

Center for Strategic Research and  
Development of Georgia (CSR DG)



Annual Report 2020

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## 2020 Annual report

### 25 year for you and with you!

CSRDG was founded in July 1995, a time when the country was experiencing difficult political processes.

For a small group of people that gathered around one idea to bring any benefit to the country and the community, the solution was to establish a civil society organization. This is how the Georgian Center for Strategic Research and Development (CSRDG) was established. Since then, for 25 years, it has been serving the public interests, economic empowerment of the society, and the establishment of sustainable institutions.

## Foreword

The year of 2020 has introduced the world to a new, and unexpected challenge. The pandemic has completely changed the daily lives and a work style of millions of people. These unexpected challenges affected us as well. However, we managed to overcome them due to our unity, professional and high motivation. We managed to retain our core values, around which we united back in 1995, unchanged.

It is due to our commitment to our values that, after 25 years of successful work in the civil sector, has established us as a strong research, and expert institution, trusted partner, and community development organization.

We are pleased to present the overview of the activities performed in 2020 by the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia. The document reflecting implemented activities of the organization is presented to the public annually. It is our responsibility to inform all stakeholders about the positive contribution made by the organization to the economic, cultural and social development of the country, the achievement of sustainable development goals, and the introduction of the principles of democracy.

The present report is an integrated document that incorporates our annual program report and communication on engagement.

In 2007, CSRDG has joined UN Global Compact Initiative. And since 2010, CSRDG has been an organizational supporter of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).



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*Global Reporting Initiative is an international network organization, which aims at elaboration and continuous improvement of universal standards of sustainable development reporting.*

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With this report, we reaffirm our continued support for the ten universal principles of the Global Compact, which cover the areas, such as environment, human rights, labor rights and the fight against corruption. We express our readiness to continue our support for the implementation of these principles within areas of our activities and influence, and to publicly express our support for the Global Compact to our stakeholders and the general public

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*UN Global Compact is the largest global initiative on corporate citizenship. It is based on organizations' voluntary initiatives to implement universal sustainability principles and take steps to support UN goals.*

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We also reaffirm our readiness to: Cooperate with the UN Global Compact and participate in its activities and events within realm of possibility;

Participate in partner projects, which aim at supporting corporate responsibility and sustainable development;

In case of necessity and request, examine the annual Communications on Progress of other companies joining the Global Compact initiative.

In 2020, CSRDG worked in three main directions under the core program: developing the civil society sector, promoting open governance, promoting economic and social change. In December we started a new project aimed at providing innovative employment opportunities. These directions include programs such as: Community Development, CSO Development, Good Governance, Promoting European Integration, Social Entrepreneurship, Corporate Social Responsibility, Consumer Rights Protection,

and Social Service Development Programs. In frames of these programs, in 2020, CSRDG implemented 22 ongoing projects, detailed information regarding which is given in the present report.

And finally, I would like to thank CSRDG's personnel, our partners and supporters, stakeholders, whose efforts enabled us to carry out the activities described in the report, and achieve the set objectives. Special thanks to each and every employee of the organization who spared no energy, responded to so many challenges and successfully, equipped with new skills, knowledge and experience, completed this the most difficult year.

Eka Urushadze,  
Executive Director, CSRDG

## Geography

The range of our activities extends to the entire country; although, within certain programs, we focus specifically on Dedoplistskaro, Lagodekhi, Akhmeta, Signaghi, Kvareli, Telavi and Sagarejo municipalities in East Georgia, and Ozurgeti, Chkhorotsku, Abasha, Martvili, Kedi, Senaki and Khobi municipalities in West Georgia.

Our headquarters are located in Tbilisi, and the regional office – in Telavi.

## Mission, Vision and Strategic Objectives

### Mission

**Our mission** is to promote good governance, stable and inclusive economic development, and the formation of an active civil society for the welfare of Georgian society.

**We contribute to** the sustainable development of the country by promoting democratic values, and strengthening cross-sector partnerships.

### Vision:

**We respect** the equality and human dignity; we believe that high civil responsibility, professional competence, mutual cooperation and solidarity are the prerequisites for the development of the country.

## Strategic Objective

Promoting an active civil society, socially responsible business and good governance for poverty alleviation and sustainable development of the country.

## Organizational Structure



## Our team

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eka Urushadze</li> <li>• Eka Datuashvili</li> <li>• Nino Vasadze</li> <li>• Vakhtang Kobaladze</li> <li>• Maka Asambadze</li> <li>• Tamar Khachidze</li> <li>• Manana Mchedlishvili</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salome Topuridze</li> <li>• Ana Nadirashvili</li> <li>• Lia Todua</li> <li>• Nino Kituashvili</li> <li>• Tamar Gobejishvili</li> <li>• Lela Khoperia</li> <li>• Elene Chkheidze</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristine Kandelaki</li> <li>• Dodo Gokadze</li> <li>• Tamar Germanashvili</li> <li>• Ekaterine Chkhetia</li> <li>• Giga Chitashvili</li> <li>• Ekaterine (Ana) Iluridze</li> <li>• Natia Metreveli</li> <li>• Keso Kuchukhidze</li> <li>• Zurab Tatanashvili</li> <li>• Ketevan Kakabadze-Avalishvili</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gvantsa Patsatsia</li> <li>• Nona Aladashvili</li> <li>• Levan Rostomashvili</li> <li>• Ketevan Kalandadze</li> <li>• Nikoloz Mekvabishvili</li> <li>• Nia Chelidze</li> <li>• David Chikvaidze</li> <li>• Mikheil Gogichaishvili</li> <li>• Mariam Turiashvili</li> <li>• Lily Ushveridze</li> <li>• Nona Rukhadze</li> </ul>
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## Financial Statement for the Year Ended December 31, 2020

### Funding from donors by years:

- **2016** - GEL 1,947,420
- **2017** - GEL 3,214,803
- **2018** - GEL 3,091,110
- **2019** - GEL 3,980,197
- **2020** - GEL 3,495,122

### Annual income

Source	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Funding from donors	1,881,150	3,146,006	3,091,110	3,980,197	3,495,122
From individual contribution From individual contributions	7,382	18,361	52,345	60,407	47,090
Income from services provided	41,979	36,227	7,531	72,718	62,276
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,947,420</b>	<b>3,214,803</b>	<b>3,150,986</b>	<b>4,113,322</b>	<b>3,604,488</b>

## Brief information about activities

- Worked with 31 communities in 11 municipalities;
- Elaborated 16 video lessons on European Integration ([www.asocireba.ge](http://www.asocireba.ge));
- Ongoing 22 projects;
- New project “Skill Building and Innovative Job Opportunities for Regional Development of Georgia” starts that aims at creating new employment opportunities in the country;
- 4 publications were elaborated by experts;
- 18 publications were elaborated within awarded grant projects;
- 6 Pro Bono Webinars were carried out; more than 160 individuals attended the Webinars;
- Community Development Program introduced new activity - Community Talks;
- 20 different online meeting were conducted with the representatives of local authorities in target regions in order to provide consultations and professional assistance in effective implementation of presented recommendations.

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*Overall, CSRDG financed 111 projects for the total amount of GEL 648,848*

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## Publications

- Explanatory Dictionary of Corporate Social Responsibility Terms;
- Electronic Textbook on Global Warming;
- Survey of Community Based Organizations operating in Georgia in 2019-2000;
- Feasibility Study for Community Foundation Start-up in Georgia;
- Social and Economic Impact of Covid-19 on target communities of Kakheti, Samegrelo and Guria;
- In order to support decentralization of local authorities (in the context of pandemic), experts prepared and published an article “Analysis of the results of local government reform”.
- Rights-based Social Service for Elderly and People with Disabilities.

## Events

- Community Leaders Forum 2020
- Social Entrepreneurship Forum 2020
- Georgia’s Responsible Business Awards Meliora
- Journalists for Corporate Social Responsibility

- Multi-stakeholder Forum “Cross-sector Partnership for Creating Sustainable Shared Value”;
- Multi-stakeholder Forum “Sustainable Construction: best solutions and importance of cross-sector partnership”;
- Photo-print contest on Corporate Social Responsibility
- Georgian Pro Bono Network Meeting
- Round Table – Protection of Consumers’ Rights

## Implemented and ongoing projects

1. The Main Program of CSRDG in 2017-2020 - Brot Fur die Welt;
2. The Main Program of CSRDG in 2020-2023 - [Brot Fur Die Welt](#);
3. Civil Society Development Initiative -The European Union;
4. Empowering Women for Change – The United Nations Development Programme;
5. Safe Product for Georgian Customers - Embassy of the Netherlands in Georgia;
6. Civil Education for Protection of Consumer Rights in Food Sector-Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria;
7. Promotion of Rights Based Social Services for People with Disabilities and Elderly – [The European Union](#);
8. Global Warming Campaign - chance to change our future - United Nations Office UNOPS;
9. Feasibility Study for Community Foundation Start-up in Georgia - European Community Foundation Initiative;
10. Optimal Utilization of Local Recourses and Potential of Keda Municipality – The European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development;
11. Transparent Facemasks for Human Rights - Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum;
12. Skill Building and Innovative Job Opportunities for Regional Development of Georgia - The European Union;
13. Response to COVID-19 Pandemic at Community Level- United Nations Development Programme;
14. Unity and Solidarity Against COVID-19 (1) - Open Society - Georgia Foundation;
15. Unity and Solidarity Against COVID-19 (2) - Open Society - Georgia Foundation;
16. EENCE Network Communication Platform Development - Federal Agency for Civic Education;
17. The Way Back to Society - The European Union;
18. House of Support – Services for dignified life of elderly in Georgia and BoH – Austrian Development Agency;

## Relevance of our Programs with Sustainable Development Goals

Goal	CSR DG's Programs	Page
<b>Goal 1 – No Poverty</b>	Community Development Social Entrepreneurship	12; 37.
<b>Goal 2 – Zero Hunger</b>		
<b>Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-being</b>	Rights Based Social Service	21.
<b>Goal 4 – Quality Education</b>	Community Development, CBO Development; Social Entrepreneurship; CSR- Program;	12; 19; 30; 37.
<b>Goal 5 – Gender Equality</b>	Community Development European Integration;	12; 25.
<b>Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation</b>		
<b>Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy</b>		
<b>Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth</b>	Community Development – Women Eempowerment for Change; Social Entrepreneurship; CSR- Program;	12; 30; 37.
<b>Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</b>		
<b>Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities</b>		
<b>Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities</b>		
<b>Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production</b>	CSR Development;	30
<b>Goal 13 – Climate Action</b>		
<b>Goal 14 – Life Below Water</b>		

<b>Goal 15 – Life on Land</b>		
<b>Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b>	Good Governance	22
<b>Goal 17 – Partnerships for Goals</b>		

## Programs

There are three main strategic directions that serve to achieve the mission of the organization:

1. Development of Civil Sector;
2. Promotion of Open Governance;
3. Promotion of Economic and Social Changes.

Programs that are part of our daily activities are grouped under these directions.

**Development of Civil Sector** represents one of the oldest strategic directions of CSRDG. It aims at supporting civil society to safeguard interests of, and to improve provision of relevant services for its target groups at local and national levels. Community Development Program, Civil Society Organizations’ (CSO) Development Program, and Social Service Development Program operate under this strategic direction.

**Community Development Program** (Village and community levels) aims at improving institutional, advocacy and fundraising skills of the community, to enable community members to actively and significantly contribute to the local development.

**CSO Development Program** aims at institutional capacity building of local and national CSOs, thus enabling them to provide better services to their constituencies.

**Social Service Development Program** aims at developing of the rights-based social service in civil and public sectors in Georgia, to promote and respect social, cultural and economic rights of vulnerable individuals.

## Community Development Program

CSRDG has been working on community development since 1998. Our main activities include forming and strengthening civic activism in the regions. We believe, that formation of civil society, in its turn, is the best way to better execute the potential and effectively solve problems at the local level.

The program is directed at identification of opportunities, and institutional development of women and youth in the regions. It is important that local population has improved access to available resources, can effectively protect its interests, and is ready to cooperate with the local government and other civil society actors.

Community Development Program offers two types of services to CBOs and groups – information-education, and financial support. These two directions complement each other and make our approach unique.

### Information and Education Support

Program operates nation-wide, and more targeted with the Network of community groups and organizations established within various projects in previous years. In both cases the Program proposes different educational opportunities.

CSRDG has been regularly providing numerous necessary information to community groups and organizations, and supporting information and experience sharing between them through Community Development Recourse Center, established by CSRDG in 2011. Community Talks, and annual Community Leaders' Forum can be listed under organization's distinguished events.

As for the work with already functioning CBO network, the education component is far more intensive and is linked to needs and interests of the particular community groups or organization. It covers trainings, seminars, workshop, exchange study visits and the entire cycle of consultations.

During 2020, Program actively worked with 47 community groups and organizations utilizing different approaches. Out of those, the most intensively CSRDG worked with the network comprising of 28 community groups, which operate in the following regions: 18 CBOs in Kakheti, 8 in Samegrelo, 1 in Guria and 1 in Kvemo Kartli.

### Trainings and Seminars

During the year, overall, we conducted 30 educational events, seminars, trainings and workshops. Topics of trainings and meeting were derived from the needs and interests of these groups. Therefore, the topics are diverse, such as financial management, writing and managing business projects, communication management and marketing, as well as local community development initiatives, adolescents and emotional intelligence, bullying, stress management. More than 300 individuals attended trainings and seminars during the year.

## Community and Environment

As mentioned earlier, we paid special attention to forming and strengthening of youth community groups. Our support considered technical, informational as well as financial support. In recent years, environmental component was added to the Program. It considers cooperation and development of eco-clubs operating in the target regions, as well as promotion of environmental issues.

In 2019-2000 years, in 50 target communities of 11 municipalities of three regions, CSRDG conducted cycles of trainings for eco-clubs' members on waste management, environmental social entrepreneurship, and proposal writing.

Following trainings and educational seminars, CBOs and eco-clubs jointly implemented 17 pilot environmental projects in partnership with local residents and local authorities.

At the same time, a survey on waste management problems in the target regions was performed; conclusions and recommendations were elaborated. We presented the information regarding the existing problems to relevant national and local authorities.

CSRDG facilitated 3 stakeholder dialogues and 6 information meetings with representatives of relevant local authorities regarding waste management and global warming issues. In addition, one educational eco-camp was organized (approx. 60 participants) and [Electronic Textbook on Global Warming](#) was elaborated (information regarding the publication can be found below, or follow the link).

## Community talks

In order to improve the cooperation between community groups and organizations, and to coordinate information sharing and various activities, periodically CSRDG hosts workshops to summarize past activities, share information and experience. It also organizes exchange visits between target regions as well as study visits to experienced CBOs in various parts of Georgia. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, these types of events moved online.

It is notably the existing situation that laid the foundation for online meetings regarding the stories of interesting women. Later these online meetings transferred to the regular cycle of **"Community Talks"**. The main goal of the meetings is to enable residents of regions (not only representatives of CBO and initiative groups) to meet with fascinating people, pose interesting questions and receive additional information about various issues.

The regular talks became popular and more and more people express their desire to attend them. CSRDG decided to brand the meeting cycle and restrict the topics and the number of attendees.

The information regarding the events is disseminated through CSRDG's Facebook Community Development Resource Center's close group, as well as mailing list of regional organizations,

community centers and initiative groups that CSRDG possesses, and through local partners. The topic of the meetings is tailored to needs and interests of participants / attendees, for which we conduct mini-polls within the closed group. In 2020, 3 such meetings were held online. Overall, more than 100 individuals from different parts of Georgia attended the meetings.

### **Community Leaders' Forum 2020**

Community Leaders' Forum is one of the most prominent events, which has been organized by CSRDG since 2016 in partnership with and for CBOs, community leaders and initiatives groups.

The topics of the event change from year to year according to the requirements, needs and desires of the community organizations at that moment. This year Community Leaders Forum was held online on November 25-27.

In response to the challenges in the country, at the event we paid special attention to civic activism and the role of solidarity in crisis times, along with presenting outstanding community initiatives and discussing themes attractive for the target groups.

The objective of the Community Leaders' Forum is popularization of CBOs, strengthening bonds between communities, sharing best practices between regions and most importantly, providing information to community leaders and civic activists on topical issues.

At the Community Leaders' Forum, the results of the Community Development Program 2017-200 were summarized. Forum speakers discussed distinguished projects that positively affected particular individuals as well as vulnerable groups. The second day of the Forum was dedicated to the implemented community projects in line with Covid-19. Beyond just the numbers, Forum participants familiarized themselves with human stories, specific facts, and tangible results. And on the third day of the Forum, a presentation of the intermediary results of the first in-depth CBO mapping study in Georgia was held.

During three days, 130 participants attended the Forum. The event was organized by CSRDG, and conducted within EU and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung funded project "Civil Society Sustainability Initiative".

### **Financial Support**

Similar to educational support, Program employs different approaches in providing financial support to CBOs and initiative groups across the country, and within the network of target community groups and organizations.

In addition to closed grant competitions to address local issues, CSRDG also offers small financial support for ongoing activities to the latter. Such an assistance considers intensive

educational events described earlier, which strengthen the groups and support implementation of project activities, as well as aids individual development of community leaders.

The ongoing activities are backed-up with small financial support, which is tailored to community needs and are utilized accordingly. During the year, we prepared action plans for 26 CBOs, conducted 11 workshops, held online consultations. Due to the pandemic, restrictions and quarantine, the elaborated action plans could not be fully implemented. However, community groups managed to amend action plans and spread the activities over the year. During the reporting period, community groups organized 223 events, which were attended by up to 7,000 individuals. Overall, 25 project were financed with the amount totaling GEL 70,029.

One of the main objectives of CBOs and groups is solving local problems. Therefore, at the end of the year each community group presents several most topical issues to the local authorities to reflect relevant funds in the following year's budget. By the end of 2020, out of 111 presented problems, 29 issues / recommendations were considered by LA. The majority of the issues related to rehabilitation of infrastructure, such as internal roads, water supply systems, kindergartens, squares and stadiums, as well as waste management issues.

### Closed grant competitions

**Program activities related to the Network of target community groups is accompanied by the closed micro-grant program**, which is announced once or twice a year for target CBOs and groups, and are aimed at strengthening them.

During the year two closed grant competitions for CBOs were announced. Each competition has a different topic:

1. Grant competition for target community groups and CBOs was announced in January 2020 within BFW-funded program and UNDP-funded project "Women Empowerment for Change". Overall, 12 applications were submitted. Based on the decision made by the Grant Review Committee, 8 projects were funded. The significant part of the competition is engaging local community, local businesses and local authorities in the processes. This stimulates cooperation between community groups, local authorities, civil sector and local businesses. Derived from the approaches of the Program implementation, resource mobilization represents a crucial component. The co-founding agency of this micro-grant competition along with CSRDG is [Constanta Foundation](#).

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*The total budget of the 8 projects financed within the closed grant competition is GEL 101,379, out of which CSRDG awarded GEL 74,527 in grants, and GEL 24,940 was the contribution from the community, and GEL 1,912 was other contributions raised by the community.*

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1. Closed grant competition represents the significant element in strengthening the environmental component of the Program. It gives CBOs and eco-clubs the opportunity to plan and implement joint projects. Properly conducted educational activities were followed by the introduction of alternative recycling methods and practices of organic household waste to eliminate release of organic pollutants in the air as a result of open burning. Four projects were funded in Guria, Samegrelo and Kakheti in the grant competition announced within the project:

- Guria, Ozurgeti municipality, Jumati community, eco-club “Ecosanitar” – Project: “Solar energy to save the planet”;
- Guria, Ozurgeti municipality, Meria community, Center “Imedi” – Project: “Supporting development of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency”;
- Samegrelo, Khobi municipality, Village Torsa, Community Center “Toliskuri”, Project: “Warm Hearth”;
- Kakheti, Telavi municipality, Village Kvemo Khodasheni, Women’s initiative group, Project: “New life – from the Sun to the Earth”.

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*The overall budget of the 4 financed environmental projects is GEL 27,282, out of which CSRDG awarded GEL 18,625, contribution from the community was GEL 1,700, and GEL 3,328 was other contribution raised by the community.*

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**In relation to the Pandemic-induced situation**, Community Development Recourse Center announced an open grant competition throughout the country for community initiatives to mitigate Covid-19 related crisis. The objective of the competition was demonstrating civic solidarity and supporting vulnerable groups affected by Covid-19 crisis. **Three projects were funded under this call:**

- Guria Mediators’ Association, project: „Challenges empower us“;
- Community Social-Economic Development Association “Imereti”, project: “You are not alone”;
- Youth Council, project: “Support of the vulnerable groups affected by the Pandemic in the city of Poti”

Within the financed project, 177 individuals representing **8 communities and 1 city (Poti) from three municipalities** received assistance.

All three project paid special attention to the following groups: lonely elderly, PDWs, unemployed individuals due to pandemic, and those affected by the bank policies.

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*The overall budget of these three projects was GEL 34,378, out of which CSRDG awarded GEL 23,953, and GEL 10,425 was raised by the community groups from other sources.*

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### **Covid-19 pandemic and response**

In 2020, along with the mobilization of internal resources, the search for significant external resources has become important. The first period of pandemic was extremely difficult, the population was not prepared to it. Regions, especially villages had the worst situation. With suspension of the municipal transport services, the large part of the population was left without access to regional center, medical services, grocery stores, etc. During this period Community Development Program raised additional financial resources and implemented three projects in partnership with existing CBOs and initiative groups. The projects were aimed at reducing the negative impact caused by the pandemic in the regions.

**Project Unity and Solidarity against Covid-19** was implemented by CSRDG in two stages. Project was financed by the Open Society Georgia Foundation. The target areas – Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli, Samegrelo and Guria.

Within the project, existing CBOs and initiative groups were mobilized and the network of volunteers was established. In the beginning, for safety reasons, a group of more than 70 volunteers was trained and instructed.

Within the project, overall, up to 600 families received primary necessities, food, social assistance package as well as computer equipment necessary for learning. The project targeted vulnerable groups, such as elderly, lonely mothers, large families, etc.

**Project Community Initiatives in response to Covid-19.** The project was initiated due to the difficult social and economic situation caused by the pandemic, and it was built as a complementary component to CSRDG's ongoing project "Empowering Women for Change". The project covered 27 communities of 11 municipalities in the target regions - Kakheti, Samegrelo and Guria.

In the project target regions, a survey on [Social and Economic Impact of Covid-19](#) was conducted (the information regarding the survey can be found below or follow the link), which

revealed general social problems, as well as areas of small businesses to exist in the community and further develop.

Considering survey results, women-initiated small business projects were financed, and a training cycle was held. The grant amounts awarded within the project, supported development of small family businesses in the regions, which despite the size, represent the significant source of income for these families.

After announcing the competition, 31 business ideas were financed, the overall granted amount was GEL 78,632. 4 family businesses were financed in Guria, 19 in Kakheti and 8 in Samegrelo.

Among the funded projects, there are many bakery and food outlets, beauty salons, sewing workshops, and coffee corners. CSRDG also financed modern agricultural seeding-machine rental services, an open store for fruits and vegetables, a family dry-fruit production, hazelnut chipping service necessary for hazelnut farm, and a resource center of agricultural tools.

### **Publications elaborated within Community Development Program:**

#### **Electronic Textbook on Global Warming**

Electronic textbook was elaborated for the CBOs and eco-clubs' members engaged in the project. The textbook provides the information regarding climate change, its causes, framework convention and related international agreements, modern challenges related to the climate change, utilization mechanisms of alternative energy resources, and rapid and effective dissemination of information to the local population.

#### **Feasibility Study for Community Foundation Start-up in Georgia**

One of the objectives of the Community Development Program is support to establishing and developing Community Foundation on sites. The purpose of the present study is to identify those opportunities and challenges that affect fundamental development of Community Foundations in Georgia, particularly in two selected locations. The study report comprises of desk research, as well as field or qualitative research results. Since 2020, Community Development Program actively support the popularization of Community Foundation's concept and establishing Community Foundations in the target regions. In this direction, CSRDG is a member of an international network European Community Foundations Initiative (ECFI), which promotes the Community Foundations movement in **Europe**.

#### **Survey of Community Based Organizations operating in Georgia in 2019-2020**

The survey covers the description of community groups operating in Georgia in 2019-2020. Profiles of these groups were examined between October 2019 and November 2020, by Ms. Ana Margvelashvili, Researcher of a Community Development Center. The survey was financed by CSRDG and Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF).

The main focus of the survey was to study the community groups operating at the village or small settlement levels, examine their organizational structure, work environment and the obstacles that community groups and organizations have to overcome in their daily activities. According to the survey, there are about 120 such groups in Georgia today.

### **Social and Economic Impact of Covid-19 on target communities of Kakheti, Samegrelo and Guria**

The research was held within the project “Community Initiatives in response to Covid-19”, financed by the UNDP. The goals of the project was empowerment of regional population, specifically women’s economic empowerment and support establishment of small family business initiatives.

The objective of the research was primary assessment of Covid-19 social and economic impact in Kakheti, Samegrelo and Guria regions (11 municipalities, 27 communities). The research report was elaborated based on interviews with residents of target communities (1310 respondents/households, 3579 family members) and focus group discussions. The research was performed in June-September, 2020.

## **Development of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**

Within its CSO Development Program, CSRDG supports Georgian civil society sector by building its capacity, raising awareness and increasing public perception about it. We started the Program in 1998.

To achieve Program goals, we continuously offer CSOs tailored technical support, which enables them to improve organizational management systems, offer quality services to target audiences, and most importantly, ensure organizations’ financial and institutional sustainability.

### **Program Activities**

Ongoing projects under the Program were focused on the development of local civil society organizations and their capacity building. In order to address four main Georgian civil society sector challenges, since January 2017, a Consortium led by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in partnership with the Center for Strategic Research and Development (CSRDG) and three Georgian CSOs has been implementing the EU-funded project “Civil Society Sustainability Initiative”. The goal of the project is to strengthen civil society and improve enabling environment in Georgia.

The overall objective of the project is to enhance the sustainability of civil society in Georgia with an improved operational environment, empowered CSOs, increased accountability of CSOs

to constituencies, and amplified linkages to other actors, thereby contributing to policy dialogue and development.

To this end, the given effort has following specific objectives:

1. To increase financial sustainability of CSOs through diversified income like state funding. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), voluntarism, and beneficial taxation.
2. To enhance the capacity, accountability and credibility of CSOs for effectively advocating interests and political, economic, social and cultural rights of their constituencies.
3. To strengthen regional civic participation through better cooperation of CSOs with local media, businesses, and authorities.
4. To support joint approaches of CSOs in policy dialogue towards sustainable development on local and national level, and towards promoting reforms in the context of the EU association process.

Project activities in general are spread over CSRDG's different programs. However, all activities and achieved results support strengthening of civil society in Georgia.

In 2020, the core part of the project “Keda Leader” was completed – **“Optimal utilization of local resources and potential for rural development in Keda Municipality”**, which was implemented by CSRDG in partnership with CENN. The goal of the project was to diversify local economic activities, attract investments and support competitive agricultural and environmental practices through participatory rural development planning. Within the project, CSRDG promoted the formation of Keda Local Action Group (LAG), which integrates representatives of local civil, business and public sectors. At present, Keda LAG actively supports the introduction of participatory, bottom-up governance principles, and social and economic empowerment of the local population. During the project implementation, CSRDG conducted numerous team and individual consultations, trainings, experience sharing tours with Keda LAG. In addition, the Center provided training and counseling to local people in preparing social and business projects.

#### **EENCE Civic Education Week – The art of living together**

In May, 2020, as a member of Eastern European Network for Citizenship Education (EENCE), CSRDG started implementation of the project “EENCE Civic Education Week – The art of living together”. The project is implemented by a consortium, which comprises of fifteen EENCE member organizations and experts. The purpose of the project was to support experience sharing between organizations and experts working in the field of civic education, to demonstrate and promote the significance of civic education in Eastern European region.

The most distinguished event of the project was Civic Education Week, which was simultaneously held in six Eastern Partnership countries and Russia. The objective of the Week

was to build the respect towards civic education providers (CSOs and experts / activists) by promoting best civic education practices. In particular, during the Week in Georgia 11 CSOs conducted 11 events (3 online, and 8 face-to-face) in 8 different municipalities. Overall, 219 individuals participated in the events.

### Summary data of 2020

Overall, during 2020, at the request of international and local organizations, number of seminars, training and workshops were prepared and implemented within the Program.

#### Summary data:

- 17 trainings.
- 319 participants;

## Social Service Development Program

Social Service Development Program operates since 2019 in the organization. The goal of the Program is to develop rights-based social services in Georgia, where social, cultural and economic rights of people in vulnerable situations are respected and supported.

#### Program Activities

Two targeted grants were awarded to the Union of Social Workers under the program. The purposes of these projects were as follows: 1. Evaluating the Action Plan implementation of the Law on Social Work, and 2. Advocating of timely execution of the Action Plan of the Law on Social Work. The total amount awarded to the Union in 2020 was EUR 2,400.

#### Publications

The study on “the Rights-based social service for people with disabilities and elderly” was conducted. The full research report and a summary in Georgian and English languages were published online, as well as printed in small amount.

**Promoting Open Governance** - direction is targeted at supporting cooperation between government and civil sector to introduce open and needs-based governance in Georgia. In order to achieve program objectives, we operate within two programs – Good Governance Program, and Promoting European Integration Program.

**Good Governance** - to introduce transparency, accountability and sustainable development principles into the governance process by local authorities.

**Promoting the European Integration** - to build CSO capacity to better identify, monitor and advocate for social, economic and cultural rights of citizens.

## Promoting Good Governance

One of the main motivators of founding our organization was to develop local democracy and to form civic culture by supporting groups of local activists. Since 1998, we have been actively working on decentralization issues of governance systems. Years of work and many implemented initiatives made a significant contribution to the local self-government development. Therefore, Good Governance Program emerged as one of the leading directions of our organization.

### Program activities

Practical studies and assessment reports prepared by our experts cover issues such as introduction and implementation of activities to promote fiscal transparency and program expenditure administration of self-governing units, introduction of possibilities to consider citizens' interests in the process of formation and disposing of the municipal property, introduction of innovative systems for democratic governance, promotion and further development of activities considered under Georgia's Decentralization Strategy Action, increasing citizen participation in the decision-making process by authorities, etc. Through studies and recommendations elaborated within the Program, we help central and local institutions in finding solution to problems.

In addition, we actively participate in ongoing reform initiatives and projects, both locally and internationally.

### Working Meeting

A combination of monitoring and consultation process is a significant feature of CSRDG's approach in working with self-governance bodies. Publicizing the main flaws and problems of local self-governments, that were identified through monitoring process, help them focusing on and addressing these problems. Provision of existing recommendations, technical assistance

that considers consultations and active work with local self-governments, represents a solid foundation for their improvement.

In 2020, the main activities of the Program were targeted at monitoring transparency and accountability frameworks, the introduction of citizen participation forms, and monitoring of local budget processes.

The data collection process includes obtaining public information from the target local authorities, on the one hand, and compliancy monitoring of transparency norms provided by law.

The analysis was based on the system developed by the Budget Monitoring Network in previous years, which reflects the transparency procedures and the timiframes of the current legislation.

**The program is still focused on eight criteria elaborated for the previous Program:**

- Existence of the Public Advisory Council in the municipality;
- Number of public hearings regarding issues of a high public interest;
- Organization of off-site sessions of the municipality's representative body;
- Informing the public about the upcoming meetings of the representative body in advance;
- Informing the public about committee meetings of the representative body in advance;
- Accountability of the members and officials of the representative body;
- Usefulness of the information available of the municipality's web site;
- Informing the public about decisions made prior to approving the Action Plan.

During 2020, Corona-19 Pandemic significantly influenced implementation of project activities in terms of monitoring the transparency of the local government activities of the target municipalities (Ozurgeti, Chokhatauri, Telavi). Bigger part of activities was carried out remotely or electronically (online).

Program experts requested relevant public information from the authorities of each target municipalities 20 times. Requested materials mainly related to the: minutes of the Sacrebulo sittings and Sacrebulo's standing committee meetings held in 2020; materials of administrative proceedings; information regarding meetings of Sacrebulo members with citizens and electorate held in 2020; information regarding expenditure incurred by Sacrebulo members under "Expenditure of the functioning Sacrebulo member" budget line, of the same period, etc. In addition, the information posted on Sacrebulos' web sites and other publicly available information was periodically checked and further analyzed. Based on the existing factual

information, in 2020, the experts developed overall 31 recommendations for local governance bodies of all target municipalities.

**The mentioned recommendations concerned the following topics:**

- Increase the transparency and accountability of activities held by authorities;
- Fulfillment of obligations to proactively disclose public information;
- Elaboration of a strategy with accompanying action plan, in order to increase transparency and good faith of authorities;
- Creation and implementation of guarantees of citizen engagement forms;
- Municipal waste management.

Program experts also worked on municipal waste management issues in terms of addressing the identified problems. The letters of recommendations were prepared in November-December 2019 in three administrative units of Ozurgeti Municipality. These letters were based on the obligations taken under "Municipal Waste Management Opinion Survey and Evaluation Reports, and Municipal Waste Management Action Plan for 2018-2022 Approved by the Municipal Council", such as:

- To expand the geographical area of municipal waste collection services for all settlements within the administrative units;
- To significantly increase in the number of waste bins allocated to these administrative units, in order to increase the efficiency of the municipal waste collection service;
- To allocate the adequate number of waste bins;
- To improve the frequency of household waste disposal from waste bins;
- To make an inventory of spontaneous waste disposal sites in settlements of the administrative units (identification of location, volume, composition), and to ensure cleaning of these sites and restoration of the area;
- To plan and implement an effective information campaign on local issues related to municipal waste management to raise public awareness, including the ability to identify waste types or develop habits of their separate collection.

**Three recommendations elaborated by Program experts were considered by the municipalities.**

In 2020, in order to provide consultations and expert advice on effective implementation of the presented recommendations, 20 different online meetings were held with the representatives of local authorities of the target regions.

In order to support decentralization of local authorities (in the context of pandemic), experts prepared and published an article "Analysis of the results of local government reform".

## Recommendations:

Based on the research document, organization's experts developed 5 recommendations regarding existing violations and shortcomings, which were presented to the local self-governance bodies of the target regions:

1. Health and social issues program of 2020 to be implemented in Telavi Municipality;
2. Monetary award on behalf of Telavi Municipality to encourage athletes with high sports results and their coaches;
3. Draft procedures for the provision of social assistance from the 2020 budget;
4. Changes in the procedures regulating the cost of stopping and parking vehicles within the administrative boundaries of Telavi Municipality.
5. A separate set of recommendations for pandemic-related budget changes has been developed for the 2020 draft budget.

In the reporting period, the municipal self-governments considered 2 recommendations submitted by the program experts.

## Promoting the European Integration Program

Promoting the European Integration Program started in 2015. In the beginning, we were focused on several areas of EU-Georgia Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), such as competition, product safety, food safety, intellectual property protection, consumer protection. However, since 2017 the Program covered practically all areas of these agreements.

The goal of the Program is to support European integration of Georgia for which we consider implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement a necessary precondition. There is why we perform and support explaining and popularization of the obligations envisaged in the Association Agreement, as well as monitoring and advocacy of EU-Georgia Association Agreement timely and proper implementation.

We conduct trainings and competitions for media, non-governmental organizations and high school students. In order to encourage engagement of non-governmental sector in monitoring EU-Georgia AA implementation, we award grants and have established effective cooperation network of active organizations.

In order to promote Georgia's European integration, we created an educational [web site](#). The web site is available for everyone, and contains the following: 1. Educational video lessons, which allow oneself to get a quick understanding of what Europe is and what its values are, what the Association Agreement means and what obligations it envisages and what is the state of their implementation; 2. Quizzes, which allow oneself to test his/her knowledge of certain topics in Europe and the EU Association Agreement; 3. Publications elaborated by us and our partners, on the monitoring results of the implementation of obligations under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement; 4. [Graphic presentation of implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement in various fields](#), accompanied by the detailed methodology of assessment, list of relevant legislation and responsible bodies, as well as links to available publications and research papers.

We also run different educational campaigns targeting schools, media and non-governmental organizations. Within one of such campaigns, we elaborated auxiliary textbook in economics for the high school students. More than 1000 of them already used the material.

## **Program Activities**

### **Training for CSOs**

A training cycle was conducted for civil society organizations on the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. The first series of 3-day trainings was held online on June 23-25; and the second and third series were held in Borjomi on July 27-30. Along with the theoretical material, the trainings participants discussed practical examples and exercises on monitoring and advocacy of implementation of number of the Association Agreement obligations.

#### **Topics discussed at the trainings:**

The role of the NGO in society; Health care reform - the current situation, obligations and the state of their implementation; Consumer rights; Public Service Reform in Georgia; Democratic elections; Food Safety (SPS) under the Association Agreement; Environmental policy under the Association Agreement: Waste Management, etc.

#### **Animation video lessons about EU Association Agreement**

In 2020, we prepared 16 educational videos on various topics. Short animated video lessons allow oneself to get an understanding of what Europe is and what its values are, what is the Association Agreement, what are the obligations envisaged and what is the state of their implementation. The video tutorials are posted on the web portal [www.asocireba.ge](http://www.asocireba.ge), as well as shared on various CSRDG social media pages.

## Video lessons elaborated in 2020:

[Regional Development in EU](#)

[Rural Development in EU](#)

[Compenhagen Criteria](#)

[General Overview of the Association Agreement](#)

[Association Agreement Implementation Procedures](#)

[Short History of Human Rights](#)

[Human Freedoms](#)

[Social-economic Rights](#)

[Procedural Rights](#)

[Instruments for Protection of Human Rights](#)

[Justice Principles](#)

[Law vs Justice](#)

[Juveniles and Justice](#)

[DCFTA General Overview](#)

[DCFTA customs duties issues](#)

[General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade](#)

## Elaborated publications

In 2020, our as well as grantee organizations' experts elaborated number of publications related to the monitoring results of fulfillment EU-Georgia Association Agreement obligations.

Publications prepared within the Program by our experts:

1. [Assessment model of obligations under EU-Georgia Association Agreement](#)  
*Shota Murghulia*
2. [Analysis of fulfilment of obligations under EU-Georgia Association Agreement in banking sphere](#)  
*Aleksandre Raibuli, Davit Sikharulidze*
3. [Analysis of fulfilment of AA obligations in the area of financial services](#)  
*Aleksandre Raibuli, Davit Sikharulidze*
4. [Situation analysis of fulfilment of AA obligations in the area of energy](#)  
*Murtaz Kvirkaia, Nikoloz Sumbadze*

## Publicaitons prepared within the Program by the grantee organizations:

1. [Racha-Lechkumi and Kvemo Staveti regional development strategy implementaiton monitoring from SME development point](#)  
*Organizations: Racha Lechkumi and Kvemo Svaneti Self Government Resource Center, and Knowledge and Experience Transfer*
2. [Security - road to Europe: monitoring of road infrastructure and secutiry in Kutaisi](#)  
*Organization: Europe is our home*
3. [Monitoring of Shida Kartli strategic development plan of 2016-2017](#)  
*Organizations: Union of young researchers and analytics, and Green Caucasus*
4. [Labour safety and social dialogue monitoring thorough public awareness rasing](#)  
*Organizations: Centre of regional initiatives "Bright Future", and Association of Women for the Development of Regions*
5. [Monitoring of works considered under 2019 village support program and analysis of effectiveness in Imereti Region](#)  
*Organizations: Georgian Democracy House, and Tkibuli Development Fund*

6. [Public opinion survey regarding municipal waste management in Mtskheta municipality](#)  
*Organizations: We for Sensible Future, and Mtskheta - Mtianeti Committee of Anti-Violence Network of Georgia*
7. [Clean and health environment in Kaspi municipality](#)  
*Organizations: Bridge of Friendship Kartlosi/ Georgian Media Group*
8. [Energy audits for monitoring of energy efficiency](#)  
*Organization: Society Development Center of Akhaltsikhe*
9. [Monitoring report on municipal waste management \(in Baghdati, Zestaponi, Samtredia and Terjola municipalities\) and farmers awareness raisin on consumption of bio-fertilizers](#)  
*Organizations: Centre of regional initiatives "Bright Future", and Association of Women for the Development of Regions*
10. [Clean Region - road to Europe](#)  
*Organization: Samtskhe - Javakheti Media Center*
11. [Challenges in the field of culture in Akhmeta municipality](#)  
*Organization: Tusheti Brand*
12. [Needs assessment and evaluation report on municipal waste management in Balieti administrative units of Ozurgeti municipality](#)  
*Organization: Union of Democratic Development of Georgia*
13. [Needs assessment and evaluation report on municipal waste management in Jumati administrative units of Ozurgeti municipality](#)  
*Organization: Union of Democratic Development of Georgia*
14. [Needs assessment and evaluation report on municipal waste management in Meria administrative units of Ozurgeti municipality](#)  
*Organization: Union of Democratic Development of Georgia*
15. [Effective and professional public servise and servant](#)  
*Organization: Step Kharagauli*
16. [Gravel extraction practices in Guria region: monitoring findings and recommendations](#)  
*Organizations: Environmental Community Organization "ECO", and Guria Civic Center*

17. [Mtsketa-Mtianeti regional development strategy implementation monitoring report](#)

*Organizations:* Stefantsmida, and Green Caucasus

18. [Monitoring and advocacy of EU-Georgia Association Agreement and regional development issues](#)

*Organizations:* *The Association of Communities Social-Economic Development "Imereti", and Europe is Our Home*

19. [Improving air quality in Chiatura Municipality by civic monitoring and advocacy](#)

*Organizations:* *Association „Union of Chiaturians“, and Imereti region youth scientific – Informative association „ASA“*

**Promoting Economic and Social Change** - strategic objective of this direction is to increase

the social responsibility of civil sector, business and citizens of Georgia. The organization has three programs running under this direction; these are Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Development, Social Entrepreneurship and Consumer Rights Protection Programs.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** - CSR concept and practice contribute to the social and environmental welfare in all sectors. For business companies it is important to understand responsibility they have towards society and to play active role in sustainable development of the country.

**Social Entrepreneurship (SE)** – is the effective way for economic inclusion of vulnerable and socially unprotected groups in environmental and social problem solving processes. With help of SE it is possible to tackle social problems that aren't in the focus of business companies interest, and for solution of which there are no sufficient resources in government.

**Consumer Rights Protection** – works efficiently only when appropriate state policy mechanisms are in place. Business is more responsible towards consumers, while citizens as consumers are more actively protecting their own rights.

## Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Since 2004, the Center for Strategic Research and Development has been implementing Corporate Social Responsibility Development Program. It was one of the first organizations that started operating in this direction. In order to promote CSR concept and raise awareness of various sectors in the field, the Center conducts research, information campaigns, trainings, seminars, multi-stakeholder forums and conferences. It actively works with governmental agencies as well as large, medium and small business companies, higher education institutions and media.

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*CSR- is a goodwill of businesses not to have a negative impact on humans and nature through its activities, and contribute to the welfare of the society*

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**Within CSR program, in 2020, Georgia's Responsible Business Awards Meliora was conducted the third times.** The third time was conducted the media award – Journalists for Corporate Social Responsibility; a CSR dictionary was published; Program activities were publicized in number of TV and radio shows; articles were published in online and print media regarding CSR and the Program; a communication campaign was held in order to raise public awareness about the role of business during pandemic; blogs were published on <http://www.csrblog.ge/> elaborated within the Program; number of meeting were held within Pro Bono mediation; two CSR forums took place.

## Program Activities

### Georgia's Responsible Business Awards Meliora

Launched by CSRDG in 2018, a nation-wide awards the business companies operating in Georgia for the best CSR projects and initiatives. The purpose of the Awards is to promote and strengthen the CSR commitment among businesses; attract attention to excellent examples of CSR projects; encourage and motivate companies to adopt best practices and become role models for others.

The focus of Meliora 2020 was Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic. The winners were awarded in four categories, and companies of all sizes operating in Georgia were eligible for the awards. The Awards was announced on November 5, 2020 and the deadline for submission of applications was December 7. Overall, 62 projects were submitted.

The Contest is supported by international and local business associations and Government of Georgia, including: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; Academy of the Ministry of Finance; Service for Accounting, Reporting and Auditing Supervision; Embassy of Austria in Georgia; Embassy of Hungary in Georgia; Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia; Embassy of Sweden in Georgia; Embassy of Italy in Georgia; German Business Association (DWV); Chamber of Commerce and Industry France-Georgia (CCIFG); World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF); EU-Georgia Business Council (EUGBC); Georgian Business Association (BAG); Georgian Microfinance Association; Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; European Business Association (EBA); International Chamber of Commerce (ICC); Georgian Tourism Association (GTA).

Meliora 2020 award ceremony was held in spring 2021.

## Award Ceremony of the Journalists for Corporate Social Responsibility contest

Media contest Journalists for CSR was announced on May 6, 2019, and the deadline for submissions was November 2019. The award ceremony was held on February 18, 2020 in the Writers' House.

The purpose of the award is to promote active and accurate media coverage of CSR and raise awareness on CSR concept and its understanding through media.

5 journalists were awarded for their works featuring CSR topics in following categories:

1. Best TV report: Manana Gigineishvili, First Channel
2. Best Radio coverage: – Nino Khugashvili, Radio Imedi
3. Best Online/printed article: Katie Ruth Davies, Georgia Today
4. Best multimedia, video material: Nino Vartapetiani, TV Borjomi
5. Best blog: Marika Mchedlidze, Forbes Georgia

Submissions were evaluated by an independent jury comprised of prominent journalists and CSR experts. Total of 36 materials were submitted by 33 journalists across Georgia.

Photos of the Award Ceremony can be found at - <https://bit.ly/39KJChD>

Multi-stakeholder Forum “Cross-sector Partnership for Creating Sustainable Shared Value”

On 4 June, the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSR DG) hosted online multi-stakeholder forum “Cross-sector Partnership for Creating Sustainable Shared Value”.

Forum aimed to involve different sectors in sharing experience, ideas and discussion about the value and modes of cross-sector partnership and its importance in overcoming the socio-economic crisis of post-covid era. Invited speakers from EU countries, representatives of Georgian companies and CSOs who had experience of fruitful cross-sector cooperation shared their insights. The forum was live-streamed on CSR DG's official Facebook page permitting all interested parties to attend in a live format and pose questions to the speakers.

## Photo-print contest on Corporate Social Responsibility

The photo-print contest on Corporate Social Responsibility was held for the third time. Georgian designers, professional and non-professional photographers could participate in it. The aim of the competition was to raise awareness about Corporate Social Responsibility and to promote a correct perception of the concept by the public.

Entries of the photo-print contest should address one of the seven CSR topics:

- Doing business ethically;
- Protection of human rights;
- Adherence to labor standards;
- Environmental protection;
- Responsible customer relationship;
- Participation in solving social problems;
- Transparency of business activities.

The deadline of the contest was March 31, 2020. The contest had two winners: One winner was selected by a special jury, and another was elected by the people by voting on the CSRDG's facebook page.

#### **Multi-stakeholder Forum “Sustainable Construction: best solutions and importance of cross-sector partnership”**

On November 12, the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSRDG) hosted online forum “Sustainable Construction: best solutions and importance of cross-sector partnership”. Overall, more than 100 representatives of civil society sector, business companies and students attended the Forum online.

The online forum aimed to raise the issue of sustainable construction on the agenda, start the discussion among private sector and civil society and share best international practice to the public. The invited speakers from Norway and United Kingdom shared their experience on sustainable construction.

During the forum representatives of CSOs and private sector raised awareness regarding sustainable construction which on the one hand enabled CSOs to lead popularization of the theme and on the other hand, motivated businesses to plan and implement programs with sustainable long-term results.

#### **Pro Bono**

Pro Bono services for companies represent one of the forms of their social responsibility, employee volunteering (corporate volunteering), in particular

The term pro bono services implies to providing professional services and expert assistance to organizations serving the social good for free or a symbolic charge, in other words - for public benefit.

Pro bono services make expertise and intellectual resources of the private sector accessible to organizations working for public benefit. By doing pro bono, companies assist communities whose interests a civil society organization represents and serves.

Pro bono is shortened from a Latin expression “pro bono publico”, meaning “for the public benefit”.

Georgia’s Pro Bono Network is an informal union of Georgian and international companies operating in Georgia that are willing to use their expertise and professional resources for the benefit of the society.

The goal of Georgia’s Pro Bono Network is to make the expertise of the private sector available to the organizations working to improve society.

Initiated by the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia, and supported by MitOst e.V., BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt and Taproot Foundation, Georgia’s Pro Bono Network was officially founded in October 2015.

[Currently the Network unites 22 business companies](#)

[Information regarding Pro Bono and Pro Bono Network](#)

### **Georgian Pro Bono Network Meeting**

On December 1, annual meeting of Georgian Pro Bono Network was held. Due to the pandemic situation, the meeting was online and more than 30 representatives of network members businesses, CBOs and Social Enterprises attended it.

The annual meeting aim at sharing experience among companies and discussing future plans. At the meeting, companies talked about their Pro Bono cases, while CSRDG team presented its report for 2019-2020.

During the meeting, the representative of Pro Bono Lab (France), shared their experience of doing Pro Bono in France and also, talked about Global Pro Bono Network and its work.

[The photos of the meeting](#)

### **Company ACT’s Pro Bono Webinar on Zoom Platform**

Following the spread of COVID-19, organizations were facing huge challenges, especially those organizations who are working for public benefit. They were obliged to shift from remote to

online working regime and needed to choose proper methods or ways to continue communication and support their beneficiaries and thus, keep their work ongoing.

During identifying those problems, it was discovered that they were strongly interested in online communication platforms. As long as, online communication was very new and vague at the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, the member company of Georgian Pro Bono Network – ACT decided to share its own expertise and experience to the organizations working for public good about online communication platform – Zoom meetings and Zoom Webinar.

Zoom discovered to be the mostly usable online communication platform among organizations working for public good, ACT conducted two Pro Bono webinars: on May 11, was conducted first webinar about Zoom Meeting and on May 25, another one about Zoom Webinar.

Up to 100 participants attended the webinars, representing local Civil Society Organizations.

### **PMCG Consulting's Pro Bono Webinar on Microsoft Teams**

Following the spread of COVID-19, organizations were facing huge challenges, especially those organizations who are working for public benefit. They were obliged to shift from remote to online working regime and needed to choose proper methods or ways to continue communication and support their beneficiaries and thus, keep their work ongoing.

During identifying those problems, it was discovered that they were strongly interested in online communication platforms. As long as, online communication was very new and vague at the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, the member company of Georgian Pro Bono Network – PMCG decided to share its own expertise and experience to the organizations working for public good about online communication platform – Microsoft Teams.

On April 29, 2020 Pro Bono webinar was conducted by PMCG about online communication platform – Microsoft Teams. Up to 15 participants attended the meeting, representing local CSOs, Social Enterprises and Community Based Organizations. Following topics were discussed during the meeting: register details, main functions of MT, advantages and disadvantages of MT, etc.

### **ACG Consulting – Pro Bono Webinar on Accounting and Taxation**

Hence, Civil Society Organizations, especially Community Based ones, are struggling lack of resources, e.g. they don't have accountant or HR manager position in their organizations and one person, mostly founder or director is fulfilling all these responsibilities. As a fact, they constantly need support from professionals, possessing expertise in Taxation and Accounting.

Since the consulting company ACG is well experienced in Accounting, Audit, Taxation, it started series of Pro Bono webinars for the representatives of local CBOs. Following topics were discussed during the meetings: Tax Code of Georgia, types of taxes in Georgia, Accounting, etc.

Since April, up to 15 Pro Bono webinars were conducted by ACG Consulting in 2020. Representatives of CBOs from different regions attended the webinars.

### **Pro Bono Webinar about Horticulture from Crystal**

As a result of communication with local farmers from Kharagauli Municipality, it was revealed that they were interested in growing horticultural corps and were lacking of proper expertise and knowledge of it.

In July and August 2020, three Pro Bono masterclasses were held by the collaboration of Crystal and Cartlis on the topic of horticulture and related issues. Within the webinars, participants received useful information about: the ways to feed the soil, importance of soil analysis and methods, development of modern technologies related to agriculture, issues and challenges related to cultivation of horticultural corps, etc.

Up to 10 local farmers and representatives of CSOs from Kharagauli Municipality participated in masterclasses.

### **Pro Bono Webinar about Poultry by Nutrimax**

Poultry, especially small scale, family poultry, is widely spread occupation among farmers in Kakheti Region. In order to develop and share comprehensive information about poultry and related topics, the representatives of Nutrimax conducted Pro Bono webinar for Community Based Organizations from Kakheti Region.

Pro Bono webinar was conducted by Nutrimax via Zoom platform on July 2. Up to 20 participants attended the webinar, representing local CBOs of Kakheti Region. As part of the the webinar, the participants recieved in depth information about poultly, such as: egg laying systems, chicken breeding, disease control, cost of production, etc.

Pro Bono Webinar about Funding Opportunities by ACG audit and consulting team  
Community Based Organizations are non-profits, operating on fund rising basis. In order to achieve sustainable development and solve the problems of their beneficiaries, it is important for them to have sustainable financial condition, hence they constantly are looking for the fundraising opportunities. On the other hand, local CBOs have various beneficiaries, among

them are local farmers. Which means, grant opportunities announced in farming and agriculture, could be the interest of CBOs.

Consulting Company ACG conducted Pro Bono webinar about “Grant Opportunities” for local CBOs. The participants received information about grant competitions and opportunities in Georgia in different fields and were introduced special online platform for grant calls.

Pro Bono Webinar was held on November 3, through ZOOM online platform. Up to 20 representatives of various CBOs attended the webinar.

## Publications and resources elaborated in 2020 within the Program

### [Explanatory Dictionary of Corporate Social Responsibility Terms](#)

In 2020, CSRDG published Explanatory Dictionary of Corporate Social Responsibility Terms, the author of which is Lela Khyperia.

The Dictionary is intended for a wide audience of professionals, researchers and practitioners that are interested in Corporate Social Responsibility. The Dictionary includes terms and concepts related to Corporate Responsibility and Sustainable Development, as well as widely used terms that are important and essential in the context of corporate responsibility. Each term has a detailed explanation. Overall, the dictionary consists of more than 200 articles.

[The Dictionary](#) was distributed to more than 200 representatives of civil society sector and business companies.

### Information Resources

Web page [www.csrgeorgia.com](http://www.csrgeorgia.com)

This online information platform created by CSRDG provides the most up-to-date, diverse, and comprehensive information on corporate social responsibility, sustainable development, and responsible business issues globally as well as within Georgia. Being the only CSR knowledge hub in Georgia, it offers variety of resources to help you navigate through this complex topic.

By providing access to information and resources, the goal of this webpage is to raise awareness on corporate responsibility and sustainability, promote its concept among business circles and various groups of the society, and help establish sustainable development principles and responsible business practices in Georgia.

**At this page you will:**

- Get familiar with information on the concept and history of corporate social responsibility and sustainable development, positive outcomes of responsible business conduct, and separate topics of CSR;
- Find the main international standards related to corporate responsibility and sustainability;
- Browse through Sustainability & CSR best practices and case studies;
- Explore national public policies and government actions to promote responsible business globally as well as in Georgia;
- Find diverse resources about international organizations promoting the adoption and spreading of corporate responsibility concept and practices, as well as various contests and educational programs on corporate responsibility and sustainability;
- Navigate through publications available on corporate social responsibility and sustainable development;
- Learn about CSR initiatives and organizations in Georgia;
- Get updated on latest trends and developments in the CSR and sustainability area.

<http://www.csrblog.ge/>

The purpose of the CSR blog is to raise awareness of the concept of corporate social responsibility and sustainable development; to provide information to the public on current news and developments in this field, and to share the opinions and experiences of experts.

In 2020, in addition to the engaging articles, a campaign was launched on the blog. The purpose of the campaign was to inform the public about the CSR initiatives implemented by Georgian business companies during the pandemic. More than 20 such articles were written on the blog and shared on the social network.

## Social Entrepreneurship

Since 2009, the promotion of social entrepreneurship (SE) in the country has become the top priority for our team.

Our goal is to create environment that is favorable for the development of social entrepreneurship. Therefore, we work in the following directions:

1. Together with partners, improve enabling environment for social enterprises;
2. Develop tailored funding mechanisms for social enterprises, and increase access to finances;

3. Technical support to operating and newly established social enterprises – providing trainings, consultations, mentoring, proposing publications about entrepreneurship;
4. Support establishment and development of new enterprises;
5. Raise public awareness about social entrepreneurship.

CSRDG is the only Georgian organization, which is an associated member of European Venture Philanthropy Association, since 2017.

### Social Entrepreneurship Program

In 2020 we mainly worked in two directions:

1. **Initiation and development of new and operating social enterprises by technical and financial support.** In this term, during the reporting period we:
  - ✓ Performed need assessment of social enterprises;
  - ✓ Announced grant competition to overcome challenges;
  - ✓ Implemented SE's technical assistance projects.
2. **Improvement of enabling environment for social enterprises.** In this term, during the reporting period we:
  - ✓ Supported capacity building of the Social Enterprise Alliance;
  - ✓ Established a practical course on social entrepreneurship at Ilia State University;
  - ✓ Shared experience with international partners.

Our team is constantly trying to inform the general public about the benefits of social entrepreneurship through various communication channels. Therefore, we actively use the web and social media resources of CSRDG and the Social Enterprise Alliance. The designated website aiming at promotion of social entrepreneurship - <https://www.segeorgia.ge/> - is operational. During the reporting period it was renewed and now it possesses functions of educational web site.

### Initiation and development of new and operating social enterprises

In order to create favorable enabling environment for social enterprises, one of the main components of the Program is to support in initiation and development of new social enterprises. In this direction we discuss existing challenges with social entrepreneurs, and try to create tailored opportunities and offer access to technical and financial support, in order to strengthen them. In 2020, we devoted ourselves to researching pandemic induced needs and creating a tailored assistance package.

### Social Enterprises' Needs Assessment

2020 turned out to be a difficult year for both traditional businesses and social enterprises. In order to perform pandemic-induced needs assessment of social enterprises, we conducted

small-scale research to explore possible opportunities for support. A total of 38 enterprises participated in the survey.

***Following findings were identified:***

- Social Entrepreneurs had challenges similar to those of other small and medium-size businesses. However, they had faced additional specific difficulties. For example, most of enterprises suspended or drastically reduced their activities. Only one social enterprise increased its sales. It adapted to the new reality derived from its area of activities, and started sewing face masks and other commodities. Other service providers completely stopped functioning (cafes, campaign, etc.). Social enterprises that provide social services continued functioning, however, they faced difficulties in terms of switching to the distance work.
- Main challenges related to the lack of finances to pay salaries, cover rent and other costs; the access to the materials reduced, the costs of hygiene and disinfection materials increased, transport were limited. In addition, there were obstacles in terms of beginning of online sales, access to internet, and limited skills of personnel, etc.

***Following needs were identified:***

- Consultations on elaboration of crisis management plans and post-crisis strategy;
- Consultations on how to adapt to the new reality and continue functioning in accordance with the consumers' needs;
- Need of training in online sales on local and international markets;
- Small grants to overcome financial difficulties;
- Development of such mechanisms, which help enterprises in coordinating activities, experience sharing and supporting each other.

**Grant competition to overcome pandemic-induced challenges**

Based on the research results, we announced a grant competition aiming at assisting social enterprises effectively overcome challenges posed by pandemic-related constraints and develop new and innovative approaches.

A consultation was held for interested individuals to familiarize them with the terms of the grant competition. 3 social enterprises were financed out of 10 applicants:

1. Babale
2. Bebias
3. Temi

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*Overall budget of three projects financed through closed competition represented GEL 55,275, out of which, GEL 39,425 were provided by CSRDG, and GEL 15,850 was contribution by social enterprises.*

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## Babale

Babale is one of the most popular creative workshops that produces wood, textiles, ceramics items and various accessories. It employs people with special needs. Within the project, Babale plans to launch "Babale Socks" as a brand to the international online market, such as British Amazon, in particular. Entering international markets requires meeting certain standards. Therefore, new packaging will be prepared, and five new socks will be added to the existing designs. Babale will place and sell products on the British Amazon with the assistance of a partner British company.

## Bebias (Grandmothers)

Bebias is a new Georgian brand. It offers consumers hats hand-knitted by grandmothers. Within the project, the social enterprise aimed to increase the number of employed grandmothers, improve the quality of hand-knitted hats, enrich product design, improve online sales system and try to enter international markets.

## Temi

Social enterprise creates living space for various vulnerable groups. A large part of the community's income comes from the production and sale of bio wine. Within the project, the social enterprise plans to rebrand its product and set up an online sales system, increase sales and enter the international markets.

## Technical support to social enterprises

Technical support to social enterprises is one of the most significant components of our activities. We offer these services to all social enterprises that win our grant competition, as well as those enterprises that are interested in further development.

Under technical support we mean tailored consultations and trainings in the areas, such as marketing and branding, public relations, elaboration of business plan to enlarge the enterprise, planning and managing social impact, product development, elaboration of crisis management strategy, and legal advice for social enterprises. Social enterprises also have access to the Pro Bono services under CSR Program.

## During the year we provided following technical assistance:

- **Consultation to the social enterprise „Crayfish farm”** – Social enterprise is located in the village Marabda of Tetrtskaro municipality. It is the first crayfish farm in Georgia. The social mission of the enterprise is creating working places, and providing financial opportunities to people conflicting with the law, thus supporting their integration into the society. Our team provided professional advice to the social enterprise on branding and communication strategy.

- **Seminar on Organic Law on Labor Safety** - During the reporting period, in cooperation with the Occupational Safety, Health and Environment (OSHE) Georgia, we conducted a seminar on Organic Law on Labor Safety for social entrepreneurs. Occupational safety experts introduced key requirements and obligations that the law has set for all enterprises and organizations, effective 2019.

### Improvement of enabling environment for social enterprises

We actively work with our partners to develop social entrepreneurship ecosystem. During the reporting period, we were involved in improving enabling environment of social enterprises at the legislative level, capacity building of the Social Enterprise Alliance (SEA) - organization unifying social enterprises, as well as raising public awareness through educational activities and experience sharing.

### Capacity Building of the Social Enterprise Alliance

In order to develop the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Georgia and build strong institutions in the country, in 2016 we established the Social Enterprise Alliance together with 6 social enterprises. SEA is a unified platform of social enterprises. It promotes the common interests of its members, increases public awareness on the topic, support experience sharing and enables the development of effective cooperation mechanisms. Our goal is to contribute to the strengthening of the SEA and the successful implementation of its activities.

Pandemic-related restriction limited organizing various exhibitions and open events. However, we supported the SEA through consultation on resource mobilization for the Social Entrepreneurship Forum. Consequently, the SEA managed to raise **GEL 40,000 from 8 different sources**.

**Social Entrepreneurship Forum** represents the largest in the field. The goal of the forum is to popularize the concept of social entrepreneurship and to establish a favorable ecosystem. Since 2012, Forum was conducted by CSRDG, however, since 2018, the Forum is hosted by the SEA. Our team remains a constant supporter and co-organizer of the forum to this day.

The Forum was held in a hybrid format on November 19, 2020, the International Day of Social Entrepreneurship. 120 participants attended the Forum. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, interest in the event and engagement were high. The event was covered by online publications, TV shows and radio, as well as Facebook Live, which has more than 2,000 viewers. "Social Enterprise of the Year 2020" became a social enterprise "**Gumbati**" operating in Tsalka Municipality, which received a GEL 4,000 grant for the development of the enterprise from the unique supporter of the nomination - Bank of Georgia.

### **Practical course on social entrepreneurship**

In order to inform the youth, we continued our cooperation with Ilia State University. The first practical course of social entrepreneurship introduced in 2019 will be attended by 80 students in the autumn semester of 2020-2021. During the course, students have already prepared 19 socially important business solution projects related to eco-friendly activities, re-socialization of people with disabilities, economic and social reintegration of people conflicting with the law, support for marginalized groups by creating jobs, preservation of Georgian cultural heritage and so on.

### **Sharing experience with international partners**

Georgia's experience in developing social entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly interesting for neighboring countries in the region. During the reporting period, we hosted a group of women organized by the Azerbaijani organization Education Hub. The group was interested in the social entrepreneurship concept and experience of Georgian social enterprises. Representatives of 6 Georgia social enterprises shared their experience to the group comprising of 20 Azerbaijani women.

## **Consumer Rights Protection Program**

We started working on Consumer Rights Protection in 2009 and in several years we became one of the leading public organizations in this field. In this terms, our goal is to ensure the protection of consumer rights by government agencies in the country at the legislative and institutional level.

### **Raising awareness about consumer rights**

In the beginning, we started market monitoring with food inspection, and at present, we are monitoring other consumer products as well, as far as possible. Since 2011, CSRDG has been operating the interactive web portal <https://www.momxmarebeli.ge/> and the Facebook page of the same name. Interested individuals can obtain information about consumer rights and facts of violation, as well as post personal information in case of violation of these rights themselves.

At customers request or our own initiatives, we take dubious quality food samples from the trade network, check them in the laboratory, in case of revealing any violations post information on the web portal and Facebook page, and refer to the National Food Agency and producers of these commodities for relevant action.

CSRDG provided 145 consultation on legal and non-legal issues related to the consumer rights at the request of citizens.

### **CSRDG conducted laboratory testing of the following 303 products:**

- 77 samples of grocery products, out of which a hazardous non-food dye Sudan was found in 8 samples.
- 40 household hygiene products were tested for containing formaldehyde, boron and lead. 15 samples were found to be hazardous to health.
- 82 samples of cosmetic products were tested for containing parabens, lead and arsenic. 7 products contained health risks, and labels of 14 products contained misleading information for consumers.
- 24 samples of jewelry, out of which an excessive amount of cadmium and lead were found in 7 samples. In several samples, these parameters exceeded the norms allowed by the EU by hundreds and thousands.
- 80 samples of dairy products for containing vegetable fat. Violations were revealed in 13 samples. According to the legislation of Georgia (Technical Regulation on Milk and Dairy Products), a product in which milk fat is replaced by vegetable fat or other ingredients is not a dairy product and it is prohibited to indicate the name of the milk product (butter, sour cream, matsoni (Georgian yogurt), etc.).

### **Response:**

In 2019-2020, CSRDG conducted testing of grocery products for existence of prohibited dyes. Prior to that, they were not controlled. The National Food Agency responded to these violations as follows:

- Removed all eight batches of harmful products from the market;
- In 2019, issued a special order, according to which each batch of grounded red pepper imported from developing countries must be accompanied by a laboratory test certificate, stating the product does not contain prohibited dyes of the Sudan group. Execution of this order is controlled by the Customs Service.
- Increased testing of food commodities for Sudan group dyes: in 2019, National Food Agency tested 10 samples, in 2020 - 34, and in 2021, it is officially planned to test 33 samples.
- In addition, the events mentioned earlier led to the improvement of laboratory facilities in Georgia. One of the main public laboratories - the National Bureau of Forensics - was established and received official accreditation to test Sudan group paints, which has not been done in Georgia before. This will make it easier and cheaper to control this risk in Georgia.

### **Information Meetings and Public Discussions**

In 2020, the Program organized 2 round tables in Tbilisi on topical issues related to food and non-food safety. Representatives of governmental agencies, the diplomatic corps, international organizations, civil society organizations, business sector, exports circles, and academia (90 people in total) attended the events.

Public meetings were held in 10 cities of Georgia - Akhaltsikhe, Batumi, Gori, Kharagauli, Kutaisi, Lagodekhi, Ozurgeti, Rustavi, Telavi, Zugdidi - on the product safety situation in Georgia, where CSRDG presented the results of non-food research. Wide range of stakeholders from various sectors, such as public institutions, CSOs, business, media and others, a total of 221 people attended these meetings.

In 2020, Program elaborated and posted on its web page 12 information-education articles.

Two PSAs were elaborated:

1. [Animation on food safety](#)
2. [Animation on food safety](#)

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### Contact Information:

#### Tbilisi office

Address: 5a, Ivel Jebashvili Street, Tbilisi, 0177, Georgia;

Telephone: (995 32) 2 39 90 19

#### Telavi office

Address: 2, Giorgi Arsenishvili Street, Telavi, Georgia

Telephone: (995 32) 2 180 177

E-mail: [office@csrdg.ge](mailto:office@csrdg.ge)

Web page: [www.csrdg.ge](http://www.csrdg.ge)

[www.momxmarebeli.ge](http://www.momxmarebeli.ge);

[www.cdrc.ge](http://www.cdrc.ge);

[www.segeorgia.org](http://www.segeorgia.org);

[www.meliora.ge](http://www.meliora.ge);

[www.asocireba.ge](http://www.asocireba.ge);

[www.csrgeorgia.com](http://www.csrgeorgia.com)