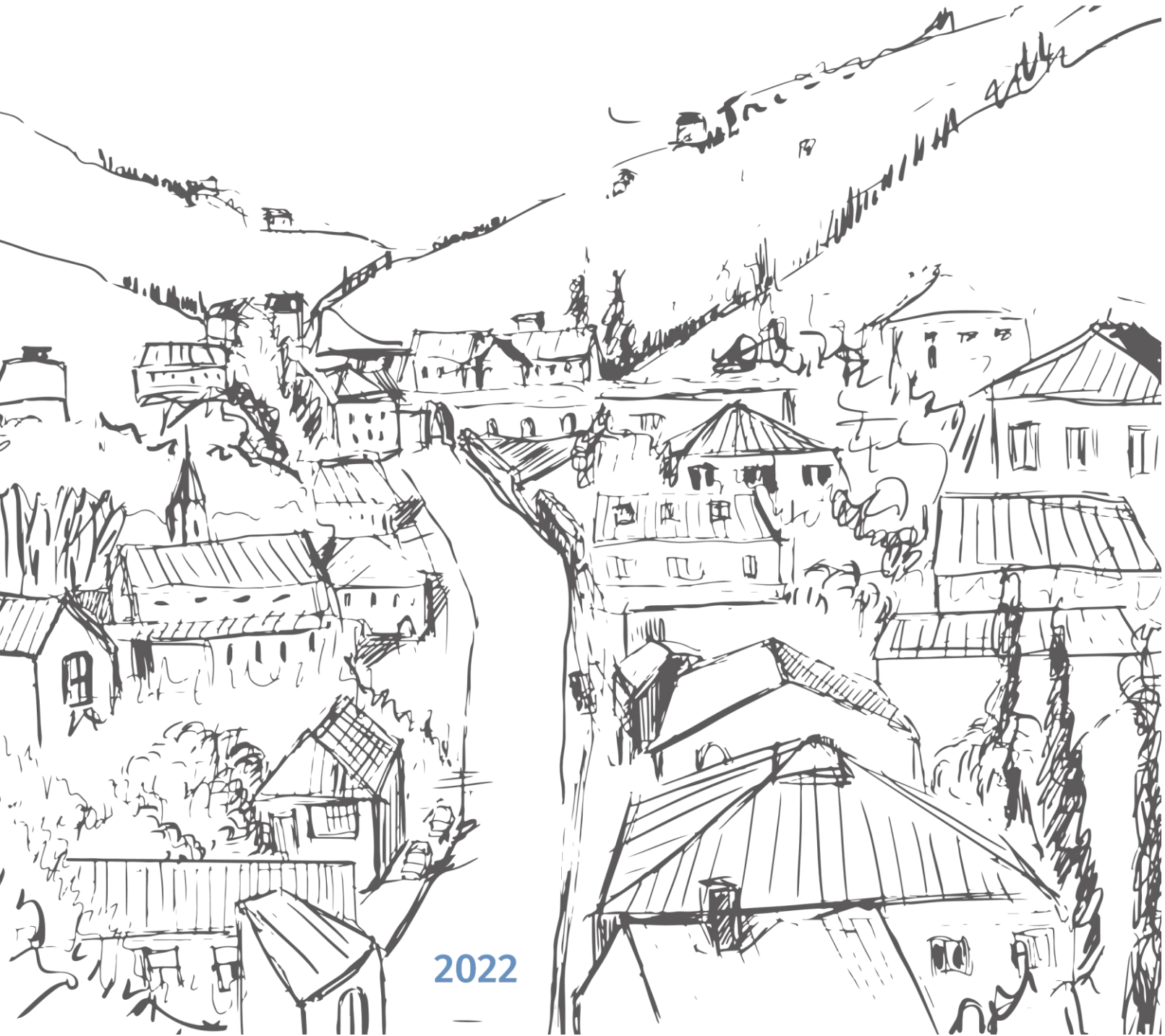




Mobility barriers of

# Internally Displaced Women

and its impact on women's economic empowerment



2022

**Author of the research: Mariam Janiashvili**

The research was conducted by the Public Defender's Office of Georgia within the framework of the project Economic and Social Participation of Vulnerable Displaced and Local Population in the South Caucasus (EPIC) financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) in cooperation with the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MOH)

## Content

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Study methodology .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Main findings.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Relevant International Standards .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Local Context overview .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1. Relevant legal framework and policy documents .....	12
2.2. Policy of resettlement of IDPs in the territory of Georgia .....	14
2.3. Regulation of mobility issues at the national level .....	15
<b>Mobility experiences of the displaced women – results of the qualitative research .....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1. Women’s daily mobility and mobility needs.....	18
3.2. Access to transportation and assessment of the state policy.....	20
3.2.1 Difficulties in introducing public transport .....	21
3.2.2. Challenges related to the functioning of the transport .....	22
3.2.3. Infrastructural challenges related to mobility .....	24
3.3. The relationship between mobility and socioeconomic vulnerability .....	25
3.4. IDP women's participation and involvement in policy-making.....	29
<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>31</b>

# Introduction

Mobility and economic empowerment are closely related concepts. Just as well-functioning transportation systems drive economic activity and socioeconomic welfare, socioeconomic welfare creates opportunities for people to access different transportation modes and have unhindered mobility.

At first glance, society and government may perceive mobility as a gender-neutral concept. However, international studies and practice prove the opposite<sup>1</sup>. The mobility system is mostly adapted to the needs of men, as well as to social stereotypes and concepts of the traditional distribution of gender roles, and ignores the challenges faced by women<sup>2</sup>.

Globally, compared to men, women's participation in the formal labor market is traditionally lower, while their involvement in unpaid, domestic work is significantly higher<sup>3</sup>. These roles imply that women travel short distances, albeit in multiple directions (for domestic work and caring for family members)<sup>4</sup>. In addition, in the case of employment together with domestic work, many women have to work within a short distance from home<sup>5</sup>. Men, on the other hand, tend to travel long distances, usually between home and work, which shapes transport systems and related attitudes<sup>6</sup>.

Women's mobility and the needs of this group have repeatedly drawn the attention of the Public Defender's Office, and a separate report was dedicated to this issue<sup>7</sup>. The document reviewed the gender aspects of mobility and addressed the state agencies with relevant recommendations. The report revealed several barriers faced by women, thus making it possible to focus on women with varying needs, highlight their challenges and view them in a bigger picture.

Over the years, IDPs have remained one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Due to the armed conflict and the loss of durable housing, the majority of them have had to live for a long time and still live away from the rest of the population, in unfit buildings and unsuitable conditions, which violates their dignity and hinders the realization of many rights. In addition, despite the provision of housing for displaced persons being a declared state obligation, a significant part of them, even 30 years after the conflict, have not been provided with decent housing.<sup>8</sup>

The study aims to analyze the mobility aspects of displaced women, to determine the challenges that the representatives of this group face on the one hand as women and on the other as displaced persons, as well as to review the impact of mobility of displaced women on their economic activity and empowerment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ramboll Smart Mobility, Gender and (Smart) Mobility, Green Paper, 2021, p. 10, <https://bit.ly/3LsGsR8>.

<sup>2</sup> Diehl K., Cerny P., Women on the Move: Sustainable Mobility and Gender, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3DK0nJL>.

<sup>3</sup> Ramboll Smart Mobility, Gender and (Smart) Mobility, Green Paper, 2021, p. 10, <https://bit.ly/3LsGsR8>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> International Labor Office, Report of the Director – General, Working out of Poverty, International Labor Conference, 91st Session, 2003, p. 48, <https://bit.ly/3UGqgjF>.

<sup>6</sup> Ramboll Smart Mobility, Gender and (Smart) Mobility, Green Paper, 2021, p. 10, <https://bit.ly/3LsGsR8>.

<sup>7</sup> Public Defender of Georgia, Women and mobility - gender aspects of the women daily movement, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3QXfGle>.

<sup>8</sup> "The state has provided housing to 45,724 families, and 45,903 families have applied according to the established procedure with a request to provide housing and is expecting settlement." - Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the state of protection of human rights and freedoms in Georgia, 2021, p. 340.

## Study methodology

Research on mobility and its impact on the economic empowerment of displaced women was conducted based on Article 12 of the organic law of Georgia on Public Defender of Georgia employing a desk and qualitative research methods. Considering the complexity and context of the research topic the study identified several major thematic directions:

- Daily mobility of displaced women and their mobility needs;
- Access of displaced women to public transport and existing state policy in this sector;
- Impact of mobility and transport policy on the socioeconomic vulnerability of displaced women;
- Engagement and participation of displaced women in relevant policy-making or changes.

The desk research analyzed relevant international standards related to economic empowerment, mobility, and transport policy of displaced women, as well as travel and economic activity concepts. On the other hand, research on local standards reviewed the national mechanisms for the protection, support and settlement of IDPs, including displaced women. Desk research also covered major national regulations in the field of mobility and analyzed relevant institutional framework. As part of the desk research, secondary sources relevant to the topic, such as reports, studies and articles, were processed along with the legislative framework.

The desk research also processed information inquired from various relevant agencies. The Office of the Public Defender requested information from the Ministry of IDPs from the occupied territories of Georgia, Labor, Health and Social Protection, the Government Administration of Georgia, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia and the municipalities. Unfortunately, the Public Defender's Office was not provided information from the Ministry of IDPs from the occupied territories, Labor, Health and Social Protection of Georgia, the administration of the Government of Georgia, as well as from 6 municipalities<sup>9</sup>, which presents the main limitation of the research.

On the other hand, within the qualitative research, using a pre-drafted questionnaire the representatives of the Public Defender's office paid a visit to 48 locations of 24 municipalities<sup>10</sup> from 7 regions of Georgia (Adjara A/R, Imereti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli, Mtskheta Mtianeti), where IDPs currently reside. In total, 330 displaced women were interviewed during the research.

The former compact settlements of displaced persons were selected based on the number of people living in them. In addition, the Office representatives visited, on the one hand, the so-called dilapidated facilities, where IDPs still live, and, on the other hand, facilities built and/or privatized for IDPs in recent years. In the selected settlements, the Office representatives conducted focus groups with the participation of displaced women. The information collected as a result was processed and analyzed for this report.

---

<sup>9</sup> Zestaponi, Senaki, Tetritskaro, Gori, Kaspi and Khashuri municipalities.

<sup>10</sup> Municipalities of Batumi, Kobuleti, Zestaponi, Tskaltubo, Samtredia, Kutaisi, Khoni, Dusheti, Mtskheta, Zugdidi, Martvili, Senaki, Poti, Tslenjikha, Khobi, Borjomi, Gardabani, Marneuli, Rustavi, Tetritskaro, Gori, Kaspi, Kareli and Khashuri.

# Main findings

## Women's daily mobility and mobility needs

- Travel patterns of the majority of displaced women participating in the study during business and non-business days were only related to domestic work and care, and not to their own needs and/or access to the formal/informal labor market;
- The majority of the displaced women walk predetermined short distances;
- Due to non-uniform travel patterns and the distance between destinations, the time dedicated to travel usually varies from 5 minutes to 2-3 hours reaching several hours in case of separate settlements; The daily amount spent for travel usually ranges from 40 Tetri to 30-40 GEL;
- Despite a significant number of women walking, there are obstacles to walking in some of the locations/municipalities mainly caused by parking spaces for vehicles and/or the lack of proper street infrastructure. Poor street infrastructure presents an especially big challenge for people with disabilities and others with limited mobility, who face essential barriers in going out and traveling.
- Considering that the majority of women participating in the research are engaged only in domestic work and care, the measures introduced by the state to limit transportation during the pandemic period did not have an essential impact on their travel patterns. On the other hand, women living in some of the IDP settlements paid attention to difficulties in mobility during the pandemic, including doubled travel time and increased transportation costs.
- The rising price of fuel in the post-pandemic period affected the current transportation costs thus decreasing the financial affordability of travel for people.

## Access to transport and evaluation of public policy

- In several municipalities, public transport/busses are not available at all and the transportation is provided by private company minibusses or by private taxis, thus negatively impacting the mobility patterns of the displaced women;
- A number of significant challenges posing essential travel limitations for IDPs have been identified within the research. Among them are: transport coverage areas and routes, which do not meet all the mobility needs of IDPs; non-uniform and arbitrary transportation schedule; lack of/problems with accessing transport in non-business days and late hours; problems related to financial affordability of transport and barriers for people with various needs. The research identified poor transport infrastructure and safety as one of the pressing problems, as well as safe access to bus stops and/or their poor infrastructure;
- Amid the mentioned challenges, municipalities are implementing transport and infrastructure improvement measures within the allocated budget, however, the majority of them still cannot see the links between mobility policy and gender;
- At both the central and municipal levels, gender-sensitive mobility information is not collected and processed.

## The connection between mobility and socioeconomic vulnerability

- A significant part of the women participating in the research is not formally employed. They note that employment is a problem not only for them, but also for most of the women living in the settlement. In addition, the remuneration of a small part of employed IDP women is too low. On the other hand, the state allowance for the IDPs is only 45 GEL, which is sharply insufficient in case of socioeconomic vulnerability.

- The research identified the challenges in mobility and access to transport as one of the biggest barriers faced by displaced women in accessing employment. Many residents of several settlements had to refuse a job offer due to lack of transport accessibility and/or transport schedules; One of the important barriers to employment is the redistribution of women's domestic work and caring activities to formal services, as well as inadequate support from the state;
- The travel patterns for the purpose of economic activity on the occupied territories are practically uniform for displaced women. According to the IDPs from Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia, they do not travel to the occupied territories. The exception is Tserovani and Tsilkani settlements, where according to the residents every month, from the 20th to the 30th they can travel to the territories and harvest crops. They spend 200 GEL on transportation. According to the residents of Tserovani settlement, they bring various products for sale from the occupied territories, for which they have to pay certain amounts at the checkpoint;
- Displaced women indicate that the main reason for migration both within the country and abroad is the difficult socioeconomic situation and the lack of jobs, however, individuals also point to the problem of transportation and the challenges of accessing services, as one of the causes of migration.

## **Participation and involvement of the displaced women in policy-making**

- The majority of IDP women participating in the study are not involved in decision-making, such as development, change and/or monitoring of programs, projects, and a budget by the central or municipal bodies and have no information about ongoing processes;
- A significant part of displaced women has no information about engagement opportunities and the right to request participation, as well as the services intended for them;
- Besides individual settlements, the displaced women indicate that state agencies are not proactive in communication and identification of their needs and challenges, and communicate mainly only in the pre-election period;
- Part of the research participants, despite having challenges related to various issues, has never addressed the central and/or municipal governments, which can be largely attributed to the lack of trust and expectation of changes;
- A problem for displaced women is the lack of information about women's rights protection, as well as programs aimed at women's empowerment and support. Most of the research participants did not receive information on these and similar issues in recent years, and no information meetings were held.





## Relevant International Standards



Women highly depend on public transport for mobility, therefore, the provision of access to relevant and safe transport for women is an essential precondition for their economic empowerment and decent work<sup>11</sup>. Despite this need, there are many systemic barriers to introducing gender-responsive perspectives in transport policy, including the threats that municipal transport poses to women (inter alia sexual abuse risks), poorly arranged transport routes and stations, low quality of vehicles, as well as unaffordability of the transport.<sup>12</sup> In the end, due to unreliable and threat-posing transport women are forced to change travel patterns and this has a negative impact on mobility for work purposes.<sup>13</sup>

Together with various studies, a number of international instruments emphasize the importance of transport and unhindered mobility. Inter alia the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11.2)<sup>14</sup> and a new agenda adopted at HABITAT III Conference are to be specially mentioned.<sup>15</sup>

From a legal point of view, mobility and freedom of movement are also covered by a number of international instruments. Among them is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, according to which any person has the right to free movement within the state. Similar provisions were added to several important international agreements since the adoption of the declaration<sup>16</sup>. For instance, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that everyone lawfully within the territory of a Contracting State shall, have the right to liberty of movement within that territory, except those cases which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the Covenant<sup>17</sup>.

The UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women also speaks about freedom of movement, according to which the States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights relating to the movement of persons<sup>18</sup>. Together with the general provision, Convention goes further and notes the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic welfare of their families. The Convention obliges the States to ensure the enjoyment of adequate living conditions, transport and other basic services by the representatives of this group<sup>19</sup>.

There is a significant provision in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention, on the one hand, emphasizes the importance of freedom of movement of persons with disabilities, while on the other hand, obliges the States to ensure access to transportation and eliminate any obstacles and barriers in this regard<sup>20</sup>. This is a significant provision for considering the individual needs of the representatives of this group in relevant policies. Despite this regulation, a number of studies including the International Labor Organization (ILO) reports indicate a strong correlation between access to transportation and unemployment among persons with disabilities<sup>21</sup>.

There is no convention at the international level exclusively dedicated to the rights of displaced persons. However, the obligations of the States towards the representatives of this group are explained by the UN guiding principles on forced

---

<sup>11</sup> UN Women, International Labor Organization, Addressing Violence and Harassment against Women in the World of Work, 2019, p. 94; <https://bit.ly/3LHKsgQ>.

<sup>12</sup> Action Aid, Executive Summary of: Freedom to Move, Women's experience of urban public transport in Bangladesh, Brazil and Nigeria, and how lost tax revenues can pay to improve it, 2016, p. 5 – 6; <https://bit.ly/3BNLUtH>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> UN Sustainable Development Goals, <https://bit.ly/3BJew75>.

<sup>15</sup> UN HABITAT III, New Urban Agenda, 2016, Para. 13, 36, 50, 54, 113 – 118, 141, <https://bit.ly/3SgPza8>.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 13.

<sup>17</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, Article 12.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979, Article 15.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid Article 14.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, Article 9, 18.

<sup>21</sup> O'Reilly A., The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities, International Labor Organization, 2007, p. 8; <https://bit.ly/3r7eGQN>.

displacement, as well as by the UN special rapporteur on the rights of displaced persons, who devoted a number of thematic reports and recommendations to this topic. It is noteworthy that the Special Rapporteur singled out displaced women as particularly vulnerable, whose rights are continuously and grossly violated<sup>22</sup>. The special rapporteur notes that during times of crisis, conflict and forced displacement, the role of displaced women in ensuring the socioeconomic well-being of the families becomes even more important<sup>23</sup>.

However, in consideration of gender inequality, in contrast to men, women have fewer opportunities to enjoy social and economic rights, as well as to participate in decision-making by the state authorities<sup>24</sup>. Inappropriate and inadequate support services, as well as the absence and/or lack of proper transportation further aggravates the rights of IDW<sup>25</sup>. The enjoyment of the rights of IDPs, as well as meeting the minimum socioeconomic needs, is practically impossible without a chance of accessing opportunities to earn a living<sup>26</sup>. This situation particularly aggravates, since in consideration of forced displacement, change of residence, instability of the labor market of the countries, a significant part of IDPs faces the real risks of being left unemployed or without livelihood<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, the state has to take positive actions (inter alia vocational education) to support the economic activities of IDPs and their integration into the current place of settlement, as well as ensure no obstacles are faced by this group when accessing jobs<sup>28</sup>. The UN Special Rapporteur in this area places special focus on the provision of accessible and affordable transportation to connect IDP settlements and places of employment<sup>29</sup>. During the resettlement of IDPs in any part of the country, along with the appropriate transportation or socio-economic support measures and services, the role of the state in providing information about the available transportation, employment and economic activity, as well as the possibilities of receiving services (as a minimum obligation on the part of the state) is essential<sup>30</sup>.

Forced displacement in different country contexts can vary in duration and policy actions implemented by governments against them. However, regardless of the duration of resettlement and the degree of integration at the place of settlement, the state should especially focus on economic empowerment and access to employment of the representatives of this group. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of policy measures and to develop new ones, the UN Special Rapporteur calls on states to produce detailed statistics and to use a minimum of the following indicators when evaluating policies<sup>31</sup>:

- There shall not be any such legal or administrative barriers in terms of employment and access to livelihood of the IDPs that are not faced by the general population;
- The comparative level of unemployment among the IDPs and the general population;
- The comparison of the labor conditions of the IDPs (inter alia engagement in informal employment, access to minimum wage, access to labor rights and standards) to the labor conditions of the rest of the population;
- The comparative levels of poverty and socioeconomic vulnerability among IDPs and the rest of the population;

---

<sup>22</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, A/HRC/23/44, 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid Para. 47, 49.

<sup>24</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, A/HRC/47/37, 2021, Para. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, A/HRC/23/44, 2013, Para. 49; See also Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2004/55, E/CN.4/2005/84, 2004, Para. 56.

<sup>26</sup> Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin, A/ HRC/13/21/Add.4, 2010, Para. 71.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Para. 72- 73.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, Para. 72.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Para. 25.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, Para. 74 – 75.





## Local Context overview

At present, there are 291,886 displaced persons and 92,679 displaced households registered in Georgia<sup>32</sup>. In spite of the state's declared responsibility to support and provide housing to them, a significant part still lives in poor conditions and/or is not provided with durable housing.

In the policy documents, the government indicates that the IDPs are a socioeconomically vulnerable group, and their unemployment rate, compared to the rest of the population, is approximately twice as high<sup>33</sup>. In terms of access to employment and economic activity, the location of their residence and the field of activity before the forced displacement create an additional problem. In particular, more than half of the IDPs lived in rural settlements and were involved in agricultural activities, and after forced displacement, 77% of the representatives of this group had to settle/resettle in cities<sup>34</sup>.

## 2.1. Relevant legal framework and policy documents

The state has undertaken many obligations in support of the IDPs and protecting their rights. The Constitution of Georgia does not consider a separate provision for IDPs and the obligation to protect them, however, it reinforces the principle of a social state, according to which "The State shall take care of human health care and social protection, ensuring the subsistence minimum and decent housing, and protecting the welfare of the family;"<sup>35</sup>.

The legal status of the IDPs is determined by the law on internally displaced persons from the occupied territories of Georgia adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in 2014 and defines the legal status of the IDPs, the legal, economic and social guarantees of the representatives of this group, their rights and responsibilities<sup>36</sup>. Together with the other guarantees provided by law, the IDPs are entitled to receive a monthly allowance of GEL 45, social and other assistance, use a proper living accommodation until returning to their permanent place of residence<sup>37</sup>.

The need to support the IDPs is underscored and relevant mechanisms are provided for in the two most important policy documents, i.e. State strategy for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)<sup>38</sup> and the Strategy for ensuring access to sources of livelihood for internally displaced persons<sup>39</sup>.

These documents provide the state vision for empowering the IDPs and include areas such as promotion of the access to economic resources, provision of support services to vulnerable groups, promotion of vocational education, improvement of living conditions, etc. On the other hand, the existing system also considers a one-time allowance. The relevant rule for that purpose is approved under the order of the Minister of IDPs from occupied territories of Georgia, Labor, Health and Social Protection. Particularly, a beneficiary of allowance can be a displaced person or a household that meet one or more criteria provided by this order: decease of a family member (beneficiary shall be registered in the unified database of the socially vulnerable households with a rating score less than 100,001) , beneficiary shall be registered in the database of the socially vulnerable households with a rating score less than 30,001, oncological

---

<sup>32</sup> LEPL Internally Displaced Persons, Eco-Migrants and Livelihood Agency, <https://idp.gov.ge/idps/>.

<sup>33</sup> Resolution No. 622 of the Government of Georgia of December 30, 2019 "On Approving the National Strategy of Labor and Employment Policy of Georgia for 2019-2023", Appendix No. 1: National Strategy of Labor and Employment Policy of Georgia for 2019-2023, p. 29; Resolution No. 7054-RS of the Parliament of Georgia of July 17, 2020 "On the approval of the concept of the youth policy of Georgia for the years 2020-2030", expected result - 4.3.

<sup>34</sup> 2019-2023 National Strategy of labor and employment policy of Georgia, p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> Constitution of Georgia 1995, Article 5 (4).

<sup>36</sup> Law of Georgia on internally displaced persons from the occupied territories of Georgia, 2014, Article 2, <https://bit.ly/3RZprkf>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, Article 12 (1).

<sup>38</sup> Decree No. 47 of the Government of Georgia dated February 2, 2007 on the approval of the state strategy for the internally displaced persons (IDPs).

<sup>39</sup> Decree No. 257 of the Government of Georgia of February 13, 2014 on the approval of the strategy for ensuring access to sources of livelihood for internally displaced persons (IDPs).



disease, the status of a severely disabled person, multiple children (the presence of 3 or more persons under the age of 18 in the household), the need for surgery (beneficiary shall be registered in the unified database of socially vulnerable households with the rating score less than 100,001), the status of a war veteran/ a person deceased in a combat or a person, who lost a breadwinner, single parent/widow status, victim status (having victim status under the Law on Prevention of Violence Against Women and/or Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance to Victims of Violence and being in a shelter or crisis center), damage/destruction of the residence of a displaced household (making it partially or completely inappropriate for living) <sup>40</sup>.

According to the order, the director of LEPL - IDPs, Eco-migrants and Livelihoods Provision Agency decides on providing an allowance, which can be issued once every 6 months, except for when the grounds for providing such allowance is the death of a family member<sup>41</sup>. The one-time assistance program is also considered by the order of the Minister of internally displaced persons from the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. According to the order, a one-time allowance in the amount of 150-1000 GEL is issued to persons of different vulnerability categories. Among them are persons with disabilities, persons who have lost a breadwinner, households with three or more children, persons with an oncological disease, households affected by natural disasters or accidents, single parents, etc.<sup>42</sup>.

Municipal budgets and programs also consider assistance and support measures for the IDPs. However, their goals and content vary indicating a non-uniform attitude of local authorities towards the representatives of this group. However, evaluating their architecture and efficiency is the topic for another research.

The responsibility for the registration of the IDPs, resolving issues of social and other nature, and providing them with housing lies with the Ministry of IDPs from the occupied territories, Labor, Health and Social Protection of Georgia <sup>43</sup>. According to the legislation, after the Ministry provides the person with housing, the state is free from the obligation to provide the direct descendants of the displaced person or his family members with housing on the bases of their IDP status<sup>44</sup>.

Despite the importance of the mentioned provision of the law, it does not include special provisions that would address the needs of various vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disabilities, children, and the elderly. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons considered this to be a flaw in the law<sup>45</sup>. On the other hand, the needs of different groups are taken into consideration under the rule on resettlement of IDPs, which provides for the needs assessment based on predetermined criteria, among which are the status of a disabled person, seniority, multiple children, social vulnerability status, the status of a veteran etc.<sup>46</sup>.

On the other hand, in the field of women's economic empowerment and gender equality, the Law of Georgia On Gender Equality is one of the important legal instruments. The law considers the obligations of the state to ensure gender

---

<sup>40</sup> Order No. 01-28/N of the Minister of IDPs from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Labor, Health and Social Protection of April 8, 2021 On Approving the Procedure for Providing Allowance, Annex N 1, Article 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, Article 2.

<sup>42</sup> Order No. 59 Y/R dated April 15, 2021, of the Minister of IDPs from the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia of the AR of Abkhazia On approval of the rules for implementing social support and infrastructural support programs of the Ministry of IDPs from the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia of the AR of Abkhazia, Annex №1, Article 5 – 6.

<sup>43</sup> The Law of Georgia On Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, 2014, Article 19 (1).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, Article 13.

<sup>45</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, Follow-up mission to Georgia, A/HRC/26/33/Add.1, 2014, Para. 14.

<sup>46</sup> See Order No. 01-30/N of the Minister of IDPs from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Labor, Health and Social Protection of April 8, 2021 On the Approval of the Rules for Provision of Housing for IDPs, Annex No. 8.

equality in a number of areas inter alia equal access to employment, education, healthcare and social protection, equality in choosing a profession or career, promotion, and vocational training<sup>47</sup>.

In addition, the following documents are noteworthy in the field of economic empowerment and promotion of employment: The Law of Georgia On Promotion of Employment, the National Strategy for Labor and Employment Policy of Georgia and the State Program for Promotion of Employment. These instruments provide employment promotion mechanisms for different groups. Their analysis shows that the subsidized employment mechanism<sup>48</sup> is intended for people with IDP status, while the subprogram Vocational training/retraining and qualification raising of job seekers provides IDPs and/or women the preferential right to receive the services<sup>49</sup>.

Additionally, the logical framework of the National Strategy for Labor and Employment Policy envisages activities such as promoting women's participation in the labor market through targeted social and inclusive employment policies, increasing women's employment rates, and promoting increased access to livelihoods for IDPs<sup>50</sup>.

Alongside the general programs, the vocational education promotion program implemented by the IDPs, Eco-Migrants and Livelihoods Provision Agency is noteworthy<sup>51</sup>. This program envisages reimbursement of travel expenses from/to the place of residence and the educational institution (mainly by public transport, while in case of a disabled person (if needed) - by taxi) for the IDPs and eco-migrants enrolled in a state vocational educational institution in 2018 and later. It should be deemed as an important mechanism for the economic empowerment of the representatives of this group.

## 2.2. Policy of resettlement of IDPs in the territory of Georgia

Internally displaced persons living in Georgia consist of two main groups: 1. IDPs who left the territory of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region as a result of the conflict in 1991-1993; 2. IDPs who left their homes as a result of the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. The number of IDPs from the territory of Abkhazia exceeds the number of IDPs from the Tskhinvali region by about 10 times<sup>52</sup>.

According to the migration profile of Georgia in 2019, there are significant differences in the resettlement practices of IDPs displaced from Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. The majority of the displaced people from the Tskhinvali region live in Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Shida Kartli regions, in compact settlements, while the majority of the displaced from Abkhazia live in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region and Tbilisi, and their distribution in private and compact settlements is practically equal<sup>53</sup>.

Resettlement of IDPs is dependent upon the availability of resources, therefore, the state gradually fulfills the obligations undertaken toward the representatives of this group. For this purpose, the executive authority adopted the State Strategy for the IDPs in 2007 and approves the action plan for its implementation with a certain periodicity.

---

<sup>47</sup> Law of Georgia On Gender Equality, 2010, Article 4, 6 – 10.

<sup>48</sup> Law of Georgia on Employment Promotion, 2020, Article 15 (1).

<sup>49</sup> Resolution No. 81 of the Government of Georgia of February 17, 2022 On Approving the 2022 State Program for Promotion of Employment, Annex N 2.3, Article 3.

<sup>50</sup> See Resolution No. 662 of the Government of Georgia dated December 30, 2019 on the approval of the National Strategy of Labor and Employment Policy of Georgia for 2019-2023.

<sup>51</sup> For more information about the program, see <https://bit.ly/3YsMck5>.

<sup>52</sup> Government Commission on Migration Issues, 2019 Migration Profile of Georgia, p. 68.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 69.

Currently, the 2021-2022 action plan<sup>54</sup> is in effect establishing certain milestones in this area. Based on the obligations stipulated by the law and policy documents, the Government of Georgia implements several programs for provision of housing to the IDPs<sup>55</sup>:

- **Housing construction** –the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia is responsible for one of the forms of resettlement offered to the IDPs i.e. construction of housing in different regions of Georgia;
- **Procurement of housing in residential buildings** – The Agency for the IDPs, Eco-Migrants and Livelihoods Provision procures apartments (separate apartments, not entire buildings) from developers;
- **Procurement of a house in the village** – within the frame of the so-called House in the village project, the IDPs are entitled to choose a private house with a land plot on the whole territory of Georgia. The selected house will be procured for the beneficiary by the Agency for the IDPs, Eco-migrants and Livelihood in case the criteria established by the program are met;
- **Transfer of title of legally owned premises** – The Agency for the IDPs, eco-migrants and livelihood, in coordination with various agencies, transfers the title of residential premises to the IDPs living in state-owned buildings;
- **Resettlement programs of veteran IDPs** – The program was launched in 2019 and it is specifically designed for the resettlement of veteran IDPs. Even though the representatives of this group were entitled to participate in any resettlement program, special quotas were allocated for them within the framework of the new program; Building a private house - the program envisages the construction of private houses on land plots owned by displaced families;
- **Rental support program** – In emergency cases, the Agency for IDPs, Eco-migrants and Livelihoods provides displaced families with rental support. According to the existing regulations, the amount of monthly rental support shall not exceed 300 GEL, while its term shall not exceed 3 months. The mentioned period can be extended based on the application of the family and the results of repeated monitoring. In special cases, rental support may be granted to a displaced family without repeated monitoring for a period of up to 1 year, but no longer after durable housing is provided<sup>56</sup>.

### 2.3. Regulation of mobility issues at the national level

According to the Constitution of Georgia, everyone lawfully staying in Georgia has the right to move freely within the territory of the country. These rights may only be restricted following the law, for ensuring national security or public safety, protecting health or administering justice, insofar as is necessary in a democratic society<sup>57</sup>.

According to the Code on Local Self-Government, the organization of municipal transport services for the population, issuance of permits for regular passenger transportation, management of local motorways and organization of traffic, as well as provision of proper adaptation and equipment of municipal transport for persons with disabilities, children and elderly belong to the powers of municipalities<sup>58</sup>. On the other hand, the competencies of the Ministry of Economy

---

<sup>54</sup> . Decree of the Government of Georgia No. 47 dated February 2, 2007 On approval of the state strategy for internally displaced persons (IDPs); Decree No. 292 of the Government of Georgia dated March 5, 2021 On approval of the action plan for the implementation of the state strategy for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2021-2022.

<sup>55</sup> . See <https://bit.ly/3DFiU9S>.

<sup>56</sup> . Order of the Minister of IDPs from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Labor, Health and Social Protection of April 8, 2021 No. 01-28/N On Approving the Procedure for issued Monetary Allowance, Annex N 1, Article 7.

<sup>57</sup> . Constitution of Georgia 1995, Article 14.

<sup>58</sup> . Organic Law of Georgia Local Self-Government Code, 2014, Article 16(2).

and Sustainable Development of Georgia include the development and implementation of a unified policy in the field of transport, as well as its regulation and management<sup>59</sup>.

In addition, several important legislative and policy documents are noteworthy in the field of organizing and scheduling land transport:

- **The Law of Georgia On Road Transport** - the law determines the legal, economic and organizational grounds for road transport activities and regulates issues such as the procedures for issuing and revoking permits for road transport, legal requirements related to motor vehicles, traffic safety, as well as issues related to foreign economic activities<sup>60</sup>.
- **Law of Georgia on the Management and Regulation of Transport Sector** – the purpose of this law is to determine the principles of technical regulation of the transport sector and to establish the legal basis for the functioning of technical regulatory bodies<sup>61</sup>.
- **The Law of Georgia On Road Traffic** – the purpose of the law is to determine the legal grounds for the organization of road traffic and safety on the territory of Georgia, the main directions of the state policy on traffic safety, the functions of state authorities, traffic rules and conditions etc.<sup>62</sup>.
- **The National Road Safety Strategy of Georgia** – the document covers the period of 2022-2025 and is accompanied by the action plan of 2022-2023, although it applies only to one specific aspect of mobility - the protection of life and health and the provision of traffic safety<sup>63</sup>.

Along with inland mobility, legislation and policy documents focus on international mobility. In particular, the Law of Georgia On Labor Migration has been in force since 2015, which, along with other issues, regulates the employment and paid labor activities of individuals<sup>64</sup> outside of Georgia.<sup>65</sup>

On the other hand, at the end of 2020, the Government of Georgia approved the Migration Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2030. This document, along with numerous other areas, emphasizes the need to identify the reasons for migration and refine the statistical data. According to the strategy, in the world, as well as in Georgia, legal migration has three main reasons - employment, education and family reunion. However, despite the challenges in collecting and processing accurate statistical data on migration and its reasons, according to the Government Commission on Migration Issues, the main reason for emigration from Georgia is employment<sup>66</sup>. Moreover, according to the 2014 census, 55% of working-age immigrants are women<sup>67</sup>. Together with the above-mentioned data, the migration strategy indicates that, taking into account the increased opportunities for international mobility, as well as migration factors, during its validity period - until 2030, the decrease in emigration flows is unlikely<sup>68</sup>.

---

<sup>59</sup> . Resolution No. 70 of the Government of Georgia dated February 11, 2016 on the approval of the regulations of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Article 2.

<sup>60</sup> . see The Law of Georgia on Road Transport, 1995.

<sup>61</sup> . Law of Georgia on Management and regulation of the transport sector, 2007, Article 2.

<sup>62</sup> . Law of Georgia On Road Traffic, 2013, Article 1.

<sup>63</sup> . Resolution No. 353 of the Government of Georgia dated July 4, 2022 On the approval of the National Road Safety Strategy of Georgia for 2022-2025 and its Action Plan for 2022-2023.

<sup>64</sup> . A citizen of Georgia, a foreigner with a permanent residence permit in Georgia, a stateless person with a status in Georgia.

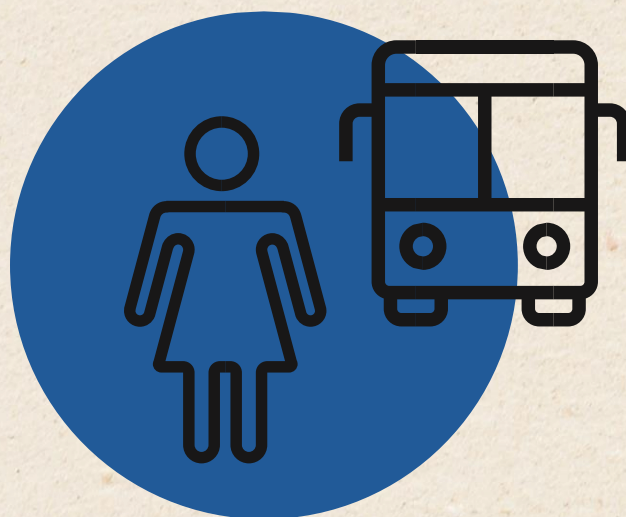
<sup>65</sup> . Law of Georgia On Labor Migration, 2015, Article 1 (2).

<sup>66</sup> . Resolution No. 810 of the Government of Georgia of December 30, 2020 On the Approval of the Migration Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2030; see Also, the Government Commission on Migration Issues, 2019 Migration Profile of Georgia, p. 19, 22 – 23.

<sup>67</sup> . Ibid

<sup>68</sup> . Government Commission on Migration Issues, 2019 Migration Profile of Georgia, p. 7.





**Mobility experiences of the displaced women –  
results of the qualitative research**

### 3.1. Women's daily mobility and mobility needs

One of the goals of the research was to study women's daily mobility, mobility needs and the impact of covid-19 on their movement. The displaced women spoke about their daily movement and their needs in this respect means of transportation or the funds and time allocated to travel.

Considering peculiarities of the mobility patterns and the diversity of the needs, the mobility patterns of women living in various settlements are non-uniform. Some indicated that they rarely travel, while others noted frequent mobility.

Moreover, as it has been identified, the majority of women are engaged in domestic work and have no access to formal employment. Therefore, frequently their mobility pattern both in business and non-business days is related to domestic work and care instead of focusing on their needs and/or accessing the formal/informal labor market.

„We travel quite often, sometimes to the hospital, to the store, to the market, especially if you are unemployed, mostly you have go everywhere." Women living in Batumi Municipality

When talking about destinations on weekdays, women indicate places such as kindergartens, general education institutions, shops, an agricultural market, a land plot, a pharmacy, an outpatient clinic and a bank. Individual participants also mentioned institutions such as the mayor's office of the municipality and the social service agency. The main travel destinations of the displaced women are related to family care even on non-business days. In particular, the research participants mentioned that on weekends they have to go to places such as a land plot, a pharmacy, various extracurricular classes for children, shops and a market.

A significant part of the displaced women indicated that mobility does not pose a challenge to them, as their places of destination are usually located within a walking distance from their residence. However, there are also obstacles for pedestrians at certain locations, which can be explained by the lack of parking spaces for cars (e.g., Gori) and/or the lack of street/road infrastructure (e.g., Tetrtskaro, Batumi, village Didi Jikhaishi, Tsilkani Settlement). Poor street amenities are a particularly big challenge for people with disabilities and other people with mobility problems, who face significant barriers to leaving their homes and getting around.

"During the rain, a person cannot even walk because there is water everywhere and many places are physically inaccessible, including our home." A Displaced woman living in Batumi

It should be noted that the residents of Mtskheta settlement face walking hazards as while waiting for a minibus taxi, they have to stand on the road (motorway) with fast traffic and no proper waiting area or footpath.

Moreover, most of the study participants have no driving license and/or car. The car is usually owned by their family members. Some of the women who have a car or used a family member's car reported avoiding driving due to increased fuel costs<sup>69</sup>.

Due to varying travel patterns and the distance between the destinations, the time allocated for traveling usually varies from 5 minutes to 2-3 hours, while reaching several hours in for some settlements<sup>70</sup>. A daily budget allocated for

---

<sup>69</sup> . Focus group of displaced women living in Kutaisi, village Koda, and Khobi.

<sup>70</sup> . E.g. Batumi, village Vaziani and village Gamarjveba



traveling usually ranges from 40 Tetri to 30-40 GEL<sup>71</sup>. Taking into consideration their socioeconomic vulnerability, a significant part of women cannot afford a taxi and/or face financial hardship when taking it<sup>72</sup>.

"We leave home for work in the morning and return in the evening, it takes a lot of our time. Well, those who don't have children can somehow manage, but what about women with children, what can they do, there is nothing close to our settlement." A displaced woman living in Batumi

When describing their travel patterns, the majority of women participating in the study did not mention the so-called hitchhiking as one of the means of mobility. Moreover, for example, the residents of the Bazaleti settlement emphasized that only young men use such mobility methods. Prezeti village is an exception from the above, where women mentioned hitchhiking as one of the means to reach the desired destination.

Some displaced women participating in the study do not mention access to preschool and general educational institutions as a challenge, as well as to medical or other important services. According to them, they mostly walk and/or travel by public transport, and in case of long distance, the transport for children is allocated by the school or the municipality. However, there are exceptions to this, which most severely affect displaced women.

- The residents of the former compact settlements for IDPs in Teliani and Ingiri villages noted that the kindergarten is located at least 2 kilometers away. Due to the lack of accessible transport, as well as the fact that there is no dedicated transport for the kindergarten, the displaced women have to walk or drive their children themselves.
- Residents of Shaumiani township noted that the school is far from the settlement, and the children often have to walk in unsafe conditions, particularly because of animals (dogs). To avoid this, they have to leave the classes early to catch the bus or wait a long time for transportation after classes.
- For IDPs living in certain settlements, there are no medicines and/or food available nearby, so they have to travel to other settlements. Residents of Prezeti village and Tserovani settlement say that they travel to Mtskheta or Tbilisi to get medicines and medical services. Residents of many settlements (including Bazaleti and Tsilkani settlements) travel to other settlements to receive medical services. In this case, travel time and expenses increase significantly.
- One of the respondents in the Bazaleti settlement mentioned that her student son takes transport at 07:30 in the morning to attend lectures in Tbilisi. Regardless of the time the classes start, he often has to wait hours before the start. The last transport from Tbilisi to Bazaleti leaves at 19:30. If he cannot catch it, he has to travel to Dusheti and take a taxi from Dusheti to Bazaleti settlement or ask a family member to take him from Dusheti. In the end, due to problems with transportation and access to higher education, the residents of Bazaleti and Zghvaia settlements noted that they had to rent apartments for students in Tbilisi and Zugdidi;
- The IDPs living in some settlements noted that elderly people face problems with receiving a pension as they cannot receive a pension in the area of their residence<sup>73</sup>, and have to travel to another settlement or hand over their pension card to someone else. Exceptions are certain settlements, where pensioners can receive a pension on the spot<sup>74</sup>.

---

<sup>71</sup> . In case of using public transport and/or private car.

<sup>72</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in Kobuleti, Borjomi, Senaki, Tsilkani settlement, village Potskho and Shaumiani township.

<sup>73</sup>. Focus group in Tsilkani settlement, with displaced women living in Tskaltubo.

<sup>74</sup>. Focus group in Bazaleti settlement, with displaced women living in village Prezeti.

As noted above, the majority of the IDPs emphasized there were no problems with accessing general education institutions. According to some displaced women, the schools are usually located near the settlements, otherwise, children are transported by school transport. In this regard transportation of the first graders appears to be a problem, as they usually finish the classes early and have to wait for some time and sometimes for several hours to use the school transport<sup>75</sup>. Moreover, the IDPs from some settlements spoke about the overcrowded school transport. For instance, residents of Bazaleti settlement noted that there is no seat for everyone and it is overcrowded. This is caused by the fact that children from two different locations are being transported in one trip instead of two. The residents of Mtskheta settlement emphasized the overcrowded school transport problem as well, while the Tsilkani residents spoke about malfunctioning vehicles. The research participants from both Tsilkani and Tserovani negatively noted that parents do not have the opportunity to use the given transport.

The scope of the study included an assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the travel patterns of displaced women. Since most focus group participants are engaged only in housework and family care, the transport restrictions introduced by the state during the pandemic did not significantly impact their travel patterns. Exceptions were women who had to travel with their children to educational or preschool institutions before the restrictions imposed during the pandemic and women who were involved in formal or informal employment alongside housework<sup>76</sup>. In this case, women had to walk to their workplace, or their employer provided the transportation<sup>77</sup>.

On the other hand, some research participants pointed to the significant impact of the pandemic on their mobility. For example, some of them reported losing their jobs during the pandemic due to lack of transportation<sup>78</sup>. In addition, women<sup>79</sup> from some IDP settlements pointed out difficulties in mobility during the pandemic, at least twice as much transportation time and/or increased expenses (mostly taxis)<sup>80</sup>.

An increase in fuel prices in the post-pandemic period also affected the current cost of transportation<sup>81</sup> reducing the financial affordability of transportation. In this regard, village Koda settlement is worth mentioning, where residents noted that due to increased transportation prices, the demand for a certain transport route has decreased leading to its cancellation and a significant deterioration of the residents' mobility. Senaki residents also mentioned the cancellation of the transport route as a result of the pandemic.

### **3.2. Access to transportation and assessment of the state policy**

Access to transportation, properly functioning vehicles and mobility issues have been important challenges in the country for years. Along with numerous problems, the lack of municipal transport, as well as its safety, appropriateness, accessibility and financial affordability significantly hinders the mobility of citizens.

In consideration of the regulations defined under the law and within the allocated budget, municipalities implement measures for transport and infrastructure improvement. However, most of them still don't see the link between mobility policy and gender, including in the process of conducting research and processing statistical information.

---

<sup>75</sup> Focus group with displaced women living in Mtskheta, village Teliani, Bazaleti and Tsilkani settlements.

<sup>76</sup> E.g., Focus group with women living in Kobuleti, Gori, Tserovani settlement.

<sup>77</sup> Focus group with displaced women living in Batumi, Kaspi, Gori, and Karaleti settlement.

<sup>78</sup> Focus group with women living Borjomi, Rustavi

<sup>79</sup> E.g., village Koda, Tetrtskaro

<sup>80</sup> Focus group with displaced women living in Chakvi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Tetrtskaro, Marneuli, Zugdidi, Senaki, Martvili, village Shaumiani, village Didi Chkoni, village in Potskho.

<sup>81</sup> Focus group with displaced women living in Batumi, Rustavi, Khoni, Tetrtskaro, village Koda, Martvili, village Potskho, Shaumiani, Tsilkani and Tserovani settlements.



Tskaltubo municipality is an exception in this regard, where the meetings with locals and the administration of the transport company Shevardeni have been held to identify the mobility barriers within the municipal territory, and the weaknesses and opportunities of the mobility system (including from a gender perspective). Currently, the municipality is working to develop a specific action plan<sup>82</sup>. In addition, Khoni municipality noted that currently, the rehabilitation of the central boulevard includes consideration of gender aspects<sup>83</sup>.

There are also challenges with the central government, which still does not collect and process gender disaggregated mobility-related information, which significantly hinders the planning and implementation of gender-sensitive mobility policies, as well as the identification of challenges using evidence-based mechanisms in this direction.

On the other hand, the policy document developed by the central government - the National Road Safety Strategy for 2022-2025 focusing on the most vulnerable road users (pedestrians, children, the elderly, etc.), as well as gender aspects, can be positively emphasized. According to the information provided by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia during the research, gender equality issues play a significant role in planning/implementing social campaigns under this document.

Together with the identification of ongoing processes at the central and municipal levels, the research brought to light the main challenges of mobility and access to transport faced by the IDPs living in various settlements. The above barriers in this area should be considered shortcomings of the state and municipal policies, which require a timely, efficient, and consistent response from the state.

As noted in the previous chapter of the report, walking is the primary mobility mode for the most displaced women participating in the study. Therefore, some did not talk much or at all about the difficulties of accessing public transport out of scarcely using it. However, IDPs living in different locations emphasized the numerous systemic challenges they face due to malfunctioning transport system, which significantly hinders movement.

### **3.2.1 Difficulties in introducing public transport**

One of the pressing problems for IDPs is the public transport shortcomings and the difficulties of introducing municipal transport. The research showed that there is no municipal transport in numerous locations, and private minibus company provides transportation<sup>84</sup>. This situation prevents the municipality from implementing various measures to ensure greater access to transportation and leads to arbitrary transport regulation, which may not correspond to the public needs, including displaced women.

Village Gamarjveba faces similar pressing problems. According to IDPs who live there, the only means of transportation is a taxi, which, considering financial hardships, significantly hinders their mobility. The fact that many other IDP settlements have no public transport is particularly problematic and creates serious movement problems.

---

<sup>82</sup> . Correspondence of the City Hall of Tskaltubo Municipality N 48-4822319101, 15.11.2022.

<sup>83</sup> . Correspondence of the City Hall of Khoni Municipality N 60-602231979, 15.11.2022.

<sup>84</sup> . e.g. Focus group with the displaced women living in Khashuri, Khobi, village Teliani, village Didi Chkoni, village Potskho; Correspondence of the City Hall of Tskaltubo Municipality N 48-4822319101, 15.11.2022; Correspondence of Mtskheta Municipality City Hall N 34-342229239, 19.10.2022; Correspondence of the City Hall of Martvili Municipality N 58-582231248, 8.11.2022; Correspondence of the City Hall of Khobi Municipality N 50-502229778, 24.10.2022; Correspondence of the City Hall of Gardabani Municipality N 18-182231962, 15.11.2022; Correspondence of Kareli Municipality City Hall N 104-104223207, 16.11.2022; Correspondence of Samtredia Municipality City Hall N 62-622233531, 1.12.2022.

- According to the residents of Bazaleti settlement they often have to travel to Tbilisi for a variety of needs. Locals are served by two minibus taxis, one of which does not go directly into the settlement. The second minibus taxi goes to the settlement on its way to Tbilisi only twice a day - at 07:30 and 16:00, and the last minibus from Tbilisi is at 19:30. On their way back, the minibusses do not enter the IDP settlement, so the residents have to arrive on the highway and walk 2.4 kilometers to the settlement.
- The IDPs living in Tsilkani noted that there is no public transport available, so they sometimes have to walk to the Tserovani settlement. The residents from other settlements also spoke about the lack of public transport, for example, residents of Senaki and the village Zeda Etseri;
- The settlement in the village Potskho is especially problematic, where the only means of transportation are private minibusses, which run only twice a week, and only in the direction of Zugdidi.
- The displaced women living in the villages of Didi Jikhaishi and Zghvaia drew attention to the fact that due to poor road infrastructure in their settlements, drivers refuse to drive into the settlement without an additional fee to be paid by the residents. The village Gamarjveba faces the same challenge, where due to poor road conditions taxi drivers (the only available transport) refuse to drive into the settlement or ask for an additional fee.
- The residents of Khoni settlement drew attention to the lack of access to transport mainly caused by poor road conditions near the settlement. According to them, minibus taxis do not drive into the settlement at all, except for the so-called market days (Wednesday and Sunday).

### 3.2.2. Challenges related to the functioning of the transport

According to the displaced women participating in the study, their main problem is improper functioning of the transport on the municipal territory, including insufficient coverage of transport services, irregular transport schedules, accessibility problems for persons with disabilities, and financial affordability.

The research identified **transport routes and coverage** as one of the significant challenges due to not covering all the destinations essential for displaced women, preventing them from accessing the workplace<sup>85</sup>, receiving medical services, and/or purchasing food (access to the agricultural market). The village Vaziani residents face a bigger challenge, where the transport does not cover any destinations significant for the IDPs, so they have to use several modes of transportation.

Considering the problematic nature of transport routes and coverage, changing several modes of transport to reach the destination is so inconvenient and time-consuming for the displaced women that, in some cases, they prefer to travel long distances with only one transport mode and bear additional financial expenses. For example, according to the residents of the Kopitnari settlement, they have access to free medical services in Tskaltubo, but they need to change two transport modes to get there. Therefore, they prefer to travel to Kutaisi to receive a paid service at the clinic as they can use only one transport mode from their settlement to the given clinic.

One of the pressing issues related to transportation accessibility for displaced women is **irregular transportation schedules**. Women often note that the transportation schedule is inconvenient and does not meet their needs. The situation is difficult in the case of private minibus taxis. According to women, this means even more irregular schedules that depend on the drivers' wishes<sup>86</sup>. As a result, according to the research participants, there are cases when the timing

<sup>85</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in Senaki, Batumi and Gori

<sup>86</sup> . E.g. focus group with the displaced women living in village Teliani

between the transportation reaches 3-4 hours. Considering problems with the transportation schedules, the IDPs indicated that they have no desire/opportunity to travel with children<sup>87</sup>.

"I often travel by transport, for example, to take my children to school. In the morning, the transport from Batumi to Chakvi arrives, but then the trip is canceled, and we have to take a minibus and pay 1.5 lari, which is very expensive."  
a displaced woman from Chakvi

Another pressing issue identified during the research is **difficulties related to lack of or no access to transport during non-business days and late hours**. According to the IDPs residing in several settlements, the number of daily public transport trips is significantly lower and/or the transport is overcrowded on non-business days<sup>88</sup>. Therefore, women are forced to either walk or take a taxi as a last resort. On the other hand, the research participants spoke about the absence of access to transport in late hours<sup>89</sup>, which affects their mobility and/or becomes a financial burden for women (in the case of taking a taxi). According to women, considering its impact given problem prevents their employment<sup>90</sup>.

Among other major challenges identified during the research is the lack of **access to transport** for people with disabilities. Due to the inadequate transport, people with disabilities are deprived of mobility. The latter impacts not only their employment opportunities but their independent life and the opportunity to enjoy practically any other rights and freedoms. Exceptions are separate settlements (for instance, Batumi, Kutaisi and Gori), where the IDPs indicated that transport is accessible for people with disabilities (people with mobility problems).

"Due to my health condition, I have to go to the clinic in Batumi for daily procedures. My health does not allow me to use public transport, as I have a problem with my spine, and I need to hire transportation service, which is very expensive, and that's why I sit at home and cannot continue treatment." a displaced woman from Kobuleti municipality

In addition, it is noteworthy that even in the absence of the above problems, there would be substantial barriers for displaced women to access transportation. In particular, one of these issues is financial affordability, which the IDPs living in many locations consider to be an obstacle to their mobility<sup>91</sup>. As an exception, the city of Batumi can be named as a good practice example in this case, where public transport is fully subsidized for the IDPs.

"People with families struggle to pay 1.5 GEL when one has to live on 45 GEL allowance and a pension." IDP woman from township Chakvi

"If I travel by bus, it costs 1 GEL. Our allowance is 45 GEL, and we are forced to walk with heavy bags."

"It takes at least 25 minutes for a woman to walk to work, minibus would take her in 7 minutes, but she can't pay 1 GEL." a displaced woman from Samtredia

---

<sup>87</sup> . E.g. Focus group with the displaced women from village Teliani

<sup>88</sup> . Focus group with displaced women in villages of Vaziani, Gamarjveba, Koda, Shaumiani township, town of Borjomi, Kutaisi, Mtskheta, Teliani and Tserovani settlement.

<sup>89</sup> Focus group with displaced women living in Batumi, Borjomi, Zestaponi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, village Akhalsopeli, village Zedaetseri,

<sup>90</sup> . See the present report, Chapter 3.3

<sup>91</sup> . E.g. township of Shaumiani, city of Zestaponi, Samtredia and village Gvishtibi.

**The research identified transport infrastructure and safety** among the pressing needs. The residents of many settlements spoke of problems with the inter and intracity transport, such as technical operability and/or convenience, unsanitary conditions, and/or the smell of alcohol<sup>92</sup>. Residents of the Tserovani settlement also spoke about the lack of transport infrastructure and noted that people even call one such vehicle a “coffin”.

In addition, the residents of Kutaisi noted that buying a public transport ticket is possible only with a specific bank card. This circumstance creates a significant mobility problem on the one hand for people living in rural areas (with little access to bank services), and on the other hand, for the elderly (who usually use Liberty Bank cards).

Another significant problem in terms of infrastructure and transport safety is **overcrowding**<sup>93</sup>. Residents point out that due to the vehicles carrying more passengers than allowed, the people not only have to stand, but the movement becomes dangerous.

"The traffic is extremely overcrowded and children can barely breathe. I have a niece with epilepsy and she gets sick very often." A displaced woman living in Batumi

### 3.2.3. Infrastructural challenges related to mobility

The research identified infrastructure as one of the main barriers to mobility, including issues such as access to and safety of stations, amenities at the stations, etc. The **poor condition of the roads leading to the transport stations was also identified among the pressing challenges, even posing safety hazards in some cases.**

- The residents of village Vaziani, as well as from Khoni settlement noted that there is no proper road leading to their settlement, thus they face mobility problems, especially in rainy weather;
- Tserovani settlement poses some significant mobility barriers to the disabled and the elderly, with poor conditions of the roads within the settlement, making the movement of people in wheelchairs impossible;
- In Poti (Gagra and Baramia Streets), due to the lack of drainage channels, the surrounding area of the settlement floods during rainfall, and the residents face significant problems in terms of mobility.

Along with the poor condition of pedestrian infrastructure, the most pressing problem is **accessing the transport stations**. One such example is the settlement in Shaumiani township. According to its residents, they have to use the Marneuli agricultural market on Sundays, although the bus service ends at 14:00. In case of delay, they are forced to use another rural transport that does not enter the township. In this case, the section of the road from the bus stop to the settlement is long and unsafe due to the number of animals.

The residents of the Tserovani settlement also spoke about the problem with animals and the irregular transport schedule. According to them, considering the above, children are especially in danger during mobility.

---

<sup>92</sup> . For example, a focus group with displaced women living in Chakvi township, in the cities of Tetrtskaro, Rustavi, Batumi, in Bazaleti settlement, in the cities of Senaki, Borjomi, Tsilkani settlement, village Koda.

<sup>93</sup> . Focus group with displaced women living in township Chakvi, Batumi, Marneuli, Senaki, Tsilkani settlement, village Koda.



## Mobility hazards of residents of Mtskheta settlement

The mobility of around 200 IDP households living in the Mtskheta IDP settlement is especially problematic. Residents indicate that to access public transport, they need to go down to the central highway, and for that, they have to cross five dangerous railroads and move under the train. According to them, many residents were injured (including broken limbs) on this section. One of the respondents recalled the case when one of the residents was caught up by the train when crossing the railroad. To save herself, the woman had to lie down on the rails, and about 50 wagons passed, resulting in an injured hand for her.

The situation is further aggravated by the fact that children also use this route, while elderly and disabled people are physically unable to move on this section.

According to residents, the official pedestrian crossing is about 2 kilometers away, in which case pedestrians go through an unsafe tunnel, dark and untidy. The residents mentioned that they need a crossing bridge, which was promised to be built during the pre-election period, but the promise has not been fulfilled so far.

When talking about the issue of accessing the stops, women living in different settlements also pointed to additional challenges:

- In case of a big settlement<sup>94</sup>, women have to walk long distances to reach the bus stop, which is especially problematic in case of people with disabilities and/or the elderly;
- Residents of the city of Kutaisi and Zugdidi (machine-building plant) and the settlement of Tsilkani indicated that there are no stops nearby, which is a significant obstacle to the mobility of the population.

In some of the settlements, the poor condition of the bus stops has been identified as problematic, together with accessibility issues. For instance, according to the residents of town Zugdidi and village Zedaetseri the bus stops have no rooftops making waiting for transport especially inconvenient in rainy weather especially considering the long waiting times. On the other hand, the residents of Karaleti settlement emphasized the lack of pay box machines at the bus stops. As a result, the passengers are unable to put their money on travel cards and get fined.

### 3.3. The relationship between mobility and socioeconomic vulnerability

As noted in previous chapters, displaced women have limited access to the formal labor market. The constantly rising prices of goods negatively affect the socioeconomic state of these people and their families. Most of the women participating in the study were not formally employed. They noted that employment is problematic not only for them but for the majority of women within the settlement. Only a minor part of the women residing in IDP settlements is employed, often with little remuneration. Considering the significant challenges with employment and/or decent remuneration, the displaced women participating in the study unanimously noted that the amount of the monthly IDP allowance (45 GEL) is extremely small. According to them, with inflation and the rising prices of goods, the state allowance for other different vulnerable groups is periodically increased, but not in the case of IDP allowance. According to the displaced women, the amount of an IDP monthly allowance is sharply inadequate for satisfying their minimum needs, while their economic situation is severe and often even desolate<sup>95</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in Karaleti settlement and village Vaziani.

<sup>95</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in township Chakvi, town of Borjomi, Zugdidi, Martvili, Khobi, village of Ingiri, Didi Jikhaishi, Didi Tchkonj, and Bazaleti settlement.

"Do you know the situation of our women? She gets up in the morning thinking about how to feed her family, what and where to buy cheaper. Those who do not have a pension and do not work are in a very difficult situation." IDP woman living in Kobuleti Municipality

It is noteworthy that despite the extreme socio-economic vulnerability of the women participating in the study, the majority of them have no experience of communicating and cooperating with social workers<sup>96</sup>.

Social workers used to visit us, but not anymore. We need the services of social workers. Being a socially vulnerable person registered in the program shouldn't be necessary for a social worker's visit. Maybe the transportation is a barrier for social workers, and that's why they don't come anymore." IDP woman living in township Chakvi

The majority of women don't have information about the available services<sup>97</sup>. At the same time, besides some exceptions<sup>98</sup>, the municipalities do not collect<sup>99</sup> the data on the displaced women engaged in social and other services, thus making it impossible to evaluate the social policy towards the representatives of this group and, therefore, to identify the challenges, and to implement evidence-based interventions.

Although the reasons behind the challenges faced by the displaced women to access employment can be diverse, a significant part of the study participants living in different locations focused on access to transport as a major hindering factor for their economic activity and employment. IDP women believe that the malfunctioning transport system, including the transport schedule, deprives them of employment opportunities.

- The transport schedule of different settlements cannot ensure timely arrival to a workplace (late arrival) and/or working late hours<sup>100</sup>;
- Considering insufficient transport accessibility and/or its schedule, the residents of several IDP settlements (Batumi, Borjomi, Vaziani, Gamarjveba, Bazaleti and Tsilkani, Zghvaia, Potskho, Zedaetseri) noted that they have had cases of refusing a job offer. In addition, women living in the village of Prezeti noted that even if offered<sup>101</sup> a job they would refuse it due to the malfunctioning transportation system and the distance between residential and working places;
- People living in the village of Didi Jikhaishi pointed to the resident of their settlement employed in Samtredia. In the evenings, due to the lack of transport, he cannot return to his place of residence and is forced to stay with his relatives and/or acquaintances in Samtredia.
- One of the residents of Vaziani village mentioned that in the evening hours, due to the unavailable minibus service, she often uses a taxi. One of the participants also mentioned that every day she has to meet a family member herself and bring them home with her resources;

---

<sup>96</sup> . Note: Kutaisi (Nikea Street) settlement is an exception, where the residents positively characterize the communication with the social worker. In addition, the residents of Rustavi mentioned communication with the social worker.

<sup>97</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in the towns of Kutaisi, Rustavi, Zugdidi, Marneuli, Martvili, Poti, Khobi, Bazaleti settlement, village Prezeti, village Akhalsopeli, Tsilkani and Tserovani settlements, town of Mtskheta, villages Ingiri, Gamarjveba.

<sup>98</sup> . Correspondence of Tskaltubo Municipality City Hall N 48-4822319101, 15.11.2022; Correspondence of the Martvili Municipality City Hall No. 58-582231248, 8.11.2022; Zugdidi Municipality City Hall correspondence No. 24-242230175, 28.10.2022; Kareli Municipality City Hall Correspondence N 104-104223207, 16.11.2022.

<sup>99</sup> . Note: the data from the municipalities containing only the number of total beneficiaries (in individual cases, gender-segregated data) were provided to the Office of the Public Defender.

<sup>100</sup> . Focus group with displaced women living in Chakvi township, Teliani village, village Akhalsopeli, village Koda, Karaleti settlement.

<sup>101</sup> . Note: The women participating in the study are not employed.

- The problems of transport accessibility negatively impact the economic activity of the population in the agricultural field as well. For example, the residents of village Koda noted that due to lack of transport, it is problematic for them to access their land plots near Kumi, 7 km from the settlement.

It is noteworthy that in addition to disarranged transport systems and mobility challenges, the majority of the women participating in the study had no experience with virtual mobility and remote work. Some women also indicate that remote work would not be acceptable<sup>102</sup> to them even in case of access to the internet and equipment, mainly due to lack of socialization and/or low quality of the performed work. The latter might be attributed to the difficulties of combining housework and formal labor. In addition, the displaced women living in Borjomi noted that virtual mobility would not work in their case due to limited and crowded residential space. On the other hand, women living in Vaziani indicated that they would prefer remote work as one of the employment forms because it is a new opportunity that should not be missed. The displaced woman living in Karaleti settlement also spoke about this form of employment and pointed out that she has been working remotely for years, and considering the possibility of saving time, it is fully acceptable to her.

When discussing economic activity and mobility, the mobility patterns and opportunities of the displaced women to travel to the occupied territories for the purpose of economic activity should be emphasized. The respondents had practically uniform answers to that question. According to the IDPs from the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia, they cannot travel to the occupied territories either for business or personal affairs. In this regard, the settlements of Gvishtibi, Tserovani and Tsilkani are an exception. According to the residents of the Gvishtibi settlement, they can travel to the occupied territories for ten days, which they do, but not for economic activities. On the other hand, the residents of the Tserovani and Tsilkani settlements noted that they are able to travel to the occupied territories from the 20th to the 30th of every month. They also pointed out that transportation expenses increased over the years, and if you don't have a car, travel becomes costly - on average, they spend 200 GEL per visit. After crossing the checkpoint, they are not permitted to ride their vehicle and need other transport, which is associated with additional costs - for example, a taxi to Akhagori costs about 50 GEL. Travel purposes provided by the residents are checking the condition of their houses and harvest for personal consumption.

Residents of Tserovani settlement talk about similar travel practices. According to residents, they bring various products (e.g. honey, walnuts) for sale from the occupied territories, for which they have to pay certain amounts at the checkpoint. For example, one of the respondents indicated that she had to pay 1,000 rubles at the checkpoint to transfer 50 kg of honey. Residents noted that such economic activity is not systematic.

Residents of the township Chakvi drew attention to travel and economic activities in the occupied territories. According to them, a person living in Tbilisi brings certain products from the occupied territories for running a restaurant business<sup>103</sup>. On the other hand, residents of the Mtskheta settlement pointed out that individual residents move to the occupied territories and bring products for their consumption. It is noteworthy that since the IDPs talked not about their own but other people's experiences, it is difficult to judge its authenticity.

Given the significant correlation between mobility and access to livelihoods, it is essential to focus on the mobility issues and the resulting challenges in accessing services as one of the causes of migration within or outside the country. When

<sup>102</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in township Chakvi, towns of Zugdidi, Rustavi, Batumi, Borjomi, Tetritskaro, Marneuli, Martvili, Poti, the villages of Koda, Gamarjveba, Ingiri, and Potskho.

<sup>103</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in township Chakvi.

speaking about migration issues, the displaced women think the aggravated socioeconomic situation and the lack of jobs are to blame, but some also point to the transportation and the challenges of accessing services as one of the migration factors<sup>104</sup>.

For example, IDPs living in the Karaleti settlement indicated that they are aware of such former compact settlement facilities where residents have problems accessing transport. Consequently, they sell their cottages/houses and move to big cities or abroad to live and work. Residents of the Bazaleti settlement also noted that many families moved to Tbilisi, among others, due to problems with transportation and access to services. Along with the mobility barriers, the IDPs participating in the study focused on other factors hindering employment:

- **Scarcity and/or insufficiency of care mechanisms**

Another significant problem related to employment is the delegation of domestic work and caring activities to formal services (including preschool). Women emphasized that despite their desire to be employed, the responsibilities of caring for their children of preschool and school age prevents them from doing so<sup>105</sup>. For example, IDPs living in Khashuri noted that kindergartens work only until 16:50, so many women with children of preschool age cannot work. Also, the mother of a disabled child in the Karaleti IDP settlement noted that she cannot find a job due to care-related work. Some of the study participants named taking care of their elderly parents along with their children as one of the factors hindering employment<sup>106</sup>.

- **Scarcity of employment promotion mechanisms**

According to the women, one of the major problems is the lack of measures for economic empowerment in the country. Considering the scarcity of initiatives and lack of awareness about them, the displaced women claim that the state does not see them as a vulnerable group and does not pay special attention to their employment<sup>107</sup>.

Taking into account the socioeconomic vulnerability of the displaced women and the need for economic empowerment and income growth of socially vulnerable people, an employment program in public works is an interesting experience, there is a practice of engaging IDPs from individual settlements<sup>108</sup> in the program, however, on the other hand, the IDPs living in certain locations are not informed about the program<sup>109</sup>.

When talking about economic empowerment, the need for vocational training of displaced women and provision of access to it location-wise (inter alia well-functioning transport system) is on the agenda. Regarding the latter, women focused on barriers to accessing vocational institutions - for example, a woman living in Borjomi emphasized that the nearest vocational institution is located in Akhaltsikhe municipality, which is associated with an additional burden (including financial) for her.

The residents of Mtskheta settlement also spoke about the challenges - they pointed out that vocational education is provided in the village of Galavani, however, the lack of access to transport poses great barriers to those who wish to receive education. According to the residents of Potskho despite their desire, inaccessibility of transport, prevents them from going to the vocational institution located in Jvari.

---

<sup>104</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in villages of Vaziani, Zghvaia, Potskho, Karaleti, Bazaleti and Tsilkani settlements.

<sup>105</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in Borjomi, Mtskheta, village Teliani.

<sup>106</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in Mtskheta.

<sup>107</sup> . Focus group in township Chakvi, cities of Zestaponi and Kutaisi.

<sup>108</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in the cities of Gori, Samtredia, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, villages of Ingiri, Didi Tchkoni, Zedaetseri, settlements of Kopitnari, Zghvaia and Bazaleti.

<sup>109</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living the cities of Kobuleti, Mtskheta, Khobi.

On the other hand, IDPs living in Khoni noted that with the support of a non-governmental organization and the local self-government body, an educational center is functioning in the settlement, where women attend sewing courses. Despite the territorial accessibility, they stated that the training course lasts only 2-3 months, which is not enough for an in-depth study of the vocation.

- **The land accessibility problems**

Women respondents living in some locations (e.g. Kutaisi, Marneuli, Borjomi, Mtskheta, Tetrtskaro, Tserovani settlement, Zedaetseri village) paid particular attention to the problems of accessing the land, which is why, despite their wish to participate in programs, they remain outside the government's initiatives and projects.

While discussing this issue, the IDPs living in Tetrtskaro also pointed to the proposal of the Ministry of IDPs from the occupied territories, Labor, Health and Social Protection of Georgia after the pandemic to provide them with agricultural tools and purchase livestock. IDPs were forced to refuse this offer, because they would not be able to benefit from the offer by the Ministry due to not owning the land.

### **3.4. IDP women's participation and involvement in policy-making**

It is essential to ensure the efficient and real engagement and participation of the local population, including women, in policy-making and implementation of mobility issues and economic empowerment. On the one hand, this ensures the transparency, inclusiveness, and democracy of the process of policy changes, and on the other hand, it helps to represent the displaced women not as "charity objects", but as active subjects with unique expertise and to reflect their perspectives in the state policy.

Despite the importance of engagement and participation, the majority of IDP women participating in the focus group indicate that they are not involved<sup>110</sup> in decision-making, programs, projects, budget development, change and/or monitoring by central or municipal bodies and have no information about ongoing processes. Individual participants also mentioned that they did not have information on engagement opportunities and the right to request participation. IDP women also indicate that the state agencies are not proactive in communicating with them and identifying their needs and challenges, and communicate mainly only in the pre-election period<sup>111</sup>.

*"I have visited the city hall regarding the transport, but all in vain. You can write and read all you want, we went to the city hall, but they don't tell us anything specific." IDP woman living in Batumi*

Considering the significant barriers to communication with various agencies, nihilistic moods can be observed among women living in different locations. For example, residents of several settlements indicated that, despite having various challenges they never approach the central and/or municipal authorities, which can largely be attributed to a lack of trust and expectation of change.

On the other hand, women living in some settlements indicated active visits and communication by state agencies to their place of residence<sup>112</sup>. It is worth noting that the majority of such settlements are located in Western Georgia. In

---

<sup>110</sup> . Note: The cases of engagement and/or communication with agencies were mentioned by the IDP women living in Batumi, Borjomi (the communication with the mayor's representative), village Potskho.

<sup>111</sup> . Focus group with IDP women living in township Chakvi, cities of Batumi, Borjomi, Zestaponi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Zugdidi, village Didi Jikhaishi, towns of Mtskheta, Khashuri, Tetrtskaro, village Akhalsopeli, village Teliani, village Ingiri, village Zghvaia, and Kopitnari, Bazaleti and Tsilkani settlements.

<sup>112</sup> . Focus group with IDP women living in the cities of Gori, Khoni, village Gvishtibi, Senaki (military settlement), Martvili.



the discussions, IDPs name a specific employee of Abkhazia A/R, allowing us to assume that this type of communication is not a unified state policy but rather an approach of a particular civil servant.

When discussing engagement in the decision-making processes, one of the significant issues is the engagement and participation of IDPs in the resettlement process and consideration of their needs. As IDPs living in some settlements noted, during the resettlement, the state did not take into account their needs in several areas, including economic empowerment and mobility and/or access to relevant services. In this regard, it is particularly noteworthy:

- Village Teliani settlement – According to the study respondents, when they were brought from Tbilisi, there was no road and the area was swampy. Many refused to stay because of the location and infrastructure. The government started working on the infrastructural problems only after the resettlement.
- Mtskheta settlement - According to the study respondents, the government did not consider the transport accessibility problem during the resettlement. Moreover, the women noted that before settling in the existing building, location-wise they lived in a better place in Mtskheta with easier access to facilities.
- Kutaisi (Nikea street) – according to the IDPs, the government resettled them in 2016. However, manufacturing processes are taking place near the settlement, in front of the building (including stone processing). Noise, dust, and air pollution are the daily life of residents in this settlement. At the same time, the first floor of the residence is flooding with water. According to the women, despite numerous appeals to the authorities, the situation has not improved, and they still have to live in unfit conditions.

On the other hand, the research identified several settlements<sup>113</sup> with inadequate and unfit living conditions, some even on a verge of demolition. Considering the situation, there is a need for the state agencies to resettle the IDPs living in those areas in the shortest time possible to create appropriate living conditions for them. In this regard, it would be essential to actively and effectively engage IDPs, including women, in the process.

Together with the existing challenges, a problem for IDP women is the lack of awareness about women's rights, as well as the programs aimed at the empowerment and support of women. The majority of the participants in the research noted that they did not receive information on these and similar issues in recent years, and no information meetings were held.

The displaced women living in separate settlements have a certain degree of awareness about women's rights<sup>114</sup>, though, in this case, the source of information are mainly trainings provided by non-governmental organizations, television and social media<sup>115</sup>. In this regard, an exception is a settlement in Khoni, where the residents indicated that meetings on gender equality and women's rights are often held, and they cited as an example the meeting organized by the prosecutor's office on domestic violence organized a day before the focus group meeting.

---

<sup>113</sup> . For instance, village Didi Jikhaishi, town of Zugdidi (the territory of machine building factory), village Ingiri, village Zedaetseri, town Khobi (the building of League of Disabled).

<sup>114</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in Marneuli, Gori, village Koda, Tserovani settlement.

<sup>115</sup> . Focus group with the displaced women living in Kobuleti, Borjomi, Rustavi, Zugdidi, Senaki, Martvili, Poti, Khobi, township of Shaumiani, village Vaziani, village Gamarjveba, village Ingiri, village Didi Tchkoni, village Zghvaia, Karaleti settlement.

# Recommendations

## **To the Government of Georgia and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia:**

- Develop a methodology for processing mobility information from a gender perspective and start collecting, analyzing and using the above-mentioned data as a policy tool within a reasonable time frame.
- Take into account and properly reflect the gender dimension of mobility in the process of developing mobility-related legal regulations and policy documents.
- Effectively involve and engage women, including displaced women, in the process of developing legal regulations and policy documents related to mobility.

## **To the Ministry of the IDPs from the occupied territories, Labor, Health and Social Protection of Georgia and LEPL - Agency for IDPs, ecomigrants and livelihoods:**

- Take into account, among other things, the importance of women's economic empowerment, uninterrupted access to services and education, as well as gender aspects of mobility within IDP housing programs.
- Ensure transition from the assistance model based on the IDP status (subsistence allowance) to the assistance model adjusted to the needs of the IDPs in cooperation with the executive authorities of Georgia. The assistance, in turn, shall be based on the needs assessment of the representatives of the given group.
- Assess and improve the living conditions of the IDPs (not yet provided with long-term housing by the state) in close cooperation with the Government of Georgia and municipalities.
- Actively engage displaced women in programs and projects aimed at economic empowerment in close cooperation with the executive authorities and municipalities of Georgia.
- Develop and implement targeted programs aimed at economic empowerment and vocational training of displaced women in close cooperation with the executive authorities and municipalities of Georgia.
- Resettle the IDPs living in the so-called dilapidated buildings in proper housing in the next 2 years.
- Actively engage and involve the IDPs, including women, in the process of developing legal regulations and policy documents regarding the legal status of IDPs.
- Continuously inform the displaced women about women's rights, existing services, programs and initiatives, in formats accessible to them.
- Develop such mechanisms and/or platforms, which provide continuous, effective and proactive communication with IDPs, including women.

## **To the LEPL – Agency of the IDPs, ecomigrants and livelihood and to the municipalities:**

- Improve living conditions in the buildings with infrastructural problems in former compact IDP accommodation, within the framework of the co-financing program of apartment owners' cooperatives;
- Strengthen the coordination between municipalities and the Agency (especially its territorial offices) to economically empower the IDPs, including women, and create decent living conditions for them.

## **To the municipalities:**

- Assess characteristics, challenges and progress on mobility policy at the local level in close communication with the executive authorities and develop a methodology for consideration of gender aspects in this process.
- Study the mobility policy and its characteristics, challenges and progress, including from a gender perspective on a continuous basis and use the collected information as a policy instrument.

- Arrange pedestrian infrastructure, especially sidewalks and transport stops on the territory of the former compact accommodation of the IDPs and take into account the state's obligations in terms of accessibility for persons with disabilities and/or persons with mobility problems in this process.
- Provide access to the transport system for persons with disabilities and/or persons with mobility challenges within a reasonable time frame.
- Ensure effective accessibility of transport for the residents of the former compact accommodation for displaced persons, and for this purpose the municipality shall ensure:
  - To establish transport schedules and continuously provide information about it to the population. Ensure the availability and proper operation of information boards at all stops;
  - Adequate availability of transport on weekends and evening hours;
  - To modify the transport coverage in close consultation with the residents of IDP settlement;
  - To introduce (if not available) and broaden the public transport system;
  - Affordability of transport for the IDPs and established special subsidies for that purpose.
  - Periodic update of the transport and proper maintenance of the existing fleet.
- Actively engage the displaced women in local programs and projects for economic empowerment;
- Effectively engage and involve IDPs, including women, in the process of developing relevant bylaws and policy documents.
- Continuously inform the displaced women about women's rights, existing services, programs and initiatives, in formats accessible to them.
- Establish such mechanisms and/or platforms that provide continuous, effective and proactive communication with IDPs, including women.

**To the Mtskheta municipality:**

- Provide the IDPs living in the settlement of Mtskheta with safe access to the transport stop and construct a bridge for this purpose.

