



**Policy, Advocacy, and Civil Society Development in Georgia (G-PAC)**

საჯარო პოლიტიკის, ადვოკატირებისა და სამოქალაქო საზოგადოების განვითარება საქართველოში

პროფესიონალიზმი  
Professionalism

სამოქალაქო  
პასუხისმგებლობა  
Civic Responsibility

**EWMI G-PAC:**

**Advocacy in Action**

2010 — 2014



**G-PAC is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by EWMI. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.**



## About EWMI G-PAC

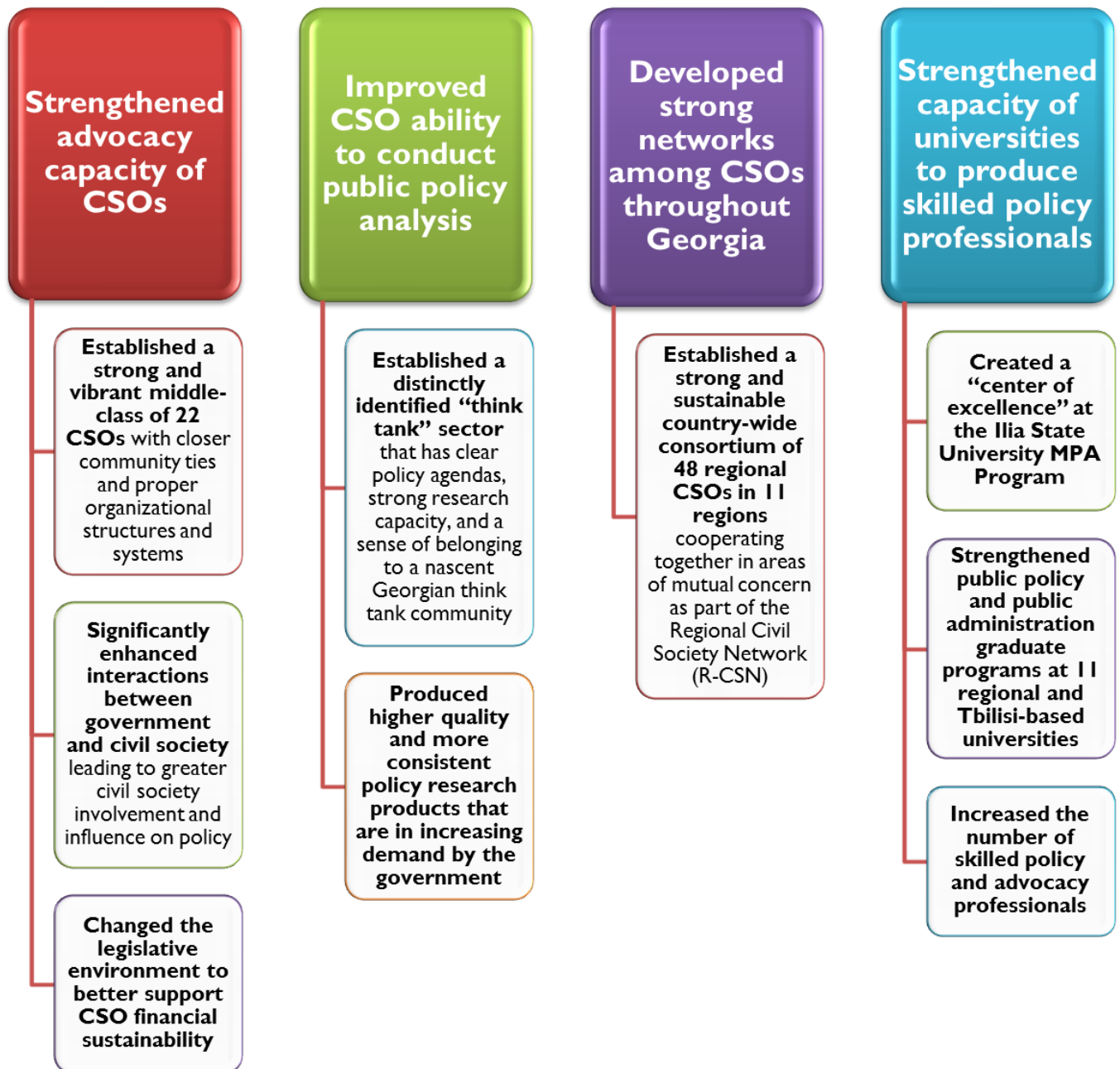
The East-West Management Institute's (EWMI) Policy, Advocacy, and Civil Society Development in Georgia (G-PAC) was a four-year, \$13.7 million initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) from 2010 to 2014. It aimed to strengthen civil society's role in influencing, monitoring, and advocating effective public policy reforms in Georgia.

To accomplish this goal, EWMI G-PAC provided grants and technical assistance to civil society organizations (CSOs). CSO is a broad term that includes NGOs, think tanks, universities, community-based and national organizations, coalitions, and informal groups of organized citizens. We supported projects that sought to engage communities, government, academia, and the media in priority public issues like economic development, healthcare, education, inclusive governance, environmental protection, and minority rights. Through innovative mentorships and workshops, EWMI G-PAC strengthened CSO capacity in advocacy, public outreach, research, management, and financial administration. With local and international partners, we also created a legislative environment more conducive to CSO financial sustainability.

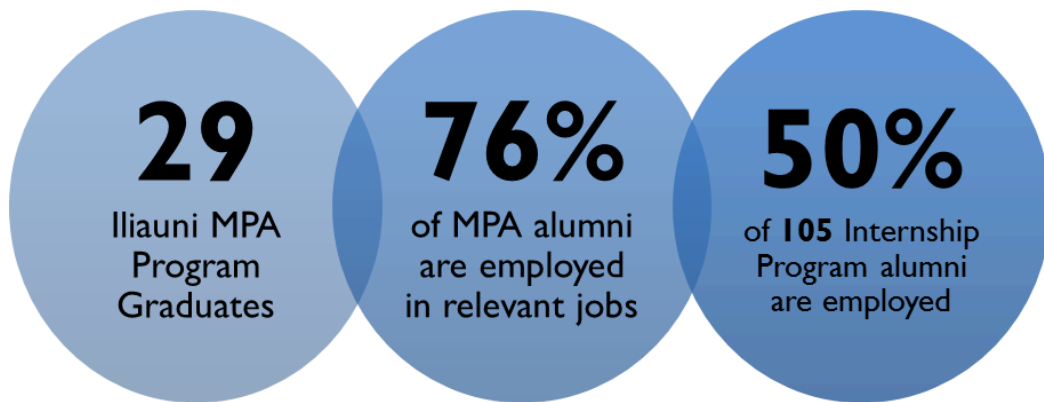
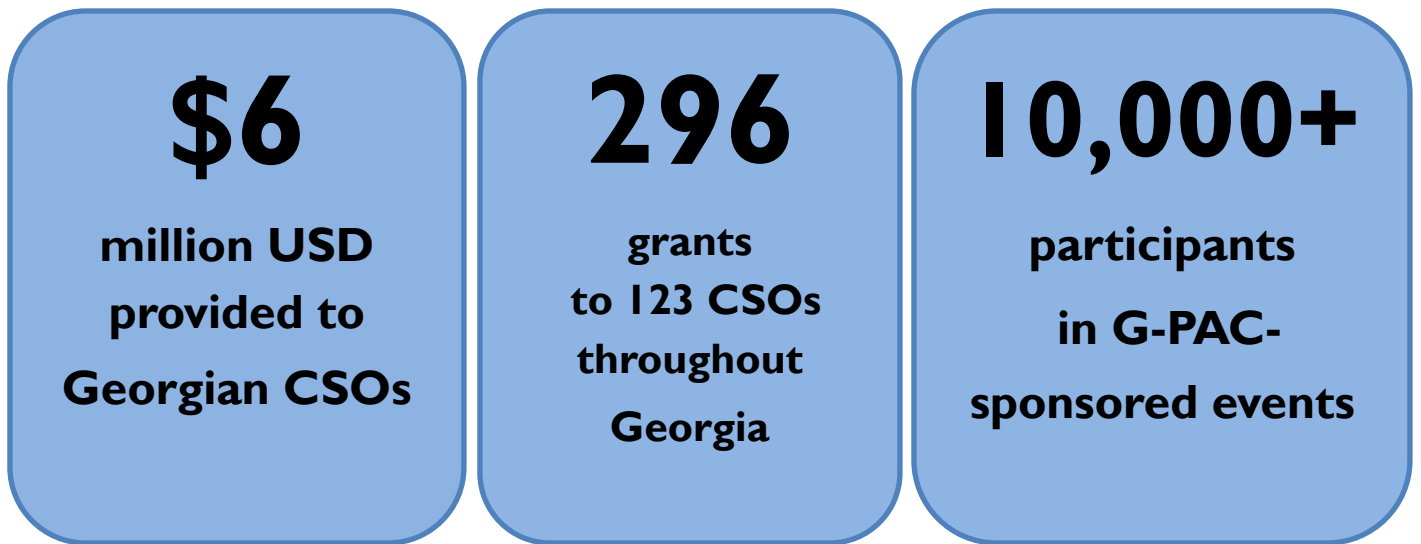
This brochure describes EWMI G-PAC's broad impact on Georgian civil society and provides a sample of the more specific successes our grantees have achieved. For more information, please visit [www.ewmi-gpac.org](http://www.ewmi-gpac.org).

# EWMI G-PAC: Objectives Achieved

By targeting its grants and technical assistance programs to different types of CSOs, EWMI G-PAC succeeded in achieving its four major objectives: (1) strengthening CSO advocacy throughout Georgia, (2) improving CSO policy research, (3) supporting new and existing CSO coalitions, and (4) developing policy-relevant university graduate programs. EWMI G-PAC's achievements in these four areas are described below:



# EWMI G-PAC by the Numbers: 2010 — 2014



# Union of Chiaturians Protects Public Health and the Environment



Industrial activities in Chiatura threatened the local environment and public health. With support from EWMI G-PAC, Union of Chiaturians (UoC) mobilized the community through petition drives and public events, closely monitored corporate promises, used research to identify solutions, and engaged local government to ensure greater accountability. Based on UoC's work, government officials and companies:

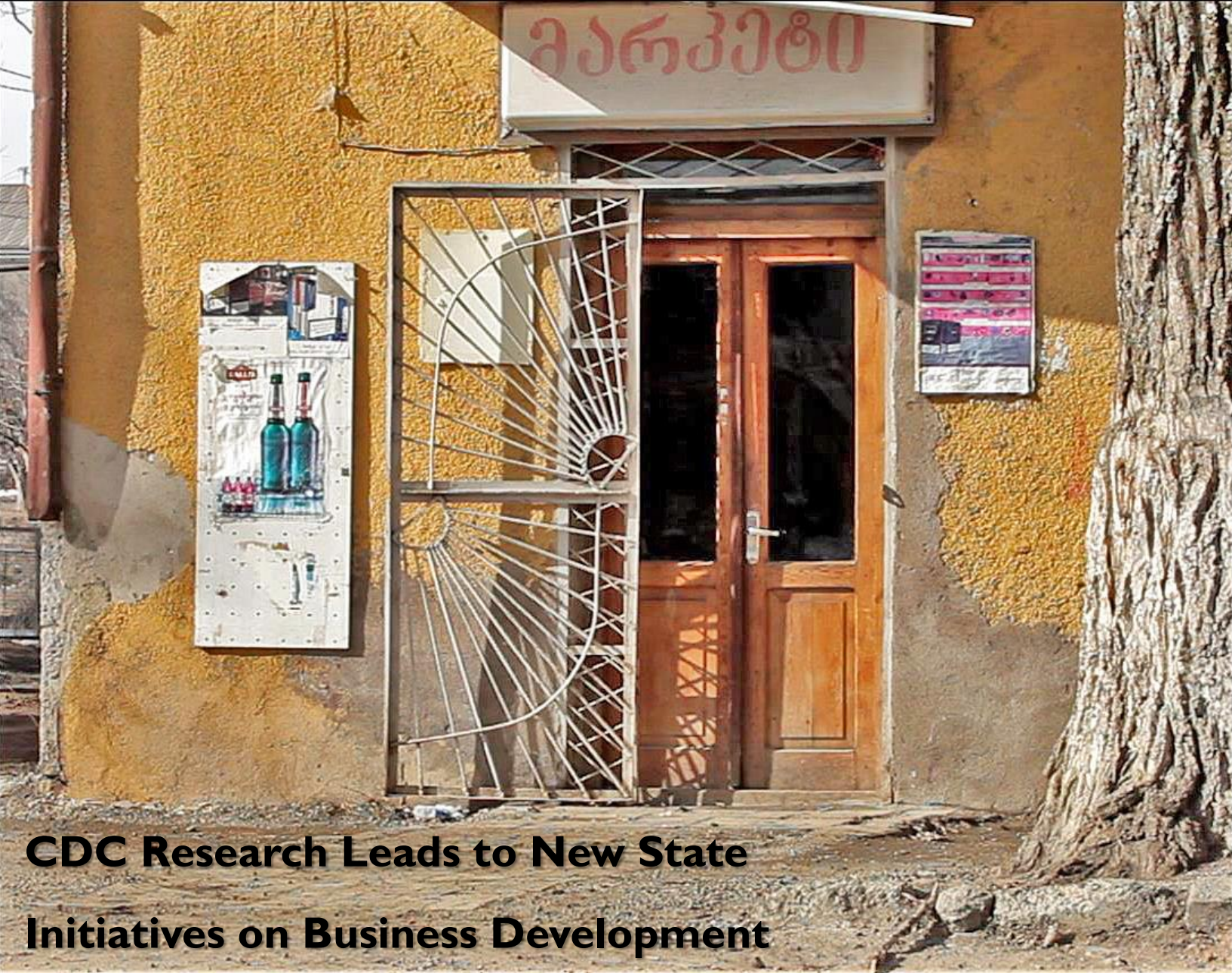
- ◆ Repaired local roads and ecosystems damaged by mining activities;
- ◆ Built a bypass road to reduce hazardous materials transport through Chiatura;
- ◆ Installed a water pollution prevention system;
- ◆ Constructed wash stations to clean toxic residues from vehicles;
- ◆ Replaced approximately 8,000 meters of water pipes;
- ◆ Updated chlorination infrastructure at three water pumping stations;
- ◆ Cleaned water reservoirs and pipelines; and
- ◆ Developed renovation plans for water treatment facilities.

# CSDC Uses Art to Get State Assistance for Homeless Children



The Civil Society Development Center (CSDC) advocated for improved services for homeless children, a vulnerable group not eligible for state assistance because they did not possess government identification. CSDC worked closely with the beneficiaries, asking them to produce art that reflected their lives. When the organization exhibited the children's compelling and often disturbing drawings in the Freedom Square Metro station, the public and decision makers took notice.

Based on CSDC's recommendations, relevant state institutions developed legislative amendments enabling homeless children to enroll in government assistance programs. Homeless children can now receive ID numbers to access state healthcare funding.



## **CDC Research Leads to New State Initiatives on Business Development**

Policies that promote small business development can create jobs and fight poverty. To assist the government in developing entrepreneurship in Georgia, a CSO coalition led by Community Development Center (CDC) studied business development efforts in the country. The coalition recommended that the government create a state mechanism to coordinate the entrepreneurship development projects of different ministries and international donors.

As a result, the Ministry of Economy launched a new agency to coordinate business development efforts that also created a 2 million GEL microfinance program of its own. Based on another coalition recommendation, the Ministry of Education initiated a pilot project to teach entrepreneurial skills to high school students.



## **SDWM Improves Preschools in Kvemo Kartli**

Preschools in Marneuli were in disrepair and teacher salaries were low. Previous efforts by teachers and administrators had failed to improve the situation. Society of Democrat Women of Marneuli (SDWM) succeeded by engaging parents, prioritizing strategic planning, and leveraging the legal obligations of government officials. SDWM then established a CSO network to improve preschools throughout the Kvemo Kartli region. SDWM's achievements include:

- ◆ Securing 800,000 GEL from the local budget to renovate all 10 Marneuli preschools,
- ◆ Increasing Marneuli preschool funding by 100% from 2013 to 2014
- ◆ Increasing Marneuli preschool teacher salaries by 95 – 125%
- ◆ Developing the 2013 – 2016 Marneuli preschool management strategy
- ◆ Raising additional funds from the Polish and Japanese Embassies for preschool renovations in the village of Kapanachi.



# Art Way Gets Creative to Bring Accessible Infrastructure to Batumi



Art Way successfully advocated the Batumi government to provide people with disabilities with the accessible public infrastructure they are entitled to under the law. To get the attention of decision makers and the public, Art Way conducted an innovative advocacy campaign including theater performances and flash mobs that simulated the experiences of people with disabilities.

As a result, the Batumi Municipal Government allocated 5,000,000 GEL to purchase 20 new disability-adapted buses. The government also installed sound-generating crossing signals at central intersections in Batumi to accommodate blind people.

# CCIIR and CDI Change National Policies to Develop Teachers



Teaching children to respect diversity and minority rights will contribute to Georgia's continuing democratic development. However, policy research by the Center for Civil Integration and Inter-ethnic Relations (CCIIR) revealed that most Georgian teachers do not have the skills to teach diversity as required by the National Curriculum. The Ministry of Education included CCIIR's recommendations on intercultural teaching competencies in the new 2014 professional standards for teachers. CCIIR is working with the Teacher Professional Development Center (TPDC) to ensure training programs adequately prepare teachers to meet these standards.

Civic Development Institute (CDI) also contributed to creating more respectful learning environments through its research on anti-bullying policies. The Ministry of Education approved a classroom management training program for teachers developed by CDI, which will be implemented by the TPDC.

# GYLA Kutaisi Holds MPs Accountable in Imereti ... and Beyond



EWMI G-PAC supported the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) Kutaisi branch in improving communication channels between MPs and their constituents in the Imereti region. GYLA fostered service-based MP office cultures and created formal mechanisms to ensure MPs meet directly with their constituents. Better communication led to concrete improvements in Imereti public services, including:

- ◆ Renovated water pipes and resolved water shortages;
- ◆ New sewers, dumpsters, and garbage trucks;
- ◆ Over 50 km of repaired roads and new street lights;
- ◆ Increased preschool funding; and
- ◆ Renovated healthcare clinics.

GYLA in Kutaisi subsequently led an EWMI G-PAC-funded coalition of regional CSOs that successfully advocated six city governments throughout Georgia to adopt new public spending reporting requirements. These requirements will significantly improve the transparency of public spending as local governments take on increased responsibilities as a result of decentralization reforms.

## **Coalition Research Improves Autism Programs at Ministry of Health**



With early intervention, children with autism can go on to lead nearly normal lives. However, Georgian children with autism often do not receive adequate healthcare. To raise awareness about the issue, a coalition led by the Georgian Association of Child Neurologists and Neurosurgeons (GACNN) held photo exhibitions and a public event on World Autism Day. The coalition also used medical research to develop an autism action plan and a new state program to assist children with autism. The Ministry of Health subsequently adopted both the action plan and the program, and allotted more funding for autism treatment.

Following the coalition's success, the Ilia State University Public Policy Research and Training Center (PPRTC) partnered with a GACNN-affiliated researcher to examine all existing state services for children with autism. The PPRTC publicized the research through public events attended by government officials. As a result, the Ministry of Health formed a working group to streamline existing autism programs and develop state guidelines for autism services, both of which the PPRTC recommended in its policy paper.



## Svaneti Youth Center Redresses Property Rights Violations

The property rights of many Svaneti residents were violated or endangered as a result of the Zugdidi-Mestia highway construction. The Guram Tikanadze Svaneti Youth Center successfully engaged diverse local, national, and international entities involved in the construction to deliver restitution to affected Svans. Working with the construction company, the Road Department of Georgia, the Municipal Development Fund, the Asian Development Bank, and local municipalities, Svaneti Youth Center ensured that those responsible:

- ◆ Financially compensated 32 families whose lands were appropriated
- ◆ Replaced damaged water and sewage pipes
- ◆ Built a 180-meter retaining wall and install fences to prevent landslides
- ◆ Dug a 200-meter ditch to prevent flooding.



## **Borjghali Helps Eco-migrants Build New Lives**

Natural disasters in mountainous areas in Georgia frequently destroy houses and displace local residents, who then become “eco-migrants.” Borjghali worked closely with local and national governments to put eco-migrants on the policy agenda and develop practical solutions. Borjghali’s sustained efforts have helped eco-migrants get the assistance they need:

- ◆ The Adjara government allocated funding for eco-migrant housing and included Borjghali’s plan for assisting eco-migrants in the regional disaster management strategy.
- ◆ The Ministry of IDPs now accepts applications for assistance from eco-migrants.
- ◆ The Tsalka local government created a database of eco-migrant families in its territory, which could help eco-migrants obtain new homes.
- ◆ A new eco-migrant center in Tsalka provides job training for eco-migrants and mediates disputes between eco-migrants and long-time residents.



## **Hepatitis B and C Patients' Group Media Campaign Delivers Better Treatment**

Hepatitis C is relatively widespread in Georgia, though knowledge about prevention was low and government services did not provide accessible treatment options. The Patients' Group organized a one-hour talk show with the Minister of Health, doctors, and other experts that aired simultaneously on three major national TV channels. The organization also created a Facebook-based petition that enabled signatories to directly contact members of the Parliamentary Committee on Healthcare.

As a result, the government provided 10,000 discounted vaccinations to the public. The price of one Hepatitis C vaccination under the plan dropped from \$230 USD to \$130 USD.



**Step  
Forward  
Improves  
Child  
Hearing  
Care**

Children with hearing problems often do not receive adequate healthcare services. Step Forward used its medical expertise to recommend improvements to local government and train doctors and parents to recognize and treat hearing disorders in children. The organization successfully mobilized officials, doctors, and parents, leading the Batumi City Council to:

- ◆ Implement an action plan to improve health and education opportunities for children with hearing problems;
- ◆ Fund infant hearing tests at every maternity hospital in Batumi; and
- ◆ Finance free hearing tests for up to 4000 children. So far 1,200 local children have been tested.





## CSI Improves Enabling Environment for CSOs

Civil society organizations in Georgia are subject to laws that limit their financial sustainability, and they are sometimes left out of policy decisions in their areas of expertise. Civil Society Institute (CSI), along with the International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL) and EWMI G-PAC, successfully advocated for a legislative environment that better promotes CSO engagement and sustainability. As a result of this joint effort, the government amended the Georgian Tax Code to encourage philanthropic donations to civil society organizations (CSOs) by allowing donations of goods and services and making most donations tax-free. Taxes were also lifted on small conferences and seminars conducted by CSOs.

CSI also organized the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between more than 100 CSOs and the Parliament of Georgia. The MoU was the first step in outlining formal rules for interactions between CSOs and Parliament.

# Safe Space Saves Dighomi Park



As urban development in Tbilisi increased, it seemed that parks and green areas were decreasing. To determine whether this was true, Safe Space researched the legal statutes governing parks and recreation areas in the city. The report revealed a trend over the last 20 years toward reduced park size and identified legislative gaps that inhibit effective park protection. To address the situation, Safe Space submitted formal complaints about park statute violations and monitored changes in statutes.

Thanks to Safe Space, Tbilisi City Hall restored “park” status to Dighomi Forest Park, which had been slated for a new development project. In so doing, Safe Space saved one of the largest park areas in Tbilisi. City Hall and the Ministry of Justice also planted 560 trees to counter deforestation based on Safe Space’s monitoring efforts.

# Caucasian House Improves Healthcare in Occupied Territories



The Center for Cultural Relations – Caucasian House successfully advocated for changes to the existing healthcare referral system to enable people from the occupied territories of Georgia to obtain state medical services. Caucasian House educated doctors about the system and brought conflicting legislation to the attention of government officials.

Following Caucasian House’s efforts, the Ministry of Health streamlined their programs to resolve the issue. Caucasian House also succeeded in advocating the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia in exile to create an information center for patients from Abkhazia, and to arrange for their accommodation during trips to unoccupied Georgia for treatment. The Government of Abkhazia in exile allocated funds for both activities in its 2014 budget.