



United Nations Population Fund
გაერთიანებული ერების მოსახლეობის ფონდი



GBV-SC Georgia Newsletter

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This is a special edition of the GBV-Georgia Project Newsletter dedicated to 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights.

The 16 Days Campaign has been used as an organizing strategy to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women by raising awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue at the local, national, regional and international levels, demonstrating the solidarity of women around the world organizing against violence against women and creating tools to pressure governments to implement promises made to eliminate violence against women.

In Georgia, local non-governmental organizations working in the field of gender and women's rights have been celebrating the *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence* for a number of years. This year, the *16 Days of Activism* was coordinated by the UNFPA-implemented project "Combating Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus". In order to coordinate the national public awareness-raising efforts, the GBV-SC project team established an *ad hoc* National Coordination Committee, whose members were: Public Defender's Office, Women's Political Resource Center, Women's Informational Center, Taso Foundation, Human Rights Center, Association Safari, Association of journalists "Gender Media Caucasus", Women's Center, Anti-Violence Network of Georgia and Women's employment support organization – "Amagadri".



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OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

The GBV-SC project launched the *16 Days of Activism* with a press conference at the *Tbilisi Marriott* on November 25, 2008.



The opening remarks and greetings came from the Vice Speaker of the Parliament and Chairperson of the Gender Equality Advisory Council - H.E. Rusudan Kervalishvili, who thanked the organizers of the campaign and emphasized the importance of combating gender-based violence in Georgia. In her speech, she highlighted that GBV is an integral part of gender equality and confirmed the commitment of the Parliament of Georgia to addressing problems of gender equality and domestic violence.

Ms. Tamar Khomasuridze, the Assistant Representative of UNFPA/Georgia outlined the objectives of the 16 Days of Activism and briefed the audience about the campaign related-activities: *"I am happy that we have managed to coordinate the campaign with governmental and non-governmental organizations. Collaboration is the key to success when it comes to major challenges such as combating gender-based violence"* - Ms. Khomasuridze stated, - *"Due to extensive efforts of the National Committee set up under the GBV-SC project, a unified calendar,*



listing over 50 awareness-raising activities planned in practically all regions of Georgia, was produced".

The official part of the event was followed by a reception and a presentation of the new TV ad/public announcement on women's rights, produced by GBV-SC Georgia specifically within the framework of the campaign. The TV Ad was aired, for two weeks, on four TV channels in Georgia.



The film by the Georgian director Liana Jakeli entitled "Invisible" narrates the story of girls in the Azerbaijani community, which upon turning 14-15 years must leave school. The general belief is that they need no education, as the most important thing is to get her married before her beauty faded away.



"It's difficult to imagine that within couple of hours from Tbilisi women's basic human rights are abused, girls are not allowed to go to schools and are tied down to heavy fieldwork with little contact with outside world,"- a 23-year-old female student said after screening the movie, - "A lot of people are unaware that such problems exist in Georgia. I think it's important to make these voices and concerns heard within our communities". -

MOVIE SCREENING ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN GEORGIA

On November 27, 28 and 29, 2008 GBV-SC Georgia screened three short documentaries on domestic and gender-based violence in Georgia. The "Return", "One life – one name" and "Invisible" produced by the Georgian documentary filmmakers in 2006 were shown to approximately 200 students from various Universities of Tbilisi.

"One of the main objectives of the 16 Days of Activism is raising the public awareness on women's rights and gender-based violence. By inviting students to movie screenings on domestic and gender-based violence we attempted to reach out to young people from different backgrounds in order to inform them of gender-based violence and equality issues in Georgia" – says Thea Maisuradze, National Project Coordinator of "Combating Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus" project – "We have chosen these three movies because they convey the perception of Georgian film-makers and reflect the problems that women face in Georgia today".



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A 23-year-old female student shared her impressions: "All three movies were impressive, especially the "Invisible". It's difficult to imagine that within couple of hours from Tbilisi women's basic human rights are abused, girls are not allowed to go to schools and are tied down to heavy fieldwork with little contact with outside world. People here are unaware that such problems exist in Georgia. I think it's important to make these voices and concerns heard within our communities".

These and other documentaries were provided to UNFPA by Taso Foundation, Natalia Zazashvili and Liana Jakeli.

YOUTH CONFERENCE ON GENDER AND FAMILY ISSUES

Also, within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism, GBV-SC Georgia project and Youth International Relations Department at the Tbilisi National Youth Palace conducted the Youth Conference - "Role of the Family in the Integration of Healthy Generation in Civil Society" on November 28, 2008.

Gender equality, domestic violence and its influence on young people, role of NGOs and UN in educating youth and preventing harmful habits and life-threatening diseases were some of the topics on the conference agenda. Participants, aged from 16 to 18 years, were granted Certificates of Participation and memorable gifts by UNFPA Georgia.

"UNFPA Georgia has traditionally collaborated with the Youth International Relations Department at the Tbilisi



National Youth Palace and our cooperation has been very successful over the years," - said Ms. Tamar Khomasuridze, Assistant Representative of the UNFPA in Georgia, - "This year, participants demonstrated remarkable research skills and excellent knowledge of many topics of significance to the contemporary world."

The Youth Conference served as a tool to engage young people and raise their awareness on the human rights, gender and healthy lifestyle issues, thus advancing the objectives of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence.



RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH MEDIA

A TV talk show, Radio and TV public service announcements, print media features on gender-based violence were part of the 16 Days of Activism efforts of the GBV-SC Georgia team. Launch of the campaign was featured on the "Good Morning Georgia" – a morning show on the most popular TV channel in Georgia, the campaign-related interviews were aired on radios: "Liberty" and "Public Broadcaster" and leading print media outlets such as "The Georgian Times", "Georgia Today", "Messenger" and "24 hours" covered GBV-SC activities on regular basis. GBV-SC Georgia actively collaborated with web-portal on gender related information – www.qjinc.net.



On December 6, 2008, GBV-SC Georgia organized a TV talk show that brought together the prominent Georgian gender experts, as well as the representatives of NGOs and governmental organizations focusing on GBV and DV. The talk show the prevalence of domestic violence in Georgia, its social, health, economic and legal aspects as well as practical issues related to shelters, victims etc. Participants assessed progress achieved since the adoption of the Law on Domestic Violence in 2006, identified gaps and discussed avenues of possible collaboration between the key players in the field.



GBV-SC Georgia

"Georgia is the only country in the region which has already adopted legislation on domestic violence. This is a huge step forward, however there's still a lot of work ahead" – extract from the TV talk show on Domestic Violence produced by GBV-SC Georgia project and aired on Imedi TV on December 6, 2008



Different thematic brochures on the themes of gender-based violence, domestic violence, trafficking and women in conflict were produced by GBV-SC Georgia and have been distributed to various regions of Georgia via NGOs, Public Defenders Office (with 8 regional offices) and Legal Aid Office at the Ministry of Justice (with 15 regional offices)

PHOTO EXHIBITION ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS & CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM



GBV-SC Georgia

Combating Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus Project is a multi-pronged, 3-year initiative funded by UNFPA and the Government of Norway. Project is contributing to the national response to domestic violence in the countries of Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The project is implemented in close cooperation with key government entities, NGOs, and academia.

The project is strengthening the democratic governance through supporting the respect for human rights, gender equality and women's participation. The project will also promote GBV-free environment by empowering women to participate and contribute to the sustainable development and democracy in the region.

On December 10, 2008, GBV-SC Georgia marked the end of the 16 Days of Activism by organizing a photo exhibition on women's rights and a reception at the Karvasla Museum in Tbilisi.

The event was open by H.E. Mr. Jon Ramberg, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Norway in the Azerbaijan and Georgia, who honored the event by making a trip from Baku, where the Embassy is located. *"I would like to thank UNFPA Georgia and the GBV-SC Georgia team for doing such a great job"*, - stated



Mr. Ambassador in his speech, - *"I hope that the support of the Royal Government of Norway will assist the region in eradicating gender-based violence and establishing the society based on democratic values"*.

The ambassador and all other male guests wore a white ribbon - a symbol of personal pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls especially prepared by the GBV-SC Georgia team for the occasion.



H.E. Mr. George Tsereteli, Vice-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, Ms. Tamar Khomasuridze, Assistant Representative of UNFPA in Georgia and Deputy Public Defender Ms. Baia Romelashvili also addressed the guests. Mr. Tsereteli emphasized the importance of involving women in country's public and political life and expressed hope for more female representation in the Georgian Parliament in the near future.



The campaign closing was attended by all state and non-state actors involved in the campaign. Guests enjoyed the photo exhibition, which featured works of the Georgian photographers. The photo contest on women's rights was announced in early October and over 40 works were collected by the GBV-SC Georgia project. The best 20 photos were selected by a competent jury and displayed at the Karvasla Gallery. *"It's an honor for me to participate in this contest and I am glad that the jury selected my photo as a winner"*, - said Mariam Amurvelashvili, -*"The [winning] photo was*

taken in the Gori Tent City where the population displaced after the South Ossetia conflict were accommodated. Women and children are especially affected by the conflict and that is the message I wanted to convey". On the closing ceremony, winners of the photo contest were announced and authors of the best artworks were awarded with UNFPA diplomas and memorable prizes.

