

GUIDELINES

For the Application and Implementation
of the Law on Gender Equality of Georgia
by Local Self-Government Bodies



2013

These *Guidelines for the Application and Implementation of the Law on Gender Equality of Georgia by Local Self Government Bodies* was developed with members of the Local Self Governments of Dmanisi, Tsalka and Tetritskaro municipalities in line with an initiative supported by the Regional Government of Kvemo Kartli. They form part of an initiative of the SDC project the Mercy Corps Georgia implemented Alliances KK programme to promote Women's Access to Decision Making and which has included the creation of a new pilot municipal service the *Women's Rooms*, a resource space and information centre for women in these three municipalities of Kvemo Kartli.

To find out more about the Womens Rooms Service please visit them at:
www.wr.ge



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1. INTRODUCTION

This document contains guidelines for local self-government bodies¹ to facilitate the application and implementation of Georgian legislation on Gender Equality at a local level and to create an enabling environment for women's inclusion in local decision-making and to prevent discrimination.

Gender Equality and *Discrimination* are defined with in the law as follows:

Gender Equality: part of the human rights pertaining to equal rights and obligations, responsibilities and equal participation of women and men in all spheres of private and social life.

Discrimination: any kind of differentiation, exclusion and/or restriction based on sex by means of differentiated recognition of the fundamental rights and freedoms, unequal expression, suppression or full rejection of abilities in a direct or indirect form.

1 The Organic Law of Georgia determines the local self-Government Bodies in Chapter 4 as:
Local Legislative body of Georgia – Sakrebulo
Local Executive Body – Gamgeoba
Trustees of Gamgeoba/Village Representatives

2. LAW ON GENDER EQUALITY OF GEORGIA

The Law on Gender Equality in Georgia was enacted by the Parliament of Georgia, in May 2010.

The specific articles of the Law on Gender Equality pertinent to these guidelines are reproduced below:

Article 2: Aim of the Law

The aim of the law is to ensure the prevention of all kinds of discrimination based on sex in all spheres of life, create appropriate conditions for the implementation of the equal rights, freedoms and opportunities of women and men and to support the prevention and elimination of all kinds of discrimination based on sex.

Article 4: Gender Equality Guarantees

1. The state supports and ensures the equal rights of women and men in political, economic, social and cultural life.
2. In order to ensure gender equality the following principles shall be adhered to without discrimination:
 - a) Equal individual rights and freedoms of women and men;
 - b) Equal access to education and free choice of education at all stages;
 - c) Legal equity of spouses;
 - d) Equal rights and responsibilities towards children;
 - e) Support to elimination of violence in family and society;

- f) Free choice of occupation or profession, career promotion, vocational training;
- g) Employment in public service based on profession, skills and qualification;
- h) Equal treatment during performance appraisal;
- i) Equal social security in case of diagnosing illness or disability of women and men;
- j) Equal access to healthcare for women and men;
- k) Equal access to information for women and men.

Article 10: Gender Equality in Family Relations

1. In family relations, in marriage and divorce, women and men enjoy equal private and property rights, including the right to choose family name, profession and occupation and bear equal responsibilities. In family relations direct or indirect limitation or privilege in the rights and obligations based on sex is inadmissible.
2. Women and men in the family shall have the equal right to independently make decisions on the issue of participation in labor and social activities.

Article 13: Support of Gender Equality by Local Authorities

1. Local self-government bodies shall in accordance with the Organic Law of Georgia on

Local Self-Governance and other legal acts of Georgia develop and implement activities on the local level to ensure identification and elimination of discrimination based on sex.

2. The budget, social-economic development priorities, municipal programs and plans of local self-government bodies shall be implemented in a way to exclude any kind of discrimination based on sex.
3. State authorities within their authority shall provide organizational, informational and other types of support to the local self-government bodies for prevention of discrimination based on sex and protection of universally recognized human rights and freedoms in their activities.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT BODIES AND VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES

CODE OF CONDUCT

Based on the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality, representatives of local self-government and trustees of *Gamgeoba* i.e. village representatives:

1. Have to base their work on experience acquired in the village/ community as well as on their awareness of the nature of their community.
2. Have to consider the requirements of the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality.
3. Have to familiarize themselves with the results of gender studies conducted in the municipalities.

4. Should be dedicated to gender equality principles.
5. Have to do their best to ensure equality in their communities and villages.
6. Have to create conditions for establishing equality in terms of gender roles, status, rights and opportunities on the community and household levels.
7. When operating within the community should be guided by the limits of their authority.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Women's equal participation in decision making at the household and community levels should be a value shared in the community.
2. The cultural constraints that tend to keep women away from direct participation in community meetings and important community and village decisions should be taken into consideration.
3. The differences in women's and men's needs should be assessed and proactive approaches should be implemented.
4. Female headed households need more support in receiving equal information and common goods.
5. Accurate information on the number of female headed households in the community/village should be held.
6. Initiatives to change factors of inequality and create conditions helping women become the agents of their own development should be taken.
7. Work should be done with men in the community in order to raise awareness of women as equal partners at work and at home.

8. While scheduling meetings give consideration to the time constraints women (and men) might have.
9. Create an environment for both sexes in which they are protected from verbal and behavioral harassment.
10. Develop initiatives to promote justice for both women and men.
11. Promote access to education for girls and boys.
12. Oppose the opinion that girls do not need full or equal education.
13. Champion a safe environment for girls, women and children.

4. VILLAGE MEETING CHECK LIST FOR VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES

To ensure women's participation in community and village meetings take the following measures:

1. Register attendees.
2. Verbally encourage those families whose members (both men and women) to attend the meeting.
3. Make sure that women are informed about important village meetings or other village activities in advance. Create, for this purpose, village steering groups composed of women. Use information dissemination methods that target women e.g. via children and neighbors; placing announcements in schools.
4. Choose times of the day convenient for women; ask them about this in advance; take into consideration when women

are most busy during the day (e.g. working in the field, looking after children and livestock).

5. There are some issues to which the principle 'one member from each family/household' does not apply. Remember to treat people; men, women, young people, old people, people with higher and lower economic status, married and single people as individuals who are different from each other.
6. Help create an environment which will be acceptable and safe from your cultural perspective and will not be humiliating for men or women.
7. Do not prevent women (and men) from coming to meetings with their children;
8. Pay special attention to the participation of breadwinning women.
9. Never assume that the ideas expressed by men fully reflect the opinions of their female family members. Encourage women to share their own problems as well as the ways of their solution.
10. When discussing issues important for the village make sure that women of different ages and from different social strata have the opportunity to express their opinion.
11. Any activity you plan needs implementers and supervisors. Try to distribute roles in such a way that both groups include more or less the same number of males and females.
12. Where cultural norms restrict the formation of mixed groups (composed of both men and women), encourage married couples to participate.

5. INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMMON BARRIERS AT MUNICIPAL LEVEL TO GENDER EQUALITY

The following list highlights some of the common problems found at local government level with regard to gender equality:

- Gender disaggregated data is not collected.
- People working in the local self-government bodies are not aware of gender equality initiatives undertaken by the Central Government (laws, commitments).
- Understanding of basic gender terms like: Gender Programs, Gender Balance, Gender Budgeting is absent or misunderstood, making it difficult to create a common understanding or develop a gender strategy (or policy).
- Perceptions are based on gender stereotypes (stereotypes towards men and women, girls and boys), rather than data and unbiased information sources.
- There is no strategy or vision of how to change traditional discriminative practices towards women/girls in rural population.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO OVERCOME EXISTING PROBLEMS

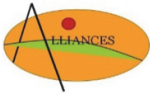
The following are some examples of activities that may help local authorities to integrate gender into their activities:

- Facilitation of an awareness raising campaign relating to the Gender Equality Law in cooperation with the Parliamentary Council on Gender Equality and civil society (international, national and local) and donor organizations
- Promotion of the use of the *Guidelines for Village Representatives* for ensuring women's real (not nominal) participation in community meetings.
- Initiation of seminars on the importance and methodology of how to collect and use gender disaggregated data with the participation above mentioned actors/partners.
- Training on gender budgeting for Local Government.
- Promotion of local government and Non Governmental Organization initiatives for gender focused projects in key value chains such as animal husbandry and milk production or otherwise.
- Research the need for and then promote within the municipal agenda key gender constraints as found in the needs analysis. For example these could include the need for pre-school facilities for working mothers to allow their participation in local decision-making or market development. Local governments in the target municipalities might then consider the funding of kindergartens within local budgets.



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Alliances Kvemo Kartli is the Swiss Development Cooperation funded Mercy Corps Georgia implemented market development programme working in the dairy, beef and sheep value chains in Dmanisi, Tetrtskaro and Tsalka municipalities of Kevmo Kartli.

For more information please go to www.allianceskk.ge



ICCN is the partner organization of Alliances KK and works with them at this initiative.

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