# STUDY ON CITIZENS' Satisfaction with public Services in georgia

# Study Report 2019



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**Fourth Round** 



Prepared by ACT IMPACT for UNDP

Tbilisi, 2020



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Tbilisi

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### **INTRODUCTION**

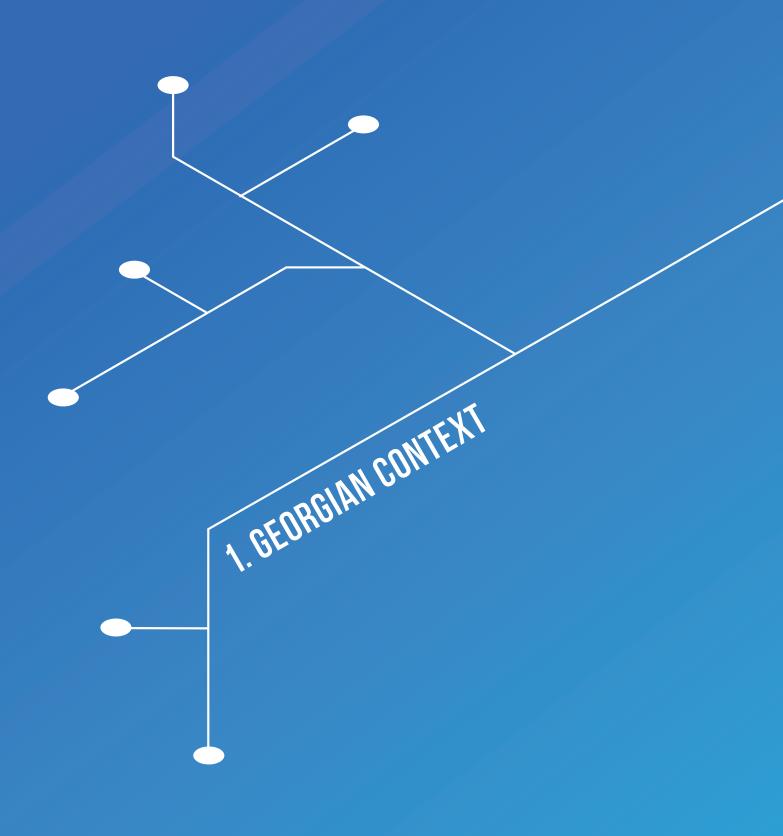
The effective provision of public services to the population of Georgia is one of the main challenges in the country's development process. Significant changes have been made in this direction over the last two decades, although despite the progress made, there are still many shortcomings to be addressed, especially at the regional and local levels. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project - "Promoting Regional and Local Development in Georgia, Phase 2", which was financed and support-ed by governments of Switzerland, Austria, and Georgia, aims to support the Georgian government's systemic reform of regional and local self-government. The assistance provided under the project, including strengthening the skills of local administrations and increasing citizen engagement, is aimed at improving the delivery of public services at the local level.

At the end of 2019, within the framework of the current UNDP project, a study was conducted to determine the level of citizen satisfaction with the services provided by municipalities in Georgia. A similar study has been commissioned by UNDP since 2013. This document is a report of the results of the fourth round of this study.

The survey was conducted in November-December 2019 throughout Georgia and involved the country's adult population. Literature review, as well as qualitative and quantitative research methods, were used to collect the data. The research findings for 2019 are also compared to the results of similar studies conducted in 2017, 2015 and 2013.

The report was prepared by ACT Impact (Analysis and Consulting Team – ACT). The document consists of four main parts. The first chapter is devoted to an overview of the situation in the field of local self-government in Georgia. It describes the steps taken in the process of decentralization and the development of municipalities, the results achieved, and the existing challenges. The second chapter is devoted to the description of the research methodology. It presents the quantitative and qualitative research design, fieldwork and research constraints. The results of the study are presented in the third chapter of the report. Population attitudes are represented according to public services. A separate section is devoted to an overview of satisfaction with services received in the areas of education, so-cial programs, healthcare, recreation, utility services, and road infrastructure. The general assessment of the activities of the municipalities and the attitude of the population towards the issues of citizen involvement in the process of self-government is presented in the final part of the third chapter. The main findings of the study and significant changes are summarized in the fourth part of the document.

UNDP will use the research findings to identify priority areas and plan appropriate activities. Comparing the data with previous studies will make it possible to identify trends and dynamics in the provision of municipal services. The results of the study will also help decision makers to understand the population's level of satisfaction of different services and therefore plan response activities.



## **1. GEORGIAN CONTEXT**

### **1.1. General Situation**

Strengthening local self-government is an important aspect of the country's democratic development, which should ensure that the decision-making process is closer to the population, better taking into account the local interests, and increasing the efficiency of public service delivery. Since gaining independence, changes in Georgia have taken place within the framework of government decentralization and public administration reform. The main focus of this process was on service delivery. Local self-government reform still faces many challenges. According to experts, the process has been delayed due to other significant challenges facing the country in the areas of security and economy (including the restoration of territorial integrity, the economic crisis, etc.). Another obstacle that was identified was the lack of political will and the desire of the ruling political forces to maintain influence at the local level.

In the last two years, two important steps have been taken in the process of local self-government development: constitutional guarantees of self-government have been created and a decentralization strategy for 2020-2025 has been adopted. From the amendments to the Constitution of Georgia on the issue of self-government in 2017, the fourth paragraph of Article 7 of the Constitution is noteworthy. According to this paragraph, local self-government is recognized not as a registered entity in the self-governing unit, but as a right of the citizens of Georgia to regulate cases of local importance through the local self-government, in accordance with the legislation of Georgia. The phrase "self-government is exercised without violating state sovereignty" was finally removed from the constitution, which should be viewed positively. At the same time, two main fundamental principles of the European Charter were also reflected: subsidiarity (exercise of powers in accordance with the scope and nature of relevant tasks, as well as the requirements of rationality, economy and efficiency by the body closest to the citizens) and equality (to provide the financial resources and appropriate resources necessary to exercise the legally bounded responsibilities by local self-governments). Chapter 9 of the Constitution deals entirely with local self-government. The ninth chapter consists of three articles (74, 75 and 76), which define the notion of self-government, the rule and status of self-government and the legal basis for self-government, issues of self-government and state oversight, and guarantees of self-government. Extremely important and principal changes are made in Article 75 paragraph 3 of the Constitution. According to this paragraph, "a self-governing unit shall exercise its powers independently and be responsible for doing so within the ambit of the legislation of Georgia. A self-governing unit's powers, as defined by the organic law, shall be full and exclusive".

On December 31, 2019, the Government of Georgia approved a decentralization strategy for 2020-2025, which is the beginning of a new phase in the development of local self-government. The strategy is based on subsidiarity, the autonomy of the local administration, financial solidarity and participatory democracy principles and aims "further development of self-government, which shall be oriented towards harmonization of national and local interests, sustainable development and welfare of the population "(2020-2025 decentralization strategy; p 8). With strategic priorities, it is possible to identify trends in which processes can be developed over the next 5 years. The three strategic goals outlined in the document respond to the difficulties identified by experts in the field, including the need for fiscal decentralization and the promotion of citizen participation in the self-government processes. It is also important that a consistent and transparent planning system is envisaged to be established at the local level that will be closely linked to the budget and finance management system; and in terms of strengthening local self-government bodies, the document outlines the strategy for the subsequent transfer of additional competencies and state-owned properties.

#### 2020-2025 Strategic Goals and Objectives of the Decentralization Strategy

• The first strategic goal - Increasing the role of self-governments in managing a substantial share of public affairs:

- Objective 1: Ensuring the full implementation of powers granted to local self-governments by the law;
- Objective 2: Increasing competencies of local self-governments based on the principle of subsidiarity.

• The second strategic goal – Ensuring adequate material and financial resources for local self-governments:

- Objective 1: Supporting a consistent increase in local self-government's own revenues;
- ✓ Objective 2: Improving mechanisms for the allocation of state resources.

• The third strategic goal – Developing reliable, accountable, transparent and results-oriented self-government:

- Objective: 1: Introduce effective and innovative management and quality service delivery systems at a local level;
- Objective 2: Introduce high standards of transparency and accountability;
- Objective 3: Facilitate effective participation in the decision-making and implementation at a local level;
- ✓ Objective 4: Set up a local development planning and coordination system.

### **1.2. Situation According to Fields**

No significant changes have been made in the last two years in certain areas of the decentralization process. The territorial arrangement of the country and the principles of formation of self-governing bodies remained unchanged (for details, see: "Study on Citizen's Satisfaction with Public Services in Georgia 2017"). The following are fields, where some steps were taken by the government:

**Legislation.** Under the conditions of the implementation of the constitutional amendments (see above), the refinement of the legislation regulating the work of local self-government remains a significant challenge. There are often inconsistencies between the various normative acts and even the separate articles of some laws. In the work of the self-governing bodies, the lack of harmonization of the sectoral legislation creates a special difficulty, which hinders the fulfillment of the obligations imposed by them. For example, according to the Local Self-Government Code, municipalities have the right to issue a regular passenger transport permit within its administrative borders, however, according to the sectoral legislation, only self-governing cities have such an authority. At the end of 2019, the Government of Georgia prepared and submitted amendments to 172 legislative acts to Parliament for approval, which aimed at bringing the Local Self-Government Code in line with the requirements of the normative base. It is also necessary to harmonize the legislation with international acts and agreements to which Georgia has already acceded.

**Authority of self-governing bodies.** The rights and responsibilities of local self-governments are described in Article 16 of the Local Self-Government Code of Georgia. The legislation distinguishes between two forms of responsibilities: own (exercised exclusively by the local government) and delegated (powers delegated by the central government, which are more efficient to be exercised at the local level). Municipalities' responsibilities include: local natural resource management, local area landscaping, construction permits, provision of street lighting, provision of pre-school and vocational education, waste management, water supply and sewerage provision, organization of public transport, external trade regulations, local cultural heritage management, providing shelter for the homeless, etc.

In 2018-2019, some competencies were added to the list of the local governments' responsibilities, such as:

- The responsibilities provided by the Law of Georgia on Public-Private Partnership;
- Adherence to the rules of group transportation of children for participation in public events;
- The regulation of children's access to print media, public film screening, and admission to mass entertainment dance centers; and the implementation of preventive and appropriate response measures to protect children from alcohol, drugs, psychotropic, toxic and other contaminants, alcoholic beverages, tobacco and nicotine-containing products, and the prohibition of free and paid supplies of capsules.

According to the principle of delegation, the self-governments were also given the responsibility to provide services to ensure the functioning of public schools, including the provision of school transportation, repair and construction work at school.

Municipalities face significant challenges in effectively implementing their own and delegated competencies. According to experts, the lack of fiscal decentralization is one of the main reasons for this. As part of the local self-government reform, the municipalities have been given number of additional competencies, but there has been no transfer of appropriate financial resources for their implementation. Consequently, it is quite difficult for them to attract the necessary funds for the provision of state services to citizens.

The lack of relevant professional staff at the local level is another challenge that reduces the efficiency of municipal work. The scarcity of relevant knowledge and experience among municipal employees, as well as the frequent turnover of staff, often complicates the process of exercising authority and makes local self-governments particularly vulnerable to new challenges.

In parallel with the powers provided by the law, in practice, the competencies exercised at local levels can be divided into three groups:

- 1. competencies which, by their nature, are local but exercised by the central government (e.g., water supply system in cities, partly internal roads, rehabilitation of utility infrastructure, etc.);
- 2. competencies that are in the hands of the private sector and outside the control of self-governments (gas and electricity supply), however, the municipalities are perceived by the public as responsible for tariffs or service quality;
- 3. competencies that should be exercised by the central government, but are the responsibility of the municipalities.

**Economic Background.** In the last two years, changes have been introduced in relation to self-government revenues. These changes affected the transfer of certain types of income tax, as well as equalization transfers. In particular, according to the decision made at the end of 2018, from 2019, instead of leaving part of the income tax at the local level and transferring the equalization transfer, 19% of the value-added tax (VAT) collected on the national level is distributed to the municipalities according to pre-defined criteria. Accordingly, the concept of equalization transfer was removed from the legislation, the refinement of the calculation of which was one of the obligations of Georgia towards the Council of Europe. Further changes are expected in this regard. According to the Georgian government, the government may consider leaving the income tax to municipalities again. Moreover, the decentralization strategy adopted at the end of 2019 aims to increase the revenue sources for self-governments, including increasing the share of profits generated by the state-owned property located on the municipality territory, handing over certain types of licenses to municipalities, simplifying the process of transferring ownership over properties located on the territory of self-governments, and transferring the ownership of unregistered property to municipalities by 2025.

It is notable that in recent years, there have been issues related to the municipal budget expenditures. In particular, the practice of fully utilizing public finances has become more complicated. Spending processes have been delayed. An example of this is in 2017, when a significant part of the funds allocated from the Fund for Projects to be Implemented in the Regions in 2018 was not fully utilized, which resulted in the re-allocation of part of the funds to the 2019 budget. One of the possible reasons for the delay may be a change in the legislative regulations for the usage of local budgets; in particular, the obligation of coordinating municipal procurements with the central government (this obligation was abolished in 2019).

Under the normative regulations, self-governments might use a number of tax benefits from their own revenues to stimulate economic development, as well as distribute resources received in the form of transfers from the state budget. However, in practice, when the prioritization of a large part of local budgets takes place at the central level, these rights can only be formal. The process of creating a favorable environment for local economic development is being complicated by the lack of unified standards and efficiency assessment criteria in a number of areas of public service. Thus, in relation to fostering local economic development, the local self-government system, in the process of decentralization, needs serious changes.

### 1.3. Citizen Participation

The involvement of the population in the exercise of local self-government is important not only to measure efficiency but also to establish the principles of democratic governance. The participation of the population in the decision-making process, as well as their active involvement in overcoming the challenges at the local level, forms the basis for the transparency and accountability of the work of municipalities. In 2015, as a result of amendments to the Local Self-Government Code, the legislative framework for citizen participation in the process of self-government was defined. Articles 85-88 of the Code provide a description of five main mechanisms, including: the procedure for filing a petition, the format of the work of the Civil Advisory Council, the forms of reporting to the community of municipal officials, and the procedures for convening/conducting a meeting of the settlement.

Despite the opportunities created at the legislative level, the level of participation of the population in the local self-government process is still quite low. Citizens are reluctant to get involved in issues that affect their daily lives. Moreover, interest in civic activism and involvement in public processes is quite low. This is also indicated by the Local Self-Government Index, which has assessed the work of 64 Georgian municipalities since 2017.<sup>1</sup> One of the (sub) criteria of the index assesses the participation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Local Self-Government Index assesses the openness and accountability of municipalities. It was established by the coalition of Georgian Non-Governmental Organizations (Consultation and Training Center, Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information and the Center for the Development of Management Systems). The index consists of 3 thematic blocks: proactive publication of public information, e-government and citizen participation and accountability. For more information, see: www.lsgindex.ge

of citizens in the local self-government process. According to 2019 data, this figure was 25% across the country, indicating that the population of Georgia uses only a quarter of the opportunities provided by the law on local involvement. The situation is relatively better in urban settlements, including Batumi (87%), Rustavi (72%) and Kutaisi (61%); While the same rate does not exceed 10% in Gardabani (6%), Kaspi (8%) and Mestia (9%).<sup>2</sup> According to experts, the lack of citizen involvement is a complex problem, which is negatively affected by the limited authorities of municipalities, scarce resources and only the advisory nature of participatory mechanisms. Nihilistic attitudes among the population, which are caused by distrust in state institutions, low efficiency, and a lack of awareness about the mechanisms of participation are also cited as obstacles.

Undoubtedly, the restoration of the "State Rural Assistance Program" should be considered a recent positive event. As a result, the degree of citizen involvement in the decision-making process has increased (2017 - 10%, 2019 - 20%). A positive trend is also indicated by the local self-government index. During the last two years, the average rate of citizen engagement (sub) criteria has increased by 6% (2017 - 19%, 2019 - 25%).<sup>3</sup>

### **1.4. Association Agreement and Self-Government**

The Association Agreement, signed in 2014, between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States on one hand, and Georgia, on the other hand, has created a new reality in the process of self-government development.

According to the agreement,<sup>4</sup> regional development is considered one of the key aspects of local development (Chapter 21, Articles 372 and 373), according to which the parties should cooperate to establish multi-level governance in Georgia (according to NUTS<sup>5</sup> and LAU<sup>6</sup> standards) to ensure partnership between all parties and co-financing of specific projects through appropriate financial contributions by involved entities.

To this end, the Georgian government should develop regional development policies, strengthen the involvement of stakeholders and consolidate partnerships (Chapter "Regional Development, Cross Border and Regional Level Cooperation"<sup>7</sup>).

As for the issue of self-development, the signatories "reaffirm their respect for the principles of the rule of law and good governance, as well as their international obligations, in particular under the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE" (Chapter I. General Principles, Article 2.3)<sup>8</sup>. The latter created a base for the Association Agenda (Action Plan)<sup>9</sup>, which focuses on the implementation of a decentralization strategy in accordance with the Council of Europe's Charter of Local Self-Government (CETS NO 122)<sup>10</sup>.

The Council of Europe's recommendations are reflected in the regular monitoring reports of "Local and Regional Democracy in Georgia" prepared by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (2003, 2004, 2013, 2015, 2018). The documents reflect the process achieved by the country in the field of decentralization, the existing challenges and the recommendations for overcoming the latter.

<sup>2.</sup> Source: Local Self-Government Index http://www.lsgindex.org/ge/dynamic/

<sup>3.</sup> Source: Local Self-Government Index http://www.lsgindex.org/ge/dynamic/

<sup>4.</sup> http://www.parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/34753/AA

<sup>5.</sup> NUTS: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

<sup>6.</sup> LAU: Local Administrative Units

<sup>7.</sup> https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830(02)

<sup>8.</sup> Ibid

<sup>9.</sup> http://www.parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/78447/annex\_ii\_-\_eu-georgia\_association\_agenda\_text 10. https://rm.coe.int/168007a088

The following issues were among the recommendations presented in the report of the last monitoring visit of the Congress (Spring 2018) (CG35 (2018):

- The development of a legal framework, sectoral legislation and a decentralization policy should be accelerated to make the responsibilities conferred on local authorities complete and exclusive.
- A formula for calculating the number of employees should be revised to make it more flexible and tailored to specific local needs.
- "Municipalization" of real estate and natural resources should be accelerated.
- The financial capacity of the local government should be strengthened, including the ability to create its own resources (including further expansion of the tax base).
- The process of regional development should be continued in order to achieve balanced and sustainable socio-economic regional development.
- Article 4 (6), Article 5, Article 6 (2), Article 9 (6) and Articles 10 (2) and (3) of the European Charter of Self-Government should be ratified.
- Joining the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government (CETS No. 207) should be finalized.

It is important that part of the recommendations (strengthening the financial base of self-government, refinement of equalization procedures and designing the regional development programmes) are consistently repeated in all monitoring documents.

Since 2013, the Georgian government's plans for this period have been in absolute agreement with the requirements of the Council of Europe recommendations. Moreover, the process in some areas preceded the issues and deadlines set out in the recommendations:

- In December 2014, a bill on amendments to the Tax Code was introduced in the Parliament, according to which income tax (after the abolition of this form in 2007) again became a "shared tax" and its share (about 15%) was allocated to local budgets.
- In addition to specialized and targeted transfers, the category of capital transfers was allocated to municipal budgets, which the central budget transferred to self-governments.
- In 2014-2015, additional forms of citizen participation in the local self-governance were defined (organic law, 2015) as well as norms regulating the privatization, use and related procedures of municipal property (Decree N669 of the Government of Georgia).
- In 2015, the laws "On the Development of High Mountainous Regions" and "On Public Service" were adopted.
- In April 2016, a package of bills was introduced in the Parliament, which included 174 legislative acts with the aim of bringing sectoral legislation in line with the new Self-Government Code.
- The Government of Georgia (Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure) has initiated the process to accede not only to the articles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government as indicated in the recommendations, but also with all remaining articles that Georgia did not join in 2004.
- On October 13, 2017, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Constitutional Law of Georgia "on Amendments to the Constitution of Georgia". The Constitution has strengthened the guarantees of local self-government (Article 7, paragraph 4 and Chapter VII<sup>11</sup>): self-government is recognized as a

<sup>11.</sup> A number of draft laws were presented by the Government of Georgia to the Parliament on April 15, 2016. The package was discussed by the Parliament and adopted in the first reading on June 3, 2016. However, during the autumn session, due to the fact that the parliamentary elections were held in October 2016, the discussion of the package of laws did not continue. The process of working on a decentralization strategy also had an impact on the process. After the basic framework of the decentralization strategy was prepared in January 2019 and it was determined in which direction the reform should be implemented, the work on harmonization of the sectoral legislation with the self-government code was resumed. The 2016 Law Package Formulation was revised and submitted to the Parliament in 2019 for reconsideration.

universal right of Georgian citizens, the principle of subsidiarity has been declared a constitutional principle, and the responsibility of the national government to provide the local self-governments with appropriate financial resources has been established;

- The government of Georgia has developed and approved the State Strategy for the Regional Development of Georgia for 2010-2017, the Development Strategies for nine regions of Georgia for 2016-2021, and Regional Development Programmes (for 2010-2014 and 2015-2017). In 2017, preparation work was started on the Regional Development Programme of Georgia for 2018-2020 and was approved in 2018.
- On May 29, 2019, the Additional Protocol of Utrecht to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the Right to Participate in Affairs of Local Authority was ratified.
- Decree # 678 of the Government of Georgia on December 31, 2019, approved the "Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025" and the 2020-2021 Action Plan.

All these changes were in line with the recommendations of the Council of Europe, as well as the declared principles of decentralization in Georgia and the need to establish an effective system of local self-government in the country.

The Government of Georgia shall, in accordance with the Association Agreement, ensure:

- Improvement of vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms between governments at all levels in developing and implementing regional policies;
- Development of the capacity of local self-governments in accordance with EU principles and practices; and
- Sharing of knowledge, information and best practices on regional development policy for the economic well-being of local communities and the balanced development of the regions.

The EU provides assistance to Georgia within the framework of the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) through the Georgian Strategic Support Framework (Single Support Framework - SSF). According to this document, the assistance provided to Georgia (considering the readiness of Georgia) in 2017-2020 is about 371-453 million Euros.

EU sectoral assistance has four directions, which are among the priorities of Georgia's regional development:

- The first sector. Economic development and increasing market capacity, which means sustainable, knowledge-based and inclusive economic growth (approximately 40% of funding);
- The second sector. Strengthening institutional and good governance, including security and rule of law (approximately 20% of funding);
- The third sector. Communication, energy efficiency, environment and climate change (approximately 15% of funding); and
- The fourth sector. Mobility and people's connections, including support for visa liberalization, vocational education and other training (approximately 10% of funding). The remainder of the funds is spent on capacity building, civil society support and strategic communication (about 15% of funding).

It should be noted that this assistance significantly lags behind the volume of assistance allocated to pre-accession instruments (IPA II) for candidate countries and potential candidate countries. Therefore, in the event of further rapprochement with the EU, there is an expectation that this assistance will increase significantly. This perspective is once again confirmed by the latest joint initiative of the European Commission and the World Bank to approve the Trans-European Transport Network Investment Action Plan (TEN-T), which became known in January 2019. According to the plan, about 18 billion Euros (including about 3.5 billion Euros for Georgia) will be allocated in 2019-2030 to improve economic growth and economic ties between Eastern Partnership countries.

In addition to this perspective, Georgia has already received additional EU support (60 million Euros) from the Pilot Integrated Regional Development Programme, which aims to attract investment and promote employment in four regions of Georgia.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, Georgia has a number of new opportunities to use EU assistance tools in the areas of inter-municipal cooperation, energy efficiency and more.

12. Kakheti, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti and Guria. Source: Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, 21 September 2018 Press Release: EU, MRDI Discuss Regional Development in Georgia.



# **2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The research design included both qualitative and quantitative methods as well as desk research.

The main goal of the research was to evaluate the level of citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by local self-governments. Specifically, the research aimed to:

- Determine the scales of services provided by local self-governments to the population;
- Identify the level of citizens' satisfaction with specific services delivered by local and central governments;
- Determine the level of the population's satisfaction with particular services provided by central state authorities, which can be assigned to local authorities in the future;
- Determine the level of the population's satisfaction with the fees for specific public services;
- Determine the level of the population's satisfaction with their participation in the decision-making process;
- Determine the level of the population's satisfaction with the performance of local government management;
- Identify the main reasons for the population's satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the specific public services;
- Provide a general evaluation of public views on the performance of the local authorities;
- Identify the challenges faced by local governments in delivering municipal services; and
- Assess citizens' involvement in local self-government implementation.

### 2.1. Desk Research

The goal of the desk research was to review the existing studies related to the current situation in Georgia in terms of services provided by central and local governments, namely to collect information on relevant issues and focus on the comparability of the collected studies and their findings to the study at hand.

The desk research focused on the following key issues:

- The current state of affairs in Georgia in terms of self-government;
- The level of citizens' engagement in self-governance;
- The performance of municipalities in terms of delivering services; and
- Public attitudes toward municipal and state services.

### 2.2. Quantitative Research

The target segment of the quantitative survey was the adult population of Georgia (over the age of 18). The survey covered all regions of Georgia except for the occupied territories.

A total of 3400 face-to-face interviews were conducted within the scope of the survey. Each interview lasted approximately 50-60 minutes.

Research tools and analysis were developed by the ACT Impact team and an invited expert – Davit Losaberidze.

A two-stage cluster sampling method was applied within the scope of the survey. This method belongs to the class of probability sampling. Random sampling technique, which is considered to be one of the substantiated sampling methods in socio-economic studies, and is used at each stage of sampling.

The proposed approach ensures the representativeness of the sample and better describes the target population in relation to the research topics.

The sampling was based on the results of the 2014 Census.

The proposed sampling allows the data to be disaggregated by various social groups. This sampling design ensures 95% reliability of the study results.

The 95% reliability was defined as statistical significance to calculate the overall margin of error. The error for 3400 interviews has been calculated for simple random sampling. The overall sampling error is 1.7% (5.7% in regions, 4.9% in Tbilisi, 2.2 % in the villages, 3.0% in the cities and 3.7% in highland settlements).

Ten households were surveyed in the Primary Sampling Unit (PSU). Settlements were selected using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) method. The Secondary Sampling Unit (SSU) was the household. Its selection was based on the random walk principle. The starting point for the random walk was determined and interviewers selected households according to pre-prepared instructions, which determined the route, the size of the step and the household selection procedure.

The final unit of the sampling was a household member, who was already 18 years old and was selected based on the last birthday principle in the household.

The data obtained were weighted for the generalization of the study findings. The weighting was based on the stratification criteria.

Quantitative research data were processed in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Transcripts of in-depth interviews with different target groups were also used independently, as well as to interpret information obtained from quantitative research. The survey data was analyzed in total as well as was desegregated by various groups (region, city/village, highland/other types of settlements, gender, and age).

The sampling volume distribution by region, city and rural/village settlements is given in Table #1 below:

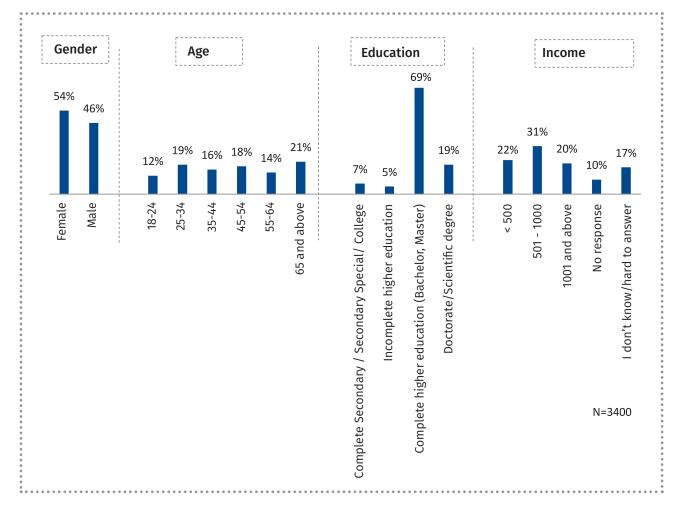
Region	City	Village	Total
Tbilisi	400	-	400
Kakheti	70	230	300
Shida Kartli	120	180	300
Kvemo Kartli	130	170	300
Samtskhe-Javakheti	100	200	300
Adjara	170	130	300
Guria	80	220	300
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	120	180	300
Imereti	140	160	300
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti	60	240	300
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	70	230	300
Total	1460	1940	3400

Table # 1. Sampling Size and Distribution in Strata

Among respondents, 54% are women and 46% are men. The largest age group among respondents is 65 and older (21%). Two out of ten respondents are 25-34 years old (19%) and 45-54 years old (18%), while 12% of respondents are aged 18-24 years and 14% of respondents are aged 55-64 years.

Seven out of ten respondents have completed higher education (69%), and 19% hold a doctorate or a scientific degree. Almost one-quarter of the respondents (24%) are retired, a fifth reported that they are unemployed (21%), 19% of respondents reported that they are hired workers, and 13% are self-employed.

One-fifth of the interviewed families earn less than 500 GEL (22%). For a third of the surveyed households, the average monthly income ranges from 501 to 1000 GEL (31%), and the income of a fifth of the surveyed families is over 1001 GEL (20%). It is also noteworthy that 27% of the respondents either do not know or refuse to name the average monthly income of the household.



#### Figure # 1. Respondents' Gender, Age, Education, Income

See the detailed socio-demographic profile of respondents in Annex 1.

### 2.3. Qualitative Research

Two qualitative data collection techniques were used during the study: focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants. A total of 12 focus groups and 20 in-depth interviews were conducted throughout Georgia. Tbilisi, Imereti, Guria, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti and Kvemo Kartli were selected as target locations for focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The criteria for selecting locations in the case of Tbilisi and Imereti were their size (Tbilisi as the capital and largest city and Imereti as the largest region in the country). As for the other four regions, they cover both Eastern and Western Georgia, highland and lowland regions as well as ethnic minority areas. Also, Guria, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti and Kvemo Kartli are target regions of UNDP ongoing project – "Fostering Regional and Local Development in Georgia, Phase 2".

Two focus groups were conducted in each region, one of which focused on discussions with rural and the other with the urban population.

The selection criteria for the focus group respondents were: employment status (public sector, private sector, self-employed, unemployed). Part of the discussion participants had the experience of working with local self-governments (City Hall, City Council) for the last year. The focus groups were mixed by gender and age. The minimum number of participants per group was 10, and the maximum was 12 respondents.

The target segment for in-depth interviews mainly consisted of the local government (Municipality City Halls, Regional Administrations), central government and NGO sector representatives/experts. In each region, except for Tbilisi, 3 interviews were conducted (first with a Municipality City Hall representative, followed by a regional administration representative, and third with an NGO member). As for Tbilisi, in-depth interviews were also conducted with central government officials, along with representatives of City Hall and NGOs. A total of 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants within the study framework.<sup>13</sup>

The focus groups lasted approximately 2.5 hours, and in-depth interviews lasted an average of 50 minutes. After the discussions and interviews, detailed transcripts were prepared and used in the final report.

<sup>13.</sup> Key Informant – a person selected for an in-depth interview purposively as a representative of a group most knowledgeable person about study specific issue.

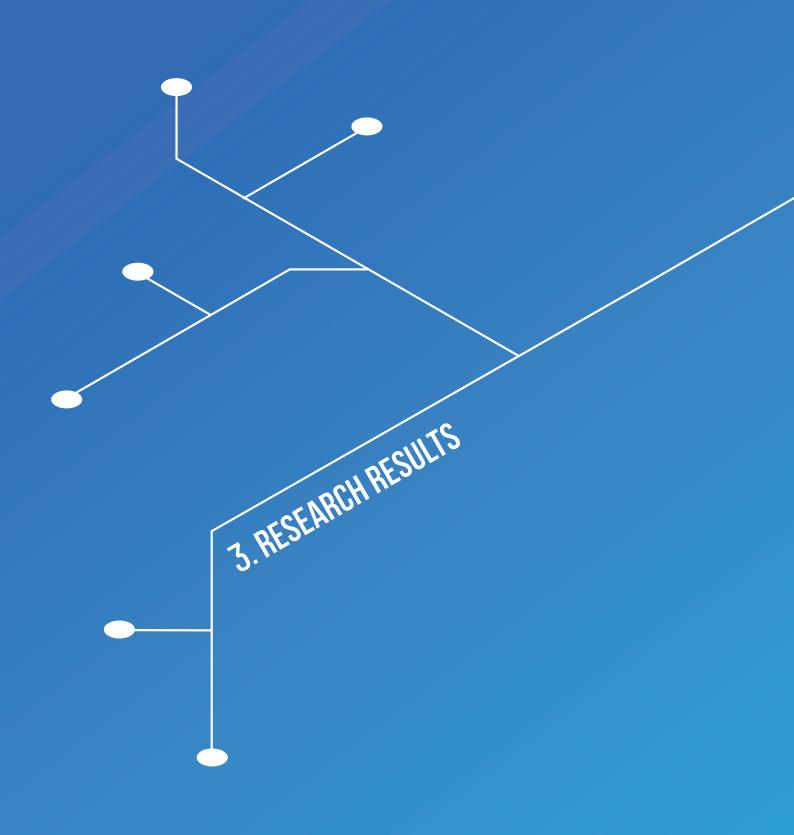
#### Table # 2. Overview of the Qualitative Study Design

Qualitative Study Design		
Techniques	In-depth interview	Focus group discussion
Target Group	<ol> <li>Local government representatives;</li> <li>Central Government Officials;</li> <li>Experts/ NGO sector representatives</li> </ol>	(1) The local population, part of whom have experience in communicating with the local government for the past year.
Sample Size	20	12
Study Area	<ul> <li>Tbilisi</li> <li>Imereti</li> <li>Guria</li> <li>Samegrelo - Zemo Svaneti</li> <li>Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti</li> <li>Kvemo Kartli</li> <li>*3 interviews were conducted in each region (with a Municipality City Hall representative, with a regional administration representative, and with an NGO representative); the number of interviews conducted in Tbilisi was 5.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Tbilisi</li> <li>Imereti</li> <li>Guria</li> <li>Samegrelo - Zemo Svaneti</li> <li>Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti</li> <li>Kvemo Kartli</li> <li>*2 focus groups were conducted in each region (with the urban settlement population, and with the rural settlement population). In the case of Tbilisi, respondents were selected both from central districts and suburbs.</li> </ul>
Sampling method	Targeted	Targeted
Interview/Discussion Duration	50-60 minutes	2-2.5 hours

### 2.4. Study Limitations

A combination of qualitative, quantitative and desk research methods were used during the study on citizens' satisfaction with public services in Georgia. Regardless of the precision of the methodology, given the large number of state and municipal services to be surveyed, each service within the study could not be analyzed in depth. The survey provides stakeholders with important information on the accessibility to public services and the level of customer satisfaction, however, in the future, in order to get more detailed information about specific services, it is necessary to have closer look at each of them through carrying out more focused qualitative and quantitative research.

The scope of the study (3400 face-to-face interviews throughout Georgia) is sufficient to analyze the data both nationally and for the following groups: (1) Tbilisi and ten administrative regions, (2) urban and rural settlements, (3) highland and lowland settlements, (4) ethnic minorities, and (5) basic demographic characteristics of the population. Data analysis at the level of these groups provides important and useful information for the development of various public services, and in general, for policy planning in this area. However, the data cannot be analyzed at the municipal level within the framework of the study. Characterizing the municipalities separately would require a significant increase in survey sampling size, which given the budgetary and time resources available, could not be achieved at this stage.



# **3. RESEARCH RESULTS**

This chapter presents the results and findings of the study. The results have been analyzed according to the main issues of the research:

- Preschool, secondary, vocational and higher education;
- Social assistance;
- Healthcare;
- Recreation, leisure and tourism;
- Utility infrastructure;
- Road Infrastructure;
- Service of self-governments; and
- ✓ Various services.

The report presents the frequency analysis of the data collected during the survey. In addition, the data is desegregated by various groups, such as settlement type, region, gender, and so on. Comparisons of highland villages<sup>14</sup> and other areas are also presented in the report. The results of the 2019 study are also compared with the results of the same study in 2013, 2015 and 2017.

The results of the study are weighted, which made it possible to generalize them throughout Georgia. The information gathered through the study was processed by statistical software SPSS 23.0. Pearson Chi Square was used to determine the reliability of the frequency distribution of the research variable rate, while One-way Anova was used to assess the reliability of the difference in average rates.

The report only presents the data that, with the use of statistical tests, were found to be 95% reliable.<sup>15</sup>

Due to the high volume of the data, the report addresses only statistically significant differences between different indicators.

### 3.1. Preschool, Secondary, Vocational and Higher Education

#### 3.1.1. Public Kindergartens

The 2019 study found that public kindergartens are accessible for the majority of respondents (81%). The majority of respondents report that public kindergartens function in their settlement/municipality (74%). In this regard, the reality has not changed substantially since 2013. According to the results of all four rounds of the survey, kindergarten is accessible to about eight out of ten respondents and is located directly in the settlement.

<sup>14. &</sup>quot;The high mountain region is inhabited territory which is located at 1500 meters above the sea but due to different parameters (abruptness of mountain slopes and platforms, geographical location, natural environment, ethnographic and economic peculiarities, lack and barrenness of agricultural lands, demographic capacity, aggravated migration processes, danger of economic loss of emptied out territories) its lower limit is decreased to 1000 meters (in exceptional case even to 800 meters) in regions located at south slope of Caucasian and Adjara-Guria highland and remains 1500 meters in highland districts of South Georgia" – The law of Georgia on socio-economic and cultural development of high mountain regions.

<sup>15.</sup> Statistically reliable means probable truth (not randomness). The research finding can be true, but not credible. When a statistician says the result is 'credible', it means that it is likely to be true. The significance of the result is not necessarily implied. The significance levels show how likely the result is to be random. The most widespread level, that implies that something is quite credible, is 95. This means that the conclusion is 95% credible, though this indicator may as well be misleading. No statistical packages will show you "95% "or "95" to indicate this level. Instead, it will use "05", which means that the conclusion of the study is five percent (.05) false, which is the contrary of 95% credibility.

In 2019, every second respondent reported that there was public transport connecting to the kindergarten (54%), 23% reported that there was no public transport to the kindergarten, and the same number of respondents (23%) declared that there was no need for public transport to reach the kindergarten. The majority of respondents claiming having access to public transport to reach the kindergarten, also declared that the schedule of public transport coincides with the working schedule of the public kindergarten.

The highest rate of access to public transport to reach the kindergartens was observed in 2015 when 66% of respondents reported that there was public transport accessible to the nearest public kindergarten.

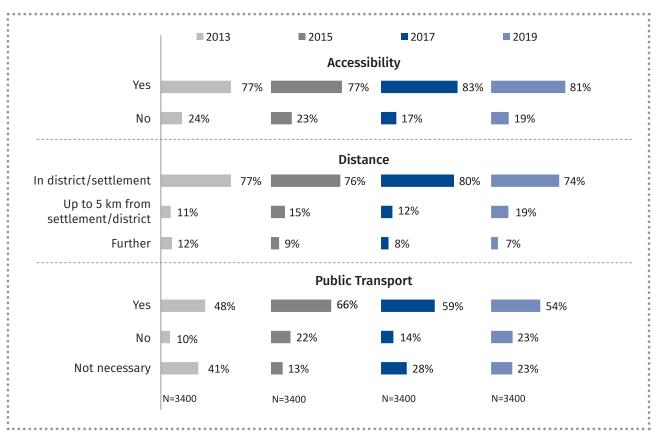


Figure # 2. Access to Public Kindergartens, Distance, Public Transport - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In terms of **region**, six out of ten respondents reported having access to the public kindergartens in their settlements/regions. Kakheti has the highest rate of accessibility to public kindergartens (93%), and the lowest rate is in Samtskhe-Javakheti (58%). It is this region that has experienced the greatest reduction in access to public kindergartens in the settlement/district. If in 2017 this type of educational institution was accessible for 72% of the respondents, in 2019, this number was just 58%. The increase has been especially noteworthy in Kvemo Kartli (2017 – 65%, 2019 – 75%) and Shida Kartli (2017 – 69%, 2019 – 81%).

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	89%	100%	93%	85%
Imereti (N=300)	86%	72%	83%	78%
Adjara (N=300)	52%	66%	66%	72%
Guria (N=300)	72%	79%	91%	81%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	89%	87%	95%	89%
Kakheti (N=300)	87%	93%	97%	93%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	57%	38%	65%	75%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	59%	78%	69%	81%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	52%	43%	72%	58%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	66%	61%	80%	79%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	43%	51%	68%	68%
Total (N=3400)	77%	77%	83%	81%

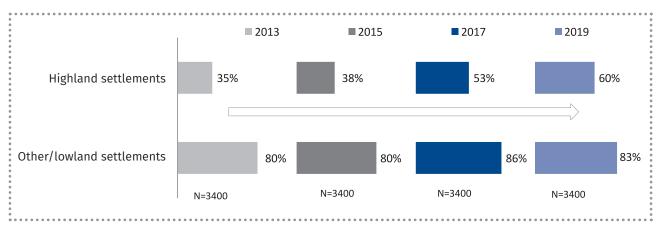
#### Table # 3. Access of Public Kindergartens by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

As for the access to public transport to reach public kindergartens, the dynamics in the regions when compared to the third round of the study (2017) is mostly positive. The most positive trend is observed in Samtskhe-Javakheti, where access to public transport has increased by 16% (2017 – 28%, 2019 -44%). The most negative dynamic is observed in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti, where access to public transport needed to reach the nearest public kindergarten was reduced by 19 percentage points compared to the previous round (2017 – 56%, 2019 – 37%). As for Tbilisi, although the share of access to public transport has decreased, there has been an increase in the number of respondents who say that public transport is not needed to reach the kindergarten (2017 – 15%, 2019 – 32%). Therefore, to say that the access to public transport needed to reach a public kindergarten in Tbilisi has decreased is irrelevant.

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	92%	97%	75%	50%
Imereti (N=300)	51%	62%	70%	59%
Adjara (N=300)	48%	96%	72%	81%
Guria (N=300)	23%	57%	72%	56%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	33%	80%	56%	69%
Kakheti (N=300)	8%	18%	34%	39%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	29%	35%	29%	39%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	9%	42%	48%	49%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	10%	41%	28%	44%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	3%	45%	38%	50%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	4%	58%	56%	37%
Total (N=3400)	48%	66%	59%	54%

Table # 4. Access to Public Transport to Reach the Nearest Public Kindergartens by Regions -2013/2015/2017/2019 data

As for **highland settlements**, study results show positive dynamics. If 35% of the respondents indicated the accessibility of public kindergartens in highland settlements for the first round of the survey (2013), 60% of the surveyed respondents indicated the same in 2019. As for the public transport needed to reach the nearest kindergarten, in 2019 it was accessible to every second respondent in both highland (51%) and lowland settlements (54%).





No substantial differences were shown in the 2019 study in terms of **urban/rural settlements**, as eight out of ten respondents reported having access to public kindergartens both in Tbilisi and in other cities and villages. The positive trend in rural settlements should be noted, where access to public transport has increased (by 19 percentage points) from the first round to the last one. Every second respondent in Tbilisi (50%), as well as in other cities (54%) and villages (55%) reported having access to public transport to reach the nearest public kindergarten. The majority of respondents who do not need public transport to the nearest public kindergarten were from Tbilisi (32%). In other urban and rural areas, public transport is not needed according to about two respondents out of ten (cities – 23%, villages – 17%). Positive dynamics in cities and villages are observed since the first round of the research. In particular, the access to public transport to reach the nearest public kindergarten were from Tbilisi (32%). In other urban and rural areas, public transport is not needed according to about two respondents out of ten (cities – 23%, villages – 17%). Positive dynamics in cities and villages are observed since the first round of the research. In particular, the access to public transport to reach the nearest public kindergarten has increased by 22 percentage points in cities (2013 – 32%, 2019 – 54%) and by 27 percentage points in villages (2013-28%, 2019 - 55%).

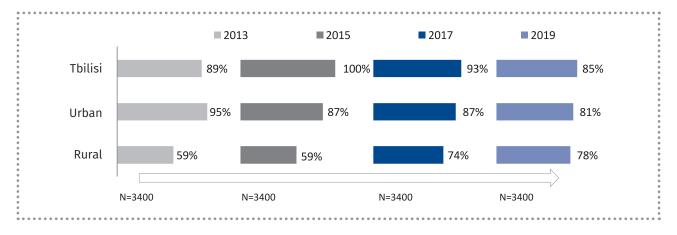


Figure # 4. Access to Public Kindergartens by Tbil isi/Urban/Rural Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

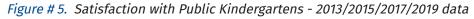
The respondents rated their satisfaction with public kindergartens against various parameters. A comparison of the last two rounds of the study shows that the level of satisfaction is the same, though from 2013, the level of satisfaction with all parameters shows a positive trend. The results illustrate that in 2019, the lowest satisfaction rate was with the registration procedure (69%), the challenges of which were also highlighted during the qualitative research. Approximately eight out of ten respondents express satisfaction with all other parameters. It is also noteworthy that security and accessibility were assessed as independent parameters only in this round of the survey, with both of them having a high rate of satisfaction (80% and 81%, respectively).

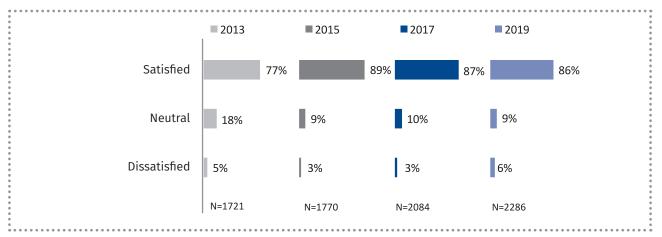
	2013	2015	2017	2019
In fire shows the set	55%	75%	78%	78%
Infrastructure	N=2370	N=2140	N=2236	N=2191
Management	51%	73%	71%	79%
	N=2370	N=2064	N=2054	N=2107
Registration procedures (simplicity)	50%	70%	63%	69%
	N=2370	N=2049	N=1978	N=2032
	48%	71%	70%	76%
Food	N=2370	N=2032	N=1988	N=2074
<b>T</b>	54%	74%	73%	77%
Teachers' competence level	N=2370	N=2055	N=2024	N=2083
C. f. h.	-	-	-	80%
Safety				N=2101
	-	-	-	81%
Access				N=2118

Table # 5. Satisfaction with Public Kindergartens Against Various Parameters - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

\*Note: "Safety" and "Access" were evaluated by respondents only in 2019

Satisfaction with the public kindergartens of the settlement/district is high and approximately nine out of ten respondents report a high level of satisfaction (86%). This rate is almost similar across the last three rounds of the survey. The lowest satisfaction level with public kindergartens was reported in 2013 (77%). No significant differences were found in disaggregated data by social groups. Eight out of ten respondents (women/men, highland and other types of settlements, and urban/rural settlements) are satisfied. The same reality is present in the regions, though it is noteworthy that Tbilisi respondents (81%) are the least satisfied and Guria respondents (96%) are the most satisfied with public kindergartens.





Trust in public kindergartens was only assessed in 2019. The rate is high, as nine out of ten respondents expressed trust in such types of educational institutions (89%). No significant differences were revealed in different terms, except for **Tbilisi/urban/rural** context, where the study illustrated that public kindergartens are least trusted in Tbilisi (84%) and most trusted in the villages (94%).

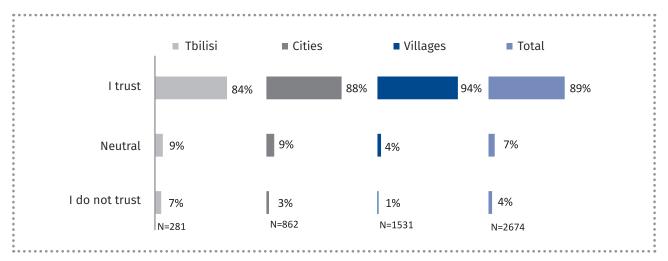


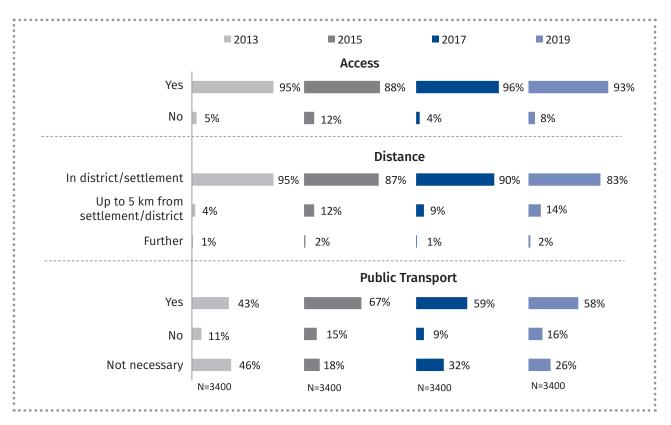
Figure # 6. Trust in Public Kindergartens by Tbilisi/Urban/Rural Settlements - 2019 data

#### 3.1.2. Public Schools

According to the study results, in 2019 access to public schools was high (93%). The majority of respondents said that public schools are accessible in their districts/settlements (83%), and six out of ten respondents noted that public transportation is accessible to reach the public school (58%).

Changes in terms of access and distance to public schools have not been demonstrated by the study results from different years. All four rounds of the study show that the absolute majority of respondents, nine out of ten, have access to public school services and the majority had an opportunity to receive this service in their own district/settlement. In terms of public transport accessibility, the highest share of respondents in 2015 stated that public schools are accessible by public transport (67%). The public transport schedule was only evaluated in 2019, and as it turns out, the majority of those who report having access to public transport to reach public schools also state that the public transport schedule coincides with the working hours of public schools (80%).

*Figure # 7.* Access to Public Schools, Distance, Public Transportation to Public Schools – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data



The 2019 study results by **region** demonstrate that public schools in districts/settlements are accessible for eight and more out of ten respondents. The lowest level of accessibility was reported in Racha-Lech-khumi-Kvemo Svaneti (77%). In terms of public school access, the 2019 study did not demonstrate the differences between **highland** (93%) and lowland settlements, (92%), or **urban/rural** (Tbilisi – 95%, cities – 90%, villages - 92%). Additionally, no substantial changes are observed across different rounds of the study. It should be pointed out that in the **regional** context, public transport to public schools was least accessible in Kakheti and Guria, where about three out of ten respondents report not having access to this service (Kakheti – 29%, Guria – 27%). The highest rate of access to public transport was reported in Adjara (87%).

Table # 6. Access to Public Transport to the Nearest Public School by Regions – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

		2013	2015	2017	2019			2013	2015	2017	2019
	Yes	88%	97%	77%	50%		Yes	10%	20%	44%	50%
Tbilisi (N=400)	No	3%	0%	9%	12%	Kakheti	No	11%	27%	12%	<b>29%</b>
	Not necessary	9%	3%	15%	38%	(N=300)	Not necessary	79%	53%	44%	21%
	Yes	49%	73%	69%	69%		Yes	15%	23%	20%	37%
Imereti (N=300)	No	9%	20%	6%	11%	Kvemo Kartli	No	27%	12%	8%	18%
intereti (N=300)	Not necessary	42%	7%	25%	20%	(N=300)	Not necessary	58%	65%	72%	45%
	Yes	41%	97%	70%	87%		Yes	6%	47%	25%	57%
Adjara (N=300)	No	10%	3%	2%	12%	Shida Kartli	No	7%	47%	8%	20%
Aujara (N-500)	Not necessary	49%		28%	2%	(N=300)	Not necessary	87%	6%	67%	23%
	Yes	46%	61%	78%	64%		Yes	6%	36%	25%	42%
Guria (N=300)	No	7%	27%	12%	27%	Samtskhe- Javakheti	No	23%	18%	25%	38%
Guna (N-500)	Not necessary	47%	12%	10%	9%	(N=300)	Not necessary	71%	46%	51%	20%
	Yes	35%	85%	74%	76%		Yes	1%	32%	53%	62%
Samegrelo-Zemo	No	16%	15%	10%	10%	Mtskheta- Mtianeti	No	23%	16%	21%	18%
Svaneti (N=300)	Not necessary	49%	1%	16%	14%	(N=300)	Not necessary	76%	52%	25%	20%
Racha-	Yes	4%	56%	53%	54%		Yes	43%	67%	59%	58%
Lechkhumi/	No	31%	31%	14%	20%	Total	No	11%	15%	9%	16%
Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	Not necessary	65%	13%	33%	26%		Not necessary	46%	18%	32%	26%

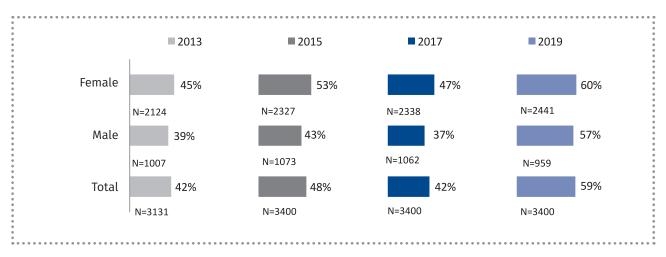
The fourth round results of the study have not demonstrated any substantial differences between **highland** and lowland settlements, or between **urban/rural** settlements in terms of the access to public transport port to reach public schools. The trend is almost similar. In particular, the percentage of public transport access has either not changed or increased, but at the same time, there is a decrease in the indication that public transport is not necessary to access public school. There is also an increase in reports that public transport does not exist. For example, other types of settlements reported an increase in the access to public transport compared to the previous round of the study (2017 - 41%, 2019 -56%), as well as an increase in the lack of access to transport (2017 -13%, 2019 -29%). However, if 46% of the respondents didn't have the necessity of public transport in 2017, in 2019 the number of such respondents was significantly lower (16%). It is difficult to say unequivocally that the access to public transport has decreased (2017 - 77%, 2019 - 50%) but the number of respondents who said that public transport is not necessary has increased (2017 - 15%, 2019 - 38%). *Table # 7.* Access to Public Transport to the Nearest Public School by Highland/Lowland Settlements and Tbilisi/Urban/Rural – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

		2013	2015	2017	2019
Highland	Yes	46%	69%	61%	58%
	No	11%	15%	9%	15%
	Not necessary	43%	17%	31%	27%
Other	Yes	7%	36%	41%	56%
	No	20%	21%	13%	29%
	Not necessary	73%	43%	46%	16%
Tbilisi	Yes	88%	97%	77%	50%
	No	3%	0%	9%	12%
	Not necessary	9%	3%	15%	38%
Urban	Yes	31%	60%	52%	59%
	No	13%	24%	10%	17%
	Not necessary	56%	16%	38%	24%
Rural	Yes	24%	54%	51%	63%
	No	15%	18%	9%	18%
	Not necessary	61%	28%	40%	19%
Total	Yes	43%	67%	59%	58%
	No	11%	15%	9%	16%
	Not necessary	46%	18%	32%	26%
		N=3400	N=3400	N=3400	N=3400

According to 2019 study results, six out of ten respondents know which school official to contact if they have an issue (59%), and 76% know who to approach if the initial result is unacceptable. Respondents with higher education (65%) are more likely to be informed about appealing public school decisions compared to those with secondary or vocational education (55%). Respondents with university degrees (84%) are also more likely to be informed about the institution where to appeal if the initial result is unacceptable than those with only a secondary or vocational education (72%).

Only 4 % of the respondents have exercised their right to appeal to a public school. It is noteworthy that the reality has not changed across the rounds of this study in terms of exercising the right to appeal, but there is a growing trend of awareness. Namely, if 42% of respondents knew which school official to contact if they wanted to appeal in 2017, in 2019 the number of such respondents was 59%. There was no difference observed by gender in the fourth round of the study, as nearly the same number of women (60%) and men (57%) knew which school official to contact if they wanted to appeal. However, it is noteworthy that awareness has increased more among men (by 20 percentage points) than among women (by 13 percentage points).

*Figure # 8.* Level of Respondents' Awareness about the Bodies to Appeal an Issue Raised at Public School ("Yes, I Know") by Gender – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data



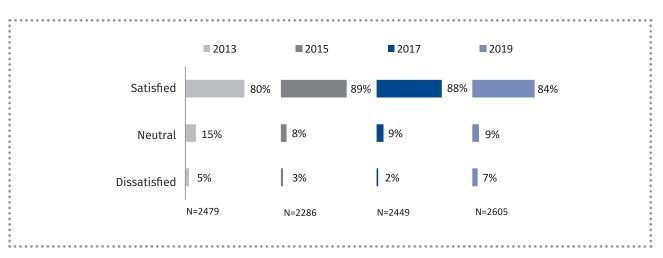
Satisfaction with public schools across various parameters is high. The last three rounds of the study show that there are no significant differences in parameters in terms of satisfaction, but the satisfaction level has increased since 2013 among all parameters. According to the 2019 study results, respondents are most satisfied with the access to public schools (87%), and they are least satisfied with the activities of the supervisory board (66%). It is worth mentioning that satisfaction with the activities of the supervisory board is the lowest in all rounds of the study.

	2013	2015	2017	2019
	62%	79%	81%	79%
Infrastructure	N=3131	N=2600	N=2535	N=2569
	60%	78%	73%	81%
Management	N=3131	N=2516	N=2397	N=2500
	58%	76%	70%	78%
Registration procedures (simplicity)	N=3131	N=2502	N=2319	N=2428
	48%	70%	60%	66%
Supervisory board actions	N=3131	N=2462	N=2309	N=2354
	64%	79%	78%	80%
Teachers' competence level	N=3131	N=2515	N=2396	N=2485
C-f-h	-	-	-	84%
Safety				N=2494
A	-	-	-	87%
Access				N=2495

*Table # 8. Satisfaction with Public Schools Against Various Parameters – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

\*Note: "Safety" and "Access" were evaluated by respondents only in 2019

As for general satisfaction with public schools, the study hasn't demonstrated any significant differences across the rounds, as more than 80% of respondents in all rounds have been satisfied with public schools since 2013.



#### Figure # 9. Overall Satisfaction with Public Schools - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

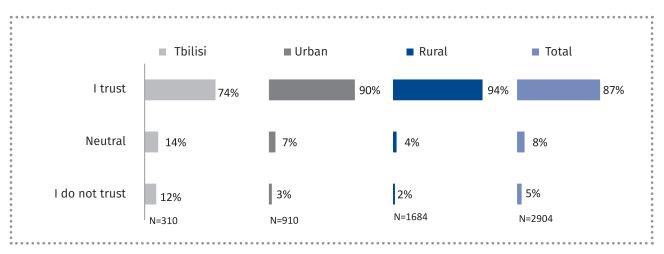
In the context of **regions,** the study shows that Tbilisi is the least satisfied (71%) with public schools, where the satisfaction has decreased by 11 percentage points compared to the previous round. As for other regions, public school satisfaction is lower in Kakheti (86%), Samtskhe-Javakheti (87%) and Kvemo Kartli (83%), where we observe a decline in the level of satisfaction in comparison to the previous round. The highest level of satisfaction with public schools is observed in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (95%) and Guria (95%). It is noteworthy that compared to the previous round, the level of satisfaction with public schools has increased the most in Guria (19 percentage points). According to the study results, satisfaction with public schools is higher in highland settlements (91%), when compared with other types of settlements (84%). Besides, the satisfaction level in terms of urban/rural settlements is higher in villages (90%), than in the city (80%). No differences were observed within the study in terms of gender, where the satisfaction level is 84% for both men and women.

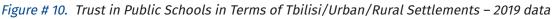
	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	71%	81%	82%	71%
Imereti (N=300)	94%	98%	92%	92%
Adjara (N=300)	80%	94%	97%	93%
Guria (N=300)	84%	93%	76%	95%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	91%	93%	91%	92%
Kakheti (N=300)	79%	89%	92%	86%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	63%	80%	87%	83%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	82%	92%	87%	92%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	84%	90%	92%	87%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	81%	93%	87%	91%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	90%	96%	90%	95%
Total (3400)	80%	89%	88%	84%

Figure # 9. Overall Satisfaction with Public Schools - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

It is worth mentioning that respondents with secondary or vocational education (87%) claim to be more satisfied with public schools than those with higher education (79%).

Trust in public schools was evaluated only in 2019 and was quite high (87%). No significant differences were revealed in different contexts, except for the **urban/rural** context, where the results of the study show that the trust in public schools was higher in villages (94%) than in cities (82%). If we look at the data in terms of Tbilisi/cities/villages, the trust level was the lowest in Tbilisi (Tbilisi – 74%, cities – 90%, villages – 94%).





The **qualitative study** related to public schools and kindergartens revealed several important trends. While discussing positive changes in public schools, focus discussion participants highlighted issues related to infrastructure. In terms of problems, however, the challenges of class overcrowding and the lack of competence among teachers were identified. With regard to overcrowding, it has been mentioned that the problem is not only the number of children in each class, but the number of classes in the school. The latter has been mainly highlighted in urban settlements, and especially in Tbilisi.

Discussion participants also negatively evaluated the competence of teachers. According to the respondents, it can be explained by two factors: on the one hand, the competence of teachers is low in terms of the subject they teach, and on the other hand, competence is low in terms of their attitude towards the learning process. In particular, school teachers pay attention to explaining the topics envisaged by the curriculum, but the assessment of students' knowledge remains unattended. Here we should mention nepotism and so-called "active parents". As the focus group participants of Imereti villages pointed out, children of active parents have higher chances that their knowledge will be assessed, while the children of inactive parents may not be evaluated at all. Nepotism is another problem, which signals that a high grade of students does not necessarily reflect their knowledge level. According to the discussion participants, poor-quality of the learning process at public schools is one of the main reasons there is a need for private tutors. According to the respondents, all of these problems are the result of insufficient motivation among teachers who are more concerned with remuneration rather than with teaching students. As assessed by the participants of the focus group discussion, since the teacher's salary is not high, their enthusiasm is also low. "The prestige [of the school] should be determined by the knowledge gained at school and not by the knowledge gained from tutors." **Woman, 50 years, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

"They do not think it is necessary to work hard at school. No one is stupid; not a single child is stupid! Why should a child need a tutor outside the school?!" **Woman, 40 years, rural settlement, Imereti** 

Focus group participants highlighted the importance of safety issues at schools. According to them, the presence of a psychologist and a resource officer is important for creating a safe environment in schools. However, the participants had different opinions about the latter. According to one argument, disagreements between students at school shouldn't be resolved by a person associated with a law enforcement agency. According to the second argument, the discipline in the schools nowadays is achieved by resource officers, so their presence is necessary.

Discussion participants agree on the importance of a psychologist. Moreover, they believe that increasing their number is desirable in some cases. Discussion participants stated that psychologists' attentions are focused on students with special needs, which means less time is allocated for other pupils.

"I do not like when a disagreement between children is resolved by the interference of police or resource officials. We were kids and we also behaved badly ...my classmate boys were so bad... and now they could be sitting in prison if the police interfered that time..." **Woman, 32 years, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

"There is discipline at school nowadays; there are resource officials." Man, urban settlement, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti

"They [students] need psychologists... There is one [psychologist] for inclusive learning, but that psychologist is mainly focused on that child [child with special needs]. Let's say, the kids had a fight. The resource official will resolve the issue and a referral to the psychologist may not take place at all." **Woman, 39 years, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

Focus group participants noted that active parents are particularly involved in the Supervisory Board and that the board discusses mainly the issues they initiate. Interestingly, at the Guria focus group discussion, it was noted that after the election of the Supervisory Board members, less attention is paid to the decision-making and implementation processes by the board members. This issue may explain why satisfaction with the Supervisory Board is the lowest in all rounds among all parameters.

In case of rejection or an undesirable decision by the Supervisory Board, according to the discussion participants, parents should probably apply to the resource centers and then to the Ministry of Education for an appeal. It should be noted that mainly those respondents who have/had an active relationship with the school also held information about the Supervisory Board. To name the resource center and/or Ministry of Education as the next instance for addressing issues were assumptions rather than assertions based on knowledge or information.

During the evaluation of satisfaction with public schools and kindergartens, the participants mainly highlighted infrastructural factors. In addition to rehabilitated/refurbished schools or kindergartens, public transport can also be considered as an important factor in the level of satisfaction with public schools, despite the fact that according to several respondents, some Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti villages have transportation problems. The access to school transport allocated for public schools was positively assessed by the focus group participants, but a specific challenge was noted. In particular, only public school students and not teachers or public kindergarten students who follow the same route are allowed to use public transport. Particular emphasis on this issue was given in the village settlements of Guria. According to the discussion participants, since public transport is very limited and citizens face serious challenges in traveling from villages to towns and vice versa, it would be desirable if public kindergarten students were allowed on public school transport, considering the fact that there are enough seats in the vehicle.

"There are 10 kids sitting [school vehicle]. There are situations when one [child] has to go to school and the other - to the kindergarten. They should send one kid to school with the bus and take the other by car while they are [the school and the kindergarten] next to each other." **Man, 41 years,** *rural settlement, Guria* 

The qualitative study revealed nutrition as one of the indicators of satisfaction with the public kindergartens, which is positively assessed by focus discussion participants. In the same context of satisfaction with public kindergartens, it should be noted that the Kvemo Kartli focus group positively assessed the presence of ethnic minorities in Georgian kindergartens and the fact that kindergarten teachers at least have minimal knowledge of communicating with ethnic minority representatives in their native language. According to one of the assessments, this simplifies the learning of the Georgian language for kindergarten students and ensures their readiness to continue their studies in Georgian language schools.

"The kids [from ethnic minority groups] do not know Georgian, but the teacher knows some essential words...to communicate with children. Then they [children] quickly study Georgian and are already ready to go to a Georgian school." **Woman, 39 years, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

Dissatisfaction with both public kindergartens and schools is associated with registration and class overcrowding. These issues were relevant to the focus groups of Tbilisi, Rustavi and Ozurgeti. According to discussion participants, during the registration process, it is desirable to give preference to the residents of the district/settlement living closest to the school. Moreover, it should be possible that they register not electronically, but based on a written application.

Reduced access to kindergartens in Guria, in the conditions of increased demand, can be explained by insufficient free places. It was noted, both in urban and rural settlement focus group discussions that people frequently take children from rural settlements to city kindergartens. There are several reasons for this. One of them is better infrastructure in city kindergartens. Also, city-employed parents prefer to take children to the same city kindergarten in order to save time. An important factor is also the presence of different educational and cultural circles in the city, which are not available in rural areas. Moreover, there are problems with transportation. All of these factors result in overcrowded classes in urban public kindergartens and decreases their accessibility.

"The kids from villages are both in schools and kindergartens, that's why city children do not have sufficient space." **Man, 47 years, urban settlement, Guria** 

"The parents are taking their kids both to the kindergarten and different groups, and that's why city kindergarten is more comfortable for them. It is difficult to take a kid from the village to the groups; transportation is also a problem." **Woman, 35 years, urban settlement, Guria** 

The fact that there are gaps in access to kindergartens in Guria villages was also highlighted by the local self-government representatives. According to them, the reason for this is deteriorated infrastructure and/or depreciated buildings. The improvement process has already initiated and partial rehabilitation of kindergartens is being done in several villages. According to one of the main informants, however, it is preferable to have full rather than partial rehabilitation of public kindergarten buildings, which is hampered by scarce financial resources.

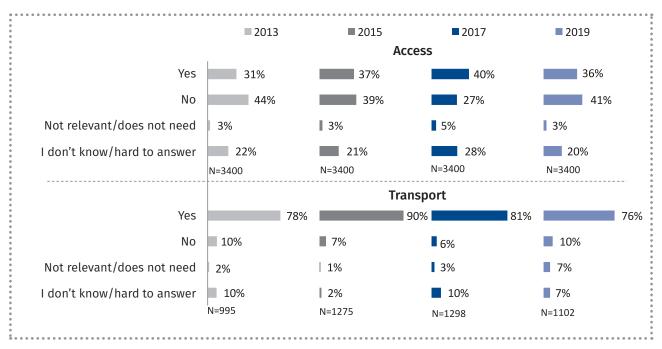
As for Kvemo Kartli, the limited quantity of available places is the main challenge, mainly observed in Rustavi. The representative of local self-government also highlighted the existence of this problem.

# **3.1.3. Vocational Education Institutions**

Among the 2019 study respondents, 36% have access to vocational institutions in the municipality, and according to 76% of the respondents, public transportation is accessible to reach these institutions. Among the latter group, 76% also say that the public transport schedule coincides with the vocational education institution schedule.

The lowest rate (31%) of access to the municipal vocational institution was observed in the 2013 study. As for transportation, the highest rate of positive responses (90%) regarding the access to public transport to reach vocational education institutions was reported in 2015.

*Figure # 11.* Access to Municipal Vocational Education Institutions, Access to Transportation to Vocational Education Institutions – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

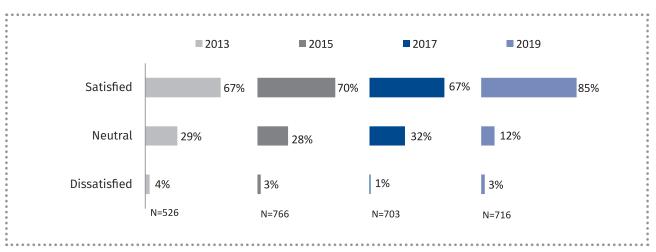


The majority of respondents who have access to vocational education institutions trust them (84%). In the context of **urban/rural** settlements, it is noteworthy that vocational education institutions are more trusted by rural (90%), than by urban residents (81%). As for the **regional** context, the lowest rate of trust in vocational education institutions in their municipalities is reported in Tbilisi (76%), Guria (80%) and Imereti (81%). The highest rate of trust in vocational education institutions is in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (93%) and Adjara (94%).

	l trust	I neither do not trust, nor trust	l do not trust
Tbilisi (N=100)	76%	14%	6%
Imereti (N=44)	81%	16%	-
Adjara (N=106)	94%	6%	1%
Guria (N=68)	80%	17%	3%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=96)	93%	6%	1%
Kakheti (N=115)	84%	15%	1%
Kvemo Kartli (N=43)	90%	5%	5%
Shida Kartli (N=54)	85%	12%	3%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=73)	84%	13%	4%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=32)	84%	16%	-
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=58)	93%	7%	-
Total (N=789)	84%	12%	3%

Table # 10. Trust in Vocational Education Institutions in the Municipality/Region - 2019 data

As for overall satisfaction, the majority of respondents, who have access to vocational education institutions, are satisfied with them (85%). It is noteworthy that satisfaction towards vocational education institutions shows a positive dynamic, and if there were no changes in this regard from 2013-2017, the satisfaction level in the last round is higher by 18 percent point (2017 – 67%, 2019 – 85%) than the previous round. The small number of respondents who are dissatisfied with vocational education institutions, report the level of teachers' competence to be one of the main reasons for their dissatisfaction in all rounds of the study. Trust towards vocational education institutions was only assessed in 2019, and it amounts to 84%.



*Figure # 12.* Overall Satisfaction with Vocational Education Institutions – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

As part of the study, respondents named the highest priority professions for their district/settlement. As it turned out, in 2019, tourism, medicine, construction and agricultural fields have an almost equal priority for 3-4 respondents out of 10. IT is also named as one of the highest priority professions (20%). The study results show that mentioning tourism among the top professions has been increasing over the years, and if it was 26% in 2014, it reached 38% in 2019; which is almost identical to the results of the previous round (2017 – 37%).

Since 2013, the indicator of mentioning medical, construction and agricultural fields among top priority professions is decreasing (although all three fields remain to be of the highest priority). The negative dynamic in the case of agriculture should be mentioned, as almost 20% fewer respondents named this profession as a priority in 2019 than in 2013 (32% and 51%, respectively). Also, the dynamic is negative for professions in the administrative field (2013 – 20%, 2019 – 7%).

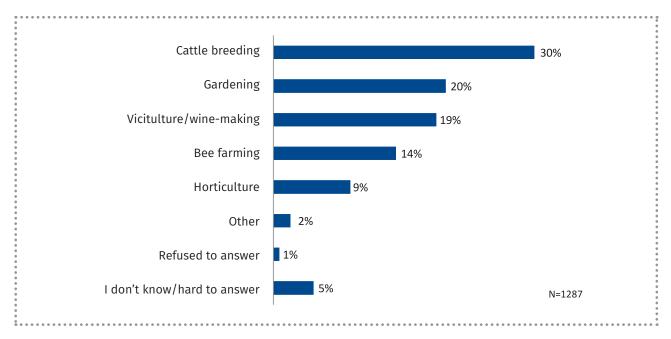
*Table # 11. High Priority Fields for the Residents of Settlements/Cities to Master at Vocational Education Institutions – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tourism (hotel business)	26%	28%	37%	38%
Medical (nurse)	50%	44%	42%	36%
Construction (carpenter, electric, mechanic, etc.)	49%	42%	43%	36%
Agricultural field	51%	41%	36%	32%
іт	-	-	-	20%
Engineering	-	-	-	13%
Administration (secretary, administrative assistant)	20%	21%	17%	7%
Culinary	-	-	1%	4%
Other	3%	2%	2%	5%
	N=2396	N=2099	N=1963	N=1102

\*Note: The sum of answers exceeds one hundred percent as several answers were allowed. IT and Engineering were offered in the list of professions for respondents in 2019

The respondents who named agriculture among the top vocational education professions in 2019 also named specific occupations they consider to be a priority for their settlement population. As it turned out, most of the respondents considered cattle breeding (30%) to be the top agricultural profession for their settlement population. Gardening (20%), viticulture/winemaking (19%) and bee farming (14%) were also mentioned among the priority occupations.

*Figure # 13. Specific Profession in the Field of Agriculture, the Mastery of which is a Priority in the Vocational Institutions – 2019 data* 



The data regarding these professions is remarkable in the context of **regions.** As the study results show, cattle breeding is the top demanded major in most of the regions. Horticulture is the most demanded profession in Guria (42%) and Shida Kartli (44%). Viticulture/winemaking is the most demanded in Kakhe-ti (63%), as well as Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (57%).

	Tbilisi	Imereti	Adjara	Guria	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	Kakheti	Kvemo Kartli	Shida Kartli	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Racha-Lechkhumi -Kvemo Svaneti
Gardening	38%	21%	16%	42%	14%	11%	20%	44%	18%	29%	3%
Bee farming	23%	18%	23%	26%	27%	4%	16%	6%	13%	24%	24%
Cattle breeding	18%	45%	33%	20%	54%	22%	61%	37%	67%	32%	17%
Viticulture/ winemaking	21%	15%	27%	13%	5%	63%	2%	13%	3%	14%	57%
	N=43	N=46	N=61	N=162	N=87	N=165	N=67	N=76	N=131	N=132	N=123

Table # 12. Top Agricultural Professions in Vocational Education Institutions by Regions – 2019 data

Tourism and agriculture were considered to be the most promising fields for local economic empowerment by the focus group discussion participants in the regions. The development of tea culture was highlighted in Guria, while Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti focused on pig breeding. According to key local government representatives, there has been progress in this regard. In particular, Jamón producer Spanish company will start production in the village of Ghari (Oni Municipality) and will promote the development of pig breeding and create additional employment opportunities for locals.

# 3.1.4. Higher Education Institutions

The study results show that state-funded higher education institutions/branches are accessible in the municipality/region for 39% of respondents. The majority of these institutions are within 1-10 km from the respondents' houses (57%). All the respondents from the location where educational institutions exist say that public transport is accessible to reach the institutions (92%) and that the transport schedule coincides with the schedules of higher education institution (84%).

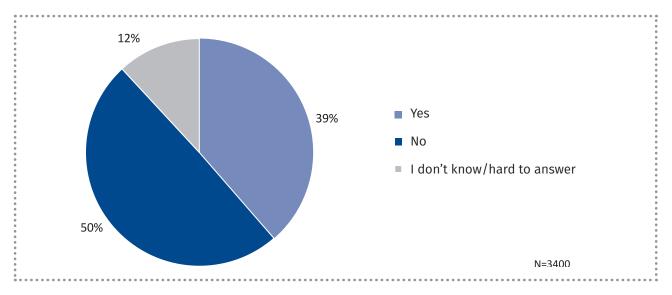
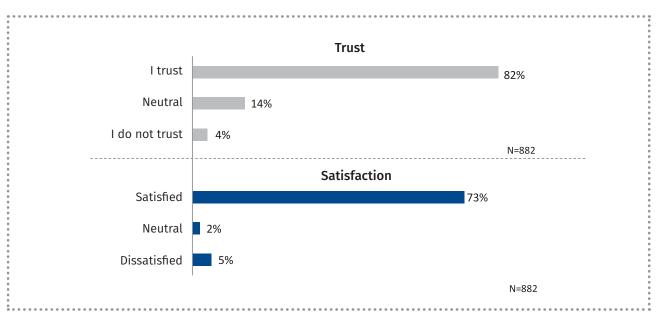


Figure # 14. Existence of the State-Funded Higher Education Institution/its Branch- 2019 data

The majority of respondents who state that there is a state-funded higher education institution in their municipality/region are satisfied (73%) with this institution and trust it (82%).



*Figure # 15. State-Funded Higher Education Institution/its Branch in the Municipality – 2019 data* 

The 27 respondents who are not satisfied with the state-funded higher educational institution in their municipality/region mainly do not like the teachers' knowledge/competence level and the curriculum.

Study results show that state-funded higher education institutions get the lowest satisfaction score among all educational institutions (average score – 3.7). The average satisfaction score is identical for all other educational institutions and is 3.9 from its maximum available point of 5. As for trust, vocational and higher education institutions have a similar assessment score (3.8). Public schools are more trusted (3.9) by the respondents than vocational and higher education institutions, and public kindergartens have the highest level of trust with an average score of 4 out of maximum 5.

Table # 13. Average Assessment of Satisfaction and Trust in Educational Institutions – 2019 data

	Satisfaction (Mean)	Trust (Mean)
Public kindergartens	3.9	4.0
Public schools	3.9	3.9
Vocational education institutions	3.9	3.8
Higher educational institutions	3.7	3.8
Max.	5.0	5.0

# **3.2. Various Social Services**

### 3.2.1. Social Assistance

Various social services, including social assistance, were assessed by the respondents within the framework of the study. As the study results show, 30% of the 2019 study respondents report that neither they nor their family members receive any social assistance from the state. Besides, almost half of the respondents themselves/their family members (46%) receive an age pension.

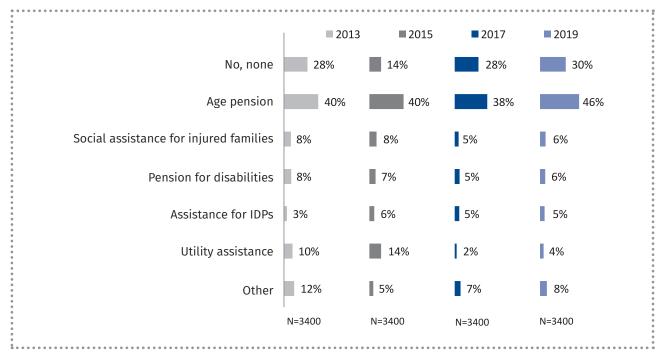


Figure # 16. Use of Various Social Services - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

\* Note: Sum of the answers exceeds 100% as several answers were allowed

Regarding the two most frequently mentioned services, it should be noted that the majority of pensioners report that the registration process was simple (90%) and receive assistance in a timely manner (99%).

# 3.2.2. Free Municipal Canteens

The study results show that the majority of respondents do not know the distance from their home to the nearest free municipal canteen. This indicator has hardly changed over the last two rounds of the study (2017 - 66%, 2019 - 63%). Among those who know about the free canteen in their area, the majority do not know whether the portion of food allocated per person is sufficient (2019 - 62%). However, as compared to previous years, the percentage of awareness about the portion of food allocated per person has slightly decreased. In 2019, 14% of the respondents believed that the portion allocated per person at the free canteen was sufficient. It is noteworthy that there is a negative dynamic compared to the previous round, because if in 2017, 15% of the respondents stated that the portion of food allocated per person was insufficient, in 2019 this indicator increased by 9 percentage points and reached 24%.

As for the food quality in free canteens, there is a positive dynamic, since in 2019 the negative evaluations of this factor were zero. In general, over the years, there has been a positive trend in attitudes towards food quality. In 2019, 84% of respondents evaluated food quality in the free canteens as "good".

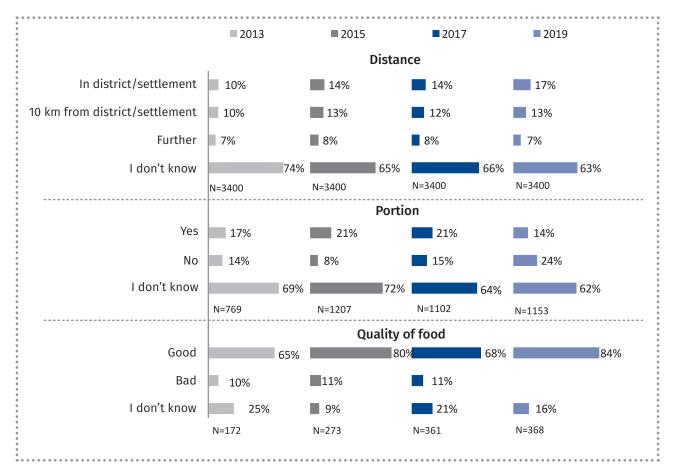
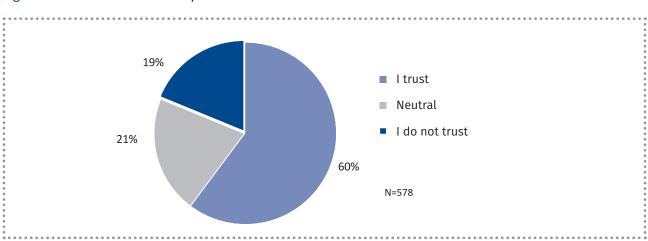


Figure # 17. Access to Free Municipal Canteens, Portion, Food Quality – 2013/2015/2017/2019

It should be noted that there is a positive dynamic in different terms regarding municipal canteens. Particularly, if in 2013 or 2015 none of the **highland** respondents reported the accessibility to this type of service in their district/settlement, in 2017, 1 % mentioned that there was a free municipal canteen in their district/settlement, and in 2019, 7% of the highland resident respondents stated the same. The **re-gional** context should also be highlighted, where the study shows a positive trend. In Tbilisi, the number of respondents reporting the accessibility to a free canteen in their district/settlement doubled (2017 -

17%, 2019 – 34%). A positive trend is also noteworthy in Samtskhe-Javakheti. If in 2017, 1% of respondents stated having access to free state canteens in their district/settlement, in 2019, the number of such respondents increased to 16%.

Trust in free municipal canteens was only assessed in 2019. The majority of respondents who were aware of the accessibility to such services trust them (60%), while 19% of the respondents do not trust the mentioned service and 21% are neutral.





# 3.2.3. Assessment of Various State Social Services

The study of the population's satisfaction with various state social services illustrated that by 2019 is state support for ethnic minorities' integration (78%) is the top evaluated service by respondents. The positive assessment of state health insurance for elderly people (76%) and offering special services to IDPs (74%) is slightly behind the state support for ethnic minorities' integration. According to the results of the 2019 study, the most negative assessment, similar to the previous rounds of the study, was recorded for state support for employment (38%). It is noteworthy that the positive evaluation of social services has decreased compared to 2017.

In the 2019 study, respondents evaluated three new services. Particularly, shelters for victims of violence, the provision of shelter for homeless children and social housing owned by the municipality. It was found that approximately half of the respondents are not aware of the existence of these services (shelters for victims of violence – 48%, the provision of shelter for homeless children – 39%, social housing owned by the municipality – 52%). An almost equal number of **female** and **male** respondents do not know about the existence or absence of the last two services in their municipality. As for the shelter for victims of violence in the municipality, the number of female respondents who are not aware of their existence (55%) is higher than the number of male respondents (48%).

Respondents who evaluated these services mainly share the opinion that in their municipalities, the listed services are 'well' implemented by the state (shelters for victims of violence – 61%, the provision of shelter for homeless children – 72%, social housing owned by the municipality – 67%).

*Table # 14. Positive Evaluation of the Provision of Various Social Services by the State – 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

	2013	2015	2017	2019
	71%	68%	76%	62%
Shelters for elderly people	N=2410	N=2687	N=1898	N=1820
Medical incurance for elderly people	77%	76%	83%	76%
Medical insurance for elderly people	N=2724	N=2973	N=2322	N=2434
	67%	67%	78%	67%
Care for people with disabilities	N2308	N=2663	N=2082	N=2029
	74%	70%	85%	78%
Supporting the integration of ethnic minorities	N=1923	N=2270	N=1738	N=1519
	71%	70%	84%	74%
Special services for IDPs	N=1948	N=2236	N=1821	N=1557
	31%	34%	40%	38%
Assistance from the government in getting employed	N=2636	N=2850	N=2347	N=2245
Chalter for intime of violance				61%
Shelters for victims of violence	-	-	-	N=1190
				72%
Provision of shelter for homeless children	-	-	-	N=1502
Control Harrison and harrow initializing				67%
Social Houses owned by municipalities	-	-	-	

\*Note: The services, the percentage indicators of which are only presented in 2019, were rated by respondents only in the fourth round

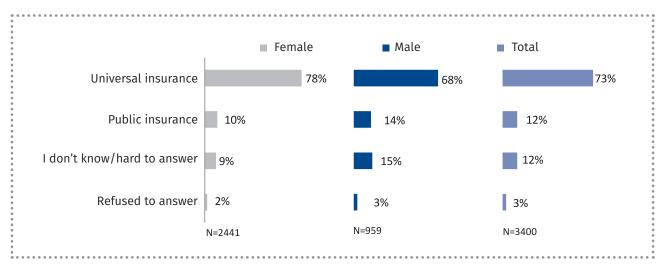
As the focus group discussions of the **qualitative study** have shown, in the context of ethnic minority integration, it is important to support citizens in studying Georgian. It was highlighted that more and more representatives of the new generation study the Georgian language, get an education in the state language, and for them, language barriers are less of an obstacle. However, access to municipal services for ethnic minorities has been identified as a problem in Kvemo Kartli, which is related to a lack of language knowledge. Both the key informants and the focus group discussion participants noted that although the rate of knowledge of the Georgian language among ethnic minorities is gradually increasing from year to year, communication in the state language is still a serious challenge. This is further complicated by the fact that the municipality staff does not speak the ethnic minorities' languages. Another challenge is that ethnic minorities do not even speak Russian and/or public officials refuse to speak Russian. Consequently, communication between the citizens of ethnic minorities who refer to the municipality for specific services and the municipality authorities is difficult, which is reflected in their level of satisfaction with local self-government.

"I have graduated from a Russian school. Half of the years I studied in Russian and half in a Ukrainian school. It is very difficult for me to read legal documentation in Georgian, though I know the Georgian language. Even now, when I'm talking, you more or less understand me, right? But legal documents are difficult for me... sometimes when they tell me to sign the document, how can I sign? Shouldn't I read and understand what I'm signing? This is a very big problem." **Woman, 38 years, representative of ethnic minorities, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli**  "They cannot speak Georgian, and cannot speak Russian... The working language should be Georgian. At least, one has to make them understand which document they need in order to receive the service, right? There is also another group, the officials who refuse to speak Russian... Social issues are easy because they already know, but as for property issues, for instance, it is very difficult for them to get these services..." **Representative of the local self-government, Kvemo Kartli** 

# 3.3. Healthcare

# 3.3.1. Universal Insurance

Unlike other rounds of the survey, the respondents in the fourth round rated universal insurance services. It revealed that seven out of ten respondents have universal insurance (73%) and one out of ten respondents (12%) has private insurance. No significant differences were shown by the study in terms of benefiting from universal insurance according to **urban/rural** settlements or **regions** and other types of settlements. In terms of **region**, approximately seven out of ten and more respondents have universal insurance. It should be noted that the largest number of respondents benefiting from universal insurance was reported in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (81%), and the smallest number in Samtskhe–Javakheti (66%). As for a **gender** perspective, more female respondents (78%) report using universal insurance than male respondents (68%).



#### Figure # 19. Use of Universal Insurance by Gender - 2019 data

The differences in terms of the number of private insurance users should be noted. In particular, the number of private insurance users in **highland** settlements is 3%, and the number in other types of settlements equals 13%. In terms of **urban/rural** settlements, there are more users of private insurance in cities (17%) than in villages (5%). If we disaggregate the data in terms of Tbilisi/cities/villages, the highest number of private insurance users is reported in the capital (Tbilisi – 23%, cities – 11%, villages – 5%). As for the regions, except for Tbilisi, the largest number of private insurance users is reported in Kvemo Kartli (11%) and the smallest number in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (3%).

The study demonstrated that every other respondent or their family member has used the universal insurance service (53%) within the last year. In terms of **urban/rural** settlements, it should be noted that every second respondent has used the mentioned service in cities (cities -50%, villages – 42%). Among **highland** settlement respondents, 36% and 48% of other settlement type respondents have used universal insurance. In terms of **gender**, every other woman used the mentioned service (50%), in the case of male respondents, this rate equals 44%. As for **regions**, as it turned out, in all regions except for Kakheti and Samtskhe-Javakheti, four out of ten respondents and/or their family members have used universal insurance service within the last year. In Kakheti, 35% of respondents reported benefiting from the mentioned service, and the smallest number of respondents (29%) reported the same in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The largest number of respondents using universal insurance was reported in Tbilisi (56%).

Table # 15. Benefiting from the Universal Insurance by the Respondent/Family Member within the Last Year
by Regions – 2019 data

	Univers	al insurance
	Has used	Has not used
Tbilisi (N=400)	56%	44%
Imereti (N=300)	43%	57%
Adjara (N=300)	45%	55%
Guria (N=300)	48%	52%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	45%	55%
Kakheti (N=300)	35%	65%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	50%	50%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	48%	52%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	29%	71%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	41%	59%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	38%	62%
Total (3400)	47%	53%

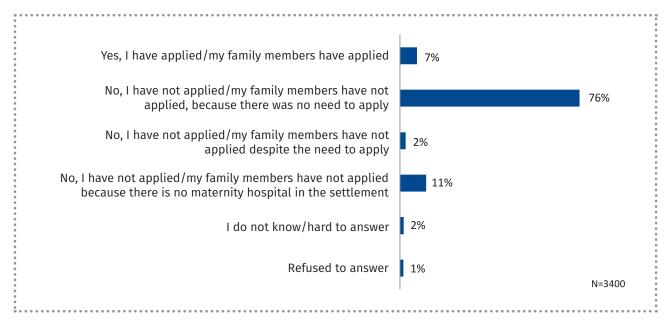
The majority of respondents who have used universal insurance are satisfied (88%) and trust (68%) it. It is noteworthy that the level of satisfaction with universal insurance in **highland** settlements is higher (95%) than in lowland settlements (87%). The lowest rate of satisfaction with the mentioned service among the regions is reported in Imereti (74%), and the highest in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (96%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (98%). It is worth mentioning that the rate of trust in universal insurance that was assessed by all respondents whether they had used it within the last year or not, was highest in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (79%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (79%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (79%). The lowest trust indicator towards the universal insurance service was reported in Tbilisi (63%), Kakheti (63%) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (64%). The significant differences in various terms were not shown by the research in terms of trust or satisfaction.

	Universal ii	nsurance
	Satisfaction	Trust
	88%	63%
Tbilisi	N=230	N=372
	74%	68%
Imereti	N=132	N=263
	93%	72%
Adjara	N=142	N=251
curi-	90%	75%
Guria	N=139	N=262
	96%	79%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	N=130	N=270
	95%	63%
Kakheti	N=104	N=270
	82%	71%
Kvemo Kartli	N=149	N=260
	93%	73%
Shida Kartli	N=141	N=255
Constalle a lought at	88%	72%
Samtskhe-Javakheti	N=88	N=240
Mtalihata Mtianati	93%	64%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	N=125	N=271
	98%	<b>79</b> %
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti	N=117	N=248
Tatal	88%	68%
Total	N=1497	N=2962

# 3.3.2. Maternity Hospitals

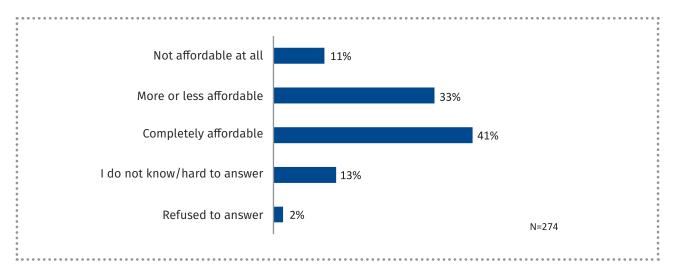
The question about maternity hospitals was only included in the last round of the study. The referral experience towards such medical institutions within the past year by respondents and/or their family members is 7%. It is natural that due to maternity medical service specifics, the majority of respondents do not have experience with referrals. It is notable, however, that 11% of the respondents haven't referred to the mentioned service due to the absence of a maternity hospital in their settlement. The share of respondents who have not referred to a maternity hospital, despite the existence of such a service in their settlement, is minimal (2%).

*Figure # 20. Referral Experience to Maternity Hospitals Located in the Settlement within the Last Year – 2019 data* 



Out of the respondents who had been referred to a maternity hospital within the last year, the majority say that the maternity hospital is more than 5 km away (52%), 28% report that a maternity hospital is located directly in their settlement/district, and 20% indicate that it is within 5 km distance. The majority (87%) reports that there is public transport accessible to reach the maternity hospital, and the majority of respondents who have used the maternity hospital service within the past year are satisfied with it (90%).

The maternity service fee is more or less or completely affordable for the majority of respondents (74%). It is noteworthy that the fee is completely affordable for 41% of the service users.



*Figure # 21. Affordability of the Medical Service Existing in the Settlement/District - 2019 data* 

As for the trust indicator towards the maternity hospital of the settlement/district, it is high (72%). The study has not shown any significant difference in various contexts in terms of referral to these medical institutions, their service fees, affordability, or level of trust. Additionally, no differences were found by **gender.** As it turned out, the representatives of both genders trust the maternity hospital located in their settlement/district (women – 71%, men – 73%).

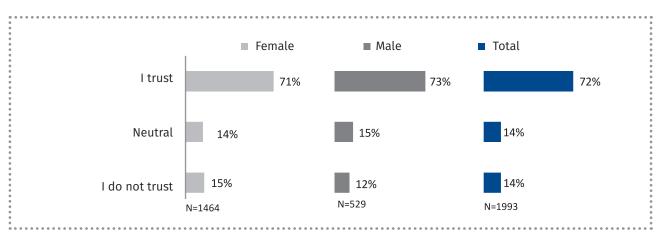


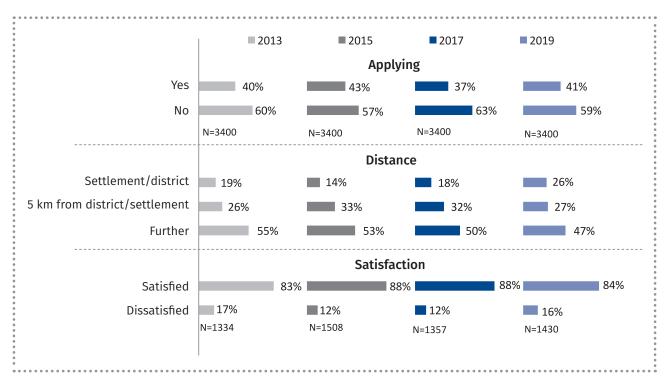
Figure # 22. Trust in the Maternity House Located in the Settlement/District by Gender – 2019 data

# 3.3.3. Seeking Treatment for Illness at Medical Institutions

### Hospital

The results show that in all rounds of the study, approximately four out of ten respondents and/or their family members have visited a hospital within the past year (2013 - 42%, 2015 - 43%, 2017 - 37%, 2019 - 41%). The hospitals are generally more than 5 km away from the respondent's district/settlement, and in these terms, no significant differences were reported (2013 - 55%, 2015 - 53%, 2017 - 50%, 2019 - 47%). Though, it is noteworthy that compared to other rounds of the study, the number of respondents who stated that there is a hospital directly in their settlement/district has increased (2013 - 19%, 2015 - 14%, 2017 - 18%, 2019 - 26%). It should be mentioned that in the majority of cases, there is public transport accessible to reach the hospital (2013 - 90%, 2015 - 89%, 2017 - 93%, 2019 - 84%). As for general satisfaction with the hospitals, respondents and/or family members of the respondents who have used the mentioned service are satisfied with it in all rounds of the study (2013 - 83%, 2015 - 88%, 2017 - 87%, 2019 - 83%).

*Figure # 23. Treatment (visit) at a Hospital, Distance, Access to Transportation, Satisfaction - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 



In cases of **rural** settlements, the hospital is generally more than 5 km away (2013 - 71%, 2015 - 75%, 2017 - 74%, 2019 - 69%). Although the majority of respondents say that public transport goes to the mentioned medical institutions, it is noteworthy that compared to the previous round, there is a negative trend in terms of the movement of public transport to hospitals (2013 - 93%, 2015 - 88%, 2017 - 93%, 2019 - 81%).

Every second respondent from **highland** settlements stated that the hospital is more than 5 km away from their settlement (54%), and 14% of respondents reported that a hospital was located directly in their settlement. There is a positive dynamic in terms of hospital accessibility in the vicinity of the respondents' settlements. In particular, if in the previous rounds of the study, eight or nine out of ten highland settlement respondents stated that the hospital was more than 5 km away from their settlement/district, in the 2019 study, their number has decreased to five out of ten (54%). Besides, the share of the respondents who reported having a hospital within 5km of their district/settlement (2013 – 18%, 2019 – 32%) and the number of respondents reporting the existence of a hospital directly in their settlement/district (2013 – 3%, 2019 - 14%) has increased.

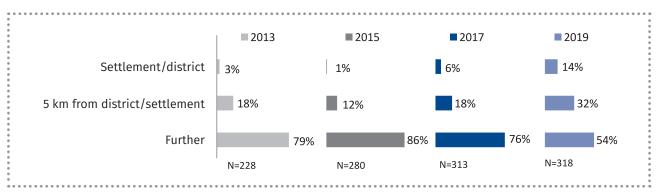
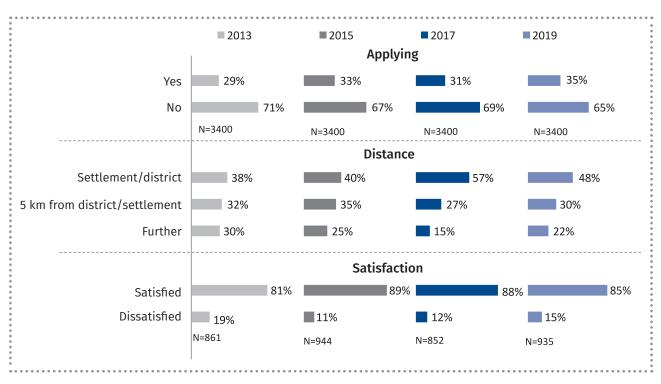


Figure # 24. Distance to Hospitals in Highland Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

# Clinics

Three out of ten respondents or their family members have sought treatment in clinics within the last year (2013 - 29%, 2015 - 33%, 2017 - 31%, 2019 - 35%). In most cases, the mentioned medical institution is located in the settlement/district. It is worth mentioning that in this regard, the last round of study results shows the increased access to clinics in settlements/districts when compared to 2013 (2013 - 38\%, 2019 - 48%), and decreased access when compared to the previous round (2017 - 57\%, 2019 - 48%). The majority of respondents who have received the services of clinics state that there is public transport accessible to reach these medical institutions (2013 - 86%, 2015 - 91%, 2017 - 93%, 2019 - 88%). As for overall satisfaction with clinics, it is high in all rounds of the study (2013 - 81%, 2015 - 89%, 2017 - 88%, 2019 - 85%).



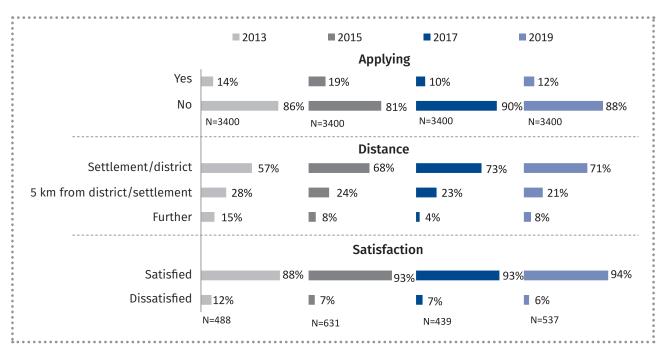
*Figure # 25. Seeking Treatment in Clinics, Distance to the Institution, Satisfaction - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

In **rural** settlements, clinics are generally more than 5 km away (2013 – 59%, 2015 – 64%, 2017 – 45%, 2019 – 52%). Although the majority of respondents say that public transport goes to the clinics, the trend is still negative, as the lowest number of respondents state the above-mentioned in the last round, and the indicator has decreased by 10 percentage points when compared to the first round (2013 – 89%, 2015 – 88%, 2017 – 87%, 2019 – 79%).

No significant changes were reported in **highland** settlements according to the last two rounds of the study. Though, compared to the first round, more respondents in 2019 state that the clinics they have referred to are located directly in their settlement/district (2013 – 15%, 2019 – 22%). A lower number of respondents report having the mentioned medical institution more than 5 km away (2013 – 60%, 2019 – 47%). Similar to villages, the dynamics in terms of access to public transport to reach the clinics is negative, especially when compared to the first two rounds of the study (2013 – 93%, 2015 – 96%, 2017 – 75%, 2019 – 68%).

# **Ambulatory / Medical Institution**

The results of all rounds of the survey show that respondents rarely refer to ambulatory/medical institution due to illness (2013 - 14%, 2015 - 19%, 2017 - 10%, 2019 - 12%). For the majority of the respondents, the mentioned medical institution is accessible directly in their settlement/district (2013 - 57%, 2015 - 68%, 2017 - 73%, 2019 - 71%). Public transportation is accessible to reach the ambulatory (2013 - 63%, 2015 - 69%, 2017 - 71%, 2019 - 72%), and the satisfaction rate of the respondents who have referred to this medical institution is high (2013 - 88%, 2015 - 93%, 2017 - 93%, 2019 - 94%).



*Figure # 26. Seeking Treatment at an Ambulatory/Medical Institution within Last Year, Distance, Satisfaction - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

In all three above-mentioned institutions (hospital, clinic, ambulatory), the majority of the respondents who have used the service state that the service fee is more or less (48%) or fully affordable for them (35%). The service fee is not affordable at all for 17% of the respondents.

Trust in medical institutions was only assessed in 2019, and the highest rate is reported for ambulatory services (86%). For hospitals and clinics, the trust indicator is 63% and 71%, respectively.

#### 3.3.4. Seeking Preventive Treatment at Medical Institutions

#### Hospital

The practice of referring to the hospital for preventive medical examination is less widespread, as a small share of respondents in all rounds of the survey during the last year indicated the existence of such a practice (2013 - 12%, 2015 - 16%, 2017 - 10%, 2019 - 18%). However, a positive trend can be noted, because if in the previous rounds only one out of ten respondents referred to a hospital for preventive reasons, two out of ten respondents (18%) reported doing the same in the last round of the study. The absolute majority of those respondents who have used hospital services are satisfied with them (2013 - 88%, 2015 - 89%, 2017 - 91%, 2019 - 88%). Four out of ten service users report that service fees for this institution are affordable (2013 - 49%, 2015 - 45%, 2017 - 42%, 2019 - 43%).

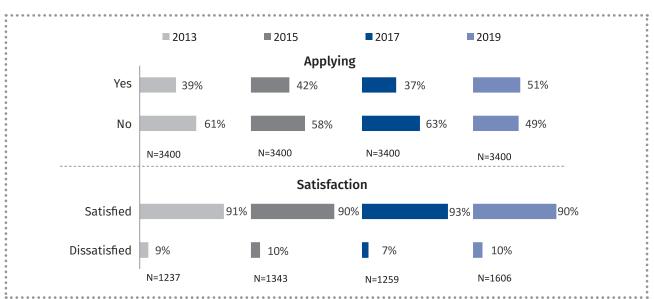
# Clinic

The practice of visiting a clinic for preventive checkups is rare, similar to visiting hospitals for preventive medical examinations. One out of ten respondents (2013 - 12%, 2015 - 16%, 2017 - 15%) in the first three rounds of the survey and two out of ten respondents (2019 - 19%) in the last round have reported the practice. It is also noteworthy that according to 2019 survey results, the number of **women** (22%) who have gone to clinics within the last year is slightly higher than the number of men (15%). A strong majority of respondents who have used the services of a clinic are satisfied with them (2013 - 85%, 2015 - 90%, 2017 - 93%, 2019 - 90%). Additionally, the service fee is acceptable for approximately every second respondent (2013 - 56%, 2015 - 49%, 2017 - 46%, 2019 - 45%).

The practice of visiting an **ambulatory or a medical institution** for preventive medical examination almost does not exist and a dynamic of change between survey rounds is not observed (2013 – 4%, 2015 – 7%, 2017 – 2%, 2019 – 3%).

# 3.3.5. Emergency Medical Service

The results of the survey show that the highest number of respondents who have used the emergency medical service within the last year was reported in the last round of the study (51%). The service was provided in a timely manner, according to all the rounds of the survey (2013 – 90%, 2015 – 89%, 2017 – 86%, 2019 – 86%). A solid majority of respondents who have called the emergency medical service are satisfied with the service (2013 – 92%, 2015 – 90%, 2017 – 93%, 2019 – 90%).



*Figure # 27. Use of Emergency Medical Service within the Last Year, Satisfaction with the Service - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

The study has not revealed significant differences in relation to satisfaction with the service. Though, it should be noted that the emergency medical service is least used in Tbilisi (86%) and mostly used in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (96%). This may be related to receiving and/or failure to receive emergency services in a timely manner. According to the data in terms of **region**, the lowest number of respondents to report that the ambulance arrived on time was in Tbilisi (76%). The number of respondents who said that the ambulance arrived on time was the highest in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (97%). In a regional context, it is also noteworthy that in terms of the timely ambulance service

delivery in Tbilisi, the trend is negative and the number of respondents reporting that the ambulance arrived on time has decreased in every round (2013 – 85%, 2019 – 76%). According to the last two rounds of the study, the trend is also negative in the Adjara region, where in 2017, 96% of respondents reported that the ambulance arrived on time, and in 2019 this percentage decreased to 89%. A positive trend should be pointed out in Kvemo Kartli and Shida Kartli, where, compared to the previous round, the indicator of ambulance arrival on time has increased. The differences were also observed in terms of settlements. In 2019, more **highland** settlement respondents (93%) report the timely receipt of ambulance services than the respondents of lowland settlements (86%). There is a similar tendency in rural settlements - more respondents from rural areas (94%) than respondents from cities (82%) reported that they had received emergency medical service in a timely manner.

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	85%	86%	79%	76%
Imereti (N=300)	90%	93%	86%	93%
Adjara (N=300)	93%	91%	<b>96</b> %	89%
Guria (N=300)	94%	92%	96%	93%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	97%	95%	90%	94%
Kakheti (N=300)	91%	93%	94%	92%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	88%	86%	84%	90%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	94%	69%	84%	95%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	92%	92%	92%	88%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	85%	92%	97%	93%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	97%	96%	99%	<b>97</b> %
Total (3400)	90%	89%	86%	86%

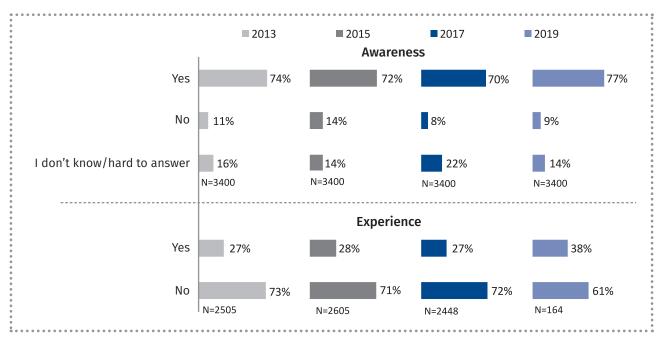
Table # 17. Timely Delivery of Emergency Medical Service by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

The level of trust in emergency medical services in municipalities was first assessed in the fourth round (2019), and study results show that trust in the mentioned service was high. Regardless of whether respondents have used the service within the last year, eight out of ten (83%) respondents trust in ambulance service in their municipality.

#### 3.3.6. Preventive Vaccination of the Population

The majority of respondents are aware of the state preventive vaccination program and the number of such respondents increased in 2019 (2017 - 70%, 2019 - 77%). The number of respondents or family members who were provided with preventive vaccinations within the past year has increased compared to the previous round (2017 - 27%, 2019 - 38%). According to all rounds of the survey, the majority of respondents received the service free of charge. Moreover, the number of respondents who report paying for vaccinations has significantly decreased (2013 - 16%, 2019 - 4%). In all rounds of the survey, the absolute majority of respondents who were provided with a preventive vaccination are satisfied with the service (2013 - 96%, 2015 - 97%, 2017 - 98%, 2019 - 98%).

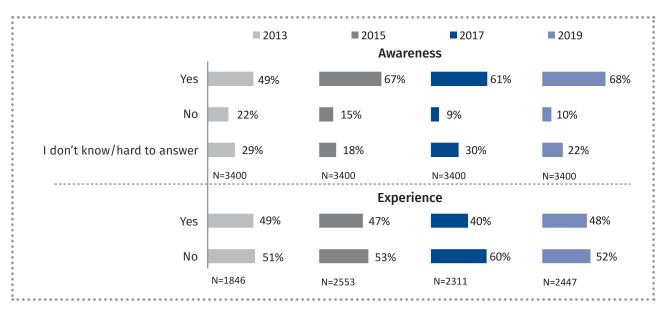




The study did not reveal any substantial differences in various parameters regarding the level of awareness about preventive vaccinations, as seven or eight out of ten respondents know about this type of vaccination. The highest rate of awareness about preventive vaccination among the regions is observed in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (86%). Even with regard to the practice of vaccination, the study does not show any differences in various parameters. The only noteworthy context is the **regional** context. In particular, according to 2019 survey results, the lowest number of respondents who had a preventive vaccination was reported in Samtskhe-Javakheti (27%) and the highest number – in Imereti (46%). As for trust towards the mentioned service, it was only measured in 2019 and was high (83%).

# 3.3.7. Vaccination of Cattle / Domestic Animals

According to the survey results, seven out of ten respondents are aware of the state vaccination program for domestic animals (68%). Half of them have the experience of vaccinating their domestic animals/poultry within the framework of the state vaccination program (48%). The majority of respondents report not paying a fee for vaccination, and are satisfied with the service (98%) as well. *Figure # 29. Awareness of State Preventive Vaccination for Domestic Animals, Use of Service within the Last Year - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

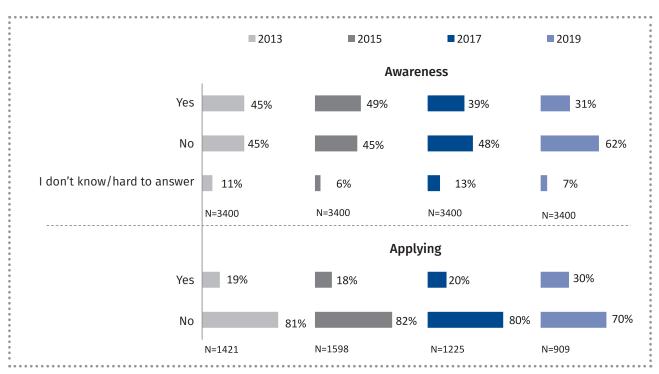


There are more respondents in **rural** settlements who have vaccinated their domestic animals/poultry for preventive purposes (69%), than in the city (24%). Besides, the portion of respondents having this experience has increased in the rural settlements, because as in 2017, 58% of respondents stated that they had vaccinated their domestic animals/poultry within the framework of the state preventive vaccination program, in 2019 this share increased by 11 percentage point and reached 69%. More respondents report having this experience in **highland** settlements (73%), than in lowland settlements (45%). As for the **regional** context, it turned out that the lowest number of respondents who used the services of the state preventive vaccination program were from Tbilisi (18%), and the highest number were from Guria, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti. An identical number of respondents (71%) report having a similar experience in all three regions.

Trust towards the preventive vaccination service for domestic animals/poultry was measured for the first time in 2019 and was high – 88%.

#### 3.3.8. State Healthcare Programs

According to the results of the last round of the study, three out of ten respondents have heard about other state healthcare programs (31%) and three out of ten respondents and/or their family members have used the state healthcare program service (30%). It is significant that the highest rate of usage of this program was reported in the last round of the study (2013 – 19%, 2015 – 19%, 2017 – 19%, 2019 - 30%). More respondents in cities (36%) than in villages (24%) have heard about other healthcare programs. The respondents from highland settlements also have lower awareness about the mentioned programs (22%), than respondents from other types of settlements (32%). As for the usage of state healthcare programs, the number of highland settlement respondents and/or their family members who have used state healthcare program services is higher (44%) than the number of respondents from other types of settlements (29%). As for the **regional** context, the lowest number of respondents who benefited from any type of service within the framework of the program was reported in Guria (15%), and the highest number was reported in Adjara (45%). The majority of respondents who have used or whose family members have used the state healthcare program are satisfied with the service (2013 – 81%, 2015 – 93%, 2017 – 94%, 2019 – 94%). It is also noteworthy that awareness about the state healthcare program is higher among respondents with higher education (44%) than among those with secondary or vocational education (25%).

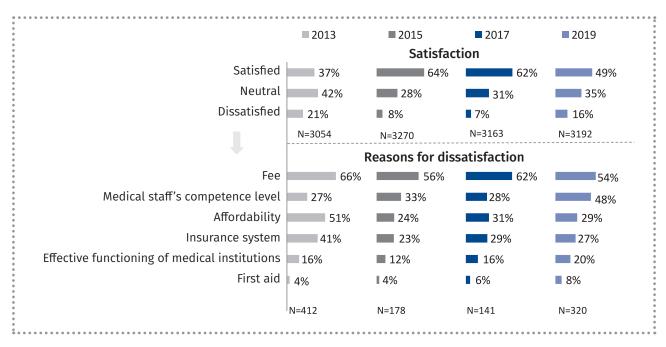


*Figure # 30. Awareness of State Healthcare Programs, Applying to these Programs - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

# 3.3.9. General Satisfaction with Healthcare System

In 2019, every second respondent (49%) reported satisfaction with the healthcare system, and 35% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. It is noteworthy that in general, compared to the first round of the study, satisfaction with the healthcare system is higher (2013 - 37%, 2019 - 49%), though compared to the second and third rounds, the trend is negative (2015 - 64%, 2017 - 62%). Besides, the number of dissatisfied respondents has doubled when compared to the previous round (2017 - 7%, 2019 - 16%). Similar to all rounds, the main reason for this in 2019 was related to the cost of the service (54%). The second reason was the level of doctors' competence (48%). It is notable that the frequency of reporting the second reason has significantly increased compared to the previous round (2017 - 28%, 2019 - 48%).

*Figure # 31.* Reasons for General Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction with the Healthcare System - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data



It is worth mentioning, that in terms of **gender**, generally more men (54%) respondents are satisfied with the healthcare system than women (45%). Further, respondents from rural areas are more satisfied with the healthcare system (58%), than those from cities (45%). **Highland** settlement resident respondents are more satisfied (60%), than the residents of lowland settlements (48%). As for the **region**, in general, Tbilisi resident respondents are the least satisfied with the healthcare system (40%) and the respondents in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti are the most satisfied with it (70%).

The respondents in 2019 also rated their trust towards the existing healthcare system in Georgia. It turned out, that approximately six out of ten respondents trust the healthcare system (57%). Three out of ten (30%) are neutral and 13% do not trust the system. Differences were observed in different groups. In terms of **gender**, the study showed that men (60%) have more trust in the healthcare system than women (54%). Trust towards the system is higher among **highland** residents (69%) than among lowland residents (56%). Besides, respondents from **rural** areas have higher trust in the healthcare system (68%) than the ones living in cities (49%). As for the **regional** context, the lowest rate of trust towards the healthcare system was reported in Tbilisi (45%) and the highest – in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (75%). An almost similar trust indicator is reported in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti region (74%).

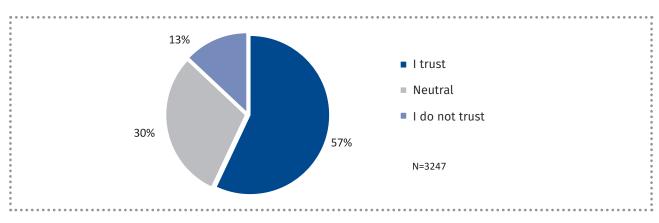
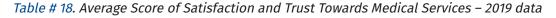


Figure # 32. Trust Towards Healthcare System – 2019 data

As the results of the fourth round of the survey show, out of all of the medical services, respondents were the most satisfied with preventive vaccination (average score - 3.12) and the least satisfied with hospital services (average score - 2.90). The trust indicator of the latter is the lowest of all (average score - 3.47). Ambulatory services are the most trusted among all services by the survey respondents (average score - 3.91). As for the state healthcare programs in general, it can be concluded that their satisfaction and trust levels are higher than average, as the average satisfaction score of all healthcare programs is 3.35 and the average trust score is 3.48 out of 5.

	Satisfaction	Trust
	(Mean)	(Mean)
Universal insurance	2.96	3.58
Maternity hospital	3.11	3.62
Hospital	2.90	3.47
Clinic	2.92	3.69
Ambulatory clinic	3.06	3.91
Ambulance	3.05	3.84
Vaccination for population	3.12	3.83
Vaccination for domestic animal	3.11	3.90
State healthcare programs	3.35*	3.48
Max.	4	5



\*Note: Unlike all other services, the satisfaction indicator of healthcare state programs was scored on a 5-point scale

**Qualitative research** revealed various shortcomings related to the healthcare system, which may explain the decrease in general satisfaction with this system (2017 - 62%, 2019 - 49%). Shortcomings revealed during focus group discussions on the healthcare system can be groups into two: one related to universal insurance and the other to the professionalism of doctors.

In the context of universal insurance, the focus of the discussions was on abuse of insurance system by doctors and misuse of available resources by initiating irrelevant treatment for patients and even assigning a serious medical diagnosis to relatively mild cases. As the participants of the focus group discussions noted, there are frequent cases of surgical interventions initiated by doctors when there is no such need.

"...doctors only think about the money that the state will transfer to them for any patient... Any recorded patient is only a sum of money for them, and they are not interested in anything except this... **Woman, 25 years, urban settlement, Imereti** 

"They may provide you with some unimportant service, but they are trying to withdraw all of the money from what is covered by the insurance." **Man, rural settlement, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti** 

"A child broke a leg... came the head [of the hospital] and asked why they didn't operate on the kid. The answer was that the surgery wasn't needed, and the head responded that no matter whether the operation was needed or not, the patient would pay the money and that's what matters. How can one trust the doctors after that?" **Man, 50 years, urban settlement, Tbilisi.** 

According to the qualitative study participants, another drawback of the work of the healthcare system is the unfair cooperation of medical staff with the pharmaceutical companies or pharmacies. This issue is manifested in the prescription of expensive medicines for patients and significantly contributes to the dissatisfaction with and distrust towards the healthcare system.

Another serious challenge to the system is the low qualification of medical staff, which has led to the increase of negative evaluations, and it was also reported during the quantitative data gathering. As the qualitative research has shown, this is especially true for regions, where citizens visit local medical facilities for simple medical complications, while in the case of relatively serious problems, they prefer to visit medical institutions in Tbilisi. The main reason for this is a lack of professionalism among doctors in regions. Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti region is the only region where the absence of doctors with specific specializations was named more frequently than a lack of professionalism among doctors.

"You should go to Tbilisi as soon as possible and look after yourself instead of waiting here and guessing." **Man, 50 years, rural settlement, Imereti** 

"You may seek first-aid [in the medical institution in the region], but you shouldn't expect to have serious treatment here; the treatment quality is very low..." **Woman, 50 years, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

As mentioned in the discussions, the medical staff employed in the regions also recommend patients to start/continue their treatment in Tbilisi, and this is not always the decision of patients alone. It is notable that participants in Imereti explained this fact by the lack of professional cooperation among doctors. According to them, due to competition, doctors will redirect patients to Tbilisi instead of directing them to local colleagues, when their own competence is not enough. The reason given for this was that doctors employed in Tbilisi are not perceived as direct competitors.

"You can go by yourself and you can say that you want to seek treatment in Tbilisi. But you will not rush to Tbilisi for an unimportant issue. If there is something serious, even they recommend you to go to Tbilisi. They are sending you to the specialists." **Man, 40 years, representative of** *ethnic minorities, rural settlement, Kvemo Kartli* 

"They do not even respect their colleagues to redirect you to other doctors in Kutaisi... even if there are more professional doctors here, no, they are sending you directly to Tbilisi..." **Man, 34 years, rural settlement, Imereti** 

Participants of the focus group discussion highlighted access to nursing services in rural settlements. However, various problems were noted, especially in the case of Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti, where the importance of social capital and the human factor was emphasized. Discussion participants noted that medical staff do not have sufficient conditions and the choice of medication is scarce, so they are unable to provide appropriate medical care to patients. Another problem is transportation, and often doctors in rural settlements go to patients at their own expense. The determinant here is the personal relationships between medical staff and citizens. "Why does the doctor come [to the patient]? Because everybody knows each other and it depends on the person..." **Man, rural settlement, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti** 

The rate of universal insurance and hospital satisfaction, when compared to other medical services, is low according to the results of the quantitative research (average rating: universal insurance - 2.96, hospitals - 2.90 out of a maximum of 4 points). Participants of the qualitative research also spoke about the problems with these medical services. The least mentioned problems were related to emergency medical care. It is significant that even with the results of the quantitative research, the assessment of emergency medical care is high, 3.05 out of a maximum of 4 points. It was observed that the professionalism of the emergency medical services in general and the doctors employed there is less problematic. The main challenge for this service is promptness. Delays were reported in both cities and villages. If in rural areas, the main reason for these delays is connected to the amount of time it takes 112 operators to specify addresses, the problem in cities is the insufficient number of crews, especially seasonally, during viral complications. It is worth mentioning that the importance of raising awareness of citizens regarding the use of the emergency medical service was especially emphasized. In particular, the participants pointed out that people should be calling for emergency medical services for minor cases, and that further difficulties should not be created for citizens in utter need of assistance.

In order to improve the emergency medical service, the participants of the focus group discussion also considered it important to simplify the procedure of filling out many different forms by the staff.

# 3.4. Recreation, Leisure, Culture

The 2019 study results show that playgrounds are the most common (66%) recreational places in settlements. It is worth mentioning that there is a significant decrease in their share compared to previous rounds. Although playgrounds are named as the top priority, the data shows a negative trend when compared to previous rounds. Respondents named cultural heritage sites (5%) and museums (9%) among the least prioritized sites. In addition, three out of ten respondents indicated the existence of these facilities in their settlements.

The 2019 survey did not reveal any significant differences in terms of **gender**, **highland settlements** and **urban/rural** areas. In all cases, playgrounds turned out to be more prevalent than other cultural/ recreational sites. When looking at the priority of such places, the same situation can be observed. It should be highlighted that 30% of rural settlement respondents state that there is not a single cultural/recreational site in their settlement, while just 6% of urban settlement respondents state the same. Playgrounds (48%), libraries (33%) and culture houses/village clubs (27%) are the three most frequently named cultural/recreational sites by rural settlement respondents. As for cities, the majority of urban respondents give the highest priority to playgrounds (42%). Public parks (35%), libraries (32%) and squares (32%) are given the highest priority by three out of ten urban respondents. *Table # 19. Existing Recreational Sites in the Settlement/City, Condition and Priority- 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

		2013	2015	2017	2019
Theatres	Existing	47%	48%	46%	32%
	Priority	29%	28%	26%	18%
Museums	Existing	48%	47%	46%	35%
	Priority	14%	16%	10%	9%
Libraries	Existing	59%	56%	56%	51%
	Priority	38%	35%	32%	32%
Public parks	Existing	49%	53%	55%	46%
	Priority	48%	45%	52%	29%
Playgrounds	Existing	71%	72%	73%	66%
	Priority	52%	58%	62%	45%
Culture houses/village clubs	Existing	40%	43%	27%	24%
	Priority	37%	38%	30%	16%
Other sports infrastructure	Existing				24%
	Priority				16%
Monuments of cultural heritage	Existing				28%
	Priority				5%
Public squares	Existing				43%
	Priority				28%

\*Note: Other Sports infrastructure, cultural heritage sites and squares from the list were assessed by respondents only in 2019

According to the 2019 survey, the closest entertainment/recreational venue to the settlement is the playground (92%) and the public square (90%), while the farthest site is the museum (10%).

Table # 20. Distance from Residential Places to Entertainment/Recreational Facilities – 2019 data

	0-3 km	4-6 km	7-10 km	Further
Theatres (N=859)	50%	25%	17%	8%
Museums (N=1086)	51%	22%	18%	10%
Libraries (N=1754)	72%	16%	8%	4%
Public parks (N=1239)	80%	12%	6%	3%
Playgrounds (N=2121)	92%	6%	1%	1%
Other sports infrastructure (N=655)	79%	14%	5%	3%
Culture houses/village clubs (N=998)	75%	17%	6%	2%
Monuments of cultural heritage (N=854)	63%	19%	11%	7%
Public squares (N=1177)	90%	4%	3%	3%

On average, by 2019, the highest score was given to the condition of museums (2.5) and public parks (2.5). Respondents rated the condition of cultural heritage sites in their settlement (2.2) with the lowest scores.

Places for Entertainment/Relaxation	Mean
Theatres	2.4
Museums	2.5
Libraries	2.4
Public Parks	2.5
Playgrounds	2.4
Culture houses/village clubs	2.3
Other sports infrastructure	2.4
Monuments of cultural heritage	2.2
Public squares	2.3
Max.	3

#### Table # 21. Evaluation of Entertainment/Recreational Sites – 2019 data

In the framework of the **qualitative research**, in terms of recreation and recreation areas, on the one hand, there was a positive trend towards focusing on the arrangement of public squares, playgrounds, and sports infrastructure in the already existing squares. On the other hand, it was clear that it is necessary to arrange more squares or stadiums, especially in rural settlements.

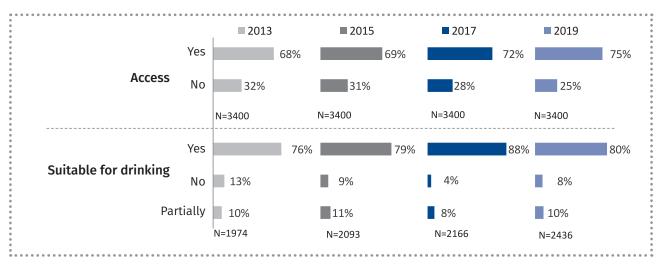
Among the most important events in Guria were the opening of the National Folklore Center and Theater in Ozurgeti, as well as the rehabilitation of the museum. According to focus group participants, after the rehabilitation of the museum, Ozurgeti will have a "museum with modern exhibition halls." The opening of the Botanical Garden in Zugdidi was named as one of the main events of the year at the focus group discussion in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. At the same time, the importance of starting the construction of a theater in the city was emphasized.

# 3.5. Utility Infrastructure

Issues related to infrastructures such as water supply, irrigation systems, sewage systems, electricity and gas supply, waste collection, and street cleaning were studied as part of the research.

# 3.5.1. Water Supply

2019 study results indicate that the majority of respondents have access (75%) to the central water supply system. There are no significant changes in this regard since 2013, however, the dynamic is positive (2013 – 68%, 2015 – 69%, 2017 – 72% and 2019 – 75%). According to all four rounds of the survey, approximately eight out of ten respondents stated that the water provided is drinkable, and 2019 study results indicate that the majority of respondent households use the water from the central system for drinking (87%).

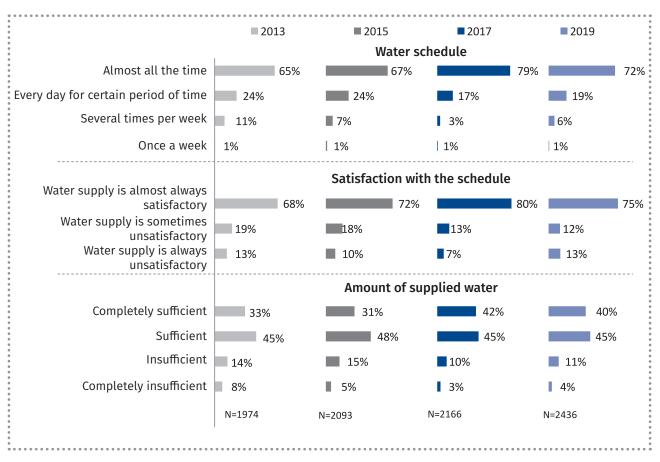


### Figure # 33. Access to Central Water Supply, Drinkability - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In 2019, seven out of ten respondents reported that water supply is nearly always accessible (72%), and just two out of ten say that water is available every day for a certain period of time (19%). The schedule of the water supply is nearly always rated as satisfactory by the majority of respondents (75%). The quantity of the supplied water is also more or less acceptable for the majority of respondents (40% - absolutely enough; 45% - enough).

According to the last round of the survey, some respondents reported that the water service fee is calculated according to the number of family members (42%) and 38% reported that they pay based on how much water they use. It should be noted that according to the results of all four rounds of the survey, the number of central water meters installed for the population is increasing year by year as the number of respondents who pay a water fee according to the volume of consumed water is rising (2013 - 22%, 2015 - 33%, 2017 - 36% and 2019 - 38%). Among water supply users, 14% reported they do not pay for the service, 17% evaluated the service fee as unaffordable, and the majority of respondents evaluated it as affordable (65%).

*Figure # 34. Central Water Supply Chart, Satisfaction Chart, Amount of Supplied Water - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 



According to the 2019 study results, there have been no significant changes in terms of **rural/urban settlements**, as according to all four rounds of the study, approximately nine out of ten respondents report having access to the central water supply. As for rural settlements, despite the positive trend observed since 2013, just half of the rural settlement population has access to a central water supply according to 2019 results (2013 – 40%, 2019 – 52%). The majority of respondents in urban settlements pay a service fee according to the number of family members (51%), while in rural settlements the majority of the population pays this service fee based on the volume of consumed water (30%).

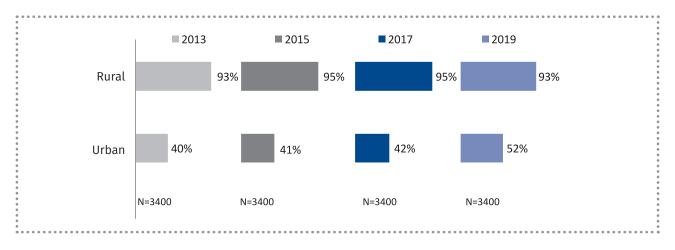
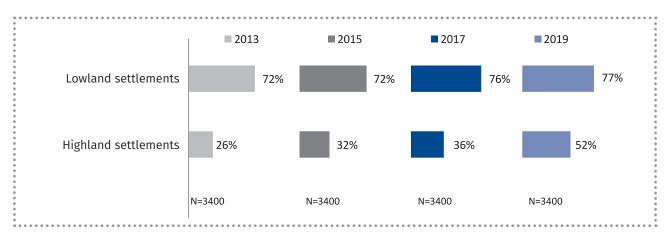


Figure # 35. Access to Central Water Supply by Urban/Rural Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

As for **highland settlements**, the study results show a positive trend. If in the first round of the study, every fourth respondent from a highland settlement reported having access to a central water supply system (2013 - 26%), in 2019, half of the respondents stated the same (52%). In general, there is increased accessibility in other/lowland settlements. According to the 2013 study results, seven out of ten respondents had access to a central water supply system (72%), while in 2019, eight out of ten respondents stated the same (77%). It should be noted that in the highland settlements, three out of ten respondents pay a service fee according to the number of family members (31%), and the same number of respondents do not pay a service fee (31%). Just 8% of the respondents have a water meter in highland settlements, while in other/lowland settlements, four out of ten respondents report the same (40%).

*Figure # 36.* Access to Central Water Supply System by Highland/Lowland Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data



According to all four rounds of the study, central water is accessible for 100% of respondents in Tbilisi. As for other regions, a significant increase in central water supply accessibility in Samtskhe-Javakheti should be highlighted, where the access has almost doubled compared to 2013 (2013 – 45%, 2019 – 84%). There is a positive trend in this regard compared to the results of the previous years in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (2013 – 26%, 2019 – 60%), Kakheti (2013 – 69%, 2019 – 77%) and Guria (2013 – 32%, 2019 – 57%). The lowest rate of water supply access is reported in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (43%) according to 2019 survey data.

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	99%	100%	99%	100%
Imereti (N=300)	57%	51%	49%	53%
Adjara (N=300)	64%	61%	55%	59%
Guria (N=300)	32%	45%	27%	57%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	32%	53%	51%	43%
Kakheti (N=300)	69%	67%	68%	77%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	82%	73%	89%	83%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	64%	65%	66%	70%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	45%	40%	57%	84%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	49%	87%	76%	81%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	26%	18%	47%	60%
Total (3400)	68%	69%	72%	75%

Table # 22. Central Water Supply Access by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

It is noteworthy that according to 2019 survey data, eight out of ten users trust the water supply system in Georgia (78%).

The study results showed no significant change across all four rounds in terms of **gender** with regard to the water supply schedule.

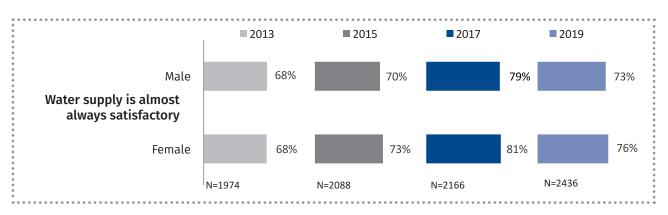


Figure # 37. Satisfaction with Central Water Supply Schedule by Gender - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

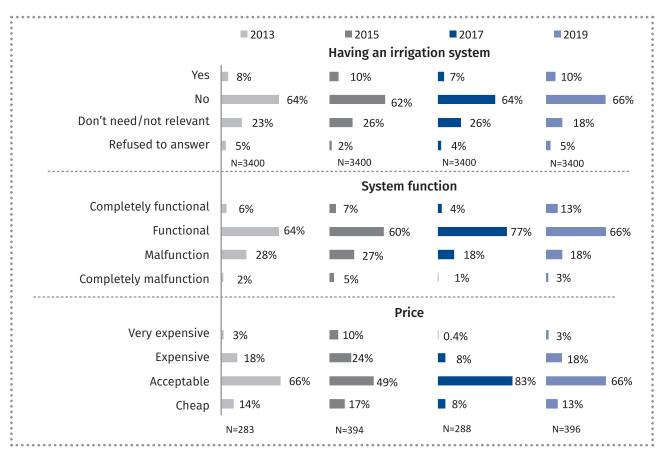
Despite the high satisfaction level of respondents regarding the water supply, some shortcomings were addressed in the framework of the **qualitative study** by the focus group discussion participants both in Imereti and Kvemo Kartli. The problem in Kutaisi is the lack of a 24-hour water supply. According to the discussion participants, only a few districts of the city have a 24-hour water supply and this affects the satisfaction level with water supply services.

An irregular water supply schedule and poor water quality were highlighted by the Kvemo Kartli focus group discussion participants. Attention was paid to the poor water quality in Rustavi, which was mostly associated with a "sedimentary" water supply by focus group participants.

# 3.5.2. Irrigation System

According to the survey results, only one out of ten respondents in 2019 used an irrigation system (10%), which is similar to the results of the previous three rounds of the survey (2013 - 8%, 2015 - 10% and 2017 - 7%). According to the results of all four rounds of the survey, most of the surveyed users consider the existing irrigation system to be functional (2013 - 70%, 2015 - 68%, 2017 - 81% and 2019 - 79%) and the service fee affordable (2013 - 80%, 2015 - 66%, 2017 - 91% and 2019 - 79%). It is notable that according to the results of the 2019 survey, eight out of ten consumers trust irrigation services in Georgia (79%).

*Figure # 38. Irrigation System Consumption, System Operation, Service Charge Affordability - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

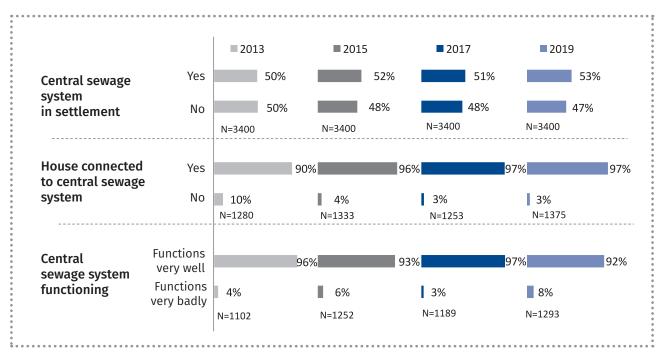


In rural areas, access to the irrigation system is higher (18%) than in cities (5%), where a large share of respondents estimate that the system is not needed (30%). As for the **regions**, it should be noted that the highest rates of access to the irrigation system are in Shida Kartli (35%), Kvemo Kartli (26%) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (26%). The positive dynamics of access in these regions were observed compared to 2013. Especially noteworthy is the increase in access in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (2013 - 5%, 2019 - 26%). Also, compared to 2017 there is almost a two-fold increase in accessibility in Kvemo Kartli (from 14% to 26%). According to the results of the study, irrigation systems are almost not accessible in western Georgia, in particular in Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Guria, which may be due to a reduced need for the system in this area.

## 3.5.3. Sewage System

According to the results of all four rounds of the survey, a sewage system is accessible to only half of the population (2013 - 50%, 2015 - 52%, 2017 - 51%, and 2019 - 53%), and the absolute majority of the population has a home sewer connected to a central sewage system (2013 - 90%, 2015 - 96%, 2017 - 97%, 2019 - 97%). According to the majority of service users, the system is functioning properly as indicated by the results of all rounds of research. It is significant that in 2019, respondents first rated their trust in the service of the system and according to the survey results, eight out of ten users generally trust the sewage system service (79%).

*Figure # 39.* Access to Central Sewage System, Connection of Home Sewer to Central Sewage System, Assessment of System's Proper Functioning - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

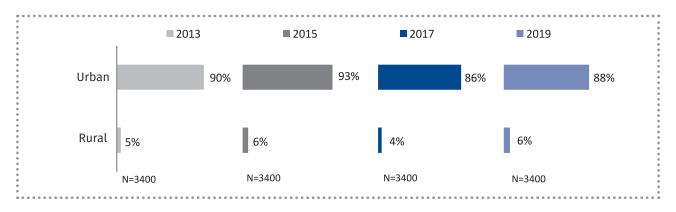


In the context of the **regions**, according to the results of all four rounds of research, only the population of Tbilisi has full access to the sewage system. As for the other regions, there has been a significant increase in access in Samtskhe-Javakheti (2013 - 33%, 2019 - 49%) and Kvemo Kartli (2013 - 31%, 2019 - 45%). In this regard, according to 2019 data, the lowest rate is in Guria (10%) and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (16%).

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	100%	100%	97%	99%
Imereti (N=300)	40%	50%	41%	38%
Adjara (N=300)	52%	54%	34%	41%
Guria (N=300)	14%	16%	14%	10%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	22%	30%	25%	16%
Kakheti (N=300)	25%	23%	14%	23%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	31%	31%	41%	45%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	32%	38%	34%	39%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	33%	33%	26%	49%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	27%	26%	38%	30%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	18%	15%	21%	30%
Total (3400)	50%	52%	51%	53%

No significant differences were found in the results of the 2019 survey in **urban/rural** settlements, as all four rounds of the survey showed that approximately nine out of ten respondents in cities confirmed the presence of a sewage system in their settlements, with almost no access to this type of service in the villages.

Figure # 40. Access to the Sewage System in Urban/Rural Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data



## 3.5.4. Electricity

According to the results of all four rounds of the survey, a strong majority of the surveyed population has an uninterrupted supply of electricity (2013 - 94%, 2015 - 94%, 2017 - 98% and 2019 - 95%). The quality of electricity (voltage) supplied by season, as well as by the service provided, like other rounds, was positively assessed in the 2019 survey (voltage in winter - 89%, voltage in other seasons - 94%, service - 95%). It is also noteworthy that trust towards electricity supply services, which was assessed by respondents for the first time in the 2019 survey, was high at 91%.

There were no significant differences in the results of the four rounds of the survey by **region**, as well as by **highland** and **urban/rural** settlements in terms of electricity supply, quality, and service satisfaction. Respondents have a 24-hour uninterrupted power supply, and both satisfaction and trust in the service are high.

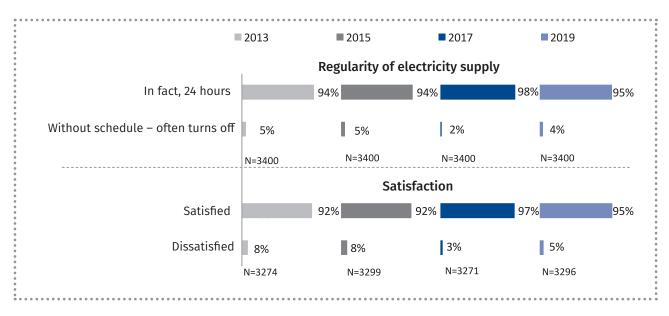


Figure # 41. Frequency of Electricity Supply, Satisfaction - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

## 3.5.5. Gas Supply Central System

According to the results of the 2019 survey, 86% of the surveyed population had access to the gas supply in their settlement, and an absolute majority of them had access to a central system (95%). It is noteworthy that, compared to the rounds of 2013 and 2015, more families were provided with central gas supply in 2017 and 2019 (2013 - 69%, 2015 - 70%, 2017 - 81%, 2019 - 86%). The majority of the population is satisfied with the quality of the gas, as well as with the services provided, throughout all rounds of the research. In 2019, 93% of service users expressed satisfaction with the gas service. In the last round of the survey, respondents rated their trust in the service as high – 89%.

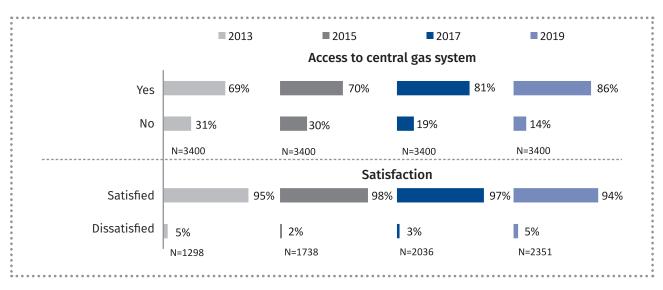


Figure # 42. Access, Satisfaction with Central Gas Supply - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In general, according to data from all four rounds of the study, access to a gas supply in **highland set-tlements** is quite low. According to the 2019 survey, if nine out of ten respondents (91%) had access to gas in lowland settlements (91%), only four out of ten respondents (37%) reported the same in highland settlements. In general, there is a positive dynamic in highland settlements, as gas supplies to citizens have nearly doubled since 2013 (21% in 2013, 37% in 2019).

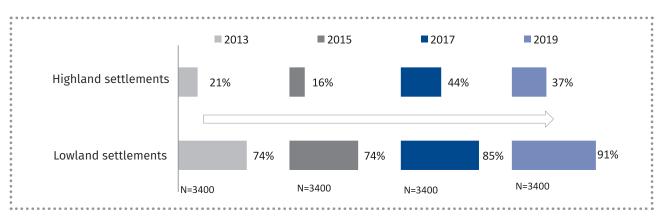


Figure # 43. Access to Central Gas Supply in the Highland/Lowland Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

No significant differences in **urban/rural** areas were found in the 2019 survey. In terms of access to central gas supply in the cities, nine out of ten respondents confirmed the existence of a gas supply in their settlement. As for the villages, the positive trend in access to the gas supply is observed. If half of the respondents had access to the central gas supply in rural settlements in 2013 (47%), seven out of ten respondents (74%) confirmed having access to this service in the last round of the survey. It is also worth noting that there is a positive trend when compared to the previous round of the research (2017 - 59%).

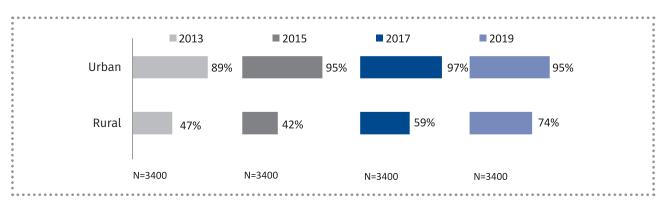


Figure # 44. Access to Central Gas Supply by Rural/Urban Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 dat

In the context of **regions**, according to the results of all four rounds of the study, only Tbilisi has a 100 percent central gas supply, but according to the 2019 survey data, the service is also fully accessible in Kakheti. The results of all four rounds show the lowest access to gas supply in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kve-mo Svaneti. In 2019, despite doubling the number of users in Racha-Lechkhumi, the central gas supply is still accessible to only a third of the region's population (14% in 2013, 36% in 2019). As for the rest of the regions, there has been a significant increase in access to the central gas supply in Imereti, where in 2019, the region reported almost full access to the gas supply (94%). Significant increases were also observed in Guria (2013 - 53%, 2019 - 78%), Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (2013 - 26%, 2019 - 58%), Kvemo Kartli (2013 - 64%, 2019 - 87%) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (2013 - 68%, 2019 - 84%). According to the results of all four rounds of the survey, only Adjara does not show a positive trend, where only half of the results of a central gas supply system.

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	100%	100%	99%	100%
Imereti (N=300)	65%	69%	80%	94%
Adjara (N=300)	50%	52%	65%	53%
Guria (N=300)	53%	49%	38%	78%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	26%	34%	45%	58%
Kakheti (N=300)	74%	72%	90%	100%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	64%	68%	88%	87%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	81%	78%	90%	91%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	66%	47%	69%	77%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	68%	73%	77%	84%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	14%	10%	5%	36%
Total (3400)	69%	70%	81%	86%

#### Table # 24. Access to Central Gas Supply by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In the framework of the **qualitative survey**, participants of the focus group discussion on the gas supply in the Kvemo Kartli rural settlement noted that the central gas pipeline has been in their settlements for years, but it is not possible to directly link households to the system. According to them, the reason for this as noted by representatives of local self-governments is a lack of readiness among private companies to start the process. Participants of the discussion expressed a willingness to pay for connection to the central gas pipeline as well as for the amount of used gas.

In the context of gas supply, it is also worth noting that besides many other benefits that may be associated with the provision of gas supply to the population, one of its most significant benefits was the reduction of tree cutting in the forests as noted during the Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti focus group discussion.

"There is a readiness [to connect the population to the central gas pipeline], of course. It costs 500 GEL. I will pay the gas fee alongside the electricity fee." **Man, 50 years, ethnic minority, rural settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

"[A central gas supply is a positive development] for forest cutting; forest cutting has declined." Man, 25 years, rural settlement, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti

## 3.5.6. Waste Collection

According to the survey results, waste collection services were accessible for nine out of ten respondents (90%) in 2019, which is a significant increase compared to the results of the 2013 survey, when waste collection services were inaccessible for only six out of ten respondents (59%). In 2019, half of the respondents reported that waste is removed from their areas on a daily basis, and according to every fifth respondent, waste is collected every other day (21%) or once a week (20%). The majority of respondents consider waste collection fees to be affordable (62%), and one in three respondents say that they are not taxed at all (31%). Overall, nine out of ten surveyed users are satisfied with the results of all four rounds of waste collection services (2013 - 86%, 2015 - 88%, 2017 - 89% and 2019 - 91%). Waste collection service trust was high (93%) in 2019 - the only year respondents were asked to evaluate this service.

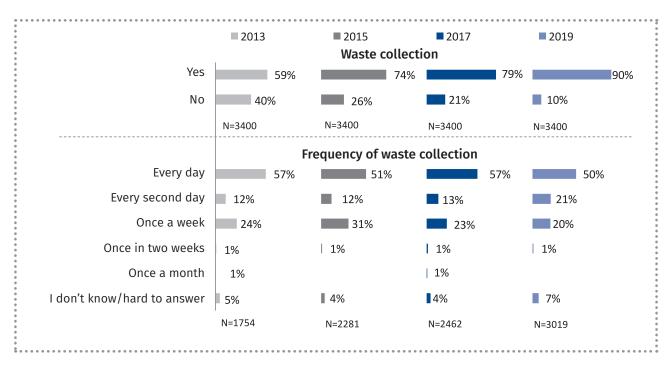
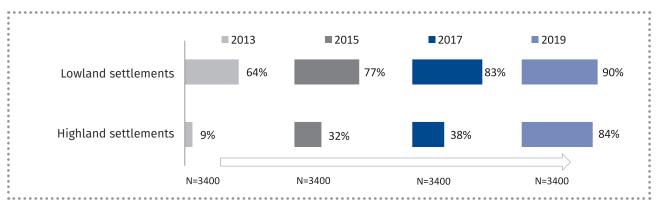


Figure # 45. Access to Waste Collection Service, Frequency of Waste Collection - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

Although there was no significant difference in access to waste collection between **highland** and lowland settlements in the 2019 survey (84% and 90%, respectively), a significant positive trend can be observed in highland settlements. In particular, only one out of ten respondents had access to waste collection services in these types of settlements in 2013 (9%), and access to the service has increased two-fold since the previous round (2017 - 38%, 2019 - 84%).

*Figure # 46.* Access to Waste Collection Services in the Highland/Lowland Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data



With regard to **urban/rural** settlements, there was no significant difference in terms of access to waste collection services in the cities, as the service was accessible to the absolute majority of respondents in all rounds. But in rural settlements, the trend is definitely positive and the rate of access to waste service since 2013 has increased fourfold. If waste collection services were accessible to only one-fifth of the population (21%) in the first round of the survey, by 2019, the service was accessible to eight out of ten respondents (83%), with a 29 percent increase from 2017.

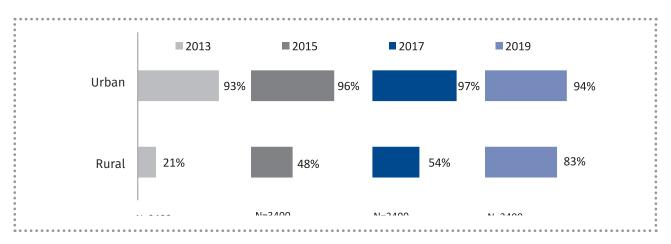


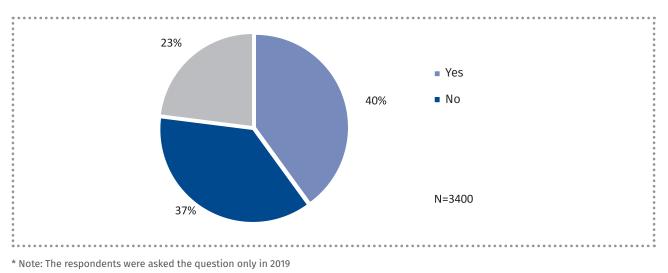
Figure # 47. Access to Waste Collection Services in Urban/Rural Areas - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In the context of the **regions**, according to the results of all four rounds of research, waste collection services are accessible to all residents only in Tbilisi. However, according to the 2019 survey, these services are already fully accessible in Kakheti (100%). Waste collection services are also accessible to almost everyone in Shida Kartli (96%) and Samtskhe-Javakheti (96%). The least access to this service is in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (75%), but it is also noteworthy that access to the service has significantly increased since 2013 (31% in 2013, 75% in 2019).

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	100%	100%	100%	98%
Imereti (N=300)	41%	60%	66%	82%
Adjara (N=300)	69%	72%	62%	77%
Guria (N=300)	35%	68%	73%	87%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	31%	55%	72%	75%
Kakheti (N=300)	61%	85%	71%	100%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	38%	58%	74%	85%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	45%	72%	84%	96%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	35%	49%	58%	96%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	66%	77%	77%	92%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	18%	28%	37%	82%
Total (3400)	59%	74%	<b>79%</b>	90%

Table # 25. Access to Waste Collection Services by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

The 2019 survey respondents were also asked about waste disposal areas, and as it turned out, onefifth of the respondents do not have information about their presence or absence in the municipality. Four out of ten respondents reported that there is a waste disposal area in their municipality (40%), and about four in ten respondents said that there is no waste disposal area in their municipality (37%). It is worth mentioning that the majority of respondents indicated the existence of waste disposal areas in Samtskhe-Javakheti (74%), and the lowest amount of affirmative responses were reported in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (27%).



#### Figure # 48. The Existence of a Waste Disposal Area in the Municipality - 2019 data

3.5.7. Cleaning Service

According to the results of the 2019 survey, only half of the study respondents (53%) have access to street cleaning services. It should be noted that when compared to the first round of the survey, the dynamic is positive, as 40% of respondents indicated that street cleaning service was accessible in 2013. According to all four rounds of the survey, most of those who have access to street cleaning services mention that these services are provided daily (2013 - 79%, 2015 - 80%, 2017 - 79% and 2019 - 73%). In general, according to the results of all four rounds of the survey, nine out of ten surveyed users are satisfied (2013 - 83%, 2015 - 86%, 2017 - 92% and 2019 - 89%) with street cleaning services, and nine out of ten respondents trust this service (90%).

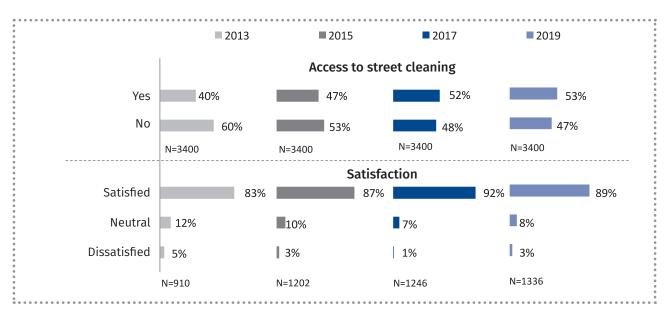
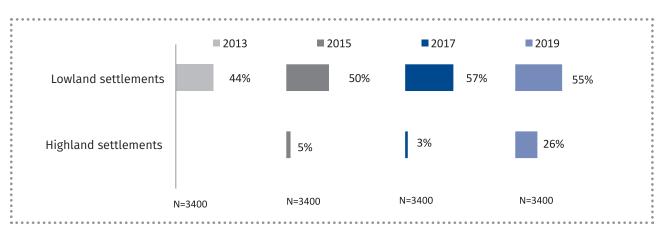


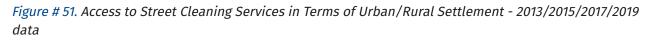
Figure # 49. Access to Street Cleaning Service, Satisfaction - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

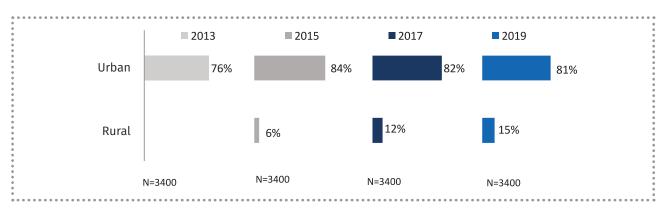
In **highland** settlements, fewer respondents had access to street cleaning (26%) than respondents from lowland settlements (55%). It should be noted that there was a positive trend in highland settlements, where almost no one had access to such services in the previous rounds of the study.

*Figure # 50.* Access to Street Cleaning Services in the Highland/Lowland Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data



The results of the 2019 survey show that no significant differences were found in the cities in terms of **urban/rural** settlements, as four rounds of the survey showed that approximately eight out of ten respondents in cities confirmed the existence of street cleaning services in their settlements. In rural settlements, there is a positive trend, since if respondents did not mention the existence of such services in rural areas in 2013, 15% of respondents in 2019 mentioned the existence of this service. Despite this positive trend, access to street cleaning services in villages is low.





By **regions**, according to the results of all four rounds of research, only the population of Tbilisi is provided with a full street cleaning service (93%). The rest of the regions have low rates of service delivery. Relatively better access is found in Adjara (45%) and Kvemo Kartli (48%), where according to the 2019 survey, half of the population has access to street cleaning services. Although access to this service has doubled compared to the previous round, the lowest rate is still observed in Guria (2017 - 7%, 2019 - 16%). There is also a negative trend in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, where half of the respondents in the third round of the survey reported access to the services (46%), while in the fourth round only three out of ten respondents indicated the same (29%). A positive trend in terms of access to street cleaning was identified in Adjara (2017 - 35%, 2019 - 45%) and Kakheti (2017 - 26%, 2019 - 35%).

Table # 26. Access to Street Clea	ining Services hy Regions -	- 2013/2015/2017/2019 data
	ining services by Regions	2013/2013/2017/2017 uutu

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	97%	97%	99%	93%
Imereti (N=300)	29%	32%	32%	36%
Adjara (N=300)	42%	44%	35%	45%
Guria (N=300)	12%	9%	7%	16%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	12%	38%	46%	29%
Kakheti (N=300)	15%	16%	26%	35%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	25%	37%	43%	48%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	4%	23%	26%	30%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	8%	24%	25%	26%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	15%	29%	27%	29%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	14%	14%	22%	24%
Total (3400)	40%	47%	52%	53%

In frames of the **qualitative survey**, during the focus group discussions, a positive assessment of waste collection and waste management services was highlighted, though the participants pointed out some shortcomings in the rural settlements of Kvemo Kartli and noted that sometimes the schedule was violated. Despite these shortcomings, the assessments were mostly positive. Rural settlements have noted that an increase in the number of garbage bins is desirable, and it would also be good if the garbage bins were made of refractory material.

The focus group participants in Rustavi focused on the waste collection schedule. It was noted that the practice of waste collection in the city at 11:00-12:00 during the day hinders the transport movement, causes noise and inconveniences the residents. Therefore, according to the participants, it is desirable to select other time for waste collection in the city.

An important event at the Guria focus group discussion was the launch of a waste separation program. The importance of starting such a project was also emphasized in Kutaisi by the representative of the local self-government. As the main informant noted, the waste separation project involves the preparation of a few hectares of land and the placement of appropriate boxes throughout the city.

"The separation program began this year, collecting paper, glass and polyethylene separately, and setting up bins in schools, and that was very important." **Man, 44 years, urban settlement, Guria** 

"In 6 months, we will have a separate square of 3,000 hectares in the city [Kutaisi]. Green waste will be recycled here and bins will be placed in 70 locations throughout the city, where paper, glass, bio-waste, etc. will be separated. We are the first in Georgia to start separating waste." **Local Government Representative, Imereti** 

# 3.6. Road Infrastructure

According to the results of the study, in 2019, the majority of respondents positively assessed the condition of the roads. Moreover, compared to the previous round of research, both the positive assessment of the roads within the settlement and access to the settlement have increased (roads within the settlement: 2017 - 57%, 2019 - 64%; roads to access the settlement: 2017 - 77%, 2019 - 84%). The condition of the nearest highway (88%) is also positively assessed. The largest number of respondents negatively evaluates the roads inside the settlement. In particular, almost four out of ten respondents (36%) negatively assessed the roads within the settlement, although compared to previous years, there has been a decrease in the number of negative assessments and an increase of positive responses. Access roads to the settlement are also the most positively evaluated when compared to previous rounds of the survey.

	Evaluation	2013	2015	2017	2019
	Bad	53%	46%	43%	36%
Roads inside settlement	Good	47%	54%	57%	64%
	Not applicable	-	-	-	-
	Bad	28%	19%	23%	16%
Roads to access settlement	Good	72%	80%		84%
	Not applicable	-	-	-	-
	Bad	8%	6%	10%	7%
The nearest highway	Good	88%	93%	89%	88%
	Not applicable	4%	1%	1%	5%
		N=3400	N=3400	N=3400	N=3400

#### Table # 27. Road Condition Assessment - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In the case of **highland** settlements, the evaluation of the condition of the roads is positive. Moreover, when compared to the previous round of research, the dynamic is positive both in the case of the roads within the settlement (2017 - 33%, 2019 - 54%), as well as in the evaluation of access roads to the settlement (2017 - 53%, 2019 - 74%). As for the nearest highway, the majority of surveys in highland settlements, although positively evaluated, show a decrease when compared to the previous round of research (2017 - 73%, 2019 - 61%). Also, although the negative evaluation of the nearest highway (2017 - 24%, 2019 - 11%) has decreased, the number of those who say that there is no nearest highway (2017 - 3%, 2019 - 28%) has increased. In this context, it should be noted that when compared to 2017, the number of settlements that have been granted highland status has increased.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16.</sup> As of June 2017, since the enactment of the Law on the Development of Highland Regions (July 16, 2015), 1730 settlements have had the status of highland settlement. In April 2018, 14 villages were added to this list (mrdi.gov.ge). The third round of the field research was conducted in March 2017.

	Evaluation	2013	2015	2017	2019
	Bad	84%	83%	67%	46%
Roads inside settlement	Good	16%	17%	.33%	54%
	Not applicable	-	-	-	-
	Bad	69%	39%	47%	26%
Roads to access settlement	Good	31%	61%	53%	74%
	Not applicable	-	-	-	-
	Bad	39%	10%	24%	11%
The nearest highway	Good	60%	83%	73%	61%
	Not applicable	1%	6%	3%	28%
		N=580	N=540	N=620	N=700

Table # 28. Evaluation of the Condition of Roads in Highland Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In terms of road condition evaluation, the dynamics in **rural** settlements are also positive. In addition to the fact that most respondents of the 2019 survey positively evaluated all three types of roads, there is an increased in positive evaluations of the condition of roads within the settlement (2017 - 35%, 2019 - 52%), as well as roads to access the settlement (2017 - 68%, 2019 - 83%). The nearest highway was positively evaluated by about nine out of ten respondents in all rounds of research.

	Evaluation	2013	2015	2017	2019
	Bad	73%	66%	65%	48%
Roads inside settlement	Good	27%	34%	35%	<b>52%</b>
	Not applicable	-	-	-	-
Roads to access settlement	Bad	36%	22%	31%	17%
	Good	64%	78%	68%	83%
	Not applicable	-	-	-	-
	Bad	10%	4%	12%	6%
The nearest highway	Good	88%	95%	86%	86%
	Not applicable	2%	1%	2%	8%
		N=2010	N=2010	N=1940	N=1940

As for **regional** context, the highest level of a positive evaluation of the roads inside the settlement was in Adjara (78%), and the lowest level in Kakheti (51%) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (51%). It should be noted that compared to 2017, the positive evaluation of internal roads has increased in all regions except Tbilisi. It is true that the positive evaluation of internal roads in Tbilisi is high and it is evaluated positively by seven in ten respondents (71%), but this amount was reduced by ten percentage points from 2017 (81%).

The positive evaluation of roads to access the settlement is high in all regions, which are also evaluated positively by at least eight out of ten respondents in all regions. It is notable that there has been a positive increase in the regions when compared to the previous round of research, except for Tbilisi, where the positive evaluation of access roads in 2019 (86%) is identical to the 2017 figure (86%). The positive evaluation of access roads to the settlement is the highest in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (98%).

As for the evaluation of the nearest highway, a negative trend compared to the previous round of the survey was observed in several regions. In particular, in 2019, a positive evaluation of the nearest highway, compared to 2017, decreased in Imereti (96%-86%), Adjara (85%-74%), Samtskhe-Javakheti (69%-62%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (91%-85%). Assessments in other regions are almost unchanged or positive compared to the previous round. Especially noteworthy is Guria, where a significant positive increase can be observed (2017 - 54%, 2019 - 84%). In Shida Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti, almost all respondents positively evaluated the nearest highway (96% and 96%, respectively).

	Roads inside settlement			Roads	Roads to access settlement			The nearest highway				
	2013	2015	2017	2019	2013	2015	2017	2019	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	75%	73%	81%	71%	87%	81%	86%	86%	84%	88%	94%	91%
Imereti (N=300)	45%	52%	51%	65%	68%	78%	70%	86%	86%	94%	96%	86%
Adjara (N=300)	66%	60%	60%	78%	78%	74%	74%	82%	94%	89%	85%	74%
Guria (N=300)	33%	42%	23%	58%	56%	80%	65%	84%	94%	99%	54%	84%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	35%	47%	58%	60%	62%	75%	68%	78%	88%	93%	80%	93%
Kakheti (N=300)	28%	45%	31%	51%	85%	89%	72%	83%	92%	98%	86%	92%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	19%	39%	51%	57%	63%	95%	76%	85%	97%	97%	96%	93%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	47%	48%	32%	55%	73%	77%	88%	91%	93%	98%	99%	96%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	13%	29%	39%	61%	49%	52%	64%	78%	78%	77%	<b>69%</b>	62%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	28%	34%	40%	51%	84%	96%	91%	98%	84%	96%	90%	96%
Racha-Lechkhumi- Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	29%	54%	39%	61%	44%	77%	59%	83%	70%	90%	91%	85%
Total (3400)	47%	54%	56%	64%	72%	80%	77%	84%	88%	92%	89%	88%

Table # 30. Evaluation of the Road Condition in Terms of "good" by Region - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

The majority of respondents also positively evaluated the frequency of public transport traffic (71%) and the affordability of transport prices (72%) in 2019. However, the positive evaluation of both the frequency of transport and the affordability of prices is declining when compared to previous rounds of the research. In particular, if in 2017 eight out of ten respondents positively evaluated both public transport traffic (81%) and public transport price affordability (81%), in 2019 both rates decreased by 10 points (71% and 72%, respectively). As for the public transport traffic schedule, which was evaluated by survey respondents only in 2019, it is "good" according to 68% of respondents. Two out of ten (22%) respondents negatively evaluated the public transport schedule.

*Table # 31. Evaluation of Public Transport Traffic Frequency, Affordability and Public Transport Schedule - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

	Evaluation	2013	2015	2017	2019
	Bad	22%	12%	15%	20%
Frequency of public transport traffic	Good	73%	82%		71%
	Not applicable	6%	6%	4%	9%
	Bad	32%	20%	18%	18%
Affordability of public transport	Good	66%	79%	81%	72%
	Not applicable	2%	-	1%	10%
	Bad	-	-	-	22%
Public transport schedule	Good	-	-	-	68%
	Not applicable	-	-	-	10%
		N=3400	N=3400	N=3400	N=3400

\* Note: The public transport traffic schedule was evaluated only in the fourth round of the survey.

The evaluation of public transport services shows a negative dynamic in different contexts. For example, if in 2017 the frequency of public transport traffic was positively evaluated by 62% of respondents in **highland** settlements, in 2019 this indicator is equal to 54%. The affordability of public transport prices, while positively assessed by 75% of respondents in the third round of the survey, was equal to 44% in the fourth round. As for the traffic schedule, half of those surveyed in highland settlements rated it positively (51%), however, two in ten respondents provided a negative evaluation (19%), while three out of ten respondents said that a schedule does not exist at all.

*Table # 32.* Evaluation of Frequency, Affordability and Traffic Schedule of Public Transport in Highland Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

	Evaluation	2013	2015	2017	2019
	Bad	45%	28%	27%	20%
Frequency of public transport traffic	Good	42%	54%	. 62%	54%
	Not applicable	13%	19%	10%	26%
	Bad	47%	33%	21%	27%
Affordability of public transport	Good	50%	66%		44%
	Not applicable	3%	1%	4%	29%
	Bad	-	-	-	19%
Public transport schedule	Good	-	-	-	51%
	Not applicable	-	-	-	30%
		N=580	N=540	N=620	N=700

\* Note: The public transport traffic schedule was evaluated only in the fourth round of the survey

A positive evaluation of the frequency of public transport traffic does not show a difference in terms of **urban/rural areas** (city - 71%, village - 72%). However, the trend for the city is more negative when compared to the previous round. In particular, if the evaluation in the village has not changed substantially (2017 - 79%, 2019 - 72%), the change in the city is negative (2017 - 82%, 2019 - 71%). No significant differences were found in the study regarding price affordability and schedule. As for the regions, it is noteworthy that the frequency of public transport traffic has the highest positive rating in Shida Kartli (83%). Despite high positive ratings, a negative dynamic was recorded in the region when compared to the previous round (-10%). The dynamic is negative in all regions except Guria, where the positive evaluation in the last two rounds is identical (68%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti. Indeed, a positive evaluation of the frequency of public transport traffic in this region has increased when compared to the previous round (2017 - 46%, 2019 - 55%), but the positive evaluation of this factor in the last round of research is one of the lowest among the regions. The lowest share of respondents in 2019 positively evaluated the frequency of public transport in Samtskhe-Javakheti (53%). Also negative is the dynamic in Kvemo Kartli, where in 2018, eight out of ten respondents positively evaluated the frequency of public transport (79%), but in 2019, only six out of ten respondents (59%) provided a positive evaluation. The highest number of evaluations as "good" for the frequency of public transport traffic were reported in Shida Kartli and Imereti (80%).

A positive dynamic in terms of affordability of public transport is observed only in Tbilisi, where the price is evaluated as "good" by more respondents in 2019 than in 2017 (from 66% in 2017 to 81% in 2019). Similar to Tbilisi, eight out of ten respondents in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti assess the affordability of public transport positively (80%), but there is still a negative trend compared to 2017 (96%). The lowest number of respondents positively evaluated the affordability of transport in Samtskhe-Javakheti (51%), Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (51%) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (52%). All three of these regions show a downward trend.

The public transport schedule was evaluated as "good" by the highest share of respondents in Shida Kartli (82%) and the lowest in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (48%).

*Table # 33.* Evaluation of Traffic Frequency, Affordability and Traffic Schedule of Public Transport in Terms of "Good" by Region - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

		Frequency transpo	y of public rt traffic		Af	Affordability of public transport			Public transport schedule
	2013	2015	2017	2019	2013	2015	2017	2019	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	72%	82%	82%	69%	49%	64%	66%	81%	66%
Imereti (N=300)	71%	84%	82%	80%	66%	87%	93%	75%	74%
Adjara (N=300)	78%	87%	87%	74%	78%	83%	96%	74%	71%
Guria (N=300)	70%	91%	68%	68%	80%	83%	80%	70%	63%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	82%	93%	76%	79%	90%	95%	96%	80%	74%
Kakheti (N=300)	79%	79%	84%	70%	76%	92%	82%	57%	69%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	68%	76%	79%	<b>59%</b>	67%	83%	86%	61%	55%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	84%	93%	93%	83%	73%	83%	91%	76%	82%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	48%	46%	60%	53%	62%	71%	75%	51%	54%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	77%	76%	72%	70%	47%	55%	63%	52%	64%
Racha-Lechkhumi- Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	41%	58%	46%	55%	54%	73%	65%	51%	48%
Total (3400)	73%	82%	81%	71%	66%	79%	81%	72%	68%

\* Note: The public transport traffic schedule was evaluated only in the fourth round of the survey

A study on traffic signs shows that 64% of respondents rated their quantity positively, while 22% said that there are no traffic signs in their settlement at all. Among all respondents, 47% said that there are no traffic lights in their settlement, while 13% mentioned that their condition is bad. Compared to the previous rounds of the survey, in 2019 the positive evaluation of this factor has decreased. A total of 79% of respondents positively evaluated street/settlement lighting, moreover, the trend of a positive evaluation of this parameter has increased over the years. As for the numbering of houses, like the previous rounds of the survey, in 2019, four out of ten respondents indicated their absence in their district/settlement (36%), while 16% assessed the numbering negatively.

	Evaluation	2013	2015	2017	2019
	Bad	14%	18%	17%	14%
Traffic signs	Good	53%	64%	58%	64%
	Not applicable	33%	18%	25%	22%
	Bad	11%	11%	12%	13%
Traffic lights	Good	39%	41%	46%	39%
	Not applicable	50%	48%	43%	47%
	Bad	12%	11%	9%	14%
Street/settlement lighting	Good	62%	66%	76%	79%
	Not applicable	26%	22%	15%	8%
	Bad	20%	14%	13%	16%
House numbering	Good	41%	46%	49%	48%
	Not applicable	39%	40%	38%	36%
		N=3400	N=3400	N=3400	N=3400

*Table # 34. Evaluation of Traffic Signs, Street/Settlement Lighting, Traffic Lights, Numbering of Houses on the Street - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

When evaluating these parameters related to roads, a positive trend can be observed in all areas. Noteworthy are the **highland** settlements, where the share of respondents who said that there are no traffic signs, traffic lights, street lighting or house numbering on the street has significantly reduced. At the same time, the positive evaluation of each of these parameters has increased.

*Table # 35.* Evaluation of Traffic Signs, Street/Settlement Lighting, Traffic Lights, Numbering of Houses in Highland Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

	Evaluation	2013	2015	2017	2019
	Bad	24%	20%	6%	13%
Traffic signs	Good	14%	46%	15%	47%
	Not applicable	63%	35%	79%	41%
	Bad	18%	9%	3%	9%
Traffic lights	Good	2%	2%	2%	17%
	Not applicable	80%	89%	95%	74%
	Bad	23%	19%	18%	23%
Streets/settlement lighting	Good	15%	25%	48%	63%
	Not applicable	62%	56%	34%	14%
	Bad	22%	16%	6%	12%
House numbering	Good	2%	-	6%	18%
	Not applicable	76%	84%	88%	70%
		N=580	N=540	N=620	N=700

As for the **regional** context, evaluating road signs as "good", like other rounds, occurred with the highest frequency in Tbilisi (81%) during the fourth round of the study. The lowest share of respondents rated this indicator positively in Samtskhe-Javakheti. Despite the negative dynamic, the greatest share of positive responses for the amount of traffic lights was reported in Tbilisi (74%). Traffic lights were not evaluated positively in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (4%) and Kakheti (8%). The positive rating of traffic lights in Guria is also very low (12%), however, it should be noted that this has significantly increased when compared to the previous round of the study.

		Traffic signs				Traffic lights		
	2013	2015	2017	2019	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	84%	89%	82%	81%	85%	85%	85%	74%
Imereti (N=300)	39%	66%	38%	60%	25%	29%	27%	35%
Adjara (N=300)	53%	64%	45%	61%	50%	49%	37%	41%
Guria (N=300)	30%	55%	62%	53%	7%	-	1%	12%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	59%	68%	71%	61%	37%	35%	46%	25%
Kakheti (N=300)	36%	42%	56%	67%	6%	2%	18%	8%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	30%	52%	47%	46%	18%	31%	38%	20%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	56%	41%	46%	47%	25%	28%	35%	21%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	39%	49%	37%	41%	10%	23%	18%	31%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	24%	38%	29%	56%	1%	2%	2%	4%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	29%	66%	32%	59%	7%	4%	2%	20%
Total (3400)	53%	64%	58%	63%	39%	41%	46%	39%

#### Table # 36. Evaluation of Traffic Signs, Traffic Lights by Region - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In all regions, the positive evaluation of street/settlement lighting is high, with at least six out of ten respondents evaluating it as "good". The highest share of respondents evaluate lighting positively in Shida Kartli (90%) and the lowest in Imereti (63%). It is noteworthy that as a result of the last two rounds, a positive trend is observed in all regions except Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, where the dynamic is unchanged (2017 - 67%, 2019 - 68%), and Tbilisi, where a negative dynamic (2017 - 95%, 2019 - 87%) is observed. A positive dynamic is especially noteworthy in the cases of Guria and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti, where the positive assessment of street/settlement lighting in each region has increased by more than 30% when compared to the previous round.

As for the numbering of houses on the street, it can be said that it is the least positive among the evaluation of the factors related to road infrastructure. In most regions, only two or three out of ten respondents evaluated this indicator positively. The lowest number of respondents positively evaluated the numbering of houses in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (22%), Kakheti (23%) and Guria (23%). However, in case of the latter, there is an emphasis on a significant, almost fourfold increase in positive evaluations (2017 - 6%, 2019 - 23%). Notable is Tbilisi, where the most (eight out of ten) respondents positively evaluated the numbering of houses on the street (82%).

Table # 37. Evaluation of Street/Settlement Lighting, Numbering of Houses on the Street by Regions -2013/2015/2017/2019 data

	Lighting of streets/settlement			House numbering				
	2013	2015	2017	2019	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	99%	90%	95%	87%	75%	90%	86%	82%
Imereti (N=300)	49%	45%	59%	63%	39%	39%	36%	42%
Adjara (N=300)	61%	67%	63%	77%	56%	57%	56%	52%
Guria (N=300)	45%	52%	52%	75%	16%	22%	6%	23%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	53%	52%	67%	68%	36%	41%	26%	35%
Kakheti (N=300)	64%	71%	79%	87%	18%	18%	21%	23%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	39%	66%	67%	75%	16%	21%	38%	26%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	35%	75%	82%	90%	26%	15%	38%	30%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	34%	40%	72%	76%	27%	23%	35%	33%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	41%	52%	70%	73%	12%	26%	28%	25%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	42%	54%	58%	86%	17%	11%	13%	22%
Total (3400)	62%	66%	76%	79%	41%	46%	49%	48%

In the fourth round of the research, respondents assessed which factors need to be improved in relation to the internal roads of the municipality. As it turned out, the three main problems that need to be addressed are road quality (57%), speed bumps (43%) and pedestrian crossings (38%). Out of them, the majority of respondents named road quality (38%) among the factors to be improved first, with pedestrian crossings (16%) in second place and speed bumps (20%) in third. The drainage system was named by respondents as the least problematic in relation to internal roads.

	In the first place	In the second place	In the third place	Sum
Road quality	38%	12%	7%	57%
Speed bumps	9%	14%	20%	43%
Pedestrian crossings	11%	16%	11%	38%
Pedestrian paths/cycle paths/sidewalks	10%	12%	12%	34%
Lighting	7%	13%	10%	30%
Safety/road signs	6%	10%	14%	30%
Waiting structures for passengers at transport stops	4%	9%	12%	25%
Road marks (for example, drawing, pedestrian crossings etc.)	2%	6%	8%	16%
Road accessibility throughout the year	2%	7%	5%	14%
Drainage system	1%	1%	1%	3%
I do not know/hard to answer/refuse to answer	10%	-	-	-

\* Note: These factors were assessed by respondents only in 2019. Selection size – 3400

It is significant that in all **regions**, the majority of respondents primarily named internal roads as a factor to be improved. The lowest number of respondents indicated this in Tbilisi (27%) and the highest number in Guria (53%). In the context of **highland** and other types of settlements, if the priority issues related to internal roads are identical for both types of settlements in the first and third places (quality of roads and pedestrian crossings), the respondents assess the problem to be solved in the second place differently according to the type of settlement. In particular, the respondents of highland settlements consider street lighting (30%), while in lowland settlements respondents consider speed bumps (17%) as the factors that should be improved in the second place. The trend is similar in **urban/rural** settlements. If the views on immediate problems are similar in the first and third places (road quality and pedestrian crossings), in the second place, most respondents consider that speed bumps in the city (20%) and lighting (21%) in villages need to be improved.

		In the first place	In the second place	In the third place
Deed suglitu	Highland	50%		
Road quality	Lowland	36%		
Speed bumps	Highland			
	Lowland		17%	
Listations	Highland		30%	
Lighting	Lowland			
Dedectric recessings	Highland			17%
Pedestrian crossings	Lowland			20%
	Urban	29%		
Road quality	Rural	49%		
Cread reducing elevations	Urban		20%	
Speed reducing elevations	Rural			
Listations	Urban			
Lighting	Rural		21%	
Dedectrian crossings	Urban			21%
Pedestrian crossings	Rural			19%

*Table # 39. Factors that Need to be Improved on the Internal Roads by Highland/Lowland and Urban/Rural Settlements - 2019 data* 

\* Note: These factors were assessed by respondents only in 2019. Only those factors are considered that respondents consider problematic in the first, second and third order. Selection size – 3400

As for the three main factors related to public transport that need to be improved in municipalities, these are the transport schedule (47%), the poor condition of transport (45%) and travel time (44%). In relation to public transport, the majority of respondents named the adjustment of the transport schedule as the first factor to be improved (20%), a malfunction of transport as the second factor (18%) and travel time as the third factor (20%). Respondents consider drivers' professionalism to be the least problematic issue regarding public transportation.

#### Table # 40. Factors Related to Public Transport that Need to be Improved - 2019 data

	In the first place	In the second place	In the third place	Sum
Transport schedule	20%	15%	12%	47%
Poor condition of transport	14%	15%	16%	45%
Travel time	7%	17%	20%	44%
Transport malfunctioning	6%	18%	18%	42%
High transportation costs	11%	12%	14%	37%
Access to transport in central areas and suburbs	11%	14%	9%	34%
Lack of professionalism of drivers	5%	9%	11%	25%
I do not know/hard to answer/ N/A / Refused to answer	26%	-	-	-

\* Note: These factors were assessed by respondents only in 2019. Selection size – 3400

It is true that generally, the transport schedule has been mentioned as the most problematic aspect of public transport and is evaluated as the main problem in both **highland** settlements (21%) and **villages** (20%). In most **regions** too, a large share of respondents considers public transport schedule to be a priority issue, but the poor condition of transport (air conditioning malfunction, outdated seats, etc.) is considered to be the main issue for Tbilisi (23%) and Guria (21%) residents. As for Kakheti, Shida Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti, respondents prioritize addressing the issue of high transportation costs (19%, 17% and 23%, respectively).

Table # 41 Factors	: Related to Public	r Transnort to he In	proved - 2019 Data
			ipioved 2017 Data

	Most problematic (Named first)				
	Poor condition of transport	Transport schedule	High transportation costs		
Tbilisi (N=400)	23%				
Imereti (N=300)		17%			
Adjara (N=300)		27%			
Guria (N=300)	21%				
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)		16%			
Kakheti (N=300)			19%		
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)		27%			
Shida Kartli (N=300)			17%		
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)		22%			
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)			23%		
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)		28%			
Total (3400)		20%			

It should be noted that road infrastructure improvement and road-related projects as positive events were discussed by the members of almost all focus groups in the framework of **qualitative research**. Few shortcomings were also highlighted. In particular, the participants of Kvemo Kartli rural settlement noted problems with low-quality internal roads, which is especially evident when meteorological conditions worsen. In Imereti focus group discussion participants mentioned the fact that the rehabilitation process is delayed and that work is performed multiple times on the same section, which has a negative impact on the level of citizen satisfaction. The respondents themselves explained the protracted work by two reasons: one related to the lack of professionalism of the parties responsible for the work, which makes it necessary to improve the poorly performed work. The second reason is linked to the intentional poor performance by specific groups to increase the costs artificially.

In the framework of the qualitative research, both the main informants and the participants of the focus group discussions from all regions and both rural and urban settlements focus on several challenges related to transportation. Along with the lack of municipal transport itself (except for Tbilisi and Rustavi), the malfunctioning of existing public transportation, and the transportation schedule were named as the most immediate challenges to be addressed.

The lack of public transport was named as a serious problem for rural settlements in the regions, failing to ensure the movement of citizens from municipal centers to rural areas and vice versa. Special attention was paid to this issue by the focus group discussions in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti.

At the same time, the insufficient number of transportation vehicles has been identified as an issue that causes serious problems for citizens. According to the discussion participants, malfunctioning vehicles are an additional challenge, making it impossible to ensure safe and timely transportation. Moreover, even where public transport is operating, the schedule is often unregulated.

*"It says half an hour and comes in 5 minutes or vice versa, I left and [then it comes] ..."Woman, 32 years, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli* 

"N109 is like a legend, then they added the second one and it was like a holiday. Using public transport in Didi Dighomi is hell on earth..." **Woman, 40 years, urban settlement, Tbilisi** 

"On my way to work, I have to stand at the bus stop and wait for kind people to give me a ride. It is 6 km and I'm not simply able to cover 6km every day." **Woman, 25 years, urban settlement, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti** 

"We have the same buses that we had in the 70s." Woman, 48 years, urban settlement, Imereti

In addition to the fact that the settlement population faces issues with movement due to transportation problems, participants of the focus group discussions, as well as the main informants see challenges in the development of various fields, such as sports and tourism. According to them, the limited access and/or lack of public transport prevents many talented young people from engaging in sports. Transport problems can also seriously hamper the development of tourism. *"We are losing a lot of good sportsmen simply because there is no transportation provided."* **Man, 32 years, representative of ethnic minority, rural settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

"Municipal transport should exist. Besides, unfortunately, we do not have so-called inter-municipal transportation, as it also depends on some people's private interests. We say unfortunately because we need the development of tourism. Right now, if you go to the city, you cannot find information on how to get to Kharagauli". **Representative of the Local Government, Imereti** 

In this regard, representatives of the local authorities in Imereti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti indicated a positive change. With the arrival of new buses in Zugdidi and Kutaisi, the focus was directed towards improving the infrastructure of the car parks. Zugdidi also noted that a new rule of payment will be introduced in the city this year, which will allow citizens to switch to an electronic payment system.

"We brought about 15 new buses [for Zugdidi]. Approximately, an additional 25 new buses are planned to be brought by April or May. With these buses, we will literally replace those completely old buses. There will be upgraded infrastructure. Also, it is already planned, a tender has been announced for the construction works of the depot of these buses, and most importantly, we have to plan a new payment system ... Today, there is no electronic system in Zugdidi." **Representative of Local Government, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti** 

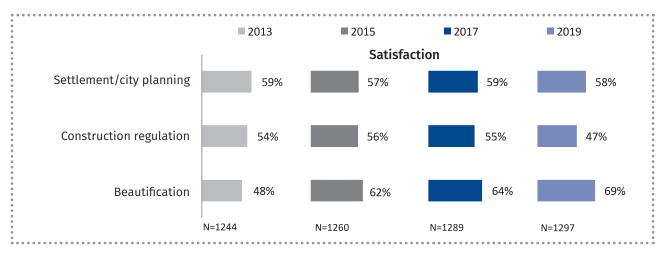
"It is a very important project. Partners are helping us; the Municipal Development Fund has already announced a tender for the purchase of buses. It was announced for 155, 60 of them will arrive in Kutaisi, we have a project for a car park where these buses will be placed, i.e. there will be municipal transport in Kutaisi at the beginning of the year. It has been more than 30 years since the city had no municipal transport. This transport will be adapted, ecologically clean and completely new, it will be fully adapted to the conditions in the city." **Representative of Local Government, Imereti** 

# **3.7. Various Services**

## 3.7.1. Settlement Planning

Only urban residents were satisfied with urban planning, construction regulation and beautification. As the results show, half or more of the respondents were satisfied with all three of these indicators. In the last round of the survey, the highest level of satisfaction with beautification was reported (69%), which is almost the same for the last three rounds, although is increased when compared to 2013 (2013 - 48%, 2019 - 69%). Six out of ten respondents were satisfied with urban planning (58%). It should be noted that this factor is constant across all years of the study (2013 - 59%, 2015 - 57%, 2017 - 59%, 2019 - 58%). In terms of construction regulations, the lowest level of satisfaction was observed in the last round of the research, when compared to previous years (2013 - 54%, 2015 - 56%, 2017 - 55%, 2019 - 47%).

*Figure # 52. Satisfaction with City planning, Construction Regulation, and Beautification - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 



In terms of regions, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti had the highest share of respondents satisfied with urban planning (80%), as well as construction regulations (71%) and beautification (86%). As for the lowest levels of satisfaction, the lowest share of respondents reported being satisfied with urban planning in Kvemo Kartli (45%), as well as construction regulation (31%) and beautification (48%) in Mtskheta-Mtianeti.

## 3.7.2. Tourism

In the 2019 survey, respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of tourism for the economic development of their municipalities. The results show that the majority of respondents believe that tourism is important/very important (78%). According to every tenth respondent (10%), it is not important and only 3% believe that it is not important at all. Respondents in cities believe that tourism is more important for the economic development of their municipality (85%) than in villages (69%). Also, this rate is higher in **highland** settlements than in lowland settlements (78%). As for the regions, most respondents consider tourism in Tbilisi (91%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (92%) to be significantly more important for the economic development of the municipality, and the lowest share in Kvemo Kartli (46%).

According to 47% of respondents, tourism is developed in their municipality. It should be noted that the perception of the relevance/development of tourism, including 2017 findings, showed a growing trend (2013 - 29%, 2015 - 38%, 2017 - 49%), while in the last round of the research no major changes were observed.

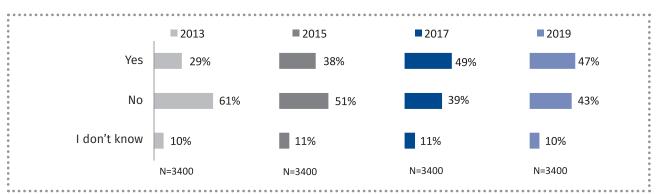


Figure # 53. Tourism Development - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

Respondents who noted that tourism is developed/relevant in their municipalities also said that many tourists visit their settlements (84%). In this case, too, a growing trend can be observed during the first three rounds of the study, while for the fourth round, the reality is slightly negative (2013 - 76%, 2015 - 78%, 2017 - 89%, 2019 - 84%). Local infrastructure is evaluated as mostly faulty for the current flow of tourists (66%). In this sense, the assessment across all years of the study is almost unchanged (2013-2015-2019 - 66%, 2017 - 60%). According to the majority of respondents, the highest number of tourists is observed in summer (2013 - 74%, 2015 - 77%, 2017 - 65%, 2019 - 79%).

Assessing the development/relevance of tourism in municipalities shows a positive dynamic in **high-land settlements.** If the assessment of tourism development/relevance in **lowland settlements** shows a slightly negative dynamic in the last two rounds (2017 - 51%, 2019 - 46%), the trend in highland settlements is positive (2017 - 26%, 2019 - 50%). As for the **regions**, most respondents in Adjara (69%) and Tbilisi (62%) indicated the relevance of tourism. High rates were also observed in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (57%), Kakheti (55%) and Samtskhe-Javakheti (53%). There is a positive trend in the development of tourism in all three regions, which is especially noticeable in the case of Samtskhe-Javakheti (2017 - 41%, 2019 - 53%). The lowest number of respondents indicated the development of tourism in Kvemo Kartli, although the dynamic in the region is still positive, as almost three times more respondents point to a trend of tourism development in 2019 (13%) than in 2017 (5%). There is a negative trend in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, where the number of respondents claiming that tourism is developed in their municipalities has decreased by 14 percentage points (2017 - 49%, 2019 - 35%). A negative trend can also be observed in Tbilisi (2017 - 79%, 2019 - 62%). In all other regions, a comparison of the last two rounds reveals that the trend in terms of tourism development is either unchanged or positive.

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	50%	50%	79%	62%
Imereti (N=300)	5%	34%	31%	40%
Adjara (N=300)	51%	53%	69%	69%
Guria (N=300)	4%	17%	23%	27%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	12%	34%	49%	35%
Kakheti (N=300)	58%	38%	47%	55%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	11%	13%	5%	13%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	7%	30%	23%	30%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	25%	47%	41%	53%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	27%	33%	48%	41%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	9%	65%	54%	57%
Total (3400)	29%	38%	49%	47%

Table # 42. Tourism Development by Regions - 2013	3/2015/2017/2019 data
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The **qualitative research** findings illustrated that tourism is considered a particularly important area for the development of the local economy by both: participants of the focus group discussions and key informants in all regions. It is especially noteworthy that the participants of the qualitative research focused on this issue in Guria and highlighted the project initiated in this regard. Plans to fully exploit the potential of Gomi Mountain and Bakhmaro Resorts are considered to be important. Participants of the focus group also identified a number of existing challenges mainly related to solving infrastructure issues. According to the participants of the focus group discussion, improving road regulations, lighting, and various utility infrastructure is critically important before attempts are made to attract a large number of tourists. According to representatives of the local self-government, the mentioned challenges have been studied, the budget estimates made and concrete visions developed regarding the development of the tourism potential of the region. It is worth mentioning that the development of Guria's tourism potential is not considered separately, and the project involves the use of tourism opportunities in Adjara and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti.

Less attention was paid to the development of Kvemo Kartli's tourism potential, but it was noted that Bolnisi, as a place inhabited by Germans in the last century, could become an interesting tourist destination. Moreover, participants noted that certain steps have been taken in this direction and it will be important to use the potential of Bolnisi in this regard. Also, according to one of the main informants, it is interesting to represent Oni as a Jewish settlement in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti and thus use its tourist potential. As for Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, the participants of the Zugdidi focus group considered tourism as a less important area for economic gains, as tourists stay there for one day and mostly go to Svaneti. However, it was also noted that maximum use should be made in terms of the current transit potential.

"We live in a country where if you are not by the sea, then what alternative do you have? You can't work on tourism. In our city [Zugdidi], one-day tourists come because they go to Svaneti, you can't build economic prosperity on it, you need some long-term development prospects." **Man, 33 years, urban settlement, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti** 

"This town [Bolnisi] is an old German town, known as Luxembourg ... They do it, they made a German mill there, turned it into a hotel [house] and maintained the interface of old quarters." **Woman, 40 years, ethnic minority representative, Kvemo Kartli** 

"The street is named after Baazov ... Baazov was born and raised in Oni and this street is named after him. This street had a different vibe. With various activities, Saturday events, when Jews were celebrating .... it was amazing. With glittering clothes and shouts, they had their own traditional games and cuisine... there are no Jews left. Only the synagogue is left ... this street can be rehabilitated with its specific houses ..." **Local Government Representative, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti** 

## 3.7.3. Agriculture

According to a large majority of the rural population surveyed in 2019, agriculture is a priority for their municipality (84%). Compared to the previous round of the research, this evaluation has slightly declined (2017 - 91%). The same is indicated by respondents (55%) in the cities, but in this case, the trend is positive when compared to previous years (2015 - 38%, 2017 - 29%). Only a quarter (25%) of respondents in rural settlements noted that the government promotes agricultural development. It is striking that there is a significant downward trend when compared to previous rounds of the survey (2013 - 81%, 2015 - 57%, 2017 - 44%).

According to 22% of respondents, a significant part/almost the entire population of their municipalities is employed in the agricultural sector. Naturally, this indicator is significantly higher in rural areas (38%) than in urban (9%). The majority of respondents believe that agriculture plays an important role in the economic development of their municipalities (80%). More respondents consider this significant in **villages** (90%) than in **cities** (74%). Also, the importance of agriculture for the economic development of municipalities is observed more in highland settlements (89%) than in other types of settlements (80%). As for the **regions**, the majority of respondents in all regions believe that the role of agriculture is important for the economic development of their municipalities. Apart from Tbilisi, this factor is given a low rate in Kvemo Kartli (76%), the highest in Guria (94%) and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (95%).

Tbilisi (N=400)	73%
Imereti (N=300)	81%
Adjara (N=300)	80%
Guria (N=300)	94%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	95%
Kakheti (N=300)	90%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	76%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	90%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	82%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	80%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	81%
Total (3400)	81%

Table # 43. The Role of Agriculture in the Economic Development of Municipalities by Regions - 2019 data

\* Note: The role of agriculture in the economic development of the municipality was assessed by respondents only in 2019

According to the 2019 survey, access to state aid in a number of agricultural sectors has declined significantly. If, according to the 2013 data, one out of the ten respondents surveyed in rural areas did not have access to any type of assistance, according to the latest round of the research, the number of such people has increased significantly to 74% (2013 - 11%, 2015 - 18%, 2017 - 48%, 2019 - 74%). Most of the respondents surveyed in rural settlements indicated that they receive assistance from the state for fertilizers/pesticides (15%) and agricultural equipment (14%), and most of them are satisfied with the assistance they received.

## 3.7.4. Free Legal Assistance

Regarding free legal assistance, a quarter of those surveyed in 2019 said that they have access to this service (25%). The perception of accessibility of the service, with the exception of the first round, does not change, and the data from the last three rounds is almost identical in this respect (2013 - 16%, 2015 - 23%, 2017 - 27%, 2019 - 25%).

There is no significant difference in the assessment of the access to free legal assistance between **women and men** (women - 22%, men - 28%). However, it is noteworthy that more women (45%) than men (34%) are unaware of this service. More respondents in cities indicate access to free legal assistance (34%) than in rural settlements (12%), and a similar trend is evident in all four rounds of the research. Villages show a negative trend in access to free legal services, as the number of those reporting that such service is not accessible has increased when compared to the previous round. A lack of

knowledge about the accessibility of free legal assistance in 2019 is less (38%) than it was in 2017 (48%). A positive dynamic is observed in **highland settlements**, as on the one hand, the share of those who do not have information on this service has reduced (2017 - 48%, 2019 - 37%), and on the other hand, direct access has doubled (2017 - 10%, 2019 - 20%).

Table # 44. Access to Municipal / State Free Legal Assistance Services in Highland and Rural Settlements -2013/2015/2017/2019 data

		2013	2015	2017	2019
	Yes	11%	18%	18%	12%
Rural settlements	No	57%	45%	34%	49%
	l don't know/hard to answer	31%	38%	48%	38%
	Yes	7%	14%	10%	20%
Highland settlements	No	79%	49%	42%	43%
	l don't know/hard to answer	15%	37%	48%	37%

As for the **regions**, no significant changes have been observed in most of the regions over the last two rounds, with few exceptions. In particular, a positive trend can be noticed in Tbilisi and Samtskhe-Javakheti, and in 2019 more respondents in these areas reported the access to free legal assistance services. In Imereti, Kvemo Kartli and Shida Kartli, the dynamics are negative. Shida Kartli is especially noteworthy, where twice as few respondents in the last round indicated access to this service (2017 - 55%, 2019 - 27%).

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	25%	26%	38%	44%
Imereti (N=300)	12%	21%	23%	15%
Adjara (N=300)	17%	29%	16%	20%
Guria (N=300)	14%	44%	26%	21%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	7%	31%	13%	14%
Kakheti (N=300)	10%	13%	13%	10%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	12%	13%	24%	15%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	28%	17%	55%	27%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	7%	32%	12%	23%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	17%	18%	16%	20%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	13%	24%	16%	14%
Total (3400)	16%	23%	27%	25%

Table # 45. Access to Free Municipal Legal Assistance by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

It is true that the difference is not significant, but it is noteworthy that more respondents with higher education do not have information about the availability of free legal assistance in their municipality (44%) than respondents with secondary or vocational education (38%).

As for the use of the free legal assistance service, 14% of those who said that the service is accessible, themselves and/or their family members have used it. This indicator has doubled when compared to the previous round (2017 - 7%, 2019 - 14%). The vast majority of respondents who have used free legal services express satisfaction with the promptness, qualifications, and service in general. Most of those who have used the service trust it (57%).

## **3.7.5. Various Public Services**

The study evaluated the use of various public services and respondents selected the services from the relevant list. As it turned out, almost half of the population (48%) did not use any of the listed services, although the number of such people has decreased when compared to the previous years (2013 - 55%, 2015 - 58%, 2017 - 64%). The rest of the respondents mainly applied/renewed their ID card (27%), received notary services (18%) and registered their property (15%).

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Have not used any	55%	58%	64%	48%
ID card / Biometric Passport	30%	28%	25%	27%
Notary service	13%	12%	9%	18%
Property registration	11%	7%	7%	15%
Driver's license	10%	6%	4%	11%
Asking for public information	5%	5%	2%	5%
Archive service	3%	2%	3%	5%
Co-property registration				3%
Issuing license/permit	2%	1%	1%	2%
Submitting tax declaration	3%	2%	1%	2%
	N=3400	N=3400	N=3400	N=3400

Figure # 54. Use of Various Public Services - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

The vast majority of respondents who use public services are satisfied with the services they received, including the timely receipt of the required documents/data and the location of the relevant institutions. For their majority, the service fee is affordable.

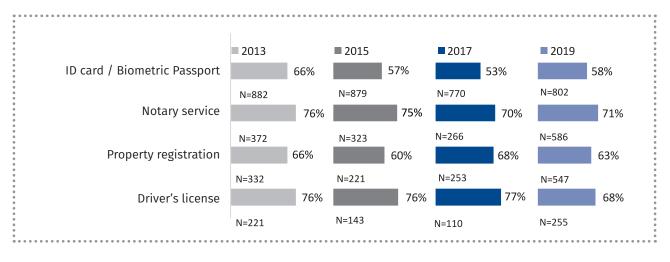


Figure # 55. Affordability of Public Service Fees - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

A total of 32 people from the surveyed respondents participated in public tenders, auctions and procurements. Due to the scarcity of data, it is not advisable to analyze the percentage distribution.

## 3.7.6. Security

The majority of the population surveyed in 2019 believes that security is ensured in their settlements (69%), but it should be noted that compared to other rounds of research, the perception of security has decreased (2013 - 88%, 2015 - 85%, 2017 - 76%) and from year to year it is characterized by a downward trend. The sense of security is higher in rural areas (76%) than in urban (65%). It is worth mentioning that, despite the higher sense of security in villages, there has been a significant increase in the number of people who do not feel safe (2017 - 9%, 2019 - 24%). The feeling of security has also reduced in highland settlements. Residents of highland settlements indeed feel safer (80%) than those of other types of settlements (69%), but compared to previous rounds, in which nine out of ten respondents surveyed in highland settlements said they felt safe (2013/2015 - 93%, 2017 - 91%), in the last round of the survey, eight out of ten respondents agreed.

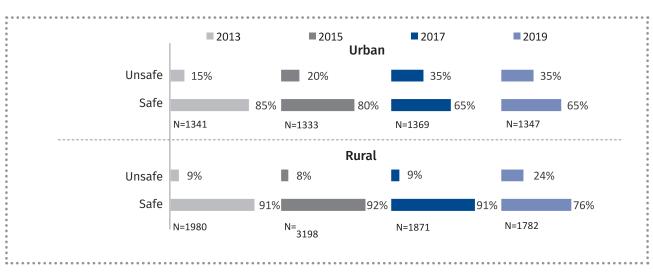


Figure # 56. Sense of Safety in Urban/Rural Areas - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

In terms of **regions**, the population feels the least safe in Tbilisi (55%), Imereti (67%) and Shida Kartli (71%), and the most protected in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (89%) and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (87%). The perception of the population in all regions shows a negative trend when compared to the previous round, except for Tbilisi and Kvemo Kartli. In Tbilisi, compared to 2017, perceptions have not changed (2017 - 54%, 2019 - 55%), while in Kvemo Kartli, perceptions have slightly increased (2017 - 74%, 2019 - 80%).

In terms of **women/men**, more male respondents feel protected (74%) than female respondents (65%), and it is also noteworthy that in both cases, perceptions of safety show a downward dynamic.

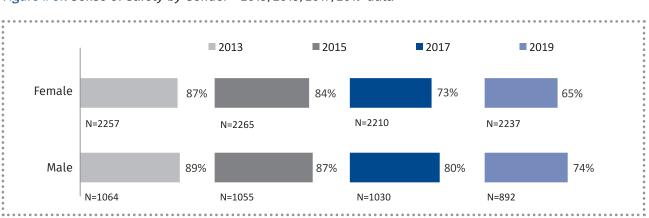


Figure # 57. Sense of Safety by Gender - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

Respondents with secondary or vocational education (72%) feel safer than respondents with higher education (65%). It should be noted that the rate of the perception of security does not show any differences in terms of age, as seven out of ten young people (18-29 years - 68%), as well as older respondents (30 years and older - 70%), feel safe.

According to the results of the study, the two most common problems in the settlements of the respondents are alcohol (42%) and drugs (25%). It is notable that it is in relation to these two problems that a positive dynamic is observed when compared to the previous round of the study. Assessments for all other problems have hardly changed. As for early marriage, about which the respondents were asked only in the last round of the survey, it is common in the settlements according to 10% of respondents. It should be noted that in terms of ethnic minorities, the difference in the prevalence of premature marriages has not been observed in the study (premature marriage is common: ethnic Georgian - 10%, ethnic minority - 14%). It is also noteworthy that respondents with higher education more frequently indicate drug abuse as a common problem (36%) than respondents with secondary or vocational education (20%). The data shows the same trend in the case of alcohol (secondary/vocational education - 38%, higher education - 49%). As for the age context, the results of the study showed no differences in drug abuse, and in the case of alcohol consumption, it was found that more young respondents named it as a problem in their settlement (18-29 years - 52%) than older respondents (30 years old and over - 52%).

#### Table # 46. Prevalent Problems in Settlements - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Robbery, plunder	3%	4%	9%	11%
Drug abuse	6%	7%	13%	25%
Consumption of alcohol	24%	23%	29%	42%
Minor hooliganism	5%	7%	13%	15%
Domestic violence	3%	6%	10%	9%
Divorce	7%	12%	16%	17%
Early marriage				10%

\* Note: The question of "premature marriage" was asked to the respondents only in 2019

The reduction in the perception of safety, as shown in the results of the **qualitative research**, could be explained by increased drug abuse and complaints related to patrol police work. As voiced in focus group discussions, these complaints involve the relatively low frequency of patrolling by the police and less stringent approaches. At the same time, according to the participants of the focus group discussions, the consumption of light drugs has increased, against which the participants would prefer police to increase scrutiny and tighten control mechanisms. According to the respondents, these mechanisms will ensure that drug users have a "fear" of punishment when using illicit drugs and that ordinary citizens feel safer. In addition to these factors, challenges related to the occupied territories are likely to have a significant impact on reducing the perception of safety in Shida Kartli.

"Drug addiction is a bit high ... because [the patrol police need to patrol intensively] to have a little bit of fear, attention should be paid to it... "Insulin needles" are often thrown in the squares, marijuana use is an ordinary thing ..." **Woman, 49 years, urban settlement, Tbilisi** 

#### **Fire and Rescue Services**

The results of all four rounds of the **quantitative research** show that fire and rescue services are accessible for most of the population (fire: 2013-78%, 2015 - 95%, 2017 - 93%, 2019 - 92%; rescue: 2013 - 67%, 2015 - 92%, 2017 - 85%, 2019 - 87%). It should be noted that access to both services has increased significantly since 2013. Only one in ten respondents used both services in all rounds of research, and the vast majority of them are satisfied with both the timely service and the service received in general. Trust in these services was only evaluated in the last round of the survey, and the majority of respondents trust both the fire department (85%) and the rescue service (83%).

As for the results of the **qualitative research**, focus group discussion members noted issues with promptness among regional fire and rescue services. In particular, due to the existence of a unified, centralized system of emergency assistance and emergency management, responses to calls made to 112 are not prompt, therefore the service is less effective. As discussed, a significant amount of time is spent clarifying addresses, therefore, the work of the services, including the ambulance service, is hindered. In order to solve the problem, respondents suggest decentralization of the system and, at least, the existence of regional centers for emergency assistance and an emergency management system in which the staff is knowledgeable of local addresses so that service will be more prompt, and therefore, more effective.

Participants expressed their satisfaction with the work of the fire service at the focus group discussions in Kvemo Kartli, which is due to the replacement/renewal of old cars and equipment.

## 3.7.7. Electronic Services

#### **Public Electronic Services**

Among respondents surveyed in 2019, 38% have heard about state e-services. In this respect, the data of all four rounds of research are almost identical (2013 - 38%, 2015 - 32%, 2017 - 34%, 2019- 39%). Nearly half (48%) of the respondents in the city and a quarter (24%) of the rural population have information about the existence of these services. Fewer respondents in highland settlements are aware of the service (23%) than in lowland settlements (39%). Among the regions, the highest awareness of public electronic services was reported in Tbilisi (57%), and the least in Samtskhe-Javakheti (20%).

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	55%	45%	63%	57%
Imereti (N=300)	23%	36%	32%	30%
Adjara (N=300)	39%	33%	24%	27%
Guria (N=300)	15%	55%	24%	39%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	19%	29%	33%	39%
Kakheti (N=300)	20%	17%	17%	24%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	30%	19%	19%	23%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	20%	41%	69%	38%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	17%	24%	15%	20%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	33%	25%	18%	25%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	17%	29%	34%	40%
Total (3400)	38%	32%	34%	39%

Table # 47. Awareness on State E-Services by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

The most respondents have heard about e-services in the 35-44 year age group (46%), and the least - in the group of respondents over 65 (20%). As for the use of these services, the highest rate was observed in the age groups of 25-34 (32%) and 45-54 years (30%), and the lowest in respondents aged 55-64 (17%). The data also differ in terms of education. In particular, among respondents with higher education, the rate of awareness about public e-services is higher (59%) than in respondents with secondary or vocational education (28%).

Among those who have heard of state e-services, 27% have used these services. Most of the respondents have used the websites of the following agencies during the last year: Justice House (psh.gov.ge) - 47%, Revenue Service (rs.ge) - 40%, Public Registry (Napr.gov.ge) - 28% and My.gov.ge portal - (20%).

The information on public e-services has not increased significantly, but when compared to the previous round, the frequency of using these services has increased by ten percent (2013 - 23%, 2015 - 19%, 2017 - 18%, 2019 - 27%). The positive trend is particularly noticeable in **highland** settlements, where in 2017, only 9% used state e-services, and in 2019 their number almost tripled (25%). A similar trend has been observed in rural settlements, where the practice of using state electronic services has also tripled (2017 - 6%, 2019 - 20%). The changes by gender are also significant. Though the difference in terms of service use has not been reported (women - 26%, men - 27%), but changes over time is higher among male (2017 - 15%, 2019 - 27%) than female respondents (2017 - 20%, 2019 - 26%).

It is noteworthy that the vast majority of those who have benefited from these services are satisfied with the services they received, and this factor is high in all rounds of the research (2013 - 98%, 2015 - 96%, 2017 - 98%, 2019 - 94%). As for trust in e-services, which was assessed by respondents only in 2019, it is 70%.

#### **Municipal Electronic Services**

The survey conducted in 2019 looked at the level of awareness of municipal e-services and the attitude of the population towards them. The findings show that 40% of respondents had heard about municipal e-services. The awareness of these services is higher in cities (50%) than in **villages** (25%). Fewer respondents in **highland** settlements have information about municipal e-services (26%) than in other types of settlements (41%). Among the **regions**, most respondents have heard about municipal electronic services in Tbilisi (61%) and the least in Samtskhe-Javakheti (19%). More respondents heard about municipal e-services in the group of respondents with higher education (56%) than among respondents with secondary or vocational education (32%). Also, the awareness of municipal e-services is higher among younger respondents (18-29 years old - 51%) than among older respondents (30 years and older - 36%).

Of those who had heard of municipal e-services, only 14% used them. Of the 116 respondents who used any of the municipal e-services, 25 could not name the specific website. The highest number of respondents used the official website of the respective city hall (64 respondents), and 23 indicated the use of the Sakrebulo website. The majority of respondents with experience using municipal electronic services trust and are satisfied with the services they received.

Key informants of the **qualitative research** focused on several positive changes related to e-services. According to them, citizens today have the opportunity to use up to 50 state and municipal services remotely. The State Services Development Agency has been providing qualified, reliable service since 2018, which includes the issuance of a qualified electronic signature certificate and a certified electronic stamp certificate that have the same legal power as a signature. This saves time and allows people to communicate remotely with an administrative body and a private entity. Also, this service is reliable and secure.

"In previous years, before we had this [qualified, reliable service], this new service, the reliability of documents, the reliability of electronic services was much lower. With this new innovation, remote services are already fully protected." **Public Sector Representative, Tbilisi** 

In the case of Tbilisi, the unification of services available in gamgeobas (the district level representation of the city hall) was mentioned, which means removing the administrative barriers for citizens. They can apply to the City Hall directly or to gamgeobas anywhere in the city and receive services.

"Diversified services, which were scattered in different structural units, were unified under one umbrella. These parts of the governing units served the citizens within their administrative boundaries only.... today citizens have the opportunity to apply to the City Hall or gamgeobas from any of the 11 points across Tbilisi and receive identical services everywhere. In fact, we already have 11 branches of the City Hall in the city." **Public Sector Representative, Tbilisi**  In addition to saving time, the use of electronic services is important in terms of caring for the environment. While remote services speed up and simplify the process, provide protection and reduce costs, it is also important that the use of paper documents reduces. At the same time, as the main participants in the study from public agencies noted, it is important that the remote services of the State Services Development Agency are available in sign language and for citizens with special needs. They have the opportunity to receive advice from a qualified specialist in sign language electronically. The agency's website is fully adapted for people with visual impairments.

Despite the positive aspects of using e-services, there are challenges related to their use. One of the main challenges, according to respondents, is the readiness to use electronic services by both citizens and public agencies in municipalities. The readiness of municipalities to provide e-services is considered to be a particularly important factor by key informants, who are directly responsible for the refinement of e-services. According to respondents, this refers not only to infrastructural readiness but also to municipalities' mental readiness to provide electronic services and see their advantages.

"Actually, the challenge is unacceptability. We are in the transition phase to e-services. For example, when plastic cards were a novelty, everybody still went to the bank to get money, we are at about that stage. Organizations are already seeing the benefits of this trusted service. Let's process these services with a full load." **Representative of Public Sector, Tbilisi** 

In addition to the challenges related to readiness, key informants also cite the problem of a lack of qualified staff members. In terms of adding new remote services or refining existing ones, the outflow of highly qualified personnel creates barriers, which is primarily caused by the wage policy in the public sector. According to the participants of the qualitative research, the public sector is finding it increasingly difficult to compete with the private sector over highly qualified human resources.

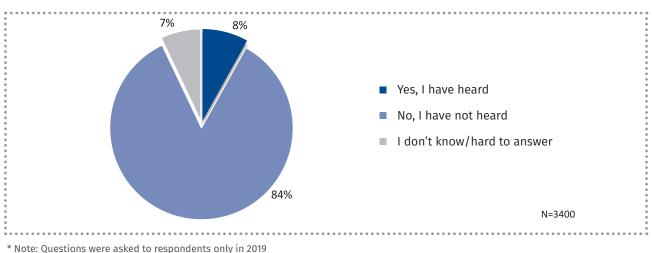
"There is a lot of competition and they have high salaries [in the private sector]; We find it difficult to maintain qualified staff. It is becoming increasingly difficult to compete with the private sector because they are offering more, so much more that we just cannot ..." **Public Sector Representative, Tbilisi** 

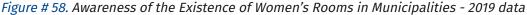
### 3.7.8. Ecology

Regarding ecological issues, respondents in **urban settlements** indicate more about air (63%), as well as land (47%) and natural water reservoir (44%) pollution than respondents in **rural settlements** (air - 18%, land - 14%, natural water reservoirs - 21%). Even in **highland settlements**, far fewer respondents point to environment pollution (air - 10%, land - 10%, natural water reservoir - 10%) than in **other types of settlements** (air - 47%, land - 35%, natural water reservoir - 35%). In terms of **regions**, the highest rates of air pollution, as well as land and natural reservoir pollution, were reported in Tbilisi, and the lowest in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti. Throughout various rounds, trends are more or less similar in terms of pollution. As for the assessment of whether the state is taking any measures to clean up the polluted environment, the dynamic is positive. If in the previous round of the survey, 16% of respondents indicated that the state took any measure, in 2019 28% responded positively. The most frequently named measure taken by the state to clean up the polluted environment is timely/efficient clean-up (50%), which is also higher than in the previous round (2017 - 37%).

#### 3.7.9. Women's Rooms

Respondents were asked about the service of women's rooms<sup>17</sup> as part of the fourth round of the research. The results of the study show that awareness about women's rooms is low and only 8% of respondents have heard about them. No significant differences in having information about the service were observed among different groups. In terms of gender, the level of awareness is almost identical: 10% of the surveyed female and 6% of male respondents have heard about the service.





Of the 259 respondents who have heard about the existence of women's rooms in their municipalities, only 12 used them, and 10 of them were women. Forty-six respondents said they had not used it themselves, but were familiar with those who had benefited from their services. Most of them are women (36 respondents).

The majority of these respondents say that state services for the protection against violence (57%) are available in the municipality. It should be noted that more male respondents indicate the existence of this service (68%) than women (51%). As for the provision of appropriate advice to others on the use of state services to provide protection against domestic violence, 15% responded positively. Confidence in state protection services against violence is 73%.

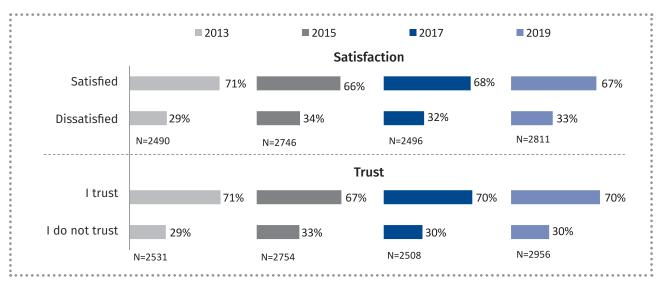
# 3.8. General Assessment of Local Self-Government's Services

#### 3.8.1. Satisfaction and Trust toward the Local Self-Government

In the frame of this study, respondents assessed the local self-governments of their municipalities. As the survey results show, the number of respondents who find it difficult to assess satisfaction and confidence has declined. In particular, if in 2017 28% of respondents found it difficult to assess the work of local self-government (City Hall/City Council - Sakrebulo), in 2019 the share of such respondents has decreased to 16%. Regarding trust, the share of answers "I do not know/I find it difficult to answer" decreased from 26% to 11%. Among those who assessed satisfaction with and trust in the local self-government, seven out of ten are satisfied (67%) and trust it (70%). Among those who assessed satisfaction and trust toward the local self-government bodies, no significant changes were observed over time.

<sup>17.</sup> Women's' Rooms - an open space in the municipality that is focused on raising the level of awareness of women, providing information and services tailored to the needs of women, and which further determines their economic, social and political activity. Women's' Rooms aim to provide information, consulting services, support the increase of women's' participation in the decision-making process at the municipal level, provide free internet and library services, plan different types of meetings, organize and thus increase the quality of access to information, as well as encourage women's' initiatives.

*Figure # 59. Satisfaction with and Trust in Local Self-Government Bodies (City Hall / City Council) - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 



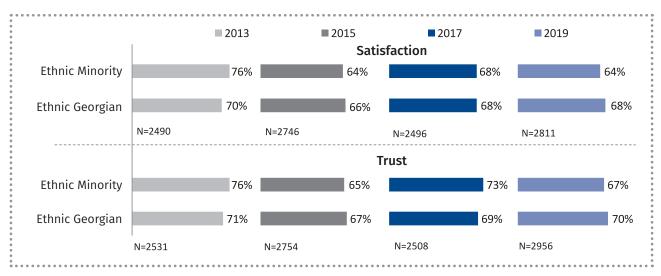
No difference in satisfaction with or trust in self-governments was observed by the studies in terms of **women/men**, as seven out of ten female and male respondents are satisfied and even trust them. In **highland settlements**, satisfaction with local self-government (80%) as well as trust (83%) is higher than in other types of settlements (satisfaction - 66%, trust - 69%). The trend is similar in **urban/rural areas**. In particular, there is higher satisfaction with local self-government (72%) and trust (75%) in **vil-lages** than there is in **cities** (satisfaction - 64%, trust - 66%).

As for the **regions**, the lowest share of respondents express satisfaction and trust in local self-government in Tbilisi, similar to previous rounds of the research, but the highest increase both in terms of satisfaction (2017 - 53%, 2019 - 61%) and trust (2017 - 54%, 209 - 64%) is observed in the capital. In terms of satisfaction, Imereti is noteworthy, where the tendency is negative when compared to the previous round (2017 - 77%, 2019 - 65%). The trust level in Kvemo Kartli has decreased the most when compared to the previous round (2017 - 71%, 2019 - 66%). The highest levels of satisfaction and trust were recorded in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (81% and 85%, respectively).

	Satisfaction			Trust				
	2013	2015	2017	2019	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	53%	58%	53%	61%	49%	60%	54%	64%
Imereti (N=300)	69%	63%	77%	65%	73%	61%	76%	68%
Adjara (N=300)	76%	66%	73%	79%	78%	67%	79%	79%
Guria (N=300)	82%	77%	77%	75%	83%	79%	78%	77%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	82%	77%	75%	72%	82%	81%	77%	78%
Kakheti (N=300)	79%	78%	71%	71%	78%	80%	71%	77%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	67%	58%	69%	63%	70%	59%	71%	66%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	86%	62%	70%	69%	88%	64%	75%	67%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	77%	76%	79%	78%	80%	74%	77%	78%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	71%	63%	67%	65%	73%	65%	68%	66%
Racha-Lechkhumi/ Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	84%	76%	86%	81%	86%	79%	85%	85%
Total (3400)	71%	66%	68%	67%	71%	67%	70%	70%

*Table # 48. Satisfaction with Local Self-Government Bodies (City Hall / City Council) and Trust by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

It should be noted that in terms of **ethnic groups** no differences were reported in relation to satisfaction with and trust in local self-government, as these indicators are almost identical in the case of respondents representing ethnic Georgians and ethnic minorities. However, there is an interesting trend in the context of trust. It is relatively low, and the level of trust in local self-government does show a negative trend among ethnic minorities (2017 - 73%, 2019 - 67%), which in terms of the regions is also seen in Kvemo Kartli.



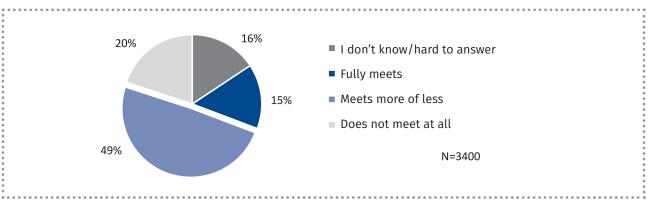
*Figure # 60.* Satisfaction with Local Self-Government Bodies (City Hall/City Council) and Trust by Ethnic Minority/Ethnic Georgian - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

It should be noted that the level of satisfaction with and trust in local self-government does not differ according to vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups. In particular, about seven out of ten respondents express satisfaction with self-government in both vulnerable (68%) and non-vulnerable (67%) groups. Similarly, roughly seven out of ten respondents in both vulnerable (72%) and non-vulnerable (69%) groups trust the local self-government.

Respondents living in rural settlements in 2019 also assessed satisfaction with and trust in the mayor's representative in the village. According to the results of the research, both the satisfaction and the trust towards the mayor's representative in rural areas are slightly, but higher than in the case of the City Hall/City Council. Approximately one in ten respondents (15% and 11%, respectively) find it difficult to assess satisfaction and trust towards the mentioned representative. Of those who evaluated this indicator, 73% expressed satisfaction with the mayor's representation in rural areas, while 78% expressed trust. In **highland settlements**, the satisfaction with (80%) and trust in (85%) the mayor's representative in the village is higher than in **lowland** settlements (satisfaction - 72%, confidence - 77%). Among the **regions**, the highest level of satisfaction with the mayor's representative was observed in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (86%) and the lowest in Kvemo Kartli (64%). Satisfaction is also high in Guria (79%) and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (88%), while the lowest rate was in Shida Kartli (70%) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (72%).

In 2019, respondents were also asked how the decision-making process at the local level meets the needs of citizens. Half of the respondents claimed that the decision-making process more or less meets the needs of citizens (49%), 20% did not respond at all and 16% found it difficult to assess. Only 15% of respondents said that the decision-making process at the local level fully meets the needs of citizens. More respondents in **highland settlements** said that the decision-making process at the local

level fully meets the needs of the population (24%) than in **lowland settlements** (14%). The difference between **urban/rural settlements or women/men** was not observed. As for the **regions**, most respondents in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti indicated that the decision-making process at the local level fully meets the needs of the population (25%), while respondents indicated this the least in Kvemo Kartli (12%).



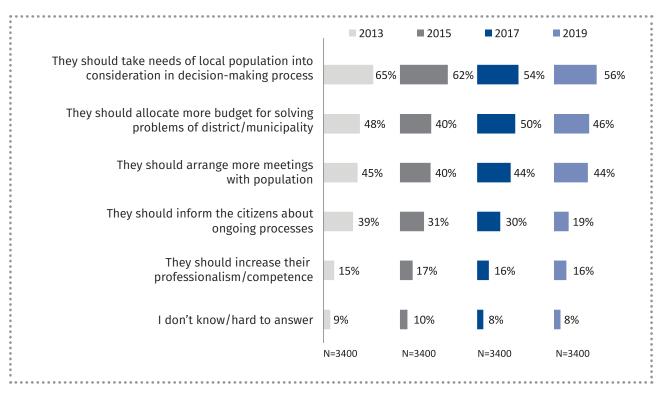


\*Note: Questions were asked to respondents only in 2019

When making decisions, the majority of respondents believe that the area where improvements need to be made is considering the needs of the local population (56%). Respondents also think that it is important to allocate more funds to solving municipal problems (46%) and to organize more frequent meetings with the population (44%). It is noteworthy that in all rounds of research, the improvement of work in these three areas is a priority for most respondents, and their sequence did not change over the years. Here, there is a positive dynamic in terms of identifying the need to inform the population about the ongoing processes. In particular, if 30% of the respondents mentioned informing the population about the processes as an issue that needed to be improved in 2017, in 2019 this factor was mentioned by 19% of the respondents.

In addition to the above, within the framework of the 2019 survey, in contrast to previous years, new answers were offered among the factors to be improved. In particular, in the decision-making process, the following should be taken into account by local self-governments: the needs of girls and women (4%), the needs of people with disabilities (8%), and the involvement of citizens in the implementation of local self-government (9%).

*Figure # 62. Issues to be Improved by Local Self-Government to Better Meet the Needs of Citizens - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 



\*Note: The sum of the answers exceeds 100%, as several answers were allowed

Significant differences in this regard have not been identified in the study, although some changes in terms of **regions** are noteworthy. In particular, if in 2017 four out of ten respondents in Guria stated that in order to meet the needs of citizens, more funds should be allocated to solve the problems of the municipality (41%), in 2019 six out of ten respondents (59%) thought so. In Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, more respondents consider it necessary to allocate more funds to solve municipal problems in the last round of research (2017 - 54%, 2019 - 63%). As for considering the needs of the population when making decisions, the research here shows a positive dynamic in the regions (2017 - 66%, 2019 - 49%).

A positive dynamic observed in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti is also noteworthy. Here, fewer and fewer respondents consider it necessary to allocate more funds to solve the problems of the municipality (2017 - 71%, 2019 - 15%), as well as to hold more frequent meetings with the population (2017 - 43%, 2019 - 17%). The share of respondents who said that the needs of the population should be considered more in the decision-making process in order for local self-governments to better meet the needs of citizens has also reduced (2017 - 59%, 2019 - 41%). Nevertheless, this factor is considered to be the most important in the region.

In Shida Kartli, taking into account the needs of the population and allocating more funds to solve the problems of the municipality is important for an identical number of respondents (50% - 50%). In Samtskhe-Javakheti, most respondents state allocating more funds for solving municipal problems as the most important issue (42%). As for arranging more frequent meetings with the population, it is most frequently mentioned as important in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (54%) and Tbilisi (53%), and least frequently mentioned in Imereti (21%).

*Table # 49. The Three Most Frequently Named Issues to be Improved by Local Self-Government to Better Meet the Needs of Citizens by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data* 

		Taking needs of the local population into consideration in the decision-making process	Allocating more budget for solving problems of district/municipality	Arranging more meetings with the population
	2013	64%	46%	46%
Tbilisi 2015		54%	27%	38%
(N=400)	2017	52%	34%	51%
	2019	61%	42%	53%
	2013	78%	52%	53%
Imereti	2015	76%	61%	33%
(N=300)	2017	47%	65%	46%
	2019	44%	24%	21%
	2013	65%	44%	55%
Adjara	2015	55%	40%	50%
(N=300)	2017	74%	42%	47%
	2019	53%	46%	42%
	2013	72%	57%	55%
Kakheti	2015	70%	52%	38%
(N=300)	2017	51%	73%	33%
	2019	66%	57%	45%
	2013	43%	44%	38%
Shida Kartli	2015	56%	27%	36%
(N=300)	2017	47%	49%	24%
-	2019	50%	50%	40%
	2013	57%	48%	18%
Samtskhe-Javakheti	2015	57%	39%	30%
(N=300)	2017	56%	58%	44%
-	2019	38%	42%	36%
	2013	78%	68%	48%
- Mtskheta-Mtianeti	2015	82%	47%	64%
(N=300)	2017	40%	44%	45%
2019		66%	53%	54%
	2013	60%	46%	57%
Guria	2015	73%	64%	33%
(N=300)	2017	73%	41%	47%
	2017	72%	59%	43%
	2013	63%	32%	24%
Samegrelo-Zemo	2015	57%	45%	30%
Svaneti	2013	66%	<b>54%</b>	45%
(N=300)	2017	49%	63%	43%
	2019	60%	54%	46%
	2015	60%	24%	61%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	2015	<b>45%</b>	56%	<u> </u>
( 000)	2017	<u>45%</u> 59%	55%	<u> </u>
Racha-Lechkhumi-	2013	68%	33%	45%
Kvemo Svaneti	2015	81%	58%	28%
(N=300) 2017 2019		59%	71% 15%	43% 17%

In the framework of the **qualitative research**, it was noted during the focus group discussions regarding the shortcomings of the local self-government that the public servant should be accountable to the population and not to the central government. The participants of the discussion also focused on the special activity of local self-government representatives in the pre-election period, which is another important reason for dissatisfaction.

"Activity [of the local government] can be higher. The civil servant and the self-government should serve the population more than the government." **Man, 50 years, rural settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

"I evaluate it [the work of the local self-government] negatively. When there are elections and something else, they come and check us all, and when there are no elections, they have no relation with us." **Man, 29 years, ethnic minority representative, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

A shortcoming with the effectiveness of communication was emphasized, but differences in the discourse were also revealed. In particular, according to some respondents, positive changes in the work of local governments are observed in terms of responding to the demands of citizens. According to their argument, regardless of whether the municipality meets the specific requirements of citizens, they receive an answer. Consequently, the existence of feedback and informing citizens, even if the issue cannot be resolved in a satisfactory way, results in a positive attitude among citizens.

"In any case, they will not close the door on you and give you an answer." **Woman, 43 years, urban** settlement, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti

*"I also liked, for example, that if they were not able to help me with my issue, at least I was given some answer that they had started working on it and I had a kind of written feedback from them." Woman, 35 years, urban settlement, Guria* 

In addition to the focus group discussion participants and the local self-government representatives, representatives from the non-governmental organization indicated a positive trend in terms of communication. For example, it has been considered an interesting practice to change the rules for receiving citizens in Guria. Instead of a specific, fixed day and time for receiving citizens, citizens have the opportunity to go to the regional administration every day, during the first half of the day and meet with the local representative. The general meetings of the settlements were identified not only to ensure the involvement of the citizens, but also as an important mechanism for communication with the population. It was also stated that the general meeting of the settlement is a good way for the local self-government to collect information about the problems faced by citizens.

In addition to the information received at the general meetings of the settlement, local self-governments also analyze the enquiries of citizens as a mechanism for **determining the needs of citizens.** The issues that the population most often address the relevant authorities are identified as the required needs. Consequently, they are reflected in action plans and budgets. Local governments do not use research as a mechanism for needs assessment. According to them, research is a "luxury" that the municipal budget cannot afford. Consequently, there are two main ways in which the needs of citizens are identified. One, as mentioned, is an official enquire made by a citizen. Second, direct meetings of the Mayor/City Hall representatives with the population, where the most urgent issues are selected from among all the issues raised. *"I think that they [action plans] are adjusted to needs ... Thousands of enquiries are submitted per year. They are differentiated according to needs and these programs are created based on them."* **Local Government Representative, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti** 

*"If some project is not funded, but enquiries related to the project have accumulated, then it is reflected in social projects. For example, such was the autism program, which was funded with 700 GEL or 500 GEL, but a lot of applications were submitted; people were claiming that there are many children with this syndrome in Rustavi and demanded an increase of this amount. And it increased to 1000 GEL, if I'm not mistaken."* **Local Government Representative, Kvemo Kartli** 

Representatives of the non-governmental sector paid particular attention to the research itself as a necessary mechanism to determine the needs of citizens. According to one of the main arguments, the use of this mechanism provides a better understanding of the needs of the local population compared to the analysis of enquiries made by a small group of citizens and/or those who attended general meetings. Two additional challenges were also identified. One is related to the practice of prioritizing problems by the central government, and the other to the organization of general meetings of the settlement. Though at the general meeting of the settlements, citizens have the opportunity to select problems that should be solved in their settlement, but according to NGO representatives participating in the study, the choices are limited to those issues that are already prioritized by the central government. There are also a number of challenges with the general meetings of settlements. According to key informants from the non-governmental organizations, the general meetings of the settlement are often formal and organized only because it is obliged by law and does not necessarily identify the real needs of the population. At the same time, the needs of a small group of the population attending the general meetings of the settlements do not represent the needs of the entire settlement. It is worth mentioning that a large part of the population is not informed about the general meetings of the settlements, and only a small group of citizens are aware of them. The results of the quantitative research also support this argument, as according to the survey findings, it is important for local self-governments to consider the needs of the population (56%) and to organize more frequent meetings with the population (44%). With all of this in mind, we can conclude that the mechanisms for identifying the needs of citizens requires further refinement.

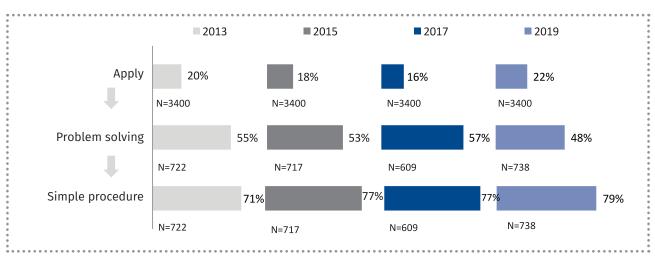
"Not a single priority is research-based ... When the budgeting process starts, the first is the priority that the center dictates ... Enquiries are analyzed and priorities set. Yes, this is also one of the methods and this method is very good. But it is based on an analysis of the enquiries and applies only to 1%; we should not think only about their problems, so it is necessary to create focus groups, meet with different target groups ..." **Representative of the Non-Governmental Organization, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti** 

"If you say that you are the center, this money is for local purposes, then why do you make decisions?! For example, five areas were written down and they were asked to send projects in this direction. In practice it created the following problems: different municipalities have different problems, of course, and people are asking for different things. They went to the general assembly and told them [the population] to choose from these five. They say they have a seventh problem; this problem is not included [in the population list]." **Expert, Non-Governmental Organization Representative, Tbilisi** 

### 3.8.2. Appealing to Self-Governments

According to the results of all rounds of the survey, two out of ten respondents have applied to the local self-government at least once to solve various problems (2013 - 20%, 2015 - 18%, 2017 - 16%, 2019 - 22%). Half of them say that the problem they have referred to the local self-government has been solved (2013 - 55%, 2015 - 53%, 2017 - 57%, 2019 - 48%).

As for the simplicity of procedures, the last two rounds of the study do not show a tendency of change, and it is evaluated as easy by most respondents (2013 - 71%, 2015 - 72%, 2017 - 77%, 2019 - 79%). Substantial differences have not been identified in the study, although it is noteworthy that in 2019, more respondents among ethnic minority groups indicated the simplicity of the procedure for applying to the local government with a request/problem (78%) than in 2017 (62%).



*Figure # 63.* Appealing to Local Self-Government, Problem Solving, Simplicity of Procedure - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

As the focus group discussions of the **qualitative research** revealed, those who have had experience addressing local self-government over the past year have found that most of the issues they raised were concerned with social and health programs in municipalities. According to the representatives of the local self-governments, the frequency of citizen referrals related to social and health programs is the highest. It is with the high demand for the services provided by these programs that local authorities explain the fact that a large part of the municipal budget is allocated to these programs. In this context, it is interesting to note the opinion of one of the key informants participating in the study, according to which it would be good to review these programs. Moreover, according to the respondent, instead of providing one-time assistance of 200 GEL to the socially vulnerable, it would be more effective to organize training courses and equip them with new skills and contribute to the creation of newly trained staff.

Kutaisi's case was cited as a good example of a relatively long-term project. One of the representatives of the non-governmental organization noted that a project was developed for mothers with many children in Kutaisi, according to which, instead of one-time assistance, they were offered the opportunity to promote business activities. Replacing one-time assistance programs with such business programs is considered to be a major step towards achieving sustainable development goals. As part of the 2019 survey, respondents were asked which issues are under the local self-government functions. Only 8% of respondents said they did not know/found it difficult to list the issues. Most respondents consider solving infrastructural problems as a function of local self-government (47%). Infrastructure together with social issues (44%) and road infrastructure improvements (44%) were named among the top three functions. The lowest share of respondents considers the issues of foreign trade, outdoor advertising and licensing of economic activities (20%), as well as the issue of suspended services in case of non-payment of taxes (18%) as functions of local government. It should be noted that the respondents did not name the functions themselves but chose them from a provided list.

As for the issues that respondents addressed to the local self-government bodies, the most frequently mentioned were social (30%) and infrastructure (17%) among issues that most respondents consider to be the function of local self-government.

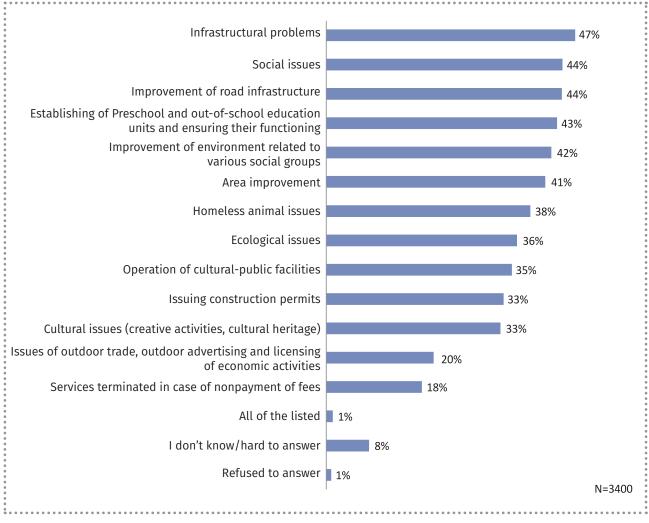


Figure # 64. Awareness of Issues that are Functions of Local Self-Government - 2019 data

\* Note: Questions were asked to respondents only in 2019. The sum of the answers exceeds 100% as several answers were allowed

In evaluating the work of local self-government, the **qualitative research** identified issues related to public awareness. Based on focus group discussions it is evident that public sector employees are more or less informed about the functions of local self-government compared to other groups that lack such awareness. Awareness of a City Council functions is lower than information about the responsibilities of a City Hall. Discussion participants stated that "any issue that worries them and is public" may be brought to the attention of a City Hall.

A lack of awareness of the functions of local self-government has also been identified as a challenge by key informants, which in turn negatively affects the satisfaction level with local self-government performance. Because citizens do not know which issues they should address to self-governments, or which issues are within their competence, they often receive unsatisfactory answers to requests.

"There are a lot of damaged houses that are old. Grandpa, his father left him, generations have not been able to take care of this house and today he is asking the government to renovate the house, roof it, fix it ... or he has a yard and is asking for its fencing. The state will not be able to fence the private property and will not be able to fix the house ..." **Local Government Representative, Guria** 

*"If you ask the municipality to lease the land owned by the state, it will not be able to do it, right? You should apply to the National Property Agency."* **Representative of the Local Government, Kvemo Kartli** 

A lack of awareness of local self-government functions is also a challenge as assessed by experts/ non-governmental organization representatives. Moreover, according to one opinion, information about one's own functions and municipal services is often unknown not only to citizens, but also to some employees of the municipality.

"For example, when we had meetings and invited some municipalities, we had meetings to raise awareness about juvenile justice reform. They were not interested at all. Many municipalities were neither interested nor attended ... This [women's'] room is in the City Hall building and most of the City Hall staff did not even know that similar services are provided in the City Hall for women, for Rustavi women." **Representative of the Non-Governmental Sector, Kvemo Kartli** 

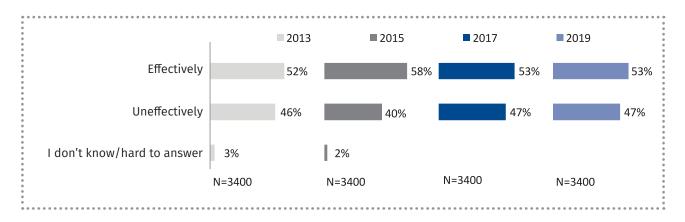
According to the participants of the focus group, the challenge is the lack of awareness of citizens about the projects planned or to be implemented in the municipalities and settlements. In this context, the need to increase the efficiency of the work of public relations departments is noteworthy, in order to properly disseminate information about the work done by local self-governments.

"We cannot say things are not done, a lot of things are done, but they lack promotion. They are not shouting." Woman, 32 years, employed in the public sector, urban settlement, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti

"Every problem starts with an informational vacuum. If a person cannot see his street is being paved, how can he know what is happening on my street ... you are doing so many things, you really do them; do something informative, print something even like a brochure and distribute it to the population for free ... Even if it costs some money, isn't it worth it?" **Man, 47 years, public sector employee, urban settlement, Guria** 

Despite the challenges, the case of Guria is interesting. In particular, Ozurgeti City Council project "Self-Government for Education", which is focused on raising citizens' awareness and facilitates representatives of the City Council to go and meet with the population to provide information about the competencies of the local self-government.

In terms of assessing the effectiveness of the relationship between the local self-government and the population, no changes were revealed according to the various rounds of quantitative research. In all rounds of the survey, almost half of the respondents consider the relationship of the self-government with the population to be effective, while the other half consider it ineffective. The highest rate of effectiveness was recorded in 2015 (58%).



*Figure # 65. Assessing the Effectiveness of Public Relations of Municipality Leadership - 2013/2015/2017/2019* 

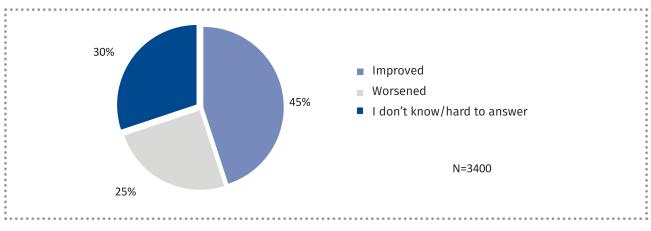
It is true that when compared to the previous round of the survey, the assessment of the effectiveness of the public relations of municipal authorities across the country has not changed and is equal to 53% in both rounds, but the dynamic in terms of **highland settlements** is positive (2017 - 67%, 2019 - 74%). **Rural settlements** have a higher rate of efficiency (65%) than urban (44%) settlements. As for the **regions**, most respondents assess the relationship of the municipality authorities with the population of Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (74%) as the most effective, and the least effective in Tbilisi (37%). Compared to the previous round of research, the assessment of this factor in the regions is either unchanged or shows a slight change, although the regions of Adjara and Imereti are noteworthy. Adjara has the highest rate of positive (2017 - 55%, 2019 - 64%), and Imereti the negative dynamic while evaluating the effectiveness of public relations (2017 - 60%, 2019 - 52%). It is notable that half of the **ethnic minority** group participating in the study assessed the municipality's relationship with the population as effective (53%).

*Table # 50.* Assessment of Public Relations of Municipality Leadership as "Effective" by Regions - 2013/2015/2017/2019 data

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	26%	44%	36%	37%
Imereti (N=300)	53%	56%	60%	52%
Adjara (N=300)	56%	62%	55%	64%
Guria (N=300)	71%	69%	70%	65%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	61%	75%	61%	67%
Kakheti (N=300)	66%	70%	64%	63%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	50%	48%	57%	52%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	55%	49%	54%	58%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	60%	64%	71%	70%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	53%	57%	58%	61%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	68%	71%	74%	74%
Total (3400)	52%	58%	53%	53%

In 2019, respondents also assessed how municipal service provision has changed over the last two years. The results of the survey showed that almost half of the respondents believe that the reality has improved (45%), while a quarter of respondents report opposite (25%). It is significant that three out of ten respondents find it difficult to assess whether the provision of municipal services in their settlements has improved or worsened (30%).





\* Note: Questions were asked to respondents only in 2019

In the last two years, more respondents point to the improvement of the reality in terms of the provision of municipal services to the population (53%) in **highland settlements** than in other types of settlements (44%). In rural areas, the improvement rate is higher (49%) than **in urban areas** (41%). As for the regions, most respondents find it difficult to assess how the quality of municipal services for the population in Samtskhe-Javakheti has changed (43%). The lowest share of respondents indicates an improvement in municipal services in Tbilisi (40%) and Shida Kartli (40%), while the highest in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (57%). *Table # 51.* Assessment of Provision of Municipal Services to the Population by Regions in the Last 2 Years by Regions - 2019 data

	Worsened	Improved	I don't know/hard to answer
Tbilisi (N=400)	40%	28%	32%
Imereti (N=300)	45%	28%	27%
Adjara (N=300)	43%	20%	37%
Guria (N=300)	50%	21%	29%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	53%	21%	26%
Kakheti (N=300)	47%	25%	28%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	50%	22%	28%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	40%	28%	32%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	41%	16%	43%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	50%	23%	27%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	57%	15%	28%
Total (3400)	45%	25%	30%

Several reasons for the shortcomings of local self-government were emphasized during the focus group discussions. One of the reasons is related to the **qualification** of the staff employed in the self-government, and in another case, to the degree of **independence** of the local self-government. According to the participants of the focus group discussions, often low-qualified staff are employed in local self-government. It is worth mentioning that focus group discussion participants paid special attention to the lack of trained staff in rural settlements. Representatives of the non-governmental organizations participating in the study also highlighted this issue.

"After all, the village governor is not qualified at all ... The local governance will hand over something to the local administration. That governor tells you that this issue does not concern him, then they call each other and it turns out that it concerns him... You see that he knows nothing and it is better to try something on your own ..." Woman, 29 years, rural settlement, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti

"Especially in the villages, there is a serious problem [of qualification] in the self-government staff ... unequivocally, we cannot say the same about everybody, but in general, they have very low competence." **Representative of the Non-Governmental Organizations, Guria** 

Challenges related to human capital were also highlighted by key informants participating in the study. According to one argument, one of the more serious obstacles is the wage policy in the public sector, which is finding it increasingly difficult to compete with the private sector. Consequently, relatively low-qualified personnel are employed in the public sector. This argument is mostly shared by local and central government officials.

"I would say that the outflow of staff is a serious problem ... they come, they get a lot of experience, but due to the fact that the private sector offers a completely different salary, they leave the public agency, then new [staff] comes and this cycle does not end ..." **Kvemo Kartli, Representative of the Local Government**  "The salary budget is [a challenge] ... the state should support it more, so that qualified staff is not drained, because it actually affects the quality of any type of service." **Public Sector Representative, Tbilisi** 

According to the second argument, which is shared mainly by experts and non-governmental organization representatives, the challenge is not so much the low qualification of the staff as the degree of their independence. According to the proponents of this argument, one part of the staff even undergoes through a professional training process. Public servants, whose competence is sufficient to work effectively fail to do so, as politicized space does not increase the degree of their independence and diminishes the motivation for further development. Ultimately, all of this results in the less effective implementation of policies by the relevant actors.

"Recently, trainings and qualification programs are more and more appreciated ... However, due to the fact that the entire space is politicized and they are not free in these decisions, therefore, this also hinders. Professional growth makes no sense; they will make political decisions anyway". **Representative of the Non-Governmental Organization, Guria** 

"... At one of the meetings, , when we were telling them [municipality representatives] how to spend their finances in a way that was tailored to the needs of young people, for example, a representative of one of the municipalities said, 'Who is asking us anything?' We were doing what we are told to do", and I saw the same problem in many places, they are not independent ..." **Representative of the Non-Governmental Organization, Kvemo Kartli** 

Participants of the focus group discussion also paid attention to the degree of independence of the local self-governments. According to them, due to the fact that local self-governments are not able to make decisions independently, often the demands of the citizens are delayed or are not satisfied at all. Discussions with residents of rural settlements revealed that the degree of independent decision-making by rural representatives of mayors is extremely low. Citizens have to go to the municipal or regional centers to appeal to the local government for many issues.

"They always send you somewhere else. [They tell you] we can't do anything, address him ... they will always redirect you above them." **Man, 26 years, rural settlement, Imereti** 

"Some people then came to Kutaisi for enquiries, even when they could [have found answers] on the spot. Then why is it local?!... if I go to Kutaisi?... Why should I need to go here and there?! **Woman, 40 years, rural settlement, Imereti** 

Fulfillment of promises by local governments is yet another criterion used for assessing the effectiveness of local self-government along with the qualifications and independence of their staff members. In the same context, the focus was on the importance of **monitoring** the work performed by various subcontractors. According to the focus group participants, since in many municipalities, the local self-government carries out work through various companies, it is necessary to have an effective monitoring system and control how the work is completed and whether the contracted company fulfilled its obligations. According to one of the arguments, given that the essential criterion in the consideration of bids is the cost of the work performed, quality monitoring becomes increasingly relevant.

*"It can be said that the company did not fulfill its duty, but doesn't that company need control?" Man, 33 years, urban settlement, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti* 

"One thing is for sure: when the tender is announced, the company offering the cheapest price will bring a very cheap worker. They do not care what the worker does. The main thing is to make a profit, and as a result, the fulfilled work quality is very low." **Man, 42, rural settlement, Imereti** 

Another important criterion for assessing the effectiveness of local self-government work was the **practice of rejecting citizens' demands based on their political preferences.** As noted in the focus group discussions, it is important that public officials are not affiliated with a particular political team and that the political preferences of citizens are not playing a significant role in responding to their specific requests or projects. It should be noted that in Imereti focus group discussions, specific attention was paid to the importance of political affiliation while implementing projects in specific districts, especially by the rural settlement population.

"The main thing is that selection on the basis of political views is prevailing... If they [the local self-government] need you, they can do something for you, if not, they won't do anything for you... if you do not comply with their interests...." **Man, 26 years, rural settlement, Imereti** 

"People were laughing because they missed paving one section of the road, since near that section, people voted for the National Movement Party. Let's see how they will drive on that dusty, broken road, they said." **Man, 50 years, rural settlement, Imereti** 

"Positions are being taken by them [local self-government representatives]. A public servant is not allowed to take sides." **Man, 50 years, ethnic minority representative, rural settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

During the focus group discussions, while evaluating local self-government, attention was also paid to them becoming more active during the pre-election period. According to one of the arguments, this is due to the fact that the central government is allocating more financial resources to the local government before elections. This explains the start-up and finalization of work on a greater number of projects during the pre-election period, and as far as this aims to gain the support of voters, according to the opinions expressed in the discussions, it is important for the citizens to use this practice to their advantage as effectively as possible and actively advocate for their own interests.

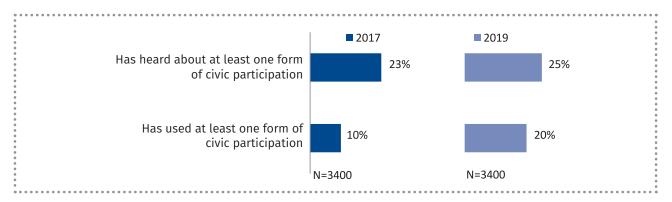
*"It [pre-election activities] is not the fault of gamgeoba because only during the election period money is allocated for everything they do." Man, 34 years, rural settlement, Imereti* 

"They become active only before elections. The population already mentions that they are remembered only when they are needed." Woman, 40 years, representative of ethnic minority, rural settlement, Kvemo Kartli

# 3.8.3. Citizen Participation in Local Self-Government

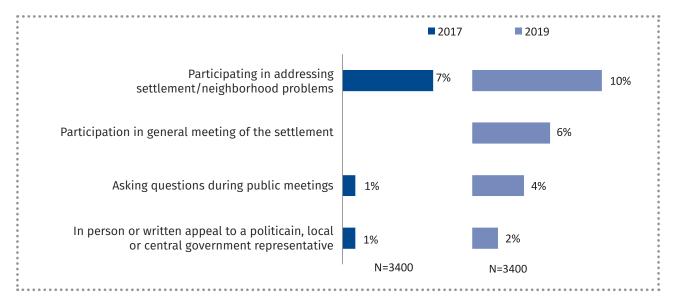
Respondents assessed various issues related to citizen participation in local self-government. The findings illustrate that a small part of the respondents is aware of the forms and mechanisms of local self-governance (25%), and a small part have engaged in any activity in this regard throughout the last year (20%). However, a positive dynamic is observed in terms of civic activism. If in the previous round of the survey only one in ten respondents participated in any type of civic activism (10%), this indicator has already doubled in the last round (20%). Of those who used any form of civic activism, the largest share of respondents participated in the general meeting of the settlement and/or in solving a neighborhood problem (10%).<sup>18</sup> Most respondents (12%) have heard about this form of public participation. The rate of awareness about the forms of public involvement has not changed since the previous round, as still only one in ten respondents have heard of these activities. The list of issues for which the respondents carried out civic activism throughout the last year mainly were concerned with the issues of beautification (25%) and water supply (18%). These issues were also relevant in 2017 (respectively, beautification - 29% and water supply - 12%).

*Figure # 67.* Awareness of at Least One Form of Civic Participation in Local Self-Governance/ Use of at Least One Form throughout the Last Year - 2017/2019 data



The four most commonly used forms of civic engagement on a local level are participation in solving a neighborhood problem (10%), participation in the general meeting of the settlement (6%), asking questions at a public meeting (4%), and in person or written enquiry to a representative of the local or central government. The frequency of use of other forms of civic participation is very low and the changes are less noticeable. The only exception is participation in the general meeting of the settlement, which directly linked to the implementation of the "State Program for Rural Support" and confirmed by the results of the qualitative research.

<sup>18.</sup> As the results of qualitative research have shown, citizens often find it difficult to draw a clear line between the general settlement meeting and participation in solving neighborhood problems, as for them both types of activities are related to solving their settlement/neighborhood problems. The organizer of the meeting (local self-government or local resident) is not always known to them. Accordingly, these two forms of decision-making at the local level (participation in solving neighborhood problems and participation in the general settlement meeting) are presented together. It should be noted that 6% of the respondents took part in the general meeting of the settlement and 10% in the neighborhood problem solving initiative. In total, 10% of the respondents used these two forms, which once again confirms the trend revealed as a result of qualitative research – only a small group of the same people are active and use different forms of engagement.



### Figure # 68. The Most Commonly Used Forms of Civic Participation - 2017/2019 data

As the results of the last two rounds of research show, awareness about the local self-government work is low and does not show a dynamic of change. No significant differences were observed in various groups including **gender**: an identical number of women and men surveyed have heard about various forms of civic participation in local self-governance. In terms of **age**, there is a slightly higher level of awareness among respondents aged 30 and older (26%) than among youth (21%). There is a significant difference observed among various ethnic groups. In particular, ethnically Georgian respondents report more awareness about the forms of civic participation (26%) than representatives of ethnic minority groups (18%).

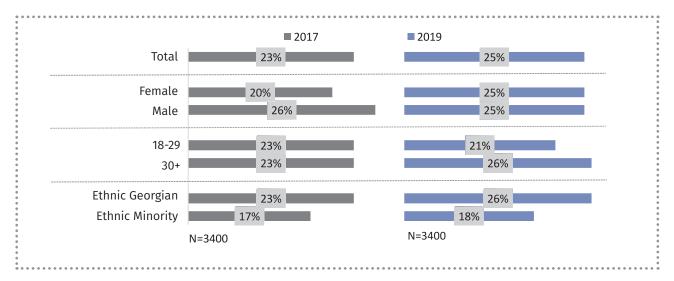
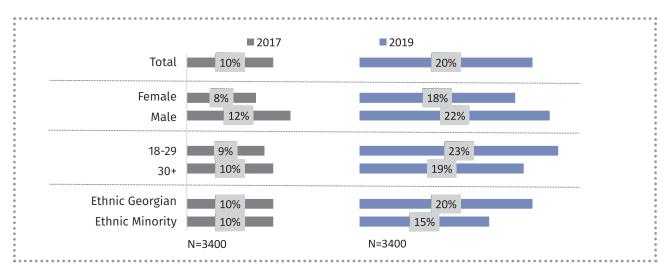


Figure # 69. Awareness about Civic Participation in Local Self-Governance - 2017/2019 data

As for the use of any form of civic participation, it has increased in the group of respondents of both young (18-29 years - 9% and 23%), as well as older residents (30+ years - 10% and 19%). The use of at least one form of civic activity has also increased in both female (8% and 18%) and male (12% and 22%) respondents. In terms of citizen engagement, a positive trend is observed in the group of ethnically Georgian respondents (10% and 20%), as well as in the ethnic minority groups (10% and 15%).

*Figure # 70.* Using any Form of Civic Participation in Local Self-Governance Over the Past Year by Gender, Age, Ethnic Group - 2017/2019 data



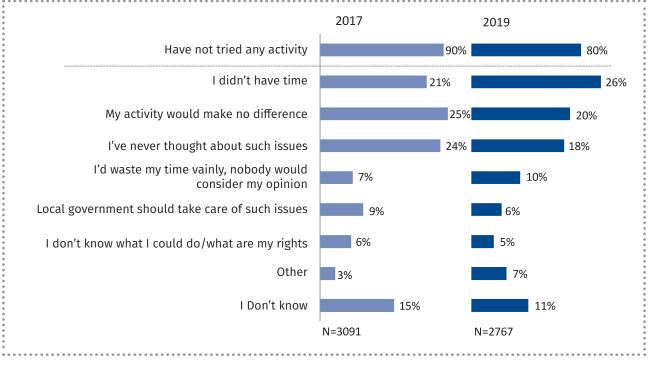
A positive trend is also noteworthy in the **regions.** In all regions, the share of respondents who did not participate in any form of civic activism except for Adjara, Shida Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti has decreased. In the case of Adjara and Samtskhe-Javakheti, it is possible to explain this by the presence of ethnic minority groups, if we take into account that the positive trend in this group is relatively low. In the third round of the survey, 90% of respondents from the ethnic minority group reported that they did not participate in any civic activity, and in the fourth round their share decreased to 85%. In the case of Shida Kartli, the negative trend can be linked to the fact of the region is bordering the occupied territory and is facing additional specific challenges associated with it. It should be noted that more respondents from the group with higher education (74%).

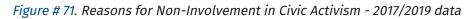
	2017	2019
Tbilisi (N=400)	87%	75%
Imereti (N=300)	96%	84%
Adjara (N=300)	80%	76%
Guria (N=300)	94%	80%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	94%	81%
Kakheti (N=300)	97%	87%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	94%	82%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	88%	85%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	82%	82%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	92%	83%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	93%	73%
Total (3400)	90%	80%

Table # 52. Lack of Attempts at Civic Activity (No Attempts at Civic Activity) by Regions - 2017/2019 data

\* Note: The question was asked to the respondents only in the third and fourth rounds of the survey

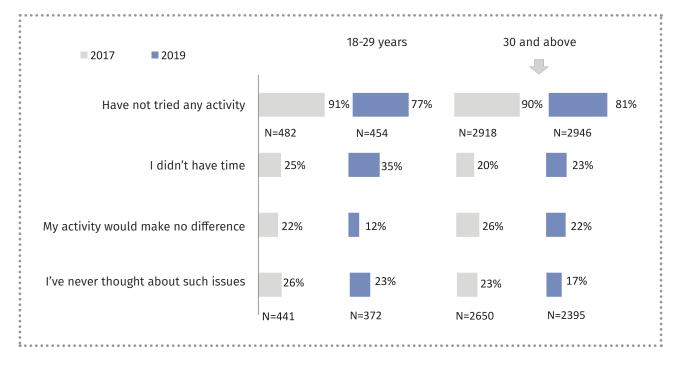
Three main reasons for not trying to engage in civic activism on the local level are: not having enough time (26%), the belief that being active will not make any difference (20%), and that respondents did not think about such issues (18%). The respondents' arguments were almost similar in the previous round of the research and there are no substantial differences identified. It should be noted that no variations are observed between responses by women and men in relation to the first two reasons (I didn't have time and my activity would make no difference) but is slightly different for the third. In particular, more women say they have never thought about such issues (22%) than men (14%).





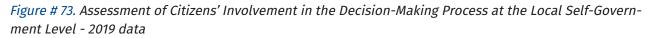
\* Note: The question was asked to the respondents only in the third and fourth rounds of the survey

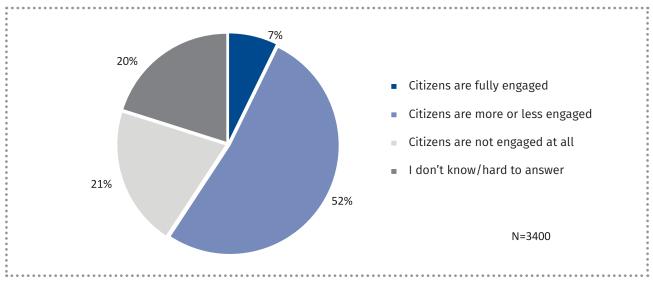
As for **age**, a positive dynamic is significant in terms of attempts to carry out any type of activity in both young (18-29 years old) and older (30+) groups. Particularly noteworthy is the positive dynamic in the youth group, where in 2017, no attempt was made to engage in any activity by 91%, and the share of such respondents in 2019 was 77%. Three main reasons for not participating in civic activism were named by both age groups. If no significant changes related to the reasons are observed in the 30-year and older age group, such changes in the youth group are significant. Almost the same number of them said in 2019 that they had not thought about such issues (23%) as in 2017 (26%), and a lack of time was named by more respondents in 2019 (35%) than in 2017 (25%). A positive dynamic in assessing the effectiveness of civic activism is noteworthy. Since fewer young respondents in the last round thought that their activity would make no difference (2017 - 22%, 2019 - 12%), we can conclude that the share of young people who are optimistic about the possibility of influencing local affairs has increased.



#### Figure # 72. Reasons for not Engaging in Civic Activism by Age - 2017/2019 data

Respondents commented on the inclusivity of the decision-making process at the local self-government level only in 2019. Only 7% think that citizens are fully involved in the decision-making process at the local level, while 21% think that citizens are not involved at all. Half of the respondents indicated that citizens are more or less involved in the local decision-making process (52%). It is noteworthy that two out of ten respondents find it difficult to assess the involvement of citizens.





\* Note: Questions were asked to respondents only in 2019.

The majority of respondents who believe that citizens are involved (more or less/completely) in the decision-making process at the local level believe that women and men are equally involved in the process (35%). About the same number of respondents think that men are more involved in the process (33%), while 20% of respondents report that women are more involved. In these assessments, in terms of **gender groups**, the survey found that slightly more female respondents believe that more women (23%) are involved in the decision-making process in the municipality than male respondents (16%).

More respondents in **highland settlements** say that more men are involved in decision-making in their municipalities at the local level (47%) than in other types of settlements (32%). Fewer respondents also indicated women's' involvement in highland settlements (11%) than in other types of settlements (21%). There is also an important difference in terms of urban/rural settlements. In particular, if an equal number of respondents in urban settlements say that more women (27%) or more men (26%) are involved in the decision-making process at the local level, only 10% of respondents indicate the involvement of more women in rural settlements, and four out of ten respondents indicate the involvement of more men (42%).

	Women	Men	Both equally	I don't know/hard to answer
Female	23%	31%	34%	12%
Male	16%	35%	36%	13%
Highland settlements	11%	47%	37%	5%
Lowland settlements	21%	32%	35%	13%
Urban	27%	26%	32%	14%
Rural	10%	42%	39%	9%
Total	20%	33%	35%	12%

*Table # 53.* Assessment of the Involvement of Women and Men in the Decision-Making Process at the Local Level by Gender, Highland/Lowland, Urban/Rural Settlements - 2019 data

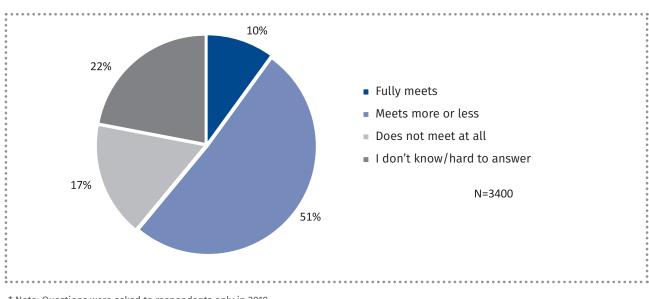
\* Note: Questions were asked to respondents only in 2019

In terms of **regions**, more respondents in Tbilisi (33%) indicated the greater involvement of women in the local decision-making process. It is also noteworthy that the rate of the involvement of men is ten percent lower in the capital (22%). It is true that three out of ten respondents also indicated the high involvement of women in Imereti (27%), but the rate of the involvement of men in the process is similar (28%). The lowest number of respondents indicated that women were more involved in local decision-making in Kakheti (9%) and Kvemo Kartli (9%), although in the same regions it is noteworthy that most in Kakheti believe that women and men are equally involved in the process (56%). In Kvemo Kartli, the majority say that more men are involved in the decision-making process (53%). A larger share of respondents indicated the involvement of men in Adjara (53%) and Samtskhe-Javakheti (52%). The same was indicated by the majority of respondents in Guria (42%). In the case of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, the majority of respondents believe that women and men are equally involved in decision-making (43%), while in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti, an almost identical number of respondents believe that more men (38%) are involved in local decision-making, or that women and men are equally (40%) involved. Table # 54. Assessment of the Involvement of Women and Men in the Decision-Making Process at the LocalLevel by Regions - 2019 data

	Women	Men	Both equally	I don't know/ hard to answer
Tbilisi (N=400)	33%	22%	30%	15%
Imereti (N=300)	27%	28%	35%	10%
Adjara (N=300)	12%	54%	26%	9%
Guria (N=300)	10%	42%	33%	14%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	11%	33%	43%	13%
Kakheti (N=300)	9%	18%	56%	16%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	9%	53%	28%	9%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	13%	38%	41%	8%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	13%	52%	30%	5%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	18%	39%	34%	9%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	13%	38%	40%	9%
Total (3400)	20%	33%	35%	12%

\* Note: Questions were asked to respondents only in 2019

Only 10% of respondents believe that decisions made at the local self-government level fully meet the needs of citizens, while 17% think they do not meet citizens' needs at all. Half of the respondents believe that the decision-making process at the local level more or less meets the needs of citizens, while 22% find it difficult to assess this factor.

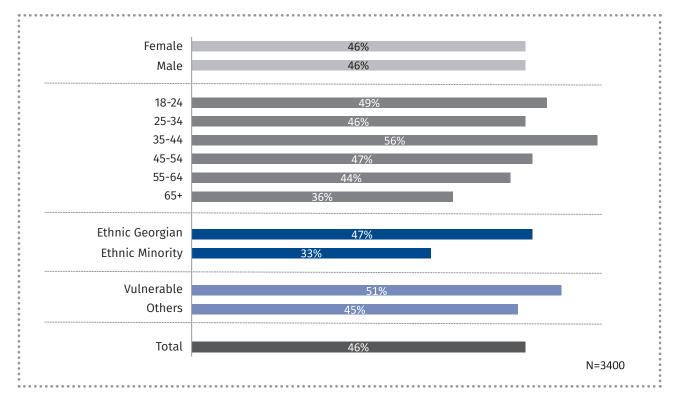


*Figure # 74.* Assessment of the Compliance of Local Government Decisions with the Needs of Citizens – 2019 data

\* Note: Questions were asked to respondents only in 2019

More respondents in **highland settlements** claimed that the decision-making process at the local self-government level fully meets the needs of the population (15%) than in other types of settlements (9%). The trend is similar in urban/rural areas. In particular, twice as many respondents in the villages said that the decision-making process at the local self-government level meets the needs of the population (14%) than in cities (7%). As for the **regions**, most respondents in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti said that the decision-making process meets the needs of the population (21%) and the lowest amount agreed in Tbilisi (5%). It should be noted that most respondents in Kvemo Kartli said that the decisions do not meet the needs of the population at all (21%).

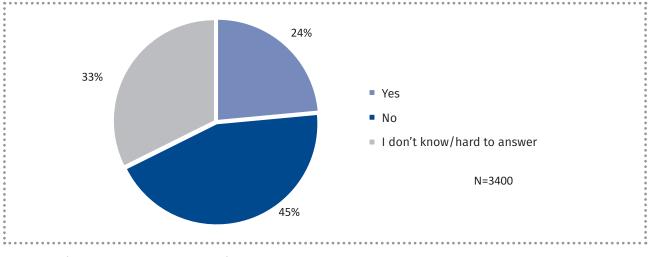
As for the share of respondents who believe that the decision-making process at the local level is inclusive and meets the needs of citizens, is 46% across the country. This assessment does not show any differences in terms of **gender**, and an identical number of women and men respondents (46%) think that the decision-making process is inclusive and meets the needs of citizens. This opinion is shared by half of the representatives of the **vulnerable** group participating in the study (51%). Noteworthy are the differences that the study revealed in terms of **age**. In particular, most respondents aged 35-44 believe that the decision-making process at the local level is inclusive and meets the needs of citizens (56%), while respondents aged 65 and above agree the least (36%). It is also noteworthy that ethnically Georgian respondents believe more that the decision-making process is inclusive at the local level and meets the needs of citizens (47%) than those of other **ethnic** minority groups (33%).



*Figure # 75. Assessment: Decision-Making Process at Local Level is Inclusive and Meets the Needs of Citizens - 2019 data* 

Three out of ten respondents do not know/find it difficult to assess whether the local government is taking any measures to increase the involvement of young people in the decision-making process at the local level (33%). Almost half of the respondents state that the local self-government does not take measures in this direction (45%), while 24% of the respondents indicate that such measures are

implemented. More respondents in **highland settlements** say that the local self-government is taking measures (32%) to increase the involvement of young people than in other types of settlements (23%). In terms of regions, the lowest share of respondents indicate this in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (17%), and the highest in Kakheti (32%) and Adjara (32%). According to the young people, 34% of the respondents in the 18-24 age group think that the local self-government is taking measures to increase their engagement, while in the 25-34 age group 27% of the respondents share this opinion. Participants in the focus group discussions spoke less about the specific activities carried out by the local self-government in the direction of youth involvement.



*Figure # 76. Assessment: Any Measure Taken by the Local Self-Government to Increase the Involvement of Young People - 2019 data* 

\* Note: Question was asked to respondents only in 2019

Two out of ten respondents believe that local self-government is implementing measures that promote public-private partnerships (21%), while 34% say that these types of measures are not being implemented, and 45% find it difficult to assess.

As **qualitative research** has shown differences of opinions about civic participation based on the background of focus group discussion participants and their personal relationship to public service. In particular, according to the group who have experience working in public service (themselves or their relatives), the involvement of citizens is increasing every year and the interest in participation in local self-governance is also growing. The assessment of the other group is more pessimistic in this regard though both groups agree that in general, the involvement of citizens is low, regardless of whether or not they see any changes.

The low involvement of citizens in the local processes was explained by several reasons. According to the respondents, one reason is related to the **lack of awareness** of the forms of engagement. As noted in the discussions, a large part of citizens is not aware of civic participation mechanisms. According to them, a small group of citizens who are active in other aspects is informed.

Another reason for low involvement is related to **nihilism.** Citizens do not believe that their activities can achieve results. It is noteworthy that on one hand, a reason for nihilistic attitudes is the non-ful-fillment of promises by the local self-government, and social inactivity, on the other. The citizens them-selves may express their dissatisfaction in a private environment but refrained from taking action. The

lack of support often pushes down citizens who want to protest and get involved rather than encourage them to become more active.

In addition to laziness and unwillingness to take responsibility for themselves, participants in the focus group discussion also explained inactiveness as a **cultural factor**. According to the latter, citizens are cautious about losing a socially desirable status. A person taking carious public actions such as voicing problems, making statements to agencies, or collecting signatures can be named as an intriguer. The negative assessment of women's' public activist by society was especially emphasized here.

"You know what? There are active young people, but with no support. My son was one of the organizers of the rally that protested against the increase of the transport price, but 5-10 people came out at that rally. If the government does not see that you have support ... no one has attended the rally except 15-20 people, there is no support." **Woman, 50 years, urban settlement, Kvemo Kartli** 

*"When there was no reaction to the specific problem, I discussed it publicly but many people said I was an intriguer/plotter ... My husband was not informed that I was going to discuss it publicly, otherwise, he wouldn't have allowed me to do so."* **Woman, 38 years, urban settlement, Tbilisi** 

*"A 20-25-year-old boy will not start discussing the problems of his apartment block, because his friend may laugh at him."* **Man, urban settlement, Tbilisi** 

A lack of civic activism is also linked to a cultural factor in refraining from protests due to acquaintanceship with authorities. Because of the close social connections in the culture, the participants noted that it is often difficult to express protest publicly, especially in the regions.

*"I cannot tell them. It is a small city and we are relatives of each other."* **Woman, 50 years, urban settlement, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti** 

"They said the majoritarian [Member of Parliament from the district] could stay offended if we wrote a complaint, as he had done a lot of things and it could sound like a complaint towards him." **Woman, 37 years, urban settlement, Guria** 

Another reason for the low involvement of citizens in the implementation of local self-government is seeing it as the main **responsible** actor in this process. According to some participants, local self-government bodies exist precisely because they are responsible for resolving local issues. "I do not understand how I should be involved in the functions of the board ... There is so much structure, so much budget, so much personnel ... the whole institution and what should I do with my involvement ?!" Woman, 37 years, rural settlement, Guria.

Despite skeptical views on the effectiveness of citizen engagement, the main discourse among the focus group participants was that long-standing and repeated actions often yields results. It was also noted that it is necessary to strategically plan civic activism and use the pre-election period effectively to inform relevant entities about various problems.

Another mechanism, highlighted by the participants of the discussion, especially in Tbilisi, is the effective use of **communication platforms.** It was noted that there are Facebook groups linked to various districts of the city, in which citizens raise issues. Response to their enquiries often is done more promptly than in the case of a written appeal. It was also noted that the probability of receiving a response to a problem mentioned on the Facebook page of City Hall is high, as there is an expectation that ignoring the message will prompt active citizens to attract more public attention. Consequently, the local self-government is trying to resolve issues before they are discussed further.

"You have to bother the government and not give up. I personally do so. I couldn't make a stadium, but I will do it anyway." **Woman, rural settlement, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti** 

"My relative managed to make City Hall build a public square through Facebook. He made them change the garbage bins ... He wrote to them why green bins were standing elsewhere and not at his location, and they brought them and installed." **Woman, 42 years, urban settlement, Tbilisi** 

"Often I refer to online communication because if I call, I have to listen to music and if I establish online communication, the answer is immediate." **Man, urban settlement, Tbilisi** 

In order to increase the involvement of citizens, the participants of the focus group discussion considered **raising awareness** to be critically important. It was also considered important to inform citizens about the **outcomes** of their involvement. The main informants share the opinion that the involvement of citizens in local self-government is low. However, unlike representatives of the non-governmental organizations, representatives of local self-governments participating in the study believe that engagement has increased, citing, for example, the general meetings of settlements. According to the representatives of the non-governmental organization, general meetings of the settlements and the number of citizens attendance in those meetings cannot be used as a criterion for increased involvement. Often, meetings are formal and citizens are mobilized to participate in them only because the law requires them to do so. In addition, there is a lack of awareness of civic participation mechanisms as well as projects planned by municipalities. According to NGO representatives, only specific, small groups are informed about the local affairs and information is not available to a wider audience.

Representatives of local self-governments name the websites and Facebook pages of their agencies as the main mechanisms for **informing** citizens. According to NGO representatives, the use of the internet is less effective because a small number of people are actually using this social media platform. Moreover, local television stations also have a few viewers. Accordingly, the most effective mechanisms for informing citizens about various issues are SMS messaging and publication of newspaper editions, which should be distributed among local residents. This is already practiced in Ozurgeti municipality and citizens receive SMS notifications about the date of the City Council session.

"Citizens' awareness is at a very low level. Only incomplete information goes to citizens ... The main part of the population does not use the internet, is not on social media, does not watch local television..." **Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Imereti** 

"The website alone should not be the only source of informing everyone because not everyone has access to the internet. Older people also have a problem with it, and not all villages have an internet connection. Other forms should be used as well..." Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Representatives of the local self-governments participating in the study pointed to the use of various forms of citizen engagement and the introduction of interesting practices in this regard. For example, in Guria, a project was implemented to increase the accountability of the local self-government towards population and increase their involvement, by ensuring publicity of the decision-making process in the City Council and the City Hall. Special rooms have been arranged in all villages of Ozurgeti municipality with special technical equipment for the local population to watch the City Council sessions live, if interested. According to the representative of the local self-government of the region, this initiative is especially important for elderly citizens who do not have access and/or skills to use modern technologies, and with this initiative, they have the opportunity to watch the sessions and ask questions live. Among the activities carried out to increase citizen engagement, the Kutaisi municipality organized the submission of project proposals electronically. The proposals were reviewed and shortlisted by the Civil Advisory Council and the final winners were selected through open electronic voting.

The service center project in Rustavi, Chkondideli settlement, is considered to be a good example of developing an action plan with citizen participation. The workshop was organized with the participation of the local residents; ideas were gathered on how to arrange municipal public space where they could receive various services at the same time. Based on these ideas, the students of the Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University designed the space. The service center has been operating since July 2019, where citizens can receive both municipal and state services.

Despite such activities, NGOs believe that there is a lot of work to be done to increase public participation. According to their arguments, only a small group of citizens is active, and in order to engage others, it is important to raise public awareness of participation mechanisms. Moreover, raising awareness among local self-government officials on the importance of civic engagement in local affairs is also needed.

"Participation in any decision-making, and first of all in public administration is an effective way of sharing responsibility. And when you are disconnected from society, whether you are a minister or a mayor, you make your work harder. You can't share responsibility with anyone. This is not properly understood." **Expert/Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Tbilisi** 

Both the representatives of the non-governmental organizations and other key informants see the role of NGOs in raising awareness and increasing the use of participatory mechanisms among wider groups of the local population. At this stage, cooperation between the non-governmental organizations and local self-governments is less effectively assessed by the latter. According to one argument, self-governments are not interested in ensuring wider public involvement, therefore, activities in this direction are less often planned. One of the respondents believes that when citizen mobilization is facilitated by the local self-government selection of involved parties is done in accordance with them having a loyal and uncritical attitude. Moreover, it was emphasized that the audience of public events hosted by non-governmental organizations and local self-government activities is usually different and there is no exchange of information between the parties regarding planned activities.

"[Local governments] have a very low interest in ensuring public involvement; they are subject to directives. They do not support it, and they hinder the involvement of the community. For example, they should invite the public when the draft budget is considered. They are mobilizing groups

that are not actually expressing their own interests or making noise at all. Therefore, these are the people who are being manipulated, this is a group used by the trustees ..." **Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Guria** 

"This is the case in all municipalities and it always happens like this: the non-governmental sector organizes something, a very cool activity and only its surroundings know, the City Hall organizes something and only its environment knows, the exchange of information does not happen, which is very bad ..." **Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Kvemo Kartli** 

# 3.8.4. Raising Awareness on the Possibilities of Economic Empowerment at the Local Level

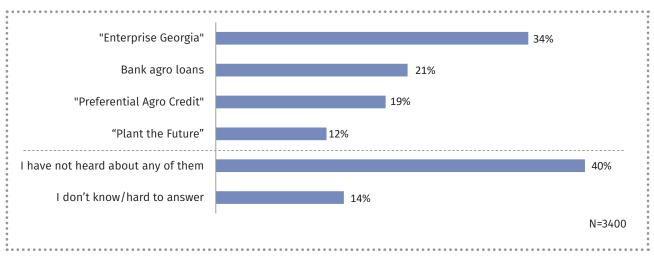
In the fourth round of the research, respondents assessed opportunities in terms of economic empowerment at the local level for the first time. Only 13% of respondents have heard about decentralization and local self-government reform, while 30% have heard about state-sponsored activities/projects of local businesses/entrepreneurs. From this point of view, it is interesting to note the **regions** where differences were identified. In particular, most respondents have heard about the state-supported activities and projects promoting local businesses/entrepreneurship in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (46%). There is also a high level of awareness about these activities and projects in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (39%) and Guria (36%), while the lowest level of awareness is in Kvemo Kartli (18%).

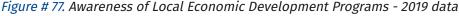
Tbilisi (N=400)	32%
Imereti (N=300)	27%
Adjara (N=300)	27%
Guria (N=300)	36%
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (N=300)	39%
Kakheti (N=300)	29%
Kvemo Kartli (N=300)	18%
Shida Kartli (N=300)	34%
Samtskhe-Javakheti (N=300)	24%
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (N=300)	26%
Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (N=300)	46%
Total (3400)	30%

*Table # 55.* Awareness of State Supported Local Businesses/Entrepreneurship Activities/Projects by Regions - 2019 data

Of those who said that they have heard of state-sponsored business/entrepreneurship activities and projects, 19% are informed about the activities and projects aimed at empowering women economic activity at the local level, however, 29% of them find it difficult to name specific activities/projects. Most respondents have heard about the possibility of financing start-ups (45%), naming the project "Enterprise Georgia" - 12%. This project was remembered by the participants of focus group discussions in the context of local economic empowerment opportunities.

Half of the respondents were unaware of local economic development programs (54%). Four in ten respondents (40%) had not heard of any of them, and 14% found it difficult to answer. The "Enterprise Georgia" program was evaluated with the highest level of awareness (34%). Two out of ten respondents knew about bank agro loans and "Preferential Agro Credit "(21% and 19%, respectively) and 12% of respondents knew about "Plant the Future." Of those who have heard of at least one program, 33% said they were aware of a project implemented within the frame of the program in the municipality.





\*Note: The sum of the answers exceeds 100%, as several answers were possible

As for the respondents 'awareness of their right to be involved in the local economic development process, two out of ten respondents say they are aware of this right (20%). Also, two out of ten respondents say they know what their role might be in the local economic development process (17%). The share of respondents who know their rights to engage in the local economic development process and also know about their role in this process is 14%. Substantial differences in gender and age have not been identified.

In the frame of **the qualitative survey**, focus group discussions on economic development projects focused on several issues. One of them concerns problems with being **informed** regarding projects/initiatives, and here issues have been identified in two directions. It was noted that one problem is lower awareness about the activities and projects supported by the state in the private sector of a large part of citizens. As discussed, it is important that information about business promotion activities and projects is disseminated not only through the internet. In terms of informing citizens, the role of the local self-governments was emphasized, which could increase the number of informed citizens by organizing meetings and voicing initiatives at those meetings.

The second issue related to raising awareness was **transparency**. In particular, it was emphasized that in the context of local economic development opportunities, information about specific activities/ projects is mostly disseminated in a very small group among acquaintances, and access to information amongst the wider public is quite low. "Not everybody has access to a computer... if there were a kind of informational corners...if there was somebody assigned from the local government to come to the village and disseminate the information among 30-50 people..." **Man, 50 years, rural settlement, Imereti** 

"I also got information like that, from my close circle." Man, 34 years, rural settlement, Imereti

Like the involvement of citizens, the nihilistic attitude among citizens, which is related to a lack of belief that their initiatives will be supported by the state has become a challenge. Consequently, it was considered important to increase the awareness of citizens about the possibilities of economic development at the local level, as well as to ensure transparency in the decision-making process, and to disseminate information about successful cases. The latter is seen as a mechanism that will help to contrast nihilistic attitudes and increase the belief among citizens that the state's support for business is real.

When mentioning positive examples during a focus group discussion in Guria, the initiative was presented in relation to tourism development which included guides' visits in Ozurgeti municipality and their introduction with local farmers and agricultural activities.

"In terms of tourism development, a lot of good things have been done in Ozurgeti municipality, guides have been brought to local farmers. Guides bring in a lot of tourists during the season. They organized a tea tasting in the city center and invited people who were interested in tea. It was important for us because there was interest." **Woman, 28 years, rural settlement, Guria** 

It is significant that the respondents found it quite difficult to see the role of citizens in the economic development of the municipalities during the focus group discussions. According to one argument, apart from the employment of a few people, they do not see their role in the process.

As for the **groups** whose support should be given priority in terms of local economic development, the views of the participants in the focus group discussion diverged. According to one view, it is critically important, first of all, to support young people and encourage them as actors with the greatest role in the economic development of the country. According to the second opinion, more attention should be paid to the experienced entities and the projects with high efficiency, rather than age. Opinions were also divided on the support of start-ups. According to one argument, start-ups should be encouraged, and on the other hand, due to limited financial resources, it is important to strengthen existing entrepreneurs/business operators, making their operations more efficient, and only then pay attention to new start-ups/individual entrepreneurs.

Focus group discussions also identified the need to **monitor the process**, in particular, to monitor how issued financial resources are spent and whether state support is being used efficiently. According to this argument, it is not uncommon to spend financial support improperly. In order to avoid such scenarios, participants in the focus group discussions consider the existence of a monitoring mechanism to be critical.

"I will not say that it was not funded, but they renovated private houses and had no intention for the development of guest houses. When you fund something, when you are the representative of "Enterprise Georgia", you should check where these funds go." **Woman, 40 years, urban settlement, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti** 

In terms of local economic development, perspectives are spotted by participants of focus groups mainly in tourism and agriculture.

As for the main informants, in terms of local economic development, the representatives of the local self-governments participating in the study see their role mainly in raising public awareness. In particular, those having questions should be informed as much as possible about economic opportunities, planned activities and the citizen engagement mechanisms. Part of the information should include the creation and delivery of training models, where the main focus should be on the development of writing skills and, the engagement of local self-government in this activity should also be facilitated.

As the main informants point out, at this stage the local self-governments do not have any power to promote local economic development. From this point of view, it is also important to advance the decentralization process, which should give the municipalities additional competencies to participate in economic development. One of the avenues is to create a favorable environment for investors in the form of certain tax deductions. At the same time, it was stressed that if independent decisions are made, on one hand, local governments will be motivated to create motivations for economic activities, and on the other hand, business actors will be more willing to operate onsite.

"One of the main directions of decentralization is to give municipalities the power, the means of legal course, to determine their own preferences to some extent." **Representative of Self-Govern-***ment, Imereti.* 

*"Imagine that the municipality discovered some property, attracted the interest of economic activity ... Institutions cannot make decisions on the spot, can they? It is natural that when any business sees that, it says no."* **Expert/Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Tbilisi** 

One of the key informants in the context of local economic empowerment highlighted the importance of establishing a learning system. It was noted that work is underway in this direction. In particular, work has begun on creating an educational system that should raise awareness among local government officials about local economic development and how to take it into consideration when planning and implementing projects.

"Training modules are being set up so that local public officials do not have to work like firefighting and should also be thinking about local economic development ... I understand that it is a bit of a sensitive issue, it is a social issue, that somewhere, in the village they need a road, but you should distribute the funds. If there is a very cool touristic attraction in the municipality, maybe you should do the road there at first, so the population will initiate some economic activity..." **Central Government Representative, Tbilisi**  In addition to highlighting the importance of decentralization in terms of local economic empowerment, key informants participating in the qualitative research also focused on the importance of decentralization in several other areas. First of all, the importance of approving the decentralization strategy document was emphasized. Key informants hope that the approval of the strategy will be followed by an effective implementation process. Representatives of both the central and local governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, point to the need for active work in several areas in the process of decentralization. One of them is to work at the **legislative level**, which involves the elimination and harmonization of contradictions present in local self-government law.

"I, the municipality, establish the rules of outdoor trade, but if the issue of fines is raised, I can no longer issue a fine; only the patrol police have the right to do so. Therefore, the municipality should also have [this right] ... For example, although this is defined as their own right in the Self-Government Code [managing municipal transportation], the law on transport does not allow it, except for self-governing cities, i.e. the old 2005-2006 record is remaining in the law." **Representative of the Central Government, Tbilisi** 

The second issue, on which the need for consistent and active work has been identified by qualitative research, concerns the effective conduction of the process aimed at **delegating rights** to the local government. There is full agreement with the local and central governments as well as the experts/ representatives of non-governmental organizations on the importance of delegating rights, however, there are different views on how the process should proceed. According to one argument, the transfer of powers to local authorities should be done in stages to avoid many problems related to the process. Cultural problems are also considered among these problems. One argument was that a serious challenge could be found in social and health-related fields (first of all, the rights associated with the assessment system) since in municipalities social ties are strong and decision-making can be associated with many difficulties.

"...which could be a problem for the local self-government, it is in the healthcare and social spheres because there was talk that the same evaluation systems would be transferred to them. Many people are dissatisfied with this and in fact, this is because Mary is a person who is there, knows everyone, and it will be very difficult for her, given the Georgian mentality, to solve this problem when the central government will do it more easily." **Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Tbilisi** 

According to the second argument, on the contrary, decisions regarding the delegation should be "surgical" and the central government should instantly transfer the powers to the locals. In this context, it was noted that first of all, documentation should be made on properties owned by municipalities and what should be transferred at this stage.

In terms of delegation, it should be noted that though the surveyed local government officials stress the necessity of managing the processes by the central government, they note that there are sufficient human resources accumulated at the local level in order to manage the processes themselves in case of increased competencies. According to another argument, decentralized management will be more effective because local problems are more familiar and understandable to local governments. The management of the property and land on the territory of municipalities are issues related to which the transfer of powers is considered a priority by representatives of the local self-governments participating in the research. According to the representatives of the central government, these powers cannot be transferred altogether. As mentioned, at this stage work has begun on the categorization of property and the transfer of certain types of property to municipalities. According to the representatives of the non-governmental organizations, it is possible that competencies will not all be transferred together, but there must be arguments, according to which specific decisions on the transfer or non-transfer will be made.

*"Let's assume that the decentralization action plan on property issues states that if there are 100 square meters of land, we will transfer only it and why [they transfer only 100 square meters of land], there is no argument."* **Expert, Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Tbilisi** 

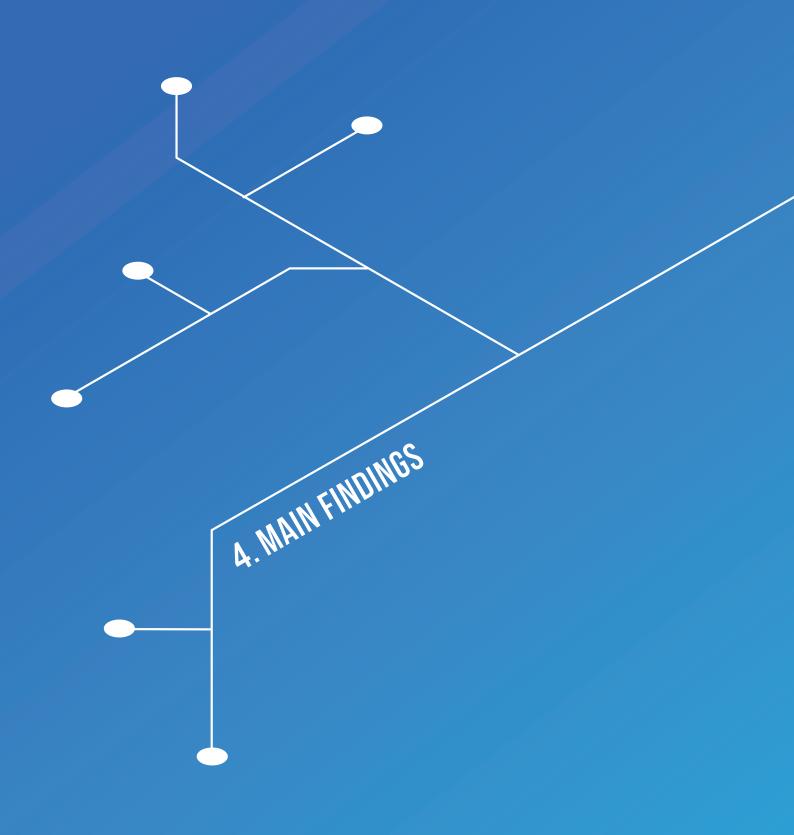
"We have categorized certain types of property, which today is, for example, on the balance sheet of the central government, specifically the Ministry of Economy, and we are starting to transfer these properties slowly. In other words, we will allocate certain types of property, which we agree to negotiate with the Ministry of Economy, and they are ready to express their willingness to transfer... Which often complicates matters today ..." **Central Government Representative, Tbilisi** 

Along with the effective facilitation of the delegation process, the representatives of the non-governmental organizations emphasized the need to adhere to the principle of **consistency** in the process. As noted, the political elite viewed decentralization as a threat and therefore delayed the process. Even today, the political factor plays a serious role in decision-making at the local level and representatives of local governments with a low degree of independence are often the subject of political manipulation. In this regard, the approval of the decentralization strategy is uniquely positively assessed by key informants. Moreover, it was noted that any representative of civil society or an academic circle had the opportunity to participate in the discussions. However, following the approval of the strategy, maintaining consistency in the decentralization process was highlighted as critical that should not be affected by the changes in the political elite, and its implementation should be ensured.

"The process of developing the decentralization strategy was very important. I can hardly remember an interested party from civic and academic circles, who wanted and wasn't given an opportunity to participate." **Expert/Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Tbilisi** 

"There is simply no place for politics in self-government. Unfortunately, our public or political actors consider it as a political tool ... For example, local issues, including voters' lists are specified by the SSSG [State Security Service of Georgia] ... It is important for everyone to sign the agreement, so-called "white paper", so that the process will continue regardless of who comes to power and how in 2020 ..." **Expert/Representative of a Non-Governmental Organization, Tbilisi** 

Consequently, key informants identified two determinants for the effectiveness of the decentralization process: on one hand, the well-managed delegation of powers, and consistency of the implementation process on the other.



### **4. MAIN FINDINGS**

The following chapter presents the main indicators of access to and satisfaction with the services identified by the study. It should be noted that the increase in access to services does not necessarily mean an increase in satisfaction with the same services, and conversely, a decrease in access to services does not necessarily mean a decrease in satisfaction with the same services, which is confirmed by many research results. Based on the results of the qualitative research, we can conclude that the expectations for the services that citizens have had access to for years are higher. While increasing access was the determinant in the previous rounds, other factors influenced the assessment at a later stage, such as service quality, delivery efficiency, qualification of relevant specialists, etc. These are important factors to consider when evaluating each area.

#### Education

Public kindergartens are accessible to 81% of respondents. The highest access rate to kindergartens is in Kakheti (93%), and the lowest is in Samtskhe-Javakheti (58%). In highland settlements, six out of ten respondents have access to public kindergartens (60%), and in rural areas, this indicator is about eight out of ten respondents (78%). Satisfaction with public kindergartens is the lowest with the simplicity of registration procedures (69%), while satisfaction with all other parameters is expressed by about eight out of ten respondents. The challenges of registration were also discussed in the focus group discussions, although the satisfaction rate with this parameter has increased when compared to the previous round (2017 - 63%). The high quality of food in public kindergartens and satisfaction with this parameter were emphasized. General satisfaction with public kindergartens, as well as trust in them is high (satisfaction - 86%, trust - 89%). The lowest level of satisfaction with public kindergartens was observed in Tbilisi (81%) and the highest in Guria (96%). It should be noted that when compared to the second (2015) and third (2017) rounds, especially in some regions (Tbilisi, Imereti, Guria, Samtskhe-Javakheti), there is a decrease in the access to transport (66%, 59% and 54%, respectively). Participants in focus group discussions pointed to the lack of targeted transport for kindergartens, which is evident in comparison to the presence of public school buses. At the same time, the rate of this indicator has increased in a number of regions (Adjara, Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli). Consequently, the degree of general satisfaction with kindergartens has not reduced greatly (2015 - 89%, 2019 - 86%).

Access to **public schools** is high (93%) and for the most part, they are directly available in the settlement/ district (83%). Public transport is accessible for 53% of schools, and according to most respondents, the public transport schedule coincides with the school schedule (80%). It is noteworthy that the focus group discussions revealed satisfaction with public transport for schoolchildren. The problem of access to public transport to get to school is most apparent in Guria (27%) and Kakheti (29%), where about three out of ten respondents say that public transport is not available to the public school. When compared to previous rounds, the rate of access to public transport has decreased in Tbilisi as well (2013 - 88%, 2015 - 97%, 2017 - 77%, 2019 - 50%), but the number of respondents who believe that transport is not needed to get to school is increasing (2017 - 15%, 2019 - 38%). The highest rate of access was observed in Adjara (87%). Satisfaction with the school Supervisory Board (66%) is the lowest, while about eight out of ten respondents express satisfaction according to all other parameters. Both public satisfaction (84%) and trust (87%) are high. It should also be noted that in the previous round (2017), these indicators were 88% and 94%, respectively. The focus of the discussions was on the large number of children in classrooms, as well as a small number of classrooms, which is especially relevant in public schools for urban settlements. Accordingly, Tbilisi (71%) is the least satisfied, Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (95%) and Guria (95%) are the most satisfied with the public schools.

Among all respondents, 36% have access to **vocational educational institutions.** Satisfaction with this type of education (2015 - 37%, 2019 - 40%) has increased compared to the previous round of the study (2017 - 67%, 2019 - 85%). Tourism, the medical field, construction and agriculture have all been identified among the highest priority vocational areas to be mastered by residents of the settlement/city as believed by the respondents. In the field of agriculture, most respondents prioritize cattle breeding (30%) among the professions to be mastered. Horticulture is the most demanded direction for mastery at the vocational educational institutions in Guria (42%) and Shida Kartli (44%), as well as viticulture/ winemaking in Kakheti (63%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (57%). At the same time, across the country, the demand for administrative professions such as a secretaries and administrative assistants is declining (2013 - 20%, 2015 - 21%, 2017 - 17%, 2019 - 7%).

A state-funded **higher education institution** is accessible to 39% of respondents in the municipalities/ regions, and this educational institution has a high level of trust (82%) and satisfaction (72%). Compared to other educational institutions (average score - 3.9), there is a low level of satisfaction with state-funded higher education institutions (average score - 3.7).

#### **Various Social Services**

The two most common **social services** are age pension (46%) and state health insurance (30%). Respondents receive these services on time and the registration procedures required to receive them are perceived as simple.

The majority of respondents are not informed about **free municipal canteens** (63%), while 17% of respondents indicate access to them in their settlement/district (2013 - 10%, 2015 - 14%, 2017 - 14%). While only 7% of respondents indeed indicate access to free municipal canteens in highland settlements, this indicator was not observed at all in the previous rounds of the survey. Access to free municipal canteen services in Tbilisi has doubled (2017 - 17%, 2019 - 34%). A positive dynamic is also observed in the case of Samtskhe-Javakheti, where in previous rounds no one indicated access to free municipal canteens in the settlement/district, but in 2019 16% of respondents indicated that they had access. When compared to the previous round of the research, the negative assessment of food portions in free municipal canteens has increased (2017 - 15%, 2019 - 24%). However, the dynamics are positive in terms of positive feedback on food quality (2017 - 68%, 2019 - 84%).

Compared to the previous round of the research, the rate of a positive evaluation of **shelters for the elderly** has decreased (2013 - 71%, 2015 - 68%, 2017 - 76%, 2019 0 62%).

Among the problems discussed during focus group discussions was the scarcity of information (or example, access to municipal social services for ethnic minorities, due to a language barrier).

In the list of social services, as in previous rounds, the most problematic is the promotion of employment by the state (2013 - 31%, 2015 - 34%, 2017 - 40%, 2019 - 38%).

#### Healthcare

**Universal insurance services** are used by 73% of respondents. Of these, the highest number of service users is in Mtskheta-Mtianeti (81%) and the lowest is in Samtskhe-Javakheti (66%). More female respondents (78%) than male respondents (68%) enjoy universal insurance. In the last year, half of the respondents with universal insurance have used it (53%), mostly in Tbilisi (56%). The majority of respondents who have used universal insurance are satisfied (88%) with the service and trust it (68%).

Among respondents, 41% have applied to **hospitals** and 35% to clinics over the past year due to illness. Most of them are satisfied with the services received in hospitals (84%) as well as in clinics (85%). The confidence rate in the hospital is 63%, and in the case of clinics, this indicator is 71%.

Half of the respondents have used the **emergency medical service within** the last year. Most of them received the service on time (86%) and are satisfied with the service they received (90%). Satisfaction with this service was also high in previous rounds (2013 - 91%, 2015 - 90%, 2017 - 93). The lowest level of satisfaction with emergency medical service is in Tbilisi (86%), which can be explained by a lack of promptness, as the lowest share of respondents in Tbilisi noted that the emergency medical service arrived on time (76%). The dynamic is positive in highland and rural settlements. Among those who have used the emergency services, 93% in highland settlements and 94% in the villages say that the emergency medical service arrived on time. There is also a high rate of trust in emergency medical services (83%). Nevertheless, the shortcomings identified by the focus group discussions are significant and are related to the challenges associated with prompt service delivery. It is noteworthy that as in the previous round of research, in this round, participants in the focus group discussion mentioned the centralized management of emergency medical services as a challenge in the regions. In particular, the identification of addresses in the regions by 112 operators requires additional time, which is a serious problem for this type of service. The situation in villages is also complicated by problems with addresses.

### A large part of the respondents is informed about the state **program of preventive vaccination (77%)** and the preventive vaccination of domestic animals/cattle (68%).

In general, every second respondent is satisfied with the healthcare system, yet this indicator has declined when compared to the previous round of research (2017 - 62%, 2019 - 49%). Dissatisfaction is caused by two main reasons - service fees (54%) and the level of professionalism of doctors (48%). It is notable that for this reason, the dissatisfaction rate has significantly increased when compared to the previous rounds of the survey (2013 -27%, 2015 - 33%, 2017 - 28%, 2019 - 48%). The low qualifications of doctors have been identified as a serious problem during focus group discussions, especially in the regions. Along with low qualifications, participants in the qualitative research point to dishonesty. According to them, in the presence of a universal insurance system, even in the case of less complex medical indications, doctors engage in serious medical manipulation. At the same time, the unfair cooperation of doctors with pharmaceutical companies and specific pharmacies was identified as a problem. All of this, according to the participants of the focus group discussion, leads to the improper use of the state budget and distrust in the healthcare system.

#### **Recreation, Leisure and Culture**

According to all types of settlements, the most accessible recreational area is the playground. It is considered to be the highest priority recreational facility in both urban (42%) and rural (48%) settlements. In the villages, the library (33%) and the Culture Houses/Village Clubs (27%) are also named as priority recreational facilities. In cities, along with playgrounds, public parks (35%), libraries (32%) and squares (32%) are named among the priority facilities.

#### **Utility Infrastructure**

**The central water supply** is accessible to 75% of respondents, and this indicator is steadily rising (2013 - 68%, 2015 - 69%, 2017 - 72%). In rural and highland settlements, the central water supply is accessible to half of the respondents (52% - 52%). Among the regions, except for Tbilisi, where the central water

supply is accessible to all (100%), service accessibility is also high in Samtskhe-Javakheti (84%), Kvemo Kartli (83%) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (81%). The lowest number of respondents have access to a central water supply in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (43%). Satisfaction with the service is 75%, and 87% of those who have access to this service use the water supplied by the central water supply for drinking. Qualitative research has traditionally identified water supply problems in Kutaisi, where the main challenge is the lack of 24-hour water supply for all districts of the city. In Rustavi, participants of the focus group discussions noted the volatile water supply schedule and the low quality of water.

**The central sewage system** is accessible to only half of the population (53%), while in rural settlements almost no one has access to it (6%). Among the regions, service accessibility is the lowest in Guria (10%).

**Electricity services** are accessible to almost everyone in all types of settlements (2013-94%, 2015-94%, 2017-98%, 2019-95%) and service satisfaction is high everywhere (2013-92%, 2015-92%, 2017-97%. 2019 - 95%).

There is a high access to the gas **supply** service (86%) and high satisfaction with it (93%). Four out of ten (37%) respondents have access to gas supply in highland settlements, and seven out of ten (74%) in rural areas. A positive dynamic is noteworthy in the case of rural settlements, where in 2017, 59% of respondents recorded access to the central gas supply. The increase in access to the gas supply in villages is most likely directly related to the current state gasification programs. Except for Tbilisi, absolutely all respondents have access to the central gas supply-- in Kakheti (100%) and almost everyone in Imereti (94%) and Shida Kartli (91%). The lowest amount of access to the central gas supply is in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (36%).

Access to **waste collection** services shows a positive trend. In 2013, the service was accessible to 59% of respondents, while in 2017 to 79% and in 2019 to 90%. The dynamic is positive in highlands (2017 - 38%, 2019 - 84%) and rural settlements (2017 - 54%, 2019 - 83%), where eight in ten respondents already have access to the service. The dynamic is also positive in terms of regions, where access to waste collection services has increased in all regions except for Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, where access to services has not changed (2017 - 72%, 2019 - 75%). In addition, except for Tbilisi, this service is fully or almost fully accessible in Kakheti (100%), Samtskhe-Javakheti (96%) and Shida Kartli (96%). The dynamic of growth is especially positive in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (2017 - 37%, 2019 - 82%). Presumably, this positive trend is related to activities carried out by the municipalities in the field of solid waste management in recent years. Within the framework of the qualitative research, the focus was on both Guria and Imereti, where the development of a waste separation program was noted.

A street cleaning service is only accessible to half of the respondents (53%), but the rate is steadily improving (2013 -40%, 2015 - 47%, 2017 - 52%). At the same time, access to services is still low, both in rural areas (15%) and in highland settlements (26%). In spite of low access, the trend is uniquely positive for highland settlements, as there was no access to service in these types of settlements in previous rounds of research. Among the regions, except for Tbilisi, where access to street cleaning services is 93%, the highest access is in Kvemo Kartli (48%) and Adjara (45%), and the lowest is in Guria (16%). Satisfaction with street cleaning in the country is high (90%).

#### **Road Infrastructure**

The dynamics of road infrastructure assessment are mostly positive. Compared to the previous round of research, positive assessment of both internal roads and roads to access districts/settlement have

increased (local roads: 2017 - 57%, 2019 - 64%; access to settlement roads: 2017 - 77%, 2019 - 84%). The condition of the nearest highway (88%) was also positively assessed. Positive assessments of different types of roads have increased in both highland and rural settlements. The lowest evaluation of internal roads is given in Adjara (78%), Kakheti (51%) and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (51%). Concerning the previous rounds, the positive assessment of access roads to the settlement has increased even more (2013 -72%, 2015 - 80%, 2017 - 77%, 2019 - 84%) in all regions. As for the nearest highways, in 2019 when compared to 2017, there was a decrease in Imereti (96% - 86%), Adjara (85% - 74%), Samtskhe-Javakheti (69% - 62%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti. (91% - 85%). Guria region is noteworthy, where a significant increase in the positive assessment of the highway is observed (2017 - 54%, 2019 - 84%).

The dynamic is negative in terms of both the frequency of public transport traffic and the assessment of transportation prices. Compared to 2017, in 2019 respondents evaluated the frequency of public transport traffic (81% - 71%) and the affordability of transport prices (81% - 72%) less positively. The trend is similar for different types of settlements. The fact that the problem of public transport is one of the most serious challenges for municipalities is confirmed by all of the focus group discussions. The challenge is both the public transport schedule and the safety associated with old vehicles. Moreover, the lack of municipal transport is a challenge, which is especially relevant for rural and highland settlements, with a particular focus on Guria, Kvemo Kartli, and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti.

The positive assessment of traffic signs has increased (2017 - 58%, 2019 - 64%), while the assessment of traffic lights has decreased (2017 - 46%, 2019 - 39%). However, traffic lights are still not present in 47% of the studied settlements/districts. The positive assessment of street/settlement lighting has not significantly increased but is still high (2017 - 76%, 2019 - 79%). Half of the respondents positively assess the numbering of houses (48%), while 36% report no numbering in the settlement/district. The number of positive assessments of these parameters and/or lack of reference has reduced in different types of settlements. The lowest share of respondents positively evaluates the numbering of houses in all types of settlements which according to the qualitative research creates special problems with a need to receive emergency and/or other types of special assistance.

Respondents consider a solution for three main problems with the internal roads of the municipality to be of significant importance: the quality of roads (57%), speed bumps (43%) and pedestrian crossings (38%). In highland and rural settlements, firstly, the quality of internal roads and secondly, the issue of street lighting is considered as the problems to be solved. Despite these shortcomings, during the focus group discussions, activities related to road infrastructure in all regions were highlighted by the participants as the most important projects implemented in their municipalities.

The three main problems with public transport that need to be solved in municipalities are the transport traffic schedule (47%), the malfunctioning of vehicles (45%) and travel time (44%). These challenges were highlighted during the focus group discussions in all regions. It was also stressed that in addition to creating discomfort for ordinary citizens, unregulated public transport could be a serious barrier to the development of tourism in the region. A positive trend in this direction can be noted in Kutaisi and Zugdidi, where the representatives of the city municipalities, along with the purchase of new vehicles, point to the implementation of specific steps to improve the infrastructure of auto parks.

#### Various Services

Among all respondents, 58% are satisfied with **urban planning** and 69% are satisfied with **beautifica-tion**. Compared to the previous round, these factors have not changed. Satisfaction with construction regulation is the lowest among these three rated services (47%) and has decreased when compared to 2017 (55%).

**Tourism** is important for the economic development of municipalities, according to the majority of respondents (78%). If 85% of the respondents in cities think so, 69% of the respondents see the importance of tourism in villages. The perception of tourism as an important factor for economic development is high in highland settlements (85%). This rate is also high in Tbilisi (91%) and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti (92%). Respondents in Kvemo Kartli (46%) assess tourism as the least important for economic development. In Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Guria, this indicator is 76% and 77%, respectively. Half of the respondents say that tourism is developed in their municipalities (47%) and according to them, many tourists visit their settlements (84%). Here, according to the majority, the local infrastructure is not prepared to receive the existing flows of tourists (66%). An interesting dynamic of tourism development is observed in highland settlements, whereas compared to 2017, more respondents believe that tourism is developed/relevant in their municipalities (2017 - 26%, 2019 - 50%).

**Agriculture** is a priority for the municipality for the majority of the rural population (84%). According to 25% of respondents, the government promotes agricultural development, and this indicator is lower than in previous rounds (2013 - 81%, 2015 - 57%, 2017 - 44%). Agriculture plays an important role in the economic development of the municipalities according to the majority of respondents (80%). This opinion is shared by 90% of respondents in rural areas and 89% in highland settlements. Among the regions, most respondents in Guria (94%) and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (95%) believe that agriculture is important for the economic development of their municipalities, and least of all in Kvemo Kartli (76%).

**Free legal assistance** is accessible for a quarter of respondents (25%), and access to the service in villages is low (12%). Access to free legal assistance is also low in highland settlements, but compared to the previous round of research, there is a uniquely positive dynamic (2017 - 10%, 2019 - 29%). More women (45%) do not know about this service than men (34%). The practice of using the service is recorded by 14% of the respondents themselves or by their family members, which is twice as much as in 2017.

In terms of the use of various **public services**, research has shown a tendency toward change. Nearly half of the population did not use any public services in 2019 (48%) and this indicator has decreased when compared to 2017 (64%). Like other rounds of the survey, respondents mostly obtained/renewed their ID cards (27%) and received notary services (18%). The third most frequently used service is property registration, the rate of which has doubled when compared to the previous round (2017 - 7%, 2019 - 15%). The vast majority of respondents who use public services are satisfied with the received services, both with the timely receipt of the necessary documents/data, as well as with the location of the relevant institutions. The service fee is also affordable for the majority.

**Security** in the settlements is observed by nearly seven out of ten respondents (69%). It should be noted that compared to other rounds of research, the perception of security has decreased (2013 - 88%, 2015 - 85%, 2017 - 76%) from year to year. Perceptions of security by type of settlement show a negative dynamic. The perception of security in all regions, when compared to the previous round, is characterized by a declining trend, except for in Tbilisi and Kvemo Kartli. The perception in Tbilisi has not changed (2017 - 54%, 2019 - 55%), and Kvemo Kartli has seen a slight increase (2017 - 74%, 2019 - 80%). The two most common problems in settlements are alcohol and drug abuse. It is noteworthy that the assessment of both of them as a common problem shows the dynamics of growth (alcohol consumption: 2017 - 29%, 2019 - 42%; drug abuse: 2017 - 13%, 2019 - 25%). The declining perception of security was also mentioned in the focus group discussions, where it was emphasized that the reduction in this feeling is related to the increase in light drug abuse and the less effective work of patrol police. In the latter case, discussion participants point to the need for the patrol police to increase the intensity of patrols, which, in their estimation, will increase the fear of punishment among drug users and increase protection among citizens. **Fire** and **rescue** services are accessible to the majority of the population (92% and 87%, respectively), although they have declined somewhat when compared to the 2015 study (95% and 92%, respectively). Most of those who have used these services are satisfied with them. Focus group discussions noted the issue of operational efficiency, which is due to the delayed response to calls made to 112 due to the existence of a unified, centralized system for emergency assistance and emergency management. According to the participants, the clarification of addresses by operators who are not familiar with local context and addresses delays the process, which is a problem both in the case of fire and rescue, as well as in the case of emergency services.

Four out of ten respondents are aware of the **state e-services** (38%) and in this respect, the reality has not changed compared to the previous round (2017 - 39%). If half of the respondents in the city have heard about these services (48%), the awareness of state e-services in the village is twice as low (24%). The awareness of state e-services has not increased significantly, but when compared to the previous round of the study, the frequency of the use of services has increased (2017 - 18%, 2019 - 27%). A growth trend is especially noticeable in highland (2017 - 9%, 2019 - 25%) and rural (2017 - 6%, 2019 - 20%) settlements. There was no difference in terms of the use of services among women/men (women - 26%, men - 27%), but the practice of use, when compared to the previous round of the study, is much higher among male respondents (2017 - 15%, 2019 - 27%) than among female respondents (2017 - 20%, 2019 - 26%). Over the past year, respondents most frequently used the websites of the following agencies: House of Justice (psh.gov.ge - 47%), Revenue Service (rs.ge - 40%), Public Registry (Napr.gov.ge - 28%) and Portal My.gov.ge (20%). The increase in the rate of use of state electronic services can be explained by the increase in the number of services available remotely. At this stage, citizens can use 50 state or municipal electronic services.

The overall rate of awareness of **municipal e-services** is 40%. Service awareness in cities is higher (50%) than in villages (25%) as well as in highland settlements (26%) where roughly one-quarter of respondents are informed about municipal e-services. Among all respondents, 14% have used municipal electronic services, and most respondents indicated that they have used the websites of the Municipality City Hall and the City Council. The qualitative study noted a positive trend in terms of the introduction of electronic services by municipalities, although a challenge was still identified based on the low acceptance of e-services.

In terms of **environmental issues**, respondents in urban settlements point to air (63%) as well as land (47%) and natural water reservoir (44%) pollution more than in rural or highland settlements. The highest rates of air pollution, as well as land and natural reservoir pollution, were recorded in Tbilisi, while the lowest rates were recorded in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti. An evaluation of these indicators does not show a substantial change across all rounds of the study. While only three out of ten respondents indicated that the state took action to clean up a polluted environment, there is still a positive trend in this direction (2017 - 16%, 2019 - 28%). The most frequently named measure taken by the state to clean up a polluted environment is timely/efficient environmental cleaning (50%), which is also higher than in the previous round (2017 - 37%).

The awareness of **women's rooms** is low and only 8% of respondents have heard about this municipal service. No difference has been observed in awareness of women's rooms among male and female respondents.

#### **General Assessment of Local Self- Government Services**

When assessing **local self-government services**, like in the previous rounds of the survey, seven out of ten respondents who rated the local self-government were satisfied (67%) and expressed trust in

it (70%). In highland settlements, satisfaction with local self-government (80%) as well as trust (83%) is higher than in other types of settlements (satisfaction - 66%, trust - 69%). Also, in villages, there is higher satisfaction with local self-government (72%) and trust (75%) than in cities (satisfaction - 64%, trust - 66%). As in previous rounds of the survey, the lowest number of respondents expressed satisfaction with local self-government and trust among the regions in Tbilisi, but in the capital, there is the highest growth trend in both satisfaction (2017 - 53%, 2019 - 61%) and trust (2017 - 54%, 209 - 64%). The dynamic in terms of satisfaction is negative in Imereti, where the tendency of decreasing of the rate of local self-government satisfaction is most noticeable (2017 - 77%, 2019 - 65%). The rate of trust has decreased insignificantly, but mostly in Kvemo Kartli, when compared to the previous round of the study (2017 - 71%, 2019 - 66%).

Half of the respondents believe that the decision-making process at the local level meets the needs of citizens (49%), while 20% think that it does not meet at all and 16% found it difficult to assess. The majority of respondents consider that when making decisions, the local population needs should be considered by the local self-government (56). Respondents also consider it important to allocate more of the budget to solve municipal problems (46%) and to organize more frequent meetings with the population (44%).

The qualitative research has revealed the need for local governments to use research as a mechanism for identifying the real needs of the population which is not currently used due to limited resources. Instead of research, local self-governments are guided by an analysis of the various issues referred to the municipalities and the problems raised at the meetings between local self-governments and the population.

In order to solve various problems, two out of ten respondents in all rounds of the survey (2013 - 20%, 2015 - 18%, 2017 - 16%, 2019 - 22%) have appealed to local self-government bodies at least once, and in all rounds, half of them state that their problem was solved (2013 - 55%, 2015 - 53%, 2017 - 57%, 2019 - 48%). The highest number of respondents points to the simplicity of the procedures for applying to local self-government bodies in 2019 (2013 - 71%, 2015 - 72%, 2017 - 77%, 2019 - 79%). It should be noted that the share of ethnic minority groups claiming that the procedure for applying to local self-government with a request/problem is simple has increased (2017 - 62%, 2019 - 78%).

Although only 8% of respondents said they did not know what are the local self-government functions, it was the low awareness of these functions that were identified as one of the serious challenges in the qualitative research. According to the main informants, due to the fact that citizens are less informed about these functions, there is a high number of referrals to local self-government with irrelevant issues, the rejection of which often affects the dissatisfaction with local self-government.

As part of the qualitative research, the lack of information about planned or implemented projects in the municipalities and settlements has been identified as a challenge. According to the participants of the focus group discussions, public awareness of the work performed by the local self-government is insufficient, as the citizens are not even informed about the projects that have already been implemented and/or are planned.

According to the results of the qualitative research, among the reasons for the less efficient work of local self-governments, the low qualification of the staff employed in the local self-government bodies of municipalities and the low degree of independence of local self-governments are especially noteworthy. It is worth mentioning that according to the main informants, due to the low degree of independence, local government officials often do not try to improve their skills.

Half of the respondents (53%) consider the relationship of the municipality representatives with the population to be effective. According to 45% of evaluations, the provision of municipal services to the population has improved over the last two years. Every second respondent points to the improvement of municipal services in highland and rural settlements (highland - 53%, villages - 49%).

#### **Citizen Participation in the Implementation of Local Self-Government**

Only a quarter of respondents have heard about the forms and mechanisms of citizen participation in local self-governance (25%), and two out of ten respondents have engaged in some type of activity in the last year (20%). This indicator is indeed low, but it shows an increasing trend when compared to the previous round of research (2017 - 10%, 2019 - 20%). The three main reasons for not trying to participate in the local self-government are not having enough time (26%), the belief that activity will make no difference (20%), and that respondents have not thought about such issues (18%). Of those who used at least one form of civic activism to participate in local self-government, the largest share of respondents participated in the general meeting of the settlement/neighborhood problem solving (2017 - 7%, 2019 - 10%). It is this form that most respondents (12%) have heard of. Among the respondents who have carried out any type of civic activity in the last one year were concerned with the issues of beautification (25%) and water supply (18%).

The use of any form of civic participation has increased in both the young (18-29 year: 2017 - 9%, 2019 - 23%) and older (30+ years: 2017 - 10%, 2019 - 19%) respondents. There is a growing trend in both female (8% and 18%) as well as male (12% and 22%) respondents. In terms of citizen involvement, a growth dynamic is observed in both ethnic Georgians (10% and 20%) and ethnic minorities (10% and 15%).

Only 7% of respondents think that citizens are fully involved in the decision-making process at the local level, while 21% think that citizens are not involved at all. Only 10% of respondents believe that decisions made at the local self-government level fully meet the needs of citizens, while 17% think that does not meet at all.

The low involvement of citizens in the process of local self-government implementation has been identified as a challenge by participants of the focus group discussion, as well as by key informants. One of the reasons for this was the low awareness of the citizens about the opportunities for engagement, and the second reason was the cultural factor and the importance of achieving the desired social status in exchange for avoiding being called "intriguer". Among the reasons provided, citizens' lack of understanding of their responsibilities and nihilism were also highlighted. The involvement of citizens is a challenge that is mainly related to the problems associated with receiving information. Accordingly, raising awareness of citizens on the one hand, and improving the mechanisms of providing information on the other hand, have been identified as important steps to take in order to increase citizen participation.

#### Local Economic Strengthening Opportunities – General Assessment

Three out of ten respondents have heard (30%) about local business/entrepreneurial activities/projects. Nevertheless, qualitative research has identified serious challenges in terms of awareness of local economic development opportunities, the role of citizens and their rights in this process. Focus group discussion participants find it difficult to explain what these rights or the role of citizens are, except in rare cases where the participant in the discussion or their family members had relevant experience. At the same time, participants themselves pointed out problems in terms of receiving information. It is clear from the discussions that it is necessary to plan the effective communication strategy, which should ensure the awareness of the citizens not only toward the possibilities of local economic development, but also about citizen engagement mechanisms. As part of the communication campaign, it is also important to inform citizens about successful projects in order to contrast nihilistic attitudes and convince citizens that their well-planned/implemented activities can make a difference.

Increasing the independence of local self-governments in the framework of the decentralization process is seen as a key to their enhancement by key informants participating in the qualitative research. This should ensure that municipalities are motivated to generate economic interest locally and motivate businesses to cooperate with local governments. Developing training modules for representatives of the local self-governments is already initiated aiming at enhancing their capacity to consider and incorporate local economic development aspects in their planning.

It is noteworthy that at this stage, 13% of the participants of the survey have heard about decentralization and local self-government reform. As for the qualitative research, the approval of a decentralization strategy is assessed as an important event by key informants. To increase the effectiveness of the decentralization process, it is considered necessary to work in several directions. One is to establish a legislative framework and harmonize local self-government law with sectoral law. The second is to effectively delegate competencies to local governments, which, according to one argument, implies a gradual transfer of power, while another argues for an instant transfer. Third, adherence to the principle of consistency, which despite the change in the political elite, implies to the recognition and use of the decentralization strategy as a working document.

Based on the analysis of the results of the fourth round of research, two main conclusions can be drawn:

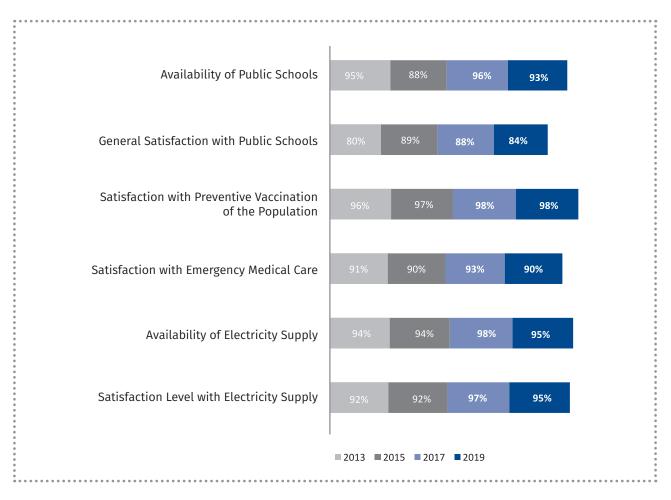
- Data from all rounds of the study show a difference in the population's satisfaction with public services between urban and rural settlements. In cities where the quality of public service delivery is higher, the public sets higher standards for the government. In rural areas, not only the improved service quality, but efforts to address the issue increases the satisfaction of the population. After a period of the complete absence of certain services, respondents positively assess even a small improvement in the situation.
- In the fourth round of the study, a distinction was made between settlements in highland regions and other rural areas. The adoption of the Law on "the Development of High Mountainous Regions" in 2015 and the launch of a number of programs by the Government of Georgia in highland settlements have created additional incentives for development, which, compared to other rural areas, has led to increased service delivery and, consequently, increased public satisfaction.

### 4.1. Changes in Public Attitudes

Similar to the previous rounds, changes in the attitudes of citizens towards specific services were observed during the fourth round of the research. Based on the trends of change in these attitudes, in the current sub-chapter services are divided into nine different groups:

 Services that had high access and a high level of satisfaction and maintained a high rate over the years

The findings of the study indicate that there are services for which access and satisfaction levels were high in the very first round of the research and remained high. At least eight out of ten respondents recorded having access to the services provided in this group, as well as satisfaction with these services:



*Figure # 78.* The services that had high access and a high satisfaction rate and maintained a high rate over the years

#### Services that illustrate positive change even with an already positive assessment

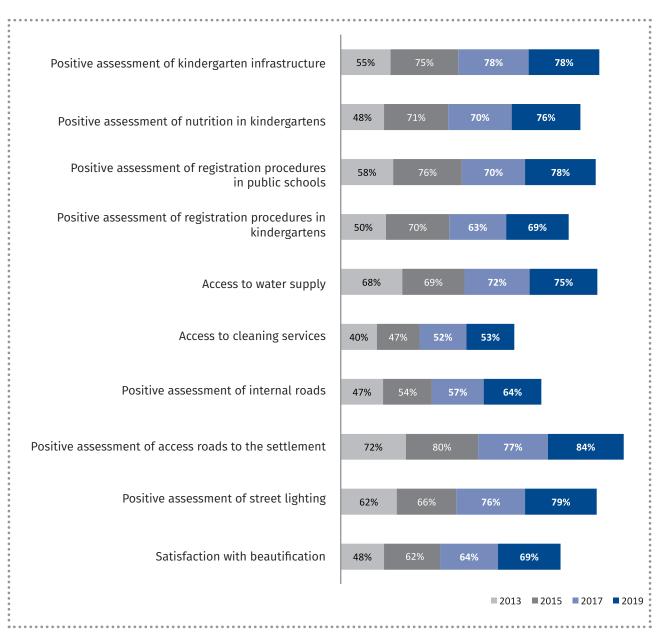
This group presents the services that were positively assessed in the first round of the survey, in the following rounds the access or satisfaction indicators showed further improvement and received a positive evaluation from at least eight out of ten respondents:



### *Figure # 79.* Services in which the gradual improvement of an already positive situation is observed

#### Services where surveys have shown a relatively problematic picture in previous rounds and recent data indicate an improvement in the situation

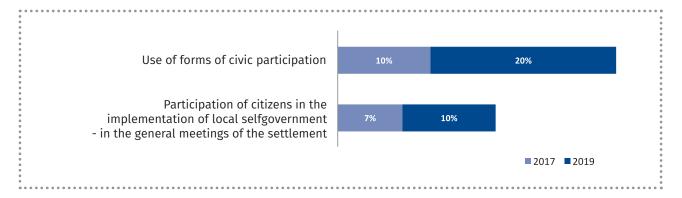
This group presents services or areas that show relatively negative assessments in the first round of the study and a positive dynamic in subsequent rounds. Compared to the first round of research, the change in the assessment of these services (access, satisfaction, positive evaluation) shows an increase of 10 or more percentage points:



*Figure # 80.* Services where surveys have shown a relatively problematic picture in previous rounds and recent data show an improvement in the situation

#### Areas where the situation was perceived as problematic, but positive shifts were observed

This group presents the positive dynamics identified in terms of civic activism. It is true that in terms of the use of different forms of civic participation, the rate can still be assessed as low, but when compared to the previous round, the reality shows a significant improvement:

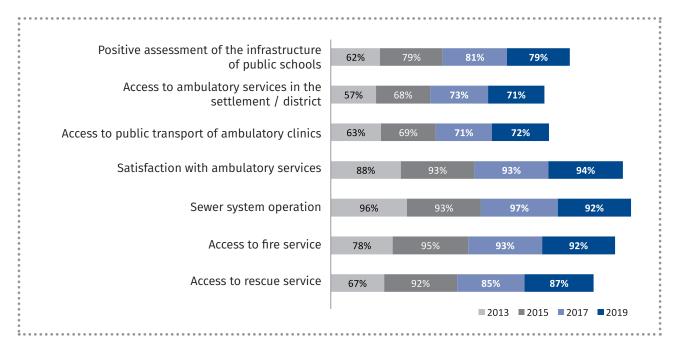


#### Figure # 81. Areas where the situation was perceived as problematic, but positive shifts were observed

## Areas in which evaluations were positive in the previous rounds and no major difference are observed over time

This group presents services with high access rate or a positive evaluation, as at least eight out of ten respondents state such a position, and no significant changes have been observed over time:

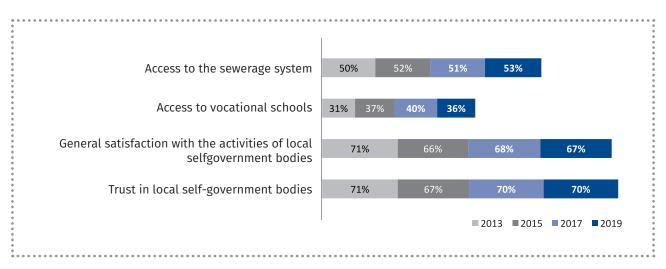
*Figure # 82.* Areas in which the evaluations were positive in the previous rounds and no major changes were observed in later rounds



## Areas in which the situation was satisfactory and no significant changes are observed in later rounds

This group presents services with satisfactory access and assessment rates, as positive responses were given by at least four out of ten respondents, and at most seven out of ten respondents:

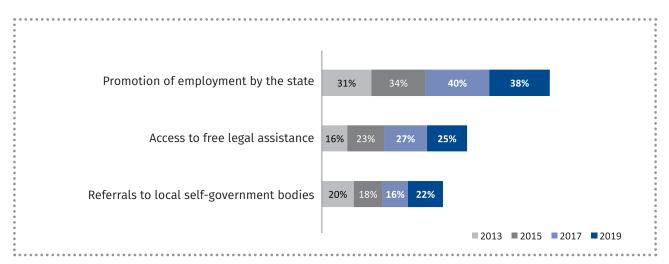
*Figure # 83.* Areas in which the situation was satisfactory and no significant changes were observed in later rounds



## Areas in which the situation is more negative, although there is no significant change between rounds

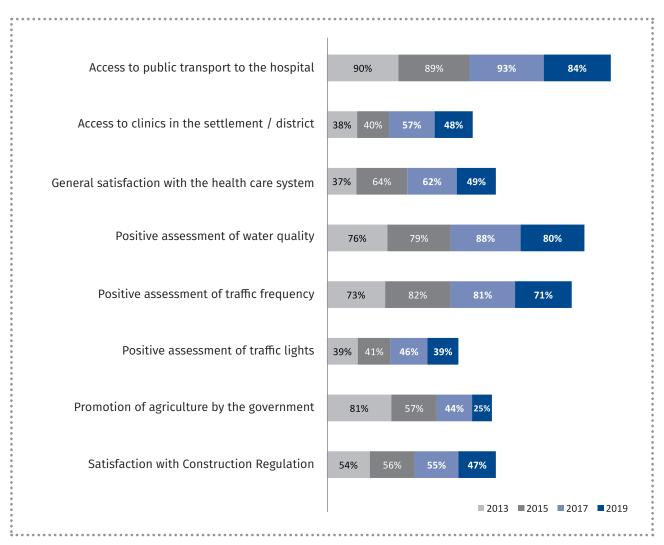
Services in this group are assessed more negatively, with a maximum of four out of ten respondents reporting having access or using it. At the same time, these are services for which the attitudes of citizens throughout the rounds almost do not change:

*Figure # 84. Areas in which the situation is more negative, although there is no significant change between rounds* 



# In the fourth round, a group of services was identified, in which the rate decreased when compared to previous rounds (especially the previous round)

This group combines services, the evaluation of which with different parameters, shows a negative trend when compared to the previous round. Public transport is one of those services, and it manifests itself in many directions (for example, access to public schools or hospitals, frequency of traffic, etc). It should also be noted that the demand for services has been growing over the years, and therefore the positive evaluation of the service by the citizens depends on more and more factors or a higher quality of the existing factors:



*Figure # 85.* A group of services with a negative trend of positive assessment when compared to previous rounds

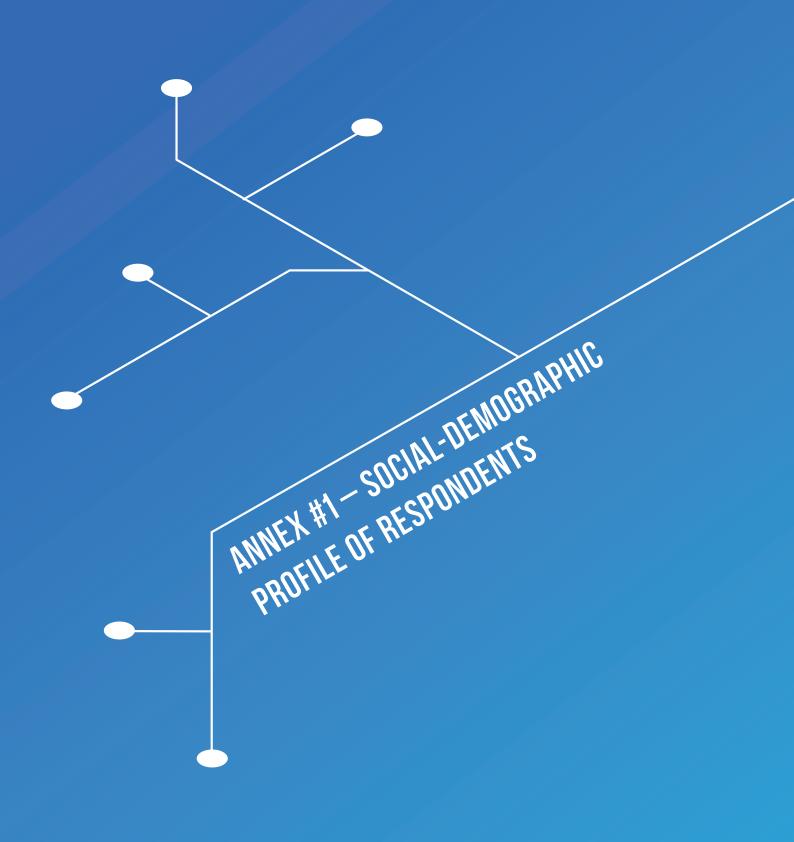
# Areas in which a negative trend in the assessment was observed in previous rounds and continued in the fourth round

Assessment of services presented in this group shows a negative dynamic and a decrease can be observed over the years:

*Figure # 86. Areas in which a negative trend in the assessment was observed in previous rounds and continued in the fourth round* 

Perception of security	88%	85%	76%	69%
Positive Assessment of programs supporting the integration of ethnic minorities	74%	70%	85%	78%
Level of being informed on state health programs	45% 49%	ä 39% <mark>31%</mark>		
			2013	■ 2015 ■ 20

The reasons for population satisfaction or dissatisfaction with individual services are different. The public attitude can be explained by the views expressed in the focus group discussions. The change in the attitudes of citizens directly depends on the increase or decrease in the quality of services and the emergence of new needs and requirements in the process of using existing services.



### **ANNEX #1 - SOCIAL-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

According to the results of the 2019 survey, 54% of respondents are women and 46% are men. Two out of ten respondents are aged 25-34 (19%), 45-54 (18%) and 65 and older (21%). Among respondents, 54% are married. The majority of respondents are ethnic Georgians (91%). Survey participants were also representatives of Armenian (3%), Azerbaijani (5%) and other Caucasian ethnic groups (1%).

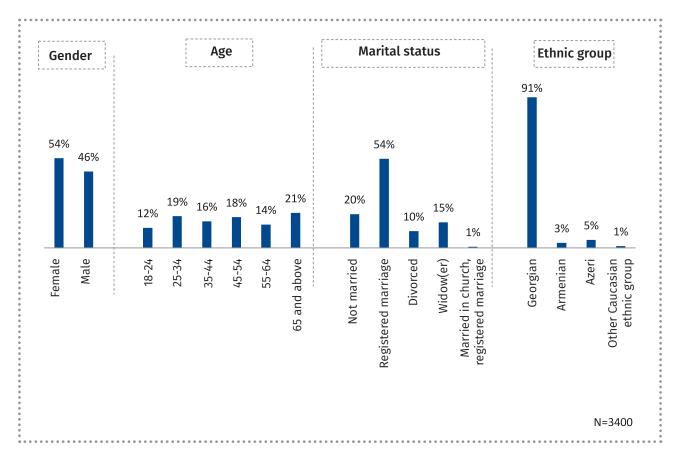
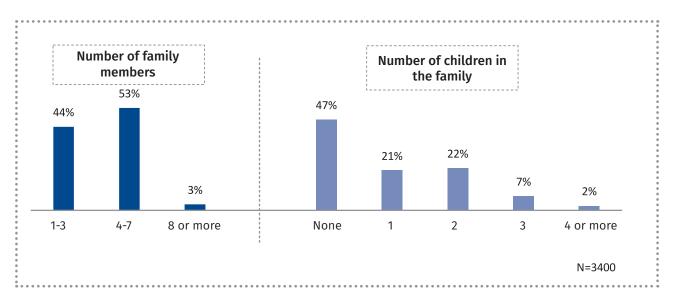


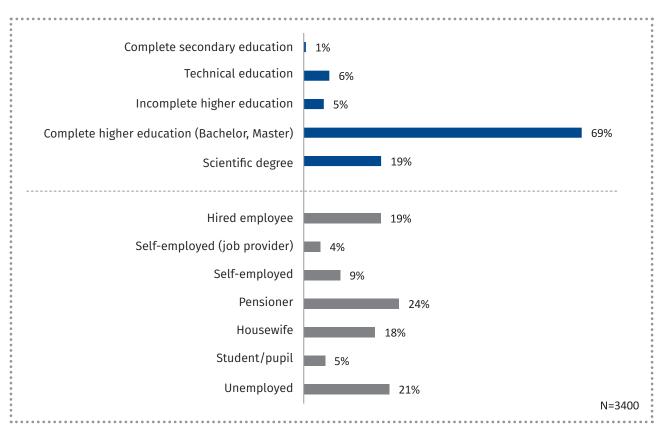
Figure # 87. Gender, Age, Marital Status and Nationality - 2019 data

According to the survey, the average number of family members of the respondents is 3. Among all respondents, 47% have no children in their family and only 9% say that the number of children in their family is 2 or more.



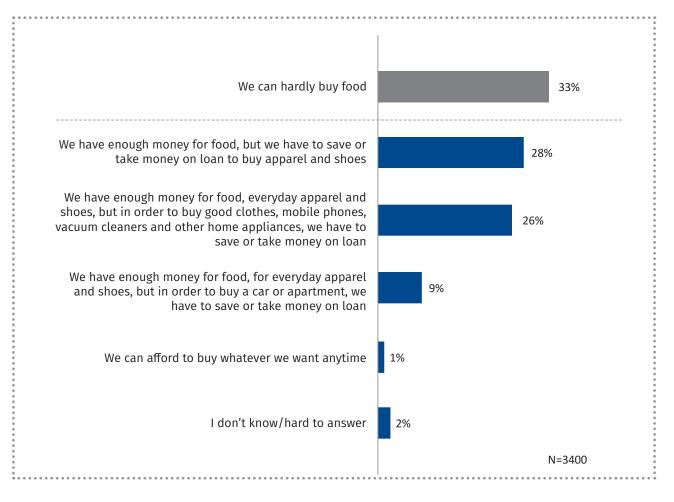


Seven out of ten respondents have completed higher education (69%) and 19% have a doctorate or a scientific degree. Nearly a quarter of respondents are pensioners (24%), one-fifth are unemployed (21%), and 19% are hired workers. Among all respondents, 13% are self-employed.



*Figure # 89. Education and Work Status - 2019 data* 

A third of respondents' families barely have money for food (33%), while 28% say they have enough money for food, but they have to save or borrow money to buy clothes and shoes and 26% say they have enough money for food, everyday clothes and shoes, but have to save or borrow money to buy good clothes or other items.



The income of one-fifth of the surveyed households is less than 500 GEL (22%). For a third of the surveyed families, the average monthly income ranges from 501 to 1000 GEL (31%), and for one-fifth income exceeds 1001 GEL (20%). It is notable that 27% of the respondents do not know and/or refuse to name the average monthly income of the family.

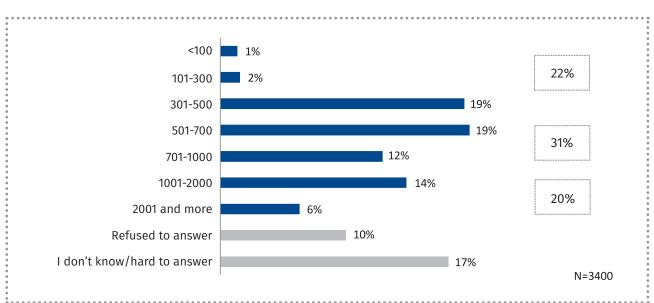


Figure # 91. Average Monthly Household Income (GEL) - 2019 data

