



EKATERINE GAMAKHARIA

**ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL
OF WOMEN'S
HUMAN SECURITY
IN WESTERN GEORGIA**

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The main focus of Ekaterine Gamakharia's work is on human rights, particularly those of women and of internally displaced people (IDPs). Ekaterine Gamakharia is a participant of a number of national and international conferences, trainings and seminars on women's rights, conflict resolution and peace-building. Her first employment was with Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi". In 2000-2006 she was the Director of the Women's Rights Protection Division and she continues to work for Fund "Sukhumi" as a consultant up to present. In 2006 Ekaterine Gamakharia was awarded the John Smith Memorial Trust Fellowship to study democratic institutions in Great Britain, then - Edmund Muskie Fellowship to study international human rights law in the US. In 2006-2007 she completed her Master's Degree in the International Human Rights Law at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law – Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), US. In 2007-2008 she worked as a National Consultant on IDP issues for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Tbilisi, Georgia. Since 2008 she has lived in Baku working as a freelance consultant and trainer for various NGOs.

Ekaterine Gamakharia is the author of analytic reports, books and manuals: "The Role of Women in Peace Building", "Women at the Negotiating Table", "The Road to Peace", «Phenomenon of Women's Leadership», «Gender and Political Parties», «Local Government and Gender», "Women in Search of Peace".

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
Chapter I. The Concept and Criteria of Human Security	
1.1. The Meaning of Human Security	7
1.2. Gender Approach to Human Security	8
Chapter II. Study of the Level of Women’s Human Security in Western Georgia	
2.1. Research Aim and Methodology	9
2.2 Main Findings	11
2.2.1. Economic Security	11
2.2.2. Food Security	15
2.2.3. Health Security	17
2.2.4. Environmental Security	20
2.2.5. Community Security	22
2.2.6. Personal Security	25
2.2.7. Political Security	28
Chapter III. Conclusions and General Recommendations	31
APPENDIX	35

INTRODUCTION

The study is the outcome of the project “Women identify the level of human security to build confidence and sustainable peace” implemented by two women’s NGOs with the financial support of Women’s International Organization Kvinna till Kvinna.

The idea of the research was based on the positive experience of women’s NGOs in Israel and Palestine, which opened possibilities to study the issues of human security as seen through women’s eyes.

An introductory visit to Israel, which took place in 2013 aimed at sharing the experience of Israeli and Palestinian women’s organizations with regard to working on both conflicting sides. One of the important outcomes of this visit was learning about a very interesting initiative of women’s organizations – researching human security from women’s perspective.

For the political circles and majority of population of Israel the term “security” was perceived in the light of military operations and dangers connected with hostilities. This interpretation of the term left out crucial components of security such as personal security and community vitality. In 2012 a coalition of five Israeli and Palestinian women’s organizations made a decision to study the question of how threatening military operations are in women’s perception, what their specific concerns are and what factors contribute to their personal security. To this end, women’s organizations jointly developed a unique methodology, which involves mapping change in women’s perception of security. The research confirmed that women link the concept of “security” not only with “hostilities”, bombings and terrorist attacks, but with a much longer list of risks that threaten their sense of security.

Although war, terrorist attacks and explosions are alarming for both Israeli and Arab women, the fear of sexual violence, economic hardships, loss of home and worry for the health and safety of women’s near and dear are even more damaging to their feeling of safety.

It emerged that just being a woman in Israel is a risk factor, as it is mostly women who become victims of physical and sexual violence or who avoid walking in dark streets for fear of losing their health or even life.

The findings of the research were used to create a database of risks and factors that Israeli and Palestinian women perceive as most threatening. Specific recommendations were developed outlining measures to ensure human security for women.

Research findings were published in a brochure and distributed among civil

society representatives, international organizations and politicians in order to bring about a response to the problems reflected in the report.

Applying the methodology used by Israeli and Palestinian women's organizations and adapting it to the needs of local communities women's organisations jointly developed methodology for determining the level of human security for women and carried out research in their own communities.

For Fund "Sukhumi" this study represents an attempt to broaden the traditional understanding of the term "security" and to gain insight into the feelings and thoughts of women who have to handle personal risks and insecurities on a regular basis.

It is the belief of Fund "Sukhumi" that identifying security risks and finding ways for their elimination will help view security as a concept focusing on human needs and requirements, attract the attention of all stakeholders at local, national and global level and take a unified stand for creating a comfortable environment for human development, stability and peaceful life.

Chapter I

THE CONCEPT AND CRITERIA OF HUMAN SECURITY

1.1 The Meaning of Human Security

The end of the twentieth century saw increased interest in the issues of security in the whole world. What is noteworthy here is that the focus from state security (its borders, territory, sovereignty, population and material values) shifted to human interests. The modern concept of human security is based on the idea that ensuring individual security is the best way to achieving overall security.

Human security is focused on the threats to individuals and society that are classified as follows: a) level of threat to human life (physical exploitation, violence, persecution, death); b) level of threat to their normal existence (unemployment, health risks, food threats); c) level of risk to human dignity.

For instance, lack of social protection is a threat to human security not only because it may encourage violence and endanger state stability, but also because it threatens individuals and their dignity. Thus, human security in its broad meaning may be defined as freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity.

The concept of 'human security' was first introduced in United Nations Development Programme's 1994 Human Development Report, which defined 'human security' as 'freedom from need' and 'freedom from fear'. The report lists seven categories of human security:

- Economic security – poverty, unemployment, etc.;
- Food security – hunger, malnutrition;
- Health security - lethal infections, malnutrition, lack of access to basic health care, etc.;
- Environmental security - deterioration of the natural environment, natural disasters, depletion of natural resources, pollution, etc.
- Personal security – physical violence, crime, domestic abuse, child labour, etc.
- Community security – ethnic, religious and similar social tensions
- Political security – political repressions, human rights violations, etc.

'Human security' is a concept emphasizing protection of basic human values, promoting human freedom and individual self-realization.

'Human security' implies protection of freedoms that represent the essence of our existence. It deals with protection from critical situations and common threats, support for individual effort and aspirations, which implies creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems. All of these combine to form the foundation of human existence and protection of dignity.

Accelerating pace of life and instability in development lead to an increase in the number of vulnerable people in the society. The danger of losing employment and income, pollution, threat of violence are becoming increasingly topical. These threats restrict human freedom and can result in a severe crisis or catastrophe. Having advance information about such risks allows us to take precautions and avoid a crisis or mitigate its effects.

1.2 Gender Approach to Human Security

Human security has evolved from its traditional understanding with the focus on the state to an interpretation, which is centered on a human being. It covers ensuring well-being of individuals and groups of people through providing protection from physical and moral harm, fear and anxiety. Human security is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the idea of equality between men and women. Women, men, girls, boys differ in their perception of security, their needs, priorities and actions as a consequence of their gender as well as sex. Thus, complex gender approach to security analysis would necessarily cover the issues that deal with identifying threats for men and women. The results of the analysis would reveal the need for security system reform to incorporate gender projects focusing on the specific needs of men and women with regard to security.

Gender projects aim to bring to the attention of security sector the difference in the perceptions of security among men and women, their differing needs and roles and the demand for improved response to these varied needs.

One way to introduce gender perspective into security issues can be broadening women's political rights and capacity in order to increase their influence on political processes and promote gender-sensitive policies in the field of human rights and security. Another possibility is women's empowerment at the community level in order to help them identify threats that endanger their sense of security and develop their own proposals for the state actors responsible for ensuring human security.

Women's perspective on security issues is much broader and is defined in terms of humane rather than military categories. Peace will remain unattainable while women feel unprotected in their homes and communities, while they see threats to their own development and that of a future generation. When women feel secure, when they are free to be mobilized and united for the purpose of protecting their rights and peace, long-term sustainable peace can realistically be achieved.

The ideas expressed in the present study are a reminder of the needs and threats that women face in their daily lives and which require adequate attention and effective measures to address the problem.

Ensuring human security for women is not only politically correct, but it is also an obligation placed on governments by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, The Millennium Development Goals, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and other international and national legal instruments.

Ensuring women's human security should be the foundation of security policy planning be it at the local, national or international levels.

STUDY OF THE LEVEL OF WOMEN'S HUMAN SECURITY IN WESTERN GEORGIA

2.1. Research Aim and Methodology

The study was carried out in May – June 2015. It aimed to determine the level of women's human security in six locations in Western Georgia.

The aims of the study include

- evaluating women's perception of human security using economic, food, physical, socio-cultural, educational, environmental and political indicators;
- studying women's attitude to their living conditions;
- analysing research findings and offering national and local authorities, international and local civil society organizations recommendations that aim at timely reaction and positive change in the areas problematic for women.

The study uses research methodology developed jointly by women's organisations. 12 moderators were selected from young women leaders who work actively with Fund "Sukhumi" in six locations in Western Georgia and were trained to conduct surveys and collect data.

The research consisted of three stages and used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research strategies involving a variety of data collection methods.

A survey, focus groups and in-depth interviews were used as main methods of data collection.

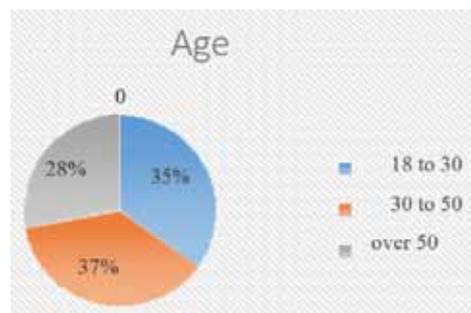
182 people (179 women and 3 men) participated in the study. 120 people were surveyed, 55 took part in focus group interviews and 7 were interviewed in depth.

Target groups for the study consisted of women and girls living in Kutaisi, Tskaltubo, Khoni, Senaki, Poti and Khurcha (Zugdidi municipality village bordering Abkhazia). This included local population as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs). Survey participants included women leaders, representatives of local communities, state authorities, law-enforcement agencies and NGOs.

Socio-demographic profile of the participants is the following:

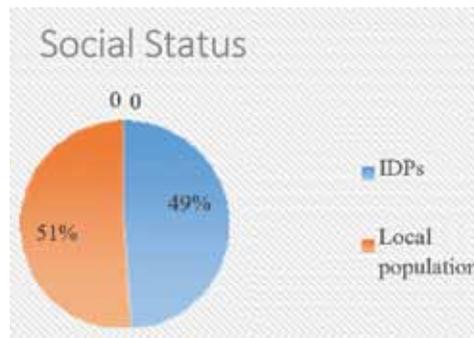
The participants' age varied from 18 to 84. (See Chart 1)

Chart 1



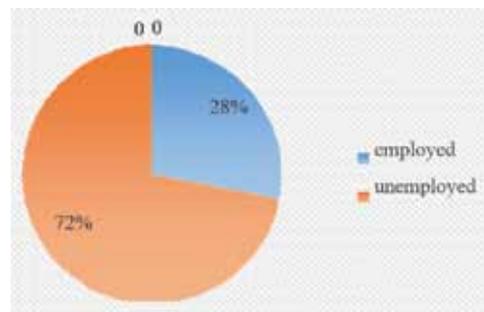
Among them 49% are IDPs, 51% - local population. (See Chart 2).

Chart 2



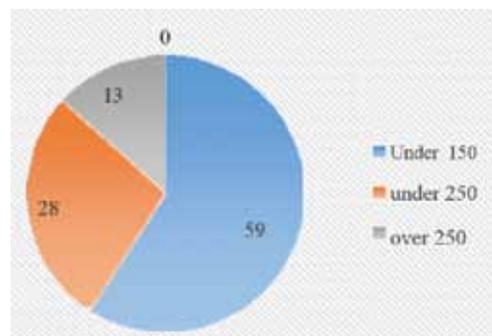
Vast majority, 72% of the participants are unemployed (Chart 3)

Chart 3



For their majority monthly income per family member is under GEL150 (approximately USD 60) (Chart 4)

Chart 4



The survey and interviews were carried out using specially developed questionnaires (see Appendices 1 and 2) containing closed as well as open-ended questions. Questions focusing on different categories of security were grouped in separate sections.

All interviewees, mainly women and girls, expressed their opinions freely on issues concerning human security and on measures necessary to cope with threats and ways of overcoming problems in their lives.

2.2. MAIN FINDINGS

This chapter presents the main quantitative and qualitative findings of the research. The study is structured around survey data while focus group and individual interview data provide additional argumentation and confirmation.

The survey and interviews identified those issues of security that are most urgent for the informants and prevent them from considering their lives as safe.

Presented below are women’s opinions on their personal security with respect to the seven categories of human security – economic, food, health environmental, personal, community and political security. Based on the findings some specific, recommendations are offered on the mechanisms of coping with threats and overcoming problems in women’s lives.

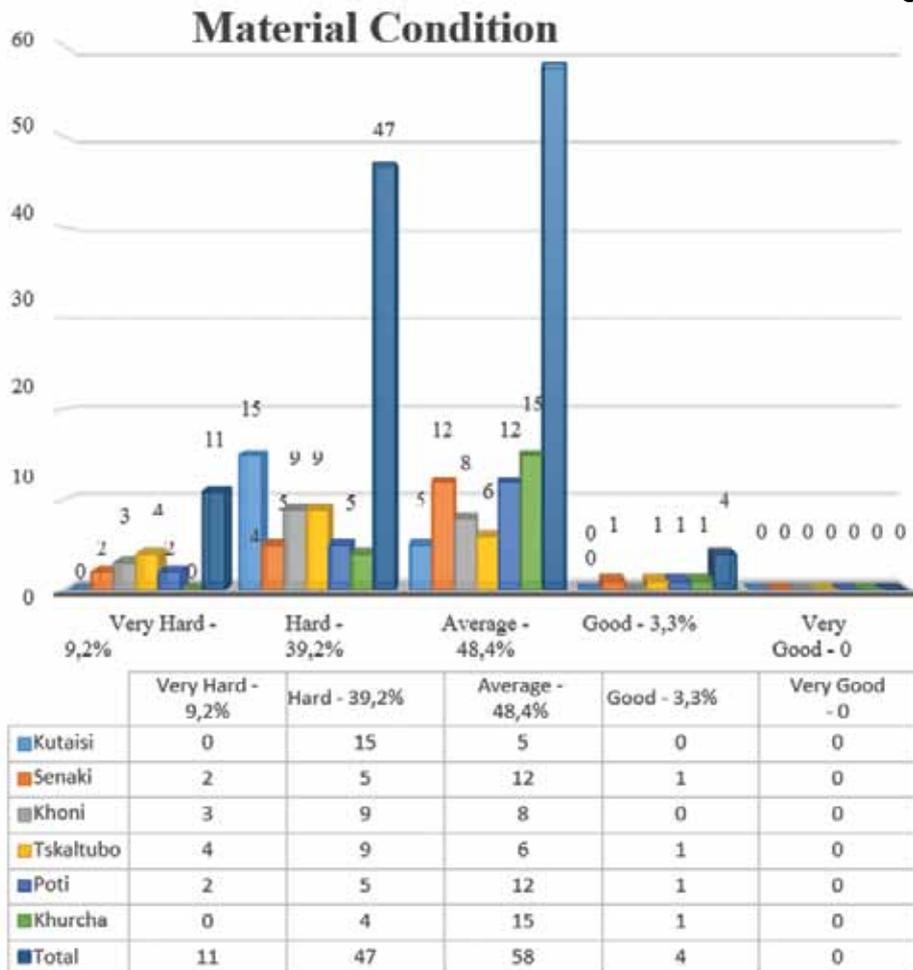
2.2.1. ECONOMIC SECURITY

Absolute majority of respondents name economic security as the most burning and topical issue.

Interestingly, 45% of the participants identify “unemployment” as the most acute problem for security. 42.5% are concerned about “poverty and lack of financial resources” whereas 35% are alarmed by “high prices”.

48.4% consider their own economic condition as “average”, while 39.2% believe that their economic condition is “hard” and for 9.2% it is “very hard”. Only 3.3% assessed their condition as “good”. (See Chart 5)

Chart 5

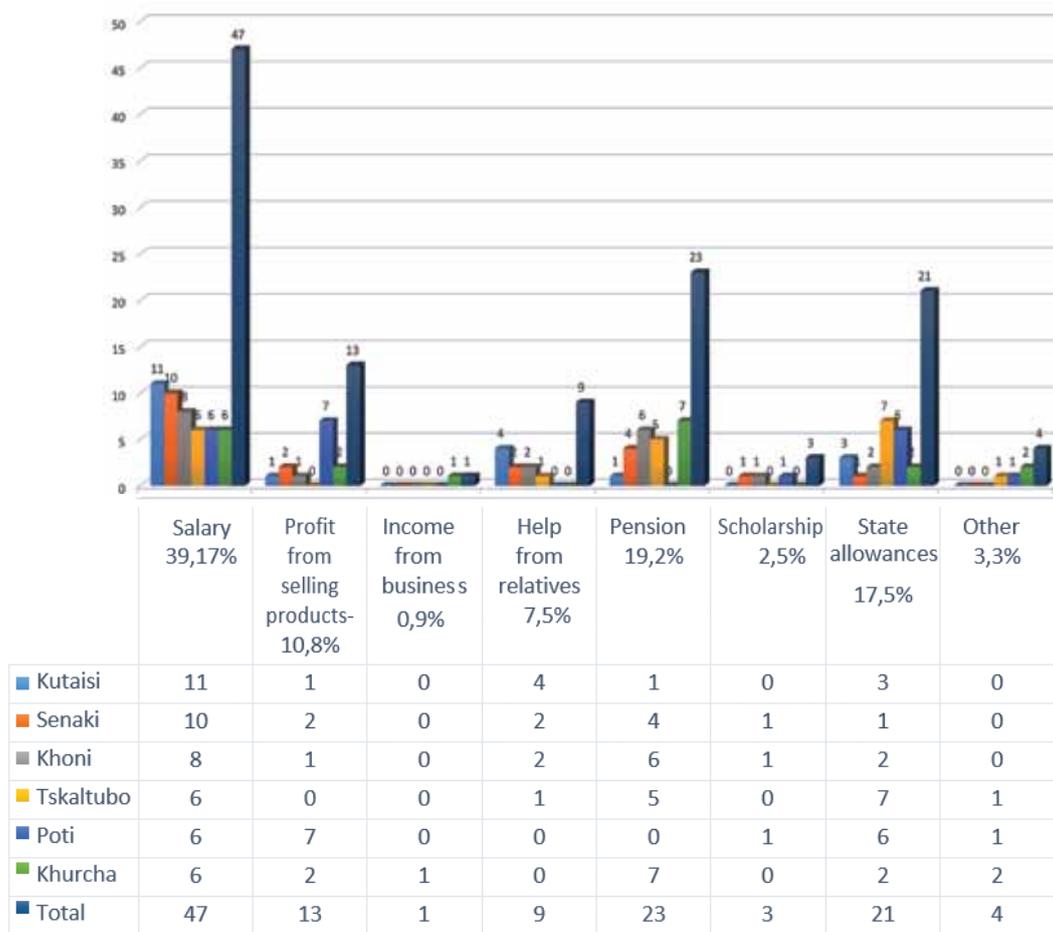


For 39.2% their own or a family member’s salary is the main source of income. However, majority of the interviewed states that in spite of their current employment they have little hope of future: “I work, but there are no guarantees that I won’t be made redundant”. 22.5% of women are alarmed by lack of stability, while 16.7% view “bank credits” as the main threat to their economic stability.

It is worth noting that for a considerable number of participants state social benefits are the main source of income. For instance, their 19.2% indicate a pension as their main income, while for 17.5% it is state benefits. The latter category includes mainly IDPs, who receive GEL45 (approximately USD 18) per month (See Chart 6).

Chart 6

Source of Income



Interestingly, a certain number of women claim that there is an increasing tendency in population to become dependent on social benefits and state support, which reflects negatively on their activity and motivation to improve their economic conditions independently. Consequently, the study participants believe that state support systems need to be reviewed and alternative systems developed.

In spite of the variety of sources of income, majority of women do not believe it to be sufficient for normal existence.

The problem of discrimination during job search was underlined by 11,7%. One of the urgent issues the participants touch upon is discrimination according to age

and gender that they encounter when looking for employment. They claim that there is an unofficial age limit for job seekers – “The state doesn’t think about employable women of over 40 who no institution wants to hire... How are they supposed to reach their retirement age and how should they support themselves?”

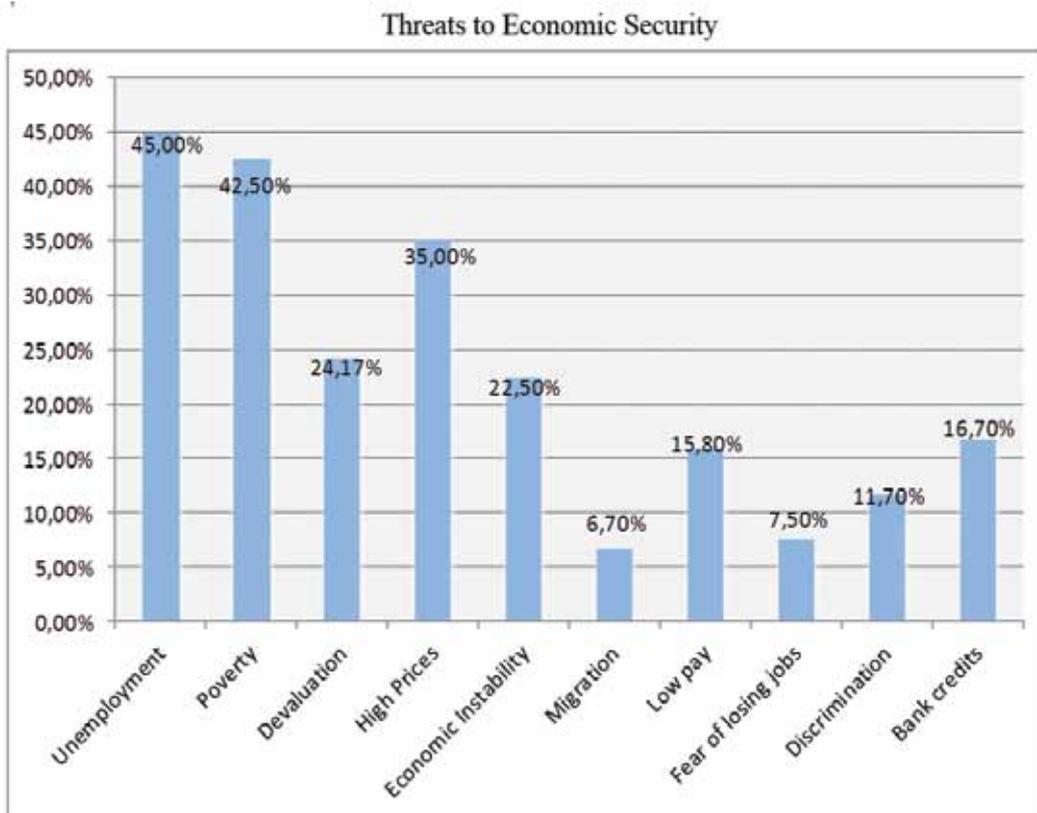
Gender discrimination is another issue of concern, especially if the job is well-paid: “Today, at the time of total unemployment if they hire someone, it’s mostly men”; “Men have chances to get well-paid jobs, women – don’t!”

Women are concerned about insufficient support and employment benefits in Georgian legislation for nursing mothers and mothers with disabled children.

On the one hand, informants said that a lot of women become fully immersed in their family lives and refuse to become actively involved outside it dedicating all of their time to children and family. On the other hand, comments were made about a certain passive attitude characteristic for women.

Generalizing research findings the category of economic security can be classified in the following way according to the level of threat to women: (See Chart 7)

Chart 7



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING ECONOMIC SECURITY

- ❖ Gender component should be integrated in macro and micro economic policy of the country;
- ❖ Economic and employment laws and regulations should be examined from gender perspective and gender specifics should be incorporated into socio-economic decision-making;
- ❖ The current situation with regard to age and gender discrimination should be recorded in labor legislation and anti-discrimination law and measures for their prevention and elimination should be outlined;
- ❖ Proposals should be developed to introduce employment benefits in Georgian legislation for nursing mothers and mothers with disabled children;
- ❖ Adding provisions prohibiting age and gender discrimination to contracts of state institutions, large and small scale enterprises and non-commercial organizations should be advocated;
- ❖ Women's awareness of their employment rights and ways of protecting these rights should be raised;
- ❖ An alternative to social benefits should be created in the form of state subsidies for small-scale enterprises and self-employment. For instance, replacing monthly allowance with a single annual allowance;
- ❖ A program should be developed at national and local levels aimed at developing small and family businesses; a system of business-incubators should be promoted, where women will have a chance to study the foundations of entrepreneurship and will also receive support in the form of temporary tax exemption, equipment provision and allocating unused state buildings for their use;
- ❖ International and local civil society organizations and local authorities should work together to create, support and expand a system of counseling and professional orientation for women who plan to start their own businesses.

2.2.2. FOOD SECURITY

Food security turned out to be one of the important problems in the lives of women and their families. Research participants believe that threats to food security are caused by a number of problems existing in the country. These include socio-economic problems, environmental changes that reflect directly on women and children's health.

The absolute majority of the participants, namely 93.3%, claim that they have no access to high quality and varied food products and for 54.2% the reason for this lies in "high prices". The prices present a bigger problem for IDP women and city residents who have no family farms.

38% of women state that shortage of quality products on the market is the main food threat and this is due to the state economic policy: *"Nowadays natural quality food products are exported from Georgia and instead we receive cheap low-quality products"*.

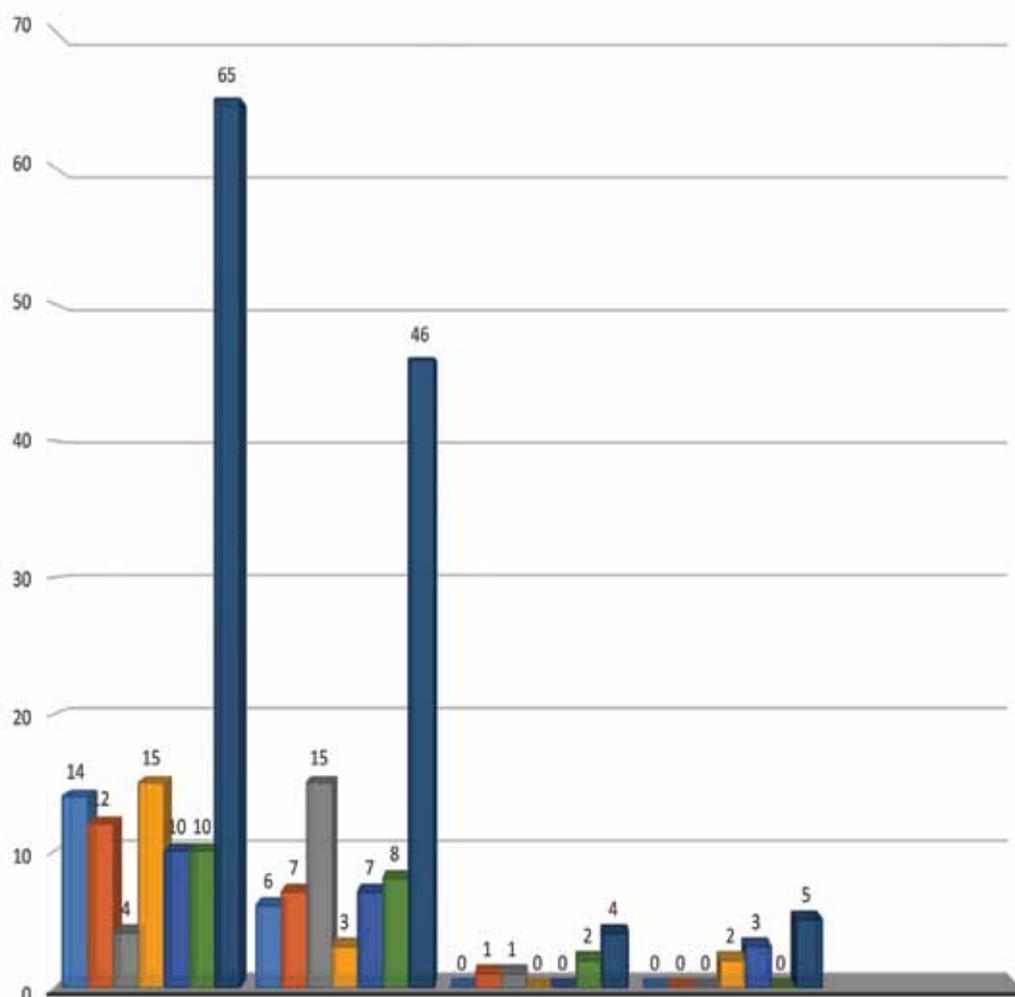
The quality of food products poses less of a threat for village population, as these women have family farms and can grow organic food products. However, women living in cities and towns are seriously concerned about the increase of the quantity of genetically modified products in food markets and shops. They claim that it is practically impossible to receive reliable information on the origins and content of products for sale. According to one of the interviewees, *"the quantity of genetically modified products has increased so much that even when buying potatoes you can't be sure that it's organic and high-quality"*.

Women are especially worried about the negative effect of low-quality products on health: *"As a mother I'm really concerned about my children's future, because low-quality and harmful products may damage their health"*.

3.3% of women, those living in Khurcha near Abkhazian border, encounter problems because there are no grocery shops in the nearby area.

The women also touch upon the issue of selling products past their expiration date and comment that relevant institutions fail to provide adequate control of these issues.

Risks for Food Security



	High Price - 54,2%	Shortage of Quality Products - 38,3%	No Grocery Shop nearby - 3,3%	Other- 4,2%	
■ Kutaisi	14	6	0	0	
■ Senaki	12	7	1	0	
■ Khoni	4	15	1	0	
■ Tskaltubo	15	3	0	2	
■ Poti	10	7	0	3	
■ Khurcha	10	8	2	0	
■ Total	65	46	4	5	

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY

- ❖ Government bodies should improve food safety control system and prevent uncontrolled distribution of genetically modified products;
- ❖ For purposes of health care and safety consumers should be provided with information on products, including social and environmental effects of using products selected by them;
- ❖ Organizations defending consumer rights should be created, encouraged and supported;
- ❖ Adequate legal and administrative measures should be identified and supported thus ensuring that consumers whose rights have been violated receive compensation efficiently through affordable and accessible legal procedures. Such procedures should be specifically focused on the interests of low-income customers;
- ❖ Consumer education should become a compulsory part of school curriculum starting from primary school to the end of school education to prepare students for sensible consumption and protecting their own consumer rights;
- ❖ State bodies, international and civil society organizations should support and implement educational programs aimed at improving populations' consumer education and promote continuous education, awareness-raising and counseling of consumers.
- ❖ Local authorities should constantly monitor product quality and safety and provide population with timely information on the results of monitoring;
- ❖ All the bodies of local self-government should play a role in setting up a special service for protecting consumer rights. This service would also be responsible for consumer education with respect to their rights and methods of their defense as well as organizing regular consultations in the municipality.

2.2.3. HEALTH SECURITY

49% of the participants of the study say that the biggest problem for health security is unavailability of quality health care. Availability of health care concerns middle-aged women much more than younger ones, also rural more than urban population.

26.7% claim that the most serious problem in health care is connected with high prices on medicines, which makes fighting disease harder for women and their families. 24.2% of the interviewees expressed their concern about deterioration of populations' health (See Chart 9).

Health Security Threats



Majority of the participants views state reform in health care in a positive light, especially hepatitis C elimination program and free diagnostic screening centers for women. They comment especially on introduction of universal health insurance. However, only 7.5% believe it to guarantee health security.

The participants claim that state insurance covers only emergency medical assistance, whereas the cost of diagnostics and medicines has to be covered by patients who cannot really afford it.

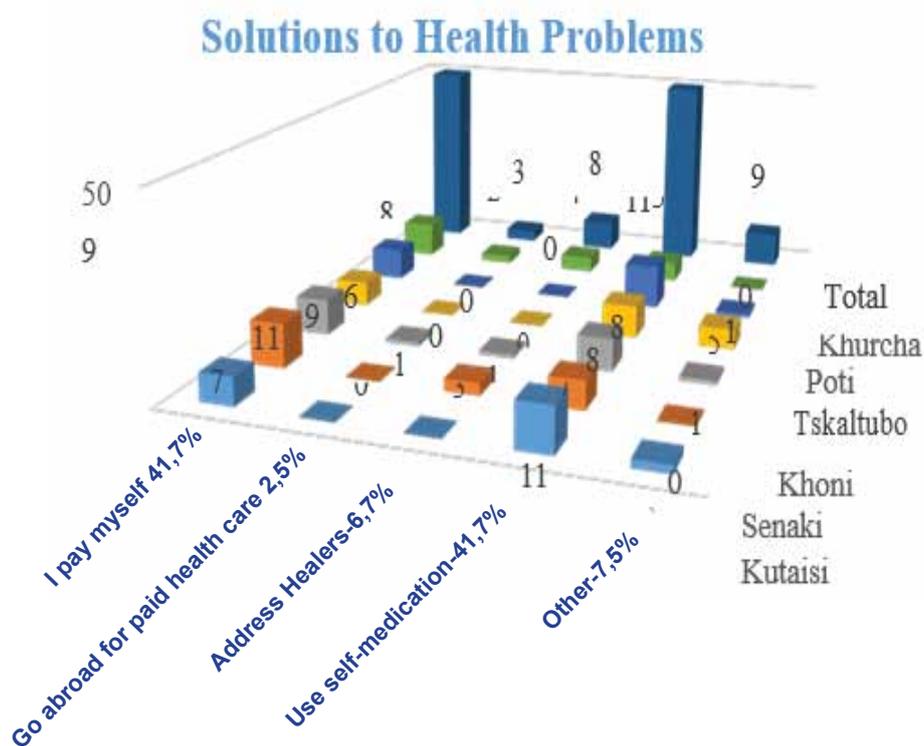
It was frequently mentioned in interviews that it is desirable for the state to cover the price of medicines as well and thus ensure that fewer need emergency medical services. *“For objective or subjective reasons we can’t see doctors until it’s too late and we already need emergency medical assistance”*.

The study shows that 41.7% pay for health care themselves. Due to lack of financial resources, insufficient education in medical issues, little experience of receiving medical services or low level of awareness 45.7% of the participants use self-medication instead of doctors’ consultation and proper diagnostics. (See chart 10).

6.7% give preference to non-traditional treatment methods and address healers with their complaints. Only 2.5% indicated that they prefer to seek medical advice abroad and pay for health care.

Participants from small towns and villages put particular emphasis on doctors’ low qualification and shortage of necessary technical equipment in medical institutions.

Interestingly, during discussions women often linked health with other categories of security. For instance, difficult social and economic conditions of the population, in the majority opinion, complicate access to quality health care. Highly polluted environment and increase in the quantity of low-quality products directly affects health of the population, especially women and children.



	I pay myself - 41,7%	Go abroad for paid health care 2,5%	Address Healers - 6,7%	Use self-medication - 41,7%	Other - 7,5%
Kutaisi	7	0	0	11	2
Senaki	11	0	3	7	0
Khoni	9	1	1	8	1
Tskaltubo	6	0	0	8	5
Poti	8	0	0	11	1
Khurcha	9	2	4	5	0
Total	50	3	8	50	9

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING HEALTH SECURITY

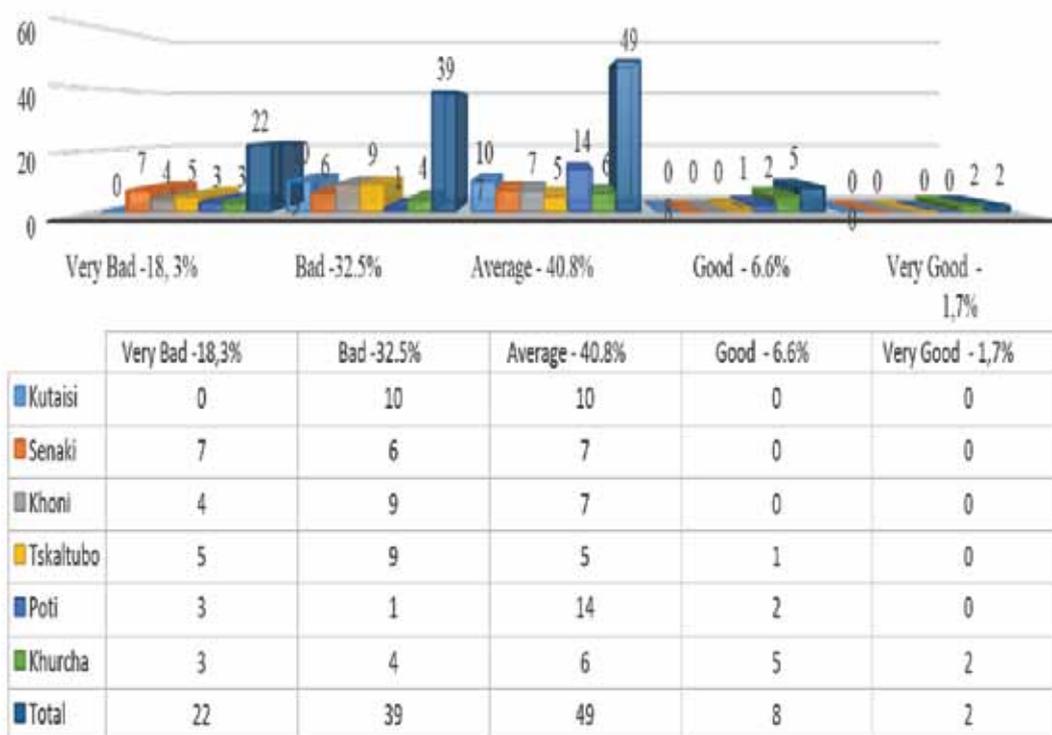
- ❖ Government bodies and international organizations should support doctors and medical personnel in improving their professional skills;
- ❖ Tighter control of the quality of health care should be established through continuous analysis of the operation of health care institutions, identification of drawbacks and adoption of adequate counter measures;
- ❖ All necessary steps should be taken in order to ensure quality health care in regional hospitals through providing up-to-date equipment, medical transport and qualified personnel, installing a system of incentives and encouraging doctors through increase in their salary;

- ❖ Measures should be taken to raise the awareness and level of education with respect to health care and healthy lifestyle;
- ❖ Universal health insurance system should be revised in order to provide women and children with accessible diagnostics and treatment.

2.2.4. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

49% of study participants evaluate the environment as average, but 32.5% contradict this opinion. (See Chart 11).

Chart 11



According to the survey results, 87.5% state that they have clean water. (See Chart 12). They are more concerned about sewage system and water treatment plants.

Chart 12



42.5% of the surveyed women say that they have no access to sewage system and 57.5% emphasized availability of water treatment plants. (See Charts 13 and 14).

Chart 13

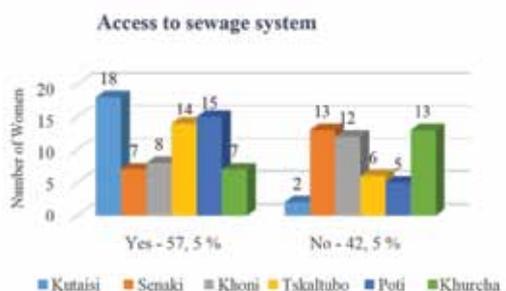
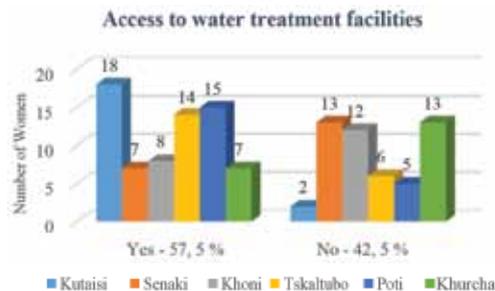


Chart 14



According to the participants of the study, air pollution and danger of infections caused by insects and rodents inhabiting rubbish dumps represent greatest environmental problems. Women from Poti were concerned about the poor ecological condition of their town caused by pollution from a fish-processing plant and unbearable smell of fish. The women expressed their regret about the fact that the state does not protect its population from similar factories and does little to solve problems that people face – *“Plant owners prefer to pay fines rather than install filters ... Consequently, the problem remains unresolved. And we breathe polluted air, which harms our health”*.

Practically all the participants emphasized the danger and negative effects of environmental problems on health, primarily children’s health and women’s reproductive health. Survey participants are concerned that the state has no effective operational system of crisis management. As one of the participants commented, recent floods that led to loss of human lives and destroyed buildings have demonstrated clearly that the state is incapable of protecting its citizens in crisis situations. It was stated that it is crucially important to create an effective system of crisis management at the legislative level.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

- ❖ State system of environment control and monitoring should be improved and sanctions for negative impact on the environment whether for individuals or enterprises should be made stricter;
- ❖ Population should be provided with regular updates on the condition of the environment and the effect of ecological factors on health, especially for women and children;

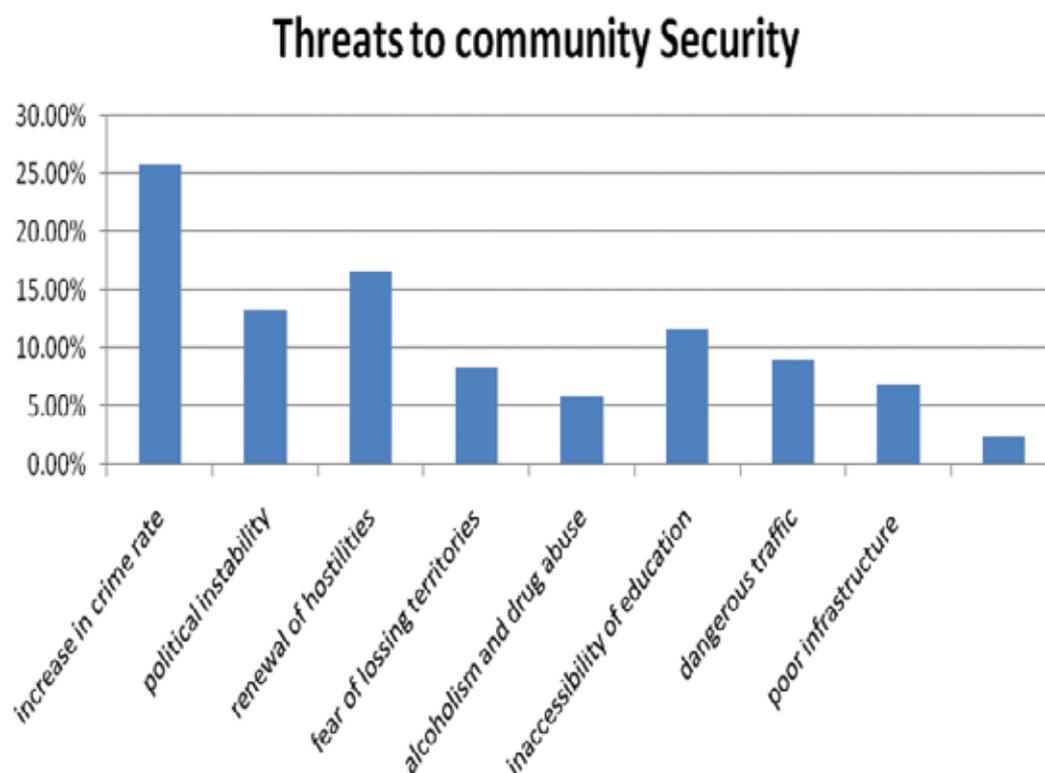
- ❖ Discussions of the idea of introducing the environmental police should be initiated;
- ❖ Environment protection should be encouraged and promoted by introducing financial rewards for important contributions in this area;
- ❖ Government bodies at the local and national level, international and local civil society organizations need to play an important role in improving population’s environmental awareness and responsibility. Work with younger generation would require particular attention;
- ❖ An effective system of crisis monitoring and management should be developed in order to ensure that undesirable developments are avoided through adequate forecasting and post-crisis measures.

2.2.5. COMMUNITY SECURITY

Majority of women (25.8%) see the greatest threat to community security in the trend of “increasing crime rate”. The participants are deeply concerned about “the fear of renewal of war” (16.7%), “political instability” (13.3%) and “lost territories” (8.3%). It has to be noted that majority of women who are concerned about these issues come from Khurcha, a village on the Abkhazian border.

11.7% of women are concerned about low access to quality education. (See Chart 15).

Chart 15



A threat that also concerns women, although to a lesser degree than others, is road infrastructure (7%) and road traffic (9%). Interestingly, 42% of women do not feel safe in the role of “pedestrians” and feel more secure when they are either driving themselves (10.8%) or travelling in someone else’s car (9.2%).

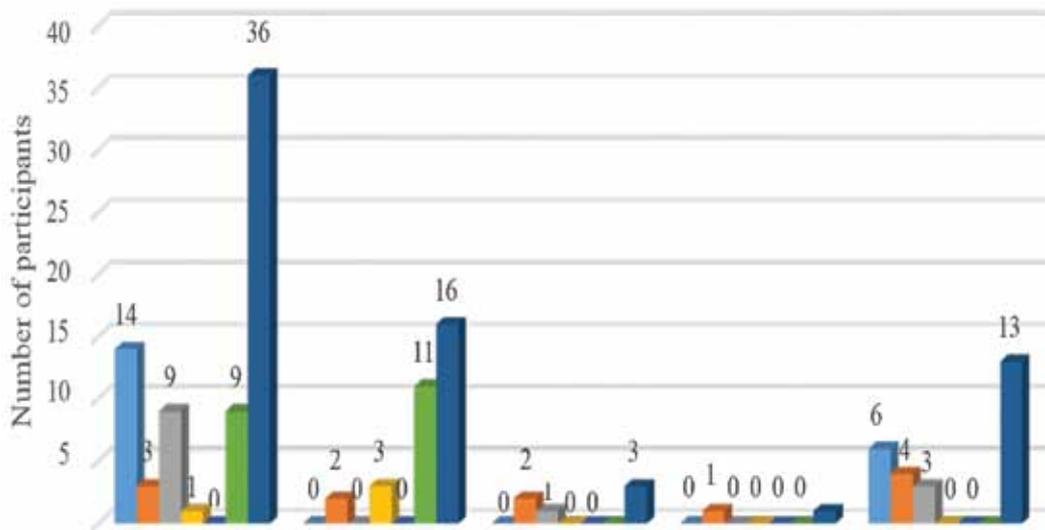
Women are least concerned about “drug abuse and alcoholism” (5.8%) and “discrimination against minorities” (2.4%).

In the category of community security special attention was paid to education. Issues such as “accessibility of secondary and higher education” were researched and reasons that prevent population from receiving quality education were studied. 64% of the participants stated that they have access to quality education while 36% negated this.

Among the obstacles to quality secondary education the women mainly mentioned “low level of teaching” (52.2%). 23.2% referred to “insufficient number of qualified teachers”. 18.9% worried that they couldn’t afford private tuition. Many of the participants remarked that schools fail to give pupils knowledge that would ensure that they qualify for higher education. Consequently, there is a demand for private tutors. (See Chart 16).

Chart 16

Problems with Access to Quality Secondary Education



	Low level of education - 52,2%	Insufficient professional teaching staff - 23,2%	shortage of personnel in schools - 4,3%	schools far from pupils' homes - 1,4%	cannot afford private tuition 18,9%
■ Kutaisi	14	0	0	0	6
■ Senaki	3	2	2	1	4
■ Khoni	9	0	1	0	3
■ Tskaltubo	1	3	0	0	0
■ Poti	0	0	0	0	0
■ Khurcha	9	11	0	0	0
■ Total	36	16	3	1	13

52.5% of women respond negatively to the question concerning accessibility of quality higher education, while 47.5% believe that they do have this opportunity.

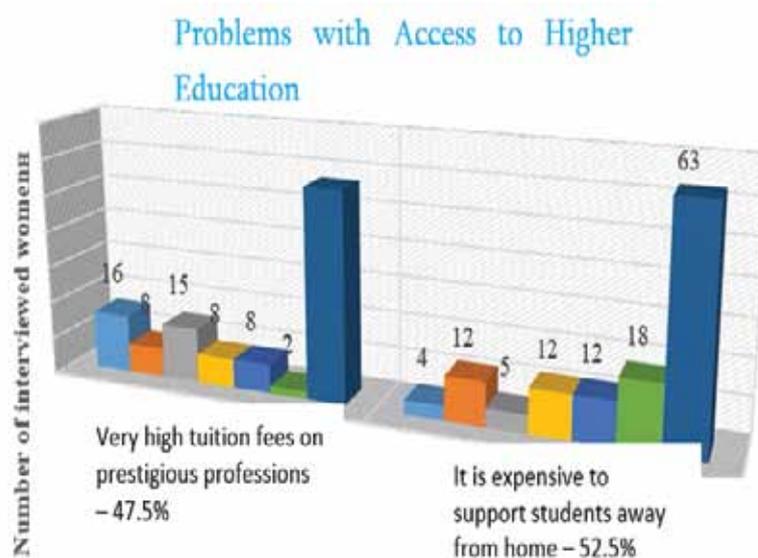
In answer to the question on the obstacles to receiving quality higher education 47.5% state that “it is very expensive to support students away from home”.

High percentage of this response is due to the fact that majority of the participants lives in small towns and villages, far from higher educational institutions. Consequently, access to higher education is connected with issues such as transportation costs, accommodation rental, additional food costs and these expenses have become an insurmountable burden for these women and their families.

52.2% of participants claim that “high tuition fees for prestigious professions” are their main problem (See Chart 17).

Although the state offers an opportunity to receive grants that cover tuition fees fully or partly, this amount does not cover fees for the more prestigious professions. It was also mentioned during the discussion that increase in the popularity of certain professions threatens other professions that are crucial for the country.

Chart 17



	Very high tuition fees on prestigious professions - 47.5%	It is expensive to support students away from home - 52.5%
■ Kutaisi	16	4
■ Senaki	8	12
■ Khoni	15	5
■ Tskaltubo	8	12
■ Poti	8	12
■ Khurcha	2	18
■ Total	57	63

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNITY SECURITY

Crime Prevention

- ❖ Television and radio, printed and electronic media should be used to inform the population about the activities directed at prevention of crime and various offences as well as measures taken to fight them;
- ❖ Economic, social and cultural conditions should be created for sustainable and harmonious development of children and socially dangerous families. This includes promoting their moral and legal culture, motivation and orientation towards positive social behavior.

Culture of Peace and Tolerance

- ❖ In kindergartens and schools lessons and extracurricular activities should be held to promote the culture of tolerance and peace and teach its main principles. These activities should raise students' awareness of the role of diverse groups of people, encourage respect towards ethnic, religious and other forms of diversity, recognition and respect to others' views.
- ❖ Peace and tolerance should be promoted with the help of TV and radio programs.

Access to Education

- ❖ A system of benefits with regard to tuition fees should be created for students from villages and small towns;
- ❖ Student campuses should be built which would offer fully or partly free accommodation depending on the academic success and social status of students.

2.2.6. Personal Security

It should be noted that the feeling of personal and physical security among women, based on the survey is quite strong. According to the obtained data, 30.8% of women have been victims of crime against their lives or property. (See Chart 18)

A lower number (21.7%) admits that they have suffered from physical or psychological abuse from their family members or relatives. (See Chart 19)

During group discussions the women often remarked that almost every woman becomes a victim of abuse – either physical or at least psychological. Many of them admitted that this is the issue that is not discussed openly and remains a taboo for a lot of women. – *“Physical violence is so common that you meet it practically everywhere, but because of the existing mentality and complexes it remains within the family and so, the problem remains unsolved”*. Abusers in the cases of either physical or psychological abuse can be: a husband

Chart 18

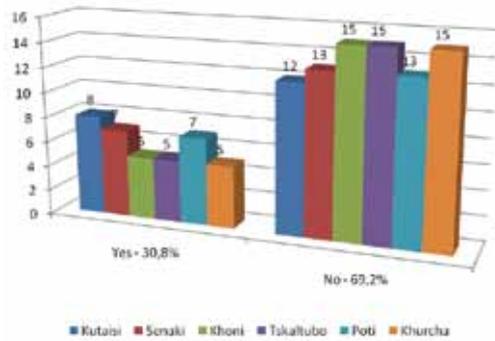
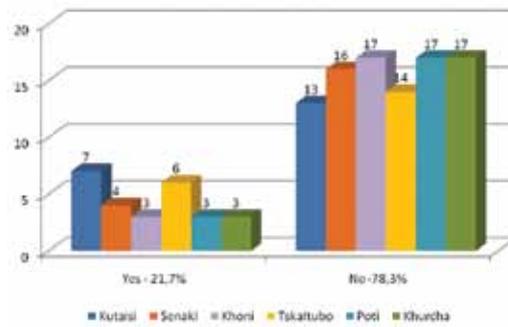
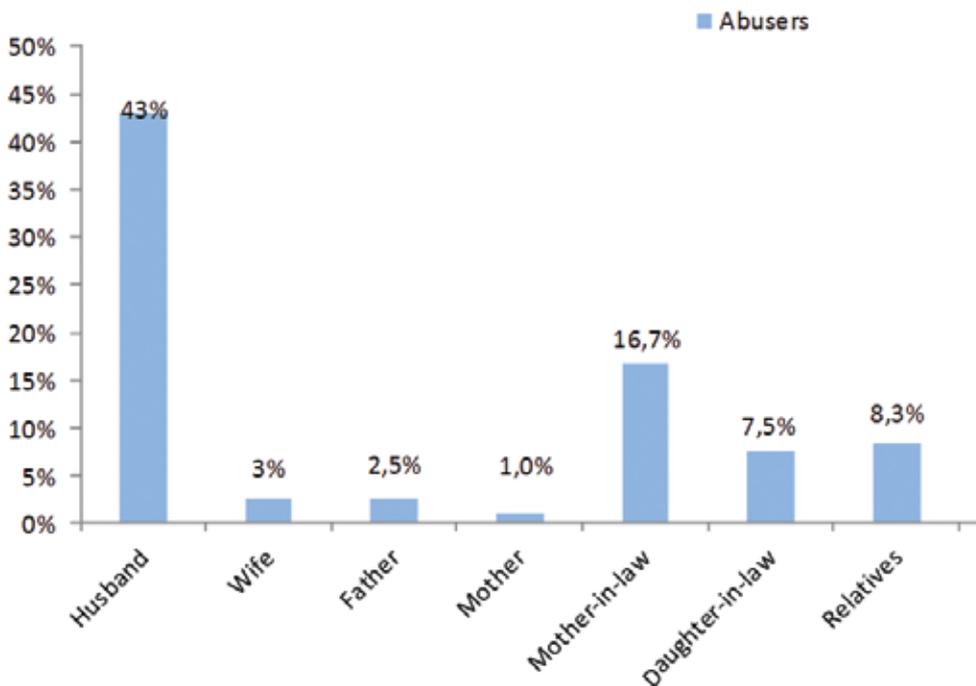


Chart 19



(42.2%), mother-in-law (16.7%), daughter-in-law (7.5%), parents (2.5%), and other relatives (8.3%). (See Chart 20)

Chart 20



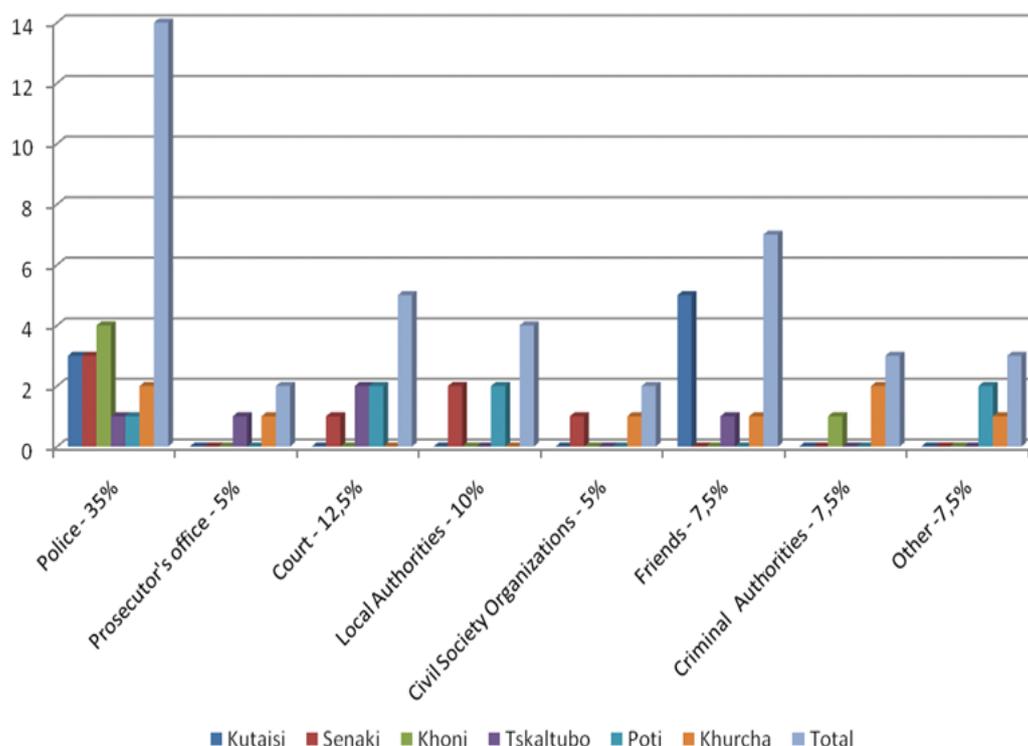
A conclusion follows that violence against women remains a taboo and women’s awareness of the types, forms of abuse and the ways of fighting against it is rather low.

As for causes of abuse and women’s passivity in resisting it a number of factors were listed including shortage of shelters for victims of abuse, absence of the effective protection mechanisms for victims, economic insecurity and early hasty marriages.

It is noteworthy that majority of women see their main protection from criminal abuse in law enforcement agencies. In such cases 35% of women have addressed the police, 17.5% have gone to friends and acquaintances for help and 12.5% have given preference to court.

It is also important that 10% of women have involved the local authorities and only 5% - civic society organizations and prosecutor’s office. 7.5% say they have addressed the so called “criminal authorities”. (See Chart 21).

The appeal for protection



	Police - 35%	Prosecutor's office - 5%	Court - 12,5%	Local Authorities - 10%	Civil Society Organizations - 5%	Friends - 7,5%	Criminal Authorities - 7,5%	Other - 7,5%
Kutaisi	3	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Senaki	3	0	1	2	1	0	0	0
Khoni	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Tskaltubo	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0
Poti	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	2
Khurcha	2	1	0	0	1	1	2	1
Total	14	2	5	4	2	7	3	3

Recommendations for Improving Personal Security

- ❖ International organizations and government bodies should set up, finance and coordinate a network of centers and services for emergency assistance and offer temporary shelters to women and their children who are either victims or at risk of violence;
- ❖ It is important to promote women’s economic independence thus making them less vulnerable to all forms of abuse;
- ❖ Social workers’ role should grow to help prevent abuse;
- ❖ Abuse prevention webpage should be created including a database of violence against women, information on causes and results of abuse and effective ways of its eradication. Also, the site would offer information on telephone hotlines, organizations and services that support victims;

- ❖ It is necessary to work with mass media, support and finance information campaigns aimed at attracting public attention on the issue of violence against women and creating negative public attitude to this phenomenon;
- ❖ School curriculum should include information on gender, gender violence and mechanisms to be used against it.

2.2.7. Political Security

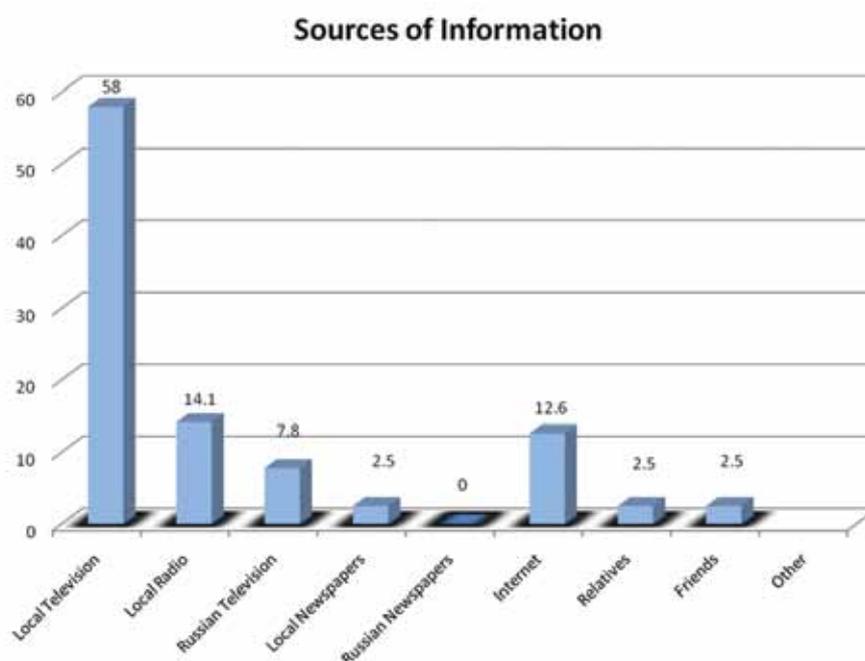
The category of political security includes the following issues: population's access to information as an opportunity for open informational interaction between the state and society, realization of citizens' right to access information on the activities of government bodies and ensuring transparency of state decisions. Also, the degree of interaction between citizens and government structures was analyzed.

The collected data demonstrate that practically every woman has a right to obtain information. However, objectivity and quality of the information received as well as freedom of media is evaluated as unsatisfactory. It was said that media does not inspire trust and is far from free – *“I think media today is not free and it is controlled ...”*, *“Certain TV broadcasters and print media promote interests of specific groups and political parties”*.

One of the major issues that concern women is the media's concentration on negative rather than positive events, the tendency that in the opinion of the study participants increases aggression, nihilism and pessimism in the society.

Among the main sources of information the participants mentioned national television broadcasters (58%), radio (14.1%) and the internet (12.6%). (See Chart 22).

Chart 22



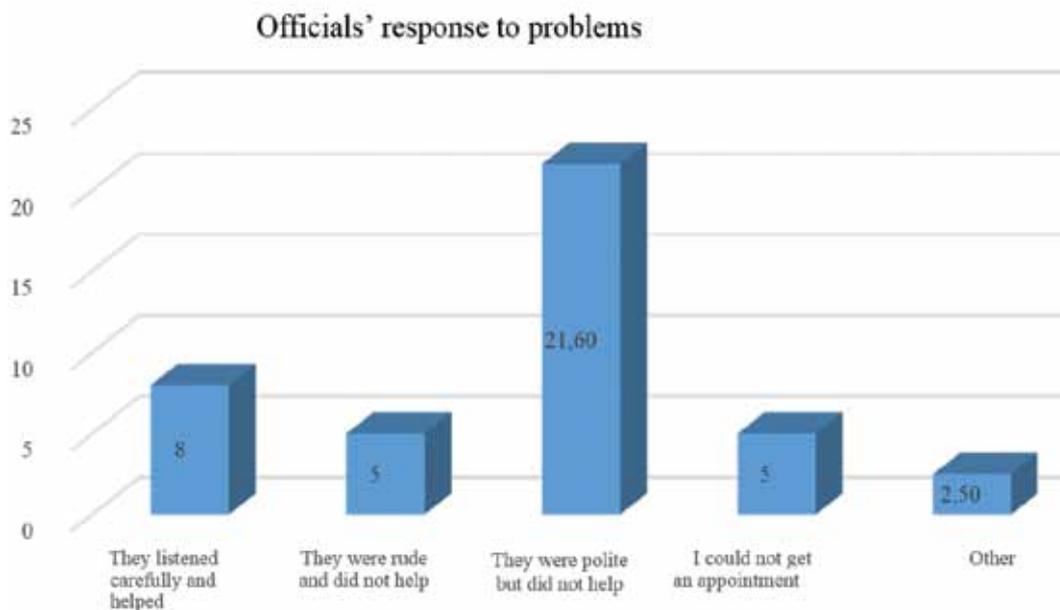
When asked if they have addressed local authorities with requests concerning their problems, 59% of the women answer negatively (see Chart 23).

Majority of the participants give negative evaluation to the responses to their problems. 21% state that they got warm reception and attention, but there was no follow-up and their problems were not solved. 5% claim that officials were rude and did not help. Only 8% confirm that they received assistance (see Chart 24).

Chart 23



Chart 24



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY

- ❖ It is important to support programs aimed at educating active citizens (members of local community) with regard to civic initiatives, civic engagement and forms, methods and principles of protection of their rights;
- ❖ Social control of the activities of local authorities should be increased and citizens should become more actively involved in local policymaking through focusing on socially relevant issues;
- ❖ Community engagement in local budget formation has to grow so that society's main concerns are reflected and solutions found;
- ❖ An effective system of feedback to civil society should be established.

CONCLUSIONS AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The research that evaluated women's human security level has confirmed the importance of considering gender-specific factors in the study of human security issues. Although the study has revealed a number of threats shared by both women and men, the participants frequently identified factors that directly affect women and threaten their security.

The results of the survey demonstrate that women's perception of security is influenced by their place of residence, social status and age. For instance, majority of urban citizens are alarmed by threats to their food security while rural population feels safer due to available land resources and household production.

Access to health care and quality medical services concerns mainly middle-aged and elderly women who live far away from cities. It is mainly women from village Khurcha on the Abkhazian border who are concerned about political instability, renewal of war and loss of territories.

Many of the issues raised in the study were common and were of equal importance to all its participants.

Generalization of the findings and summarizing the main results can lead to the following conclusions:

- Absolute majority of the participants consider economic security as the most topical and burning issue, which according to the responses is connected with practically all the components of human security. Massive unemployment, limited access to jobs, gender discrimination when applying for a job are all factors that lead to increase in the number of women who leave the country in search of better jobs and salaries. They leave their families and children and become potential victims of human trafficking. Unstable economy, devaluation of national currency and lack of material security makes it difficult for women to buy quality natural products. This in turn has negative effects on their reproductive health and increases the risk of diseases in women and children. There is cause and effect relationship between insufficient finances and poverty on the one hand and increase in crime rate, aggression and violence which are often directed against women. Economic difficulties also complicate access to higher education and quality health care.

- Research participants' evaluation of food security allows us to identify three main threats that concern women in this area: a) low access to food products - low income prevents population from buying quality natural products to satisfy minimal consumption requirements, b) food representing danger for consumers – increase in the amount of genetically modified products, lack of information on product origins and its potential effects on health; c) unavailability of quality products – shortage of quality products on the market caused by unsatisfactory food policy. The women's concern about low availability of quality food products is mainly caused by their desire to ensure children's health and adequate development.

- The research identified poverty and unemployment, malnutrition and negative impact of the environment as the main causes of declining health. According to the interviewed women the main challenges for health security lie in the lack of financial resources for diagnostics and prevention of diseases, high prices on medicines, low qualification of doctors and insufficient technical equipment in hospitals and clinics, especially in areas remote from cities.

- Present environmental condition is assessed as unsatisfactory and research participants would wish for it to be better. According to the participants of the study air pollution, danger of infections from rubbish dumps, inadequate sewage system and treatment plants represent the main threats to environmental security. It was emphasized that these factors have negative effect on women's reproductive health, general condition of the population and especially children. Frequent natural disasters and ecological crises require an effective system of monitoring and management, whose absence poses a serious threat to the life and welfare of the society. Thus, this system has to be improved and advanced.

- The main threats to community security that particularly concern women are increasing crime rate, political instability, possibility of renewal of war, the fear of losing territories and the problems with access to quality education. The data obtained during the study show that the participants see the main causes of these threats in economic difficulties. Also, frequent political confrontations, insufficient effort in promoting culture of tolerance and peace, to a certain degree, increase aggression in the society and are not conducive to stable and peaceful development of the community.

- Majority of the women claim that the level of their personal security is high and few of them admit to being victims of or having heard about cases of physical or psychological abuse. However, in personal communication it was often mentioned that gender violence is one of the major concerns for women, which is rarely discussed openly. Taboo on gender violence and in particular, domestic violence hampers effective measures to confront this social evil. Moreover, it stimulates

social tolerance and acceptance of violence thus making women more vulnerable and weakens their resistance. It is evident that inadequacy of the state system of protection for victims and low level of awareness of their legal rights and protection mechanisms prevents women from openly opposing outdated stereotypes and traditions.

- The level and quality of interaction between the authorities and citizens were assessed as unsatisfactory. Many of the women saw a serious problem in low political culture of many local officials and lack of their awareness of their responsibility to voters. In the absence of accountability from the side of government bodies and officials, citizens are prevented from active participation in decision-making, shaping the local policy and the local budget to reflect society's main concerns. The important challenges to political security identified in the study were media freedom, objectivity and impartiality which hamper realization of citizens' right to access information on the activities of government bodies and transparency of state decisions.

- In the area of informational security, in spite of the variety of sources, overall objectivity, transparency and freedom of media received negative evaluation. It was also remarked that high level of aggression in the society is the caused by abundance of negative information flowing from television screens. Based on the conclusions of the research and in addition to the recommendations offered with sections on all seven categories of human security, some general recommendations are made below in order to increase awareness of the need for in-depth research in human security issues as perceived by women.

General Recommendations

- ❖ “Gender Committee of Human Security Issues” should be formed at the National Security Council of Georgia. The Committee should include experts in human security issues from women’s organizations.
- ❖ Every analysis, study or program carried out by government bodies should integrate gender-specific data and gender issues with a view to women and girl’s needs and priorities.
- ❖ Regular consultations should be conducted with gender councils operating within municipalities, women representing communities and civil society organizations; the data received should be used to develop an effective policy and strategy at local and national levels.
- ❖ All ministries and agencies should introduce a system for collecting gender-specific data.
- ❖ Gender-sensitive budgeting approaches reflecting women’s needs and concerns should be introduced in planning and designing state programs and strategies. Moreover, a system of accountability to women needs to be developed.
- ❖ A special educational course in gender issues should be introduced for state officials at all levels.

APPENDIX 1

Sociological research of Fund “Sukhumi” on the issues of women’s human security using focus group interviews:

Questionnaire

1. What are greatest concerns for you, your family and friends in everyday life? What are the main causes of this concern? How can they be resolved?
2. Do you have a permanent source of income? How would you estimate your (or your family’s) income with respect to your well-being?
3. Is quality secondary/higher education accessible to you, your children, grandchildren or relatives? If not, what is the main problem?
4. Is quality food and adequate nutrition accessible to you and your relatives? If not, what is the main problem?
5. Is clean water, sewage system and filtering facilities accessible to you and your relatives? How would you estimate sanitation and environment protection system of your town, village and the country as a whole?
6. Can you and your family members receive quality and free medical service during illness or accidents? If not, how do you solve such problems?
7. Have you, your family or friends ever heard about facts of physical/psychological/economic violence from the members of your own or your friends’ family members? How are such problems solved according to your observations?
8. How would you estimate quality, reliability and immediacy of the information you receive? How safe is the field of media?
9. How protected do you consider your labor rights and labor rights of women in general in our country? What are the main threats in this respect?
10. Have you or your relatives ever come into contact with crimes against life, safety, property or personal interests? If yes, from whom? In such a case whose support do you rely on?
11. Have you ever addressed local authorities or other state institutions on your personal, public or job-related issues? If yes, what was the result of the visit?

APPENDIX 2

Sociological research of Fund “Sukhumi” on the issues of women’s human security

Questions for in-depth interview with an expert:

1. From the perspective of women’s human security, which areas are most secure in your opinion? Which are least secure?
2. What do you consider the greatest achievement in the field of health care in our country? What is the greatest challenge?
3. Do women have access to adequate reproductive health care?

4. In your opinion, how far does the labor law protect women?
5. Do women seeking employment encounter specific problems and obstacles? What are they? What measures would you suggest for dealing with these issues?
6. Do you think women are adequately protected from domestic violence? What are the challenges in this respect?
7. In your estimation, how strong is women's economic security? What are the threats in this area?
8. Do women/girls have opportunities for receiving adequate education? Do you see any gender-specific challenges in this respect?
9. What are your views on environment protection in the country and what threats do you see for women and girls in this area?
10. Do you consider it necessary to reform the security sector in the country with respect to women's personal security and what measures would you suggest for this purpose?

APPENDIX 3

Sociological research of Fund "Sukhumi"

Survey Questionnaire

1. Profile

1. Age -----
2. Place of Residence -----
3. Ethnicity -----
4. Employment status
 - 1) employed
 - 2) unemployed
5. Social status
 - 1) IDP
 - 2) local
6. Family income per member
 - 1) under 150
 - 2) under 250
 - 3) over 250
7. Education
 - 1) primary
 - 2) secondary/professional training
 - 3) incomplete higher
 - 4) higher

2. Main Section

I. Women's economic security

1.1. How would you estimate your (your family's) material condition on a scale of 5?

- 1) very bad 2) bad 3) average 4) good 5) very good

1.2. Which of the following do you consider your permanent source of income?

(Circle as needed)

- 1) your and your family members' salaries
- 2) profits from selling products and handmade objects
- 3) income from business
- 4) help from relatives and friends
- 5) pension
- 6) scholarship
- 7) state allowance
- 8) other (specify) _____

II. Food security

2.1. Are quality and varied food products available to you and your relatives?

- 1) yes 2) no

2.2. What is the main problem? (Circle as needed)

- 1) high price
- 2) shortage of quality products
- 3) no grocery shops nearby
- 4) other (please specify) _____

III. Health security

3.1. Which of the following do you believe to be the greatest threat to your own and your family's health security?

- 1) low quality health care
- 2) high prices
- 3) deteriorating health
- 4) other

3.2. How do you manage to solve your problems with health? (Circle as needed)

- 1) pay for medical services
- 2) go abroad for paid health care
- 3) address healers
- 4) use self-medication
- 5) other (please specify) _____

IV. Environmental security

4.1. How would you evaluate the situation with sanitation and environment protection system in your town/village on a scale of 5?

- 1) very bad 2) bad 3) average 4) good 5) very good

4.2. Is clean water, sewage system and water treatment facilities accessible to you and your relatives?

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - clean water | - <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| - sewage system | - <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| - treatment facilities | - <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |

V. Community security

5.1. Which of the following do you consider the greatest threat to community security?

- 1) political instability
- 2) increase in crime rate
- 3) hostilities
- 4) fear of losing territories
- 5) alcoholism/ drug abuse
- 6) dangerous traffic
- 7) other

5.2. Is quality secondary education accessible to you, your children, grandchildren or relatives?

- yes no

5.3. If not, what is the reason? (Circle as needed)

- 1) low level of teaching
- 2) insufficient professional teaching staff
- 3) shortage of personnel in schools
- 4) school is far from home
- 5) cannot afford private tuition
- 6) other (please specify) _____

5.4. Is higher education accessible to you or your relatives?

- yes no

5.5. What do you consider the main obstacles to receiving higher education? (Circle as needed)

- 1) Tuition fees for prestigious professions are very high
- 2) It is expensive to support students away from home
- 3) other (please specify) _____

VI. Personal security

6.1. Have you, your family or friends ever suffered from physical or psychological violence from the members of your family or your relatives and friends?

yes no

6.2. In your opinion, who uses physical or psychological violence most frequently? (Circle as needed)

- 1) husband
- 2) wife
- 3) father
- 4) mother
- 5) mother-in-law
- 6) daughter/sister-in law
- 7) other (please specify) _____

6.3. Have you or your relatives ever come into contact with crimes against life, safety, property or personal interests?

yes no

If yes, who did you address for protection? (Circle as needed)

- 1) police
- 2) prosecutor's office
- 3) court
- 4) local authorities
- 5) civil society institutions
- 6) family and friends
- 7) 'criminal authorities'
- 8) other (please specify) _____

6.4. Do you believe that roads and traffic are safe?

yes no

6.5. If yes, when are you more concerned about your safety? (Circle as needed)

- 1) when you or your relatives are driving themselves
- 2) when you or your relatives are travelling in someone's car
- 3) when walking
- 4) other (please specify) _____

VII. Political security

7.1. Where do you get information on what happens in the country and in the world? (Circle as needed)

- 1) local television
- 2) local radio
- 3) Russian television
- 4) local newspapers
- 5) Russian newspapers
- 6) internet
- 7) relatives
- 8) neighbours and acquaintances
- 9) other (please specify) _____

7.2. Have you ever addressed the local authorities or other government bodies in order to solve certain personal, job-related or social issues?

- yes no

7.3. If yes, what were your impressions after communication with officials at various levels? (Circle as needed)

- 1) They listened carefully and helped.
- 2) They were rude and did not help.
- 3) They were polite but did not help.
- 4) I could not get an appointment with them.
- 5) other (please specify) _____



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