

Open Society Georgia Foundation Strategy for 2014-2017

1. Executive Summary

During its twenty-two years of Independence, Georgia has managed to turn itself from a near-failed state to a developing country with western aspirations. OSGF has contributed to this process every step of the way, and continues to do so to this day.

However, the gains Georgia has made remain fragile. Despite the new opportunities presented by the transfer of power following the 2012 parliamentary elections, there is growing public discontent with the slow progress the new government is making in keeping its pre-election promises, and with the lack of economic development in the country. The ruling coalition, a political amalgam of parties and groups with contradictory values and goals, is slow on reforms and often criticized for inefficient governance. Media freedom is a stated value for the new government, but it appears to be trying to covertly reshape the media landscape in its favor, and sensationalist and unprofessional content is widespread. The highly centralized system of governance put in place by the previous regime is being dismantled, but local administrators find themselves ill-prepared to govern autonomously. Human rights abuses, which have been a major concern under the previous government, have not been yet approached systemically. Intolerance and violence against religious and sexual minorities, particularly among young people, has emerged as a worrying new development.

Recent political changes and the new leadership's openness to listen and respond to civil society concerns created a window of opportunity for OSGF to actively push for reforms in a few key sectors and also to promote open society values with broader public. To take full advantage of these opportunities, however, there must be a public discourse that will generate a critical mass for change, driven by a free and diverse media with high professional standards and a generation of young people educated according to European values. OSGF has trusted and reputable partners who have a capacity to advance our cause in the following **fields: higher education reform** with an emphasis on ensuring equal access for all to quality education, development of **public interest media**, with a focus on promoting media business development, journalistic ethics, and media literacy, and **engaging EU institutions for better protection of minority rights** and development of robust anti-discrimination legislation.

OSGF, relying on its own internal experience and expertise and the openness to reform expressed by the new government, will advance the following concepts: **1) securing greater due process and human rights in the justice system** by promoting liberalization, further improvement of an adversarial system (especially in pre-trial justice), and the prevention of torture, **2) improving governance of local municipalities** through improved legislation on jurisdiction, taxation, and enhanced mechanisms for civic participation and oversight, and **3) development of an inclusive healthcare system**, where marginalized and vulnerable groups are not discriminated against by securing better access to state-funded services, improved disability rights, greater availability of community-based services, and integration of the rights of marginalized groups into the broader discourse on human rights.

2. History and Context

OSGF was established in late 1994, a time of political chaos and economic collapse in Georgia. Responding to the crisis conditions in which it found itself, OSGF was obliged to take on a wide variety of tasks, from widening access to the internet to bolstering the development of social sciences. Over time, the foundation was able to spin off a number of successful, sustainable programs, and focus on most crucial issues.

From its earliest days, OSGF made a profound impact on the political and civic life of Georgia, demonstrated by the events of 2003's peaceful Rose Revolution. Several NGOs that had been nurtured and backed by OSGF played central roles in the peaceful protests that ended the rule of Eduard Shevardnadze, and, following the transfer of power to Mikheil Saakashvili and his United National Movement, many senior OSGF staff members left to take up positions inside the new government. This proved to be a double edged sword: the newly selected leadership focused on cooperation with the government and endorsing its reforms, while paying less attention to free media and civil society¹. Regrettably, these events fuelled a perception that OSGF was responsible for all the flaws of the government.

Following the 2008 war with Russia, the OSGF board significantly reshaped the foundation's strategy and narrowed its work to four major programs: *Human Rights and Good Governance*; *Civil Society Support*; *Support to Independent Media* and *Improvement of Public Health*. This new approach has allowed the foundation to better focus its resources, and also to re-position itself in the public eye as an independent player, and an advocate for human and civil rights.

By the time of Georgia's parliamentary elections in 2012 OSGF, together with partner NGOs, OSGF launched a campaign that achieved *the improvement of political party finance legislation; increasing access to diverse media; ensuring monitoring of pressure on voters, activists and journalists and ensuring a coordinated, non-partisan response to such pressure*.

The results of the elections, which brought about the first peaceful transfer of power through the ballot box in the history of the region, has opened new opportunities for the civil sector to endorse the human rights agenda and to influence government policy. The post-election period has also created new challenges and threats to open society development, which the Foundation has to address.

The majority coalition currently running the country is a mixture of liberal and conservative forces, thus lacking a clear vision. The indecision of the leadership creates a danger of the more conservative forces to be taking an upper hand in the future. The public discontent is on the rise because the expectations of the fast "restoration of justice" and revealing all the violations of rights by the previous government, on the one hand, and increased welfare and improved social protection, on the other, do not get fulfilled. The disillusionment with the western assistance in the larger public contributes to the growth of anti-liberal and anti-western sentiments, which are strongly supported by the increasingly assertive church.

OSGF is ideally placed to influence government decision making, and to push for the most pressing reforms in 2014 and beyond so that Georgia is able to consolidate and build on its gains in recent years.

3. Fealty to Fields

Field 1: Public Interest Media

The media sector in Georgia remains underdeveloped and riddled with ingrained problems. Genuine public interest media is profoundly weak; the few outlets that do produce ethical, investigative content that serves the public good rely almost entirely on donor support. Outlets lack basic business skills and often do not have marketing units, which makes them vulnerable to pressure from business and political interests. Breaches of ethical standards are common. Furthermore, the ramifications of the impending digital switchover remain completely opaque.

In the ten months since the October 2012 elections, much of the Georgian mainstream media remains deeply polarized and driven with political bias. Worryingly, the new government is showing signs of impatience with critical media voices, and appears to be interfering with the editorial policy of various

¹ "OSGF strategic priorities for 2005-2008"

outlets. Furthermore, the so-called “yellow press” is expanding, with the appearance of online portals that are clearly anti-Western and serve society a diet of conspiracy theories and hate speech. OSGF has worked hard to establish platforms which break this pattern, and can now identify several areas where more developmental assistance is needed.

Journalistic content supported by OSGF has played a significant role in shaping the public discourse in recent years. By extending our support to outlets that provide reliable, ethical reporting we seek to raise the bar in the Georgian media sector, and to reshape the landscape in a way which serves the public. In 2014-17 OSGF will fund 6-8 independent media outlets to produce dynamic news, investigative reports and diverse programming that will strengthen the position of public interest media. The support will concentrate on popular **multimedia sources**. Internet penetration in Georgia is rising quickly, as is the proliferation and influence of online news sources. We plan to support www.netgazeti.ge, www.liberali.ge, www.ick.ge (news, opinion, analysis), www.sknews.ge (Georgian-Armenian language news), www.media.ge (tri-lingual portal on media and journalism), www.dfwatch.net (English language news and opinion), as well as **independent TV studios**: Studio Monitor, a leader in investigative journalism, and Studio RE, producer of quality talk shows and documentaries.

In order to strengthen the field and help it become self-sustaining, OSGF will make its support conditional: media companies that produce public interest content will be eligible for continuous support on the condition that they simultaneously increase advertising and other revenues. As part of this effort, in 2014 we will offer high-quality mentoring; will continue to fund the annual Media Advertisement Fair and work closely with the OSF Media Program and Media Development Investment Fund to expose Georgian media to innovative business models and the best international practices.

OSGF will continue to focus on strengthening public interest media by raising journalistic standards and improving media literacy. OSGF will continue supporting the **Georgian Journalistic Ethics Charter**, an organization uniting 250 journalists. Currently the Charter is widely viewed as the only reputable journalism organization in Georgia, working to enhance professionalism in the media by analyzing and debating breaches of journalistic standards and calling for their improvement. Foundation’s support will enable the Charter to engage more of its members in media research and monitoring and to develop training courses for journalists in ethical reporting.

According to the updated National Curriculum, a mandatory plan for teachers, media literacy should be exercised at the primary, secondary and high school levels. However, this is not the case, owing to a lack of expertise within the Education system and civil sector. OSGF plans to continue its support for the **Civic Development Institute (CDI)**, a reputable NGO focusing on civic education and freedom of speech, to improve media literacy in the country step-by-step working with school teachers in 2014-15 and shifting to university level in 2016-17.

The impending digital switchover in 2015, and the government’s failure to adequately prepare for it, poses a serious challenge to the future of independent broadcast media in Georgia. If the switchover is mishandled, it risks discriminating against local broadcasters and disadvantaged households. The complete lack of public awareness about the switchover is also disturbing. In 2013 with OSGF support the Institute for **Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)** developed a strategic vision for the digital switchover and presented it to the government and broadcasters.² Together with the **Regional Association of Broadcasters (GARb)**, it also presented an alternative technical model of small multiplexes as a cost-effective measure for small regional broadcasters. Currently the Ministry of Economic Development is reviewing the proposal. In 2014 OSGF will fund IDFI and GARb experts for a one-year project to draft policies on tariffs and subsidies and share their legal and technical expertise with the governmental groups working on the digital transition to ensure that the government adopts a strategy that serves the public interest and media plurality.

² <http://www.idfi.ge/?cat=researches&topic=103&lang=en>

Field 2: Higher Education Support

The improvement of the higher education system is one of the key challenges for Georgia's democratic development. We believe that higher education instills the norms and attitudes crucial to democracy in its own students, who then become a driving force for Georgia's democratic reforms and the country's overall modernization process. More open, democratic, and inclusive higher education system will encourage in young citizens of Georgia a greater appreciation for diversity and the critical thinking skills necessary to prevent them from falling under the influence of ultraconservative or nationalistic rhetoric. The higher education reforms undertaken in last nine years have successfully reduced corruption within the system, but closed-door decision-making and a disregard for public opinion created fertile ground for politicization of the system, deepening inequality, decline in the overall quality of education, and an extreme bureaucratization of administrative structures. The new leadership of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoES) has attempted to address these challenges and proposed important reforms in 2013. However, the set of proposals contained problematic elements, including a provision that would have seen the Prime Minister responsible for selecting the rectors of state universities (that provision was subsequently amended). Furthermore, opponents of the proposals worried that they did not sufficiently address the key challenges of higher education in Georgia and no proper prior discussions were held with the relevant stakeholders. A coalition of CSOs that were spin-offs from OSGF and continue to receive our support initiated a series of public debates and discussions about the reforms, and started working on analytical papers to propose innovative solutions to the problems. This initiative proved to be essential in absence of analogous initiatives by other international donors. Over the next four years OSGF's support will enable its partners to lead public debates, speak with decision makers, write policy papers, carry on advocacy campaigns and cover higher-education related issues in media.

The **Center for Social Sciences (CSS)** is a think tank with ten years of experience in complex analysis of issues in higher education, higher education quality improvement, academic and applied research development. CSS has helped the University in updating curriculum in social sciences, promoted new academic disciplines, elaborated PhD Concept Paper for Georgian Universities, and established new assessment procedures and quality assurance standards. CSS is active in promoting development of higher education policy through open, inclusive and consultative process, advocating policy recommendations for higher education quality improvement and developing academic system of governance that meets the needs of faculty, students and wider society. Over the next four years CSS will mobilize local and international expertise on reform initiatives, contribute analytically and advocate for legislative changes (Law on Higher Education, Law on National Science Foundation, authorization and accreditation standards, etc) for the improvement of governance structure and quality of academic programs and instruction.

The **Education Policy, Planning and Management Institute (EPPM)** and its regional network contribute to the development of legal framework for higher educational reform; advocate for improved quality and access in education, and educate public on costs and benefits of reform initiatives. Over the next four years EPPM's particular focus will be on the advancement of policies for young people from disadvantaged rural areas, IDPs, ethnic minorities, and students with disabilities (making HEI accessible for disabled, development of inclusive learning environment, targeted scholarships). EPPM will study productiveness, management and effectiveness of education, and provide recommendations on budgetary policy and resource allocation between sectors of learning, levels of learning (undergrad, masters, doctoral, and administrative versus academic activities). EPPM will monitor the ongoing developments in HE and lead public discussions on reform initiatives.

Center for International Education (CIE) has a decade-long experience in administering NSP scholarships for training future faculty to raise the quality of university-level instruction and supporting talented young people to gain advanced education at Western universities for active role in a society. CIE will

mobilize its network of OSF education program alumni that has a capacity to develop innovative solutions to education challenges and involve in public debates on reform initiatives. CIE's direct access to decision-makers, experience in relationship-building between the MoES, academia and civil society, makes it well-positioned to contribute to the establishment of a standing committee of key CSOs, education experts, and key Ministry of Education staff for continued dialogue and involvement of stakeholders in higher education system improvement.

In addition to the experienced CSOs, the OSGF will give support to recently established student groups oriented towards positive change of the education system: **Laboratory 1918**, established in 2011 by the students of the Tbilisi State University protesting absence of study materials in their native Georgian language; **Orange Club** established in May 2012 to initiate public debates on issues critical to students; and **Student Zone** established in 2013 to protest amendments to the Law on High Education and advocate for public hearings and reviews of amendments.

Field 3: Engaging Regional & Global Institutions in Support of Open Society Values

Civil liberties and minority rights are under threat in Georgia. 2013 has seen an enraged, violent mob attack on a peaceful anti-homophobia protest in downtown Tbilisi as well as religious minorities being prevented from worshipping. Worryingly, no one has been held criminally accountable for these acts beyond the issuance of small fines. Illegal government surveillance of private individuals, prevalent under the previous government, has not been thoroughly dealt with by the new administration, which has delayed the destruction of illegally recorded material and has not downgraded its capabilities for surveillance. In the next strategic period OSGF will support its partners advancing the greater protection of minorities, personal data protection and greater government accountability. These are also the key benchmarks for Georgia's closer association with the European Union. By engaging with EU institutions, making use of Eastern Partnership and European Neighborhood Policy instruments, OSGF partners will leverage the decision making process in Georgia, and hold the government to greater degrees of accountability.

Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) is an NGO dedicated to promoting human rights and the rule of law. In 2013 OSGF funded GYLA to review the draft bill on anti-discrimination written by the Ministry of Justice and propose much needed amendments. In the next four years OSGF will fund **GYLA** to advocate for the adoption of the legislation and to ensure its effective application to fight against discrimination and the protection of minority rights. GYLA will monitor the enforcement of the law, document violations, pursue strategic litigation at the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) and monitor the government's implementation of the ECHR judgments in this area.

Transparency International-Georgia (TIG), Georgia's leading advocacy think tank, works on increasing government transparency and accountability, monitors the performance of key institutions and pushes for necessary reforms in a non-partisan manner. TIG is a member of the Special Commission overseeing the handling of recordings currently held by the authorities. In coming years, TIG will advance a legal framework for surveillance that will ensure the necessary safeguards for privacy and legal guarantees against abuse. TIG will engage with the European Commission, Council and Parliament to ensure that the Association Agreement (AA), to be signed later this year, and the proceeding Action Plan for its implementation include transparency and accountability as key benchmarks for Georgia's closer ties with the EU. It will monitor the AA implementation process and feed into the annual progress reports prepared by the European Commission.

Academic Fellowship Program Alumni group funded by the OSGF has been monitoring the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in Georgia using the guidelines set by the EU under the Eastern Partnership Roadmap. In the coming years the group will use new EU instruments and benchmarks to present evidence-based research and advocate for policy change. The Group will also organize advocacy events in Brussels and Strasbourg with the European Parliament, European Commission, Council of Europe, and European think tanks to raise awareness and improve Georgia's compliance with EU's fundamental values.

National Platform of Civil Society Forum for the Eastern Partnership was established in 2011 to advance goals of Eastern Partnership in Georgia. The National Platform, which includes more than 100 most active CSOs, ensures civil society participation in ongoing reforms, facilitates CSO dialogue with public authorities, enhances oversight of public services and strengthens public confidence in them. In 2013 OSGF supported the **National Platform** in successfully lobbying for the adoption of 2014-2017 EU Integration Communication Strategy. In next four years the **National Platform** will ensure the active involvement of civil society with the Government of Georgia, facilitate communication with EU institutions at the central and local level, and educate the public on the European Integration process to strengthen public support for EU-driven reforms, in particular those related to strengthening democratic institutions, accountability, human rights, and the protection of minorities.

4. Concepts

Concept 1: Pretrial Justice and Liberalization of Criminal Justice Policy

Since 2006, the Georgian government implemented a 'Zero Tolerance Policy,' which introduced harsh sentences for organized crime, corruption, minor crimes and drug-related offenses, and reduced the minimum age of juvenile criminal responsibility. This policy was to a certain extent effective, but caused a drastic increase in the prison population, with Georgia becoming one of the highest per capita incarcerators in the world by 2010. In criminal cases the judiciary was almost totally loyal to the prosecution and the investigative bodies. Additionally, the system of 'plea bargaining' coupled with an acquittal rate of less than one percent meant that to avoid prison, alleged offenders could plead guilty and pay hefty costs to the state. By 2010-11 over 80% of criminal cases were resolved in this way, providing roughly 80 million USD to the budget annually. Those who could not avoid incarceration served their prison terms in overcrowded penitentiaries with poor healthcare and a high risk of ill-treatment and torture³ - a systemic problem reinforced by a widespread culture of impunity.

Throughout the years, OSGF has become increasingly experienced in the criminal justice field and has been deeply involved in helping develop Georgia's legal aid system. We have supported targeted research to document and expose⁴ the deficiencies of the 'Zero Tolerance' policy by utilizing relevant international standards and best practices. We have been the driving force behind revealing and raising the alarm on some of the system's most vital issues, including the vicious practice of pretrial detention, the extremely low number of acquittals and abuse of plea bargain system.

In response to the shocking videos depicting torture and ill-treatment in penitentiaries, OSGF launched a mission⁵ in partnership with ten local NGOs, Baroness Vivien Stern, and Professor Andrew Coyle from the International Center for Prison Studies. The mission is aimed at evaluating the role of torture in the Georgian criminal justice system and providing a set of recommendations to prevent such inhumane practices in future.

The new government is aware of our activities in these fields. A number of high level officials within the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Penitentiaries, the Office of Personal Data Protection Inspector, and the Parliament are our former grantees and colleagues. These senior figures were personally involved in our efforts, thus providing a good basis for future cooperation. In addition, the new government has already demonstrated its willingness to address the fundamental flaws of the criminal justice system.

³ Shocking videos, apparently filmed during the past few years, emerged on Georgian TV channels in September of 2012. The recording depicts torture and rape in Georgian prisons carried out by prison officials, confirming longstanding allegations of abuse, as well as reports of the public defender and NGOs on ill-treatment.

⁴ Significant findings from our funded projects have been constantly highlighted in the U.S. State Department reports, as well as in Ombudsman's and international watchdog NGOs' reports, and in public statements of (by then) opposition leaders.

⁵ OSGF mission is the only NGO proposal recognized by the Council of Europe and the Georgian government concerning the investigation of alleged facts of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners.

For example, it has changed mandatory consecutive sentencing, allows media to attend trials, and separated the Legal Aid Service from the Ministry of Penitentiaries. Some of the ill practices have been improved as well; however this happens solely due to a good will of the government, and is not supported by legislative changes. We aim to solve these problems institutionally and establish standards that will be in accordance with the ECHR case law.

We are in an ideal position to use our years of experience and highly-developed network of professionals (OSF Justice Initiative, local NGOs, leading academics, etc.) to shift from research work towards advocacy. We will use our expertise and high profile to push for systemic changes related to pretrial justice, administrative detention, and the prevention of torture.

We expect to achieve three major goals: 1) **transform Georgia's criminal justice policy from 'zero tolerance' to liberalization**, 2) **guarantee equality of arms in our relatively new adversarial system** (in particular with regard to pretrial justice), and 3) **to eliminate torture and ill-treatment in penitentiaries and in temporary detention centers**. To achieve these rather ambitious goals, we will develop a concrete set of recommendations, legislative packages, guidelines and action plans for the relevant institutions based on the findings of our investigations and research projects, and we will advocate for their implementation.

Outcomes:

- The Criminal Code envisages more liberal and reasonable sanctions, in particular for minor crimes
- Criminal policy is fundamentally transformed; misapplied practices of plea bargains, and pretrial and administrative detention are minimized
- OSGF proposed recommendations on procedural safeguards and due process are incorporated in administrative and criminal legislation and proceedings
- OSGF proposed recommendations on prison management, investigation of cases of torture and ill treatment, and oversight mechanisms are implemented

Concept 2: Decentralization and Local Democracy Development

Decentralization is a key element in building a democratic society, promoting civil participation and ensuring the government's greater accountability. The highly centralized system of government that currently exists can hardly assure the independence of self-governance, civil participation in the decision-making process and adequate public service on the local level. Since 2005, the previous government had been fostering top-down centralization by amending the Georgian Constitution and pertinent normative acts in order to exert control at all levels of government⁶.

In recent years, the Foundation was the only organization supporting a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of self-governance issues and encouraging critical discussions of the subject-matter. As a result, it has acquired extensive, hands-on expertise in this area. OSGF, in cooperation with 8 NGOs and expert groups, drafted a concept paper on Georgia's decentralization process, which became the foundation for the government's decentralization strategy initiated by the new prime minister and administered by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI). In fact, the individuals who are now responsible for administering the reform, actually co-authored a number of analytical reports OSGF has produced in recent years.

OSGF believes the time is ripe to open a new chapter in Georgia's decentralization history. Utilizing its experience and expertise, OSGF intends to make a feasible contribution to decentralization reform and the processes of building a local democracy. In the impending term, we plan to tackle the following major goals: 1) **ensure institutional and financial independence of self-governance** by clarifying the self-government's jurisdictions, drawing a line between the powers of the central and local authorities

⁶ As a result of 2005-2006 reforms, 1100 self-government units were radically consolidated into 67 municipalities, the power of president-appointed governors was increased, and most of local taxes were directed to the central budget.

and enabling the accumulation of certain types of taxes directly in local budget via amending legislation; 2) **prevent risks of corruption inherent to decentralization and ensure civil participation in the decision-making process** by altering the legislation; monitor the reform implementation; and 3) **support NGOs to work on the problems identified through local residents' participation in the reform process.**

Decentralization reform is a continuous and extended process that permanently requires joint efforts from NGOs and groups of experts in order to maintain cooperation and constructive discourse with the government at the same time. To achieve these ambitious goals, OSGF shall apply well-tested methods and tools in addition to experimental approaches and interpretations. The Public Advisory Council (PAC) will be a major partner of the OSGF in this effort. It is an agency responsible for developing concepts and draft laws related to self-governance development in Georgia that is run by the OSGF. It unites 18 NGOs working on local governance issues, 2 UNDP experts and representatives of state authorities⁷. Together, OSGF and PAC will develop concept documents and policy papers, a package of recommendations, bills of amendments, and will push for major changes in the laws pertaining to clarification of jurisdictions, civil participation, taxation and anti-corruption. Moreover, together with local NGOs and media organizations, the OSGF will monitor the implementation process of the reform (including monitoring of local elections 2014), pilot the changes ensued in 1 Georgian municipality, and analyze the practice and actual impact of civil participation in decision-making locally.

Despite the fact that the government comprehends all the benefits of decentralization and the development of local democracy will bring, OSGF acknowledges the prospect that not all the proposed amendments and recommendations to improve the reform will be shared or adopted by the government unanimously. Therefore, OSGF believes it will be advantageous to work on mobilizing public opinion through relevant media coverage, waging pro-active advocacy campaigns by NGOs, and as a member of Anti-corruption Inter-agency State Council, influence decision-makers to respond to the challenges that will occur during reform implementation.

Outcomes:

- Clarification of jurisdictions between the central and local government is backed by relevant legislation;
- Tax Code is amended to enable the accumulation of certain types of taxes directly into the local budgets;
- Risks of corruption inherent to decentralization are reduced, amendments to anti-corruption legislation are adopted;
- Mechanisms of civil participation in the local decision-making process are introduced in respective legislation;
- The reform implementation and Local Elections 2014 are monitored and the continued improvement of reform process is ensured.

Concept 3: Promote Right to Health for Marginalized Groups

People with HIV/AIDS, intravenous drug users, patients with hepatitis C and other marginalized groups all face severe problems in accessing proper healthcare in Georgia. In spite of a legal framework designed to protect the inviolability of their dignity and privacy, their rights are often violated because of their health status. This results from problems with the legislation as well as a lack of theoretical and practical skills on the part of medical, legal and other professionals, and neglect from the society. In order to promote right to health of marginalized groups, OSGF plans to work in three main directions: refining mechanisms (laws, regulations and policies), improving health systems and raising voices of marginalized groups.

⁷ According to the Memorandum of Understanding countersigned between PAC and Government of Georgia, members of Parliamentary Committee on Regional Development as well as representatives of MRDI will participate in the working process of the Council.

There is currently a unique chance to leverage the new government's promises of improved healthcare and social security in favor of marginalized groups. OSGF's work has already seen results, including launching of a state program on hepatitis C for the penitentiary system and increasing the budget line for adult palliative care. The government intend to further increase the healthcare and social security budget. We will use this momentum to push the government to improve nondiscriminatory and community-based models for persons with physical and mental disabilities and children with special needs, as well as to overcome the lack of care for terminally ill children. Furthermore, we will call on the parliament of Georgia and ministry of health to expand hepatitis C programs and to provide budgetary support for the upgrading of care for those with mental disabilities, including the expansion of community based services.

Georgia is poised to ratify the Disability Rights Convention this year, making this the ideal time for OSGF to draw on its experience to raise public awareness of the rights of the disabled and to ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of the convention. The foundation has had success in uniting marginalized groups, professional communities, and the public at large by means of successful advocacy campaigns ("No pain in our families" and "Sharing the care" for example). Innovative community-based services initiated by OSGF have raised the profile of people with different disabilities and served as a common platform for dialogue (e.g. parents' organizations of children with Autism); this experience will be used for advocating of the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as for reducing barriers for women who use drugs, and supporting the access to medicines campaign focused on corruption and monopoly etc.

To provide quality healthcare for all it is essential to ensure the accountability of private companies and government agencies. To this end, norms and regulations must be enforced and independent compliance monitoring must be carried out. Working with the Public Defender's Office and partner NGO's, OSGF will push for amendments to healthcare laws so as to bring them in line with international standards.

Over the next four years we will pursue three major goals: **1) Set up mechanisms to protect health rights of marginalized groups; 2) Overcome discrimination and exclusion in healthcare system and empower community based model services; 3) Break down barriers by raising community voices and promoting the engagement of marginalized people in decision-making.**

To achieve these goals we will work by strengthening the capacity of civil society actors, increasing their involvement in health policy-making, enhancing the accountability of the government on public health issues, supporting the development of model services and developing recommendations for the restructuring of financing mechanisms to sustain community based services.

Outcomes:

- Georgian health-related legislation and policies comes into harmony with international standards; progress in implementation of the disability rights convention (CRPD)
- Access to state funded programs is increased (Hepatitis C, pediatric palliative care, children with special needs);
- marginalized people have an opportunity to choose community based housing and services (end of life pediatric care, community based care for people with intellectual and mental disabilities);
- The health and human rights issues of marginalized groups are more actively represented in public discourse

5. Other Significant Collaborations

OSGF will continue to collaborate with the OSF network programs it has been working with in the recent years and will intensify its work with a few others. In particular, OSGF will continue working actively with a) Justice Initiative (JI) and Legal Aid Reformers' Network (LARN), on criminal justice issues; b) Media Program in the field of Public interest media c) Public Health Program and Early Childhood Program on Right to health; OSGF will connect the potential grantees with HESP on higher education reform issues. Having good experience of working with the OSF International Advocacy and Communications offices, we also plan to use their advocacy and communications expertise to provide high-context assistance to the partners focused on advocacy with EU.

OSGF had been developing good relations with a number of international donors in the country. Currently we are managing a USAID sub-grant on National Integration program, and a USAID sub-contract on launching the decentralization reform; we are also part of a consortium of an EU grant for strengthening capacity of Eastern Partnership civil society platform. OSGF will continue to seek funding for its initiatives from those donors, also expanding the potential pool, primarily to the World Bank and Swedish Development Agency.

6. Internal organizational plans

The staff of the foundation will be reorganized in compliance with the new strategy. While the headcount remains the same in 2014, a significant re-assignment of the tasks and change of positions will be conducted; program staff will be assigned to fields and concepts respectively, and will be overseen by the programs' director (replacement for the deputy director). Towards the end of 2014, the plans for downsizing the core staff will be developed.

2014 WORK PLAN FOR Open Society Georgia Foundation

Fields	Primary Beneficiary	Amount	Supporting Staff	Sig. deviations in case of H or L budget approval
Field #1: Public Interest Media 1. Strengthen Public Interest media to produce quality content and to generate revenues 2. Increase business capacity of public interest media 3. Improve professionalism of media and media literacy 4. Advocate to smooth digital switch-over	1. 7 media outlets 2. group of business consultants 3.1 Charter of Journalistic Ethics 3.2 Civic Development Institute 4.1 Institute for Development of Freedom of Information 4.2 Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters.	1. 7 Grants (Q1-3) (\$415,935) 2. Weekly consulting sessions (Q1-4), 3 trainings on management (Q1), marketing (Q2), fundraising (Q3), Media Advertisement Fair (Q4) (\$70,000) 3.1 Media Monitoring(Q2), 3 trainings in journalism (Q1-3), annual Media Conference (Q4) (\$60,000) 3.2 publish Media Literacy manual (Q2), Train teachers (Q3) (\$30,000) 4.1 Draft policies, advocate for digital switch-over (Q1-4) (\$40,000) 4.2 Organize public information campaign (Q1-4) (\$40,000)	Hatia Jinikhadze (Manager) Irakli Tsertsvadze (Coordinator) Mako Gogoberidze (Coordinator) Irina Javakhidze (Assistant)	1. We will support 8 media outlets in High Budget Scenario. 2. We will support one more training and a study tour in high budget scenario. 3. We will not be able to support any of 3.1 and 3.2 activities in low budget scenario.
Field # 2: Higher Education Support 1. Improve HE quality 2. Increase disadvantaged groups' access to HE and strengthen democratic governance of HEIs 3. Ensure civil society participation in HE policy dialogue	1. Center for Social Sciences; International Institute for Education Policy, Planning and Management 2. Center for Social Sciences; International Institute for Education Policy Planning and Management 3. Center for International Education; Student Zone, Orange Club, Laboratory 1918.	1. Fund 2 policy papers and 2 advocacy campaigns (Q1-4) (\$80,000); 2. Fund 2 policy papers and 2 advocacy campaigns (Q1-4) (\$80,000); 3. 10 public debates (Q1-4) (\$30,000); Fund 1 Standing Committee operations (Q2-4) (\$26,000); Award 6 grants to student advocacy campaigns (Q2-4) (\$40,000)	Khatuna Ioseliani (Manager) Ani Akhalkatsi (Coordinator)	1. We will add 4 media campaigns and increase number of public debates on reform initiatives in High Budget Scenario. 2. We will not support student group campaigns and decrease number of public debates on reform initiatives in a Low Budget Scenario.
Field #3: Engaging Regional & Global Institutions in Support of Open Society Values 1. Strengthen government accountability 2. Combat discrimination and improve minority rights protection 3. Increase personal data security	1. Group of AFP Alumni 2. Georgian Young Lawyers Association 3. Transparency International Georgia	1. Sustain Group of AFP Alumni monitoring of GoG commitments vis-à-vis EU (Q2-3) (\$70,000); Support external and internal advocacy campaigns (Q4) (\$60,000) 2. Monitor and document AD Law implementation (Q2-4) (\$60,000) 3. Grant for Special Commission capacity building and data protection policy evaluation (\$40,000, Q1-4)	Khatuna Ioseliani (Manager) Ivane Chkhikvadze (Coordinator) Tamri Tsereteli (Assistant)	1. We will not support internal advocacy campaign in a Low Budget Scenario. 2. We will add monitoring of the implementation of EU-integration and communication strategy in a High Budget Scenario.

Concept 1. Pretrial Justice & Liberalization of Criminal Justice Policy

Goals	2014 Milestones	Activities	Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators	Significant deviations in case of High or Low budget approval
Goal #1: Transformation of Criminal Justice Policy	Administrative detention is abolished; minor offenses are transferred from administrative to criminal code	Advocacy campaign for changing existing practices of administrative detention; propose new (liberal) sanctions for minor crimes in the Criminal Code; monitor application of alternatives to pretrial detention, use of non-custodial sentences, functioning of early release system, and compliance to ECHR standards	Working group consisting of Justice and Governance Program (JGP); Partner NGOs: Art. 42, GYLA, EMC; Meetings with representatives from MoJ, Parliamentary Legal Committee, and the working group; Staff members: Nika Jeiranashvili, Vako Natsvlishvili, and the manager	Low budget: We will not work on abolishing administrative detention. High budget: We will launch extensive advocacy campaign on changing ill-practices of administrative detention.
Goal #2: Guarantee Equality of Arms	OSGF proposed recommendations are incorporated in criminal legislation and proceedings; procedural safeguards are applied in administrative cases;	Prepare recommendations (including legislative drafts) on procedural safeguards and due process; advocate for the implementation of the recommendations; monitor the implementation.	Legal Aid Reformers' Network, OSJI, Coalition for Independent and Transparent Judiciary; staff members: Nika Jeiranashvili, Marina Gvimradze, external experts: Besarion Bokhashvili, Moris Shalikashvili and others.	Low budget : We will not advocate for implementing the recommendations. High budget: We will monitor the implementation process.
Goal #3: Elimination of Torture and Ill-treatment	OSGF recommendations on preventing torture and ill-treatment are shared by decision-makers and institutional reforms are launched	Monitoring penitentiaries and temporary detention places; advocacy for institutionalization of torture and ill-treatment prevention mechanisms (based on findings and recommendations of OSGF initiated study on torture in Georgian prisons).	Working group consisting of JGP staff, International Center for Prison Studies, Penal Reform International, Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT), Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture, GYLA; Meetings with representatives of Ministry of Corrections, Prosecutor General and the working group; Staff members: Nika Jeiranashvili, Tinatin Bolkvadze	Low budget: We will shift solely to monitoring penitentiaries. High budget: We will advocate for launching institutional reforms.

Concept 2. Decentralization and Local Democracy Development

Goals	2014 Milestones	Activities	Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators	Significant deviations in case of High or Low budget approval
Goal #1: ensure institutional and financial independence of self-governance	1. The jurisdictions between and competencies of central and local governments are clarified by respective legislation; 2. Tax Code is amended enabling accumulation of certain types of taxes directly in local budget.	Analyse current legislation touching on jurisdictions and competencies of central and local governments; public consultations with civil society representatives, academics and local residents; prepare draft amendments in Organic Law on Self-governance and Tax Code; model (pilot) the proposed changes in 1 municipal unit; advocate for parliamentary adoptions.	Public Advisory Council; hire 7 external experts; 1 grant to Civil Development Agency; 1 grant to "Studio Re;" meetings with MRDI and relevant Parliamentary Committees; staff members: Tinatin Bolkvadze (manager), Vakhtang Natsvlishvili, Marina Gvimradze, Tamar Tsereteli	Low budget: We won't work on amendments to Tax Code. High budget: We will model (pilot) the proposed changes (new competencies, boundaries, budget parameters, etc) of the reform in 1 municipality and hold public consultations.
Goal #2 : prevent risks of corruption and ensure civil participation	1.Package of recommendations for reducing corruption is elaborated and preparation of respective draft laws is started; 2. Mechanisms of civil participation in decision-making process are adopted in respective legislation.	Develop a concept paper on preventing the risks of corruption; prepare a package of recommendations and action plans; advocate for establishing a separate sub-group within the Anti-corruption State Council; conduct research on international best practice of civil participation in local decision-making; hold local CSOs' forums; draft amendments to the Organic Law on Self-governance and advocate for its adoption.	Public Advisory Council; Grants to Transparency International Georgia, Civil Society Institute and Economic Policy Research Center; 2 grants to local NGOs; staff members: Tinatin Bolkvadze; Vakhtang Natsvlishvili, Nino Kiknavelidze	Low budget: We won't work on amendments to Tax Code. High budget: We will model (pilot) the proposed changes of the reform in 1 municipality and hold public consultations.
Goal #3: monitor the reform implementation	1. Local Democracy annual report is elaborated; 2. Gaps and shortcomings are identified with local NGOs during reform implementation; 3. Local elections 2014 are monitored.	Prepare annual report; identify gaps and shortcomings with local NGOs during reform implementation; monitoring local election 2014.	Public Advisory Council; hire 5 independent experts; 3 grants to local CSOs; 3 grants to the NGOs working on election observation; staff members: Tinatin Bolkvadze, Vakhtang Natsvlishvili, Marina Gvimradze	Low budget: We won't monitor local elections 2014 and won't identify shortcomings during reform implementation. High budget: We will monitor local elections 2014.

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Concept 3. Promote Right to Health for Marginalized Groups

Goals	2014 Milestones	Activities	Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators	Significant deviations in case of High or Low budget approval
Goal #1: Set up mechanisms to protect health rights of marginalized groups	Action plan for the ratification of the Disability rights convention (CRPD), shadow reports for international bodies are submitted; recommendations for decreasing barriers of harm reduction; services are subited to MoH and Moli; recommendations for ECD and MH system improvement is elaborated and incorporated in the state program and action plan;	CEDAW report for UN (training and elaboration of the report); Protect patient's rights by juridical support and strategic litigation; elaborate action plan for ratification and implementation of UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities; working on shadow report on right to health for UN special reporter; Promote ECD and MH system reform through advocacy and consultation efforts; Evaluation and Monitoring of Hep C state program; Coordination of legislative changes for the decriminalization of DU;	Staff members: Irma Khabazi (manager), Nino Kiknadze, Marina Chokheli, Nato Pitshkelauri; Georgian bioethics and patients rights society, Georgian Young Lawyers Association, Global Initiative in Psychiatry, Georgian Harm Reduction Network	Low budget: tie-off the work on reports for international bodies; Tie-off the work supporting decriminalization of DU;
Goal #2: Overcome discrimination and exclusion in healthcare system and empower community based model services	pediatric palliative hospice is functional; trained doctors, nurses and allied professionals provide decent care while using modern guidelines and other supporting material; model service for psychiatric patients is operational; small group homes for intellectually disabled people is operational; children with special needs get community based services	Support establishment and functioning (piloting) of model pediatric palliative care service; Professional development of doctors nurses and other supportive staff; challenge barriers to social inclusion of people with mental disabilities; promote development of model services for children with special needs;	Staff members: Irma Khabazi (manager), Nino Kiknadze, Nato Pitshkelauri; National Palliative Care association, transfiguration Marcy Center, Hand in Hand, Evidence Based Practice Center, Children of Georgia	Low budget: no support for professional development for pediatric palliative care High budget: We will work on the development of model services for children with special needs
Goal #3: break down barriers by raising community voices on issues pertinent to healthcare and human rights	People with disabilities participate in the process of ratification of UN convention; quality TV plots and articles on human rights and health are disseminated; documentaries with participation of patients using story telling have circulated;	Campaign by Mobilizing NGO's, persons with physical disabilities and Media representatives for advocating ratification of the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities; Advocating the expansion of community based services by using of narrative medicine and movie making; Advocacy work for the state program for pediatric palliative care; Advocate for breaking corruption and monopoly for increasing access to medicines; Advocacy for rights of WDU and overdose prevention;	Staff members: Irma Khabazi, Nino Kiknadze, Marina Chokheli, Nato Pitshkelauri Children of Georgia, Georgian Harm Reduction Network; Autism Society of Georgia; Georgian Autism association; Association of professionals and parents of children with Down syndrome, GeCAB	Low budget: Reduced advocacy work on access to essential medicines and harm reduction; No support for advocacy work for the pediatric palliative care; High budget: Support on increasing of sustainability of self organizations