

2008. DONORS OF THE YEAR



Project:
**SUPPORT TO
TASO FOUNDATION
ACTIVISM IN 2008**



Project:
**COMMUNITY CENTER FOR
SOCIAL RESPONCIBILITY
IN DEMOCRATIZATION**



OSI (Bud) Arts & Culture Network Program

Project:
**CELEBRATION
ETHNICAL DIVERSITY
IN KAKHETI, GEORGIA**
Co-financing



Co-financing of the competition:
**EMPOWERING OF
RURAL WOMEN FOR
ECONOMIC ACTIVISM**



EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM

The point of making grants for small business development is that the majority of women villagers, business starters still cannot afford getting micro credits, just as years ago. Though commitment to social responsibility has always been among competition conditions/selection criteria, serious work for turning activity outcomes into social activism of women villagers started in 2007 with women's leadership training and organizing a meeting of rural women with leaders of Georgian women's movement, experts in different fields of WHRs.

We issued 68 small grants to women villagers for contributing to overcoming poverty in 2004-2008. We maintain relationship with our grantees of previous years thinking about the perspective of the involvement of those most socially active and responsible in women's movement of the country. We consider that all necessary preconditions are fulfilled for starting a new stage of the activity – empowerment of women villagers for advocating women's rights at the places of inhabitancy in interaction with the leading experts/women's NGOs.



Meeting with rural women in TF office
შეხვედრა სოფლის ქალებთან ფონდის ოფისში

From TF Strategic Plan for the Years 2007-2009: "...Intensively and systematically pass knowledge to rural women, ethnic minority women in the areas of their compact settlement and contribute to their involvement in women's movement; help them establish cooperation with local government and self-government bodies for Women's Rights implementation and planning of socially fair local budgets; ensure social and political activism at grassroots level; through gradual and purposeful work, create an access for rural women to international financing".

☀ In 2008, eighty-four proposals of women villagers were registered within the frames of a widely announced competition, *Economic Empowerment of Rural Women*. The feasibility of pre-selected 42 proposals was reviewed through site visits. Twenty-nine grants were eventually made (TF succeeded in raising funds for making an additional grant: TBC Fund for Victims donated \$1 000 for financing the project of an ethnic/religious minority woman, single mother). The grants for individual women and women's initiative groups based in Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Imereti, Guria, Meskheti, Samegrelo, Zemo Achara, Shida Kartli, Mtianeti regions were issued for income-generating activism in the following areas: sewing and traditional crafts workshops, traditional sweets production, beekeeping, bakery, pig farm, dairy farm, rabbit farm, chicken farm, goat milk production, fruit growing, food store, beauty salon. In September 2008 and March 2009, TF evaluated the outcomes of the grants made.



Sewing workshop in Sarbevi village
სამკერვალო სარბევიში, იმერეთი

Further planning included two activities: organizing training in small business management and education of rural women in WHRs for social activism.

☀ On August 1, 2008 TF launched the pilot project *Community Center for Social Responsibility in Democratization Process*. Project goals: raising public awareness, activism and civic education in the villages of Georgia; mobilization of women villagers for achieving gender equality and justice in collaboration with the country's leading experts/organizations.



Dialogue with local officials, Saniore Women's Centre
დიალოგი ხელისუფლების ადგილობრივ წარმომადგენლებთან,
სანიორეს ქალთა ცენტრში

Women's Social Responsibility Center, as the office of TF, was opened in Saniore village (Saniore WC). The activism of the centre, directed mainly towards combating domestic violence, covered six neighbouring villages of Telavi Municipality, Kakheti Region of Georgia: Saniore, Arthana, Phshaveli, Jugaani, Laphankuri, Naphareuli.

Group of CEDAW Scholl participants
ქალთა უფლებების სკოლის მონაწილეები



ists participated in different workshops, seminars, events organized by civil society actors in Tbilisi, the capital;

- Local radio broadcasting on the problem of domestic violence in Kakheti Region was organized, and the poster on Community against Domestic Violence was published and purposefully distributed in the region and country-wide;
- Saniore WC acted as a crisis center responding to cases of domestic violence in cooperation with Anti-Violence Network of Georgia and local police;
- Women villagers, grantees of TF participated in five-day business management training held in Tbilisi, and conducted by Centre for Training and Consultancy (CTC);
- Women's Rights School was conducted in Tbilisi by experts in different spheres of women's rights, with the participation of 23 women villagers, medical doctors, police and local government representatives; experts from leading women's organizations delivered the training;
- Two one-day seminars on requests of EU towards candidate countries in the sphere of gender equality (conducted by an invited Lithuanian expert) were organized in Saniore and Leliani villages;
- **Blackberry**, a 26-minute documentary on the actual status of women villagers and their potential for participation in social and political life of the country was created; the first screenings took place in Tbilisi, at the hall of Public Defender's Office and Karaleti Women's Center;
- An independent organization Rural Women for Human Rights (RWHR) was founded and officially registered. TF granted the project property to RWHR. RWHR became a member of Anti-Violence Network of Georgia.

The experience of Saniore Center was documented in the project diary and taken into consideration while preparing a similar project for women in the conflict zone region of Shida Kartli.

Within the frames of the project, the following were implemented:

- Saniore Women's Center delivered different services, such as copying documents, training in computer literacy, providing access to internet etc. to community representatives;
- Cooperation with local government representatives, regionally based civil society actors and the Kakheti Branch of Public Defender's Office was built; Kakheti based women activ-



Tamar Sabedashvili introduced the CEDAW at the school
თამარ საბედაშვილი საუბრობს ქალთა კონვენციაზე

The August 2008 war has significantly affected the whole society in Georgia, as well as civil society actors, Taso Foundation among them. First off all, it means involvement in humanitarian activities to provide urgent assistance to war affected population, as well as certain changes in the scheduled working agenda of TF. At the end 2008, TF elaborated a new strategy for years 2009-2011, prioritizing Human Rights Advocacy/Social Mobilization programs for conflict affected and internally displaced women. The August events encouraged Taso Foundation to become a member of the FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE NETWORK.



August 16, 2008. Gori. Proto: Gogita Bukhaidze
16 აგვისტო, 2008. გორი, გოგია ბუხაიძის ფოტო

COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

☀ In 2008, TF continued the grant making activity *Collaboration for Implementation of the Law on Domestic Violence* launched in 2007 through organizing a work meeting between representatives of six regionally based organizations that had submitted project proposals within the frames of the competition, and experts of the field: Nato Shavlakadze and Eliso Amirejibi (AVNG). The meeting was important for bettering the proposals and consolidation of the organizations working for the law implementation. After the submission of new versions of the proposals, projects of five organizations based in Kutaisi, Gori, Poti cities, Lagodekhi and Akhaltsikhe districts were supported by Taso Foundation.



Nino Sukhishvili,
head of Khashuri committee of AVNG
ნინო სუხიშვილი,
საქართველოს სოფლის მეურნეობის
საერთაშორისო კომიტეტი

By the end of June, almost all VAW projects supported at the end of 2007 – beginning of 2008 within the frames of the activity had been finalized. A number of working meetings with local law enforcement bodies and local authorities were undertaken; informational meetings/seminars with different community members, such as school teachers (in Khashuri District), village-based leaders (in Shida Kartli Region), internally displaced from Abkhazia (in Kutaisi & Tskaltubo), journalists, etc. were organized; brochures on law on domestic violence & national action plan and posters were published and widely distributed; a series of TV talk shows was prepared and broadcasted through regional TV-Radio Company Trialeti (Shida Kartli Region).



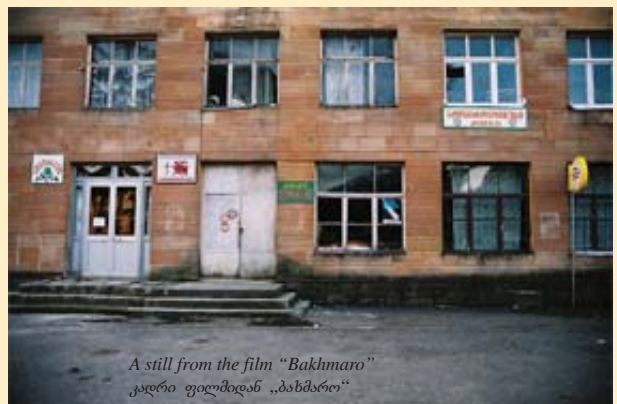
☀ On March 12, 2008, Taso Foundation hosted a meeting of representatives of organizations running shelters for the rehabilitation of victims of domestic violence. Agreements were made on: unification of questionnaire forms, other documentation; making joint statements; collaboration in relationships with media representatives; collaboration on the issues of women's property rights; interaction to start working for violators' reformation; joint lobbying of the issues of domestic violence with governmental institutions.

☀ TF initiated the activity *Treatment of Addicted Women Prisoners* for conducting a training course of ATLANTIS Program for a group of addicted women prisoners in 5th Youth's & Women's Colony. The necessity of the activity (February-July, 2008) was dictated by a danger of a close of the ATLANTIS Rehabilitation Center (established in two prisons of the country through our attempts in years 2004-2006). Dr Phikria Kolbaia, Psychologist/Trainer of ATLANTIS Program, delivered the course in February – July 2008. TF organized the celebration of March 8, International Women's Day, in 5th Youth's & Women's Colony.

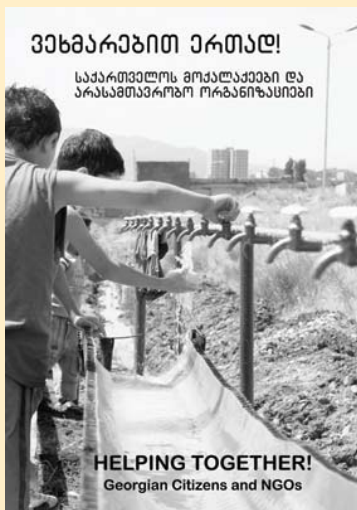
GENDER AND MEDIA

☀ In 2008, TF continued supporting the countrywide network of gender sensitive journalists Gender-MediaCaucasus in the preparation and publication of **Women's Dialogue**, a Russian-language magazine of regional importance (post-Soviet space). Women's Dialogue (Editor-in-Chief Galina Petriashvili) maintains its role of an internationally important publication and excellence in consolidating women's movement regionally. Issues 7 and 8 of the magazine, with articles & photos of authors from different post-Soviet states, were published in 2008 and widely and purposefully distributed in Georgia and abroad.

☀ After several meetings with female film directors organized at TF office for raising their gender sensitivity and negotiation on details of future documentaries, two grants were made in 2008. TF provided the grantees *Mari Gulbiani* and *Salome Jashi* with special letters that prove TF's support for video filming and recommend the projects for co-financing. The project *Ariadnes from Lanchveli Village* (Director Mari Gulbiani) is about the life of the inhabitants of a village in Svaneti, the most patriarchal and conservative mountainous region of Georgia: ethnic Russian and ethnic Kabardinian women, wives of Svan



A still from the film "Bakhmaro"
კლერი ფილმიდან „ბახმარო“



men. The project *Restaurant Bakhmaro and Those Who Work There* (Director Salome Jashi) with two main female characters tells the story of rural women fighting for survival. Both film directors succeeded in raising additional funds for full-scale shootings and postproduction of the documentaries. Both films, *High above the Clouds* and *Bakhmaro*, premiered in 2011.

🍌 *Lali Kiknavelidze*, a Georgian female film director, was supported by Taso Foundation in producing the film *Collapse*. The project aims at making a full-length documentary featuring women who have experienced firsthand drastic changes of the history of Georgia, i.e. breakdown of Soviet Union, first years of independence, etc. Taso Foundation provided Ms Kiknavelidze with video equipment for preliminary shootings. As a result, a trailer was prepared for further fundraising process. TF provided a number of women directors and young documentary makers with the same type of support.

🍌 The activity *School for Journalists & Media Campaign* started with the announcement of a double competition: for participation in the School for Journalists and the competition Awards for Best Media Publication on Women's Reproductive Rights/Issues of Gender Justice. In parallel, a number of working meetings under the leadership of Women's Center and other experts were organized for the development of the project *Gender School for Journalists*. Grant to Women's Center was made and participants for School for Journalists were selected. The school was conducted on May, 2008. Seventeen journalists (11 of them – regionally based) received intensive training on the following issues: domestic violence; women's social/economic status and labor rights; reproductive rights and health; HIV/AIDS as women's problem; labor migration and trafficking; gender journalism. Documentaries on the issues of Women's Rights and women's activism were screened and discussed at the end of each working day of the school.



The competition *Awards for Best Media Publication on Women's Reproductive Rights/Issues of Gender Justice* was re-announced and media publications were uploaded on TF website upon their submission. After the expiration of the competition deadline, publications were considered by TF Board and prizes were awarded to the six authors of the best publications. The prize awarding ceremony coincided with the return of Georgian participants from AWID 11th Global Forum; they shared their experience and impressions concerning the forum with the journalists. The event was concluded with the screening of the documentary *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*.

WOMEN AND PEACE

🍌 Screening of the documentaty *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (Fork Films) in Georgia

The authors of the documentary provided TF with a copy of the film for its screening among women's NGO leaders /civil society actors. The poster of the film was developed and film scripts were translated into the Georgian language. The first screening of *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* took place on April 16 in a movie theatre of The Cinema House. The audience showed great appreciation and were emotionally stirred after the screening, as this documentary really deserves. We received many thankful words for showing the film. On April 22, Open Society Georgia Foundation conference hall hosted the second screening of *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*. The audience mainly consisted of civil society actors, leaders of women's and other NGOs. During the follow up discussion, women leaders came up with the idea of starting a special peace-making campaign to respond to the militaristic media rhetoric connected with the increasing exchange of fire in the conflict zone of Shida Kartli. Discussion was video recorded. The text of *the Peace Appeal* (authors: Tamar Sabedashvili, Marina Tabukashvili) was prepared and widely distributed, thousands of signatures were collected after April 24. "...We are confident that peace-building requires hard, consistent, and complex work from all of us. Peace is our vital interest and not only that of politicians. Let us not allow war - death, suffering, destruction..." - states the text of the peace appeal.

🍌 **Emergency Humanitarian Aid to Internally Displaced:** On August 7, the conflict turned into intensive hostilities as Russia invaded the sovereign state of Georgia. By August 11, we already had thousands of internally displaced from the city of Gori and villages of the region to be placed and cared for here in



Tbilisi. During the first days of the war, we, together with women's/civil society NGOs, were involved in intensive information sharing/providing, contacting our colleagues and friends internationally. Starting from August 11, we started direct work for internally displaced: feeding hundreds of people, providing hygiene products, other necessary goods. We acted in close cooperation with IDP support coordination center at Open Society – Georgia Foundation, one of the most active coordination centers organized for emergency support. We contacted our women villager partners in Kakheti Region, coordinated purchase of products at very cheap prices locally in the villages, and coordinated their transportation to Tbilisi. It is important to stress that many women villagers took out their clothes, products stored for winter for their own families and loaded our trucks free of charge, some of them even suggesting we take some refugee families to them – they were eager to feed these families through the whole winter, to host and support them in every way – so strong was their wish to participate in humanitarian actions.

Those days not only women's NGOs but also other civil society organizations, volunteers, population in general, were involved in humanitarian actions to help more than 115 000 internally displaced people. In about one week from starting emergency support actions, stickers of international humanitarian organizations appeared on the doors of the buildings of IDPs compact placing. On August 18, we developed the poster **Helping Together. Georgian Citizens and NGOs.**

On August 27, GD of Taso Foundation participated in the first international aid coordination meeting for organizations involved in gender issues, women's rights and childcare in Georgia, organized by Gender Advisory Council Under the Speaker of Parliament of Georgia. Draft of the Appeal of Gender Advisory Council under the Chair of Parliament of Georgia to Nations of Europe and the United States of America was considered. On August 28, TF responded to an offer to contribute to the finalization of the Appeal text with the following: *Human life, as well as peace as the guarantee of human life, is the highest value; It is clear that the phenomenon exceeds the frames of a Russian-Georgian conflict acquiring an international character; The Appeal should not support further escalation of confrontation on global level; Our actions should be directed for the benefit of war victims, taking into consideration their best interest.*



🍌 **Post-war narratives of war affected women:** TF considered the initiative of Dr. Tamar Sharabidze, a researcher, and made a negotiation grant for preserving oral histories of women who had personally experienced the bombing and horrors of the Russian invasion. Five respondents residing in the city of Gori and an IDP woman living in an IDP camp in Tbilisi were interviewed.

GENDER AND EDUCATION

🍌 **Celebrating Ethnic Diversity in Kakheti, Georgia** was the main project of Memory Research Center of TF in 2008. The main goals of the project were: building a

trustful atmosphere, providing dialogue space for overcoming ethnic/cultural estrangement between the closed communities living in 8 neighbouring villages of Kakheti Region; attract attention of civil society/officials to the complexity of problems of rurally based ethnic minority communities.

Minorities targeted: **Udi** in Zenobiani village; **Ossetians** in Tsitskanaantseri village; Dagestani **Avars**, **Lezgs** and **Laks** in Chantliskure village; **Dagestani Avars** in Tivi village; Georgians and 3 families of **Ossetians** in Akhalsopheli village; **Azerbaijani** in Kabali village; **Russian Molocans** (Bible-centered Christians) in Graphovka village.

Communications with ethnic minority communities were established through a number of individual and group meetings with villagers, both female and male; more than **1000 photos** were taken, **17 hours of video material** were recorded and **10 oral histories** were preserved. This material describes religious/public celebrations, daily life, portraits, examples of traditional crafts, old photos from family albums, documents from family archives of ethnic/religious minorities residing in villages of Kakheti.

An illustrated article by Tsisana Goderdzishvili (Project Coordinator) about women in the community of Russian Molocans (Ulianovka village) was published in a prestigious Georgian magazine Tskheli Shokoladi; the photo material collected within frames of the Project was included in the publication of The Public Defender's Office of Georgia Minority Center: *Religions in Georgia*.

The project poster (depicting 5 ethnic groups, bearing the slogan *TOGETHER* in 5 languages) was printed and widely distributed among the target villages, as well as country-wide and abroad. The richly illustrated book *Another Georgia* was prepared and published in two, Georgian and English, languages. The book includes photos of daily life, celebrations, crafts, portraits of ethnic/minority groups targeted in the project; two articles (by Archil Kikodze, Tsisana Goderdzishvili) and narratives of ethnic minority women.



Ethnic Dagestani woman, Tivi village
აფხაზეთის ქვეყნის, თივი



Ethnic diversity celebration in Tivi Village, 7th August, 2009
ეთნიკური მრავალფეროვნების აღიარება, 7 აგვისტო, 2009

The Festival for Celebrating Diversity planned for the autumn 2008 was postponed because of the August 2008 war and its heavy consequences for Georgia. Established as AN ANNUAL CELEBRATION DIRECTED TOWARDS MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND PEACE, with participation of representatives of 11 villages, it was held in August 7, 2009 instead, in the Tivi village populated by Dagestanians.



The internal activity **Library and Archives** included providing services to readers and researchers, hosting internships of gender study students; interactions with the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia for placing the electronic versions of OSGF WP/Taso Foundation publications on its web-portal; updating of TF website; distribution of TF publications, etc.



In 2008, TF continues publishing the *Feminist Library* series, initiated in 2007. Based on a contract with *Lela Samniashvili*, Georgian female writer and translator, the Georgian translation of **The Bell Jar** (1963), a semiautobiographical novel by **Sylvia Plath**, was prepared for publication and, with preface by the translator, published as the second edition of *Feminist Library* series. The cover photo was provided free of charge by Italian artist Lucia Porfiri, lay out and cover design were done at TF.

PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS/EVENTS IN 2008:

- *International Gender Policy Network (IGPN) General Assembly*, followed by training on CEDAW, Provided by Ms. Shanti Dairiam, CEDAW Committee Member, and lectures on Official Development Assistance (ODA) from EU countries, delivered by **Nerea Craviotto**, Gender Expert, **Istanbul, June;**
- The conference *Women and Governance in Eastern Europe and CIS*; organized by UNDP and TIKa. Discussions and trainings on different issues of Women in Politics topics; Mechanisms to Promote Women's Political Participation; Gender Equality Law. Istanbul, December
- *AWID Forum 2008: "The Power of Movements"* Cape Town, South Africa, November. Co-organization of two panel sessions initiated by IGPN: Women's Movements in IGPN Member Countries: Experience and Perspectives; How Petro-Wars and Petro-Politics Affect our Movements.

TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANTS MADE IN 2008: 60 618 USD
TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANTS MADE IN 2008: 47