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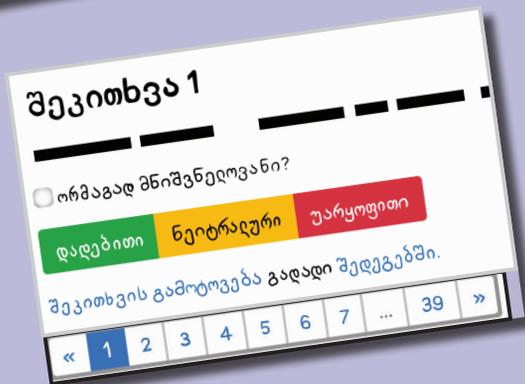
THE MANUAL

“ONLINE VOTE-O-METER”

VOTER ADVICE APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION IN GEORGIA -

LESSONS LEARNED



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FOREWORD

"The main idea of the "Online Vote-O-Meter" is to give the voter a tool to make an informed choice in the upcoming elections. In Europe, this model is widely used not only in national elections but also in the run-up to local elections to help voters get the information they need in a context where a rather large and diverse amount of information is disseminated. In the case of Georgia, I find it interesting because Georgians like to talk politics, sometimes emotionally, and that leads to serious discussions. "Online Vote-O-Meter" allows voters to think primarily about the party's arguments and decide accordingly, not whether they like a particular person or which party has the most media support. The app is an opportunity for smaller parties to present better arguments, regardless of whether they are widely represented in the media. I think in the case of Georgia it is also important to note that civil society has opinions on various issues, which means that they can offer the parties some kind of agenda on what issues should be discussed before the elections. They can influence the election campaign and raise important issues for the public, regardless of whether the party talks about them.

In Georgia, many parties contest elections, so this is a good tool to understand how close the party is to your personal standards. In the long run, civil society can familiarise themselves with this online tool and see if it is actually followed by a particular political party and to what extent the promises made match the actual actions of the party.

Therefore, the use of this tool is important for Georgia. "



BENEDICT IVANOV
Excerpt from the
interview, October
2020

**"Online Vote-O-
Meter for the 2020
Parliamentary Elec-
tions", author of the
project;**

**International Expert-
Consultant of the
Fund "Sukhumi"**

INTRODUCTION

In the conditions of low public trust in political institutions, as evidenced by numerous studies¹ conducted in Georgia, it is of great importance to take measures to strengthen political trust. It is a political trust that shapes citizens' willingness to comply with collective obligations and laws, and their willingness to participate in a political decision-making process that is a priority for them. The activity and participation of the population in the political process ensures the implementation of policies tailored to their priorities and needs, the legitimacy of the decisions made, and the increase of accountability of decision-makers to citizens, which is a necessary condition for participatory democracy.

Elections are the most powerful instrument for expressing the will of citizens, and the **pre-election campaign process** is one of the most favorable environments for citizens to participate and communicate priority and topical issues for the population to political actors. Greater participation and involvement of civil society during the election period increase the chances of citizens to put topical and priority issues on the agenda of political parties. Maximum information of citizens about the priorities and directions reflected in the programs of political parties is the best condition for an informed and deliberate choice of the voter during the elections.

Since 2005, the Fund "Sukhumi" has been actively working to raise public awareness before the elections by publishing and disseminating a collection of pre-election program documents of political parties, organizing information meetings or round tables, and promoting dialogue between the population and political parties through "Women Voters' Clubs" established in 10 municipalities of Western Georgia.

Many years of work experience have proved that the dissemination of the collection of the parties' political programs and the meetings with the constituencies are not enough to reach out the masses and provide information in a complete and

¹ The Caucasus Research Resource Center 2017 (CRR) "Caucasus Barometer 2017 Georgia". Available at <https://caucasusbarometer.org/ge/cb-ge/TRUPPS/>



From the Photo Archive of the Fund “Sukhumi”



understandable language. Therefore, the need for new and more effective forms of information sharing was on the agenda of the Fund “Sukhumi”, which gave rise to the desire and attempt to replicate in Georgia the “Voter Advice Application” successfully implemented and practiced in many European countries.

In February 2020, the Fund “Sukhumi” was able to launch a project supported by the International Visegrad Fund - “Online Vote-O-Meter for the 2020 Parliamentary Elections”, which aimed at both to inform the population before the elections and to increase the accountability of the parties.

The launch of the application was preceded by quite active cooperation with civil society organizations operating in the Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia), which carefully shared their own countries’ experiences in implementing the application - what difficulties and achievements they had in this area. Taking into account the lessons learned, they provided practical recommendations that contributed significantly to the development of an online platform strategy based on the experience of the Visegrad countries, while adapting it to the specificities and peculiarities of Georgia.

Within the project, series of meetings with representatives of political parties and the public were held to present the nature of the application and the importance of their participation. In order to expand the scope of information about the Voter Advice Application and to raise the interest of the population, a rather intensive media campaign was launched, through the active use of social media, online media information portals, TV, and cooperation with journalists.

The "Online Vote-O-Meter" was launched in the first days of September 2020, and was in operation until November 21, and it was eventually filled by 68,780 people.² This clearly shows the high interest of voters in the future political course of the country and the social order of the priority issues for the newly convened Parliament.

The strategy and approach chosen by the project and the Fund "Sukhumi" in launching the "Voter Advice Application-Online Vote-O-Meter", is a very unique and interesting methodology for replication the similar initiatives in the future. The methodology developed by the organization is an innovative mechanism, which is based on the specifics of Georgia and serves as an effective tool to inform citizens, increase their participation and raise accountability of the political parties.

The purpose of this methodological guide is to provide stakeholders with information and share the Fund "Sukhumi"'s experiences and lessons learned in the process of launching and implementing the "Online Vote-O-Meter" and to facilitate the multiplication and replication of similar applications in different contexts in the future.

The description of each phase of the project allows the reader to become familiar with the detailed methodology of the application, which will be useful for active members of civil society and organizations working in various fields to inform citizens, increase their participation and strengthen accountability through state institutions.

² The "Online Vote-O-Meter" launched by the Fund "Sukhumi" is available at <http://onlinemricxveli.ge/>



CHAPTER I:

THE NATURE AND MEANING OF THE VOTER ADVICE APPLICATION - “ONLINE VOTE-O-METER”

EKATERINE GAMAKHARIA

Voter Advice App “Online Vote-O-Meter” is a voter information application based on the best practices of European countries, including Visegrad countries. The application provides information about the electoral programs of political parties in a very innovative, simple and interesting way.

By filling in the application: **the voter** can find out which political party is closest to their views in order to make an informed and well-considered decision at the elections. **Political parties** are given the opportunity with minimal expenses and effort, to inform and raise the interest of the population, and thus to increase motivation of voters to participate in the Parliamentary elections.

In order to ensure transparency and publicity of the process, experts from the Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia), non-governmental organizations active in Georgia with different profiles, representatives of scientific and professional associations, as well as ordinary citizens were actively involved **in the process of developing questions** on the online platform.

Citizens also had the opportunity to submit their own questions to the political parties via the social media. The questionnaire summarized the most pressing issues for the population in various fields (foreign policy and defense, economy, social security, education, ecology, gender equality, conflict resolution, etc.). Political parties could, if they wished, offer a question themselves and express an opinion on a topic of their choice.

The specificity of the innovative project implemented by the Fund “Sukhumi” was reflected in the fact that citizens had the opportunity to find out not only how close the candidates’ political agenda is to their views, but it also created other parallel opportunities, including:

- ❖ **Get condensed information about political party programs** - As party platforms become more complex and confusing, it is difficult for voters to find a party or candidate that shares the common views with them. The condensed and understandable presentation of information that this app provides, helps voters make a decision, even if it comes at the cost of oversimplifying the political parties' platforms. This helps to increase voter turnout and the level of political education;
- ❖ **Voters are informed about the political programs and positions of different parties** on different topics and can clearly see the difference between them;
- ❖ **Increases the accountability of parties to the electorate**, as voters will be able to assess and compare well the position declared by the party and the actual actions in case of their future entry into the Parliament;
- ❖ **Helps voters** who have not yet made a decision and are uncertain of their position;
- ❖ **The questions in the application inform political parties about priority and topical issues for the electorate** and perhaps some of them will focus on issues in their political programs that were not considered before;
- ❖ **Increases fairness and competition between parties in the elections.**

Despite many benefits, there are **some challenges** in implementing the application:

- ❖ Difficulties in accessing the online platform, especially for people living in regions and villages, due to poor internet coverage, lack of smart technologies, or lack of skills to use them (especially among the middle-aged and elderly population). Accordingly, to promote the application, the Fund "Sukhumi" has placed a special focus on young people and, with their help, has tried to involve a large part of the community in the process of filling out the application;
- ❖ Responsibility for answering the questions and communicating about the application was often delegated to individuals who were less motivated or not sufficiently qualified to complete the questionnaire;
- ❖ In the process of cooperation with the political parties, there were examples of antagonism towards the representatives of the civil society or less motivation to cooperate, resulting in refusal to fill in the questionnaires or to their improper completion.



Specifics of the Fund "Sukhumi" "Online Vote-O-Meter":

- The application was open for participation to any interested person regardless of age;
- After all the questions were answered, a diagram appeared on the screen. It showed the percentage of a person whose political program and vision most closely matched the voter's position. In addition, the app showed the party's answer to each question in a separate window to a person who clicked on a party's comment, position, or excerpt from the election platform;
- In filling out the questionnaire, political parties had complete freedom to answer a specific closed question, to take a position on each question/position based on their own political program, in the form and scope they felt necessary. Some parties left some questions uncommented, stating that their party's position on these issues was quite exhaustive and did not require further explanation, while some parties did not take a position on certain issues in their election program;
- A statistical analysis of the answers and results recorded in the application is not possible, as citizens did not identify themselves in any way when filling in the questionnaire and registering in the application. There was also no restriction on a person completing the application again. The online platform was accessible to any person and its sole purpose was to inform the voters about the political agenda and program of the active political entities.

CHAPTER II:

COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE WITH PARTNERS IN THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

EKATERINE GAMAKHARIA

The launch of the Voter Advice Application was preceded by intensive cooperation between the Fund “Sukhumi” and partners in three Visegrad countries - Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia.³ Through the meetings dedicated to the exchange of experiences, thematic trainings and the publication of analytical articles, the partners actively shared information on the electoral system and climate in their country. Using concrete examples, we were able to demonstrate the diversity and specificity of voter outreach applications, as well as the factors that facilitate and hinder the implementation of online platforms. The future strategy and establishment of the Fund “Sukhumi and concrete measures to implement its application in Georgia were developed on the basis of their shared experience, lessons learned and given recommendations.

The cooperation was implemented in several stages:

Partner meetings: Dedicated to the exchange of information between partners on the political context of their countries and the political activism of their citizens. Representatives of the Visegrad countries described in detail the diversity, specificities and impact of voter advice applications in their countries on increasing the accountability of politicians and changing the behavior of voters themselves. And Georgian colleagues provided information about the political landscape and peculiarities of Georgia.

³ KLARA CHMOLIKOVA-COZLOVA Gender Studies, o.p.s. (Czech Republic);

KATARZYNA ZIELINSKA Prof. UJ, Dr hab. Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University; “Notes from Poland” Foundation (Poland)

PETER GURAN Ph Dr. PhD. Trnava University in Trnava



From the web-page of the Fund “Sukhumi”

25.11.19

On November 24-25 a two-day workshop was conducted in the office of Fund “Sukhumi”, where experts from the Visegrad countries and Georgia talked about political situation in their countries, discussed attitudes of civil societies and political parties to online tools and outlined draft questions for the "Online Vote-O-Meter for 2020 Georgian Parliamentary Elections".



The partners' meeting deepened the awareness of the representatives of the Fund "Sukhumi" about the electoral environment, experience and best practices of informing citizens and their participation in the elections in the Visegrad countries. The meeting predicted possible challenges that might arise in the implementation of the application, as well as discussed possible coping strategies. The meeting developed the initial version of the application questionnaire and issued specific recommendations for consultations with civil society professional groups and a wide range of ordinary citizens, ensuring that the highest priority issues for the voter were reflected in the questionnaire and made them much more credible and legitimate in the eyes of the political parties.

Publication of the collection of analytical articles: In order to systematize and compile the experiences of the countries involved in the project, a collection of analytical articles "Experience of Visegrad countries and Georgia on the Development of the Electoral System Enhancing Participation of Citizens in the Elections" was prepared and published. The collection presents five analytical articles in which experts from the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia share their experiences in their countries on the formation, development and participation of citizens in the electoral system. Their articles describe the role of the online platform "Voter Advice Application", already widely used in their countries, in raising awareness and activism in the run-up to elections. The strengths and weaknesses of the application are listed in the papers and, based on the lessons learned, specific recommendations are made on how to better and more effectively implement this platform in Georgia. The collection



Collection of the analytical articles, Fund "Sukhumi", March, 2020, available at <http://www.fsv4.ge/index.php/en/news/publication-news/268-collection-of-analytical-articles-for-the-development-of-the-electoral-system>



also reflects two analytical articles submitted by Georgian experts on the importance of political trust and the likely electoral models for the 2020 parliamentary elections. One of the articles analyzes the importance of political and public trust for the sustainable development of democracy in Georgia and provides specific strategies for overcoming the lack of political trust. The second describes the models of the possible electoral systems for the 2020 parliamentary elections presented by the main political parties in Georgia. The article presents possible scenarios of these models and their impact on the political landscape and political development of Georgia and analyzes their consistency with the Constitution of Georgia.

Training: Advocacy to Involve Citizens and Political Parties in Voter Advice Application - A two-day training conducted by a Czech partner for the staff of

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19.02.20

On a two-day workshop, Klara Cozlova shared the experience of her country – Czech Republic, on the implementation of "Online Vote-O-Meter" to the Georgian partners. An advocacy plan and a working strategy have been worked out. The workshop was conducted in the office of Fund “Sukhumi” Tbilisi representation, in the framework of the project “Online Vote-O-Meter for 2020 Georgian Parliamentary Elections” supported by the International Visegrad Fund.



Fund “Sukhumi” with the aim of developing a specific advocacy strategy and action plan to raise awareness and increase interest of citizens and political parties in Voter Advice Application.

The training analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, possible challenges or contributing factors to advocacy, and identified specific target groups and allies for advocacy. Two different action plans were also developed: 1. a political party-oriented advocacy campaign and 2. an advocacy campaign targeting the general public. The documents developed at the training were a roadmap for the Fund “Sukhumi” to achieve the advocacy goals and objectives.

Training: “Online Media Campaign to Promote the Application” - The training conducted by the Polish expert aimed to familiarize the staff of the Fund “Sukhumi”

From the web-page of the Fund “Sukhumi”

05.06.20

Voting Advise Application VAA - What Is It? What meaning does it have? How does it work? What is its European model? How to introduce this model in Georgia?

The online workshop for the staff of the Fund “Sukhumi” was dedicated to these issues.

This project is supported by the Visegrad Fund and therefore the Visegrad countries are meant in the essence of European Experience.

This time, the European model was presented on the example of Poland. Dr. Katarzyna Zielińska (Institute of Sociology) spoke about it with an overview of specific e-pages.

She familiarized the participants of the workshop with Poland’s experience in integrating VAA (Voting Advise Application) and its results, as well as practical tools for disseminating VAA through media and online platforms, and how the population was involved in the process.



Trust and voting turnout in Poland

- Low turnout results from lack of stable party preference among voters, instability of the supply side, with political parties continuously changing their manifesto premises and following them only loosely when in government (accountability issues).
- In recent years we can see an increase in turnout in parliamentary elections (50.92% in 2015 and 61.74% in 2019) and stabilisation of political preferences and the party system in Poland.



with successful examples of online and media campaigns based on the Polish experience and to develop a specific action plan for the popularization of the voter advice application.

During the training, participants had the opportunity to discuss the organisation's internal resources, the factors that contribute to the successful management of the media campaign, and the factors that hinder it. Strategies for working with journalists, TV outlets and online media platforms, as well as ways how to effectively use the social media were discussed and worked out to ensure the efficiency and scaling-up of the campaign.

During the cooperation with the experts of the Visegrad countries in the framework of the project, the exchange of experiences and lessons learned from the practice of their countries has significantly helped the Fund "Sukhumi" to identify strategies and actions that have created a real condition for the raised interest of the population and political parties. The experiences shared by the partners and the recommendations presented, significantly mitigated the challenges encountered during the development and launching of the application, ensured greater involvement of the citizens and raised awareness of the population about the political programs of major political parties participating in the elections.

CHAPTER III:

COLLABORATION WITH POLITICAL PARTIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE APPLICATION

EKATERINE GAMAKHARIA

The Fund “Sukhumi” has a long history of cooperation with political parties.

The organization has been actively working to raise awareness of the voters in Western Georgia before elections since 2005. The “Women Voter's Clubs” established by the Fund “Sukhumi” have been actively involved in disseminating political party programs and informing the public. By creating and disseminating a collection of party program documents, through information events or round tables, the organization promoted dialog between the population and the political parties and actively advocated for the integration of the priority issues and needs of the citizens into the party programs. Since 2006, the Fund “Sukhumi” has been working with representatives of the “women’s wing” of political parties to strengthen their role and address gender equality issues and women’s priorities and needs in political programs. The long-lasting and politically neutral cooperation of the Fund “Sukhumi” with local political party organizations has laid the foundation for active work with the City Council members elected at the local self-governments to implement gender equality policies.

In 2013, the Fund “Sukhumi” has piloted the first institutional mechanism for gender equality at the local level called the “Gender Equality Councils” and set the first precedent for gender-equitable local policies.⁴ The Fund “Sukhumi” continues to work actively on strengthening institutional capacity of the gender equality councils in different municipalities of Western Georgia.

⁴ The first “Gender Equality Councils” created by the Fund “Sukhumi” in Georgia were established in 2013-2016 in Kutaisi, Senaki, Ozurgeti and Batumi.



From the web-page of the Fund "Sukhumi"

31.07.20

Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi" representative office in Tbilisi has started meetings with the political parties. The parties have expressed interest and willingness to cooperate. At the moment we have met the following political parties: Eka Beselia's political party "For Justice", "Lelo for Georgia", "Girchi", "United National Movement", "European Georgia".



20.08.20

The stage of meetings with political parties has finished. The staff of Tbilisi representative office of the Fund "Sukhumi" this time met with members of four parties ("Georgian Dream", Aleko elisashvili – the "Citizens", "Our Georgia - Solidarity Alliance", "Reformer"). They were provided with information about the project, the "Online Vote-O-Meter" and the importance of its implementation.



To ensure the involvement of political parties in the “Online Vote-O-Meter” for the 2020 parliamentary elections, the Fund "Sukhumi" has adopted a **parallel top-down and bottom-up communication strategy** involving party headquarters and their direct leaders, as well as representatives of the local political party organizations.

On the one hand, the transparency and full project information provided to the party leaders significantly contributed to the raised interest of the parties to join the application. The contact persons from the parties for further communication were assigned and questionnaires were timely filled in. In cases where access and communication with party leaders at the central level were difficult, the representatives of local party organizations, familiar with the Fund “Sukhumi” political neutrality and with long-lasting experience of cooperation, played an important role. With their support, party headquarters were connected and cooperation was initiated.

Due to the limitation in reflecting all political parties in the application, active communication was carried out only with the already high-ranked and well-known political entities, **with high ratings in the previous parliamentary elections**, as well as **with the newly registered parties**, which were quite active in the election marathon and attracted high interest and attention of the citizens. Finally, thirteen political parties have joined the application.⁵

Informing the parties as **fully and transparently as possible about the organization’s activities**, the nature of the project, the objectives, the source of funding and the forms chosen to promote the application, significantly contributed to their credibility towards the organization. Many forms of communication, such as correspondence, telephone calls and face-to-face meetings, have been employed with the parties, which has ensured the productive cooperation and timely completion of questionnaires by the parties.

The questionnaire was composed of closed questions related to different fields and areas. Political parties have been given the opportunity to answer - **“Yes, No,**

5 Eka Beselia - P.P. For Justice; Citizens Political Union - “Lelo for Georgia” (comments were retrieved from their party program); “Girchi”; “United National Movement”; “Shalva Natelashvili - Georgian Labor Party”; “Nino Burjanadze - United Georgia Democratic Movement”; “Choice for the Fatherland”; “Free Georgia (Kakha Kukava, Giorgi Tsulaia)”; “Strategy Aghmashenebeli” (comments retrieved from their party program); Aleko Elisashvili - “Citizens”; “Reformer”; Republican Party; “Georgian Dream” (refrain from cooperation. The answers to the questions were retrieved from the political program of the party).



I partly agree", and at the same time to provide **concise and simple comments on each question**. In order to spark the interest of political parties to join the application, they were offered a possibility to propose their own question to be reflected in the application. Several parties took advantage and used this opportunity.

In the process of launching the application, the interest of the parties was clearly expressed, especially **by the new political parties with less financial resources**, as it has been providing them opportunity to increase visibility and raise awareness of voters about the political programs with minimal cost and effort. Application served as a tool to communicate with voters, to raise their interests and motivation to participate in the parliamentary elections. Due to the rather intense nature of the pre-election marathon and the heavy workload of political leaders, some political parties limited themselves by answering only the closed questions and leaving the window for comments blank. Some questions that were left uncommented were filled with relevant excerpts based on the study of their political programs.⁶

During the project implementation, **antagonistic and skeptical attitudes** towards CSOs' initiatives **by some individual political parties**, and their **less motivation to share information on priority issues for the population** were also observed. Such attitude clearly weakens the principle of transparency and openness of the pre-election process and creates the risk of a low level of accountability to voters in the future and a high probability of non-compliance of the electoral promises given to the constituencies.

Lessons learnt:

- ❑ Transparency of the Fund "Sukhumi" activity contributed to the establishment of links and cooperation with political parties (political parties have been provided with detailed information on the project purpose and objectives, source of funding and planned activities);
- ❑ Different means of communication, such as e-mail, telephone or meetings (online and face-to-face) have contributed to the effectiveness of the collaboration;

⁶ "Lelo for Georgia"; "Strategy Aghmashenebeli"

- ❑ The political neutrality and impartiality of the Fund “Sukhumi” have made a positive impact on establishing cooperation with the parties;
- ❑ The variety of actions planned for the popularization of the application has aroused the interest of political parties;
- ❑ Direct communication with political party leaders has made cooperation even more effective;
- ❑ Relatively more interest from political parties with less financial resources;
- ❑ While introducing the application, the representatives of political parties who were quite antagonistic towards the NGO sector and were not interested in spreading their agenda to a wider society were identified. They had their own specific electorate and tried to influence them.

The Fund “Sukhumi” continues to work to increase the accountability of political parties’ promises to the electorate and to draw attention of already elected MPs on priority and important issues for the population.



CHAPTER IV.

INFORMATION MEETINGS WITH VOTERS AS PART OF THE “ONLINE VOTE-O-METER” PROMOTION PROCESS

EMMA KAMKIA

The project clearly outlined the relevant strategy for advertising and publicizing the online voter advice application: A promotional video was created, information flyers with detailed instructions on how to use the application were issued, TV programs were broadcasted, and advertising banners were placed on the platform of internet media agencies.

In parallel with these events, meetings were planned to inform different groups of citizens, with a particular focus on relatively vulnerable groups who have less access to the Internet resources or are less likely to become users of the online application. Meetings were held with various groups in the community: youth, women, the socially vulnerable, IDPs, various professional groups (teachers, doctors, government officials, etc.) and citizens living along the dividing line of the conflict. The information meetings covered the following municipalities of Western Georgia: Kutaisi, Samtredia, Terjola, Zugdidi, Senaki, Khoni, Tskaltubo, Ambrolauri, Kobuleti, Tsalenjikha, Bagdati, Ozurgeti. A total of 1762 voters attended the meetings.

Format and structure of the meetings: The information meetings were structured, duration, time and format, location and target groups were determined, clear instructions were given to the facilitators and the appropriate skill holders were selected. The information meetings consisted of two parts. The first part was dedicated to the voter advice application, when the principles and essence of the "Online Vote-O-Meter" was explained in detail to the audience. The second part was an interactive dialogue with a representatives of the invited political parties and went into question-and-answer mode, depending on the specific interest of the target audience.

In other words, the project popularized the “Voter Advice Application” and created awareness through direct communication with groups of voters and electoral political actors themselves.

From the web-page
of the Fund "Sukhumi"

10.07.20

On July 10, a workshop on the organization/management of public discussions was held. The workshop was held in a mixed format - some of the participants were in the office of the Fund "Sukhumi", and some of them participated from different regions through the online platform Zoom. They talked about the current challenges and prospects, outlined work plans and future activities. The workshop was led by Ekaterine Gamakharia, Head of the Fund "Sukhumi" Tbilisi Representation.



21.07.20

How should public discussions be conducted? What information should be provided to the meeting participants about the "Online Vote O Meter", its importance? A meeting was held in the office of the Fund "Sukhumi" with the mobilizers involved in the project was devoted to this topic. They discussed the duration of the planned briefings.





"During these meetings, the idea of an "Online Vote-O-Meter" was presented as a necessary tool for informing voters, so that citizens could learn about the programs of political entities, have the opportunity to compare the positions of parties on issues important to them. Our goal was to motivate and interest them in the given platform, as well as to facilitate an interactive dialogue with the invited political entity."

"The participants of the meeting had different attitudes. A part of the citizens showed interest in the political process and, as mentioned, had actively observed the election debate before. Some of them did not hide their nihilistic attitude and distrust towards political authorities and the subject of elections in general. However, in most cases, it was possible to raise their motivation and interest in online application."

"Our goal was to reach the widest possible range of voters. The category we met (IDPs, socially vulnerable persons, etc.) may have less literacy in modern technologies, but they have their own needs and expectations. The fact that they were informed about specifics of the elections and online voter advice application by a neutral side without any political agitation was perceived very positively and increased their interest."

Facilitators of meetings

Citizens stressed that they generally notice a negative trend. The flow of information to voters before elections is characterized by the "slinging of mud" by competing entities, and less explained, the programs of political parties, their focus on domestic or foreign policy, education, economic platforms and others.

Therefore, **these meetings were very important for them due to two factors:** they received detailed information about the possibility of using the online platform and had a direct dialogue with the representatives of political parties and raised the issues of concern to them.

"Speaking about Georgian society, the opinion is often expressed that Georgians are politically active, have an "order" of a certain political agenda, whereupon political parties, influenced by the factor of "social desirability", offer voters issues and programs to which they find it difficult to orient themselves. Therefore, many election promises are offered to citizens as bait, which loses their urgency after the elections. Unfortunately, the culture becomes "lame" that the political entity is responsible for fulfilling its promises and that voters fundamentally demand fulfillment of the conditions given to them."

Representative of the civil society organization participating in the meeting

INFORMATION MEETINGS KUTAISI





The peculiarity of the information meetings was that a direct dialogue of the representatives of various political parties with the electorate was ensured. The electoral political actors, especially new political forces or opposition parties, often complain that they have little or no opportunity to present themselves properly in the media, in political debates, which put them in an unequal position with the ruling or major political parties, which are “spoiled” by the media attention. These meetings filled that gap in the sense that the Fund “Sukhumi” was a “conductor” and facilitator of dialogue of political parties participating in application with their constituencies, providing the audience a benevolent space for healthy discussion, where the critical opinions were expressed and the citizens’ priority issues were raised.

From the beginning of the project implementation, the organization has offered an active cooperation to all political entities that expressed a desire to meet with citizens, where besides the promotion of the application, they had the opportunity to talk about the party programs, listen to voters, learn more about citizens’ attitudes to social and political processes. Information meetings were the next stage of this cooperation.

Given the experience that political parties are usually less program-oriented and more in the “hunt” for more or less relevant issues for the electorate and try to “adapt” to these issues in order to “win” the heart of the voters, their pre-election promises revolve around the most popular issues. At the meetings, political parties were limited in that they could not “deviate” from their positions reflected in their political programs.

“Political decisions are made on the basis of how much the voter likes this or that candidate personally, or how much the leading figures of the party arouse his sympathies. Arguments, organized programs are given less importance. In this regard, these meetings were also useful for the parties to take more responsibility for voter accountability and well-organized programs. At one of the meetings, the political unit representative noted that his party’s response to the application was strange and unexpected even to him.”

Project participant comment

“Because of the peculiarities of election campaigns, relatively young political entities have fewer opportunities to introduce themselves to the public, to present their vision and positions, and to receive feedback. Hear what we need, what we expect, and what we think is most needed. This meeting answered many questions for both sides.”

Project participant comment

INFORMATION MEETINGS KHONI



TSKALTUBO



KOBULETI



OZURGETI





“The electronic “Online Vote-O-Meter” brings the ‘product’ of political parties together in one space, and the voter have the opportunity to learn more about their positions, adjust them to their own views, and see the appealing visions and promises which resonate to their political taste. This is what I particularly like in this application.”

Comment of the meeting participant

Frequently asked questions for Political Parties: At the meetings, depending on the specifics of the target group, questions were asked about health, social security, housing, utility bills, and other social issues. The issues regarding the purpose of social assistance, re-assessment of the families’ living conditions, were often heard during the meetings since according to the citizens, the blind social policy puts the people, who do not even have a living wage and are excluded from social assistance in a difficult situation. In their opinion, raising the issue of social justice should be the priority direction on the political agenda of the political parties. Especially at a time when the disastrous social and economic consequences of the Covid-19 are yet to be explored.

During the meeting with cultural workers, it was noted that raising the cultural sphere is a “fashionable” theme of all pre-election meetings that is not usually followed up and fulfilled. Thus, it is important, that the application provides a documented way to compare the actual position of the political parties regarding the cultural issues with the declaration of candidates on their “election wishes”, which do not always express and coincide with the real position of the political forces they represent. The participants of the meeting also spoke about their problems, such as low salaries for cultural workers, that mean that the state does not respect and value culture, which is very disappointing.

“The population needs a free space to speak. Society is more in the role of a listener, which either does not have the opportunity to ask questions or is not listened to. The “central character” of the information sessions was the citizen, who made the discussion very interactive and brought the positive outcome. Moreover, I am sure that without this meeting the most of the population would not have understood the essence and importance of the Voter Advice Application and would not have been interested in it. They asked many questions, even took brochures to pass on to the relatives. They even assume the responsibility to disseminate the information.”

“Elderly women took flyers and said they would ask children and grandchildren and complete them.”

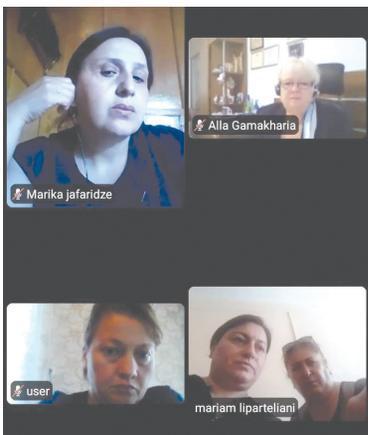
Comments from meeting facilitators

INFORMATION MEETINGS TSALENJIKHA



ONLINE MEETINGS

TSAGERI
AMBROLAURI
SAMTREDIA





“It was very attractive that for the platform it doesn’t matter how old you are, what your profession is, what your status is. The political neutrality of the application was positively perceived.”

“Some citizens also expressed a desire for more cooperation within the project. They think it would be good for them to have the opportunity to ask interesting questions and find answers.”

“We are not able to receive information and use it immediately in a second effectively. It takes a real habit. Relatively older people prefer live meetings. It also depends on which social group a person belongs to and how much he/she trusts the person organizing the meeting.”

Comments from meeting facilitators

Talking about the results and lessons learned from the information meetings held within the project, it can be said that during the meetings the voter advice application was widely promoted and awareness of citizens was raised, which was ensured by the direct communication with voters and creation of the platform for their direct communication with the political parties.

- There were more opportunities for citizens to make informed and well-considered decisions because the information meetings increased the number of citizens who were informed about the “Voter Advice Application”;
- The participants of the information meeting received comprehensive information about the “Online Vote-O-Meter”. The information with detailed instructions on how to use the application was provided in a short and understandable way;
- Voters have realized that by answering the questions, they will find out which party platform and vision is consistent with their position, and this will enable them to make a more informed choice in the future;
- It turned out that part of the population was interested in receiving new information, while the other part was indifferent and associated all meetings with electoral agitation, so it was necessary to emphasize the politically neutral nature of the project.

Specific groups of citizens and their interests - When most of the participants in the meeting were IDPs, it is clear that they were more interested in issues related to IDPs, conflict resolution, IDP policies’ issues. They did not hide the fact that wide range of issues of specific concern to them reflected in the application, have made it even more interesting and attractive.

Restrictions to the meetings - Due to pandemic restrictions, the information meetings planned in the project came into question after some time. Only some of

INFORMATION MEETINGS ZUGDIDI





them could be held indoors. The rest of the meetings were held in an open space according to the established rules. Due to the epidemic situation, the meeting was planned and conducted with special care and in compliance with all safety measures. Each participant was provided with face masks, drinking water and disinfectant. All recommendations to prevent the spread of Covid-19 were strongly upheld.

Methodological calculation - The issue of the need for information meetings was built on the fact that there is a certain category of citizens who are less technology-friendly and they could not get information reflected in the online application and use this tool. This is especially true for vulnerable groups of population with limited access to internet and information technologies and the relatively older category of citizens. They were outreached and engaged in the application with the assistance of their young family members.

Also it is noteworthy that the platform was very new and specific awareness-raising tool, that is less recognizable and would be difficult for some members of the audience to understand its benefits in a short period of time without additional instructions and “live” explanations. The citizens were also provided with information about anonymous and confidential nature of the application, which presented one of the main concern to them, has completely excluded the possibility to make their political preferences public.

Young people, including those who have not yet participated in the elections, were particularly active and open to the information they received. The project will definitely have a positive impact on shaping their electoral culture.

It was stressed at the information meetings that the process will continue after the elections, when the informed voters will remind the members of parliament their promises and demand their implementation. However, the nihilism of some part of the population regarding this issue was quite evident.

The direct meetings with voters ensured achievement of the goal - The "Vote-O-Meter" was widely promoted and the benefits of the application were explained to the broad range of the population; the germ of a new, higher political culture was fostered, and an attempt to overcome the nihilism of the citizens and to increase interest and loyalty to the elections was undertaken.

Loyalty and credibility to the Fund “Sukhumi” - A number of participants attending the information meetings were beneficiaries of the Fund “Sukhumi”. They trusted the organization and the innovative tool initiated by the Fund has inspired their interest and trust. With their support and assistance, the information about the application was disseminated within the wider society. Equipped with information and flyers they became an information-sharing channel within their own communities.

Equal starting conditions - For a certain category of citizens, it was attractive that all people using the platform, regardless of their background, social and intellectual capital, have the same starting conditions as any other person. This increased their interest in the application and neutralized the problem of vulnerable groups which had less access to the information and the ability to interpret it; and reduced the nihilism regarding the issue that nothing will change as a result of their activism.

Anonymity - Most participants at the meeting were interested in whether confidentiality was maintained and the extent to which the person who completed the questionnaire could be identified. The principle of anonymity while using the platform was very important to them.

An important feature of the information meetings was **to ensure a direct dialog between the representatives of the different parties and the voters**. The representatives of the political parties who participated in the meetings unequivocally emphasized that the very idea of the application, which was at the forefront of these meetings, served as a “bridge” in the process of communication and direct dialogue with the electorate, which took place with the participation of neutral facilitators assigned by the Fund “Sukhumi”.



CHAPTER V:

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION

LALI SHENGELIA

Significant work has been done.

We have achieved good results.

The media have played pivotal role in our success. This is natural because the influence of the media on public opinion is immeasurable.

“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter” - stated Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States in the early 19th century. At that time the term mass media, journalism (from the French word journal - newspaper) referred only to printed periodicals. More than two centuries have passed since then and the field of journalism has grown, radio and television have been added ... and now most people receive information via the Internet, social media.

The 21st century is the age of information. It is impossible to succeed without the means of mass communication. Because of its great influence on people, it is also called the “fourth government”. The media is often compared to the window through which we look at the world. They are also called the doors through which thoughts and ideas enter our consciousness.

For this reason, we have actively involved the mass media.

In addition, the Fund “Sukhumi” pays special attention to the media: for 20 years it has its own publications (magazines, newspapers, reports, methodological guidelines and manuals, analytical articles and policy papers). Over the years, the special rubrics of radio stories and TV programs in regional TV and radio outlets were broadcasted by the Fund “Sukhumi”, and currently the number of news and programs are commissioned by the organization. The Fund “Sukhumi” has trilingual (Georgian, English, Russian) websites, Facebook pages, its own YouTube channel.

Therefore, Fund “Sukhumi” has long been aware of the value and the significance of information dissemination.

The cooperation with the mass media was given a special place in this project from the very beginning.

Elections - a hot topic in the media

Elections are one of the most important events in the country. For the mass media - a profitable, interesting and topical subject. The media, as an important institution of the electoral process, gain strength, especially in the pre-election period. It also happens that through the media a person can vote for an election candidate whom he does not even know and whose election program he is not aware of.

Our work has also intensified before the elections since the project was related to the elections.

It is especially fascinating when you presented yourself to media with such words:

For the first time in Georgia - “Online Vote-O-Meter –Voter Advice Application”!

The media “likes” it when something special happens. And when it’s for the first time, it gains even more importance.

Our basic information for the media was as follows:

For the first time in Georgia – “Online Vote-O-Meter – Voter Advice Application”!

Complete the Voter Advice app - make an informed choice!

www.onlinemricxveli.ge

The app helps you figure out which political party is closest to your views so you can make an informed choice.

The application is based on the successful experience of European countries, especially Visegrad, and is being introduced in Georgia through the Fund “Sukhumi” with the support of the International Visegrad Foundation.

Any citizen can connect to the “Online Vote-O-Meter, without any restrictions and it is completely confidential.

Find out which party’s vision is closest to your position!

Go to the link www.onlinemricxveli.ge



Preparation of the information materials.

Everything is a plan in itself, and therefore everything is planned in detail: what is to be publicized, how, in what forms. We studied European practice, adapted to the Georgian environment, relied on our intuition and our own rich experience, and, of course, involved our media partners.

What was done?

We had several ways to spread the information out and get people's attention: a poster, a newsletter, a banner, and an animated video.

Posters – The posters of various sizes were printed. Typically, a poster contains textual and graphic elements. Our posters contained text only - a call to voters to fill out an online application and a link was provided. These posters were disseminated at the information meetings.

Newsletter - A triplet (a type of advertising print, folded into three sheets) was printed, in which the experience of the Fund “Sukhumi” related to the elections, the essence of the "Online Vote-O-Meter" and the instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire were outlined.

კულტურულ-კუმანიტარული ფონდი „სოხუმი“

ქალთა არასამთავრობო ორგანიზაცია, რომელიც 1997 წლიდან მუშაობს დასავლეთ საქართველოში გენდერული თანასწორობის, ქალთა პოლიტიკური გაძლიერების და სამშვიდობო პროცესში ქალთა ჩართვისთვის. თავისი პროექტებით, ორგანიზაცია 2005 წლიდან ხელს უწყობს დიალოგს მოსახლეობასა და პოლიტიკურ პარტიებს შორის.

წინასწარჩენოდ დასავლეთ საქართველოს რეგიონების მოსახლეობის ინფორმირება სხვადასხვა ფორმით მიმდინარეობდა: ამომრჩეველ ქალთა კლუბების მუშაობა, საინფორმაციო შეხვედრები, მრგვალი მაგიდები, უფუნალ-გაზეთების გამოცემა, პუბლიკაცია „საარჩევნო გზამკვლევი“ (პოლიტიკური პარტიების საპროგრამო დოკუმენტების კრებული), სატელევიზიო და რადიოსიუჟეტები, აქციები ქალ-კანდიდატთა მხარდასაჭერად.

„ონლაინ ხმის ელექტრონული მრიცხველი 2020 წლის საპარლამენტო არჩევნებისთვის“

„ონლაინ ხმის მრიცხველი“ იქმნება ფონდი „სოხუმის“ მიერ ვიშეგრადის საერთაშორისო ფონდის ფინანსური მხარდაჭერით - ჩეხეთის, პოლონეთის და სლოვაკეთის გამოცდილებაზე დაყრდნობით. ფონდმა „სოხუმმა“ შეინაწავლა ონლაინ ხმის ელექტრონული მრიცხველის „ამომრჩეველთა რჩევის აპლიკაციის“ (Voter Advice Application) ვერობაში აპრობირებული და წარმატებული მოდელი.

პროექტის ფარგლებში:

- ჩატარდა შეხვედრები ვიშეგრადის ქვეყნების ექსპერტებთან
- გაიმართა ვორკშოპები და ვებინარები
- გამოიცა კრებული „ვიშეგრადის ქვეყნების და საქართველოს გამოცდილება საარჩევნო სისტემის განვითარების და არჩევნებში მოქალაქეების მონაწილეობის გაძლიერების საქმეში“

„ამომრჩეველთა რჩევის აპლიკაციის“ დახმარებით მიიღე გაცნობიერებული გადაწყვეტილება!

www.onlinemricxveli.ge

საკრძიმოდ ვებგვერდი www.fsv4.ge

ფონდი „სოხუმის“ ვებგვერდი www.fsokhumi.ge

მიიღე გაცნობიერებელი გადაწყვეტილება!

დროდადრო, შენ გინეცს მნიშვნელოვანი ნაბიჯების გადადგმა, რომლებიც გაელენას ახდენს შენს ცხოვრებასა და მომავალზე...



ზოგჯერ სწორი გადაწყვეტილების მიღებისთვის შენ დახმარება გჭირდება!

წინ 2020 წლის საპარლამენტო არჩევნებში

როგორ უნდა მიიღო გაცნობიერებული გადაწყვეტილება?



ამაში დაგეხმარება ონლაინ აპლიკაცია „ონლაინ ხმის მრიცხველი“

ონლაინ ხმის მრიცხველი - „ამომრჩეველთა რჩევის აპლიკაცია“

„ონლაინ ხმის მრიცხველი“ დაწერვა ნიშნავს მოქალაქეთა ინფორმირებას „ამომრჩეველთა რჩევის აპლიკაცის“ მეშვეობით.

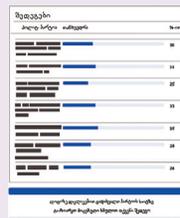
გაიარე გამოკითხვა!!!

ყველა კითხვაზე პასუხის გაცემის შემდეგ ეკრანზე გამოჩნდება დიაგრამა. ის პროცენტულად გიჩვენებს - რომელი პარტიის პოლიტიკური პროგრამა და ხედვა შეესაბამება შენს პოზიციას ყველაზე მეტად.

პოლიტიკური პარტიები პასუხობენ „მრიცხველში“ წარმოდგენილ კითხვებს.



პოლიტიკურ პარტიას ეძლევა საშუალება, ამომრჩეველს გააცნოს თავისი პროგრამა მოკლედ და მარტივად კითხვარში ასახული მიმართულებების მიხედვით.



აპლიკაცია მზად არის ასამოქმედებლად!!!

როგორ გამოიყენოს ამომრჩეველმა ონლაინ ხმის მრიცხველი?

ამომრჩეველი გასცემს პასუხს იმავე კითხვებს, რომლებსაც წინასწარ უპასუხეს პოლიტიკურმა პარტიებმა და მიიღებს ინფორმაციას ყველაზე რეიტინგული პარტიების პოლიტიკური პროგრამის შესახებ.



ამომრჩეველი გაიგებს, რომელი პარტიის პოლიტიკური პროგრამა და ხედვა დგას ყველაზე ახლოს მის პოზიციასთან.

რამდენიმე წუთში, მიღებული ინფორმაციით ამომრჩეველი შეძლებს, გააკეთოს გააზრებული არჩევანი!



კონფიდენციალურობა სრულიად დაცულია!!! ონლაინ პლატფორმა საუკეთესო შესაძლებლობაა:

პოლიტიკური პარტიისთვის - უკეთ წარმოაჩინოს თავისი ხედვა.

ამომრჩევლისთვის - გაარკვიოს, რომელი პარტია იზრუნებს მისი საჭიროებების მოგვარებაზე.

Banner - This advertising product was prepared for online publication. A static banner and a GIF- banner with several shots.

Visegrad Fund
"ამომრჩეველთა რჩევის აპლიკაციის" დახმარებით მიიღე გაცნობიერებელი გადაწყვეტილება!
 საპარლამენტო გვირდო www.fsv4.ge
 "ფონდი სოხუმის" ვებგვირდო www.fsokhumi.ge

შეავსე ამომრჩევლის რჩევის აპლიკაცია
 ონლაინ ხმის ელექტრონული მრიცხველი
 2020 წლის საპარლამენტო არჩევნებისთვის
გააკეთე გაცნობიერებული არჩევანი!

Visegrad Fund www.fsv4.ge
www.facebook.com/Fundsokhumi.VisegradFund
შეავსე ამომრჩეველის რჩევის აპლიკაცია!
გააკეთე გაცნობიერებელი არჩევანი!
 ონლაინ ხმის ელექტრონული მრიცხველი
 2020 წლის საპარლამენტო არჩევნებისთვის



Animated video - Animation, also multiplication (Latin: multiplicatio - multiplication) is an optical illusion of motion created by static images alternating in time. This form gives neutrality to the material, so we decided to express it with animation.

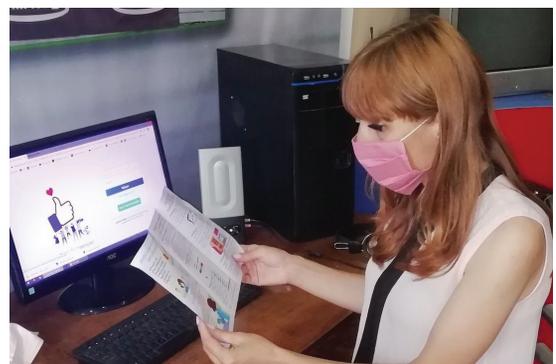
This case was entrusted to the young self-taught artist Keso Tsirghvava.

This was one of our main tools, thus the work process was undergoing with scrutiny and took a long time: getting to know the European videos created on this topic, writing a script, choosing cartoon characters, formulating short text messages, sound... The voices of a woman and a boy were chosen for the sound - to maintain the balance of age and gender. Based on the drawings, a video ad was created by the news agency “Act 2”. All staff of the Fund “Sukhumi” have participated in the discussion of the working versions. Each sentence was carefully written and refined so that it was as unbiased as possible, easy to understand and interesting to listen to.

Information sharing

The next step was to start informing. Our goal was to raise awareness of as many people as possible about the Voter Advice Application and make them fill in the app.

To do this, we used a variety of methods and resources.



The press conference

We held a press conference - a type of event for the press, for journalists. Its purpose was to give information about the news to the media representatives. The press conference was held under the conditions of Covid-19 (lockdown, restriction of free movement due to the state of emergency) - on the Zoom platform. This expanded the opportunities for journalists to participate. If during the normal regime we invited only the media in Kutaisi, this time up to 30 media from Tbilisi and Imereti, Samegrelo and Guria regions were involved. The journalists listened to the information with great interest, filled in the application themselves and called on others to participate.



TV shows

TV outlets play an important role in the pre-election period. Basically, the form and manner in which voters receive information about candidates depend on their editorial policies. Over the years, observations of debate shows and news programs have shown that the polarization of broadcasters is increasing - the TV space is becoming bipolar, one part of the broadcasters is biased in favor of the government, the other - in favor of the opposition.





Our TV show was, of course, neutral. It reflected the essence of the new online platform, it was about working with political parties and the European experience in launching the similar voter advice applications. The main message was addressed to the TV viewers, the voters, who through our application could get a brief overview of the programs of the electoral actors, their answers to topical questions and thus determine which party is closer to them, which of them could address their needs and problems.

The television spots were uploaded on the websites created by the Fund “Sukhumi” within the project. It was also posted on the organization’s YouTube channel and on its two Facebook accounts, as well as shared by the Fund’s staff on their personal Facebook accounts. Afterwards, the separate interviews from the television program were posted on the Facebook. This is also a way to gain viewers, as 3-5 minute fragments have many more views than an hour-long TV program. The wide dissemination of the television spots has remarkably increased the number of informed people.

Online Publications

We have actively used the space of online media agencies to disseminate information. We focused on our partner agencies, whose ratings are quite high. We placed static banners on the page of some of the online agencies - people could click on the link to go to the "Online Vote-O-Meter" and fill it out.

In some online platforms, a GIF banner and an introductory video clip were placed that explained the nature of the application and by clicking the link, the reader could easily access the application. Wide dissemination of the information about the application with its corresponding link attracted the attention of the numerous readers who without any extra effort, by a single click were able to access the “Online Vote-O-Meter”.

Website

The dissemination of information on the Internet has a special effect. Since 2009, the Fund “Sukhumi” has a trilingual website <http://fsokhumi.ge>, which contains multimedia information (news, videos, TV and radio programs, PDF files of publications) about the activities of the organization. The website <https://www.fsv4.ge> was created as part of the project - only project activities are reflected here.

The banner with "Online Vote-O-Meter" link was placed at the top of the website. The reader could easily access application and fill it out.

Facebook Page

Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Georgia. It is the new media when the information is transmitted through the Internet. Traditional media goes through several stages before reaching the reader, listener, or viewer. Social media has made it easier to reach the audience, simplified communication, increased efficiency and improved information delivery time.

Social media played an important role in disseminating our important information. News of all activities, TV spots, a video clip, posters, newsletters, banners were posted on Fund "Sukhumi"'s main Facebook and the project Facebook accounts. The link to the "Online Vote-O-Meter" was displayed in each post. Some sort of active Facebook media campaign was organized, when all Fund "Sukhumi"'s staff has been sharing the information about the "Online Vote-O-Meter" with the corresponding link. This allowed to reach out thousands of people and inform them about the application.

Lessons Learned

The project implied launching the "Online Voter-O-Meter", and the Covid-19 pandemic has shown importance of remote/online work.

Part of the project activities was conducted through live meetings where information newsletters and posters were disseminated. The second part was the internet meetings and was also very effective.

A significant work has been undertaken and the media was fully involved throughout the process of the project implementation.

Posters, flyers, banners, and an animated video clip were prepared and widely disseminated. A press conference was held. A TV program was organized and broadcasted.

The information was disseminated through live press conferences and then online. Information about project activities and each stages of launching the "Online Vote-O-Meter" was systematically posted and spread through organization's main and the project's websites, as well as on Facebook accounts and different platforms of the online media agencies.

Particular attention was paid to the pre-election period when voters sought information about political entities.

The process of information and media campaign has clearly demonstrated the following aspects:



- Receiving information through the Internet platforms is becoming increasingly popular, and the pandemic put the need on the top of agenda;
- The media expressed a great interest in online application and helped us to spread the information;
- The announcement of the second round of the parliamentary elections extended the validity of the application and thus increased the number of people who became familiar with the "Online Vote-O-Meter" and filled in the questionnaire;
- Voter interest was high, which is proved by the final results: from September 15 to November, an estimated 21, 68,760 people filled out the voter advice application;
- The team work of the Fund "Sukhumi" was evident - every member of the organization was committed to spread the information about the app among large number of people. Information about all activities along with the link of the application was shared on their personal Facebook accounts and Instagram;
- As a result of this diligence and activity, a very high rate was recorded on the application – it was filled in by the 68,760 persons. However, there were cases when people who heard about this app but did not fill it out. Some were reluctant, some were skeptical, some showed the usual indifference - "nothing will change after all". There were those who due to various circumstances were afraid to be identified.

The most significant outcome of the project is that the application has been successfully launched and introduced to Georgian population. The organization has made a serious statement and gained a lot of experience for the next elections. There is a model, a detailed plan, the sequence of the working process, in which the mass media play an important role.

“Even though we never like it, and even though we wish they didn’t write it, and even though we disapprove, there isn’t any doubt that we could not do the job at all in a free society without a very, very active press” - John F. Kennedy.

The same can be said for the mass media.

The active involvement of the mass media has given more effect, scale and resonance to our work.

ONLINE VOTE-O-METER FOR 2020 GEORGIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE

Foreign policy and security

1. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that Georgia should become a member of the European Union?

Yes No *Partly agree*

2. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that Georgia should become a member of NATO?

Yes No *Partly agree*

3. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion on the need of deepening the economic ties with Russia?

Yes No *Partly agree*

4. Do you agree or disagree with the abolition of compulsory military service and its replacement by a contract system?

Yes No *Partly agree*

Conflict transformation, confidence-building and IDPs

5. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the conflicts in Georgia should be resolved through peaceful means?

Yes No *Partly agree*



6. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that Georgia should invest more financial resources in strengthening economic cooperation with the people living in the uncontrolled territories by Georgia to reduce their dependence on Russia? (State program “A Step for a Better Future” for more effective implementation.)

Yes No Partly agree

7. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that healthcare programs and free medical services should be increased for the population living in uncontrolled territories by Georgia, as it will contribute to reconciliation and restoring relations between people?

Yes No Partly agree

8. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that people living in uncontrolled territories by Georgia should have more opportunity to receive education in Georgia and abroad to reduce their dependence on Russia?

Yes No Partly agree

9. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that solving IDPs’ problems (timely resettlement, more active involvement in the decision-making process, employment, etc.) should become a priority?

Yes No Partly agree

10. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that IDPs’ social assistance should be based on their needs and not status?

Yes No Partly agree

Gender equality

11. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that more women should be involved in the country’s governance and at all levels of decision-making, and it is necessary to introduce fixed gender quotas in the electoral list to ensure it?

Yes No Partly agree

12. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the state should be more actively involved in preventing and responding to violence against women and/or domestic violence, as well as femicide?

Yes No Partly agree

13. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the state should increase free support services, including childcare/extended services in schools and kindergartens, for single mothers, large families, to enable women to be actively involved in economic activities?

Yes

No

Partly agree

Social service

14. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that social work should be decentralized and the power of local self-government expanded in the decision-making process or granting, revoking, or restoring a socially vulnerable person's status?

Yes

No

Partly agree

15. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that to strengthen socially vulnerable groups and stimulate their employment, their start-ups or employment should not be grounds for status and assistance revocation (at least for a year)?

Yes

No

Partly agree

16. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the current universal healthcare program is successful?

Yes

No

Partly agree

17. Do you agree or disagree with the current pension reform and mandatory participation in the funded pension scheme?

Yes

No

Partly agree

Inclusion

18. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the government should ensure access to public spaces for people with disabilities?

Yes

No

Partly agree



19. Do you agree or disagree that the representatives of minorities living in Georgia (national, religious, sexual) need more support from the state for full integration into society?

Yes No *Partly agree*

Economics

20. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that public debt should be reduced by cutting down administrative costs?

Yes No *Partly agree*

21. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the alienation of agricultural land to foreigners should be limited and, at the same time, other forms be created to encourage the growth of local and foreign investment in the agricultural sector?

Yes No *Partly agree*

22. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that it is necessary to reduce taxes to promote small and medium entrepreneurship development?

Yes No *Partly agree*

23. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that drug policy liberalization will contribute to economic growth and a gradual decrease in the number of drug users?

Yes No *Partly agree*

24. Do you agree or disagree with the idea of introducing a progressive tax (i.e. tax rate increases with increase in the taxpayer's income)?

Yes No *Partly agree*

25. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that gambling advertisements should be banned in TV and electronic formats, on the internet, in outdoor advertisements, on public transport?

Yes No *Partly agree*

26. Should the Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Georgia enjoy exclusive privileges granted by the state (e.g. transfer of property to the Patriarchate by the state free of charge, exemption from tax, etc.).

Yes

No

Partly agree

System of education

27. In your opinion, does the current education system provide quality and affordable education?

Yes

No

Partly agree

28. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the state should increase education system funding?

Yes

No

Partly agree

Environmental protection

29. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that the state should encourage electric public transport?

Yes

No

Partly agree

30. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that the state should strengthen and tighten control over the harmful substances in food, toys, household and industrial items on the market?

Yes

No

Partly agree

Road traffic safety

31. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that more traffic control and increased fines for traffic violations will reduce road accidents?

Yes

No

Partly agree



32. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the right-hand drive car poses a greater risk on the road and should be banned in Georgia?

Yes

No

Partly agree

Judicial system

33. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the current judicial system ensures a fair and impartial administration of justice?

Yes

No

Partly agree

Fair elections

34. Do you agree or disagree or disagree with the opinion that proportional elections are the best way to ensure democratic and fair elections?

Yes

No

Partly agree

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ონლაინ ხმის ელექტრონული მრიცხველი
2020 წლის საპარლამენტო არჩევნებისთვის



შედეგები	პოლიტიკური პარტია	ხმები
1	პოლიტიკური პარტია	30
2	პოლიტიკური პარტია	15
3	პოლიტიკური პარტია	25
4	პოლიტიკური პარტია	10
5	პოლიტიკური პარტია	35
6	პოლიტიკური პარტია	20
7	პოლიტიკური პარტია	28
8	პოლიტიკური პარტია	22

ლოგოტიპი და დოკუმენტის სტრუქტურა
გამარჯობა! თქვენი ხმა ჩაითვალა!



THE MANUAL “ONLINE VOTE-O-METER” VOTER ADVICE APPLICATION INTRODUCTION IN GEORGIA - LESSONS LEARNED