

# Evaluation Report



## School Youth Networks of Collaboration for Sustainable Solutions (SYNCS) Programme

February 28, 2018

**World Vision Georgia**

## **Acknowledgements**

The School Youth Networks of Collaboration for Sustainable Solutions (SYNCS) Evaluation is a result of a collaboration between CRRC-Georgia and World Vision Georgia. The CRRC-Georgia team would like to thank the following people for their support in carrying out the evaluation: Irina Grdzelidze—Faith in Development Manager (WV Georgia); Dariko Bakhturidze—Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Officer (WVSC); Irakli Giorbelidze—Youth Technical Program Coordinator (WV Georgia); and Kristine Ter-Abrahamyan—Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Senior Coordinator (WVSC).

## **Affirmation**

Except as acknowledged by the references in this paper to other authors and publications, the evaluation herein consists of our own work, undertaken to secure funding, implement the activities, describe and advance learning, as part of the requirements of World Vision's Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Learning System.

Primary data collected throughout the study remains the property of communities and families described in this document. Therefore, the information and data must be used only with the project beneficiaries' consent.

# Executive Summary

Between February, 2016 and January, 2018, World Vision Georgia carried out the School Youth Networks of Collaboration for Sustainable Solutions (SYNCS) project in Georgia in cooperation with the Civic Development Institute (CDI), Marneuli Youth Centre, and Youth2Georgia. In addition, the action's associates included the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs (MSY) and Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). The project's overarching goal was to "contribute to improved and sustainable community-based solutions to targeted community needs through increased civic activism of public school students, universities, local governments and CSOs."<sup>1</sup> The project had four primary components:

1. Youth (from school clubs, school self-governance bodies, youth-led CSOs) were trained on leadership development, effective communication, advocacy and child and youth rights;
2. The project established proactive partnerships between community adults (municipality representatives) and youth leaders;
3. The project established working partnerships between university students and school students;
4. The project developed a web portal to facilitate civic engagement.

In order to assess whether the project achieved its objectives and goals, CRRC-Georgia carried out a mixed methods evaluation. The evaluation methods included a desk review, key informant interviews, focus groups, and a panel survey.

The results of the evaluation are generally positive with regard to the first, second, and third expected results, while the results of the fourth are unclear. Project documentation suggests that the program reached approximately 1250 students.

The project's design, with a bottom-up and demand-driven focus, enabled activities to be highly relevant to the participants and communities of the project. This led to young people identifying community needs, and then directly addressing them. As a result, relevance was decided by the communities as well as solved by young people in the communities.

This design also led to a highly effective and impactful implementation of the first two components of the project noted above, with many young people engaged in the project reporting that the project provided them with a transformative experience. Not only was the project effective at providing a transformative experience for young people, but it was also instrumental in providing municipal government staff with effective tools with which to work and opening municipal staff's eyes to youth. This led to municipal staff considering youth as a resource rather than a hindrance. When it comes to school administrations, the project was also successful in some cases, with some schools deciding to fund youth-initiated projects from their budgets.

In general, the project was also efficient. Project management reacted to challenges that emerged over the course of the project in an appropriate manner. Some of the achievements of the project are also likely to be sustained, and particular value was added through the institutionalization of youth work policy at the local government level. In other cases, it is unclear whether some project components will have a sustained impact due to a number of structural barriers as well as the late implementation of the fourth activity within the project.

Although the project appears to have been highly relevant, effective, and to have had reasonable levels of achievement across evaluation domains, there are two significant issues with project performance. First,

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<sup>1</sup> Interim Narrative Report.

a lack of link-up in the activities CDI and WVG implemented represents a missed opportunity. Second, and potentially the largest problem found within the project, was poor monitoring practices. Rather than any form of attempt to overemphasize the successes of the project, poor monitoring practices have likely led to an underestimation of impact. To provide just one example, there were likely more schools that participated in the program than recorded in monitoring documentation. Two key monitoring practices were problematic in this regard. First, monitoring visits were only carried out annually rather than bi-annually, a best practice, according to project implementation staff. Second, the project team did not maintain accurate participant lists or data about participants, as the evaluation team found when trying to carry out the quantitative survey for the project's evidence building exercise.<sup>2</sup> Interviews with project team members suggest that under-resourcing was the cause of these issues.

These deficiencies in monitoring and evaluation practices lead the evaluation team to strongly recommend that World Vision Georgia strengthen its monitoring and evaluation practices and consider strengthening oversight therein. This is important for both World Vision Georgia as well as local and international stakeholders. For World Vision Georgia, better monitoring and evaluation practices will enable the organization to showcase what, by all accounts, appears to be a very strong performance. For other stakeholders, stronger monitoring and evaluation practices will facilitate learning about how World Vision Georgia has positively impacted the lives of those they have worked with.

The report below provides background on the project and the context in which it was implemented; describes the purposes and objectives of the evaluation; describes the methodology used for the evaluation; presents the evaluation findings as it relates to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability; and provides conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learnt. In the appendices to the report are the evaluation's terms of reference, the inception report of the evaluation, survey questionnaire, key informant interview and focus group guides, a list of documents reviewed, and the data from the panel survey disaggregated by gender.

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<sup>2</sup> E.g. the list of schools where the project was carried out in that was provided to the project team may have been incomplete, and contained inaccuracies about who participated in the program in approximately one third of cases.

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## List of Acronyms

ADP	Area Development Program
CDI	Civic Development Institute
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Centers Georgia
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
LG	Local Government
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
SC DME	South Caucasus Design, Monitoring and Evaluation
SYNCS	School Youth Networks of Collaboration for Sustainable Solutions
WVSC	World Vision South Caucasus
WVG	World Vision Georgia

# Background and Context

Georgia is a republic situated on the Black Sea, with Turkey to the West, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the South, and the Russian Federation to the north. The country gained independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which ushered in a wave of domestic social unrest and economic collapse. The country stabilized from 1995, and has rapidly developed since 2004, following the 2003 Rose Revolution. During this period, the country also developed democratically with the first peaceful transfer of power in the country's history occurring in 2012 via parliamentary elections. The country's education system is in significant need of improvement, and the relatively low quality of education represents a structural bottleneck for the country's economic development as it attempts to move from middle income to upper income status, attempting to avoid the middle income trap in the next several decades.

Among the subjects of significant importance for Georgia is civic education, both formal and informal. Civic engagement and education are critical to Georgia's future as they have the potential to help Georgia maintain and expand upon the democratic growth it has experienced in recent years; maintain Georgia's civil society, which is among the most vibrant in the region; and encourage good governance through promoting active citizenship. This has been recognized by the government through the introduction of civic education classes in school as well as the international community through their engagement in and funding for a wide variety of civic education programming.

Despite Georgia's relatively vibrant civil society, previous studies show that grassroots civic engagement levels are low and citizens lack the capacity to influence decision-making processes (Lutsevich, 2013).<sup>3</sup> According to Sumbadze (2013), there is a large gap between public perceptions of the importance of civic engagement and its perceived possibility, with an overwhelming majority of Georgians believing they cannot exert any influence on important national decisions.<sup>4</sup>

While informal, one-off forms of civic engagement—including pro-social helping behaviors toward family, friends, neighbors and other Georgian citizens—are quite widespread, formal civic engagement is low in Georgia. Interestingly, people who are more proactively engaged with NGOs tend to be younger, have higher levels of education, report accessing the internet more frequently, and surprisingly, are more distantly located from the capital, i.e. living in rural areas (CRRC/GPAC survey 2014).<sup>5</sup>

According to Caucasus Barometer 2015, only 21% of Georgia's population reported volunteering during the six months prior to fieldwork, only 17% reported attending a public meeting, only 6% reported signing any petition (including online petitions), and only 5% reported writing a letter or making a phone call to a newspaper, TV or radio program. With all the above activities, the involvement of young people is higher.<sup>6</sup> Young people are also less likely to hold fatalistic views, agreeing more with the statement that "people shape their fate themselves" versus "Everything in life is determined by fate" (CB 2015).<sup>7</sup>

The above findings indicate that there is a great need to improve civic engagement practices in Georgia and young people living in rural areas seem to be the most valuable resource for boosting activism at the

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<sup>3</sup> Orysia Lutsevych. "How to Finish a Revolution: Civil Society and Democracy in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine," *Chatham House* (2013): [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0113bp\\_lutsevych.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0113bp_lutsevych.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Nana Sumbadze. "Determinants and Consequences of Civic Participation," *Academic Swiss Caucasus Net* (2013): [http://ascn.ch/en/Book-Presentation-2013/mainColumnParagraphs/00/download\\_website.pdf](http://ascn.ch/en/Book-Presentation-2013/mainColumnParagraphs/00/download_website.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> G-PAC. "Policy, Advocacy, and Civil Society Development in Georgia: Follow-up Report on Civic Engagement," *G-PAC East West Management Institute* (2014): [http://crrc.ge/uploads/tinymce/documents/Completed-projects/FINAL\\_GPAC\\_2014\\_Civic\\_Engagement\\_Report\\_04.08.2014\\_ENG.pdf](http://crrc.ge/uploads/tinymce/documents/Completed-projects/FINAL_GPAC_2014_Civic_Engagement_Report_04.08.2014_ENG.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> CRRC-Georgia. "Civic engagement in Georgia." *Caucasus Research Resource Center* (2016): <http://crrc-caucasus.blogspot.com/2016/07/civic-engagement-in-georgia.html>.

<sup>7</sup> "Caucasus Barometer Georgia, 2015," *Caucasus Research Resource Centers* (2015): <http://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2015ge/FATEINLF-by-AGEGROUP/>.

local level. This is also reflected in the EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society, according to which youth involvement and strengthening links between CSOs and civic education curriculum are important for enhancing civic participation in all regions of Georgia.<sup>8</sup>

Besides schools and CSOs, municipalities can greatly affect civic engagement at the local level. According to a study on forms of civic participation in rural areas of Georgia carried out in 2014 by the Open Society Institute, low civic engagement levels in rural communities can be explained, on the one hand, by the lack of information and, on the other hand, by widespread pessimism that people's actions cannot bring any result. The study showed that people living in rural areas of Georgia are largely unaware of: 1. Their own rights; 2. Resources and competences of the local self-government; 3. How to identify a problem, organize themselves around this problem and present it to the local self-government. Moreover, the study showed that there might be some resistance from local governments to engaging people in decision-making processes. As local government neglects the problems community members raise, people become pessimistic and come to believe they can not affect decisions, even at the local level.<sup>9</sup>

## ***Project Background***

Within the above context, World Vision Georgia implemented the School Youth Networks of Collaboration for Sustainable Solutions (SYNCS) project between February, 2016 and January, 2018, in cooperation with the Civic Development Institute (CDI), Marneuli Youth Centre, and Youth2Georgia. In addition, the action's associates included the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs (MSY) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). The project's overarching goal was to "contribute to improved and sustainable community-based solutions to targeted community needs through increased civic activism of public school students, universities, local governments and CSOs."<sup>10</sup> The project's specific objective was that, "Networks of youth-led movements, CSOs and school self-governance bodies drive positive social change in collaboration with adult-led CSOs, governmental and higher educational institutions."<sup>11</sup>

In order to achieve the overall and specific objective, the project had four primary components:

1. Youth (from school clubs, school self-governance bodies, youth-led CSOs) were trained on leadership development, effective communication, advocacy and child and youth rights. Youth were empowered to advocate for various changes at the community and school level by applying gained competencies through different non-formal education methods (awareness raising campaigns; round table discussions, conferences on youth-related issues, and workshops with peers to promote youth activism).
2. The project aimed to establish proactive partnerships between community adults (municipality representatives) and youth leaders. The main activities aimed at enabling community adults to be receptive to working with youth via Citizen Voice & Action methodology. These included training local authorities on youth engagement; funding small grant initiatives for local community adult-youth groups to encourage cooperation; facilitation of structural dialogue between school club leaders and adult municipality representatives to ensure youth voice in municipality decision-making, and conducting study tours for local municipality representatives from the target regions to learn about different practices.
3. The project aimed to establish cooperation networks between universities and public schools in 6 target regions. After laying the groundwork for youth-led activism on the municipality level

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<sup>8</sup>"EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society, Georgia 2014-2017," *European Union* (2014): [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/documents/civil\\_society\\_library/eu\\_roadmap\\_georgia.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/documents/civil_society_library/eu_roadmap_georgia.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> "Handbook on civic engagement on local municipality levels," USAID (2017): <http://www.lsg.gov.ge/contentimage/teees.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Interim Narrative Report.

<sup>11</sup> Annex A. Grant Application Form.



through targeted youth- and adult-focused activities, work was set to begin on fostering closer links among a larger set of community stakeholders on the regional level. Initially, the project aimed to establish collaboration networks between regional universities and public schools but to later expand to include CSOs and local government. The project aimed to recruit 24 students from 6 universities and train them on action-oriented research and form partnerships with 6 public schools in each region. The project aimed to have student volunteers and members of student self-governance bodies develop joint action plans and disseminate research results at joint conferences in each region. The project aimed to have assessments of local problems at the school or community level developed, followed by research on public school-CSO cooperation. It also aimed to develop a policy paper and to present it in selected regions and the capital. Finally, to encourage collaboration networks on the larger scale, a national competition was held for school-university networks to compete for project-based solutions to local problems.

4. The project team aimed to create an online platform to build and enhance effective dialogue and engagement of different stakeholders. The platform would serve as a forum for communities, teachers, school staff, parents, university staff, university students and youth to discuss problems and identify common solutions as well as to share resources and news on school life and youth activism. The web portal aimed to promote the cooperation opportunities between public schools and universities, CSOs and youth. The web portal also intended to provide useful information to LGs, municipal authorities and MoES. As a result, these institutions would better respond to the needs of youth participation in public schools.

As a result of the above activities, the project expected to achieve the following estimated results:

1. Empowered young boys and girls plan and implement community initiatives;
2. Proactive partnerships are established between community adults (municipality representatives) and youth leaders;
3. Cooperation networks between universities and public schools are established in 6 target regions;
4. A virtual web-based portal is developed to serve as a platform to share best practices and strengthen cooperation between schools and civil society stakeholders.

The project was carried out in six regions of Georgia including Kakheti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli and Samegrelo.

The remainder of the report proceeds as follows. In the first section, we provide an overview of the evaluation purposes and objectives. In the subsequent section, we present the methods used and an overview of the data collected. In the next section, the results of the evaluation are presented. In the final sections, conclusions and recommendations are provided. In the appendix to the report are the evaluation's terms of reference, the inception report of the evaluation, survey questionnaire, key informant interview and focus group guides, a list of documents reviewed, and the frequency tables from the panel survey and its disaggregation by gender.

## Evaluation purposes and objectives

In order to assess whether the project achieved its objectives, CRRC-Georgia carried out an evaluation. The evaluation has two primary objectives. First, it aims to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the action. Second, it provides recommendations and lessons learnt to inform future World Vision operations in Georgia as well as in comparable contexts. Within each evaluation domain, the key questions asked are presented in the table below.

Evaluation Objectives	Key questions to be asked
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent project interventions addressed the needs of the targeted group?</li> <li>● What are the strengths and weaknesses of programme design and its M&amp;E plan?</li> <li>● What are the opinions of stakeholders (beneficiaries, partners) regarding the project, its purpose and approach/es?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent the project objectives/ results have been achieved? (Setting status of project's indicators)</li> <li>● Was the project effective in achieving its intended objectives?</li> <li>● To what extent did the project address cross-cutting issues (gender)?</li> <li>● How and which unforeseen external factors influenced the project?</li> <li>● How did the assumptions affect the programme?</li> <li>● Were any unplanned results achieved?</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How efficient were the management and accountability structures of the project?</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent have the project design and implementation contributed to the sustainability of interventions?</li> <li>● How did the organizations involved in the project contribute to project objectives?</li> <li>● How were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level?</li> <li>● To what extent are the benefits of the projects likely to be sustained after the completion of this project?</li> <li>● How effective were the exit strategies, and approaches to phase out assistance provided by the project?</li> <li>● The ownership of objectives and achievements. What could have been done to increase the sustainability of project objectives</li> <li>● The extent to which the project is embedded in local institutional structures</li> <li>● How far good relations with existing institutions have been established;</li> <li>● What are some existing factors that contribute positively to sustain project interventions? What are some of the existing challenges to sustainability?</li> </ul>

Recommendations Lessons Learned	&	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What lessons learned does the evaluation identify that have implications for future projects?</li><li>• What were the most significant constraints and/or difficulties in implementing the project and, where appropriate, how did the project overcome them?</li><li>• What are the future intervention strategies and issues for similar projects?</li><li>• What are the recommendations for similar support in future?</li></ul>
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# Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed methods design, including desk review, key informant interviews, a panel survey, and focus groups with project beneficiaries to assess whether the action achieved its objectives. A description of the research methodology is provided below, and additional details are provided in the appendices.

## *Desk Review*

The project team reviewed key project documentation and studies related to civic education and engagement in Georgia. The review of project documentation was primarily used to provide the evaluation team with background on implemented activities. The full list of documents reviewed is provided in Appendix 4.

## *Quantitative methods*

The evaluation made use of a panel survey design. Panel surveys interview the same people before and after an intervention. In this case, the organization interviewed the same people who had participated in the baseline survey. This type of design more accurately tracks changes within an area than taking two random samples with one at baseline and one at end-line.

The questionnaire was developed based on the baseline evaluation and the project's logical framework. The project team identified areas of interest that were missing from the questionnaire and indicators within the project's logical framework. Although supplemental questions that are missing from the baseline questionnaire were developed, it was necessary to include questions exactly as they were asked in the baseline in order to ensure that changes from the baseline could be measured from the baseline.

Survey fieldwork proceeded following interviewer training during the week of December 25th. The survey resulted in an achieved sample size of 110. Although the second wave of the survey has a smaller sample than the baseline, a logistic regression analysis suggests that non-response in the end-line survey was random, with no significant differences in the age-group of the respondents that participated and did not participate in the survey.<sup>12</sup> The results of the logistic regression analysis are presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Logistic regression analysis of participation in the survey**

	Estimate	Standard Error	z value	p-value
15-19	0.26	0.36	0.71	0.48
20-24	0.09	0.37	0.23	0.82
25-29	0.68	0.35	1.91	0.06

In addition to the logistic regression analysis, a comparison of responses on the baseline survey for respondents of the end-line survey and the entire baseline survey suggests that the final sampled group had comparable attitudes to the individuals who did not participate in the second survey. The differences in response between panel participants and non-panel participants are under 5% in the vast majority of cases, and hence, well under the reported margin of error of the baseline survey. This fact, in tangent to the logistic regression analysis of non-response presented above, suggests that non-response was not caused by systematic differences in the composition of the group in a thematically relevant manner. This

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<sup>12</sup> Other demographic data was not available to test in the baseline survey.

suggests that despite the smaller sample size, the baseline and end-line samples are comparable and that the smaller sample in the end-line survey is representative of the baseline group.

In order to test whether changes present in the data were likely due to sampling variation or actual changes, the project team used paired-sample t-tests on continuous-like variables, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests on variables with two categories, and Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests with ordinal variables.

## *Qualitative methods*

In order to supplement the quantitative data collection and identify how and why the program activities achieved or did not achieve their goals, CRRC-Georgia carried out key informant interviews and focus groups. The full key informant interview and focus group guides are presented in the appendices.

### *Key informant interviews*

The general purpose of the key informant interviews was to understand the project's implementation, and to generate an understanding of the how's and why's for the project's successes and failures. Key informants included World Vision staff in Tbilisi, a CDI representative, local project coordinators, school principals and teachers, university students and local government officials. The sample of individuals interviewed was determined in collaboration with the World Vision Georgia team. Following key informant interviews, the interviews were transcribed and the project team analyzed the transcripts to answer the evaluation questions described above. The type of key informant interview, their number, and dates are presented in Table 2, below.

**Table 2: Key Informant Interviews**

Target Group	Number of respondents	Location	Data collection tool
Local Government	6	Samegrelo, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, Imereti	KII guide
School Administration	6	Samegrelo, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, Imereti	KII guide
University Students	4	Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, Imereti	KII guide
Regional Coordinators	6	Samegrelo, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, Imereti	KII guide
Program Staff (WVG & CDI)	4	Tbilisi	KII guide

### *Focus Groups*

Within the evaluation process, the organization carried out focus groups with participants from the six regions that the project was implemented in. The sample of youth who participated in the focus groups was determined by World Vision Georgia and CDI. The focus groups aimed to understand the how's and why's of the project's successes and failures from the perspective of the participants. In total, 11 focus

groups were carried out. Following the focus groups, transcripts were produced, and the project team analyzed them to answer the evaluation questions described in the previous section of this report. The region of each focus group, the number of focus groups and dates of implementation are provided in Table 3, below. A focus group in Samtskhe Javakheti with CDI beneficiaries was cancelled due to the participants not showing up at the agreed time and place.

**Table 3: Focus Groups**

	Location	Target group	Number of participants	Data collection tool
1	Imereti	WVG beneficiaries	10	Focus Group Guide
2	Imereti	CDI beneficiaries	11	Focus Group Guide
3	Kakheti	WVG beneficiaries	6	Focus Group Guide
4	Kakheti	CDI beneficiaries	5	Focus Group Guide
5	Samtskhe-Javakheti	WVG beneficiaries	10	Focus Group Guide
6	Shida Kartli	WVG beneficiaries	10	Focus Group Guide
7	Shida Kartli	CDI beneficiaries	8	Focus Group Guide
8	Kvemo Kartli	WVG beneficiaries	9	Focus Group Guide
9	Kvemo Kartli	CDI beneficiaries	6	Focus Group Guide
10	Samegrelo	WVG beneficiaries	10	Focus Group Guide
11	Samegrelo	CDI beneficiaries	10	Focus Group Guide

## *Limitations*

The research design has a number of limitations, which primarily stem from the quality of the baseline survey data as relates the evaluation of the project in terms of relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The four primary limitations are described below.

First and foremost, the present evaluation does not use a quasi-experimental or experimental design with a counter-factual. In general, this means that it can only be said that the SYNCs project likely contributed to any change, positive or negative, found through the panel survey rather than the change being attributable to the project.

Second, although respondent selection appears to have been conducted with an appropriate method in the baseline survey, the reported margin of error of less than 5% is likely inaccurate, because it does not appear to have taken into account the clustered nature of data collection. The 5% number appears to have been calculated for a simple random sample rather than a clustered and stratified sample, despite the fact that sampling appears to have used clustering with stratification. This method generally has a higher margin of error than a simple random sample or a stratified simple random sample. Hence, the average margin of error given the sample size is likely to be in the range of plus or minus 9-13%. This estimate of the margin of error is based on a number of assumptions, which are based on information presented in

the baseline report. Specifically, according to the report, we assume that 6-7 interviews were carried out in each of the villages listed in Annex 2 of the baseline report, and that the intracluster correlation was between 0.05 and 0.1112, which are estimates based on previous surveys. In the absence of stratification, this would result in a theoretical margin of error of 9.75% and 13.5%, respectively. Stratification will likely lower these numbers, but the extent to which it would reduce the margin of error is not calculable without further information, which was not available in the baseline dataset. Nonetheless, it is unlikely to drastically reduce the average margin of error. In practice, this means that for the evaluation to find a change in project indicators, they generally need to be around 10-20 percentage point differences between baseline and end line.

Third, in addition to the previously noted limitation, the baseline survey made use of a screening questionnaire. In the present case, the screening questionnaire filtered out any respondent who had not engaged in some form of civic engagement during the time prior to the interview. This suggests that the baseline survey was not representative of young people in the project area *in general*, but rather **representative of civically engaged young people** within the project area. Hence, results reported below should be consistently interpreted with this caveat in mind.

Fourth, given that data from the baseline is not available in the dataset about the location which interviews took place in to the best of the project team's knowledge, what statisticians refer to as the "pretend it's something else" (PISE) assumption is used in the statistical analysis. This means that all inferential statistics reported below do not take into account the true margin of error, but rather assume that simple random sampling occurred. This stems from the fact that clusters are not coded in the baseline data set, hence making it impossible to calculate the actual confidence intervals of a given statistic.

## Evaluation Findings

The SYNCS project aimed to contribute to improved and sustainable community-based solutions to targeted community needs through increased civic activism of public school students, universities, local governments, and CSOs. The project attempted to achieve this objective through the activities described in the background and context section, which in turn would lead to: 1) Empowered young boys and girls planning and implementing community initiatives; 2) Proactive partnerships established between community adults (municipality representatives) and youth leaders; 3) Cooperation networks between universities and public schools established in 6 target regions and; 4) A virtual web-based portal which would serve as a platform to share best practices and strengthen cooperation between schools and civil society stakeholders. This section of the report provides evaluation findings about these results and objectives, with a focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the results. While the sections assessing project relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency use general perspectives on these domains, the sustainability section considers World Vision's specific sustainability indicators.

### *Relevance*

The evaluation team takes relevance to refer to the degree to which the action met local and national needs. Interviews and focus groups with all stakeholders were used to assess to what extent project interventions addressed the needs of the target groups, strengths and weaknesses of the project, its design including that of the monitoring and evaluation plan, approaches, and purpose as seen by the stakeholders. A panel survey was used to assess the dynamics of attitudes among youth in the target areas. Below, a discussion of findings related to each relevance evaluation question is provided.

Given the relatively low levels of civic participation in Georgia, the project in general can be considered relevant to local and national needs. As noted in the background section, civic engagement and civic education are critical to sustaining Georgia's democratic development. Within the specific regions where the project took place, the baseline survey generally suggests that young people indeed found the goals of the project relevant, with 86% of the baseline survey participants rating the importance of youth civic involvement for the country's general development as very important. Among panel participants, this figure increased from 85% to 95% at the end of the project period, and statistical testing suggests the change is a significant increase.

The program's targeting strategy was also relevant. In Georgia, civic engagement is generally more common among young people. In general, targeting strategies should aim to provide to those in need, those who can benefit, and those unlikely to benefit in absence of the program. In the present case, this means that the targeting should have aimed to provide the necessary skill sets to engage among those who are most likely to participate as well as those who are less likely to have the skills to engage successfully. Given that young people are more likely to engage in Georgia, yet the population under consideration was younger than would generally participate in other programming, the target groups should be considered relevant. Moreover, the engagement of young people with slightly older but still young people capable of modelling civic engagement is a positive model for future programming. Importantly, the project worked in primarily rural areas, wherein young people have significantly fewer opportunities. All the above suggests a relevant targeting strategy.

In terms of design, the project used a bottom-up approach, which led to the tailoring of project activities to participants' needs and thus a high degree of relevance. During the project, WVG and CDI targeted youth, helped them to identify their needs, and worked towards addressing them, which made the project very relevant not only for them, but for their entire community. Trainings were planned and organized by WVG based on youth surveys that identified their needs and interests. The only concern expressed by the youth was that their interests and needs vary according to their age, which made some trainings more interesting for young school students, while others were more relevant for older ones. Hence, future programming should consider age-based targeting to improve upon relevance.

University students also reported that the trainings and other project components were highly relevant. They reported learning more about research, project implementation and communication skills, which they now use in their academic and other work. As for the projects that were implemented within this component of the project, they are described – both by university and school students – as highly relevant for schools. This is illustrated by the following quotes:

In my opinion this project was oriented towards the needs of the student. Students had to choose the problems independently and neither I nor school administration or teachers intervened in this process (Interview with University Student, Kakheti).

What we did in Kvemo Kartli was various activities connected to the development of teaching Georgian language in schools. There were not enough Georgian books for the students and with our help they purchased relevant literature. The problem was identified by students (Interview with University Student, Kvemo Kartli).

Local government representatives positively noted the preventative nature of the project, highlighting that it helped keep youth from hanging around in the streets and becoming engaged in criminal activity. They reported that a significant problem they face is youth who do not know how to spend their free time, as it can lead to the previously noted issues. The project helped to ameliorate this situation in target locations. The local government representatives also positively discussed the trainings WVG provided



them. They report that it was highly relevant to their work, as many reported learning about new methods of working with youth. This was particularly important as they note coming from a diversity of educational and employment backgrounds other than youth work. Now, they report using the skills they developed in their work on a regular basis.

The school administrations reported that the project activities WVG and the young people chose to implement were appropriate and relevant to the setting. They noted that the implementation was driven by the needs of youth. Most importantly, the youth identified their own needs. The success of this approach is highlighted by the fact that school teachers and principals reported that in some cases they were unaware of the needs the young people identified (e.g. early marriage), however, they now see these issues and needs as highly important and are glad to see their pupils involved in addressing them. As a school principal noted:

It addressed the needs, and I want to underline once again that the students identified the issues correctly. I was aware about the first issue [bullying]. There are always some elements of bullying and violence in schools. It happens unconsciously, but I never saw the need to talk about early marriage... (Interview with School principal, Kakheti).

A major strength of the project, as interviews with stakeholders and youth demonstrate, was its flexibility in adapting to the needs of the youth and community. Instead of offering some specific activities to youth and other stakeholders, the project relied on their opinions and needs when defining topics for trainings and activities. This approach guaranteed that beneficiaries received what they needed most. Also, since youth defined the problems, they were more motivated to work on them. Hence, the success of such projects and their sustainability was more likely with this approach.

The only weakness the project stakeholders mentioned directly was the limited scope of the project. They emphasized that the limited resources, timeframe and low number of youth involved in the project activities limited impact. In this regard, a large share of the youth population remains inactive and all stakeholders expressed a desire for a larger-scale intervention to address this issue. Given that project documentation estimates that there were 1250 direct participants in the project, while there are 542,093 people between the ages of 14 and 29 in the areas the project was implemented in,<sup>13</sup> the project reached only 0.23% of the youth in the project area. Hence, the demand for a larger scale intervention should not be surprising, given the problem.

Although it was difficult for interviewees to name weaknesses of the project, some of their responses indicate issues. These include the:

1. Need to work not only with children but also with their parents to make sure that they understand the tangible benefits of their children becoming involved in civic activities. A large share of young people noted that their peers were inactive because of family influence and parents not realizing the importance of civic engagement and other non-academic skills;
2. Need for more work with teachers and school principals, especially at the beginning of the project. Youth reported school administration being distrustful and unsupportive of youth at the beginning of the project. In some cases, they were even aggressive and warned the children not to waste time in attending project trainings and meetings. Even though youth report that these attitudes changed once teachers saw real and material results through activism, this resistance could have discouraged some youth who were not as determined as others.

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<sup>13</sup> "2014 National Census," *National Statistics Office of Georgia (GEOSTAT) (2014)*:  
[http://www.geostat.ge/cms/site\\_images/\\_files/english/population/Census\\_release\\_ENG\\_2016.pdf](http://www.geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/english/population/Census_release_ENG_2016.pdf).

With regard to the project's monitoring and evaluation plan, the indicators are of varied quality. Overall, the project's logical framework is realistic and makes use of specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound (SMART) indicators. However, the logical framework and project indicators also focus heavily on output indicators rather than outcome indicators. While a relatively common practice, WVG carried out an evidence building exercise using a rigorous, quasi-experimental research design within the scope of the project. In the future, if the project partners intend to carry out such an activity it is recommended that, in addition to SMART output indicators, SMART outcome indicators are developed and planned for accordingly from the outset of the project.

Besides the focus on output indicators, the evidence building exercise within the project also suggests the WVG project team requires additional efforts be focused on accurate record keeping. During the fieldwork for the project's evidence building exercise, which resembles the process of an impact evaluation in many ways, the evidence building exercise research team encountered a number of difficulties related to project team record keeping practices regarding the names of the schools activities were carried out in, the names of students within those schools, and their age/grade level.

Overall, the project was highly relevant in that it very specifically addressed the needs of the targeted groups, including school administrations, local government, the communities the project was implemented in, and most importantly the young people themselves. The project design was critical to achieving this high degree of relevance, and should be emulated in future WVG and partner programming. Stakeholders, in general, presented positive views of the project and survey results suggest that the project indeed was relevant to the needs of the areas the activities took place in. The main project weakness in relation to relevance was the lack of outcome indicators in the project's monitoring and evaluation plan as well as poor monitoring practices.

## *Effectiveness*

This section of the report focuses on the effectiveness of the project, which is understood as whether the tools the project used lead to the outcomes that were expected. Importantly, the focus of the evaluation is on outcomes rather than outputs, which WVG's monitoring and evaluation team has measured to a large extent, with the caveats noted in the section below.<sup>14</sup> It specifically addresses the extent to which the project effectively achieved its intended objectives, and the extent it addressed cross-cutting issues like gender. The section concludes with a discussion of the unforeseen factors which inhibited project implementation as well as unforeseen achievements.

### **ERI. Empowered young boys and girls plan and implement community initiatives.**

The quantitative data from the panel survey as well as the qualitative data from the focus groups and key informant interviews suggest that expected result one was achieved, with young boys and girls planning and implementing community initiatives. The qualitative data suggest that the key factor in achieving this expected result was WVG's combination of training with a grants program, which enabled young people to combine classroom learning with on the ground civic engagement activities.

Qualitative data gathered for the evaluation suggests the empowerment of youth as a result of the project as well as the effectiveness of the methods used for achieving this result. The project seems to have provided an extra boost to participant's activism and motivation and enabled them to put their skills into practice. As one school principal noted:

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<sup>14</sup> According to the report prepared by this department and also according to the interviews done by program staff, on the output level all expected results are achieved.

Before [the project] there were some students who made decisions easily, but they were not initiating anything. There was an initiative and they sometimes got involved, but now the initiative comes from them (Interview with school principal, Kakheti).

Still, it is important to note that the youth WVG targeted were already more active than their peers, with WVG staff noting that they engaged young people they had already worked with. Hence, even though the targeting strategy did effectively increase the level of civic engagement, it did so for a group likely to engage already.

Youth also report many positive changes within themselves that they experienced as a result of project activities. Namely, they started expressing their opinions freely and felt that they (youth studying at the schools in rural areas) have the same opportunities as students studying in urban areas. They report learning advocacy and communications skills with different audiences, e.g. local government representatives and NGOs. Young people also repeatedly noted that they feel they gained the ability to do things independently. As one young person stated:

This project gave me strengths and skills to implement activities independently. Soon after the start of the project, in the same year, I nominated my[self for] head of school self-governance, and I became it. After that, I implemented 44 activities independently and the knowledge received during the trainings helped me a lot in this (FG with WVG targeted youth, Shida Kartli).

In the Georgian context, where rural settlements are distinctly worse off and rural schools in general provide lower quality education, this is an important achievement.<sup>15</sup>

All groups of stakeholders interviewed also suggest that youth became more self-confident and active as a result of the project. The youth themselves highlighted the importance of the advocacy and civic engagement trainings WVG offered them as something that was especially useful in this regard. Local coordinators did a good job helping young people translate their knowledge into practice. To provide only a snapshot of what youth were enabled to organize through the project, some activities included:

1. Arranging sports events and intellectual meetings;
2. Creating and updating libraries;
3. Organizing trainings and festivals;
4. Creating spaces for youth meetings;
5. Equipping schools;
6. Improving roads and parks.
7. Organizing trainings on issues like gender equality, bullying, etc.

The wide variety of activities reinforces that the project was relevant to the communities the young people live in, and further suggests the approach, which was driven by youth-identified needs, was effective.

The main indicator for the project was the percentage of youth who engaged in community activities in the project area and any changes. The panel survey provides ambiguous answers on whether the project increased the share of young people engaged in community activities, the frequency of their engagement, or whether their role in those activities changed following the project. The survey asked whether respondents had participated in any community/civic activities in the past 2 years. *However, due to the screener question used on the baseline survey which excluded those who were not civically engaged, 100% of*

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<sup>15</sup> CRRC-Georgia. "Tracing Rural Inequalities in the Georgian Education System," *Caucasus Research Resource Center* (2015): <http://crrc-caucasus.blogspot.com/2015/02/tracing-regional-inequalities-in.html>

students reported they had engaged in some community activity during the past two years at baseline. During the end-line, this number dropped by 15 percentage points to 85%. Yet, the frequency of participation among those engaged increased. While at baseline 5% of young people reported participating in more than one activity in the past two years, at end-line 23% of young people did. Hence, it can be concluded that some young people stopped engaging in activities, while others started engaging more intensively. Although participation remained high among civically active youth, relatively few young people reported (6%) organizing events at end-line. A comparison with baseline in regards to this second question is not possible since the baseline questionnaire did not include a question on young people's role in community events.

Empowering youth to implement community initiatives was achieved mainly through trainings and providing small grants for implementing community initiatives. Providing trainings to youth is a widespread activity. However, offering follow up grants to young people to put into practice knowledge obtained through classroom learning is rarer. This activity appears to have been a key factor in the effectiveness in this project. Through putting into practice knowledge obtained through trainings, and in turn letting young people achieve clear results, they became more self-confident and motivated to continue with civic engagement.

According to youth, implementing community initiatives not only reinforced their knowledge and motivation, but also changed the attitudes of local government and school representatives towards the youth. The young people, local government representatives, and school officials report that each group of adults has changed their attitudes towards young people and their potential. As a result, they started viewing youth not as a problem, but rather, as a resource. As reported by students in Imereti, skeptical attitudes towards youth among local government representatives changed after several presentations students gave.

The same is true for school teachers and principals. The students reported that at the start, school teachers and administration were quite skeptical toward the project and even warned children not to get involved in the trainings. They thought it was a waste of time, but when they saw the children making tangible changes within the school, they changed their attitudes. In the end, some projects were even funded through school budgets. As one student noted:

They [the school administration] did not trust students and personally me. They even were aggressive some times. But after I participated in this project and implemented my own and equipped the school with new resources, the trust towards children increased. Now they even ask us to be more active and do more projects (FG, Shida Kartli).

Most youth who participated in focus group discussions in the six regions confirm these changes and report a positive experience working with municipalities. Experiences were not uniformly positive in Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Samegrelo. Nonetheless, positive experiences predominated in these areas. When it comes to school administrations, the picture is more mixed and in almost every region youth report that some teachers and school principals remain very skeptical towards youth activism.

Linking schools and local government via youth seemed to be another much-needed, innovative approach given the fact that all key stakeholders reported changing their attitudes towards each other as a result of the communication and cooperation that occurred within the project. Before the project, youth perceived local government as something distant from them and as something which had nothing to do with young people in general. As one young person noted, "One day we discovered that children aged 14-15 can go to a mayor, offer him a well-written and effective project and this project can be funded and implemented. This is very important" (FG, Samtskhe Javakheti). As a school principal noted, "Before the school administration and also the local government thought that students do not know anything, that students

had no ideas and that their ideas could be taken into consideration...but now they see that students can do much more [than we expected from them]. I support these youth” (Interview with school principal, Samtskhe-Javakheti). And as a student noted, “They [the school administration] saw that we have a power and not only adults, but we also can do things. They saw this power and they support us actively” (FG, Samtskhe Javakheti). Hence, it can be concluded that the project played an icebreaking role between young people and local government and that it enhanced perceptions of young people among school administrations.

Stemming from the above, it is reasonable to believe that WVG’s activities contributed to the 18 percentage point increase in young people reporting that they would definitely become a member of “an active partnership between youth, local government and NGOs” when compared with baseline. While the baseline value on this question was 43%, the endline value was 60%.<sup>16</sup> Reinforcing this view, there was a 23 percentage point, statistically significant increase in the panel survey in young people reporting that local government should finance young people’s initiatives. With this question, the baseline value was 15%, while the endline value was 38%. The qualitative and quantitative data above suggest the project’s combination of classroom training and practice was highly effective.

Without a special intention to do so within the design of the project, a focus on a variety of cross-cutting issues emerged via student planned, lead, and implemented community initiatives. These initiatives included gender issues like early marriage and girls’ education. In Kvemo Kartli youth implemented several activities aimed at integrating ethnic minorities, while some initiatives in other regions targeted children with disabilities and created adapted spaces for them. Another group organized training sessions on gender equality. Hence, the project appears to have been effective in addressing cross-cutting issues.

While the project appears to have been effective in large part in achieving ERI, according to stakeholders in every region, youth activism is largely limited to a specific group of youth. Local Government representatives report the same people being active and cooperating with them, while a large part remains inactive. However, respondents also talk about peer-influence as something happening as a result of the project within and outside schools. In Shida Kartli an initiative called Senior Friend, which had teens talking about different issues to junior schoolmates, aimed to increase the breadth of youth engagement. Senior friends prepared presentations and trainings on the topics identified by their junior schoolmates. This approach was used in other regions as well. Even out of the school context, youth reported having debated and discussed the importance of civic engagement, human rights and gender issues not only with their peers, but also with adults including their family members. As a representative of municipality noted, “When teens can see others in other villages are motivated and actively participating in different events, they also want to be motivated and participate in different projects. It works!” (Interview with a municipality representative, Shida Kartli).

The above data and analysis suggests that the project was effective in achieving expected result I. The main strength leading to the effectiveness of the project was its combination of training with the opportunity to put the knowledge into practice. The main weakness in the effectiveness of the project was that it engaged youth who were already likely to be involved in civic life, rather than working with those less likely to, although it did make some efforts to increase the participation of youth who are generally less active. Hence, future programming should aim to provide intensive training to young people less likely to participate in civic engagement activities.

## **ER2. Proactive partnerships are established between community adults (municipality representatives) and youth leaders.**

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<sup>16</sup> Due to rounding, the difference in this case appears to be 17%. It is in fact 18%.

Establishing proactive partnerships between youth and municipality representatives was achieved through trainings provided to youth and local government officials as well as through the funding of small grant initiatives for local community adult-youth groups. Focus groups and interviews with project stakeholders show that such partnerships have largely been achieved and that both partners evaluate the tools used for establishing this partnership and the existing partnerships very positively.

Training WVG provided to municipality representatives and youth were described as very useful for both sides. One local government representative noted:

The best thing they [WVG] have done related to municipalities is opening our eyes. I might have seen before but only what happened within a meter from me. [WVG] did an eye-opening surgery and we [LG staff and youth] saw more distant things. We saw details, other factors, issues, possibilities, and goals that we did not know before (Interview with municipality representative, Shida Kartli).

As a result of the training, youth and municipality representatives started to understand each other's potential. Trainings in communication skills, advocacy and project management helped youth to prepare quality presentations and proposals which further reinforced municipality representatives' positive attitudes towards youth. All of the local government representatives interviewed noted a positive change in their views. They started perceiving youth not as a problem as they used to, but rather as resources, and involved them in every possible activity. As a local government employee stated, "It was before when people were thinking that teens were a problem. Now they are a resource for us, for the municipality as well" (Interview with municipality representative, Samtskhe Javakheti).

Working with municipality staff and youth resulted in both sides' readiness and motivation for cooperation. Youth started asking municipalities for support and received it in most cases, while municipality representatives started considering the needs of youth in their work. One young person stated:

Last year a representative of local government visited our school several times and asked us what we needed from them. This was a huge motivation for us, because they were so attentive to us. We became more active, and arranged several meetings with them afterwards (Focus group with WVG targeted youth, Imereti).

Youth also reported that if before only children from urban schools were involved in activities municipalities organized, now they started informing and involving rural youth in their events.

As a result of these processes, the relation between youth and municipalities is described as very positive and useful for both sides. One young person stated, "In case of any problem, any time, Gori municipality is always supportive. They always meet you with a smile and offer cooperation. We don't have a feeling anymore that we go there, they just listen to us, and we come back without any result" (Focus group with WVG targeted youth, Shida Kartli).

Youth started participating in the budgeting, planning and implementation of municipally-funded projects aimed at addressing community needs. As one municipality representative noted, "Youth did not know that someone could do something for them, but after World Vision's work, the municipality felt the obligation to work with youth. Now teens know when and where to come and they give us advice before planning events" (Interview with municipality representative, Samtskhe Javakheti). Municipalities started to generalize this participatory approach to other villages, where WVG has not worked. In Kakheti this practice became institutionalized through preparation and adoption of a youth policy document. As noted in the previous section, the activities within the project likely contributed to the 18 percentage point, statistically significant increase in young people reporting that they would definitely become a member of "an active partnership between youth, local government and NGOs" when compared with the baseline.

There are some differences between regions in terms of levels of cooperation between municipalities and youth, with Kvemo Kartli and Samegrelo being less active in this regard. The perceived reason for this lack of cooperation in Kvemo Kartli among all stakeholders is a lack of activism among youth. In contrast, in Samegrelo, there was a lack of support for the project among local government.

Given the above, the second expected result has been achieved. However, the achievement is differentiated by region, with a lower level of achievement in Samegrelo and Kvemo Kartli, and a significantly higher level of achievement in Kakheti, achieved through the adoption of a policy document which appears to have been effectively implemented by local government. In this regard, future programming aimed at encouraging youth civic engagement should attempt to achieve similar institutionalized mechanisms in other regions, though being careful to ensure that key stakeholder buy-in is present so that policy does not remain on paper alone.

### **ER3. Cooperation networks between universities and public schools are established in 6 target regions.**

Cooperation between universities and public schools happened with the support of CDI. 24 university students that underwent rigorous training in action research methodology worked with 36 schools in urban and rural areas of their regions to identify and solve important local problems with small grants received from the project.

The main idea was linking universities with schools to boost youth activism in these schools using an action research methodology. Both university and school students report positive experiences related to the training they received within this component. As the biggest success of the project, they mention school students realizing the importance of activism and the fact that they have the power to change things around them. As one young person noted, “We, young people, can change certain things around us. I have participated in many activities, me and my friends, and I think we change thinking in the society. I am not talking about broad masses but I mean around us...” (Focus group with CDI targeted youth, Imereti).

Even though the collaboration between schools and universities happened and is evaluated as a very positive process both by university and school students, this cannot be described as establishing a network that will continue functioning in the future. The project activities rather created a group of youth which became more active than they were before. This is illustrated by the following chain of quotes. A young person stated, “High school students were gathered in the hall. We were asked what the problem at school was. After identifying the problem, those who were interested stayed.” As a result of staying, a focus group participant reported students engaged in beneficial trainings. They said, “Those trainings were very good and important for us. We learned how to find useful information on the internet, how to use it, make a project and present it to the audience. We also learned how to do research and did it ourselves at our school” (Focus group with CDI beneficiaries, Imereti). However, in all regions, the youth reported being involved in many other extracurricular activities that different NGOs offered as well as through self-organized entities (e.g. clubs), besides the activities that SYNCS engaged them in. As a university student in Kvemo Kartli stated, “Mostly one and the same students are engaged in all projects. They are very few students who want to learn more.”

University students and professors acquired specific knowledge in research methods that they anticipate using in their future work. The project also linked universities with schools which, according to the CDI representative, can be described as “a revolution of sorts which now needs evolution to be sustained.” However, it remains uncertain whether this cooperation between public schools and universities will continue in the future.

Given the above, project performance on expected result 3 should be considered partially effective. Although output level indicators were achieved, it appears unlikely that the project activities will lead to a sustained network between schools and universities. Hence, future programming should work towards the institutionalization of cooperation mechanisms.

**ER4. A virtual web-based portal is developed to serve as a platform to share best practices and strengthen cooperation between schools and civil society stakeholders.**

The platform (<https://ganatldi.ge>) was recently developed and will be presented on January 31, at the end of the project. It was originally intended to be developed within the first year of the project. The delay was caused by the technical difficulties in tender procedures. It is unknown whether it will be used by schools and civil society stakeholders for strengthening their cooperation. Hence, at the output level, the virtual web-based portal has been developed, but it is unclear whether it will in fact lead to the expected result at the outcome level. CDI is the main responsible part for updating and maintaining this platform, while WVG staff report they will also contribute to increasing its visibility.

**Unforeseen Factors which inhibited project implementation and unforeseen achievements**

A number of unforeseen factors inhibited project implementation during the project, including resistance to youth civic engagement among parents and teachers, language barriers, and a high rate of personnel turnover both within the project team and among project participants. In general, the project partners took appropriate efforts to dampen the effect of challenges which emerged. The project also had a number of unforeseen achievements which made strong contributions to the level of effectiveness of the project, and particularly the development of a policy document for local government youth work in Kakheti.

The largest unforeseen, external factor which inhibited achievement on the outcome level was parents' and teachers' resistance to youth activism. Even though educational workshops were implemented in the framework of the project that included teachers and parents, students involved in the components of the project noted that teachers and parents often do not realize the importance of civic engagement and do not encourage (and in some cases even discourage) youth from getting involved in different project activities, as noted above. Focus groups conducted with youth in all regions presented a mixed picture regarding teachers' attitudes towards youth activism, as perceived by youth. In every region students talked about some teachers and school principals who are very supportive towards youth and became even more supportive after they saw tangible results achieved through youth activism. As one principle stated, "We now believe in our students. We are now aware of their abilities...Before we believed that they could not do anything without us...We now believe that they can do certain things independently" (Interview with school principal, Kakheti). Perceived support from schools and increased trust towards youth also varies, but between schools, rather than regions. In all regions, but especially in Shida Kartli, students report that some, mainly older, teachers and principals have quite rigid attitudes towards their activities, which is hardly changeable. As one young person noted, "There was a project within which we had to go to another school and train students there to share our knowledge. It was in a village. And when we arrived the principal didn't even know what the training was. It was a huge problem, she/he chastised us and kicked us out" (Focus group with CDI beneficiaries, Shida Kartli).

According to the young people in the project, adults often perceive trainings, participation in projects, and other informal education as waste of time, needless and something which is less important compared to formal education. As a result of adults' influence, many young people think the same. Therefore, they create a significant barrier for expanding civic engagement. Moreover, formal education for many youth continues after school, since most have private tutors. This leaves less time for other activities, and university students report this fact often prevented youth from attending trainings and meetings organized



within the framework of the project. In this regard, future programming should include stronger measures to dampen adult resistance to youth civic engagement, including activities which highlight the tangible benefits of training provided to youth for success later in life.

Personnel turnover took place at many levels of the project, and influenced its implementation. Changes happened not only among project staff members, but also in university and school students who were selected at the beginning of the project. Even though turnover is always possible and even expected within a two-year time span, high rates should be expected among youth in particular as they are likely to change their priorities, desires and even residence even more often than adults. Municipal staff turnover also resulted in the loss of trained stakeholders and the need to start some work anew. However, the project team's response to this issue was exemplary, as discussed in subsequent sections below.

The project was also affected by changes at the policy level. Policy changes in the composition of municipalities inhibited the project in particular. Previously rural municipalities were merged with largely urban ones during the project period. In turn, this meant that the policy document developed within the project had to be written anew to take into account the needs of urban as well as rural youth.

Finally, language issues in ethnic minority areas affected the project implementation in Kvemo Kartli region, where according to the interviews done in this region youth activism seems lowest. At project start-up, the implementation team assumed that youth recruited as leaders would understand and communicate in Georgian language freely. This was not the case, and additional resources were needed for working with ethnic minority youth.

It should be highlighted that all these issues were identified during the implementation stage of the project and to some extent also addressed. By mobilizing additional resources to work with schools, ethnic minorities, municipalities and universities, WVG and CDI were effective in addressing these unforeseen factors and minimized their impact on project outputs.

Besides these unforeseen factors that negatively affected project implementation, there were a number of unplanned achievements that demonstrate the success of the project. The youth policy document which was developed in Kakheti and is very likely to be replicated in other regions, is probably the most important achievement that was not included as an objective or expected result of the project but happened as a logical continuation of the project driven processes in municipalities. This document can be considered as the institutionalization of good practices related to municipality based youth work and dampened the loss of trained staff in municipalities. Moreover, peer influence, as reported by the respondents, happened independently from project activities not only between youth but also between municipality staff. The skills and knowledge that youth and municipality representatives acquired during the project was transferred to peers and colleagues via formal and informal means. Finally, municipalities and schools started to fund youth devised, led, and implemented activities, another result that went beyond expectations.

The project made a number of assumptions. The assumptions were neither inaccurate nor did conditions change in such a manner to make the related risks of the project's assumptions appear. Hence, the assumptions did not affect project implementation. To view the assumptions, please see the logical framework in the appendix of this evaluation.

Overall, the project was highly effective in achieving expected result 1. Expected result 2 was also achieved broadly speaking. However, the level of achievement was lower in Kvemo Kartli and Samegrelo. Expected result 3 was partially achieved, with success at the output level, but uncertain levels of effectiveness at the

creation of a sustained network. Expected result 4 was achieved at the output level, but it is not possible to say that at the outcome level activities associated with ER4 will be achieved.

## *Efficiency*

The evaluation takes efficiency to refer mainly to the accountability and performance of project management. Overall, the project was managed efficiently. However, monitoring and evaluation practices within the project are problematic.

The project was not easy to manage considering its structure. While the head office of WVG was formally responsible for overall management (including monitoring and reporting) of the project and the technical management for day to day operations, regional coordinators supported daily operations in the field. For the second component of the project, cooperation between schools and universities, CDI was responsible. All these people can be considered as managers of the project who were managing the processes at different levels.

Overall management and accountability of the project is evaluated very positively by all sides. Municipality representatives describe WVG's team as, "A team of professionals who are very comfortable to work with" (interview with municipality representative, Kakheti). School representatives also report positive experiences while working with WVG and highlight their support whenever the school asked for it. Regional coordinators report that WVG staff in the head office provided them with all that was needed in a timely manner. Regional coordinators who joined the project had different levels of financial and administrative skills and different experiences working with WVG. Some of them needed more coaching from the head office staff than others, and WVG staff invested their time in training local coordinators that needed it for improved administrative and reporting during the project.

Students describe CDI staff as very involved and responsive. As a student noted, "Whenever we encountered any problem during the project implementation either financial or problematic, everything was resolved with their help" (interview with a student, Imereti). Students also report appropriate spending of funds at schools they worked with.

Changes of head office staff, regional coordinators and selected youth that happened during the project implementation hindered the project minimally. This resulted from the timely replacement of vacant regional coordinator positions.

The most problematic area of project management was monitoring and evaluation. The project was a theory-driven project, which made its monitoring and evaluation especially important. However, the monitoring and evaluation plan was not implemented as envisioned.

Monitoring was scheduled twice a year, however, it happened only once and even then it was done without actually visiting the regions. The only monitoring of the project happened after a year from the start of the project and checked (based on existing project reports) whether the targets (outputs) were achieved. Even though almost all targets were achieved, the monitoring report included a list of recommendations regarding the improvement of sources of verification. However, it remains unknown whether these recommendations have been taken into account since further monitoring of the project has not happened afterwards. WVG staff explained this fact noting a lack of time and resources.

Even when monitoring activities took place, a number of questions remain about the veracity of the information reported. *Rather than an attempt to improve the apparent impact of the project, the lack of accuracy actually appears to underestimate the impact of the project.* For instance, in one region it appears that 11

schools were worked with instead of 10, suggesting a higher beneficiary count than reported. Moreover, the list of students and schools in which World Vision worked contains a number of inaccuracies about who WVG worked with and where they worked. On top of this, participant lists do not appear to have been collected for students engaged in the youth organized training. These facts were uncovered during the project's evidence building exercise.

When it comes to evaluation, the logical framework is weak in that it primarily uses output-based indicators instead of outcome-based indicators. Of the 18 indicators in the logical framework, only one or two can be considered an outcome indicator. The clear example of an outcome indicator is, “% increase among youth of targeted regions reporting their active engagement in community issues (target will be set after baseline)”, which is found in the project's logical framework. In addition, one could argue that successful completion of trainings, measured by pre and post-tests, would also be an outcome indicator. Using outcome based indicators was possible, given the evaluation component considered in the project design. The lack of outcome indicators is a clear weakness in the project, and responsibility here lays with project management.

Even with the above outcome indicators, World Vision did not take appropriate steps to evaluate whether it had reached them. When it comes to the pre- and post- tests, World Vision did not implement the testing. With the first outcome indicator, the organization did not commission an appropriate baseline study that would enable the rigorous evaluation of the project. In this regard, the baseline was inadequate, because it:

1. Used an inappropriate screener question that excluded all students not already civically engaged, making the single outcome indicator noted above impossible to measure;
2. Did not use appropriate sample size calculations, as the simple margin of error formula appears to have been used. This formula does not take into account the clustered and stratified nature of the data collection in Georgia;
3. Did not carry out a large enough survey, given that the margin of error on the baseline is likely somewhere between 9 and 13%;
4. Did not collect appropriate data to actually calculate a margin of error or enable appropriate statistical testing, given that information on clusters is not present in the baseline evaluation dataset, thus making it impossible to take into account an accurate margin of error;
5. Did not translate questionnaires, but rather used an on the spot translator to carry out interviews;
6. Did not properly document how the survey was carried out.

Hence, we conclude the monitoring and evaluations practices were highly problematic within the project.

Besides the above noted issues with monitoring and evaluation, WVG and CDI did not integrate their activities. Rather, each organization worked with different groups of young people. This represents a missed opportunity as each project component had significant potential synergies and shared an overarching goal: improved participatory decision making practices. This may have increased the number of young people engaged in the project, however, it likely dampened the ultimate effect of it. Hence, future programming should consider taking advantage of natural synergies within a given project.

Overall, project management has been accountable and efficient. However, monitoring and evaluation activities within the project were poorly implemented, which is particularly problematic for WVG since the program appears to have had a significant and positive impact on the lives of young people, from available evidence. Thus, it is strongly recommended that WVG provides intensive monitoring and evaluation training to all project managers and coordinators. In tangent to this, the organization should consider allocating more human resources to the subject, including the potential addition of an extra monitoring and evaluation intern. Moreover, prior to project start up a detailed monitoring and evaluation

plan including concrete actions that need to be taken to ensure the accuracy of the data should be taken. This is critical to the future of WVG activities if the organization wants to have a firm understanding of its impact in Georgia.

## *Sustainability*

Sustainability, as discussed in this section, is taken to include local ownership, partnering, transformed relationships, and local and national advocacy, in line with World Vision's sustainability drivers. The resilience of families and households is not discussed insofar as the project does not appear to have directly targeted this driver of sustainability, although it may have had some indirect effect through helping to create a more civically engaged citizenry. This section aims to specifically address whether the project design and implementation contributed to the sustainability of interventions; how the organizations involved contributed to project objectives; how capacities were strengthened at the individual and organizational level; the extent to which interventions are likely to be sustained after the completion of the project; the effectiveness of exit strategies; ownership of objectives and achievements; the project's embeddedness in local institutions; how well relations were developed within existing institutions; and existing factors that contribute to and hinder sustainability of results.

Before proceeding, a note on this section is important. The analysis of project sustainability is limited given that the evaluation was ongoing at the end of the project, whereas sustainability analysis is more appropriate after some time passes between project implementation. Hence, this part mainly looks at the prospects for sustainability based on analysis of implemented activities and stakeholders' opinions regarding the project's sustainability.

The project approach, which was bottom up and thus enabled beneficiaries to identify needs themselves, is promising in terms of sustainability. One large component of the project was its capacity-building component. School and university students as well as municipality and university staff acquired new skills within the framework of the project. They describe SYNCS provided trainings as useful and informative. As discussed above, the grant component of the project enabled them to put newly acquired skills into practice during the course of the project. Participants reported that putting new skills into practice and achieving real results that other people appreciated gave them self-confidence and motivated them to remain active in the future. Thus, enabling beneficiaries to lead the processes and combining classroom learning with practice created a good foundation for sustaining achieved changes in the future.

Another promising approach of the project was working in parallel with youth and municipality representatives and preparing both sides simultaneously for cooperation. This approach guaranteed that both sides are similarly prepared for cooperation and thus chances for successful cooperation increased significantly. In several cases, successful cooperation occurred and both sides benefited. Hence, cooperation is more likely to be sustained. The latter is true for schools as well, although to a lesser extent. Even though SYNCS did not work as much with school administration as it did with municipalities, school administration saw tangible results achieved by youth and started to value them more. Most importantly, some schools started allocating budget for youth-initiated projects within the schools.

In regard to the project's sustainability in this domain, the project's success is reflected in the 18 percentage point increase in young people reporting that they would definitely become a member of "an active partnership between youth, local government and NGOs" when compared with baseline, as noted above. This fact aside, there was an 10 percentage point increase among panel participants reporting that youth civic engagement is very important for the country's development, as noted above. Moreover, the absolute majority of respondents in both baseline (92%) and end-line survey (96%) report that young people should be involved in solving their region's problems.

Besides enhancing individual skills and knowledge, some activities of the project resulted or are expected to result in more sustainable organizational changes. For example, cooperation between youth and municipalities led to the development of a youth policy document, which will remain a guiding document for municipalities and will minimize the threat of losing local government connections with youth as staff turnover takes place. Similarly, universities are expected to include action research methodologies in their curriculums, further contributing to the institutionalization, and thus, the sustainability of project results. Moreover, project coordinators report acquiring new knowledge during the course of the project, which will help them in the future to better plan and manage youth related projects and cooperate with municipalities and CSOs. They see some ways to involve young leaders in their future activities including proposal writing and fundraising activities.

Another important component of the project was providing youth with small grants for implementing community initiatives. Most activities youth implemented in this component are sustainable in their nature since they resulted in renovated and well equipped school libraries, spaces for discussions, adapted school spaces for children with disabilities, sport spaces, youth centres, rehabilitated roads and parks among a wide variety of other projects that are in principle sustainable. These outputs of community initiatives are quite likely to sustain in the future and benefit other young people. Similar outputs were achieved within the framework of the second component of the project which entailed cooperation between schools and universities. As one student reports, “After the completion of the project we visited the school one more time to check if there was interest among students in the books that we purchased during the project. We checked the records and saw that the usage of the books increased” (Interview with a student, Kvemo Kartli).

Peer influence is an important factor for sustainability within the project. Project-targeted youth reported that they often discuss the topics that are important for them with peers and adults. Even though they say they often do not manage to persuade their peers or even older generations about certain topics, such as gender equality and LGBTQ rights among other topics, they think they have greater influence on younger children, whom they talk with. They report witnessing how these children change their behavior (e.g. no longer engaging in bullying, littering, etc.). School teachers and principals confirm student reports, noting that participants are role models for younger children who want to become as active as they are. As one noted:

Because students from our school were so active, it raised interest of other young people outside of the school. While cleaning a public space, they had contact and as a result young people who did nothing but standing in the neighborhood (‘at *Birzha*’) decided to clean and fix a small territory near a church. I think this is a very positive result (School principal, Shida-kartli).

Youth reported that at the end of the project they were able to receive some funding for their projects from the school budget and municipal budget. The regional coordinator in Samtskhe–Javakheti noted that in May 2017, in the middle of the project, all community initiatives were co-funded by other donors, indicating that youth were able to search for and find partners to implement their projects with. This is very promising from the sustainability point of view.

Last but not least, WVG’s advocacy work with central government, namely with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, is important for the sustainability of the project’s results. Primarily, encouragement that came from these ministries made local governments more motivated to work on youth affairs. It also made it possible to involve high officials of local government in coordination meetings and youth forums where youth related issues were discussed together with youth. Most importantly, a youth policy document was adopted in Kahketi. On top of this, ongoing work on the guidelines of preparing youth policy documents combined with the commitment

from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (now the Ministry of Education) to present the youth policy document and its guidelines to all municipalities in Georgia and the commitment of Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure to make youth policy part of municipal development plans creates a solid foundation for generalizing best practices across the country and sustaining these positive changes that were already achieved within the framework of SYNCS.

While in many respects the project appears to be sustainable, some factors work against project sustainability. Given that educational opportunities are most available in the cities of the country, it is likely that many young people will migrate for educational or work purposes. Although there is little the project could have hoped to do about this global and local trend, migration of active young people from rural areas is likely to reduce the impact on the communities the project worked in.

The regular turnover of municipal staff, which is also out the control of the project team, is another structural barrier to the sustainability of the project. While training will not disappear and former municipal employees may be able to apply the training they received in future employment, the development of youth work policy documents that have stakeholder backing is the best available tactic to dampen the effect of this barrier. Moreover recent structural changes in the government that resulted in Ministry of Youth Affairs becoming part of Ministry of Education, according to WVG staff, was perceived by some municipalities as youth affairs becoming a lesser priority for the state, which threatens the status of youth workers and the work they do within these municipalities. Despite challenges, the project's efforts in this regard are positive and should be expanded upon in future programming.

The relatively small share of active youth is another barrier to project sustainability. As noted above, a relatively small number of young people engage the municipalities. Moreover, the project engaged young people who World Vision had previously worked with. On the one hand, this likely increased the quality of the project's impact, while on the other hand, it limited its scope. Without a general movement in the country towards civic engagement, the effects of programming have the potential to dissipate over time. This weakness, which basically corresponds to the quality-quantity trade-off, should be considered in future program design, and efforts should be made to balance the two. In this regard, it is recommended that World Vision prioritize the participation of young people they have not worked with in the past.

Overall, a number of important outcomes are likely to support the sustainability of the action including:

- Changed viewpoints of youth and municipalities on the one hand, and youth and school administration on the other hand, regarding each other's resources and potential;
- Youth being independent and self-confident about their abilities to change things around them;
- Positive experiences for youth in solving community problems and the determination to continue activism in the future;
- Positive experiences for local government and schools working with youth and in establishing practices to fund youth initiated projects;
- Established youth centres, a youth council in Telavi, and a leaders' league that serve as a link between youth and municipalities;
- Material outputs of community initiatives implemented by youth that are likely to benefit other children and youth;
- A youth policy document that will serve as a roadmap for newcomers in the municipalities and will ensure that youth needs and potential are considered in the everyday work of local government;
- The development of positive relations between CSOs, municipalities, schools and universities that will ease their cooperation in the future;

- The central government's involvement and commitment to make youth policy part of municipalities' development plans.

On the other hand, there are factors that represent challenges to the sustainability of the project, including:

- A low proportion of active youth in rural areas which is not enough to create a critical mass for sustained change;
- Turnover of municipal staff and changing policy priorities at the municipal and central government levels;
- High mobility of young people and the high chance that many active youth will migrate from their communities (rural areas) to urban areas for study or work;
- Low levels of public awareness regarding the importance of civic engagement. Parents can greatly prevent youth from being active citizens through pushing them towards formal education alone;
- The attitudes of some school administrations remains rigid and skeptical toward youth activism and issues like gender equality, human rights etc. This can prevent future generations from critical thinking and being active members of their community.

Overall, while SYNCS-targeted youth seem unlikely to lose the skill sets they've gained, to become inactive citizens, or in the medium-term to stop spreading their skills through peer influence, unless a critical mass of active youth with the requisite skill sets for active citizens are achieved, it is questionable whether gains achieved within the project period will be sustained. In turn, this suggests the need for follow-up activities that are on a larger scale and aim to support young people who are less engaged, but interested in becoming more engaged citizens.

# Conclusions

Overall, the evaluation team positively evaluates the SYNCS project, although room for improvement is clearly present in several components of the project. Importantly, the project has significant potential for scaling, and all stakeholders expressed a clear demand for similar but larger scale projects.

Project relevance was strong across the board. The key strength of the project design in this regard was that young people were able to design their participation in the project, which in turn led to all activities being directly relevant. Both school staff members and local government found the activities highly relevant, and even eye-opening in this regard. The only weakness found in the domain of relevance is that some trainings were not age differentiated.

When it comes to the effectiveness of the project, achievement varies with each expected result. With the **ER1, empowered young boys and girls plan and implement community initiatives**, the evaluation team concludes that SYNCS was highly effective. The project achieved these results, and in turn produced a wide variety of societal goods in the communities in which the young people carried out initiatives. These included projects which addressed cross-cutting issues like gender, ethnicity, and disability. With regard to **ER2, that proactive partnerships are established between community adults (local government representatives) and youth leaders**, the project was also highly effective. As it relates to the results of partnerships between school administration and youth, the project was still effective with some transformations of views on the part of students and school administrations, and it was less effective than with the partnerships between young people and local government. Nonetheless, the project activities led to a transformation of the views of many young people, school principals, and local government officials. Although this ER was accomplished in a highly effective manner overall, the results vary by region, with weaker effectiveness in Samegrelo and Kvemo Kartli. With **ER3, cooperation networks between universities and public schools are established in six regions**, the project was moderately ineffective. Within the project, connections were established between young people; however, the networks lack institutionalization. Hence, it cannot be said that networks were established, although the roots necessary for a network have been. Finally, with **ER4, the creation of a virtual web-based portal to serve as a platform to share best practices and strengthen cooperation between schools and civil society stakeholders**, the project achieved this ER on the output level. Whether SYNCS will have accomplished this ER at the outcome level however waits to be seen given the late launch of the platform.

With efficiency, the project was generally successful. All stakeholders had positive impressions of the project management, and were generally appreciative of their effective work. Challenges that emerged over the course of the project were addressed, sometimes leading to positive and unanticipated outcomes. The largest issue within the efficiency domain, however, is that the project's monitoring and evaluation work was carried out in a poor manner, to the detriment of the project's evaluation. Given the fact that data collected within this evaluation generally suggests a positive impact, this is particularly unfortunate as it weakens the ability of the evaluators to understand the exact impact of the project. This issue aside, the lack of integration of CDI and WVG activities represents a missed opportunity.

In terms of sustainability, the conclusions are least clear. A number of factors support the project's sustainability. The youth work policy document is the strongest accomplishment of the project in this domain. The transformation of outlooks among stakeholders is also a clear accomplishment of the project that is likely to have a sustained impact. At the same time, a number of structural barriers including parents and teachers attitudes and youth migration will likely work against the sustainability of project impact in the communities the project worked in. Importantly, the web portal would likely have been more



sustainable if it had been developed earlier in the project, because it would have enabled World Vision Georgia to develop its user base.

The above conclusions lend themselves to a number of recommendations and lessons learnt, which are described below.

# Recommendations and Lessons Learnt

The above findings suggest a number of recommendations and lessons learnt for different stakeholders, including other organizations working with young people on civic engagement, World Vision Georgia specifically, and the donor community.

## Relevance

The project was highly relevant to its participants, which stemmed from two key factors: 1) the bottom-up approach wherein, young people themselves identified their needs, and 2) the combination of classroom training with the opportunity to put skills into practice. This leads to two positive lessons learnt:

- Projects aimed at encouraging youth civic engagement should use a bottom-up approach that is flexible and enables participants to identify the direction of project activities;
- Projects that aim to increase participant skill sets should include a mechanism that enables participants to practice the skills acquired in training in a real-life setting.

The only significant weakness with regard to relevance within the project was a lack of age differentiation in trainings. Hence, in future actions, it is recommended that:

- Trainings aimed at young people be tailored to the age of participants;

## Effectiveness

The project was highly effective in achieving expected results 1 and 2, and less successful at achieving expected results 3 and 4. With regard to the high effectiveness of the project on ER 1 and 2, the evaluation team has concluded that this stems from the project's design. Hence, the above two recommendations for future programming also apply to encouraging the effectiveness of other projects within the same field. In addition to the above two recommendations, the project's impact was expanded through the institutionalization of local government youth policy through a policy document, which may be adopted outside of the region which has already adopted it. In this vein, the evaluation recommends that:

- Future projects that work with local government attempt to institutionalize the means of collaboration between governmental stakeholders through the development of relevant policy documents.

Although the project was highly effective at achieving results 1 and 2, implementation does provide a number of lessons learnt. First, the need to work with children's parents more intensively as stakeholders within communities is clear. Their backing would, in turn, enable broader civic engagement in the communities through reducing resistance to young people becoming civically engaged. The same is true of working with teachers and school administrations. To achieve this, it is recommended that:

- Meetings be held with parents, teachers, and principals in the communities in which project activities take place in order to explain to them the tangible benefits of young people's participation in training sessions and project activities prior to their implementation.

With expected results 3 and 4, the project was less effective. With expected result three, there was not a strong enough effort to institutionalize relations between universities and schools, in turn meaning that networks were not established. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Future projects aimed at establishing networks include activities aimed at institutionalizing the cooperation in some form or another, and consider some way of making these institutional forms sustainable.

With expected result 4, the project did not develop the platform early enough to gain a significant user base within the project time frame. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Projects which intend to develop online platforms with significant user bases should prioritize the development of the platform in the early stages of project implementation.

The project did not effectively integrate the activities of CDI and WVG, even though a natural synergy was present. Young people engaged in community projects and trainings at their schools could have easily integrated into the attempt to develop networks of collaboration. This represents a missed opportunity. Hence, it is recommended that future programming:

- Attempt to take advantage of natural synergies between different project components.

The project encountered difficulties stemming from policy changes over the course of the project period. This is an issue that is largely out of the control of the project team. At the same time, through working more intensively with government at the central and local levels, the project team could have avoided the setbacks noted in the above sections. Hence, it is recommended that future programs:

- Coordinate with central government in order to achieve lasting change.

Finally, the project assumed that young people in ethnic minority areas would be able to communicate freely in Georgian, which turned out not to be the case. This challenge was overcome within the project. Nonetheless, this challenge should serve as a lesson learnt, and future programming should ensure the availability of minority language program staff. Notably, given the inequalities ethnic minorities face in Georgia, it is generally recommended that additional resources be directed toward project implementation when working with minority youth.

### **Efficiency**

In terms of efficiency, the project was largely successful. However, the largest issue with management of the project was accurate monitoring and evaluation. During the course of this evaluation, the evaluation team uncovered a number of issues with monitoring documentation. Since the inaccuracies largely underestimate the project impact, this is largely to the detriment of World Vision Georgia rather than an evasion of accountability. Hence, it is recommended that:

- World Vision Georgia project managers receive intensive training on monitoring and evaluation;
- Projects develop monitoring and evaluation plans that include concrete instructions on steps to take to ensure the accurate recording of monitoring information. It is particularly crucial to have information about young people's age or grade level, their names, and their place of residence or study for impact evaluations to take place;
- Monitoring activities include participant lists together with contact and demographic information;
- Monitoring activities be carried out on a bi-annual rather than annual basis;
- WVG should follow up on recommendations received as a result of the monitoring processes it carries out.

Besides the above, the project's logical framework had a heavy emphasis on output variables rather than outcome indicators. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Current project logical frameworks are reviewed to ensure the inclusion of both output and outcome indicators;
- Current project logical frameworks develop outcome indicators that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART);
- Future projects include a mix of SMART output and outcome indicators;
- WVG provide appropriate levels of resources to carry out monitoring activities;
- WVG take appropriate steps to review the quality of proposed baseline surveys, ensuring that they are of appropriate design to enable impact measurement.

### **Sustainability**

As noted above, the project has unclear levels of sustainability for a number of reasons, however, the project has made some clearly sustainable changes. First and foremost among these is the development of the youth policy document. The youth policy document, which was a product of WVG's work with youth, municipalities and central government was largely possible due to the bringing together of all stakeholders and WVG's advocacy at the central government level. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Future programming which has strong stakeholder backing due to project activities attempt to institutionalize changes within either local or central government policy frameworks;

At the same time, a number of structural barriers including parents and teachers attitudes and youth migration will likely work against the sustainability of project impact in the communities the project worked in. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Future projects should attempt to achieve parental and school administration early and intensively. One potential avenue for this could include presenting the achievements of youth in the present project.

Importantly, the web portal would likely have been more sustainable if it had been developed earlier in the project, because it would have enabled World Vision Georgia to develop its user base. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Future projects should prioritize the early achievement of any component which will require time to take hold.

Given that the project evaluation is taking place during the implementation of the project, the analysis of sustainability can be considered preliminary. This leads to the recommendation that:

- Project implementation plans include a sufficient amount of time between project activity completion and project evaluation.

Finally, although the project has worked towards and encouraged a high level of civic engagement among young people, it has done so among a group that was likely already to be doing so. This stems from the project working with a group of young people who were already engaged with World Vision previously. For civic engagement activities to have a truly sustainable impact, they must reach a large enough group of young people for change to be sustained. Hence, it is recommended that:

- Future projects should prioritize working with young people that World Vision Georgia has yet to engage with over previous beneficiaries.

# Appendix 1: Terms of Reference and Project Logical Framework



SYNCS Evaluation  
Terms of Reference.doc



Logical  
Framework.doc

# Appendix 2: Evaluation Design Document



Evaluation Design  
Document.doc

# Appendix 3: Survey Questionnaire, Focus Group, and Key Informant Interview Guides



Evaluation Survey  
Questionnaire Engli



Evaluation  
Questionnaire Geor



KII guide  
general.docx



KII Guide  
Georgian.docx



KII Guide Project  
Staff.docx



Focus Group  
Guide.docx



Focus Group Guide  
Georgian.docx

## **Appendix 4: Documents Reviewed**

Within the scope of the evaluation, the following documents were reviewed:

1. SYNCNS Monitoring Report - 24.03.17
2. Interim Narrative Report 371284 World Vision
3. 1st Quarterly Report Feb-Apr 2016
4. SYNCNS III Quarterly Report August-November 2016
5. SYNCNS quarterly report August-October 2017
6. SYNCNS quarterly report May-July 2017
7. SYNCNS Quarterly Report February-April 2017
8. Terms of Reference for the SYNCNS Evaluation and Evidence Building Activity
9. Baseline Report for the SYNCNS Project



## Appendix 5: Descriptive Statistics Tables

### What kind of community/civic activities are held in your village? (%)

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
No community/civic activities are held	4	2	15	14
Cultural activities (e.g., play/performance, poetry reading)	17	14	14	0
Sport activities including competitions with different institutions	36	33	35	2
Educational activities and events (debates, trainings, film screenings and discussions)	12	15	13	-2
Entertainment Events (Excursions, 'KVN')	5	6	3	-3
Cleaning activities	19	23	7	-16
Charity activities	5	5	1	-4
Village Support Program	2	3	0	-3
Don't know	0	1	13	12

### Approximately how frequently are community/civic activities held in your village? (%)

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
At least once a week	2	1	4	3
Once in two weeks	1	8	4	-4
Several times a month	9	29	14	-14
Once a month	25	7	24	16
Several times a quarter	8	11	5	-6
Once a quarter	8	29	4	-25
Several times a year	27	13	39	27
Once a year	15	2	5	3
There hasn't been any activity for over a year	3	0	0	0

**Please tell me, have you participated in any community/civic activity held in your village during the last two years? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
Yes, once	96	95	61	-33
Yes, twice	4	5	17	13
Yes 3 times or more frequently	0	0	6	6
No	0	0	15	15

**Please tell me in what kind of activity have you participated in? (%)**

	Panel Wave 2
Cultural activities (e.g., play/performance, poetry reading)	4
Sport activities including competitions with different institutions	15
Educational activities and events (debates, trainings, film screenings and discussions)	12
Entertainment Events (Excursions, "KVN")	0
Cleaning activities	4
Charity activities	0
Village Support Program	0
Other (Specify) _____	0
Not applicable	66

**Please tell me, what was your role in that activity? (%)**

	Panel Wave 2
Participant of activity	29
Organizer group member	4
Organizer group leader	2
Organizer alone	0
Other (Specify) _____	0
Not applicable	65

**Please tell me who organized the event(s) in which you participated? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Panel Wave 2	Difference between waves
School	48	45	16	-30

University	4	2	31	29
Students from the university	1	1	1	0
Local government	26	30	5	-25
An NGO	18	19	6	-13
Youth initiative group	0	0	2	2
Other	0	0	4	4
Not applicable	5	5	69	64

**Have you been to another village in your region in order to participate in an event/activity during the last two years? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Panel Wave 2	Panel wave 2 without missing	Difference between waves
Yes	38	43	15	16	-27
No	62	57	76	84	27
NA	0	0	7	0	NA
Don't Know	0	0	2	0	NA

**Please tell me in what kind of activity have you participated in another village of your region? (%)**

	Panel Wave 2
Cultural activities (e.g., play/performance, poetry reading)	1
Sport activities including competitions with different institutions	5
Educational activities and events (debates, trainings, film screenings and discussions)	6
Entertainment Events (Excursions, 'KVN')	0
Cleaning activities	1
Charity activities	1
Village Support Program	0
Other (Specify) _____	0
NA	86

**Would you personally plan any type of civic activity? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 2 without Don't Know	Difference between waves
Yes	70	81	58	63	-18
No	30	19	34	37	18
Don't Know	0	0	8	NA	NA

**If there is an active partnership between youth, local government and NGOs, would you think you would become member of such partnership? Please use this scale where code “1” means “I wouldn’t become a member” and code “4” means “I would definitely become a member”. (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 2 without Don't Know	Difference between waves
I would not become a member	9	8	9	10	2
I would rather not become a member	11	7	4	4	-3
I would rather become a member	38	42	24	26	-16
I would definitely become a member	43	43	56	60	18
Don't Know	0	0	6	0	0

**How would you rate the importance of youth civic involvement for the county’s general development? Please use this scale where code “1” means “Very unimportant” and code “4” means “Very important”. (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 2 without Don't Know	Difference between waves
Very unimportant	1	1	0	0	-1
Somewhat unimportant	1	0	1	1	1
Somewhat important	12	14	3	3	-11
Very important	86	85	95	96	11
Don't Know	0	0	1	NA	NA

**Do you think young people should participate in problem solving processes in the region? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
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Yes	93	92	96	4
No	6	8	2	-6
Don't Know	1	0	2	2

**In which ways do you think schools should get young people interested in being involved in public affairs? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
They should involve students in decision making	25	20	5	-15
They should be encouraged by financing and implementing their own initiatives	44	45	42	-3
There should be trainings for improving specific skills	20	29	26	-3
Active young people should be rewarded	14	13	15	3
They should cooperate with NGOs	5	3	7	4
They should cooperate with each other	12	16	18	2
They should accept different opinions	3	5	9	4
They should finance the study of talented students	15	22	7	-15
Provide young people with space for meetings	0	0	5	5
Other (Specify) _____	0	0	4	4
—	0	0	4	4
Don't Know	2	1	12	11

**In which ways do you think universities should get young people interested in being involved in public affairs? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
They should involve students in decision making	15	16	4	-12
They should be encouraged by financing and implementing their own initiatives	17	9	30	21
There should be trainings for improving specific skills	25	23	21	-2
Active young people should be rewarded	18	22	10	-11
They should cooperate with NGOs	9	6	6	0

They should cooperate with each other	15	19	8	-11
They should accept different opinions	4	4	7	3
They should finance the study of talented students	3	30	14	-16
Provide young people with space for meetings	0	0	6	6
Other (Specify) _____				
—	1	0	3	3
Don't Know	3	4	25	21

**In which ways do you think local government should get young people interested in being involved in public affairs? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
They should involve students in decision making	11	15	5	-10
They should be encouraged by financing and implementing their own initiatives	15	15	38	23
There should be trainings for improving specific skills	10	12	11	-1
Active young people should be rewarded	9	8	11	3
They should cooperate with NGOs	9	8	5	-4
They should cooperate with each other	14	13	12	-1
They should accept different opinions	4	4	3	-1
They should finance the study of talented students	55	58	24	-34
Provide young people with space for meetings	0	0	8	8
Other (Specify) _____				
—	1	1	0	-1
Don't Know	4	5	27	23

**What do you think are positive aspects of young people's civic engagement? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
Finding a job	4	5	16	11
Making decisions focused on the society	2	2	7	5
New initiatives	7	6	37	31
Self confidence	5	4	8	3

Developing/improving sense of responsibility	6	6	10	4
Developing/improving leadership skills	3	3	4	1
Developing/improving social skills	9	13	27	15
Improving general skills	15	11	9	-2
Opportunity for decision making	3	6	4	-2
Promoting youth activism	12	13	8	-5
Continue studying	9	8	2	-6
Keeping the young generation in the region	4	5	2	-3
Getting familiar with youth needs and problems	3	4	0	-4
Discovering the potential of the young generation	5	3	5	2
Keeping the future work force in the region	2	1	0	-1
Other (Specify) _____	0	0	0	0
Don't know	33	33	18	-15

**What do you think are the difficulties/barriers of young people's civic engagement? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
Not enough experience	16	18	20	2
Combine study / work with a social activities	7	7	19	12
Transportation problems	8	5	7	1
Few employment opportunities	12	11	4	-7
Society's unhealthy attitude to active youth	16	20	15	-5
Security	1	0	4	4
Other	14	15	7	-8
Don't Know	44	45	41	-4

**From where / how do you get the information about different kinds of civic activities? (%)**

	Wave 1	Panel Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference between waves
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Social networks	58	56	61	5
Friends / acquaintances	30	31	43	12
Local broadcasters	12	19	0	-19
School	17	18	23	5
University	3	5	4	-1
Local government	4	4	5	1
NGOs working in the community	6	4	3	-1
Other ( <i>Specify</i> )	0	0	0	0
Don't Know	0	0	3	3

**Have you participated in any World Vision Georgia activities? (%)**

	Wave 2
Yes, I was a student leader that went to trainings with World Vision and/or other NGOs	20
Yes, I participated in a World Vision activity that my peer organized	8
Yes, I participated in some other World Vision activity	6
No, I have not participated in any activity organized by World Vision	71
Other ( <i>Specify</i> )	0



## Appendix 6: Descriptive statistics, gender disaggregated

The baseline dataset did not include a gender variable. Hence, the cross tabulations for each question below only consider the data from those who participated in both the first and second wave of the survey.

### What kind of community/civic activities are held in your village? (%)

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves females	Differences between waves male
No community/civic activities are held	0	5	20	7	2	20
Cultural activities (e.g., play/performance, poetry reading)	16	10	7	24	15	-9
Sport activities including competitions with different institutions	40	22	39	27	5	-1
Educational activities and events (debates, trainings, film screenings and discussions)	10	22	6	24	2	-5
Entertainment Events (Excursions, 'KVN')	6	5	3	2	-3	-3
Cleaning activities	24	22	9	5	-17	-15
Charity activities	0	12	1	0	-12	1
Village Support Program	3	2	0	0	-2	-3
Don't know	0	12	15	10	-2	15

### Approximately how frequently are community/civic activities held in your village? (%)

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves females	Differences between waves male
At least once a week	2	0	7	0	0	6
Once in two weeks	9	7	2	6	-1	-7
Several times a month	24	37	19	9	-28	-5
Once a month	8	7	28	18	11	20
Several times a quarter	9	15	5	6	-9	-4
Once a quarter	34	20	5	3	-17	-30
Several times a year	15	10	28	55	45	13
Once a year	0	5	7	3	-2	7
There hasn't been any activity for over a year	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Please tell me, have you participated in any community/civic activity held in your village during the last two years? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves females	Differences between waves male
Yes, once	97	93	64	57	-36	-33
Yes, twice	3	7	20	14	6	17
Yes 3 times or more frequently	0	0	7	5	5	7
No	0	0	10	24	24	10

**Please tell me in what kind of activity have you participated in? (%)**

	Male	Female
Cultural activities (e.g., play/performance, poetry reading)	1	7
Sport activities including competitions with different institutions	22	2
Educational activities and events (debates, trainings, film screenings and discussions)	4	24
Entertainment Events (Excursions, "KVN")	0	0

Cleaning activities	3	5
Charity activities	0	0
Village Support Program	0	0
Other (Specify) _____	0	0
Not applicable	68	61

**Please tell me, what was your role in that activity? (%)**

	Male	Female
Participant of activity	26	34
Organizer group member	4	2
Organizer group leader	1	2
Organizer alone	0	0
Other (Specify)	0	0
Not applicable	68	61

**Please tell me who organized the event(s) in which you participated? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves females	Differences between waves male
School	38	57	10	24	-32	-28
University	3	0	0	0	0	-3
Students from the university	2	0	2	0	0	0
Local government	38	16	6	2	-14	-32
An NGO	18	19	6	5	-14	-12
Youth initiative group	0	0	2	2	2	2
Other	0	0	2	7	7	2
Not applicable	3	8	69	61	53	66
Don't know	NA	NA	4	0	NA	NA

**Have you been to another village in your region in order to participate in an event/activity during the last two years? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
Yes	36	54	15	18	-35	-22

No	64	46	86	82	35	22
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**Please tell me in what kind of activity have you participated in another village of your region? (%)**

	Male	Female
Cultural activities (e.g., play/performance, poetry reading)	0	2
Sport activities including competitions with different institutions	7	0
Educational activities and events (debates, trainings, film screenings and discussions)	3	12
Entertainment Events (Excursions, 'KVN')	0	0
Cleaning activities	0	2
Charity activities	1	0
Village Support Program	1	0
Other ( <i>Specify</i> )	0	0
NA	87	83

**Would you personally plan any type of civic activity? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
Yes	75	93	48	76	-17	-27
No	25	7	44	17	10	18
Don't Know	NA	NA	9	7	NA	NA

**If there is an active partnership between youth, local government and NGOs, would you think you would become member of such partnership? Please use this scale where code "1" means "I wouldn't become a member" and code "4" means "I would definitely become a member". (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
I would not become a member	12	2	16	0	-2	4
I would rather not become a member	12	0	3	5	5	-9

I would rather become a member	40	44	29	21	-23	-12
I would definitely become a member	36	54	52	74	20	17

**How would you rate the importance of youth civic involvement for the county's general development? Please use this scale where code "1" means "Very unimportant" and code "4" means "Very important". (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
Very unimportant	2	0	0	0	0	-2
Somewhat unimportant	0	0	2	0	0	2
Somewhat important	17	10	2	5	-5	-15
Very important	82	90	97	95	5	15

**Do you think young people should participate in problem solving processes in the region? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
Yes	89	98	96	98	0	6
No	11	2	2	3	0	-9
Don't Know	NA	NA	3	0	NA	NA

**In which ways do you think schools should get young people interested in being involved in public affairs? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
They should involve students in decision making	20	20	6	3	-18	-14

They should be encouraged by financing and implementing their own initiatives	48	40	38	50	10	-11
There should be trainings for improving specific skills	30	28	27	25	-3	-3
Active young people should be rewarded	13	13	20	8	-5	8
They should cooperate with NGOs	3	3	5	10	8	2
They should cooperate with each other	14	20	11	30	10	-3
They should accept different opinions	2	10	3	18	8	2
They should finance the study of talented students	19	28	8	5	-23	-11
Provide young people with space for meetings	0	0	5	5	5	5
Other ( <i>Specify</i> )	0	0	14	22	22	14
Don't Know	2	0	11	13	13	9

**In which ways do you think universities should get young people interested in being involved in public affairs? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
They should involve students in decision making	12	22	3	5	-17	-9
They should be encouraged by financing and implementing their own initiatives	9	10	26	38	28	17
There should be trainings for improving specific skills	17	32	23	18	-14	6
Active young people should be rewarded	25	17	17	0	-17	-8
They should cooperate with NGOs	6	5	6	5	0	0
They should cooperate with each other	19	20	8	8	-12	-11
They should accept different opinions	5	2	6	8	5	2
They should finance the study of talented students	29	32	14	15	-17	-15

Provide young people with space for meetings	0	0	6	5	5	6
Other (Specify) _____	0	0	9	12	12	9
Don't Know	5	2	23	28	25	19

**In which ways do you think local government should interest get young people interested in being involved in public affairs? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
They should involve students in decision making	14	17	3	8	-10	-11
They should be encouraged by financing and implementing their own initiatives	14	17	33	45	28	20
There should be trainings for improving specific skills	8	20	11	13	-7	3
Active young people should be rewarded	8	10	5	23	13	-3
They should cooperate with NGOs	11	5	5	5	0	-6
They should cooperate with each other	14	12	8	20	8	-6
They should accept different opinions	2	7	2	5	-2	0

They should finance the study of talented students	59	56	24	23	-34	-34
Provide young people with space for meetings	0	0	9	8	8	9
Other (Specify) _____	1	2	0	2	0	-1
Don't Know	5	5	30	23	18	26

**What do you think are positive aspects of young people's civic engagement? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
Finding a job	5	6	16	15	9	11
Making decisions focused on the society	3	0	6	7	7	3
New initiatives	7	6	28	49	43	21
Self confidence	5	3	6	10	7	1
Developing/improving sense of responsibility	7	6	12	7	2	5
Developing/improving leadership skills	3	3	4	2	0	1
Developing/improving social skills	13	11	20	37	26	7
Improving general skills	8	17	7	12	-5	-1
Opportunity for decision making	7	6	3	5	-1	-4
Promoting youth activism	12	14	4	12	-2	-7
Continue studying	10	6	1	2	-3	-9
Keeping the young generation in the region	5	6	1	2	-3	-4
Getting familiar with youth needs and problems	7	0	0	0	0	-7
Discovering the potential of the young generation	2	6	4	5	-1	3



Keeping the future work force in the region	0	3	0	0	-3	0
Other (Specify) _____	0	0	0	0	0	0
Don't know	32	36	25	5	-31	-7

**What do you think are the difficulties/barriers of young people's civic engagement? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
Not enough experience	19	15	19	23	8	-1
Combine study / work with a social activities	11	0	11	33	33	0
Transportation problems	7	3	6	8	5	-1
Few employment opportunities	16	3	5	3	0	-11
Society's unhealthy attitude to active youth	14	29	12	20	-9	-2
Security	0	0	0	10	10	0
Other	12	20	8	5	-15	-4
Don't Know	39	56	52	23	-33	14

**From where / how do you get the information about different kinds of civic activities? (%)**

	Male Wave 1	Female Wave 1	Male Wave 2	Female Wave 2	Difference between waves female	Differences between waves male
Social networks	60	49	59	64	15	-1
Friends / acquaintances	37	22	48	36	14	11
Local broadcasters	18	22	0	0	-22	-18
School	12	27	19	28	1	7
University	3	7	3	5	-2	0
Local government	6	0	7	3	3	1

NGOs working in the community	3	5	2	5	0	-1
Other <i>(Specify)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
Don't Know	NA	NA	0	0	NA	NA

**Have you participated in any World Vision Georgia activities? (%)**

	Male	Female
Yes, I was a student leader that went to trainings with World Vision and/or other NGOs	14	28
Yes, I participated in a World Vision activity that my peer organized	5	13
Yes, I participated in some other World Vision activity	5	8
No, I have not participated in any activity organized by World Vision	74	68
Other <i>(Specify)</i>	0	0
Don't Know	0	0