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the European Union



L. Barabadze

LIFE Stories

Fostering Disability Livelihood

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International Organization World Vision Georgia has been working in Georgia since 1994. Its goal is to enhance children’s well-being by supporting local resources. World Vision Georgia has been mainstreaming disability in all projects and programs since 2013.

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Project Background

The LIFE Georgia project has aimed to contribute to poverty reduction among conflict affected/displaced persons and their host communities in Georgia by facilitating their socioeconomic integration and inclusive participation in broader economic development processes. Specifically, the project facilitated increased sustainable livelihoods opportunities of internally displaced women, men, youth (comprising people with disabilities) and their host communities in Samegrelo and Shida Kartli through enhanced access to employability, entrepreneurship and professional development; and promotion of inclusive and gender sensitive policies in collaboration with duty bearers, service providers and civil society actors. The project has been implemented by the Consortium of organizations led by ACF in partnership with Rural Development for Future Georgia (RDFG), ATINATI, Education For Democracy (EFD), Social Programs Foundation (SPF) / Legal Aid Georgia (LAG) and World Vision Georgia in 6 municipalities of Samegrelo and Shida Kartli within the period of January 2015 to September 2016.

This project has been implemented with the financial support of the European Union.

Foreword

The following work considers two angles of disability employment and livelihood: on one hand, we are presenting a small study that contains quantitative data. On the other hand, we are offering stories of our beneficiaries, stories that surpass numbers and quantities.

The small research gives us opportunity to observe how the NGOs and DPOs work and if they are successful in achieving the central goal: assisting employment of people with disabilities. This study is a good starting point for a bigger research. It marks the tendencies for a more comprehensive investigation.

I did not solely aim to objectively observe success stories. On the contrary, I allowed myself to register emotions that the beneficiaries' stories stirred up in me. Some stories are sad, some business-oriented, some long, some short, family members attended some interviews and fauna representatives – the others. All of these affected the respondent and the listener. I tried to express the atmosphere of the interviews.

I deliberately did not emphasize disabilities and needs of our beneficiaries. Every story centers around a person with either physical, intellectual or multiple disability. Within the frames of this project, their needs were considered, business training adapted and their business plans - evaluated considering their status. However, I believe that this is the time to emphasize what they can do well, rather than listing what they can't.

Consequently, we're offering you a small study about disability employment and success stories that are result of two-years' effort on the behalf of all partner organizations.

Lika Barabadze

Senior Disability Expert

World Vision Georgia

Success Stories

Distance Between the Wheelchairs

I am ascending stairs to get to Mrs. Khatuna's apartment. A cat with a pretty necklace lies on one of the steps. The staircase has no handrails, so I try to avoid stepping on the cat and at the same time, refrain from falling two stories down. I see a wheelchair in the room. I've noticed a second one in the yard.

Mrs. Khatuna is anxious at first. She tells me that originally she was a teacher and for a while she lived in Russia until her husband passed away. She returned back to Zugdidi afterwards.

Mrs. Khatuna learned massage therapy because her son, Mirian needed one: "The doctors told me that he will live for 12 years. Every day I thought: he is going to die now, he is going to die now, but Mirian is 16 years old now. The doctors claim that it's my good care, massage and healthy food that helped him survive".

A practitioner visited Mirian in the beginning, though Mrs. Khatuna soon learned how to massage her son: "I looked up massage techniques online...my mother is a famous massage therapist, she taught me too. She is a very strict teacher. Very strict.

Soon I attended a massage therapy course at the vocational college. I decided to acquire this profession – for my son, for others and for my own health".

Presently, Mrs. Khatuna offers different services: "I specialize in a rehabilitation massage. I do sports massage. I also help people loose weight using a massage technique with honey. I do not perform other massages, as I feel responsible for my clients' well-being and practice only what I know well".

Mrs. Khatuna has two children. The youngest, Mirian, is always home, since no school in Zugdidi can provide education catered to his unique needs. Her eldest, Tamta, is a high school senior. Tamta plans to attend foreign language studies in order to work in the tourism department.

Since Mrs. Khatuna has to constantly take care of her son, she had hard time scheduling the appointments: „I had to wait for my daughter to come back from





school to leave the house. Sometimes I had to work early in the morning and rush back home”.

Mrs. Khatuna attended a series of business trainings, presented her business idea and was funded within the framework of the “LIFE Georgia” project. As a result, she purchased a massage table. This event has radically changed her working schedule. Now clients come to her home. She is able to see 5 clients daily and provide them with a two-week rehabilitation course.

“They come here and I have a lot of clients. It is easier to work with this new table, my joints don’t hurt anymore. Also, the new table allows me to approach clients from all sides. This is important: the quality of massage depends on how I distribute my weight”.

I ask her whether it was hard to find clients in the beginning and how she managed to build up clientele base. Mrs. Khatuna explains that she likes to exercise and her friends, inspired by her personal example, approached her for weight correction massage and exercise. After a while, she received more clients and expended her practice to include rehabilitation work.

Mrs. Khatuna answers my question why she loves her job: “I exercise with my clients to stay fit. I can work at home. Finally, I am glad that my clients are satisfied. Some of them have been coming for 3-4 years”.

As we continue with the interview, I hear noise outside: “mom, the garden!” Mrs. Khatuna runs down the stairs and chases away several cows that snuck into the patch of corn. She returns with her daughter, Tamta and Tamta’s friend. Mrs. Khatuna’s everyday life interrupts our talk and I imagine, how hard it must be for a single mother to have a career of her choice, grow corn and take care of the family at the same time.

Mrs. Khatuna also attempted to salvage her low-rent apartment. She plastered wallpaper: “I did all of this. The building used to be a kindergarten for 20 years, then a camp for the internally displaced people”. I notice a second kitty in the house, she sits in the middle of the room and snobbishly glances at me. Mrs. Khatuna explains that the first floor of the building is used as a hazelnut storage and they keep these two furry anti-mouse agents to patrol the apartment.

Mrs. Khatuna chose this place because she grew up in the area and her mother and friends live in the neighborhood. They help her get by. However, she is ready to move to a better home: “I want to find another apartment, on a first floor. I have to lift up my boy from the first wheelchair, carry him down the stairs and place him into the second wheelchair. That’s difficult. I also think accessible apartment will be more comfortable for my clients”.

I notice that Mrs. Khatuna treats Tamta as her peer, who will soon join her mother as a financial provider. Presently Mrs. Khatuna receives a social welfare, but she hopes that with two employed family members she can manage to take care of the costs: “soon I won’t need a welfare. I won’t have to depend on the government aid”.

Generally, despite the fact that Mrs. Khatuna is very busy, she doesn’t seem to be exhausted. I believe that she loves her profession.

“I work all day and keep myself occupied, hence I have no time to sit at home, isolated, alone with my son. I make money, I am physically active and I have no time for brooding. This job has saved my life”.

Mrs. Khatuna talks about her future plans:

“I’d like to officially open a massage cabinet in several years. My work is seasonal now- most of my clients want to loose weight for the summer. I will also need a certificate to work with children. They provide a three-month training and a certificate in Tbilisi only and that’s why I postponed my future education until Tamta graduates. Sometimes I consider moving to Tbilisi, but for some reason, she wants to stay here”, Mrs. Khatuna looks at her daughter. “Tamta, why don’t you want to move to Tbilisi? On the other hand, I know how hard it will be for me to live without friends. Friends and my job helped me so much. I wouldn’t be able to work in school now”.

After discussing future plans, I take pictures of Mrs. Khatuna and Mirian. I say good-bye and take the steep stairs down, the stairs that Mrs. Khatuna encounters daily, while carrying her 16-year-old son. The cat is still lying down on the middle of the staircase, pretty with her necklace, purring at the sun.



Business Training at Home



Mr. Beso has been carving wood for 10 years. He learned this trade from his father, also a self-taught carpenter. His father helps and teaches Mr. Beso to this day.

“Does he point out your mistakes?” I ask jokingly. “I never make mistakes” answers Mr. Beso and I realize that working on wood is more than a job for him. It is part of his everyday life—handmade chicken house, wooden ramp that enables him to access the first floor of his house.

Within the scope of the “LIFE Georgia” project, Mr. Beso bought several tools to work in a small room in his house. However, when I visit him for the interview, he shows me a little wood shop.

“Wood products are in demand, so after working for three months, this is what I built. I am planning to hire several workers too”. As we speak, Mr. Beso’s wife brings us his handmade items: chairs, cornices, and crosses.

Mr. Beso purchases the material, prepares it for cutting and produces objects that he either sells directly to the costumers or gives to a store.

Mr. Beso’s success is a result of many people’s work. For example, his wife found about the business training programs through a local NGO. She attended the trainings, since Mr. Beso could not access the training space that was located on the second floor. However, finally “I asked the trainer to come see Mr. Beso, in case I misunderstood the material”. Business trainer agreed and visited Mr. Beso seven times for special “home schooling”.

“Who wrote your business plan?”

“I did. It was my idea and I wrote the plan”.

Mr. Beso claims that it was hard for him in the beginning, since he knew nothing about the business management and many concepts were foreign to him. Nonetheless, the business trainer “translated” the concepts for him and provided the carpenter with recommendations. Mr. Beso’s idea was selected and financed.

After this case, World Vision Georgia provided additional funds for acquiring a training space that is accessible for beneficiaries in wheelchairs.



A Hundred-Year-Old Well in the New Café

Mr.Zviad shows me an open café that he built by his diner. I ask him what his part in the construction was, did he lead the process?

“The construction?! Of course! This whole building is my idea...it will be beautiful when these trees grow up”.

Mr.Zviad learned about the “LIFE Georgia” project from his cousin and decided to attend the business training. He had to cover some distance with his wheelchair; the training sessions were moved to accessible space to accommodate his needs. Mobility is a challenge that he does not consider a problem: he tries to go everywhere, to the church, training and even canyons.

As he attended business training sessions, he decided to build a café, since he has seen them in Ukraine and his brother had opened one too.



I ask him what specifically he accomplished within the framework of the project.

„Everything that you see. The tables. The net. I also added money for the craftsman and designer”.

Currently Mr.Zviad has less clients than he expected. He names lack of tourists as the main reason. He converted his store to the diner when many people passed his place, on their way to Anaklia construction. The construction is over now and less people visit the diner. Therefore, he considers alternative ways to attract the clients. For example, with additional investment, he may use this space for different events.



„We're hoping and not giving up and working. The work here is seasonal. It is barely enough to keep us afloat, we have enough money for the produce. I hope we don't stop. I believe that we can hold post-funeral reception, no neighboring village has a space this big. If we only had enough (furniture, dishes) for 160 people“.

Mr.Zviad needs additional furniture and dishes to meet this goal. Currently, he and his sister supervise the cafe. I ask them how are they planning to attract tourists and what are their plans for the nearest future.

„I'll place a poster right there, for sure...my brother told me to serve corn and cold melons in an open café for the tourists“.

As we talk, I notice a round structure in the middle of the café.

„This is a well. It has been there for more than 100 years. I have purchased tile to make it look pretty. Then, I'll place flowers on the top. I am 46 years old and as long as I remember, the well has been here. This family is 100 years old“.

I say good-bye to Mr. Zviad and I hope that he will expand his business despite the challenges and that he will be able to feed his guests around the hundred-year-old well.



The New Mill

Mr. Rezo's house is easy to find; his mill is marked by a noticeable poster.

Mr. Rezo, his wife, family members and friends attend the interview. They answer my questions collectively.

After attending business straining, Mr. Rezo decided to enhance his business. His friend claims:

"According to our experience, the small mill that he had was not enough. Neighbors bothered each other, there was a lot of work and not enough space. So he came up with the idea of expansion. Now he serves the whole village."

Mr. Rezo's wife adds: "the neighbors are happy now. People from far away come to us too."

Mr. Rezo used to own a small mill, however the equipment that he purchased within the scope of the "LIFE Georgia" project allows for different corn treatment.

"Yes, it can make food for the cattle and the family. That's its strongest side. It is unique for us and our village. This is the first one. We had to travel long distance to such mills and now we can stay right here, it's so close. All of the village people use it."

Thus, Mr. Rezo's mill has no competition. At this point he and his wife are expecting the beginning of corn season, it starts in September and lasts till June. However, even off season, the new mill serves 3-5 people per day.



Cake Author and Cake Manager



Flower arrangements are the first thing that I notice in Mr. Nugzar and Mrs. Liana's house. Hence, it isn't difficult for me to imagine cakes that Mrs. Liana bakes.

This is not our first meeting and I have heard their story. However, this time they tell me the details and I am thankful that the family shared such private and painful story. All of us proceed with tears in our eyes.

Mr. Nugzar and Mrs. Liana had to leave everything behind and start anew twice.

Mr. Nugzar decided to live in the village, with his parents, after he left Tskinali. He used to repair cars and buses. Mrs. Liana worked as a nurse. Their village orchards provided their income, as well.

Their village house was located close to the Georgian military base. During the August war, Mr. Nugzar saved his wife and children and returned back to the village for his parents. The village was being bombed and Mr. Nugzar got in the middle of it.

"Two of us, cousins, were blasted by the pressure. He was killed later. My cousin weighted 160 kg and he was thrown on top of me. I still managed to save everyone... the army boys were running and leaving, but they did not know the way and were heading straight to Tskhinali, I showed them the way".

Mr. Nugzar spends his days at home since then. He has mobility challenges.

"I'm still depressed and I wonder, why did it happen? I am thankful that I saved my family, but everything that I had was left behind, I could not take anything, we didn't even have clothing...I left my store and tractors, my well-tended orchards...everything that I've worked for. I am thankful that we're alive. We're fine now, I don't like complaining".

Mrs. Liana gave many jobs a try to support her family--husband and two children. She used every opportunity presented to her: she attended hairdressing classes, assembled boxes and started working in an NGO.

„We have a team here, we harvest garlic and tomatoes. They call me...I also help with medical issues, I serve my community without holding official position“. She laughs.

„ I used to assemble small, two –board boxes for fruit. I made 15-18-20 Lari per day: 3 tetri was paid for one box. I was happy to support my family...that’s in the past though, cakes are my source of income now“.

Mrs. Liana learned this craft as well; she attended baking classes.

“I worked half time in an NGO, so I would rush to classes after work and learn baking“.

Mrs. Liana and Mr. Nugzar decided to establish a cake business, but did not have a storage fridge.

She shows me a small fridge in her bedroom: it is barely large enough to hold food for their household.

„This is what we had, when we came here.“

Mrs. Liana attended “LIFE Georgia” project training to purchase a fridge. She learned business skills and presented her idea to the panel. A new fridge stands in her kitchen now. She sells up to twelve cakes per month.

„I try to improve my skills. I have a relative in Tbilisi who teaches me how to use marzipan. I used to frost cakes with cream, now costumers prefer marzipan».

However, she is not alone in her work. Mr. Nugzar also participates in the cake production, we jokingly call him “the cake manager“.

“I receive orders, help make the wrapping, manage finances and make deals“.

Mr. Nugzar wroks with the clients while Mrs. Liana bakes the cakes.

Their daughter Nino helps them frequently. Nino is interested in many things, just like her mother: she graduated from pharmacy courses in college, is now attending





history major at the Gori University and plans to enroll into the police academy. That is her childhood dream.

Their son is fourteen years old and he is a high school freshman. The family works as a team to start new life for the second time.

At the end of interview everyone is upset that they did not know about my visit beforehand and thus could not bake me a cake. I am upset as well, for not having a cake for the picture, so I take pictures of its ingredients and say good-bye to the cake author and cake manager.

The First Job

Nika is 27-year-old young boy who got employed in the cornflake factory, within the framework of the “LIFE Georgia” project. His responsibilities include: “I deal with the cornflakes, I sell them, load the mini bus, take it to the market and help move pasta and cornflakes”.

Nika has not attended the business training, though he is a beneficiary of the given project. Partner organizations agreed to grant additional points to the business plans that were not written by the people with disabilities but nonetheless employed them. This is what happened in Nika’s case: his boss decided to include Nika in his factory.

I have visited this place during the monitoring, when I made sure that every beneficiary, including Nika, was able to perform the duties that their employers defined for them. It turned out that Nika wanted and was able to work in the factory.

This is Nika’s first job. He comes here every day, from morning until evening.

“We load the cornflakes, put them in the car. I follow the car to the store and unload everything in the store”.

His boss mentions that Nika is a motivated worker. He explains this to me in his office. The office walls are covered in saying by Confucius, Niche and Tomas Jefferson - they give advice on work and ethics.

Nika’s boss likes his work.

Nika helps cornflakes reach the stores and hence, reach the people who’d like to taste a delicious treat.



Starting Again



Mrs. Shorena and Mr. Shalva tend an orchard in Gori. They wrote a business plan in frames of the “LIFE Georgia” project and bought a pesticide sprayer – their goal is to help develop their own business and rent out the sprayer.

„We bought a land here and we have an orchard. We need a pesticide sprayer to spray on others’ land and receive a small income small income. When we heard about the project, we decided to buy it (the equipment)...we took care of the fruit trees and sprayed manually. But now we can put the sprayer on the tractor and spray the orchards. We decided to buy the equipment that would make work easier for us. We will be able to grow better apples, spray others’ trees and earn more income”.

The family moved to Gori from the Liakhvi valley in 2008. Before resettlement, Mr. Shalva worked at the police, while Mrs. Shorena was a teacher. They had to start anew in Gori – they could not get employed here. Hence, they decided to set up an orchard. Mr. Shalva encountered unexpected challenges - he needs

to spray apple trees in a different way and more frequently in Gori, compared to the apple trees in his homeland. Additionally, he has to wait for the available sprayer in line and the delay is often detrimental for the quality of the produce.

“The queues are huge during the spraying time, I have to delay spraying for a week. The apples get diseases and go bad. Now that I have my own sprayer, I will have enough time to take better care of my orchard. It will take me an hour to finish the job that took a whole day. I won’t need to wait in line. It will be easier physically as well. Everything will get better”.

The pesticide sprayer that they have purchased within the framework of the project will help this family lead the work they have started anew.

Self-taught Businessman and Artist

Mr. Rezo's room is covered with pictures of sun, sea, self-portraits and portraits. Mr. Rezo works a lot, he paints, takes pictures and videos, edits and plays music. He learned all these skills independently, since he hasn't received formal education after the ninth grade.

"I left the school in ninth grade...I wanted to paint. Nobody knew that I painted. I painted in secret for a year and when I saw that my paintings were good, I showed them to the people. I met different artists...then received an Indian camera as gift. I wrote scenarios. This is why I received a camera. And I never thought that I could make money at those times..."

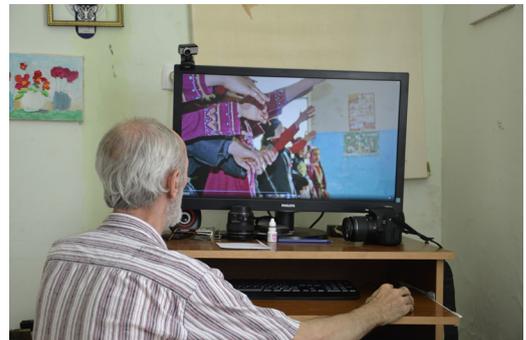
When Mr. Revaz had no other source of income in the 90ies, he turned his hobby into a profession. He started shooting weddings, birthdays, graduations and other events.

He learned about the "LIFE Georgia" training from the local government and he decided to attend it, since he needed new equipment.

"I needed new camera and that was accomplished. It can take videos too...I also purchased a (computer) monitor, mouse, camera, computer and keyboard".

Hence, he is able to take and edit better quality images. He receives around 3-4 orders per month; the artist does not take more work yet, as he is getting used to the new equipment.

I ask him about business training challenges. It turned out that the training was difficult at first, but he diligently attended every session; Mr. Rezo did not miss a single session to learn everything well. Afterwards, he recommended the courses to others.



“To tell you the truth, I knew nothing about business...I learned a lot during the training. People need this knowledge...than I understood everything. But some people came at first and did not attend later...I tell everyone to attend every course, since they may get funded. I give them address. I sent 2-3 people to the training”.

Mr. Rezo learned how to write a business plan during the training and started drafting his ideas.

“I had a computer for work and I stayed up for nights, it was so hard in the beginning. I did not want any help. Mr. Akaki (business trainer) told me to take it easy, he told me that my plan was good as it was. But the thing is, I have not graduated from school, I haven't attended college, I seldom read books and I lived in Russia for so long that it was difficult for me to write in Georgian. The business terms were also difficult...that's it, not a big deal”.

With his “not a big deal” attitude, Mr. Rezo learned how to write a business plan and now wants to participate in other projects as well, including agricultural



projects. However, at this point painting and video/photo shoots are his main activities. He successfully works in Zugdidi and Tbilisi. He plans to purchase different details for his camera to achieve desired results.

„I generally loved movies from the very childhood, not watching them, but thinking about their scripts and cinematography. I made it my profession. I want to have good camera to shoot videos“.

The self-taught artist and businessman is searching for new images. For example, “when I paint the sea, I need to see clouds in action. Sea and clouds appear together once in a million. Many people are surprised why do I take pictures of the clouds, when I can download images off the internet...I take my camera and go out in the rain, to take pictures during the morning, midday and evening. The clouds create special atmosphere...then I move the cloud pictures to the computer and paint them“.



Learning, as a new experience



I rarely see ramps that are built according to the standards. The ramp of the houses built by the Ministry of Internal Affairs is a well-functioning one and I can see that Aleko navigates it easily. Aleko and his wife show me towards their apartment.

Aleko and I are of the same age, though he has a much richer life experience. He tells me:

"I always chose the hardest way, from the very childhood. I like to overcome challenges. I am an IDP from Abkhazia and my childhood was spent among the shootings, war, famine and pain of my motherland. I have experienced hunger and hard times. I became more resilient and view the world differently."

Aleko is a veteran of war in Afghanistan.

"I was the first soldier who got blown up on a handmade mine. I was trying to save my commanding officer, who was killed".

I ask him about the sewing workshop that was established within the framework of the "LIFE Georgia" project and provides vocational training for the people with disabilities.

"I have one friend who received a message about an opportunity to learn sewing. The message indicated contact number. I called it and they were very glad to hear from me. I asked if it was wheelchair accessible and they replied that it was. I got excited and I started attending the classes. They taught us very well, professionally."

Aleko wants to work with leather to make details for the leather car seating. That was his goal, when he started learning sewing. As I listen to him, I consider how many interesting people I've met lately, through my work. Here, for example, was a man whose Wi-Fi was called "Warrior" and at the same time, he was interested in sewing and leather work.

Unfortunately, Aleko was not able to finish the sewing workshop, since he had to attend a rehabilitation course.

He researched the market and found out that the equipment for leather is pretty expensive - \$9000. Currently, he is looking for a sponsor, to expand his work.

"Life is full of surprises. You never know, which way you'll have to choose. Based on my experience, I had completely different plans. One small happening turned my life around. Sometimes learning new thing is another way to better know yourself".

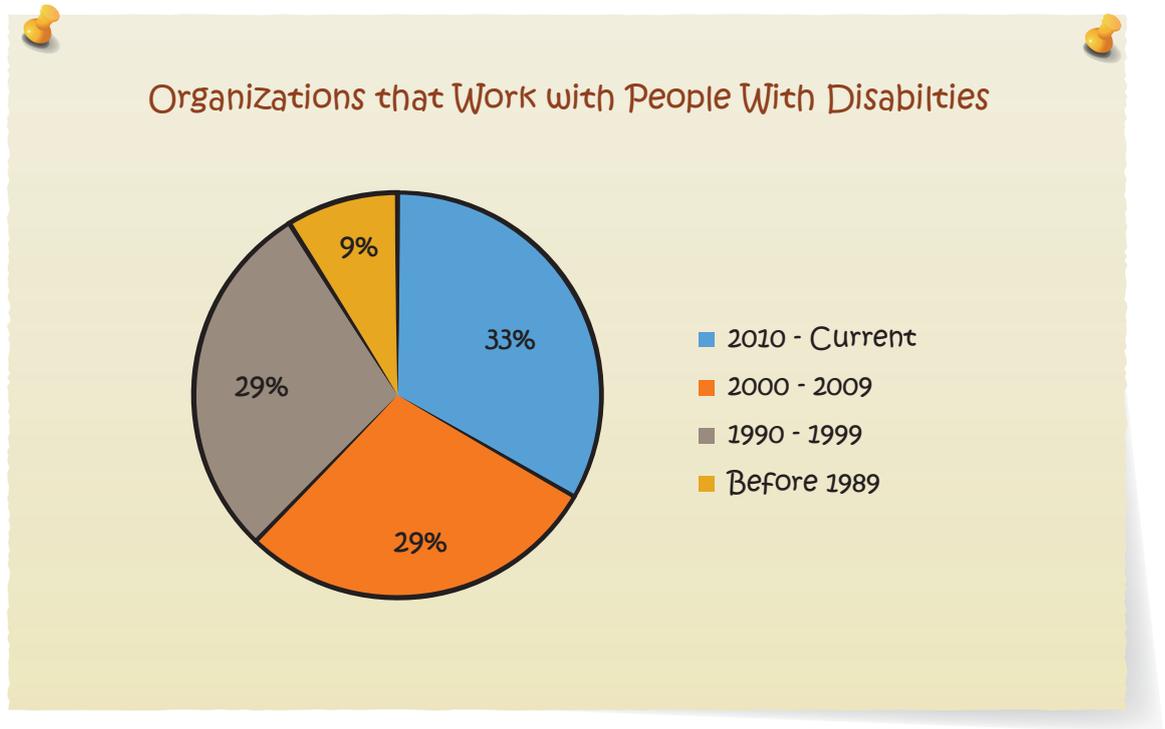
Disability Employment Mapping

Disability Employment Mapping

We studied NGOs and DPOs that work with people with disabilities. For this purpose, we used the World Vision Georgia database. We contacted 45 organizations and administered a questionnaire over the phone.

Experience of Working with People with Disabilities

The study revealed that the disability field has been developing with a relatively same tempo, after 1990ies: around the same number of organizations that work with people with disabilities have been established in every consequent decade.



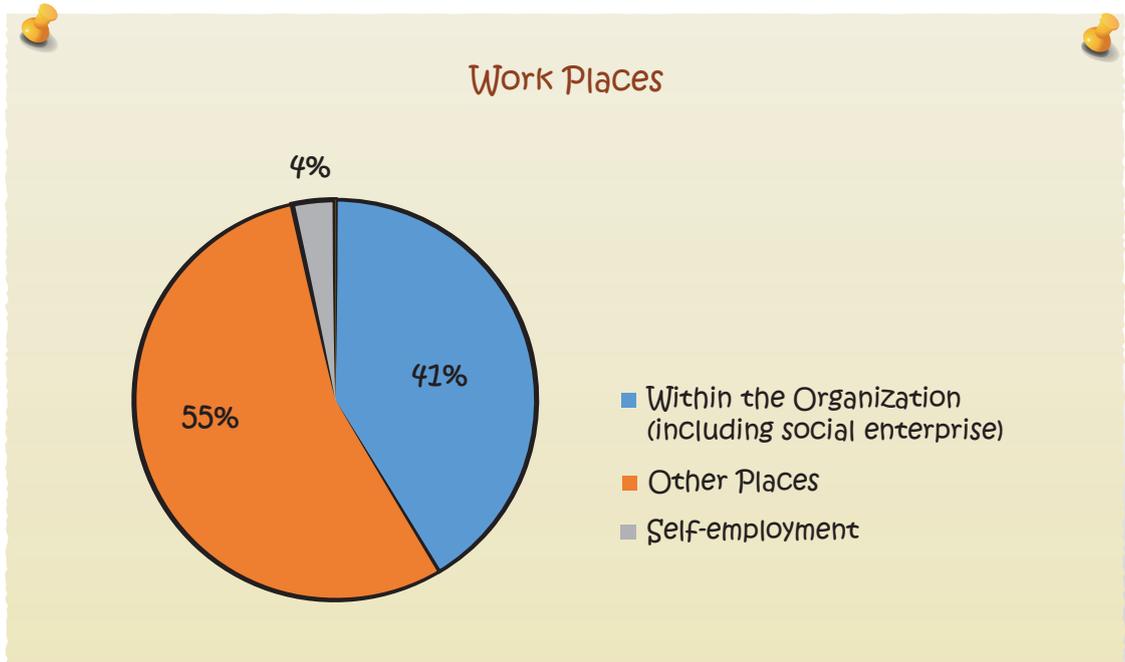
Disability Employment

Around 50% of the surveyed organizations work on the employment issues. Organizations offer beneficiaries different services, such as: grants, subsidies, vocational training, employment of parents of children with disabilities, internship, job-seeker training, social enterprise, business training, work therapy, environment accessibility assistance, and on-job training. Some organizations provide single service, while others provide multiple services.



Data analyses revealed, that almost half of the organizations offer vocational training, including development of vocational skills, such as carpentry, sewing, etc. 19% of the organizations are involved in social enterprises.

These two main categories are somewhat overlapping, as some organizations firstly provide vocational training and then employ the beneficiaries in their own organizations.



It is noteworthy, that roughly 40% of the organizations employ beneficiaries in their own organizations. As for the rest of 55%, they help beneficiaries get employed in the public or private sector.

Public sector work places include: cleaning services, the teacher's house and local government.

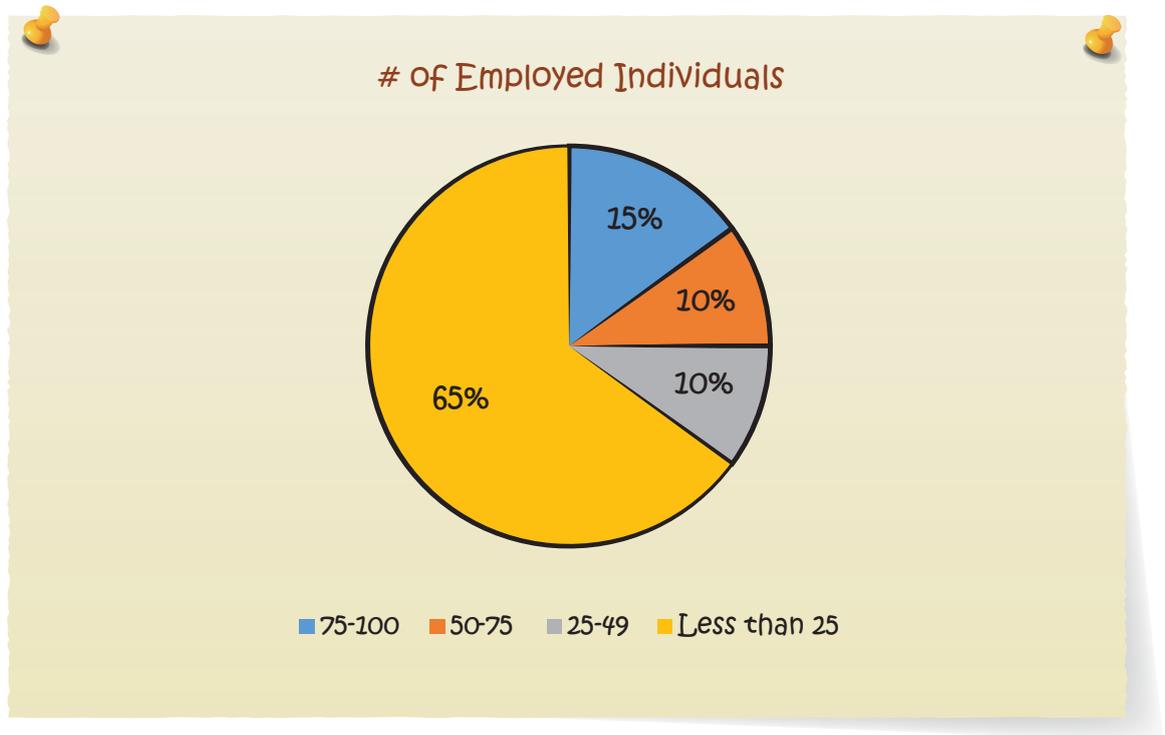
Private sector work places include: social café, social enterprise, culture house and a farm.

As for the self-employment, only one organization prioritized this direction. Beneficiaries worked in an accessible guest house, greenhouse and family business (not specified).

Work places could not be exactly categorized, since respondents often named categories (for example, "Private Sector"), but refused to specify how many people got employed in the category or what specific work places constituted the named category.

Employed Beneficiaries

According to the survey, organizations help employ 377 beneficiaries. Some organizations did not know the exact number of employed beneficiaries and could not answer the survey questions, while others told us rough estimates. The following is the distribution of beneficiaries, employed with the aid of organizations:



Organizations helped employment of less than 25 individuals (including only few individuals) the most frequently, while other quarterly categories are more or less the same.

Partner Parties

We surveyed the stakeholders that partnered up with the organizations to assist with disability employment. We can tentatively name four partner groups:

Governmental Institutions

- Day Center
- Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (named several times)
- Employment Agency (named several times)
- Tbilisi City Hall
- Vocational College
- Local Government (named several times)
- Election Administration of Georgia
- Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia (named several times)
- Regional Outpatient Union of Gurjaani
- Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia

Local NGOs

- Coalition for Independent Living (named several times)
- Association «Anika»

Private Companies

- Clean World
- Tbilisi Mall
- Bank of Georgia
- Geocell
- Goodwill
- myvideo.ge
- TBC Bank
- Caucasus Online
- Restaurant «Ezo»
- PSP Drug Stores

International Institutions/ Organizations

- Embassy of Czech Republic
- Embassy of Germany
- USAID
- Georgian Caritas
- Swiss Development Cooperation
- Diakonie Austria
- Polish Aid

Conclusion

50% of the surveyed organizations work on the employment issues. Thus, this is a key field. The number of employed beneficiaries is also impressive. Despite the fact that some organizations are able to assist employment of 2-3 individuals, some organizations have aided 90 individuals. The following analysis would be of interest: does the experience of the organization and number of years spent working in the field affect number of employed beneficiaries?

The fact that organizations employ beneficiaries at their own workplace or enterprise is positive, however, the number of jobs at one organization is limited and thus, this strategy is not sustainable in the long run – after a while organization will not be able to employ more people with disabilities. Social enterprise can't expand exponentially either.

This issue is connected to the employment services that the organizations offer - most of the organizations are oriented towards vocational trainings and social enterprises. Unfortunately, business straining, business grants, self-employment and supported employment services are underemphasized. Further research is needed in this direction – what is the reasons of such service distribution? What barriers prevent additional services and subsequent employment?

Finally, it is recommended that the organizations have better means of counting beneficiaries, so that individual employment histories could be tracked and general tendencies could be identified.

I realized, based on the „LIFE Georgia” project experience, that the unified team vision and cooperation is the key for supporting persons with disabilities. Everyone involved in this work will do their best, if partners share the idea that disability employment is one of the priorities, rather than a Charity.

Since I witnessed that shared team understanding is the key, I decided to investigate our partner organizations' feelings.

I asked them the following question:

What is Necessary for Disability Employment?