group includes "Russian forces": the Russian government (first of all, prime minister Putin and his retinue), the authorities of breakaway regions, the Georgian Orthodox clergy, which is closely linked to the Russian Orthodox Church, and "oligarchs", in other words, Georgian citizens who amassed their fortune in Russia and have strong ties with that country. The second group, dubbed the "Western Vector", consists of the diplomatic corps, international and regional organisations (NATO, World Bank, IMF), most of CSOs, and pro-western political forces. Individually, they cannot pose any challenge to the dominance of the Russian forces, but as a group they have enough capacity to counterbalance the "Russians."

The Georgian government, namely the presidency together with the ruling party and state bureaucracy which are strongly dependent on the president's office, is the most influential and powerful institution in Georgia today. On the one hand, the government is trying to maintain a balanced stance between the Western and Russian forces; on the other hand, as the most powerful actor, it is determined to defend its own interests.[12]

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[12] As a result of the privatisation process, the biggest part of the Georgian national economy is now controlled by Russian companies. This aspect is somehow counterbalanced by a large-scale western financial assistance. At the same time, there are no large private companies and corporations in Georgia. That is why the state (national budget) remains the biggest buyer in the country. It uses different state structures (financial police, law-enforcement agencies, and security services) to keep the national economy and the political situation in the country under its full control.

Under such circumstances, Georgian civil society has a rather limited ability to influence ongoing processes in the country.[13] Although the activities of these organisations, which include think tanks, watchdogs, professional and sectoral associations, are quite diverse and cover, at least formally, the entire territory of Georgia, they have minimal influence on society. As to their ability to influence the government, many civil society representatives think that pro-government CSOs are unreasonably over-optimistic. According to a Georgian expert George Tarkhan-Mouravi, whose views were shared by a majority of the CSI NWPs. On the one hand, the government does not hesitate to give certain civil society groups a free hand in dealing with some unimportant issues, both on the legislative and practical levels, in exchange for their full loyalty. On the other hand, however, once political or economic power sharing (such as civilian oversight of security and police structures, transparency of the budgeting process, or decentralisation of government) is suggested, government refuses to even discuss such a possibility.

III.   ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

1. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In this section, we discuss the extent, depth, and the diversity of citizen engagement in social and political processes, on both formal and informal levels.

From the outset it is important to note that, while the CSI methodology proposes that political parties be considered as part of civil society, in Georgia, in the opinion of respondents of the External Perceptions Survey, and members of the Advisory Committee, the ruling party has never been a segment of civil society. In reality, it seems that the ruling party is part of the government, as it relies heavily on the government's administrative, financial and political resources.[14] For this reason, it was decided to exclude the ruling party from the analysis.

TABLE III.1.1 Civic Engagement

1	Dimension: Civic Engagement	20.6
1.1	Extent of socially-based engagement	4.6
1.2	Depth of socially-based engagement	17.8
1.3	Diversity of socially-based engagement	52.5
1.4	Extent of political engagement	6.2
1.5	Depth of political engagement	14.0
1.6	Diversity of political engagement	28.5

Civic engagement, especially CSO volunteering activities, is noticeably low in Georgia on a formal level.[15] Even more worrying is the apparent trend toward a decrease in volunteering, rather than an increase.[16] This tendency is particularly evident with regard to socially-based

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[13] More than 10,000 organisations are registered in Georgia. But fewer than 10% of them are really functional. Besides, the overwhelming majority of them depend heavily on donor organisations, which usually provide only small-scale and non-regular financial assistance.

[14] The assessment is relevant to both the Soviet-era Communist Party of Georgia and post-Soviet governing political groups: Round Table - Free Georgia (1990-92), Citizens' Union of Georgia (1994-03), United National Movement (2003 to present), and Aghordzineba Party, that was at the helm of Ajara until 2004. This form of government is characterised by a single-party system in which one party dominates the government and parliament (from two thirds to 100% of parliamentary seats). Opposition parties are completely ignored, or the government creates pseudo-opposition groups that are in fact loyal to the authorities and are needed to provide a veneer of democracy.

[15] By civic engagement, mainly participation in various types of groups (such as political, religious-based, environmental) is meant. During the research, attention was paid to the number of people participating in the work of these organisations, as well as to how intensive this participation was.

[16] See sub-dimension 1.1 and 1.4 for further discussion of this topic.

engagement. CSOs are well aware of the problem, and it remains one of their prime concerns.

1.1 The extent of socially-based engagement

Citizen engagement in social activities is measured by the number of people involved, formally and/or informally. Citizen participation in general, and socially-based engagement in particular, is far from active in Georgia. According to the NWPs, one explanation for this may be that difficult economic and social circumstances, including high levels of unemployment, drastic worsening of living conditions, and largely unstable social, political and economic environments, along with the neglect of the interests of wider society by government, have marginalised large segments of society and prevented the emergence of organised groups and the implementation of institutionalised activities.

The current political situation in Georgia offers another serious stumbling block to increased civic engagement. Euphoria and enthusiasm witnessed during the 2003 Rose Revolution gradually faded away in the post-revolution period, giving way to widespread public frustration and disillusionment. As a result, civic participation has fallen in the country from some 10% in 2006 to 8.8% at present (VGS 2006; WVS 2009).

The table below summarises how civic engagement is structured socially as measured in the CSI project.

TABLE III.1.2 Socially based engagement

Participation	Active members	Passive members	Volunteers
The Orthodox Church and religious organisations	1.7	3.9	2.0
Arts, music, educational organisations	1.1	1.2	1.1
Sport and recreational organisations	0.6	0.2	0.7
Consumers' organisations	-	0.1	-

(WVS 2009)

Unsurprisingly, the highest level of citizen engagement for Georgians was within the Orthodox Church and religious organisations. This is because the Georgian Orthodox Church is one of the most influential and popular institutions in the country. Unfortunately, available research data does not tell us the exact nature of such participation in church activities. It is noteworthy that this form of civic engagement has increased sharply in recent times, from 1.3% to 5.6%.[17] Regardless, it is much higher than civic participation in other spheres, consumer protection unions, for instance, where it stands at 0.1% (WVS 2009). According to NWPs, even this figure, however small, seems somewhat exaggerated.

In contrast to institutionalised activities, community participation, which is not institutionalised as a rule, is higher in Georgia, at 7.1% (WVS 2009). This can be seen as a reflection of the fact that public confidence in formal structures has never been high in Georgia. In a country where official structures have always been treated with a fair dose of mistrust, it is mainly the neighbourhood and community groups and other similar informal associations, such as within groups of friends, which traditionally enjoy high levels of public confidence and thus have higher levels of civic participation.

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[17] The participation in church activities of both of the active (1.7%) and passive (3.9%) members is shown in the table above.

1.2 Depth of socially-based engagement

This sub-dimension demonstrates the frequency and the quality of socially-based engagement beyond the mere number of those engaged. The evidence from the Population Survey shows that volunteerism is relatively weak in institutionalised structures compared with the number of members; recorded at 4.7% and 5.3% respectively. This is because, as a rule, CSO members consider their work paid employment, while volunteering means working for no pay, a very unpopular idea in Georgia, where a large part of the population lives in dire financial straits. This can be illustrated by the fact that 33.3% of CSOs surveyed do not have any volunteers at all (WVS 2009).

The percentage of citizens that engages in various social activities, including sport centres and formal or informal associations, at least once a month is much higher, calculated at 43.5%. The Population Survey interviews did not ask the exact nature of activities respondents were involved in, whether, for example, they attended sport tournaments or entertainment centres as fans, collected donations for low-income families, or volunteered to organise social events. At the same time, when asked who they prefer to spend their spare time with, the overwhelming majority of the respondents named relatives, family members and friends. The table below summarises responses to this question.

TABLE III.1.3 Preferred companions for leisure-time activities

Companions for leisure-time activities	Every week	Every one or two months	Several times a year	Never
Relatives, parents	44.1	25.0	22.5	8.4
Friends	41.5	31.0	14.7	12.8
Fellow churchgoers	14.9	27.7	30.3	27.1
Colleagues	11.3	10.0	8.1	70.6
Fellow members of sport centres, volunteer organisations	1.6	1.5	4.0	92.9

(WVS 2009)

As already mentioned, the traditional values of patrimonial Georgian society require that people do not put much confidence in formal relations. It is unclear, however, what the respondents meant when referring to their relationship with fellow churchgoers. Presumably, they meant simply going to church and praying together, but this is not clear. Regional focus group participants pointed out that the lack of thematic diversity in programmes of formal civil society groups was another impediment to active civic participation. The case study on young volunteers' motivation factors in political organisations/parties also indicated this (see the CSI case study: Volunteerism in Modern Georgia: Case of Political Parties' Youth Organisations).

1.3 Diversity within socially-based engagement

Apart from the number of people engaged in social activities and the depth of their involvement, it is important to identify how representative this engagement is, and how well it covers all aspects of social reality.

Georgian civil society, mainly CSOs, is relatively representative of the public at large. Despite the low level of citizen participation, the part of society which is involved in different social activities represents a wide variety of social groups, at 52.5% (WVS 2009). There would seem to be no formal discrimination and no particularly excluded groups in civil society, at least at the level of declaration, in this regard. The structure of representation is as follows (WVS 2009):

- **Ethnic minorities**: Ethnic minorities constitute 13% of Georgia's total population and 8.3% of the active members of CSOs. The relatively low levels of participation can be explained by the social passiveness of minorities residing in large cities, though it is somewhat offset by relatively higher civic engagement of the residents of ethnic enclaves, such as Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli.
- **Age groups**: The bulk of CSO members, a high 93.3%, are young and middle-aged people, aged between 25 to 64, while only 6.8% are older people, although they constitute 17.5% of the total population. This can be explained by the fact that the level of civic engagement is usually lower among those who grew up and spent most of their lives under totalitarian rule.
- **Representation by gender**: In general, women, who account for 54.5% of the total population, are underrepresented in civil society, with only 39.4% representation (WVS 2009). In contrast, however, more than 60% of CSO members are women with a 29% representation in the governing bodies of CSOs (Gaprindashvili, 2003).
- **Representation by region**: A majority (some 60% of the more than 10,000 organisations) of CSOs are based in large cities. In reality, however, regional CSOs, especially in rural communities, are more active. Rural residents, which constitute 49.4% of the total population, make up 54.2% of CSO members. Residents of provinces (75.5% of the total) also represent a high number of members (79.7%) of civil society. The capital and centrally based CSOs play a relatively 'passive' role, perhaps because cities provide more diverse alternative opportunities, such as business, or the public service, for citizens to fulfil their potential and needs than in rural communities (WVS 2009).
- **Social status representation**: Finally, 86.4% which represents a majority of civil society members come from the Georgian middle class, despite this group only making up 61.5% of the population. However, the lower class is clearly underrepresented, presumably since struggling for basic needs is more urgent for lower-class families than participation in the activities of CSOs (WVS 2009).

Although Georgian civil society theoretically does not discriminate on the grounds of social status, cooperation between different social groups remains weak. Every group has carved out its own niche and rarely interacts with the others.

1.4 Extent of political engagement

On the one hand, according to available data, political membership has decreased in Georgia, from 5.4% four years ago to 1.3% at present (VGS 2006; WVS 2009). But participation in one-off political actions has increased in the same period. It is hard to say, however, whether this data is reliable enough; NWPs suggested that many respondents might have been simply afraid to confess to being engaged in political activity. Given the current political situation, this explanation does not seem implausible.[18]

TABLE III.1.4 The level of political engagement

Participation	Active members	Passive members	Volunteers
Trade unions	0.3	1.8	0.3
Political parties	0.3	0.6	0.5
Environmental organisations	-	-	-
Professional associations	0.2	0.4	0.2
Charities	0.1	0.1	-

(WVS 2009)

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[18] See sub-dimension 5.2 for further discussion on the external environment

Over the last four years, the number of citizens who have taken part in boycotts and protest demonstrations has risen from 2.2% to 2.8% and from 8.0% to 14.5% respectively, indicating a growing public discontent with the government's policies (VGS 2006; WVS 2009). During the same period, however, the number of strike actions has decreased to almost zero. In comparison, 4.9% of the Georgian citizens went on strike across the country in 2005 (VGS 2006; WVS 2009). In the current economic downturn, this trend can only be explained by fear of losing a job, however difficult and underpaid it is.

As to political parties, the majority of the Georgian opposition parties share certain main features: organisational weakness, patriarchal mentality (though some opposition parties are led by women), under-representation of ethnic minorities and lower social classes in governing bodies, vague political programmes and ineffective recruitment systems for new members. As a rule, for instance, opposition parties recruit/invite new members and volunteers only prior to elections or protest demonstrations. Party members are instructed to look for potential sympathisers among their relatives and friends, who are then promised various benefits in return for their contribution; these include a chance to befriend 'goodfellas', offer service to society, raise one's self-esteem and social status, improve career opportunities, or to develop a sense of security by becoming a member of a certain social stratum. Further, new recruits are tasked with monitoring protest demonstrations or putting up election posters. In one or two years, most of them usually quit the party or become inactive by not participating in party activities, as their enthusiasm plummets (see CSI case study: Volunteerism in Modern Georgia: Case of Political Parties' Youth Organisations).

CSOs are generally non-partisan. CSOs deliberately avoid contact with any particular party, as well as with the government, since they are well aware that the majority of the public disapproves of such relations. At the same time, individual members and employees of CSOs have quite good relationships with political parties. Some of them are even members of a party, though they prefer to keep silent about it as they know well enough that their party membership could make them vulnerable to criticism and finger pointing from opponents.

In conclusion, it can be noted that, while the level of political participation and political discourse was quite high in previous years, the absence of an adequate response from the government and consequent disillusionment have led to widespread public frustration and disenchantment and a relative radicalisation of political activities.

1.5 Depth of political engagement

An analysis of the depth of political engagement further supports the conclusions from the previous paragraph regarding the high level of social nihilism and social demands exceeding the existing offers. People are discontented with existing forms of political engagement.

TABLE III.1.5 The depth of political engagement

Membership of political organisations	5.0
Political volunteering	8.2
Individual participation	28.9

(WVS 2009)

The number of citizens involved in more than one political party exceeds the combined membership of political organisations. This generally leads to the assumption that people are actively looking for ways to resolve the current problems of society. At the same time, a number of citizens (28.9%) have opted for individual participation in various protest actions, indicating that they no longer trust political parties to address their grievances. There is clearly an increasing critical mass of popular discontent with current governmental policies,

suggesting that people have lost confidence in institutions and prefer to solve their problems by other, more radical means.

1.6 Diversity of political engagement

This indicator examines how representative political engagement is and the extent to which it covers all groups and layers of society.

There are diverse forms of political engagement in Georgia, which is rated at 28.5% according to the CSI. The level of political activity for different social groups is higher than their socially based participation. The following numbers drawn from WVS 2009 highlight this situation:

- Women account for 70% of those involved in various political actions.
- Political activism is higher in urban areas, registered at approximately 80%, than it is in rural communities.
- Residents of provinces, large cities and ethnic enclaves are the most active, recorded at 85%.
- More than 95% of the active citizens come from middle class, while the participation of lower-class residents is almost zero.

Concerning civic engagement in general, three social groups are considered marginal by civil society or significant parts of the population:

- Orthodox and/or nationalistic small radical groups, which are constantly criticised by other sections of civil society.
- Members of religious sects (namely the so-called 'non-traditional' religions, especially Jehovah Witnesses), which are disliked, if not hated, by a majority of the population. But except for small radical groups, people usually do not resort to aggressive attacks against these sects. As a rule, this confrontation rarely goes beyond political boundaries, and different political forces often try to exploit the problem for their advantage.
- Sexual minorities - until recently, this was a taboo subject in Georgia, but of late it has become a prominent part of public debate. It is noteworthy that almost the entire Georgian population, except a majority of CSOs, is very aggressive and intolerant towards these groups (according to NWPs).[19]

Conclusion

The extent of social and especially political engagement in Georgia is quite low, which is manifested by the relatively small number of active citizens, as well as by the depth and the diversity of their engagement. Existing poor political and social conditions do not provide a good ground for wider social activism. In these circumstances, informal social engagement is higher as people do not trust formal and institutionalised bodies. If this trend is to be sustained, it can be expected that, under certain conditions, society's frustration will be turned into some radical forms of activism.

2. LEVEL OF ORGANISATION

This dimension describes the organisational and institutional sustainability of CSOs, as well as their structure and resources. In particular, it looks into how widely a model of collective decision making is employed in practice and how realistic it is, how and to what extent CSOs

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[19] According to World Value Survey 2009 data, homosexuality is considered as absolutely unacceptable by 90 percent of the population.

cooperate with one another and with other public associations, the current potential and capability of the human, financial and technological resources of Georgian CSOs, and the extent of their involvement in international networks. The table below summarises the aggregated scores for the various sub-dimensions in this dimension.

TABLE III.2.1 The level of organisational development

2	Dimension: Level of Organisation	64.5
2.1	Internal Governance	94.1
2.2	Infrastructure	69.3
2.3	Sectoral communication	83.7
2.4	Human resources	43.0
2.5	Financial and technological resources	91.1
2.6	International linkages	6.1

The question "How organised and capable is civil society?" on the CSI organisational survey (CSI OS 2009) drew mixed responses from respondents. On the one hand, CSOs are clearly self-confident and self-assured. On the other hand, many CSO members are doubtful of their organisation's competence and expertise; they think that the real capabilities of the CSOs fall far short of what they claim to have.

2.1 Internal governance

This sub-dimension describes organisations' structures and the extent of democratic governance in CSOs. Formally, the internal governance of CSOs is quite adequate, with 94.1% of CSOs having collective governing bodies, such as administrative boards and executive boards (CSI OS 2009). Moreover, an increasing number of CSOs have set up external boards or advisory boards, which are made up of more prominent and respectable figures of Georgian civil society, provided they are not members of the same CSOs for which they serve as board members. The main task of an advisory board is to outline a long-term development strategy for an organisation. However, the CSOs in question are stable, full-grown and long-standing organisations with a dozen or more members, which are hard to govern by a small group of like-minded people using instruments of direct democracy.

In reality, advisory boards are rather passive. As a rule, they are created to satisfy funding conditions required by donor organisations, rather than to meet the development needs of a CSO. Given the fact that a considerable number of CSOs are more than five years old, this aspect can hardly promote a positive view of the CSOs.[20] In addition, experts of advisory boards are usually busy dealing with issues of their own organisations and have little time to consider development strategies for others as well (The Political Landscape of Georgia, 2006).

2.2 Infrastructure

According to the findings in the Organisational Survey, 69.3% of the CSOs are members of different networks, coalitions and associations. Currently, there are only a few permanent CSO umbrella organisations in Georgia. These include a network of environmental organisations (CEEN), which is well known even outside of the environmental field.

There are also coalitions of CSOs that share a common goal to promote and support government initiatives, such as participation in the election process or social programmes. The government explicitly or implicitly backs these coalitions. According NWPs and FGPs, other CSOs, however, see them as less trustworthy and reliable within CSO circles.

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[20] According to the research results, 79.2% of the polled CSOs were founded in 1906-2004.

Other forms of coalitions are usually created in the framework of large projects, provided donor organisations put forward networking as a condition for funding. The lifespan of such coalitions and networks, however successful they may be, rarely extends beyond the duration of a project. Afterwards, with scarce opportunities for their continued existence, they either break up or continue to exist only on paper.

The coalitions are also often politicised, meaning they fall into two groups, namely pro-government and non-government, and tend to refer to each other as 'them' and 'us.' However, the government's attitude towards CSO coalitions is, in general, neutral. From time to time, governmental circles debate over plans to create a governmental regulatory body to coordinate activities of CSOs. However, this idea is invariably met with widespread criticism and scepticism from the CSO community and usually ends up being shelved.[21]

2.3 Sectoral communication

In contrast to the above indicator, sectoral communication within Georgian civil society is much better, both formally and practically. The analysis from the Organisational Survey data shows that in the three months preceding the CSI OS 2009 data collection, 85.1% of the CSOs organised meetings and discussions with CSOs from the same sector, while 82.2% shared various information (documents, reports, data). On the whole, sectoral communication is estimated at 83.7% (CSI OS 2009).

Such ties depend on ongoing projects and help CSOs improve their performance. For instance, the USAID-sponsored 'Citizens Advocacy Programme,' which ran from 2002 to 2005, was a successful example of cooperation and coalition work among CSOs; however this cooperation ceased once the project ended.

According the NWPs, the main downside of inter-CSO cooperation initiatives is that they tend to pay less attention to major target groups and direct beneficiaries and focus instead on efforts to successfully fulfil their part of responsibilities under a joint project, principally donor deliverables.

Mutual assistance offered by CSOs, such as think tanks or training providers, to each other in such spheres as consultancy and training for the personnel of underdeveloped CSOs can, on the other hand, be seen as a positive side of cooperation. A recent and very positive trend in sharing information and setting up permanent networks to achieve common goals has emerged among CSOs. This tendency is usually observed across the same-sector CSOs and does not rely on donor assistance.[22] If this tendency is consolidated, it may herald the beginning of a new, significant chapter in the development of civil society in Georgia.

2.4 Human resources

Human resources comprise the basis of any institution. This sub-dimension assesses the strength of the human resources working for CSOs. According to the Organisational Survey findings, 43% of surveyed CSOs have sustainable human resources, meaning that more than 75% of their staff consists of paid workers, as opposed to volunteers (CSI OS 2009). As mentioned previously, volunteerism is less common in CSOs than paid employment,[23] and 33% of CSOs surveyed have no volunteers at all, while 38% have only a few, from 2 to 20. However, the term 'volunteering' is not always properly understood by CSOs, and most often 'volunteers' are actually project beneficiaries, not true volunteers.

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[21] Such plans were proposed by both the current government and its predecessor.
[22] The trend can be illustrated by the creation of the Coalition for Local Self-Government and Democracy in 2009 by CSOs dealing specifically with local self-government problems.
[23] See sub-dimension 1.1 and 1.4 for further discussions on this topic

A major stumbling block to achieving a sustainable human resource base is that, in the early days, most CSOs were simply groups of like-minded enthusiasts. Many of them are still small organisations and, save a few exceptions, recruit new members through personal contacts rather than formal job advertisements. CSO leaders prefer hiring people they know from previous activities to selecting unknown candidates on the basis of competition. Recently, nevertheless, relatively large CSOs have increasingly recruited new staff on a competitive basis (Khapava, 2010).

It is also noteworthy that, since the Rose Revolution, many CSO members have moved from the civil society sector to governmental institutions and private businesses. As few have managed to be replaced since leaving, the lack of qualified personnel has had a significant impact on Georgian CSOs. To make matters worse, donors reduced funding for the civil society sector, while wages soared in other sectors, mainly in governmental bodies. As a result, 'brain drain' from the civil sector has intensified.[24]

During the focus group discussions, CSO representatives cited the above-specified factors as main drivers behind increasing authoritarian tendencies in CSOs, and the steady concentration of power in the hands of CSO leadership. This problem will be discussed more in-depth in the sub-dimension dealing with democratic forms of decision-making.[25]

2.5 Financial and technological resources

Below we discuss the problems CSOs encounter with financial and technical resources and the trends observed in this respect. According to the Organisational Survey findings, 91.1% of CSOs rated their financial and technical resources adequate: 89.0% for financial sustainability and 93.1 % for technical resources (CSI OS 2009). Yet CSO self-assessment reports indicate the following picture of their financial sustainability:

TABLE III.2.2 Annual budgets of CSOs

	Increased	Unchanged	Decreased
Income in comparison with the previous year	26	41	26
Expenditure in comparison with the previous year	22	55	15
Budget over last five years	24	31	37

(CSI OS 2009)

The table shows that over the last five years, 37% of CSOs surveyed reported that their budgets have shrunk and only 26% said their budget had increased in the past year (2008). The data corroborates claims by CSOs that their financial sources have steadily decreased since 2003. FGPs also confirmed that the number of donor organisations, as well as their lists of priority spheres for financing, has diminished. In addition, regional focus group participants report a new negative tendency: in view of their limited resources, CSOs obediently accept all priorities laid out by donor organisations, even implementing projects outside their sphere of competence, provided they are ranked high among donor priorities, in order to secure donor funding. For example, gender organisations are often forced to deal with environmental problems. Since a majority of donors usually favour stable and experienced CSOs, newly founded organisations have slim chances of survival. Regional

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[24] In the 1990s, CSOs were largely seen as a better place to work than, say, corrupt state structures, because unlike the latter, CSOs offered citizens more opportunities to realise their potential without relinquishing their values and beliefs. Further, at a time of deep economic crisis, monthly wages in CSOs (100-200 USD on average) greatly exceeded the national average, thanks to western grants. An increase of wages in the state sector in recent years and the scarce financing from donors combined with a perceived lack of involvement by the government is felt to have decreased the previous attractiveness of CSOs.
[25] See sub-dimension 3.1 for further discussion on this topic.

CSOs also face problems as donors direct their funds to them through an intermediary, namely a Tbilisi-based CSO.

International donor organisations remain major financial sources for Georgian CSOs. This is illustrated by the fact that the share of donor funds is 100% in the annual budgets of 37.4% of CSOs, more than 70% in the budgets of 54.6% of CSOs, and more than 50% of the budgets of 58.6% of CSOs. Other financial sources are much smaller in comparison. For instance, 88% of CSOs have never received any financial assistance from the government (either central or local), 95% were never funded by private businesses, and 83.2% never received individual donations. Further, 82.8% of the organisations have no income, apart from selling their services (CSI OS 2009).

At a first glance, this data seems to be in contradiction to the general budgetary parameters of these CSOs. The annual budgets of 29.6% of CSOs vary between 250 thousand GEL and 4 million GEL, while budgets of 23.5% of the organisations amount to 50-250 thousand GEL (WVS 2009).[26] Two factors must be taken into consideration; firstly, CSOs tend to exaggerate their incomes in order to prove that they are financially sustainable; secondly, as many CSOs, especially small ones, have 'gone out of business' in recent years, donors redistributed their funds among the remaining, relatively large organisations.

As for technical resources, for years, Georgian CSOs had better technical resources, including more up-to-date computers and equipment than other sectors, primarily due to Western grants (Kipiani, 2003). The CSOs were guided by pragmatic considerations: modern equipment needs more time to become out-of-date and therefore does not require frequent upgrades (every two or three years). Today 87.1% of the CSOs have access to the internet and 91.1% are equipped with modern PCs (CSI OS 2009).

However, with the decrease in donor funding mostly affecting projects that focus on organisational development issues, the high-tech equipment these CSOs possessed has become increasingly obsolete. In many CSOs, the technology is already five or even ten years old. As a result, these CSOs are facing difficulty in installing and using new software, such as the latest versions of Microsoft Office, in their project work. For regionally based CSOs, the problem is exacerbated by slow internet connections or the lack of internet access across Georgia's regions. On the whole, according to estimations by international organisations, the number of internet users is steadily rising in Georgia; having reached 23.7% of the total population in 2008 (Internet Users, World Bank Data, 2008). Unfortunately, the share of pirated software is also very high. In 2009, Georgia was ranked number one in the world in terms of piracy levels (95%), ahead of Zimbabwe - 92%, Bangladesh - 91%, Moldova - 91% and Armenia - 91% (Business Software Alliance, 2009). On the one hand, this offers clear evidence of the rapid development of technical resources. On the other, users more and more often encounter problems caused by incompatibility between pirated and licensed software, besides the obvious ethical considerations. CSOs are promoting the rule of law, but use pirated goods in their everyday work. This is contradictory in one way, but on the other hand understandable, because licensed software is extremely expensive.

2.6 International linkages

This indicator examines the strength of international links available to Georgian CSOs. According to the database of the Union of International Associations, the percentage of international non-governmental organisations operating in Georgia today stands at 6.09% of

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[26] The exchange rate of the Georgian national currency is rather unstable, fluctuating from 1.4 to 1.9 GEL for one US dollar.

the world total.[27] Many international organisations have opened their offices in Georgia in recent years. They deal with the most urgent problems of the country, such as aid to internally displaced persons (IPDs) and refugees, and social assistance programmes. The participation of Georgian CSOs in international networks is another important aspect to be considered. There is no recent data available regarding the exact level of their involvement. In 2003 however, Georgian CSOs were affiliated to 766 international organisations, such as the various United Nations associations and Partners for Democratic Change, and their activities covered a remarkably broad range of topics. In terms of international affiliation, Georgia was way ahead of other Caucasus countries, but far behind Eastern European countries.

Conclusion

We conclude that:

- To a large extent, democratic institutions (elected bodies) of Georgian CSOs are a mere formality. This is especially the case with advisory boards. According to the majority of FGPs, there are no forms of direct democratic governance.
- Although Georgian CSOs' infrastructure is quite well developed compared to other countries of the region, it still does not meet international standards.
- CSOs are facing serious problems with regard to their human resources, as they struggle to find replacements for staff lost to the ongoing 'brain drain' to other spheres.
- The long-term technical and financial sustainability of CSOs also leaves much to be desired. Their once modern and adequate technical resources have become out of date. To make matters worse, donors have become less interested in funding the civil sector in recent years and the flow of grants has dried up, while other fundraising sources are almost unavailable.
- More positively, the level of cooperation among CSOs has increased in recent times, indicating that they have moved to the next, higher stage of development.
- It would be helpful for CSOs to expand their international contacts and cooperation with international networks, as their current situation is not equipping them to meet modern challenges.

3. INTERNAL PRACTICE OF VALUES

The table below summarises the scores for the sub-dimensions used in assessing the level of the practice of values in civil society. The overall dimension score was 64.7%. However, while the data findings show a relatively high achievement of the practice of values in Georgian CSOs, many we consulted felt that unfortunately the reality was bleaker and far less impressive than this high rate. As with the case of organisational development in the second dimension above, data on internal practice of values is very controversial. Opinions expressed by NWPs, as well as the evidence provided by CSOs themselves, suggest that the data findings reflect the way CSOs perceive the situation rather than the reality.

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[27] Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development and CIVICUS would like to thank the Union of International Associations for their collaboration with the CSI project in providing this data.

TABLE III.3.1 Internal values and code of conduct

3	Dimension: Practice of Values	64.7
3.1	Democratic decision-making governance	82.2
3.2	Labour relations	36.5
3.3	Code of conduct and transparency	87.7
3.4	Environmental standards	80.2
3.5	Perception of values in civil society as a whole	37.0

3.1 Democratic decision-making governance

The sub-dimension assesses the extent of democratic decision-making in CSOs and the extent to which governance structures ensure or impede this. During the analysis, 82.2% of the Organisational Survey sampled CSOs claimed to have democratic decision-making practices in place (CSI OS 2009). A breakdown shows that in 49.5% of the organisations, decisions are made by an elected chair, while an elected board makes decisions in 25.7% of organisations. A much smaller group of organisations, a meagre 3%, exercised direct democracy by giving all members a voice in decision-making. However, NWPs severely doubted the validity of this data. At best, in their opinion, only about 30% of the CSOs have a truly democratic decision-making system. Besides, there is usually no regular rotation of board members; boards and other governing bodies either exist only on paper or are made up of 'permanent members' of an organisation.

Yet another negative tendency has emerged in recent years amid dwindling donor funding for the civil society sector. Under national NGO legislation (a new amendment of this law was put in place 2005), organisations have to re-register as CSOs. The official reason for the amendment was said to be further support of CSO activity. During this process, some CSOs that were governed by boards in the past officially adopted a one-person governance model in which an organisation's leader acts simultaneously as its only founder and director, who remains the sole decision-maker.[28]

It is important to note that ordinary members of these CSOs appear unconcerned with such developments in their organisations. At a time of growing financial uncertainty and mounting challenges to sustainable development of their organisations, many seem to think that the individual leadership of an 'experienced leader' is the best way to deal with problems. Of the survey respondents, 87.7% said they were satisfied with how their organisation was managed, while only 3.1% assessed the performance of their management team negatively (CSI OS 2009). It is noteworthy, however, that in small CSOs, a majority of the ordinary members are, at the same time, part of the management team. For them, "are you satisfied with management?" is a self-assessment question.

3.2 Labour regulations

As in some above-mentioned aspects of civil society, there is a significant mismatch between everyday practices and the formal regulatory procedures regarding labour legislation. In fact, Georgia does not have clear rules to regulate its current labour practices, although the result is not necessarily rampant discrimination. There exists no significant formal discrimination on the basis of gender or any other identities within Georgian CSOs. As to formal regulations, there are many issues that are not regulated by the law at all (CSI OS 2009). This problem is perceived in various ways, as shown below:

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[28] Actions of such CSOs mirrored the processes that were unfolding in the country at that time. After 2004 the constitution was repeatedly amended to expand presidential powers. As a result, some of the very CSOs that opposed authoritarian tendencies in the government opted for a rather authoritarian model of internal governance themselves.

- Only 17.8% of the CSOs said that their formal regulations ensured gender equality in terms of payment and recruitment policies, though NWPs claimed that the real number of such CSOs did not exceed 5%. This does not demonstrate widespread inequality but bears witness to a general absence of CSO internal regulations and structural development
- Of CSO paid employees, 24.1% are members of trade unions while 89% of the CSO management staff members are not involved in any trade unions. NWPs doubt the validity of this data as well. In their view, there are very few trade unions in Georgia nowadays and none of them represents CSO employees. It is unclear therefore, which unions these people are members of.
- According to CSO self-assessment reports, 18.8% provide newly recruited staff with training in labour regulations; according to NWPs, only 1% of CSOs do so.
- Of CSOs surveyed, 85.1% claimed that they had transparent labour standards and policies. In reality, according to NWPs, fewer than 5% of CSOs have such standards and policies. According to the NWPs, CSOs are often tempted to declare that they have no problems in relation to labour standards and regulations in order to meet the funding requirements of their donors. Quite often, however, after winning a contest to fill a staff vacancy and quitting a previous job, an applicant may be told that his/her nomination was annulled at the last moment because another applicant was given preference. Georgia's libertarian labour law does not regulate such cases.

3.3 Code of conduct and transparency

According to the research findings, the averaged transparency index is 87.7%, encompassing existence of a code of conduct (82.2%) and financial transparency (93.1%) (CSI Data Indicator Matrix (3.3); CSI OS 2009). According to the NWPs, however, only 20% of CSOs provide unrestricted access to their code of conduct. Furthermore, for an overwhelming majority of CSOs this code is a dead document. In addition, NWPs expressed some major doubts about the self-assessments.

- 82.2% of the CSOs claimed that they already had a code of conduct. But according to the NWPs, this data is obviously unrealistic.
- 79.1% of the organisations that claimed to have publicly available codes of conduct emphasised that the information was available upon request. This led NWPs to suspect that in response to donors' requests these organisations may provide codes of conduct that are effectively defunct.

According to one of the project case studies, only a few Georgian CSOs have sufficient knowledge of the principles and forms of accountability (See CSI case study: *Forms and Practices of Accountability in Civil Society Sector of Georgia*, 2009). Things are not much better in international organisations in this regard, though sometimes standards adopted in certain fields do work. Examples include standards of Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), which incorporates five organisations; SPHERE standards to improve quality and accountability of the humanitarian response to natural disasters (1997); Interaction PVO standards to enhance the effectiveness and professional capacities of the member organisations engaged in international humanitarian efforts (among the members are 10 Georgian organisations) (HAP International, 2007; Codes of conduct, 2009). These standards, however small in numbers, can be assessed only positively.

Another downside is the lack of transparency in decision-making processes, including in donor organisations. In several cases, for instance, the winner of a grant competition was denied funding by the donor, without any explanation, and the money was given to another CSO, despite the latter scoring fewer points in the competition. The CSI financial transparency data was also criticised by NWPs. In their view, although 93.1% of the interviewed organisations claimed that the information about their financial affairs was open

and freely available, in reality fewer than 20% of them provide access to such information. In most cases, NWPs felt this openness means that CSOs submit regular financial reports to their donors and, at best, publish their annual financial reports, which only include general information about their incomes and expenditures. A simple empirical analysis is enough to determine that in many CSOs, mainly large organisations, a majority of their members know almost nothing about the incomes and financial policies of their organisations.

Unfortunately, this is also the case with some international organisations currently present in Georgia, both service providers and donors. Although they routinely urge local CSOs to make public their detailed financial information, including disclosure of wages, they are reluctant to publish even general information about their own budgets, let alone detailed data. Moreover, local CSOs involved in joint projects with foreign partners often know very little, if anything, about the project budgets.

It is more difficult still to obtain information from those international organisations that cooperate with governmental institutions. According to Transparency International - Georgia, the donors conference in Brussels (2008), which discussed and approved allocation of relief funds for Georgian Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) displaced by the 2008 Russian-Georgian war, refused to provide a detailed description of the aid structure. This aid budget, which distributes about US$3,000 per IDP, is five times bigger than the annual budget for 2009 of the Georgian Ministry of Refugees and Settlement. Further, both the Georgian government and donor organisations are tight-lipped about how they are going to allocate US$700 million that has been promised to social development projects (See the CSI case study: Forms and Practices of Accountability in Civil Society Sector of Georgia, 2009).

Finally, in the view of the NWPs, it should be noted that although Georgian CSOs are well aware of the principles of accountability, they often tend to ignore them in their practical work, either out of mercantile interests or due to the lack of common standards.

3.4 Environmental standards

In their self-assessment reports, 80.2% of CSOs surveyed claimed to have established environmental policies and practices (CSI OS 2009). Based on their empirical analysis, NWPs concluded that such policies are in reality currently adopted in no more than 20% of the organisations in the sample.

Few CSOs can be seen to apply environmental standards in their everyday activities. To begin with, the meaning of these standards remains unclear. As NWPs stated, some CSOs may think that these standards imply smoking bans (full or partial) in their offices or user restrictions on printer usage to ensure rational use of paper. At first such practices were employed mainly by international organisations, but of late, more and more local CSOs have followed suit. However, little is being done to address other environmental concerns; for instance, reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, or responsible water consumption. One of the few exceptions in this regard are environmental organisations, since they are focused on environmental protection and their projects are specifically designed to tackle environmental problems. It is important to note here that these organisations are perceived to form a separate community which is distanced from other CSOs which operate in different spheres.

3.5 Perceptions of values in civil society as a whole

This section will focus on how CSOs relate key civil society values, such as non-violence, an internal democratic mentality, aversion to corruption and tolerance. These values are listed below with their scores in Georgia (CSI OS 2009):

- **Non-violence**: According to the research, actors that employ various forms of violence constitute 35.1% of civil society. Interviews showed, however, that as many

as 50.5% of CSOs were in favour of violent methods. NWPs agreed that the last figure was quite realistic and suggested that it seemed to have included both those who use such methods in practice and those who would be willing to use them. Among these actors are radical orthodox and/or nationalistic groups, as well as libertarian organisations. As formulated by CSO representatives at the National Workshop, some watchdog organisations may also fall into this category. Although the number of such groups is very small and they are seen as marginal by wider civil society, opinions on their role and influence are mixed: 38.6% of CSOs surveyed think that these groups are quite large and influential, 33.3% said that violence was a common feature in civil society, while 26.3% of CSOs fell somewhere in between.

- **Internal democracy**: There are relatively high expectations (43.5%) of civil society's role in the modelling of democratic decision-making. NWPs estimated this figure even higher (more than 50%) and stated that this is the least that can be expected of civil society. Nevertheless, 51.1% of the respondents said that civil society had a very limited role in the practice of internal democracy, and only 23.9% assessed this role as significant.
- **Corruption**: The research demonstrated that the perceptions of corruption among respondents were noticeably high (14.0%),[29] though NWPs estimated this at around 50%. In their estimation, although taking and giving bribes is rare in CSOs, if it exists at all, non-financial corruption, such as providing support out of political bias or personal sympathy, is widespread.
- **Intolerance**: During interviews, 66.2% of respondents admitted that, to some extent, intolerance was a real problem (CSI OS 2009). In the late Twentieth and early Twenty First Century, Georgia saw the rise of nationalistic and radical religious, Orthodox groups, which targeted small religious denominations, and sects that spread in the country at that time. After the Rose Revolution, the new government quickly suppressed these groups. It appears that even ultraliberal, pro-government groups demonstrated a certain degree of intolerance, equating dissent with treason.

As to civil society's role in promoting peace and tolerance, NWPs suggested that such expectations were mere wishful thinking. For instance, in their opinion, although many CSOs had observed the severe militarisation the country was going through by 2008, and that the danger of war was looming large, they preferred to remain silent and refrained from reacting because pacifist ideas were very unpopular in Georgia at that time. This would appear to be supported by the fact that 50% of survey respondents assessed civil society's role in promoting peace and tolerance as limited and insignificant, and only 12.2% said that it was an essential part of civil society.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that many representatives of CSOs, as well as members of the other segments of civil society, do not always abide by their declared values and principles. This could be the result of conformist attitudes or other considerations, indicating the presence of a range of significant problems within the CSO community.

Based on analysis of the daily practice of CSOs we can state that:

- In recent years, there is an increasing trend of autocratic management, which can be explained by the need for quick resolution of existing problems.
- Labour rights have been restricted and continue to shrink, which can be described as an adequate response to existing trends in the country (worsening of the labour laws).

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[29] The CSI methodology indicates that the lower the score, the higher the perceived level of corruption.

- CSOs acknowledge the importance of codes of conduct and transparency of finances, but in practice these are often ignored.
- Many CSOs acknowledge that they cannot influence public opinion, which demonstrates increasing destructive and inhuman attitudes, such as violence and intolerance towards alternative opinions.

4. PERCEPTION OF IMPACT

This section reviews the impact of CSOs on processes within Georgia. It attempts to answer the following questions:

- How adequately do CSOs address the social and political challenges facing Georgia?
- How responsive are CSOs?
- What is the impact of CSOs on ongoing processes?
- Can they affect public attitudes?
- To what extent do CSOs' values reflect broad public perceptions?
- What do ordinary people think about CSOs' activities?

Analysis includes self-assessment and an external assessment of CSOs by outside actors and experts.

TABLE III.4.1 Impact of CSOs on the processes within the country

4	Dimension: Perception of Impact	30.3
4.1	Responsiveness (internal perception)	33.0
4.2	Social impact (internal perception)	49.5
4.3	Policy impact (internal perception)	40.7
4.4	Responsiveness (external perspective)	20.3
4.5	Social impact (external perspective)	25.0
4.6	Policy impact (external perspective)	23.3
4.7	Impact of civil society on attitude	20.2

The analysis shows that self-assessment results are usually more positively rated than are the external evaluations. At the same time, effectiveness in both cases is much lower than one might expect, given the current level of organisational development and the importance of declared values.

4.1 Responsiveness (internal perception)

This indicator attempts to assess the impact of civil society on major social concerns. To do this, we must firstly identify the major problems facing Georgian society.

Widespread poverty was cited as the main challenge by 87.9% of people surveyed (WVS 2009). Other problems (only 12.1% together) are rated as much less serious in comparison with poverty: environmental pollution - 31.0%, inadequate quality of education - 27.8%, and substandard health care services - 26.7%. On this basis, environmental pollution is considered as the second biggest problem in Georgia for the purpose of this research (WVS 2009). When CSO respondents were asked to evaluate civil society's responsiveness to these problems, the first (poverty) received a score of 22.7%, while the second (environmental pollution) was scored at 25.8% (CSI OS 2009). In the Organisational Survey, CSO representatives admitted that in both cases, civil society had very limited powers to influence decision-making:

- CSOs have no influence (29.9%) or very limited influence (47.4%) on anti-poverty policies. Only a handful of the respondents (2.1%) believed that CSOs were in a position to exert strong influence on these policies.

- Regarding environmental pollution, 36.1% of respondents stated that CSOs had no influence on policies, 38.1% that they had very limited influence, and 9.3% of the respondents believed CSOs were in a position to exert strong influence on these policies.

It is interesting to note that attitudes towards the second problem exhibit higher levels of both excessive pessimism and excessive optimism than attitudes towards the first. It may be because the second problem, seen as less serious and less sensitive, is associated with higher expectation of success and greater perception of the ability of CSOs to influence. As to poverty, a majority of respondents doubt that CSOs can play any meaningful role in tackling the problem. Most respondents argued that the best solutions to the problem were to be found in the realms of economics and business. Nevertheless, Georgian CSOs do their best to remedy these problems. Sometimes CSO staff continue to work with beneficiaries on a voluntary basis even after a project is finalised and the donor funds run out; this is especially the case with large organisations. However, such cases are rare and occur spontaneously, and their impact is minimal in the long term.

4.2 Social impact (internal perception)

This indicator looks at the impact of the civil society sector on society as a whole, and also asks CSOs to measure their own effectiveness on the major social issues identified above. The former was rated at 34% and the latter at 65% (CSI OS 2009).

According to the self-assessment reports (CSI OS 2009), CSOs either do not play any role in the anti-poverty effort (14%) or play a very limited role (51%). Only 1% of respondents assessed CSOs' role as significant, while 32% believed that CSOs played a "certain role". The CSI research showed similar results for environmental protection: no role at all - 14%, limited role - 53%, certain role - 32%, and significant role - 1%.

Interestingly, different results were obtained when respondents were asked to assess the role of their own organisations. The anti-poverty effort was assessed as: no role - 33%, certain role - 57%, and significant role - 8%. Their assessment of their organisation's role in environmental protection was nearly identical. When asked to elaborate on how their organisation can contribute to the anti-poverty effort, 33.7% of respondents named educational programmes and awareness raising, while 21.8% emphasised providing support for poor and marginalised social groups as possible measures. As to environmental protection, the respondents' answers were evenly spread across a wide range of activities, without giving preference to any particular sphere. Two major conclusions can thus be drawn from the above-obtained results:

- When dealing with the most urgent problems of Georgian society, CSOs see their role as chiefly limited to civic education and humanitarian programmes, effectively admitting that they are not key players in this sphere. But in other, less sensitive areas, CSOs suggest a greater range of activities, indicating that they actually would have the ability to influence key processes.
- The self-assessment also showed that respondents tended to evaluate the role of their own organisations as more important than that of the civil society as a whole. In other words, they appeared confident of the significance of their organisations.

NWPs highlighted an increasing role of CSOs in public life. The main factor behind this is the fact that social programmes have become a top government priority in the two years covered by the study (2008-2010). It is in fact the public sphere that, unlike political activity, provides CSOs with a wider range of opportunities to work, including human rights protection, monitoring of public finances and conflict-related issues. CSOs ought to exploit these opportunities to a greater extent.

4.3 Policy impact (internal perception)

Apart from the social sphere, CSOs impact or attempt to impact the policy-making process in various fields. How effective is this impact, as perceived by CSOs?

According to the CSOs' self-assessment, civil society's policy impact is estimated at 40.7%. This is an average value calculated from assessments of the general impact of the sector, the individual organisation's perceived level of success, and the level of policy activity pursued by CSOs. Civil society's general policy impact is measured as 22.2% (CSI Data Indicator Matrix 4.3.1). In the CSOs' self-assessment reports the evaluation of the policy impact ranged from zero to strong: namely, zero (8.1%), minimal (69.7%), certain (20.2%), and strong (2.0%).

Despite these low scores, 55.6% of CSOs surveyed have attempted to advocate and lobby for certain policies in the last two years, a clear indication of civil society's relatively high level of activity. But this process can be also divided into several stages.[30] Unfortunately, the consequences of these activities are hard to predict and the information available is often contradictory.

CSO activities in policy and decision-making, regardless if they are successful or not, often take the following forms: participation in public discussions (72.3%), consultations with government (67.3%), and joint projects with other CSOs (60.4%), in other words, participation in existing programmes. Advocacy, lobbying and joint drafting of projects, i.e. creation of new programmes in collaboration with the government, are relatively rare (some 18.0% of the CSOs) (CSI OS 2009). Some conclusions from the above-specified results show that:

- Pro-government CSOs tend to evaluate their capacity for policy impact more positively. Quite often, they think that their main achievement is to promote and popularise the government's programmes and policies. As to the opposition CSOs, they blame the government for unwillingness to cooperate with them and usually assess CSO activities more negatively (See CSI case study: Factors Influencing Impact of Civil Society Over Policy Making, 2009).
- However, CSOs have achieved some success, albeit only in issues that pose no threat to the ruling elite's political or economic powers. The proposals that provide for at least partial redistribution of power and/or resources, or that demand a decentralisation of government, have not even been discussed, let alone approved and implemented.

4.4 Responsiveness (external perception)

This sub-dimension looks at the same issue identified in sub-dimension 4.1, but gathers an assessment from external experts, rather than from CSOs.

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[30] For two or three years after the Rose Revolution, for instance, teachers' trade unions, which actively supported the new government, had quite a strong influence on the implementation of education reforms. Since the end of 2006, however, the government has gradually scaled down consultations with civil society stakeholders and the trade unions have lost their capacity to influence the processes as a result. Representatives of trade unions insist that the government's aim is to marginalise dissenting voices. While earlier some 10 legislative amendments were adopted and enforced through the consultations, in 2008 the parliament refused even to debate legislative proposals submitted in full compliance with the legislation (with 60,000 signatures of support from some 50% of the public schools in Georgia) - an apparent breach of the Constitution.

The assessment by external experts of civil society's responsiveness to the general public's concerns substantially differs from CSOs' self-assessment.[31] With regard to impact on poverty alleviation, which was identified as a major problem, 20.7% of respondents stated that CSOs were not responsive, while 62.1% assessed their responsiveness as weak. Only 3.4% of the experts believed that CSOs were highly responsive to poverty concerns. As to impact on the second most important problem, environmental pollution, the experts assessed CSO responsiveness as follows: 46.7% evaluated CSOs as not responsive, 30% as weak, and 3.3% as high (CSI EPS 2010).

The conclusions of the external assessment are mostly consistent with the self-assessment results. The only difference is that, compared with the self-assessment, the external assessment was generally more critical of civil society's responsiveness. In particular:

- According to the self-assessment, 47.4% of the respondents assessed civil society's responsiveness to poverty as weak: the respective external assessment figure stands at 62.1%. Experts suggested that the optimistic self-assessment data was based on 'wishful thinking' rather than on reality. The external assessment also stated that economic growth, rather than the efforts of civil society, was the most effective way of eradicating poverty.
- Both the external evaluation and the self-assessment produced almost identical results in regard to environmental protection. The external assessment acknowledged that civil society's responsiveness to this problem was better than its response to poverty.

Regardless of the differences between the two evaluations - internal and external - both revealed that civil society generally is not responsive enough to the most serious problems Georgia faces today.

4.5 Social impact (external perception)

The external assessment of social impact (25%) is an average value derived from the estimates of impact on specific sectors (33.3%) and a general assessment (16.7%) (CSI EPS). As in the case of responsiveness, the external (expert) assessment and the self-assessment of the social impact showed slightly different results.[32]

The activities of CSOs involved in poverty reduction efforts usually cover education (30.0%), assistance and support for poverty-stricken and marginalised groups (16.7%), humanitarian relief and housing (10.0%) (CSI OS 2009). The social impact of these activities was assessed as insignificant by 63.3% of the respondents and as quite meaningful by 33.3%. According to the external assessment, environmental CSOs also pursue quite a wide range of activities, giving priority to humanitarian relief (23.3%) and social development (13.3%). Other programmes (such as education, food security, employment) were assessed to be covered by 30% of CSOs. In this case, too, a majority of the respondents (66.7%) evaluated CSOs' social impact as weak, while 30% of the respondents felt that their activities produced noticeable results.

In general, therefore, civil society's social impact is perceived as very limited, taking into account that 10% of expert respondents stated that the general impact was next to nothing, a vast majority of 73.3% said that it was insignificant, and a mere 3.3% felt that it was strong. In areas where public concerns are the strongest, activities of CSOs lack diversity and their social impact is low. In the opinion of civil society experts, the real general situation is far

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[31] See sub-dimension 4.1 for a comparative discussion on this topic.
[32] See sub-dimension 4.2 for a comparative discussion on this topic

worse than the CSO self-assessment reports (16.7% external perception compares with 34.0% internal perception marks). The NWPs emphasised that CSOs stated priorities according to donor guidelines and requirements (for instance, civil integration of minorities, gender equality, etc.), but that these priorities often do not meet the publics' needs (of which poverty reduction and social assistance are seen as most important). This problem does not affect only CSOs; other segments of civil society also often set wrong priorities.[33]

4.6 Policy impact (external perception)

This sub-dimension reviews the assessment of CSOs' impact on policy-making and implementation by external observers.

The level of CSOs' political activity is estimated at 33.3%, with achieved results at 13.3%. In other words, the value experts ascribe to obtained results is about 2.5 times lower than that of the implemented activities, a clear indication of the perceived inefficiency and ineffectiveness of CSOs' political activity (CSI Data Indicator Matrix 4.6.1 and 4.6.2). According to the external assessment, CSO's political activities include human rights protection (26.7%), promotion and lobbying of various policies (20%), implementation of various programmes in the judicial sphere (13.3%), penitentiary sectors (defence of the human rights of prisoners) (13.3%), and support to independent media institutions (10%) (CSI EPS).

With regards to the above-mentioned results, both the external and internal (self) assessments showed some contradictory results, with 96.6% stating that political activities by CSOs had netted zero results (CSI EPS).

Conclusions by NWPs, who based their judgement on the USAID Sustainability Index 2008 (prepared by USAID-Georgia), were largely in agreement with the self-assessment findings - that policy impact amounts to nothing, if advocacy targets systemic (political, economic) reforms in state structures (NGO Sustainability Index - 2008; USAID-Georgia, 2008). It is worth mentioning that, in terms of perception, both external and internal assessments yielded similar results, though the former was apparently more critical of the quality and quantity of the achieved results when compared with the latter.

4.7 Impact of civil society on attitudes

This sub-dimension looks at whether civil society is achieving a positive impact on the attitudes of the public. Below is data from the CSI Data Indicator Matrix to illustrate the relationship between members and non-members of civil society.

TABLE III.4.2 Relations between different actors in Georgian society

Difference in trust between civil society members and non-members	1.8
Difference in tolerance levels between civil society members and non-members	0.0
Difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members	33.4
Trust in civil society	45.6

As to the level of public confidence in civil society, it varies widely depending on the type of civil society institution.

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[33] During one of the focus group discussions participants cited the relocation of the Joseph Stalin Statue in the former Soviet ruler's native town, Gori, and ensuing rival actions by pro- and anti-relocation groups as one of the examples. But they did not say a single word about the recent illegal logging of 20 hectares of forest in the vicinity of the same town, which went unnoticed by media and political parties.

TABLE III.4.3 The level of public confidence in civil society institutions

Level of public confidence	Very high	Quite high	Low	Absent	No answer
Church	62.4	24.5	4.1	1.2	5.5
Charities	6.7	34.4	28.4	9.3	20.1
Environmental organisations	3.5	31.8	33.0	9.7	20.8
Women organisations	3.5	28.1	27.7	8.8	30.9
Trade unions	1.5	16.1	32.1	16.3	31.8
Political parties	1.3	14.8	44.6	27.9	10.2

According to our findings, the Orthodox Church's authority, which has always been very high, has increased even further in recent years from 'very high' 54.1% in 2006 to 62.4% in 2009 (VGS 2006). Positive attitudes towards political parties, another segment of society that used to be relatively popular among the general public, has declined from 'very high or quite high' 22.8% to 16.1% between 2006 and 2009 (VGS 2006). In the same period, public confidence in CSOs has significantly improved. In 2006, for instance, 57.0% of the population did not trust CSOs; in 2009, the figure is 39.0%. However, as outlined in sub-dimensions 4.2 and 4.5 above, CSOs still have a very limited ability to influence social processes (VGS 2006).

Conclusion

The research on these issues suggests that:

- CSOs have a very limited ability to influence both the government and the general public. As a rule, in the opinion of experts consulted, they use international organisations as a tool to influence government policies.
- Although the government actively cooperated with CSOs in the immediate aftermath of the Rose Revolution in 2003, the cooperation has again decreased dramatically since 2006-2007. Today, cooperation between the government and CSOs is limited to the participation of pro-government CSOs in governmental programmes.
- Public awareness of civil society's activities remains low. In the opinion of experts consulted, only the beneficiaries of their programmes usually praise CSOs, even though their numbers are not very high.

To sum up the analysis from this chapter, CSOs are too weak to cope with the challenges society faces. Though they identify the main problems, CSOs are unable to solve them. They are also powerless in policy-making processes. The state does not recognise them as an equal and serious partner. However, CSOs often overestimate their capabilities and the impact of their activity.

5. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

In order to better understand the challenges Georgian civil society faces, and especially the challenges faced by national CSOs, it is necessary to analyse the current political, social, economic, and cultural context in which Georgian civil society operates. The government and certain social spheres continue to stagnate, according to assessments by some international organisations such as Freedom House, Transparency International, World Bank, Social Watch and UNDP HDR, as data in this chapter shows. Data obtained from major international sources were used as the criteria to assess the external environment, producing an overall score of 59.6%.

- The first sub-dimension assesses the socio-economic context using data from international sources: the Basic Capabilities Index, Human Development Index, Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International and the Gini coefficient.

- The second sub-dimension assesses the political situation in Georgia in accordance with data from Freedom House on political rights and freedoms, rule of law, media freedom and level of democracy. We also included the subjective experience of the legal context and indicators developed by the World Bank, with regard to the effectiveness of the state.
- The third sub-dimension reviews Georgian society's system of values, including interpersonal trust, tolerance and public spiritedness.

TABLE III.5.1 External environment of CSOs

5	Dimension: External Environment	59.6
5.1	Socio-economic context	66.5
5.2	Socio-political context	57.0
5.3	Socio-cultural context	52.8

5.1 Socio-economic context

Attempts to assess Georgia's current social and economic situation triggered intense debate among NWPs and FGPs, as they were unable to agree on whether it facilitated or impeded the development of civil society in Georgia. On the one hand, it was argued that hard social and economic problems increased motivation for citizens to participate in political and public life, especially as they have sufficient free time due to unemployment. On the other hand, people struggling with daily hardship were less inclined to spend their time on political and social activities because they are busy trying to meet their basic needs.

According to Social Watch, the Basic Capabilities Index for Georgia stands at 89.4% in 2008, placing the country on the 89th place among 176 countries (BCI, 2007). At the same time, there have been some major reversals in the last two decades, and especially in recent years, though in some areas, if compared with the total meltdown of the 1990s, the situation has definitely improved (BCI, 2008).

Between 2000 and 2007, according to UNDP, Georgia's HDI improved by an average of 0.73% per year (from 0.739 to 0.778). In this case, the country is also in 89th place out of 182 countries, falling behind OECD and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, and Eastern and Central Europe, and has more in common with Latin American and Caribbean countries (UNDP HDR Georgia, 2009).

Health and education: According to the 2008 Social Watch Report, the relatively high scores of certain areas of human capabilities, despite the global economic recession, can be explained by the fact that the situation in these areas was already quite stable beforehand. The number of children completing fifth grade at school has increased in comparison to 1999, but the general tendency remains worrying: the first grade of school was completed by only 86.68% of children in 2006, which is a decrease from the extremely high rate of 97.1% in 1991. In addition, elementary school consisted of eight years of schooling in 1991 and today consists of five years. At that time, approximately 99% of 13 to 14-year-old pupils did not have the grade needed to continue to vocational training schools. Today approximately 20% of 10-11 year olds drop out of school after five years (Social Watch Report, 2008).

United Nations literacy data measures as the percentage of people aged 15 to 24 who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life. According to this data, Georgia is first in the world in terms of adult literacy rates and one of the four countries, together with Cuba, Estonia and Latvia to achieve a 100% literacy rate among citizens age 15 and above (UNESCO Database, 2008). In recent years, however, the situation has worsened significantly. An ongoing optimisation of the national education system has, instead of improving the situation, led to the closure of many small rural schools

and a lack of school bus services in rural communities. As a result, quite a few local children (5-6% in some communities) can neither write nor read.[34]

Three other important indicators of the Basic Capabilities Index are child mortality rates, survival until the fifth birthday and number of births attended to by health professionals. Georgia has made some progress on these indicators in recent years. For example, the infant mortality rates have reduced from 39 to 28 per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2006, while the mortality of children under five years has dropped from 46 to 32 per 1,000 live births. However, this improvement can be attributed to a dramatic decline in birth rates rather than significant improvements of the national health care system, as only wealthy families can afford to have many children (UNICEF, 2008).

The other BCI indicator, the assistance of professional health personnel during child births, dropped from 96.0% in 1990 to 92.0% in 2006, presumably largely due to the deterioration of the health care infrastructure over the last two decades in the country, especially in rural communities (Social Watch Report, 2008a).

Life expectancy in Georgia (currently 71.6 years in 2007) has also decreased in recent years. This places the country on the 90th place in the world ranking today, situated between the Philippines and Jamaica. Furthermore, due to a combination of low birth rates and high mortality rates, the annual population growth fell from 0.6% (1990-1995) to 0.0% (2005-2010) (Human Development Report - Georgia, 2009).

Other negative developments in the health care system include the first reported malaria cases since the beginning of the 1920s (1990 - 0 cases, 2003 - 0.1 cases per 1,000 citizens), and also a rise in the number of TB cases (from 53 to 84 cases per 100 thousand citizens in the period between 1990 and 2005, though these figures represent only registered cases). There has also been a three-fold increase in the number of maternal deaths at birth per 100 thousand from 22 in 1995 to 66 in 2005 (World Health Organisation 2005a; 2005b; 2005c). According to Georgian healthcare experts, these negative tendencies are driven by the following factors: the decline in living standards (with environmental and social problems), and the lack of health care professionals, who often opt to migrate to other countries - the so-called 'brain drain' - or pursue other activities. For instance, many pregnant women seek medical advice and assistance only at the last stages of pregnancy in order to reduce the costs.

Corruption: In 2008, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index rated corruption in the Georgian public service at 3.9 by the decimal rating system. The rating placed Georgia between Swaziland and Ghana and indicates an above average position. The situation in Georgia is still regarded as better than the situation in 20 other Eastern European and Central Asian countries. Corruption has thus far not increased significantly, despite the war and the economic and political crises the country has faced in recent years. Despite this, scepticism towards the government's anti-corruption policies and its commitment against corruption in general, persists. People's perception of high-level corruption remains high (Transparency International, 2009).

Inequality: Georgia's Gini coefficient was 40.8 for 2005 (36.9 in 2001, 38.9 in 2003) (Human Development Report, 2009a). Of the country's population, 13.4% live on US$1.25 a day, while 30.4% of the population earns less than US$2 a day. This means that in the period 2000 to 2006, 54.5% of Georgian citizens lived below even the Georgian official poverty line (Human Development Report, 2009b). Considering the fact that during the Soviet period the

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[34] Expert estimate from unpublished source.

standard of living was significantly better than it is now, the situation has radically worsened, when compared to the 1980s.

Other economic parameters: The country's foreign debt amounts to 10.8% of GNI (Gross National Income). This debt level is a relatively good for a country like Georgia, especially taking into account the significant improvements since 1998 (World Bank Database). Nevertheless, Georgia is still ranked at 135th in the world in terms of per capita income ($2,313 USD in 2007), which means that the country is now three to five times below the world average and 15.5 times below the Eurozone figures (Human Development Report, 2009b; World Bank, Statistics for Georgia; Human Development Report - Georgia, 2009).

5.2 Socio-political context

Both international organisations and civil society experts surveyed agreed that the socio-political context has worsened in Georgia, especially after 2007. The euphoria of the Rose Revolution gave way to widespread frustration and disillusionment. Progress achieved by the new government in the first post-revolution year is felt to have stagnated or even reversed in some areas.

Political rights and freedoms: Georgia scored 20 in the 40-point ranking system for Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index scoring in year 2009. The data regarding other aspects related to political freedoms corroborates this (see Table III.5.2 below) (Freedom House, 2008a).

TABLE III.5.2 Political rights and freedoms

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Political rights				19	21	24	24	25	20	
Civil rights				32	32	34	37	37	34	
Independence of the judiciary	4	4	4.25	4.5	4.5	5	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Freedom of press	47	53	53	54	54	56	57	57	60	60
Independence of media	3.75	3.5	3.75	4	4	4.25	4.25	4	4.25	4.25
Corruption	5	5.25	5.5	5.75	6	5.75	5.5	5	5	5
Democracy Score	4.17	4.33	4.58	4.83	4.83	4.96	4.86	4.68	4.79	4.93

(Freedom House, 2009)

The table above shows that the situation significantly improved in many areas immediately after the Rose Revolution of 2003, but soon worsened again. Press freedoms suffered the biggest decline. Once seen as a partly free nation (60 marks), Georgia has gradually drifted closer to being a non-free nation (61 marks and above) (Freedom House, 2008b).

Inefficient government, a pervasive and powerful executive branch and the absence of a strong opposition are, according to Freedom House, among the major obstacles to the democratisation processes in Georgia. The election process has become less fair and less democratic since 2007, while opposition leaders and activists are being persecuted and harassed to a greater extent. Cooperation between the government and civil society has weakened, and the government became less transparent. Local self-government in Georgia is still far from being truly independent. Although the level of mass corruption has reduced as shown earlier, high-profile corruption continues unabated. This partly explains why corruption in Georgia has again climbed to its 2000 level (5 score). It is also important to note that in 2009, Georgia unfortunately lost its status as an 'electoral democracy' (according

to Freedom House), though just a year earlier, in 2008, it was ranked as such alongside 119 other countries (Freedom House, 2009).

The rule of law and individual freedom: The Freedom House *Freedom in the World* report puts this indicator at 56.25%. Most worrying here is that the rule of law often is ignored by government. There is also a wide gap between written laws and everyday practices, and a tendency towards tougher legislation. For instance, the 'out-of-court settlement' and 'plea bargaining' with associated penalty payments have become a considerable source of revenue in the government budget (Freedom House, 2008a).

Associational and organisational rights: This is given a score of 58.33% by Freedom House (2009). The table III.5.2 above shows the lack of progress in this field as well. Although both Freedom House and the World Bank concluded that the situation had worsened in Georgia in this regard, the trend went unnoticed by civil society as it was overshadowed by other problems, such as financial, internal management and public trust (Freedom House, 2008a).

Experience of the legal framework: This was given a score of 40.2% by the Freedom House *Freedom in the World* report. The views of CSOs surveyed in the CSI project differ considerably in their evaluation of this aspect, as 31.3% of respondents believe that the current legislation places too many constraints on civil society, while 54.5% consider it generally acceptable, and 14.1% fully approve of the existing laws. At the same time, the most critical CSOs are much more uncompromising regarding central and local governments' everyday decisions and practices in general, which are often in breach of the laws and impose restrictions on the CSOs (87.0%). Nevertheless, 53.5% of CSOs have no doubt that Georgian society continues to move down the path of democratisation, while only 14.9% feel that democratic processes have slowed down in the country. Despite the many criticisms, however, 88.1% of CSOs are willing and ready, if offered by the government, to take part in governmental programmes (CSI OS 2009).

State effectiveness received a score of 47.4%. There is a broad consensus among international bodies and Georgian civil society experts that effectiveness and efficiency of the country's state institutions has improved significantly in recent years. At the same time, political instability is said to have risen in Georgia due to recent events, such as the political crisis of 2007 and the Russian-Georgian war of 2008 (Worldwide Governance Indicators, World Bank, 2008).

TABLE III.5.3 State effectiveness

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Voice and Accountability	34.1	35.6	42.8	44.7	42.8	40.9	40.4
Political Stability	10.6	7.2	16.8	25	20.7	23.6	16.3
Government Effectiveness	23.2	27.5	40.3	39.3	48.3	55.5	61.6
Regulatory Quality	19.5	20.5	31.7	29.3	44.9	58.7	68.6
Rule of Law	7.6	9	24.8	26.2	34.8	41	44
Control of Corruption	6.3	15	31.1	43.2	51.5	48.8	50.7

(Worldwide Governance Indicators, World Bank, 2008)

As mentioned previously, it is useful to recall that Georgia's socio-political situation has worsened in some areas in the last three to four years. The trend should be attributed mainly to the government's blunders and to growing nihilism in general society.

Civil society's attitudes towards state institutions are largely determined by how loyal a particular group or a specific organisation is to governmental policies. It is evident in the opinions of FGPs that although active involvement of citizens in democratic processes is

guaranteed by law, in real life the government often ignores legislation and disregards public opinion, fuelling nihilism and frustration in society. The government does not have any policy on civil sector development. Every positive development in this field has been a result of western pressure so far. The country's pro-Western course enables the civil society sector to indirectly influence the government's policies.

Relations with the business community are even less productive. Georgia's 12 top rated companies practice some form of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Although they admit lacking experience in this field, they understand that participation in social programmes is essential. Moreover, these companies are involved, to a certain degree, in such programmes (*The Georgian Times*, 2009). But their attitude towards CSOs is quite different. The companies either know nothing about the activities of CSOs, or cast doubt on their efficiency. That is why they mostly prefer to cooperate with governmental institutions or international organisations. As a consequence, joint projects between Georgian businesses and CSOs are extremely rare. Furthermore, companies argue that if the number of foreign-funded programmes, seen as the main source of income for CSOs, is reduced, cooperation with CSOs will become pointless and useless (See CSI case study: Local Business, Corporate Social Responsibility and NGOs, 2009).

5.3 Socio-cultural context

Georgian national culture's traditional, even to some extent patrimonial, mentality, which aligns the country with Mediterranean societies, is one of its most distinctive features. Its main characteristics are the extremely low level of public confidence in state structures and formal institutions, and the dominance of traditional, informal relations. Another peculiar characteristic of Georgian society is a quite strong belief in mythical and superstitious sayings. Georgians are very proud of their centuries-long culture and history, claiming that Georgian statehood dates back more than 3,500 years and has a long tradition of Georgian tolerance. For centuries, in Georgians' words, Georgia used to be an outpost of the civilised world against barbarian invasions and, some time later, the most far-flung centre of Christianity, which managed to cooperate quite closely with the Islamic world.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 provided Georgia with a chance to regain its independence and sovereignty. However, neither the Georgian government nor society in general appeared able to meet the new challenges facing the country at that time. There seemed a stark contrast between how the problems of Georgia were perceived by society (with economic and security problems related to state building processes not well understood by a majority of the population), and the reality of these problems.. The transition towards democratic institutions and systems has been a very painful process in Georgia, being impeded, by such factors as unsophisticated political culture among the political elite and a lack of civic education among society (WVS 2009).

Interpersonal trust received a score of 18.6%. Only 13% of respondents (WVS 2009) stated that most people could be trusted, while 44.3% maintained that caution was necessary, 30.1% thought that only relatives and friends could be trusted, and 8.8% were certain that nobody should be trusted except next of kin. On the whole, the level of interpersonal trust is very low in Georgian society.

Tolerance levels scored 47.1%. It is a fact that different social groups are treated differently by Georgian society. When asked "who do you least want to be your neighbour?" 79.2% of the respondents mentioned homosexuals. The next were drug addicts (77.5%) followed by alcoholics (64.6%) and people with HIV/AIDS (37.8%). Respondents demonstrated much more tolerant attitudes towards people of other religions, races, or ethnic identities. Apart from traditional mentalities, public attitudes can be seen to be greatly influenced by government propaganda, which tolerates the traditional values present in Georgian society.

'Drug addicts' and 'alcoholics' are perceived as potential criminals by a large part of society, and this can be seen as the main reason for negative attitudes towards this group, especially as drug trafficking is a growing problem in Georgia (WVS 2009).

Public spiritedness received a score of 92.8%, a very high level (WVS 2009). According to these results, 95.9% of respondents disapproved of using deception to get benefits from the state, 96.7% said it was wrong to travel on public transport without paying, 97.0% denounced tax evasion, and 98.1% condemned bribery. It is important to note, however, that words and public statements do not always reflect reality. The overwhelming majority of citizens are well aware of the essence of public spiritedness and know that violation of these principles is viewed by society as unacceptable. At the same time, many people may presumably find it hard to resist the temptation to obtain some benefits by illegal means, if the right conditions arise. The energy crisis of the 1990s is a good case in point: installation of illegal household power supply lines, without electricity meters, by local residents reached an unprecedented level at that time, since the overwhelming majority of citizens simply could not afford to pay for electricity.

Conclusion

From the above findings, many of them drawn from the research of international organisations, we may form the following conclusions:

- While Georgia's overall level of social and economical development is comparable to some African and Latin American countries, the quality of its human resources (such as educational level, life style) is close to that of some Eurozone countries.
- The police crackdown on peaceful demonstrators in 2007, the snap presidential and parliamentary elections in 2008 (assessed as not fully fair and democratic by international observers, most notably by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)), and the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008 (which is thought to have been provoked by Russia but started by Georgia, according to foreign analysts (Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, September 2009)) are thought to have seriously tarnished the government's image both at home and abroad.
- With rare exceptions, relations between CSOs and the business community are in an embryonic stage. There is still a long way to go before these relations mature and evolve into full-fledged partnerships.
- In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the high level of public spiritedness, based on traditional Georgian values, will hardly be reflected in citizens' daily behaviour unless favourable conditions for its practical strengthening (a supporting institutional framework) are created.

We have to mention the obvious discrepancy between the evaluation of the situation in Georgia by civil society (see earlier sections) and the judgment on the same by the international community. Georgian CSOs often overestimate their capabilities and values and present the situation in the country relatively positively. International organisations are far more conservative in their assessments, which altogether point out the regress in almost every aspect of the social life in Georgia during last five years.

IV.   STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN GEORGIA

This section reviews strengths and weaknesses of the Georgian civil society sector, and CSOs in particular, as perceived by the persons involved in this study (participants of focus

groups and national meetings). We include here only the major arguments. They will be further discussed in a separate CSI project output, the Policy Action Brief.

WEAKNESSES:

- Despite many positive characteristics, the Georgian civil society sector is not membership-oriented. It was formed as a Western funded, privileged class, which is rather detached from the everyday concerns of citizens.
- CSOs are rather far from modern organisational standards. Written regulations and standards are rare, and these are mostly only formal and rarely applied. There are no clear and efficient mechanisms for staff rotation.
- In terms of Georgian CSOs' practice of values, there exist a range of challenges. Despite statements of democratic mechanisms for internal decision-making, the use of these mechanisms is very limited in practice. Decisions are made in a non-transparent way, and often only by small group of managers. CSOs suffer under the lack of pluralism, as they are highly politicised and divided as "friends" and "foes." There seems to be a lack of tolerance towards different views.
- Despite some isolated cases of success, the impact that CSOs have on the decision-making processes in the country is rather limited. Success in creating dialogue with the authorities concerns only those fields that do not limit their political, economic and other influences. When it comes to demands for division of power and transparency, the chances of success are almost non-existent. Moreover, CSOs lack support from wider parts of society, as civic involvement in civil society is limited.
- The severe social and economic situation hinders speedy growth of the civil society sector. Furthermore, Georgian officials are often sceptical towards CSOs.

STRENGTHS:

- From the organisational point of view, CSOs, unlike other segments of civil society, are more developed, particularly in terms of in management, financial and technical resources.
- CSOs increasingly acknowledge the need for change and consolidation around core values.
- There are positive trends evident. Firstly, as the authorities' wish to improve their image in the international community, and because of their decreasing popularity among the population, they have resumed expressing interest in and acknowledging the potential of alternative opinions.
- Secondly, a broad-spectrum of society increasingly demands information and democratic values, which can be used by CSOs to expand their social basis.

V.   RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations developed by participants at the CSI national workshop, expressed here, aim at empowering Georgian civil society, and CSOs in particular, to act in the interest of the broader public and to increase the sector's effectiveness and efficiency in these activities. A more thorough and detailed overview of these recommendations, based on the analysis of strengths and weaknesses of Georgian CSOs, is provided in the accompanying CSI Policy Action Brief.

CSOs pointed out two directions for further work. Firstly, actions that aim at 'awakening', activating and encouraging society to participate in social processes; and secondly, actions to put pressure on the Georgian government to commence/accelerate democratic reforms.

In addition, the international community represented in Georgia was confirmed as a strategic partner of Georgian civil society in order to achieve these two main directions of action.

A. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

General objective: Increase the level of civic engagement in civil society.
Specific objectives:
- Increase CSO transparency and visibility.
- Create support for social groups with poor experience in civic activities.

Suggested activities:
- Assess the needs of CSOs.
- Support transformation of informal networks into formal organisations.
- Develop local volunteering bases.
- Participate in advocacy programmes in cooperation with the media.
- Implement broad civic education programmes aimed at disseminating democratic values.

Actors: All types of CSOs, with the support of international organisations and other segments of Georgian civil society.

B. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

General objective: Develop CSO organisational skills.
Specific objectives:
- Improve human resources and financial sustainability.

Activities:
- Support social entrepreneurship for membership-based organisations.
- Increase accessibly of state programmes and tenders.
- Lobby for the adoption of legislation supporting philanthropy.
- Develop and implement modern organisational standards.
- Participate in donors' policy-making processes.
- Broaden international connections (including international networks).
- Provide trainings on organisational development.

Actors: Think tanks, donor organisations, training providers, overseas consulting organisations and the media.

C. VALUES

General objective: Improve the practice of promoted values.
Specific objectives:
- Introduce democratic decision-making practices.
- Revise civil society values and their adaptation to new challenges.
- Limit the influence of intolerant, coercive and corrupt forces.

Activities:
- Provide training, workshops and seminars in the field of civic education.
- Develop and implement realistic standards and action plans.
- Develop behavioural, ethical and professional codes of conduct.
- Involve various social groups in large programmes, particularly focusing on marginalised groups.

Actors: CSOs, authorities, various stakeholders, professional and open associations and donor organisations.

D. IMPACT

General objective: Increase the influence of CSOs on social, economic and political processes.

Specific objectives:
- Achieve rapid impact in the fields where it is possible, such as in less politicised fields like culture and sports.
- Achieve sustainable impact in the fields which are extremely difficult to influence, such as human rights protection, change of state fiscal policies in accordance with real social demands, leading the dialogue in conflict regions, adaptation of health, education and social policies to the needs of the country.

Activities:
- Develop CSO issue-based networks.
- Develop informational campaigns to disseminate existing views.
- Instigate educational activities - such as civic education programmes.
- Make and lobby for policy recommendations to improve legislation.
- Support fundraising systems for financial security of planned activities.
- Intensify consultations with international and donor organisations.

Actors: CSOs (and broader civil society), authorities, international organisations, other civil society actors (media, political parties).

E. ENVIRONMENT

General objective: Enhance social, economic and political sustainability; increase joint working with international organisations; empower democratic institutions.

Specific objectives:
- Improve Georgia's economic situation.
- Increase civil society awareness.
- Promote institutional development at all levels.
- Develop a more democratic political culture.
- Socially activate the population.
- Implement the rule of law.
- Develop a more ecological culture.

Activities:
- Implement joint projects in different fields, focusing on regional, international, and conflict areas.
- Popularise multi-ethnic and diversity cultures.
- Support social and cultural integration of different social groups.
- Develop professional training seminars for target groups.
- Develop/empower institutional mechanisms within democratic processes.

Actors: Entire civil society (within and outside Georgia).

VI.   CONCLUSIONS

A number of challenges regarding civil society in Georgia have been revealed through the CSI from 2008 to 2010, although it is important first to make clear the low level of reliability for some of the data collected, partly due to overrated self-assessments by CSO representatives. This became particularly visible through the scores in organisational development (64.5%) and CSOs' practice of values (64.7%). The members of the National Workshop (which took place in Tbilisi, March 2010), expressed severe doubts regarding the accuracy of this data and explained the high scores by the motivation of CSOs to show a better side of their organisations.

There is also a difference in the perception of the environment. Georgian civil society describes the existing picture as a much healthier than that suggested by the international data sets.

Nevertheless, we can make a number of conclusions based on the findings from this study:

- Civil society, particularly CSOs, has been considerably weakened since the 2003 Rose Revolution, as local and international actors have shifted their attention mainly towards the support of government policies.
- Policies recently implemented in Georgia have set back the transition towards democratisation considerably. According to a considerable number of indicators, the situation in the country has continuously worsened since 2000. The situation is aggravated by the government's refusal to initiate a dynamic dialogue with civil society.
- In such an environment, Georgian civil society has degraded to the position it occupied 10 to 12 years ago, which must force this sector to think of new developmental possibilities. CSOs, because of their conformist views and low impact upon the processes within Georgia, have failed to avoid the processes described above and, thus, they have to rethink and recreate their role within society at large.
- Now, because society increasingly shows discontent towards the policies of the government, new prerequisites are being created for CSOs to play a more active role.
- CSOs have some advantage in this respect; despite a number of weaknesses, they still form an organised power, and in the case of particular policies, they can increase their authority and influence within society, as well as over the government.
- Furthermore, civil society ought to pay greater attention to the social problems Georgia faces, as well as to the spreading of democratic values.
- An additional stimulus comes from international organisations, including donor organisations, the policies of which shift their focus towards the issue of democratic values.

In order to adequately address new challenges, CSOs should take the following actions:

- CSOs, and all other segments of civil society, should agree on some common values that would further unite their efforts.
- Common frameworks should be developed, such as sector specific or regional focuses, which should be supported by a number of CSOs, disregarding their political and other sympathies.
- Networking among CSOs should be intensified, along with the improvements in management and in the degree of democratisation within the CSOs.
- Using common frameworks and networking, CSOs should communicate their views to the wider population as much as possible and support the formation of new public order and demands for positive changes in the country.

Only if all of these are in place will CSOs be able to increase their positive influence and impact directly on the government, on society and on processes within Georgia.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 CSI INDICATOR MATRIX

1) Dimension: Civic Engagement			20.6
1.1		Extent of socially-based engagement	4.6
	1.1.1	Social membership 1	3.2
	1.1.2	Social volunteering 1	3.6
	1.1.3	Community engagement 1	7.1
1.2		Depth of socially-based engagement	17.8
	1.2.1	Social membership 2	5.3
	1.2.2	Social volunteering 2	4.7
	1.2.3	Community engagement 2	43.5
1.3		Diversity of socially-based engagement	52.5
	1.3.1	Diversity of socially-based engagement	52.5
1.4		Extent of political engagement	6.2
	1.4.1	Political membership 1	1.3
	1.4.2	Political volunteering 1	1.0
	1.4.3	Individual activism 1	16.4
1.5		Depth of political engagement	14.0
	1.5.1	Political membership 2	5.0
	1.5.2	Political volunteering 2	8.2
	1.5.3	Individual activism 2	28.9
1.6		Diversity of political engagement	28.5
	1.6.1	Diversity of political engagement	28.5
2) Dimension: Level of Organisation			64.5
2.1		Internal governance	94.1
	2.1.1	Management	94.1
2.2		Infrastructure	69.3
	2.2.1	Support organisations	69.3
2.3		Sectoral communication	83.7
	2.3.1	Peer-to-peer communication 1	85.1
	2.3.2	Peer-to-peer communication 2	82.2
2.4		Human resources	43.0
	2.4.1	Sustainability of HR	43.0
2.5		Financial and technological resources	91.1
	2.5.1	Financial sustainability	89.0
	2.5.2	Technological resources	93.1
2.6		International linkages	6.1
	2.6.1	International linkages	6.1
3) Dimension: Practice of Values			64.7
3.1		Democratic decision-making governance	82.2
	3.1.1	Decision-making	82.2
3.2		Labour regulations	36.5
	3.2.1	Equal opportunities	17.8
	3.2.2	Members of labour unions	24.1
	3.2.3	Labour rights trainings	18.8
	3.2.4	Publicly available policy for labour standards	85.1
3.3		Code of conduct and transparency	87.7
	3.3.1	Publicly available code of conduct	82.2
	3.3.2	Transparency	93.1

3.4			Environmental standards	80.2
	3.4.1		Environmental standards	80.2
3.5			Perception of values in civil society as a whole	37.0
	3.5.1		Perceived non-violence	35.1
	3.5.2		Perceived internal democracy	43.5
	3.5.3		Perceived levels of corruption	14.0
	3.5.4		Perceived intolerance	33.8
	3.5.5		Perceived weight of intolerant groups	45.6
	3.5.6		Perceived promotion on non-violence and peace	50.0
4) Dimension: Perception of Impact				**30.3**
4.1			Responsiveness (internal perception)	33.0
	4.1.1		Impact on social concern 1	22.7
	4.1.2		Impact on social concern 2	25.8
4.2			Social Impact (internal perception)	49.5
	4.2.1		General social impact	34.0
	4.2.2		Social impact of own organisation	65.0
4.3			Policy Impact (internal perception)	40.7
	4.3.1		General policy impact	22.2
	4.3.2		Policy activity of own organisation	55.6
	4.3.3		Policy impact of own organisation	44.4
4.4			Responsiveness (external perception)	20.3
	4.4.1		Impact on social concern 1	17.2
	4.4.2		Impact on social concern 2	23.3
4.5			Social Impact (external perception)	25.0
	4.5.1		Social impact selected concerns	33.3
	4.5.2		Social impact general	16.7
4.6			Policy Impact (external perception)	23.3
	4.6.1		Policy impact specific fields 1-3	33.3
	4.6.2		Policy impact general	13.3
4.7			Impact of civil society on attitudes	20.2
	4.7.1		Difference in trust between civil society members and non-members	1.8
	4.7.2		Difference in tolerance levels between civil society members and non-members	0.0
	4.7.3		Difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members	33.4
	4.7.4		Trust in civil society	45.6
5) Contextual Dimension: External Environment				**59.6**
5.1			Socio-economic context	66.5
	5.1.1		Basic Capabilities Index	89.4
	5.1.2		Corruption	39.0
	5.1.3		Inequality	59.6
	5.1.4		Economic context	78.0
5.2			Socio-political context	57.0
	5.2.1		Political rights and freedoms	50.0
	5.2.2		Rule of law and personal freedoms	56.3
	5.2.3		Associational and organisational rights	58.3
	5.2.4		Experience of legal framework	40.9
	5.2.5		State effectiveness	47.4
5.3			Socio-cultural context	52.8
	5.3.1		Trust	18.6
	5.3.2		Tolerance	47.1
	5.3.3		Public spiritedness	92.8

APPENDIX 2 COLOUR CODING EXERCISE: RESULTS

At the concluding stage of research, members of Advisory Committee were asked to assess the validity of the results of surveys conducted in the framework of project. In order to help them in this, a colour coding exercise was used. After careful review of each indicator, members of AC had to give their assessment based on a four colour scheme.

FIGURE AII.1 Validity colour code and description

The validity of the sources upon which the final score is based is highly questionable (biased or outdated) and should not be taken into account for either international comparison or for the internal assessment of civil society within the country.	The validity of the sources upon which the final score is based is moderately questionable. They should not be taken into account for international comparison but are indicative for the internal assessment of civil society within the country	The validity of the sources upon which the final score is based is rather dependable and can be used for some international comparison (within a certain context or regional logic) and for the internal assessment of civil society within the country.	The of the sources upon which the final score is based is dependable and can be used for international comparison and for the internal assessment of civil society within the country.

Below, we list those indicators which were most frequently characterised as highly questionable (red code) and moderately questionable (orange code).

Dimension: Civic Engagement
1.1.3 Community engagement
1.2.1 Social membership 2
1.2.2 Social volunteering 2
1.5.1 Political membership 2
1.5.2 Political volunteering 2
1.5.3 Political activism 2

Dimension: Level of Organisation
2.4.1 Sustainability of human resources
2.5.1 Financial sustainability
2.6.1 International linkages

Dimension: Practice of Values
3.1.1 Decision–making
3.2.4 Publicly available policy for labour standards
3.4.1 Environmental standards

Dimension: Perception of Impact
4.7.1 Difference in trust
4.7.2 Difference in tolerance

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APPENDIX 4. SUMMARIES OF CASE STUDIES

1. Volunteerism in Modern Georgia: Case of Political Parties' Youth Organisations
By Ketevan Khapava

According to the data derived from the most recent World Values Survey, involvement in civil society's work in modern Georgia is comparatively low. At the same time, the rate of involvement in the work of political parties is somewhat higher than rates for other activities. What are the reasons behind these? Also, how can we explain the low level of participation in volunteer activities in general? These were questions guiding our research. It was assumed that exploring the motivations of active political party supporters could shed light on the reasons that make political parties a somewhat more attractive arena of activities compared with the rest of CSOs. It was assumed that parties appear more attractive as a means of attaining not only social, but also personal goals. Furthermore, it was suggested that the unstable membership of political parties could be explained by the inability of parties to satisfy most of their supporters with tangible social benefits.

Young supporters of political parties involved in campaigns were the focus of research. According to experts, the contribution of this group is indispensable for the functioning of political parties in Georgia. As a main method of research, in–depth qualitative interviews with young party activists were used. Overall, six interviews were done. It was observed that young people are joining parties mostly as a result of active recruitment work. It was also found that the political orientations of the parties were not playing an important role in this process, in agreement with a general thesis according to which ideological boundaries between political groups in Georgia are rather blurred. While attraction to the personality of a leader is playing a role, personal motives are important for understanding a decision to participate in a party's work. Different motives of this kind are cited including: gaining professional experience, enlargement of social networks, filling free time and making a position in civil society more secure. With regard to the dynamics of involvement, research has proved the hypothesis on the failure of most of party activists to achieve their goals in the framework of a party. After some period of enthusiastic participation, feelings of disillusionment and frustration drive activists out of the party.

As a result of research, a predominant role of personal motives for participation in a party's work is identified. While quantitative/qualitative studies are needed to verify this conclusion, it gives certain weight to rational choice analysis of civil society involvement in Georgia.

2. Local Business, Corporate Social Responsibility and NGOs
By Tamar Charkviani

The last five years are marked by the emergence of discourse of corporate social responsibility in public–state–business relations in Georgia. Several projects have been implemented by non-governmental organisations aimed at popularising this concept. In several instances CSR projects were realised by big companies. At the same time, initiatives jointly implemented by business and CSOs are rare. Consequently, the aim of this case study was to explore reasons behind this lack of cooperation. It was hypothesised that CSR is seen by managers as part of a company's PR and advertisement strategies. The low level of legitimacy of civil society makes cooperation with those organisations less beneficial in terms of social respect and advertisement purposes.

As a method of research, an analysis of media, a desk study and interviews with top managers of three Georgian companies were used. Among the three big companies selected for the purpose of the research, two were recognised by business media outlets as champions in the CSR field. The following general questions guided the process of research: What is the level of awareness of top managers with regard to the concept of CSR? Which of the different forms of CSR are recognised by them? Which of these forms are implemented in Georgia? What is the attitude of managers toward civil society and how do they evaluate the possibility of cooperation with this sector?

Analysis of data shows that despite a clear understanding of the meaning of CSR as well as comprehensive knowledge of the different forms of its implementation, the range of activities in this direction is quite limited. Many existing initiatives serve a purpose of improving company images and/or developing their human resource bases. Correspondingly, many forms of CSR implementation are not even discussed by top managers. Also, the level of awareness about the nature and activities of the civil society sector is very low among managers. Managers do not see in the immediate future any possibility for cooperation between business and civil society. They see international donors as 'natural' sponsors and do not see overlapping interests between them, NGOs and big companies. The level of trust toward civil society is also low, with many of the respondents citing the ineffectiveness of the NGO sector as a main reason for this. It was concluded that a vicious circle emerges as a result of this situation - while CSOs do not pay sufficient attention to the interests and views of business, business abstains from supporting these organisations, with a consequent deepening of gap between two. As a recommendation, it is suggested that measures aimed at intensifying dialogue between these two parties should be taken.

3. Forms and Practices of Accountability in the Civil Society sector of Georgia
By Tamar Charkviani and Ana Chelidze

Ensuring accountability is one of the most important problems faced by civil society in different countries. While most of the NGOs in Georgia claim to be respectful of this concept, grounds for scepticism are abundant. Critics point out the absence of these mechanisms, and in many cases the formal character they acquire in local settings. To understand this problem an explorative study was undertaken. Both vertical and horizontal accountability were considered in the research. The presence and functioning of the following mechanisms were explored: 1) democratic governance, including transparency and collective decision making; 2) financial transparency; 3) existence of internal and external evaluation mechanisms; 4) openness toward cooperation with different stakeholder groups.

Three NGOs were selected. Two of those organisations were well established watchdogs, operating in the areas of human rights defence and environmental protection. The third was the football federation, an NGO with strong links (including financial) with the government. The selection thus allowed comparison between donor–funded and state–funded organisations. The study was undertaken by inspecting documents and the websites of these organisations as well as through interviews with representatives of top level management.

One of the problems revealed by the study is an absence of common standards in this area recognised by most CSOs in Georgia. In watchdog organisations, a quite developed system of accountability was found to be in place, which could be partly explained by the need to fulfil formal requirements posed by grant-giving agencies. At the same time, while the concept of accountability is well embedded in the practice of NGOs, it is poorly reflected in these organisation's internal documents. Also, it could be said that practices related to accountability toward the donors are more developed in these organisations. As for the football federation, the study revealed important problems in this regard. Among the most pressing problems, a lack of transparency in financial management and manipulations in elections of governing bodies were cited. Existence of these problems could be partly explained by an informal system of patronage linking management of the organisation to the leadership of the ruling party. As a conclusion, it was suggested that while the practice of accountability is already present in Georgian civil society and is even well rooted in some organisations, this concept has not yet acquired the value which it should have in the minds of civil society activists. Adoption of a common code of conduct might be a step toward resolving this.

4. Leading Georgian TV News Programmes on Civil Society in Georgia
By Vasil Mamulashvili

According to the results of different surveys, the level of awareness about civil society's work is quite low in Georgia. As electronic media is the most important source of information for the majority of Georgians, we examined the coverage of civil society by news programmes of leading TV channels. The following issues were covered by our research: the amount of time dedicated to civil society work; the attitude towards civil society; priorities given to different kinds of CSOs, and other topics. As a method, content analysis of news programmes of three major TV stations with national coverage was undertaken.

One of the interesting findings was that more then half of all CSO mentions came in the context of international/foreign affairs news. There was also a substantial divergence between three leading TV channels in terms of the time devoted to civil society related coverage. More then half (approximately 52%) of the mentions were for educational/research organisations, followed by business associations and human rights watchdogs (respectively 11 and 10 %). In the majority of cases, research/educational organisations were represented by experts individually commenting on foreign policy problems. Even in time devoted to human issues, news from abroad played a pre-eminent role (60%), mostly mentioning international NGOs. To conclude, the study revealed inadequate coverage of local CSOs and their activities.

5. Factors Influencing Impact of Civil Society over Policy-Making
By Giorgi Babunashvili

The CIVICUS research has shown that despite the high level of organisational development, Georgian CSOs exercise little influence on policy-making in Georgia. To understand the reasons for this, a closer look at the process of cooperation between government and civil society is needed. In existing literature, personal and political contacts are stressed as

crucial factors for influencing government decision making in post–Soviet countries. On the other hand, some scholars argue that organisational capacity is a key for understanding NGOs impact over policy.

The case study was conducted employing methodologies of both qualitative and quantitative research. Cooperation between the Teacher's Trade Union and Ministry of Education between 2004 and 2008 was the focus of the qualitative case study research. In-depth interviews were done with representatives of trade unions, former and current officials of the ministry and experts. Conclusions derived from the case study were checked and compared using quantitative data from the CIVICUS research.

It was clear from the results that organisational capacity did not play an important role in sparking active cooperation between the ministry and the union between 2004 and 2007. In that period, close personal and political links emerged between key figures, strengthened by previous cooperation between these two groups. While the organisational weaknesses of the trade union were an obvious fact for both sides, cooperation between two groups went smoothly in this period. In exchange for the support of state policy, the union gained an opportunity to influence the decision-making process in relevant fields. However, with a change of top personnel in the ministry these contacts were dissolved, and the union grew critical towards the government, and relations cooled. Thus, the results of the study support the hypothesis on the decisive role of personal/political ties for success in influencing government policy. This hypothesis was further checked using quantitative analysis.

Different variables from the organisational survey were recoded into three groups, namely cooperation with government, political attitudes and organisational capacity. A statistical analysis was performed to explore the relative importance of these factors on policy influence. It was found that experience of cooperation with government (e.g. having implemented a joint project with government structures) correlated positively with a high level of influence on government policy. The same is true with regard to a positive assessment of political development in the country – organisations with representatives who hold this opinion are usually better received by policy makers and consequently their impact is higher then those who express negative opinions.

The study concludes that political positions and personal contacts play decisive roles in policy cooperation between the government and CSOs in Georgia. According to recommendations presented in the report, avoiding excessive confrontation with government should be regarded as an important goal by CSOs. At the same time, international donors should push for more cooperation between government and CSOs, persuading government that this kind of cooperation could be fruitful in many regards.

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