



WOMEN'S NEEDS AND GENDER- SENSITIVITY

OF ELECTION PROGRAMS OF POLITICAL MANIFESTOS

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OF ELECTION PROGRAMS
OF POLITICAL MANIFESTOS

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საპარტიზო სისტემების განვითარების,
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FOREWORD

The final report of an Election Observation Mission deployed by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) to monitor the presidential election held in Georgia on 27 October 2013, notes that women generally represented between 25 and 50 per cent of attendees at public meetings conducted by candidates. However, the report continues, in their campaigns and platforms candidates did not bring up issues specifically affecting women and most of them referred to the traditional role of women in the Georgian family.¹

In their final report of 2013 presidential elections, the OSCE/ODHIR observers provide the following recommendation to Georgian political parties:

“Parties and candidates could consider how to integrate a gender perspective into their campaign strategies in order to better represent the interests of both male and female voters.”²

The above recommendation prompted us to study whether political parties pay adequate attention to issues affecting women in their election

¹ GEORGIA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 27 October 2013; OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission; Final Report p. 12. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/110301?download=true>

² *Ibid.*; p. 26.

programs, on the one hand, and on the other, to identify the topics women would like to see being reflected in election platforms.

This paper consists of two parts: the first part overviews documents and election platforms of the political parties that were identified as qualified election subjects in the local elections held in Georgia on 15 June 2014; the second part deals with the findings of a survey conducted in nine cities of Georgia with the aim to reveal women's needs and further communicate them to political parties so that they consider those needs in their election manifestos in future. A concluding part of this overview includes recommendations drawn up on the basis of the aforementioned activities.

² See page 40



ABOUT THE PROJECT

This overview was prepared within the framework of the Women for Changes project implemented by the Media Development Foundation (MDF) with the assistance from the Election Systems Development Reforms and Training Center, the legal entity in public law of the Central Election Commission of Georgia.

The objectives set by the project were to support equal involvement of women in social and political processes; establish an effective mechanism of cooperation among actors in the election process (voters, political parties, civil leaders); facilitate the mainstreaming of gender issues in election manifestos of political parties; promote and encourage new women leaders.

Pursuing the above said objectives, the MDF, through active participation of local representatives of the women leaders' cooperation network, conducted a survey in nine cities of Georgia, namely in Tbilisi, Gori, Marneuli, Gardabani, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Signaghi and Zugdidi. The findings of the survey were discussed in round tables with regional representatives of political parties, media and civil society in five cities (Gori, Akhalkalaki, Gardabani, Signaghi and Zugdidi). Moreover, trainings on the issues of women's civil and political activities and ways

of promoting them were held in the regions (namely, Sighnaghi, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Gardabani and Zugdidi).

One of objectives of the project – supporting equal involvement of women in social and political processes – was not limited to encouraging women to enter politics; this represented one of its aspects. When implementing the project the emphasis was rather placed on stepping up women’s activity in advocating those issues which specifically affect them and are pressing for women and through this activity, exert influence on social and political processes in the country. This means having influence not only on government decisions but also altering views of political parties regarding women’s needs. Therefore, yet another aspect of the above cited objective was the empowerment of women as voters, which, inter alia, implies the following:

- Enhancing women participation in public meetings held by political parties in the run up to, during or after elections;
- Communicating issues that are pressing for women to political parties and demanding from them that those issues and corresponding initiatives be included in election manifestos;
- Better familiarizing themselves with political party manifestos and hence, making informed choices.



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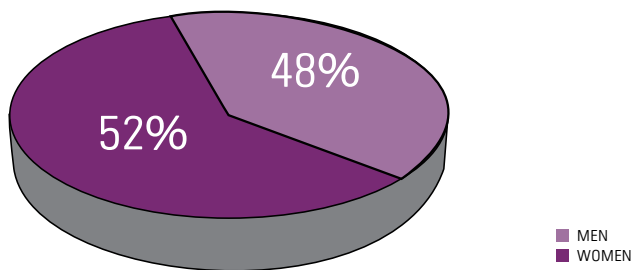
PART I

**GENDER-SENSITIVITY OF ELECTION PROGRAMS
OF POLITICAL MANIFESTOS**

Ketevan Mskhiladze

SOME STATISTICS

According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia, as of 2014, the population of Georgia stood at 4 490 500 with 2 349 100 among being women and 2 141 400 men.¹ Thus women comprise the majority of Georgia's population, 52 percent. Almost 80 percent of them are women of full legal age, in other words, the voters.



The number of registered voters for the June 15, 2014 local elections comprised 3 429 748 including 1 844 314 women and 1 585 434 men. Only 40 percent of registered women (that is 745 604) and 47 percent of registered men (739 746) arrived at polling stations to cast their ballots in the first round of elections.²

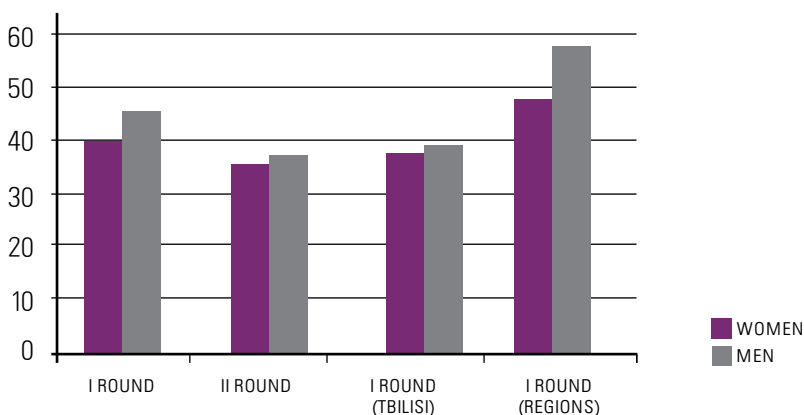
¹ National Statistics Office of Georgia. Gender Statistics. Women and Men in Georgia. http://geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/georgian/qali%20da%20kaci.pdf

² Gender statistics of the voters registered in the unified voters' list and the voters who participated in the June 15, 2014 Municipal Elections Gender. The Central Election Commission.

The pattern of voters' behavior did not change in the run-off election held on 12 July 2014: out of 947 059 registered women only 332 865, or 35 percent, cast their ballots whilst among 768 455 registered men, a corresponding indicator stood at 284 586, or 37 percent.³

The breakdown of figures by the capital city and the rest of Georgia is as follows: Tbilisi saw the participation of 36.59 percent (191 860) of women out of total registered 524 313 in the first round of the election as compared to 38.32 percent (i.e. 151 136) of total registered men (394 354). The turnout was higher in the regions with 48 percent of registered women and 57 percent of registered men arriving at polling stations to vote.⁴

Table 1. Gender statistics of the voters who participated in the June 15, 2014 Municipal Elections



As seen from the nationwide percentage indicators in the above chart, less women took part in the elections than men (40 percent as compared to 47 percent). One may assume that half of those 60 percent of women (which is probably the highest possible number to assume) who did not arrive at

³ Ibid.

⁴ For additional gender statistics for I and II rounds of the local election, please see, “Gender statistics of the voters registered in the unified voters’ list and the voters who participated in the June 15, 2014 Municipal Elections”. The Central Election Commission.

polling stations did so due to objective reasons (were not in the country, were ill, et cetera). However, another half – i.e. 30 percent, which amounts to more than 500 000 women, may be regarded as “lost women voters.” For such a small country as Georgia, half a million voters is a strong electoral base capable to decide the fate of a political party (true, there are “lost voters” among men too as 53 percent of them did not arrive at polling stations either, however, as the aim of our project was to promote participation of women in social and political life, we focused on women voters alone).

There has not been a survey conducted in Georgia, which would enable to analyze gender-specific activity of voters, differences in electoral behavior of women and men, reasons of the failure to arrive at polling stations on an election day, gendered peculiarities of political preferences. Nor does gender statistics exist on party supporters, showing gender differentiation of party supporters and allowing to compare supporters of various political parties from this angle. Consequently, political parties do not develop strategies that would take into consideration gender peculiarities of voters and be focused on attracting women (or male) voters.

Attracting “lost” women voters and offering them such issues that would turn them into supporters are those objectives that any political party striving to come to power would set to themselves.

THE AIM OF THE OVERVIEW

This overview pursues one of the aims of the Women for Changes project, namely, to contribute to mainstreaming gender issues in election manifestos of political parties. It is not focused on assessing the gender composition of political parties, voters, candidates, parliament or government or to describe the situation concerning the gender equality therein (these issues have already been analyzed in a number of studies);⁵ nor is it focused on encouraging women to join political parties. This overview deals

⁵ See, for example, Tamar Bagratia; Gender Analysis of the October 1, 2012 Parliamentary Election in Georgia. NIMD, 2013.

with the gender sensitivity of election manifestos of political parties, in other words, whether the manifestos reflect those issues which specifically affect women and fall within the scope of their interests.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze gender sensitivity of election manifestos, we used the manifestos of those political parties that were identified as qualified election subjects in the most recent elections – the June 15, 2014 Municipal Elections. According to the Central Election Commission, there are 11 qualified election subjects⁶ of which some formed joint blocs to stand for the election. Thus, the following election subjects participated in the local election:

- Election bloc “Georgian Dream”(Georgian Dream-Democratic Movement, Conservative Party of Georgia, Industry Will Save Georgia, Republican Party of Georgia, Free Democrats, National Forum);
- Election bloc “United National Movement” (United National Movement, Christian-Conservative Party of Georgia);
- Nino Burjanadze – United Opposition (United Democratic Movement);
- Shalva Natelashvili – Labor Party of Georgia (Labor Party of Georgia);
- Davit Tarkhan Mouravi – Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (Alliance of Patriots of Georgia).

Since five election subjects (comprising 11 political parties) stood for the local elections, the election manifestos to be studied were five, accordingly.

This overview of manifestos is based on the following sources: the 2014 election manifestos available on official websites of the above listed election subjects, and views of the parties available on the voter information website <http://partiebi.ge>⁷ in the form of questionnaires.

⁶ <http://www.cesko.ge/uploads/other/29/29500.pdf>

⁷ The website was created within the project “Support to the Development of Democratic Institutions in the South Caucasus” implemented by Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy with the funding from the Embassy of Kingdom of the Netherlands to Georgia.

It must be noted here that not all election manifestos were available on official websites of political parties and our efforts to obtain missing manifestos through direct communication with political parties proved unsuccessful. Several political parties had only election manifestos of Tbilisi mayoral candidates whereas our Internet searches for the website of one political party ended without result. Nor were we able to obtain additional information about the views of political parties from the voter information website partiebi.ge – the online questionnaires containing specific and policy related questions about the issues that were important to the Georgian society for the 2014 local elections were filled in only by the Georgian Dream, the United National Movement, and Nino Burjanadze – United Opposition.

Therefore, the overview is based on the election manifestos of the following: the election block Georgian Dream (the official website had the election manifesto of Tbilisi mayoral candidate, Davit Narmania, alone; we were not able to obtain the manifesto for the rest of Georgia); the election bloc United National Movement (the official website of the political party had both election manifestos – those of Tbilisi mayoral candidate and for the rest of Georgia); Nino Burjanadze – United Opposition (the official website of this election subject also had election manifestos of Tbilisi mayoral candidate and for the rest of Georgia); Shaltva Natelashvili – the Labor Party of Georgia (the election manifestos were not published on the website, however the party provided a document which, judging by its content, may be regarded as the election manifesto of Tbilisi mayoral candidate); as regards Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi – Alliance of Patriots of Georgia, we failed to find the official website of the political party as well as to obtain its manifesto through direct communication.

Table 2. Election manifestos of political parties available for the 2014 local elections

Election blocs	Election manifesto, Tbilisi	Election manifesto, regions	partiebi.ge questionnaire	Websites
Georgian Dream	✓	–	✓	http://41.ge/program
United National Movement	✓	✓	✓	http://www.unm.ge/index.php?m=159
Nino Burjanadze – United Opposition	✓	✓	✓	http://www.democrats.ge/
Shalva Natelashvili – Labor Party of Georgia	✓	–	–	http://www.labour.ge
Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi – Alliance of Patriots of Georgia	–	–	–	–

We also used questionnaires available on the partiebi.ge, which were filled in by political parties in the run up to the October 1, 2012 parliamentary elections to compare them with the 2014 election manifestos in terms of gender issues covered therein. The questions in the 2012 questionnaire were responded by the following election subjects: the United National Movement, the Georgian Dream coalition, the New Rights, the Labor Party of Georgia and the Christian-Democratic Movement.

In analyzing the election manifestos, the attention was paid to the following aspects:

- Whether an election manifesto is gender sensitive;
- Whether an election manifesto is more oriented on men than women or vice versa;
- Whether an election manifesto or any issue covered therein is discriminatory against women;
- Whether an election manifesto contains an open declaration of the principle of gender and highlights gender equality issues;
- Whether an election manifesto reflects issues which specifically affect women and if it does, describes consistent steps towards tackling these issues.

As experience of various developing countries show, when manifestos are gender sensitive, they reflect and highlight such issues as child health care, reproductive health care, food security, violence against women, water and sanitation, shelter, income generation, literacy, and the like. Non gender sensitive manifestos, on the other hand, reflect such issues as defense, foreign affairs, roads, tourism, employment, agriculture.⁸

Other international experience also shows that issues specifically affecting women include: maternal healthcare, maternal mortality rates, social assistance to single mothers and multi-children families, employment and protection of women at workplace, domestic and sexual violence against women, elimination of all forms of violence, the education on women's rights and gender equality, et cetera.

One should, however, take into account peculiarities of a country. What is considered an urgent issue for women in one country may not represent a problem in another country at all.

The second part of this overview provides findings of the survey conducted by the Media Development Foundation to identify women's needs and assist in incorporating them in future election manifestos, which give a general idea of those topics that women in Georgia are concerned about.

WOMEN'S ISSUES REFLECTED IN ELECTION MANIFESTOS

It should be noted from the very beginning that this overview does not aim at assessing the quality and content of election manifestos drawn up for the 2014 local elections or analyzing all of the issues reflected therein. Naturally, the issues and initiatives which political parties included in their manifestos (for example, order and security, defense, foreign policy of the country, economy et cetera) are all important for the population

⁸ <http://www.necliberia.org/other.php?&7d5f44532cbfc489b8db9e12e44eb820=Mjkgz>

and equally affect them regardless of their sexes. However, as we have already emphasized, this overview pursued a somewhat narrower aim – to identify the issues that specifically affect women and fall within the scope of their interests – so as to create a general understanding of a degree of gender sensitivity of election manifestos.

THE ELECTION BLOC “GEORGIAN DREAM”⁹

The election manifesto prepared by the Georgian Dream for 2014 local elections is gender neutral, in other words, the issues covered therein are equally important for both women and men. However, within a wide spectrum of topics which the program of this election bloc includes, there are a number of issues which may be regarded as women-oriented.

Health care

Of those promises which the Georgian Dream gave to voters in the health care sector, one specifically affects women – the improvement of reproductive health care services, including pregnancy supervision, family planning, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, maternal and child health, monitoring of the growth and development of children. Moreover, interesting for women (as well as men) are the promises to deliver primary health care service for free and/or at a minimal co-payment rate to the population regardless of their living places or financial standings; to allocate an annual amount for each person covered under the primary health care service; to ensure the geographic accessibility to necessary outpatient (basic) service along with a primary health care team of a family doctor or a general practitioner and a pediatrician; to introduce the institution of a “village doctor” so as to ensure that none of settlements (including in mountainous areas) are left without a medical service.

⁹ Materials are taken from the following sources:<http://41.ge/program>; http://partiebi.ge/new/index.php?action=show_party&parties_id=17&lang=geo.

Employment and improvement of labor conditions

A promise concerning employment and labor conditions, which specifically affects women is to revise the status, social assistance mechanisms, labor reimbursement system, and norms of educator-student ratio of employees of pre-school educational institutions (the absolute majority of which are women) as well as establish a system for the development of professional standards, retraining and attestation thereof.

Among other topics that may be of interest to women are: support to the development of small and medium businesses; establishment of a family and small business development fund; implementation of such infrastructure projects that will create opportunities to attract investments, develop the service sphere and employ local population; devoting special attention to ensuring the qualifications that match labor market demands and the improvement of quality of vocational education, thereby increasing employment opportunities for graduates and retrained persons.

Agriculture

A topical issue for women in the field of agriculture is the provision of immediately available funds and the implementation of targeted programs which will increase the access to relatively cheaper and long-term financial resources as well as agricultural raw materials.

Social policy

Promises in the area of social assistance, which are specifically focused on women include: issuing a 500 GEL worth voucher to a child born in an economically disadvantaged family for the purchase of items necessary for newborns (nutrient supplements, diapers, et cetera) whilst in case of twins, issuing such vouchers to each infant; providing allowances for every third and following child, in particular, 800 GEL for the third child, 1,000

GEL for the fourth and 1,500 GEL for the fifth and following child born in economically disadvantaged families.

Other mother-oriented promises include introducing an assistance program for indigent families with children to ensure that needs of such families are met; expanding a social assistance package and increasing the monetary aid to minors with disabilities as well as multi-children families who reside in Tbilisi; financing the education fee of students from economically disadvantaged families in Tbilisi.

Infrastructural projects

An infrastructure-related issue interesting for women is the rehabilitation of inter-state and local roads, including village roads.

Education

Among initiatives intended by the election bloc in the field of education, the most topical for mothers are: to carry out a needs assessment of pre-school educational institutions for a further aim to bring them in line with the “standard physical environment of pre-school educational institutions;” to revise the norm of acceptable number of students in a kindergarten class and to determine a recommended maximum number of students therein; to renew the arrangements for organization and operation of kindergartens taking into account age properties of students; to organize a catering process in a transparent, quality and rational way; to adapt the issues concerning the enrollment of students in pre-school educational institutions, the education process and the length of holidays to the needs of parents; to improve the infrastructure, physical environment and facilities according to the concept of safe kindergarten and the age requirements for physical development of kindergarten students; to implement a policy of inclusive education in preschool educational institutions.

Other mother-oriented promises are: to improve school infrastructure and implement student transportation programs; to create a safe and motivating educational environment for all students; to review the national curricula and textbooks; to train teachers in modern teaching methods; to integrate modern technologies into the learning process; to promote enterprising education and professional orientation & carrier planning courses that will inform students about different professions and labor market trends and help them choose their future profession; to set up a special fund to support and finance those targeted programs that will contribute to the realization of intellectual potential and civic activities of the youth; on the basis of needs assessment, to establish educational institutions for after-school activities; to modernize libraries by combining traditional library environment with modern technologies; to pay special attention to matching the requirements of the labor market by students and the quality of vocational education, which will increase employment opportunities for graduates and trained persons.

Ecology

In the area of ecology, the promises that interest women are the upgrade of waste management system through improving the condition of landfills and setting up recycling enterprises; the expansion of recreational and green zones in Tbilisi in order to form a healthy ecological environment. Also interesting in this regard are promises to conduct a regular control on the quality of country's water resources and air both in cities and regions and introduce new requirements for emissions.

Sport and healthy lifestyle

In terms of promoting sport and healthy lifestyle, mother-oriented promises include: to improve health of children and adolescents and take care of their harmonious development; to support physical and mental development of schoolchildren by providing sport and physical education

classes; to replace the “sedentary lifestyle” by a physically active life; to deal with drug addiction and alcohol abuse.

Also an attractive initiative for mothers is the installment of exercise machines and equipment in cities and rural areas on a massive scale and the construction of gyms.

Persons with disabilities

To ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs), the election bloc “Georgian Dream” promised voters to support the expansion of community organizations and day centers of PWDs; to supply assistive devices to PWDs; to develop special social assistance programs for PWDs and their family members; to establish programs for adapting living places of PWDs so as to enable them to move independently; to inventory the entire physical environment of Tbilisi, to assess its further adaptation and to plan a long-term funding from the Tbilisi budget for the adaptation of infrastructure; to control the use of parking spaces for PWDs.

Internally displaced persons

To significantly improve living conditions of IDPs, the Georgian Dream promised to speed up the process of handing over living spaces of IDPs living in Tbilisi into their ownership and in parallel, to undertake works to improve infrastructure.

THE ELECTION BLOC “UNITED NATIONAL MOVEMENT”¹⁰

The election manifesto of the United National Movement covers a wide spectrum of issues – from Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspiration to the res-

¹⁰ Materials are taken from the following sources: <http://www.unm.ge/index.php?m=159>; http://partiebi.ge/new/index.php?action=show_party&parties_id=13&lang=geo

toration of territorial integrity and safe and dignified return of refugees – and is gender neutral, that is it equally refer to both women and men. Although women do not represent a clear target of the manifesto, it reflects some issues that fall within the scope of women’s interest.

Health care

Among issues of health care reflected in the manifesto of the political party, the ones that may be regarded as attractive for women are: to improve the quality of and access to medical services; to continue the implementation of medical infrastructure rehabilitation projects in order to allow citizens to receive quality and efficient health care services in regions; to upgrade the insurance system and improve both private and state insurance schemes for citizens; to prioritize the public health to improve the populations’ health care indicators; to take efforts to establish a healthy lifestyle; to toughen the competition in the pharmaceutical sector in order to decrease prices on pharmaceuticals and ensure the supply of quality and effective medication to population.

Employment and improvement of labor conditions

With regard to employment and the improvement of labor conditions, the issue that specifically affects women is the increase in the salary of teachers. This is because the majority of teachers at schools are women (according to the National Statistics Office of Georgia, as of the 2013–2014 academic year, the number of teachers in the general educational schools comprised 67,152 of which 57,370 are women¹¹). Other important promises for women and mothers include: to further rehabilitate a school infrastructure; to renovate, equip and provide needed resources to all schools in accordance with modern requirements. More financial support to the institution of village and family doctor may also be regarded as a women-oriented issue for the same reason as in the case of teachers.

¹¹ National Statistics Office of Georgia. Gender Statistics. http://geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/georgian/qali%20da%20kaci.pdf

The United National Movement sees the development of competitive labor market, support to training of qualified workforce, attraction of investments, protection of private sector and the sense of stability as necessary prerequisites for the growth in employment. In the agriculture sector, it sees the establishment of processing enterprises as contributing to the creation of new jobs. All these issues are, naturally, important for women.

Social policy

Out of initiatives offered in the area of social assistance, the most interesting for women is free travel by public transport. The same promise was given to students and schoolchildren, which is also a promise oriented on women/mothers.

Yet another attractive promise for women is to maintain the state financing system for the education of clever young people from economically disadvantaged groups of population.

Among other social assistance promises targeting a certain category of women are a heightened focus on targeted assistance of people living under the poverty line; incorporation of wider list of medications in insurance packages, cost of which will be reimbursed by the state for economically disadvantaged groups of population, while representatives of different groups will enjoy serious discounts.

Infrastructural projects

Most attractive promises given by the United National Movement in terms of infrastructural initiatives are improvement/development of natural gas supply infrastructure; improvement/development of water supply infrastructure; improvement/development of infrastructure of irrigation channels; improvement/development of road infrastructure, especially those connecting villages.

Education

Of promises given in the field of education, the issues oriented on women are: to maintain the model of funding an education grant per school student and at the same time, to increase the amount of grants; to integrate unified national examination and school graduation examination so that a school student will no longer have to sit two kinds of exams; to maintain the principle of grant funding of universities and increase the amount of grants for bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies; to continue financing of education of students studies for master's degree at best world universities; to finance the education of students from economically disadvantaged families; to offer paid internship to successful students; to finance free Internet access for students from economically disadvantaged families living in Tbilisi; to develop vocational education; to modernize libraries and transform them into modern spaces for education and development.

Ecology

Initiatives in the area of ecology that are interesting for women include providing the population with the public transportation means that are modern, comfortable and ecological; strictly observing the regulations concerning recreational zones; allocating significant amounts from the Tbilisi budget to create and develop new “green zones.”

Sport and healthy lifestyle

Sport and healthy lifestyle initiatives oriented on women are: promoting a healthy lifestyle among the youth, implementation of sport, cultural and educational programs; arranging/initiating academic competitions and other sports/entertainment events; organizing mini-parks and public gardens, where people will have a rest and relax together with families and children.

Persons with disabilities

The initiatives towards supporting persons with disabilities include the adaptation of all public institutions, educational and medical entities, and public transport to the needs of people with disabilities; along with economic development, the application of the same requirement to the private sector.

Internally displaced persons

The United National Movement believes that the return of IDPs to their homes, the restitution of their property rights and ensuring security guarantees must be carried out in full observance of principles of fairness and equality, human rights and freedoms, based on the principles of international law; it is necessary to create such conditions which will enable them to enjoy the right of safe, voluntary and dignified return.

NINO BURJANADZE – UNITED OPPOSITION¹²

The election manifesto of Nino Burjanadze – United Opposition is also gender neutral, but it contains a number of issues which specifically affect women.

Health care

One of health care initiatives that specifically affects women is the strengthening of the state patronage program for pregnant women which involves additional visits to doctor, examinations, pregnancy prevention, treatment of pathologies of pregnancy and implementation of medicine supply programs. Other election promises although not specifically ori-

¹² Materials are taken from the following sources: <http://www.democrats.ge/>;
http://partiebi.ge/new/index.php?action=show_party&parties_id=24&lang=geo.

ented on women, but falling within the scope of their (as well as men's) interest are: increasing the population's access to primary health care institutions; ensuring early detection of diseases and corresponding treatment; devoting more attention to preventive health care and implementing screening programs aimed at early detection of diseases (by age groups, job-specific or inheritance-related risks); also, reinforcing activities aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles.

Social policy

Among social assistance initiatives, the women-oriented one is the promise to develop a special social assistance package for families and single parents aimed at providing them with additional social assistance, helping them get employment, start up business, overcome daily problems. Although this promise is expressed in a gender-neutral language, the phrase used – “single parents”, is normally associated with single mothers and therefore, this initiative is important for this category of women.

Some other social assistance promises that are attractive for women include the funding of co-payment of state health care programs from local budgets for retired and indigent people and the issuance of an additional 25 GEL for medications.

Employment and improvement of labor conditions

As regards employment and the improvement of labor conditions, the most important initiatives for women are those which concern kindergarten and school teachers, because educators at preschool educational institutions as well as the majority of teachers at schools are women. The election bloc Nino Burjanadze – United Opposition promised voters to restore the status of teacher to educators employed in preschool educational institutions; to revise salaries of teachers and raise them up to the level commensurate with public servant salaries; to organize and

finance retraining of teachers; to attract qualified teachers and create proper conditions for them; to not close schools with limited number of students. Also a women-oriented promise is the improvement of labor remuneration to librarians because the majority of librarians are women.

For the same reason as cited above, one can also regard a promise on improving labor conditions of doctors and nurses attractive for women. The initiatives in this area include ensuring appropriate remuneration for medical staff; devoting special attention to the institution of family doctor and ensuring the conditions and motivation commensurate with the demands towards them; upgrading the qualification of the staff of outpatient network; increasing the remuneration of primary line workers of medical care – doctors and nurses working in outpatient clinics and policlinics. The majority of the staff in these medical institutions, as a rule, represent women and therefore, this promise may be regarded as a promise targeting this category of women voters.

As regards the employment, the Tbilisi mayoral candidate promised the inhabitants of the capital city to establish a program named “No citizen without a profession,” under which citizens of all ages would be equipped with vocations and skills that meet modern requirements.

Infrastructural projects

Out of issues concerning the infrastructural development, the most urgent initiative is ensuring the supply of water round-the-clock. Also interesting promises are the improvement of drinking water quality in rural areas and the improvement of so-called internal roads. These two issues, however, are important for men too.

Ecology

In the area of ecology, women-oriented promises are: to set up smoothly running systems of household waste management, to implement sepa-

rate collection of household waste and develop secondary waste processing industry; to plan and implement measures of preventing the contamination of water, air, soil and food; to develop a state program for the protection of atmospheric air from the greenhouse emissions and to set up an effective mechanism of air quality monitoring; also, to declare a moratorium on tree felling and carrying out constructions in gardens and parks of the capital city.

Sport and healthy lifestyle

For promoting sport and healthy lifestyle, the initiatives oriented on women/mothers are: to develop and implement a comprehensive program in order to bolster child and adolescent sports and recreational activities; to refit buildings for sports purposes; to provide summer camps for children from economically disadvantaged families living in Tbilisi. Other interesting promises for women include increasing the access to education and sports for economically disadvantaged groups; to provide the target groups with recreational programs.

Education

Women-oriented promises in the area of education include the opening of libraries with not only print but also electronic books available there and also, ensuring a high-speed Internet in villages.

Agriculture

As regards agriculture, access to long-term, low-interest loans is that promise to agricultural employees which may be regarded as interesting for women, though it is no less important for men too.

¹³ sources of the material: <http://www.democrats.ge/>;
http://partiebi.ge/new/index.php?action=show_party&parties_id=24&lang=geo.

Persons with disabilities

Initiatives of the party in regards to persons with disabilities are: to construct underground walkways as well as walkway bridges adapted to the needs of PWDs, to create special seat areas in public transport and install special lifts; to install special wheelchair ramps on roads and sidewalks and ensure special audio road signs for people with impaired vision; to ensure their full integration into society; to modernize public transport in a way that PWDs do not encounter any problem in the movement.

SHALVA NATELASHVILI – LABOR PARTY OF GEORGIA

The election manifesto of the Labor Party is gender neutral and basically, focused on providing social benefits and assistance to economically disadvantaged people.

Health care

Among initiatives proposed in the health care sector the ones that are specifically oriented on women are the construction of a municipal maternity hospital and a children's hospital. Also interesting promises for women are ensuring a municipal hospital for adults and one municipal polyclinic in each district.

Social policy

From among social assistance issues the one that is interesting for women (mothers) is the promise to make transportation free for students. Free travel in public transport is also promised for economically disadvantaged groups and retirees. Other promises include providing assistance of the size of minimum subsistence level to economically disadvantaged and unemployed people; decreasing all utility fees; granting vouchers to economically disadvantaged people and retirees; establishing a fund for economi-

cally disadvantaged people, which will be focused on providing housing to homeless residents of Tbilisi; financing the cost of medication to economically disadvantaged people and retirees from the Tbilisi budget.

Employment

The party's initiative in this area involves the employment of people in budgetary organizations of the capital city, also, allocation of long-term, low interest-rate loans from the municipal budget for the development of small and medium size business.

Education

Women-oriented promises in the field of education are the construction and expansion of budget-funded kindergartens as well as vocational institutions for socially disadvantaged youth.

Ecology

The promise to maintain and develop recreational zones falls within the scope of women's interests.

Infrastructural projects

From among infrastructural issues the ones that are interesting for women include the rehabilitation of roads and continuation of the project envisaging the maintenance and repair of doorways, elevators and roofs.

DAVIT TARKHAN-MOURAVI – ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS OF GEORGIA

As we have noted at the beginning of this overview, we were not able to obtain the election manifesto of Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi – Alliance of Patriots of Georgia. The views of this election subject are not available on

NIMD's election platform partiebi.ge either. We, therefore, were not able to study the election manifesto of this party.

2012 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Since the political manifestos for the local municipal elections of 2014 are largely gender neutral, we compared them with the views of political parties for the 2012 parliamentary elections. The comparison revealed a difference between the two in terms of views on the political involvement of women.

The election subjects standing for 2012 parliamentary elections had the following views and initiatives regarding the increase of women's participation in political life.

New Rights

In its election manifesto the New Rights party placed an emphasis on the need to ensure gender equality, observe equal rights of men and women and support women's active involvement in social or political activities.

“Despite the fact that women in Georgia are actively involved in social activities, their participation in politics – especially at the decision-making level – remains low. For the country's democratic development to be stable, gender equality is mandatory, as is observing the equal rights of men and women and supporting women wishing to play an active part in social or political activities. To achieve this:

- Promotion in the political parties and active participation of women in the elections should be supported (according to a resolution of the “New Rights” committee, women will represent a minimum of 30% of party electoral lists as from the 2012 parliamentary elections);
- Higher education for women must be promoted;

- The involvement of women in business should be increased by providing special consultation programmes and cheap credit resources; and
- The country must have a sufficient number of kindergartens so that bringing up children will no longer be a brake to women's professional and social activities.”¹⁴

The United National Movement

The United National Movement deemed necessary to support gender equality in the formation of public opinion and in decision-making processes and at every level of democratic governance.

“The United National Movement supports the equal participation of women and men in politics. The most effective way in which this aim can be supported is through the introduction of incentives for political parties. Changes made to the electoral code are an example of this: if, during the electoral process, a political party will have 2 different sex per 10 representatives on its party list, it will be entitled to 10% more funding from the state.

The UNM has set up a gender equality department within the party, whose goals are: to support gender equality in the formation of public opinion and in decision-making processes and to support gender equality at every level of democratic governance.

The United National Movement supports efforts to ensure the broad and active participation of women in peaceful processes at both the national and international level. A gender council has been established in the Georgian parliament at the initiative of the United National Movement for supporting these and other types of activities”.¹⁵

¹⁴ NIMD, 2012 parliamentary elections; http://partiebi.ge/2012/index.php?thematic_id=17&party_1_id=12&lang=eng

¹⁵ http://partiebi.ge/2012/index.php?thematic_id=17&party_1_id=13&lang=eng

Georgian Dream coalition

The Georgian Dream coalition believed that the participation of women in politics should be increased in two directions – intra-party and general politics.

“Efforts to increase the participation of women in politics should follow two directions – intra-party and general politics. In terms of intra-party representation, a women’s branch of the “Georgian Dream” coalition has been established and this branch serves as a mechanism for grouping and strengthening the coalition’s women members working at grass-roots and middle levels. The head of the women’s branch will be included in the party’s political council, which is the party’s decision-making body. Those in the party’s women’s branch who are willing will be involved in the party’s higher-level activities in order to increase women’s participation in important decision-making processes. In this way, the party will quickly switch to a more equal model (as opposed to a model in which women are active but men make the decisions). As for the general political process, the coalition aims to adhere to current legislation establishing a norm for parliamentary party lists. The coalition, however, considers this norm to be only a basis and believes it does not give grounds for satisfaction. Having greater numbers of female candidates on party lists for future national or local elections is therefore a priority. Particular efforts will also be made to nominate women as candidates for majoritarian seats and to provide these candidates with as much support as possible during pre-electoral campaigns”.¹⁶

Labor Party of Georgia

The Labor Party promised to increase proportional representation of women in government.

¹⁶ http://partiebi.ge/2012/index.php?thematic_id=17&party_1_id=17&lang=eng

- “The proportional representation of women in government will be increased.
- Decisive and irreversible policies will be carried out against domestic violence and gender discrimination”.¹⁷

Christian-Democratic Movement

The Christian-Democratic Movement saw the increase in representation of women in party electoral lists as the necessary step.

“The Christian-Democrats believe that the representation of women in party electoral lists should be increased (existing incentive of public funding increase), and we consider it necessary to improve the chances of most women by affording them direct financial support with the help of the government (namely during the preparation, publication and dissemination of campaign materials)”.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

The above overview has shown that the manifestos prepared by the election subjects for the local elections in 2014 are largely gender neutral. True, they contain a number of such issues and initiatives which specifically affect women and fall within the scope of women’s interests, but the range of such topics is limited. Women’s issues are mainly seen through specific lenses, namely those of health (reproductive health, supervision of pregnant), demography (one-off allowances per child born), children’s learning and sport activities. As regards one of the most acute issues – employment, this is limited to kindergarten and school teachers. This may be easily considered as a result of common stereotypes ac-

¹⁷ http://partiebi.ge/2012/index.php?thematic_id=17&party_1_id=16&lang=eng

¹⁸ http://partiebi.ge/2012/index.php?thematic_id=17&party_1_id=14&lang=eng

ording to which teaching at a kindergarten or school is seen as the most appropriate job for women.

The above provided overview makes us think that political parties do not spend adequate time on a thorough study of women's problems and are merely influenced by those opinions and stereotypes that are commonplace in Georgia. For example, none of election manifestos contains such an urgent issue as the domestic violence.¹⁹ Nor do election manifestos reflect initiatives for the increase of women's employment, elimination of all types of discrimination or ensuring gender equality. These issues, as the meetings conducted in the regions made it very clear, represent very serious problems in the country. Hence, correctly identifying women's problems in party manifestos, raising the awareness of gender equality in society as well as the level of gender sensitivity are those issues which require serious and urgent attention.

None of election manifestos for the 2014 local elections touched upon the issues of women's participation in political life, their political empowerment or gender equality. Political empowerment, among other things, implies informing women and thus making it easy for them to make informed choices. The need of the latter was seen from the findings of the survey (see, part II) which revealed that the majority of interviewed women neither attended public meetings held by political parties ahead of elections nor got familiar with election manifestos of political parties.

¹⁹ More than 20 women fell victim to domestic violence in Georgia in 2014.



PART II

**MAINSTREAMING WOMEN'S ISSUES IN ELECTION MANIFESTOS OF
POLITICAL PARTIES**

Lela Khomeriki



INTRODUCTION

To facilitate the mainstreaming of gender issues and women's requirements in election platforms of political parties, the Media Development Foundation (MDF), with the involvement of Women's Cooperation Network, conducted a survey in nine cities of Georgia (Tbilisi, Gori, Marneuli, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Gardabani, Signaghi, Zugdidi, Ninotsminda).

The survey was designed to reveal views of local women voters, civic leaders and representatives of non-governmental organizations on those topics which political parties should take heed of in order to accommodate the interests of women voters in their election strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted in November–December, 2014. A total of 238 respondents were interviewed. The distribution of respondents by cities was as follows: Tbilisi – 45 respondents, Akhaltsikhe – 23, Akhalkalaki – 24, Ninotsminda – 25, Marneuli – 22, Gardabani – 20, Zugdidi – 20, Gori – 34, Signaghi / Tsnori – 25 respondents.

Respondents included active women from regions and villages, non-governmental organizations working on women’s issues as well as other non-governmental organizations, and local journalists.

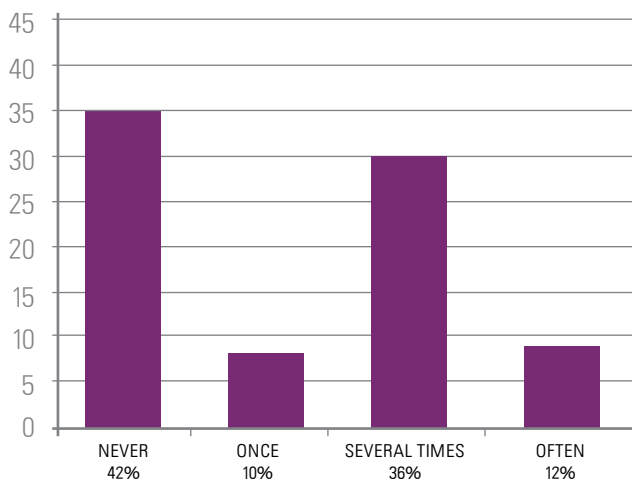
A questionnaire which was used as a survey instrument contained open-ended as well as formal standardized questions.

This report provides the findings of the quantitative analysis of data obtained through standardized questions and the thematic analysis of answers received through open-ended questions.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Some 7% of respondents proved to be members of political parties.

To the question “Have you ever attended meetings held by political parties?” the respondents answered as follows:

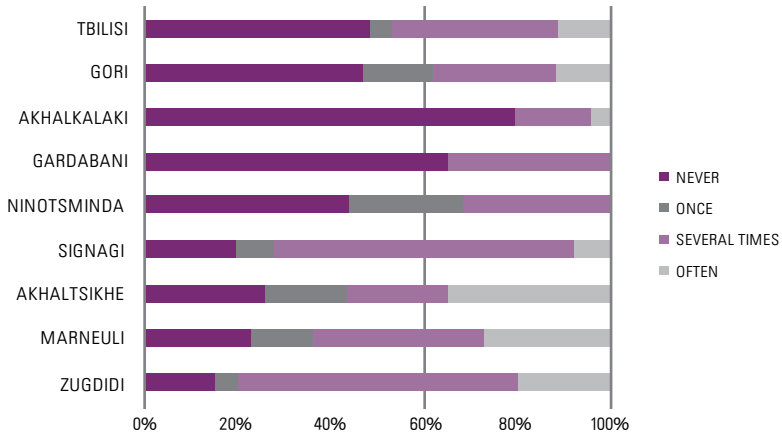


Even though respondents of the survey comprised socially active women, some 42% of them had never attended meetings of political parties. Such

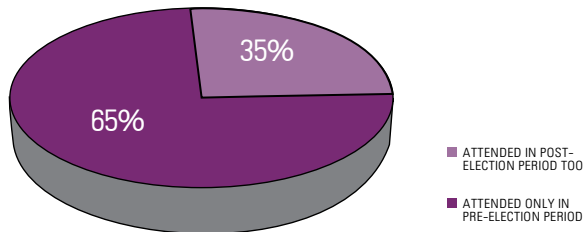
PART II

meetings were attended only once by 10% of respondents, several times by 36% and often by 12%.

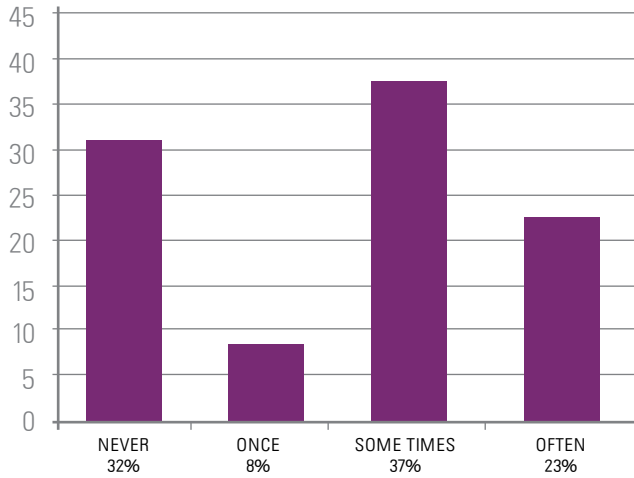
The chart below shows the attendance of political party meetings by cities:



It is worth noting that 65% of the total number of respondents who attended political party meetings did so only in pre-election periods while 35% attended them both in pre- and post-election periods.

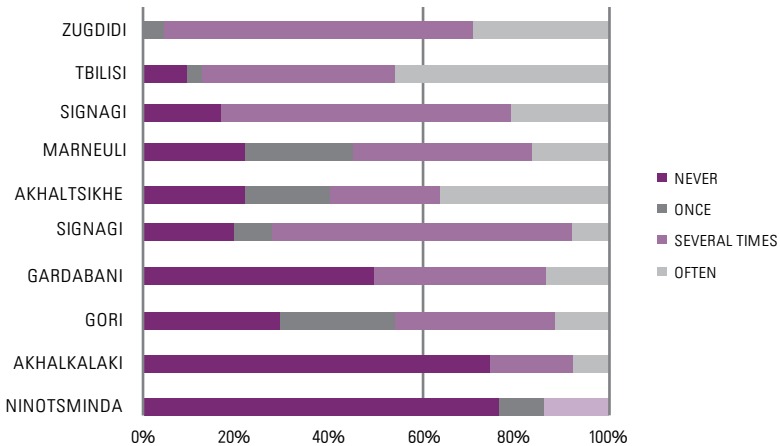


Answers to the question “Have you ever got acquainted with the political party manifestos?” were redistributed as shown below:



As the chart shows, 32% of the respondents have never got acquainted with election manifestos of political parties, 8% has done so once, 37% – several times and 23% – often.

This indicator by cities looks as follows:





ISSUES WOMEN WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED IN ELECTION MANIFESTOS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Before moving to closed-ended questions regarding women's priorities, the respondents were asked to name four issues which they view as specifically affecting women or being most important for women and which they would like to see included in the manifestos of political parties of Georgia.

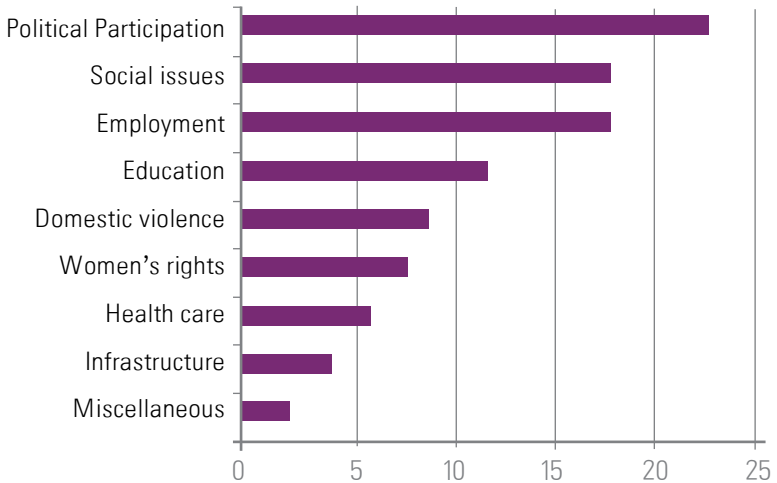
To this end, the questionnaire contained an open-ended question: "What are those important women-related issues that you would like to see included in the manifestos of political parties?"

A total of 508 opinions were expressed by 238 respondent in nine cities. As a result of thematic analysis of responses the opinions were classified into nine thematic groups of issues that women deem important.

The redistribution of respondents' opinions into thematic groups is as follows:

The distribution of responses to the open-ended question in thematic groups

Political Participation	23%
Education	12%
Health care	6%
Social issues	18%
Employment and economic empowerment of women	18%
Domestic violence	9%
Women's rights	8%
Infrastructure	4%
Miscellaneous	2%



The quantitative data of responses classified into thematic groups is shown in the following table, by cities:

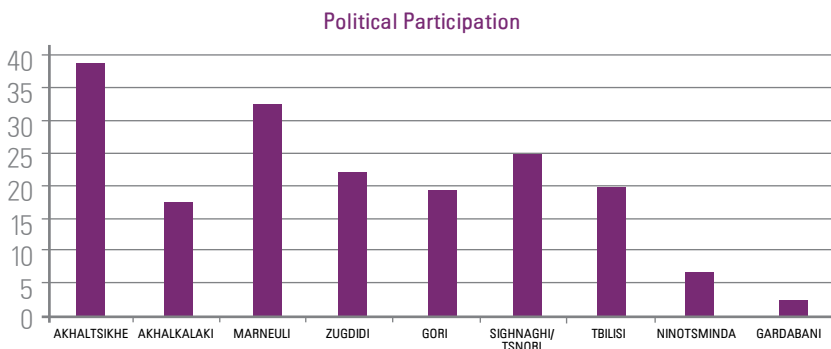
	Political Participation %	Health care %	Education %	Social Issues %	Employment %	Women's rights %	Domestic violence %	Infrastructure %	Miscellaneous %
Tbilisi	21	6	11	23	8	15	16	0	0
Akhaltzikhe	40	3	10	18	15	3	6	5	0
Akhalkalaki	20	15	22	27	10	2	2	0	2
Ninotsminda	9	2	24	3	22	7	2	19	12
Gardabani	0	4	19	37	15	14	7	0	4
Marneuli	34	7	12	9	20	2	9	7	0
Zugdidi	25	6	7	11	31	9	11	0	0
Gori	21	7	3	20	22	10	14	0	3
Sighnaghi/Tsnori	27	6	4	23	16	12	4	6	2

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

Some 118 views were expressed on the issue of political participation, which comprises 23% of total answers received through the open-ended question.

It should be noted that the percentage shares of responses belonging to this thematic group was quite high in all cities except for Gardabani.

The share of responses classified into the thematic group of political participation among all responses received via the questionnaire is shown in the chart below by cities, in percentage terms:



The summary of responses which as a result of thematic analysis were classified into the group of political participation is provided below:

- Acknowledging and eliminating gender discrimination in political institutions;
- Elaborating a long-term strategy towards achieving gender equality;
- Increasing the number of women in politics and enhancing the role of women in the political process;
- Seeing more women in decision-making positions at all levels of legislative and executive branches;
- Ensuring the equal number of men and women in parliament;
- Observing gender balance in leading positions of public agencies;
- Appointing more women to high-ranking positions, especially in the field of social policy;
- Seeing more women in the diplomatic corps;
- Elaborating mechanisms for the enactment of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on promoting women's participation in peace and security efforts.

Gender quotas

- Promoting the principle of gender quotas and adopting a legal provision on gender quotas;
- Establishing internal party gender quotas.

Achieving gender balance in political parties

- Observing gender balance in a political party system, including through the introduction of internal party gender quotas;
- Observing gender equality in managerial positions of political parties;
- Putting more women on electoral lists of political parties, including at the beginning of lists;
- Increasing the number of women in political parties;
- Drawing up a plan for enhancing the motivation of women;
- Strengthening women's wings inside political parties;
- Promoting new women party members.

Manifestos of political parties

- Identifying women's problems and incorporating them in election manifestos of political parties;
- Focusing on educational programs in political party manifestos;
- Incorporating family empowerment program in party manifestos;
- Focusing on women's rights.

Field activities of political parties

- Field activities of political parties are too weak;
- Parties do not have a local operational strategy for non-election periods;
- Political parties should often hold meetings (not only during pre-election periods) with women to listen to their problems;
- Local political schools should be established;
- Various activities (training, etc.) designed to raise women's political awareness and increase their participation in the political process (primarily on the local level) should be implemented across the country.

Enhancing women's role in local self-governments

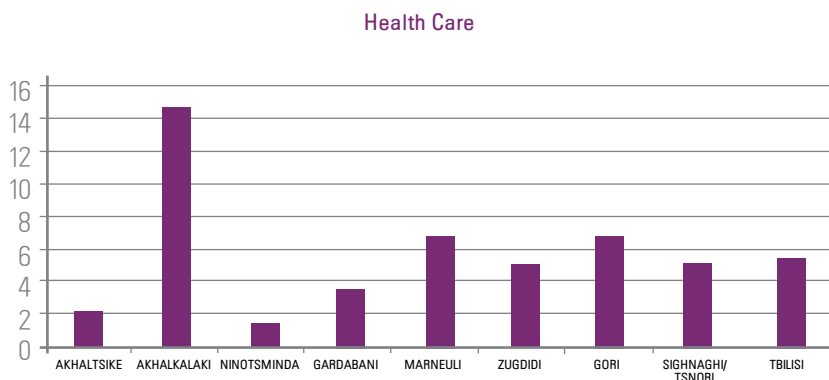
- Increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in local self-government bodies as women are not represented in responsible positions and mainly hold lower public service posts in regions;
- Increasing the number of women deputies in representative bodies of local governments and enhancing women's involvement in the activity of these bodies;
- Ensuring equal number of women and men in executive bodies of local governments;
- Accommodating women's needs by local self-government bodies;
- Introducing the principles of gender-sensitive budgeting;
- Enhancing women's participation in decision-making process of local self-governments;

- Having more women engaged in commissions working on social issues;
- Establishing transparent mechanisms of monitoring the quality of implementation of agriculture programs and village budgets and enhancing the involvement of public in this process.

HEALTH CARE

Some 6% of total number of opinions expressed by respondents was classified into a thematic group of health care issues.

The share of responses classified into the thematic group of health care is shown in the chart below by cities, in percentage terms:



The summary of responses which as a result of thematic analysis were classified into the group of health care is provided below:

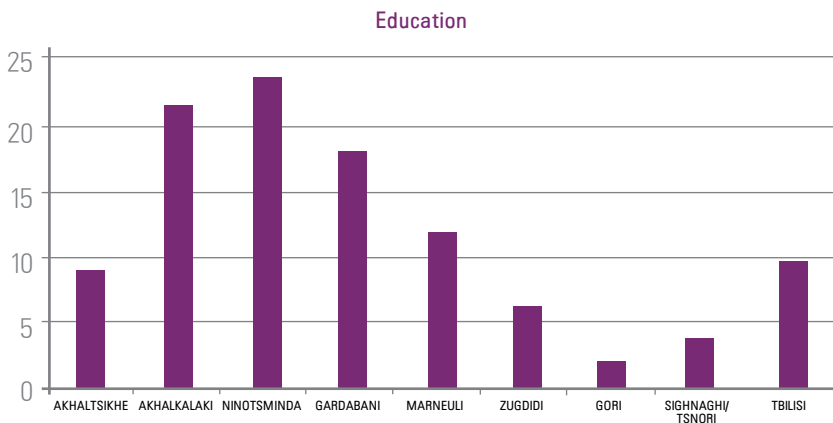
- Increasing the availability of high quality health care services on sites;
- Increasing the access to health care services for women living in rural areas;
- Establishing diagnostic centers for providing preventive health care services in the regions.
- Establishing first aid centers in villages;
- Ensuring medical services for the prevention of cancer among women (for the time being it is impossible to undertake screening and mammography in the regions);

- Conducting free ultrasound and other test types at least once a year in the areas which lack medical centers fit with relevant equipment;
- Providing vital medicines to women suffering from breast cancer;
- Ensuring the access to reproductive health programs on sites, raising the awareness of reproductive health and contraception issues, paying special attention to reproductive health-related problems of under-age married females;
- Funding the reproductive health programs for infertile couples;
- Providing free gynecological services for multi-children mothers;
- Increasing the funding of health care service program for pregnant women; ensuring quality medical care during pregnancy; ensuring the public funding for at least eight free visits instead of four under the antenatal programs;
- Allocating monthly bonuses for each child born until them reaching a certain age;
- Improving health care service for retirees;
- Implementing periodic medical examinations in kindergartens;
- Establishing adult and children psycho-rehabilitation centers in the regions.

EDUCATION

Some 12% of total number of opinions expressed by respondents was classified into a thematic group of education issues.

The share of responses classified into the thematic group of education is shown in the chart below by cities, in percentage terms:



The following issues were raised by women respondents in the field of education:

 **School education**

- Paying more attention to school education;
- Improving the quality of school education;
- Increasing teachers' salaries and paying due respect to their activities;
- Providing each school with a psychologist;
- Sorting out the issue of transportation of children to schools.

 **Preschool education**

- Identifying the preschool education as a priority;
- Arranging kindergartens in line with modern standards;
- Increasing the occupancy of kindergartens;
- Opening new kindergartens, especially in rural areas; ensuring the access to kindergartens for all women in order to support women's employment and professional growth;
- Ensuring free kindergartens in regions;
- Reducing the number of children per kindergarten group by strictly defining a maximum number of children per group in order to avoid overcrowding;
- Improving educational programs in kindergartens;
- Eliminating shortage of qualified educators in kindergartens;
- Tackling the problem of the absence of psychologists in kindergartens;
- Tackling the problem of very low salaries of kindergarten educators and other personnel.

 **Education of women from ethnic minority groups**

- Paying more attention to problems in the education of girls and women from ethnic minority groups;
- Increasing opportunities to obtain higher education for women from ethnic minority groups;
- Preventing under-age married girls from quitting school;

 **Human rights and gender issues in educational programs, inclusive education**

- Providing human rights education starting from a kindergarten age;

- Allocating significant time to gender issues within the scope of civic education classes at schools;
- Introducing gender issues into various educational programs;

Inclusive education

- Paying more attention to inclusive education;
- Engagement of politicians more actively in the promotion of inclusive education;
- Carrying out various educational programs to cultivate tolerance towards persons with disabilities.

Parents' school

- Enhancing the knowledge of youth about child-rearing issues.

Realizing the right to education of under-age married girls

- Girls who get married in their school years are often left without a secondary education; it is therefore necessary for schools to keep the statistics on early marriages and take preventive measures to ensure that such girls do not quit schools.
- Special education system should be developed for under-age married girls in order to provide them with opportunities to obtain vocational education.

Women's vocational education

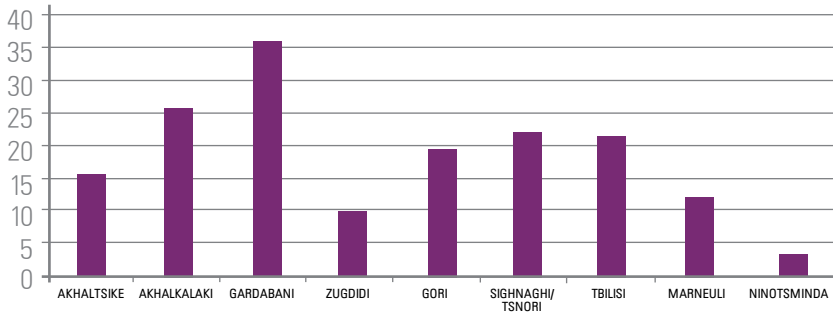
- Promoting women's vocational education thereby increasing employment opportunities for women;
- Increasing the access to vocational education for rural women;
- Implementing training programs for rural women.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Some 91 viewpoints of the respondents were thematically classified in a group of social issues, which comprises 18% of the total number of responses received through the open-ended question.

The following chart shows the percentage of responses falling within the social issues group by cities:

Social Issues



The summary of responses which as a result of thematic analysis were classified into the group of social issues is provided below:

Increase in salaries

- Resolving the problem of low salaries that are further undermined by inflation and price increases;
- Increasing salaries to a maximum extent, including teachers' salaries;
- Increasing salaries up to 300 GEL, at least.

Pensions

- Increasing pensions;
- Issuing pensions according to the length of service;
- Decreasing the retirement age;
- Increasing pensions for persons with disabilities.

Maternity leave

- Pregnancy should not be a verdict to leave a job for an employed woman;
- Conditions of women and children during and immediately after pregnancy must be taken into account;
- The Labor Code's provisions concerning pregnancy and maternity leave must be improved through increasing the length and amount of compensation for maternity leave.

- The period of paid maternity leave must be extended;
- The Labor Code must impose an obligation on an employer that a maternity leave period is reimbursed in full and not at an employer's discretion;
- State must provide financial assistance to mothers for a child care by allocating a monthly assistance of 100 GEL to a child until the latter reaches a certain age (3 years old) or a full legal age;
- More levers must be put in place to prevent employers from discriminating mothers with small children or pregnant women;
- A practice of men taking parental leaves should be established.

Labor rights

- Women should not have to go abroad to exercise their labor rights;
- Labor conditions for women must be improved;
- The Labor Code must provide more levers to prevent employers from discriminating pregnant women or mothers with small children;
- The work time and space must be adjusted to needs of mothers with little children (establish children's centers within territories of entities);
- Employers often refuse to hire women due to stereotyped division of professions into so-called "feminine" and "masculine" jobs.
- Employers often discriminate women on the ground of age when hiring them for work.

Assisting persons with disabilities

- The quality of education for people with disabilities must be improved and employment conditions must be created for them after they reach full legal age;
- Social problems faced by families, especially, women (mothers) with disabled children must be resolved;
- The funding and number of centers for children and adults with disabilities must be increased;
- The pension of persons with disabilities must be increased;

- An existing discriminatory attitude towards women with disabilities must be changed;
- Awareness of women with disabilities must be raised and their full integration into the environment must be facilitated;
- Social programs for single women and women with special needs must be developed;
- Wheelchairs to persons with disabilities must be delivered in a timely manner;
- Social assistance programs for parents with disabled children must be developed;
- Special programs for persons with disabilities – for instance free vacation and medical treatment programs – must be developed.

● **Assisting multi-children families**

- A flexible system of assistance to multi-children families must be established.
- Labor conditions of multi-children mothers must be improved.

● **Problems of IDP women**

- The IDP assistance system must be put to right;
- Monthly financial allowances must be allocated to unemployed women with IDP status or those from socially vulnerable families.
- Assistance and rehabilitation of IDP women must be ensured.

● **Assistance to single mothers**

- The status of single mothers must be defined and mechanisms of social assistance to them established;
- Allowance for single mothers must be increased, their employment supported and special programs developed.

● **Assistance to single people**

- A system of assistance to single and vulnerable people must be developed.

Adoption

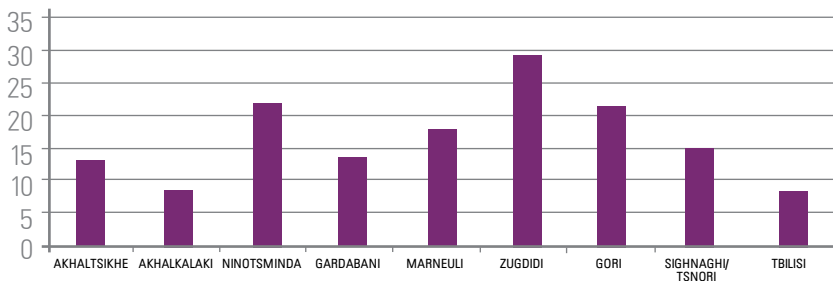
- Adoption procedures must be simplified.

EMPLOYMENT AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

A thematic group of employment and economic empowerment of women includes 18% of total of viewpoints expressed by the respondents via the questionnaire.

The share of responses classified into the thematic group of employment and economic empowerment of women is shown in the chart below by cities, in percentage terms:

Employment and Women's Economic Empowerment



The summary of responses classified into the group of employment and economic empowerment of women is provided below:

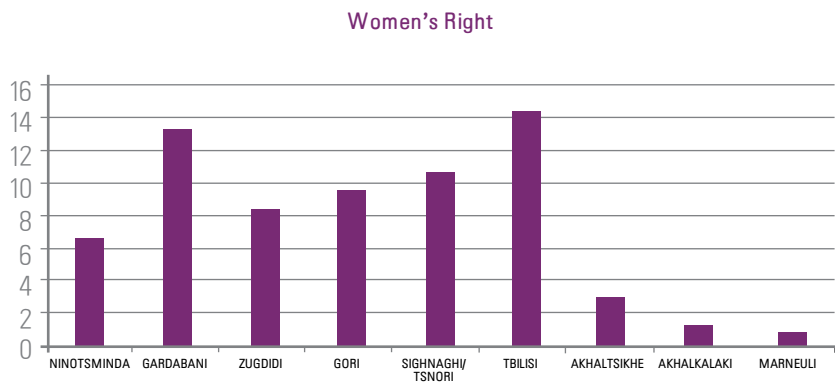
- Implementing employment programs for single mothers and mothers with disabled children as they face the unemployment problem most acutely;
- Implementing employment programs for women with disabilities;
- Supporting youth employment by creating internship programs for young women since employers seek experienced personnel;
- Supporting the involvement of women in small businesses through the implementation of projects on women's economic empowerment and issuance of preferential loans.

- Building capacity of women by delivering informal education / programs to them;
- Supporting women’s vocational education to increase their employment by improving the access to professional development-retraining programs for women living in regions;
- Promoting employment and economic empowerment of rural population (including women and youth);
- Conducting trainings on private entrepreneurship issues for temporarily unemployed women.
- Supporting joint economic initiatives of women;
- Giving priority to vulnerable groups of women in the process of hiring staff.

WOMEN’S RIGHT

Some 8% of total viewpoints expressed by respondents via the questionnaire are classified into a group of women’s rights.

The share of responses classified into the thematic group of women’s rights is shown in the chart below by cities, in percentage terms:



The summary of responses classified into the group of women’s rights is provided below:

- **Develop the state policy in the field of women's rights**
 - Parliament should work hard to draw up the legislation that not only protects women's rights, but also enhances them;
 - A strategy to combat discrimination against women must be drawn up.

- **Freedom of choice**
 - Promoting the right of women to freedom of choice: freedom to choose whether to get married, to obtain education and profession;
 - Ensuring the right to choose whether to stop or continue pregnancy.

- **Raising awareness of women's rights and gender issues**
 - Enhancing public sensitivity of women's issues;
 - Providing public with information about gender equality;
 - Implementing measures designed to break stereotypes;
 - Inviting housewives to discussions concerning the women's rights.
 - Raising civil awareness and the level of knowledge of own rights.

- **Protecting and supporting women's and girl's rights**
 - Preventing girls from getting married until they reach a full legal age;
 - Preventing girls from quitting schools, particularly in the regions populated with ethnic minorities.

- **Protecting the rights of rural women**
 - Implementing special programs focused on the empowerment of rural women;
 - Promoting the economic independence of rural women (through providing cheap loans, vocational training programs, supporting their economic initiatives)
 - Getting rural women involved in various training and educational programs.

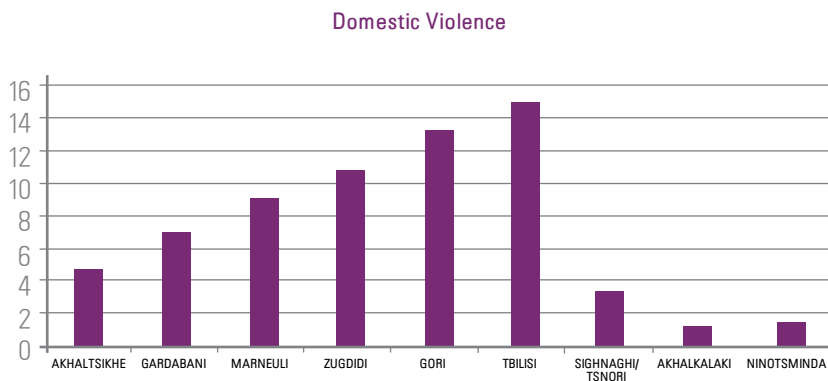
Protecting women from family conflicts

- The state lacks a mechanism which will effectively protect women's rights in case of divorce;
- The state should develop a mechanism which will protect mothers and children from being left without shelter after divorce.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Some 9% of total viewpoints of the respondents were classified into a thematic group of domestic violence.

The share of responses classified into the thematic group of domestic violence is shown in the chart below by cities, in percentage terms:



The following viewpoints were classified into the group of domestic violence:

- Refining and enforcing the legislative norms on violence against women;
- Developing preventive mechanisms to protect women from violence;
- Protecting the rights of victims of violence and establishing an effective system of providing aid to them as women are afraid to disclose that they are subject to violence because there is no leverage in place to prevent their husbands from retaliation;

- Toughening measures against violent men so that women become assured that their husbands will not kill them in retaliation;
- Supporting the families belonging to high risk groups;
- Getting social workers engaged in the families falling under high risk groups;
- Conducting long-term campaigns against domestic violence;
- Combatting existing stereotypes contributing to violence against women.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Some 21 viewpoints of the respondents were classified into a thematic group of infrastructure issues, which comprises 4% of total number of responses to the open-ended question.

The views falling under this group are summarized below:

- Increasing the number of activities aimed at developing regions;
- Resolving problems regarding waste management in a city (respondents from Ninotsminda especially underlined this problem);
- Resolving the problem of water supply interruptions in district centers (for the time being water is supplied only several days a week);
- Paying more attention to the development of rural infrastructure;
- Resolving the problem of waste management in villages;
- Resolving the problem of drinking water supply to rural areas (women have to manually fetch water);
- Resolving the problem of irrigation;
- Resolving the problem of poor local roads;
- Resolving the problem of rural roads blocked due to heavy snow;
- Ensuring gasification;
- Tackling the problem of decreasing pastures, and quarries seizing rural territories.

MISCELLANEOUS

Some 12 viewpoints of the respondents were classified into a thematic group of miscellaneous issues, which represent 2% of total responses to the open-ended question.

The summary of responses classified into the group of miscellaneous issues is provided below:

- Annulment of income tax;
- Revision of minimum subsistence level;
- Elimination of dismissal from jobs on political grounds;
- Unemployed, lazy husbands;
- Secularization of public and political spaces;
- Lack of information on the developments in the country and a general lack of information in the regions populated with ethnic minorities.



PRIORITIZING WOMEN'S ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IMPORTANT TO WOMEN

One of the aims the survey pursued was to identify the level of importance for our respondents of those main topics which, based on international experience, are traditionally considered as specifically affecting women and are taken into account by political parties when developing woman-oriented policies.

Some 17 questions were drawn up for this section of the survey, which were further classified into six groups:

1. Political participation
2. Preschool and school education
3. Rural infrastructure development
4. Social issues
5. Engagement of rural women in business
6. Domestic violence

In drawing up the questions the following peculiarities were taken into account:

- Where traditional views about gender roles of women and men prevail and a traditional model of gendered labor distribution operates, a significant part of household work is done by women; therefore, the development of such areas that help alleviate this burden is of utmost importance for women. These areas include the construction of water and gas supply systems, the access to kindergartens and the improvement of education quality.

- Since the attendance and support of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, is the task basically performed by women, the increase in pensions for disabilities of all categories is also important to them.
- Feminized spheres of the labor market, that is the fields dominated by female employees, are the ones that traditionally lack financing; consequently, the increase in the funding of these spheres is seen as part of the policy promoting gender equality.
- Domestic violence is also a gender issue given that in Georgia, according to official statistics, some 91% of victims of domestic violence are women and consequently, the implementation of effective policy against domestic violence is viewed as an important issue by women.
- Bearing in mind that traditional gender norms are normally more entrenched in rural areas than in urban ones, the work on tackling problems of rural women, especially in terms of supporting their economic independence, is considered important.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation is seen as a very important issue by 58% of respondent and as an important issue by 31%; this issue is less important for 6% and unimportant for 5% of surveyed respondents.

It should be noted that the issues concerning the development of gender policy by political parties are no less important for respondents than the social and infrastructural issues that are traditionally seen as problematic.

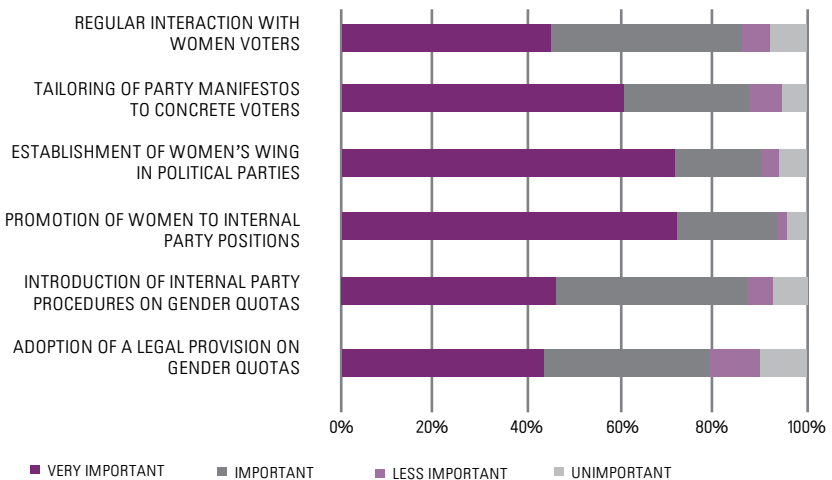
Out of issues concerning the political participation, the respondents prioritized the promotion of women inside political parties and the establishment of efficient women's wings which will regularly interact with women, including those living in rural areas, not only in the run up to elections but any other time too. Both issues are seen as very important by 73% of the respondents.

The table below shows the distribution of answers to questions concerning the political participation, in percentage terms:

ISSUES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	VERY IMPORTANT %	IMPORTANT %	LESS IMPORTANT %	NOT IMPORTANT %
Establishment of regular and formalized procedures for ensuring regular interaction with women voters in order to study the needs of women	46	41	7	6
Tailoring of party manifestos to concrete voters; drawing up not only national manifestos, but also community based manifestos in which women voters of concrete regions or districts will discern the problems that specifically affect them	62	27	7	4
Eestablishment of effective women’s wings inside political parties, which will regularly interact with women voters, including those living in rural areas, not only in the run up to elections but also any other time	73	19	4	4
Promotion of women to internal party positions	73	22	2	3
Introduction of internal party procedures on gender quotas	47	41	6	6
Adoption of a legal provision on gender quotas	45	36	10	9

See below a corresponding chart:

Political Participation



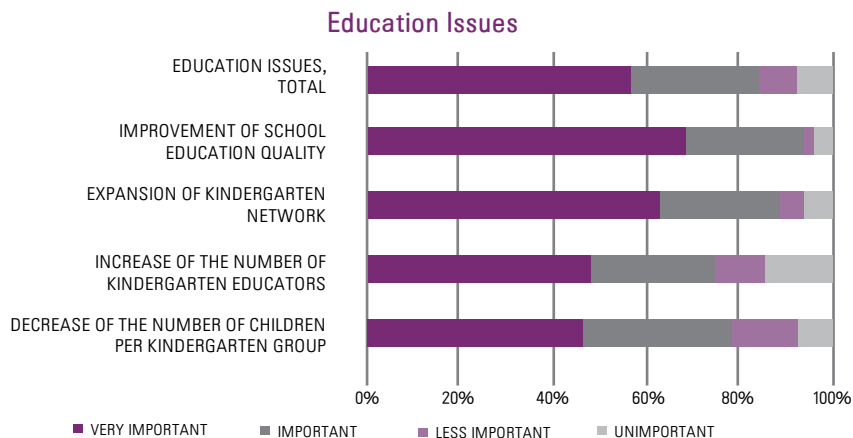
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL EDUCATION

Education issues are very important for 57% of respondents, important for 28%, less important for 8% and not important for 7% of respondents.

The table below shows the distribution of responses to separate questions concerning infrastructure, in percentage terms:

EDUCATION ISSUES	VERY IMPORTANT %	IMPORTANT %	LESS IMPORTANT %	NOT IMPORTANT %
Improvement of school education quality so as to avoid additional expenses for private tuition	69	25	3	3
Expansion of kindergarten network and increase in the occupancy of existing kindergartens	64	26	4	6
Increase of the number of kindergarten educators	49	26	11	14
Decrease of the number of children per kindergarten group	47	32	14	7
Education issues, total	57	28	8	7

See below a corresponding chart:



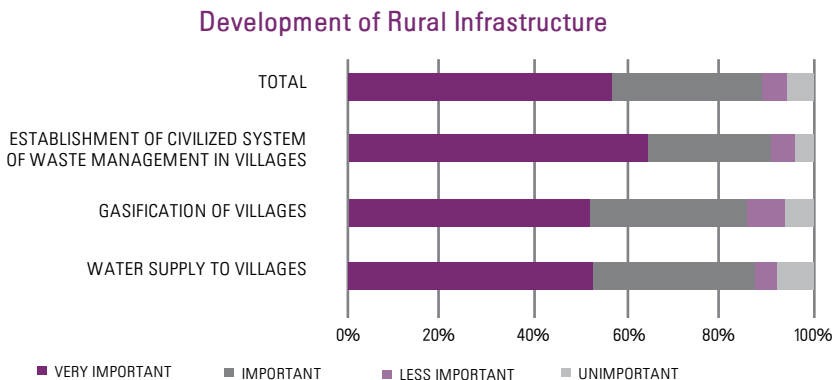
DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The implementation of infrastructure programs is very important for 57% and important for 31% of respondents. This issue is considered less important by 6% of respondents and unimportant also by the same share of respondent.

The following table shows the distribution of responses to separate questions concerning the infrastructure programs, in percentage terms:

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	VERY IMPORTANT %	IMPORTANT %	LESS IMPORTANT %	NOT IMPORTANT %
Increase in the number of gasified villages	54	35	6	5
Increase in the number of villages provided with water supply	53	33	6	8
Establishment of civilized system of waste management	65	25	5	5

See below a corresponding chart:



SOCIAL ISSUES

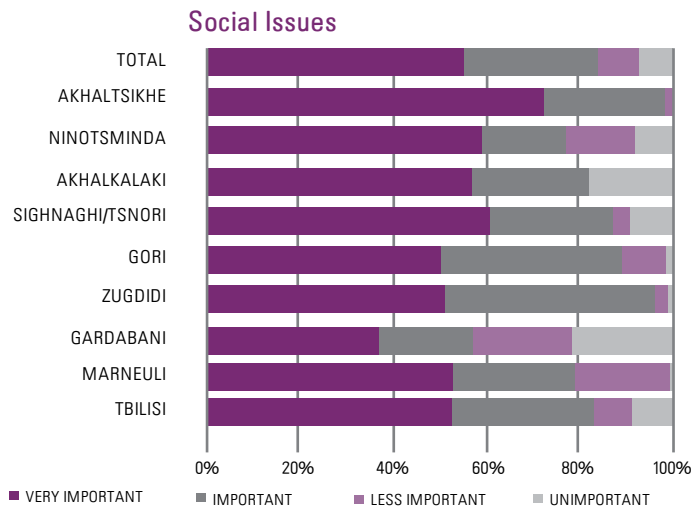
The problems falling within a group of social issues are very important for 54% of respondents, important for 28%, less important for 9% and unimportant for the same number, i.e. 9% of those surveyed.

Quite a difference is seen in prioritizing two issues under this group; namely, 73% of respondents believe that the increase in pensions for disability of all types is very important.

The following table shows the distribution of responses to separate questions concerning the infrastructure programs, in percentage terms:

SOCIAL ISSUES	VERY IMPORTANT %	IMPORTANT %	LESS IMPORTANT %	NOT IMPORTANT %
Increase in financing those spheres which mainly employ women, in particular, preschool and school education, social assistance sectors	36	38	15	11
Increase in pensions for disability of all types	73	19	3	5

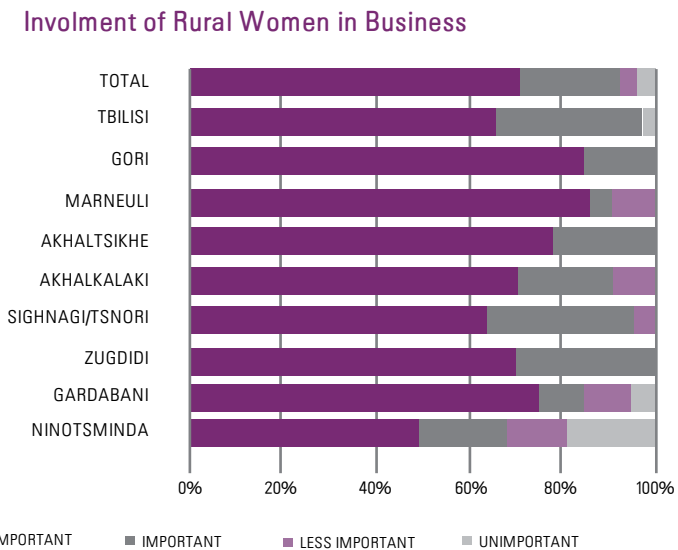
A corresponding chart looks as follows:



INVOLVEMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Supporting the introduction of soft agricultural loan program for women living in rural areas is seen as a very important issue by 71% of respondents, important by 22%, less important by 3% and unimportant by 4% of the respondents.

The chart below shows the results by cities:

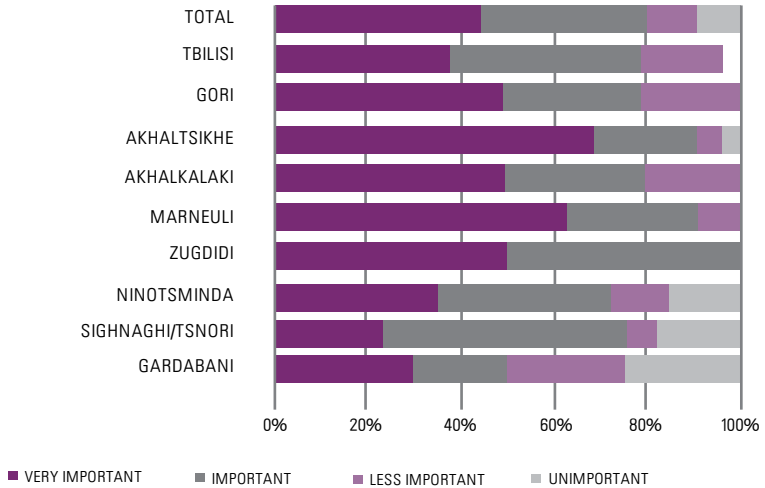


DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Establishing an effective system of support to victims of domestic violence and increasing the engagement of social workers in assisting families facing the risk of violence is very important for 45% of respondents, important for 35%, less important for 11% and unimportant for 9% of surveyed women.

The chart below shows the results by cities:

Domestic Violence

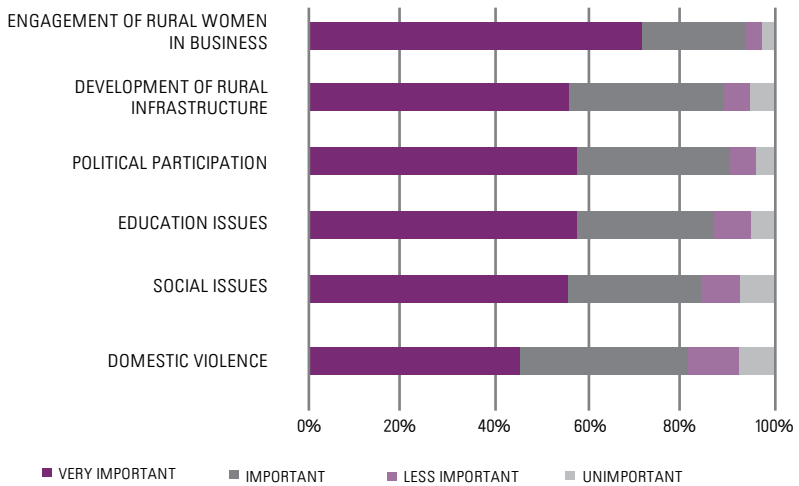


Of those issues that were given in the questionnaire, the most important one for the respondents proved to be the engagement of rural women in business through the issuance of soft loans. Some 71% of respondents considered it very important. The next issue by priority is the political participation with 57% of respondents assessing it as a very important issue. It should be noted that two issues falling within this group were seen as very important: the establishment of women’s wings inside political parties and the promotion of women to internal party positions were assessed as very important by 73% of respondents. The same degree of importance among 17 questions provided in the questionnaire was attached to the issue of increase in pensions for disability of all types.

The respondents prioritized the issues classified into six groups in the following way:

	VERY IMPORTANT %	IMPORTANT %	LESS IMPORTANT %	NOT IMPORTANT %
Engagement of rural women in business	71	22	3	4
Political participation	58	31	6	5
Development of rural infrastructure	57	31	6	6
Education issues	57	28	8	7
Social issues	54	28	9	9
Domestic violence	45	35	11	9

The chart below shows the distribution of responses to questions under all six groups:





CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLITICAL PARTIES

An election manifesto is a strong instrument for attracting potential supporters and voters, as it is a document which is available for a wider public enabling them to make informed choices. Therefore, an election manifesto which is a political party's view of a society which it wants to build after coming to power, must reflect the needs of various groups of society.

Since this overview is focused on potential women voters, we would stress that political parties must devote adequate attention to the needs of women supporters or potential supporters and consider the ways how to attract them. Why should women vote for your party? – is a question which any political party should answer.

- Establish regular and formalized procedures of interaction with women voters to study the needs of women.

CONCLUSION

- Hold public meetings with women voters not only ahead of elections but also after them.
- Involve women party members in meetings with women voters, since they will be able to better identify women's problems.
- Reflect women's issues in an election manifesto and involve women in drawing it up to ensure that women's issues are properly reflected.
- Explain steps of tackling women's issues in a clear and consistent manner in a manifesto.
- Enable women to effectively participate in social and political life and facilitate the empowerment of women as actors in the public life.
- Minimize barriers to full and equal partnership between men and women.
- Draw up a strategy on how to make women voters more active.
- Draw up a campaign to inform women voters.
- Step up efforts to attract women through nominating more women candidates, developing corresponding messages and proposals.
- Show interest towards women's issues and come up with such initiatives that specifically affect or benefit women.
- Identify a party with women's issues by mobilizing around these issues.
- Focus a party manifesto on concrete voters. Along with national manifestos, draw up manifestos targeting communities so that women voters from rural or urban areas see the problems affecting them in those manifestos.

- Conduct meetings on the issues of gender equality, women's political empowerment, women's rights and the elimination of all types of discrimination with the population in regions.
- Draw up such a policy that contributes to the improvement of gender equality.
- Mainstream gender issues into election manifestos.
- Avoid using traditional, stereotyped attitudes in elections.

