

SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF LGBTQ GROUP IN GEORGIA



Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia

Quantitative research Analysis

ადამიანის უფლებების სწავლებისა და მონიტორინგის ცენტრი

EMC

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center



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The views expressed in this study reflect the views of the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre and may not express the position of Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU).

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The Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre is a human rights organization that aims to promote the development of a free, equal, and cohesive society. For social transformation, the organization creates and supports solidarity platforms that bring together groups, activists, and organizations working on emancipatory policies.

The organization aims to identify social and political inequalities, structural causes of oppression, to critically analyse them, and change existing policies using human rights tools and activist methods.

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Terminology¹

Cisgender – the term cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity and gender self-expression correspond to the biological sex given to him or her at birth and the social expectations that apply to his or her gender.

Cross-dressing – the occasional wearing of clothing that is traditionally associated with people of the opposite sex. Crossdressers are often comfortable with their biological sex and may not want to change it. Crossdressing is a form of gender self-expression and does not have to be related to orientation or sexual behaviour.

Gay – synonymous with a homosexual. The term is often used only in relation to men and refers to a man who is emotionally and physically attracted to another man.

Gender (self-)expression – the external manifestation of gender, which is manifested mainly in “masculine” and “feminine” dress, appearance, manners, speech and other behaviours. Gender expression is not necessarily an indicator of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Gender Dysphoria – a diagnosis used by psychologists and psychiatrists to describe the stress that some individuals experience due to the difference between gender at birth and gender self-esteem.

Gender identity – a person’s gender self-perception when he or she attributes himself or herself to any gender. A person can identify himself or herself as a man or as a woman. In some cases, one’s gender self-perception may lie between the social constructs of masculinity and femininity, or go beyond them altogether. Gender identity may or may not be consistent with a person’s gender of birth. Since gender identity is an internal phenomenon, it is not visible to others. Gender identity is different from sexual orientation.

Gender nonconformity and gender variation – the expression of a person’s protest and resistance to established gender “norms” and “conformities”. Gender nonconformity can be manifested regardless of whether a person combines his or her gender identity with sex at birth.

Heterosexism – the belief that heterosexuality is superior (religiously, morally, socially, emotionally, etc.) to other sexual orientations, the presumption that all people are heterosexual, and the belief that all people ought to be heterosexual. As an institution-

¹ For reference, see the glossary of terms of ILGA Europe at: <http://old.ilgaeurope.org/home/publications/glossary>

alized system of oppression, heterosexism negatively affects LGBTQ people as well as some heterosexual individuals who do not conform to the traditional understanding of masculinity and femininity.

Heterosexuality – an emotional, romantic and sexual connection/feeling towards a person of the opposite sex and gender.

Homophobia/transphobia – irrational fear and hatred of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people based on prejudice, and similar to racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and sexism.

Lesbian – a woman who is emotionally and physically attracted to another woman.

LGBTQ – an acronym used to refer to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Men who have sex with men (MSM) – the term refers more to sexual behaviour than to identity. It is used to describe the behaviour of all men who have sex with men, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Sexual orientation – an individual's sustained physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction to another person. It includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual orientation.

Sex – a set of characteristics (anatomical, physiological, biochemical, genetic) that distinguishes the female and male organism.

Transgender/Trans – an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender identity, expression, and behaviour differ from the typical characteristics of their biological sex. The term also refers to transsexuals, travestis, transvestites, transgender people, cross-dressers, and people who do not conform to social expectations in terms of gender identity. Transgender people may have a heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual orientation.

Transgender man – a person who was born female, but identifies himself as a man. Transgender men are also called FtM (Female-to-Male).

Transgender woman – a person who was born male but identifies herself as a woman. A transgender woman is also called MtF (Male-to-Female).

Transsexual – a person whose gender identity differs from the sexual affiliation granted at birth. Often transgender people seek body correction through hormones or surgery to match it to their own gender identity.

Executive Summary

The Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre (EMC) began to study the LGBTQ group's experiences of social exclusion and violence in 2019 as part of this research. The aim of the research was to identify the main socio-economic barriers facing the LGBTQ group and to develop policy measures needed to address the key issues.

The aim of the study was to investigate the determinants of social vulnerability and symptoms of social exclusion, which was achieved by identifying the interaction of aspects of vertical and horizontal inequality. These were based on the characteristics of social and economic exclusion of the LGBTQ community, and identification of political participation, agency, and inclusive involvement, as well as opportunities to engage in activism to set their own agenda. .

Using the broad social exclusion framework, this study seeks not to define the exclusion of the LGBTQ community in terms of purely economic factors, but to focus on forms of exclusion that result not only in monetary poverty, but also in social deprivation contingent upon livelihood, demonstrating, among other things, deprivation of agency and exclusion from equal citizenship. The study shows that members of the LGBTQ community are unable to enjoy an equal and adequate life, and their chances of living freely are substantially limited in relation to all human rights.

The Right to Self-Determination and Coming-Out – In a culture dominated by heterosexuality, the community has limited opportunities to express its identity, and this process is subject to constant mediation, self-restraint, and self-control. The research shows that the coming out of members of the LGBTQ community can result in multiple vulnerabilities, including violence, lack of adequate access to education, lack of access to health care, and challenges of homelessness. Consequently, a large percentage of respondents – 63.9% avoid disclosing their sexual orientation, especially in the home/family, neighbourhood, street, and other public spaces, indicating that there is almost no space reserved for the LGBTQ community members, and they constantly have to control their forms of their presentation/expression. It is noteworthy that 44% of respondents indicate that their possible coming out may result in homelessness, job loss, and violence.

Violence – The damaging nature of physical and psychological violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and its symbolic nature, have a negative impact on the well-being of members of the LGBTQ community. The survey shows that 52% of respondents have experienced violence at least once in their lifetime, with the highest rate of violence experienced among gay (65.5%) and transgender (61.8%) respondents. Institutional measures taken by the state in recent years, as well as the dissemination of infor-

mation on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), have led to some changes in terms of improved response to violence, although the scale of violence is still high, with the survey showing that 48% of respondents have experienced psychological violence in the last 2 years, and 29% severe physical violence (threat of death, beatings, other forms of violence). However, despite the spread of violence, respondents still rarely turn to the law enforcement system for help. In the case of physical violence, only 30.4% appealed to the law enforcement system, while in the case of psychological violence, 14.2%. The low level of referrals is accompanied by a low level of trust in the law enforcement agencies. The survey shows that 74.1% of LGBTQ people do not trust the law enforcement agencies at all or trust them very little, which is due to complex factors, including past negative experience, hyper-masculinisation of the system, and institutional homophobia.

Access to Education – Research shows that LGBTQ people have limited access to education. Complete access to education includes not only physical access to courses and institutions, and the financial means to facilitate access, but also the provision of a healthy institutional environment and a safe space within which LGBTQ people can thrive. The most acute problems among educational institutions at various levels were identified at the school level, which is a vulnerable age for young LGBTQ people. Unsupportive environment in school spaces has the most negative impact on the future lives of individuals as it forms a foundation that ensures the transition to adulthood. The research shows that for 32.2% of the respondents (N = 292) the barrier to general education is homophobic discrimination by teachers and/or the school administration, and for 41.9% homophobic bullying by classmates/schoolchildren. It is noteworthy that of the respondents who experienced barriers to general education due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (N = 136), 44.1% missed school days. Negative attitudes in the school environment have a significant impact on students' quality of learning and cognitive motivation/ability, as negative identity-based environment reinforces stress and self-intolerance.

As for higher education, its accessibility is primarily hampered by social barriers related to tuition fees and the burden of employment. Students are compelled to choose between education and financial income, which is not supported by social protection mechanisms and measures from the state.

Labour Rights and Access to Employment – Employment opportunities in Georgia are limited for all members of society, and a decent working environment is an exception. LGBTQ community members, due to their exclusion, do not enjoy equal access to employment in society due to both objective factors that imply discriminatory practices and other forms of unequal treatment, and subjective factors related to LGBTQ group members' low self-esteem towards their own capabilities and their own belief in powerlessness, which limits their development opportunities. According to the results of

the survey, 93.1% of respondents agree that “LGBTQ people have less access to employment than others”. Consequently, a significant part of the LGBTQ community chooses a work environment that allows free self-expression without the expectation of discrimination. However, these, with a few exceptions, push them toward low-income jobs and trap them in a “spiral of precariousness”.

The survey shows that the average salary of LGBTQ people in the case of 60.5% of respondents does not exceed 1000 GEL. More than one fifth of the employed respondents (22.3%) are employed in two jobs at the same time, which is due to the lack of remuneration in 88.9% of the cases. It is also worth noting that for 82% of those surveyed, wages are only enough to buy food, clothing, and household items. This indicates that wages in Georgia are insufficient and do not provide an adequate quality of life, as access to some key dimensions of well-being is related to income and exclusion from income precedes other forms of exclusion, such as limited access to services, including health care and education. Thus, income exclusion is often the precondition to other forms of exclusion.

Access to Adequate Quality of Health Care – In terms of health care, the main challenge for most LGBTQ people is mental health, which may be considered as one of the symptoms of social exclusion. Healthcare in Georgia is not tailored to the needs of individuals, it does not provide prevention, nor can it deal adequately with the already established outcomes, due to lack of information, financial barriers, and non-supportive services. In addition to the above, as the study shows, different types of mental health problems are associated with social exclusion, which is manifested in the marginalization and stigmatization of the LGBTQ community. The survey shows that 43.1% of respondents have a mental health problem, with 37.1% of respondents directly linking mental health problem with stigma, discriminatory practices, and stress based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. However, because public health insurance packages, and insurance companies in particular, do not reimburse mental health services, community members have to deal with institutional and structural failures (violence, stigma, discrimination, and inadmissibility), increasing the risk of these challenges to be seen as “individual pathologies” redirecting the attention from structural oppression to individualized problems.

Social Protection and Access to Adequate Housing – Social protection and the prevention of the risks of homelessness are essential for members of the LGBTQ community. The social protection system in Georgia is ineffective and not tailored to the needs of specific individuals. The state has insufficient knowledge of the risk factors for homelessness for different social groups, which leads to the violation of the right to adequate housing or to the risk of its violation. The right to adequate housing is part of the right to an adequate standard of living and is central to the enjoyment of all other economic, social, and cultural rights.

In addition to social determinants, violence and social vulnerability are closely linked to the issue of adequate housing, creating the most conducive environment for homelessness. Thus, discrimination is often both a cause and a consequence of homelessness.

Solidarity Groups and Civic Activism – LGBTQ people’s political participation and right to speech are limited, which is reflected in the lack of adequate consideration for their real needs in the state agenda, strategies, and action plans. At the same time, due to the fact that trust in state institutions is substantially low, members of the LGBTQ community see non-governmental community organizations as their main supporters, which is reflected in the de-politicization of problems and flawed attitudes towards community organizations. As the survey shows, the needs of the LGBTQ community members include effective implementation of socio-economic rights, including employment promotion, housing (LGBTQ shelter), and health care. Some respondents believe that the agendas of community organizations do not always reflect these needs, which also derives from low degree of democratic participation and framework directions predetermined by the donors.

In terms of civic activism, the LGBTQ and/or Queer community is one of the most active segments. They are often involved in the activities of united resistance groups for social justice on various grounds and are often the instigators of these movements. However, the LGBTQ group directly suffers from a lack of support from other solidarity groups. The survey shows that respondents think of solidarity groups as largely feminist movements, and relatively less as movements with both leftist and liberal ideologies.

The present study shows that in all of the abovementioned human rights contexts, LGBTQ people suffer from lack of access to resources/opportunities, indicating social exclusion in all areas of life, especially identity-based exclusion from community decision-making. Therefore, it is essential for the state to understand the importance of social protection and the “transformational” function of inclusion in response to social exclusion. This approach implies that social protection interventions should not only address the problem of economic security, but also set broader goals of equality, social justice, and empowerment, which will help not only to correct the consequences of exclusion but also to focus on the deprivation process.

Such a multidimensional analysis of the problem should lead the state to create new models of social protection, which will not only help people meet their basic needs, but also give them the skills to escape poverty and contribute to their well-being in the long run.

1. Introduction

1.1. Importance and Necessity of the Research

Describing the condition and oppression of LGBTQ people requires a complex approach and analysis that is not limited to identifying identity-based oppression and the cultural consequences it defines. The discussion of the LGBTQ group in the majority of analytical approaches is limited to identifying violent and discriminatory experiences based on identity and reflected in individual, interpersonal, or institutional mechanisms of violence against this group.

Consequently, the predominant analytical framework for analysing the LGBTQ group, which sees identity-based oppression only in cultural expressions, such as the members' lack of recognition as equal subjects or full-fledged citizens, omits from its analytical field the latter's socio-economic consequences, which, in fact, substantially worsens the group's well-being and its chances for leading a life of dignity.

Under the pressure of international instruments the state is obliged to take important steps to fight against discrimination and violence, however state's agenda is formal and illusory towards the recognition and visibility of the LGBTQ group and does not seek to eliminate the consequences of oppression, which is based only on seeing this group as an object of cultural oppression, whose problems can be solved by "building tolerance" and providing legal "recognition". As a result, in today's analytical framework, identity is far removed from any material basis, thus hindering the identification and analysis of the material consequences of cultural oppression.

Thus, it is the tendency of the discourse to concentrate only on cultural oppression, to place identity in purely cultural contexts, to blur the various functions of geographical origin, health status, social class, and gender in the social exclusion of the LGBTQ group. Oppression can only appear as interpersonal discrimination unless there is an explanatory scheme for why homophobia and sexism perform specific functions, and to what extent they reduce the chances of a life of dignity.

On the other hand, there are theoretical frameworks for which the starting point is economic oppression. Class-based analysis considers only economic status or social status as a model for any expression of oppression, and ignores the harmful effects of cultural oppression. It also fails to identify the specific oppression faced by the LGBTQ group, which is represented as intersectional oppression and manifests itself in a new form of oppression that defines both identity and economic vulnerability.

Consequently, under these polarized approaches, the needs of LGBTQ individuals remain unrecognized and unanalysed. The main purpose of this study is to identify the material (social and economic) consequences of identity-based oppression. On the one hand, this approach shows how sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression lead to cultural oppression, which conditions the exclusion of the group. On the other hand, it identifies a nation state with an excluded identity group, and reveals how these matters are aggravated by low socio-economic status and/or how the latter causes social marginalization and exclusion.

One-sided approach to non-dominant sexual orientation and gender identity fails in adequately fighting the consequences of homophobia. The state anti-discrimination policy is not tailored to address the consequences of homo/transphobia through mechanisms that offer adequate psychosocial services or ensure access to quality education.

Therefore, it is essential to study various aspects of social exclusion in order to better identify the indicators of exclusionary processes, which in turn establish and promote various forms of deprivation.

Thus, in-depth research on the issue of social exclusion forms an important foundation for the empowerment agenda of LGBTQ people, at the individual, collective, institutional, and state levels. By promoting social inclusion and equal recognition – strengthening social protection interventions, working diligently on the needs of LGBTQ people, and addressing their interests, – the state, civil society organizations and the community can take steps collectively to tackle the problem of social exclusion.

1.2. Conceptual Framework of Social Exclusion

Studying inequality requires the analysis of multi-layered factors, including the process of overcoming economic, social, and group-based inequalities, and describing their consequences.

Economic inequality, which relates to unequal distribution of income and wealth, can be differentiated from “social inequality”, which includes the status acquired through political power, health, education, housing, and the distribution of other resources among the members of society. Social inequality and economic inequality interact and reinforce each other. For example, a person with a high income may have more power and access to a better education than those who have a relatively low income.² Economic and social

² A/HRC/29/31, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Philip Alston, 27 May 2015, Paragraph 6.

inequality is often categorized as “vertical inequality”, which refers to the distribution of income, health, or power among the members of society. Vertical inequality is different from “horizontal inequality”, which implies group-based distinction between a woman and a man, between people of different races, or between individuals of different sexual orientations. Horizontal inequality is often crossed by vertical inequality, for example, when women are more represented in the low-income labour sector.³

Problematisation of economic inequality is relevant not only in the framework of socio-economic rights but also to the extent in which it reinforces unequal exercise of civil and political rights. Therefore, a high degree of economic inequality “may create institutions that retain the political, economic, and social privileges of the elites and trap the poor in poverty, from which it is difficult to escape”.⁴

Vertical and horizontal inequalities, among others, are closely linked to discrimination and unequal access to opportunities in groups defined by different characteristics. In many countries, the poorest sectors are typically made up of marginalized social and ethnic/racial groups, indicating that discrimination is both a cause of unequal distribution of opportunities and a result of the unequal redistribution.⁵

The framework for “social exclusion” provides a better opportunity to study and analyse the interaction of vertical and horizontal inequalities, their causes and composition, as it seeks to identify various factors and symptoms of exclusion and marginalization of specific members of society.

Social exclusion is a relatively new approach and is used in the social policy and social development literature as a framework for conceptualizing human deprivation and revealing its causes or mechanisms of reproduction.⁶ Its development is linked with sociological papers in France, which focused on the changes associated with socio-economic transformations in the 1980s. It sought to reflect the dynamics of weakening social ties as a result of social disqualification caused by mass social and economic vulnerabilities in industrialized states.⁷

3 Ibid, Paragraph 7.

4 *Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change*, Social Policy and Politics. United Nations Publication. Sales No. E.10.III.Y.1, p. 6.

5 A/HRC/29/31, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Philip Alston, 2015, Paragraph 24.

6 Babajanian, Babken, and Jessica Hagen-Zanker. 2012. *Social Protection and Social Exclusion: An Analytical Framework to Assess the Links*. Overseas Development Institute.

7 Paugam, S. 1996. ‘The Whirlpool of Precariousness: a Multidimensional Approach to the Process of Social Disqualification in France’. n Room, G. Ed. *Beyond the Threshold: the Measurement and Analysis of Social Exclusion*. Bath: Policy Press: 47–79 (As quoted by CoE, Promoting the policy debate on social cohesion from a comparative perspective, 2001, p. 11).

In the 1990s, the EU paid particular attention to the processes that transformed human vulnerability into social exclusion. At the time, “the poor” were perceived as a heterogeneous group, so it was necessary to transform the static definition of income into a theory with a dynamic and multidimensional explanation. The argument behind this change was the weakening of the power of the social class as the only explanatory framework, as it became clear that inequality of life chances could no longer be explained by class positions alone.⁸

Consequently, social exclusion is associated not only with material well-being but also with symbolic exclusion, social deprivation, and imperfect participation in social institutions. It highlights the problem of weakened relationship between the individual and society⁹ and the lack of equal political participation and agency.¹⁰ The framework of social exclusion can help us to place social protection in a specific economic, social, and institutional context that has an impact on human well-being, and to see how policies and programs address the various dimensions of deprivation and its underlying causes.¹¹

Definitions of social exclusion

According to **Estivill**, social exclusion “can be understood as the accumulation of co-occurring processes accompanied by divisions within the bosom of the economy, politics and society”.¹²

According to **Levitas and others**, “Social exclusion is a complex and multidimensional process. Which includes the absence or restriction of access to resources, rights and services, as well as the inability to participate in normal relationships and activities that are accessible to the majority of the public, regardless of whether it concerns economic, social, cultural or political spheres. It affects the quality of life of individuals as well as the equality and unity of society”.¹³

8 CoE, Promoting the Policy Debate on Social Cohesion from a Comparative Perspective, 2001, see https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/Trends/Trends-01_en.pdf

9 CoE, Promoting the Policy Debate on Social Exclusion from a Comparative Perspective, 2001, see: https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/Trends/Trends-01_en.pdf

10 UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Leaving No One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development, Report on the World Social Situation, 2016.

11 Babajanian and Hagen Zankar 2012.

12 Estivill, J. 2003. Concepts and Strategies for Combating Social Exclusion. Geneva: International Labour Organisation.

13 Levitas, R. A. 2007. *The Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion*. Bristol, United Kingdom: University of Bristol.

According to **Silver**, social exclusion is a dynamic process that “excludes full involvement in the normatively written activities of a given society and prevents their access to information, resources, sociality, recognition and identity, shakes self-confidence and reduces opportunities to achieve personal goals”.¹⁴

There is no single definition of social exclusion in academia and politics. Different authors, however, agree on several common characteristics of the term, namely that social exclusion is a process that is multidimensional and changeable with time.

As a framework, social exclusion offers an alternative tool for conceptualizing poverty and inequality and points to the under-involvement of individuals in issues important to their society.¹⁵ A broad understanding of exclusion implies a variety of unfavourable economic and social conditions caused by a variety of factors, including inadequate income, health problems, geographical location, and cultural identification.¹⁶

The main analytical advantage of the concept of social exclusion is that it emphasizes the connection between welfare and wider conditions and factors influencing welfare parameters. According to De Haan’s categorization, social exclusion can be used to describe the “consequences of deprivation” and the “processes of deprivation”.¹⁷ Focusing on the consequences of deprivation, the notion of social exclusion shows the extent of deprivation that a person may experience. It also identifies human deprivation with the parameters related and unrelated to income. Consequently, De Haan points out that people may not have access to employment, products, and economic opportunities, and at the same time, have limited access to education, health care, utilities and adequate housing, social and cultural inclusion, security, political rights, suffrage, and representation. Generally speaking, people are poor by more than one, and probably by many parameters.¹⁸

14 Silver, H. 2007. *The Process of Social Exclusion: the Dynamics of an Evolving Concept*. CPRC Working Paper 95. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Center.

15 Bhalla, Ajit and FréÅdeÅric Lapeyre. 1997. *Social Exclusion: Towards an Analytical and Operational Framework, Development and Change* 28: 413-433. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

16 U N, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Leaving No One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development, Report on the World Social Situation, 2016*

17 De Haan, A. 1999. *Social Exclusion: Towards an Holistic Understanding of Deprivation*. London: Department for International Development.

18 Ruggeri Laderchi, C., Saith, R., and Stewart, D. 2003. “Does it Matter that we Don’t Agree on the Definition of Poverty? A Comparison of Four Approaches”. Queen Elizabeth House (QEH) Working Paper Series 107. Oxford: University of Oxford (as quoted by Babajanian and Hagen-Zanker 2012).

The extent of exclusion often depends on individual and social characteristics such as wealth, race, gender, ethnicity, social status, caste, or religion, as well as political views, profession, language, and place of residence. This concept emphasizes the “relative” rather than the “absolute” nature of deprivation and therefore places individual needs in the context of their own community and society.¹⁹

The framework of social exclusion, in addition to exposing the various deprivations, also identifies their underlying causes. In contrast to the “monetary” understanding of poverty, social exclusion “essentially, rather than as a secondary issue, focuses on the processes and dynamics that make possible the origin and existence of deprivation.”²⁰ The social exclusion framework is conducive to understanding the broader, structural factors that lead to deprivation. It “shifts the focus from understanding poverty as a personal shortcoming and instead relating it to social structures.”²¹ Accordingly, it focuses on the interdependence that exists between human well-being and the understanding of wider circumstances, including policies, social relations, norms, and values that produce and reproduce various forms of deprivation.

Finally, social exclusion helps us understand the dynamic nature of deprivation, which has many different, often interrelated, and complementary dimensions. Pogam notes that this is a dynamic process, or a “precarious Whirlpool”, where one form of deprivation pushes us towards another. He argues that social exclusion is not simply a matter of precarious work, but of the strong correlation that exists between employment and other issues of economic and social life (e.g., family, income, living conditions, and social ties). Focusing on deprivation as a process makes it possible to identify a whole range of factors that contribute to human exclusion.²²

Since the framework of social exclusion is a concept with a rather broad content, the framework for its interpretation is also broad, which allows us to use it for describing the challenges faced by specific groups, although relatively few examples of this exist in scholarly literature. However, it is also difficult to operationalize social exclusion as a process of deprivation. It is true that its dynamic nature can be exploited by qualitative studies, but it is difficult to establish indicators that can determine the mechanisms and trajectories of exclusionary processes. Studies suggest breaking down the exclusionary process into separate segments to identify specific factors that contribute to various

¹⁹ Babajanian and Hagen-Zanker 2012.

²⁰ Ruggeri Laderchi et al. 2003.

²¹ Gore, C. and Figueiredo, J. B. 1997. “Social Exclusion and Anti Poverty Policy: A Debate”. Research Series Paper 110. Geneva: ILO and UNDP (As quoted by Babajanian and Hagen-Zanker 2012)

²² Babajanian and Hagen-Zanker 2012.

forms of deprivation. This can happen at the individual level, such as vulnerabilities in everyday life, or at the community or group level, such as discriminatory norms and practices. Adapting the framework of social exclusion to the LGBTQ group requires understanding their situation in three main dimensions: equal opportunities, equal access to resources, and equal participation. These three aspects allow us to highlight the lack of, or scarcity of, opportunities for LGBTQ people in terms of social, economic, and cultural participation, as well as their social incapacity to present their own interests, and their non-recognition, which does not allow them to enjoy equal opportunities as citizens with equal status.²³

Accordingly, the present study analyses several key indicators showing access to opportunities, namely education, health care, employment and income, housing, and participation in political, civic, and cultural life. This study does not operationalize and measure social exclusion, but rather shows the symptoms of social exclusion, which will require further study in the future for a more in-depth analysis of objective and subjective factors of exclusion.²⁴

²³ Takács, Judit. 2006. *ILGA-Europe and IGLYO, Social Exclusion of Young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People in Europe*.

²⁴ UN, *Leaving No One Behind*, p. 26.

2. A Brief Overview of the Situation of LGBTQ People in Georgia

2.1. Legislative Environment

In recent years, Georgian legislation has undergone significant changes that have facilitated the recognition of the LGBTQ group at the policy level. Georgia's 2014 Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination defines sexual orientation and gender identity as protected subjects, but due to weak provisions in the law, it failed to ensure a high standard of protection and legal effect for victims of discrimination. Despite numerous calls from the Public Defender and human rights organizations, the law was amended only in 2019 to ensure its effectiveness, thus somewhat strengthening the law enforcement mechanism. Amendments were also made to the Law on Gender Equality of Georgia, as a result of which the mandate of the National Gender Equality Mechanisms was strengthened.²⁵ It is important that the law sets out the principles needed to implement a separate gender equality policy and to achieve equality in various areas of life, and provides for the development of institutional mechanisms at the state, regional, and municipal levels. However, it should be noted that the effective functioning of these mechanisms remains a problem.

Legislative changes in 2020 also affected the Labour Code of Georgia, as a result of which the norms of the prohibition of discrimination were renewed in accordance with EU directives; the changes also addressed the issues of dismissal.²⁶ The reformed code also provided for the establishment of an effective labour inspection service, whose mandate was expanded to include oversight and monitoring of discrimination in the workplace, which should be considered a significant step forward. Nonetheless, the Code could possibly be improved in order to significantly enhance the socio-economic status of employees and existing working conditions.

Despite the legislative changes, effective practical implementation of the equality policy remains problematic. This is most pronounced against the LGBTQ group – one of the most vulnerable groups in Georgia that is stigmatized and discriminated against through many forms of unequal treatment. Despite numerous legislative acts or national action plans that have ensured the commitment to protect the rights of LGBTQ people, these changes have not been reflected in practice. This is evident in the state's superficial and unsystematic approach, the primary reason why institutional changes do not reflect the improved quality of life of LGBTQ community members.

²⁵ The amendments regarding the national mechanisms were made in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020.

²⁶ For further details see: <https://emc.org.ge/ka/products/emc-pozitiuri-tsvlilebebis-miukhedavad-shromis-kanonmdeblobashi-problemebi-rcheba>

2.2. Prejudices Against the LGBTQ Community

According to recent studies, homophobic attitudes still persist in Georgia.²⁷ In a quantitative survey conducted by UNFPA in Georgia in 2020, 83% of men were ashamed of having a homosexual child, while in the case of women this sentiment was shared by 74%. The belief that homosexual women/men should not have the right to work with children is still shared by 83% of men and 64% of women, with 81% of men surveyed saying they would not have a homosexual friend when only 54% of women shared the sentiment.²⁸ According to a 2019 CRRC survey, when asked by respondents who they would not want to live next door to, homosexuals are in the third place, accounting for 24% of respondents following criminals (27) and drug addicts (25).²⁹

According to the results of a quantitative and qualitative survey conducted by the Council of Europe, when asked how important the protection of minority rights is for Georgia's development, positive answer for the LGBT group was the lowest (33%), while 42% said that protection of LGBT rights is not important at all.³⁰

According to the above study, regression analysis showed that with regard to the protection of LGBT people, several different factors determine the perception of the importance of human rights protection. One of these factors is gender. In particular, as research shows, men are much less likely to support the protection of LGBT community rights than the rights of religious minorities. As for rights in general, the second regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which awareness of various rights determines the level of support for LGBT rights. Based on the analysis of the data, it was revealed that there is a much greater chance that the protection of the rights of LGBT people will be considered important by a person who is more informed about the rights of minorities.³¹

These studies indicate that there is still a negative bias against LGBT people, which is often manifested in discrimination and hate crimes that constantly threaten LGBT people and, consequently, lead to their social and economic exclusion.

27 UNFPA. 2020. Men, Women and Gender Relations in Georgia: Social Perception and Attitude. Tbilisi: UNFPA and UNDP.

28 Ibid.

29 CRRC. 2020. *A Decade of changes: Opinions and Values in Georgia, (2009-2019)*. Tbilisi: CRRC- Georgia, Caucasus Barometer.

30 CoE, C. 2018. *Hate Motivated Crime, Hate Speech and Discrimination in Georgia: Public Mood and Awareness*. Tbilisi: European Council.

31 Ibid.

2.3. Hate Crimes and Trust in Law Enforcement Agencies

Hate crimes are not only a criminogenic but also an important social problem in Georgia. Studies show that hate crimes have a significant impact on the lives of victims of violence and the broader social structures to which they are committed.³² Consequently, prejudice-based wrongdoing is a public health risk³³ and its negative impact often remains unresolved.

The severity of intolerance-induced crime differs from other types of crime precisely in that it is a power mechanism aimed at maintaining existing hierarchies in society, targeting stigmatized and marginalized groups and individuals. From this perspective, these crimes can serve as a tool for maintaining order based on gender and racial differences.³⁴ Attention is drawn to the fact that crimes nurtured by prejudice and stereotypes do not end in a specific action or incident, nor do they arise in a cultural and social vacuum. It is believed that the victim of such crimes often stands as a symbol, and the action is directed not against that particular person, but against the group to which the victim actually or presumably belongs.³⁵

Because hate-motivated crimes reflect a range of discriminatory experiences, its effects and impact on marginalized groups may be severe. Victims of hate-motivated crime are more likely to experience feelings of fear, guilt, and embarrassment. Consequently, the trauma is much more serious, even when the unlawful behaviour itself may not be of severe nature.³⁶

It is noteworthy that the academic framework describing the nature of hate crimes and the harm suffered by the victim is does not sufficiently address factors that influence victims of violence to seek help from relevant agencies. **Help-seeking** refers to the process by which an individual uses legal, financial, community, and institutional resources to address issues that have a significant negative impact on his or her life. Reaching out to law enforcement agencies about hate crimes and incidents is an important step in the process of seeking help, as it provides support for witnesses and victims, and restores justice by prosecuting potential perpetrators. However, as research by Herek and his colleagues

32 Herek G., & B. 1992. *Hate Crimes: Confronting Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. See also Levin 1993.

33 Bell, C. 2003. "Racism: Diagnostic and Treatment Considerations". Paper presented at the 156th Annual Convention of the American Psychiatric Association, San Francisco, Ca.

34 Perry, B. 2001. *In the Name of Hate*.

35 Ibid.

36 FRA. 2016. *Ensuring Justice for Hate Crime Victims: Professional Perspective*.

shows, gay and lesbian victims are less likely to turn to the police to report a crime.³⁷ However, according to Dunbar, de-individualization of victims – victims' perception of their own experiences as group experiences – plays an important role in their decision not to report the crime.³⁸

Crime reporting is also influenced by a person's socio-economic status, ethnicity, or other characteristics. Studies show that individuals with multiple vulnerability statuses are less likely to turn to law enforcement or other types of institutional mechanisms for assistance,³⁹ which is also caused by greater severity of victimization and scant opportunities for rehabilitation from the event. As a result, victims of violence are more likely to resort to self-help methods that involve sharing information about the violence with friends, or other narrowly trusted groups. This strategy, however, is not considered an effective mechanism in response to the harm caused by crime, and is often insufficient to deal with the psychological problems that accompany these severe experiences.⁴⁰

A low crime rate does not mean that crime does not occur or occurs in small numbers. It points to a gap in the criminal justice system, which reflects the low trust of citizens in the system and raises the need for institutional reform of the law enforcement system.⁴¹ The small number of referrals to law enforcement agencies means that the relationship between the LGBTQ community and law enforcement agencies is perceived as antagonistic, distant, discriminatory, and dangerous, which is also due to the "hyper-masculinisation" of the law enforcement system.⁴² Institutional hetero-sexism and homophobia in the police system significantly undermine the degree of trust in these agencies and lead to their de-legitimization.

The legitimacy of a state institution or system depends on "the psychological nature of power, government, institution and social systems, which in turn leads to a belief in the adequacy, correctness and justice of these systems".⁴³ The legitimacy of state systems in the eyes of the public facilitates their voluntary interaction with it, which is essential for

37 Herek, G. G. 1996. "Hate Crime Victimization among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 12(2): 195-215.

38 Dunbar, E. W. 2000. "Community, Group, and Individual Characteristics of Violent Hate Crime Activity". Paper presented at the 108th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

39 Garnets, L. 1997. "Antigay Violence and Multiple Minority Status: Psychological Consequences and Interventions". Paper presented at the 105th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

40 Dunbar, E. W. 2006. "Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation in Hate Crime Victimization: Identity Politics or Identity Risk?" *Violence and Victims* 21(3): 323-37.

41 Jalagania, L. 2017. Operational Guideline, Tbilisi: EMC

42 Rabe-Hemp, C. E. 2009. "POLICEwomen or Policewomen? Doing Gender in Police Work". *Feminist Criminology* 6: 135–155.

43 Tyler, T. R. 1990. *Why People Obey the Law*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

the police to carry out its duties. However, if there is a lack of procedural fairness in the process of this interaction – in terms of respect, objectivity, support, etc. – or if the procedural fairness is weak and inappropriate, the quality of interaction with the society is also weakened. Consequently, positive treatment of citizens promotes the perception of legitimacy, while negative treatment reduces legitimacy.

Hate crimes in Georgia remain one of the most critical challenges for the LGBTQ community. A UN Independent Expert Report on Georgia on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), published in 2019,⁴⁴ identifies persistent discriminatory practices against members of the LGBTQ community, noting that “beating is a common practice as well as persistent persecution on the part of their families, and also exclusion from the educational process, work and health care facilities”.⁴⁵ According to the experts, the stigma attached to the community, the fear of identity disclosure, the lack of trust in the law enforcement system, and the homophobic attitudes expressed by the police about the violence create substantial barriers to referring problems to the police.⁴⁶ According to the official statistics of the state in 2019, 32 people were prosecuted for committing a crime on the grounds of intolerance under the heading of SOGI. However, the low turnout due to the existing barriers obscures the real scale of the violence as the statistics documented by community organizations outweigh the official statistics.⁴⁷ The problem is the lack of a unified statistical methodology, which is a hindrance in the process of crime analysis and prevention policy planning.

In order to ensure an effective fight against homophobia and trans-phobia, Georgia has received a number of recommendations from international organization to strengthen the fight against hate crimes and to establish a separate investigative agency to deal specifically with hate crimes. These recommendations were adopted by Georgia within the framework of the UN Universal Periodic Review of 2015⁴⁸ and the 2016 report of the European Commission on Racism and Intolerance in Georgia.⁴⁹ As a result, a **Human Rights and Quality Monitoring Department** has been set up at the Ministry of Internal Affairs to improve the fight against hate crimes. However, since the established department does not replace the specialized investigative agency within the police system, it

44 Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, 2019. see at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/41/45/ADD.1?fbclid=IwAR%201uGxuj6IMh0KqfYO9D1vUNMQv45WO0LSiwgZcH7UQCeSdylM71tmToyZo>

45 Ibid, Para. 31.

46 Ibid, Para. 40.

47 For example, according to the research conducted by the organization WISG in 2018, it turns out that 226 respondents have become the victims of hate crimes during 2015-18 (Aghdgomelashvili, E. *From Prejudice to Equality: LGBTQ People in Georgia*, 2018).

48 Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Georgia, 2015, Recommendation 118.10.

49 ECRI REPORT ON GEORGIA (fifth monitoring cycle), Adopted on 8 December 2015 Published on 1 March 2016.

does not represent a targeted effort to strengthen the investigation of hate crimes at the law enforcement level.⁵⁰ It is noteworthy, however, that as a result of these institutional changes, active work on the production of unified statistics has begun. In September 2020, a memorandum was signed between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, the Supreme Court, and the National Statistics Office of Georgia,⁵¹ which stipulates the accountability of agencies to one other and includes the obligation to share information. In addition, the memorandum provides for the production of segregated data, which is essential for the prevention of hate crimes.

Today however, effective prevention of hate crimes, given their scale and politicization, remains a serious challenge for law enforcement agencies. The scale of hate crimes is well illustrated by the rise of ultra-conservative violent groups and their persistently discriminatory practices against members of the LGBTQ community. For example, on November 8th in 2019 violent groups gathered in front of a cinema in Tbilisi during the premiere of the film *And Then We Danced*⁵² and openly attacked the public wishing to see the film, and the police mobilized around the area. An investigation was launched into 27 administrative violations identified on the spot, especially violations against police officers and the destruction of the police car. However, the state's negligence towards the statements made by the leaders of the violent groups, who were publicly threatening and calling their supporters to disrupt the film screening, should have been assessed negatively.⁵³ These actions indicate the practice of mobilizing ultra-conservative and violent groups and their cultivation of homophobic and trans-phobic attitudes in society, which the state fails to counteract with effective preventive or punitive measures.

2.4. Freedom of Assembly and Expression

In Georgia, the exercise of the right to freedom of assembly and expression by LGBTQ people is still a significant problem, which is related to the attempts of certain social groups to privatize public space. Dominant religious as well as ultra-conservative violent groups limit the possibility of freedom of assembly for the LGBTQ community, and the appearance of LGBTQ individuals in public in any form is "perceived as propaganda for homosexuality".⁵⁴ The existing negative ex-

50 The Interim Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) published on March 5th, 2019 (CRI (2019) 4) on the implementation of the recommendations made in the report of March 1st, 2016 on Georgia is available at: <https://women.ge/ka/news/newsfeed/226/>.

51 See: <https://police.ge/ge/saqartvelos-generalur-prokuraturashi-diskriminatsiis-nishnit-sheutsknareblobis-motivit-chadenili-danashaulis-statistikis-tsarmoebisa-da-ertiani-angarishis-gamotsemis-shesakheb-memorandumi-gaformda/13986>

52 The film addressed an LGBTQ topic.

53 See: <https://oc-media.org/georgian-ultraconservative-groups-vow-to-prevent-queer-romance-film-premier/>

54 Aghdgomelashvili, E. 2012. "Homophobic Hate Speech and Political Processes in Georgia", *The Situation of LGBTQ People in Georgia*, p. 10.

perience from 2012-2013 up to the present day regarding the exercise of the rights of freedom of assembly and expression, has contributed to provoking violence in public spaces. This also manifested itself in the failure of the state to ensure the fundamental human right to freedom of assembly and expression, and to punish those who violate that right.⁵⁵ As a result, May 17th, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT), has become the day for manifesting institutional and individual homophobic attitudes in society annually.

The European Court of Human Rights' 2015 judgment on *Identoba and Others vs. Georgia*, alleges an interference with the right of assembly of LGBTQ members at the IDAHOT meeting in 2012, a failure to fulfil the positive obligation on the part of the state, as well as ineffective investigation of the incidents. It states that "the domestic authorities failed to ensure the proper restraint of homophobic and violent counter-demonstrators and the peaceful conduct of the March 17, 2012 [...]. In view of this negligence, the authorities failed to fulfil their positive obligation under Article 11 of the Convention, in conjunction with Article 14".⁵⁶ Although this decision is under the supervision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, on the basis of which the state is obliged to take specific individual and general measures to ensure the effective implementation of the principle of assembly, and the prohibition of discrimination against LGBTQ people, since 2013, members of the LGBTQ community have not been allowed to celebrate IDAHOT day in a safe and politically significant location without restrictions.⁵⁷

Attempts to mark May 17th in public show that, in addition to exercising their right to assembly and demonstration, LGBTQ activists, community organizations, and supporters in Georgia are not allowed to draw public attention to the real challenges and needs of the community. The reason for this is the lack of security guarantees from the state and the strengthening of violent groups since the practical restriction on the realization of these rights is accompanied by the practice of constant active mobilization of homophobic groups.⁵⁸

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia refused to ensure the safety of the population in the event of the "March of Pride" held within the framework of "Tbilisi Pride Week" in June 2019.⁵⁹

55 Jalagania, L. 2015. "The Human Rights Situation of LGBTI People in Georgia". EMC.

56 Case of *Identoba and Others v. Georgia* (Application no. 73235/12) May 12, 2015, Para. 100, see: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-154400>

57 Except for 2017, when LGBTQ community organizations met in front of the Chancellery of the Government of Georgia, within the framework of providing high quality protection by the law enforcement system, with limited time and space, which can not be considered as an example of protection of freedom of assembly.

58 Coalition for Equality. 2019. The Right to Non-Discrimination in Practice for Various Groups in Georgia. See: <http://equalitycoalition.ge/article/51>

59 Due to the safety of members of the LGBTQ community, the Ministry of Internal Affairs offered a disproportionate alternative to the organizers of the march: to hold the march in a closed space – in a nightclub or on a stadium. See: <https://netgazeti.ge/news/368709/> Also, See: <https://police.ge/en/shinagan-saqmeta-saministros-gantskhadeba/12775>

Besides, the Patriarchate of Georgia issued an official statement calling on the Government of Georgia not to allow holding the “Pride March” organized by “Tbilisi Pride”.⁶⁰ In response, on June 14th, supporters of Tbilisi Pride held a rally in front of the Government Chancellery to demand guarantees from the state regarding their right to assemble. Ultra-conservative political and clerical groups, whose leaders and members openly carried out their violent actions and intentions, attacked part of the rally organizers and activists.

It is noteworthy that the leader of the ultra-conservative and violent group publicly made a number of violent statements against the rally (incitement of violence).⁶¹ In particular, the group created “People’s Legions” and started street patrol despite the fact that the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched a formal investigation into the incident.⁶² The public and the victims have not yet received information about the effectiveness of the investigation and its outcomes.⁶³ As a result, even in 2019, the right of the LGBTQ community members to freedom of assembly could not be exercised in practice due to the risk of violence posed by ultra-conservative groups and the lack of effective state protection measures.

2.5. Access to Education

Education is both a right and an important means of realizing the rights of others. As a means of empowerment, education is a key tool for economically and socially marginalized adolescents and children to escape poverty and achieve full participation in their own community and society. Education also plays an essential role in empowering women, protecting the vulnerable from child labour and sexual exploitation, as well as promoting human rights and democracy. Globally, education is also considered a significant financial investment, although according to the 13th General Recommendation of the UN Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, its importance is not only practical, but also serves toward the formation of people with saner and clearer minds.⁶⁴

60 see: <http://tbl.ge/3rm1>

61 See: <https://oc-media.org/tbilisi-pride-cancelled-after-location-leaks-online/>

62 See: <https://imedinevs.ge/ge/dzalovnebi/108905/shsm-lgbtqpraidis-tsinaagmdeglegonisshemqmnis-shesakheb-levan-vasadzis-gantskhadebisshemdeg-gamodzieba-daitsko>

63 General proposal of the Public Defender of Georgia on the issue of preventing and combating discrimination: <http://www.ombudsman.ge/geo/qvela-zogadi-tsinadadeba/sakhalkho-damtsvelma-khelisuflebas-lgbt-temistsarmomadgenlebis-gamokhatvis-tavisuflebis-datsvisken-moutsoda>

64 General Comment No. 13 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights “Right to Education” (the body in charge of monitoring the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), 1999, Paragraph 1, See: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G99/462/16/PDF/G9946216.pdf?OpenElement>

Under the UN Sustainable Development Goals Agenda, states are committed to “providing inclusive and quality education and promoting equal lifelong learning opportunities” (Goal 4).

However, the right of LGBTQ youth to education is often restricted as a result of outright and indirect discrimination in these areas. Under international human rights law, LGBTQ pupils and students have the right to an education free from violence and discrimination, which promotes respect for human rights and the protection of fundamental freedoms.⁶⁵

According to UNESCO, exclusion from the education system in the case of the LGBTQ group often involves two common forms:

Implicit violence – when educational institutions exclude persons and marginalize them because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression;

Impact of Direct Violence – when an LGBTQ student misses class, or avoids going back to school so as to avoid violence.

Students who have poor academic performance and drop out of school at an early age have low qualifications, which ultimately affects their future employment opportunities. A broad analysis of homophobia and transphobia conducted in 2014 shows that homophobia and transphobia in developing economies are associated with low employment opportunities.⁶⁶ When educational institutions do not respond adequately to homophobia or transphobia, it can have a negative impact on the overall social climate. Violence can push pupils and students to experience an environment of fear, insecurity, learning and cognitive difficulties.⁶⁷

According to Recommendation CM/Rec (2010) 5 of the Council of Europe on anti-discrimination measures based on sexual orientation and gender identity, the member states should take appropriate legislative and other measures, aimed at educating staff and students, to ensure the effective exercise of the right to education without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. This includes, in particular, protecting the right of children and young people to receive an education in an environment that is safe and free from violence and other forms of discrimination and ill-treatment based on sexual orientation/gender identity.⁶⁸

65 Ibid.

66 M. V. L. Badgett, S. Nezhad, K. Waaldijk, and Y. V. D. M. Rodgers,. 2014. 'The Relationship between LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development: An Analysis of Emerging Economies', USAID, The Williams Institute.

67 UNESCO. 2016. *Out in the Open: Education Sector Responses to Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression*, See: <https://www.gale.info/doc/unesco/INT-2016-UNESCO-OutInTheOpen.pdf>

68 CM/Rec(2010)5, Paragraph 31.

The recommendation states that the protection of the right to education should include the provision of objective information about sexual orientation and gender identity, for example, in school curricula and educational materials; the provision of information, protection, and support to pupils and students that will enable them to live according to their sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition, member states may develop and implement school equality and security policies and action plans, as well as provide access to appropriate anti-discrimination training or support and educational facilities. Such measures should also take into account the rights of parents to the education of their children.⁶⁹

2.6. Access to Employment

Suitable/appropriate work means a combination of all aspects that are tailored to the needs and rights of employees, work that is productive, provides fair pay through social security and protection mechanisms, protects basic rights, offers equal opportunities and treatment, promotes career development and recognition, and a culture of listening to the problems and concerns of employees. Suitable/appropriate labour is the central effort for eradicating poverty, and an important path to equal, inclusive, and sustainable development.⁷⁰

The right to work is a fundamental right and is inseparable from the right to human dignity.⁷¹ Inadequate working conditions and the material consequences of unequal treatment in the workplace pose a risk that unequal treatment will go unpunished. Queer precariousness is mentioned in scientific literature in the context of economic inequality and unequal access to employment. LGBTQ people are particularly vulnerable to economic inequality because finding work with adequate conditions is especially difficult for this group and is often concentrated in low-wage and or vulnerable alternative economies.⁷²

No specific studies have been conducted on the employment opportunities or working environment of LGBTQ people in Georgia, however, practical experience shows that LGBTQ community members, due to their exclusion, cannot enjoy equal access to employment in society. According to a report by the UN Independent Expert on Georgia on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection from Violence and Discrimination,

69 CM/Rec(2010)5, Paragraph 32.

70 ILO, The Decent Work Agenda.

71 ISESCR, GR no. 18.

72 Weiss M. and Hollibaugh A. Queer Precarity and the Myth, *New Labor Forum*, Vol. 24(3), 2015

*"[members of the LGBTQ+ community] hide their sexual orientation or gender identity in order to have a decent job. Those, whose appearance does not meet the expectations of society, especially feminine men, said that they are not employed or in the case of employment they are marginalized, insulted and ridiculed, and in the case of disclosure of identity information, they may be fired [...] the most vulnerable and marginalized group are transgender women. They have a very little chance of being employed unless they live a double life. This is accompanied by difficulties with legal recognition of gender and the sad reality, in which most transgender women have identity documents which do not match their gender identity. Consequently, many of them are employed in the informal economy with poor working conditions and income."*⁷³

The LGBTQ group's lack of access to opportunities is due to both external factors, such as discrimination and other forms of unequal treatment, as well as subjective factors, including LGBTQ members' low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence. Consequently, a significant portion of the LGBTQ group members chooses a work environment that allows them to express themselves freely, without the expectation of discrimination, although this, with a few exceptions, leads them to concentrate on low-paying jobs and to remain in the "Whirlpool of precariousness".

2.7. Access to Healthcare

Discrimination and social exclusion experienced by LGBTQ people negatively affect not only the equal enjoyment of their fundamental rights, but also their physical and mental health and well-being. According to the Pan-American Health Organization, *"Regardless of the origins and manifestations of homophobia, any form of homophobia has a negative impact on LGBTQ people, their families and the wider community [...]"* *"Because homophobia is a public health problem that requires a complex approach"*⁷⁴

Under Article 12 of the 1966 UN Convention on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Member States recognize the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.⁷⁵ In addition to the general framework of health care, the rights of LGBTQ people may also be considered in the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights.⁷⁶ General Comment 22 of the Covenant, which clarifies and specifically

73 Mandate of an Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity from Violence and Discrimination Visit to Georgia. September 25th – October 5th, 2018. Post-Mission Statement.

74 Pan American Health Organization, Regional Office of WHO. *"Cures" For an Illness that Does Not Exist*: Purported Therapies Aimed at Changing Sexual Orientation Lack Medical Justification and Are Ethically Unacceptable.

75 ICESCR, Article 12.1

76 ICPD PoA.

addresses the fundamental issues of sexual and reproductive health, states that effective exercise of these rights is influenced by the “social determinants of health”.⁷⁷ In many countries, aspects of sexual and reproductive health are negatively impacted by social inequalities, unequal distribution of powers based on gender, sexual orientation, and other traits, affecting the quality of these and other related rights.⁷⁸ Accordingly, in order to realize the right to sexual and reproductive health, states must make efforts to address the social determinants that are reflected in legislation, institutional arrangements, and social practices that prevent individuals from exercising these rights.⁷⁹

As studies show, the quality of physical health is significantly affected by the unpreparedness and lack of information in the medical field about sexual orientation and gender identity.⁸⁰ Fear of stigma and negative attitudes, and in some cases discriminatory experiences, force members of the LGBTQ community to postpone, or even refuse, access to health care services, which can lead to more complex harm.

Important in terms of mental health is the empirical evidence that negative health outcomes are substantially dependent on social stressors manifested in LGBTQ group stigmatization and discriminatory practices.⁸¹ According to research, the LGBTQ group experiences both structural and institutional oppression in social protection systems, employment, health services, and legal policies, as well as individual oppression, which manifests itself in numerous practices of violence and harassment. These oppressions operate in the form of subjective and objective stressors, resulting in both mental disorders and psychological distress in these populations.⁸²

Studies confirm that institutional heterosexuality, high levels of homophobia, and social exclusion among members of the LGBTQ community are critical factors in determining their social status, mental health, and suicidal and self-destructive behaviour. In addition to individual stressors affecting the well-being of general population, there is also the concept of **social stress** in psychology, according to which stressors imply a combination of events and conditions that cause substantial change and force a person to adapt to a changed situation or new lifestyle.

77 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health (article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), Paragraph 7.

78 Ibid, Paragraph 8.

79 Ibid.

80 Aghdgomelashvili E. From Prejudice to Equality: Attitudes, Knowledge and Information Regarding the LGBTQ Community and Their Rights, WISG, 2016

81 Kristi E. Gamarel, S. L. (2012). Association Between Socioeconomic Position Discrimination and Psychological Distress: Findings from a Community-Based Sample of Gay and Bisexual Men in New York City. *American Journal of Public Health*, vol 102, no.11.

82 Herek, G. M., Gillis, J. R., & Cogan, J. C. (1999). Psychological Sequelae of Hate Crime Victimization Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, in press.

According to the model of social stress in the literature of psychology, the conditions of the social environment, and not just personal events, elicit the emergence of various stressors and affect a person's mental health and well-being. Consequently, social stress has a significant impact on people who belong to socially stigmatized groups. Stigma and discrimination against these groups on the basis of low socio-economic status, racism, xenophobia, sexism, and homophobia, affect their position in society and, consequently, cause additional stress.

To better describe the impact of social stress on LGBTQ people, Professor Eileen Meyer developed a model of "minority stress"⁸³ that includes several elements and is essentially related to a person's adaptation to and interaction with the social environment, in which alienation from social structures, norms and institutions plays a key role. Feelings of "abnormality", and the existence of social control and alienation from society, may have a significant impact on a person's well-being and provoke self-destructive behaviours, as the basic social needs are not met.⁸⁴

Although such studies have not been conducted in Georgia, which makes it difficult to apply the mentioned research trends to the country, the present study allows for certain assumptions, according to which the higher the social stressors, the greater their impact on an individual's physical, mental, and emotional states.

2.8. Social Protection and Homelessness

The right to adequate housing is part of the right to an adequate standard of living and is central to the enjoyment of all other economic, social, and cultural rights.⁸⁵

In addition to the social predicates, adequate housing is closely linked with violence and social vulnerability, which create the most favourable environment for homelessness.

Thus, discrimination is often both a cause and a consequence of homelessness. Those who are discriminated against on grounds of race, place of residence, socio-economic status, gender, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, and other bases are at greater risk of homelessness.⁸⁶ Global studies show that lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-

83 Meyer, Ilan H. 1995. "Minority Stress and Mental Health in Gay Men". *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour* 7: 9-25; Meyer, I. 2003. "Prejudice, Social Stress and Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Populations: Conceptual Issues and Research Evidence". *Psychological Bulletin* 129(5): 674-697.

84 Durkheim. 1951 (As quoted by Meyer 1995).

85 CESCR General Comment No. 4: The Right to Adequate Housing (Art. 11 (1) of the Covenant).

86 A/HRC/31/54, Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, 2015, Paragraph 39.

gender and intersex young people make up a large proportion of homeless people, are subject to additional stigma and social exclusion from their families and communities, are at greater risk of violence, and often do not have shelters adjusted to their needs.⁸⁷

According to the UN Special Rapporteur, homelessness is the result of individual circumstances and broad systemic factors. The human rights framework must respond to both. The human rights approach to homelessness suggests that it may be related to individual dynamics such as psychosocial problems, job loss, and, other factors, as well as ineffective state mechanisms that fail to respond to individuals' unique circumstances with respect for their dignity and with compassion. The human rights approach must also address the pervasive structural causes of homelessness embodied in national policies, programs, and legislation, as well as in international financial and development agreements that contribute to and create the ground for homelessness.⁸⁸

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights believes that the right to housing should not be considered in a narrow sense, but rather that the right to housing should guarantee the right to live in a safe, peaceful, and dignified environment anywhere.⁸⁹ According to the definition and typology/classification (ETHOS) developed by FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless) and the European Observatory for Homelessness, the concept of housing is defined by three main factors – the physical, social and legal aspects of living space. The physical dimension of living space implies the conditions that are adequate to the needs of the people living there; the social aspect is defined as a safe and private environment that enables social relationships; the legal dimension of housing implies the legal guarantees of ownership of the space. According to the research literature, the deterioration of individual conditions, the loss of certain elements, or a combination of these conditions determine the state of homelessness and lack of adequate housing.⁹⁰

There are no statistical data in Georgia that would allow us to identify the causes of homelessness. Consequently, it is not possible to assess the extent of the experience of homelessness among LGBTQ people through objective criteria, which implies that the state should ensure that social protection systems are organized to respond to and protect all groups that face or may face the risk of homelessness.

87 A/HRC/31/54, paragraph 44.

88 A/HRC/31/54, paragraph 28.

89 Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Miloon Kothari, 2005, paragraph 13.

90 Kate Amore, Michael Baker and Philippa Howden-Chapman. 2011. *The ETHOS Definition and Classification of Homelessness: An Analysis*, *European Journal of Homelessness* 5(2). December.

2.9. Coming-out⁹¹

Minority stress in society can be caused by both external (discrimination, hate-motivated crime) and internal factors (internalized homophobia), both by revealing one's sexual identity (coming-out) and by concealing one's identity.⁹² LGBTQ people, who may change behaviours for the purpose of social adaptation, manifest minority identities in different ways. Consequently, they may limit social interaction with the outside world, anticipating rejection, conceal their identity for fear of violence and harm, or internalize stigma, manifested later as severe internalized homophobia.⁹³ The severity of these forms is due to the fact that both external and internal factors are chronic/systemic in nature and may haunt a person throughout life.

Studies point out that having a supportive environment, including family, friends, and colleagues, plays an important role in coping with minority stress. In order to study the impact of external influences/external factors on the health and well-being of the LGBTQ group, an important place in the social sciences is devoted to the study of the role of the family environment. As studies show, its negative perception and its escalation into internalized homophobia are facilitated by the LGBTQ group's expectations of parental rejection, as internalized homophobia increases psychological stress by reducing interpersonal support, leading to concealment of information about sexual orientation. As the analysis shows, gay and lesbian individuals who identify the problem of internalized homophobia rarely resort to coming out with family members and loved ones.⁹⁴

As Meyer describes, in overcoming or reinforcing the stress of minorities, it is important for a person to reveal his or her identity to those around him or her. Consequently, the coming out has a significant impact on a person's social position with the outside world, as well as on the origin and stigma of the risk of violence, especially within his or her own family.

Valentine's significant study of coming out⁹⁵ critically describes its value for such fundamental aspect of intimate life as deep social bond of connection between individuals –

91 This chapter was first published in the EMC study on Domestic Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Legislative Gaps, and Policy Challenges, 2018.

92 Meyer, I. 2003. "Prejudice, Social Stress and Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Populations: Conceptual Issues and Research Evidence". *Psychological Bulletin* 129(5): 674-697.

93 Ibid.

94 Julia A. Puckett, Eva N. Woodward, Ethan H. Mereish, and David W. Pantalone. 2015. "Parental Rejection Following Sexual Orientation Disclosure: Impact on Internalized Homophobia, Social Support, and Mental Health." *LGBT Health* 2,(3).

95 Valentine G., Skelton T., and Butler R.. 2003. "Coming Out and Outcomes: Negotiating Lesbian and Gay Identities with, and in, the Family, Environment and Planning". *Society and Space* 21: 479-499.

the family. Before talking about the coming out experience, however, Valentine critically describes the impact of the neoliberal system and individualism in the modern world on the institution of the family, a change that was based on the idea of liberation, rights, self-realization, and choice. Yet, at the same time, he charges it with creating a heavy personal responsibility for one's own development and success.

According to Valentine, although the unconditional dominance of traditional, nuclear families in the West is changing and relationships are evolving differently, the new system has in fact changed only the forms of "doing families" and not the hierarchies within it. Postmodern families or post-families may differ from the traditional family in the degree and duration of duties, while the desire of its members for intimacy, resource sharing, and responsibilities remain intact. As a result, despite individualization, the transition from childhood to independent adulthood involves many risks, and it is still mediated within families. An individualized approach fails to ensure the well-being of individuals. At a time when access to the labour market is becoming increasingly difficult, school and higher education is not the basis for basic social benefits, and social security benefits are not even available, leaving young people half-dependent on their families. According to Jones, "*the restructuring of the welfare state and the reduction of social assistance for young people, which should have helped them leave their parents' homes, has delayed this process and often even made it impossible*".⁹⁶ Due to their inability to support themselves financially, young people become dependent on their families and therefore, in order for them to leave their families, they must be able to do so at the expense of family resources. As a result, young people often achieve social autonomy from their parents (in terms of social identity, sexuality) before they gain financial and residential independence.⁹⁷

Given the importance of the family as a safe environment, coming out for many young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people poses a threat because of their fear of losing the family's support and facing rejection,⁹⁸ leaving them alone in a social environment where the state does not stand by them.

In view of the above, in most cases, the decision of a gay or lesbian person to come out is not only based on their individual desire, it is also related to the process of "creating" a family, and the responsibility and relationship with family members. For young people, the family is central to their personal lives, not least because of their need for emotional and financial support, so any decision over coming out is related to a potential loss. At

96 Jones G. 2000. "Experimenting with Households and Inventing 'Home'". *International Social Science Journal* 52(2): 183–194.

97 Jones G. 1987. "Leaving the Parental Home: An Analysis of Early Housing Careers". *Journal of Social Policy* 16: 49–74; Jones G. 1995. *Leaving Home*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

98 Finch J, Mason J. 1993. *Negotiating Family Responsibilities*. London: Routledge

the same time, the emotional connection of young people with their family members, the obligation to protect parents and cousins from pain, guilt, and embarrassment play an essential role in making individual decisions.⁹⁹

Interestingly, as a rule, at coming out, the LGBTQ people rarely share information about their sexuality or identity with their whole families, but rather have to select someone who, in addition to providing emotional support, also simplifies the process of coming out for other family members and prepares them for the news. Consequently, coming out does not become a one-time act, but a process that involves between family members and the loved ones. Typically, the mother, who is the key emotional agent within the family space, plays this role.¹⁰⁰ Studies show that members of the LGBTQ group are less likely to approach their fathers for fear of violence and intolerance. The validity of this fear is confirmed by other studies, which indicate that fathers are less likely to have a receptive attitude towards homosexuality than mothers and cousins.¹⁰¹

Therefore, according to Valentine, coming out is not only an individual process, the results of which affect an individual gay, bisexual or lesbian person, but also a collective process that affects the family and its members. As a result, homophobia is not only experienced by the individual, but also becomes a process of marginalization that is passed on to others. Thus, the fear of personal and family identity damage, discrimination, and social exclusion creates a barrier for parents to disclose their children's sexual identity to other family members and the public. Consequently, the closeted state often embraces a collective space.¹⁰²

99 Valentine et al. 2003.

100 Valentine G. 1997. "My Son's a Bit Dizz", „My Wife's a Bit Soft": Gender, Children and Cultures of Parenting". *Gender, Place and Culture* 4: 37–62

101 D'Augelli A, Hershberger S, and Pilkington. 1998. "Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth and Their Families: Disclosure of Sexual Orientation and Its Consequences". *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 68: 361– 371.

102 Valentine et al. 2003.

3. Research Objectives and Methodological Framework

3.1. Research Objectives

The aim of the present study is to explore social vulnerability, economic situation and experience of violence of the LGBTQ community in Georgia. In order to achieve this goal, it has become necessary to carry out the following tasks:

- ▶ Study the socio-demographic profile of the LGBTQ community;
- ▶ Study the experiences related to coming-out;
- ▶ Identify the extent of physical and psychological violence, including a presentation of the subjective perspective on the perception of violence;
- ▶ Identify barriers to LGBTQ community's access to general, vocational, and higher education;
- ▶ Identify labour rights violations and study discriminatory practices in the workplace and identify barriers to entering the labour market;
- ▶ Make an assessment of physical and mental health status of members of the LGBTQ community, and study discriminatory practices in the process of access to and use of health services; also, assess the existence and quality of trans-specific health services in relation to the needs of community members.
- ▶ Measure the effectiveness of social security services, including the identification of housing issues and the study of the experiences of homelessness;
- ▶ Identify motivations for LGBTQ and/or Queer formal and informal activism, assess the impact of NGO work, from the perspective of community members, to improve and develop strategies tailored to their needs.

3.2. Research Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of sociological research were used to achieve the goals and objectives of the research. However, we used the qualitative research method (namely, focus groups) as an aid to quantitative research – to develop the variables and indicators that formed the basis of the main research tool (questionnaire).

Research method: The sociological research was conducted with face-to-face interview method, based on a structured questionnaire. Although practice shows that quantitative surveys of the LGBTQ group use online survey format, in this study, face-to-face interview method was preferred to ensure greater credibility.

Object of the study: Members of the LGBTQ community participated in the study. The target group was determined based on the following criteria:

- ▶ A person who identifies himself or herself as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or represents any other gender identity;
- ▶ A person who was 18 or older at the time of the fieldwork.

According to the above criteria, 375 respondents participated in the study, however, as a result of data processing and refinement, only 320 interviews were valid for the study. The remaining questionnaires were considered irrelevant or insufficient for the research.

3.3. Research Tools

The main tool of the survey – the questionnaire – was created in several steps. In the first stage, focus groups met in Tbilisi, Telavi, Kutaisi, and Batumi to study the social needs and experiences of the LGBTQ community. This helped to identify specific indicators and variables that corresponded to the goals and objectives of the study and, consequently, allowed for the inclusion relevant issues in the questionnaire.

In addition, the process of building the initial version of the questionnaire was based on credible and valid research on LGBTQ issues in other countries and the corresponding tools. We used a study published in 2014 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey (FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014); a survey conducted by the UK Government Equality Office – National LGBT Survey (UK Government Equality Office, 2018); a study conducted by regional LGBT organizations ILGA Europe and IGLYO – Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Europe.¹⁰³

An important task was to synthesize individual questions (or question blocks) and bring them in line with the local social, cultural, and political context. To this end, the questionnaire underwent an expert evaluation process. In particular, the initial version of the questionnaire was sent to LGBTQ community organizations and other human rights professionals in Georgia for evaluation, namely the Women’s Initiative Support Group (WISG), The Identoba (Youth), Equality Movement, Tanadgoma, Temida, Representatives of RFSL, and the Public Defender’s Office of Georgia. Experts were asked to assess the relevance and validity of the blocks in the questionnaire, taking into account the existing

¹⁰³ Judit Takács, ILGA-Europe and IGLYO, Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Europe, 2006.

social, cultural, and political context. After the expert evaluation, a certain part of the questionnaire was modified to make it easy to use and understand.

The next step in the expert evaluation process was to pilot the questionnaire with the prospective respondents of the study. A pilot interview was conducted with **15 members of the LGBTQ community**, based on which some modifications were made to the questionnaire in terms of consistency of the thematic blocks, linguistic editing, and definitions of terms.

Finally, the questionnaire used consists of 16 thematic sections and covers the following issues: socio-demographics, coming out, life satisfaction, physical and psychological violence, education, employment and labour relations, health, including trans-specific health, legal recognition, social protection mechanisms, and LGBTQ formal and informal activism sections.

The questionnaire was mainly presented in the form of closed and semi-open-ended questions, although in a few cases open-ended questions were used, which allowed the respondents to provide additional information about their experience and vision.

3.4. Sampling

In quantitative studies, probabilistic sampling methods based on sampling statistical operations are used to generalize the results of the study to the entire population. In representative sampling, the parameters of the sample set must accurately reflect the general set, allowing the researcher to examine a small group of people, and then generalize the results to the overall set. When selecting such a sample, it is important to follow two principles: I) the sampling characteristics must accurately reflect the characteristics of the population from which we are taking the data; II) Each unit in the population should have an equal chance of being selected. The more difficult it is to obtain countable (identifiable) data on the general population, the harder is the selection process.^{104 105}

The LGBTQ population is a difficult and indefinable category, as the individual's gender identity and sexual orientation are self-identifiable categories, so there is no (and cannot be) a type of database that would provide information on the general population of the LGBTQ community.

104 Rohwer, G. (2010). *Models in Statistical Social Research (Social Research Today)*. Routledge.

105 Singh, K. (2007). *Quantitative Social Research Methods*. Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd.

Due to the circumstances referred to above, the study uses a non-probabilistic, **targeted sampling method**, which makes it difficult to talk about the results of the study in general and to generalize the data presented in the report to the entire population of the LGBTQ community in Georgia. In this case, our goal was to see the experiences and needs of self-identifying LGBTQ people and to gather indicative information about their problems. **Targeted sampling in the study was carried out with the aid of the snowball principle.**

The distribution of respondents in the survey is unequal by regions and overall, the total number of community members living in regions is low in the total number of respondents interviewed in the survey. Weighting was not performed by region during the data analysis, as it is important to have information about the general population or the actual distribution of the groups we need during the weighting. Due to the lack of information on the selected community, it was impossible to determine the specific share of community members in the total population of each region. The data on the region is presented in the study only for the purpose of description. Similarly, it is impossible to talk about the accuracy of the confidentiality intervals and statistical tests used in the analysis process because the data were not based on representative sampling.

Since the survey was conducted in close collaboration with community organizations, despite our efforts to cover all age groups in the survey, most of the respondents are divided into 18-23 and 24-29 age groups. However, due to the nature of the selection, the present study may not accurately describe the needs and attitudes of LGBTQ people who are not familiar with the community organizations or do not have sufficient information about them (the share of those who do not know community organizations in Georgia is 5.6% of the survey – a total of 18 respondents).

Fieldwork: Fieldwork was conducted by up to 20 interviewers. Data were collected in the field based on a printed questionnaire. The fieldwork was carried out from September to the end of December 2019.

Data Sorting and Analysis: In parallel with the fieldwork, a data grid was created using SPSS software and data was entered into the system. After entering the data, they were prepared for analysis, which included coding the answers to the open-ended question and clearing the data.

Respondents had the opportunity to clarify information about their sexual orientation and gender identity by submitting an answer. The grouping of respondents was carried out based on the status of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Due to the re-

search limits, the specified identities were grouped under other umbrella identities. Under the gender identity category, a trans category was included, which for the purposes of the study, in turn, included a combination of transgender woman (MtF), transgender man (FtM), and non-binary/a-gender gender Queer/gender fluid groups. In some cases, trans identities, which included gender fluid, non-binary, a-gender, and other identities, simultaneously considered themselves in the LGB category. In these cases, the respondents' experiences were analysed in relation to the identity that was the cause of their vulnerability in their case.

Considering the critically small number of respondents, the Intersex category survey could not be conducted during the analysis, on the one hand, due to statistically insufficient data, and on the other hand, due to the risk of breaching the anonymity of respondents.

We believe that the division of the LGBTQ+ community into fixed groups is not an objective method of studying this group. However, due to the methodological limitations of quantitative research, grouping identities under broader umbrellas is only instrumental in identifying identity-based social vulnerabilities and violent experiences.

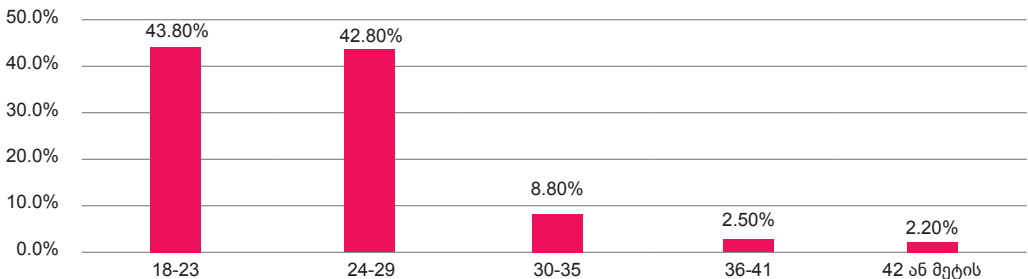
4. Quantitative Research Results

4.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics

370 respondents participated in the present quantitative study, however, after checking and filtering the data, 320 interviews turned out to be valid for the analysis phase. Accordingly, the data presented in the report reflects the data of 320 respondents.

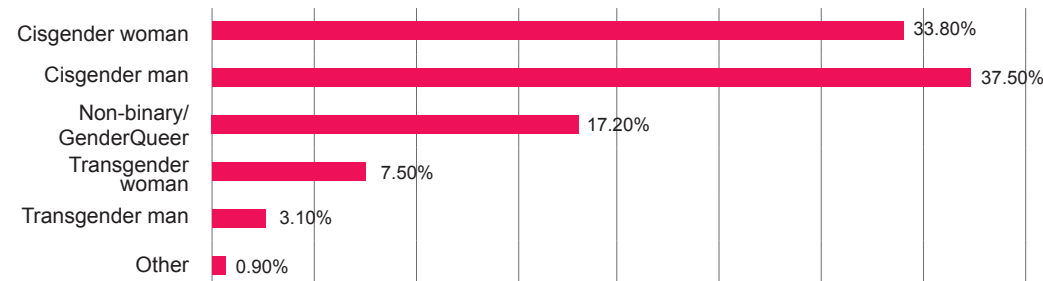
At the stage of data processing, the age variable was grouped into five categories, among which the percentages of respondents were distributed as follows: the share of respondents aged 18-23 and 24-29 is almost equal (43.8% for 18-23 years and 42.8% for 24-29 years). The overall share of respondents aged 30-35 in the survey is 8.8%. Respondents aged 36-41 represent 2.5%, 42 and 42+ respondents are represented in the survey by 2.2%.

Chart №1: Age distribution of the respondents.



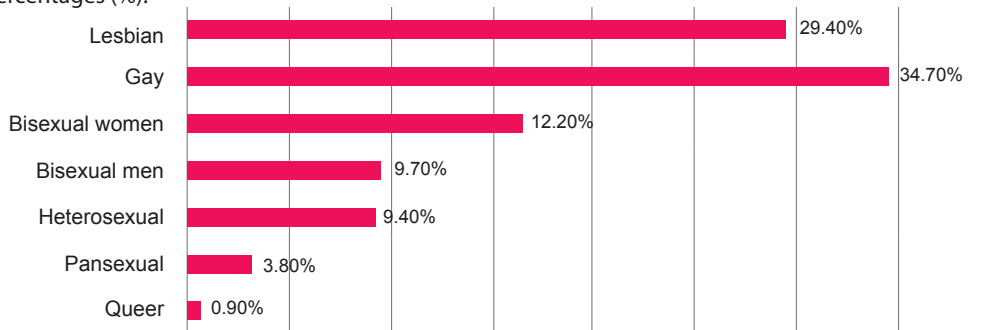
As regards the distribution of respondents according to gender identities, 33.8% of the respondents are cisgender women, 37.5% are cisgender men, 17.2% are non-binary/gender Queer/ a-gender/gender fluid, 7.5% are transgender women, and 3.1% are transgender men. 0.9% of respondents (0.3% – Queer; 0.6% – I do not know) indicated “other” or “I do not know” answer to this question.

Chart №2. Distribution of the respondents according to the gender identity.



The distribution of respondents according to sexual orientation is as follows: 34.7% of respondents belong to the gay group, 29.4% to the lesbian group, the total number of bisexual respondents adds up to 21.9%, of which 12.2% are bisexual women and 9.7% – bisexual men. The number of heterosexual respondents in the study is 9.4%, each of whom defines herself/himself as a transgender woman or a transgender man according to gender identity. 3.8% of respondents defined their own orientation as “pansexual”, and 0.9% – Queer. See Chart №3.

Chart №3. Distribution of Respondents according to their sexual orientation; data are presented in percentages (%).



Besides sexual orientation and gender identity, the questionnaire focused on community members' self-identification with being Queer and specific definitions of Queer. Significantly, 72.5% of respondents perceived themselves as Queer, 22.2% answered negatively to the question, and 5.3% found it difficult to answer the question unequivocally.

At the same time, in order to better understand the meaning of the respondents' use of the term Queer, in the research process, the respondents had the opportunity to state their position on four different definitions of Queer. These definitions are based on theoretical, political, and cultural use of the term¹⁰⁶, which reflect simple propositions that are consistent on the one hand, with the understanding of Queer theory and Queer activism, and on the other hand, with cultural notation and therefore, equated with identity.

As a result, it should be noted that the majority of respondents **agree** with the provisions that (1) “Queer is an umbrella term and includes the LGBTQ+ spectrum” (61.6%) and (2) “Queerness is a form of LGBTQ activism aimed at combating homophobia” (52.5 %). Interestingly, the majority of respondents **disagree** with the statement that “Queerness is a form of radical left-wing political activism, one of the goals of which is to achieve social justice and confront the hetero-patriarchal order” (50.6%). In view of these results, on the one hand, Queerness is virtually rejected as a critique of normativity, and on the other,

106 Wickman, J. 2010. “Queer Activism – what might that me?” Trikster 4.

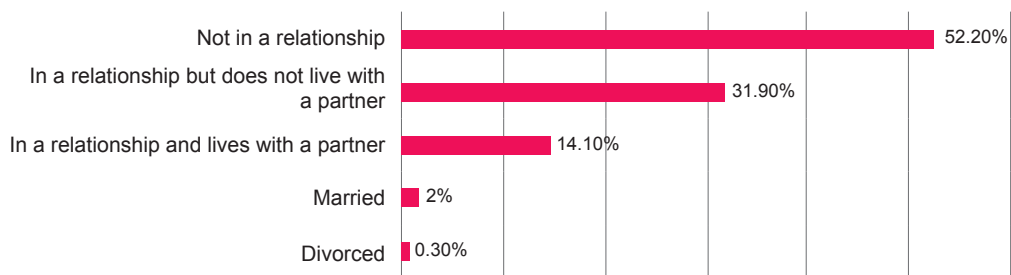
the theory that “the goal of the Queer struggle is not to achieve tolerance and equal status, but to dismantle these institutions and notions”¹⁰⁷ is widely accepted. For detailed figures, see Table №1.

Table №1. Particular definitions of Queer and distribution of the respondents’ responses.

	Thesis	Agree	Disagree	Find it difficult to answer
1	Queer is an umbrella term and embraces the LGBTQ + spectrum.	61.6%	32.5%	5.9%
2	Queer opposes grouping people according to their sexualities	41.9%	46.3%	11.9%
3	Queer is a form of radical left-wing political activism whose main goal is to achieve social justice and to oppose the heteropatriarchal order.	38.4%	50.6%	10.9%
4	Being Queer is a form of LGBTQ activism, the main goal of which is to fight homophobia.	52.5%	41.9%	5.6%

Regarding marital status, the majority of respondents (52.2%) are not in a relationship, and 46% – are in a relationship with another person (of which, 31.9% do not live with a partner, and 14.1% live with a partner). The next position was given to the category of married respondents, which came to 1.6% of the sample. As for the number of divorced respondents, their part in the survey is relatively small and represents only 0.3%.

Chart №4. Marital status of respondents.



107 Warner, M. 1993. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. London: University of Minnesota Press.

Cross-tabulation analysis showed (Table №2) that according to identities, the largest share of respondents who were not in a relationship were bisexual female respondents (73.0%), followed by gay respondents (59.1%); of those who are in a partnership and do not live with a partner, the largest proportion are bisexual men (45.2%) and lesbians (39.8%). There is a high number of lesbian and gay respondents living with a partner (18.3% and 15.5%). For a detailed picture of the distribution of marital status according to respondents' identities, see Table №2.

Table №2. Distribution of respondents' marital status according to their identities (N=320).¹⁰⁸

	Not in a relationship	In a relationship (Does not live with a partner)	In a relationship (Lives with a partner)	Divorced	Married	Number of respondents N
Lesbian	41.9%	39.8%	18.3%	0.0%	0.0%	93
Gay	59.1%	24.5%	15.5%	0.0%	0.9%	110
Bisexual woman	73.0%	18.9%	2.7%	0.0%	5.4%	37
Bisexual man	41.9%	45.2%	9.7%	0.0%	3.2%	31
Transgender	50.0%	32.4%	11.8%	2.9%	2.9%	34
Other	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15

49.7% of respondents live with family/parents, 28.7% live alone, 21.3% in a shared space (with a roommate), and 0.3% in a state institution for victims of violence (crisis centre/ shelter).

Only 4.1% of the respondents have a child or children, of which 69.4% are bisexual respondents. 91.7% of respondents who have a child or children (n = 13) do not live with their children.

According to ethnicity, the majority of respondents (94.1%) consider themselves belonging to the Georgian ethnic group, 1.9% – Russian, 0.9% – Armenian, and only 3.1% of respondents were included in the category of “other”.

¹⁰⁸ Respondents' identities were reduced to 5 main categories based on the goals and objectives of the study: lesbian, gay, bisexual woman, bisexual man, and transgender respondents. Respondents according to other identities represented 4.7% of the total selection, which is why the data of these respondents are presented together, in the “other” category.

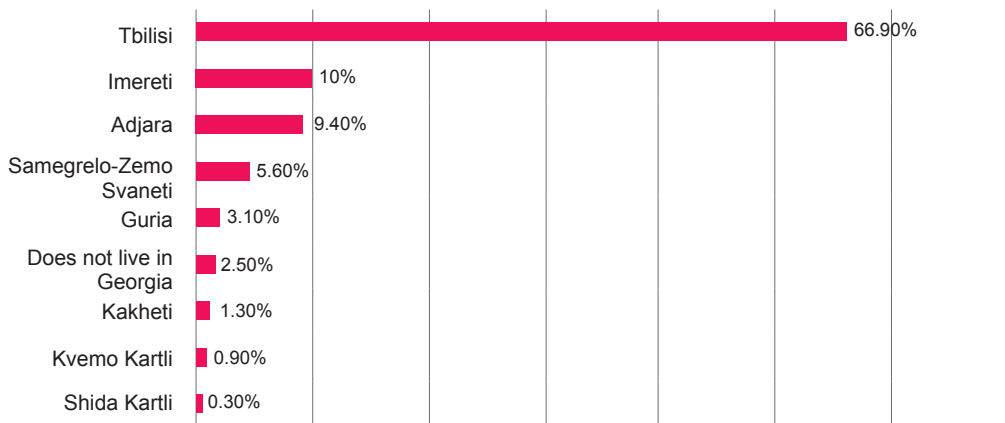
As regards to the **religious affiliation** of the respondents, answers to the proposed categories were distributed as follows: the majority of respondents (37.5%) consider themselves atheists, and a high number of respondents consider themselves Orthodox Christians. See Chart №5.

Chart №5: Religious affiliation of respondents.



Regarding the distribution of respondents by **place of residence**, 66.9% of the respondents in the survey lived in Tbilisi during the period the fieldwork was carried out. The respondents living in Imereti (10%) and Adjara (9.4%) regions are almost equally represented in the survey. 5.6% of respondents lived in Samegrelo and Zemo Svaneti region and 3.1% in Guria region. The total number of respondents living in other regions of Georgia is 2.5%. Also, the number of immigrant respondents in the survey constitutes 2.5% (N = 310). 49.7% of respondents had lived in the indicated regions throughout all their lives.

Chart №6: Distribution the respondents by place of residence.

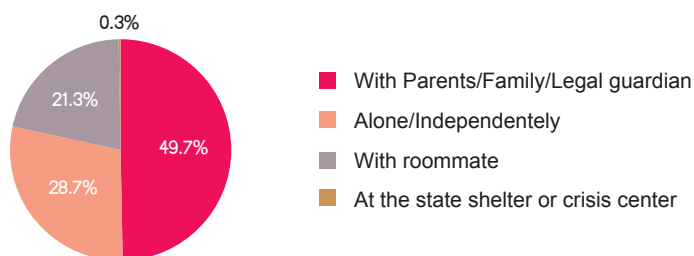


Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia

Respondents who had changed their place of residence within the previous 5 years (50.4%, n=161) identified the main reasons for their change of residence. 58.6% of them cite relocation to another school/job as the main reason for the change of residence, 8.9% cite migration for a greater prospect of employment opportunities, 8.3% cite change of residence due to armed conflict, and **7.6% refer to a general homophobic environment as the main reason for the change.**

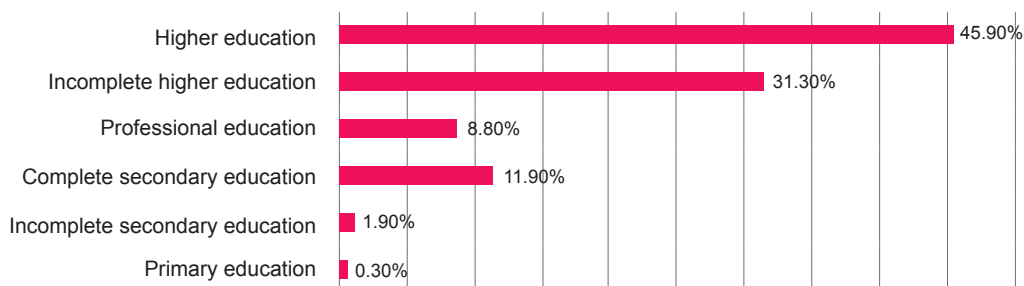
At the moment of the research 49.7% of respondents were living with their parents/family, 50% independently – alone or with a roommate. See Chart №6.1.

Chart №6.1. Distribution of respondents by the place of living.



The assessment of the **level of education** revealed that a large proportion (45.9%) have higher education (awarded a Bachelor's or Master's degree). 31.3% had an incomplete higher education status at the time of the fieldwork process; for 11.9% of the respondents the highest level of education is completed secondary education. 8.8% have received professional education. 8.8% have received professional education. See Chart №7.

Chart №7. Level of education achieved in the respondents.



4.1.1. Income

The income of almost a third of the interviewees (29.1%) falls under the range of GEL 251 to GEL 600. 27.5% of respondents indicate that their income is in the range of 601-1000 GEL. In the cases of more than one fifth (22.2%) of the respondents, income is in the range of 1001 GEL to 2000 GEL. The data distributed in the other categories is less than 10%. See Chart №8.

Chart №8. Average monthly income of respondents (N = 320).

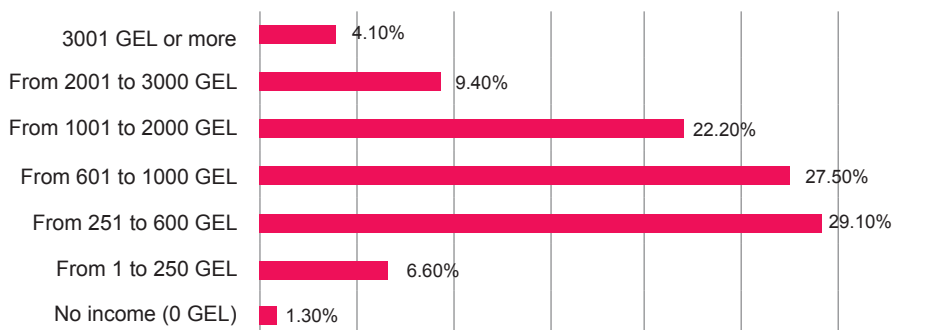
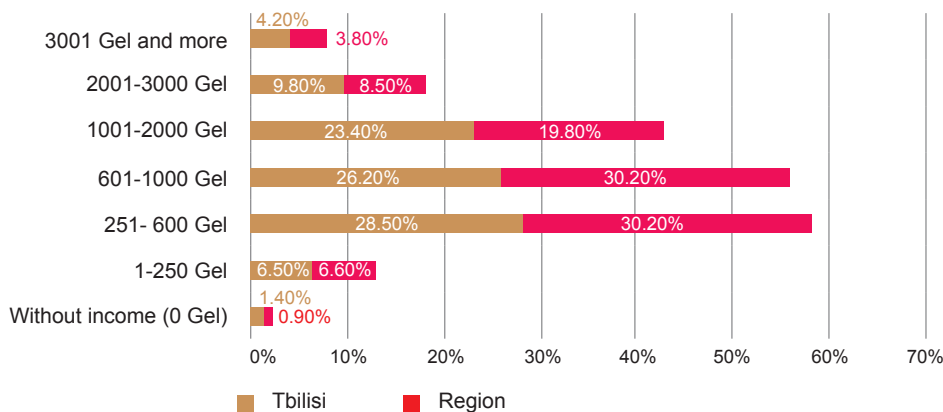


Chart №9: Distribution of incomes according to regions.¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁹ Due to the small number of cases, individual variants of the answers were combined into one category (3 Kvemo Kartli and 4 Shida Kartli merged into the category “other”). The 5th, 6th, 8th, and 11th response options did not fit into the analysis process due to the selection of the study.

Table №3: Distribution of incomes according to the identity the respondents.

	2001 GEL or more	From 1001 to 2000 GEL	From 601 to 1000 GEL	From 251 to 600 GEL	From 1 to 250 GEL	Without an income (0 GEL)	n, number of respondents
Lesbian	9.7%	28.0%	36.6%	17.2%	6.5%	2.2%	93
Gay	11.8%	20.9%	22.7%	38.2%	6.4%	0%	110
Bisexual woman	18.9%	5.4%	16.2%	40.5%	13.5%	5.4%	37
Bisexual man	16.2%	35.5%	25.8%	22.6%	0%	0%	31
Transgender	23.5%	11.8%	32.4%	23.5%	8.8%	0%	34
Other	6.7%	33.3%	26.7%	33.3%	0%	0%	15
LGBTQ Total:	13.5%	22.2%	27.5%	29.1%	6.6%	1.3%	320

It is noteworthy that a large proportion of respondents (46.3%) indicate that the income they receive on average is only spent on food and clothing, and they are unable to afford expensive items. More than a fifth (23.4%) estimate that current income is limited to food and household necessities, but not clothing. 16.6% of respondents can buy expensive household items with the existing level of income, but cannot afford a car. Respondents in the next category do not even have money for food (7.8%), while 5.3% of respondents can afford to buy anything they want with their existing income. 0.6% of respondents refused to answer.

When asked about the source of income, 74.7% of respondents indicated salary as the source. For 38.8% of respondents, family members are the source of income. Some of the respondents receive allowance for the socially vulnerable. Only 0.6% of respondents belong to this category.

Chart №10: Respondents' sources of income.

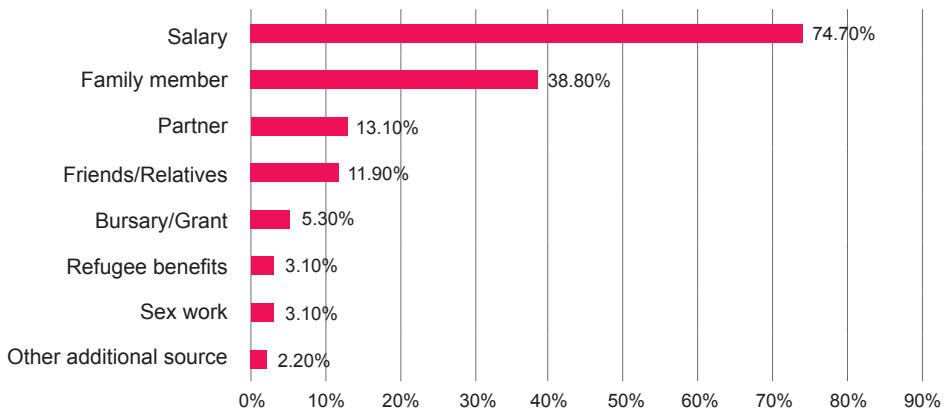
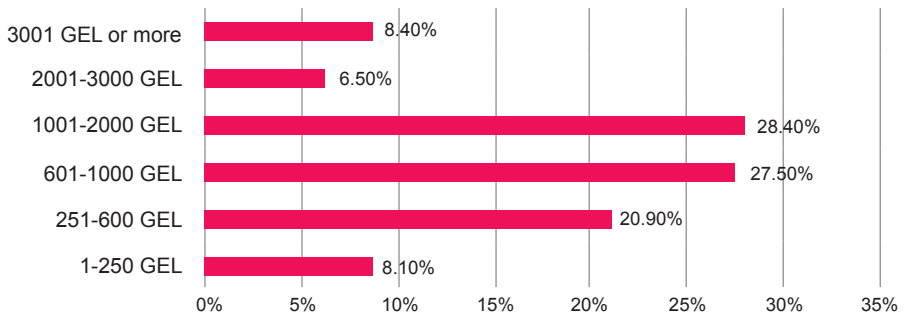


Chart №11: Average expenditure of respondents in the last month.



The research shows that no matter how much income the respondents have, it is largely analogous to their monthly expenditure, which means that respondents are not given the opportunity to save money from income for other needs in the future. This is confirmed by the fact that **only 26.6% of respondents (n = 85, N = 320) have personal savings, while 45.0% of respondents have debt (or financial liability).**

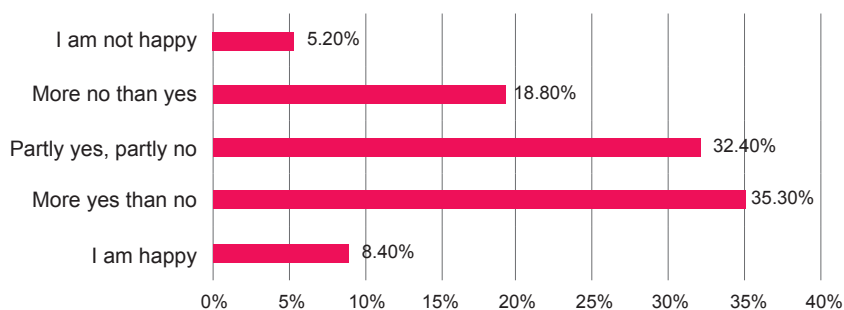
In terms of the connection between well-being and income, it is interesting to note that only 68.4% of respondents have the opportunity to relax at winter and summer resorts. 49.1% of the respondents have never travelled outside Georgia with their own funds. Also, it is interesting that **96.1% of respondents have full access to the Internet while only 68.8% of respondents have their own personal computer.**

4.1.2. Satisfaction with Life

The survey assessed the respondents' **perception of their own happiness** on a 10-point scale, where 1 meant "I am not happy" and 10 – "I am happy". Out of the 10-point scale, the mean index of the Happiness Scale is 5.9 points in the surveyed respondents (St.d 2.08; Med. 6.0). Interestingly, compared to the above data, according to the CRRC Caucasus Barometer, the average population of Georgia feels more happy than unhappy, namely on a 10-point scale, the happiness figure is 7.31 according to the 2019 data.¹¹⁰

Chart №12: Distribution of respondents' happiness scores on a 5-point scale.

Are you happy or not?



As for the distribution of happiness scores according to the identities of the respondents, in the case of the lesbian respondents surveyed, 28% answered that they are more happy than unhappy, while 17.2% indicated they are more unhappy than happy. At the same time, exactly 17.2% indicated that they are happy, while 5.4% choose the category "I am not happy".

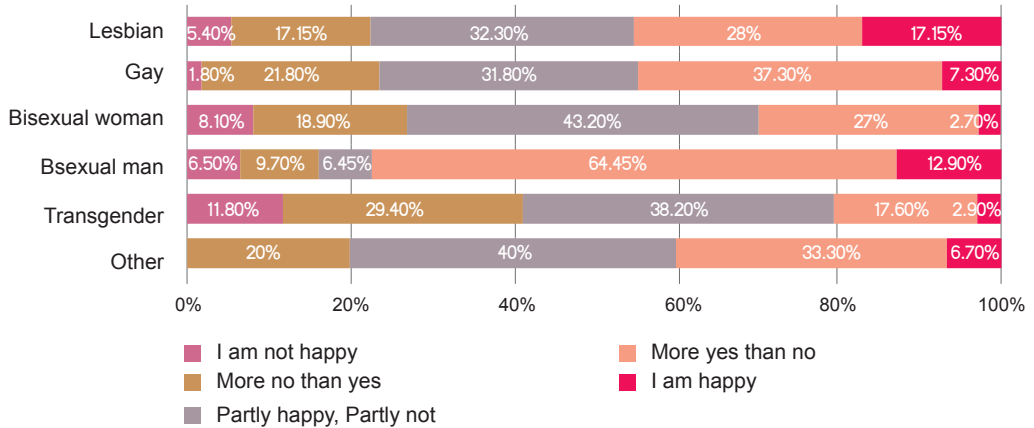
In the case of gay respondents, unlike the lesbian ones, the number of the respondents answering "I am more happy than not" is higher (37.3%). 21.8% even indicated that they are more unhappy than happy.

There is a significant difference in the perception of one's own happiness between bisexual female and bisexual male respondents. **More than half (64.5%) of bisexual male respondents indicate that they consider themselves more happy than unhappy, while almost a quarter of bisexual female respondents (27%) consider themselves in this category.** At the same time, 18.9% of bisexual women tend to be more not so happy with their own lives, which in the case of bisexual male respondents comes to 9.7%.

110 CRRC, Caucasus Barometer, 2020

In the case of transgender respondents, a higher number of respondents chose categories such as “I am not happy” or “more no than yes”. The number of such respondents is 41.2% (I am not happy – 11.8%, more unhappy than happy – 29.4%). See the detailed figures in Chart №13. (Statistical test for comparison of means showed that the differences between the groups were statistically significant ($Sig = 0.001$)).

Chart №13: Distribution of happiness scale scores according to identities.



We asked the respondents how comfortable they feel in Georgia. The proportion of respondents who rated the answer “very uncomfortable” or “uncomfortable” is significantly higher than the proportion of respondents who chose the answer “comfortable” or “very comfortable” to the question (very uncomfortable/uncomfortable – 37.2%; comfortable – 25.27%), while 40.0% of the respondents chose the “partly comfortable” and “partly uncomfortable” answer.

Cross-tabulation analysis showed that **the highest rate of dissatisfaction with their own lives was prevalent among transgender respondents – very uncomfortable (20.6%) and uncomfortable (35.3%)**. See Table №4. Differences between groups are statistically significant ($Sig. = 0.00$).

Table №4: Distribution of life assessment in Georgia according to the identities of the respondents.

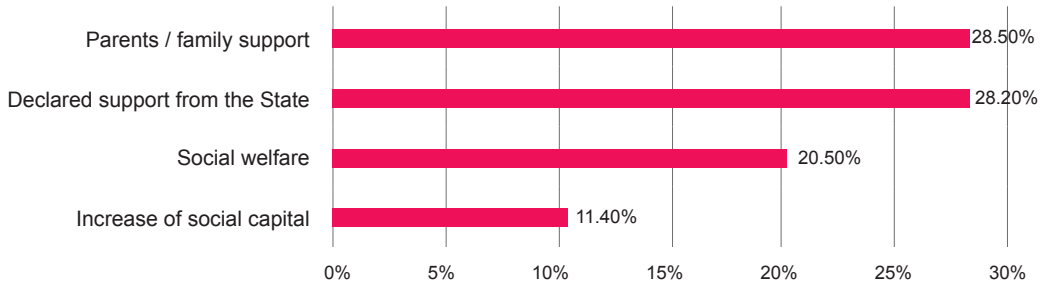
Respondents' identity	Very comfortable	Uncomfortable	Partly comfortable partly uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very uncomfortable	Other (refusing to answer/ I do not know)
Lesbian	10.8%	16.1%	51.6%	19.4%	2.2%	0%
Gay	15.5%	23.6%	31.8%	25.5%	1.8%	1.8%
Bisexual woman	5.4%	37.8%	40.5%	16.2%	0.0%	0%
Bisexual man	9.7%	22.6%	45.2%	19.4%	3.2%	0%
Transgender	20.6%	35.3%	35.3%	2.9%	0.0%	5.9%
Other	20.0%	20.0%	26.7%	26.7%	6.7%	0%

It is noteworthy that 44.4% of the respondents mentioned that had they had the opportunity to leave Georgia forever, they would have done so; 70.9% of them referred to **economic reasons** as an important factor determining why people leave the country, 66.5% see the reason as the **homophobic environment in Georgia**, 45.2% identify it with a **low quality of education**, and 38.0% – a **low quality of healthcare**. 86.2% consider the expectation of a better life as a significant reason for leaving the country.

In terms of life satisfaction and general well-being, respondents were also asked about the right to marry. According to the survey, 48.4% of the respondents want to use the institution of marriage, 36.2% of them think that the absence of the institution of marriage creates a feeling of non-recognition, while 23.0% believe that the absence of the institution restricts the right to adopt a child. Also, 17.2% say that the absence of the institution of marriage gives them a feeling of insecurity in their partnership.

Respondents were also asked to name the key factor that would allow them to live without restrictions with their own identity. In this regard, 28.5% of the respondents mentioned the support of parents/families, 28.2% declared support from the state, 20.5% social welfare, and 11.4% increase of social capital, which can be considered part of the previous question. See Chart №14.

Chart №14: Factors that would allow respondents to live their lives without restrictions.



4.2. Trust in State Institutions

Key findings:

- ▶ **Confidence in state institutions by members of the LGBTQ group is substantially low.**
- ▶ **82% of respondents do not trust the Georgian Executive Government.**
- ▶ **79% of respondents do not trust the Parliament of Georgia.**
- ▶ **68% of respondents do not trust the Court.**
- ▶ **74% of respondents do not trust the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, and 66% do not trust the Ministry of Internal Affairs/Police. Only 5% and 6% of the respondents trust these structures.**
- ▶ **The highest levels of trust are enjoyed by LGBTQ community human rights organizations (65%) and human rights NGOs (60%).**
- ▶ **The Public Defender of Georgia enjoys an average level of trust, 39% of the respondents trust him/her.**
- ▶ **A large proportion of respondents, namely 42.8%, believe that stigma and prejudice against the LGBTQ community has decreased significantly or at least decreased more than increased in the last 5 years.**
- ▶ **A large proportion of respondents (36.2%) believe that violence and discrimination against the LGBTQ community has increased significantly or at least increased more than decreased in the last 5 years, while 29.4% indicate a decrease in this figure.**

To examine institutional homo/transphobia toward the LGBTQ community, it was essential to study the degree of **trust** in state institutions. Respondents' confidence in various institutions in Georgia was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 meant – I do not trust, and 5 – I trust

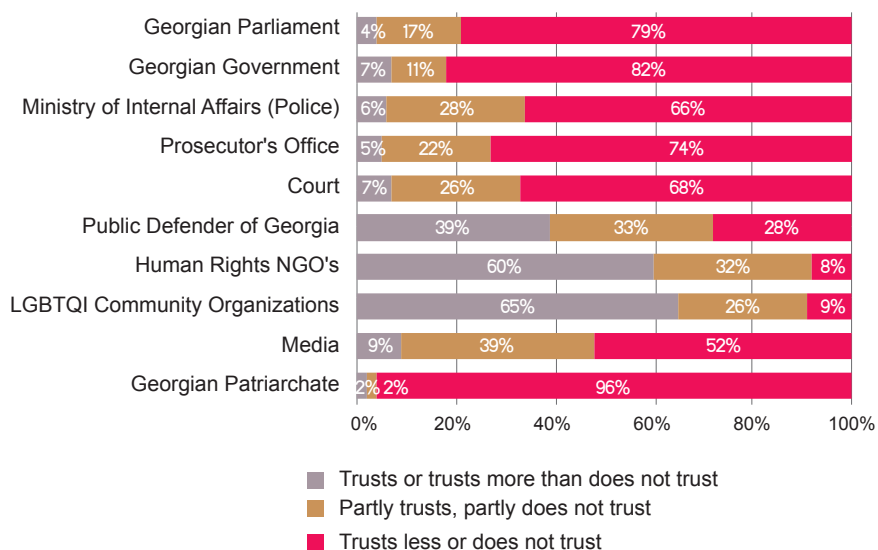
The survey showed that the average rate of trust in law enforcement agencies in the LGBTQ community is 1.73 (N = 310), which means that a large part of the community (74.1%) does not trust law enforcement agencies at all or has a low level of trust in them.

According to the respondents, the lowest level of trust was observed in the following institutions: The Parliament of Georgia (Average 1.53); The Executive Power of Georgia (1.61); The Ministry of Internal Affairs (1.88); The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia (1.69); The Court (1.88). The lowest level of trust was observed towards the institution of the Patriarchate (1.15), however, it should be noted that only two thirds of the respondents answered this question (N = 227).

In terms of trust, a low rate was observed towards the **media**, with an average score of 2.09. The rating of the **Public Defender of Georgia** is close to the average confidence level of trust – 2.79.

As for the institutions that the respondents tend to trust more than not, such categories include human rights NGOs (average score: 3.53) and LGBTQ community organizations (average score: 3.76). See Chart №15 for details.

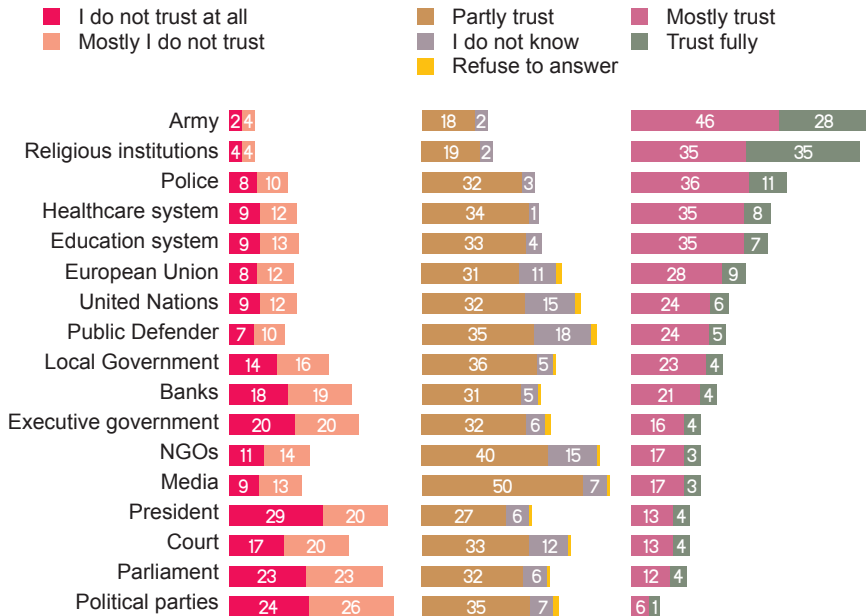
Chart №15: Rate of trust in various institutions.



Interestingly, confidence rates in the general population of Georgia are completely opposite. While in the present survey the **police** have the lowest trust rate, according to the Caucasus Barometer 2019 data, among the general population, along with other structures, the police enjoy the most trust, while non-governmental organizations have the least trust. See CRRC Caucasus Barometer Data.

How much do you trust or do not trust?

Caucasus Barometer 2019 wave



Source: CRRC, Caucasus Barometer, 2019 wave

In the survey, respondents also assessed the changes in stigma and prejudice against the LGBTQ group over the past 5 years. The survey showed that the majority of respondents (42.8%) (N = 320) think that stigma and prejudice against the LGBTQ community has **decreased in the last 5 years or at least has decreased to a greater extent than increased**. A neutral position was observed by 25.3% of respondents, while 29.1% of respondents think that stigma and prejudice towards the group has increased in the last 5 years.

Respondents were asked a similar question about the tendency towards violence and discrimination against the LGBTQ community over the past 5 years. In the present case, a larger proportion of respondents (36.2%) believe that violence and discrimination against the LGBTQ community has increased or at least it has increased more than decreased during the last 5 years, while 29.4% indicated a decrease in this figure.

Respondents who noted that violence and stigma have increased over the past 5 years also cited the main reasons that have contributed to the increase and decrease in violence and stigma against the LGBTQ community. It is noteworthy that the respondents most often cit-

Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia

ed negative role of the Patriarchate and the strengthening of ultra-conservative and violent groups as reasons for the growing trend of violence and stigmatization; manipulation of the topic by politicians was also frequently mentioned. Interestingly, respondents also linked the reduction and increase of stigma and violence against the LGBTQ group to the visibility of the community. At first glance, these seem mutually exclusive, however, in practice, community visibility has two mutually exclusive effects: it increases sensitivity to the community, and reinforces violence and discriminatory treatment. Therefore, community visibility is not necessarily related to a single outcome due to its ambiguous nature. See Chart N°s 16, 17.

Chart N° 16: What contributed to the increase of violence and stigma against LGBTQ people?

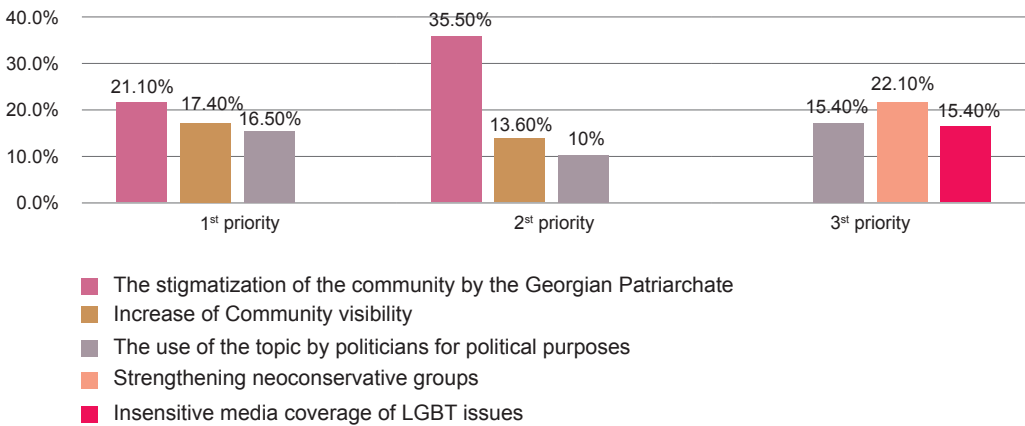
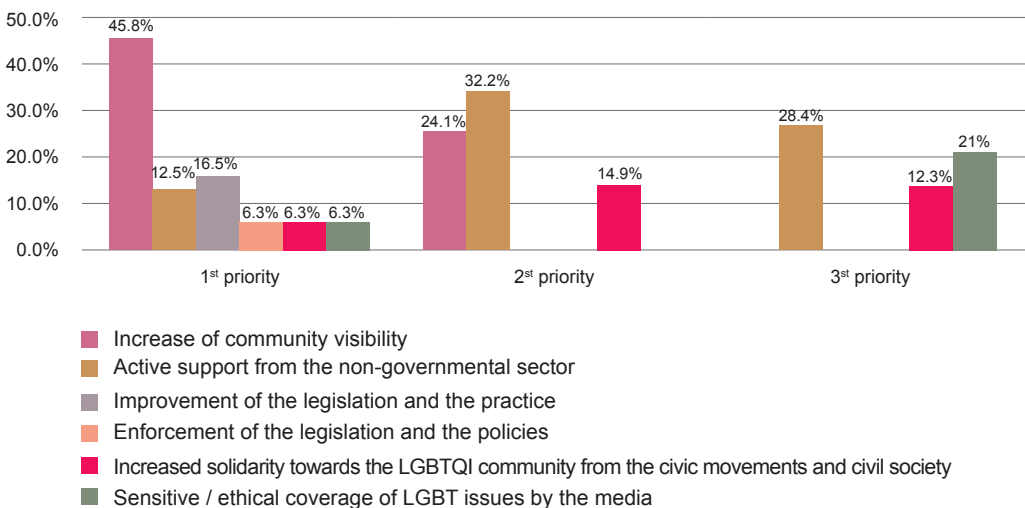
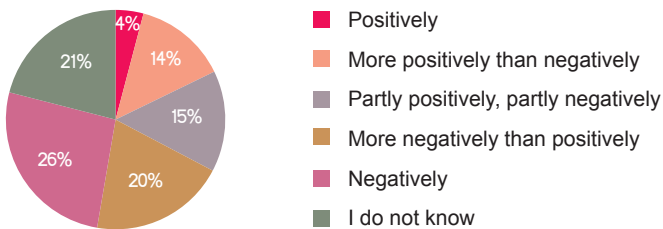


Chart N° 17: What contributed to the decrease of violence and stigma against LGBTQ people?



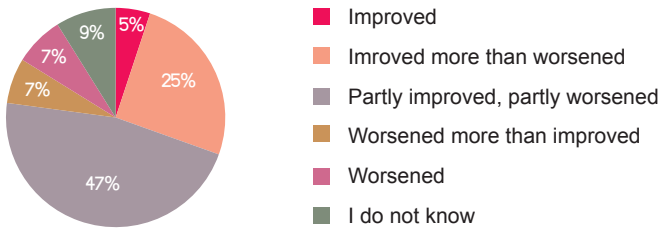
The Human Rights Department (currently the Human Rights Monitoring and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department) was established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia in 2018. Its mandate, among other things, extends to monitoring the quality of investigations into hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The launch of this department has brought significant changes in terms of crime detection and prosecution, including statistical data collection and introduction of certain aspects of prevention policy. In particular, the department has helped train police and investigators to provide an effective response to these types of crimes. Given the Department’s mandate, it was important for the present study to assess its role in reducing violence against LGBTQ people, and to respond more broadly to the Department’s work since its inception. However, it should be noted that 21% of respondents are not aware of the activities of the department and, most likely, have no information about its existence. **It should also be noted that 46% evaluate the work of the department negatively, while 18% assess it positively.** Although the study does not analyse the reasons for the distribution of answers to this question, it is likely that the negative evaluation by some of the respondents is not directly related to the department’s investigative work, but their weak impact on violence reduction. See Chart №18.

Chart №18: Assessment of the work of the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.



Respondents were also asked to rate police behaviour and attitudes towards LGBTQ people, with a small percentage of respondents (30%) believing that police attitude has improved. 14% say it has worsened. The highest rate is the neutral response, with 47% saying police officers’ behaviour and attitude has not changed (“partly improved, partly worsened”). See Chart №19.

Chart №19: Changing police behaviour and attitudes towards LGBTQ people.



These results indicate that despite some legislative recognition and policy improvements, the attitudes of institutions towards LGBTQ individuals have not changed fundamentally, leading the LGBTQ group towards a deep distrust of various government agencies.

4.3. The Experience of Coming out

“Coming out” is a phase in a person’s life when one starts the identification of one’s sexual orientation and learns to accept oneself as one is. It is a process of self-acceptance that continues throughout life and at its various stages. Individuals first establish their Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender identities for themselves and then reveal them to others. Disclosing one’s sexual orientation or gender identity to another person, either publicly or privately, can be considered as coming out.¹¹¹ However, Coming out is never a one-time act but rather a process. A person may have to re-perform the act with different people in different situations during his/her lifetime,

Despite the importance of coming out in the lives of some LGBTQ people, *“Due to the high rate of psychological and physical violence and the severe homophobic background in the country, which is rooted in traditional ideologies and supported by strong institutions, most members of the LGBTQ group, due to physical or psychological threat, avoid publicly declaring their status. In addition, the fear of coming out is a significant obstacle for these people to fight for their rights”*¹¹²

Coming out also varies in different circumstances. As mentioned earlier, as a rule, the biggest difficulty is coming-out to family members, during which LGBTQ people do not generally share information about their sexuality or identity with the whole family. Instead, they have to choose a person who, in addition to emotional support, also makes the process of their coming out easier in relation with other family members by the way

111 The definition of the term is taken from the research by E. Aghdgomelashvili, *From Prejudice to Equality* (2016).

112 Aghdgomelashvili E. *“From Prejudice to Equality”*, WISG, 2016

of indirect delivery and preparation for full disclosure. Typically, the mother, who is the main drive of emotional labour in the family, plays this role. Studies show that members of the LGBTQ group are less likely to turn to their father for fear of violence and intolerance. The validity of this fear is confirmed by other studies, which indicate that fathers are less likely to show a receptive attitude than mothers and cousins.

This chapter assesses coming out experiences, outcomes, and barriers based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

4.3.1. Openness about One's Sexual Orientation

Key findings:

- ▶ **Only 21.8% of respondents (n = 275) are open with everyone about their own sexual orientation. 76.7% are partially open, i.e. only a few people know about their sexual orientation, while 1.5% are not at all open about their own sexual orientation with others.**
- ▶ **The rate of openness about one's sexual orientation with all family members is substantially low – 17.7%. Of all the respondents surveyed, most gay respondents (43.2%) and bisexual male respondents (61.3%) said that they were not open with any family member about their sexual orientation.**
- ▶ **The rates of openness towards mother and father are substantially different, with the father they are almost twice as low as with the mother. In particular, 68.6% of respondents are open with their mothers and only 27.5% with their fathers.**
- ▶ **Interestingly, a large proportion of respondents are also open with their sisters – 71.7%, which is higher than the same figure for siblings, which is 54.3%.**
- ▶ **Consequently, openness to sexual orientation is still gender-driven and inherently linked to patriarchal and masculine culture, forcing members of the LGBTQ community to hide their identities more from their male family members.**

The experience of coming out is essentially related to the realization of one's own identity, which is an individual and private process in every person's life and often differs from the act of sharing a conscious decision with someone else. In the study, respondents were asked at what age they first realized their sexual orientation; in this regard, the average age of the respondents was 13 years (Mean 13.5; St. D. 3.96).

Table №5: At what age did you first realize your own sexual orientation?

Respondent's identity	Average	Number, n	Standard deviation	Median	Minimal importance	Maximum importance	Range
Lesbian	13.5	94	4.4	14	3	25	22
Gay	12.3	111	3	13	5	20	15
Bisexual woman	15.9	39	4.7	16	5	27	22
Bisexual man	14.9	31	2.5	16	9	18	9
LGB Total:	13.5	275	4	13	3	27	24

At around the age of 17, study respondents first shared information about their own sexual orientation with others (Mean 17.2; St.D. 3.4). The presented data were compared to different categories of sexual orientation, and statistically significant differences were found between bisexual female respondents and lesbians (Sig. = 0.05) and gay respondents (Sig. = 0.0). See the central trend indicators between the groups in Table №6.

Table №6: At what age did you first share information about your identity with another person?

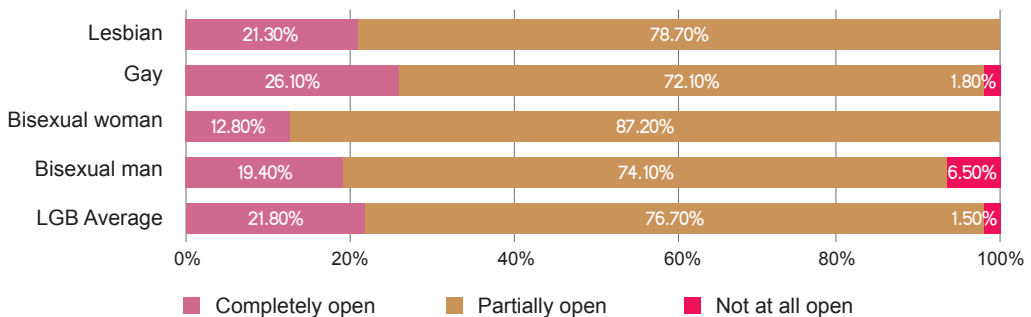
Respondent's identity	Average	Number, n	Standard deviation	Median	Minimal importance	Maximum importance	Range
Lesbian	17	94	3.4	17	7	25	11.5
Gay	16.6	109	2.6	16	9	27	7.0
Bisexual woman	18.7	38	5.1	17.5	11	38	25.5
Bisexual man	18.1	31	3.1	19	11	25	9.4
LGB total:	17.2	272	3.4	17	7	38	11.8

The survey assessed respondents' openness about their sexual orientation, which includes two main forms: on the one hand, openness means proactively coming out when a person openly declares his or her sexual orientation in a particular setting; and on the other hand, there is another type of openness when an LGBTQ member does not hide one's sexual orientation, and this includes cases where a member of the LGBTQ group does not come out, but indirectly discloses one's sexual orientation. Accordingly, the re-

sults of the questionnaire about openness include the cumulative content of the above cases.

Thus, when asked how open they are about their own sexual orientation, **21.8% of respondents (n = 275) state that they are open to everyone about their own sexual orientation, 76.7% are partially open, and 1.5% are not at all open about their own sexual orientation to others.** The category “I am not at all” refers to cases when respondents do not share their identity with at least one person. Due to the nature of purposeful preselection for the survey, it mainly included respondents who shared information about their identity at least with community organizations, interviewers, or members close to them. It is also important that the category “partially open” has a broad content and includes respondents who are open to only one or a few people. See Chart №20.

Chart №20: Openness about one’s own sexual orientation with others (N = 275).



According to cross-tabulation analysis, gay respondents are **most** open about their sexual orientation (26.1%, n = 111), while in the case of lesbian respondents this figure is equal to 21.3% (n = 94). As for bisexual respondents, in the case of bisexual men the figure is higher – 19.4% (n = 31), and in the case of bisexual women, it equals 12.8% (n = 39). The LGB average for this figure is 21.8%. 78.7% of lesbian respondents and 72.1% of gay respondents are **partially** open about their sexual orientation. The LGB average for this figure is 76.7%.

In regard to the respondents’ degree of identity openness in relation to their age group, the mean comparison method (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there would be a difference between these groups. As a result of the data calculated at 95% reliability, it was found that no statistically significant difference was observed between the groups (Sig. = 0.192). A similar result underscores that the percentage difference observed between the groups does not describe the general trend. It is only the result obtained in a specific case, specifically within the scope of this study.

Significant differences are evident in the openness of sexual orientation in relation to different groups.

Lesbian respondents (27.7%, n = 94) followed by gay respondents – 17.1% (n = 111) tend to be most open with all their **family** members about their sexual orientation. The least open are bisexual male respondents with all family members (3.2%, n = 31), while only 7.7% of bisexual women are open with all family members about their own sexual orientation. The LGB average for this type of response is 17.7%. Of all the interviewees who were not open with any family member about their own sexual orientation, most were either gay respondents (43.2%) or bisexual male respondents (61.3%). The average response rate for this category is 36.4% for LGBTQ groups. (Differences between groups are significant statistically (Sig. <0.05)).

Friends, within the framework of the survey, represent the social group with which respondents are most open while sharing their own sexual orientation. In this regard, particularly high rates were observed among the lesbian respondents (75.3%, n = 93).

The number of respondents open with **relatives and close acquaintances is low** (42.9%, n = 252). The number of respondents who are open within the neighbourhood is also very low: 74.9% of respondents (n = 207) are not open with **neighbours**.

In the case of **co-workers**, a large proportion of respondents are open with them about their own sexual orientation. More than 80% of respondents are open about their own sexual orientation with at least one colleague. In terms of statistics, the differences between groups were significant between bisexual women and the respondents of all other sexual orientation (with lesbian respondents – sig <0.01, with gay respondents – sig = 0.02, and with bisexual male respondents – sig = 0.04).

About 78% of respondents (with at least one member) are open about their sexual orientation with their **classmates/course-mates (n = 162)**. A statistically significant difference was observed only between gay and female bisexual respondents (Sig <0.05). For detailed distribution of the respondents' openness about their sexual orientation to different social groups, see table №7.

Table №7: Respondents' rate of openness about their sexual orientation to different social groups (data are presented in percentages, %).

Openness about one's own identity	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual woman	Bisexual man	LGB total:
With family members:					
Number of respondents:	94	111	39	31	275
All of them	27.7%	17.1%	7.7%	3.2%	17.7%
Most of them	11.7%	6.3%	12.8%	12.9%	9.8%
Some of them	18.1%	11.7%	12.8%	6.5%	13.5%
One of them	20.2%	21.6%	35.9%	16.1%	22.5%
None of them	22.3%	43.2%	30.8%	61.3%	36.4%
With Friends:					
Number of respondents	93	111	39	31	274
All of them	75.3%	49.5%	35.9%	45.2%	55.8%
Most of them	14.0%	32.4%	51.3%	35.5%	29.2%
Some of them	10.8%	16.2%	12.8%	19.4%	14.2%
None of them	0%	1.8%	0%	0%	0.7%
With relatives/close acquaintances:					
Number of respondents:	85	103	36	28	252
All of them	10.6%	6.8%	2.8%	3.6%	7.1%
Most of them	7.1%	5.8%	0%	10.7%	6.0%
Some of them	38.8%	33.0%	25.0%	28.6%	33.3%
Only one of them	11.8%	5.8%	27.8%	28.6%	33.3%
None of them	31.8%	48.5%	44.4%	53.6%	42.9%
With neighbours:					
Number of respondents:	66	87	33	21	207
All of them	12.1%	6.9%	3.0%	9.5%	8.2%
Most of them	0%	2.3%	0%	0%	1.0%
Some of them	10.6%	6.9%	9.1%	33.3%	11.1%
Only one of them	9.1%	1.1%	9.1%	0%	4.8%
None of them	68.2%	82.8%	78.8%	57.1%	74.9%
With co-workers:					
Number of respondents:	78	78	30	26	212
All of them	51.3%	35.9%	16.7%	38.5%	39.2%
Most of them	6.4%	21.8%	3.3%	26.9%	14.2%
Some of them	25.6%	20.5%	36.7%	11.5%	23.6%
Only one of them	5.1%	1.3%	13.3%	7.7%	5.2%
None of them	11.5%	20.5%	30.0%	15.4%	17.9%
With classmates / course-mates:					
Number of respondents:	66	76	27	13	162
All of them	22.7%	26.3%	7.4%	7.7%	20.9%
Most of them	15.2%	18.4%	18.5%	7.7%	16.5%
Some of them	36.4%	30.3%	22.2%	53.8%	33.0%
Only one of them	9.1%	3.9%	14.8%	7.7%	7.7%
None of them	16.7%	21.1%	37.0%	23.1%	22.0%

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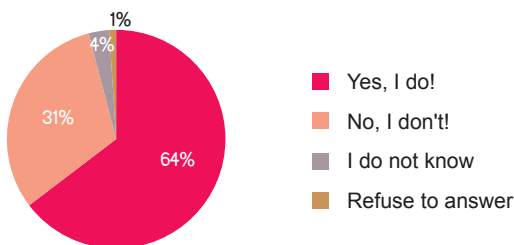
Interestingly, a larger proportion of respondents are open about their own sexual orientation with their mothers (68.6%) and sisters (71.7%). 54.3% of respondents are open with their brothers about their own sexual orientation. In this regard, a low rate was observed in terms of openness with the following family members: **father** (27.5%), **grandmother** (25.0%), and **grandfather** (11.8%), as well as with other family members (except in the above cases) – 28.0%. These differences are significant in terms of statistics (sig <0.001).

Table №8: Openness rates for different sexual orientations with different family members (shown in percentages, %).

Openness about one's own sexual orientation	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Grandmother	Grandfather	Other family members
Yes	68.6%	27.5%	54.3%	71.7%	25.0%	11.8%	28.0%
No	31.4%	72.5%	45.7%	28.3%	75.5%	88.2%	72.0%
Number of responses:	169	138	70	106	92	85	75

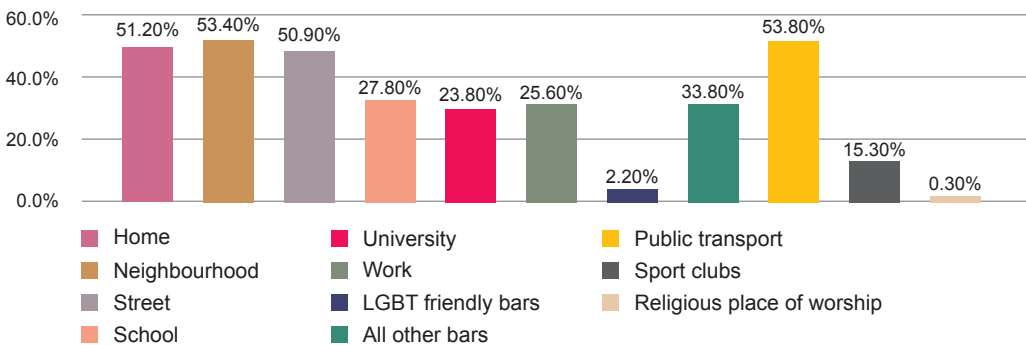
Regarding the openness about one's own sexual orientation, the respondents were asked a clarifying question in the research whether they avoid revealing their sexual orientation due to the expected negative reactions. This question is different from the question of openness about sexual orientation and should not be interpreted as statistically complementary, to be more precise, respondents who stated that they are open about their sexual orientation do not rule out that they also hid this information to avoid negative reactions in certain situations. Consequently, it should be emphasized that openness about one's identity is not always absolute and depends on various situational and environmental factors. Given this, it is not surprising that a large percentage of respondents – 63.9% – avoid disclosing their sexual orientation, while 31.3% do not avoid it. See Chart №21.

Chart №21: Do you avoid expressing your own sexual orientation because of the expected negative reaction?



To better understand the situations, in which the LGBTQ group members should refrain from direct or indirect disclosure of their sexual orientation, respondents named specific personal or public settings. The answers show that there is no significant difference between public and private spaces, i.e. **members of the LGBTQ group expect a negative reaction from strangers in the public space, as well as in private spaces** where they know each other and where they have reason to feel safe. Accordingly, Respondents, in their answers, most often mention such spaces as public transport (53.8%), neighbourhood (53.4%), house (51.2%), and street (50.9%). See Chart №22.

Chart №22: Places, where one should restrict the disclosure of information about sexual orientation



4.3.2. Openness about One's Gender Identity

Key findings:

- ▶ **043.8% of respondents (n = 39; N = 89) are open with everyone about their gender identity, while 52.8% are partially open (n = 47). Partial openness means that they are open to one or more people about their identity.**
- ▶ **Only 18.6% of trans respondents are open about their gender identity with family members, while a large number – 45.3% – are not open with any family member.**
- ▶ **A larger proportion of respondents are open about their own gender identity with their mothers (59.6%) than with their fathers (36.6%). Also, the difference between sister and brother is significant, 79.5% of the respondents are open about their gender identity with their sisters, while in the case of brothers the openness rate is 59.4%.**

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Prior to asking about the coming out experience, respondents were asked at what age they first realized their gender identity. In this regard, the average age of the respondents was 12 years (Mean 12.3; St.D. 4.4). While, around the age of 16, survey respondents first shared information about their own gender identity with others (Mean 15.8; St.D. 4.2). The data presented were compared with different categories of gender identity, statistically significant differences were found only between non-binary/gender/a-gender/gender-fluid and transgender female respondents (Sig. <0.01). See the central trend indicators between the groups in Table №9.

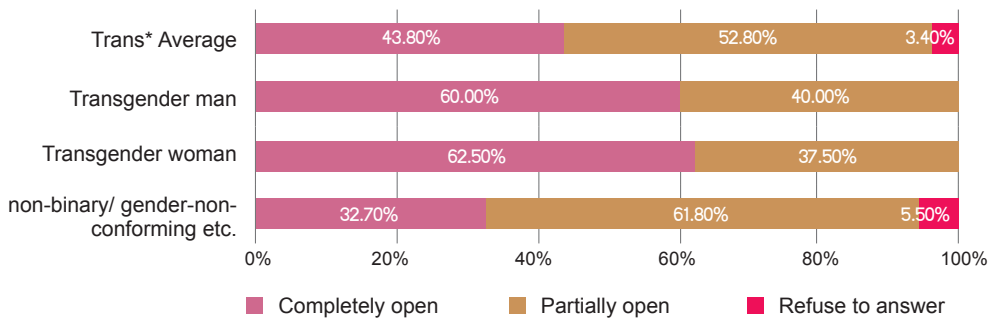
Table №9: Central trends in age indicators of respondents' perceptions of gender identity and sharing with others.

Respondent's identity		Average	Number, n	Standard deviation	Median	Minimal importance	Maximum importance	Range
Non-binary/ Gender Queer / A-gender / Gender fluid	Realized one's own gender identity	14	55	3.3	14	6	20	14
	Shared information about one's own gender identity with another person	16.9		2.6	17	11	25	14
Transgender woman	Realized one's own gender identity	10.6	24	4.9	12	4	18	14
	Shared information about one's own gender identity with another person	13.9		6.5	13	6	38	32
Transgender man	Realized one's own gender identity	7.5	10	3.7	6	3	15	12
	Shared information about one's own gender identity with another person	14.1		2.6	13	11	18	7
Trans* total:	Realized one's own gender identity	12.3	89	4.4	13	3	20	17
	Shared information about one's own gender identity with another person	15.8		4.2	16	6	38	32

According to the survey, 43.8% of respondents (n = 39; N = 89) are open about their gender identity with everyone, while 52.8% are partially open (n = 47).

Cross-tabulation analysis showed that transgender female (62.5%, n = 24) and transgender male (60.0%, n = 10) respondents were almost equally open about their gender identity with **everyone**, which is almost twice as high as that of non-binary/ agender/gender fluid respondents (32.7%, n = 55). Consequently, 61.8% of respondents are only partially open about their gender identity. See Chart №23.

Chart №23: Openness with others about one’s own gender identity (N=89).



Similar to the openness about sexual orientation, there are significant differences in the openness about gender identity with respect to different social groups.

With all **family** members, transgender male respondents are most open about their gender identity (30%, n = 10), while 53.8% of non-binary/agender/gender fluid respondents and 40% of transgender male respondents are not open to any family member. Significant statistical differences were observed between non-binary and transgender female respondents (Sig = 0.01).

Friends in the survey represent the social group with which the respondents are most open in terms of sharing their gender identity. In this regard, particularly high rates were observed among transgender female respondents, 75% of who are open to all their friends about their own gender identities.

Relatives and close acquaintances have a high rate when it comes to respondents not being open about their gender identity with any of their relatives (38.4%). (Differences between groups are not statistically significant (Sig > 0.05)).

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In the case of trans* interviewees, **neighbours** are the social group with which the respondents are least open about their own sexual orientation. 47.7% of respondents are not open about their identity with any of their neighbours.

In the case of **co-workers**, transgender female and transgender male respondents are more open about their own gender identity. (66.7% of transgender women and 70% of transgender men are open about their gender identities with all of their colleagues).

In the case of **classmates/course-mates**, the least open about their gender identities are the a-gender/gender fluid/gender Queer respondents – 36% are open about their gender identity with any classmate or fellow student. (Differences between groups are not statistically significant (Sig> 0.05)). For a detailed illustration of the distribution of respondents' openness to their gender identity in relation to different social groups, see Table №10.

Table №10: Respondents' openness about their gender identity with different social groups.

Openness about one's own identity	Non-binary, Gender Queer, A-gender, Gender fluid	Transgender woman	Transgender man	Trans* total:
With family members:				
Number of respondents:	52	24	10	86
All of them	17.3%	16.7%	30%	18.6%
Most of them	0%	20.8%	10%	7%
Some of them	1.9%	20.8%	0%	7%
Only one of them	15.4%	12.5%	20.0%	15.1%
None of them	53.8%	29.2%	40.0%	45.3%
With friends:				
Number of respondents:	52	24	10	86
All of them	30.8%	75%	80%	48.8%
Most of them	23.1%	20.8%	20%	22.1%
Some of them	21.2%	4.2%	0%	14%
Only one of them	11.5%	0%	0%	7%
None of them	3.8%	0%	0%	2.3%
I do not know / Refuse to answer / Does not apply to me	9.6%	0%	0%	5.8%

With relatives / close acquaintances:				
Number of respondents:	52	24	10	86
All of them	15.4%	25%	30%	19.8%
Most of them	1.9%	0%	0%	1.2%
Some of them	9.6%	29.2%	10%	15.1%
Only one of them	9.6%	16.7%	0%	10.5%
None of them	46.2%	25%	30%	38.4%
I do not know / Refuse to answer / Does not apply to me	17.3%	4.2%	30%	15.2%
With neighbours:				
Number of respondents:	52	24	10	86
All of them	5.8%	33.3%	40%	17.4%
Most of them	1.9%	8.3%	0%	3.5%
Some of them	0%	12.5%	0%	3.5%
Only one of them	1.9%	8.3%	0%	3.5%
None of them	61.5%	25%	30%	47.7%
I do not know / Refuse to answer / Does not apply to me	28.9%	12.5%	30%	24.4%
With co-workers:				
Number of respondents:	52	24	10	86
All of them	26.9%	66.7%	70%	43%
Most of them	3.8%	8.3%	0%	4.7%
Some of them	15.4%	4.3%	0%	10.5%
Only one of them	5.8%	0%	0%	3.5%
None of them	25%	0%	10%	16.3%
I do not know / Refuse to answer / Does not apply to me	23.1%	20.8%	20%	22.1%
With classmates / course-mates:				
Number of respondents:	50	24	10	84
All of them	14%	8.3%	20%	13.1%
Most of them	4%	12.5%	0%	6%
Some of them	18%	4.2%	20%	14.3%
Only one of them	8%	0%	0%	4.8%
None of them	36%	20.8%	0%	27.4%
I do not know / Refuse to answer / Does not apply to me	20%	54.2%	60%	34.4%

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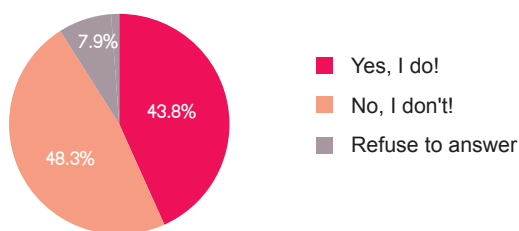
A larger proportion of respondents are more open about their gender identity with their mothers (59.6%) than with their fathers (36.6%). Also, the difference between sister and brother is significant; 79.5% of respondents are open about their gender identity with their sisters, while 59.4% of respondents are open about their gender identity with their brothers. In the case of the grandmother this figure is 42.4%, and in the case of the grandfather – 33.3%. **With sister it is 71.7%.**

Table №11: Indicators of openness about one's own sexual orientation with different family members (represented in percentages, %).

Respondent's identity	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Grandmother	Grandfather
Yes	59.6%	36.6%	59.4%	79.5%	42.4%	33.3%
No	31.4%	72.5%	40.6%	20.5%	57.6%	66.7%
Number of responses:	47	41	32	39	33	18

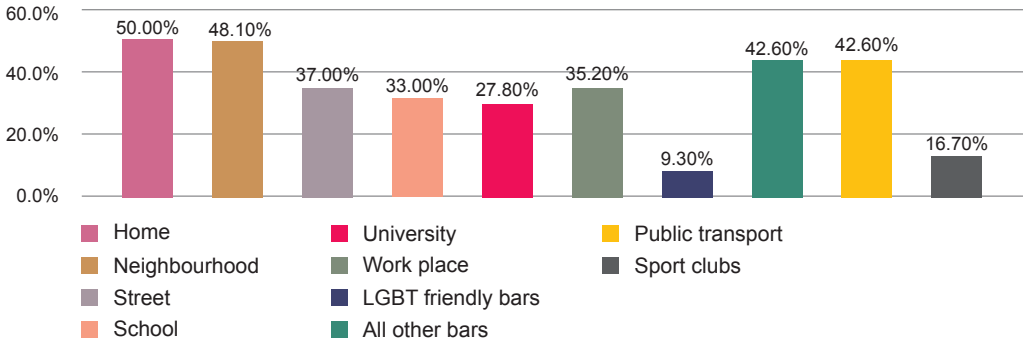
With regard to openness regarding sexual orientation, the trans group was also asked a clarifying question as to whether they avoid expressing their own gender identity due to the expected negative reaction. According to the answers, 43.8% of the respondents (N = 89) avoid revealing their identity and 48.3% do not avoid it, and 7.9% refrained from answering. See Chart №24.

Chart №24: Index of avoidance of expressing one's own gender identity.



According to the survey, almost half of the respondents refrain from disclosing information about their gender identity, and among the spaces where group members try to subject themselves to gender-conforming behaviour, places such as home (50%), neighbourhood (48.1%), public transport (42.6%), and street (37%) still prevail. Schools (33.3%) and entertainment venues that are not specifically marked as “LGBT friendly” (42.6%) were also frequently named. See Chart №25.

Chart №25: Places where one needs to restrict the disclosure of information about one’s sexual orientation.



As the description of Coming Out experiences shows, openness for members of the LGBTQ community is still met with substantial obstacles. Although a large proportion of respondents are fully or partially open about their own sexual orientation or gender identity, this rate of openness is conditional and is always linked to external factors, due to the fact that coming out is not a static process and is constantly subject to mediation between the person and the outside world. Consequently, even in the case of those respondents who state that they are fully open about their sexual orientation, one cannot assume that they are constantly giving out information about their own identity. They, like other respondents, may still have to hide information about their identities in various places to avoid possible adverse reactions or consequences, which may also have a negative impact on their lives, or their temporary well-being. Consequently, it is not surprising that a large proportion of respondents refrain from directly or indirectly disclosing information on their identities in both public and private (family) spaces, which indicates that there are almost no safe zones for community members to be free from danger, negative expectations, or unacceptability. This essentially compromises their satisfaction with life and degree of happiness.

4.4. Experience of Homo/Transphobic Violence

4.4.1. Experience of Violence throughout One’s Lifetime

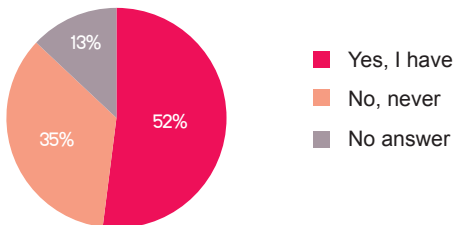
This chapter provides an overview of the experience of violence encountered by the LGBTQ community, which is differentiated into specific rates of physical and psychological violence in the following chapters.

Key findings:

- ▶ **52% of respondents have been victims of violence at least once in their lives, in whole or in part, because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.**
- ▶ **Of all the surveyed respondents, the experience of violence is highest among gay (65.5%) and transgender (61.8%) respondents.**
- ▶ **Experience of violence is high in the cases of respondents living in Tbilisi (57%), Adjara (53.3%), and Imereti (43.8%).**
- ▶ **Respondents were most often exposed to verbal abuse (91%) and psychological violence (81%). Threats of physical violence (75%) and bullying (physical or online) have been encountered by one third of respondents (73%).**

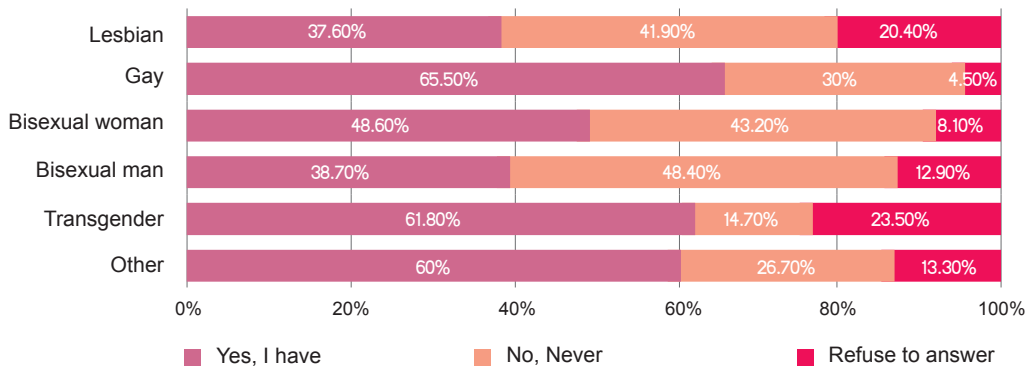
More than half of the respondents have experience of violence (52%). It should also be noted that 13% of respondents refrained from answering the above question. See Chart №26.

Chart №26. An indicator of a lifetime experience of SOGI based violence.



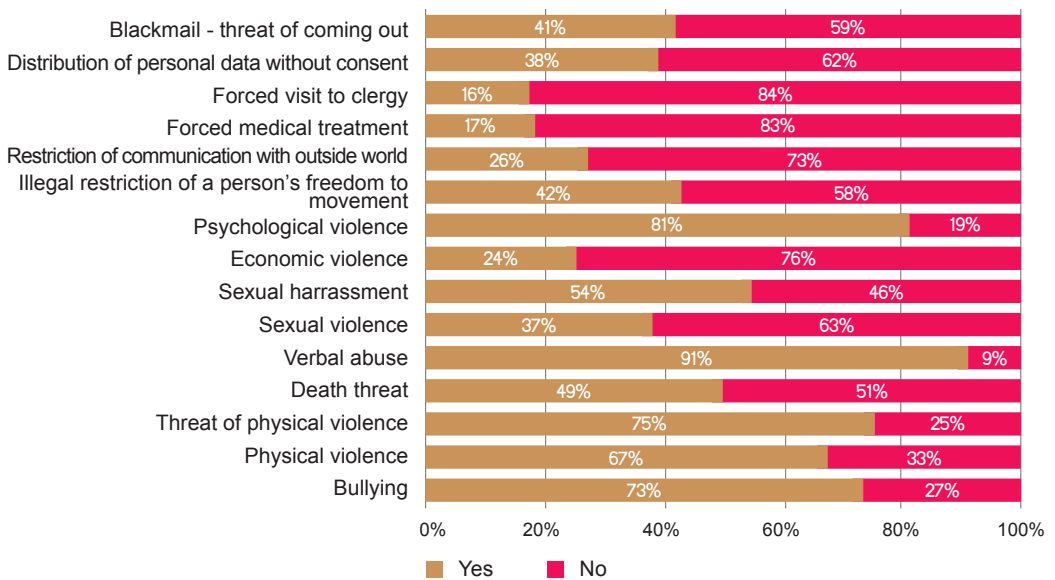
Cross-tabulation analysis has shown that, in terms of lifetime violence experiences, there are differences across various groups of the LGBTQ community. Among all the surveyed respondents, the experience of violence is highest among gays (65.5%) and transgenders (61.8%). However, in the case of transgender respondents, 23.5% refrained from answering this question. The rate of self-restraint towards the question is also high in the case of lesbian respondents (20.4%). Experience of violence differs between bisexual female and bisexual male respondents, in particular, in the case of bisexual female respondents, the number of respondents who have experienced any form of violence in their lifetime is 48.6%, while in the case of bisexual male respondents this figure is equal to 38.7%. (The differences are statistically reliable (chi-square = 31.86, df = 10, $p < .001$). See Chart №27 for details.

Chart №27: Experience of violence throughout life, according to identities.



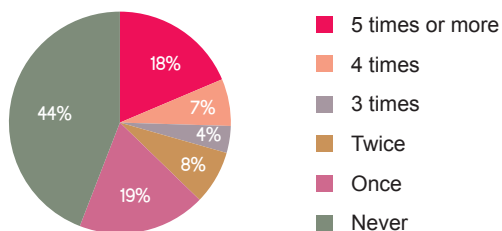
Respondents who have experienced lifelong violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity (52%, n = 167) had the opportunity to specify the forms of violence experienced. **Chart № 28** shows the distribution of respondents' "yes" and "no" answers according to each form of violence. As can be seen in Chart №28, the majority of respondents have experienced **verbal abuse** (91%) and **psychological violence** (81%) among other forms of violence. However, in one third of the respondents there are cases of **threats of physical violence** (75%) and **bullying (in either physical or online space)** (73%). In this regard, the rarest mentioned forms of violence included **forced treatment** (17%) and **forced visits to clergy** (16%).

Chart №28: SOGI-based violence rate during one's lifetime according to the forms of violence (N = 167).



Regarding the frequency of experiencing physical, psychological, and sexual violence in the last 2 years, almost half of the respondents (45%, n=167) indicate that they have not had a similar experience. Out of 55% of respondents who have had a similar experience, 19% say they have been a victim of physical, psychological, or sexual violence at least once, and 19% say they have had a similar experience at least 5 or more times in the last 2 years. For detailed distribution of frequencies, see Chart №29.

Chart №29: Experience of physical/psychological/sexual violence during the last 2 years.



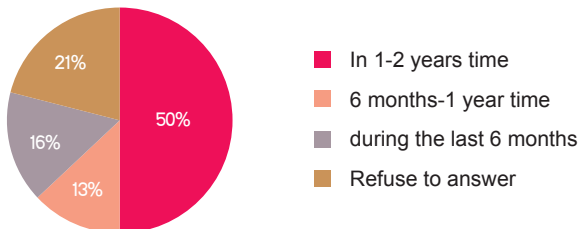
4.4.1.1 The Experience of Physical Violence within the Last 2 Years

Key findings:

- ▶ **29.4% of respondents (n = 91) have experienced physical violence in the last 2 years.**
- ▶ **78% of the respondents, who have experienced physical violence in the last 2 years, were exposed to the threat of physical violence, 34% to the threat of sexual violence, 36% to physical violence, and 40% to death threat.**
- ▶ **The perpetrator of violence was most often a stranger (n = 40) and an acquaintance (n = 39).**
- ▶ **In 49.5% of cases, the violent act was committed by one person, while in 50.4% of cases, the perpetrator was more than one person.**
- ▶ **According to the gender of the perpetrators, it is noteworthy that in most cases the perpetrator was a man (78%), in 8.8% – a woman, and in 7.7% – both a woman and a man.**
- ▶ **Only 30.4% of respondents appealed to the police to respond, while 69.6% refused to contact the police.**
- ▶ **57.1% of those who appealed to the police for a response (n = 28), rated the police response negatively and 25% positively.**

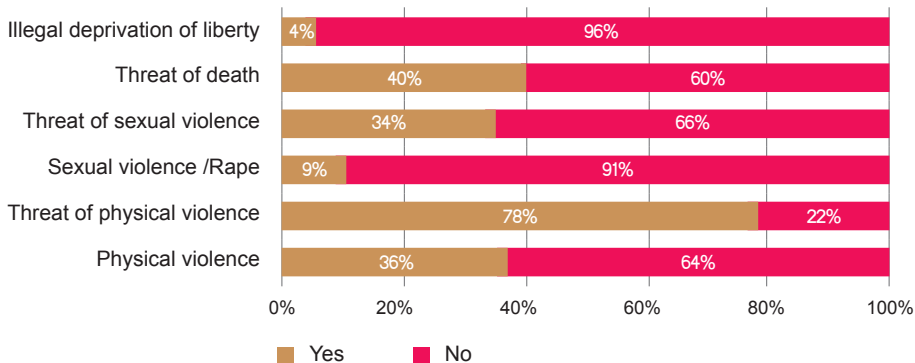
29.4% of respondents (N=91) have experienced physical violence in the last 2 years. For detailed distribution of periodicity, see Chart №30.

Chart №30: The most recent case of physical violence in the last 2 years.



It is noteworthy that the two categories of perpetrators most frequently iterated in the survey were strangers (n=40) and persons from a circle of acquaintances (n=39). The number of cases of violence committed by members of radical neo-conservative groups in the survey is 13. Almost equally frequently, the respondents named a family member/guardian (10 cases) or a partner (9 cases) as the perpetrator of the violence. For detailed distribution of frequencies, see Chart №31.

Chart №31: Experience of various forms of physical violence.



In the case of 49.5% of the respondents, the violent act was committed by one person, while in 50.4% of cases, the perpetrators were **more than one in number**. According to the gender of the perpetrators, it is noteworthy that in most cases the perpetrator is a **man** (78%), in 8.8% of cases – a woman, and in 7.7% of cases there was both a woman and a man involved.

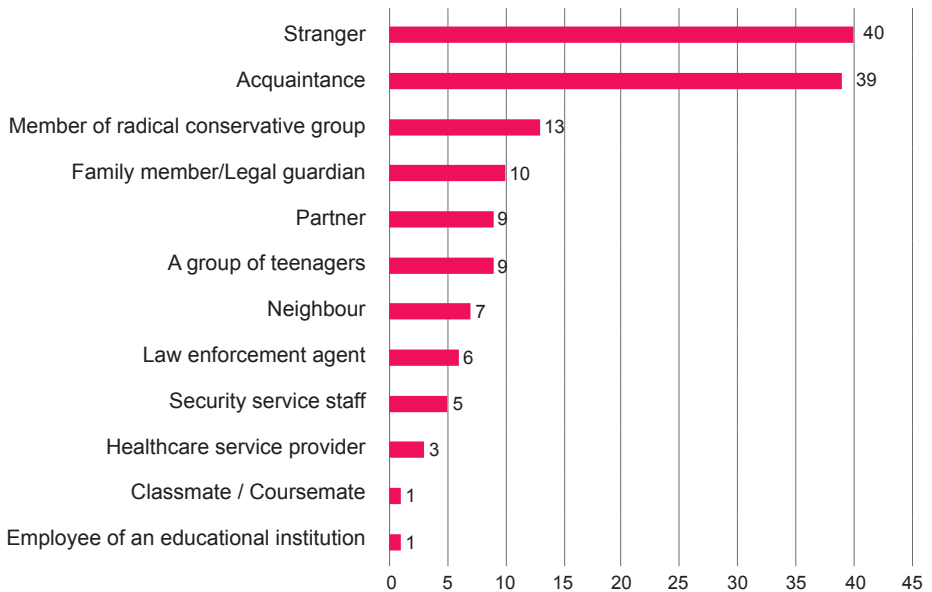
In cases where the perpetrator was one person (n = 45), the perpetrators’ age mostly lies in the range of 18-35 years (73.3%), while in 17.8% of cases the age of the perpetrator is

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within the 36-54 years range. In cases where the violence was committed by a group (in which more than one person participated) (n=46), the age categories of the perpetrators were divided as follows: 16-17 years – 2.8%; 18-35 years – 65.1%; 36-54 years – 52.4%; 55+ years – 15.4%.

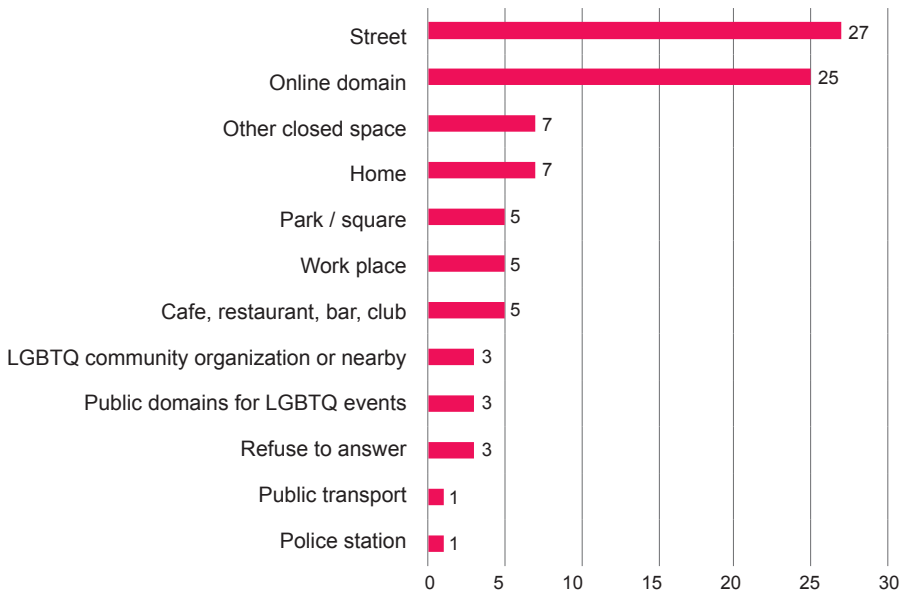
With regard to the **locations** of the violence, the most frequently named were physical places such as the street (27 cases), and the online domain (25 cases). For detailed figures see Chart №32.

Chart № 32: The perpetrator of the violence. ¹¹³



113 Note: Respondents were given a chance to choose one or more answer options, as well as to add their own version of the answer if it did not appear in the pre-submitted answers to the question.

Chart №33: The place of violence.



75.3% of the violent acts named by the respondents took place in Tbilisi, 9.0% in Imereti, and 6.7% in Adjara, 3.4% of cases occurred in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Guria regions. In addition, 1.1% of actions were carried out outside Georgia. In almost all cases, violent acts took place in **urban-type settlements** (96.6%).

It is noteworthy that **only 30.4%** of the respondents who spoke about their experience of violence in the last 2 years, **appealed to the police for a response, while 69.6% refused to appeal to the police.**

We asked **those who appealed to the police (n = 28)** to assess the response of the law enforcement system/police regarding a specific act of violence. 57.1% of respondents rated the police response negatively, while 25% assessed it positively. 17.9% of respondents rated the police response as partly positive and partly negative.

In the case of 25.0% of the respondents, the perpetrator was charged with criminal/administrative liability, while the same did not happen in 32.1% cases. At the same time, in the case of 42.9% of the respondents, the case did not even reach the court.

Respondents who did not appeal to the police for a response to the violent act (n = 60) were asked to list 3 reasons (in priority sequence) why they refrained from contacting the law

enforcement agencies. The following provisions were most often named as the first priority: 1. I thought that they would not take any action (25.8%); 2. I considered the action insufficiently severe (19.7%); 3. Due to fear of transphobic/homophobic sentiments on the part of police officers (10.6%). The second priority was most often “Due to the fear of a recurrence of violence” (22.6%), and the third priority – “Due to a negative experiences with the police in the past” (21.7%). See table №12 for a detailed distribution of priorities.

Table №12: Reasons for refusing to call the police.

	1 st priority	2 nd priority	3 rd priority
I thought that action would not follow anyway	25.8%		
I considered the action as insufficiently severe	19.7%		
Due to the fear of Transphobic / Homophobic reactions of the police officer	10.6%	11.3%	8.7%
I thought I could handle it myself	7.6%	11.3%	
Due to the fear of recurrence of violence	6.1%	22.6%	
I thought they would not be able to do anything		17.0%	
I asked somebody else for help		9.4%	
Due to a negative experience with the police in the past			21.7%
Due to the fear of the breach of confidentiality			19.6%
It was emotionally disturbing			13.0%
The act did not have a continuation (it was a one off act)			6.5%
N	66	53	46

4.4.1.2. The Most Severe Experience of Physical violence in the 5 years interval

Except for the last case within the last 2 years, respondents were asked to recall the most severe cases of physical violence during the last 5 years. In the first stage, the distinction from cases experienced within the last 2 years was clarified. To the question, 44% of respondents answered that the experience of the most severe case of physical violence was in fact the most recent case within last 2 years, while 49.7% (85 respondents) talked about a different case.

Key findings:

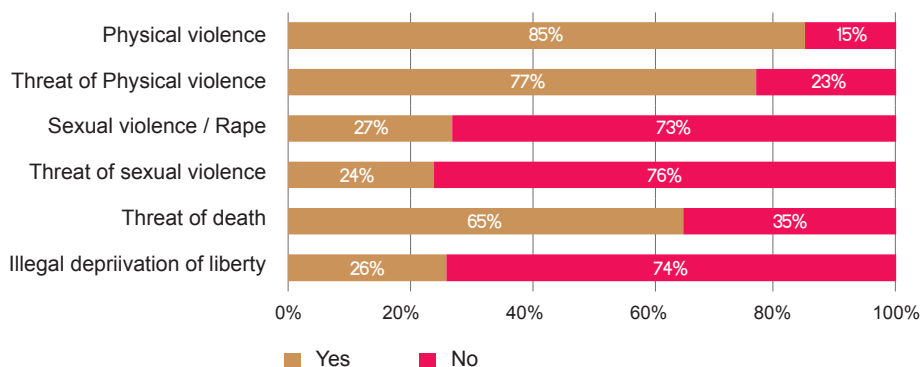
- ▶ **According to 86.9% of respondents, the worst cases of violence in the last 5 years occurred at least 3 years ago, 3.5% of the worst cases occurred in the last 12 months, and about 10.6% of the worst cases occurred between 1 and 2 years ago.**
- ▶ **Respondents named physical violence (85%), threat of physical violence (77%), and threat of death (65%) as the most severe forms of violence.**
- ▶ **Quantitatively, the most severe cases of physical violence came from the respondent's circle of acquaintances (n=29), from a stranger (n=28), and from the respondent's partner (n=18).**
- ▶ **The perpetrator of violence in most cases was a man (80.0%), in 7.1% of cases – a woman, and in 11.8% of cases, both a woman and a man were involved.**
- ▶ **Only 24.7% of respondents with the most severe physical violence experience in the last 5 years applied to the police to respond, while 75.3% did not. The vast majority of the ones who addressed the police (95.2%) rated the response from the police as negative.**

For the purpose of the study, it was important to assess the response of respondents to severe experiences of violence, in addition to less severe cases of physical violence. It is noteworthy, however, that according to the study, despite the subjective severity of the perception of violence, the index of responding to it and asking for help does not differ substantially from the responses of victims with relatively light violence experiences.

The question about the most severe experience of physical violence in the last 5 years was answered by the respondents (N = 85) whose experience was distinct from their experience of violence in the last 2 years. In terms of the periodicity of the most severe experiences of physical violence, 3.5% of cases occurred in the last 12 months, approximately 10.6% of cases occurred within 1 year, and 86.9% of cases occurred at least 3 years ago.

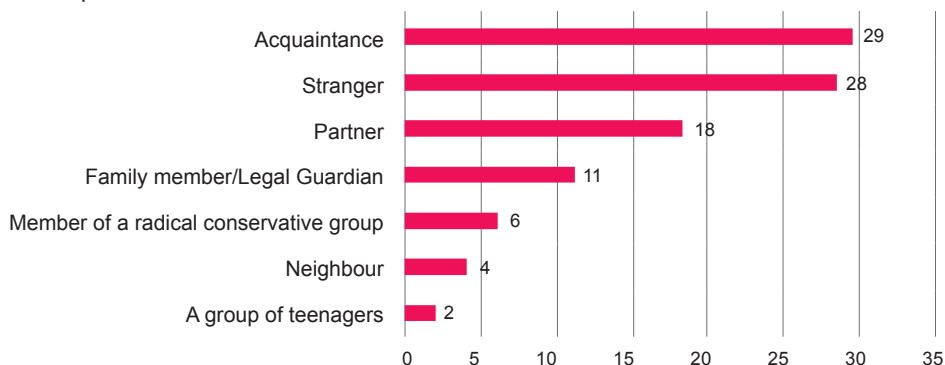
Respondents named physical violence (85%), threat of physical violence (77%), and threat of death (65%) as the most severe forms of physical violence. See Chart №34 for details.

Chart №34: Experience of the most severe forms of physical violence.



When asked from whom the violent act originated and what relationship the respondent had with this person, the most frequently named person was from the **circle of acquaintances** (n=29) and a **stranger** (n=28). Also, a **partner** was often named (n=18). For detailed distribution of frequencies, see Chart № 35.

Chart №35: Perpetrator of the violent act.¹¹⁴

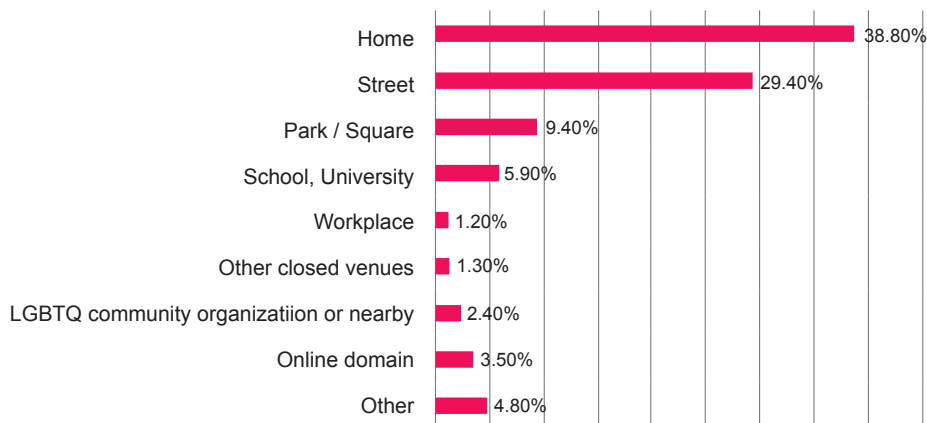


In the last 5 years, the person who committed the most severe physical violence towards the respondents in more than half of the cases (57.6%) was **one person**, and in 42.4% of the cases – **two** people. The perpetrator of violence was a **man** in most cases (80.0%), a woman in 7.1% of cases, and in 11.8% – both a woman and a man. (1.2% reported not knowing from whom the violence originated). In cases where the perpetrator was one person (n = 36), the age was mostly within the range of 18-35 years (58.3%), and in 41.7% of cases within the range of 36-54 years. In the cases of group violence (or cases in which more than one person participated) (n = 49), the age categories are distributed as follows: <16 – 2.4%; 16-17 years – 9.3%; 18-35 years old – 75.6%; 36-54 years – 44.2%; 55+ years old – 12.2%).

¹¹⁴ Note: Respondents had the opportunity to choose one or more options for the answer, as well as to add a version of the answer themselves, if it did not appear in the pre-submitted answers to the question.

In terms of the location of violence, the most frequently named locations were physical places such as the home (38.8%) and street (29.4%). See Chart N36. for detailed figures.

Chart №36: The place of the act of violence.



63.5% of the violent acts named by the respondents took place in Tbilisi, 15.3% in Imereti, and 14.1% in Adjara; 6% in other regions of Georgia, and 1.2% outside Georgia. In almost all cases, violence occurred in **urban-type settlements** (93%).

Although the experience of violence named by the respondents was severely subjective in perception, the number of referrals to law enforcement agencies was still substantially low. Only 24.7% of respondents with such experience applied to the police for a response, while 75.3% refused to contact the police.

Respondents who contacted the police for a response (n = 21) were asked to rate the response of the law enforcement system/police to a specific act of violence. In this regard, the majority of respondents (95.2%) rated the police response as negative or more negative than positive – only 4.8% of respondents rated the police response as positive. In the case of 28.6% of the respondents, the abuser/offender was charged with criminal/administrative responsibility, in the case of 33.3% the abuser was not charged, and in the case of 38.1% the case did not reach the court.

Respondents who did not contact the police to respond to the violence (n = 60) were asked to list three reasons (prioritized) why they refrained from contacting the police. The following statements were mentioned most often: **Emotionally disturbing** (23.4%); **Feeling ashamed, I did not want anybody else to know about it** (18.8%); **Fear of transphobic/homophobic reactions from police officers** (14.1%). See table №13 for detailed distribution of priorities.

Table №13: Reasons for refusing to contact the police.

	1 st priority	2 st priority	3 st priority
It was emotionally disturbing	23.4%		
I felt ashamed (did not want to anyone to know about it)	18.8%		
Feared transphobic/homophobic reactions from the police officers	14.1%	11.9%	
I thought no response would follow	12.5%		9.1%
I thought I could handle it myself	12.5%	15.3%	
Due to the fear of recurrence of the violence			11.4%
I asked somebody else for help			18.2%
I did not have enough evidence (visible physical injuries)		11.9%	
Due to the fear of the breach of confidentiality		13.6%	
I thought they would not believe me		10.2%	
I had negative experience with the police in the past			22.7%
I did not want the perpetrator to be arrested			6.8%
N	64	59	44

4.4.1.3. Psychological Violence within the Last 2 Year Interval

The next chapter of the study deals with the experience of psychological violence, economic violence, coercion and negligence based on respondents sexual orientation and gender identity.

Key findings:

- ▶ **48.4% of respondents have experienced psychological violence in the last 2 years;**
- ▶ **81.5% of transgender respondents have experienced psychological violence in the last 2 years;**
- ▶ **In the case of lesbian respondents, 51.6% of the surveyed respondents have the experience of psychological violence;**
- ▶ **In the last two years, almost the majority of respondents have experienced**

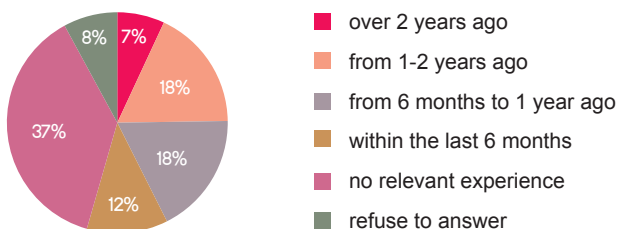
verbal abuse/humiliation or ridicule. From forms of psychological violence (87%), about half of the respondents have experienced emotional manipulation (53%) and coercion to restrict gender expression (54%). More than a quarter of respondents have experienced forms of psychological violence such as blackmail and coercion (36%) and threats of being outed (28%).

- ▶ 59.4% of respondents mentioned that the psychological violence was of a continuous nature, while in the case of 40.6% the action was a one-time event.
- ▶ Psychological violence was most often perpetrated by a family member (n = 54).
- ▶ The perpetrator of psychological violence in most cases was a man (37.4%), in 21.9% of cases – a woman, and in 32.9% – both a woman and a man.
- ▶ Psychological violence was most common at home (48.7%), in the street (29.8%), and online (27.0%).
- ▶ Only 14.2% of respondents with experience of psychological violence applied to law enforcement agencies.
- ▶ Respondents who did not contact the law enforcement agencies named the following reasons: I considered it an insufficiently serious action (31.0%); I considered that I could handle it myself (22.6%); I did not want the perpetrator arrested (24.4%).

Respondents recalled the latest cases of psychological/economic violence, coercion, and neglect that were related to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

38% of respondents indicated that they had no experience of psychological violence in the last 2 years, while about 7% of respondents indicated that they had a similar experience 2 years ago. 36% of respondents indicated that the last case of psychological violence occurred within the period from 6 months ago to 2 years ago, while 12% recall the last case of psychological violence within the last 6 months. See Chart №37.

Chart №37: Recent cases of psychological violence (periodicity).

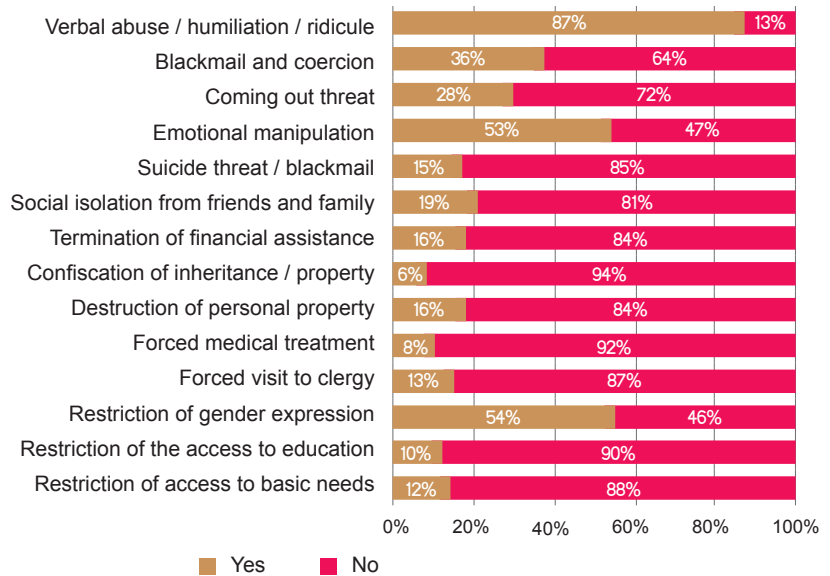


Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia

Significant differences were found in terms of income figures. In particular, among respondents with an income above 2001 GEL **no experience of psychological violence** was around 10% higher, and among respondents with an income above GEL 3001 – 20% higher, compared to other income categories. The differences are statistically significant. (Chi-square = 64.845, df = 35, p <0.005).

Respondents who had experienced psychological violence over the past 2 years due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (48.4%, n = 155) were asked specifically what form of psychological violence they had experienced. As Chart №39 shows, almost the majority of respondents have experienced verbal abuse/humiliation or ridicule among other forms of psychological violence (87%), about half of the respondents have experienced emotional manipulation (53%) and coercion to restrict gender expression (54%). More than a quarter of respondents have experienced forms of psychological violence such as blackmail and coercion (36%) and the threat of outing (28%). See Chart №38 for details.

Chart №38. Forms of psychological violence during the last 2 years.

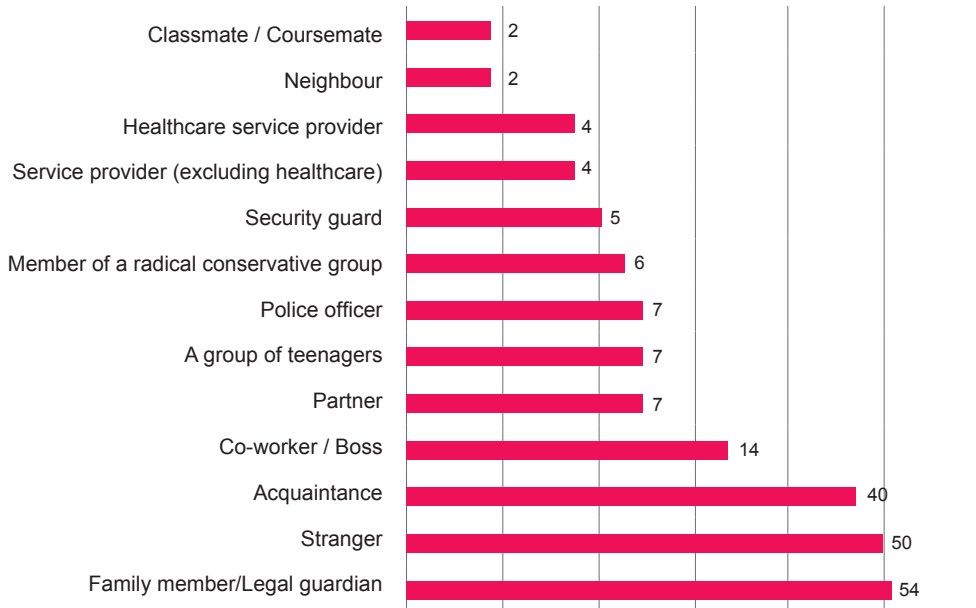


59.4% of the respondents mentioned that the psychological violence was of a continuous nature, while in the case of 40.6% it was a one-time event.

When asked from whom the psychological violence came and what relationship they had with the respondent, the most frequently named were family members (n = 54) and

strangers (n = 50). In 40 cases, the perpetrator of psychological violence was a person from the respondent’s acquaintance circle. For detailed distribution of frequencies, see Chart №39.

Chart №39: The perpetrator of psychological violence (frequencies, quantities indicated in numbers).

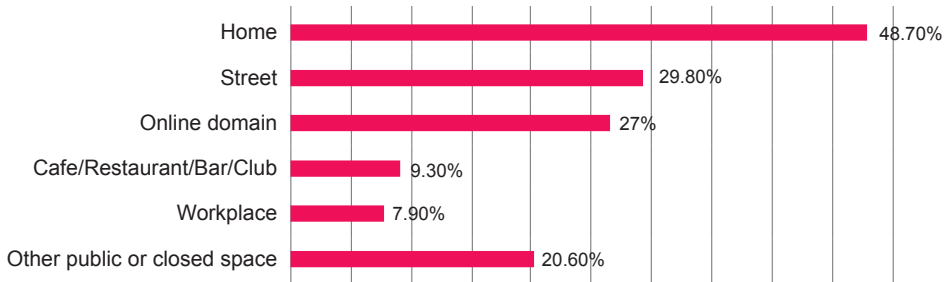


According to the respondents, almost half of the cases of psychological violence were committed by one person (47.7%), and in 51% of the cases the perpetrators were more than one person. Interestingly, unlike physical violence, there is no substantial difference between the genders of perpetrators of psychological violence. In 37.4% of cases, violence was committed by a man, in 21.9% – by a woman, and in 32.9% – by both a woman and a man (7.8% said they did not know who committed the violence).

In cases where the perpetrator was one person (n = 74), the age was mostly within the range of 18-35 years (45.3%), and in 32.0% of cases within the range of 36-54 years. In the case of group violence (or when more than one person participated) (n = 79), the age categories are divided as follows: >16 – 1.6%; 16-17 years – 10.9%; 18-35 years – 64.9%; 36-54 years – 44.9%; 55+ years – 6.5%).

Home (48.7%), **street** (29.8%), and **online domain** (27.0%) were the most named in terms of the location for violence. See Chart №40 for details.

Chart №40. The place of psychological violence.



68.4% of the cases took place in Tbilisi, 12.9% in Adjara, and 11% in Imereti. 7.6% of cases occurred in other regions of Georgia, and 0.6% – outside Georgia. 90.7% of cases of psychological violence occurred in urban-type settlements, 7.3% in rural areas, and 2.0% in rural-type settlements.

As in the case of physical violence, respondents are unlikely to turn to the police or law enforcement agencies. In the case of psychological violence, the number of people who report to police is 14.2%, while 82.6% of respondents do not turn to the police. 3.2% of respondents refrained from answering the question.

The number of respondents who reported psychological violence to law enforcement agencies is substantially low (n=22), which means that psychological violence is not perceived to be as severe as physical violence. It is noteworthy that even those who applied to the law enforcement agency for response, half of them rated the response negatively (50.0%), 31.8% of respondents assessed the response of law enforcement agencies to a specific violent experience either positively or more positively than negatively. 18.2% chose a partially positive and partly negative option. In the case of 4.5% of the respondents, the abuser/offender was charged with criminal/administrative liability, in the case of 68.2% the abuser/offender was not charged, and in the case of 13.6% the case did not reach the Court. Also, in 13.6% of cases, the case was under review during the fieldwork.

Respondents who did not appeal to the police for responding to a violent act (n=128) were asked to list three reasons (according to priorities) why they refrained from contacting the police. Among the reasons, the following provisions were named the most: I considered it to be an insufficiently severe action (31.0%); I considered that I could handle it myself (22.6%); I thought there would be no response (15%); I did not want to arrest the perpetrator (24.4%). This once again indicates that psychological violence is a normalized behaviour and respondents consider it to be insufficiently serious and therefore, expect less support. See Table №14 for detailed distribution of priorities.

Table №14: Reasons for refusing to contact the police.

	1 st priority	2 st priority	3 st priority
I considered the action insufficiently severe for reporting	31.0%	13.2%	
I thought there would be no response	13.5%	7.5%	7.0%
I felt ashamed (I did not want the other to know about it)	11.9%		
I thought I could handle it myself	11.9%	22.6%	11.6%
Due to insufficient evidence (like visible physical injury)	7.9%		
I thought they could not do anything		7.5%	8.1%
Due to the fear of recurrence of violence		7.5%	
I did not want the perpetrator arrested			24.4%
Due to the fear of transphobic/homophobic reactions on the part of the police			10.5%
N	126	106	86

4.4.1.4. Psychological Violence in the Last 5 Year Interval

Key findings:

- ▶ **Verbal abuse/ridicule or humiliation (70%), emotional manipulation (58%), blackmail and coercion (46%), and forced restriction of gender expression (36%)** were given as the most severe cases of psychological violence in the last 5 years.
- ▶ **Despite the subjective gravity of the violent nature of the actions, only 10.2% of respondents applied to the law enforcement agency to report the fact, while 89.8% did not.**
- ▶ **Respondents did not contact the law enforcement agency for the following reasons: “I thought there would be no response” (22.0%); “Fear of homophobic/transphobic reaction from police officers” (14.3%); “I did not have enough evidence” (14.3%.); “Because of negative experience with the police in the past” (22.9%).**
- ▶ **The most severe psychological violence in the last 5 years, according to the respondents, took place at home (30.5%), online (18.6%), in the street (15.3%), and at work (15.3%).**

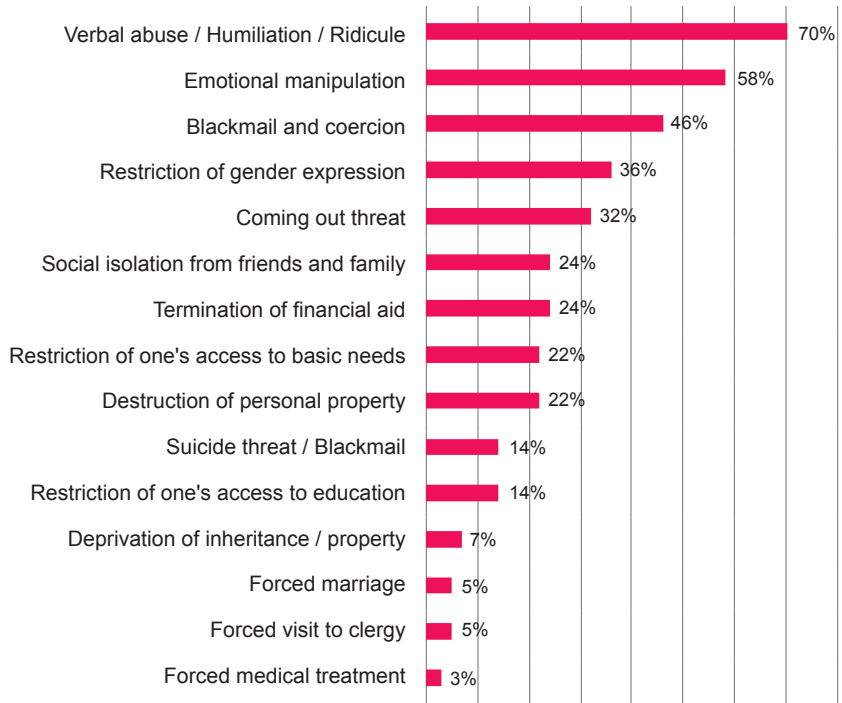
Except for the last case of psychological violence that occurred within 2 years, respondents were asked to recall the most severe case of psychological violence within the last 5 years. **A separate testimony of harsh experience serves to identify differences in reaction to it, and to show whether the severity of violent experiences affects the likelihood of addressing the law enforcement system or other supportive agencies. Various surveys show that in some cases, the subjective nature of the experience impels the abuser to seek help, but on the other hand, the very nature of this fact can be a reason for refusing help, as it has a particularly negative effect on the person's psycho-emotional state.**

Accordingly, it is important to distinguish within the study the most recent case in the last 2 years from the most severe case in the last 5 years. **In this regard, 23.0% of respondents (n = 59) reported that the most severe form of violence experienced in the last 5 years was different from the reported case of psychological violence in the last two years, and in the case of 75.4%, the latest case of psychological violence during the last 2 years was perceived as the most severe instance.**

Although the perception of the severity of a violent act is subjective and often also depends on the victim's connection to the perpetrator, it was important for the study to show what respondents consider to be a severe form of psychological violence and what form of violence took place in their case.

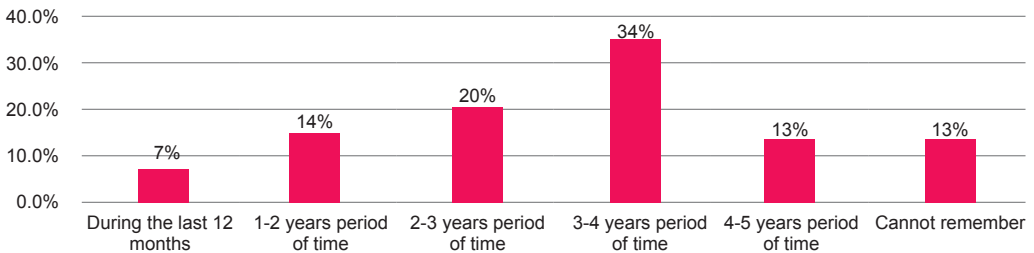
In this regard, the most mentioned were **verbal abuse/ridicule or humiliation (70%), emotional manipulation (58%), blackmail and coercion (46%)**. Also, 36% of respondents named **forced restriction of gender expression**. See Chart №41 for detailed figures.

Chart №41: Cases of the most severe psychological violence in the last 5 years (N = 59).



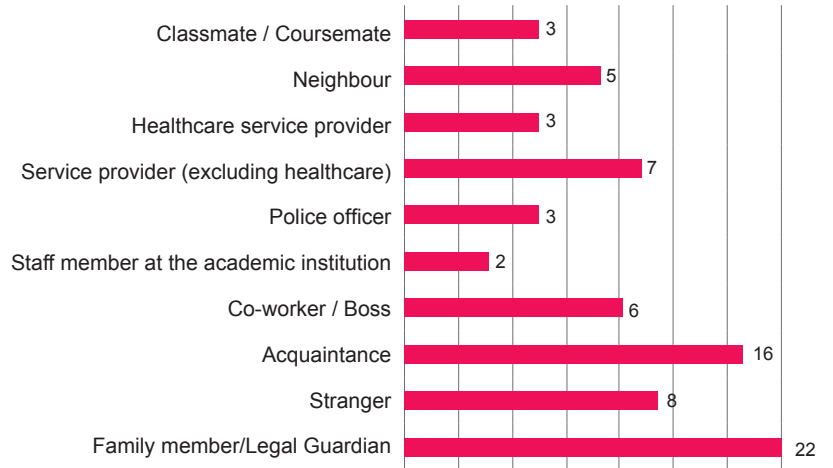
In the last 5 years, 7% of severe cases of psychological violence were committed in the last 12 months, 14% – in the period from 1 to 2 years ago, 20% – in the period from 2 to 3 years ago, 34% – from 3 to 4 years ago, and 13% – from 4 to 5 years ago. 13% of respondents indicated that they do not remember when the incident occurred.

Chart №42: The time scale of the most severe cases of psychological violence.



When asked from whom the psychological violence came and what relationship they had with the perpetrators, a **family member** (n = 22) and a **person from the circle of acquaintances** (n = 16) were named most often. In 8 cases, the perpetrator of psychological violence was a stranger. For detailed distribution of frequencies, see Chart №43.

Chart №43: The perpetrator of psychological violence.

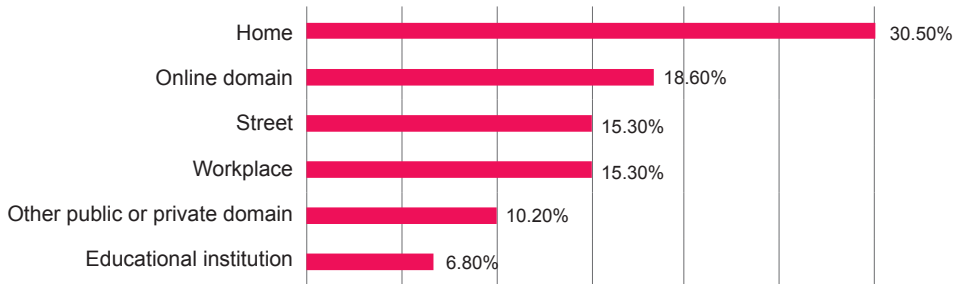


According to 76.3% of the respondents, the most severe act of violence was committed by one person, while in 23.7% of cases the perpetrator was more than one person.

The perpetrator of psychological violence in almost half of the cases was **male** (52.5%), in 28.8% of cases female, and in 15.3% of cases both female and male (3.4% reported not knowing from whom the violence originated). In cases where the perpetrator was a single person, their ages is mostly within the 18-35 years range (37.8%), and in 28.9% of cases within the 36-54 years range. In the cases of group violence (or when more than one person participated), the age ranges are distributed as follows: 18-35 years – 64.3%; 36-54 years – 71.4%.

The most severe psychological violence in the last 5 years, according to respondents, took place at **home** (30.5%), **online** (18.6%), **in the street** (15.3%), and **at work** (15.3%). See Chart №44 for detailed figures.

Chart № 44: The place of the most severe case of psychological violence.



It is significant to note that, despite the subjective gravity of the violent nature of the actions, only 10.2% of respondents addressed the law enforcement agency to report the fact, while 89.8% did not.

The respondents who applied to the police were identified as a total of six people, which is why the quality of the police response was not assessed here.

Respondents who did not report the act of violence to the police (n = 53) were asked to list three reasons (in priority order) why they refrained from contacting the police. The following statements were mentioned most often among the reasons – **I thought there would be no response (22.0%); Due to fear of homophobic/transphobic reaction from police officers – 14.3%, also – I did not have enough evidence – 14.3%.** For details, see table №15.

Table №15: Reasons for refusing of report to the police.

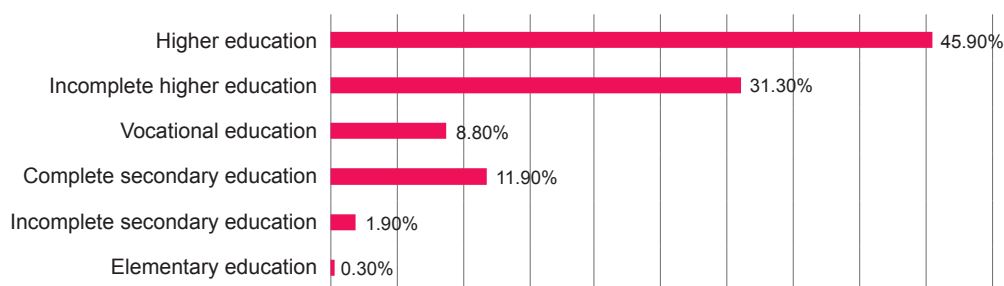
	1 st priority	2 st priority	3 st priority
I thought they would not do anything	22.0%		11.4%
I thought no response would follow	18.0%		5.7%
I considered the action as insufficiently severe	16.0%	7.1%	
I felt ashamed and did not want anybody to know about it	8.0%		
I feared transphobic/homophobic reactions on the part of the police	6.0%	14.3%	
I did not have enough evidence (such as visible physical injuries)		14.3%	
I feared the recurrence of the violent act		11.9%	
I thought I could handle it myself		9.5%	20.0%
I had a negative experience with the police in the past			22.9%
I thought they would not believe me			8.6%
N	50	42	35

4.5. Access to Education and Experience of Homo/ Transphobic Bullying

This chapter assesses LGBTQ people’s access to education and in this regard, examines social or identity-related barriers concerning the three main educational areas – school, vocational, and university/higher education.

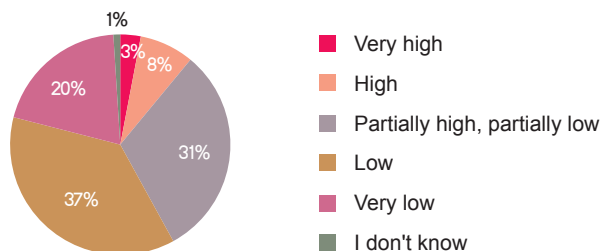
Almost half of respondents **surveyed** (45.9%) have received higher education (have been granted a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree), while **almost a third** are at the level of incomplete higher education, only 11.9% of respondents indicated complete secondary (school) as their last level of education. Also, 8.8% have received vocational education. For detailed breakdown see Chart №45.

Chart №45. Level of education received by the respondents.



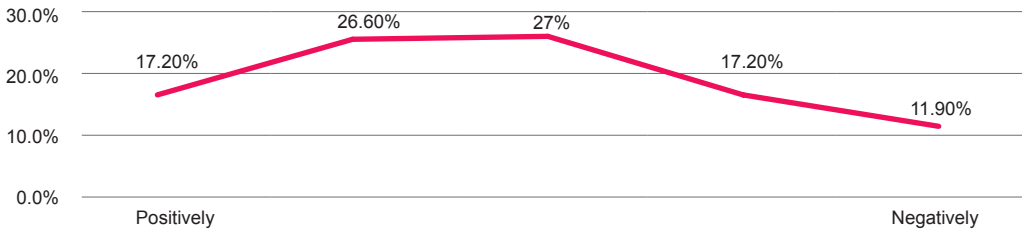
The respondents assessed the quality of education in Georgia. Most of the respondents (37%, N=320) emphasized low quality of education in Georgia, while 20% chose very low category. The share of respondents participating in the study who think that Georgia has high or very high level of education is about 11%. For detailed breakdown, see Chart №46.

Chart №46. A general assessment of the quality of education in Georgia.



The respondents also evaluated the quality of the final level of education on a 5-point scale. 43.8% of the surveyed respondents assessed the final level of education that they received positively or more positively than negatively and 29.1% – negatively, or more negatively than positively. For detailed breakdown see Chart №47.

Chart №47. Assessment of the final stage of education.



To the question “Did family stress affect the quality of your education?” 42% of respondents (N=274) answered negatively; 33.6% said that stress coming from their families had a partial effect on the quality of their education, and 23.7% indicated that the above factor had a huge impact on the quality of their education.

4.5.1. School Education

Key findings:

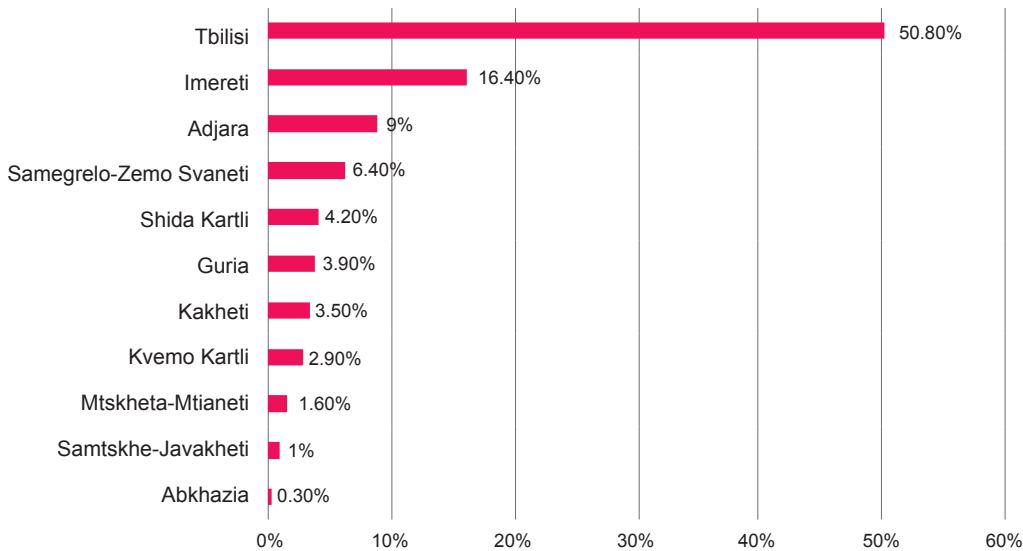
- ▶ **57% of respondents believe that the quality of education in Georgia is low.**
- ▶ **The notion that “teenagers with non-normative sexual identities have less access to the right of education than others” is fully or partially agreed with by 48% of respondents.**
- ▶ **32.2% of respondents (N=292) named homophobic discrimination by teachers and/or school administration while 41.9% named homophobic bullying by classmates/schoolmates as a barrier to receiving general education.**
- ▶ **Of the respondents who have had barriers to receiving general education due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (N=136), 44.1% have missed a day at school.**

- ▶ In terms of formal education, a quarter (25.3%) of respondents have received information on issues related to early marriage and 19.7% on issues related to gender equality. Issues such as sex life/protection (14.1%) and sexually transmitted infections (14.7%) were least mentioned.
- ▶ More than half of respondents (N=89) have experienced violence at school because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (N=49). Verbal abuse, harassment, or hostile comments were the most common acts of violence (46.1%). Part of respondents mentioned that third parties encouraged homophobic/transphobic behaviour of students (29.3%). A quarter of respondents (25.8%) have experienced violence or threats of violence at school within the last 5 years; 22.5% have had their personal information leaked without their consent.
- ▶ The majority of cases of violence were carried out by classmates (85.17%), while 26.6% of respondents pointed out that violence was caused by a teacher.

97.2% of respondents surveyed received school education in Georgia (N=320), and 2.5% received it outside Georgia. 0.3% have not received school education. In the case of 50.8% of respondents (N=311) who received their school education in Georgia, their schools were located in Tbilisi, in Imereti for 16.4%, in Adjara for 9%, and in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti for 6.4%. See Chart N^o48 for detailed breakdown.

84.7% of schools were located in urban settlements, 10.7% in rural settlements, and 3.6% in a town like settlements. As for the types of schools, 78.8% of respondents have been educated in a public school, 7.7% in a private school, and 13.2% in both a public and a private school.

Chart №48. Location of respondents' school (N=311).



Since complete formal school education may have a significant impact on people’s future well-being, it was of particular importance for the present study to investigate the possible existence of social or other barriers in the process of receiving such education. Among the respondents with social barriers (N=87%), 14.5% named the lack of financial resources necessary for buying clothes as an obstacle; 13.8% also emphasized the lack of financial resources in the context of buying books. Interestingly, 7.7% mentioned involvement in paid employment as a barrier to receiving complete school education. See Chart №49 for detailed breakdown.

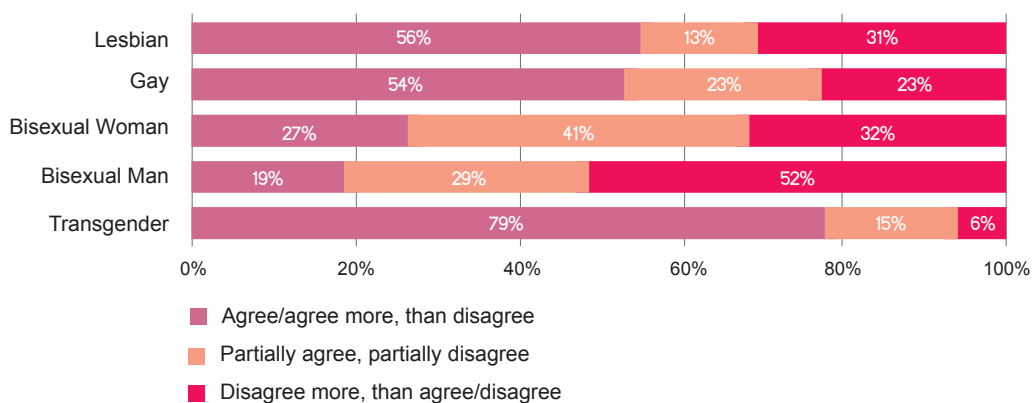
Chart №49. Social barriers in the process of receiving school education.



In addition to socio-economic barriers to education, there may be barriers that prevent one from effectively exercising these rights in practice. In the case of the LGBTQ community, this may be directly related to their identity and gender expression. As a result, in light of the homophobic attitudes existing in the society, members of the LGBTQ community may be subjected to ill-treatment and exclusion, including, from educational spaces, making formal general education inaccessible. Discriminatory attitudes existing in school spaces, in turn, force community members to change their behaviour and/or expression, and in difficult cases, to skip classes or to change schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to show the attitudes and perceptions of respondents regarding the right to access education. As a result, it is noteworthy that the notion – *“teenagers with non-normative sexual identities have less access to the right to education than others”* – was fully or partially agreed with by 48.7% of respondents (N=310), which is a substantially high rate. 27.5% of respondents fully or partially disagreed with the above notion, while the number of respondents who found the question difficult to answer was only 3.2%. According to cross-tabular analysis, transgender (79%), gay (54%), and lesbian (56%) respondents mostly agreed with this notion (differences are statistically reliable (chi-square=85.425, df=25, p<0.001)).

See Chart №50 for the breakdown of answers concerning the notion, which are produced on the basis of the respondents’ identities.

Chart №50. The breakdown of responses to the notion: teenagers with non-normative identities have less access to the right to education than others.



Respondents also named barriers to access to general education that prevented them from equally utilizing access to education (as was the case for others) due to their gender identity or sexual orientation. It is noteworthy that **32.2% of respondents (N=292) named homophobic discrimination on the part of teachers and/or members of**

school administration to be such a barrier, while 41.9% focused on homophobic bullying by classmates/schoolmates. 27.1% of respondents named the threat of violence in the schools, and 11.5% of respondents indicated the threat of formal expulsion from school.

The study showed that there are differences between groups in terms of barriers hindering access to general education. In particular, homophobic/transphobic discrimination and bullying by teachers/administration or classmates/schoolmates are **most common among transgender respondents, the threat of violence is also frequent in this group (60.6%)**. Bullying by classmates is common among the gay respondents (47.1%). (Based on 95% reliability data, differences between groups were found to be statistically significant (sig. <0.05)). See **Table №16** for detailed breakdown of frequencies.

Table №16. Breakdown of bullying and unequal treatment (the results in the table are calculated per frequency of answer “yes”)

Identity of the Respondents	1. Homophobic discrimination by teachers and/or school administration	Total number of respondents, N	2. Homophobic bullying by classmates/schoolmates	Total number of respondents, N	3. Threat of Violence	Total number of respondents N	4. Threat of expulsion from school	Total number of respondents, N
Lesbian	28.2%	85	30.6%	85	11.1%	81	4.8%	84
Gay	30.4%	102	47.1%	102	36.3%	102	14.0%	100
Bisexual woman	32.3%	31	40.0%	30	6.5%	31	16.1%	31
Bisexual man	6.9%	29	24.1%	29	13.8%	29	0%	29
Transgender	66.7%	33	69.7%	33	60.6%	33	28.1%	32
Other	41.7%	12	50.0%	12	50.0%	12	9.1%	11
Total:	32.3%	292	41.9%	291	27.1%	288	11.5%	287

Due to the risk of violence, discrimination, bullying, and harassment spread in the school environment, members of the LGBTQ community are forced to protect themselves from these violent and harmful actions in different ways. Therefore, to the question asked in the survey – “Did you have to conform your gender expression at school to stereotypical gender norms in order not to fall victim to discrimination, bullying or harassment” a big part of the respondents – 69.7% pointed out that they had to use this method of defence/avoidance at different intensities. (32.6% of respondents answered that they **always** had to,

37.1% said they had to conform to their common gender norms **partially**, while 30.3% did not have to do so).

Negative attitudes in the school environment have a significant impact on students' learning quality¹¹⁵ and motivation/ability to gain knowledge, as identity-based negative environment reinforces stress and self-intolerance. Consequently, it is particularly noteworthy that **44.1% of respondents**, who have had barriers to receiving general education due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (N=136), **have missed a day at school**. In this regard, the frequency of absence is also important. 35.5% of respondents (N=60) rarely missed school, 30.3% – often, and 19.7% – very often. It is also important, that due to homophobic/transphobic bullying a relatively small number of respondents – 6.6% (N=320), have changed schools.

There is no comprehensive sex education in Georgia. Some issues are included in the curriculum of various subjects (for example, “Me and Society”, Civil Education, Biology), but these curriculums are not enough to guarantee the **right of students to receive scientifically correct, age-appropriate, in-depth education about sexuality**.¹¹⁶ The present study also aimed to show what types of experience exist among the respondents in terms of receiving information about any element of sex education/receiving education within the scope of **formal** and **non-formal** education, including those about gender equality, early marriage, and gender-related violence.

The study showed that in terms of formal education, a quarter of respondents (25.3%) received information on issues related to early marriage and 19.7% on issues related to gender equality. In the case of surveyed respondents, the **least mentioned issues** were issues related to sex life/protection (14.1%) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (14.7%). It should also be noted that when it comes to the scope of non-formal education the respondents cite each notion more often. See Table №17 for detailed figures.

115 UNESCO. 2016. *Out in the Open: Education Sector Responses to Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression*.

116 Public Defender of Georgia, National Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Georgia, 2019

Table №17. Have you received information on the following issues within the scope of formal and non-formal education?

	Formal	Non-formal
Related to sex life/protection	14.1%	27.2%
Related to sexually transmitted infections	14.7%	23.1%
Related to abortion, motherhood, and reproductive health	16.6%	27.5%
Issues related to gender equality, women's rights	19.7%	34.4%
Issues related to early marriage	25.3%	34.1%
	N=320	N=320

Even though when it comes to formal education issues of sexual orientation and gender are not part of the school curriculum, such issues are still frequently discussed informally between students, and teachers and students. The content of these discussions may have a significant impact on a person's self-perception and future life. 55.1% of respondents mentioned that at school they have not had discussions on issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity (N=305). 16.7% said that they had discussions on similar topics during the classes, although these issues were considered in a negative light. 5.9% indicated that discussions on similar issues were held in a neutral context, 14.1% said that discussions on the above issues were held in both negative and neutral contexts, while 8.2% did not mention discussing these matters.

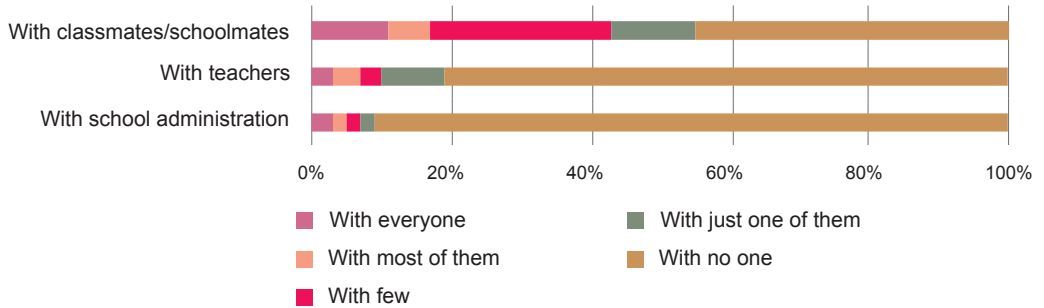
The notion ***“What impact did the issues discussed in the learning process, which were related to LGBTQ community, have on their future life and self-perception?”*** was answered as negative by 21.4% of respondents, since it had created the feeling of fear and pushed them to hide. According to 16.1%, discussions on such issues made them feel unaccepted. 45.5% thought they did not have any impact. Only 4.5% of respondents mentioned that discussing issues of the LGBTQ community in school had a positive impact on their self-perception and future life, which stimulated acceptance. 12.9% of respondents abstained from the question or found it difficult to answer (N=112).

The study, with reference to the school education level, examined the experience of coming out and possible violence related to it (N=89).¹¹⁷ The examination covered the period

117 51% of respondents finished school in the years 2010-2014, 24% in the years 2015-2019, and 19% in the years 2000-2009. 3% of respondents finished school in years 1985-1999, while 2% did not receive or complete secondary education.

of the last 5 years. It should be noted that 45% of respondents were not open about their identity with any of their classmates, 80% with none of their teachers, and 90% with none of the members of school administration. Coming out is most common with a group of classmates, with 12% of respondents being open about their identity to only one classmate, 26% to only a few, 6% to most, and 11% to all. See Chart №51 for detailed figures.

Chart №51. Experience of coming out during the school period.

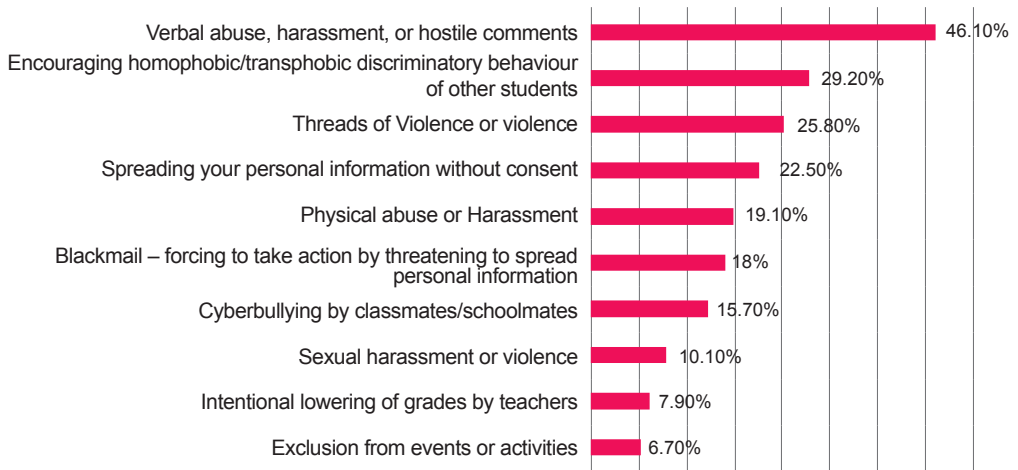


Of those respondents who had the experience of coming out with at least one classmate or schoolmate (N=49), 24.5% pointed out, that classmates had demonstrated a more neutral than a negative attitude. 57.1% said that attitudes of classmates were unequivocally neutral. 4.1% said that the attitude of their classmates were more negative than neutral, while in the case of 8.2% this attitude was certainly negative.

In the case of teachers (N=20), 45.0% of respondents spoke of **negative** experience on their part, 40.0% spoke of a more neutral or unequivocally neutral attitude. In the case of school administration (N=11), 45.5% of respondents spoke of explicitly negative attitude, 18.2% of more negative, than neutral and 36.4% – of neutral attitude.

The study also examined experiences related to sexual orientation and gender identity violence that have occurred over the past 5 years. More than half of the interviewed respondents (N=89) had a similar experience during their school time (N=49). They have most often experienced verbal abuse, harassment, or hostile comments (46.1%), as well as other students encouraging homophobic/transphobic discriminatory behaviour (29.2%). A quarter of respondents (25.8%) had experienced violence or threats of violence at school, while 22.5% had their data disseminated without their consent. See Chart №52 for detailed figures.

Chart №52. Experience of different forms of violence during the school period (N=89).



Note: respondents could mark several answers.

Most of the actions named by the respondents came from the classmates (85.17%), 26.5% of respondents named the teacher as the person performing the above-mentioned action(s). In the case of 16.3%, these action(s) were performed by an unknown schoolmate, and in the case of 6.1% – by the administration.

67.3% of respondents (N=49) who had experienced various types of violence/discrimination while attending school did not complain to anyone in order to receive a response to the fact. 8.2% referred to another teacher and 10.2% to the school administration. Only 4.1% brought the issue of discrimination/violence to their parents.

Of the respondents who reported discrimination/violence, 18.8% said that their complaint remained unanswered. 43.8% said that they received some type of answer, yet the fact of discrimination/violence was not considered to be serious enough. According to 37.5% of respondents, their complaint was followed by an adequate response (N=16).

Respondents, who did not report discrimination/violence to anyone, cited three reasons for their inaction:

- ▶ Did not know whom to turn to or how (39.5%).
- ▶ Did not want to reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity (31.6%).
- ▶ Thought their problem would not have been taken seriously (18.4%).

Substantially low reporting rates, as well as the grounds for refraining from bringing a complaint, expose shortcomings in the education system that fail to prevent violence and discrimination, and in the event of the occurrence of such a fact, they exhibit a failure to create an effective, safe, and trustworthy environment that not only generates a sense of security for the students but also makes them able to rehabilitate from the psychological damage. In this regard, the existence of professional psychological services in schools is essential, as it would enable students to receive adequate psycho-social support, if they do not have the opportunity to do so within their family and other living spaces. It should be noted that **only 48.9% of respondents in the present survey said that their school had a psychologist. Although this type of service is provided, it is not being used frequently, as 72.7% of respondents have never used it.**

4.5.2. Vocational Education

Key findings:

- ▶ **Almost one-fifth of respondents have received vocational education (20.9%).**
- ▶ **According to the majority of the respondents (62.7%), vocational school graduates have less chance of employment.**
- ▶ **A large proportion of the respondents did not have significant barriers in terms of accessing vocational education due to their sexual orientation and gender identity; this is essentially related to the rare experience of coming out and the practice of conforming to stereotypical gender norms of gender expression.**

According to the Georgian Professional Development Strategy,¹¹⁸ vocational education is one of the most important means of achieving the goal of eradicating poverty and unemployment. It is an international commitment of the state to ensure proper organization and inclusiveness in vocational education. Among those commitments, Georgia, within the scope of sustainable development, took responsibility to ensure by 2030 a significant improvement of the skills of adolescents and adults for their decent employment and self-employment. Access to vocational education is important for achieving both the 4th (quality education) and the 8th (employment and economic growth) goals of sustainable development. The importance of access to quality vocational education in overcoming unemployment is reinforced by the fact that socially vulnerable people make

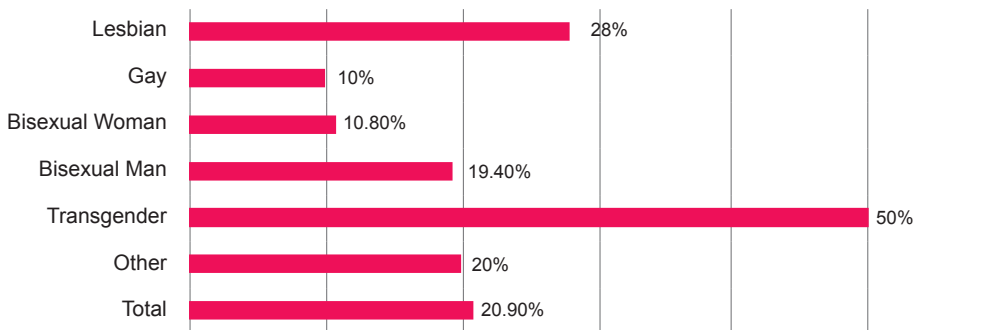
118 See: <https://www.mes.gov.ge/uploads/300.pdf>

up more than a third (37%) of those enrolled in vocational programs, while members of low socioeconomic groups make up the majority of those whose enrolment status was terminated (42%), as well as the graduates (35.5%).¹¹⁹

However, despite the above objectives, it is noteworthy that according to the survey of employers' attitudes towards vocational education, possession of a professional diploma is not yet a proof of qualification of a graduate for more than half (53%) of employers. 43% of employers consider that vocational school graduates are poorly versed in the profession and need training in large doses.¹²⁰ However, the study revealed a small number of cases of cooperation between employers and vocational schools, which in the long run makes vocational education obsolete for ordinary citizens.

The purpose of displaying the issue of vocational education in a separate section of this study was to define its role in the social and economic well-being of individuals and in the process of overcoming poverty. In the present study, almost one-fifth of the respondents have received vocational education (20.9%). Cross-tabulation analysis showed that vocational education is most common among transgender (50%) and lesbian respondents (28%). (Data are statistically reliable (Chi-square = 30.41; df = 5; p <0.001)).

Chart №53. Experience in obtaining vocational education by identities.



Respondents also assessed the difference between employment opportunities after graduating from vocational schools and higher education institutions. Interestingly, the majority of those that are involved in vocational education (62.7%) believe that vocational school graduates have fewer employment opportunities, while a quarter (25.4%) be-

119 *Vocational Education Socio-Economic Status of Students*. 2020. Vocational Education Development Department of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia and ACT Research Company. See <https://www.mes.gov.ge/uploads/files/SOCIO-ECONOMIC%20STATUS%20OF%20VOCATIONAL%20EDUCATION%20STUDENTS-GEO.PDF>

120 ACT, UNDP, *Employers' Attitudes Towards Vocational Education*, 2015.

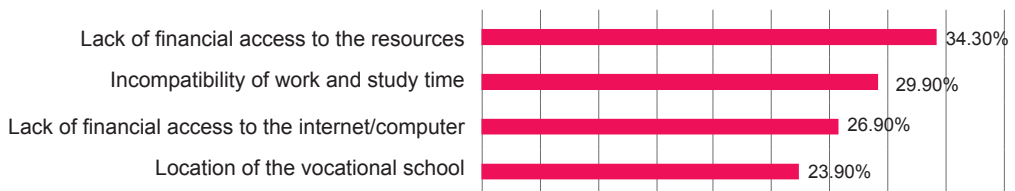
lieve that vocational school graduates have more employment opportunities than those with higher education. 10.4% of respondents do not talk about the difference in terms of employment, while 1.5% find it difficult to answer.

Due to the fact that vocational education in Georgia is viewed as the means for strengthening the “competitiveness” of workers in the labour market, the respondents were asked to rate the “competitiveness” of private/public vocational schools. In this regard, an equal number of respondents provided answers to two opposition views. Namely, 49.3% assessed the issue in a positive light (“competitive”), while 49.3% think that graduates of public/private vocational schools are not competitive enough. 6% of the latter expressed an extremely negative viewpoint (“completely uncompetitive”). 1.5% of respondents found it difficult to express any position.

One of the key elements of vocational education is its inclusiveness, which means that it must be accessible to all people regardless of their identity and characteristics and must respond to the specific needs of an individual. To assess this, the respondents were presented with the following notion: **“Young people with non-normative identities have less access to vocational education”, which was agreed with by 46.2%** of respondents. 34.4% of respondents disagreed with the above notion, while 16.4% expressed a neutral attitude.

On the issue of accessibility, it was interesting to see what specific obstacles the respondents face in fully accessing vocational education. Interestingly, the respondents mostly refer to **the absence of such barriers**. On average, a quarter of respondents have experienced different types of barriers, which is distributed in the following manner (“Yes” category): location – 23.9%, lack of access to financial resources – 34.3%, lack of the Internet/computer – 26.9%, incompatibility of work and study time – 29.9%. See Chart №54.

Chart №54. Social barriers in the process of obtaining vocational education.



Respondents also assessed the obstacles they had to face due to their identity, which deterred them from getting a vocational education. As it turned out, the majority of the respondents do not have this type of experience (80%). Accordingly, identity-based bar-

riers, which may hinder vocational education, are represented by a low percentage of 6% -16%, among which the identity-based barriers are expressed in the following forms: homophobic discrimination by professors – 11.9%, homophobic bullying by classmates – 16.4%, threat of violence – 6%. See Chart №55.

Chart №55. Barriers to vocational education related to homophobia/transphobia.



Interestingly, 84.6% of respondents who had different types of barriers to accessing vocational education due to their identity missed classes for the same reason. The frequency of absences is estimated by more than half of the respondents (53.3%) as “rare”, in 33.3% of cases absences are more common, and 13.3% fall into the “very often” category.

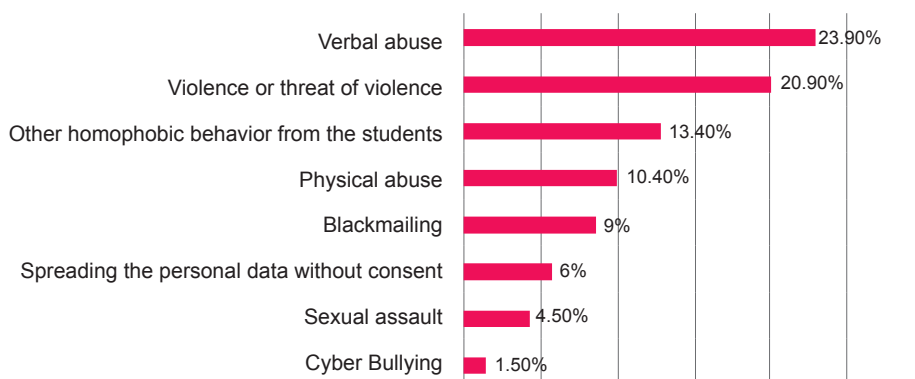
The low frequency of identity barriers, which were revealed within the scope of the survey, maybe largely related to the rare experience of coming out because, as the survey shows, respondents avoid coming out in the school space. 80.6% of respondents are not open with any lecturer about their identity, 91% have not had a case of coming out with the administration. This figure is relatively small even in the case of classmates (65.7%).

Respondents who had the experience of coming out evaluated the reaction of lecturers, classmates, or administration. The evaluation was carried out on the spectrum of “neutral” to “negative”. As it turned out, in all three categories the reaction to the respondents’ coming out was mostly neutral, with the highest percentage with classmates – 85.6% (lecturers – 50%, administration – 66.7%). It is also interesting to note that partially or completely negative reaction was observed only in the case of coming out to lecturers – 18.5% (including 6.3% – “negative”).

As already mentioned, refusing to come out in order to avoid danger does not always provide an effective safeguard mechanism, especially for trans people. Often, not only passive but also active action is required, in particular, to conform to stereotypical gender norms of gender expression. **37.3% of respondents** mentioned that they had to conform their behaviour and expression to the gender norms in order to avoid discrimination/harassment in the educational space.

Respondents also assessed allegations of discrimination against them because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity. For the most part, respondents do not have a similar experience (negative answer to this question varies between 76%-98%). Regarding the manifestation of different types of negative attitude/discrimination, the respondents most often name verbal abuse (23.9%), followed by violence or threats of violence (20.9%). Cases of cyberbullying are presented with a minimum rate of 1.5%. See Chart №56 for detailed breakdown of the data.

Chart №56. Experiencing various forms of discrimination in the process of obtaining vocational education.



More than half of the respondents (52.6%) who reported experiencing a similar negative attitude, noted that the above-mentioned action came from a classmate they already knew, 31.6% named a lecturer. 10.5% of respondents estimate that similar action was taken against them by a classmate they did not know, while 5.3% emphasized the negative attitude expressed by the administration of the vocational school. Despite the obvious discrimination by various actors, 84.2% of respondents state that they have not referred to anyone to report the fact; 10.5% of respondents informed a teacher and 5.3% – the administration. The absolute majority of all respondents with similar experiences state that their complaint was answered, however, the fact itself was not taken seriously enough and, consequently, no action was taken against the abuser.

On the other hand, those who did not report any discriminatory action against them cited the lack of information about the relevant services to be the reason for such inaction, namely, they did not know to whom or how to apply (43.8%). 31.3% of respondents estimated that they had dealt with the problem themselves. The second most cited/prioritized answer in the said categories is the following: *"I thought the fact was not worth reporting"* (28.6%), followed by the emotional state of respondents; 21.4% indicate that the emotional impact of the incident was so big that they were not ready to talk about it.

4.5.3. Higher Education

Key findings:

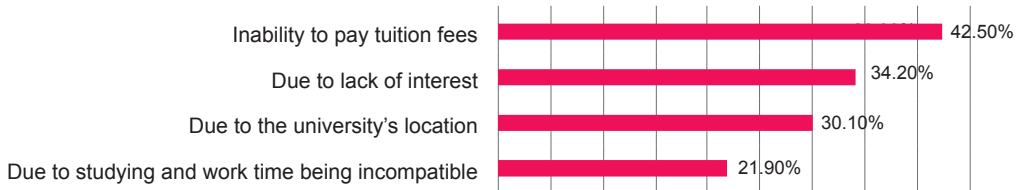
- ▶ **Almost half of the respondents (42.5%) mentioned the inability to pay tuition fees as a barrier to higher education.**
- ▶ **Among the social barriers existing in the process of receiving higher education, respondents named incompatibility of work and study time (42.9%) and tuition fees (40.4%).**
- ▶ **Respondents avoid coming out; 66.8% of respondents have never been open about their identity with any teacher, a similar position is found concerning the administration – 90.9%. In the case of classmates, this figure is small and equals 21.6%.**
- ▶ **20.3% of respondents had to conform to gender norms fully or partially to avoid unequal treatment.**
- ▶ **74.6% (N=44) of respondents who had experienced various types of violence/discrimination while studying in a higher education institution did not report the fact.**
- ▶ **The provision that “young people with non-normative identities have less access to higher education than others” is agreed with by 31.0% of respondents.**

Higher/university education is an important factor in determining the socio-economic status of individuals. Therefore, within the framework of this study, the examination of social and cultural barriers associated with receiving higher education serves to identify reasons that make education inaccessible in reality.

The majority of respondents surveyed (77.2%) are have an experience of higher education. 40.5% of them are in the process of receiving higher education, and 59.5% have received at least a bachelor’s degree. 91.1% of respondents received higher education in Georgia, 8.1% both in Georgia and abroad, and 0.8% outside Georgia. However, in the present study the section on higher education only addresses the quality of higher education received in Georgia and the aspects of its accessibility. Therefore, the respondents who received education **only** outside Georgia no longer participated in the survey focusing on the subsequent sections on higher education.

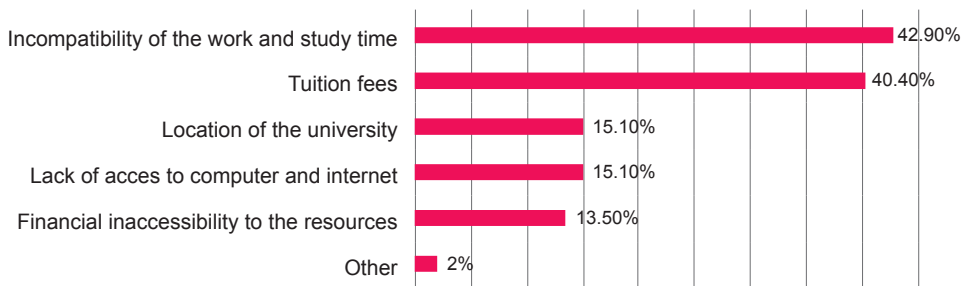
Respondents without higher education named the main reasons for not receiving or not being able to receive it. It is noteworthy **that almost half of respondents (42.5%) named the inability to pay tuition fees as a barrier to not receiving education.** See Chart №57 for detailed figures.

Chart №57. Barriers to receiving higher education.



Different types of barriers may also appear in the process of receiving higher education, which complicates the possibility of fully mastering the profession. Among the mentioned barriers, the most frequently mentioned by the respondents were **incompatibility of work and study time (42.9%) and tuition fees (40.4%).** See Chart №58 for detailed figures.

Chart №58. Social barriers in the process of receiving higher education.



In addition to the economic barriers, the respondents assessed barriers that emerged in the process of receiving higher education, which were caused by their own identity and significantly limited their capacity to fully practice the right to education. It should be noted that the mentioned barriers are represented by a low percentage, 1.4%-13.6% ("yes" category), although in terms of forms, the respondents named problematic experiences such as **homophobic discrimination by teachers – 13.6%, homophobic bullying by classmates – 9.9%, the threat of violence – 5.3%, and other reasons – 1.4%.**

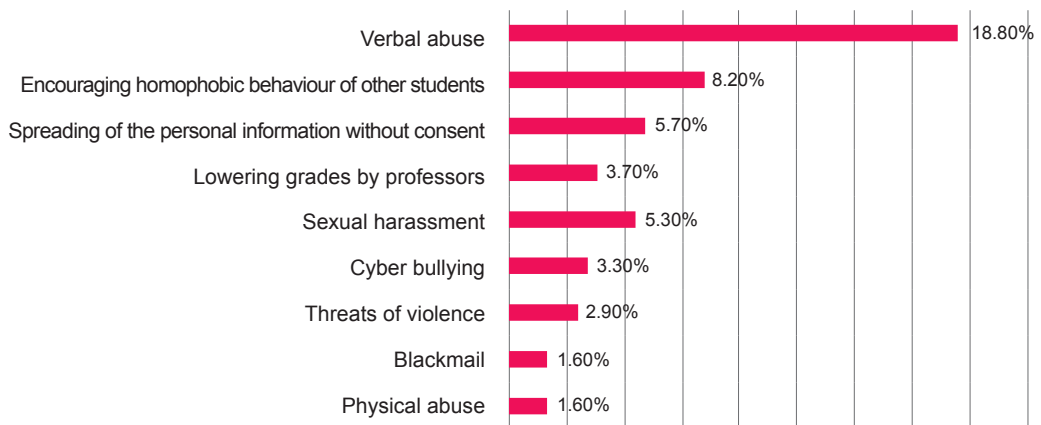
Significantly, different types of barriers associated with identity posed such a major problem for students that they had to miss a day or a class at the university (44.2%). More than half of respondents (52.2%) rate the frequency of absenteeism as "rare", while in 39.1% of cases, absences are a more common practice. Among those, 8.7% chose the category of missing "very often".

As mentioned above, the experience of coming out is essentially related to a violent experience or discriminatory act against the LGBTQ community, including in the university space. As the present study shows, the respondents mostly avoid coming out. 66.8% of respondents were not open with any teacher about their identity, a similar position is found with regards to the administration – 90.9%. In the case of classmates, this figure is also small and equals 21.6%, of which 43.7% of respondents indicate that they are/were open about their identities with several classmates. Openness to everyone is indicated by only 11.4% of respondents.

As it has been repeatedly stated above, refraining from coming out does not guarantee the absence of identity-based hostility and unequal treatment. Often, members of the LGBTQ community have to make a very active effort to prevent the spread of information about their identity without their consent and formation of a stereotypical representation. Accordingly, the study assessed the extent to which the respondents had to conform to the stereotypical gender norms of gender expression in order not to fall victim to discrimination and harassment in an educational space. As it turned out, 29.3% of respondents had to fully or partially engage in gender-conformist behaviour to avoid unequal treatment.

It was essential to study the experiences of the respondents in terms of identity-based violence, which were assessed in the last 5 years. As studies show, various forms of violence, mostly psychological violence, often take place in university spaces, both by academic staff and students. Interestingly, the following forms of discrimination or violence were most named by the respondents (N = 245): verbal abuse, harassment or hostile comments (18.8%), as well as the encouragement of homophobic/transphobic behaviour in students by academic staff or other university staff (8.2%). Personal data of 5.7% of respondents was leaked, while 5.3% were victims of sexual harassment. See Chart №59 for detailed figures.

Chart №59. Experiencing discriminatory treatment while receiving higher education.



The majority of actions named by the respondents came from a familiar student (61.0%), 20.3% of respondents named a professor as the person performing the action/actions mentioned above. In 11.9% of cases, the above mentioned action/actions was/were performed by unknown students, and in 3.4% of cases – by a member of student self-government.

3.4% of the above-mentioned actions were carried out (before the fieldwork process) during the last 6 months, 10.2% – in the last 6 months to 1 year period, 13.6% – 1 to 2 years period, 15.3% – 2 to 3 years period, 27.1% – 3 to 4 years period, and 23.7% of cases – 4 to 5 years period.

74.6% of respondents who have experienced various types of violence/discrimination while studying in a higher education institution, **did not refer to anyone to respond to the fact.** 15.3% reported to the university administration, 5.1% reported to the dean, 3.4% referred to non-governmental organizations for assistance, and 1.7% of respondents used the service of the Public Defender.

Out of respondents who **reported** discrimination/violence to different people (N=15), 66.7% said that there was a response to the complaint, although the case was perceived as insufficiently serious. In the case of 20%, the case was adequately answered, while in the case of 13.3%, the case is still under consideration (N=15).

On the other hand, those who did not report any discriminatory acts committed against them pointed out that the main reason for their inaction was the fact that they have decided to deal with the situation by themselves (29.5%). According to 25.0% of respondents, they did not know whom to address. In the categories named as the second priority, the following answer prevails – *“I thought the fact was not worth reporting”* (32.4%). The next most cited answer was the risk of breaching confidentiality (21.6%). Among the reasons named in the third place, the category of – *“I thought they would not take this problem seriously”* prevailed with 19.4%.

To summarize the above assessments and to better understand the impact that non-normative and non-dominant identity can have on the process of receiving higher education, the respondents were presented with the following provision: *“students with non-normative identity have less access to higher education than others”*, which was agreed with by 31.0% of respondents. 41.6% of respondents do not agree with this statement, 26.1% take a neutral position, and 1.2% found it difficult to answer the question (“I do not know”).

As statistics show, the utilization of the right to education by the members of the LGBTQ community is associated with many barriers. On the one hand, the opportunities for quality education within the existing education system in Georgia are limited, which is evident in both the first and subsequent levels of education. Moreover, it is clear that school education cannot provide citizens with skills that will ensure their future well-being.

There is no comprehensive education on human sexuality in Georgia, which is an important foundation not only in the process of breaking the misconceptions about sexual orientation and gender identity but also for the upbringing of equal citizens in an equal society.

Homo/transphobic bullying, as well as unequal treatment or encouragement of such behaviour by teachers and school administration, is still prevalent in school educational spaces. This reveals the multifaceted and complex problems in educational spaces that require effective measures both in terms of permanent retraining of teachers and proper revision of the curriculum, which will contribute to the safety of the school space and adherence to the principles of equality.

At the same time, social barriers related to tuition fees and the burden of simultaneous employment are still a problem. Students have to choose between education and financial income, which is not supported by adequate social protection mechanisms and measures implemented by the state.

Under these circumstances, identity-based oppression and the possibility of unequal treatment for the LGBTQ community create additional barriers in the process of receiving a full education. While the present quantitative study did not reveal numerous cases of violence and discrimination in university spaces, this is largely due to the LGBTQ community's self-restraint in coming out and engagement in gender-conforming behaviours.

4.6. Labour Rights and Access to Employment

Key findings:

- ▶ In 60.5% of respondents, the average salary of LGBTQ people does not exceed 1000 GEL.
- ▶ More than one-fifth of the employed respondents (22.3%) work two jobs at the same time, which in the case of 88.9% of respondents is due to low wages.

- ▶ **For 82% of respondents, wages are only enough to buy food, clothes, and household items, evidencing that wages in Georgia are not adequate and cannot ensure an adequate quality of life.**
- ▶ **Incompatibility of study and work time predominates among the causes of unemployment among the respondents (27.3%). In the case of trans respondents, the survey shows that the employment barrier is the requirement set by the employers, which obliges the candidates to submit personal documents (14.1%).**
- ▶ **A large proportion of respondents (42.9%) consider having a contact to be an important factor in finding a good job in Georgia, evidencing a lack of belief in equal access to employment.**
- ▶ **63% of respondents have to borrow money to even cover daily expenses, 31.7% have to do so for food and 25.9% for renting an apartment. Of the respondents who borrowed money from any source, 62.2% are employed and 37.8% are unemployed.**
- ▶ **During the last 2 years, 23.9% of respondents borrowed from a bank or microfinance company for food and/or other basic needs.**

Access to employment and decent working conditions are a fundamental human right that ensures the elimination of social and economic inequality and future well-being. By 2014, there were 73 million young people worldwide in search of a job. The share of young people who were not employed, did not receive education or training is one in five. Moreover, as of 2013, more than one-third of the employed young people in the world lived on just \$2 a day.¹²¹

According to the UN International Labour Organization, young people who do not receive full school education are in a risk group for social vulnerability, working and staying in workplaces where their rights are not protected while the working conditions are dangerous and cause chronic poverty. Unemployment at an early age has a negative impact on life chances and long-term job opportunities. The cycle of in-depth education and re-training, more and better quality are an important element of economic growth and a guarantee of people's social and economic well-being.¹²²

Consequently, access to decent labour and adequate working conditions is an important element in poverty elimination, combining the principles of equal treatment in the

121 ILO, Decent Work And The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development. See: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-lisbon/documents/event/wcms_667247.pdf

122 Ibid.

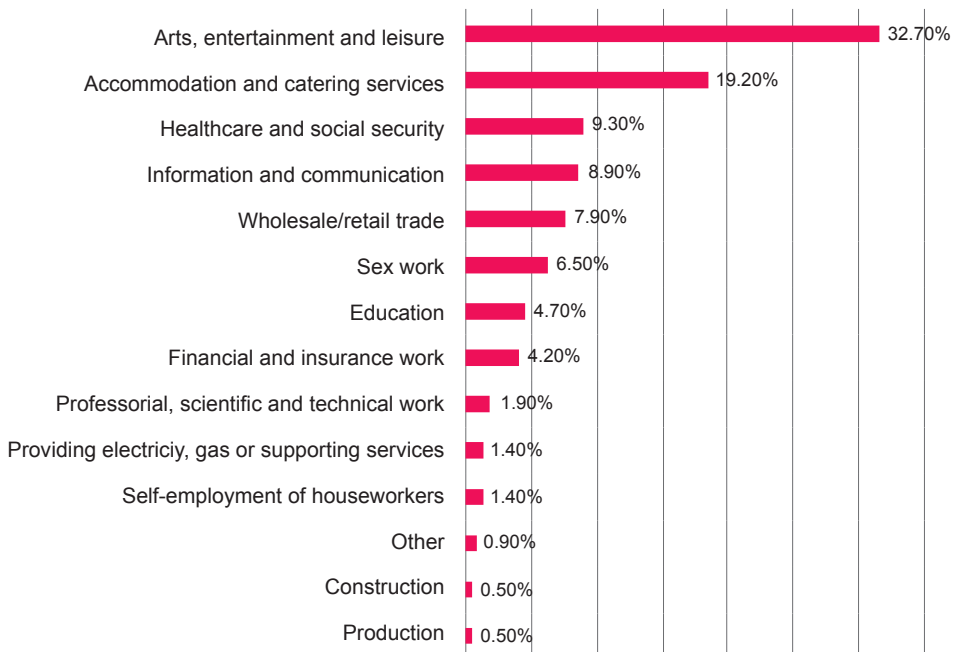
workplace with the protection of labour rights by employers ensuring such protection in an effective manner. Working conditions of employees include, among other things, adequate remuneration, working hours, and overtime pay, and other important conditions.

This chapter, in the first part, examines the employment status and working conditions of LGBTQ people, the aim of which is to expose the practice of violation of rights that occurs in the workplace and, as a result, creates an unworthy work environment and, sometimes, unemployment.

The majority of respondents interviewed in the present study (68.8%) **are employed at the time of the study, while 31.3% are unemployed.** In terms of basic employment status, 36.1% of respondents are hired workers in a medium or large organization, and 28.2% – in a small enterprise. 16.7% of respondents indicate that they work for a local/international non-profit organization, while 12% are self-employed or have their own business. However, the share of those working in a state organization (4.2%) or involved in seasonal work (2.8%) does not exceed 5%.

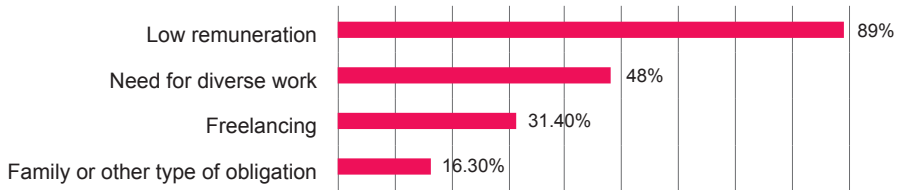
From the point of view of the employment sector, a large proportion of respondents (32.7%) work in the arts, entertainment, and leisure sectors, and almost a fifth (19.2%) in the accommodation/catering sector. See Chart №60 for detailed data distribution.

Chart №60. Employment sector.



It is noteworthy that more than one-fifth of the employed respondents (22.3%) are employed in two jobs at the same time. The number of cases of employment in more than two paid jobs does not exceed 2% (3 jobs – 1.8%, 4 or more – 0.5%). It should be noted that respondents **employed in more than one job cite low remuneration (88.9%) as the reason for doing so.** See Chart №61. (“Yes” category).

Chart №61. Reasons for being employed in several jobs at once.



To better explore existing practices of employee workload and working time, they were asked to specify the number of hours they spend working per week. 60.5% of respondents indicate that they work full time for an average of 47.4 hours per week. 20.9% of respondents work part-time, their average working hours being 28.9 per week, less than one-fifth of the respondents (18.6%) are employed part-time, which includes an average workload of 25.1 hours per week. According to the first part of Article 14 of the Labour Code of Georgia, the number of working hours should not be more than 40 hours per week, and in an enterprise with a working regime, where the production/labour process involves continuous working time of more than 8 hours – more than 48 hours per week. The present study shows that in the case of some respondents, the mentioned obligation is being violated by the employers.

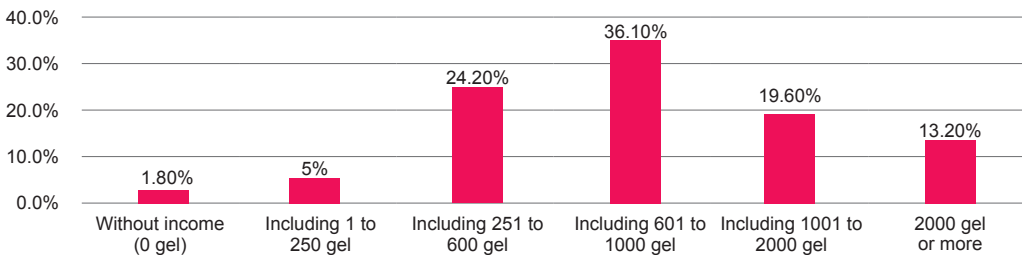
It is also interesting to note that 23.2% of the employed respondents are employed without a contract, while half (50%) of the respondents working under a fixed-term contract. 16.8% are employed on a permanent contract. Only 1.8% indicate that they have signed both types of contracts (8.2% indicate that this issue does not concern them). According to Section 1 (Prima) of Article 6 of the Labour Code of Georgia, an employment contract must be concluded in writing if the employment relationship lasts for more than 3 months. The study could not determine the period of employment of those who did not have a contract. Therefore, it is impossible to investigate the extent to which the employers violated workers' rights in relation to this particular issue.

According to Geostat data for the year of 2018, the average monthly salary of employees is 1068 GEL, in the case of women the figure is 823 GEL, and in the case of men 1281.¹²³ It

123 Geostat, Salary Calculator. See: <https://www.geostat.ge/salarium/?lang=ka>.

is noteworthy that in the present study, the average salary of LGBTQ people in the case of 60.5% of respondents does not exceed 1000 GEL. In the case of 36.1% of respondents, the salary is in the range of 601-1000 GEL. Almost a quarter (24.4%) indicate that they receive an average of 251-600 GEL per month as wages. In the case of only 19.6% of respondents, the average monthly salary is in the range of 1001-2000 GEL, which is, in essence, a low rate. For detailed breakdown of the data, see Chart №62.

Chart №62. The average income of the respondents based on their salary.



If assessed in conjunction with the regions, the average salary of the respondents living in Tbilisi stands at 3.91, while in the case of other regions it is 3.23, which means that in the case of Tbilisi, this number is closer to the category of 601-1000 GEL, and in the case of the regions – of 251-600 GEL.

According to the cross-tabulation analysis, the income of the respondents who received **high education** and are employed at the same time is distributed as follows: more than 3000 GEL – 4.5%; From 2001 GEL to 3000 GEL – 15.3%; From 1001 GEL to 2000 GEL – 23.4%; From 601 GEL to 1000 GEL – 34.2%; From 251 GEL to 600 GEL – 18.9%; From 1 GEL to 250 GEL – 3.6%. **This means that higher education in Georgia does not guarantee an adequate income and, therefore, is not essential in ensuring well-being.**

Opportunities for meeting the needs of the respondents were explored to assess the adequacy of remuneration. It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents (52.5%) estimate that their salary is spent on food and clothing but they cannot afford expensive items. 29.5% indicate that their monthly salary is only enough for basic food and household needs, but not enough to buy clothes. 13.2% of respondents can afford to buy expensive household items, however, they cannot buy a car with their salary. Indicators of the two extreme content categories do not exceed 5% – namely, 3.2% indicate that the monthly salary is only enough for food, while 1.8% can buy everything they need with their salary. **These data show that wages in Georgia are not adequate and cannot ensure an adequate quality of life.**

It is also noteworthy that 53% of the employed respondents in the present study are not eligible for health insurance because their workplace does not provide this service. More than a quarter (27.4%) do not voluntarily use health insurance services. Almost one-fifth of the respondents (18.7%) gave a positive answer, while 0.9% refrained from answering.

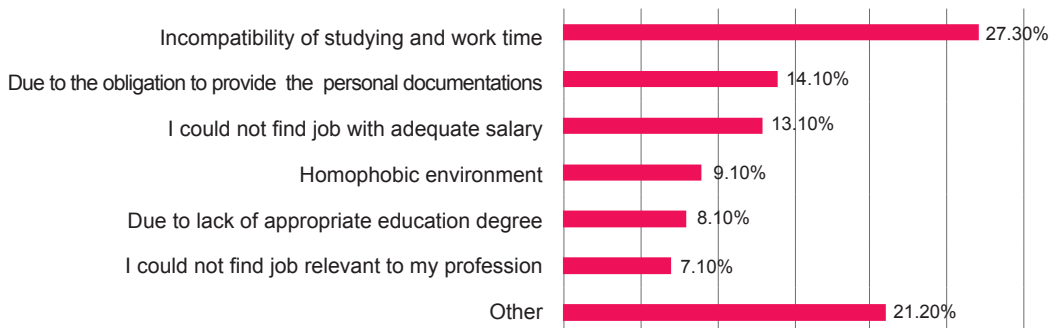
The issue of economic and social inequality is better illustrated by observing the public's reflection on the importance of employment and the essence of labour. In addition to the fact that labour has a material value, and it is a determinant of economic well-being, it can also be a source of individual development, empowerment, and personal satisfaction.

The opinions of the respondents regarding two conceptually different provisions in the present study are presented with an equal rate of 40.6%-40.6%. Provisions put to them were the following: *"I work to get paid"* and *"In addition to remuneration, work gives me a sense of personal satisfaction"*. 18.7% of respondents said that their main goal is to gain experience.

As part of the study, the situation of those who were not employed at the stage of the research was also evaluated. 44.8% of respondents have not worked for 0-6 months, while 42.7% have not had a paid job for over a year. 12.5% of respondents have been in the category of unemployed people for the period of 7-12 months.

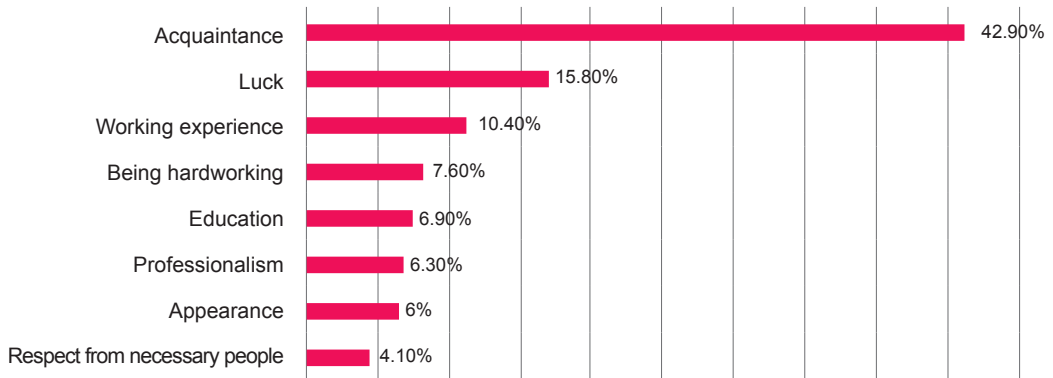
The incompatibility of study and work time (27.3 %) prevails among the reasons for unemployment among the respondents. **In the case of the trans respondents, the survey shows that the employment barrier required by the employers obliges them to submit personal documents (14.1%).** Numerous studies show that in countries where trans people do not have the opportunity to change their personal documentation and alter their gender marker in accordance with their own gender perception, their chances of employment are substantially reduced. Consequently, they have to be employed in jobs that are often temporary, low-paying, and in some cases even dangerous. See Chart №63 for detailed breakdown of the data.

Chart №63. Causes of unemployment among the respondents.



To identify respondents' subjective opinion about employment opportunities, they were asked to focus on what factors contribute to finding a good job. **A large proportion of the respondents** (both employed and unemployed) **consider having contacts to be an important factor – 42.9%, which showcases a lack of belief in equal access to employment.** According to 15.8% of respondents, luck plays an important role. Only 6.9% of respondents believe that education is the most important factor for employment. The latter demonstrates that even an adequate education cannot provide a high rate of employment opportunities for the respondents. See Chart №64 for detailed breakdown of data.

Chart №64. Factors necessary for finding a job.



In order to better reflect socio-economic vulnerability, financial readiness of the respondents was also assessed in the study. In particular, to what extent would the respondents be able to mobilize 500, 1500, and 5000 GEL if put in a difficult situation. The study shows that a large proportion of the respondents would be able to mobilize GEL 500 (86.8%); more than half of the respondents (57.3%) would be able to mobilize GEL 1,500, and only one-fifth of the respondents (23.6%) would be able to mobilize GEL 5,000, which is essentially a low figure.

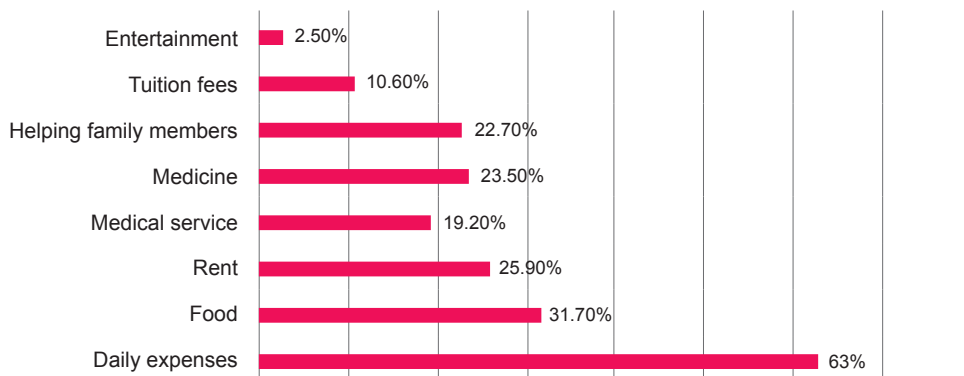
The sharp increase in debts in recent years has made households vulnerable. High loans that are disproportionate with the income are one of the main sources of financial problems for the population.¹²⁴ Yet, the need to borrow may itself be an indicator of social vulnerability, depending on what specific factor is causing it. The present study found that **63% of respondents had to borrow money to cover daily expenses, 31.7% for food, and 25.9% for renting an apartment.** For detailed figures, see Chart №65.

124 *Population Welfare Survey*, 2017. UNICEF, p. 22.

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It is noteworthy that according to cross-tabulation analysis, out of the respondents who borrowed money from any source, 62.2% of are employed and 37.8% are unemployed.

Chart №65. Practice of taking loans per necessity.



In the case of banks, and based on the loan types, the positive response rate equals to 39.1%; in the case of a friend/acquaintance (having a contact), it is 79.1%, which is the highest result; one-fifth of the respondents have borrowed money from a family member (20.6%). Most respondents rarely ask an employer for a loan – 7.3%.

It is noteworthy that in the last 2 years, 23.9% of respondents have borrowed from a bank or microfinance company for food and/or other basic needs. Among them, 12.4% of respondents have borrowed only once, while 11.5% have borrowed twice, the percentage of other frequency indicators is up to 7%. This indicates that the income of the respondents is not enough to cover even the basic needs and they need to accumulate additional funds. It should, however, be taken into account that borrowing often aggravates social vulnerabilities and leaves them facing constant financial problems, which directly affects the well-being of individuals.

4.6.1. Discrimination in Labor Relations

Key findings:

- ▶ The majority of the respondents (93.1%) agree with the opinion that “LGBTQ people have less access to employment than others”.
- ▶ 54.4% of respondents have positive answer to the question – “Would you work for a low salary should the job allow you to freely express your iden-

tity". This showcases that for more than half of the respondents it is essential to have an adequate remuneration as well as a homophobia-free, safe, and healthy work environment where they will not have to subject themselves to constant self-control and make extra efforts to avoid direct or indirect disclosure of identity and therefore, maintain a normal work environment.

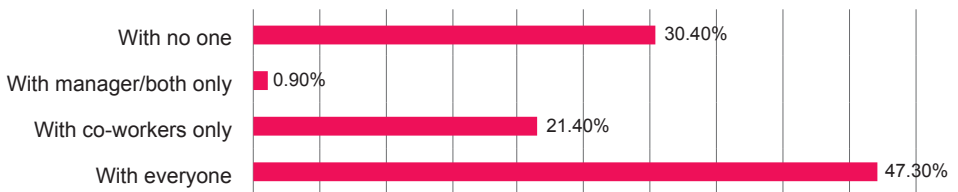
- ▶ In terms of openness in workplace, 47.3% of the employed respondents (N = 220) indicated that in the workplace they are open with everyone, while 52.7% are not open at all or are open partially about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- ▶ 48.9% of respondents think that possible low level of acceptance in the workplace will have a significant impact on their ability to work because they will lose motivation. 16.5% of respondents say that in such a case they will have to hide or control their behaviour/speech, which will have a significant impact on them. According to 5.5%, low level of acceptance in the workplace is the reason why they leave the workplace.
- ▶ In the last 2 years, 28.8% of respondents have been victims of workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity or association. Among the discriminatory acts, verbal discrimination – insults, humiliation and ridicule (81.2%), and non-verbal discrimination prevail – exclusion, talking behind one's back, spreading rumours (66.7%). 18.2% of respondents had a discriminatory experience at the interview stage because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- ▶ 68.1% of respondents did not address anyone to report a discriminatory fact.
- ▶ As a result of discriminatory behaviour in the workplace during the last 2 years, 36.9% left the job voluntarily while 9.2% left the job against their will.

Stigma and discrimination against LGBTQ people in society also affect their employment opportunities and the conditions for maintaining a job. This creates additional barriers for community members and substantially reduces their chances of achieving well-being in life. The data obtained from the respondents evidences unequal treatment of the LGBTQ people based on their identity. The majority, that is 93.1% of respondents (of which 39.7% agreed partially) agree to the notion that **"LGBTQ people, when compared to others, have lesser access to employment"**. Only 6.9% of respondents did not agree to the above notion. Moreover, 44.8% of respondents partially agreed to the notion that a member of the LGBTQ community finds it difficult to achieve career advancement; 35.3% fully agreed to the said notion while 18.8% disagreed.

For a detailed examination of accessibility, the study analysed the openness rate of the respondents in the workplace. **47.3% of the employed respondents (N=220) indicated that they are open to everyone, while 30.4% are not open** (in addition to the general rate of openness, it is interesting to note that the employed respondents also cited additional factors related to the openness in the workplace. 24.5% of respondents think that openness is not necessary, 2.7% are afraid to share their identity due to possible homophobic attitudes, and 3.2% are afraid that if their identity is revealed, they may face the risk of losing their job). 21.4% stated that they are open only with employees or some employees, while 0.9% are open about their identity only with the manager/superior employee. **Consequently, 52.7% are not at all or are partially open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the workplace.** See details in Chart №66.

When studying the openness rate the method utilized for selecting the respondents of the present study should be taken into consideration. The study applied the snowball principle to the respondents who are more or less affiliated with local community organizations and thus, possess information on human rights mechanisms and are empowered compared to members of other communities (which are not open or are not covered by this study). Also, some of them work in these organizations. For these reasons, the rate of full openness in the workplace (47.3%), based on the selection mechanisms of the present study, cannot be considered as high.

Chart №66. Openness about respondents' identity at the workplace.



Note: This question was answered only by employed respondents (N220).

The respondents who are fully or partially (with at least one person) open in the workplace about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, assessed the degree of acceptance in the workplace on a scale from negative to neutral. According to 61.2% of respondents, the degree of acceptance in the workplace is completely neutral, 9.2% described it as partly neutral and partly negative, 27.6% cited more neutral than negative attitude, and 2% spoke of a negative attitude (N=152).

In terms of the expected reactions to openness regarding their sexual orientation or gender identity in the current workplace, **73.4% of respondents stated that the fact of openness does not/will not affect their workplace.** This data should be analysed with regards to the sampling method of the present study and taking into account the working sector of the respondents. As mentioned, 32.7% of respondents are employed in the arts, leisure, and entertainment sectors. Studies show that members of the LGBTQ community try to find employment in a sector or place that is community-friendly or at least not explicitly homophobic. This clearly limits their chances of getting a job, as well as their ability to pursue professionally desirable activities, yet in their workplace, they expect less discrimination and negative attitudes. **Interestingly, out of those who stated that openness about their identity does not affect their workplace, 35.6% were employed in the arts, entertainment, and leisure sectors, and 20% in the food and accommodation sector.**

21.3% of respondents expect that openness about their SOGI will have a negative impact on their workplace. Of these respondents, 8.0% pointed out that openness will have a negative impact so they will try to talk to employees/superiors to avoid hostile work environment. 8.5% said they would have to leave the workplace because they would be subjected to abuse and violence; 4.8% think that in such a case they may be fired; 2.7% of respondents did not answer the question (N = 188).

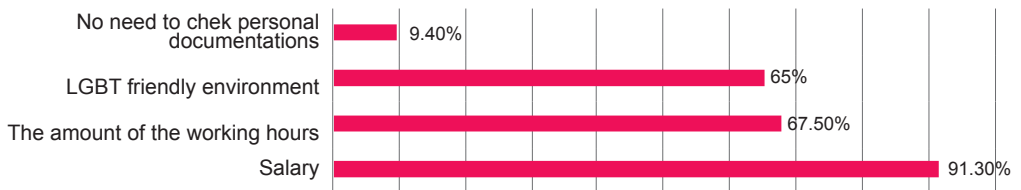
According to 48.9% of respondents, low level of acceptance will have a significant impact on their ability to work because they will lose motivation. 16.5% of respondents say that in such a case they will have to hide or control their behaviour/speech, which will have a significant impact on them. For 5.5%, low level of acceptance would result in leaving the workplace. Of particular interest is the fact that **25.7% of respondents think that the low level of acceptance in the workplace will not affect them for two main reasons – 6.6% say they will try not to think about the situation, while 19.1% say they will ignore it. This means that if a respondent is faced with low level of acceptance in the workplace, the coping method includes enduring such a work environment.** Substantially, this can be detrimental to a person, especially when one has to spend long hours in the workplace.

The respondents' positioning on the question posed by the study – *“Would you work for a low salary if the job allows you to freely express your identity”* – is linked to the above. 54.4% of respondents agreed with the statement, 38.1% gave a negative answer, 7.5% refrained from answering (“Refusal to Answer”). This indicates that for more than half of the respondents, it is essential to have an adequate remuneration as well as a homophobia-free, safe, and healthy work environment where they do not have to constantly en-

gage in self-control and make extra efforts to avoid direct or indirect disclosure of their identity in order to maintain a normal work environment.

This showcases the factors preferred by the respondents when searching for a job. The majority of the respondents named the **wage factor** (91.3%) and **the number of working hours (time)** (67.5%), yet the LGBT friendly environment in the workplace was also rated highly (65%). It is also important to note that in the case of transgender respondents, the **personal document verification factor** was the most named factor (9.4%) – that is, not to be asked for personal documentation by an employer. See Chart №67 for detailed figures.

Chart №67. Important factors when looking for a job.



To better demonstrate discrimination and unequal treatment in the workplace, the study focused on the experience of the last 2 years. According to the study, **28.8% of respondents were victims of discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity or association**, of which 15.2% indicated that they often are/have been victims of discrimination (wherein: very often – 1.3%, often – 13.9%), 7.6% of respondents have rarely been victims of discrimination, while 6.0% reported that a case of discrimination had occurred once in the workplace.

Among the discriminatory acts, **verbal discrimination, such as insults, humiliation, and ridicule (81.2%) and non-verbal discrimination, such as exclusion, talking behind one's back, spreading rumours (66.7%), prevail**; threats of violence (37.7%) and sexual harassment (37.7%) are also frequently mentioned. See Chart №68 for detailed figures.

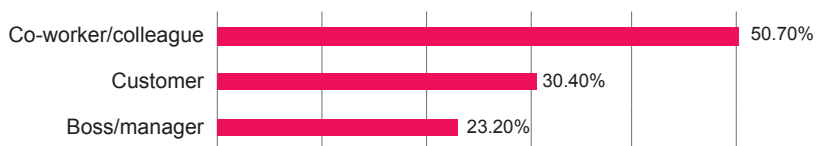
Chart №68. Different practices of discrimination at the workplace.



Note: Respondents were given the option of marking several answers at once.

More than half of the respondents (50.7%) who had experienced various forms of discrimination in the workplace stated that discrimination came from a co-worker/colleague. In 23.2% of cases it came from a supervisor/manager, and 30.4% named the customers.

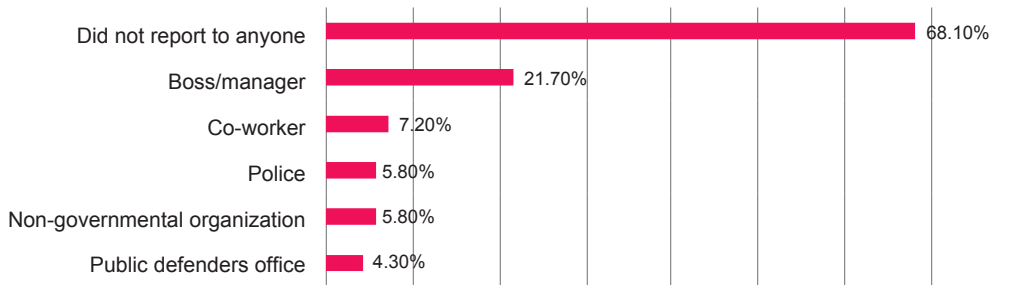
Chart №69. The perpetrator of the discrimination.



In terms of gender, in 60.9% of cases the perpetrator of discriminatory behaviour was male, in 1.4% – female, and in 37.7% of cases it was both female and male.

In terms of responding to a hostile work environment and/or discriminatory treatment based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity, it is noteworthy that **68.1%** of those who have had such an experience **did not turn to anyone for help**. 21.8% of respondents reported to a supervisor/manager; 5.8-5.8% reported to a non-governmental organization or law enforcement agencies (the police). See Chart №70 for detailed figures.

Chart №70. Rate of complaints to the relevant person/agency on the fact of discrimination.



On the other hand, in terms of reasons for refusing to submit a complaint, the respondents who did not report to anyone considered that they could handle the situation themselves (25.0%). 18.2% of respondents said that the reason was to avoid strained relations in the workplace. The second most cited answer in these categories was the following: *“I thought they could not do anything”* (28.1%). In the case of 21.9%, similar to the first priority, the lack of reporting served to avoid strained relations in the workplace. The third most cited reason was the following category: *“the perpetrator was a high-ranking official and/or a manager/senior”* – with 29.2%.

As a result of discriminatory behaviour at work in the last 2 years, 36.9% left the job voluntarily, 9.2% left the job against their will, and 18.5% retained the job, albeit at the expense of a hostile environment.

Beside the workplace, discriminatory practices may also occur during a pre-contractual relationship (interview). The Labour Code of Georgia prohibits discrimination in pre-contractual relationships, yet 18.2% of respondents had a discriminatory experience at the interview stage because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. For detailed breakdown of specific forms of discrimination, see table №18.

Table №18. Subjective perceptions of the discrimination in pre-contractual relations.

I was asked questions about my “lifestyle”	Breakdown of respondents’ answers in percentage (N=57)
I was asked questions about my gender expression	35.8%
I was asked direct or indirect questions about my sexual orientation	35.3%
I was asked questions about my “lifestyle”	45.1%
I was asked questions about my gender identity	11.8%
I was asked “are you a woman or a man?”	19.6%
I assumed/understood from the general attitude	76.5%
They were looking for another reason not to hire me	35.3%

4.6.2. Sex Work

Key findings:

- ▶ **18.4% of respondents were/are involved in commercial sex work. In terms of analysing the issue in light of identity, the rate of involvement in sex work is higher among transgender respondents (82.4%).**
- ▶ **According to 71.4% of respondents involved in sex, the latter was their primary source of income.**
- ▶ **The majority of the respondents (61.4%) cite difficult economic situation (poverty or debt, etc.) as the main reason for their engagement in sex work; 20.5% of respondents indicate the risk of homelessness, and 18.2% say the decision was their choice.**
- ▶ **In terms of assessing the main difficulties associated with engaging in sex work, the respondents most often named the stress related to financial instability (79.5%). A large number of respondents also named the threat to life and health – 77.3%.**

Although globally there is a lot of debate about commercial sex work, there are no discussions or active supportive policies in Georgia to study and protect the rights of sex workers. The main challenge facing people involved in sex work is the safety factor, which is related to both multifaceted practice of violence as well as physical and mental health challenges. It is true that adults have the opportunity to decide whether or not to engage in commercial sex work, yet in the Georgian reality, this choice is often triggered by socio-economic vulnerability and chronic poverty. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), sex work often involves a strong financial incentive, which, among other factors, causes engagement in this sector. Despite the social stigma and physical danger, these jobs often involve high pay compared to jobs available to young or old people who do not have adequate education or are in chronic poverty.¹²⁵

Around the world, sex workers are at an increased risk for HIV/AIDS along with many other critical challenges. Regardless of who is involved in sex work, a cisgender woman, a man or a trans person, they are constantly at risk of marginalization, stigma, and violence. According to the International Labour Organization, it is important to reduce the social and cultural vulnerability of sex workers through economic empowerment, workplace

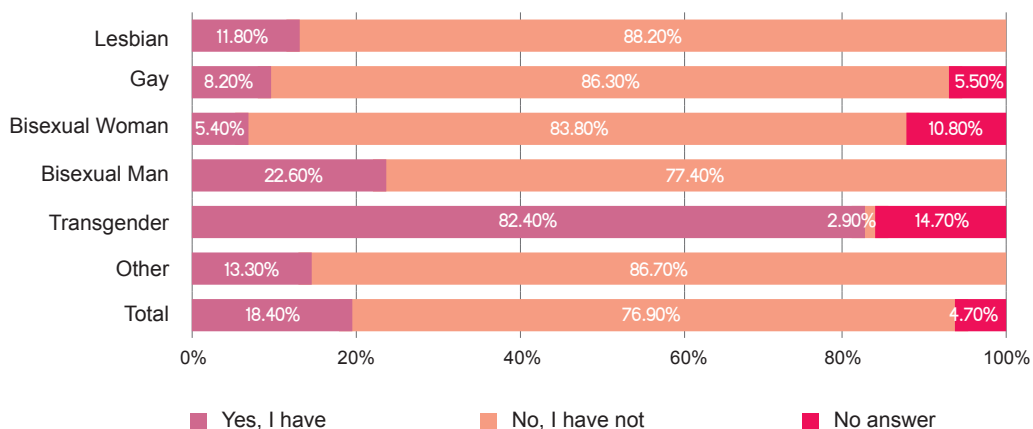
¹²⁵ Lim, Lin Lean. Ed. 1998. *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

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safety, and access to social protection, including access to adequate health care services and screening programs.¹²⁶

18.4% of respondents interviewed in the present study were/are involved in commercial sex work. In terms of identifying the issue in light of identity, the rate of involvement in sex work is higher among transgender respondents (82.4%). See Chart №71 for detailed breakdown of the data.

Chart №71. Experience of engaging in sex work by identities.



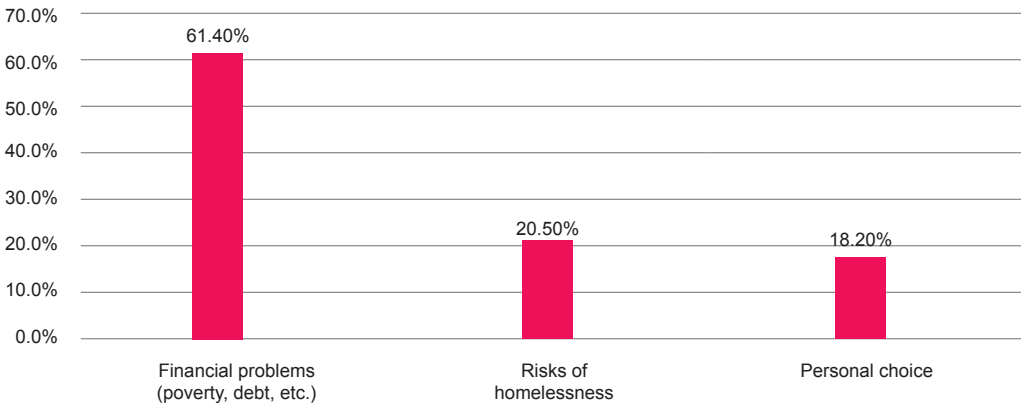
According to 71.4% of respondents who were involved in sex work during the study, this was their primary source of income.

In terms of the period of involvement in sex work, 52.5% of respondents say they have been/were involved for more than 2 years, 43.2% – between 0 to 6 months. Engagement in sex work from 6 months to 1 year and from 1 to 2 years is represented equally by 2.3% -2.3%.

In addition to the frequency, the study also assessed the reasons for engaging in sex work. The majority of the respondents (61.4%) cited a difficult economic situation (poverty or debt, etc.) as the main reason for engaging in sex work. 20.5% indicated the risk of homelessness, and 18.2% said that it was their choice. See Chart №72 for detailed figures.

126 ILO. "Thematic Brief on Sex Workers". See: https://www.ilo.org/aids/WCMS_185717/lang--en/index.htm

Chart №72. Subjective reasons for engaging in sex work.



Note: What are the main reasons for engaging in sex work? (N57)

Given the reality in Georgia, when inquired about the main struggles associated with sex work, the respondents most often cited the stress related to financial instability (79.5%). A large number of respondents also named the threat to life and health – 77.3%. See Chart №73 for detailed figures.

Chart №73. Difficulties related to sex work (N=57).



These data indicate that sex work is one of the most dangerous forms of labour. People involved in sex work constantly have to assess the health and life risks posed by by-passers, law enforcement agencies, or clients. This puts them under constant stress. Accordingly, it is essential to include the issues of sex labour within the scope of the discussion on safe labour and to advocate for the models of its regulation, which will take into account the needs of the people involved in this labour by ensuring their direct involvement.

4.7. Access to Healthcare Key findings:

Key findings:

- ▶ In terms of physical health, 32.5% of respondents pointed out that they have a chronic physical health problem.
- ▶ 21.4% of respondents mentioned that the physical health problem, disease, or disability interferes with their daily activities. 44.1% of respondents suggested that a mental health problem interferes with their daily activities.
- ▶ In terms of physical and financial access to health services, 13.4% of respondents stated that their inability to access such services prevails over their ability to do so, and 9.1% have no access at all.
- ▶ 31.9% of respondents have not visited a doctor for planned examinations, while 16% have done so 1 year or more ago. 37.5% of respondents noted that they have been with a doctor for planned examination in the last 6 months, while 14.7% – between the last 6 months to 1 year.
- ▶ Among the barriers to comprehensive and quality health care services, 72.9% of respondents named long queues and waiting, 63.7% named lack of professional doctors, 41.4% – financial inaccessibility to medicine, and 32.7% – financial inaccessibility to health services.
- ▶ As a SOGI-based barrier to healthcare services, 36.5% of respondents (N=285) indicated low level of sensitivity from medical staff, 39.6% indicated the risk of spreading personal information (N=293), and 37.6% – the inability to provide healthcare providers with comprehensive information due to risks of discrimination.
- ▶ 51.0% of respondents are open with their doctors about their sexual orientation/gender identity when it comes to certain health issues, while 21.6% are not open, 7.2% found it difficult to answer the question, and 20.3% refused to answer.
- ▶ Among the reasons for not being open, 34% of respondents named the risk of breaching confidentiality, while 30.2% said they did not consider it necessary to provide this information to a doctor. The fear of expected lack of acceptance was also named by 28.3% and the expected threat of refusal of service was named by 7.5% (N=53).
- ▶ 14.4% of respondents (N=46) stated that they have become victims of discrimination while receiving health care services within the last two years (70.6% answered negatively, and 15.0% refrained from answering the question).

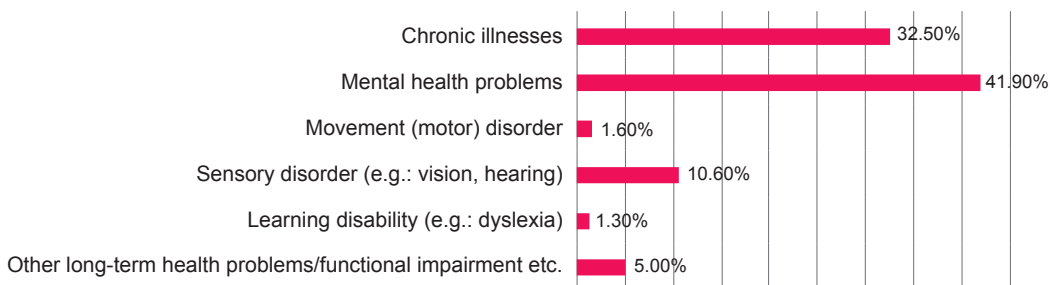
- ▶ **78.3% of respondents did not report any discrimination, the main reason being the perception of the action as insufficiently serious (25.0%) and the risk of breaching confidentiality (19.4%).**
- ▶ **Lack of health care providers knowledgeable/informed about trans-specific health care (61.8%), health insurance that does not cover the health needs of trans people (58.8%), and lack of support by professionals (52.9%) were named as barriers to trans-specific healthcare.**

Access to the highest possible standard of health care has a significant impact on people’s well-being and decent living opportunities. Accessibility involves a variety of intersecting factors, particularly physical existence, financial availability, accessibility, and quality of healthcare services. Only with the full realization of these aspects can human health rights be achieved.

Before identifying specific factors for access to health care, respondents assessed the general status of their health, with 46.6% of respondents indicating that they were feeling well in terms of health status (19.1% – very good), and 17.5% choosing poor or very poor categories as a general assessment of their health status (very bad – 5.6%, bad – 11.9%). 34.1% of respondents have a neutral assessment and find it difficult to declare a position. These data are similar to the CRRC Caucasus Barometer 2019 data, according to which, 35% of respondents assessed their health status as good, 47% as average, and 18% as poor (CRRC, 2020).

According to the survey, in terms of long-term health problems or functional impairments, mental health problems (41.9%) and chronic physical illnesses (32.5%) were relatively high. For detailed figures, see Chart №74.

Chart №74. Long-term health problems.



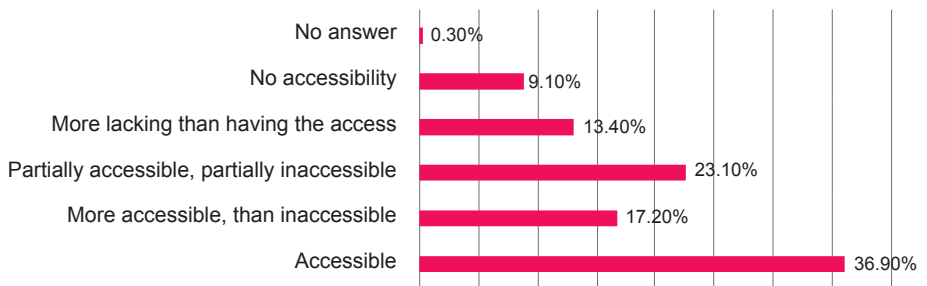
* “Long-term health problems” refers to health problems that last for at least 6 months.

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It is noteworthy, that 21.4% of respondents mentioned that a **physical health problem**, disease, or disability impairs their daily activities. As for a mental health problem, in 44.1% of respondents, it impairs their daily activities (26.2% – impairs, 17.9% – impairs more, than not).

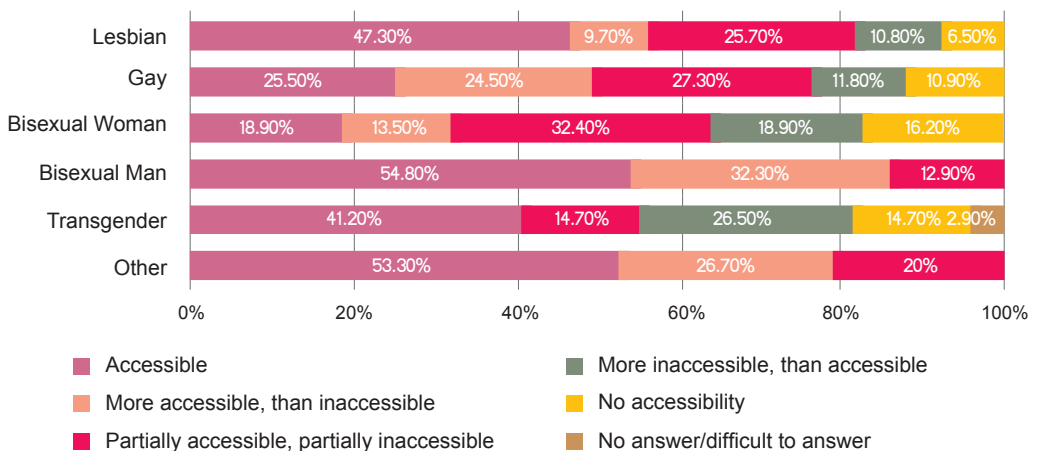
In terms of access to health services, which include both physical and financial access to services, 13.4% of respondents point out that their lack of access to such services prevails over their ability to have such access, and 9.1% have no access at all. See Chart №75 for detailed figures.

Chart №75. Access to health services.



Cross-tabulation analysis showed that access to healthcare services was relatively high among bisexual male (54.8%) and lesbian female respondents (47.3%), and lowest among bisexual female respondents (16.2%) and transgender respondents (14.7%). See Chart №76 for a detailed breakdown. (Data are statistically reliable, $x^2=66.99$, $df=25$, $p<0.001$). As a result of the data calculated at 95% reliability, the differences between the groups were found to be statistically significant ($sig<0.01$).

Chart №76. Access to healthcare services by respondents' identities.

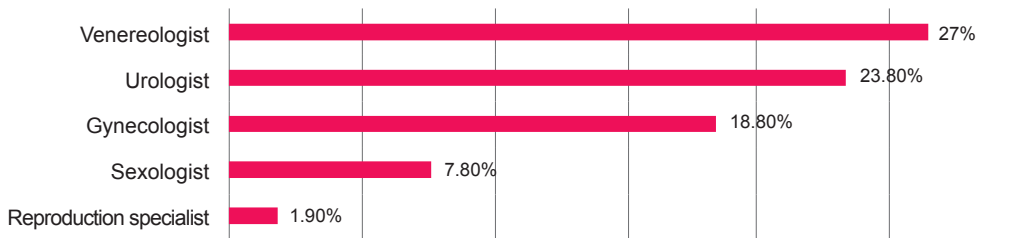


79.4% of survey respondents have not used any type of healthcare service in the last 2 years. 81.7% of those who have used a healthcare service within the last 2 years received it in Tbilisi, 13.1% in another big city, 2.0% in another city, and 2.8% outside Georgia (N=252).

In the last 2 years, 33.4% of respondents have received emergency medical care, 26.3% have undergone planned check-ups, and 29.1% have received health care for general prevention (note: respondents could mark several answers). 31.9% of respondents did not go to the doctor for planned check-ups, while 16% had visited the doctor for this purpose 1 year or more ago. 37.5% of respondents mentioned that they visited the doctor for a planned check-up in the last six months, while 14.7% indicated a period of 6 months to 1 year.

In terms of specific sexual health, **27.0%** of respondents used the services of a venereologist in the last 2 years, **23.8%** – a urologist, **8.8%** – a gynecologist, **7.8%** – a sexologist, and 1.9% – a reproductive specialist. See Chart №77.

Chart №77. Rate of use of sexual health-related services.



In the last 2 years, 27.5% of respondents have not been tested for their HIV/AIDS status, 10.6% tested only once, 27.5% of respondents have had similar tests 2, 3, or 4 times in the last two years, and 34.7% of respondents said that they have been tested for HIV/AIDS 5 or more times in the last 2 years. In terms of the group differences, most often these services are used by gay man and trans people, and rarely by bisexual and lesbian women. See Chart №78 and 79.

In the regions outside Tbilisi, 71.7% of respondents were tested for their HIV/AIDS status, while in Tbilisi, the rate stands at 72.9%.

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Chart №78. Frequency of STIs and HIV/AIDS health status screening.

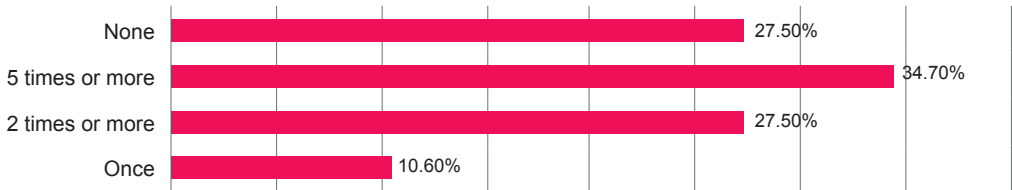
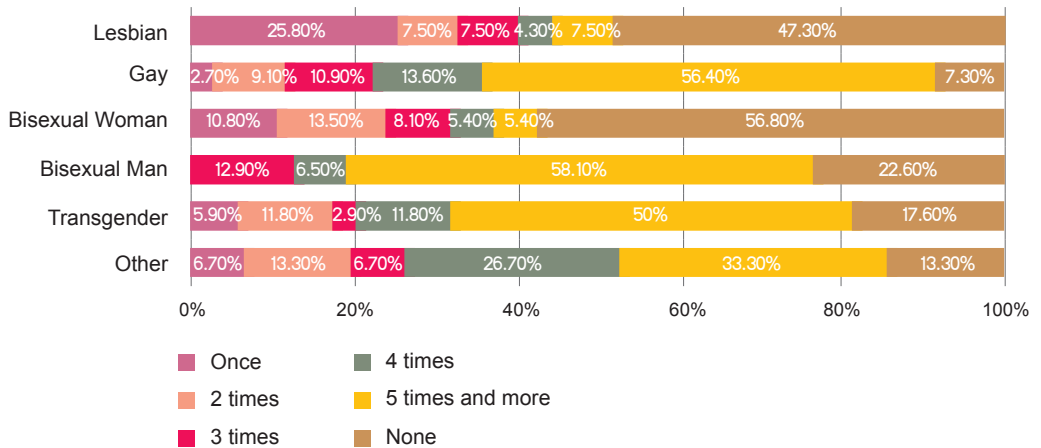
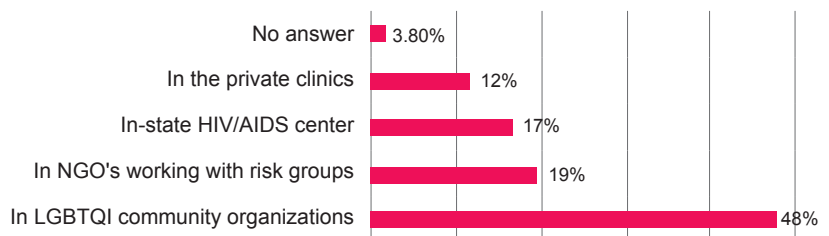


Chart №79. Frequency of STIs and HIV/AIDS health status screening by identities.



It is significant that **91.9%** of respondents had heard of STIs and HIV/AIDS free services. This is due to the work performed by LGBTQI+ community organizations, as well as those working on sex and reproductive health issues including the risk groups, to increase awareness and provide services. Also, 48.0% of respondents first received services for STIs and HIV/AIDS in an LGBTQI+ community NGO, 19.0% in the state HIV/AIDS centre, 18.0% in NGOs working on risk groups (N=294). See Chart №80.

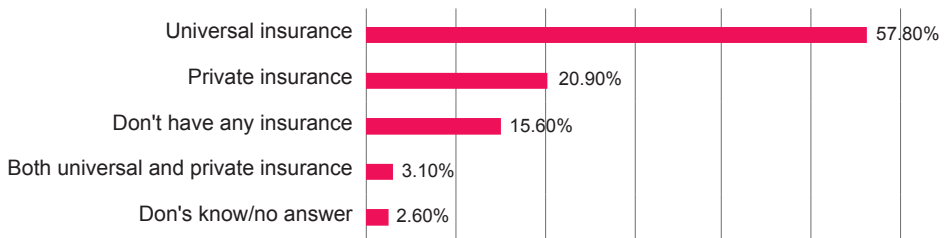
Chart №80. Receiving HIV/AIDS related services.



In general, access to health care is substantially improved by access to an adequate insurance package. Georgia introduced universal healthcare in 2013. It substantially increased funding for health care from the state budget, thereby increasing access to health care and providing better financial support for the population. Yet despite increased funding it did not support reforms in other health sectors. In particular, the reforms did not cover quality control and monitoring mechanisms of the service, quality regulation, and medication costs. The state also has not taken additional measures to improve the primary healthcare ring as a financially efficient service that can identify, treat, and prevent diseases at an early stage.¹²⁷

With regards to the insurance service, the respondents of the present study were also asked about the use of insurance and being satisfied with it. 57.8% of the interviewed noted that they use the universal insurance service, 20.9% use private insurance service, 3.1% use both private and state-provided universal insurance service, and 15.6% indicated that they do not have insurance. See Chart №81 for detailed figures.

Chart №81. Use of insurance services.



Respondents who use services under universal health insurance rated their satisfaction with universal insurance. In this regard, only 26.2% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the universal insurance (of which 15.9% were satisfied and 10.3% were more satisfied than dissatisfied), while 29.7% indicated that they were dissatisfied with the universal insurance services (12.8% – more dissatisfied than satisfied, and 16.9% – dissatisfied). 23.6% of respondents gave a neutral answer to the question, while 20.5% did not use the services available under the universal insurance.

In this regard, there is a significant difference between state and private insurance systems. Namely, of those using the services offered by private insurance, 62.3% are satis-

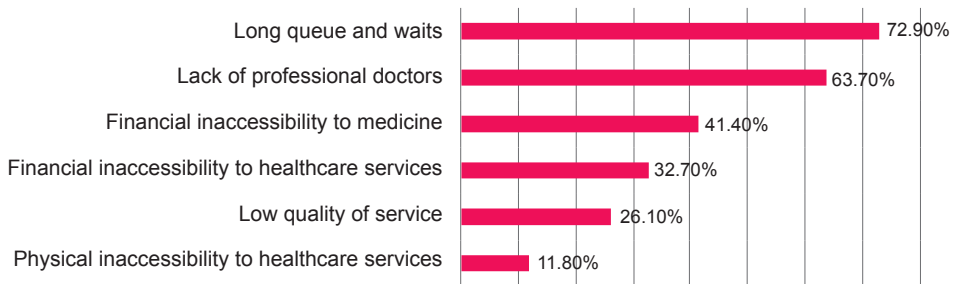
127 Country Gender Equality Profile of Georgia. 2020. UN Women. 2020, p. 33

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fied, 22.1% are more satisfied than dissatisfied. Only 5.2% of respondents rated the services received under private insurance negatively. 10.4% gave a neutral answer to the question.

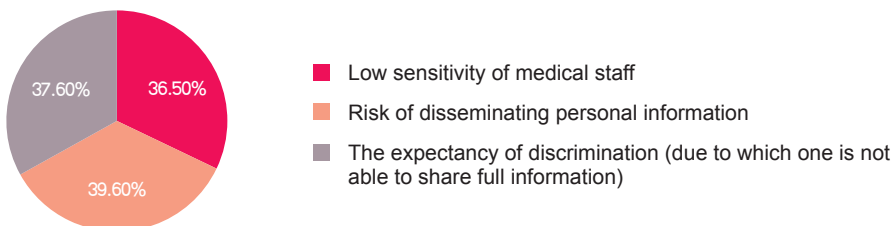
Respondents were also asked to indicate the specific barriers that prevent them from receiving comprehensive and quality healthcare services. 72.9% of respondents named **long queues and waiting time** as the main barrier, 63.7% said that **the lack of professional doctors** was a barrier to accessing health services, and 41.4% named **financial inaccessibility** of medicines. Also, approximately a third of the respondents named financial inaccessibility of health services as a limiting factor for accessing health services (32.7%). See Chart №82 for detailed figures.

Chart №82. Barriers to accessing health care services.



As for the barriers that respondents face with healthcare providers due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, 36.5% of respondents (N=285) indicated low sensitivity of medical staff, 39.6% – the risk of spreading personal information (N=293), and 37.6% of respondents said that the obstacle is their failure to provide the healthcare provider with comprehensive information, which is caused by the potential risk of discrimination. See Chart №83.

Chart №83. Barriers to accessing health services (related to SOGI).



In the case of trans respondents, low level of awareness on the part of health care providers on gender identity and transgender issues was identified. In particular, 41.2% of trans respondents mentioned that there had been at least one case when they themselves had to supply the healthcare provider with information (explanation) about gender identity or transgenderism.

Trust in the health care system and staff is also expressed by respondents in the degree of openness to medical staff when needed. According to the research, **51.0% of respondents are open with their doctor about their sexual orientation/gender identity when it comes to certain health issues**, while 21.6% are not open, 7.2% found it difficult to answer the question, and 20% refused to answer.

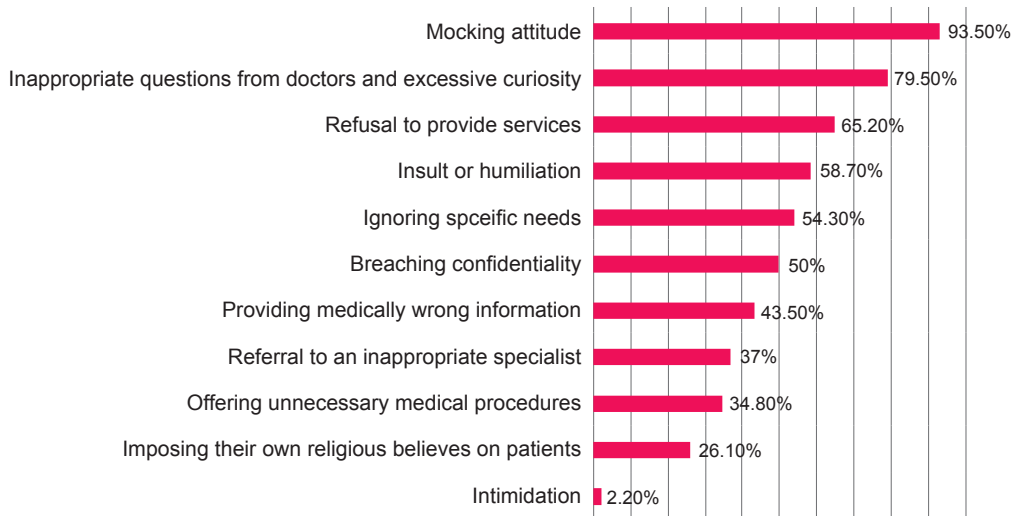
Respondents, who, in case of necessity, do not provide the doctor with information about their sexual orientation or gender identity, were asked what causes this behavior. 34% of respondents named the risk of breaching confidentiality, 30.2% stated that they did not consider it necessary to provide this information to a doctor. The fear of expected lack of acceptance was named by 28.3% and the threat of expected refusal to the service was named by 7.5% (N=53).

14.4% of respondents (N=46) stated that they had become victims of discrimination while receiving health care services within the last two years (70.6% gave a negative answer, and 15.0% refrained from answering the question). It should be noted that among those who reported being victims of various forms of discrimination while receiving health care services, 43.5% were fully open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity with the doctor.

In terms of the place, among the respondents who had such experience, 41.3% were in different regions of Georgia, except Tbilisi.

Among direct discriminatory acts were mocking attitude (93.5%), inappropriate questions from doctors (79.5%), refusal of service (65.2%), insult or humiliation (58.7%), ignorance of specific needs (54.3%), and breach of confidentiality (50.0%). See Chart №84 for detailed figures.

Chart №84. Forms of discrimination experienced when receiving healthcare service.

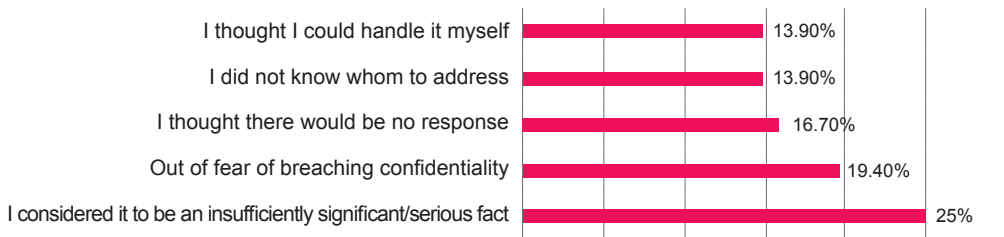


The majority of the actions mentioned by the respondents came from doctors (93.5%), 41.3% of respondents also brought up nurses, 26.1% named the administration of the medical establishment, 17.4% named other staff of the medical establishment, and 23.9% said the discriminatory action came from the laboratory employee (N=46).

Respondents also named specialists in specific fields from whom discriminatory actions came. In 32.6% of the cases, the action came from a gynecologist, in 23.9% of the cases from a venereologist, in 13.0% of cases from a sexologist, and in 6.5-6.5% of cases from a psychiatrist and family doctor. 10.9% of respondents left the question unanswered (N=46).

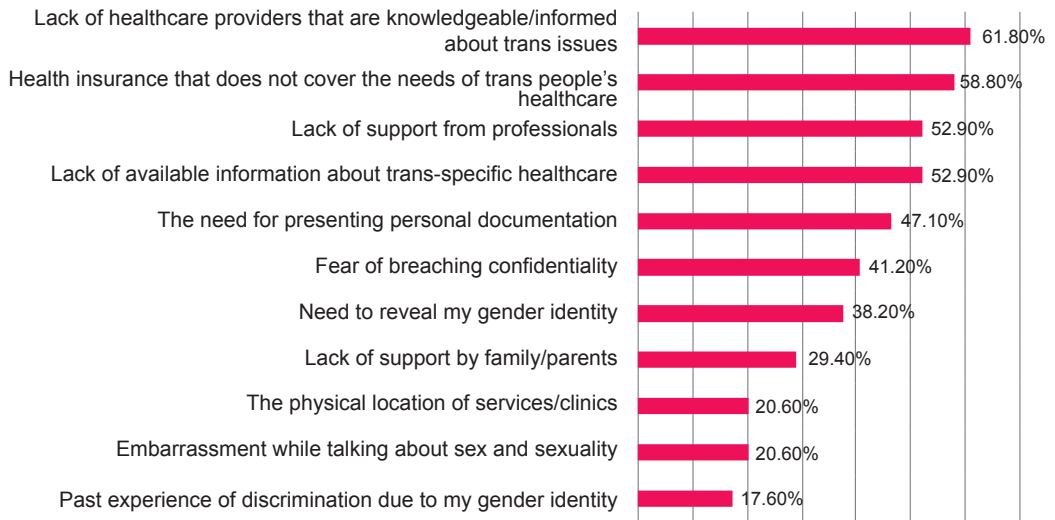
78.3% of respondents did not report any discrimination, the main reason being the perception of the action as insufficiently serious (25.0%) and the risks of breaching confidentiality (19.4%). See Chart №85 for detailed figures.

Chart №85. Reasons for not reporting a discriminatory fact.



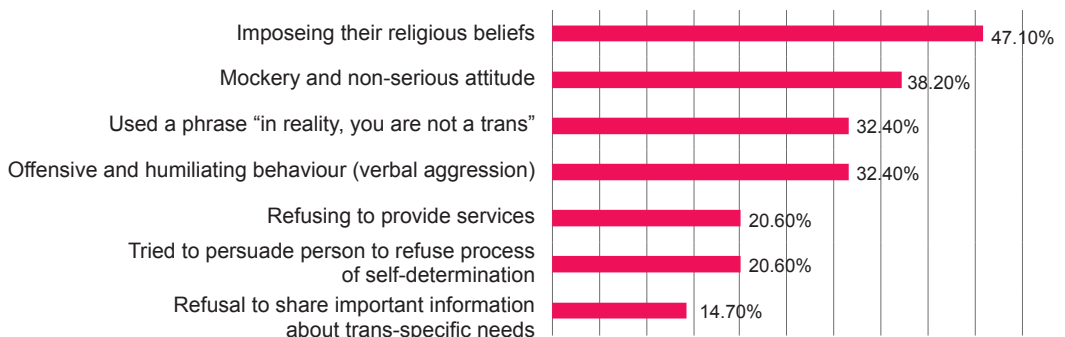
Trans respondents (N=34) were additionally asked questions about access to healthcare. In particular, respondents were asked to name barriers to full access to health services in Georgia. Most cited answers to this question were lack of healthcare providers that are knowledgeable/informed about trans matters (61.8%), health insurance that does not cover the needs of trans people (58.8%), and lack of support by professionals (52.9%). See Chart №86 for detailed figures.

Chart №86. Barriers to accessing healthcare (trans-specific).



In terms of specific forms of discriminatory attitudes, 47.1% of trans respondents named imposition of religious views by service providers, mocking and/or non-serious attitude (38.2%). See Chart №87 for detailed figures.

Chart №87. Forms of discriminatory treatment against trans people.



Trans respondents are well aware of the key challenges of the healthcare sector in Georgia, especially when it comes to trans-specific healthcare. According to the respondents, for the state to respond effectively to the health needs of trans people, it should develop guidelines and protocols on trans-specific healthcare (82.4%). 73.5% think that state insurance should cover all needs of trans-specific healthcare, and 70.6% suggest that state insurance should also cover hormone therapy. According to 82.4% of respondents, state insurance should cover gender reassignment operations, while 67.6% think that the state should provide retraining for health professionals.

4.7.1. Mental Health

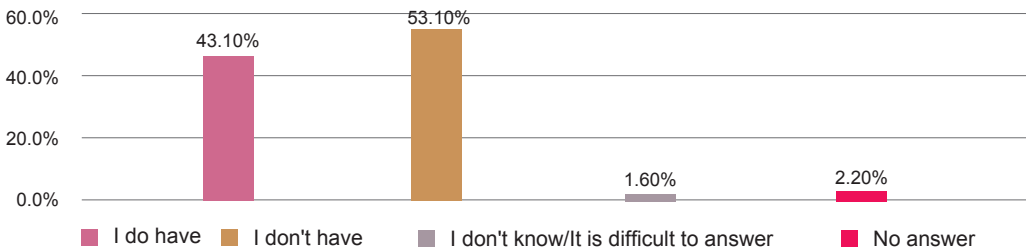
Key findings:

- ▶ 43.1% of respondents mentioned that they have a mental health problem.
- ▶ 37.1% of respondents who have various mental health problems directly linked them to sexual orientation or gender identity stigma, discriminatory practices, or stress.
- ▶ The most often cited specific problems among those related to mental health were: depression (74.3%), anxiety disorder (71.4%), post-traumatic stress disorder (32.1%), substance abuse (31.4%).
- ▶ 77% of respondents who have a mental health problem stated that they had/have suicidal thoughts (77.0%); 47.4% stated that they have a problem with alcohol dependence, and 40.6% – that they have experienced/experience self-harm.
- ▶ Of the respondents who have a problem with alcohol dependence, the highest rate – 31.7% – falls on lesbian women, and 30.2% on gay men; alcohol dependence in the trans community is also high at 12.7%.
- ▶ Only 40.0% of respondents (N=140) said they had used the services of a psychiatrist/neurologist in the last two years. 41.0% of respondents (N = 83) named financial inaccessibility as the reason for not using the said services; 13.3% said they did not want to use the services of a psychiatrist or neurologist; 8.4% thought they would handle the situation themselves; 8.4% said that insurance does not cover the service, which is why they lack access to it.
- ▶ More than half of the respondents – 58.0% – have used psychotherapy in the last two years. The reason for not using these services is still dominated by the factor of financial inaccessibility (29.8%).

▶ **63.2% of respondents receive mental health services in an LGBTQ+ community organization, which means that the main source of support is a non-governmental organization and not the state.**

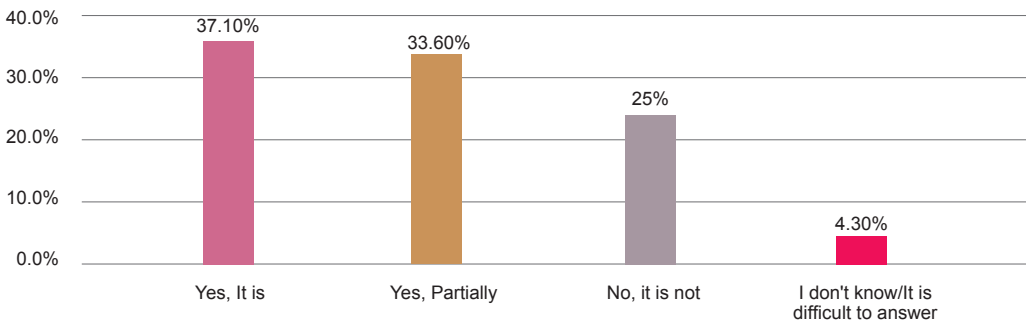
Mental health is a significant problem for vulnerable groups and those under systemic violence. **43.1% of respondents in the present study stated that they have a mental health problem**, 53.1% gave a negative answer. 1.6% indicated they did not know, while 2.2% did not answer the question. See Chart №88.

Chart №88. Breakdown of mental health problems



It is noteworthy that 37.1% of respondents who have various mental health problems directly linked them to sexual orientation or gender identity stigma, discriminatory practices, or stress. See Chart №89 for details.

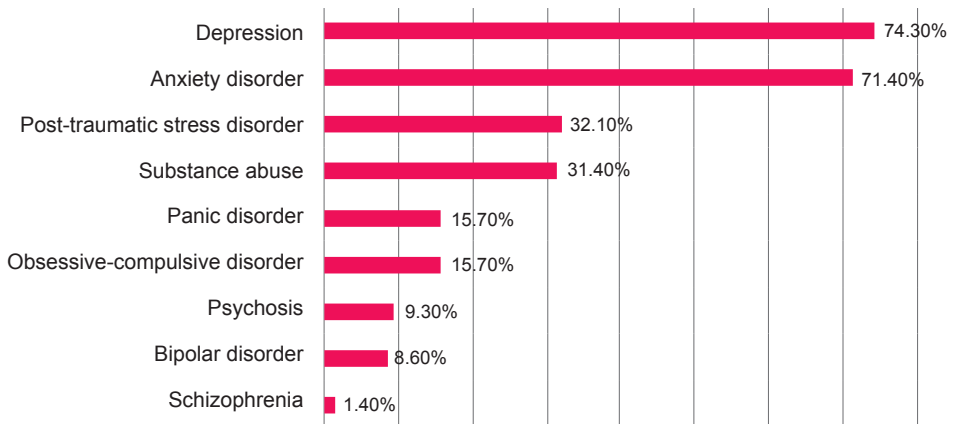
Chart №89. The link between mental health problem and the stigma associated with SOGI.
Does your mental health problem directly or indirectly linked with stigma, discrimination or the stress connected to your identity?



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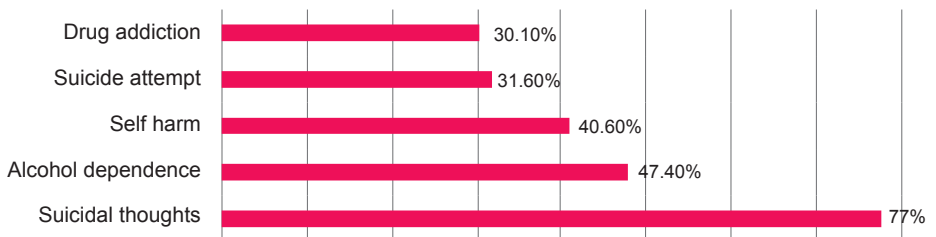
Among the specific problems related to mental health, the following were named with the highest frequency: **depression** (74.3%), **anxiety disorder** (71.4%), **post-traumatic stress disorder** (32.1%), **substance abuse** (31.4%). See Chart №90 for detailed figures.

Chart №90. The prevalence of specific forms of mental health problems.



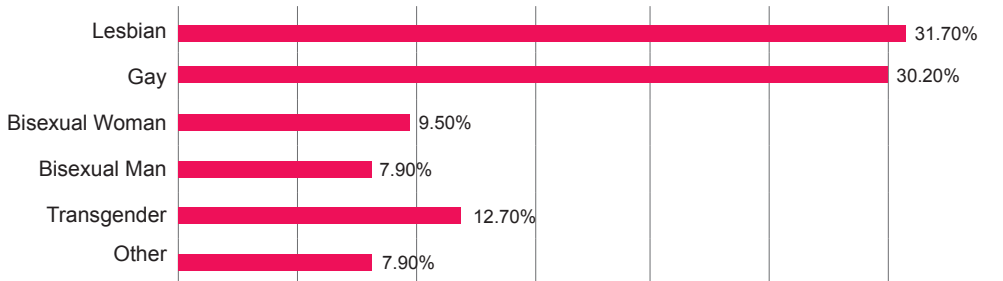
Self-destructive thoughts and behaviours were singled out among the mental health problems. 77% of respondents who have a mental health problem stated that they had/have **suicidal thoughts** (77.0%), 47.4% mentioned that they have **alcohol addiction problems**, and 40.6% – that they experienced/experience **self-harm**. See Chart №91 for detailed figures.

Chart №91. The prevalence of self-destructive behavior.



Of those respondents who have a problem with alcohol dependence, the highest rate (31.7%) falls on lesbian women and 30.2% on gay men; a high rate of alcohol dependence is also prevalent in the trans community, at 12.7%. Chart №92.

Chart №92. Alcohol dependence rate according to respondents' identities



As for the mental health support service, only 40.0% of respondents (N = 140) said that they **have used a psychiatrist/neuropathologist service in the last two years** (therefore, 60.0% had a negative answer). Their utilization rate in different regions of Georgia is only 28.6%, and 71.4% in Tbilisi. Through a clarifying question, the survey also revealed the reasons for refusing to use the services. 41.0% of respondents (N = 83) named **financial inaccessibility**, 13.3% said they did not want to use the services of a psychiatrist or neurologist, 8.4% wanted to manage the issue themselves, and 8.4% said that insurance does not cover the said service, which makes it inaccessible.

As for **psychology services and psychotherapy**, more than half of respondents – 58.0% have used this service in the last two years – 30% of them in different regions of Georgia, and 70% in Tbilisi. The reason for not benefiting from the service is still financial inaccessibility (29.8%). 19.3% indicated that they did not want to use the service, 15.8% said that there was no need for it, 12.3% could not find a professional doctor, and 8.8% suggested that the state and private insurance does not cover this service.

39.5% of respondents using mental health services said that they receive these services in a private clinic, 6.6% use the services offered by the NGO, and 63.2% **use those offered by the LGBTQ+ community organizations**.

This evidences that community organizations that offer a variety of mental health services to the LGBTQ group free of charge are the main providers of these services. Discontinuation of these services by the community organizations will render them inaccessible to a large part of the LGBTQ group, as the leading reason for not being able to benefit from the services is their financial inaccessibility.

In addition, conceptualizing mental health determinants requires a focus on relationships and social connections, which requires structural interventions in society and beyond the health sector. The report of the Special Rapporteur on Physical and Mental Health suggests that an individual, causal model is still being used in practice to identify determinants of mental health. This trend results in interventions that focus on subtle, individual behavioral factors, rather than on eliminating the underlying structural circumstances. Consequently, the narrow content of determinants, as well as the over-reliance on biomedical explanation for interpreting emotional stress and mental health status, divert political attention from human rights-based policies and health-promoting measures.¹²⁸

According to the UN Special Rapporteur, “the burden of dealing with systemic harm resulting from ignoring health determinants has been borne by individuals. As a result, individuals turn to the mental health sector, which lacks adequate resources and appropriate approaches to deal with collective failure.”¹²⁹ States have an obligation to ensure that individuals have access to care and support based on a human rights approach. In addition, providing mental health care implies not only the availability of adequate services but also the prevention of these conditions, which require complex and multidimensional work necessary for changing the circumstances that contribute to the emergence of mental health problems.

As the data of the present study show, due to their social vulnerability, the LGBTQ group faces numerous mental health-related challenges. However, the solution to these problems can not be provided by an individual and only medical approach, because their causes are intertwined with social background, inequality, and stigma, which puts the lives of LGBTQ people under constant tension and stress.

A human rights-based approach to health care requires that special attention be paid to people and communities who are particularly vulnerable, as well as health-related determinants that lay the groundwork for the emergence of mental health. To ensure the adequacy of the health sector and services, active and informed participation of LGBTQ people is decisive for the implementation of effective measures.¹³⁰

128 A/HRC/41/34, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health, 12 April 2019, Para. 4

129 Ibid, Para. 7

130 ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt, 2006

4.8. Legal Gender Recognition

Key findings:

- ▶ **23.5% of respondents, who did not legally change their gender marker, stated that they did not meet the requirements for a legal change, while 17.6% said they did not want to (N=34).**
- ▶ **50.0% of respondents think that a person's self-identification is what legal gender recognition should be based on, in order to be more effective, oriented at the protection of dignity, and tailored to human needs. 17.6% say that legal gender recognition should be based solely on the diagnosis of gender dysphoria, 14.7% have no established position, 5.9% suggest that it should be based on a certificate of hormonal therapy, and 11.8% consider a certificate of gender reassignment surgery a prerequisite for legal gender recognition.**

Transgender people remain a particularly vulnerable group in the LGBTQ community. Along with transphobic crimes, the fact that transgender individuals are unable to change their gender marker in civil acts without surgery remains a problematic issue to this day. Requiring anatomical gender reassignment surgery and an appropriate medical certificate to change the gender record violates the rights of transgender people to privacy, prohibition of inhuman treatment, free development of an individual, and independent decision-making on medical intervention.

Legal gender recognition remains a significant challenge in Georgia, which is also hampered by the absence of a homogeneous view in trans communities and feminist associations regarding the elements of legal gender recognition procedures and their pre-conditions. One of the aims of this quantitative research was to identify the views and opinions of the people who are most concerned with these issues. Which also plays an essential role in the development of a strategy for legal gender recognition and in the advocacy process for claims towards the state.

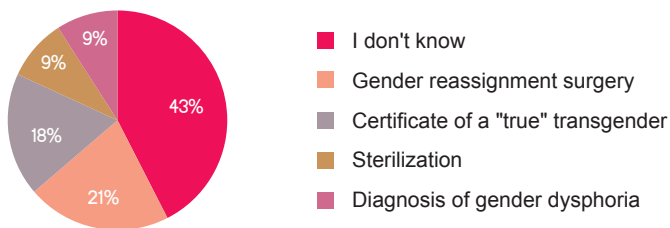
Questions about legal gender recognition within the framework of the study were answered by trans respondents who considered the issue relevant to them. Therefore, out of the trans respondents, this block was answered mainly by trans male and trans female respondents (N=34).

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It was essential that the study demonstrate the knowledge and awareness of trans people about these procedures. It should be noted that the majority of respondents are aware that there is no possibility of legal gender recognition in Georgia in the form and with the tools required by international standards (50.0%), 11.8% are unaware of the existence of such a service, and 38.2% of respondents replied that there is a possibility of legal gender recognition in Georgia. Interestingly, 85.3% of respondents indicated that they were not familiar with the official procedure for legal gender recognition in Georgia.

The current form of the legal gender recognition does not meet international standards and is in substantial conflict with it. Recognition procedure under Article 78 of the Civil Acts Law is based on the “gender reassignment record”, which is not defined by either the law or a public body, although it is assumed that gender reassignment involves changing the sex of a person at birth with the opposite sex or a “gender reassignment surgery”. Find information on the respondents’ awareness of this issue in Chart №93.

Chart №93. Prerequisites for the Legal Gender Recognition.



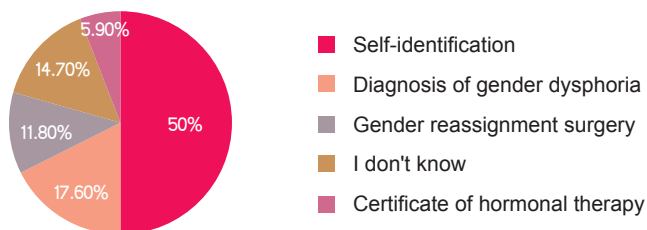
41.2% of respondents do not know what conditions are required for legal gender recognition, 20.6% think that irreversible gender reassignment surgery is the main condition for legal gender recognition, 17.6% mentioned a document proving that one is a “true transgender”, and 8.8% discussed sterilization. Also, 8.8% of respondents indicated the need for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria to ensure legal gender recognition.

Unlike legal gender recognition, Georgian law allows for a formal name change. Interestingly, 17.6% of respondents used this service.

23.5% of the respondents who did not legally change their gender marker, stated that they did not meet the requirements for legal changes, while 17.6% did not want to (N=34).

Respondents’ views on what legal gender recognition procedures should be based are particularly important in order for them to be highly effective, oriented at the protection of dignity, and tailored to human needs. **According to 50.0%, a person’s self-identification is what legal recognition of gender should be based on.** 17.6% say that legal recognition of gender should be based solely on the diagnosis of gender dysphoria, 14.7% have no established position, 5.9% suggest that it should be based on a certificate of hormonal therapy, and 11.8% consider a certificate of gender reassignment surgery a prerequisite for legal recognition of gender.

Chart №94. What should be the prerequisites for legal gender recognition.



It is also interesting that 26.5% of the respondents think that a record about gender is not needed in personal documents, 26.5% think that no other designations beyond “woman and man” should be written in the ID card. According to 23.5%, the following wording is preferable: man, woman, third gender, or “man, woman, other” (11.8%).

The above emphasizes once again that legal gender recognition is an important lever and means of social inclusion for trans people. The absence of these procedures excludes trans people from many dimensions of social protection and facilitates their exclusion from political life. Due to the above, the lack of LGR is one of the strongest symptoms of social exclusion of trans people, which affects their entire life cycle. Therefore, it is necessary to develop regulations based on the recognition of trans people by the state and respect for their fundamental rights, which ensure that the needs of trans people are taken into account and they are directly involved in the decision-making process, predominantly taking into account the principle of “nothing about us, without us”.

4.9. Social Protection and Experience of Homelessness

Key findings:

- ▶ Only 6.1% of respondents own a house.
- ▶ 46.0% of respondents almost never have to change their place of residence, 30.7% change it less often than once a year, 12.5% – at least once a year, and 9.9% have to change their place of residence several times every 6 months.
- ▶ Respondents have to change their place of residence mostly due to the (unstable) salary factor (28.6%). 10.5% of respondents cited homo/transphobic attitude of the homeowner as the main reason for the change of residence and 9.5% –homo/transphobic attitude of the neighbors.
- ▶ 20.9% of respondents were at risk of homelessness. 13.4% of respondents refrained from answering the question.
- ▶ 70.1% of respondents with experience of homelessness (N = 63) lived with a friend at that time, 35.8% – with a relative, and 26.1% had to live on the street.
- ▶ 44.8% of respondents indicated that the experience of homelessness was related to their identity, 11.9% indicated a partial connection.
- ▶ 58.1% of respondents with experience of homelessness (N63) indicated both lack of financial income and low income as the cause of homelessness. 43.5% of respondents named coming out to family members as the reason for homelessness. 41.9% cited identity-based violence by family members as the cause of homelessness.

Social protection and prevention of the risk of homelessness are essential for members of the LGBTQ community. The social protection system in Georgia is inefficient and not tailored to the needs of specific individuals. The state has insufficiently understood the risk factors of homelessness for different social groups, which leads to the violation of the right to adequate housing or the risk of its violation.

In the present study, respondents rated housing satisfaction on a 5-point scale, where 5 meant – satisfied and 1 – dissatisfied. 40.8% of respondents are satisfied with their place of residence (11.6% – satisfied, 29.2% – more satisfied than dissatisfied), and 21.0% dissatisfied (7.5% – dissatisfied, 13.5% – more dissatisfied than satisfied). 30.5% of respondents hold a neutral position and find it difficult to support any position. 7.5% refrained from answering the question.

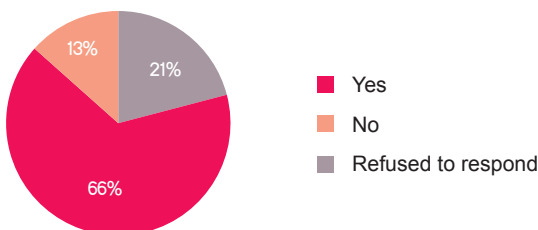
At a later stage, respondents answered the question of who owned their current place of residence. In this regard, almost equal number of respondents fell into two categories – “housing is owned by my family” (43.6%) and “housing is owned by the landlord” (42.3%). **Only 6.1% of respondents own a place of residence.** 4.5% live in a house owned by a friend/acquaintance, 2.9% indicated that the question does not concern them, and 0.6% refrained from answering the question. Interestingly, **only 45.3% of respondents indicated that they would be able to purchase a privately owned apartment within the next 10 years.**

Frequent change of the place of residence is associated with substantial stress, although it is often a necessity caused by circumstances. Often, changing homes is necessary for LGBTQ community members to avoid negative attitudes or the risk of a privacy breach. 46.0% of those surveyed in the present study almost never have to change their place of residence, 30.7% change it less frequently than once a year, 12.5% – at least about once a year, and 9.9% change their place of residence several times every 6 months.

The most frequently named reason for changing the place of residence was **the variable (unstable) remuneration factor** (28.6%), followed by the **educational institution/workplace location factor** (12.4%). 10.5% of the respondents **cited homo/transphobic attitude of the homeowner** as the main reason for the change of residence, about the same number of the respondents (9.5%) chose **homo/transphobic attitude of the neighbors.**

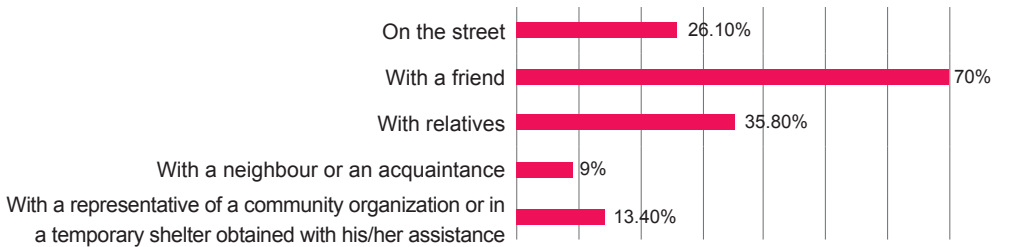
It is especially important that when asked **“Have you ever faced a problem of homelessness during your lifetime?” 20.9% of respondents indicated that they did face such a problem (N=63),** while 65.6% indicated that they did not. It is also noteworthy that 13.4% of respondents refrained from answering the question. **Almost half (47.8%) of the respondents with the experience of homelessness mentioned that they have been facing the problem of homelessness for the last 2 years.** See Chart №95.

Chart №95. Index of the experience of homelessness.



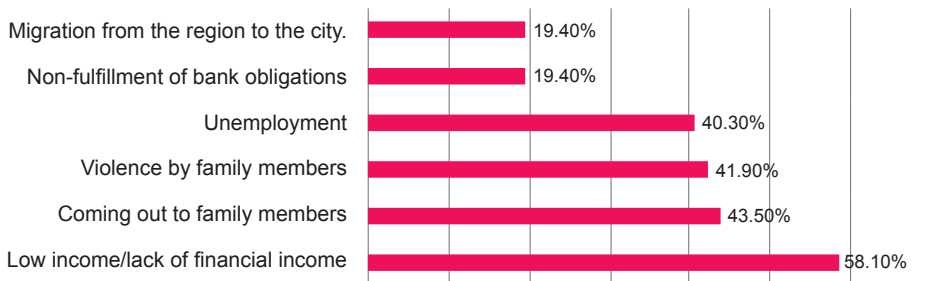
70.1% of the respondents who had the experience of homelessness (N = 63) lived with a friend during homelessness, 35.8% – with a relative, and 26.1% had to live on the street. See Chart №96 for detailed figures.

Chart №96. Where did you live during the homelessness?



It is noteworthy that 44.8% of respondents indicated that the experience of homelessness was related to their identity, 11.9% indicated a partial connection, and 43.3% stated that the experience of homelessness was not related to their identity. Also, 58.1% of the respondents indicated both **lack of financial income and low income** as the cause of homelessness. **43.5% indicated the factor of coming out to family members, while 41.9% named violence due to identity by family members as a factor.** See Chart №97 for detailed figures.

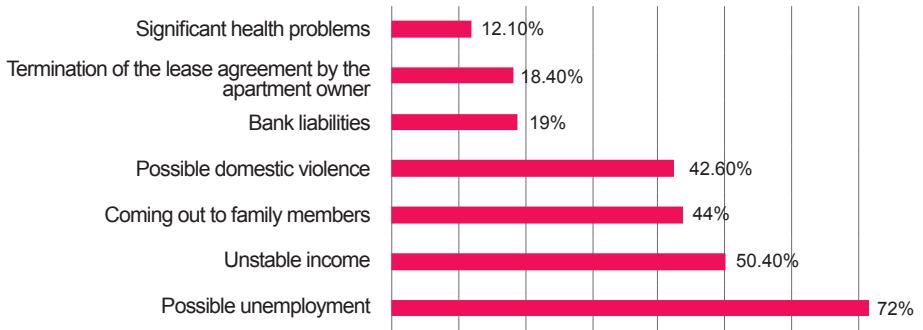
Chart №97. Causes of homelessness.



Over the next 2-5 years, 36.3% of respondents thought they might be facing the problem of homelessness, while 52.5% said they were not expecting to face at such a risk, with 11.2% of respondents finding it difficult to answer the question.

Causes that could put respondents at risk of homelessness over the next 2-5 years were assessed according to predetermined factors. 72.0% of respondents cited possible unemployment, 50.4% indicated unstable income, 44.0% thought homelessness could be caused by coming out to family members, and 42.6% thought that domestic violence could occur. See Chart №98 for detailed figures.

Chart №98. Possible factors contributing to homelessness.



As the survey showed, the risk of homelessness is often on the agenda for LGBTQ people, and its causal factors are related to both the general social background and their identity. In particular, due to their sexual orientation and gender identity they often face domestic violence or the risk of it, which either forces LGBTQ members to leave their place of residence or causes them to be evicted by the family. If we expand the definition of homelessness to incorporate social burden, it will become even clearer that even when community members remain in their families due to lack of shelter, they do so at the expense of suppressing their identity and expression, which means that one of the important functions of housing – creation of a safe space, – is violated.

Consequently, in order to reduce and prevent the risk of homelessness, the state needs to take diverse measures that will be tailored to the underlying causes of homelessness and the needs of community members.

4.10. Local Community Organizations and Democratic Participation

Key findings:

- ▶ 36.6% of respondents are familiar with all LGBTQ+ community organizations operating in Georgia;
- ▶ 80.3% of respondents are aware of the services offered by LGBTQ+ community organizations in Georgia, while 59.7% use them.
- ▶ Respondents most often mentioned the need for the following services: promotion of employment, promotion of education, and provision of shelter.
- ▶ 27.3% of respondents think that community organizations reflect their needs, 21.0% think that they do not reflect them, and 30.7% assess the issue as neutral. It is also noteworthy that 16.9% found it difficult to answer the question, while 4.1% refrained from answering it.
- ▶ Respondents were also asked to rate their ability to influence the decision-making process of community organizations – 47.8% of respondents indicated the lack of such opportunities.
- ▶ According to the respondents, the agenda of community organizations does not meet the following challenges: unemployment and poverty (48.7%), protection from homelessness (41.8%), and access to education (40.8%). Regarding the donor agenda, only 25.9% of respondents believe that the agenda of international organizations responds to local challenges.
- ▶ In response to the socio-economic challenges of the LGBTQ community, the specific measures and steps that community organizations “require” from the community may be disputed. In the present study, respondents were asked to prioritize the key issues that had to be addressed by LGBTQ+ community organizations. Respondents often mentioned employment promotion (12.5%), economic empowerment of community members (15.2%), as well as housing (12.8%).

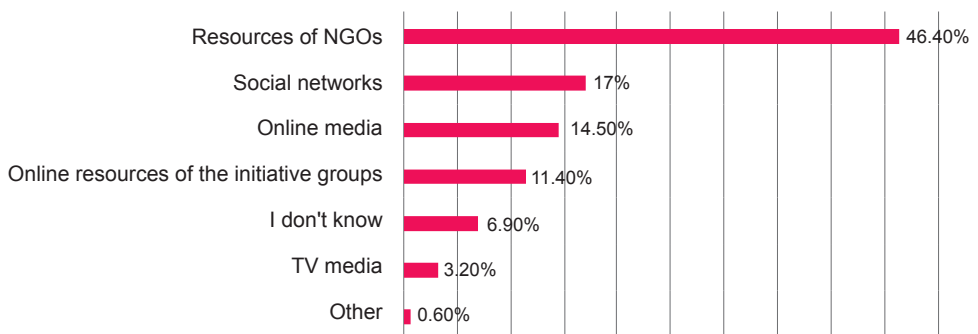
Due to homophobic and transphobic attitudes in the country, a secure support space is essential for LGBTQ community members, not only to protect their rights, but also to create an environment that allows LGBTQ community members to express themselves freely and feel that they are not alone. These support spaces in Georgia have been provided for years by local LGBTQ+ organizations working to promote the elimination of sexual

orientation and gender identity oppression and to advocate for the challenges the community faces. However, it is noteworthy that due to the intensity of public services and appropriate support measures for LGBTQ individuals, LGBTQ+ community organizations have replaced state services in offering multiple forms of support to community members. While these services are essential to community members, the process has to some extent led to a tendency to depoliticize social needs and demands, with community members viewing community organizations as the primary institutions that must ensure their well-being. It is clear that the resources of community organizations are not sufficient to meet these individual requirements, due to limited funding. However, it should be noted that the political agenda and working methods of the organizations play an essential role in shaping this attitude, which leaves the community members dependent on them.

Knowledge of these services and organizations is essential to receiving the above services. The present study shows that local community organizations enjoy a high visibility among community members. **36.6% of the respondents know all LGBTQ+ community organizations in Georgia, 48.1% – several, and 9.7% – only one.** Only 5.6% of respondents said they were not familiar with community organizations in Georgia.

46.4% of respondents believe that reliable sources of information on sexuality, SOGI, or other issues are the **resources of non-governmental organizations**, 17% – the social network, and 14.5% – online media. See Chart №99 for detailed figures.

Chart №99. The most reliable source about sexuality.



In terms of using the services offered by NGOs, it is essential to trust these organizations and perceive them as safe spaces. As mentioned in the beginning of the study, the LGBTQ community, in contrast to the general population of Georgia, relies heavily on local NGOs, as these organizations are the only supporters of the LGBTQ group. Accordingly, a large

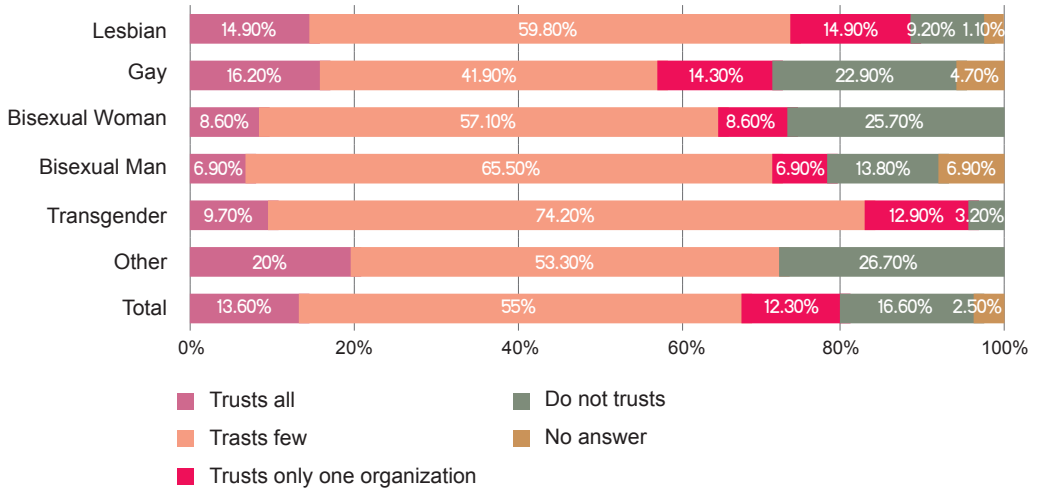
Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia

number of respondents express confidence in at least one community organization, in particular, 13.6% of respondents said they trust all community organizations in Georgia, 55.0% – trust a few of them, and 12.3% – only one. 16.6% of the respondents stated that they do not trust the community organizations in Georgia, while 2.6% did not answer the question (N = 302).

64% of those who do not trust any community organization live in Tbilisi and 36% in the region. 24.4% of those who trust everyone live in regions, 36.1% trust a few, 29.7% trust only one, and 36% do not trust any of them (N = 101),

Cross-tabulation analysis showed that all community organizations were most trusted by gay (16.2%) and lesbian (14.9%) respondents, several organizations were most trusted by transgender respondents (74.2%), and only one organization was most trusted by lesbian respondents (14.9%). **The highest rate of distrust was observed among bisexual female respondents (25.7%).** See detailed figures in Chart № 4.10.2. ($X^2 = 31.321$, $df = 20$, $p < 0.05$).

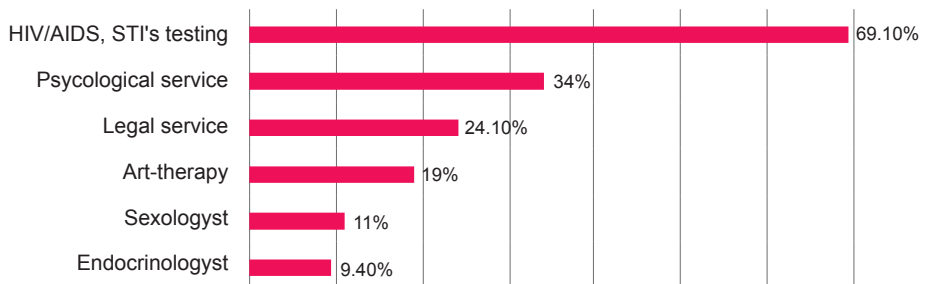
Chart №100. Rate of trust in community organizations.



80.3% of the respondents are aware of the services offered by LGBTQ+ community organizations in Georgia and more than half of the respondents (59.7%) use them. 55.3% of the respondents who **do not use** the services of LGBTQ+ community organizations in Georgia (N = 114) stated that they do not want to use the services, 15.8% indicated that they do not need them, and 13.2% noted that they do not feel comfortable receiving the services of community organizations. It should be noted that 5.3% of respondents rated the risk of breach of confidentiality and 4.4% low quality of services.

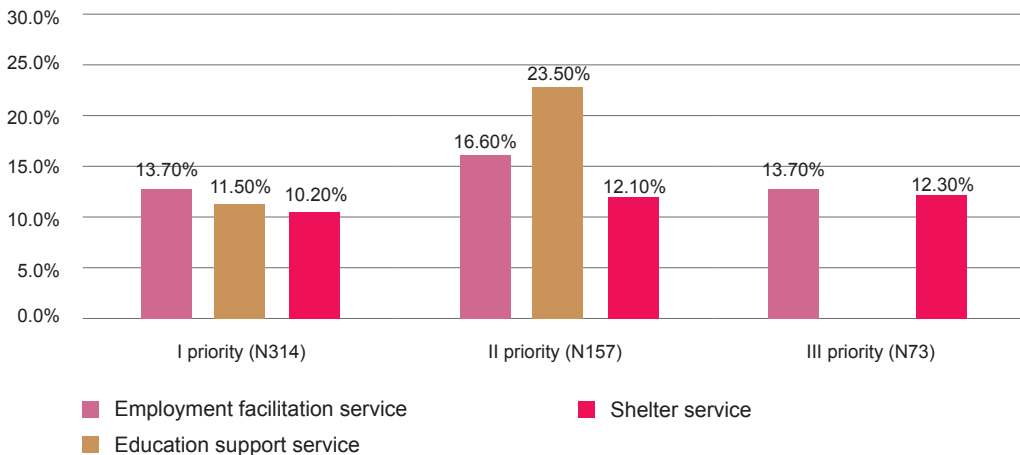
Those who use the services of community organizations most often use health-related prevention services, in particular, HIV/AIDS and STI testing (69.1%), which can be explained by the purposeful and continuous work of LGBTQ+ community organizations in this direction. Also, a large proportion of respondents (34%) use mental health services (psychologist/psychiatrist), and 24.1% – legal services. See Chart №101 for detailed figures.

Chart №101. Index of using services of community organizations.



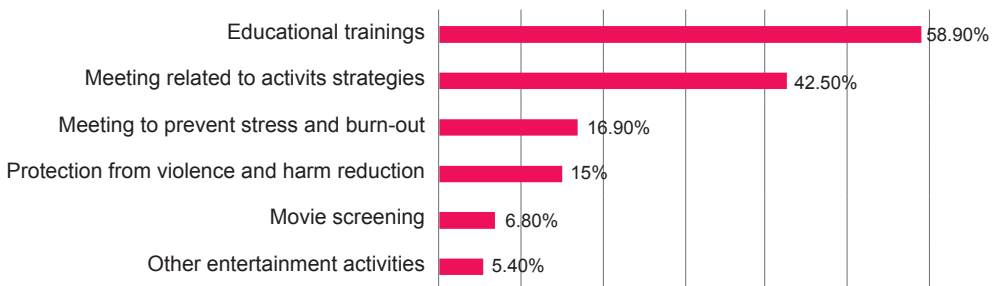
Through open-ended questions, to better identify respondents' needs, they were given the opportunity to name the services they would like to have under community organizations, and to prioritize them. According to the survey, respondents most often named employment facilitation, education support, and provision of shelter. See Chart №102 for detailed figures.

Chart №102. What additional services should be offered by community organizations?



The study also assessed the frequency of participation in various types of events organized by LGBTQ+ community organizations. **A large share of respondents – 64.4% – are involved in these activities with different intensity** (11.6% – less often than once a year, 9.1% – once a year, 5.3% – once in six months, 11.3% – once in three months, 10.0% – once a month, and 17.5 % – several times a month), **58.9% of respondents mainly participate in educational trainings, and 42.5% – in meetings related to activist strategies.** See Chart №103 for detailed distribution of the answers.

Chart №103. Index of participation in events organized by community organizations.



35% of respondents do not participate in events organized by community organizations. For detailed distribution of the reasons see Chart №104.

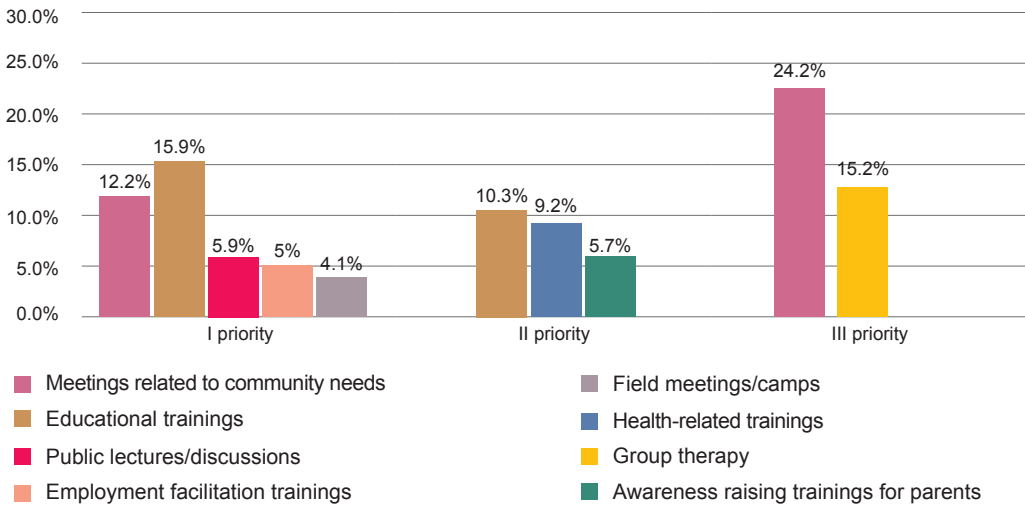
Chart №104. Reasons for refusal to participate in events arranged by community organizations.



To assess the relevance and significance of the measures proposed by LGBTQ+ organizations, respondents were asked to rate the measures according to the degree of importance. A large part of respondents (36.3%) believe that the measures proposed by the organizations are important, 21.9% indicate that they are more important than unimportant, 12.8% believe that such measures are more unimportant than important, 5.6% said they are unimportant, 20.0% hold a neutral position and find it difficult to support any position, and 3.4% refrained from answering the question.

While respondents found various types of events organized by community organizations important, they also focused on organizing events or improving existing ones that they considered most important to the community. See distribution of answers according to priorities in Chart №105.

Chart №105. What activities would you like to be improved/added by community organizations?

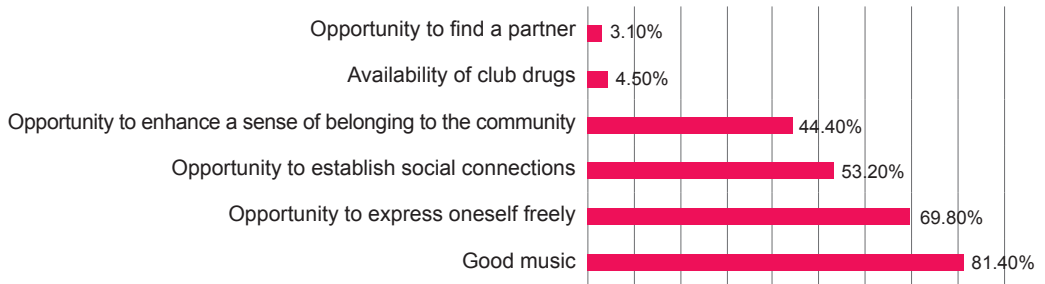


Note: 43.4% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

The degree of participation of the interviewed respondents in awareness raising or other types of trainings arranged by community organizations is also characterized by high activity. 41.3% of the respondents have participated in the trainings conducted by the community organization in the last 2 years, which covered issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity.

The study also assessed the frequency of the use of entertainment/club spaces arranged by LGBTQ+ community organizations or in cooperation with them. According to the survey, 47.7% of respondents use “Horum” and 47.1% – “KIKI”. 3.6% of the respondents named events organized by “Identity U”. It is noteworthy that LGBTQ friendly entertainment spaces are consequential for community members. To highlight this importance, respondents were asked to emphasize the relevance of the above-mentioned spaces in their lives by marking several answers at once. See Chart №106 for detailed distribution of answers.

Chart №106. Reasons for using entertainment/club spaces.



Functioning of community organizations means working for the joint interests of a group of people united by one or more characteristics. Accordingly, in order for NGOs to promote the rights of the community and strengthen its members, it is imperative to assume that organizations use **participatory methodologies** to ensure the involvement of the relevant group in their initiatives, development plans, and activities. Participation in the processes implies some degree of ownership of the processes, participation in decision-making, and the ability to control the process. Therefore, the lack of such a connection hinders any development project. The lack of participation is evident both at the stage of identifying the needs of the community, creating, monitoring/evaluating the project, as well as during its implementation.¹³¹ This is facilitated by the fact that often NGOs do not have developed participatory tools, which makes the community a passive participant in the process.¹³²

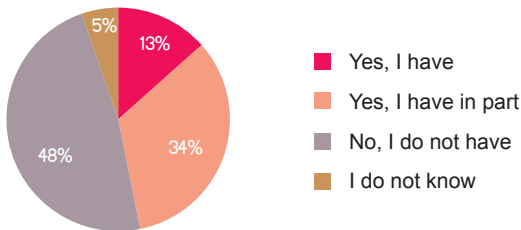
In the present study, to identify the degree of democratic involvement and participatory governance of LGBTQ+ community organizations, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which community organizations reflect their needs. 27.3% of respondents think that community organizations reflect their needs, 21.0% think that they do not reflect them, and 30.7% assess the question as neutral. It is also noteworthy that 16.9% found it difficult to answer the question, while 4.1% refrained from answering it.

Respondents were also asked to rate their opportunity to influence the decision-making process of community organizations. It is noteworthy that **47.8% of respondents indicate the lack of these opportunities**. See Chart №107 for detailed figures.

131 Powell, F. 1998. *The Non-profit Sector: A Research Handbook*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

132 White, S. C. 2000. "Depoliticizing Development: the uses and abuses of participation". In Pearce, J. Ed. *Development, NGOs and Civil Society. Selected Essays from Development in Practice. A Development in Practice Reader*. London: OXFAM GB.

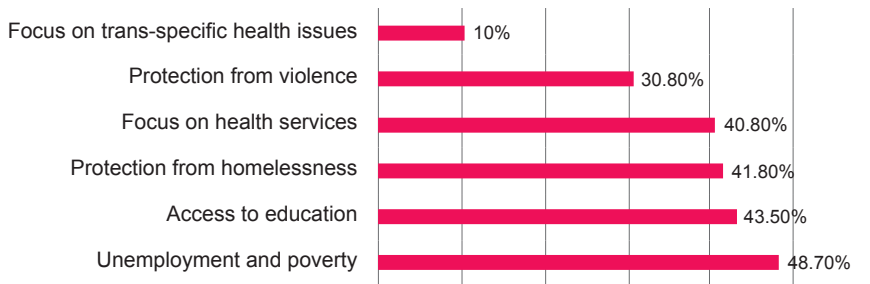
Chart №107. Influence on the community organization’s decision-making process.



Despite this result, it is noteworthy that the study failed to make an in-depth survey of various degrees of involvement in the decision-making process, which leaves some ambiguity as to what the relationship between respondents and community organizations is. Consequently, the present study fails to answer what reasons led to the inability to influence decision-making and in what specific forms it manifests itself. Accordingly, these issues need further elaboration and additional research in terms of transparency and democratic involvement of community organizations in order to address the issues identified in this study and to introduce participatory methodologies.

In terms of identifying community needs and prioritizing them in the agenda, respondents also assessed the acute challenges in their daily lives to which the work focus of community organizations is less responsive. Respondents most frequently mentioned **unemployment and poverty** (48.7%), **protection from homelessness** (41.8%), and **access to education** (40.8%). See Chart №108 for detailed figures.

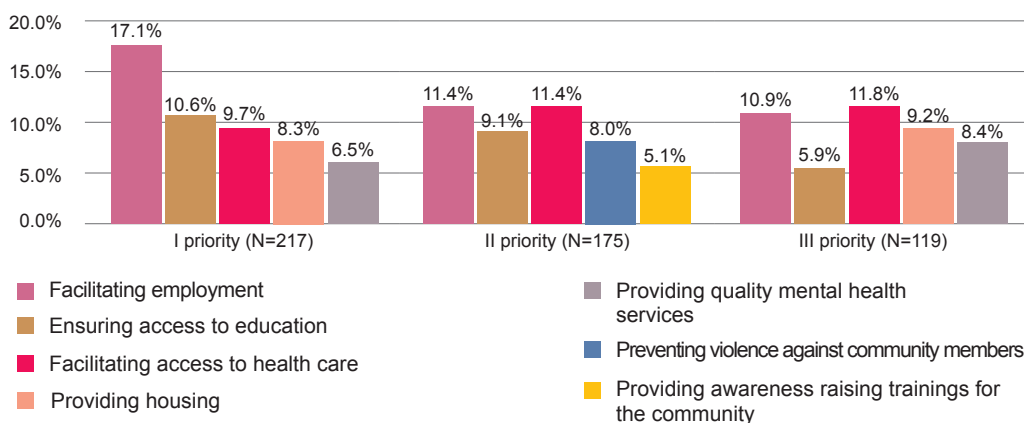
Chart №108. The needs which are not covered by the community organizations.



These data indicate that despite the efforts of community organizations, the work done to secure civil and political rights fails to address the daily hardships of LGBTQ individuals due to inaccessibility of basic social needs. This necessitates the introduction of the language of socio-economic rights in the agenda of community organizations and the state.

On the other hand, in response to the socio-economic challenges of the LGBTQ community, the specific measures and steps that community organizations are “required” by the community may be controversial. In the present study, respondents were asked to prioritize the key issues that needed to be addressed by LGBTQ+ community organizations. Interestingly, respondents often mentioned **employment facilitation** (12.5%), **economic empowerment of community members** (15.2%), **employment facilitation** (12.5%), as well as **provision of housing** (12.8%). For detailed figures see Chart №109.

Chart №109. In your opinion, should LGBTQ+ community organizations make efforts?



These priorities somewhat repeat the needs that in the opinion of the respondents the work of community organizations in Georgia cannot cover. However, as noted, there may be controversial ways in which socio-economic challenges and needs can be met by community organizations. On the one hand, a community organization while covering advocacy, research process and conducts monitoring, it is also a service provider that provides services tailored to the needs of the community, however these services are constantly dependent on donor funding and they may not have a lasting effect and solidity. On the other hand, only by providing services, the community organization indirectly relieves the state from taking responsibility for these services. Consequently, to place social or other types of services outside the state only under the resources of non-governmental organizations poses risks to the sustainability and depoliticization of these services. Therefore, it is important that the policy of community organizations does not work toward the full coverage of these needs, but rather toward their emergence under the services of the state. This in itself does not preclude close cooperation with relevant government agencies and even provision of these services by the community organizations through state funding (under its conscious responsibility).¹³³

133 Nicola Banks, David Hulme, Michael Edwards, NGOs, States, and Donors Revisited: Still Too Close for Comfort? World Development, Volume 66, 2015

The main areas and interests of support and funding from donor organizations are essentially related to the above issues. The agenda of donor organizations in Georgia is largely focused on civil and political rights, so the socio-economic needs of LGBTQ community members may often be left out of funding, which is a result not only of exsited homophobia, but also the result of the country's acute social situation. Accordingly, in the present study, respondents also assessed **the degree to which international organizations and donors responded to the local needs of the LGBTQ community**. In this regard, 25.9% of respondents think that international donors and organizations reflect the local needs of the LGBTQ community, while 19.7% think that they do not. The question was answered neutrally and accordingly, it was difficult to support any position for 32.8% of the respondents, while 20.9% indicated that they find it difficult to answer the question. A large number of neutral responses indicate that members of the LGBTQ community are not explicitly aware of the focus of projects implemented by community organizations under donor funding and with their support, which again demonstrates some shortcomings in the involvement of community members in community organizations.

4.11. Civic Activism and Solidarity Groups

Key findings:

- ▶ **Most of the respondents are aware of the main social challenges in Georgia, which makes the population in general vulnerable and creates barriers in achieving prosperity. Therefore, poverty, unemployment and human rights violations of the respondents are the main problems in Georgia.**
- ▶ **Almost a third of respondents (37.2%) surveyed consider themselves civil activists (58.8% do not).**
- ▶ **In terms of participation in rallies and public demonstrations, the share of participants in rallies and demonstrations (47.8%) and those who do not participate in them (48.8%) are almost equal.**
- ▶ **A large proportion of respondents (62.9%) are involved in rallies and demonstrations in support of non-privileged members of the LGBTQ group ("to send a message that they are not alone"). The demand for the state to fulfill its obligation to protect human rights is also distinguished by a high percentage – 62.1%.**
- ▶ **Lack of openness (coming out) of identity (43.8%) was mentioned as the most common reason for refusing to participate in public demonstrations or rallies; part of the respondents also indicated a high risk of**

violence (40%) among the reasons. The responses also revealed differing approaches to the working methodology and tools of the LGBTQ movement/organizations, in particular, 37.6% of respondents believe that Idaho/Pride has no significant potential for improving the situation in the community, while 40.3% of respondents believe that only public gatherings and manifestations [emancipatory] are not an effective mechanism of struggle.

- ▶ 38.4% of respondents think that visibility policy positively changes the social and legal status of the LGBTQ community. However, it should be noted that the negative evaluation rate is almost equal to the positive response – 32.2% of respondents believe that the visibility policy has a negative impact.
- ▶ In response to internal problems, in the answers of the respondents the need to strengthen the community and take care of its unity prevails. This means that respondents believe that in addition to external work, work needs to be done within the community in the first place to ensure their empowerment, mobilization, and unity.

“The LGBTQ movement (i.e. a combination of organizations working against homo/bi/transphobia, unregistered groups, and individual activists) has been in Georgia for 11 years and its center has been represented by non-governmental organizations from the very beginning. They set an agenda that members of the community roughly agree with, and they were and are the most visible representatives of the community”.¹³⁴ NGOs have made significant contributions in terms of community visibility and advocacy of the needs of LGBTQ people before the state institutions. However, their work has also received some criticism, largely due to a partial omission of the needs of the community in their agenda, lack of communication with certain segments of the community, and unequal representation of these groups in the movement.¹³⁵ Consequently, the work done in terms of LGBTQ rights is still based on a strong a top-down and a weak bottom-up agenda. The “NGO-ized” agenda has also hampered the ability of the LGBTQ /Queer movement to form independently, although over the years, on the basis of LGBTQ+ community organizations, as well as beyond, different independent movements emerged, working with different methodologies, different ideological platforms, and sometimes with different goals. This indicates that the LGBTQ community is not homogeneous,

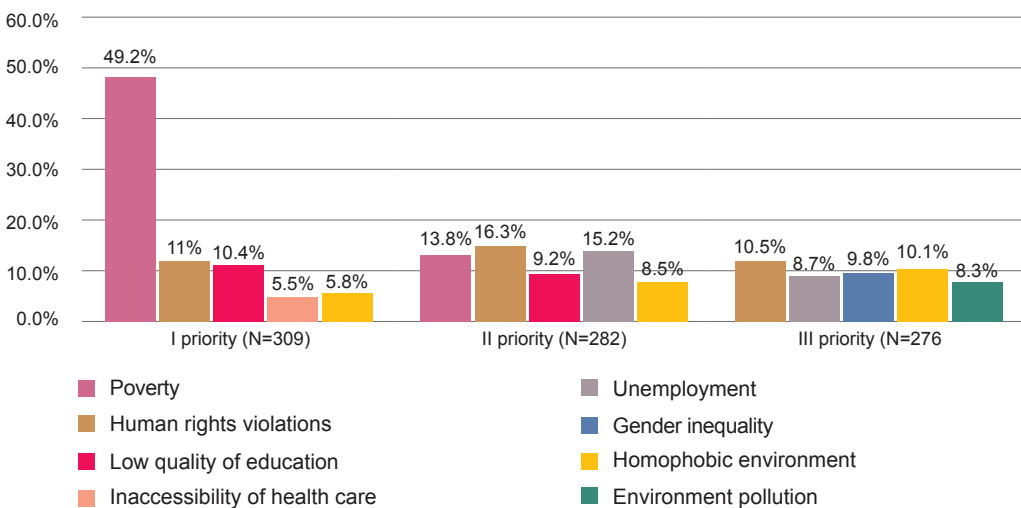
134 Gvianishvili N. *LGBT Movement in Georgia: Success and Challenges from the Activist Position*, EMC, Edited Volume, 2018

135 Ibid

which highlights radical differences between different actors. While the activist field today is much more pluralistic and has seen some sort of revision of the agenda through the eyes of identity politics of previous years, there is no positive experience of a more inclusive, democratic, and socially oriented political agenda and movement. This also conditions the respondents' attitude that poverty and other social challenges are not properly addressed in the agenda of community organizations.

Most of the respondents are aware of the main social challenges in Georgia, which cause vulnerability both of the general population in general and of the community in particular, and hinder the attainment of prosperity. Therefore, poverty, unemployment, and human rights violations are the main problems in Georgia identified by respondents. See Chart №110 for detailed figures.

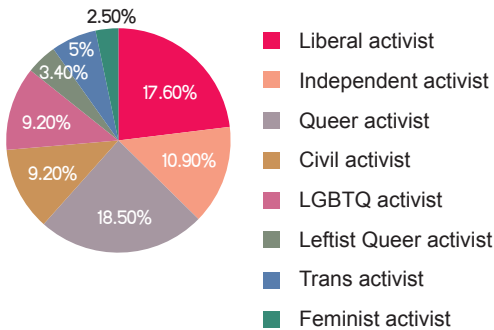
Chart №110. Currently, what is the most important problem in Georgia?



In order to change the existing problems, part of the respondents tries to be politically aware and active. For this purpose, more than half of the respondents (63.2%) participate in the elections, while 56.9% have participated in activist rallies held by civil society.

Interestingly, **almost a third of respondents (37.2%) consider themselves civil activists** (58.8% do not, 3.4% said “I do not know”, and 0.6% of respondents refrained from answering the question). The diversity and ideological differences in the activists' work is demonstrated by the variety of activisms specified by the respondents through open-ended questions. See Chart №111 for detailed figures.

Chart №111. Ideology/naming of the activism.



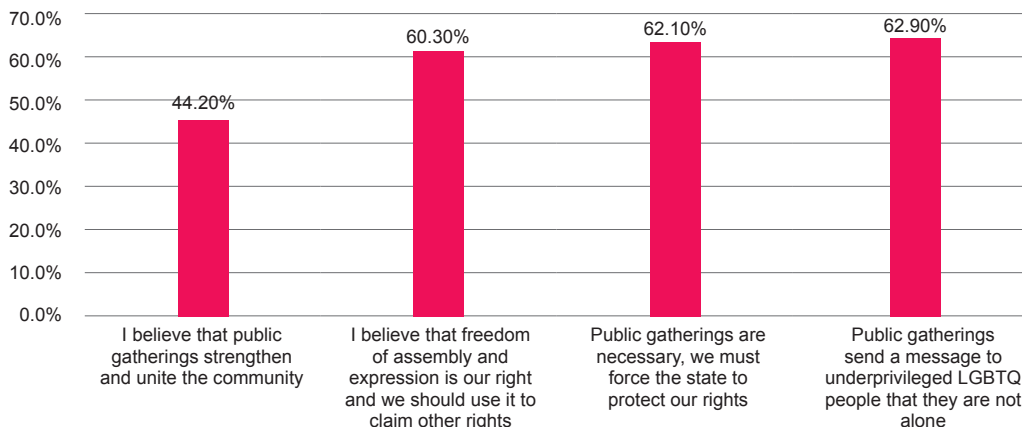
Note: This question was answered only by those who consider themselves civil activists.

The survey also assessed participation of respondents in public demonstrations and gatherings organized by community/community organizations related to LGBTQ+ issues. **As the data show, the number of participants in rallies and demonstrations (47.8%) and the number of respondents who do not participate in them (48.8%) are almost equal.**

28% of respondents with experience in participating in public meetings focused on SOGI, participated in the May 17, 2013 public meeting. The May 17, 2015 meeting in Tbilisi “Round Garden” (27.3%), as well as the May 17, 2017 meeting near the Government Office, Tbilisi (24.7%) were often mentioned. More than one-fifth of respondents (22.7%) indicate that they participated in the “Queer Sisters” run organized by the Women’s Initiatives Support Group in 2019. In the case of 2018, this figure was 18.7%. 17.3% of the respondents took part in the celebratory week and partisan gathering organized by Tbilisi Pride 2019.

In addition to specific experience, the study sought to demonstrate the motivation of respondents to participate in public meetings, to which respondents could mark several responses. As it turned out, **a large share of respondents (62.9%) are involved in such activities in support of non-privileged members of the LGBTQ group (“to send a message that they are not alone”). The demand for the state to fulfill the obligation to protect human rights is also distinguished by a high percentage – 62.1%.** See Chart №112 for detailed distribution of the answers.

Chart №112. What is the main motivation for you to attend the public gatherings/manifestations?

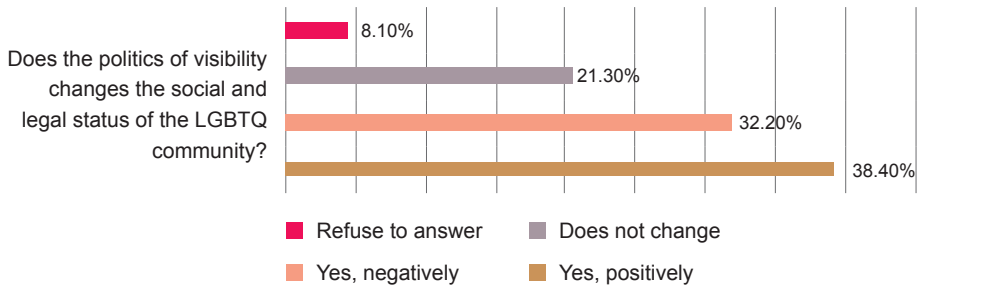


The survey also identified the main reasons why respondents do not participate in public demonstrations or rallies. In this regard, **the most commonly cited reason was the lack of openness (coming out) about identity (43.8%)**. This means that respondents see a connection between attending public meetings and the act of coming out. Respectively, even if there is a desire, a community member may fail to attend the meeting. It also means that “community representation is entrusted to a limited circle of ‘open’ activists, which means that the community has insufficient control over representation”.¹³⁶ However, the diversity of groups and people in the movement is gradually changing this trend. Some of the respondents also indicated a high risk of violence (40%) among the reasons. The responses also highlighted different approaches to the working methodology and tools of the LGBTQ movement/organizations. In particular, **37.6% of respondents believe that IDAHOT/Pride does not have significant potential for improving the situation in the community, while 40.3% of respondents believe that public gatherings and demonstrations alone are not an effective [emancipatory] fighting mechanism.**

The practice of excessive focus on the visibility policy on the part of LGBTQ movement is related to the assembly and assessment of public activity in general. The respondents were given an opportunity to assess this. **38.4% of respondents think that visibility policy positively changes the social and legal status of the LGBTQ community. However, it should be noted that the negative evaluation rate is almost equal to the positive response – 32.2% of respondents believe that the visibility policy has a negative impact.** More than one-fifth (21.3%) of respondents estimate that visibility policy does not affect the social and legal status of the community, i.e. it does not change the status of LGBTQ people. See Chart №113 for detailed figures.

136 Ibid

Chart №113. Impact of the politics of visibility on the social and legal status of the community.

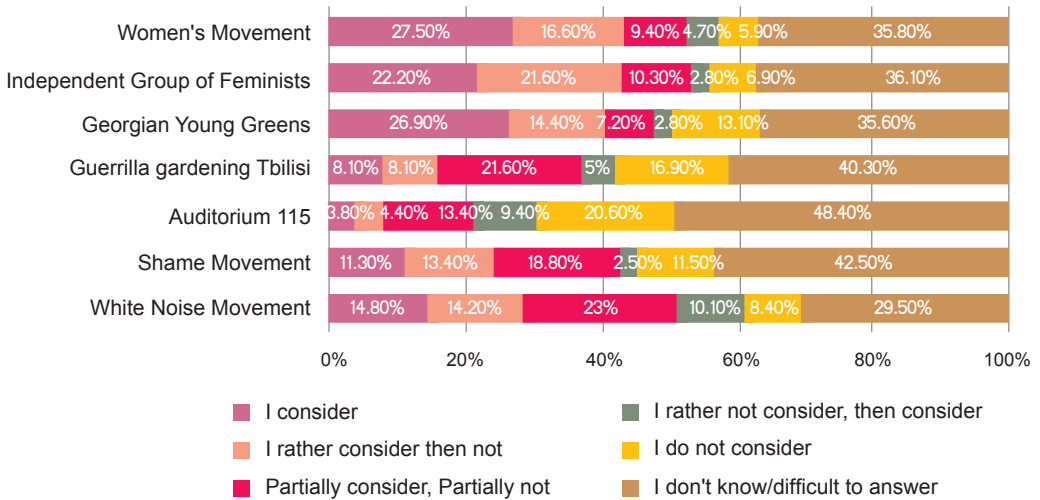


Historically, it has been characteristic of the LGBTQ movement to be separated from other types of social or civil movements. Which, on the one hand, was due to the lack of support, and on the other hand, due to their narrow focus, which meant concentrating the movement agenda only on identity-based needs. This lack of support has created and continues to create a lack of understanding of the universality of these needs, both by the LGBTQ movement and by activist groups united around other issues. Another characteristic of the lack of support is purely political, members of other movements did not want and still do not want to associate with a group against which there is a simultaneous civil and religious controversy, because it would make their work less effective and prevent them from achieving the goal. "Any appearance of the LGBT community in public is perceived as LGBT propaganda"¹³⁷ not only for the public and clerical groups, but also for other activist movements. Consequently, over the years, the LGBTQ movement has pursued its own goals beyond the obvious and explicit support of other groups.

The activist groups that have strongly supported LGBTQ groups are mostly feminist groups. In the present survey, the majority of respondents consider **the women's movement** (44.1%), **the Independent Feminist Group** (43.8%), and **the Georgian Young Greens** (41.3%) as potential supporters of the LGBTQ community. Activist groups such as **Auditorium 115** (30.0%) and **Guerrilla gardening Tbilisi** (21.9%) are less likely to be potential supporters of the LGBTQ community. See Chart №114 for detailed figures.

137 Aghdgomelashvili E. „Homophobic Hate Speech and Political Processes in Georgia“, Situation of LGBT People in Georgia, 2012, pg. 10

Chart №114. Potential supporter activist groups of the LGBTQ group.



Importantly, the proportion of respondents who do not have information on the above groups or their agenda (“I do not know/find it difficult to answer”) is substantially high, indicating that their activities do not reach the main population due to their centralized nature. However, it should also be noted that some of the named groups no longer exist today in the form of a movement/association (e.g. Auditorium 115, White Noise Movement). Interestingly, 32% of those who said they were unfamiliar with specific activist groups were members of the LGBTQ group living in the regions, indicating that these activist movements did not have a high profile outside of Tbilisi.

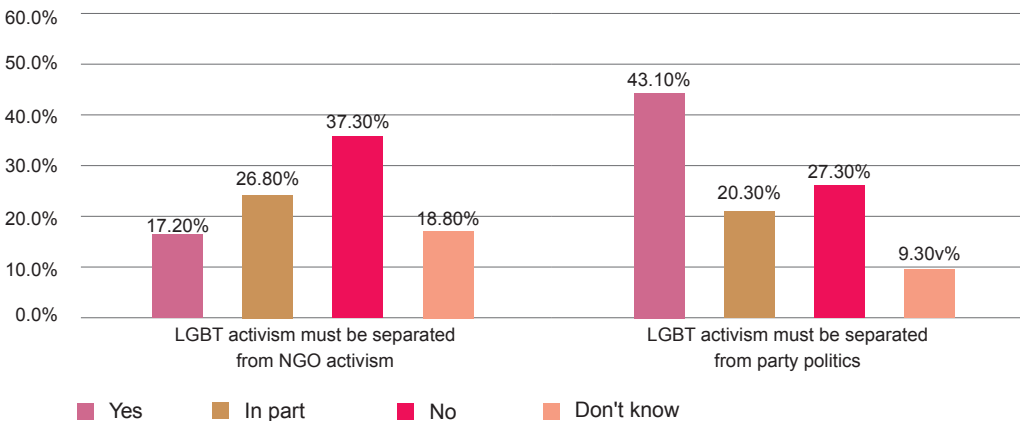
In addition to support, which may include formal or passive support, such as joining a public gathering or demonstration, active support is also important, which implies active support for mainstreaming LGBTQ issues on the agenda of activist unions. Today, feminist movements in Georgia try to cover the needs of LGBTQ people in various ways, but there are different opinions as to what extent the coverage is in line with the needs of the community. Interestingly, the majority of respondents – 58.1% – think that the feminist movement in Georgia reflects the needs of LGBTQ people (48.1% – partially reflect, 10.0% – reflect), while 24.7% believe that they do not. See Chart №115 for detailed figures.

Chart №115. Whether feminist groups reflect the needs of LGBTQ groups.



44.0% of respondents agree with the statement that LGBTQ activism should be separated from NGO activism (17.2% of them fully agree with this statement and 26.8% – partially agree) as to the need to separate activism from party politics, 63.4% of respondents agree with it. See Chart №116.

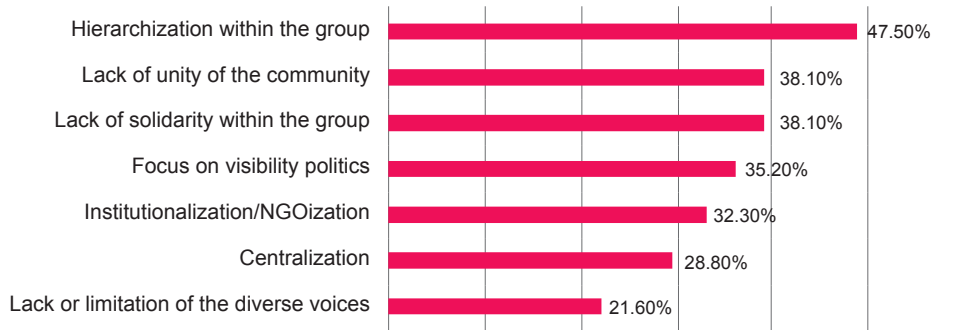
Chart №116. Should LGBTQ activism be separated from the party politics and NGO activism?



Question: G31. Do you agree with the statement that LGBTQ activism should be separated from NGO activism? [NGOL-GN] G32. Do you agree with the statement that LGBTQ activism should be separated from political parties? [LGPPN]

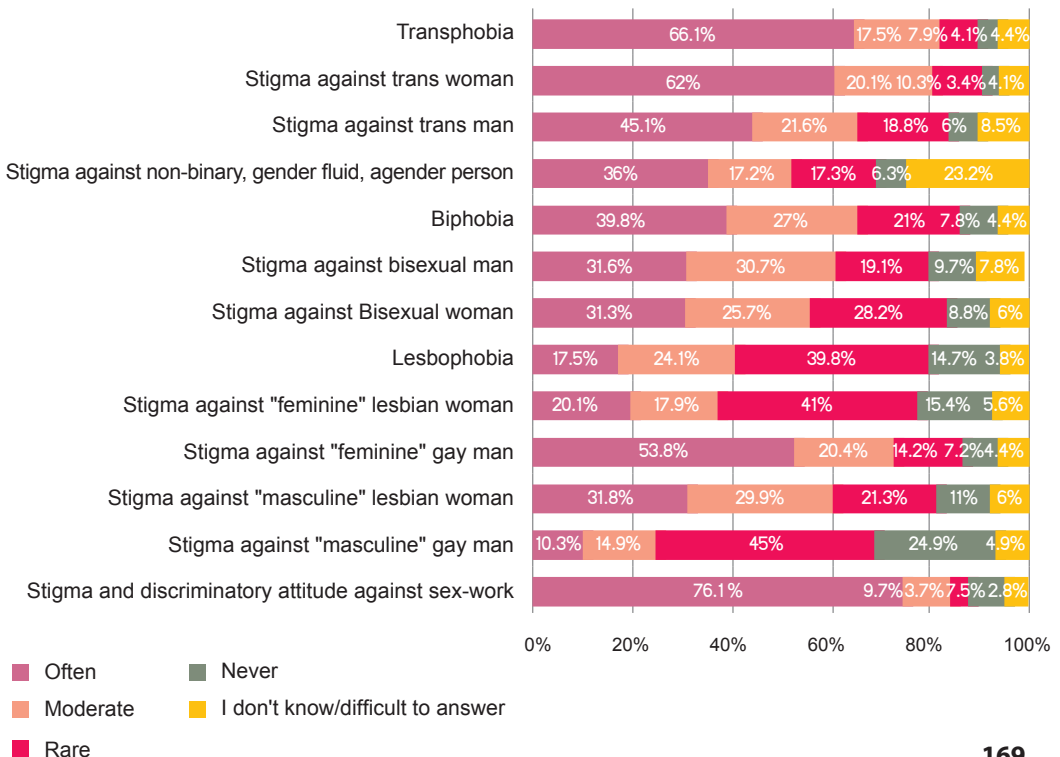
In this regard, it is important to assess the respondents in relation to the internal challenges of LGBTQ activism. To this end, 47.5% of respondents indicated hierarchical status within groups. 38.1% think that the main challenge of community activism is the lack of solidarity within the group and also, the same number think that the lack of communal unity is the main challenge of LGBTQ activism today. 35.2% of respondents think that today, the main challenge of LGBTQ community activism is to focus on the politics of visibility, while 32.3% point to the problem of its enjoined nature. See Chart №117 for detailed figures.

Chart №117. The main challenges of LGBTQ activism.



Apart from homo/bi/transphobia on the part of society, the community itself is not free from prejudices and stigma prevalent in society, especially low sensitivity to the needs and situation of different groups of people, which in some cases leads to a lack of solidarity between groups. According to the survey, respondents believe that **stigma and discrimination against sex work** (76.1%), **as well as transphobia** (66.1%), **and stigma towards trans women** (62%) are most common within the community itself. There is also a high level of stigma and discrimination against “feminine” gay men (53.8%). At the same time, the following problems were most **rarely** mentioned: stigma against masculine “gay” men (45.0% – rarely) and stigma and discrimination against female lesbian women (41.0%). See Chart №118 for detailed figures.

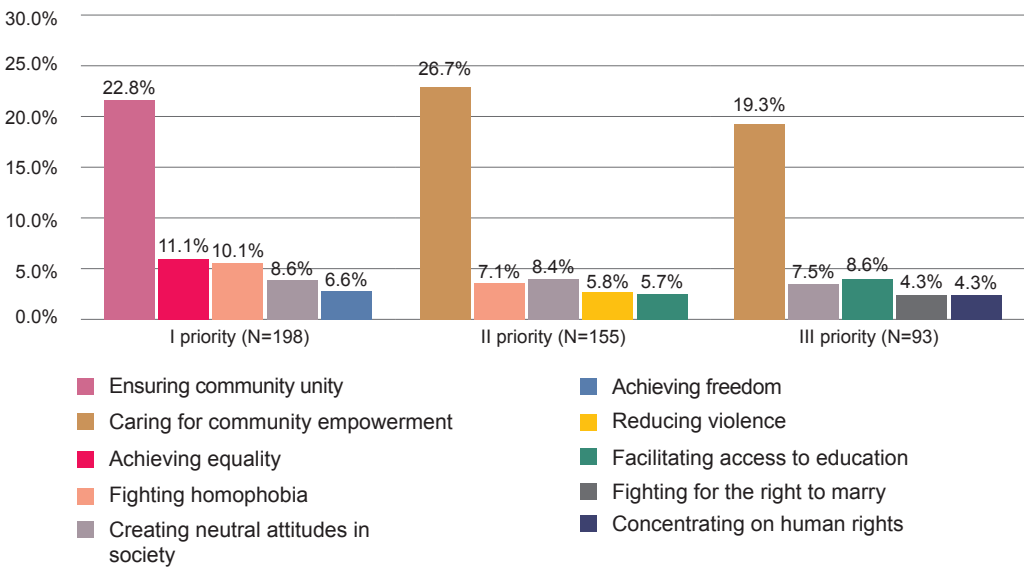
Chart №118. In your opinion, how frequent/common are the following cases in the LGBTQ community?



Negative stereotypes and stigma within the community are also evidenced by the fact that **42.3% of respondents hide/conceal information about their sexual orientation within the community** (49.3% do not hide and 8.5% did not answer the question).

In response to the above problems, respondents were asked through an open-ended question to identify the three main goals that should be prioritized by LGBTQ activism. It is noteworthy that **the need for strengthening the community and caring for its unity** prevails in the answers. This means that respondents believe that in addition to external work, work needs to be done within the community in the first place to ensure their empowerment, mobilization, and unity. By the desire for unity, we should probably mean working on internal controversies, and not homogenizing them, or putting them in one ideological framework. For detailed figures, see Chart №119.

Chart №119. The three main goals of LGBTQ activism.



As the above data show, the LGBTQ community is a non-homogeneous group, so its approaches to combating homo/transphobia differ. It should be noted that community members also consider it important to become stronger within the community by promoting its unity. However, it is still unclear what “unity” entails and what issues need to be worked on to create a group connected by safe and common concerns, which will have the resources to mobilize and to create stable activist solidarity.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of the present study was to investigate the determinants of social vulnerability and symptoms of social exclusion, which was achieved by identifying the interaction of aspects of vertical and horizontal inequality. This was based on the characteristics of social and economic exclusion of the LGBTQ community and its identification of political participation, agency and inclusive involvement, as well as opportunities to engage in activism and set its own agenda.

By expanding the framework of social exclusion, the study sought to show its multifaceted aspects – along with economic vulnerability, it showed forms of exclusion that become manifest in deteriorating chances of livelihood and cultural non-recognition and include loss of agency and expulsion from the idea of equal citizenship. The research shows that LGBTQ people experience both the negative impact of common socio-economic structures and other social difficulties related to stigma, discrimination, and identity, which make them even more vulnerable socially.

Based on the findings of the study, it is clear that there is a deep link between the various forms of oppression of LGBTQ people, the solution of which requires equal recognition of LGBTQ people, equal citizenship, as well as focusing on independent social and economic needs and effective measures to fulfill them.

Political homophobia and the policy of non-recognition of LGBTQ people in Georgia today make it difficult to put their social and economic concerns, needs, and rights on the agenda. The gap between the legislation and the real policy is still visible in the existing state agenda, which calls into question the effectiveness of the legislative framework and its goals. Despite a number of institutional changes adopted by the state, it is noteworthy that trust in state institutions is quite low. The level of trust in the law enforcement system is also low, which indicates that the reforms implemented in this system are not based on care, support, and human rights approaches. This is due to the lack of proper social services and multi-sectoral approach, which reduces practical effectiveness of the reforms in practice and fails to improve the quality of life of LGBTQ people.

The research has shown that tackling the symptoms and consequences of social exclusion through pursuing comprehensive and complex policies is the most effective need-based approach to combating the practice of exclusion. The problems identified in the study allow to develop and outline specific ways to improve the social and economic situation in Georgia, which as a whole will serve to eliminate social problems not only

for the LGBTQ people, but also for those of members of society whose well-being is negatively affected by low access to social and economic rights and low understanding of their importance by the state in the existing political discourse.

Operationalizing the findings of the study will help to create a social justice-based agenda in the country that aims to recognize LGBTQ human rights and prevent their social exclusion through more democratic, needs-oriented, and sensitive policies. It will also help identify gaps within organizations, activists, and community, and find effective ways to address them in order to create a more pluralistic, socially oriented, decentralized, and inclusive agenda in Georgia.

EMC