



**STEP BY STEP
TOWARDS
A BETTER
FUTURE
(PHASE II)**

**2017 -
2020**



The European Union
for Georgia
EU4Justice

Austrian
Development
Agency



In the framework of the second phase of the EU project “**The EU for Justice Program**” a second phase of the project was implemented in the period from 2017 to 2020. The project, which was funded by the **European Union** and **Austrian Development Agency**, was implemented by **Hilfswerk International** together with its local partners **IDP Women Association Consent** and **Fund of Women Entrepreneurs**, and in close cooperation between the National Agency for Crime Prevention, Non-custodial Enforcement and Probation of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and Science.

A lot of efforts have been made since 2013 to create sustainable conditions for the re-socialization and rehabilitation of people in conflict with law in Georgia, to give them the full-fledged second chance for their way back to society. Our experience shows that this challenging task can only be solved through the joined efforts of the state bodies on the national, local and community levels, active civil society organizations that work very closely with the beneficiaries and understand their needs, representatives of small and medium businesses that are ready to hire these people, as well as with active participation of every single member of society that has overcome the existing prejudices about people in conflict with law.

Elena Smirnova, International Project Manager
Hilfswerk International

Seven years ago IDP Women Association “Consent” decided to start very new area - to work with people in conflict with law. For us it was much more than simply new project – it was entering completely new area where at first you needed to establish trust, then – together with these people carefully, step by step, plan and build new, positive reality. It was a real teamwork – and members of this team were all: IDPWA staff, who made sometimes miracles; always standing shoulder to shoulder with us team from Hilfswerk International, our managers from European Union, people from state agencies from Probation Bureau and Prevention center, teachers from colleges, mentors - difficult to name all, but our main partners were these people who wanted to change their lives, build more sustainable and happy reality and who trusted us to participate and support these changes.

Iulia Kharashvili, Local Project Leader
IDP Women Association Consent

In 2012, when there was a large amnesty in Georgia and thousands of prisoners were released from prisons at the same time, I wondered how these people could be supported to return as full members to society. I am glad that since 2013, I have been allowed to be a member of the project with the help of which, I made a little contribution towards the resocialization/reintegration of the persons in conflict with the law. It is crucial to be part of the reform and the progress of the beneficiaries that change people's lives for the better. I would like to thank each team member, supporter, and partner of the project. I wish all the participants success and progress in life.

Nana Gohokhia, Local Project Manager
IDP Women Association Consent

Unfortunately, there are still people in our society who are in conflict with the law. The reasons are different-the consequences are the same - you have to answer to the authorities according to the existing laws. Crucial in this situation is the combination of the desire – to change your life and at the same time to have the opportunity to do so. The project “Step by step towards a better future” is a vivid example of how to cope with this difficult task. The biggest reward – to the project team - is the words of gratitude of our beneficiaries for the changes that have occurred in their lives.

Meri Gelashvili, Chairperson
NGO - Fund of Women Entrepreneurs

The Background of the Project

For the last several years the Government of Georgia has been undertaking substantial reforms of its justice sector and achieved significant progress in the probationary system, supported largely through diverse programs financed by the European Union.

However, the country is still lacking a sufficient number of complementary rehabilitation services that would give former inmates and probationers a full-fledged second chance for their way back to society and the job-market. There are still scarcity of specific and targeted training courses and vocational education possibilities and support services for prisoners, former inmates and probationers.

At the same time, despite significant progress in the improvement of living conditions and access of prisoners to quality healthcare, less than 5% of inmates employed within the penitentiary establishments.

In the period December 2013 until February 2016 Hilfswerk International together with its local partner IDP Women Association Consent implemented the first phase of the project “**Step by Step – towards a Better Future**”.

The project, which was funded by the European Union and Austrian Development Agency and was supported by the National Probation Agency and the Center for Crime Prevention, fostered the reintegration of socially vulnerable groups of Shida Kartli, e.g. former inmates, probationers, their family members, and IDPs in Georgian society through an integrative approach, consisting of vocational education trainings (VET), psycho-social services, job counselling, mentoring and small grants, rendered by a multi-disciplinary team at the “Integration Center” in Gori.

As a result of the project, the re-socialization and rehabilitation of 150 persons, thereof a substantial number of former inmates and probationers, was significantly improved in manifold ways.

Beneficiaries acquired competencies in three different professions (carpentry, welding, business management) that are demanded in the labor market and that increased their employability. In parallel, they received individualized psycho-social and legal support that significantly contributed to their general stabilization and overall motivation to find a job or continue education and restore bonds with their families.

Moreover, selected probationers and former inmates received small grants that allowed them to start or expand their own micro-businesses and to improve their socio-economic conditions.





Step by Step Towards a Better Future

Project “Step by Step towards a Better Future” (Phase Two) was implemented from 2017 till 2020 introduced complementary and sustainable rehabilitation and re-socialization opportunities to all of the main target groups of the criminal justice sector in Georgia - inmates, former inmates, probationers and also their closest family members - that allow them building a better future for themselves and their families “step by step”.

The uniqueness of the project was the combined supply of different services to beneficiaries in one space, which promoted the absolute resocialization of the persons in conflict with the law.

The primary focus was to enhance opportunities for vocational education of former inmates and probationers in the regions of Shida Kartli, Imereti and Samegrelo by fostering stronger cooperation between colleges, state probationary systems and NGOs.

To reduce risk of recidivism, the VET trainings were accompanied as a secondary focus by complementary aspects of re-socialization (psycho-social support, job counselling, mentoring, small granting).

In addition, the project aims to enhance vocational education, training and employment possibilities in semi-open prisons as a means of pre-release preparation for reintegration and re-socialization by piloting targeted practical trainings in prison #15 in Ksani, Mtskheta-Mtianeti.



Project Data

Project Regions:
Samegrelo, Imereti, Shida Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti

Overall Project Budget:
888.723 EUR

Project Period:
February 2017 – July 2020

This Project is...

Together with Georgian authorities, we support inmates, former inmates, probationers and also their closest family members:

Training

VET training courses at an Integration Center in Gori and in collaboration with colleges in Kutaisi and Zugdidi on various professions, including food and transportation allowance

Practical VET training in Ksani prison

Support

Measures for (re-)socialization through mentorship

Complementary psycho-social and legal support

Employment support

Subsidized internships for selected graduates at local companies

Financial support through sub-granting

Policy dialogue & know-how transfer:

Policy dialogue with stakeholders between public colleges, NGOs, ministries and state agencies

Study visit to Austria

Exchange between Austrian and Georgian authorities for sustainable effectiveness



Our Results

492 VET training participants

428 Successful graduates

80 Internships made possible

65 % of graduates found a job or are self-employed

60 Inmates trained in practical trainings in prison #15

96 Persons have got material support (up to 5.000 Euro) for their business ideas

79 new entrepreneurs are established with the support of the material support program

110 Voluntary mentors support and accompany former prisoners and their families





"I spent a great part of my life in prison. This project is a beginning of a new life, new friends, new profession, a stable working place, everything positive that I could not imagine years ago. Each project team member actively participated in my well-being. I felt at home here. Team members of the project "Step by Step towards a Better Future" took each of my problems to heart and helped me in solving them. I'm very grateful for my today's calm and stable living."

**Ramaz Buzaladze, from Gori
(Former Inmate)**

GRADUATES
AVERAGE AGE
34,5



Vocational Education

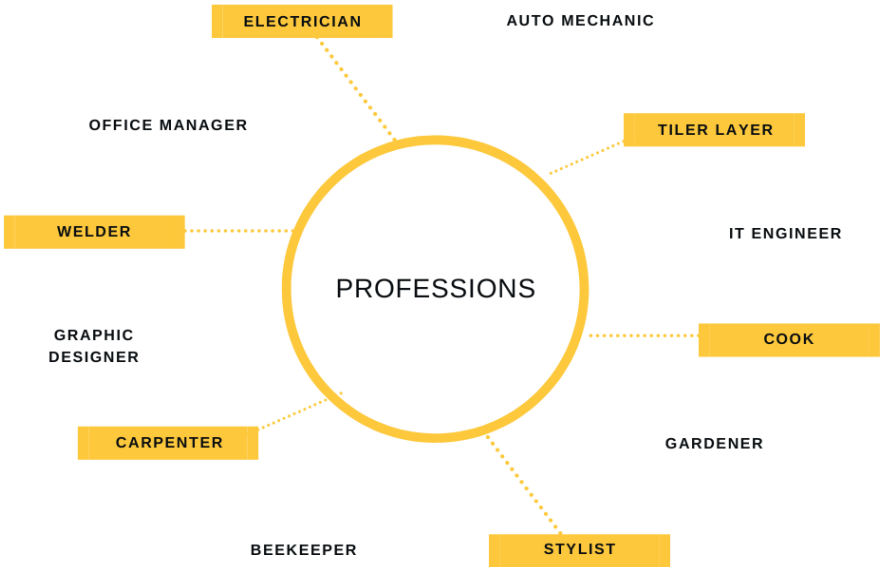
The project promoted short-term VET training for persons in conflict with the law in cooperation with the state colleges. The beneficiaries had the opportunity to choose one of the **47** different most demanded professions on market, and to master them in the short-term period; at the Shota Meskhia University in Samegrelo, and at the campus of the community college "Iberia" in Imereti. In Shida Kartli, the VET courses were implemented at the integration center of the association "Consent."

Supporting factors that proved very useful during the project to encourage the target group to attend the training program on a regular basis were the coverage of transportation and food expenses during trainings.

7 training cycles lasting **12 weeks** (3 months) each were conducted in three target regions. Each week consisted of 3 full training days.

After completing the VET courses the beneficiaries - upon successful completion – received a certificate acknowledged by the Ministry of Education.

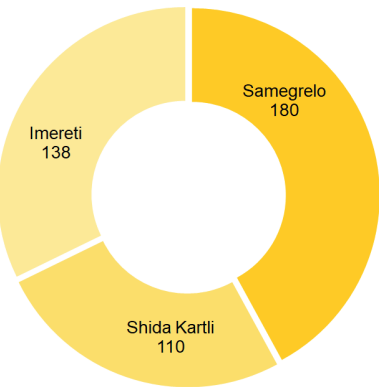
In the framework of the project, **428** probationers, former inmates, and their family members obtained new professions and received the proper certificates; 138 of beneficiaries in Imereti, 180 in Samegrelo and 110 in Shida Kartli. **99** of them were women.



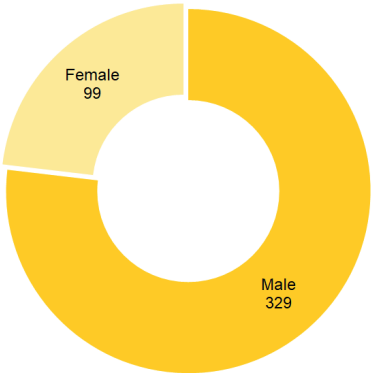
"In the framework of the project "Step by Step towards a Better Future" short term vocational training programs were implemented at Legal Entity under Public Law College "Iberia." The project significantly improved socio-economic conditions for each beneficiary, with the help of the vocational skills and knowledge gained at the college the beneficiaries were allowed to become competitive on the labor market. We express gratitude to the donor organizations and all the institutions involved in the project for allowing us to participate in the implementation of such an important project."

**Ana Tsutskiridze
Deputy Director of Legal Entity
under Public Law
College "Iberia"**

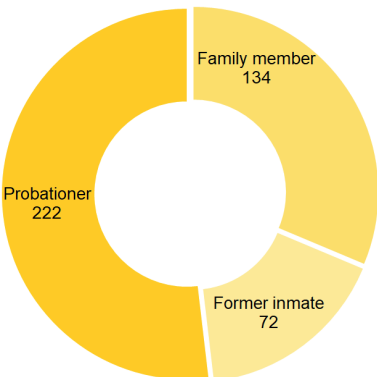
**VET training graduates
per region**



**VET training graduates
according to gender**



**VET training graduates
per status**



"When I think about what the project "Step by Step towards a Better Future" gave me, the first thing I think about is self-confidence and self-belief. I would laugh if two years ago someone told me I would achieve so much. I am a self-confident and successful stylist in the city now. I support my husband and help him to be self-confident and successful now. I can never forget this important step forward. I thank the whole staff of the project "Step by Step towards a Better Future" and IDP Women Association "Consent" for transforming me for the better."

**Tea Chaladze from Shida Kartli
(Family Member of a Former Inmate)**





Social workers and psychologists of the project met with social workers of the Crime Prevention Center and the Probation Agency regularly: In the beginning of the cycle staff members of CPC and NPA shared information about beneficiaries to social workers and psychologists of the project.

Due to this regular exchange the teams can continuously work on the further improvement of the cooperation, exchange of information, discuss the development plans of each beneficiary and work on other issues related to the beneficiary. These meetings have helped to share information that is so important to achieve successful results.



Complementary psycho-social counselling

While implementing the integrative training model, along with VET training, much attention was paid to providing complementary services to the beneficiaries, such as life skills trainings or psycho-social and legal counselling which support the beneficiaries' rehabilitation and competitiveness in the labor market.

Mentors' support facilitated additional resocialization of the beneficiaries which was proved during the project a number of times.

During the project, active cooperation was underway with social workers of the Probation Agency and the Crime Prevention Center. During each cycle, social workers and psychologists of the project held exchange meetings with social workers and psychologists of the Probation Bureaus and the Crime Prevention Center where Information regarding each beneficiary and his/her achievements and challenges was exchanged.

For each beneficiary comprehensive support plans were elaborated based on an individual (risk) assessment. Furthermore for each training participant an individual CV, an evaluation form, a genogram and a eco-map were prepared by the social workers and psychologists.

Additionally individual and group sessions with the project psychologists and the social workers were offered for training participants.

The social workers involved in the project, together with the social workers from the Probation Bureau, were evaluating beneficiaries, identifying their needs, and finally, supporting them in achieving goals, looking for a job, and renewing relationships with family members.

Psychologists, on the other hand, tried to increase the beneficiaries' motivation, intention, and self-awareness with the help of individual and group consultations.



"I must tell you that I looked at the project with distrust at first, however, after the social worker explained its importance to me, I immediately got involved in the project and have not regretted it since. I can say now for sure that the project brought a great benefit to me: it has improved my financial situation; I have obtained loyal, faithful friends. It has inspired a belief in me that with effort, a person can achieve many things. I would like to thank the project organizers and, especially, my social worker, whose support I always felt, this person's assistance made me find myself, taught me communication with people, facilitated my integration into society and helped me to find my inner strength, which allowed me to start over in life. I once more thank them greatly."

Tsisana Kharazishvili from Shida Kartli
(Family Member of a Former Inmate)

"The project team created the best opportunity for people, especially former inmates and probationers, to feel as valuable members of society. Attending each meeting is a great pleasure for us, as the discussion and study process are always interesting; we go deeply into different significant topics, which I probably have not thought a lot about before. All of the lecturers, I can honestly say, are, first of all, friendly, attentive; they are a highly responsible, objective, competent, highly qualified team. I wish Georgia had more similar organizations. The ones that helping people directly. I would like to especially single out Ms. Maia – the social worker, with whom communication is always interesting. I wish the whole organization great success; may you, again and again, make plenty of people's hearts happy."

Natia Kakushadze from Imereti
(Family Member of a Former Inmate)





Mentorship program

Persons in conflict with the law often lack role models and are not aware of alternatives to their current life and various professional possibilities and leisure activities. Besides, a majority of them is in need of support in terms of resocialization and for getting over the stigma they have in society.

Upon completion of the training program, in order to further reinforce the positive dynamics of the training program after graduation and continue support in a more informal way, some trainees were brought together with **“mentors”** from the local community.

The mentor helped the beneficiary to use gained skills in everyday life, to become more self-confident and become a full-fledged member of society.

Mentors do not replace, but complement the work of professional social work – in a less formalized and more locally oriented way.

What does “mentoring” mean?

Mentorship is a relation between persons with different experiences and its main aim is to facilitate enriching social capital in each person.

Mentorship implies informal and long-term communication between two persons, one of which has more skills or experience in a certain area and becomes a “mentor” and another who has less skills and experience becomes the “mentee”.

Mentoring has the following advantages:



accompanies people in their daily lives



easily uses local resources and additionally also personal resources to support a beneficiary's resocialization



provides additional support to persons to make their re-socialization more sustainable

On the one hand, mentorship benefits “mentees” as they get necessary support and assistance from their mentors during the project.

At the same time, mentorship also benefits “mentors” themselves as it gives the chance to examine themselves in the role as mentors and develop personal and professional skills.

Mentoring functions as a bridge between the local community and persons in conflict with the law, increases mutual acceptance, creates a more realistic picture of criminality and criminalization and helps to break stereotypes of certain groups in society and restores lost trust between the society and vulnerable people.

In the frame of the project, a group of **110** ordinary Georgian citizens (33 in Imereti, 34 in Shida Kartli and 43 in Samegrelo) with various professional backgrounds received preparatory training based on the Austrian example and were then matched with interested graduates from the training program to support him/her in various daily activities and challenges, such as communication with state agencies, employers, discussion of social / health issues, joint leisure activities.

This voluntary mentorship program proved to be a very effective means of complementary integration support.



Through the mentorship program the project contributed to the development of voluntarism in Georgia, demonstrating that reintegration can be significantly improved if vulnerable groups are offered a helping hand by society.

The project envisages holding trainings for new mentors in order to provide them with the information about the essence of mentorship as well as to present the peculiarities of mentors' activities to them. In order to encourage the mentors' activities, trainings on different topics (e.g. communication, tolerance, psychological assessments, setting boundaries) were made available to them which facilitate the development of their personal skills.



“I have become so close with the family of my mentee that we are almost a family now. Despite the project is over, our relationship won't end, it will surely continue.”

Gogi Revia from Samegrelo (Mentor)

“Thank you for getting me involved in the Mentoring program; the mentor has become my best friend.”

Elene Barkaia from Samegrelo, (Family member)

“I have found hope; I have realized that someone can support and take care of you in Georgia as well.”

Koba Totadze from Imereti (Probationer)





"The auto service "Rashi" (Kutaisi) was very happy to cooperate with the implementing team of the project "Step by Step towards a Better Future". The project beneficiary, L. Tkeshelashvili, took an internship at our auto service, he gained practical experience in doing car repair work, obtained the profession well, after which he was employed at our company and still works here. I would like to thank the Fund of Women Entrepreneurs for implementing such a project in the Imereti region. This was the project which supported the resocialization of persons in conflict with the law into society."

Zaza Svanidze, AutoService "Rashi" Kutaisi

"I would like to thank the project so much for making me think about everything. I am working now and I don't feel isolated. Without the project, no one knows if I would ever be able to get out of this situation at all. This project gave me more than family, helped me to become a person; you can't imagine how grateful I am to you."

Bachuki Kopaliani from Imereti (Probationer)



Subsidized Internships

Getting employed is one of the main challenges for persons in conflict with the law. Because of the conviction history and existing societal stigma towards these people, probationers and former inmates often are not able to find jobs and have proper working conditions.

In order to increase the employability of graduates of the integrative program, **three-months scholarships** were awarded to the **best graduates** of each of the 7 training cycles. They were matched with local businesses that agree to hire an intern in the area of his/her chosen specialization.

Every intern received a scholarship in the amount of **EUR 90** per month during the internship.

In the period from 2017 to 2020 **80** VET courses graduates (38 in Samegrelo, 24 in Imereti and 18 in Shida Kartli) benefited from subsidized internships.

The internship not only had the advantage that the intern can apply the acquired knowledge in practice, thus further expand his/her know-how and skills, but also the potential employers get acquainted with graduates from the training program and could remove potential reservations to hire probationers/former inmates.

All training participants were registered on "Worknet", a platform offered by the Georgian Employment Agency for unemployed and job seekers.

They also attended the life skills training where they were able to increase their awareness level about topics such as teamwork, leadership, labor relations; they could obtain motivation letters and resume writing skills.

Employability data

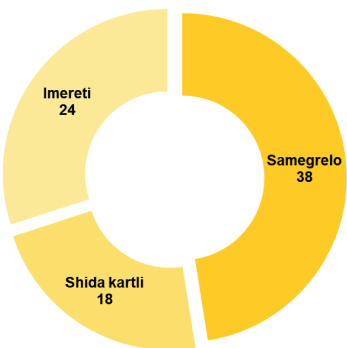
80 internships made possible

277 graduates found a job or are self-employed (151 in Samegrelo, 54 in Shida Kartli and 72 in Imereti)

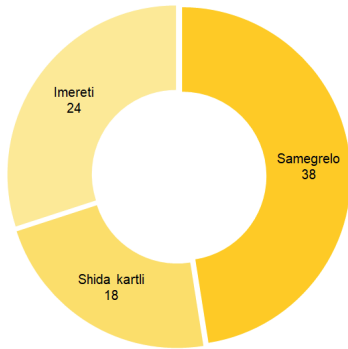
65% is the **employment rate** among the graduates (69% for female graduates and 64% for male graduates)

83% is the **highest employment rate** which was in Samegrelo region

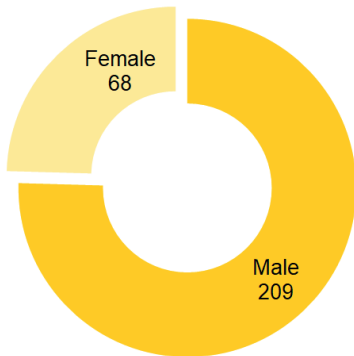
Number of Internships made possible per region



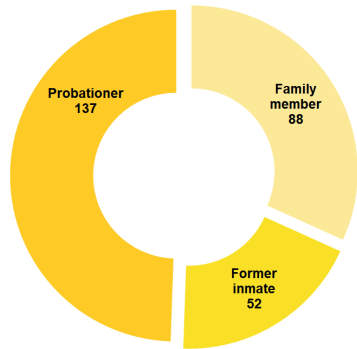
Found job after graduation per region



Found job after graduation according to gender



Found job after graduation per status



"The project "Step by Step towards a better future" emerged in my life when I had different life plans. I was a juvenile convict and I thought that living under the label of "offender" was my life sentence. Everyone around me thought of me as a negative person. After getting involved in the project, I began living a different life, I have obtained different aims and priorities. After the project, my life has changed. I can call the project social worker, coordinator on the phone for any issue and get a great recommendation from them. Today, I am a fully developed person with the help of this project, my financial condition has improved, and I have a profession, a working place. I am in love and planning on getting married soon. I will always have fond memories of the project team."

Zakro Baramashvili from Gori (Probationer)



Best Moments





"My father is a beekeeper. Even as a child I always helped him. When he went to prison, I quit my job and took care of the bees. My father got out of prison soon, and was so happy that I took care of his hives for him. Together we then applied for a start-up grant from Hilfswerk International. We actually won and with the money we could buy more bee colonies and equipment. My father and I are now merging beekeeping and are successful with it. We have an income and I see how this gives him hope again"

Gvantsa Todua, from Samegrelo
(Family memeber)

"My brother—Giorgi, and I had this business idea for a long time, and the project allowed us to implement it. Nowadays, we have a stock farm, where we breed cattle and feed them intensively, with a feedlot diet, and, as a result, produce high-quality beef. We deliver produced beef to the supermarkets located in Gori. As we do not have any competitors at the moment, our beef is high in demand and our business gets more and more profitable. Participating in the project made me more confident. I am employed and have my own business. Most importantly, it allowed me to financially support my three young children without any help, which I could not do before"

Shota Kavtaradze from Shida Kartli
(Probationer)



Material support through sub-granting

The Material Support Program gave the beneficiaries involved in the project an opportunity to support the establishment of new micro-businesses or the expansion of existing small businesses by acquiring specific items (e.g. tools, building or packaging material) or services (e.g. counselling). This program contributed significantly to the reintegration of former inmates, probationers and family members in society and improve their economic and financial situation. The material support amounted up to **EUR 1500** for individual applications and up to **EUR 5000** for group applications.

All graduates of the integrative VET training could apply for a small grant. The selection of awardees was realized in a 2-step-process in each project region. First, up to 20 potential candidates were selected in each region to undergo 3-day micro-business training, where the participants under the supervision of professional trainers learned how to write a business-plan.

Additionally individual consultation sessions held by experienced project staff, was offered for each candidate to elaborate his/her concrete business idea.

The selection of final awardees was made by an especially established Evaluation Committee consisting of representatives of all project partners and other, external experts, such as representatives of NGOs, NPA, CPC or local authorities.

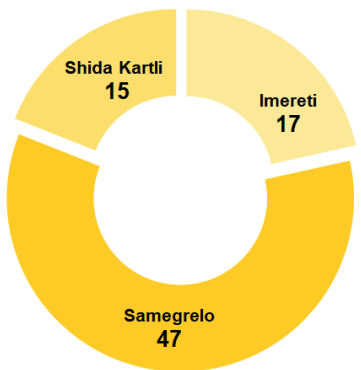
The Material Support Program was implemented in two phases in 2018 and 2019. The total budget amounted to **138.000 EUR** (430.000 GEL) and **79** business applications were awarded (17 individual and 62 group applications). In total **96** persons (80 male and 16 female) received material support through small grants.



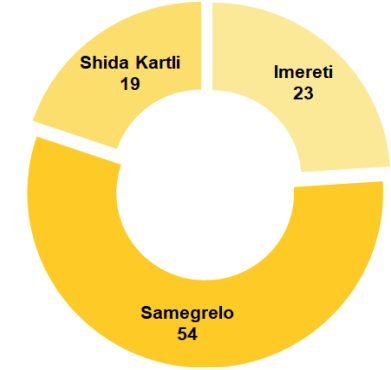
"After getting involved in the project, together with my sister in law, we participated in study courses at the College "Iberia" and the Integration Centre. I was convinced that there are people who support you. In the framework of the Material Support Program, we have received sewing and embroidery machines; our family business transformed into a profitable business, which has become a source of financial well-being for us. Thanks to the "Fund of Women Entrepreneurs," we sold our products to locals, as well as to tourists. We are not afraid of tomorrow; my family also was given a stimulus: my sister in law, who is my business partner, began obtaining the designer profession, it will allow us to expand our business more and achieve more success."

Photola Lagvilava from Imereti
(Probationer)

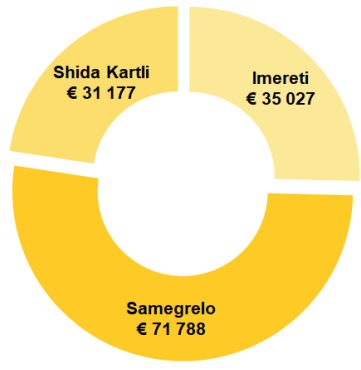
Number of awarded projects per region



Number of graduates received material support



Total budget of awarded small grants



"Winning in the Material Support Program helped us to expand our little ever-green agriculture. We purchased seeds of hundreds of different types of trees: Buxus colchica, Thuja, Cypress, different types of spruces. I enjoy working in my nursery very much; I touch each plant separately and express my affection to them. I take cuttings from the plants and I also propagate them. I trim and give shapes to the spruces; it is a great pleasure to see the result, which is a beautiful plant that pleases not only me but also my clients and everyone who sees it. The business is the main source of income for my family. When I work in my agriculture, I only think about a better future. I am very glad that I do what I love, and support my family by doing it."

Bakur Alphenidze and Iza Korkelia from Samegrelo
(Probationer)





International best practices exchange

In the first stage of the project, in order to learn more about support services before / upon release from custody and different forms and options for organizing entrepreneurship zones and employment opportunities for inmates in Austrian prisons a study visit to Austria for representatives of the Ministry of Corrections, the Ministry of Justice and prison administration, and project staff was organized in 2018.

The study process included visits to the Probation Bureau of Austria and the penitentiary systems of Vienna and Salzburg. As well as getting familiar with the services and employment opportunities in Austria.

Austria applies an integrated approach to reintegration and resocialization, which starts already during detention.

All sentenced prisoners in Austria fit for work have a legal obligation to work and approximately 80% of prisoners in Austria are pursuing work in different fields, within or outside of the penitentiary facilities, partly in cooperation with companies. Various professional educations can be completed during the time of imprisonment. This study visit aimed at enhancing international knowledge exchange in the field of vocational education and employment options during and after detention.



The main goals:

Give a comprehensive overview of the Austrian detention and reintegration system

Present different support services before / upon release from custody in Austria

Explain education opportunities in Austrian prisons (vocational education, short-term trainings, trainings on the job, distance learning, higher education, cooperation with external training institutes / schools / universities)

Getting familiar with different forms and options for organizing entrepreneurship zones and employment opportunities for inmates in Austrian prisons

Discuss alternatives to detention (diversion/community services, release on parole)



Program of Study visit

Meeting with **NEUSTART** (an Austrian organization being in charge of the Probation Service) about probation services, rehabilitation and resocialization of (former) inmates in Austria, with a specific focus on electronic home detention, after care, diversion services (victim offender mediation, community services), social net conference, and vocational training

Meeting with NGO **SOCIUS**, with a tour through the premises of SOCIUS' re-use and recycle waste management system of electronic appliances and a presentation on SOCIUS and its approach on the system of diversion as well as integration of persons under diversion in the work process

Meeting with NGO **CARLA**, with a tour through the premises of the association CARLA, and a presentation on Caritas' organizational structure, the social components of CARLA, as well as the employment of prisoners on day parole

Visit at the federal correctional facility of Simmering (Vienna) with presentations about correctional services in Austria, and the dual education system, workshops in Simmering and other educational options

Visit at the federal correctional facility Salzburg with the opening round with general facts about the Federal Correctional Facility Salzburg, was followed by a detailed tour through the premises, including visits to the different workshops (carpentry, laundry, kitchen, tinsmith, therapeutic art workshop for impaired people; eleven workshops in total)





Training programme at a semi-open prison

In cooperation with Tbilisi-based college “Mermisi” the VET training modules in prison #15 in Ksani, Mtskheta-Mtianeti region were piloted.

A short-term training course was designed especially for the inmates.

The program contained 125 academic hours. Upon completion of the short-term program, each beneficiary knew how to produce three types of cloisonné enamel jewellery (rings, crosses, pendants).

In total 6 training cycles of enamel courses were implemented from October 2017 to October 2019 for 60 inmates. Trainings have been held 3 days a week, 3 hours per day over a period of 12 weeks.

Participants of the VET training were selected by prison administration and security service; during the selection process readiness and desire to work on enamel were the main criteria.

Three classrooms in #15 Ksani correctional facility were selected for reconstruction and for using as classroom space (in total 60 m²).

Refurbishment works took place in August and September 2017.

After refurbishing and equipping workshop rooms in Ksani, the workshop was officially opened through an opening ceremony on 11.09.2017.



Additionally the training course with participation of ten persons who had already mastered the profession of working on enamel in 2018 was implemented.



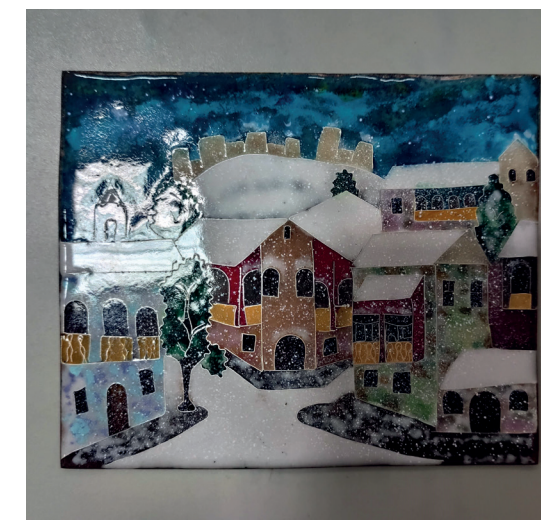
This course taught in-depth techniques to inmates, showing them how to work on cloisonné enamel.

Therefore a program which allowed the beneficiaries to learn how to work with copper and how to match enamel with wood were developed by the college Mermesi.

The implementation of this course facilitated continuation of the workshop's activity. More precisely, after the in-depth course, the graduates themselves were able to handcraft more items of high quality, and they were also able to teach this profession to other beneficiaries as well.

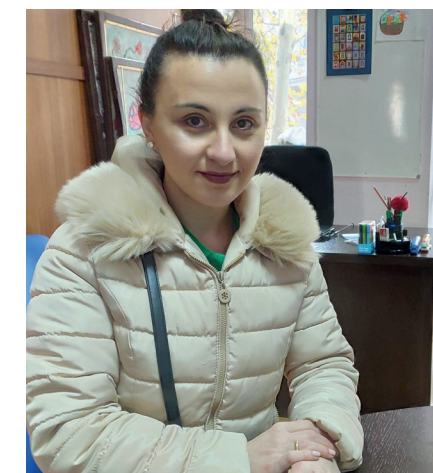


During the training process beneficiaries made beautiful items of high quality



Following the decision of the project management, part of the items was given to the inmates' family members as the inmates' first handcrafted items.

Graduated beneficiaries were questioned in the penitentiary establishment which of their relatives should receive the items.





Policy Dialog

One of the essential parts of the project was a close cooperation with Georgian public authorities, government representatives on central and local levels, as well as with other local and international civil society organizations.

Project activities contributed to strengthening the linkages between colleges, training centers, penitentiary and probationary systems and CSOs to enhance opportunities for vocational education and income generation of former inmates and probationers in Shida Kartli, Imereti and Samegrelo regions of Georgia.

Joint and coordinated operation of civil society organizations, local municipalities and central government departments was facilitated.

At the beginning of the project the Memoranda of Understanding were prepared and aligned with the two main institutional stakeholders, the Ministry of Corrections and the Center for Crime Prevention and finally signed in September 2017.

Different dialog platforms (working groups and round tables) with representatives of NPA, CPC, Ministry of Corrections and Ministry of Justice were established and regular meeting were held during the whole project period.

These platforms played a crucial role for keeping an ongoing dialog with governmental structures even during the ongoing reorganization and reform process within the Justice System in Georgia (merging process of the Ministry of Corrections and the Ministry of Justice, reorganization within National Probation Agency and Center for Crime Prevention).

As a result of this close cooperation different models and policy documents to advocate for improved pre-release preparation and re-socialization services with a focus on employability for inmates, former inmates and probationers were developed.

Based on international best practice and local discussions with responsible public authorities, policy recommendations to advocate for practical training and employment possibilities in semi-open prisons were developed.



Main results:



Together with the EU funded organizations, joint recommendations on the resocialization/rehabilitation of the persons in conflict with the law were elaborated and presented to the Ministry of Justice



In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, a vocational education program for conditionally convicted people has been adapted; the budget for the program was increased, and the program became more flexible



With the involvement of the Ministry of Education and the National Probation Agency, a cooperation model about vocational education accessibility for the conditionally convicted people was elaborated.



In Zugdidi and Gori Municipalities, together with the social services, additional services were developed for the persons in conflict with the law.



Together with the Legal Entity under the Public Law Children Referral Centre of the Ministry of Justice, working on the implantation of the Mentoring Service has begun.



During the implementation of the project, structure of criminal justice system of Georgia changed significantly. The most important structural change was merging of two ministries – Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance (MCLA), which was implementing from 2018 until the end of 2019.

As a result of this, Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance was abolished and Department of Penitentiary that was functioning under this ministry was transformed to Special Penitential Office.

Another department – The National Probation Agency merged with the Crime Prevention Center from MoJ and now is named as “The Agency of Crime Prevention, Enforcement of Noncustodial Sentences and Probation”.

Another unit of the MCLA, Educational Center of Penitentiary and Probation, which was responsible on retraining and continuing education the staff of the Ministry was abolished and created new structural unit – “Center of Professional Education and Retraining of Prisoners” (in 2020). This center is now responsible on vocational education of inmates.





Forum theater

To overcome the stigma regarding the persons in conflict with the law among society the interactive forum theater was organized in all three project regions.

Forum theater is a well-tested interactive theater format in which the dramaturgy of a scene can be changed based on input from the audience, in an attempt to make the audience experience in a more vivid and tangible form how small behavioral changes can entirely change a situation (e.g. positively or negatively influencing reintegration of probationers and former inmates e.g. in families or in the job market).

A group composed of a script writer, a director and professional young actors, working in different theaters like Marjanishvili Theater or the Children's Theater, conducted visits to the regions during which they met with conditionally convicted persons and heard their stories. Based on these stories a script for the performance was created and the forum theater was prepared.

The performance of forum theater reflected relations and communication of former convicts with the rest of society and demonstrated the real problems, which they face in daily life.

The performance was played in three target regions, and spectators were invited from different societal groups, including former convicts and members of their families, youth, and school children and teachers, representatives of local official structures.

After each performance, interesting discussions were held and the audience was actively engaged in the forum theatre by being presented with an opportunity to express their opinions and change the script.

During the second play, for spectators it was possible to become a personage and participate in play on the stage instead of actors, change the behavior and words that will give more positive development to situations described in the play.

The forum theater techniques allows spectators, who become direct participants of play, to feel responsibility for created situations and also show the big power society possess to change situations with former convicts to better or to worse.

At the same time, the performance and reaction from the audience showed former convicts and members of their families the compassion from the audience and the possible positive role which society could play in their resocialization and reintegration into normal life.



"The real story was presented in the performance. The society thinks that the convicted person cannot be trusted. Yes, we made a mistake, but we regret it. So we have a chance to start living again. Similar events will help us to defeat this stigma."

Participant

"For me as for performer it was very important that the performance was attended by schoolchildren. Through participation in performance they could see that they should not have prejudices against people in conflict with law".

Ana Masurashvili, Actor



"It was a very interesting process, when the former prisoners themselves were participating in the process of performance creation. For us, as for performers, it was very pleasant that those, for whom we were trying to achieve positive changes, were witnessing this process by themselves."

Statement of the Actors



"The social stigma of being a person in conflict with the law is one of the major challenges for the reintegration of former inmates and conditionally convicts into society."

Project Team

Vienna, Austria



Elena
Smirnova



Petra
Steinkogler

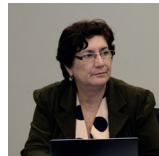


Nicole
Bauer

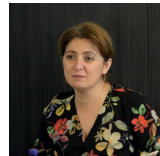


Christopher
Koppensteiner

Tbilisi, Georgia



Julia
Kharashvili



Nana
Gogokhia



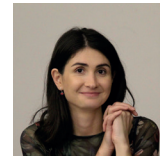
Giorgi
Zhgenti



Iason
Kvantiliani



Tamar
Inalishvili



Manana
Lagazidze

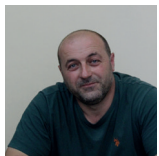


Nino
Tatanashvili



Aleksandre
Gachechiladze

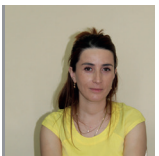
Shida Kartli, Georgia



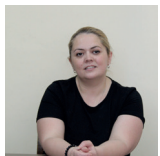
Gvtiso
Lobjanidze



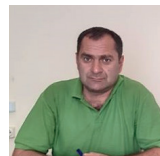
Kote
Pozovi



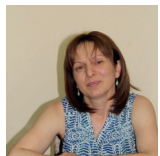
Ketevan
Tamliani



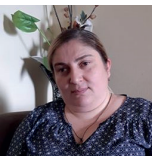
Uliana
Petrova



Sergo
Japaridze



Ia
Zubashvili



Qetevan
Zubashvili

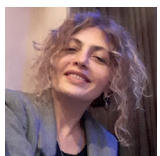


Giorgi
Gakheladze

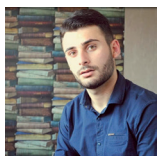
Samegrelo, Georgia



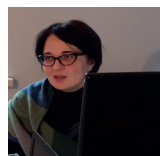
Maia
Chemia



Marina
Gogvadze



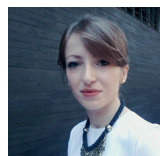
Vakhtang
Janelidze



Tamar
Chezha



Lana
Gogia



Tamar
Chiqovani



Nino
Kharchilava

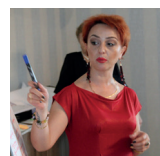


Khatuna
Gadelia

Imereti, Georgia



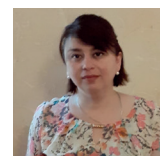
Meri
Gelashvili



Tamar
Kalandadze



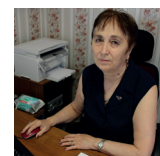
Maia
Kamushadze



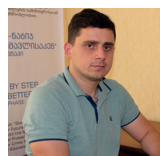
Inga
Maghlaperidze



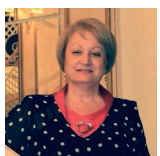
Natruli
Nachkebia



Neli
Kenjia



Varlam
Mindeli



Nanuli
Ramishvili

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The European Union
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EU4Justice



Implementing Partners:



Hilfswerk International, Vienna Austria

Hilfswerk International (HWI) is one of Austria's leading non-profit, non-party and cross-denominational organizations with its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. It provides both long-term international development assistance as well as humanitarian aid for victims of conflicts and environmental disasters. Its particular strategic focus is on long-term capacity development of the most vulnerable population sectors, i.e. women, children and ethnic minorities, in terms of organizational and institutional development.



IDP Women Association "Consent", Tbilisi Georgia

The IDP Women Association "Consent" is a non-governmental organization, working in Georgia since April 1995. "Consent" works at all levels of society: advocates for the rights of conflict affected women and girls and IDPs; provides services (juridical consultations, medical and psychological assistance, vocational training, social assistance); informal education and skills training for vulnerable groups in areas with the high density of IDPs and in zones close to conflict division lines (ABL)/occupied territories.



FWE, Kutaisi Georgia

Fund of Women Entrepreneurs is a non-commercial, non-profit, charitable organization founded on July 17, 2003. It supports women's active involvement in decision-making processes and strengthens their civil capacities, supports women's sustainable development for economic independence and poverty reduction, increases integration opportunities for IDP women and national minorities in local communities. FWE offers professional orientation for young girls, training for middle-aged women, involvement of local and socially vulnerable IDP women's in social entrepreneurship.



Zugdidi Shota Meskhia
State Teaching University



Public College "Iberia"

In close cooperation with:



Ministry of
Justice of
Georgia



NATIONAL
PROBATION
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პრეზიდენტის
სამსახური



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