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Needs Assessment of Women and Youth under the Gender-Oriented Conflict Early Warning System (GREWS)

Zugdidi Municipality

Project 72011421CA00001

*„Overcoming the discord- among people initiatives
for conflict resolution“*

April, 2021

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*Opinions expressed in the study belong to the foundation "Sukhumi"
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Introduction

The Gender-Oriented Conflict Early Warning System (GREWS) implies the study of community needs and the establishment of an early response system in terms of the potential risks. The introduction of this (GREWS) system with a gender-oriented approach significantly reduces the risk of developing violence and conflict in society, facilitates the establishment of democratic principles.

Due to the unstable political environment of the country, the low social-economic rate, the fear of losing the job and income, environmental pollution, unstable guarantees for health care, the increased rate of violence and other threats limit the person's freedom of choice, hinders the possibility of high quality life and significantly increases the risk of violence and conflict in the society. In order to neutralize the aforesaid risks, early intervention and response are important.

The Gender-Oriented Early Warning System (GREWS) represents an important tool in terms of early response to problems in society as well as improving the quality of human security.

The determination of potential risks of conflict shall be based on a study of the population needs through a gender approach, the assessment of which and the inclusion in the early warning system will create a sense of sustainable peace and stability in the society.

The study conducted by the foundation "Sukhumi", on the **"Needs Assessment of Women and Youth under the Gender-Oriented Conflict Early Warning System (GREWS)"** will promote to identify women and youth priority problems and establish an appropriate early warning (GREWS) mechanism at the local level.

The aim of the study and methods

Assessment of the population needs is very important, in order to base the municipal programs on and to allocate budget funds to address them. Assessment of the gender need and the quality of human security was carried out in Zugdidi Municipality within the framework of the project "Overcoming the discord – among people initiatives for conflict resolution" of the foundation of "Sukhumi".

The initiative group of women created within the project was actively involved in the study. In April 2021, the members of the group passed through a special training and performed work using a quantitative and qualitative methods.

The quantitative research implied filling of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of eight blocks: demographic data, economic security, food safety, public safety, health safety, personal security, environmental safety, general questions. Similar questions were developed for a qualitative research that was conducted by the focus group and with the use of the in-depth individual interview tool.

The study aims at assessing the quality of human security and gender needs of the population in Zugdidi Municipality and providing specific recommendations based on the gained information.

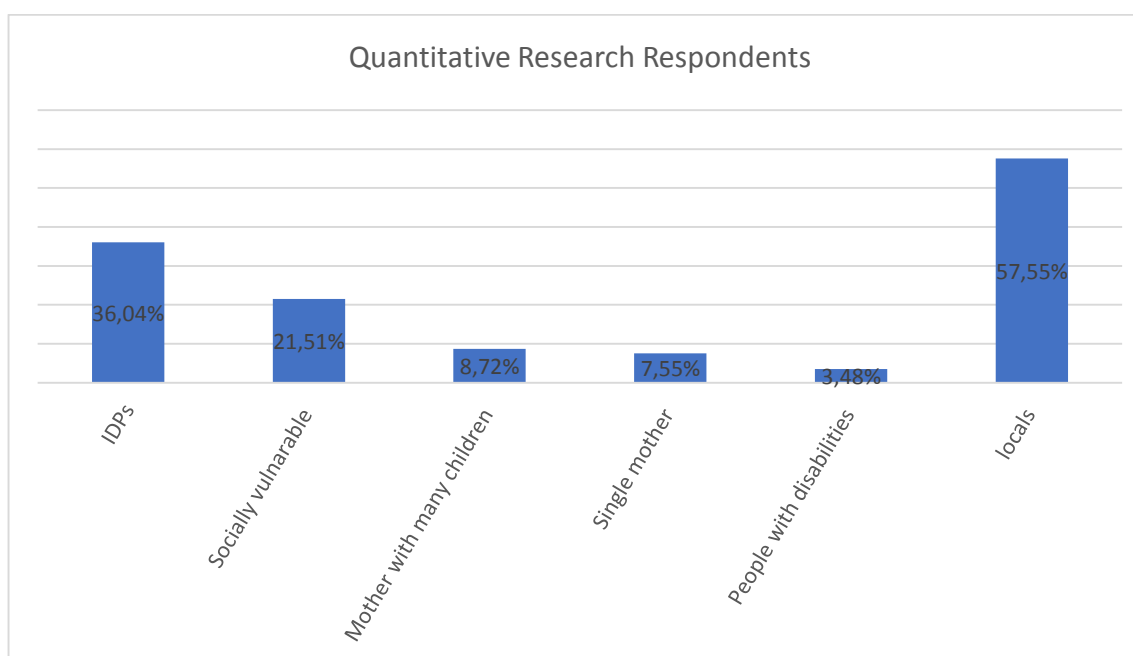
Analysis of the Results

First block. Socio-demographic characteristic of the study

150 women were supposed to be involved in online quantitative research, but the questionnaire was completed by more of them 172. Their age data are as follows: 18 to 30 years -33 (19.18%), 31 to 45 years- 66 (38.37%), 46 to 65 years -53 (30.81%) and over 65 years - 20 (11, 62%).

For the purpose of qualitative research, 4 focus groups were held with the local social groups. 21 women were participated in the focus –groups. Simultaneously, 4 in-depth interviews were conducted – local experts were selected as respondents – 2 women and 2 men. The information obtained from the qualitative research will be used to confirm or strengthen the results of the quantitative research.

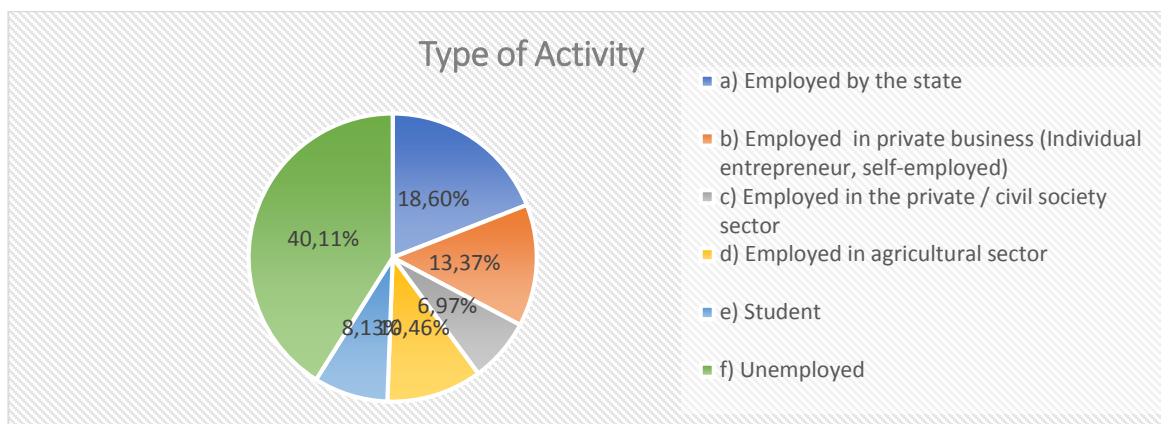
The most of the women involved in the quantitative research were locals - 99 (57.55%), there were citizens with particular status as well: IDPs -62 (36.04%), socially vulnerable -37 (21.51%), mothers with many children - 15 (8.72%), single mothers-13 (7.55) %, person with disabilities -6 (3.48%).



Single mothers and mothers with many children as well as socially vulnerable women, representatives of the budget organizations, youth, persons with disabilities or their family members, IDPs participated in target focus groups for qualitative research.

The picture reflecting the working status (primary work) of the quantitative research respondents are as follows:

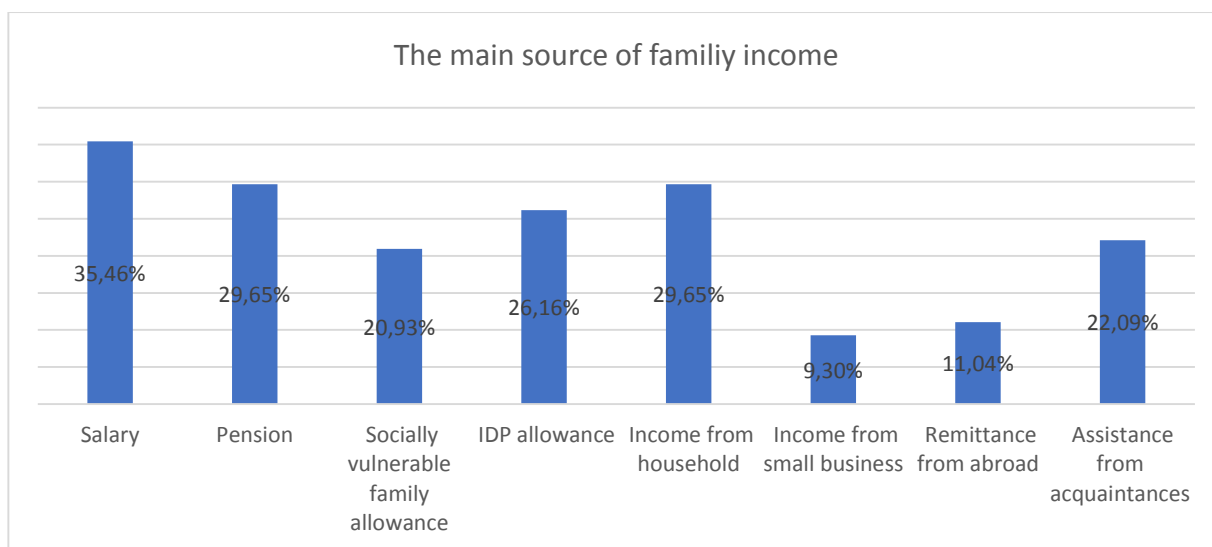
Employed by the state -32 (18.60%), employed in private business (individual entrepreneur, self-employed) - 23 (13.37%), employed in the private / civil society sector - 12 (6.97%), engaged in agriculture- 18 (10.46%), student -14 (8.13%), unemployed -69 (40.11%). Among the unemployed: 22 are IDPs (31.88%), 43 - local (62, 31%), 1 single mother (1.44%) and 8 mothers with many children (11.59%).



Second block. Economic security

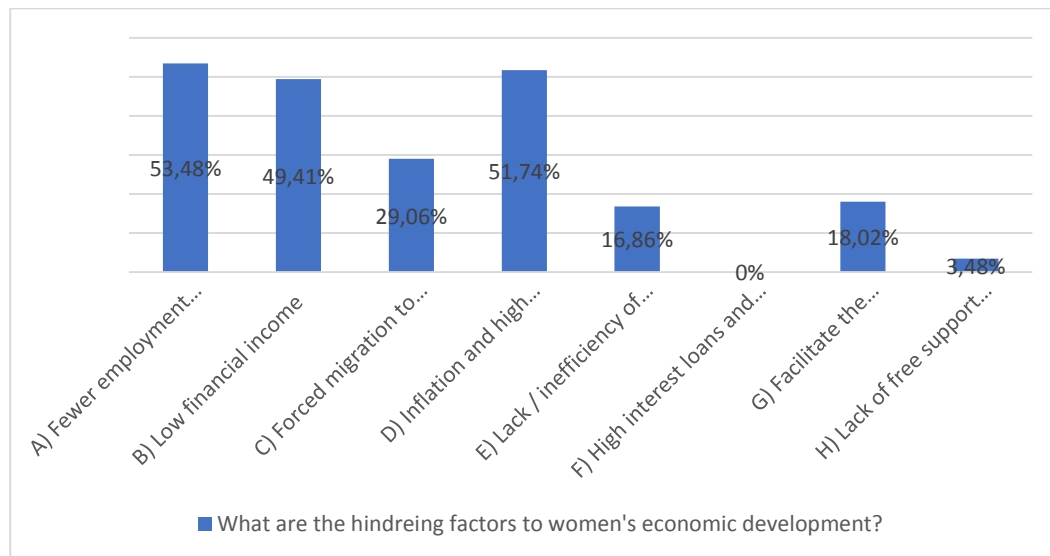
Based on the questions grouped in this block, it became possible to determine the economic stability of women, to identify the hindering and strengthening factors for their economic empowerment. It was established, that the source of income for most of them (35,46%) is salary, the main income for an equal number of respondents is household (29,65%) and pension (29,65%). The income of a significant part of the respondents is based on state support: IDP allowance (26, 16%) and socially vulnerable family allowance (20, 93%).

It is noteworthy, that 22,09% are depended on relatives' help, while for 11,04% remittances are meaningful from abroad, and very few (9, 30%) rely on small business income.



Among the hindering factors of economic strengthening, the highest percentage of responses comes to lower employment prospects - 92 (53, 48%). Low financial income was mentioned by almost half of the respondents - 49,41%. In terms of the hindering factors, the following were defined as well: forced migration abroad - 29,06%, inflation and high prices for food, medicine, household items - 51,74%, lack of local / central government programs / inefficiency for small business, entrepreneurship development - 16,86%. 18,02% of respondents state that there is no support for restoring the business activities halted due to the Covid-19.

The absence of free support services for employed women (including extended childcare / services in schools and kindergartens, for single mothers, mothers with many children) is considered as a hindering factor as well, that impedes women to be actively involved in economic activities.



The data that were obtained during the qualitative research, even more emphasized the hindering factors, and among them were defined the problems caused by the pandemic - lose of jobs and consequently, loss / reduction of income. The work to be done that would contribute to the economic empowerment of women was also mentioned:

"Many people lost their jobs due to the Covid-19. Women used to go to daily group work, they can no longer afford to go in this regard and this causes a lot of problems. It would be good for them to do something that would help their economic growth" (A.N., 38, employed).

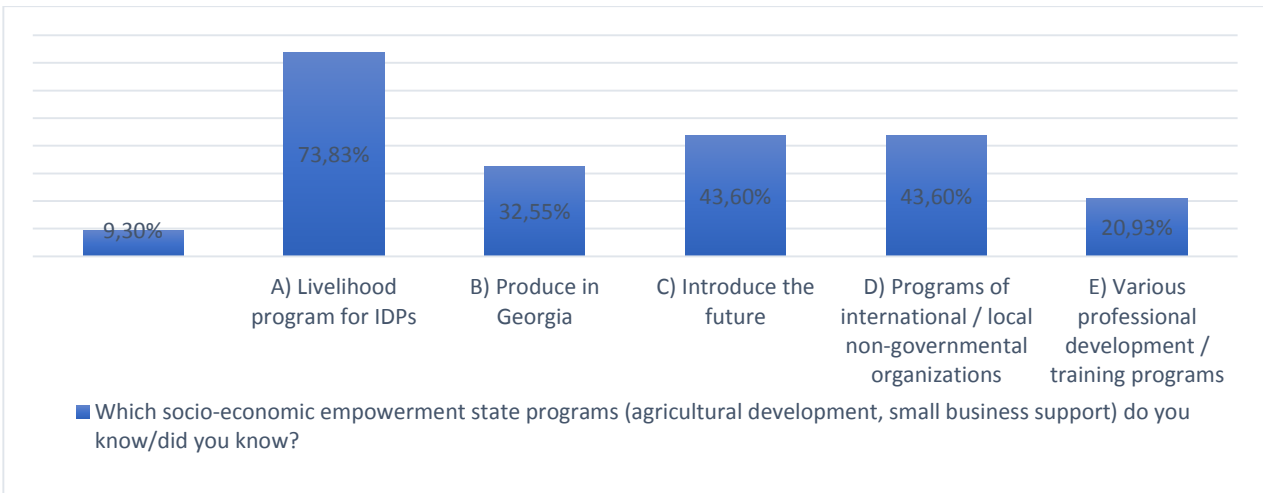
"I have a small child and if I am employed in a family, it will be better, because I cannot leave my child" (NS, 42, IDP, housewife).

"I had a project, I have space and I was going even to employ IDPs living in the neighborhood. It did not work. Such projects should be financed" (M.K, 52, local, employed).

"Training and grant competitions will facilitate the women empowerment. For example, sewing and culinary courses and further small funding" (ZH.J., 46 years old, IDP, employed).

"We have enough space in Ganmukhuri to create sewing courses and empower women" (Kh.N., 27, IDP, socially vulnerable).

According to the survey, it was found out, that women are most familiar with the program "Produce in Georgia" - 127 (73.83%), IDPs among them 49 (38, 58%) and locals - 73 (57.48%). The quality of information in relation to other programs is represented as follows: 43.60% informed on various professional development / retraining and international / local NGO programs. As for "Introduce the Future" - 32.55% have information on this program, only 9.30% have heard about the IDP livelihood program, and 20.93% of respondents have no information at all.



Respondents' attention was focused on needed of supporting the household, small business and self-employment. The highest rates were recorded in small business support programs (57.55%) and affordable loans (51.16%). The respondents also mentioned: rural support programs (38.95%), grant programs (36.04%), local self-government programs (24.41%).

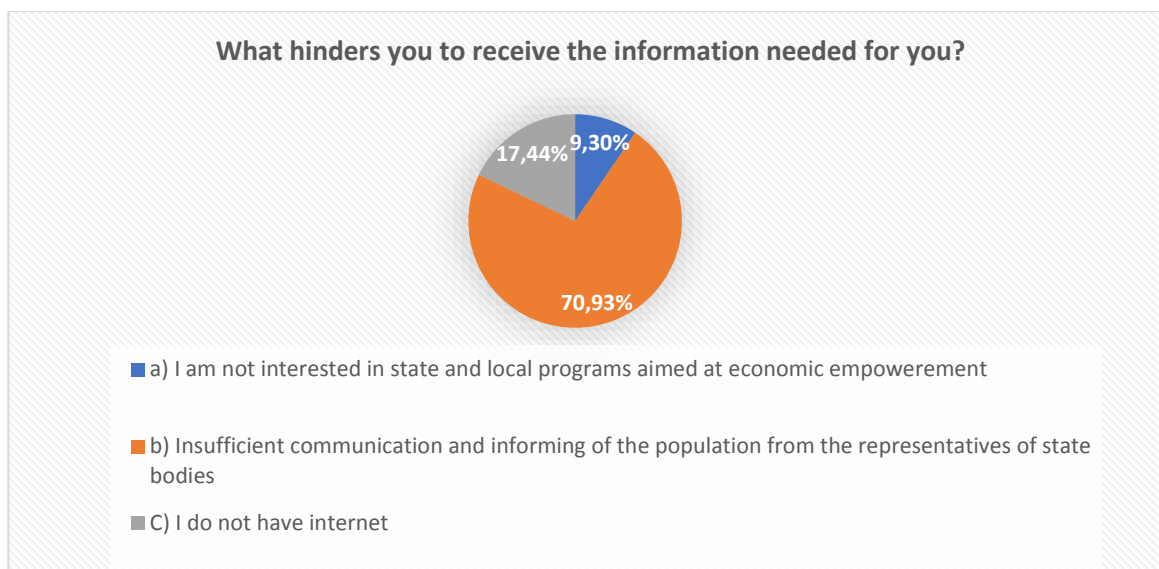
It is also notable, that the population of the municipality wants to receive more information and advice. 53.48% of the respondents stated that more information is needed in terms of the existing state programs, while 31.97% highlighted consulting services and assistance in writing of business projects.

Pursuant to the study, it was possible to find out, how people got the information on economic programs offered by local and central governments. The survey revealed, that for the majority (67.44%), the primary source is television and radio. 22.67% get information from the municipality website and Facebook page. Data on other sources were distributed as follows: NGOs (48.25%), neighbors / acquaintances (38.95%), online media outlets, social networks (37.79%). For one part of the respondents, the information is delivered by the representative of the mayor in the community and the local MP (15.11%), and 11.62% read about economic programs on the information sheets or on the information boards in the community.

Various source of information were also outlined on the focus groups:

- *Mainly, I got information from my friend, non-governmental organizations.*
- *The population uses the social network.*
- *I teach at school, I get information from the school and municipality.*
- *Information is received from local authorities, MP.*
- *Representative of the village, MP, representatives of the various services of the City Hall meet with the population and consequently, there is no lack of information.*

There are factors, that hinder obtaining of the necessary information. Including, the highest rate (70,93%) was outlined in that direction, that there is insufficient communication as well as informing of the population from the representatives of the government bodies. For 17,44%, this hindering factor is the absence of Internet (the most part of this respondents are socially vulnerable and IDPs). It was also clarified, that 9,30% are not interested at all in terms of the programs aimed at economic empowerment.



„absence of Internet impedes us to get information“ (Kh.B., 27 years old., IDP, Socially vulnerable).

This is the excerpt from one of the respondents' response, though, others had the same opinion as well, and it was mentioned even during the in-depth interview, that vulnerable category does not have access to the Internet.

Third block. Food safety

The food safety is one of the most important among the safety components of human. So, questions are included to the study in this regard.

To the question – what is the factor that mostly poses the greatest threat to the food safety for you –women circled the most priority 2 versions and consequently, the responses were distributed as follows:

Expensive products - 88,37%, including: IDPs - 38,15%, locals - 55,92%

Lack of quality products -72,09%, including: IDPs - 43,54%, locals - 50,80%

Absence of the product store in the vicinity - 25%, Including: IDPs -16,27%, locals - 79, 06%.

According to the answers, it is revealed, that the majority of respondents cannot afford to buy qualitative food products. No less alarming is the reality for women that the prices for products have been raised. There are certain and quite serious threats to this component of human safety, which represent a special concern for women and this was justified by the survey as well.

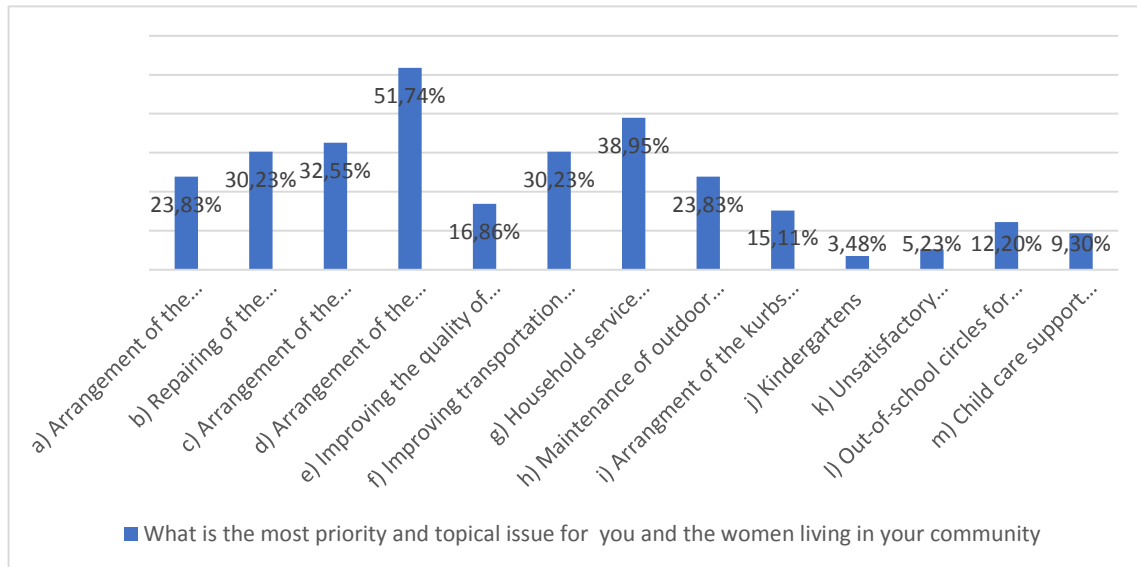
Forth block. Public safety

Public safety comprises all the components according to which human rights should not be violated and should be protected from public threats.

Pursuant to the answers of 172 women interviewed in Zugdidi Municipality, it is clear, that their public safety is not guaranteed and this is caused by the existing problems. Infrastructural problems are especially urgent for them: arrangement of the rural roads or central entering road to the village (51.74% and 30.23%), maintenance of sewerage system (32.55%) and etc. No less important is the improvement of transportation services (30.23%), the improvement of the water supply system and the quality of drinking water supply (16.86%). ☹ (16,86%).

The number of respondents (38, 95%) pays attention to the issue, that there are no household service objects in the village (beauty salon, sewing, etc.), as well as the outdoor lighting (23.83%), curbs and sidewalks (15.11%).

Especially, the number of mothers who are not satisfied with the school infrastructure (5.23%) should be mentioned, they do not like, that there are no out-of-school circles for children (12.20%) and cannot benefit from childcare support services (after school and kindergarten) for employed mothers (9.30%).



Qualitative research data clarified these problems and revealed the attitude of the respondents towards them:

„The main problem is unemployment and the pandemic has been added. We were moved to new apartments, but there is still water in the basements, and there are many problems in this regard”.

„There are very bad roads in the Ingiri, there are drainage systems. We do not have water in well all. Water flows by the door, and we are not allowed to use it, it is said that it is owned by the city”.

„The problem of the population living in the Ganmukhuri IDP settlement, is the connection of the central water and malfunctioned sewerage system“.

„There is no pharmacy in the community, as well as the bank. This hindering factor became especially noticeable within the period of the pandemic”.

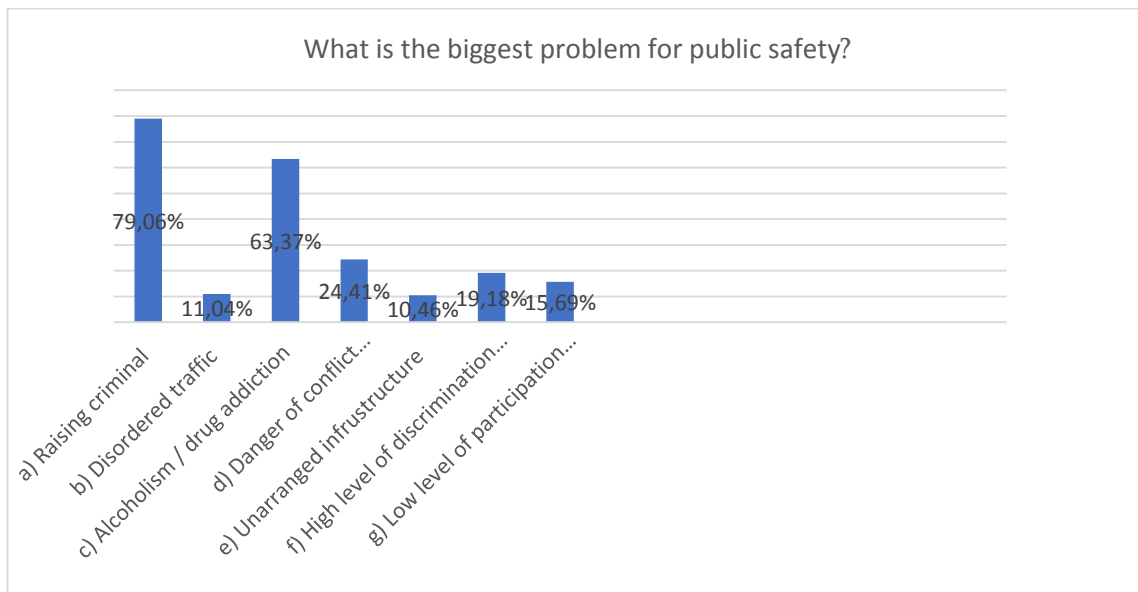
„Seeds have been handed out in the population and there is no equipment for processing of vegetables”.

The respondents of the in-depth interview also focused on the existing problems:

"The social problem is the most priority, with the principle of chain reaction, it has a serious impact on many other directions. Social problems in the field of education have been revealed, especially in the conditions of the pandemic. The Ministry of Education and Science has created a good platform that facilitated teachers in order to conduct lessons in a virtual classroom. The problem, that was encountered by our colleagues was access to the Internet. Parents, due to their financial problems (many lost their jobs due to the pandemic), were unable to purchase internet packages, some of them did not have a computer or telephone to attend online lessons (local experts in education issues).

"The municipality implements up to sixty different sub-programs in this direction. From September 1, 2020, we have been added a new direction and a new responsibility - the Department of Child Protection and Support. It is a department with six permanent staff and this is another new challenge for our service, the municipality (local expert on social and health issues).

Respondents had the opportunity to outline the existing threats and in this regard, we received the following picture: The majority 79.06% worry on rising criminal, alcoholism and drug addiction is considered as a threat by 63.37%, the threat of conflict escalation is indicated by 24.41%. Other data were distributed as follows: unranged traffic (11.04%), disordered infrastructure in Georgia (10.46%), high level of discrimination and intolerance (19.18%), low level of participation of minorities, persons with different political views in public life (15, 69%).



The research revealed a special attitude of women towards the issue of education. According to 31.97%, quality secondary education is available, while 9.30% answer this question in a negative form. The focus was made on the reasons, among which, due to the pandemic conditions, low quality internet is in the first place (to ensure the distance learning process) - (54.65%). Important reasons are also: the low quality of teaching (38.95%), the lack of professional teachers (25%), the unranged school infrastructure (16.27%). For 13.37% the problem is that the school is far from house, while 24.41% noted that the school does not have the appropriate technical equipment (computers, internet, specialized subject classrooms). Numerous comments on the Internet were also made during the focus groups. This problem has become particularly acute within the pandemic conditions of online learning. Internet malfunctions have impede the involvement of students and teachers in lessons. Along with the problems, information was also provided on the support program:

„Pursuant to the decision of the Mayor, a program supporting the talented young people has been introduced, the sub-program represent the support especially for those students who study abroad, is defined at three thousand GEL and accrued once. This program and financial budget code comprises different programs: mayor's scholarship, promoting the departure of people with different talents, support for children and young people (City Hall representative).

Respondents also discussed on access to higher education. 34.30% believe that it is accessible, 5.23% had a negative attitude, while the rest indicated a third version of the answer: "partially". Among the problems, the following answers are presented with a high percentage: high tuition fees (39.53%) and free accommodation available to students in the city from the region (37.20%). It was also noted, that there are vocational orientation courses at schools (19.18%) and the low quality of teaching (2.90%).

Fifth block. Health safety

Health safety is particularly important for respondents and this has been clearly illustrated by the quantitative research. High prices for medicines represent the particular concern for women, which was outlined by the 77.32% of respondents, including: 36.09% IDPs and 58.64% locals. 41.27% complained about the lack of free medical examinations on the spot, in the villages. 40.11% indicated on unawareness of health programs, most of them (59.42%) are locals.

There are other issues that were highlighted by the surveyed women:

Absence of primary outpatient medical center - 12.20%, including: IDPs - 52.23%, locals - 42.85%.

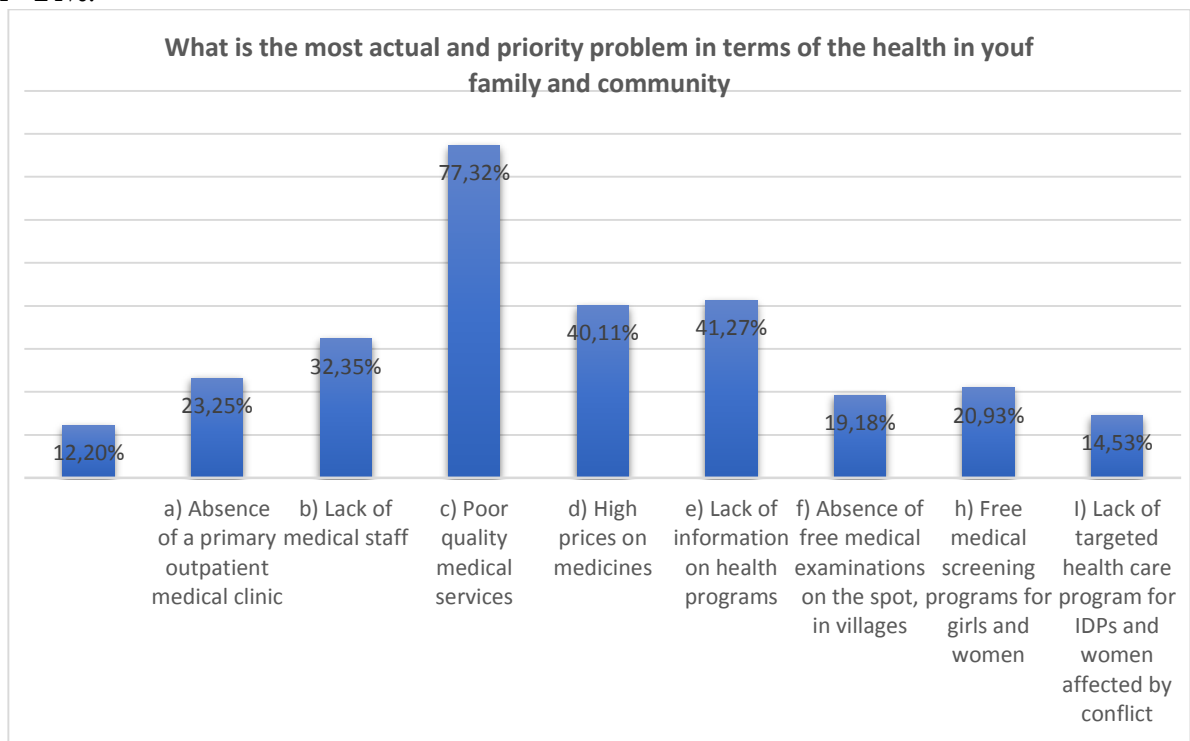
Lack of medical staff - 23.25%, including: IDPs - 25%, locals - 67.5%.

Poor medical services -32.55%, including: IDPs -23.21%, locals 51.78%.

Low awareness of reproductive health -19.18%, including: IDPs - 24, 24%, locals - 72.72%.

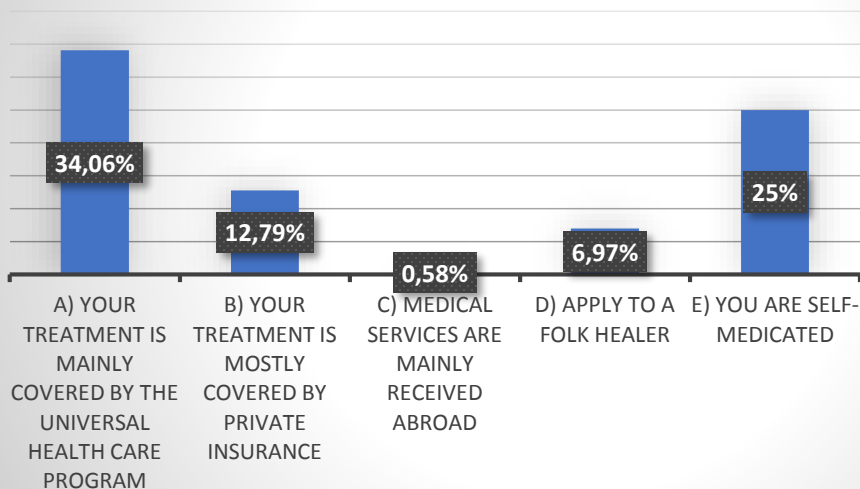
Free medical screening programs for girls and women - 20, 93%, including: IDPs - 38.88%, locals - 52.77%

Lack of targeted health programs for IDPs and women affected by conflict - 14.53%, including: IDPs - 68%), local - 24%.



As it was established by the quantitative research, the number of participants are assisted by the universal health program to solve the worsened health problem (34.06%), 25% are self-medicated and 12.79% use private insurance. There is a category that refers to a folk healer (6.97%), and the only woman among the respondents said that she mainly receives a medical care abroad (0.58).

How do you solve the worsened health problem?



Within the frames of the focus group, the participants also talked about the problems in terms of the health and support from the municipality. It was noted, that it is necessary to rehabilitate the outpatient clinic of Koki. There should be a pharmacy in the village and the most demanded medicines as well. The representatives of the focus groups indicated, that they and they and their acquaintances needed an assistance in the field of the healthcare and they received it.

- *I addressed to the healthcare program and they financed expensive medicines.*
- *Operation of my spouse was financed by 70%.*
- *I would like to outline the healthcare program. My sick sister was involved in a caregiver program and also used a medication program.*

Information on healthcare support and local programs was also stated in an interview with a local expert:

„One of the programs of Zugdidi Municipality, home care program to elderly people, which facilitates the elderly citizens, who do not have family members and are not able to solve hygiene and living problems. One-time assistance in an amount of one hundred Gel, has been replaced by the service, that is much more expensive. There are more than 100 beneficiaries. Periodically they are visited by a qualified team. There is a doctor in the multidisciplinary group, who provides consultancy and assistance to them. The population of both the city and community is engaged in the program. We launched a new program last year - Early Detection of Thyroid Cancer. 888 women with high risk, who did not have any specific symptoms, were provided with quality medical service, were diagnosed and in all cases the prognoses were trustworthy. The screening center is an achievement of the region, a serious investment of the Caritas Czech Republic and the government” (local expert on social and health issues).

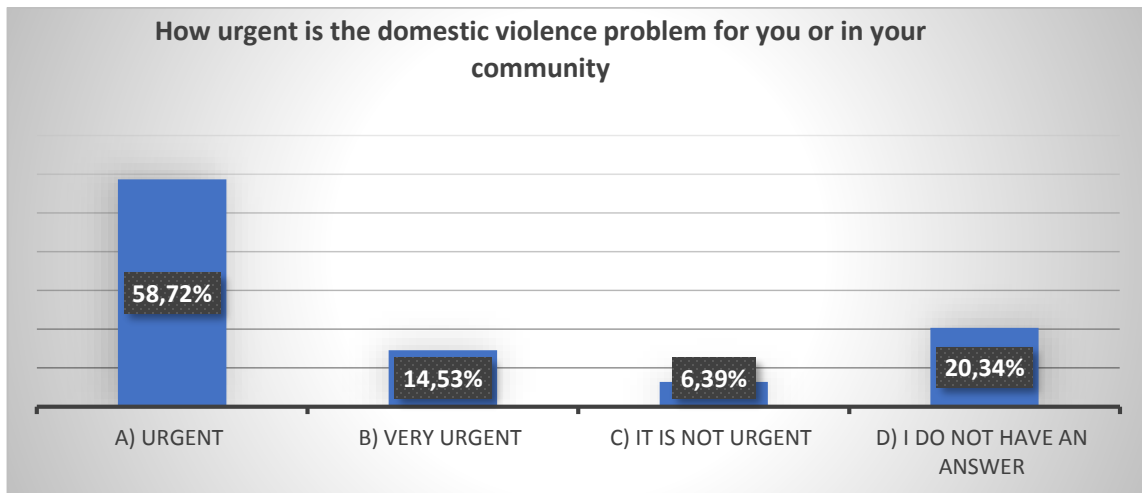
Six block. Personal safety

Domestic violence is one of the serious threats in terms of the personal safety. The problem is not topical for 11 respondents (6,39%) and 35 (20,34%) do have the answer at all.

For the most part, violence is an actual threat in the community. More precisely, figures are broken down as follows:

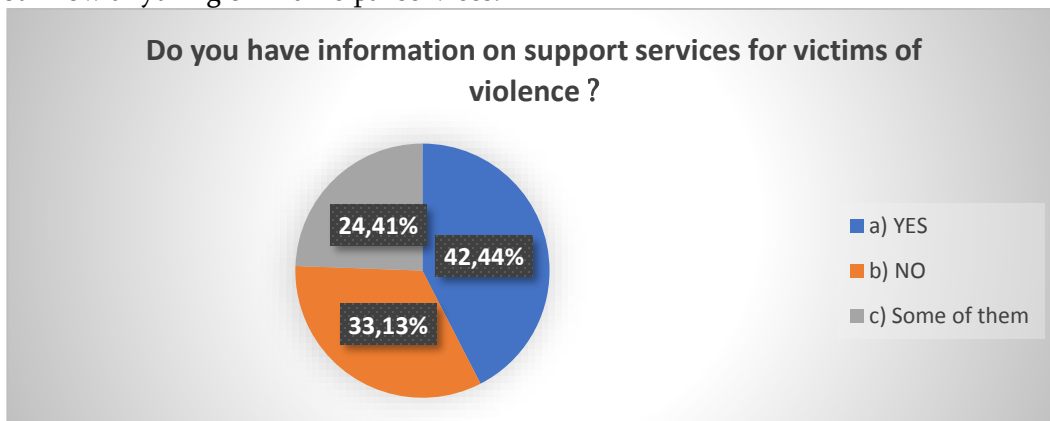
Actual for - 101 (58, 72%), including: IDPs- 35 (34,65%), locals - 64 (63,36%), including: a single mother - 7 (6,93%), socially vulnerable -23 (22,72%), a mother with many children - 9 (8,91%), unemployed-38 (37,62%)

Very actual - 25 (14,53%), including IPDs - 13 (52%), locals- 9 (36%), a single mother - 3 (12%), socially vulnerable - 4 (16%), a mother with many children - 3 (12%), unemployed - 8 (32%)



All form of the violence were brought up, but, according to the participants, psychological violence is the most common in the community 88 (51,16%), physical and economic violence were outlined with the same percentage rate (23,83%). As it turns out, there is also a sexual violence (1,16%).

The victim support services are of utmost importance in the event of violence and access to information in this regard is essential as well. It was revealed, that the majority (42,44%) have relevant information. As concerns the specific services, the list is as follows: the respondents know about the hot line (36,04%), NGOs services (16,86%), crises centers on government and non-governmental level (12,79%), shelters on the base of the state and non-government organizations (9,88%), state legal services (4,65%). Unfortunately, they do not know anything on municipal services.



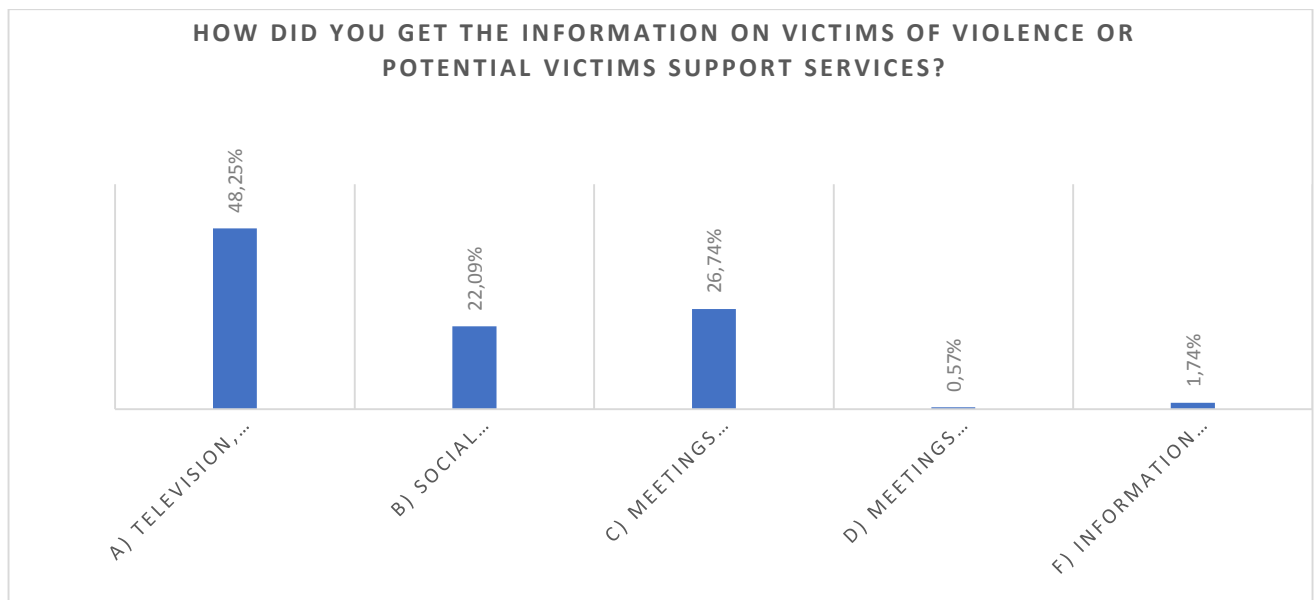
In this regard, full information was gained through the in-depth interviews, although, these programs are not known by many of them yet.

„ We have a number of programs in the City Hall, that have been implemented over the years, due to those challenges and realities, that our population face with. There is a Rehabilitation Crisis Centre for women and domestic valance victims. The projects that we commenced with the civic sector became more sustainable, i.e. when multi-sectoral interest was revealed. The number of beneficiaries

of the shelter – the number of women and children is increasing from year to year. An interagency commission is functioning as well (police, prosecutor's office, local government, non-governmental sector), which has been raising awareness in this directions for years” (City Hall representative).

„We have a day centre and a shelter. Since, the regulations have been lifted, the number of beneficiaries have been rising. Violence seems to be reduced during the regulations. In fact, it did not decreased, they did not call, may be were unable to call. Zugdidi Municipality is one of the flagships compared to other municipalities, for instance, in terms of both the sensitive gender and violence issues. The program one-time assistance to victims of violence has been introduced in Zugdidi. If earlier, the municipal amount was - 800 Gel and was given to the victim after submission of the relevant document, nowadays, the various sectors are foreseen: how many children does he/she have? What are the conditions? and etc. the program works and that is very good. The shelter is a regional and beneficiaries came from entire Samegrelo as well as from Abkhazia” (local expert on violence issues).

(1,74%). Respondents mostly have information about victims of violence or assistance services of potential victims by TV or radio (48.25%). Other sources have been revealed as well and these are: Meetings with NGOs (26.74%), Social Networks (22.09%), Meetings with central government officials (0.57%), information leaflets, announcements in public gathering places (1.74%



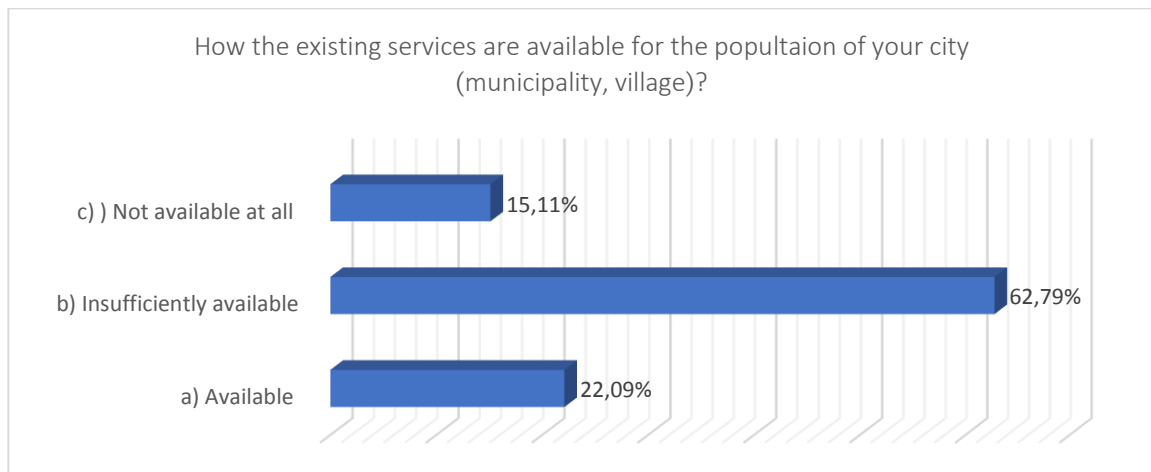
The local experts consider, that the population is informed on these issues.

„The population is informed by local representatives, MPs. All in the information is transparent on the social network“ (representative of the City Hall).

„The victim of violence calls -112 and the police takes her to us, but there are cases, when they do not call to the police, because she does not want a husband to be detained and directly goes to the shelter. The day center is visited by the women, who do not need the shelter, but they are in need of certain services, a course of psychotherapy, the help of a lawyer, a social worker. The information of police, they already know from TVs, videos, messages. There are cases, when they directly address to the municipality, or they have a restraining order and the police officer tells, that they can receive some service in the municipality. Information is got by acquaintances as well, someone is a friend, or neighbor and so on”. (local expert on violence issues).

„I like to appeal with one wisdom „when you are aware – it means, you can”, so, that is a strategy of both self-government and citizen. We use all the resources at our disposal. We have different kinds of communication forms – in addition to the standard form, a citizen can apply with the statement, both personally and electronically, there is a publishing house, that is delivered to citizens in a form of the newspaper. Social network and hot line are active as well” (local expert on social and health issues).

To the question – How are the existing services available for the population of your city (municipality, village) - three options of the answer were outlined: available - 38 (22.09%), insufficiently available - 108 (62.79%), not available at all - 26 (15.11%).



According to a small part of the participants (2.90%), the programs implemented by the local government in order to respond to violence against women are sufficient, 22.67% consider it as insufficient, while a larger share (38.37%) indicates the answer: partially. A category was identified that did not acquire the information about the mentioned local government programs (18.02%), while for the same number of people it is necessary to diversify the programs and to tailor them to the specific needs of the victim of violence (18.02%).

The materials of the qualitative research also presented some interesting moments:

„we were actively addresses by the women victims of violence. Zugdidi was one of the first municipalities, which introduced the programs of support. From 100 to 800 Gel, one-time, may be a symbolic mechanism from the first aid. Shelters and support programs are more effective and long lasting for women victims of violence” (representative of the City Hall).

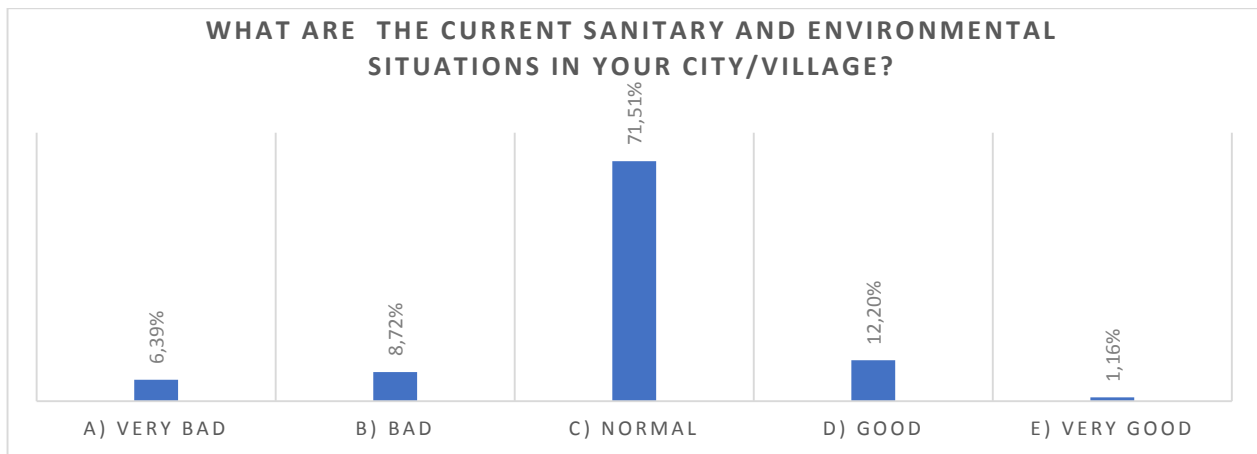
"In terms of the violence, there is an apartment rental program and one-time assistance. Our beneficiaries are benefited from this. The apartment program is good, but the amount is small, for 100 and 150 GEL in Zugdidi you can no longer find anything with normal living conditions to live with children“ (local expert on violence issue).

„we have a co-financing program for projects. One of the applicants wrote the program for women victims of violence, with the prospect of mastering the profession in accounting and in terms of the other directions and to be employed as well. More than 80% beneficiaries of the program started working. During the project funding and commission review we are focusing on the issue, not to give the fish to our beneficiaries, but to teach them fishing, in order to strengthen and be able to support their families independently.” (local expert on social and health issues).

According to the focus group participants, the programs implemented to respond to violence are sufficient, and some contributions are made by the non-governmental organizations - through trainings and projects. According to the second part, the programs are insufficient.

Seventh block. Environmental safety

Environmental safety is a very important segment of human security and the current situation is a subject of concern. However, for the vast majority of respondents (71.51%) the sanitary situation in the city / village and the situation in terms of environmental protection are normal. A small part thinks that the situation is bad (8,72%) and even less believes that it is very bad (6,39%).

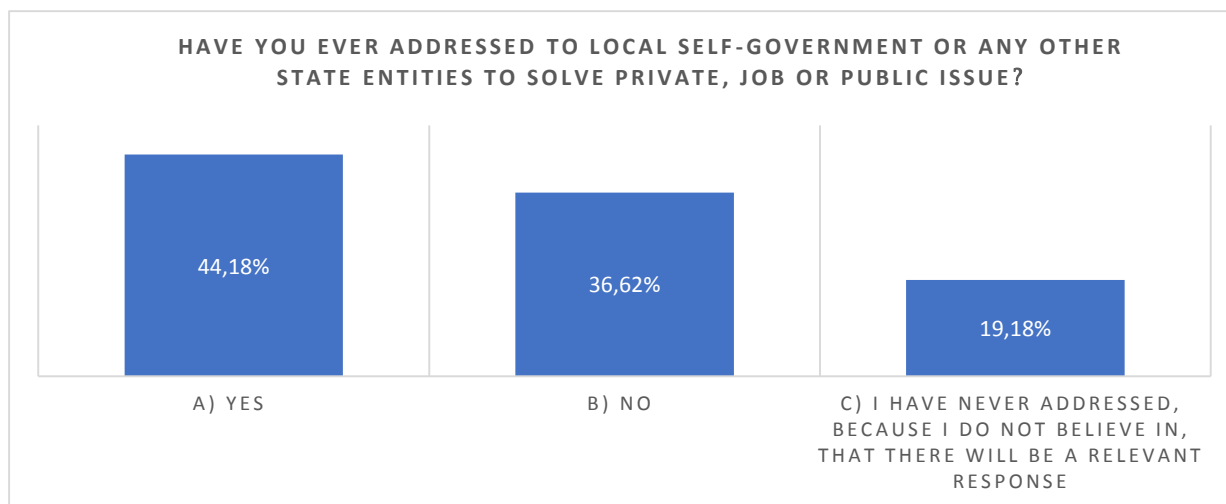


Women brought up several problematic issues in the focus groups:

- *We are bothered by street dogs, there are excrements in the entrance halls, and insanitary conditions.*
 - *There is no an animal shelter, we contacted to certain people several times and they get used to take them, vaccinate and return back.*
 - *There is an insanitary situation as well as the water problem. Access to disinfections is necessary.*
- The following answers were found to the question - which of the following is the most important environmental problem in your community: polluted air (29,09%), inadequate access to clean water (11,04%), disordered sewerage system (25%), absence/unarranged drainage pipes (34,88%).*

Eight block. General questions

In order to achieve the human safety, a special role is given to cooperation with the local self-government. It was turned out, that 44,18% of the respondents addressed to tackle their problems, while 36,62% did not. As for, 19,18 did not address, because of the lack of confidence. They do not believe, that the proper response will be followed to above mention.



The participants of focus group defined problems, that were settled in virtue of the local government:

- *I addressed to infrastructural assistance and received an instant positive response.*
- *The water pump damaged for the New Year in the settlement and we were without water. With the help of the Mayor, it was bought from the reserve fund in a day – there was an instant response from their side.*
- *We were in need of an infrastructural help and we were always received a positive answer to all our requests. I am very satisfied in this regard.*
- *Toilets of the Koki public schools were repaired, roads were rehabilitated as well.*
- *Cemeteries of the village were fenced.*

The opposite opinions were also mentioned:

- *During each rainy period, water does not flow to the drainage pipes, I applied in written form, as well as directly, but it is still unresolved. We are told, that it would be done, but it is 5 years, since it has not done. Yes, there was a response, but without result.*
- *My child as a student of the village on the brink of the conflict, received funding. Eventually, it was turned out, that two years of tuition fee must be paid. I addressed to the City Hall, governor, I wrote a letter to the Ministry of Education, but there is still no answer.*
- *I have applied for one-time allowance, but I have not received neither positive nor negative decision so far.*
- *If we bother them, we are promised, but no one is doing anything for us.*
- *I had my own greenhouse, I addressed to the City Hall, that the wind destroyed everything, enclosed photos as well, but no reaction at all.*
- *I bake cakes, I want to earn for myself, but that's nothing.*

Respondents use various forms of civic involvement for communication with local government, especially - mostly – settlement/village meetings (61, 04%).

One part has (16,86%) electronic correspondence, and the second one (7,55%) attends the meetings in the City Municipal Assembly. As concerns the other forms of involvement - listening of the reports of the mayor and services of the City Hall, petition, the Mayor's Advisory Board, the Council of the Gender, the Council of Persons with Disabilities, civil budgeting – percentage rate ranges from 0,58 to 7,55 percent.

Respondents of the focus groups and in-depth interviews focused on the involvement forms as well:

"I participated in the meeting of the Rural Support Program, where the improvement of internal roads was discussed. The meeting was attended by the Mayor of the Municipality, Giorgi Shengelia and his representatives."

"I attended a meeting of the Rural Support Program. Roads and footbridges were done."

"The doors of self-government are open for citizens. All forms are acceptable to us: meetings, direct communication or statements. Our programs are known to everyone, but the outdoor meeting revealed even a few citizens who had no information. This is a natural phenomenon and therefore, it is impossible to be happy with the format you have. As for the Covid-19 pandemic, we ensured a humanitarian assistance to 5,000 families with donations from the municipality and the private sector. There was a psychological help. The hotline did not stop, citizens called us in a 24 hours mode. Together with the products we provided the right information. They felt that self-government was on their side. At the end of 2020, the Social Protection Department was added a gender equality function, a person responsible for gender issues was designated. Despite the pandemic, the department conducted serious research in various areas, including gender analysis. This year we think to expand this research, to cover other directions as well. One of the achievements is that contact groups of women have been trained in all administrative units, who will be our ambassadors, so we try to get information on current gender issues, challenges in order to enable to the self-government to solve their problems "(local expert on social and health issues).

"Citizens actively attend village meetings and discuss a number of issues on the spot. There are many forms of citizen involvement. There are forms prescribed by the law, at the same time the City Municipal Assembly was able to introduce good projects. These are also a kind of mechanisms of involvement. Civic budget and green budget, which means fixing specific issues, drafting the projects, holding elections. These projects are supportive mechanisms for enhancing cooperation between self-government and citizens. Complying of interests or differences in opinions represent a culture of relationship" (representative of the City Hall).

20.93% of respondents think that local programs refer to the specific needs of vulnerable groups 38.37% believe that the situation is the opposite.

Qualitative research revealed, that what has been done so far and what needs to be done for the specific needs of vulnerable population.

"I would say more about people with disabilities, they do not have a transportation, the ability to move. For example, a person using a wheelchair called a taxi, but he/she was refused because they knew his/her number and were lazy about the simple service "(Zh.J., 46, IDP, employed).

Other vulnerable groups were also observed: families with many children, lonely elderly people, socially vulnerable, orphans, single mothers.

„All programs of the City Hall are tailored to the beneficiaries: the socially vulnerable, the person with disabilities, the lonely elderly people. The information is provided by the village trustees, we are applied by a neighbor or family member who submits the application. The commission gets familiar with the situation on the spot. We have to increase the funds every year as the number of applications increases. For example, if in the last year it was 65, this year we have 70 funded children and 6 is waiting. We have up to 120 citizens involved in the rent program. We have a house building program. If a citizen has a plot of land, we will build a house. This is a sustainable accommodation program. The construction of the house costs several thousand GEL. We satisfy the construction of 20 houses a year. Our municipality fits into certain frameworks. We shall distribute these funds as correctly as possible. We were addressed by parents who have children with diabetes. There is also a Council of Persons with Disabilities, a Civic Council, and a Gender Equality Council. These councils provide us with recommendations, in which directions shall be commenced a new program" (representative of the City Hall).

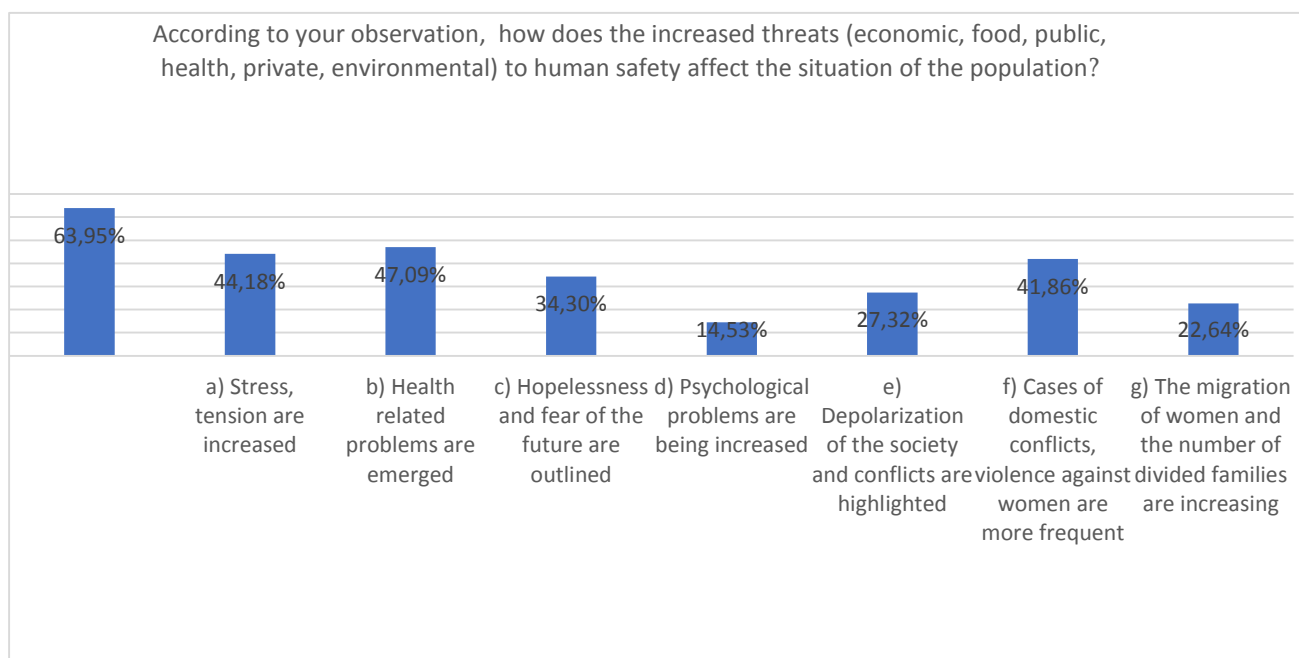
"You can not determine who needs help less and more. Emphasis should be made on economic empowerment, as well as on employment. More attention needs to be paid to agriculture, even to equip with equipment, with tractors that could cultivate the land and make it accessible. There are other problems as well. Let's say the victim has to leave the shelter, we apply to the municipality where he/she is registered (Zugdidi only helps people with registration in Zugdidi). When we ask whether they have anything to help, we are told, "We have nothing." We were not applied and we did not take it into account. When we tell them, how to address you when you do not have anything. "When we have, then we will take it into account." They are not able to provide a flexible budget or are not sensitive to the community "(local expert on violence issues).

"The most vulnerable group is the socially vulnerable population, especially in the pandemic conditions. These people often worked in exchange for daily wages and were left without poor income. They have families, children whose lives are affected by social problems. Employment of the population even in small enterprises and support of family farms would reduce the existing problems. Needs are studied by questioning of the population, studying their data. Data on pupils with special needs and disabilities are also periodically collected at schools. Home learning is provided by the school if needed. Information is sought from schools, for example, on wheelchair users, children with hearing problems and their needs are met. The needs of the population have been more or less studied, just to tackle all the problems are related to finances "(local expert on education issues)."

"People with disabilities are the most serious challenge. In 2024, when the law comes into force and we will be required to offer a service, we should not be with empty hands, we should have a smooth system. Every year we have our main message. This year it is - quality. We have a lot of programs. For example, a home care, caregiver program involves providing money to care for a person lying in a bed with limited capacity or a person with disability, using a wheelchair. We want to provide quality service to these citizens. We have databases in all programs. Content analysis of these databases are carried out throughout the year. We communicate with dozens of people every day.

"We indicate the actual problems that have not been reflected in our program yet. Then, when it comes to working on the budget process, we meet with stakeholders, experts in the field on all specific issues. We ask the sector of the society that has experience of working with this particular problem or group, we make the final decision and initiate a program or sub-program. We realized earlier that just like in this form, only in a building, stationary communication could not give us complete information, so we had different formats of meetings: focus groups, outdoor meetings, even started the "bridges", but the pandemic hindered us. We actively cooperate with non-governmental organizations working in this direction. It was achieved through joint efforts that we replaced the one-time cash assistance, that we had for people with disabilities, with utility bills co-payment. Accordingly, from year to year we do not have inviolable programs, we always try to refine, to introduce new initiatives, and foundation for all these are the analysis, research and communication with representatives of various sectors of society "(local expert on social and health issues).

As it turns out, the increased threats to human security (economic, food, public, health, personal, environmental) have a negative impact on the condition of the population: **the majority of respondents (63.95%) believe that** stress is increased. Threats cause a lot of problems, primarily it is related to health (44.18%). Women's migration and division of the families are increased (41.86%), pessimism is outlined (47, 09%), psychological problems are risen as well - 59 (34.30%), domestic conflict and violence against women are frequent - 47 (27, 32%), Increases), sense of insecurity is high- 39 (22.64%).



Recommendations

Needs assessment for women and youth in Zugdidi Municipality has been conducted through the Gender-Oriented Conflict Early Warning System (GREWS). According to the work of the women's initiative group of Zugdidi, a huge number of information that shall be taken into account has been collected and on the bases of it, recommendations have been developed for local governmental and non-governmental entities:

- Spread of information on existing municipal programs electronically or in print manner.
- Monitoring of the existing municipal programs, study of efficiency, correction and development of new programs.
 - Active and permanent cooperation with the population from the self-government, in order to study the needs of different groups.
 - Development of the municipal programs for women's economic empowerment.
 - More involvement of the society in budget discussion, development of new programs
 - The special attention shall be paid to the women's initiatives living along the dividing line of the conflict region
 - Maximum delivery of information on different offers (course, contests) for vulnerable groups
 - Vocational training of the women and financial support in terms of the small funds
 - To carry out preventive measures against women/domestic violence
 - Advocacy of the priority issues for women at the municipal and central levels by the Gender Equality Council
 - Active cooperation of the local self-government with non-governmental and business sectors to solve the problems of population
 - More use of electronic resources for informing
 - Promotion of Internet accessibility and teaching of relevant skills for interested people
 - Provision of socially vulnerable families in IDPs' collective centers with preferential Internet
 - Settlement of social and infrastructural problems
 - Full/partial education funding assistance for the students from vulnerable families
 - Promoting the development of family farms, family hotels
 - Provision of the quality medical service in all villages rehabilitation of outpatient clinics, opening of pharmacies, mobilization of groups of doctors)

- Opening of household service centers in villages (beauty salon, sewing salon, shoe repair)